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Playground on a Hill for clarinet quartet**Shao Fern Teo****Alea Publishing****4', \$20****Reviewed by: Andrew J. Allen**

This delightful new work (2016) for a quartet of three B-flat clarinets and bass clarinet will make a fine addition to any recital. It is jazz and pop-inflected while never tilting towards the saccharine or cheesy. Students (and professionals) will enjoy playing it, and audiences of all types will appreciate this work a great deal.

Technical considerations in this piece are fairly minimal. It would be appropriate for advancing high school quartets and younger collegiate groups. What challenges exist come in the form of syncopated rhythms and quite independent parts. For younger players, this piece will aid in the further development of rhythm and counting. Further, each of the four parts receives a considerable amount of exposure as the principal voice. No range concerns exist, as the first part is the only one to venture above an A above the staff, and that is only fleetingly.

This piece comes highly recommended. Especially if this is to be included in a program of more musically serious literature, the work will serve as a contrast that will draw in non-musicians in the audience. All the while, it is still a high-quality work worthy of study and rehearsal by young musicians and professionals.

About the Reviewer

Andrew J. Allen is an assistant professor of music at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas and editor of *The NACWPI Journal*. He has been heard as a soloist and chamber musician throughout North America and Europe, including performances at the 16th and 17th World Saxophone Congresses; the United States Navy Band International Saxophone Symposium; the NACWPI national conference; and at national and regional conferences of NASA and CMS. As an advocate of new music, Dr. Allen has premiered nearly twenty works. His writings on music have appeared in such publications as *The NACWPI Journal*, *The Instrumentalist*, *The Saxophone Symposium*, and *Saxophone Today*. Dr. Allen holds degrees from Tennessee Technological University, Central Michigan University, and the University of South Carolina. His teachers include Phil Barham, John Nichol, and Clifford Leaman, and he has pursued additional study with Joseph Luloff, Claude Delangle, Vincent David, and Arno Bornkamp. Dr. Allen is an Artist-Clinician for Conn-Selmer, Inc.