

Commissioned by and dedicated to the Sagewood Middle School Music Program, Parker, Colorado, Kurt Stroman and Jennifer Needham, directors

# **ETERNAL PEAKS**

## ROBERT W. SMITH (ASCAP)

#### **INSTRUMENTATION**

### **PROGRAM NOTES**

Colorado; land of mountains, rivers, canyons and dreams. It is a state where national monuments are the legacy of the most powerful and artistic forces of nature, past and present. The natural beauty of this region of the United States was the inspiration for ETERNAL PEAKS. If one listens carefully, they may hear the panoramic beauty of a Colorado sunrise with the Rocky Mountains as the backdrop. The power of the dinosaurs, the menacing sheer angles of jagged rocks and the thunder of ancient drums combine to form the first movement, entitled *In Stone and Shadow*. In contrast, *Twilight* seeks to capture the majestic yet delicate scenery at perhaps the most beautiful time of the day. The final movement, entitled *Avalanche*, brings together musical and visual imagery to the most powerful of conclusions.

ETERNAL PEAKS was commissioned by, and is dedicated to, the Sagewood Middle School Music Program in Parker, Colorado, Douglas County School District Re-1, under the direction of Kurt Stroman and Jennifer Needham. The work was originally composed for band, orchestra and chorus. ETERNAL PEAKS was completed in the spring of 2002 and was premiered on May 20, 2002 under the baton of the composer.



#### NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

The opening phrases should be "mysterioso," yet "majestic" with careful attention given to balance within the line of the crescendo. By contrast, the statement beginning at measure 17 should be very aggressive and intense. Shorter crescendo effects are punctuated with large ensemble blocks of sound. These more dissonant "exclamation points" should be balanced to ensure maximum effect through the notated harmony. Through the remainder of *In Stone and Shadow*, the percussion section should be the driving force, but not overshadow the winds.

The soloist in *Twilight* should be as expressive as possible. The keyboard percussion must be sensitive to the interpretation of the soloist and adjust in time and dynamic shape as appropriate. I would suggest isolating the various musical lines beginning at measure 84 to ensure understanding and clarity throughout the band. It is important to point out the contrasts in dynamic shaping between these lines to ensure clarity in the musical conversation. Please feel free to explore tempi and shaping for the most effective interpretation based upon your ensemble.

The success of the avalanche effect beginning at measure 115 is dependent upon the staging of the percussion. If personnel and equipment permit, please stage various percussionists around the performance hall. Beginning in the back of the hall, the roll effect should begin sweeping to the front of the hall and eventually onto the stage. You may wish to assign each percussionist in the hall to one of the five fermatas to cue their entrance. Each entrance should begin at pianissimo even though the prior entrance may be well into the notated crescendo. With careful dynamic overlapping and rehearsal in the actual performance space, the effect of a distant avalanche that advances toward the listener and consumes the concert hall is achieved. Please adjust this effect based upon your available personnel and equipment.

The intensity of Avalanche should be maintained through the various dynamic effects as notated. Particular attention should be given to the chromatic lines throughout to ensure their technical clarity and audibility.

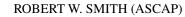
I would like to extend a very special thanks to Kurt Stroman, Jennifer Needham and the members of the Sagewood Middle School Band, Choir and Orchestra, for their gracious hospitality during my visit to Parker, Colorado, for the premiere of the piece.

I hope that you, your band and audience find ETERNAL PEAKS to be a rewarding musical experience. Best wishes for a wonderful performance!

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