

Harbour, Ocean, Stars and Dreaming

for organ

Anthony Skilbeck

Material for a programme note

Born in Coventry (1947), Anthony Skilbeck's composing life has been supported by work as a teacher, pianist, organist and choir trainer. Musical studies were begun during Skilbeck's childhood in Bournemouth, where his principal musical mentor was Michael Peterson. First professional qualifications were obtained whilst studying at the Royal College of Music and London University Institute of Education. Since 1977 he has resided in Nottinghamshire. In 2000, composition studies with David Harold Cox and George Nicholson culminated in a Ph.D. degree for original composition being awarded by The University of Sheffield. During his time as a mature student, for a short period, Skilbeck also studied the interpretation of organ music with Nicolas Kynaston.

Of his compositional language (usually atonal, but "listener-friendly") Skilbeck writes:

The pianoforte music of Debussy and works from Schoenberg's 1908 to 1912 period have had a particular influence on my harmonic language, which is not based on and has not evolved into a text-book schema. Only comparatively rarely does my music find itself in a key, creation and release of tension in harmony and melody holding a greater interest for me than the use of keys and their relationships. This gives rise to compositions often starting in one area of harmony and ending in another. Justification for a language neither tonal nor serial was strengthened on the discovery of Liszt's *Bagatelle without Tonality*.

The tritone, whole tones and the bitter-sweet intervals of minor and major sevenths figure prominently. Practical knowledge of contrapuntal organ works has been significant, but I have not been drawn to overtly mathematical processes, though frequently changing and unusual time signatures are often employed.

Planning a structure, or letting one evolve, gives me much pleasure, as does finding that a passage of my music has an evocative quality. The expression of moods and human temperaments fascinates me.

A Piscean, proximity to water has also been a feature of environments in which Anthony Skilbeck has lived. His childhood was near to Poole Harbour (Dorset), many years were spent near the River Thames and now he lives near a lake.

Harbour was inspired by a Mediterranean cruise during which five ports were visited. Akin to a symphonic poem, and using much melodic material (some of which is developed), the work leads the listener's thoughts from a quiet harbour into playful and gradually rougher waters, during which some dreaming at the stars is rudely interrupted. The central section (beginning at bar 248) tells of great, imaginary, sailing ships. Using material from the first section, the music then becomes calmer, until the pedal cadenza. Following this, more star-gazing leads to a repeat of the opening bars, signifying a safe arrival at the port of destination.

The work displays a fusion of registration characteristics from different eras. At bar 88 there is a French baroque-like *Tierce en taille* melody; passages for the solo reed and organ glockenspiel (if available) are redolent of the 20th century. In the opening bars (later repeated), the writing and registration requirements utilize Schoenberg's *Klangfarbenmelodie* technique.

A brief analysis for the performer

Introduction: the ship in harbour. Homophonic use of *Klangfarbenmelodie*.

Part One (starting at bar 17): sailing into a gradually rougher sea with playful waves. In bars 88 to 102, there is a melody for the Tierce combination, reminiscent of French baroque organ music, yet in a romantic style. Bars 138 to 149 comprise an example of the "playful waves" idea.

Bars 179 to 194: a look at the stars with dramatic interruptions - as if in a dream.

Central Section (Part Two - starting at bar 248): Great sailing ships in view (using an archived theme from 1965), often with *scherzando* waves.

Part Three (starting at bar 349): using some material from Part One and including a Pedal cadenza.

Final Section (starting at bar 449): uses the "harbour", "twinkling stars" and "great sailing ships" music.

Performance notes

Dynamic marks are found in the score, but where these appear to be missing, it is the suggested registration which provides sufficient information.

The writing in bars 17 to 75 is essentially trio-like, employing varying sound colours.

In bars 3 to 15 and 481 to 493, Schoenberg's *Klangfarbenmelodie* technique is used.

Bars 243 to 342 require the use of a solo 8' reed. If one is not available, use the Great as Solo and the Swell as Great. Adjust the Pedal accordingly.

A further suggestion is made below.

Bars 179 to 189 and 449 to 465 can be played on the Glockenspiel (stars twinkling), when such is part of an organ's specification. Otherwise, performers might like to experiment with electrically-generated sound: the passages could be played on an electric keyboard (using its memory?) or from a pre-recorded cd.

The sound quality must be of a reasonably compatible standard to that of the organ.

Such electrical equipment could also be used to provide the sound of a solo reed, where one is lacking. This idea may be most successful if played by an assistant. If an assistant is being used, the glockenspiel parts could be played by that person an octave higher than written, on a pianoforte (perhaps some distance from the organ) which is in tune with the organ.

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Gt. Stopped Diapason 8'
 Sw. Salicional 8' & Celeste 8'
 (Ch. Flutes 8', 4' & Nazard - or see b.17)
 (Solo - see b.17)
 Ped. Flute 8'

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♩ = 112 Duration ca.12'

Gt. + Flt. 4' (but possibility here for another solo stop until b.30)

49

(Gt.)

(Ch.)

^

59

Gt. (or Sw.)

Gt.

Sw. (or Ch.)

C

G

v

U

70

Sw. (or both on Gt.)

Gt. \flat 5.

2 1

3

\wedge

79

Sw. (if m.s. is on Sw.)

1 2

4

v

u

\wedge

86 (Sw.)

Gt. (or Ch.) + Sesquialtera

98 Sw. to Mixture ↓ Gt. 3 5 4

+ Sw./Gt. - Sesquialtera ↓

crescendo

Ped. Add

106 ♩ = ♩ (Gt.)

114

Sw. Ab tr

Gt. 1 2 # 3

Sw. C#

Gt. 5

scherzando (Gt.)

1 2 # 3

v u

^ u ^ u

u

125 (Gt.)

serio

v u

poco rall.

137

scherzando

Gt. & Ped. Add

149

serio
Sw.

(Gt.)

Tempo primo (♩ = 56)

accel.

Sw. Add Full Sw.

179

Glk. { *p leg. e tranquillo*

Gt. { *f risoluto*

Sw. { *ff veemente*

If any l.h. notes are out of the glockenspiel range, play them an octave higher than written.

f

A tempo

accel.

Gt. Add perhaps

187

Glk. { *p leg. e tranquillo*

Sw. { *ff impetuoso*

Gt. Add perhaps

(Perhaps leave box open)

195 $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

Gt.

legato

Sw.

f

mf

5 3 4

203

Ped. + Sw./Ped.

5 3 2 1

1 2

4 5

228

Sw. {

Gt.

(Box 3/4 open)

poco a poco crescendo

239

poco accelerando

A tempo

Solo reed 8'
(both hands)

non legato

(Solo)

(Close Sw.)

"Central section"
(Part Two)

From here until bar 348, ♩ = ♪ throughout all time signature changes

♩ = 152 (♩. = 54)

(Strict time!)

246 ("Echo") Gt. Add

Sw. { *leg.* } (Should have Sw./Gt.) Gt. { *ff* } *esultante* Solo

Open Sw. box

sopra

ff

256

Gt. Solo Gt. *sopra*

ff

Ped. Add Solo to Ped. ↑

Omit this chord if hand needed to prep. solo reeds

332 **Prep. Solo** reeds 8' & 4' (en chamade if available) (Gt.)

serio *esuberante* *Solo* *fff*

338

rit. *schierzando* *serio e legato*

Possibly Sw. to 2'; Gt. to Mixture, Sw. cop.

Possibly Gt. to Sesquialtera (- Mixture, - S/G)

♩ = ♩

Tempo primo ♩ = 112

Sw.

Part Three
(using some material from Part One)

346

354

384

scherzando

Sw.

Gt.

Gt. 1

Gt. & Sw. Principals.
No 2', mutations or mixtures.
Sw. box closed.

397

senza rall.

L'istesso tempo

mf cantabile

mf cantabile

Ped. to Fifteenth.
Possibly no couplers.

406

412

Allarg. ... accel.

No Sw. Celestes Sw. *pp legato*

Tempo allarg. accel.

lirico

f

Ped. Add, including the Mixture. No loud reeds.

Short pause (for echo)

Ped. Add 8' reed.

Ped. Add 16' reed.

421 Sw. Add Full Sw. Gt. Possibly add (Mixture)

A tempo ♩ = 112

Sw. *f*

f

Ped. Possibly add Gt./Ped. *ff*

431 ♩ = ♩

A tempo (♩ = 112)

Gt.

Slow enough for legato accel.

Gt.

Roll $\bar{\vee} \cdot \bar{\vee} \cdot \bar{\vee}$

Roll $\bar{\vee} \cdot \bar{\vee} \cdot \bar{\vee}$

Glockenspiel (or Gt. Flute 4).

If any l.h. notes are out of the glockenspiel range,
play the l.h. part on a 4' flute, with the r.h. on the glockenspiel.

Final Section

Tempo primo (♩ = 56)

ritardando

441

Sw. Salicional & Celeste 8',
box open.

Glock.

p legato e tranquillo

Roll
·v· v· ·v· v·

Ped. Quiet flutes 8' to 32'.

452

sopra

rall.

Sw. Soft 8's + Celestes
Gt. Flute 8'

M.d.: from bars 252 - 259. "Great sailing ships" music, now with Celeste.

R. h. 8va from here if compass restricted

Gt. Off Sw./Gt.

(rall.)

♩ = 112

rallentando

Tempo primo ♩ = 112

Ped. Off 16' & Sw./Ped.

- Gt. Stopped Diapason 8'
- Sw. Salicional 8' & Celeste 8'
- Ped. Flute 8'

♩ = 40 **rall. al fine**

491 **Gt.** **rallentando** ♩ = ♩

Gt. **Sw.** **Ped. Sw./Ped. only**

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