

## Christopher Rouse: Trombone Concerto - Gorgon - Iscariot (1997)

Written by bluesever

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Trombone Concerto (29:50) 1 *Movement I* 11:07 2 *Movement II* 70:07 3 *Movement III* 11:35  
Gorgon (17:16) 4 *I. Stheno* 5:37 5 *Perseus Spell 1* 0:44 6 *II. Euryale* 4:58 7 *Perseus Spell 2* 0:47 8 *III. Medusa* 5:13 9 *Iscariot* 14:18  
Trombone – Joseph Alessi Colorado Symphony Orchestra Conductor – Marin Alsop

Among contemporary composers of orchestral music, Christopher Rouse is a prominent figure, noted for his extremely virtuosic scores as well as for his dark subject matter. Such fantastic -- some might say nightmarish -- pieces as the ultra-violent *Gorgon* (1984) and the enigmatic *Iscariot* (1989) are true to form in their evocation of mythology or religion, and even the elegiac *Trombone Concerto* (1991) has its suggestions of otherworldly things, particularly in its quotation of Leonard Bernstein's "Kaddish" Symphony and the haunting, dirge-like adaptation of the folk song *Tsintskaro* at the opening of the third movement. Yet Rouse's music is much more than its allusions, however meaningful, and it's possible to enjoy these works for their raw power and ethereal beauty without knowing anything about their references. The *Trombone Concerto* is a tour de force for the instrument, particularly in the ferociously fast second movement, and *Gorgon* is relentless in its savage rhythms and terrifying drive; the outer movements of the concerto and *Iscariot* provide some of the most profound and moving music Rouse has ever produced. Trombonist Joseph Alessi and the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, directed by Marin Alsop, deliver exciting and technically impeccable performances on this 2007 reissue from Phoenix USA, and the sound quality is exceptionally clear and focused, even in passages where the music is soft and intentionally blurred for effect. ---Blair Sanderson, allmusic.com

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