

John Casken

# Serpents of Wisdom

for horn in F and piano

(2015)

ED 13796

ISMN 979-0-2201-1859-3

PREVIEW  
Low Resolution

BBC  
RADIO



First Performance: 1 February 2016  
Alec Frank-Gemmill, horn  
Alasdair Beatson, piano  
Wigmore Hall  
London, UK

Duration: c. 11 minutes

## Serpents of Wisdom

The title of this piece comes from the Celtic cross that MacCaig wrote that brings to life the symbols of an earlier time, carved in stone, whose cool statements show "Serpents of wisdom in links of song", as "Serpents of wisdom things, and the idea of plaiting and entwining things an image of the horn came together in my mind.

Much of the material of the piece is generated by the opening phrase, a strong and vibrant phrase in which I wanted to capture the essence of the noble creatures on Celtic crosses. The idea of plaiting and entwining things an image of the horn came together in my mind.

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Performances

There is a note required to play natural harmonics at given points during the work, e.g. bars 17-18, 83-84, etc. These natural horn passages must be played without correcting the intonation of given pitches. The notes are given at concert pitch.

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## Serpents of Wisdom

Strong, vibrant  $\text{♩} = 120$

Horn in F

Piano

5

10

14

18 rit.

21  $\text{♩} = 84$

24

\* (+) = half-stopped.

28

*p* *pp* *mf* *pp*

*p* *mf* *p* *f sub*

Ped.

31

*f* *mp* *p*

*mf* *mp* *p*

Ped.

34

con sord. *f*

*pp* *f*

Ped.

39

*mf* *mp* *pp*

*mf* *p* *pp*

Ped.

44 **Meno mosso** ♩ = 108

Musical score for measures 44-47. The score is in 4/4 time and features a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand plays a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

48 *senza sord.*

**Entwined**

Musical score for measures 48-52. The score is in 4/4 time and features dynamics of piano (*p*), mezzo-piano (*mp*), and piano (*p*). The right hand continues with a melodic line, and the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment. The section is marked *senza sord.*

53

Musical score for measures 53-58. The score is in 4/4 time and features dynamics of piano (*p*), mezzo-forte (*mf*), and forte (*f*). The right hand continues with a melodic line, and the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment. The section is marked *senza sord.*

59

Musical score for measures 59-64. The score is in 4/4 time and features dynamics of piano (*p*) and mezzo-forte (*mf*). The right hand continues with a melodic line, and the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment. The section is marked *senza sord.*

64

mf

f

This system contains measures 64 to 68. It features a single melodic line in the treble clef and a piano accompaniment in the grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The piano part consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the bass clef and chords in the treble clef. Dynamics include mezzo-forte (mf) and forte (f).

69

rit.

ff

ff

Ped.

This system contains measures 69 to 72. The tempo is marked as ritardando (rit.). The piano part features a dense texture with a strong fortissimo (ff) dynamic. Pedal points are indicated at the end of the system.

73

mp

mp

Ped.

Ped.

This system contains measures 73 to 76. The dynamics are marked mezzo-piano (mp). Pedal points are indicated at the end of the system.

77

rit.

p

pp

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

This system contains measures 77 to 80. The tempo is marked as ritardando (rit.). The dynamics range from piano (p) to pianissimo (pp). Pedal points are indicated at the end of the system.

PREVIEW Low Resolution

82 Hymn-like ♩ = 60

Musical score for measures 82-87. The right hand features a melody with triplets and dynamics *p*, *mp*, *mf*, and *ff*. The left hand provides harmonic support with chords and a bass line, including a pedal point. Chords are marked with (F) and (Bb).

Musical score for measures 88-93. The right hand continues the melody with dynamics *p*. The left hand has chords and a bass line with a pedal point.

Musical score for measures 94-99. The right hand has a melody with dynamics *p* and *ff*. The left hand has chords and a bass line with a pedal point.

Musical score for measures 100-105. The right hand has a melody with dynamics *p* and a section labeled "Floating". The left hand has a complex bass line with a pedal point.

\* half pedal