

Sententia for Solo Cello and Orchestra
by HoYin Cheung

1. Clear and inventive deviation from the shared material between movements, all with an obviously repeated introduction. /20

The contrast between the processes of the first two movements is far greater heard than those in the second and third movements. That being said, the breaking up of subtle gestures of the main motive around the orchestra in the first and third movements is noticeable *and* audible (which is hard to do with set theory), and the similarities between two and three give rise to some nice variation in the way they are executed. However, generally speaking, I would have liked to *hear* more variation in that thematic breaking exactly like you do in the beginning of the piece in layer portions of each movement, since it all ends up sounding somewhat similar without a particular overarching process in mind that isn't backed by orchestration. Overall, however, that fact that I was able to hear many variations in a post tonal style is appreciated and should not be undersold.

17.5/20

2. A conclusive and satisfying, yet creatively combined final movement. /10

An interesting take on this requirement, as the composer seemed to use orchestration qualities and make that the basis of the processes of development. This is a very tenuous connection, however, because those atmospheric changes need to be extremely explicit, and while that happens, the actual development of the motivic content is lost. It's a really strange push and pull to balance, and it's *almost* there. There is some subtle variation of a (016) trichord, but this is not unique to this given movement. When it's stated vertically it is much more welcome and the counterpoint it forms between the voices is actually quite clever, though it is hard to hear these kinds of things amidst the need to balance the piece orchestrally. **7.5/10**

3. A good, semi-professional score and audio rendition of the work. /10

Score is mostly good. I have very few complaints, come from some strange additions as opposed to anything that's necessarily wrong. m. 77, for example restates all of the clefs for some reason. I won't dwell on it.

The sound quality is somewhere in the middle. It's good enough to hear most of what *needs* to be heard, but a lot of stuff is covered up, and stuff that would be covered up in a real performance is brought to the forefront of the recording. Some tinnier sounds are fine, but I tended to lose my way of some processes, especially in multiple places in the second and third movements, where a lot of bigger, contrapuntal moments are used. Generally not bad, though. **8/10**

4. Sound and realistic instrumentation and orchestration. /10

Very good! My main complaints are mostly in the vain of jumps in difficulty or strange choices rather than anything strictly incorrect. The beginning of the second movement, for example, has the cello play two down bows in m. 4, when it doesn't make much sense to play a down bow coming from the *detache* notes prior. The quick jumps at the beginning of movement three are another good example: not wrong, but very difficult out of nowhere, and not particularly helpful in a sense of register. I do, however, commend your specificity of notational articulation, and while more bowings might have been helpful, it's always nice to see care put into the sound of the work. I also worry some things might be a little too uselessly covered up in the bigger sections, but it's generally subtle enough to have a presence. **8.5/10**

TOTAL: 41.5/50