PROGRAMME NOTE

When Jan Börjesson first commissioned this piece, he had a very clear idea of what he wanted the music to be about. He told me about the old city of Kalmar and then how, in the 17th century, a new Baroque city and cathedral had been built. My imagination was easily stimulated by this idea, as, living in London, I am always aware of the layers of history that lie beneath the streets, subtly influencing modern life, reflecting the way our personal history and our genes influence our own lives.

There are three movements: in the first, a quasi plainsong theme is introduced that reappears throughout the work in different guises. A distant reminder of the old cathedral bells chimes and the people of the past walk solemnly about their ghostly business. In the second movement, there is a drive to rebuild – the opening of the movement is fugal, like bricks or stones gradually accumulating. The plainsong theme returns in a 'beatific' and then a triumphant form as the new cathedral is finished. The third movement is a Sanctus, as the cathedral is consecrated. Rising figures 'sing' the Sanctus, and the plainsong theme returns in a dance-like form. There is a slow build up to a triumphant finish. The Cathedral rises, a beacon of the Baroque, the past erased in this temple to light, love and enlightenment.

Judith Bingham

OPTIONAL PARTS

There is an optional part for 2 handbells, in A and B flat, to be struck (ideally) with a rubber hammer, not a mallet.

A soprano or group of sopranos may be used to sing the plainsong beginning at bar 62. They can be hidden from the audience.

Movement 1 was commissioned by Jan H Börjesson and first performed by him on the organ of Kalmar Cathedral, Sweden, May 2019. This movement can be performed separately (duration: 7 minutes).

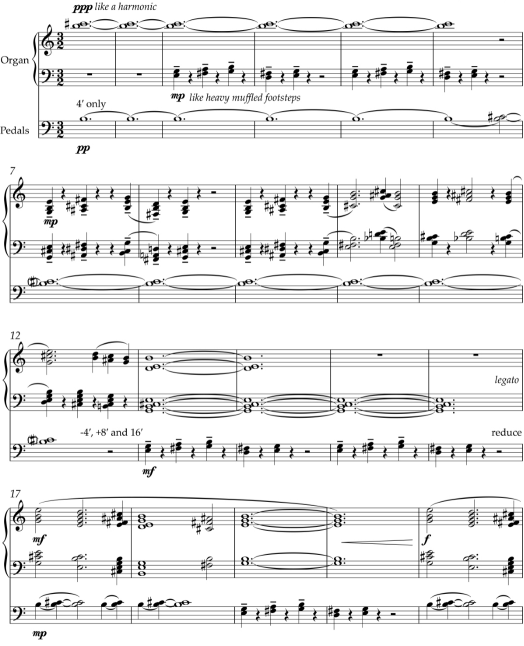
Movements 2 and 3 were commissioned by Jan H Börjesson and first performed on the 13th of September 2020 in Kalmar Cathedral, Sweden.

Total duration: 16 minutes

Kalmar Rising

1. The Past Beneath Our Feet

Judith Bingham



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