

Date: October 10, 2018

Start time: 4 p.m.

End Time: 5 p.m.

Total Time: 1 Hour

Today my mentor and I had a meeting so that I could explain, in depth, my senior project. I had printed out every paper I would need for senior project (such as time sheets and mentor evaluation sheets) to show her what I would need to complete in the process. My mentor showed me what books we would be working with and how much it would cost to get them on my own. She also explained that her mentoring me would be, in short, a crash course of a full piano class.

We have planned to meet weekly for one hour sessions so my mentor can show what I need to focus on intensely based on my weekly progress. She also suggested that I compose my own piece to learn music theory as well; by our next session I should have a description of what song I would like to write and possibly a melody.

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Date: October 11, 2018

Start time: 9:00 p.m.

End Time: 9:30 p.m.

Total Time: 30 minutes

For a half hour before I went to sleep I wrote descriptions of what song I wished to write. A few words I wrote: Royal, Haunting, Jubilant, and Beautiful. I have been listening to a song called *Jupiter of the Planets*; it is a song, hopefully, the Carson High Wind Ensemble can play in the spring. I was thinking on something starting in a major or 'happy' tone, but want it to get hauntingly sweet at the end.

Hopefully in the morning a melody can come to me and I can show my mentor next week what I have thought up. I also plan on working on my exercises with her and ask where my fingers need to be.

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Date: October 12, 2018

Start time: 5 a.m.

End Time: 5:30 a.m.

Total Time: 30 minutes

This morning I woke up with a start: I had a melody in my head and realized that it was original. I rushed down stairs, with a pen and pad of paper, to my piano. I translated the melody into notes and wrote them on a piece of paper. I kept playing it over and over so that I can get it exactly how I wanted, but then I had a second thought in my head. I took the melody and

transposed it into a new key so I had a 'happy' (major) and a 'sad' (minor) version of the same melody.

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Date: October 15, 2018

Start time: 2:30 p.m.

End Time: 3 p.m.

Total Time: 30 minutes

I looked at my melody and practiced a bit on the piano with it. I also looked at the book *A Dozen A Day* by Edna-Mae Burnam. It is a book filled with musical exercises to help build up my technic. I started playing a couple and waited until I got it correct three times before I moved on. I got through three of the exercises; however, I stopped at the third because two fingers at the same time was really hard for me to do. I started to get frustrated with my hands and decided to stop.

I plan on working on the exercise again to overcome it and work further into the book. I also hope that this session with my mentor can help me with my technique some more; especially were I put my fingers. I also am excited to show my mentor my melody that I had thought of.

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Date: October 15, 2018

Start time: 2:30 p.m.

End Time: 3 p.m.

Total Time: 30 minutes

Again I sat down to work on the exercise book. I revisited the first two, then moved on to the third. I still had a very rough time. In this exercise I must use two fingers on both hands (four in total are playing) and play staccato quarter notes which change. I decided to use a different technique after 5 minutes and played only one hand at a time. After I had both hands sufficient on their own, I played it with both hands slowly together. It was much cleaner and decided to move on with the next three exercises.

I will show what I have accomplished in my exercises with my mentor and ask how I can improve my learning techniques.

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Date: October 17 2018

Start time: 4 p.m.

End Time: 5 p.m.

Total Time: 1 Hour

I had a meeting with my mentor again. I showed her the melody I had thought of and played it on the piano. We talked about it some more and discussed my descriptions of what I wanted. I

added more descriptions along the line of: creepy, playful, and childlike. We also had worked on the exercises and she helped me work through the third exercise that I was frustrated with.

She wants me to develop my melody: produce a counter melody or bass clef accompaniment. She also wants me to add words to my description of my song and work on more dexterity.

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Date: October 19, 2018

Start time: 2:30 p.m.

End Time: 3 p.m.

Total Time: 30 minutes

Today I wrote more descriptions for my song as follows: suspense and heroic. I also worked on more exercises, revisiting past ones, and completing exercises up to number ten. The hardest ones are the numbers three and four because they require more than one finger at a time. Other exercises consist of scales and working on my thumb coordination; exercises three and four work on chords and intervals. In this practice I also thought of a second melody to write down (possibly a counter melody to the original).

In my next practice, I plan on figuring out a bridge (transition) to connect both of the melodies I had come up with.

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Date: October 26, 2018

Start time: 2:30 p.m.

End Time: 3 p.m.

Total Time: 30 minutes

Today I wrote more descriptions for my song as follows: dark and maybe life vs death. I thought about more themes for my song based off the melodies I had written. The first one I had wrote (I am using the first melody with a 'happy' feel to it) and the new melody I had wrote. The newer melody sounds timid and quite beautiful. I thought hard, but no transitional melody came to mind this practice.

I plan on practicing more exercises and hopefully finishing my song with a transitional melody and conclusion.

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Date: November 6, 2018

Start time: 7 p.m.

End Time: 7:30 p.m.

Total Time: 30 Minutes

Today I practiced playing both of my melodies and I found a bridge to combine the two. I practiced them only one handed today because I wanted to see what tempo I wished to play my

piece and I have yet to write a bass clef. It seems more of a slower piece to me. I also worked on some exercises before hand going on to eleven and twelve; I use these to warm up my fingers now before I practice my piece.

Next practice, I want practice much as I have today. It is mainly to get the melody under my fingers. It is still hard to play anything up beat.

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Date: November 9, 2018

Start time: 2:30 p.m.

End Time: 3:00 p.m.

Total Time: 30 Minutes

I did the same thing as last practice. I worked on exercises, specifically one and two in chapter two this time, to warm up my fingers. Then I worked on playing my piece. I have it written and I just need to play it. In the exercises, my left hand is harder than my right since I have a hard time reading bass clef; I am a flute player so I have experience in treble clef.

As for the practices following this one, they will be similar in their trifles until I meet with my mentor again for the next step.

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Date: November 12, 2018

Start time: 7 p.m.

End Time: 7:30 p.m.

Total Time: 30 Minutes

In this practice I worked on mainly exercises to vary my practices in the least. I revisited one through twelve in chapter one and the first two in chapter two; just now I had worked on exercises five more exercises in chapter two. The hardest ones were three and five. Exercise three, chapter two, works on a faster pace in sixteenth notes. Normally, I have been working on eighth notes in the past exercises so playing notes chromatically was not very hard. The only hard part was trying to play them staccato (short and detached). I can play them legato (long and attached) since the notes practically run into one another. Exercise five, chapter two, was hard because again I am working on chord structures.

In the next practice I aim on focusing on my melody again with little exercises to warm up.

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Date: November 13, 2018

Start time: 7 p.m.

End Time: 7:30 p.m.

Total Time: 30 Minutes

In this practice I revisited the last five exercises I worked on in last practice (three through seven in chapter two). I mainly worked on my melody this time trying to practice my left hand smoothly playing the melodies. My left hand often jumps around when playing the melody and some times octaves come into play. Octaves are when one note is higher than another, but have the same letter name. I also had come up with a bass clef on my own in this practice as the notes seem to fit together; it mainly consists of chords and triplets.

Next practice will be with my mentor. I will show her what I have accomplished in my exercise book and when playing my melody. I will see what I can do better in my practice time and what the next step is with my melody is.

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Date: November 14, 2018

Start time: 4 p.m.

End Time: 5 p.m.

Total Time: 1 Hour

I just had a practice with my mentor. She says my dexterity has improved because of my paced progress through the exercise book. She also likes my melody and my bass clef accompaniment. We worked on tricks to read bass clef easier and how chord progressions work. It was mainly paper work today, as we pulled out another book *Chord-Speller* by John Thompson. We worked on identifying different chords and what a chord consists of.

In the following practices, my mentor wants me to name the scales (if they are major or minor and what are their note names) and write out what possible chords my bass clef consist of. We did end a little earlier in this practice so I went home and wrote down the names of the scales and what chords I think my bass clef consists of.

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Date: November 21, 2018

Start time: 4 p.m.

End Time: 5 p.m.

Total Time: 1 Hour

I had another practice with my mentor, we got on the piano and revisited the warm ups she gave me (exercises). We also revisited my song a little to keep what I already know under my fingers. Once we were done with the piano, we worked more on paper with chord progressions. I accidentally did them wrong when I wrote them down after last practice because I guess I forgot a key point in her lecture: to write what I think the chord progressions are in the relative key signature I had already written. We fixed the first few measures and she showed me in depth what she was looking for; then said I needed to do them on my own time following this practice.

In my free time, I will work on the chord progressions again; however, there is a silver lining to this mishap. I learned how all the scales are connected as there are only twelve keys on

the piano (they are repeated in octaves) and only so many scales you could perform with them. Again, I was let out a little early so I went home right after the practice and finished writing out the chord progressions.

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Date: November 28, 2018

Start time: 4 p.m.

End Time: 5 p.m.

Total Time: 1 Hour

I had another meeting with mentor. We worked on more exercises as I could not practice this week. We warmed up with the first few from group two then practiced sight reading exercises eight and nine in group two. I got used to moving my fingers around more freely and my dexterity has improved since the first time I have played. We also worked on my song and drilled fingerings in my mind. My mentor had me repeat the hardest sections so that they are easier to play and said if I continue this strategy in private practice then I would get my song under my fingers in no time.

In the next practice, I hope to use the drilling technique. Using one hand at the time to get accustomed to the feeling. The hardest part is playing the beginning (my main melody) with both hands. The idea of 'drilling' will help my hands go into an 'overdrive' and do what the need to (and feel natural) when played together.

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Date: December 5, 2018

Start time: 4 p.m.

End Time: 5 p.m.

Total Time: 1 Hour

Another practice with my mentor. It was the same as last practice except we only drilled on the song. We warmed up on exercises one and two in the first group just to warm up my hands and get them moving. We did more drilling on the fingerings; my right hand gets pretty accustomed to its side of the melody. My left hand is a little harder to control and my reading of bass clef still is not the strongest. I am still happy with my progress though because now I can actually play the first few measures together. Granted it is really slow, but it is progress that I am excited about having.

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Date: December 12, 2018

Start time: 4 p.m.

End Time: 5 p.m.

Total Time: 1 Hour

This practice with my mentor was a lot like my last. I warmed up with exercises three and nine of group two since they have faster sixteenth notes in it to wake up my fingers. In the beginning of my melody I have dotted quarter notes and eighth notes, which is similar to a swing

beat, and the sixteenth notes will help my fingers work to play them. We figured out a good tempo for my song. I did plan a regal themed beginning so I decided to play it no more than 65-70 beats per minute (bpm). It is on the slower side as well; this will give me time to think and play.

In my next practice I hope to practice my song in the new tempo with a metronome. I also plan on completing more drilling and hopefully by the next time I meet my mentor I can perform the beginning of my piece.

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Date: December 17, 2018

Start time: 2:30 p.m.

End Time: 3 p.m.

Total Time: 30 Minutes

Today I finally figured out a name for my song. I wanted an 'life vs death' feel: something like a story. I began my practice by listening to my song through a computer software app called *flat*. It is free and helped me to really develop my piece by listening to my song. Doing this I wanted to name my piece Life and Death like I said before; however, I thought that was boring and obvious so I went to google translate and really liked the Italian version *Vita e Morte*. I spent most of my time deciding on a name that I did not practice physically a whole lot: I played through an exercise to warm up (two and three in group one) then played through my song very slowly a couple of times.

I hope to show my mentor my new song name and explain its existence. I also plan on playing through my song more with her.

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Date: December 19, 2018

Start time: 4 p.m.

End Time: 5 p.m.

Total Time: 1 Hour

I had a practice with my mentor today; she was excited that I named my piece, except I noticed that I accidentally spelled it wrong and must fix it later. Today, she had me sight read a few christmas songs for fun. I played *Jingle Bells* and *Deck the Halls* and a couple others. She would have me sight read then asked me to play it a couple times through cleanly. After that, she would remove the piece and asked me to play it from memory. I did for the most part; however, I did miss a few notes. We were testing my listening skills (if I could tell if it was a wrong note or not) and also my memory. She explained that most piano players not only memorize where their fingers need to be, but their music. It will help being able to look down and up based on memorization of movement and of my song. We played through my song a couple more times before the end of our session; I can now play the beginning of my piece cleanly. Not from memory, but cleanly.

Next practice, I aim to work on chord progressions (homework sent by mentor). I am going to take all the notes in my piece and stack them according to their measure numbers; then I will name the possible scales they belong to using John Thompson's *Chord-Speller*.

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Date: December 22, 2018

Start time: 7 p.m.

End Time: 7:30 p.m.

Total Time: 30 Minutes

I finished working on the chord progressions, as explained in the log before this one, and wrote them in my cool notebook with staff lines already printed for me. Some were a little harder since some chords had more than 3 notes. I also exclusively worked on playing the beginning of my song completely through and through about 10 times in a row correctly. I believe I now have the beginning of my song under my fingers.

In the next practice I plan on working with my mentor on my chord progressions and further my music theory behind the piece I wrote for senior showcase.

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Date: January 9, 2019

Start time: 4 p.m.

End Time: 5 p.m.

Total Time: 1 Hour

Today was my lesson with my mentor, we solely worked on chord progressions. I did not understand her directions from the last practice and explained a little more in depth how to complete them. I stacked them incorrectly: I should have stacked them so they were all either lines or spaces (on the staff). Some would be known as 'inversions' since some notes, in order to fit, would become an octave higher or lower (inversed) to fit the description. However, I did learn how intertwined these scales are. There are only seven letter notes in the entire universe of music and they continue to make entertaining pieces out of them by mixing them around and giving them different rhythms.

In my next practice, I will work on correcting my chord progressions and go over my song again a few times.

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Date: January 15, 2019

Start time: 11:00 p.m.

Start time: 4 p.m.

End Time: 11:30 p.m.

End Time: 5 p.m.

Total Time: 30 Minutes

Total Time: 1 Hour

Today was a B day at the high school (I have no class scheduled today) so I dedicated today to completing homework. Including practicing my song. I did not finish fixing all my chord progressions; although, some were harder than others due to either accidentals or some of the notes not fitting on either a line or a space. I also practiced an exercise (number three of



group one for sixteenth notes again) to warm up my fingers before playing my piece. I drilled my hands separately before putting them together again. I was able to play them slowly together (up to tempo) as needed.

I also logged my time with my mentor. I did have a practice today with my mentor and looked over my chord progressions. They were not perfect, but they worked and I understood that the scales were intertwined with each other. We talked about how they worked like cogs in a clock: many clocks are the same inwards (cogs are like the same seven letter notes in music), but the way they are put together creates the different clock faces and chimes to make them unique.

Next practice, I hope to work on identifying the rest of my chords as I did not finish them and trying to practice the rest of my piece.

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Date: January 17, 2019

Start time: 7 p.m.

End Time: 7:30 p.m.

Total Time: 30 Minutes

Today I worked on finishing my chord progressions only. I stacked the accidentals in another group in the same measures and named the similar scales they could possibly fit into. It took me a long time to figure out how to take those notes (at least six or more in some measures) then look at John Thompson *Chord-Speller*.

In the next practice, I hope to accomplish on naming more chord progressions. I did finish writing all the notes stacked, but I did not finish working on identifying which chord progressions belong to which scale.

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Date: January 22, 2019

Start time: 1:30 p.m.

End Time: 2:00 p.m.

Total Time: 30 Minutes

Today I finished naming my chord progressions like last practice. I did not practice my song this last two practices and solely focusing on music theory. There were many chords belong to some stacked triads and inversions because of accidentals in the same measure changing the scale mid-measure. We also looked at the status of my senior project and what we need to do before it is due; such as the different forms I need my mentor to fill out and/or sign to complete my portfolio.

In the next practice, I will show my chord progressions to my mentor and talk a little more music theory. Although, I really hope to practice my song some more. I can play the beginning, but I cannot play the rest of the piece.

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Date: January 23, 2019

Start time: 4 p.m.

End Time: 5 p.m.

Total Time: 1 Hour

This practice was with my mentor: we looked over my chord progressions and did not really spend time on them. Instead, we worked on exercises one and two from group one to warm up my fingers then really focus on my song. We blocked out the rest of my song and worked on writing down fingerings for my right hand as it tended to have the most moving parts. The triplets with my right hand at measures seven through ten and the triplets with my left hand at measures eleven through sixteen are the hardest for me since they are considerably fast even at the slow tempo of 65 bpm.

Next time I practice, I plan on focusing on my left hand triplets and the ending of my piece. Hopefully, chopping up the song and playing it piece by piece will help me overcome my difficulties.

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Date: February 6, 2019

Start time: 7 p.m.

End Time: 7:30 p.m.

Total Time: 30 Minutes

This was an independent practice and as I planned, I worked on my triplets on my left hand from measures eleven to sixteen. It is the same notes, in the same pattern, for measures eleven through fourteen and changes on measures fifteen and sixteen. So for the measures that stay the same, I practiced the same notes slowly until my fingers got used to it and slowly took it up to tempo. It took most of my time because it was hard to keep the triplets steady and equally distributed with a F sharp accidental.

Hopefully in my next practice I can just run through these triplets to get a feel for them again (they are not perfect but they work for now). I plan on working on my left hand from measure seventeen to the end since it is fairly easy and I only want to start making my left hand used to being mechanical as soon as I start adding my left hand to the same melody.

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Date: February 20, 2019

Start time: 4 p.m.

End Time: 5 p.m.

Total Time: 1 Hour

This practice was the same as last practice. I worked solely on measure seventeen to the end on my right hand since it is the simplest melody of the entire song; I like to think of this section as the lyrical section of the song and the rest would be technical sections. After being able to play it from memory, I went back to practicing the triplets on my left hand at measure eleven to fourteen. They were fairly clean and a little under the tempo, but I did improve on my dexterity and played them cleaner than before.

In my next practice, I hope to go over both the triplets in my left hand and the melody on my right hand and add in practicing the triplets on my right hand from measures seven through eleven.

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Date: February 22, 2019

Start time: 1:30 p.m.

End Time: 2:00 p.m.

Total Time: 30 Minutes

This solo practice was a lot like the last, I ran through the triplets in my left hand and the melody on my right hand as said before. The triplets on my left hand took a while to get back up to tempo like I had it before, but I did not spend a lot of my time on it. I spent most of time time learning the different notes of the broken chord triplets since they do change not by note; however, they tend to be within the same fingering guideline. In musical terms, a pianist's fingers are actually numbered: on my right hand, from thumb to pinkie, my fingers are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. In this case, my fingering continually is 1, 3, 5, 1, 3,5, etc.

In my next practice I will focus on committing my right hand triplets from measure seven to eleven to memory. I will also run through my left hand triplets and the melody on my right hand.

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Date: February 25, 2019

Start time: 1:30 p.m.

End Time: 2:00 p.m.

Total Time: 30 Minutes

Again the practice was a lot like the last one. I ran through the triplets in my left hand and the melody on my right hand again (as before). Then mainly focused on the triplets on my left hand from measures seven to eleven again. I took them up to tempo, even above the tempo, and then worked on playing them from memory measure by measure. It was hard because the notes changed so often.

Next practice will be with my mentor. I plan on showing her what I have accomplished: triplets from my left hand from measures eleven to fourteen; the melody on my right hand from measures seventeen to the end; and the triplets on my right hand from measures seven to eleven.

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Date: February 26, 2019

Start time: 4 p.m.

End Time: 5 p.m.

Total Time: 1 Hour

Today was my lesson with my mentor. I showed her what I had accomplished in my last few practices (as stated in my goal for 'the next practice' in my last log). We worked on measures eleven through sixteen and putting both hands together. This really frustrated me

because the rhythms on both my hands are syncopated: meaning that I have to different feeling beats layered on top of one another. In this case, my right hand plays dotted quarter and eighth notes while my left hand plays triplets. These rhythms are off set and gets a little confusing on how they work together.

In my next practice, I hope on finishing signing all my senior project forms that need to be filled out. I also plan on revisiting what we did today.

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Date: March 5, 2019

Start time: 4 p.m.

End Time: 5 p.m.

Total Time: 1 Hour

This was the same as last week when practicing my song. We worked on fingerings and putting together my hands on measures eleven through sixteen again. It took up practically all of the hour after running through the beginning with both hands. It was complicated and my hands had a really hard time working together, but we did it! I got them together and it sounded exactly how I written it. Granted it was very, very slow, but it was together. My mentor had me play it over and over and over so that it was drilled into my hands.

In my next practice, I hope to work on this and everything else I know. I want to start putting my hands together on measures seven through eleven because I do have triplets in my right hand (opposite of this case when I have triplets in my left).

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Date: March 12, 2019

Start time: 4 p.m.

End Time: 5 p.m.

Total Time: 1 Hour

Today I gave my mentor her thank you letter and thanked her for everything she has done for me in these past months. She helped me have more confidence when writing my own piece and she supported me when playing piano got extremely complicated. We also worked on fingering measures seven through eleven as I asked. It was even harder than measures eleven through fourteen because my right hand triplets not only change note by note, but my left hand also jumps around as it has my original melody in a different key. My left-hand melody in measures seven to eleven does have more rhythmic challenge than measures eleven through fourteen.

Our practices will go on after senior project as I want to perform my piece at senior showcase in April I believe. I will continue to work on my skill and I also know that this newly found skill will benefit my future in Music Education at the University of Nevada, Reno.