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At Summer's End

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At Summer's End

for string orchestra

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At Summer's End (2018)

Program Notes

If spring brings relief at the end of winter (with the reappearance of leaves, animals coming out of hibernation, birds migrating back from their haunts away from the cold), the season remains one of fledgling youth and preparation. Summer is the culmination: light, warmth, confidence, a time to harvest abundant and delicious fruits. Be it in New England or on the Atlantic coast of France, where I grew up, the end of the summer is in many ways an ideal time. The heat abates, the season still displays all of its glorious and lush trappings, but none of its harshness. Yet, there is something bittersweet about this comfortable, pleasant moment, as the thought of the upcoming cold, darkness, scarcity, and renewed hardships of winter gradually looms. During the last week of summer vacation (in France, school might resume as late as September 10), I also remember the waves signaling this change, increasing in height as the equinox neared, making the water muddier as the rougher ocean picked up more sand.

In life too, we may experience a moment like this, when we know – from watching the life cycles of others – that we are at a moment of height, that we can take in what we have gleaned, but that an inevitable descent is due. As we brace for this, at the end of this summer of sorts, we can still indulge for a few more days in the dream of a world that is warmly disposed toward us.

Although *At Summer's End* involves serious moments, thanks to their brevity and frequently propelling motion, the mood never become too ponderous: the connection to a youthful spirit is kept and the piece ends in a moment of optimism.

Descriptive Notes

The piece begins with the low strings in unison introducing a melodic motive that will return throughout.¹ The grave tone of this chant evokes a spoken pronouncement, a prayer, an incantation by

a religious leader, or perhaps a ballad – a bard's retelling of a national epic. The higher strings take over the narration (m. 10), now evoking how the identity of this people is tied up with a history of plight and vulnerability, a keen sense of the wounds of history, and the expectation of more hardships to come. The continued presence of the bass suggests strength and resilience as well as the richness and depths of this people's cultural roots.

This swiftly transitions to a new section with pizzicato (plucked) strings (m. 32), creating a new mood, somewhere between playfulness and mystery. To me, the athletic sound of a *tutti pizzicato* texture such as this also suggest travel by horse, which reinforces the imagery of an epic narrative set in early medieval times. Over this, a solo violin playing *arco* (bowed, not plucked) reprises the plaintive, melancholic idea of the beginning (m. 39). While the solo continues, a harmonically-complex chorale is introduced in the background, softly, in a high, icy register (m. 73). The chorale gradually takes precedence, acquiring the characteristics of an anthem (m. 88). Its concluding Picardy cadence (ending with a major chord instead of the expected minor chord) emphasizes once more the medieval setting (m. 98-99).

The next section (m. 100) uses the opening melodic theme once more, but this time in a very different, Baroque guise, perhaps reminiscent of Handel. The leisurely affect (mood) of this light, elegant, stylized aristocratic dance is short-lived, as first violins and basses bring back the opening chant (m. 104) and then the anthem (m. 113). The anthem is at first stated using tentative-sounding chalky harmonies, before gradually coming back to life as it returns to the Picardy cadence (m. 125). The sprightly Baroque music and the chant alternate, resolving in favor of clarity and weightlessness, with the strings evaporating (m. 146) like dew in the sun

steps of shorter rhythmic value. In subsequent iterations of the motive, the size of the intervals may be modified, but the shape remains.

¹ The motive begins with an anacrusis (a pickup) consisting of ascending leap, followed by two ascending skips. The anacrusis leads to a metrically accented note which is held longer, followed by two descending

AT SUMMER'S END

for string orchestra

Francis KAYALI

Like an old folk song ♩ = 96

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Contrabass

nostalgic and a little solemn

mp *f* *mf* *mf* *p*

nostalgic and a little solemn

mp *f* *mf* *mf* *p*

10

5

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Contrabass

mf

mp *f* *mp* *f* *p*

mp *f* *mp* *f* *p*

11

mp *p* *mf* *p* *f* *mp*
mp *p* *mf* *p* *f* *mp*
mp *p* *p* *f* *mp*
mf *p* *f* *mp*
mf *p* *f*

16

espr. *f* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *p* *calm*
espr. *f* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *p* *calm*
espr. *f* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *p* *calm*
mf *mp* *mf* *mp* *p* *calm*
mf *mp* *mp* *p*

21 *rit.* *a tempo* 25

mp

mp

mp

26

mp

3

31

very light

p *pp*

pp very light

very light

p *pp*

pizz.

pp

pizz.

pp

34 Playful and a little faster ♩ = 112

pizz.

f

pizz.

f

pizz.

f

f

f

40

f *p* *f*> *f*> *f*>
f *p* *f*> *f*> *f*>
f *p* *f*> *f*> *f*>
f *p* *f*> *f*> *f*>
f *p* *f*> *f*> *f*>

46

45

bouncy, athletic

mp *f* *f*> *f*> *mp*<*f*
mp *f* *f*> *f*> *mp*<*f*
mp *f* *f*> *f*> *mp*<*f*
mp *f* *f*> *f*> *mp*<*f*
mp *f* *f*> *f*> *mp*<*f*

bouncy, athletic

bouncy, athletic

bouncy, athletic

bouncy, athletic

49

Violin Solo
gradually emerge into the foreground

espr.

Solo

Musical score for measures 49-52. The score is written for six staves: Violin I, Violin II, Violin III, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass. The Violin I staff begins with a *mp* (arco) dynamic marking. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with various articulations such as accents and slurs. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

53

meditative

Solo

Musical score for measures 53-56. The score is written for six staves: Violin I, Violin II, Violin III, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass. The Violin I staff begins with a *meditative* dynamic marking. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with various articulations such as accents and slurs. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

58 *lyrical*

Solo

58 *mp* *f*

63 *f*

64

Solo

66

64 *f*

66 *p* *mp*

69 *p* *mp*

70

Solo

Violin I: *mp*, *f*, *p* in the distance ³

Violin II: *mp*, *f*, *p* in the distance ³

Viola: *mp*, *f*, *p* in the distance ³

Cello: *mp*, *f*, *p* in the distance ³

Double Bass: *mp*, *f*, *mp* in the background

74

Solo

Violin I: *f*, *p*, *mf*

Violin II: *p*, *mf*

Viola: *p*, *mf*

Cello: *p*, *mf*

Double Bass: *mp* in the background, *mp*, *f*, *p*

Solo: *mp*, *f*, *p*

molto espr.

Solo

78

mp

p

p

p

arco

(sempre pizz.)

f

f

f

Like an icy draft

82

mp

mp

mp

mp

arco

mp

88 **Elegant and refined**

short break

espress.

Musical score for measures 88-92. The score is written for five staves: two treble clefs, one alto clef, and two bass clefs. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4, then 2/4, then 3/4, and finally back to 4/4. The music features a prominent triplet in the first measure of each staff. Dynamics include *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *espress.* (espressivo). The tempo/mood is 'Elegant and refined'. A 'short break' is indicated above the first measure of the second system.

93

playful

with intensity

Musical score for measures 93-96. The score is written for five staves: two treble clefs, one alto clef, and two bass clefs. The time signature is 4/4. The music is characterized by a 'playful' and 'with intensity' mood. Dynamics include *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *f* (forte). The tempo/mood is 'playful'. The score shows a dynamic progression from *p* to *mf* and then to *f* with increasing intensity.

97 **Playful** **Assertive, confident**

mp *f* *mf*

mp *f*

mp *f*

mp *f*

mp *f*

100 Light and playful, like a Handel Bourrée

mf

mf

103

ff massive, powerful, inexorable

p *mf*

ff massive, powerful, inexorable

106

mf

f *p*

f *p*

f *p*

mf

110

Musical score for measures 110-113. The score consists of five staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a whole note chord (Bb, D) in measure 110, followed by a half note chord (Bb, D) in measure 111, and a quarter note chord (B, D) in measure 112, ending with a quarter rest in measure 113. The second staff is a treble clef with a sixteenth-note pattern in measure 110, a sixteenth-note pattern in measure 111, and a quarter note chord (B, D) in measure 112, ending with a quarter rest in measure 113. The third staff is an alto clef with a sixteenth-note pattern in measure 110, a sixteenth-note pattern in measure 111, and a quarter note chord (B, D) in measure 112, ending with a quarter rest in measure 113. The fourth staff is a bass clef with a whole rest in measure 110, a whole rest in measure 111, and a whole rest in measure 112, ending with a whole rest in measure 113. The fifth staff is a bass clef with a whole note chord (Bb, D) in measure 110, followed by a half note chord (Bb, D) in measure 111, and a quarter note chord (B, D) in measure 112, ending with a quarter rest in measure 113.

Poco meno mosso $\text{♩} = 96$

113

Distant, pale and chalky (senza vib., senza espr.)

Musical score for measures 113-116. The score consists of five staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a quarter note chord (B, D) in measure 113, followed by a quarter note chord (B, D) in measure 114, a quarter note chord (B, D) in measure 115, and a quarter note chord (B, D) in measure 116. The second staff is a treble clef with a quarter note chord (B, D) in measure 113, followed by a quarter note chord (B, D) in measure 114, a quarter note chord (B, D) in measure 115, and a quarter note chord (B, D) in measure 116. The third staff is an alto clef with a quarter note chord (B, D) in measure 113, followed by a quarter note chord (B, D) in measure 114, a quarter note chord (B, D) in measure 115, and a quarter note chord (B, D) in measure 116. The fourth staff is a bass clef with a quarter note chord (B, D) in measure 113, followed by a quarter note chord (B, D) in measure 114, a quarter note chord (B, D) in measure 115, and a quarter note chord (B, D) in measure 116. The fifth staff is a bass clef with a whole rest in measure 113, a whole rest in measure 114, a whole rest in measure 115, and a whole rest in measure 116.

117

Musical score for measures 117-119. The score consists of five staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, the middle two are in alto clef, and the bottom one is in bass clef. The time signature is 4/4. The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

Richer (come back to life, restore vib.)

122 Playful and a little faster ♩ = 112

accel. -----

120

Musical score for measures 120-122. The score consists of five staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, the middle two are in alto clef, and the bottom one is in bass clef. The time signature is 3/4. The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Dynamic markings include *p*, *f*, and *mp*. The tempo is marked as *accel.* and the tempo is 112 beats per minute.

Assertive, confident

Musical score for measures 123-125. The score consists of five staves. The first two staves are in treble clef, the third is in alto clef, and the last two are in bass clef. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4 and back to 3/4. Dynamics are marked as *mp* and *f*. The music is characterized by a strong, assertive feel.

126 Nostalgic

Musical score for measures 126-130. The score consists of five staves. The first two staves are in treble clef, the third is in alto clef, and the last two are in bass clef. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 2/4 and back to 4/4. Dynamics are marked as *pp*, *mf*, *p*, and *f*. The word "nostalgic" is written under the first staff. The music has a soft, nostalgic quality.

131 *molto espr.*

molto espr. *f > mp* *mf* *mp* *mf*

molto espr. *f > mp* *mf* *mp* *mf*

molto espr. *f > mp* *mf* *mp* *mf*

mf *mp* *mf*

mf *mp* *mf*

135 **136** **Playful**

calm

mp *p* *lead in* *mp*

calm *mp*

calm *mp*

calm *mp*

calm *mp*

calm *mp*

mp *p*

139

Musical score for measures 139-140. The score is written for five staves: two treble clefs, one alto clef, and two bass clefs. The first three staves contain active musical notation. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The second staff has a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The third staff has an alto clef and a key signature of two flats. The fourth and fifth staves have bass clefs and are mostly empty, with some rests. The music starts at measure 139 and continues to measure 140. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is present in the first three staves at the beginning of measure 140. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and accidentals.

141

Musical score for measures 141-142. The score is written for five staves: two treble clefs, one alto clef, and two bass clefs. The first three staves contain active musical notation. The fourth and fifth staves have bass clefs and are mostly empty, with some rests. The music starts at measure 141 and continues to measure 142. The time signature is 2/4. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and accidentals.

143

f *p* *very light* *p* *very light* *p* *very light* *p* *very light* *p*

f *poco pesante* *p* *calm and warm*

147

pp *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp*