

# DR. TYLER WAYNE TAYLOR

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*Revisions* for Large Symphony Orchestra and Saxophones (2023)  
Commissioned by the Louisville Orchestra

## I. Instrumentation:

Piccolo

Flute 1, 2 dbl. Alto Flute

B♭ Clarinet 1, 2 dbl. E♭ Clarinet

B♭ Bass Clarinet

Oboe 1, 2

English Horn

Bassoon 1, 2

Contrabassoon

E♭ Alto Saxophone dbl. B♭ Soprano Saxophone

E♭ Alto Saxophone

B♭ Tenor Saxophone

E♭ Bari Saxophone

F Horn 1, 2, 3, 4

C Trumpet 1, 2, 3 dbl. Flugelhorn

Trombone 1, 2

Bass Trombone

Tuba

Timpani

Perc.:

1. Crotales, both octaves (bow), Triangle
2. Vibraphone, Whip, Sus. Cymbals
3. Snare Drum (brushes), Sus. Cymbals, Tam-tam, Whip
4. Bass Drum, Hand Cabasa, Tam-tam

\*Common instruments among players should be shared in setup.

Harp

Piano

Strings

## II. Duration: 14:00

## III. Program Notes:

“Revisions” draws its inspiration from the historical relationship—or lack thereof—between the saxophone and the orchestra. In Europe, the instrument’s creator Adolph Sax was known as an arrogant and difficult man whose new and advanced instruments threatened to disrupt the scene as it was. His reputation alongside performers’ general fear and distrust of change kept his instruments from being widely used at the time. In early 20th century America, the saxophone had become an instrument

associated with Jazz and black expressions of music, and therefore associated with a race of people who were viewed as inferior by a majority in the classical scene. Classical music institutions, the orchestra being a prime example, were not known for welcoming these expressions, or things associated with them, into their traditions. In both cases, the saxophone was viewed as a potential threat – unworthy infiltrators of something sacred. Thus, the saxophone, with few exceptions, became a family of instruments othered by the orchestra.

I have experienced the residue of this attitude toward the saxophone in my lifetime with composers and performers frequently perpetuating the erroneous idea that saxophones do not blend well with orchestral instruments and therefore do not belong. The saxophone’s specifically engineered ability to blend well with orchestral instruments, in addition to the tremendous strides made by saxophone players in the last 50 years, has proven the instrument to be extremely versatile and valuable in many contexts including the symphony orchestra. Even still, we rarely see them included.

Lately, I have thought about how an instrument or a group of instruments’ “meaning” or connotation can be used to inform dramatic musical scenarios. In a broad sense, these scenarios create abstract analogies for social-political happenings. In the case of “Revisions”, the saxophone’s history comes charged with immense dramatic and symbolic potential. The presence of the saxophone quartet, seated alongside the string section principals, creates a dramatic tension within the orchestra as part of a scenario that explores power dynamics, unity, division, companionship, and finding a sense of place.

The piece is cast in four sections that blend seamlessly into each other. **I.** is a chorale initiated by the saxophones – the orchestra listens and joins in, echoing the music of the Saxophones. **II.** explores what happens when the Saxophone quartet separates and takes members of the orchestra with them into new territories. **III.** Deals with the aftermath of the previous scenario, recovering from chaotic tuttis by favoring more intimate settings. A brass chorale signals the orchestra’s ultimate rejection of the Saxophones’ play and a new, dire direction. **IV.** Sets up an unlikely pairing between the Saxophone Quartet and solo String Quartet as the orchestra attempts to annihilate them.

I offer “Revisions” to you with many thanks to Teddy Abrams and the Louisville Orchestra for their trust in and commitment to my work, and to my fellow Creators Lisa and TJ for their unending support and friendship.

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#### IV. Seating:

- The Saxophones should be seated in the first row of the orchestra with one saxophone seated next to each section principal of the violins, violas, and cellos. There are several moments in the score when this group of instruments perform together as a unit or in conversation with each other – their proximity should be prioritized and this arrangement should not be obstructed visually from the vantage point of the audience.

#### V. Performance Indications:

- Accidentals do not carry the octave but do carry through the measure.
- Trills are notated either with an applied accidental, in which the accidental is applied to the note directly above the notated pitch, or with a parenthetical pitch. Parenthetical pitches for trills are only used when the applied accidental would result in an unusual or cumbersome accidental or the trill spans a distance greater than a major second (aka. tremolo).
- A capital “T” before a trill indicates a timbre trill.
- All bass harmonics, including those in treble clef, sound down an octave.
- Horn bass clef is “new” notation – while the score is in C, the individual parts in F will sound a perfect fifth lower than written.
- All glissandi should begin immediately and should be performed evenly and continuously over notated durations. These durations are denoted by headless notes with stems.
- Brass Harmonic Glissandi:  
A fundamental pitch will be given in concert pitch to provide the correct fingering combination to produce the desired harmonic glissando.
- Several other instrument specific techniques are included in boxed texts in the score as they come. These boxed texts are included in the instrumental parts.

#### VI. Performance Instructions:

- The score includes open and closed, bold brackets. These brackets show which lines should be prioritized.
- There are occasions when a section of strings is asked to perform a figure independently from each other. The section should avoid playing “together” favoring a maximum variety in the composite sound.
- String solos from m. 122 -145 are acting as members of chamber pairings – they do not need to be heard individually above the rest of the orchestra.
- The last tutti m. 227 into 228 should be especially devastating. The percussion *should not* dampen their instruments in m. 228.
- Each Saxophone solo m. 230 to the end should be performed with a lot of freedom and expressive, subjective rhythm.