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Pandemic Music: Developing Music Compositions for Performance During Covid-19

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Pandemic Music: Developing Music Compositions for Performance During Covid-19

by

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requirements for the degrees of

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1. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic threw a wrench in the plans of many creatives, especially those involved in the performing arts. As a double major in both theater arts and music composition approaching my Junior Music Composition Recital in June of 2020, I felt these disruptions most keenly. Through my junior year of music composition studies from fall term 2019 through spring term of 2020, I spent a great deal of time and creative energy on the development of a one-act musical performance inspired by the folk traditions of Ireland. Excerpts from this were to form the bulk of my junior recital. However, due to the fact that the material I anticipated presenting at this performance included at least five vocalists and an alto flute, a live performance of the material became impossible due to the safety concerns surrounding the pandemic. Hoping that the situation would improve, the recital was postponed to the fall term of 2020.

Over the course of the summer and into the beginnings of fall term, with consideration for the state of the pandemic, I decided that I needed to pivot the direction of my recital. It seemed unlikely that a performance of the material as I envisioned it would be possible due to masking and social distancing requirements. While a virtual performance would have been possible, the theatrical nature of the piece was a large part of the performance, not just the music, and I was unwilling to commit to the time and energy requirements of a virtual performance if it would not fulfill my creative needs as a composer workshopping a piece. I therefore decided to compose a new program of music which could be presented at a live recital while following the current health and safety guidelines.

This thesis is an examination of the music that resulted from this endeavor. The finished program consisted of three pieces titled collectively *Meditations for Woodwind and Electronics*,

a solo piano work titled *Des-C-H-Ut-Es* (or more simply *Deschutes*), and a string quartet called *Trasformerò*. All of these were presented at my Junior Music Composition Recital on June 6th, 2021. The *Meditations* were pre-recorded and shown as a video while the other two pieces were performed live.

In the following pages I will discuss each piece in the program, examining the compositional processes that went into their creation as well considering as the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic. I will then reflect upon what I learned regarding my own process of composing music and consider the implications of this in my future creative endeavours.

Before this discussion begins, however, there are a few notes about the terminology used in this paper that need to be addressed. Firstly, the terms ‘measure’ and ‘bar’ are used interchangeably here. Secondly, the term ‘pitch’ is used to indicate a specific frequency of sound or to differentiate between different octaves of the same note. ‘Note’ refers to the named pitches frequently used in modern Western music labeled as A, B, C, etc., including their appropriate sharps and flats, and based on A440 tuning.

2. Meditations for Woodwind and Electronics

Meditations for Woodwind and Electronics is a collection of three pieces, originally performed with oboe as the solo woodwind instrument. For my recital these three pieces were pre-recorded for performer and audience safety and presented with a video for added visual interest. Each piece utilized different compositional techniques and were written in collaboration with performer Al Fernee. Each was also written with a particular piece of nature in mind, which inspired the musical material, title, and the visual elements included in the performance. The

meditative character of the music is reflective upon my own personal connection to nature and the reconnection I experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic.

2.1 Tree Song

The performance of *Tree Song* at my June 6th recital consisted of two parts: the composed melody and accompanying electronic track. For this discussion, I consider the written melody to be the relevant creative material because it was notated in a score and is most important for potential future presentations. I consider the accompaniment track, while an integral part of the performance, to be a performer's interpretation of how the piece might be performed, and not necessarily an essential part of the composition.

The piece was developed through improvisation on a pentatonic flute, which was designed based on traditional Native American flutes. The rich, woody sound of the flute regularly reminded me of wind blowing through trees. As I began to notate some of the musical figures I was most drawn to in my improvisations, I kept envisioning the trees of the park blocks outside Lincoln Hall where I spent most of my time studying music at Portland State University prior to classes going virtual due to the pandemic. Because of this, the title of *Tree Song* was in place before I had even completed composing the melody.

The melodic material is relatively simple, consisting of the notes F-sharp, A, B, C-sharp, and D between F-sharp⁴ and A⁵. Originally, an E was used in place of the D, but this was changed when I transferred my original handwritten score to my notation software and input the note as a D by mistake. During the rehearsal process, I realized my mistake and upon some

reflection I decided I preferred the intervallic character of the note collection with the D over the one using E.

The overall structure of the piece consists of two different melodic phrases, marked as A and B in the score, each of which consists of four short musical figures separated by silence. These phrases are organized in an AABBA structure. This structure was influenced by my background in Irish traditional music, which uses a binary structure with repeating A and B sections, giving it the form AABB. Traditionally, this binary structure is repeated several times, and while my own performance of the piece often utilizes this same structure, I decided to adjust this in the score for performance at my recital. I felt the ending of the piece would feel more complete to my audience if the A section was repeated once more, and so I deviated from the traditional Irish structure.

Through the compositional process, I experimented with several different methods for notating the melody, shown in figure 1. The relatively free-flowing nature of the piece made it difficult to notate using conventional methods of indicating rhythm. Originally I attempted to organize the melody into a consistent time signature with each figure contained within a single measure (method 1). However, this strict organization with specific time durations for each note felt too restrictive and didn't seem in character with the flowing nature of a tree swaying in the wind. I next experimented with more freeform rhythms, still notated with conventional rhythmic indicators (quarter notes, eighth notes, etc.) and with each figure separated by rests (method 2). The only bar lines were used to separate the different phrases. This too felt overly restrictive. Despite the less structured nature, the consistency of having specific rhythmic durations still felt too artificial for the piece and would likely lead to confusion for a performer. This led to the final



Figure 1. Notation methods for *Tree Song*.

version, which simply includes noteheads without stems. The rhythms can be inferred from the relative distance of noteheads from one another, but specific note values are not given.

After composing the melody and creating a rough recording, I imported it into Logic Pro, my Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) and began adding layers of electronic accompaniment. I first created the accompaniment with the intention of learning more about the software, and I was not intending to include the tracks in the recital performance. Later I decided to include the accompaniment in the performance to provide a richer soundscape for the woodwind melody. This necessitated the inclusion of time frames in the score to help the performer keep track of the pacing of the melody in relation to the accompanying track.

2.2 Flower Song

This piece originated from a prompt given for an acting exercise in TA 345 TOP: Experimental Acting, taken virtually during winter term of 2021. The prompt was provided by instructor Devon Allen and included the following guidelines, which I used as the basis for *Flower Song*:

Title of the Composition (this is your guide for tone or texture or meaning): **Something Good is Right Around the Bend and It Is Beautiful**

Rules of the Composition

*The title must be used in some way in the piece. Written, sung, Morse coded out, spoken using sign language, spoken, etc...If spoken, it is the only spoken sentence. The piece has no other language. However - sounds are great and approved to use!

*The piece must contain whistling

...

*A flower blooms.

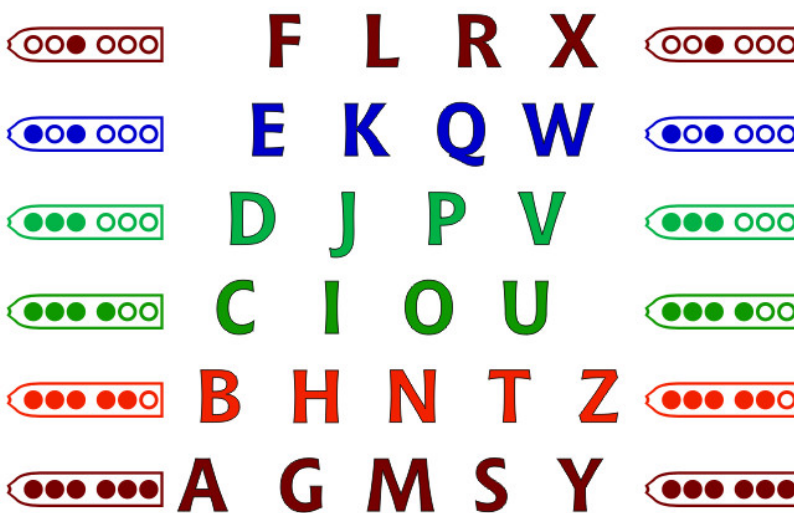
*Choose one of these tools. You may choose more, but one must be from this list:

dynamics (contrast, a build in sound or movement or intensity, etc.), sudden start/stop, mirroring. (Allen)

The idea of using written language as the basis for melodic and rhythmic ideas has long been an intriguing puzzle for me. In order to fulfill most of these requirements simultaneously, I composed a short song

using ideas discussed by Clint Goss on Alphabet Songs. I discovered Goss's website, Flutopedia, while learning to play my own pentatonic flute, and I became enamored with the system used by Goss to

Alphabet Songs – Pentatonic Minor Scale



Latin alphabet – Colors = pitch⁴⁰ (F#m)

Clint Goss [clint@goss.com] – Flutopedia.com – April 23, 2014

Figure 2. (Goss)

translate letters into notes,
 figures 2 and 3. To fulfill
 the requirement of using
 the title somewhere in the
 piece, I translated the

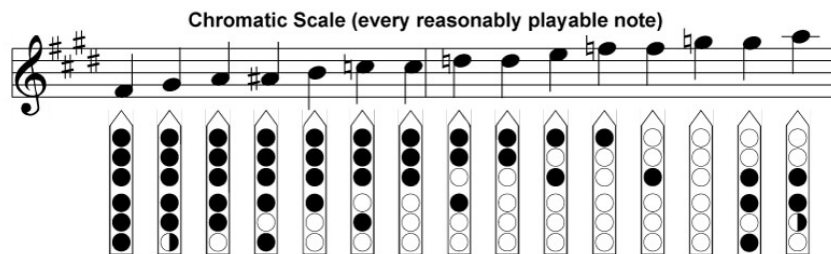


Figure 3. "Wooden Flute Sheet Music."

letters into musical notes,

which provided the melodic material for my composition, example 1.

During the acting exercise, I used an Irish penny whistle to fulfill the whistling requirement. Though this changed in the final score to be notated as an oboe, the rhythmic character of many of the figures was inspired by my own capabilities when playing a D penny whistle and the ease of fingering different melodic ideas. Notes that were easier for me to finger between with my limited performance abilities on the whistle naturally became faster while harder passages became slower, eventually developing into rhythmic ideas within the piece.

When the first version was presented, the accompanying drone at the beginning of the piece underscored a short video of flowers blooming, the video edited so that the opening of the flowers corresponded with sound effects of fireworks going off. This imagery stayed with me as



Example 1. *Flower Song* Melody.

I reworked the piece into its present form, and this was the inspiration behind the video element that was presented along with the recording of the piece at my recital.

In the final version of the piece, the experimental acting tool of sudden stops and starts is visible in the oboe line of measure 10-16. These alternating sections of sound and silence were used throughout the original version and were illustrated by actors moving when the melody played and freezing in place during the silence. The use of the listed tools evolved with the piece to also include distinct dynamic levels, which are determined by which section of the piece is being played.

The structure of *Flower Song* has three main textures that are cycled throughout the composition. Table 1 shows how the melody is organized within these different textures over the course of the piece. Example 2 illustrates each of the three textures.

Texture A is the basic melody, comprised of notes that spell out the title sentence. These notes are organized into groups of four. The original version of the piece that was presented in Experimental Acting was composed only of these groups of notes alternating with periods of rest over bass drones. In the final version these groups are used to spell out one to three words at a

Measures	Texture A	Texture B	Texture C
10-16	SOME THIN GGOO		
17-19			SOMETHING
22-26	GGOO DISR		
27-28		GOOD IS	
29-33			SOMETHING GOOD IS
36-46	DISR IGH AROU NDTH		
47-50		RIGHT AROUND	
51-59			SOMETHING GOOD IS RIGHT AROUND
61-67	NDTH EBEN DAND		
68-69		THE BEND AND	
70-80			SOMETHING GOOD IS RIGHT AROUND THE BEND AND
83-93	ITIS BEAU TIFU L		
94-97		IT IS BEAUTIFUL	
99-134			SOMETHING GOOD IS RIGHT AROUND THE BEND AND IT IS BEAUTIFUL (x2)

Table 1. *Flower Song* Textures.

time, always as complete four-note groups.

Once the words have been introduced using Texture A, they are repeated in Texture B, with the exception of the singular word “something.” Texture B can be distinguished from Texture A by the higher dynamic level, mezzo piano versus pianissimo. Texture B also gives the letter notes new rhythms, removing the silences and forming the words of that section into a continuous melody.

Texture C is presented at forte. It uses the melody created in all previous B sections and combines them to form a complete melody with the material that has already been introduced. These sections of woodwind melody are accompanied by the Glitter line, usually played in canon 2-3 measures behind the woodwind. The Glitter line, so named for the coloristic effect created when played with vibraphone MIDI—such as at the June 6th performance—uses the same basic melody as the woodwind in that particular section, but usually with additional ornamentation. At the second complete iteration of the sentence/melody in measure 118, the Glitter and woodwind lines occur in parallel, both beginning on the downbeat of the measure.

The other accompanimental parts in the score—Middle [rate of motion] Voice, Soprano/Alto and Tenor/Bass Accompaniment—use the pattern of notes created by the sentence (example 1) at different rates of motion. Between the Soprano/Alto and Tenor/Bass accompaniment, one new note is played each measure and sustained, with up to six notes being played at a time. These parts spell out the full sentence twice and repeat “beautiful” four more times before gradually making their way to octave Fs.

The Middle Voice does not follow a consistent pattern in regards to when during the piece it plays. This line was added later in the process of writing this piece because I felt there needed

Texture A	Texture B	Texture C

Example 2. *Flower Song* measures 83-115, Oboe part.

to be additional material to fill in spaces that seemed too musically thin. As previously mentioned, it uses the same pattern of notes created by the sentence. The rhythms of this voice are twice the duration that they are in the Texture C woodwind line.

An additional layer of sound is included in the accompanying track of the performance and is not included in the score. This added layer consists of whispered recitations of the title sentence at varying tempos and occurs during instances of Texture C. This came from further experimentation when working in my DAW and is not an integral part of the performance that needs to be replicated in future.

2.3 Sea Song

Like *Tree Song*, *Sea Song* was composed using more intuitive means. This time, however, the improvisation which led to its composition happened using a combination of piano and experiments with the Notion 6 notation software. The melodic material was written after an interview with oboe player Al Fernee, with whom I discussed the technical abilities, strengths, and weaknesses of the instrument and performer. During the first full winter of the Covid-19 pandemic in the United States, I spent increased time on the ocean at the Oregon coast on crabbing trips. This time on the water inspired the material and title of *Sea Song*.

The structure of the piece can be understood as ABCA'. The A/A' and B sections resemble those seen in *Tree Song*, being composed of four shorter musical ideas separated by rests which, when combined, form a complete melody. The initial A section introduces the listener to the characteristic features of the piece: longer, sustained notes juxtaposed by faster moving lines; lines of eighth notes with repeated note figures; and wavelike swells in both the dynamics and the alternately ascending and descending melodic lines (example 3). These features are experimented with further in section B, which introduces embellishing grace notes and chromatic notes. These additions are intended to elicit a sense of uneasiness in the listener. This uneasiness is furthered in section C by the long, ascending melodic line, which gradually builds in intensity and dynamics before finally breaking in measure 46 from one of the highest points in the piece and resolving back down over an octave, much like the breaking of a large swell or the clearing of a squall of coastal rain. The concluding A' section is largely composed of the same melodic material as A but with the addition of embellishing grace notes reminiscent of the previous two sections.

Example 3. *Sea Song* measure 1-21 (section A), Oboe part.

The accompanying material was originally intended to be a simple bass drone. However, as the melody developed and the rhythmic character of the piece became more solidified, I found it necessary to include some rhythmic elements to the accompaniment to maintain aural interest. This resulted in the existing rhythmic pattern in the bass part. As revisions progressed I was compelled to include more lines and pitch material in the accompaniment that grew and developed as the melody did. The accompaniment therefore evolved to consist of three lines of repetitive rhythmic patterns, notated as bass, cello, and viola in the score. While the performance of the piece used electronic samples from Logic Pro, the lines were written with the idea that the piece could be performed live by a quartet.

2.4 Video elements

All video elements accompanying the *Meditations* were recorded by myself using an Apple iPhone SE. The *Tree Song* video was recorded at a park in Hillsboro, Oregon. *Flower*

Song was recorded at a community garden in Milwaukie, Oregon. *Sea Song* was recorded at Rockaway Beach, Oregon.

Due to the complexity of the structure in *Flower Song*, the video component was designed to help facilitate a better understanding of the piece by aligning the transitions between each shot with the changing sections. The concept was that this would cue the audience into the fact that there was a change happening in the music, even if they were not aurally able to follow the shifting textures and melodic line. While there are changes in the video of *Sea Song*, these do not correspond to any specific changes in the music.

3. Des-C-H-Ut-Es (Deschutes)

Deschutes is a minimalist composition for solo piano. Initial inspiration for this piece came from analyzing Ann Southam's *Rivers I*. One of my longtime favorite vacation destinations, the Deschutes River in Oregon, was chosen as further inspiration for the piece. In experimenting with pre-compositional processes, I realized that by breaking the word into five pieces (des, c, h, ut, and es) and translating those units into German and French solfege syllables and note names, I got the notes D-flat, C, B, C, and E-flat. This five note pattern and the octatonic scale D-flat, E-flat, E, F-sharp, G, A, B-flat, and C are the basis of all pitch material in the piece.

3.1 Structural Elements

There are a total of nine sections in *Deschutes*: five main sections (rehearsal marks A, C, E, G, and I) alternating with four short interludes (rehearsal marks B, D, F, and H).

The musical score for 'Deschutes' measures 1-9 is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 1-3) is marked 'Piano' and begins with a tempo of quarter note = 90 and a dynamic of *pp*. The second system (measures 4-6) is marked 'Pn.' with a dynamic of *p*. The third system (measures 7-9) is also marked 'Pn.' and concludes with a dynamic of *pp*. The right hand (RH) features a melodic line of eighth notes, while the left hand (LH) provides a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes.

Example 4. *Deschutes* measure 1-9.

There are three primary structures that govern the five large sections of the piece, visible in example 4. The smallest of these I refer to as cells. A cell consists of five consecutive eighth notes following the intervallic pattern seen in the motive D-flat, C, B, C, and E-flat (down two consecutive minor seconds, up a minor second, up a minor third).

The second rhythmic structure is a unit. A unit consists of nine cells within the time signature 9/8. Because two full cells cannot fit within a single measure, they are forced to shift position within the next bar, further displacing the pattern. A full unit takes five bars. In this time the cell pattern has phased around back to the starting position, as you can see in the right hand in bars 1-5.

I refer to the third rhythmic structure as a phrase. A single phrase is nine bars long and mimics the left hand rhythmic pattern in *Rivers*. In *Deschutes* the pattern also appears first in the

left hand. The simplest version of this pattern is presented in section A and is also seen in example 4, so for the sake of clarity it is this section that I will be referring to in the remainder of this segment.

The pattern in the left hand contains 1-2 accented or staccato pitches an octave above the bass. Looking at the positioning of these pitches within the bar, you can see the staccato pitches in bar 1 are on the first and last eighth notes of the measure. Each successive bar moves these staccato pitches one eighth note closer to each other. Once they reach the centermost accented eighth note, they move back towards the outermost eighth note positions. A return to the starting position marks the end of the phrase. This entire pattern takes nine bars.

A single section ends after five phrases. The end of the fifth phrase also corresponds with the completion of 9 units, all totaling 45 measures. This structure is repeated in all subsequent main sections.

The structure of the interludes is also composed of three rhythmic patterns, seen in example 5. The smallest of these is a cell, identical to the ones we see in the larger sections. Cells have the fastest rate of motion among these rhythmic patterns with nine notes per bar.

The middle rate of motion is the basic five-note pattern consisting of four quarter notes and one eighth note in each measure. The first measure of this pattern is four quarter notes followed by one eighth; the second is three quarter notes, one eighth, one quarter; the third is two quarter notes, one eighth, two quarter notes, and so on.

The slowest rate of motion is ideally played as one note held for the entirety of a measure, though this duration has frequently been altered in the score to increase playability. In this voice there is one note per bar following the original five-note pattern.

B| Interlude 1

Pn.

Example 5. *Deschutes* measures 47-49.

Each of these three rates of motion takes five measures to complete a single cycle, much like a unit in the main sections. The first half of each interlude is composed of a complete cycle. The second half of the interlude is a retrograde variation on the cycle. For the cells, this is simply achieved by playing the primary note pattern in reverse (E-flat, C, B, C, D-flat).

For the second and third rates of motion however, this retrograde pattern is harder to hear and see in the score. It is easiest to understand by considering the position of the eighth note in the original measure of the cycle and mirroring this in the second half of the interlude. Consider the tenor line on page 4, measures 51-52 and shown in example 6. Measure 51 is the final measure of the initial cycle, and measure 52 is its mirror image. The first tenor note in measure 51 is a D-flat on the first eighth note of the measure. This is mirrored by a D-flat on the final eighth note in measure 52. The second note in measure 51 is a C on the second eighth note of the measure, mirrored on the penultimate eighth note in measure 52. A B occurs on the fourth eighth note in 51 and on the fourth eighth note from the end in 52. One full cycle and its retrograde variation comprises a single interlude of 10 measures total.

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system, labeled '50', contains measures 50, 51, and 52. The second system, labeled '53', contains measures 53 and 54. The right hand (treble clef) plays a melodic line of eighth notes, while the left hand (bass clef) plays a bass line of quarter notes. The key signature consists of two flats (B-flat and E-flat).

Example 6. *Deschutes* measures 50-54.

3.2 Variations

Section A is the simplest form of the main body sections, and section B has the greatest distinction between the three lines of the interludes making it the easiest to see and understand. Each subsequent section is a variation on these original forms. I will be examining the variations within the main sections first and looking at the interludes second.

Pitch material in A is limited to the five note theme in both the right and left hands. These occur at vastly different rates of motion. In the right hand the pattern occurs 81 times in 45 measures, while in the left hand the pattern is completed only once. In section C the two main developments are the switching of the rhythmic patterns to opposite hands and the increased rate of change among the pitch material of the phrases. While the rhythms present in the phrases are identical to the original, the notes now change with each new attack, thus cycling through the motive much faster.

Section E retains the designation of phrases in the right hand and the units in the left. The phrases have now reverted to the original pattern of one note per phrase. The orientation of the

pattern has changed so that the staccato and accented notes occur with a downward octave leap rather than the ascending leap seen previously. Development of pitch material occurs in the left hand units during this section. The first unit of the section contains the primary motive played with the original notes. Each subsequent unit in the section is transposed down to a new pitch level while retaining the original intervallic structures. The transpositions of the units form the descending octatonic scale D-flat, C, B-flat, A, G, F-sharp, E, E-flat, and D-flat.

Section G switches the units back to the right hand and the phrases to the left. The units repeat the descending octatonic pattern they followed in section E, transposed up one octave. The first phrase uses the same pattern of changing notes seen in section B with an added line in the bass for harmonic density. This added line occurs only on the downbeat of each measure and forms a palindrome with the primary motive notes D-flat, C, B, C, E-flat, C, B, C, and D-flat. In instances where the notes of this palindrome are the same as a previously existing note within the phrase, the overlap is notated with an accent. Each successive phrase transposes this pattern and the added bass line to a new pitch level. The transpositions of the five phrases follow the primary motive, found on the first note of each phrase.

Section I is the most complex of the main sections of the piece. The units in the right hand follow the palindromic pattern of transposition that the added line in the bass of section G followed, though in this section the transposition occurs with the start of each new unit. Starting at the beginning of the section in bar 229, one octave doubling per measure is added to the soprano line in a consistent pattern; the downbeat of the first measure, the second beat of the second measure, the third beat of the third measure, and pickups to those beats in subsequent measures. After nine bars, the pattern restarts.

Phrases occur in the left hand, with a few changes. To increase density there are no ties between notes as in previous sections. Unlike all previous sections, the first phrase does not start on D-flat. In this section the pattern begins at the E-flat level of transposition, though still following the intervallic pattern established in section C. There is an added line in the bass of this section that consists of the same octatonic line used for the transposition of units in section E, though here it is used in an ascending pattern beginning on E-flat (one octave below the first note of the phrase). Phrases are transposed to follow the original motive in reverse (E-flat, C, B, C, D-flat) with the same octatonic scale adjusted so its starting note is one octave below the first note of the phrase. One final measure is added to the end of the section so that the piece ends on octave D-flats in both hands, resolving the piece and motive within its pitch collection.

The organization of the different lines and their corresponding rates of motion in the interludes is most easily explained using the following table. The columns represent the different interludes and their rehearsal number. The rows indicate the starting pitch of the lines and the octave at which they occur. The numbers in table 2 indicate the number of notes that occur per measure for a particular line in order to differentiate them; 9 notes per measure is the fastest rate

	B	D	F	H
Db6			1, 5	
Db5	9			1, 9
Db4	5	5, 9	9	5
Db3	1			
Db2		1		

Table 2. *Deschutes* interludes.

of motion and 1 note per measure is the slowest. Where two numbers share a box separated by a comma, both lines are performed at the same pitch level. With limited material and consistent dynamic levels throughout all the interludes, the greatest concern for these

sections was that they would all sound too much alike. The initial presentation of the lines at distinct pitch levels in section B allows for a relatively clear separation of the different lines while retaining as much playability as possible for a single performer. Different methods are used in the subsequent sections to notate how two lines with different rates of motion can be played simultaneously.

In section D, in instances where the 5- and 9-note lines overlap on the same pitch, they are marked with an accent. The remainder of the notes in the 5-note pattern can be differentiated from the 9-note pattern by examining the dyads present elsewhere in the measure. In section F, however, it is rather harder to distinguish the two lines. The sustain of the 1-note per measure pattern is achieved through tying notes together with reiterations where the 5-note pattern overlaps. After some experimentation in notating section H, I settled on the final version for its clarity. I decided that it was more important for the player to be able to see the different lines they are attempting to perform than to notate exactly how they might perform the piece. While this method of notating the overlapping patterns does require more careful consideration on the part of the performer, I believe that it will ultimately result in a better performance by utilizing their expertise. These variations in notation can be compared in figure 4.

The variations in this piece came from the attempt to create a wide variety of musical characters using the least amount of musical material. During the compositional process, I was frequently tempted to use more material than I had initially set, but I wanted the experience of working with limited material in consistent patterns. This way, I could solve a musical puzzle in ways I might not have explore otherwise This experience was drastically different from any composing I had previously done, which had always allowed for a fair amount or complete

D| Interlude 2

104 *ff*

Pn.

F| Interlude 3

161 *ff*

Pn.

H| Interlude 4

218 *ff*

Pn.

Figure 4. *Deschutes* interludes comparison.

freedom. The end result was a composition that, though inspired by nature and my own life experiences, does not follow a narrative as many of my compositions do. Nor does it follow other western musical conventions such as antecedent and consequent phrasing and harmonic progressions, which I use in other works.

3.3 Articulations and Dynamics

Patterns of articulation and dynamics in section A follow the structure of the phrases.

Staccato in the right hand emphasizes the note that is simultaneously played in the left hand with

slurring between the other notes (see example 4). When a new phrase begins, the pattern of slurring and staccato changes in the right hand as well, despite this occurring in the middle of a unit.

Dynamic shaping occurs in the left hand of this section. Each phrase crescendos to the middle of the fifth bar at the accent octave leap, at which point the phrase begins to mirror itself as the octave leaps in each successive bar move back towards their starting positions. The phrase immediately begins to decrescendo at this center point, going back to pianissimo. These dynamic changes are like the swells and waves in a rapid, which cause someone in the water to rise and fall with the motion. Each phrase incrementally increases its loudest dynamic level, from piano to mezzo-piano, mezzo-forte, forte, and finally fortissimo. The right hand units remain at a constant pianissimo the entire section. This dynamic swelling and the rippling background pattern of cells is reminiscent of the motion of the Deschutes River as one floats down it, moving faster and slower as the shape of the river changes. The alternating dynamics in this piece explore the winding contours and moods of the river.

Section B, and all other interludes, are notated at fortissimo. Since there is no variation in this dynamic level, and use of articulations was discussed in the previous section, there will not be continued discussion of the interludes in this section. This dramatic contrast between sections illustrates the surprising nature of the rapids, which can begin or end suddenly, bookended by moments of calm.

The articulation pattern of the cells in section C is similar to the first phrase of section A. The accented note follows the main motive as it did previously with one note emphasized per phrase, though in this section only one note is accented per cell while all others are slurred,

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'Section A' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Section C'. Both staves show two hands (treble and bass clefs) with notes and dynamic markings. Section A shows a descending melodic line in the right hand and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. Section C shows a similar pattern but with different dynamics and articulation, including accents (>) on certain notes.

Figure 5. *Deschutes*, 9th and 10th measures of sections A and C.

which differs from some of the patterns of staccato in section A as seen in figure 5. Each hand has a different pattern of dynamics in this section. The phrases in the right hand follow a similar pattern to the left hand of A, though this time it begins the section at fortissimo, decrescendos to pianissimo, back

to forte, continues the pattern down to piano, then crescendos to fortissimo from pianissimo for the last four and a half bars. The left hand units follow the original pattern used by the left hand in A, but with the switch from crescendo to decrescendo and vice versa occurring every five measures rather than every four and a half. This half measure offset means that the final crescendo to fortissimo corresponds with the final five bars of the section, similar to the right hand.

Section E reuses the dynamic pattern of the phrases in its right hand while keeping the units at pianissimo throughout, much like section A, but the articulation of the cells is slightly different. Each cell follows the same pattern wherein the starting note of each descending transposition (D-flat, C, B-flat, A, G, F-sharp, E, E-flat, and D-flat) is accented and the remaining notes are slurred. The accented first note in each cell makes the descending octatonic scale of the transpositions easier to identify.

With the addition of the third line in the phrases of section G, articulation and slurring in the units was largely dispensed with. At later points of the section, when the ascending leaps of the phrases in the left overlap with the notes of the descending pattern of units in the right, the

overlapping notes are notated with an accented staccato in the right hand and an eighth note rest in the left. As previously discussed, accents also occur in the left hand where the pattern of the phrase overlaps with the added palindromic line. The dynamic level of the units is pianissimo throughout. The left hand phrases follow the original pattern of crescendo/decrescendo as seen in section A.

Accents in the right hand of section I occur only on the first downbeat of each phrase and the final note of the piece. The only additional articulation to the phrases outside of the previously established pattern of staccatos and accents occurs on the final D-flat octave. The dynamic shaping of this section is different from all other sections, and utilizes a different method of notating crescendos. This eliminates potential confusion caused by the hairpin dynamic markings used in previous sections. The left hand dynamics are the simpler of the two, beginning at pianissimo, then crescendoing and increasing one dynamic level with each phrase until the final phrase is forte. The D-flat octave in the final measure is fortissimo. The right hand begins at pianissimo and gradually crescendos to piano on the first downbeat of the second phrase before immediately returning to pianissimo. The right hand then crescendos to mezzo-piano on the first downbeat of the third phrase and continues the pattern until the end of the piece, finishing at fortissimo in the final measure along with the left hand. The dynamic shaping of this particular section was written with the final stretch of the Deschutes River in mind, specifically the class III Colorado, Rattlesnake, and Moody rapids.

4. Trasformerò

The third piece to be performed was the first piece to be composed. The original inspiration for this composition came from the guidelines for the Lisker Music Foundation’s 3rd Annual Composition Challenge. The prompt was to compose a piece for string quartet “exploring the human experience as it makes its way through a global pandemic,” the length of which should not exceed 10 minutes. I came up with the idea to write 5 short movements, each one exploring a different component of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross’ “five stages of grief” model, introduced in 1969 in the book *On Death and Dying*. The pitch material for each movement was derived from the first sixteen partials of the harmonic series over a C fundamental. The choice of a C fundamental utilizes the lowest string on the cello for maximum fullness in the harmony and more accessible natural harmonics among the ensemble. Due to the nature of modern equal-tempered tuning in our musical scales, some of the pitches had to be rounded to a convenient note in order to allow for playability. This resulted in the following notes, organized into groups of 3 or 4 which were assigned to the various movements:



Figure 6. *Trasformerò* note collections.

The organization of the notes in descending order, rather than the more common ascending structure, was to illustrate the gradual sense of clarity and security gained by moving through these stages of grief as we simultaneously move from a small cluster of pitches to a more familiar and stable C sonority. These groups of notes would become the thematic material for the movement dealing with their corresponding stage of grief, with the acceptance movement

utilizing all of the thematic material from the previous movements. The overarching goal in the music was to have each of the themes build off of the ones that came before it, gradually combining into a full melody that would tie all of the movements together. In order to accomplish this, I composed a basic final melody prior to writing any of the movements. This way, I could use patterns present in the melody to guide the composition of each of the smaller themes in the individual movements. The full melody is shown in example 7, though the exact rhythms of this melody would go on to change as the music was developed.



Example 7. Original *Trasformerò* melody.

The choice to title the piece and its individual movements in Italian rather than my native English was a cosmetic one. During composition I referred to each movement by the stage of grief it was associated with. In the process of titling the entire piece, I found myself drawn to titles in languages other than my own for the added element of mystery, especially for those who do not speak those other languages. Using another language also allowed me to be quite literal in my titles without feeling as though I was handing the entire meaning of the piece to the audience. “Trasformerò” translates to “I will transform” and sounds familiar to a purely English-speaking audience while retaining the exotic flair of being different from the word they know.

Please note that in Appendix A, the title of this piece was misspelled as “Transformerò.”

4.1 *Rifiuto* (“I decline,” Denial)

To establish the significance of harmonics in the language of the piece, I begin this movement with natural harmonics on the violin 2, viola, and cello. The violin 1 introduces the first collection of notes starting on C6. This soundscape of natural harmonics and some basic exploration of the collection continues through the beginning of measure 12. At this point the collection of notes and soundscape begin to more actively explore its potential, transposing the collection to different pitch levels, moving through the ensemble, and using different rhythmic patterns.

Denial comes through in the lack of any true development of the material. Despite the introduction of other notes through transposition, the movement is hobbled by the limited nature of its thematic material. Frustration with this lack of development manifests in the tremolos beginning in measure 21. When multiple transpositions are used simultaneously in measures 25-26, the instruments aren't able to find mutual ground, leading to greater frustration even when they all find their way back to the original C-fundamental collection. This frustration develops into anger as we transition to the next movement.

4.2 *Furia* (“Fury,” Anger)

Anger has many ways of manifesting itself, only some of which are represented here. The two manifestations that I explore are differentiated by the use of pizzicato and arco, which give two distinct characters to the accompanimental textures. The first we encounter is a rhythmic pizzicato texture among violin 1, viola, and cello, with the melody in violin 2. This pizzicato texture illustrates a relatively quiet, seething anger simmering beneath the surface. We hear this

controlled anger literally snap at times with snap pizzicato. Violin 2 gives us short, curt phrases using the second note collection (F, G, and A-flat) in measures 2-7. At measure 9 the simmering turns to a boil in the accompaniment as the melody opens up, utilizing pitch material and rhythmic ideas from the denial movement as it tries to control its energy. This control disappears in 17 as we get our first instance of the arco texture, and the violin 1 takes over the melody. This anger is much louder and more aggressive than the other kind we've seen and heard here, arriving and dissipating suddenly with double stops in the viola and cello and crashing waves of emotion and melody in the violins. This torrent gives way to another moment of quiet, seething pizzicato in measure 33 as the violin 2 reconfigures the pitch material into a snarky new melody down an octave. In the final outburst at measure 44, the ferocity of the anger is waning despite the return to a fortissimo arco texture. Viola and violin 1 have switched roles, the viola taking the melody down the octave and placing it below violin 2 while violin 1 takes on an accompanimental role. Without the energetic momentum of the earlier sections, the outburst quickly burns out.

4.3 *Conversazione* ("Conversation," Bargaining)

My initial impulse with this movement was to write something akin to a hymn, connecting bargaining with religious prayer. This did not prove to be fruitful for me within this context as I found the whole-tone nature of the assigned note collection too limiting. At the suggestion of my composition instructor, I examined Bartok's *String Quartet #4*, specifically the violin 1 in measures 34-40 of the third movement. In this passage the violin 1 uses only the notes E-flat and F to create a melody through rhythmic character and octave displacement. Using the

pitch material of my own piece, I began to create sketches replicating musical ideas I was drawn to within the Bartok and to craft them into my own unique melody. The resulting musical lines reminded me of a recording I had heard in which a human voice was filtered so that only the pitches and inflection of speech was left with no audible consonant sounds. This sparked the idea of a musical conversation between the instruments of the ensemble.

The initial idea or subject of the conversation is presented by the viola. The other instruments take this idea and begin to play with it, transposing it, adding layers, playing with inflection, and combining it with existing pitch material from the previous movements in measure 15. The idea continues to be fleshed out and examined from new angles until the conversation derails. The viola and cello begin a reiteration of the melody in 30, but violin 2 interrupts in 31, disrupting the flow. The duo attempts to continue, but the disruption has thrown everyone off balance and violin 1, viola, and cello are unable to come back together for the next phrase. The viola tries to keep the conversation flowing, but the other voices are fragmented and confused, dropping out one by one until the viola is left entirely alone, searching for connection and a resolution that will never come.

4.4 *Tristemente* (“Sadly,” Depression)

In one of my earliest music lessons as a child, I was taught the vastly oversimplified rule that major chords are happy and minor chords are sad. Unfortunately, this mindset stuck with me throughout my musical education and proved to be a stumbling block when I happened to pick the three notes of a C-major triad for the movement on depression. Had I noticed this earlier in the process, my own biases towards the “proper” use of major and minor tonalities would likely

have compelled me to adjust the arrangement within the assigned groups of notes in order to avoid this. As it was, I had already composed the previous three movements and so was forced to face this particular musical prejudice. Inspiration for this movement came from Chopin's "Marche funèbre" in his *Piano Sonata No.2, Op.35*. This influence can be observed in the rhythmic character of the melody and steady, marching accompaniment.

The arrangement of the pitches in the accompanying chords was carefully chosen in order to explore the different ways a C-major chord can be arranged for varying coloristic effects. The melody introduced in the viola is passed around to the violins with some intervallic and rhythmic variation, but the somber nature of the piece necessitates a simpler melodic line and less development than in previous movements. When the cello takes the lead in measure 17, we get the completed antecedent phrase of the full melody. Even though sufficient pitch material has been introduced to complete the melody in this movement, the consequent phrase was withheld to serve as the material that is unique to the acceptance movement.

4.5 *Accetto* ("I accept," Acceptance)

The bulk of this movement is repurposed material from the rest of the piece, beginning with *Rifiuto* and summarily working through *Tristemente*. By revisiting the material in this manner, it is easier to hear the evolution from a three-note cluster to a full melody. Violin 1 gives us this first cluster, beginning in measure 6. Violin 2 adds different material than we saw in *Rifiuto* by continuing the melody in measure 9. The tempo increases from *adagietto* to *allegro* in 13 with the cello utilizing the double stop arco pattern from *Furia* and the violins taking the melody through measure 18. In 19 the viola takes over from violin 2 for the full melody from

Furia, first seen in measure 24 of *Furia* and utilizing pitch material originating from *Rifiuto*. Violin 1 and viola duet with this material until violin 1 drops out in 27 while the viola continues with the fuller melodic form from *Conversazione*. The cello continues the double stop texture through the *Conversazione* material as well. The violins re-enter and join the viola with the original melodic material in 29 and 30. A lightening in the cello texture from double stops to alternating notes in m. 36 prepares us for the inherently lighter sound of the viola, which transitions into accompanimental double stops in measure 40. This change frees up the cello for its melodic line from *Tristemente*. Violins accompany, both utilizing note patterns from the previous section but with a new rhythmic flair in the violin 1. At measure 50 the final two versions of the melody are presented as a duet between violin 1 and cello. While the lines use the same notes separated by octave displacement, each uses slightly different rhythms which fade in and out of rhythmic unison. The viola accompaniment lightens similarly to the cello before it, and violin 2 takes over the accompanimental figure the violin 1 had been using. The viola texture continues to lighten at 55 to allow for the expansive texture of the finale at 59. In 59 all instruments use variations on the consequent phrase of the melody to draw the piece to its conclusion. The final measure utilizes the shimmering texture of natural harmonics that the quartet began with. The movement ends with a greater sense of closure than any of the other stages of grief did before it.

5. Reflections and Applications

In the course of writing the pieces for this recital I came to understand several important points about my creative process and what is most effective for me.

The first major thing I learned was that, as much as I would like to be a composer who can intuitively write large pieces and movements, that is not how my brain works. Simpler pieces such as *Tree Song* and *Sea Song* are doable in this way for me, as well as melodic passages of larger works and when working through stumbling blocks in my procedures. However, more complex passages like *Trasformerò* require a lot more careful consideration, trial and error, and down time away from the piece to allow me to gain perspective on my writing.

As part of my own compositional process, I found that the most fruitful creative area for me to work within is one which has specific criteria for me to meet while also being flexible in how those goals are accomplished. The work represented in this recital covered a wide range within this spectrum, with the complete creative freedom of *Tree Song* at one end and the rigid rules of *Deschutes* at the other. While I did enjoy working in both of these extremes, a middle ground with both guidelines and flexibility was the most productive and efficient area for me to work in, namely *Trasformerò*.

Perhaps the most important point that I came to understand in this process was that nothing that I write is sacred. Despite how strongly I feel about particular musical figures or passages, there is always potential for it to evolve or, if necessary, to be left behind to be picked up by a future project. The original melody I composed for *Trasformerò* is a prime example of this. As the project developed and as the character of the music solidified for me, it became necessary to make adjustments to the melody so that it served the goals of the music, rather than attempting to shape the rest of the piece to serve those few bars I wrote at the beginning of the process.

Working on *Trasformerò* also taught me that I had to be very precise and concise in my composing. I needed to include the relevant material for each movement without adding superfluous passages that would take up valuable time within the limit of the composition. This required regular editing, often of sections that I felt were in excellent shape. The resulting composition was, as my composition teacher Renée Favand-See said, a “string quartet concentrate” of only the important musical material.

Through the rehearsal process of *Trasformerò*, I accumulated many notes to improve the composition from performer comments during rehearsals, annotations the performers added to their parts, and my own observations of which sections required the most rehearsal time. These notes will be used to revise the string quartet and, hopefully, expand it into a larger work for performance by string orchestra. One particular edit I am excited to implement is to change the cello part in *Tristemente* to pizzicato in measures 1-16 and 25-32. During rehearsals there was a miscommunication resulting in pizzicato being played in these sections as opposed to the notated arco. I quite liked this change and requested that it be kept for the performance.

Moving forward, my plan to expand the string quartet will allow me to develop ideas I did not previously have time for. While there are some notational errors in *Meditations* and *Deschutes* that I intend to rectify, I have no immediate plans to edit or expand upon the existing material. The skills I have developed with this work will also be applied to the music I am writing for my Senior Composition Recital.

School of Music & Theater

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

Lincoln Recital Hall 75

June 6, 2021

2:30 pm

Junior Composition Recital

Maia Denzler

Program

Meditations for Woodwind and Electronics

- I. Tree Song
- II. Flower Song (or Something Good is Right Around the Bend and It is Beautiful)
- III. Sea Song

Al Fernee, oboe

Des-C-H-Ut-Es (Deschutes)

Transformerò

- I. Rifluto
- II. Furia
- III. Conversazione
- IV. Tristemente
- V. Accetto

Western-U Summerton, piano

Lucia Atkinson and Liz Carrero, violins
Leah Ilem, viola and Heather Blackburn, violoncello

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Bachelor of Music degree

Maia Denzler is a student of Renée Favand-See

Composition Notes

Meditations for Woodwind and Electronics

Knowing that this recital would be performed while Covid safety precautions would still be in place, these three compositions were written with the intention of being performed virtually. Each song utilizes a different compositional approach to give it a unique character with which it celebrates its subject matter. While the others contain melodies that adhere to a more conventional song structure, *Flower Song*'s melody is generated through a process in which the song's secondary title (Something Good is Right Around the Bend and It Is Beautiful) is gradually spelled out, slowly unfolding its pitch and rhythmic material until the full melody is revealed.

Des-C-H-Ut-Es (Deschutes)

Inspired by the music of Ann Southam, this piece is a tribute to the Deschutes river and was entirely written following strict compositional rules. The unusual presentation of the name of the river in the title refers to the pitch material which governs the entire piece (Db, C, B, C, Eb).

Transformerò

Although there are a number of issues with examining the entirety of the human experience as a checklist of stages to go through, I have found that the emotions and coping mechanisms of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross' model of the Five Stages of Grief to be an effective way to organize my own feelings surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic. For this composition, I decided to explore each of these elements in a series of five movements, one each for denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.

The pitch material for each movement is derived from the harmonic series. When these notes are organized in order over the fundamental, this represents the "natural" order of our lives, the "normal" which we are all hoping to go back to. The chaos the pandemic has thrown us all into is illustrated by each movement working through the harmonic series from top to bottom, beginning at C6. The theme or primary motive for each movement is derived from a set of pitches which, as we work through each movement and its corresponding emotion, brings us back down towards the fundamental and a sense of acceptance for our new situation, our new normal. These themes or motives in each movement also incorporate the pitches of previous movements to illustrate the interconnectedness of human emotions and the non-linearity of the experience.

While this composition explores my personal journey of adapting to life with Covid-19, I hope that it will also serve as a reminder to others that to feel deeply is a normal part of being human and that we need not feel alone in our emotions as we move forward together.

Appendix B

Tree Song

For wind instrument and electronic recording

Maia Denzler
29 January 2021

A | 0:17-0:40

To be played freely.
Allow rest where notated.

Inst.

A' | 0:43-1:10

2
Inst.

B | 1:13-1:37

3
Inst.

B' | 1:40-2:09

4
Inst.

A'' : 2:12-2:40

5
Inst.

Something Good is Right Around the Bend and It Is Beautiful

Flower Song

Maia Denzler
21 April 2021

The musical score for "Flower Song" is presented in a multi-staff format. It includes the following parts and measures:

- Gitter:** Measures 6, 12, 18, 24, and 30. The score includes a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 80$ and a dynamic marking of *mf*.
- SA Accompaniment:** Measures 6, 12, 18, 24, and 30.
- TB Accompaniment:** Measures 6, 12, 18, 24, and 30.
- G. (Guitar):** Measures 18, 24, and 30.
- Oh. (Oboe):** Measures 18, 24, and 30.
- MV. (Violin):** Measures 24 and 30.
- SAA. (Soprano):** Measures 18, 24, and 30.
- TBA. (Tenor):** Measures 18, 24, and 30.

The score features various musical notations, including dynamics such as *pp*, *mp*, and *p*, and articulation marks like accents and slurs. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor).

35

G.
Ob.
MV.
SAA.
TBA.

pp
f

This system contains five staves. The first staff (G.) has a melodic line starting with a piano (*pp*) dynamic and moving to a forte (*f*) dynamic. The other staves (Ob., MV., SAA., TBA.) provide harmonic support with sustained notes and some melodic fragments.

41

Ob.
MV.
SAA.
TBA.

f

This system contains four staves. The first staff (Ob.) has a melodic line starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The other staves (MV., SAA., TBA.) provide harmonic support with sustained notes.

47

Ob.
MV.
SAA.
TBA.

p
mp
f

This system contains four staves. The first staff (Ob.) has a melodic line starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic, moving to mezzo-piano (*mp*), and then to forte (*f*). The other staves (MV., SAA., TBA.) provide harmonic support with sustained notes.

53

G.
Ob.
SAA.
TBA.

p
f

This system contains four staves. The first staff (G.) has a melodic line starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic and moving to a forte (*f*) dynamic. The other staves (Ob., SAA., TBA.) provide harmonic support with sustained notes.

58

G.
Ob.
MV.
SAA.
TBA.

pp
f

This system contains five staves. The first staff (G.) has a melodic line starting with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic and moving to a forte (*f*) dynamic. The other staves (Ob., MV., SAA., TBA.) provide harmonic support with sustained notes.

64

Ob.
MV.
SAA.
TBA.

mp
f

This system contains four staves. The first staff (Ob.) has a melodic line starting with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and moving to a forte (*f*) dynamic. The other staves (MV., SAA., TBA.) provide harmonic support with sustained notes.

70

G. Ob. MV. SAA. TBA.

76

G. Ob. SAA. TBA.

81

G. Ob. MV. SAA. TBA.

87

Ob. MV. SAA. TBA.

93

Ob. MV. SAA. TBA.

99

G. Ob. MV. SAA. TBA.

105

Musical score for measures 105-108. The score is for five instruments: G (Guitar), Ob (Oboe), MV (Violin), SAA (Soprano Alto Saxophone), and TBA (Tenor Bass Alto Saxophone). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The music features a melodic line in the G and Ob parts, with MV, SAA, and TBA providing harmonic support through sustained notes and chords. Dynamics include *f* and *mf*.

G. Ob. MV. SAA. TBA.

109

Musical score for measures 109-112. The score is for five instruments: G, Ob, MV, SAA, and TBA. The key signature has two flats. The music continues with melodic development in the G and Ob parts. Dynamics include *f* and *mf*.

G. Ob. MV. SAA. TBA.

113

Musical score for measures 113-116. The score is for five instruments: G, Ob, MV, SAA, and TBA. The key signature has two flats. The music features a melodic line in the G and Ob parts. Dynamics include *f* and *mf*.

G. Ob. MV. SAA. TBA.

118

Musical score for measures 118-121. The score is for five instruments: G, Ob, MV, SAA, and TBA. The key signature has two flats. The music features a melodic line in the G and Ob parts. Dynamics include *f* and *mf*.

G. Ob. MV. SAA. TBA.

122

Musical score for measures 122-125. The score is for five instruments: G, Ob, MV, SAA, and TBA. The key signature has two flats. The music features a melodic line in the G and Ob parts. Dynamics include *p* and *f*.

G. Ob. MV. SAA. TBA.

126

Musical score for measures 126-129. The score is for five instruments: G, Ob, MV, SAA, and TBA. The key signature has two flats. The music features a melodic line in the G and Ob parts. Dynamics include *f* and *mf*.

G. Ob. MV. SAA. TBA.

130

G
Ob.
MV
SAA
TBA

135

G
Ob.
MV
SAA
TBA

Sea Song

Miaia Denzler
21 April 2021

Musical score for measures 1 through 17. The score is written for Oboe, Bass, and Cello/Double Bass. Measure 1 includes a tempo marking of *♩ = 60*. Dynamic markings include *pp* and *mp*. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into systems: measures 1-4, 5-8, 9-12, 13-16, and 17.

Musical score for measures 19 through 33. The score is written for Oboe, Cello/Double Bass, and Violin. Measure 19 includes a dynamic marking of *pp*. Measure 31 includes a dynamic marking of *pp*. Measure 32 includes a dynamic marking of *pizz.*. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into systems: measures 19-24, 25-28, 29-32, and 33.

Appendix D

37

Ob. *mp*

Vla.

Cell.

Bass

41

Ob. *mf*

Vla.

Cell.

Bass

45

Ob. *f*

Vla.

Cell.

Bass

49

Ob.

Bass

53

Ob. *pp*

Bass *mp*

57

Ob. *pp*

Bass *mp*

61

Ob. *pp*

Bass *mp*

65

Ob.

Bass

Appendix E

Des-C-H-U-t-Es

Inspired by the music of Ann Southam

Maina Denzler
2 May 2021

Musical score for piano (Ph.) covering measures 16 to 31. The score is written in treble and bass clefs. Measure 16 starts with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The music features a melodic line in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. Measure 19 has a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. Measure 22 has a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. Measure 25 has a piano (*pp*) dynamic. Measure 28 has a piano (*pp*) dynamic. Measure 31 has a piano (*pp*) dynamic.

Musical score for piano (Piano) covering measures 1 to 13. The score is written in treble and bass clefs. Measure 1 starts with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. Measure 4 has a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measure 7 has a piano (*pp*) dynamic. Measure 10 has a piano (*pp*) dynamic. Measure 13 has a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic.

34

Pn.

pp

37

40

Pn.

ff

43

Pn.

pp

B) Interlude 1

47

Pn.

ff

50

Pn.

pp

53

55

58

Pn.

C

ff

pp

61

Pn.

p

64 *f*

Ph.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 64 and 65. It features a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The music consists of eighth-note patterns with slurs and accents. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is placed above the first measure.

67 *pp*

Ph.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 67 and 68. It features a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The music consists of eighth-note patterns with slurs and accents. A dynamic marking of *pp* (pianissimo) is placed above the first measure.

70 *pp*

Ph.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 70 and 71. It features a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The music consists of eighth-note patterns with slurs and accents. A dynamic marking of *pp* (pianissimo) is placed above the first measure.

73 *mf*

Ph.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 73 and 74. It features a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The music consists of eighth-note patterns with slurs and accents. A dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte) is placed above the first measure.

76 *pp*

Ph.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 76 and 77. It features a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The music consists of eighth-note patterns with slurs and accents. A dynamic marking of *pp* (pianissimo) is placed above the first measure.

79 *pp*

Ph.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 79 and 80. It features a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The music consists of eighth-note patterns with slurs and accents. A dynamic marking of *pp* (pianissimo) is placed above the first measure.

82 *mp*

Ph.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 82 and 83. It features a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The music consists of eighth-note patterns with slurs and accents. A dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano) is placed above the first measure.

85 *mf*

Ph.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 85 and 86. It features a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The music consists of eighth-note patterns with slurs and accents. A dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte) is placed above the first measure.

88 *pp*

Ph.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 88 and 89. It features a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The music consists of eighth-note patterns with slurs and accents. A dynamic marking of *pp* (pianissimo) is placed above the first measure.

91 *p*

Ph.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 91 and 92. It features a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The music consists of eighth-note patterns with slurs and accents. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is placed above the first measure.

94 Ph.

97 Ph. *pp*

100 Ph. *ff*

[D] Interlude 2

104 Ph. *ff*

107 Ph. *ff*

110 Ph.

112 Ph.

[E]

115 Ph. *pp*

118 Ph. *p*

121 Ph. *pp*

124 Ph.

127 *mp*

Ph.

130 *pp*

Ph.

133

Ph.

136 *mf*

Ph.

139 *pp*

Ph.

142

Ph.

145 *f*

Ph.

148 *pp*

Ph.

151

Ph.

154 *ff*

Ph.

157 *pp*

Ph.

F Interlude 3

Ph.

160 *ff*

Ph.

164 Ph.

167 Ph.

169 Ph.

172 Ph.

175 Ph.

178 Ph.

181 Ph.

184 Ph.

187 Ph.

190 Ph.

193 Ph.

196 Ph.

199

Ph.

202

Ph.

205

Ph.

208

Ph.

211

Ph.

214

Ph.

H Interlude 4

218 *ff*

Ph.

221

Ph.

224

Ph.

226

Ph.

229 **I** poco a poco
pp cresc. ...
pp Sempre

232

233 *p* poco a poco
cresc. ...
pp
P Sempre

241

244

247 poco a poco
mp pp cresc. ...
mp Sempre

250

253 *mf* poco a poco
cresc. ...
pp
mf Sempre

256

259

Pn.

262

Pn.

265

f > *pp*

f *Sempre*

Pn.

268

Pn.

271

ff

ff

Pn.

Maia Denzler

Trasformerò

Emotions in five movements

For string quartet

Maia Denzler, Trasformerò

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Appendix F

M. Denzler

Trasformerò

Emotions in five movements

For string quartet

- I. Rifuto
- II. Furia
- III. Conversazione
- IV. Tristemente
- V. Accetto

A note from the composer

Although there are a number of issues with examining the entirety of the human experience as a checklist of stages to go through, I have found that the emotions and coping mechanisms of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross' model of the Five Stages of Grief to be an effective way to organize my own feelings surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic. For this composition, I decided to explore each of these elements in a series of five movements, one each for denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.

The pitch material for each movement is derived from the harmonic series. When these notes are organized in order over the fundamental this represents the “natural” order of our lives, the “normal” which we are all hoping to go back to. The chaos the pandemic has thrown us all into is illustrated by each movement working through the harmonic series from top to bottom, beginning at C6. The theme or primary motive for each movement is derived from a set of pitches which, as we work through each movement and its corresponding emotion, brings us back down towards the fundamental and a sense of acceptance for our new situation, our new normal. These themes or motives in each movement also incorporate the pitches of previous movements to illustrate the interconnectedness of human emotions and the non-linearity of the experience.

While this composition explores my personal journey of adapting to life with Covid-19, I hope that it will also serve as a reminder to others that to feel deeply is a normal part of being human and that we need not feel alone in our emotions as we move forward together.

-Maia Denzler

Trasformerò

Emotions in five movements

Maia Denzler
30 November 2020

I. Rifuto

Adagietto espressivo $\text{♩} = 72$
Tempo rubato

Musical score for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello, measures 1-6. The score is in 4/4 time and features a tempo of Adagietto espressivo (72 bpm) with a rubato marking. The Violin I part begins with a non-vibrato note, followed by a series of notes with a *pppp* dynamic. The Violin II part has a *pp* dynamic. The Viola part has a *pp* dynamic. The Cello part has a *pp* dynamic. The score includes various dynamics such as *pppp*, *pp*, and *ppp*, and performance instructions like *non-vib.* and *Freely*.

Musical score for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello, measures 11-30. The score continues from the previous page. The Violin I part has a *pp* dynamic. The Violin II part has a *pp* dynamic. The Viola part has a *pp* dynamic. The Cello part has a *pp* dynamic. The score includes various dynamics such as *pp*, *ppp*, *mp*, and *f*, and performance instructions like *non-vib.*, *Freely*, *molto vib.*, and *normale*.

II. Furia

24

Vln. I *mf*

Vln. II *f*

Vla. *f*

Cell. *f*

normale

36

Vln. I *mf*

Vln. II *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Cell. *f*

Allegro agitato $\text{♩} = 160$

Violin I *ppp*

Violin II *ppp*

Viola *pp*

Cello *pp*

sul pont.

59

Vln. I *p*

Vln. II *pp*

Vla. *pp*

Cell. *pp*

9

Vln. I *p*

Vln. II *pp*

Vla. *pp*

Cell. *pp*

sul tasto

13

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Ccll.

normale → normale → sul pont. → sul pont. → *mf*

mf

17

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Ccll.

arco normale arco f

21

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Ccll.

sfp

f

24

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Ccll.

ff normale *ff*

ff

28

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Ccll.

ff

ff

32

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Ccll.

pizz. *p* sul tasto *p*

pizz. *p* pizz. *p*

36

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello.

40

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello.

44

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello.

48

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello.

51

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello.

III. Conversazione

Moderato $\text{♩} = 100$

Musical score for measures 1-4 of 'III. Conversazione'. The score is for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The tempo is Moderato (♩ = 100). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The music features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. Dynamics include *p* and *f*. There are accents and slurs throughout.

Musical score for measures 5-8 of 'III. Conversazione'. The score is for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The key signature has two flats. The time signature is 4/4. The music continues with the rhythmic pattern. Dynamics include *p* and *f*. There are accents and slurs throughout.

Musical score for measures 9-12 of 'III. Conversazione'. The score is for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The key signature has two flats. The time signature is 4/4. The music continues with the rhythmic pattern. Dynamics include *f* and *p*. There are accents and slurs throughout.

Musical score for measures 13-16 of 'III. Conversazione'. The score is for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The key signature has two flats. The time signature is 4/4. The music continues with the rhythmic pattern. Dynamics include *f* and *ff*. There are accents and slurs throughout.

Musical score for measures 17-20 of 'III. Conversazione'. The score is for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The key signature has two flats. The time signature is 4/4. The music continues with the rhythmic pattern. Dynamics include *p* and *mf*. There are accents and slurs throughout.

Musical score for measures 21-24 of 'III. Conversazione'. The score is for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The key signature has two flats. The time signature is 4/4. The music continues with the rhythmic pattern. Dynamics include *f*, *mf*, and *p*. There are accents and slurs throughout.

25

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello.

29

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello.

31

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello.

35

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello.

39

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello.

43

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello.

IV. Tristemente

Lento maestoso $\text{♩} = 54$

Musical score for measures 1-4. The score is for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The tempo is Lento maestoso (♩ = 54). The dynamics are *pp* (pianissimo) for all instruments. The Violin I part is marked *non-vib.* (non-vibrato). The Viola part is marked *pp* and *non-vib.* The Cello part is marked *pp* and *non-vib.*

Musical score for measures 5-8. The score is for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The dynamics are *normale* (normal) for all instruments. The Violin I part is marked *non-vib.* The Viola part is marked *normale*.

Musical score for measures 9-12. The score is for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The dynamics are *p* (piano) for all instruments. The Violin I part is marked *normale*. The Viola part is marked *non-vib.* and *p*. The Cello part is marked *p*.

Musical score for measures 13-16. The score is for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The dynamics are *mf* (mezzo-forte) for all instruments. The Violin I part is marked *non-vib.* and *mf*. The Violin II part is marked *normale* and *non-vib.* The Viola part is marked *normale* and *non-vib.* The Cello part is marked *mf*.

Musical score for measures 17-20. The score is for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The dynamics are *pp* (pianissimo) for all instruments. The Violin I part is marked *pp*. The Violin II part is marked *pp*. The Viola part is marked *pp* and *molto vib.* (molto vibrato). The Cello part is marked *pp*.

Musical score for measures 21-24. The score is for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The dynamics are *p* (piano) for all instruments. The Violin I part is marked *p*. The Violin II part is marked *p*. The Viola part is marked *p*. The Cello part is marked *p*.

V. Accetto

Adagio espressivo $\text{♩} = 75$
Tempo rubato

Musical score for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello, measures 25-30. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat. The dynamics are marked as *normale* and *p*. The Violin I part has a *normale* dynamic, while the Violin II, Viola, and Cello parts have a *p* dynamic. The Viola and Cello parts also include a *non-vib.* marking.

Musical score for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello, measures 31-36. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat. The dynamics are marked as *ppp* and *normale*. The Violin I and Violin II parts have a *ppp* dynamic, while the Viola and Cello parts have a *normale* dynamic. The Viola and Cello parts also include a *non-vib.* marking.

Musical score for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello, measures 37-42. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat. The dynamics are marked as *ppp*. The Violin I, Violin II, and Viola parts have a *ppp* dynamic, while the Cello part has a *pp* dynamic. The Viola and Cello parts also include a *non-vib.* marking.

Musical score for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello, measures 43-48. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat. The dynamics are marked as *ppp* and *pp*. The Violin I and Violin II parts have a *ppp* dynamic, while the Viola and Cello parts have a *pp* dynamic. The Viola and Cello parts also include a *non-vib.* marking.

7

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello.

p
mp
pp

11

Allegro $\text{♩} = 120$

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello.

mp
mp

15

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello.

mp
mp

19

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello.

f
f
f
f

23

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello.

f
f
f
f

26

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello.

mf
mf
mf
mf

30

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.

mf

31

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.

mf

38

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.

p

42

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.

mf

molto vib.

f

46

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.

f

50

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cell.

mf

mf

normale

f

54

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello.

58

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello.

62

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello.

66

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cello.

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