



Dry Bones

AFRICAN AMERICAN SPIRITUAL

Arranged by ANDREW H. DABCZYNSKI (ASCAP)

INSTRUMENTATION

- 1 Conductor
- 8 1st Violin
- 8 2nd Violin
- 5 3rd Violin (Viola T.C.)
- 5 Viola
- 5 Cello
- 5 String Bass
- 1 Piano Accompaniment
- 3 Optional Percussion
(Wood Block, Sticks,
Ratchet, Tambourine,
Triangle, Cowbell, etc.)

Each student has a chance to play the melody with their “finger-bones connected to their...hand bones” in this bone-rattling arrangement of a well-known spiritual. Perfect for Halloween or any time of year, simple optional percussion provides the crazy sounds of the bones.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

All Belwin string parts have been carefully bowed and fingered appropriately by level. The Yellow Very Beginning series includes many bowings as well as reminder fingerings for first-time readers. The Red Beginning series includes frequent bowings to assist younger players. Fingerings for altered pitches are often marked. The Green Intermediate series includes appropriately placed bowings for middle-level students. Fingerings and positions are marked for notes beyond first position. The Blue Concert series includes bowings appropriate for the experienced high school player. Fingerings and position markings are indicated for difficult passages.

Bob Phillips
Belwin/Pop String Editor

PROGRAM NOTES

Spirituals are songs—usually religiously inspired—that originally were sung by African-Americans during the period of slavery. One of the most upbeat and popular of these spirituals, appearing in the late 19th century, this piece is based on a passage of Biblical scripture (Ezekiel 37:1–14) in which the prophet foresees the “Valley of Dry Bones” being revived in a future day upon God’s command. Performances often include humorous “bone-sounds” to accompany the main melody, along with transition sections that continuously rise and fall, both in pitch and dynamics.

NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

Dry Bones provides an opportunity for students to focus on rhythm, counting, dynamics, and sound effects while playing variations on the simple spiritual theme for a humorous effect. The score calls for optional percussion, suggesting that a wide variety of simple hand percussion instruments be collected (wood block, sticks, ratchet, tambourine, triangle, cowbell, slide whistle, etc.). The player(s) can then randomly and creatively choose different instruments to play throughout the piece, so that the percussion part offers a humorous accompaniment to the strings.

In the introduction (mm. 1–4), the celli/basses provide a simple bass part while the violins/violas tap the top of their instruments—this can be accomplished by holding the bow in a fist and extending the first finger to tap. The first statement of the theme (mm. 5–13) is pizzicato; care should be taken not to rush, and to play *piano* the first time and *forte* on the repeat. The violas/celli then play a rhythmic variation on the theme with a pizzicato accompaniment (mm. 14–21). The violins join (mm. 22–29), alternating the theme in *piano* with the violas/celli/basses in an accented, *forte* context.

The next section (mm. 30–41) provides an extended, diatonically ascending transition—traditional in arrangements of this melody—where each statement grows progressively louder in a long crescendo. The melody finally appears *forte*, an octave higher in the first violins, with rhythmic accompaniment in the 2nd violins/violas/celli and a walking pizzicato bass line (mm. 42–50). Another transition then appears (mm. 51–63), this time descending both in pitch and in dynamic.

A sudden crescendo (mm. 63–64) leads to the final varied statement of the theme (mm. 65–73, repeated). Here, the 1st violins predominate, while the 2nd violins/violas/celli provide a rhythmic and harmonically rich accompaniment, along with a bowed walking bass line. As an optional challenge, all students can be instructed to “swing” the eighth notes in this section and in the coda (mm. 74–77). All instruments should crescendo to the final two measures. In measure 76, the optional percussion instruments should play throughout, making as much noise as possible (multiple percussionists will make this more effective and amusing).

Dry Bones

3

CONDUCTOR SCORE

Duration - 3:00

African American Spiritual

Arranged by Andrew H. Dabczynski (ASCAP)

Sprightly (♩ = 126)

Tap instrument with 1st finger of right hand

Violins

Viola (Violin III)

Cello

String Bass

Piano Accompaniment

Optional Percussion
(Wood Block, Sticks, Ratchet, Tambourine, Triangle, Cowbell, etc.)

5

(first time *p*, second time *f*)

Vlns.

Vla. (Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.

Opt. Perc.

5

(first time *p*, second time *f*)

5 *p-f* **6** **7** **8**

* Collect as many percussion instruments as possible.
Randomly choose different instruments to play throughout piece.

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1.

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla. (Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.

Opt. Perc.

9 10 11 12

f

f

f

f

f

f

2.

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla. (Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.

Opt. Perc.

13 14 15 16 17

mp

mp

arco

mf

mf

mp

mp

mp

Vlns. I
 Vlns. II
 Vla. (Vln. III)
 Cello
 Str. Bass
 Pno. Accomp.
 Opt. Perc.

18 19 20 21

Vlns. I
 Vlns. II
 Vla. (Vln. III)
 Cello
 Str. Bass
 Pno. Accomp.
 Opt. Perc.

22 23 24 25

Score for measures 26-29. The score includes parts for Vlns. I & II, Vla. (Vln. III), Cello, Str. Bass, Pno. Accomp., and Opt. Perc.

Measures 26-29 show a dynamic progression from *p* to *f* and then to *mf*. The Vlns. I & II parts end with a *pp* dynamic. The Pno. Accomp. part features a *f* dynamic in measure 27 and a *mf* dynamic in measure 28. The Opt. Perc. part has a *mf* dynamic in measure 28.

Measures 26, 27, 28, 29

Score for measures 30-33. The score includes parts for Vlns. I & II, Vla. (Vln. III), Cello, Str. Bass, Pno. Accomp., and Opt. Perc.

Measures 30-33 show a dynamic progression from *pp* to *p*. The Vlns. I & II parts end with a *p* dynamic. The Vla. (Vln. III) part features a *pp* dynamic in measure 30 and a *p* dynamic in measure 31. The Cello part features a *pp* dynamic in measure 30 and a *p* dynamic in measure 31. The Str. Bass part features a *pp* dynamic in measure 30 and a *p* dynamic in measure 31. The Pno. Accomp. part features a *pp* dynamic in measure 30 and a *p* dynamic in measure 31. The Opt. Perc. part has a *pp* dynamic in measure 30 and a *p* dynamic in measure 31.

Measures 30, 31, 32, 33

Vlns. I *mp* *mf*
 Vlns. II *mp* *mf*
 Vla. (Vln. III) *mp* *mf*
 Cello *mp* *mf*
 Str. Bass *mp* *mf*
 Pno. Accomp. *mp* *mf*
 Opt. Perc. *mp* *f*

34 35 36 37

Vlns. I *f*
 Vlns. II *f*
 Vla. (Vln. III) *f*
 Cello *f*
 Str. Bass *f*
 Pno. Accomp. *f*
 Opt. Perc.

38 39 40 41

pizz.

42

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla. (Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.

Opt. Perc.

42 *f* 43 44 45

1.

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla. (Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.

Opt. Perc.

46 47 48 49

51

2.

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla. (Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.

Opt. Perc.

arco

50 51 52 53 54

59

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla. (Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.

Opt. Perc.

mf *mp* *p*

mf *mp* *p*

mf *mp* *p*

mf *mp* *p*

mf *mp* *p*

55 *mf* 56 57 *mp* 58 59

Score for measures 60-64. The score includes parts for Vlns. I & II, Vla. (Vln. III), Cello, Str. Bass, Pno. Accomp., and Opt. Perc.

Measures 60-64 are marked with *pp* (pianissimo) for the strings and piano (*p*) for the percussion.

Score for measures 65-68. The score includes parts for Vlns. I & II, Vla. (Vln. III), Cello, Str. Bass, Pno. Accomp., and Opt. Perc.

Measures 65-68 are marked with *f* (forte) for the strings and piano accompaniment.

1.

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla. (Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.

Opt. Perc.

69 70 71 72

2.

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla. (Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Pno. Accomp.

Opt. Perc.

73 74 75 76 77

fp *f* *ff*

* Make as much noise on instruments as possible.