

Dutch Courage

Performance Notes

1. The division of the ensemble between treble and bass instruments is at the director's discretion, but the two groups should be equal in volume and articulation abilities as far as possible. The timbre of each group should also be well matched. Instruments such as violas, horns and clarinets can be employed in either group so as to smooth out timbral balance or confidence issues. If a piano is available it should double both lines in cluster chords, either by two players or a single player playing both lines.
2. The single line of the staff represents the middle range of the instrument. On a violin, for example, this might equate to the open A string. (On the piano, the middle range should be adjusted for the treble and bass parts to imitate the ranges of the other instruments playing those parts. For treble this might be an octave above middle C, and for bass an octave and a half below middle C) The highest notes above the line should be high but not so extreme as to be almost pitchless (i.e. the very highest range of the violin, where articulation and volume may fail). If the ensemble is made up of mainly strings, the very lowest pitches should be varied and open G/C strings should be used sparingly.
3. The percussion part uses two types of instruments, high and low, corresponding to top and bottom lines. The lower sound should be quite deep and resonant, like a thud – a kit bass drum would be ideal. The high sound should be sharp but not too bright – something like a closed hi-hat or a woodblock. Resonant metal instruments and semi- or fully-pitched instruments should be avoided for both parts.
4. Diatonic scales should be avoided as much as possible for the 'scalic' passages at the opening and ending. However, stepwise motion may be very difficult to avoid. Try inserting a few major or minor thirds or consecutive semitones along the way to avoid playing complete diatonic scales.
5. A crescendo hairpin beginning with an open circle means crescendo from nothing (*pppp*).
6. Give it everything you've got.