Musical Inspiration Derivative of Literature; An Exercise

Introduction and Objectives

This project aims to explore how the composition of new music can be influenced by a thoughtful text. It seeks to discuss the following questions. Are the ways that we appreciate literature and music fundamentally different? Is it possible to communicate the same ideas and motivations in a thoughtful text through the medium of music?

*Meditations* by Marcus Aurelius is the memoir of a dying Roman emperor and influencer of Stoic philosophy. Outstanding quotes from the book were selected to guide the development of the motifs present in the composition.

Methods

MuseScore 2.0 was the music notation software used to document the composition.

While reading Marcus Aurelius’ *Meditations*, themes of chapters were documented. These included ideas such as love for one’s nation and respect for one’s ancestors. The author stresses the importance of the ability to remain fortified in one’s beliefs even in the face of great struggle and pain. Significant specific quotes were also selected to guide passages of the piece, and are included in the musical text for the performer to consider.

Composers who have previously based one or more musical works on a literary work include Beethoven, Prokofiev, and many others.

Conclusion

This project culminated in the form of a performance on the evening of April 19th, 2019. With Prof. Joshua Johnson on horn and John Hoelzer on piano, the work was shared with those attending the Spring 2019 ISU Horn Studio recital.

Next steps are to seek publishing and further performance opportunities.