**Serenata Notturna**

*Serenata Notturna* was originally written, to a private commission in 1998, for violin and piano. The version for cello and piano was first performed by Victoria Simonsen (cello) and Benjamin Frith (piano) at the 2004 RNCM Manchester International Cello Festival.

As the title suggests, *Serenata Notturna* evokes the atmosphere of night music. Following a reflective opening, where the pitch development outlines a twelve-note series, the music gradually becomes more agitated, developing into a kind of *dance macabre*, which eventually reaches a powerful climax. The music then subsides into a much more tranquil atmosphere and the previous dissonant material transposes itself into a simple melody (like a lullaby), uttered by the cello, the outline of which, both melodically and in terms of the piano figuration, has already been present in the piece from the beginning. Thus the turmoil of the first part of the work becomes transfigured into something much more peaceful – hence the quotation at the beginning of the score: *out of darkness cometh light*.

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