

SPIRIT – tone pictures after the B2 Bomber

Aldo Rafael Forte

- I. Prelude***
- II. Stealth***
- III. Attack***
- IV. Epitaph***
- V. Triumph***

SPIRIT is a major work for band in the form of five contrasting tone pictures inspired by the B2 Bomber. “Spirit” is the nickname of the B2 Bomber. The composition was commissioned by and is dedicated to Dr. Scott C. Lubaroff and the University of Central Missouri Symphonic Wind Ensemble. I first met Scott in 2005 when he gave a fantastic performance of one of my compositions. I am very impressed with his artistry and musicianship and was thus thrilled when he asked me to compose this work.

SPIRIT is approximately 13 minutes in duration and is scored for standard American concert band instrumentation. The work opens with ***I. Prelude*** which functions as a sort of overture laying out some material which will be heard later on in the composition. It begins softly and builds gradually indicating the gradual evolution of flying machines from their infant beginnings to the present day grandeur of the B2 Bomber. The mood is heroic with fanfare-like rhythms. The addition of a snare-less drum adds to the military ambiance of the movement. The second movement, ***II. Stealth***, is the athletic and nimble scherzo-like movement of the set. The volume is mostly soft indicating the capability of the B2 to fly undetected toward its destination. There are several technical passages for the woodwinds and trombone glissandi symbolize the B2’s ability to glide smoothly through the air. Though entirely original, the ambience of this movement represents a musical tip of the hat to *Mercury* from *The Planets* by Gustav Holst. The third movement, ***III. Attack***, is ferocious and restless in nature. Different “menacing” motifs and harmonic systems clash with each other relentlessly. The music is noisy and continuously changing, inflicting massive “sound” chaos on the listener! ***IV. Epitaph*** is a musical tribute to not only Lt. George A. Whiteman, the name sake of Whiteman AFB who lost his life on December 7, 1941, but to all the airmen who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the defense of our great nation. The movement begins softly in funeral march-like fashion with low brass and timpani intoning dotted rhythms. An expressive solo for the English horn adds to the solemn mood of the work. These elements along with heroic musical gestures are collaged and eventually lead to bold statements from the entire band. In the end the dotted funeral march-like rhythms give way to hints of the Star Spangled Banner and the movement concludes with allusions to Taps. ***IV. Epitaph*** leads directly to the final movement ***V. Triumph***. Processional-like bold music sometimes intoning previously heard materials evolves into heightened heroic and fanfare-like statements which eventually build to involve the entire ensemble. This tutti build up leads directly into a final fast section where previous themes are further developed in a joyous fashion and the piece ends triumphantly with an emphasis on G just like it started.

Special thanks to Dr. Lubaroff and the University of Central Missouri Symphonic Wind Ensemble for making this work come to life in such a fantastic way.

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Composer