

Of Shining Worlds

Arranged by Larry Norred

Program Notes

This composition has a very dramatic and interesting history. The text of this hymn “God of Our Fathers Whose Almighty Hand,” was written by Daniel C. Roberts (Rector of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Brandon, Vermont) in 1876 in celebration of the first Centennial Fourth of July observance commemorating the adoption of our U.S. Constitution. This hymn text was chosen as the official hymn for that event.

It was originally sung to the tune, known at that time, as “Russian Hymn”. After the premier, it was decided that a new original tune was needed and George Warren (organist of the St. Thomas Episcopal Church in New York City) was commissioned to write it.

The hymn was written in 1888 and was published under the title of “National Hymn,” in 1894 in the official Episcopal Hymnal, and Robert’s text has been used solely with that music since that time.

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Performance Suggestions

The piece opens with a sonorous modal statement of the primary theme. The theme is then harmonized with quartal harmonic structures. The high Woodwinds and Percussion articulate the driving opening eighth note ostinato led by the Mallet Percussion players. As the introduction unfolds for the listener, the stage is set for the main statement of the majestic George Warren hymn tune melody.

The A section includes a more traditional harmonization . The treatment begins with a herald trumpet call at measure 15. It is followed by a presentation, in a majestic march style, with the melody stated by the Low Brass first, and then it is answered by the Woodwinds and Trumpets.

The B section is based on a hymn tune variation presented in a simple contrapuntal treatment 16 measures in length. It layers 4 contrasting themes which weave from a simple single line statement into a more complex texture as it progresses through the development. Make sure students respect each others' parts and listen for the multiple melodic statements as they are revealed during this section.

The final section, at measure 59, completes the form with a re-statement of the original fanfare motive. The composition concludes with the driving eighth note pattern used in the opening, which brings the listener's ear back to the original themes of the piece. The mallet percussion part sets the musical mood, so make sure that the band understands the role of the percussion in creating the right atmosphere for this historic George Warren composition.



Larry Norred is a professional keyboardist, composer, arranger and former Vice-President of Production for Jenson Publications in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He has over 300 published arrangements for jazz ensemble, concert band, choral ensemble and marching band in distribution throughout the United States, Canada, the Far East and Europe.

While at Jenson in the early 1980's he designed the first totally integrated publishing software in use in a major music publisher. The system and the people who ran it, made possible the print production of over 2500 publications annually for Jenson Publications.

Larry's commercial jazz improvisation software, **Changes** is available on the world wide web <http://www.changes98.com> and is currently in use in scores of Jr. High, High School and College jazz programs all over the world.

He is an owner and managing editor for Jon Ross Music, LLC. This site is a direct result of his publishing experiences with 6 different major world-wide music publishing firms. He is one of the first graduates of Alfred Reed's Music Merchandising program at the University of Miami. Throughout his professional career he has been the editor for composers from Sammy Nestico to John Higgins and has been privileged to work with some of the best writers in the world.