

an ideal insomnia (2001/02)

for piano

- 1 Night Music**
- 2 Rockaby**
- 3 The Hatter**
- 4 Alter Klang**

'*an ideal insomnia*' is a piece that explores the ways in which objects, sounds and thoughts are distorted by the night and by half-awake dreams. All four movements use samples from pre-existing pieces that undergo a variety of transformations.

The final piece, '*Alter Klang*', takes its title from a painting by Paul Klee. The canvass comprises blocks of colour that seem to obscure an image, rather like the large pixels of a low-grade digital photograph. In '*Alter Klang*', I took sections from the '*Adagietto*' of Mahler's 5th Symphony, removed much of the detail and generated a new piece from my distillation. Sometimes the Mahler becomes almost recognisable, but for the most part it is kept under the surface like a faded memory. This contrasts sharply with the grotesque and frantic '*Night Music*', which nervously quotes from a number of sources distorted beyond recognition into a nightmarish phantasmagoria. '*Rockaby*' is a lullaby and a cradlesong that takes its material from night pieces by Britten and Turnage. '*The Hatter*' refers to Lewis Carroll's '*Alice in Wonderland*' and is loosely based on Satie's setting of Rene Chalupt's poem '*Le Chapelier*'.

The whole set lasts around 10½ minutes, however, the performer is free to select one or more of the pieces and to perform them in any order to suit the contexts of specific recital programmes.

'*an ideal insomnia*' was written for and is dedicated to Graham Caskie, who gave the first performance at the Guildford International Music Festival on 19th March 2003.

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