COMPOSERS’ FORUM: COMPOSERS AT THE PIANO

Hyun-Kyung Lee, Director

Thursday, May 14, 2020 at 7 p.m.
Program Notes

Nostalgic Scenes — Andrew Porter
A short, simple, and gentle piece for piano, intended to evoke the feeling of daydreaming.

— A.P.

Flight To Heaven — Mikaelia Erwin
This piece was made to depict this idea of this character, going to bed one night and having a dream about a trip from earth to heaven, and back to earth by the end of the piece. Measures 1-9 depict the flight from earth to the sky alone. Measures 8&9 depict the end of the travel from earth to the sky. Measures 10-24 depict the flight throughout space and the character is in awe as he soars past all of the planets that he has only ever heard about, but never seen, and also the moon, the sun, and the stars (which there is a twinkling sound of high notes in measure 17 representing the stars). Notice that the same theme from measures 8 & 9 returns in measures 22, 23, and the beginning of 24 indicating the end of the journey through space. The second half of measure 24 depicts the character’s journey into the third heaven, and the pulsing rhythm of the chords in measures 24 and 25 depict the heart of the character racing with excitement because of what he has seen, and because of what he is about to see. The angels welcome him into the pearly gates at measure 28, and the character is in awe at the different types of angels, colors, riches, and music that are not like anything he has experienced or earth or even in space. He is just about to see the throne of the One who reigns in this beautiful heaven, but suddenly finds himself falling out of heaven, and back into space at the second half of measure 34. Then he falls through space from measure 35 to 37 (Notice how one of the themes from space returns). Finally, he reaches earth in measure 38, a little sad because he is sorry that he couldn’t stay forever, yet grateful for everything he has experienced, and knowing he’ll never be the same. Notice that the first way he left earth in measures 1-9 is different from how he came back in measures 38-46 as the same idea is presented, but the chords are played differently.

— M.E

The Magic Wand — Tariq Allen
The Magic Wand originally named the one who wanders starts in F minor and uses the magical key of F-sharp major as the mysterious fog that sets the tone for this piece. Quartal harmony is used to show quick movement.

— T.A.
Without Much — Tiger West

In a system contingent on the buying of always more things, what is it to create one’s own life without much.

— T.W.

Factory Chase — Theodore D’Anna

If there was a visual context, this music would accompany the production process in a factory. A product travels across a conveyor belt through presses, molds and other machinery.

— T.D.

Off the Chain — Gidong Kim

“Free yourself, like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the snare of the fowler.”

— Proverbs 6:5

I wanted to express that my limits are broken only by myself.

— G.K.

We Move — Chantal Scott

This piece is called We Move because time does not stop for anyone or anything. Things may not always go as we plan for them to, but we move regardless. Quarantine has shifted my perspective and, perhaps, given me the most inspiration I have had for a long time. If all you have is time, how much do you need?

— C.S.

Amager — Laura Boland

It was late January when I found myself wandering the grey islands of Denmark. I discovered an inviting landscape; a balanced lifestyle and a culture rich in history and stories. Architecturally stunning, Copenhagen is a city where the streets and the people are warm and charming. I rented a tiny room in Amager; a little island situated in the south. On my daily walks, I was comforted by a calming presence. It was as if I’d always been there; a familiar world that I needed to hold onto. The awareness of the people, their elevated futuristic perspectives and consciousness was inspiring and awakening. It made for a healthy climate. I returned to Brooklyn and floated through my days. I thought of my little Amager retreat often. The opening passages of my composition effortlessly began to take shape. The arc of the melodies and overall aesthetic emulated the feel of those drizzly days; a lightness mixed with stillness; a painting of the old and the new.

Suddenly, an unexpected disruption and alarming confusion interrupted life as we knew it on our planet. The dreamy world immediately dissipated and seemed out of reach. I became paralyzed internally and externally. I was now floating on a roller coaster and was forced to embrace the unknown and accept uncertainty. Writer’s block halted my world, but soon I began to find solace and an escape. As I sat at my piano with headphones on, I could dream of a new world that didn’t yet exist as I was forced to let go of our disappearing one. This composition finished itself, little by little. Vignettes formed; some fluid with much sustain; representing the whimsical trance. These moments are challenged with pulsating heartbeats; rhythms that build momentum; mirroring the uncertainty and trauma in our days. The story comes to a full circle representing life and this dream interwoven into our current storm.

— L.B.

Song Without Words — Artur Gomes Telxeira.

An exercise on creating an instrumental song, with a melody that could be easily sung.

Translating human singing to the piano was one of the goals of this piece.

— A.G.T