**Essay**

This work was specially commissioned as the test piece for a new brass band competition in 1971, held at the Royal Albert Hall, London. It is in three movements, the titles of which all have literary connotations. The first movement, *Dialogue* takes the form of ‘conversations’ between the instruments, based on the opening melody announced in unison on cornets and euphoniums. A second theme is introduced on the flugel horn and developed alongside this, creating a sonata form shell.

The second movement, *Soliloquy* is dedicated to the memory of Gilbert Vinter – a composer who did so much in the 1960s to bring the brass band into the modern world. The movement is poignant in mood, which is depicted by a cornet solo announced after a brief introduction. The middle section builds to a powerful climax, at which point the opening theme of the first movement is heard again. Tranquillity returns however, with a solo trombone now playing the original theme with other instruments adding decorative accompanying patterns.

The final movement, *Epigram,* creates strong rhythmic contrasts and exploits the more virtuoso character of the brass band. The middle section, with its changing time patterns and open expansive melody, suggests a ‘big-country’ style. A rhythmically charged coda concludes the work in exciting fashion.

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