



# *L'Esquisse d'un Sourire*

*For violoncello and piano*

*Nigel Morgan*

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# *L'Esquisse d'un Sourire*

*For violoncello and piano*

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## **About the music**

This short piece is based on a poem by the composer that speaks of autumn and the quality of light and shade common to that season. The word *Esquisse* in the title has a double meaning in the French language – a sketch and a hint. So the phrase ‘a hint of smile’ is *un esquisse d'un sourire*. This phrase forms the central line in the poem.

The music is built from two chords that constantly alternate throughout the work. In the first section these chords provide a gentle rocking motion. They explore different textural possibilities in the piano part accompanying a sustained cello line that weaves its way through the tenor and bass voices of the harmony. In the second section the cello becomes a gentle poetic voice playing the text of the poem like a free recitative against further reflective harmonies built from the two-chord source.

The afternoon is golden.  
It has that light  
only September  
holds when  
the angle of the sun  
casts shadows  
of a softer hue.  
. . . and seeing you  
in silhouette,  
your back to the light,  
(across this busy room)  
there is a hint of a smile  
as,  
caught in talk,  
your gaze attends  
to the fielding of questions  
. . .

So the while  
I read your voice's music.  
Sketch the while  
those gestures  
I already know.

*L'Esquisse d'un Sourire* was composed for the cellist Tim Lowe and pianist Stephen Gutman to play at the opening event of the Wakefield Live Music Project at the Orangery, Wakefield on 7 October 2009.



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# L'Esquisse d'un Sourire

*intimo* ♩ = 60

Cello

Piano

*p*  
(sul II con sord. ad lib.)

*pp*

*ppp*

*pp*

*mp*

9

Vc.

Pn.

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

17

Vc.

Pn.

*mp*

*f*

*p*  
(con sord.)

*mp*

*mf*

*f*

*mf*

Con Pedale

25 *mp* *sub p* *f* *quasi recitative*  
*mp* *mf*  
 (senza sord.)

32 *mp* *mf*  
*f* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *f*

39 *Adagio*  
*poco a poco ritard.* *p* *calando* 3 *p*