

I am grateful to Andrew Steinberg and the Megalopolis Saxophone Orchestra for giving me the opportunity to compose music for this excellent ensemble. In addition to them, the work also bears a dedication to N. Stanley Balch (1938-2018), for many years the director of the Central High School band in my hometown of Helena-West Helena, Arkansas. He taught me some of the first lessons I learned about music for large ensembles, orchestration, and writing for woodwind and brass instruments, exposed me to a lot of modern music, in the realms of classical concert band music as well as jazz, and gave me a great deal of encouragement.

*Through to (and Out of) the Other Side* is in a single movement comprising several sections. The first is fast, syncopated and edgy, gradually morphing into a gigue-like rhythm. After a series of episodes this section gradually cycles back to the material of the opening, with siren-like wailing in the altissimo registers of the soprano and top two alto parts. A transition ensues, with some rock and jazz elements and a hint of bluesiness, interrupted from time to time by soft four-part harmonies marked “*senza vibrato, ethereal, disembodied.*” A very brief *accelerando* outburst yields to the heart of the work, a slow movement that is by turns lyrical and austere, with fairly large pauses interspersed, suggesting vast spaces. The opening sonority of this section is a simple simultaneous interval of a minor third (C to E-flat), which happens to be the opening sound of a haunting late work of Mozart, his *Masonic Funeral Music*. Not sure how this found its way in — it is not an exact quotation from Mozart’s piece — but somehow it did. After the climax of this section, a stark two-part chorale for the entire ensemble asserts itself, before the mood is swept away by the final section in waltz tempo. Besides the Mozart reference, another piece, coincidentally also in the key of C minor, wormed its way into my thinking at the end of this work: the Waltz No. 2 from Shostakovich’s *Suite for Variety Orchestra*, familiar to anyone who has seen Stanley Kubrick’s *Eyes Wide Shut*, where it accompanies the opening scene. Again, there is no direct quotation, and this reference, such as it is, is even less obvious than is the case with the Mozart. The overall trajectory of my piece seems to travel from a more upbeat, if rambunctious opening, through a much more introspective passage, ultimately returning to a mood similar to the opening, with perhaps more of a satirical cast.