

Mahmoud Abuwarda



PROGRAM NOTES

Night is rarely the peace we pretend it to be. It carries the weight of unshed grief, the ache of injustice, and the quiet endurance of those who refuse to be broken. This nocturne was born that night. Its opening speaks softly but with a tremor of truth: harmonies unsettled, chords like bruised constellations, tenderness strained by pain yet unwilling to collapse. It is the sound of a heart that feels deeply and still remains standing.

From this interior darkness rises movement—first as breath, then as resolve, and finally as flame. The music turns toward the tango not as escape, but as uprising. Rhythm becomes a spine. Melody becomes defiant. The tango does not dance to forget; it dances to insist upon presence, dignity, and life. It carries the strength of someone who has faced the storm and chosen to walk forward regardless.

This work is dedicated to **Francesca Albanese**, whose courage, clarity, and unwavering humanity have been a fierce light amid so much shadow. Her voice, steady and unafraid, has held space for truth when truth is neither convenient nor welcomed. The music draws strength from that example—from her compassion, from her refusal to look away, and from her solidarity with a people who deserve breath, earth, and future.

When the music returns to fragments of its opening, it does so changed. The stillness is no longer fragile—it is conscious, resilient, and marked by the journey. In that return lives gratitude. In those final echoes lives a vow: to remember, to resist erasure, to honor courage, and to offer music not as an ornament, but as a solidarity and a witness. This nocturne was born from dialogue—long hours of music, thought, and conviction shared with my friend, the distinguished Italian pianist **Alberto Nones**. During an almost continuous flow of messages, our thoughts often returned to **Francesca Albanese**, to her courage and unwavering humanity. From that admiration grew the decision to dedicate this work to her.

Some of the musical ideas too were shaped in close conversation with **Alberto Nones**. He helped forge the emotional spine of the piece: the charged cluster chords, dense with feeling and truth, as well as the very configuration of the clustered accompaniment and the contour of several bass lines. He provided the harmonic foundation of the tango theme and fully conceived the climactic peaks in bars 23 ff. and 56 ff.

When the opening theme took shape, it was **Alberto** who then whispered the spark—“a **Nocturno Tanguero**”—and with that, the tango section was born. He finally performed the early draft, offering the same generosity, insight, and artistry that have always guided his counsel, establishing also the final tempi of execution—tempi that give the work its exact perceived form. I wish to credit him for all his help and contributions. Through dialogue, friendship, and Francesca’s luminous example, this nocturne found its voice.

To Francesca Albanese
Nocturne No, 5
Nocturne Tanguero
for Solo Piano

Mahmoud Abuwarda

Larghetto nostalgico ♩ = 63

pp
con pedale

mp
poco rall. *a tempo*
p

halidon

Nocturne No. 5

13

13

16

poco rall.

Animato

mp

16

19

mf

cresc.

19

22

rall.

f

22