Commissioned for the 1996-1997 Thunder Bay Jr. High School
8th Grade Concert Band, Alpena, Michigan,
Raymond R. Reynolds, Director

The Maelstrom

ROBERT W. SMITH (ASCAP)

INSTRUMENTATION

1. Conductor
2. 1st C Flute
3. 2nd C Flute
4. Oboe
5. 1st B♭ Clarinet
6. 2nd B♭ Clarinet
7. 3rd B♭ Clarinet
8. E♭ Alto Clarinet
9. B♭ Bass Clarinet
10. Bassoon
11. 1st E♭ Alto Saxophone
12. 2nd E♭ Alto Saxophone
13. B♭ Tenor Saxophone
14. E♭ Baritone Saxophone
15. 1st B♭ Trumpet
16. 2nd B♭ Trumpet
17. 3rd B♭ Trumpet
18. 1st Horn in F
19. 2nd Horn in F
20. 1st Trombone
21. 2nd Trombone
22. Baritone
23. 1 Baritone Treble Clef
24. Tuba
25. Mallet Percussion
   (Bells, Chimes, Marimba)
26. Timpani
27. Percussion I
   (Snare Drum, Bass Drum, Wind
   Chimes, Triangle, Tom-Toms)
28. Percussion II
   (Suspended Cymbal, Crash
   Cymbal, Shaker)

PROGRAM NOTES

THE MAELSTROM derives its title from an aquatic event of enormous intensity. Although the term is used in other settings, it refers to a whirlpool of immense size and strength, constantly circling upon itself while drawing into its center all who see and hear its activities. It is with these thoughts in mind that this work is dedicated to the commissioning party, the Thunder Bay Jr. High School Concert Band of Alpena, Michigan. Composed in early 1997, the work was premiered in April of the same year.
NOTES TO CONDUCTOR

The opening statement in the alto saxophone should be freely interpreted and as rubato as possible. The ensemble’s response at measure 9 should be brilliant by contrast.

The “maelstrom” is unleashed beginning at measure 13. Great care should be given to the notated dynamic contrasts. The eighth note figures in the clarinets at measure 17 should not lose momentum. This figure is developed throughout the piece and should create the “swirling” motion of the whirlpool. Please note the articulations notated in the low reeds and tuba at bar 17. I would suggest spending a few minutes with the ensemble noting the two versus three between the low reeds/tuba and clarinets.

Be very cautious of the balance between the moving repetitive lines beginning at measure 25. I have marked the flutes at forte to insure presence within the ensemble. Feel free to make any dynamic adjustments necessary for balance.

The melodic line in the horns and euphonium/baritone at measure 29 should be as flowing as possible amid the swirling masses of woodwinds. The toms provide a constant “groove” which unifies the various roles in the winds.

The “pick a note” in measure 90 should be voiced as dissonant as possible. Although the individual player is given the freedom to be “creative” at this point, I would suggest voicing each section in seconds for maximum effect. Dynamic shaping in this bar is crucial to the effect!

At measure 95, I have suggested conducting in one. However, feel free to stay in three if rhythmic security in the ensemble becomes an issue.

The building of momentum into the “Furious” section beginning at bar 153 will require special attention. The woodwinds should be very aggressive with the “swirling” motif at measure 163. The timpani should be treated as a rather bombastic solo in this section.

Measure 175 should be as large a build as possible in the percussion with as intense a trill as possible in the woodwinds. The last note should be heavily accented and of full value.

I hope that you and your ensemble find The Maelstrom to be an exciting experience. Best wishes for a great performance!

Robert W. Smith