**Dances and Arias**

This work was commissioned by Boosey & Hawkes Band Festivals (with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain) for the National Brass Band Championships of Great Britain, held at the Royal Albert Hall, London, on 7th October 1984.

*Dances and Arias* is in one continuous movement, but as the title suggests is a series of alternating fast and slow sections as follows: *Dance - Aria I* - *Dance* (scherzo) - *Aria II - Dance.* The opening dance is energetic and introduces a four-note motif (on trombones) which is the basis for much of the melodic material in the work. Throughout, there is a continuous process of thematic cross-reference and transformation.

The first aria unfolds a long melody on solo cornet, eventually continued by all the solo cornets, and dissolving into a shimmering harmonic background (muted cornets, horns and baritones) over which is heard a brief self-quotation on solo tuba. This leads into the second dance, a frenetic scherzo, followed by the second aria, in the style of a lament (solo euphonium, followed by two flugel horns). This builds to a powerful climax which subsides, leaving the percussion to introduce the final toccata-like dance. It transforms material from the opening before a coda brings the music to a triumphant close. The large percussion section is an integral part in the work and uses a wide variety of instruments including timpani, glockenspiel, vibraphone, xylophone, tubular bells, tom-toms, snare drum, bongos and tam-tam.

The work is dedicated to my brother and sister.

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