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 MU 101- 01
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 March 15, 2021

Final Musical Composition

I learned Indian Classical Music for a few years during my high school. Even with that knowledge behind me, studying western music theory felt as if I'm learning a new language. I began searching for inspiration to take the first step. While staring at my wall one day, I noticed the photo frames mounted there. The collage of photographs was creating a definite pattern, the pattern of an ascent. I found that collage suddenly interesting and inspiring at the same time as it comprised the pictures of my growing years. There were photographs of my childhood on the left side and the pattern transitioned to the recent ones on the right. It depicted steady growth and progress. It inspired me to pick my first form (form A) at a lower pitch and then intensify it as the piece progressed.

In my piece, I chose Ab major as my scale. An "A" major scale sounds happy, joyful to me and I used it to produce relaxing and calming sounds. I wanted my musical piece to be soulful and relaxing. Ab scale has a good mix of flats which highlighted some unique and mysterious sounds. I wanted to get out of my comfort zone a little and decided to use instruments like xylophone due to its unique clicking sound that reminded me of a ticking clock, and guitar steel drums, a chirpy pitched percussion instrument that I used to add beats in my composition. I have never played or heard these two instruments together in mainstream music and thought now is a good time for exploration. To compliment them, I chose a Harmonium, a modified version of a reed organ, which is a pivotal instrument used in Indian Classical music. And lastly, the piano, which is a strong instrument that provides foundational support to any music. I used the harmonium and piano together as my keyboard instruments to create a fusion of sounds. The total duration of this composition is 3 minutes and 3 seconds.

I have three distinct forms "A," "B," "C," and another one which is similar to "A," called the "a' (A prime)." I wanted "A" to start slow and then gradually pick up some pace. I assigned 50 seconds for this form as I wanted it to be longer, and that holds in my final piece. I wanted "A" to have lower energy, but a firm tone. And I set the register to have low-mid level pitches. I assigned "A" with a time signature of 3/4 as that meter felt very relaxed and calm and went well with my introduction which is supposed to be slow and soothing. To add that mysterious effect, I chose "m2" and "M3" as my intervals. The minor second interval sounds a little mysterious and added some tranquility. It went well with the slow music in form "A." The major third interval sounds happy and is easy on the ear. It served as a good companion and helped in the transition from the mysterious and slow piece to the next form which is more energetic and has strong

beats. To create a strong beginning, I modified the initial few measures to add repetition to emphasize the melody and used the xylophone to add unique beats. I added some intentional rests to help the audience feel additional emotions and a sense of anticipation for what's next. For some measures, I made the piano louder (ff dynamic) than the harmonium (mp dynamic) as the harmonium was overpowering the piano's melody and I wanted a stronger piano base. I used many slurs to make the form flow better and be continuous. This form contains a couple of "f," "mp," "mf" and "ff" dynamics. The tempo in "A" (quarter note) is 100 bpm.

The next form is "B," it's full of alternating sounds of short durations and dramatic variations. Initially, I allotted 15 seconds for this form but stretched it out to 21 seconds to emphasize more on this melody and to make up for the faster beats. It's a combination of mid-high pitch registers. It has natural tones, overall relaxed but has a mildly strong beat full tone to add drama. It's centered at Bb and that creates a very different sound quality as the key is an Ab. This format was intentional to add a bit of an extraordinary effect of syncing the form in a way that compliments the key and the pitch center. "B" was assigned a time signature of 6/8 as that rhythm picked up some pace and began to have more beats which went well with the middle part of my composition. In addition to the mysterious minor second, I added a "P5" interval which sounds flowy, free, hopeful, and futuristic. This interval duo synced well together. I changed the pitches in this form to closely align with the pitch center and the key. I changed the form to have longer notes and faster harmonies. This form contains "f," "mf" and "ff" dynamics. The tempo in "B" (dotted quarter note) is 70 bpm.

The A prime was initially the same duration as that of form "A," but I added variations in the middle and at the end of it to differentiate it from "A." It created a smooth transition to the next form, so the duration changed from 50 seconds to 56 seconds. The ending of this form gives a fuller effect due to the chord that gels well with the next form C. The pitch register is low-mid and is centered around Ab. The meter is 3/4, the same as form "A." The intervals are M3 and m2. This form contains a couple of "f," "mp," "mf" and "ff" dynamics. The tempo in "A" (quarter note) is 100 bpm.

Form "C" is the energetic form with strong sound effects. Initially, it was supposed to be 50 seconds, but I cut it down to 30 seconds to let it be a unique point in the music. A smaller duration helped in bringing out this form in a positive way and prevented monotony. The time saved here was added to form "B" and a'. This form brings life to the piece and was given a mid-high pitch range and is centered at C. I gave it a meter of 4/4 as that rhythm is energetic and sets the mood for a high energy and strong beat full composition. Since 4/4 is familiar to the ear, this form pops out more and the melody is easy to remember. The prime interval in this form is P5, it creates a really lively happy sound, and the music piece sounds fresh and hopeful. I made the rhythm a lot more consistent and created a unique effect by passing the melody from one instrument to the other. This made the form stand out more and made it unique, enjoyable and

thus the rhythm was not syncopated. I added a crescendo in form “C,” for a smoother transition to go from a softer pitch to a louder pitch. This form contains “f,” “mf” and “ff” dynamics. The tempo in “C” (quarter note) is 100 bpm.

In the end, I have my form “B,” but I changed the duration to 27 seconds to account for the coda, to conclude the musical composition. To conclude the piece, I intentionally repeated melodies. To explicitly highlight the fading music at the end, I added a diminuendo line that gradually diminished the loudness of the harmonium and the piano. This form contains “mf,” “p,” and “f” dynamics. The tempo in “B” (dotted quarter note) is 70 bpm.

For my scale, I had the following chords available to me: (I) Ab C Eb, (II) Bb Db F, (III) C Eb G, (IV) Db F Ab, (V) Eb G Bb, (VI) F Ab C, (VII) G Bb Db. Out of all the chords, the chords I made are (II, V, VII), (I, VI, IV, V), and (III, VI, IV). These chord progressions aligned well in my piece and are widely used alongside other chords that were created during the making of this music piece.

Overall, I added more chords and increased the playtime of every instrument. Now, every instrument is adding a lot more value to my piece which eliminated the feeling of sparseness. My piece contains half notes, quarter notes, eighth notes, sixteenth notes, thirty-second notes, and sixty-fourth notes. Consistent rhythms made the instruments blend nicely. I tried to design the baseline of the piano by keeping the root tones in mind to emphasize chord progressions. It helped me in creating nice sounding chords.

The addition of dynamics helped in balancing out the instruments. Dynamics helped in focusing the attention on a particular instrument that’s the highlight for that phrase. It improved the music by making a particular instrument go loud or soft during the form. I noticed that I wasn’t using slurs appropriately in the previous draft, so I have significantly increased them in my final piece. The addition of slurs and connecting the notes made the piece less discrete.

Initially, I had a couple of naturals that were really standing out. My initial intention with them was to increase unique melodies. And to add something that positively grabs the attention of the audience. But as I was refining the final draft, I realized the natural notes were distracting away from the chosen key and scale. After some consideration, experimentation, and consulting the professor, I decided to remove the naturals to focus on the decided key and pitch centers. This allowed me to focus on the scale and keys I’m working with instead of moving away from them. There was an interesting situation that arose with my form “B.” I intentionally chose my key to be Ab major and assigned “B” to revolve around the Bb pitch center. Although unusual, this created a good contrast and a unique harmony in my piece.