

## ***Mission Songs Program Notes***

Historically late autumn is a celebration of the end of the harvest, a time to enjoy the fruits of labor, share our abundance with others, and gather to celebrate and exchange our culture and experiences. My goal was to capture the essence of the season, so in the arranging of the two songs in this work, I selected traditional songs with a rich and significant history.

The first song *Alabado*, is a Spanish word that literally translated means “song of thanksgiving”. The genre of *Alabado* was used in the 1700s and 1800s in Latin America and in American Spanish missions as a staple of daily life. I was intrigued by a quote I’d like to share here:

“It [the *Alabado*] is mentioned in almost every historic account of California and the Southwest. It was sung by padre and soldier, colonist and neophyte, in church, at home, in the field, and on the trail.” – Father Owen da Silva

In the music you’ll hear the melody presented by different groups of instruments. This is to honor the tradition of how the *Alabado* was often sung by four groups separated into men, women, boys, and girls.

The second song, *Lac qui Parle* is a tune notated and given lyrics by Joseph Renville, whose mother was Sioux Indian and father was French Canadian. The tune is among the world’s most widely known melodies of American Indian origin, and I included it to honor Native Americans. *Lac qui Parle* literally translates to “lake that talks”, and in addition to being the name of the song, was a mission in which the Sioux Indians’ Dakota language was written and parts of the Bible were translated.

Due to its minor mode and resulting darker sound, I hesitated to include this tune. However, in an effort to accurately reflect history I decided to use it, as we know that Native Americans and Pioneers had many trials and tribulations.

*Lac qui Parle* Lyrics:

Many and great, O God, are Thy things, Maker of earth and sky;  
Thy hands have set the heavens with stars, Thy fingers spread the mountains and plains. Lo, at  
Thy word the waters were formed; Deep seas obey Thy voice.

A special thank you to Randy Benton and the Le Mars Community 5th/6th Grade Band for commissioning this work. After thirty eight years of teaching, Mr. Benton premiered this work in April of 2022 on his very last concert!

## ***Mission Songs Performance Notes***

The first two measures are meant to sound like bells used in the missions to signal gathering for different events throughout the day such as mass, meals, etc. Any brass bell or toy bells from home will work for this! Please visit my website to see a picture of the bells I used (which I gathered from my mom's Christmas decorations!) If you have extra percussionists or even wind instrumentalists who have toy or brass bells who'd like to play, the more (balanced) cheerful noise the better!

The agogo bells (or cowbell) part does not need to be performed exactly as written. I have notated a figure for reference. The brass bells and shaker can be played at random.

The two tom-toms parts are meant to be played on four drums, two drums per percussionist. The tom-toms 1 part should have the highest two drums, and the tom-toms 2 part should have the lowest two drums.

The optional Brake Drum/Triangle percussion part was humbly and joyfully written for the commissioner's special education students. It can be included or left out for performance.

As mentioned in the program notes, the *Alabado* melody is first presented monophonically by four different instrument groups to honor the tradition of how it was often sung by four groups separated into men, women, boys, and girls. I have provided cue notes if you'd like to include the other instruments!

Please conduct freely beginning at m.19 to enhance the cadences and musical material! I envision something like a chorale through this section.

At m.32 it is my suggestion that the percussion section hum the next tune (*Lac qui Parle*) during the fermata on beat 4. I found it helpful to have them do this so that they can easily find the tempo when they begin at m.33.

I provided generous cueing through m.37-48 if you would like to build the section with more instruments. Please feel free to make it work for your band and situation!

For a rehearsal exercise, have the students learn to identify the two tunes. To introduce the *Alabado*, have the Flute and Trumpet 1 play m.19-21 and the Clarinet and Tenor Saxophone play m.22-23 (the vibes can play throughout). Then, have the Trumpet 1 play m.26-28 and the Clarinet join and play m.29-32. To introduce *Lac qui Parle*, have everyone play m.37-48. Finally, see if the students can detect which tune is being played beginning at m.53. This section will give the opportunity to introduce the concept of "synthesis" (the combination of ideas).

## Composer Bio

Haley Woodrow (b. 1984) is a North Texas based composer, educator, trumpeter and pianist. Her music reflects a broad range of influences and genres, and aims to successfully combine styles as a primary objective.

Haley's Concert Band compositions have received awards and recognition from the American Bandmasters/Sousa/Ostwald composition contest, the National Band Association, the Texas Music Educators Association, and the VLAMO International Composition Contest. 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. Her music has been widely performed throughout the US, Canada, Europe, Asia, and Australia.

Haley has received numerous commissions, including from the Florida Bandmasters Association, the Kenosha Community Foundation, the Young Band March Project, and from many individual programs and performers. In 2020, Haley partnered with Minnesota-based Director Charles Weise to create a consortium for adaptable band works in response to COVID-19. This project attracted 125 programs across the US.

Haley currently teaches piano at the King's University and composition at Tarrant County College, and holds a Master's of Music in Composition from Texas Christian University, where she studied with Dr. Blaise Ferrandino, and a Bachelor of Music from the University of Texas at Arlington. From 2019-2021, Haley and her husband, Jonathan Woodrow, served in a volunteer capacity as lieutenants and co-directors of the Texas State Guard Band. Haley and Jonathan have one daughter, Avery, are avid CrossFitters, and attend Gateway Church of Southlake.

Visit [haleywoodrow.com](http://haleywoodrow.com)

