

GEORGE BENJAMIN

THREE
INVENTIONS

FOR CHAMBER
ORCHESTRA

(1993–95)

FABER *ff* MUSIC

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Commissioned by Betty Freeman for the 75th Salzburg Festival
The first performance of *Three Inventions* was given by Ensemble Modern, conducted by the composer at the Salzburg Mozarteum, as part of the Salzburg Festival, on 27 July 1995

Duration: c.17 minutes

Three Inventions is recorded by the London Sinfonietta conducted by the composer on Nimbus Records NI 5505 (CD) and by Ensemble Modern conducted by the composer on Ensemble Modern Medien EMCD-002 (CD)

Instrumental parts and a larger-sized conducting score are available on hire from the publishers

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INSTRUMENTATION

2 Flutes (1=piccolo, 2=piccolo+alto flute)
Oboe (=cor anglais)
2 Clarinets (1=Bb†+A, 2=Bb+bass clarinet)
Bass clarinet (=contrabass clarinet)
Bassoon (=contrabassoon)

2 Horns in F
Trumpet (=flugelhorn+piccolo trumpet)
Trombone (=euphonium)

Percussion (2 players)

Piano (=celesta (5 octave))
Harp


3 Violins (3=viola)
2 Violas
2 Cellos
2 Double basses (with 5 strings)


†optional part in E♭ for Invention II


Score in C


PERCUSSION

Total requirements: 2 vibraphones, glockenspiel, crotales, 5 pairs of cymbals (small to large), 3 bongos, wash board, 2 very small side drums, 2 very large bass drums, 4 large gongs, 2 small tam-tams

PLAYER 1: vibraphone, glockenspiel, 2 crotales 

3 pairs of cymbals (small, medium and large),
wash board, very small side drum, very large bass drum,
2 large gongs  (not an octave higher), small tamtam

PLAYER 2: vibraphone, 3 crotales 

2 pairs of cymbals (small and medium),
3 bongos, very small side drum, very large bass drum,
2 large gongs  (not an octave higher), small tam-tam

In the first two Inventions the percussion should be situated in the conventional position, at the back of the ensemble. However, for the third Invention, the gongs, tam-tams and bass drums should be placed antiphonally, at the front of the platform.

PROGRAMME NOTE

Commissioned by Betty Freeman for the 75th Salzburg Festival, this work is scored for an ensemble of 24 players: 7 wind, 4 brass, harp, piano, 2 percussionists and 9 strings. The discrepancy in length and character of the three movements is intentional – two relatively short and light movements preceding a much longer and darker conclusion.

In the first Invention, mainly serene and luminous in atmosphere, a brief introduction leads to a sustained flugel-horn solo whose melodic curves create constantly transforming harmonic implications.

The second Invention is fast, loud and rhythmic. A virtuoso cor anglais solo announces what appears to be a conventional triple metre; however, within a very brief time all manner of irregular figuration and unexpected tempo juxtapositions contort this metre beyond recognition. Halfway through the texture launches into an energetic *tutti*; only at the very end is metrical regularity reinstated by an acrobatic clarinet solo.

The final Invention mirrors the first in technical conception, but the tone is radically different. Antiphonal tuned gongs and bass drums surround a network of materials which weave through the whole ensemble: slow bass octaves, floating consonant harmonies, rushing filigree scales ... As these materials rotate across the structure in ever-changing combinations they encounter a variety of foreground melodic solos: initially a serpentine contrabassoon, later a menacing euphonium and more florid violins and violas. As the movement progresses, harmony and rhythm mutate into constantly new territory, but the heavy, bass-dominated pulse which underpins the texture remains remorselessly regular until the very end.

GB

Any pause between the first and second Inventions should be as brief as possible; there should be a much longer break between the second and third Inventions.

THREE INVENTIONS for Chamber Orchestra

I

in memory of Olivier Messiaen

George Benjamin

Molto tranquillo $\text{♩} = 66$

2 Flutes

Oboe

2 Clarinets in B \flat

Bass Clarinet

Bassoon

5/4

2 Horns

Flugelhorn

Trombone

5/4

Vibraphone Motor off: extremely soft sticks (damp with stick)

1 *p dim.*

Percussion 2 *pppp cresc.*

Harp *mp* *p* *pp* *ppp* *pppp* SOLO

Piano *p* *mp* almost without pedal

5/4 *Molto tranquillo* $\text{♩} = 66$ *pizz.* *pppp* *mp*

Violins

Violas *pizz.* *mp* *pppp*

Violoncellos

Double basses

II

Con brio $\text{♩} = 96$

SOLO

bell down bell up bell down rim.

f *molto* *fff* *molto* *fff*

raucous, sempre legatiss.

Vibraphone Hard felt sticks *pp* *pp* *pp*

Crotales *f*

Harp *fff* *mf* *fff* *mf* *fff* *p* *mf*

Pno. *fff* *p* *ff* *p* *ff* *p* *f* *p*

pp (sempre)

$\frac{3}{4}$ Con brio $\text{♩} = 96$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

Vln. *fp* *fp*

arco *p* *ff* *ff* *ff*

pizz. *fff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

Vla. *p* *fp*

arco *fp*

Vc. *p* *fp*

arco *p*

Db. *p* *più p*

più p

This page of a musical score contains the following parts and markings:

- C. A. (Cello/Double Bass):** Starts at measure 12. Features complex rhythmic patterns with triplets and sixteenth notes. Dynamics include *fff*, *molto*, and *fff*. Time signatures are 5/4, 4/4, 2/4, and 3/8.
- Hn. (Horn):** Empty staff.
- Euph. (Euphonium):** Empty staff.
- Perc. (Percussion):** Includes Vibraphone. Dynamics include *pp*.
- Harp:** Features arpeggiated patterns with dynamics *ff* and *mf*.
- Pro. (Piano):** Features arpeggiated patterns with dynamics *ff*, *p*, and *f*.
- Vln. (Violin):** Includes markings for *arco*, *pp*, and *f*.
- Vla. (Viola):** Includes markings for *arco*, *pp*, and *fff*.
- Vc. (Violoncello):** Includes markings for *arco*, *pp*, and *pp*.
- Db. (Double Bass):** Empty staff.

Additional markings include *pp*, *fff*, *molto*, *f*, *p*, *arco*, and *pizz.* throughout the score.

16 (♩ = 72)

C. A. *fff sempre* *sfpp* *ff* bell down (suddenly) up

Hn. *ffff* (muted) *sfppp* *mp*

Euph. *staccatiss. leggero* *fp* *poco* *p* *fp*

Perc. 1 (2a) 2

Harp *f* *fff*

Pno. *fff*

Vin. *ff*

Via. SOLO *sfpp* *ruvido* *ff* *ff* SOLO *sfpp* *ruvido* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

Vc.

Db. arco *mf* *mfpp* *f* *mf* pizz. *p* *mf* *p*

III

for Alexander Goehr

Lento $\text{♩} = 48-52$

Cl.

B. Cl.

Cb. Cl.

Cbsn. *SOLO*
mf sostenuto *fpp* *mp* *piu* *sff*

Hn. *with mute* *pp*

Tbn. *Cup mute* *gliss.* *pppp* *mf sub.* *sim.* *mf*

Perc. 1 *Gongs (with large B.D. beater)* *(preciso)* *f* *Large Bass Drum* *mp*

Perc. 2 *Large Bass Drum* *Gongs (with large B.D. beater)* *(preciso)* *f*

Vin.

Violin 3 takes Viola

Via. *5 gliss.* *pppp* *non vib. †* *gliss.* *f sub.* *pppp*

Vc. *3 gliss.* *pppp* *mf sub.* *pppp* *pizz.* *f secco*

Db. *arco* *gliss.* *pppp* *non vib. †* *gliss.* *mf sub.* *pppp* *non vib. †* *gliss.* *mf sub.* *pppp* *pizz.* *f secco*

† molto pesante, tenuto, senza dim.: sempre sim.

6

Cl. 1. in A

B. Cl.

Cbsn. *fff feroce*

Hn. *with mute* *pp* mute off

Tbn. *gliss.* *pppp*

Perc. 1 *B.D.* *mp* *Small Tam-tam (swept with large triangle beater)*

Perc. 2 *Gongs* *f* *Small Tam-tam (swept with large triangle beater)* *sf*

Vln. *pp flautando* *fff pp*

Vla. *pizz.* *f secco* *arco* *pp flautando* *fff*

Vla. *pizz.* *f secco* *arco col legno* *p* *nat.* *fff pp flautando*

Vc. *arco* *f* *pp flautando* *non vib.* *mf sub.* *pp* *sul pont.* *fff*

Vc. *pizz.* *f secco* *arco* *col legno* *p* *nat.* *fff pp flautando*

Db. *arco* *gliss.* *pppp* *mf sub.* *pppp* *fff*

Db. *pizz.* *f secco* *f* *arco non vib.* *mf*

† See note, p.37

*Strings, bars 16-53: stressed notes (♩) to be played **pp**, slightly stretched in length (even *poco vibrato*); all other fast notes to be played **pppp** poss., and slightly rushed to compensate for the stretched notes

17

Cl.

B. Cl.

Cbsn.

Hn.

Tbn.

1

Perc.

2

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

ppp

f

fff

(Cup mute)

ppp

ppp

mf secco

mf secco

mf secco

ppp

mf secco

nat.

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

nat.

*See note, p.39

2/

Cl.

B. Cl.

Obsn.

Hn.

Tbn.

Perc.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

4/8

4/8

4/8

with mute

Gongs

B.D.

mp

f

mf sub.

(muted)

ffff

gliss.

Gongs

B.D.

f

mp

4/8

ppp

f sub.

non vib. †

non vib.

pizz.

mf secco

arco

ppp

mf sub.

mf secco

non vib. †

gliss.

ffff

non vib. †

mf

non vib.

gliss.

ppp

mf sub.

ffff

non vib. †

mf

non vib.

pizz.

mf secco

† See note, p.37

* See note, p.39

25
B. Cl. *ppp*

Cbsn. *p* *f* *fff*

2
8

Hn. *mf* *ppp* *mute off*

Tbn. *mf sub.* *ppp*

2
8

Perc. 1 Gongs *f*
2 B.D. *mp*

2
8

Vln.

Vla. *arco col legno* *p* *nat. non vib. †* *f* *pizz.* *mf*
(pizz.) *arco col legno* *p* *nat.* *ppp* *mf*

Vc. *gliss.* *col legno* *p* *nat. non vib. †* *mf* *ppp* *pizz.* *arco col legno* *p*

Db. *(pizz.)* *arco* *gliss.* *pppp* *nat. non vib. †* *gliss.* *pppp* *pizz.* *mf* *col legno* *p*

Preview File Only

† See note, p.37

29

B. Cl.

Cbsn.

Hn.

Tbn.

Perc.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

mf sub.

mute off

to Euphonium

f

mp

B.D.

Gongs (l.v.)

non vib. †

f

arco

ppp

non vib. †

f sub.

ppp

arco

ppp

nat. †

mf

ppp

non vib.

mf sub.

sempre ppp

arco non vib.

mf

non vib.

mf sub.

nat. non vib.

mf

non vib.

mf

Preview File Only

† See note, p.37

32

Gongs

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

p

p sub. (half damped)

ppp

ppp

pizz.

p secco

ppp

pizz.

p secco

pizz.

p secco

pizz.

p secco

35

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

p

pp

pp flautando

pp flautando

ppp

ppp

pp flautando

pizz.

p secco

p secco

p secco

* See note, p. 39

44

Fl. *mp*

A. Fl. *mp* *pppp* *breathy* *non vib.*

Harp *mf*

Cel. *f*

Vln. *ppp* *spiccato* *ppp*

Vla. *pp*

Vc. *pizz.* *p* *arco* *pppp*

Db. *(pizz.)* *p* *(pizz.)* *p*