

Larry Sue's Rehearsal Notes

***Let All Things Now Living, Traditional Welsh Melody* arr. Larry Sue**

Now and then a strange impulse hits a composer and results in something truly grandiose. This isn't that time... but here we at least have something unusual. Undecuple (eleven-fold) meter is a rare bird, which means it's a bit out of our ken. However, the large number of beats offers some spectacular opportunities to create engaging and addictive rhythmic patterns. Still, the big question remains: "Why?" In this case, the answer is "Because Thanksgiving is in November!"*

Meter Considerations: So... the first matter to tackle is how to deal with how the meter works. 11/8 is called an "irregular meter" because it can't be divided into (practical, nice) equal parts. The result with an irregular meter is that you determine what compromise you have to make. The first option is to give one beat for each whatever-the-bottom-number-means - five beats for 5/4, and the like. But when the tempo becomes fast enough, you must combine the unit notes into chunks so that 1) you, as the conductor, don't look like you're on something, and 2) so that those who are following you can make sense of what you're trying to communicate.

There are only three types of rhythmic subdivisions in *Let All Things Now Living*. They're indicated by the beaming of the eighths notes in many cases; this is the main hint. Here are the patterns (and how I'd conduct them):

Measure 1 is marked "(3+4+4)". This means the subdivision of the eighth notes has a beat of three eighth notes followed by two beats of four eighth notes each. Even this is three different-length chunks, it's still conducted with a three-beat pattern. The three strokes just take different amounts of time.

Measure 4 is marked "(3+3+3+2)". By the same reasoning, these measures are conducted with a four-beat pattern, and the strokes take different amounts of time.

However, if you're going for a faster tempo, conducting a literal 3+3+3+2 may be too jerky to communicate properly to the ringers. A possible solution is to switch to a modified two-beat "6+5", adding a small hitch for the other subdivisions, to wit, 3(beat)+3(hitch)+3(beat)+2(hitch).

The third pattern occurs just once, in measure 128. It's 2+3+3+3... piece of cake!

One more little detail: A number of measures (example: m. 46) are polyrhythmic. They have a musical line in 3+4+4 and another musical line in 3+3+3+2. The options are 1) to conduct which

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of the patterns belongs to the melody, 2) to conduct the pattern that's consistent with most of the passage, or 3) (for the truly crazy) conduct both, one with each hand. Your choice...

Incidentally, the three-patterns and four-patterns will serve to differentiate the measure types before the second beat starts because the hand motions following the "point" of the first beat go in opposite directions. The ringers will be reminded of what kind of measure it is before the second beat each time!

Interpretation: But on to the music - we're going for excitement and fun! The general mien of *Let All Things Now Living* is a good deal edgier than the usual arrangement of the Welsh tune. Perhaps the clearest indication of this is that three eighth notes comprise the first beat of each except the penultimate measure; because we're trained to think that "one beat equals one quarter note", it means whatever follows it will feel syncopated (take a look at the first measure; because everything after the first beat is quarter notes, the whole measure will feel syncopated, perhaps in a Latin sort of way). Acquiring the feel of the music via conga line practice most certainly is not out of the question!

There are three types of musical sections:

The mood-setter (m. 1-8, m. 76-83, and m. 116-128). Make these passages intense, almost abrasive to take advantage of the open/parallel fourths and fifths, and to contrast with the three verses.

The first verse (m. 9-40) and third verse (m. 84-115) will work nicely with some amount of sloppy damping in the melody to contrast with the stopped sounds below. The exact amount of sloppy damping will depend on the acoustics of the space where you're playing.

And in the second verse (m. 41-75), LVing each beat in the upper treble's 3+3+3+2 broken chords works well against a fairly-strictly-damped melody line. The idea is to capture some, but not all, of the aggressiveness of the "mood-setter" sections - we have to save some "stuff" for the end!

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Measures 84-115, though nearly identical to 9-40, require some special care because of the high treble doubled accidentals. Because they occur in chromatic mini-scales, it's helpful to reassign them (temporarily) for the last verse of the piece. I suggest the following reassignment:

Cb6, C#67, and A67 to EF67 (position 9)
E67 and Cb7 to GA67 (position 10)

Timbre notations:

m.1: All < 2
m.9: Upper treble: $\perp 2$, accompaniment > 2
m.41: Treble eighth notes > 2, chimes $\perp 2$, bass $\perp 0$
m.76: All < 2
m.84: Upper treble: <2, treble accompaniment > 2, bass < 1
m.116: All < 1

* For those of you who aren't from the USA, we have a national holiday called Thanksgiving that is appointed to be on the fourth Thursday of November. Oh, and we put the month before the day when we write dates, so that's why, for me, "11/8" doesn't refer to August.

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