**Rococo Variations**

*Rococo Variations* was commissioned by the British Open Championships for their 2008 contest in Symphony Hall, Birmingham, and co-commissioned by the Norwegian Band Federation, for their National Championship in Bergen in 2009.

The title of the work has been used before, of course, most notably by Tchaikovsky in his work for cello and orchestra. My set of variations follows the Tchaikovskian model in that it is based on a quasi-Baroque original theme, and has certain ‘dance-like’ characteristics in the variations, but beyond that all comparisons end.

There are six variations: *Toccata*, *Siciliana*, *Waltz*, *Moto Perpetuo*, *Lament*, and *Fugal Scherzo*, followed by a triumphant re-statement of the theme. Throughout, there is considerable contrast in the music, with the fast variations being rather virtuoso in character, sometimes with constantly changing time patterns, whilst the two slow variations (*Siciliana* and *Lament*) are in turn lyrical and pensive in mood with prominent solos and duets for a number of instruments.

Although the work overall is dedicated by my brother, each of the six variations pays tribute to a different composer whose contribution to the brass band repertoire during the second half of the twentieth century has been of great significance. To this end, all six composers have their own ‘musical signature’ embraced within the particular variation, a process which reaches its zenith, contrapuntally speaking, during the final variation and reprise of the theme.

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