

Concerto Grosso

Composer: Avner Dorman
Year: 2003
Duration: 13 min
Orchestration: str
Publisher: G Schirmer Inc

Program Note

Composer's Note:

I have always loved baroque music. Even as a young child, when I did not care for classical or romantic music, I found baroque very exciting and closer to the music of our day. In retrospect I guess it was the clear rhythms, the strong reliance on the bass, and the extreme contrasts that made this music appeal to me.

In 2002, Israeli conductor Aviv Ron approached me to write a concerto for his orchestra for a series dedicated to Baroque concertos. He wanted a piece based on the music of Handel and Vivaldi, and I gladly accepted the challenge.

I chose to use the opening theme of Handel's Concerto Grosso, opus 6, no.4 as my main motif and Vivaldi's signature virtuosic patterns as the rhythmic driving force of the piece. The piece can be described as a "minimalist" take on baroque music, influenced by Górecki, Pärt, and Glass, and taking their techniques to new extremes.

The soloists are comprised of a String Quartet and a Harpsichord. As in a traditional concerto grosso, they serve as both soloists and as leaders for the large ensemble. Structurally, the piece has three large sections – (i) slow, (ii) fast, and (iii) slow. The opening slow section is interrupted twice by outbursts of energy, and the middle fast section gives way to a static exploration of sound toward its culmination.

Concerto Grosso was premiered in February of 2003; its revised version was premiered in November of the same year.

— Avner Dorman

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