

Transition Notes

I have heard it said that autobiographical compositions are at a disadvantage because they face difficulty in transcending the composer. Even though this work is a conscious effort on my part to depict my struggle after graduation, my hope is that the emotional journey is relatable, and therefore can become anyone's story. After all, at some point – every person faces the unknown in his or her life.

Transition contains three musical Themes, each of which are presented as “snapshots” in the prelude without pause. The piece proper then highlights the movement between and arrival at each Theme.

Theme I, presented at the beginning of the prelude and end of the piece proper, is meant to be heard as a prayer – a two-way conversation between the oboe (representing a human's voice) and the piano (representing God's voice). The hymn *Be Thou My vision* is heard in fragments until the end where it is heard in its full form. Theme I expresses the idea of seeking direction from God, though not always being in tune with Him. In the prelude, this is presented as polytonal (in the simultaneous key of Db and B) to reflect the incongruous nature of praying with a personal agenda.

Theme II is a Tango, whose roots are found in the Argentinean dance of seduction. This theme is meant to convey a person trying to manipulate their circumstances, in an attempt to carry out their will. In the prelude, the oboe first plays the melody seemingly in d minor – but at the end of the cadence (thanks to the piano) finds itself in g minor. In both the prelude and piece proper, the oboe plays long spurts of monologue, always trying to convince the audience that the music is in d minor. At the entrance of Theme III in both instances however, we find the music in G Ionian, and eventually G Lydian and F Lydian.

Theme III is played primarily by the piano, and is a bright and exciting place of arrival! Despite the oboe's efforts in Theme II, the music ends up in this much different place – somewhere much better than what was intended. Theme III highlights the Lydian mode, which being the brightest of the 7 modes based on the major scale, represents light and life. The oboe's musical role is present and melodically pleasing, but is also clearly carried by the wave of energetic figures from the piano.

The piece proper ends with Theme I, this time with the oboe and piano playing in the same key center of Db. The final line heard from the oboe is the last phrase of the hymn *Be Thou My Vision*, whose lyrics are “waking or sleeping, thy presence, my light.”

Haley Woodrow is a composer, educator and trumpet player. Haley earned a Master's of Music in composition from Texas Christian University in 2016 and served as Orchestra Director and Arranger for Cornerstone Baptist Church from 2006-2013. She has been commissioned by the Kenosha Community Foundation and the Texas Christian University Trombone Summit, and has been commissioned to write works for soloists such as Steve Norrell (Metropolitan Opera bass trombonist). Her chamber works have been sold and performed worldwide.