

Butterfly

for flute choir

RUSSELL NADEL

(2010)

Duration: c. 7'45"



Instrumentation:

Solo Piccolo
Flute I
Flute II
Flute III
Alto Flute
Bass Flute
Contrabass Flute*

* The contrabass flute part can also be performed on sub-contrabass or double contrabass flutes.

Program Notes:

Butterfly was inspired by a remarkable series of events that happened to family friends of mine. On the afternoon of July 10, 2007, Mr. Daniel Southerland was walking with a friend in crowded, hot downtown Washington, D.C., when a Red Admiral butterfly landed on his shoulder. It remained there for many hours, through lunch, photographs, and a taxi ride home, and seemed to make itself at home in the Southerland family's yard. For thirty-seven consecutive days, the butterfly that Dan dubbed "Poppy" remained with the Southerlands, and came out nearly every evening to greet Dan and his family. He sometimes brought other Red Admirals along to "show off their flying abilities," and sometimes landed on Dan's head or even the rim of his glasses. Poppy's behavior was so unusual, and so friendly, that the entire Southerland family became very attached to him. After Poppy's final farewell appearance on August 15, 2007, Dan wrote about his experience for the *Washington Post Magazine*, which published his article on August 24, 2008, and advertised the article with the title page headline, "A near-miraculous encounter with a butterfly changes a man's life." Dan has since received poems, letters and even hand towels embroidered with Red Admiral butterflies from people inspired by his story.

While my composition *Butterfly* was inspired by Dan's extraordinary story, I did not try to produce a literal programmatic version of the story in my music. Instead, I paid homage to Poppy and to the story in a few different ways. First, I wrote a virtuoso solo piccolo part to play the role of the titular butterfly; the piccolo accordingly dances, twirls and swirls in rapid passagework around the more slowly-moving remainder of the flute choir. I used common-tone modulations and rapidly-shifting key centers throughout the work to try to convey a sense of wonder, and used a variety of arpeggiation and passagework techniques to give all the members of the flute choir opportunities to dance, and to "zip and dip," in the words of Dan's son Matthew. In my mind, the opening represents Poppy's flight through the Washington air before landing on Dan; the lyric themes introduced in measure eighteen represent Poppy in free flight; and the busier, more dissonant section represents the traffic jam scene in downtown Washington where Dan and Poppy's paths initially crossed. From measure 85 onwards, the listener should use his or her imagination to decide what might be happening in the story, up until the butterfly's final display of "fighter pilot" tricks in the piccolo cadenza and his reluctant trilled goodbye at the very end.

This work is dedicated jointly to the Southerland family and to Ms. Debbie Gilbert and the Woodbridge Flute Choir of Woodbridge, VA. The WFC will premiere *Butterfly* on March 20, 2011, in Burke, VA.

— *Russell Nadel*
December 2010

BUTTERFLY

RUSSELL NADEL

Quasi cadenza, ma tempo stretto (♩ = 88)

Musical score for Solo Piccolo, Flute I, Flute II, Flute III, Alto Flute, Bass Flute, and Contrabass Flute. The score is in 3/4 time and features a quasi-cadenza section. The Solo Piccolo part begins with a triplet of eighth notes marked *mp*, followed by a triplet of sixteenth notes marked *poco f*. The Flute I, II, and III parts play sustained notes with dynamics ranging from *p* to *ppp*. The Alto Flute, Bass Flute, and Contrabass Flute parts are mostly silent, with some notes in the final measures.

Musical score for Piccolo, Flute I, Flute II, Flute III, Alto Flute, Bass Flute, and Contrabass Flute. The score begins at measure 5. The Piccolo part features a triplet of eighth notes marked *mf*, followed by a triplet of sixteenth notes marked *mp*. The Flute I, II, and III parts play sustained notes with dynamics ranging from *p* to *pp*. The Alto Flute part plays a sustained note marked *mp*. The Bass Flute and Contrabass Flute parts are mostly silent, with some notes in the final measures.

12 *poco accel.*

Picc. *mp* *cresc.* *f* *p*

Fl. I *mp* *f* *pp*

Fl. II *mp* *f* *pp*

Fl. III *mp* *f* *pp*

A. Fl. *mp* *f* *pp*

B. Fl. *mp* *f* *pp*

Cb. Fl. *mp* *f* *pp*

A *Andante con moto* (♩ = 96)

16

Picc. *mp* *mf dolciss.* *mp*

Fl. I *mp* *mf dolciss.* *mp*

Fl. II *mp* *mf dolciss.* *mp*

Fl. III *mp* *mf dolciss.* *mp*

A. Fl. *mp* *mf dolciss.* *mp*

B. Fl. *mp* *mf dolciss.* *mp*

Cb. Fl. *mp* *mf dolciss.* *mp*

B

23

Picc.

Fl. I
cresc. poco a poco

Fl. II
p

Fl. III
mp

A. Fl.
cresc. poco a poco
div.

B. Fl.
cresc. poco a poco

Cb. Fl.
mp

f

mf

p

unis.

C

30

Picc.

Fl. I
mf

Fl. II
mf

Fl. III
mp

A. Fl.
div.

B. Fl.
mp

Cb. Fl.
mp

pp

p

unis.

p

mp

mp

D

38

Picc.

Fl. I Solo Tutti

Fl. II *mf* *f* *f* *mf*

Fl. III *mp* *f* *mf*

A. Fl. *mf*

B. Fl. *mf*

Cb. Fl. *f*

46

rit.

Picc.

Fl. I *mp*

Fl. II div. unis. *mp*

Fl. III *mf* *mp*

A. Fl. *mp*

B. Fl. *mp*

Cb. Fl. *mp*

E Più lento (♩ = 72)

F Moderato, liltino (♩ = 63)

50

Picc. *mp* 6 3 *ff* *p* rit. Flz. ord.

Fl. I *sfp* *mf* molto legato

Fl. II *sfp* *mp* molto legato

Fl. III *sfp* *p*

A. Fl. *sfp* *p*

B. Fl.

Cb. Fl.

54

Picc.

Fl. I

Fl. II

Fl. III *legato* *mf* cresc. poco a poco

A. Fl. *legato* *cresc. poco a poco*

B. Fl. *mf* legato

Cb. Fl. *mf* legato

60 **G**

Picc.

Fl. I

Fl. II

Fl. III

A. Fl.

B. Fl.

Cb. Fl.

mf

f

mp

f

ff

63

Picc.

Fl. I

Fl. II

Fl. III

A. Fl.

B. Fl.

Cb. Fl.

mf

mp

f

* In passages like this one, with long streams of running sixteenth notes, performers may exchange measures or slurred note-groups with their stand partner to simplify performance.

J Tempo primo (♩ = 88)

82

Picc.

Fl. I

Fl. II

Fl. III

A. Fl.

B. Fl.

Cb. Fl.

mp

p

pp *mf*

pp *mf*

pp *mf*

mp

88

Picc.

Fl. I

Fl. II

Fl. III

A. Fl.

B. Fl.

Cb. Fl.

mf *pp* *mp*

mp *mf* *mp* *cresc. poco a poco*

mp *mf* *mp* *cresc. poco a poco*

pp *mp* *mf* *p*

pp *mp* *p* *mf* *p cresc. poco a poco*

pp *pp cresc. poco a poco*