

Keith Allen

celebrates the 10th anniversary of Martin Ellerby's Paris Sketches

PARIS SKETCHES IS 10 YEARS OLD!

It was back in 1994, that Cleveland Youth Wind Orchestra, conducted by John MacKenzie performed the world première of what is now accepted as an international classic in the wind band repertoire, namely *Paris Sketches* (Maecenas Music) by Martin Ellerby. This 15 minute piece, subtitled as 'Homages for Wind Band', was commissioned under the auspices of the British Association of Symphonic Bands and Wind Ensembles Consortium Commissioning Scheme with funds provided by BASBWE, Bell Baxter High School, Bodmin Community College, Cleveland Youth Wind Orchestra, Hemel Hempstead High School, Northern Arts, Richmond School, Scottish Arts, South West Arts, Springwood High School, and Yorkshire & Humberside Arts.

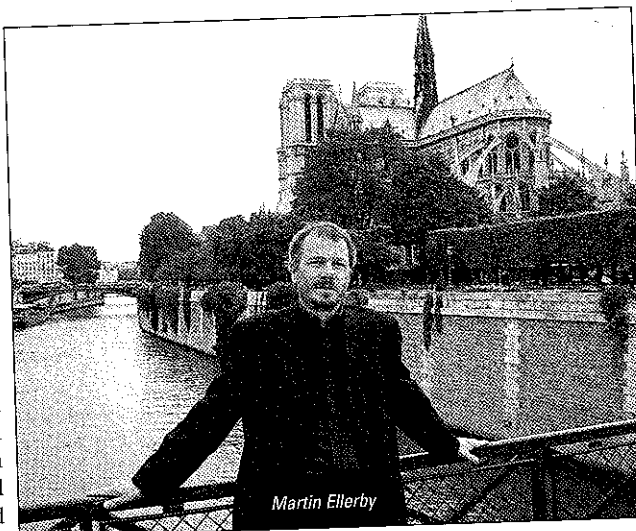
For those not familiar with this most accessible of works, let me highlight that *Paris Sketches* is written as a personal tribute to a city that Martin Ellerby knows and loves well. Each movement pays homage to some part of the French capital (with a unifying thread of the sound of bells) and to composers who lived, worked or passed through – rather as did Ravel in his tribute to an earlier master in *Le Tombeau de Couperin*. The four contrasting movements (which may be performed separately) are full of splendid orchestral colour and never fail to excite players and listeners alike:

Saint-Germain-des-Prés – the Latin Quarter famous for artistic associations and bohemian lifestyle. This is a dawn tableau haunted by the shade of Ravel; the city awakens with the ever-present sound of morning bells.

Pigalle – the Soho of Paris. This is a burlesque with scenes cast in the mould of a balletic *scherzo* – humorous in a kind of 'Stravinsky-meets-Prokofiev' way. It's episodic but everything is based on the harmonic figuration of the opening. The bells here are car horns and police sirens!

Père Lachaise. This is the city's largest cemetery, the final resting place of many a celebrity who once walked its streets. The spirit of Satie's *Gymnopédies* – themselves a tribute to a still more distant past – is affectionately evoked before the movement concludes with a quotation of the *Dies Irae*. This is the work's slow movement, and the mood is one of softness and delicacy, which the composer has matched with more transparent orchestration. The bells are gentle, nostalgic, wistful.

Les Halles. A bustling finale; the bells triumphant and celebratory. *Les Halles* is in the old market area, a Parisian Covent Garden and, like *Pigalle*, this is a series of related but contrasted episodes. The climax quotes from Berlioz's *Te*



Deum, which was first performed in 1855 at the church of St Eustache – actually in the district of *Les Halles*. A gradual crescendo initiated by the percussion prefaces the material proper, and the work ends with a backward glance at the first movement before closing with the final bars of the Berlioz *Te Deum*.

Martin Ellerby has since composed other 'city tributes', which each explore different facets of their namesakes:

Venetian Spells (Studio Music) is a charming 15 minute, four movement work paying homage to composers associated with

Venice in the past, namely Vivaldi, Stravinsky, Monteverdi and Gabrieli.

The Big Easy Suite (Studio Music) subtitled 'New Orleans' is in four movements and is an extended work for elementary bands – it recreates the joy of living in the 'deep south'.

Dreamscapes (Studio Music) is a suite in four movements each depicting in a dramatic and colourful way, four cities of the imagination: Eldorado, Avalon, Shangri-La and Xanadu.

The original score of *Paris Sketches* was in the composer's own manuscript with hand written performing material as well – to celebrate this 10th anniversary, the publishers Maecenas Music have issued a new edition with a type-set score (A3 size, though an A4 score is also available) and processed parts. However they have retained the original score and parts in the archives for anyone who needs to 'make up' an earlier set.

Keith Allen is the Musical Director of Birmingham Symphonic Winds, Director of the National Concert Band Festival, Conductor of Solihull Youth Wind Ensemble and Artistic Director of the London International Wind Band Festival.

CD recordings of *Paris Sketches* by Martin Ellerby are numerous – check out some of the following to get a flavour of this enormously popular work:

- North Texas Wind Symphony, cond. Eugene Corporan, (Kavir K11124)
- Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra, cond. Douglas Bostock, (Kosei KOCD-3905)
- RNCM Wind Orchestra, cond. Clark Rundell, (Classicprint CPVP 004CD)
- Rutgers Wind Ensemble, cond. William Berz, (Mark 2940-MCD)
- Symphonic Wind Orchestra St Michael of Thorn, cond. Heinz Friesen, (World Wind Music 500.055 WWM)

PARIS SKETCHES

1. Saint-Germain-des-Prés

MARTIN ELLERBY

Andante ($\text{♩} = \text{c. } 60$)

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with the following parts and staves:

- Piccolo
- Flutes 1 2
- Oboes 1 2
- E♭ Clarinet
- 1. B♭ Clarinet 1
- 2. B♭ Clarinet 2
- 3. B♭ Clarinet 3
- E♭ Alto Clarinet
- B♭ Bass Clarinet
- Bassoons 1 2
- E♭ Alto Saxophones 1 2
- B♭ Tenor Saxophone
- E♭ Baritone Saxophone
- 1. B♭ Trumpets
- 2. 3. B♭ Trumpets
- 1. 2. 3. 4. F Horns
- 1. 2. Trombones
- Euphonium
- Tuba
- Double Bass
- Piano
- Timpani
- 1. Percussion 1
 - Glockenspiel
 - Tubular Bells (or Large Triangle)
 - Tam-tam
- 2. 3. Percussion 2
 - Tam-tam

Dynamic markings include *p*, *mp*, *pp*, *pp subito*, *pp lv*, *plv*, *lv*, and *pp lv*. Performance instructions include "con sord. Solo" for trumpets and "1. Solo", "2. Solo", "3. Solo" for horns.