

Programme note from concert in the Reid Hall, Edinburgh, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2003 given by the Capriccio Quartet with Alina Kolonitskaya on piano.

## Piano Quintet

**Julian Wagstaff**  
**(b. 1970)**

1. Movement #1
2. Movement #2
3. Movement #3

My decision to write a piano quintet was made during a trip to the Aldeburgh Festival last June, where I heard the première of the quintet by Alexander Goehr performed by the Brodsky Quartet with Tom Poster. The choice of form was inspired partly by the experience of this concert, and partly by my wish to write a piano piece for my friend Alina Kolonitskaya, who will give the performance we shall hear in the Reid Hall this evening.

The quintet configuration lends itself in particular to what I wished to achieve with the work on a conceptual level, which was to explore certain harmonic gestures whose reference points lie within my own "spiritual home" of rock and theatre music, but to do so through formal structures associated with Western art music – in this case romanticism. In embarking on this, my first major work of concert music, I was guided by the old writers' imperative: "write what you know". I have not attempted to disguise points of contact with music from the repertoire which most moves, thrills and excites me, and therefore most listeners will have no difficulty in discerning to which giants the footprints which have guided me in this endeavour belong.

The work is cast in three movements, the slow second movement contrasting with the more urgent nature of the first and third. The short introductory section which begins the work may be heard as a kind of cipher, a microcosm of the work as a whole, whose logic can be traced through the development of the first violin's thematic exposition in the first movement, through the harmonic and referential interplay of the second, to the anarchic rebellion at the end of the third, which culminates in the re-establishment of order - of a sort - in the parallel octaves which end the piece.

The Piano Quintet formed my major portfolio submission in September 2002 in the context of my Masters degree at Edinburgh University.

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