

Program Notes for Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra

The Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra was begun in mid 1997 after the composer received an Artist fellowship from the Minnesota State Arts Board. It was finished during the last half of 1999 and premiered on January 28th, 2000. It was written specifically for saxophonist, Vasili Kasatkin, and the greater Grand Forks Symphony.

The composition is divided into three movements or sections with no break between the sections. In the first movement, *Moderato*, the saxophone enters with a dramatic statement that reflects the strength and socialistic nature of the instrument. The versatility of the saxophone is shown in this movement as it blends equally well with the brass and woodwinds. A restatement of the opening material by the full ensemble is followed by an expressive transition section to the second movement.

The lyrical theme played by the saxophone at the beginning of the second movement, *Andante*, is accompanied by muted strings. This theme is then altered and presented by the first violins joined by a saxophone counter melody. A cadenza follows in the saxophone that leads to the third movement, *Vivace*.

The dance-like quality of this movement is evident in the fast-moving triplet solo line as well as the heavier 5/4, peasant accompaniment. Elements of jazz appear later in contrasting sections, as well as an accompanied cadenza where the soloist displays virtuosic double tonguing. The dance-like material returns one last time and with a flurry races to the end.