

Neil Buckland - Bassoon Concerto

(includes *Echoes in the Memory* and *Rondo del Mondo* for bassoon and orchestra)

My bassoon concerto, as with most of my music, is lyrical and tonal in style, with influences from baroque and other early music (particularly in the first movement) and folk and world music. The first movement is not yet finished but I have included its opening section here, as the remainder of the concerto has been completed and the other movements can both stand alone as separate pieces.

The first movement begins in a neo-baroque style, but with medieval cadences and modern orchestration. A lighter, major-key section will follow.

The second movement, *Echoes in the Memory*, is a lament for vanished dreams, lost beauty, forgotten ideals, and a civilisation that has lost sight of the values it was founded on. The title is a reference to TS Eliot's *Four Quartets*: "Footfalls echo in the memory / Down the passage which we did not take / Towards the door we never opened / Into the rose-garden". This movement can also stand alone as a separate piece.

A slow introduction to the finale gradually leads out of the sombre mood of the slow movement into sunnier regions. After a brief pause, the finale proper bursts into action with a vigorous and high-spirited quasi-folk dance, the bassoon and orchestra engaging in a dialogue in which first one then the other takes the lead. The music then ventures into more mysterious realms, leading eventually to a yearning theme that sounds like it might have been a French waltz in a former life (but is actually a transformation of the first theme). A cadenza follows, in which the bassoon has a mostly (but not entirely) serious discussion with the harp, and finally the first theme returns, restoring the high spirits of the opening. This movement is subtitled *Rondo del Mondo* and can also stand alone as a separate piece under that title (in which case the slow introduction is omitted).

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