

Geoff Palmer: String Quartet No.5: *Haec Dies*

This work links a celebration of the “colours” released when one splits the semitone, to a musical reflection of certain phenomena which have fascinated or moved me during my time here in the north and northeast of Scotland. Its sonic inspiration comes from here too - from sources as diverse as the singing of the Benedictine monks at Pluscarden Abbey (much of the thematic material is based on the Easter Gradual *Hæc Dies*) to the beguiling sound of a Himalayan singing bowl picked up recently at a bazaar in Findhorn!

I: Adagio ... turn of the tide, Findhorn Bay

We start with each of the four instruments tuned conventionally.

II: Sonata ... sands of Culbin

Here the second violinist retunes. Culbin Forest was established slowly and with great difficulty, drifting sand repeatedly choking the young saplings.

III: Ciacona ... geese flying north

Here the viola player retunes. The calling of migrating birds has inspired more than one composer!

IV Cadenze e finale ... aurora borealis

Here at last the whole quartet is tuned appropriately to find its way to the sound spectrum of my singing bowl by way of gestures and textures which reflect in my mind the stunning flickering dance of the Northern Lights; we also hear solo reflections on this beauty from each of the four players.