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# **Ascent of an Ancient Empire**

for Young Band

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J. Aaron Stanley



# Ascent of an Ancient Empire

for Young Band

by J. Aaron Stanley

Composed 2020  
Duration: c. 2.5m  
Grade c. 1.5

## Included Parts:

Flute 1  
Flute 2  
Oboe (opt.)  
Clarinet in B $\flat$  1  
Clarinet in B $\flat$  2  
Bass Clarinet in B $\flat$  (opt.)  
Bassoon (opt.)  
Alto Saxophone 1  
Alto Saxophone 2  
Tenor Saxophone  
Baritone Saxophone (opt.)  
  
Trumpet in B $\flat$  1  
Trumpet in B $\flat$  2  
Horn in F  
Trombone  
Baritone T.C. & B.C. (opt.)  
Tuba  
  
Glockenspiel  
Timpani  
Crash Cymbal  
Suspended Cymbal  
Tam-tam  
Snare Drum  
Bass Drum

## Instrumentation Notes:

This work contrasts the brass with the woodwinds, and the highs against the lows. Ideally, there will be both lows and highs of *both* brass and winds, but cues are provided in the event there is a shortage of one versus the other.

Oboe is doubled in other instruments, and can be considered optional.

Bass Clarinet, Bassoon, and Baritone Saxophone each play the same part, and are cued (or doubled) in the low brass should they be lacking.

Trombone and Baritone play the same part, but are cued in the low woodwinds, or doubled in other parts, should *they* be lacking.

Horn is 100% doubled in the Tenor Saxophone part for strength and security.

## About the work:

*Ascent of an Ancient Empire* came right on the heels of my previous piece for young band, *Deep Space Voyage*. In that piece, I used quartal harmonies in the march section to depict the coldness of space. Here, I wanted to write a follow-up piece that used quartal harmonies much more extensively as an alternative to the abundance of plain vanilla tonal works for young band.

To many of us, quartal harmonies (particularly parallel 4ths and 5ths) sound older and more ancient—and indeed early polyphonic music often considered 3rds to be dissonant compared to the “perfect” fourths and fifths. But perhaps we can also attribute that association to film composers who have often used stark quartal harmonies to evoke a more ancient sentiment. Oddly enough, quartal harmonies can sound fresh, modern, and sophisticated at the same time, which is an interesting paradox.

Like in *Deep Space Voyage*, I used mental imagery to help inspire the musical ideas and give it a cinematic feel, but the piece isn't programmatic. Instead, I encourage students to create their own imagery and story lines as their own personal reaction to the music.

My hope is that students will find *Ascent of an Ancient Empire* a fun and exciting piece that ignites their imagination, and inspires them to rise to the challenge of performing it successfully.

## Notes to the conductor.

Dynamic contrast will be important to successfully performing this piece, making it a good selection to teach that concept. There is also a bit more independence than is typical in Grade 1 music, which should be a fun challenge for your students, without it being too difficult.

The piece begins with a big fanfare at *forte* that pits the woodwinds against the brass and evokes the pomp and ceremony of an ancient emperor. It then moves into a stately procession at bar 10, which should come all the way down to *piano*.

Another fanfare—back to *forte*—transitions us to a new tonal area by bar 27, where another processional melody is introduced. The dynamic here should be slightly higher than the previous procession.

The big opening fanfare then returns at bar 40, and this time the *forte* is sustained as the two previous melodies are combined into one grand procession. The Coda, beginning at bar 62, can even be a notch louder, so students may be instructed to “save it” for the ending.

## Practical learning objectives:

- Dynamic contrast with crescendos / decrescendos (*p* to *f*)
- Articulations: normal attack, accent, and slur
- Rhythms: up to 8th notes in winds, 16th notes and rolls in snare drum
- Phrasing and good tone production
- Gaining confidence with more independent parts
- Stretching the ear with quartal harmonies and some chromaticism rather than purely standard tonal harmonies.
- Non-musical tie-ins: ancient history, civilizations, and warfare; state parades and processions; etc.

# Ascent of an Ancient Empire

J. Aaron Stanley (b. 1975)

**Stately** ♩ = c. 108

Flute 1/2

Oboe

B♭ Clarinet 1/2

Bass Clarinet/  
Bassoon

Alto Saxophone 1/2

Tenor Saxophone

Baritone Saxophone

B♭ Trumpet 1/2

F Horn

Trombone/  
Baritone

Tuba

Glockenspiel

Timpani

Crash Cymbal  
Suspended Cymbal

Tam-tam

Snare Drum  
Bass Drum

Play *only* if directed:

Play:

Play cue *only* if directed.

Tuning: 28": G | 25": C

1.v.

Ascent of an Ancient Empire

10

This musical score is for the piece "Ascent of an Ancient Empire" and is page 2 of the score. It features a variety of instruments including woodwinds, brass, and percussion. The score is written in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature. The woodwind section includes Flute 1 and 2, Oboe, Clarinet 1 and 2, Bass Clarinet/Bassoon, Alto Saxophone 1 and 2, Tenor Saxophone, and Baritone Saxophone. The brass section includes Trumpet 1 and 2, Horn, Trombone/Baritone, and Tuba. The percussion section includes Glockenspiel, Timpani, Cymbals (Cr. Cym. and Sus. Cym.), and Tom-toms (T.-t.). The string section (S.D. and B.D.) is also present. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f* (forte), *p* (piano), and *sfz* (sforzando). A rehearsal mark "10" is located at the top of the page. The woodwinds and strings play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, while the brass and percussion provide harmonic support and accents.



Ascent of an Ancient Empire

17

Fl. 1  
2

Ob.

Cl. 1  
2

B. Cl.  
Bsn.

A. Sax. 1  
2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Tpt. 1  
2

Hn.

Tbn./  
Bar.

Tba.

Glock.

Timp.

Cr. Cym.  
Sus. Cym.

T.-t.

S.D.  
B.D.

2 players only

*mp*



ri . tar . dan . do .

This page of the musical score, numbered 22, features a variety of instruments. The woodwind section includes Flutes 1 and 2, Oboe, Clarinets 1 and 2, Bass Clarinet/Bassoon, Alto Saxophone 1 and 2, Tenor Saxophone, and Baritone Saxophone. The brass section consists of Trumpets 1 and 2, Horns, Trombone/Baritone, and Tuba. Percussion includes Glockenspiel, Timpani, Cymbals (Cr. and Sus.), Triangle, and Snare/Drum (S.D./B.D.). The score is written in a key signature of two flats and a common time signature. It begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes a *tutti* (all) instruction. The vocal line at the top right indicates the lyrics "ri . tar . dan . do .". The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines, with various musical notations such as notes, rests, and articulation marks.

**27 a tempo**

Fl. 1 2 *mp*

Ob. *mp*

Cl. 1 2 *mp*

B. Cl. Bsn. *mp*

A. Sax. 1 2 *mp*

T. Sax. *mp*

Bar. Sax. *mp*

Tpt. 1 2 *mp* Play only if directed:

Hn. *mp*

Tbn./ Bar. *mp*

Tba. *mp*

Glock. *mp*

Timp. *mp*

Cr. Cym. Sus. Cym.

T.-t. *mf*

S.D. B.D. *mp*

33

Fl. 1  
2

Ob.

Cl. 1  
2

B. Cl.  
Bsn.

A. Sax. 1  
2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Tpt. 1  
2

Hn.

Tbn./  
Bar.

Tba.

Glock.

Timp.

Cr. Cym.  
Sus. Cym.

T.-t.

S.D.  
B.D.

Ascent of an Ancient Empire

39

This musical score is for the piece "Ascent of an Ancient Empire" and is marked with the number 39 in a box. It is arranged for a large ensemble and includes the following parts:

- Flutes:** Fl. 1 and 2
- Woodwinds:** Ob. (Oboe), Cl. 1 and 2 (Clarinets), B. Cl. Bsn. (Bassoon), A. Sax. 1 and 2 (Alto Saxophones), T. Sax. (Tenor Saxophone), Bar. Sax. (Baritone Saxophone)
- Brass:** Tpt. 1 and 2 (Trumpets), Hn. (Horn), Tbn./Bar. (Tuba/Euphonium), Tba. (Tuba)
- Percussion:** Glock. (Glockenspiel), Timp. (Timpani), Cr. Cym. (Crash Cymbal), Sus. Cym. (Suspended Cymbal), T.-t. (Tamtam), S.D. (Snare Drum), B.D. (Bass Drum)

The score is written in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature (C). It features various dynamics such as *f* (forte) and *sfz* (sforzando), and includes performance instructions like "Play only if directed:" and "Play:". The notation includes notes, rests, and articulation marks such as accents and slurs.

This page of the musical score, titled "Ascent of an Ancient Empire", covers measures 45 through 48. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with multiple staves for woodwinds, brass, and percussion. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats), and the time signature is 4/4. The woodwind section includes Flute 1 and 2, Oboe, Clarinet 1 and 2, Bass Clarinet/Bassoon, Alto Saxophone 1 and 2, Tenor Saxophone, and Baritone Saxophone. The brass section includes Trumpet 1 and 2, Horn, Trombone/Baritone, and Tuba. The percussion section includes Glockenspiel, Timpani, Cymbals (Crash and Suspended), and Tom-toms. The strings are represented by the S.D. (Second Violin) and B.D. (Second Viola) staves. The score features various musical notations such as dynamics (mf, f), articulation (accents), and phrasing slurs. A boxed measure number "48" is located at the top right of the page.

49

Fl. 1  
2

Ob.

Cl. 1  
2

B. Cl.  
Bsn.

A. Sax. 1  
2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Tpt. 1  
2

Hn.

Tbn./  
Bar.

Tba.

Glock.

Timp.

Cr. Cym.  
Sus. Cym.

T.-t.

S.D.  
B.D.

*f*

*mf*

54

Fl. 1  
2

Ob.

Cl. 1  
2

B. Cl.  
Bsn.

A. Sax. 1  
2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Tpt. 1  
2

Hn.

Tbn./  
Bar.

Tba.

Glock.

Timp.

Cr. Cym.  
Sus. Cym.

T.-t.

S.D.  
B.D.

Detailed description of the musical score: This page contains measures 54 through 58 of the piece 'Ascent of an Ancient Empire'. The score is written for a large orchestra. The woodwind section includes Flute 1 and 2, Oboe, Clarinet 1 and 2, Bass Clarinet/Bassoon, Alto Saxophone 1 and 2, Tenor Saxophone, and Baritone Saxophone. The brass section includes Trumpet 1 and 2, Horn, Trombone/Baritone, and Tuba. The percussion section includes Glockenspiel, Timpani, Cymbals (Crash and Suspended), Triangle, and Snare/Drum. The key signature is three flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor), and the time signature is 4/4. The score features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The woodwinds and strings play melodic lines, while the brass and percussion provide harmonic support and rhythmic drive.

61

59

Fl. 1  
2

Ob.

Cl. 1  
2

B. Cl.  
Bsn.

A. Sax. 1  
2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Tpt. 1  
2

Hn.

Tbn./  
Bar.

Tba.

Glock.

Timp.

Cr. Cym.  
Sus. Cym.

T.-t.

S.D.  
B.D.



64

Fl. 1  
2

Ob.

Cl. 1  
2

B. Cl.  
Bsn.

A. Sax. 1  
2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Tpt. 1  
2

Hn.

Tbn./  
Bar.

Tba.

Glock.

Timp.

Cr. Cym.  
Sus. Cym.

T.-t.

S.D.  
B.D.

l.v.