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Canticle to the Sun (Concerto for French Horn and Orchestra) by Kenneth Fuchs. 2007.

Fire, Ice, and Summer Bronze (Idyll for brass quintet) by Kenneth Fuchs. 2008

Autumn Rhythm (Idyll for woodwind quintet) by Kenneth Fuchs. 2006.

Kenneth Fuchs is currently enjoying a truly impressive amount of critical acclaim, certainly due in part to *Canticle to the Sun (Concerto for French Horn and Orchestra)*, which was featured on the second recording of his music produced by the London Symphony Orchestra, released in January 2008, and reviewed in the October 2008 edition of *The Horn Call*. That recording also includes *Fire, Ice & Summer Bronze: Idyll for Brass Quintet after Two Works on Paper by Helen Frankenthaler*, and *Autumn Rhythm: Idyll for Woodwind Quintet after a Painting by Jackson Pollock*, as well as a mixed quintet without horn, and an orchestral concert overture.

A great deal has already been written about all of these works. Fuchs himself provides biographical anecdotes and other copious program notes about the extra-musical influences, melodic and harmonic elements, moods, textures, and structures in both the published editions and the CD liner notes. The collection of reviews on his website (kennethfuchs.com/reviews.htm) includes *ten* reviews of this music based on the recording. In addition to supplying extensive information about Fuchs's career and compositions, the website also features an inspiring and fascinating story about his first interaction with the London Symphony (kennethfuchs.com/lso.htm).

The concerto's immense popularity with horn players also speaks volumes. Timothy Jones, for whom it was written, recorded it for the 2008 release in 2006. Rick Todd premiered it in 2008 in Hartford CT, and it has since been performed by David Wick in Norfolk VA, and Randy Gardner in Denver at the 40th International Horn Symposium. Future performances scheduled at this time include one by Maria Rubio in Valencia, Spain. Instead of repeating what has been said, or attempting to come up with fresh descriptors and superlatives, I encourage you to read the extensive, enthusiastic reviews already available, and to purchase the recording. Below, I will try to provide some of the more "technical" information that may be helpful.

Canticle to the Sun, the concerto, is a through-composed single movement of twenty minutes duration. In addition to strings, the orchestral score requires one each of flute, English horn, B^b clarinet, B^b trumpet, and trombone, plus harp, celesta, timpani, and four percussionists. It is available on rental from the publisher, and a piano reduction is available for purchase. Some of the piano passages in the reduction appear pretty daunting: the "not exactly chromatic" fast, repetitive noodlings from the string parts, an awkward right hand figure that results from the combination of a [reasonable] celesta pattern with a [reasonable] violin pattern, and the extensive sections of ex-

treme upper register ledger lines. The horn writing is elegant, lyrical, idiomatic, and already well-appreciated by listeners and performers alike.

Fire, Ice, and Summer Bronze, the two-movement, twelve-minute idyll for brass quintet, was written in 1986 (but not published until 2008) and is scored for C trumpets, horn, trombone, and bass trombone. It is based on "Fire and Ice" and "Summer Bronze," two paintings by the Abstract Expressionist Helen Frankenthaler. The moods conveyed are, in Fuchs's words, "restless and contradictory," "inconclusive but serene," and "repose." He describes the horn as serving "as a musical catalyst," which means that horn lines are soloistic (and gratifying); however, the other four voices are in no way subservient or uninteresting – they are truly engaged in "dialogue," from unison rhythms to independent, pyramiding lines. Although the range and tessitura demands are modest, the range of expression (which is greater than the label "idyll" might imply), the ensemble precision required for the rhythmic complexities, and the uniqueness of the expressionist yet tonal style within the brass quintet repertoire would make this work a great addition to a program of demanding brass chamber music.

Autumn Rhythm, inspired by the famous Jackson Pollock "drip" painting with the same title, is a one-movement, thirteen-minute idyll for wind quintet written in 2005 and dedicated to Alfred Reed, Fuchs's teacher, mentor, and friend. It, too, is an elegant, lyrical exploration of the colors and textures inspired by the aesthetic of Abstract Expressionism that Fuchs describes as "states of feeling expressed through gesture." In general, the technical demands on the performers are similar to those for the brass quintet. The original version of this work moves the flute, oboe, and clarinet players to the alto flute, English horn, and bass clarinet for the last three minutes of the work; however, there is an alternate ending (a minute shorter) for which none of the players change instruments. *Virginia Thompson, West Virginia University (VT)*

