

Program Notes

The composition's name, *Always Looking Upwards*, comes from the time I spend looking up into the sky and getting lost in its vastness. Often on a road trip or campout I spend time looking at the many different images in the sky, from a beautiful clear blue vastness to a dark canvas spotted with endless dots of light. I especially find storms fascinating to watch, whether from a distance or sitting at the center. The intent of this piece is to take the listener through all of these many facets of the sky.

The first movement, *Day*, begins with a simple accompaniment in the piano and a soaring melody based on the simple pentatonic scale. It then develops into a rhythmic offset with the accompaniment playing triplets against a duplet feeling in the melody. This is designed to give the listener a slight feeling of discomfort as if the storms were moving in and the wind were picking up. This feeling soon ends and a calm feeling returns like the calm before the storm. A cadenza in the trumpet signifies the feeling we all have had that the storm has passed without letting loose on us. But then all of a sudden the cadenza ends and the piano and trumpet begin a flurry of rhythmically and harmonically active music as if the storm were to surprisingly catch everyone outside in a deluge. This leads to an atonal section filled with trills between the piano and muted trumpet giving the feeling of sitting inside and hearing the rain come down on the roof. The trills slowly die out and the second movement begins.

This movement, *Night*, begins with minor harmonies in the left hand of the piano with a melody in the right hand based on a minor pentatonic scale, as if to give a darker sense of the original calmness expressed at the beginning of the piece. The trumpet then enters and the music slowly begins to complicate itself. Harmonies begin to become more and more dissonant while

rhythms become more complex and disjoint. This leads into a section where the left hand of the piano is rumbling like distant thunder while the trumpet and right hand of the piano play off each other simulating rain and lightning. The storm then begins to move in closer, as the music turns into a constant rhythmic feel giving that pounding feeling of being stuck in a thunderstorm. This section is punctuated by moments of unison rhythms as if being right in the middle of the storm with lightning and booming thunder all at the same time. Finally the music begins to wind down with less active lightning and thunder sounds and returns to the trills from before as the storm dies away. The piece then ends with a section similar to the beginning calmness, as if a new day comes and the skies have cleared.

These notes are designed to give the listener an idea of what the composer had in mind while writing the music. However, the listeners should understand that this music can mean many things to different people and these notes should not constrict their imagination to just the images described above. Listeners should feel free to close their eyes and let images and ideas form in their mind that they feel are represented in the music. That is the true reason and basis for this piece. Enjoy.