

## *The True Colour of the Sky*

**GARY KULESHA**

B. August 22, 1954, Toronto, Canada

*Premiered in 2000 by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.*

*Scored for two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp and strings (approx. 10 minutes).*

*The True Colour of the Sky* was commissioned by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in 1999 for the European tour of 2000. It followed on my first symphony very closely, which had been premiered by the TSO in the winter of 1998. The symphony was a celebration of my relationship with the TSO, and featured several important solos for my friends and colleagues. I wanted to do something similar in this work, especially because I felt it was appropriate to highlight our individual players and superb sections for European audiences.

Like the symphony, *The True Colour of the Sky* is a broad journey through many moods and colors. There are moments of serene beauty, moments of great drama, shattering climaxes, and atmospheric interludes. Unlike the symphony, this all happens in 10 minutes. It is a very mercurial work, moving rapidly and suddenly between moods until the final climax ushers in the quiet coda.

The image that inspired this work came from the movie, *The Right Stuff*, about the early days of the space program. At one point in the film, a pilot pushes his regular atmospheric jet up past the top of the atmosphere, and just before the plane stalls and drops, he briefly catches a glimpse of the true color of the sky. I wanted to convey something of the magic of that moment when, after arduous work and a perilous journey, we are rewarded with a sudden brief vision of the truth. Somehow, this metaphor applies to everything in life. The point is, I suppose, that the sky reveals its true color only to those who strive for it.

- by Gary Kulesha