

trumpet concerto

Each of the titles for the three movements of the Trumpet Concerto came to me almost by accident. They provided me with a spark of an idea that served as springboards. They are all intentionally ambiguous or open-ended in their meanings.

The first movement, *The Infinite Jetty* begins with a floating pulse in the orchestra that unfolds in a meandering yet concerted way. The trumpet enters with a contemplative and almost elegiac line above the orchestra. After a brief climax new material enters, signposted by punched-out chords in the piano, harp and pizzicato strings. The trumpet then plays very splashy and virtuosic music. A great deal of the ensuing music is based on fragments of fanfare-like motifs – a perfect vehicle for the trumpet. After a 'cadenza', where the soloist is set against random loops in the orchestra, the movement returns to the opening material, still meandering, but this time completely exhausted.

The second movement, *Dead Centre* begins with low, slow pondering lines from the depths of the orchestra. After the plaintive entry of the trumpet, the music entwines and grows to a large climax, without ever letting light in. After a calming passage, the music soon becomes agitated and then forceful, culminating with loud, angry blurts between orchestra and soloist. Like the first movement, this movement concludes with a return of the opening material. This time however, the trumpeter plays with a piece of tubing removed from the instrument, creating an eerie and strangely muted effect on certain notes.

Then (with the piece of tubing returned to the trumpet), there is the third movement *Stop the Clocks*. This movement sets off like a juggernaut with a driving pattern in the cellos and double basses. The music catapults onwards toward a serene middle section. After this, a virtuosic loop begins in the trumpet that on each repeat grows from within. Meanwhile the orchestra attempts to consume the soloist until they all meet at an apocalyptic final note.

During the writing of the solo part, I had help and enthusiastic support from the West Australian Symphony Orchestra's principal trumpet player, David Elton. Initially he came to my house to play to me some of my curious requests. These ideas were then bounced back and forth via email, constantly being revised, modified and refined.

James Ledger 2007