

Fragile

For String Orchestra and Piano, Grade 2.5
By Randall D. Standridge (ASCAP)

Instrumentation

1 - Full Score
8 - Violin 1
8 - Violin 2
3 - Violin 3 (Viola T.C.)
5 - Viola
5 - Cello
5 - Bass*
1 - Piano

Note from the Editor:

Written in g minor, this grade 2.5 work focuses on bow control, dynamics and phrasing to express an array of human emotion. Though written entirely in 1st position, advanced groups may add shifting to enhance the beauty of the work.

The piece includes solo/soli moments for viola, violin and piano (required). Violin 3 is provided as an alternative/enhancement to viola. *A Cello 2 part that doubles the Bass is available as a free download.

- Katie O'Hara LaBrie

Full Set - \$55.00

Extra Conductor Score - \$10.00

Extra Part - \$4.00



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Fragile

By Randall D. Standridge, Grade 2.5

Why I wrote *Fragile*

In our media soaked society, it is fashionable to only focus on positive outcomes. People love to hear a story of someone who beats the odds, overcomes the challenges of living with mental health issues, and comes out stronger on the other side.

That is a beautiful story, but...it is not everyone's story.

I have written two works of that type (unBroken and (not) Alone), both of which portray individuals who were able to get the help and support they needed and were able to flourish. Not everyone is always so fortunate.

This newest work in The unBroken Project reflects on the darker aspect of the silent epidemic that claims thousands of lives every year. Some are not strong, they are not resilient, they are not okay.

Some survive. Some do not. Some escape the only way they know how.

The goal of The unBroken Project and its works is to spark conversations and reflections on mental health, as well as tearing down the social taboo of discussing the reality of living with mental health conditions. Living with depression and anxiety myself, I understand this all too well.

Some may say that students are too young to discuss such issues. But no. For some of them, this is their daily life.

We need to talk about this. We are GOING to talk about this.

And maybe, we can bring some of them back to us, piece by broken piece.

Peace Love and Music

The unBroken Project began with the composition of my work, unBroken. The work was my first to deal with mental health struggles and, inspired by its reception, I have created a series of works for performers, conductors, and audiences to use as conversational starting points for these issues. As of this writing, there are currently 6 works in the series, and I anticipate creating at least 2 more: unBroken Grade 5, Loosey Grade 4, Not Alone Grade 2.5, Blue Sky on Grade 2, and Fragile Grade 3.5-2, all for concert band, and this arrangement of Fragile for String Orchestra and Piano (Grade 2.5)

Note that unBroken (the grade 5 work) is available as a free rental for university, professional, community, and accomplished high school bands. Please message me for details.

About the work

The piece starts very softly, with both beauty and dissonance. The individual is aware that something is wrong but is trying to bravely persist. The violas introduce the main theme of the work, a bittersweet melody that is lovely and vulnerable. As the first segment continues, dissonant elements and a three note descending theme signals the onset of a mental health crisis.

The second segment is manic and violent. The individual struggles with their condition as everything seems to be in darkness. The piece builds to a thunderous moment before dying away to a single dissonant sound, signaled by the violins. The individual is broken.

The original theme sounds out again, as an unaccompanied violin solo(soli). Slowly the individual resumes their life, still hopeful, but knowing the cycle will repeat. The piece ends on an ambiguous note, their future uncertain.

Major Themes

There are two major themes that are used in the work.

The first, which I call "Shirley's Theme", after my mother who lives with severe depression, is first heard at measure 9. This work is used throughout, both in whole and in part, to signify the individual.

The second theme, a three note descending motif, appears in 2 forms throughout the work. When the individual is hopeful, it appears as in m.17, a minor second down and major third down. Later, it is twisted, a minor second down and minor third, which alters its character (m.46 cello example).

Rehearsal suggestions

- Dynamics should be noticeable and taken to extremes, for a hyper dramatic quality.
- Bowings and bow control will be a predominant focus in rehearsals. How can students extend the life of the bow to show phrasing and the rich story of the piece? Consider LAWS (Location, Amount, Weight & Speed), as well as Bow Tilt.
- For more advanced groups encourage players to re-bow melodic lines into longer phrases (ie. 2 bar phrases at m. 61)
- The piano part is an essential part of the fabric of the piece.
- The aleatoric segment at m.50 should sound extremely chaotic and manic. Second violins are to play behind the bridge- changing strings at any speed they wish, but in a frantic, tremolo manner.
- The work may appear daunting at first. Work in segments and gradually join them. I recommend breaking the piece up into the following "chunks" to work on: m.1-49, m.49-60, m.61-End. Treat it as 3 smaller pieces and approach it accordingly.
- At m.61, the first time the solo may be played freely with a slight pause between each phrase. Let the silence echo out. An optional fingering is provided for students ready for more advanced shifting - this can continue throughout the tutti section as well.
- Violins and Violas should avoid open strings when ever possible to maintain an even tone quality. Some 4th fingers have been added as a reminder.
- Cellos are encouraged to avoid open A through the piece and shift throughout the piece if ready for this skill.
- Explain to performers that rests are not the composer saying "do not play." They are the composer saying that the player should "allow silence to exist." They must be still and not move to create this effect. Movement creates both aural and visual sound. The silence should be absolute to create the proper mood.

WORKS IN "THE UNBROKEN PROJECT"

- unBroken (Grade 5, Concert Band)
- Choose Joy (Grade 3, Concert Band)
- (not) Alone (Grade 2.5, Concert Band)
- Blue Sky Horizon (Grade 2, Concert Band)
- Fragile (Grade 2.5, String Orchestra)
- Fragile (Grade 1.5-2, Concert Band)



About the Composer

Randall Standridge (b.1976) received his Bachelor's of Music Education from Arkansas State University. During this time, he studied composition with Dr. Tom O'Connor, before returning to Arkansas State University to earn his Master's in Music Composition, studying with Dr. Tom O'Connor and Dr. Tim Crist. In 2001, he began his tenure as Director of Bands at Harrisburg High School in Harrisburg, Arkansas. He left this post in 2013 to pursue a career as a full-time composer and marching arts designer.

Mr. Standridge is currently published by Grand Mesa Music, Alfred Music, FJH Music, Wingert-Jones Music, BandWorks Publications, Twin Towers Music, and Northeastern Music Publications. Mr. Standridge's music is performed internationally. He has had numerous works selected to the J.W. Pepper's editor's choice. His compositions ***Snake Charmer***, ***Gently Blows the Summer Wind***, and ***Angelic Celebrations*** have been included in the "Teaching Music Through Performance in Band" series. He has had numerous works performed at the prestigious Midwest Clinic in Chicago, Illinois. His work *Art(isms)* was premiered by the Arkansas State University Wind Ensemble at the 2010 CBDNA conference in Las Cruces, New Mexico, and his work ***Stonewall: 1969*** was premiered at the National LGBA conference in 2019. Mr. Standridge is a contributing composer for Alfred Music's Sound Innovations: Ensemble Development series.

In addition to his career as a composer, Mr. Standridge is the owner and editor for Randall Standridge Music, LLC and Grand Mesa Marching. He is in demand as a drill designer, music arranger, and colorguard designer for the marching arts, as well as a freelance artist/photographer and writer. He lives in Jonesboro, Arkansas with his family.

Fragile

Score
Grade 2.5
Duration 3:30

for String Orchestra and Piano
part of the unBroken Project, a musical initiative about mental health

Randall D. Standridge
(ASCAP)

Flowing ♩ = 104

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Cello

Double Bass

Piano

2 3 4 5 6

9

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

Pno.

7 8 9 10 11 12

Fragile

2

17

Vln. 1 *pp* *mf*

Vln. 2 *pp* *mp*

Vla. *mp*

Vc. *mp*

D.B. *mp*

Pno.

13 14 15 16 17 18

rubato *a tempo*

Vln. 1 *f* *p*

Vln. 2 *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

D.B. *mf* *p*

Pno. *mf* *p*

19 20 21 22 23

Fragile

rall. 27 *a tempo*

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

Pno.

pp Solo (opt. Soli) *mp*

p *pp* *mp*

p *pp* *mp*

p

pp *p*

mp *p*

24 25 26 27 28

31

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

Pno.

pp *mp* *pp*

All *pp* *mp* *pp* *mf*

All *pp* *mp* *pp* *mf*

mf

mf

29 30 31 32 33 34

Fragile

4

39

Vln. 1 *mf*

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

Pno.

35 36 37 38 39 40

mp

mp

mp

rit. *a tempo*

Vln. 1 *f* *mf*

Vln. 2 *f* *mf*

Vla. *f* *p* *mf* 4

Vc. *mf* *f* *p* *mf*

D.B. *f* *p* (V) (M)

Pno. *f* *mf*

41 42 43 44 45 46 47

molto rit. **49 Violent!** $\text{♩} = 112$
div. Play pitches in order over and over, frantically

Vln. 1 *ff* *f* Behind bridge, changing strings frantically

Vln. 2 *ff* *mf* *div.* *ff*

Vla. *ff* *mf* *div.* *ff*

Vc. *ff* *mf* *div.* *ff*

D.B. *ff*

Pno. *f* Play pitches in order over and over, frantically

sfz 48 49 50 51 52 53

ff *8vb*

Vln. 1 *mf* *div.*

Vln. 2 *cresc.* *mf* *ff* *p* *4*

Vla. *mf* *ff* *mf*

Vc. *mf* *ff* *mf*

D.B. *mf*

Pno. *cresc.*

8vb 54 55 56 57 58 59

molto rit.

64 Hopeful ♩ = 120
Solo (opt. Soli) *opt.-3*

Vln. 1 *ff* *pp* *p*

Vln. 2 *ff* *pp*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

D.B. *ff*

Pno.

8vb 60 61 62 63 64 65

Vln. 1 *mp* *-2* *-3*

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

Pno.

66 67 68 69 70 71

Fragile

72 All -2

Vln. 1 *mp*

Vln. 2 *mp*

Vla. *p*

Vc. *p*

D.B.

Pno. *p* *mp*

72 73 74 75 76 77

80

Vln. 1 *mf*

Vln. 2 *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

D.B. *mf* (V)

Pno. *mp*

78 79 80 81 82 83

Fragile

8

molto rit. 86 **Slowing** ♩ = 96

div. V *rit.*

Vln. 1 *ff* *mf*

Vln. 2 *ff* *p*

Vla. *ff* *mf*

Vc. *ff* *mf* opt.-1 x2

D.B. *ff* *p*

Pno. *ff* *p*

84 85 86 87 88

rit.

Vln. 1 *pp* *mf*

Vln. 2 *pp* *mf*

Vla. *mp* *mf*

Vc. *mf* *p* *mf*

D.B. *mf*

Pno. *mf* *pp* *mf*

89 90 91 92 93 94