Concerto for Cello, Piano, and Orchestra

Composer: Avner Dorman
Year: 2022
Duration: 27 minutes
Orchestration: 2+alto+pic.2.2+bcl.2 / 2.2.0.btbn.1 / timp.2perc / strings
Publisher: Lyric Row Press

Program Note

Concerto for Cello, Piano, and Orchestra (2022) is, at its core, about trying to connect with someone you really care about — someone who's very different from you. The cello and the piano are such fundamentally different instruments: they produce sound differently, they have different strengths and limitations, and they tend to express emotion in very different ways. I started thinking of them as two people who want to be close, but don't quite know how. The piece follows their journey — starting in a place of loneliness and emotional distance, moving through moments of joy, frustration, and vulnerability, and ultimately arriving at a kind of connection that allows each to stay true to themselves. I. Andante con tenerrezza — The piano opens with fragile, high arpeggios, answered by the cello with a sad, inward-looking melody. There's a shared atmosphere, but the two instruments remain emotionally separate. The movement is in a large ABA form, and while they play together, there's still a clear sense of disconnect. II. Allegro — The second movement is a dance — fast, rhythmically playful, full of meter changes and bursts of energy. There's excitement and even optimism as the instruments seem to enjoy being around each other. But that connection still doesn't quite hold, and the movement ends with a kind of collapse — a reminder that it's hard to change who you are just to fit into someone else's world. III. Adagio espressivo – a piacere — This movement is the most expressive and emotionally open. It starts with a lyrical theme in the cello that unfolds through a set of variations. I wanted this to feel more free and intimate — a space where both instruments can express themselves more honestly. Maybe they're getting closer, or maybe they're ready to let go.

Either way, something has shifted. IV. Allegro con fuoco — The final movement is energetic and full of life, with lots of 5/16 and layered rhythms. This is where the cello and piano finally connect — not by becoming the same, but by embracing their differences and playing together fully as themselves. It’s intense, joyful, and — I hope — deeply satisfying. This concerto is very personal to me. It’s about the tension between individuality and closeness — how we navigate difference in relationships, and how meaningful it is when real connection happens.

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Accessed on September 16, 2026