

# Pillars of the Sun

by Craig Wadley

*Pillars of the Sun* features some harmonic elements not often heard in music of this difficulty level. Typically, quartal harmony and tone clusters are avoided in music for young bands. Where these elements appear in this piece, an opportunity arises for the director to introduce these new concepts to young players. Intonation is often a concern with this type of dissonance, and players should be instructed to listen for open intervals of perfect fourths or fifths where possible in order to provide tonal stability. These instances also provide an opportunity for players to develop an ear for the proper intonation of dissonances such as major and minor seconds and sevenths.

Numerous meter changes are to be found in this piece. Take this opportunity to introduce students to unbalanced meters (specifically 7/4, which is alluded to quite often in this piece through alternating 3/4 and 4/4). Ensembles should strive to make the transitions between meters as seamless as possible, giving these sections a sense of rhythmic freedom, as opposed to metric tyranny. This would also be a good time to explain to students that barlines exist to make the music easier to read, giving the eye a way to organize and quickly recognize groups of beats, and that barlines should not necessarily be “heard” by the listener.

This piece also provides students an opportunity to learn about motivic development. Much of the piece is based on a four note motif, consisting of three notes in ascending motion, followed by a step downward. The intervals used are not fixed, allowing for variations in tonality and mood, though the contour of the line should be easily recognized both on paper and by the ear.

While not strictly programmatic, *Pillars of the Sun* attempts to paint a scene not unlike that of a sunrise amid the pillars of an ancient Roman coliseum, perhaps as a prelude to an epic gladiatorial spectacle.



**Craig Wadley** attended college at Arkansas State University, where he earned a degree in Music Education. He went on to earn a master's degree in composition from Arkansas State University, as well. He currently serves as the Director of Bands for Williams Baptist College in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, and Rector Public Schools in Rector, Arkansas. One of the highlights of his composition career has been winning the 1996 Fine Arts Festival Music Award at Illinois State University for his brass quintet, *Songs of the Warrior*.