

Children at a Funeral (1996)

Children at a funeral was written about a year after the death of my father. He was an eccentric man - friends and family remember him with a healthy mixture of affection, admiration and exasperation. It was the extraordinary atmosphere that pervaded his memorial service that prompted the idea for the piece. I have always felt there to be a special affinity between children and their grandparents (or indeed elderly people in general) - they seem to share a certain wisdom or knowledge that transcends their apparent innocence, and to which us, mere adults, are not privy. I have often wondered what goes through their minds as they attend the funeral of such a benefactor. Their seeming ability to take bereavement in their stride, as they play games in the churchyard during the boring parts of the ceremony and giggle at all their other strange friends and relatives, leaves one wondering if they know something we don't. *Children at a funeral* tries to summon up a little of this mysterious, touching phenomenon with the elusive, ephemeral, bell-like sounds of the prepared piano. It is dedicated to the memory of my father.

James Wood