

**Antarctica**  
**Suite for guitar and orchestra**  
By Nigel Westlake

**LECTURE 12/02/01**

If you haven't listened to much contemporary (especially Australian contemporary) music, or if you think that modern "classical" music is all dissonant and unpleasant, then Nigel Westlake's score of *Antarctica* may prove to be a pleasant surprise! This is very accessible music, yet, in terms of compositional craft, it is exceedingly well written. It is powerful and dramatic, and in its quieter moments beautiful and uplifting. It evokes the imagery of the film very effectively, yet it stands perfectly well on its own as a concert piece because the musical vocabulary expresses the full gamut of human emotion.

**Source material:**

◆ Score available for the Australian Music Centre:

Westlake, N "*Antarctica: Suite for guitar and orchestra*"

1-The Last Place on Earth, 2-Wooden Ships, 3-Penguin Ballet, 4-The Ice Core

◆ Recordings:

Tall Poppies (Antarctica - the film music)

Sony Classical (John Williams and the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Paul Daniel)

ABC Classics (Timothy Kain and the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra conducted by David Porcelijn)

**Further resources:**

◆ Music Resource Kit "**Out of the Blue**"(by Kim Waldo) (Australian Music Centre):

The *Antarctica* kit is designed for both teachers and students. The kit contains the score and the Timothy Kain (TSO) recording of *Antarctica* as well as information about the composer, the genre, the guitar, film music and the development of an Australian film music tradition. There is an analysis of the suite and suggestions for a variety of classroom activities.

◆ **The Oxford Companion to Australian Music**: the entries under "Westlake" and "Composition in Australia".

◆ Biographical information and press clippings in the **Westlake file** at the **Australian Music Centre library**.

◆ **Brenton Broadstock's "Sound ideas", Australian Music Centre, 1995**: There is a chapter on Westlake. I also recommend the chapter on "The Rites of Passage – 1972-1992: The Changing Face of Australian Composition". This sets the scene in terms of the socio-political climate. Also Linda Kouvaris'chapter "A Plurality of Voices" which discusses the divergent styles of contemporary Australian composers.

◆ **Westlake's website**: [www.rimshot.com.au](http://www.rimshot.com.au).

◆ The *Antarctica* video is available from the California Science Centre.

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**Background - the work and the composer:**

**Antarctica**

The score of *Antarctica* was originally composed for the 1991 Imax movie *Antarctica*, directed by John Weiley. Since then it is estimated to have been viewed by over 4 million people annually in the US, Europe and Asia. 20,000 km of the Antarctic were covered during the shooting of the film, over three year period. In 1992, as part of the ABC's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations, Westlake was commissioned to write a guitar concerto for John Williams and the TSO. To complete the commission, Westlake returned to the first sketches he made for the film *Antarctica*, which had been originally intended for solo guitar and orchestra. (Weiley did not consider the guitar powerful enough to evoke the imagery so Westlake used cello instead in the film score). In the suite for guitar and orchestra, Westlake reworked some of the original score for guitar as well

as incorporating new material. The themes of the film focus on the desolation and grandeur of the pole, the life it sustains, and the impact that we humans are having on this planet. These are reflected very strongly in Westlake's music.

Weiley describes Antarctica as a noisy place - he talks about the sound of generators and motors, but when the noise stops, he says "... there is a kind of epiphany. You are here. That's when the music starts".

### **Nigel Westlake**

Westlake was born in Perth in 1958. He studied clarinet with his father who was clarinetist with the SSO. He attended the NSW Conservatorium High School, leaving school at age 16 to work as a freelance musician with prominent orchestras and ensembles, both in Australia and overseas. In particular The Magic Puddin' Band (which he formed in 1980 – bringing together musicians from jazz, rock and classical backgrounds), Synergy Percussion, the Australia Ensemble, Flederman, the SSO and John Williams' ensemble Attacca.

Westlake studied film music at the Australian Film and Television School (1982) and in Holland in 1983 he studied the bass clarinet with Harry Sparnaay and composition with Theo Loevendie. In 1987 he was composer-in-residence for ABC radio, composing many signature tunes (especially for Radio National). In 1993 he studied composition with Richard Meale and composition and conducting with Richard Mills. Apart from this, he is largely self taught as a composer. His works have been performed throughout the world and he has won numerous awards including 1<sup>st</sup> Prize of the Jazz Action Society Composition Competition (1985) the Gold Medal for "Best Original Music" at the New York Radio Festival (1988), an APRA Music Award for Contemporary Classical Composition for the Year (1992), the Australian Guild of Screen Composers Award (A.G.S.C.) for Best Music for a Documentary for *Celluloid Heroes* (1995), an APRA Music Award for best film score for *Babe* (1996) an A.G.S.C. Film Award for Best Original music for the film *A Little Bit of Soul* (1998). *Antarctica* was nominated for an ARIA award for Best Film Soundtrack in 1993.

Westlake's compositions cover a wide range of genre including orchestra and various ensembles, theatre and film, television and radio. His extensive list of commissions includes works for the ABC, the Flying Fruit Fly Circus, Synergy, the Australia Ensemble, Tall Poppies Records, SBS television, Film Australia, the Royal Australian Navy Band, Guitar Trek, the Bell-Shakespeare Co., the Seymour Group, Elektra String Quartet, the Aboriginal and Islander Dance Theatre, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Musica Viva, Wild World Films (Canada) and guitarist John Williams. Film music include scores for *Babe* (1995 –this brought him international fame), *Celluloid Heroes*, *The Edge*, *Roads to Xanadu*, *Children of the Revolution*, *Imagine*, *Antarctica* (IMAX) and *Breaking Through* (3D IMAX). His recordings have been released on Tall Poppies, ABC Records, ABC Classics, Vox Australis, Entr'acte and Great Island labels.

### **Style and influences**

Some insight into the man and his music can be gained through the many reviews and interviews in the press. In an interview for APRA magazine (August 1990) Belinda Webster describes Westlake as "...an unassuming and gentle man who is profoundly dedicated to his art". She describes his music as "... a very distinctive compositional style characterised by exuberant rhythms, chuckling melodies, unorthodox harmonies and a huge sense of fun. It is relatively uncomplicated music, once described by Peter Sculthorpe as 'the essence of Pacific minimalism'. His music expresses a sense of wonder at the world without melancholy or introverted self-analysis. This makes audiences feel good and is a reflection of Nigel's own personality both on and off stage".

His music has been variously described as:

"at the cutting edge of post-minimalism"

"This is music that exposes the nonsense of pigeon-holing into categories... it is simply good and, above all, intelligent music"

"program music of a high order; so much force, so much descriptive delicacy"

"brilliantly conceived and delivered – the effect was mesmerising"

(Source: Westlake's biographical file, AMC library – the authors of these quotes are not given).

Of *Antarctica* in particular, The Hollywood Reporter said:

"Westlake's starkly tempestuous musical score swells and ebbs with the harsh grandeur of its subject matter – big effects movie producers take note".

Roger Covell describes Westlake's style in a nutshell:

“His allegiance to the rhythmic liveliness and strength of the Stravinsky tradition is obvious; and it is also fair to say that he has drawn usefully from the richer developments that have followed minimalism, a composing texture characterised in the late 1960s and early 1970s by its then unusual readiness to establish and maintain a tonal centre and its interest in musical change as a gradual process rather than as a series of rapidly achieved extremes”.

(CD cover: *Synergy with Samuels* TP 030, 1994).

Bill Mackay interviewed Westlake for “Sounds Australian” (Spring 1989). He asked Westlake about **minimalism** and influences generally. In reference to Westlake's Magic Puddin' Band, Mackay comments on the distinctly minimalist context of his music for band, to which Westlake replies “Yes, but at the time I'd never heard any minimalist works at all. I didn't even know who Steve Reich was”. Mackay then asks about the source of his music. **A:** Well, rock music is basically minimalist and that's where Magic Puddin' had its roots, really. Furthermore, rock and minimalism have the same roots in African music. **Q:** “What influence have Steve Reich or Phillip Glass had on you?” **A:** “None really – I can't stand Phillip Glass. I find his work incredibly cold and mechanical. You would never know that there were live performers, it just sounds like sequenced lines. I don't like a lot of Steve Reich's music either, although some of it's very warm and communicates something to me. I'm not actively seeking to associate myself with the minimalist school. As a composer, I'm totally untrained – working on intuition I instinctively go to the piano and play repetitive patterns. **Q:** So there's no formal intellectual link with minimalism? **A:** None at all. **Q:** But rock music has been influential? **A:** Certainly, I've always enjoyed good rock music. I like some songs by the Eurythmics, Aretha Franklin and even Prince... I don't regard myself as a “serious” composer. I'm a performer/composer in that all my ideas are taken from my experience as a performer and the reason I write music is to perform it. I do feel an affinity with Peter Sculthorpe who to me seems to have little regard or inclination towards the intellectual pursuits of many composers. His work is melody based and very simple”. Later in the interview Westlake comments: “... I recognise that my music is not overly concerned with content. It basically draws upon unadventurous harmonic and melodic principles and tries to be interesting rhythmically.”

Westlake's comments here are of particular interest because they indicate that one of the main characteristics that commentators have associated with his music ie. minimalism, is not the result of hearing minimalist music and being directly influenced by the experience. Rather, these traits in his music have been arrived at quite independently and are not something he himself associates with the minimalist school of composition.

Westlake's attitude towards the audience and the question of the “accessibility” of his musical style is made clear in Belinda Webster's interview for APRA magazine (August 1990) where she quotes Westlake as follows: “I don't see the point in writing music that doesn't address the audience, but at the same time the criteria for addressing the audience can only be guided by my own aesthetic values. I can only write music that speaks to me. I can't write music that I think other people will like. It must be something that I feel committed to. I couldn't fit into the pop music scene, where music is written for a specific audience, on a very commercial basis. I don't want to be compromised in my endeavours to reach people... I rely totally on what my instincts tell me to be good and what else can you go on? I can't imagine that musical formulae and academic structures could ever work for me. Sure, there have been great master works written from all the composition schools, but it seems to me that it tends to become an academic pursuit and not much else. The music seems to die a bit”.

Most important of all Westlake says that:

“All that's important to me is that the music speaks. I feel that if it speaks to me it will speak to the audience. It's important that music addresses the heart, that it's honest music. It's an intuitive process...” (2MBS-FM Programme Guide September 1989)

The above comments provide some insight as to where Westlake is coming from as a composer. However, more specific influences can also be identified: **Jazz** is one such important and acknowledged influence. Harry Sparnaay, his teacher in Holland, was a jazz musician. The Magic Puddin' Band included musicians from many different backgrounds including jazz. Westlake won the Jazz Action Society Composition Prize in 1985. In an interview in the Herald (3rd March, 1997) he says that American jazz clarinetists Eric Dolphy

and Chico Freeman have been an important influence. Works such as *Hinchinbrook Riffs* for jazz rock ensemble (1978), *Stone the Crows* (1981) and *Trellis Music* (1997) are directly jazz influenced. Westlake mentions the influence of **Indian music** in another interview (4MBS Brisbane Programme Guide, May 1997). He also specifies **John Williams' Changes** album in the same interview, emphasising its unique fusion of classical/pop/rock. He says that the colour and lyricism of John Williams' playing has been an important inspiration for him throughout his career.

**Electronic media** have been another source of inspiration. eg.. the use of digital delay in *Onomatopoeia*. He describes his first band – Eggs Benedict – as a “first venture into electronic-based sounds. It was essentially an adventurous rock band”. (Interview in Sounds Australian, Spring, 1989). Westlake's **experience as a performer** has also been vitally important. He comments: “ I think it's something I relate back to all the time. The most important thing is that often the best music is that which is best written for the instruments. Take Mozart – the instruments speak clearly and naturally. That's what I aim for. It's a long learning process. The sheer facts of daily immersion in sound in a variety of music, and working with other instrumentalists, are always instructive”. (Belinda Webster APRA magazine, August 1990). He mentions the fact that **Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring** (SSO) was the first professional record he played on and that the performance had a profound effect on him. (Interview, 4MBS, May 1997). His **early experiences**, including listening and learning from his father, are also very important to him as a composer: “These experiences in all my formative years all play a role in my musical identity and in some ways I believe my ambition to compose is an attempt to recapture the magic of those very first encounters in music”. (Interview, 4MBS, May 1997).

And of course the most obvious inspiration in the case of *Antarctica* is the **extra-musical** element: the stunning images of *Antarctica* that Westlake set to music for the film.

## **Analysis and Listening Guide**

A table summarising each movement of *Antarctica* is given below, indicating bar numbers, the section, the key area and chord progressions and important characteristics. The key is often ambiguous due to missing or “de-emphasised” third of chord which is why the term “key area” has been employed. The relevant chord names are then given. Most chords are extended with 9ths, 11ths and 13ths. All 7ths are presumed minor (as in a dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chord), in accordance with the conventions of jazz notation. The major 7<sup>th</sup> is indicated as Δ7. ALT refers to an “altered” chord eg. C ALT = C7 with altered chord tones eg. b5, #5, b9, #9.

Also, at this point I should mention that an analysis such as this involves some degree of interpretation - meaning that the answers are not always cut and dry, especially when you are dealing with chords which are extended and altered within what is basically a jazz-based context. Chords with #9, 9, #11, b13, without a root or third etc.... can be analysed and named in a variety of ways. The language is flexible and ambiguous, which is one of its great strengths and beauties. As I proceed through the analysis you may see other solutions or alternatives to the naming and interpretation of chords and this is fine. Feel free to send me an email if you would like to discuss any aspects of the analysis further.

### **I. The Last Place on Earth**

In the film this music accompanies the awesome sight of an aerial shot of the polar ice cap in the light of the midnight sun.

#### **Instrumentation:**

2 flutes/ piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets in Bb, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets in Bb, 2 trombones, 1 bass trombone, percussion (timpani, tam tam, wind gong, bass drum, bongos, cymbal, marimba) harp, guitar, strings.

**NB** Make sure you understand the concept of transposing instruments – otherwise the score is meaningless! eg. clarinet in Bb sounds a tone lower so it is written a tone higher. For more information on the orchestral instruments – technical aspects, range, transpositions etc. please refer to a good orchestration book such as:

**Guitar scordatura:** the two lowest strings are tuned down to C and G. Basic tonality is C, with emphasis on the perfect fifth C-G as chord basis. The main reason for the *scordatura* is the that Westlake wanted to preserve some of the material (and in particular the range going down to low C) of the cello that he used in the film score. This necessitated the altered tuning for the guitar in the suite.

**TABLE 1: I. The Last Place on Earth**

BAR	SEC	KEY AREA (in bold) AND CHORD PROGRESSIONS	IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS
1-17	Intro	<b>C Major</b> d min b13 (B.1-14)	Long held notes in strgs ( <i>senza vib</i> to <i>con vib</i> ) and hrp ostinato: evocative + mysterious. Ascending melodic line in gtr ( <i>scordatura</i> ). Dynamics begin <i>mp</i> , sudden <i>cresc</i> (B.14). <b>(EX.1)</b>
		C ALT (B.15-17) (chord built on stacked 4ths+5ths and tone+s-tone clusters – polychord).	<i>Tutti</i> “Antarctica chord” (B.15-17): powerful + rhythmically incisive, with gtr <i>molto tremolo</i> , <i>ff</i> - immensity +grandeur. Doubling: high strgs+high w/w; low strgs+low w/w. <b>(EX.2)</b>
18-23	Link	chromatic harmony: (complete chromatic scale).	2 piccs (short melodic motives) + hrp using disjunct movt. Against this: vn glissandi (B.19-23). Guitar <i>pizz</i> (B.21-23).
24-39	A	Harmony derived from the C ALT <i>Antarctica</i> chord, but now the Eb suggests c min (see trbs, b.trb, timp + d.bss: all C to Eb). <b>(EX.4)</b>	2 elements: fast repeated figures in bongo, gtr and va. Slower melodic lines in vn, vc, cls + bssns. Polyrhythmic effect (2:3) and textural layers evident. Heavy momentum, <i>f</i> , with accented staccato. Static melodic lines: much conjunct movt: <b>(EX.3)</b> Brass punctuate the texture periodically. Doubling: piccs+vn1 (octave); cls +vn2 (unison); bssns+vc (unison); guit+viola (octave).
40-55	Cdza	G Δ7, (#5, 11) This chord is related to previous c min chord: creates ambiguity. <b>(EX.6)</b>	Freely: Gtr cadenza, concluding with hrp (from B.18-19). <b>(EX.5)</b>
56-86	B = derived from “A”	Gtr figuration continues over C pedal in d.bss. B.60: c min b13. Built on tone+s-tone clusters like <i>Antarctica</i> chord). <b>(EX.7)</b> Perfect cadence (B.68- 69)	<i>A Tempo</i> . Gtr links this section to cadenza. Ominous beat in bass drum. Return of repetitive patterns and assertive rhythms (A). B.60: Vc (from B.24). Strgs <i>divisi</i> . Doubling: vn1 <i>divisi</i> +fl/ob (octave) (B.65-68).
		<i>Antarctica</i> chord. (B.69-76). Chord sequence built on F Maj/min <b>(EX.8)</b>	From B.69: <i>Tutti</i> . Gtr into triplet pattern.
		C# (ADD 11) (B.77-79), then chord sequence over descending bass line (B.81-86). <b>(EX.9)</b>	strgs + gtr only (B.77-79) then full <i>Tutti</i> (B.81-86): Gtr pattern alters to fast strumming and hrn motive is extended. Dynamics <i>ff</i> from B.81 with sudden <i>cresc</i> to climax (w.gong + timp).
87-101	Trans-ition	C b13 (becomes c min at B.92)	Guit <i>rasg.</i> and strg <i>pizz</i> (B.87-92).
		chromatic harmony (complete chromatic scale).	B.93-96: melodic fragments in piccs (recalls B.18-19) with marimba, and gtr, then hrp at B.95-96 (recalls B.18-19).
		Chromatic line continues in gtr: from Gb to F resolving down to Eb at B.102	B.97-99: <i>Bartok pizz</i> then sporadic <i>pizz</i> in strgs decorate gtr. B.100-101: graphic notation in gtr, gradually slowing.
102-120	Coda	c min b13.	Related to opening – here down a tone (over a C pedal). <i>Con sord, non vib</i> – eerie effect is even more pronounced here. Final gtr chord: quartal voicing.

- **EXAMPLE 1:** Gradual build up of d min b 13 (B.1-14).
- **EXAMPLE 2:** Chord structure of *Antarctica* chord (B.15-17). The chord is built on tonal/semi-tonal clusters, stacked a 4<sup>th</sup> +5<sup>th</sup> apart. It could be described (enharmonically) as an altered C chord = C ALT = C 7 (#5, #9, b9). The effect is almost like a polychord – 2 chords combined: a chord built on C and a chord built on C#. Note the wide, “gapped” spacing.

- **EXAMPLE 3:** Harmonic 2nds in the *Antarctica* chord become melodic: horizontal realisation of the vertical (P.3-4).
- **EXAMPLE 4:** Chord derived from C ALT but addition of Eb in trbs, b.trb, timp + d.bss: all C to Eb: suggests c minor (P.3-4).
- **EXAMPLE 5:** Compare P.2 and P.7. (the same pitch pattern in hrp).
- **EXAMPLE 6:** Guitar cadenza built over G  $\Delta$ 7. Compare to the C min ALT chord.
- **EXAMPLE 7:** Harmonic construction of B.60-68. Compare with *Antarctica* chord. Similarly – this is built around pitch clusters and can be analysed as a polychord. (Chord built on C and a chord built on F. The “F” chord makes a smooth transition to the following bars which are all based on Fmaj/min).
- **EXAMPLE 8:** Chord structure of B.69-74. The orchestration of these *tutti* chords fits naturally with the harmonic series. This results in chords that are well balanced and blended. The progression here also demonstrates some basic principles of orchestration in the way instruments are placed within the chord: juxtaposition, interlocking and overlap. They also connect very neatly with each other, making for fluent progressions. Similarly the progressions in **EX.9:**
- **EXAMPLE 9:** Chord structure of B. 77-86. Note chord tones moving down a step or remaining: very smooth, logical progressions.

## FORM:

Intro	Link	A	Cadenza	B (rel'd to A)	Transition	Coda	
(17)	(6)	(16)	(16)	(31) (* climax B.87)	(15)	(19)	= 120 Bars

**NB** The overall structure relates to a palindrome with the cadenza at the centre. However the climax is at the 3/4 mark (“golden mean” - one of the most common organisational structures in music and nature).

Note how powerfully Westlake has evoked the vision of the ice cap: the opening with its surreal, “other-worldly” effect of static strings, *non vib*, the crashing climaxes and pounding rhythms suggesting the immensity of the ice formations and the awesome, irrevocable power of nature. The fragmented motives and eerie sparse textures remind us of the isolation and desolation. Note (in the analysis) the harmonies based on extended chords and the orchestration of individual chords such as the *Antarctica* chord.

**Live Demonstration:** *tremolo* (followed by the instruction to *dampen*) (B.15-17), *scordatura*, *pizz* (B.21) *non pizz* (*but staccato*) (B.24), *ossia* sections (B.69), *rasgueado* (B.87)

**Terminology:** *scordatura*, *div*, *senza vib*, *con vib*, *gradual gliss*, *rasgueado*, *con sord*, *Bartok pizz*, *ostinato*, graphic notation, *tutti*, polyrhythm, polychord, quartal voicing

## II. Wooden Ships

This movement is a tribute to the first explorers, whose fragile wooden ships were always at risk of being smashed to smithereens by the ice. This introduces the human element into the landscape - sailing ships on calm seas – human emotions, a sense of nostalgia and quiet reflection. It is not so much the majestic, rugged beauty but rather an appreciation for the delicacy and serenity of the surroundings. For this reason perhaps, the music is lyrical and nostalgic; a reflection of the frailty of humankind in this environment.

### **Instrumentation:**

flute1, flute 2/alto, oboe, cor anglais, clarinet 1 in A/Bb, clarinet 2 in A/Bb/bass, 2 bassoons, horn, marimba, harp, guitar, strings.  
(trumpet, trombone and timpani: all *tacet*)

**TABLE 2: II. Wooden Ships**

BAR	SEC	KEY AREA (in bold) AND CHORD PROGRESSIONS	IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS
1-20	A	<b>E Major</b> E 11 (omit 3 <sup>rd</sup> +7 <sup>th</sup> ): Maj/min ambiguity. A 9 (B.13), B 11 (B.15) E 9 (B.17) Plagal cadence suggested (B.20-21)	Ostinati in hrp and strgs. B.5-17: Melody ( <b>Theme 1a</b> ) in gtr. ( <b>EX.12</b> ) B.13: counter melody in alto fl underpinned by cl+vn B.17: counter melody in bssn +vn2 (unison) doubling cl (octave).
21-37	B	B 11 (3 <sup>rd</sup> weak or omitted).  Perfect cadence suggested (B.28-29) E 11 (from B.29) Surprising harmonic colour at B.36-37: E #11 (in hrp+gtr).	Ostinati continue in hrp and strgs. B.21-31: Melody ( <b>Theme 1b</b> ) in gtr ( <b>EX.13</b> ). Imitative links between cl+bssns, gtr, ob (B.21-25) B. 29-32: Harp arpeggios doubled by b.cl and Melody in gtr doubled in 3rds by fl.
38-46	Link	descending scalic progression B to C# ( <b>EX.14</b> )	Guitar solo/cadenza – contrasts with previous mood.
47-80	C	<b>C# Major</b> C# 11 Maj/min (3rd omitted) (B.47-54) ----- chord sequence(3 <sup>rd</sup> weak or omitted): C# #11, C# b13, C# 11 (B.55-62) C# #11 (B.63-64)  ----- chord sequence(3 <sup>rd</sup> weak or omitted): G# 9, G# 13, G#11 (B.65-72)  Perfect cadence suggested (B.72-73). B.73 to end: C# Maj 11	Continuous harp ostinati. Guitar colour effects (harmonics, <i>sul pont.</i> , trill) against <b>Theme 1a</b> in alto fl (B.49-55). ----- B.57 elaborate counter melody in gtr while b.cl plays 2 <sup>nd</sup> part of <b>Theme 1a</b> . Accompanying <i>pizz</i> in d.bass. B.63: colourful and surprising combination of marimba + gtr (doubled at the 4 <sup>th</sup> ) and vn clusters <i>pizz</i> . ----- B.65: theme in gtr, countermelody in cl supported by <i>pizz</i> strgs + hrp ostinato (polyrhythm: 2:3). B.69: horn doubles cl (unison) whilst gtr moves into accompaniment figuration. B.72: a scalic run in guitar leads back into theme at B.73-75 (2 <sup>nd</sup> sec of <b>Theme 1b</b> – up a 6th). It is sparsely orchestrated against bssns, hrp + strgs.

- **EXAMPLE 12:** Theme 1a in gtr (in 2 sections). Note the beautiful lyricism, the nostalgic and reflective mood of the theme. A free, improvised quality. (P.17-18).
- **EXAMPLE 13:** Theme 1b (2 sections). (P.19-20)
- **EXAMPLE 14:** Guitar solo/cadenza –constructed around descending scale. (P.21-22).

**FORM:**

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Link/cadenza</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>T1a</b>	<b>T1b</b>		<b>T1a, T1a, T1b</b>
<b>(20)</b>	<b>(17)</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>(34) = 80 bars</b>

This movement is constructed around repeated patterns (ostinati) which occur in the harp (throughout the entire movement except for the guitar cadenza) and the strings set against more rhapsodic, lyrical lines. The distinctive mood is set by:

- The delicate effect of the ostinato patterns in harp and strings.
- A sense of threat beneath the surface is cleverly painted by Westlake –there are ominous moments created by unexpected harmonies. eg.B. 35-37 and the ensuing guitar cadenza. Also B.55 and B.63 – all suggest something “foreign” in the landscape.
- Chords where the third is missing or very weak – harmony which disguises the function of the chord: makes it ambiguous (eg. B.47-54 and opening bars – the G# of the E chord does not appear until B.7 –only briefly as triplet semiquaver). This creates a prevalence of bare fifths. In some places (B.21) the writing resembles quartal harmony (stacking of fourths), but generally, fifths seem to be more prevalent – both melodically and harmonically).
- Melodies tend to be constructed from steps and thirds – lyrical, smooth flowing lines, in an improvised style.

**Live demonstration:** harmonics (B.50), *sul pont* (B.52)

**Terminology:** *pizz*, *senza sord*, harmonics, *sul pont*, *Tacet*

### III. Penguin Ballet

This music accompanies a scene in the film where a diver descends through the ice to observe the penguins at play below the ice cap – an “underwater ballet”. Leopard seals are always a threat, and the only escape for the penguins is to exit speedily through a hole in the ice.

#### **Instrumentation:**

flute1/picc, flute 2, oboe1, oboe2/cor anglais, clarinet 1 in Bb, clarinet 2 in Bb/bass, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, bass trombone, percussion (timpani, glockenspiel, cymbal, snare, bass drum, marimba), harp, guitar, strings (trumpet and trombone: *Tacet*)

**TABLE 3: Penguin Ballet**

BAR	SEC	KEY AREA (in bold) AND CHORD PROGRESSIONS	IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS
1-7	Intro	<b>D Major:</b> D7 (omit 3 <sup>rd</sup> )	Harp solo: “cascade”. Static support in strings. Dominant pedal in vc+va. Ends with hrp scalic run.
8-17	A1	e min 13  A 9 (B.17). Perfect cadence (B.17- 18).	<b>Theme (grp) 1:</b> <i>Pas de deux</i> between gtr and hrp (the dancing penguins) underpinned by <i>pizz</i> bass (B.8-15) ( <b>EX.15</b> ). Short w/w motives interject -penguins jumping through holes in the ice (B.14-15). Bridge passage (B.16-17) ending in hrp scalic run.
18-28	B1	Implied chord sequence (B.18-22): [D, a min 7] X 2, [B, f#min 7] X 2, G, A 9. Plagal cadence (B.22-23). e min 11 (B.23-28): <b>Theme 3</b> comprising chromatic passing harmonies.	B.18-22: <b>Theme 2</b> (a <i>ritornello</i> ) in vn1.Gtr (accompaniment) doubled by vc on the beat ( <b>EX.16</b> ).  B.23-28: <b>Theme 3</b> (the leopard seals) in va. ( <b>EX.17</b> ) Accompaniment in vc+db doubled in longer note values in gtr. Hrp ostinato. Ends with gtr scalic run.
29-38	A2	Almost exactly as A1: <b>Theme (grp) 1</b> (B.29-36) plus bridge passage (B.37-38): elaboration of w/w motives. Ends with hrp scalic run.	
39-49	B2	As B1: <b>Theme 2</b> (B. 39-43) however w/w is filled out considerably and <i>vc pizz</i> added. Doubling: db+bssn (octave); vn1+cl (octave). <b>Theme 3</b> (B.44-49) doubled in va+bssn+cor (unison) with added w/w.	
50-57	C	<b>Bb Major:</b> c min 13	<b>Theme (grp) 4:</b> another <i>pas de deux</i> in gtr+hrp. ( <b>EX. 18</b> ) Tonic and dominant sustained pedals in vn1 (harmonics) and vc.
58-62	D	<b>D Major:</b> A 13	<i>Tutti</i> . Short w/w motives which first appeared in B.14 now developed into thick texture + extended lines Doubling: fl+picc+ob1+vn1+guitar(unison)+cl1(8ve). Repeated quaver pulse underneath.
63-65	E	D Maj, E maj, d# min 7	Motives passed between: gtr to bssn1 to ob1 to fl/picc to gtr to cl2 to marimba.
66-71		Chord changes continue every bar, from d# min 7 ending on a min 11. Plagal cadence (B.71-72).	Repetitive pattern in gtr offset by dotted quaver pulse (descending scale) in marimba and syncopated rhythms in fls, obs and cls. Ends with hrp scalic run.
72-79	A3	As A1 however <b>Theme (grp) 1</b> in gtr up 8ve and elaborated from B.77. Fl and picc double hrp (adds extra colour).	
80-84	B3	As B2 however <b>Theme 2</b> in vn 1 doubled by cl (octave). Sustained notes in va added.	
85-88	Coda	e min 11 (omit 3 <sup>rd</sup> )	Ostinati in harp and guitar, accompanied by ob1, bssns and upper strings (sustained notes and crotchet pulse).



- **EXAMPLE 15:** Theme (grp) 1: *Pas de deux*. This theme is really a group of themes. It has 3 components: a primary and secondary melody and accompanying ostinato (P.30).
- **EXAMPLE 16:** Theme 2 in vn 1 (P.32).
- **EXAMPLE 17:** Theme 3 in va (P.33).
- **EXAMPLE 18:** Theme (grp) 4: *Pas de deux*. Main melody in the gtr: accompaniment figuration in harp (P.38).

#### FORM:

<b>Intro</b>	<b>A1</b>	<b>B1</b>	<b>A2</b>	<b>B2</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>A3</b>	<b>B3</b>	<b>Coda</b>	
	<b>T1</b>	<b>T2+3</b>	<b>T1</b>	<b>T2+3</b>	<b>T4</b>	<b>(w/w motives developed)</b>		<b>T1</b>	<b>T2</b>		
<b>(7)</b>	<b>(10)</b>	<b>(11)</b>	<b>(10)</b>	<b>(11)</b>	<b>(8)</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>(9)</b>	<b>(8)</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>= 88 bars</b>

This is closely aligned to a modified rondo form (ie. sonata-rondo; A-B-A-Devel-A-B-Coda).

#### Note:

- Highly effective instrumental colours and combinations: eg. doubling of va, bssn+cor anglais (B.44-49); snare+bass drm (B.58); hrp+fl+pic (B.72-79).
- Distinctive, colourful orchestral effects which help to define structure eg. “**Bookend**” effect: refers to the ascending and descending runs (of 1 bar length) to start and conclude a section. These fast flourishes aid the delineation of and connection between sections. Also, the use of percussion to colour beginnings and ends of sections eg. glock, marimba, cymbal (B.50, 65-66, 72).
- Note the changing metre from 21/16 to 6/8, 9/8, 3/8, 5/8 and 7/8. Think about this from the point of view of the performers and also the interest it creates musically.
- Motives/themes used to represent screen personalities (penguins and leopard seals).

**Terminology:** *solo, arco, pas de deux, ritornello*

#### IV. The Ice Core

Scientists extract ice cores to learn about changes in the earth’s atmosphere. This was how the hole in the ozone layer was first discovered. In the film, this music accompanies images of divers swimming through caverns of ice and water inside a glacier.

#### **Instrumentation:**

flute1, flute 2/piccolo, bass clarinet, bassoon, marimba, harp, guitar, strings  
(oboe, horn, trumpet, trombone, bass trombone and timpani: all *tacet*)

**TABLE 4: IV. The Ice Core**

BAR	SEC	KEY AREA (in bold) AND CHORD PROGRESSIONS	IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS
1-19	A	<b>C Major</b> C Maj/min #11 (ambiguous)	Close spacing in strgs; dissonant clusters. Vn1 – <i>divisi</i> (a tone apart). Quartal harmony in opening gtr chord. Pitch bends in gtr create an eerie effect. Vn 2 represents the earth’s breathing. Ascending chromatic line in gtr from B.8. Hrp ostinato (aug 4 <sup>th</sup> ) continuous throughout. B.16-19 vc doubles gtr.
20-39	B	C b13 (b5) over Gb pedal  A 13 (from B.28)	<b>Theme 1:</b> solo vn doubled in picc. ( <b>EX.19</b> ) Gtr, hrp and marimba ostinati – polyrhythms. Dynamic “swells” in vns. Vn1 still <i>divisi</i> a tone apart. Sustained pedal in vc + d.bass. B.28: <b>Theme 1</b> up a min 3 <sup>rd</sup> + rhythm altered: doubled by fl (octave) + answered by triplet motives in bssn (B.30-31) and bs.cl (B.34-35). B.35-38: link to next section; brief countermelody in fls.
40-50	C	G 11  From B.48 to end: c min All harmony derived from c min 13	<b>Theme 1</b> in va, <i>divisi</i> , close spacing, doubled by bssn. Melodic answer in the gtr: scalar, lyrical patterns become disjunct leaps at B.48: Strg chords gradually descend. Harp ostinato throughout.
51-54	Coda	(rootless voicing) <b>(EX.20)</b>	Sustained strg chords and ascending solo guitar. The strgs form a tonal cluster. Note the quartal voicing of gtr chord (B.51-52). ( <b>EX.20</b> )

- **EXAMPLE 19: OVERHEAD:** Theme 1 in vn (P.48).
- **EXAMPLE 20:** Final string cluster and guitar chord. Note the c min 13 rootless voicing (c min with 5, b5, 7, Δ7, b9, 11, 13)
- The sparsely scored passages with solos or duets in the foreground in this movement are examples of what Westlake describes as his “**bare bones scoring**” technique.

**Live demo:** feathered beaming to show *accel* and *rit* (B.3-7), pitch bends (B.3-7), “Let it vibrate” (B.52)

**Terminology:** pitch bends, *sul tasto*, *div soli*, *Tutti unis*, quartal voicing

### **Summary of compositional characteristics:**

- Colourful chord progressions, (not complex), jazz influenced, extended chords using 9ths, 11ths, 13ths; third often omitted or “weak” creating tonal ambiguity.
- Vertical and horizontal realisation of chords (eg. IV B.28-38); slow rate of harmonic change one chord maintained for whole sections, often 10 bars or more. Although individual chords are usually sustained over long sections, one or more chord tones are often varied (eg. b9, #11) creating interesting harmonic colours.
- Important compositional devices: repetitive rhythms and melodic patterns (ostinati) and pedals
- Often the structure does not revolve around a single climax point – a more even, continuous texture and course of development is typical.
- Melody often emerges as long improvised “threads” that gradually evolve.
- Idiomatic use of instruments, not too technically demanding. Note however the difficulty of writing for a solo instrument like the guitar when pitted against full forces of symphony orchestra eg. 1st Movt *tutti* sections especially B.24 onwards – difficult to maintain the balance and audibility of the solo guitar.
- Solo instruments used expressively
- Very accessible style, melodic, tonal, strong sense of rhythm.

Westlake uses all the musical parameters at his disposal – harmony, melody, rhythm, dynamics, texture etc. to evoke the powerful visual images of the Antarctic.

## **Interpretation/Style and critical response:**

The interpretations of the Williams and Kain on the two recommended recordings are quite different in places. eg. the triplet rhythm in opening and closing of I. Williams plays in octaves B.46-48 and in II, B.53-55 he plays harmonics.

Compare the interpretation of the cadenzas eg II: Kain uses a particularly expressive *rubato* and beautiful phrasing. The guitar sound could be described as generally more “forward”, more twangy in the LSO recording. Conversely, to my ear, it is warmer in the TSO recording. Williams is beautifully precise and clear in articulation and placement eg. II – opening 16 bars (listen for the exact, graceful placement of the grace notes in Williams’ interpretation). In II Bar 7, Kain misses a note in the triplet semiquavers converting it into a duplet. Yet in this movement the orchestral backing sounds somehow heavier in the LSO recording compared to the TSO. Also B.29-32 of II – the bass clarinet doubling cannot be heard in the TSO recording – it is much clearer in the LSO recording. Overall the balance appears to be better in the LSO recording – refer to the *tutti* sections in I. The guitar is non-audible in spots in the TSO recording.

Listen to the recordings and try to articulate your own, **personal response** to the work: what you like (or dislike) about it and why.

***Antarctica* is a wonderful work (in my opinion) by one of Australia’s most renown composers. There is so much beauty and humanity in the score, so much to discover and rediscover on repeated listenings. Listen to it carefully with the score, but also more casually for enjoyment: I have found it to be the sort of work that “grows” on you. I hope you have the same experience, and that your studies bring you a greater appreciation for this beautifully crafted and inspired work and for contemporary Australian music generally.**