

The EWU Department of Music presents

Margaret Francik
Senior Composition Recital

Saturday, April 30th, 2016

2:00 p.m.

Music Building Recital Hall

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
Bachelor of Music, Composition

Studio of Professor Jonathan Middleton

Program

Limned
Margaret Francik, piano
Margaret Francik

Echo
Margaret Francik, mezzo-soprano
Kyle Ross, piano
Margaret Francik

Lighthouse
Kate Slyusarev, violin
Nicole Johnston, bass clarinet
Margaret Francik, piano
Margaret Francik

Silence
Alexandra Rannow, Victoria Dreher, sopranos
Margaret Francik, Morgan Cockrill, altos
Nathan Hoyt, Jacob Segalla, tenors
Ryan Gunn, Tristan Thompson, basses
Rachael Ferry, piano
Kristina Ploeger, conductor
Margaret Francik

Intermission

Anchor
Margaret Francik

The EWU Symphonic Choir, directed by Kristina Ploeger

A Thin, Pale Column
Kate Slyusarev, violin
James Marshall, viola
Mikaela Elms, cello
Wyatt Wireman, bass
Margaret Francik

Anthems
The Dreamer
Jay Jones, trumpet
Kyle Housden, flugelhorn
Ky Curry, horn
Nathan Wood, trombone
Ben Price, tuba
Margaret Francik

Rescindment
Alexandra Rannow, soprano
Margaret Francik, piano
Margaret Franck

Limned

Limned (past tense): to suffuse or highlight with a bright color or light. "Limned," is a piece I wrote while exploring sympathetic resonances, the frequencies that naturally ring in response to any single note. I achieved this at the piano by silently depressing a cluster chord in the lower range of the keys, causing the dampers to be released from the strings, and maintaining the suspension of this particular chord with the sostenuto pedal. The result is that the strings left open ring sympathetically with the strings that are struck while being played normally with the left and right hands, creating a halo of resonance that thickens throughout the piece. A simple melody is played above this effect in a canonic style, growing increasingly dense with harmonies that shift out of the diatonic key before gradually thinning and fading out.

Echo

"Echo," was written in the spring of 2015 for Renee Honn's Senior Vocal Recital, and was my first piece written for a single vocalist. It was also one of the first pieces to spark my passion for writing with text. The poem, "Echo," is my own, and through its formal language and images of thread and weave recalls an ancient solitude and the longing to know real companionship. Musically the piece explores this by using the piano as an echo of the vocalist's line. Growing thicker and more harmonically dense with the speaker's rise in passion, eerie and forlorn in moments of intimacy, the piano's line weaves in and around the vocalist's part, reflecting and refracting off of her voice. The piece concludes as the speaker's line ends, her echo also fading, leaving her standing alone. The full text of "Echo," by Margaret Francik is below:

If ever there were love,
Darling, pass it on
to me.

It needs no flower, no
crimson mark, no
cuff of safety

A thread of some
permanence
will do.

Weave,
until every inch of me
is sown

Until the leaves, hailed by
radiance, mistake me for
summer, and green again.

Lighthouse

"Lighthouse," was written for the Evnika Trio in the summer of 2015, and was premiered in their fall recital in 2015 alongside new works by several other composers. This piece is a short tone poem that, in its most basic sense, creates a narrative which moves from obscurity to clarity. The piece begins with atmospheric elements in the piano and violin, broken only by the bass clarinet's searching melody. As "Lighthouse," continues, it grows thicker texturally with narrow harmonies between the three parts,

until all three instruments are unified for several bars with extreme diversity in range, depicting the first sight of light. The piece then mellows into its last section in which a hopeful new theme in the violin overlaps with the original clarinet melody with thinner textures and simpler harmonies, representing the journey to clarity and complete arrival of the light.

Silence

In the spring of 2015, the EWU Symphonic Choir traveled to Limerick Ireland, one of Spokane's sister cities, in a tour that featured works by American composers. "Silence," was written for this tour, and was performed at the EWU's spring Choir concert and the National Conference of Undergraduate Research at EWU in the spring of 2015. It uses text from the poem of the same name by a dear friend of mine, the marvelous poet and novelist Ana Ramana, who was born in Ireland and now resides in Shasta, California. Ramana's text discusses the readiness to let go of the familiar and beloved in order to commit to the exploration of greater truths. Although the poem is rich and lyrical, it is also quite succinct. I explored this dichotomy of lushness and brevity by allowing phrases to appear, blossom and bleed into the next in a piece that speaks of anticipation and freedom. The full text of "Silence," by Ana Ramana is below:

The breeze on my neck
told me I was about
to be uplifted.
Why did I cling
so hard to earth?
Doesn't the salmon
live only to go
back home?

I love you, sky. I love you, grass.
Flowers drizzling in the wheat
of my hair are a miracle.

But something louder
is singing and it is
soundless, a current
that knows.

I need to step off
the world, toe by
toe, into
it.

Anchor

"Anchor," both the text and the music, was written in the summer of 2013. At the time, I had just finished my first year of college, and was in a state of drastic decline as I struggled with depression that had been worsening for several years. My intention with this piece had been to give a voice to this state of mind as I experienced it, without dismissing or disguising its ugliness, and to also fill it with the longing for hope. It was to be both catharsis and balm.

Reflecting on the text now, several years later and in much better health thanks to the help of some excellent counselors, I am struck by the vague, drifting nature of the

images, at the smooth, long vowel sounds that support this feeling of intangibility, broken only by the short, sharp lines, "vast, black/burial of night." The girl pictured in the poem is in a state of constant duality, dreaming in darkness and yet lit both externally and internally with light from the stars, the moon, from within her own bones. The music makes note of this, the various lines intertwining gently with one another, thickening and intensifying both harmonically and contrapuntally when the text represents moments of greater light or darkness. The piece ends with the singers humming the consonant "mmm," of the word, "dreamed," before starkly articulating the ending consonant, "d." This moment was very intentional in my mind as the first spark that allows the dreamer who is groundless to stir and awake. The full text of "Anchor," by Margaret Francik is below:

There in the center of the eve
with locks like birds taking wing
she lay.

And there in the reediness of stars
shone a heart,
a heart among the vast, black
burial of night.

And she dreamed.

There in the anchor of the moon,
with bones like opal stones
she lay.

And she dreamed.

A Thin, Pale Column

This piece for string quartet is slightly unusual in that it calls for Double Bass rather than a second Violin, as is the standard instrumentation. My intention with adding this lower range to the quartet was to utilize the rich spectrum of sound available when bass is added to an ensemble, and to feature this range melodically just as much as the other three instruments. "A Thin, Pale Column," takes its title from a line in the poem "The Still Pool," which I wrote in the winter of 2016. This poem captures the longing and fractiousness present in the quartet quite effectively with its restrained, intimate language.

This quartet has several sections, each of which revolves around one of two themes. These sections have a ripple effect, each one beginning with a drone note and gradually growing more harmonically and rhythmically complex before returning to stillness. The piece as a whole however, is constantly moving towards a state of chaos, ending with a section that is completely improvised by all four performers with the two main themes as reference material. When this last section ends, it is in stillness again as all four instruments gradually return to a unified chord that fades into nothing. The result is a piece that represents a writhing inner world, bookended and concealed by still surfaces. The poem, "The Still Pool," by Margaret Francik is below:

Late light filled the window,
a sweet dust.

We were thick with that rich

seep of gold, thick

with summer's slow drip
across our bodies. The air

lay naked
on our tongues.

There is a place deep inside me
where it is always night, where

mollusks stir in their secret
shells. They smell of salt.

They widen their mouths,
clatter and gleam.

And I am filled with this ringing,
the clamor of ancient husks

a blood-beat rippling
beneath my skin,

the longing to see ocean
wrench and spill in you.

Like a single point of light,
I wanted to

run one finger,
slowly

up your back,
you

a deep, still pool
in that long afternoon

and I
a

fracture,
blooming, I

a thin
pale column

swallowing.

Anthems

The Dreamer

"The Dreamer," is one movement from the suite called, "Anthems," for brass quintet. It is not a piece that depicts dreaminess or soft textures, as one might expect. Rather, it is a character piece that describes one who has a purpose or calling, and was written with the intention of depicting that character's inner world with encouragement and resolute hope. The main theme, first presented in the flugelhorn, travels between the different instruments in various inversions before eventually appearing in the tuba at the piece's conclusion. The instruments wander contrapuntally through mixed meter and dense harmony around this theme, before presenting the final motif with unified joy and determination.

Rescindment

"Rescindment," was commissioned by my esteemed colleague and dear friend Alexandra Rannow for her graduate vocal recital in fall of 2015. One meaning of the word "rescindment," is to do away with something by formal action. The text for this piece is my own, and takes inspiration from this definition, describing through words of labor and trespass the burdens we carry, and the internal battle that ensues as we begin to formally lay them aside within ourselves. The soprano line begins unaccompanied, an illustration of the speaker's own true voice before her burdens, represented by the crashing harmonies and relentless, pounding rhythms in the piano part, battle for their right to reign in the speaker's inner world. At the same time, these rhythmic elements in the piano represent the speaker's determination to step forward and out of her self-made bonds. The soprano's line dances nimbly and with great leaps of agility around this accompaniment, sometimes opposing the lines and sometimes matching them beat for beat. As the piece reaches its conclusion with increasing fervor and intensity, the soprano's line leads the listener to fierce, raucous victory. The text of "Rescindment," by Margaret Francik is below:

If I am the only spark
barking from among these
sundry darknesses,
it will be enough.

Arrows, singing bitter, dragging
their corroded, vanquished hopes
may pierce my breast,
may steal my breath but cannot leach
the pearl from my bones.

I will hold my cup
to the lips of the moon
and grow, not lonely.

Bring your tears,
carry on your back the
ragged, feral beast.

You cannot have me.

You cannot blow me out.

I would like to acknowledge the people who have made this recital possible, and who have made my time at EWU so incredible. To my parents and family who have supported me in a myriad of ways throughout this journey, thank you so much. To the incredible students who have worked with me throughout the years, and especially to the musicians performing my pieces this afternoon, I quite literally could not have done this without you and am so grateful for your willingness to try new things, and for your friendship. To Kristina Ploeger, a director who has shown me so much generosity and support, thank you for all you have taught me in our rehearsals, and for your help in getting this recital on its feet. To Don Goodwin, Jody Graves, Bill Conable, Jane Ellsworth, John Marshall, Susan Windham and Ross Holcombe, a huge thank you for all the instruction and aid you have given me and my fellow musicians as we have put this recital together. Thank you to Colleen Hegney, whose tireless work keeps this building going. And to Dr. Middleton and Kendall Feeny, the two professors who have worked with me one-on-one for the past four years, I am eternally grateful for your teachings, your enthusiasm and your steady presences throughout this journey. It has been the highest honor to work with both of you.

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