

Composer's programme notes

Earthrise is my second work dealing with the subject of space travel; the first was called *Gagarin* written for wind orchestra.

Earthrise is written in one continuous movement but divided in to three sections *fast-slow-fast*. I have tried to capture the excitement and expectation that the Apollo 8 mission brought to the world. This is reflected in the extreme virtuosic demands put upon the performers. I have endeavoured in my opening bars to reflect, as a musical portrait, the description given by the author and aviator Anne Morrow Lindbergh when she witnessed the launch on 21 December 1968 in Florida.

“Slowly, as in a dream, slowly it seemed to hang suspended on a cloud of fire and smoke. Then followed the noise - a shattering roar of explosions, a trip-hammer over one's head, under one's feet, through one's body. The Earth shakes, cars rattle, vibrations beat in the chest. A roll of thunder prolonged, prolonged, prolonged.”

After the opening section I have emulated the speed and power of Apollo 8's Saturn V rocket, using the Earth's gravitational force to catapult it towards the Moon. Preceding the central section of *Earthrise* is a large scale multilayered cadenza featuring most instruments in the band in free time floating bars and portraying the astronauts floating on the dark side of the Moon. The cadenza acts as a prelude to the kernel of the work, the moment when Earth comes into view as the only coloured object in our monochrome universe. The final section of the work paints a picture of Apollo 8 hurtling back to Earth at an incredible 25,000 miles per hour on its quarter of a million mile journey, hitting Earth's narrow atmospheric corridor and finally splashing down in the Pacific.

The various moods of *Earthrise* are reflected and captured in a specially commissioned poem of the same name by Martin Westlake to accompany this score.

NIGEL CLARKE began his musical career as a military bandsman but a developing interest in composition took him to the Royal Academy of Music to study with Paul Patterson. Here, his striking originality and capacity for hard work were recognised by several significant awards including the Queen's Commendation for Excellence - the Royal Academy of Music's highest distinction. A British Council scholarship enabled him to participate in the 8th Summer School for Young Composers, in Poland, where he studied with Penderecki and Lutoslawski.

Nigel Clarke has been Tutor at the Royal Academy of Music, London, Head of Composition at the London College of Music, and the Composer to the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall. More recently he has become a visiting tutor at the Royal Northern College of Music, and Associate Composer to the Band of the Grenadier Guards. In 2008 the award of Doctor of Musical Arts was conferred on him by Salford University.

MARTIN WESTLAKE was born in Amersham, Buckinghamshire, and grew up in Harrow, North-West London. He studied at University College, Oxford (BA), the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, Bologna Center (MA) and the European University Institute, Florence (PhD). He lived and worked in Italy and France before moving to Brussels, Belgium. He is currently Secretary General of the European Economic and Social Committee. Martin is the author of a number of books, is a budding poet, and is currently working on an historical novel.