

# ROBERT SIROTA

COMPOSER

## PROGRAM NOTES

*Epiphanies*, for String Quartet and Orchestra (2006)

Commissioned jointly by Lincoln's Symphony Orchestra and East Texas Symphony

Program note by Robert Sirota:

### **Left-brained Program Note**

*Epiphanies* is a concerto for string quartet and orchestra. A single-movement work of about sixteen minutes in duration incorporates elements of a three-movement concerto.

An opening Allegro introduces the main, most frequently recurring idea in the string quartet. This is followed by a chorale-like theme shared primarily by the string quartet and a quartet of principal string players in the orchestra. A developed return of the opening theme follows, giving way to a flowing Adagio section. The original Allegro material returns a third time, now in a more florid and atmospheric treatment, leading to an extended cadenza for string octet. This culminates in a lively dance-like Allegro section which dissolves into a final Adagio coda.

### **Right-brained Program Note**

*Epiphanies* is a meditation on the yearning for divine revelation. It is an exploration of how we strive for and occasionally receive glimpses of the transcendent, the eternal. The string quartet takes the role of the individual; the orchestra is the world that surrounds us. In the beginning (Awakening), the quartet alternatively searches and yearns; the orchestra alternatively empathizes and obscures the vision, sometimes drawing a veil of chords over the sound of the quartet. As the initial section progresses, the division between the individual and the external world is blurred.

In the Adagio (Searching/Shimmering) the quartet's quest continues in a starker, more plaintive way. At the end of the slow movement, hope returns, and the journey regains its initial energy.

After an extended soliloquy (the Cadenza), we emerge into a lively Round Dance, inspired by the great Matisse paintings of people dancing in a circle. This ultimately dissolves into a coda (Blessing/Revelation) in which the yearning of the beginning of the work is transformed into a brief moment when the veil is lifted.