

***Diversions: 4 Pieces for Young Pianists* (1994)**

1. Distant Bells, 2. Gathering Clouds, 3. Land of Nod, 4. Games

Diversions was composed only a few short years following a concentrated period of piano writing, including Divertimento No. 10 for solo piano and string orchestra (1988), *Micromotions* (1988), *Three Pieces for Piano* (1989), and *Duologue for Two Pianos* (1990). While Weinzwieg confessed that his own piano technique was lacking, his piano works are both challenging and rewarding in rhythm, texture, and expression. Though Weinzwieg is generally not known for his pedagogical piano works, *Diversions* offers many technical and expressive explorations that are sure to interest and teach any young player.

“Distant Bells” focuses on major and minor seconds, with a few minor thirds to keep the player alert. Damper pedal indications help the player practice creating a “sustained ringing” while regularly clearing the sound. The narrow interval range of the first piece is abandoned for leaps of minor and major sevenths in “Gathering Clouds.” These leaps must be “gently flowing” across numerous metre changes and dynamic shifts—changes which conjure up the title’s image.

“Land of Nod” returns to the small intervals of the first piece, with seconds and thirds used almost exclusively in the right hand. These right hand harmonic intervals alternate with a single left hand D. The challenge of this piece lies in the right hand leaps and sharp dynamic contrasts. The final piece, “Games,” is the most challenging, with metre and tempo changes, increasing rhythmic complexity, and shifts in texture. The polytonality and dramatic ritardandos draw out the humour in this “cheerful” piece.

Written by Alexa Woloshyn