
Three Short Pieces for Cello and Piano

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Three Short Pieces for Cello and Piano, composed during the winter of 2006 under the direction of Professor Ross Bauer, is a small set of three character pieces for cello and piano comprised of “Prelude,” “Vocalise,” and “Recitative-Tango.”

The first movement, “Prelude,” has a very agitated character. The fast, restless sixteenth notes and the dense harmony in both cello and piano create a lot of tension in this movement. This agitated character is contrasted by the calm second movement, “Vocalise,” where the “voice” is imitated by the expressive, long held notes in the cello. “Recitative” is a speech-like singing interlude that introduces “Tango.” Note that this movement is called “Recitative-Tango,” because there is no pause between “Recitative” and “Tango.” One of the most untraditional aspects of this particular tango is its frequent and irregular meter changes throughout the entire movement (whereas a traditional tango is usually written in simple duple meter).

Even though they are three different character pieces, they are to be heard as a whole. The connection is evident in their closely related thematic materials. For examples, the fast sixteenth notes from “Prelude” re-appear in the piano accompaniment in “Vocalise,” but in much slower tempo; likewise, the syncopated rhythms in “Vocalise” later become a characteristic element in “Tango.”

Three Short Pieces for Cello and Piano is also about the nature of the two instruments. In “Prelude,” the cello and piano demonstrate their agilities in maneuvering between different registers (high and low range of notes) in fast tempo. The cello’s capability of playing long-held notes is also demonstrated in “Vocalise.” Finally, “Tango,” a seductive dance, further presents the charms of the two instruments’ personalities.

Ed. note.

An brief excerpt from “Tango” can be heard at the following web address:
http://undergraduatestudies.ucdavis.edu/explorations/Tan_excerpt.mp3/

