

An Analysis of John Harmon's *Heroic Overture*

By

Amy Dunker

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Instrumentation: Standard Concert Band

Duration: 3 ½ Minutes

Grade: 4

Harmonic Language: Tonal (Bb Major with Chromaticism)

Composition Date: 2002

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Commission Statement: Commissioned by the Hart High School Band in Hart,
Michigan – John Taranko, Conductor

Composer Bio:

John C. Harmon

(b.1935)

Composer / Pianist / Jazz Collaborator / Educator

John Harmon's distinguished career as a composer has been both exciting and varied. Few composers have explored as many musical directions with such passion as Mr. Harmon. His compositions cover a broad spectrum of styles and performing media—songs, jazz, chamber music, orchestra, band, chorus, sacred music, solo piano and children's music. The titles and content of many Harmon compositions reflect deep interest in environmental issues and Native American folklore. His music is immediately compelling to listeners with its richness, charm, grace and wonderful joy.

Mr. Harmon is a superb teacher and, as a resident composer/commissioned artist for children's choir festivals in both elementary and secondary schools, he has inspired and invited creativity in the process of creating a new work for them. From such experiences of working with the school children come the songs which delight, uplift and deeply touch the inner world of the child in each of us. *Simple Things* and *Child of Love* are some of these gems. Everyone is able to identify with their message, meaning, and spirit.

A master keyboardist, performer and composer, John Harmon developed the foundation for his music composition at Lawrence University Conservatory of Music from which he graduated in 1957. He received his master's degree in composition at the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1968, where he studied with Belgian composer Henri Pousseur. After several years of performing as a jazz pianist in Europe and New York City, he returned to Lawrence University in 1971 and became the founding director of 'Jazz Studies'. From 1971-1980, he toured and recorded with the critically acclaimed contemporary nonet "Matrix". He has come to be known as Wisconsin's "gentle poet of jazz."

Since 1981, John has been composer-in-residence in more than ten Wisconsin school districts, and at many colleges and universities throughout the United States. This program has been supported by the Wisconsin Arts Board "Art in Education" program. Concert band, wind ensemble and chamber music compositions have been created as a result of these endeavors.

Other Concert Band Works by John Harmon:

A Father's Dream (Trumpet Solo) (Grade 3/Trumpet Grade 6) AP – 636

I Am the Glad Earth (Grade 3) AP – 621

Peace is the River Gently Flowing (Grade 5) AP – 637

Trilogy for Trumpet and Wind Ensemble (Grade 4 -5/Trumpet Grade 6) AP - 620

Time Signature: 4/4

Score Markings: Majestically – Maestoso
With Tenderness, A Shade Slower – Meno mosso
Majestically – Maestoso

Form:

Introduction	ms. 1 – 3		Bb Major
A	ms. 4 - 31	Themes 1 and 2	Bb Major
B	ms. 32 – 49	Development of Theme 2	(Explores Key Areas)
A'	ms. 50 - 63	Theme 1	Bb Major

Theme 1 (Trumpet I, ms. 4 – 7):



Theme 2 (Alto Saxophone I, ms. 11 - 15):



Dr. Amy Dunker is an Associate Professor of Music at Clarke College in Dubuque, IA, USA where she teaches composition, theory, aural skills, trumpet and directs the new music ensemble.

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