

Summer Sunrise on the Mississippi by Robert Fruehwald (b. 1957)

There is an eloquence of silence...
There is a haunting sense of loneliness...
The tranquility is profound, infinitely satisfying.

That is all beautiful, soft and rich and beautiful,
A pink flush, a powder of gold, a purple haze.

from *Life on the Mississippi* by Mark Twain

I teach music composition and theory at Southeast Missouri State University. Every day, when walking home, I would see a glint of blue through the trees on the horizon. For many months, I thought I was seeing the sky. Then, one day, I saw a stern-wheel steamboat squarely in the middle of that patch of blue - what I had been seeing was the Mississippi River. Every day after that, I would watch the river and observe its moods. It's been my daily companion ever since.

Recently, our music department at Southeast Missouri moved from the main university campus to a new one on the banks of the Mississippi. Now I observe the river up close. I see different things every day.

I decided to write a piece about the river, a piece that expresses its mood on a warm day, early in the morning, just as my own day would begin. I looked to Mark Twain for some lyrics and found a suitable passage in his *Life on the Mississippi* (published the year before *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*). I thought Twain's words would make a great basis for a song, and I think that someday they will; however, instead of a vocal work they inspired me to write this instrumental solo.

When I recorded the river sounds on the CD accompaniment, I put the microphone right down on the Mississippi River (at Cape Girardeau, Missouri). I also recorded some other nearby sounds: birds, cicadas, a passing train, etc. - Robert Fruehwald

Summer Sunrise on the Mississippi was commissioned by Michael Dean. He premiered it on his tour of Florida (Florida State University, University of Florida, University of South Florida, and University of Central Florida) in October of 2009. He performs it on the CD, *Woodwind Music of Robert Fruehwald, Vol. 1* – available at cdbaby.com, iTunes.com and Amazon.com for purchase and download.

The sheet music and CD accompaniment for *Summer Sunrise* are available for **free download** at www6.semo.edu/fruehwald/downloads.html.