

Seven Inventions and a Passacaglia for Piano duet
Also known as A Little Sketchbook for Piano Duet

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'A Little Sketchbook' consists of eight short movements which follow one another without breaks to create a work of about eleven minutes. While presenting different characters and textures, the pieces can be understood as elaborations of a single idea, of a unifying resonance which we glimpse behind them.

- 1 Moderate tempo: 'bare bones' of melody, heard in double octaves and occasionally expanding into decorations that suggest a wider harmonic field
- 2 Quick: a tiny dancing refrain
- 3 A kind of canonic carillon—purling, fleeting
- 4 A splashy toccata, obsessed with repeated notes
- 5 no. 2 again but slower and gentler, with a melody etched above the refrain
- 6 Brief but wayward: *primo* ascends, *secondo* meanders downwards
- 7 Quickest: the refrain dances past in a flash
- 8 Quietly circling chords, with the radiance of resonating harmonics allowing the full tessitura of the piano to sound. Three cycles of the chorale-like harmonies, lasting in all about four and a half minutes, make this closing movement the most substantial.

Conceived in purely musical terms (how else?!), the pieces could be approached through a seasonal imagery: winter (bare boughs) spring (quickenning growth) through to the concluding movement: warm days, summery fields.

'A Little Sketchbook' was composed in April 2000 for Helen and Harvey Davies. It was commissioned by the Northern Aldborough Festival.

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