

Integrated Coursework

I have chosen to study Evanescence – Hello, All About Eve – Scarlet and Joy Division – The Eternal. These pieces are all from the gothic genre yet each has individual features that make them very different from each other. This can provoke people into believing that they lie more comfortably into a sub-genre, for example; gothic rock, gothic folk etc. The main features of gothic music are hard to pinpoint because of this diversity however they regularly include melancholy lyrics, unusual vocals created by singers who are not accepted into the “charts”, often with drawn out notes and, more recently, female fronted.

This is certainly true of Evanescence and All About Eve however, Joy Division were the most ground breaking band in the history of the sub-culture according to the publications of the time e.g. NME. Their lead singer Ian Curtis is well known for his on stage performance where he often looked possessed by devils. His vocals range from a fast, tenor, atmospheric sound to a steady, bass, haunting sound as in The Eternal. The mix of their songs causes the bass and drums to be very prevalent and the vocals and lead guitar in the background. The tempo, dynamic and melody always influence the content of the lyric.

Evanescence did, in fact get into the charts when their ‘debut’ album, Fallen, was released in 2003. The front lady Amy Lee has a beautifully crystal clear voice that, while being digitally enhanced on the CD, also comes across in the live performances. The guitar, bass and drums are secondary to the vocals in most of the songs and this is the standard set up. On the other hand, Hello has a marvellous piano melody which is a refreshing break from the guitar rock and, in my opinion, allows it to fit more comfortably under the ‘gothic’ classification.

All About Eve played their first gig in 1985 and by this time the gothic ‘scene’ was well established and they have remained as underground as

they were then until their (most recent) split in 2004. Some would describe this music as folk rock but this would be in the loosest way possible. Again, it is a female fronted band with a standard 4 person set-up (vocal, guitar, bass, drums), although this has varied over the years as has the mix of their songs. The melody is powerful and well delivered through the, occasionally gritty, vocals of Julianne Regan. The guitar riff in Scarlet is shaped around the chords and can be put across successfully on an acoustic guitar. The chords used are mostly in standard shape with very few power chords.

My instrument is my voice and I am going to perform Hello by Evanescence. This piece is adagio and the structure is ABABC without an obvious verse and chorus. This is different from Scarlet which has an AABABAB structure with A being the verse and B being the chorus yet it does compare well with The Eternal as that simply has four similar repeated melodies. Part A is all minims for the vocals with the exception of the last two bars of each of the two phrases which contain a semi quaver to convey a more colloquial style and finish off the phrase neatly. The first three notes rise in a scale from B to D and then fall back to C before an interval of a major 3rd down to A. This melody should be legato and a slight variance in dynamic should be applied to each note to prevent it from sounding too calculated.

Section B has mainly crotchets and dotted crotchets, allowing for a faster, yet still controlled manner. The melody here also has a range of an octave and there are similar sized intervals between notes than that of part A however, they appear more frequently. The same rhythm at the end of the phrases in A finishes off these phrases too giving the piece a subtle consistency.

C is a variant of B with a small fragment of chromatic scale from B to C. The majority of this section is higher than the B an octave above the start note (one octave above middle C). This calls for a forte, dramatic vocal part and offers a suitable finale for the piece.

This type of ending is not mirrored in The Eternal as that has a long intro and outro yet Scarlet has an extra line in the last chorus and the guitar leads out for approximately the same time as the piano in Hello. I think the piece should be performed in a very vocal ambient style with the piano motif gentle in the back ground but still supporting and accentuating the vocals.

I don't want it to sound forced, especially at the climax, or my voice sound too breathy, as it has the tendency to be, because this will detract from the power of the lyric and legato melody.

- In general I am pleased with my performance having succeeded in creating an ambient type of sound where the reverb is prominent without it being sounding like I'm trying too much to make it different.
 - My singing overall was of a satisfying tone and volume and I feel I made the phrases smooth without slurring my words at all.
 - I felt that my timing was steady and with the piano and where necessary I increased my dynamic to emphasise the lyrics.
 - The climax of the piece I tried not to hold back on in order to prevent a strained sound.
 - My support from my diaphragm was adequate to get me through the phrases without a struggle.
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- If I had the chance to perform the piece again I would have warmed up for longer to ensure I had a little more confidence.
 - I would memorize the lyrics and try to relate them to me so I could "feel" the song and put more emotion into it.
 - I would also attempt to remove even more of the breathiness in my voice as I am not fond of this but realise it will be a lengthy process.

Taken as a whole my performance was successful in portraying the gothic genre and extending the study of this to influence my composition. Comparing the three pieces has led to a greater understanding of the features used in this style and how to convey them through a performance with things such as how the position of the microphones affects the stereo of the recording.

Melancholy song

Voice

Gothic rock

Performance 1 - Evanesence - Hello

- All About Eve - Scarlet

- Joy Division - The Eternal

My piece will be influenced by the above pieces, they can be linked by their gothic connotations and genre. Evanesence - Hello is a song about the death of a little girl and this will influence my lyrics and style of performance. In particular the continuous phrases, sung legato, and timbre of vocals (inparticular the mezzo pitch, smooth phrasing and clear tone), creating a melancholy ambience.

Scarlet by All About Eve will be a rough guide to the structure of my song, for instance verse, verse, chorus, verse, chorus etc. This can be elaborated upon. It is also of an appropriate tempo, that is, walking pace - andante.

Joy Division are often referred to as the first gothic band having been described as "gothic compared to the mainstream". They wrote many songs about depression and manage to create a very atmospheric air through the music and general performance. The lead singer, Ian Curtis took his own life in 1980 and this will also inspire the lyrics of my composition. The chords used in The Eternal are mainly E minor and A minor, common chords in gothic songs because of their "sad" sound, therefore this will be the basis for my chord patterns.

Most of the song should have lyrics as in Scarlet and they should relate to the melody, as in Hello. I shall accompany myself on the acoustic guitar only, to create a simplicity and connection with the music.

Capo on 3rd fret

E

Dress me in scarlet

A

Ribbons and bows so everyone knows I'm hiding a face

I

That hadn't the grace to go free

E

Dress me in shadows

A

Sad April skies have opened my eyes to the lie that I live

E

And given the river away

B

A

E

I'll change these clothes if I want to, and I do

G

C

A

E

I think that I've found out what no-one's about to tell me

G

C

A

B

Am

I think that I've found out I don't wear scarlet well

E

Waiting before me

A

Poets and painters may say, "When will you stumble our way

E

Kick off your red shoes and fly now"

B

A

E

I'll die for their words if I want to, and I do

G

C

A

E

I think that I've found out what no-one's about to tell me

G

C

A

B

Am

B

Am

B

Am

B

Am

I think that I've found out I don't wear scarlet well

E

Always before me

A

Poets and sages may say, "We've been lamenting your fall

E

And carving it all into stone here

B

A

E

And skimming them into the river, just for you"

G

C

A

E

I think that I've found out what no-one's about to tell me

G

C

A

E

I think that I've found out the place where angels fell from

G

C

A

B

Am

B

Am

B

Am

B

Am

B

Am

B

Am

B

Am

B

Am

I think that I've found out I don't wear scarlet well

Procession moves on, the shouting is over

Praise to the glory of loved ones now gone
Talking aloud as they sit round their tables
Scattering flowers washed down by the rain

Stood by the gate at the foot of the garden
Watching them pass like clouds in the sky
Try to cry out in the heat of the moment
Possessed by a fury that burns from inside

Cry like a child, though these years make me older
With children my time is so wastefully spent
A burden to keep, though their inner communion
Accept like a curse an unlucky deal

Played by the gate at the foot of the garden
My view stretches out from the fence to the wall
No words could explain, no actions determine
Just watching the trees and the leaves as they fall

Intro : Em

Am Em
That's me, that wilting rose
Am Em
With sadness no one knows
Am C#m Em
The water we drink is like blood
Am Em
These are my final words

Am Em
I'm all alone
Am Em
With the tears I've shown
Am C#m Em
The heart that barely beats is as night
Am Em
These are my final words

Dm Em
The world falls away
Dm Am
The flame is extinguished
Dm Em Am
The Darkness embraces me

G A Dm
I'll spread my wings
G Dm C#m
Fly away
G A Dm
Black angels take my hand
G Dm Em
Reach for crimson light

Am Em
It's not a curse
Am Em
It's simply freedom
Am C#m Em
Incomprehensible visions of Paradise
Am Em
These are my final words

Dm Em
The world falls away
Dm Am
The flame is extinguished

Dm Em Am
The Darkness embraces me

G A Dm
I'll spread my wings

G Dm C#m

Fly away

G A Dm

Black angels take my hand

G Dm Em

Reach for crimson light

Am G

In this eternal night

Am G

My tears begin to dry

Am Em

And I no longer have to fight

Dm Em

The world falls away

Dm Am

The flame is extinguished

Dm Em Am

The Darkness embraces me

G A Dm

I'll spread my wings

G Dm C#m

Fly away

G A Dm

Black angels take my hand

G Dm Em

Reach for crimson light

Arpeggios: Am Em Am Em Am C#m

Am Dm

The moon draws me near

Am Dm

I'm staring to a void

Em Am

Take that final step

The instruments used are voice and acoustic, steel-stringed guitar.

My composition is linked to performance one by its gothic genre and melancholy overtones. It used minor or "sad" chords such as those

used in Joy Division's The Eternal and the structure was similar to that of Scarlet by All About Eve yet both of these things have been elaborated on. Evanescence - Hello gave the composition its pace and vocal style, it also acted as an inspiration for the lyrics.

The final piece fitted with my brief pleasingly with most of the criteria satisfied. For example I did use the chords E minor and A minor and I did set a similar tempo to that of Hello.

As I composed, I elaborated on the structure and added in an instrumental part based around the specified chords. This was to vary the rhythm and structure of the piece and break up the vocals to add more drama to the end as in Hello.

I think the idea of repeating the line "these are my final words" was good as it gives the song a hook line. I also like the piece before the final bridge and chorus ("in this eternal.....have to fight") because it broke up what was a very repetitive double chorus.

As I composed I tried different ways of playing the chorus and it took me a while to get to the final version. Whilst doing that I discovered that I did not like power chords as only striking three strings does not give a full enough sound when it's all that's accompanying a vocal part. So instead I used standard shape chords, most of which require five string strikes at least.

I am also pleased with the very final line in that the last chord is not played completely but falls away. Together with the diminuendo in the vocals it successfully creates a depressive atmosphere. My brief states that I should have a climax at the end but I thought the fade to be more effective.

- I am extremely pleased with the lyrics and I feel that they fit perfectly with the brief.
- My chord patterns and sequences were all developed from the E minor, A minor basis and I enjoy the way they fit with the melody.

- The tempo of my piece was more similar to Scarlet than Hello and this is because I chose a speed most suitable to the chord sequence and the elaboration of the melody within a phrase.
 - My vocals were simply as they came out because it was a highly emotive song. Nevertheless, I think the tone was clear and the phrasing legato.
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- I feel that my melodic material wasn't varied enough and whilst the contrasts between the sections of the structure (verse, chorus, bridge etc) were evident, there was too much repetition to give an intriguing performance.
 - In my opinion the piece lacked depth and simply having a vocal part and a guitar part did not support the melody successfully. The piece would have benefited from a drumbeat and a bass line around the pattern of the chords.
 - I would have liked to be accompanied by another guitarist to allow me to concentrate on the singing and support of my voice in order for it to carry as it did in my performance.
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By and large my composition was successful. I have realised a number of things that I could do to improve it further and also what made it an effective piece. There were evident links to my study pieces and these were recognized in a number of ways from the lyrics to the chord sequences. My performance of the composition was valuable in outlining my ideas but, again, the positives and negatives of this have been realised.

Throughout the duration of composing I have learnt how to fit lyrics to melodies so that the content is conveyed through performance and I have also practised and improved my speed on guitar and support of my voice through my diaphragm.