

...*And Bold To Fall Withal* *
(Henry Hudson in the New World)

for Tenor and Chamber Orchestra

Libretto and Music by Gary S. Fagin

Commissioned by The Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trusts in celebration of the
400th anniversary of Henry Hudson's sail into New York Harbor.

Premiere performance, January 16, 2010
The World Financial Center Winter Garden, New York City
The Knickerbocker Chamber Orchestra, Jason Danieleley, tenor
Gary S. Fagin, conductor

*from an entry in first-mate Robert Jouet's journal on the day Henry Hudson's Halve Maen (Half Moon) sailed into
New York Harbor for the first time, "*The land is very pleasant and high, and bold to fall withal.*"

PART I: DEPARTURE

Sails... Sails... Sails!
All Europe's ports
Filled with sails,
Surging with men
Seeking Bounty from the Orient:
Saffron, cinnamon, silk;
Rubies, jade... and gold.

Sail west to reach the East.
Columbus tried.
Magellan's men proved it so.
West, then south, and further south,
Round the treacherous Cape,
Through Pacific's calm seas.

Spain and Portugal own the South Seas.
England and the Dutch look North.
Twice for the British Henry Hudson sails;
Bitter cold, impenetrable ice force him back.
Now Amsterdam's merchants summon,
"Brave Hudson, find the Northern Passage
For Us!"

Year 1609; the thirtieth of May. Henry Hudson, commanding the Half Moon, sails once more into the unknown.

PART II: TERRA CONTINENS*

Ten thousand years ago
This continent ice-covered.
Inch by inch glaciers recede.
The Earth reveals a furrow—
A deep, wide River
Teeming with life:
Foot-wide oysters,
Ten-pound lobsters,
Salmon beyond number,
Magnificent abundance!

Lenape, Iroquois, Mohecan
Give the River many names.
“*Mahicánituk*” is one:
“*The River That Flows Both Ways*”—
Mountain water south;
Ocean tides north.

One late-summer day
Something strange appears:
A phantom propelled by wind—
Stretching, straining massive sheets.

Third of September. The Half Moon enters the Great River Harbor.

*Latin: *continuous land*; denoting a continuous tract of land, “continent;” origin mid-16th century.

PART III: ARRIVAL

Up the River the Half Moon sails.
First mate Robert Jouet writes:
“The Land is pleasant and high,
And bold to fall withal,
With Grass and Flowers
And Goodly Trees
As ever to be seen.”

“The people of the Country come aboard
In Deere skins loose, well dressed.
They bring Greene Tabacco, Corn and Wheat,
Dried Venison and Beaver skins
And give of it for Knives and Beads.”

Four weeks on the River.
No passage.
The Half Moon comes ‘round,
One canoe off its stern.
A man climbs up,
Snatches a pillow and two shirts.
The Master’s Mate shoots,
Strikes him in the breast
And kills him.

Before the day is out
Twelve slain in their canoes.
O, harbinger of what’s to come:
Temptation, Mistrust, Death.

Fourth of October. The Half Moon heads back to sea, and home.

EPILOGUE

Three times Henry Hudson fails
To find a Northern Passage.
The fourth attempt,
Abandoned in the Bay that bears his name,
He dies.

Sixteen summers pass.
Dutch merchants again send men
To these shores—
For good.

Forty years more,
As spoil of war,
New Amsterdam becomes New York.
Towers rise, scrape the skies.
One day two fall.

The River "*Mahicánituk*,"
Now "*Hudson's River*."
The Island at the River's mouth,
Four hundred years
A harbor for seekers of New Worlds.
"*Manna-hatta*," Manhattan—
Sacred, scarred,
Grand, gritty—
And Bold to Fall Withal.