

Berklee College of Music, Valencia Campus



Allurement:

A Retrograde Brush from Music to Picture

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Degree of Master of Music
in Scoring for Film, Television and Video Games

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Abstract

The purpose and intent of this project is to provide an analytical discussion about the creation of a musical piece; from beginning to end. As so often, most believe that the compositional and music process is: one of intrigue and mystery in which only few talented people possess and can forge. However, this project serves to demystify the development and creation of music; as it will lead you through the following stages: initial concept, the writing of musical notation, recording the music and finally assimilating the final audio that will be distributed for use. Additionally, the initial leg begins with the music, and so it is a reversed look at the relationship between music and media. This project was designed to ensure fulfilment of the Degree of Master of Music in Scoring for Film, Television and Video Games at Berklee College of Music. The implications of this project are written for the assiduity of both musician and non-musician to provide a wholesome approach in which all can partake and enjoy!

Keywords: filmscoring, conducting, retrograde, music to picture, reflective paper

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This program and project could have never been possible without the help and support of my best friends, who have given me so much of their time and who have helped me improve throughout the years. I truly appreciate their attention to detail and their thoughts. These special people have been there when I was ill, frustrated or couldn't express what I needed to; and I couldn't have come this far without you. Additionally, I would like to thank my teachers for inspiring me with their knowledge and commitment to excellence and to my classmates for being so close-knit, welcoming, diverse and such a passionate group who never ceased to share their gifts and knowledge with everyone else. I could've also never been as ready to head out into the workplace, without the many appointments at the International Career Centre (ICC), and the warm hearted-tenderness of my advisors.

I would also like to thank my teachers, for their spirit and passion which has inspired me to see how someone can excel in so many different avenues all at once.

They have helped me believe that that goal of excellence is within reach. Lastly, I would like to thank each and every one of my family members, as they have no idea what I have been “really doing here,” but yet still have given me their undying support and love.

When I have needed to laugh, my four beautiful nephews jumped to the challenge and skyped me. Their antics lifted my spirit as they blow kisses from a million miles away, asking me when I’d be home again and in how many “sleeps” time that would-be in. My two strong brothers and their wives who have held our family together and really made me treasure the gift of family and relationships above all else. From this place of being loved, I hope to love through the voice of music, that knows no boundaries and yet breaks down all of them

1. Introduction

Music. Fascinating, charming, appealing, enchanting.

It's an allurement. My life-long allurement.

Allurement is the culmination of my experiences and striking wonder and exploration of what music really is thus far. Every time, I seem to place my finger on it; it rapidly fades and briskly propels me in another direction.

Up until this point, I have endeavoured to discover what music truly is - in all shapes and colours. It fascinates me that when we try to describe a piece of music: we can categorise it, say it sounds like somebody else's music, explain the type of techniques used in the composition as well as the instrumentation; but however hard we try, until we actually play that piece of music for someone else – only then can they begin to understand what we were talking about.

Music thus transcends our ability to rationalise and affects us in a much deeper way. Interestingly enough, all people – musician and non-musician alike – are capable of perceiving music and having an opinion about it, an opinion that cannot be disputed as it is based on their perspective. In other fields, only experts are capable of delivering good feedback on work done. However, all of us, are capable of expressing an idea about a piece of music, based on our perceptions and backgrounds. Whether or not, our feedback is expertly expressed or broken down, however - does depend on our sets of expertise and knowledge acquired through studying music.

This fascination alone has drawn me towards music, as it seems inexplicable at best. The more I have learnt about composition, songwriting, theory, conducting, orchestration, harmony, music production, music technology (and the list goes on...); the more I marvel at what music is. I feel so highly honoured to be a part of something in which every human-being can perceive and hopefully be touched by. Touched by in a deep, meaningful way that impacts everything else in their lives. If I fail to accomplish that, at the very least I will be forever allured by music and how much it continues to affect and touch my life significantly.

2. Overview

Allurement is the title with which I have dubbed my final project in fulfilment of completing a Master's Degree in Scoring for Film, Television and Video Games. The reason being that the title indicates my intrigue and fascination for music according to *Dictionary.com*, s.v. "allurement," accessed June 19, 2018, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/allurement>.

It is an accumulation of a style of music, that touches my heart. As it also sums up my education career, I felt that it should also be a reflection of where I am in my music career – my thoughts, style and ideas, in addition it should incorporate my musical knowledge up until this point. As composing is closely related to an emotional context, I write this music and paper from where I am currently in my life's journey. Since, the last few years have been fraught with personal and family changes as well as inconsistent schedules that gave rise to stress and health issues; I write from the place of someone who

earnestly wants to persevere, focus and concentrate on what matters, whilst leaving the rest to fall by the way-side. I write from the place of feeling blessed that I have been able to make it this far.

A Retrograde Brush from Music to Picture is a reverse study of the process of putting together film clips that react to music. It is an artistic approach to take a music brush and paint pictures with it. The normal relationship between music and picture is the procedure of having the film set out first and thereafter the film dictates the approach of the music. In this case, I did a retrograde of that. I amuse myself, by thinking that only a Master like J.S. Bach can retrograde seamlessly with such ease and complexity. I especially titled this paper with the notion of his *Crab Canon* (see fig. 1) in mind.



Figure 1. Crab canon example. J.S. Bach, BWV 1079. Image from Wikimedia Commons Contributors, "file:crab canon.png," Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=file:crab_canon.png&oldid=247506236 (accessed June 1).

However, through my studies and experiences of working with putting music to media, I have learnt the idiosyncrasies involved. Thus, I have set about to explore the

retrograde process in which I start by explaining and creating the music – which is the raw material. What follows, begins with the music and finishes with the final artistic product – the film and music.

As a Native South African, people often ask me what my profession is; and I reply: “I’m a music composer for visual media.” To which they appear confused and normally ask if that is similar to journalism. Sadly, this is due to the fact that the creative process of writing music is often explained abstractly at best. Most people do not understand how music comes into being. Hence, I hope that in the pages that follow, the process of composing music will be demystified as I walk through the journey of my final graduate piece, *Allurement*.

3. Initial Legwork

The search for a Final Project Concept was more unusual and eye-opening than I had anticipated. The conceptual process seemed to bring my knowledge of - writing music to media - round in a full circle. The initial legwork helped me tie up some loose ends, in the way I conceptualized the relationship between music and media; as previously I had always thought of music as the outpouring of something else – in which that something else calls for more emotion. However, in this case, the procedure was reversed. The heart of my piece of music would need to initiate the emotion and context of the picture. As follows, the picture would be based off of the music.

However, when I first started my search process, I didn’t apperceive this. I started thinking about which industry had not been ‘exposed’ internationally as much as, for example: Hollywood; and or what place I could try dig into that might yield or put me in touch with

people to work with after completing the project. Firstly, I decided to choose a beautiful Turkish series called “Seyit ve Sura” and contacted the Turkish TV Productions to see if they would allow me to score a few sequences. It took 5 weeks to eventually get through to the right person and to send an email that helped them understand what we were looking for. My friend obviously had to walk the long road with me, as I don’t speak Turkish. However, we succeeded and in the end, they graciously sent me four hours of footage with the sound effects, dialogue and original music in stems separately. I was so amazed and felt very honoured.

During and thereafter that, I was showing my professors and friends the clips I’d received and my musical ideas for them; thereafter getting some good advice. The advice helped me see that these Turkish series were not quality (in terms of filmography) productions and so that would lessen the worth of my music. It would be better for me to collaborate with professional videographers, in order to be more visually appealing to prospective directors and producers. Thus, I went on a new search to find time-lapse videos that were filled with natural beauty. I found about 15 people that I liked and whose contact details I managed to find, and sent them a message. The response was overwhelming, within 2 weeks they all had jumped in and wanted me to use their videos! Which placed me in a beautiful position, where I got to really choose who I wanted to work with, based on who responded quickly and willingly enough to start sending me materials for the project. Within a day, one man had sent me all the time-lapses I had requested, and I started to put them all together and develop a story.

4. Conceptualization

The concept of what type of music I wanted to write, accumulated over a long period of time. This question mark played in the back of my mind, whenever I started another new project and whenever I thought about the Final Recording of my graduate

year. All this “background” time, definitely gave way to an identifiable idea which helped me to write efficiently and with conviction when the time came. In order to achieve the best of what I have now - through this great opportunity of recording at Air Studios.

So, the initial question I asked myself was what type of music would I like to write? Action – packed, bombastic, broad, peaceful, melody-driven, harmonically-dense...? And the list went on. And so, then I had to ask myself, what am I trying to prove? Why not just do the music that speaks directly from my heart and makes me smile. Thus, I decided on writing melody-driven music, with constantly changing orchestration and a mixture of pure harmonies with moments of tension and “thunder.”

After making this decision, I asked myself what contour I’d like to create and with what timeline. I drew up a timeline and thereafter decided that I wanted to have one common thing that happened in the beginning and weaved its way through and then finished with that initial thought. My common element was simply a tree. It is a reminder to me, that sometimes, a most commonplace thing, when rooted deeply, can withstand the strongest storms and bespoke many seasons.

I have had so much change in my life lately, that almost nothing has stayed the same and I find it challenging to move forward, when you have nothing of comfort to hold onto. For example, it makes me upset to lose contact with friends over time; but this idea of having a tree intertwined throughout this work, depicts the most important lesson I have learnt about letting go and moving through change. Some things are for a season, a reason or for a lifetime.¹

The music concept then branched out into the following:

- Starting with spacious chords that fills one with wonder, hope and expectation. The images are wide, slow, expansive and dramatic
- Bountiful melodies interwoven together begin and gradually grow with the camera angles moving along in concordance with the music
- The orchestration gets more dense and intense as the clouds thicken and pick up pace
- The piece builds tension as the rain comes and the clouds darken.
- A storm hits and lightning flashes across the music and night sky. Thunder echoes through the music, then dies away with the orchestration and it...
- Ends with a long bass note, pushing it towards something calmer. The cloud cover disappears and the stars glisten and shine. The melodies sparkle and dance.
- Then the piece swells and grows, giving way to a moment of grandeur.
- It depicts many seasons beginning and ending as quickly as they started. The music swiftly moves around the orchestra – sometimes using solo sections, sometimes using sections of the orchestra, sometimes a blend
- Towards the end, the journey picks up pace as all the elements grow
- A cello melody soars just before the last chords. This is a symbol of the last thread of hope before the dawn. It's always when we feel at our lowest, that those times are the greatest launching pads for success.

¹ “Madea - Let People GO!,” posted by DJ ALXXX, November 11, 2015, Facebook, 4:51 accessed June 14, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/deejay.alex.uk/videos/10154462255358357/>.

- The piece ends in triumphant final chords with a twinge of something left unuttered

Thus, the music and changes in temperament are illustrated through the visuals. They are interwoven and work together to demonstrate how the seasons change and how almost everything we see shifts, but yet how to grow our roots and stay grounded through it all. The music is written to illustrate a journey that leaves its source and is uprooted, but later finds a new perspective and weathers the arid deserts to the breath-taking moments with new gusto.

The concept is governed by my musical approach to the natural realization of my themes, melodies, harmonies and orchestrations. The concept can be approached theoretically with regards the compositional side, as it can be approached from the visual storytelling as the time-lapses unfold, but lastly it also means a lot to me in terms of what my current lifestyle looks like. And so, it seems to be some sort of parable to remind me of what I've learnt and stand by today. The concept has grown from many sources and I've tried to combine them all here in order to be as cohesive as a stand-alone viewpoint can be, but really, they work together as a whole.

5. The Composition Process

5.1 Main Idea and Thought Process

Initially, I began with just trying to come up with a melody (see fig. 2), in which I could use throughout the piece, but it needed to be one that had a smaller unit, in which I could use that smaller unit throughout the piece. After about an hour of trying different

intervals and rhythms, I finally settled on my main theme. The opening upbeat of the melodic idea, would be a thirty-second note, in order to create a shuddering effect on the downbeat. Thereafter, I tried to create a counterpoint that weaved in and out of the range of the melodic line, but without getting in the way. This line also served as indicating my harmonic intention. After creating a few variations of the thematic material, I was ready to embed it into my form. The form of the piece was mostly predetermined by the storyline; however, the intricate form i.e. tension and release points, I decided to compose during the orchestration phase.

Main Theme:

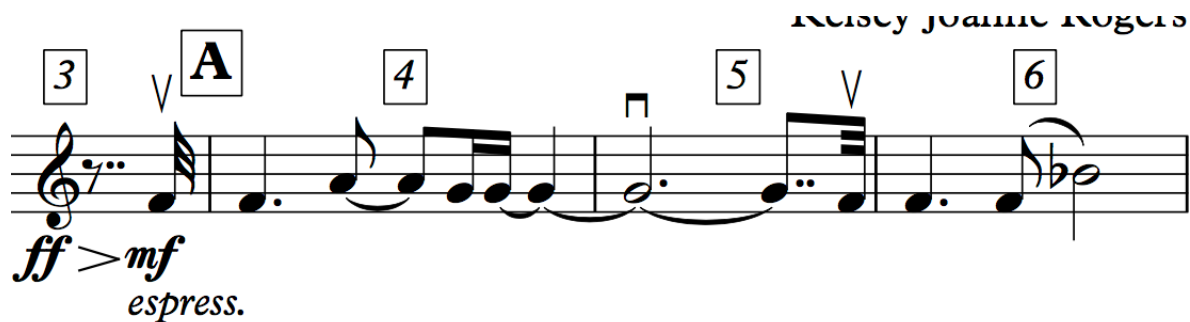


Figure 2. Main theme of Allurement, mm. 3-6.

My main intention for composing this piece, is that I created a melody that could be used all through the piece, but that also consisted of a rhythmic element that could become the core structure as well as the driving force of the piece. The other part of the melody and harmony, I decided, needed to consist of elements which would help me change orchestration rapidly, as well as to have enough material that could be used for *espressivo* (expressive) solo parts. As the piece, would be only three minutes long, I really wanted to be as concise as possible. I wanted to lean on this main melodic material, throughout every beat of the piece. This thirty-second heartbeat of *Allurement* (see fig. 3.)

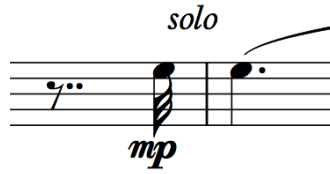


Figure 3. 1/32 note from Allurement, mm. 50-51.

5.2 Score Analysis and Inspirations

As I was looking for a really warm and thick sound, I turned to Johannes Brahms - Symphonies, no. 3, op. 90, F major. I mainly focused on his movement in the strings and continual warm bed that he provides to many different contexts. I also looked at Brahms's famous violin concerto, (Concertos, violin, orchestra, op. 77, D major) as I love the way he treats the solo violin in comparison to the orchestra. I then listened to Job, Legends of the Fall soundtrack (1994), and enjoyed how James Horner uses the brass to illicit wide open spaces and create a very broad feeling. Intermingled in that, I also analysed some Tchaikovsky, namely his Serenade in C, (Serenade, string orchestra, op. 48, C major) and looked at his voicings of simple chords and how he places dissonances that sometimes never resolve.

6. Orchestration

After, composing my melody, harmony and variations, as well as looking through some key pieces - in which I identified what sound I was working towards creating - I began orchestrating. Which in this case, is a mixture between composing and orchestrating, (as I worked with the whole orchestra and not from a piano sketch.) This method helped energise my creativity throughout the orchestration, as it made me really dwell within the realm of the instruments.

6.1 Instrumentation:

Instrumentation is very important, as it defines your palette of colours. Regardless, if you envisioned using a different colour in a place, you have to always remember what colours you have in front of you and you have to decide how best you want them to speak. Additionally, all these colours are “alive” so to say; as you, the composer, knows that in the end, real musicians will read and interpret what you have written.

Furthermore, you have to really envision, what sound you want to create and which combinations of instruments can effectively pull that off. In this case, we were given our instrumentation and so I had my template ready with only those instruments. In this way, when I orchestrated, I could only write music within the staves that were available. Orchestrating is so closely intertwined with instrumentation, as when you compose, you are continually trying to get inside of each player’s head, all at the same time and asking yourself – if I were that player, how could I add or create the texture needed here. Additionally, you want to paint with as many colours as possible to bring life and depth to the music. In the table following, the specific instrumentation used is listed below.

<i>Instrumentation:</i>
<i>Strings: 10, 8, 6, 6, 3</i>
<i>Woodwinds: 2 flutes (2nd fl/picc), 2 oboes (2nd oboe/EH), 2 clarinets (2nd clar/bass cl), 1 bassoon</i>
<i>Brass: 3 horns, 2 Bb trumpets, 2 trombones, 1 bass trombone, 1 tuba</i>
<i>Percussion: 1 perc, 1 timpani (4 timpani, gran cassa, sus cym, glockenspiel)</i>

6.2 Contour and Arc

Once I had all my sections defined and the instrumentation set out, which included the main melodic material, I started to join and thread each section together, so that it

worked seamlessly. My foremost thoughts were on the contour and arc of the piece. I wanted to have these rolling opening chords and then build and release...build a little further and then release; until I built up to the end and faded away.

7. The Recording Session

7.1 Preparation and Conducting the Recording Session

Once the piece was written and orchestrated, herein begins a different process. I needed to edit the score and put all the dynamic and articulation markings in. These are indications that help the players to know how loud or soft they need to play as well as how or in what way they need to play i.e. gently, forcefully etc.

After these markings are inserted, it's time to move over to the parts. The parts are the musical pieces of paper that are given to each instrumentalist. Hence every instrumentalist will be given a part that is designed specifically for them and so will tell them what to play. When preparing the parts, it involves pretending that you are that player, and reading through the part – either by singing the music written there or sometimes I personally play it on the piano or on my violin. When it comes to the string parts, I would often play “air” violin in order to try decipher the best bowings which helps the phrasing and emotion of the piece.

This phase is quite technical, but very important as you want to provide the players with all the necessary indications for them to understand how they should play. After all

these markings have been completed and the “language” has been conveyed, so to speak – it is a matter of checking and double checking that all the information is there and that it is consistent throughout all the parts and music. In other words, every person should have the same main messages, along with their personal messages for their instrument.

After this process, the parts and score need to be printed and taped, which is quite tedious, as you can imagine. There are about fifty players and each player requires at least two pieces of paper, which then need to be printed and taped together. Thus, I printed all the parts as well as the scores. I needed about 5 scores to be taped as well, because the recording engineer, producers and conductor (in this case myself) need a personal score each with slight variations which make it easier to do their job efficiently.

Prior to the session, I began practicing my conducting as I would be the conductor for this piece. It is an interesting change, as you have to put aside the thoughts about the composition and just focus on the performance and accuracy of the piece. You practice being as precise as possible, so in order to help the players play in time, together and with the necessary emotion. I also had to keep in mind certain phrases that I needed to listen out for, as I wanted them to play those in a specific way. Inevitably, I made quite a lot of mental notes prior to the session. These are some of the roles of the conductor. The time spent preparing the piece helps facilitate an easier recording session and also helps the performers feel comfortable and settled. The conductor sets the atmosphere in every section and helps shape the piece. Hopefully, that was the idea in this case (see fig. 4).

On the day of the session, all the parts were placed on each respective musicians’ stand and I was ready to begin. It was exhilarating to be standing on the podium. After a

short introduction, I firstly discussed how I would like to end the piece, as I wanted the players to follow me and play according to my timing and intention. Then we began. The first take was invigorating, as we all experienced the music together for the first time. There's truly no other experience like this. When you stand in front of so many musicians who put their heart and soul into something that you've been working on and poured your heart into. It's as if they are invested in something treasured and so close to the essence and rhythm of your soul.

7.2 Working in the Studio

The session progressed and we completed four takes in the allotted time. During this time, we stopped between takes and the producers commented on different bars and notes, rapidly trying to procure a better next take. Minor details were worked out and questions asked from the musicians - if they needed clarification of any kind. Types of comments included – asking the bass drum to play a little more softly in a particular bar, or asking the bassoonist to put a piece of paper in the top of their instrument, so that they could play a lower note. In addition to the above, I also worked with the recording engineer, who was responsible for ensuring all the instruments were balanced and that the players had an indication of when and where the recording would begin. The last person on the team is the Protools operator who is in control of pressing record and ensuring all the music is labelled and recorded flawlessly into the Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) – Protools.

All in all, the collaboration between musician, conductor, producers and recording

engineers was smooth and very comfortable. It was rather exciting, as all of us pulled together to rapidly create the best product we could. Time is really limited in these sessions and so it is vital that communication is efficient.

With regards, the entire experience in the studio . . .

I could not have asked for better! What a phenomenal experience, that I can't wait to repeat many times over again!



Figure 4. Picture from the recording session.

8. Final Music Production

8.1 The Mixing Process

Once the music has been recorded, it now needs to go into the mixing stage. At this stage of the process, it is most efficient to work solely in Protools. You firstly need to organise everything, as there are about 60 microphones that are used in the session. Once you have categorised each microphone and listened to it, you need to balance how loud you want each particular microphone to be. Thereafter, you need to start editing the takes together. For this session, I had four complete takes, so I needed to find which takes had the finest performance (most well played) sections and thereafter I would join them together, so that they sounded like they were recorded all in one pass or in one go. Additionally, where there are any noises, I will use a program to clean those sounds so that only the music is heard in the end. This program is called Izotope RX.

At this point, I would add in my percussion samples. I will discuss this section shortly hereafter.

Now comes the exciting part – the mixing stage. In this stage, we begin to turn the raw material into music that is polished in order to make it sound more similar to what one would expect to hear as the final product. This is a very important stage, as you can have the most outstanding performance, but without the mixing, it won't sound professional and would be rather substandard. So, we add plugins which create space in the music and which helps to accentuate frequencies and the volume of different instruments. Thereafter we

blend everything together. Most of the process should be done in an acoustically treated room and with good speakers. This makes it possible to hear all the frequencies – from the lowest to the highest and makes it easier to hear a true reflection of how it sounds.

In this case, with *Allurement*, I basically opened the session from the recording and ‘cleaned’ the session, in i.e. I got rid of all the tracks and elements that were unnecessary at this stage. The reason for doing this is so that we can have access to more CPU which becomes available when the session is lighter (less tracks). As this session was orchestral, there are about 60 mics used in the session. We need to listen to them and decide which are the most fitting, as engineers use different mics because ultimately, they sound differently compared to each other. When you compare one mic to another, it has different capabilities and strengths as well as it captures different flavours, so to say. Some mics make instruments sound darker and others make instruments sound brighter. Depending on what we want to record, we use a variety of mics. At this stage, we decide which mics to use. The engineer from this session also kindly provided a Protools session with his volume and pan knobs, so that we could quickly hear the mix, similarly to what he was doing in the studio. This is a good starting point, thereafter we add reverb and the other plugins as mentioned before. Once we are happy with the overall sound of the mix, we then export the audio file and proceed to the Mastering Stage.

8.2 Adding Percussion Samples

Percussion is often the driving force in music, and it requires a lot of takes to record it. Thus, most music we hear today is often enhanced with percussion. I recorded bass drum, sustain cymbal and timpani; but have added slightly more percussive elements in

layers. However, as my piece is not in the action genre, my percussion is subtle and supportive. The sample libraries I used was mainly East West. They then are mixed in with more reverb and with the same type of reverbs used in the other tracks, to unify the sound of the entire project.

8.3 The Mastering Stage

Sometimes, the mastering stage is extremely important depending on the style of music. However, in this case, it's not that important. This process is still generally interesting as you basically take the final mix and alongside it place other pre-existing music, in which you use that to comparatively master against. In that way, you can hear how loud the other tracks are and how they sound throughout the frequency spectrum. Then you try to make your track have the same power in those frequency ranges and reduce other frequencies elsewhere. Ultimately, you are referencing your mix alongside other pre-existing music. Thus, when you are finished, you should be satisfied with the quality and overall loudness of the track. This ensures that the track will have a good level, no matter the device that it is played on. This process then needs to be checked on as many different listening devices as we are able to use.

9. Editing the Picture to Music

I was always hardwired to have an artistic constitution and thus I have always combined many art forms and spent my life thus far perfected many of them; starting with Ballet and Dance, broadening to Music and later I got into videography and photography namely for surfing and realistic but artsy visuals. However, it wasn't until this year, that I began editing films together and without realising, I ended up receiving

the videos from the person I'm collaborating with, and began putting them together. Without knowing it, I had already grafted together the videos to align with my music concept. Then I wrote the music and began editing the picture to the music. Ensuring the fades working with the music. As the picture was an outgrowth of the music, the tricky part was ensuring that every note I wrote had a voice in the media and that the media was being affected by the music. Once, I got past that hurdle, I showed a number of people, to get their opinion and within a few different revisions, the editing of the video was finalised. I also then put the time-lapses into another program and had a friend clean up any final edits. Now, I just needed the final dub of the music to sync to the video and we had completed this process relatively uneventfully.

10. Video Recording and Production

For this segment, a videographer filmed the recording session with three cameras. I also had a small camera shot from the balcony above the orchestra. After the session, once I've received all the footage, I used the final music track that I've mastered, and placed it in a video editing software. Then I cut each cameras' footage four times (this is the number of takes) and thereafter I aligned each take with the music. Once everything is aligned, I watched all the footage and decided which camera angles I liked best in each section. For example, if the French horns are playing in a section and the camera has captured a close up of that, then I would cut to them playing - perhaps then move to the strings and then switch to the conductor and so on. After all those decisions have been made, I then make the cuts smooth and work together seamlessly. The video is then ready to be exported and posted online. The video serves to add interest for the listener as well as shows the characteristics and expressions of the players, so one can

get more involved.

11. Results and Reflections

Strikingly, when looking at the final result, one cannot possibly imagine the amount of work that goes into a piece of music as well as the coalesce of music to picture – or in this case: picture to music. The final result is a high-quality audio file that is dubbed to exquisite time-lapse landscapes.

In terms of the things I learnt, I don't believe anyone can place their finger on exactly what each experience teaches us; but it is indisputable that each experience renders an opportunity to learn from the good and the bad. Overall, this project felt so polished each step of the way that I wouldn't have changed a thing about the process. If anything, the most prominent feeling after the recording session, was that I just wanted to go back into the studio and record another piece of music. It's significant to spend hours composing a piece of music and then to have the privilege of 51 musicians putting their sentiment into each note and breathing life into something that came directly from your heart. In earnest, there's very few experiences that can compare.

I would like to take a moment to reflect here, as it is always a special moment when you complete a project and you look back at how you composed the piece. In this piece, especially, I felt really chuffed about the orchestration and attention to detail in using the “heartbeat of *Allurement*” throughout the transitions. My colour palette in *Allurement* is definitely one of the largest palettes I've used within a single piece. However, this experience did surpass my expectations and I am thrilled with the results and reflections of where I am at in my compositional walk.

12. History and Impact on Self

The most extraordinary thing about this particular piece, is having the opportunity to completely partake in every aspect of the process. Though this is uncommon, as usually many people cover all the necessary aspects/occupations. However, this piece impacted me, as it was an amazing experience of discovering every facet of the musical cycle. From the first idea to the finished product.

But, despite this process being exceptional, my *Allurement* didn't begin here, but many years prior.

I grew up with music around my home, and so my mother has countless VHS tapes of me dancing and singing every single word to each song that played. We had a piano at home and though I tinkered on it, taking piano lessons never crossed my mind. However, one day at school, there was a teacher giving a violin demonstration. I was captivated and after the assembly, I sneaked out of line and watched the teacher pack away her violin ever so carefully. Its' gloss and mystery were so alluring. I then and there decided I wanted to take lessons with this teacher. I told my mom about it and she asked why I didn't want to try piano instead; but I was adamant. Thinking back, I would never have imagined that such a small performance at a school assembly could affect someone's life so intensely; but here I am. Forever changed by that encounter. I picked up the violin and never looked back.

The violin world by nature surrounded me by the likes of the great composers – J.S. Bach, Johannes Brahms, Ralph-Vaughn Williams etc. The violin repertoire is extensive and I threw myself into it, always yearning for more. In those times, I wondered why these notes were written there and how and why they were supposed to be played in a certain

way. It fascinated me. Though violin is an extremely challenging instrument, it threw me into the throngs of understanding musical history and repertoire extremely well.

Whilst studying violin, I was still discovering other artists. I listened to folk, blues, soul, jazz, gospel, pop...you name it! I found myself falling in love with the meaning of the lyrics and the intention of the music. It became really easy to grasp the concept of what the music was trying to convey through contemporary music as opposed to my violin repertoire. So, I investigated. I started playing more piano and listening to many different artists. A few artists' songs that have deeply affected me for various reasons are the likes of Eric Clapton – Wonderful tonight, Celine Dion – All coming back to me, John Mayer – Gravity and Ben Howard – Depth Over Distance. Of course, there are many more; but I pulled these few songs out, as they are songs that I used to sing, play on the piano or violin as well as really sit and dwell on the lyrics. As you can see, they are extremely different and from this aspect I truly started to grow.

When I was sixteen, I decided there had to be more to music, other than performing and teaching. My dad told me to have a look at Berklee College of Music, as many of the musicians that my dad had albums of, went to school there. So, I did a bit of research and a few hours later, I came back and asked my parents if I could sign up for a songwriting course with Berklee Online. From that first week, I fell in love with songwriting and composition. Despite, being very academically involved at school as well as participating in almost all sports as well as dancing ballet; I thrived during that course. I was writing down and singing lyrics in every spare minute I had. I finally discovered my passion, that was underlying everything up until this point.

From that point, I went onto my higher education, and have really felt lately, as I finish my Master's program, that I've come a full circle. *Allurement* provided me with the opportunity to fully explore the line-up of recording orchestral music for media in today's industry. This process tied up all the allurements I felt about music when I first started and it is an awe-inspiring feeling to actually grasp it to the extent that I can now and be able to even dig in deeper. Music has so many facets to it and thus it has so incredibly impacted me and will continue to... I'm sure.

13. Contribution to the Profession

Under this section, I would love to say that I am going to go out there and change the world. Of course, I truly am passionate about sharing music and want to bring about large-scale change; but I feel like I shouldn't undermine small beginnings and always remember how a simple violin piece, in a sardine-packed school hall, brought me into the world of music.

It all starts with education. We cannot know something, until we discover that which we don't know. Most people, don't understand how music comes about; yet all people are exposed to some form of music. The first step to contributing to the profession is to make the general public aware. In other professions, for example the medical profession – the doctors do not need to make the patient understand all the intricacies of the medical examination, but they should convey the general idea. In the same way, we should break down this barrier of music being only for the “talented” and thus making it widely unattainable. If we can bring music closer to people, it has the power to transform hearts

and minds.

Currently, most people watch a movie and don't remember a thing about the music, but hum the tune afterwards without realising. Incredible, isn't it? That the one thing they can't explain, is the very thing that stays with them the longest. But what if we gave them knowledge, even if limited, to understand and identify music. Then we are moving into a generation where music can be used to help us daily – by working through emotions, expressing our feelings, building relationships, transforming entertainment and relaxation times. All the above, are vital experiences that affect who we are as human beings. If we start to realise and value the impact of music, we can change so much, so quickly.

I'll say it again. Everything starts with education, as we always have something new to learn. The contribution I am making through composing *Allurement*, is not only my unique perspective and addition to the abundance of musical repertoire, but it is the addition, the essence of this paper which coincides with the piece. This project is aimed to explain the process in which others may benefit and learn from. We all love a good story and I aimed to write a piece that inspires and is inclusive by every means possible.

I firmly believe that education should mainly focus on the individual i.e. their learning styles, personality, daily routines and identify how music works and can impact these areas. Plus, as I have a passion for teaching, I really try reinvent the methodology of teaching. I focus and try understand how that individual learns and perceives information; as each person learns in a different way. In this way, we make music tangible. Additionally, as music is multi-faceted, I believe that we should also use music to enhance other areas of our lives e.g. children who learn music develop their brain and connectivity between

regions of their brain. I really would love to impact the profession, by transforming how we teach music. So that music lessons no longer involve, a student who didn't practice, a teacher who is irritable and an environment that breeds competition and never feeling good enough. Music should be a safe-haven.

Additionally, I am currently growing my online students, as I believe online education is extremely powerful. Yes, it is true that there is something special when you meet face to face; and yes, that is somewhat lost when having an online classroom, but on the plus side – students who learn with me in person versus online progress more rapidly online than they do when they meet me in person. After many years, I have identified why. It is because when the student is with you, the teacher tends to 'interfere' a lot during the lesson. They fix arm positions by manipulating the student's hands or they play a passage with the student and so the student feels like they understand the concept. But after leaving the lesson, they return to practicing it and cannot quite get that same concept again. So, they show up to the next lesson and the cycle repeats. This means that they need to do this many times, before they can comprehend what is going on. However, with online lessons it continually forces the teacher to explain things, and yes that takes more time initially; but once the student comprehends the concept they are able to 'produce' that concept over and over. The latter is more time efficient and relies on the student and not on the quantity of times the student repeated the process with the teacher.

So ultimately, education about music helps people understand more about how music works, what are the different elements and even trickles down into how people compose for media and how are budgets calculated. All these aspects are relatively simple to explain and I encourage more people to be involved with the process. In Africa for

example – the idea of working in the music industry solely means that you know how to play an instrument or that you teach. However, that’s just the beginning. Just in the composition field, you have so many different avenues - songwriting, arranging, orchestration, score preparation, Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) programming etc.

Over and above this, I personally want to impact my audience through my unique compositional style. I have worked hard at trying to really listen and question what I am writing, so as not to just do something for the sake of it. I really felt rewarded at the end when thanking and talking to the musicians and people at Air Studios after my recording session. Many people congratulated me, but the common word of praise seemed to be how unique my piece was. The most poignant being one principal violin player turning around to me after I thanked him and replying: “Thank you for bringing something new to us.” Wow, I was speechless that these players felt that I had brought them different music and that they enjoyed it! This moment was so rewarding and made me thrilled that we all have so much yet to discover!

Other contributions that I’d like to make to the profession, is by studying well and always learning so that we can use the idiosyncrasies of instruments as well as unusual combinations to light. In *Allurement* for example, I asked the bassoon player if he could use a lower extension. He was thrilled to hear that, and said he didn’t have one, but that he would use a toilet role and get the sound I wanted. In this way, I tried to push the boundaries and never get comfortable so that I can grow from strength to strength in my understanding of all the instruments peculiarities and innuendos and thus I can start doing more with the various instruments. Inevitably, I also really want to try use different

instruments and create new “orchestral settings” – so that the instruments are accommodated differently.

I anticipate composing music for media and always pushing myself to learn more and experiment with sound by focusing on every note and what is the purpose of what I am writing. Through this I hope to touch people, in the same way that I am impacted by the music. As after all, I am just the instrument of Music - allured by its tune.

Previously, I discussed what my intent and motivation was in pursuing the aforementioned next steps. Here below, I would like to dedicate this section as a summary.

13.1 Artist Development

The main perspective that I endeavour to always keep intact is my wilfulness to pursue new avenues. This means that I don't want to live out of a comfort zone, as I want to forever be learning daily. It is so easy to slip into a daily routine and not to set aside and dedicate any part of our day towards learning. This desire to learn and develop more and more, is probably one of the reasons why I love composing so much. Each piece seems to take us on a journey and I often have to question where I am at in life and what emotions I am feeling, so as to garner what I can from that and really be present whilst writing.

The ways I would like to develop myself compositionally is to challenge my ideas of fundamental principles like harmony, orchestration, genres, instrumental idiosyncrasies etc. so as not to reinvent the wheel, but rather to be true to what I would write with what I have and to stay true to how the music impacts me. I would also like to branch out into

learning more about mixing, mastering and programming so as to expand the way I perceive and listen to music. I also firmly believe that the more we comprehend and appreciate different facets involved in making our art form, the more we can collaborate with others. Collaboration is a treasure in this industry and when it is given the space and trust to work well, there is no stopping it.

13.2 Artist Promotion

The means by which I hope to promote myself, is by contacting people in the industry and really trying to develop relationships. In order to do this, I would like to refurbish my website; as I first created my website a few years ago and have over that time implemented all the material as well as carved out the direction that I wanted to take with my website, but now I would like to hand it over to a designer to make it more visually appealing. In this way, I hope to grow my online presence. Furthermore, *Allurement* will be highlighted on my website as a key piece and hopefully will open many doors for me.

13.3 Artist in Education

The last step that I'd also like to grow is my teaching base. As I thrive on helping others, I would really love to share what I know with others, develop new courses/material and techniques, and discover different teaching methods to more effectively help each individual achieve to the best of their ability. So far, I have been teaching whilst being involved in my artistry and I would like to continue it this way. Despite being passionate about teaching, I would like my main focus to be on composition, but I firmly believe that a working artist is a great teacher to have as they are still in touch with the industry and are continually faced with new demands, so they can understand and work more intimately

with their students.

I would like to grow my online student base, perhaps teach more South African students, as well as teach more advanced topics online to undergraduate or higher level education students. Additionally, I have been working the last few years, to design string courses that include a new method to help students learn scales more progressively. I would also like to help melodic instrumentalists to learn about having a more holistic view and concept of music.

The final step in which I am very passionate about with regards education, is the dissemination of different careers available in the industry today. This is important, when I was growing up and studying music privately and at school – the only job opportunities my teachers told me about was the ability to either perform or teach music. They said there were no other career opportunities available, unless you got into a band and became an overnight success. Thankfully, this is not true and there are so many avenues of music careers that people are working in from the business side to the technical and to the artistic and creative side. I hope to share more about these different options to create awareness so that we can all engage with music and better understand the processes that walk alongside it.

14. Conclusion

After listening to *Allurement* with great hope and expectation, my anticipation is that you would feel *Allured* to the piece and to the entire process. I hope that this discussion has slightly demystified the composition process, working in the studios and recording with musicians as well as the final production of a piece of music. Music speaks on a level we cannot understand, but we know and feel it; even if unconsciously.

The sense of *Allurement*.

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Below I have provided a number of references to inspirational music and information that has influenced me throughout my musical career, and though I mention them subtly previously, they are additionally listed here.

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