

Silent Witness

*A Rhapsodic Elegy
for String Orchestra*

Composed by Martin Ellerby



MEM Publications

Martin Ellerby

SILENT WITNESS

(A Rhapsodic Elegy)

for
Divisi String Orchestra

Full Score

Not for Rehearsal or Performance
Perusal Score Only



SILENT WITNESS

Composer's Programme Notes:

Silent Witness was completed in early April of 2025 then tinkered with before committing to print in January, 2026. It is written for a reasonably large divisi string orchestra, the division of which allows for a consistently rich texture throughout its brief duration. It is prefaced with the dedication *Remember the Alamo...* and it is this historic structure, or its remains today, that grace the modern Texan State City of San Antonio in the USA, that provided both its subject and inspiration.

I had first visited the site in May of 2014, but it was after a second excursion in February of 2025 that a musical work was set in motion. There's something about this American National monument that exudes an air of quiet contemplation and silent respect – you have to visit to breath this air, but it is intoxicating once consumed. And, I might say, equally so by day or night.

Most famous as the scene of the 1836 Battle of the Alamo it conjures up evocative names such as freedom, courage, heroism and sacrifice, alongside associated characters the likes of Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, Colonel Travis and General Santa Anna. Today it attracts millions of visitors each year who come to tread its ground and reflect – I was one, twice! It does not disappoint being sensitively presented as museum, hallowed ground and educational resource combined. There's nothing to match having under foot the actual earth where history was made – I have felt this in many other places at home and abroad, Agincourt, Waterloo, Leningrad, Gettysburg, Auschwitz, the list is long and emotive, the very names of the places delivering a shiver down the spine.

In this piece, named Silent Witness after the surviving fragment of the Alamo siege, there is no intent to represent in music the events of the day, rather to present a brief rhapsodic elegy in respect of the fallen as a latter-day musical memorial and tribute to their devotional cause.

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Duration: circa 4 minutes

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Performance Notes:

- a) In both score and parts the use of tenuto and standard accent signs are applied to differentiate between a light accent (tenuto: -) and heavier accent (the conventional accent sign: >).
- b) The parts have been printed in instrumental groups, ie two staves per instrument group. This is to enable the divisi to be allocated according to the individual components of the ensemble in question. It also facilitates adjustments during the course of the reading for the weighting to be varied depending on the musical concerns of directors etc.
- c) All parts are of equal status be they melodic or harmonic. For example, at the opening the 2nd Violas provide a harmonic pedal note that is as essential as their colleagues more thematic line, providing a 'pulse' to the orchestration. The same point applies to the 2nd Cellos at the start, their pedal note anchoring the whole ensemble. This point can be applied elsewhere with the same validity. However, melodic lines are to be emphasised as it is they that provide the journey material binding the piece. The essential point is that it takes all component parts to make the greater whole 'sing'. It has been attempted to provide every part with something of interest at some place in the work.
- d) The dynamic scheme follows the series of rehearsal letters in group style, the overall concept being a 'coming and going' over the the course of the brief structure. However, directors can 'ebb and flow' within these 'blocks' should they feel it more effective to do so – discretion being the better part of valour.

Composer Biography: please visit www.martinellerby.com

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First published 2026

Impression: 1

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ISMN: 979-0-57061-185-0

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Remember the Alamo...

SILENT WITNESS

(A RHAPSODIC ELEGY)

for

Divisi String Orchestra

MARTIN ELLERBY

Moderato (♩ = c. 60)

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Double Bass

like a bugle call

pp

pp

pp

pp

pp

pp *l.v.*

pp *l.v.*

* 2nd D. Bass is 5-string if possible
(if not available then play all extreme
low notes an octave higher as bracketed)

pizz. (like drum beats)

pizz. (like drum beats)

pp *l.v.*

pp *l.v.*

A

5 like a bugle call

Vln. I

pp

pizz.

pp l.v.

pizz.

p

arco

p

Vln. II

pizz.

pp l.v.

arco

p

pizz.

p l.v.

Vla.

p

Vc.

p

p

Db.

p l.v.

p l.v.

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9

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

pizz. *p l.v.*

arco *p*

pizz. *p l.v.*

Not for Rehearsal or Performance

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for measures 9, 10, and 11. Measure 9 starts with a measure rest for Vln. I. Vln. II plays eighth notes. Vla. and Vc. play half notes. Db. plays quarter notes. Measure 10 features 'pizz.' and '*p l.v.*' for Vln. I, and 'arco' and '*p*' for Vln. I. Vln. II continues with eighth notes. Vla. and Vc. play half notes. Db. plays quarter notes. Measure 11 features 'pizz.' and '*p l.v.*' for Vln. II, and 'arco' and '*p*' for Vln. I. Vln. II plays eighth notes. Vla. and Vc. play half notes. Db. plays quarter notes. A large diagonal watermark 'Not for Rehearsal or Performance' is overlaid across the score.

12

B

arco

mp

Vln. I

arco

mp

Vln. II

arco

mp

Vla.

mp

Vc.

mp

mp

(pizz.)

mp l.v.

arco

mp

Db.

Not for Rehearsal or Performance

The image shows a page of a musical score, page 4, measures 12 through 14. The score is for a string ensemble consisting of Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Db.). Measure 12 begins with a rehearsal mark 'B' and a measure rest for the Violin I and II parts. The Viola and Vc. parts have notes, while the Db. part has a whole note. Measure 13 shows all parts with notes and dynamic markings. Measure 14 continues the musical material. A large diagonal watermark across the page reads 'Not for Rehearsal or Performance'.

15

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

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The image shows a page of a musical score, page 5, measures 15 and 16. The score is for a string ensemble, including Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The notation is in treble and bass clefs. A large diagonal watermark is overlaid on the score, reading "Not for Perusal Score Only" and "Not for Rehearsal or Performance".

C

17

mf

Vln. I

mf

Vln. II

mf

Vla.

mf

Vc.

mf

mf l.v.

Db.

mf

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The image shows a page of a musical score, page 6, marked with a rehearsal mark 'C' at measure 17. The score is for a string ensemble and includes parts for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello (Vc.), Double Bass (Db.), and Double Bassoon (l.v.). The dynamics are marked *mf* (mezzo-forte) for all parts. The Violin I and II parts have melodic lines with slurs and accents. The Viola and Violoncello parts have sustained notes with slurs. The Double Bass part has a more active line with slurs and accents. The Double Bassoon part has a simple line with slurs and accents. A large diagonal watermark reading 'Not for Rehearsal or Performance' is overlaid on the score.

A musical score page for a string ensemble. The score includes staves for Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), Double Bass (Db.), and another Double Bass staff at the bottom. The music is written in treble clef for Vln. I and Vln. II, and bass clef for the other instruments. A large diagonal watermark reads "Not for Rehearsal or Performance". A rehearsal mark "D" is placed above the first measure of the Vln. I staff. The score shows various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings like "f" (forte).

23

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

E pizz. arco

mf l.v. *mf*

pizz. *f* l.v. arco *mf* pizz. *mf* l.v.

mf

mf

(div.) *mf*

(div.) *mf*

pizz. *mf* l.v.

arco *mf*

(arco)

mf

Not for Rehearsal or Performance

27 pizz. *mf l.v.*

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

Not for Rehearsal or Performance

F arco (div.)

29

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

Not for Rehearsal or Performance

The musical score for measures 29 and 30 is as follows:

- Violin I (Vln. I):** Treble clef, key of D major. Measure 29: Quarter rest, then eighth notes D5, E5, F#5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6. Measure 30: Quarter rest, then eighth notes D5, E5, F#5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6.
- Violin II (Vln. II):** Treble clef, key of D major. Measure 29: Quarter rest, then eighth notes D5, E5, F#5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6. Measure 30: Quarter rest, then eighth notes D5, E5, F#5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6.
- Viola (Vla.):** Treble clef, key of D major. Measure 29: Quarter rest, then eighth notes D5, E5, F#5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6. Measure 30: Quarter rest, then eighth notes D5, E5, F#5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6.
- Violoncello (Vc.):** Bass clef, key of D major. Measure 29: Quarter rest, then eighth notes D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5. Measure 30: Quarter rest, then eighth notes D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5.
- Double Bass (Db.):** Bass clef, key of D major. Measure 29: Quarter rest, then eighth notes D3, E3, F#3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4. Measure 30: Quarter rest, then eighth notes D3, E3, F#3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4.

(unis.)

31

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

Not for Rehearsal or Performance

The musical score for page 11, measures 31-32, features five staves. The Violin I staff begins with a measure number of 31 and a '(unis.)' marking. The Violin II staff continues the melodic line. The Viola and Violoncello staves provide harmonic support with sustained notes and moving lines. The Double Bass staff has a more active role with eighth and sixteenth notes. A large diagonal watermark, 'Not for Rehearsal or Performance', is overlaid across the center of the page.

33

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

mp l.v.

mp

pizz.

mp l.v.

mf

mp

mf

mp

mf

mp

pizz.

mp l.v.

pizz.

mp l.v.

mf

36

Vln. I

like a bugle call

arco

mp

Vln. II

like a bugle call

mp

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

Not for Rehearsal or Performance

The image shows a page of a musical score, page 13, measures 36-38. The score is for five instruments: Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Db.). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The music is in a major key. The Violin I and II parts have a melodic line with a slur and a fermata over the final note, marked 'like a bugle call' and 'arco' with a dynamic marking of *mp*. The Viola part has a similar melodic line. The Violoncello and Double Bass parts have a more rhythmic, eighth-note pattern. A large diagonal watermark reading 'Not for Rehearsal or Performance' is overlaid across the center of the page.

H

39

Vln. I

(mp)

pizz.

mp l.v.

arco

mp

Vln. II

(mp)

mp l.v.

Vla.

(mp)

(mp)

Vc.

(mp)

(mp)

(div.)

(div.)

Db.

(mp l.v.)

(mp l.v.)

Not for Rehearsal or Performance

42

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

pizz. *mp* l.v. arco *mp*

pizz. *mp* l.v. arco

(unis.)

(unis.)

Not for Rehearsal or Performance

44

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

mp l.v.

mp

arco

pizz.

mp l.v.

Not for Rehearsal or Performance

The image shows a page of a musical score, page 16, measures 44 and 45. The score is for a string ensemble consisting of Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Db.). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Measure 44 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The Violin I part has a half note G4, a quarter rest, and a half note G4. The Violin II part has a half note G4, a quarter rest, and a half note G4. The Viola part has a half note G4, a quarter rest, and a half note G4. The Violoncello part has a half note G4, a quarter rest, and a half note G4. The Double Bass part has a half note G4, a quarter rest, and a half note G4. Measure 45 continues the same pattern. The Violin I part has a half note G4, a quarter rest, and a half note G4. The Violin II part has a half note G4, a quarter rest, and a half note G4. The Viola part has a half note G4, a quarter rest, and a half note G4. The Violoncello part has a half note G4, a quarter rest, and a half note G4. The Double Bass part has a half note G4, a quarter rest, and a half note G4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings. A large diagonal watermark reads "Not for Rehearsal or Performance".

46

I

pizz.

arco

Vln. I

p

Solo (opt.1 only)

tutti pizz.

p l.v.

Vln. II

arco

mp

p

p

Vla.

p

p

Vc.

p

p

Db.

p l.v.

p l.v.

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49

pizz.

p l.v.

arco (div.)

p

Vln. I

arco Solo (opt.1 only)

p

tutti pizz.

p l.v.

Vln. II

like a bugle call

tutti

Vla.

Solo (opt.1 only)

Vc.

Db.

Not for Rehearsal or Performance

51

arco (unis.) like a bugle call

Vln. I

pp

arco like a bugle call

pp

pizz.

pp l.v.

Vln. II

pp

like a bugle call

pp

Vla.

pp

pp

Vc.

tutti

pp

pizz.

pp l.v.

arco

pp

pizz.

pp l.v.

arco

pp

pizz.

pp l.v.

Db.

pp

pp l.v.

pp l.v.

Not for Rehearsal or Performance

54

Vln. I

(div.)

SILENCE

arco (div.)

pp

a niente

Vln. II

pizz. *pp* l.v.

arco *pp*

a niente

Vla.

(opt. non div.)

a niente

Vc.

(opt. non div.)

arco (opt. non div.) *pp*

a niente

arco (opt. non div.) *pp*

a niente

arco *pp*

a niente

Not for Rehearsal or Performance