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A Northwest American Sound in Classical Music

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Abstract

For my poster presentation, I will have a form chart of the composition, visually representing the overall form of the piece. The form chart will include important harmonies that are prevalent throughout the composition. I will also highlight the juxtaposition of the piano and viola as well as the ametric tendency of this composition. Additional visuals will include representative sections of the notated music score. I will include the sheet music in its entirety, color coded to match the form chart for quick and easy reference. A large part of the presentation will be the qualitative data that went into this composition such as my background growing up in the woods of western Oregon, as well as my cultural/musical influences that permeate this piece. I will provide photos to support this information. I will also provide a comparative analysis of other classical composers in the Northwest region to highlight some stylistic traits of composers in this region.

A Northwest American Sound in Classical Music

Allen Skirvin

Background

The music you'll hear in this presentation is inspired by my upbringing in the woods of the Pacific Northwest.

Techniques to Listen for

1. The music rarely has a sense of meter. Music of this type is called "ametric" and is meant to embody the spontaneity of nature.
2. The string part sounds very fiddly, with lots of double stops and slides.
3. Listen for the stark contrast in style between the piano and viola
4. There is a section halfway through the composition where the viola is loosely imitating country yodeling, can you hear it?
5. Does the music at times sound conversational to you?

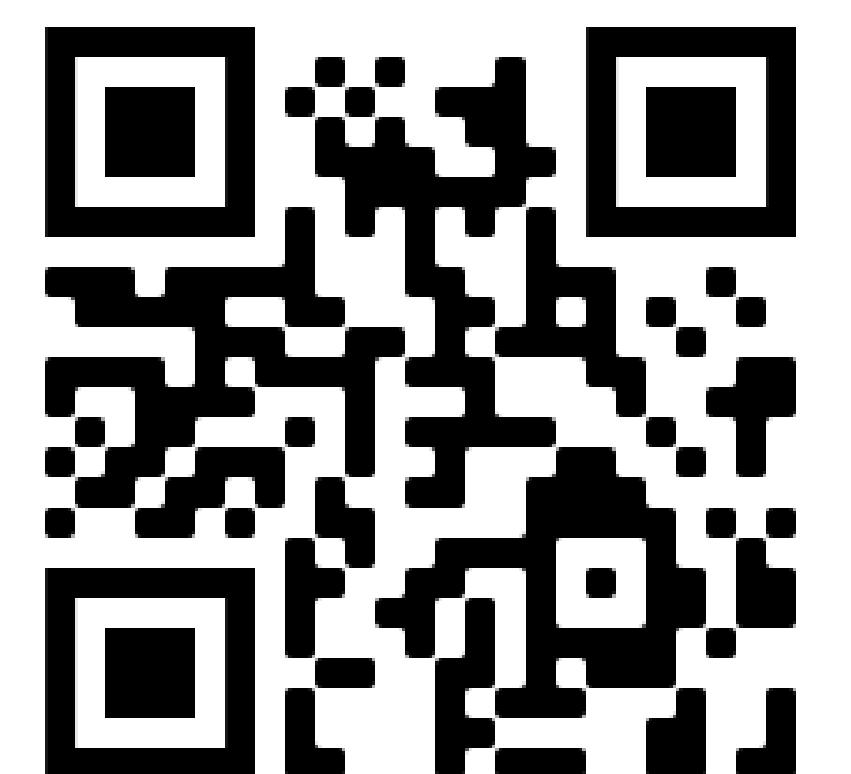
But don't take my word for it! Here is link to the composition. Let me know what you think!
<https://youtu.be/Oqeyw2CwzrE>

“Composers are like the flora of cultures, creating landscapes suited for their climates.”



The Compositional Process of this Piece

- My music tends to be based in heavy improvisation with no preconceived direction.
- Rather than an organized outline of scales, chords, and rhythms, musical ideas passively drift into my conscious through stories of my past, and the pastoral imagery that complements it.
- I tend to think conversationally when writing music. I approach musical phrases with the mindset of, “how would I say this?” versus, “how would I play this?”



Contact

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Mentors

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“My music is imperfect, but embodies the northwest.”



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY