

MERCURY CONCERTO

Flute and Chamber Orchestra

2008/9

- Score and Parts available from the composer

Commissioned by the River Oaks Chamber Orchestra, Houston TX for Christina Jennings with a generous grant from Kathy and Ed Segner

DURATION: 20 minutes

Flute

Oboe 1

Oboe 2

Clarinet 1 B-flat

Clarinet 2 B-flat / Bass

Bassoon

Horn 1 F

Horn 2 F

Trumpet C

Percussion (1 or 2 players)

Timpani

SOLO FLUTE

Harp

Strings (6, 5, 4, 3, 2 or larger)

Program note:

MERCURY CONCERTO (2008/9), commissioned by the River Oaks Chamber Orchestra in Houston TX, is the culmination of my great and anxious excitement to write a work for flutist Christina Jennings. You can imagine my luck to have such a balanced artist show interest in a prospective work of mine! I immediately took to the task of 'fantasizing' the music for her.

I am a composer who leans heavily on both the structural integrity in my music as well as an attractive melodic/harmonic framework. These ingredients were precisely at the forefront of my sketch work for the concerto. Also, I love to exploit a performer's musical capacity (especially in the art of the 'concerto'). For Christina I had an extremely wide range in which to work.

Cast in three movements (i.e. Fast, Slow, Very Fast), MERCURY CONCERTO runs the gamut of musical expression over 20 minutes. I do something different from anything I have done before in this first movement –there is a 'piece within a piece' here. The language is fiercely tonal while Christina plays an invention over rushing strings. The middle section is a straight-up pop tune. The muted trumpet joins the flute in a cheeky dance, which then returns to the previous music in a rush to finish. The second movement, marked 'Contemplative', is a piece in which I try to evoke a kind of 'Night Music.' This is an airy, breathing movement for only the solo flute and strings/harp (no woodwinds play in this movement). Christina will sing as beautifully as I know she can throughout this movement. The last movement is a true finale to the concerto. It is devilishly difficult in places, pushing the technical into the pyrotechnical realm. I liken this last movement to a kind of *Scherzo Diabolique* (part moto perpetuo, part whimsy)

On the whole, MERCURY CONCERTO represents a work of genuinely excited exploitation of the best instrumentalists, a group in which Christina Jennings belongs without contest.

*Contact the composer for a reference recording of MERCURY CONCERTO.