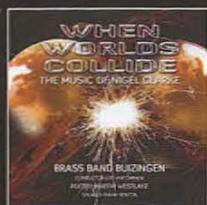


# reviews

## CD OF THE MONTH



### WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE: THE MUSIC OF NIGEL CLARKE

Brass Band Buizingen

Luc Vertommen

Band Press

If there is one aspect that immediately strikes home about this impressive double CD, it is the feeling of synergy that exists between composer and performers. Although hailing from Margate, Nigel Clarke has been resident in Brussels for some years and has developed a close working relationship with Belgian National Champion, Brass Band Buizingen and its talented MD, Luc Vertommen, and is presently working as the band's Associate Composer.

Several of Nigel Clarke's recent works have consequently been written with Buizingen's

players in mind, and make huge technical and physical demands on the performers, both collectively and individually. Listening to these stunning performances, however, it is apparent that Buizingen is completely on top of the challenge, delivering every piece with remarkable technical prowess.

In the oldest work, the euphonium concerto, *The City in the Sea*, the music rises mysteriously from the ocean's depths in an atmospheric evocation of the submerged medieval East Anglian town of Dunwich, played with breathtaking facility by Glenn van Looy, now a permanent fixture at Buizingen. What the composer describes as the most "eccentric" piece, the overture *Tilbury Point* (although *When Worlds Collide* runs it pretty close for the accolade) is a rollicking portrait of the pirate, Captain Kidd, and displays a lighter side to the composer's creative personality.

*Mysteries of the Horizon*, a stamina-sapping, vividly dramatic four-movement cornet concerto played magnificently by Harmen Vanhoorne and previously released on the dedicatee's solo album, is inspired by the surreal paintings of René Magritte, whilst *Earthrise* portrays the extreme velocity of the

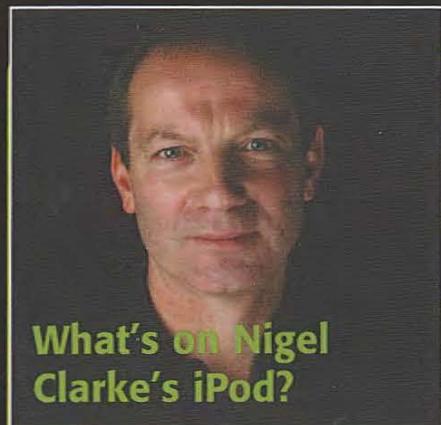
Apollo 8 mission and its radiantly beautiful view of Earth from space. *Swift Severn's Flood*, a Shakespeare-inspired musical drama, paints a dramatic portrait of Edmund de Mortimer's battle with Owain Glyn Dwr in powerfully pictorial music, which owes much to Clarke's credentials as a composer of film scores.

That leaves the title track, *When Worlds Collide* - a quirky, distinctly offbeat response to early 1950s sci-fi movies that, for all its zany effects and tongue-in-cheek humour, belies a piece of dazzling creative virtuosity.

With Frank Renton's silver-tongued recitation of the words of Shakespeare and poet, Martin Westlake, providing a neat link between each piece, plus excellent composer notes, this recording is both a virtuosic tour-de-force and a compelling portrait of Nigel Clarke's ever-increasing significance.

CHRISTOPHER THOMAS

- ◀◀◀◀ Programme
- ◀◀◀◀ Performance
- ◀◀◀◀ Recording
- ◀◀◀◀ Presentation



### What's on Nigel Clarke's iPod?

We asked Nigel to name five pieces currently on his current playlist, to get a sense of his own inspirations, and this is what he revealed:

"The first currently dear to my heart is **Hans Werner Henze's** *Violin Concerto No. 1*, performed by Peter Sheppard Skærved and the

Saarbrücken Radio Symphony Orchestra on the Naxos label. Henze died last October and has left a legacy of rich music.

Number 2. is also a violin concerto by the American composer, **George Rochberg**. The work is more than 50 minutes long, also performed by Peter Sheppard Skærved (violin) Saarbrücken Radio Symphony Orchestra on the Naxos label.

I have always loved the aleatoric music of **Witold Lutoslawski** and have his string orchestra masterpiece, *Funeral Music*, currently on my iPod. As the title suggests, it's full of dark melancholy. I remember a memorable week as a student at the Royal Academy of Music when Lutoslawski was in residence as part of a dedicated festival of his music.

My fourth choice is a recent discovery -

**Erich Wolfgang Korngold's** luxurious *Symphonic Serenade* (1947) for large string orchestra. This work was meant to put Korngold back at the centre of Viennese life, after his wartime exile to the States. The Vienna Philharmonic gave its première under the baton of Furtwängler, but life had moved on in post-war Austria, and it is his Hollywood film scores that have kept his reputation alive.

My fifth and final piece of music is **Igor Stravinsky's** primal masterpiece - *Le Sacre du Printemps* (*Rite of Spring*), first performed 100 years ago on 29 May 1913 - music was never to be the same again!!

My choice of listening is always changing and covers most genres of music - I think it's important that I always remain open-minded to all musical languages."