

# Commissioned by and Dedicated to the Homewood (AL) Middle School Symphonic Band, Chris D. Cooper, Director

# The Sleeping Place of the Stars

**RALPH FORD** 

### **INSTRUMENTATION**

- 1 Conductor
- 8 C Flute
- 2 Oboe
- 4 1st B♭ Clarinet
- 4 2nd B Clarinet
- 2 B Bass Clarinet
- 2 Bassoon
- 5 El Alto Saxophone
- 2 By Tenor Saxophone
- 2 E Baritone Saxophone
- 4 1st B<sup>1</sup>, Trumpet
- 4 2nd B<sub>b</sub> Trumpet
- 4 Horn in F
- 4 Trombone
- 2 Baritone
- 2 Baritone Treble Clef

- 4 Tuba
- 3 Mallet Percussion I
  (Bells, Optional Vibraphone,
  Optional Chimes)
- 2 Mallet Percussion II (Xylophone, Matimba)
- 1 Timpani (Tune: D, G, D)
- 2 Percussion I (Snare Drum, Bass Drum)
- 2 Percussion II
  - (Crash Cymbals, Suspended Cymbal)
- 4 Percussion III
  - (Wind Chimes, Triangle, Congas, Sleigh Bells)
- 3 Percussion IV
  - (Cabasa or Assorted Shakers, Claves)
- 4 Percussion V
  - (Four Auxiliary Percussions Stations, Large Tom, Beaded Gourd, Rainstick)

### **WORLD PARTS**

- 4 Horn in E
- 3 Trombone in B♭ Bass Clef
- 3 Trombone in Bb Treble Clef
- Baritone in B<sub>b</sub> Bass Clef
- 7 Tuba in E♭ Bass Clef
- Tuba in E♭Treble Clef
- 2 Tuba in B<sub>b</sub> Bass Clef
- 2 Tuba in B, Treble Clef





### **PROGRAM NOTES**

By Homewood Middle School Enrichment Teacher, Mrs. Karen Narro, and Students Michelle Everson, Meredith Wildes, and Katie Frierson

"The Sleeping Place of the Stars," a work commissioned by the Homewood Middle School Band, Homewood, Alabama, Director Chris Cooper, draws its inspiration from a poem written by Ethel Armes. Sitting on her balcony that overlooked the valley, she "made a great discovery." In the poem, Armes writes: "I have found the sleeping place of the stars. It is in Shades Valley . . . down, way down into the depths of green eternal." This piece of music tells the story of this place, a valley once so thick with forest that the Native Americans dared not enter, a valley snuggled in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountain Range in Homewood, Alabama. Once considered sacred to the Indians, the mountains that rose over Shades Valley stood tall and foreboding and remained uninhabited by Indians who traveled along the summit of what they called Red Mountain. By the early 1800s, Indians and white men alike called the valley "Shades." Although various stories have been offered over the years to explain the name "Shades Valley," none is so intriguing as the one told through this piece by the students of Homewood.

Dangers lurked within the valley; therefore, Indians who only on occasion slipped into the forest never encountered the white man until Congress added that area to the Mississippi Territory in 1802. The threatening and portentous forest remained silent and undisturbed for centuries behind deep shadows of sheltered darkness, and only occasional breaks in the valley's thick foliage allowed in a sliver of sunlight. Stories handed down from white settlers tell of the body of a murdered trader and settlers who died of dangerous fevers. Indian guides and traders became hopelessly lost in the dense, dark foliage. Perhaps for this reason the Indians once called this vale the Valley of Shadows.

Unbeknownst to humans, Shades Valley stood silently for centuries against the towering mountains that surrounded it. Even during the exploration of Hernando de Soto in 1540, the valley lay desolate and uninhabited. It had, in fact, remained undisturbed for millions of years. Although they did not make their home in the valley, the Indians ventured into the thick woods for an occasional hunt. In addition, the forest was used as a celebration ground for the Indians' spring rites, which included a hallowed Green Com Dance, performed to welcome the arrival of spring. Young Indian girls, leaping and whirling in the flickers of a roaring bonfire, greeted their friend Spring and welcomed her warmth and affection. Now every year as the valley greens and the first buds take shape in Homewood, she continues to warm the hearts of the community and always "the footstep of the quick young Spring is heard before Winter has reached old age." Over time, as Indians forged trails along Red Mountain and discovered a ridge nestled snugly between it and the neighboring Shades Mountain, the valley came to be known simply as Shades Valley; and the "sleeping places of the stars" gave way to the future city of Homewood, Alabama.

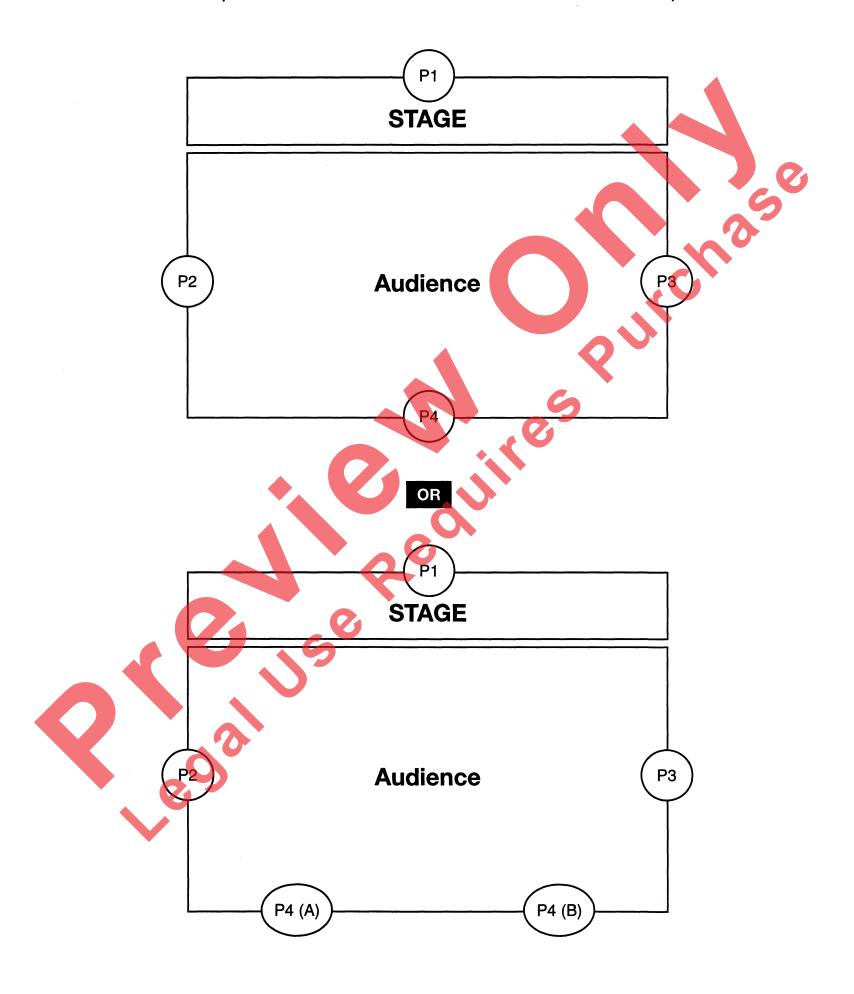
## NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

"The Sleeping Place of the Stars" musically reflect the richness and diversity, past and present, of this central-Alabama area. This piece may include the use of many percussionists, placing as many as four off-stage percussion stations in locations described in the included diagram. Only the onstage percussion parts are necessary for a satisfying performance, which includes one auxiliary station. Each station should contain a large tom (such as a floor tom—the larger, the better), a large beaded gourd, and a rainstick. The effect beginning at measure 69 should start with the wind chimes as a transition into the onstage rainstick. The sound of the rain should proceed out into the audience and surround them. During this sequence, at measure 73 the instrumentalist should faintly whisper, not allowing any specific words to be heard until the notated unison syllables. The unison syllables should be spoken strongly, in whisper voice. The rain begins to fade out from the stage to the rear of the audience as though it had passed through the performance space. Enjoy!

Ralph Ford

# **AUXILIARY PERCUSSION STAGING**

Station one (PI) is the only one required for performance. You may choose to include two stations in the rear of the hall or the balcony.





























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