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Grey Areas: Songs of Memory, Imagination, Intellect, and Death for Baritone Voice and Mixed Instrumental Octet

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GREY AREAS: SONGS OF MEMORY, IMAGINATION, INTELLECT, AND DEATH
FOR BARITONE VOICE AND MIXED INSTRUMENTAL OCTET

By

SCOTT STEPHEN HANSEN, Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Arts

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

Stephen F. Austin State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements

For the Degree of

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ABSTRACT

The central element of this thesis is *Grey Areas*, a newly-composed dramatic piece in four movements for baritone and chamber ensemble. The work is highly personal in both its subject matter and its musical execution; it also contains a unique movement order that changes depending on the age of the baritone. Along with the written portion of this document and full score, I completed a studio recording of the entire composition as part of the project. Composers (by necessity) are more frequently functioning as their own recording and mixing engineers for their own works. I have been able to gather a variety of skills related to the recording arts and sought out opportunities to employ them in this project. In order to meaningfully add to the greater body of research, I describe both the creative aspects of my compositional process and the technical aspects of the recording process.

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Dr. Jennifer Dalmas, Alina Nebzhidovskaia, and Ernesto Mendoza; violin
Dr. Evgeni Raychev and Ella Gartner, cello
Dr. Stella Sick, piano
Max Muciño, trumpet and flugelhorn
Mariah Taller, Kurt Swisher, and Ethan Ainsworth; percussion
Jacob Kilford, saxophones
Joshua Pearson, bass clarinet
Kristen Williams and Elizabeth Esquivel, flute and piccolo
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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Within the process of composition, there are many approaches to starting a piece. For me, each one I write feels like artistic archaeology instead of a more creative and procedurally constructive process such as baking, drawing, or sewing. While I can easily direct what plot of musical terrain I excavate, the actual material feels inaccessible at first – hidden within the elements I use for inspiration. This archeological approach lends itself very well to long-term projects and letting ideas marinate within my musical subconscious before teasing them out into appropriate methods of notation. An example of this in motion is the first decision made for *Grey Areas*: I chose to write for baritone voice, having never worked with that voice type before. What followed was a series of lyrics and texts that I had been mulling over (for years in some cases) aligning in my brain and forming themselves into a cohesive whole. This thesis catalogs the composition and recording of my work *Grey Areas*: a thirty-minute monodrama for baritone and chamber ensemble.

Monodramas (musical works featuring one singer and a chamber ensemble) have risen in popularity and greatly expanded in diversity since Arnold Schoenberg's seminal *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912). Admittedly, though, I did not have the genre of monodrama in mind as I began forming the structural ideas for what would become *Grey Areas*. I found

myself oriented towards a series of related works with monodrama-adjacent definitions such as micro-opera, concept musical, and dramatic song cycle. As I completed my survey of repertoire, I decided to classify my composition as a monodrama based on the following criteria: it would use a single singer; employ a medium-sized chamber ensemble; and could benefit from semi-theatrical dramatic staging. The majority of existing works I list share most, if not all, of these same characteristics. For ease of reference in this document, all are described as monodramas.

I already had texts, voice type, and subject matter in mind when beginning my survey of repertoire, however, I did not fixate on a specific style or compositional language. The broadness and diversity of these monodrama-adjacent pieces struck me. Surveying the following pieces informed my writing and creative process in various ways:

- Jason Robert Brown, *The Last Five Years* (2001) and *Songs from a New World* (1995)
- Tania Leon, *Canto* (2001)
- Stephen Lias, *From the Diaries of Adam and Eve* (1995)
- David Little, *Soldier Songs* (2006/11)
- Kevin Puts, *Einstein on Mercer Street* (2002)

Grey Areas bears almost no surface similarity to the pieces I researched, but instead adds another variety to the collection of semi-dramatic repertoire. The unifying line between all these works and my own is the creation of an individual mythology. While each are

based in lived experience or recorded history, the process of setting to music and dramatizing the stories through artistic representation moves them away from the journalistic and towards the mythological. While this modality of thinking came to me organically during the composition process, I was subsequently made aware of Lévi-Strauss' *bricolage* theory which codifies the approach in a much more cogent manner.¹ Since I was unaware of this theory during my creative process, I have not made an attempt to frame *Grey Areas* within it in this document but expect that it will further influence my thinking about future pieces.

The building up of new works (such as *Grey Areas*) through repurposing pre-existing and fragmented events and history is often a characteristic feature of mythological thought.² This thought plays into the discussion of my composition process and framing of my work in the larger societal context. A significant part of that societal context is the literature review of pieces similar to my composition. One of these, Jason Robert Brown's *The Last Five Years* (2001), bears similarity to *Grey Areas* in that both contain elements that are deeply personal. I readily mix truth with artificially constructed reality to serve my narrative in line with this mythological thinking.

With wide-ranging themes and extreme emotional arcs, *Grey Areas* is my attempt to transcend my personal story and reach for the universal. While not morality plays or

¹ Claude Lévi Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, 6th edition, trans. George Weidenfield and Nicholson Ltd. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 27.

² Ibid.

Iliadic, the texts used in my composition do contain homily and extensive descriptive adventure undertaken through the eyes of a baritone who embarks on one of three possible journeys of self-discovery, contemplation, and self-actualization.

Every interaction with society and nature has shaped my perception of the world and how I communicate. Both latent and explicit representations of societal issues and my own personal memories are embedded within all my compositions; works based off of texts (such as vocal works like *Grey Areas*) show these influences in greater clarity. Broad societal concepts addressed by my selected texts include first-person perceptions of disability, 21st century feminism, growing emotional maturity, the phenomenon of found family, LGBTQIA+ life experiences, and the age of technology.

With the sobering reality that almost every interaction of life is now recorded, recollections that are unclear or hazy have become all the more fascinating to me. Looking back on memories through the lens of lived experience draws out the narrative embedded within any situation. While nostalgia may retain isolated tableaux, stringing events together allows the tracking of developmental experience. My goal was to craft a cohesive and flexible story through interpreted recollection, the process of text assembly, repertoire research, and writing music.

I was influenced by a variety of elements from the five works listed above. Brown's *The Last Five Years* (2001) planted the inspiration for non-linear narrative structure. It also started my thought process regarding the creation of a personal mythology and an ambiguous history told through an unreliable narrator. David Little's

Soldier Songs (2006/11) promoted the idea of a single vocalist portraying many characters. Little's penchant for bridging genres motivated me to expand my own writing process. Kevin Puts' *Einstein on Mercer Street* (2002) influenced my instrument choices and helped flesh out my preliminary ideas about personal mythology and constructed reality.

These varied pieces and ideas coalesced into the piece I have written. *Grey Areas* is comprised of four movements that can be performed in a variety of orders (more on this later). The titles and authors are:

“Clickbait Poetry,” text by Alexander Bergman;

“Look Well To This Day,” a traditional Sanskrit poem;

“Dear Aunt Sally,” text by Felicia Finley and me; and

“Uncanny Valley,” text by me.

Three of these four movements planted seeds in my creative subconscious years ago. I did not realize that they all belonged together until I encountered the fourth text, “Clickbait Poetry.” Once selected, these texts directed my research. Repeated listening and study of the pieces helped define the ensemble, clarify the genre, and see how the proverbial field of context lay before frolicking about in it. While the dramatization of mortal crises is a very large genre indeed, pinpointing the emotional nucleus of each text and seeing how other composers addressed similar ideas provided a foundation on which to work.

Three main themes form the basis of my monodrama: death; self-discovery; and coming of age/maturity. “Clickbait Poetry” contains all these themes; this is what drives it to link all four movements together. “Look Well To This Day” discusses these themes in a general sense and approaches points softly. In the text I wrote (“Uncanny Valley”) and the text I contributed to and edited (“Dear Aunt Sally”), I connect and attach these concepts to the more personal issues of found family, memory vs. constructed reality, and humanism (valuing humans and their interactions over supernatural affairs).

These aspects are easiest to see in a broad sense when discussing the movements’ titles themselves. The title of “Uncanny Valley” contains themes of technology, perception, and identity due to the connection to artificial intelligence research and robotics.³ “Clickbait Poetry” describes problems that are distinctly modern and first-world problems, while hinting at toxic inspirational behavior and an era of disinformation. “Dear Aunt Sally” is framed as a series of letters but the character and situations surrounding this movement stretch far beyond the simplistic title (more on that later). This movement grounds the listener by connecting to the ideal of family, birth or found. The remaining title, “Look Well To This Day,” sums up the entire movement in one phrase.

³ In these disciplines, the term 'uncanny valley' describes the range of imitative human figures that are extremely close to being life-like yet are still conceptually rejected and perceived as non-passing by the human brain. (M. Mori 2012)

Following the score to *Grey Areas* (Chapter 2), I provide a more detailed exploration of both the writing process and the content of the finished work (Chapter 3) and then a discussion of the recording process (Chapter 4). The conclusion of the document (Chapter 5) ends with my reflections on the composition and recording processes. The texts I used in the composition of *Grey Areas* are also included after Chapter 5 in Appendix A for ease of reference. The principal goal of this thesis was to compose and record *Grey Areas*. The material provided in Chapters 3 and 4 recount some of the major issues encountered in both processes but are in no way intended to be exhaustive. A limited number of aspects unique and foundational to this work will be discussed in greater detail, such as my harmonic language and the non-standard movement orders. In relating my perspective as a composer on the recording process, I will discuss technical decisions, self-discovered errors, and solutions undertaken.

CHAPTER 2 – GREY AREAS (TRANSPOSED SCORE)

Performance Notes:

GREY AREAS consists of four songs for baritone and mixed octet that can be arranged in three different concert orders, based on the age of the singer, as shown below:

Extroverted Order – for singers up to 24 years old:

- I. Dear Aunt Sally
- II. Uncanny Valley
- III. Clickbait Poetry
- IV. Look Well To This Day

Rogue Order – for singers 24 – 42 years old:

- I. Uncanny Valley
- II. Look Well To This Day
- III. Dear Aunt Sally
- IV. Clickbait Poetry

Introverted Order – for singers 42 years old and above:

- I. Look Well To This Day
- II. Clickbait Poetry
- III. Uncanny Valley
- IV. Dear Aunt Sally

The following score is arranged in the *Rogue Order*.

Score
Hansen

GREY AREAS:
Uncanny Valley

Scott S. Hansen

Emotionally-distant groove (♩ = 104)

The score is for a piece titled "Uncanny Valley" by Scott S. Hansen, with a tempo of 104 beats per minute. The music is in 3/4 time and features a variety of instruments. The score is divided into two systems, with the second system starting at measure 9. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Piccolo:** Remains silent in the first system. In the second system, it plays a melodic line starting at measure 9, marked *mf* and *pizz.* (pizzicato).
- Bass Clarinet:** Plays a melodic line in the first system, marked *mf*. In the second system, it continues the melodic line, marked *f*.
- Trumpet in C:** Remains silent in the first system. In the second system, it plays a melodic line starting at measure 9, marked *f*, with the instruction "straight mute (copper)".
- Percussion:** Plays a rhythmic pattern in the first system, marked *mf*. In the second system, it continues the pattern, marked *f*.
- Baritone:** Remains silent throughout both systems.
- Piano:** Plays a harmonic accompaniment in the first system, marked *mf*. In the second system, it continues the accompaniment, marked *f*.
- Electric Guitar:** Plays a harmonic accompaniment in the first system, marked *mf*. In the second system, it continues the accompaniment, marked *f*. The guitar part includes the instruction "warm tone".
- Violin:** Remains silent throughout both systems.
- Cello:** Plays a harmonic accompaniment in the first system, marked *mf*. In the second system, it continues the accompaniment, marked *f*.

The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (*mf*, *f*), articulation (*pizz.*), and performance instructions (*straight mute (copper)*, *open*). The key signature is one flat (Bb), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is marked with a box containing the number 9 at the beginning of the second system.

GREY AREAS: Uncanny Valley - Score

17

13 *ord.*

Pic. *p* *f*

B. Cl.

C. Trp. *mf* *f*

Perc.

B.

Pno.

E. Gtr. *C7* *Bb7/Ab* *D7(b5) E7(b5)* *C7* *Bb7/Ab* *Bb7(b5) C7(b5)*

Vln. *mf* *p* *f*

Vi.

A la-dy-bug crawled up my mail-box to die.

20 VAMP

OUT after "the universe in a cup"

Pic. *pp* *fil.* *molto vib.* *p*

B. Cl. *pp*

C. Trp. *pp* *straight mutes* *fil.* *open* *molto vib.*

Perc. *pp*

B.

Pno. *pp*

E. Gtr. *C7* *Bb7/Ab* *D7(b5) E7(b5)* *C7* *Bb7/Ab* *D7(b5)* *C7* *Bb7/Ab* *D7(b5) E7(b5)* *C7* *Bb7/Ab* *D7(b5) E7(b5)*

Vln. *pp* *mf* *p*

Vi. *pp*

GREY AREAS: Uncanny Valley - Score

[20-27] 28

Picc. *(cont.)*

B. Cl. *(cont.)*

C. Tpt. *(cont.)*

Perc. *(cont.)*

B. *(cont.)*
enter after one cycle of V_{ASW}
 I start-ed off ___ the morn-ing ___ by cry-ing in ___ my col-fee; ___ mag - ic beans and leaves, the u-ni-verse ___ in a cup. 'The last

Pno. *(cont.)*

E.Gtr. *(cont.)*

Vln. *(cont.)*

Vcl. *(cont.)*

34

Picc. *29*

B. Cl.

C. Tpt.

Perc.

B. *mp*
 per-son who won the lot-ter-y cooked the per-fruit, cooked the per-fruit,

Pno.

E.Gtr.

Vln.

Vcl.

GREY AREAS: Uncanny Valley - Score

37

Picc. *f* *fz* *fz* *fz*

B. Cl. *f*

C. Tpt. *p* *f*

Perc. *f*

B. *f*

the per - fect, the per - fect pot of

Pino. *f*

E.Gtr. D7(9) D7(9) E7(9)

Vln. *fz* *fz* *fz* *arco* *alleg.*

Vc. *fz* *fz* *mf*

41

Picc. *p* *ff*

B. Cl. *p* *ff*

C. Tpt. *p* *ff*

Perc. *fz*

B. *fz*

rice. My skin con-tin-ues its dai-ly march towards the tips, march towards the tips, dai-ly march towards the tips of my

Pino. *p* *ff* *p* *ff*

E.Gtr. *p* *ff* *p* *ff* C7(9)

Vln. *p* *ff* *p* *ff*

Vc. *p* *ff* *p* *ff*

GREY AREAS: Uncanny Valley - Score

45 Mechanical (♩ = 92)

Musical score for measures 45-51. The score includes parts for Piccolo, B. Clarinet, C. Trumpet, Percussion, Bass, Piano, Electric Guitar, Violin, and Viola. The key signature has one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 92. The lyrics for the Bass part are: "fin-gers. Is this me, or just who I want to be? Locked a-way by my". Dynamics include *pp* and *p*.

Musical score for measures 52-58. The score includes parts for Piccolo, B. Clarinet, C. Trumpet, Percussion, Bass, Piano, Electric Guitar, Violin, and Viola. The key signature changes to two flats (Bb, Eb) and the time signature changes to 3/4. The lyrics for the Bass part are: "own sub-con-scious, I'm tor-ment-ed by what could have been. Can you teach me to dream?_". Dynamics include *mp*, *ppp*, and *rit.*. A performance instruction "straight mute (wooden)" is present for the C. Trumpet part.

GREY AREAS: Uncanny Valley - Score

58 Emotionally-distant groove (♩ = 104) OUT after "prove my humanity...?"

VAMP ♩ = 104

Picc. *pp* *fil.* *mf* *p*

B. Cl. *pp*

C. Tpt. *pp* *fil.* *straight mute (copper)* *molo vib.* *p*

Perc. *pp*

B.

Pno. *pp*

E. Gtr. *pp* *molo vib.* *p*

Vln. *pizz.* *pp* *mf* *p*

Vc. *pp*

[58-65] (cont.)

Picc. (cont.)

B. Cl. (cont.)

C. Tpt. (cont.)

Perc. (cont.)

B. *rubato, ad lib.*

Why do I feel like a for-got-ten Av-o-ca-do! The rind tells no se-crets, but in-side I'm al-read-y gone.

Pno. (cont.)

E. Gtr. (cont.)

Vln. (cont.)

Vc. (cont.)

GREY AREAS: Uncanny Valley - Score

158-651
 Picc. *(cont.)*
 B. Cl. *(cont.)*
 C. Tpt. *(cont.)*
 Perc. *(cont.)*
 B. *alibery*
 All of this trou-ble o-ver half of a scrap of a piece of pa-per — Un-can-my val-ley, how do I prove my hu-man-i-ty?
 Pno. *(cont.)*
 E. Gtr. *(cont.)*
 Vln. *(cont.)*
 Vc. *(cont.)*

66 2X
 Picc. *mf*
 B. Cl. *mf*
 C. Tpt. *mf*
 Perc. *mf*
 B. His-to-ry is writ-ten by the vic-tors,
 Pno. *mf*
 E. Gtr. *mf*
 Vln. *mf*
 Vc. *mf*
 D7(b5) C7(b5)/Bb E7(b5) Gb7(b5) D7(b5) C7(b5)/Bb Bm6 D7(b5) C7(b5)/Bb E7(b5) Gb7(b5)

GREY AREAS: Uncanny Valley - Score

74 (G.P.)

Picc. *mf*

B. Cl. *mf*

C. Tpt.

Perc. *mf*

B.

and at the end, I have sur-vived!

Pno. *mf*

E. Gtr. *mf*

Vln. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

D7(b9) C7(b9)/Bb E7(b9)(Gb7(b9)) D7(b9) C7(b9)/Bb E7(b9)(Gb7(b9))

77 *a tempo* *fr.* *molto vib.* (G.P.) *a tempo*

Picc. *mf*

B. Cl. *mp*

C. Tpt.

Perc. *mf* *mp*

B.

and at the end, I have sur-vived!

Pno. *mp*

E. Gtr. *mp*

Vln. *mf*

Vc. *mp*

D7(b9) C7(b9)/Bb Bm6 Gb7 Bb7(b9)/Ab E7(b9)(Gb7(b9)) Gb7 Bb7(b9)/Ab D7(b9)

GREY AREAS: Uncanny Valley - Score

84

84

Picc. -

B. Cl. *morendo*

C. Trpt. -

Perc. *morendo*

B. -

Pno. *morendo*

E. Gtr. *morendo*

Vln. -

Vc. *morendo*

Chords: Gb7 Bb7(95)/Ab D7(95) E7(95) Gb7 Bb7(95)/Ab Bb7(95) C7(95) Gb7 Bb7(95)/Ab D7(95) E7(95)

Detailed description: This system contains measures 84 through 89. The Piccolo and Trumpets are silent. The Clarinet and Percussion play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, with the Clarinet marked *morendo*. The Piano plays a chordal accompaniment of eighth notes, also marked *morendo*. The Electric Guitar plays a simple eighth-note accompaniment, marked *morendo*. The Bass and Violoncello play a walking bass line. The Violins are silent.

90

90

Picc. -

B. Cl. *morendo*

C. Trpt. -

Perc. *morendo*

B. -

Pno. *morendo*

E. Gtr. *morendo*

Vln. -

Vc. *morendo*

Chords: Gb7 Bb7(95)/Ab D7(95) Gb7 Bb7(95)/Ab D7(95) E7(95) Gb7 Bb7(95)/Ab D7(95) E7(95)

Detailed description: This system contains measures 90 through 95. The Piccolo and Trumpets are silent. The Clarinet and Percussion continue their rhythmic pattern, with the Clarinet marked *morendo*. The Piano continues its chordal accompaniment, marked *morendo*. The Electric Guitar continues its accompaniment, marked *morendo*. The Bass and Violoncello continue their walking bass line. The Violins are silent.

Score
ancient Sanskrit poem

GREY AREAS:
Look Well To This Day

Scott S. Hansen

Andante, molto rubato

The musical score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes parts for Flute, Bass Clarinet, Flugelhorn, Percussion (Vibraphone), Baritone, Piano, Electric Guitar (clean/light chorus), Violin, and Cello. The second system includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.), Flugelhorn (Flghn.), Percussion (Perc.), Baritone (B.), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E.Gtr.), Violin (Vln.), and Cello (Vc.).

Key performance instructions include dynamics such as *mp*, *pp*, and *mf*, and articulation like *con sord.* and *B.D.*. The score features a vocal line with the lyrics: "Look well to this day— for it is life, the ver y life of life." The music is in a 3/4 time signature and includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

GREY AREAS: Look Well To This Day - Score

21

Fl.

B. Cl.

Flghn.

Perc.

B.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Vln.

Vc.

mf

mf

p

f

mp

p

sus. Cim.

Vibraphone

In its brief course lie all the re - al - i - ties and truths of ex - ist - ence: the joy of growth, the

Gb/bb Eb/G C Gb(omit3) Ebmaj7 Dbmaj7

27

Fl.

B. Cl.

Flghn.

Perc.

B.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Vln.

Vc.

p

f

p

senza sord.

senza sord.

p

splen - dor of ac - tion, the glo - ry of pow - er. For yes - ter-day

GREY AREAS: Look Well To This Day - Score

31

Fl.

B. Cl.

Flghn.

Perc. *B.D.* *aux. Cym.*

B. *mp* *mf* *p*

is but a mem o ry and to mor row is on ly a vi sion. But to day

Pno. *p*

E.Git. *p*

Vln.

Ve.

37

accel.-----rall.

Fl. *pp* *p cresc.* *mf*

B. Cl. *mf* *pp* *p cresc.* *mf*

Flghn. *mf* *pp* *p cresc.* *mf*

Perc. *Vibraphone* *B.D.* *aux. Cym.* *pp* *p cresc.* *f*

B. *pp* *p cresc.* *f*

well lived makes ev'ry yes ter day a mem'ry of hap pi ness and ev'ry to mor row a vi sion of hope.

Pno. *pp* *p cresc.* *mf*

E.Git. *pp* *p cresc.* *mf*

Vln. *pp* *p cresc.* *mf*

Ve. *pp* *p cresc.* *mf*

C Bb Cb/Bb A Eb/Bb Fm/C E/B Bbadd11 D/A

GREY AREAS: Look Well To This Day - Score

a tempo

Fl. *p* *mf* *pp* *pp*

B. Cl. *p* *mf* *pp* *pp*

Flg. Hn. *p* *mf* *pp* *pp*

Perc. *p* *mf* *pp* *p* *mp*

B. *p* *mf* *pp* *pp*

Pno. *p* *pp* *pp* *pp*

E. Gtr. *p* *mf* *pp* *pp*

Vln. *p* *pp* *pp* *pp*

Vc. *p* *pp* *pp* *pp*

Look well, there-fore, to this day. Look

54

Fl. *mp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

B. Cl. *mp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

Flg. Hn. *mp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

Perc. *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

B. *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

Pno. *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

E. Gtr. *p* *pp* *pp* *pp*

Vln. *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

Vc. *p* *pp* *pp* *pp*

well, for it is life, the ver-y life of life. In its brief

GREY AREAS: Look Well To This Day - Score

58

Fl.

A. Sax. *Alto Sax.* *mp*

Flghn.

Perc.

B.

course lie all the re - al - i - ties and truths of ex - ist - ences: the

Pno.

E.Gtr. C/G Bb/F Ebv(444#11)/Bb Db/Ab A/E

Vln.

Vc.

62

Fl.

A. Sax. *mp*

Flghn.

Perc. *sub. Cym.* *mp*

B.

joy of growth, the splen - dor of ac - tion, the glo - ry of pow - er. For

Pno.

E.Gtr. Bb/F E Bm/F# Ebm/Bb Ab/Eb

Vln.

Vc.

GREY AREAS: Look Well To This Day - Score

55

Fl.

A. Sax.

Flghn.

Perc.

B.

yes - ter - day is but a mem - o - ry and to - mor - row is on - ly a

Pno.

E.Gtr.

Vln.

Ve.

BmM7(♯)

E♭/B♭

let ring.....

59

Fl.

A. Sax.

Flghn.

Perc.

B.

vi - sion. But to - day well lived makes ev' - ry yes - ter - day a

Pno.

E.Gtr.

Vln.

Ve.

D7(4)3sus/G

G

B♭

let ring

to Bass Clarinet

mf

p

mf

mf

mf

mf

mf

GREY AREAS: Look Well To This Day - Score

rit. ----- *colla parte*

Fl. *pp*

B. Cl. *p*

Flghn. *mp* *pp*

Perc. *p*

B. *pp*

men' ry... and to - mor - row a vi - sion of hope. Look

Pno. *pp*

E.Gtr. F/C G/D Bb/Bb Am5/E B9/F#

Vln. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

rall. ----- *Slowly*

Fl. *mp* *pp*

B. Cl. *pp*

Flghn. *pp*

Perc. *p* *pp*

B. *pp*

well, there - fore, to this day.

Pno. *pp*

E.Gtr. C9/G

Vln. *pp*

Vc. *p* *pp*

Score
Finley/Hansen

GREY AREAS:
Dear Aunt Sally

Scott S. Hansen

Conversational (♩ = 78)

Flute *Flute* *mp*

Alto Sax *Alto Sax* *mp*

Trumpet in C *Trumpet in C* straight mure (wooden) *mp*

Percussion *Vibraphone* *mp*

Baritone *f*
Dear Aunt Sal-ly 'To-day was mis-er-able,

Piano *mf*

Electric Guitar *light distortion* *mp*

Violin

Cello

Fl. *f*

A. Sax.

C. T. pi.

Perc.

B. *f*
it start-ed out o- kay but I feel so tired in- side. It is like my

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Vln.

Vc. *p*

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

rit. ----- **13** a tempo

Fl. *p* *pp* *3*

A. Sax. *p* *pp* *3*

C. Clar. *p* *pp*

Perc. *p*

B. *p* *pp* *3*

Pno. *p*

E. Gr. *p*

Vln. *p* *pp* *3*

Ve. *p* *pp* *3*

soul could sleep for ever in the mists behind my eyes. Why is your name weird? I think that you were a dopt-ed. I wonder if

Fl. *p*

S. Sax. *p*

Flugh. *p*

Perc. *mf*

B. *mf*

Pno. *mf*

E. Gr. *p* *hammer on*

Vln. *fp* *glissando* *pp* *secco* *mp*

Ve. *fp* *glissando* *pp* *secco*

I am a dopt-ed, or if I was dropped as a baby?

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

20

Fl. *pp* *pp* *mp*

S. Sax. *pp* *pp* *pp*

Flghn. *pp* *pp* *pp*

Perc. *pp*

B. *pp*

Lyrics: feel so strange, so out of touch with ev'ry-thing, as though I can't do an-y-thing well e-

Pno. *p*

E.Gtr. *mp*

Vln. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

Fl. *mp* *p*

S. Sax. *mf*

Flghn. *f*

Perc. *mf*

B. *mf*

Lyrics: nough to make me feel ful-filled or ac-com-plished. I am just try-ing to hang in there

Pno. *mf*

E.Gtr. *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

Vln. *f*

Vc. *f*

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

31

Fl. *f* *pp*

S. Sax. *f* *pp*

Flgln. *f* *pp* 1st Trumpet in C

Perc. *f* *pp*

B. *f* *pp*

Pno. *p*

E. Gtr. *pp*

Vln. *ord.* *p*

Ve. *mf* *p*

some-how; the world keeps on spin-ning and

36

Fl. *mp*

S. Sax. *mp*

C. Tpt. *mp* 1st Trumpet in C straight mute (copper)

Perc. *mp*

B. *mp*

Pno. *fp*

E. Gtr. *fp* P.M. *fp*

Vln. *fp* *let ring*

Ve. *fp*

throws each sea-son one af-ter the oth-er un-til I am done. A

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

41

Fl.
S. Sax.
C. Tpt.
Perc.
B.
Pno.
E. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.

new day... of start-ing o-ver near-ly where I start-ed

mp
mf
mf
mf

pre-bend

Fl.
S. Sax.
C. Tpt.
Perc.
B.
Pno.
E. Gtr.
Vln.
Vc.

yes ter-day...

mf
mf
mf
mf

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

48

Fl. *p* *mp* *pp* *mf*

S. Sax *p* *mp* *pp* *mf*

C. Tpt. *p* *mp* *pp* *mf*

Perc. *p* *mp* *pp* *mf*

B. *mp* *p* *pp* *mf*

Phno. *mp* *p* *pp* *mf*

E.Gtr. *p* *pp* *mf*

Vln. *mp* *pp* *mf*

Vc. *mp* *pp* *mf*

Good - night, from the ash - es of a cold camp - fire. Signed, "S." Dear Aunt

54

Fl. *mf* *fz*

A. Sax *mp* *mf* *fz*

C. Tpt. *mp* *mf* *fz*

Perc. *f* *mf* *fz*

B. *mp* *mf* *fz*

Phno. *p* *mf* *fz*

E.Gtr. *mp* *mf* *fz*

Vln. *mp* *mf* *fz*

Vc. *mp* *mf* *fz*

Sal - ly He and I are run - ning for our lives, a - gain. Some -

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

Musical score for measures 58-62. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Alto Saxophone (A. Sax.), Clarinet in Treble Clef (C. Tpt.), Percussion (Perc.), Bass (B.), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E.Gtr.), Violin (Vln.), and Viola (Ve.). The key signature has two flats and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "times I feel like I am most a - live when I am spend - ing its glow for an -". Dynamics include *mf*, *p*, and *mf*. Measure numbers 58, 59, 60, 61, and 62 are indicated at the top of the staves.

Musical score for measures 63-67. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Alto Saxophone (A. Sax.), Clarinet in Treble Clef (C. Tpt.), Percussion (Perc.), Bass (B.), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E.Gtr.), Violin (Vln.), and Viola (Ve.). The key signature has two flats and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "oth - er. I can't tell you what I am do - ing in case the let - ter falls in - to the wrong hands, I will con - sign this to the". Dynamics include *ff*, *mf*, *ff*, *fp*, and *p*. Measure numbers 63, 64, 65, 66, and 67 are indicated at the top of the staves. Performance instructions include "Palm Mute" and "over pressure" for the electric guitar and violin parts, and "Vibraphone" for the percussion part.

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

67

Fl.

A. Sax.

C. Tpt.

Perc.

B.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Vln.

Ve.

flames, and know you won't receive it, but I need - ed to write down my feel - ings an - y - way.

71

Fl.

A. Sax.

C. Tpt.

Perc.

B.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Vln.

Ve.

ready straight mtrc (copper)

Some - times it floats to the sur - face of my soul, but I know it's just a

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

76

rit.

Fl.

S. Sax.

C. Tpt.

Perc.

B.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Vln.

Ve.

mp *ff*

Triangle

feel - ing. I know for a fact that what he and I are do - ing is the best thing I could ev - er do,

Palm Mute

mp *ff* over pressure

82

(rit.) a tempo

Fl.

S. Sax.

C. Tpt.

Perc.

B.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Vln.

Ve.

f *so* *f* *f*

straight mute

Vibraphone

thank you for be - ing our aunt.

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

Slower (♩ = 52) 87 **freely**

84

Fl. *fp* *mp*

S. Sax. *fp* *pp* *Alto Sax*

C. Tpt. *fp* *mp*

Perc. *fp* *mp*

B. *fp* *mp* *pp*

Piano

E. Gtr.

Vln. *fp* *mp*

Ve. *fp* *mp* *pp*

Pray for me, some-one, who - ev-er reads this let-ter I am a-bout to con - sign - to ash.

92 **Patter** (♩ = 88)

92

Fl. *p* *mf*

A. Sax. *p* *mf* *Sop. Sax*

C. Tpt. *p* *mf*

Perc. *mf* *pp* *Triangle* *Drumset*

B. *f*

Piano *mp*

E. Gtr. *mf*

Vln.

Ve.

Dear Aunt Sal-ly I can't wait to see your Scot-tish cas-tle, port-cul-lis, and moat. The tur-rets sound spec-

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

96

Fl. *fp* *mp*

S. Sax. *fp* *mp*

C. Tpt. *fp* *mp*

Perc.

B. tac - u - lar, I'm jeal - ous of the view. Each day here is a lot of work. Each day is a

Pno.

E. Gtr. *f*

Vln. *mf*

Ve.

99

Fl. *p*

S. Sax. *p*

C. Tpt.

Perc.

B. gift, I know, but this gets dif - fi - cult to see. It seems like there are more and more

Pno. *p*

E. Gtr. *p* let ring... L.R... let ring...

Vln. *p*

Ve. *p*

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

Musical score for measures 102-104. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Saxophone (S. Sax.), Trumpet (C. Tpt.), Percussion (Perc.), Bass (B.), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.), Violin (Vln.), and Viola (Ve.). The lyrics are: "beau - ti - ful things a - round me but they cut through my". The music is in 4/4 time and features various dynamics such as *mf* and *f*. There are also performance markings like "let ring" and "L.R.".

Musical score for measures 105-107. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Saxophone (S. Sax.), Trumpet (C. Tpt.), Percussion (Perc.), Bass (B.), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.), Violin (Vln.), and Viola (Ve.). The lyrics are: "soul with their beau - ty.". The music is in 4/4 time and features various dynamics such as *mf* and *f*. There are also performance markings like "harmon mute" and "V".

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

108

Fl. *mp*

S. Sax. *mp*

C. Trpt. *mp*

Perc. *mf* Vitrphone

B. *f*

Pno. *mp*

E. Gtr. *mp*

Vln. *mp*

Ve. *mp*

I saw a fat lit-tle bird sing-ing on a branch this eve-ning. The

112

Fl. *f*

S. Sax. *f*

C. Trpt. *fp*

Perc. *f* *p* *fp*

B. *f* *p* *fp*

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Vln. *f* *p* *fp* *fp* *fp*

Ve. *f* *p* *fp* *fp* *fp*

rit. molto

sun shone from be-hind, I wept, I cried great gobs of

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

(molto rit.) 117 Slower (♩ = 52)

Fl. *mf* *s* *p sub.* *pp*

S. Sax. *p sub.* *pp*

C. Tpt.

Perc. *solo* *mf* *p*

B. *p* *pp*

Pno. *pp* *pp*

E. Gtr.

Vln. *fp* *p sub.* *pp*

Ve. *fp* *p sub.* *pp*

tears. Why do beau ti ful things hurt so much?

122 Patter (♩ = 88)

Fl. *mp*

S. Sax. *mp*

C. Tpt. *open* *mp*

Perc. *mp*

B. *mp*

Pno. *p*

E. Gtr. *clean (w/Piano)* *mp*

Vln.

Ve.

Like sea - ur - chins, and un - der - wa - ter walks, the blis - some in the

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

126

Fl.

S. Sax.

C.Tpt.

Perc.

B.

rin Thank you for the but-ter-fly. I will not let it go.

Pno.

E.Gtr.

Vln.

Ve.

133

Fl.

S. Sax.

C.Tpt.

Perc.

B.

Signed, "S." Dear Aunt Sal-ly. If

Pno.

E.Gtr.

Vln.

Ve.

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

Slower (♩ = 52)

142 Conversational (♩ = 78)

138

Musical score for measures 138-142. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Saxophone (S. Sax.), Clarinet (C. Tpt.), Percussion (Perc.), Bass (B.), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.), Violin (Vln.), and Viola (Ve.). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor). The time signature changes from 3/8 to 6/8, then to 4/4, and finally to 3/4. Dynamics include *pp*, *p*, *mp*, and *mf*. Performance instructions include "harmon mute sempre" for the clarinet and "Vibraphone" for the percussion. The lyrics for the vocal line are: "on-ly I could real-ly talk to some-one a-bout all these things. No one cares, no one".

144

146

148

Musical score for measures 144-148. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Saxophone (S. Sax.), Clarinet (C. Tpt.), Percussion (Perc.), Bass (B.), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.), Violin (Vln.), and Viola (Ve.). The key signature is one flat. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 6/8, then to 4/4, and finally to 3/4. Dynamics include *pp*, *mp*, *p*, and *mf*. Performance instructions include "Sut. Cymbal" for the percussion, "light distortion" for the electric guitar, and "pizz." for the violin and viola. The lyrics for the vocal line are: "cares a-bout the feel-ings of an an-ar-chist hid-ing in a der-e-lict build-ing. No com-mon folks, no".

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

149

Fl. *mp*

S. Sax. *mp*

C. Clarinet *p* *open* *mp*

Perc. *mp*

B. *mp*

Lyrics: mid-dle class, no Dre-u-ids, and no friends. I hope what we do with this scrap-py life makes it bet-ter for oth-er peo-ple.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Vln. *mp*

Vc. *mp*

156

157

Fl. *mf*

S. Sax. *mf*

C. Clarinet *mf*

Perc. *mf*

B. *mf* *f*

Lyrics: But here I am, king of the hid-den. Here I am, boss of the dis-placed, the run-a-ways.

Pno. *mp* *f*

E. Gtr. *p* *med. distortion, fuzzy* *mf* *let ring* *L.R.* *let ring*

Vln. *mf*

Vc. *f*

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

164

162

Fl.

S. Sax.

C. Tpt.

Perc.

B.

Pno.

E.Gtr.

Vln.

Ve.

the op-pressed and the un-want-ed. Here I am, rul-er of the re-jects, writ-ing let-ters to my

167

rit.

Fl.

S. Sax.

C. Tpt.

Perc.

B.

Pno.

E.Gtr.

Vln.

Ve.

aunt; my pret-ty ex-cit-ed, momen-tar-y de-par-ture; my dear, dear aunt

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

173 Conversational (♩ = 78)

Musical score for measures 173-176. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Saxophone (S. Sax.), Clarinet (C. Tpt.), Percussion (Perc.), Bass (B.), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.), Violin (Vln.), and Viola (Vc.). The key signature is B-flat major. The tempo is marked as Conversational with a quarter note equal to 78 beats per minute. The dynamic marking is *mf*. The Flute, Saxophone, Clarinet, and Percussion parts feature rhythmic patterns. The Piano part has a complex texture with chords and arpeggios. The Electric Guitar part has a melodic line with a note marked "med. heavy distortion". The Violin and Viola parts have melodic lines with a note marked "crescendo".

Musical score for measures 177-180. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Saxophone (S. Sax.), Clarinet (C. Tpt.), Percussion (Perc.), Bass (B.), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.), Violin (Vln.), and Viola (Vc.). The key signature is B-flat major. The tempo is marked as Conversational with a quarter note equal to 78 beats per minute. The dynamic marking is *mf*. The Flute, Saxophone, Clarinet, and Percussion parts feature rhythmic patterns. The Piano part has a complex texture with chords and arpeggios. The Electric Guitar part has a melodic line. The Violin and Viola parts have melodic lines.

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

180

Fl. *mf* *fz* *fz*

S. Sax. *mf* *fz* *fz*

C'l. Pt. *mf* *fz* *fz*

Perc. *mf* *f* *fz* *fz*

B. Dear Aunt Sal-ly 'Tis-day went well, I guess. Noth-ing has changed since

Pno. *mf* *p*

E. Gtr. *p*

Vln. *mf* *fz* *fz* over pressure

Vc. *mf* *fz* *fz* over pressure

187

Fl. *sfz* *fz* *fz* *f* *pp*

S. Sax. *sfz* *fz* *fz* *f* *pp* to Alto Sax

C'l. Pt. *sfz* *fz* *fz* *f* *pp* to Flugelhorn

Perc. *sfz* *fz* *fz* *f* *pp*

B. yes-ter-day but I feel a lit-tle bit bet-ter. The sun still goes up in the

Pno. *f* *p*

E. Gtr. Palm Mule solo clean *f* *p*

Vln. *sfz* *fz* *fz* *f* *pp* ord.

Vc. *sfz* *fz* *fz* *f* *p* ord.

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

188

Fl. *mp* *p*

A. Sx. *p* **Alto Sax**

C. T. pt. **Flugelhorn** open *p*

Perc.

B. *p* *mp* *p*

Pno.

E. Gtr. *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

Vln. *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

Vc. *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

lyrics: morn - ing and down in the eve - ning, I do get tired of the weeks and the num - bers get - ting high - er and let ting...

194 Strident

Fl. *mf*

A. Sx. *mf*

Flghn. *mf*

Perc.

B. *f* *mf*

Pno. *mf*

E. Gtr.

Vln. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

lyrics: high - er, then as the month ends, we start o - ver a - gain. No time to en - joy the fact we com - plet - ed a whole month...

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

200 **202** **205** Molassesey

Fl. *pp*

A. Sax. *p*

Flghn. *p*

Perc. motor on, med. speed

B. *p* *mp*

Piano

E. Gr. *pizz.*

Vln. *pizz.*

Vc. *p*

Yours for to - day, Signed, "S," Dear Aunt

208

Fl. *p*

A. Sax. *mf* *p*

Flghn. *mf* *p*

Perc. *Sus. Cymbal* *Vibraphone*

B. *mp*

Piano *mp*

E. Gr. *solo clar.* *mp*

Vln. *arco* *p*

Vc.

Sal - ly, How was Cal - ro? I must

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

213 *poco rit.*

Fl. *mf*

S. Sax. *mf*

Flghn. *mf*

Perc. *mf*

B. *mf*

Piano. *mf*

E. Git. *mf*

Vln. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

keep my let-ters short. When are you com-ing home? When are you com-ing home?

217 Crystalline

poco accel......

Fl. *p sub.*

S. Sax. *p sub.*

Flghn. *mf molto legato*

Perc. *p sub.*

B. *p sub.*

Piano. *p sub.*

E. Git. *p sub.*

Vln. *p sub.*

Vc. *p sub.*

home?

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

Conversational (♩ = 78)

221

Fl. *mp* *mf*

S. Sax. *mp* *mf*

Flghn. *mf* to Trumpet in C [Trumpet in C] straight note

Perc. *mf*

B. I can't wait to see... your ex-ot-ic pets, the liz-ard and the cat.

Pno. *p* *mf*

E.Gtr. *mf* *p* *mf* Palm mute)

Vln. *mp* *fp* solo molto sul pont.

Ve. *mp* *f*

228

225

Fl. *p* *mp*

S. Sax. *p* *mp*

C. Tpt. *mp*

Perc. motor on, med. speed *mf*

B. I hear the Kom-od-o drag-on is quite tame, I'm glad there is no mis-un-der-stand-ing... The drag-ons and the but-ter-flies, I

Pno. *mp*

E.Gtr. light distortion *mf*

Vln. ord. *p* *mf*

Ve. *p* *mf*

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

230

Fl.

S. Sax.

C. Tpt.

Perc.

B.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Vln.

Vc.

miss them ter - ri - bly much. Dear Aunt

234

235

Fl.

S. Sax.

C. Tpt.

Perc.

B.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Vln.

Vc.

Sally. None of them are real! They have on - ly one or two things dif - ferent from the

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

238 241

Fl. *mp* *f*

S. Sax. *mp* *f*

C Tpt. *f* *f open*

Perc. *f* *f*

B. rest of us, but we all think they will change the world. Some do, some don't, but *f* *p*

Pno. *f*

E.Gtr. *f*

Vln. *f* *pizz.*

Ve. *mp* *f*

242

Fl. *pp*

S. Sax. *pp*

C Tpt. *pp*

Perc. *p* *mp* *solo*

B. none of them are here now. You mat ter, I mat ter, all this mid die stuff *p*

Pno. *pp*

E.Gtr.

Vln. *arco sul tasto* *pp*

Ve. *arco* *p sub.*

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

rit. 252 Introspective (♩ = 62)

250

Fl. *mf* *p*

S. Sax. *mf* *p*

C. Trpt. *mf*

Perc. *mf* *p* *mf*

B. *mf* *p* *mf*

mat-ter. — How should a life mat-ter? — The fi-nal mo-ment when the last words are

Pno. *mp*

E. Gtr. *mf*

Vln. *mf* *ord.* *mp* *p*

Vc. *mf* *p*

260

256

Fl. *pp* *mp* *p*

S. Sax. *pp* *mp* *p*

C. Trpt. *mp* *p*

Perc. *pp* *mp* *p*

B. *p*

said and eve-ry-thing re-solved? What a-bout — those fin-g'ring deaths, where the per-son lays there need-ing wa-ter, — slow-ly mov-ing

Pno. *p*

E. Gtr.

Vln. *ord.* *pp* *ord.* *mp* *p*

Vc. *pp* *ord.* *mp* *p*

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

più mosso 270

Fl. *pp*

S. Sax. *pp*

C. Tpt. *pp* *mp*

Perc. *pp* *motor off*

B. *mf* *f*

Piano *pp*

E. Gtr. *pp*

Vln. *pp* *p*

Vc. *pp* *p*

less and less? Do you think that is a sto - ry worth re - tell - ing? Aunt

accel. 272 Conversational (♩ = 78)

Fl. *mf*

A. Sax. *mf*

C. Tpt. *mf*

Perc. *mf*

B. *mf*

Piano *mf*

E. Gtr. *mf* *p* *med. distortion, fuzzy*

Vln. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Sally, when can we go sky - div - ing? In your pip - er cub, your big brown

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

274

Fl.

A. Sax.

C. T. pt.

Perc.

B.

Pho.

E. Gtr.

Vln.

Ve.

boots, with your trust-y ma - chet - e.

Woodblock

Driving

277

Fl.

A. Sax.

C. T. pt.

Perc.

B.

Pho.

E. Gtr.

Vln.

Ve.

Aunt Sal - ly, when can we go par - a - chut - ing?

Sus. Symbol

over pressure

P.M.

ond.

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

281

Fl. *fz* *mp* *p*

A. Sax. *fz* *mp* *p*

C. Tpt. *fz* *mp* *p* *to Flugelhorn*

Perc. *fz* *mp* *p*

B. *fz* *mp* *p*

I woke up this morn - ing with the in - tent of do - ing the a - maz - ing, con - quer - ing the un -

Pno. *fz* *mp* *p*

E.Gtr. *fz* *mp* *p* *over pressure* *PM*

Vln. *fz* *mp* *p* *ord.*

Vc. *fz* *mp* *p* *ord.*

287

Fl. *mf* *p*

A. Sax. *mf* *p*

Flughn. *mf* *p* *Flugelhorn*

Perc. *mf* *p*

B. *mp* *mf* *p* *con - quer - a - ble and un - scal - ing all the heights. I woke up this morn - ing*

Pno. *mf* *p*

E.Gtr. *p* *mf* *p* *med. distortion, fuzzy* *let ring* *LR*

Vln. *mf* *p* *mf*

Vc. *f* *p*

GREY AREAS: Dear Aunt Sally - Score

289 291

Fl. *mf* *p* *mf*

A. Sx. *mf* *p* *mf*

Flghn. *mp* *mf*

Perc. *p* *mf*

B. *f*

Pno. *mf*

E.Gtr. *mf*

Vln. *p* *mf*

Ve. *mf*

to a de-li-cious break-fast, so on to the ad-ven-tures!

L.R. let ring

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for measures 289 to 291. The score is written for a full orchestra and includes vocal lines for Flute, Alto Saxophone, Flute/Glengarry Horn, Percussion, Bass, Piano, Electric Guitar, Violin, and Viola. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. Measure 289 starts with a *mf* dynamic. Measure 290 features a *p* dynamic. Measure 291 begins with a *mf* dynamic. The vocal line in measure 291 includes the lyrics "to a de-li-cious break-fast, so on to the ad-ven-tures!". The electric guitar part has a "let ring" instruction. The percussion part has a *p* dynamic. The bass part has a *f* dynamic. The piano part has a *mf* dynamic. The violin part has a *p* dynamic. The viola part has a *mf* dynamic.

293 295

Fl. *f*

A. Sx. *f*

Flghn. *f*

Perc. *f*

B. *f*

Pno. *f*

E.Gtr. *f* let ring

Vln. *f*

Ve. *f*

rit. molto

Aunt Sal-ly, I don't want to die!

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for measures 293 to 295. The score is written for a full orchestra and includes vocal lines for Flute, Alto Saxophone, Flute/Glengarry Horn, Percussion, Bass, Piano, Electric Guitar, Violin, and Viola. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. Measure 293 starts with a *f* dynamic. Measure 294 features a *f* dynamic. Measure 295 begins with a *f* dynamic. The vocal line in measure 295 includes the lyrics "Aunt Sal-ly, I don't want to die!". The electric guitar part has a "let ring" instruction. The percussion part has a *f* dynamic. The bass part has a *f* dynamic. The piano part has a *f* dynamic. The violin part has a *f* dynamic. The viola part has a *f* dynamic. The tempo markings "rit." and "molto" are present above the score.

Score
Alexander Bergman

GREY AREAS: Clickbait Poetry

Scott S. Hansen

Adagio (♩ = 64) accel. rit.

Flute
Bass Clarinet
Trumpet in C
Percussion
Baritone
Piano
Electric Guitar
Violin
Cello

9

Flute
Bass Clarinet
Trumpet in C
Perc.
B.
Pno.
E.Gr.
Vln.
Vc.

Death, non-be-ing. What's the big deal with this par-tic-u-lar part of in-

s.t. -----> in s.p.

GREY AREAS: Clickbait Poetry - Score

16

Fl.

B. Cl.

C. Tpt.

Perc.

B.

Puo.

E. Gtr.

Vln.

Vc.

mp

mf

Vibraphone

fin-i-ty that we sim-ply can't be a part of ex-is-ten-tial-ly as in-di-vid-u-als?

22 Faster (♩ = 82)

26

Fl.

B. Cl.

C. Tpt.

Perc.

B.

Puo.

E. Gtr.

Vln.

Vc.

mf

p

mf

It pass-es through us as food, an-cient for-ests all up in your share-ware. Tell me a-bout your pe-ri-od, or hair-cut and

GREY AREAS: Clickbait Poetry - Score

33 Adagio (♩ = 64)

29

Fl.

B. Cl.

C. Trpt.

Perc.

B.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Vln.

Vc.

fur-ni-ture. It is-n't sup-posed to make you mis-er-able just re-er-ent of re-birth and mu-ri-ent cy-cling, un-like

p, *mp*, *fp*, *p*, *mf*

40

36

Fl.

B. Cl.

C. Trpt.

Perc.

B.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Vln.

Vc.

cap-i-tal-ism. Why am I so a-fraid of life, be-ing? That's what I want to know. Is liv-ing just be-ing

pp, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, *p*, *mp*, *p*, *pizz.*, *pp*, *mf*, *p*, *arco*

solito voce, *B.D.*, *staccato*, *m.s.p.*

GREY AREAS: Clickbait Poetry - Score

48

Fl.

B. Cl.

C. Trpt.

Perc.

B.

Pno.

E. Gr.

Vln.

Vc.

will ing to ac cept death as the ma jor i ty of in fi ni ty and then re

Fl.

B. Cl.

C. Trpt.

Perc.

B.

Pno.

E. Gr.

Vln.

Vc.

turn at ten tion back to liv ing be fore it nev er hap pens?

to Alto Sax

Am7/C Bm7 B7(b9)

GREY AREAS: Clickbait Poetry - Score

55 Brighter (♩=96)

Fl.

B. Cl.

C. Tpt.

Perc.

B.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Vln.

Vc.

Alto Sax

Triangle

light distortion delay: sixteenth

Scans like a fright - end

p *pp* *p* *mf*

62 colla parte

Fl.

A. Sax.

C. Tpt.

Perc.

B.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Vln.

Vc.

ques - tion. "Why will I live brave - ly," feels better. A-

p *f* *f* *p*

GREY AREAS: Clickbait Poetry - Score

66 Adagio (♩=64)

Musical score for measures 63-71. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Alto Saxophone (A. Sax.), Clarinet in Treble Clef (C. Tpt.), Percussion (Perc.), Bass (B.), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E.Gtr.), Violin (Vln.), and Viola (Vc.). The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is Adagio with a quarter note equal to 64 beats per minute. The score features various dynamics including *mf*, *p*, *mp*, and *pp*. A vibraphone part is introduced with the instruction "Vibraphone motor on, med. speed". The bass line includes the lyrics: "ha- Rhet-o-ric I See You There! I'm a-fraid to con-tribute to suf-fer-ing (shame: not past it)".

72

Musical score for measures 70-78. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Alto Saxophone (A. Sax.), Clarinet in Treble Clef (C. Tpt.), Percussion (Perc.), Bass (B.), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E.Gtr.), Violin (Vln.), and Viola (Vc.). The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The score features various dynamics including *mf*, *pp*, *p*, and *f*. The bass line includes the lyrics: "and I will live brave-ly be-cause my mis-takes are pun of the bal-ance, not what I".

GREY AREAS: Clickbait Poetry - Score

79

Fragmented

76

Fl. *pp*

A. Sax. *pp*

C. Tpt. *p* straight mure (copper)

Perc. *p* motor off

B. *mp* *p* *f*

am, or will be, but com-put: ap-par-ent-ly dead, but not real-ly. /Three-day ad-d-en-dum/ /scam-less and sub-tle/ I will live

Piano. *pp* *p* *f*

E. Gtr. *p* *f* med. distortion

Vln. *p* *f*

Ve. *p* *pp* *p* *f*

poco rit. 84 Faster (♩ = 82)

82

Fl. *f*

A. Sax. *f* *mf* *f*

C. Tpt. *f* open

Perc. *f* *pp* *mf*

B. *f* *pp*

brave-ly be-cause com-put! Great, I hope eve-ry-one was tak-ing notes;

Piano. *mf*

E. Gtr. *mf* let ring...

Vln. *mf*

Ve. *mf*

GREY AREAS: Clickbait Poetry - Score

92

Fl. *8g*

A. Sax.

C. Tpt.

Perc. *Woodblock* *Triangle* *Vibraphone*

B.

Pno. *B.D.*

E.Gtr. *light distortion delay: sixcents*

Vln.

Vc.

f *p* *mp* *pp*

we real-ly fig-ured that one out.

96

Fl.

A. Sax.

C. Tpt.

Perc.

B.

Pno.

E.Gtr.

Vln.

Vc.

mf *p* *mp*

f *mp*

p *mp*

An-y-way... speak-ing of shame

GREY AREAS: Clickbait Poetry - Score

Fl. *mf*

A. Sx. *mp* *to Bass Clarinet*

C. Tpt. *mp* *straight mute (copper) p*

Perc. *p*

B. *p*

Pno. feels a bit like death, know what I mean? Fear of shame,

E. Gur. *p*

Vln. *p* *mp* *mf*

Ve. *p* *mp* *mf*

102 Freely, quasi ad lib.

Fl. *p sub.*

A. Sx. *mf* *Bass Clarinet*

C. Tpt. *mf*

Perc. *p sub.* loosely rhythmic

B. *p*

Pno. *p sub.* repeat these pitches in any order, in any tempo

E. Gur. *p sub.* repeat these pitches in any order, in any tempo

Vln. *p sub.*

Ve. *p sub.*

or shame for hav ing fear? A vi cious cy cle... I'm go ing to make the wrong words... I'm go ing to kill my friends in ig no rance.

GREY AREAS: Clickbait Poetry - Score

103 104

Fl.

B. Cl. *to Alto Sax*

C. Tpt. *mf*

Perc.

B. *p sub.*
I'm go - ing to fail in shar - ing move - ment so... I'm go - ing to do north - ing.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Vln.

Ve.

105 Adagio (♩=64)

Fl. *pp mf p*

B. Cl.

C. Tpt. *pp mf*

Perc.

B. *mf*
Dy - ing for fear of liv - ing: quite the pick - le.

Pno. *p*

E. Gtr. *clean p*

Vln. *sul tasto p*

Ve. *pp mf pp*
s.l. m.s.p. sul tasto

GREY AREAS: Clickbait Poetry - Score

110

Fl.

B. Cl. *Alto Sax*

C. Tpt. *harmon mute*

Perc.

B.

Pno.

E.Gtr.

Vln.

Vc.

I would nev - er say to an - y of my friends in the same sit - u - a - tion just ex-

115

Fl.

A. Sax.

C. Tpt.

Perc. *motor on, med. speed*

B.

Pno.

E.Gtr.

Vln.

Vc.

act - ly how ac - cept - ing of my - self am I be - ing then if I'm not al - lowed to say, 'I am a - fraid.'

GREY AREAS: Clickbait Poetry - Score

125

120

Fl. *pp* *ppp*

A. Sx. *pp* *ppp*

C.Tpt. *p* *pp* *to Flugelhorn*

Perc.

B. *p* *Re - as - sur - ing con - clud - ing sen - ti - ments... tho', (sigh) But real - ly,*

Pno.

E.Gtr.

Vln. *pp* *ppp*

Ve. *pp* *ppp*

126

Fl. *p*

A. Sx. *p*

C.Tpt. *p* *Flugelhorn open*

Perc. *p* *R.D.*

B. *mp* *f* *e - ven if op - ti - mism is just as ar - bi - trar - y as pes - si - mism, I - M - O; du - li - ous par - a - digns an - y - way... it makes sense to al - firm your own*

Pno. *pp* *mf*

E.Gtr. *pp*

Vln. *ord.* *p*

Ve. *pp*

GREY AREAS: Clickbait Poetry - Score

132

Fl. *p* *mf* *pp* *p*

A. Sax. *p* *mf* *pp* *p*

Flghn. *p* *mf* *pp* *p* solo

Perc. *p* *mf* *pp* *p* *motor off*

B. *p* *mf* *pp* *p*

Piano. *p* *mf* *pp*

E. Gr. *p* *mf* *pp* *p*

Vln. *p* *mf* *pp* *p*

Vc. *p* *mf* *pp* *p*

life and accept all of it while you have it.

137

rall.

Fl. *pp*

A. Sax. *pp*

Flghn. *pp*

Perc. *pp*

B. *p*

Piano. *pp*

E. Gr. *pp*

Vln. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

That is al - so - jur - tice, when you do it for oth - er pro - ple.

CHAPTER 3 – EXEGESIS AND RATIONALIZATION

Major Influences

The major influences of other works on my composition fall into two broad categories: stylistic similarities and subject matter. I can track general stylistic influences in *Grey Areas* back to a few primary works. Admittedly, while I did not set out to emulate these works, some of their characteristics are reflected in my music nonetheless. The evidence of these influences is often only recognized in hindsight, but some conscious decisions made during the creative process were more deliberate and warrant scrutiny. First, I identified works that I listened to during the pre-composition process as a springboard for inspiration.

My choice to meld musical theatre elements with aspects of art music is influenced by Leonard Bernstein's *Mass* (1971). I elected to write for baritone in *Grey Areas* (despite *Mass* featuring a tenor soloist) simply because I had not worked with this voice type before. As such, I continued looking to other pieces for inspiration. David Little's *Soldier Songs* (2006/11) added to my understanding treatments of contemporary text. Little's exclusive use of biographical and personal texts in English gives a particular grittiness to the composition by employing a vernacular language. In Bernstein's *Mass*,

original texts in English and Yiddish by Stephen Schwartz and Bernstein are softened by use of the Latin mass. Both works cross genre boundaries by using colloquial texts and rock music elements. Topics of death, shame, aging, and maturity in *Soldier Songs* motivated me in my editing the selections of text in “Dear Aunt Sally” to move forward with what ended up being a highly personal (and occasionally painful) journey back into my childhood. Both Little’s and my use of a single singer instead of an ensemble (as in Bernstein’s *Mass*) allows personal relation of universal experiences on a more dramatic one-to-one level. With no other characters on stage to interact with, the audience is made an active member of the narrative by the lone singer.

A third piece that is a stylistic ancestor to *Grey Areas* is Stephen Lias’ *From the Diaries of Adam and Eve* (1995). His work is originally for mezzo-soprano, baritone, and chamber ensemble, but I helped him create a piano/vocal version in the summer of 2020.⁴ This work, similar to *Mass* draws on musical theater styles and semi-apocryphal subject matter (by Mark Twain) to craft its musical world. After finishing the recording of “Uncanny Valley” I pinpointed places where I unintentionally placed snippets of material similar to Lias’ piece; one of these instances is illustrated in Musical Example 1 and Musical Example 2. Like a rapidly changing radio station, “Uncanny Valley” rotates

⁴ This new version was published by Alias Press and released through Theodore Presser in February of 2021.

through a variety of moods and musical ideas very quickly in its middle section so the specifically influenced morsels are brief in occurrence.

Grey Areas, “Uncanny Valley” m. 29-36

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Grey Areas" from "Uncanny Valley", measures 29-36. The score includes staves for Bass (B), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E.Gtr.), Violin (Vln.), and Viola (Vc.). The piano part features a prominent gallop motive, which is a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with a dotted quarter note. This motive is highlighted with a black box and labeled "Gallop motives" in a separate box. The score includes various dynamics such as *mp*, *p*, *f*, and *pp*, and includes chord markings like *E7/B* and *A♭7/E♭*. The lyrics are: "per-son... who won the lot-ter-y... cooked the per-fect...".

Musical Example 1. Gallop motive in *Grey Areas*

From the Diaries of Adam and Eve, III. A Year Later, m. 148-154

The image shows a musical score for the piece "From the Diaries of Adam and Eve", III. A Year Later, measures 148-154. The score includes staves for Treble Clef (Vocal), Piano (Pno.), and Bass Clef (Piano). The piano part features a gallop motive, which is a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with a dotted quarter note. This motive is highlighted with a black box and labeled "Gallop motives" in a separate box. The score includes various dynamics such as *mf* and *f*. The lyrics are: "get her a kan-ga-roo. If she will let this one go, but it did no good." The measure number 151 is indicated at the start of the second system.

Musical Example 2. Gallop motive in *From the Diaries of Adam and Eve*

Since so much of the songs' texts in *Grey Areas* is highly personal, a closer look at each movement reminds me that I do not compose within a cultural vacuum. Influence and inspiration filter down to me through both the smallest threads of thought and the largest possible sensory experiences. For effective vocal writing, I knew these compositional influences would need to be applied in a way that would best serve the text and (by extension) the piece.

Selection of Texts

While such latent influences could be traced all the way back to childhood, this project had its true genesis when I encountered the poem *Clickbait Poetry*, a recent piece by Alexander Bergman (one of my former classmates) who developed amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) during his undergraduate studies as a percussionist. By highlighting an individual experience presented with broad-reaching relatability, this poem provided the baseline for gathering the three other texts. With the foundation of mood and language style set, I was able to connect sources that I had been wanting to set to music for quite a while to this project.

The rest of the texts draw on three distinct periods of my life: childhood; high school; and graduate school. "Dear Aunt Sally" contains childhood letters from my sister and me to our imaginary friend, Aunt Sally. Growing up homeschooled in rural Alaska, we were quite isolated and had limited experiences with the wider world. We became

fascinated with the so-called exotic and created traditions to share our created mythology. One such tradition was that of holding fancy tea parties and poem readings. “Look Well To This Day” was introduced to me in high school through one of these tea parties by a dear friend, although it is originally an ancient Sanskrit text that predates all of western history. “Uncanny Valley” is collected scraps of text from the past few years of my haphazard journaling. Through the selected texts, I am able to chart my own life experiences and gradual exposure to the world and then write music about that process.

Examining each of the four texts in more detail, the letters written by my older sister⁵ and me that form the basis of “Dear Aunt Sally” illuminate the relationship to our imaginary relative and friend Aunt Sally, who is based off of a mnemonic device for remembering the order of operations in mathematics: Parachute Expert, My Dear Aunt Sally.⁶ She is a strong female entity, self-sufficient in the wilderness yet with an impeccable hodge-podge sense of style so as to fit in on the streets of New York during fashion week in any decade. In the same company as the magical wizard Merlin, the eponymous television character from the BBC’s *Doctor Who*, the fabulous Ms. Frizzle, or the indefatigable Mary Poppins, she appears at opportune times with bits of wisdom, helpful items, or swashbuckling verve. The mythology of this character grew throughout our childhood via short film scripts, creative writing assignments, and bedtime stories for

⁵ Felicia Finely, *née* Hansen.

⁶ The order of operations is as follows: parentheses, exponents, multiplication, division, addition, and subtraction.

younger siblings while gathered around the woodstove in the living room of our childhood home on long Alaskan winter nights.

After finding a verse to set as a wedding gift for two friends, I added the Sanskrit poem, “Look Well To This Day” to my selection of texts. The text is quite short – just sixteen lines that are immediately repeated verbatim. It has appeared repeatedly throughout my life, quoted by various influential figures in a wide variety of contexts. I selected a traditional English translation with which I am most familiar. Its addition gives my monodrama a bit of gravitas by connecting it to the broader collection of art that ruminates on the human experience.

The only completely original text in *Grey Areas* is “Uncanny Valley.” Its collection of sentences is drawn from notes and sayings scribbled on scraps of paper and saved over the course of the last few years (2018-2021). In this movement, juxtaposition of the seemingly banal and the potentially profound creates constant friction and drama. The title and inspiration came from the fields of computer-generated imagery, artificial intelligence, and robotics. The collected phrases illustrate my instinctual response to events and observation of things in and out of the ordinary: ruminating on the purposes of the dead ladybugs lying on my mailbox in the mornings; allowing myself the self-congratulatory satisfaction of cooking a pristine pot of rice; or the existential crisis of mortality summed up in the line, “my skin continues its march towards the tips of my fingers.”

Instrumentation

For modern mixed chamber ensembles (especially monodramas), one of the most influential starting points is Arnold Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912). The highly successful grouping of voice, flute, clarinet, piano, violin, and cello has become such a standard that it is now known as a *Pierrot ensemble*. After acknowledging *Pierrot* as my starting point, I then sought out how other composers in the last twenty-five years have adjusted this instrumentation to fit their needs.

In researching other monodrama ensembles, I chose five that applied and intrigued me and compared their instrumentation as seen in the following list:

- Jason Robert Brown's *The Last Five Years* (2001).
 - Soprano and tenor voices; guitar, bass, two percussionists, piano, violin, and two cellos.⁷
- Kevin Puts' *Einstein on Mercer Street* (2002).
 - Baritone voice; flute (doubles piccolo), clarinet (doubles Eb and bass clarinets), trumpet, one percussionist, piano, violin, and cello.⁸

⁷ Jason Robert Brown, *The Last Five Years* (New York: Music Theatre International, 2001).

⁸ "Einstein on Mercer Street, for Bass-Baritone and Chamber Ensemble," Kevin Puts, accessed March 22, 2021, <http://www.kevinputs.com/program/einstein.html>.

- David Little’s *Soldier Songs* (2006/11).
 - Baritone voice; flute (doubles piccolo, alto flute, and percussion), clarinet (doubles bass clarinet and percussion), two dedicated percussionists, piano, violin, cello, and pre-recorded electronics.⁹
- Kate Soper’s *Voices from the Killing Jar* (2012).
 - Soprano and baritone voices; flute (doubles piccolo and bass flute), clarinet (doubles alto saxophone), one percussionist, piano, violin, and live electronics.¹⁰
- Paul Simon’s *Homeward Bound Tour* (2018) (selections) with yMusic.
 - Baritone voice; flute, clarinet (doubles bass clarinet and alto saxophone), trumpet, guitar, violin, viola, and cello.¹¹

I decided on my ensemble after assessing current repertoire and reviewing the texts I selected. Early sketches of the “Uncanny Valley” suggested that I would need a rhythm section consisting of drum set, piano, and guitar. Supplementing a Pierrot ensemble with these still neglects the brass family, so I added a trumpet to access all my envisioned timbres.

⁹ David T. Little, *Soldier Songs* (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 2011).

¹⁰ Kate Soper, *Voices from the Killing Jar* (New York: PSNY, 2012).

¹¹ “yMusic – About” yMusic Ensemble, accessed March 22, 2021, <https://www.ymusicensemble.com/>.

Midway through the compositional process I decided to swap out the clarinetist in the core Pierrot group for the type of single-reed doubler typical in the Broadway and big band traditions. The resulting reed part contains alto saxophone, soprano saxophone (or clarinet), and bass clarinet. I made this discovery during a read-through in which the wind player showed me how well the clarinet part suited the alto saxophone range. This tipped the scale and allowed for a wider set of compositional options.

The following chart shows my final instrumentation in comparison with the list of pieces in table 3.1; on the X-axis, each player is listed in bold, while doubled instruments are in normal type.

Table 1. Instrumentation Comparison

	flute	piccolo	alto flute	saxophone	clarinet	Eb clarinet	bass clarinet	trumpet	flugelhorn	percussion	guitar	bass	piano	violin	viola	cello
Soper	x	x		x	x					x			x	x		
Puts	x	x			x	x	x	x		x			x	x		x
Brown										x	x	x	x	x		x
Little	x	x	x		x		x			x			x	x		x
Simon	x			x	x		x	x			x	x		x	x	x
Hansen	x	x		x	x		x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x

Process of Text Setting

Composers frequently write movements in an order that is different from the finished piece. Further complicating the matter of experiential listening, *Grey Areas*

incorporates variable movement structures (discussed later in this chapter). So, while no single definitive sequence of these individual songs exists, it may be helpful to understand the order in which I set texts to music as that may illuminate the chronology of musical choices and how I made certain decisions based on other components already written.

The first movement I started was “Dear Aunt Sally.” As I began adapting the writings and correspondence provided by my sister, I grouped the different letters into categories based on personas of authors. While I chose to write to Aunt Sally as myself, my older sister created a series of personalities with which to craft an interdimensional and cross-century web of friends with which Aunt Sally kept up. While occasionally Aunt Sally would respond (we maintained the illusion of her existence for younger siblings), in this project all selected stories and interactions are one-sided. For these letters, there were no responses from Aunt Sally at the time or any manufactured after-the-fact by me: it was not necessary. Her purpose here was to listen while writers worked out their problems on paper.

Throughout this movement, the baritone sings one half of the conversations of three semi-distinct characters. The bleed-over from one story to the next in both my adaptation and the original letters creates an enveloping sense of urgency between each correspondence, even though they are distanced by time and space. The main motivic gesture (and title) of this movement is derived from the opening salutation of each compiled letter as seen in Musical Example 3.

Baritone

f

Dear Aunt Sally

Musical Example 3. Aunt Sally motive

The sheer volume of narration in the letters addressed to Aunt Sally motivated the decision to use near-constant, propellant rhythmic motion throughout this movement. I highlight the exuberant relation of information through both the busy instrumental accompaniment and the active vocal line. Chromatically ascending and descending lines are embedded throughout in the vocal part to track the emotional direction of phrases. In addition, frequent *overshooting* of the expected arrival notes of melodic cadences is accomplished through the use of whole-tone scales (see Musical Example 4) as well as placing significant words on the ninth of important chordal arrivals (Musical Example 5).

D-flat expected, whole-tone scale overshoots to D-natural

rain. Thank you for the but-ter-fly, I will not let it go.

Embedded chromatic ascending line:

Musical Example 4. Chromatic ascending line and whole-tone overshoot

Voicing:

Fl. 9th *mp*

S. Sax. 3rd *mp*

C Tpt. *mp* Trumpet in C straight mute (copper) Root

Perc. 5th 3rd *mp*

B. 9th

threws each sea-son one af-ter the oth-er un-til I am done.

Pno. *fp* (Piano doubles wind voices)

E. Gtr. *fp* C#major^{add2}/G# let ring

Vln. 9th *fp*

Vcl. 9th *fp*

Musical Example 5. Chord voicing in "Dear Aunt Sally"

In approaching, “Look Well To This Day” I wanted to distill the poem down to a single melodic gesture that could work in either direction. Since the songs have three different potential orders, the act of “looking” referred to in this movement could be either forwards or backwards – the perspective of the vocal character is determined by which movements surround it. I based the melodic line around the interval of a minor

seventh to accomplish this. The imitative opening sets up each instrument *looking* to the next through the searching melody that uses the pitch class set (0124), until the baritone enters with the final fugato entry. The pitch level that each entry of (0124) starts on is raised first by six half-steps, then five at a time (diatonic fourths in C lydian: C, F#, B, E, etc.). This forms a circle so that the last entry, the baritone, is stated at the same pitch level as the first, flute and percussion, as shown in Musical Example 6 (transposed score).

The musical score illustrates the fugato entries of the pitch class set (0124) across various instruments. The entries are as follows:

- Flute:** (0124) on C
- Bass Clarinet:** (0124) on B
- Flugelhorn:** (0124) on E
- Percussion:** (0124) on E
- Electric Guitar:** (0124) on F#
- Violin:** (0124) on A
- Cello:** (0124) on A
- Baritone:** (0124) on C
- Piano:** (0124) on G
- Violoncello:** (0124) on D

Musical Example 6. Fugato entries of (0124)

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, “Uncanny Valley” revolves around the questioning of reality. This movement explores elements of humanity through a vamping ostinato while the baritone sings fragmented text forming collected notes, short observations, and half-baked thought processes. Like the Turing Test (a benchmark for AI research) or “I’m not a robot” captcha, the phrases sung by the baritone are slices of life assembled into an attempt at one whole human experience. The detached accompaniment impresses the point that time waits for no one and will continue on regardless of outcome or complaints.

In the first section of this movement (m. 1-28) there is hardly any cohesion between the baritone and instrumental accompaniment. While the two forces are indeed in the same sonic space, they are non-referential to each other (see Musical Example 7).

20 VAMP OUT after "the universe in a cup"

fr. *pp* *molto vib.* *p*

Picc.

B. Cl. *pp* *straight m.* *fr.*

C. Tpt. *pp* *p*

Perc. *pp* *enter after one cycle of Vamp*

B. *pp*

Pno. *pp*

I start-ed off the morn-ing by cry-ing in my cof-fee, mag-ic beans and leaves, the u-ni-verse in a cup.

Vocal line completely independent from accompaniment

Musical Example 7. Independent vocal line

The two sections that feature this detached accompaniment, mm. 20-27 and mm. 58-73, were partly inspired by the opening number from Benjamin Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*, where conflicting key areas are outlined by the free *recitative* and the rhythmic, propulsive accompaniment over which it is layered (Musical Example 8).

SCENE I THE JOURNEY
DIE REISE

The lights go up on the interior of a coach. *Das Licht blendet auf und beleuchtet das Innere einer Kutsche. Die Gouvernante ist im Reisekleid.*
The Governess is in travelling dress.

Free recitative

Cl. in A *pp*

Bsn. *pp*

Hrn. in F *pp*

T.D.

Perc. *pp* *always in regular time*

GOVERNESS

Near-ly there. *Fast schon da.* Ve-ry soon I shall know, *Und sehr bald seh ich klar,* I shall know what's in store for me. *seh ich klar, was vor mir steht.*

Free recitative

I. *pp*

VI. *pp*

II. *pp*

Vla. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

D.B. *pp*

“The Turn of the Screw” By Benjamin Britten
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For The Sole Use Of Scott Hansen, Stephen F. Austin State University

Musical Example 8. Act I, Scene I recitative from Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*

I repurposed this compositional idea to fit the needs of my text, as seen in Musical Example 9.

G minor implied movement in the vocal line, unresolved

m. 66-71, G# modal accompaniment; bassline constructed from whole tones, unstable

Musical Example 9. Elements in "Uncanny Valley" inspired by Britten

There are two points where the shape of the melodic line directly engages and influences the instrumental accompaniment. Measures 28-33 (Musical Example 10) contain the first obvious acknowledgement that the baritone and instrumentalists exist in the same plane. The subsequent shift from simple to compound meter reflects the energy of making new discoveries in cohesion, consciousness, and of hyper-stimulating experiences.

34

Imitative acknowledgment of vocal line:

Cohesion between parts:

The last per-son who won the lot-ter-y

Musical Example 10. Imitation and cohesion in m. 29-33 of "Uncanny Valley"

At various places throughout this movement, I used the instruments to illustrate the implied meaning of the text. The two clearest examples are at m. 45 and m. 56-57. These two points also function as transitional moments in and out of the middle contrasting section. The shift in texture at m. 45 is signaled by the phrase, “My skin continues its daily march towards the tips ... of my fingers.” The strings then respond with a slower and steady pulse that mimics the referenced dermal trajectory (Musical Example 11).

45 Mechanical (♩ = 92)

The musical score for 'Mechanical' is presented in 4/4 time with a tempo of ♩ = 92. The score includes five staves: B. Cl., B. (Baritone), E. Gtr. (Electric Guitar), Vln. (Violin), and Vc. (Violoncello). The lyrics are: 'fin-gers. Is this me, or just who I want to be? Locked a-way by my'. A box labeled 'Fingertip march' with a downward-pointing arrow highlights the beginning of the electric guitar part. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo) and *p* (piano).

Musical Example 11. Fingertip march

The dreamy moment of stasis after this in mm. 56-57 (Musical Example 12) directly relates to the line sung by the baritone, “can you teach me to dream?” and uses a tense ^{add#11} harmony which I also associate with anticipation in “Dear Aunt Sally.”

The image displays two musical examples. The left example, 'Uncanny Valley,' m. 56-57, voice on #4, features a vocal line with lyrics 'Can you teach me to dream?'. The orchestration includes Piccolo, B. Cl., C. Tpt., Bassoon, Piano, E. Gtr., Violin, and Viola, all marked *ppp*. A callout box identifies the harmony as $A^{add\#4}/E$. The right example, 'Dear Aunt Sally,' m. 172, voice on #11, features a vocal line with lyrics 'sunt...'. The orchestration includes Flute, Saxophone, Trumpet, Percussion, Bassoon, Piano, E. Gtr., Violin, and Viola, with dynamics ranging from *ppp* to *ff*. A callout box identifies the harmony as $B^{maj13, \#11}$.

Musical Example 12. Anticipation harmonies

The return of the opening vamp in m. 58 and subsequent transposition up a whole step (with slight chordal modification) at m. 66 (Musical Example 13) mirrors the increased drama and tension in the reflection and observation in the text that closes this movement with the line, “History is written by the victors, and at that end I have survived!”

58 Emotionally-distant groove (♩ = 104)
 VAMP ♩ = ♩

The image displays two systems of a musical score for the piece "Uncanny Valley". The first system, starting at measure 58, is in F# major and features a groove with dynamics ranging from ppp to pp. The second system, starting at measure 66, is in G# major and features a groove with dynamics ranging from mf to pp. The score includes parts for Piccolo, Clarinet, Trumpet, Percussion, Bass, Piano, Electric Guitar, Violin, and Vocal. Chord symbols are provided for the guitar part in both systems.

Musical Example 13. Transposition of groove in "Uncanny Valley"

The reappearance of opening material in m. 80, along with general pauses marked in the score signals the winding-down of the movement. Despite the wide scope of human emotions traveled by the singer through the text, there still is not quite enough impetus for the vocal character to pass over the threshold of the uncanny valley and the singer drops out well-before the groove plays out.

In direct contrast to the existential and textural crisis of “Uncanny Valley,” “Clickbait Poetry” relies heavily on vocal and instrumental lines exchanging musical information. Bergman’s writing style is very different from mine and the chance for the

narrative momentum to halt for a meaningful soliloquy provided the opportunity for some wonderful Greek-chorus moments as seen in Musical Example 14.

The image displays a musical score for Musical Example 14, titled "Call-and-response settings of 'infinity' in 'Clickbait Poetry'". The score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes parts for Flute (Fl.), B. Clarinet (B. Cl.), C. Trumpet (C. Tpt.), Percussion (Perc.), Bass (B.), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.), Violin (Vln.), and Viola (Vc.). The lyrics "in - fin - i - ty" are written under the Bass line. The second system includes parts for Flute (Fl.), B. Clarinet (B. Cl.), C. Trumpet (C. Tpt.), Percussion (Perc.), Bass (B.), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.), Violin (Vln.), and Viola (Vc.). The lyrics "part of in - fin - i - ty that we sim - ply can't be a" are written under the Bass line. A large grey arrow points from the piano accompaniment in the first system to the electric guitar part in the second system.

Musical Example 14. Call-and-response settings of "infinity" in "Clickbait Poetry"

The periodic and cyclical nature of life and death as discussed and described in Bergman's text is reflected in my setting through frequent pauses, halts, and repeating oscillating material in the musical texture. Speaking about this poem during an interview, Bergman said, "I wrote it for myself as a way of naming the moment I was having and acknowledging it as I was sharing. It was a way to open up the conversation and confront

them [fear and shame].”¹² I take this to mean that by naming problems, confronting them head on, and not misattributing or conflating causes and effects we are able to better deal with issues of mortality, intellect, and fear that are ever-present.

Regarding his own journey in dealing with the subjects of “Clickbait Poetry”

Bergman added:

I’ve felt myself change since then, since I wrote the poem, especially regards to personal and cultural situations of shame and blame. I’ve began referring to it as shame disease. ... I like to be accountable to my community, and not let fear and shame get it the way.¹³

The text evolved similarly over the course of a few days, as indicated within the poem itself through the use of unorthodox punctuation:

*/Three-day addendum/
/seamless and subtle/*

I chose to highlight the frequent repeated subjects that Bergman wrestled with by returning to the opening “searching” motive without developing it any further. This happens at measures 9, 39, 79, 104, 125, and 134 as shown in Musical Example 15.

¹² Alexander Bergman, interview by author, by phone, March 15, 2021.

¹³ Ibid.

<p><i>p</i></p> <p>Death, non-be-ing. _____ m. 9</p>	<p>(C omitted)</p> <p>life, _____ be-ing? m. 39</p>	<p>ap - par - ent - ly dead, but not real - ly. m. 9</p>
<p>I'm go - ing _____ to do noth - ing. m. 104</p>	<p>(sigh)</p> <p>But real - ly, m. 125</p>	<p>while you have it. _____ m. 134</p>

Musical Example 15. Instances of the searching motive in "Clickbait Poetry"

The final iteration of this motive is transposed down a semi-tone and adorned by soft tintinnabular harmonies in the accompaniment (Musical Example 16).

137

rall.....

Fl. *pp*

A. Sax. *pp*

Flghn. *pp*

Perc. *pp*

B. *p*

Pno. *pp*

E. Gtr. *pp*

Vln. *pp*

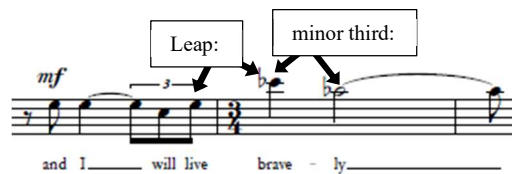
Vcl. *pp*

That is al - so jus - tice, when you do it for oth - er peo - ple.

Searching motive, transposed:

Musical Example 16. Final searching motive in "Clickbait Poetry"

The main “searching” motive, a rising major sixth and whole step, is complemented by the secondary “answer” motive: a falling third after an upward leap that first appears in m. 72 (Musical Example 17). This coincides with the first breath of resolve in the text, “and I will live bravely...”



Musical Example 17. The "answer" motive in "Clickbait Poetry"

Throughout all four movements, the texts are primarily set syllabically: one articulated pitch sung per syllable. This reflects my emphasis on the clear and concise word delivery that has been common for English text since the middle of the 20th century. Melismatic moments that do occur are quite brief and serve to highlight specific words in their phrases, or for vocal effect. During the vamp between mm. 20-27 in “Uncanny Valley,” the baritone sings a slurred D dominant-seventh chord on the word, “magic” (Musical Example 18). This elongation of the word emphasizes it and brings it out of the rhythmic texture.



Musical Example 18. Melismatic moment one

In m. 35 of the same movement, a brief two-note slur accomplishes same goal on the word, “cooked” (Musical Example 19).



Musical Example 19. Melismatic moment two

There is only one moment in “Dear Aunt Sally” with non-syllabic setting. In m. 120, a two-note melisma highlights the word, “hurt” for dramatic emphasis (Musical Example 20).



Musical Example 20. Melismatic moment three

“Clickbait Poetry” similarly contains two single-word, two-note melismata: “never” in m. 110 and, “afraid” in m. 119 as show in Musical Example 21 and Musical Example 22, respectively.



Musical Example 21. Melismatic
moment four



Musical Example 22. Melismatic
moment five

These moments all serve to heighten the emotional connection of the singer, audience, and instrumental ensemble to the texts.

Movement Order

Studies have shown that viewers of discrete portions of artistic content tend to create imagined links that form an overall narrative. The juxtaposition of even just two different images conures up storylines and elicits emotional responses from viewers. This is known as the “theory of montage,” as described by filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein.¹⁴ While dramatic staging is not prescribed for *Grey Areas*, the text implies a narrative construction through this theory. I have also noticed that the audience’s perception of a work is different with each performance and influenced by the performer, the setting, and

¹⁴ Antoine-Dunne, Jean, and Paula Quigley. 2004. *The montage principle: Eisenstein in new cultural and critical contexts*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 12.

what comes before and after. This led me to the idea of movements that could be performed in a variety of orders – thus expanding the possible imagined narratives. By acknowledging the change in the dramatic arc based on the performer’s age, and by extension perceived life experience, the piece serves a greater number of performers and programs.

Tying the age of the baritone to the piece’s large-scale structure was inspired by David Little’s *Soldier Songs*, in which a single baritone portrays multiple differently aged characters (or, possibly, the same character at different ages). For my composition I chose to invert Little’s idea and crafted a piece that would instead change based on the singer.

Broader inspiration for this reordering also came from hearing Leonard Bernstein’s *I Hate Music* song cycle and Aaron Copland’s *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson* performed by three singers of differing ages and voice maturity types in the course of the same week. In reflecting on the differences between the three performances, the variations in contextual interpretation (as a listener) were quite striking and have informed all of my subsequent vocal writing. With the mature and matronly voices, the facets of nostalgia and longing were more present. With younger, developing voices, the self-discovery and exploratory nature of singing repertoire for the first time brought a different and highly intriguing listening experience.

Like a narrative Russian nesting doll, the isolated songs inform the assembly structures that, in turn, interact with each other as singers transition from one prescribed age group to the next. Similar to comic books or graphic novels, the story that is

connected by the listener's subconscious happens between the frames. The juxtaposition of movements is as important as the notated music. While a total of twenty-four discreet sequences are possible, I have chosen these three narrative structures for their strengths:

1. Extroverted Order (singers up to twenty-four years old);
2. Rogue Order (singers from twenty-four to forty-two); and
3. Introverted Order (singers older than forty-two).

In the following sections, I explore these three orders and describe their resultant narrative arcs as well as tonal relationships that result from the sequence in question.

Extroverted Order:

In the Extroverted Order (for younger singers up to twenty-four years old) two circular narratives are depicted in the tonal relationships. The outer two movements both travel towards a tonal center of C major: The final harmony of "Dear Aunt Sally" has a dominant function, while "Look Well To This Day" ends on a $C^{\text{add}2}$ chord. The two interior movements, "Uncanny Valley" and "Clickbait Poetry" both share a final tonal center of F#, as seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Extroverted Order

Up to 24 years old	Tonal Centers	Length
<p>“Dear Aunt Sally” <i>Opening:</i> <i>Structural arrival point:</i> <i>Ending:</i></p>	<p>F major Bb major, m. 173 C quintal, dominant function</p>	12min
<p>“Uncanny Valley” <i>Opening:</i> <i>Structural arrival points:</i> <i>Ending:</i></p>	<p>F# modal/whole tone C# (written as Db), m. 41 G# modal/whole tone, m.66 F# modal/whole tone</p>	6min
<p>“Clickbait Poetry” <i>Opening:</i> <i>Structural arrival point:</i> <i>Ending:</i></p>	<p>G major F minor, m. 102 F# major</p>	8min
<p>“Look Well To This Day” <i>Opening:</i> <i>Structural arrival points:</i> <i>Ending:</i></p>	<p>Bb minor/unstable C major, m. 20 D major, m. 57 C major</p>	4min

Rogue Order:

The tonal relationships between the movements when placed in the Rogue Order (Table 3) are best understood in light of the overall narrative structure. “Uncanny Valley” opens the work by attempting to discern what constitutes humanity, while “Clickbait Poetry” answers that question with the final line of text, “it makes sense to affirm your own life, and accept of it while you have it. That is also justice, when you do it for other people.” In essence, these bookend-movements connect the holding of others as more important than yourself to the definition of good humanity.

This connection is reflected and emulated with the key areas cycling away from, and then back again to, F#. The unsteady opening of “Uncanny Valley” rises and falls in pitch class but ultimately cannot shake the whole-tone based, incessant eighth-note pulse. The instability is continued through “Look Well To This Day” using a pan-tonal fugato opening with a constantly rising chordal accompaniment. At the end of this second movement, the resolution to a C major tonic is immediately reinterpreted as a dominant once the next (“Dear Aunt Sally”) begins on F major. In this ordering of movements (see Table 3), the coda-like “Clickbait Poetry” navigates from G major to F# major in slow shifts over the course of approximately eight minutes. This mirrors the slow narrative shift of the text from unsure to resolved.

Table 3. Rogue Order

24 – 42 years old	Tonal Centers	Length
<p>“Uncanny Valley” <i>Opening:</i> <i>Structural arrival points:</i> <i>Ending:</i></p>	<p>F# modal/whole tone C# (written as Db), m. 41 G# modal/whole tone, m.66 F# modal/whole tone</p>	6min
<p>“Look Well To This Day” <i>Opening:</i> <i>Structural arrival points:</i> <i>Ending:</i></p>	<p>Bb minor/unstable C major, m. 20 D major, m. 57 C major</p>	4min
<p>“Dear Aunt Sally” <i>Opening:</i> <i>Structural arrival point:</i> <i>Ending:</i></p>	<p>F major Bb major, m. 173 C quintal, dominant function</p>	12min
<p>“Clickbait Poetry” <i>Opening:</i> <i>Structural arrival point:</i> <i>Ending:</i></p>	<p>G major F minor, m. 102 F# major</p>	8min

Introverted Order:

The final movement ordering for singers aged forty-two and older presents a progressive narrative structure, beginning with the most sedate and ending with the most animated (Table 4). By opening with two slow movements, the energy builds steadily over the whole work and culminates with a resurgence of life force, “Aunt Sally: I don’t want to die!” The movements are ordered in exact reverse as the youngest sequence. This imbues the entire work with an even larger external structure, beyond that of a single performance.

Table 4. Introverted Order

Up to 24 years old	Tonal Centers	Length
<p>“Look Well To This Day” <i>Opening:</i> <i>Structural arrival points:</i> <i>Ending:</i></p>	<p>Bb minor/unstable C major, m. 20 D major, m. 57 C major</p>	4min
<p>“Clickbait Poetry” <i>Opening:</i> <i>Structural arrival point:</i> <i>Ending:</i></p>	<p>G major F minor, m. 102 F# major</p>	8min
<p>“Uncanny Valley” <i>Opening:</i> <i>Structural arrival points:</i> <i>Ending:</i></p>	<p>F# modal/whole tone C# (written as Db), m. 41 G# modal/whole tone, m.66 F# modal/whole tone</p>	6min
<p>“Dear Aunt Sally” <i>Opening:</i> <i>Structural arrival point:</i> <i>Ending:</i></p>	<p>F major Bb major, m. 173 C quintal, dominant function</p>	12min

As described, each individual song takes on a differing narrative role depending on the sequence. “Look Well To This Day” is unique in how broadly it is transformed by the prescribed orders’ juxtapositions. This is particularly apparent with the contrast of the Extroverted and Introverted orders, in which the movements are reversed in sequence. The Sanskrit text is highly relatable with a wide range of applications, so my compositional intent has always been to use it to direct the narrative differently based on the four songs’ order. As the opening song for the Introverted Order, “Look Well To This Day” causes the monodrama to be a reflection on life and advice being passed down.

When placed at the end of the set in the Extroverted Order, it refocuses the whole program as having been a journey towards reflection, learning, and future growth.

The other most-transformable movement in the monodrama is “Uncanny Valley.” While every movement of *Grey Areas* can be categorized into an eclectic post-modern aesthetic, “Uncanny Valley” departs from the others. As discussed earlier in this chapter, it is predominantly groove-based, and the text is the most disparate. This causes it to be a formal break in the musical texture when placed as an interior movement, or a whimsical rompish overture that precedes the more serious texts yet to come. The steady groove (inspired by Broadway musicals and Paul Simon) gives the baritone yet another backdrop for emoting and characterization.

Discussion of Individual Movements

Vocal Characters

As mentioned in Chapter One, I drew influence from David Little’s micro-opera *Soldier Songs* in a variety of ways. One particular point of inspiration is how Little employs a single baritone to portray characters of different age throughout the multi-movement work. While it is not new or groundbreaking to have multiple vocal characters and points of view in an art song cycle, song set, or monodrama, explicitly incorporating this into the form of the composition opens new avenues of expressive potential and exploration for the featured singer.

None of the vocal characters in “Dear Aunt Sally” are defined by age or gender, they are non-specific characters with relatable plights from every stage of life. The first of these expresses their concerns about identity, depression, and beauty. The second is a medieval ranger of some noble birth leading a Robin Hood-style resistance with their male lover. The third character is longing with expectation for an upcoming journey with Aunt Sally. I establish each of these three with differing instrumental choices and harmonic and melodic content. Varying experiences of the characters are connected through the musical treatment and freely cross-faded with one another. The first introductions of each character are shown in the following musical examples:

The first character is accompanied by an ostinato of added-note harmonies:

Conversational (♩ = 78)

Flute *mp*

Alto Sax *mp*

Trumpet in C *mp* straight mute (wooden)

Vibraphone *mp*

Baritone *f*

Piano *mf*

Electric Guitar *mp* light distortion

Dear Aunt Sally To-day was mis-er-able,

Musical Example 23. Character one in "Dear Aunt Sally"

The second character has a rapidly moving vocal line that is punctuated by hits across the ensemble, frequently of un-defined pitches:

54

The musical score for 'Dear Aunt Sally' includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Alto Saxophone (A. Sax.), Trumpet (T. Tpt.), Percussion (Perc.), Bass (B.), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.), Violin (Vln.), and Viola (Vc.). The score is annotated with several boxes and arrows:

- A box labeled "54" is in the top left corner.
- A box labeled "Character two material:" points to a section of the score where the vocal line and several instruments (Fl., A. Sax., Perc., B., E. Gtr., Vln., Vc.) play a rhythmic pattern.
- A box labeled "Cross-faded material:" points to a section of the score where the piano and electric guitar play a rhythmic pattern.
- Other annotations include "Woodblock", "open", "B.D.", "mp", "mf", "f", "fz", "Sal - ly", "He and I are run - ning for our lives, a gain.", and "Some -".

Musical Example 24. Character two in "Dear Aunt Sally"

The third character is typified by an oscillating harmony first seen in the piano:

The musical score for 'Dear Aunt Sally' includes parts for Bass (B.) and Piano (Pno.). The score is annotated with a box labeled "Character three:" pointing to a section of the piano part where an oscillating harmony is played. The lyrics are: "Dear Aunt Sal - ly I can't wait to see your Scot - tish cas - tle, port - cul - lis, and most. The tur - rets sound spec -".

Musical Example 25. Character three in "Dear Aunt Sally"

As each vocal character shifts from one perspective to another, thematic areas are further explored in interludes, underscore, and musical commentary. For “Uncanny Valley,” the characters within the composite text reflect various states of mental duress. The narrative is constructed through phrases that are butted up against one another or chopped up and repeated by the singer (Musical Example 26).

The image displays a musical score for a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is written on a single staff with lyrics: "My skin con-tin-ues its dai-ly march towards the tips, march towards the tips, dai-ly march towards the tips of my". Three specific vocal phrases are circled in black: "march towards the tips," "march towards the tips," and "dai-ly march towards the tips of my". The piano accompaniment is written on two staves. The first staff begins with a forte (*ff*) dynamic and features a bass line with notes marked with an 8 and a slur. The second staff also begins with a forte (*ff*) dynamic and includes a specific chord marking: C7(5). The score is set in 3/8 time and consists of three measures.

Musical Example 26. Repeated fragments in "Uncanny Valley"

These vocal characters are underscored and imitated by the sometimes-comical accompaniment, as discussed on page 82. The text is a play-by-play stream of consciousness rather than grand thought-out phrases pondering the human condition. Presented like a live-streamed mental breakdown, this movement encourages each singer

to draw on their own personality and experience to inform their vocal character performance.

The two movements in which the singer presents only a single persona are “Clickbait Poetry” and “Look Well To This Day.” In both of these, the text addresses the listener directly in soliloquy form. “Clickbait Poetry” goes even further to break the fourth wall by including editorial notes within the text (Musical Example 27).

Musical Example 27 is a score for a song titled "Clickbait Poetry". The score is in 3/4 time and features a fragmented section starting at measure 79. The instruments include Flute (Fl.), Alto Saxophone (A. Sax.), Clarinet in C (C. Tpt.), Percussion (Perc.), Bass (B.), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.), Viola (Vln.), and Violoncello (Vcl.). The vocal line (B.) includes the lyrics: "am, or will be, but com post: ap - par - ent - ly dead, but not real - ly. /Three - day ad - den - dum/ /ream - less and sub - tle/ I will live". The fragmented section is marked with a box labeled "Fragmented" and includes editorial notes: "straight mute (copper)", "motor off", and "med. distortion". The score also includes dynamic markings such as *pp*, *p*, *mp*, and *f*.

Musical Example 27. Cluster chords and editorial notes in text of "Clickbait Poetry"

The frequent asides addressed to the audience pull the vocal character away from their main thought, while the repeated returns to (and unlocking of) the main problem illustrate their deepening resolve and growth over the course of the movement. “Look Well This Day” has the most consistent vocal perspective: one unchanging point of view relayed to the listener. Regardless of what order is sung (Introverted, Extroverted, or Rogue) this movement provides a point of reference from which the rest of the performance can be defined.

Formal Analyses

The text determined the formal structures in all four movements. I built my musical forms around the existing poems instead of placing an outside framework on top of the words.

Highly episodic, the mish-mash nature of the text for “Uncanny Valley” is mirrored in both the accompanying music and small-scale formal structure. Serving as a de facto scherzo movement, this short song upends expectations no matter where it is placed in the larger form. As an interior movement it breaks up any comfortable mood established by the slower songs and causes the words to again jump to the forefront. As an opening movement for the Rogue Order it provides a starkly contrasting vignette different from anything that comes after. Additionally, in the Rogue Order, with the

modal harmonic movement around F# opening and closing the movement, it bookends nicely with the final F# major resolution of “Clickbait Poetry.”

The constant hocketing patterns in the groove reflect, on a smaller scale, the interruption of the movement’s formal structure through the insertion of vamp sections. The vocal solo freely interpolates semi-rhythmic lines of text over these vamps. Each of these compositional decisions serves to obscure the structural nature of the piece at various levels to reflect the obscured and disordered nature of the text. I was able to upend the stability of the vamp section without compromising the underlying groove by using off-kilter rhythmic constructions. Zooming out to the structural level, the vamps create an uneven form and prevent the exact proportions from being known. This also changes the experiential time for each performance (especially if semi-staged) making each production more personalized.

“Uncanny Valley” best fits into ternary form, with a nested binary form making up the B-section: a[bc]aa'a While scherzo-like in execution and mood, the lack of a consistent refrain distinguishes it from scherzo-rondo form (ABACADA), as shown in Figure 1.

Uncanny Valley						
A		B			A	
a		[bc]			aa'a	
m. 1 - 28	transition	m. 34 - 45	m. 45 - 59	m. 58 - 66	m. 66 - 78	m. 78 - 96
F# modal		E major	D minor	F# modal	G# modal	F# modal

Figure 1. "Uncanny Valley" formal diagram

The most diffuse of the four movements, “Dear Aunt Sally” does not have a global tonal center. Instead, the harmonic evolution builds from one section to the next as each persona unfolds. By analyzing “Dear Aunt Sally” based on the vocal characters, attributes of a structural arch form are revealed as can be seen in the following formal analysis. However, it is unevenly distributed about the golden mean section (m. 173 - 180) as opposed to having perfect symmetry as seen in Figure 2:

Dear Aunt Sally																
Forward (A, B, C) narrative construction						Fragmentation and transformation					Reversed (C, B, A) narrative construction					
Character A		Character B		Character C		Character B		[golden mean]			Character C		Character B		Character A	
m. 1 - 53		m. 54 - 92		m. 92 - 133		m. 134 - 172		m. 180 - 204			m. 205 - 232		m. 233 - 270		m. 271 - 298	
F major	B major	Bb modal	B major	Eb modal	Ab modal	F major	wedge motive	Eb major	G major	B minor	E minor	E major	A minor	C pedal	Eb major	wedge motive

Figure 2. "Dear Aunt Sally" formal diagram

While this formal structure was not planned from the outset, I did adapt the text in such a way that characters were first established with longer introductions at the beginning, and then more rapidly shifted between viewpoints (and key areas) later in the piece. This directly transferred to a pleasing musical form without much additional work.

Likewise, in “Look Well This Day” the formal structure and harmonic movement are directly influenced by the text. The original Sanskrit poem contains the same short stanza twice in a row. I complemented that existing formal structure by setting the second iteration rhythmically faster than the first. The slow-fast pairing of instrumental activity separates this movement into a binary form with a short introduction (Figure 3).

Look Well To This Day				
[Introduction]		A		B
Fugato		Slow		Fast
m. 1 - 15		m. 16 - 53		m. 54 - 83
circles around Bb modal in entries		C major	A major	D major B major C major

Figure 3. "Look Well To This Day" formal diagram

“Clickbait Poetry” is the movement closest to a strophic song. I took the repeated ideas Bergman placed in his poem and imitated them with music. Oscillating harmonic content forms the basis of the A section which cycles back in varied repeats until m. 55. Here, the homogenous pad of supportive harmony underneath the baritone is contrasted by an active B section. These stable textural areas are rudely interrupted in mm. 62, 80, and 102 as seen in Figure 4.

Clickbait Poetry													
A			B	interruption		A	interruption		B	interruption	A		Coda
first cycle	second cycle	third cycle	contrasting	a	b	fourth cycle	c	d	contrasting	e	fourth cycle	fifth cycle	slow
m. 1 - 21	m. 22 - 39	m. 40 - 54	m. 55 - 62	m. 62 - 65	m. 66 - 70	m. 71 - 79	m. 80 - 83	m. 84 - 91	m. 92 - 101	m. 102 - 104	m. 105 - 124	m. 125 - 134	m. 135 - 143
G major	C major	G major	Gb modal	unstable		B minor	unstable		Ab modal	F minor	E minor	G major	F# major

Figure 4. "Clickbait Poetry" formal diagram

Other Compositional Elements

Moving on from formal analysis, three additional topics of smaller scale that are worth discussing: harmonic devices; motivic unity; and rhythmic elements. Each is distinct enough in *Grey Areas* to be presented individually in the following sections.

Harmonic devices

A significant part of the philosophical glue that holds these four songs together is my consistent use of added-note harmonies in the vocal line on cadential arrivals and important words of the text, as seen in the following examples.

In measure 41 of “Uncanny Valley” (Musical Example 28), the first cohesive arrival of text and accompaniment is highlighted by the voice landing on the second scale degree of a $\text{Db}^{\text{add}2}$ chord.

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff is for the voice, and the bottom staff is for the piano (Pno.). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 12/8. The lyrics are "rice!" and "My skin con-tin-ues its dai-ly". In measure 41, the voice line has a note on the second scale degree of a $\text{Db}^{\text{add}2}$ chord, which is circled in red. A box labeled "add2" points to the second scale degree of the chord. The piano accompaniment features a $\text{Db}^{\text{add}2}$ chord in measure 41, also circled in red, and a ff dynamic marking in measure 42. The piano part includes a fermata over the $\text{Db}^{\text{add}2}$ chord in measure 41 and an 8va marking in measure 42.

Musical Example 28. Voice and piano harmony, m. 41-42 of "Uncanny Valley"

Likewise, in measures 20 and 78 of “Look Well To This Day,” I again set the important phrase arrivals on the added notes of $\text{C}^{\text{add}2}$ and $\text{B}^{\text{add}2}$ major chords as seen in Musical Example 29 and Musical Example 30.

Musical Example 29. C^{add2} chord in m.
20 of "Look Well To This Day"




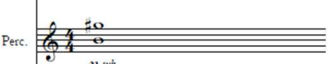






Musical Example 30. B^{add2} chord in m.
78, "Look Well To This Day"

For measure 107 of "Dear Aunt Sally," the line, "it cuts through my soul with its beauty" is set off by the C^{add2, add#4} chord on, "beauty" (Musical Example 31).

Voicing:

Musical Example 31. C^{add2, add#4} chord in m. 107 of "Dear Aunt Sally"

As “Dear Aunt Sally” descends past the top of its arch form in m. 217, the question, “when are you coming home?” propels it forward and is again brought out of the texture by using another anticipation harmony: $E^{add2, add\#4}$. This moment is given further importance through a mode shift from minor to major that corresponds with a *p subito* marking across the entire ensemble (Musical Example 32).

217	Crystalline	Voicing:
Fl.		3 rd
S. Sax.		Root
Flghn.		3 rd and 5 th
Perc.		3 rd and 5 th
B.		add2
Pno.		3 rd 5 th
		Root
E. Gtr.		Root
Vln.		$E^{add2}/G\#$
Vc.		$E^{add\#4}/B$

Musical Example 32. Chord voicing in m. 217 of "Dear Aunt Sally"

In the final few measures, at the second-to-last cadence of this movement, I placed another added-note chord: this time an $F\#\text{maj}^{add2}$ (Musical Example 33). This

chord then morphs into the wedge motive that spreads all the way to the close of this movement.

287 **Voicing:**

The image shows a musical score for measure 287 of 'Dear Aunt Sally'. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Alto Saxophone (A. Sax.), Flute/High Clarinet (Flghn.), Percussion (Perc.), Bassoon (B.), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.), Violin (Vln.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The key signature is one sharp (F# major). The tempo and dynamics are marked 'mf'. The voicings for the instruments are as follows:

- Fl.: 3rd
- A. Sax.: 5th
- Flghn.: Root
- Perc.: F# major
- B.: add2
- Pno.: F# major (treble clef), Root (bass clef)
- E. Gtr.: Root and 5th
- Vln.: 3rd
- Vc.: Root

Musical Example 33. Chord voicing in m. 287 of "Dear Aunt Sally"

Motivic Unity

In addition to typified harmonies present at key points of *Grey Areas*, I placed motivic material across movements using similar sources of inspiration. The wedge motive seen at both the golden-mean section of "Dear Aunt Sally" (Musical Example 34) and at its ending (Musical Example 35) is also present in a modified form at the end of, "Look Well To This Day" (Musical Example 36). While these movements do not use the

same exact harmonies, dynamics, or instruments, I made a conscious decision to link their endings through different versions of the same initial idea.

The image displays two systems of a piano/vocal score for the piece "Dear Aunt Sally". The first system, starting at measure 163, features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. A box labeled "164" is placed above the vocal line. The lyrics are: "w...ant, tur-er of the re-jects, writ-ing let-ters to my aunt; ———". A large, shaded wedge-shaped arrow is drawn across the system, pointing from the beginning of the system to the end, indicating a crescendo. The second system, starting at measure 168, includes lyrics: "my pret-ty ex - cit-ed, mo-men-tar-y de - par-ture; my dear, dear aunt". It features a vocal line with triplets and a five-note run, and piano accompaniment with dynamics *fp* and *ff*. A "rit." marking is present above the vocal line. A second shaded wedge-shaped arrow is drawn across this system, also pointing from left to right. The score is written in 3/4 time and includes various musical notations such as clefs, notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Musical Example 34. Wedge motive at golden mean section of "Dear Aunt Sally"
(piano/vocal score)

291

f ³ so on to the ad - ven - tures! *rit.* Aunt Sal - ly,

mf

(rit.) - molto

294 295

I don't want to die!

f

rit.

Musical Example 35. Wedge motive at the end of "Dear Aunt Sally" (piano/vocal score)

70 *rall.*..... *Slowly*

The musical score consists of ten staves. The top staff is for Flute (Fl.), followed by B. Clarinet (B. Cl.), Flg. Hn., Perc., Bass (B.), Piano (Pno.), E. Gtr., Violin (Vln.), and Voice (Vc.). The tempo markings are *rall.* and *Slowly*. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are "well, there - fore, to this day, ...". The piano part features a wedge motive, indicated by a grey arrow pointing from the piano part to the end of the piece. The piano part also includes a section marked "8." and a chord labeled "C9/G".

Musical Example 36. Wedge motive at the end of "Look Well To This Day"

I used a different linking idea to set the drier, recitative-like phrases in “Dear Aunt Sally.” In mm. 13-16 the singer leads a unison rhythm across the ensemble that corresponds to the intrinsic meter of the text (Musical Example 37). The effect is that of a cluster chord that shifts up and down in pitch based on syllabic inflection. I also used this compositional device for “Clickbait Poetry” in mm. 80-81 (Musical Example 38).

rit.----- 13 a tempo

Fl. *p*

A. Sax. *p* to Sop. Sax. Sop. Sax. *pp* 3

C. Tpt. *p* to Flugelhorn. Flugelhorn *pp* 3 open 3

Perc. *p*

B. *p* soul could sleep for - ev - er in the mists be hind my eyes. Why is your name weird? I think that you were a dopt - ed. I won - der if

Pno. *p*

E. Gtr. *p*

Vln. *p*

Vc. *p*

Musical Example 37. Unison rhythm across ensemble led by singer, in "Dear Aunt Sally"

79

The musical score for "Clickbait Poetry" features a unison rhythm across the ensemble starting at measure 79. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Alto Saxophone (A. Sax.), Clarinet in Treble Clef (C. Tpt.), Percussion (Perc.), Bass (B.), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.), Violin (Vln.), and Viola (Vc.). A section from measure 79 to 81 is circled and labeled "Fragmented". The lyrics for the Bass part are: "am, or will be, but com-put: ap-par-ent-ly dead, but not real-ly /Three day ad-d-en dum/ /seam-less and sub-tle/ I will live". Dynamics include pp, mp, p, f, and med. distortion.

Musical Example 38. Unison rhythm across ensemble led by singer, in "Clickbait Poetry"

As the largest movement by far in *Grey Areas*, "Dear Aunt Sally" has the most recognizable and self-contained musical material of the four. I made this choice in order for the piece to hold together between all the vocal characters, mood shifts, and experiential time. The simple, yet recognizable opening motive reappears at many points throughout the piece both in the voice and instruments (see Musical Example 3, page 79). In the instrumental statement at m. 81 the soprano saxophone takes over the lead role from the singer in an elided moment over the word "aunt." This connects the interlude to

the unheard character of Aunt Sally, as seen in Musical Example 39.

Musical Example 39. Aunt Sally motive in soprano saxophone at m. 81 of "Dear Aunt Sally"

The same goal is accomplished at m. 108 (Musical Example 40) where the two strings fill in for the typical (but here unheard) letter preface by playing the salutary gesture.

108

Fl.

S. Sax.

C. Tpt.

Perc. *Vibraphone*

B.

Pno.

E. Gtr.

Vln.

Vc.

mp

mf

f

mp

mp

mp

I saw a fat lit-tle bird sing-ing on a branch this eve-ning. The

Musical Example 40. Aunt Sally motive in strings at m. 108 of "Dear Aunt Sally"

In the short instrumental break between measures 217 and 221, the flugelhorn plays a solo (Musical Example 41) in response to the question, “when are you coming home?” Finishing off the solo with a statement of Aunt Sally’s motive continues the series of letters and implies that Aunt Sally is not coming home anytime soon.

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff, starting at measure 213, features a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. It includes a *poco rit.* marking and a boxed measure 217 labeled 'Crystalline' with a *solo 3* instruction. The bottom staff, starting at measure 219, includes a *poco accel.* marking and a section labeled 'Conversational (♩ = 78)' with a box around it. A bracket indicates a transition 'to Trumpet in C' with a *mf* dynamic. A box labeled 'Trumpet in C' with 'straight mute' is also present. The score includes various time signatures (3/4, 4/4, 3/4) and dynamic markings (*mf*, *mf molto legato*).

Musical Example 41. Flugelhorn solo and Aunt Sally motive in m. 217 of "Dear Aunt Sally" (trumpet part)

Finally, the fourth instance of the Aunt Sally motive in the accompaniment from mm. 226-227 features staggered entries in the rhythm section. As the movement speeds towards the finale I move through letters, perspectives, and key areas with increasing rapidity. This is referenced and imitated through lightly offset entrances of the motive as seen in Musical Example 42.

228

225

Fl. *p* *mp*

S. Sax. *p* *mp*

C. Tpt.

Perc. motor on, med. speed *mf*

B. I hear the Kom-od-o drag on is quite tame, I'm glad there is no mis-un-der-stand-ing. The drag-ons and the but-ter-flies, I

Pno. *mp*

E. Gtr. light distortion *mf*

Vln. *oed.* *p* *mf*

Vcl. *p* *mf*

Musical Example 42. Offset entries of the Aunt Sally motive in mm. 226-227 of "Dear Aunt Sally"

Rhythmic devices

The hocketing of the piano, cello, and bass clarinet in “Uncanny Valley” is directly inspired by chamber ensemble yMusic’s 2018 performance of the track “Can’t Run But” from Paul Simon’s 1990 album, *The Rhythm of The Saints* that backed up Simon during his October 13, 2018 appearance on the NBC show *Saturday Night Live* at the end of his *Homeward Bound* tour. To reflect the scattered nature of the text, players in the de facto continuo (bass clarinet, piano, cello, guitar, and drum set) never align perfectly. Instead of an even groove as in the Simon piece, I morphed the source material

into a hobbled version in which nothing fits exactly, and things are off kilter. This is seen clearly in the cello and bass clarinet parts in Musical Example 43. For this movement both the flute and reed players take their most extreme instruments (piccolo and bass clarinet) for maximum timbral effect and percussive ambiance. A funhouse of sound is created by using instruments at either end of the frequency spectrum and coupling them with the rhythmic groove.

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.) and Cello (Vc.). The score is written in 3/4 time and consists of eight measures. The Bass Clarinet part is in the treble clef, and the Cello part is in the bass clef. Both parts begin with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic marking. Vertical dashed lines connect specific notes in the Bass Clarinet part to corresponding notes in the Cello part, illustrating their alignment. The Bass Clarinet part features a melodic line with various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The Cello part provides a rhythmic accompaniment with a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together.

Musical Example 43. Alignment points of the "Uncanny Valley" groove in bass clarinet and cello

CHAPTER 4 – STUDIO RECORDING PROCESS

Recording Process Challenges, Changes, and Decisions

The differences between a studio recording and a live recording revolve around control: control of the space; control of the performance; and control of the time. By narrowing down the unpredictable variables of performances, studio recordings tend to be of a higher quality. While both take considerable work to prepare and execute, a studio recording allows the producer, engineer, or composer to capture cleaner performances.

Regarding spatial differences, for large ensembles or larger chamber groups it is usually desirable to capture the natural ambience of the performance space since that is such an integral part of the sound.¹⁵ For over a year during the COVID-19 pandemic, however, it was not safe to record any ensemble with winds in a confined space for an extended amount of time. Thus, the potential of preparing a full ensemble recording was edged out by the safety, flexibility, and quality of an individually tracked studio recording.

¹⁵ “Michael Bishop: On Classical Recording” Interview by David Goggin, *Tape Op*, September/October 2015, <https://tapeop.com/interviews/109/michael-bishop/>

Due to the length of this composition, I did not rely on one single group of musicians for all movements. Instead, I divided up the different movements between multiple instrumentalists. This allowed a more flexible recording schedule that did not put too heavy a burden on any single musician. This strategy of dividing and conquering did however present some challenges. Rehearsal difficulties arose related to scheduling, occupancy, and wind instrument restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. These restrictions to single-occupancy rooms for tracking brass, winds, and voice did work in my favor since the increased isolation allowed for a more flexible editing process. What this did *not* allow me to do, however, was record a rough version of each movement with the whole ensemble (termed a scratch track) to be used in recording drafts and proof-of-concept examples. Instead, virtual instrument mockups were used for individual practice purposes. These mockups did partially fulfill the need for a scratch track, but they were not my first choice.

Throughout the entire composition, many sections needed instrumental parts beyond piano to be recorded before the baritone could be reasonably expected to record his performance. Due to the previously mentioned rehearsal limitations and personnel challenges, it was necessary to work with a click track from the beginning of the recording process to achieve cohesive performances across the ensemble that matched the musical needs of the baritone line.

Rehearsal time was focused on the baritone, where the vocal and piano parts were workshopped together. I was in conversation with Prof. James Held throughout the

composition process and therefore was pleased with the fact that only a few modifications were necessary once we got into rehearsals. One such change was that “Look Well To This Day” needed to be recorded at a faster tempo than originally planned. The phrases were too long for a singer to execute musically and also breathe. I also tightened up a few rhythms in the text to let it maintain cohesive meaning. Measure 63 had one rhythmic adjustment in the vocal line: eighth-note triplets were expanded to quarter-note triplets to put the syllables of “action” on moving eighth-notes instead of the more stagnant quarter-notes as seen in Musical Example 44.

The image shows two musical staves in bass clef. The top staff represents the original composition, and the bottom staff represents the adjusted version. Both staves have lyrics underneath: "joy of growth, the splen-dor of ac-tion, the glo-ry of pow-er. For". A double-headed arrow points from the original staff to the adjusted staff, indicating a comparison. In both staves, a box highlights the phrase "splen-dor of ac-tion". In the original staff, the word "action" is set to a triplet of eighth notes. In the adjusted staff, the word "action" is set to a triplet of quarter notes, which is a rhythmic expansion.

Musical Example 44. Adjusted vocal rhythms in "Look Well To This Day"

In contrast to this, workshopping “Clickbait Poetry” brought to light that it needed more emotional breathing room instead of less. Thus, two bars were extended by a beat to allow settling of ideas in m. 91 (Musical Example 45) and m. 138 (Musical Example 46).

Musical score for measures 89-91. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Alto Saxophone (A. Sax.), Clarinet in C (C Tpt.), Percussion (Perc.), Bass (B.), Piano (Pno.), Electric Guitar (E. Gtr.), Violin (Vln.), and Viola (Vc.).

- Measures 89 and 90 are in 9/8 time.
- Measure 91 is in 3/4 time.
- Dynamic markings include *f* (forte) and *p* (piano).
- Percussion markings include "Woodblock" and "B.D." (Bass Drum).
- The Piano part has lyrics: "we real-ly fig-ured that one out."
- A page number "89" is at the top left.
- A box with a checkmark is at the top right of the measure 91 staff.

Musical Example 45. Measure 91 changed to 3/4 in "Clickbait Poetry"

137

Fl.

A. Sax.

Flghn.

Perc.

B.

Pno.

E.Gtr.

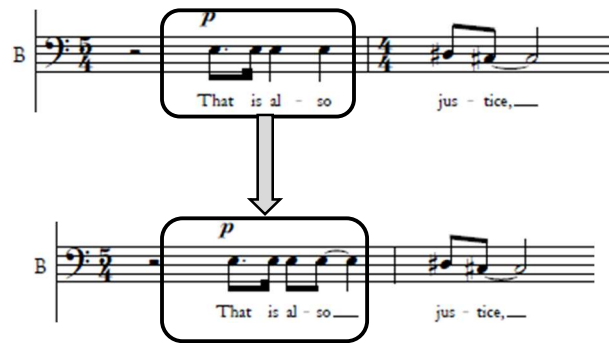
Vln.

Vc.

That is al - so — jus - tice, — when you do it for oth - er

Musical Example 46. Added beat in m. 138 of "Clickbait Poetry"

Measure 137 was also adjusted rhythmically for the syllables of “also” to fall on eighth-notes instead of quarter-notes (Musical Example 47). At the slow tempo of this movement’s closing, this change increased the intelligibility of the text.



Musical Example 47. Adjusted vocal rhythm in "Clickbait Poetry"

Key sections that I clarified through the rehearsal process (but which needed no compositional changes) were areas in “Dear Aunt Sally” with rhythmic unison hits across the ensemble. These motivic gestures occur in measures 62-65, 75-78, 146-148, 183-187, and 281-282. While these would be commonplace to execute within in a live chamber ensemble, the combined factors of individual tracking, rehearsing without a vocalist, and generic latency in the recording process compounded. It became obvious in both rehearsal and recording that it would be faster and more efficient to record the hits in isolation and sync them up later via editing. I added ossia-style clarification to the instrumental parts in mm. 281-282, where the ensemble ultimately plays a simple bar of 3/4 over the asymmetric 7/16 and 5/16 figure in the voice (Musical Example 48).

Musical Example 48. Clarification of rhythmic hits in "Dear Aunt Sally" (violin part)

The biggest mistake I made was in the engraving process of “Dear Aunt Sally.” A transitional passage from mm. 111-117 consisting of tempo changes and metric modulations was overshadowed by unclear notation. While the first metric modulation was straightforward enough, the expected beat division implied by my use of 9/8 was not present. As shown in Musical Example 49, I failed to indicate that dotted eighths become the prevailing beat division in both the musical texture and the click track.

Musical Example 49. Dotted eighth beat division in m. 112 of “Dear Aunt Sally,” first draft

Further compounding the haziness of this passage is a short ritardando into a second metric modulation (Musical Example 50).

Musical Example 50. Ritardando into m. 117 in "Dear Aunt Sally," first draft (flute part)

Musical Example 50. Ritardando into m. 117 in "Dear Aunt Sally," first draft (flute part)

The severity of slowing was not accurately communicated: the tempo is nearly halved within three measures. I improved this entire section by adding a “16th = 16th” figure above the bar line between mm. 111-112, correcting time signatures to reflect the written beat divisions, and adding “molto” to the ritardando in m. 114 to accurately portray the subsequent tempo change as seen in Musical Example 51.

112

Fl. *f*

S. Sax. *f*

C. Tpt. *fp*

Perc. *f*

rit.

molto

(molto rit.)

117 Slower (♩ = ♩)

116

Fl. *mf*

S. Sax. *p*

C. Tpt. *p*

Perc. *p*

Musical Example 51. Revised transition in "Dear Aunt Sally," winds and percussion

Two different instrumental parts went through a more obvious revision process than the others. The trumpet part was originally a mix of open and straight mute timbres, in addition to doubling flugelhorn. The part was expanded to specify both wooden and copper straight mutes as well as to add a Harmon mute for the trumpet, as Musical Example 52 shows.

107 harmon mute **108**
f *mp*
 111 *fp* *p* rit. ... molto

Musical Example 52. Use of Harmon mute on trumpet in “Dear Aunt Sally”

I also increased the practicality and playability of “Dear Aunt Sally” by eliminating a few unnecessary mute changes as seen in Musical Example 53.

272 Conversational (♩ = 78) straight mute *p* *f* open *fz*
 276 *fz fz fz* *f* Driving straight mute *f*
272 Conversational (♩ = 78) *p* *f* *fz*
 276 *fz fz fz* *f* Driving *f*

Musical Example 53. Comparison of updated mute use in “Dear Aunt Sally”

The vibraphone part in “Clickbait Poetry” was a casualty of transposition late in the composition process and had a nearly unplayable ostinato that was reworked into a manageable figure in m. 97-101 during the recording session.

Musical Example 54. Edited vibraphone passage in "Clickbait Poetry"

Microphone and Pre-amp Choices

One of the most central decisions any recording engineer faces when undertaking a large recording project is the selection of microphones. They come in many different

designs, each with varying sonic characteristics and frequency response patterns. This means that the same sound source may appear markedly different depending on the choice of microphones. Selecting the best microphones to suit the particular needs of the instruments and musical material can involve elements of compromise and improvisation in the process. The most efficient and stable workflow is to use items with which you are familiar, just like driving a favorite car, playing your own instrument, or navigating your hometown. This is recommended by many recording engineers, especially when seeking to accurately capture art music performances.¹⁶

The main workhorse microphones I used on this project for nearly every recording session were the WA-47 (imitative clone of the classic and high-dollar, variable-pattern, large-diaphragm Neumann U47 tube condenser) and the Earthworks SR20 (small-diaphragm cardioid condenser).¹⁷ Other microphones that I used extensively included the Neumann U87 large-diaphragm and KM184 small-diaphragm condensers, along with the Royer 121 and Shure KSM 313 ribbon microphones. While these all sound fantastic straight out of the box, they have varying levels of detail (by design) within their frequency response curves. On the most accurate end of the spectrum are the SR20 and KM184. Capturing details to the point of being unforgiving, I used these two

¹⁶ “Marc Aubort: Classical Recordist” Interview by James Fei, *Tape Op*, July/August 2006, <https://tapeop.com/interviews/54/marc-aubort/>.

¹⁷ “WA-47,” Product Page, Warm Audio, accessed March 18, 2021, <https://warmaudio.com/wa47/>.

small-diaphragm condensers in all sessions. The WA-47 and U87 offer boosted mid-range frequencies and higher signal sensitivity due to their larger diaphragms. Of these three types of microphones, the ribbon microphones used (Royer 121 and KSM 313 for these sessions) capture audio with the most unique frequency response curves. This of course results in a different sound than that of flat frequency response microphone, allowing different audio profiles and characters to be obtained in recording sessions. In the past, ribbon microphones have been used only for lower sound pressure level (SPL) sources or placements due to being delicate but technological innovations have improved their construction (as with these microphones selected) to allow them to be used on virtually any sound source.¹⁸

The main preamps used were the Rupert Neve Designs 511, API 512, and the Avalon 737. I used the onboard preamps of the SSL 948 for percussion sessions due to the higher number of inputs needed. The 511 won every comparative listening test easily by coloring the audio signal with the desired frequency response curve. The two 511s that were available gave me the desired harmonic saturation that I wanted for this project. When tracking sessions needed more than two channels, I used Avalon 737s and API 512s (the two runners up in my listening tests).

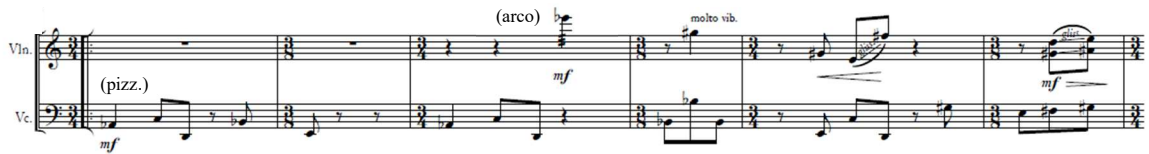
¹⁸ SPL, indicated by the decibel (dB) measurement unit, is the primary method of rating the intensity of sound pressure waves. With older ribbon microphones, higher SPL could physically distort the ribbon filament inside the capsule. This would change its sensitivity to different frequencies, if not fully destroying it.

Recording Techniques

Throughout the recording process I worked towards a standard polished sound, with slightly heavier mid-range frequencies that allow vocals be pushed to the front. In line with *Grey Areas*' definite musical-theatre influences, the primary goal was to make each movement pleasing to listen to and have the text understood, rather than create an experimental sonic space. Instead of seeking to be groundbreaking, the goal was to gain competence with widely applicable recording techniques while these tools were available to me. To accomplish this while still maintaining COVID-19 safety precautions, I decided I would need to primarily use close-proximity microphone positioning techniques as opposed to more distant stereo techniques.

In pursuit of this sound, I took two different approaches while recording the strings. First, for "Clickbait Poetry" I tracked them individually in isolation rooms. The performers and I agreed that this did not work very well for the majority of movements, even though the isolation of individual microphone signals was superb. The problem was that visual cues that performers are accustomed to having access to in live situations (such as matching bow positions and speed) were unavailable due to sight lines being eliminated. For "Uncanny Valley," this isolated technique did prove to be more valuable than recording in the same space because of the intended disparity between all parts, as

Musical Example 55 shows. I was able to successfully record each performer separately in this movement because the strings did not ever play together as a unit.



The image shows a musical score for Violin (Vln.) and Viola (Vla.) parts. The score is written in 3/4 time and consists of six measures. The Violin part starts with a rest, then plays a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The Viola part starts with a half note G3, followed by a quarter note A3, and a quarter note B3. The score includes dynamic markings of *mf* and performance instructions such as (pizz.), (arco), and molto vib.

Musical Example 55. Dissimilar playing techniques in "Uncanny Valley" string parts

During the isolation-room recording session of strings, I positioned one microphone for the violin (an Earthworks SR20) and two for the cello (a Royer 121 and an Earthworks SR20). I selected these microphones for their contrasts in timbre and detail. After experimenting with different pre-amp selections during this session, I again determined the 511 was ideal for both saxophone and strings, especially if paired with large diaphragm condensers (as I did when recording saxophone). No room mics were used for the isolation sessions.

The second method undertaken for strings had both violin and cello in the same tracking room, with room mics in a mid-side configuration (two U87s) three feet from each player and close mics one foot from each player.¹⁹ Each instrument had two microphones closely positioned: an Earthworks SR20 and a ribbon microphone (Royer 121 on violin and Shure KSM 313 on cello). I ran the mid-side configuration through 511 preamps, while the Earthworks SR20s were run through API 512s. The ribbon mics were each routed through an Avalon 737, with light compression and EQ added to remove unwanted low-end frequencies and help compensate for the proximity effect of being closer to the individual strings of each instrument.

For tuning purposes of the entire ensemble, I recorded piano and fixed-pitch percussion first. In the same vein of modifying initial recording plans to pursue ideal performance quality, I elected to track grand piano in a large hall as opposed to using an upright piano in an acoustically treated studio space. Since the concert hall was quite active sonically, I only used close mics for piano sessions in order to avoid capturing the unwanted environmental color and reverb. I recorded piano on two different sessions

¹⁹ A mid-side configuration involves two microphones: one with a figure-eight frequency response pattern and the other with a cardioid response pattern. They are positioned so that the lobes of the figure-eight pattern are horizontal, and the cardioid pattern faces forward (like a three-leafed clover). The capsules of each microphone are positioned as close as possible so that the two signals will be as near to in-phase as possible. By duplicating the signal from the figure-eight, panning the two signals hard left and right, and then inverting the phase of the duplicate, a stereo image can be mixed by adjusting the level of the cardioid microphone.

with a pair of SR20s in an XY configuration positioned just inside the lid's orbit, at the center of its brace. The first session contained the bulk of takes used, as well as temporary pitch reference material only recorded as backup.

In the second piano recording session, I chose to demonstrate a proof-of-concept for remote recordings using the functions of the Yamaha Disklavier on, "Uncanny Valley." A technologically-advanced, acoustic player-piano, the Yamaha Disklavier communicates in the industry-standard music technology protocol of Musical Instrument Digital Interfaces (MIDI).²⁰ Disklaviers function as normal pianos with the added benefit of being able to record keystrokes, hammer velocities, and pedals being pressed as MIDI data with extreme precision.²¹ This remote-session for *Grey Areas* involved sending a click-track to pianist Dr. Stella Sick, in Minneapolis, who recorded three different performances on her Disklavier. Dr. Sick then sent the very small MIDI files to me (instead of much, much larger audio files that would have existed in more traditional distance recording sessions) which I loaded onto a local Disklavier and then recorded acoustically. This session documented and demonstrated the flexibility and potential of this technology in a recording situation, particularly regarding studio time. The ability for

²⁰ "What is MIDI?" Home, The MIDI Association, accessed March 18, 2021, <https://www.midi.org/>

²¹ "e-competition and Yamaha" e-competition and Yamaha, International Piano e-Competition, accessed March 22, 2021, https://www.piano-e-competition.com/ecomp_yamaha.asp

piano performances to be captured and selected asynchronously by the performer saves an immense amount of the engineer's time spent recording audio that will never be used.

Percussion sessions involved me using close mics on all instruments as opposed to using a single or pair of room mics. These techniques accomplished a consistent sonic palette of capturing only scant room noise across all recording sessions. This is also in line with methods frequently used in Broadway pit bands when no organic instrument sound is heard on the stage or by the audience. I initially recorded vibraphone with a spaced pair, but the phase interactions between mic positions due to the breadth of the instrument motivated me to use an XY pair (with the diaphragms aligned to prevent phasing artifacts) for subsequent sessions.

I tracked woodwinds all in separate isolation rooms so as to take all possible precautions against the spread of COVID-19. These sessions were predominantly asynchronous and non-sequential due to scheduling constraints of performers. For doubling instruments, I recorded each different instrument separately so as to maximize efficiency of tracking sessions. The reed instrument switch shown in Musical Example 56 was deemed to be a tad rapid, but not unattainable for the skill level that other areas required and with a standard neck strap commonly used for Broadway and big-band parts.²²

²² Jacob Kilford, interview by the author, Nacogdoches, February 13, 2021

Musical Example 56. Measures 71-74 of "Dear Aunt Sally," woodwinds

All instruments played by the reed doubler (alto and soprano saxophone and bass clarinet) were recorded with a WA-47 and an Earthworks SR20. Both mics were run through 511 preamps after recording and listening to tests with the performer. Flute and piccolo were recorded with both a KM184 and SR20 as an A/B comparison of small-diaphragm condensers along with a U87 for an option with more presence in the mid frequencies. To maintain the close sonic presence worked towards throughout this process, trumpet and flugelhorn were recorded with a Royer 121 elevated and positioned off-axis, and a WA-47 18 inches away just above the bell.

For vocals, I used three different microphones: the WA-47, SR20, and the KSM 313 enabling an A/B/C comparison. The pre-amps I chose were the 511 for the WA-47 and KSM 313 and an API 512 for the SR-20; these two models of pre-amp I consistently return to due to their pleasing tone color. I compared these combinations side-by-side with baritone James Held during our first recording session to have his input on the differences between options. The favorite pairing for both of us was easily the WA-47 with the 511: detail was retained in mid to high frequencies without overpowering the

ear, and a pleasing tone that would require less effort in the post-production process was present in the mid to low frequencies.

CHAPTER 5 – REFLECTIONS

This composition has been bouncing around my creative subconscious for quite a while, and I am glad that it is finally out on paper. Since I have spent so much time with the ideas involved in the composition itself, I frequently found it more difficult than normal to remain objective throughout the editing process especially when it came to paring down texts and musical material. As a result of the editing, revision, and defense processes of my thesis a number of new structural possibilities have materialized to further refine the life of *Grey Areas*. The finished composition presented in Chapter 2 is fine, but while I am ultimately happy with how the composition turned out, I do now feel that it nears the limit of what is reasonable for performers.

The most exciting new opportunity for this piece involves splitting up “Dear Aunt Sally” into knee plays in the style of Phillip Glass’ *Einstein on the Beach* (1975). It is by far the longest movement in the *Grey Areas* and would benefit both the larger non-linear story structures and the stamina of the baritone by being adjusted. In working with Prof. Held on the baritone part, we did begin by identifying his workable singing range. He has a high baritone voice, and the tessitura of the vocal part reflects that – especially in “Dear Aunt Sally.” Along with the aforementioned restructuring, addressing the piece’s high

tessitura would open up the opportunity for more performances and interpretations by making it accessible to a larger number of singers. I see now that the vocal part could be just as effective in a more conservative range, especially considering this movement's length. Splitting up this movement and adjusting transpositions and tonal centers would solve many practical issues that were identified.

Another possibility for revision that became evident is a more rigorous editing of the texts. The interlocking nature of the letters in "Dear Aunt Sally" mirrors the larger structures at play between all movements of *Grey Areas*. Now that the composition and exegesis have been completed, I see that the text in its entirety could be pared down even more to achieve the same result in a shorter experiential timeline. This would have not only simplified the musicians' performances but also the recording process.

The recording process was another aspect of this project that was made clearer in hindsight. Inclusion of a studio recording as a part of this thesis was done more out of opportunity than expertise; the process quickly revealed how much I have yet to learn in this area. My position as a graduate teaching assistant in Sound Recording Technology at SFA has allowed me to glean information over the last two years that made this section of my thesis possible. It does not, however, substitute for concentrated study of the recording arts. I was still able to make a very serviceable recording for this project, and its undertaking provided innumerable learning opportunities that will make my future sessions more efficient, informed by technical theories, and of an overall higher quality.

I believe the most successful part of this project was the ensemble and voice pairing. As shown in Chapter 3, I undertook a careful survey of comparative pieces' instrumentation, and the influence of these works can be seen in the most effective moments of my composition. Also, the specific experience I gained from working directly with guitarists in the recording process allowed me to further expand my compositional techniques with an unfamiliar instrument. The success of my eclectic instrumentation, in which I merge musical theatre and art music influences contributes to the effectiveness of the piece and fulfills one of the principal goals for the project.

APPENDIX A – MOVEMENT TEXTS

Uncanny Valley *by Scott S. Hansen*

A ladybug crawled up my mailbox to die.

I started the morning by crying in my coffee.
Magic beans and leaves, the universe in a cup.

The last person who won the lottery cooked the perfect,
cooked the perfect,
the perfect,
the perfect pot of rice!

My skin continues its daily march towards the tips, march towards the tips,
daily march towards the tips of my fingers.

Is this me, or just who I want to be?
Locked away by my own subconscious, I'm tormented by what could have been.

Can you teach me to dream?

Why do I feel like a forgotten avocado?
The rind tells no secrets, but inside I'm already gone.

All of this trouble over half of a scrap of a piece of paper.

Uncanny valley, how do I prove my humanity?

History is written by the victors, and at the end, have I survived?

Look Well To This Day

Sanskrit poem, adapted by Scott S. Hansen

Look well to this day for it is life, the very life of life.

In its brief course lie all the realities and truths of existence:
the joy of growth, the splendor of action, the glory of power.
For yesterday is but a memory and tomorrow is only a vision.
But today well lived makes every yesterday a memory of happiness
and every tomorrow a vision of hope.

Look well, therefore, to this day.

Look well, for it is life, the very life of life.

In its brief course lie all the realities and truths of existence:
the joy of growth, the splendor of action, the glory of power.
For yesterday is but a memory and tomorrow is only a vision.
But today well lived makes every yesterday a memory...
and tomorrow a vision of hope.

Look well, therefore, to this day.

Dear Aunt Sally

by Felicia Finley and Scott S. Hansen

Dear Aunt Sally –

Today was miserable,
it started out okay but I feel so tired inside.
It is like my soul could sleep forever in the mists behind my eyes.
Why is your name weird?
I think that you were adopted.
I wonder if I am adopted, or if I was dropped as a baby?
I feel so strange, so out of touch with everything,
as though I can't do anything well enough
to make me feel fulfilled or accomplished.

I am just trying to hang in there somehow;
the world keeps on spinning and throws each season one after the other
until I am done.

A new day... of starting over nearly where I started yesterday.

Goodnight, from the ashes of a cold campfire. Signed, "S."

Dear Aunt Sally –

He and I are running for our lives, again.

Sometimes I feel like I am most alive when I am spending its glow for another.

I can't tell you what I am doing in case the letter falls in-to the wrong hands,

I will consign this to the flames, and know you won't receive it,

but I needed to write down my feelings any-way.

Sometimes it floats to the surface of my soul, but I know it's just a feeling.

I know for a fact that what he and I are doing is the best thing I could ever do,

thank you for being our aunt.

Pray for me, someone, whoever reads this letter I am a-bout to con-sign to ash.

Dear Aunt Sally –

I can't wait to see your Scottish castle, portcullis, and moat.

The tur-rets sound spectacular, I'm jealous of the view.

Each day here is a lot of work.

Each day is a gift, I know, but this gets difficult to see.

It seems like there are more and more beautiful things around me

but they cut through my soul with their beauty.

I saw a fat little bird singing on a branch this evening.

The sun shone from behind, I wept, I cried great gobs of tears.

Why do beautiful things hurt so much?

Like sea urchins, and underwater walks, the blossoms in the rain.

Thank you for the butterfly, I will not let it go.

Signed, "S."

Dear Aunt Sally –

If only I could really talk to someone about all these things.

No one cares, no one cares about the feelings of an anarchist hiding in a derelict building. No common folks, no middle class, no Druids, and no friends. I hope what we do with this scrappy life makes it better for other people. But here I am, king of the hidden. Here I am, boss of the displaced, the run-aways, the oppressed and the unwanted. Here I am, ruler of the rejects, writing letters to my aunt; my pretty excited, momentary departure; my dear, dear aunt Sally!

Dear Aunt Sally –

Today went well, I guess.
Nothing has changed since yesterday but I feel a little bit better.
The sun still goes up in the morning and down in the evening.
I do get tired of the weeks and the numbers getting higher and higher,
then as the month ends,
we start over again.
No time to enjoy the fact we completed a whole month.

Yours for today, Signed, “S.”

Dear Aunt Sally –

How was Cairo?
I must keep my letters short.
When are you coming home?
When are you coming home?
I can't wait to see your exotic pets, the lizard and the cat.
I hear the Komodo dragon is quite tame,
I'm glad there is no misunderstanding.
The dragons and the butterflies, I miss them terribly much.

Dear Aunt Sally –

None of them are real!
They have only one or two things different from the rest of us,
but we all think they will change the world.
Some do, some don't, but none of them are here now.
You matter, I matter, all this middle stuff matters.

How should a life matter?
The final moment when the last words are said and everything resolved?
What about those lingering deaths,
where the per-son lays there needing water,
slowly moving less and less?
Do you think that is a story worth re-telling?
Aunt Sally, when can we go skydiving?
In your piper cub, your big brown boots, with your trusty machete.
Aunt Sally, when can we go parachuting?
I woke up this morning with the intent of doing the amazing,
conquering the unconquerable and scaling all the heights.
I woke up this morning to a delicious breakfast,
so on to the adventures!
Aunt Sally, I don't want to die!

Clickbait Poetry

by Alexander Bergman, used by permission

Death,
nonbeing.

What's the big deal with this particular part of infinity
that we simply can't be a part of
existentially
as individuals?

It passes through us as food,
ancient forests all up in your shareware.
Tell me about your period, or haircut
and furniture.
It isn't supposed to make you miserable

just reverent of rebirth
and nutrient cycling,
un-like capitalism.

Why am I so afraid of

life,
being?
That's what I want to know.

Is living just being willing to accept death
as the majority of infinity
and then return attention back to living
be-fore it never hap-pens?

Seems like a frightened question.
"Why will I live bravely,"
feels better.

Aha! Rhetoric! I See You There!

I'm afraid to contribute to suffering
(shame: not past it)

and I will live bravely
because my mistakes are part of the balance,
not what I am,
or will be,
but compost:

apparently dead,
but not really.

/Three-day addendum/
/seamless and subtle/

I will live bravely because compost!
Great, I hope everyone was taking notes;
we really figured that one out.

Anyway, speaking of shame
feels a bit like death, know what I mean?
Fear of shame,
or shame for having fear?
A vicious cycle.

I'm going to make the wrong words.
I'm going to kill my friends in ignorance.
I'm going to fail in sharing movement
so...
I'm going to do nothing.

Dying for fear of living:
quite the pickle.
I would never say to any of my friends in the same situation
just exactly how accepting of myself am I being then
if I'm not allowed to say,
"I am afraid."

Reassuring concluding sentiments tho'.

(sigh)
But really,

even if optimism is just as arbitrary as pessimism,
IMO: dubious paradigms anyway,
it makes sense to affirm your own life
and accept all of it
while you have it.

That is also justice,
when you do it for other people.

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VITA

Scott S. Hansen is a composer, performing musician, and audio engineer born and raised in Alaska. He attended the University of Alaska Fairbanks where he received a Bachelor of Music in piano performance and a Bachelor of Arts in music composition in May 2019. He went on to study under Dr. Stephen Lias for a Master of Music degree at Stephen F. Austin State University, graduating in May 2021. An active orchestral player and promoter of musical theater and new music, Scott enjoys synthesizing compositions and projects across genre boundaries in addition to writing concert music.

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For access to the recordings made for this project, please contact me via my website:
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