Six Reflections Through Music and Poetry

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Six Reflections Through Music and Poetry

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music in Music Composition

by

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University of Arkansas
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This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council

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Abstract
Since beginning school at the University of Arkansas in 2008 I have learned many lessons both in and outside the classroom. To date, the most challenging lessons have been those that I have learned about myself. The manifestation of the person that I am today has been an adventure with many twists and turns. This piece aims to capture the essence of some of the lessons that I have learned. Each poem offers the product of that lesson.

The movement entitled “Memories” has a subdued joy in its message. The poem offers nostalgia to begin the piece with. However, it is also a commentary on my own struggles with memory loss. The following movement, “The Musicians’ Wife,” is an exploration of relationships. While the external message may focus on the relationship with another person, the internal message is about the relationship with the self. The third movement, “The Road Not Taken,” is a poem by Robert Frost. The poem’s message is to encourage individuals to walk a different path than everyone else. The fourth and fifth movement are centered around the idea of how I personally have come to learn the various lessons that life has offered. The projected message is that the most valuable lessons are those not easily learned. Finally, “O Me! O Life!” utilizes a Walt Whitman poem for the music. The poem, like the corresponding music, asks many hard questions. As it concludes the movement provides a simple and serene answer.

The music written is not to accompany each of the poems. Rather, the poems are to accompany the music. The orchestration for any performances can be any instrument in any amount per part. When performing this piece, the musicians should not be formally dressed, except for the individual reciting the poetry. If the ensemble wishes to add a visual element to the performance, they may allow individuals to wander the stage and isles and pose pensively to further the reflective mood.
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Memories

Adagio \( \frac{\text{d}}{\text{4}} = 30 \)

Nick Vecchio

Oboe

Vibraphone

Voice

Cello II

Ob.

Vib.

Vc. II

p legato

Ob.

Vib.

Vc. II

3 Halftone

\( \text{Half Pedal/Pedal appropriately} \)

Nick Vecchio

Score
Voice: How sweet the silent backward tracings! The wanderings as in Dreams - The meditations of old time resumed. Their loves, joys, persons voyages
The Musicians Wife

II

Nick Vecchio

Ob.

Vib.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

D.B. I
The Musicians Wife

M.M. \( \frac{4}{4} \approx 185-195 \)

Oboe

Voice

Vln. I

\( mf \)

Vln. II

\( mf \)

Vc. I

Cello II

D.B. I

\( mf \)
The Musicians Wife

Ob.  

Vln. I  

Vln. II  

Vc. I  

Vc. II  

D.B. I  

mf

mp
The Musicians Wife

Ob.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

D.B. I
The Musicians Wife

Ob.

Vln. I

Vln. II

mp

Vc. I

Vc. II

D.B. I
The Musicians Wife

Between the visits to the shock ward The doctors used to let you play on
Old upright Baldwin Donated by a former patient Who is said to be quite stable now.
The Musicians Wife

And all day long you played Chopin, Badly and hauntingly, when you weren't screaming on the porch that looked
Like an enormous birdeage. Or sat in your room and stared out at the sky.

Repeat 4 times
The Musicians Wife

You never looked at me at all. I used to walk down to where the bus stopped Over the hill where the
The Musicians Wife

eucalyptus trees Moved in the fog, and stared down At the lights coming on, in the white rooms.
The Musicians Wife

And always, when I came back to my sister's I used to get out the records

Repeat 4 times

Ob.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

D.B. I
The Musicians Wife

you made The year before all your terrible trouble, The records the critics praised and nobody bought
The Musicians Wife

That are almost worn out now.

Now, sometimes I wake in

Repeat 4 times
The Musicians Wife

Ob.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

D.B. I

the night And hear the sound of dead leaves Against the shutters. And then a distant Music stars, a
The Musicians Wife

music out of an abyss, And it is dawn before I sleep again.
Gradually get faster and faster until end
The Musicians Wife

Ob.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

D.B. I
Ob.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vc. I

Vc. II

Vc. III

D.B. I

D.B. II

\( \frac{q}{c} \approx 450 \)
The Road Not Taken

Adagio \( \frac{\cdot}{\cdot} = 30 \)

III

Voice

Vln. I

Vln. II

Cello II

Vc. III

D.B. II

p dolce

p dolce

p dolce

p dolce

p dolce
Two Roads divered in a yellow wood
and sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
And both that morning equally lay
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,
I doubted if I should ever come back

then took the other, as just as fair,
In leaves no step had trodden back
Oh, I kept the first for another day
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same.
I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -
I took the one less traveled by,
and that has made all the difference.
Lessons

IV

Lessons of war and death to those I love, That they readily meet invasions, when they come.

Stronger Lessons

V

Have you learned lessons only of those who admired you and were tender with you, and stood aside for you?

Have you not learned great lessons of those who rejected you, braced themselves against you?

Or who treated you with contempt, or disputed passage with you?
Stronger Lessons
Oh Me! Oh Life!
VI

Gradually increase dynamic starting very quietly and ending as loud as possible
Oboe

Voice

Vln. I

Vln. II

Cello II

Vc. IV

Ob.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vc. II

Vc. IV

O me! O life! of the questions of these recurring, Of the endless trains of
the faithless, of cities fill'd with the foolish, Of Myself forever reproaching myself, (for who more
foolish than I, and who more faithless?) Of eyes that vainly crave the light, of the objects mean of

the struggle ever renew'd, Of the poor results of all, of the plodding and sordid crowds I see around
me of the empty and useless years of the rest, with the rest of me intertwined,
The question, O Me! so sad recurring - What good amid these, O me, O Life?
(Solo)

Answer: That you are here -
that life exists and identity,
That powerful play goes on,
and you may contribute a verse