

The Music of Michael Sweeney

Michael Sweeney is currently Director of Band Publications for Hal Leonard Corporation in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, one of the largest publishers of printed music in the world. Michael is directly responsible for the development, production, recording and marketing of new publications for school bands.



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In addition, he contributes as a composer and arranger in all instrumental areas, and is particularly known for his writing at the younger levels for concert band and jazz. Since joining the company in 1982, Hal Leonard has published over 500 of his compositions and arrangements.



The Music of Michael Sweeney

Mr. Sweeney is a 1977 graduate of Indiana University (Bloomington), where he earned a bachelor's degree in music education and studied composition with Bernard Heiden, John Eaton and Donald Erb. Prior to working for Hal Leonard he was a band director in Ohio and Indiana, working with successful concert, jazz and marching programs at all levels from elementary to high school



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A winner of multiple ASCAP awards, his *Ancient Voices* (1994) and *Imperium* (1992) are featured in the acclaimed *Teaching Music Through Performance* series by GIA Publications. Other compositions such as *Black Forest Overture* (1996), *The Forge of Vulcan* (1997) and *Distant Thunder of the Sacred Forest* (2003) have become staples in the repertoire for middle school bands.



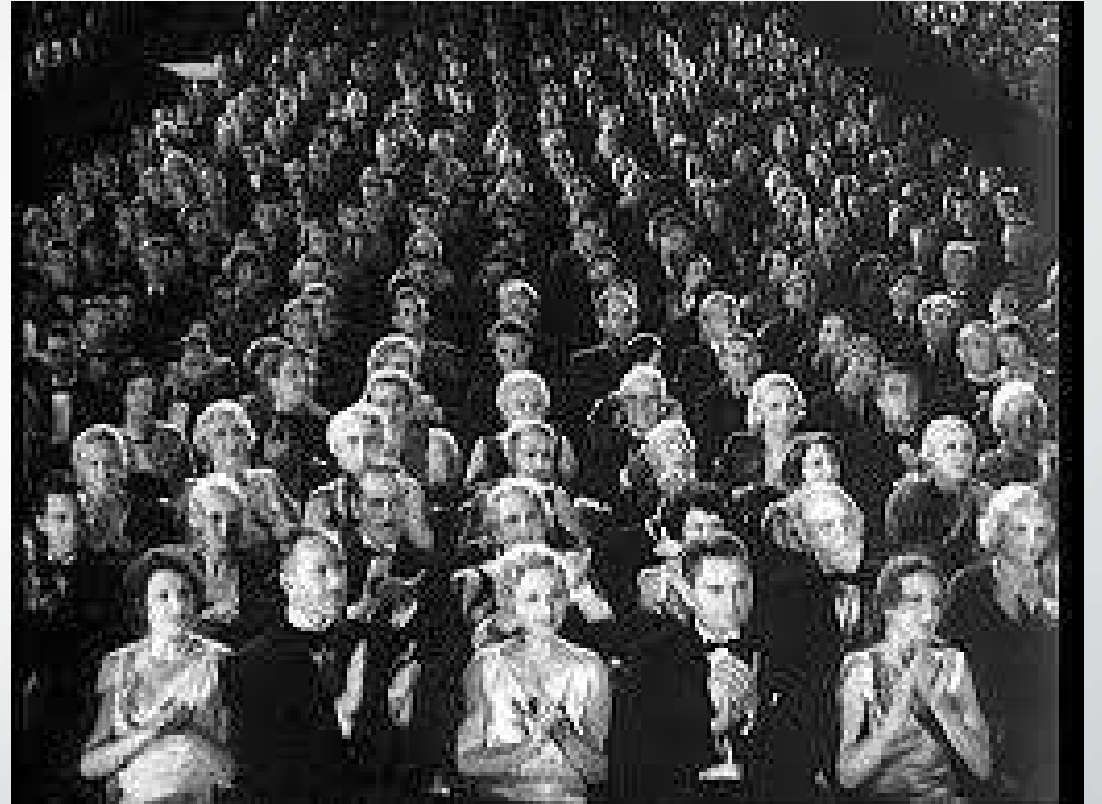
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He has received commissions ranging from middle school and high school bands to the Eastman Wind Ensemble and Canadian Brass. His works appear on numerous state contest lists and his music is regularly performed throughout the world. Michael is also in demand as a clinician and conductor for honor bands and festivals. Michael resides north of Milwaukee where he enjoys fishing and playing the bodhrán.



Artistic Ethics

*I will respect my
audience regardless of
size or station.*



High Water Mark :The Third Day

By the summer of 1863, the American Civil War was already two years old and would continue for nearly another two years. In June of that year Confederate General Robert E. Lee led his Army from Northern Virginia on an invasion of northern territory through Maryland and into Pennsylvania.



High Water Mark :The Third Day

His army was being pursued from the south by union forces under General George G. Meade. Upon learning of his pursuers, Lee had to gather his scattered forces and reverse the direction of his invasion. Both armies would collide in a monumental battle lasting three days near the town of Gettysburg. In one of the War's strange turnabouts, the Northern forces would approach Gettysburg from the south, while the Southern army would approach from the north.



High Water Mark :The Third Day

Of the more than 170,000 soldiers involved, more than 50,000 were killed or wounded. Highwater Mark: The Third Day depicts some of the main events that occurred on July 3rd during the battle of Gettysburg.



High Water Mark :The Third Day

Musical references include the calm before the battle, offstage drums and trumpets representing the opposing armies awaking to the day, two cannon blasts signaling Confederate gunners to begin their fire on the Union positions on Cemetery Ridge, The calm before the Confederates launch their infantry attack, the ill-fated "Pickett's Charge" reaching the union lines with fierce "hand-to-hand" fighting, and finally the return of the opening theme in a more optimistic setting anticipating the end of the war still two years away.



Monmouth Overture

Written to depict the small town life and scenic beauty of a New England village, *Monmouth Overture* features a single reoccurring theme that winds its way throughout this composition in a modified theme and variation form.



Monmouth Overture

Theme and variation is a specific kind of form in music. The form of a piece of music tells you how the music is organized. With a **theme and variation**, the piece begins with a **theme** that is the main melody. That is followed by one or more **variations** of that main melody.



Celtic Air and Dance

Drawing on the rich and varied tradition of Celtic folksongs, this piece opens with the touching and melodious *The Parting Glass*. The flutes and percussion take center stage on the dance-like *Tha Mi Sgith (A Fairy's Love Song)*, then the entire band gets into the act for the rousing finish.



Celtic Air and Dance

"The Parting Glass" is a Scottish and Irish traditional song, often sung at the end of a gathering of friends. It was purportedly the most popular parting song sung in Scotland before Robert Burns wrote "Auld Lang Syne". The song is also hugely popular in Ireland and amongst Irish communities.



Due North

Composed for a band festival in Duluth, MN, and suggesting perhaps an exciting downhill ski run or possibly a snowmobile chase through the woods, *Due North* is a fast-paced overture written entirely in a single tempo.



Due North

Along the way, various moods are suggested as themes and musical ideas are passed from section to section. The percussion section provides a driving, rhythmic pulse throughout.



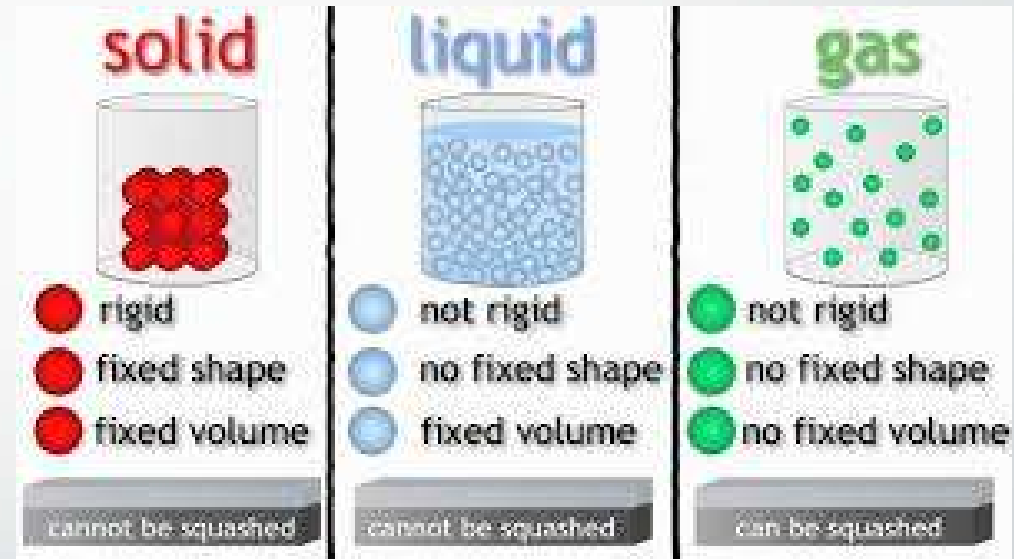
Due North

Overture in music is the term originally applied to the instrumental introduction to an opera. During the early Romantic era, composers such as Beethoven and Mendelssohn began to use the term to refer to independent, self-existing instrumental, programmatic works that presaged genres such as the symphonic poem.



Particles

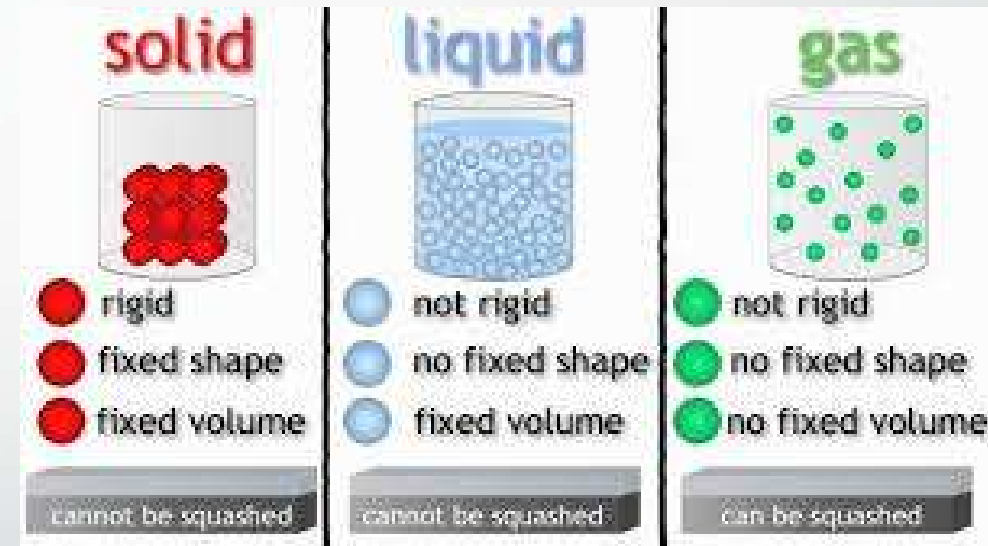
This unusual work portrays the transformation of matter from solid to liquid and ultimately to gas. You'll hear a single musical theme transformed throughout, starting with a very rigid and dense opening statement.



Particles

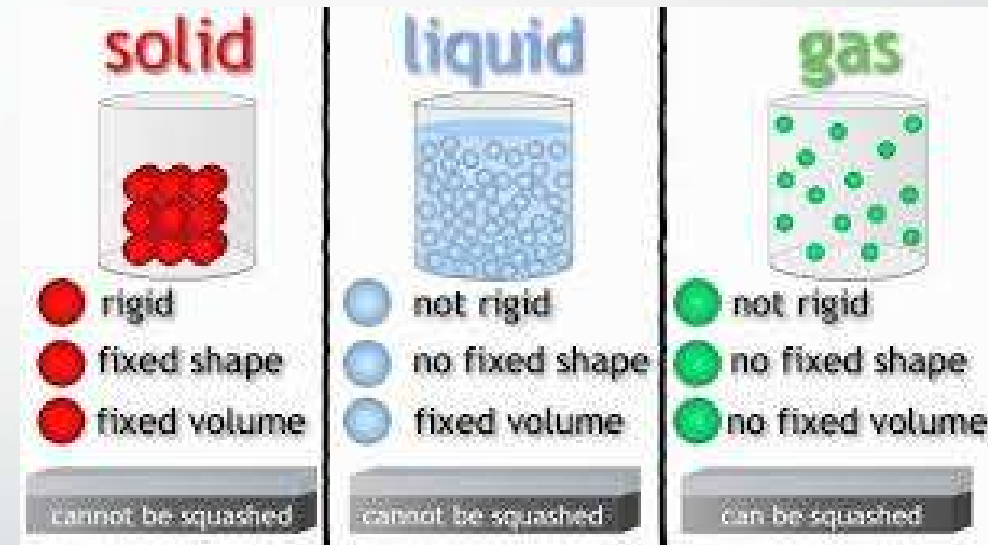
From there the theme is treated in a lyrical style (liquid), and finally the pace becomes frantic and energetic as the melodic particles transform into gas.

Using unique scoring techniques (including a few aleatoric sections and dramatic percussion effects) this descriptive work will stir the imagination of players and audience alike.



Particles

Aleatoric music (also aleatory music or chance music; from the Latin word *alea*, meaning "dice") is music in which some element of the composition is left to chance, and/or some primary element of a composed work's realization is left to the determination of its performer(s).



Distant Thunder of the Sacred Forest

This amazing work opens with the sounds of distant villages as their drumming echoes through the African rain forests. As the players return to their “normal” seats in the band, the various elements of this composition gradually come together in a joyous unified celebration. Thoroughly researched to include authentic African drumming patterns.



Artistic Ethics

*The Show Must Go On!
I will never miss a
performance.*



Artistic Ethics

I shall play every performance to the best of my ability, regardless of how small my role or large my personal problems.



Artistic Ethics

I shall never miss an entrance by my failure to be ready.



Artistic Ethics

I shall forego all social activities which interfere with rehearsals and always be on time.



Artistic Ethics

*I shall never leave until
I have completed my
performance.*



Artistic Ethics

*I shall accept the
director's advice in the
spirit in which it is given
for he sees the
production as a whole
and my role as a portion
thereof.*



Artistic Ethics

*I shall respect the music
and the composer,
remembering that "A work
of art is not a work of art
until it is finished."*



Artistic Ethics

I shall direct my efforts in such a manner that when I leave this organization it will stand as a greater institution for my having labored there.

