ARAM KHACHATURIAN’S MASQUERADE SUITE; REHEARSALS AND PERFORMANCE

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Master of Music,
in Conducting

By

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Dr. John Roscigno, Chair ______________________ Date

California State University, Northridge
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ABSTRACT

ARAM KHACHATURIAN’S MASQUERADE SUITE; REHEARSALS AND PERFORMANCE

By

Tigran Arakelyan

Master of Music in Conducting

The Graduate Project in Orchestral Conducting for Tigran Arakelyan consisted of rehearsals and a performance of Aram Khachaturian’s *Masquerade Suite* with California State University, Northridge Symphony Orchestra. The performance took place at Plaza del Sol Performance Hall on the campus of California State University Northridge on October 5, 2012. Masquerade Suite was chosen after consultation with Dr. John Roscigno, Director of Orchestral Studies at CSUN.

The paper will discuss the rehearsal process, relation of the piece to the play, and score study. Prior to studying the score the conductor first listened to a number of recordings with different interpretations. Although most recordings had a similar approach to this piece it was interesting to notice slight differences in tempo and articulation. In preparation the conductor went through the score, analyzing and predicting possible problem areas for the orchestra as well as specific instruments. It is also important to go through the score and practice the physical gestures in sections that might be problematic for the conductor such as *ritardando*, *accelerando*, and multiple meter areas.
Unlike an instrumentalist the conductor has to be 100% ready for the performance prior to the first rehearsal. There are numerous audio and video recordings therefore the conductor should not have any problems with gestures or interpretation. With all of the score study and preparations done the conductor is able to confidently work with the orchestra knowing all aspects of the music. If members of the orchestra dedicate the time in preparing their respective parts after each rehearsal the orchestra will achieve a positive result.
INTRODUCTION

The Graduate Project in Orchestral Conducting for Tigran Arakelyan consisted of a rehearsals and a performance of Aram Khachaturian’s *Masquerade Suite* with California State University, Northridge Symphony Orchestra. The performance took place at Plaza del Sol Performance Hall on the campus of California State University Northridge on October 5, 2012. Masquerade Suite was chosen after consultation with Dr. John Roscigno, Director of Orchestral Studies at CSUN.

The CSUN Symphony Orchestra is a student orchestra comprised of students from California State University, Northridge. For the graduate project it was necessary to pick a piece between 15-20 minutes in length. After consulting David Daniel’s *Orchestral Music Handbook* and my personal desire to conduct music by an Armenian composer, Khachaturian’s *Masquerade Suite* was chosen. Later the choice was presented to Dr. Roscigno who approved and programmed the piece on the first concert of the 2012-2013 season.

This paper will discuss the rehearsal process, the relation of the suite to the play, and the conductor’s abilities to emote from the podium. The preparations for rehearsals started by learning the score. I listened to different recordings with the score at hand and studied the score without listening. During the initial process I understood some of the possible problematic areas for the orchestra as well as sections where there might be some conducting difficulties.

Some conductors choose to do bowing themselves to achieve their desired sound or to have control of all aspects of the orchestra. In this particular case, I had the
concertmaster and principal players do the bowings for the parts. It is important to have all bowings marked prior to the first rehearsal.

Some conductors organize the rehearsal schedule by predicting possible problem areas and ways to fix them prior to the rehearsal but I chose not to work this way for the most part. It is important to know the score extremely well. It is vital to spend time with the score, listen to recordings, and learn about the composer and his/her compositional style. I first studied the score vertically identifying key changes, tempo changes, and transitions. After this I studied the woodwind, brass, percussion and string sections separately. One learns a lot about the piece by dissecting the score in this manner. In the following pages you will learn about Khachaturian’s *Masquerade Suite* and it’s intricacies
HISTORY AND SCORE

Aram Khachaturian’s Masquerade Suite is a five movement symphonic suite initially written for Mikhail Lermontov’s play of the same name directed by Ruben Simonov. The play was premiered on June 21, 1941 in Vakhtangov Theatre in Moscow. The five movements were extracted in 1944 to create the five-movement piece, which is known as the Masquerade Symphonic Suite. The five movements are: I. Waltz, II. Nocturne, III. Mazurka, IV. Romance, V. Galop. The suite is approximately 17-20 minutes long depending on how the conductor takes the tempos. The tempos for movements two, three and five are set but movements one and four have a slight range (i.e. I. dotted half= 72-76, IV. Quarter=72-69).

The instrumentation for the piece is a full orchestra (diagram 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Woodwinds</th>
<th>Brass</th>
<th>Percussion</th>
<th>Strings</th>
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<tr>
<td>2 flutes, (Flute 2 – piccolo)</td>
<td>4 horns (F)</td>
<td>Timpani</td>
<td>1st &amp; 2nd Violins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 oboes</td>
<td>2 trumpets (Bb)</td>
<td>Snare drum, cymbals</td>
<td>Violas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 clarinets (Bb)</td>
<td>3 trombones</td>
<td>Bass drum, bells</td>
<td>Violoncellos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bassoons</td>
<td>tuba</td>
<td>Xylophone, wood-block</td>
<td>Basses</td>
</tr>
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Diagram 1

After listening to many different recordings of the suite I skimmed the score marking phrases. Sometimes the phrases were as short as two measures and at times as

2 Yuzefovich, *Aram Khachaturian*, 79
3 Yuzefovich, *Aram Khachaturian*, 80
long as eight. Marking phrases helps to better understand the score, follow the score while conducting, and to note proper places to start or stop during the rehearsals. After marking the phrases I went through the score marking tempo changes by putting arrows in blue. Cues, solos, entrances after long breaks, dynamic markings were marked in red.

The play is four-acts and is set in the 1830’s St. Petersburg. The story line is compared to Shakespeare’s Othello. The lead character of the play is Arbenin. He is wealthy, young, and from the high society. He is rebellious and wants freedom from his high social status. Arbenin is an honorable young man but his pride and jealousy lead him to murder his wife.

Khachaturian had a difficult time composing this suite, especially the waltz, which is considered one of his most memorable compositions alongside the Sabre Dance from Gayane Ballet. He had trouble composing something beautiful and new. Nikolai Myaskovsky, Khachaturian’s former teacher tried to help him by recommending waltzes and romances from Lermontov’s time but they were to no avail. The waltz took him a few months to complete, more than any of the other movements in the suite. In the following sections I will discuss the relation between the five movements of the suite and

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4 Konsm Lomunov, *Stage history of Lemontov’s “Masquerade”*, 554
5 Lomunov, *Stage history of Lemontov’s “Masquerade”*, 559
6 Boris Eichenbaum, *Five Editions of Masquerade*, 96
7 Eichenbaum, *Five Editions of Masquerade*, 96
8 Eichenbaum, *Five Editions of Masquerade*, 98
the four acts of the play. Khachaturian wrote much more music for this play but it is virtually unheard because the play is not performed.
I. WALTZ

The tempo for the first movement is marked *Tempo di valse* (∫. = 72-76), I took the tempo at 72, conducting in one. The hardest part in this movement aside from the numerous *ritardando* markings is the start. The start of this movement needs confidence and grand gestures from the conductor since it is the opening of the Masquerade party in the play. The first movement in the suite can be compared to Act-I in the play. In the opening act Arbenin, the wealthy and passionate young man is playing cards with Prince Zvezdicha. After the card game they decide to go to the Masquerade party, which is also attended by Arbenin’s wife Nina.

One interesting aspect of conducting this movement is the beautiful connected melodic line along with the short eight notes on beat two and three. As a conductor it would be acceptable to conduct with fluid motions or with rigid motions. I decided to use both motions interchangeably throughout the movement depending on which section of the orchestra needed the most help. During wind entrances and solos I conducted with strict gestures and during the lyrical string entrances I conducted with more fluidity. The winds usually need a longer preparation to breath and in this movement the winds mostly play the rhythmic accompaniment.

Four before rehearsal 1 is where the first problem was encountered. The orchestra did not follow what is written on the page therefore not fully realizing the first *diminuendo*. After numerous reminders and exaggeration in my physical gestures the group started to come together. The melodic line, which is traded between the 1st violins and violas in rehearsal 1, is compared to Prince Zvezdicha flirting with a baroness who is Nina’s friend. Therefore the *diminuendo* in to rehearsal 1 is particularly important since
this is where all things start to fall apart. During the rehearsals I asked the musicians with accompanying 8\textsuperscript{th} notes to play under the melody in this passage. In other sections of the piece raising the volume of a melodic line would be fair but building too much tension in the beginning would destroy the momentum of the movement.

Four before rehearsal 4 is where the crescendo begins and since the melodic lines are ascending it was not hard to achieve the desired crescendo. After listening to a number of recordings and studying the score I decided to insert a \textit{ritardando} two before rehearsal 4, even though the composer does not have this marking. The reason why I decided to add a \textit{ritardando} is because the melody, which was played in rehearsal 1, comes back in rehearsal 4 an octave higher and with the change in the instrumentation it was only natural to make this slight change. One before rehearsal 4 I gave a cue to the timpani and snare drum after a long break.

One before rehearsal 9 there is a \textit{ritardando} marking with a big crescendo. This section turned out to be one of the most difficult moments in the movement. The first reason why this measure was hard to put together was because I conducted in a slow “one”. Musicians, having their own internal pulse, played the second and third beats at their own pace creating sloppy entrances. After looking at the videos and talking to Dr. Roscigno I decided to take the \textit{ritardando} passages in three while clearly gesturing each beat for maximum unified sound.

Four before rehearsal 11 was another part where I conducted in three instead of in one. I started conducting in fast three four before 11 gradually making the beasts slower till \textit{a tempo} marking in rehearsal 11. This again was a difficult part in this movement but it all came together after the first few rehearsals. I cued the timpani after a long layoff at
rehearsal 12. One measure after the timpani cue I cued the 4 horns since they enter with accented dotted-half notes, which adds to the already full texture of the music.

Rehearsals 5-10 can be compared to the play and how the baroness who is Nina’s friend gives Prince Zvezdicha a bracelet as a souvenir of the moment they had together. This bracelet once belonged to Nina. Later, Arbenin sees the bracelet in Prince Zvezdicha’s possession and concludes that his wife has been disloyal and this moment is marked by the key change.

The double bar before rehearsal 13 indicates a key change to C Major. Two before rehearsal 16 there is a **ritardando**, which was conducted in three for two measures before going back in to one at rehearsal 16 which goes to *a tempo*. At rehearsal 16 Khachaturian goes back to exactly what he did in rehearsal 1 where he was trading the melody between the 1st violins and the violas. At rehearsal 18 Khachaturian repeats what he did in rehearsal 3 in the strings except an octave higher to build momentum leading to the end of the movement.

In rehearsal 20 I asked for more emphasis on the downbeat of each measure from the players that were playing accents. Four measures before rehearsal 21 there is a **ritardando e crescendo** marked followed by a *lento* marking one before 21. These 2 tempo markings show that Khachaturian wants an extreme holding of the tempo compared to the previous **ritardando** markings. I conducted in three starting four before rehearsal 21 and slowed the pattern down gradually until the last beat before rehearsal 21. From then on it is tutti with the orchestra playing the main melody of the waltz. The last measure of the movement has fermatas on beats one and two. I conducted beats one and two after which I stopped before cutting the orchestra off. I did not have a plan of how
long the fermata should be, it was a little different each time it was played. As long as the conductor is confident with his gestures the orchestra will have no trouble following fermatas and tempo changes.
II. NOCTURNE

Act II in the play coincides with movement two in the suite. During the second act Nina meets with her friend the baroness from the Masquerade party. In the next scene Arbenin discovers a friendly letter from Prince Zvezdicha to his wife Nina and he becomes furious. Thinking that all of St. Petersburg knows about his wife’s affair with Zvezdicha he decided to organize a harsh punishment. Arbenin first decides to kill Zvezdicha but later decides to kill them both.

The tempo for the second movement is marked *Andantino con moto*, which means slightly faster than walking pace with motion. The movement is in 4/4 and is marked at quarter note = 76. I took a slightly slower tempo at 70 not because of any technical difficulties but mostly because the piece was more soulful at a slower tempo especially after reading and understanding the relation to the play. There are a number of recordings by Soviet conductors, that are much slower than the tempo I took. The movement starts with the four horns playing whole notes on the downbeat while violas, cellos, and basses enter on the second beat playing *pizzicato*. This particular section was difficult for the horns since breathing and attacking the note together is hard for brass instruments, especially for the horns. During the first few rehearsals the horns were finding it hard to play especially since there were two horns missing out of the four.

In the third measure, the horns *diminuendo* along with the strings to set up the entrance of the lyrical accompaniment by the second violins and violas. There are three difficult parts in this section: the 8th note rest at the beginning of the measure, the constant hairpins, and the *piano*. Clarinets, bassoons, and the two horns add to the texture of the strings by playing held notes. The swells done by the winds cannot overpower the
strings at any time even though both are at the piano. After asking the strings to play out a bit more and keeping the winds soft, this section came together.

The interesting aspect of this movement is the use of the solo violin, which enters at rehearsal 1. The soloist plays the same rhythmic idea as the seconds and violas for two measures prior to rehearsal 1. The orchestra is required to play piano while the soloist is at mezzo piano. The challenge of this particular section was to keep the orchestra soft without asking the soloist to play out. My goal for this movement as a whole was to not give too much energy but save the intensity for later. There is no big climax in this movement since the movement is all about Arbenin’s mixed feelings and confused emotional state.

Rehearsal 1 ends with a two-measure flute solo, which sores above the orchestra. The solo is to be played in the same espressivo manner as the violin solo. Rehearsal 2 begins in the same character as rehearsal 1; violinist plays the melody in the same key and octave. The fifth measure of rehearsal 2 is two octaves higher compared to the original melody. Rehearsal 3 is the first climactic moment in the movement since the range, dynamic, and the direction of the passage is uniform in the orchestra. The flute plays an ascending line, which is heard through the texture. During the rehearsal the orchestra encountered problems going back to piano even though the climax in this section was only to mezzo forte. The third measure of rehearsal three was well anticipated by the strings as they diminuendo into the next melodic idea in the solo violin.

The next climax in this movement starts two measures before rehearsal 5 and although it is not as powerful as the previous climax, it is important since it leads to the violin solo in rehearsal 5 except a whole step lower compared to the original melody in
rehearsal 1. It is also important to note that compared to the previous melody, the melody in rehearsal 5 is also at forte with a crescendo into rehearsal 6. The problem in this section was the rushing from flute, oboes, second violins, and violas; they crescendo which leads them to rush during this tension building moment. The constant 8th notes in the accompaniment are to build tension behind the beautiful melody by the violin, but every time there was a crescendo in the score, the orchestra anticipated a rush instead of a more grounded sound. The melody at this point is a whole step lower which demonstrates how Abrenin is furious about the whole city of St. Petersburg knowing about his wife’s affair. This ideally should have a nervous tension mostly anticipated by the soloist.

Outside of the rehearsals the soloist was told to build more tension through vibrato and playing to the contour of the line. This moment was successful at times even though it never grew to its fullest in the direction I desired.

Rehearsal 6 is the big climax reaching to forte in the orchestra and fortissimo in the violin solo. Tension here builds franticly when thoughts of killing Prince Zvezdicha and his wife start running through Abrenin’s head. The tension is built by the constantly moving 8th notes and 8th rests throughout the upper strings while the winds are accenting half notes every two measures. This tension lasts for only four measures and soon deflate to piano in rehearsal 7. This short section of the movement was one of the easiest sections for the orchestra to play since they had been waiting to play at full volume for quite some time. The two mini climactic moments led to an enormous release of tension but due to its quick fading in to rehearsal 7 the orchestra did not foresee this resolution.

The orchestra anticipated this transition particularly well when they were reminded. This was addressed numerous times and although not fully demonstrated
during the performance some individuals really worked hard to express this in my desired manner. The transition from rehearsal 7 to 8 was interesting due to the horn playing a solo while the soloist is still playing. This can be described as Arbenin’s thoughts. The violin soloist constantly appearing is the wife while the horn solo is Prince Zvezdicha.

Rehearsal 8 has a *divisi in 3* for 1st violins; the first two outer violinists played the top note, the first two inner played the middle note, and the last stand played the bottom note. Tension continues to build in the violin solo in to rehearsal 9. The orchestra built the tension naturally in rehearsals 9 to 10 because the ascending and descending lines matched the contour of the melody. There were no difficulties in this section for the orchestra. Two beats before rehearsal 10 I pulled back the tempo just a little. Khachaturian did not write a *ritardando* but as a conductor it felt necessary to hold back before returning to the original melody with same key, octave, dynamics, and instrumentation. The orchestra followed perfectly after just one comment and it is due to the fact that it felt natural to do this gesture. Conducting the *ritardando* was not difficult; I just slowed the movement of beats three and four.

The ending of the movement relates to Abrenin’s final decision to kill his wife. The horns and soloist play together three before the end with no other instruments accompanying. The horn and the violin soloists exemplify the wife and the prince. Arbenin is represented as the accompaniment throughout the movement and the one who decides the faith of his wife Nina, the accompaniment comes back in the strings plucking softly to the end as if to say the decision has been made.

It is critical for the conductor to clearly cue entrances throughout this movement. The violin soloist usually enters at the end of a beat therefore she needs a clear downbeat.
Woodwinds and strings also need cues for a unified entrance in a few passages. Nocturne is the slowest movement in the suite and the conductor needs to set the mysterious mood in the opening measures before the violinist enters. Since the movement has moments of tension and calmness it is important to have a flexible tempo to maneuver through these moments.
III. MAZURKA

Act III in the play is connected to movement three of the suite. In act three Arbenin and Nina attend a ball where he mixes poison into her ice cream. He got the poison a few years ago for himself during some financial hardships.

The movement is full of *ritardando* markings, which are similar to movement one and they should be conducted in three while the movement is conducted in one. The tempo (*Allegro* dotted-half = 76) is also similar to that of movement one. The movement is written in 3/4 and the tempo I took during the performance was around 70. The reason for the slightly slower tempo compared to what the composer has marked is because when taking a faster tempo during the rehearsals the orchestra was not precise with the articulations and the overall sound was foggy instead of having a strict and rigid character. From a conductor’s perspective, if the *ritardando* sections are mastered in one movement, the other one should not give problems. Khachaturian uses the last *ritardando* to set up the end of the piece as he did in movement one. In this movement it was very hard for the orchestra to do a *piano* for four to eight measures and go to *forte* for the next few measures because the changes were happening constantly throughout the movement.

The Mazurka is full of back and forth moments and this was what the orchestra struggled with. It is easy for them to play at a comfortable *mezzo forte* or *forte* for an extended period of time but when there are constant changes, the concentration level is lacking to anticipate these moments. Most of the rehearsal was spent on asking the orchestra to play extremely soft or to go back to *forte*. My gestures during the first two rehearsals were not extreme, (i.e. I did not over do the *piano* and *forte* dynamics). I
changed the gestures during the following weeks of rehearsals to better help the orchestra in achieving these moments.

The movement begins with two measures of accented dotted half notes at *fortissimo* for *tutti*. In the fourth measure everyone is holding a note except for the timpanist who has an 8\textsuperscript{th} note on beat 3. This caused some confusion for the timpanist especially since there is a slight ritardando before getting in to rehearsal 1. After repeating the first five measures numerous times she felt the pulsing of the fourth to fifth measure transition. Even though there was no ritardando marking in measure four by Khachaturian it felt natural to pull back a little before starting the theme in rehearsal 1. Most of the recordings do this slight ritardando since the first four measures of the movement are considered as an introduction.

The triplets that appear throughout the movement were also problematic for the orchestra since they did not have the crispness necessary for this movement. The musicians who played the triplet came in late in the following beat, which slowed down the movement especially in the middle. We worked on this section numerous times throughout the rehearsals. During the first few rehearsals I asked the orchestra to get off of the last 8\textsuperscript{th} note of the triplet quickly to get to the next beat without slowing down. The theme of the movement has 16\textsuperscript{th} note rests which should be anticipated since they give the forward moving push to the movement.

Four before rehearsal 2 there are accented triplets on beat one and three. Unlike the Waltz movement, which had a strong beat one and weaker beats two and three the accents in this movement should be equal in intensity. I asked this of the orchestra and it was successfully accomplished throughout the movement mostly because of the already
energetic nature of this movement. Every time there is a triplet in this movement it is accented no matter where it is and all accents are at equal power unless of course there are dynamic differences.

As stated previously, one of the difficulties in this movement was to keep changing the dynamics every four to eight measures. The first time this happened was at rehearsal 2 and the only ways to make sure the orchestra does these changes is if they mark the parts, concentrate, and for the conductor to give extreme differences in gestures. I believe that I was successful in doing the gestures especially in the second week of rehearsals. The orchestra did not anticipate this as well as I imagined mostly because of lack of concentration.

There is a crescendo that is six measures long and comes to its fruition at rehearsal 3. During the first few rehearsals the crescendo was achieved too early which gave no room to grow in the final stages of this climax before rehearsal 3. I asked the winds to hold back since they were the main aggressors of this premature growth. After drilling this section a few times the crescendo was truly one of the most beautiful moments of this movement. The first marked ritardando comes two before rehearsal 3, which again is conducted in three.

One before rehearsal 5 is lento which the orchestra masterfully expressed. I conducted this measure in three with an elongated third beat before the a tempo in the next measure. Rehearsal 5 has a very interesting back and forth interactions between the woodwinds and the strings, while the brass is left out. The marking for both sections is piano but the strings were timid therefore I asked them to play out and respond to the woodwinds with confidence instead of fear. The lead up in to rehearsal 7 was not
successful at first again because of rushed playing from the winds. They moved fast in the building of the crescendo and also rushed in the 16th note rests, which were overseen. I asked the woodwinds to play together and talked to them about the importance of the rests and the spacing of the crescendo.

Two measures before rehearsal 7 there is a diminuendo, which was ideally brought out except that it was dragged every time it was done up until the final days before the concert. I asked the accompanying instruments to play together and watch. This worked well, but adding the melodic ideas in the woodwinds and strings held it back again. This was partly because two before rehearsal 5 there is a similar transition and Khachaturian marks lento except this time around there is no such marking and it confused the musicians. Rehearsal 7 is the same as rehearsal 5; I cued the woodwinds then the strings and back to the woodwinds. This was one of my favorite parts as a conductor because to cue the woodwinds I had to reach out and work with them and come back down to my left to cue the violins.

The big climactic moment in the movement was at rehearsal 9 when everyone was playing forte and the rhythmic drive really came through. The brass had a minor problem of entering with a powerful accent on beat two. I asked for just the brass to play and after a few tries and a more anticipated beat one gesture from me the brass came through. The ritardando three measures before 11 is unlike the previous ones since it is not tutti; the oboe and clarinet lead the transition with horns accompanying. During the last two measures before rehearsal 11 the oboist plays solo. This transition was successful for the woodwinds but the horns had trouble with holding the pitches, after many unsuccessful attempts to fix it throughout the rehearsals I decided to let it go. I asked the
horns to play together and not overpower the melodic lines in the woodwinds, but they did not accomplish the task and the transparency I was looking for did not come through. The movement ends with a dynamic short accent.
IV. ROMANCE

The fourth movement of the suite is related to the second part of Act III in the play. In the second part the scene moves from the ballroom to the couples bedroom. Arbenin explains to his wife what he has done. He tells her of his love for her but explains that the thought of her cheating has led to his decision. The aggression prevents him from listening to her cries that she is innocent.

The tempo of this movement is *Andante* dotted quarter = 72-69. The movement is in 4/4, I took the movement at around 72. The movement is beautiful and it shows how much Arbenin loves Nina but it also has moments of tension, which characterizes what he has done and the emotions that he is going through. The movement has a number of tempo changes but they did not cause any difficulties for the orchestra. The main difficulties in this movement were about interpretation. When the theme appears in the different instruments, it should have a unique direction and when the accompaniment comes in, it should be with at most delicacy with the exception of a few moments.

The movement starts with the violas playing moving 8\textsuperscript{th} notes while the clarinet, bassoons, cellos and basses are supporting. This part was especially hard for the violas since they were not technically proficient, not only were they playing a third apart but they also were doing hairpins and with all this in mind this section had to sound delicate to really set up the character of the movement. I worked with the violas as a section and had them play the passage a few times; after the notes were learned I asked them to play it delicate and mysterious. During the performance the orchestra played with delicacy and direction.
At rehearsal 2 the cellos and violas have the melody in unison. Even though Khachaturian did not mark any tempo changes, I took a little time the beat before rehearsal 2 to set up the entrance in violas and cellos. I asked for expressive playing in the strings and soft tenuto on the half note accompaniment so they are not overpowering the soaring melodies. The clarinet comes in with accompanying 8\textsuperscript{th} notes one before three and I asked the clarinetist to blend in with the second violins for a change in the sound as oppose to a new soloistic entrance.

Khachaturian marks a poco-ritardando two beats before rehearsal 4. The ritardando worked very well but the orchestra did not play together on rehearsal 4. The reason why this particular section was hard to realize was the forte and ritardando in the previous measure combined with an a tempo and subito piano in rehearsal 4. I conducted with more authority on the a tempo measure to show a clear beat one, even though it was marked piano. Although my intention was to have a delicate entrance it was more important to have the orchestra be unified on the entrance instead of a delicate but sloppy entrance.

The clarinet enters with the beautiful melody in measure two of rehearsal 4. The entrance is on beat four and its marked espressivo therefore I extended just a little on the fourth beat. The clarinet played beautifully and I gestured with the left hand for more volume and espressivo playing. I asked the clarinetist to play with vibrato and at a forte dynamic level since there was no marking in the score or the part. The orchestra was overpowering the soloist and I wanted to hear the clarinet lead over the orchestra.

Two before rehearsal 5 Khachaturian marks poco allargando and a diminuendo leading in to rehearsal 5. Right after the diminuendo the oboe takes the solo after which
the 1st violins respond. The oboist was being timid and was unheard during the oboe-violin conversation. As a result I asked the oboist to play out. The trumpet solo one beat before rehearsal 6 was subject to discussions with Dr. Roscigno. He asked me to conduct the solo and lead that moment to really bring out the trumpet and shape the lines. I disagreed since I thought it was important to have the trumpet play as a soloist while I just conduct the accompaniment. I later decided that I would conduct the trumpet solo but only in the first measure just to give him the attention as he starts. The trumpet player shaped the melody and played with beautiful tone and it really came out as I imagined.

Five before the end there is a *poco accelerando* with the clarinets leading the orchestra to the end. Three measures before the end there is a *ritardando* and *diminuendo* as the cellos play a descending line. I turned to the cello and bass sections as I was conducting since two before the end they are the only ones playing on the downbeat. On the third beat of the same measure woodwinds enter at *pianissimo* while the rest of the strings pizzicato. This exemplifies Arbenin’s final thoughts and the last moments before Nina died. The movement ends in a similar manner as movement two.
V. GALOP

The fifth movement is marked *Allegro vivo (quarter note =168)* and it is related to Act IV in the play. The movement is in 2/4; I took a slightly slower tempo at 160 because the rhythmic drive of the movement was getting lost in the fast inarticulate sound. In this act Prince Zvezdicha and an unknown character come to Arbenin wanting revenge. They bring a letter from baroness proving Nina’s innocence; Arbenin realizing he killed his wife for no reason goes insane. The music in this movement is very descriptive of what is going on in the play. It depicts the confused and agitated feelings that he is experiencing. As I describe the interesting aspects in this movement and the rehearsal process, it will become clear how Khachaturian masterfully organized the movement to skillfully depict the story line.

The movement starts in 2/4 and opens with two half notes at *fortissimo by tutti*. The orchestra played powerfully the first time around but I asked for more accents by the winds and for everyone to play at full volume throughout the first few measures. There are a number of difficult moments in this movement, but one that constantly happens are the hairpins. The upside is that the hairpins in this movement are more natural than any of the previous movements; they happen usually during the ascending and descending lines. After a powerful start it was hard for the orchestra to bring down the volume in to rehearsal 1 and since the notes and rhythms were identical for that short duration it was harder for the orchestra to anticipate. The problem with these sections is that they are not about intonation or rhythm; they are about the orchestra realizing what they have to do on their instrument to lower the volume. The conductor should clearly show a *diminuendo* by making smaller gestures and bringing the hands closer to the body.
The orchestra had problems two before rehearsal 6 since the horns and trumpets were either early or late. They had an 8\textsuperscript{th} rest, two 8\textsuperscript{th} notes, and 8\textsuperscript{th} rest figure which was not together. I asked them to play without the orchestra and after numerous attempts the section came together. Since the movement has many accidentals, the strings and upper woodwinds had a few problems at rehearsal 8. I told them to look over the parts after which most of the note mistakes were fixed in the following rehearsals.

Five before rehearsal 10 Khachaturian writes a 3/4 measure, which is the first time he uses multiple meter in a movement. The 3/4 measure is followed by four 3/8 measures which were one of the most difficult moments in the entire suite. It was difficult for the orchestra to go from the 3/4 to 3/8. I first asked the orchestra to play just the four 3/8 measures thinking that the transition from 3/4 to 3/8 was the problem but it was not. Understanding that the first 8\textsuperscript{th} note of the 3/8 measure would not be the problem I asked the people playing on the second and third beats to play. After hearing that, it was obvious that the cellos, basses and trombones were late to enter on beat three. I asked them to anticipate a bit faster and not think about playing too early or too close to beat two. After the 3/8 measures came together it was time to add the measure before which was in 3/4 and the measure after which was in 2/4. I also asked the musicians playing on the downbeat of 3/8 to really emphasize and accent it as written. The orchestra played the section but there was a little hesitation going in to the 3/8. After watching footage of the rehearsal and discussing with Dr. Roscigno I realized that my downbeat gesture for the 3/8 was a little high.

Five before rehearsal 12 is a ritardando, which is lead by the woodwinds and strings. I conducted the ritardando in two with gradual slowing of the gestures. One
before rehearsal 12 on the second beat orchestra comes in with an accented *sforzando*. These are the little hints of surprise that Khachaturian shows via music, which are connected to the unsettled feeling in the play. By the end of the play the audience does not see Arbenin as the sole guilty party. The baroness and the other characters are guilty as well in leading him to believe that his wife cheated.

The fifth measure of rehearsal 13 is where the next ritardando starts. One before the *Andante*, I cutoff the orchestra on the second beat as they diminuendo and cue the clarinetist to start the cadenza. The clarinet cadenza is not conducted and lasts for 5 measures. The last measure of the cadenza the clarinet plays a fermata note while fading. Four before rehearsal 14 I conducted in four for two measures and in two the following measures because of the *accelerando* and *ritardando* within that frame. The movement continues in the same manner as it started and ends with two short accents on beat one and two of the last measure.
PERFORMANCE AND FINAL RESULTS

I conducted Khachaturian’s *Masquerade Suite* on October 5, 2012 with the CSUN Symphony Orchestra. I conducted parts of all movements during the dress rehearsal to make sure all tempos worked well and that the soloists in some of the movements were not overpowered by the orchestra. I also conducted the multiple meter section in the fifth movement in a way to make sure the orchestra felt comfortable.

I believe that the performance was very successful and that the orchestra played at its best that night without any noticeable mistakes. At the end of the performance I acknowledged the players with significant solos in the suite including the concertmaster, flutist, clarinetist, trumpet player after which the brass, percussion, woodwinds and strings.

It is a great experience for a conductor to be able to put a work together from the beginning stages of score study to final day of the performance. I am thankful for having the opportunity to conduct this work since I have heard parts of these movements throughout my childhood.
1. Waltz: Violins playing the melody while the rest of the orchestra is accompanying.


3. Mazurka: One of many tempo changes.

5. Galop: Multi meter section.
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