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Onus 1

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Onus 1:

Three Major Compositions

Senior Project Submitted to

The Division of Arts

of Bard College

By

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CALEB BENORE PRESENTS:
Onus 1
a senior project concert

• String Quartet in three movements

• Piano Quintet in three movements

• “Pantheon” in twelve movements:

  In order: Chaos, Chronos, Rhea
  Apollo, Artemis, Dionysus
  Sisyphus, Persephone, Pan
  Hephaestus, Aphrodite, and Zeus
Artist’s Statement

This senior project is a set of three major compositions: a string quartet, a piano quintet, and a piano suite called “Pantheon.” Frankly, the string quartet is the best piece. It’s my most recent effort and I definitely improved while working on the other two compositions. My primary concern for the string quartet, particularly in the first movement, was how my instruments fit together. I might have a melodramatic taste in harmony but I believe I created a few elegant moments in the rhythm and line contours.

The most important lesson came from my piano quintet, which does have some good ideas. However, as my senior project adviser observed, it’s sometimes lacking in unity. I think this is partially because of the burden put on me by the inclusion of a piano in the ensemble. My interest in music began by thumbing through simple piano music without any formal instruction, and all of my very first compositions were for piano. I’m certainly not finished with the instrument but it has become a kind of training wheels that I need a break from. The string quartet format was liberating.

The piano piece is the set’s least serious work. It consists of many movements, one or two minutes each. They’re almost all inspired by a different god from the Greek pantheon, hence the name “Pantheon.” Some are pretty silly, such as my movement for Sisyphus, a mortal sentenced to an eternity of futilely pushing a boulder up a hill. I paint this picture in somewhat cartoonish fashion. Others are blatant tributes, like the movement for Pan, which is based on the
first phrase from Beethoven’s Pastoral Symphony. My lack of discipline allowed me to experiment.