Duo Sonata

Gregory Wanamaker

Notes

My friends and colleagues Tim McAllister and clarinetist Alan Woy approached me about composing a duo for them after they performed together in a performance of my *Dream Fragments* for a much larger chamber ensemble in 1999. A dangerous ensemble, this duo of sax and clarinet; and despite the fact that they are two very different instruments, I really wanted to focus on the similarities between the two as much as possible.

The result is my *Duo Sonata*, which was completed in 2002. It combines the traditional formal aspects of the classical sonata genre with some more recent musical trends and languages. It exploits many of the coloristic and virtuosic qualities of the clarinet and alto saxophone as individuals and as an ensemble.

Duo Sonata is in four movements each exploiting a different musical style characteristic while sharing common motives and themes:

1. *Departure* is a highly chromatic and rhythmically driven movement in sonata form. Opening with a fast unison passage (introducing the two instruments as if they together were one), they separate - dancing in homorhythmic passages - only to return to the opening phrases in octaves.
2. *Elegy* is strictly white-note aeolian and freely rhythmic. Perhaps more importantly, it was composed very quickly as a reaction to the tragedy of September 11, 2001. It has since been rescored for sting orchestra, string quartet and saxophone quartet.
3. Like *Departure*, the *Scherzo* opens with the clarinet and saxophone in unison silences only to find themselves simultaneously presenting simple motivic ideas in a 2 vs. 3 polymeter.
4. Unlike the previous movements, the groove presented in *Arrival (Blues)* requires the performers to consider those points "when not to play," as Al Woy humorously put it. It is a fast blues (proportional to the 12-bar format) with a contrapuntal development.

Notes to the Performers

Accidentals apply to the following note only. Accidentals are never transferable at the octave.
Some cautionary natural signs have been inserted.

The performers should feel free to apply any tempo fluctuations and expressive devices considered appropriate more "traditional music" in this piece.

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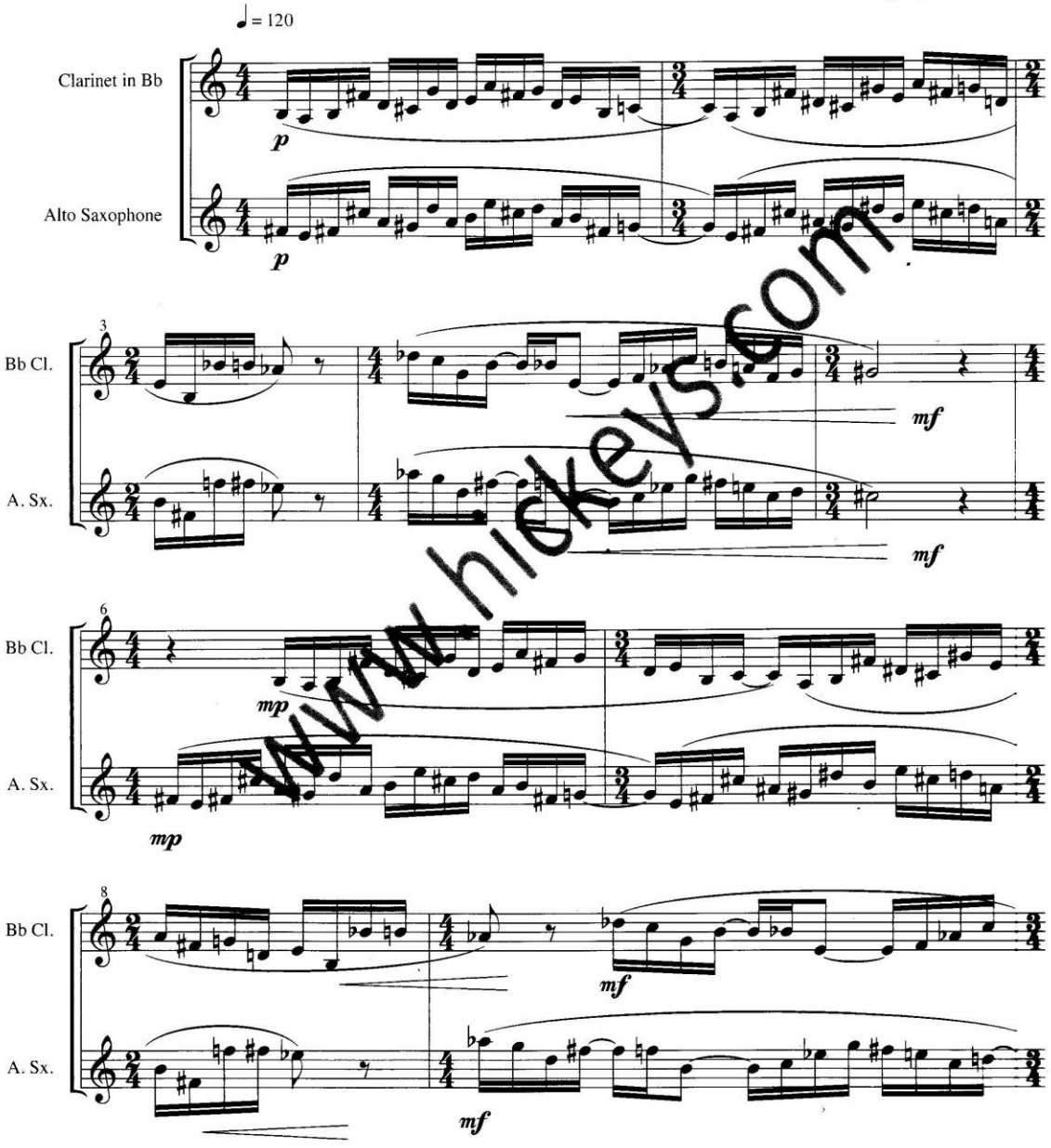
Duo Sonata

for Al and Tim

1. Departure

Gregory Wanamaker



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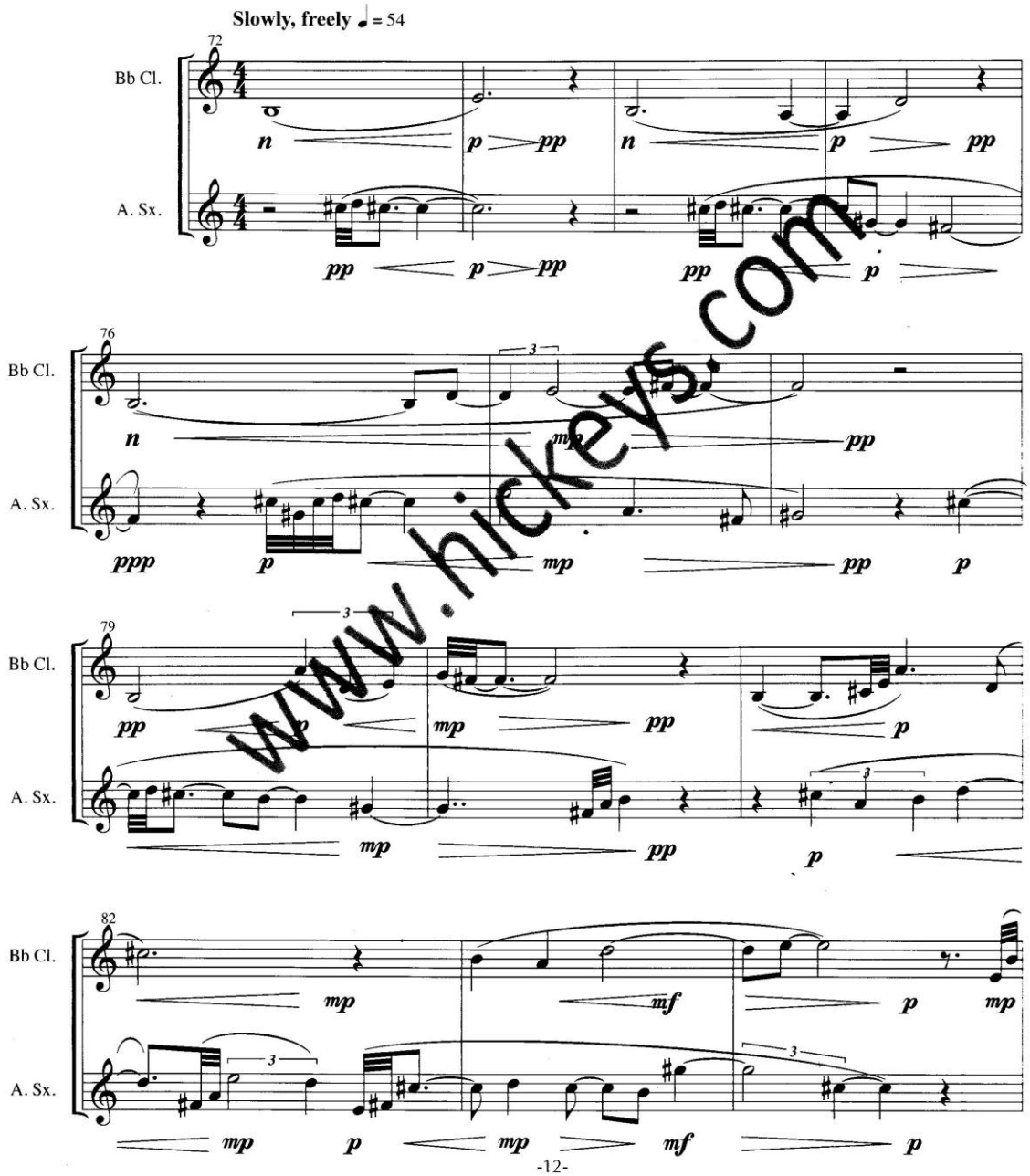
2. Elegy



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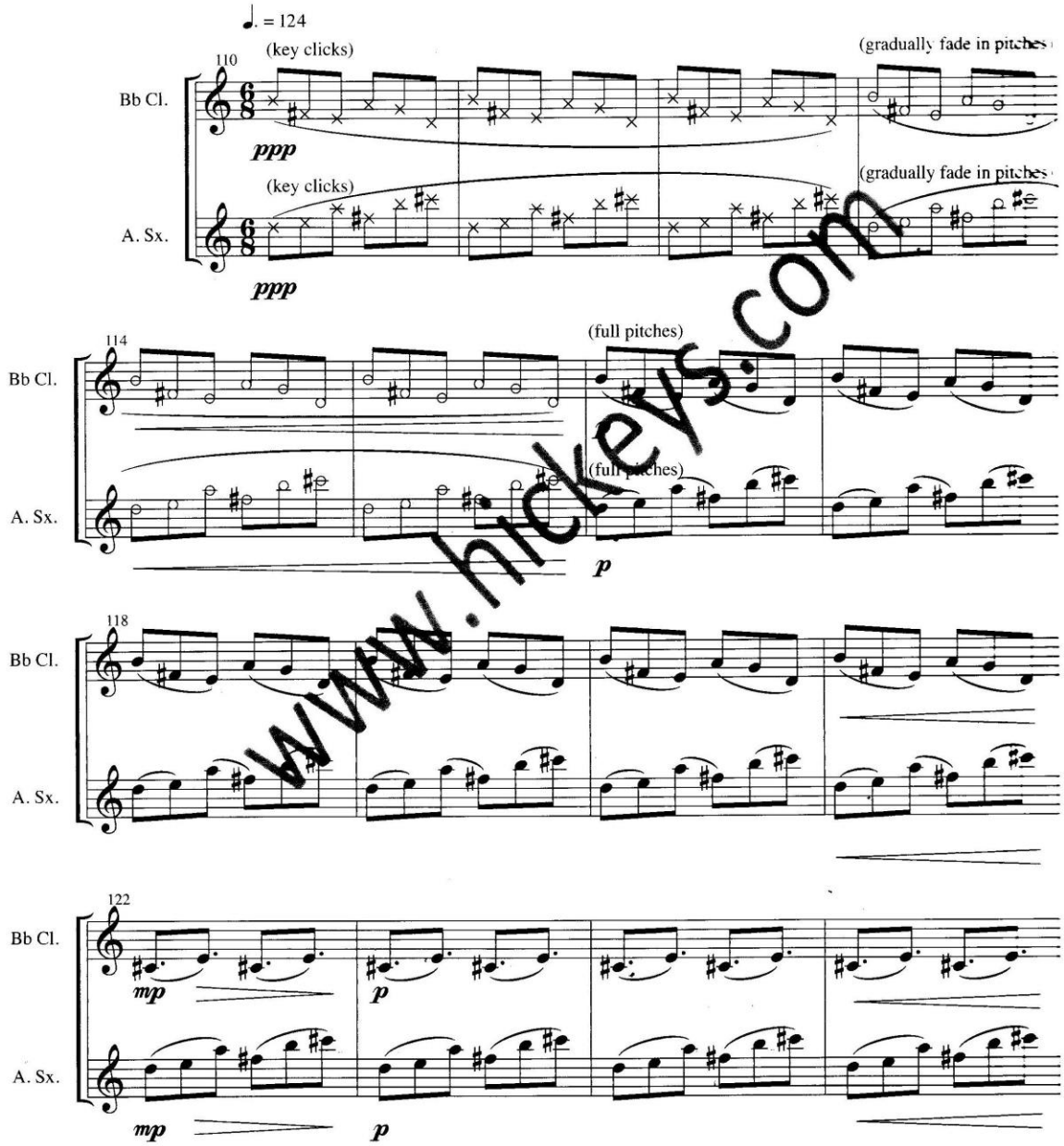
3. Scherzo



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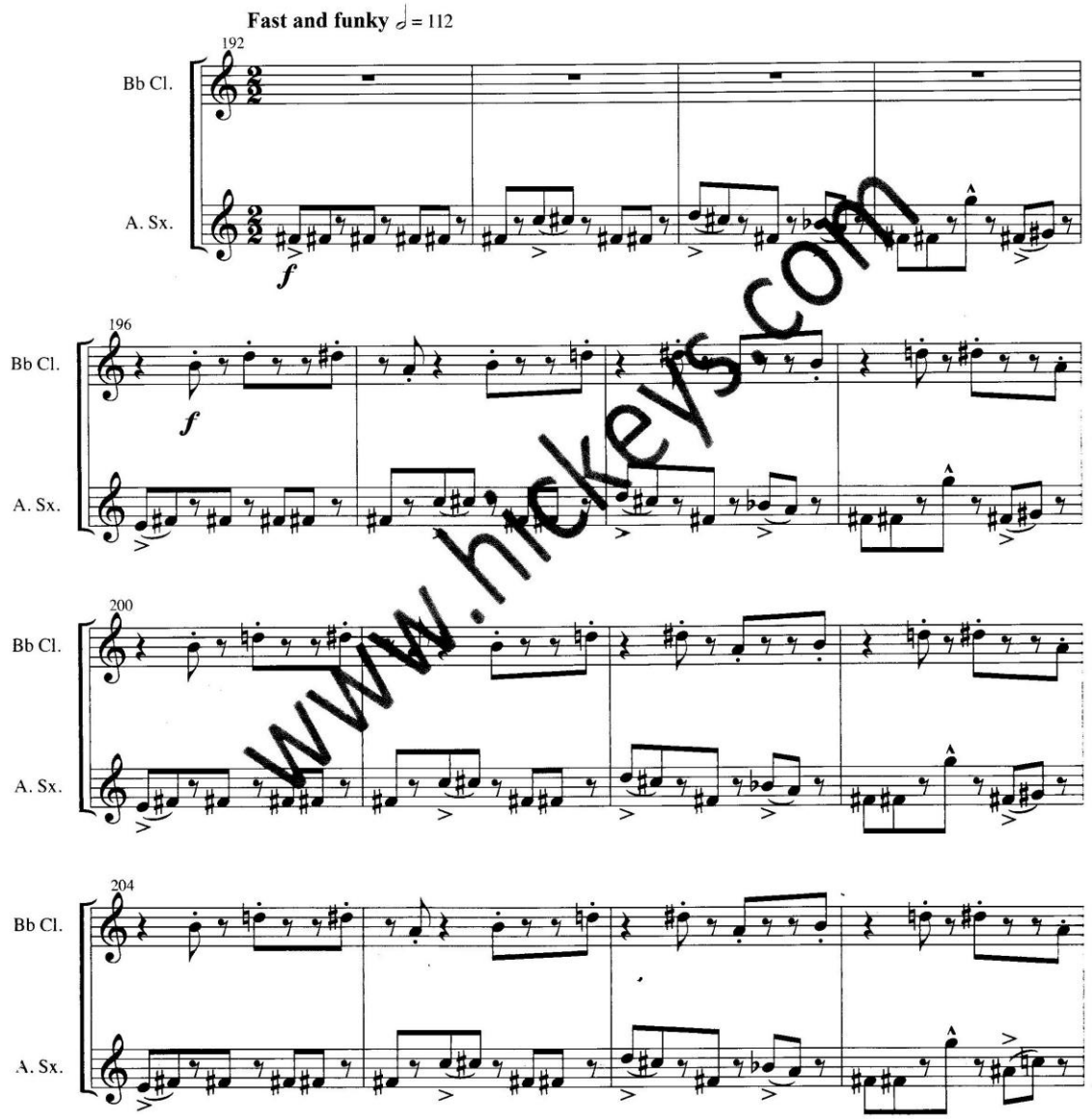
4. Arrival (Blues)



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