

of the tree in our upward gaze, and also exposing some fundamental counterpoint that requires careful balancing: saxophones and horns beginning in m. 36, and the quarter notes versus half note woodwind triplets in m. 41. At m. 42, the various contrapuntal elements dissolve into a heavily descending F minor scale that, for the first time, finally pulls our outlook back to street level. A strident Gb rattles through this sonority, but ultimately a unison F pitch wins out, and provides a bridge to a new version of the 'A' section, beginning at m. 47.

Before we move on to the second iteration of the 'A' section however, let's delve a little more deeply into interpretation. First off, note a few more subtleties of this expository section of *City Trees*, especially in the percussion parts: the crotales strike in m. 12, 21, and 31, and the soft rumbling of the bass drum in m. 15, 20, and 30. Note the dissonance in the

trumpet parts in m. 34; be sure that both Tpt. 1 and Tpt. 2 play out bravely, one against the other here. Throughout this opening section, be sure that the *ostinato* is always audible as it moves throughout the instrumentation. Finally, during the transition in mm. 44-47, note the *diminuendo* in all of the instruments except the muted trumpet, which will yield a significant change in timbre and volume in what Markowski calls a "subtle morphing effect." Take your time here, and when it is time to move on give a nice prep beat to re-set the tempo at m. 47.

Now let's take a look at the gesture in m. 9 and m. 18, which requires some special care. Markowski has marked these with a *tenuto* mark, and it is important to think about that *tenuto* mark within the context of the phrase. And not to be a spoiler, but this gesture becomes more predominant later in the piece, so it is important to give it its due here. Your

Example 2: Main Theme ("broad, majestic chords")

5

18

wind players must give the beginning of the note a little extra weight with their breath, not an accent, but just a little extra stress. You could practice this with your students by having them press into their music stands or their thighs with one hand—not hitting or slapping, but pressing in a bit and releasing, just as they will do with their breath stream. Next have them do this by pressing with their hands into air, as a conducting gesture. And then have them use a light tongue and press a bit on the note with their air stream, as written.

That takes care of the beginning of the note; the end of the note must be distinct, so as to account for the silence that follows. But the music doesn't really stop; the silence is part of the music. These *anacrusis* must be played with a bit of weight at the beginning, and then released cleanly on time, but with a sense of going on, interpreted by your players with the knowledge that these are pick-up notes that must create a sense of connection to the rest of the phrase in spite of the rests that follow them. The bigger point is that each of the phrases beginning at m. 5, 14, 23, and 33 must be performed as phrases, and incorporating the silences into the phrases. The piece needs to move forward, and not become halting because of these rests.

A crucial point in regard to keeping a sense of forward motion in *City Trees* is tempo. Seemingly calm gestures need to have just a little bit of urban frenzy. That comes from taking Markowski's marked tempo, or something very close to it. This is not an aimless walk in the park, this music is going somewhere, and the proper tempo propels the piece toward that end.

The material of the 'A' section is reworked beginning at m. 47, now in the key of F minor. The *ostinato* and the broad, majestic phrases are back, and they lull us into a sense of familiarity. But the original

'A' section is consolidated here, as Markowski is wont to do in his formal schemes. And a new element appears, beginning in the oboe and second flute in m. 51, a counter-melody [ex. 3] that comes and goes and moves about in a most relaxed, meandering way (contrary perhaps to how the rhythms appear). By m. 65 or so, these three elements are blended together convincingly and satisfyingly, and the ascending line in the first trumpet at m. 70, this time in tandem with the first trombone, builds toward the climax of the section (as at m. 27, but with a little tetrachord manipulation).

A bit of triumphant chaos ensues at m. 72, as the *ostinato* is confronted with a clone of itself in triplet augmentation, all in the clarinets, while the lower reeds and conical brass decide whether or not to join forces with the cylindrical brass and flutes. A second-

ary climax takes place, leading to a glorious sequence of softening and slowing descending suspensions in mm. 81-89. These suspensions are foreshadowed in that strident trumpet duo back in m. 34, and developed a bit further in mm. 40-41. Be sure your

players do not shy away from the dissonance embedded in the suspensions.

As the descending suspensions reach their nadir, a brief, subtle ascending line in the euphonium and harp moves in contrary motion in m. 88, unafraid to be a little different, bringing us to a development section. Marked at 60 beats per minute, and indicating a change of key, Markowski settles in on a warmly vibrant Gb9 chord as a lovely flute solo uses material first heard in mm. 16 and 51 to allow us a brief sit on a bench in Central Park. The clarinets reply wistfully in m. 95, soon followed by saxophones and horns, and then trumpets, who urge us up and onward, as the harmony shifts from Bb minor to an open F and C at m. 99.

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Example 3: counter-melody

51
Flute 2 & Oboe

55

Example 4: the “anthem” theme climax

From this Coplandesque point of repose, Markowski continues to develop the ideas from the flute in m. 16/m. 51/m. 90, beginning in just the first clarinet at m. 102, and then fortifying the line at m. 108 with flute in unison, and oboe, clarinet 2, and alto saxophones in the octave below. Meanwhile, the broad, majestic *City Trees* gestures are back, but in an entirely different role. We are no longer called to focus on these sumptuous chords as individual trees as we were in the exposition; instead, the woodwind line creates the shape of a landscape that now emerges before our eyes (and ears).

Now is a good time to look at the photograph at the top of this article—that is where we are going! As we get there, take note: the broad, majestic chords, now in the background, need just as much attention here as in the beginning, *tenuto* marks and all. And note the several places in the woodwind line that carry through when the chords are halting (mm. 104, 108, and 111). It would be wonderful to have your players not breathe in these places; sustain this line through, staggering breathing if necessary. (The first clarinet should breathe after the dotted half note in mm. 102 as should the flutes and clarinets 1 and 2 at 110.) The tubas at m. 108 and trombones at m. 109 should enter imperceptibly.

An ascending line in unison and then thirds at m. 115 *crescendos* mightily to a measure marked *ritard* with *tenuto* marks on each quarter note. And at m. 118 we are in a very direct, no nonsense, no ninth or eleventh chords here, starkly taut Bb Major [ex. 4]. Take your time here! It seems as if we’ve been peering through one of those coin operated scenic viewing telescopes, and we have just zoomed out to the stunning panorama of the photograph above. And our song has become an anthem! Enjoy this

section, dig in, make some broad strokes. As you get to m. 123, the *tenutos* can be even a little bit broader than at m. 117 (and to make sure you do, Markowski has thrown in an extra beat to dwell on!).

A transition to the recapitulation of *City Trees* begins at m. 124. The climactic point at m. 124 devolves into suspensions descending gradually, as at m. 85. But unlike m. 89, the suspensions meet at m. 128 to form a unified front of flute, clarinet, and bassoon in octaves. Keep mm. 124-125 *forte*, including the percussion, and make the subsequent *diminuendo* truly gradual. Measures 130-131 is one of the points in *City Trees* that will make you want to include the harp part in performing this piece. The open fifth at m. 132 is reminiscent of the one in m. 99, and allows for a similar point of repose. Although there is no *ritard* marked at m. 136, the three quarter notes leading into m. 137 have *tenuto* marks. In these three quarter notes (from mm. 108-9, 123, 128) are the exuberant strength of the former anthem, restated in one still, small voice of calm. You’ll likely want to conduct four beats in this measure, and then lead your ensemble into the tempo change at m. 137.

As Markowski is not one for too literal a recapitulation, the materials of the exposition seem quite familiar upon their return to the original tempo, but the *ostinato* this time is framed in BbMaj7 rather

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than Bb minor. The broad, majestic chords return as well, and a climactic point comes much sooner than in the exposition. If the 3/2 measure in long ago m. 24 stretched our neck to see higher up the tree, the 3/2 measure at m. 155 swirls around us, urging our eyes to open wide to the great urban forest. This is exhilarating music, reflecting the city’s energy, the landscape lit up. Bring out the counter-line in the alto saxophones and horns at m. 158, especially the suspension on beat one of m. 161. Also, emphasize the descending bass line at m. 166. Be sure to voice the trumpet section carefully in the Bb9 chords in mm. 158 and 166. These chords, balanced properly, are *brilliante*. And the cityscape is illuminated even more brightly by the skyrocketing fanfare figures in the trumpets in mm. 161-163.

From branch to crown, from tree to landscape, our familiarity with these themes causes us to own them now, and they own us as well. You will find your own way in incorporating the *ritard* Markowski marks at m. 170. Perhaps the biggest challenge is to set a steady tempo at m. 174, for and with the snare drummers, in this larger-than-life presentation of the anthem. Take as much care to play cleanly and precisely at m. 174 as the first time the broad, majestic chords appeared in m. 5.

Note that, in spite of the *ritard* to 60 bpm, this entire section remains *forte*. A penultimate *rallentando* begins in m. 178, which should be carried out so as to deftly accommodate the dotted rhythm in the third beat. In the now signature m. 179, Markowski adds yet again one additional beat, literally building anticipation of what is to come, and also bravely adding accents to the quarter note *tenutos* this time. From m. 180, picking the tempo up just a bit now, be sure to attain and maintain for a bit a very full *forte* sonority before beginning the *decrescendo* to *piano* in just four fluid measures. The suspensions at m. 180 are in augmentation in this final hearing, lending an unexpected sense of nostalgia. The colorful *crescendo* in m. 183 yields to an entirely different palette in m. 184. Note the unity afforded by the open fifths in clarinets and tympani throughout. We have gone from grand *tutti* to *sotto voce* very quickly.

The still, small voice of calm returns in the form of a lingering solo clarinet passage in m. 186 that quotes both earlier melodic material, and also the yearning of the *tenuto* from the broad, majestic chords. This solo is answered with similar material by all of the first flutes and first clarinets. The piece then concludes most simply and satisfyingly, on two tarrying, differently voiced F Major chords, the latter followed by one last *tenuto* quarter note in the same voicing.

City trees become urban forests; people plant themselves in the city as lonely individuals but come to find they are anything but alone. *City Trees* is a remarkable paeon to the inner strength and that “still, small voice of calm” that allows space for each of us to make our own way, whoever and wherever we are.



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