Sunscapes

Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra

Don Freund

Don Freund: Sunscapes

Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra

Duration: 25 minutes

(2006)

PART ONE

- 1. First Rays
- 2. Morning Sunsong
- 3. Beamdance
- 4. High Noon Sunsong
- 5. Midday Radiance
- 6. Blazing Sundance

PART TWO

- 1. Overexposed
- 2. Sunshine through the haze
- 3. Sunbreeze Song
- 4. Sunstorm
- 5. Song in the Lengthening Glow
- 6. Setting Sunbursts
- 7. Celebration Sunsong
- 8. Last Lights

PROGRAM NOTES

Sunscapes was inspired by the scintillating brilliance and warmth of the sun at Hua Hin, Thailand's royal beach resort, coinciding with plans to write a concerto for alto saxophone, which happens to be the beloved instrument of the King of Thailand.

Sunscapes takes the form of alternating sun tone-pictures with solo-dominated "sunsongs." These alternating sections are gathered together into two "Parts" separated by a movement-break pause.

Part One begins with "First Rays," a quiet awakening brimming with distant energy. Three shimmering tremolos introduce "Morning Sunsong," a lyric saxophone ballad whose final cadence interlocks with the next section, "Beamdance," a juxtaposition of fiddle licks and jazzy saxophone riffs. These exchanges get closer and closer together, the tension releasing into "High Noon Sunsong," an expansive saxophone ballad accompanied by the orchestra's throbbing waves of light. As the saxophone reaches its peak, the section breaks into "Midday Radiance," a cadenza of cascading arpeggios followed by shimmering "sun-chords," a succession of brightly colored harmonies that appear throughout the work. The accelerating repetition of the last sun-chord (in tandem with a Peking Opera Gong) announces the closing section of Part One, "Blazing Sundance," a whirling jig-dervish.

Part Two begins right where we left off, only the "Overexposed" version of the sundance is an overbright sound-photo of the previous section - only the glimmering outlines of the material can be distinguished against the triangle's pulsar. The whispering saxophone descends into "Sunshine though the haze," rays of light fleetingly penetrating a murky orchestral cloud-shape. All this serves as an extended introduction to the next saxophone tune, "Sunbreeze Song," a sassy two-part melody whose simple six-note refrain moves at a quicker tempo than the heavy beats of the initial phrase. A sudden saxophone explosion ignites "Sunstorm," eruptions of solar flares that blast superhot gasses into space. The storm abates, leaving only a pair of clarinets to accompany the first strophe of the saxophone's final lyric ballad, "Song in the Lengthening Glow." The song grows, cadencing in "Setting Sunburst" — the sun-chord succession passed from strings to brass to woodwinds. This transcendental mood is broken with "Celebration Sunsong," an unabashed rock'n'roll party with a 4/4/+5/4 refrain. "Last Lights" is a nostalgic look back to the opening of the concerto which closes the piece as the colors fade to uncover the brightness of the evening star.

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Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra
for David Effron and the Brevard Music Center Orchestra Don Freund (2006) PART ONE Joseph Lulloff, solo alto saxophone 1. First Rays 5 = 112, brimming with distant energy E^b Alto Saxophone (concert pitch) Piano Reduction pp pp Half-Pedal → 6 mp15 mpmf 19 18 light and bright





















































$5. \ Song \ in \ the \ Lengthening \ Glow$















