

Nocturne and Minuet for String Quartet



Bill Robinson

Nocturne and Minuet for String Orchestra

(Dec. 2002—April 2003)

From 1991 to 2001, I did not have the housing or other factors in life that would allow me the luxury of composing. None of my compositions had been performed since 1984, so there was little motivation to continue. In 2001, I enrolled at NCSU to study physics, which gave me student housing and a regularized lifestyle. Thus in 2002, I made two electric violins, one with six strings, with adaptive gear in hopes of being able to play violin once again, despite my severe arthritis. This in turn led to the purchase of an old upright piano, and starting to use Finale on my computer for copywork. I made a new edition of my solo violin music, as well as music for my six-string violin using a curved bow allowing polyphonic performance. Once my set of eleven solo violin sonatas was finished, I decided to warm up and flex my compositional muscles with a larger form. This was *Nocturne and Minuet*, written for either string quartet or string orchestra. It was designed to be suited to amateur performance, and for the enjoyment of the general audience that attends classical music concerts. It is not as complex or as long as the works that would follow; this is not an ambitious piece, but rather just something that might be fun to play and hear, and to get me back in the game after a long absence. (This does not presume to be my Big String Quartet at all.) After completing this modest effort, I went on in the following summer to larger projects.

The first movement ended up with a kind of moodiness that justifies the title of *Nocturne*. The second movement is in strict classical minuet form, complete with a trio section and *minuet da capo*. I don't usually get the chance to make musicians flip pages back and forth trying to find the little symbol and hey don't forget the repeat did we agree to take it or not? Always good for a little nail-biting during performance. Don't let the form fool you, though, this is 21st Century music, although it may seem to ignore the last 60 years of thumping and bumping that most in the audience would just as soon forget. You may find a little Prokofiev, a touch of Bartok in his milder moods, maybe a little Ravel, and in the Minuet, more than a touch of Papa Haydn in the stew; but the language is my own.

Nocturne and Minuet was premiered by the strings of the Raleigh Civic Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Randall Foy, in November 2003. This was the first performance of my music in nineteen years. (I had to wait until 2006 for any other performances.) The cover photograph shows me after the concert, speaking with (left to right) Susan Osborne, Stephen Reynolds, Matt Corne, Dean Lee, and on the far right, Bruce Sherwood. Steve, Matt, Dean and Bruce were all on the physics faculty here at NCSU; Susan is Steve's wife and teaches English here.

Should time constraints or other limitations lead to an inability to perform both movements, either may stand alone in a concert.

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Publisher Parrish Press Raleigh NC 2nd Edition February 2015
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Nocturne and Minuet for String Quartet

Lento $\bullet = 72$

I. Nocturne

(7.5')

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Violin I

p dolce

Violin II

p dolce

Viola

p dolce

Cello

p dolce

5

10

cresc.

cresc.

Nocturne and Minuet

2

16

mp *mf* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

21

f *f* *f* *f* *f* *f*

26

p *p* *p* *p* *p* *subito p*

Nocturne and Minuet

3

31

pizz.

f

35

f

p

39

subito p

p

arco

p

Nocturne and Minuet

4

45

ff

ff

ff

ff

50

ff *pp* *ff* *pp* *pp* *ff* *pp* *pp* *ff* *pp*

p dolce

[illegible]

Nocturne and Minuet

60

ff *pp* *p* *p* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *p*

65

ff *ff* *ff* *ff*

71

p

Nocturne and Minuet

6

81

Handwritten musical score for 'The Rose Tree'. The score is written on four staves. The first staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The third staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The fourth staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'n.' (piano) and 'f.' (forte). The piece is marked with a repeat sign at the beginning and a double bar line at the end.

85

mf f

mf f 3 3

pp mf f

pp mf f

Nocturne and Minuet

7

90

ff *dim. p. a p.* (*mf*)

ff *dim. p. a p.* (*mf*)

ff *dim. p. a p.* (*mf*)

ff *dim. p. a p.* (*mf*)

94

p

p

p

p

98

cresc. *f* *ff*

cresc. *f* *ff*

cresc. *f* *ff*

cresc. *f* *ff*

Nocturne and Minuet

8

103

ff *p* *pp* *sempre*

ff *p* *pp* *sempre*

ff *p* *pp* *sempre*

ff *p* *pp* *sempre*

109

pp *sempre*

pp *sempre*

pp *sempre*

pp *sempre*

114

molto rit.

molto rit.

molto rit.

molto rit.

II. Minuet

(6.2')

9

Vivace $\bullet = 160$

Violin I *ff*

Violin II *ff*

Viola *ff*

Cello *ff*

9

17

pp

pp

pp

pp

25

pp *cresc.*

pp *cresc.*

34

f+ *ff*

ff

ff

ff

42

ff

50

Measures 50-56 of the Nocturne and Minuet. The score is written for piano in 3/4 time. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The music features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, often beamed together. The bass line is simpler, with quarter and eighth notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

57

Measures 57-63 of the Nocturne and Minuet. The key signature changes to one flat (Bb). The melody in the right hand continues with eighth and quarter notes, some beamed. The left hand features a more active bass line with eighth notes and quarter notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

64

Measures 64-70 of the Nocturne and Minuet. The key signature changes to two flats (Bb, Eb). The melody in the right hand continues with eighth and quarter notes, some beamed. The left hand features a more active bass line with eighth notes and quarter notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

12

72

Musical score for measures 72-78. The system consists of four staves: two treble staves (upper and lower) and two bass staves (upper and lower). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The music features a variety of note values including eighth, quarter, and half notes, with frequent use of slurs and ties. The melody is primarily in the upper treble staff, while the bass staves provide harmonic support with sustained notes and moving lines.

79

Musical score for measures 79-85. The system continues with four staves. The key signature remains two flats. The music shows a continuation of the melodic and harmonic themes, with some chromatic movement and dynamic changes indicated by slurs and ties. The bass staves continue to provide a steady harmonic foundation.

86

Musical score for measures 86-92. The system consists of four staves. The key signature changes to one flat (B-flat). The time signature remains 3/4. The music features a variety of note values including eighth, quarter, and half notes, with frequent use of slurs and ties. The melody is primarily in the upper treble staff, while the bass staves provide harmonic support with sustained notes and moving lines. The system concludes with a double bar line.

93

ff

ff

101

pp *sempre*

pp *sempre*

pp *sempre*

109

Fine **Trio**

pp *sempre*

pp *sempre*

pp *sempre*

118

pp sempre

127

133

142

Musical score for measures 142-150. The score is in 3/4 time and features a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass staff. The melody is in the treble staff, and the bass staff provides a harmonic foundation with chords and single notes. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

151

Musical score for measures 151-158. The score continues the piano accompaniment from the previous system. The melody in the treble staff is more active, with many eighth and sixteenth notes. The bass staff continues with a steady accompaniment of chords and single notes.

Minuet Da Capo

159

Musical score for measures 159-166. This system marks the beginning of the Minuet Da Capo section. The treble staff has a wavy line indicating a repeat or a specific performance instruction. The bass staff continues with a steady accompaniment. The key signature changes to one flat (Bb).