

Alec Roth – DEPARTURE OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

for oboe, cor anglais and string orchestra

commissioned by the Academy of St Martin in the Fields.

first performed by Celia Nicklin (oboe), Rachel Ingleton (cor anglais), Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Kenneth Sillito (director), St Martin-in-the-Fields Church, Trafalgar Square, London, 7 October 1999

Departure of the Queen of Sheba uses the same instrumentation as Handel's *Arrival of the Queen of Sheba* (Sinfonia to Act III of the oratorio *Solomon*), except that the second oboe is replaced by the cor anglais. Some of the musical material is also derived from the Handel, although subjected to various transformations.

The structure and emotional content of the piece, however, were inspired by the Brazilian artist Ana Maria Pacheco's wonderful painting [Queen of Sheba and King Solomon in the Garden of Earthly Delights](#). The music attempts to depict the private moment of parting of these two legendary lovers. The mood is gentle and intimate – a wordless duet with the oboe as the voice of Sheba and the cor anglais as the voice of Solomon, with the orchestra providing the Garden of Earthly Delights.

Three inner sections of the score are headed with quotations from the *Song of Solomon*:

“Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth . . .”

“His left arm is under my head and his right arm embraces me . . .”

“Let my lover come into his garden and taste its choice fruits . . .”

DURATION

ca. 10 minutes

FORCES REQUIRED

Oboe, Cor Anglais and String Orchestra (minimum 4 3 2 2 1)

The Cor Anglais line is also playable on the Oboe d'amore, for which a separate part is available

It may also be performed as a chamber work by oboe, cor anglais and keyboard (using the short score)

PERFORMANCE MATERIALS

Full Score

Orchestral Parts

Short Score (a keyboard reduction for rehearsal purposes)

SCORE SAMPLE

Click here to see sample pages of the [Full Score](#)