More About SERENATA FOR CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

In the spring of 1973, I gave my doctoral composition recital at Florida State University, which consisted of three chamber compositions of about ten minutes each. The first two were **Soliloquy and Rondo** (flute and piano) and **Delineations** (brass quintet).

This composition, in its original incarnation as an insanely difficult unaccompanied duo for violin and cello, was the third piece on the program.

Despite the excellent performance it was given at the recital, I always thought that **Serenata for Violin and Cello** would be better suited to a somewhat larger ensemble, where it could be played by more than just top-tier virtuoso soloists. I first thought about a string quartet or quintet, but when a contest for chamber orchestra compositions was announced a couple years later (with none other than Aaron Copland leading the panel of judges), I committed myself to transcribing the string duo into the chamber orchestra medium. While it didn't win or place, **Serenata for Chamber Orchestra** earned an honorable mention in the contest, which carried with it a performance by a scaled-down Fort Worth Symphony. But that outdoor performance was, of course, not recorded. I have made many very significant revisions to the score since then anyway, and the audio track on the website is a very realistic VST-generated performance.

Serenata for Chamber Orchestra is a contemporary style work in 5 movements:

> 1. Prologue - *Lento assai*
> Growing from an almost inaudible beginning, this movement quickly swells to a restless conflict before returning to the ethereal opening.

> 2. Scherzo - *Capriccio*
> The quiet mood is shattered by this spasmodic and restless scherzo. Having no trio, it is built on disjointed motifs treated in an almost pointalistic manner.

3. Nocturne - *Dolente*
Over an undulating accompaniment, the oboe and then violins sing an angular song-without-words. This is interrupted by a contrapuntal middle section that builds in intensity until it gives way to the return of the opening music.

4. Tarantella - *Presto*
In form, not so much a strict Italian dance as a 5-part simple rondo, this frenzied movement has much of the rhythm and all the mood and energy of the fabled tarantella.

5. Epilogue - *Lento molto*
A very short return to the mood of the opening movement, this bookend close fades into the silence from which the work began.