

# Superman – Extended writing

**Katherine Armstrong and Emily-Jane Bloomfield**

## **Timbre**

- This piece is scored for the modern orchestra (woodwind, brass, strings, percussion and additional features of piccolo, bass clarinet, glockenspiel and harp)
- Trumpets and horns play the opening fanfare along with a timpani roll in C major (tonic). The fanfare is repeated with trombones playing an octave lower.
- Opening fanfare theme A features bass instruments playing (lower strings, bass clarinet and tuba), ending with the trumpet fanfare repeating 6 times, creating a feeling of suspense.
- March Theme B begins with trumpets, cymbal crashes, triangle rolls and full orchestral chords to punctuate. The lower strings are featured and the timpani plays on the pedal.
- Theme B repeats with added glockenspiel and scales in the woodwind.
- In the second part of the March Theme, the cellos are prominent on the theme to add a rich string sound.
- Near the end of the March Theme, rising trumpet arpeggios and woodwind flourishing scales are featured.
- Theme A returns with a full orchestra, still including flourishing ascending woodwind scales.
- The horns are featured in the Love Theme C with a countermelody on the violins and harp arpeggios. The themes then continue in the woodwind still featuring a violin countermelody.
- The end of the piece features cymbal crashes, adding a dramatic finish.

## **Harmony and Tonality;**

- Theme A begins in a major tonality of C major. The timpani roll in the opening is played in C major which is the tonic.
- In Theme B there is a chord with an added 7<sup>th</sup> which is colourful harmony and slight dissonance which adds a mood of suspense.
- In the second part of Theme B there is an added major 7<sup>th</sup> which creates dissonance. There is then a Db chord. The Db-F-Ab over a Gb in the bass adds tension.
- Quartal chords which are built of 4<sup>th</sup> (G-C-F) show modern/contemporary harmony.
- The Love Theme is played in F major (sub-dominant) and the finale of the whole piece drops to Bb major, ending the piece dramatically.

## **Melodic features**

- Bare, open arpeggio sounds are featured in the opening fanfare theme. A cymbal crash coincides with the highest note, which falls by step to the note (E) which falls by step to the note below
- The March Theme B includes rising 5<sup>th</sup>. Theme B repeats with scales in the woodwind making it sound more developed.
- In the second part of March Theme B, fragmented version of the March Theme is heard. This is followed by rising arpeggios played by the trumpets.
- The Fanfare Theme A returns with full orchestration including rising woodwind scales.
- In the love theme features woodwind ascending sequences with a violin countermelody that imitates fragments of the melody and harp arpeggios form part of the orchestral accompaniment.
- The falling seconds which were part of themes A and B are developed using descending sequence.
- At the end of the piece, the March Theme B has a new ostinato accompaniment made up of a four-note descending scale in the lowest instruments of the orchestra.

## **Rhythmic/ metre features**

- In the opening fanfare, the triplet uses syncopated rhythmic patterns, along with the accelerando and the rhythmic ostinato which create anticipation leading into the march theme.
- The metre changes from the Opening Fanfare's simple quadruple time in 4/4 to compound quadruple time in 12/8 for the March Theme B.
- The metre returns to simple quadruple time in 4/4 during the second part of the march theme from the compound quadruple time.
- The ostinato rhythms are still present in the string background in the opening of the Love Theme.
- The falling seconds, fragments of themes a and b are developed using syncopation and repetition, followed by the ostinato rhythm now returns on the note Bb.