



Johana Harris and Roy Harris

ROY HARRIS

QUINTET FOR PIANO AND STRINGS (1936)

Johana Harris, piano / Eudice Shapiro 1st violin

Nathan Ross, 2nd violin / Sanford Schonbach, viola / Edgar Lustgarten, cello

SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO (1942)

Eudice Shapiro 1st violin / Johana Harris, piano



THE PIANO QUINTET WAS COMMISSIONED by M. D. Herter Norton for the Roth String Quartet and Johana Harris. It was written as a wedding gift to my bride in Princeton, in the Fall of 1936. The world premiere was given by the Roth Quartet and Johana Harris in Town Hall, New York City, in February, 1938; first broadcast on CBS a week later; first recording was made in 1938 by the Coolidge String Quartet and Johana Harris (RCA Victor).

The Piano Quintet was written as a conviction and prediction concerning the twelve-tone technique. At that time I was convinced, and still am, that the dodecaphonic restriction of no repeated notes in a twelve-tone row was the weak link in this school of thought.

Guided by these convictions, I planned my Piano Quintet as a polytonal technique, using twelve-tone melodic materials in such a way as to emphasize tonality rather than as an atonal technique to destroy tonality. Throughout my lifework, my purpose has been to affirm tradition as our greatest resource, rather than to avoid it as our greatest threat.

Consequently, I cast my Piano Quintet in three traditional variation forms: Passacaglia-Cadenza-Fugue, and fashioned all the themes into twelve-tone polytonal rows. In the Fugue (a triple fugue) the first subject is presented as an eleven-tone subject in which I purposely omitted the augmented fourth or diminished fifth (*musica diabolus*, of the ancients, but a supreme entity of the Viennese School) until the last section in which it is used as a structural accent.

The Passacaglia is divided into two parts separated by a short stretto; the first part is in four sections: subject and three variations. The second part consists of a long melodic development of the Passacaglia materials (piano) against restatements of the original Passacaglia subject in canonic section (strings) culminating in a vigorous stretto (piano versus violin, viola and cello) which leads attacca to the Cadenza (solo violin).

The Cadenza emphasizes technical resources of all instrumentalists, but is at the same time a further development of the twelve-tone Passacaglia subject.

The Cadenza culminates in a long bravura (piano) leading directly into the Fugue.

The first part of the Fugue is in three sections: separated by two strettos. The first section was conceived in organum textures (vigorous dynamics). The second section was conceived in fauxbourdon textures in the gentle dynamics of muted strings and unable *corda piano*. The third section combines both fauxbourdon and organum textures in vigorous dynamics. The second part of the Fugue is in the traditional rhythms of the gigue. The third part of the Fugue is a four-part canonic development of subject three (strings) against which materials from the gigue are developed (piano). The final section of the Fugue is a further development of subject one and subject two in diminution (strings) against which subject three is restated in the piano in vigorous dynamics. A short coda restates materials from subjects one and three.

THE VIOLIN SONATA WAS WRITTEN for the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Concerts (Library of Congress). It was written in New York City in 1941. It received its first performance and broadcast in the Library of Congress by William Kroll and Johana Harris and was commercially recorded in 1950 (Columbia) by Joseph Gingold and Johana Harris. It was awarded the "Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Medal for eminent services to Chamber Music on the occasion of Founders Day in the Library of Congress." The first movement of the Violin Sonata is a fantasia to illustrate the freedom of melodic qualities on the four different strings of the violin. The second movement is in a free folksong style, as a transcription of the English-American folk song I'll be True to My Love, If My Love Will Be True to Me. The third movement of the Violin Sonata was conceived to emphasize the singing potential of the violin. The last movement is a Toccata planned as a display of technical facilities of both instrumentalists.

By Roy Harris
March 14, 1964

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Quintet for Piano & Strings 1936

1. Passacaglia 9:10
2. Cadenza 8:45
3. Fugue 7:05

Sonata for Violin & Piano 1942

1. Fantasy 5:50
 2. Pastorale 3:23
 3. Andante Religioso 7:10
 4. Toccata 4:11
- Total Time: 45:34

Recorded at Contemporary Records in Los Angeles under the supervision of the composer.

Recording Engineer - Howard Holzer

Producer - Lester Koenig



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