

# **Arizona Centennial Overture**

**Sy Brandon**

## **Program Notes**

Arizona Centennial Overture was commissioned by the Arizona Commission on the Arts to help celebrate Arizona's centennial. The overture pays tribute to the unique blend of the various cultures that had a part in shaping Arizona into what it is today. This six and a half minute composition is divided into three main sections.

The first section begins with fanfares that announce the celebration. After thirty seconds, the introduction fades into music that pays tribute to the pioneers that migrated to Arizona. The music has a rustic quality reflecting the pioneering spirit of the ranchers, farmers, miners, and merchants who came to Arizona seeking a better way of life. This section is intended to be inclusive as it is impossible to represent each culture individually in a short musical composition.

The second section pays tribute to the various Native American cultures that are a large part of Arizona's history and its present way of life. Flutes and percussion instruments are used in the beginning of this section to represent the Native American respect for nature. This quiet section evolves into a ceremonial dance that increases in intensity. Towards the end of this section one hears fragments of the "pioneer" melody as these culture come together.

The third section is influenced by Mariachi music to recognize the Hispanic influence in Arizona. The first part uses an original rollicking tune with four beats to the measure over syncopation. The second part contains a lyrical melody with three beats to the measure accompanied by instruments playing accents that create the Hispanic sounding grouping of six notes into three groups of two alternating with two groups of three. A brief ending using the fanfares of celebration interspersed with figures from the Native American and pioneer sections brings the work to a rousing close.