Matthew Whittall

The wine-dark sea VI

for guitar ensemble

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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 sh onance.

- = in

casional 8ths.
instruments).
e or two
riodic (i.e.
ss groove

for both
ms of

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dedicated to Rody van Gemert and Avonia Music Institute Guitar Ensemble

The wine-dark sea VI

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Relaxed; Drifting ♪=132-144

Slowing

Slowing

Solo

I

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

free arpeggiation
"alla campanella"

II

=D

free arpeggiation
"alla campanella"

Bass

(l.v.)

(l.v.)
sempre

(l.v.)
sempre

(l.v.)
sempre

free arpeggiation
"alla campanella"

As before

Slowing

Slow, rubato

(uneven)

div.

div.

free arpeggiation
"alla campanella"

Slow

Rit.

Slow

Rit.

Slow

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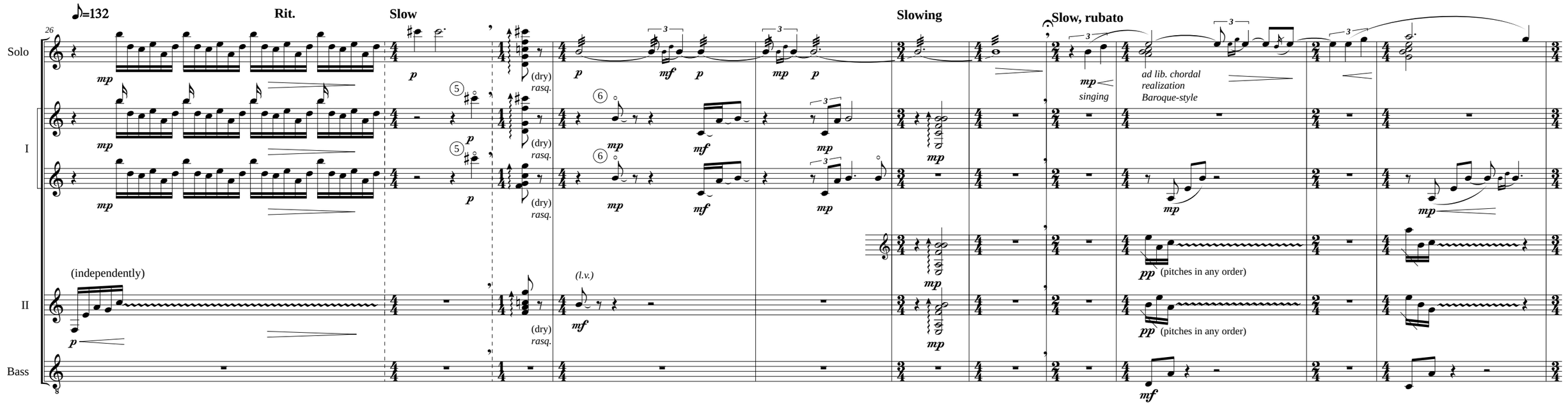

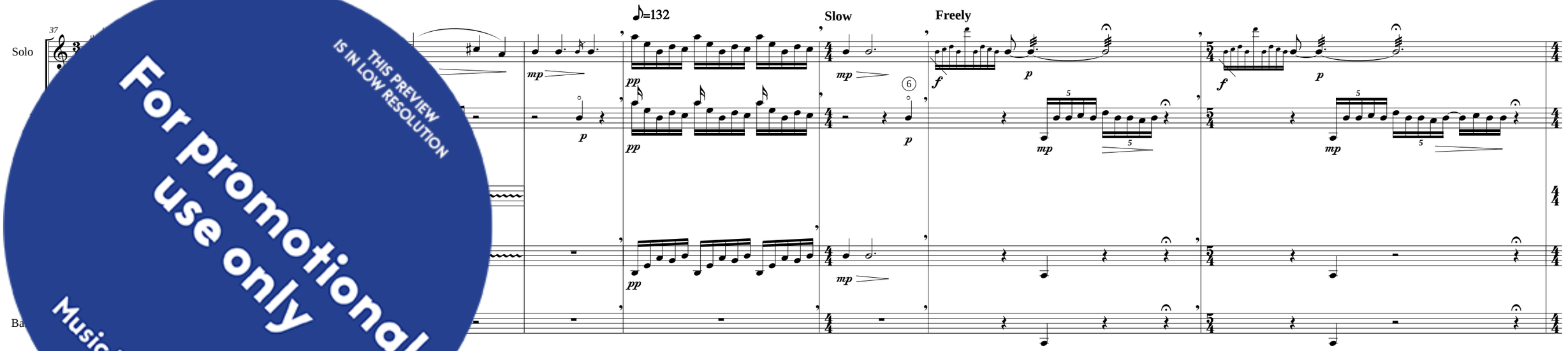

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45

Slow

Rit.

Even 16ths ♪=108-112

Rit.

A tempo

Rit.

Solo

I

II

Bass

51

A tempo

Still very even and rhythmic; Hypnotic

♪=116-120

Forward 10"

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

(art.)

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

sub. p

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

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4 5-7" 5 5-7" 6 5-7" 7 5-7" 8 5-7" 9 5-7" 15-20"

58

Solo

I

II

Bass

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)

Slow

65

Solo

Bass

mf

8va

(art.)

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