

Danse Macabre

Instrumentation: Violin, Cello, Piano

Duration: 4'50"

Completed: 2006

Premiered: March 29, 2009 by Paula Farias Bujes, violin, Pedro Huff, cello, and Eva Elizabeth Holder, piano, at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Awards: Winner, Society of Composers Inc./ASCAP Student Composition Competition, 2007, regional level

Winner, Southeastern Composers' League's Arnold Salop Memorial Composition Contest, 2007

Danse Macabre, a dance of death, is a late medieval allegory of the universality of death. Ravished by the horrors of the 14th century, such as famines, wars, and the Black Plague, Europe was constantly reminded of the brevity and fragility of life.

Paintings of that period personify death and depict it as a skeleton or a decaying body leading people from the highest ranks of the medieval hierarchy (a pope and emperor), down to its lowest (beggar, peasant and child), in a procession or a grotesque dance. The allegory of the dance with death is also present in plays and poetry of that period. Artists throughout the centuries have been fascinated by this theme as well.

The present work follows in this tradition. It is my personal and emotional reaction to our society's quiet and "disinfected" way of dealing with death and grief. It is an expression of senselessness and bewilderment after losing a young friend to the grip of death.