Extracts from Epping Forest Suite

Notes about the piece from the composer to his niece Kathleen

These are three short pieces that I wrote for a small youth orchestra. They are part of an *Epping Forest Suite*

The first piece is called *The Green Folk dance by moonlight (Fairmead Bottom).* Fairmead Bottom is a large green slope roughly between Connaught Waters and High Beach. The violin music represents the dancing of the various fairies and their friends, the dwarfs. Puck, the mischievous Green Man of folklore, is represented by the cello; he joins in the dancing, but also interrupts the music every now and again to make a solo comment about the delicious dancing of the fairies and the clumsy dancing of the dwarfs. The donkey character, in this piece supposed to be a dwarf wearing a donkey head, a bit like the character called Bottom in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* is represented here by the bassoon, and is meant to sound rather humorous.

The second piece is called *Springtime on the Green Ride*. As you may remember, the Green Ride is a broad bridleway and footpath which winds its way throughout Epping Forest from south to north, from Chingford Plain up to Bell Common in Epping. The music represents the opening of the spring flowers and the renewed activity of the birds, deer and small animals. The central section is the Green Folk peeping from the bushes and trees, watching the group of human hikers strolling and enjoying the pleasures of the forest walk. The Green Folk are represented by the strings again and the woodwind – the oboe, bassoon (the donkey character again), clarinet and flute.

The third piece is called *The Church of the Holy Innocents, High Beach*. This is the lovely church in the Epping Forest, not far from the King's Head. The gentle music on the strings is punctuated towards the end by various bird calls (the flute) which can been heard in the churchyard. It ends with a peaceful 'Amen'.

Thomas More Hagger 1950-2023