

Scene from a Marriage

for viola and piano

Kyle Gann

2010

Scene from a Marriage (2010)

Performance directions:

The pianist should not follow the viola, but the other way around; in fact, the pianist should virtually play as though unaware of the violist. The violist might consider playing facing away from the piano, if that works. The violist can use some rubato, especially early in the piece, even if it leads to minor nonsynchronicity; the pianist, never.

Program notes:

The musical idea came first, but the analogy to marriage was too perfect. You see these long-married couples all the time: the woman is chatty in a stream-of-consciousness way, desperate to talk to someone, while the man is stolid, lost in his business thoughts, yet not unaffectionate, and taking pride in providing the stability, the framework for her free association. Or else the man is brilliant, comic, or a kvetch and needs an audience, while the woman cloaks her occasional disapproval, reins him in softly, and silently holds everything together. It can work either way (and similarly for gay couples). The fact of marriage creates these contrasts between people whose single behavior would be more moderate, each fulfilling for both of them the functions he or she is most naturally suited for. It's counterpoint. Neither line would be nearly as interesting alone as the two of them together. This is a portrait not of an entire marriage, but of a moment, a segment of an evening alone together - a scene.

Scene from a Marriage was written for the violist Marka Gustavsson and premiered by her and Frank Corliss on February 27, 2011, at Bard College.

Duration: 9 minutes

for Marka Gustavsson

Scene from a Marriage

Exceedingly calm throughout

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$\text{♩} = 36$

light, graceful, highly nuanced

Viola

mp

Piano

stolid, steady, warm, but almost without nuance

mp

4

Vla.

mf

Pno.

6

Vla.

mp

Pno.

9

Vla.

mf

Pno.

12

Vla.

mf 3 *mp*

Pno.

15

Vla.

3 *p*

Pno.

17

Vla.

3 3

Pno.

19

Vla.

5 3 *mf* 3

Pno.

21

Vla.

Pno.

23

Vla.

Pno.

p

mp

27

Vla.

Pno.

mp

mp

30

Vla.

Pno.

mp

33

Vla.

Pno.

mf

36

Vla.

Pno.

mp

40

Vla.

Pno.

mp


43

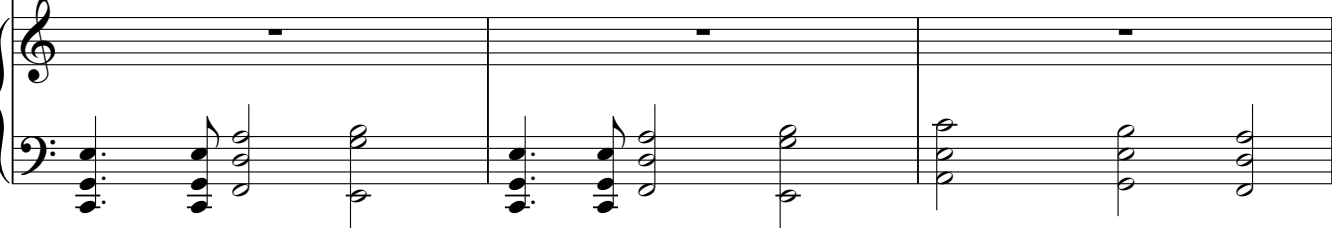
Vla.

Pno.


mp

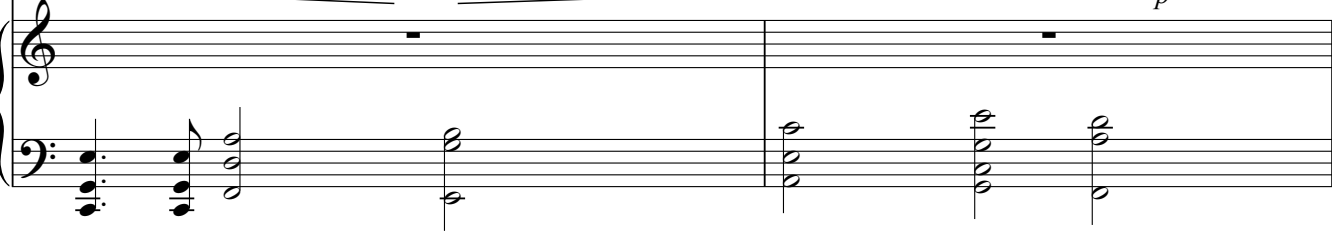
46

Vla. 

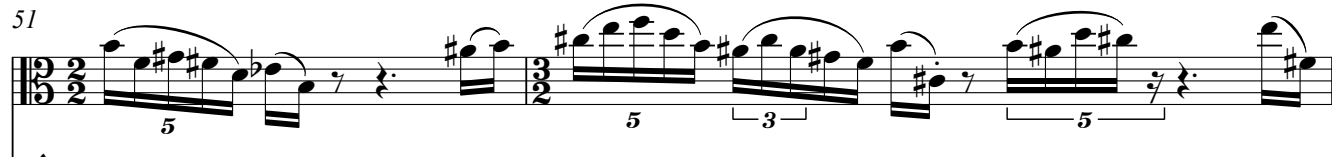
Pno. 

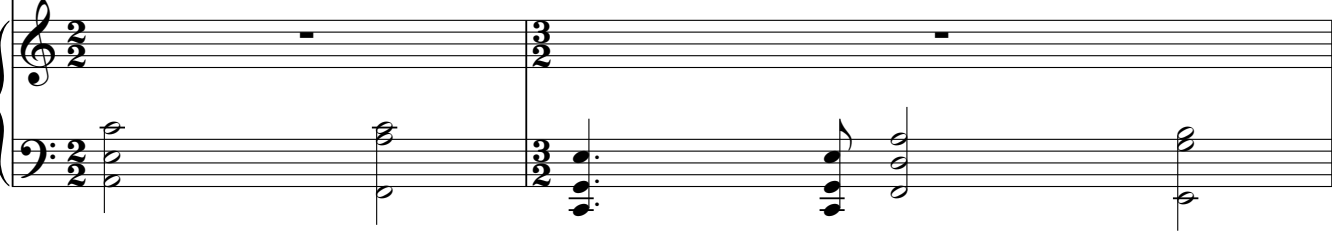
49

Vla. 


Pno. 

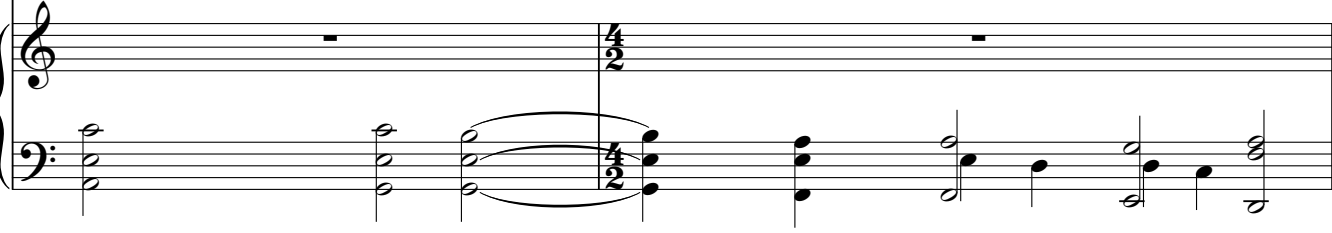
51

Vla. 

Pno. 

53

Vla. 

Pno. 

Scene from a Marriage

55

Vla. *still p* 5 3 5 *p*

Pno.

57

Vla. *mf* 3 *mp* 5 3

Pno. *f*

59

Vla. *p* 5 *p* 5

Pno.

61

Vla. 5 3 3 *mp*

Pno.

64 warmly

Vla. *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

Pno. *not heavy* *mp*

68

Vla. *mf* *p* *mp*

Pno.

71

Vla.

Pno. *mp*

74

Vla.

Pno.

77

Vla.

Pno.

still mp

5

3

mp

mp

p

80

Vla.

Pno.

p

unrolled

mp

p

84

Vla.

Pno.

mp

mp

3

87

Vla.

Pno.

mf

3

mp

mf

3

mp

90

Vla.

Pno.

mp

94

Vla.

Pno.

mp *mf*

97

Vla.

Pno.

100

Vla.

Pno.

mf

Scene from a Marriage

103

Vla.

Pno.

mp

106

Vla.

Pno.

109

Vla.

Pno.

p

pp

June 24-30, 2010
Germantown, NY