

*Brieflets* is a set of four concise snapshots of commonplace human situations, each the result of some emotional state. All - excepting the second - include an element of humor:

**I. Fidgeting** An audience member, racked with boredom, struggles to get comfortable in his seat (perhaps during this piece...), and is only occasionally engaged by sounds from the stage. About 2:20

**II. Mourning** A child grieves for a lost pet. About 3:30

**III. Badgering** A woman, frustrated by her husband's inattentiveness, whines and nags. The man, from behind his newspaper, responds mostly with grunts. They eventually become mired in an inconclusive argument. About 2:00

**IV. Panicking** An earnest and very nervous young musician waits for an audition. About 2:30

Some basic musical elements are common to all four movements. Melodic elements consist primarily of half steps alternating with larger intervals, especially major and minor 3rds, and perfect and augmented 4ths. Virtually all lines are constructed in this manner, including background parts in homophonic sections. A related device, occurring in some manner in each of the movements, is a pattern of major 3rds rising or falling by minor 3rds:

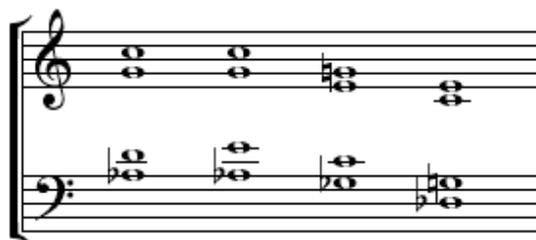
I., bars 43-44

II., bars 29-32

IV., bar 21



Examples of these related harmonies are scattered throughout in prominent places:



## Performance Suggestions

**I.** As fast as possible. Violin solos at 25 and 61 very passionate and not too fast. Glissandi at 23 in 'cello, and at 76 in all parts, very loud and broad.

**II.** Chords with bouncing bows should decay slowly and gently, with all players ending as close together as possible. Exaggerate dynamics and bring out inner parts in 15-22 and 28-44. The last two bars should decay in the same gentle manner as the chords.

**III.** Observe all articulations carefully; play all staccatos as short as possible. Viola and 'cello are on equal footing with violins in 53-59 and 63-67.

**IV.** Again, articulations very important; exaggerate dynamics. Bring out melodic exchange between violin I and 'cello in 41-48. Ending should be very passionate; the pause before the final motive may be as long as a full beat.