**Serenata Notturna**

*Serenata Notturna* was written in 1998 to a private commission. It received its first public performance with Helena Smart (violin) and Caroline Jaya-Ratnam (piano) at the String Final of BBC Young Musicians 2000 in Manchester.

As the title suggests, the piece evokes the atmosphere of night music. Following a reflective opening where the pitch material outlines a twelve-note series, the music becomes more agitated, developing into a quasi *danse macabre*, which eventually reaches a powerful climax. The music then subsides into a more tranquil atmosphere, where the previous dissonant material transforms itself into a simple diatonic melody (‘like a lullaby’), the basic outline of which has already been present in the music from the beginning. Thus the dark turmoil of the first part of the work becomes transfigured – hence the quotation at the beginning of the score: *out of darkness cometh light*.

After finishing the *Serenata*, a substantial part of the same music became an outline sketch for the slow movement of a Violin Concerto that I had just started to compose. The concerto was premiered by Lyn Fletcher and the Hallé Orchestra, conducted by Kent Nagano, at the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, in February 2000. It has since been recorded on the Chandos label by Olivier Charlier, with the BBC Philharmonic conducted by Martyn Brabbins.

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