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Complete List of Works and Performances

By Opus Number (Chronological)

Op. 1 - Five Vignettes for Piano

- 1 – **Clouds**, 2" (January 2018)
- 2 – **Chasm**, 2" (February 2018)
- 3 – **Tower**, 3" (February 2018)
- 4 – **Thoroughfare**, 2" (February 2018)
- 5 – **Squall**, 2" (March 2018)

Op. 2 - Aftermath, for euphonium and piano, 2" (March 2018)

Op. 3 - Nocturne No. 1, "Excursion," for piano, 6" (April - May 2018)

Op. 4 - The Monomyth, in five movements for two euphoniums and piano, 10"
(June - December 2018)

Op. 5 - people let people, for SATB chorus, 4" (February 2019)
- commissioned by Jan Kim

Op. 6 - String Quartet No. 1, "Cobalt," 4" (January - March 2019)

Op. 7 - Fantasia on a Theme of Purcell, for two violins, 2" (March 2019)

Op. 8 - Analysis Paralysis, for clarinet, marimba, and cello, 2" (April 2019)

Op. 9 - Precipice, for string quartet, 2" (June 2019)

Op. 10 - Two Pieces for Viola

- 1 - **Triptych Visions**, in three movements, 5" (March 2019)*
- 2 - **Rhapsody on 3 and 4th**, 7" (November 2019)

*movement 1 written in November 2018

Op. 11 - The Albatross and the Seal, in two movements for jazz sextet and chamber orchestra, 14" (July 2019 - January 2020)

Op. 12 - Viridian Horizons, for SATB sax quartet, 5" (February 2020 - March 2020)
- commissioned by Invicta Sax Quartet

Op. 13 - Pegasi Delta, for metal group and large orchestra, 4"
(April 2020 - May 2020)

Op. 14 - Three Textural Études for Piano

1 - **Saturday Morning**, 3" (December 2018 - January 2019)

2 - **Rush**, 2" (July - August 2019)

3 - **Boiling Point**, 4" (May 2020 - June 2020) - commissioned by Jacob Mason

Op. 15 - Three Miniatures for Harmonium - commissioned by Jacob Mason

1 - **Antiphonal Woolgathering**, 3" (March 2020 - April 2020)

2 - **Regulus**, 1" (May 2020)

3 - **Lament for a Modern Medusa**, 2" (June 2020)

Op. 16 - Piano Suite No. 1, "Arcadia," in eight movements, 23"
(December 2019 - October 2020) - commissioned by Aaron Petit

Op. 17 - Stellar Remnants, in three movements for bass clarinet and marimba
(November 2020 - ?), unfinished

Op. 18 - Crystal Cavern, for flute, guitar, and fixed media (November 2020 - ?),
unfinished

By Genre

Orchestra

Op. 11 - The Albatross and the Seal, in two movements for jazz sextet and chamber orchestra, 14" (July 2019 - January 2020)

Op. 13 - Pegasi Delta, for metal group and large orchestra, 4"
(April 2020 - May 2020)

Chamber

Op. 2 - Aftermath, for euphonium and piano, 2" (March 2018)

Op. 4 - The Monomyth, in five movements for two euphoniums and piano, 10"

(June - December 2018)

Op. 6 - String Quartet No. 1, "Cobalt," 4" (January - March 2019)

Op. 7 - Fantasia on a Theme of Purcell, for two violins, 2" (March 2019)

Op. 8 - Analysis Paralysis, for clarinet, marimba, and cello, 2" (April 2019)

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Keyboard

Op. 1 - Five Vignettes for Piano

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- 5 - **Squall,** 2" (March 2018)

Op. 3 - Nocturne No. 1, "Excursion," for piano, 6" (April - May 2018)

Op. 14 - Three Textural Études for Piano

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Solo Instrumental

Op. 10 - Two Pieces for Viola

- 1 - **Triptych Visions,** in three movements, 5" (March 2019)*
- 2 - **Rhapsody on 3 and 4th,** 7" (November 2019)

*movement 1 written in November 2018

Choral:

Op. 5 - people let people, for SATB chorus, 4" (February 2019)
- commissioned by Jan Kim

In Progress:

Op. 17 - Stellar Remnants, in three movements for bass clarinet and marimba
(November 2020 - ?)

Op. 18 – Crystal Cavern, for flute, guitar, and fixed media (November 2020 - ?)

Performances/Premieres

April 7th, 2018: **Five Vignettes for Piano, Op. 1: No. 1, "Clouds," and No. 2, "Chasm"** premiered by Kevin Knowles at St. Bede Chapel, University of Miami, in Coral Gables, FL

Sept. 18th, 2018: **Aftermath, Op. 2**, premiered by Jason Donnelly (euphonium) and Kevin Knowles (piano) at Clarke Recital Hall, University of Miami, in Coral Gables, FL

Oct. 12th, 2018: **Nocturne No. 1, "Excursion," Op. 3**, premiered by Lanjiabao Ge for KMA Call for Scores 2018 concert at Clarke Recital Hall, University of Miami, in Coral Gables, FL

April 27th, 2019: **Three Textural Études for Piano, Op. 14: No. 1, "Saturday Morning,"** premiered by Jacob Mason at St. Bede Chapel, University of Miami, in Coral Gables, FL

May 2nd, 2019: **Two Pieces for Viola, Op. 10: No. 1, "Triptych Visions,"** premiered by Wynne Owre at St. Bede Chapel, University of Miami, in Coral Gables, FL

June 22nd, 2019: **String Quartet No. 1, "Cobalt," Op. 6**, premiered by Beo String Quartet for 2019 Charlotte New Music Festival at Plaza Midwood Tattoo in Charlotte, NC

June 29th, 2019: **Precipice, Op. 9**, premiered by Beo String Quartet for 2019 Charlotte New Music Festival at Crown Station in Charlotte, NC

Nov. 12, 2019: **Three Textural Études for Piano, Op. 14: No. 2, "Rush,"** premiered by Jacob Mason at St. Bede Chapel, University of Miami, in Coral Gables, FL

Feb. 3rd, 2020: **Five Vignettes for Piano, Op. 1: No. 2, "Chasm,"** performed by

Aaron Petit at Clarke Recital Hall, University of Miami, in Coral Gables, FL
 Feb. 27th, 2020: **The Albatross and the Seal, Op. 11**, premiered by Shawn Crouch (conductor), Shelly Berg (piano), Frost Stamps Brass Quintet 2020, Frost Stamps Jazz Quintet 2021, Frost Stamps String Quartet 2022, and Frost Stamps Woodwind Quintet 2023 for 2020 Frost All-Stamps Concert at Gusman Hall, University of Miami, in Coral Gables, FL
 Mar. 5th, 2020: **Two Pieces for Viola, Op. 10: No. 2, "Rhapsody on 3 and 4th,"** premiered by Dimitrios Floor at St. Bede Chapel, University of Miami, in Coral Gables, FL

Complete Compositional Information (Chronological)

Five Vignettes for Piano, Op. 1: No. 1, "Clouds"

Date Composed: January 2018

Instrumentation: solo piano

Duration: 2 min.

Program Notes:

A jazz influenced, neo-impressionistic work, "Clouds" was originally written without a specific extramusical concept in mind. However, as the compositional process continued, the idea of late afternoon cloud watching on a sunny hillside became attached to the work. The result is a piece that bears resemblance to the title concept but is not tethered to it completely. Organized in a simple binary form, "Clouds" exploits lopsided rhythms and extended harmonies to create an atmospheric and ephemeral mood.

Premiere: April 7th, 2018

Kevin Knowles, piano

St. Bede Chapel, University of Miami

Coral Gables, FL

Five Vignettes for Piano, Op. 1: No. 2, "Chasm"

Date Composed: February 2018

Instrumentation: solo piano

Duration: 2 min.

SoundCloud: <https://soundcloud.com/wesleythompsonmusic/vignette-no-2-chasm?in=wesleythompsonmusic/sets/compositions>

Program Notes:

Like its elder cousin “Clouds,” this work also was created without an extramusical concept in mind. However, as the piece developed, the open fifth harmonies began to conjure up images of standing alone at the edge of a yawning abyss. Leaning into this element, “Chasm” attempts to replicate the sense of fear and loneliness that is associated with such a location. Additional inspiration was drawn from the music of *Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Sky*.

Premiere: April 7th, 2018
 Kevin Knowles, piano
 St. Bede Chapel, University of Miami
 Coral Gables, FL

Five Vignettes for Piano, Op. 1: No. 3, “Tower”

Date Composed: February 2018
 Instrumentation: solo piano
 Duration: 3 min.

Program Notes:

While the first two Vignettes began their lives without an extramusical concept in mind, “Tower” attached itself to an image from the beginning. Paying homage to grimdark fantasy settings, the piece paints a picture of an ominous black spire overlooking a ruined wasteland. A ragged group of heroes vainly struggles to climb the tower’s blasted ramparts while a dark lord initiates a ritual to plunge the realm into a state of undeath. Musically, a quote from the opening to the menacing third movement from Maurice Ravel’s piano suite *Gaspard de la nuit* sets the tone while heavy cluster chords and jagged melodic lines provide additional ambiance in crafting this sinister atmosphere.

Five Vignettes for Piano, Op. 1: No. 4, “Thoroughfare”

Date Composed: February 2018
 Instrumentation: solo piano
 Duration: 2 min.

Continuing the fantasy trend that “Tower” started, “Thoroughfare” conjures up images of a bustling village street. Horses, peasants, and guards form a claustrophobic throng that the piece weaves through, and everything comes to a clattering halt as a cart carrying barrels of mead crashes to the ground. Rhythmically complex, “Thoroughfare” utilizes rapid chord changes and syncopation to illustrate a chaotic atmosphere while still remaining relatively lighthearted.

Five Vignettes for Piano, Op. 1: No. 5, "Squall"

Date Composed: March 2018

Instrumentation: solo piano

Duration: 2 min.

Program Notes:

While not immediately recognizable as being drawn from a fantasy setting like "Tower" and "Thoroughfare" are, this piece is a reference to my long running D&D campaign where my friends' characters were forced to navigate a vicious cyclone at sea in order to reach a mystical tropical paradise. The piece utilizes rapid ascending and descending scales that change modally in order to represent the surging waves and currents. The placid middle section is a nod to the eye of a hurricane, where serenity reigns in spite of the surrounding storm.

Aftermath, Op. 2

Date Composed: March 2018

Instrumentation: euphonium and piano

Duration: 2 min.

SoundCloud: <https://soundcloud.com/wesleythompsonmusic/aftermath-euphonium-and-piano?in=wesleythompsonmusic/sets/compositions>

Program Notes:

Aftermath had its beginnings as an exercise in musical quotation (the quotation being the main melody from Debussy's Arabesque No. 1) as well as a first attempt at writing for the euphonium. However, the piece quickly took on a life beyond its origin. It gradually builds in intensity, with the quoted melody appearing more frequently, until it reaches a climax and reprises the material from the opening. The piece evokes sorrowful and melancholic images of places ravaged by tragedies such as war and famine.

Premiere: September 18th, 2018

Jason Donnelly, euphonium

Kevin Knowles, piano

Clarke Recital Hall, University of Miami

Coral Gables, FL

Nocturne No. 1, "Excursion," Op. 3

Date Composed: April 2018 - May 2018

Instrumentation: solo piano

Duration: 6 min.

SoundCloud: <https://soundcloud.com/wesleythompsonmusic/nocturne-no-1-excursion?in=wesleythompsonmusic/sets/compositions>

Program Notes:

I find late night traveling, whether by foot, car, or plane, to be a prime opportunity for listening to quiet music and doing some introspective thinking. Unfortunately, partaking in such an endeavor makes the thinker susceptible to melancholy. Inspired by the conflicting emotions that arise during these after-hour excursions, I composed my first nocturne in an attempt to make peace with my evening thoughts while simultaneously celebrating the context in which they took place.

Premiere: October 12th, 2018

Lanjiabao Ge, piano

Clarke Recital Hall, University of Miami

Coral Gables, FL

The Monomyth, Op. 4

Date Composed: June 2018 - December 2018

Instrumentation: two euphoniums and piano

Duration: 10 min.

Movements:

I – Outset, 2" (two euphoniums and piano)

II – Expedition, 2" (euphonium and piano)

III – Doubt, 2" (solo euphonium)

IV - Loss... and Resolve, 2" (two euphoniums)

V – Confrontation, 2" (two euphoniums and piano)

Program Notes:

The Monomyth is a multi-movement work for two euphoniums and piano that pays tribute to the hero's journey, or monomyth. A common narrative trope, the hero's journey revolves around a central hero or heroine that leaves home to go on an adventure, face a trial, confront their inner demons, and return triumphantly changed. In this musical take on the monomyth, the first euphonium represents the hero and ties the movements together. Each movement is a different segment of the journey and uses varying compositional techniques to depict the way the hero changes over time. The one area where the piece branches off from its source material, however, is its ending. In the final movement, the hero confronts the decisive crisis, and it is up to the listener to decide whether he or she returns home victorious!

people let people, Op. 5

Date Composed: February 2019

Instrumentation: SATB chorus

Duration: 4 min.

Lyricist: Jan Kim

Commissioner: Jan Kim

Program Notes:

Drawing inspiration from the poem of the same name by Jan Kim, *people let* explores the trauma that humans inflict on one another through their actions. In this case, sometimes the worst forms of damage can be at the hands of the ones that claim to love us. The piece aims to explore this love-hate conflict through its usage of extended harmony and parallel motion with a focus on unexpected resolutions. It is divided into three contrasting sections, each focused on a particular theme that is tied to that section of the poem. The piece ends in an ambiguous yet somewhat uplifting manner, reflecting the dream that the greater good within people might eventually win out despite the violence present within our nature.

String Quartet No. 1, "Cobalt," Op. 6

Date Composed: January 2019 - March 2019

Instrumentation: string quartet

Duration: 4 min.

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBJrI88SiYw>

SoundCloud: <https://soundcloud.com/wesleythompsonmusic/string-quartet-no-1-cobalt>

Program Notes:

A love letter to heavy metal music, this piece attempts to combine the genre's rhythms, timbres, and gestures with neo-impressionist harmonies and improvisatory flair. The result is a work featuring electric guitar-esque riffs and runs, extreme dynamic changes, and a healthy mix of both lyrical and screeching melodies. Extended techniques are utilized to mimic whammy bar dive bombs, death growls/shrieks, and amplifier feedback. Structurally, the work is organized in a pseudo-ternary form, with an extended coda at the end. However, each section was inspired by traditional metal songwriting ideas (intro, riff, verse, chorus, bridge, etc). The coda is a not-so-subtle attempt at a breakdown similar to something one might find in a metalcore song!

Premiere: June 22nd, 2019

Beo String Quartet

Plaza Midwood Tattoo

Charlotte, NC

Fantasia on a Theme of Purcell, Op. 7

Date Composed: March 2019

Instrumentation: two violins

Duration: 2 min.

Program Notes:

This short piece melds the melody from Henry Purcell's famous rondeau with elements inspired by the soundtracks to video game franchises such as *Halo* and *The Elder Scrolls*. The piece is a traditional fantasia in the sense that it progresses between varied sections in an improvisatory style; however, all the motives and musical elements are presented in a shortened format in the first eight measures of the piece. These elements are then extrapolated on in the latter half.

Analysis Paralysis, Op. 8

Date Composed: April 2019

Instrumentation: clarinet, marimba, and cello

Duration: 2 min.

Program Notes:

When faced with a difficult decision, I am rather prone to the perils of overthinking. I twist and turn a situation around in my mind, trying to analyze every possible outcome in order to make the correct decision. Unfortunately, life does not always have a correct decision. As such, I often find myself caught between two equally undesirable choices, and my anxiety over such a situation commonly leads me to make no decision at all. This condition, I recently learned, is called "analysis paralysis." In regard to this piece, the main motif initially presented by the marimba is turned around over and over in various patterns and passed between different instruments. While it may sound like the motif is being developed, the reality is that by the end of the piece, much like the title concept, no true progress has been achieved.

Precipice, Op. 9

Date Composed: June 2019

Instrumentation: string quartet

Duration: 2 min.

SoundCloud: <https://soundcloud.com/wesleythompsonmusic/precipice-string-quartet?in=wesleythompsonmusic/sets/compositions>YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lbeuqoGpLRY>

Program Notes:

Inspired by composer Kevin Penkin's score to the anime *Made in Abyss*, I sought to write a lyrical piece for string quartet that was horizontally focused. The end result contains elements of impressionist harmonies along with rhythmic syncopations that hint at heavy metal. Regarding the title, I kept remembering scenes from *Made in Abyss* where the protagonists are standing on the edge of the titular crevasse, contemplating how to plumb its perilous depths.

Premiere: June 29th, 2019
 Beo String Quartet
 Crown Station
 Charlotte, NC

Two Pieces for Viola, Op. 10: No. 1, "Triptych Visions"

Date Composed: March 2019 (movement I written in November 2018)
 Instrumentation: solo viola
 Duration: 5 min.

Movements:

I - Andante con moto, 1"
 II - Molto larghissimo con affetto, 3"
 III - Vivace furioso, 1"

Program Notes:

In the spirit of John Coltrane (among others), this work explores relationships in thirds. Each movement uses this concept to create a unique sound world, with the connection that everything is related by major and minor thirds in varying combinations. Beyond this, the piece keeps to relatively strict triple meters that vary wildly in tempo between movements. Each movement is sectional, quasi-improvisational, and uses extended techniques to explore the rich timbres the viola has to offer. The first movement is jumpy and paranoid, the second extremely slow and expressive, and the third is a pseudo *moto perpetuo* that is highly virtuosic and aggressive. I observed that, when staring at one panel of a triptych mirror for long enough, the brain would twist and distort the images in the other mirrors into fantastic shapes. The dichotomy in tone between the three movements (yet their interconnected atmosphere) reflects this observation.

Premiere: May 2nd, 2019
 Wynne Owre, viola
 St. Bede Chapel, University of Miami
 Coral Gables, FL

Two Pieces for Viola, Op. 10: No. 2, "Rhapsody on 3 and 4th"

Date Composed: November 2019

Instrumentation: solo viola

Duration: 7 min.

YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qGx9pXtu14>

SoundCloud - <https://soundcloud.com/wesleythompsonmusic/rhapsody-on-3-and-4th-solo-viola?in=wesleythompsonmusic/sets/compositions>

Program Notes:

Rhapsody on 3 and 4th is a technical showpiece that explores timbral shifts and contrapuntal playing on the viola. It is organized into five contrasting sections around three pitch centers (C, F, and Bb) and two main motivic/melodic ideas that are the basis for the first two sections, respectively. The title originates from these three pitch centers and the interval of a 4th, from which the majority of the fast, progressive rock-inspired riffs are constructed.

Premiere: March 5th, 2020

Dimitrios Floor, viola

St. Bede Chapel, University of Miami

Coral Gables, FL

The Albatross and the Seal, Op. 11

Date Composed: July 2019 - January 2020

Instrumentation: jazz sextet and chamber orchestra

Duration: 14 min.

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YVPCxGyFXpl>

Full Soundcloud Single: <https://soundcloud.com/wesleythompsonmusic/sets/the-albatross-and-the-seal-jazz-sextet-and-chamber-orchestra>

Movements:

I – Passacaglia (The Albatross), 6"

II - Fantasia (The Seal), 8"

Program Notes:

The Albatross and the Seal, written in 2020 for the Frost Stamps Scholarship ensembles' yearly concert together, is the encapsulation of the best and worst aspects of undergraduate music school life. On one hand, there is the frenetic busyness, monotony, and stress that dominates a student's daily experience; this is illustrated by the loud and boisterous Passacaglia. On the other, there is the fear, uncertainty, and joy that comes with the goal of turning your passion into a profession; the Fantasia attempts to bring these complex feelings to life. Both movements have their own defining motives (the odd meter figure played by the brass at the beginning of the Passacaglia and the swelling gesture played

by the woodwinds at the beginning of the Fantasia) that intrinsically tie these two states of being together via their presence throughout the complete work.

“Albatross” is often used as a synonym for stress and corresponds with the first movement. Meanwhile, in many seafaring cultures from modernity and history, seals symbolize dreams, creativity, and a willingness to let life take you where it will; this is represented by the second movement. Both animals are commonly found in the world's southern oceans and depend on many of the same environmental conditions to survive, even though one is a bird and the other is a sea mammal. As such, they are the perfect figurative analog to the emotions embedded within the work's core.

Premiere: February 27th, 2020
 Shawn Crouch, conductor
 Shelly Berg, piano
 Frost Stamps Brass Quintet 2020
 Frost Stamps Jazz Quintet 2021
 Frost Stamps String Quartet 2022
 Frost Stamps Woodwind Quintet 2023
 Gusman Hall, University of Miami
 Coral Gables, FL

Viridian Horizons, Op. 12

Date Composed: February 2020 - March 2020
 Instrumentation: sax quartet (SATB)
 Duration: 5 min.
 Commissioner: Invicta Sax Quartet

Program Notes:

While I do not possess synesthesia to the extremes of such composers as Messiaen or Ligeti, I definitely associate chords and keys with specific colors. In regard to keys specifically (or scales/modes), the more sharps or flats present, the greener the sound's color tends to be. Additionally, an abundance of sharps creates bright music, while flat heavy music tends to be more muted and darker. *Viridian Horizons* attempts to explore this relationship by combining the chartreuse and pistachio colors associated with the pitch centers of C# and B (four sharps and two sharps respectively) with the azure blue of the pitch center C (three flats). In the process, the titular viridian color is created. Additional inspiration for the work was taken from the soundtrack to the Winter 2020 anime *Somali and the Forest Spirit*, in which the horizon features as a background thematic element.

Pegasi Delta, Op. 13

Date Composed: April 2020 - May 2020

Instrumentation: metal group (two electric guitars, bass guitar, and drum kit) and large orchestra

Duration: 4 min.

Program Notes:

A long-standing dream of mine has been to meld the performance practices of heavy metal music with traditional notation and other Western art music techniques. I envision writing for eight string guitars, expanded progressive metal drum kits, and synthesizer keyboards in the same way as I write for string quartet or piano. The pinnacle of this dream would be to write for large orchestra and heavy metal group, with the group either functioning in a soloist capacity or as a part of the orchestra itself. *Pegasi Delta* is my first step into this new territory.

The piece revolves around a pentatonic, fourths-based riff that I initially used in an older, now defunct, piece for solo double bass. In its new guise, the riff gives the piece a propulsive energy pushed further by driving drum kit rhythms, lyrical melodies in the strings, and chunky/cloudy accompaniments by the brass and woodwinds, respectively. The title is a reference to a bloody battle in the book *Ghosts of Onyx* from the *Halo* franchise. On the remote planet of Pegasi Delta, 300 Spartan-III's are sent on a suicide mission to destroy a pivotal Covenant refinery; only two members of the company survive.

Three Textural Études for Piano, Op. 14: No. 1, "Saturday Morning"

Date Composed: December 2018 - January 2019

Instrumentation: solo piano

Duration: 3 min.

SoundCloud: <https://soundcloud.com/wesleythompsonmusic/three-etudes-for-piano-op-14-no-1-saturday-morning?in=wesleythompsonmusic/sets/compositions>

Program Notes:

Early one wintery Saturday morning, I was locked in a particularly lucid dream where I was sat at the piano, fully aware that I was dreaming. Unable to wake or tear myself away from the instrument, I started to improvise and immediately came up with a pleasing melody and accompaniment. Shortly thereafter, I awoke in my bed with the early morning light just beginning to stream through the blinds. Recognizing that the inspiration would quickly disappear if I did not immediately record it, I wrote down a few scattered ideas on my phone and went back to bed. Later that day, my ideas would transform into this short étude. A reflection on that morning, the piece increases in activity similar to how my dream transpired, culminating in my inspiration, awakening, and subsequent return to peaceful sleep. The predominant technical challenge in this work is

balancing the light, *sotto voce* melody with increasingly florid and awkward accompaniment figures. I sought to keep the piece in the tonal realm while sprinkling in extended harmonies and modal elements.

Premiere: April 27th, 2019
 Jacob Mason, piano
 St. Bede Chapel, University of Miami
 Coral Gables, FL

Three Textural Études for Piano, Op. 14: No. 2, “Rush”

Date Composed: July 2019 - August 2019

Instrumentation: solo piano

Duration: 2 min.

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vsheeljytjhs>

SoundCloud: <https://soundcloud.com/wesleythompsonmusic/piano-etude-no-2-rush?in=wesleythompsonmusic/sets/compositions>

Program Notes:

In the summer of 2019, I was stuck in a compositional dry spot and completely unenthusiastic for any of the pieces I was writing. Around that time, I had the pleasure of working with American composer Marc Mellits. After studying with Marc and listening to his music, I found myself mentally reinvigorated and immediately began composing a new piece for piano without any regard to external stimuli, and this étude was the result. “Rush” focuses on repetition and layering, favoring harmonic stasis while developing the piece’s motives. The title can be attributed to many different types of “rushes,” such as rush hour traffic, a rush of emotions, or even the band Rush (where the odd time signature patterns are partially drawn from)! However, I had no explicit thought in mind when writing it other than the renewed passion I had for composition.

Premiere: November 12th, 2019
 Jacob Mason, piano
 St. Bede Chapel, University of Miami
 Coral Gables, FL

Three Textural Études for Piano, Op. 14: No. 3, “Boiling Point”

Date Composed: May 2020 - June 2020

Instrumentation: solo piano

Duration: 4 min.

Commissioner: Jacob Mason

SoundCloud: <https://soundcloud.com/wesleythompsonmusic/three-etudes-for-piano-op-14-no-3-boiling-point?in=wesleythompsonmusic/sets/compositions>

Program Notes:

The tumultuous events that have characterized the first half of 2020, both in the world and in my own life, have led me to contemplate the limits that human beings place on themselves, along with the point at which those limits break. If I were to use an analogy, I am interested in “the straw that broke the camel’s back.” Why do we bottle up our emotions for extended periods of time, only to release them after x number of problems have arisen? Why do we not deal with our anger closer to the moment in time when problems occur, instead of internalizing frustration until our limit is broken? This étude explores this “boiling point,” so to speak. There are many instances of furious passagework, but at what point does the music finally let loose and truly release all of its pent-up steam?

Three Miniatures for Harmonium, Op. 15: No. 1, “Antiphonal Woolgathering”

Date Composed: March 2020 - April 2020

Instrumentation: solo harmonium (hand-pumped)

Duration: 3 min.

Commissioner: Jacob Mason

Program Notes:

Antiphonal - something sung, recited, or played alternately by two groups; most commonly used in reference to Western Christian liturgy.

Woolgathering - indulgence in idle daydreaming. Once used to refer to the act of collecting tufts of wool that had gotten snagged on scenery as a herd of sheep passed by; the term later came to describe the aimless wandering of the individuals who collected said wool.

The fusion of these two words describes the pastoral, somewhat chant/hymn-like sound world evoked by the piece’s melodic statements.

Three Miniatures for Harmonium, Op. 15: No. 2, “Regulus”

Date Composed: May 2020

Instrumentation: solo harmonium (hand-pumped)

Duration: 1 min.

Commissioner: Jacob Mason

Program Notes:

Webern-inspired, extremely short, and motivically taut. The piece moves rapidly through ternary form with a small coda at the end, but blink and you might miss it. The title is simultaneously a reference to the quadruple binary star system

Regulus as well as the largest realm in Mechanus, one of the outer planes in D&D's Forgotten Realms setting. The fantasy Regulus is known for its clock-like construction, being comprised of 64 interlocking cogs.

Three Miniatures for Harmonium, Op. 15: No. 3, "Lament for a Modern Medusa"

Date Composed: June 2020

Instrumentation: solo harmonium (hand-pumped)

Duration: 2 min.

Commissioner: Jacob Mason

Program Notes:

The monstrous Medusa is known for her snake-like hair and her ability to turn victims to stone after making eye contact with them. However, in my opinion, Medusa's path to monsterhood is decidedly tragic: she was a beautiful maiden who was molested by Poseidon in one of Athena's temples. Since Athena could not punish the powerful Poseidon, the goddess instead took out her anger over the defiling act by transforming Medusa into the monster we know today. This lament, distantly related to its Baroque operatic ancestor via a chromatically descending bass line, developed in response to a contemporary parallel of the Medusa myth found in a famous light novel/anime series. In this particular story, one of the main female characters transforms into a Medusa-like apparition after being driven to a point of desperation by unfortunate circumstances; she then becomes a villain that the other protagonists must eventually confront.

Piano Suite No. 1, "Arcadia," Op. 16

Date Composed: December 2019 - October 2020

Instrumentation: solo piano

Duration: 23 min.

Commissioner: Aaron Petit

Poem: [https://fd5e0ed6-de93-4d28-8bf3-](https://fd5e0ed6-de93-4d28-8bf3-0e25785b2688.filesusr.com/ugd/b1ffed_8e1eaefaa6064b1ea15f553b6c32d7de.pdf)

[0e25785b2688.filesusr.com/ugd/b1ffed_8e1eaefaa6064b1ea15f553b6c32d7de.pdf](https://fd5e0ed6-de93-4d28-8bf3-0e25785b2688.filesusr.com/ugd/b1ffed_8e1eaefaa6064b1ea15f553b6c32d7de.pdf)

Movements:

I - Toccata (A Dream), 2"

II – Canon (Arcadia), 2"

III – Gigue (Hubris), 2"

IV – Intermezzo (Wordless Lament), 2"

V – Fugue (Machine), 4"

VI – Corrente (Ruin), 2"

VII – Sarabande (A Dirge), 6"

VIII – Epilogue (Forgotten Dream/True Arcadia), 3"

Program Notes:

Written for Aaron Petit over the course of a chaotic year between 2019 and 2020, this piano suite was a massive undertaking that compiled all of the stylistic traits I developed during my undergraduate years into a singular musical statement. A programmatic work, the suite confronts the literal and figurative repercussions of humans attempting to create the titular concept of "Arcadia," or heaven/Eden, here on Earth.

The suite was written alongside a poem of the same name; this poem explains the narrative drama of the suite and the two frequently correspond in terms of content. Each movement is associated with one of the poem's stanzas, and the secondary movement titles are drawn from the beginning of each stanza. Additionally, many musical elements share associations with passages and words within the poem. However, while the poem sheds light on my personal musical intentions, it is not a necessary read. Listeners are welcome to forgo the poem and draw their own conclusions regarding the suite's meaning.

Piano Suite No. 1, "Arcadia," is dedicated to the life and memory of my godmother, Sandra Simons, who passed away shortly before its completion.