

Sanguine, a double concertino for alto saxophone, tuba, and orchestra

(By concertino I mean a short, single-movement concerto.)

Sanguine has a number of meanings including blood-red (one of my favorite colors since childhood) but also confident, optimistic and cheerful – attributes I tried to convey in this work with lively rhythms and exuberant chords. The first music I can remember was the church choir in my home parish. Drawing on my musical roots, Sanguine closes with a chorale, like a Bach cantata. The entire work is derived from that original chorale.

Listening Guide:

1. Duet – The saxophone soloist plays the chorale tune (slightly modified) along with simple counterpoint from the tuba.
2. The orchestra enters with a drawn-out rendition of the first phrase of the chorale. The soloists interject.
3. Canon – The tuba is followed closely by the saxophone. Both perform a bouncy version of the tune. Soon other instruments join and create a boisterous party that spins out of control. The soloists have the final word.
4. The orchestra performs another drawn-out phrase.
5. While the orchestra performs music based upon the contour of the chorale tune, the tuba and saxophone have a typical parent and child exchange.
6. The orchestra performs one more drawn-out phrase.
7. Chorale – The soloists blend in completely with the orchestra.

Sanguine was first a violin and piano piece I composed in the late 1990s and later scored for orchestra. In 2022, I added the saxophone and tuba solo parts for my colleagues, Fritz Hemke and Travis Netzer. I created an opening duet for them and completely rewrote the center section.