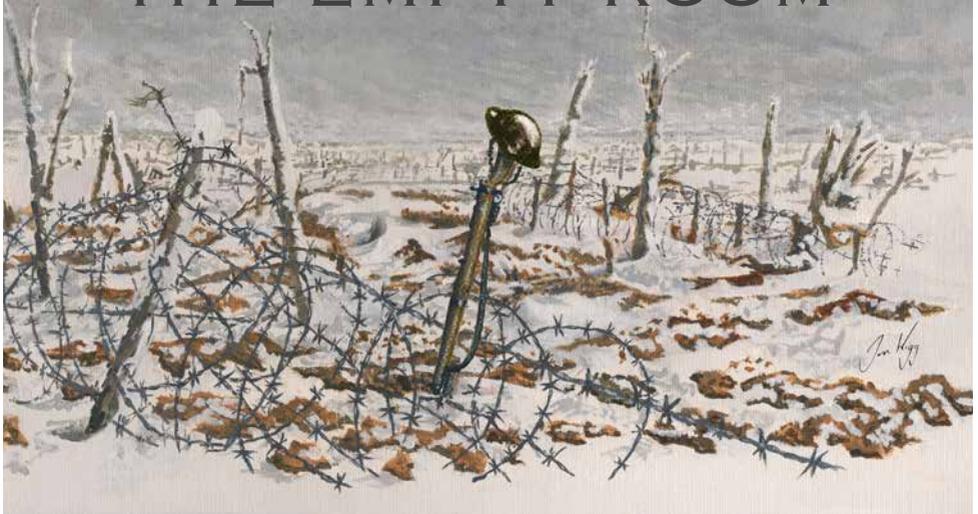


**JIMMY LEE**  
ORCHESTRAL STORIES

# THE EMPTY ROOM



## **THE BALLERINA**

If you have ever had a music box you will remember how it would wind itself down and never ever finished where you wanted it to...The figure that turned as it played was often a ballerina...for me this piece brings her to life and she dances with joy at being set free then slowly and with sadness returns to her music box as the music fades.

## **THE EMPTY ROOM**

I have long had this image of a room rather like the 'old fashioned' drawing room. Through my mind's eye I can still see it very clearly. It was panelled with a bureau and a piano. I am standing in the doorway looking in. Opposite me are two French windows, the one on the left is open with a slight breeze moving the drawn curtains. It is early morning and as I gaze around the room my eyes rest on a photograph on the bureau of a young man in uniform.

As my eyes roam I see another and yet another and more. I wonder who all of these people are. I have not known them and yet they are here in my home.

Years later I recalled this incident and described it to my Father who recognised my memory. It was the sitting room in my grandfather's house and the photographs were of all the men in the family who did not return from the First and Second World War and whose loss had such a profound effect on all of our lives both now and then. All of these wonderful people who I did not know. To be denied their presence in my life seems selfish compared to their own suffering and loss. Never the less, it did and still does make me very angry. The Empty Room is my requiem for them. It is for my love, my gratitude, my outrage, my anger, my sorrow and contempt for those who brought this about. I have tried to express all of those emotions in the piece... it makes me very sad.



Artwork by Jon Wigg

## **HOME FOR CHRISTMAS**

My memories of the build up and anticipation of Christmas as a child, were and still are, very powerful. Those magic evenings when the excitement of the approaching day was unbearable, compounded by small changes in the behaviour of parents and friends as the 'big day' drew near. Heralded preparations that were undeniably going to add to that most wonderful moment when Christmas day arrived and gleefully suffering the painful wait of a child who wanted so much for his world to be magical on that day, and for evermore!

No longer a child, I stand outside of my childhood home on a cold crisp winter's night peering through the window to see myself and my loved ones as they were in those days of yore, happy and content with all suffering and hardship banished by the warmth and joy that Christmas brings. I long to enter the window to dance with the memories and embrace those feelings lost to childhood.

## **JOURNEYS END**

Standing on top of a high cliff looking down into a bay ... the sea is bright blue and calm and full of sunshine but in the distance, meeting the horizon, heavy seas and dark storm clouds are still clearly visible. Alone and without purpose a small sailing boat welcomes the security of the bay and its calm waters and seems to relinquish itself to the 'safe harbour'.

The boat with its tattered sails and torn rigging, bears the obvious scars of a voyage that has been both rough and fearful and appears, like us, to be terribly small and frail to have survived such difficult times, reminding us of our own journey through life. Despite all the slings and arrows endured, it is better to have come through battered and bruised than not at all.

The boat at anchor reflects that spiritual moment of satisfaction and the sigh of relief and gratitude for having arrived at that place of safety where you can rest, secure in the knowledge that you don't have to fight anymore.

**Performed by the Guards Chapel Orchestra at the Guards Chapel, Wellington Barracks, London.**

**Composed by Jimmy Lee**

**Arranged and conducted by Major Craig Hallatt (Director of Music, Band of the Household Cavalry)**

**Recorded by Abbey Road Studios, London, England**

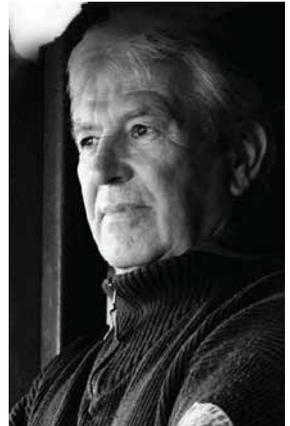
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## **JIMMY LEE**

Jimmy has led some sort of life! A country boy, born into a working class country life in a remote farming community in Sussex, England. He had a start in life few would have survived...Taken into care at 3yrs old, by the time he was 9 he'd had 10 homes and 11 schools.

His has been a life of music with a distinctive voice and folk/country style which was later to find a home during his travels in the America. He took his first steps towards a music career in the embryonic London folk scene, existing by day in a shared house in Cricklewood, emerging by night alongside the passionate new wave of British acoustic aristocracy - Alex Campbell, Roy Harper, Gerry Lochran, Cliff Aungier, Johnny Silvo, Derek Brimstone, Ralph McTell, Ron Geesin et al. In that hallowed company he cut his performing teeth playing for beer and bed in the capitals back street blues and folk clubs.

His early life was hard by any standards... At 14 he ran away to join the Royal Navy and was sent , with 2000 other boys, to the notorious HMS Ganges training establishment at Shotly Point where a harsh regime held sway . He had the misfortune to be placed under the care of two particularly brutal and drunken instructors whose continual bullying and abuse proved too much for this emerging free spirit, he fought back and deserted on numerous occasions. Among his many punishments, he suffered 'cuts', a particularly brutal form of Naval punishment... The next 6 yrs passed with regular naval



detentions, exhausting punishments, solitary confinements, ending with a twelve month sentence in the infamous HMP Corradino, Malta. He was subsequently dismissed from the service and returned to civilian life. Jimmy's Father was 'called up' in 1942 and was to serve the next 4 years in one of the most bitter campaigns of WW2 as part of the 'Forgotten Army', in the jungles of Northern Burma... He would not return to England until 1946.

During that long absence things went 'wrong' for his mother. Destitute, and shunned by her family, struggling to survive with her four children, she placed her young son on a train with a note attached... 'Please take care of me, my name is John'... She was never to see him again... (Jimmy was to search for, and find him 42 yrs later) Jimmy and his elder brother, suffering from neglect and malnutrition, were taken into 'care'. And the nightmare of 'childhood ruin' began.

As an infant, dominated by hardship and loneliness, music became a critical stone in the man. When singing in school and church choirs, he discovered that displays of emotion were not seen as a sign of weakness so music and his abiding faith were to become, and still are, his salvation.

Following on from his days in London, Jimmy had to flee to the West of Ireland to escape a high court warrant, where he remained for 3 yrs until the 'Troubles' began; Back in the day, the Provisionals were recruiting for the emerging operational IRA, and Jim's failure to read the danger signs was placed under suspicion by the Republican powerbrokers. His casual, confident, 'don't give a damn' attitude, dubious UK service background and ability to look after himself raised a few local eyebrows, and he was summarily set up for a fall. A late night pull from the local Guardia and a quiet word in the wrong ear and Jim, by the skin of his teeth, was on the next boat back to England. Back home, his impassioned self defence plea in the high court saw his case dismissed and Jim out and about footloose and fancy free!

**Jimmy's incredible life story has been captured  
in his stage show...The Runaway - touring autumn 2016  
[www.therunaway.co.uk](http://www.therunaway.co.uk)**

Please visit  
**[www.edgeofchaosorchestra.co.uk](http://www.edgeofchaosorchestra.co.uk)**  
for more information, Gigs, Songographies and albums.

