

A Musical Journey Back To 1103 A.D.  
(Themes and Variations)

*for pianoforte*  
*(or organ)*

Anthony Skilbeck

### ***Programme note***

Though not exact contemporaries, the work's dedicatee and I are alumni of the Royal College of Music, London. Also, we have both lived in the same town for many years and have a connection with Worksop Priory; Haydn sings in the choir, and I was Organist and Choirmaster there from 1977 to the end of 1983. It was only recently that I discovered that my paternal Great, Great Grandfather, George Taylor, was baptised in the Priory on Christmas Eve, 1822. I did not know this when I moved to Worksop, over 30 years ago. When Haydn, a pianist, hinted that he would appreciate having a composition written for him, it therefore seemed appropriate to involve some aspect of the Priory's history in the work.

It was in 1103 that a monastic establishment after the order of St Augustine was founded in Worksop. From this fact was born the concept of the composition - a theme and variations travelling musically back in time to that year. First, the theme is announced, after which comes a romantic "Album-leaf", a classical style movement, a baroque "Gigue" and a renaissance "Ricercare". Bar 153, beat 1, marks the point at which the journey reaches 1103 A.D. and here, the theme is used in a plainsong-like way, plainsong being the church music of the time. Four trope-like passages are interpolated leading to a section in the motet style of the Notre Dame School (circa 13th century), for this is how tropes developed. The work concludes with a 21st century passage in which the main theme is combined with that of the second trope, both rhythmically altered. As this final passage has a bell-like quality and the varied Theme 1 is repeated, I have called this section "Carillon." Throughout the work I have used my own harmonic language.

Whilst working on the composition, it occurred to me that arrival at the 1103 point could mark the Golden Section (in duration) of the work - bar 153. beat 1. Up to this point, the length of the piece should be 5'40" (340 seconds). Calculation showed that the remainder should be 3'50" long, making a total duration of 9'30". I remain unconvinced that listeners comprehend such a structure, but it is a useful compositional tool.

The work was finished in July, 2012.

### ***Performance notes***

Some pianoforte pedalling signs are given; they are not indications concerning the use of organ pedals.

The term "ease" is an indication not to hurry or play in strict time; *pochissimo rit.* / *pochissimo rubato*.

If an electric piano is used, vary the sounds. For example, a harpsichord sound could be used for bars 90 to 112; a "choir" sound for bars 187 to 191 and a vibraphone sound from bar 192 to the end. A skilful organist could adapt the work for performance on that instrument, despite the occasional straying out of compass. Registration could be varied and the "motet" (bars 187 to 191) even played as an organ trio. The "motet" and "carillon" could be played together as a separate piece, during Communion, perhaps.

### ***Bibliography***

A History of Western Music (5th Edition) by Donald Jay Grout, published by W.W.Norton & Co.  
Masterpieces of Music before 1750 by Carl Parrish & John F.Ohl, first published by Faber & Faber Ltd. in 1952.  
An outline history of European Music by Michael Hurd published by Novello & Co. Ltd. in 1968.

For Haydn Robert Lee

# A Musical Journey Back To 1103 A.D.

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♩ = 60

"ease"

*mf* *espress.* *mf* *sim.*

*senza ped.*

5

"ease"

*mf* *sim.* *mf* *mf*

*poco rit.*

11

*a tempo*

"ease"

*mf* *sim.*

15

"ease"

*mf* *sim.* *p* *p*

*poco rit.*

♩ = 80

Link of 7 notes, later used as commencement of Trope I (bar 157).

Romantic "Album-leaf"

♩ = 108

21

accel.

Musical score for measures 21-27. The piece is in 3/4 time with a tempo of 108. It begins with an acceleration. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (2, 3, 5-4). The left hand has a bass line with slurs and fingerings (4, 3). Dynamics include *mf* and *con ped.*

28

Musical score for measures 28-34. The right hand continues with slurs and dynamics of *mf*, *f*, and *mf*. The left hand has a bass line with slurs and dynamics of *mf (>)*.

Variation

♩ = 80

35

rit.

Musical score for measures 35-40, marked as a variation with a tempo of 80 and a ritardando. The right hand has slurs and dynamics of *p*, *mp*, and *mf*. The left hand has a bass line with slurs and dynamics of *mp* and *con ped.*

41

Musical score for measures 41-45. The right hand features slurs, dynamics of *mf*, and fingerings (3, 1). The left hand has a bass line with slurs and dynamics of *mp* and *mf*.

46

Musical score for measures 46-52. The right hand has slurs and dynamics of *mp* and *mf*. The left hand has a bass line with slurs and dynamics of *mf* and *sonore*. A fingering of -4 is shown at the end of the piece.

*scherzando*

52

*p* *mf* *p* *mf* *mf* *mf*

*rit.*

*In Classical style*

56

*mf* *mp* *mf*

$\text{♩} = 84$   $(\text{♩} = 84)$

2 1 1 2 3

3

Link, as before.

*mp* *mf* *mp* *sim.*

61

66

*mf* *mp*

71

*mf* *mp* *mf* *mf*

3 3 3 3 5

1

poco rit.

76

a tempo

*mf*

Musical score for measures 76-79. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. Measure 76 has a tempo marking 'a tempo' and a dynamic marking '*mf*'. A fermata is placed over the first measure of the upper staff. The lower staff has a '5' written below it. Measure 77 has a dynamic marking '*mp*' and a '5' below the staff. Measure 78 has a dynamic marking '*mf*' and a '5' below the staff. Measure 79 has a dynamic marking '*mf*' and a '5' below the staff. A 'sim.' (sostenuto) marking is placed below the lower staff in measure 78.

80

Musical score for measures 80-84. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. Measure 80 has a dynamic marking '*mf*'. Measure 81 has a dynamic marking '*mf*'. Measure 82 has a dynamic marking '*mf*'. Measure 83 has a dynamic marking '*mf*'. Measure 84 has a dynamic marking '*mf*'.

$\text{♩} = 63$

Baroque (Gigue)

85

Musical score for measures 85-92. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. Measure 85 has a dynamic marking '*mf*'. Measure 86 has a dynamic marking '*mf*'. Measure 87 has a dynamic marking '*mp*'. Measure 88 has a dynamic marking '*mf*'. Measure 89 has a dynamic marking '*mf*'. Measure 90 has a dynamic marking '*mf*'. Measure 91 has a dynamic marking '*mf*'. Measure 92 has a dynamic marking '*mf*'. A 'Link, as before.' marking is placed below the lower staff in measure 91. A 'senza ped.' marking is placed below the lower staff in measure 92.

Link, as before. *senza ped.*

93

Musical score for measures 93-97. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. Measure 93 has a dynamic marking '*f*' and a 'C#' marking above the staff. Measure 94 has a dynamic marking '*f*' and a '3' marking above the staff. Measure 95 has a dynamic marking '*mf*'. Measure 96 has a dynamic marking '*mf*'. Measure 97 has a dynamic marking '*mf*' and a 'B nat.' marking above the staff. A 'tr' (trill) marking is placed above the staff in measure 97.

98

Musical score for measures 98-102. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. Measure 98 has a dynamic marking '*f*' and an 'E nat.' marking above the staff. A 'tr' (trill) marking is placed above the staff in measure 98. Measure 99 has a dynamic marking '*f*'. Measure 100 has a dynamic marking '*f*'. Measure 101 has a dynamic marking '*f*'. Measure 102 has a dynamic marking '*f*'. A '1.' marking is placed above the staff in measure 101. A '2.' marking is placed above the staff in measure 102.

103

Musical score for measures 103-107. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. Measure 103 has a dynamic marking '*f*'. Measure 104 has a dynamic marking '*f*'. Measure 105 has a dynamic marking '*f*'. Measure 106 has a dynamic marking '*f*'. Measure 107 has a dynamic marking '*f*'. An 'F' marking is placed above the staff in measure 105. A 'tr' (trill) marking is placed above the staff in measure 105.

2nd time,  
poco rit.

1. | 2.

mf

Link, as before.

Renaissance (Ricercare)

113 ♩ = 80 **rall.**

♩ = 58

*sereno e spianato*  
mp

senza ped.

Reminiscent of the Ricercare in my "Variations on Three Original Themes" for organ.

121

mp

128

mp

135

mp

141

mp

A discreet use of the sustaining pedal may be used in bars 147-152.

*Circa 1103 / Golden Section (see notes).*

Vox Organalis (V.O. - bass clef lowest notes and treble clef notes).

Each phrase begins in unison (though does not end so here), which was the custom since 9th C..

Vox Principalis (V.P.) in the tenor: first three phrases of the theme of the work with changed phrasing and no anacrusis. The V.P. is harmonised by means of organum (parallel intervals).

**Trope I** New material. The first 7 treble notes have been used as a link between previous sections.

The trope tenors (bass notes) comprise those of the last-heard phrases of the V.P.. In most cases, at the point where each tenor note begins, the two voices form intervals of a unison, 4th, 5th, or octave, as was the custom of the time. I permit the interval of an augmented 4th (bar 158) as it is a prominent interval in my harmonic language.



159

leg. leg.

Continuation of the Vox Principalis  
(Theme of the work).

161 **poco rit.** ♩ = 84

*mp tranquillo*

leg.

164 **Trope II**

*mp quasi plainsong*  
(espress. e flessibile ♩ = 72)

senza ped. leg. leg.

167

crescendo

leg. leg.

Continuation of the Vox Principalis  
(Theme of the work).

169 **poco rit.** ♩ = 84

*f*

*mp tranquillo*

leg.

**Trope III** "Notre Dame School" (ca. 1180)  
using the six Rhythmic Modes. 3 parts. Dance-like.

♩ = 80

173

*f energico*

*con ped.* *leg.* *leg.*

176

*leg.* *leg.*

178

*poco rit.*

Final phrase of the Vox Principalis  
(Theme of the work).

♩ = 84

179

*mp tranquillo* *f energico*

*con ped.* *leg.*

"Notre Dame School" (ca. 1180)  
using the six Rhythmic Modes.  
3 parts. Dance-like.

**Trope IV**

♩ = 80

184

*leg.* *leg.*

rall.

186

attacca

"Motet" "Notre Dame School" (ca. 13th C.)

♩ = 104

187

Triplum  
Motetus

Tenor

*mf religioso, legato, come coro*

*mf*

*con ped.*

The plainsong of Trope I, transposed and organised into rhythmic modes.

"ease"

189

*mf*

"ease"

190

*mf*

"ease"

191

*mf*

rall.

Coda: "Carillon"

♩ = 80

A variation of Theme I  
(omitting the 4th & 5th phrases).

Musical score for measures 192-193. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It features a treble and bass clef. The tempo is marked as *mp*. A bracket above the treble staff indicates a phrase to be played with an "ease". The bass staff contains a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes, with some notes beamed together. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1-5. A dynamic marking of *mp* is present. The piece concludes with a fermata over the final notes.

The plainsong (rhythmically varied) of Trope II.

Musical score for measures 194-195. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It features a treble and bass clef. The tempo is marked as *mp*. A bracket above the treble staff indicates a phrase to be played with an "ease". The bass staff contains a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes, with some notes beamed together. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1-5. A dynamic marking of *mp* is present. The piece concludes with a fermata over the final notes.

Musical score for measures 196-197. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It features a treble and bass clef. The tempo is marked as *p delicato*. A bracket above the treble staff indicates a phrase to be played with an "ease". The bass staff contains a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes, with some notes beamed together. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1-5. A dynamic marking of *p* is present. The piece concludes with a fermata over the final notes.

Musical score for measures 198-199. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It features a treble and bass clef. The tempo is marked as *p*. A bracket above the treble staff indicates a phrase to be played with an "ease". The bass staff contains a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes, with some notes beamed together. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1-5. A dynamic marking of *p* is present. The piece concludes with a fermata over the final notes.

\* As if a clockwork musical box "winding down" - similar to the carillon movement in my "Seven Jewels" for flute and cello (1976).

This section has the same character as the "Pastorale Variations" (Comunio) in my "Barzago Pieces" for organ (2006) and "The Budding Tree" movement in my chamber work "Harthill Moor" (2007).