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Largo for Strings: An Original Composition

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LARGO FOR STRINGS: AN ORIGINAL COMPOSITION

By

Rae Marie Donaldson

Honors Capstone Project

Submitted to the Faculty of

Olivet Nazarene University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

GRADUATION WITH UNIVERSITY HONORS

May 2012

BACHELOR OF ARTS

in

MUSIC

<u>Karen Ball</u> Capstone Project Advisor (printed)	<u>Dr. Karen Ball</u> Signature	<u>3-19-2012</u> Date
<u>Sue E. Williams</u> Honors Council Chair (printed)	<u>Sue E. Williams</u> Signature	<u>4-12-2012</u> Date
<u>Sara E. Spruce</u> Honors Council Member (printed)	<u>Sara Spruce</u> Signature	<u>4-20-12</u> Date

To those who are the music of my life, who sing the same tune that my heart does
and have never given up: my dear friends and family.

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Thanks must first and foremost go to my faculty mentor, one of the greatest Christian women that I have ever had the privilege of knowing, Dr. Karen Ball. Without her patient guidance this project would not have ever gotten off the ground. I am indebted to the performers who generously gave of their time and musicianship to make this performance come alive: Chantalle Falconer, Ann Kincaid, Amanda Luby, and Ben Miller. I would like to thank the honors department for their generous financial support which made this project a possibility. Lastly, my thanks goes to Dr. Neal Woodruff and Dr. Timothy Nelson of the Music Department at Olivet Nazarene University who extended the gift of their time and professional opinions through their evaluations.

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ABSTRACT

The string quartet genre was begun by Haydn during the latter half of the 1700's. *Largo for Strings* is a work composed for string quartet that takes typical aspects of the genre and marries them to newer concepts of sound and freer harmonic direction. The project was composed throughout the course of a year and a half, during which the composer studied and worked under the supervision of Dr. Karen Ball. The culmination of the project was the performance of the piece in February of 2012. The work is a single movement ABA piece that makes use of several recurring motifs, especially the interval of a sixth.

KEY WORDS: Haydn, string quartet, composition, largo, equal-voicing

LARGO FOR STRINGS: INTRODUCTION

Largo for Strings is an original composition with typical string quartet instrumentation: two violins, one viola, and one cello. This composition mimics the quartet genre in the equal-voicing of the melody and harmonies, allowing each part to hold the melodic line rather than isolating melody to typical melodic instruments such as the violin. This movement evolved into a standalone work although it was originally intended to be the middle movement within a longer set of works. The title "Largo" came from the original idea of writing a multi-movement work because the middle movements are generally slower. Pieces with slow tempi, or largo, tend to have contrapuntal movement between the voices and a higher degree of ornamentation. As the piece began to grow into being a work in and of itself, I decided to keep the title because the largo nature of the piece had not changed despite its isolation as a single work movement.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The string quartet has been used in a variety of forms throughout history. Haydn composed sixty-eight string quartets during his lifetime and is responsible for helping this genre of music become what we know it as today (Wright 410). It was originally used in the private setting such as the parlor of a home (402). During the latter half of the 1700's, Haydn changed the string quartet genre into one where each voice in the quartet was equally voiced. This was done by taking the trio sonata instrumentation (two treble instruments and one to two voices on the basso continuo) (280) and adding to it the viola voice and a more involved cello part which served as the basso continuo (402). Instead of relying on the use of dramatic elements like those found in symphonic works, Haydn's string quartets focus more on developing motives and express them through each of the four voices of the quartet (411). This genre has been transported to the less intimate setting of the concert hall from its beginnings in upper class salons. The intimacy of the voicing however has been persevered in that the music continues to only have one player per part (402).

The string quartet started out as a four movement genre. The first and fourth movements were in sonata form, similar to the symphony. The second movement was a theme and variations. The third movement tended to be the dance movement (Wright 403). Beethoven, a student of Haydn's, composed several string quartets. His later works show his unique creative genius with this form. Instead of the quartet containing four movements, his B-flat quartet has six movements, each with a very distinct character (467).

Although the string quartet reached its full maturity in form and instrumentation in the 1700's, it still continues to be widely used as a mode of expression for composers. Notable pieces have been written for string quartets in the last century including works by Shostakovich, Webern, Prokofiev, Schoenberg, Bartok, and Crawford-Seeger. These works are certainly not in the style the string quartet genre began with and yet they are intriguing works, modern for their day. There are numerous benefits to composing in older genres and styles where multiple skills can be developed simultaneously during imitation (Stravinsky in Cope, 11). Despite the fact that numerous genres and styles are being created daily, one can make use of older genres and styles as a platform for exploring new melodic, harmonic, textural, and rhythmic ideas.

Most successful or convincing works have several key factors in common. Each contains elements of rhythm (the organization of time), melody (musical lines with pitched shape and contour), and harmony (the filled-out version of the melody). Each of these is critical to the development of any composition. Likewise, every composition has moments of tension and relaxation, the music leading to a point of arrival and then resolving with a cadence. The composition progresses from focal point to focal point, giving intentional meaning to the motivic development. Rhythm, melody, and harmony all contribute in various ways to creating tension and relaxation within the music, and subsequently, arrival points and resolutions.

Counterpoint provides a basic outline of musical "law", where multiple linear lines converge point against point. Our ears are accustomed to certain sounds in

music. When that preconceived musical notion is violated we become aware that something within the music is "incorrect". More often than not, there has been a deviation from traditional counterpoint and common practice traditional harmonic theory. Counterpoint and the rules of harmonic progression are not meant to be kept without any regard to musical creativity. Bach himself was a culprit of breaking rules for the sake of the music. Theory systems are to be viewed as outlines for creating traditional musical structure instead of sets of steadfast rules. Often times, especially in the past two centuries, composers have intentionally diverged from this outline with the express intention of causing the listener to question what they are hearing, thereby capturing their full attention.

In traditional common practice music, the two primary tonal centers are tonic (the first note of the scale) and dominant (the fifth note of the scale). These two scale degrees and the chords based off them create the greatest sense of finality in music, providing the frame work for cadences. The other scale degrees and the chords based off of them are extremely active and create high levels of tension, or movement, in the music. By using secondary and altered chords, the composer can create the highest level of harmonic tension because these chords are foreign to the key. Voice leading dictates that certain notes within the chords must move according to their tendencies. In a seventh chord the 7th must resolve down by step, the seventh scale degree must resolve up to tonic, etc. Voice leading also requires that most movement within the different voices in an ensemble be stepwise in the opposite direction of the bass line's movement. There is a hierarchy when doubling notes in a chord. The root should be doubled first, then the 5rd, and last of all the 3rd.

Intervals of an octave or a fifth that are played parallel to one another are to be avoided as well as any unresolved dissonant intervals (tritones, etc.).

The compositional process can be conceptualized beforehand in many different ways. Cope submits that creating an overview of the work before you compose any part of it is one of the best ways to go about pre-compositional conceptualization. He suggests sketching what the piece will look like. His sketches are parallel bar-lines with sections of varying thickness, length, and angle. This sketch should include something to represent the dynamics of the piece, the climax, the texture, and anything else that would be significant to this structural shape of this work. Doing the seemingly childish task of doodling at the forefront of the composing process keeps the composer's writing on track and gives it an overall purpose which will help weed out erroneous ideas later on. (Cope 1-2)

Motive development should be the goal to which all other creative elements of the work become subservient. Often composers create pieces full of copious amounts of weak musical ideas because no single motive has ever been fully developed and exploited. David Cope advocates the value of developing very few ideas and only incorporating a new idea when the music demands one (4). Composers are tempted to include many new ideas in their piece simply because they are good musical motives. These only interrupt the music and should instead be kept in a notepad for times when musical creativity is running dry (3).

Cope offers various methods of developing motives into larger melodies. Motives can be transposed or can be inverted according to their interval size. They can be put in retrograde or into inverted retrograde. Any combination of these four

elements may be used to create melodic extension. Other ways variety and extension can be attained are through the addition of notes: putting in passing tones between leaps in the melody or elongating the beginning, middle, or end of the motive with added notes. Taking notes away can also be effective, skeletonizing the motive. The composer can alter the rhythm of the motif by elongation, repetition, or omission of rhythmic patterns. Likewise, they might alter the harmonic structure within the melody by augmenting or diminishing the intervals used. (28-9)

Revising music is an integral part of the process of composition. It is easy for the composer to become stone-eared or too familiar with their own work. Objectivity can be better achieved through a short break from the work, allowing someone else to listen to it, or by reading through the piece with a metronome to begin to hear the work in a concrete time (Cope 4, 11). Erasing measures is as important as writing measures and ensures that each phrase is directional, contributing to the whole, rather than being stagnant or frivolous (4).

The craft of composing is very similar in demand to that of learning an instrument. Practicing every day is critical (Cope 4). It is best to find a location and materials that produce the highest level of creativity. This can be done by sketching music for ten minutes a day for one week using a variety of locations and materials (piano, outside setting, computer, manuscript paper) and noting which produces the best results. Musical ideas that will not be presently needed can be kept in a sketchbook. A good exercise is to sort these sketchbook ideas into groups by similarity and create an overview of a work that employs one of the groups. Then

the composer can evaluate what links these ideas together. As with any other craft, the composer's dedication to practice is pivotal to his art. (11)

Good musicians listen to music almost as much as they play it, thereby developing the ability to imitate what already has been aurally stated but in a new and unique way. As the composer's ability and natural ear grow, it becomes easier to create a physical sound to embody that which had only been imagined beforehand. Cope offers his opinion on the value of listening: "Listening to all types of music represents one of the most important ways to learn about orchestration and form. Not only does such listening help to educate in ways no book can, but it also broadens the musical perspective of composers" (8). It is also wise to listen while reading along with the score. This develops sight reading skills, identification of textural and form techniques, instrumental sounding combinations, and many other skills useful to the composer (8).

DESCRIPTION OF COMPOSITION

Largo for Strings opens with a cello solo, containing a motif that will later be developed by each of the instruments in the quartet, theme A. The violin joins in measure 2, echoing the cello with the same pattern. The motif in the starting key of F, contains a leap of a major 6th from C to A, a descending leap of a 3rd to F, and a resolution of an ascending major 2nd to G. Because the pattern ends on the second scale degree it allows for future movement in the melodic line. The cello and first violin continue as a duet until the resolution in m. 5, a perfect cadence from a C chord (implied by the E and G) to the tonic, F.

In m. 6 the other instruments join in a chromatic descending sequence that leads to a solo line in the violin. This solo develops the original theme by adding and excluding notes from the starting theme but by using the original skeleton, C to A to G. This theme, theme B, moves the harmonic support from F major to C minor by beat 3 in m. 9. The Eb/D# serves as a pivot point between C minor and B mixolydian because it is the third scale degree in both keys. Theme A, the theme stated at the opening of the work, is restated in the first and second violin lines but centered around B rather than F. Although this restatement of theme A utilizes different intervals and starts on a different scale degree, it retains the same basic structure as the one found in the opening cello line. The tonal center only stays in B mixolydian for two beats but it serves an important role in getting the piece to the new tonality of Eb, where the piece remains for m. 10-11. Here the theme is again echoed in the first and second violin lines. Throughout this transition from C minor to B mixolydian to Eb, the viola and cello restate theme B underneath the polyvoice

texture in the higher instrumental lines. It is not until the end of m. 11 that the melodic line of theme B leads the tonality through a change to Db. Measure 12 functions as a short transition that not only allows the piece to shift to back to F but also creates the climax of harmonic tension.

Dramatic writing makes use of both tension and relaxation although often a composer will intentionally focus on using a single aspect to draw out a predictable reaction from the audience. Without tension, there would be nothing to motivate the sound and it would become stagnant. Without relaxation, the listener would always be in a state of unease. Measures 9-12 offer little in the way of relaxation because the chords used are highly active. The ever-changing tonal center also creates tension and gives motivation to the music. Measures 13-17 reinstates the key of F, helping establish it again as the tonic key. This section allows for a much needed sense of relaxation. Starting in m. 14 a chorale begins with the melody in the viola and then is passed to the first violin. Theme A is briefly hinted by the cello in m. 17 with the ascending leap of 6th and a descending leap of a 4th.

The use of a major-seven chord in first inversion on tonic creates a softer tense of tension than the ever changing tonality found earlier. Because the major-seven chord is an active chord and because F is the home chord of this key, the use of an FM⁷ allows for the music to still have direction but puts the listener at ease.

This transitions the piece into the primary meat of the piece, theme C-the first "chorus", if you will, after 17 measures of "verses." The open voicing in this section allows the music to merely float, propelled only by the ornamentation of violin on the falling melodic line. There is little dissonance except for between the

first and second violin on beat 5 of m. 19, but even this serves more to transpose the melody a major second higher than to add tension. Unlike the harmonic movement in the earlier measures, the structure of this theme is very simple, comprising of only tonic and dominant, without much shifting between the two. A suspension between tonic and the super-dominant affords the melody one last lilt before resolving. Throughout this section the cello begins the harmonic support by starting on the third of the chord. By using the A, the third of the F chord in the bass line, the tonality of the piece is open because it lacks the normal root in the bass. This is similar to the pattern seen in m. 17 in the cello line, where the first inversion of the chord creates more of a question than a definitive statement.

A short transition is seen from m. 24-25 with both melodic and rhythmic interplay between the cello and second violin, utilizing theme A from the opening cello solo. Here the original triplet pattern is expanded to a similar shape but instead uses sixteenth notes. Measure 26 reintroduces an extended version of theme A, played by the second violin but this time played using the A melodic minor scale. The theme is expanded by varying the interval and rhythm slightly as the melody is passed between the viola and first violin. Starting in m. 30, the theme is repeated in the viola and second violin, passing from voice to voice four different times between m. 31-34 with the final note of the melody landing with the first violin. This is an exaggeration of the string quartet genre trait to pass the melody freely back and forth. This happens often earlier in the work but perhaps not as liberally as it does in these six measures.

A violin cadenza leads into the second major section of the piece. In a typical binary form, there are two main sections. Both hold their own themes although typically the second section will adapt themes from the first in a way that still creates an obvious contrast from the first. In binary form, there is a return to the original opening section at the close of the piece.

The B section of *Largo* uses less structured chords but instead approaches the task of establishing tonal context by allowing waves of notes to wash over the audience. By sharing the accompaniment between two instruments and splitting groups of sextuplets, the first and second violin are confronted with the challenge of replicating even parts of an ascending melodic line that mimics many of Debussy's works for piano. The melody is based around A but utilizes leaps of tritones and several pieces of the minor version of theme A, previously heard in m. 26. Measures 46-47 introduce the primary structure of the melody for this section. That same structure is elongated in m. 49-52 with a tag attached on to give the melodic line closure. Due to the tessitura of the cello in this line, the melody appears somewhat harsh and very brilliant.

Measures 56-57 creates a brief interlude and introduces the violin holding the melody. The voicing of the melody in the violin puts it in the lower to middle tessitura of the instrument which provides the recapitulation of the melodic line with a much warmer and dark tone. The melody is repeated after which the cello joins for a last tag which begins on the fifth beat of m. 67. The texture lightens leading into m. 71, allowing the silence needed to transition to different material.

Starting in measure 73 there is a return to the A section of the piece which reinforces the binary nature of the work. Here the tonal center is Db, a major third lower than the original theme in m. 14 but with a slightly different voicing. This change to a lower key creates a darker, richer color than the primary theme due partially to different strings being open on the instruments which causes different overtones to be muted. This appropriately leads the piece to a close which, in keeping with the ever shifting nature of this work, ends with the cello line not on the root of the chord but the fifth, leaving the listener with a slight sense of unease.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

I was pleased with the final outcome of the piece, the culmination of about a year and a half of composing. The process that this project took afforded me countless opportunities to edit the piece and revise it weekly. I studied privately with Dr. Ball during one of the semesters over which my research and composing took place. This gave me direct feedback and the chance to make revisions to the ideas before they were fleshed out into being full segments of the piece. Once the rehearsal process began many other revisions followed, which included the exclusion of the double bass part which, at the time, was underdeveloped and musically unnecessary. The ability to have feedback from the performers was greatly helpful in leading me to a better understanding of the individual instrument's capabilities. Numerous times their suggestions helped smooth out problematic passages.

The beautiful thing about composing is that the composer is never technically done. Many composers go on to edit their works, expanding them in length or improving the orchestration. I have enjoyed working in the string quartet genre and the flexibility of musical line demanded by that style. However, I would love to expand the orchestration at some point to that of a full symphonic orchestra, keeping the same idea of equal voicing. This would offer new challenges in regard to balance and texture but would be as rewarding as this initial process has been. I have submitted my piece to a national composer's competition and will continue to make revisions to it as is necessary.

I was extremely happy with the outcome of this project as a whole. I was able to deal with a completely different realm of music than I had been able to before. My concentration is trumpet. Writing music made me more aware of the ink on the page of compositions I myself was playing. I began to process it as the composer would have when writing and it affected my overall interpretation of the music. I began to realize that much of what I had taken for granted in the way of tempo, dynamics, and articulation, had been written very intentionally by the composer.

The opportunity to write music is a freeing event. It connects a person to the heart of the creation of music unlike being a performer does. It was thrilling to be able to paint lines of music however I desired to paint them, without hindrance of some higher power objecting to my interpretation. I got to be that "higher power" and had the privilege of hands-on experience. Through this project, I gained a new appreciation for the detail within other composers' works and for the creative process as a whole. Should the opportunity arise to do this again, I would jump at the chance.

The funding provided by the department allowed me to hear local professional ensembles such as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Being exposed to such high quality groups gave me the opportunity to watch some of the best string players in the world and helped me understand those instruments better as I composed for them. The CSO performs a wide variety of musical styles and I was exposed to several different composers in the concerts that I had the chance to attend. This helped broaden my own musical style to include several more

traditional ideas. I'm also grateful for the funding in that it allowed me to offer my performers a monetary thank-you for their hard work.

EVALUATION BY JURORS

***Largo for Strings*; composed by Rae Marie Donaldson**

Premiered Feb. 27, 2012, Composers of Olivet Concert

Evaluated by Karen Ball, DMA

Largo for Strings was composed by Olivet Nazarene University student Rae Marie Donaldson as her capstone project for the ONU Honors program. I was her project advisor, and worked closely with her during the creative process. The work was originally intended to have multiple movements as in traditional string quartet form, with the *Largo* functioning as the second movement. The work deviated from traditional form with regards to second movements of this genre in that there is a contrasting middle section. Second movements typically were unified in musical content, either in two part form or variation form. The piece also originally had a double bass part, which was later omitted. *Largo* functions well as a stand-alone piece in ABA form, or as a slow movement of a larger contemporary work.

Largo for Strings is written from a contemporary perspective rather than a classical one with regards to phrasing, shifting tonality, and overall structure. Unlike classical models, the phrase structure is irregular, and musical ideas are “spun out” rather than conforming to the rigid protocol of four measure phrases and functional harmonies. Pieces of this type focus on continual development of motive, whether rhythmic or melodic, and the intervallic content is of prime importance. Rae Marie utilizes a triplet motive extensively throughout the piece, subjecting it to repetition, variation, augmentation, and transposition. The motive consists of an ascending 6th, a descending 3rd, ending on an ascending 2nd. The shape of this

musical idea remains consistent, and is even evident in other accompanying figures, giving the piece a wistful and compelling character. The piece contains two obvious cadences that end on the fifth of the chord rather than the root. The last chord of the piece also ends on the fifth. Although prepared successfully to clearly reveal a point of arrival in these important places, the use of the fifth in the bass reveals the questioning and unresolved character of the entire piece, infusing it with an almost melancholy tone throughout. One is left with a lack of definitive closure, providing prime opportunity for an *attacca* into a succeeding movement should Rae Marie choose to continue the work.

Largo for Strings is written in a tonal framework, but in a non-traditional sense. Harmonies are free to move and fluctuate without the restraint of functional chord progressions that must follow certain dictates of movement and resolution. Rhythms are fluid and in a constant state of flux, with all parts moving for the most part independently in both A sections. The piece is very linear. An ostinato effect is established in the contrasting middle section. Chromatic alterations in the broken chords, played in split fashion between two instruments, serve as accompaniment to the long-lined expressive melody carried by the cello and then the first violin. Interestingly, this melodic line, though different, still retains the uplift of an ascending interval seen in the initial motive introduced at the beginning of the piece.

Although the reoccurring motives in *Largo for Strings* can at times be redundant, they never-the-less are compelling and well developed. When compared to other contemporary pieces of this genre, the overall expressive range is a bit limited. Yet, it offers an appealing quality that draws the listener in. As experience

is gained, the writing will become clearer and more distilled in the sense of direction and intentionality. The score also needs a bit of refining with more expressive markings, tempo markings, and dynamics. This piece is an incredible first attempt, especially with a genre that is particularly difficult to master successfully. Rae Marie is to be commended for a job well done.

***Largo*; composed by RaeMarie Donaldson**

Premiered 27 Feb 2012

Evaluated by Neal Woodruff, DMA

Largo is an original musical composition by Olivet Nazarene University student RaeMarie Donaldson. This piece was conceived and developed under the instruction of Dr. Karen Ball, and premiered at the ONU student composition recital by student musicians. The following evaluation is written on behalf and at the request of RaeMarie Donaldson in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Capstone Project of the ONU Honors Program.

Largo was originally conceived as a present-day exploration of the string quartet genre. Exemplary forms of the multi-movement string quartet are the compositions of notable composers such as Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. The first and final movements are typically cast in sonata form (ABA) at a relatively quick tempo (Andante, Allegretto, Allegro, Vivace), usually in the tonic key. The second movement often utilizes Theme and Variation form at a contrasting, slower tempo (Grave, Largo, Adagio), frequently in the subdominant key. The third movement often adheres to a common dance form, such as Minuet and Trio, and is often in the tonic key.

Ms. Donaldson's single-movement composition presents an intersection of a variety of the standard elements typically distributed among the movements of the model string quartet. In addition to the standard two violins, viola, and 'cello, *Largo* includes the double bass. The bass is not an "equal" voice of the ensemble, instead functioning as a continuo instrument. This perhaps reflects a return to the *trio sonata* practice of multiple continuo instruments with fewer independent melodic lines. While the continuo pattern is often accomplished by the pairing of viola and 'cello, utilization of the bass offers the 'cello more flexibility to explore and elucidate upon the melodic figures presented elsewhere.

Largo utilizes the sonata form typical of the framing movements, but is placed within a tempo conventional for the second movement. The melodic and harmonic content also reflect elements of a multi-movement concept. During the framing sections the melody moves at a relatively quick pace within a largely contrapuntal melodic framework. The melody broadens greatly during the B section, suggestive of the tempo and mood changes of the various movements. Specifically, the ostinato of the B section is evocative of the typical practice of increased rhythmic motion during slower movements.

The archetypal musical key relationship is tonic (I) to dominant (V), but during the Romantic era expanded to include keys related by the interval of a third. *Largo* employs third relationships (F-Ab; F-Db), including the relationship of the theme to its return. However, it also makes specific use of the tonal axis of tonic (I) to subdominant (IV) (F-Bb; Gb-Db), typical of the relationship between the first and

second movements of a string quartet, including the movement of A to B, and the final cadence.

At first blush the phrase structure departs from the customary four-measure phrase, appropriated by both classical and contemporary musical forms. This departure seems to be guided by the development of the four-note motive presented during the introduction: ascending leap- usually of a sixth, followed by descending leap of a third, completed by an ascending step. The first half of the motive is presented in various stages throughout the piece, pre-figured in the introduction, and filled in and developed as an ostinato figure in the bi-part B section. However, it is perhaps telling that the return of the main theme is eight measures long, and the coda reuses four of the same measures, "tipping its hat" to classical formal structure.

Largo is an intriguing present-day look at the constituent elements of the traditional string quartet genre. This single-movement composition is an amalgam of traits conventionally found in a multi-movement form, attempting to condense the major components of several movements into a unified entity. It includes traditional content as well as expanded harmonic and structural elements, reflecting an intentional extension of the formal content. As such it serves quite well as a Capstone project for the Honors Program.

Largo for Strings

By

Rae Marie Donaldson

A Review of Its First Performance

Monday February 27, 2012

**Timothy Nelson, D. Mus.
Reviewer**

Rae Marie Donaldson is to be commended for hard work composing *Largo for Strings* which had its premiere at the 2012 Composers of Olivet concert on February 27, 2012. Her desire with this piece was to use the genre of a string quartet to provide an opportunity for string players to play lines that explored the salient features of the ranges of the respective instruments. The work is written for two violins, viola, 'cello and double bass. The work was performed as a chamber work without a conductor. Unfortunately, the double bass part was missing during the performance. The work was sufficiently prepared and performed by the remaining instrumentalists. Because of the atypical lack of doubling of cello and bass lines, the presence of the bass line was noticeable to the reviewer watching the score.

The form of the work is largely determined by the texture of the sections. Section one opens with a solo cello line followed by a violin line that later incorporates the other instruments into the texture. The texture is complex with disjunct lines, non-traditional rhythmic note patterns, and unclear points of closure are not prescribed or predictable. While the intent of the composer was to explore possibilities for each instrument, the writing seems to diffuse some melodic and harmonic as it moved from one chord to another with seemingly random voice leading.

Between the first and second sections a violin recitative is used as a transition to the new material. The second section of the piece is faster and includes broken chords/lines divided between the violins with a melodic line beginning in the cello, moving to other voices and growing into instrumentation without a double bass part. The melody is doubled an octave higher and lower than the faster voices, creating an interesting and remarkable effect.

As in many works which reflect an ABA form, the return of A at measure 71 is not an exact repeat of the opening section, but returns to the same texture as the opening. It has greater harmonic clarity and the texture is less dense. Tonally, the work is free, but clearly not atonal. Consistent with her interest in writing lines for the uniqueness of each instrument, the lines have been written using traditional harmonic implication, but instead with disjunct lines. Interestingly, the work, while not in a particularly defined key, ends on a D-flat major chord.

Overall, the work needs some editing. A tempo marking and dynamic markings are missing from the score. This reviewer is wondering if this movement is planned to be a middle movement or a larger work or if it is a stand-alone work. Rae Marie is to be commended for her hard work, insight and creativity into this very unique and interesting work.

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APPENDIX B: COMPOSERS CONCERT PROGRAM

Composers of Olivet Concert

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7:00 p.m.
Monday, February 27, 2012
Kresge Auditorium
Larsen Fine Arts Center

PROGRAM

Invocation		
Fiddler's Revenge	String Ensemble Percussion Ensemble Prof. Freddie Franken, guitar ◆◆◆◆◆	Ben Cherney
Dance of Temptation	Dr. Karen Ball, piano Dr. Gerald Anderson, piano ◆◆◆◆◆	Zachary Kohlmeier
Perpetual Midnight	Percussion Ensemble ◆◆◆◆◆	Zachary Kohlmeier
The Seven Deadly Sins; Pride	Dr. Karen Ball, piano ◆◆◆◆◆	Seth Lowery
Tango to the Death	Chantalle Falconer, violin Ann Kincaid, violin Dr. Karen Ball, piano Chris Field, percussion ◆◆◆◆◆	Zach Kohlmeier

Procession Seth Lowery

Castle on a Hill Kyrstin Stevens
 Seth Lowery, trumpet
 Adam Weeks, trumpet
 Ian Matthews, trombone
 Paul Matthews, tuba
 ♦♦♦♦♦

Largo for Strings RaeMarie Donaldson
 Chantalle Falconer, violin
 Ann Kincaid, violin
 Amanda Luby, viola
 Benjamin Miller, 'cello
 ♦♦♦♦♦

Mountain Streams Kyrstin Stephens
 Andrea Richardson, piano
 ♦♦♦♦♦

Silent Night arr. Ben Cherney

My Father's World arr. Chantelle Chamberlain

Easter Kyrstin Stephens
 Concert Singers
 ♦♦♦♦♦

The Air Chantelle Chamberlain
 Rachel Von Arb, flute
 Joy Matthews, oboe
 Ethan McCallister, bassoon
 ♦♦♦♦♦

Ancient Grove Kyrstin Stevens

Katie Gajewski, flute
 Katelyn Dunkman, oboe
 Elise Payne, clarinet
 Ethan McCallister, bassoon
 Kyle Miller, horn
 ♦♦♦♦♦

Deicidal Platypi Zachary Kohlmeier

Montgomery's Escapade Zachary Kohlmeier
 Andrea Richardson, piano
 ♦♦♦♦♦

Reflections Josh Ring
 Sam Stauffer, euphonium
 Josh Ring, piano
 ♦♦♦♦♦

Pensée Josh Ring
 Ian Matthews, trombone
 Cymone Wilder, trombone
 Mike Speer, trombone
 Josh Ring, trombone
 ♦♦♦♦♦

Gypsy Dance Chantelle Chamberlain
 Chantalle Falconer, violin
 Dr. Gerald Anderson, piano
 ♦♦♦♦♦

Ruins in the Desert

Amanda Luby, violin
Benjamin Miller, 'cello

♦♦♦♦♦

Kyrstin Stevens

The Smile

Chantelle Chamberlain
Chantelle Chamberlain, piano

♦♦♦♦♦

Carpe Diem

Zachary Kohlmeier
Christine Caven, mezzo-soprano
Gwen Holmes, alto
Caleb Carr, tenor
Zachary Kohlmeier, baritone
Elizabeth Morley, piano

♦♦♦♦♦

Stars

♦♦♦♦♦

Josh Ring

Many heartfelt thanks to the faculty and students who participated in making this evening possible for our Olivet composers. We salute you.

Program Notes

Fiddler's Revenge

While writing, *The Fiddler's Revenge*, the composer did not begin with a story in mind, but rather chose to embrace the juxtaposition of strings and rock combo, and the influence of the Tran Siberian Orchestra. Arranged in an ABA'CA' format, the piece opens with an energetic A section based around a repetitive motif which is carried by two solo violins. The B and C sections balance the energy and veracity of the opening, introducing calmer complementary melodies carried by the piano, percussion, and cellos. The repeating A' sections use the theme created in the opening of the piece, layering it with a soaring melody brought out in the violins. The piece's energy is contagious and will hopefully excite and entertain the listener.

Dance of Temptation

Dance of Temptation is a piano duet with a curious blend of romantic harmonies and Latin American dance rhythms. Similarly to a couple dancing, this sensuous piece sways back and forth between the two pianos, testing the boundaries of speed and dynamic as it progresses.

Perpetual Midnight

Perpetual Midnight is a minimalist work for percussion ensemble. The repetitious, tinkling ostinato of the marimbas give an impression of wandering lost on a dark, rainy night. This style is very useful in cinema, for it would set a mood without imposing upon the acting.

The Seven Deadly Sins; Pride

Throughout centuries, Christian apologists and theologians have made reference to a set of behaviors known as the seven deadly sins. These behaviors are said to be "deadly," due to the all-

encompassing allure they present to the darker elements of human nature. *The Seven Deadly Sins* is a set of seven piano pieces. One of these, *Pride*, will be performed this evening.

Tango to the Death

Is it a duel, or is it a romance? In this piece two violins (with piano and percussion accompaniment) battle and dance around the gypsy scale, a series of notes common in Spanish music.

Procession

One of William Shakespeare's most famous quotes begins with the phrase, "All the world's a stage." This is quite a good illustration of the pageantry that many emphasize in their lives. *Procession* is a brass quintet piece that is demonstrative of that pageantry.

Castle on a Hill

Castle on a Hill is a work for brass instruments. The texture of the work is partially polyphonic, formed by individual instrumental lines overlapping with each other, and homophonic, formed by notes lining up to create chords. Mixolydian mode, an ancient scale, is used throughout the work giving it a medieval flavor, reminiscent of the imagery of knights and the castle they defend. A pure trumpet melody begins the work, like a fanfare for returning heroes. The French horn then expresses a melody that combines elements of the opening theme and a new melody which is presented later in the work. Another section of polyphonic conversation ensues. With a dramatic key change the new melody hinted at earlier in the work, explodes into the vista of courage and strength. The texture of this portion of the work is different than the rest of the piece, centering on a melody and closely knit harmonies. The piece accelerates into another section of polyphony, and, as the

tonality returns to the Mixolydian mode the piece comes to a noble conclusion.

Largo for Strings

In a symphonic work, the different string players have stereotypical roles: the violinist leads with the melody, the viola holds the supporting part in harmony, and the cello creates a foundation with longer less expressive notes. This piece was composed in the style of the string quartet genre where each instrument has a separate and equally important voice. As the string quartet developed, it gave each instrument an equal say in the drama of the piece. Each part got a chance to play the leading character in the story (the melody), even the cello! As you listen to this piece, I invite you to let your ears follow the different lines as they emerge and are passed back and forth among the musicians throughout the work. An additional note: the opening cello solo creates a foundation upon which later motifs are derived. Listen especially for the use of the major 6th leap in the melodic lines.

Mountain Streams

Mountain Streams is the first in a set of three piano pieces, and was inspired by Scottish Celtic music. The work consists of colorful chordal textures and some instances of polytonality. The piece is based around the 16th note pattern of the opening section and two melodies. The variations of these melodies presented in the work are interrupted by a chorale-like section of the piece where the left hand takes over the melody. In this piece the 16th note passages represent the continual movement of the stream, while the two melodies elaborate on its beauty, quiet nature, or exciting trips off of rocks into beautiful waterfalls. The chordal textures of the work represent the magnificence of the surrounding mountains, a note of reflection on a larger scale in the piece. Through multiple changes of texture, listeners hear the journey of a mountain stream as it flows quietly, leaps over waterfalls, contemplates the majesty of the

mountain it flows over, and joyfully enters the valley below at the works conclusion.

Silent Night

Although the tune of the famous Christmas carol, *Silent Night*, is familiar to the listener, the setting for SATBB Choir uses unexpected harmonies and moving parts to communicate the beauty and tension in the anticipation and surprise of Christ's birth. The arrangement also includes musical material from several Christmas classics, both carols and soundtracks.

My Father's World

This piece is a 4-part, a cappella medley of 3 well-known hymns, with *All Things Bright and Beautiful* and *Jesus Loves the Little Children* weaving around the main melody, *My Father's World*. This piece was originally arranged for voice and piano, as part of a song cycle adapting traditional hymns to modern melodies and arrangements. The combination of these three particular pieces is meant to show the beauty of God's creation, and how it is an indicator of his love for all of us as part of that creation.

Easter

Easter was inspired by a poeticized text of a famous chorale, *Christ lag in todesbanden*, and a simple melody. The composer envisioned the work for all women's voices, as a retelling of the story of Christ releasing His people from bondage. The work starts out slowly, and gradually grows more intense and more dissonant as the story of Christ's redemptive work is told. The piece involves text painting, or matching phrase direction and dissonance with specific words in the text. For instance, on the line where the choir meditates on the fact that humans are helpless the piece moves into minor. Towards the middle of the piece, the various sections of the choir repeat the words "we were captive", which represents how the entire human race was held in bondage by sin. The piece takes a decided

turn towards hope when a soloist extols Christ's taking the place of His people. The followers of Christ who have accepted this great gift of freedom meditate upon the meaning of Christ's resurrection before breaking out in joyful song, extolling the Lord for His greatness, beauty, and power to change lives. A soloist and the choral response remind all of Christ's followers that His sacrifice should make us full of gratefulness and thanksgiving.

The Air

"There is music in the air, music all around us. The world is full of it and you simply take as much as you require." – Edward William Elgar. *The Air* is meant to be a concept piece based on this quote. It opens with the three instruments weaving in and around each other chaotically, passing 3 melodic ideas between all 3 instruments, as though carried by the wind. Then the music starts to come together, as if the unseen hand of a composer is plucking the notes from the air and setting them down. As the composer releases his melody, the notes float back into the air, and the original melodic ideas repeat. Then another composer comes to collect the music from the air, organizing it into his own ideas, in the form of a lullaby-like section. As he releases, the music drifts once more into the original airy melodies. Finally, a third composer collects the music from the air, organizing it into a more even piece of his own. When he finally starts to let go, the other composers melodies weave back into the composition and spin between each other and the original melody. Finally, each part fades away like the last breaths of a breeze, until all that's left is the low whisper of the bassoon, slowly disappearing into the air.

Ancient Grove

A short, but colorful work, *Ancient Grove* invites the audience to follow the voices of the woodwinds to the depths of a thick and primeval forest. The work begins with harmony in fourths, instead of traditional thirds, giving the piece an open and wandering

sound. Out of this texture rises a simplistic melody line played by the clarinet, then completed by the flute that represents the forest awakening. A short development section follows in which the different instruments imitate motives from the melody. A climax occurs as the flute soars up to the highest note of the work extolling the glorious nature of the woods at its creative fullness. After a short meditation, the forest sinks back into its dark sleep leaving the listener to contemplate the other mysteries the ancient grove might hold.

Deicidal Platypi

This short piece marks my first valorous attempt at composing an atonal piece in dodecaphony. Dodecaphony is the use of a predetermined series of twelve pitches that determines when each note is played. This piece has eight sets of twelve pitches, and the first note of each row outlines the “Dies Irae,” a chant from the requiem mass that speaks of the end of days. As for the title *Deicidal Platypi*, I leave it up to you to imagine a suitable story.

Montgomery’s Escapade

This second short work marks my first courageous attempt at composing a polytonal piece. Polytonality is the use of more than one mode, key, or scale at the same time. I used two differing octatonic scales and chord-as-line to represent a frantic escape. Also, if you listen closely you may hear whimsical references to Bon Jovi’s *You Give Love a Bad Name*, and the Doxology. Finally the golden mean, a numerical sequence that is often found in nature and architecture, gives this odd piece structure.

Reflections

Reflections was written for Sam Stauffer, a Euphonium performance major at ISU and a friend of Josh’s from high school, to showcase many of the possibilities of the euphonium. Going from very high in its range to very low, it sings through flowing melodies

and is clear and articulate on fast passages. It was written by changing the harmonies by step. So instead of traditional harmonic progressions, new harmonies are created by changing a voice or two by whole- or half-step. Parallel tritones and diminished 7th chords are also central to the accompaniment. In the beginning of the reflection, all is calm and peaceful. Deeper into the reflection, the harshness of life emerges and all becomes chaotic. However, in the middle of all the chaos, peace can still be found, even though the chaos will still continue. At the end of it all, the overall reflection is still calm and peaceful, even though a few twists remain.

Pensée

Pensée, literally French for thought but can also be translated as idea, imagine, reflection, or wonder, is a Trombone Quartet of four equal parts. This piece progresses via the harmonic changes instead of a driving rhythm or a singing melody. The close harmonies progress by step instead of traditional harmonic progressions, similar to Reflections but in a completely different style. There are no clear-cut sections, but ideas do return throughout the piece.

Gypsy Dance

This piece is meant to evoke the image of a Gypsy performer dancing and spinning in the streets. The piece begins with a soft, open piano part, like church bells in the early morning. As the violin starts in, slow and quiet, the performer tiptoes out into the streets and begins her dance, growing faster and more complex as it goes on. As the streets grow busier and the day goes on, the dancer tires and starts to slow down, discouraged by people passing her by, until the world fades away and the melody stands alone, a sad, slow dance, pleading for someone to stop and listen. As the world begins to come back into focus, she realizes people have slowed down to watch, and the dance slowly begins to speed up again. Unable to contain her joy as the crowd grows, she spins into a dance of leaps and twirls,

growing in intensity, until, at last, she finishes with a flourish and a bow.

Ruins in the Desert

This piece for cello and violin is written in octatonic minor. Variety of motive and development occur through intervallic relationship and rhythmic spontaneity. The haunting nature of the piece inspired its title. As the music begins a listener can picture a lonely expanse of dunes of sand. After the opening statement the listener goes on a journey giving them a glimpse of several ruined civilizations all over the world. It begins with the Arabian dessert of the Middle East.

Dunes of sand spread across the horizon as snakes slither along the ground. Many nomadic tribes have traversed these sands, but few remain there still. A triplet rhythm offers a new motivic idea, and a Spanish influence takes the audience to the Mojave Desert of the Southern United States, former home of many Native American tribes. Next, the low notes of the cello represents the drone of a didgeridoo, and the disjointed violin part the excited hopping of Australian marsupials. As the rhythmic texture quickens listeners perceive the sounds of the drums of Africa and the Sahara desert with its ruins of the mighty Egyptian empire. As the violin begins to play a high tremolo listeners get a glimpse of one of the scariest and destructive deserts on our planet: the icy lands of the poles. Here few humans dwell, as this desolate wasteland can hardly sustain life. The piece ends with a dissonant duet of similar melodic material to that which was heard in the opening bars, and the audience is left to contemplate what civilizations have yet to be claimed by the world's deserts.

The Smile

This piece was written as a gift to my boyfriend on our one-year anniversary. The piece is meant to be a musical picture of a smile, as well as a story. *The Smile* can be seen in the up-and-down nature of the melody, itself; the way the piece drifts between octaves; and the repeated change in dynamics, from soft, to loud, and back to

soft. The piece opens as a boy and girl meet, greeting each other tentatively, but warmly, and they smile at one another. They begin to talk, and the conversation deepens. As they begin to connect with one another, they smile again. Then, the conversation goes to lighter topics, causing them to laugh and smile again. Soon, the conversation becomes more personal, and as they connect further, more animated. Soon, they realize they have to part ways, and the conversation slows to a close. Finally, they share a kiss, and depart, smiling to themselves as they go. *Dedicated to Brian Jacobs.*

Carpe Diem

Poor Jason is in quite the predicament; he has fallen desperately in love with his best friend Elise. To make things worse his friend Lauren tells him to seize the day and confess his love to her, but his other friend Casey warns him to keep this love to himself or else he may lose her as a friend forever. So what will he do? This song is written as a piece from a Broadway musical, and yet it stands alone as a miniature musical in itself. The intense dissonances, missing thirds in the harmony, and borrowed chords (such as the minor five) represent Jason's plight whilst the romantic leaps in the melody lead your ear to hope that there may be a happy ending after all.

Stars

Stars was designed to be played on one keyboard with multiple sounds going on at the same time. Sounds occurring in the same register, or in different registers utilizing a split keyboard, are all uniquely different. The piece also utilizes a looper pedal during the end of the piece where multiple voices are overlapping. Exploring a small portion of the available electronic resources, this piece will be played from a recording made exclusively by computer and electronically generated instrumentation instead of from one keyboard as originally intended. It will also explore the possibilities of multi-media, utilizing visual elements along with the music.

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, February 28: Norden Sr. Recital
Kelley Prayer Chapel, 6:00pm

Tuesday, February 28: ONU Bands Concert
Kresge Auditorium, 7:00pm

Wednesday, February 29: Percussion Ensemble Concert
Kresge Auditorium, 8:30pm

Thursday, March 1: LeFevre/Ring Recital
Kresge Auditorium, 7:00pm

Monday, March 12: Schumann Sr. Recital
Kresge Auditorium, 7:00pm

Tuesday, March 13: Strings/Chamber Ensemble Concert
Kresge Auditorium, 7:00pm

Thursday, March 15, 2012: Night of Jazz**
Kresge Auditorium, 7:00pm

Friday, March 16, 2012: Organ Recital
Centennial Chapel, 12:00pm

Friday, March 23, 2012: Organ Recital
Centennial Chapel, 12:00pm

Monday, March 26, 2012: Donaldson/Tschetter Sr./Jr. Recital
College Church, 7:00pm

Tuesday, March 27, 2012: Fisher/Seefeldt Sr. Recital
Kelley Prayer Chapel

**Tickets needed for this event **