

Composures

**In Four Voices
for
Mixed Winds and Brass**

Jon Jeffrey Grier

Composures

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These pieces are designed to be practical and playable by a wide variety of wind instruments in standard ensembles, such as woodwind or brass quartets, or in non-standard combinations. In each part - soprano, alto, tenor, and bass - extreme highs and lows and special techniques have been avoided to facilitate maximum flexibility of instrumentation. Any combination of the following is possible

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Soprano

trumpet, cornet, clarinet, alto clarinet, soprano sax, alto sax, oboe, flute 8^{va}

Alto

trumpet, cornet, clarinet, alto clarinet, alto sax, horn, English horn

Tenor

trombone, euphonium, horn, bassoon, alto clarinet, bass clarinet, alto sax, tenor sax

Bass

trombone, euphonium, tuba, bassoon, bass clarinet, baritone sax

While saxophones will combine with brasses easily, dynamics may need to be adjusted if brasses are combined with other woodwinds. Brasses are encouraged to experiment with mutes, especially in softer passages.

The movements have no specific programs beyond the titled states of mind; each employs gestures and textures that attempt to suggest its title. Thus "Composures" is a sort of pun, referring not only to a personal condition, but also to the limited thematic material and compositional techniques applied in each movement.

I. Fixation

This movement employs three essential textures, all somewhat obsessive in behavior: terse motives tossed about in erratic but insistent imitation, solos with motoric, harmonically static accompaniment, and a few brief sections in rhythmic unison to punctuate the form. The gestures in imitative sections should be sounded as equals; in solo sections, the solo should stand well out from the accompaniment. The tempo is steady and vigorous throughout. Duration about 2:30.

II. Consultation

This movement alternates between lively, metrical sections and slow, expressive sections. With the exception of a few brief unison passages, it is always concerned with some sort of conversational exchange-- sometimes between individual voices and sometimes between pairs. The slow sections should be lyrical, *rubato*, and generally unhurried; the fast sections, though generally light, keep a steady and lively pulse. Duration about 3:50.

III. Rumination

This is slow, dark and brooding throughout, with a suggestion of inner turmoil that rarely boils to the surface. Though there is much chorale texture with dynamics in unison, the occasional moving parts should be brought out slightly. Careful attention to dynamics is vital, and some modest *rubato* is appropriate. Duration about 3:40.

IV. Vacillation

As the title suggests, this is largely concerned with sudden and extreme contrasts with a humorous edge. The form is loosely a sonata; the developmental middle section is slightly more stable in character than the outer sections. The tempo is kept strictly throughout. An over-the-top execution of the dynamics and articulations will heighten the cartoonish character appropriately. Duration about 3:15.

About the Composer

Jon Jeffrey Grier holds a B.A. from Kalamazoo College, where he studied composition with Lawrence Rackley, an M.M. in Composition from Western Michigan University, studying with Ramon Zupko, and an M.M. in Theory and a D.M.A. in Composition from the University of South Carolina, where he studied with Jerry Curry, Dick Goodwin and Sam Douglas. Jon has taught Advanced Placement Music Theory and Music History at the Greenville Fine Arts Center, a magnet school of the arts in Greenville, SC, since 1988. He composes frequently for student and faculty ensembles at the FAC, usually when he really should be grading papers. Jon has also been a writer/keyboardist with various jazz-fusion ensembles since 1984. He lives in Greenville with wife Marion and manic mongrels Roxanne and Gracie Jean.