

VIER
VOLKSLIEDER

for eight violoncelli

James Barralet

Approximate duration: 16 minutes

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Vier Volkslieder

arranged for eight violoncelli by James Barralet

Vier Volkslieder was composed for and first performed in the Graz Festival, Austria, in 2006 and has since been performed in countries all around the world. Extended cello techniques are employed to imitate the traditional folk instruments of India, Hungary and Russia.

The first of the four melodies, *'The Boatman Song'*, originates in Bengal in India. It is one of 2500 or so folk tunes composed by the Nobel Laureate, Rabindranath Tagore, who is better known for his poetry. It was taught to me by the children of the Mathieson Music School in Calcutta in 1998 during a six-month teaching visit. The first task of the celli is to establish the tonic drone, vital in Indian music, by imitating the *tanpura*, the Indian drone instrument, with its infinite array of overtones. After a short 'improvised' section by the first cello (with pizzicato comments by cello 2), the celli then set about imitating the rhythm of the *tabla*, the Indian percussion instrument, and other traditional instruments.

'Porzik a Hegyi Borozda' (from the Somogy county in Hungary) is in itself a medley of three Hungarian folk songs. The initial melody, played by cello six, should emulate the sound of the pure and raw untrained female voice. In the forthcoming section the lower celli imitate the instruments of the Hungarian folk band: the ütögardon (percussion cello), the Hurdy-Gurdy, viola and double-bass, while the top cello parts take on the role of the virtuosic solo fiddle.

The two Russian folk tunes *'As I Walk Alone Along the Road'* and *'Pedlars'* are in stark contrast to each other. The former is intimate and melancholic, while the latter is lighter and comical.

James Barralet

other cello works arranged by James Barralet:

The Four Seasons – Astor Piazzolla (eight celli); Chaconne in D minor – J. S. Bach (eight celli / violin and cello); Two Sad Folk Songs – 'Oh, You Steppe' (Russia) & 'Shenandoah' (America) (eight celli); Double Cello Concerto in G minor – Vivaldi (five celli); theme from James Bond 'Nobody Does It Better' (string quartet / three celli and piano); Vier Volkslieder (cello and piano); 'Por Una Cabeza' – Carlos Gardel (string quartet / cello and piano).

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"The Boatman Song" (India) - Rabindranath Tagore

Violoncello 1

Violoncello 2

Violoncello 3 con sord. sul pont. → sul tasto → sul pont. ad lib. continue so until one bar after 'A' *pp*

Violoncello 4 con sord. flautando *ppp* * ♩=52 continue so until three bars after 'A'

Violoncello 5 pizz. ♩=52 *p* continue so until 'A'

Violoncello 6 con sord. sul pont. → sul tasto → sul pont. ad lib. quasi flautando continue so until one bar after 'A' *pp*

Violoncello 7 molto sul pont. → sul pont. continue so until three bars after 'A' *pp*

Violoncello 8 molto sul pont. → sul pont. continue so until 'A' *pp*

* after the pizzicato, touch the vibrating open string with a few hairs of the (moving) bow, in order to achieve a 'buzzing' tanpura-like sound.



Performer may improvise slightly in this section, but in keeping with the forthcoming melody.

free, quasi improvisando

Vc.1 *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

Vc.2



Vc.1 *mf* *p* *mp* *mp* *pizz.*

Vc.2 *mp*

R Free (♩ = approx. 120)

Violin parts (Vc.1-4) and Cello/Double Bass parts (Vc.5-8) for measures 1-4. The score includes dynamic markings such as *fff*, *pp*, *mp*, and *p*. Performance instructions include *gliss.*, *sul pont.*, and *independent tempo (♩=52) pizz. continue so until 'S'*. A double bar line is present at the end of measure 4.

Violin parts (Vc.1-4) and Cello/Double Bass parts (Vc.5-8) for measures 5-8. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mp* and *mf*. Performance instructions include *3* and *ii*. A double bar line is present at the end of measure 8.