

Roger Briggs

Jitterbug

For Solo Piano
an etude on quintuplets

PROGRAM NOTE

Jitterbug was written for Milica Jelača Jovanović and premiered by her on May 30, 2015. The Jitterbug was a dance popular in the early 20th century United States and is often considered part of the “swing” movement.

The lyrics of a 1934 recording of “Call of the Jitterbug” by Cab Calloway establish a strong relationship between the dance and alcohol consumption:

If you'd like to be a jitter bug,
First thing you must do is get a jug,
Put whiskey, wine and gin within,
And shake it all up and then begin.
Grab a cup and start to toss,
You are drinking jitter sauce!
Don't you worry, you just mug,
And then you'll be a jitter bug!

I imagined a pianist who has the “jitters” or “heebie jeebies” and I used an abundance of ever-changing quintuplet rhythms to create the effect of “the shakes”. The work is light-hearted and nervy, producing the effect of “not quite being in control”... but in truth, it takes an enormous amount of control to sound on the edge and be a “jitterbug”.

Duration ca. 4.30 to 5.00, depending on the Jitters

Jitterbug

an Etude: quintuplets
for Milica Jelača Jovanović

♩ = 110 or faster

light, jittery, with a grin

Roger Briggs

Measures 1-2 of the piece. The music is in 4/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) features a melody with eighth notes and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes in measure 1. The left hand (bass clef) plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. A dynamic marking of *mp* is present in measure 1.

Measures 3-4 of the piece. The right hand continues the melodic line with eighth notes and sixteenth notes. The left hand maintains the eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 3 contains a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand. Measure 4 shows a change in the right hand's rhythm with more sixteenth notes.

Measures 5-6 of the piece. The right hand features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 5. A dashed line labeled *8va* spans measures 5 and 6, indicating an octave shift for the right hand. The left hand continues with eighth notes, including a triplet in measure 6.

Measures 7-8 of the piece. The right hand has a triplet of eighth notes in measure 7. A dashed line labeled *8va* spans measures 7 and 8. The left hand continues with eighth notes, including a triplet in measure 8. The piece concludes with a final chord in measure 8.

9 *a little faster
extremely short*

The score is for a piano piece in 2/4 time. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter rest, and a triplet of eighth notes F4, E4, and D4. The second measure contains a quarter note C4, a quarter rest, and a quarter rest. The third measure contains a quarter note B3, a quarter rest, and a quarter rest. The fourth measure contains a quarter note A3, a quarter rest, and a quarter rest. The fifth measure contains a quarter note G3, a quarter rest, and a quarter rest. The sixth measure contains a quarter note F3, a quarter rest, and a quarter rest. The seventh measure contains a quarter note E3, a quarter rest, and a quarter rest. The eighth measure contains a quarter note D3, a quarter rest, and a quarter rest. The ninth measure contains a quarter note C3, a quarter rest, and a quarter rest. The tenth measure contains a quarter note B2, a quarter rest, and a quarter rest. The eleventh measure contains a quarter note A2, a quarter rest, and a quarter rest. The twelfth measure contains a quarter note G2, a quarter rest, and a quarter rest. The thirteenth measure contains a quarter note F2, a quarter rest, and a quarter rest. The fourteenth measure contains a quarter note E2, a quarter rest, and a quarter rest. The fifteenth measure contains a quarter note D2, a quarter rest, and a quarter rest. The sixteenth measure contains a quarter note C2, a quarter rest, and a quarter rest. The score ends with a double bar line.

12 **A** a tempo
mp
 5 8va

16

5

5

5

cresc.

5

5

5

4/4

4/4

4/4

4/4

[illegible]