

Matthew Whittall

# The wine-dark sea VI

for guitar ensemble

2014

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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 elicit a shimmering resonance.

\* = in

C

occasional 8ths.  
(instruments).  
one or two  
periodic (i.e.  
jazz groove

for both  
forms of

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Relaxed; Drifting  $\text{♩}=132-144$

Slowing

Slowing

Musical score for the first system, measures 1-6. It features four staves: Solo, I, II, and Bass. The Solo part begins with a melodic line in 4/4 time, marked *p*. The guitar parts (I and II) feature arpeggiated accompaniment. Part I includes the instruction "uneven 16ths, random pitch groupings (like a windchime)" and "free arpeggiation 'alla campanella'". Part II includes "uneven 16ths, random pitch groupings (like a windchime)" and "free arpeggiation 'alla campanella'". The bass line is marked *pp*. Dynamics include *mp* (l.v.), *p*, *pp*, and *mf*. There are circled numbers 5, 6, and 3. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 and back to 4/4.

Musical score for the second system, measures 7-16. It features four staves: Solo, I, II, and Bass. The Solo part continues with melodic lines, marked *p* and *mp*. The guitar parts continue with arpeggiated accompaniment. Part I includes "free arpeggiation 'alla campanella'". Part II includes "uneven 16ths, random pitch groupings (like a windchime)". The bass line is marked *pp*. Dynamics include *mp*, *p*, *mf*, and *pp*. There are circled numbers 4, 3, and 4. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 and back to 4/4. Performance markings include "As before", "Slowing", and "Slow, rubato".

Musical score for the third system, measures 17-24. It features four staves: Solo, I, II, and Bass. The Solo part continues with melodic lines, marked *mp* and *p*. The guitar parts continue with arpeggiated accompaniment. The bass line is marked *mp*. Dynamics include *mp*, *p*, *pp*, and *mf*. There is a circled number 5. Performance markings include "rit.", "Slow", "Rit.", and "Slow". The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 and back to 4/4.



26  $\text{♩} = 132$  Rit. Slow Slowing Slow, rubato

Solo *mp* *p* (dry) *rasq.* *p* *mf* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *singing* *ad lib. chordal realization Baroque-style*

I *mp* *p* (dry) *rasq.* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mp* *mp* *mp*

II (independently) *p* (dry) *rasq.* *mf* (l.v.) *mp* *pp* (itches in any order) *pp* (itches in any order)

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

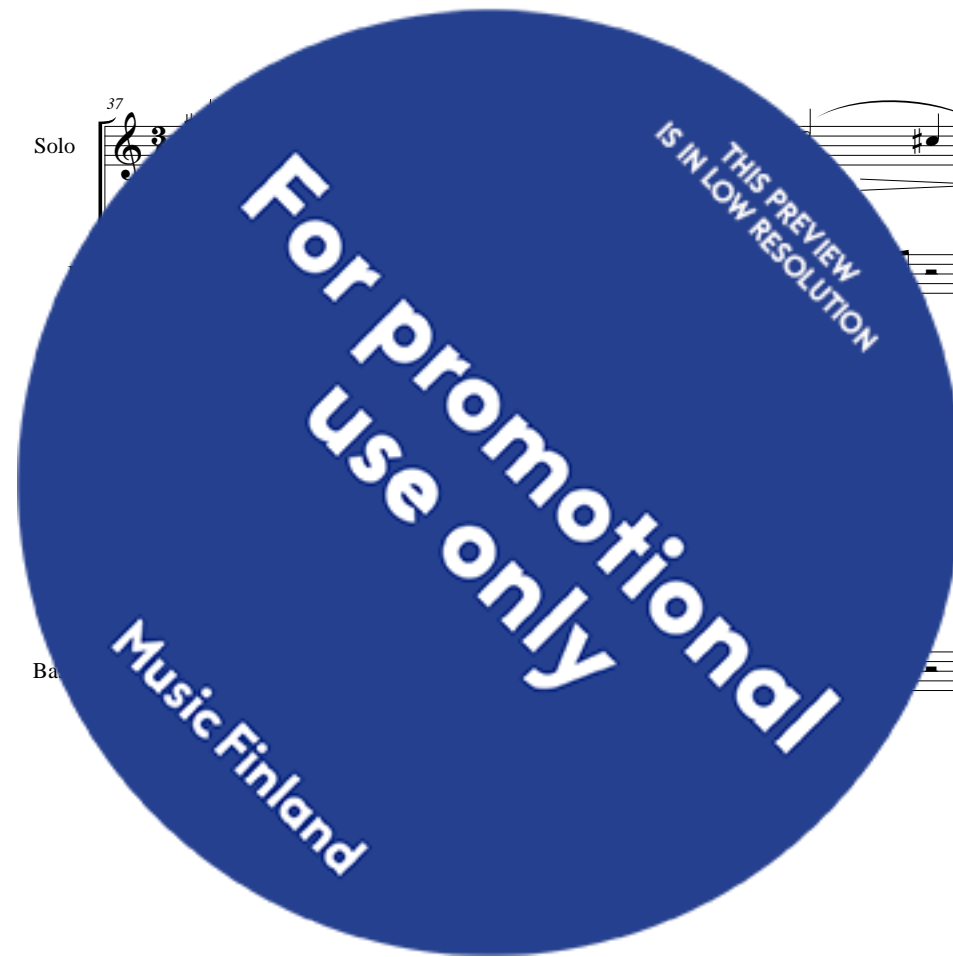
37  $\text{♩} = 132$  Slow Freely

Solo *mp* *pp* *mp* *f* *p* *f* *p*

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

II *pp* *mp*

Bass *pp* *mp*



45

Solo  
I  
II  
Bass

Slow

*mp* — *f*

*pp* div.

*pp*

*p* *mp* *p*

*mf* *mf*

Rit.

Even 16ths ♩=108-112

Rit.

A tempo

Rit.

16

51

Solo  
I  
Bass

A tempo

Forward 10"

1 5-7" (approx.) \* 2 5-7" 3 5-7"

*mp*

(ad lib. even 16ths on given pitches, random order)

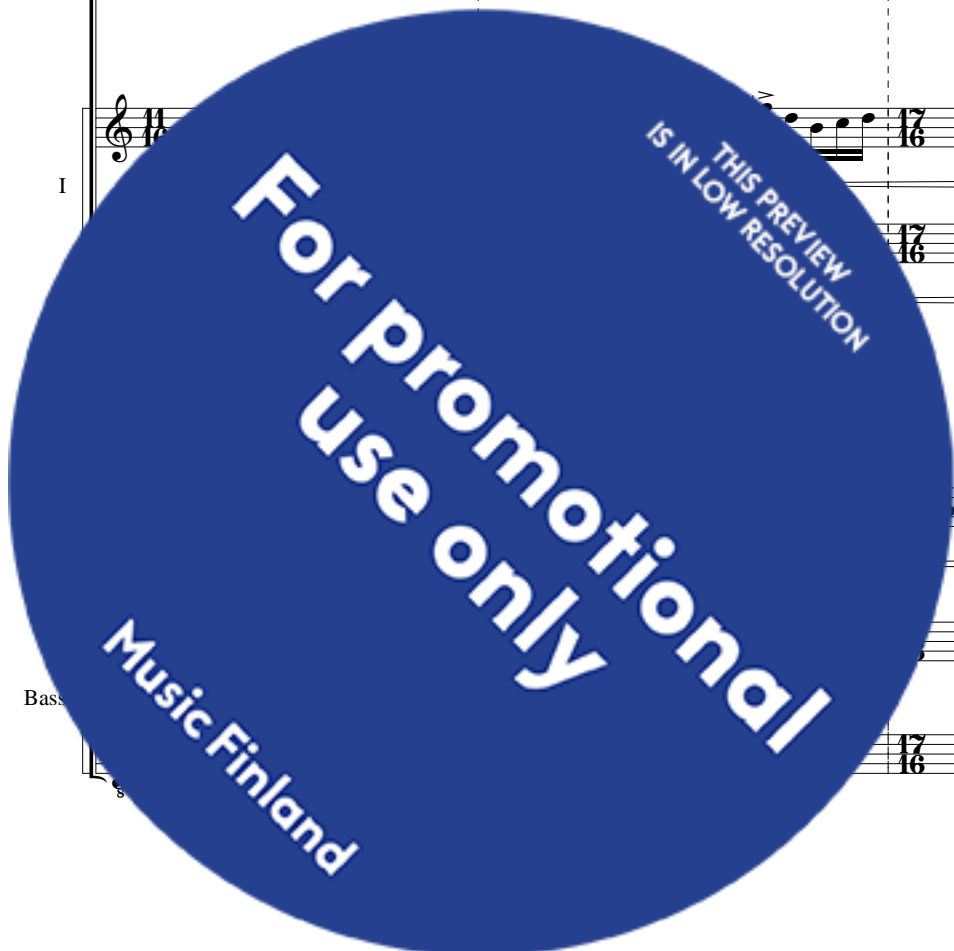
*f* *f* *f*

*sub. p* *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf*

*f*

3-5x (or more, ad lib.)

16



The wine-dark sea VI

4

4 5 6 7 8 9

5-7" 5-7" 5-7" 5-7" 5-7" 5-7" 15-20"

Solo

I

II

Bass

58

8va

(only play 2-3x)

(only play 2-3x)

(gradually slowing, losing rhythm)

(gradually slowing, losing rhythm)

(gradually slowing, losing rhythm)

(gradually slowing, losing rhythm)

(only play 2-3x)

(only play 2-3x)

65

Solo

Bass

mf

Slow

8va

(art.)

2 4 5 1

2 4 5 1

2 1 3 4 2 1

2 1 4 3

2 3 4 5

