Piano Concerto No. 1

Zachary Gulaboff Davis
Notes:

This concerto focuses on two primary aspects—virtuosic piano writing and a high level of interaction between the soloist and instrumentalists. Set in the structure of five movements, six different themes are presented at reoccurring places throughout the piece, giving the entire composition a sense of thematic cohesion.

The first movement begins with three foreboding chords in the brass and low woodwinds. As the third chord increases in sound, a march-like section begins. It is at this point that the piano enters with the first theme. As this movement moves along, a second theme is presented in the clarinet and different variations of the initial melodic material are heard in the piano. A French horn introduction begins the second movement, which soon leads to the fourth theme presented initially in the solo piano. Melancholy at first, the second theme of the opening movement is heard in the trumpet before the work takes an intense turn. After chaos ensues, the oboe ends the movement in a whisper. While not completely upbeat in nature, the third movement is the most cheery of the set. Fast and effervescent, this rondo-like interlude presents an entirely new theme, while also retaining elements of pervious ones. Beginning slowly, the fourth movement introduces two new themes: a majestic and slow one in the trombone and a fast and unexpected one in the piano’s cadenza. As if to bring things to a close, the grim beginning of the fifth movement harkens back to the opening chords of the concerto. As this movement moves along, fragments of previously heard themes are heard in many places. Following an intense climax, the piece abruptly drops off to a section totally contrasting in character. It is at this point that the initial march-like theme is presented again before the movement concludes soft and ethereally.

Movements and Duration:

I. Andante misterioso - allegro alla marcia - adagio (2:25)
II. Adagio - marcia moderato - allegro - adagio (4:51)
III. Allegro con brio (2:40)
IV. Andante moderato - andante animto - andante moderato (5:22)
V. Adagio con fuoco - moderato animato - allegro decioso - adagio nevicata (6:07)

Trill notation:

In any given passage with a trill, a small grace note is placed before the primary note. The performer is to begin the trill on this grace note and alternate their trill between this and the primary note.

Instrumentation:

For 22 players plus solo piano

Solo piano
Flute 1 (doubling piccolo)
Flute 2
Oboe 1
Oboe 2
Clarinet 1 in B-Flat
Clarinet 2 in B-Flat
Bassoon 1
Bassoon 2
Trumpet 1 in C
Trumpet 2 in C
Horn 1 in F
Horn 2 in F
Euphonium
Tenor Trombone
Tuba in F
Timpani
Percussion 1 (snare drum, field drum)
Percussion 2 (xylophone, marimba, crash cymbals)
Percussion 3 (chimes, glockenspiel)
Percussion 4 (gong, tambourine)
Percussion 5 (suspended cymbal)
Percussion 6 (bass drum)
Marcia moderato (m=84)
Allegro (a=120)
Andante moderato \( \frac{q}{1}=70 \)