

LYRIC CONCERTO: BRUCE LAWRENCE

“Lyric Concerto” for Contrabass flute and Strings (2009) Bruce Lawrence

Commissioned by: Peter Sheridan (2009)

Movements: *Allegro Moderato-Andante con Moto-Vivace*

The Lyric Concerto was composed at the request of Low Flutes specialist Peter Sheridan. This unique concerto fills the void of solo musical works for the contrabass flute, a flute that is played upright and plays two octaves below the normal C Flute. Mr. Sheridan’s passion is to increase the awareness and repertoire of the low flutes, which include: Alto, Bass, Contra and Sub-Contra bass flutes. Peter was introduced to Lawrence’s music through a work for cello and piano titled ‘Elegy.’ He performed that work on the Contrabass flute and was so impressed by the composition’s lyricism, that he commissioned Mr. Lawrence for a full scale work for Contrabass flute and Strings.

The work’s lyrical character is clearly evident in the opening theme of the **first movement**. The soloist enters and immediately begins to climb in tessitura, displaying a unique tonal quality. The music continues through a series of changing tempos and moods, demonstrating the flexibility of the Contrabass flute’s nuance of timbre. The brief Allegro vivo section is filled with demanding technical challenges for the soloists, again demonstrating sounds that are not usually heard on an instrument of this size. The music calms and the voice of the gentle giant is heard in its richest octave, singing a song that hints at the beauty of an English ballade. The triple time *piu mosso* returns and the movement is brought to a close with a short reprise of the opening material.

The **second movement** *Andante con moto* is a gentle pastoral in ABA form. Harmonic inflections flavour the musical cadences, as the B section explores a theme in the parallel minor. The cadenza states new material and briefly wanders towards the instrument’s outer ranges. The returning A, is repeated with a descant in the solo.

The **third movement** *Vivace* begins with a falling B minor triad as the soloist enters with a fast, agitated moving quaver passage unfolding the triad in an upward motion. A march-like *Maestoso* briefly enters the music, and then dissipates into some of the finest music in the concerto. An emotionally moving E major *Adagio* explores the rich low voice of the contrabass flute. The music climbs in the third phrase and travels into a haunting E minor episode. The cadenza experiments with the tonal and timbral possibilities of the contrabass flute, as the soloist plays different extended techniques in various ranges, before returning to the active opening passage. The work closes with a tonal push towards B minor and the power of the opening falling triad brings the music to an exciting close.

Peter Sheridan, Contrabass flute (and Cadenzas) **Claire Cooper**, Piano