

Berklee College of Music

**Nostalgia:
From Visual Inspiration to Final Composition**

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

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July 2018

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Abstract

This thesis described the methods of finding a video, the composing process, recording preparation, post-production and suggestions for future recordings of the recording session at London AIR Studios. I used a time-lapse video called “ERRONKARI - Pyrenean Paradise” from Vimeo and did a rescore. The original music was composed by Vanessa Garde. In the thesis, I explained how I tried to find a video and why I choose this video, and what are some inspirations of my composition. I came up with a flute melody as theme one and the piece was developed based on two main themes. Then I prepared Pro Tools session, score and parts and conducting for the recording session. After the recording, I mixed the recording with the help of experiences gained from a previous mixing project for the Pac-Man anniversary animated short. After the recording, I realized what can be improved in my composition to make the orchestra sounds better, and I proposed some suggestions for future recordings. I hope this thesis will help future students to get a clear idea of the process of final recording and be well prepared for it.

Keywords: film scoring, compositional process, studio recording, session preparation, mixing

Acknowledgements

I am so grateful to our Scoring for Film, Television and Video Games program director, Lucio Godoy, for accepting me to Berklee College of Music. Without him I won't have the opportunity to be here and have an amazing journey at Berklee, and I won't be standing on the podium of AIR Studios this June. Thank all the amazing musicians and engineers who participated in my recording throughout this year. Thank Vanessa Garde, Alfons Conde, Pablo Schuller, Sergio Lacima, Eduardo Tarilonte and Vicente Gimeno for teaching and helping me. Specially, thank everyone who helped me solving my visa problem.

Special thanks to Vanessa and Sergio for producing my London recording session. Thank Alfons for the talks that enlightens me to be a braver composer, and thank him for helping me with my composition and orchestration even when he is not feeling well. Thank Pablo for devoting his time on preparing for every recording session we had this year and helping us a lot with our mix. Thank Lucio for always being kind to me and encouraging me when I am down.

It was so lucky for me to meet all my fellow musicians and colleagues here this year. Thank you for sharing all the wonderful memories with me for the whole year. It has been one of the best years in my life. I do wish we could meet each other again, and I wish the best for every one of you a wonderful future.

Most importantly I want to thank my parents for giving me financial and spiritual support, and for trusting me on studying music. Without them I won't be able to go anywhere and I won't have the chance to study music at all. They gave me everything and they made my dream come true.

1. Preparation before Composition

1.1. Video or Script

Preparing for AIR Studios recording has been a long process for me. After all these I think one thing we could have decided earlier is either to use a video or script. Both of them have pros and cons. If you choose to score for a video, you have to plan ahead either to find an original video which the director allows you to write music for or to rescore, or use an already exist video clip for inspiration and do a rescore, but you won't have the right to post it on your website or demo reel later. Composing music for a video should be the best choice because it is what our major is aiming for, but for London recording there are a lot of limitations.

First of all, it takes time to find an ideal original video. I have found some ways to look for videos and I will explain more in 1.2.

Secondly, the length of London recording should be no more than 3 minutes, so the length of the video and the amount of music it needs is better to be around 2 to 3 minutes. It is fine to sequence more music with sample libraries if the video is longer than 3 minutes and if it needs more music, but the difference between a live recording with amazing session players in London AIR studio and MIDI sequencing is big. It will be difficult to blend them well in the same video. I would recommend choosing a video that is 2 to 3 minutes long, or it only needs 2-3 minutes of music.

Lastly, the instrumentation choice has always been a problem of the videos I found. It is either the director wants electronic music, or the 51-piece orchestra is too big for their movie. For such a great recording opportunity, I think it is wise to use the full orchestra and write whatever we like. According to my experience, it is difficult to find a short video with a nice arc of story line, and it fits massive orchestral music.

Also, taking into consideration that the director might ask for more revisions. It is better to make them clear of your composition and preparation timeline in May, and make them clear that their video should be as final as possible so you don't have to make big changes of your music after the recording is done.

1.2. Searching for Visual Media Material

I have taken notes of all the methods and platforms I used for finding a video.

The one I used most is Vimeo. On Vimeo, I checked a lot of "Staff Pick" videos and sent the message to directors directly through Vimeo. Some of them might want a rescore of their video, and some of them might have a new video and they are looking for composer. But sending message on Vimeo is not that efficient in my case. A more professional way of contacting them is by visiting their website and sending them project request.

Another method I spent a lot of time trying is contacting video game studios. I searched online several different lists of video game companies, and checked each of their website. I tried to contact them, explaining the recording project I have from Berklee, and asking if they have a short video like a trailer that I can try to write music for or rescore. By using this method, I received no video from any video game studio, but I received several replies saying that they have archived my resume and they might contact me when they have a position open for composers. My suggestion is, try to contact the video game studios from your own country first. Even if you got nothing from them finally, you are networking with them.

Also, it was great to contact film academy. I contacted a friend of mine who is studying at Beijing Film Academy and another friend of mine who is studying Script Writing at Columbia University. I didn't find a video suitable for London recording, but I had a chance to score for a

30-minutes short film. The director is going to apply for film festivals with this short film. He played the film with my first draft of music to his colleagues, and one other director from his class already contacted me for doing music for her next short film. This is a very efficient way and I think the possibility of finding a good video for London is big. It is also a very good networking with aspiring directors in your own country.

There are also some other ways I didn't try that much but they might work for you too. For example, there is IMDB Pro account on Berklee library computers. You may try looking for contacts from there. I also searched on Instagram some tags related to film school and film music production, there I found and followed some young directors too.

2. Composition Process

2.1. Choosing the Video

For me, I prefer composing for a video. But because of so many limitations from the video I got from directors, I decided to start with using a time-lapse video I really loved for inspiration, and then develop my music more in the last section without syncing to the video that much.

I started with the video from Vimeo called *Everest – A Time Lapse Film – II*¹. My first two versions were trying different sync points, tempos and markers. But because this video has too many shot cuts and they happen too fast and steady, I found it difficult to do a rescore and to make it different from the original soundtrack.

Then I tried to write something without a video. I was thinking of writing a script. My original plan was to write something like a letter to my mother, but I found it hard to decide sync

¹ "Everest – A Time Lapse Film – II," created and posted by Elia Saikaly, March 24, 2018, Vimeo video, 2:35, <https://vimeo.com/261660348>.

points. In my version 3, I used some ideas from the first 2 versions and developed them a little, but I still feel like having a video will inspire me more and I will be much faster on the composition process.

The idea of using a time-lapse video came from Vanessa's class. She showed us the music she composed for a time-lapse video *ERRONKARI – Pyrenean Paradise*². Both the video and music were amazing and I found there are so many possibilities in music for a time-lapse video. In most of the time-lapse videos, they have a similar problem: lack of shape. After searching for tons of time-lapse videos online, I finally decided to use this video. I started at around 00:33 of the video and ended at 03:33, because it is 3 minutes long, and there is a perfect arc and form in this section, it helps me to decide the ups and downs in my music. Also, the transitions and shot cuts in this video are more random and smooth, each scene lasts longer so it allows the music to breath and grow while I can still achieve to sync most of the shot changes. It doesn't get mechanical, repetitive or boring. I can picture the scenes with emotional music and scenes with music providing motion. I decided to use this time-lapse video and finally started on 17th of May. After the first "spotting session", I am almost done with the arrangement of the piece and I have a clear idea of the shape of this piece. Finally, after all the changes and revisions, the last version ends up at version 7.2.2.

2.2. Inspiration

I always try not to search for scores before I write something, because I am always afraid of writing similar themes or motifs without recognizing that I was inspired by some others' work I

² "ERRONKARI – Pyrenean Paradise," created and posted by Iñaki Tejerina, June 11, 2017, Vimeo video, 4:47, <https://vimeo.com/221153118>.

listened to. I prefer to listen to random soundtracks from my favorite movies and composers, and once I found something special and interesting, I will check the score to see how did the composer do that. Then I will take short simple notes of it on a notebook. For example, I really like *A Window to the Past*³, and I love the solo recorder in the beginning. So, I was taking notes of “using solo woodwind instrument for theme”. I like the pace of changes on harmony, mood, tempo and style in *The Downed Dragon*⁴, so I wrote down notes like “dark to bright, fast and unexpected changes”. These are just two recent examples. I had a lot of small details I loved from film music, video game soundtrack and classical music, and I have a few pages of notes from listening to them. When I have to compose, the notes I have taken can be a reminder for me to try and apply those techniques or color I liked in my own piece. The beginning of my London piece *Nostalgia* is a flute solo, and that was inspired by *A Window to the Past*. Inspired by *The Downed Dragon*, I was also trying to have big different sections in my London piece. It would be interesting to hear how the orchestra would present different styles in a short 3-minute cue. Finally, because of the structure and style of the video I choose, I smoothed the transition between distinct sections and made my cue less sectional. But you may still notice the trace.

Among all my favorite composers, Joe Hisaishi influenced me the most. I love the *Departures*⁵ so much and I was so determined to include a beautiful cello solo in my London recording. I did have a cello solo in my first few versions, but in my final version I changed it to viola section for the safety of recording, because I was not sure if it is possible to have an extra

³ John Williams, “A Window to the Past,” track 7 on *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban/Original Motion Picture Soundtrack*, 2004, Spotify.

⁴ John Powell, “The Downed Dragon,” track 3 on *How to Train Your Dragon (Music from the Motion Picture)*, 2010, Spotify.

⁵ “Departures – Joe Hisaishi,” performed by London Symphony Orchestra and Joe Hisaishi, posted by Zaibi Med, April 22, 2012, YouTube video, 8:30, <https://youtu.be/48eiXcYzvY4>.

microphone for solo strings in AIR Studios. If not, then one cello against the entire orchestra is demanding. Actually, they do have two spare microphones for solo instruments. One was for violin, and one was set between woodwinds and horns section. I think it was a regret that because we didn't know about it, none of us actually used any of those spare microphones. It is securer to check with professors or engineers before the recording if you want to record a solo instrument and I am sure the engineers in the AIR Studios will take care of it.

2.3. Theme and Variations

I started *Nostalgia* with the theme played by flute. I was loading and testing the flute MIDI track, and playing around on the keyboard. I remember I was in lab B05, looking through the window to the clear aquamarine water pools under Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia, and all of a sudden I came up with this melody. I liked it so much so I wrote it down and since then I haven't changed any note in it. But for a long while I was doubting if I heard this melody somewhere else before or I came up with it on my own. I also asked some of my colleagues to take a listen to see if they recognize the melody.

Score Analysis 1. Jing Zhang, *Nostalgia*, theme I, flute part, mm. 1-6.



The first 6 measures of *Nostalgia* were only the theme with a simple harmony: with a D pedal. I kept it growing and expanding orchestrally with the fade in and fade out of different instruments, trying to create an echo effect on the D pedal.

Then, I harmonized the melody. And modulated it to C minor from rehearsal letter B.

Score Analysis 2. Jing Zhang, *Nostalgia*, theme I with harmony

Score Analysis 2 shows two staves of music in 3/4 time. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 97. The first staff has a dynamic marking of *mp* and includes chords Dmin, Amin, and Emin7. The second staff starts with a measure rest and includes chords Gmin and Dmin.

Score Analysis 3. Jing Zhang, *Nostalgia*, theme I modulation, rehearsal B

Score Analysis 3 shows a single staff of music in 3/4 time. It includes chords Cmin, Gmin, and Dmin.

The other theme was actually used more often in the whole piece. It was first introduced by horns and brass unison from measure 29. But it doesn't develop and it was interrupted by the modulation from rehearsal B soon. I used all the horns, trumpets and tenor trombones to get a rich section sound.

Score Analysis 4. Jing Zhang, *Nostalgia*, theme II, horns, trumpets and tenor trombones, mm.29-32.

Score Analysis 4 shows three staves of music for horns, trumpets, and tenor trombones. Each staff is marked "Unis. a 3" and *mp*.

The second time the theme II shows up was from measure 57 to measure 70. It started with woodwinds section unison, and ended with woodwinds, horns and brass harmonized but in tutti. And the third time it was from measure 81 to measure 87, in a new key a whole step lower, with variation.

Score Analysis 5. Jing Zhang, *Nostalgia*, theme II, horns, trumpets and tenor trombones, mm. 81-82.

Unis. a 3
mp
Unis. a 3
mp
Unis. a 2
mp

Score Analysis 6. Jing Zhang, *Nostalgia*, theme II, horns, trumpets and tenor trombones, mm. 83-87.

Hn. 1,2
Hn. 3
B♭ Tpt. 1,2
Unis. a 2
p
ppp
p
ppp

My composition was mainly based on two themes, with variations and counter melodies. This is what I usually do in my composition: having a lot of different lines going on at the same time. It might work in mockup, but not for a live orchestra recording. I found simple doublings work way better than complex orchestration if the orchestration was not nicely done. Like what Alfons taught us in orchestration class, in a live orchestra recording, the “weight” of each section, how many musicians were playing, the dynamics, the range of instruments, they should all be taken into consideration in order to create a well-balanced sound and to make every melody line clear. In *Nostalgia*, I tried to use simpler doublings or doublings plus simple harmonization while the melody is being played. The recording sounds pretty close to what I imagined, but there are still some unbalanced sections because of my inexperience of the weight of sections while doing the orchestration.

3. Preparation for the Recording

3.1. Pro Tools Session: Making the Recording Session Efficient

As we all know, every second is expensive in a live recording session. Especially a recording session with 51-piece orchestra in AIR studios. Since we had only 18 minutes to record our 3-minute piece, it is extremely important to make sure our Pro Tools session is clear for the engineer and ready to go. Most of us got 4 perfect full takes in 18 minutes.

Before London recording, we had a lot of recording experiences at school and remote recording sessions with Budapest Art Orchestra. It won't be a problem for us to prepare the Pro Tools session at the end of this year. I want to mention again here as many details as I can think of to avoid any problem in Pro Tools session. You may use it as a checklist for proofreading your session.

All your audio files (stems, click, mockup, mix-minus track) should begin at exactly the same time. In case the version of your Pro Tools session file doesn't work in their studio, the engineer can always create a new session and drag all the audio files to the session very fast. Also, it is always better to have all your audio files at the same length. If you have one or two shorter audio file, the engineer might think it was a mistake in printing the file or if it is incomplete.

Import the tempo map from the Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) you used, and check the name of markers you have with the rehearsal letters you have on your score. Because sometimes the markers you import from DAW might be your naming of sync points. Mark the music in (MX IN) in your session and numbers of pre-clicks in your session and on score. Print your click at around -14dB with classic MPC click sound, without accent click. Always double check your click: play your printed audio click together with the click track created in Pro Tools that is

matching the tempo map, and check it together with your other stems, see if it works. If there is a big tempo change in your cue, for example from rehearsal letter A, create playlist for the click print, mark it as “click_A”, print it from rehearsal A until the end of your cue. Then copy the first two bars and move them before A as the pre-clicks of that new tempo. Always include in the comment how many different click prints you have in your click playlist. One thing we learned from the AIR Studios session was that they would also prepare an audio click in their recording template. They put a click (audio clip) on every beat of an audio track, and on that audio track they choose “ticks” instead of “samples”. So, when they import their template to our Pro Tools session, they can have an extra click track that matches our tempo map for safety. All the audio clips will follow the tempo map and sit on every beat, because it is measured by ticks.

Other than the most important elements of the Pro Tools session (tempo map, audio files and click), remember to check: if the comments are clear for each track; if all the inputs are off and automation read are off; if unused files are deleted; if all the audio files in the session are also in the audio files folder and if they are named correctly; if there is a big counter on the top right corner and so on.

3.2. Score and Parts: Making Sight-Reading Easier

Preparing the score and parts for the London recording was not that different from preparing for other recordings. The only difference was finally we had a chance to print our score and parts on a special type of paper, which is very nice for musicians to read. But it was not mandatory. Because of the hardness of that special paper, if you have three pages on one of your part, it can still fit on the music stand in AIR Studios. But it is always securer to fit your music in two pages or leave enough time for page turn. It is always better to include on the top left corner of score

and parts how many pre-clicks are there in your session. Even if you tell that during the recording, musicians might still ask to make sure if they don't see it on their parts. All the details are just for an efficient use of time in the short recording session. According to the musicians' feedback after session, they prefer to have bar numbers on the first bar of every system instead of on every bar. Bar number on every bar is too much information, and sometimes it is clashing with dynamics or notes with ledger lines. Other important things to check are transposition and time signatures. Be very careful if you have instrument switch in one part. For example, when you have piccolo switching to flute, check if the notation is in the right octave. If you have oboe switching to English horn, check if the oboe part is in concert and English horn part is transposed. I found this mistake twice in parts when proofreading others' parts. Another typical mistake is because of that some of us are using templates, and some templates don't have time signature settings on the parts. Because of my visa problem, I didn't have enough time around school with my fellows, so I had to proofread all my score and parts by myself. But I would suggest that, always have your score and parts proofread by as many people as you can find. A clear and well notated part is so important if you want your recording session to be efficient. Always go through every part, imagining you are the musician, to see if the part is playable and if you can sight read that part. Be strict to details like slurs for strings part (changing of bow direction), slurs for woodwinds, horns and brass instruments (breath), sharps, flats, enharmonic spellings and beaming of notes. A good notation psychologically makes difficult lines much easier to play.

3.3. Conducting: Experience from Budapest Recording

I am always too shy to stand and speak in front of the public. But I found I enjoy standing on the podium and talking to the orchestra while having a recording session. I think this special confidence comes from all the recording sessions throughout this year at Berklee, and also, no one knows my music better than myself. Because we never had experience conducting in front of more than 10 musicians during the year, I would recommend going to Budapest for the final recording of the second semester instead of doing a remote session from Berklee, if time and money permit. It was a wonderful experience for me. I was nervous during the first take I had in Budapest, and then I was relaxed and I really enjoyed the rest of my recording time. In London, I was nervous only for a few seconds in the beginning, and then I enjoyed it so much and felt it went by so fast.

Conducting recording sessions is different from conducting a live concert. Musicians have the click in their headphones, and they have to sight read the parts, they can read the meter changes on their parts, so they won't be looking at the conductor that often, especially during the first takes. It is unnecessary to conduct the beat too much. It is actually distracting if the conducting is a little behind or ahead of the click. But I found it helps to give the orchestra certain important cues during the first takes. Of course, they can count the multi-measure rests, but a clear cue from the conductor in their peripheral sight will help them to start playing without hesitation.

Except for giving cues, the most important job for recording session conductor is to convey the emotion and shape of the piece to musicians. Especially when the composers are conducting their own pieces, it is their responsibility to guide the orchestra to a better understanding of the composition. The conducting should show the phrase and breath of the music, instead of the mechanical beat counting.

4. Post Production: Mixing and Experience from Pac-Man Project

Before going to London, we had a collaboration with Primer Frame animation school on scoring for an anniversary animated short *Lifetime*⁶ for Pac-Man, the classic video game from Bandai Namco Entertainment. The soundtracks were recorded in Budapest with Budapest Art Orchestra on two different dates. We had to mix nine different cues we recorded and one song at the end. We had to make the transitions smooth and to make all the cues sounding like they were recorded from the same recording session. We had six different composers. We had the same lineup for recording but we are still different on the way we orchestrate and the instruments we used. We were also using different sample libraries as stems, so it becomes difficult for us to mix with the orchestra. We did draft mixes ourselves and Pablo helped us to improve and master. It was a very precious experience mixing with Pablo. Just by watching him working on our mix, there are so many tricks we can learned from it.

Keep the mix simple. The recording room in Budapest has some strong frequencies standing out at around 350Hz and 600Hz. It needs a lot of help with equalizer (EQ). But if the room already sounds flat, especially for the AIR Studios, there is no much to do on EQ except for cleaning the low end. Sometimes for film score, using iZotope RX6 to clean the noise is necessary. But it is always better to keep it as natural as possible. Both EQ and RX6 might decrease the quality of the recording and create other problems like phasing issues. Decca tree microphones, together with our choices of one or two of the other room microphones such as gallery, ambient and ribbon microphones, are 70% of the final mix. Now I always start mixing with Decca and adjust the balance a bit with spot microphones. Similar techniques apply to

⁶ "PAC-MAN X PrimerFrame presents: Lifetime: A PAC-MAN Story," created by Primer Frame, posted by BANDAI NAMCO Entertainment Europe, May 22, 2018, YouTube Video, 10:24, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHlkofs97jk>.

almost all different sessions, unless a different style of the mix is desired. For example, *Departures* by Joe Hisaishi⁷, was mixed with more spot microphones than room microphones, and it was recorded in a room smaller than AIR Studios. It is also important to take notes of the orchestra sitting position and microphone placement of the recording session. Only by changing the panning and volume assignment in the Pro Tools session of my London recording, the sound changed dramatically. This year, the engineer from AIR Studios uploaded a Pro Tools session file with all the panning and volume settings for us. We just had to import the session data from that file, and it was already a really good starting point of our final mix.

Before the summer semester, we had an assignment of building a mixing template. It was important and really useful. I started to import the session data from that template to my Pro Tools sessions ever since we made it, and I have been changing and improving the inserts gradually to make that template more and more suitable for film music.

5. Suggestions for Future Recording

First I would say that the length of the cue doesn't matter that much. If you have a full 3-minute cue, you wrote more music but you will get less takes. If you write around 2 minutes, you might get about 5 full takes. Try to focus more on the structure of your cue instead of trying to extend your cue to 3 minutes.

For orchestration, I learned a lot from both the Budapest recording and the London recording. Usually, woodwinds section is easily buried by horns, brass and even strings when those sections are playing together. In *Nostalgia*, I had flute solo in the beginning and before the

⁷ "Departures – Joe Hisaishi," performed by London Symphony Orchestra and Joe Hisaishi, posted by Zaibi Med, April 22, 2012, YouTube video, 8:30, <https://youtu.be/48eiXcYzvY4>.

last section. It works very well. But I also have some melody lines played in octaves by woodwinds section, while the entire orchestra and my percussion stems are playing at the same time. The melody line was almost buried. It would be better to double the woodwinds melody line with one more section. For example: it stands out well when the melody is doubled by violin section; it makes the brass or horn sounds airier when the melody is doubled by them in octaves; doubling bassoon and cello around and above middle C sounds very nice; doubling oboe and horn cuts through the orchestra very well and it creates a unique sound, and so on.

Brass and horns can overwhelm the rest sections of orchestra in a lineup we had for London recording. Be careful when assigning the dynamics to brass and horns. In *Nostalgia*, I always give brass and horns dynamics that are lower than the rest of orchestra. Unless when they are taking the melody, they got the same dynamics as the most sections of orchestra.

Cello section sounds rich and idiomatic while it is or it is almost the only section playing below middle C. But it doesn't sound that distinct if it is playing below middle C against the brass and horns. Cello section sounds distinct and "shining" while it is playing above middle C. It cuts through the orchestra better when it doesn't have to fight against the brass and horns.

According to my experience, first violins section always stands out or even aggressive. Sometimes it is better to give it slightly softer dynamic than the rest of strings section when it is not playing the leading melody but playing as accompaniment.

A good composition and orchestration is absolutely the key of a good sounding recording from AIR Studios. The room was almost perfect, and the musicians are amazing. If the cue is well orchestrated, the recording would naturally sound amazing without touching anything other than panning and volume in ProTools.

6. Conclusion

My experience preparing for London recording was not smooth, but finally the recording turned out amazing. Since the beginning of this project, we have been working on our own in the whole process of preparing for a recording session and get the final mix. It is lucky that throughout this year, we never had to worry about contacting musicians, booking the studio or preparing the recording setup. But, except for that, we have been playing multiple roles in this project: composer, composer agent, orchestrator, arranger, mockup programmer, librarian, copyist, conductor, producer, video editor, mixing engineer and so on. By doing so, we get to know everyone's job in a real-world film score recording session. By knowing this, we are more experienced and prepared for future collaboration with people specialized in one or some of these fields. This year has been so intense. It was like a rehearsal for what we will be doing in the rest of our lives.

This year at Berklee Valencia has been the busiest year but at the same time one of the best years in my life. Scoring for film, television and video games program has given me opportunities to stand on the podium, conduct and have my composition played by amazing musicians. It was also incredible that we had the chance to stand on the podium in AIR Studios at the beginning of our career. That was absolutely an unforgettable magic moment. But the experience of studying in SFTV program was not only about knowing and getting ready for working as a film composer in the industry. For me, it's also more about meeting all the amazing aspiring composers and musicians from different parts of the world and becoming lifelong friends with them. It's more about learning together with them and also learning from them. They are amazing composers.

It has been a wonderful year and the London recording was the summit of it. This year just went by too fast. We were always occupied and we have been working so hard at music, but we enjoyed doing it and we can't stop doing it. Now it is approaching the end, I am sad but I am also hopeful for that I'm sure everyone of us will have a wonderful future.

Nostalgia, a sentimentality for the past, typically for a period or place with happy personal associations. I think the title of my piece is the best conclusion of my feelings towards this memorable year at Berklee College of Music, Valencia.

Appendix: Inspiration from a Traditional Chinese Farewell Song

The song was adapted from a 19th century work *Dreaming of Home and Mother* by John P. Ordway. When his work was introduced into Japan, musician Kyuukei Inudou translated it into the Japanese version, 旅愁 ("Loneliness on a Journey"). During 1905 and 1910, when Li Shutong (Chinese Artist) was studying abroad in Japan, he heard this song by chance, and was moved by its melody. Accordingly, when Li returned to China, he wrote Songbie in 1915 based on Ordway's original work.⁸

This song is well-known in China, and it is usually played or sung on farewell occasions, typically graduation ceremonies. The mood and lyrics of this song present the exact emotion I was trying to express through my piece.

Farewell (Chinese: 送别 *Sòng Bié*)

Lyrics by Li Shutong Translation by Jing Zhang

长亭外，古道边，芳草碧连天。
晚风拂柳笛声残，夕阳山外山。

Beyond the distant pavilion, along the ancient trail, fragrant green grass stretching to meet the sky afar.

Evening breeze sways weeping willows, the melancholic melody from an old flute lingering still, the sunset shines over mountains and hills.

天之涯，地之角，知交半零落。
一觚浊酒尽余欢，今宵别梦寒。

To the ends of the sky and corners of the earth, Friends have gone their separate ways. If only we had a bottle of thick wine to celebrate the last moment of joy of our rare reunion; Then my dream after our parting wouldn't be so sad tonight.

问君此去几时来，来时莫徘徊。
人生难得是欢聚，唯有别离多。

To ask my friend, "When will we meet again?" Please don't hesitate to drop by when you are here again. Rarely in this life is the joy of reunion. When we are apart, always remember the happiness we had together.

⁸ Wikipedia, "Songbie (song)", accessed May 9, 2018, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Songbie_\(song\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Songbie_(song)).

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