



Alan McMurdie, composition

Tax Day Tribute (2019)*

Alan McMurdie

Alan McMurdie, piano

The Night Before (2017)

Alan McMurdie, piano

Space Drone on F (2019)*

Alan McMurdie, piano and track

Shakespeare Sonnet Settings (2018)

- I. From Fairest Creatures*
- II. When Forty Winters
- XII. When I Do Count*

Ryan DeBoer, baritone; Justin Ramm-Damron, bass; Irina Gayduchik, piano

INTERMISSION

Pictures Suite (2018)

- I. Thunderground
- II. Marketplace

Marcos Torres, percussion

Rabbits (2017)

- I. Prelude
- II. Community
- III. Predator
- IV. Chase*

Olivia Chaikin, flute; Madison Armstrong, clarinet; Tyler Kashow, bassoon

continued on reverse

Double Guitar Concerto (2019)*

- I. Fugue
- Interlude 1
- II. Dance in Five
- Interlude 2
- III. Rondo

Matthew Foley and Sean O'Connor, guitar
Viktoriya Sinitsa and Trevor Reynolds, violin
Emily Svendsen, viola; Jia-Mo Chen, cello; Connor Green, double bass
Arianna Guntvedt, conductor

** = world premiere*

*This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Bachelor of Music in Theory & Composition.
Alan McMurdie is a student of Dr. Stephen Blumberg.*

PROGRAM NOTES

The Night Before

Originally titled "Stream of Thoughts," "The Night Before" depicts the varying thoughts racing through the mind of a performer who is sleeping the night before a big event. The person is excited, anxious, nervous, then suddenly calm, then anxious again, then calm again, then nervous again. The different emotions continuously go back and forth throughout the piece, until suddenly it is time to wake up.

Space Drone on F

This is a very simple piece combining an acoustic instrument performed live with pre-recorded electronic sounds. The idea of this piece is to create an ambience that symbolizes the still environment of space itself, in the eyes of someone floating in the vacuum of space. The sparse piano, along with the mostly constant drone, allow the music to provide the stillness that is normally associated with space. Not all is calm though; stars, novas, and black holes are constantly creating, releasing, and consuming energy respectively. This is why the musical harmony and the drone are not always stagnant, but move back and forth occasionally, building and increasing in energy and intensity using a minimalistic approach, until it finally reaches a peak at the end.

Shakespeare Sonnet Settings

This piece stemmed from an idea I had for a long-term project: to put Shakespeare's sonnets into songs. "When Forty Winters" is the first piece that came from that idea. Each movement is set to the text of one of the sonnets, meaning the text is all Shakespeare's; I am simply setting music to it—voice and piano specifically. The point is to create textures that reflect the overall character of the poems. These sonnets in particular share a common theme: we are all faced with mortality, so Shakespeare beckons us to use our time wisely in appreciating the beauty of youth, for physical beauty is fleeting with age.

Text for Shakespeare Sonnet Settings

From Fairest Creatures

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But as the ripener should by time decease,
His tender heir might bear his memory:
But thou contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thy self thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel:
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament,
And only herald to the gaudy spring,
Within thine own bud buriest thy content,
And, tender churl, mak'st waste in niggarding:
Pity the world, or else this glutton be,
To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.

When Forty Winters

When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
Thy youth's proud livery so gazed on now,
Will be a tatter'd weed of small worth held:
Then being asked, where all thy beauty lies,
Where all the treasure of thy lusty days;
To say, within thine own deep sunken eyes,

Where an all-eating shame, and thriftless praise.
How much more praise deserv'd thy beauty's use,
If thou couldst answer 'This fair child of mine
Shall sum my count, and make my old excuse,'
Proving his beauty by succession thine!
This were to be new made when thou art old,
And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold.

When I Do Count

When I do count the clock that tells the time,
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;
When I behold the violet past prime,
And sable curls, all silvered o'er with white;
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
And summer's green all girded up in sheaves,
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard,
Then of thy beauty do I question make,
That thou among the wastes of time must go,
Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake
And die as fast as they see others grow;
And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence
Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee hence.

Pictures

"Pictures" is a collection currently consisting of two pieces, "Thunderground" and "Marketplace." Each piece attempts to represent with music the sounds you might hear in the scenarios represented by the title. For example, "Thunderground" is a combination of 'thunder' and 'underground.' The best way to interpret this is to envision the rumbling and shaking during an earthquake, a natural disaster with which California is all too familiar.

Rabbits

The title "Rabbits" is very literal, as this piece was inspired by my vision of a classic animation that is centered on a community of rabbits. The first movement is the prologue, and is meant to set the tone for the rest of the piece. In the second movement, the instruments imitate the rabbits hopping around and enjoying a typical day in their community. A stalking predator comes into play in the third movement, represented by the bassoon. This leads right into the finale, where the chase is on. Fortunately, the predator ultimately fails in catching his dinner.

Double Guitar Concerto

This is the biggest piece that I have written thus far, scored for two classical guitars and a string quintet. Each movement is written in the style of three previous classical music eras, namely Baroque, Romantic, and Classical (specifically in that order). In addition, each movement includes some nuances in the harmonic structure that make the music feel generally more modern. "Fugue," for example, is written with more modern harmonies, but with a Baroque fugue structure. There are also two interludes, featuring the two guitars in a duet without the strings, in order to provide a smoother transition between the bigger movements.