Fanfare for Full Fathom Five

(2015)

for brass and percussion

John Mackey

Commissioned by Columbus State University (Jamie L. Nix, Director of Wind Ensemble Activities)
Arizona State University (Gary W. Hill, Director of Ensembles)
Georgia State University (Robert J. Ambrose, Director of Bands)
Louisiana State University (Damon S. Talley, Director of Bands)
Oklahoma State University (Joseph Missal, Director of Bands)
University of California Los Angeles (Travis J. Cross, Wind Ensemble Conductor)
University of Florida (David Waybright, Director of Bands)
University of Oregon (Rodney Dorsey, Director of Bands)
and Western Michigan University (Scott Boerma, Director of Bands)

Consortium organized by Jamie L. Nix, Columbus State University
**Instrumentation**

6 Trumpets in C (placed with three each on the far sides of the ensemble) *

6 Horns in F

3 Tenor Trombones

3 Bass Trombones (contrabass trombone optional for bass trombone 3)

2 Tubas

Organ (optional)

4 Percussionists:
   - Player 1: Timpani
   - Player 2: Crash cymbals
   - Player 3: Tam-Tam and large suspended cymbal
   - Player 4: Bass drum

* The trumpets - three each - should be placed on the far sides of the ensemble, creating a left (trumpets 1-3) and right (trumpets 4-6) antiphonal effect. The placement of the other players is left to the discretion of the conductor.
“Fanfare for Full Fathom Five” takes its title from Shakespeare’s “The Tempest,” where Shakespeare’s text refers to a drowning during a storm and shipwreck in water about five fathoms (30 feet) deep:

Full fathom five thy father lies;  
Of his bones are coral made;  
Those are pearls that were his eyes;  
Nothing of him that doth fade,  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange.  

In The Tempest, this rather foreboding and gloomy text is sung by the tormented spirit Ariel to the young prince of Naples, Ferdinand, who has just escaped a shipwreck caused by the eponymous storm and is unaware of whether his father — the King, Alonso — has survived. In reality, Ariel’s dire taunt proves to be somewhat inaccurate, but his song has a place in the English lexicon partly due to two phrases which have entered common usage: “full fathom five,” a nautical reference that indicates a placement under a depth of thirty feet of water but is used metaphorically to imply an impossible and unavoidable doom; and “sea-change,” which describes an unexpected and profound transformation. Both of these images, along with the backdrop of a tumultuous squall, paint the musical language of John Mackey’s Fanfare for Full Fathom Five.

The fanfare is scored for an athletic array of brass and percussion: six trumpets (deliberately split into two quasi-antiphonal trios), six horns, three tenor trombones, three bass trombones, two tubas, and four percussion, with an ad libitum organ and the possible substitution of contrabass trombone. The orchestration and architecture of the piece is designed to be analogous to Richard Strauss’ Wiener Philharmoniker Fanfare, but where Strauss’ fanfare is emotionally straightforward with bounds of unstoppable heroism, Mackey’s is more complex, taking the traditional fanfare rhythms and motifs and blurring them with a whirlwind of dissonance through chromaticism and murky glissandi that present the whole in a darker and more sinister context. All of the typical hallmarks of the fanfare genre are present: vibrantly articulated triplets in the trumpets, soaring horn lines, and brash pedal points in the low brass (doubled colorfully by the organ). The harmonic language is one of abrupt shift; the blustery opening seems to clearly establish B-flat major as the home key, but each time it seems to reaffirm this notion, it veers wildly into unexpected territory. The piece ends triumphantly in E-flat, but along the way it also takes detouring ventures through D-flat, G-flat, and perhaps most strangely, E major during the work’s contrastingly delicate midpoint. In the end, despite a journey that is continuously rich and strange, the heroes win the day and, as in The Tempest, all comes to a happy and victorious conclusion.

Duration: about 3 minutes

“Fanfare for Full Fathom Five” received its world premiere on March 26, 2015, with the Columbus State University Wind Ensemble, conducted by Jamie L. Nix, in Schermerhorn Symphony Center in Nashville, Tennessee, as part of the College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA) National Convention.
legato, but with clear pulses

very soft mallet

rub with superball mallet

leather-wrapped wooden mallet

very soft mallet
Maestoso \( \frac{3}{8} = 82 \)

sustained and legato unless articulations indicate otherwise

\( \frac{3}{8} \)

sustained and legato unless articulations indicate otherwise

sustained and legato unless articulations indicate otherwise

Maestoso \( \frac{3}{8} = 82 \)

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BB

Cymb. T.T.

Tam-Tam with heavy triangle beaters

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