Michael Daugherty

***Reflections on the Mississippi* (2013) for tuba and orchestra**

I. Mist
II. Fury
III. Prayer
IV. Steamboat

COMPOSER NOTE

Reflections on the Mississippi (2013) for tuba and orchestra was commissioned by the Boyer College of Music and Dance at Temple University. The world premiere takes place at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts on March 24, 2013 at 4:00 PM. www.kimmelcenter.org.

The New York premiere takes place on April 5 at 8:00 PM at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall. www.lincolncenter.org

The Temple University Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Luis Biava, performs both concerts. Carol Jantsch is the tuba soloist at bother concerts.

Composed in memory of my father, Willis Daugherty (1929-2011), this concerto is a musical reflection on family trips during my childhood to the Mississippi River. In 2012, I returned to the Mississippi River to make a road trip from McGregor, Iowa to Hannibal, Missouri. Along the "Great River Road," I explored small river towns and snapped photographs of scenic vistas. Local boat owners also guided me to the secluded wildlife havens and murky backwaters of the Mississippi River. All the while, I was collecting sounds, musical ideas and an emotional framework for my tuba concerto.

The tuba concerto is 20 minutes in duration, and composed in four movements:

In the first movement of the concerto, "Mist," I reflect on sunrise as seen and heard through a misty haze over the Mississippi River. After an opening ripple, the tuba intones a mystical melody that ascends through shimmering orchestral chords. An *ostinato* is introduced in a musical canon by percussion, piano and tuba, followed by a dark second theme that rises from the depths of the string section punctuated by woodwinds. At the end of the movement, the *ostinato* returns in the timpani and is combined with the misty opening melody of the tuba.

The title of the second movement, "Fury," evokes the turmoil of the Mississippi River in the fiction of William Faulkner and in the history of the "Great Mississippi Flood" of 1927. Like the jarring time shifts in Faulkner's 1927 novel, *The Sound and the Fury*, the music I have created consists of dissonant harmonies, turbulent polyrhythms, and clashing 3/4 and 5/4 time signatures performed simultaneously. A rhythmic duet between the tuba and the snare drum recalls my father, who was a self-taught dance band drummer in Iowa.

In “Prayer”, the third movement, I meditate on the calm mood of the Mississippi River seen from a high vista, overlooking the water as far as the eye can see, as sunset turns into a clear and starry night. Glockenspiel, vibraphone, chimes and piano echo like distant church bells down in the valley, while the tuba plays a lyrical, soulful melody. In a musical flashback, music reminiscent from the first movement returns in the third and fourth movements to remind us of the timeless currents of the Mississippi River.

The final movement, “Steamboat,” conjures up colorful tales from *Life on the Mississippi* (1883) by Mark Twain. I have composed lively music that follows the gambling steamboats down the Mississippi River from Twain’s hometown in Hannibal, Missouri, to the final stop in New Orleans, home of Zydeco and Second Line music. Just as the tuba plays a central role in these musical traditions of New Orleans, the tuba soloist leads a “second line” of syncopated rhythms that propels my concerto to a virtuosic conclusion.

COMPOSER BIOGRAPHY

Michael Daugherty is one of the most commissioned, performed, and recorded composers on the American concert music scene today. His music is rich with cultural and political allusions and bears the stamp of classic modernism, with colliding tonalities and blocks of sound; at the same time, his melodies can be eloquent and stirring. Daugherty has been hailed by *The Times* (London) as “a master icon maker” with a “maverick imagination, fearless structural sense and meticulous ear.” Daugherty first came to international attention when the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, conducted by David Zinman, performed his *Metropolis Symphony* at Carnegie Hall in 1994. Since that time, Daugherty’s music has entered the orchestral, band and chamber music repertory and made him, according to the League of American Orchestras, one of the ten most performed living American composers.

In 2011, the Nashville Symphony’s Naxos recording of Daugherty’s Metropolis Symphony and Deus ex Machina was honored with three GRAMMY® Awards, including Best Classical Contemporary Composition.

Born in 1954 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Daugherty is the son of a dance-band drummer and the oldest of five brothers, all professional musicians. He studied music composition at the University of North Texas (1972-76), the Manhattan School of Music (1976-78), and computer music at Pierre Boulez’s IRCAM in Paris (1979-80). Daugherty received his doctorate from Yale University in 1986 where his teachers included Jacob Druckman, Earle Brown, Roger Reynolds, and Bernard Rands. During this time, he also collaborated with jazz arranger Gil Evans in New York, and pursued further studies with composer György Ligeti in Hamburg, Germany (1982-84). After teaching music composition from 1986-90 at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Daugherty joined the School of Music at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) in 1991, where he is Professor of Composition.

Daugherty is a frequent guest of professional orchestras, festivals, universities and conservatories around the world where he participates in pre-concert talks, teaches composition master classes and works with student composers and ensembles. Daugherty has been the Composer-in-Residence with the Louisville Symphony Orchestra (2000), Detroit Symphony Orchestra (1999-2003), Colorado Symphony Orchestra (2001-02), Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music (2001-04, 2006-11), Westshore Symphony Orchestra

(2005-06), Eugene Symphony (2006), the Henry Mancini Summer Institute (2006), the Music from Angel Fire Chamber Music Festival (2006), Pacific Symphony (2010-11), Chattanooga Symphony Orchestra (2012) and New Century Orchestra (2013).

Daugherty has received numerous awards, distinctions, and fellowships for his music, these include: a Fulbright Fellowship (1977), the Kennedy Center Friedheim Award (1989) for his compositions *Snap!* and *Blue Like an Orange*, the Goddard Lieberson Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters (1991), fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts (1992) and the Guggenheim Foundation (1996), and the Stoeger Prize from the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (2000). In 2005, Daugherty received the Lancaster Symphony Orchestra Composer's Award, and in 2007, the Delaware Symphony Orchestra selected Daugherty as the winner of the A.I. DuPont Award. Also in 2007, Daugherty was named "Outstanding Classical Composer" at the Detroit Music Awards and received the American Bandmasters Association Ostwald Award for his composition *Raise the Roof* for Timpani and Symphonic Band. His Grammy nominated recordings can be heard on Albany, Argo, Delos, Equilibrium, Klavier, Naxos and Nonesuch labels. His music is published by Peermusic Classical, Boosey and Hawkes and Michael Daugherty Music. For more information on Michael Daugherty see www.michaeldaugherty.net