

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*

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Measures 1-2 of the piece. The music is in 4/4 time. The right hand features a melody with eighth notes and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes in measure 1. The left hand plays a bass line with eighth notes and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes in measure 1. The piece starts with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic.

Measures 3-4 of the piece. The music continues in 4/4 time. The right hand features a melody with eighth notes and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes in measure 3. The left hand plays a bass line with eighth notes and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes in measure 3.

Measures 5-6 of the piece. The music continues in 4/4 time. The right hand features a melody with eighth notes and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes in measure 5. The left hand plays a bass line with eighth notes and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes in measure 5. The piece is marked with an 8va (octave) sign.

Measures 7-8 of the piece. The music continues in 4/4 time. The right hand features a melody with eighth notes and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes in measure 7. The left hand plays a bass line with eighth notes and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes in measure 7. The piece is marked with an 8va (octave) sign.

9 *a little faster*  
*extremely short*

5

*p*

12 **A** *a tempo*

*mp*

5

8va

14 (8)

*p*

5

16

*cresc.*

5

**B**

18 8va

*mf*

5