

W. Jay Sydeman

Soliloquy
for Solo Violoncello
(2010)

A Short Aggressive Romp
(c. 1986)
&
Homage to Late Beethoven
(c. 2007)
for Violin and Cello

Manuscript of “Soliloquy”

Soliloquy – written for Keith Miller, a friend of a friend and part time cellist. It just seemed like a nice thing to do, and he apparently appreciated it (as did his teacher)... the first piece I had written with “pen in hand” for several decades. It is lyrical, lies in the first position, but has quite a bit of drama in it. I would hope that burgeoning cellists might embrace it and enjoy the small bursts of passion, not to mention the left hand pizzicati. For all that, the tonal language is quite sophisticated. (September 2012)

Duo for Violin and Cello (A Short Aggressive Romp): Perhaps the subtitle says it all. The piece lasts but a minute while making significant technical and musical demands on both performers. At the same time, it is quite accessible (even humorously wry) to hear, so hopefully it is worth the effort. I have written over twenty duos for violin and cello and really enjoy this medium. As always, the thematic material is quite clear and rigorously developed, even in this mini form. (July 2013)

Homage to late Beethoven for Violin and Cello: In the tradition of the later Beethoven quartets... This slow movement is darkly romantic while being understated. The musical lines are long and seemly free-flowing while being tied together with a thematic kernel which introduces the movement. It ends with something of a question... perhaps the “unanswered question” of life itself. Actually with its many double-stops it sounds quite like a string quartet. (July 2013)

– W. Jay Sydeman

W. Jay Sydeman’s life mirrors the breadth and variety of his music. Born in New York in 1928 and educated at Manhattan’s Mannes School of Music, he quickly became one of the most sought-after and honored composers of his generation, receiving commissions from such prestigious groups as the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Tanglewood Music Center, and the Boston Symphony, which premiered his orchestral work in memory of John F. Kennedy in 1966. “Sydeman uses a whole battery of far out techniques,” wrote the New York Times, “but he has an uncanny ability to throw in the whole avant-garde machinery as if it were the simplest, most normal way of making music in the world ... More than many of his colleagues, he seems to know what will sound well, and he works for some remarkably attractive, pure textures. His sounds seem to grow from a physical sense of exactly what material is right.”

In 1970, after a heady period that included awards from the National Institute of Arts and Letters, the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Library of Congress, Sydeman left New York – and composition – to begin a journey of personal and artistic exploration.

“Around 1980,” he has written, “I returned to composition – at first a large number of choral works which reconnected me to the source of all music – the human voice. Out of this new lyric impulse have evolved all of my works since that time – more romantic, more accessible. I create music for the musician.”

– Howard Hersh,
Artistic Director of “Music Now”

Sydeman is part of a composers’ group in Nevada City annually producing the “Wet Ink Festival of New Music.” He now lives in Mendocino and hosts a bi-weekly program on KZYX, “The Mind of a Composer,” 10 am to noon on Mondays, introducing and commenting on contemporary music.

Duration: Soliloquy: circa 4:00 (with repeat)
A Short Aggressive Romp: circa 1:00
Homage to Late Beethoven: circa 3:45

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Homage to Late Beethoven

for Violin and Cello

W. Jay Sydeman
(c. 2007)

Lento rubato ♩ = c. 50

Vln

VC

mp

p sub.

mp

poco rit.

6

9

a tempo

poco rit.

a tempo

mf

mp

A

14

p

19

p

mp

B

25

p sub.

mp

30

p

p sub.

mp

C

36

p

mp

p

rit. - - - a tempo

42

mp

p

allarg. - - -

pizz.