



November 2008

Mission Statement

MELOS MUSIC is an organization of five composers who collaborate to promote, publish, and disseminate their music to as wide an audience as possible.

Our common interests lie in a deep-rooted passion for music and collaboration with conductors, instrumentalists, vocalists and composers.

Comprising our growing catalog are dozens of pieces spanning a wide variety of aesthetic styles and instrumentation.

- Chin Ting
"Patrick" Chan

Jason McChristian

Mark DeSimone

Daniel Foley

Jason Thorpe
Buchanan



Introduction

Greetings from Patrick, Jason, Mark, Dan and Jason! The five of us are excited to tell you that we've formed an organization called Melos Music, and this newsletter will be a brief periodical update of our various musical activities. In our newsletter we'll keep you informed about what we've been writing, who will be performing our works, and how you can participate. All of the music you read about is or will be available on our website - www.melosmusic.com - in digital and printed form. We invite you to explore our site and catalog, where you have access to lots of audio and video samples of many of our works. There is also detailed information about each work, including program notes, and composers' biographies. If you find yourself interested in purchasing a piece, we operate through PayPal and can email PDF files directly to you, or mail you printed copies.

Announcements

Mark will be producing and performing in his graduate composition recital on Saturday, May 2nd at 1:30PM in San José State University's concert hall. Steve Harreld and Keith Hunter will perform *Four Miniatures for Two Trombones*; Scot Gorman will sing Mark's art song, *Dry*; Cole Tutino, Lane Sanders and Harlan Otter will perform Mark's Master's thesis composition for Cello, Vibraphone and Piano; and the Cuivre Brass Quintet will perform a new work. Mark will also play two of his jazz compositions with a jazz combo: *Kim's Song* and *Bird's Eye View*. *Emperor Norton's Jazz Band* will close the concert with some classic Dixieland music.

New Works

Also, make sure to check the **Upcoming Performances** section for premiers of these pieces!

Chin Ting Chan

I have always tried to blend the sound of instruments from different families. In *Trio for Violin, Clarinet and Marimba*, the clarinet is really a mediator that softens the sound of a violin, and sustains the decay of a marimba. I have chosen the clarinet in A because of the slight darker color than the Bb clarinet and the lower possible notes. This piece also calls for a bass clarinet near the end for its low rumbling bass that fits particularly well with the low notes in marimba, and contrasts brilliantly with violin harmonics. With this combination of instruments, I have created infinite possibilities, where I can write music that spans well over five octaves and have no limitation on legato, staccato, wide leaps or even frequent meter changes. Therefore, in addition to tone color, rhythm is my main focus in this piece. There are many places throughout, where one instrument plays an ostinato in compound duple time while the other instruments are playing in simple triple time.

Jason Thorpe Buchanan

Six Shelley Songs were composed in the summer of 2008. Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) wrote these poems between 1814 and his unexpected death in 1822, when he drowned at sea. He is known for having been expelled from Oxford for distributing a pamphlet entitled *The Necessity of Atheism*. He was married twice, leaving his first wife shortly after having written *Away!*, later meeting Mary Shelley, soon to be author of *Frankenstein* and daughter of William Godwin, a literary figure whom Shelley idolized. He lost two of the three children he had with Mary Shelley between 1818 and 1819. His texts have been criticized for their seemingly abstract surface aesthetic, as well as being called "splendidly nebulous". With these six songs I have attempted to capture the essence of Shelley's writing and depict the well-crafted romantic imagery contained in these poems. I hope that in doing so I manage to show their "splendidly nebulous" nature in my music.

Daniel Foley

The Road not Taken is a six part a capella choral setting of the famous Robert Frost poem. The piece was composed during the summer of 2008.

During the summer of 2008, Daniel also completed *Os Justi* which is an eight part Latin a capella setting of Psalm 37 composed in a style

that somewhat hearkens back to the great cathedral music traditions of the Renaissance.

Daniel's percussion quintet, *Prelude and Java*, was premiered on October 16th by members of the San Jose State percussion studio in the San Jose State Concert Hall and will soon be considered by Melos for publication.

Currently, Daniel is working on a woodwind quintet in three movements which is expected to be completed soon. The quintet utilizes harmonies built on traditionally "non-consonant" intervals, strong rhythms, and heavy use of counterpoint.

Jason McChristian

From Four Papers for string quartet consists of four movements, each "inspired" by a prolific scientist. The scientists I chose, Stephen Jay Gould, Neil deGrasse Tyson, Charles Darwin, and Carl Sagan, are unique in their ability to convey the wonders of science to the general public and have had a profound effect on my own appreciation of science. I have chosen fragments from each of these "science ambassadors" writings, hoping to capture, in just a few words, the general attitude of the given movement.

Mark DeSimone

The *Four Miniatures* are the first parts of a larger collection of short pieces for two trombones. Each movement focuses on one of the many challenges inherent in trombone performance, as well as one of the instrument's unique strengths. The "Prelude" examines the bittersweet nature of the trombone slide, which gives each note the capacity for perfect intonation while providing the player with no shortcuts toward achieving that goal. In the "Invention" we see that the trombone can effect playful and humorous textures without resorting to the stereotypical glissando. In the "Interlude", the performers are required to hum while playing. This technique is uniquely effective on the instrument because the trombone's timbre so closely resembles that of the human voice. The "Caper" attempts to dispel, at least temporarily, the trombone's reputation as an inarticulate instrument, and takes full advantage of its capacity for theater and contrast.

Blogs/Articles

05.21.08 / 3:42pm PDT

In my blog on www.melosmusic.com you can expect to find thoughts, updates, and other ramblings on various subjects related to the music and composers on this website, so here's a little background about me. I am 27 years old, and the youngest of identical twins. I've been playing music since first grade, and writing since my sophomore year in high school. I studied bass trombone with Bill Booth at Cal State Northridge (CSUN), then took a few years off before pursuing my master's degree in composition at San Jose State. I've just finished my second out of three years at SJSU, and I'm looking forward to a very light course load next year as I work on my thesis composition.

CSUN has a pretty lively jazz department, and while I was there I couldn't help but take as many jazz courses and play in as many jazz groups as I could. My B.M. was in classical Trombone Performance, but I learned about jazz arranging and improv from Matt Harris and Gary Pratt, and even squeezed in a film composition course. I was fortunate enough to record *For Tom* (which is for sale through Melos) with the Jazz "A" Band at Capitol Records.

At San Jose State, in addition to modern compositional techniques I've been learning about recording techniques, principals of electroacoustic music, and along with other Melos members, I've also worked on the soundtrack for a feature-length movie called *We Bombed in Baghdad* which was written by SJSU professor Scott Sublett. Together we recorded, edited, mixed all aspects of sound for the picture, and it was a tremendous year-long learning experience. Now that classes are finished for the semester, I'll be working on my thesis, as well as several other projects that may find their way to this site. Also, since this is a new endeavor, we welcome any comments you might have on the site, the catalogue, or anything else.

- Mark DeSimone

07.11.08 / 10:32pm PDT

Dear Visitor,

First, I'd like to thank you for showing interest in the work of my colleagues and I. Music is something which is absolutely essential to all of us here at Melos and we hope that the music which we compose and perform may in some way enrich your own life. We have all strove to create music which is meaningful and communicates, in some way, the emotions of the human experience and we would like to share this music with anyone who is willing to listen. So, if you are interested in performing, commissioning, studying, or just enjoying one of our works, please do not hesitate.

On a more personal note, I'd like to tell you a little bit about myself and my musical experiences. I was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area of California. Currently, I am twenty one and I did not begin studying music until age seventeen when I, quite by chance, picked up a guitar and found that it did something for me. I am presently studying both classical guitar performance and composition at San Jose State University in northern California. Within the past two years I have fallen in love with classical choral music and, when given the opportunity, I tend to favor composing for classical guitar or choir as these are the two areas where my greatest musical passions lie.

With regards to my present musical activities, I recently completed a setting of Robert Frost's *The Road not Taken* for SATB choir. My current projects are a setting of the Latin text *Os Justi* for SATB chorus, a Gamelan inspired piece for solo guitar, a thus far untitled woodwind quintet, and an ongoing collection of concert studies for solo guitar. If for any reason you would like to contact me, please feel free and I welcome comments, suggestions, and commissions. Thank you again for visiting the Melos website and enjoy the music.

- Daniel Foley

08.22.08 / 2:27pm PDT

While researching subtitles for my String Quartet I began to wonder if the subject matter would offend anyone. Titled *From Four Papers*, this work consists of four movements, each of which is "inspired" by a prolific scientist. The scientists I chose, however, are unique in their ability to convey the wonders of science to the general public. Two in particular have had a profound effect on my own appreciation of science, Neil deGrasse Tyson and Carl Sagan. I have chosen fragments from each of these "science ambassador's" writings, hoping to capture in just a few words the general attitude of the given movement.

I have, however, also chosen Charles Darwin as the subject of my third movement, an excerpt from "Origin of the Species" in particular. My concern is that as a "new composer", and since some

people consider evolution a fabrication, I may have only compounded the already difficult task of acquiring musicians to perform the work. But, it did dawn on me that throughout history musicians have had to overlook the personal beliefs or strange behavior of the composer they are performing. A few cases come to mind 1) Richard Wagner's well-known anti-Semitism 2) The attitude of the Vienna Philharmonic's initial distain toward Mahler's 9 symphonies under Bernstein's baton. Though my work is not part of the standard repertory as say Wagner or Mahler (someday), perhaps those performers who would find evolution objectionable can put aside their disagreements with me and just perform the music, even if all it takes is a little encouragement from their wallet.

- Jason McChristian

08.24.08 / 2:25pm PDT

Hello, I am writing this posting to some degree as a response to Jason McChristian's previous blog posting. As artists of any kind, part of the job description is to raise questions and or provide the participant with an experience, whether visual or aural, that stimulates the mind and brings feelings to the surface that may not have otherwise been there. Within any discipline of the arts, any work with depth or content that raises the big question(s) will inevitably offend somebody. There isn't any way around it, nor should there be in my humble opinion. Whether or not you agree with what an artist has to say, their job is to provoke thoughts and emotions, positive or negative, for better or worse, bottom line. Anything controversial is bound to encounter obstacles, but regardless of your own personal belief, art work that pushes boundaries is a necessity and should have the support of performers as well as audience members. Without support, the artist living in fear of offending someone will discontinue the production of stimulating artwork. Usually, the things that make us uncomfortable are the things that hit closest to home, which should be the target of any artist worth a second glance. If everyone were comfortable, then where does that put us?

A little background information, I just finished my undergraduate study at San Jose State University and was awarded outstanding graduating senior. I left the program with two degrees, a B.M in Composition and a B.A. in Music Technology, as well as a minor in Film. I was also recently offered a part-time instructor teaching assistantship at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where I will be pursuing graduate study in composition and conducting, as well as teaching two music theory courses.

- Jason Thorpe Buchanan

Upcoming Performances

Six Shelley Songs by Jason Thorpe Buchanan

World Premiere

Nicole Yazolino - Soprano, University of Nevada, Las Vegas Recital Hall

November 2, 7:00pm

The Great Appetite of Garuda by Jason McChristian

World Premiere

San José State University Concert Hall Brass Ensemble, SJSU Concert Hall

November 18, 7:30pm

In Darkness Let Me Dwell by John Dowland, Arranged by Jason Thorpe Buchanan

World Premiere

University of Nevada, Las Vegas Brass Ensemble, UNLV Recital Hall

November 24, 7:00pm

A Zarzuela & Other Lost Works by Jason Thorpe Buchanan

World Premiere

Tad Wind Symphony - Takayoshi "Tad" Suzuki, Conductor

Ota Kumin Hall Apuriko, June 11, 2009,

7:00JST Tokyo, Japan