COMPOSER’S NOTE
The music of the gamelan first drew me to the island of Java in 1980. My imagination was fired by the aptness of Shakespeare’s descriptions of the music which permeates that other magical isle – Prospero’s, in The Tempest, and I set two of Ariel’s songs to music in 1983 as concert works for the English Gamelan Orchestra. My ambition to compose music for the whole play was realised in 1989 in a production at the Simon Fraser Centre for the Arts in Vancouver. Since then extracts from the music have been given in concert on numerous occasions, including the South Bank Gamelan Players’ performance at the Royal Albert Hall for the BBC Proms in 1998.

DURATION
stage version: ca. 160+ minutes (see below for durations of individual concert items)

FORCES REQUIRED
Central Javanese court-style gamelan in slendro and pelog tuning
the standard ensemble is employed (including voices), with the exception of the rebab which is not used
performers need to be well versed in traditional Central Javanese performance practice (garap)

PERFORMANCE MATERIALS
A fully cued work-book: the music is notated in standard Central Javanese gamelan notation (kepatihan)
Some of the concert extracts are available in separate notations

CONCERT EXTRACTS
The following excerpts may be performed as concert works:
Dance for Ariel (Lancaran ‘Sea-sorrow’) [ca. 3’]
‘Come unto these Yellow Sands’ [ca. 4½’]
‘Full Fathom Five’ [ca. 5½’]
‘Wondrous Heavy’ [ca. 1½’]
Dance for Caliban [ca. 2’]
‘Marriage Blessing’ [ca. 4’]
Solemn Music (Ladrang ‘Sea-sorrow’) [ca. 2’]
‘Where the Bee Sucks’ [ca. 1½’]
Bubaran ‘Tempest’ [ca. 2’]

RECORDING
a version of ‘Full Fathom Five’ by Vancouver-based Gamelan Madu Sari is on the Songlines CD “Hive” (SGL2406-2)
the individual track may be sampled and downloaded at iTunes

“. . . Alec Roth’s setting of a scene from Shakespeare’s “The Tempest”, in which he ingeniously and resourcefully evoked Prospero’s Isle with daring directness in one of the happiest East-West musical ententes I have ever witnessed.”
THE SUNDAY TIMES (Felix Aprahamian) 9 October 1983