

Paper Cut Alex Shapiro

About *Paper Cut*

Grade: 3

Time Length: ~ 5:00

Premiere:

Workshopped January - June 2010 with the Friday Harbor Middle School Band in Friday Harbor, WA, directed by Janet Olsen.

Special Instrumentation:

Electric bass, prerecorded instrumental track, paper

"In my desire to compose something relevant to younger players, I decided to create a piece that sounds somewhat like a movie soundtrack, to which the musicians can imagine their own dramatic scene. I also thought it would be fun to make the kids themselves part of the action, and so "Paper Cut" has the band doing choreographed maneuvers that look as compelling as they sound.

Music isn't just melody; it's rhythm and texture as well. The unusual element of paper and the myriad sounds that can emerge from something so simple, offer a fresh view of what music-making can be and opens everyone's ears to the sonic possibilities found among everyday objects.

With a nod to environmentalism, "Paper Cut" might even remind people to avoid waste and recycle. Players can collect paper that would have otherwise ended up in the trash, and bring it to rehearsals. The piece might even be therapeutic, as students can take out their aggressions by ripping up bad grades and test scores!" - Alex Shapiro



About Alex Shapiro

- Born in New York City in 1962, now lives on remote San Juan Island of Washington State
- Known for composing acoustic and electroacoustic pieces
 - Style is particularly notable for lyrics and drama
- Studied at Juilliard and the Manhattan School of Music with Ursula Mamlok and John Corigliano
- Beginning of compositional career focused on scoring for films, television, and documentaries
- Known as an advocate for artists - serves on numerous boards for music organizations



Performance Practice

- Combination of electronics, unique paper performance, and standard band instruments
 - Band does not play their instruments until the second half of the piece
 - "Play" paper with prerecorded track
 - Instrumental writing is mostly repetitive rhythms, colorful dynamic changes in sustained notes
- Paper performance includes:
 - Tapping a crumpled ball, slowly ripping in rhythm, crescendo rip, paper on floor
- Curriculum, recordings, rehearsal suggestions, and opportunities for communication with Alex are all available through Bandquest and Shapiro's personal website
 - Enjoys collaborating and working with students/bands

