

**Commissioned by The Commission Project
for Dale Underwood and Prism Brass Quintet**

Sextet

for Alto Saxophone and Brass Quintet

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The Sextet for Alto Saxophone and Brass was commissioned by Dale Underwood and Prism Brass, who premiered it in 2002 at the Kennedy Center. The work was one of several I composed in response to 9/11. My wife and I live in Lower Manhattan; we saw the attack from the balcony of our apartment, half-mile away.

In this music, I was trying to find a way to show that Western and Islamic cultures need not be at war, but could add to each other—this, at a time when forces on both sides were stoking the flames of war, and wanting to have us fighting, fearing, and despising each other. “Contempt causes war,” wrote the great philosopher Eli Siegel, who founded Aesthetic Realism, and with whom I had the honor to study. This sextet was created in the hope that, through the language of music, I might convey the kind, necessary, and beautiful alternative to contempt: the desire to know and have good will for the world and people different from ourselves.

In this Sextet, aspects of Western and Islamic musical technique constantly interact and merge—most often by having Western musical forms meet Islamic rhythmic cycles. For example, the second movement relies on an Islamic meter (2+3+3+2) while being simultaneously a strict Western fugue—albeit one with strong jazz flavoring. (And humor!)

The opening movement, “Cantilena,” is likewise affected by the world of Islam. It is in quadrupal meter, but is not a typical 4/4; instead, it's a highly irregular “4” in which the eight-notes are grouped 2+3+2+1.

Note: please take care *not* to perform this in an irregular *triple* meter: as 2+3+3. I want the Islamic feeling—the groove that comes from an irregular pattern “in 4.” So please give an independent accent to the final eighth note.

Back to the over-all design: the third movement, “Recitative,” is in free meter, much like an Arabic taqsim; here there is also a melodic salute to the Middle East in certain aspects of the saxophone's rhapsody. Meanwhile, no microtonal shadings! That much, the music remains typically Western.

Just as most Arabic suites, or nawbahs, conclude with a joyous and rapid dance in 6/8, so does this Sextet—only in a surprising way: nearly every phrase in this high-spirited movement is an unusual five bars in length.

And, yes, it's a Western rondo.

Sextet

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1. Cantilena

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Lyricaly ♩ = c. 108 *

Musical score for measures 1-4. The Alto Saxophone part begins with a melodic line marked *mp*. The Brass Quintet (Trumpet 1, Trumpet 2, Horn, Trombone, Tuba) provides harmonic support, with most parts starting at a *p* dynamic. The key signature is three flats (B-flat major/C minor) and the time signature is 8/8.

Musical score for measures 5-8. Measure 5 is marked with a box containing the letter 'A'. The tempo is marked *Poco meno* ♩ = 100. The Alto Saxophone part continues with a more complex melodic line. The Brass Quintet parts are more active, with the Trombone and Tuba parts showing more rhythmic movement. The section concludes with a *poco rall.* marking and a *mp* dynamic.

*The 8/8 measures in this movement should be played with a feeling of four large beats. That is, 2+3+2+1, counting in 8ths. It is crucial to avoid the feeling of 3 large beats.

B *Meno Mosso* ♩ = 88

C

Musical score for section B and C, measures 9-11. The score is for a woodwind and brass ensemble. The key signature is three flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor). The tempo is *Meno Mosso* with a quarter note equal to 88 beats per minute. Section B (measures 9-10) features a dynamic of *mf*. Section C (measure 11) features a dynamic of *p*. The instruments are: A. Sax. (Alto Saxophone), Tpt 1 (Trumpet 1), Tpt 2 (Trumpet 2), Hn (Horn), Tbn. (Tuba), and Tba (Trombone). The saxophone part has a melodic line with slurs and accents. The brass parts provide harmonic support with various rhythmic patterns.

D *Poco Meno* ♩ = 84

Musical score for section D, measures 12-15. The key signature changes to two sharps (D major or B minor). The tempo is *Poco Meno* with a quarter note equal to 84 beats per minute. The score is for the same woodwind and brass ensemble. Section D (measures 12-15) features dynamics of *mf* and *p*. The instruments are: A. Sax., Tpt 1, Tpt 2, Hn, Tbn., and Tba. The saxophone part has a melodic line with slurs and accents. The brass parts provide harmonic support with various rhythmic patterns.

15

A. Sax. *mf*

Tpt 1 *p*

Tpt 2 *p*

Hn *mf*

Tbn. *mp* *mf*

Tba

E

18

A. Sax. *p*

Tpt 1 *mp*

Tpt 2 *p*

Hn *mp* *p*

Tbn. *mf*

Tba

F

G

Poco piu mosso $\text{♩} = 92$

21

A. Sax. *mf* *pp* *mp*

Tpt 1 *f*

Tpt 2 *p*

Hn *mf* *p*

Tbn. *mf* *p*

Tba *p*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 21, 22, and 23. Measure 21 features a saxophone solo with a triplet of eighth notes. The woodwinds (Tpt 1, Tpt 2, Hn, Tbn, Tba) provide harmonic support with sustained notes and some melodic fragments. Dynamics range from *mf* to *pp*. Measure 22 continues the saxophone line with a triplet and a dynamic shift to *pp*. Measure 23 shows the saxophone playing a melodic line with a dynamic of *mp*, while other instruments play sustained notes.

24

A. Sax.

Tpt 1

Tpt 2 *pp*

Hn *pp*

Tbn. *pp*

Tba *pp*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 24, 25, and 26. Measure 24 features a saxophone solo with a triplet of eighth notes. The woodwinds (Tpt 2, Hn, Tbn, Tba) play sustained notes in a *pp* dynamic. Measure 25 continues the saxophone line with a triplet and a dynamic of *pp*. Measure 26 shows the saxophone playing a melodic line with a dynamic of *pp*, while other instruments play sustained notes.

27 **H** Subito pui Mosso ♩ = 132

A. Sax. *pp* *mf*

Tpt 1 *mp* *mp* *mp*

Tpt 2 *mp* *mp* *mp* *p*

Hn *mp* *mp* *f* *p*

Tbn. *mp* *mp* *mp* *p*

Tba *mp* *mp* *mp*

Horn lead

I accel.

A tempo

31 **Meno Mosso** ♩ = 96

A. Sax. *mp* *mf*

Tpt 1

Tpt 2 *mf*

Hn *mf*

Tbn. *mf*

Tba *mf*

Subito Meno (♩=c. 92)
(Broadly, like a mountain vista)

33

A. Sax. *mp*

Tpt 1 *f*

Tpt 2 *mp*

Hn *mf*

Tbn. *mf* *f*

Tba *f*

35

A. Sax. **J** *Piu Mosso* (♩=c. 96)

Tpt 1 *p*

Tpt 2 *p* *ppp*

Hn *f* *ff* *mp*

Tbn. *mp* *p*

Tba *mp*

38

A. Sax. *mp*

Tpt 1 con sord. *p*

Tpt 2 con sord. *p*

Hn

Tbn.

Tba *mp*

42

K

Meno ♩ = 84

A. Sax. *mp* *p*

Tpt 1

Tpt 2

Hn *mp*

Tbn. *mp*

Tba *p* *mp*

46 (Freely) **L**

A. Sax. *p* *pp*

Tpt 1 *pp*

Tpt 2 *pp*

Hn *pp* con sord.

Tbn. *pp* con sord.

Tba *pp* con sord.

2. Fugue

Scherzando $\text{♩} = c. 126$

Alto Saxophone

Musical staff for Alto Saxophone, showing a melodic line with dynamics *mp* and various articulations.

Trumpet 1

Musical staff for Trumpet 1, marked *senza sord.*

Trumpet 2

Musical staff for Trumpet 2, marked *senza sord.*

Horn

Musical staff for Horn, marked *senza sord.*

Trombone

Musical staff for Trombone, marked *senza sord.*

Tuba

Musical staff for Tuba, marked *senza sord.*

A. Sax.

Musical staff for Alto Saxophone, starting at measure 7, showing a melodic line with dynamics *mp* and various articulations.

Tpt 1

Musical staff for Trumpet 1, marked *senza sord.*

Tpt 2

Musical staff for Trumpet 2, marked *senza sord.*

Hn

Musical staff for Horn, marked *senza sord.*

Tbn.

Musical staff for Trombone, marked *senza sord.*

Tba

Musical staff for Tuba, marked *senza sord.*

13 **A**

A. Sax. *pp*

Tpt 1 *mp* *pp*

Tpt 2

Hn *mp*

Tbn.

Tba *mf*

Detailed description: This system of music covers measures 13 through 18. It features six staves: A. Sax., Tpt 1, Tpt 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tba. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 2/4. Measure 13 is marked with a box 'A'. The A. Sax. part starts with a *pp* dynamic and has a crescendo hairpin. Tpt 1 starts with *mp* and has a *pp* dynamic later. Hn. starts with *mp*. Tba. starts with *mf*. The music includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are also dynamic markings like *pp* and *mf*.

19

A. Sax.

Tpt 1 *p* *mf*

Tpt 2 *mf*

Hn *mf*

Tbn. *mf*

Tba *pp*

Detailed description: This system of music covers measures 19 through 24. It features six staves: A. Sax., Tpt 1, Tpt 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tba. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 2/4. Measure 19 is marked with a box 'A'. The A. Sax. part has a crescendo hairpin. Tpt 1 starts with *p* and has a *mf* dynamic later. Tpt 2 starts with *mf*. Hn. starts with *mf*. Tbn. starts with *mf*. Tba. starts with *pp*. The music includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are also dynamic markings like *p*, *mf*, and *pp*.

B

25

A. Sax. *mf* *mp*

Tpt 1 *p*

Tpt 2 *p*

Hn *mf* *p*

Tbn. *mf* *mp* *p*

Tba

C

31

A. Sax.

Tpt 1 *p* con sord.

Tpt 2 *p* con sord.

Hn *mp* *p*

Tbn. *f*

Tba *f* *p sub.*

37

A. Sax.

Tpt 1

Tpt 2
(con sord.)

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

43

A. Sax.

Tpt 1
senza sord.
pp mp

Tpt 2

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

49

A. Sax. *mf* *ff* *mp*

Tpt 1 *mf* *f* *mp*

Tpt 2 *mp* senza sord.

Hn *f* *p*

Tbn. *mp* *mp* *p*

Tba *mp* *f*

55

A. Sax. *mf*

Tpt 1 con sord. *mp* *p* *pp*

Tpt 2 con sord. *mp* *p* *pp*

Hn *p* *pp* *f*

Tbn. *mf* *mf*

Tba *mp* *mf* *f*

E

62

A. Sax.

Tpt 1

Tpt 2

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

68

A. Sax.

Tpt 1

Tpt 2

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

F

(con sord.)

f

mf

mf

mp

75 **G**

A. Sax. *p*

Tpt 1 *mp* *p* *mf* senza sord.

Tpt 2 *mp* *p*

Hn. *p*

Tbn. *p*

Tba. *p*

82 **H**

A. Sax. *f*

Tpt 1

Tpt 2

Hn.

Tbn.

Tba. *mf*

I

88

A. Sax. *mp* *mp* *f*

Tpt 1 *mf* *f* *mf* *mp* *f*

Tpt 2 *mf* *f* *mf* *mp* *f*

Hn *f* *mp* *mp* *f* *ff*

Tbn. *mf* *mf* *mp* *ff*

Tba *mp* *mf* *f* *ff*

senza sord.

J

94

A. Sax. *f*

Tpt 1 *f* *ff*

Tpt 2 *f* *ff*

Hn *mf* *ff*

Tbn. *mf* *ff*

Tba *mf* *ff*

100

A. Sax. *ff* *fff*

Tpt 1 *fff*

Tpt 2 *fff*

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

106

A. Sax. *ff*

Tpt 1 *ff*

Tpt 2 *ff*

Hn *fff* *f* *ff*

Tbn. *fff* *f* *ff*

Tba *fff* *f* *ff*

K

112

A. Sax.

Tpt 1

Tpt 2

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

118

A. Sax.

Tpt 1

Tpt 2

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

L

sfz

sfz

sfz


sfz


fff


sfz


sfz


124


A. Sax. 

Tpt 1 

Tpt 2 

Hn 

Tbn. 

Tba 

M

130

A. Sax. 

Tpt 1 

Tpt 2 

Hn 

Tbn. 

Tba 

136

A. Sax. *mp*

Tpt 1 *mf* < *f* senza sord.

Tpt 2 *f* senza sord.

Hn *f*

Tbn. *mp*

Tba *mp*

141

A. Sax. *mf* *p*

Tpt 1 *p*

Tpt 2 *p*

Hn *f* *p* stopped

Tbn. *mf* *p* *mp*

Tba *mp* *mp*

N

146

A. Sax. *fff*

Tpt 1 *fff*

Tpt 2 *con sord.* *senza sord.* *fff*

Hn *open*

Tbn. *mp* *fff*

Tba *fff sub.*

151

A. Sax.

Tpt 1

Tpt 2

Hn *fff*

Tbn.

Tba

O

156

A. Sax.

Tpt 1

Tpt 2

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

160

A. Sax.

Tpt 1

Tpt 2

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

ffp

ffp

ffp

ffp

ffp

ffp

ff

ff

ff

ff

ffz

ffz

ffz

ffz

3. Recitative

$\text{♩} = 40$ (Molto Rubato)

A. Sax. *p* *mf*

Tpt 1 con sord. *pp*

Tpt 2 con sord. *pp*

Hn con sord. *pp*

Tbn *pp*

Tba

5

A. Sax. *p* *mf* *p*

Tpt 1 *p* *p*

Tpt 2 *mf* *p*

Hn *p* *mf* *p*

Tbn *p* *mf*

Tba *p* *mf* *p*

A

9 **B**

A. Sax. *sfz* *p*

Tpt 1 *p* *mp* *pp*

Tpt 2 *p* *mp* *pp*

Hn *mp* *pp*

Tbn. *p* *mp* *pp*

Tba *p*

13 **C**

A. Sax. *mf*

Tpt 1 *mp*

Tpt 2 *mf*

Hn *mp* *mf*

Tbn. *mp* *mf*

Tba *mp* *mf*

D (Somewhat Freely)

16

A. Sax.

Tpt 1

Tpt 2

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

p *pp*

4. Rondo

Allegro Scherzando ♩ = 120

A

Alto Saxophone

Trumpet 1

Trumpet 2

Horn

Trombone

Tuba

mp

p

pp

mp

p

pp

mp

p

p

pp

mp

p

p

pp

mp

p

B

A. Sax.

Tpt 1

Tpt 2

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

mf

p

p

C

12

A. Sax.

Tpt 1

Tpt 2

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

D

18

A. Sax.

Tpt 1

Tpt 2

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

E

F

24

A. Sax. *mf*

Tpt 1 *f* *mf*

Tpt 2 *f* *mf*

Hn *mp* *mf*

Tbn. *mp* *mp* *mf*

Tba *mp* *mf*

G

31

A. Sax. *f* *p sub*

Tpt 1 *f*

Tpt 2 *f*

Hn *pp*

Tbn.

Tba *pp*

H

I

38

A. Sax. *ff*

Tpt 1 *ff*

Tpt 2 *pp* < *ff*

Hn *ff*

Tbn. *pp* < *f* *ff* *f*

Tba *f*

J

45

A. Sax.

Tpt 1 *mf*

Tpt 2 *mf*

Hn

Tbn.

Tba *f*

K

52

A. Sax. *mf*

Tpt 1

Tpt 2

Hn *mf*

Tbn. *mf*

Tba *mf*

L

M

59

A. Sax. *mp*

Tpt 1 *mp* *lyrically*

Tpt 2 *p*

Hn *p*

Tbn. *p*

Tba *p*

67 N

A. Sax. *p* ∇ *mf*

Tpt 1 *p* lyrically

Tpt 2 *mp*

Hn.

Tbn.

Tba.

75 O

A. Sax. *f*

Tpt 1 *f*

Tpt 2 *f*

Hn. *f*

Tbn. *f*

Tba. *f*

84

P

Q

A. Sax. *mf* *mp*

Tpt 1 *mf*

Tpt 2 *p* *mf*

Hn *p* *mf*

Tbn.

Tba *p* *mf*

94

R

A. Sax.

Tpt 1

Tpt 2

Hn

Tbn. *mf*

Tba

102

S **T**

A. Sax. *pp*

Tpt 1 *mf*

Tpt 2 *pp*

Hn *p*

Tbn. *pp*

Tba *pp*

110

U

A. Sax. *p* *mp* *mf*

Tpt 1 *mf* *f*

Tpt 2 *mf* *f*

Hn *mf* *f*

Tbn. *p* *mf* *f*

Tba *f*

116 V

A. Sax. *mp*

Tpt 1

Tpt 2 *p*

Hn *p*

Tbn. *p*

Tba *p*

122 W

A. Sax. *mf*

Tpt 1 *p*

Tpt 2 *mp*

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

X

129

A. Sax. *p*

Tpt 1 *p*

Tpt 2 *mf* *mp*

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

Y

135

A. Sax.

Tpt 1

Tpt 2 *p*

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

Z

AA

141

A. Sax.

mf *mp* *f*

Tpt 1

mp *f*

Tpt 2

mf *f*

Hn

mp *f* *mf*

Tbn.

mp *f* *mp* *f*

Tba

mp *f* *mp*

BB

148

A. Sax.

mf *sub p*

Tpt 1

mp *f*

Tpt 2

sub p

Hn

f *p*

Tbn.

sub p

Tba

p

CC

155

A. Sax. *ff*

Tpt 1 *ff*

Tpt 2 *ff*

Hn *ff*

Tbn. *ff*

Tba *ff*

DD

EE

162

A. Sax. *p* *f* *mp*

Tpt 1 *f*

Tpt 2 *f* *mp*

Hn *p* *f* *mp*

Tbn. *p sub.* *f*

Tba *f*

FF

168

A. Sax. *p* *mf*

Tpt 1

Tpt 2 *p* *mf*

Hn *p* *mf*

Tbn. *mp* *p* *mf*

Tba *mp* *p* *mf*

GG

175

A. Sax. *mf*

Tpt 1 *f*

Tpt 2 *f* *mf* *f*

Hn *mf*

Tbn. *mf*

Tba *mf*

HH

181

A. Sax. *f* *p*

Tpt 1

Tpt 2 *f* *p*

Hn *f* *p*

Tbn. *f* *p*

Tba

187

A. Sax. *f*

Tpt 1 *f*

Tpt 2 *f*

Hn *f*

Tbn. *f*

Tba *f*

II

JJ

193

A. Sax. *ff*

Tpt 1 *ff*

Tpt 2 *ff*

Hn *f*

Tbn. *f*

Tba *f*

KK

199

A. Sax. *ff* *ffp* *fff*

Tpt 1 *ff* *ffp* *fff*

Tpt 2 *ff* *ffp* *fff*

Hn *ff* *ffp* *fff*

Tbn. *ff* *ffp* *fff*

Tba *ff* *ffp* *fff*