

SENSE OF PLACE

FOUR SEASONS FOR SOLO GUITAR



SUMMER

NIGEL MORGAN

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Cover image: *Summer*, by Alice Fox www.alice-fox.co.uk

ISMN 979-0-57043-149-6 (Full Score) 979-0-57043-150-2 (Spring) 979-0-57043-151-9 (Summer)
979-0-57043-152-6 (Autumn) 979-0-57043-153-3 (Winter)

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About the Piece

Sense of Place is an ambitious concert work in four parts written during April 2010. It was commissioned by the tapestry artist Jilly Edwards for her exhibition of the same name at the High Cross House on the Dartington Estate in South Devon.

The curator June Hill has written: “Jilly Edwards focused one year of her life on High Cross House, sensing its story. She observed its seasons, inside and out She sat in its stillness and absorbed its translucent light. She felt its history and grew to know its colours: pure white, pure blue, pure yellow and blended greens. Edwards expresses all of this in *Sense of Place*. This is not so much an exhibition, as a conversation between an artist and her subject; a record of a journey which we are all invited to share.”

Nigel Morgan was asked to create both a concert work and a sonic installation; the latter to be played through domestic digital photo frames in six rooms of this remarkable Bauhaus-influenced house designed by William Lescaze in 1932.

The music is cast in four seasons: Spring – *cool and clear*; Summer – *warm and sultry*; Autumn – *rich and golden*; Winter – *cold and still*. Each ‘season’ may be considered as a stand-alone movement, but as a sequence the music is through-composed. The formal aspects of the score take part of their inspiration from the original title of the exhibition *Inside / Outside*. There is an important function for the open strings of the guitar as ‘inside’ pitches, whereas stopped notes are viewed as being ‘outside’. The play of inside and outside is particularly evident in the outer movements *Spring* and *Winter*. The inner movements focus in *Summer* on harmonic expansion from open string diads, and in *Autumn* on the use of a complex and unusual *scordatura*. There is very little repetition or recapitulation throughout the score as befits the cyclical nature of the seasons. What does occur at the end of each movement is a kind of pre-echo of the season to follow.

Each ‘season’ contains another kind of echo: that of music of the past associated with High Cross House and its location. Two pieces have been chosen to colour the musical texture in this way. The first Cello Suite BWV 1007 by J.S. Bach references the tradition of Bach performance at Dartington Hall under the inspirational guidance of Imogen Holst, the first director of music at Dartington College of the Arts. The cellist Pablo Casals is known to have performed Bach’s cello suites in the house itself. Ludus Tonalis by Paul Hindemith has been chosen as a second source because of this composer’s admiration of the Bauhaus aesthetic and its contemporary emphases on the conception of line as energy and thought. This is particularly evident in the work and writings about music by the artist Paul Klee, himself an accomplished violinist.

Since 2008 the composer has been studying the practice of fine art weaving. He made contact with Jilly Edwards when purchasing her beautiful 40-year-old Polish tapestry loom. Edwards immediately saw the possibility of a musical score that might act as both installation and performance piece – as a young woman she had also studied the guitar seriously and so realised how sounds on the instrument had associations with the weaving process.

In preparation for composing the score Nigel Morgan spent time in the artist’s Exeter studio and analysed what he has described as the significant rhythmic effects often present in the woven textures of Edwards work. He also experimented with the artist’s approach to what he has termed ‘diary into structure’, a way of building effective form from gathering sequential images from a journey. These experiments include the choral work *Under Attermire Scar* composed for Voces Nordicae and *The Wakefield Nativity* for flute and chamber organ.

Nigel Morgan acknowledges the assistance of Phil Legard in aspects of the music’s algorithmic programming and in preparing the complex score for publication.

Sense of Place is dedicated to the composer’s daughter Frances May Morgan and Mark Dicker on the occasion of their marriage on 6 May 2010.

Performance Notes

The four movements of *Sense of Place* may be played separately as concert studies. When playing the whole sequence, the music should begin at *Spring* and end at *Winter*.

The editing and fingering by the composer should be considered as an integral part of the composition. It particularly exploits a personal view of the possibilities of resonance, and articulation with the *portamento* slide. All dynamics, expression, and articulation markings are to be considered as guides, no more.

Harmonics are always notated at pitch using diamond-shaped note-heads, for example:



Summer

In this movement, marked *warm and sultry*, the open string triad is split into two diads, a perfect fourth and major third. Using algorithmic techniques these diads are expanded to create novel harmonic sequences. After an opening of three chordal expansions a gentle flowing arpeggiation follows that ends in a harmonically enriched quotation from a Bach sarabande.

Linking passages of arpeggiated chord expansion take the music into a fragment of a Vals by Hindemith. A three-part choral follows based on what in the *Autumn* movement will become a *scordatura* tuning of the open string triad introduced in *Spring*. As the music progresses the three lower bass strings are gradually retuned and an inversion of Neapolitan rhythm supports an elegant melody passing from soprano to bass. The final bars present a pre-echo of the *Autumn* movement.

Musical score for the Summer movement. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff starts at measure 56 and ends at measure 60. It is marked 'F semplice' and has dynamics 'p' and 'mf'. The second staff starts at measure 61 and ends at measure 64. It is marked 'G quasi sarabande' and has dynamics 'mf', 'mp', and 'mf'. The third staff starts at measure 65 and ends at measure 68. It has dynamics 'f' and 'mf'. The music is in 3/4 time and features arpeggiated chords and melodic lines.

Arpeggios leading into the first sarabande quotation.

Summer

Guitar

warm and sultry ♩ = 60

mp *f* *mf* *mp* *dim.*

6

p *mf* *mp* *mf* *f* *mf*

11

A

p *pp* *mp* *mf* *cresc.*

15

B

f *mp* *mf*

20

f *p* *mf* *mp* *p*

23 **C** *scorrendo*
i p m

mp *mf*

27

mp *mf*

31

f *mf* *p*

35 **D**

mf

39

f *mf* *mp* *p*

43 *allargando* **E** *a tempo*

mf *mp*

47

mf *f*

51 *mp*

55 *p* *mf* *p*

F *semplice*

60 *mf* *mp* *mf*

G *quasi sarabande*

64 *f*

69 *mp* *p* *mf*

H

poco a poco cresc.

74 *f* *mp* *mf*

78 *p* *mf*

III

83 *mf*

mp *mf* *mp* *mf*

87 *quasi valse dolce, mf*

mf

93 *f* *poco a poco ritard.*

f *poco a poco ritard.*

99 *a tempo quasi chorale*

mp *mf*

104 *mf* *p*

mf *p*

109 *f* *mf*

f *mf*

114 *mp* *p* *gradually detune to Eb* *gradually tune to Bb*

mp *p* *gradually detune to Eb* *gradually tune to Bb*

119 *molto rit.* *repeat until in tune* L *a tempo*
mf
 ④ gradually detune to Db *pp*

124 *mp*

127 *p*

130 *p* *cantando in basso, mf*

133 *f* *pp*

135 *mp* *mf*

138 *p* *pp* *mp*