



R. W. HAMPTON PRESENTS:

Oklahoma . . . **WHERE THE WEST REMAINS!**

Background Information

In September of 2004, I met with Douglas Newell, Music Director of the Enid Symphony Orchestra, to discuss a possible project for the Oklahoma State Centennial. My thought was to create and commission an original symphony that would tell the rich history of Oklahoma and her people through songs, stories and historical facts. The concept was to present this production and feature R. W. Hampton in conjunction with the Enid Symphony Orchestra.

Armed with encouragement from Doug, I began to write a narrative to try and touch on the perspectives of the Native Americans, Cowboys, Settlers, African Americans, Immigrants and also the landscapes that make up the colorful history of our State. I enlisted Dr. Bob Blackburn, Executive Director of the Oklahoma History Center, to proof my script for factual accuracy and content. The next step involved a two and one half year process of working with R. W. Hampton and multiple Wrangler Award winner Rich O'Brien to make song selections of both original music and some old standards to further tell the story that we wanted to convey. Because this project involves a full orchestra, Doug Newell then recommended that we contact Professor/Musician/Composer Jerry Neil Smith to prepare symphonic charts for the selected songs. Jerry Neil collaborated with Brian Tidwell to divide and conquer the orchestral scores that were commissioned.

In January 2006 the project was approved as an official Oklahoma Centennial Commission event. The Premiere was held in Enid in September 2006 with two sold out performances at Enid Symphony Hall with the 40 piece Enid Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Douglas Newell and featuring R. W. Hampton. Rich O'Brien and the Chisholm Trail String Band completed the makeup of the musical guests.

- Edna Mae Holden

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