

JOHN MACKY

Strange Humors

Saxophone Ensemble with djembe / 2021

Commissioned by the Cedar Ridge High School Saxophone Choir
Arminda Velasquez, director

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Instrumentation

2 Soprano Saxophones
2 Alto Saxophones
2 Tenor Saxophones
2 Baritone Saxophones
1 Bass Saxophone (optional)

Djembe

Program Note

The first version of “Strange Humors” was a student piece for string quartet and djembe that Mackey wrote while pursuing his graduate degree at The Juilliard School. It was later adapted for use by the Parsons Dance Company, with choreography by Robert Battle, and subsequently added to the repertoire of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. The piece represents a merging of musical cultures – the modal melodies and syncopated rhythms of middle Eastern music with the percussive accompaniment of African drumming, all – to quote Mackey – “passed lovingly through the brain of a very white kid from Ohio.”

At the heart of “Strange Humors” lies the pulse of the djembe, which remains from the original version. The djembe, an hourglass-shaped drum played with bare hands, is a major part of the customs of west African countries such as Mali and Guinea, where djembe ensembles accompany many functional celebrations of society.

The piece opens with a sultry soprano saxophone, a line laced with Phrygian influence representing the “typical” melodies of the most northeastern parts of the African continent — most notably Egypt, but also parts of the Arabian peninsula. Later, the other saxophones emulate the snaking lines of the soprano. The groove of the djembe combined with the quirky rhythms throughout leave an impression that lingers in the listener’s mind long after its conclusion.

Program note by Jacob Wallace

Please credit Jacob Wallace when reproducing or excerpting this program note

Strange Humors

for saxophone ensemble & djembe

John Mackey

Slow, extremely freely

solo
mf

Soprano Sax 1
Soprano Sax 2
Alto Sax 1
Alto Sax 2
Tenor Sax 1
Tenor Sax 2
Baritone Sax 1
Baritone Sax 2
Bass Sax
Djembe

4/4, 3/4, 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, 3/4

A

tutti
mf
sub. p
molto rit.

S. Sax. 1
S. Sax. 2
A. Sax. 1
A. Sax. 2
T. Sax. 1
T. Sax. 2
B. Sax. 1
B. Sax. 2
Bs. Sax.
Djmb.

p
ppp
ppp
ppp

(start with a very flat C#, and scoop slowly up to proper pitch)

stuttering unison tremolos, varying speed, using alternating alternate fingerings

fade in and out randomly, with varying amounts of crescendo, never exceeding *p*

n. *ppp* n. *p* etc.

3/4, 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, 3/4, 4/4, 3/4

B ♩=120

18

S. Sax. 1 *ff*

S. Sax. 2 **3/4** *ff*

A. Sax. 1 *ff*

A. Sax. 2 *ff*

T. Sax. 1 **3/4** *ff*

T. Sax. 2 *ff*

B. Sax. 1 *ff*

B. Sax. 2 **3/4** *ff*

Bs. Sax. *ff*

Djb. *ff*

C

25

S. Sax. 1

S. Sax. 2

A. Sax. 1

A. Sax. 2

T. Sax. 1 *mf* solo *sfz* *molto!* *mf*

T. Sax. 2

B. Sax. 1 *mp*

B. Sax. 2 *mp*

Bs. Sax.

Djb. *mp*

32

S. Sax. 1
S. Sax. 2
A. Sax. 1
A. Sax. 2
T. Sax. 1
T. Sax. 2
B. Sax. 1
B. Sax. 2
Bs. Sax.
Djb.

D

39

S. Sax. 1
S. Sax. 2
A. Sax. 1
A. Sax. 2
T. Sax. 1
T. Sax. 2
B. Sax. 1
B. Sax. 2
Bs. Sax.
Djb.

46

S. Sax. 1
S. Sax. 2
A. Sax. 1
A. Sax. 2
T. Sax. 1
T. Sax. 2
B. Sax. 1
B. Sax. 2
Bs. Sax.
Djib.

E

52

S. Sax. 1
S. Sax. 2
A. Sax. 1
A. Sax. 2
T. Sax. 1
T. Sax. 2
B. Sax. 1
B. Sax. 2
Bs. Sax.
Djib.

56

S. Sax. 1 *f* *p*

S. Sax. 2 *f* *fp* *f* *p*

A. Sax. 1 *f* *mp* *mf*

A. Sax. 2 *f*

T. Sax. 1 *mp*

T. Sax. 2 *mp*

B. Sax. 1 *mp*

B. Sax. 2 *mp*

Bs. Sax. *mp*

Djb. *mp*

62

S. Sax. 1 *mp* *f*

S. Sax. 2 *mp* *f*

A. Sax. 1 *mp* *f*

A. Sax. 2 *mp* *f*

T. Sax. 1 *mf* *f*

T. Sax. 2 *mf* *f*

B. Sax. 1 *f*

B. Sax. 2 *f*

Bs. Sax. *mp* *f*

Djb. *f*

F

68

S. Sax. 1 *ff*

S. Sax. 2 *ff*

A. Sax. 1 *ff*

A. Sax. 2 *ff*

T. Sax. 1 *ff*

T. Sax. 2 *ff*

B. Sax. 1 *ff*

B. Sax. 2 *ff*

Bs. Sax. *ff*

Djb. *ff*

G

73

S. Sax. 1 *p* *mp* *p* *mf*

S. Sax. 2 *p* *mp* *p* *mf*

A. Sax. 1 *p* *mp* *p*

A. Sax. 2 *p* *mp* *p*

T. Sax. 1 *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf*

T. Sax. 2 *p* *mp* *p*

B. Sax. 1 *p* *mp* *p*

B. Sax. 2 *p*

Bs. Sax. *mp* *p*

Djb. *p*

80

H

S. Sax. 1

S. Sax. 2

A. Sax. 1

A. Sax. 2

T. Sax. 1

T. Sax. 2

B. Sax. 1

B. Sax. 2

Bs. Sax.

Djb.

f *ff* *mf* *ff* *mf*

slap tongue

88

S. Sax. 1

S. Sax. 2

A. Sax. 1

A. Sax. 2

T. Sax. 1

T. Sax. 2

B. Sax. 1

B. Sax. 2

Bs. Sax.

Djb.

f *p* *f* *p* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

I

97

S. Sax. 1 *ff f*

S. Sax. 2 *ff f*

A. Sax. 1 *ff f*

A. Sax. 2 *ff f*

T. Sax. 1 *ff f*

T. Sax. 2 *ff f*

B. Sax. 1 *ff f*

B. Sax. 2 *ff f*

Bs. Sax. *ff f*

Djb. *f*

3/4

mp

8/5

ff

105

S. Sax. 1 *mf ff f*

S. Sax. 2 *mf ff f*

A. Sax. 1 *mf ff sfz ff*

A. Sax. 2 *mf ff sfz ff*

T. Sax. 1 *mf ff sfz ff*

T. Sax. 2 *mf ff f*

B. Sax. 1 *ff f*

B. Sax. 2 *ff f*

Bs. Sax. *ff f*

Djb. *ff f*

3/4

fff

fff

fff

fff

3

ff

111 **J**

Musical score for measures 111-118, section J. The score includes staves for S. Sax. 1, S. Sax. 2, A. Sax. 1, A. Sax. 2, T. Sax. 1, T. Sax. 2, B. Sax. 1, B. Sax. 2, Bs. Sax., and Djb. Dynamics include *sfz*, *ff*, *fff*, *mp*, and *ff*. Articulations include accents and slurs. A large watermark 'WWW.JOHNMACKEY.COM' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

119 **K**

Musical score for measures 119-126, section K. The score includes staves for S. Sax. 1, S. Sax. 2, A. Sax. 1, A. Sax. 2, T. Sax. 1, T. Sax. 2, B. Sax. 1, B. Sax. 2, Bs. Sax., and Djb. Dynamics include *ff*, *ffp*, *f*, and *fff*. Articulations include accents, slurs, and triplets. A large watermark 'WWW.JOHNMACKEY.COM' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

125

Musical score for measures 125-130. The score includes parts for S. Sax. 1 & 2, A. Sax. 1 & 2, T. Sax. 1 & 2, B. Sax. 1 & 2, Bs. Sax., and Djb. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The music features dynamic markings such as *f*, *sfz*, *ff*, and *mf*. The Djb. part includes triplet markings.

L

131

Musical score for measures 131-136. The score includes parts for S. Sax. 1 & 2, A. Sax. 1 & 2, T. Sax. 1 & 2, B. Sax. 1 & 2, Bs. Sax., and Djb. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The music features dynamic markings such as *mp*, *f*, *mf*, and *mp*. The Djb. part includes triplet markings.

M

137

S. Sax. 1 *f* *ff*

S. Sax. 2 *f* *ff*

A. Sax. 1 *f* *ff*

A. Sax. 2 *f* *ff*

T. Sax. 1 *f* *ff*

T. Sax. 2 *f* *ff*

B. Sax. 1 *f* *ff*

B. Sax. 2 *f* *ff*

Bs. Sax. *f* *ff*

Djib. *ff*

143

S. Sax. 1 *p* *mp*

S. Sax. 2 *p* *mp*

A. Sax. 1 *p* *mp*

A. Sax. 2 *p* *mp*

T. Sax. 1 *mp*

T. Sax. 2 *p*

B. Sax. 1 *p* *mp*

B. Sax. 2 *p*

Bs. Sax. *mp*

Djib. *fff* *ff* *mf* *mf*

deadstroke

149

S. Sax. I

S. Sax. 2

A. Sax. I

A. Sax. 2

T. Sax. I

T. Sax. 2

B. Sax. I

B. Sax. 2

Bs. Sax.

Djb.

p *mf* *fff*

p *mf* *fff*

p *mf* *fff*

p *mf* *fff*

mf *mp* *mf* *fff* *ff*

mf *fff*

p *mf* *fff*

p *mf* *fff*

p *mf* *fff*

mp *mf* *f* *ff*

N

885

885

885

5

solio

157

S. Sax. I

S. Sax. 2

A. Sax. I

A. Sax. 2

T. Sax. I

T. Sax. 2

B. Sax. I

B. Sax. 2

Bs. Sax.

Djb.

ff

ff

ff

ff *tutti*

ff

ff

ff

ff

ff

ff

3/4

3/4

3/4

O

164

Musical score for measures 164-168. The score includes parts for S. Sax. 1 & 2, A. Sax. 1 & 2, T. Sax. 1 & 2, B. Sax. 1 & 2, Bs. Sax., and Djb. Dynamics include *sfz*, *ff*, and *sfp*. Performance instructions include "add growl".

P

169

Musical score for measures 169-173. The score includes parts for S. Sax. 1 & 2, A. Sax. 1 & 2, T. Sax. 1 & 2, B. Sax. 1 & 2, Bs. Sax., and Djb. Dynamics include *mf*, *f*, and *mp*. Performance instructions include "4" and "3".

174

Musical score for measures 174-178. The score is for a full orchestra including strings, woodwinds, and percussion. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The dynamics range from *ff* (fortissimo) to *mf* (mezzo-forte). The percussion part includes a double bass drum (Djb.) with a *f* dynamic and a snare drum (sub.) with a *p* dynamic. There are crescendos and triplets in the percussion part. A large watermark 'WWW.JOHNMACKEY.COM' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

Q 179

Musical score for measures 179-182. The score is for a full orchestra including strings, woodwinds, and percussion. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The dynamics range from *p* (piano) to *fff* (fortississimo). The percussion part includes a double bass drum (Djb.) with a *p* dynamic and a snare drum (sub.) with a *ff* dynamic. There are triplets in the percussion part. A large watermark 'WWW.JOHNMACKEY.COM' is overlaid diagonally across the page.