

The Nutcracker Suite Op.71a

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The orchestra work that can be played with 2 violins and piano such arrangement is I believe something not just for people who play violin, but also the whole music lovers all over the world were waiting for. The other day, I had an opportunity to perform this work at an elementary school with my daughter (Ayano Arai). I received a comment that the children would like to hear it again. It was a work which the children knew well and they were moved by the taste and by the sound different from the orchestra. This has encouraged me to continue perform at various places now.

Mr. Hiroki Tamaki's arrangement is indeed wonderful. There are several outstanding points to be said about. One is, the original key in "Overture miniature" was Bb Major, but by transposing it to A Major violin sounds well and also made the difficult parts easier to play. Secondly, in "Danse de la fée-dragée" the idea of using harmonics on violin where celesta plays the part in original. Thirdly, in "Danse arabe" while the piano plays the continuous rhythmic part, on top of that violin plays the pure music harmony creating the wonderful sound and music with tension. And so forth, you may see the genius work of Mr. Tamaki all over the pieces. Now, in the music I have written fingerings and bowings for your reference, however, please feel free to perform each

piece with various ideas you may have.

I look forward to the performance in various occasions such as at kindergarten, at school music appreciation program, concert, Christmas party and so forth. And this work can be performed with other instruments (like winds), so please make a try. Wishing this work would be performed all over the world....

1.Ouverture miniature

The original music is in Bb Major, however, Mr. Tamaki transposed it and arranged it in A Major so to make the instrument easier to sound and play. In the original, cello and contrabass were omitted from the strings. There is no bass sound, but A Major has made the piece sound as a whole with a good balance and made it easier to play by using many open strings.

The first 8 measures are only violins, so listen carefully to each other for intervals and try to make a beautiful harmony. At first, practice in slow tempo so that you can get the right pitch. In original piece, various instruments play the succeeding part, so if you can, play it with various instrument tone color.

2.Marche

In the first act, it is the music where the children come out to the stage. The theme begins

with the trumpet, horn and clarinet. Then follows the strings and further develops into many instruments. It would be nice if you can play it on violin just as the original changes into different instruments. Especially the first theme where there will be no piano accompaniment, take the 5th interval with accuracy and clearly.

Where rhythm continues  don't rush. Unite the 1st Violin and 2nd Violin playing and bow position. At unison in octaves, play the lower part stronger.

3.Danse de la fée-dragée

It's the dance of a queen of sweets castle (fée-dragée) in the second act. In original celesta plays the melody, but with innovative arrangement, that part is played with harmonics on the violin. To have a right pitch is difficult, but practice patiently until the tone sounds beautifully and try to memorize the shape of a hand. In order to do this, press down the first finger firmly. Unite the 2nd violin part playing also.

From section B, it changes from harmonics to triplets, to pizzicato and then to harmonics again. Practice hard until you can play them beautifully. The rhythmic part in measures 21 • 22, 25 • 26, 29-32, enjoy playing like one player is playing.

4.Trepak

The music for Tempo di trepak, Molto vivace. Trepak is a intense second time dance of Russian farmers. In a ballet, the chocolate fairy dances in a dreaming castle. It's a vivid, merry music.

In , the use of a bow is difficult, but try to practice until the combination of left hand goes well and that each other's playing unites.

In the unison at section A, 1st violin goes on top of the 2nd violin and play it with a good balance. Pizzicato at section B, try to put the weight of your body and pluck. The 2nd violin should have a sound of the lower strings like cello and play it in tempo. From measure 68, the intervals are difficult, so start practicing them in a slow tempo at first.

5.Danse arabe

This music has Oriental sound. It's a dance of coffee fairy. This arrangement is superb. Play non vib.(without vibrato) and con vib.(play with little vibrato) with precision. Perform them under control. Enjoy the tone of non vib.

This piece has strong tension. Piano plays the same pattern continuously, and the two violins sing on top of that piano. If the pitch and the playing are matched, it will sound beautiful and thus creating a strange mood. Let's unite to the detail movement. Think about the angle of your left finger, while playing the pizzicato.

6.Danse chinoise

It's a dance of tea fairy. In the original, the flute sings in high voice over bassoon and string's pizzicato. On a violin, melody will be played in very high position. So first, practice the high position scale using on G string to E string. By learning the exact shape will make it easier to play.

In second half of 2nd violin's arpeggios, take your intervals by chords. The 1st violin should feel the phrase and play it along with the rhythm of piano. And then feel the breathing in the right hand and hold the notes well.

7.Danse des mirlitons

It's a dance of toy flute. In original the flute trio plays the melodies. And from section C, it is a trumpet melody.

This piece also needs a practice taking the intervals, listening to a harmony well. From measure 19, 2nd violin plays with full tone. From section B enjoy the conversation made to each other.

Unite the way of playing such as in 4th measure  , 10th measure  and also the starting of next measure, too. Play the 2nd violin of 26th measure with confidence. In section C, listen to each other's harmony very well and play.

8.Valse des fleur

It's a very well known music that it is performed by itself.

It would be very wonderful, if you can play the first harmony played by the 1st violin and the 2nd violin beautifully. In deed the 5th intervals are difficult, however do listen to each other's pitch and make a beautiful harmony. When you play the unison in octaves, please play the lower part stronger.

In measure 86 of 1st violin and measure 102 of 2nd violin entrance, come in beautifully to connect each other's part. The eighth note movement in section G, feel the intervals firmly and let the movement of chords be heard. As to the melody from section H, play it broad with a tone like a viola or cello.