

Introduction to “*Arti Play*”

I wrote “*Arti Play*”, for cello duo, in 2016, for my wife Kitty Knight. We performed the premiere at the Rocky Mountain Sahavas the same year. The piece is essentially a game of “tag” where the melodies of the Australian and American *artis* take turns being “it”.

The piece begins with a very brief intro, where one cello climbs a Major 6th, from D to B, followed by the other moving up a Perfect 5th, from D to A. These are, of course, the opening intervals of the Australian and American *artis*, respectively.

“*Arti Play*” then unfolds with 2 iterations of the Australian *arti*, followed by 2 iterations of the American *arti*. All is “play”: in addition to the straightforward presentation of the *artis* as we know them, we hear swirls, an Arabic dance, bird calls, whispers of wind.

Eventually the 2 *artis* attempt some sort of unison, playing together rather than successively as heretofore. Given that the Australian *arti* is written in 4/4 meter in the key of G Major, and the American in 6/8 meter in e minor, this proves difficult, problematic. Both have to adapt to each other, but distortion, discomfort inevitably arise. They square off, asserting and eventually being diminished to their core melodic intervals, as presented at the very beginning of the piece (Australian - Major 6th, American - Perfect 5th). Resolution and unity is finally achieved with the entrance of a third, well known, *arti*.