

## The Composition

The essence of folk music lies in strong melodies shared between voices. Drawing from this rich tradition, *Irish Fantasy* is melody-driven with the theme freely passed so all voices share the joy of the tune.

*Air* starts with a flowing cello melody soon taken up by the violins. A fast, syncopated middle section featuring violas, cellos, and basses progresses into the final spirited retelling of the theme. As the movement quietly resolves, several voices echo the melody.

*Jig* starts with high energy and a strong beat as the melody circles through the instruments. In the contrasting middle section, a slow, lyric theme highlights cellos and violins and is then woven together with the first jig rhythm as the movement proceeds to a climactic end.

## Rehearsal and Teaching Notes

Because melodies are the centerpiece of this music and are passed between voices, it is crucial for players to know who has the tune at any given point. The melody must be prominent at all times, regardless of the dynamic level. This provides a chance to teach advanced watching and listening skills as sections shift from melody to accompaniment to rhythm, and must balance their dynamic levels accordingly. The melody line is indicated in the parts with the word *Soli*. Other important voices are marked with *Espressivo*. Occasionally, the melody line is given a dynamic level higher than the other voices to ensure its prominence.

*Irish Fantasy* employs many characteristics of traditional Irish folk music including the pentatonic scale and Aeolian mode as well as lilting triple-meter melodies interspersed with strong rhythmic sections. It is useful for teaching contrasts in styles, tonalities, textures, time signatures, rhythms, bowings, and articulations. Each teaching point below has general information with questions and answers from the music to help teach the concepts.

### Styles

Both movements of this piece move back and forth between lyric and rhythmic sections.

*Question:* Identify when the music is lyric and rhythmic.

*Answer:* *Air*: 1-lyric; 46-rhythmic; 69-lyric. *Jig*: 1-rhythmic; 59-lyric; 75-rhythmic.

### Tonalities

The “Irish” sound of *Irish Fantasy* comes partly from the use of pentatonic scale and the Aeolian mode. Discuss the differences between major, minor, and modal scale patterns.

*Q:* In the first themes of the *Air* (cello melody at measure 5) and the *Jig* (violin melody at measure 17), what scale patterns are used?

*A:* The five notes of the Pentatonic scale form the basis for the first themes of the *Air*; the first theme of the *Jig* is set in the Aeolian mode.

### Textures

Students will play melody, harmony, and rhythmic accompaniment sections as the music moves between different textures.

*Q:* In the *Air* at measure 52, and the *Jig* at measure 79, which part of the texture does your section play?

*A:* *Air* 52: violins-rhythm, viola-harmony, cello/bass-melody;

*Jig* 79: 1st violin-melody, 2nd violin-harmony, viola/cello/bass-rhythm.

### Time Signatures

The beginning  $\frac{3}{4}$  time signature of the *Air* is strongly contrasted by the syncopated  $\frac{4}{4}$  of the middle section. The *Jig* is in a traditional  $\frac{6}{8}$  setting, but then moves to a lyric  $\frac{3}{4}$  theme. At the end of the *Jig*, the  $\frac{3}{4}$  melody is overlaid onto the  $\frac{6}{8}$  jig.

*Q:* In the *Jig*, compare the 1st violin melody at measure 67 and at measure 77, and look for the relationship.

*A:* It is the same melody. At measure 77, the notes are tripled in length.

**Rhythms**

Contrasts between free and patterned rhythms are displayed throughout the piece. While the rhythms of the *Jig* may look difficult, they become much more playable when the repetitive patterns are recognized.

*Q:* Find two main rhythmic patterns in the *Jig*.

*A:* Example: viola/cello/bass-79, measure and viola/cello/bass-measure 80.

**Bowings**

Patterns can also be useful to teach coordination in bowing. The fast and somewhat difficult cello/bass bowings in the mid-section of the *Air* and the hooked bowings in the *Jig* repeat several times. Once the pattern is understood, the bowings for many measures will have been learned.

*Q:* Identify a complicated bowing pattern in your part that is repeated.

*A:* Examples: cello in the *Air* at measures 52 and 54; 1st violin in the *Jig* at measures 108 and 111.

**Articulations**

Players are asked to employ many different articulations in these two movements including long slurs, detached bowings, and detached slurs.

*Q:* Find examples of long slurs, detached and detached-slur articulations.

*A:* The beginning of the *Air* has many long slurs (2nd violin-measure 1); all bowings are detached in the middle section of the *Air* (1st violin-measure 48); and the *Jig* is mostly detached slurs (cello/bass-measure 1).

SAMPLE

# Irish Fantasy

Full Conductor Score  
Approx. total time - 7:10

Miriam Overholt

## I. Air

1 Moderato  $\text{♩} = 94-98$

Violins 1  
Violins 2  
Viola  
Cello  
String Bass

7  
Vlns. 1  
Vlns. 2  
Vla.  
Cello  
Str. Bass

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13 14 15 16 17 18

1 Vlns.

2 Vlns.

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

19 20 21 22 23 24

1 Vlns.

2 Vlns.

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

Soli V

mp

arco

mp

25 26 27 28 29 30

1 Vlns.

2 Vlns.

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

mf espress.

mf

mf

mf

mf

arco

mf

1 Vlns. 1 31 32 33 34 35 36 V

2 Vlns. 2

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

1 Vlns. 1 37 38 39 40 41 42 V cresc.

2 Vlns. 2 cresc.

Vla. cresc.

Cello cresc.

Str. Bass cresc.

1 Vlns. 1 43 44 45(V) 46 Presto ♩ = 144 detached, off the string 47

2 Vlns. 2 detached, off the string

Vla. rit. V

Cello rit. V

Str. Bass rit. V

48 49 50 51 52

Vlns. 1 2

Vla. *detached* *off the string* *detached, off the string*

Cello *detached, off the string*

Str. Bass *detached, off the string*

53 54 55 56

Vlns. 1 2

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

57 58 59 60

Vlns. 1 2 *cresc.* *ff*

Vla. *cresc.* *ff*

Cello *cresc.* *ff*

Str. Bass *cresc.* *ff*

61 1. 62 63 64 2. 65

Vlns. 1 *f*

Vlns. 2 *f*

Vla. *f*

Cello

Str. Bass

66 67 68 69 Tempo I (♩ = 94-98) 70

Vlns. 1 *rit.* *p legato*

Vlns. 2 *rit.* *p legato*

Vla. *rit.* *p legato* *espr.*

Cello *rit.* *p espr.* *legato*

Str. Bass *rit.* *p legato*

71 72 With energy (not overly accented) 73 74 75 76

Vlns. 1 *pp* *sim.*

Vlns. 2 *pp*

Vla. *pp* *sim.*

Cello *pp* (V)

Str. Bass *pp*

Musical score for strings and woodwinds, measures 77-96. The score is arranged in three systems, each with five staves: Violins 1 and 2, Viola, Cello, and String Bass. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. Measure numbers 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, and 96 are indicated above the staves. A box containing the number 83 is located above the first staff of the second system, and a box containing the number 97 is located above the first staff of the third system. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings like *sim.* and *f*. A large, semi-transparent watermark reading "SAMPLE" is oriented diagonally across the page.



98 V 99 V 100 V 101 102 103 Slightly faster  $\text{♩} = 116$

Vlns. 1 *ff* *mf*

Vlns. 2 *ff* *mf*

Vla. *ff* *mf*

Cello *ff* *mf*

Str. Bass *ff* *mf*

104 105 (V) 106 107 Tempo I ( $\text{♩} = 94-98$ ) 108 109 (V)

Vlns. 1 *p*

Vlns. 2 *p espress.*

Vla. *p*

Cello *p* *sim.*

Str. Bass *pizz.* *(pizz.)* *p*

110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117

Vlns. 1 *molto rit.* *pp* *ppp*

Vlns. 2 *molto rit.* *pp* *ppp*

Vla. *molto rit.* *pp* *ppp*

Cello *molto rit.* *pp* *ppp arco*

Str. Bass *molto rit.* *pp* *ppp*

# II. Jig

1 Fast ♩ = 128-132

The musical score is divided into three systems of staves. The first system (measures 1-10) features Violins 1 and 2, Viola, Cello, and String Bass. The second system (measures 11-19) includes Violins (Vlns.), Viola (Vla.), Cello, and String Bass (Str. Bass). The third system (measures 20-28) also includes Violins (Vlns.), Viola (Vla.), Cello, and String Bass (Str. Bass). The score includes various dynamic markings: *f* (forte), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *p* (piano), *dim.* (diminuendo), and *sim.* (sustained). Performance instructions include *Soli V* for the Violins in measure 17. Measure numbers 1 through 28 are indicated above the staves.

29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36

Vlns. 1

Vlns. 2

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

Soli

37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44

Vlns. 1

Vlns. 2

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

pizz.

*p*

Soli

*mf*

*p*

*p*

pizz.

*p*

45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52

Vlns. 1

Vlns. 2

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

arco

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

pizz.

1

3

4

x1

*mf*

59 Slower, legato  $\text{♩} = 76$

53 54 55 56 57 58 60

Vlns. 1 *p* molto rit.

Vlns. 2 *p* molto rit.

Vla. *p* molto rit.

Cello *p* molto rit. arco *V* *mf* espress.

Str. Bass *p* molto rit. arco *V* pizz.

61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68

Vlns. 1 *mf*

Vlns. 2 *mf*

Vla. *mf* espress.

Cello *mp*

Str. Bass arco *mp*

*Soli*

75 Tempo I  $\text{♩} = 128-132$

69 70 71 72 73 74 76

Vlns. 1 *sub. f* non div.

Vlns. 2 *sub. f*

Vla. *sub. f*

Cello *sub. f*

Str. Bass *sub. f*

77 *Soli V* 78 79 80 81 82 83 *V* 84 85

Vlns. 1

Vlns. 2

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

*espress.*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93

Vlns. 1

Vlns. 2

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

*cresc. poco a poco*

*cresc. poco a poco*

*cresc. poco a poco*

*cresc. poco a poco*

*cresc. poco a poco*

94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101

Vlns. 1

Vlns. 2

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

*div.*

102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109

Vlns. 1 *mf*

Vlns. 2 *mf*

Vla. *f espress.*

Cello *f* *Soli V*

Str. Bass *f* *Soli V*

110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117

Vlns. 1

Vlns. 2

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

118 119 120 121 122 123 124

Vlns. 1 *cresc.*

Vlns. 2 *cresc.*

Vla. *cresc.*

Cello *cresc.*

Str. Bass *cresc.*

125 126 127 128 129 130 131

Vlns. 1 *dim.* *p espress.*

Vlns. 2 *dim.* *p*

Vla. *dim.* *p*

Cello *dim.* *p*

Str. Bass *dim.* *p*

132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139

Vlns. 1 *f* *f espress.* *ff*

Vlns. 2 *f* *f espress.* *ff*

Vla. *f* *f* *ff*

Cello *f* *f* *ff*

Str. Bass *f* *f* *ff*

135

140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148

Vlns. 1 *div.*

Vlns. 2 *div.*

Vla. *div.*

Cello *div.*

Str. Bass *div.*

SAMPLE



SAMPLE

SAMPLE

