

DIVERSIONS AND LAMENT

for Horn Quartet

I. Burleske

II. Maduro-Maduro

III. Imperial Stout

IV. Lament

V. Vixen Hunt

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(ASCAP)

DIVERSIONS AND LAMENT for Horn Quartet was composed on a request from the horn quartet of the USAF Heritage of America Band for an original work to be premiered by the group at the 1999 Annual Conference of the International Horn Society which in 1999 was held at the University of Georgia in Athens, GA. The ensemble premiered the work there in May 1999. The composition is dedicated to this wonderful group of musicians.

DIVERSIONS AND LAMENT is approximately nine minutes in duration and is cast in five contrasting movements. The scoring of the horns varies from movement to movement. "Diversions" refers to recreations, amusements, or pastimes. Certain members of the ensemble have contributed to the titles of some of the movements by suggesting "pastimes" in which some of them (as well as the composer) sometimes partake. Those individuals and the pastimes in which they sometimes partake shall remain nameless!

BURLESKE, the raucous first movement, is inspired by the spirit and rhythms of cabaret style dance shows like those painted by Toulouse-Lautrec at the Moulin Rouge in Paris. The second movement, **MADURO-MADURO**, is the shortest movement of the set. Like the ultra dark tobacco leaf cigar which it seeks to portray, this movement achieves a "murky and smoky" texture by confining the horns to their lower tessituras. This is followed by **IMPERIAL STOUT**, a tribute to dark beers! In this movement, the hollow harmonies of open fourths and fifths, symbolizing the antiquity of the German beer Purity Law of 1516 (Reinheitsgebot), coexist side by side with heavy and heroic melodies. The music is highly spirited and the horns often "raise their mugs" in a toast as they perform ascending "rips" into the highest range of their instruments. The fourth movement, **LAMENT**, is the lyrical movement of the work. It features the principal hornist accompanied by muted horns in music which is mostly tranquil, sentimental, and introspective. This is the composer's musical tribute and farewell to Steve Schaugency, the quartet's principal hornist who moved to Germany shortly after the premiere of this work. The finale, **VIKEN HUNT**, returns once again to a highly spirited tempo with "hunting music" built on horn calls recalling the former use of the horn in hunting expeditions. **VIKEN HUNT**, a title suggested by the poet Carolyn Ruth Moser, is meant to imply a hunt for female foxes in the traditional term of the expression. However, as the composer has already experienced, the title is open to a variety of "individual" interpretations!

DIVERSIONS AND LAMENT was composed in early 1999.