

Nick Ray

Recollections Book II

(2013)

for piano

RECOLLECTIONS Book II for piano

These six pieces follow the same scheme as the previous book. No.1 is a ‘mechanism’ piece, no.2 is a landscape evocation, no.3 a light-fingered scherzo, no.4 a tribute to a favourite composer, no.5 a dramatic and aggressive conflict between irreconcilable elements, and no.6 a ‘programme’ piece with a direct literary inspiration.

No. 1 (*Gatcombe Brook*) recollects an unforgettable evening walk close to the ruins of Berry Pomeroy castle in Devon. The brook flows at the bottom of a small valley with wooded slopes, and on this late July evening the setting sun caught individual tree branches and illuminated them in the darkness, changing the pattern as it moved. In the piece, the murmur of the brook continues throughout and splashes of light are scattered around it. Each layer repeats its ‘splash’ at a different time duration, and when they coincide the process begins again in a different harmonic setting, leading to a final flourish. This piece is about as close to minimalist style as my music is ever likely to get.

In no.2 (*On Visiting the Coombe Gibbet*) a cheerful and vigorous melody ascends the slopes of Inkpen hill (on the Berkshire/Wiltshire border) but is periodically arrested by the glimpses of the gibbet that stands near the summit and all cheerful thoughts fall silent. These interruptions become more dramatic as we get nearer and the music stops and contemplates the grisly eminence for a while before setting off home more thoughtfully, casting occasional backward glances at it.

No.3 (*Starlings, Jesus Green, Cambridge*) evokes the murmuration (or ‘scourge’) of starlings swirling around, with the cloud growing denser or more rarefied as the individual birds’ bodies turned.

No.4 (*Elegy for Déodat de Séverac*) is a tribute to a composer whose music has always appealed to me. It quotes the opening theme from his *Coin de cimetière au printemps* and treats it contrapuntally in my fashion rather than his. The central section reproduces some of his pianistic and harmonic mannerisms but transforms them in combination with more dissonant material into a passionate and grief-stricken outburst. The piece ends with a sombre quote of the principal theme’s main motif.

No.5 has no title. Several contrasting elements – some angular and aggressive, others lyrical and gentle - are presented and placed seemingly without any hope of reconciliation. Over an extended trill in the central section they begin to combine and reveal links.

No. 6 (*A Grey and Boiling Street...*) parallels Stephen Crane’s poem whose first line provides the title. A hearse travels slowly along ‘this chasm of commerce’ and an uncomfortable tension is set up between the grief of the mourners, the mild curiosity of the spectators and the unseemly haste of the hired men who only want the event to be over: “Drive man, drive.....let us finish it quickly”.

Nick Ray

April 2013

Recollections Book II was first performed by the composer at a semi-public recital in Finsbury Park, London N4 on 20 September 2014. Anthony Green gave the first public performance at Schott’s recital room, Great Marlborough St, London W1 on 18 March 2017.

Recollections Book II

.1.

Gatcombe Brook

Nick Ray (2013)

Piano

Allegro ($\text{d} = \text{c.152}$)

The sheet music consists of three staves of piano music. The top staff shows a melodic line with eighth-note pairs and sixteenth-note patterns, with dynamics *mf* and *pp*. The middle staff shows a harmonic pattern with eighth-note pairs. The bottom staff shows a harmonic pattern with eighth-note pairs. Measure numbers 8, 3, and 5 are indicated above the staves. Accidental markings (flat signs) are placed above the first note of each measure. Measures 8 and 3 begin with a single flat sign, while measure 5 begins with two flat signs. Measure 5 also features a bass clef change. Measure 5 concludes with a bass note followed by a fermata.

Accidentals last a bar but are frequently repeated for clarity. NR

7

8

3 3 3 3

3 3 3 3

9

8

3 3 3 3

3 3 3 3

11

8

4

4

rffz

non-legato

13 8

mp

pp

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

16 8

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

19 8

p

p

21 8

poco rall.

23 *subito più allegro*

8va

f

fff

p

.2.

On visiting the Coombe Gibbet

Tempo 1: Deciso (mm. ♩ = c.80)
Tempo 2: Poco lento

15

Tempo 2
(rabbividendo!)

19 **Tempo 1**

21

22

25

28

30

Tempo 3: Un poco pensieroso (mm. ♩ = 72)

33

35

38

Tempo 2

Tempo 1

40

short

loco *R&d.* 5

42

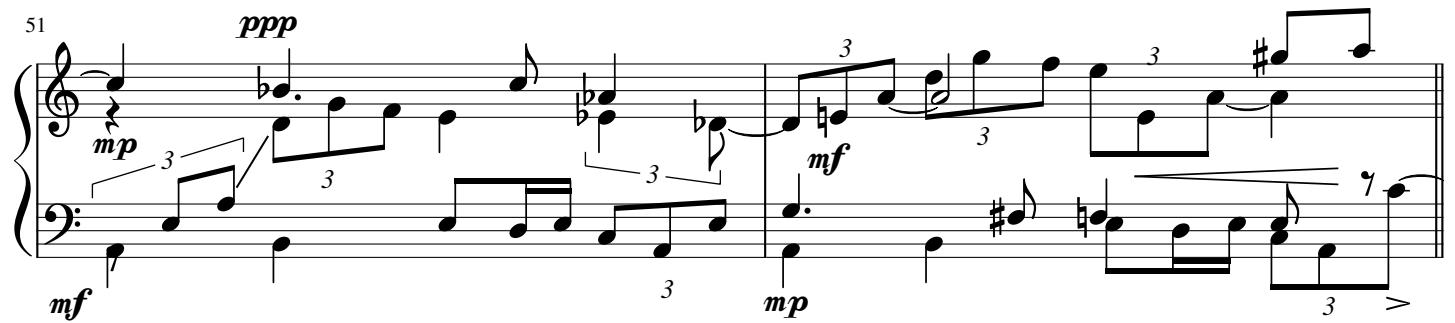
44

Tempo 2

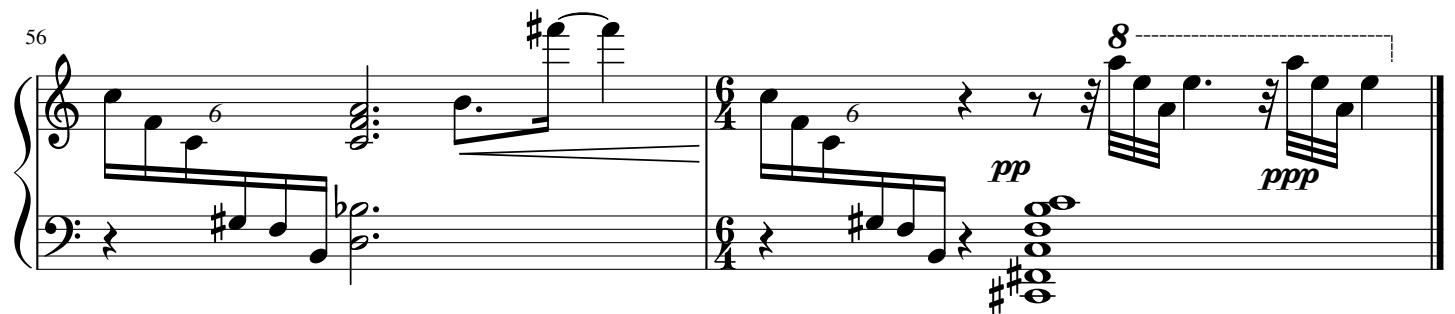
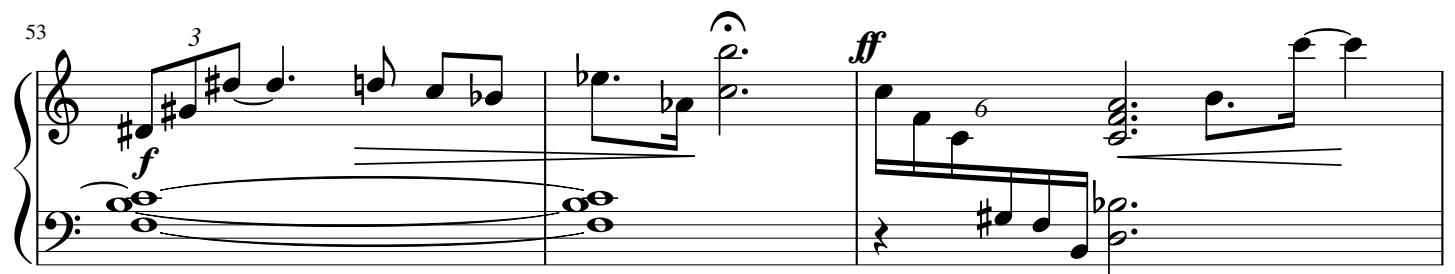
46

Tempo 3

48



Tempo 1



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.3.

Starlings, Jesus Green, Cambridge

Tempo 1: Allegro ma non troppo (mm \downarrow = c.144)

The musical score consists of four systems of music, each with two staves. The top staff uses a treble clef and the bottom staff uses a bass clef. Measure numbers are indicated above the staves: 8, 3, 4, 6, and 8. The key signature changes frequently, including major and minor keys with various sharps and flats. Dynamic markings include **p** (pianissimo), **leggiero**, and **mf** (mezzo-forte). Articulation marks like **loco** and **3** are present. The music features complex rhythms, including triplets and sixteenth-note patterns, often grouped by brackets. Measures 8 and 9 show a transition to a new section.

9

pp

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

12

mf

pp *poco a poco cresc.*

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

15

3 3 short

17

ff

loco

3 8 3 3

19

8

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

8

21

5

3

3

Tempo 2: meno mosso (mm. \downarrow = c.96)

23

3

3

3

3

26

misterioso

mp

p

mp

6

6

29

3

3

3

3

3

3

30

3

3

3

3

31

32

poco accel.

mp

35

piu accel.

f

Tempo 1 (Allegro)

37

ff

short

39

ff

41

loco

Tempo 2 (meno mosso)

p secco

44

Tempo 1 (Allegro)

ppp

loco

47

Tempo 2 (meno mosso)

mf

50

.4.

Elegy for Déodat de Séverac (1872-1921)

Tempo 1: assez lent (mm $\text{J} = \text{c.52}$)

Musical score for measure 1. The score consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and 4/4 time, with dynamics *p* and *pp*. The bottom staff is in bass clef and 4/4 time. The music begins with eighth-note patterns in the treble staff, followed by quarter notes and sixteenth-note patterns. The bass staff has sustained notes and eighth-note patterns. A note in the treble staff is marked with a bracket and the instruction ** un peu en dehors*.

Musical score for measure 4. The top staff starts with *pp* dynamics. The bass staff has a sustained note. The music continues with eighth-note patterns in the treble staff and sustained notes in the bass staff.

Musical score for measure 7. The top staff starts with *mf* dynamics. The bass staff has a sustained note. The music features eighth-note patterns in the treble staff and sustained notes in the bass staff.

Musical score for measure 10. The top staff has *pp* dynamics. The bass staff has a sustained note. The music continues with eighth-note patterns in the treble staff and sustained notes in the bass staff.

* The theme is from '*Coin de cimetière au printemps*' (no. 4 of the *En Languedoc* suite)

13

8

17

Tempo 2: un peu animé (mm $\downarrow = c.84$)

19

21

Tempo 3: un peu plus retenu (mm. ♩ = c.66)

8

23

pp

8

loco

beaucoup plus retenu

A tempo (3)

24

8

26

29

32

ralentir

Tempo 1 (assez lent)

ppp p

35

38

mf

en dehors

41

(*ppp*)

mf

Doucement animé

44

pp

[l'angelus, au loin]

Tempo 1

(*pp*)

Plus animé

47

Tempo 1

mp

pp

8

.5.

Tempo 1: Allegro feroce (mm $\downarrow = \text{c.}66$)

Musical score for piano, page .5. The score consists of five staves of music, each with a dynamic range from p (pianissimo) to ff (fortissimo). The music is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. Measure 1 starts in 3/8 time with a forte dynamic (ff). Measure 2 begins with a piano dynamic (p). Measures 3 and 4 continue in 3/8 time. Measure 5 starts in 4/4 time with a forte dynamic (ff). Measures 6 and 7 continue in 4/4 time. Measure 8 begins in 6/4 time with a forte dynamic (ff). Measures 9 and 10 continue in 6/4 time. Various performance markings include slurs, grace notes, and tempo changes indicated by $\downarrow = \text{c.}99$ and $\downarrow = \text{c.}66$. Measure numbers 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 are explicitly marked above the staff.

11

poco piu mosso

f

mf

a tempo

espress.

v.

15

p

17

f

20

p

f

23

p

rfz

26

b

5

Tempo 2: più lento (mm $\text{J} = \text{c.} 72$)

28

marcato

mp

3

accel.

30

8

mp

5

f

ff

5

Tempo 1 (allegro)

Musical score for piano, page 31, measures 8-12. The score consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef, 3/4 time, key signature of one sharp (F#), and dynamic 8. The bottom staff is in bass clef, 3/4 time, key signature of one sharp (F#), and dynamic 8. Measure 8 starts with a forte dynamic. Measure 9 begins with a forte dynamic. Measure 10 starts with a forte dynamic. Measure 11 starts with a forte dynamic. Measure 12 starts with a forte dynamic.

Musical score for piano, page 10, measures 33-35. The score consists of two staves. The top staff uses a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The bottom staff uses a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). Measure 33 starts with a dynamic *p*, followed by a forte dynamic *ff* with a 3 overline. The tempo is marked *loco*. Measure 34 begins with a 2 overline, followed by a 3 overline. Measure 35 begins with a 4 overline, followed by a 3 overline. Measure 36 begins with a 4 overline.

Musical score for piano, page 10, measures 37-40. The score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef, and the lower staff is in bass clef. Measure 37 starts with a forte dynamic (ff) and the instruction *il tenore in rilievo*. The melody is played in the upper staff, while the lower staff provides harmonic support. Measures 38-40 continue this pattern, with the melody shifting slightly and the harmonic progression changing.

Musical score for piano, page 12, measures 38-39. The score consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef, and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Measure 38 begins with a melodic line in the treble staff, followed by a rest and a fermata over the bass staff. Measure 39 continues with a melodic line in the treble staff, followed by a dynamic marking *p*, a fermata over the bass staff, and a measure ending with a fermata over the bass staff.

40

42

Tempo 3 (Meno mosso)

44

50

.6.

A grey and boiling street
 Alive with ricketty noise.
 Suddenly, a hearse,
 Takes a deliberate way
 Through this chasm of commerce;
 And children look eagerly
 To find misery behind the shades.
 Hired men, impatient, drive with a longing
 To reach quickly the grave-side, the end of solemnity.
 Yes, let us have it over.
 Drive, man, drive.
 Flog your sleek-hided beasts,
 Gallop - gallop - gallop.
 Let us finish it quickly.

Steven Crane (1871-1900)

Largamente, solenne

Tempo 1: Andante con dolore (♩ = 80)

5

8

Tempo 2:
Pochiss. meno mosso

(mm $\text{j} = \text{c.} 68$)

11

pp

15

Poco più mosso

pp

pp

19

pp

22

pp

24

Tempo 2

26

Tempo 1: Impaziente

30

(C)

33

Musical score for piano, two staves. Measure 35: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs followed by sixteenth-note patterns. Bass staff has chords. Measure 36: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs. Bass staff has sustained notes. Measure 37: Treble staff has eighth-note pairs. Bass staff has sustained notes. Dynamics: **ff** at the end of measure 35, **fff** at the beginning of measure 36, **ff** at the beginning of measure 37.

24 April 2013
Southampton

Other works by Nick Ray (2023)

Piano solo

Three Preludes (1997)
Three Studies (1997)
Mirror Variations (2003)
Two Localities (2003)
Sonatina (2006)
Three Transcriptions from *Songs of Collision* (2006)
Variations and Finale on a theme by Anthony Green (2008)
Recollections Book 1 (2009)
Recollections Book 2 (2013)
Recollections Book 3 (2015)
Sonata (2015)
Panegyric for Anthony Green (2016)
Phoenix (2017)
Recollections Book 4 (2017)
Recollections Book 5 (2020)
Recollections Book 6 (2021)

Solo instrument and piano

Resonant Blackness (2006) [vibraphone and piano]
Bren Tor (2007) [clarinet and piano]
Epitaph for Michael Tippett (2007) [double bass and piano]
Rough Edges I and II (2010-12) [clarinet and piano]
Two pieces (2011) [vibraphone and piano]
Sonata (2020) ['cello and piano]

Solo instrument (other than piano)

London Stone (2008) ['cello]

Vocal with piano

Four Poems of Elizabeth Daryush (1999) [soprano and piano]
Dirge (Kenneth Fearing) (2000) [tenor and piano]
Two Longfellow songs (2017) [SATB, piano]

Vocal with ensemble

Songs of Collision – Twelve Poems of Stephen Crane (2004/16) [tenor, horn, clarinet, vibraphone, string quartet]
Three Walter de la Mare Songs (2008) [baritone, clarinet and 'cello]

Chamber/Instrumental

String Quartet (2008-10/revised 2017)
Five Facets for Wind Quintet (2016)
String Quartet no.2 (2022)

Orchestral

Symphony (2014)
Concerto (2018) [piano and orchestra]

Further information

See page on [composition today](#) website – also nickray55 on [soundcloud.com](#)

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