**Blazon**

*Blazon* was commissioned by the Bournemouth International Festival and was given its premiere by the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra under Richard Hickox in 1991. It is scored for large symphony orchestra with the addition of harp, piano and an array of percussion. The title of the work is derived from the old English heraldic term to “proclaim abroad”.

The work could be loosely described as a mini-concerto for orchestra, featuring sections of the orchestra in a soloistic, and often virtuosic, manner. It commences with fanfares heralded by three antiphonal trumpets spread around the back of the orchestra. This colourful introduction, also scored for the rest of the brass, piano and percussion, soon gives way to the strings which ponder for a while on the short motivic figure from the trumpet fanfares before breaking into fast, arpeggiated rhythmic figurations. This dance-like section finally gives way to a section for wind, where each of the four groups has their own characteristic music. This leads to a simple chorale, followed by a development section which takes all the various melodic and rhythmic ideas and throws them against each other, often in a contrapuntal manner. Eventually, the music reaches a climax when the chorale is restated triumphantly against a counterpoint of the opening trumpet fanfares and the dance-like string music. The work ends in a blaze of colour.

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