

Woodsmoke

Piers Hellawell
(2023)

Nebbioso ♩ = 120

Clarinet in B $\flat$

Piano

mp

p

mp

mp

pp

mf

cresc.

mf

p

sim.

mf

mf

f

mp

poco mf

f

Ped.

A

B

PROGRAMME NOTE

This piece takes up my main compositional concern of the last decade, which is the resizing of a family of musical ideas – themes, sections or actual movements – into larger, or occasionally smaller, versions. Initially I likened these expansions to unpacking Russian Dolls, the kind that live within one another, but those are otherwise identical in design, whereas my musical entities have, latterly, sought to develop with their expansion, rather than just being ‘larger’ versions of the same thing. This piece posits three contrasted ideas; they can be found in bars 1, 2 and 3 of the piece and are distinguishable by exploring middle (1), lower (2) and higher (3) registers. Thereafter, these three reappear as they grow, initially ‘in order’ – ABC, ABC – but then more freely. The piece therefore tells the story of dissimilar siblings, interacting as their individual narratives expand. The work’s title suggested itself, for no concrete reason: a piece of whimsy that may be related to my sense of the surrounding autumn during composition in 2023.

Piers Hellawell, 2024

PERFORMANCE NOTE

This piece contains no experimental notation, but the clarinet employs a number of quarter-tones: these all have a colouristic, ornamental function – equivalent to a vibrato in Baroque practice – and so are not required to conform to an exact intonation.

Duration: 4 minutes approx.

Written in 2023 at the request of Sicilian clarinettist Francesco Paolo Scola

*First performed on 21 November 2024, by Robert Plane (clarinet) and
Tim Horton (piano) of Ensemble 360, at the Royal Welsh College of
Music and Drama in Cardiff; recorded by them on 30 November 2025*