

Senior Project Proposal

Jay Sanderson

Senior Music Education Major
Weber State University

Proposal Outline

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“My students can’t swing!” the teacher exclaims in desperation. Why do students in grades 6-12 have trouble expressing themselves musically in different styles? Are students underexposed to certain types of music in their literature? What can be done? Perhaps if the students are given the opportunity to know a single piece of music, and yet perform it in different stylistic interpretations, then they will become one step closer to being the versatile musician that today’s varied repertoire requires. It is my proposal to create a piece of music for young musicians that will demonstrate a single melody interpreted in a sample of different styles.

As the modern student band has developed, there has been a surge of worthy and appropriate literature that is contemporary in nature. The reasons for this include ease of procurement and playing level. While music of all styles and time periods is available for the students, often their exposure to it is minimal. The issue is interesting because many conscientious directors have taken it upon themselves to teach their students in many stylistic mediums. In this way, the problem has been treated and even solved by many and it must be clear that my work will not be an endeavor to “reinvent the wheel” so to speak, but only to add to the existing resources for creative future directors and to provide something for use, perhaps, in my own classroom.

The piece I propose to create will be a light-hearted treatment of a popular American folk song entitled “Billy Boy.” I will first present the theme and then I will create several variations keeping intact the original melody. Each variation

will provide a different insight into how a composer of a different period may have treated the melody. In order to create a product with a reasonable length and integrity, I hope to choose no more than five variations to represent some of history's musical styles and tastes.

Speaking environmentally, the project will be carried out personally in the university and home setting. I will require the use of a computer, notation software, a printer, and sufficient paper for copies. I will also benefit from the consultation of university students and faculty for expertise including Dr. Root for composition help and Mark Maxson for technical assistance.

I foresee the most difficult challenge during the process as being able to retain a grade 2 or 3 playing level in all of the parts. In order to be a usable piece, the composition needs to be accessible by students playing in the Jr. High or middle school setting; perhaps high school. I hope for the project to be unique in that students at a younger age will be able to play and enjoy the music.

This project will result in both tangible and intangible products. The physical products will be:

- A. A composition that is both performable and enjoyable and will strengthen developing skills in young musicians.
- B. A notation-based electronic recording of the piece.
- C. A premiere performance by the WSU symphonic band.
- D. A recording of the live performance in Video DVD.

Some examples of the intangible products will be:

- A. Students' confidence in handling different playing styles

- B. A greater strength in myself as a teacher to be able to provide situations in which students can learn new skills in creative ways.
- C. Greater capacity to reorchestrate and compose as necessary while teaching and directing.

Each phase of the project will be completed during the summer and fall semesters 2005 allowing three weeks for each part of the composition and a final period for reconciliation and editing. The final performance and recording will be handled in the spring semester 2006. The final performance date will be at the discretion of Dr. Thomas Root, director of bands at WSU. Any necessary rehearsals will be held accordingly. Afterwards, the committee will meet and evaluate the project for final approval.

I know that this project will benefit both teacher and students by giving opportunities to learn and grow in different mediums. Students' ability is sometimes hindered by a limited repertoire and it is my hope that I can help them to be exposed to a different way of looking at their musical world.

References

Selections for Listening:

Title: Four Brothers- The Manhattan Transfer

Composer/Genre: Jimmy Giuffre/Woody Herman-Vocal Jazz

Publisher: 1994 Rhino Records

Title: Symphony #9

Composer/Genre: Beethoven

Publisher: Deutsche Grammophon

Title: Appalachian Spring

Composer/Genre: Aaron Copland

Publisher: RCA Victor

Title: Le Jeu de Robin et de Marion

Composer/Genre: Adam de la Halle

Publisher: McGraw-Hill

Reference Material for Repertoire:

Title: Overture Don Giovanni

Composer/Genre: Mozart – Classical Opera

Publisher: Luck's Music Library

Title: Prelude and Giocoso

Composer/Genre: Thomas Root

Title: The Minnesota March

Composer/Genre: John Phillip Sousa

Publisher: Warner Bros. Music

Section for Committee Approval

Dr. Thomas Priest -*Music Education Advisor*

Dr. Thomas Root -*Director of Bands*

Mark Maxson -*Music Technology Specialist*