**Concerto for Piano and Wind**

The concerto was commissioned by Berkshire Young Musicians Trust in 1995. The sub-title of the concerto - Homages - is a tribute to the various twentieth century composers whose piano concertos I so admired when I was young (and still do!), particularly Stravinsky, Bartok, Rachmaninov and Poulenc. My intention was to write a concerto which would be taxing but accessible. The instrumentation of the concerto is identical to the Stravinsky Piano Concerto of 1924, with the addition of a soprano saxophone.

The work is in three movements: fast - slow - fast. The first, *Toccata*, contrasts two main ideas: an impetuous opening theme on the piano (heard after a brief introduction) which is rhythmic in a neo-classical manner, followed by a second theme, more lyrically-tinged, heard initially on flute with the piano taking a subsidiary, accompanying role (later in the movement the roles are reversed). The development section takes on the mood of the rhythmic music, with the piano taking off into an extended cadenza at the climax. The orchestra returns with the first theme with the piano wistfully repeating the second. A brief coda ends the movement abruptly.

The *Passacaglia* is built on a rising three-note figure, always present in the texture of the music. A simple melodic phrase unfolds, first on oboe, later on piano and soprano saxophone. The movement builds to its climax (with the saxophone prominent) and subsides again to where it began. The last movement, *Rondo-Burlesque*, has a swirling, dance-like main theme built around Bartokian-style time changes. Through its two episodes there gradually emerges a new theme, *St Nicholas, Godes Druth* (an example of twelfth century English monody) which, after a brief reference to the opening theme of the concerto and the final statement of the rondo tune, flowers into a triumphant statement and brings the concerto to a rousing conclusion.

The Concerto is dedicated to, and was written for, John McCabe, who gave the first performance of the revised version of the concerto in November 1997 at Lancaster University, with the Royal Northern College of Music Wind Orchestra conducted by Clark Rundell.

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