

TOMBEAU FOR PIANO

‘Tombeau’ – which takes its title from the central elegy of the work – was composed 1966-69. Its form is a series of fairly specific technical studies interspersed with variations. The introduction provides a sort of ‘trailer’, in which each phrase of the theme is punctuated by a brief quote from the ensuing studies (heard in reverse order). This scheme is balanced by that of the finale, which is also punctuated by short ‘flashbacks’. The Tombeau was written as a tribute to certain composers for the piano, notably Schumann and Szymanovsky, and to a style of playing that has now become almost ‘historic’. It is also a tribute to our beloved masters, many of them obscure, who made us musicians. It is therefore, in many senses, a retrospective work, the last of a phase, undertaken just before a fairly drastic re-evaluation of techniques, ideas, and intentions. It is dedicated to Stephen Kovacevich, who commissioned it and gave its first performance on the BBC Third Programme and subsequently at Dartington Hall Summer School.

NOTES ON PERFORMANCE

1. This work may be performed in a number of ways:
 - i) All three parts may be played in sequence, with a long *laissez vibrer* pause at the end of Parts I and II.
 - ii) The three parts may be played separately, in which case it is suggested that Parts II and III should be prefaced by the Theme. (See Appendix 1)
 - iii) The work may be regarded as an anthology, from which any portion or portions may be extracted, and performed in whatever sequence the player prefers.
2. Suggested fingerings and manual lay-out may be regarded as optional. But it should be pointed out that the lay-out specified in the score – especially in the studies – refers to particular technical problems, and to adjust this too drastically is to deny the premise of the study.
3. Pedalling, though specified at times, is largely left to the discretion of the player.

Jeremy Dale Roberts. 1969