

An Analysis of Joel Blahnik's *Good Land (Wau Toma)*

by

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Instrumentation: Flute
Oboe
Bassoon
Bb Clarinet 1 – 3
Eb Alto Clarinet
Bb Bass Clarinet
Eb Alto Saxophone
Bb Tenor Saxophone
Eb Baritone Saxophone

Bb Trumpet 1 – 3
Horn in F
Trombone 1 – 2
Baritone
Tuba

Timpani
Mallet Percussion: Bells, Chimes Temple Block
Percussion I: Snare Drum
Percussion II: Tenor Drum, Bass Drum
Percussion III: Wind Chimes, Gong

Grade: 2 1/2

Duration: 10 Minutes

Harmonic Language: Tonal (Bb Major with limited chromaticism)

Meter: Mixed (7/4, 6/4, 5/4, 4/4, 3/4) (One short section in Mixed Meter)

Texture: Melody and Accompaniment, Homophony, Counterpoint

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Composer Bio:

Joel Blahnik is a native of Wisconsin's Door County, a graduate of Lawrence University Conservatory of Music, and above all, an instrumental music educator in the Wisconsin Public Schools from 1961-1993. During his comprehensive music career he has been a guest clinician/lecturer in over 250 of the state's schools. He has received many local, state, and national awards for his creativity and excellence in teaching during these three decades.

As a composer, his works have been featured at national composer symposiums and international festivals, and appear on state and international music education selected lists. His works have been recorded by state, national and foreign radio and TV. As an author, his writings have appeared in state, national, and international journals.

As a conductor, his student ensembles have distinguished themselves at state convention events including three performances at the celebrated Mid-West International Band and Orchestra Clinic. He has served many years as a clinician for state adjudication workshops, related-arts festivals, music camps, and other music activities from elementary schools to world professional ensembles.

Since 1988, he has been called to a great deal of musical activity in the Czech Republic. This includes guest conducting student, amateur, and professional ensembles, co-founding the Prague Youth Wind Ensemble Festival, Music Director of Summer Music Camps, and networking with Czech musical artists and composers.

The counter melody to his teaching is the water, where he has served over 40 years as a U.S. Coast Guard licensed skipper on the Great Lakes. Since 1975, he has also been the Chambers Island Lighthouse caretaker and historian. He and his wife, Mary Ann, have a family of three children.

Notes:

Good Land is a tone poem created as a commissioned work by the students and director of Parkside Middle School in Wautoma, Wisconsin. The composer was invited to meet with the Eighth Grade Band of Parkside and design a composition that would provide an opportunity to create a unique work together. During this dialogue many ideas were expressed, but the unanimous choice was to celebrate their community, Wautoma, which, in the Menominee Indian language, means “good land”. The original composition was for a three minute work. Yet, as the work began to develop, it came to be the ten minute work represented in this score. The result was a composition which gave a real stature to their program and pride to the community. It was a joint celebration!

Tips from the Composer:

What insights do these symbolic elements within the composition give you?

- 7/4 Meter
- Paraphrase of “Amazing Grace” and “America the Beautiful”
- The major chords in the slow 7/4 sections, unrelated in tonality, yet still having a relationship to each other
- The concert pitch of D – the pitch on which the Earth rotates on its axis which is common to and expressed by all creatures in the air, sea and land
- The opportunity for creative writing either prose or poetry, to be read at the beginning and near the end of the composition
- The sequence of the Prologue, Dance of Creation, Chant, Celebration Dance and Epilogue movements

Form:

Prologue	ms. 1 – 11	7/4	
Dance of Creation	ms. 12 – 37	7/4	Dance of Creation and “Amazing Grace”
Chant	ms. 38 – 50	Mixed Meter	
Celebration Dance	ms. 51 – 127	4/4	Celebration Dance and “America the Beautiful”
Epilogue	ms. 128 – 148	Mixed Meter	

“Dance of Creation” Theme (Bassoon, ms. 12 – 13):

solo
mf

Musical notation for Bassoon, measures 12-13. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef. It features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, some beamed together. The dynamic marking *mf* is placed below the staff. The word *solo* is written above the staff.

“Chant” Theme (Bb Clarinet I, ms. 38 – 43):

solo cue - legato
mp
play
p
f

Musical notation for Bb Clarinet I, measures 38-43. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef. It starts with a melodic line marked *mp* and *solo cue - legato*. The line continues with a series of notes marked *p* and *play*, and ends with a note marked *f*. The notation includes various note values and rests.

“Celebration Dance” Theme (Bb Trumpet I, ms. 53 – 60):

f
f

Musical notation for Bb Trumpet I, measures 53-60. The notation is on two staves with a treble clef. It features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests, marked with a strong *f* dynamic. The notation includes various note values and rests.

Tpt. 1
Tpts. 2/3

Musical notation for Tpt. 1 and Tpts. 2/3, measures 53-60. The notation is on two staves with a treble clef. It features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests, marked with a strong *f* dynamic. The notation includes various note values and rests.

America the Beautiful

**Words by Katharine Lee Bates,
Melody by Samuel Ward**

O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet
Whose stern impassioned stress
A thoroughfare of freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for heroes proved
In liberating strife.
Who more than self their country loved
And mercy more than life!
America! America!
May God thy gold refine
Till all success be nobleness
And every gain divine!

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for halcyon skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the enameled plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till souls wax fair as earth and air
And music-hearted sea!

O beautiful for pilgrims feet,
Whose stern impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till paths be wrought through

wilds of thought
By pilgrim foot and knee!

O beautiful for glory-tale
Of liberating strife
When once and twice,
for man's avail
Men lavished precious life!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till selfish gain no longer stain
The banner of the free!

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till nobler men keep once again
Thy whiter jubilee!

The Words or Lyrics To Amazing Grace:

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That sav'd a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears reliev'd;
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believ'd!

Thro' many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promis'd good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease;
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God, who call'd me here below,
Will be forever mine.²

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¹ <http://www.scoutsongs.com/lyrics/americatebeautiful.html> (accessed 4/15/08).

² <http://www.musicedmagic.com/music/amazing-grace--free-sheet-music.html>

America The Beautiful

Oh Beau - ti-ful for spa -cious skys for am-ber waves of grain. For pur - ple moun-tains

6
ma - jes-ties a bove the fru-ted plain! A - mer - i-ca A - mer - i-ca God shed his grace on

12
thee and crown thy good with bro - ther-hood from sea to shi-ning sea!

The musical score is written on three staves in G major (one flat) and 4/4 time. The first staff contains the first line of music, the second staff starts at measure 6, and the third staff starts at measure 12. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the third staff.

Amazing Grace

Voice

Arr. Criswell



A - ma - z-ing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! me! I



on - ce was lost but no - w am found was blind but now I see! _____