

An Analysis of Josef Suk's Towards a New Life

by

Dr. Amy Dunker

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Transcription: Ronald E. Stilwell

Instrumentation:

- Piccolo
- Flute 1 – 2
- Oboe 1 – 2
- English Horn
- Bassoon 1 – 2
- E♭ Clarinet
- B♭ Clarinet 1 – 3
- B♭ Bass Clarinet
- E♭ Contra Alto Clarinet
- E♭ Alto Saxophone 1 - 3
- B♭ Tenor Saxophone
- E♭ Baritone Saxophone

- B♭ Trumpet 1 – 3
- Horn in F 1 - 4
- Trombone 1 – 3
- Euphonium
- Tuba

- String Bass

- Timpani
- Percussion 1: Snare Drum, Field Drum, Bass Drum
- Percussion 2: Cymbals (Crash and Suspended), Triangle

Duration: 6 Minutes

Grade: 5

Harmonic Language: Tonal (B♭ Major, E♭ Major)

Meter: 4/4 2/4

Texture: Melody and Accompaniment, Imitation, Counterpoint

Date of Composition: 1919, Trans. 1991

Genre: March

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Dedication Statement: Dedicated to the Symphonic Band of St. Louis Community College at Meramec, Kirkwood, Missouri

Composer Bio:

JOSEF SUK (1874—1935), outstanding Czech composer and son-in-law of Antonin Dvorak, was for four decades the second violinist with the Czech Quartet and, later, was a professor of composition and rector of the State Conservatoire in Prague. Foremost among his compositions are his orchestral works which include this well-known and beloved festive march of the Sokol. The Sokol is a society founded in Prague which emphasizes mass calisthenics as a means of promoting communal spirit and physical fitness. Sokol festivals, or Slets, have been held at periodic intervals since 1882. Of these, the largest was the seventh in 1920 when over 500,000 people attended.

Transcriber Bio:

RONALD E. STILWELL is Professor Emeritus of Music at St. Louis Community College at Meramec, located in Kirkwood, Missouri, after having served on the music faculty at that institution for thirty-five years. He was the founder and conductor of the Meramec Symphonic Band to which this transcription is dedicated. The original transcription, completed in 1991, was subsequently performed by the Meramec Symphonic Band in 1992 and in 2000 under Dr. Stilwell's direction. The present revision was completed in 2005 for performance by the Webster Groves (Missouri) High School Band during its concert tour of the Czech Republic in March, 2005.

Program Notes:

“Towards A New Life” was first sketched in 1919 as a patriotic march dedicated to the young Czechoslovakian Army fighting to protect the endangered southern district of Slovakia. That same year Suk entered his work, then titled only “New Life”, in a competition to select a festive march for the upcoming Slet. After being chosen the winner the march was scored by the composer for orchestra and for brass band with the first performance taking place in 1920 when the men marched on to the drilling grounds at the festival. It has since become an indispensable part of the impressive entry of the participants at every succeeding Sokol festival. Suk’s festive march received further recognition by winning first prize in 1932 in a musical competition held during the Olympic Games in Los Angeles, and when, during World War II, the fanfare opened the radio broadcasts produced by the exiled Czech government in England.

Form:

Fanfare	ms. 1 – 29	Trumpet Trio/Percussion 1
Transition	ms. 30 -33	Percussion 1 – 2
A	ms. 34 – 49	Full Ensemble
B	ms. 50 – 72	Full Ensemble
A’	ms. 73 - 89	Full Ensemble
	<i>(Repeat ms. 50 – 84)</i>	
Transition	ms. 90 – 91	Timpani/Percussion 1
C	ms. 92 – 113	Full Ensemble
C’	ms. 114 – 135	Full Ensemble
	<i>(D. S. to ms. 34 – 86)</i>	
Coda	ms. 136 – 163	Full Ensemble
Optional Ending	ms. 164	Full Ensemble

Fanfare Theme (Bb Trumpet I, ms. 1 – 8):

1 per part
molto marc.

Trumpet I (1st, 3rd)



B Tpt. 1



Theme 1 (Bb Clarinet I, ms. 34 – 49):



Cl. I



Cl. I



Theme 2:

Phrase 1 (Bb Clarinet I, ms. 52 – 59):

marc.



Cl. I



Phrase 2 (Bb Trumpet I, ms. 61 – 72):

B Tpt. 1 *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

B Tpt. 1 *mf* *mp*

Theme 3 (Bb Trumpet I, ms. 92 – 99):

2 only *espressivo* *mf* *mf*

B Tpt. 1 *mf*

Theme 4:

Phrase 1 (Euphonium, ms. 92 – 99):

1 only *espressivo* *mf*

Euph. *f* *mf*

Phrase 2 (Bb Clarinet I, ms. 100 – 106):

The image shows a musical score for Bb Clarinet I, Phrase 2 (ms. 100-106). It consists of two staves. The first staff is labeled 'tutti' and 'f' (forte). The second staff is labeled 'Cl. 1' and '2 only' (second clarinet only), with a 'f' dynamic marking. The music is in 2/4 time and features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including slurs and accents.

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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