

Movement I Comments

by Ruey (May 2012)

Hi Ollie, Neil, Chun, and Weichen! (Hmm should I call you the WONC) Sorry Sibelius won't open the Finale files :(but I'll use the .wav files' minutes to refer to the piece. By the way, unless otherwise indicated, I will refer to ALL four of you -- Ollie, Weichen, Neil, and Chun -- as "you" in this email. Here is my feedback:

0:00 LOL Ollie so this was what you were talking about!!! I totally recognize this! And it makes me happy :D haha

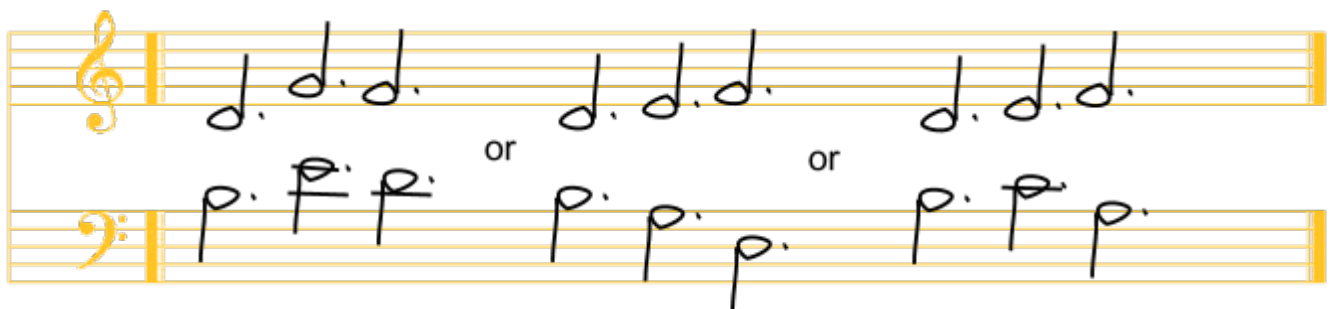
0:05 nice timpani touch! (and again at 0:26) You can ask the timpanist to adjust the hardness of these notes depending on whether you want this movement to be triumphant or solemn

0:22 nice flute progression

0:30 until 0:35 - This is the third time that you play the opening motif. I think it is really nice that each time the motif appears, it is performed by a greater set of instruments. Make sure to tell the orchestra how you want them to distinguish each of the four occurrences of the opening motif. For example, you could tell them to start very soft and mellow, and then incrementally get louder and crisper each time. However, it gets old when the same notes are played 4 different times in a row. To fix this, consider changing the progression slightly during this third time that you play the opening motif. For example:



can be varied to be



0:43 I love this brass cadence, especially since you have the Bb together with the C. Ask the brass to crescendo leading up to this cadence. To make it cooler, you can increase the rhythmic complexity of the V chord at 0:46, so you can build up a sense of rhythmic progress.



0:48 The main melody, which is first introduced here, can be more lyrical. I know this is quite a bit of work, but can you consider rewriting it? Try to use more than just the I, IV, V chords. More importantly, try to also create a response to this main phrase so that it sounds more like a conversation and so you don't have to keep on repeating the same phrase throughout the piece. For example, here is the variations among phrases of a very simple melody that you are most certainly familiar with:

Variation of first phrase:

even just a small difference is sufficient to create a nice second phrase of the melody, since it changes the cadence

nice little variation

a needed relief from the quarters

a gorgeous rhythmic highlight

1:26 Consider rewriting the section from here until 1:48 using more unique chord progressions. Currently, it is IV IV I I. IV IV I I. IV IV I I. IV IV V V. It would sound very interesting if you rewrote it using these chord progressions (for example): IV IV I I. ii ii6 vi vi64. vii(dim) vii(dim)6 vi64 IV. V(3->4) V(3->4) V(3->4) V. This would prepare you very well to transition back into 1:48 where you have a return to a theme in Bb major starting on D. Here is a sketch of what you can do:

1:26

Then go directly to 1:48, where
it returns to Bb major.

2:28 This sounds great. You are doing some development of the theme, and using very creative chord progressions oriented around the same note. Especially the chord transition at 2:33, which is beautiful! And again the transition at 2:36!

2:40 and onward sound a bit lacking, especially the parts that are in unison and the rehashing of the main theme. The introduction of the piano solo sounds really snazzy but I think it is quite abrupt to have it pop up at the end, and it won't sound very loud or grand compared to the orchestra parts preceding it. I think it would good if you remove everything from 2:40 onward and write an ending at 2:40, so you can end while you're strong (as in, right after the beautiful downward harmonic and melodic progression from 2:28-2:36). You don't have to, but I think this is a very good spot to end.

Whew, it took me hours to draw all those by hand! Overall, great movement. I think it really opens your piece strongly.