**The Kings Go Forth**

This work was commissioned jointly by the Royal Air Force Music Service and an American Universities Consortium and received its world premiere during the 1996 RAF British Tour. It is scored for large symphonic wind band, with the addition of voices.

The work is a sequel to the highly successful *The Sword and the Crown* which was premiered in 1991 by the mass bands of the RAF (and also was an RAF commission). That work was based on music written for the Royal Shakespeare Company productions of *The Plantagenets* and *Henry IV, parts 1 and 2* (for productions between 1988 and 1991).

*The Kings go Forth* is similarly based on musical material for those productions. It uses different thematic elements and incorporates them into a three-movement suite entitled: The Church; The People; The State.

This reflects the fact that in *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2*, Shakespeare introduces “the People” as an important element in the dramatic structure. The Church and the State are, of course, both leitmotivs throughout the entire plays. An *Agnus Dei* is heard at the outset from a solo voice. The ensuing *Dies Irae* is a fast and, at times, quite violent dance. The two sections which form the basis of the second movement, *The People*, concentrate on popular elements and reflect to some extent the tavern scenes in the plays.

The two ideas presented are a harvest hymn reflecting the country scenes set in Gloucestershire, and a jazzy, ‘up-tempo’ dance based on the medieval song *Sumer is icumen in*. The third movement, (*The State*), deals with the “Kings” theme in the title of the piece. The juxtaposition of battle music with funeral music for Henry IV and Henry VI leads to a reworking of the leitmotif from the beginning of the work which is transformed into a triumphant climax.

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