

This is a short analysis of the composition "Desideratum II" to be featured on the album "More Than Ever."

Desideratum II

This composition originally started with the enjoyment of simple guitar "chord-solos" in which melodies and chords are played by the performer at the same time. In recording this, I found that the chord-solo wasn't strong enough in the composition; therefore, I simplified the part into a more straightforward picked melody with arpeggiations in the guitar. Additionally, I wanted the composition to display a melancholy feel due to my mood at the time of writing the initial guitar parts, but I also wanted a symphonic texture and a "drill & bass" (an electronic genre) feel due to my recent listens to a couple of albums by electronic artist Venetian Snares.

(the composition no longer is affiliated with "drill & bass," "breakcore," or anything pertaining to European electronica. This change was made to allow to upcoming album to be more cohesive in textures; this composition is now written in a symphonic rock style.)

After writing the short 'a' & 'b' sections (A collectively), I needed something to further the composition and display contrast to what I just wrote. I remembered back to a composition I wrote for Counterpoint 1 with Dr. Hawthorne and his positive comment towards a mediant relationship I had written. I remembered the unique sound that separated it from the rest of the harmonies and thought it would be beneficial and interesting to study and write music based on these mediant relationships. I wrote two different systems of relationships initially, and I do expect to continue coming up with several more after realizing the power of these relations. I only used one set (relationship) of mediants for this composition feeling that adding more music to this composition wouldn't be fitting. So, here's the set of mediants I used for "Desideratum II" and how I used the relationships between the chords to my great advantage.

B7, G#M7, FM7, DM7

Chords Vertical, Voice Leading Horizontal

A G# A A

F# G F F#

D#D# E D

B C C C#

If that relationship isn't intriguing enough; here's how the voice-leading is used to propel the notes in an upward fashion while using the chord tones as a chromatic & antiphonal bass line.

Each line is stated once before the next horizontal line enters beneath it with the next chord tone; each continuing to ascend.

B → C → C → C# → D# → D# → E → F# → F# → G# → A → A → (repeats line up 8ve)
D# → D# → E → F# → F# → G# → A → A → B → C → C → C# → (repeats line up 8ve)
F# → G# → A → A → B → C → C → C# → D# → D# → F → F# → (repeats line up 8ve)

What is going on over top this “ostinato” set of notes is a polyrhythm of sorts. The ostinato of continually rising notes is in 5/8 while the guitar, bells, & percussion are happening in 6/8. The notes the guitar and bells are hitting to correspond to the chord they’re over in the ostinato. The first series of hits are every 12 beats, then creating more intensity as it quickens to every 6 beats, then every 3 with ultimately passing chords and the guitar switching from clean in 6/8 to distortion to supply root-motion in 5/8.

The recap of the composition is simply modulated up a whole step and orchestrated a bit fuller to supply a sense of completeness. As you may assume by the title, there will be more than one Desideratum as the second one has already been composed and a few more of these compositions are quite possible. Hope you enjoyed my mediant explorations.

- Johnny Newman