

Gerry's Timepiece

*commissioned by the Humanities Center and
College of Arts & Sciences at Syracuse University*

a piece for large jazz ensemble
by Michael Conrad

A note from the composer:

The Syracuse Humanities Center “Cultural Corridor” program made funding available for the creation of new works for jazz orchestra by graduate, faculty, or professional composers representing SU, Cornell, and the University of Rochester/Eastman School of Music. The intent was to commission works that would recall, celebrate and demonstrate some aspect of the stylistic legacy of a jazz artist whose upbringing, education, and/or performance oeuvre took place (or may still be taking place) in the geography of the “cultural corridor” loosely defined as Central New York, the Southern Tier, and Western New York.

As the representative for the Eastman School of Music, I chose to write a piece honoring Gerry Niewood, a Rochester native and great saxophonist who died tragically in a 2009 plane crash in Buffalo. I found that some of the professors at Eastman knew and played with Gerry. Bill Dobbins, in particular, was very helpful in directing me to recordings to get the ball rolling. Dave Rivello also provided great insight and guidance for this project.

Gerry’s playing was so full of energy and passion. I am especially impressed and intrigued by his ability to approach each saxophone differently. He sounds equally brilliant on soprano, alto, and tenor, bringing such a unique sound to each. It was clear to me from the beginning, that this piece would feature the saxophone.

Listening to Niewood’s recordings, “Slow Hot Wind” (1975) and “Gerry Niewood and Timepiece” (1977) was a good way for me to explore his compositional voice. His more modal pieces seemed to be inspired by the John Coltrane Quartet, bursting with energy and a sense of spirituality.

“Gerry’s Timepiece” is meant to bring out these characteristics of his music and his playing. A recurring reference to Gerry’s lively piece, “Joy,” is included - this music, after all, should be full of joy and life! Thank you for helping me celebrate the life and legacy of a fantastic musician.

Michael Conrad
MM, Eastman School of Music
Class of 2013

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Mike Conrad

Freely ♩ = app. 120

(piano trem.) solo, espress.
mf

Alto Saxophone 1

Alto Saxophone 2

Tenor Saxophone 1

Tenor Saxophone 2

Baritone Saxophone

Trumpet 1

Trumpet 2

Trumpet 3

Trumpet 4

Trombone 1

Trombone 2

Trombone 3

Bass Trombone

Guitar

Piano

Bass

Drums

ad lib... continue to tremelo freely (alto) *p*

these pitches only

mp ♩ = app. 120

10 freely, with motion

Alto 1 *mf* start slightly after tpt. 2 *sim.* (as is)

Alto 2 *mf* start slightly after trbs. *tremolo* (ad lib)

Tenor 1 *mf* re-articulate/swell ad lib.

Tenor 2 *mf* re-articulate/swell ad lib.

Bari. *mf* re-articulate/swell ad lib.

Tpt. 1 *mf* start slightly after alto 1 *sim.* solo *mf*

Tpt. 2 *mf* start slightly after tpt. 2 *mf*

Tpt. 3 *mf* start slightly after trb. 1 *start slightly after trb. 1*

Tpt. 4 *mf* re-articulate/swell ad lib.

Tbn. 1 *mf* re-articulate/swell ad lib.

Tbn. 2 *mf* re-articulate/swell ad lib.

Tbn. 3 *mf* re-articulate/swell ad lib.

B. Tbn. *mf* create atmospheric accomp. (C pedal)

Gr. *mf* as is brief alto cadenza tremelo ad lib. (as before)

Pno. *mf* *pp* *mf*

Bass *mf*

Dr. *mf* (in time) *mf*

A *♩* = app. 90 loosely... (coloristic, Play - mallets out of time)

brief cadenza, E phrygian

53

Alto 1

Alto 2 *w/ tpts.*

Tenor 1 *mf* *f*

Tenor 2 *f*

Bari. *mf*

Tpt. 1 *mf* *f*

Tpt. 2 *mf* *f*

Tpt. 3

Tpt. 4 *mf* *f*

Tbn. 1 *mf*

Tbn. 2 *mf*

Tbn. 3 *mf*

B. Tbn.

Gr. *mf*

Pno. *C-11 (comp.)* *Ab%* *Bb%* *G7alt/B*

Bass *C pedal ad lib.* *Ab%* *Bb%* *G7alt/B*

Dr. *(time)* *ten/bari* *(tpts.)* *trbs.*