

David Ibbett describes the structure of Hymn Portraits

When I began Hymn Portraits I was aware that my granddad, Lawrence Kidd, was likely to pass away very soon after a long life of 92 years. Hymn Portraits is a memorial to celebrate his musical life – he had a wide taste, from Methodist hymns to jazz, light music to Debussy – drawing on some of these musics to portray aspects of his character and my sadness on his passing. In particular, much of the musical material stems from the hymn O Love That Will Not Let Me Go voiced in the left hand of the first movement, staccato pedals in the second, the left hand in the third – each time reinterpreted, revoiced, reharmonised. I set down this element first then crafted other elements around it, sometimes in discrete layers, others blended, interacting, interrupting. The middle movement's Scherzo material comes from Felix Arndt's Nola, a piano piece of jolly character. Originally I planned the piece as a single movement, but as three breaths began to emerge, it seemed natural to separate them – though they are only complete played together.

The atmosphere I am trying to create is one of sadness, remembrance, catharsis and new life.