

Program Notes

The 2017 Atlantic hurricane season was the costliest on record, with a damage total close to \$300 billion (USD) and resulted in over 3,000 fatalities and countless injuries. The strongest three storms of the season – Harvey, Irma and Maria – occurred during August and September, and battered parts of Texas, Louisiana, the Caribbean, Puerto Rico, the Bahamas, Cuba, and Florida, among other territories. This work, entitled HIM (for Harvey, Irma and Maria), was written in remembrance of this greatly disastrous storm season, and is a musical expression of a hurricane. The work simulates a strong storm blowing in, wreaking its havoc, and then blowing out, before a respite representing the eye of the storm then takes center stage. The storm then returns stronger, before moving on its way into the distance.

As I contemplated what it would be like to experience a strong hurricane, particularly during the period in the eye of the storm, I was reminded of an early childhood memory when I encountered a tornado for the first time. I was a typical Texas kid – sitting in the back of my mom’s minivan with my two siblings. As we were driving on a highway over the lake to our home, the sky turned an eerie, greenish tint and the atmosphere increasingly became very still and quiet. My mom said to look over the lake in the distance – and sure enough, a dark twister was slowly expanding from the sky toward the earth below. I remember the feeling of angst for the people in the path of the great vortex, coupled with the awe of truly one of the most beautiful things I’d ever seen – resulting in an intense cognitive dissonance in my mind. It’s the closest personal experience I can use to relate to the beauty and terror of the eye.

In the music, I decided to use a familiar hymn, partially due to the word hymn being a homonym of the title HIM, but also since in some of history’s worst circumstances many hymns were written. I chose *Great is Thy Faithfulness* whose text reflects the words of Lamentations 3:22-23, written during a time when famine was severe and cannibalism was rampant:

22 The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
His mercies never come to an end;
23 they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.

Thank you to Brian Dell and the Florida Bandmasters Association for commissioning this work, as well as conductor Michael Garasi and the 2020 Florida Middle School All-State Band, for giving the piece its premiere.

Performance Notes

Here in Texas during the Spring, we have some pretty intense thunderstorms. The night before I made significant decisions about the storm sequence of events utilized in *HIM*, I was woken very early in the morning by one of these storms, which continued for hours and hours, giving me a chance to make some observations that would ultimately influence my music.

At the beginning, the “wind” blows in, causing “leaves” on trees to become excited (orchestrated as clarinet trills), various metal and wooden chimes to sound (orchestrated in the percussion instruments) and quiet pitches from “bottles” to be heard (orchestrated in the flutes). In this section I was thinking of a porch where a person might hang various metal and wooden chimes, and have bottles sitting out, which all become increasingly noisy as a strong wind blows in. The balance here is delicate – the section should be rehearsed to sound as naturalistic as possible to reflect the programmatic “scene”.

The hiss, representing the wind, is purposefully scored in the brass and saxophones due to their placement in the Symphonic Band setup, behind the upper woodwinds, whose ensuing effects are caused by it. The percussion parts are notated to sound like random metal chimes clanging about, though I would not recommend taking excessive amounts of rehearsal time to achieve an exact reproduction of the notation as its not necessary to do so to achieve the overall purpose. Take note the percussionists will need seven triangle beaters for the opening section. Clarinets may need to play as quiet as possible at m.2, close to a “subtone” effect. Their tremolo should not be coordinated; each player should play independently as each individual “leaf” of a “tree” that would be excited at a slightly different rate of a strong wind. At m.4 the flute 1 and 2 are each given a figure and asked to play at random, with three players on each part for a total of six flutes. Take notice I ask them to play “at random sparsely” – they should not to repeat this figure excessively. Ensure they do not use vibrato, and do imitate wind blowing across a “bottle”. On beat three of m.16, the solo trumpet player is asked to bend the pitch with the embouchure (instead of changing valves), and should bend the pitch in a way that does not sound pretty, but also is not overly bombastic. After hours of listening to storms, I have gathered there are seemingly different sounds of thunder. The roll and pedal gliss. in m.16-18 (also occurring at m.99-101 and again in m.216-218) by the timpani should result in a groaning type of thunderous sound, whereas the bass drum in m.90-93 (also occurring at m.123-126 and m.218-221) should create a clearer type of threatening thunder in the distance.

All three hurricanes (Harvey, Irma and Maria) originated off the coast of West Africa – and for this reason West African drums are utilized to introduce the beginning and through the entirety of the storm. The first set of drums (B.D., Timp., Frame Drum and Dundun/Sangban/Kinken) enter at m.19 like execution drums, a threatening force from the Western coast of Africa. The notation at m.30 switches to a 12/8 meter and changes tempo, accommodating the notation of a “cross rhythm” for the second set of drums (three djembes and the shaker). The first set of drums continue playing their same figure, even though the notation looks different and may find it easiest to continue thinking in a 3/4 meter at the slower tempo.

*In African culture, cross-beats can symbolize challenging moments or emotional stress: it is thought that playing them while fully grounded in the main beats prepares one for maintaining life-purpose while dealing with life’s challenges.

Also at m.30, if rattles and/or a beaded foot shaker are available that can be attached to the djembe players, do this – and have them continue playing on each downbeat as they also play the djembe. If no leg rattles and/or foot shaker are available, have the djembe players clap before they enter from m.30 through beat three of m.31.

The pitch bend in the low winds in m.48 should be achieved with the embouchure, even in the trombone, like the solo trumpet performed in m.16. The “scoops” on beat three and four of m.63 in the trombones should not be overplayed, although the two glisses in the trombones in m.70 can be accentuated. Have the trombones take care to gliss slowly in m.75 – it should take the entire measure before they land on their notated pitches on beat 1 of m.76. The upward pitch bends in the tuba and bassoons in m.126 and 129 should be performed slowly, and then the performers should change fingerings as subtly as possible to the notated pitch on beat 1 of the following measures.

I considered having the section at m.146 be aleatoric, but instead decided to notate the music in a way that should sound random. Therefore, players performing the repetitive figures do not need to be overly concerned with exact execution of these figures in this section. The conductor may mention that the notated figures of the repetitive lines in m.150 are the same duration as the previous measures, but look different due to the shift in meter (this applies to all the woodwinds except for the alto saxophones). The horn rips in m.147 and m.148 should be performed as loud as possible. (The alto saxophones can even be omitted if the horn section is strong and large enough to be clearly heard.) The horn parts (and alto sax. parts) in m.149 through m.158 (and again at m.210 through m.216) are meant to sound like a storm siren, which often has at least two pitches, with one pitch oscillating in and out of tune with a stable pitch. The conductor may choose to conduct m.148 and m.149 in six if they choose, to prepare the tempo at m.150.

The euphonium solo part can be omitted at m.194 through m.202 if needed.

The conductor should be aware that I have provided generous cueing in the parts for ease of entrance for the performers. Most of does not appear in the score as they are not doubling suggestions.

Composer Bio

Haley Woodrow loves to partner with performers in crafting musical experiences that offer listeners an active role. Her music reflects a broad range of influences and genres, and combines styles as a primary objective.

Haley’s compositions have received awards from the National Band Association (for *And it Begins*), the Texas Music Educators Association (for *And it Begins* and *March for Jazz*), the International VLAMO Composition Contest (for *Melting Pot*), the Shannon Shaker Women’s Band Composition Competition (for *In Two Places*), the MACRO Composition Competition (for *Place of the Pike: Then and Now*), the International Arcady Emerging Composer Competition (for *Winter Light*), and the Noteflight Big Band Composition Contest (for *Something Entirely Different*). Alfred, Hal Leonard, Barnhouse and MurphyMusicPress offer published versions of several of her compositions and she also actively self-publishes through her company, Woodrow Music.

As an educator, Haley currently is an Adjunct Instructor at the King’s University, as well as Tarrant County and Weatherford Colleges. Haley leads a Summer Chamber Music and Entrepreneurship program each summer, where she teaches emerging composers the skills to fulfill commissions and make a living as a musician. She and her husband Jonathan are Second Lieutenants in the Texas State Guard, where they serve as chaplains and co-Directors of the Texas State Guard Jazz Orchestra. From 2006 to 2013, Haley was the staff Orchestra Director and Arranger for Cornerstone Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas, completing approximately 500 arrangements and establishing a home production studio in 2012. Her ninety-minute Creating Composers Clinics, based on her own compositions, are designed to teach composition fundamentals and performance application in an ensemble setting to 7-12 grade band students.

Haley’s concert works have received performances at such events as the Texas Music Educators Association Convention, the Society of Composers, Inc. Region VI Conference, the Mississippi University for Women Music by Women Festival, the Houston Underground Saxophone Competition, Texas Tech’s Big XII Trombone Conference, Texas Christian University’s Trombone Summit and the Friends University Jazz Festival. Copies of her music have been sold and performed nationwide, as well as internationally in countries such as Australia, France, Germany, the UK and Canada.

Haley currently maintains a blog on entrepreneurship, composition and music education. Please visit haleywoodrow.com for more information.

Composition Outline

HIM (*Harvey, Irma, Maria*) is in Ternary form, with an introduction.

Introduction m.1-18

HIM begins with a snapshot of the “eye” of the hurricane, which is presented in full beginning at m.104. A solo trumpet plays a melody fragment from the hymn *Great is Thy Faithfulness*:



Musical notation for the introduction, featuring a solo trumpet part starting at measure 8. The notation shows a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a melody starting on a middle C. A box labeled '8' and the word 'solo' are placed above the staff. The dynamic marking 'mf' is below the first note. A fermata is placed over the final note of the fragment.

Before the timpani executes a pedal gliss. at m.16-18 simulating thunder.

Beginning of the storm m.19-55:

Eight percussionists divided into two sets of Western and African drums create a polyrhythmic “cross rhythm”. Low winds enter in m.40, and the rest of the instruments layer over with threatening figures.

“A” theme m.56-84:

The A theme (representing the storm in full force) is played by the alto saxophones and trumpet 1 at m.56:



Musical notation for the “A” theme, featuring alto saxophones and trumpet 1 starting at measure 56. The notation shows four staves: A. Sax. 1, A. Sax. 2, T. Sax. 1, and Bari. Sax. The A. Sax. 1 and 2 parts play a melodic line with slurs and accents. The T. Sax. 1 part is silent. The Bari. Sax. part plays a rhythmic pattern. The Tpt. 1 part starts at measure 56, marked 'open' and 'f'.

The bassoons, tenor sax, trombones and euphonium play it at beginning at m.64.

Transition to the “B” theme m.85-104:

The hissing effect and clarinet tremolo heard in the snapshot of the B theme from the very beginning of the work begin to layer over the fragments of the A material, as a giant cross fade takes place throughout the section. The cross fade creates the effect of a storm blowing off into the distance, as the listeners then experience the “eye” of the storm.

“B” theme (*Great is Thy Faithfulness*), the “eye” of the storm m.104-142:

The eye of the storm is represented as a full statement of the hymn, *Great is Thy Faithfulness*.

Transition back to the “A” theme m.142-159:

The last four notes of the hymn are overlapped and staggered, as other repetitive figures enter and the music dissolves into chaos.



Musical notation for the transition back to the “A” theme, showing overlapping and staggered notes. The notation shows three staves with overlapping notes and slurs. A large '3' is written on the left side. The text 'hend nitch with emb.' is written at the bottom right.

The horns enter at pickups to m.148 mimicking storm sirens and the meter shifts back to 12/8 as the storm begins to “blow back in”.

Return of A m.160-193:

A material returns, and the melody makes its reappearance at m.167. At m.175, material first presented at m.40-55 returns and escalates. The A theme is played a final time with full band participation at m.185.

Synthesis of A and B material m.194-209:

Fragments of *Great is Thy Faithfulness* are heard over the A material:

The image shows a musical score for measures 210 through 219. The score is arranged in a system with seven staves. The top three staves are for Trumpets 1, 2, and 3 (Tpt. 1, Tpt. 2, Tpt. 3). The next two staves are for Horns (Hn.). The bottom two staves are for Trombones 1 and 2 (Tbn. 1, Tbn. 2). The music is in 12/8 time and features a complex texture with overlapping melodic lines and rhythmic patterns. A box containing the number '21' is located in the top right corner of the score.

Ending m.210-end

The horns mimic storm sirens once again, before the hissing enters representing wind blowing the storm way. The timpani and bass drum resemble thunder in the distance (m.216 and m.218, respectively) and the music fades out.