HENRY FLURRY

CURRENTS

A PIANO CONCERTO INSPIRED BY NEW ORLEANS' RELATIONSHIP WITH WATER
CURRENTS

COMMISSIONED BY
DR. RINNA SAUN

2 FLUTES (1 Piccolo doubling)
2 OBOES
2 CLARINETS (B♭)
2 BASSOONS

2 HORNs (F)
3 TRUMPETS (C)
2 TENOR TROMBONES
1 TUBA

1 TIMPANIST (4 DRUMS)
2 PERCUSSIONISTS

VIOLIN 1 (UP TO DIVISI A 3)
VIOLIN 2 (UP TO DIVISI A 3)
VIOLA (UP TO DIVISI A 2)
CELLO (UP TO DIVISI A 2)
CONTRABASS

PERCUSSION REQUIRED:
- BASS DRUM
- CLASH CYMBALS
- SUSPENDED CYMBAL
- GLOCKENSPIEL
- SNARE DRUM
  (STICKS & BRUSHES)
- TAM-TAM
- 4 TOM-TOMS
- TRIANGLE
- VIBRAPHONE OR
  CROTALES & 2 BOWS
- WATERPHONE & BOW

FULL SCORE IS IN CONCERT C
Program Notes

Dr. Rinna Saun and Henry Flurry met and became longstanding friends during high school, when they attended the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts together. Through the ensuing years they discussed collaborating professionally and, in 2014, conceived the idea of Flurry writing a piano concerto for Saun to perform in 2016. With 2015 being the tenth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, it is not surprising that they settled on the idea of using New Orleans’ complex relationship with water as a starting point for the concerto.

While much of southern Louisiana is dominated by swamp land, within the city of New Orleans three waters impact daily life: the ever flowing and powerful Mississippi River that borders one side of New Orleans, the Lake Ponchartrain that borders the northern side and hides its far shores over the horizon, and the seemingly still waters (bayous and canals) that cut through the city. Combined, these waters enable industry, tourism, recreation — and sometimes tragedy.

The piano concerto is entitled Currents. Its three movements are subtitled “River”, “Breaking”, and “Still”.

I. River: The Mississippi River is the lifeblood of New Orleans. It created the land upon which New Orleans sits, it provides the drinking water for its residents, and it is a primary travel and shipping channel that makes New Orleans a major world port. If anything is constant about the river, it is that it never stops moving and it brings continually changing sights and sounds.

II. Breaking: As Hurricane Katrina passed by New Orleans, storm surges pushed water from the river and lake into the canals that cross the city. While the rising water overtopped some levees, it was the seven catastrophic levee failures within the city that overwhelmed the city’s pumping stations and prevented New Orleans from completely draining the floodwaters for nearly a month. Although the levees were designed to resist water at levels much higher than those Katrina pushed into the city, the Army Corps of Engineers eventually conceded that the levees were never built nor maintained to those design specifications. Tests that demonstrated the appropriate design strength were either misinterpreted or ignored, money was pinched, and many fingers were pointed in the flooding’s aftermath. As it turns out, the 2005 New Orleans flood was not a natural disaster: it was a man-made disaster that killed a thousand or more New Orleans residents and cost over $100 billion.

The second movement is not about the tragedy and pain of the flood, as originally intended. It is more an expression of the anger that grows with awareness of the extent that human decisions — whether by error, apathy, or intentional malfeasance — played a role in this disaster. The time line of events between when Hurricane Katrina, still far offshore, was declared a Category 4 Hurricane (shortly after midnight on 28 August 2005) and martial law was declared in New Orleans (midday on 30 August 2005) provided a rough map for the movement. Of note are the seven full orchestral hits near the middle of the work that symbolically represent the seven levee breaches that occurred the morning of 29 August.

III. Still: Still waters can be peaceful and reflective of the surrounding beauty, or, as in the case of the standing waters left after the levee failures, they can bring great sorrow and dramatically alter the future of a city and her people. This movement reflects that dichotomy by combining elements of pain and loneliness with beauty and hope. The piece is constructed from distorted fragments of the hymn “Nearer My God to Thee”, a hymn particularly relevant to New Orleans for its prominence in jazz funerals. Near the end of the work, the hymn comes together with the full orchestra, symbolizing both the way the entire city of New Orleans united to rebuild after the 2005 New Orleans flood and the hope for the city shared by all who have lived in New Orleans.

- Henry Flurry, 2016
I. River
1 - River
II. Breaking
II - Breaking

* All 8th and 32nd marks apply to all notes only on that one staff
* Play the octave if available on the piano.
III. Still

ca. 40-60 sec.

Lento (≈50)

Piccolo
Flute 2
Oboe 1
Oboe 2
Clarinet in B♭ 1
Clarinet in B♭ 2
Bassoon 1
Bassoon 2
Horn in F 1
Horn in F 2
Trumpet in B♭ 1
Trumpet in B♭ 2
Trumpet in B♭ 3
Trombone 1
Trombone 2
Tuba
Timpani

Waterphone
p

Waterphone
Waterphone
p

Glockenspiel
Glockenspiel

Piano
Piano

Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Violoncello
Contrabass

mournful & isolated, with space

Lento (≈50)

pp

con sord.

bowed, occasionally scraped or tapped, always l.v.

solo, improvise

con sord.
III - Still
Meno mosso (\( \times h. h. = 45 \))

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tba.

Timp.

Sus. Cym.

Glock.

Pno.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.
III - Still
III - Still