

Lark Descending Analysis and Performance Notes

Overview

Lark Descending is a piece written for string quartet. It should evoke the sense of a lark flying.

Introduction

Everyone but the string section has an introduction that evokes a dark but proud feeling. It is made up of chords, and it is generally in similar motion.

A section

Bar 5 - 12: Violin 1 takes the melody until bar 14. It should be played mostly in first position to maintain a clear tone. It is in D harmonic minor and contains no accidentals (minus sharp 7th) The rest of the strings have a motif with chords on beats two and three. To create a light touch in this motif, they should play down bows to maintain control of the bow. The second beat should be shorter than the third beat in this motif.

Bar 13 - 14: Cello starts a different motif - thirds.

Bar 15 - 16: All instruments take the melody, each in a different octave. There is the inclusion of the G#. The cello continues to play something similar to the new motif - playing Ds in between the melody notes.

Bar 17 - 20: Violin 1 finishes the melody by itself. Violin 2 has a small countermelody to the violin 1. Cello finishes the section with a perfect cadence.

B section

The B section is in F major, the relative major of D minor.

Bar 21 - 28: Violin 1 continues having the main melody and violin 2 takes a countermelody. Cello has a broken chord semiquaver pattern. In bar 25, viola also gains a countermelody for that bar before reverting to an alto/tenor line-like accompaniment.

Bar 29 - 30: The string quartet should sound like birds at this point. Each instrument plays 1 crotchet beat's worth of semiquavers, and play a crotchet after that, with the exception of the violin 1.

Bar 31 - 32: The string quartet reverts back to its feel in bars 21 - 28.

Bar 33 - 34: The string quartet is now manipulated to sound like tubular bells. The cello plays half bar semiquaver patterns. The viola is the primary bell, and the violins second and third bells.

Bar 35 - 36: The string quartet reverts back to the structures in bars 31 - 32, and there is movement back to D minor.

A2 Section

This section is in D minor, and mostly has a fairly lonely feeling to it. The violin 1 takes the lead part again, and violin 2 features a flowing semiquaver counter melody.

Bar 37 - 40: The cello plays long semiquavers while viola has dotted minims. This is to evoke a sense of emptiness and loneliness. The violin 1 bar starts one octave higher than in the A section, and it descends to its original octave in bar 39.

Bar 41 - 46: Cello has a pedal note tremolo to portray more emptiness, and viola has pizzicato on beats two on three to assist in creating atmosphere.

Bar 47 - 48: Violin 1 and viola take the melody line together while the cello continues its tremolo and the violin 2 continues its counter melody.

Bar 49 - 50: The same structure is used in these two bars as 41 - 46.

Bar 51 - 52: The viola stops its pizzicato structure and has an arco accompaniment section instead. In bar 52, a perfect cadence occurs.

Coda

Bar 53 - 56: Evokes a similar dark feel as the intro. Violin 1 stops playing and violin 2 and viola have short solos at the beginning of bars 53 - 55. The section ends in a perfect cadence.