

A Land So Luminous for Solo Violin and piano (2003)

A Land So Luminous (ou, un monde de flocons de neige embrasée) takes its title from an episode found in a book by Cyrano de Bergerac, namely Les Etats et Empires du Soleil (The Empires and States of the Sun), the second extant part of the larger L'autre Monde. This is not the Cyrano of Edmund Rostand's novel but the 17th century philosopher-poet whose imagination conjures other worlds and utopian societies predating the earliest science fiction by centuries. He is a poet of infinite space, capable of conveying opposing sensations in rapid succession and such qualities as these (as well as a marvellous plasticity of imagination) drew me to the text; the musical work is a response to such imaginings in sound.

Originally written for the soloist Peter Sheppard-Skaerved and the Continuum ensemble, this piano and violin version was prepared somewhat later. The piece is organic, unfolding by constant reforming of the opening material thereby renewing itself, only briefly at the end referring back directly to the beginning of the work. The formal contour of the piece moves from virtuosity and velocity to quiet contemplation, only to grow once more to an almost uncontrolled dance. The violin soloist must move between equal partner within the total texture as well as the role of antagonist to the accompaniment.

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