

**Name of Piece:** “Fiddles On Fire”

**Composer:** Mark Williams

**Arranger:** Mark Williams

**Publisher:** Highland/Etling Alfred

**Type of Ensemble:** Beginning String Orchestra

**Prepared by:** Starr Desmond

## **I. Reasons for Teaching**

This piece is very energetic due to the fiddle-like style and tempo marking at  $\text{♩}=150$  or higher. This tempo allows the students to test their performance skills. The students will be challenged to read the music quickly while working on their motor skills by playing the notes at the given tempo. This piece also includes the note C natural (on the A string) which allows the students to practice the half step between C sharp and C natural. This piece also introduces a new bowing technique called a double stop. These double stops occur on open strings and will allow the students to bow two strings at the same time. The double stops in this piece allow the students to explore the differences in bow weight, bow angle, and the bow's balance point as well as how these different aspects of bow technique affect the sound of their instrument.

## **II. Background**

Mark Williams is an American composer who has a ten-year teaching background in elementary/beginning level band and orchestra. Williams has published many compositions over the years and has a passion for preparing young musicians for advanced pieces. He accomplishes this by incorporating different techniques, styles, and genres throughout his beginning level compositions. The book that contains “Fiddles on Fire” is used all over the country as a foundational tool for elementary band teachers, and it is published by Alfred Music company. Alfred Music company was founded in New York in 1922 and has since grown with numerous branches located all around the world.

## **III. Analysis**

(See Attached Score Map)

## **IV. Instrumentation**

- Violin 1
- Violin 2

- Viola
- Cello
- String Bass
- Piano Accompaniment

## **V. Form**

Intro (4 measures)

A' (8 measures)

B' (8 measures)

A' (8 measures)

C (8 measures)

B' (8 measures)

A' (10 measures)

## **VI. Melody**

In the first two A' sections, Violin I and II have the main melody. In the last A' section Violin I and Cello have the main melody. In the B' section a call and response is taking place between the lower strings (Viola, Cello and String Bass) and the upper strings (Violin I and II). In the C section, there is new material where the basses have the main melody and the Violin I's have the supporting harmony. In the second repeat of the C section Violin II, Viola and Cello enter to add in additional supporting harmonies.

## **VII. Harmony**

A' : I-(passing V) - I - V - I

B' : vi - I - V - I

C : I - IV - I - vii - I - IV - I

## **VIII. Rhythm**

This piece is notated in a 4/4 time signature and includes rhythms that are standard for the grade level, including half notes, quarter notes, eighth notes, and ties.

## **IX. Texture**

The texture is homophonic throughout the whole piece. Main melodies are introduced and are supported by other melodic lines yet the lines never clash.

## **X. Timbre**

The overall sound of this piece is bright due to the fiddle-like style. The main melodic lines occur in higher registers for each instrument which helps create the brighter sound.

## **XI. Expression**

This is a very energetic and lively piece due to the consistency of the *ff* dynamic from beginning to end. The fiddle-like style adds to this expression through the accented beats in the melodic lines as well as the staccato markings that draw emphasis to the off-beats.

## **XII. Introducing the Piece**

To immediately draw attention to the contrasting C natural in the B' section vs. the C sharp in the A' section. Have students focus on how the change from C sharp to C natural in the key of D major changes the feel. Ask students how this change affects the sound quality of the piece.

Draw attention to the double-stops throughout the piece and have the students explore with bow weight, bow angle and where they play on the bow; and how that affects the sound quality of their instruments.

## **XIII. Outcomes**

### **1) Skills**

Students will play with proper intonation and can play the half step between C sharp and C natural, and play double stops with proper intonation as well as meeting Massachusetts State Standards:

- **3.1** Play independently with accurate intonation, steady tempo, rhythmic accuracy, appropriate technique, and correct posture
- **3.5** Perform in groups, blending instrumental timbres, matching dynamic levels, and responding to the cues of a conductor
- **Strategies (addressing the skill outcome)**
  - Have students play exercise on a D major scale: on the way up playing a C sharp and on the way down playing a C natural (each note gets one quarter note, conducted in 4/4). After completing this exercise have the students play on quarter notes, alternating between C natural and C sharp. Then have them do the same exercise again on eighth notes (this exercise is the melody in the B' section).

- In class have a group activity where the students explore playing the double stops with different bow weights, bow angles, and bow positions. When group activity is over ask the class how the different components to the way they held and played with the bow affected their sound. Ask students which components allowed them to play the double stops with proper intonation and accuracy. After this exercise, the students play double stops on open D and A strings at a slow tempo and work them up to the tempo of the piece.
- **Assessment (assessing the skill outcome)**
  - Assessment by the teacher
    - Assess the students' ability to distinguish the half step between C sharp and C natural.
  - Assessment by the students
    - Have the students play exercises listed above and record them. Have the students watch the clips of themselves and reflect on their intonation. This should be done several times so students can reflect upon the differences in their playing.

## 2) Knowledge

Students will be able to identify dynamic markings and symbols associated with tempo, articulation and bow patterns, and will meet Massachusetts State Standards:

- **2.3** Identify symbols and traditional terms referring to dynamics, tempo, and articulation and interpret them correctly when performing.
- **3.2** Play expressively with appropriate dynamics, phrasing, and articulation, and interpretation.
- **Strategies (addressing the skill outcome)**
  - Have students play D major scale exercise listed above and have the students play as loud as they can on the way up(try to feel forte), then have them play as soft as they can on the way down to (try to feel piano). Then have the students play the whole scale as loud as they can and reveal that this the dynamic marking for the entirety of the piece.
  - Have students play the last 2 measures of the piece (mm 53-54) where there are distinct bow markings. Loop the bars without mentioning the differences in the bow markings. After a few loops, have students take a look at the markings and ask them what each bow mark means. After bow markings are clear have students play again to clear up any errors.
  - Have students play the final A section, after playing ask students what the dot near the note is (staccato mark). Play section again and have students accent

the notes staccato markings. Then have the students play the markings without accenting the notes (staccato marks should be crisper/cleaner after this).

- Have students “tah” the rhythms of their parts at tempo for the A’ section, then have students do the exercise again while playing their rhythms on an open D string. Take away the “tah” and have the students play the rhythms of the A’ section at tempo on an open D. Finally, have the students play the A’ section at tempo (this should allow the students to feel the allegro tempo).

- **Assessment (assessing the skill outcome)**

- Assessment by the teacher
  - Assess the students’ ability to identify dynamic markings and symbols associated with tempo, articulation and bow patterns in class through the exercises listed above.
- Assessment by the students
  - Have the students play the piece and record the performance, have the students watch the clips of themselves and reflect on their dynamic, tempo, and bow patterns. This should be done several times so students can reflect upon the differences in their playing.

### **3) Affective**

This piece is very energetic and lively in expression due to the fiddle-like style, accented beats in the melodic lines and the staccato markings that draw emphasis to the off-beats. Students should be able to understand the feel of this piece due to the historical genre and by doing this will meet Massachusetts State Standard and National Standard:

- **3.9** Perform music representing diverse historical periods, genres, and cultures, with expression appropriate for the work being performed.
- **MU:Pr6.1.E.5b** Demonstrate an awareness of the context of the music through prepared and improvised performances.

- **Strategies (addressing the skill outcome)**

- In class, have students watch performances of fiddle-like music as well as movements and dances associated with fiddling. Ask students where they think this style of music comes from. Ask the students for words that describe the music and dances. Make a list of the words that the students provide, and write them on the board where everyone can see. Then ask students how they think, the words provided, can be expressed through their performance of the piece. Take suggestions from students and play the piece again.

- **Assessment (assessing the skill outcome)**
  - Have students play the piece before taking class time to do the activity above, and make notes of how the piece sounded in the areas of expression, attention to style and detail. Then after the activity, the students play the piece again, make note of any changes in expression, attention to style and detail. (Did the students play the piece with more expression, attention to style and detail after the activity?) This activity should allow the students to reflect on the piece and its context and apply what they have learned to the following performances.

### **Additional Handout and Resources:**

#1



#2



#3



#4



## Score Map:

Tempo ♩ = 150      Score Map      "Fiddles on Fire"

Form: (4) Intro      (8) A'      (8) B'      (8) A'      (8) C      (8) B'      (10) A'

Meter:  $\frac{4}{4}$

Melody: [ Violin I + II      ] [ ALL Call & Response Violin I + II      ] [ BASS (rest support the bass)      ] [ ALL Call & Response Violin I + Cello      ]

Harmony: [ I-(V)-I-V-I      ] [ VI-I-V-I      ] [ I-(V)-I-V-I      ] [ I-IV-I-vii-I-IV-I      ] [ VI-I-V-I      ] [ I-V-V-I      ]

Orch: violin I + II  
viola  
cello  
bass  
piano

Texture: Homophonic

Dynamic: *ff*

## **Work Cited:**

Dyke, Matthew Van, and Brian Berk. "Alfred Music Joins Peaksware." *The Music & Sound Retailer*, 13 May 2016, [msretailer.com/alfred-music-joins-peaksware/](http://msretailer.com/alfred-music-joins-peaksware/).

"Mark Williams- Composer and Arranger." *Mark Williams | Composer / Arranger (3) - Concert Band Noten & Partituren - HeBu Musikverlag GmbH*, HEBU MUSIKVERLAG GMBH, [www.hebu-music.com/en/musician/mark-williams.348/?page=3](http://www.hebu-music.com/en/musician/mark-williams.348/?page=3).

Musescore. "Fiddles on Fire." *Musescore.com*, 16 July 2018, [musescore.com/user/5109181/scores/1614816](http://musescore.com/user/5109181/scores/1614816).