

ALEX SHAPIRO

TIGHT SQUEEZE

For Concert Wind Band and Pre-recorded Soundscape

Performance Time: 3:15

Instrumentation

1 – Conductor	4 – B \flat Trumpet 1	1 – Glockenspiel
1 – Piccolo	4 – B \flat Trumpet 2	1 – Xylophone
4 – Flute 1	2 – French Horn in F 1	1 – Vibraphone
4 – Flute 2	2 – French Horn in F 2	1 – Marimba
2 – Oboe	3 – Trombone 1	1 – Suspended Cymbal
2 – Bassoon	3 – Trombone 2	1 – Cowbell
4 – B \flat Clarinet 1	1 – Bass Trombone	1 – Tom-Toms
4 – B \flat Clarinet 2	2 – Euphonium/Baritone T.C.	
2 – B \flat Bass Clarinet	2 – Euphonium/Baritone B.C.	
2 – E \flat Alto Saxophone 1	2 – Tuba	
2 – E \flat Alto Saxophone 2	1 – Electric Bass	
2 – B \flat Tenor Saxophone	1 - Audio Accompaniment Track with click, for conductor	
1 – E \flat Baritone Saxophone	1 - Audio Accompaniment Track for performance	

In addition to the instruments listed above, *TIGHT SQUEEZE* requires an audio system capable of playing the audio tracks from a laptop computer via a small digital audio interface connected to an audio mixer.

To download the necessary accompaniment track, please send a friendly email to: download@activistmusic.com.

Acknowledgements

TIGHT SQUEEZE was commissioned by Composers and Schools in Concert (www.composersandschools.com), with the participation of a consortium of partners:

Matthew Frost, Friday Harbor High School, Washington
Miller Asbill, Brevard College, North Carolina
Brian Margrave, Cheyenne Mountain Junior High School, Colorado
Rob Lubbers, Dobson High School, Arizona
Steve Olsen, Rosemount High School, Minnesota
Stephanie Sanders, Berwick Academy, Maine
Mark Reid, Vancouver Technical Secondary School, British Columbia.

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TIGHT SQUEEZE is an electroacoustic piece in which the band plays along with a pre-recorded audio track, with the goal of creating one seamless, sonic entity. The percussive track drives the piece, and should be played loudly. The downloadable audio files include the accompaniment track in its stereo performance mix, and also in a mix for the conductor that includes a click track for in-ear monitoring.

Rehearsal:

The rehearsal room will need a basic PA system, ideally with stereo speakers that can play loudly, placed facing the band. There is a stereo performance track which the band (and later, the audience) hears, as well as the stereo track that includes the click heard solely by the conductor through headphones or earbuds. These are routed from a laptop computer connected to an audio mixer via a small audio interface.

Because the accompaniment track is a percussive one with a constant beat, it's possible to conduct *TIGHT SQUEEZE* using the track without the click, either via earbuds, or with an additional monitor facing the podium. However, it will be easier if the conductor uses the click track as an accurate guide to keep the band and the accompaniment track in synch. If desired, one ear may be left uncovered, in order to clearly hear the live band against the track.

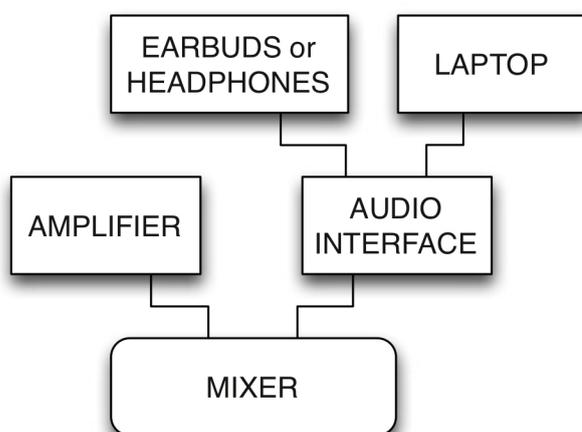
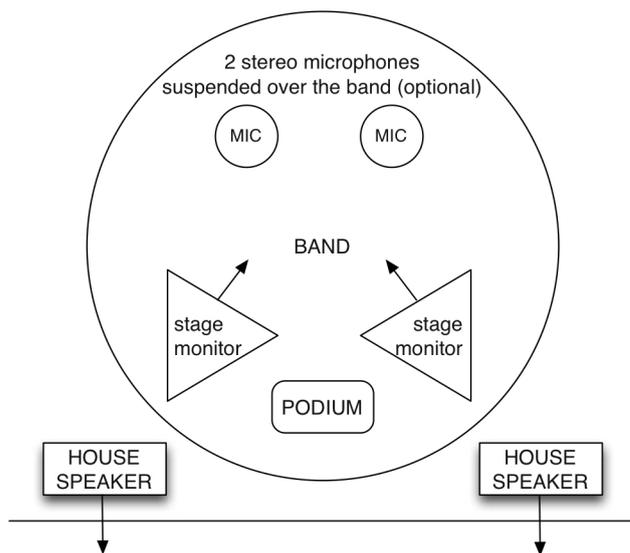
Bonus!

Musicians can practice this piece at home by downloading the accompanying audio track, with or without the click. Please visit the *TIGHT SQUEEZE* page on Ms. Shapiro's website, www.alexshapiro.org, to send an email requesting file access.

Technical setup:

Connect a laptop computer to a small audio interface, which in turn connects to an audio mixer. Open a simple multitrack digital audio application, and load the accompaniment track **with** the click into one stereo channel routed **solely** to the headphones or ear bud worn by the conductor. Next, load the track **without** the click into two more stereo channels: one pair routed to the stage (and podium) monitors so that the band and conductor can hear the track, and another pair routed to the house speakers so that the audience can hear the track. The audio track uses panning effects, so be sure that it's routed to the audience in stereo.

An additional stereo channel may be used to route an optional pair of stereo microphones placed over the band. If the band is mic'ed, it's best to have an engineer reading a music score to ride the faders at the mixing board and control the balance.



Monitors, speakers, laptop, audio interface, and microphones are connected by cables to the mixer, which is usually placed in the back of the auditorium or on the side of the stage. Additional technical information and suggestions may be found on the TIGHT SQUEEZE page at www.alexshapiro.org.

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Program Note

Tight Squeeze might best be described by the following suggestion: imagine Arnold Schoenberg, Henry Mancini, and Charlie Parker walking into a techno rave dance club in Havana.

And, staying for at least three minutes.

On the heels of composing **Paper Cut** which pairs a wind band with not only an electronic track, but a ream of printer paper, I knew I wanted to create another, even more uptempo, groove-oriented piece that would be fun for fidgety teenagers with the attention spans of diabetic gnats. Okay, even fun for calmer musicians. Unexpectedly, that turned out to feature a twelve-tone row theme-- possibly the world's first for high school band, at least this far west of Vienna. Initially the melody only had eight notes. When I noticed that none repeated themselves, I decided to go for broke, in a tip of the hat to my beloved 90-year old German composition teacher Ursula Mamlok, who was a renowned serialist during the earlier years of her career. The only serialism I've ever been interested in is granola, but I had a good time with this little tone row, which I paired with a techno-rock-infused percussion groove and electric bass line (yeah, I know, Schoenberg did that first), plus a few Latin rhythms and a hint of jazz. Voila: Electroacoustic Twelve-tone Techno Latin Bebop.

The twelve pitches are first introduced in all their chromatic glory at bars 7-10, and they reappear in different keys throughout the piece. The music, however, is not really in any key at all, since I only think in terms of keys if I'm locked out of my car. And if I were locked out of my car, this is probably the kind of thing I'd be hearing in my head while frantically trying to get back in.

Which leads to the title, which has nothing to do with my car. It has everything to do with a young gull who landed on a rock in front of my desk window as I was finishing this music, with a sizable flounder uh, floundering in his clamped beak (as seen on this cover, and on the TIGHT SQUEEZE page of my website). The rather goofy-looking bird was having a challenging time figuring out how to swallow his windfall. Looking up from my work for a moment, I said to the bird, "Wow, tight squeeze!", and immediately realized that all these notes that were cramming the score page would soon be squeezing through the students' instruments, as snugly as a fat flounder in a gull's mouth. I also realized that talking to birds is pointless; they make lousy conversationalists.

*Alex Shapiro
San Juan Island, WA
January 2013*

Composer Biography

Alex Shapiro aligns note after note with the hope that a few of them will actually sound good next to each other. Published by Activist Music, her works for acoustic and electroacoustic ensembles are performed and broadcast daily across the U.S. and internationally, and can be found on over twenty commercially released recordings.

Long established in the chamber music world, Ms. Shapiro is also known for her groundbreaking electroacoustic works for wind band at the middle school, high school, and college levels. As the 2010 commissioned composer for the American Composers Forum BandQuest series, Shapiro created the repertoire's very first Grade 3 electroacoustic band piece, PAPER CUT. The unusual addition of printer paper used as a percussion instrument rapidly turned the piece into a worldwide best seller, and sparked nearly a hundred YouTube videos of live performances, some of which include black light and other visual effects. The fun of creating fresh, contemporary music to engage students has become one of Alex's newest joys.

Born in New York City in 1962 and raised in Manhattan, Alex began composing as a much shorter person at age nine. Educated at The Juilliard School and Manhattan School of Music as a student of Ursula Mamlok and John Corigliano, Ms. Shapiro is an enthusiastic leader in the new music community, and advocates for other artists through speaking appearances, published articles, and volunteerism. She is a familiar guest lecturer at universities around the United States, and the author of a chapter in the 2013 GIA Publications book, "Musicianship: Composing in Band and Orchestra." Ms. Shapiro serves on several U.S. music advocacy boards, and is the elected concert music composer representative on the ASCAP Board of Review.

Alex lives on Washington State's remote San Juan Island, and procrastinates on her next piece by pointing her camera at the surrounding wildlife, resulting in images like the ones on the cover of this score. Shapiro's audio and photos fill her popular blog, *Notes from the Kelp*, and are accompanied by her essays on animals, sea life, and human nature, connecting Alex's music and her heart to a wide sphere of colleagues and audiences.

**Alex Shapiro loves to hear from people!
To contact her, please send an email to:
hello@alexshapiro.org**

**For more information about Ms. Shapiro's music,
including audio excerpts and score samples,
please visit her website at:
www.alexshapiro.org**

**Like the cover? For more of Alex's photographs
of wild creatures doing interesting things,
please visit her photosonic blog, *Notes from the Kelp*, at:
www.notesfromthekelp.com**