



Program Notes

January: Anticlimax

A solo piano begins what could be a student's exercise in octaves, but soon the full orchestra reveals itself as the tempo suddenly accelerates. Before long, the boundless energy seems to dissipate almost as quickly as it had appeared. The pace slows and the mood grows cautious and haunting. Legato strings, muted piano, tubular bells, and a lone tambourine provide an eerie accompaniment to the dancing clarinet, until the piano regains the spotlight and the orchestra grows silent, bringing the movement to its anticlimactic close.

February: Companionship

Lush strings and tickled ivories paint a romantic backdrop for a courtship between two oboes. With elegance, affection, and heartfelt yearning, the double-reed instruments harmonize and dovetail each other's musical cues with sweet vibrato, thoroughly enjoying their treasured companionship.

March: Determination

A harp strums and a tam tam is struck, and then it begins. Like an unwavering blizzard, muted French horns and trombones ally to blare dissonance over an intensifying battery of heavy percussion. The music perseveres with tireless but controlled insistence, inspiring determination and implying the promise of a reward.

April: Anticipation

A tight rhythm section sets the stage for a cool jazz waltz, as the soprano sax blows an upbeat tune. The tempo quickens with uncertain anticipation, as the Fender Rhodes piano works through the changes, improvising riffs until finally ceding the show back to the sax.

May: Rebirth

Grey greens and flowers bloom, as yesterday's dreams are renewed. A piano-heavy rock band waltzes through a rebirth of mind and spirit. Refreshed vision and rediscovered energy rule the day, as evidenced by the happy tintinnabulation of the vibraphone, and the clickety-clack of the castanets and güiro.

June: Fulfillment

Tribal rhythms, complex counterpoint, and a distorted guitar reveal the unseen struggle behind an accomplishment. Success arrives on the wings of a spirited jazz ensemble, its bebopping brass brimming with exultation. The mood changes once more, as the music melts fast into a New Age nirvana where pleasant, ethereal tones hover over a confident beat, as if basking in the cozy light of dream fulfillment. The movement ends with a lesson on the importance of not taking easy times for granted, instead remembering how past difficulties and challenges were ultimately surmounted.

July: Euphoria

The sun's warmth comforts, the fresh air's scent invigorates, and worries are exiled, as a sense of euphoria sets in. Lilting rhythms, playful octaves, gentle guitar strums, majestic strings that morph between legato and pizzicato, colorful reeds, and a spray of cymbals portray this sentiment that is a welcome mix of calm and ecstasy. Soon, chimes and bells toll while a full string section joins the romp with bouncy, dutiful bows. The main theme is heard again, this time as a musical canon, as if to recall memories of a carefree, simpler youth. Its consonance and repetition mesmerize.

August: Nostalgia

The sultry, sticky days of August are here, as many prematurely lament the end of another long-awaited summer. Nostalgia lurks in the soft, melancholy chords of the strings, and the fleeting nature of the jazzy interludes remind us that while happy times may end, their memories become ours to keep and cherish.

September: Passage

Routines change, and so a search for structure must begin. A cello plucks and a piano hammers a metronomic ostinato, soon joined by others in a sparse instrumentation. The music undergoes a transition, and then another, even trying on disco for size. But, after experiencing a passage, we may wonder how much things have truly changed.

October: Beauty

It is a time of taintless beauty. Determined strings and an acrobatic piano lead the listener on a musical safari to explore beauty's versatile range, from the subtle to the intense. At one point, the path is cleared so that a music box may gingerly offer its simple tune, conjuring up the delicious image of yellow, gold, and red leaves all dancing under the spell of a late autumnal breeze. The movement finishes with a magical flourish.

November: Gratitude

The movement begins as a simple, elegant waltz, with the piano, strings, and flute cooperating as a musical triumvirate. Soon, there is an air of mystery as a trumpet's declarations evoke the Near East, colored by finger cymbals, tambourines, and other exotic percussion. It then becomes the piano's turn to express its gratitude in a majestic fashion, paying homage to familiar motifs from earlier movements. After a cadenza of sorts, the orchestra rejoins, adding more instruments until a powerful army of brass arrives. The tympani and glockenspiel enter in time to help bring the movement to its grandiose conclusion.

December: Reflection

In contrast to the fanfare and intensity of the prior movement, this movement offers a welcome sense of serenity, achieved through its simplicity. Another year is ending, and it is time once more for reflection. The orchestration calls for little more than a piano, flute, and a handful of strings, and these instruments explore the melody as if engaged in a quiet, amicable conversation. The mood is contemplative and almost wistful, but most of all it is hopeful for a new year that exceeds expectations.