

Paul Dougall

Music Theory Final Composition

For my composition, I based my pieces mostly on the work of Debussy. The goal of my piece was to use the concept of different modal centers that Debussy liked to use in his works. I created a melody, originally it was in D major, however, I decided to alter it with some notes outside of the key to make it more interesting. Then I wanted to take the original melody and create variations on similar melodic contours, but in the different keys and modes.. The first variation is in D Dorian and is meant to produce the feel of a fantasy-like world. The second variation, like the first, still starts on D, however, different notes are inflected to reflect the key of Eb Major. Therefore, the melody is based on “Ti” or the 7th note of the scale, while the harmonies more reflect Eb major.

Then I wished to go into a contrasting B section which was unfortunately cut shorter than was expected due to time constraints. My contrasting B section was loosely based on measure 24-28 of Debussy’s “Cloches a travers les feuilles.” I used a repeating figure in the right hand that alternates between two different octaves. This B section also used bitonality. The repeating figure in the right hand is in D Major Pentatonic while the left hand is in Bb major.

Obviously in the second variation and in the contrasting B section I also used a simple 2 against 3 rhythm. I wanted to include some sections of competing rhythms (polyrhythm), but I still wanted to keep it in line with the rest of the piece. Since the rest of the piece was quite serene in nature, I figured that the most effective form of a polyrhythm would be a very simple one.