

## PROGRAM NOTES

Completed in August 1992, this work was commissioned by the Saitama Sakae High School Band of Ohmiya, Japan. It received its premiere performance in Tokyo in January 1993. The composer provides the following notes about this piece:

IMPRESSIONS OF JAPAN is a tone poem in three sections expressing my personal portrayal of what I have seen and experienced during my recent visits to Japan.

1. **Joetsu Asahi** (Dawn in Joetsu): In the small town of Joetsu on the Sea of Japan, we watch as the early morning stars give way to a very beautiful sunrise. The very short notes that begin this piece are intended to depict the tiny beams of light from the starry sky that precede those first rays of sunlight breaking over the surrounding hills.

2. **Todaiji** (The Great Buddha at Nara): In this beautiful little city south of Kyoto stands the world's largest Buddha. No one can visit Todaiji without being impressed with its enormity and by the incredible influence that Buddhism has had on Japan for a thousand years.

3. **Askusa Matsuri** (Festival in Asakusa): The thundering drums of the final portion of the work help portray the excitement and spirit of a celebration at this most famous of all Tokyo's many ancient temples. I tried to write music with the same sort of intensity and drive that I have heard played by traditional Japanese folk groups at these festivals. The piece ends with a frantic coda intended to propel the band to the audible brink of sound, rhythm and color available to the composer in the modern wind band.