

Incantation and Dance (1960)

John Barnes Chance (1932-72)

Composer:

John Barnes Chance was a graduate of the University of Texas where he studied with Kent Kennan and Clifton Williams. He served as timpanist with the Austin Symphony, arranger for the Fourth and Eighth US Army Bands, Composer in Residence at Greensboro Senior High School in North Carolina, and a professor at the University of Kentucky. He died accidentally when he was electrocuted in his backyard.

Composition:

Incantation and Dance was composed in 1960 for the Greensboro Senior High School Band, North Carolina. Incantation is defined as "words chanted in magic spells." The Dance section begins with 5 different rhythmic patterns introduced by the percussion. These patterns with the beginning flute melody combine to make up the rest of the piece.

The title suggests a religious orientation, but not toward any of the established religions of Western or Eastern cultures. To the standard deities one offers prayers. Incantations are uttered in rituals of magic, demonic rites, the conjuring up of spirits evil and benign. And when the spirit comes and the worshiper is possessed, there is dancing, wild and abandoned. The *Incantation*, full of mystery and expectation, serves as an introduction to the piece. The *Dance* begins quietly with percussion instruments but soon grows wild and frenzied with brass instruments hammering out ferocious snarls and woodwinds flying in whirling scales.

Incantation is defined as "words chanted in magic spells or rites." Composers have often been drawn to create musical renditions of supernatural or magical happenings. Chance's work for band virtually takes the listener into another time period for a chanting ritual or mystic celebration. From the *misterioso* opening of the *Incantation* to the wild presto of the *Dance*, this composition creates a visual and aural image of a magical ceremony.

Musical Guidelines:

- Rhythm = the most important element of the work
 - Count carefully and enter confidently
 - Hemiola feel in the dance section
- Woodwind runs - need rhythmic precision while conveying freedom and frantic energy
- Proper and precise attacks, releases and accents
- Dynamic Markings:
 - *pp* (*pianissimo*) - very softly
 - *p* (*piano*) - softly
 - *mp* (*mezzo piano*) - medium soft
 - *mf* (*mezzo forte*) - medium loud
 - *f* (*forte*) - loud
 - *ff* (*fortissimo*) - very loudly

Incantation: Largo (♩ = 54)

The *Incantation* section of this composition work as an introduction and presents a 13-bar theme from which all other melodic material is derived.

- Musical terms to know:
 - *Misterioso* - mysteriously
 - *Largo* - played very slowly
 - *dolce* - sweetly (flute soli)
 - *poco piu mosso* - a little more motion (m.13) (♩ = 66)
 - *senza crescendo* - without crescendo
 - *sempre* - always
 - *sotto voce* - beneath the voice (referring to the flute trill in m.19 - beneath the clarinet melody)
 - *Tempo I* - return to the previous tempo (m.26) (♩ = 54)
- Rehearsal Notes
 - m.1-25 - mysteriously gorgeous flute soli - beautiful tone, dripping with vibrato and phrasing
- clarinets & friends: count carefully, enter accurately, support the *misterioso* effect
 - m.26-30 - trumpets and trombones purposely play into your stands
- bass drum and gong add to the intensity as we approach the dance section
- Storyline
 - Darkness—it is a clear and calm night. The primitive village appears deserted as the full moon shines from above. A palpable intensity is in the air. Shrouded, dusky figures appear and begin to make their way towards the Great Circle. They gather around the perimeter, huddled close in anticipation. An ancient ritual is about to begin.
 - m.1-16: A lone tribeswoman chants as the ritual preparations begin.
 - m.17: A section of the chant is echoed by two other tribeswomen, their separate voices weaving mysteriously.
 - m.19: The male tribesmen now offers his incantation, repeating a fragment from the lone woman's initial melody.
 - m.26: All in attendance quietly add their voices to the ritual.

Dance: Presto (♩ = 138)

The *Dance* section begins quietly with the building of a complex and driving rhythmic pattern in the percussion. As the rest of the band enters, the music becomes more and more frenzied, continuing its wild dance with complete abandon up to the final measure.

- Musical terms to know:
 - *subito* - suddenly
 - *feroce* - ferociously
 - *ffp* (*fortissimo piano*) - the note should be attacked very loudly, then instantly diminishing to a much softer volume
 - *molto diminuendo* - get a lot softer
 - *muted* (*timpani, horn, trumpet*) - use a mute to make your instrument sound distant
 - *stagger breathing* - players breathe at different points to create the illusion of a seamless phrase

The 4 main rhythms/melodies in this piece - used in full and in fragments to create layers:

Rhythm/Melodic Idea #1 (Temple Blocks)



Rhythm/Melodic Idea #2 (Gourd)



Rhythm/Melodic Idea #3 (Clave)



Rhythm/Melodic Idea #4



- Rehearsal Notes
 - Accurate **rhythm placement** is the key to our success
 - **Balance** is essential to hear important lines and all layers
 - m.33: Percussion feature
 - All instruments enter at equal volume, mind the accents in the temple blocks
 - **Clarinet Choir** - stagger breathe, be seamless as you sneak in after taking a breath
 - Storyline: The ceremonial fire is lit (maracas). A small flame emerges. The tribal drummers take their cue and enter one by one - each addition heightening the excitement as the fire gains strength.
 - m.53:
 - The intensity and volume of the accented entrances should make the audience jump!
 - **Feroce**:
 - The **whip** starts each melodic fragment - like it is scaring the notes away, scattering them in a frenzy out in front of it.

- **Brass:** Put space in the quarter note triplets, play with the most volume you can with a good, controlled sound.
 - **Woodwinds** answer the brass with precise articulation
 - Storyline m.53: The wisest elder signals for the dance to begin, and the tribes-people echo the last statement of the incantation, this time their voices confident – reflecting the growing intensity of the flames.
 - Storyline m.57: Trombone and horns – incantation becomes ferocious now, as the spirits are summoned. Women’s voices punctuate the intensity and aggression of the men.
- m.70:
 - Storyline: The dance begins!
 - 2 whip cracks signal the start of the first dance statement, layering melodies #1, 2, 3 + 4
 - The melodies, and fragments of them, are passed around the woodwinds
 - m.88: the **low brass** re-state melodies #1+4
 - m.95-100: the full ensemble layers melodies #1, 2+3
 - m.100:
 - The clarinet choir presents a new melodic idea over a low WW pedal point
 - Control your tone over the large intervals, and be sure your articulation is precise!
 - Listen low and balance, especially as more and more voices enter
 - The intensity grows through m.113-114 - horns bells up!
 - m.115:
 - Brass fanfare is king - sound needs to be very powerful!
 - WW runs - need to be precise and controlled
 - m.121: Brass powerfully moves the melody into m.122 where the lowest voices summon evil demons...
 - m.126: **All mark the 8th rest on beat 3+**. We need to be silent!
 - m.127: Powerful entrances that *molto diminuendo* as the dance starts again
 - m.130:
 - Recap of the percussion feature from m.33, but at 2 measure intervals
 - Stagger breathing - make it sound seamless
 - m.140 - low voices accent should be powerful
 - m.141 - trumpet and horn entrance on 3+ needs precision
 - m.142 - clarinet 1 soli is frenzied - leads us (and the flutes) into the sneaky melody of...
 - m.148:
 - Timpani and bass clarinet set the *misterioso* tone
 - Horn fanfare is muted but precise
 - Clarinet 1 soli is mysteriously dark in tone and range - an inverted fragment of melody #1
 - m.159 - flute joins in with fragments of melody #1
 - The audience is lulled to sleep until...
 - m.165:
 - The *fortissimo* low brass entrance on 4+ makes the audience jump out of their seats! (melody #3)
 - m.168 - trumpets add their fortissimo voices (melody #2)
 - m.170 - WW’s add melody #1 fragment
 - m.172 - immediate change back to soft *misterioso* (horn melody #2, timpani and Bcl #3)

- m.176
 - *Misterioso* vibe still going on with flute (melody #1), clarinet (melody #2) changes to...
 - Clarinet (melody #1) Bcl (melody #4), when suddenly...
- m.186 **Whip Crack!**
 - The frenzied dance is back with a vengeance...and WW runs
 - WW runs should be subservient to the melodic ideas
 - **Powerful** horn/trombone (melody #2), trumpet (melody #1), timp/tuba melody #3
 - m.193 - full band plays melodies in layers
 - Melody #1: flute, alto/tenor
 - Melody #3: trumpet, whip
 - Melody #4: lowest voices, timpani
 - 200-205 is almost the same as 188-192 (WW runs and all)
- m.205-215
 - Raucous, frenzied **percussion!** Answer each melodic interjection *fortissimo*
 - Half note melody needs power and excellent tone/intonation, accented triplets
 - WW runs are secondary to the melodic ideas - need precise fingers and note endings
- m.215-226 *fortissimo* within the balance pyramid
 - Frenzied percussion continues
 - m.216 all enter with a fragment of melody #1 - push momentum into m.217
 - m.217
 - middle and low voices continue melody #1
 - flute/clarinet/trumpet layer melody #2
 - m.219
 - trumpet (melody #1)
 - trombone/horn/baritone (melody #2)
 - WW's use melody #1 fragments to push the momentum into m.222
 - m.222
 - trumpet/flute/clarinet (melody #2)
 - Low voices/saxes/horn (melody #1)
 - timpani enters (melody #3)
 - All push momentum into m.224
 - m.224
 - trumpet (melody #1)
 - horn/trombone (melody #2)
 - flute/clarinet join in m.225 (melody #1)
 - All push momentum into m.226
- m.226
 - WW's have fragments of melody #1
 - Maracas, tambourine, claves are holding down the rhythmic fort
 - m.228 POWERFUL brass fanfare (with *fp!*), punctuated by cymbal crash and tambourine
 - WW's have those darn runs again...be clean, and not overpowering
 - m.231 brass has a hard stop on -4, return of powerful fanfare in m.232
- m.236-end
 - All original percussion return in force
 - WW's balance their trills and count to end 3e+a 4e+a 1 precisely
 - Timp, tuba, baritone, low WW's (melody #3)
 - Horn, alto/tenor/trombone (melody #2)
 - Trumpet fanfare pushes ALL - everyone push momentum to end the piece!