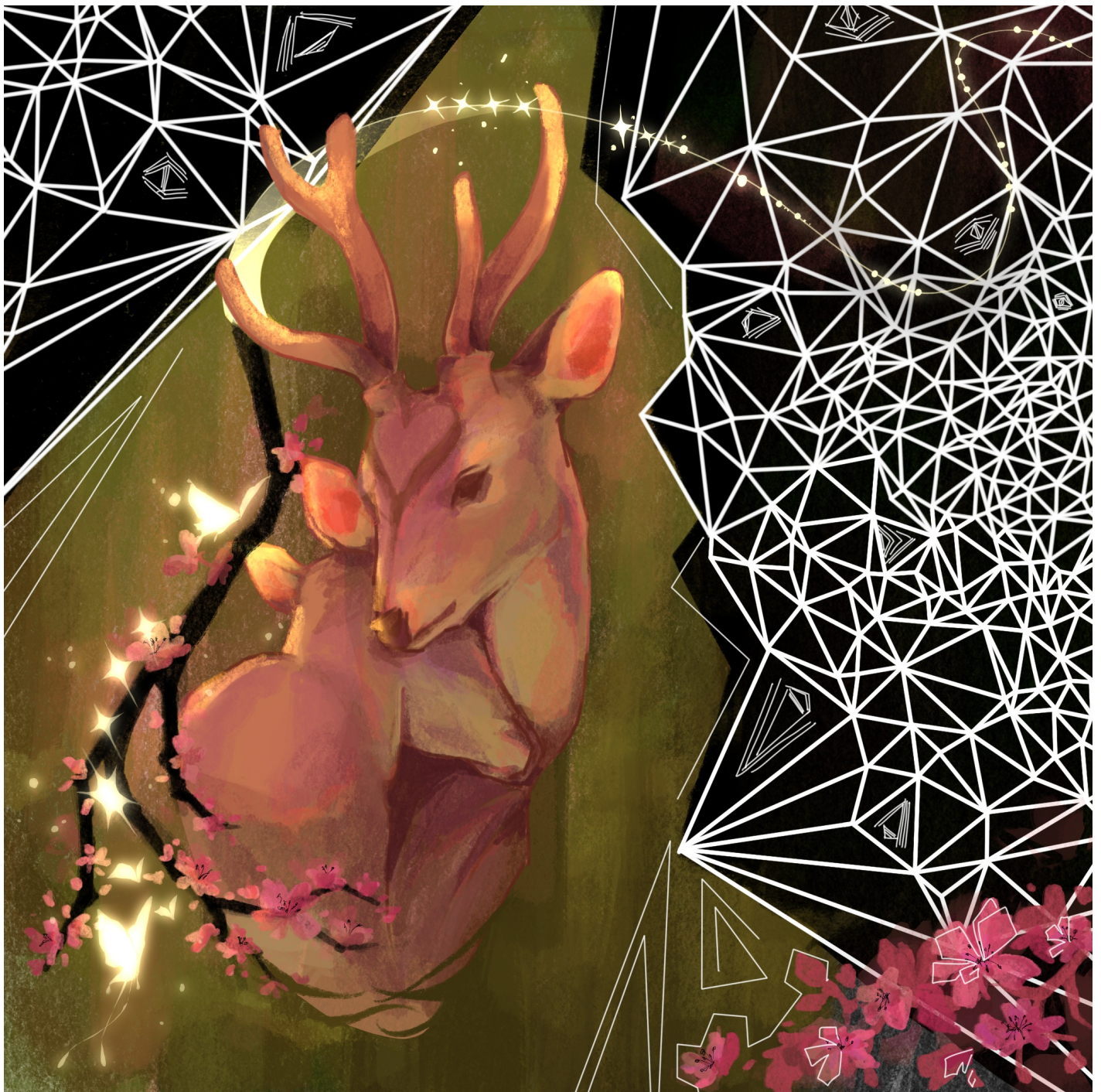


Serenade and Toccata

For Solo Piano

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for Dr. Hagle

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Program Notes

I. Serenade

What comes before the first *I love you*?

Heartbeats. First like the flickering of a candle, weak and wavering; then faster, fluid, swaying, driven not by chance but by conviction. The heartbeats cascade over themselves; the lover ruminates, then they sing—

I love you. It is a simple melody, built from a sequence of four ascending notes. A simple melody for a simple phrase with a simple meaning. *I love you*, the lover sings again, this time with a different inflection; then *I love you* once, twice, thrice more, and each time with something else in mind; a smile, a kind act, a midnight tryst. *You, you, you* until the sounds become meaningless.

Are words not so temporary, so ineffectual? How can the lover sing them so that their love knows it not once but continuously—forever? Why even try? Time passes. The heartbeats accelerate. Twos turn into threes; threes turn into fours. Fours are dizzying; *how does my love appear so composed, so graceful, when I cannot help but—*

I love you spills out, almost involuntarily, and as the lover sings they realize the words *have* changed. The words are broader and warmer. They reverberate with the weight of shared meals and shared kisses and shared dreams. *I love you*, a simple melody for a simple phrase. *I love you* thrice more, and this time each repetition—*you, you, you*—seems more solid than the next, bringing more details into relief: the way their love brushes their hair from their eyes; the way their love tilts their head and blinks away their fatigue in the morning; the way their love squeezes the lover's hands when together, they map out their future, which seems so immense, so infinite.

Time passes. As the lover and their love go about their lives, the shops and footpaths they so often frequent take on a certain density. A coffeehouse is first for freshly-brewed coffee; then for conversation; even later for co-working, the lover's music and their love's painting or physics or poetry. Time passes. Memories accumulate. The words go unspoken, or are spoken every day and night. Does it matter? Any limp repetition captures little of reality. Flimsy as the words are, the feelings they represent only intensify. Around their love, the lover's heartbeats become almost tangible, *material*, like quakes from the footsteps of a giant—

I love you bursts from the lover's chest. The notes sweep through the once-still air and whip it into a whirlwind. *I love you*, still the same four notes, but each word somehow more substantial than ever before, deep and full and heavy with harmony. There is so much more *you* to love than when *you* were just a heartbeat and a smile. Four times more the lover sings it, *I love you*, as if trying to grasp the enormity of the sentiment; to the lover's surprise, on the fifth, the heavens echo fragments back to the pair, as if to reinforce the claim. With relief at the acknowledgment, the lover lets their song fade. The air stills.

Time passes.

I love you, whispers the lover. It has been decades, or perhaps a half-century. *I love you*—sung so many times, always with a different lilt or thought or cadence—now seems to the lover a strange phrase. After all, the memories are gone. It is just a melody they have always sung and must continue to sing to their love. And despite the lack of intent, their love understands the phrase as a simple, sweet statement of how things are. *I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you.*

Time passes. Humans forget. Words evolve. Melodies erode. But—still-familiar, still-fluid—the heart beats as it did before.

II. Toccata

Toccata is a uniquely physical experience. It interrupts itself with deep accented bass notes, which produce reverberations we can *feel*; its volatile perpetual-motion engine leaves no time for thought or meditation. Its rhythm registers as much in the body as it does in the mind. In this sense, and in many others, *Toccata* is the opposite of *Serenade*.

Toccata's main motif, a series of four descending notes in half-steps that ends in a *bang!*, proceeds at a pace that lends it a certain brutality. It is a warped, inverted version of *Serenade*'s *I love you*: percussive rather than lyrical, dissonant rather than harmonious.

Beyond the harmony of chords, *Serenade* is a story of the harmony of lovers. So *Toccata* is dissonant in more ways than one, too. In addition to its chromaticism, *Toccata*'s individual sections clash; if they were wrestled into a narrative, it would be jagged, uneven. Designed to be abstract, *Toccata* resists such easy categorization.

Beyond the lyricism of *Serenade*'s songlike melody, *Serenade* swells and fades much like the human voice. So *Toccata* is percussive in more ways than one, too. In addition to its deep accented bass notes and rhythmic intensity, *Toccata* features mostly short, clipped melodies, almost like vulgar utterances. In fact, the sharp cutoff of *Toccata*'s main motif's last *note* simultaneously functions as an abrupt truncation of *Serenade*'s song—from extended melody to four-note motif.

As such, the differences in their themes are a microcosm of their overall differences. So it makes sense that where *Serenade* ends gently, harmoniously, tapering the way singers do, *Toccata* ends with a dissonant, percussive, blood-and-guts coda—the last note predictably unpredictable.

(Andrew Wu)

Serenade and Toccata

I. Serenade

Fluid (♩. = 40)

ppp

with pedal

poco accel. poco rit. poco accel. *swaying*

[4] poco rit. poco accel. poco rit.

6 poco accel. cascading

p

8 poco rit. singing

pp

p

poco accel.

10

poco rit. poco accel.

12

poco rit. poco accel. poco rit.

[13]

poco accel.

15

Graceful (♩. = 48)

16

17

Measures 17-18 of a piano piece. The key signature has four flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat, D-flat). The time signature is 24/16. The music features a complex, flowing melody in the right hand with many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and a dense, rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. A *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic marking is present at the start of measure 17.

18

Measures 18-19. The melody continues with intricate phrasing and grace notes. The left hand maintains a steady, rhythmic pattern. The time signature remains 24/16.

19

Measures 19-20. The time signature changes to 12/8. The right hand melody becomes more spacious, with longer note values, while the left hand continues with a similar rhythmic texture. The key signature remains four flats.

20

Measures 20-21. The time signature changes to 12/8. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes in both hands. The right hand has some accents. The key signature remains four flats.

21

Measures 21-22. The time signature changes to 12/8. Measure 21 begins with a *sf* (sforzando) dynamic marking and a *sub. pp* (subito pianissimo) marking. The right hand features a triplet of eighth notes followed by a series of triplets. The left hand has a triplet of eighth notes followed by groups of eighth notes, some marked with '8' (octaves). The key signature remains four flats.

22

p

23

pp

24

poco accel.

p

Simmering (♩. = 52)

25

mp *mf*

27

poco accel.

mp *mf*

Erupting (♩. = 60)

29

f

3

molto rit......

30

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

24/16

Sweeping (♩. = 40)

32

ff

24/16

33

24/16

34

sub. mp

8va

35

8va

8va

36

sub. mf

ff

37

relieved

sfz

rit.

fading *8va*

[37]

Still (♩ = 40)

ppp *pp*

40

poco accel.

8va

43

poco rit.

[45]

f *mp*

8va

poco rit.

47

pp *ppp*

8va

poco rit.

sweet

Fluid (♩ = 40) poco accel. poco rit. poco accel.

49

poco rit. accel.

[50]

poco rit.

52

poco rit.

54

poco rit.

(8)

56

II. Toccata

Animated (♩ = 132)
intense

Measures 1-3 of the Toccata. The music is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The right hand features a melodic line with chords and eighth notes, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. Dynamics include *sf* (sforzando) and *p* (piano).

Measures 4-6 of the Toccata. The right hand continues the melodic development with chords and eighth notes. The left hand features a more active line with eighth and sixteenth notes. Dynamics include *sf* (sforzando) and *pp* (pianissimo).

Measures 7-10 of the Toccata. The right hand has a melodic line with chords and eighth notes. The left hand features a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. Dynamics include *mp* (mezzo-piano), *pp* (pianissimo), and *sf* (sforzando).

Measures 11-14 of the Toccata. The right hand features a melodic line with chords and eighth notes. The left hand has a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. Dynamics include *sf* (sforzando) and *sfz* (sforzando). A *poco rit.* (poco ritardando) marking is present at the end of the section. A *8va* (octave) marking is also present.

.....a tempo

Measures 15-18 of the Toccata. The right hand features a melodic line with chords and eighth notes. The left hand has a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. Dynamics include *mp* (mezzo-piano). A *lyrical* marking is present.

18 *playful*

22 *p*

25

28 *mp* *pp*

31 *thunderous* *fp* *f*

34

Measures 34-36 of a musical score. Measure 34 features a complex chordal texture in the right hand with a slur over measures 34 and 35, and a bass line in the left hand. Measure 35 continues the right-hand texture with a *fp* (fortissimo piano) dynamic. Measure 36 shows a right-hand melody with a slur and a *fp* dynamic. The left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

37

Measures 37-39 of a musical score. Measure 37 has a right-hand melody with a slur and a *f* (forte) dynamic. Measure 38 continues the right-hand melody with a slur and a *fp* dynamic. Measure 39 shows a right-hand melody with a slur and a *fp* dynamic. The left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

40

Measures 40-42 of a musical score. Measure 40 features a right-hand melody with a slur and a *f* dynamic. Measure 41 continues the right-hand melody with a slur and a *mp* (mezzo-piano) dynamic. Measure 42 shows a right-hand melody with a slur and a *mp* dynamic. The left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

43

Measures 43-46 of a musical score. Measure 43 features a right-hand melody with a slur and a *f* dynamic. Measure 44 continues the right-hand melody with a slur and a *f* dynamic. Measure 45 shows a right-hand melody with a slur and a *sf* (sforzando) dynamic. Measure 46 shows a right-hand melody with a slur and a *sf* dynamic. The left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

47

Measures 47-49 of a musical score. Measure 47 features a right-hand melody with a slur and a *8ba* (8va) dynamic. Measure 48 continues the right-hand melody with a slur and a *8ba* dynamic. Measure 49 shows a right-hand melody with a slur and a *8ba* dynamic. The left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

50 *adrift*

p *mp*

54

pp *p*

57

mf *f* *p*

60

mf *f* *mf*

64

mp

68 *hallucinatory*

71

74 *mysterious*

78

82

85

sf *pp*

88

sf *sfz*

91

f *sub. pp* *8va*

94

mp *pp*

97

p *pp*

101

104

104

8^{va}
ppp

107

(8)
p

110

apprehensive

pp *p* *mp* *pp*

113

p

*with passion**mp* \leftarrow *mf*

116

mf *f* *ff*

with rubato

120

mp

124

pp *sub.f* *sfz* *ff*

8va

8ba

127

sf

8ba

130

sf

133

136

139

142

145

148

151

154

157

160

