

Spring 2024

Performance of Original Compositions

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Bard College

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PERFORMANCE OF ORIGINAL COMPOSITIONS

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of the Arts of Bard College

by
Mina Watanabe DeVore

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

May 1, 2024

On the evening of April 20, 2024 I held my senior concert for the Electronic Music Department in Blum Hall at Bard College. This show was a culmination of a long journey in songwriting, vocal and violin performance, and was performed alongside by my band, Counseling. I played eight original compositions, one written as far back as the spring of 2021 but the majority written within this last year. A number of the songs were also extended into jams to showcase some violin improvisation and the time I have spent studying in the Jazz Department as well. It was a small and intimate performance for a room full of friends and a great culmination to a formative four years spent studying music at Bard College.

I met my bandmates Elias Smith and Sam Crocker my first week at Bard in the fall of 2020. Within a few months our group solidified into the members that are in it today and it was an honor to get to perform alongside them at my Sproj show. They have inspired me to no end and without them I would never have had the courage to start singing and taking vocal lessons. I had never really sung in any serious capacity until I came to Bard and it was a surprise to myself that my senior show turned out to be a showcase of lyrical music performed by me.

When I first came to Bard I had intended to be a jazz violin performance major. When that proved unlikely to work due to the limitations on ensembles during the pandemic, I turned to the Electronic Music Department and spent a significant amount of time teaching myself to produce music, specifically techno. All the while I continued to play with my band and thanks to them I had a platform to seriously try my hand at singing on stage, performing my original compositions, and incorporating the violin into indie rock music. Over time it became clear that this was where I was finding the most fulfillment musically.

Coming from a strenuous background in classical violin training I never had much of an opportunity to truly express myself musically. I would occasionally play the guitar and write short songs but rarely shared them. I joined my high school jazz band in secret due to my family and violin instructor's disfavor of non-classical genres of music and ended up winning the Louis Armstrong Jazz Award my senior year. I always knew I wanted to do more with music than the classical trajectory but continue to incorporate the violin into everything I did, and Bard College absolutely allowed me to do that.

This concert pushed me out of my comfort zone musically and although I wish I had showcased a bit more of my progress in violin improvisation, the singing component was definitely where I pushed myself the most. I still have a lot to improve on in that area but I am excited about the progress I have made and can see my potential with this.

The Ensemble for the show was Counseling, the band, as well as Kay Flynn-Murray and Tallulah Calderwood on backup vocals and Noa Doucette and Adriana Ondrejka on backup violins. After spending the previous semester working on recording and mixing my songs, I got a better sense of how to orchestrate my music and write out specific parts for my band to play so that everything complimented each other. When I first started playing with Counseling years back, we had a bad habit of all improvising at once and not listening enough to each other. This was also due to our practicing in small basement practice rooms with terrible acoustics but after recording for months in the recording studio this last year it quickly became clear that less is more and that we had to do a lot more listening. This concert was a great opportunity to play with a relatively large ensemble and figure out how all the pieces should fit together.

As for the album component of my Senior Project, all eight songs I played for the show are recorded, mixed, and nearly ready for release. It was a great learning experience getting

comfortable in the recording studio and learning to mix my own music. It is exciting being able to produce my music from beginning to end because I have a clear vision of where I want my music to be and exactly how I want it to sound. Once I learn a bit more about production and general recording practices I feel like my music could level up quite a bit. Overall I have learned a lot about music at Bard College and in directions I didn't expect I would. I feel equipped to play and produce music in a variety of different genres and I am excited to soon release my first single "My Time" on all streaming platforms.

Thank you to Elias Smith, Sam Crocker, Cyrus Kurman-Browning, Cedric Rule-Becker, Kay Flynn-Murray, Talullah Calderwood, Noa Doucette, and Adriana Ondrejka for playing in my Senior Concert. And a special thank you to my academic advisor Matthew Sargent who has helped me mix my music and generally guide me through the music department over the last four years, I can't thank him enough.

Find my band at @Counselingband on instagram and @Counseling on Bandcamp.

PRESENTING

MINA'S SPIROJ SHOW

FT. COUNSELING+

Featuring: Eli Smith, Sam Crocker, Cedric Rule-Becker



Cyrus Browning, Tallulah Calderwood, Kay Murray, Noa Doucette, Adriana Ondrejka



04/20/24

7:30pm

@Blum Hall

