

Matthew Whittall

# The wine-dark sea

for baroque guitar and theorbo

2008

**Music Finland**



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IS IN LOW RESOLUTION

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Music Finland

### Composer's note

The Mediterranean looms large in my family history and genealogy. Learning the mythology of Greece and Turkey as a child through books and bedtime stories, I came to associate this body of water with mystery, no small amount of adventure and, despite my strong physical and psychological attachment to the North, a distant, muted sense of ultimate home. As I draw primarily on landscape for creative impetus, during a trip to the region in 2007, I expected to find in the lands of my ancestors a potent new source of ideas.

Although the vistas were arresting and beautiful, they did not resonate in me on a deep level. What I - a northerner by more than birth and temperament, it would seem - was allowed to carry away from that trip were merely fond recollections of a foreign place, profoundly "other" from my experience: the iconic, archetypal "Mother Sea" and its numberless shades of blue, the quality of the sunlight, the smell of flowers and herbs in the air. These are the impressions informing *The wine-dark sea*, a dreamlike postcard written after the fact, through a haze of memory. I could add to this a feeling of blissful honeymoon detachment and, in the choice of Baroque guitar and theorbo, a sense of the contemporary overlaying a deeper antiquity.

*The wine-dark sea* was commissioned by the Helsinki Guitar Duo (Mikko Ikäheimo and Rody van Gemert), and is dedicated to them.

### Performance notes

-Repeated pitches should be played on separate strings for maximum resonance.

• = indicates a pause or "breath" of 1-2 sec.

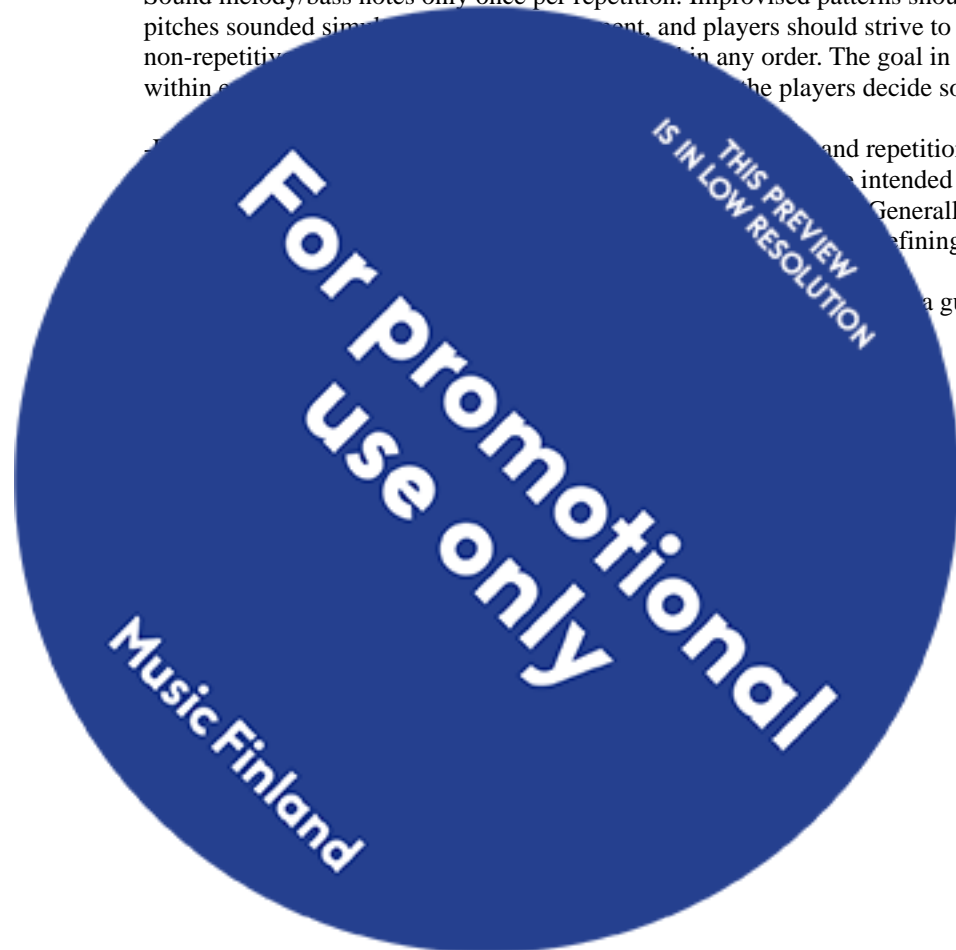
⸮ = a longer pause of 3-5 sec.

### For boxes 1-9 on p. 3:

-Repeat boxes, maintaining improvised texture of running 16ths, as previously notated, interposing occasional 8ths. There should be no gaps in the total 16th-note texture (i.e. stagger interposed 8th notes between the two instruments). Sound melody/bass notes only once per repetition. Improvised patterns should consist of no more than one or two pitches sounded simultaneously, and players should strive to create patterns that are non-periodic (i.e. non-repetitive) in any order. The goal in this section is to create a timeless groove within a 2-measure box. The players decide so spontaneously.

Repetitions and repetitions need not begin simultaneously for both instruments. Repeated notes are intended to blend from one to the next in terms of articulation. Generally speaking, the theorbo part should be more rhythmic, defining the harmonic shift.

Repetitions are a guide and may be lengthened or



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for the Helsinki Guitar Duo  
*The wine-dark sea*

Matthew Whittall  
(2008)

Relaxed; Drifting ♩=132-144

Baroque guitar

Theorbo

*p*

uneven 16ths, random pitch groupings (like a windchime)

Slowing

Slowing

Slowing

Slow, rubato

*pp*

free strumming, "alla campanella"

*mp* (l.v.)

*p*

*pp*

*mf*

*mf*

*p*

*mp* (l.v.)

*p*

*p*

*mf*

*mp*

*mf*

*mp*

*mp*

As before

Slowing

Slow, rubato

*mp*

*p* (uneven)

*pp*

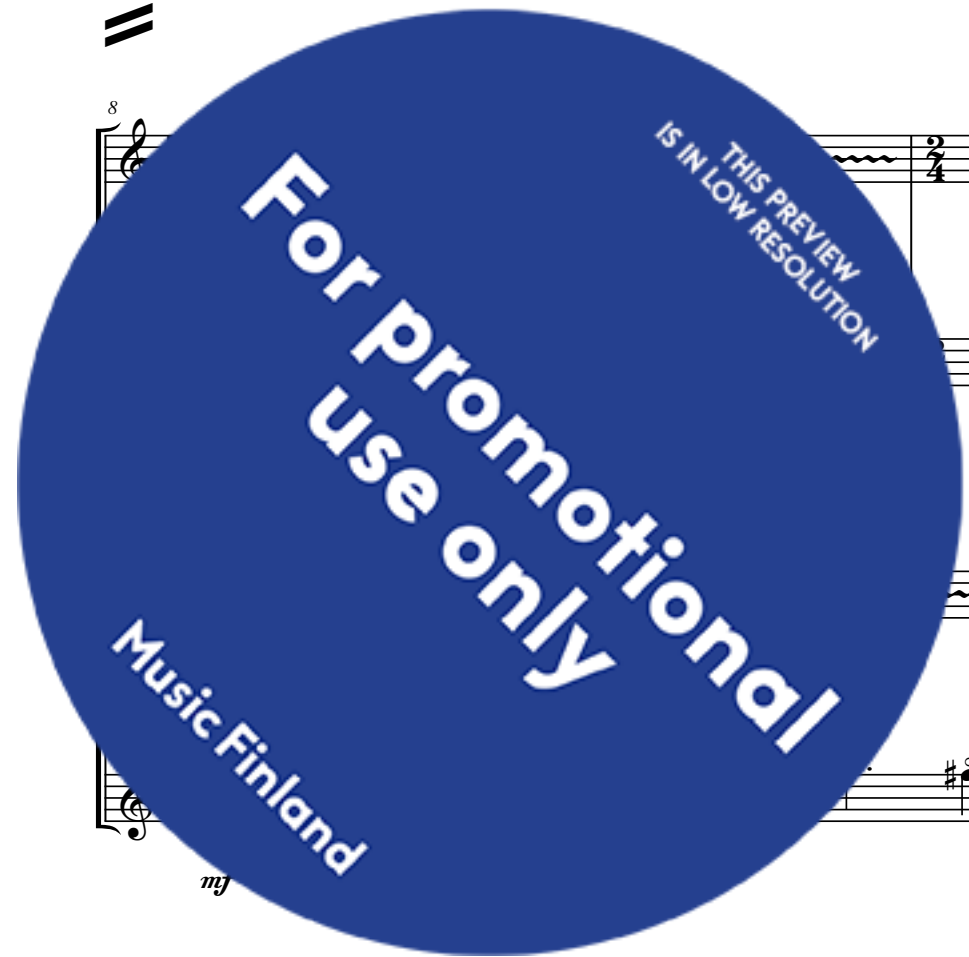
*mp*

*mp*

*mf*

*mp*

*mf*



18 **Slow**  $\text{♩}=132$  *rit.* **Slow**  $\text{♩}=132$  *rit.* **Slow**  $\text{♩}=132$  *rit.* **Slow**

*mp* *mp* *mp* *p* *p* *pp* *mp* *p*

*mp* *mf* *p* *pp* *mp* *p*

26  $\text{♩}=132$  *rit.* **Slow** **Forward** **Slowing**

*mp* (independently) *p* *f* (dry) *rasq.* *p* *mf* *p* *mp* *p*

*p* *rit.* *p* *f* (dry) *rasq.* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

33 **Slow, rubato**

*mf* *mp* *p*

**Slow**

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

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



47

*rit.* **Even 16ths** ♩=108-112 *rit.* **A tempo** *rit.*

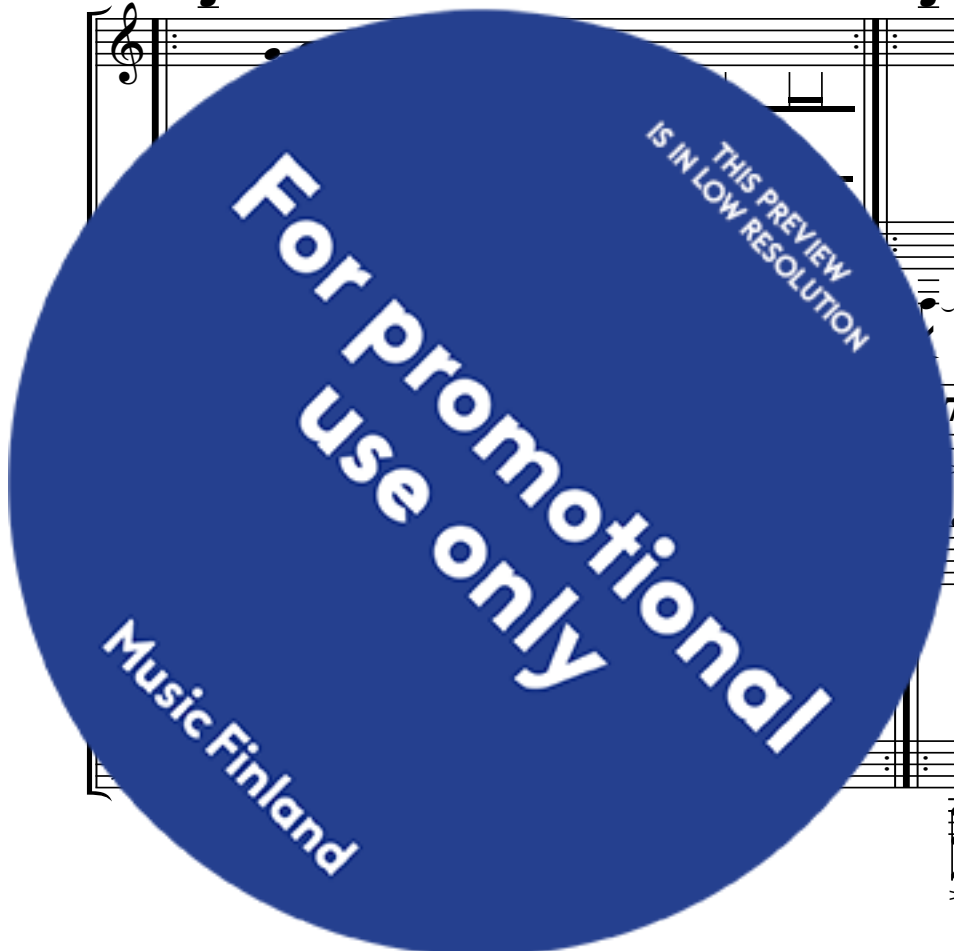
*mf* *p* *pp* *mp* *mp*

51 **A tempo** *mp* (no sense of downbeat) *sub. p* **Forward** 10" **1** **Still very even and rhythmic; Hypnotic** ♩=116-120 5-7" (approx.) \* *mf*

*mp* (no sense of downbeat) *sub. p* *ad lib. even 16ths on indicated harmony* *mf* 3-5x (or more, *ad lib.*)

56 **2** 5-7" **3** 5-7" **4** 5-7" **5** 5-7" **7** 5-7" **8** 5-7" **9** 5-7"

*etc.* *mf* 2-3x only



15-20" 15-20" Slow ♩=50-54 Freely

(ad lib. phasing out melody/bass notes, slowly losing rhythmic coordination)

*mf* *mp* *mp*

8<sup>va</sup> 8<sup>va</sup> 8<sup>va</sup>

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for two staves. The first staff is in treble clef and the second in bass clef. The score is divided into three sections. The first section, marked '15-20"', contains a melodic line in the treble and a bass line in the bass, with the instruction '(ad lib. phasing out melody/bass notes, slowly losing rhythmic coordination)'. The second section, also marked '15-20"', begins with a dynamic marking of *mf* and features a crescendo. The third section is marked 'Slow ♩=50-54' and 'Freely', with a dynamic marking of *mp*. It includes an 8va (octave) marking and a final crescendo. The score concludes with a double bar line.

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