

Double Concerto

For Violin, Cello, and Orchestra

Composer: Avner Dorman
Year: 2019
Duration: 25 min
Orchestration: 2(pic,afl).2.2.2/2.2.1.0/timp.2perc/str
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Program Note

Composer note

When I was first approached by Pinchas Zukerman and Amanda Forsyth to write a double concerto for them, I was ecstatic. I grew up admiring Zukerman's playing, hearing him at the Israel Philharmonic as often as I could. Hearing the two of them play together years later was completely enchanting. I wanted to write a piece that explored the relationship between the two soloists — not only their instruments. How do they interact with one another? What is the interplay between the soloists and the orchestra? How does a modern-day concerto reflect both a long musical tradition and our present time?

The piece is neoclassical in some aspects. It follows a general fast-slow-fast three-movement structure, and there are contrasting themes in each movement. Each movement develops these themes throughout the form. The soloists begin the piece almost wistfully, with a certain sense of nostalgia for older concertos. Against that longing for the past, the orchestra pushes for modern rhythms, harmonies, and orchestral colors.

In the first movement, the soloists oscillate between fighting against the orchestra and joining its exciting harmonies and rhythms. While the orchestra adopts some of the older materials that the soloists present, it ultimately engulfs them with its drive. At the outset of the second movement the soloists try again to return to the past. They play a sweet melody in octaves accompanied by a simple Alberti bass,

and for a period of time this seems to work. Yet this time, it is the cello who strays away from the original theme. The soloists no longer appear as a unified group; their conflict leads to an intimate duet. At the conclusion of the movement the conflict subsides, and the soloists seem to find a new way to coexist, with the orchestra now in support of their reunification. The third movement is both energetic and expressive, and all voices seem to have found a way to cooperate and exist together. The two main themes no longer yearn for the past, now allowing a playful interplay between the soloists as a group with the orchestra. Each of the soloists gets the opportunity to shine individually, at times with interjecting allusions to the past (quotes and misquotes alike). By the conclusion, this nostalgia has passed, and in its place is an acknowledgement — a tribute, celebrating the relationships, the individuals, and the history of the concerto.

— Avner Dorman

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