

DAVID LUMSDAINE

BAGATELLES

Flute doubling piccolo
Clarinet in A
Piano
Violin
Viola
Cello

Score in C

Bagatelle - a trifle, a thing of no importance, a piece of light music, a scrap of melody or a hunk of harmony carried in the pocket -

The somewhat surreal landscape of BAGATELLES is an exotic litter of fragments of familiar-sounding musical objects in an overgrown garden. Vines, ramblers and tree roots resume concrete and marble.

Oddly enough, those fragments still recognisable come from music whose subject matter is other music... Who heard them first? In what garden? Who is hearing them now?

Is the piece made up of eight short bagatelles (nine if we count the movement for clarinet which accompanies number seven?) Or is it a single movement made up in the manner of a mosaic in which no matter what path we take, like Alice in the Garden of Live Flowers, we continually find ourselves approaching that same door by which we went out (in?)?

Whichever way you hear it, the musical texture is made up of different combinations of solos, duos, trios and quartets. Only for a moment in the middle, and again at the end, does the sextet come together in a tutti; yet players who are listening have to play as hard as those who are making a noise.

BAGATELLES was composed in Sydney early in 1985. It was commissioned by the Australia Ensemble and first performed by them at the University of New South Wales in June of that year. It lasts just over twenty minutes and is dedicated to Robin Walker.