

The Great Steamboat Race

ROBERT W. SMITH (ASCAP)

INSTRUMENTATION

- 1 Conductor
- 8 C Flute
- 2 Oboe
- 4 1st B \flat Clarinet
- 4 2nd B \flat Clarinet
- 2 B \flat Bass Clarinet
- 2 Bassoon
- 5 E \flat Alto Saxophone
- 2 B \flat Tenor Saxophone
- 2 E \flat Baritone Saxophone
- 4 1st B \flat Trumpet
- 4 2nd B \flat Trumpet
- 4 Horn in F

- 4 Trombone
- 2 Baritone
- 2 Baritone Treble Clef
- 4 Tuba
- 2 Mallet Percussion
(Xylophone, Chimes, Bells)
- 1 Timpani
(Tune: D, B \flat , A)
- 4 Percussion I
(Snare Drum, Bass Drum, Mark Tree or Wind
Chimes, S. M. Hat Cymbals, Congas)
- 4 Percussion II
(Suspension, Gong, Crash Cymbals, Ocean
Drum, Multiple Water Jugs, Cabasa, Brake
Drum)

WORLD PARTS

Available for download from
www.alfred.com/worldparts

- Horn in F
- Trombone in B \flat Bass Clef
- Trombone in B \flat Treble Clef
- Baritone in B \flat Bass Clef
- Tuba in E \flat Bass Clef
- Tuba in E \flat Treble Clef
- Tuba in B \flat Bass Clef
- Tuba in B \flat Treble Clef

PROGRAM NOTES

From the first time two steamboats met and passed each other on the Mississippi River, pilots and owners have competed to see whose boat was the fastest. Perhaps the most famous of these races occurred in the summer of 1870 between the *Robert E. Lee* and the *Natchez*.

In June of 1870, the *Natchez* made a record-breaking run from New Orleans to St. Louis in 3 days 21 hours 58 minutes. Captain T. P. Leathers and the *Natchez* were lauded as the fastest on the great river. Captain John W. Cannon of the *Robert E. Lee* decided that the success of the *Natchez* could not go unanswered. While waiting for the *Natchez* to return to New Orleans, he readied his great steamboat for the race by stripping her of excess weight and declining all passengers and cargo.

Captain Leathers of the *Natchez* welcomed the challenge. However, he refused to lighten his load. On the last day of June 1870, the two boats left New Orleans and raced up the river, with the *Natchez* carrying passengers and a full cargo load. Captain Cannon had arranged for barges to be floated alongside the *Robert E. Lee* to alleviate docking for the refueling process. In order to stay in the race, the *Natchez* was forced to do the same in response.

The race continued with each boat paddling furiously up the river. Along the route, a thick fog settled over the famously tricky river. Piloting the great steamboats through the constantly changing river required visibility. Thus, the two boats throttled their boilers to a standstill, waiting for nature's permission to continue the race. As the fog lifted, the race ensued on the final leg to St. Louis. The *Robert E. Lee* was victorious, arriving in St. Louis a full 6 hours 25 minutes ahead of the *Natchez*.

"The Great Steamboat Race" by Robert W. Smith draws upon this historic event as its inspiration. From the paddle wheels churning the water to the melodious calliope on the *Robert E. Lee*, the composition brings the sounds and intensity of the great race to the concert stage. If you listen carefully, you may even be able to hear the great ships throttling down as the fog sets in, only to resume the race in a final push to the finish line. The *Robert E. Lee*, with its calliope singing, churns ahead of the *Natchez* in the final moments, leaving the great Mississippi River in peaceful silence.

NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

The opening two measures should be as bright and joyous as possible. In contrast, measure 3 should set the tone for the slow and muddy Mississippi River. The solo quotes are based on "Waiting for the Robert E. Lee," which was brought to public attention through performances by Al Johnson. These quotes should allude to a Dixieland style. However, please do not swing the eighth notes. The race takes place at a time when the seeds of jazz were just forming. You may wish to think more in a Scott Joplin ragtime for stylistic inspiration.

Beginning in measure 10, our steamboats are readying for the great race. The sound of the water is created using an ocean drum (see percussion notes for options). The clarinet trill should be rather lazy to emulate the sound of the slow-moving river. The flutes imitate the sound of the steam whistle through a divisi into three parts while rolling the instrument to bend the pitch flat.

The race begins in measure 20 as the sounds of the paddle wheels begin to churn. You may wish to stage the water jugs throughout the hall to create a surround-sound effect. Their careful placement will leave the audience feeling as if they were on the boat. Measure 25 begins the long accelerando as the great ships throttle to full power up the river. Careful attention should be given to the balance of the bell tones versus the initial sounds of the calliope effect at measure 28. The accelerando continues to measure 37 as the race tempo is established. Please feel free to adjust this culminating tempo to the abilities of the band.

The "Waiting for the Robert E. Lee" quotes return at measure 49. Again, please do not swing the eighth notes as the melody passes from horns/saxophones to trumpets and finally to the upper woodwinds. However, at measure 61, the music scored an eighth-note true Dixieland statement of the classic song. At this point, it would be appropriate to swing the eighths for this section, providing greater contrast as we move back to the original thematic environment in measure 64.

The muted trumpets and saxophones provide an interesting effect beginning in measure 81. Please take great care to balance the two sections along the lines of the crescendo/decrescendo. The interval is a Doppler effect, which will actually clash harmonically with the rest of the ensemble while fading in measures 83–85.

Our ships begin to throttle down for the fog in measure 97. The clarinet and trombone duets and tuba solo should be bluesy yet part of the larger ritardando leading to the final sound of the horn in measure 103. The vocal effects during this section are intended to emulate the sounds of escaping steam as the huge engines come to rest. Please note the breath mark in measure 102 for the tuba soloist. For the developing tuba player, you may wish to use one soloist in measures 102–103 and then use another with full breath to play the final low G.

The tempo and race resumes beginning in measure 106. The tension of the race comes to fruition beginning in measure 119. Please ensure that the dynamic shaping of the ascending lines leads to the final rallentando beginning in measure 131. As the rallentando unfolds, the intensity should continue to grow in both the winds and percussion.

The race tempo returns at measure 134 as the sounds of the *Robert E. Lee*'s calliope fades into the distance. As the calliope figure ends, the audience should be left with the sound of the paddle wheels (water jugs). The water jugs should be deleted one by one to create the sound of the steamboat churning into the distance. As each player leaves the accented figure, he or she should swirl the water quietly in the jug, creating the sounds of the river shoreline in peaceful silence. That swirling effect can then be diminished and released together upon your cue.

PERCUSSION NOTES

Using water jugs partially filled with water creates the paddle wheel effect. I suggest using as many players as possible on this part. Each player can hold two jugs in each hand if a standard gallon milk jug with a handle is used. You may also wish to add a few small ball bearings to each jug to amplify the desired effect.

The percussion section should employ both a shaking and a swirling technique to create the sounds of the paddle wheels and the river shoreline. Depending on available personnel, I suggest adding percussionists throughout the hall with water jugs. If your percussionists are carefully positioned, the audience will feel as if they were on the deck of the steamboat with the sound of water all around them. If personnel allows, the ocean drum at measure 10 can be replaced and/or doubled with the swirling effect for a more realistic acoustic environment.

The sounds of the paddle wheels were particularly challenging in the creation of this piece. I extend a sincere thank-you to Stuart Brownley in Melbourne, Australia, for his assistance. I had the great fortune of attending a music festival in Melbourne in August 2002. During one of the breaks between performances, Stuart's percussion technique with a water bottle created the sound I had been searching for. In addition, I thank Bryden Atwater, a talented and gifted friend and percussionist, who was present during the rehearsals for the premiere of the piece. Through his assistance and experimentation, we were able to finalize the water effect in a concert hall environment. Finally, I extend a sincere thank-you to Dr. John M. Long for his suggestion to write a composition based on this historic event.

I hope you, your ensemble, and your audience find "The Great Steamboat Race" to be a rewarding experience. I firmly believe that music is at its most effective when it connects with the performer and audience at multiple levels. Sharing the story of the great race and the written musical effects that resulted from its inspiration will enhance the experience for all. Best wishes for a wonderful performance!

Robert W. Smith

THE GREAT STEAMBOAT RACE

By ROBERT W. SMITH (ASCAP)

Bright! $\text{♩} = 160$ **Slowly $\text{♩} = 92$**

C Flute *f* *mp* *ff*

Oboe *f* *mp* *ff*

1 B♭ Clarinets *f* *mp* *ff*

2 B♭ Clarinets *f* *mp* *ff*

B♭ Bass Clarinet *f* *mp* *ff*

Bassoon *f* *mp* *ff*

E♭ Alto Saxophone *f* *mp* *ff*

B♭ Tenor Saxophone *mp* *ff*

E♭ Baritone Saxophone *mp* *ff*

1 B♭ Trumpets *f* *mp* *ff* *mf* "Bluesy" (straight eighths)
Solo (Opt. Plunger mute)

2 B♭ Trumpets *f* *mp* *ff*

Horn in F *mp* *ff*

Trombone *mp* *ff*

Baritone *mp* *ff*

Tuba *mp* *ff*

Maracas, Chimes, Bells *f* *mp* *ff*

Compani *p* *ff*

Percussion I (Snare Drum, Bass Drum, Mark Tree or Wind Chimes, Ship's Bell, Hi-Hat Cymbals, Congas) *f* *mp* *ff*

Percussion II (Suspended Cymbal, Crash Cymbals, Ocean Drum, Multiple Water Jugs, Cabasa, Brake Drum) *p* *ff*

S.D. *pp*

B.D. *pp*

Cr. Cyms. *pp*

Susp. Cym. *pp*

1 2 3 4

* Let all Cymbals ring unless otherwise noted.

BDM03043C

Fl. *Steamboat whistle*
div. *f*

Ob.

1
Cls.

2

B. Cl.

Bsn.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

1
Tpts.

2

Hn.

Tbn.

Bar.

Tuba

Mlt. Perc.

Timp.

Perc. I

Perc. II

Solo
mf

Solo (Opt. Plunger mute)
mf

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Fl. *ritard.* *tutti* *f* *div.* *mf*

Ob. *ritard.* *p* *f*

1. Cls. *ritard.* *p* *f*

2. Cls. *ritard.* *p* *f*

B. Cl. *ritard.* *p* *f*

Bsn. *ritard.* *p* *f*

A. Sax. *ritard.* *p* *f*

T. Sax. *ritard.* *p* *f*

Bar. Sax. *ritard.* *p* *f*

1. Tpts. *ritard.* *tutti* *f*

2. Tpts. *ritard.* *p* *f*

Hn. *ritard.* *p* *f*

Tbn. *ritard.* *div.* *tutti* *f*

Bar. *ritard.* *p* *f*

Tuba *ritard.* *p* *f*

Mlt. Perc. *ritard.* *f*

Timp. *ritard.* *p* *f*

Perc. I *ritard.* *pp* *ff*

Perc. II *ritard.* *pp* *f* Water Jugs (as many as possible)

16 17 18 19 20 21

accel. poco a poco

Opt. Picc.
(double Flute)

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Fl.

Ob.

Cls.
1
2

B. Cl.

Bsn.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Tpts.
1
2

Hn.

Tbn.

Bar.

Tuba

Mlt. Perc.

Timp.

Perc. I

Perc. II

(double Flute)

mf

(Bell tones)

sfp

(Bell tones)

(Bell tones)

(Bell tones)

(Bell tones)

(Bell tones)

accel poco a poco

(Bell tones)

sfp

(Bell tones)

(Bell tones)

sfp

(Bell tones)

sfp

(Bell tones)

sfp

(Bell tones)

p cresc. poco a poco

pp

22 23 24 25 26 27

[28] (*accel. poco a poco*)
(calliope)

Fl. (calliope) div.

Ob. *mf* (calliope) div.

1 *mf* (calliope)

2 *mf*

B. Cl. *sfzp*

Bsn. *sfzp*

A. Sax. *sfzp* (Bell tones) *sfzp* div. *mf*

T. Sax. *sfzp*

Bar. Sax. *sfzp*

[28] (*accel. poco a poco*)

1 *sfzp*

2 *sfzp*

Hn. *sfzp*

Tbn. *sfzp*

Bar. *sfzp*

Tuba *sfzp*

Mlt. Perc. *mp* (calliope)

Timp. *sfzp*

Perc. I *f*

Perc. II *f*

pp

28 29 30 31 32

♩ = 132 (accel.) *♩ = 160*

Fl. *f* *ff*

Ob. *f* *ff*

1 Cls. *f* *ff*

2 Cls. *f* *ff*

B. Cl. *sfzp* *ff*

Bsn. *sfzp* *ff*

A. Sax. *sfzp* *ff*

T. Sax. *mf* *ff*

Bar. Sax. *mf* *ff*

1 Tpts. *sfzp* *ff*

2 Tpts. *sfzp* *ff*

Hn. *sfzp* *ff*

Tbn. *sfzp* *ff*

Bar. *sfzp* *ff*

Tuba *sfzp* *ff*

Mlt. Perc. *mf* *ff*

Timp. *sfzp* *ff*

Perc. I *sub. mp* *ff*

Perc. II *pp* *ff*

Hi-Hat

33 34 35 36 37

41 With intensity!

Fl.

Ob.

1

2

Cl.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

1

2

Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.

Bar.

Tuba

Mlt. Perc.

Timp.

Perc. I

Perc. II

p

p

sfzp

sfzp

sfzp

sfzp

sfzp

sfzp

p

mf

p

mf

mf

mf

mf

mf

Susp. Cym. *scrape*

42

Fl.

Ob.

1

2

Cls.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

1

2

Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.

Bar.

Tuba

Mlt. Perc.

Timp.

Perc. I

Perc. II

p

f

div.

p

f

sfzp

(calliope)

p

mf

(scrape) mp

f

43

44

45

46

47

BDM03043C

Fl. *mf* *div.* **[57] Dixieland**

Ob. *mf*

1 Cls. *mf* *Solo* *f*

2 Cls. *mf*

B. Cl. *sfzp* *mf*

Bsn. *sfzp* *mf*

A. Sax. *mf* *v.*

T. Sax. *mf*

Bar. Sax. *sfzp* *mf*

[57] Dixieland

1 Tpts. *mf*

2 Tpts. *mf*

Hn.

Tbn. *sfzp* *sfzp* *mf* *(5th pos.)* *div.* *gliss.*

Bar. *sfzp*

Tuba *sfzp* *mf*

Mlt. Perc. *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

Timp. *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

Perc. I *mf*

Perc. II *pp* *f*

53 54 55 56 57

BDM03043C	58	59	60	61	62
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BDM03043C

69 Mysterious

Fl.

Ob.

1

2

Cls.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

1

2

Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.

Bar.

Tuba

Mlt. Perc.

Timp.

Perc. I

Perc. II

Water Jugs

Cabasa

Ship's Bell

Congas

68

69

70

71

72

73

ff

mf

pp

mp

ff

mf

Cue: B. Cl./Bsn.

77

Fl.

Ob.

Cls.

2

B. Cl.

Bsn.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Tpts.

2

Hn.

Tbn.

Bar.

Tuba

Mlt. Perc.

Timp.

Perc. I

Perc. II

Cue: Hn.

*mf**sim.*

74

75

76

77

78

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Fl.

Ob.

1
Cls.

2
Cls.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

1
Tpts.

2
Tpts.

Hn.

Tbn.

Bar.

Tuba

Mlt. Perc.

Timp.

Perc. I

Perc. II

div.

p

ff

p

ff

St. Mute

p

ff

79

80

81

82

83