



FORWARD, TOGETHER, FORWARD

With standards of musical excellence raising so dramatically across the globe, I have seen the students and faculty of Northern Illinois University's percussion studio embrace these newfound standards and wrestle with them in such special ways. This struggle has become more urgent after a tragic school shooting on the NIU campus in the spring of 2008. In the wake of the tragedy, with a community hurting, these students have been able to use the tools at their disposal to reassess just what is important to them and to act on their assessments. Their solidarity in struggle with excellence seems to have been what brought them together, not merely a sense of victimization, and I am thrilled that this community of students is choosing excellence and the joy therein when appropriately presented with the choice. I earnestly hope they continue to embrace the struggle that comes with it, knowing that while there is a new standard of expectations in percussion unfolding before our very eyes, there is also an amazing standard of work-ethic being developed, and now, a new sense of urgency with respect to empathy, humility and grace.

Forward, Together Forward are the words NIU President, John G. Peters used to describe how the NIU community will grow after the painful events of last spring and can still be seen on posters in windows across the campus. It is so appropriate that he should use the same words that describe how students will pull through this incredible shift of musical expectations on the world stage, as well. This work is a fanfare, somewhat in the style of John Adam's *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*, John's McLaughlin's *On the Way Home to Earth*, and Dee Barton's *Three Thoughts* and was composed for the opening of the NIU Percussion Ensemble's performance at PASIC 2009.

***Contact Composer for Purchasing Information**