

UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

SENIOR PROJECT - APPROVAL

Name: George Ho

College: Arts & Sciences Department: Music

Faculty Mentor: Mark Zelmanovitch

PROJECT TITLE: Collections of Short Pieces from Senior Year

I have reviewed this completed senior honors thesis with this student and certify that it is a project commensurate with honors level undergraduate research in this field.

Signed: Mark Zelmanovitch, Faculty Mentor

Date: 05/14/97

Comments (Optional):

George Shiyao Ho
UTK Honors Program
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My senior project centers on music composition and performance aspects of the compositions. My faculty mentor is Mark Zelmanovitch of the Music Department. He is my private solo lesson teacher for violin. He was instrumental in teaching performance techniques but was not involved in the actual composing of the project pieces. The three pieces submitted as my project were composed by myself with the exception of the original traditional melodies built upon which will be explained in more detail later. I have never taken any music composition course or received any instruction in the subject. I do it for my own amusement and rarely perform my pieces for others or even let others see the music. I do feel that the harmonies and transitional portions of my pieces are weak points that either need guidance or more practice.

I have a particular interest in acoustic stringed instruments such as the violin, cello, and guitar. I have studied these as well as piano and viola, but the only ones I have access to are the violin and guitar. I believe that I prefer these instruments because they possess an emotive quality I find lacking in certain other instruments. I believe that music is nothing more than a language, like any other language one perceives through the audio senses. Different instruments give different voices, with individual instruments of the same kind giving individual varieties of those voices. Each player plays with a very personal voice, identifiable in cadence, style, and accent. This, however, is a topic for another discussion, as is what constitutes music in the first place.

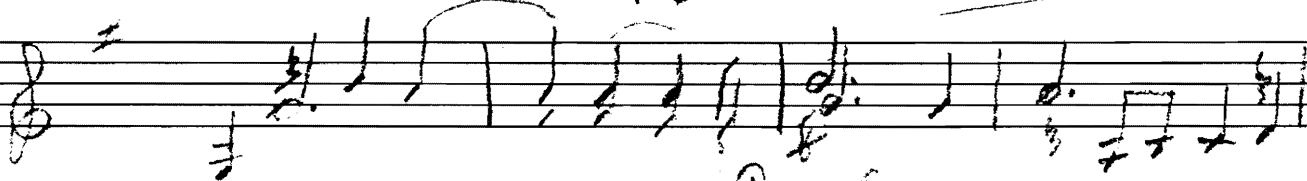
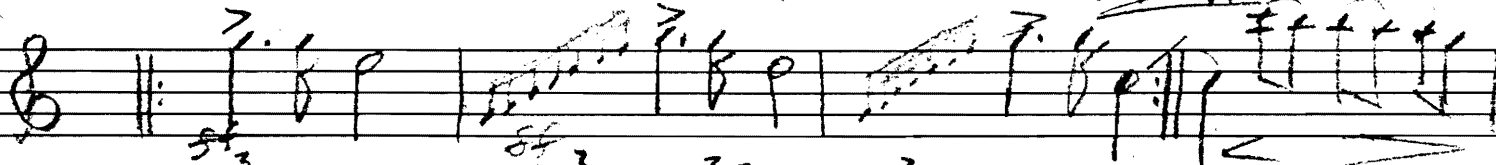
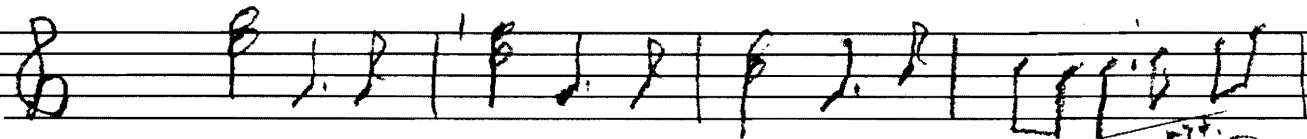
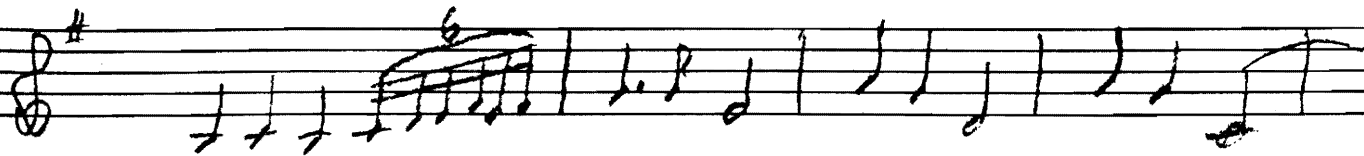
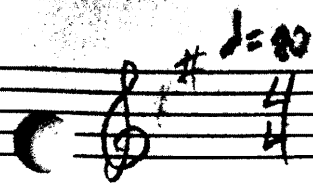
I am attracted to folk songs and traditional melodies from around the world, particularly from the Middle East and Slavic regions. These usually have a sad exotic feel to them, even the dances, and are mostly unadorned and simple in composition. They also have qualities within them that can be brought out with more development and render themselves well to improvisation and building upon. The first piece in this project is based very loosely on a traditional Middle Eastern melody. It has been "Westernized" somewhat and arranged in a format that contains more traditionally Western harmonies and rhythms. I have slowed it down and would like to add other instruments to create a softer thicker background to smooth the harshness of the single instrument.

The second piece in this project is almost completely original. It shares the same chord progression in the opening melody as the second movement of one of Sibelius' concertos, but after that it becomes something else entirely. It is a melody that, with proper orchestral accompaniment, could be a fair piece. The closing section of the piece is a slower, semi-cadenza resolution to the piece that ends it in a calmer mood that is in the same key signature as the opening, but in a slightly different harmonic key.

The final piece in this collection is again based on a traditional folk melody, this time from the region of Bosnia. It is freer in form and tempo, with a strong part of the effect due to the syncopation of the rhythm. It also is simple in notes, but lends itself well to a more complex setting. I have set this piece to the accompaniment of a flamenco style guitar with a driving rhythm that adds to the exotic feel of the piece. I have included a version for solo violin, however, due to the difficulty involved with playing two instruments at once.

During the course of this past year, I have worked on many different pieces. I have never had the feeling of having to write music with due dates, as an assignment. I have started many pieces, completed a few, and been satisfied with fewer still. I have found that my perspective on my compositions changes greatly when faced with the prospect of presenting my musical doodling to others. I am thankful that I did not choose to pursue music composition or performance as a career. I believe that I will enjoy going back to and continuing to play and write in my spare time and for my own amusement.

Handwritten musical score on ten staves. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. The tempo is marked as $\text{♩} = 120$. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, half notes, and rests. There are several instances of accidentals (sharps and flats) and dynamic markings (e.g., f , p). The notation is somewhat informal and appears to be a student or working draft. The final staff includes the word "improv." written above the notes.



Handwritten musical score for a piece titled "Largo". The score is written on 11 staves in G major (one sharp, F#) and 4/4 time. The tempo marking "Largo" is written above the first staff, and the dynamic marking "mp" (mezzo-piano) is written below the first staff. The music consists of a single melodic line. The notation includes various note values: eighth notes, quarter notes, and half notes. There are several measures with triplets indicated by a '3' over the notes. The score concludes with a double bar line and a "pp" (pianissimo) marking.