

# Sheltering Sky

(2012)

John Mackey

Commissioned by Traugber Junior High School Band, Rachel Maxwell, Director, and  
Thompson Junior High School Band, Daniel Harrison, Director  
Oswego, Illinois

**Version for 4-Part Adaptable Ensemble**

arranged by Patrick Dunnigan

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## Instrumentation

This setting of Sheltering Sky was created for an adaptable ensemble in four parts:

PART 1: Flute, Oboe, Eb Clarinet, Bb Clarinet, Bb Soprano Sax, Bb Trumpet

PART 2: Flute, Oboe, Bb Clarinet, Bb Trumpet, Eb Alto Sax

PART 3: Bb Clarinet, Bb Trumpet, Eb Alto Sax, Bb Tenor Sax,  
French Horn, Trombone, Euphonium, Bassoon

PART 4: Bass Clarinet, Eb Baritone Sax, Trombone, Euphonium,  
Bassoon, Tuba, Double Bass

Percussion:

Marimba 1 & 2 (one instrument, two players)

Vibraphone

Suspended Cymbal

Bass Drum

## Conductor Notes:

This version is playable with as few as four players, one per part. When assigning parts, strive to achieve a balance across the ensemble for proper musical effect.

The percussion parts are optional in this version. If percussionists are available, the order of preference for part assignments would be Marimba 1, Vibraphone, Marimba 2, Suspended Cymbal, then Bass Drum. Switching between percussion parts is also possible.

Across the parts, there are measures where some notes are doubled in octaves. When one note is smaller than the other (cued size), the regular-size note is the preferred note. Use the cued note if the player is unable to play the regular-size note. When both notes are the same size, the choice of which note to play is up to the conductor. In most cases, the choice will be obvious as some extremely high or low notes may be out-of-range of younger players.

The designations 'solo' and 'tutti' apply across the parts, not the staves. Thus in Part 1, one player covers the 'solo' for all assigned to Part 1, and so forth. Of course, this may be adjusted for proper balance at the discretion of the conductor.

- notes provided by Patrick Dunnigan

## Program Note from the Original Version

The wind band medium has, in the twenty-first century, a host of disparate styles that dominate its texture. At the core of its contemporary development exist a group of composers who dazzle with scintillating and frightening virtuosity. As such, at first listening one might experience John Mackey's *Sheltering Sky* as a striking departure. Its serene and simple presentation is a throwback of sorts - a nostalgic portrait of time suspended.

The work itself has a folksong-like quality - intended by the composer - and through this an immediate sense of familiarity emerges. Certainly the repertoire has a long and proud tradition of weaving folk songs into its identity, from the days of Holst and Vaughan Williams to modern treatments by such figures as Donald Grantham and Frank Ticheli. Whereas these composers incorporated extant melodies into their works, however, Mackey takes a play from Percy Grainger. Grainger's *Colonial Song* seemingly sets a beautiful folksong melody in an enchanting way (so enchanting, in fact, that he reworked the tune into two other pieces: *Australian Up-Country Tune* and *The Gum-Suckers March*). In reality, however, Grainger's melody was entirely original - his own concoction to express how he felt about his native Australia. Likewise, although the melodies of *Sheltering Sky* have a recognizable quality (hints of the contours and colors of *Danny Boy* and *Shenandoah* are perceptible), the tunes themselves are original to the work, imparting a sense of hazy distance as though they were from a half-remembered dream.

The work unfolds in a sweeping arch structure, with cascading phrases that elide effortlessly. The introduction presents softly articulated harmonies stacking through a surrounding placidity. From there emerge statements of each of the two folksong-like melodies - the call as a sighing descent in solo oboe, and its answer as a hopeful rising line in trumpet. Though the composer's trademark virtuosity is absent, his harmonic language remains. Mackey avoids traditional triadic sonorities almost exclusively, instead choosing more indistinct chords with diatonic extensions (particularly seventh and ninth chords) that facilitate the hazy sonic world that the piece inhabits. Near cadences, chromatic dissonances fill the narrow spaces in these harmonies, creating an even greater pull toward wistful nostalgia. Each new phrase begins over the resolution of the previous one, creating a sense of motion that never completely stops. The melodies themselves unfold and eventually dissipate until at last the serene introductory material returns - the opening chords finally coming to rest.

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4 Part Adaptable Ensemble

# Sheltering Sky

John Mackey

for Elizabeth Sharp

arr. Patrick Dunnigan

♩ = 42

stagger breath  
3 players max.

*rit.*

tutti

solo

**PART 1**

Flute  
Oboe

E♭ Clarinet

B♭ Clarinet

B♭ Soprano Sax  
B♭ Trumpet

*pp* stagger breath 3 players max.

*pp* stagger breath 3 players max.

*pp* stagger breath 3 players max.

*pp*

4/4 3/4 4/4 3/4

tutti tutti tutti tutti

solo solo solo solo

**PART 2**

Flute  
Oboe

B♭ Clarinet  
B♭ Trumpet

E♭ Alto Sax

solo

*pp* solo

*pp* solo

*pp* solo

4/4 3/4 4/4 3/4

tutti tutti tutti tutti

**PART 3**

B♭ Clarinet  
B♭ Trumpet

E♭ Alto Sax

B♭ Tenor Sax

F Horn

Trombone  
Euphonium  
Bassoon

3 players max.

*pp* 3 players max.

*pp* 3 players max.

*pp* 3 players max.

*pp* 3 players max.

*pp* 3 players max.

4/4 3/4 4/4 3/4

tutti tutti tutti tutti tutti tutti

**PART 4**

Bass Clarinet

E♭ Bari Sax

Trombone  
Euphonium  
Bassoon

Tuba

Double Bass

3 players max.

*pp* 3 players max.

*pp* 3 players max.

*pp* 3 players max.

*pp* 3 players max.

*pp* 3 players max.

4/4 3/4 4/4 3/4

tutti tutti tutti tutti tutti tutti

Marimba 1

Marimba 2

Vibraphone

Cymbals

Bass Drum

*pp*

motor on, fairly slow  
bowed until indicated otherwise

*p* pedal down until indicated otherwise

4/4 3/4 4/4 3/4

*pp*

always let ring, do not dampen

*pp*



15

*poco rit.*

**B** *a tempo*

PART 1

Fl. Ob.  
E♭ Cl.  
B♭ Cl.  
B♭ S. Sx.  
B♭ Tpt.

*pp* tutti  
*p*

3/4 4/4

PART 2

Fl. Ob.  
B♭ Cl.  
B♭ Tpt.  
E♭ A. Sx.

*pp* tutti  
*p*

3/4 4/4

PART 3

B♭ Cl.  
B♭ Tpt.  
E♭ A. Sx.  
B♭ T. Sx.  
F Hn.  
Tbn.  
Euph.  
Bssn.

*pp* tutti  
*p*  
*mp*

3/4 4/4

PART 4

Bs. Cl.  
E♭ B. Sax  
Tbn.  
Euph.  
Bssn.  
Tuba  
D.B.

*pp* tutti  
*p*  
*pp* tutti  
*p*

3/4 4/4

Mba. 1  
Mba. 2  
Vib.  
Cym.  
B. Dr.

*mp*  
*mp*  
*mp*  
(do not release pedal)

3/4 4/4

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**E** with more motion

**PART 1**  
 Fl. Ob.  
 E♭ Cl.  
 B♭ Cl.  
 B♭ S. Sx.  
 B♭ Tpt.

**PART 2**  
 Fl. Ob.  
 B♭ Cl.  
 B♭ Tpt.  
 E♭ A. Sx.

**PART 3**  
 B♭ Cl.  
 B♭ Tpt.  
 E♭ A. Sx.  
 B♭ T. Sx.  
 F Hn.  
 Tbn.  
 Euph.  
 Bssn.

**PART 4**  
 Bs. Cl.  
 E♭ B. Sax  
 Tbn.  
 Euph.  
 Bssn.  
 Tuba  
 D.B.

Mba. 1  
 Mba. 2  
 Vib.  
 Cym.  
 B. Dr.

3/4, 2/4, 3/4, 2/4, 3/4  
 pp, p, mp, tutti, solo

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**F** *a tempo*

**PART 1**

Fl. Ob. *tutti*  
cresc. *f*

E♭ Cl. *tutti*  
cresc. *f*

B♭ Cl. B♭ S. Sx. B♭ Tpt. *tutti*  
cresc. *f*

4/4

**PART 2**

Fl. Ob. *tutti*  
cresc. *f*

B♭ Cl. B♭ Tpt. *tutti*  
cresc. *f*

E♭ A. Sx. *tutti*  
cresc. *f*

4/4

**PART 3**

B♭ Cl. B♭ Tpt. *tutti*  
cresc. *f*

E♭ A. Sx. *tutti*  
cresc. *f*

B♭ T. Sx. *tutti*  
cresc. *f*

F Hn. *tutti*  
cresc. *f*

Tbn. Euph. Bssn. *tutti*  
cresc. *f*

*ff*

**PART 4**

Bs. Cl. *tutti*  
cresc. *mf* *f*

E♭ B. Sax *tutti*  
cresc. *mf* *f*

Tbn. Euph. Bssn. *tutti*  
cresc. *mf* *f*

Tuba *tutti*  
cresc. *mf* *f*

D.B. *tutti*  
cresc. *mf* *f*

4/4

Mba. 1 *mp* cresc. *f*

Mba. 2 *mp* cresc. (play "C" instead of lower notes if marimba range is limited) *f*

Vib. mallets *mf* *mp* *mp* *f*

Cym. *mp*

B. Dr. *mp*

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*poco rit.*

I

*a tempo*

J

*poco rit.*

**PART 1**  
 Fl. Ob. *p* solo *tutti* *solo* *tutti*  
 E♭ Cl. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*  
 B♭ Cl. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*  
 B♭ S. Sax. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*  
 B♭ Tpt. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*

**PART 2**  
 Fl. Ob. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*  
 B♭ Cl. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*  
 B♭ Tpt. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*  
 E♭ A. Sax. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*

**PART 3**  
 B♭ Cl. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*  
 B♭ Tpt. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*  
 E♭ A. Sax. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*  
 B♭ T. Sax. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*  
 F Hn. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*  
 Tbn. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*  
 Euph. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*  
 Bssn. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*

**PART 4**  
 Bs. Cl. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*  
 E♭ B. Sax. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*  
 Tbn. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*  
 Euph. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*  
 Bssn. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*  
 Tuba *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*  
 D.B. *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*

Mba. 1  
 Mba. 2  
 Vib. *p* bowed *pp* pedal down until indicated otherwise  
 Cym.  
 B. Dr.

*3/4* *2/4* *4/4* *3/4* *2/4* *3/4*

