

# Sextet

**Composer:** Avner Dorman  
**Year:** 2022  
**Duration:** 23 min  
**Orchestration:** ctpt(dtpt)/pf/str(1.0.1.1.1)  
**Publisher:** G Schirmer Inc  
**Commission:** Commissioned for Pacific Symphony's Café Ludwig Series by Dot and Rick Nelson (2020)

## Program Note

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I wrote my Sextet for trumpet, violin, viola, cello, contrabass, and piano during the Covid pandemic for Orli Shaham and musicians from the Pacific Symphony. Orli and I have collaborated often, and she has commissioned several of my works. Writing this piece for her and these players gave me a sense of connection at a time of isolation.

At the core of the Sextet is a tension inspired by Schumann's two alter egos: Florestan, fiery and explosive, and Eusebius, reflective and ruminative. In the pandemic, I felt those two sides of myself more acutely than ever — energy wanting to be dissipated meeting mandatory silence. The first Allegro bubbles with Florestan's passion: repeated notes, symmetrical harmonies, and an irresistible forward drive. It is directly inspired by Schumann's Toccata, reimagined in a modern idiom that transforms its relentless energy into my own language.

The Andante is Eusebius's answer: soft, balanced, and restrained. In its bass line it alludes to Bach's slow movement from Violin Concerto in A minor to ground the music with a kind of continuity and quiet interchanges throughout centuries.

The third movement, Hocket, is like two movements wrapped in one. It begins as a quick, sparkling pattern of overlapping canons, like Florestan at his most unruly, to give way to a slow ghostly chorale where Eusebius is in charge. Harmonics, mutes, and fragile lines hover as if time has stopped, music timeless and frozen.

Finally, the Sextet culminates with a paraphrase of Schumann's scherzo from his Piano Quintet. It seemed important to let Schumann himself join the dialogue, as he embodies the interchange between future and past, between Florestan and Eusebius. His scherzo becomes a seed for rhythmic play — syncopations and minimalist ostinatos that build to a jubilant conclusion where both voices are reconciled. For me, the Sextet is about extremes held together in balance: flame and silence, rush and rapt attention, isolation of quarantine and vicarious relationship with players and listeners. It is Schumann's dialogue, refracted through my own, culminating in joy.

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