

Sara's Suite

for string orchestra

by

Arthur J. Michaels

(ASCAP)

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"When my wife and I became parents, we understood our parents better. When we became grandparents, we understood our grandparents better. As new parents back then and now as new grandparents, we embraced the hopes and dreams all parents and grandparents have for their children, grandchildren, and their descendants. 'Sara's Suite' is dedicated to Sara, our first grandchild."

Arthur J. Michaels earned a bachelor of music degree in music education from the Eastman School of Music and a master of arts degree in teaching from Teachers College, Columbia University. He has taught instrumental music in grades 4 through 12 in New York and in New Jersey. His concert band and string orchestra works have won contest awards and were selected in competition for performances. His published works include music for concert band, chorus, string orchestra, and instrumental ensembles. He is a member of the National Association for Music Education, the Florida Music Educators Association, and ASCAP.

Other string orchestra works by Arthur J. Michaels

Dance Suite

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dedicated to a first grandchild

Sara's Suite

for string orchestra

Arthur J. Michaels
(ASCAP)

I. Celebration

delighting in the arrival of a new family addition

Brightly (♩ = 124)

The musical score is written for a string orchestra in 4/4 time. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes parts for 1st Violins, 2nd Violins, Violas, Violoncellos, and Double Basses. The second system includes parts for 1st Violins (1Vns.), 2nd Violins (2Vns.), Violas (Vas.), Violoncellos (Vcs.), and Double Basses (Dbs.). The tempo is marked 'Brightly' with a quarter note equal to 124 beats per minute. The dynamic marking is *mf* (mezzo-forte). The score features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. A large 'SAMPLE' watermark is visible across the score.

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10

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Db.

p

14

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Db.

f

19

1Vns. *mp* *f*

2Vns. *mp* *f*

Vas. *mp* *f*

Vcs. *mp* *f*

Db. *mp* *f*

24

1Vns. *mf* *f* pizz. arco *mf*

2Vns. *mf* *f* pizz. arco *mf*

Vas. *mf* *f* pizz. arco *mf*

Vcs. *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

Db. *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

29

1Vns. *f* *mf* pizz.

2Vns. *f* *mf* pizz.

Vas. *f* *mf* pizz.

Vcs. *mf*

Db. *mf*

33

1Vns. arco *mf*

2Vns. arco *mf*

Vas. arco *mf*

Vcs.

Db. *mf*

38

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Db.

mp

mf

42

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Db.

mf

f

46

1Vns. *pizz.*
mp

2Vns. *pizz.*
mp

Vas. *pizz.*
mp

Vcs. *pizz.*
mp

Dbs. *pizz.*
mp

50

1Vns. *arco*
p

2Vns. *arco*
p

Vas. *arco*
p

Vcs. *arco*
p

Dbs. *arco*
p

pizz.
p

55

1Vns. arco *pp* *f*

2Vns. arco *pp* *f*

Vas. arco *pp* *f*

Vcs. *pp* *f*

Db. *pp* *f*

59

1Vns. *mf* *mp* *f*

2Vns. *mf* *mp* *f*

Vas. *mf* *mp* *f*

Vcs. *mp*

Db. *mp*

1 pizz. arco

64

1Vns. *pizz.* *mf* *mp* *mf* *arco*

2Vns. *pizz.* *mf* *mp* *mf* *arco*

Vas. *pizz.* *mf* *mp* *mf*

Vcs. *mp* *mf*

Dbs. *mp* *mf*

68

1Vns. *f* *ff*

2Vns. *f* *ff*

Vas. *f* *ff*

Vcs. *f* *ff*

Dbs. *f* *ff*

molto ritenuto

II. Tuning Tune

(in which "A" remains a chord tone throughout)
Eight variations symbolizing life's playfulness and wonder in learning new things

Moderately (♩ = 100)

Musical score for the first part of "Tuning Tune". It features five staves: 1st Violins, 2nd Violins, Violas, Violoncellos, and Double Basses. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked "Moderately" with a quarter note equal to 100 beats per minute. The dynamic is marked *f* (forte). The music consists of a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests and slurs.

First Variation

Musical score for the first variation of "Tuning Tune". It features five staves: 1Vns., 2Vns., Vas., Vcs., and Dbs. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is "Moderately" and the dynamic is marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). The music continues with similar rhythmic patterns as the first part, but with some melodic changes and slurs.

12

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Dbs.

Second Variation

17

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Dbs.

f

p

Third Variation
Forcefully (♩ = 80)

ritenuto -----

23

1Vns. *mp* *p* *mf*

2Vns. *mp* *p* *mf*

Vas. *mp* *p* *mf*

Vcs. *mp* *p* *mf*

Dbs. *mp* *p* *mf*

27

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Dbs.

Fourth Variation
Pensively $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

31

1Vns. *f* pizz. arco pizz.

2Vns. *f* pizz. arco pizz.

Vas. *f*

Vcs. *f*

Dbs. *f*

35 arco pizz. arco pizz. arco pizz. arco pizz.

1Vns. arco pizz. arco pizz. arco pizz. arco pizz.

2Vns. arco pizz. arco pizz. arco pizz. arco pizz.

Vas.

Vcs.

Dbs.

Fifth Variation
Light Latin feel (♩ = 120)

39 arco pizz. arco pizz. arco

1Vns. *mp*

2Vns. *mp*

Vas. *mp*

Vcs. *mp*

Db. *mp*

43

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Db.

Sixth Variation
Fiery and determined
(♩ = 120)

ritenuto -----

47

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Dbs.

f

51

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Dbs.

55 *ritenuto*

1Vns. *mp*

2Vns. *mp*

Vas. *mp*

Vcs. *mp*

Db. *mp*

Seventh Variation
Cool swing (♩ = 120)

60

1Vns. *mf*

2Vns. *mf*

Vas. *mf*

Vcs. *mf* *pizz.*

Db. *mf* *pizz.*

* Repeat is optional

64

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Dbs.

Eighth Variation
Fast and pressing forward (♩ = 140)

68

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Dbs.

f *cresc.* *ff*

f *cresc.* *ff*

f *cresc.* *ff*

f *cresc.* *ff*

f *cresc.* *ff*

III. Stirred to Success

an overture celebrating accomplishment and striving for accomplishment

Boldly and brightly, not too fast (♩ = 90)

The musical score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes staves for 1st Violins, 2nd Violins, Violas, Violoncellos, and Double Basses. The second system includes staves for 1st Violas (1Vns.), 2nd Violas (2Vns.), Violas (Vas.), and Double Basses (Dbs.). The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 3/2 time. The first system begins with a dynamic marking of *f* and features triplet eighth notes in the violin parts. The second system starts at measure 5 and continues with similar rhythmic patterns and dynamics. A large 'INSPECTION COPY' watermark is overlaid diagonally across the page.

10

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Dbs.

14

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Dbs.

Ethereally $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

20

1Vns. *sub. pp*

2Vns. *sub. pp*

Vas. *sub. pp*

Vcs. *sub. pp*

Dbs. *sub. pp*

26

1Vns. *mp* p cresc. *f*

2Vns. *mp* p cresc. *f*

Vas. *mp* p cresc. *f*

Vcs. *mp* p cresc. *f*

Dbs. *mp* p cresc. *f*

32

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Dbs.

mp

mp

mp

mp

mp

37

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Dbs.

Boldly

ff

ff

ff

ff

ff

41

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Db.

45

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Db.

mf

mf

mf

mf

mf

49

1Vns. *f* 3 3

2Vns. *f* 3 3

Vas. *f*

Vcs. *f*

Dbs. *f*

Measures 49-53: This system contains five staves. The first two staves (1Vns. and 2Vns.) feature melodic lines with triplets and slurs, marked with a forte *f* dynamic. The third staff (Vas.) provides a bass accompaniment with a forte *f* dynamic. The fourth and fifth staves (Vcs. and Dbs.) provide a rhythmic accompaniment with a forte *f* dynamic. A tempo change is indicated by a double bar line and a new time signature of 3/4. A note equals a half note ($\bullet = \text{half note}$) is shown above the first staff.

54

1Vns. 3 3

2Vns. 3 3

Vas.

Vcs.

Dbs.

Measures 54-58: This system contains five staves. The first two staves (1Vns. and 2Vns.) feature melodic lines with triplets and slurs. The third staff (Vas.) provides a bass accompaniment. The fourth and fifth staves (Vcs. and Dbs.) provide a rhythmic accompaniment. The dynamic is not explicitly marked in this system but continues from the previous system.

59 pizz. p pp

1Vns. p pp

2Vns. pizz. p pp

Vas. pizz. p pp

Vcs. pizz. p pp

Db. pizz. p pp

66 arco pp poco a poco cresc.

1Vns. arco pp poco a poco cresc.

2Vns. arco pp poco a poco cresc.

Vas. arco pp poco a poco cresc.

Vcs. arco pp poco a poco cresc.

Db. arco pp poco a poco cresc.

73

1Vns. *mf*

2Vns. *mf*

Vas. *mf*

Vcs. *mf*

Db. *mf*

78

1Vns. *mf*

2Vns. *mf*

Vas. *mf*

Vcs. *mf*

Db. *mf*

83

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Db.

88

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Db.

93

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Db.

f

98

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Db.

102

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Db.

106

1Vns.

2Vns.

Vas.

Vcs.

Db.

110

1Vns. *mp*

2Vns. *mp*

Vas. *mp*

Vcs. *mp*

Db. *mp*

114

1Vns. *cresc.*

2Vns. *cresc.*

Vas. *cresc.*

Vcs. *cresc.*

Db. *cresc.*

molto riten.

f

ff

Teaching and Rehearsal Notes

This work provides ample opportunities to teach advanced students more refined ensemble and musicianship skills. Each of the three movements in “Sara’s Suite” can work as a standalone concert choice.

I. Celebration

The first movement marks Sara’s birth and the family’s exhilaration.

“Celebration” is an energetic movement. The piece features a lively rhythmic and melodic motif, imitative sections, light syncopation, and contrary motion.

Rehearse with the goal of creating a spirited performance. Begin this piece at its strictly prescribed tempo—avoid the temptations to start too fast and rush. Maintain contrast between staccato and legato passages throughout, and follow dynamics and hairpins carefully. When playing the hairpins, exaggerate the dynamics with which they begin and end, thereby contributing to the piece’s robust character.

In measures 31-39, beginning with the cellos, rehearse the round-like section entrances so that players enter confidently. Make the three repeated staccato eighth notes in this section’s motif light and even, suggesting laughter. Boldly entering at the right times here and observing the articulations contribute to the piece’s playful, happy character.

II. Tuning Tune

The second movement is a theme with eight variations. The different musical styles symbolize the limitless possibilities and joy of discovery in Sara’s young life. This movement is subtitled “in which ‘A’ remains a chord tone throughout.” With this element I’ve tried to capture life’s playfulness and wonder in learning new things.

The piece is an eight-measure chord progression with eight variations. The chord progression is mainly:

Dm, Am/C, B \flat 7, B \flat maj7, Am, Gm9, Am, Dm.

This chord progression varies slightly in places, but the “A” remains constant throughout, either played or implied.

Theme. Observe the tempo carefully—too slow and the piece drags; too fast and the mood is lost. A three-measure decrescendo in measures 6-8 sets the stage for the quieter first variation.

First Variation. Violins 1 and 2 play a melody with violas and basses playing a different, lilting counter-melody. The cello part reminds us of the “A” chord tone throughout. Start this variation at mezzo piano to make the crescendo in measures 15-16 an effective lead-in to the next variation.

Second Variation. This variation features tremolos in the violin, viola, and cello parts. This variation’s chord progression differs from that of the other variations, but the bass part still reminds us of the “A” chord tone throughout. Carefully observing the ritenuto in measures 23-24 sets up the next variation’s contrasting mood.

Third Variation. This variation features a meter change from 3/4 to 9/8. The harmony and voice leading disguise the “A,” but it is there or implied throughout. Work for a light, tutti, on-the-bow staccato.

Fourth Variation. This variation moves to 4/4 time. Maintain a steady tempo, and rehearse for precision with violins 1 and 2 alternating between arco and pizzicato. Work for tempo accuracy in the viola eighth-note passages and in the cello and bass eighth-note pickups and passages.

Fifth Variation. Create the “light, Latin feel” by keeping the staccato notes delicate and flighty, and by observing the mezzo piano dynamic. Work for a steady tempo also.

Sixth Variation. This variation’s mood contrasts greatly with that of the previous variations. Establish the “fiery and determined” mood by rehearsing for crisp, weighty accented (but still on-the-bow) staccatos and the forte dynamic. Make this variation the “angry” one. The ending is lengthened by two measures to accommodate a slight decrescendo (measures 57-59) and ritenuto (measures 58-59), as part of the transition to the next variation.

II. Tuning Tune (*continued*)

Seventh Variation. This variation swings! It contrasts greatly—again—with the mood of the previous variations. Create the “cool” mood by going for a steady tempo, especially with the pizzicato cello and bass lines. Make this variation the “carefree” one. This variation’s repeat is optional, as indicated.

Eighth Variation and Ending. Let this variation rip right up to the ending! Make the last measure’s fermata long—create a more dramatic ending by letting the audience wait in anticipation of the last chord!

III. Stirred to Success

The third movement is subtitled “an overture that celebrates accomplishment and striving for accomplishment.” It highlights Sara’s striving for and attaining goals throughout her life. This movement is a sparkling celebration of setting out on a path to success, the journey of striving for achievement, and reaching a goal. As a standalone work, this exhilarating piece is perfect for marking a semester's beginning, mid-year and semester-end concerts, graduations, and observing milestones and other commemorations.

The movement’s ascending and descending eighth-note triplet runs symbolize setbacks and advances while striving to reach a goal. The soft portions, loud sections, phrases of crescendo, and measures of decrescendo also represent the ups and downs of striving for accomplishment.

Rehearse for a robust performance. Begin precisely at the prescribed tempo, and beware of rushing the tempo throughout—too slow and the piece drags, but too fast and it loses its dignified quality. Practice the triplet runs for evenness in dynamics and note duration. Let the tranquil, legato, quiet sections contrast greatly with the piece’s accented, staccato, louder portions.

Need an encore? Take it from measure 94!