

Composition Portfolio 1: "Storm Drains" Annotations

Inspirations, Meaning & Themes

"Storm Drains" is a 12-tone, expressionist piece composed for Oboe, Bb Clarinet, Bassoon, Viola, Cello and Contrabass, depicting seasonal depression, and the different but cyclical ways it effects people. The piece is slow and lethargic, but ever changing in how it presents itself e.g. weariness, irritation or hopelessness. The 12-tone system works well in presenting these themes in a logical and intriguing way. I was inspired by Alban Berg's Violin Concerto of 1935 as it uses the 12-tone system for a deeply emotive and effecting piece of music. Exploring the huge dynamic range and logical orchestration of his 12-tone music helped to ground my arrangement. However, it was his choices of when to utilise or break from the traditionally expressionist ideals of chromaticism that captivated me. This influenced the structure of how I set up the traditional 12-tone ideas in my piece before eventually breaking them, and then once again conforming to them.

	P0	P5	P4	P8	P7	P11	P10	P6	P9	P2	P1	P3
I0	C	F	E	A ^b	G	B	B ^b	G ^b	A	D	D ^b	E ^b
I7	G	C	B	E ^b	D	G ^b	F	D ^b	E	A	A ^b	B ^b
I8	A ^b	D ^b	C	E	E ^b	G	G ^b	D	F	B ^b	A	B
I4	E	A	A ^b	C	B	E ^b	D	B ^b	D ^b	G ^b	F	G
I5	F	B ^b	A	D ^b	C	E	E ^b	B	D	G	G ^b	A ^b
I1	D ^b	G ^b	F	A	A ^b	C	B	G	B ^b	E ^b	D	E
I2	D	G	G ^b	B ^b	A	D ^b	C	A ^b	B	E	E ^b	F
I6	G ^b	B	B ^b	D	D ^b	F	E	C	E ^b	A ^b	G	A
I3	E ^b	A ^b	G	B	B ^b	D	D ^b	A	C	F	E	G ^b
I10	B ^b	E ^b	D	G ^b	F	A	A ^b	E	G	C	B	D ^b
I11	B	E	E ^b	G	G ^b	B ^b	A	F	A ^b	D ^b	C	D
I9	A	D	D ^b	F	E	A ^b	G	E ^b	G ^b	B	B ^b	C

Process of Creating The 12-Tone Matrix:

Here is the 12-tone matrix I created for the piece. It emphasises the groups of 2^{nds} in the scale, resulting in an interesting melodic ostinato occurring in the prime row between P5 - P10 that I particularly liked the sound of. I feel that the minor second reflects the "lethargy" of the piece the best, since its the smallest interval you can get with 12-tones. However, I use these groups of seconds in a winding way, as if the melody is taking "two steps forward, one step back".

I've highlighted the main tone rows & columns I used throughout the piece. I mostly used them in complimentary pairs e.g. Rows 1 & 4, for the Bassoon and Contrabass at the start of the piece. However, most of it was composed depending on what overlapping intervals the piece needed or needed to avoid depending on how strictly I was adhering to the chromaticism of the piece at certain sections.

Score Annotation Legend:

Blue = Relevance to meaning and themes

Red = Indicating a new row and how it's structured; **Yellow** = a break of the rules or rows

Green = Structure and arrangement of the piece

The password for the locked document is "tamaaie" (the annotated score)