

Serenade for Wind Quintet Program Information

Instrumentation

Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in B♭, Bassoon, Horn in F

Performance Notes

Performance time: Nine minutes

Program Notes

This three-movement work for wind quintet makes use of classical forms. The first movement is a small set of variations while the second is a fugue and the third is a sonata.

The theme for the first movement's variations is a wistful melody introduced by the oboe, clarinet and flute. Each restatement of the melody typically brings growing rhythmic complexity along with a change in character as the mood becomes lighter and more lyrical, then more energetic and playful. Following a brief fanfare, the movement ends plaintively, as it began.

The second movement is a fugue, but with a special twist. Generally in a fugue, each voice has its own well-defined tessitura (range of pitches) for statement of the fugue subject. Each voice may then use all twelve pitches of the chromatic scale as the fugue evolves through a variety of sequences and, perhaps, different key areas. This fugue is different. While each instrument has a well-defined tessitura for its statement of the fugue subject, only six pitches are used. Then, throughout the remainder of the fugue, each instrument is strictly limited to its specific set of six pitches. While quite restrictive, this pitch limitation frequently guides the choice of voices and results in a more free harmonic flow than might have otherwise been achieved. The movement is ternary in form, with its central section based on the original fugue subject in retrograde (reversed order) using a different rhythm.

The third movement is a vigorous finale in sonata form. It has two contrasting themes in the exposition; the first based on an arpeggiated triad and the second a series of small duets among the upper winds. This is followed by a brief development, a recap in the home tonality, and a closing coda.

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