

Composer's Programme Note

Sinfonia Aqua explores the musical form of the miniature but cast in a series of such movements providing a greater whole. The addition of a reciter helps bind the various strands together in a cohesive fashion adding a touch of theatre and drama to events. The work has the subtitle of '*Six Water Divertimenti In Memoriam*' which further confirms the miniature aspect and gives a kind of '*Enigma Variations*' slant in that each part is dedicated to a friend, family member, colleague or hero of the composer no longer with us. The movements are all subtitled after places concerned with water or the sea that have made an impression on me over many years or even a single visit. There is also a mix of the celebratory and tragic which lends contrast to the sections. The texts are taken from the poetry of John Masefield and Mary E. Coleridge in intact form and in extracted and adapted form from Henry F. Chorley and the Book of Hours. All are included for symbolic purposes especially when appearing in the more abstract renditions. Masefield's famous '*Sea Fever*' is broken down into its three component verses which introduce three of the movements.

1. Prelude: Portsmouth Points (J.K.) - John Kelly was a student of mine serving in the Royal Marines who suffered a brain haemorrhage and passed away. He was based in Portsmouth and always struck me as a genial type of soul. This opening prelude is a happy affair whilst nodding in the direction of mariners and their sea-influenced music. My father also served in the RN during WWII and was based in Portsmouth which I have visited on numerous occasions.
2. Intermezzo I: Warren Beach (R.E.) - for my father who passed away in December 2015. The location is in Wales, near Abersoch, and is one of the finest swimming beaches in my memory – I was taken there many times during my childhood. A gentle folk-like character prevails throughout. Masefield's '*Beauty*' is included as a symbolic poem reflecting on things long lost yet happily remembered...
3. Elegy: Coniston Water (D.C.) - I have visited this lake several times. For me it will always be synonymous with Donald Campbell who met his end there in January 1967, the haunting TV images of which I remember seeing as a young child. The poem '*L'Oiseau Bleu*' fits the mood like a glove and two further quotes are included, one from '*The Long Day Closes*' and the second from The Book of Hours which were included in Campbell's original funeral service.
4. Intermezzo II: Portmeirion (W.J.) - this place, in Wales, was most famously used as the location for the TV series 'The Prisoner' for which my former tutor Wilfred Josephs wrote one of the submitted theme tunes. I have written this section as a 'Sixties Theme' in memory of Wilf – it provides much contrast and gives all sections a workout. I have been to 'The Village' on several occasions – it has a most unique and charming character! Be seeing you...
5. Hymnos: Lindisfarne (N.S.) - Norman Sykes was a dedicated educationalist who suffered a heart attack on having sailed to Holy Island in Northumberland on his yacht Low Water Silver in 1983. I wrote him a Requiem in 1985 which although performed I have subsequently withdrawn. This movement quotes a part of the *Lacrimosa* from that early work. There is a choral quality to the writing enhanced by Masefield's poem '*If*' with a further addition from '*The Long Day Closes*' as a coda.
6. Postlude: Padstow March (M.A.) - although Padstow is now also known as 'Padstein' after the restaurateur Rick Stein, the British composer Malcolm Arnold lived nearby in St Merryn. He wrote a famous march 'The Padstow Lifeboat' which incorporated the use of the lifeboat's horn, pitched in D. I have written a very different (and much briefer) march but maintained the horn effect and the contrast between the inviting and dangerous nature of the sea. I knew Malcolm well and have also had lunch at Rick Stein's famous Seafood Restaurant by the quay!