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## Hesed: Redeemed Brokenness in a Multimedia Retelling of the Biblical Story of Ruth

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### Cover Page Footnote

I am grateful for the Olivet Nazarene University Honors Program and the financial support it provided for this work. I am thankful for the help of Professor Greiner and the guidance he gave me as my mentor. I would also like to acknowledge Professor Kohlmeier, who played a vital role in the development of this project by encouraging and guiding me as I composed the music. I would like to thank Dr. Woodruff for his continued support. Professor Koszut and Professor Wraczewska played key roles in the development of this project as they reviewed my artwork regularly. I am also thankful for critiques from Professor Dombrowski, Professor Seals, Professor Szostek, and Professor Thomas. I would also like to thank Professor Peeler, Professor Ring, and, again, Professor Seals for their written reviews of my project. I am indebted to my fellow art majors Lillian Brown, Maddie English, Kylie Festen, and Alison McHugh, who were often with me at the most stressful points in the art process. I am grateful for the insightful suggestions from Hailie Rasmussen during the brainstorming stages of the art process. I would also like to acknowledge Curtis Snow, Emmalee Dorsey, Hannah Kegg, and Rachel Ford for performing and recording the music of my project. Lastly, I would like to thank my parents for their encouragement.



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Retelling of the Biblical Story of Ruth***

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## ABSTRACT

Through the powerful interaction between the visual arts and music, an ancient story of brokenness and redemption is retold. This thesis seeks to give greater insight into this multimedia retelling of the biblical book of Ruth. Scholarly sources were reviewed to deepen understanding, and works from professional visual artists and musicians were examined for this project to come together. The end product is this thesis as well as a body of art and a five-movement piece of music. This combination of visual art and music allows the relevance of the biblical book of Ruth to be seen in the transforming journey of a grieving woman and her daughter.

**Keywords:** music, music composition, art, ceramics, sculpture, multimedia, storytelling

## INTRODUCTION

Stories surround us. Our culture is saturated with movies, books, news channels, and social media. Even in our social interaction, sharing stories is essential in connecting with others. It is through stories that we can learn about and relate to the experiences of others. Although some may believe that stories are only for children, scholars find the importance of stories in learning throughout our lives. For example, Chris Hamstra, a communications professor who studies storytelling in the workplace, calls stories a full-body experience. He states that they influence both individuals and groups (86). Humans have been telling stories to each other for thousands of years.

The importance of stories is also seen throughout the Bible. In the New Testament, Jesus tells stories to communicate truth in the form of parables. In the Old Testament, prophets told their listeners stories to communicate messages from God. Stories are used to drive home truths so that we, who are wired to learn through stories, can know God better. One story used to teach us how to interact with each other is the book of Ruth. As a finely crafted story, the book of Ruth weaves in surprises into a plot which ties many pieces together, all pointing to God's presence. The book of Ruth is significant because, despite God being mentioned very few times, his presence is seen in the interactions between characters. Ruth's extraordinary acts reflect God's steadfast love—*hesed*. This is a Hebrew word which appears in the book of Ruth when characters go beyond what is expected to support each other (Campbell, 81). Many retellings focus on Ruth, the protagonist of the story. Though her loyalty and courage are admirable, another important character is Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law. I was struck by Naomi's transformation in this story. Ruth begins and ends the story as an optimist, but Naomi begins the story grieving and complaining. She is a character to which many can relate, raw with emotion and on a slow, uncertain journey.

Just as stories influence us, visual art surrounds our society and influences us every day. Research from Teo, Leng, and Phua suggests that images on social media have much influence on us. These researchers conducted two experiments in which participants viewed ads on Instagram from a fictitious sports company. In the first experiment, the experimental group viewed positive comments about the product. In the second experiment, the experimental group viewed an image that was two times larger than that viewed by the control group, although it was the same image. The researchers found

that the size of the image had a greater influence on participants than the comments in the first experiment. We are constantly seeing advertisements and designs created to influence us, whether we are driving on the highway or scrolling on social media. One performance which inspired me to create this project is the performance of Alex Dowis on America's Got Talent. In his performances, Dowis creates scenes with lights while sound effects and music play in the background. His visuals are very effective in communicating a story, captivating the viewer with each brush stroke.

Visual art is not the only media which can influence us. Music has power to convey emotions and imagery, symbolizing specific characters in a story or abstract concepts. The article "Feelings and Perceptions of Happiness and Sadness Induced by Music: Similarities, Differences, and Mixed Emotions" from Patrick G. Hunter et al. examines the question "How does music of different types influence listeners differently?" The researchers manipulated the tempi and modes of music. Participants listened to excerpts of music that were fast or slow in tempo and had a minor or major key. The researchers found that slow-minor excerpts resulted in perceived sad emotions for participants, whereas the fast-major excerpts resulted in perceived happy emotions. This article displays the influence that music can have on listeners' emotions, which implies that music can be an effective part of connecting through storytelling. I seek to retell the story of Ruth, and this storytelling quality of music plays a significant role in the project.

This paper focuses on my project, a multimedia retelling of the biblical book of Ruth with an emphasis on the transformation of Naomi. The project entailed many separate components. Articles and a commentary were consulted for greater understanding. Art works and music compositions were studied. Time was spent writing music, creating clay sculptures, and drawing with charcoal.

### Relevance

The biblical book of Ruth is relevant to our modern day as it explores the redemption of the character Naomi through the hesed of her daughter-in-law Ruth. This significant story about Ruth and Naomi's journey is the focus of this multimedia project. The protagonist, Ruth, is known for her loyalty. Yet she is also strong, humble, determined, and optimistic. At the outset of the story, Naomi is in the land of Moab, a neighboring nation of her home country Israel. Her husband and sons have recently passed away, so she is left with only her two daughters-in-law. Although Naomi encourages them to return to their homes and remarry, Ruth refuses. Ruth, who is a native of Moab, chooses to become a foreigner in Israel and provide for Naomi. Ruth gathers food at the field of Boaz, a distant relative of Naomi who praises Ruth for her actions. In ancient Israel, there was a custom that widows left without children would have a child with the brother of their deceased husband so that their lineage would not die. Because Boaz is a distant relative of Naomi, he is called her kinsman redeemer. After the harvest is over, Naomi instructs Ruth on how to propose to Boaz. Ruth meets Boaz at the threshing floor at night to ask him. Although he wishes to say yes, he must ask another relative that is closer to Naomi than himself. When that man says he will not marry Ruth, Boaz and Ruth marry. Later, they have a child who continues the line of Naomi, a line that leads to the Messiah.

This retelling focuses on Naomi's redemption because her journey is easier to relate to than that of Ruth. She is not the stubborn and optimistic Ruth who seems to always do the right thing. On the contrary, she is more like Job or the writer of Psalm 88, questioning and complaining to God. At the outset of the story, Naomi claims that God has left her empty in the presence of Ruth. In this state of bitterness, Naomi is blinded to the hand of God working behind the scenes in her life.

This is the story of Naomi's transformation in light of the loving actions of Ruth. Whether it is loss of loved ones, rejection, or continuous dead ends, there are circumstances that break us as people. Naomi's brokenness speaks to each of us. Ruth's optimism in the face of loss, while admirable, is most likely not how we would respond. Naomi's honesty in her bitter state is something that we have experienced. The beauty of this story is that although Ruth and Naomi may no longer be alive, God is still present. Hesed can still be seen in the interactions of people today.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### **The Storytelling Materials: Visual Art**

One aim of the project was to display the various emotions and mindsets of Ruth and Naomi within the plot. The visual arts have the ability to communicate abstract concepts and emotions. Artists such as Christina Cordova create skilled and compelling art pieces. Her works of art often include multiple pieces, such as the sculpture of a human along with leaves that suggest a background. This interaction between humans and the environment is a strength of art, as it is able to tell stories and convey emotions without saying a word. I strive to effectively represent the interactions between characters within the plot of the story as Cristina Cordova does.

In this project, there are sculptures that emerge from the wall. These were inspired by the work of Matteo Pugliese. His *Extra Moenia* sculptures depict intense emotions in human figures. These are mounted on the wall so that the figure appears to emerge from the wall. I was inspired by the sculptures of Pugliese while creating art pieces that express emotion and emerge from the wall.

The biblical character Naomi experiences brokenness when she loses her husband and sons. One artist who explores the theme of brokenness within a biblical context is Eugenia Sherman-Brown. I sought to use my materials to reflect the concept of the work as she did in her mosaic piece *Lament*. While she was under pressure to create art for an upcoming exhibit, she felt paralyzed by her husband's brain cancer. She created this piece in her grief, inspired by the Bible. The mosaics, created from broken pieces, hold spiritual significance. Sherman-Brown's journey in life has included broken hearts and dreams as well as a reformed image of herself and God. In this way, broken pieces come together, creating something beautiful. Meaning is found in shattered pieces. This is the strength of visual art; the artist can use the properties of physical materials to communicate.

The materials of this body of work, charcoal and clay, are significant. These materials existed in the Iron Age, which is when the story of Ruth takes place. This body of work explores the redemption of Naomi in the biblical story of Ruth, which took place many years ago. Just as charcoals and clay are used today, so the book of Ruth is relevant to our modern day, resonating with the broken pieces we call our lives.

### **The Storytelling Materials: Music**

This project relates the experiences of Ruth and Naomi through music and art within an art gallery. I composed music that correlates with specific pieces of art, and Modest Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition" is an example of music representing individual art pieces. In each movement of the music, Mussorgsky represents a different piece of visual art. He also has a movement that captures the grandeur of the room in which the art is housed. I wrote music that correlates with pieces of artwork. I strove to capture emotions that will represent the story and the visuals.

Composers have been telling stories through their music for centuries. I chose to use themes to represent different aspects of the story of Ruth and Naomi, similar to what Rimsky Korsakov did in "Scheherazade." This piece of music relates the tale of Scheherazade, a woman who uses her skill in storytelling to keep herself alive each day. There are themes that represent the different characters in the story, such as the violin solo representing Scheherazade herself. In the same way, I used themes intentionally in my music. Some themes represent characters while other themes represent situations.

When writing themes and melodies for the music, I was inspired by several Jewish modes, or scales. *Magen Avot*, which translates to "Shield of Our Fathers," is a lyrical and calming mode; it sounds exactly like the Western minor scale (Walden, 90). Another mode by the name of *HaShem* Malakh, meaning "The Lord Reigns," is identical to the *Mixolydian* mode; it can emphasize God's grandeur (Walden, 90). The *Freygish* mode is also used. This mode, now one of the most popular of the modes, was at one time seen as inappropriate for the Jewish synagogue due to its melodic structure, but it was welcomed over time. It is also known as *Ahavah Rabbah*, which translates to "Great Love" (Walden, 91). The movements of music are in various Jewish modes. These were used as inspiration for melodic and harmonic figures.

### **Combination of Art and Music**

A significant aspect of this retelling of the story of Ruth that makes it unique is the fusion of the visual arts with music. A great example of the fusion of visual art and music is the "Midwinter" event at the Art Institute of Chicago. Different music artists performed within the galleries, surrounded by works of visual art. However, this example still does not fully illustrate the project I am creating, since my project will feature artwork that directly correlates with the story told through music. The performance of Alex Dowis on *America's Got Talent* is another example of the combination of music and art. Much like a movie using background music, Dowis paints scenes while music and sound effects play. Another professional who works with stories through music and art is James Brinkmann. Brinkmann seeks to engage the audience with classical music, giving them the opportunity to tell their own story by creating art. Although my

project is not identical to any of these performances, these are great examples of the professionals who are pushing boundaries today.

As Edward Fay Campbell points out in *Ruth: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*, the book of Ruth is a unique piece of literature and a work of art (18). My project will illustrate this story using the two art forms of visual art and music. The translation of this piece of literature into an experience that communicates to people through music and visuals will give this story a fresh perspective. As mentioned before, the fusion of music and art has been utilized at museums such as the Art Institute of Chicago. Today, artists are inspired by biblical themes and composers are seeking to tell stories through music. This creative project brings a new experience to the audience as the visual arts and music are combined to tell one unified story. Brinkmann states that research from his interactive performances suggests that incorporating art-making and writing into classical performances enhances the viewers' experiences ("Participatory Classical Music"). This retelling of the story of Ruth is a unique project that, like the interactive performances created by musicians today, seeks to connect in deeper ways with audiences.

### The Book of Ruth

This project focuses on the retelling of one ancient Hebrew short story, the book of Ruth. It has seen many faces throughout the years. Campbell states that it would have been repeated orally before being written down between 900-750 B.C.E (24). Portions of it may have been poetry or the story may have been sung by performers (Campbell, 10, 18). Indeed, the book of Ruth features a finely crafted chiasmic, or symmetrical, structure which is seen in not only the whole book, but also in select chapters, pointing to the work of a skilled storyteller (Campbell, 14-18).

### Development

Campbell elaborates on the possible origin stories of Ruth. Hermann Gunkel, a scholar who has published research on the book of Ruth, proposes that the story originally did not include Ruth. First it focused on the widow Naomi finding a husband to continue her line, and later Ruth was added. Jacob Myers, a researcher who has worked with the poetic qualities of the book of Ruth, proposes that it was once a nursery tale. Another possibility is that there were no precursor stages. Hebrew short stories may have been a new form in the Judges period. Campbell proposes that the question of plausibility is a better one than that of historicity. The circumstances in the story reflect those faced by people of that day—famines, Israelite burial, the Judean town plan with gates and a threshing floor, the weights and values mentioned. Campbell concludes that is a plausible story.

This story may have been told by professional storytellers in ancient Israel. The chiasmic structure utilizes *inclusios*, the use of the same or similar words to bracket off the beginning and end of sections. For example, Campbell points out that Boaz asks about Ruth's identity and blesses her before giving her food in chapter two. At the end of chapter three, the same three events occur. In between this bracket is the height of the story when Ruth goes to propose to Boaz. These *inclusios* bracket the story and

give the reader hints of what will come. They also would have made memorization of the story easier. The intricate use of *inclusios* points to a skilled storyteller.

This story, which features people who live rightly, may have been told by Levites who were positioned around the nation of Israel. For example, Levites may have told this to teach law principles. In ancient Israel, there was a law stating that the brother of a deceased man should have a child with the widow if the man left no offspring (*English Standard Version*, Deut. 25). This way, the family line would be continued. Furthermore, the property could be passed on through generations because property was closely tied with inheritance in ancient Israel.

Another proposal is that wise women told this story, such as the woman who tells a story to persuade King David to reconcile his outlawed son in II Samuel 14. Additional wise women mentioned in the Bible who may fit into this category include the woman who persuades the town of Abel-beth-maacah to turn in a rebel in II Samuel 20 and the mother of Sisera in Judges 5. The Bible records this mother preparing a song to sing upon her son's successful return from battle, although the outcome was not what she expected. There are also figurines from ancient Palestinian excavations showing women holding tambourines. These point to women's roles as singers and dancers, and consequently, storytellers, in ancient Israel.

### Hesed

God's presence in the book of Ruth is subtler than what we may expect. Campbell says that God is the primary actor, and His actions are seen when stated directly by the story teller such as in Ruth 1:6 and 4:13 and indirectly through the complaints and blessings spoken by the characters. The primary way that we see God, however, is through the parallels of God's actions and those of the characters. Boaz says Ruth found refuge under God's wings, yet Ruth finds refuge under his wing when he marries her. Naomi calls on God to give her daughters-in-law security in marriage, but it is through her plan that Ruth finds this security. Naomi asks God to show *hesed* to her daughters-in-law, yet Ruth carries out *hesed*. This word, *hesed*, is mentioned several times in the book of Ruth.

*Hesed* is translated to kindness in Campbell's *The Anchor Bible*. It is the important part of a covenant relationship which sustains it. Campbell states that *hesed* is not deserved and goes beyond "ordinary human loyalty." Both God and humans are shown as doers of *hesed* in the book of Ruth. In Ruth 2:20, God is taking part in *hesed* before a positive turn of events in the lives of Ruth and Naomi. One amazing aspect of *hesed* is that it is not confined to the Israelites, God's chosen people. Ruth, although a foreigner, is still capable of receiving and giving *hesed*, suggesting it to be possible in every one of us.

Closely associated to the theme of *hesed* is the theme of redemption. Boaz becomes the redeemer of Naomi's legacy, knowing that the property belonging to Naomi's deceased husband and sons will ultimately go to the family of Ruth and Naomi through the first son he has with Ruth (Hongisto, 28). Naomi's redemption is possible due to the *hesed*-living of Ruth and Boaz.

*Chiastic Structure*

Leif Hongisto elaborates on the many layers of the chiastic structure in Ruth. An analysis of chapter two provides a good example of this symmetrical structure. Ruth and Naomi begin the chapter speaking to each other, and then the reader is given a view of Ruth among the reapers at Boaz's field. At the middle point of the chapter, Ruth has a conversation with Boaz. She then goes back to gathering among the reapers before returning home to Naomi. The entire book of Ruth has this chiastic structure, as seen in a visual from Hongisto (Figure 1).

<b>A. NAOMI—Too old to conceive</b>	<b>Chap. 1</b>
<b>B. THE POSSIBLE REDEEMER IS INTRODUCED</b>	<b>2:1</b>
<b>C. RUTH AND NAOMI MAKE A PLAN</b>	<b>2:2</b>
<b>D. RUTH AND BOAZ' FIELD</b>	<b>2:3</b>
<b>E. BOAZ COMES FROM BETHLEHEM</b>	<b>2:4</b>
<b>F. BOAZ ASKS: "Whose is that young woman?"</b>	<b>2:5-7</b>
<b>G. RUTH BECOMES PART OF THE BOAZ CLAN</b> —servants are to offer her water —she is to be regarded as a maidservant and can eat with the household	<b>2:8-16</b>
<b>RUTH BRINGS ONE EPHAH OF BARLEY TO NAOMI</b>	<b>2:17, 18</b>
<b>H. NAOMI BLESSES BOAZ</b>	<b>2:19</b>
<b>I. BOAZ THE ONE WHO IS IN POSITION TO REDEEM</b>	<b>2:20</b>
<b>J. RUTH JOINS BOAZ' WORKERS</b>	<b>2:21-23</b>
<b>THE PIVOTAL POINT—The plan laid by Naomi and Ruth</b>	<b>3:1-8</b>
<b>J'. RUTH IDENTIFIES HERSELF AS BOAZ' HANDMAID</b>	<b>3:9</b>
<b>I'. RUTH CHALLENGES BOAZ TO ACT AS A REDEEMER</b>	<b>3:9</b>
<b>H'. BOAZ BLESSES RUTH</b>	<b>3:10</b>
<b>G'. BOAZ PROMISES TO MARRY RUTH</b>	<b>3:11-15</b>
<b>RUTH BRINGS 6 MEASURES OF BARLEY TO NAOMI</b>	<b>3:16</b>
<b>F'. NAOMI ASKS: "Who are you?"</b>	<b>3:16-18</b>
<b>E'. BOAZ GOES TO BETHLEHEM</b>	<b>4:1</b>
<b>D'. RUTH AND A FIELD</b>	<b>4:2-12</b>
<b>C'. RUTH AND NAOMI'S PLAN IS FULFILLED, marriage</b>	<b>4:13</b>
<b>B'. THE REDEEMER WAS NOT DENIED</b>	<b>4:14-16</b>
<b>A'. A SON WAS BORN TO NAOMI!</b>	<b>4:17</b>

Figure 1

For this project, the levels of the chiasm have been simplified to a five-scene story. This is reflected in the pieces of art and music; there are five movements of music correlating to five drawings and five sculptures. These five pieces are shown below:

**A:** Naomi's Loss

**B:** Ruth Gleans in Boaz's Field and Returns with Food

**C:** Ruth follows Naomi's Instructions in Proposing to Boaz

**B':** Boaz Responds to Ruth, and Ruth Returns with Food

**A':** Naomi's Redemption

## DESCRIPTION

There are many details in the music and art which point to the story of Ruth. The overall structure parallels the chiastic structure of the book. There are visual and musical elements that represent different aspects of the story.

**Retelling the Story: Visual Art**

I began the visual art portion of this multimedia retelling by exploring different art materials and imagery. I used acrylic paint and soft pastels to create an image of a mournful Ruth at the beginning of the story (Figure 2). I represented the climax of the story, when Ruth is at the threshing floor, by an oil pastel drawing of a close view of Ruth (Figure 3) and clay reliefs of Ruth and Boaz among piles of grain (Figure 4). I began life-size charcoal portraits, leading to my idea of creating charcoal landscapes of the same size. The portraits and landscapes would be displayed in pairs. Eventually, I decided on keeping only the landscapes. These were each paired with a clay sculpture.



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

The final art exhibition (**Figures 5 through 6**) consists of ten art pieces: five charcoal drawings and five clay sculptures. The charcoal pieces illustrate the settings in which the characters interact and emphasize Ruth's actions. The drawings are on 70-inch brown craft paper. The clay busts emphasize the mindset of Ruth and transformation of Naomi, while the hand sculptures represent the two instances when Ruth returns with food to Naomi. Each of the drawings is paired with a sculpture to create five pairs.



Figure 5

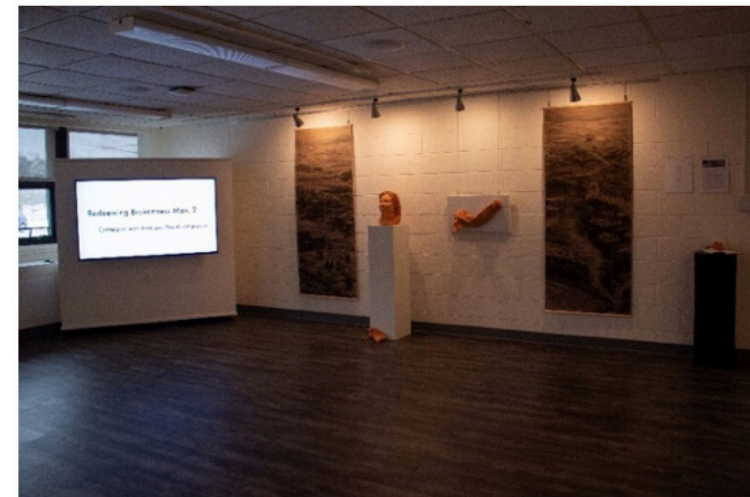


Figure 6

The first pair displays the journey Ruth and Naomi must travel to Israel as well as the emotional state of Naomi. This emotional state is seen in a bust of Naomi which hangs on the wall (**Figure 7 and 8**). Here, Naomi's grief is evident in her facial expression. Her eyes are closed, representing how her bitterness had blinded her from even recognizing the blessing of Ruth's presence. There is a charcoal drawing of the landscape between Israel and Moab, at the base of which is a dark tomb where the dead were buried (**Figure 9**). There is a road stretching upwards, towards the horizon line at the top of the drawing. There, at the top of a hill, is Naomi and Ruth's destination—the town of Bethlehem.





Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10

The second pair illustrates Ruth's hard work as she gleans and meets Boaz for the first time. The landscape features the Israelites country side at sunrise as people work in the field of Boaz (**Figure 10**). At the bottom, Ruth can be seen gleaning in the field. Following this drawing is a sculpture of grain in a bowl that sits on a pedestal (**Figure 11**). There are hands holding the bowl out, representing the hands of Boaz offering grain to Ruth. Ruth has found favor with Boaz, who blesses her, bringing attention to the hesed that she has shown to Naomi.



Figure 11

The third pair features a landscape in which the town of Bethlehem and the threshing floor can be seen (**Figure 12 and 13**). Outside the city gates, Ruth and Naomi can be found speaking to each other. The road in front of the city leads to the threshing floor where Boaz can be seen. The bust of Ruth (**Figure 14**) sits in front of this long drawing. Her eyes look straight ahead, representing her determination. Her lips are slightly parted as she begins to smile. It is through her actions that Naomi finds redemptions, her actions which reflect God's *hesed*.



Figure 13



Figure 14

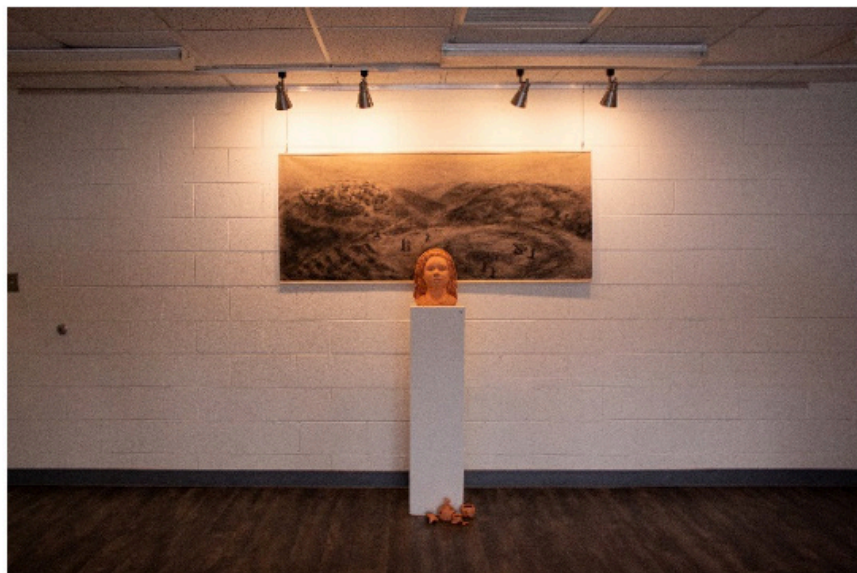


Figure 12

The fourth pair depicts Boaz's reply to Ruth. The landscape features Ruth speaking to Boaz at the threshing floor (**Figure 15**). Then, there is a sculpture that mirrors the second clay sculpture (**Figure 16**). In this one, a bowl of grain sits on a pedestal. Behind it, a hand reaches out from the wall and drops grain into the bowl. This represents Ruth bringing the grain back to Naomi after speaking to Boaz.



Figure 15



Figure 17

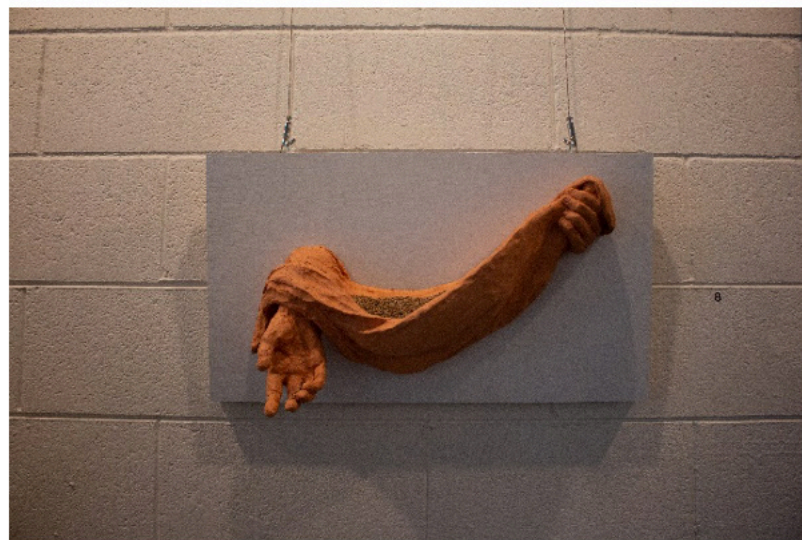


Figure 16

The last pair of pieces includes the fifth drawing (**Figure 17**). In this one, Ruth can be seen handing her newborn son to Naomi as Boaz stands in the doorway. A group of women surround Naomi and Ruth, and these are the women who give praise to God for blessing Naomi. There is a bust of Naomi (**Figure 18**) beside this drawing. This piece contrasts with the first bust of Naomi. Now, her expression is one of contentment. A smile spreads across her face as she looks upwards, seeing the blessings of God in her life.



Figure 18

On the floor surrounding the gallery are small jars (Figure 19). These are cracked and broken, representing the brokenness seen in not only Naomi's life, but also ours. Inside them are lights, shining through and creating unique shapes on the walls.



Figure 19

### Retelling the Story: Music

I began composing the music portion of this project with the guidance of Professor Kohlmeier. There are many components of the music, such as the overall structure of the five movements, that were first suggestions from him. When deciding on what instruments to include, I wanted instruments that had long histories. The flute is an instrument that has existed in ancient times, and my experience as a flutist made it an apt choice. I chose the clarinet and cello due to their tones. The violin was the last instrument that I decided to include, and its large range makes it ideal.

There are five movements of the music, which correlate with each of the five sections in the chiastic structure of the story and visual art. The first and fifth moments have ternary A-B-A' structures, the second and fourth movements have binary A-B structures, and the middle third movement has a strophic structure.

The first movement has an A-B-A' ternary structure. The A section represents the journey back to Israel as well as mourning. In the middle of these somber sections is a hopeful one that represents Ruth's loyalty. The first movement begins with a breathy flute tone before the cello enters with a solemn melodic motif built on "C" *Magen Avot* mode (Figure 20). This represents the grief of Naomi and Ruth, as well as their long journey from Moab to Israel. Over this motif, the ensemble builds to a climax at measures 29 to 36, which represents the crying of Ruth and Naomi. The clarinet and flute become increasingly dissonant in measure 33. This dies down and transitions to the B section beginning at measure 45. The flute begins this section with a rhythmic motif on middle "C" before the rest of the ensemble enters and the modulation to C major becomes evident (Figure 21). The melody of the violin represents Ruth's statement of loyalty and determined hope. Eventually, however, the motif of the A section is integrated into the violin's melody, and the A' section begins at measure 68. The mode returns to *Magen Avot* for this last section of the movement. The melodic motif of the A section and the rhythmic motif of the B section are heard again in movement five.



Figure 20



Figure 21

The second movement has an A-B structure, with the first section representing Ruth gleaning all day and the second representing her coming back with grain. It begins in G *Freygish* as the clarinet and flute play ascending melodies over a “G” drone, representing a new day beginning in Israel as Ruth sets out to glean. Throughout this section, there is a contrast between the ascending melodies and the arched melodies, contrasting Ruth’s hope with her tedious work in the field. Then, the B section begins in C *HaShem Malakh*. This section is relaxing. It represents Ruth finding favor with Boaz, who gives her food to take home to Naomi. This theme (**Figure 22**) played by the violin is also heard in the B section of movement four when Ruth is again given food.



Figure 22

The third movement is strophic, revolving around a single theme representing Ruth getting ready and going to propose to Boaz. The melody, from which the variations were made, can be heard in its original form in the clarinet part (**Figure 23**). There is a second melody heard when the violin echoes a similar melody (**Figure 24**). The variations of the first melody include the retrograde inversion in the clarinet part (**Figure 25**) and later the inversion of it in the violin (**Figure 26**). The second melody can also be heard in retrograde in the clarinet part. In the beginning of the movement, only the flute and violin play, representing the conversation Naomi and Ruth have as Naomi instructs Ruth in proposing to Boaz. The melody and its variations continue, building more tension as Ruth follows the instructions. These variations lead to the climax of the story, when Ruth proposes to Boaz.



Figure 23



Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26

The fourth movement has an A-B structure, with the A section representing Boaz’s response and the B section representing Ruth’s return. The theme of the B section of movement two is heard in this B section because this is the second time in the story that Ruth is returning with food from Boaz. This movement begins with a cello melody in C *HaShem Malakh*. This deeper, calming melody represents Boaz’s response to Ruth’s proposal. This section ends with a slightly dissonance chord resolving to a minor chord as Boaz cannot give Ruth a sure answer. He must speak to another person before he can promise to marry Ruth. At this point in the story, we know that Naomi’s line will be redeemed, but Boaz must find out if he can marry Ruth. He gives Ruth food before she returns, and this is represented in the music. This is when the B section begins, and the theme of section B in movement two is heard again (**Figure 27**).



Figure 27

The final and fifth movement is one of celebration. It has an A-B-A’ structure in which the A and A’ sections represent celebration while the B section represents Naomi looking back and seeing how her brokenness was redeemed. In this movement, the cello is used as a percussion instrument. There is a connection between women and frame drums, which are tambourine-like percussive instruments. Ancient ceramic figurines holding similar drums from Mesopotamia have been discovered, and traditions suggest that the frame drums were often played by women; indeed, the Bible records women playing these instruments in celebration with singing and dancing (Doubleday, 107). The cello player taps on the body of their instrument in the A and A’ sections of this movement, representing the drums that ancient women have played in celebration. The A section represents the marriage of Ruth and Boaz. In it is the rhythmic motif of the B section from moment one (**Figure 28**). Now, this rhythm is incorporated into a melody based on the *Freygish* mode in F. This builds until measure 46 when the B section begins in F major. The minor melodic motif from movement one is now heard as a major melody (**Figure 29**). The rhythm of this melody was also changed to resemble the rhythmic motif mentioned previously. The movement returns to F *Freygish* in the A’ section. This represents the birth of Ruth and Boaz’s son Obed. At the end of this movement, there is a coda with the melodic and rhythmic motif from the B section.



Figure 28



Figure 29

## CONCLUSION

This is a creative project that explores the interaction of the visual arts and music within a narrative. The music tells the story using emotion and symbolizing the experiences and responses of people through motifs. With the visual art, I am physically representing scenes of the narrative, focusing in on details in the clay sculptures and landscapes in the drawings. This unique pairing of the visual arts and music are combined to retell an ancient piece of literature.

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