

NOCTURNE

From *String Quartet No. 2*

Alexander Borodin

Arranged by Andrew H. Dabczynski

INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor Score	1
Violin I	8
Violin II	8
Viola	5
Cello	5
String Bass	5

In this arrangement of one of the most popular tunes in all of classical music, the marvelous melodies, counterpoint, and textures of Borodin's original composition remain, but are technically approachable, with options to accommodate varied abilities. This is a showpiece that performers and audiences will long remember.



PROGRAM NOTES

Russian composer Alexander Borodin (1833–1887) originally composed his famous “Nocturne” in 1881 as the third movement of his *String Quartet No. 2*. He wrote the work after returning to life as a musician following a successful career as an accomplished physician and chemist. Borodin dedicated the quartet to his wife, and the “Nocturne” movement is said to be a remembrance of their courtship in Heidelberg, Germany.

NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

Throughout the arrangement, *divisi* options—usually indicated with small “cue” notes—are provided as simplified alternatives in technically challenging sections. Whenever possible, the original, larger-note option is recommended in order to maintain clarity in scoring. As the piece begins, the syncopated and pulsating rhythm (2nd violin/viola/bass) should be audible, but not played staccato or loudly (the challenging hooked bowing may be played *detaché* at the tip of the bow). Throughout the initial presentation of the primary theme (beginning mm. 3–10, repeated), attention should be paid to articulations and dynamic levels, especially the hairpin swells that give direction and depth to the canonic voices. In the transition sections (mm. 17–18, 1st vln, and subsequently in other voices), the scales should be played off-the-string, if possible, whenever it appears. The 2nd violin accompaniment tremolo (mm. 19–26, repeated) should be performed quietly, at the tip of the bow, while coordinating with the steady, interlocking pizzicato eighth note line in the celli and basses. The final two measures of the famous main theme provide the material for the coda (mm. 52–59), traded among the upper four voices of the orchestra. The final held note fades to silence.

This arrangement is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Robert S. Frost (1942–2013), a superb arranger/composer, and champion of string teaching and orchestra performance.

Nocturne

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CONDUCTOR SCORE

Duration - 3:15

Andante (♩ = 64)

Violins
I
II

Viola

Cello

String Bass

Vlns.
I
II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

Vlns.
I
II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

1. 2.

div.

3 1 2

9 10 11

This system contains measures 9, 10, and 11. It features four staves: Violins I and II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The key signature is one sharp (F#). Measure 9 includes first and second endings for the Violin I part. Measure 10 features a triplet in the Cello part. Measure 11 includes a fermata in the Cello part. A large red watermark is overlaid across the score.

Vlns.
I
II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

div.

div.

3 -3 -1 3

12 13 14

This system contains measures 12, 13, and 14. It features the same four staves as the previous system. Measure 12 includes a triplet in the Cello part. Measure 13 includes a fermata in the Cello part. Measure 14 includes a triplet in the Cello part. A large red watermark is overlaid across the score.

15

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

fp

div.

15 16 18

19

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

mf

p

p *mp*

pizz. *p*

pizz. *p*

19 20 21 22

Vlns.
I
II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

23 24 25 26

This block contains the musical notation for measures 23 through 26. It features five staves: Violins I and II, Viola, Cello, and String Bass. The key signature is one sharp (F#). Measure 23 shows the first violin playing a melodic line with a bow accent (V) and a triplet of eighth notes. The second violin plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The viola has a melodic line with a bow accent and a triplet. The cello and string bass provide harmonic support with eighth notes. Measure 24 continues the patterns, with the first violin playing a triplet. Measure 25 includes a first ending bracket (1.) and a bow accent. Measure 26 concludes the section with a repeat sign.

Vlns.
I
II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

27 28 29 30

This block contains the musical notation for measures 27 through 30. It features five staves: Violins I and II, Viola, Cello, and String Bass. The key signature is one sharp (F#). Measure 27 starts with a second ending bracket (2.) and a bow accent. The first violin plays a melodic line with a bow accent. The second violin plays a rhythmic accompaniment. The viola has a melodic line with a bow accent and a triplet. The cello and string bass provide harmonic support. Measure 28 continues the patterns, with the first violin playing a melodic line with a bow accent. Measure 29 includes a bow accent. Measure 30 concludes the section with a repeat sign and a fingering instruction: *1/2 Pos. 1 2 2*.

31

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

31

32

33

35

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

34

35

36

37

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

40

f *fp* *f* *f* *f* *p* *fp* *p* *mf* *p*

V

-2

-1

-3

(-1)

38 39 40

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

41

42

43

mf

V

3

44

Vlns. I *mp*

Vlns. II *p*

Vla. *pp*

Cello *mp*

Str. Bass *pp*

opt. div.

3

(-3)

-1

V 2 3

44 45 46 47

Vlns. I *p* *mp*

Vlns. II *p*

Vla. (H) (V)

Cello

Str. Bass

3 -2

-3

2 3 -2

V

48 49 50 51

52

opt. div.

Vlns. I *p*

Vlns. II (V)

Vla. *ppp*

Cello (-1 2 4 V) *mp*

Str. Bass *ppp*

53 *mp*

54 *p*

55

Vlns. I *pp* *ppp*

Vlns. II *mp*

Vla. *p*

Cello 4 2 *pp* *ppp*

Str. Bass *pp* *ppp*

rit.

56 *pp*

57

58 *ppp*

59