

## A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF THE MUSIC OF ANDREW DOWNES

by Dr David C F Wright

My introduction to Andrew Downes's music was the Concert Overture: Towards a New Age which is an incredible score. Among its many qualities is a marvellous understanding and control of the orchestra. The music is very loud and dramatic at times and almost unbearably exciting and yet the texture of the writing is absolutely faultless. There are composers, some of whom are famous, who, when writing orchestral tuttis do not care, or simply do not know how to spread the orchestra and what range of each instrument to use in a "big passage" to make its contribution the most effective. One of the worst offenders was Britten but the two masters of this rare skill were Wagner and Sibelius. It is interesting to note that Professor Downes rates Sibelius highly for the qualities that are also evident in his own music.

Towards a New Age was awarded a gold medal by the Institution of Mechanical Engineers for their 150th anniversary. Malcolm Arnold wrote a piece called Machines and Mossolov wrote Iron Foundry and the Scottish composer, Robert Crawford, wrote Hammered Brass, a very good piece, yet Downes's work depicting the same percussive aspects of craftsmen's skills is the finest piece of its kind. What it does convey is a strong beauty that is inherent in the clever and often subtle workings of mechanical technology.

Andrew writes music with traditional titles such as symphony, concerto, sonata and string quartet which titles, being abstract, call for more imagination from the listener and these forms usually call for greater discipline in composition. A piece called Summer Night in Edinburgh, for example tells the listener how to think, to conjure up the Venice of the North, the kilt and the bagpipe, the spear thistle and, perhaps, a reel or strathspey and an imbibing of Scotch which Malcolm Arnold and Peter Maxwell Davies' can do very well. I mean compose music with a Scottish flavour rather than become inebriated! But such a title of a composition does not call for any highly personal response or imagination but, rather, a looking for the landmarks in the music to indicate its Scottishness. And yet Professor Downes is certainly not trammelled by the past as implicit in the titles of two of his works: Towards a New Age and the oratorio New Dawn. In addition he has written a Sonata for eight horns and a Sonata for eight flutes or flute choir as well as the Tone Poem: Song of the Eagle for flute choir.

Andrew was born at 8 Goldshill Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, to Frank and Iris, neé Fennell on 20 August 1950. He was the second of two children. His sister, Judith Anne was born on 28 August 1946. His father, who is now retired, was born on 21 November 1921 and was a professional horn player, having been a student of the legendary Denis Brain, and serving in several orchestras, the Sadlers Wells, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Malcolm Sargent, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra under George Weldon and the BBC Midland Orchestra under Leo Wurmser who was a very fine conductor. He also worked under the baton of Beecham, who was a very limited conductor and who hated Beethoven and Elgar and with Rudolph Schwarz, a very personable man, and the superb Sir Adrian Boult whom I also found to be a very fine musician. Frank Downes took the part of the third horn in the premiere of Humphrey Searle's Symphony no.4 in Birmingham under the composer's direction. During the war Frank Downes was in the RAF Central Band. >From 1970 he was Head of Orchestral Studies at the Birmingham School of Music.

It was Frank Downes' playing of Mozart on the piano that probably awakened Andrew to music and encouraged him to improvise on the piano. He began piano lessons with his father in 1955. His mother, who was born on 17 May 1923, taught commerce and was a fine amateur singer. Sadly, she died on 13 June 1997. Both Andrew and Judith were brought up in a musical home. Andrew's uncle is the distinguished viola player Herbert Downes who, among other fine achievements premiered the Benjamin Frankel Viola Concerto at Cheltenham. He was the first to play the splendid Bartok Viola Concerto after William Primrose had premièred it in America. I remember talking to Harry Danks, the principal viola in the BBC Symphony Orchestra and asking him whom he thought our best violist was. He replied quietly and firmly, "Bert."

One of Andrew's ancestors was a signatory to Charles the First's death warrant.

Andrew had lessons in piano and singing with Alvena Grant who, with her husband Peter, founded the Midland Boys Singers.

Schooling was enjoyed, or endured, by Andrew at St Michael's School, Handsworth (1954-5), Streetly County Primary School (1955-61) and Aldridge Grammar School (1961-8).

At school Andrew won a verse speaking prize three years running. He also won a French verse speaking prize and two prizes for music. He played the parts of Francis in Shakespeare's Henry the Fourth (part one), Krushina in Smetana's The Bartered Bride, Bottom in A Midsummer Night's Dream and Macheath in John Gay's The Beggar's Opera.

His first composition was a setting of It was a lover and his lass for voice and piano which dates from 1958. He was a fine singer and made his debut at the Wigmore Hall in September 1969 as both a singer and a composer singing solo songs by Schubert and Purcell and taking part in his motet O Magnum Mysterium. He sang the part of David in Handel's Saul alongside Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau which he considers was the most demanding role that he has ever undertaken. This was at the Gottingen Festival in June 1975. He was surprised that Fischer-Dieskau was a chain smoker and understandably taken up with the soprano Julia Varady, a splendid artist.

But to return to his school years. He achieved seven GCE O levels and four A levels in English, Music, Art and General Studies. He became a choral scholar at St John's College, Cambridge from 1969-72 studying singing with Gordon Clinton and composition with Herbert Howells. He had considered other careers such as law and architecture but the appeal of music and the arts was very strong. In his teenage years Renaissance music and that of Vaughan Williams appealed to him. As he had learned to play the horn he was in the Staffordshire Youth Orchestra. He did not identify with late romantic works such as those of Wagner and Liszt but his appreciation of literature included Shakespeare, Tom Jones by Henry Fielding and the poetry of Hardy, Wordsworth, Keats and Dylan Thomas.

His first work performed by amateurs was a madrigal It fell upon a day in the merry month of May in 1965 and was broadcast on the BBC Home Service by the Midland Boy Singers. His first professional performance was of his Piano Sonatina given by Malcolm Wilson in 1978 whereas his first professional broadcast was of his Prelude, Fanfare and Postludes for organ played by John Bishop on the organ of Bridlington Priory on 27 December 1978.

Upon leaving college, he taught music at St Michael's School, Sloane Square, London. In 1974 he began teaching at Thames Valley Grammar School in Twickenham. The following year he became a lecturer at the Birmingham School of Music. Five years later he was a senior lecturer and in 1987 became Principal. By 1992 he was Professor and Head of Studies of Composition and Creative Studies at the Birmingham Conservatoire.

Andrew is blessed with a marvellous wife who is a tremendous support to him. Her contribution cannot be praised too highly. She was born Cynthia Rosemary Cooper. She read French and German at Royal Holloway, University of London. She is a violinist having studied with Mary Mitchell of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and with Hubert Veasey of the Philharmonia. She is currently a teacher and publishes Andrew's music.

Their wedding was in August 1975 at the village church of Codsall in Staffordshire

The Downes have two daughters. Anna Rebecca was born on 19 February 1977 and is a music graduate from Exeter University. She studied the violin with David Gregory of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and is currently teaching at King's School, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton. Paula Rachel was born on 13 December 1979 and is a choral scholar at Trinity College, Cambridge and pursuing a career as a soprano soloist.

To return to Andrew's music. To date, there are three string quartets. The String Quartet no.1 was completed in Blakedown, Worcestershire in 1977 and first performed by the Perry String Quartet in the following year. Its first professional performance was given by the Arioso String Quartet in Birmingham in February 1983. The Birmingham Post called it "a joyous piece, rich in melodic invention and constructed with closely knit musical sensibility." It is in three movements, an Allegro marked with vitality which contains a brief Adagio espressivo and another featuring a slackening of speed throughout its six minutes. The simplicity of the

opening material is notable. Tonic chords in root position and the cello takes up the theme at once. The cello is the star of the show for the first 63 bars and from bars 195 to the end. The simplicity of the music calls for a good performance to prevent it from becoming commonplace, which it is not. The slow sections possibly hinder the music's progress but the fugato section is very rewarding. The slow movement *Andante molto legato* is also noted for its simplicity. The theme is in octaves on the violins over an Alberti bass. The introduction of jazz elements do not seem to belong in a movement that intends to be serene. The final, *allegro vivace* has a very strong jazz input. The material is linked to the opening movement but the worrying feature to some may be when the cello takes on the role of a pizzicato double bass in a jazz band. There appears to be a dance tune and one wonders whether this suits this most intimate of classical mediums. It contains some good music and a more persuasive performance than the one I heard may have done the work justice. The work was not well received in some quarters. Some actually thought that the content was not suited to this classical medium. It may explain why its successor is so very serious.

The String Quartet no. 2 was completed in 1987 and premiered by the Isis String Quartet at Birmingham's Festival of New Music and Art on 5 December 1989. The work was commissioned with funds made available by West Midlands Arts. Again, the Birmingham Post gave it a good review writing "Downes's style seems to combine the least cloying aspects of English pastoralism with dashes of European eclecticism." It is in three movements. The opening *Andante con moto* is another movement of frequent mood changes from the plainsong melody on the violins to a passionate attack and a dreamlike quality. In the performance that I heard the movement did not hang together which is always a problem when tempi are varied. This is why a Haydn *allegro* is superb because it keeps going and makes for a satisfactory movement. The second movement is a scherzo but also suffers from slow sections which break the music up but then the classical composers wrote scherzos and trios and the trios were usually slow affairs. The finale is marked *prestissimo* but the main unit of semiquaver gives way to the main unit being minims thus slowing down the music considerably. It no longer sounds *prestissimo* but a slow *andante*, a device Elgar used.

The String Quartet no. 3 of 1994 is probably his best quartet. It was written for the Almira Quartet and is dedicated to the composer John Mayer. There are three main ideas: one a slow and sad plainsong, the next ragged, almost violent and the third, which is clearly influenced by Classical Indian music and inspired after the composer visited Bengal in February 1994. It is a long work of constantly shifting moods conveying joy, tragedy and passion. In its best pages there are many musical delights such as at figure NN, whereas the section Y to AA seems very simplistic and gives the music an unintentional facile sound. As in his Symphony no.4 it is difficult to appraise this work because the quality of the material varies so much. But I think the real problem is that the music is very personal and therefore may eliminate our full enjoyment of it.

There are four symphonies. Symphony no. 1, op. 27 was completed in September 1982 and was first performed by the Symphony Orchestra of the Birmingham School of Music conducted by Mark Foster in All Saints Church, Cheltenham in a concert to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the death of Gustav Holst, formerly organist of the church. The work is scored for organ, brass, percussion and strings. It is not, however, an Organ Concerto. The Birmingham Evening Mail called it a brilliant work, written as a cry from the heart for the recognition of the horrors of nuclear war. It is in four movements. The opening Prelude and Fanfare is an *andante*, sombre, sinister and empty, beginning with lugubrious cellos and basses over a low timpani E. The violins 'cry' by a falling semitone, a feature that exists in the opening bass line. The opening of Shostakovich Eleven is not far away. The organ's first entry is a reedy, quasi-snarling statement joined by eight trumpets. The pace slightly quickens into a sort of march which grows louder but the fanfare figures are neither fast nor brilliant. The side drum has a subdued militarism and the trumpets *con sordini* have a tragic resignation. The brass entry at bar 80 leads to a tremendous climax and the peace is restored with the opening theme on the full strings over the timpani E. Again, the indebtedness to Shostakovich Eleven and Vaughan Williams Five is evident. A touching passage for string quartet follows and the distant trumpets herald a big climax and a broad theme at bar 132 which is very impressive and includes the main theme. The movement ends with a passage for two solo violins and a solo viola accompanied by a timpani D.

The second movement is marked *ricercare* and is an *andantino con moto* which is another slow movement. It has more aggression but by bar 60 the momentum has slowed to the mood of the opening movement. The

heart-beats of the bass drum are very effective, a symbol of life that has to go on despite adversity and man's hostility to his fellow man.

The third movement is entitled scherzo which has the feel of the Country Dance as in Rawsthorne's Symphony no. 2. It rushes with life but ends with a rituendo and a few bars marked *molto adagio*. The finale, postlude, is another slow movement, very introspective but which, in a brass section tries to achieve optimism.

I have yet to hear a satisfactory performance of this piece. It is deep and requires the finest of interpretation to do it justice.

The Symphony no. 2. Op. 30 is a splendid work. It is scored for a chamber orchestra, double woodwind, two of horns and trumpets, timpani and strings. It was completed on 17 March 1984 and given its first performance by the Sutton Coldfield Chamber Orchestra under Anthony Miller at the Town Hall, Sutton Coldfield on Sunday, 17 November 1985. It was written to celebrate the orchestra's tenth anniversary and funds came from sponsors and the West Midlands Arts. There are three movements, *Lento molto*, *Vivace* and *Largo*. It is a very fine score noted for its clarity and textural integrity. Its quasi-classical design leads to an even greater enjoyment. It is a score with life and a contrast that is so well-judged that it does not sound episodic. The opening movement begins with a flute solo in a typical Downes's style, simple but telling. In fact, the themes of this movement are memorable. The rhythmic sections are invigorating and beautifully set out for the orchestra. The *Vivace* starts lightly with deceptively simple themes which make them all the more endearing; there are some clever contrasts and a welcome open-air feel about the music. The finale also has simple themes but they are never banal. The preoccupation with the interval of the fourth has an integral part to play and there is a simply stunning fanfare-like passage before the quiet close.

Any work in the same genre to follow this is already at a disadvantage. However, the Symphony no. 3 is another fine work. What is admirable in Downes's work is that he does not find a style and reel off work after work in that same style. All his symphonies are different as, indeed, were those of Vaughan Williams. Lesser composers like Elgar and Britten found a style which they adjudged to be people-friendly and produced all their scores in that same predictable vein. Downes's Symphony no. 3 has the subtitle *Spirits of the Earth* and is really a desire to bring all cultures together in their respective musical styles. This suggests that the work is in great danger of being a hybrid but the composer avoids that pitfall very cleverly.

The work was premièred by the Birmingham Conservatoire Symphony Orchestra on 1 April 1993 in the Sir Adrian Boult Hall and the conductor was Andrew Mogrelia. The work is dedicated to the NSPCC in recognition of their sterling work among children in need, a cause close to my heart as well as to Andrew's.

The work is scored for a large orchestra with an amplified percussion section. And to those prejudiced critics who respond to such information by implying that composers who use large percussion sections are nothing more than noise merchants should recant that absurd observation. The percussion is used to great effect and very subtly at times. Of course, there are moments of tremendous power and excitement but there can be very impressive triple fortes whereas other composers just write noise. Consider Elgar's *Cockaigne Overture* and compare it with Dvorak's stirring *Carnival Overture*, for example.

There are five movements in this symphony. The first, *allegro ma non troppo*, is a stunning piece full of rhythmic vitality and energy coupled with melodic interludes that are almost beautiful. The use of the percussion evokes the universal theme and the music has a refreshing virtuosity. There is real excitement and a spirit of life itself. In one section, at figure H, the composer instructs the brass section to stand, as if it were a dance band. The second movement begins with three solo flutes who are instructed to play in African folk style. The music does not sound very African to me but rather like the flute incantation music we associate with Western movies when Red Indians and their culture is being depicted. The whole symphony shows Andrew's interest in paganism and/or the spiritualism that believe that the dead can communicate by spirit to the living and thus the cycle of life goes on uninterrupted. The movement proceeds apace with elements of jazz, again conjuring up for me the North American continent. There are some absolutely tremendous moments... figure 1 and the five bars following, is just one example. Here is life, full of vitality

and joy and it is magnificently captured. The third movement is marked *molto vivace* but introduces music at a slower basic unit. The movement has an impressively broad theme, unashamedly romantic, and, at figure K we are in Bali with gamelan music briefly referred to. The fourth movement is sub-titled *Belas Knap* referring to that part of the Cotswolds. Here Andrew's English pastoral style is at its best with melodic fragments that are now definitely beautiful. And his pastoral music is never anaemic. Perhaps there is more than a hint of the British brass band culture but the music is never vulgar. The finale, in my view, is the least successful movement and may suggest that the composer has run out of steam. It contains many fine moments but the long slow ending, while often beautiful, may have been better as a confident affirmation. Nonetheless there is a very great deal to admire in this impressive symphony and my few honest reservations (I am not referring to the Red Indians now) will not deter from this fine score. When one considers some of the music that has been commercially recorded, a proportion of which is very poor, one wonders why these symphonies have not been recorded.

I am undecided about the Symphony no. 4, op. 59. It was commissioned by Jan Sperling and the Albuquerque City Concert Band. It is inscribed "to my lovely daughter Anna on her leaving for Exeter University." The first movement, *City*, describes the composer's feeling on visiting this city; the second movement *allegro vivace* is a portrait of the surrounding mountains; the third movement which employs a solo cedarwood flute is entitled *Sky City* whereas the fourth movement depicts the desert. The finale is entitled *Rio Grande* but is nothing like Constant Lambert's masterpiece of the same title. The opening movement is really quite splendid depicting a day in the life of Albuquerque just as James Wilson did in his portrait of Dublin and the river Liffey. One feels that the music is too charitable to accurately portray the city or any other city for that matter. It seems to imply that it is a place without faults or a seedier side. That fine Scottish composer, John Maxwell Geddes did the same with his *Portrait of a City*, his city being Glasgow, and he paints another flattering picture. Downes's opening movement is well-conceived and hugely enjoyable. The second movement does not come off since the opening *allegro vivace* soon gives way to slower music. It is not that the pulse changes but the time values do and the music stutters. It breaks the flow of the music. A better performance would have eliminated these problems. The third movement is a delight with the hollow and very human sounds of the cedarwood flute making a tremendous atmosphere. The fourth movement is a very successful *adagio* full of interest throughout. It does not drag, meander or stop every few moments at musical traffic lights. The finale does not quite work. Leisurely finales seldom do. There is a lack of drama in this movement which is partly due to the music being too comfortable. And so, we have a five movement symphony of which three movements are excellent and two are disappointing. How does one assess such a score? And yet, my assessment is probably due to the lack of a good performance so far. We must wait until we have a definitive performance before we can give any accurate assessment... and that goes for all music.

This dilemma exists in many other pieces. I have been amazed at the number of my fellow professionals who agree that only one movement of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* is any good. The rest is canon fodder. I have always loved Bruckner's Symphony no. 6 but I have to say that the last two movements are not in the same class as the first two. There are works that maintain the same high level of quality throughout the whole of the work, for example, probably the three finest violin concertos of the twentieth century, those by Sibelius, Reger and Berg. There is a long Mahler symphony that has two magnificent minutes that appeal to me very deeply. This passage is superlative but the rest... Of course, some of this may be due to the performance. I took a friend to hear Simon Rattle conduct Sibelius. It was awful. She vowed never to hear the piece again. But she did and when she heard a great performance under Sir Alexander Gibson she was bowled over.

A stunning orchestral work of Downes is the *Centenary Fire Dances* which has been given a professional performance and more than confirms my previous observations. This is, without doubt, one of the most exciting scores of any British composer. The magnificent orchestration, the sheer brilliance and the, above all, masterly skill are all evident here. It is an absolute winner. But how many people know the work? It is more impressive than Tippett's *Ritual Dances* and Britten's *Sea Interludes* from *Peter Grimes*. And, as an added bonus, it is not trite or superficial as some grand orchestral showpieces can be.

There are concertos for two guitars, another for two pianos and strings and one for native American flute.

There is a wealth of instrumental music. The Piano Sonata was admired by the late John Odgon and another famous player is about to take it up. The Sonata for two pianos, a work associated with Bracha Eden and Alexander Tamir, is as engaging as Milhaud's Scaramouche and there are sonatas respectively for horn, violin, flute, piccolo, viola, brass quintet and the piece on the drawing board at the moment is the Sonata for cello and piano. The horns of the Czech Philharmonic have recorded his Sonata for eight horns, a magnificent piece in which the composer avoids the usual trap of writing blaring music. So much of it has a remarkable tenderness. Of particular note is his Sonata for flute choir which I have found to be very rewarding.

There is accomplished music for children particularly the opera Odysseus and the Cyclops. I was amazed at how simple techniques could be so effective, Andrew's involvement with the voice has lead him to write impressive vocal and choral music. His daughter Paula has just recorded Lost Love, a cycle of songs for soprano, flute, cello and piano, Old Love's Domain for voice and piano and Songs from Spoon River which the distinguished singer Sarah Walker has performed. The tenor, John Mitchinson has sung Old Love's Domain and The Marshes of Glynn which the composer believes was his first public success. His instrumental, chamber, vocal and choral work needs more attention and appraisal than I can give at the moment but what is clear is that we have a composer who needs promoting and whatever his view on his own music is he cannot promote himself since he is not an arrogant or pompous man. But who will?

### **Concerto for Four Horns and Orchestra op. 77**

In my forty five years of listening to music seriously there have been some notable and unforgettable milestones. These include the first hearings of such masterworks as Beethoven's Symphony no. 7, Dvorak's Carnival Overture, Humphrey Searle's The Riverrun ( and, indeed, all else that he wrote) Irving Fine's The Hour Glass, the music of Webern and now, Andrew Downes's Concerto for four horns and orchestra Op. 77, a truly staggering piece.

I heard the premiere in Prague. The Concerto was written for the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra and dates from the year 2002.

The premiere with that orchestra under Vladimir Valek was nothing short of sensational. I have not heard horn playing of this excellence ever before and I suggest neither have you.

The work is in three movements linked by a clever use of material. It is scored for four very brave horn players, piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, double bassoon, two horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion and strings. It lasts about 23 minutes.

This is both a real concerto and a true symphonic work.

The first movement is marked Allegro vivace and starts with an ostinato figure on violas and lower strings. This ostinato figure proceeds to the lower woodwind with brief brass melodic lines which melodic fragments are shared by the high woodwind. The soloists enter in a expansive, almost secondary role, and here the composer's usual wisdom is employed. He does not introduce his soloists with a bang or a display. All is in control. The music is broader accentuating minims as opposed to quavers and semiquavers as in the opening ostinato figure. But for all this the music does not lose interest. The first emphatic statement is not given to the soloists ( another clever move by this inspirational composer) but the soloists enter with the ostinato idea fortissimo and there is a fascinating interplay between the soloists and the orchestra. The climax is short lived and after five bars of broader music the timpani takes up the ostinato figures of rising minor thirds and major seconds. The horn parts are smooth over a more violate orchestra but it makes for an excellent contrast. At bar 218 the soloists, having established their presence, begin to enter into a display but I must say it is not crude like brass band virtuosity. This is still real music.

Andrew has among his many gifts a wonderful sense of orchestration and texture. In the loud passage for sustained strings, bar 236 onwards, he has spread the instruments perfectly to get the required effect but then he shows us immediately how to acquire gorgeous hushed sounds from woodwind, horns and strings. The music picks up excitement again and Andrew wisely avoids overkill. There is nothing pompous, thick or

turgid in his orchestration and his clarity I have noted in other works of his, notably the splendid second and third symphonies. The limited use of the timpani with unleashed power is another wise employment. The ostinato figure returns but its use is so reserved that it never becomes tedious. The very quiet passage for high strings at bar 332 is glorious and sets the calm before a brief and exciting climax with a wonderful ambiguity of tonality.

The second movement is headed *Adagio e molto espressivo* and is introduced by a curious theme on cellos and basses. Curious, since it is broad and stately but not stuffy. It has a march like quality and speaks of the need of the music to keep moving. It shows how good horn players can play legato and acquire soft top notes. There are so many little things that the composer does which make for a continuity. The Cinderella of the orchestra, the viola, has a say, three recurring crotchets as a triplet, the thirds in the flutes and the sixths in the oboes and clarinets and the way that simple devices generate alternatively a glowing beauty and then a tremendous excitement. The triplets figures in contrary motion on the horns ( bar 40 onwards) above strings in alternating fifths and sixths makes a wonderful sound. There are some strong timpani entries and the orchestral brass have some great moments particularly bar 44 onwards. There is so much to admire here. And still Andrew has not introduced any vulgar writing from either soloists and orchestra. He does not make a long slow movement to pad the music out as do lesser composers. The first movement takes about eight minutes and the second only five.

Perhaps the most notable aspect of Andrew's music is that although it is not complicated it is never banal. I know no other modern composer who can write music that adheres to simple but effective design with such telling results.

The finale is one of those rare pieces that is genuinely very exciting and, indeed, spell-binding. While it may be called a tour de force it is still music for music's sake.

It begins with another ostinato figure which is the reverse of the opening movement and the horn writing is stunning.

And yet, note well, Andrew does not use any horn clichés... no open air hunting horn sounds, no fanfare figures, no ghastly Edwardian pageantry but just music which is strong even in the delightful quiet passages... but there is also that infectious swagger. The powerful dramatic high horn sequence which first appears at bar 34 is nothing short of stupendous and throughout the piece Andrew has impeccable orchestration. To quote but many many strokes of genius the high flutes about the horns in full flight adds a marvellous crystal clear scintillation. There is a rhythmic drive and exuberant energy and, again, little touches of sheer class such as two notes on the glockenspiel with high violin writing, bar 174 for example. The final pages are ecstatic and thrilling and overwhelmingly exciting.

It makes Schumann's *Konzertstück* for four horns and orchestra, good though it is, a kindergarten piece.

However, it must be said that this premiere performance was so outstanding that to get another performance to match it may be very difficult!

### **List of works**

Casterbridge Fair (song cycle) Opus 1 (1973)

O Magnum Mysterium (motet & mass SATBB) Opus 2 (1973)

Sonatina for Piano Opus 3 (1974)

Christmas Cantata (for school choir & orchestra) Opus 4 (1974)

What can I do to show how much I love her (song AATTBB) Opus 5 (1974)

Ave Maria (motet AATTBB) Opus 6 (1974)

Toccata for Brass Band Opus 7 (1976)

Overture for St Cere Opus 8 (1975)

Prelude, Fanfare & Postlude for Organ Opus 9 (1975)

Five Movements for Piano & String Orchestra Opus 10 (1976)

Five Holy Songs (song cycle) Opus 11 (1976)

Sonata for Piano Opus 12 (1976)  
Fanfare for a Ceremony Opus 13 (1977)  
String Quartet No. 1 Opus 14 (1977)  
Lost Love (song cycle) Opus 15 (1977)  
Sonata for 13 Brass Instruments Opus 16 (1978)  
The Death of Goliath (cantata - soloists & piano) Opus 17 (1978)  
Veni Emmanuel (choral arrangement with brass) Opus 18 (i) (1979)  
The Coventry Carol (unaccompanied SATB) Opus 18 (ii) (1979)  
The Temple of Solomon (SATB chorus, brass band, soloist) Opus 19 (1980)  
Series 3 Mass for Church Congregation Opus 20 (1980)  
Cain and Abel (cantata - soloists, SATB chorus, piano) Opus 21 (1981)  
Sonata for 4 Horns Opus 22 (1982)  
O Vos Omnes (unacc. SSA) Opus 23 (1981)  
A Child is Singing (cantata - SATB choir & piano) Opus 24 (1981)  
Odysseus and the Cyclops (children's opera) Opus 25 (1982)  
Toccata for Small Orchestra Opus 26 (1982)  
Symphony No.1 (for organ, brass, percussion & strings) Opus 27 (1982)  
Suite for Brass Quintet Opus 28 (1983)  
Old Love's Domain (song cycle) Opus 29 (1983)  
Symphony No.2 (for chamber orchestra) Opus 30 (1984)  
O Love the Lord all ye His Saints (anthem SATB) Opus 31 (i) (1984)  
The Souls of the Righteous (anthem SATB) Opus 31 (ii) (1984)  
In Peace I will lie down and sleep (anthem SATB) Opus 31 (iii) (1984)  
'Piano' (part song SSA) Opus 32 (1985)  
The Marshes of Glynn (soloist, SATB chorus, orchestra) Opus 33 (1985)  
Festival Fanfare Opus 34 (1985)  
I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills (anthem SATB & organ) Opus 35 (1986)  
In the Cotswolds (Overture) Opus 36 (1986)  
Preces and Responses (SATB) Opus 37 (1986)  
Meditations for Solo Trumpet Opus 38 (1986)  
Songs from Spoon River (song cycle) Opus 39 (1986)  
String Quartet No.2 Opus 40 (1987)  
Sonata for Two Pianos Opus 41 (1987)  
Dreamland (soprano soloist, soprano saxophone, piano) Opus 42 (1988)  
Centenary Firedances (symphony orchestra) Opus 43 (1988)  
Song of the Prairies (SATB soloists, chorus, semi chorus, orchestra)  
Opus 44 (1988)  
Symphony No. 3 (full symphony orchestra) Opus 45 (1992)  
The Last Trumpet (solo trumpet) Opus 46 (1990)  
Earth Dances (saxophone quartet) Opus 47 (1991)  
The Dancers of Huai Nan (high voices) Opus 48(i) (1992)  
Gibraltar, our Homeland (high voices) Opus 48(ii) (1994)  
Ballads for Christmas (high voices & harp) Opus 49 (1992)  
A St Luke Passion (baritone soloist, SATB chorus, orchestra) Opus 50 (1992)  
O Praise the Lord (anthem SATB & Organ) Opus 51 (1993)  
Sonata for Violin & Piano Opus 52 (1994)  
Sonata for 8 Horns Opus 53 (1995)  
String Quartet No. 3 Opus 54 (1994)  
Sonata for Oboe & Piano Opus 55 (1995)  
Fanfare for Madam Speaker Opus 56 (1995)  
Brass Quintet No.2 Opus 57 (1995)  
Sonata for 8 Flutes Opus 58 (1996)  
Symphony No. 4 (scored for concert wind band) Opus 59 (1996)

Concert Overture: "Towards a New Age" Opus 60 (1996)  
Concerto for Two Pianos & Strings Opus 61 (1997)  
Concerto for Guitar, Bass Guitar & Strings Opus 62 (1998)  
Fantasia for Alto & Bass Flute Solos with 5 Part Concert Flute Choir  
Accompaniment Opus 63 (1998)  
Concerto for Native American Flute (or Alto Flute) & Strings Opus 64 (1998)  
Runnymede Millennium Evensong Service (SSAATTBB & organ)  
Opus 65 (1997)  
O Sing unto the Lord a New Song (anthem - SSAATTBB & organ)  
Opus 66 (1997)  
Sonata for Flute & Piano Opus 67 (1998)  
Sonata for Horn & Piano Opus 68 (1998)  
Suite for 6 Horns Opus 69 (1999)  
New Dawn (SATB soloists, SATB chorus, symphony orchestra)  
Opus 70 (1999)  
Tone Poem: Song of the Eagle (for flute choir) Opus 71 (1999)  
The God Marduk (violin & piano) Opus 72 (1999)  
Sonata for Brass Sextet Opus 73 (1999)  
Sonata for Piccolo & Piano Opus 74 (1999)  
Sacred Mass for Solo Violin Opus 75 (2000)  
Sonata for 8 Pianists Playing Four Pianos Opus 76 (1999)  
Concerto for 4 Solo Horns and Symphony Orchestra Opus 77 (2000)  
The Forest at Dawn (organ solo) Opus 78(a) (2000)  
The Mercies of our Lord (anthem SATB, 2 trumpets, organ) Opus 78(b) (2001)  
Symphony No. 5 (flute orchestra) Opus 79 (2001)  
Five Dramatic Pieces for 8 Wagner Tubas Opus 80 (2002)  
Celtic Rhapsody (soprano soloist, symphony orchestra) Opus 81 (2002)  
Piano Sonata No.2 Opus 82 (2002)  
Anna's Bridal March (2 horns, 2 trumpets, organ) Opus 83 (2003)  
Mountain Song (flute choir, harp or piano, string bass) Opus 84 (2003)  
Songs of Autumn (children's voices with instrumental ensemble or CD)  
Opus 85 (2003)  
Sonata for Cello & Piano Opus 86 (2001)  
Far from the Madding Crowd - opera (soloists, chorus, chamber ensemble) Opus 87 (2005)  
Songs of the Skies (children's voices with instrumental ensemble or CD) Opus 88 (2005)  
7 Preludes for Piano Opus 89 (2005)  
Sonata for Double Bass & Piano Opus 90 (2006)  
Songs of Love (song cycle) Opus 91 (2006)  
Sonata for Organ Opus 92 (2006)  
Sonata for Violin, Horn and Piano Opus 93 (2007)  
Introduction and Allegro for Solo Organ Opus 94 (2007)  
Forgotten Fields (song cycle) Opus 95 (2007)  
Sacred Mass for Solo Voice Opus 96 (2007)

---

Copyright (C) Dr David C.F. Wright – This article or any part of it, however small, must not be copied, quoted, reproduced, downloaded or altered in any way whatsoever nor stored in any retrieval system. Failure to comply is in breach of International Copyright Law and will render any offender liable to action at law.