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Short Essay

for symphonic wind ensemble

TRAVIS J. CROSS

*Commissioned by the St. Ambrose University
Symphonic Band, Andrew Mast, conductor*

Performance Notes

An essay is generally defined as a short and somewhat informal composition on a single subject. To that end, my “Short Essay” for symphonic wind ensemble lasts only four minutes and concerns the inception and development of one musical theme.

The introduction sets both the tonal vocabulary and primary rhythmic material of the essay. The first four pitches establish a general key area of B flat major, colored by the second and fourth scale degrees to create relatively innocuous harmonic dissonance. In fact, only four pitches are heard for the first 90 seconds! The syncopated eighth-note rhythms and shifting accents that figure prominently throughout the piece are also introduced.

Short statements of the four-pitch set from throughout the ensemble build into a *tutti* arrival point that immediately transforms into an *ostinato*, establishing the second section of the essay. A playful tune fleshes out the tonality by realizing the rest of the major scale, but the harmonic seconds, suspended fourths and syncopated rhythms from the introduction remain as part of the accompaniment.

The tune naturally progresses into a musical bridge, played first in the horns and trombones and then in the entire brass section. An upper woodwind obbligato and more active percussion writing provide harmonic ornamentation and rhythmic drive.

As the woodwinds continue, an augmented recapitulation of the tune enters in the low brass and leads up through the higher voices of the ensemble. Brilliant chords and an aggressive unison statement of the opening rhythm bring the work to a close much in the same way that a conscientious student restates the thesis sentence at the end of a literary essay.

“Short Essay” was commissioned by the St. Ambrose University Symphonic Band, Andrew Mast, conductor. The title also refers to the initials prominently used in the university web address, *sau.edu*. Trust me — just say the first two letters really fast, and you’ll get it. “Short Essay” was premiered at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa, on 2 May 2003, with the composer conducting.

Travis J. Cross
Edina, Minnesota
April 2003

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Short Essay

for symphonic wind ensemble

TRAVIS J. CROSS

Allegro con brio ♩ = 132

Piccolo

Flutes 1-2

Oboes 1-2

Bassoons 1-2

Clarinet 1

Clarinet 2-3

Bass Clarinet

Alto Sax 1-2

Tenor Sax.

Baritone Sax.

p (*stagger breathe*)

p (*stagger breathe*)

Allegro con brio ♩ = 132

Trumpet 1

Trumpets 2-3

Horns 1-2

Horn 3-4

Trombone 1

Trombone 2

Euphonium

Tuba

mf muted

p

mf muted

p

mf

p

Allegro con brio ♩ = 132

Timpani

B flat - C - E flat - F

Percussion 1

S.D. with rattan mallets

mf

Percussion 2

Maracas

Tam-tam

p coin scrape

Percussion 3

Mar.

mf

Percussion 4

This musical score page contains the following parts and markings:

- Woodwinds:**
 - Picc.: Rested.
 - Fls.: *p* (stagger breathe), *p* (stagger breathe)
 - Obs.: Rested.
 - Bsns.: Rested.
 - Cl. 1: Rested.
 - Cls. 2-3: *p*
 - B.Cl.: Rested.
 - A. Sxs.: Rested.
 - T. Sx.: Rested.
 - B. Sx.: Rested.
- Brass:**
 - Tpt. 1: *mf* *harmon mute*, *p*, *mf*, *p*, *mp*, *p*
 - Tpts. 2-3: *mf* *harmon mute*, *p*, *mp*, *p*
 - Hns. 1-2: Rested.
 - Hns. 3-4: Rested.
 - Tbn. 1: *mf*, *p*, *mf*, *p*, *mp*, *p*
 - Tbn. 2: *mf*, *p*, *mf*, *p*, *mp*, *p*
 - Euph.: Rested.
 - Tba.: *mf*
- Percussion:**
 - Temp.: *mf*
 - Perc. 1: *mp*
 - Perc. 2: Rested.
 - Perc. 3: Rested.
 - Perc. 4: *Vib.*, *mf*

This page of a musical score, page 3, features a variety of instruments. The woodwinds include Piccolo (Picc.), Flute (Fls.), Oboe (Obs.), Bassoon (Bsns.), Clarinet 1 (Cl. 1), Clarinets 2-3 (Cls. 2-3), Bass Clarinet (B.Cl.), Alto Saxophone (A. Sxs.), Tenor Saxophone (T. Sx.), and Baritone Saxophone (B. Sx.). The brass section consists of Trumpet 1 (Tpt. 1), Trumpets 2-3 (Tpts. 2-3), Horns 1-2 (Hns. 1-2), Horns 3-4 (Hns. 3-4), Trombone 1 (Tbn. 1), Trombone 2 (Tbn. 2), Euphonium (Euph.), and Tuba (Tba.). The percussion section includes Timpani (Timp.), Percussion 1 (Perc. 1), Percussion 2 (Perc. 2) with a Chinese Bell Tree, and Percussion 4 (Perc. 4) with Bells. The score is marked with dynamics such as *mf*, *f*, *mp*, *p*, and *mf* *harmon mute*. It also includes performance instructions like *unis.* and *mf* *harmon mute*. The page number 21 is indicated at the start of several staves.

29

Picc. *ff*

Fls. *ff* div.

Obs. *ff* div.

Bsns. *f*

Cl. 1 *ff*

Cls. 2-3 *ff*

B.Cl. *f*

A. Sxs. *f* *ff* div.

T. Sx. *f*

B. Sx. *f*

36

Tpt. 1 *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *ff* open

Tpts. 2-3 *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *ff* open

Hns. 1-2 *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *ff*

Hns. 3-4 *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *ff*

Tbn. 1 *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

Tbn. 2 *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

Euph. *f*

Tba. *f*

36

29

Timp. *f* *ff*

Perc. 1 *f* *ff* with snare sticks (r.s.)

Perc. 2 c.c. *ff* Tam-tam

Perc. 3 Xylo. *f* *ff*

Perc. 4

38

Picc. *f*

Fls. *mf*

Obs. *mf*

Bsns. *ff* *div.*

Cl. 1 *mf*

Cls. 2-3 *mf*

B.Cl. *ff* *f*

A. Sxs. *f* *mf*

T. Sx. *ff*

B. Sx. *ff* *f*

38

Tpt. 1 *f*

Tpts. 2-3 *f*

Hns. 1-2 *f*

Hns. 3-4 *f*

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Euph. *ff* *f*

Tba. *ff* *f*

38

Timp. *B flat to G, C to B flat*

38

Perc. 1 *f* *mf*

Perc. 2

Perc. 3 *f* *mf*

Perc. 4 *Vib.* *ff* *f*

46 48

Picc. *mp*

Fls. *mp*

Obs. *mf solo*

Bsns. *mp* unis.

Cl. 1 *mp* *p*

Cls. 2-3 *mp* *p*

B.Cl. *mp*

A. Sxs. *mp* *mp solo*

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

46 48

Tpt. 1

Tpts. 2-3

Hns. 1-2

Hns. 3-4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Euph.

Tba.

46 48

46 *mp*

Perc. 1 *mp*

Perc. 2 Maracas *mp* Tri.

Perc. 3 *mp*

Perc. 4 Bells *mp*

54

Picc.

Fls.

Obs.

Bsns.

Cl. 1

Cl. 2-3

B.Cl.

A. Sxs.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

54

Tpt. 1

Tpts. 2-3

Hns. 1-2

Hns. 3-4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Euph.

Tba.

54

54

Temp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Perc. 4

This page contains the musical score for measures 62 through 64 of an orchestral piece. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral layout with staves for various instruments. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4. Measure numbers 62 and 64 are indicated in boxes above the Piccolo and Tuba staves, respectively. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf*, *f*, *mp*, and *p*, as well as performance instructions like *mf tutti*, *div.*, *open*, and *with rattan mallets*. The woodwind section includes Piccolo, Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Clarinet 1, Clarinets 2-3, Bass Clarinet, Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, and Baritone Saxophone. The brass section includes Trumpet 1, Trumpets 2-3, Horns 1-2, Horns 3-4, Trombone 1, Trombone 2, Euphonium, and Tuba. The percussion section includes Timpani, Percussion 1 (with rattan mallets), Percussion 2 (with stick), Percussion 3, and Percussion 4. The string section is not explicitly shown on this page.

70

Picc.

Fls.

Obs.

Bsns.

Cl. 1

Cl. 2-3

B.Cl.

A. Sxs.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

70

Tpt. 1

Tpts. 2-3

Hns. 1-2

Hns. 3-4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Euph.

Tba.

70

Timp. *G to A flat*

70

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Perc. 3

Perc. 4

Detailed description: This page of a musical score contains measures 70 through 79. It features a large ensemble of instruments. The woodwinds (Piccolo, Flutes, Oboes, Bassoons, Clarinets, Bass Clarinet) and strings (Saxophones, Trumpets, Trombones, Euphonium, Tuba) play melodic and harmonic lines. The percussion section includes Timpani, four different types of Percussion instruments (Perc. 1-4), and a snare drum. The score is written in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature. Measure 70 is marked with a '70' above the staff. A key signature change from G major to A-flat major is indicated in the Timpani part at measure 75. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings like 'f' (forte).

This page contains the musical score for measures 78, 79, and 80. The score is divided into three systems. The first system includes woodwinds (Piccolo, Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Clarinet 1, Clarinets 2-3, Bass Clarinet, Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Bass Saxophone) and strings (Trumpet 1, Trumpets 2-3, Horns 1-2, Horns 3-4, Trombone 1, Trombone 2, Euphonium, Tuba). The second system includes Timpani and Percussion 1. The third system includes Percussion 2, Percussion 3, and Percussion 4. The score features various dynamics such as *mf*, *ff*, *f*, *mp*, and *fz*, along with performance instructions like *div.*, *unis.*, *(play)*, *(horn cue)*, *(trombone cue)*, and *(tuba cue)*. The percussion parts include mallets, tam-tam, triangle, and maracas.

This page of a musical score, numbered 11, covers measures 86 through 91. The score is arranged in a system of staves for various instruments and percussion. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats), and the time signature is 4/4. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Picc.** (Piccolo): Melodic line with eighth-note patterns.
- Fls.** (Flutes): Rapid sixteenth-note passages.
- Obs.** (Oboes): Melodic line with eighth-note patterns.
- Bsns.** (Bassoons): Sustained chords.
- Cl. 1** (Clarinets 1): Melodic line with eighth-note patterns.
- Cl. 2-3** (Clarinets 2-3): Melodic line with eighth-note patterns.
- B.Cl.** (Bass Clarinet): Sustained chords.
- A. Sxs.** (Alto Saxophones): Sustained chords, with a *f* dynamic marking and *unis.* instruction in measure 91.
- T. Sx.** (Tenor Saxophones): Sustained chords.
- B. Sx.** (Baritone Saxophones): Sustained chords.
- Tpt. 1** (Trumpet 1): Sustained chords, with a *f* dynamic marking in measure 91.
- Tpts. 2-3** (Trumpets 2-3): Sustained chords, with a *f* dynamic marking and *unis.* instruction in measure 91.
- Hns. 1-2** (Horns 1-2): Sustained chords, with a *f* dynamic marking and *unis.* instruction in measure 91.
- Hns. 3-4** (Horns 3-4): Sustained chords, with a *f* dynamic marking and *unis.* instruction in measure 91.
- Tbn. 1** (Tuba 1): Sustained chords, with a *mf* dynamic marking.
- Tbn. 2** (Tuba 2): Sustained chords, with a *mf* dynamic marking.
- Euph.** (Euphonium): Sustained chords, with a *mf* dynamic marking.
- Tba.** (Trombone): Sustained chords, with a *mf* dynamic marking.
- Timp.** (Timpani): Sustained chords.
- Perc. 1** (Percussion 1): Rhythmic pattern with eighth notes.
- Perc. 2** (Percussion 2): Rests, with *C.C.* and *B.D.* markings in measure 91.
- Perc. 3** (Percussion 3): Melodic line with eighth-note patterns.
- Perc. 4** (Percussion 4): Sustained chords, with a *f* dynamic marking in measure 91.

This page of a musical score contains measures 93 through 100. The score is arranged in systems for various instruments. The top system includes Piccolo (Picc.), Flute (Fls.), Oboe (Obs.), Bassoon (Bsns.), Clarinet 1 (Cl. 1), Clarinets 2-3 (Cls. 2-3), Bass Clarinet (B.Cl.), Alto Saxophone (A. Sxs.), Tenor Saxophone (T. Sx.), and Bass Saxophone (B. Sx.). The second system includes Trumpet 1 (Tpt. 1), Trumpets 2-3 (Tpts. 2-3), Horns 1-2 (Hns. 1-2), Horns 3-4 (Hns. 3-4), Trombone 1 (Tbn. 1), Trombone 2 (Tbn. 2), Euphonium (Euph.), and Tuba (Tba.). The third system includes Timpani (Timp.), Percussion 1 (Perc. 1), Percussion 2 (Perc. 2), Percussion 3 (Perc. 3), and Percussion 4 (Perc. 4). The score is in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature. The woodwinds and strings play melodic lines with various articulations and dynamics. The brass section provides harmonic support with sustained notes and some rhythmic patterns. The percussion section features a complex rhythmic pattern in Perc. 1, while Perc. 3 and Perc. 4 play steady accompaniment. The number 93 is written above the first measure of each system.

This page of a musical score, page 13, covers measures 100 to 102. The score is for a symphony orchestra and includes parts for woodwinds, brass, percussion, and strings. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes Piccolo (Pic.), Flute (Fls.), Oboe (Obs.), Bassoon (Bsns.), Clarinet 1 (Cl. 1), Clarinets 2-3 (Cls. 2-3), Bass Clarinet (B.Cl.), Alto Saxophone (A. Sxs.), Tenor Saxophone (T. Sx.), and Bass Saxophone (B. Sx.). The second system includes Trumpet 1 (Tpt. 1), Trumpets 2-3 (Tpts. 2-3), Horns 1-2 (Hns. 1-2), Horns 3-4 (Hns. 3-4), Trombone 1 (Tbn. 1), Trombone 2 (Tbn. 2), Euphonium (Euph.), and Tuba (Tba.). The percussion section at the bottom includes four parts: Perc. 1 (snare drum), Perc. 2 (cymbals, triangle, and bass drum), Perc. 3 (tom-toms), and Perc. 4 (tom-toms). Measure 100 shows a dense texture with woodwinds and strings playing sixteenth-note patterns. Measure 101 features a forte (f) dynamic and the entry of the brass section with sustained notes. Measure 102 continues the brass and woodwind textures, with a 'unis.' (unison) marking for the saxophones. The score includes various performance markings such as *f*, *mf*, *ff*, and *ff*.

This page contains a musical score for measures 107 through 110. The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes woodwinds (Piccolo, Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Clarinet 1, Clarinets 2-3, Bass Clarinet, Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Bass Saxophone) and strings (Trumpet 1, Trumpets 2-3, Horns 1-2, Horns 3-4, Trombone 1, Trombone 2, Euphonium, Tuba). The second system includes percussion (Timpani, Percussion 1, Percussion 2, Percussion 3, Percussion 4). The score features various dynamics such as *ff*, *f*, *mf*, *p*, and *mp*, as well as performance instructions like *unis.* and *Tam-tam*. Measure 110 includes a specific instruction for the Chinese Bell Tree.

107 110

Picc. *ff*

Fls. *ff* *unis.* *f*

Obs. *ff* *f*

Bsns. *mf* *mf*

Cl. 1 *ff* *f*

Cls. 2-3 *ff* *f* *unis.*

B.Cl. *mf*

A. Sax. *ff* *f* *unis.*

T. Sax. *f* *mf*

B. Sax. *mf*

Tpt. 1 *ff* 110

Tpts. 2-3 *ff* *p* *p*

Hns. 1-2 *ff* *p* *p*

Hns. 3-4 *ff* *p* *p*

Tbn. 1 *ff* *p* *p*

Tbn. 2 *p* *p*

Euph. *mf*

Tba. *mf*

Timp. *ff* *mf*

Perc. 1 *ff* *p* *p*

Perc. 2 *ff* *mp* Chinese Bell Tree

Perc. 3 *ff* *f* *p* Tam-tam

Perc. 4 *ff*

113

Picc. *f* *mp* *f*

Fls. *mp* *f*

Obs. *mp* *f*

Bsns. *f* *p*

Cl. 1 *mp* *f*

Cls. 2-3 *mp* *f*

B. Cl. *p*

A. Sxs. *mp* *f* *p*

T. Sx. *p*

B. Sx. *p*

113

Tpt. 1 *f* *p*

Tpts. 2-3 *mp* *f* *mf* *p*

Hns. 1-2 *mp* *mf* *p*

Hns. 3-4 *mp* *mf* *p*

Tbn. 1 *mp* *mf* *p*

Tbn. 2 *mp* *mf* *p*

Euph. *p*

Tba. *p*

113

Timp. *p*

113

Perc. 1 *mp* *mf* *p*

Perc. 2 *mp* *p* (choke)

Perc. 3 *mp* *mf* *f* *p*

Perc. 4 *f* *mp* *mf* *f*

Sus. Cym.

(rs.)

(choke)

119 123 Presto

Picc. *ff*

Fls. *ff*

Obs. *ff*

Bsns. *ff* unis.

Cl. 1 *ff*

Cls. 2-3 *ff*

B. Cl. *ff*

A. Sax. *ff*

T. Sax. *ff*

B. Sax. *ff*

Tpt. 1 *ff*

Tpts. 2-3 *ff*

Hns. 1-2 *ff* *fff* bells up! *ff*

Hns. 3-4 *ff* *fff* bells up! *ff*

Tbn. 1 *ff*

Tbn. 2 *ff*

Euph. *ff*

Tba. *ff*

Temp. *ff*

Perc. 1 *f* *ff*

Perc. 2 *f* B.D. *ff* Sus. Cym. with stick *ff*

Perc. 3 *ff* Xylo. *ff*

Perc. 4 *ff* Chimes *ff*