

Helen Grime (b.1981) Three Whistler Miniatures (2011)

I: The Little Note in Yellow and Gold (Tranquillo)

II: Lapis Lazuli (Presto)

III: The Violet Note (Lontano, molto flessibile)

Helen Grime studied oboe and composition at the RCM where she held a fellowship before studying at Tanglewood, and becoming a Lecturer in Composition at Royal Holloway in 2010. Her more than 30 compositions range from opera through orchestral (she premiered her own oboe concerto), through a Radio 3 commission of a piece for 100 violas to more than 15 chamber works. Her work has been performed at the Proms and she was composer in residence at the Wigmore Hall from 2016 to 2018.

She writes of today's work:

" *Three Whistler Miniatures* falls into three movements, contrasted in mood and tempo. The titles refer to three chalk and pastel miniatures, which are displayed in the Veronese Room of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. Although the music does not relate directly to the pictures, I was taken by the subtly graduated palate and intimate atmosphere suggested by each of them. Throughout the piece the violin and cello form a sort of unit, which is set against the contrasting nature of the piano.

" The first movement opens with a very quiet and gentle piano melody. Gradually the violin and cello become part of the texture, but moving at a slower pace. The violin and cello form an overlapping two-part melody, very high in register and ethereal in quality whilst the piano moves at a quicker pace with a more detailed and elaborate version of the string material creating a delicate, layered effect. This leads to a faster section, the two string instruments have overlapping material with more agitated outbursts from the piano. This builds to an impassioned and somewhat flamboyant piano solo, featuring falling gestures and is interspersed with an intensified and quicker version of the previous string material until the end of the movement.

" The second movement is lively and virtuosic for all three players. A running continuous line is passed back and forth between the cello and violin, eventually being taken by the piano before a more melodic section. Lyrical lines are contrasted with the more jagged material of the opening, the three instruments coming together in rhythmic unison before an extended and complete melody is heard in the violin and cello. Each melodic entry is lower in register and dynamic, seeming to die away before the final presto section takes over until the movements close.

" Beginning with a distant high piano melody and set against muted strings 'quasi lullaby', the third movement alludes to the textures and material of the opening of the piece. A more agitated florid section leads to a heightened rendition of the piano melody for high cello surrounded by filigree passagework in the piano and violin. The violin takes over before the final section, which combines the piano writing from the opening of the first movement, but here it is much darker in nature."

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