Brief

My school's music department wants to encourage students to start to learn to play instruments. To help them choose which instrument they would like to learn, students who already play will be demonstrating their skills by performing a composition. I have decided to write a composition for a violin accompanied by a piano.

Compositional Process

The piece is in rondo form (Area of Study 1) for a violin and piano which contains 3 sections in the format ABACA, with the A section as the returning theme, but varied slightly each time to keep the theme interesting. The piece was composed in simple time: 4/4. I chose to use this to counter the difficulty of the piano parts, where semi-quavers and quavers are played in both parts for a large proportion of the piece. The first A section was composed mostly in G major, with 4 bars in the middle in D major, the dominant key of G major. To start the piece, I created a violin melody accompanied with a piano playing arpeggios and broken chords. I made bar 8 an exception: a scale was used instead of an arpeggio in the piano right hand. I decided to do this to contrast with the other bars which were playing arpeggios. This section started off as *mezzo-forte* with two *mezzo-piano*'s in the middle of the piece, as the note lengths were swapped around for one bar: usually the violin part is in crotchets, right hand piano semi-quavers and left hand piano quavers, which was changed to violin - semiquavers, right hand piano - quavers and left hand piano - crotchets. I did this to vary the rhythm of the piano and violin parts, so that no one part was playing just semi-quavers for a whole section. Also, in bar 15, the left hand piano part only plays a single G note, which was changed from a crotchet rhythm like in the preceding bars. I did this so that the piano parts would not just keep playing quavers, semi-quavers and crotchets throughout the whole piece without a break and to allow only one piano part playing for the rest of that bar. There is a crescendo from the bar 17 to bar 20, during which only quavers and semibreves are being played. I decided to do this so that the violin and the right hand piano part were playing the same rhythm whilst the left hand is only playing a single note every bar after playing many bars full of semiquavers. This section ends with a perfect cadence as *forte*, which gives it a strong ending.

The first half of the B section was composed in G major and had a I-VI-II-IV progression. The second half was in the relative minor: E minor, and had a I-II-V-I progression, but the rhythm was dotted. Originally, the first half of the B section had a I-VI-II-IV I-II-V-I progression, with the second half with the same progression but in E minor. However, I decided to cut this down as it made this section become too long. The change of rhythm in this section contrasts this section from the other sections of the piece, as the lack of semiquavers makes this section feel slower. This helped with my decision to cut this section down to only 8 bars to counter that. I ended this section in E minor so that this would lead into the next A section, which started in the same key. I also used more articulation in this section, particularly with staccato notes, as they have not been used anywhere else in the piece apart from this section.

The second A section was transposed into E minor (the relative minor of G major), though had sections in G and D major in the middle, but was likewise similar to the

first A section, except from the ending. I decided to do this so that this section was different enough from the first A section, but also allowed the main theme to still be recognised. The violin melody also included accidentals in bar 36, whereas in the first A section, accidentals were only present in the piano section. I transposed violin melody in bars 40 and 41 down an octave than it was originally, so it descended below middle C to show that the violin is capable of playing low notes. This also contrasts from other bars where the violin melody is usually high.

The C section started in E minor and mainly consisted of a piano solo. I did this to contrast this section from the other sections of the piece, as it has a lighter texture, and starts as *piano*, rather than *mezzo-forte*. However, it is still polyphonic, just like the rest of the piece. The left hand played thirds whereas the right hand carried the melody. The first 4 bars followed this pattern, with the chord changing every half bar: Emin, Bmin, Amin, F#min, Dmaj, Amin, Bmin, F#min. The next 4 bars started in G major and had a similar transposed pattern to the previous 4 bars and the 4 bars after that started in D major. The next 4 bars consisted of the piano playing block chords: a diminished triad of F#, a triad of Emin, a chord of F7 and a diminished triad of C#. The violin part also came in, playing a single note, usually the key note. I did this to contrast with the previous bars where the chord notes were split between the piano parts. As both piano parts are now playing block chords, and that the violin part has re-entered, this created a dramatic change. I chose all of the chords for the C section through experimenting with the MIDI keyboard and selecting chords which I liked and thought would go well in this section. The last two bars consisted of a D major chord in first inversion, another D major chord but in the other hand with the 7th added which is the climax of this section and is *forte* which resolves to a *pianissimo* G major chord, creating a perfect cadence.

The third A section consisted of G major, with the left and right hands swapping harmonies and the semiquavers lengthened to quavers from bar 70; and E minor and D major, with elements from the C section, especially the thirds in the left hand. I decided to end the piece with the piano parts playing block chords as they have only played them at the end of sections and in the C section. Also, both piano parts at the end of this section are in unison, which only occurred in the C section beforehand. I did this because I wanted the last A section to incorporate elements that were introduced throughout the whole piece to neatly sum up the piece and to bring it to a close.

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