
Isabella Rhapsody

for Wind Ensemble or Symphonic Band

J. Aaron Stanley

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by J. Aaron Stanley

Opus 4b, 2019 (rev. 2021)
Duration: c. 5m
Grade 4-5

Instrumentation:

Piccolo
2 Flutes
2 Oboes
3 Clarinets in B \flat
Bass Clarinet in B \flat
2 Bassoons
Contrabassoon (optional)
2 Alto Saxophones
Tenor Saxophone
Baritone Saxophone

4 Trumpets in B \flat
4 Horns in F
2 Trombones
Bass Trombone
Euphonium
2 Tubas

Timpani
4 Percussionists (see right)

Percussion 1:
Tubular Bells
Vibraphone
Glockenspiel

Percussion 2:
Glockenspiel (may use Perc. 1 station)
Crotales
Tambourine
Wind Machine (or friction on a Concert Bass Drum)

Percussion 3:
High-sounding Suspended Cymbal
Low-sounding Suspended Cymbal
Sleigh Bells
Concert Bass Drum (or Field Bass Drum)

Percussion 4: Drum Set
Kick Drum
3 Tom-toms (High, Medium, Low)
Snare Drum
Hi-hat
Ride Cymbal
Crash Cymbal

Performance Notes:

As with all of my "band" works, my approach to orchestration was as if it were 1-to-a-part. With the understanding that bands vary in instrumentation, I leave it to the conductor to solve any balance issues that may arise, which may involve reducing some sections (like 31-48, 74-91, and 91-126) to 1-to-a-part, with full tutti for the rest of the piece.

It is understood that not all bands have access to a Contrabassoon, so while it is desirable, the piece will work just fine without it.

Each Percussionist has their own setup, but if there is not a second Glockenspiel, the 2nd Percussionist has plenty of time to assist the 1st with Glockenspiel, and get back to their station in time for the next cue. If a Wind Machine is not available, a similar sound may be produced through friction on a Concert Bass Drum using wire brushes, or another hard item that doesn't damage the drum head. Experimentation may reveal a better solution, but wire brushes should work fine in a pinch.

In Percussion 3, the Bass Drum will be played on its side using wooden (or hard) mallets near the edge, which will create a "boomy" resonance. If the Concert Bass Drum proves too over-the-top boomy, a smaller Field Bass Drum may be a better solution. I leave this to the Conductor's or Percussionist's discretion.

If the Drum Set is too loud, which can happen with all but the most disciplined players, have the performer use the lightest sticks possible, place the set on a carpet, and have them practice pianissimo playing. You might even erect a plexiglass screen around the drums like many churches do. If any egos are in danger of being bruised, remind them they can "cut loose" in bars 177-180 during the final climax!

Program Notes:

Isabella Rhapsody is among several Christmas-inspired works I wrote as a young composer/arranger in my mid-20s. I was attracted to Christmas melodies in part due to nostalgia, but mostly because their familiarity offered an opportunity to create something unlike the thousands of typical, predictable Christmas arrangements we've all heard a million times. With expectations firmly set by so many plain vanilla arrangements, it can be a joy to defy those expectations and create interesting surprises. It was good training for a young composer.

Isabella Rhapsody is among the more adventurous of the set (which also includes *Carol of the Bells*, *Greensleeves*, *Three Kings Fantasy*, and *Variations on Noel Nouvellet*). Although it is clearly based on "Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella," I didn't feel entirely beholden to the original melody and structure of the song. I chose to riff freely on melodic fragments of the melody, creating a series of episodes, each wildly different from the rest.

The piece opens with an energetic fanfare that leads quickly into the cheerful and somewhat schizophrenic first statement. The oft-changing time signature and accompaniment was suggested by the quirkiness of the original melody.

At 31, the melody finally settles into a stable 12/8 time with the horns laying a minimalistic accompaniment using fragments of the melody. The Euphonium, Flugel, and Trombones carry the slightly altered theme. This relative stability lasts only a short while, though, because at 48, the accompaniment shifts into an unstable bitonal pattern originally notated in 15/8 time (following the accompaniment pattern), but was changed in the 2021 revision to 6/8-9/8, settling into 9/8 (following the melody), which makes the section much easier to perform. The melody here is augmented and first played in the low instruments, then passes to the high instruments. Soon afterward, the instability suddenly "decays" into a very stable homophonic chorale feel at bar 65 in a different key. But it, too, is not to last.

Another sudden transition at 74 leads into yet another key with an energetic, bitonal, quasi-waltz feel while fragments of the melody are played by the Trumpets and high woodwinds and answered in the Trombones, while other fragments lay a repetitive, Celtic-like background pattern. Then, at 91, the frenetic energy finally dies down into a contemplative choral-like setting, taking a nod from Erik Satie. This time, the melody is in minor mode, but the melancholic and reflective nature of this setting soon gives way to more festivity with the Celtic-like variation starting at 126. This "new" melody, accompanied by drums, builds over three statements, changing key and adding a countermelody in the third iteration before we finally reach the coda at bar 159. Melodic fragments heighten the tension, which builds to a finale that harkens back to the opening fanfare.

Overall, it's quite a joyride and should be loads of fun for performers and audiences alike.

This work was adapted in 2019 for Band/Wind Ensemble from the original 2003 Brass Band version (which is like adding Technicolor!), then revised and re-engraved in 2021. The revision mostly focused on orchestration and notational changes to make the work more approachable and easier to play.

J. Aaron Stanley, 2021

5 7 ← ♩ = ♩ →

Picc. **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

Fl. 1/2 **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

Ob. 1/2 **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

1 Cl. **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

2/3 Cl. **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

B. Cl. **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

Bsn. 1/2 **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

Cbsn. **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

A. Sax. 1/2 **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

T. Sax. **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

Bar. Sax. **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

1 Tpt. **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

2 Tpt. **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

3/4 Tpt. **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

1/3 Hn. **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

2/4 Hn. **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

Tbn. 1/2 **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

B. Tbn. **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

Euph. **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

Tba. 1/2 **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

Timp. **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

Tub. Bells **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

Tamb. **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

H. Sus. Cym. **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

L. Sus. Cym. **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

Drum. Set **6/8** **4/4** **9/8** **2/2** **9/8**

p *f*

ff *f* *mf*

To Flug. (opt.)

wood

15

Picc. *1. cantabile* *mf*

Fl. 1/2 *1. cantabile* *mf*

Ob. 1/2 *1. cantabile* *mf*

Cl. 1/2/3

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1/2 *cantabile*

Cbsn.

A. Sax. 1/2 *cantabile* *mf*

T. Sax. *cantabile*

Bar. Sax. *mf*

Tpt. 1 *cantabile*

Flug.

Tpt. 3/4

Hn. 1/3/4

Tbn. 1/2

B. Tbn.

Euph. *cantabile*

Tba. 1/2 *cantabile* *mf*

Timp.

Vib.

Tamb. *mf* shake

H. Sus. Cym. / L. Sus. Cym.

Drm. Set *mf* *ad lib. (quasi-waltz)*

20

Picc.

Fl. 1
2

Ob. 1
2

Cl. 1
2
3

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1
2

Cbsn.

A. Sax. 1
2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Tpt. 1

Flug.

Tpt. 3
4

Hn. 1
2
3
4

Tbn. 1
2

B. Tbn.

Euph.

Tba. 1
2

Timp.

Vib.

Tamb.

H. Sus. Cym.
L. Sus. Cym.

Drum. Set

ff

f

mf

wood

To Sl. Bells

28

Picc.

Fl. 1
2

Ob. 1
2

Cl. 1
2
3

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1
2

Cbsn.

A. Sax. 1
2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Tpt. 1

Flug.

Tpt. 3
4

Hn. 1
3
2
4

Tbn. 1
2

B. Tbn.

Euph.

Tba. 1
2

Timp.

Vib.

Tamb.

Sl. Bells

Drm. Set

12
8

9
8

12
8

mf

To Crot.

wire brushes

mf

37

Picc.

Fl. 1
2

Ob. 1
2

1
Cl.
2
3

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1
2

Cbsn.

A. Sax. 1
2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Tpt. 1

Flug.

Tpt. 3
4

1
Hn.
2
3
4

Tbn. 1
2

B. Tbn.

Euph.

Tba. 1
2

Timp.

Vib.

Crot.

Sl. Bells

Drm. Set

mp
mf
light metal

mp

42

Picc.

Fl. 1
2

Ob. 1
2

1
Cl.
2
3

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1
2

Cbsn.

A. Sax. 1
2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Tpt. 1

Flug.

Tpt. 3
4

1
Hn.
2
3
4

Tbn. 1
2

B. Tbn.

Euph.

Tba. 1
2

Timp.

Vib.

Crot.

Sl. Bells

Drum Set

48

46

Picc.

Fl. 1
2

Ob. 1
2

1
Cl.
2
3

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1
2

Cbsn.

A. Sax. 1
2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Tpt. 1

Flug.

Tpt. 3
4

1
Hn.
2
3
4

Tbn. 1
2

B. Tbn.

Euph.

Tba. 1
2

Timp.

Vib.

Crot.

Sl. Bells

Drum. Set

mf

To Tpt.

To Tub. Bells

To Glock.

To Sus. Cyms.

6 9 6

55

Picc. *mf*

Fl. 1 2 *mf*

Ob. 1 2 *mf*

1 Cl.

2 3 Cl.

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1 2

Cbsn.

A. Sax. 1 2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

1 2 Tpt.

3 4 Tpt.

1 3 Hn.

2 4 Hn.

Tbn. 1 2

B. Tbn.

Euph.

Tba. 1 2

Timp.

Tub. Bells

Glock. *mf* Assist Perc. 1 (light metal)

H. Sus. Cym.
L. Sus. Cym.

Drum Set

12 8

9 8

12 8

9 8

59

Picc. *cantabile*

Fl. 1 2 *mf cantabile*

Ob. 1 2 *mf cantabile*

Cl. 1 *mf cantabile*

Cl. 2 3 *mf*

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1 2

Cbsn.

A. Sax. 1 2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Tpt. 1 2 3 4

Hn. 1 3 2 4

Tbn. 1 2 *mf*

B. Tbn.

Euph.

Tba. 1 2

Timp. *mf*

Tub. Bells *f*

Glock.

H. Sus. Cym.
L. Sus. Cym.

Drm. Set

77

Picc.

Fl. 1
2

Ob. 1
2

Cl. 1
2

3

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1
2

Cbsn.

A. Sax. 1
2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Tpt. 1
2

3
4

Hn. 1

2.3
4

Tbn. 1
2

B. Tbn.

Euph.

Tba. 1
2

Timp.

Glock.

Tamb.

H. Sus. Cym.
L. Sus. Cym.

Drm. Set

mf

cantabile

(4)

(8)

82

Picc.

Fl. 1
2

Ob. 1
2

1
2
Cl.

3

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1
2

Cbsn.

A. Sax. 1
2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

1
2
Tpt.

3
4

1
Hn.

2.3
4

Tbn. 1
2

B. Tbn.

Euph.

Tba. 1
2

Timp.

Glock.

Tamb.

H. Sus. Cym.
L. Sus. Cym.

Drum. Set

cantabile

cantabile

cantabile

(12)

(12)

97

Picc.

Fl. 1
2

Ob. 1
2

1
2
Cl.
3

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1
2

Cbsn.

A. Sax. 1
2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

1
2
Tpt.

3
4

1
Hn.
2,3
4

Tbn. 1
2

B. Tbn.

Euph.

Tba. 1
2

Timp.

Glock.

Tamb.

H. Sus. Cym.
L. Sus. Cym.

Drm. Set

(16)

small fill

mf

3
4

3
4

3
4

91 Meditatively ♩ = c. 74

3/4

Picc. *mp*

Fl. 1/2 *mp*

Ob. 1/2

1/2 Cl.

3 Cl.

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1/2

Cbsn.

A. Sax. 1/2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

1/2 Tpt.

3/4 Tpt.

1 Hn. *mp* solo, cantabile

2/3/4 Hn. *mp* *p* solo, cantabile

1/2 Tbn. *mp* *p*

B. Tbn. *mp* *p*

Euph. *mp* *p*

1/2 Tba. *mp* *p*

Timp.

3/4 Glock. *mp*

Tamb. To W. M.

H. Sus. Cym.
L. Sus. Cym.

Drum. Set

102

Picc.

Fl. 1
2

Ob. 1
2

1
2
Cl.

3

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1
2

Cbsn.

A. Sax. 1
2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

1
2
Tpt.

3
4

1
Hn.

3
2

4

1
2
Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Euph.

1
2
Tba.

Timp.

Glock.

W. M.

H. Sus. Cym.
L. Sus. Cym.

Drum. Set

solo, dolce
p < *mp*

solo, cantabile
mp

Wind
p *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

To B. Dr.

126

ri - tar - dan - do **Energico** ♩ = 144

125

Picc. **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Fl. 1 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Fl. 2 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Ob. 1 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Ob. 2 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Cl. 1 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Cl. 2 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Cl. 3 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

B. Cl. **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Bsn. 1 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Bsn. 2 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Cbsn. **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

A. Sax. 1 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

A. Sax. 2 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

T. Sax. **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Bar. Sax. **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Tpt. 1 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Tpt. 2 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Tpt. 3 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Tpt. 4 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Hn. 1 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** *pp*

Hn. 2 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** *pp*

Hn. 3 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** *pp*

Hn. 4 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** *pp*

Tbn. 1 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Tbn. 2 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

B. Tbn. **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Euph. **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Tba. 1 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Tba. 2 **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Timp. **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

Glock. **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4**

W. M. **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** *mf* *pp*

B. Dr. **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** *mp*

Drum. Set **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** **3/4** **4/4** *mp*

hard mallets (near edge)

129

129

Picc.

Fl. 1
2

Ob. 1
2

1
2
Cl.

3

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1
2

Cbsn.

A. Sax. 1
2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

1
2
Tpt.

3
4

1
3
Hn.

2
4

Tbn. 1
2

B. Tbn.

Euph.

Tba. 1
2

Timp.

Glock.

Crot.

B. Dr.

Drum Set

mf

To Crot.

4/4 3/4 4/4 3/4 4/4

151

Picc.

Fl. 1
2

Ob. 1
2

1
2
3
Cl.

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1
2

Cbsn.

A. Sax. 1
2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

1
2
3
Tpt.

1
2
3
4
Hn.

1
2
Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Euph.

Tba. 1
2

Timp.

Glock.

Crot.

B. Dr.

Drum Set

bring out

f

ff

4/4

3/4

155

Picc.

Fl. 1
2

Ob. 1
2

Cl. 1
2
3

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1
2

Cbsn.

A. Sax. 1
2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Tpt. 1
2
3
4

Hn. 1
2
3
4

Tbn. 1
2

B. Tbn.

Euph.

Tba. 1
2

Timp.

Glock.

Crot.

B. Dr.

Drum Set

159

3
4

Picc. 1 2

Fl. 1 2

Ob. 1 2

Cl. 1 2 3

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1 2

Cbsn.

A. Sax. 1 2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Tpt. 1 2 3 4

Hn. 1 2 4

Tbn. 1 2

B. Tbn.

Euph.

Tba. 1 2

Timp.

Glock. *f* brass ball

Crot. *f* brass ball

B. Dr. To Sus. Cyms.

Drum Set (4)

179

Picc.

Fl. 1
2

Ob. 1
2

1
2
3
Cl.

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1
2

Cbsn.

A. Sax. 1
2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

1
2
Tpt.

3
4

1
3
Hn.

2
4

Tbn. 1
2

B. Tbn.

Euph.

Tba. 1
2

Timp.

Tub. Bells

Tamb.

H. Sus. Cym.
L. Sus. Cym.

Drm. Set

3
4

3
4

3
4

ff

ff

ff

damp both Cym.

wood

go crazy!

ff

ff

ff

(4)