

IAN KEITH HARRIS

# THE DARK TOWER

*Childe Roland to The Dark Tower Came*

Oboe d'amore (Cor anglais) & Piano



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ASI 028

# Ian Keith Harris

(1935-)

Australian composer, arranger, oboist, music educator, critic and eclectic musician, Ian Harris, was born in Melbourne in 1935, living there for the first 26 years of his life. He started the piano at the age of five and three years later was playing cornet in his school band. He took up the violin shortly after this, playing for several years, but relinquished it when he became his school pianist at thirteen. The oboe came next, and in 1953, he began his Bachelor of Music degree at Melbourne University Conservatorium of Music taking piano as chief study and oboe as second. National Service in the Army intervened and, this time, Ian Harris played the trombone in the University Regiment. The same year, he changed to oboe as his chief study. The trombone did not impress Jiří Tancibudek, his professor! This time, the piano was his second study and composition (Arthur Nickson) crept in too.

Not surprisingly he was soon in demand as a free-lance orchestral musician, arranger and copyist, working in a very eclectic mix of musical spheres from arranging for Eartha Kitt (television and various theatrical shows), to playing in opera, ballet, chamber music and symphony orchestras. He was a founding member of the *Glendenian Trio*, (flute, oboe, bassoon), which gave regular broadcasts over several years. The trio was another area in which his skills at arrangement were frequently employed.

Ian Harris moved to Hobart, Tasmania, in 1961 (Tasmanian Orchestra), was seconded to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (cor anglais) for several months, returned to Tasmania only to be seconded again, this time to the Victorian Symphony Orchestra (oboe).

Back again in Tasmania, his next move was to Wellington, New Zealand (1965-1974) to join NZBCSO (the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation Symphony Orchestra) as Principal Cor anglais. During this time, in which he yo-yoed across Australasia, Harris tutored at the universities of Tasmania, Melbourne, and the Victoria University of Wellington. It was at the latter that he completed his degree in composition (with David Farquhar) in 1969. He was to return yet again to Tasmania at the end of 1974.

However, this time, he embraced a new career as a music educator with his move. His wealth of instrumental and orchestral experience was invaluable to his students. He also conducted the Tasmanian Junior Youth Orchestra for several years.

Harris was a dedicated member of policy committees, especially in Education and the Arts. A great listener to music and musicians, he served as music critic for *The Mercury*, Hobart's daily newspaper, for several years.

His *oeuvre* consists mainly of chamber music, much of which has been performed and broadcast: *Microsymphony for Cor anglais Quartet* (cor anglais, string trio), *Oboe Quartet* (oboe, string trio), *Essay for Bassoon and Strings*, *Sonata for Viola and Piano*, amongst many other pieces and numerous arrangements for broadcasts and concerts.

His sense of fun has shown in many of his compositions including, *A Piece with Strawberry Jam*, *The Little Dog's Day* (Rupert Brooke), 'Paw de trois' - *Three Dances for Canines* (for Woodwind Quintet, with movements dedicated to his dogs by name), *The Whitebait Fishers* –

*“A sort of Donizetti-like spoof for harpsichord, string quartet and small choir, for which the producer of the hour-long national radio show penned the libretto for this, a special anniversary broadcast of the programme.”*

Harris orchestrated songs for symphony concerts, including a version of *The Last Rose of Summer* for Rita Streich (1920-1987). He also wrote, directed and even performed in advertising jingles, playing celesta, oboe, cor anglais or whatever was required.

Ian Harris moved back to Sydney definitively in 2000 and has since devoted himself to composition and a considerable *entourage* of cats (10) and dogs (5). He is a keen gardener and chef and a passionate enthusiast of the oboe d'amore. A close friend of Jennifer Paull, he has written many works for her.



## The Dark Tower

### *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*

Oboe d'amore (Cor anglais) & Piano

AS I 028

*Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came* ( published in the volume *Men and Women* [1855] a collection of fifty-one monologue poems ) by Robert Browning ( 1812 – 1889 ) was my inspiration for this piece, which I

conceived for oboe d'amore (cor anglais) and piano. Browning's vision of the wasteland heralds T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and many other modernistic works.

When I first read it as a teenager, the poem evoked mystical knights in the days of chivalry, challenging evildoers to single combat – good over ill. Its title and inspiration are taken from the song sung by Edgar in Shakespeare's *King Lear*. I read it as an adventure of the intrepid apprentice Knight seeking to challenge the evil beast of the Dark Tower. Now, several decades later, the poem still fascinates me but it holds within a somewhat different meaning.

Childe Roland's quest takes him through a nightmare of ever-increasing despair and depression: through a dark marshy wasteland, filled with horrors and frightening sounds, which all magically change as he proceeds, dissolving into unreality when he looks back upon them. We can identify with him as he progresses.

Fighting discouragement, futility and fear, he reaches the Dark Tower where he sounds his horn. The last couplet of the final stanza reads

*'Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I set,  
And blew, 'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came.'*

I have not attempted to evoke the story as it reflects upon the ugly scenery and hellish journey it portrays, but rather to encapsulate its mood. The piano part is constructed using a twelve-note tone row, which I have overlaid at all times with its retrograde, and then inverted, producing a 'doubled-up' tone row in chromatic sequences through all twelve semitones. The solo line, while built mainly of the same material, is independent throughout and from the last section of the work - entirely free.

Ian K. Harris  
2010

*Other works by Ian Keith Harris can be found listed at*

[www.amoris.com](http://www.amoris.com)

for Jennifer Paull

# THE DARK TOWER

## *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*

Ian Keith Harris  
(b. 1935)

❖ Oboe d'amore

Steadily  $\text{♩} = 66$

*pp*

Piano

Steadily  $\text{♩} = 66$

*pp*

3

*crescendo molto*

*f*

3

*sf*

5

*ff*

4

3

*sfz*

5

*mf*

❖ In Concert Pitch

Musical score for measures 7-8. The upper staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line starting with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, then a half note G4. A wavy line above the staff indicates a tremolo effect. The lower staff (bass clef) contains a complex accompaniment of chords and eighth notes. Dynamics include *sfz* and *f*.

Musical score for measures 9-10. The upper staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line with quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5, followed by a half note G4. The lower staff (bass clef) contains a complex accompaniment of chords and eighth notes. Dynamics include *mf* and *diminuendo*.

Musical score for measures 11-12. The upper staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line starting with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, then a half note G4. The lower staff (bass clef) contains a complex accompaniment of chords and eighth notes. Dynamics include *mf* and *ppp*.

Musical score for measures 13-14. The upper staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line with quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5, followed by a half note G4. The lower staff (bass clef) contains a complex accompaniment of chords and eighth notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.

15

15

*sfz*

RH

*crescendo molto*

*f*

20

20

*pp*

*subito pp*

22

22

*crescendo molto*

*f*

*sfz*

24

24

*ff*

*sfz*

*pp*

20 *sfz*

26

28 *pp* *sfz*

30 *f* *pp*

32 *crescendo poco a poco*

Detailed description: This page of a musical score contains measures 20 through 32. It is written for a piano with a treble and bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. Measure 20 features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a complex accompaniment. A dynamic marking of *sfz* is present. Measure 26 shows a continuation of the accompaniment. Measure 28 introduces a *pp* dynamic in the bass and a *sfz* dynamic in the treble. Measure 30 features a *f* dynamic in the treble and a *pp* dynamic in the bass. Measure 32 begins with a *crescendo poco a poco* instruction and a change in the bass line's rhythmic pattern.



34 *p* *mp* *sfz* *ppp*

36

38 *p* *mp*

40 *ritenuto*

43 *a tempo*

*ff*

43 *a tempo*

*f*

45

45

47

47

49

49

51 *ff*

51

53 *ff* *sfz*

53

55 *slower and more deliberate* *pp*

55

57 *mp* *crescendo poco a poco*

57

50

50

*mf*

61

61

*diminuendo*

12/8

63

63

*ff* *sfz* *ff*

12/8

67

67

*pp* *ppp*

*ppp*

for Jennifer Paull

# THE DARK TOWER

## *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*

Oboe d'amore

Ian Keith Harris  
(b. 1935)

*Steadily* ♩ = 66

*pp* *crescendo molto* *f*

5 *ff* *sfz* *sfz* *f*

9 *mf* *diminuendo* *mf*

13

17 *pp* *crescendo molto*

23 *f* *ff* *sfz*

26 *sfz*

30 *f*

2

34 *p* *mp*

37 *p* *mp*

41 *ritenuto* *a tempo* *ff*

45 *ff*

40 *ff*

52 *ff* *sfz* *slower and more deliberate*

56 *mp*

59 **2** **12**/**8**

64 *ff* *sfz* *ff* *pp*

68 *ppp*

# THE DARK TOWER

## *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*

Cor anglais

Ian Keith Harris  
(b. 1935)

*Steadily* ♩ = 66

*pp* *crescendo molto* *f*

5 *ff* *sfz* *sfz* *f*

9 *mf* *diminuendo* *mf*

13

17 *pp* *crescendo molto*

23 *f* *ff* *sfz*

26 *sfz*

30 *f*

34 *p* *mp*

37 *p* *mp*

41 *ritenuto* *a tempo* *ff*

45 *ff*

49 *ff*

52 *ff* *sfz* *slower and more deliberate*

56 *mp*

59 *2*

64 *ff* *sfz* *ff* *pp*

68 *ppp*