

# ROBERT SIROTA

COMPOSER

## PROGRAM NOTES

### *IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME* (1999)

Program note by Robert Sirota:

As a 1971 graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory who met and married organist Victoria Ressmeyer Sirota (also class of '71) while we were both undergraduates, I have received a thorough indoctrination in composing for organ. From the beginning of our relationship, I hung out in organ lofts, pulled stops, and turned pages for Vicki. I sat in on her lessons in Paris with André Marchal, and I have followed her around the United States and Europe as she has performed on organs great and small. I soon began composing solo works for service and concert use, leading eventually to larger projects which have continued over the course of my career.

*In the Fullness of Time* was commissioned by the American Guild of Organists and given its premiere on July 6, 2000 on a concert inaugurating the great Fisk organ in Seattle's Benaroya Hall. Organist Hatsumi Miura performed the work with the Seattle Symphony conducted by Gerard Schwarz. It was well received and subsequently performed twice more by the Seattle Symphony during the following concert season. It has since been performed by Lincoln's Symphony (Lincoln, Nebraska) with Victoria Sirota as the featured soloist, and by the Oberlin Orchestra with organist David Boe. It is scored for large orchestra (piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, two trombones, bass trombone, tuba, four percussion, timpani, piano, harp, and strings, and organ.

For me, the "fullness of time" is the completion of time, when the temporal as we perceive it ceases to exist and the kingdom of God is realized. This is the idea I worked with in the composing of this one-movement concerto.

I often think of my work in visual terms. To cite two examples, my chamber work *Seven Picassos* (1987) is based on seven early paintings that I saw hanging in the National Gallery in Washington. The *Mass* (1990) for chorus, soloists, organ, and percussion, was conceived as an iconostasis – a grouping of holy icons. Similarly, *In the Fullness of Time* is a large ceiling fresco. In its 13-minute span I have endeavored to produce a mystical vision of the triumph of light over darkness. The material I have used to paint his picture is the German chorale tune "*Es ist genug*," which appears in continuously varied form throughout the piece.