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A Collection of Original Music

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A COLLECTION OF ORIGINAL MUSIC

A Thesis

Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Designations

University Honors with Distinction and University Honors

Kelsey Staudacher and Hanna Van Hemert

University of Northern Iowa

December 2010

A Project
Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Designation
University Honors with Distinction or University Honors
Hanna Van Hemert
A Collection of Original Music
University of Northern Iowa
December 2010

This Study by: Hanna Van Hemert

Entitled: A Collection of Original Music

has been approved as meeting the thesis or project requirement for the Designation
University Honors with Distinction or University Honors

12/13/10

Date

Dr. Alan Schmitz, Honors Thesis Advisor, School of Music

An Explanation of Our Project and Reasons for Choosing It:

The thesis project, 'A Collection of Original Music', is a creative/performative project comprised of composing, rehearsing, performing, recording, and notating original music. Designed to be completed as a collaboration between two musicians, Kelsey and I worked together during each of the tasks of the project. Consisting of four original pieces for piano/voice, and ukulele/voice, the compositions were performed at a live concert/thesis presentation, recorded at a later date, and transcribed for posterity.

Kelsey and I chose this project for a number of reasons. Having both studied music and another academic area, and planning on pursuing a career in an area other than music, we were both looking for an experience to act as the capstone of our musical education. Paired with our difficulty in finding an exciting thesis project in our primary academic areas, Kelsey and I pursued a creative/performative thesis to stretch ourselves as musicians, to explore our own creative potentials, and to satisfy our senior thesis requirement.

The Steps Taken:

In order to complete our project, Kelsey and I first had to define it. Knowing that we wanted the focus of our work to be on composition, we had to determine a way to show the result of our process. Setting out a schedule of compositional deadlines (including melodies, orchestrations, lyrics, and rehearsal), we rounded out our calendar with a performance for family, friends, and advisors and a few recording dates. With our year set on paper, we began our work.

Our compositional process consisted of two weekly appointments during which Kelsey and I met in the practice rooms of Russell Hall to discuss our progress since our last meeting. We agreed to never come to a meeting 'empty-handed'. Our appointments then continued by either working together on a new musical idea that one of us brought to the table, continuing work on a previously started piece, or sometimes, when we were at a standstill, we split-up and worked our own compositional ideas

separately. We ended each meeting by going over what we did and where we were going to go from there.

As the compositional portion of our project came to an end, it was time to begin planning and rehearsing for our performance. We secured a location, created programs, rehearsed our pieces along with their inspirations, and prepared to convey our process and results to our audience.

The final steps of the project included finishing our reflections, transcribing our music onto paper using the computer program, 'Finale', and recording rough cuts of our pieces, all to include in our final thesis project.

A Description:

Our final work took three forms. The first, and which best conveyed the scope of our project, was the performance. Completed at the Hearst Center for the Arts in Cedar Falls, Iowa, we were able to include the lyrics for our audience, along with 'liner notes' explaining the sources for each of the original compositions in the program, as well as perform a few of the original pieces inspirations as covers. Along with being a whole lot of fun, it was a great way to share with others how we completed our project, and the results of our creative process.

The second form of our work is a recording of each of the original pieces. Completed in a V-Room in the Russell Hall practice rooms, Kelsey and I were able to record each piece and put them directly onto our computer to burn onto a CD. This way, we were able to record and re-record until we were satisfied with the recordings of the pieces to be included in our final thesis.

The third form of our work is a transcription of each of the arrangements of our original pieces as we performed them at our live performance as well as on our recordings. Using 'Finale' music notation software within the School of Music, we were able to input our songs onto the program in order to print out sheet music to include in our final thesis.

An Assessment of the Importance to Society:

It is quite a difficult task to assess the importance of a creative piece as it enters a body of extant work. Creative work is easily graded by opinion, but not as easily defined by objective criteria. So, while it is difficult to assess the importance of our thesis in the entire world of original music, it is easy to assess its importance in our development as musicians and young adults. This thesis project is the only academic endeavor that allowed me to explore and understand my own abilities as a creative musical artist. Without it, I would not have been able to combine formally acquired skills such as playing the piano and the study of functional harmony.

In other terms, this thesis project produced four songs that would not otherwise have been created. The probability that another artist or artists could create what we have is astronomically small. Combined with our own unique skills, our own unique viewpoint, and our own unique experiences, Kelsey and I have created four musical pieces that are, arguably, as important as other original music as it is just that, original.

A Statement on the Value of the Experience

When Kelsey approached me with the idea to do a collaborative thesis that was also on the creative spectrum, it took me about four seconds to whole-heartedly agree. I had never seriously considered writing original music, especially for others to hear. After discussing the idea with Kelsey a bit more, I began to get excited about the work ahead of us. In hindsight, the experience has been a very significant one in my life as a student, musician, and young adult.

As a college student, I have experienced many different types of learning. The thesis experience, however, has proven to be quite unique. Embarking in a year-long and intense process, guided by my own ideas and work ethic, I didn't know how much I would grow as a student. By essentially writing my own syllabus, grading my own work and determining my own creative process, I received a new appreciation for the way I gain knowledge and skills. I would have liked to think that the 'creative process', as it is colloquially known, proceeds in an unpredictable ebb and flow. What I

have learned is that my creativity needs to be nudged, in regular intervals, to start flowing. And it will! I could start a scheduled meeting with Kelsey thinking I wasn't 'in the mood' to compose or to edit, begin working, and have a wonderfully productive session. Yet at other times I could feel very 'musical' and have a session that brought nothing new to the table. In continuing my studies after this experience, I hope to be a more productive student, or professional, or whatever because I will know that by working when I don't 'feel' like it, I can still get things done. On the other hand, I will know that I don't need to be so hard on myself when I don't have particularly productive days.

One of my greatest anxieties during my senior year was preparing for my senior recital. The preparation and anticipation of performing the pieces I had worked on for two years was incredibly intimidating. I had to let the audience in to my personal interpretations and work and passion. Then I agreed to prepare a senior thesis that would essentially multiply that experience because the pieces to perform would allow my audience into my heart and mind as I performed my own compositions. Having studied music formally for more than 15 years, I felt a lot of pressure to perform well. As I began the compositional process with Kelsey, I explored parts of my 'musical self' that I did not know existed. Without any other choice, *I* had to decide on the chord progressions, *I* had to decide on the melody, and *I* had to decide on the lyrics (along with Kelsey, of course). Relying solely upon my own musical knowledge and intuition, I journeyed through the intimidating process of exposing that knowledge and intuition to others. Perhaps my greatest area of growth as a musician was in trusting myself. I will take that trust into my next musical endeavor, as well as my young adulthood.

Along with a new sense of innate trust, I will take many other aspects of the thesis experience into my young adulthood. Working with another person so closely, so intimately has proven to be very significant in the relative amount of personal growth experienced throughout the thesis. Kelsey and I worked on a basis of friendship, mutual interest in music, and mutual passion for learning. Taking these mutualities and focusing them on a year-long project also forced us to bring our own work habits

and quirks to the compositional process. With a strong friendship as our foundation, we worked on a new balance of encouragement and expectation, as well as critical thinking and listening. I can confidently say that the most powerful and most valuable part of the entire experience is my deepened friendship with Kelsey.

Definitely not traditional, definitely not cut-and-dry, definitely not easy: My thesis experience, upon reflection, has become a cornerstone of my undergraduate experience. Taking life skills and perspectives beyond UNI, my thesis journey will prove to last much longer than the year that it was active in my life.

What Kind of World is This?

Kelsey Staudacher/Hanna Van Hemert

[Arranger]

Voice

What kind of world is this? When a man sleeps in the doorway of a Prada Store. His only shel-

Piano

5

5

Pno.

10

10

Pno.

14

you say when you walked away.?

Pno.

17

What kind of world is this? When we

Pno.

19

3 3 3 This game of politics 3 3 3
send our sons to fight in a war that they don't know. made by men in monkey suits putting
3 3 3 on a circus show

Pno.

23

La da da, la da da, la da da da da da da. La da da, la da da, la da da da da da da.

Pno.

28

What would they say if they died that way?

Pno.

33

Pno.

38

Pno.

43

43 What kind of world is this? When the first word I learned was me and the second one no.

Pno.

47

47 This world of selfishness, based on objects to our name but we can't take them to our grave. La da da...

Pno.

51

Piano accompaniment (Pno.) for measures 51-55. The music is in G major and 4/4 time. The piano part consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the bass and chords in the treble.

What did

56

Piano accompaniment (Pno.) for measures 56-61. The music continues in G major and 4/4 time.

we say to make a world this way? What did we say to make

62

Piano accompaniment (Pno.) for measures 62-66. The music continues in G major and 4/4 time.

a world this way? What did you say to make a life that way? La da da, la da da,

68

La da da da da da da Ooo....

What kind of world is this?

Pno.

Breaking Free

Kelsey Staudacher and Hanna Van Hemert

Voice

Piano

Musical notation for the first system, featuring a voice staff with a whole rest and a piano accompaniment with triplets.

5

5

Pno.

came so quick ly your rag - ing wat - ers the

Musical notation for the second system, including a voice line with lyrics and piano accompaniment.

8

8

Pno.

dis - ease you dis - ease Con - sumes me takes me

Musical notation for the third system, including a voice line with lyrics and piano accompaniment.

11

My half wrote sto - ry - ripped-to — pie - ces by you — what do I do

Pno.

14

now — that I'm — de - fined by you — I'll break free from your

Pno.

17

har - den chains I'll — break free to your dismay I'll break

Pno.

20

Free from my help-less ways I'll break free just let

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 20, 21, and 22. The vocal line (treble clef) features a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, including triplet markings over measures 21 and 22. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) consists of chords in the right hand and a bass line with eighth notes and chords in the left hand, also featuring a triplet in measure 21.

23

me. gasp for words as breath-es - capes - me and

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 23, 24, and 25. The vocal line (treble clef) has a melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes, ending with a fermata in measure 25. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features chords in the right hand and a bass line with eighth notes and chords in the left hand.

26

I - freeze this - time you've - won you've won... This

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 26, 27, and 28. The vocal line (treble clef) has a melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes, including triplet markings over measures 26 and 27. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) consists of chords in the right hand and a bass line with eighth notes and chords in the left hand, also featuring triplets in measures 26 and 27.

29

bo - dy's — toll's - one life - time — on - ly but my sould oh — my soul's

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 29, 30, and 31. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 3/4 time signature. It features eighth-note patterns with slurs and triplet markings (indicated by a '3' over a bracket) in measures 30 and 31. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves: the right hand in treble clef mirrors the vocal melody, and the left hand in bass clef provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and eighth-note patterns.

32

for — ever more — for - ever more - I'll break free from your

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 32, 33, and 34. The vocal line continues with eighth-note patterns and a dotted quarter note in measure 34. The piano accompaniment maintains the harmonic support with chords and rhythmic patterns in both hands.

35

har - den chains I'll — break free to your dismay I'll break

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 35, 36, and 37. The vocal line features eighth-note patterns with triplet markings in measures 35 and 36, and a dotted quarter note in measure 37. The piano accompaniment continues with harmonic accompaniment, including triplet markings in the left hand in measure 35.

38

Free from my help-less ways I'll break free just let

Pno.

41

me.

Pno.

45

Pno.

48

Piano accompaniment for measures 48-50. The treble clef contains whole rests. The bass clef features eighth-note triplets. The treble clef features quarter-note triplets. Time signatures change from 2/4 to 4/4.

51

Piano accompaniment for measures 51-53. The treble clef contains whole rests. The bass clef features eighth-note triplets. The treble clef features quarter-note triplets.

54

hold you've gained _____ is mor-tal _____ on - ly you know - I'll _____ die -

Vocal line and piano accompaniment for measures 54-56. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "hold you've gained _____ is mor-tal _____ on - ly you know - I'll _____ die -". The piano accompaniment features eighth-note triplets in the treble and block chords in the bass.

57

then - I'm gone — and — you're done — I feel as — though - you

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 57, 58, and 59. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are: "then - I'm gone — and — you're done — I feel as — though - you". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves: the right hand in treble clef and the left hand in bass clef. The piano part features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and block chords in the left hand.

60

damned - my — sould - - - but my God Oh — My God

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 60, 61, and 62. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "damned - my — sould - - - but my God Oh — My God". The piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note accompaniment and block chords. In measure 62, the vocal line features two triplet markings over the notes "Oh" and "My".

62

He — Saves — just - the same! — I'll break free from your

Pno.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 62, 63, and 64. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "He — Saves — just - the same! — I'll break free from your". The piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note accompaniment and block chords. In measure 64, the piano part features a more active bass line with eighth-note chords.

65 har-den chains I'll break free to your dismay I'll break

Pno.

68 Free from my help-less ways I'll break free just let

Pno.

71 me. free from your har-den chains I'll break

Pno.

74

free to your dismay I'll break Free from my

Pno.

74

77

help-less ways I'll break free just let me.

Pno.

77

80

Pno.

80

84

Piano score for 'Breaking Free' starting at measure 84. The score consists of three staves: a vocal line (top), a piano right-hand line (middle), and a piano left-hand line (bottom). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The vocal line has four measures of whole rests. The piano right-hand line features eighth-note patterns with triplets in the first two measures. The piano left-hand line provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and eighth notes.