
Senior Projects Spring 2012

Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects

Spring 2012

Running Barefoot

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Benjamin Marx
May 2, 2012

Artist Statement

I have been required by the registrar to submit an artist statement, and to be honest I do not know what I am supposed to say. If I am expected to explain a deep profound message about my music, I have none. And if I should to discuss the pieces in my concert, I would rather leave it up to the audience to figure out what the pieces mean to them. Now I am only on the cusp of my musical exploration. I have just this year glimpsed the vast world of music and begun to understand its endlessness. While I may not have an “artist statement”, I can talk about my understanding of music. I do believe the way that each person comes to understand music is unique to each individual. The process of realization is different for everyone, and I am proud of the process that I have gone through during my time at Bard.

I began playing the upright bass in the very end of my Sophomore year. It was one of the best decisions I have ever made. Unlike the guitar, which I played when I came to college, the bass is a humble instrument. It is often not in the spotlight, but stands its ground in the back of the bandstand, holding down the groove without an expectation of acknowledgement. The bass itself is physically demanding to play, and it asks a lot from its player. Each note from the bass carries a heavy message, and it can tell volumes while speaking very simply. I have grown to truly cherish the instrument and I only hope I can keep playing it for my entire life. In the process of putting on my two senior concerts, I have developed tremendously as a performer, but I have even more so developed as a composer.

I viewed my concert in the Fall of 2011 as a test run for exploring composition. Many of the pieces I wrote were simply studies of different ideas regarding harmony and rhythm. I have taken composition classes with Erica Lindsay and George Tsontakis. What is amusing to me is

that while taking their courses I thought all the information was all going over my head, but now I realize how much has actually stuck with me. Writing all the pieces for my second concert was much easier than writing for my first concert. I have become comfortable and familiar with the writing process and more confident in my ability to create a captivating piece of music. I have to thank Erica in particular for guiding me and helping tremendously both as a musician and as a person. I could not have done it without her.

I would also like to take a moment to thank John Esposito, without him, I most likely would not have become a music major, which is something I would have regretted for my entire life. He has given me the foundation and material to pursue music on my own terms, and I am very grateful to have had him as my advisor and teacher.

I would also like to thank all of my peers, I believe they taught me the more than anyone else. They have taught me different possibilities for approaching music. They have taught me how to make a composition great, and shown me the pitfalls that can make a composition not so great. Most importantly they have given me the opportunity to play music. I would like to close by turning your attention to that phrase, 'play music'. With all the musicians I have encountered in my life, from young to old, they still approach music with glee and excitement; it keeps them young. They all still 'play' when they are creating music; it is their joy. I pray that music never becomes my 'work'.

Thank you for taking to the time to read this artist's statement

Sincerely,

Benjamin Marx