

ENDGAMES

Concertino Grosso for Woodwind Ensemble and Strings

INSTRUMENTATION

Piccolo
Alto Flute
English Horn
Clarinet in Eb
Bass Clarinet
Contrabassoon

Strings

Duration: 12 minutes

PROGRAM NOTES

Most of us don't want to be outsiders.
— Julian Fellowes

You have to feel just a little bit sorry for musicians who play instruments that fall slightly under the orchestral radar. Especially those members of the orchestra sitting at the far ends of the woodwind section. They rarely have big solos, are sometimes mocked and go unsung the majority of the time.

To help remedy this situation, I have written a brief *divertissement* featuring six of the instruments that are often underrepresented in a solo capacity. The title comes from the play by Samuel Beckett, but does not have anything to do with the drama. Instead, it is intended to show the playful as well as lyric nature of the instrumentalists.

The *Concertino Grosso* is scored for Piccolo, Alto Flute, English Horn, E Flat Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Contrabassoon and Strings.

ENDGAMES is cast in three short movements, played without pause. The opening gives each soloist a brief moment to introduce the audience to the sound of each instrument. This is followed by an Allegro that contains the main theme of the piece. The music winds down and the slow movement that follows is essentially a variant of

the main theme. The final Allegro contains a few passages where each of the soloists plays a short excerpt from an orchestral work, where their instruments are showcased with familiar solo turns.

For performance, I suggest that the soloists be placed in a semi-circle in front of the conductor. The number of strings can vary but probably a Mozart sized ensemble will work best. The metronome marks are only guidelines, as each group of musicians will figure out what works best for them.

The piece is about 12 minutes long. It is dedicated to all the musicians who have chosen to play these outsider woodwind instruments.

— Leonard Slatkin