



RBC YOUNG BAND SERIES

DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

(Day of the Dead)

By

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ASCAP

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PUBLICATIONS

CONDUCTOR
Band 2

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Extra Score - Band 1 \$7.00
Extra Score - Band 2 \$6.50

Dia de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead)

What is “Dia de Los Muertos”?

It is a fiesta in the graveyard! On November 2, children romp around the tombs and leaning crucifixes, munching tiny sugar skulls as their parents sit near the grave of a departed loved one, eating sweet tamales, pan de los muertos (bread of the dead) and recalling fond memories of the difuntos (deceased). On this day the souls of the dead receive divine permission to visit their living loved ones, who light the way with candles to the altar laden with offerings of food and personal belongings they had been fond of when they still inhabited their bodies. The celebration is based on the common belief that the souls of the dead are able to visit their relatives in this world. In Mexico the people say “There can be no life without death before it, and there can be no death without life before it.”

My ideas for “Dia de Los Muertos” came to me originally after I read a poem in, oddly enough, a Mexican cookbook. It was about a child bringing tortillas and salt to the cemetery for a deceased loved one. After moving to Mexico I had the pleasure of seeing the “ritual” of the “Dia de Los Muertos” first hand. In the small villages the towns people parade to the cemetery with lit candles, tortillas and salt. All the way singing and talking about their departed loved ones. It is a ceremony that is both “dark” and “joyful” – I thought that this could be portrayed in music better than in any other art form.

The concept of the work is to keep a “core” group in a fixed tempo (using Band I) and a “melodic” group with a second conductor (Band II). The “core” of the ensemble would represent the solemn aspect of the ritual – never changing texture with chords “floating” into another. This sets the stage. The “melodic” members of the ensemble enter periodically with bits and pieces of “march like” folksongs – always fading and re-entering. In the “core” group the soprano saxophone represents the “question” of the existence of the departed loved ones. It remains an unanswered question.

The idea is to compose a work for young bands that would use very contemporary language, multi tempi, two conductors and a programmatic theme.

This work is dedicated to the Lake Highlands High School Band (Dallas, Texas), Marion West Conductor and was composed for the bands 2001 Midwest performance.

Performance suggestions:

Band I should always be under Band II in dynamics. They are like a solemn “back drop” that sets the stage. They represent the “dark” side of the “Dia de Los Muertos” and in contrast Band II represents the “light” side. It is preferred that the brass in Band I all be muted, however, understanding the difficulty and cost involved in Euphonium and Tuba mutes it is understandable why a director would choose not to mute those instruments. The Soprano Saxophone is preferred over the optional Trumpet on the solo line. This repeated melody should be very smooth and mysterious. I would suggest that the

percussion section in Band I be placed to the side and even apart from the ensemble. Although the Bowed Crotales are optional they will add an eerie effect that will enhance the over all performance. If no Crotales are available bowed vibraphone may be substituted. Careful attention to the consistency of dynamics in the percussion section is very important. They are meant to be faint and distant sounding.

Band II needs to be “playful” and in total contrast to Band I. The ending of each entrance must totally fade away. Following the instructions as to how and when to ritardando is very important. It will take an effort on the part of the conductor of Band II to get the students to ritardando independently – it is against everything they have been taught, but the effect is intended to sound as if the wind is carrying their “melody” through the cemetery in every direction. Placement of Band II will help in this effect. Band II should be one or two persons per part, more may be needed depending on the strength of the musicians.

I would suggest that Band I and Band II be rehearsed apart for the first several rehearsals.

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DIA DE LOS MUERTOS INSTRUMENTATION

BAND 1

3 - Flute 1
4 - Flute 2/Oboe
3 - Clarinet 1
6 - Clarinet 2/Trumpet 2
3 - Clarinet 3
2 - Bass Clarinet
1 - Contra Alto Clarinet
4 - Bassoon/Euphonium
2 - Soprano Saxophone (opt. Bb Trumpet)
4 - Alto Saxophone
2 - Tenor Saxophone
1 - Baritone Saxophone
3 - Trumpet 1
3 - Trumpet 3
2 - F Horn 1
2 - F Horn 2
3 - Trombone 1
3 - Trombone 2
2 - Euphonium TC
4 - Tuba
1 - Chimes
1 - Gong/Bowed Crotales (opt.)
1 - Vibraphone

BAND 2

5 - Flute
4 - Alto Saxophone
3 - Tenor Saxophone or Bass Clarinet
3 - Trumpet 1
3 - Trumpet 2
3 - F Horn
4 - Trombone
3 - Tuba
2 - Cymbals/Bass Drum
2 - Snare Drum
1 - Marimba

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Poco Rit. with Conductor

Fl.

Alto Sax.

Tenor Sax.
or Bass Clar.

Poco Rit. with Conductor

Trpt. 2

Trpt. 2

Horn

Tbn.

Tba.

Rit. at random

Cym.
B. Dr.

Sn. Dr.

Mar.

14 ♩ = 52-60

Fade Away ---

Fl.

Fade Away ---

Alto Sax.

Fade Away ---

Tenor Sax.
or Bass Clar.

Fade Away ---

Trpt. 2

Fade Away ---

Trpt. 2

Fade Away ---

Horn

Fade Away ---

Tbn.

Fade Away ---

Tba.

Fade Away ---

Cym.
B. Dr.

Fade Away ---

Sn. Dr.

Fade Away ---

Mar.

Sop. Sax Entrance

❄ **Note to Conductor 2: It is not important that they end together, only that they totally fade away.**

Rit. at random

Fade Away ---

Fl.

Fl. *f*

Musical staff for Flute with notes and dynamics.

Rit. at random

Fade Away ---

Alto Sax.

Alto Sax. *f*

Musical staff for Alto Saxophone with notes and dynamics.

Rit. at random

Fade Away ---

Tenor Sax.
or Bass Clar.

Tenor Sax. or Bass Clar. *f*

Musical staff for Tenor Saxophone or Bass Clarinet with notes and dynamics.

Rit. at random

Fade Away ---

Trpt. 2

Trpt. 2 *f*

Musical staff for Trumpet 2 with notes and dynamics.

Rit. at random

Fade Away ---

Trpt. 2

Trpt. 2 *f*

Musical staff for Trumpet 2 with notes and dynamics.

Rit. at random

Fade Away ---

Horn

Horn *f*

Musical staff for Horn with notes and dynamics.

Rit. at random

Fade Away ---

Tbn.

Tbn. *f*

Musical staff for Trombone with notes and dynamics.

Rit. at random

Fade Away ---

Tba.

Tba. *f*

Musical staff for Tuba with notes and dynamics.

Rit. at random

Fade Away ---

Cym.
B. Dr.

Cym. B. Dr. *mf*

Musical staff for Cymbal and Bass Drum with rhythmic notation.

Rit. at random

Fade Away ---

Sn. Dr.

Sn. Dr. *mf*

Musical staff for Snare Drum with rhythmic notation.

Rit. at random

Fade Away ---

Mar.

Mar. *f*

Musical staff for Maracas with notes and dynamics.



23 ♩ = 52-60

29 ♩ = 100

Rit. with Conductor

Fl. Sop. Sax Entrance *f*

Rit. with Conductor

Alto Sax. *f*

Rit. with Conductor

Tenor Sax. or Bass Clar. *f*

Rit. with Conductor

Trpt. 2 *f*

Rit. with Conductor

Trpt. 2 *f*

Rit. with Conductor

Horn *f*

Rit. with Conductor

Tbn. *f*

Rit. with Conductor

Tba. *f*

Rit. with Conductor

Cym. B. Dr. *mf*

Rit. with Conductor

Sn. Dr. *mf*

Rit. with Conductor

Mar. *f*

34 ♩=52-60 44 ♩=100

Fl. *Fade Away ---* *Sop. Sax Entrance* *f*

Alto Sax. *Fade Away ---* *f*

Tenor Sax. or Bass Clar. *Fade Away ---*

Trpt. 2 *Fade Away ---* *f*

Trpt. 2 *Fade Away ---* *f*

Horn *Fade Away ---*

Tbn. *Fade Away ---*

Tba. *Fade Away ---*

Cym. B. Dr. *Fade Away ---*

Sn. Dr. *Fade Away ---*

Mar. *Fade Away ---* *f*

50 ♩=52-60 55 ♩=90

Fl.

Alto Sax.

Tenor Sax.
or Bass Clar.

Trpt. 2

Trpt. 2

Horn

Tbn.

Tba.

Cym.
B. Dr.

Sn. Dr.

Mar.

Sop. Sax Entrance

Solo *mf*

Solo *mf*

Molto Rit. at random, Fade Away - - - Release with Cond. 1
(if possible)

Fl.

Rit. these 3 notes with Trpt.

Alto Sax.

Tenor Sax.
or Bass Clar.

Rit. at random, Fade Away - - -

Trpt. 2

Rit. these 3 notes with Flute

Trpt. 2

Horn

Tbn.

Tba.

*** Note to Conductor 2: Conduct the 3 anacruses then allow the Fl. and Trpt. to rit. at random. Fl. should do a greater rit. than Trpt.**

Cym.
B. Dr.

Sn. Dr.

Mar.