

Aldor
by Tónskáld

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

I struggled with this piece a lot. There were moments I really loved (I'd perform the first movement in a heartbeat), and places that really seemed to meander. The developed content regarding flexible symmetry in multiple directions was very clear in some places (i.e. mm. 30-34, Mvt. 5), and hard to grasp in others (Allegro chiassoso, Mvt. 4). I really didn't know what to make of it, though I will congratulate you on being one of the only people I know who I can make the MoLT sound natural and not gimmicky. You achieve a sort of implicit isography with the specific modal transformations of the same motive which is super cool, but I can't hear it. These are bounded by the stop and start nature of some of the quicker passages, which is great because it establishes bounds, like Stockhausen, but interrupts the flow a little bit too much for my liking.

I'm basically rambling and I apologize for that, since I should be in a position to be able to explain my opinions, but I'm stuck in which way I want to interpret your passages: the way that flows more musically, but interrupts the pattern, or the follows the pattern but may potentially be a little more stilted. In the end, I averaged my opinions out considering the process I felt best kept the mapping consistent.

This is an impressive work on many, many levels. You should be proud regardless of my analysis. **+18/20**

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

I repeat my praise in being able to use the modes (especially mode 1) without sounding too gimmicky or heavy-handed. What I found a little troubling was the movement's relative stylistic stasis compared to the other movements. The other movements, to me, had so much color in the changes that this movement's more singular style threw me off a little bit. I appreciate the internal symmetry interplay you have going with the different modes and such, but it was an odd choice to be the finale movement. In other words, the mode development seemed a little bit reductive this time around, despite the modes being inherently similar to each other. It felt like the previous processes were references in this one as opposed to an overarching telling of the piece. However, it was creative the way that you interplayed the mode types as a subtle retelling of the piece, as the internal structure are, segmented, somewhat similar. **7.5/10**

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

I have very little to say here. The score looks good for the most part, though I do question some tied dotted halves in 9/8. There are also some parts where the main voice or some markings are obscured by the shaping (i.e. m. 59, Mvt. II or m. 60, Mvt. V), especially when they're not totally necessary.

In terms of your recording, I think you may have the human playback way too high on it or something, because lots of things sounded off between the two instruments at various times. The piano sounded excellent, however.

Overall, fantastic presentation. **8/10**

4. Sound and realistic instrumentation and orchestration. /10

Great use of both instruments, though I think you may have the up bow and down bow markings flipped... at the beginning of mvt. 3, are all of those fortissimo double stops supposed to be played up bow; that is to say, do you want that sort of weaker, uncomfortable sound on those, or did you want them to be played full force?

You have a couple awkward passages for the cello, like m. 62 of Mvt. 3. Nothing impossible of course, but definitely a little confusing when reading through it. It helps that the low note isn't sustained all the way through the triplet. Measure 30 in Mvt. 1's long slur is also a little awkward, if you don't follow the written bowing.

You know what you're doing with the piano. I won't waste your time or mine telling you anything about it.

9.5/10

TOTAL: 43/50