

**Program Note:**

*Symphony No. 104* was originally written for the Durham University Orchestral Society to be premiered at The Sage Gateshead in February 2007. The fact that it was written for a student orchestra had a significant impact on how the piece was conceived – the performers had very limited experience with contemporary music and many expected me to produce a relatively ‘tonal’ composition. For this reason, I chose to give the piece an ‘inner’ structure based on Haydn’s *Symphony No. 104*. This piece functions as a pedestal for my own work, lying beneath it as a symbol of the ‘conventional’ conception of the symphony. Occasionally it breaks free and surfaces in the form of direct quotations.

Although it is in one sense based on Haydn’s work, the structure of my piece is very different; it consists of 11 short movements and employs a number of different structural models. The most obvious of these is that I limited the number of notes used for each movement, ranging from three to twelve, in order to give them all a specific harmonic identity. The original central movement (now the fifth) functions as a pivot around which the others are arranged. To extend this idea further, the whole piece opens with a single A in the oboe – the final movement ends with two sustained notes [C and C#] in the oboe and cor anglais. In addition to this, I used three 12-tone rows to provide me with material for many of the different movements, with or without the relevant notes left out.

Each movement of *Symphony No. 104* was conceived as an individual musical *moment*, with a single musical idea in mind. However, perhaps equally important to the ideas themselves is the contrast between them. Furthermore, the experience of the Haydn quotations is informed by the music that surrounds them, and vice versa. The idea behind being that this extreme contrast puts even more emphasis on the character of all the musical material in the piece.