

# ROBERT SIROTA

COMPOSER

## PROGRAM NOTES

### *BIRDS OF PARADISE*

Program note by Robert Sirota:

*Hail to thee, blithe spirit!  
Bird thou never wert,  
That from Heaven, or near it,  
Pourest thy full heart  
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.*  
Percy Bysshe Shelley (1821)

*In the days of perfect nature, man lived together with birds and beasts, and there was no distinction of their kind...they were in a state of natural integrity.*  
Chuang-tzu (369-286 B. C.)

*Arise my love, my fair one,  
And come away;  
For now the winter is past,  
The rain is over and gone.  
The flowers appear on the earth;  
The time of singing is come,  
And the voice of the turtledove  
Is heard in our land.*  
Song of Solomon 2:10

As soon as I began thinking about a new work for the Webster Trio, I began to hear birdsong. Every culture has its images of paradise, all of which include the sights and sounds of birds. In my own experience, I have been fortunate to walk through an equatorial bird sanctuary in Singapore, as well as the woods surrounding my house in coastal Maine. While the sounds of these two environments are worlds apart, both evoke the same sense of wonder, peace and communion with God.

It is this mystical dimension- the “profuse strains of unpremeditated art “- of birdsong that has attracted me in composing *Birds of Paradise*, which is my tribute both to the twenty years of music-making by the Webster Trio and the twenty years of marriage of Leone Buyse and Michael Webster.