



Music Selection Information for the 2018 Contest

from Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95, “From the New World”

I. Allegro molto [excerpt] – Antonín Dvořák (1841 – 1904)

In the early 1800s, New Spain and later Mexico began to allow immigration from the United States to Texas. Thousands of American settlers made the move to Texas territory during that time in search of land, fortune and a new start. For many, the trip down south was a long and difficult one; for others, it was much worse. The rugged landscape, lack of good roads, extreme temperatures, disease and insect swarms were serious problems along the way. There were also Native American peoples to worry about, such as the Apache and the Comanche, who didn't want settlers on their land and often attacked them. Many settlers left for Texas with the promise of cheap or even free land, but they did so at great risk to themselves and their families.

Czech composer Antonín Dvořák was later invited to visit and work in the United States. His first reaction was to say, “I would not dream of it, to cross the big water and risk my children to be drowned! America is full of natives and wild animals.” He changed his mind, however, and did make the nine-day journey by boat with his family. It was here in America that he would write his famous Symphony No. 9, subtitled “From the New World.” For many, the symphony captures the sounds and struggles of American life at the time – including perhaps those of settlers moving down to Texas.

from *The Alamo Suite* (arranged from the 1960 film score)

II. Davy Crockett – Dmitri Tiomkin (1894 – 1979), arr. Palmer / Russ

In February and March of 1836, a ragtag group of just 200 men defended the Alamo for 13 days against an army of 1,800 Mexican soldiers. The defenders were made up of native Texans (Tejanos) of Spanish or Mexican descent as well as American and European settlers. Among other things, they opposed the higher taxes of the new Mexican government and its sudden crackdown on immigration from the U.S.

One of the defenders of the Alamo was a “tall, slim man with black whiskers” named Davy Crockett. A native of Tennessee, Crockett had served briefly as a U.S. Congressman, where he fought for the rights and protection of American settlers. After losing re-election in 1835, he decided to leave for Texas in order to support the revolution there. Crockett arrived to the Alamo early the following year “dressed in a hunting suit, wearing a coonskin cap, and carrying a fine rifle.” He and his fellow men from Tennessee were welcomed to the fortress, where they fought and died in the Battle of the Alamo just two weeks later. Known as the “King of the Wild Frontier,” tall tales about Davy Crockett existed even before his death, but the stories of him grew and spread like wildfire in the years following.

“Marching Mountains” from *Men and Mountains*

Carl Ruggles (1876 – 1971)

The decade of the 1920s saw major economic growth and many political and cultural shifts in the United States. San Antonio was no stranger to this period of change, called the “Roaring Twenties.” Among other things, many of the most impressive and imposing structures of our city were built during that time, including the Tower Life Building, the Witte Museum, the Nix General Hospital, the Majestic Theatre, what is now the Emily Morgan Hotel, the Milam Building, and the Municipal Auditorium (a long-standing precursor to the new Tobin Center).

Men and Mountains is a three-movement suite written by American composer Carl Ruggles in 1924. Drawing inspiration from the words of English poet William Blake: “Great things are done when men and mountains meet,” Ruggles’ suite is a powerful but often dissonant and angular work. The last movement, “Marching Mountains,” might suggest imposing landmarks made by men, such as those of our city, and their rising up over what was once a more open landscape.