



Four Commentaries

for piano and violoncello

VIOLONCELLO

Nigel Morgan

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About the music

During 2007 I had the opportunity to hear performances of three entirely different compositions of music for cello and piano: Shostakovich's Sonata, Alexander Goehr's Fantasia and a revelatory performance of three of Beethoven's Cello Sonatas. Following the Beethoven experience I felt I could no longer sit on the fence deliberating about this challenging combination of sonorities and chose to write a preliminary work that explored how my own musical preoccupations might react to the cello and piano duo.

Four Commentaries was written with Beethoven's F major sonata Op.5 No.1 open on my desk. On the first page of Beethoven's score it became obvious that sequential harmonic and melodic movement was something largely absent within my musical style. My first task was to attempt my own expression of such sequential movement as a building block of a composition. Furthermore, a comparison with this early sonata and the mid period Op.69 in A Major showed that Beethoven developed a sophisticated approach to voice exchanges, shifts of register, changing of rhythms and articulations. I have tried to follow a similar path: the piece opening with the cello occupying the acoustic space between the treble and bass registers of piano and then gradually exploiting all kinds of textural relationships and combinations.

All that said the work is not a set of commentaries on Beethoven's sonatas – that is perhaps a project for the future. The subject of commentary here is the first movement of my own first Concerto for orchestra (2004). Each commentary looks at the melodic material of the music focusing in turn on a different musical element. These elements are expressed using the celebrated descriptions of composer Sam Richards, descriptions I continue to find a source of inspiration and challenge. They provide a kind of subtitle to each commentary.

The work is dedicated to Martin Roscoe and Moray Welsh whose performance at the Beverley Chamber Music Festival 2007 I was privileged to hear.

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... rising, falling, hovering

agilmente ♩ = 65
Pno.

Cello

mf *mp* *mp* *cresc.* *cresc.*

4 *mf* *mp* *mf*

8 *mp* *mp* *mf* *enfatico*

12 Pno. *cresc.* *f* *pizz*

17 Pno. (*poco staccato*) *mp* *mf*

21 *arco* *mp semplice*

25 *mf* *cresc.* *f*

28 *deliberato* *sub.mp* *mf* *mp* *cresc.*

32 *f* *mp* *mf*

35 Pno. (*cantando e poco meno*)

mp *f* *mp*

38 (Pno.) *piu mosso* *allargando*

mf

43 *a tempo*

mp *mf* *p* *mp*

46 *poco ritard. ed allargando*

p *mf* *attacca*

... rate of change

innocente ♩ = 56

Cello

48 *f* *deliberato* *mp* *gracile*

51 *cresc.* *mf* *articolato*

54 *delicato* *sub. mp* *grazioso*

57

60 *mf* *f* *mf* *articolato*

63 *cresc.* *f*

65 *mp*

67 *cresc. poco a poco* *f*

70 *mf*

74

mp *cresc.* *mf* *mp* *leggiero*

77

cresc. *mf*

81

mf *f* *p* *leggiero*

85

mp *cresc.* *mf*

88

mp *f* *mf*

91 *grazioso*

mp *mf*

94

p *mf* *p* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *articolato*

97 *deliberato*

f *attacca*

... what happens together

Risoluto ♩ = 120

Cello

99 *f* pizz. arco

102 *mf*

106 *mf* *preciso*

110 *f*

113 *mf* pizz. arco

116 *mp* *animato*

119 *cresc.* *mf*

122 *mf* *f* pizz. arco

126 *mf* *affabile*

129

Musical notation for measures 129-131. Measure 129 is in bass clef, 7/8 time, with a melodic line. Measure 130 is in bass clef, 6/8 time, with a melodic line. Measure 131 is in treble clef, 4/4 time, with a chordal accompaniment. Dynamics include *mf* and *Pno.*

132

Musical notation for measures 132-136. Measure 132 is in treble clef, 7/8 time, with a chord. Measure 133 is in bass clef, 2/4 time, with a melodic line. Measure 134 is in bass clef, 6/8 time, with a melodic line. Measure 135 is in bass clef, 4/4 time, with a melodic line. Measure 136 is in bass clef, 7/4 time, with a chord. Dynamics include *mp*.

137

Musical notation for measures 137-140. Measure 137 is in bass clef, 7/4 time, with a melodic line. Measure 138 is in bass clef, 9/8 time, with a melodic line. Measure 139 is in treble clef, 4/4 time, with a melodic line. Measure 140 is in treble clef, 4/4 time, with a melodic line. Dynamics include *mp* and *p*. Performance instructions include *Pno.* and a 5-fingered scale.

140

Musical notation for measures 140-143. Measure 140 is in treble clef, 4/4 time, with a melodic line. Measure 141 is in bass clef, 4/4 time, with a melodic line. Measure 142 is in bass clef, 4/4 time, with a melodic line. Measure 143 is in bass clef, 4/4 time, with a melodic line. Dynamics include *mf* and *mp*. Performance instructions include *chiaro*, *non dim.*, and *attacca*.

... where things come from

145 *severo* ♩ = 52

Cello *f*

*
see note below

148 Pno. ♩ = 80

mf impaziente

152 *tempo 1* ♩ = 80 *flautando*

sul pont *p*

f normale ♩ = 65 *allargando e bravura*

156 ♩ = 75 *con sord.* *accel.*

p *mf* *p* (tempo 1) ♩ = 52

160 *accel. a tempo 2*

tempo 2 ♩ = 110 Pno. *mf*

164 *senza sord.* *pizz.*

ritard. a tempo 1 *tempo 1* ♩ = 80

mf *f*

168 *arco* *Pno.* *accel. a tempo 2*

mf *f* *mf*

174 *tempo 2* ♩ = 110 *Pno.* *f* *f*

tempo 1 ♩ = 80 *f inciso*

178 *accel. a tempo 2*

p

* make these empty bars long enough to prepare the listener for a different tempo, timbre or style of playing

182 *tempo 2* ♩ = 110 *ritardando ed*

ff *f* *f* *mf*

189 *allargando a tempo 1* *tempo 1* ♩ = 80

f *mf*

194 *accel. a tempo 2* *tempo 2* ♩ = 110

Pno. *f* *f*

200 *deliberato* *ritard. a tempo 1* *tempo 1* ♩ = 80

Pno. *mf* *mf*

205 *animato* *ritard. ed allargando*

mf

209 *tempo 1* ♩ = 80 *tempo 2* ♩ = 110

Pno. *f* *mf* *f* Pno. (*giustamente*)

213 *tempo 1* ♩ = 60 *accelerando a tempo 1*

mp *f*

217 *tempo 1* ♩ = 80 *accelerando a tempo 2*

mf

220 *tempo 2* ♩ = 110 *ritard. a tempo 1* *tempo 1* ♩ = 80

f