

STRING EXPLORER SERIES

C-Serpents

Andrew H. Dabczynski (ASCAP)

INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor Score	1
Violin I	8
Violin II	8
Viola	5
Violin III (Viola 	3
Cello	5
String Bass	5
Piano Accompaniment	1

PROGRAM NOTES

C-Serpents is an original work for string orchestra that features the viola and cello sections playing on their low C-strings. In fact, all the players perform primarily on their lowest strings (the violins never playing higher than their open E-string). The piece is in Dorian mode, an ancient Greek scale that has a distinctly dark and melancholy sound. The repeated, wavy musical figures are combined with dissonant harmonies and steady rhythms to produce the mysterious, sinister, foreboding mood associated with mythical sea serpents. The piece has three main themes. It begins slowly, accelerates, and then returns to the introductory material. Just as the listener thinks the "C-Serpents" are fading away, and all is quiet, the piece ends with a sudden, explosive bite from the deep!



NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

Here's the perfect piece for your "C-farers!" Written especially for young violists, cellists, and bassists, *C-Serpents* explores the depths of the lower strings. Simple modes are creatively mixed with contemporary-sounding rhythms and harmonies for a work that's perfect for students within their first two years of string study. This piece uses relatively simple fingerings, bowings, and rhythms to focus on tone production on the lower strings. While the pun in the title is obvious, the piece should maintain a rhythmic, sinister, and haunting "sub-mariner" character. Emphasis is on the violas, cello, and basses throughout. Primarily in D-Dorian mode, the piece begins slowly and steadily with a repeated C-string figure (violas/cello) and sudden accented and dissonant outbursts by the basses and violins (mm. 1–8). The repeated figure accelerates and is expanded (mm. 8–12) until the main theme is reached at m. 13 in a comfortable Allegro tempo. The accompaniment in the violins should not over-balance the viola/cello melody. Roles are reversed at m. 20 when the 1st violins take over the melody. A second theme begins at m. 27 (violas, cello, basses), an augmentation of the opening measures. A steady, almost "rock-beat" feel should be maintained when the violins join with their rhythmic accompaniment (m. 34). The violins come to the fore with a new melody in m. 45, but the accompaniment in the lower strings is of almost equal importance and should always be steady and insistently rhythmic. Following the second ending (m. 53), the piece suddenly ritards, comes to a cadence and pause (m. 58), and with a da capo, returns to the opening. A coda is taken (after m. 28), and with a return to the introductory material, the piece ritards and fades to a virtually silent halt. Following a long, tension-filled grand pause, the piece concludes with a startling, loud plucked note in all instruments, with the strings slapping the fingerboard (Bartok pizz)—a final bite from the deep.

C-Serpents

3

CONDUCTOR SCORE

Duration - 3:40

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Moderato (♩ = 96)

Violins
I
II

Viola
(Violin III)

Cello

String Bass

Piano Accompaniment

Moderato (♩ = 96)

Vlns.
I
II

Vla.
(Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Piano Accomp.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

fp *mf* *mp* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

pizz. *accel.* *cresc.*

13 Allegro (♩ = 128)

Score for measures 11 through 15, marked 13 Allegro (♩ = 128). The instruments are Vlns. I & II, Vla. (Vln. III), Cello, Str. Bass, and Piano Accomp.

Measure 11: Vlns. I & II play eighth notes. Vla. (Vln. III) and Cello play eighth notes. Str. Bass plays eighth notes. Piano Accomp. plays eighth notes.

Measure 12: Vlns. I & II play eighth notes. Vla. (Vln. III) and Cello play eighth notes. Str. Bass plays eighth notes. Piano Accomp. plays eighth notes.

Measure 13: Vlns. I & II play eighth notes. Vla. (Vln. III) and Cello play eighth notes. Str. Bass plays eighth notes. Piano Accomp. plays eighth notes.

Measure 14: Vlns. I & II play eighth notes. Vla. (Vln. III) and Cello play eighth notes. Str. Bass plays eighth notes. Piano Accomp. plays eighth notes.

Measure 15: Vlns. I & II play eighth notes. Vla. (Vln. III) and Cello play eighth notes. Str. Bass plays eighth notes. Piano Accomp. plays eighth notes.

Dynamic markings: *mf* (measures 11-12), *f* (measures 13-15). Performance markings: *legato* (Vla. and Cello), *arco* (Str. Bass).

Score for measures 16 through 20, marked 13 Allegro (♩ = 128). The instruments are Vlns. I & II, Vla. (Vln. III), Cello, Str. Bass, and Piano Accomp.

Measure 16: Vlns. I & II play eighth notes. Vla. (Vln. III) and Cello play eighth notes. Str. Bass plays eighth notes. Piano Accomp. plays eighth notes.

Measure 17: Vlns. I & II play eighth notes. Vla. (Vln. III) and Cello play eighth notes. Str. Bass plays eighth notes. Piano Accomp. plays eighth notes.

Measure 18: Vlns. I & II play eighth notes. Vla. (Vln. III) and Cello play eighth notes. Str. Bass plays eighth notes. Piano Accomp. plays eighth notes.

Measure 19: Vlns. I & II play eighth notes. Vla. (Vln. III) and Cello play eighth notes. Str. Bass plays eighth notes. Piano Accomp. plays eighth notes.

Measure 20: Vlns. I & II play eighth notes. Vla. (Vln. III) and Cello play eighth notes. Str. Bass plays eighth notes. Piano Accomp. plays eighth notes.

Dynamic markings: *f* (measures 16-18), *mf* (measures 19-20). Performance markings: *legato* (Vlns. I & II, Vla. and Cello), *arco* (Str. Bass).

Vlns. I
 Vlns. II
 Vla. (Vln. III)
 Cello
 Str. Bass
 Piano Accomp.

mf
mf
mp

21 22 23 24 25

Vlns. I
 Vlns. II
 Vla. (Vln. III)
 Cello
 Str. Bass
 Piano Accomp.

mp
mp
mf
mf
mf
f
f
f
f

27 To Coda \oplus
 27 To Coda \oplus
 1/2 pos.
 1 4

26 27 28 29 30 31

Score for measures 32-37, featuring Vlns. I & II, Vla. (Vln. III), Cello, Str. Bass, and Piano Accomp.

Measures 32-37 show a dynamic progression from *mp* to *mf* across the string and piano sections. The Vlns. I & II parts feature a crescendo leading to *mf* and then a decrescendo back to *mp*. The Vla. (Vln. III), Cello, and Str. Bass parts also show a crescendo to *mf*. The Piano Accomp. part follows a similar pattern, starting at *mp* and reaching *mf* by measure 37.

Measures 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37

Score for measures 38-42, featuring Vlns. I & II, Vla. (Vln. III), Cello, Str. Bass, and Piano Accomp.

Measures 38-42 show a dynamic progression from *f* to *p* across the string and piano sections. The Vlns. I & II parts feature a decrescendo from *f* to *p*. The Vla. (Vln. III), Cello, and Str. Bass parts also show a decrescendo from *f* to *p*. The Piano Accomp. part follows a similar pattern, starting at *f* and reaching *p* by measure 42.

Measures 38, 39, 40, 41, 42

45

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla. (Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Piano Accomp.

mf

mf

mf

mf pizz.

43 44 45 46 47

1. 4

Vlns. I

Vlns. II

Vla. (Vln. III)

Cello

Str. Bass

Piano Accomp.

48 49 50 51 52

D.C. al Coda

2. rit.

Vlns. I dim. mp p

Vlns. II dim. mp p

Vla. (Vln. III) dim. mp p

Cello dim. mp p

Str. Bass dim. mp p

Piano Accomp. dim. mp p

53 54 55 56 57 58

D.C. al Coda

Coda
rit.

Vlns. I mf

Vlns. II mf

Vla. (Vln. III) 4

Cello

Str. Bass

Coda
rit.

Piano Accomp.

59 60 61 62

63 Moderato (♩ = 96)

Vlns. I *mp* *fp* *pizz.* *mp* *pizz.*

Vlns. II *mp* *fp* *mp* *pizz.*

Vla. (Vln. III) *mp* *pizz.*

Cello *mp* *pizz.*

Str. Bass *mp*

Piano Accomp. *mp* *mf* *mp*

63 64 65 66 67 68

Vlns. I *rit.* *p* *dim.* *pp* *ff*

Vlns. II *p* *dim.* *pp* *ff*

Vla. (Vln. III) *p* *dim.* *pp* *ff*

Cello *p* *dim.* *pp* *ff*

Str. Bass *p* *dim.* *rit.* *pp* *ff*

Piano Accomp. *p* *dim.* *pp* *ff*

69 70 71 72 73

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