

CURTAIN CALL

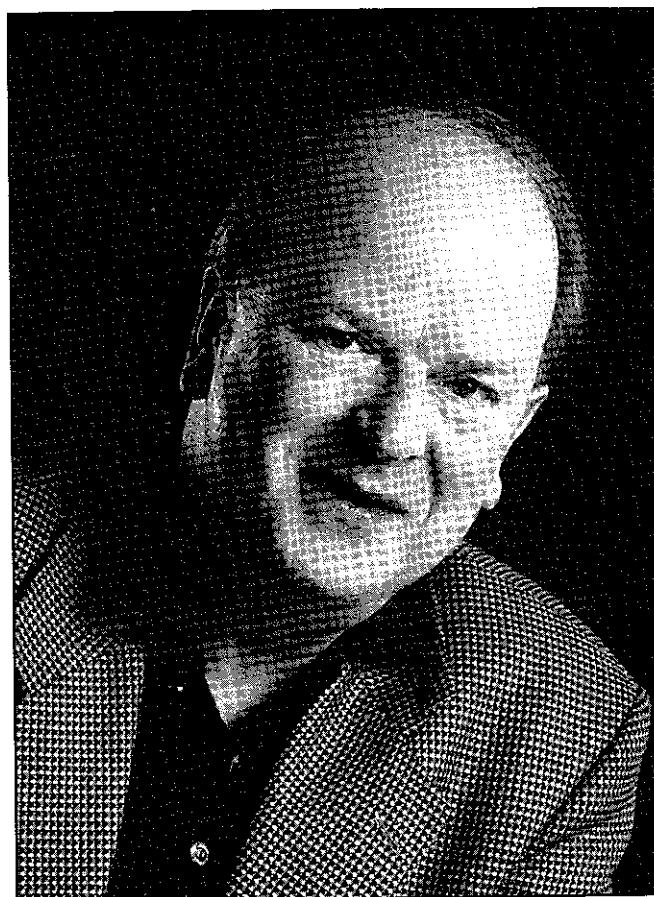
A new work for concert band by Guy Woolfenden

Guy Woolfenden is Head of Music to the Royal Shakespeare Company. With more than 150 scores for the RSC and an impressive list of credits with major European theatre companies, including the Comedie-Française, Paris, the Burgtheater, Vienna and the Norwegian National Theatre, Oslo, Guy Woolfenden's theatre music is highly regarded throughout the world. He has collaborated with some of the world's finest directors, designers and choreographers in many award-winning productions

In collaboration with choreographer André Prokovsky, he has arranged the music for four full-length ballets, which he has subsequently conducted in productions with The Australian Ballet, The Royal Ballet of Flanders, Hong Kong Ballet Company, Asami Maki Ballet, Tokyo, Ballet West, USA, and The Kirov Ballet in St Petersburg.

Guy's compositions for wind orchestra, several based on his music for the theatre, are in great demand all over the world and are now available on CD. Gallimaufry is a set work for the 1997 World Music Contest in Kerkrade and Curtain Call will be performed at the WASBE Conference in Schladming, Austria in July. Guy is conductor of the Birmingham Conservatoire Symphonic Wind Orchestra

With his score the 1991 production of Two Gentlemen of Verona, Guy completed the Shakespeare canon, and has written music for all Shakespeare's plays in productions for the RSC. He is an Honorary Associate Artist of the Royal Shakespeare Company



Curtain Call was written for Birmingham Symphonic Winds. One movement featured in their concert at last year's BASBWE Conference and, as they seemed to enjoy it, I added two more movements. The complete piece is about 12 minutes long, had a successful première at the Adrian Boult Hall in Birmingham on March 13th this year, and will be repeated at the WASBE Conference in Schladming, Austria, on July 11th, the day before my 60th birthday. Keith Allen, Musical Director of Birmingham Symphonic Winds, commissioned the piece, and it is dedicated to him and Jayne Rollason with great affection.

The first and last movements are in some ways mirror images, or negativepositives of each other. The first, Solemn March, has a dour, weighty introduction, which prepares the ground for the first statement of the main theme in the submediant major, featuring the brass and percussion.

Example 1

Trumpet in B♭ *Maestoso* *f*

A more gently scored middle section follows, with the brass interrupting occasionally to remind us of their presence. This leads to a fully scored restatement of the main theme a tone higher than before.

The Finale also features the brass (two Euphoniums are needed). As in the first movement, there is an introduction, and the main theme returns in a higher key.

Example 2



and to round it off, there is a pretty exciting coda. Whereas the first movement has weight, solemnity, a 'maestoso' feel, a steady pulse, and a tendency to hug the dark, minor side of the harmony, the last movement, after a measured start, generates pace, celebrates the glamour of a brightly lit stage and revels in the major keys. The negative (dark) and positive (light) 'bookend' feel to these two movements was very noticeable at the excellent first performance directed by Keith Allen.

The 'book' between these bookends is a Valse Triste. Our ears, and the brass section's lips, get a bit of a rest, as the principal oboe plays a haunting melody tailor-made for that instrument.

Example 3



There is one passionate outburst marked marcato and forte, but the movement is largely concerned with pastel shades, loss and loneliness. It will be no surprise to readers of Winds Magazine that I have drawn a good deal of inspiration, and pinched quite a few ideas, from my considerable archive (nearly 200 scores) of RSC music.

The Solemn March started life as a coronation procession for the character called Lussurioso in a famous Jacobean blood and guts play: The Revenger's Tragedy by Cyril Tourneur. This was the first major Stratford production by the man who took over from Peter Hall as RSC Artistic Director, conquered the world with his brilliant musical stagings, and has also had enormous success with opera at Glyndebourne and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden - Trevor Nunn. Just for good measure, he has recently been appointed Artistic Director of the Royal National Theatre.

Trevor was also responsible for a most sensitive production of All's Well That Ends Well, starring Dame Peggy Ashcroft and Harriet Walter, for which I wrote the basic melody of Valse Triste. In New York, when we were transferring the production on Broadway, he even wrote me a lyric for the tune. Perhaps I should take another look at it - his lyric for Andrew Lloyd Webber's Memory didn't do too badly!

The last movement, Finale, is a reworking of the curtain call (hence the overall title of the work) for Bill Alexander's amazing production of Richard III starring Tony Sher, who memorably played the role on crutches tucked under arms which protruded from long mediaeval sleeves, giving credence to that memorable description of Richard as a "bottled spider".

I am currently planning a new wind band work, which has been commissioned by the Metropolitan Wind Symphony in Boston, and I've decided to start with a blank page (or a blank Sibelius 7 screen), and not plunder my RSC archive - not that I've ever been worried about doing so. In fact, I seem to have started something: Eddie Gregson's exciting piece The Sword and the Crown is based on the music I commissioned him to compose for the RSC's productions of Henry IV Parts I and II and The Plantagenets. He has recently finished another work drawn from the same sources: The Kings Go Forth. Totally out of the blue, he told me recently that he has dedicated it to Jane and me - what a wonderful 60th birthday present!

Guy Woolfenden

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the wind music of
Guy Woolfenden


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*Available on CD DOY 042 GALLIMAUFREY
featuring the wind music of Guy Woolfenden
Royal Northern College Wind Orchestra
conducted by the composer



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