

Workshop with Steve

No. 5 Diabolo - Final Confrontation

(5th and final movement from The Gothic Suite)

As in previous movements there is a paragraph preceding the music which should be read aloud before beginning to play:

"This, then, was the end. There was nowhere to run or hide from whatever it was that stalked me.

I turned and waited until finally the rage of the beast roared from out of the darkness as it approached."

Having read all that, this movement needs to be played with lots of drama. The opening bars should be played as quiet as possible (by about bar 3 the sound should just be trickling through to the front row!); try and create a supernatural atmosphere right from the start. As in the opening movement, Diabolo, accentuation is vital, so put emphasis on the 1st and 4th quavers in this opening section. Try and play this movement as quickly as you're capable of.

Where the first of the chords enters the accentuation should change to beats 2, 4 and 6 creating the syncopation needed at this point and a general crescendo should be given over this phrase. At the first change of time signature (to 5/8), heavy accents should be placed on the two Perfect 4ths and on the two F naturals in the following bars. In bars 25 and 26, try and hang onto as many notes as possible, forming chords, and remember to hold the final top C of this phrase on for its full duration. Similarly with the next few phrases, form chords all the time.

At the bottom of the first page, the main Diabolo theme recurs very briefly but concludes on a different note to the original (F natural); really emphasis this F natural. Similarly with the next phrase which once again quotes something from the first movement of the Gothic Suite; emphasise the E flat. At this point we are reaching the big finale which should begin at around the beginning of line 3 of the second page with a quiet build up. As soon as the strummed chords are reached then begin thinking about increasing the volume, gradually moving up to 'forte' and finally as **LOUD AS POSSIBLE** when the final line is reached. Don't worry about strumming too hard - it is volume needed here not subtlety! Going back to the beginning of the strumming sequence; strum with a finger (i or m) but not with the thumb. The sequence is:- **DOWN UP DOWN DOWN UP DOWN**, with very strong emphasis on the 1st and 4th beats. The final note is played using 'Bartok pizzicato'; lift up the string with right hand thumb and finger, and 'twang' it down very hard so that it rattles on the fretboard, then stop the note immediately.

I hope this series of workshops on The Gothic Suite has been of help.

Anyone wishing to ask questions about any aspect of this work, just e-mail me and I'll get back to you.

Next Workshop will be on the publication 'The Day Mr. Murray Fell Off The Trapeze and other delights'.