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Duet for Viola and Piano

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Duet for Viola and Piano

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Program Notes:

This is the tale of a land once inhabited by ancient spirits, who still haunt the land for hundreds of years to come. Measure by measure, the story unfolds...

The piano introduction gives the listener a glimpse of a time in the past when spirits ruled among darkness, until the first trace of sixteenth notes (measure 11) clears the air, flashes us forward hundreds of years, and brings in the viola as a beacon of light. The streets are now filled with people and livelihoods, and the land of the past is completely unrecognizable, with no traces of the ancient spirits.

A: A man strolls through the streets alone at night, whistling the tune that the viola comes in with as he takes in the surrounding beauty. As the piano's sixteenth note figure creeps back in and becomes more prominent, he gradually begins to feel uneasy and realizes that he is not alone—spirits are lurking in the shadows and lunging at him from all angles! After a brief build up of intensity, he retreats into a hiding place to catch his breath.

B: The chase continues as a fugue, conducted with a dignity that seems rather humorous, and before it spins too out of control the man retreats once again.

C: This time, he gives in to his exhaustion and melts into a wondrous, fanciful dream, which begins the first and only section of the piece that offers the listeners a break from the grotesque and panicked character of the piece, and instead invites them into a brief state of euphoria.

D: The spirits' gruesome theme, recognizable from the very beginning of the piano introduction and now heard in the viola, brings the man back to reality and leads us into a short cadenza.

E: The return of the piano then sparks a relentless chase between the man and the spirits—rather, a back-and forth routine of complacent sauntering followed by abrupt, nimble attacks—dictated by startling accents, impetuous runs, and conniving trickery.

F: The madness builds to a climax of fiercely dreadful chords in the viola with a low rumbling accompaniment in the piano, erupting in a final shriek that scares the spirits away.

G: Finally, the man walks alone once again. He whistles a tune that is reminiscent of the viola's initial entrance, but now burdened with a heaviness and wariness from his newfound knowledge of the land. The tune fades from a wistful rumination to an unsettling whisper of dread, indicating that he knows that the spirits will never truly leave.

Duet for Viola and Piano

Julia Moss
(2019)

♩=65

Viola

The Viola staff shows four measures of whole rests, indicating the instrument is silent during this section.

Piano

The Piano staff consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line starting with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a harmonic accompaniment of chords: G2-B2, G2-B2, G2-B2, and G2-B2.

5

poco rit

a tempo

Vla.

The Viola staff shows four measures of whole rests, indicating the instrument is silent during this section.

Pno.

The Piano staff consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line starting with a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a harmonic accompaniment of chords: G2-B2, G2-B2, G2-B2, and G2-B2. The dynamic marking *pp* is present. There are also some triplets in the lower staff.

8

Vla.

The Viola staff shows four measures of whole rests, indicating the instrument is silent during this section.

Pno.

The Piano staff consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line starting with a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a harmonic accompaniment of chords: G2-B2, G2-B2, G2-B2, and G2-B2. The dynamic marking *fff* is present. There are also some triplets in the lower staff.



Vla.

Pno.

Vla.

Pno.

Vla.

Pno.

Vla.

Pno.

18

Vla. *poco cresc.*

Pno. *poco cresc.*

19

Vla.

Pno.

20

Vla. $\text{♩} = 90$ (eighth notes just slightly slower)

Pno. *f* *subito ps:* *mp* *gentle* *freely, with rubato*

23

Vla.

Pno. *poco cresc.* *p*

27 **B.**

Vla. *mf* *fugue-like* *cresc.*

Pno. *mp* *stately, fugue-like* *cresc.*

Vla. *3*

Pno. *3* *3*

Vla. *cresc.* *f dim.* *mp*

Pno. *f* *dim.*

Vla. *relaxed, swaying.* *3*

Pno. *p* *3* *3* *3* *3*

♩=80

37 *rit.*

Vla. Pno.

41 **C.** ♩=120

Vla. Pno. *full of wonder* *cresc.* *poco rit*

44 *floating mp*

Vla. Pno. *floating mp* *a tempo f* *p* *cresc.*

47

Vla. Pno. *ff* *cresc.*

Duet for Viola and Piano

50

Vla. *rit.*

Pno. *ff* *mp* *ff* *mp*

52 *a tempo*

Vla.

Pno. *freely*

54 *rit.* **D.** ♩ = 70

Vla. *mf*

Pno. *mf*

58 ♩ = 70

Vla. *agitato* *espress.*

Pno.

Duet for Viola and Piano

65 **E.** $\text{♩} = 75$

Vla. *mp* lightly *sfz*³ startled *f*

Pno. *p* *sfz*

70 *mp* lightly *sfz* startled *mp*

Pno. *p* *sfz*

73 *cresc.* *f* *mp* relaxed, swaying

Pno. *cresc.* *sf*

76 $\text{♩} = 75$ *sfz* *molto cresc.* *rit.* *ff* *cresc.*

80 **F.** *a tempo*

Vla. *ff grandioso* *mf*

Pno. *mf dolce*

84

Vla. *f*

Pno. *cresc. agitato* *ff*

88

Vla. *mf* *f*

Pno. *p* *reminiscent*

93 **G.** $\text{♩} = 50$

Vla. *mp legato, dolce*

Pno.

Duet for Viola and Piano

95 *rit.* $\text{♩} = 40$

Vla. Pno.

3 3

Detailed description: This system contains measures 95 and 96. The Viola part (top staff) begins with a *rit.* marking and a tempo of $\text{♩} = 40$. It features a melodic line with a slur over measures 95-96 and a fermata over the final note. The Piano part (bottom two staves) has two triplet markings (3) in measure 95. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#).

97 *rit.* *a tempo* *heavy, defeated* *p*

Vla. Pno.

pp

Detailed description: This system contains measures 97 through 100. The Viola part (top staff) starts with a *rit.* marking, followed by *a tempo* and the instruction *heavy, defeated*. The dynamics are marked *p* in measure 97 and *pp* in measure 98. The Piano part (bottom two staves) features a *pp* dynamic in measure 98. The key signature remains three sharps.