**Alarum**

This work, for solo tuba, was written for, and premiered by James Gourlay in 1994. Hans Nickel gave the first performance outside of England at the International Tuba and Euphonium Conference in Chicago in 1995.

Written for solo tuba, the title of the work derives from an old English word meaning a “call to arms” and Gregson interpreted this to be a “primeval call”, hence the opening gesture of the piece which is meant to imitate a tribal-like intensity. The piece is divided into three main sections and runs continuously. The first section is aggressive, nervous, and yet lyrical. The second section melodic and peaceful, but reaching a climax when the two themes (lyrical and rhythmic) are juxtaposed against each other. The last section is dance-like in character with changing time patterns which lead back to the very opening statement, the *alarum* of the piece. There are no time signatures and seldom bar lines. The rhythmic values are, however, strict and proportional. The notation appears less cluttered as a result and gives greater freedom to the soloist with regard to phrasing.

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