

MUS 735

Discussion - Hitchcock, Chapter 4

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Paying special attention to Hitchcock pp. 75-81, use your resources to find and post five songs by Stephen Foster with an explanation of why you feel each one is important/accessible/useful in your teaching.

Beautiful Dreamer was Stephen Foster's last work, being copyrighted shortly after his death in 1864. It is also arguably one of his most well-known lyrical pieces. I found a very nice arrangement of it by David Gillingham that I would very much consider if I were to move to a high school position.

<https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/media-player.jsp?&productID=10312782&type=audio>

This arrangement begins in an almost haunting style, and is very soloistic between the flute and clarinet 1 at the beginning. When the melody is first introduced with the alto saxophone and horn at measure 22, there is a warmth and familiarity to the piece. This work would be a useful tool in teaching 6/8 time, lyrical style, the history of American music and Stephen Foster's later contributions to it.

An excerpt of *Gentle Annie* is presented to us in Hitchcock, chapter 4, and it is so beautifully contoured and expressive that I wanted to see if I could find a band arrangement. I found a setting by Loras John Schissel that is very well done, and I would strongly consider using this setting if I were teaching high school band again, or directing a municipal band.

<https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/media-player.jsp?&productID=2702877&type=audio>

This setting features an instrumental or vocal solo with band accompaniment. In the recording, we hear a euphonium solo, which I find fits the piece very well. I appreciate that this piece would feature a particularly strong individual, while giving the band an opportunity to balance their sound and phrase shaping to the solo part.

In the realm of middle school students, I feel like the most well-known Stephen Foster tune is likely *Camptown Races*. This piece was published in 1850 as a minstrel song, and was originally titled *Gwine to Run All Night*. I found an arrangement/treatment of this melody in a piece entitled *Camptown Variations* by Brian Balmages (who is one of my favorite middle school-level band composers).

<http://www.fjhmusic.com/band/mp3/b1040.mp3>

This arrangement takes the *Camptown Races* melody, inverts parts of it, and modernizes the harmonies, creating a piece that would appeal to students and families with the familiar melody, while at the same time presenting a piece with contemporary feel.

I generally enjoy multi-movement works, as they often provide very clear contrast and organization. I found a nice arrangement entitled *Four for Foster*, by Bill Simon.

<https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/media-player.jsp?&productID=10829131&type=audio>

Movement I, *Some Folks Do*, presents a 2/4, upbeat dance or march-like piece. Movement II, *Hard Times Come Again No More*, is a 4/4 lyrical piece featuring the clarinets, alto saxophones and horns. It is very well-written and provides a nice melodic range for those instruments, which should help students in their second or third years to play lyrically and sensitively.

Movement III, *Nelly Bly*, is presented as a slower, more stately, ceremonial march. Melodic material here is shared among most of the winds. The fourth movement, *Oh Susanna*, would definitely be a crowd favorite, as most people know this tune. Melody is given to upper winds for the most part in this dance-like piece. I love the variety that this piece provides, and the flexibility of only doing two or three movements if it suits my ensemble.

Finally, I found another nice medley of Stephen Foster tunes in a piece entitled *Fantastic Foster*, arranged by L.C. Harnsberger. This piece combines three of Foster's most well-known melodies: *Camptown Races*, *My Old Kentucky Home*, and *Oh, Susanna*.

<https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/media-player.jsp?&productID=10093395&type=audio>

I would program this with my 6th grade band, and I believe it would serve as a very effective teaching tool for regal, marcato style (*Camptown Races*), smooth lyrical style (*My Old Kentucky Home*), and a quicker dance style (*Oh, Susanna*). The three tunes would likely be recognizable by students and their families, making this an easy piece to program. The melody is given to nearly every section throughout the piece, making it a great tool for identifying the melodic material and playing sensitively towards it.