

## Les Grandes Plaines du Jour for solo violin

The title of this work, *Les Grandes Plaines du Jour* (The Grand Plains of Morning), was taken from 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.

The two sections of this work (which run without a break) are drawn from episodes specifically dealing with the eponymous hero's landing on the sun and interaction with the native beings. The quasi-scientific postulation by de Bergerac, that "the principal of matter (on the sun) is to be constantly in flux" influenced the first section. Various gestures are set against each other in an ever-changing order; a high single pitch with rhythmic articulations, large chords and leaping, irregular and dramatic melodic materials are presented, mosaic-like, through the unfolding narrative. A short linking section (*L'envoi*) winds this section down and presents the previously heard material in a more fundamental form, specifically long notes with occasional left hand pizz. counter-figures. The second section (Lighter Regions) begins simply, using pizzicato natural harmonics to form an immediate aural contrast to the previous section. Short duets, in the form of repeated figures alternating between arco and pizzicato, provide the structural backbone to this section, both modes of playing being developed as the work progresses. After a varied recapitulation, the piece ends with extremes of tessitura, from bottom open G-string repetitions (loud) to rapid altissimo passages (quiet).