**Triptych**

**for solo violin**

Composing a work for a competition is always something of a dilemma. Although the main requirement is to produce an exacting technical test, a composer must try and avoid the ephemeral nature of such a task and create something more universal. *Triptych* is therefore as much of a musical challenge as a technical one – intended for concerts as well as for competitions.

*Triptych* is cast in three movements, each having its own musical characterisation:

‘A Dionysian Dialogue’ takes up the idea of the conflict of ‘opposites. The dialogue is really between Dionysus and Apollo, or the metaphorical representation of this within all of us. Thus, the Dionysian music is raw, earthy, sometimes violent, often ecstatic; whereas the Apollonian is serene, dream-like, calm, assured. The musical quotations are meant to evoke a layer of subconscious memory (mainly for violinists it should be said), as well as underlining the  ‘opposites’ (so for me, the Walton and Bach = Apollonian, whilst the Stravinsky and Shostakovich  = Dionysian). Performers should try to realise the maximum potential here for opposing musical characterisation.

‘Liebeslied’ (or ‘Love Song’) is cast in the form of a theme with two variations, which are in turn reflective and playful, followed by a brief coda reprising the theme. In this final utterance there is perhaps a feeling of regret, of a memory half grasped, disappearing into the distance (perhaps love lost?).

‘Moto Perpetuo’ is really a tarantella-like musical ‘romp’, where sheer virtuosity is the order of the day. Towards the end of the movement the character of the music becomes more akin to an Irish jig, where previous chromatic elements are transformed into diatonic ones. As I am half Irish there was nothing self-conscious about this gesture. Although the use of the bodhrán (Irish drum) is entirely optional in performance, some foot-stamping in the manner of a folk fiddler is to be encouraged – indeed, it would be entirely appropriate!

In 2020, I decided to make substantial revisions to the final movement, as well as re-titling the second and third movements, in preparation for the first recording of the work.

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