

PROGRAM NOTES: “Soprano Sax Concerto”

I have always been struck by the range of power and beauty that comes from saxophones. I have seen a sax quartet bring a large school room filled with hundreds of children come to a complete halt with onetutti note. Many people don't realize just how much power exists in this group of instruments, and often they may not realize the potential for beauty.

The soprano sax in particular produces a tone of warmth and a real agility that allows it to sing like none of the other instruments in this group. So it seemed fitting when I found myself being approached by several saxophonists, to arrange my “Oboe Concerto” for this instrument. There are not a lot of works for the soprano sax in a concerto format; and the ranges of both oboe and soprano are similar. Because the saxophone has more power to it than an oboe, I thought that this instrument would balance the accompanying ensemble quite well, but give listeners a chance to hear its exquisite beauty.

The original work was commissioned in 2005 by The Minnesota Commissioning Club. This arrangement was premiered in 2007 at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, Marin Alsop, conducting.

--Jennifer Higdon