

Michael Gandolfi

Arioso Doloroso/Estatico

(a song without words for solo violin)

Performance Notes

- (tenuto) means a light accent and a slightly longer duration for that note value

Dotted slurs indicate phrasing, not bowing.

The section with alternating pizzicato and arco (mm. 52-65) may be played entirely as arco. If so, the staccato articulations must be strictly observed, so as to create a color-contrast for those notes.

Approximate duration: seven minutes

Program Listing

Arioso Doloroso/Estatico

Michael Gandolfi (2016)

Program Notes

Arioso Doloroso/Estatico is a song without words for solo violin cast in a single movement of about seven minutes in duration. It was written at the request of violinist Yevgeny Kutik, whose playing I have admired since I first heard him perform at the Tanglewood Music Center in the early 2000's. It was Yevgeny's wish that I compose a work for violin that is based on the concept of a 'song without words,' as explored by Felix Mendelssohn in his short lyrical pieces for piano by the same title. Yevgeny's note to me included the following:

"...to explore the idea of "without words" in depth to the point where words fail because the expression or underlying emotion is too fervent for them."

My method was to include the 'deliverer' of the words, the human voice, in this notion - i.e., to construct a piece that begins in a vocal range, with vocal-quality contours, and progresses to an instrumental outburst that overtakes those constraints, not in a display of virtuosity for its own sake, but born from a musical fervor that can only be realized through the unique qualities of instrumental writing.

My other models in writing this piece were the solo violin partitas of J.S. Bach. I have studied, listened to, and played these works on my guitar throughout my life, and as the years progress, my love and admiration for them only grows. There are always several voices implied in Bach's partitas, so my starting point was to do likewise and compose the opening melodic material in two voices. This music is quite somber in tone, hence the word 'Doloroso' in the title. It is followed by a series of episodes that increasingly add purely instrumental figuration to the materials, while maintaining its polyphonic design. Ultimately this motion leads to an outburst of delirium, as referenced by 'Estatico' of the title, and it is here where 'the words/voices end' as it were. However, what is gained by this outburst is revealed in its resolution: the return of the opening 'duet,' modified harmonically by what was 'learned' in the 'Estatico' passage.

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Adagio ♩ = 72

con poco rubato

rit.

a tempo

6 *rit.* *a tempo*

13 *mp p* *f un poco agitato*

18 *più f* *f*

23 (optional repeat) *a tempo senza vibr.*

29 *vibr. ord.* *cresc.*

34 *f*

38

42

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2
47

3 3 3 5

51 (non. tr.) **Spirito** $\text{♩} = 72$ (The pizzicati are optional. If played arco, staccato articulations must be observed.)

pizz. arco pizz. arco pizz. arco

p

56 pizz. arco pizz. arco pizz. arco pizz. arco pizz.

61 arco pizz. arco pizz. arco

66

f

72

78

80

83

85

88 *ff*

Musical staff 88-90: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The music consists of a series of eighth notes, some beamed together, with a dynamic marking of *ff* (fortissimo).

91

Musical staff 91-93: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp. The music continues with eighth notes and some slurs.

94

Musical staff 94-96: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp. The music continues with eighth notes and some slurs.

Adagio ♩ = 72
con poco rubato

97 *p*

Musical staff 97-102: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) and a 4/4 time signature.

103 *pp* *p* *f* *p*

rit. a tempo

Musical staff 103-108: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp. The music consists of chords and quarter notes. Dynamic markings include *pp*, *p*, *f*, and *p*. Tempo markings include *rit.* and *a tempo*.

109 *f* *p* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

rit. a tempo

Musical staff 109-115: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp. The music consists of chords and quarter notes. Dynamic markings include *f*, *p*, *p*, *mp*, *p*, *mp*, and *p*. Tempo markings include *rit.* and *a tempo*.

116 *f* un poco agitato

Musical staff 116-120: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp. The music consists of chords and quarter notes with accents. Dynamic marking is *f* and the instruction is *un poco agitato*.

121

Musical staff 121-124: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp. The music consists of chords and quarter notes with accents.

125 *dim.*

rit.

Musical staff 125-129: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp. The music consists of chords and quarter notes. Dynamic marking is *dim.* and tempo marking is *rit.*

130 *pppp*

senza vibr. vibr. ord.

Musical staff 130-133: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp. The music consists of chords and quarter notes. Dynamic marking is *pppp*. Performance instructions include *senza vibr.* and *vibr. ord.*