

Orchestra In A Box

by Daniel R. Mitchell

The music on this CD consists of pieces originally written with a software synthesis program (*BasicSynth*). I then used a program (*MuseScore2*) to produce scores with traditional music notation. *MuseScore2* assumes the user wants to assign each staff to a traditional music instrument, and then will “play” the score using a built-in, sampled sounds synthesizer. The result is a traditional orchestration, albeit synthesized on a computer. Computer programmers often refer to a desktop computer as a “box” --- hence the name, “*Orchestra In A Box*.”

Ecstasy In Yellow (2005)

One Sunday I took a ride in the country with my friend Rebecca and we came across a field of yellow flowers. We got out and started taking pictures. I convinced Rebecca to go over by the fence and stand there while I took her picture. The next thing I knew, she had climbed up on the fence and pretended she was on a bucking bronco. I made a video of the photographs and composed this music to go with it.

Sunflower Sonata (2005)

Music for a video entitled *Sunflower Serenade*. The visuals are photographs of sunflowers made to dance by panning and zooming the pictures.

It's not really a serenade in form, but a short sonata in 5/8 time.

Jitter Creep (2016)

Music to accompany the “zombie apocalypse.”

jitter

n. feelings of extreme nervousness, anxiety, restlessness or agitation.

n. slight irregular movement, variation, or unsteadiness, especially in an electrical signal or electronic device.

creep

v. move slowly and carefully, especially in order to avoid being heard or noticed.

v. occur or develop gradually and almost imperceptibly.

n. slow movement, especially at a steady but almost imperceptible pace.

n. (informal) a detestable person.

Two syncopated themes are each repeated several times. As the piece develops, the themes are layered on top of each other, with each layer halving the rhythm of the previous. The result is a confusing mass of sound.

Dance On A Sparkling Moonbeam (2016)

A slow “dance” of two timbres, with complementary tunes. The two sounds are accompanied by an arpeggio background. The two sounds in the original synthesizer version are replaced with a concerto-like structure where a flute is answered by strings.

A Chance Of Flurries (2016)

Music for Christmas 2016, with snow in the weather forecast. Written using Dorian mode, with a simple, folk-like melody. Then, accompanied by increasing “flurries” of woodwinds, finally ends up switching to a relative major key.

Sub(dis)traction (2016)

Subconscious distractions of events that otherwise we think are important.

Charism (2011)

Charism is “an extraordinary power (as of healing) given a Christian by the Holy Spirit for the good of the church.” (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*). In general, charism means grace. More specifically, the term is applied to the spiritual orientation of a religious order of the Catholic Church, for example, a teaching order.

The piece was composed using a melody that repeats in different contexts. A flute is used for the melody, accompanied by marimba, organ, strings, glockenspiel, and steel drum.

Rainbow (2016)

Light strikes a drop of rain and scatters. This was inspired by seeing a double rainbow one day.

A pair of melodies (violin and oboe), finally joined in unison, accompanied by multiple arpeggios at different rhythms, some producing slow arcs, others faster arcs.

Plead For Persuasion (2016)

When we need understanding from others, we plead for persuasion. We need them to persuade us as to why they think that way.

This piece is plaintive, with a main theme layered, and varied, into a bigger texture. The pounding, emphatic, accompanying figures contrast the plaintive melody.

Verse 2 (2017)

A lively tune for my second wedding anniversary. The opening runs form a signature motive for the piece and reoccur over the course of the whole. The main tune is then heard twice using different accompaniment for the second time through. The following section uses a slower moving tune, with an “improvised” melody accompaniment. The final section repeats the texture of the opening, but with shortened and reversed tunes.