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## Programme Notes

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One of the ideas that Fr. Arthur Bridge outlined when commissioning this piece was that it reflect in some way "the Spirit in Australia". The consequent approach that I implemented was that of "Australian Postcards" - i.e. a set of movements that in some way reflected some Australian place or outlook. I decided that each of the "postcards" would portray contemporary rather than historical Australian culture, as that is what seems more relevant to me.

There are three separate movements in this work. The first of these is based upon a physical object, the wind turbine at Kooragang Island, near Newcastle. This is a enormous windmill-generator that has been constructed by Energy Australia as a showcase of the possibilities of wind-generated electricity. There are three huge prongs on this turbine that move at tremendous speed. When standing nearby, it seems hard to believe that the whole thing won't come apart and decapitate everyone, such is its power and speed.

The turbine has been portrayed programmatically as well as metaphorically in this movement. The sense of momentum is fast and seemingly never-ending. The solo violin part must perform some death-defying leaps and string crossings. On the metaphorical level, different musical elements have been composed according to relationships of the number three, as there are three prongs to the turbine. (This however is not essential to the appreciation of the movement).

In 1998, whilst on a visit to Tasmania, my fiancée Christine and I had the opportunity to tour some of the smaller towns in Tasmania. One of these, Westaway, is a village near Mt. Field National Park.

Sometimes it would seem to be an idyllic existence living in a country town - no traffic or parking hassles, a clean environment with a strong sense of community amongst its residents. However unemployment and boredom appear to be a more accurate description of everyday reality. In Westaway it seemed that every house had a "For Sale" sign on it. Since the closure or scaling back of logging operations, there were no jobs and thus high unemployment. Services such as banks were removed, causing further dislocation and disillusionment amongst residents.

This movement is then a portrait of such small towns and communities in rural and regional Australia. The mood is hardly one of doom and gloom, but largely a reflection upon "better times" and an optimistic outcome that can be achieved in the long run through creative thinking and innovative solutions.

Sport is an integral part of Australian life for most people, and one of the greatest celebrations in the yearly calendar is Grand Final Day. The Grand Final in whatever sport is hyped up to be the greatest game of the year, a day of high emotions and high drama, of acrobatic feats and legendary skills. Parades are held before and after the great match. The thrill of your team winning the greatest prize of the year is unsurpassed. The final siren sounds, the club song is sung, all-night parties ensue and life is really worth celebrating!

The approximate duration of the Violin Concerto is 26 minutes.

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*This piece was partly composed whilst I was in residence at the Peggy Glanville-Hicks House, Paddington.*

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