

Rocking Chair Serenade (2013)

for string orchestra

Robert Carl

*Commissioned by and dedicated to The Wintergreen Music Festival, and its director,
Larry Alan Smith, as part of my 2013 composer residency*

Instrumentation:

String Orchestra:

Violin I

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

[Contrabass should have C extension or be 5-string]

Suggested numbers: 5-5-4-4-1, or multiples thereof.

Duration: c. 13'

Descriptive note:

For all my life I've been in a rocking chair at some time during the day. It's an eccentricity, I know (I recently realized that every room in my house--except the bathrooms!--has one). It probably comes from the fact of my mother rocking me as a child, and also something deep in the DNA of my Southern roots.

*When I was invited to Wintergreen and we agreed on a new work, I realized it was time for me to celebrate this essential part of my life. And so the **Rocking Chair Serenade** emerged. I hope its spirit comes in part from evenings spent with my parents and maternal grandparents on a porch in Alabama, watching the dusk fall on Lookout Mountain. And as I wrote it I imagined similar scenes in the Blue Ridge.*

*The piece is a theme with six variations. Each (but the last) is in turn divided into two sections, which I think of inhalation/exhalation, or a rocker's oscillation. (The variations themselves also alternate between more abstract and lyrical/tuneful). As the piece nears its end, I indulge in a little self-quotation, using a melody from a 1987 piece for a singing pianist, **Warm Waxing Wail**, that I've always thought had a similar "front porch" quality.*

Of course there are moments of some intensity and flights of abstract fancy in the work, but then I often find myself dreaming off into strange realms while rocking...

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R. Carl

Theme (♩ = 72) (Spacious, leisurely, "breathing" on each note)

Musical score for the Theme section, featuring Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Contrabass. The score is in 4/4 time, with a tempo of 72 beats per minute. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into two systems of measures. The first system consists of measures 1-5, and the second system consists of measures 6-8. The Violin I and Viola parts have a melodic line with a triplet in measure 6. The Violin II, Cello, and Contrabass parts have a bass line with a triplet in measure 6. Dynamics include *mp*, *mf*, *p*, *mp*, *pp*, and *mp*. Performance instructions include *(simile)* and *breathing* on each note.

Poco Rit. A Tempo

Musical score for the Poco Rit. A Tempo section, featuring Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Contrabass. The score is in 4/4 time, with a tempo of 72 beats per minute. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into two systems of measures. The first system consists of measures 9-13, and the second system consists of measures 14-18. The Violin I and Viola parts have a melodic line with a triplet in measure 14. The Violin II, Cello, and Contrabass parts have a bass line with a triplet in measure 14. Dynamics include *mp*, *p*, *mp*, *mf*, *p*, *pp*, *p*, *pp*, *mp*, *pp*, and *p*. Performance instructions include *(simile)* and *breathing* on each note.

"Pre-Variation"

Poco Rit. (♩ = 66)

16

Vln. I *mp* > *pp* *mp* < *mf* > *p* (*simile*) *mp* > *p* *mp*

Vln. II *mp* > *pp* *pp* (*simile*) *p* > *pp* *p*

Vla. *mp* > *pp* *p* < *mp* > *pp* (*simile*) *p* > *pp* *p*

Vlc. *mp* > *pp* *p*

Cb.

Variation 1a

Poco Rit. ----- *A Tempo*

23

Vln. I (*loco*) *p* *pp* *p* *mf* < *f*

Vln. II (*div.*) *pp* > *n.* (*uni*) *pp* *mp* *pp* *mf* < *f*

Vla. *pp* *ppp* *mp* < *mf* < *f* *mf* *p*

Vlc. *pp* *ppp* *mp* < *mf* < *f* *mf* *p*

Cb. *ppp* > *n.*

Variation 1b

28

Musical score for measures 28-32. The score is for five instruments: Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vlc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The music is in 5/4 time and consists of six measures. The first measure (28) has a 5/4 time signature. The second measure (29) has a 7/4 time signature. The third measure (30) has a 6/4 time signature. The fourth measure (31) has a 5/4 time signature. The fifth measure (32) has a 7/4 time signature. The sixth measure (32) has a 6/4 time signature. Dynamic markings include *mf*, *p*, *mp*, and *pp*. Slurs and hairpins are used to indicate phrasing and dynamics.

33

Musical score for measures 33-37. The score is for five instruments: Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vlc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The music is in 6/4 time and consists of five measures. The first measure (33) has a 6/4 time signature. The second measure (34) has a 6/4 time signature. The third measure (35) has a 4/4 time signature. The fourth measure (36) has a 4/4 time signature. The fifth measure (37) has a 4/4 time signature. Dynamic markings include *p*, *pp*, *n.*, *mp*, *mf*, and *f*. Slurs and hairpins are used to indicate phrasing and dynamics.

Variation 2a

40

Poco Rit. ----- (♩ = 60)
(return to tutti)

Vln. I (solo) *p* *pp* *n.* (return to tutti)

Vln. II (solo) *pp* *p* *pp* (return to tutti next measure)

Vla. (solo) *p* *pp* (return to tutti)

Vcl. (solo) *p* *mp* *p* *pp*

Vln. I *p* *pp* *n.*

Vln. II *mp* *p* *pp* *ppp* *pp*

Vla. *p* *mf* *mp* *p* *p* *pp* *ppp*

Vcl. *mp* *mf* *mp* *p* *p* *pp* *ppp* *ppp* (Div.) (sempre Div.)

Cb. *p* *mp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp* *ppp*

47

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

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

(uni)

(con sord.)

pppp *ppp* *n.*

55

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

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

mp *mf* *mp* *cresc.*

mp *mf* *mp* *cresc.*

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

ppp *pp* *ppp* *p*

Variation 2b

63

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

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

mf *f* *decresc. poco a poco*

mf *f* *decresc. poco a poco*

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

mp *p* *p* *mp* *p*

70

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

mp *p* *p* *mp*

mp *p*

mp *p*

mp *p* *p* *mp*

p *mp* *p*

Variation 3a

78

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

ppp *p* *pp* *pp* *p* *pp* *pp*

(*uni*)

(*uni*)

p *mp* *p* *mp* *mp* *p*

(*senza sord.*)

ppp *p* *ppp* *n.*

86

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

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

pp *p* *mp* *p*

p *pp* *mp*

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

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

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

*) All trills are a 1/2 step above indicated note;
 exception is a whole step above, always indicated by pitch in parens)

93

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

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

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

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

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

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

Variation 3b

(♩ = 80)

102

Vln. I (solo)
Vln. II (solo)
Vla. (solo)
Vlc. (solo)

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vlc.
Cb.

mp *p* *pp* *ppp* *n.*
f *mf* *mp* *f* *p* *mp*
mf *mp* *f* *p* *mp*
f *mf* *mp*

(con sord.) *(G)*
(con sord.) *(F#)* *(A)*
(con sord.)
ppp *n.*

mf > mp *p > pp*
f *mf* *mp*
f *mf* *mp*

Variation 4a

109 *8va* *Rit.* (*tutti sub mp*) (♩ = 48)

Vln. I (solo) *mp* *p* *pp* *f* *mp* *p*

Vln. II (solo) *p* *pp* *f* *mp* *p*

Vla. (solo) *p* *pp* *f* *mp* *p*

Vlc. (solo) *p* *pp* *f* *mp* *p*

Vln. I *n.* *ppp* *n.*

Vln. II *ppp* *pp* *ppp* *ppp* *n.*

Vla. *pp* *ppp* *pp* *ppp* *< pp >* *< pp >*

Vlc. *p* *mp* *pp* *pp*

Cb. *p* *ppp* *pp*

115

Vln. I (solo) *(to tutti)*

Vln. II (solo) *(to tutti)*

Vla. (solo) *(to tutti)* *mp* *n.*

Vlc. (solo) *(to tutti)* *n.*

Vln. I *(senza sord.)* *(non-divisi)*

Vln. II *(senza sord.)* *pp* *3*

Vla. *(senza sord.)* *(gently rocking)* *mp* *(Div.)* *p*

Vlc. *(non-divisi)* *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

Cb. *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

Poco Rit. ----- *A Tempo*

120

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

mp *p* *mp* *p*

p *mp* *mf*

Variation 4b

124

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

mp *mf* *mp*

pp *n.* *pp*

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

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

129

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb.

mf *mp* *p* *n.* *pp*

Variation 5a

(♩ = ♩) (♩ = 96) (suddenly free, unpulsed)

134

Vln. I (solo)

Vln. II (solo)

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

p *pp* *p* *cresc.* *p* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *pp* *pp* *n.*

141

Vln. I (solo) *mp* *p* *p* *mf*

Vln. II (solo) *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mp* *mf*

Vla. (solo) *p* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Vcl. (solo) *pp* *n.* *p* *mp*

146

Vln. I (solo) *mp* *mf* *mp* *p*

Vln. II (solo) *f* *mf* *f* *mp* *f* *mp*

Vla. (solo) *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf*

Vcl. (solo) *mf* *smf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *f*

Variation 5b

149

Vln. I (solo) *mp* *mf* *f* *mp*

Vln. II (solo) *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Vla. (solo) *mp* *mf* *f* *mf* *mp*

Vcl. (solo) *p* *mp* *mf* *mp*

Variation 6

Rit. (♩ = 60)

(♩ = 76)

(to tutti)

153

Vln. I (solo) *mf* *f* *sub p* *n.* (to tutti)

Vln. II (solo) *mf* *f* *sub p* *n.* (to tutti)

Vla. (solo) *mf* *f* *sub p* *n.* (to tutti)

Vlc. (solo) *mf* *f* *sub p* *n.* (to tutti)

Vln. I *p* *mp*

Vln. II *p* *mp*

Vla.

Vlc.

Cb. *p* *mp*

168 *e* (Div.)

Vln. I *pp* *mp* *< mf* *mp* *p*

Vln. II *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

Vla. *p* *mp* *p* *< mp >*

Vlc. *mp* *p* *mp*

Cb. *pp*

172 *(uni)* *Rit.* *(harmonic:solo)*

Vln. I *mp* *< mf* *p* *mp* *p* *pp*

Vln. II *mp* *p* *< mp* *p* *mp*

Vla. *(uni)* *< mp >*

Vlc. *mp* *mf* *mp* *p*

Cb. *p*

A Tempo

Rit. -----

(♩ = 48)

177

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vlc.
Cb.

pp
p
mp
pp
pp
n.
(Div. a 2)
(non-div.)
n.
n.
n.
n.

Hartford, 3/16-6/12/13