

Dance to the Piper's Tune

descant recorder & string quartet

PROGRAMME NOTES

The sheer energy and entrepreneurial verve of the British recorder phenomenon John Turner has inspired many composers to write for his instrument, so when he announced his intention of presenting a memorial concert for his lately departed wife Margaret, with a repeat performance one week later, I responded with *Dance to the Piper's Tune*.

Scored for descant recorder and string quartet, first performed by John and the Victoria Quartet on the 18 April 2026 in Heaton Moor United Church in Stockport, then 25 April at St, Peter's Church in Addingham, the work was one of fourteen world premieres in both well attended marathon events which also featured music by Ravel, Mozart and Purcell.

Dance to the Piper's Tune is a macabre, yet joyous, tarantella. The recorder player is death who leads us on in the dance of life, with the tarantella sections contrasted against the expressive, legato character of the reassuring chorale introduced by the string quartet. In the end, both themes combine, and the effects of flutter-tonguing, *col legno* and knocking of the cello body add an edge to the dance and a reference to death as the dancing skeleton as depicted in many medieval illustrations.

Wendy Hiscocks