

Hornarama Code: 29030

Sonata No. 2

by Laurence Lowe (b. 1956)

for horn, soprano and piano

About the Work

I started composing the Sonata No. 2 for Horn, Soprano, and Piano in early 2005. Shortly after beginning the drafts of the 1st movement, I was in Hawaii playing chamber concerts with the Orpheus Wind Quintet. Three days into the trip, the retina in my right eye tore severely while I was swimming at a waterfall on Oahu (in January!). The dedication of the 1st movement is a tribute to my wife, Jenny, and to Chris and Patricia Smith who gave up virtually all the rest of the trip to help care for me through the surgery and its aftermath. Much of the Sonata was written during the long, painful recovery, when it was by no means sure that my vision would return intact.

Movement 1 is in a kind of baroque French overture form, though the music is in the “new romantic” style. It starts with a contemplative introduction. This segues into a wild allegro, with rips to high “C” and fast, light tonguing. The furious pace is broken up with lyrical passages. Some are passionate, and some are gentle. Others are hesitant, then hopeful. Then the movement ends much like it begins. This movement, most of all, captures the poignant emotions that colored everything I did as my sight slowly began to return.

Movement 2, *Johnny Has Gone for a Soldier*, is a piece that I have been performing, in a simpler arrangement, for years as a duet for two sopranos and piano. My daughter Laura and myself improvised the original soprano and piano parts. We have performed it, with Laura’s sister Wendy on the melody, many times. Since it was always improvised, each performance was unique. For the Sonata I added the brooding horn and piano introductions and interludes, and gave one of the soprano parts to the horn.

Movement 3, *Rondo*, was inspired by movie music, which I record often, and the heroic use of the horn in so many scores. Though there are no direct quotes in the three contrasting sections, I can tell you that the

opening allegro was inspired by a particular western and a particular player in Los Angeles. It would be crass to divulge which one.

About the Composer

A prize winner at the 1996 McMahon International Solo Competition, Laurence Lowe has established a national reputation as a horn soloist, orchestral player, and teacher. He has been a soloist at five international horn workshops sponsored by the [International Horn Society](#). Mr. Lowe has performed numerous recitals at colleges and universities throughout the United States. Orchestral and chamber music engagements have taken him to Europe, the Far East, Brazil, Mexico, Carnegie Hall, and the [Blossom Festival](#) in Cleveland.

Mr. Lowe studied with Don Peterson, principal horn of the [Utah Symphony](#), David Krehbiel, then principal horn of the [San Francisco Symphony](#), and Verne Reynolds, then professor of Horn at the [Eastman School of Music](#). He has held positions in the Veracruz Symphony (Mexico) and the Utah Symphony, and has toured with the St. Louis Symphony. Formerly Professor of Horn at [Missouri University](#), he currently teaches horn and theory at [Brigham Young University](#) in Utah. Mr. Lowe has recorded extensively for motion pictures and television, and can be heard playing principal horn on many current motion pictures and television shows, including solo horn in [Mannheim Steamrollers' A Fresh Air Christmas](#) video. His assignment at Brigham Young University includes performing with two exceptional chamber ensembles: the Orpheus Wind Quintet and the Brassworks Brass Quintet. Mr. Lowe is also principal horn of the [Orchestra at Temple Square](#). His first solo CD, *Four American Sonatas for Horn and Piano* is available on [Tantara Records](#).