

# Poe Extracts

for

speaking guitarist

by

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HARVEY MUSIC EDITIONS

# Forward

approximate duration: 18 minutes

*Poe Extracts* was composed in response to a commission by Andrew Hull and completed on December 18, 1996. It became the first of many works written especially for him. Movements II-IV were first performed by Hull at the California School for the Arts (3/97). The first complete performance by Hull was at the University of Arizona (4/97). He featured the work as a dramatic presentation, fit with a period costume and candles to capture the spirit in which the piece was composed. Any performer planning to play the piece as a whole (the inner three can function as an independent structure) is free to interpret the material in this way.

The work consists of five movements-

I *Pit and Pendulum* (prose fiction), II *Upon the Quiet Mountain Top* (verse), III *to Eveleth* (letter), IV *Divine Injustice* (philosophy), V *Labyrinth of Light* (verse)

“...The opening glissandi and rhythmic pendulums reminded me of Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Pit and the Pendulum* story and so I thought I’d do a piece taking that tale and dividing it up into scenes with the player taking the point of view of the narrator. Once I became more involved in reading about the life of the author as well as other works of his, I noticed recurring visual motifs he would use from genre to genre and I said to myself that it would be more interesting to illuminate something about the man through his work rather than to set one of his macabre affairs. I selected text excerpts from all sorts of his writings including stories, poems, letters, and philosophical discourses and arranged them so that the thread of his thinking from piece to piece was made apparent.

Next came the idea that in order to illustrate Poe’s swaying back and forth between sanity and madness (like a pendulum), I would avoid writing my entire work in a consistent style. Instead I would, too, sway between using the vocabularies of two musical languages. The problem was to try to maintain unity throughout a single work while developing the disparate materials independently. The piece then all fell into place very fast, composed amidst an illness I was suffering with all during the Christmas season. I decided to structure the work as a five pillar arch with through-composed and non-tonal first, third, and fifth movements. Meanwhile, the second and fourth would further explore the tonal techniques that I had previously reserved for my sacred organ chorales, here within a repetitive framework. A further means of distinguishing the two styles was in the manner of using the text. The non-tonal pieces would have rhythmically accurate renderings of the chosen passages integrated into the flow of the music and the guitar writing was to reflect the imagery Poe was drawing upon. The tonal pieces, on the other hand, would have the text read normally at the end of each ‘verse’ (for lack of a better word) of the movement while the performer plays a in vamping style in the background.

I finally decided that to bring out the pendulous nature of Poe, the last movement would contain snippets of all the previous movements thrown about, but carefully thrown about to tie together the many types of musical gestures despite the wide variety of their content. To set the stage for the piece, I used the word ‘extracts’ over ‘excerpts’, as the first obviously had more painful associations than the latter, and called the work *Poe Extracts*.”

- from *About My Music* by the composer

# I Pit and Pendulum

(6th string tuned to D)

$\text{♩} = 112$  Distant

The musical score is written for a single melodic line on a 6-string guitar with the 6th string tuned to D. It consists of several systems of music with various dynamics, articulations, and performance instructions.

- System 1:** Starts with a *ppp* dynamic and a *cresc. poco a poco* instruction. The music features a series of notes with fingerings (1-5) and a *mf* dynamic at the end.
- System 2:** Features a *meno mosso* tempo change and a *f* dynamic. It includes a triplet of eighth notes and a 5:4 time signature.
- System 3:** Starts with *a tempo* and a *mp* dynamic, followed by a *cresc. poco a poco* instruction. It includes fingerings and a 7:8 time signature.
- System 4:** Features a *meno mosso* tempo change and a *ff* dynamic. It includes a 7:8 time signature and a triplet of eighth notes.
- System 5:** Starts with *Rit.* and a *pp* dynamic. It includes fingerings (IV, VII), a high A# note, and an arpeggio behind the nut. The lyrics "I was sick - sick unto death with that lo -" are written below the notes.
- System 6:** Includes performance instructions: "(tap on body of guitar with fleshy part of hand)" and "(tap on body of guitar with knuckle)". It features a 6:4 time signature and a *ff* dynamic. The lyrics "- ng a-go-ny..." and "And then my vision fell - - - upon the seven tall candles" are written below.
- System 7:** Starts with *mp* and a *freely* instruction, followed by an *accelerando molto...* instruction.

\* Note: all glissandi begin as soon as the initial pitch has been attacked. The arrival pitch should itself be attacked unless notated as a grace note.

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*ritardando molto...*

*sotto voce* ***mf*** ***pp***

"their flame went out ut - ter - ly... still - ness and night were the

*(morendo)* ***Tempo I*** ***pp*** *cresc. molto ...*

u - ni - verse..."

***f***

***mp*** ***f*** ***mp***

"How at least shall we distinguish its

"sha - - - - dows from those of the tomb?" ***ff*** (sub.)

*mp* *accelerando...*

*ritardando...* *f*

"These sha - dows of me-mo-ry

*mp* *mf* *ppp* *pp*

tell...

"in-di-stinct-ly of tall fig-ures"

*mf* *mp* *p*

"The black-ness... of e - - ter - - nal night..."

*mp* *ff* *pp* *p*

...encompassed me." (LV)

*pp* *mp*

*p* *f*

Musical score for the first system. The top staff contains a vocal melody with dynamics *pp*, *mf*, *p*, *mp*, *ff*, and *p*. It includes triplets, a 5:4 interval, and a fermata. The bottom staff contains piano accompaniment with dynamics *p*, *ff*, and *ppp*. It features a 3:2 interval, a 5:4 interval, and fingerings for chords: ② IV, ④ III, and ① XII.

... saw the lips of the black - - robed judges."

Musical score for the second system. The top staff is marked "Resonant" and contains piano accompaniment with dynamics *mp* and *pppp*. It includes fingerings ①, ③, ④, ⑤, and ⑥, and intervals 3 and 5:4. The bottom staff contains a vocal line with dynamics *pppp* and intervals 3 and 5:4.

## II Upon the Quiet Mountain Top

♩. = 72 Calm- *legato e cantabile* (5th string tuned to G, 6th on D)

The musical score consists of seven staves of music. The first staff is a treble clef with a 12/8 time signature. The second staff begins with a double bar line and a common time signature. The third staff has a 12/8 time signature. The fourth staff has a 12/8 time signature. The fifth staff has a 12/8 time signature. The sixth staff has a 12/8 time signature. The seventh staff has a 12/8 time signature. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings like accents and slurs. There are also performance instructions like 'Dal segno (2X) al fine' and 'fine'.

(Ad lib. repeats and arpeggiation types as text is read) *Dal segno (2X) al fine*

1. "I stand beneath the mystic moon.  
An opiate vapour, dewy, dim..."
2. "Of her grand family funerals -  
some sepulchre, remote, alone..."

### III to Eveleth

(5th string tuned to A)

$\text{♩} = 66$  Sonorous

*f* *mp* *p*

*f* *mf* *p*

" - it was the hor-ri-ble ne-ver end-ing

*p* *mf* *ppp* *mf* *mp* *p* *mp*

" os - cil - la - tion be - tween hope and dispair....."

*mf* *p* *mf* *f* *ff*

"I drank ... .. God on - ly

*ppp* *f*

"knows how often or how much."

*ff* *p*



# IV *Divine Justice*

♩. = 56

Calm- *legato e cantabile* (6th string tuned to E)

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef, with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo is marked as 56 beats per minute. The performance style is 'Calm- legato e cantabile', with a note that the 6th string is tuned to E. The score begins with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic and a *p* (piano) dynamic later. It features several first and second endings, indicated by '1.' and '2.' above the notes. The piece concludes with a *mp* (mezzo-piano) dynamic, a *Rit.* (ritardando) section, and a *fine* marking. A *tempo* section follows, with the instruction '(ad lib. repeats as the text is read)'. The final instruction is *Da capo al fine*.

" We walk about, amid the destinies of our world-existence, encompassed by dim but ever present memories of a Destiny more vast - very distant in the bygone time...  
... and infinitely awful."

# V Labrynth of Light

(6th string tuned to D)

$\text{♩} = 100$

Lightly

*crescendo...*

*ffff*

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of several systems of music. The first system features a guitar part with a *sfz* dynamic and a *f* dynamic, leading into a *ffff* section. The second system includes time signatures of 7:8 and 5:4, with dynamics ranging from *mf* to *mp*. The third system is marked *meno mosso* and includes a 3-measure rest, with dynamics from *p* to *pp*. The fourth system contains the lyrics "Dim vales... and sha -- dow -- y floods..." with dynamics *ff* and *mp*. The fifth system includes the lyrics "...And cloud - y looking woods..." with dynamics *mf* and *f*. The sixth system features the lyrics "Whose form we can't" with dynamics *pp*, *mf*, and *p*. The seventh system includes the lyrics "dis - co - ver... For the tears..." with dynamics *f* (sub) and *p*. Various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic hairpins are used throughout the score.

...that drip all o - ver

*p* *f*

*pp* "They use that moon no more." *ppp*

"And they put..."

out the star - light.

*ppp* *crescendo poco a poco...*

*ffff*

5:4 5:4

8 "And buries them up quite..." 5:4

*mf* *ppp* *crescendo...*

*mp*

*finis*

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revised  
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