Ken Davies

Dark River

for

Alto Saxophone and Digital Media

CD Enclosed

KD 201-1

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Program Notes

"...and then I came upon the dark river,
murky, mysterious, melancholic mist
suspended over the surface like ancient spirits of a lost tribe
sighing, singing, screeching from the dark river..."

In my part of south Mississippi, there is a legend built around a river that periodically emits inexplicable eerie sustained sounds. The Singing River legend has it that an ancient tribe of Pascagoula Native Americans chose to drown themselves in the river rather than go to war against their neighboring Biloxi tribe and that their anguished voices can still be heard today.

Notes to the performer:

In addition to measure numbers at the beginning of each system, the performer will also find periodic timings [i.e. 1:15] enclosed in rectangles. These timings are for use during rehearsals and are very close approximations of the timings that would be shown on most compact disc players.

The written digital media part is given as a guide to what is heard on the accompanying compact disc. While the aural cues are quite complete, no attempt was made to notate or exactly identify each and every sound. The graphic notations for wind noise (a large flag), thunder (black triangle) and bell (diamond noteheads) are obvious and will be easily noticed in the score while listening.

Several other pitched and unpitched sounds are also used. Those of pitch melodic or harmonic content are notated normally with regard for readability rather than for exact registers. Some distinct sounds have been given their own notehead styles to assist in aural familiarity (or musical analysis for those so inclined). They are:

Drums = × x — lower and higher of two different indefinite pitches
Screech = vertical rectangles — a metallic noise cluster
Doits = very small noteheads — "blwup" sounds of lower/higher indefinite pitch
uh = small triangle notehead — sound resembles a human voice

This work was originally written for English horn. The score has been transposed for E-flat alto saxophone. The digital media remains as originated.

About the Composer:

Ken Davies received his Master of Music in composition from the University of Colorado at Boulder where he was a recipient of the prestigious Cecil Effinger Composition Fellowship. His works include pieces for brass, woodwinds, voice, organ and piano. He has worked as a commercial arranger and session producer for nationally broadcast recording and television projects. He is also active as a trombonist, conductor and private brass teacher. His works have been performed at such venues as Society of Composers national conference, Southeastern Composers League and International Trombone Festival (2005 New Orleans).

Saxophonists or producers wishing to record this work for commercial release or media broadcast may use the accompanying recording upon contacting the publisher and obtaining the appropriate copyright licenses for both the music and the recording.

Score is transposed
(originally for English Horn in F)

Duration 4:40

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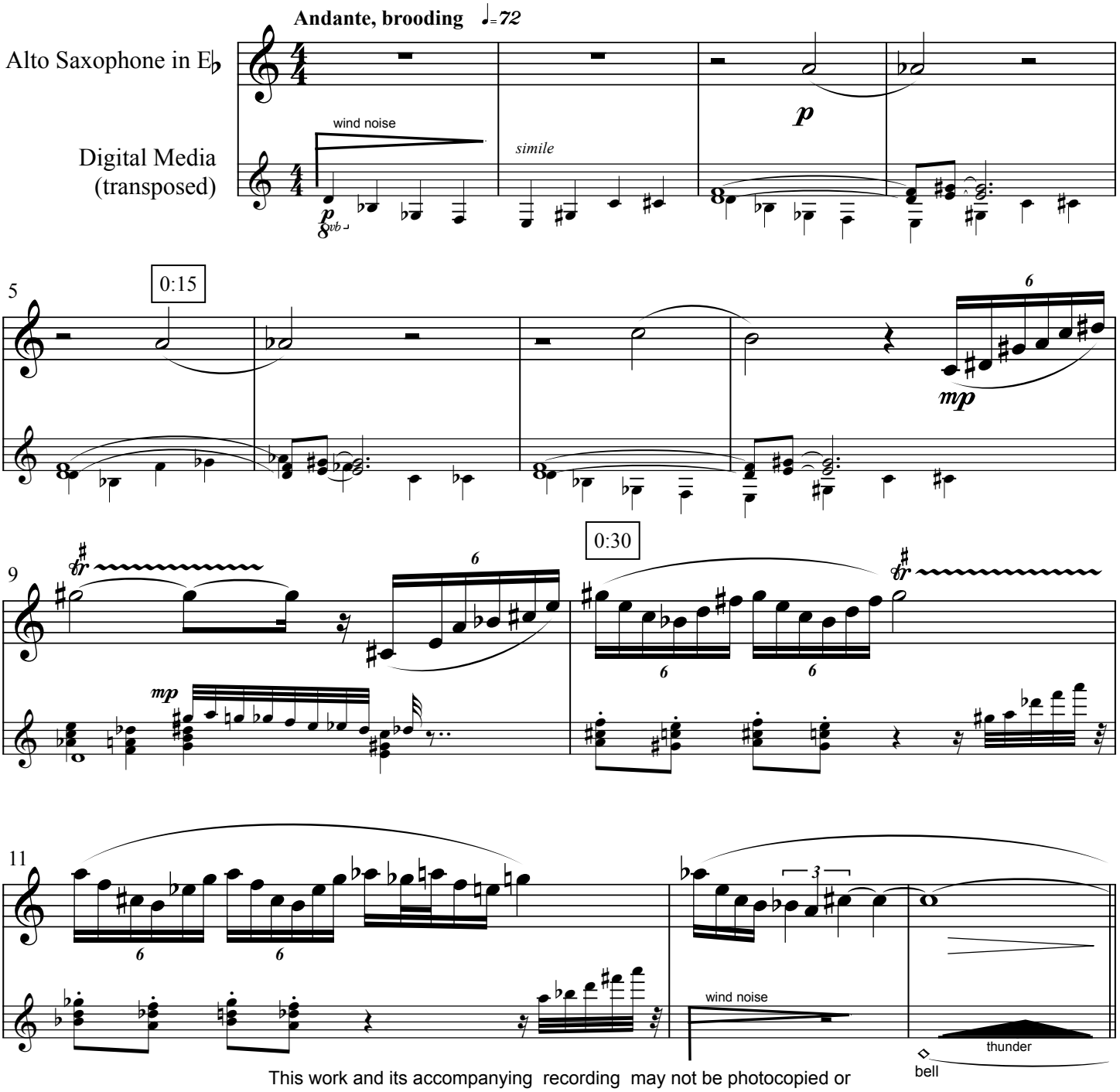
from the dark river

KEN DAVIES



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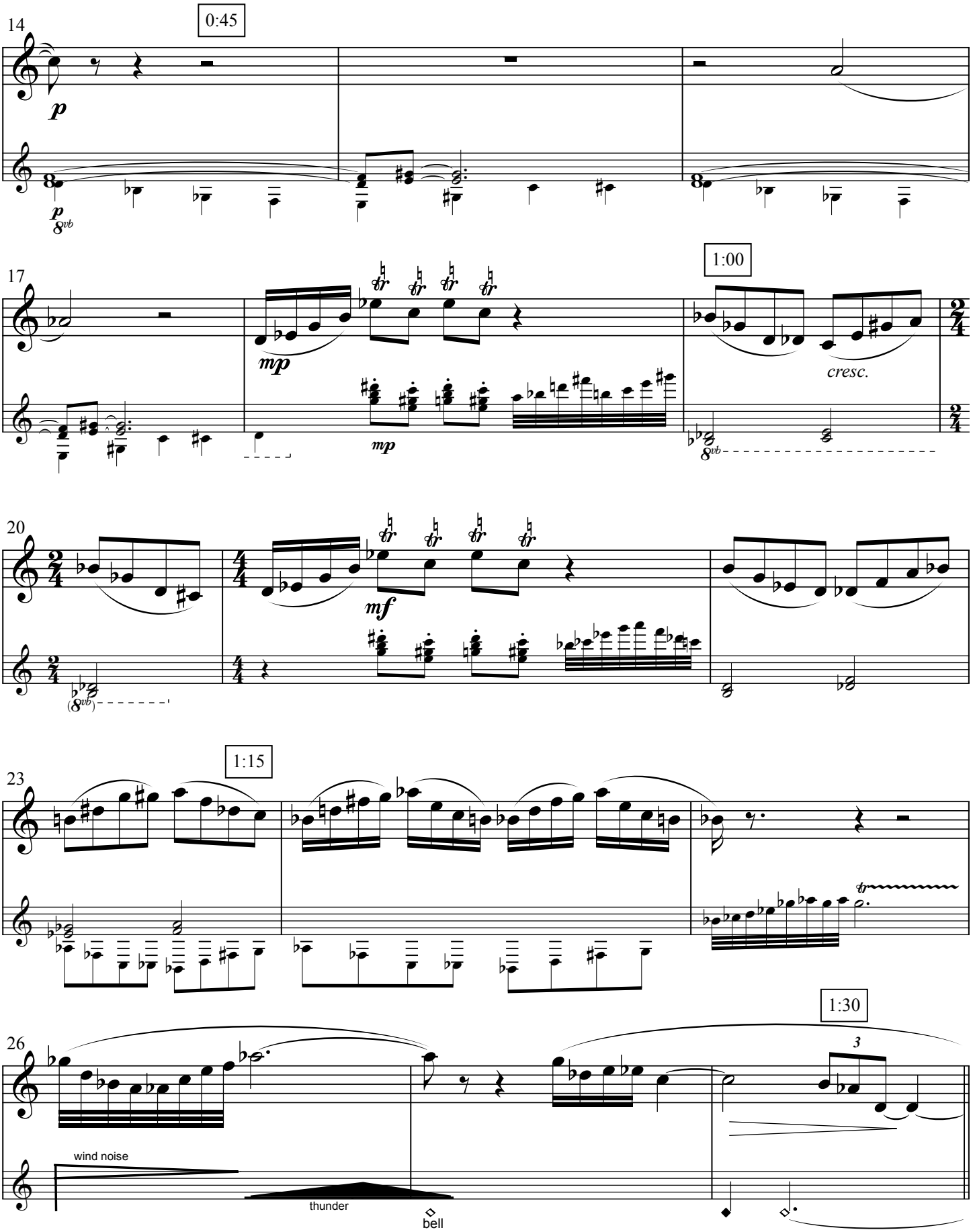

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