

## INTEGRATED TASK COMMENTARY

For my performance I have chosen a Trinity Guildhall Grade 5 piece called Lime Tree Bay. It is a jazz piece composed by a session musician and composer called Malcolm Ball. I will play my own interpretation of this particular piece of music, which differs subtly in the “feel” from the way Malcolm Ball plays it. Malcolm Ball’s version lacks a degree of subtlety in the way it is played, which modifies the way it sounds and the emotions conveyed. I believe my version is truer to the way traditional jazz is played which was reflective of the black people’s liberation in back street clubs (the birthplace of jazz). Malcolm Ball’s piece only provided a template for the piece which could be developed by the performer, acknowledging the supposition that a piece of music, much like a book can be interpreted in a variety of ways.

The first twenty five bars are performed using brushes; this is not dissimilar to the way many big band pieces were played and so shares properties of both big band and traditional jazz. The use of brushes makes it easier to differentiate between accented notes and long legato

“sweeps” on the snare drum, giving the piece a variance in timbre making the piece more interesting. It is difficult to sustain a homogenous sound that doesn’t vary at the apex of the stir. Instead I chose to embrace the issue and accentuate the apogee of the crescendo that resulted from an unsteady stir. The brushes also allow for greater dynamic contrast in the music, as the brushes enable the player to play very softly. This means that there can be fastidious attention to detail that makes it sound less simplistic. There is very little dynamic notation in the piece of music which if played as written would not complement the accompanying piano, and for this reason I have incorporated some changes in dynamics. This makes it sound as if there is less “conflict” between the drum kit and piano. The First bar is very simple playing a quaver -triplet rhythm and crotchet stirs with the right hand. This simple rhythm is common in many big band pieces but is not often played on its own; there is often an improvisation on top of this. The hi-hat on beats two and four acts as a pulse, throbbing to the beat of the music and in live music acts as a kind of metronome for the other instruments.

In the 11<sup>th</sup> bar, a separate rhythm played with right hand is prevalent, within this style of music there is a great deal of floccinaucinihilipilification towards the precise timing of the supplementary rhythm. However I feel this is sheer neglect of an important feature of this particular piece of music. I have chosen to play this as is

written as it augments the 'feel'. This aspect of the piece is repeated every two bars, however the two bar phrase at bar 23 is difficult to play. This technical obstacle involves swapping from brushes to sticks in no time at all if played as written. In fact this is a flaw in the music and was amended in a 12 page list of corrections published by the exam board. Unfortunately I have not had the pleasure in laying my eyes upon it. I originally proposed to swap my sticks in half a beat. This proved difficult and in practice I swapped them missing out the final crotchet in the bar, a somewhat primitive but necessary solution. Bars 25 to 31 are a bridge, where there is a gradual crescendo to a fill. I kept this improvised simple so I could replicate it later on in the piece and move it onto a different set of drums. I did this on the philosophy "true sophistication is simplicity", I felt the need to have a theme that was evident throughout the piece. This is because the written music varies for the sake of testing technical ability; I wanted a sense of gravitas and the piece to resemble something that would be played live.

Bars 33 to 54 are effectively playing the same thing throughout, a traditional jazz rhythm where the ride cymbal is played on all four beats with slight variation in rhythm every 9 bars. The hi-hat plays on beats 2 and 4 still. Above bar 33 there is a note saying "comp and fill as required"; I haven't improvised so much as to make the improvisation contrast with the accompaniment. I have added ghost notes on the snare drum that give a certain lilt to the music that to me, make it jazzier and less rigid. In bar 52 there is yet another typographical mistake, where there are three crotchets in a bar. I have added a rest on the last crotchet which I suspect is what was intended as it fits so well. In bar 55 the fill that was in bar 32 is repeated, except I play the role on the snare. From this fill a pattern is repeated but with extra layers added, so it swells to a climax, which peaks with stabs in the final bars.

I have taken several distinct factors and incorporated them into my composition, firstly I using a set drum rhythm, where the bass drum plays on all four beats. My composition is written in the style of jazz. The high-hat plays on beats 2 and 4 as in all jazz music. The piano accompaniment will have to same rhythm as the ride cymbal so the two sound in time. To make my composition more interesting and to overcome the monotony of repetitive drumming I am adding snare improvisations, in a similar way to my performance. To make my composition technically exciting I have allowed for a drum solo at the beginning, I can demonstrate a simple but effective technique, exploring different tonal qualities of each drum within the solo. Somewhere in my composition there will be a key change that changes the mood of it.