**Shadow of Paradise**

**for oboe and percussion**

This work was completed in July 2005 and was written specially for Melinda Maxwell and Richard Benjafield. The music is based on the well-known poem *Kubla Khan* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and in it I have attempted to capture some of the spirit of his highly evocative text.

The work lasts for some ten minutes and is structured in three main sections. The opening section(and *'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far ancestral voices prophesying war*) is dramatic with the oboe announcing two ideas - the first a high repeated note rhythmic pattern (later with multi-phonics) which is answered by six differently pitched drums and temple blocks, and the second a short lyrical phrase mainly built on thirds.

In the second section (*a damsel with a dulcimer in a vision once I saw...could I revive within me her symphony and song*) the solo oboe transforms the repeated notes and thirds of the first section into a love song, underpinned by the percussionist's vibraphone and crotales. A short reprise of the very opening leads into the final section (*Beware! Beware! His flashing eyes, his floating hair! Weave a circle round him thrice...*) which mirrors the text with three short dances in chain form, folk-like in character and increasingly climactic. A final reprise of the opening seems to suggest a violent end, but the works ends gently with the oboe’s minor thirds of the love song echoed by the percussionist’s crotales.

© Edward Gregson