

Piece 3-TV Soap Opera Theme Tune

Brief

I was advised by my tutors at school to compose three pieces from three different periods in musical history, e.g. Classical, Baroque and Romantic. For my third piece I decided to write something based around modern 20th century ideas. It was also suggested that I write a piece with words, either original or taken from a poem/song.

Stimulus

In school I listened to a selection of music from the 20th century. I chose the words from the pop-song "California Dreamin" written by John and Michelle Phillips from "The Mamas and the Papas". They were a hippie style band from the 1960's well known for their strong vocal lines and close harmony, because I was familiar with the words I felt it would be easy to create my own chord sequences and melody to suit them. However I found this was not the case and felt the uncomfortable using these words with varying instruments. I found that they suited a Jazz style piece and continued to expand this idea. After completing my piece in this style I began to improvise in a swing rhythm using a computer-writing program. After discussion with my teacher, I decided that the swing rhythm did not suit my piece and after listening to my piece whilst viewing the opening visual sequences from Soap Opera's such as "Where the heart is". I finally decided that this is what my ideas suited most and took the swing and jazz elements out of my piece and edited it in this fashion.

Influences

Influences for this piece obviously include the song "California Dreamin", by "The Mamas and the Papas". During editing the piece, when I thought about what it really should be used for, looking at video sequences on the computer made me think that the piece should be for a soap opera.

Analysis

The piece is written in a light popular style, reflecting current styles in television programme theme music. The table below shows an outline of the structure.

<u>Bars</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Analysis</u>
1-8	1	Theme E _b major. Piano broken chords → B _b major. Sax and clarinet play shared melody
9-16	2	Bass guitar introduced, playing walking bass. Sax and clarinet repeat melody. Piano plays block chords.
17-24	3	Piano plays short repeated block chords and walking base. Bass continues. Sax and Clarinet share new blues style material.
25-32	4	Return 1 st theme. No bass. Block chords.
33-40	5	Original melody for sax and Clarinet with reversed roles. Piano broken chords. No Bas. Melody variations.

Process

As with my other pieces I used my piano and keyboards in school to write my chords and basic melodies. I played lots of ideas into Sibelius and eventually, my piece began to take the form and length that I had originally imagined, even if a Sax and a Clarinet played the "words", with a piano accompaniment. After playing the playing the piece on Sibelius and discussing it with my school tutors, it was suggested that there was still something missing. I thought of adding a Bass guitar, a drum kit or both. Eventually I decided that just a Bass guitar would be the right choice, because a drum kit would make the piece feel too modern for my new idea; the piece being used as a television theme tune.

Revision

Ideas for what the piece should be, were revised a couple of times, however, the actual melody and rhythm stayed the same. The final revision for the piece was some editing of the phrasing and the speed of the piece, and the addition of a Bass guitar part.

Equipment

I used my piano at home and pianos and keyboards in school to compose the chords and parts of the melody. I used a Yamaha PSR-330 keyboard and a Yamaha PSR-350 keyboard for inputting my ideas into Sibelius. I used a Hewlett Packard Laser jet 6Lto print of my manuscript. Word processing was done using Office 2000 on a Pentium 3 computer.