

Surface Tension

A Saxtet for Woodwinds

David Kechley

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To further facilitate successful presentation of this work, program notes and a brief biography of the composer are included on the following pages.

Program Notes:

SURFACE TENSION: A Saxtet for Woodwinds was written for the Academy Woodwind Quintet at West Point with saxophonist Wayne Tice and the Ithaca Woodwind Quintet with Steve Mauk. The primary purpose of the piece is to combine traditional woodwind quintet with alto saxophone, which is a woodwind instrument to be sure, but something of a loner among them. One might speculate that if the saxophone had been invented some years earlier it might be a regular member of the orchestral woodwind section. It functions very well this way in some of my own music, but most own examples that come to mind when we think of saxophones in the orchestra are pieces such as *Lt. Kije* or *Pictures at an Exhibition* where there is a featured solo in one or two movements. The saxophone is not attempting to be featured here, simply to claim a rightful place among its classical cousins.

The saxtet is one continuous movement developed from materials occurring in the opening bars. At first this material appears as call and response between the pairing of saxophone and horn against the rest of the group. The horn is also something of a loner in the woodwind quintet itself so this pairing seems quite natural and the two instruments balance quite well together. Pairing of instruments in general is a clear textural preference throughout the piece, but many other combinations are used as well. There is a conscious attempt, in fact, to combine the instruments in as many different ways as possible. Solo texture, on the other hand, is the least common.

I have observed that my pieces often fall into a kind of sonata form even though it is never intentional. It is interesting how one can seem to create a form by allowing the material to flow where it seems to want to go and then step back and see a similar kind of macro structural coming through almost every time. This tendency is not so much for harmonic reasons, but due to texture, and different types of music that tend to sound introductory, expositional, developmental, transitional, recapitulational, etc. If this piece is a sonata form it is not by design. What is intended is a continuous musical thread constructed from a few notes, creating larger sections of contrasting mood and texture.

David Kechley Biography:

Since the 1968 premiere of Second Composition for Large Orchestra by the Seattle Symphony, David Kechley has produced more than 70 works. Over 1000 performances have taken place throughout North America. Europe and other parts of the world, including those by the Cleveland Orchestra, Colorado Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, North Carolina Symphony, Louisville Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Boston Pops, Kronos Quartet, Lark Quartet, Amherst Saxophone Quartet, Vienna Saxophone Quartet, and the United States Military Academy Band. The Sea of Stones: A Concerto for Guitar and Saxophone and RUSH, for saxophone quartet were premiered at World Saxophone Congress XIII at the University of Minnesota in 2003.

In 1979 Kechley was awarded a Fellowship by the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and has twice received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts (1976,1979). Other recognition includes the 1994 Lee Ettelson Composer's Award for In the Dragon's Garden, 1980-81 Shreveport Symphony Composers' Competition for Five Ancient Lyrics on Poems by Sappho, First Prize Winner of the 1979 Opus I Chamber Orchestra Contest for Ohio Composers for Concerto for Violin and Strings, and the Twenty Fourth Annual NBA/William D. Revelli Memorial Band Composition Contest for Restless Birds before the Dark Moon. Kechley has also received grants from North Carolina Arts Council, Massachusetts Cultural Council, Barlow Foundation, commissions from The American Composers Forum Commissioning Program and continuous ASCAP awards since 1979. In 2002 he was invited to be a artist resident at Bellagio, a retreat run by the Rockefeller Foundation.

His sheet music is published by Pine Valley Press and available on recording from Albany Records, Reference Recordings, and Liscio Recordings. Discs exclusively featuring Kechley's music include In the Dragon's Garden, The Skylark Sings, and Winter Branches.

David Kechley was born in Seattle, received a Bachelors Degree in 1970 and Masters in 1974 from the University of Washington and completed a DMA in Composition at the Cleveland Institute of Music in 1979.

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With Great Energy $\text{♩} = 112$

The first system of the score consists of six staves for woodwind instruments: Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, Alto Saxophone, Horn in F, and Bassoon. The music is in 4/4 time and begins with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The Flute, Oboe, and Bassoon parts are marked *ff* (fortissimo), while the Clarinet in Bb, Alto Saxophone, and Horn in F parts are marked *f* (forte). The Flute and Oboe parts feature rapid sixteenth-note passages with accents, while the Clarinet, Alto Saxophone, and Horn parts play more rhythmic, eighth-note patterns. The Bassoon part provides a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

The second system of the score continues the woodwind parts from the first system. It begins with a measure rest for all instruments, followed by a dynamic change to *f* (forte) for the Flute and Oboe. The Flute and Oboe parts continue with their rapid sixteenth-note passages. The Clarinet in Bb, Alto Saxophone, and Horn in F parts continue with their rhythmic eighth-note patterns. The Bassoon part continues with its eighth-note accompaniment. The system concludes with a 5/4 time signature change.

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Musical score for measures 8-10. The score is for a woodwind ensemble with parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Bass Clarinet (B♭ Cl.), Alto Saxophone (A. Sx.), Horn (Hn.), and Bassoon (Bsn.). The music is in 2/4 time and features a complex rhythmic pattern with many accents and slurs. The dynamics range from *f* (forte) to *ff* (fortissimo) and *mf* (mezzo-forte).

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Musical score for measures 11-13. The score continues with the same woodwind ensemble parts. The music features a variety of dynamics including *mf*, *p* (piano), *f*, and *ff*. The time signature changes from 2/4 to 3/4 and back to 2/4. The notation includes many slurs and accents.