

Four Violin Concerto

for

Four Violins and Orchestra

by

John Burge

Total duration: approximately 25 minutes

About the music...

For many years John Burge was the accompanist, arranger and composer for the Canta Arya School for Strings in Kingston, Ontario. Directed by Karen Kimmett, this school has produced some wonderful young violinists and is keenly supported by parents and volunteers. After a group of violinists of approximately the same age had performed the Vivaldi *Four Violin Concerto* a number of times, John Burge was inspired to compose his own *Four Violin Concerto* for these same musicians. The resulting three movements were premiered separately with piano accompaniment between 2008 and 2009 and the work was recorded on the Canta Arya School's first CD in June of 2009. It was always the composer's intention to orchestrate this work and John Burge is very grateful to the Calgary Youth Orchestra and their Music Director, Edmond Agopian, for agreeing to premiere the full orchestra version of this composition with their four best violinists in February, 2013.

While the work may have been composed for young musicians, it is fair to state that the music has made very few compromises and is technically difficult, artistically challenging and substantial in that it takes 25 minutes to perform all three movements. Underlying the first movement is a repeated chord pattern heard initially in the solo violins that provides a kind of minimalistic fabric that is frequently used to accompany longer melodic gestures. Both the opening thematic material and a more lyrical idea introduced later are developed and reprised in a traditional first-movement design that even includes a cadenza for all four soloists. The second movement has a very free structure that shifts between slow chordal passages and longer melodic lines some of which are played in unison by all four violins. The last movement is a light-hearted rondo that includes a fugal episode that is both rhythmically and dissonantly intense.

About the composer...

Dr. John Burge (b. 1961) holds degrees in Composition and Theory from the University of Toronto (B.Mus. and M.Mus.) and the University of British Columbia (D.M.A.). Since 1987 he has been teaching at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario where he is a Full Professor. He has written a significant body of vocal, chamber, and orchestral compositions but he is particularly well known for his choral music. Many of his choral works have been published by Boosey and Hawkes Music Publishers. His work for SSA choir and orchestra entitled, ***Angels' Voices***, received the 2006 Outstanding New Choral Composition Award from the Association of Canadian Choral Conductors and was performed in New York City's Carnegie Hall in 2005.

Over the past two decades, a number of Canadian string orchestras have commissioned John Burge to compose new works for their ensemble such that he has written a large number of works for strings. Some of these compositions, such as ***Upper Canada Fiddle Suite***, are amongst his most popular works being repeatedly performed, recorded and broadcast. The recording of his string orchestra piece, ***Flanders Fields Reflections***, by Sinfonia Toronto on the Marquis Classics label, received the 2009 Juno Award for the Best Canadian Classical Composition. A passionate advocate for Canadian music, he was a member of the Executive of the Canadian League of Composers from 1993-2007, serving as President from 1998-2006. He has served as an appointed board member of the SOCAN Foundation since 2009.

**The four violins and piano version of this work was premiered by
Eric Burge, Annie Foreman-Mackey, Calvin Rubens and
Mikela Witjes with pianist, John Burge,
Between 2008-2009 in Kingston, Ontario.**

**The four violins and orchestra version of this work
Was premiered by Eva Aronian, Sarah Bleile, Alicia Venables and
Natalie Wiebe with the Calgary Youth Orchestra,
Conducted by Edmond Agopian, on February 3, 2013 at
Mount Royal College, Calgary, Alberta.**

Four Violin Concerto

John Burge (b. 1961)

I. Allegro moderato.....	1
II. Largo.....	38
III. Allegro vivace.....	59

Performance Advice: The piano and violin version of this work is highly successful and satisfying primarily because it is so easy to control the balance between the strings and the piano. Equally, there is no aural confusion between the music played by the piano and the string passages. In the full orchestra version, the soloists will likely have to be encouraged to play with a more prominent dynamic placement and to increase the softer dynamic markings at times. For example, the diminuendo for the solo violins in bars 73-74 of the first movement works well with a piano but with full orchestra, delaying the diminuendo until bar 75 is more effective. Please make similar adjustments at the conductor's discretion.

INSTRUMENTATION

Three Flutes (Fl. 3 doubling on Piccolo)
Two Oboes
Three Clarinets in B Flat
Two Bassoons

Four French Horns in F
Two Trumpets in C (or B Flat Trumpets)
Tuba (Optional)

Percussion (2 players)
Glockenspiel
Triangle
Tambourine
Small Suspended Cymbal
Large Suspended Cymbal
Cymbals
Tam tam
Claves
Snare Drum
Large Tom-tom
Bass Drum

Timpani

Strings

Score is notated using transpositions for Clarinets and French Horns.

Concerto for Four Violins

John Burge

Allegro moderato ♩ = 112

1, 2 Flutes
3 (Piccolo)
2 Oboes
1, 2 Clarinets in B \flat
3
2 Bassoons
1, 3 French Horns in F
2, 4
2 Trumpets in C*
Tuba (Optional)
1 Percussion
2
Timpani
1 Solo Violins
2
3
4

Dynamic markings: *mp*, *p*, *mf*, *f*, *sfp*, *solo*

Tempo: Allegro moderato ♩ = 112

Allegro moderato ♩ = 112

I Violins
II
Viola
Cello
Double Bass

Dynamic markings: *pizz.*, *p*, *div.*, *f*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

*Trumpet in B Flat parts also provided.

1, 2 Fls.
3 (Picc.)
2 Obs. 1.
1, 2 Clars. 3.
2 Bsns. mp
1, 3 Fr. Hns. 2, 4.
2 Tpts.
Tuba (Opt.)
1 Perc. 2.
Timp.
Solo Vns. 1, 2, 3, 4. f solo
I Vlns. II.
Vla.
Vc.
Db.

8 9 10 11 12 13

Detailed description: This page of a musical score covers measures 8 through 13. The instrumentation includes woodwinds (Flutes, Piccolo, Oboes, Clarinets, Bassoons), brass (French Horns, Trumpets, Tuba), percussion (Percussion, Timpani), and strings (Solo Violins, Violins I & II, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass). The woodwinds and strings have active parts, while the brass and percussion are mostly silent. The Solo Violin section features a prominent melodic line in the second violin, marked with dynamics like *f* and *solo*, and includes a sixteenth-note run in measure 11. The bassoon part has a melodic line with dynamics *mp* and *mf*. The double bass part has a steady bass line with dynamics *mp*.

1, 2
Fls.

3 (Picc.)

2 Obs.

1, 2
Clars.

3

2 Bsns.

1, 3
Fr. Hns.

2, 4

2 Tpts.

Tuba (Opt.)

1
Perc.

2

Timp.

1
Solo Vns.

2

3

4

I
Vlns.

II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

mf

mp

mp

p

p

p

no cresc.

mp

p

p

no cresc.

f

sfp

p

II.

Largo ♩ = 66 **accel.** **Più mosso** ♩ = 80 *rit.*

Woodwinds:
 Flutes: 1, 2 (Fl. Piccolo) - *f*, *mp*, *p cresc.*, *f*, *p*
 Oboes: 2 (a2) - *f*, *mp*, *p*, *f*, *mf*
 Clarinets in Bb: 1, 2 (a2), 3 - *f*, *mp*, *p cresc.*, *f*, *mf*
 Bassoons: 2 - *f*, *mf*, *p*, *f*

Brass:
 French Horns in F: 1, 3 (a2), 2, 4 - *f*, *mp*, *p (no cresc.)*, *f*
 Trumpets in C: 2 - *f*, *mp*
 Tuba (Optional): 1 - *f*, *mp*

Percussion:
 Glock. (1) - *mp*
 Timpani: 1, 2 - *f > p*, *mf > p*, *p*, *f*

Strings:
 Solo Violins: 1, 2, 3, 4
 Viola: *f*, *mp*, *p cresc.*, *f*, *p(sub.)*
 Cello: *f*, *mp*, *p cresc.*, *f*, *p(sub.)*
 Double Bass: *f*, *mp*, *p cresc.*, *f*, *p(sub.)*

Measures: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

A Tempo Largo

1, 2 Fls.

3 (Picc.) *mp* *mf*

2 Obs. *p*

B. Cl. 1 Clars. *mp* *mf*

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

2 Bsns. *mp* *mf* *p*

1, 3 Fr. Hns.

2, 4 *pp* *mp* *pp*

2 Tpts.

Tuba (Opt.)

1 Perc. *mf*

2

Timp. *p* *mp* *p*

1 Solo Vns. *p dolce* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

2 *p dolce* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

3 *p dolce* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

4 *p dolce* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

A Tempo Largo

I Vns. *mp* *p*

II *div. a 3* *mp* *p*

Vla. *(p)* *mp* *p*

Vc. *(p)* *mp* *p*

D.B.

1, 2
Fls.

3 (Picc.)

2 Obs.

B. Cl. 1
Clars.

3

2 Bsns.

1, 3
Fr. Hns.

2, 4

2 Tpts.

Tuba (Opt.)

1
Perc.

2

Timp.

1
Solo Vns.

2

3

4

I
Vns.

II

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

17 18 19 20 21 22

Detailed description: This page of a musical score covers measures 17 through 22. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral layout. The woodwind section includes Flutes (1, 2), Piccolo (3), Oboes (2), Bass Clarinet (1), Clarinets (3), and Bassoons (2). The brass section includes French Horns (1, 3), Trumpets (2, 4), Trombones (2), and an optional Tuba. The percussion section includes a snare drum (1, 2) and timpani. The string section includes Solo Violins (4 parts), Violins I and II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The woodwinds and strings are mostly silent, indicated by rests. The Solo Violins have a complex melodic line with dynamic markings: *mp*, *p*, *mp*, *p*, *mf*, *p*, *f*, and *p*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic hairpins.

rit.

B *poco a poco a tempo*

(a tempo)

1, 2 Fls.

3 (Picc.)

2 Obs.

B. Cl. 1

Clars.

3

2 Bsns.

1, 3 Fr. Hns.

2, 4

2 Tpts.

Tuba (Opt.)

1 Perc.

2

Timp.

1

2

3

4

Solo Vns.

rit.

B *poco a poco a tempo*

(a tempo)

I Vns.

II

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

III.

Allegro vivace ♩ = 144

1, 2 Flutes *mfp* *mfp* *mfp* *f*

3 (Piccolo) Fl. *mfp* *mfp* *mfp* *f*

2 Oboes *fp* *cresc.* *f* a2

1, 2 Clarinet in B_♭ *mf* *f*

3 *mfp* *mfp* *mfp* *f*

2 Bassoon *fp* *cresc.* *f*

1, 3 French Horns in F a2 senza sord. *mp* *mf*

2, 4 a2 senza sord. *mp* *mf*

2 Trumpets in C senza sord. *p* (no cresc.) *mf*

Tuba (Opt.) *mf*

1 Percussion *mf* [Tri.]

2 [Sn. dr.] *fp* (no cresc.) *f*

Timpani

1 Solo Violins *f* *f*

2 *f* *f*

3 *f* *f*

4 *f* *f*

Allegro vivace ♩ = 144

I Violins *arco* *p* *cresc.* *f*

II *arco* *p* *cresc.* *f*

Viola *senza sord.* *p* *f*

Cello *senza sord.* *p* *f*

Double Bass *f*

A

1, 2 Fls. *mp* *f p* *f p*

3 (Picc.) *f* *f*

2 Obs. *p* *f* *f*

1, 2 Clars. *mp* *f p* *f p*

3 *f* *f*

2 Bsns. *p*

1, 3 Fr. Hns. *sfz* *p*

2, 4 *sfz* *p*

2 Tpts. *p* *mp* *f p* *f p*

Tuba *mp* *fp*

Perc. 1 *fp*

Perc. 2 *fp* *f*

Timp. *mf* *fp*

Solo Vlns. 1 *ffp* *ff*

Solo Vlns. 2 *ffp* *ff*

Solo Vlns. 3 *ff* *ff*

Solo Vlns. 4 *ff* *ff*

A

Vlns. I *p* *simile*

Vlns. II *p* *simile*

Vla. *p* *simile*

Vc. *p* *simile*

D.B. *senza sord.* *pizz.* *mp*

1, 2 Fls. *f p* *mf* *f* *mf* *p mf* *p mf* *p*

3 (Picc.) *p* *mf*

2 Obs. *p* *mf* *dim.*

1, 2 Clars. *f p* *mf* *f* *mf* *p mf* *p mf* *p*

3 Clars. *p* *mf*

2 Bsns. *p* *mf* *dim.*

1, 3 Fr. Hns. *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *1.* *p*

2, 4 Fr. Hns. *a2* *a2* *p* *mf* *mf* *p*

2 Tpts. *fp* *mf* *f* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

Tuba *mf* *p*

Perc. 1 Glock. *mf* *p*

Perc. 2 Tamb. *mf* *p*

Timp. *mf* *p*

Solo Vlns. 1 *mf*

Solo Vlns. 2 *mp*

3 Vlns. *cresc.* *f* *pizz.* *f* *dim.* *p*

4 Vlns. *cresc.* *f* *pizz.* *f* *dim.* *p*

Vla. *cresc.* *f* *pizz.* *f* *dim.* *arco* *p*

Vc. *cresc.* *f* *pizz.* *f* *dim.* *arco* *p*

D.B. *cresc.* *f* *mp*

1, 2 Fls. *mp* < *mf* > *mp* < *mf* > *1. soli*

3 (Picc.)

2 Obs.

1, 2 Clars. *a2 soli* *mp* < *mf* > *mp* < *mf* >

3

2 Bsns. *a2 soli* *mp* < *mf* > *mp* < *mf* >

1, 3 Fr. Hns. *mp* *p* *1. soli* *p* < *mp* > *p* < *mp* >

2, 4

2 Tpts. *2. soli* *p* < *mp* > *p* < *mp* >

Tuba

1 Perc. *Tri.* *p*

2

Timp.

1 Solo Vlns. *mp* *f* *p* *mf* > *p* *mf* > *p* *mf* >

2 *f* *p* *mf* > *p* *mf* > *p* *mf* >

3

4

I Vlns. *arco* *pp* *sotto voce* *arco*

II *pp* *sotto voce*

Vla. *mp* *p*

Vc. *mp* *p*

D.B. *mf* *mp*

1, 2 Fls. *p* *mf* *p* *cresc.*

3 (Picc.)

2 Obs. 1. *p* *mf* *p*

1, 2 Clars.

3

2 Bsns.

1, 3 Fr. Hns.

2, 4

2 Tpts.

Tuba

1 Perc.

2

Timp.

1 Solo Vlns. *p* *mp* *p cresc.*

2 *p* *mp* *p cresc.*

3 *solo* *mf* *f dim.* *p* *cresc.* *(non-solo)*

4 *solo* *mf* *f*

1 Vlns. *simile* *(no cresc.)*

II *simile* *(no cresc.)*

Vla. *(no cresc.)*

Vc. *(no cresc.)*

D.B. *(no cresc.)*