

Linda Strommen Premieres New Work for Oboe and Wind Ensemble

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Maryville, Missouri



Center from left to right: Stephen Pratt, Eric Ewazen, Linda Strommen, and Ellen Strommen with students of the oboe studio.

The oboe has always had the ability to shine as a soloist supported by the orchestra, but today it can prove to be problematic when featured as a solo instrument with wind ensemble. Wind conductors are often hindered by the limited body of works currently available for oboe and wind ensemble. Oboist Linda Strommen has collaborated with Eric Ewazen and Stephen Pratt to expand the amount of quality literature available for this instrumentation by commissioning a piece that is beautiful, versatile, and gratifying.

Eric Ewazen's *Concerto for Oboe and Wind Ensemble* was first performed on February 16th, 2010 by the Indiana University Wind Ensemble, under the direction of Stephen Pratt. Dedicated to, and premiered by Linda Strommen, professor of oboe at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, this work is certain to become a standard of the oboe repertoire.

Strommen's original vision was to commission a work for oboe and wind ensemble that would be "easily accessible, enjoyable, and rewarding for both the



Linda Strommen and Eric Ewazen

oboeist and wind ensemble, equally convincing as a solo with piano, colorful in its orchestration, able to be played by the professional, college, or advanced high school oboist. Possible in that each movement could be performed as a separate entity."



Eric Ewazen, Linda Strommen, Jeffrey Gerbman, and Stephen Pratt.

This concerto is the fulfillment of that dream. It is the second collaboration of Linda Strommen and Eric Ewazen, the first being Ewazen's *Dawn at River of Time* for oboe and string orchestra, which Strommen recorded for Albany Records. His new concerto is written in a Neo-Romantic style with elegant melodies, lush harmonies, and vibrant colors organized within traditional structural forms.

Laid out in a standard three movement structure, the concerto contains a fast-moving second movement, framed by two slower movements. Written to honor Linda Strommen's mother, Ellen, the work is a lyric representation of her character. The opening is a soothing waltz, with little jostling flourishes, while the second movement takes the listener through loss, anguish, and questioning. The final movement is a celebration of love, spirituality, and fulfillment.

Throughout the work, the ensemble delicately paints a vivid picture, which both supports and interacts with the oboist. Combined with the accessibility and flexibility of all parts, this work is a welcome addition to the oboe repertoire with shall be enjoyed for years to come.

The concerto is currently being edited and is due for publication in 2012. Also included will be the composer's piano reduction, which captures all the brilliance of the wind ensemble accompaniment. Strommen hopes to perform this work at an upcoming IDRS conference. ♦

Jennifer Kirby is currently pursuing her doctorate in oboe performance at Indiana University where she is a student of Roger Roe and serves as an associate instructor under Linda Strommen. She completed her Master's Degree and Professor's Diploma at Indiana University while studying with Ms. Strommen, and she holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music, summa cum laude, from Northwest Missouri State University.