

# **Snowdrift**

for

**Full Orchestra**

by

*John Burge*

Funding for the preparation of performance materials provided  
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Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario.

**duration: approximately 13 minutes**

***Snowdrift* was premiered by the Kingston Symphony,  
Glen Fast, conductor, on March 23, 1997  
at the Grand Theatre, Kingston, Ontario.**

### About the music...

*Snowdrift* is a short, single-movement work for full orchestra. On a descriptive level, the work musically conveys the title's image in two ways: the limitation of the work's pitch content to the white notes of the piano and the compositional reliance on a slowly evolving orchestral texture. At a much deeper level, the work appears to be typically Canadian: resourceful in spite of externally imposed constraints, expressive but not over-bearing, calm. The piece is dedicated to Paul and Irma Webb, two long-time family friends, whose Muskoka cottage in the winter provided the composer with an ideal visual image. Like many aspects of the winter season though, the snowdrifts are sometimes best enjoyed from the chair closest to the fire place.

*Snowdrift* is the third work of John Burge's that the Kingston Symphony has commissioned and premiered. Previous collaborations include Burge's *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* (1991) and his cantata, *That we may not Lose Loss* (1993). In the spring of 1998 Glen Fast will conduct the Kingston Symphony in the premiere Burge's *Symphony No. 1*.

### About the composer...

John Burge was born in Dryden, Ontario in 1961. He holds degrees from the University of Toronto (B.Mus. and M.Mus.) and the University of British Columbia (D.M.A.) where his composition professors included John Beckwith, Walter Buczynski, Stephen Chatman, John Hawkins and Derek Holman. Since 1987 he has been teaching at the School of Music, Queen's University where he currently holds the position of Associate Professor. Burge's composition output is marked by a number of major choral works including: *Mass for Prisoners of Conscience* (1989), a seventy-five minute work for three soloists, choir and chamber orchestra; *Thank You God* (1992), an eight-movement prayer cycle for children's choir and chamber orchestra; and *Divinum Mysterium* (1995), a Christmas composition for choir and brass band.

Like his close connection with The Kingston Symphony, in recent years Burge has worked productively with The Thirteen Strings of Ottawa. In April of 1997 they will premiere, *Upper Canada Fiddle Suite*, the third work that Burge has specifically composed for the group. The two previous compositions include *One sail*, for solo cello and strings, which was premiered in 1993 with cellist, Shauna Rolston, and *Forgotten Dreams*, for solo flute and strings, which was premiered in 1995 with flutist Joanna G'froere. The latter work was included as the title track on their most recent CD recording.

## Instrumentation

2 Flutes  
2 Oboes  
2 Clarinets in B flat  
2 Bassoons

4 French Horns in F  
2 Trumpets in B flat  
3 Trombones  
Tuba

Timpani

2 Percussionists

Triangle

Small Suspended Cymbal

Large Suspended Cymbal

Tam-tam

Glockenspiel

Vibraphone

Assorted Non-wood Wind Chimes  
(glass, metal, pottery)

Strings

for Paul and Irma Webb

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1 Gracefully  $\text{♩} = 84$

The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes woodwinds and percussion. The woodwinds (Flute 1 & 2, Oboe 1 & 2, Bb Clarinet 1 & 2, Bassoon 1 & 2) play a melodic line with a *sempre p* dynamic. The percussion (Percussion 1) features a vibraphone part with a motor on, marked *mp* and *sim.* The brass (French Horns 1 & 2, Bb Trumpets 1 & 2, Trombones 1-2, Trombone 3, Tuba, Timpani) and strings (Violin 1 & 2, Viola, Cello, Contrabass) are silent in this section.

The second system includes strings. The woodwinds and percussion are silent. The strings play a sustained harmonic accompaniment. Dynamics for the strings are marked *mp* and *p*. The Viola part includes a *arco* marking.

6

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Bb Cl. 1

Bb Cl. 2

Bn. 1

Bn. 2

Perc. 1

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

*div.*

*f espr.*

*p*

*mp*

*Voc.*



A

16

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Bb Cl. 1

Bb Cl. 2

Bn. 1

Bn. 2

Hns. 1, 3

Hns. 2, 4

Tbns. 1-2

Tbn. 3

Tb.

Perc. 1

A

16

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.



