

NIMBUS RHAPSODY

Nimbus Rhapsody is a Pas de Deux – a dance between two partners. The partners in this case are the flute and the tuba, the high and the low of things. The whole piece is *leggiero* (light) and playful in nature. Thus the title – this piece is a dance on a cloud.

The work is divided into three sections. The first section is *Grazioso*, or graceful. The solo instruments present the main themes and then step out of the way for a while as the ensemble builds and expands on those themes. Saxes, trumpets and trombones play a large role in creating a color that is reminiscent of how a big band might sound (if you added a healthy dose of classical style and instrumentation into the mix). As the movement develops, the soloists start their dance, featuring some intricate and flashy work by the flute, contrasted with a more rhythmic and melodic approach on the tuba.

Section two is called *Pas de Deux*. It's slow, delicate and very much like a ballet in its nature, with the two soloists sharing a gentle and expressive melody over a simple accompaniment.

And then section three, *Pirouette*, takes up the dance in earnest. The intensity ramps up quickly, starting off with a fairly ridiculous toy-box ensemble section before moving with a vengeance into a mashup of ballet, symphonic and big band styles. The percussion section finally makes its appearance in this movement, cranking up the energy, emphasizing the dance rhythms and pushing the whole momentum of the piece forward in a big way. The soloists and the ensemble trade riffs in quick succession. After building to what seems like the finish, we are surprised by the sudden appearance of a new coda section, which features a some very intricate and virtuosic passage-work by the soloists as they lead us on to the actual final ending.