

Program Notes – “Stories of Survivors”

“The Final Battle Cry” by Alexis Carrier

From the composer:

*“A warrior
Bedecked in leather armor,
Alone amidst the cold fog caught in the gloom of a never-ending dusk,
Stands within a sea of death,
His homeland struck down by the plague of war.
With no brethren to call upon,
He raises his sword
As the figures of his enemies form against the disappearing horizon
And continues to stand in courage
As he gives the final battle cry.”*

This piece was requested by University of Montana Horn Professor, Dr. Zachary Cooper. Leaving the artistic door wide open, I chose to create a piece solely for the horn, which was quite a challenging project, as a single line alone would have to pique the interest of listeners. The work portrays a warrior of the past singlehandedly facing a horde of oncoming enemies, for his own army has already been destroyed. Unwilling to face defeat, he chooses to stand against the enemy with his last strand of courage left.”

This piece reflects the tenacity that survivors of sexual assault need to face the challenges that they face alongside the challenges society provides. Often, survivors are not believed, or they are shamed for their “role” in their assault. Justice is often not attainable with our current systems, and survivors are often left to fend for themselves. It takes great strength to continue and fight these battles every day.

For more information about Alexis Carrier, please check out her website:

<https://alexiscarrier.com/>

“Meditazione” by Teresa Procaccini

This work for horn and piano features a haunting, lyrical melody played over a dissonant and dark piano part. The slow tempo evokes a sense of plodding, almost like a dirge or funeral march. The somber, mourning melody in the horn floats through the air like a fog, echoed in occasional interjections from the piano.

This piece reflects the deep, emotional struggles that survivors of sexual assault go through after their assaults. Trauma can have lasting impacts, and many survivors have had to wade through very difficult, treacherous waters to come through their experiences.

For more information about Teresa Procaccini, please check out her website:

<https://www.teresaprocaccini.it/biografia/>

“Under the Blue” by Catherine Likhuta

From the composer:

“Under the Blue was inspired by Claire Nouvian’s book The Deep. This book talks about, and contains photos of, creatures living at the deepest corners of the sea not reachable by sunlight. At that depth, the water looks very different from any water we are used to seeing: it is much darker than the common blue colour we associate with water. That world is altogether frightening, fascinating and creepy. In the music, I wanted to tell a story of an imaginative journey down to the Deep. At first, as you just dive in, the surroundings look beautiful and harmless, somewhat melancholic. But as you start submerging towards the bottom, it gradually becomes a world full of creatures you have never thought existed. You cannot obey the strong desire to go back immediately since you want to see this odd world that awakens the widest spectrum of emotions. It scares you to death but also strangely captivates you. When you can’t take it anymore, you resurface. Everything seems back to normal again: the same calm blue water, the same familiar surroundings. But the experience of what you’ve seen under the blue has slightly changed your perception of things...”

The emphasis on exploration is what connects this piece to the stories of survivors. After being assaulted, survivors often have to go through a journey of self-exploration to process, grow, and heal. This kind of personal work is difficult and messy, and it leads survivors through an emotional roller coaster as they discover more about what happened to them and how they can heal.

For more information about Catherine Likhuta, please check out her website:

<http://www.catherinelikhuta.com/>

“Wind Song” by Adrienne Albert

From the composer:

“Originally titled, ‘Wind Tides’ for trombone and piano and commissioned by the wonderful trombonist, Andrew Malloy, ‘Wind Song’ is a transcription of that work. Changes have been made to suit the unique and beautiful sound of the horn.

‘Wind Song’ is a mini-concerto in a single movement with a fairly lengthy cadenza. It is in ABA form. The title comes from the obvious reference the breath required for this instrument and from the ebb and flow of music.”

In this program, this work demonstrates the strength and resilience of survivors of sexual assault. The heartfelt melodies, sweeping gestures, and triumphant ending send other survivors the message that things do get better and that they can take this horrible experience and use it for positive, meaningful change in their lives.

For more information about Adrienne Albert, please check out her website:

<http://adriennealbert.com/>