



A World of Miracles

12 Reflections on Childhood and Memory

For Violin and Piano

Violin

Nigel Morgan

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Commissioned for the 150th Anniversary
of the death of Robert Schumann on 29 July 1856

About the music

There is a small but fascinating repertoire of music that is made up of pieces whose subject is childhood. Most of these pieces are miniatures and some have found favour with teachers and particularly diligent children. Schumann, of course, leads the way with his *Kinderszenen*, but there are other collections from composers as diverse as Dallapiccola and Nielsen. What the best of these pieces have in common is something that their music shares with the best of children's literature: the ability to sustain the interest of the Young and the Old.

A World of Miracles pays an important debt to Schumann's *Scenes from Childhood*, a debt acknowledged in the final movement. However, the scenes from childhood pictured within this work are those depicted by the author G.K. Chesterton in the second chapter of his *Autobiography*. The chapter is titled *The Man with the Golden Key* and is a kind of secular sermon on memory. His 'text' is his first childhood memory recounting a scene from his father's toy theatre.

With a nod to Schumann 12 paragraphs from *The Man with the Golden Key* have been selected each with titles from within the text itself.

An ambition in this collection is to provide music that can be played by both by the enterprising young person and the inquisitive older person. In the keyboard part the physical demands are not great, indeed some of the pieces attempt to follow Nielsen's example in his *Klavermusik for Små og Store* where the spread of each hand sought by the music rarely requires more than the interval of a fifth. The violin part makes no such concessions and requires a more mature technique, although the music remains well within the bounds of good student and amateur players. Whatever the age and experience of the performers the music offers much scope for the play of musical imagination. Such imagination may extend to redefining tempi, expressive markings, dynamics and articulations where appropriate. What is set out in the score should be thought of guides, no more.

Throughout the collection harmony is a predominant musical feature, sometimes lurking behind the scenes to give a foundation for melodic and contrapuntal invention, sometimes clearly present and sounded out as chord sequences. However, using the word ‘sequences’ gives a false idea: chord objects would often be more precise. Each chord is a unique sonic object, created to be played easily by two fingers in each hand. Only in the movement, which gives the collection its name, do the chords get any bigger! In the first half of the collection the harmonic rhythm and content is quite rich, often between 12 and 24 different chord objects per piece. As the second half progresses the harmonic rhythm tends to slow down until in No.11 just two chords (taken from the prologue of Harrison Birtwistle’s opera *Punch and Judy*) provide the source material. The final piece explores inversions of chord objects as the music pours new harmony into the mould of Schumann’s *Der Dichter Spricht*.

A World of Miracles is the final section of *Childhood and Memory*, a four-part multi-media project celebrating the legacy of Robert Schumann in his anniversary year 2006. *Kinderszenen* and *Dichterliebe* have provided both a scaffolding and a starting point, embodying as they do reflections about innocence and the loss of what has once been loved.

The White Light of Wonder 12 Scenes from Childhood for solo piano

The Man with the Golden Key 12 Almost Too Serious songs for voice and piano,

Every Picture Tells a Story Fantasy Piece for violoncello and piano.

A World of Miracles 12 reflections on Childhood & Memory for violin and piano

Allegories Five Movements for string quartet

An important addition to this project has been the specially commissioned illustrations by Dette Allmark, poems by Margaret Morgan, and web media by Phil Legard. Further information about their contribution can be found on the composer’s website:

www.nigel-morgan.co.uk

From the Autobiography of G.K. Chesterton

The Man with the Golden Key

The very first thing I can ever remember seeing with my own eyes was a young man walking across a bridge. He had a curly moustache and an attitude of confidence verging on swagger. He carried in his hand a disproportionately large key of a shining yellow metal and wore a large golden or gilded crown. The bridge he was crossing sprang on the one side from the edge of a highly perilous mountain chasm, the peaks of the range rising fantastically in the distance; and at the other end it joined the upper part of the tower of an almost excessively castellated castle. In the castle tower there was one window, out of which a young lady was looking. I cannot remember in the least what she looked like; but I will do battle with anyone who denies her superlative good looks.

Frames and Limits

Apart from the fact of it being my first memory, I have several reasons for putting it first. I am no psychologist, thank God; but if psychologists are still saying what ordinary sane people have always said—that early impressions count considerably in life—I recognise a sort of symbol of all that I happen to like in imagery and ideas. All my life I have loved edges; and the boundary-line that brings one thing sharply against another. All my life I have loved frames and limits; and I will maintain that the largest wilderness looks larger seen through a window,. . . I will still assert that the perfect drama must strive to rise to the higher ecstasy of the peep-show. I have also a pretty taste in abysses and bottomless chasms and everything else that emphasises a fine shade of distinction between one thing and another; and the warm affection I have always felt for bridges is connected with the fact that the dark and dizzy arch accentuates the chasm even more than the chasm itself. I can no longer behold the beauty of the princess; but I can see it in the bridge that the prince crossed to reach her. And I believe that in feeling these things from the first, I was feeling the fragmentary suggestions of a philosophy I have since found to be the truth.

The Things We Remember (are the things we forget)

Really, the things we remember are the things we forget. I mean that when a memory comes back sharply and suddenly, piercing the protection of oblivion, it appears for an instant exactly as it really was. If we think of it often, while its essentials doubtless remain true, it becomes more and more our own memory of the thing rather than the thing remembered. I had a little sister who died when I was a child. I have little to go on; for she was the only subject about which my father did not talk. It was the one dreadful sorrow of his abnormally happy and even merry existence; and it is strange to think that I never spoke to him about it to the day of his death. I do not remember her dying; but I remember her falling off a rocking-horse. I know, from experience of bereavements only a little later, that children feel with exactitude, without a word of explanation, the emotional tone or tint of a house of mourning. But in this case, the greater catastrophe must somehow have become confused and identified with the smaller one. I always felt it as a tragic memory, as if she had been thrown by a real horse and killed.

The Great Adventure

A man does not generally manage to forget his wedding-day; especially such a highly comic wedding-day as mine. For the family remembers against me a number of now familiar legends, about the missing of trains, the losing of luggage, and other things counted yet more eccentric. It is alleged against me, and with perfect truth, that I stopped on the way to drink a glass of milk in one shop and to buy a revolver with cartridges in another. Some have seen these as singular wedding-presents for a bridegroom to give to himself; and if the bride had known less of him, I suppose she might have fancied that he was a suicide or a murderer or, worst of all, a teetotaller. They seemed to me the most natural things in the world. I did not buy the pistol to murder myself or my wife; I never was really modern. I bought it because it was the great adventure of my youth, with a general notion of protecting her from the pirates doubtless infesting the Norfolk Broads, to which we were bound; where, after all, there are still a suspiciously large number of families with Danish names.

A World of Miracles

From this general memory about memory I draw a certain inference. What was wonderful about childhood is that anything in it was a wonder. It was not merely a world full of miracles; it was a miraculous world. What gives me this shock is almost anything I really recall; not the things I should think most worth recalling. This is where it differs from the other great thrill of the past, all that is connected with first love and the romantic passion; for that, though equally poignant, comes always to a point; and is narrow like a rapier piercing the heart, whereas the other was more like a hundred windows opened on all sides of the head.

Day-dreams

I have already mentioned how my honeymoon began before the White Cow of my childhood; but of course I had in my time been myself a calf, not to say a moon-calf, in the sort of calf-love that dances in the moonshine long before the honeymoon. Those day-dreams also are wrecks of something divine; but they have the colour of sunset rather than the broad daylight. I have walked across wide fields at evening and seen, as a mere distant dot in a row of houses, one particular window and just distinguishable head; and been uplifted as with roaring trumpets as if by the salute of Beatrice. But it did not, and does not, make me think the other windows and houses were all almost equally interesting; and that is just what the glimpse of the baby's wonderland does. We have read countless pages about love brightening the sun and making the flowers more flamboyant; and it is true in a sense; but not in the sense I mean. It changes the world; but the baby lived in a changeless world; or rather the man feels that it is he who has changed. He has changed long before he comes near to the great and glorious trouble of the love of woman; and that has in it something new and concentrated and crucial; crucial in the true sense of being as near as Cana to Calvary. In the later case, what is loved becomes instantly what may be lost.

A Hobby is not a Holiday

A hobby is not a holiday. It is not merely a momentary relaxation necessary to the renewal of work; and in this respect it must be sharply distinguished from much that is called sport. A good game is a good thing, but it is not the same thing as a hobby; and many go golfing or shooting grouse because this is a concentrated form of recreation; just as what our contemporaries find in whisky is a concentrated form of what our fathers found diffused in beer. If half a day is to take a man out of himself, or make a new man of him, it is better done by some sharp competitive excitement like sport. But a hobby is not half a day but half a life-time. It would be truer to accuse the hobbyist of living a double life. And hobbies, especially such hobbies as the toy theatre, have a character that runs parallel to practical professional effort, and is not merely a reaction from it. It is not merely taking exercise; it is doing work. It is not merely exercising the body instead of the mind, an excellent but now largely a recognised thing. It is exercising the rest of the mind; now an almost neglected thing.

Maps of Fabulous Countries

The real child does not confuse fact and fiction. He simply likes fiction. He acts it, because he cannot as yet write it or even read it; but he never allows his moral sanity to be clouded by it. To him no two things could possibly be more totally contrary than playing at robbers and stealing sweets. No possible amount of playing at robbers would ever bring him an inch nearer to thinking it is really right to rob. I saw the distinction perfectly clearly when I was a child; I wish I saw it half as clearly now. I played at being a robber for hours together at the end of the garden; but it never had anything to do with the temptation I had to sneak a new paint-box out of my father's room. I was not being anything false; I was simply writing before I could write. Fortunately, perhaps, for the condition of the back-garden, I early transferred my dreams to some rude resemblance to writing; chiefly in the form of drawing straggling and sprawling maps of fabulous countries, inhabited by men of incredible shapes and colours and bearing still more incredible names. But though I might fill the world with dragons, I never had the slightest real doubt that heroes ought to fight with dragons.

Impatience

It is now so common as to be conventional to express impatience with priggish and moralising stories for children; stories of the old-fashioned sort that concern things like the sinfulness of theft; and as I am recalling an old-fashioned atmosphere, I cannot refrain from testifying on the psychology of the business. Now I must heartily confess that I often adored priggish and moralising stories. I do not suppose I should gain a subtle literary pleasure from them now; but that is not the point in question. The men who denounce such moralisings are men; they are not children. But I believe multitudes would admit their early affection for the moral tale, if they still had the moral courage. And the reason is perfectly simple. Adults have reacted against such morality, because they know that it often stands for immorality. They know that such platitudes have been used by hypocrites and pharisees, by cunning or perversion. But the child knows nothing about cunning or perversion. He sees nothing but the moral ideals themselves, and he simply sees that they are true. Because they are.

The White Light of Wonder

Stephenson talks of the child as normally in a dazed daydream, in which he cannot distinguish fancy from fact. Now children and adults are both fanciful at times; but that is not what, in my mind and memory, distinguishes adults from children. Mine is a memory of a sort of white light on everything, cutting things out very clearly, and rather emphasising their solidity. The point is that the white light had a sort of wonder in it, as if the world were as new as myself; but not that the world was anything but a real world. I am much more disposed now to fancy that an apple-tree in the moon-light is some sort of ghost or grey nymph; or to see the furniture fantastically changing and crawling at twilight, as in some story of Poe or Hawthorne. But when I was a child I had a sort of confident astonishment in contemplating the apple-tree as an apple-tree. I was sure of it, and also sure of the surprise of it; as sure, to quote the perfect popular proverb, as sure as God made little apples. The apples might be as little as I was; but they were solid and so was I. There was something of an eternal morning about the mood; and I liked to see a fire lit more than to imagine faces in the firelight.

Punch and Judy

My fixed idolatry of Punch and Judy illustrated the same fact and the same fallacy. I was not only grateful for the fun, but I came to feel grateful for the very fittings and apparatus of the fun; the four-cornered tower of canvas with the one square window at the top, and everything down to the minimum of conventional and obviously painted scenery. Yet these were the very things I ought to have torn and rent in rage, as the trappings of imposture, if I had really regarded the explanation as spoiling the experience. I was pleased, and not displeased, when I discovered that the magic figures could be moved by three human fingers. And I was right; for those three human fingers are more magical than any magic figures; the three fingers which hold the pen and the sword and the bow of the violin; the very three fingers that the priest lifts in benediction as the emblem of the Blessed Trinity. There was no conflict between the two magics in my mind. I enjoyed Punch and Judy as a drama and not a dream; and indeed the whole extraordinary state of mind I strive to recapture was really the very reverse of a dream. It was rather as if I was more wide-awake than I am now, and moving in broader daylight, which was to our broad daylight what daylight is to dusk. Only, of course, to those seeing the last gleam of it through the dusk, the light looks more uncanny than any darkness.

A Lost Experience in the Land of the Living

In a word; I have never lost the sense that this was my real life; the real beginning of what should have been a more real life; a lost experience in the land of the living. It seems to me that when I came out of the house and stood on that hill of houses, where the roads sank steeply towards Holland Park, and terraces of new red houses could look out across a vast hollow and see far away the sparkle of the Crystal Palace (and seeing it was a juvenile sport in those parts), I was subconsciously certain then, as I am consciously certain now, that there was the white and solid road and the worthy beginning of the life of man; and that it is man who afterwards darkens it with dreams or goes astray from it in self-deception. It is only the grown man who lives a life of make-believe and pretending; and it is he who has his head in a cloud.

For Thomas Zehetmair

The Man with the Golden Key

andante con moto ♩ = 70

1. *mp* *mf* *mp*

5 *poco allargando* *f* *mf* *p* *f* *p*

8 *a tempo* *mp* *p* *mf*

11 *mp* *mf* *poco rit.* *mp*

16 *a tempo* *calando* *a tempo primo piu con moto* *p* *con forza* *f*

21 *poco lento e dolce* *ff* *mp*

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of six systems of music. The first system (measures 1-4) starts with a tempo marking of 'andante con moto' and a quarter note equal to 70. The second system (measures 5-8) includes the instruction 'poco allargando'. The third system (measures 8-10) is marked 'a tempo'. The fourth system (measures 11-14) includes 'poco rit.'. The fifth system (measures 16-19) includes 'a tempo', 'calando', and 'a tempo primo piu con moto'. The sixth system (measures 21-24) includes 'poco lento e dolce'. Dynamics range from piano (p) to fortissimo (ff). The score features various time signatures: 2/4, 5/8, 7/8, 5/4, 4/4, 4/4, 5/8, 2/4, 2/4, 5/8, 6/8, 9/8, 6/8, 6/8, 4/4, 3/4, and 4/4.

24 *subito allargando e deliberamente* *meno mosso e rit.* *a tempo primo*

mf *mp* *p* *pp*

27

mp *mf* *f* *mf*

30 *poco rit.* *a tempo*

mp *p* *mp*

33 *poco rit.* *a tempo* *canabile*

mf *mp*

36 *ritardando*

mf *f* *mf*

Frames and Limits

giustamente ♩ = 60

2.

pp

2

f *mf* *mp* *mf*

4

mp *f* *p* *p*

6

mp *mf* *pp*

8

pp *mf*

10

f *mp* *mp* *poco allargando*

13 *a tempo*

mf *f*

15

pp

16

f *mp* *f* *p* *p*

19

mf *pp*

21

pp *mp* *mf* *p* *mp* *poco allargando*

The Things We Remember (are the things we forget)

ondeggiante (rocking) ♩ = 120

3. *p* *mp*

7 *mf* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp*

12 *mf* *f* *mp*

17 *mf* *f* *mf* *mp*

22 *p* *f* *p* *quasi chorale doloroso* ♩ = 50

26 *mp* *pp* *mp*

29 *p* *mp* *p* *f*

32 *p*

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A Great Adventure

4. *risoluto* ♩ = 90

mf *f* *mf*

5

mp *pno.*

10

f

14

mf *mp* *mp*

19

mf

24

mp *mf* *p* *mp*

29

p *mp* *mf*

34

f *mf* *f*

39

mf *f* *mf* *mp* *mf*

44

mf *f*

48

mf *mp*

A World of Miracles

semplice ♩ = 75

5. *pno.*
p

5
p

9
mp *mf* *f* *p*

13
mp *mf*

17 *pno.*
f *f* *mf*

22 *poco ritardando e calando*
mp *p* *pp*

26 *pno.* *a tempo*
piu fantastico

f *p* *mf* *mp*

32

p *f* *pp* *mp*

37 *pno.*

f *mf* *ff*

43 *pno.*

f *f* *mf*

50

f *mp* *f*

Day-dreams

6. *con raccoglimento* ♩ = 65
con sordini
mp (seconda volta)

6

11 *poco a poco calando*

16 *ppp*

23 *ppp*

29 *poco ritardando*
pp *p* *mp* *p*

35 *quasi fanfare con spirito* ♩ = 80
pno.

39

43 *a tempo primo*
p

48

53 *poco a poco calando*

58

p *pp* *ppp*

A Hobby is not a Holiday

7. *con gioco* ♩ = 90
p

5
mp *mf*

9 *poco allargando* *a tempo*
mp *f* *mf*

12
f

17 *poco allargando* *a tempo*
p *f*

19
mp

25 *poco allargando*

f *p*

28 *a tempo* *poco a poco accelerando*

f *mf*

31 *a tempo* *poco ritardando*

mf

36

p *p* *mf*

39 *poco allargando*

f *p*

Maps of Fabulous Countries

8. *innocente* ♩ = 90

6/16

mp *mf*

Detailed description: This musical staff begins with a treble clef and a 6/16 time signature. The tempo is marked 'innocente' with a quarter note equal to 90 beats per minute. The dynamics start at mezzo-piano (*mp*) and move to mezzo-forte (*mf*). The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, some beamed together.

5

mp *mf* *p*

Detailed description: This musical staff starts with a treble clef. The dynamics are mezzo-piano (*mp*), mezzo-forte (*mf*), and piano (*p*). The melody features eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals, including flats and naturals.

10

mp *mf* *rit.* *a tempo* *p*

Detailed description: This musical staff begins with a treble clef. Dynamics include mezzo-piano (*mp*), mezzo-forte (*mf*), a ritardando (*rit.*), piano (*p*), and a return to 'a tempo'. The notation includes eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and rests.

14

mp *p* *rit.* *a tempo* *mp*

Detailed description: This musical staff starts with a treble clef. Dynamics are mezzo-piano (*mp*), piano (*p*), a ritardando (*rit.*), a return to 'a tempo', and mezzo-piano (*mp*). The time signature changes to 6/16. The melody uses eighth and sixteenth notes.

18

mf *rit.* *a tempo* *mp*

Detailed description: This musical staff begins with a treble clef. Dynamics are mezzo-forte (*mf*), a ritardando (*rit.*), a return to 'a tempo', and mezzo-piano (*mp*). The time signature changes to 7/16 and then back to 6/16. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes.

22

mf *rit.* *a tempo* *mp*

Detailed description: This musical staff starts with a treble clef. Dynamics are mezzo-forte (*mf*), a ritardando (*rit.*), a return to 'a tempo', and mezzo-piano (*mp*). The time signature changes to 7/16 and then to 5/16. The melody features eighth and sixteenth notes.

27 *mf* *mp* *mf* *rit.* $\frac{6}{16}$

33 *a tempo* *mp* *mf* *rit.* *a tempo* *p* *mp*

39 *mf* *rit.* *a tempo* *p* $\frac{4}{16}$ $\frac{5}{16}$

45 *sonore al fine* *pp* *poco a poco rit.* *p* *mp* *meno mosso* *p* $\frac{5}{16}$

50 *molto ritardando* *pp*

Impatience

9. *altieramente* ♩ = 70
mf *f*

4 *piu allargando* *a tempo*
mf

7 *piu allargando*
mp *p* *mf*

10

12 *a tempo*

15 *piu mosso*
ff *mp* *p*

18 *poco a poco rit a mm = 56* *pomposo ed esclamato* ♩ = 56
mf

21

24

27 (jeté) *poco a poco stringendo a mm = 70*
p mp mf

30

33
mp p mf p

The White Light of Wonder

luminare ♩ = 90
con sord.

10. *ppp* (*ppp*)

4

9

12

17

21

pp

misterioso

24 *p* *pp*

28

The musical score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. It consists of eight systems of music, each with a measure number at the beginning. The first system starts at measure 10. The tempo is marked 'luminare' with a quarter note equal to 90 beats per minute, and the performance instruction is 'con sord.' (con sordina). The score features various time signatures: 7/16, 3/4, and 6/16. Dynamics include ppp, (ppp), pp, p, and misterioso. The music is characterized by long, sweeping melodic lines with many accidentals (sharps and flats) and a sense of ethereal lightness.

32

Musical staff 32-35. Measures 32-33: 6/16, 3/4, *p*. Measures 34-35: 7/16, 3/4.

36

Musical staff 36-39. Measures 36-37: 13/16, 3/4. Measures 38-39: 7/16, 3/4.

40

Musical staff 40-43. Measures 40-41: 9/16, 3/4. Measures 42-43: 7/16, 3/4.

44

Musical staff 44-46. Measures 44-45: 13/16, 6/16. Measures 46: 7/16, 4/4. Dynamics: *p*, *p*, *mp*.

47

Musical staff 47-50. Measures 47: 3/4, *non dim.*. Measures 48-49: 13/16, 3/4, *piu mosso*, *non dim.*. Measure 50: 6/16, 3/4, *p*.

51

Musical staff 51-54. Measures 51: 3/4, *non dim.*. Measures 52-53: 7/16, 13/16. Measures 54: 3/4, 13/16. Dynamics: *mp*, *p*.

55

Musical staff 55-57. Measures 55-56: 13/16, 3/4, *p*. Measures 57: 7/16, *mp*, *sub. pp*.

58

Musical staff 58-61. Measures 58-59: 6/16, 13/16, *p*. Measures 60-61: 3/4, 7/16, *mp*.

62

Musical staff 62-65. Measures 62-63: 7/16, 3/4, *mf*. Measures 64-65: 12/16, 3/4, *p*, *piu poco rit.*, *ppp*.

Punch and Judy

11. *adirato* ♩ = 126
pizz.
ff

6 *dolce e vibrato*
arco
mp

13
mf *f*

20 *ruvido (sul pont.)*

26 *subito dolce (tasto)* *ruvido (sul pont.)* *pizz.*
mp *f*

32 *normale*
arco
p *mp* *mp*

39 *poco a poco cresc.*

mf *f*

44

ff *pizz.* *adirato*

49 *cantabile e risentito*

f *arco*

56

62 *piu dolce ed amore* (sul ponticello)

mp *pp* *mp* *pp* (sul ponticello)

68 *senza rit.* (sul. pont)

mp *ppp* (sul. pont)

A Lost Experience in the Land of the Living

12. $\text{♩} = 112$

The musical score is written in treble clef with a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = 112. The first staff (measures 12-15) starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second staff (measures 16-19) features a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic. The third staff (measures 20-23) includes markings for *p*, *rit.*, and *a tempo*. The fourth staff (measures 24-27) contains triplets and markings for *pp*, *rit.*, and *a tempo*. The fifth staff (measures 28-31) continues the melodic line. The sixth staff (measures 32-35) includes markings for *rit.*, *ritardando*, and *pp*. The seventh staff (measures 36-39) concludes the piece with a final chord.