

Composer's Notes

It was a real pleasure to create these interesting and quirky musical pieces, corresponding to the random notes in Sofi's drawings. I would thank her for the opportunity to play with what I consider quite fascinating little musical puzzles. Each of the six resulting compositions is drawn from a fairly strict interpretation of the notes dictated by the visual images. I decided on the unusual combo of violin, accordion, harp, bassoon and double bass to give the pieces both the circus character of the elephant as well as the tender delicate feel of the angels.

My Self-Imposed Ground Rules

I use ALL the notes in each drawing and ONLY those notes.

I am free to decide on the clef of each staff.

When a note lies more or less between two staves, I treat it as a "wild card" which can be any of the notes between the staves (b, c or d, for example.) In addition, if I repeat a section, I may change the wild card notes.

I also take the liberty to decide on accidentals for each note.

Most of the pieces start with #1 although that is not a hard and fast rule.

Angels at Play

I must admit this quirky piece in 7/4 is my favorite of the 6 pieces. At first I was baffled at what to do with these two short melodic fragments. I started with a bass line made from the lower melody. The accordion simply plays syncopated inversions of the resulting thirds. The bassoon enters again with the staccato bass line. The violin with a contrasting rhythm plays the upper line, changing the octave of the last note with alternating phrases. The harp completes the ensemble with a swinging little melody based on the three repetitions of the upper melody.

Elephant Cycle

The violin and bassoon alternate playing the upper and lower segments of the big wheel. The violin takes over the small wheel as a short secondary melody. The accordion plays notes based on the section connecting the two wheels (#19-24). The bass plays a short vamp taken from scattered notes.

Cupid Whisper

This piece for solo harp starts with a delicate melody made out of notes #1-9. The chords are made from the following groups of 3 notes (#10-12, 13-15, 16-18, 19-21), and the ending is a long arpeggio based on #22-32.

Waking With Wings

The harp begins as if improvising on the chords from #1-6. The "wild card" notes allowed me to add a bit more interest. The pizzicato violin improvises on notes in the upper region starting on #18. Since there are so many D's, the melody jumps from D to the other notes in the region. As the two instruments come together, the harp plays notes taken from #7-10.

Mother with Baby

Solo violin plays the melody in retrograde (starting with #1) across the floor. The last two notes are saved for the ending. Various accidentals are used to give it a gypsy feel. It repeats four times, the third and fourth times the violin uses double stops of notes found already in the melody. The final repetition includes a repetition of notes #11-18 with an accelerando until the end. Joel Buchanan has done a fantastic job of interpretation for this recording.

Gramophone in Elephant

This picture seemed like the biggest challenge because of the number of notes involved. However, the task was simplified when I gave the entire set of notes to the double bass as a bass line plays from #1- 107 and back around to #24 for the ending. As for the main melody in the violin, I selected 3 groups of 4 notes across the back of the elephant. (#14-17, #18-21, 25-28 with some grace notes) and then repeated the first group to give it some form. The accordion plays a dissonant descending line made from scattered groups of thirds (#38,#45; #66,67; #38,41; #56,57.)

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