

THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF MUSIC

CONCERTO FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA

By

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ABSTRACT

The *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* is a three-movement work for small orchestra and piano solo. Typical of the genre, the movements are arranged by tempo in a fast-slow-fast configuration. The overarching concept of the piece is a kaleidoscopic view of a single idea; that is, each movement represents the metaphorical twist of a kaleidoscope which is itself always fixed on a single point. That point, stated in musical terms, is the interval of a third (particularly the minor third), and it is prominently re-examined in each movement, both in the orchestral and solo parts.

The tonal centricity of the movements is governed by the above rubric as well. The first movement begins with a sustained F-sharp major sonority, the second in G major, and the third in a quasi-A minor, thus tracing the interval of a minor third from F-sharp to A on the largest scale. (In microcosm, the third movement exhibits this phenomenon in reverse, beginning in A, recapitulating in G, and concluding on F-sharp.) Each movement ends with an F-sharp tonal center.

The first movement is framed by two expansive sections featuring a wavering minor third in the orchestra, and a sober solo piano line which clashes with the prevailing tonality. Out of this springs a more joyous melody, first in the piano, then in the entire ensemble. Midway through the movement, a fanfare motive (again based on the minor third) emerges, and leads to a developmental passage in which various motives introduced earlier in the piece are juxtaposed and intertwined. A brief cadenza then gives way to a *giocosso* interplay between soloist and winds that caps off the development and leads to a recapitulation of the opening material.

The second movement differs greatly in character from the first, beginning with a *semplice*, quasi-Baroque G major orchestral *tutti*. Despite this contrast, important connections remain. The opening motive of the melody is a descending major third, while the closing gesture of this section is a lilting minor third—a transformation of the passages which encapsulate the first movement. Serving as a sort of *ritornello*, this opening expository material is interspersed with rhapsodic piano interludes. The third and final statement of the *ritornello* is given at first to the soloist alone, before cascading into a *tutti* statement of the lilting minor third closing gesture, followed by a brief coda.

Finally, the light-hearted third movement introduces a minimalist-inspired *ostinato* figure, which is present throughout most of the movement and suggests the music's *moto perpetuo* label. This figure is a series of repeated pitches (accenting groupings of 3+3+2) concluded by a single ascending minor third. This *ostinato* figure is metrically at odds with the more prosaic and insistent quarter note pulse found in the percussion section. Throughout this movement, the soloist's skills are put on display with fast passagework that requires both quick fingers and a high level of endurance.

INSTRUMENTATION

2 Flutes

2 Oboes

2 Clarinets in B-flat

2 Bassoons

2 Horns in F

Trumpet in C

Trombone

Timpani

Percussion (2 players)

Xylophone, Crash Cymbals, Slap Stick,
Tam-tam, Glockenspiel, Suspended Cymbal,
Hi-hat, Marimba, Triangle (Medium), Snare drum

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

Piano (solo)

Score in C

(Double Bass, Xylophone, and Glockenspiel observe their usual octave transpositions)

Duration: Approximately 20 minutes