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O haupt voll Blut und Wunden - Suites

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This is a suite in four parts, in which eligibility is preserved.

Clear/inventive material / 20	17
Creative final movement / 10	5
Score and audio /10	8
Realistic instrum/ orchestr /10	7
<i>Total</i>	37

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

The shared material consists in 4 measures: the five voices are identical except in movement III where the oboe departs from the rest. The harmonic structure is the same, in minor mode. The pulse changes from the first movement. In all, the material is recognizable and almost the same in every part. The amount of shared material is about 10-15% in each section, except in the longer final part, exceeding 5%.

Part I is marked as *adagio*, and the rest of the piece *andante*, part IV has additional tempo marks. As expected: "Shared material need **not** be at the same tempo between movements"

In all parts, the transition is smooth and natural into the rest of the piece. Parts I, II and III have similar development with a central section in which the oboe is silent. That is a nice organization in general. The first part is a chorale, but parts II and III take different ways, I consider this a good point. These two sections (II, III) have quite interesting baroque flavor due to the sequences (repetition of beautiful motives in different transpositions).

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

Part IV doesn't fulfill entirely the criteria because it has been thought as an ensemble of transposed fragments from the previous parts, for example from measure 125 on (taken from III), or from measure 133 on (taken from III). The result is really pleasant to the ear, it is nicely blended, but it is not exactly what expected.

The issue here is that, except transposition following tonality adjustment, everything is a copy of the original material in previous sections (counterpoint, harmony). I mean, perhaps one solution would be keeping the melody (oboe) the same and make some variation with harmony, rhythm, or the counterpoint itself.

The Baroque style offers one powerful weapon to transform things: motivic development. Perhaps reworking the motives from parts II and III in this way would give sense to a new part IV (inversion, fragmentation, augmentation, etc....)

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

The score is clean and clear. The "composer notes" should be written apart (just my taste). The parts and tempos are correct.

The management of some dynamics could be clearer by making them all converge. For example, in the very beginning we have ff, f, mp, mf in different voices. Or in measure 81 violins (p, and mf, and their *crescendi*, etc.). I know this is an adjustment of the midi sound, because matching them leads to disbalance. Of course, different dynamics are possible in voices or lines or instruments, but, in my opinion, this is more frequent in contemporary music where we have very different lines.

One solution is recording the piece (exporting audio) and fixing dynamics in the score (that is what I do many times if I want a semi or quasi professional score).

Sound and realistic instrumentation and orchestration. /10

A concern about orchestration is why in part II and part IV there are some phrases with two oboes. We can infer there is a string orchestra playing, but there is one oboe it is mentioned in the notes). In the real life, it's not the same asking for one soloist or for two (just for a few measures of the total).

In most parts counterpoint is highly effective. In some spots I find the music rather homophonic (parallel motion in general), for example the central section of movement I.

I find the writing of the strings correct and safe (no slurs, divisi in the viola when needed instead of double stops...).

The sound is correct but unavoidably "technical". The oboe sounds more natural than the strings. The main issue is the lack of true legato.

Observations or suggestions:

Being a baroque Suite, perhaps a more characterised work would have been interesting. I mean taking the form of baroque dances, and typical parts. This is just an observation, since the way it is designed is valid, in free counterpoint.

I suggest taking a look at the concept of suspension, retardation, and appoggiatura, essential in this style, which contribute to the embellishment of melody and the other lines.

The harmonic structure could have been expanded. All parts are in minor mode and have some phrases in the dominant, but there are no true modulations.

The melody runs in a sweet, lovely melody contour made of steps. Just a few leaps (thirds mostly) can be heard. This issue, plus the same fact in the strings (except in the celli and counterbasses) don't allow, perhaps, the potential of melody to be expanded.

Regarding the score, I suggest the landscape (horizontal) layout, with this number of instruments/sections it's easier to follow.