

Nigel Clarke

‘EARTHRISE’

‘**Earthrise**’ is written for and dedicated to Luc Vertommen and Brass Band Buizingen. The work was written to be the free choice test piece for Brass Band Buizingen at the Flemish Open Brass Band Championships, held in Mechelen City Theatre, Mechelen, Belgium on 17th April 2010, the 33rd European Brass Band Championships, held in Linz, Austria on 1st May 2010 and the Euro Brass 2010 Championships held in the De Lawei Theatre, Drachten, Netherlands on 12th June 2010. The Dutch premiere was given at a concert entitled ‘Top Brass’ in Schoonhoven, Netherlands on 23 April 2010.

BACKGROUND

‘**Earthrise**’ is the name of one of the most iconic photographs in history. The original NASA image named AS8-14-2383 was one of a series of photographs taken by William Anders and the Apollo 8 crew on 24 December 1968 during the first manned mission to the Moon. Astronaut Michael Collins, who was later to take part in the Apollo 11 mission that first landed on Moon and who was working on the ground as capsule communicator for the Apollo 8 team, called their mission “more awe-inspiring than landing on the Moon”.

The sight of the Earth rising above the Moon took the Apollo 8 crew by surprise. It came into view on the fourth orbit as they emerged from the far side of the Moon. The excitement of the crew members Frank Borman, Bill Anders and James Lovell was captured on audio:-

Frank Borman:

Oh my God! Look at that picture over there! Here's the Earth coming up. Wow, is that pretty!

Bill Anders:

Hey, don't take that, it's not scheduled.

Frank Borman: (laughing)

You got a color film, Jim?

Bill Anders:

Hand me that roll of color quick, will you –

James Lovell:

Oh man, that's great!

Bill Anders:

Hurry. Quick

James Lovell:

Take several of them! Here, give it to me

Frank Borman:

Calm down, Lovell.



James Lovell recalled after the mission “There’s no colour. In the whole universe wherever we looked, the only bit of colour was back on Earth.... It was the most beautiful thing there was to see in all the heavens. People down here don’t realize what they have.” These sentiments reflected those of the first man in space Yuri Alexeyevich Gagarin in his autobiography “Circling the earth in the orbital spaceship I marvelled at

the beauty of our planet. People of the world, let us safeguard and enhance this beauty – not destroy it!” The crew were not briefed by NASA to take photographs of the Earth on their mission but of the moon, anything extra was described as a *target of opportunity* so it is extraordinary that the most famous image to be captured on their mission was the photograph AS8-14-2383 and not the Moon! In 1969 the **‘Earthrise’** photograph was featured on a US Postal Service stamp commemorating the achievements of Apollo 8.

‘EARTHRISE’ PROGRAMME NOTE

‘Earthrise’ is my second work dealing with the subject of space travel; the first was a work 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, stimulated by the New Polish School of composers, 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 Josiah Parker Prize adjudicated by Sir Michael Tippett and 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 the works of Penderecki and Lutoslawski. Nigel Clarke was previously Young Composer in Residence at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, Composition and Contemporary Music Tutor at the Royal Academy of Music, London, Head of Composition at the London College of Music and Media and Associate Composer to the world famous Black Dyke Mills Band. He has also been guest professor at the Xinjiang Arts Institute in north-west China and Associate 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 the Associate Composer to the Band of HM Grenadier Guards and Brass Band Buizingen. In 2008 the award of Doctor of Musical Arts was conferred upon him by Salford University. Website: www.nigel-clarke.com

MARTIN WESTLAKE was born in Buckinghamshire (Amersham) and grew up in North West London (Harrow). 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 Belgium (Brussels). He has worked for several European political organisations and institutions and is currently Secretary General of the European Economic and Social Committee. Martin is the author of a number of books and articles about British and European politics and institutions as well as a major biography of Neil Kinnock. He is also a budding poet and is currently working on an historical novel.

EARTHRISE

By Martin Westlake

On 21 December 1968,
In a daring escape,
Three men with a pocket calculator
Rode a roaring tower of 5.6 million parts
Into Floridean skies
And soared into expectant orbit.

While they gazed back at a world fast changing
From landscape to planet,
Gravity drove them,
Pebbles flung from Earth's sling,
Across the vast astrolabe
Towards their lunar destination.

Rushing slowly through utter loneliness,
They floated in their silvery dust speck,
Gliding and sliding along an invisible plane
Towards the moon's bright disk,
And there they hid in the black nothingness
Of the dark side.

Celestial tourists drifting back into light,
Their cameraed necks craning through fogged up windows,
They caught a target of opportunity,
A twin-filmed grain of rock floating with all its peoples,
A colourful, half-lit pendulum,
Swinging out from the moon's pockmarked cheek.

Borman, Anders and Lovell - the three exceptions,
Gazed at the rest of humanity in its distant invisibility,
Then fell a quarter of a million miles,
Bouncing on the atmosphere before streaking earthward,
An orange slash in a black piece of velvet,
Parachuting down to the Pacific's waves.

Man had been to the moon, but he had seen the earth,
Seen what gods saw, seen what gods made;
He had seen the earth rise,
Seen frontiers and races disappear.
And, just for a while, it seemed
That man would think as gods thought.