

THE PIPER AT THE GATES OF DAWN

For piano

PROGRAMME NOTES

1. *Prelude*
2. *Nocturne*
3. *Caprice*
4. *Finale*

Piper at the Gates of Dawn is a suite of four movements and was inspired by a magical chapter from Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*. In a scene far removed from the antics of Mr Toad, two of the animal characters journey through a summer night to the breaking of dawn, drawn on irresistibly by a mysterious glad piping to a vision of Pan, protector of all wild creatures. ***Prelude*** evokes twilight, punctuated by moths and wheeling bats; ***Nocturne*** paints the river as the moon gradually rises and sails overhead; ***Caprice*** brings first light, hints of a morning breeze, and the mysterious piping. The ***Finale*** follows Kenneth Grahame's closing poem, with the reeds' talk and carolling of the morning birds as accompaniment to the song (whose words are not meant to be vocalised).

Caprice was the first movement of the suite completed in 1990. The ***Prelude*** and ***Nocturne*** followed and were premiered at London's 1992 Spitalfields Festival. The 2003 version of the ***Finale*** replaced an earlier version of 1995 which was less pianistic. And this later version was first performed at the Elder Conservatorium, Adelaide, as part of the Australasian Pedagogy Conference on July 15, 2005. Roy Howat both inspired and premiered all the movements of the suite and the score is dedicated to him with admiration.