

A PRESENTATION OF WORLD MUSICAL STYLES ON THE WESTERN BOEHM FLUTE

By

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Artist Statement

Long prior to planning my senior recital I mentioned to my flute professor, who would become my mentor for the Senior Honors Project, that I was interested in the music of other cultures. She mentioned the term ‘ethnomusicology’ to me, but at the time I wasn’t familiar with that field. This became the central point upon which I built my project. My goal was to introduce to the audience music that did not meet their expectations of Western flute repertoire, and to challenge their preconceptions about flute music.

Program Guide

Sunlight on Mountain Tian reflects the Chinese culture of composer Huang Huwei through notation applicable to the Western Boehm flute. In ancient China, one role of music was considered to be to increase the harmony between humans and the natural universe (Witzleben, 1998). The importance of connection and harmony with nature was enhanced in Chinese culture by the presence of the Daoist philosophical tradition, for “in early Daoism, music is discussed as a communicative link between humans and nature, one innocent of artifice and artificiality. Consequently, music and dance are instruments of self-cultivation that bring us closer to nature around and within us” (DeWoskin, 1998, p. 97). Huang Huwei continues to connect music and nature even by the simple act of titling his piece after Tian Shan (Heavenly Mountains), a mountain range on the Northwest border of China.

Sunlight on Mountain Tian also acts as a mixture of stylistic forms developed during the twentieth century for the *dizi*, a traditional Chinese transverse flute. Drawing upon elements of the theme and variations form found in the first stylistic period (1949-1960) and the middle period’s (1960-1978) characteristics of using regional music as a base, incorporation of elements

of nationalism, as well as the additions of an introductory cadenza and coda, the composer infused quintessentially Chinese elements into his music for the Western flute (Lau, 1998).

Night Music, published in 2001, is intended to reflect elements of the “Indian flute folk music played by young boys in the night markets of Delhi” (International Opus). The composer, Vanraj Bhatia, was originally trained in Indian *raga* music, but later in life studied classical Western composition, and is a living composer who writes for Indian art films. He utilizes aspects of both cultures within *Night Music*. Indian classical music utilizes two methods of expressing rhythm; metered and unmetered. Indian *tablā* (a traditional Indian membranophone) performer, Swapan Chauduri, described the origin of Indian rhythms as

“from speech patterns, which were made into poetic meters, and then classified according to types. These became spoken as abstract syllables, grouped into types containing short (given a count of 1) and long (given a count of 2) syllables...these poetic meters were the systematic combination of long and short vowel sounds, which in turn was translated into rhythmic language” (Ruckert, 2004, 40).

Each movement of *Night Music* includes a time signature, but notes from the composer, indications of “*poco tenuto*” or “*rush*” and instructions regarding length of fermatas all play a role in creating the illusion of a lack of meter in first, second, and final movements. The third movement, *Dance (7 + 10)*, stands out with a distinct rhythmic emphasis, but remains unfamiliar to audience members accustomed to Western rhythmic patterns, with alternating meters of 7/16 and 10/16 that accentuate the sixteenth note value, rather than the quarter or eighth that is more common to Western music.

Concerto No. 7 in e minor by Francois Devienne represents the control piece against which the audience may compare the other pieces against. The concerto represents accepted Western classical music best of the recital repertoire, for the tonality, meter, and communication between the orchestra and soloist follow Western standards. Written in 1787, Devienne wrote in the style of the period by opening the concerto with an exposition by the orchestra (or, in the case of the recital, the piano) without the soloist, before writing the solo to enter and gradually take over a new theme.

The final three pieces on the program, *Sonata para Flauta e Piano*, *Sonata Latino*, and *Histoire du Tango*, each featured different elements of Latin American music. *Sonata para Flauta e Piano* was written by Mozart Camargo Guarnieri of Brazil, and has rhythmic and melodic patterns similar to the Brazilian *chôro*. The *chôro* generally refers to urban instrumental ensemble music with a soloist, and was developed in the late nineteenth century; one of the first *chôros* was written by composer and flutist Joaquim Antonio da Silva Callado (Béhague, 2001). *Chôro* elements featured in *Sonata para Flauta e Piano* include the contrapuntal melodies of the flute and piano and the broken chord patterns throughout the piece, usually in the left hand of the piano, but occasionally appearing in the flute line as well.

Sonata Latino, though titled in reference to Latin American music, and featuring such Latin elements as the 2:3 clave rhythm, emphasis of the off-beat, and an optional improvisatory section, was composed by American Mike Mower. Mower studied classical flute in London, but also plays clarinet and saxophone, and has a strong background in jazz (Mower). He fused aspects of American jazz with Latin music, condensing rhythms that would normally be played between four or more instruments (i.e. claves, bongo, cajón, piano, trumpets) into a score playable by flute and piano, though an arrangement for flute soloist and salsa band has also been written.

The final selection of the recital program is a twentieth century duet for flute and guitar by Argentinian Astor Piazzolla, *Histoire du Tango* (History of the Tango). Tango refers to both a rhythmic pattern and a dance, and in his four movement work, Piazzolla spans, appropriate to the title, the history of the tango. The first movement, Bordel 1900 is written with the duple meter 2/4 influence of the habañera and *milongai*, and as historically the tango more frequently adopted the 4/4 meter, so too do the following movements of *Histoire du Tango* (Béhague, 1998). Each movement of Piazzolla's flute and guitar duet is titled in reference to the locations where the tango was acceptably performed; initially, around the beginning of the twentieth century, the tango was too risqué for any performance venue other than bordels. As the tango increased in popularity, the public accepted it into café venues in the 1930s, and in the 1960s, nightclubs.

Each piece performed for my senior flute recital was selected with the purpose of representing styles of music from a variety of cultures, beyond the repertoire of classical and contemporary Western society. Though the final half of the program represents music of Latin America, each piece is unique to the region in which it was performed. This emphasizes marked differences between countries that many outside of the area consider to be a singular geographic and cultural region, despite that the distance between Argentina and Brazil is greater than that of the distance from the United States to Mexico.

Reflection

Knowledge beyond the generalities of Western music was necessary to accurately portray the unique elements of each of the pieces of the recital. In addition to listening to recordings of each recital piece, I expanded my listening repertoire to include twentieth century Chinese compositions, for traditional and Western instruments, traditional Indian flute music, of both the folk and art traditions, and many recordings of additional pieces by Guarnieri and Piazzolla.

Listening to these recordings allowed me to comprehend more than the technical aspects of each piece, and be able to articulate the musical characteristics idiosyncratic to the cultures. Music is as much a product of culture as it is a factor that shapes culture. Though styles may differ across cultures and continents, it is possible to connect the music of cultures to allow audiences to experience unfamiliar music in a manner that is more familiar, either by instrument or style.

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