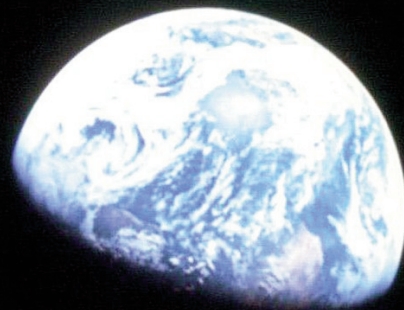


NAXOS

Nigel
CLARKE

Earthrise
(version for orchestra)



ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra

Neil Thomson

Nigel Clarke (b. 1960)

Earthrise (version for orchestra)

The British composer Nigel Clarke grew up in the seaside town of Margate, UK and though not from a musical background, he developed a lifelong love of music at an early age while learning a brass instrument at school. At 16 he joined the Royal Marines as a junior military bandsman and went on to serve in the Band of the Royal Army Medical Corps and ultimately the Band of the Irish Guards. His desire to write music was encouraged at the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall. This led to him studying composition at the Royal Academy of Music, London with Paul Patterson.

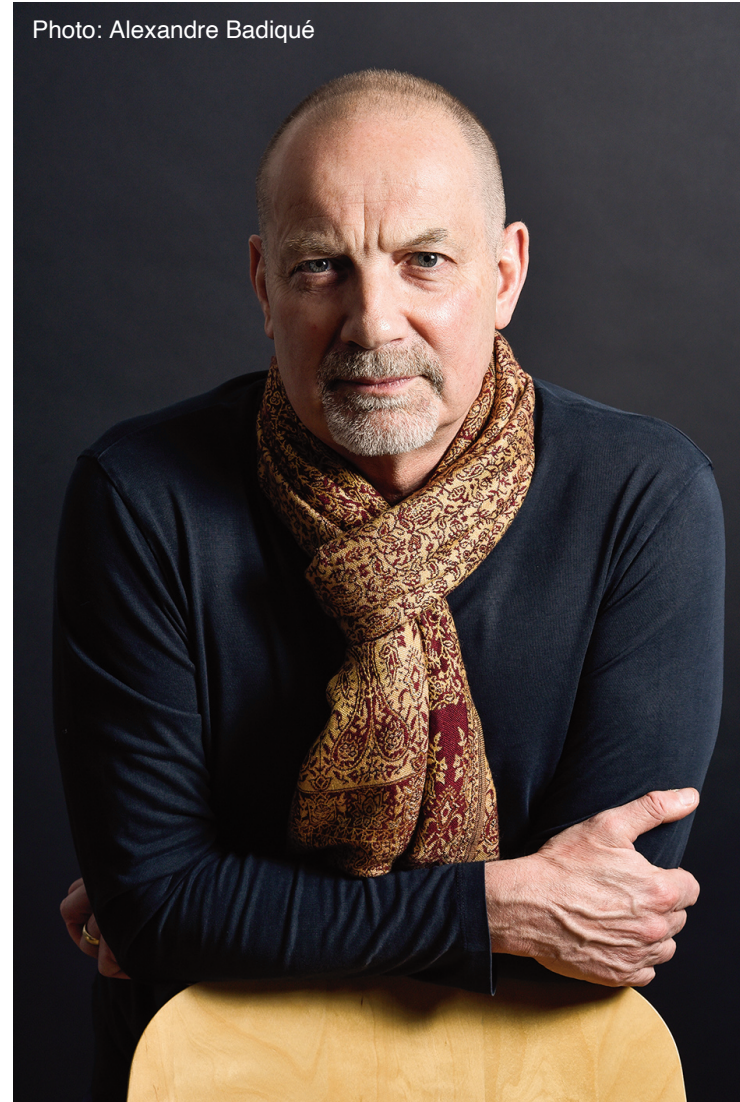
During his professional career Clarke has held posts as composition and contemporary music tutor at the Royal Academy of Music, and head of composition at the London College of Music and Media. His many national and international residencies and associations include positions with the Young Concert Artist Trust, The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, Black Dyke Band, Brassband Buizingen, Grimethorpe Colliery Band, Middle Tennessee State University and Brussels Muzieque. Clarke's longest musical collaboration has been with violinist Peter Sheppard Skærved.

Clarke is renowned for his virtuosic writing using an uncompromisingly contemporary language which speaks to audiences. He has a penchant for story-telling, and his work brims with rhythmic drive and bravura orchestration. It is this language of contrasts and colour, juxtaposing savage musical outbursts with moments of sheer transcendental beauty, that draws audiences into his sound world.

Clarke's scores include works for symphony orchestra, brass, wind and chamber combinations, and he has also been nominated for numerous awards for his compositions for the concert hall and for film. His works are recorded on many prestigious labels and are performed worldwide.

www.nigel-clarke.com

Photo: Alexandre Badiqué



Earthrise (2010, arr. 2021)

Earthrise refers to one of the most iconic photographs in history. The original NASA image, named *AS8-14-2383*, was captured by the Apollo 8 crew on 24 December 1968 during the first manned mission to the Moon.

The sight of the Earth rising above the Moon took the Apollo 8 crew by surprise. It came into view on their fourth orbit as they emerged from the far side of the Moon. The excitement of the crew members Frank Borman, Bill Anders and James Lovell was captured on audio:

<i>Frank Borman</i>	Oh my God! Look at that picture over there! Here's the Earth coming up. Wow, is that pretty!
<i>Bill Anders</i>	Hey, don't take that, it's not scheduled.
<i>Frank Borman (laughing)</i>	You got a colour film, Jim?
<i>Bill Anders</i>	Hand me that roll of colour quick, will you –
<i>James Lovell</i>	Oh man, that's great!
<i>Bill Anders</i>	Hurry. Quick ...
<i>James Lovell</i>	Take several of them! Here, give it to me ...
<i>Frank Borman</i>	Calm down, Lovell.

James Lovell later recalled: 'There's no colour. In the whole universe wherever we looked, the only bit of colour was back on Earth... It was the most beautiful thing there was to see in all the heavens. People down here don't realise what they have.' The first man in space, Yuri Alekseyevic Gagarin, reflected on the same sentiment in his autobiography: 'Circling the earth in the orbital spaceship I marvelled at the beauty of our planet. People of the world, let us safeguard and enhance this beauty – not destroy it!'

The crew of Apollo 8 were briefed by NASA to take photographs of the Moon – anything extra was described as a target of opportunity, so it is ironic that the most famous image from their mission was of the Earth. In 1969 the *Earthrise* photograph was featured on a US Postal Service stamp commemorating the achievements of Apollo 8.

Earthrise is written in one continuous movement but divided into three sections: fast–slow–fast. It is a symphonic poem, in which I have endeavoured to capture the excitement and expectation that the Apollo 8 mission brought to the world. The opening bars are a musical portrait of the rocket launch on 21 December 1968 in Florida as witnessed by the author and aviator Anne Morrow Lindbergh:

Slowly, as in a dream, slowly it seemed to hang suspended on a cloud of fire and smoke. Then followed the noise, a shattering roar of explosions, a trip-hammer over one's head, under one's feet, through one's body. The earth shakes, cars rattle, vibrations beat in the chest. A roll of thunder prolonged, prolonged, prolonged.

After the opening section, I have emulated the speed and power of Apollo 8's Saturn V rocket which was catapulted towards the Moon using the Earth's gravitational force. The atmosphere then becomes calm, portraying the astronauts floating weightlessly in their capsule on their way to the dark side of the Moon. This is a prelude to the kernel of the work, the extraordinary moment when the Earth comes into view – the only coloured object in an otherwise monochrome universe. The final section of the work depicts Apollo 8 hurtling back to Earth at an unimaginable 25,000 miles per hour on its quarter-of-a-million-mile journey, hitting Earth's narrow atmospheric corridor and finally splashing down in the Pacific Ocean.

The various moods of *Earthrise* are reflected and captured in a specially written poem of the same name by Martin Westlake to accompany this score. *Earthrise* was commissioned by and dedicated to conductor Luc Vertommen and Brassband Buizingen.

This recording is a first presentation of my new orchestral transcription of *Earthrise* for full symphony orchestra.

Nigel Clarke

With thanks to: Sofiya Afonasina, Dr Christoph Becher, Nathalie Bleicher, Stella Clarke, Full Circle, Rosemary and Norman Clarke, Gary Copnall, Tina Crowley, Leslie East, Simon Endelweber, Irene Frank, Martin Gilbert (The British Council), Duncan Gwyther, Veronika Hartl, Erich Hofmann, Anna Jagenbrein, Jakob Jedletzberger, Fabio Kapeller, ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, Richard Phillips, Michael Ramsauer-Müller, Research England (part of Knowledge Exchange Violin), Ian Ridgewell, Peter Sheppard Skærved, Malene Skærved, Heidi Sones, Dario Sotelo, Studio Music Company, Neil Thomson, Luc Vertommen, Emma Wauters and Martin Westlake.

Earthrise

On 21 December 1968,
In a daring escape,
Three men with a pocket calculator
Rode a roaring tower of 5.6 million parts
Into Floridian skies
And soared into expectant orbit.

While they gazed back at a world fast changed
From landscape to planet,
Gravity drove them,
A pebble flung from Earth's sling,
Across the vast astrolabe
Towards their lunar destination.

Rushing slowly through utter loneliness,
They floated in their silvery dust speck,
Gliding and sliding along an invisible plane
Towards the moon's bright disk,
Where there they hid in the black nothingness
Of the dark side.

Celestial tourists drifting back into light,
Their camera-ed necks craning through fogged up windows,
They caught a target of opportunity,
A twin-filmed grain of rock floating with all its peoples,
A colourful, half-lit pendulum,
Swinging out from the moon's pockmarked cheek.

Borman, Anders and Lovell – the three exceptions,
Gazed at the rest of humanity in its distant invisibility,
Then fell a quarter of a million miles,
Bouncing on the atmosphere before streaking earthward,
An orange slash in a black piece of velvet,
Parachuting down to the Pacific's waves.

Man had been to the moon, but he had seen the earth,
Seen what gods saw, seen what gods made;
He had seen the earth rise,
Seen frontiers and races disappear.
And, just for a while, it seemed
That man would think as gods thought.

Martin Westlake

Born in 1957, Martin Westlake is an author and an academic. He has studied and worked in the UK, Italy, France and Belgium. His historical novel, *Other Than an Aspen Be*, is currently on submission.

ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra



An ensemble of international renown, the ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra (ORF Vienna RSO) is a paragon of Viennese orchestral tradition. Known for its exceptional programming, the orchestra combines 19th-century repertoire with contemporary works and rarely performed pieces from other periods. All ORF Vienna RSO performances are broadcast on the radio, and the orchestra performs in two subscription series in Vienna, in the Musikverein Wien and the Wiener Konzerthaus. In addition, it regularly appears at major festivals in Austria and internationally such as the Salzburg Festival, musikprotokoll im steierischen herbst and Wien Modern. The ORF Vienna RSO enjoys a successful collaboration with the MusikTheater an der Wien, and is also equally at home in the film music genre. The orchestra regularly tours internationally, and its discography spans a broad range of cross-genre recordings. Under the leadership of its former chief conductors, which include Milan Horvat, Leif Segerstam, Lothar Zagrosek, Pinchas Steinberg, Dennis Russell Davies, Bertrand de Billy and Cornelius Meister, the orchestra has continuously expanded its repertoire and its international reputation. Marin Alsop has served as the orchestra's chief conductor since 2019.

rso.orf.at

Photos: Nancy Horowitz

Neil Thomson



Photo: Rafaella Pessoa

Neil Thomson (b. 1966) studied conducting at the Royal College of Music with Norman Del Mar and at Tanglewood summer school with Leonard Bernstein. He has been principal conductor and artistic director of the Goiás Philharmonic Orchestra since 2014, leading the orchestra to national prominence with its championing of Brazilian and contemporary repertoire. He also enjoys a busy international career working with all the major UK orchestras and the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, Russian National Orchestra, São Paulo State Symphony Orchestra (Osesp), WDR Rundfunkorchester, Lahti Symphony Orchestra and the Romanian National Orchestra, among others. He has performed with many distinguished soloists including Dame Felicity Lott, Sir Thomas Allen, Sir James Galway, Nelson Freire, Jean Louis Steurman and Antonio Meneses. From 1992 to 2006 he was professor of conducting at the Royal College of Music, London, the youngest person ever to hold this position. He was made an Honorary Member of the RCM in recognition of his services to the institution.

www.neilwthomson.com

The Brussels-based British composer Nigel Clarke is renowned for his virtuosic style and an uncompromising contemporary musical language that speaks with an authentic voice to today's audiences. *Earthrise* refers to one of the most iconic photographs in history – an image of the Earth rising above the Moon taken by the crew of Apollo 8. This symphonic poem captures the excitement and expectation that the Apollo 8 mission brought to the world. Clarke's symphony for violin and orchestra *The Prophecies of Merlin* can be heard on Naxos 8.579127.

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(2010) (version for orchestra, 2021)

1 Earthrise

19:05

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ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra

Leader: Kristina Šuklar

Neil Thomson

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