A Senior Composition Recital: Notes from the Composer

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

Michael J. Reed

Thesis Advisor
Dr. Ernesto Pellegrini

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana
June 14, 1991

Expected date of graduation
December, 1991
INTRODUCTION

On February 21, 1991 in Pruis Hall a special event in my life occurred, an event which was three years in the making and required hundreds of hours of work. The event was my senior composition recital. The recital served two purposes: First, it fulfilled the requirements for my composition major; second, it was the culmination of my participation in the honors program here at Ball State University. The recital was the largest of its kind ever attempted at Ball State. There were a total of 108 performers, including 93 in one piece alone. There were seven pieces of music presented, with each piece vastly different to the others. Pieces included "Three Scenes from the Graveyard" for brass quintet, "A Diplomatic Scene in the Smith House" for a group of actors, "Scherzo" for four bassoons, "Wars We Do Not See" for solo trombone and piano, "Black Light" for big band, "Tape Piece No. 1" for stereophonic tape, and "Revelation" for chorus and wind ensemble. One of the most satisfying elements of the recital for me as composer was that different people have told me that at least five different pieces were their favorite. That tells me that there was literally something for everyone on the concert.

The advisor for the recital was Dr. Ernesto Pellegrini, Professor of Music Theory and Composition. In addition to being in charge of the recital, he was also my private composition teacher for two of the pieces. There were also pieces presented which were written under the supervision of Dr. Bradley Hanson, Dr. Cleve Scott, and Dr. Dan Senn. I thank all of the above for the help and guidance they provided in the preparation for the recital. There are two other special people I want to thank: Mr. David Foley, head of the Music Theory Department of the School of Music, and Ms. Michelle LaCourse, Professor of Viola. This performance would have been impossible without their assistance.

This recital was presented as part of the Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Festival of American Music. The remainder of this thesis project is a piece by piece description of the music which was presented on the recital. Scores and a copy of the program are included.
THREE SCENES FROM THE GRAVEYARD

This composition was started in the fall of 1989 under the supervision of Dr. Pellegrini. It was completed in January of 1991, and is written for brass quintet. It contains three movements: I. Goblin's Holiday; II. Adam Johnson, b.1879, d.1882; and III. The Storm at Midnight. The individual movements are programmatic in that they each represent a pictorial idea, but there is no unified "story" per se in the work as a whole. The movements of the work were written out of order, with the second movement being composed first (completed in January of 1990), the final movement composed second (completed in March of 1990), and the final movement being written last (completed in January of 1991).

The first movement begins with loud, majestic chords. This is a fanfare to the work. Then almost immediately at m.6 the dynamic level of the ensemble gets softer, and a complex rhythmic section which forms the backbone of the movement begins. At this point it is unclear to the listener what meter the piece is in. In fact, there are places during this section where duple and triple meters are played back to back, adding to the uncertainty. This was done intentionally.

For centuries man has feared the unknown. Goblins are supposedly little creatures who live in dark places and torment helpless people. The unknown brings uncertainty into our lives. Goblins represent the unknown, or the dark side of human nature. Hence, the uncertain nature of the meter of this movement represents the mystery that surrounds our life (and death), and also the "goblins" that were used as an excuse in times past to explain things that didn't seem to fit a neat, logical explanation of reality. In addition, death is perhaps the one area of our existence that we know the least about. It makes us uncomfortable and fearful. How many of us have been dared to go into a cemetery at night, but backed down out of fear of what might happen to us, no matter how illogical is seems in retrospect?

The main theme of the movement begins at m.33 with the trumpets. The meter at this point is 6/8. The theme has a quasi-jazz feeling to it, caused mostly by the \( \uparrow \downarrow \) rhythms and syncopated entrances. This gives the melody a feeling of almost being swing. The A section ends at m.56.

The B section starting at m.57 is a four-part fugue. The subject is nine bars long, and keeps the quasi-jazz feel established earlier in the piece. The first entry of the fugue is given to the tuba. The answer is heard at the octave by the trombone. The french horn has the subject next,
not at the expected interval of an octave or a perfect fifth, but at the major third. The final entry is in the trumpets at the octave. They are playing unison octaves which become tritones after several bars.

A brief connecting section occurs between mm.95-103. The section recalls the ambiguous meter section of m.19. This leads to the recapitulation at m.104. Here, the upper and lower instruments play the beginning fanfare (in 6/4), while the horn (in 12/8) plays thematic material reminiscent of the melody at m.33.

At m.111 the ambiguous meter section returns. From this point until the end of the movement there is extensive five-part counterpoint. The movement ends with a final moving line for the trombone. The final cadence is in F-major.

The second movement, “Adam Johnson, b.1879, d.1882”, was composed during the fall of 1989. This movement is meant to be a lullaby to a little boy who passed away because of disease in the old west of the last century. Adam Johnson is a fictional character, and it can be said that he represents all children who succumb to death at an early age. Rather than being dissonant and grotesque, this movement is beautiful and restful. There are rich harmonies which support delicate, lyrical melodies. There is a feeling of freedom from meter which permeates the piece.

The movement starts with the following motif:

This motif becomes the basis for the theme at m.19, and the upward skip is utilized extensively in this movement. M.1 is marked adagio. This is a flowing section with each of the four instruments having a melodic line. The tuba was left out on purpose to avoid any feeling of heaviness here.

The tempo picks up slightly at m.8, with the trombone having the melody. There is a brief pause at the end of m.14, then a very slow, very rich section occurs at m.15, which leads to the main theme of the piece at m.19.

Up to this point the movement is obviously tonal, but no firm key center has been established. However, at the end of m.18 the tuba enters on a firm dominant which resolves to C major at m.19. At m.19 a major textural change occurs as the three upper voices drop out, leaving the trombone to play the main melody over a simple accompaniment. The horn
sneaks in at m.24, producing a pleasant three-voice texture.

The trumpets enter at m.31, utilizing the upward skip extensively. Four bars later they fade out, leaving the horn free to play an intensely romantic line which takes the instrument down to the lowest part of its tessitura.

This is followed by the trumpets, which come in again playing thematic material. Two bars later at m.45 the climax of the piece begins. All five parts are playing different rhythms, capped off by the first trumpet which is playing a complex melodic line. The dynamic level increases to fortissimo. The trumpet line leads up to a high A. The entire ensemble plays a bright-sounding chord. Then, while the first trumpet player holds the A the other players release their notes, leaving the trumpet player free to play a short cadenza.

At m.49 there is a short two bar section recalling the beginning, which is followed by the recapitulation at m.51. This time the trombone is joined by the second trumpet with the tune. The other three parts are playing accompanying material. This section leads to the end of the movement at m.62.

This section utilizes an interesting concept. The first trumpet drops out, leaving the other four instruments playing repeated lines, each of which is in a different meter. The score is written at this point without bar lines. The notes are lined up directly under and over each other. This was the only way I could think of to notate this passage. It is important to note that even though all the parts are in a different meter, they are playing in the same tempo. This gives continuity and flow to the section.

This has the effect of setting a texture which serves as the background for the first trumpet. The first trumpet player is instructed to wait approximately ten seconds before entering with material from the beginning of the movement. This thematic material is both out of meter and out of time with the background instruments. This gives a feeling of freedom to the music. The background instruments gradually drop out one by one, leaving the trumpet to finish the movement alone with the final motif from the introduction.

The programmatic element of the ending is the feeling of a soul drifting up to heaven. The texture at m.62 represents the sounds of life all around us. Many of these sounds are not consciously heard by us, but they are there nonetheless. The first trumpet represents the soul leaving the body. For a while it hovers over the body, but begins a gradual ascent up into heaven. As the instruments drop out the texture becomes lighter.
The sounds of life on earth are growing distant and fading out. On the last motif the soul is so far from earth that there are no sounds from the planet, only a last fleeting glimpse of it.

The final movement, “The Storm at Midnight”, is the antithesis of the second movement. While the second movement is flowing and lyrical, this movement is violent and dissonant. The second movement is highly introspective. This movement looks not inside a person, but outside at an event. As the title implies, this movement depicts a raging thunderstorm in a creepy cemetery at midnight.

The tempo is marked very fast. The music should be played as rapidly and aggressively as the group possible can play. The movement begins with loud, sharp chords which hit the listener like claps of thunder. The burst of lightning occurs at m.7. There is no theme to this movement. The continuity is provided by a constant eighth-note ostinato drone.

This is picked up by different instruments as the piece progresses. Over this droning ostinato pattern is a flurry of rhythmic activity. This reminds one of all the parameters accompanying a thunderstorm, plus the elements of terror at having to experience the storm in a gloomy cemetery at night.

A novel effect is introduced at m.19 in the second trumpet. The player is instructed to make wind sounds through his instrument. This is accomplished by blowing a fast stream of cool air through the horn. This effect is used several times during the piece. Another unique effect is used during the next bar in the tuba part. The player is instructed to make thunder sounds. This is accomplished by blowing sudden bursts of air through the instrument while the player keeps his lips as loose a possible. The tubing of the tuba acts as a resonating chamber for the sounds, allowing them to have a thunder-like sound.

The rhythmic activity gradually increases until m.58 where there are five ostinato passages occurring simultaneously, ending with a dissonant chord at m.63. This is where the rain becomes extremely intense and is interrupted by a blinding flash of lightning.

The adagio section at m.65 provides a contrast to the first part of the piece. The tuba has a slow theme over which short bursts of material happen in the upper four voices. Programmatically there is a break in the storm with flashes of lightning still going on. Also, the slow theme against the rapid accompanying bursts is reminiscent of the sensation of standing on the ground looking up at the clouds rolling by. From the ground they appear to be moving lazily along, but are actually moving very rapidly. Near the end of this section the wind (represented by the upper
instruments making wind sounds) picks up, and we hear thunder off in the
distance as a lone owl (the horn) whistles a melancholy song.

At m.76 the ostinato reappears as the storm regains its strength.
The instruments are added one by one until the thunder figure reappears
over the ostinato at m.81. A short imitative section leads to the final
appearance of the thunder section, this time without the ostinato. This
goes to a dissonant chord which resolves to a unison C.

This movement adds a quality of barbaric fury to the malevolent
playfulness of the first movement and the quiet lullaby of the second
movement. The different styles of writing combined with the moods
portrayed in the music create a composition which has an incredible
amount of variety. Each of the five parts has stylistic and technical
challenges which make this composition a difficult piece to perform.
However, the results of a good performance justify the amount of
rehearsal time needed to put this piece together.
III. THE STORM AT MIDNIGHT

Very Fast

Trumpet 1

Trumpet 2

French Horn

Tuba

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

Trumpet 1

French Horn

Tuba

26 27 28 29

Make Thunder So Sounds 31 32 33
A DIPLOMATIC SCENE IN THE SMITH HOUSE

This piece was written during December of 1990. The piece was originally composed as a final project for the MUSTH 420 (Twentieth-Century Music) class of Dr. Dan Senn. The piece was written as an example of minimalism, but actually encompasses several different styles of music. Some people would not consider it to be music. I listed the piece as "experimental" music. People will accept almost anything if you tell them it is experimental. In addition to having elements of minimalism it includes elements of jazz improvisation, baroque counterpoint, fugal writing, and several early twentieth-century movements, including chance (aleatoric) music and the "theater of the absurd" movements which were popular after the second world war. All this is accomplished without the use of any acoustical notes in the traditional sense.

There is a tremendous amount of freedom available to the performers. As can be seen from the score, there are only three commands given to the performers. In other words, the performers are told what to do, but they are not told how to do it. This is similar to jazz improvisation in that the performer is given a roadmap (the ten statements in this piece, the chord changes in a jazz piece), but what the performer does with the roadmap is what gives the piece its character.

The piece can be performed by any number of people and can last for as long as the performers wish it to. The piece relies heavily on the acting ability of the performers. There are a lot of theatrics involved. For example, when the piece was performed for the recital there were both props and costumes. In addition, it is essential that the performers memorize their lines just like they would for a play, otherwise the performance will sound mechanical and boring instead of spontaneous and creative.

When the piece was actually performed several twists were added which weren't mentioned in the score. To help set the proper atmosphere a living room set was put onstage. The piece began with an adolescent boy walking onstage to a TV set. He turns on the TV, turns on a Nintendo set, and puts in a cartridge. He then proceeds to play a video game for most of the rest of the piece. Once he has been playing for about thirty seconds the first actor comes out and begins the piece. The actors come onstage one by one and perform their lines. During the constant griping that the boy must endure he never once looks up at or responds to the actors. He is totally immersed in the game.
For the piece to be convincing it is essential that the actors interact with each other. A group of people babbling to themselves makes no sense and quickly gets boring. However, a group of people interacting (in this piece that means arguing with each other) draws attention. The first couple of actors onstage focus on the boy. However, as more people enter the stage the focus gradually shifts from the boy to themselves, and they begin to argue with each other. This produces some hilarious moments. This piece works best when the performers have fun with it and perform it as a humorous piece.

When the last person leaves the stage the boy shuts off the television and the Nintendo set on his own. He then picks up a book (on his own), goes out into the audience, props his feet up on the seat in front of him, and starts reading the book. This was the end of the piece.

I added this list of theatrics for a couple of reasons. First, it gave a sense of purpose to the piece. By having the boy there, the comments were focused rather than randomly dispersed. Secondly, I was making a statement about a problem I see with many kids in our society today. In many households the children don't go outside and play or read books, they sit in front of a TV set for hours on end playing video games. They do not respond to anything except their joystick. I tried to portray this situation in a humorous way. The end of the piece where the kid picks up the book on his own is my way of saying that maybe there is hope for the younger generation.

These additions weren't necessary, but I felt they gave the piece the extra theatrical impact it needed to succeed. Going into the performance I had no idea of how the audience would react. Thankfully, they loved it. This piece started some debate about just what music is. I have to call the premiere of this composition a rousing success.
A DIPLOMATIC SCENE IN THE SMITH HOUSE

The minimalist composition "A Diplomatic Scene in the Smith House" is about a discussion (argument?) between a mother and son. It consists of 10 short statements which are repeated any number of times by any number of performers.

The rate of speed, tone of voice (frustrated, patient, angry, etc.) and duration of the piece are left entirely to the discretion of the performers. The only parameters which are controlling are the following:

1. Each statement should be read at least 4 times.
2. Each voice will enter after the preceding voice goes onto the next statement, and will proceed to the next statement only after the previous voice does so.
3. The final statement should be read 4-6 times.

The beauty of the piece is that it will have a different character each time it is performed, depending on who is performing, their acting skills, and their general mood at the time of performance. My vision of the perfect performance has moments of anger, frustration, fatigue, and most importantly, humor. Depending on the number of performers and how it is presented, the piece could last anywhere from 2 minutes to 10 or 12 minutes.
A DIPLOMATIC SCENE IN THE SMITH HOUSE

I. Hey!

II. Do your homework.

III. Who?

IV. You!

V. But why?

VI. Do your homework (more declaratory).

VII. Because!

VIII. I don’t want to.

IX. NOW!!

X. You’re grounded.

-Each statement should be read at least 4 times, with the meter and tone of voice at the performer's discretion.

-Each voice will enter after the preceding voice goes onto the next statement, and will move onto the next statement only after the previous voice does so.

-The final statement should be read 4-6 times.
SCHERZO FOR FOUR BASSOONS

This piece started out as a movement from a bass trombone quartet called "Ugly Music for Four Bass Trombones". I began the piece while taking lessons from Dr. Scott in the spring of 1989. The word 'scherzo' means joke in Italian. Thus, a scherzo is a light-hearted, playful musical composition.

The piece is built from the motif

which is (or was) the subject for a fugue in the original trombone composition. The main theme appears first in the fourth bassoon, then in the other three parts:

The accompaniment consists of repeated offbeat eighth notes. It is mostly staccato, in contrast to the melody, which is slurred. There is a second thematic motif which occurs frequently throughout the piece:

At m.33 a four bar cluster of running eighth notes leads to the first climax at m.37, which fades down to the development section.

The development starts at m.48 with the adagio section. The new theme is:

The development here consists of a group of legato phrases layered on top of short staccato notes.

At m.63 the fourth bassoon has the subject from the fugue of the original bass trombone quartet. At m.65 the next climax occurs. The four bassoons are spread over two and a half octaves. Over the course of the
next nine bars the interval gradually shrinks to just a step and a half for the four instruments. The dynamic level also shrinks. It starts out at mezzo forte at m.65 and gradually decrescendos to ppp.

At m.74 the transition to the recapitulation begins. For the next twenty-three bars (mm.74-97) the tempo gradually accelerates from $\downarrow=88$ to $\downarrow=144$. This whole section consists of legato and staccato motifs heard previously in the piece. The texture thickens gradually until at m.81 when the piece reaches its original voicings (parts I, II, and III playing background material; part IV playing thematic material).

The recapitulation occurs at m.97. The climax is extended by seven bars. The composition ends with an open F chord. This piece was completed on December 2, 1990.
WARS WE DO NOT SEE

This is the piece on the recital to which I have the most emotional attachment. If one of the seven pieces can be considered superior to the others, this is my choice for that piece. The piece was started in September of 1988 under the supervision of Dr. Hanson, and was completed in October of 1990. The piece was inspired by the book "This Present Darkness" by Frank E. Pereti. The book is about spiritual forces fighting for control of a town. The idea behind the piece is not about the fight for a whole city, but the more personal idea of a battle for one man's soul. The man has to make a choice between good and evil, and angels and demons are engaged in a horrific battle in an attempt to sway the man's conscience. The piece is written for solo trombone and piano.

The opening is very mysterious and sinister. Quiet, dissonant chords for the piano set the tone for the piece. This composition is built on the following set:

![Set](f: o b ^c e)

The trombone enters in the third bar playing the set. A low pedal note in the piano also lends to the mysterious mood. There is a short break from the dissonance at m.8 when the trombone and piano resolve to an open fifth.

After a fermata the tempo increases slightly. There is more motion in both the trombone and the piano part. There is a crescendo leading into m.12. Here the right hand of the piano part has (in octaves) an accented line which is picked up by the left hand three bars later. Throughout this part of the introduction the tension and suspense build up to the second fermata at m.17. However, instead of a pleasant resolution the music suddenly gets aggressive.

The section marked "fast" beginning at m.18 is where the battle is joined between the spirits. For this section I wanted a primitive, fiery sound. I achieved this by putting open fifths in the left hand. That is the most primitive sound I can think of. The reason why I think this part of the piece should have as primitive a sound as possible is that according to Christian theology these forces have been around long before man, and have been battling each other for thousands of years.

The trombone plays a melody directly based on the original set. The right hand has a rhythmic countermelody. At this point I should add that
this is about 130 bars of extremely difficult music for both instruments. The rhythms and technical demands are hard enough at a normal tempo, but at \( \text{\textit{=166}} \) they become extremely difficult. Add to this the fact that there are numerous meter changes and you can imagine what a challenge to the performers this piece is, both physically and mentally. Throughout the early stages of the fast section it is difficult to tell which side is winning the fight. Clashing dissonances suggest the evil side is ahead, only to be interrupted moments later by consonant, almost traditionally functional chords.

At m.34 the trombone drops out, and there is ten bars of solo piano. At this point the trombonist needs a rest. The piano has a dissonant eighth note pattern over which a single-note rhythmic pattern is repeated three times on ascending pitches. The trombone enters at m.44, starting a brief statement and response section between it and the piano. Several short variations on the previous material lead into what I consider to be the most technically difficult section for the pianist, mm.56-70.

In this section the piano has short, dissonant chords in the right hand against an odd rhythmic pattern built on eighth notes in the left hand. This is extremely difficult to play up to tempo. On top of this the trombone has half note triplets. To the listener this creates uneasiness. The piano part sounds rapid and aggressive. At the same time the trombone part sounds lazy and almost totally out of tempo.

The main theme of this whole section returns at m.71. This time there are fourths instead of fifths in the bass. The countermelody remains the same. The melody changes after a few bars. The accompaniment changes to whole note chords in the left hand against punctuated quarter notes in the right hand. A syncopated accent passage in the piano leads to the next major section of the work, mm.88-131.

At m.88 there is a change from a four meter to an eight meter for the first time. In this section the meter changes in almost every bar. The tempo here should pull back a little, even though it is not marked in the score. There are influences from both rock and jazz music in this section. Again, the primitive feeling is maintained by the open fifths in the bass. However, after a few bars the open fifths become open tritones, leading one to a feeling that order is breaking up and chaos is about to break loose. The trombone and piano alternate playing melodic fragments. The trombone drops out, leaving the piano to play a melodic motif at m.99. The trombone melody repeats, and it is followed by another short piano break.

The trombone enters again at m.117. This leads to the climax to this section, m.123. The tempo marking here is "driving". This means to pick
Black Light

This piece was originally written in the spring of 1989 under the supervision of Dr. Hanson. It was revised early this year and was finished at about 9:00 PM on Monday, February 18. The first rehearsal was set that same night for 9:30 PM, so it can be said that the piece was finished just in the nick of time.

The instrumentation is for the traditional big band. It includes parts for five saxophones, four trumpets, four trombones, guitar, piano, bass, and drums. It is written in the style of the Glenn Miller or Tommy Dorsey Orchestras. There are no avant-garde compositional techniques or unique features involved here. It is simply a straight-ahead swing tune based on a twelve bar blues head.

The piece starts with a ten bar introduction which goes directly into the theme. The saxophones have the melody the first time through. The trumpets play it for the second time through. Mm.35-47 is a repeated vamp section which is open for solos. In the performance of this work on the recital there were two soloists used—Tom Cox and Tom Hunt. Both played alto saxophones. The next section is a transition section to m.65.

Here, there is a four bar drum break which leads into another solo section. For the recital there were two soloists used here. Bob Klingler played a trumpet solo, and Mike Wilson played a piano solo. At m.81 the trombones enter. They are playing an accompaniment figure which sets up the shout chorus at m.93. This is the standard big band shout chorus. It is very active and loud, and is the climax of the piece.

At m.118 the saxophones play the main theme again. The trumpets answer at m.130, with the first trumpet playing up an octave. The piece ends with a sforzando chord over which the first trumpet and first trombone improvise in the upper register. This piece was extremely well-received and was a pleasant break from the heavy music which preceded it.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALTO I</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALTO II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TENOR I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TENOR II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BARI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUMPET I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUMPET II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUMPET III</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUMPET IV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TROMBONE I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TROMBONE II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TROMBONE III</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TROMBONE IV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUITAR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIANO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BASS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRUMS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

34  35  36  37  38  39  40  41  42
TAPE PIECE NO. 1

(Dedicated to the Allied Forces in the Persian Gulf)

This piece was composed during January/February of 1991 under the supervision of Dr. Scott. The tape was realized at the Music Engineering Studio at the music building annex. For this piece I used three tone generators, all manufactured by Yamaha: the TX81Z, the TX802, and the TX816. The keyboard used was a Yamaha KX88, and the sounds were mixed through a Yamaha DMP 11 digital mixing processor. I used the Performer program for Macintosh computers to monitor the progress of the piece. The piece is exactly 11'30" long, and approximately ten hours were spent at the studio for every minute of sound on the tape.

Sounds used from the 81Z include helicopter, race car, space midiot, flight simulator, "WOW", space talk, noise shot, storm wind, and three original sounds: Mike's Gun, Mike's Bird, and Mike's Bell. The original sounds were produced by taking a single sound wave and adding to, subtracting from, or generally playing with the parameters of the wave.

Sounds used from the 802 include koikecycle, science, thunderon, explosion, bell wahh, glastine, lasersweep, and whisper. In addition, two original sounds were developed for this piece on this tone generator. They are Mike's Sound No. 1 (including elements from whisper, FM growth, science, puff organ I, koikecycle, and steel cans); and Mike's Sound No. 2 (including whisper, glastine, explosion, and thunderon). Unlike the original sounds used from the 81Z which came from the same wave, the original sounds produced on the 802 were made by combining parameters of several existing sounds.

Sounds used from the 816 include Juan I, Fred VCE, Tr wahs, Tr bomb, Tr AM mod, and Tr basso. The piece contains 2,720 different events and 19 program changes. There are a total of 26 different sounds used.

As mentioned in the title the piece is dedicated to the troops who served our country in the Persian Gulf War. It basically details the events surrounding the war. The piece is set in Baghdad during the first days of the war.

The piece begins with a low rumbling sound over which a lone female voice is heard. It is the calm before the storm (the Desert Storm). Several voices mysteriously join in, and shortly thereafter the first faint, distant rumblings of war can be heard. The start of the air war occurs shortly thereafter. The roar of the fighter jets and the exploding smart
bombs can be distinctly heard. There is a sudden realization that this is no longer two groups of people making idle threats of war. This is the real thing.

In the midst of the bombardment a church bell can be heard ringing out in the cold January night. Perhaps it is a bell of warning, or perhaps it is mourning the dead. After a very short lull the fighters return for another round of bombing, this time joined by helicopters. Suddenly the jets are gone. There are only distant sounds of bells and bombs.

The next section is a beautiful chorale to pay homage to those killed in the heat of battle. Angelic voices can be heard escorting those killed to their final destination. For a few moments there is a feeling of serenity. This slowly changes to a phantasmagoric parody of reality as the heartbeat of the living becomes audible. The heartbeat grows louder and picks up intensity as the bombers come in for yet another wave of attacks. An air raid siren materializes out of the texture of planes and exploding bombs, and gradually becomes the dominant sound. After a while the planes go away leaving the wailing siren as the only audible evidence of war.

This segues into the next section, the ground war. Now in addition to the bombers flying overhead the sound of tanks shakes the ground. Also we now distinctly hear the machine gun fire as the Allies try to liberate Kuwait and the Iraqis try to defend themselves. There is gunfire on both sides. Eventually the shooting stops.

We hear the bells toll again. They ring 11 times. This is symbolic of it being the eleventh hour for the army of Iraq. Their reign of terror is almost over. A faint melody reminiscent of “Somewhere” comes in. Then it is daybreak again and we hear the female voices as in the beginning, only more distant now. As the piece ends there is an army helicopter flying across the smoke-filled horizon, checking for downed allied pilots to rescue.
REVELATION

I. PRAYER.

This piece was composed during March/April of 1990 under the supervision of Dr. Pellegrini. This was quite an undertaking for me. This was by far the largest ensemble I have ever written for. For the premiere there were 93 performers. "Revelation" is intended to be a 40-45 minute oratorio detailing the events outlined in the book of Revelation in the bible. The "Prayer" is the first movement of the oratorio. The text in this particular movement is from Revelation I, v.4-8. It is from the letter that John wrote to the seven churches in Asia.

The work is scored for chorus and wind ensemble. The wind ensemble has a full complement of brass, woodwind, and percussion. In fact, this five minute introductory movement utilizes timpani, chimes, vibraphone, bells, tam-tam, snare drum, suspended cymbals, crash cymbals, bass drum, and toms. I used a band accompaniment instead of an orchestra for two reasons. First, I like the sound of a band, and second, there are many more bands than orchestras in this country, so my chances of getting this work performed are greater with a band.

The usual association we have for the word "Prayer" is of a quiet, contemplative appeal to the Lord. The type of prayer referred to in this work, however, is not quiet and introspective, it is loud and joyful. This prayer doesn't ask for forgiveness, it proclaims the greatness of the Lord. This is the most extroverted music I've written yet.

The piece is built on the following motif:

The piece begins with the brass instruments playing the motif in various transpositions. At m.5 the rest of the ensemble comes in. They are playing fragments of melodies which will appear later in the piece. The music gradually grows louder and builds tension until m.14, when we come to the vivace section. This section is in one beat to the measure, and is built on the following rhythmic motif: . This is played first by the trombones, then is picked up by the horns, and finally by the trumpets. Because of the tempo the figure must be double-tongued. The snare drum is doubling the brass for two reasons. First, it makes good musical sense. Second, it makes the rhythm sound clearer. The section climaxes at m.30
with a resolution to an E Major chord.

The chorus comes in for the first time at m.31. It is doubled by the woodwinds for security reasons. The brass reenter at m.43 to set up the crescendo to m.46. At this point the chorus is singing against the full band and, therefore, the forte dynamic marking for the wind players needs to be a restrained one. The first part of the prayer repeats at m.58, and leads to a climax of the first half of the work at m.73 on an open fifth.

Immediately and without a break the piece goes into the largo section. The introduction to this section is scored for woodwinds (minus flutes) and horns in the lower to middle register. It is obvious after glancing at the score that these few bars are thickly scored. I did this because the type of sound I am trying to get at m.74 is a sound that is as close as possible to an organ. I feel that if the chords are properly balanced the timbres of the individual instruments will blend in such a way that an organ-like sound will be produced.

The soprano solo begins at the end of m.78. The accompaniment changes to the three trombones and tuba. This is reminiscent of the way trombones were originally used, as accompaniment to sacred music in cathedrals. At m.87 the baritone solo enters over a very warm-sounding E Major chord. A mini-climax occurs at m.90 when the winds resolve to a Bb Major chord. The melodic percussion comes in and gives a brilliance to the sound.

The solo ends in m.92, and is immediately replaced by the women singing “to him be glory”, which is answered by the men. They alternate on the word “forever”. Then at m.98 the entire chorus is at unison singing “Amen” while the brass play chords below them. Just as in the beginning section there is a resolution to E Major, and an immediate modulation to C Major at m.102.

M.102 is the beginning of the most complex section of the piece. The meter is 3/4. The brasses are playing dotted quarter notes while the chorus starts by singing half-notes. The effect is a “hemiola” effect, or a four against three feel.

After a few bars the chorus breaks away from the strict homophony of the first couple of bars and goes into some intense counterpoint. At this point the lines take on an almost renaissance feel. Each line is rhythmically independent of the others. Harmonically this section is
(with the exception of one chord) pandiatonic. Were it not for the strong C Major feeling at m.122, this section could be said to be modal (ionian). This section is the rhythmic high point of the piece. The intricate lines combine to form a section which is at the same time homophonic (brass) and highly polyphonic (chorus). There is a programmatic reason for this.

God is considered to be omnipotent. He is considered to know things too wonderful for normal man to imagine. He can, according to the scriptures, do all things. For biblical support of this consult the book of Job. When Job has many tragedies in his life he blames the Lord. The Lord answers him by asking him where he was when the world was created, etc. The main point is that our minds cannot comprehend what has been done. To give this same impression musically I have two vastly different rhythmic ideas. To hear just the rhythms one gets the impression of chaos (and extreme complexity and intricacy). However, God is orderly. To bring a sense of order to the chaos the music is pandiatonic (no notes foreign to the key). The strong feeling of C Major against the frenetic rhythmic texture gives stability and a sense of order to the music. To summarize, the Lord is at the same time simple enough to communicate with us, and so complex that we cannot understand his workings. The music reflects this by being simultaneously complex (rhythmically) and simple (harmonically).

Everything comes together at the end of the section, and at m.122 the chorus is singing "the Lord" over the brass fanfare, as in bar 14. This time the fanfare is in C Major, not F Major. The chimes are ringing like church bells. At m.128 the low brass begin a group of descending chromatic bell tones which go all the way back down to C. The chorus sings the initial thematic motif a final time at m.137, then holds the word "you" while the band plays a short reprise of the fanfare section before the final "Amen" at m.144.

The premiere performance of this work was conducted by George Killian, with Kelly McKee as soprano soloist and Myles Ogea as baritone soloist. Dr. Amman was gracious enough to let me use the Ball State Concert Choir. The wind ensemble was made up of players from both the university wind ensemble and Ball State Symphony Orchestra. The piece was given a standing ovation by the audience and was an inspiration to the composer.
REVELATION  
J. Prayre  
For Chorus and Wind Ensemble  
Michael Reed  

© 1991  

JUDY GREEN MUSIC  Hollywood, CA 90028  (213) 465-2451  
P-523