

Annotation on Blues Composition

Brief

I have been asked to compose a piece of music that would be suitable to be played in a cocktail bar of a cruise ship. The piece must be composed for Piano and have a minimum length of 1 minute 30 seconds. It must have a blues theme and have one contrasting section. I have chosen to write in C major, as it is an easy key to play in. I chose 4:4 time as this is a characteristic of blues music.

One blues/jazz piano piece which inspired my composition was George Gershwin's 'Rhapsody in blue'. It is mainly a jazz piece and has many blues characteristics.

For this piece I wrote an 8 bar long introduction. I composed 4 bars of blues music and then adapted it to make a further 4 bars. The music is syncopated, and the position of the accents enforces this, thus adding a 'blues feel'. I have used notes of the C blues scale, which flattens the 3rd, 5th and 7th notes. The introduction flows well into my first section (section A). My melody has a very strong catchy tune, which sounds improvisatory and compliments the homophonic bass part.



At first I composed the A section with my 4 bar chordal bass part running all the way through. After performing my piece I decided to add more rhythmic variation as my piece began to sound repetitive. I changed the 4 bar block crotchet chords to quaver chords with sustained notes.



As a development of my original idea I inverted my melody and kept the bass to quaver chords and sustained notes. This adds rhythmical variation and flows very well on from my original idea. To adapt my bass rhythm further I added semi quavers and triplets. Section A is mainly forte, except for bar 20, where I added a crescendo from mezzo piano to fortanissimo. Also I added a diminuendo in bars 25 and 26 which leads nicely into the mezzo piano dynamic of section B.

Originally my section B was similar to section A but in a different key. I decided more contrast was needed so I used a slower tempo and a less complex rhythm. I experimented with a few acciacatura's but kept a constant walking chord bass line. This tied in with my blues theme. At the end of section B I added a perfect cadence and a crescendo, which is followed by the start of section A part 2.

I 'cut and pasted' section A at first as a starting point. Firstly I changed the material by putting the first 6 bars of right hand an octave higher. At Bar 43 I decided to vary my melody once more by adding extra sets of triplets.



I did this because it varies the melody and it works well with the harmony in the left hand. Also, I think this idea is better than my original, but too much of it may make my piece become repetitive. Therefore I limited its use to section A part 2. I also used this idea again but with a descending melody instead of ascending. Again this worked well with my bass line.

I ended my piece with a perfect cadence and a Tremolo. The tremolo is typical of many blues pieces and I felt it worked well with my composition.

In conclusion to the annotation of my piece, I am very happy with the way my composition turned out. I think my composition has a catchy tune and fulfils most aspects of the marking criteria. If I were to write this composition again, I think I would plan the structure more and add more harmonic variations. I would maybe experiment with texture and possibly try out giving the left hand the tune every now and again. For my next composition I shall take into account where I went wrong and how it can be improved. On the whole I am very happy with this composition and the way I performed it.