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Glen Shannon, Editor

Jay Kreuzer

**Jay's
Pyramid
Scheme**

for SATB Recorders

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Jay's Pyramid Scheme

by Jay Kreuzer

*"A painter paints pictures on canvas.
But musicians paint their pictures on silence."*

— *Leopold Stokowski*

PREFACE



Technically an *étude* about intonation, this piece can be considered a real piece of concert music, whether one to a part or recorder orchestra with doubles at the lower octave. (Tuning issues are compounded, of course, in larger groups.) It has a full story arc with conflict and resolution, requiring consensus among the players with regard to the storytelling.

Jay Kreuzer plays recorder, harmonica and dulcian, composes music, and enjoys life as an old San Francisco hippie living along the California coast. He is a member of the Barbary Coast Recorder Orchestra, the San Francisco chapter of the ARS, and is a founding member of the quintet SDQ.

— *Glen Shannon*

Composer's note: My dear friend and current ARS Board member Greta Haug-Hryciw did a mini-workshop in 2009 entitled "Tuning Camp". I offered to write a tuning exercise to be used in her workshop. As I was writing the exercise, it grew into something bigger, and I finally gave it a name. I wrote the whole thing in one sitting, and I hope the ARS membership will like it.

— *Jay Kreuzer*



Performance notes: The marking "Tempo nervoso" is more about the intended affect than any specific metronome mark; the composer suggests that there should be a slight unease to the sound. A "tu" or crisp "du" articulation puts a clean front edge on the notes and brings out the bell-tone quality of the stacked entrances. Legato tonguing can be used in the more melodic lines, such as measures 71-77 in the Soprano and Alto.

The piece is constructed of many short phrases strung together, each built around a certain entrance pattern of the voices, either from the bottom up, such as in measures 1-12; or from the top down, such as measures 22-25. In between these staggered-entrance segments are homophonic moments such as the tuning chords in measures 13, 20, 57 and 78; or the series of half-notes in measures 26-28, 63-65 and 84-86. The ensemble might breathe together after these moments — for example, between measure 28's final note, a weak syllable, and measure 29's return of the staggered entrance pattern (likewise measures 65-66 and 86-87).

Measures 70-80 might enjoy a change of mood, when the short runs up and down appear in the Soprano and Alto, offering lots of fun interpretive possibilities.

The drama peaks at measure 91 as the Bass climbs and then plunges suddenly to a long pedal point doubled in the Alto, during which the three upper voices clamor over an extended version of the descending 3-note motive introduced back in measure 15. Note the defiant series of half-notes in the Soprano in measures 97-100.

Finally, a modified recap of the opening sequence restores order and brings the piece to a close. The caesura (//) at the very end means that there should be no lengthening of the final note, as is a popular tendency. It should end right in time, as if the music is about to continue.

