

***Four Characters* (2003) for viola and piano**

- 1. La Marquise de Merteuil**
- 2. Madame de Volanges (and her daughter, Cécile)**
- 3. Madame de Tourvel**
- 4. Le Vicomte de Valmont**

The opportunity to write for the wonderful violist, Lawrence Power – one of BBC Radio Three’s New Generation Artists – presented itself simultaneously with an invitation from choreographer Michael Corder and English National Ballet to collaborate on a new ballet based on Choderlos de Laclos’ novel *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. Consequently, *Four Characters* presents a series of musical portraits of the main protagonists, conceived as a set of miniatures for viola and piano. The work was completed in March 2003.

The first movement introduces us to **La Marquise de Merteuil**, her music moving from a dark interior world to a grander public arena. A portrait of **Madame de Volanges** follows, as she chatters away with court gossip and fusses over the innocence of her daughter, **Cécile**. The third movement presents us with **Madame de Tourvel** – a lyrical study, framed by an evocation of her garden. Finally, in **Le Vicomte de Valmont** we meet Laclos’ voracious rake, whose musical bravado takes in references to some of his first victims.

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Four Characters

FOR VIOLA & PIANO

1

No 1: *The Marquise de Merteuil*

Julian Philips

Slow and mysterious (Tempo 1)

q = 66

Violin part: p, mp, 3

Piano part: p, mp, 3

Measures 1-5 of the score. The violin part begins with a half note G4, followed by a half note A4, and then a triplet of eighth notes (B4, A4, G4). The piano part provides harmonic support with chords and single notes. Dynamics range from piano (p) to mezzo-piano (mp). A tempo marking of q = 66 is indicated.



6

Violin part: mf, p, cresc, mf

Piano part: mf, p, cresc, mf

Measures 6-9 of the score. The violin part features a half note G4, followed by a half note A4, and then a triplet of eighth notes (B4, A4, G4). The piano part continues with harmonic support. Dynamics range from mezzo-forte (mf) to piano (p) and include a crescendo (cresc) marking.



10

Violin part: p, mp, 3

Piano part: p, mp

Measures 10-13 of the score. The violin part begins with a half note G4, followed by a half note A4, and then a triplet of eighth notes (B4, A4, G4). The piano part provides harmonic support. Dynamics range from piano (p) to mezzo-piano (mp).

15

mf mp mf rit.



A With nervous movement (Tempo 2)

q = 88

19

mp pp *leggiero*

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pp

24

Musical score for measures 24-25. The piece is in 3/8 time. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth notes and slurs, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. Dynamics are marked as *p* (piano) and *mp* (mezzo-piano).



26

Musical score for measures 26-27. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and a fermata. The left hand continues with eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics include *p* (piano) and *p leggiero* (piano, light).



28

Musical score for measures 28-29. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and a fermata. The left hand has a rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamics include *cresc* (crescendo) and *mp* (mezzo-piano).

30 *mp* *mf* *f* *piu marcato*

mp *mf* *f* *piu marcato*

mp *mf piu marcato*



rit.

32 *p* *cresc molto*

p *cresc molto*

cresc molto



B Fast and demonic (Tempo 1 but h = 66)
q = 132

34 *mf marcato* *mf marcato* *mf* *marcato*

mf marcato *mf marcato* *mf* *marcato*

37

Musical score for measures 37-39. The score is in 3/4 time and features a vocal line with slurs and accents, and a piano accompaniment with triplets and slurs.



40

f *piu legato*

Musical score for measures 40-43. The score is in 3/4 time and features a vocal line with slurs and accents, and a piano accompaniment with triplets and slurs. A watermark "Preview File Only" is visible.



44

Musical score for measures 44-46. The score is in 3/4 time and features a vocal line with slurs and accents, and a piano accompaniment with slurs and accents.

48

mf

mf



51 **C** A tempo 2 (q = 88)

3+2+3

pp

3+2+3

p

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53

p

mp

sfz

mf more urgent

3+2+3

p

mp

mf more urgent

Preview File Only

56



58



60

62 **D**

p poco a poco cresc *mp*

p poco a poco cresc *mp*

3+3+2



Broadening

64

mf sempre cresc

mf sempre cresc



rit.

A tempo 2
(q = 88)

66

f

f *f pesante*

68 **E**

Musical score for measures 68-69. The top staff is in bass clef with a 7/8 time signature, starting with a forte (f) dynamic. The bottom staff is in treble clef with a piano part marked with an asterisk (*) and the instruction "weighty and sonorous".



70

Musical score for measures 70-71. The top staff continues the melody. The bottom staff features a triplet of eighth notes in the treble clef and a sharp sign in the bass clef.



72

Musical score for measures 72-73. The top staff continues the melody. The bottom staff features a triplet of eighth notes in the treble clef and a sharp sign in the bass clef.

* Piano part: transcription of part of Rameau's overture to *Les Fetes de Polymnie*

74

Musical score for measures 74-75. The top staff is a single melodic line with slurs and accents. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment with chords and a bass line. Dynamics include 'ff' and 'v'.



76

F

Musical score for measures 76-77. The top staff is a single melodic line with slurs and accents. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment with chords and a bass line. Dynamics include 'f'. A box labeled 'F' is above the top staff. A large blue watermark 'Preview File Only' is overlaid on the score.



78

Musical score for measures 78-79. The top staff is a single melodic line with slurs and accents. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment with chords and a bass line. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' above it.

80

ff

3

3



82

rit.

3/4

3/4

3/4



84

blend with piano LH

f

p

f

No 2: Madame de Volanges (and her daughter)

Tempo rubato

(q = c. 88)

f courtly



1

mp dolce *mp* **accel.**



Brisk (tempo 1) 3

q = 132

2

f courtly



A **Fast and impatient (tempo 2)**

q = 150

4

f marcato *f pesante* *piu leggero*

7 pizz

f (sempre)

mf leggiero

mf



11

B

f

p

p

p



15

p

mp

mf

p

mp

mf

f

18 **C** arco pizz

f marcato

f pesante



22

f molto marcato

ff

sfz mf leggero

subito f



26 **D** arco

f sly

mf molto leggero

mf

29

Musical score for measures 29-31. The top staff is in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. The bottom two staves are in treble and bass clefs with a 3/4 time signature. Dynamics include *mf* and *mp*. A large slur covers the first two staves.



32

Musical score for measures 32-34. The top staff is in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. The bottom two staves are in treble and bass clefs with a 3/4 time signature. Dynamics include *p* and *mp*. A large slur covers the first two staves. The instruction *poco a poco dim* is written above the top staff. A watermark "Preview File Only" is visible across the score.



35

Musical score for measures 35-37. The top staff is in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. The bottom two staves are in treble and bass clefs with a 4/4 time signature. Dynamics include *pp*, *p subito dolce*, and *mp*. A large slur covers the first two staves. The instruction *poco rit.* is written above the top staff, followed by a box containing **E** and *A tempo 2* (q = 150), and then *rit.*

16 **F** Slow and gentle (Tempo 3)

40 q = 56

Musical score for measures 40-41. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a piano (p) dynamic and a 'child-like' character. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and ties, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with slurs and ties. A double bar line is present at the end of measure 41.



A tempo 3

(q = 56)

42

poco rit.

Sul C

Musical score for measures 42-43. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a piano (p) dynamic and a 'poco rit.' (poco ritardando) instruction. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and ties, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with slurs and ties. A 'Sul C' instruction is present above the right hand staff. A double bar line is present at the end of measure 43.



44

Musical score for measures 44-45. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a piano (p) dynamic. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and ties, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with slurs and ties.

46

mp p

mp p

mp

Detailed description: This system contains measures 46 and 47. The top staff is in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. The middle staff is in treble clef. The bottom staff is in bass clef. Dynamics include *mp* and *p*. A large slur covers the first half of the system.



48

mp p

mp *piu dolce* p

3/4 3/4

Detailed description: This system contains measures 48 and 49. The top staff is in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. The middle staff is in treble clef. The bottom staff is in bass clef. Dynamics include *mp* and *p*. The middle staff has the instruction *mp piu dolce*. The time signature changes to 3/4 at the end of measure 49. A large slur covers the first half of the system.



50

p mp

p mp

p mp

Detailed description: This system contains measures 50 and 51. The top staff is in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. The middle staff is in treble clef. The bottom staff is in bass clef. Dynamics include *p* and *mp*. The time signature changes to 2/4 at the end of measure 50 and to 4/4 at the end of measure 51. A large slur covers the first half of the system.