

Coping Skills: Post-Recital Reflection

Overall, I felt there were many things that went well on my recital. There were no major train wrecks and the audience seemed to genuinely enjoy the material. In the weeks prior I had been struggling with my tone; however, at the recital my tone came out clear and projected nicely. The band did a great job interpreting my music, especially with the limited time we had to prepare. There were a couple questionable spots, but we managed to land on our feet. My recital was on the shorter side, but I think the density of the material made up for it.

The tricky melody on “Dolphy’s Dance” went without incident on my part. However, both the guitar and piano were comping and the same time, causing a bit of a harmonic train wreck. I should have been more aware of this and addressed it in rehearsal. My improvisation wasn’t bad, as I hit most of the harmonic markers. However, there was one pattern in particular that I kept reverting back to, and I didn’t use any harmonic substitutions, which is common on this solo form (rhythm changes).

“Hide and Seek” was definitely the trickiest piece to pull together. My accompaniment under the beginning vocals may have been a little too aggressive. I struggled with the solo as the chords were challenging for me to get my fingers around. However, I think I did well with what I could pull together. Unfortunately, the piano and guitar were both comping again, bringing back the harmonic confusion. We successfully pulled off the toughest part of the tune, coming out of the energetic guitar solo into a different time signature. However, the energy dropped and someone came in a beat early shortly after, causing everything to flip over. But the band went with it and we came out on our feet going into the final recap of the A section. The final vamp may have been the strongest part of the piece, coming to a great climax and ending solidly.

The melody of “Smashin’ the Patriarchy” went well, especially since the guitar was doubling the melody instead of comping. This allowed us to avert the harmonic clashing that happened in the first tune. There was one note in the bridge that was out of tune between me and the guitar, but other than that it was good. I had some good ideas in my solo and the intention was there, but the development was a little choppy. During rehearsal we discussed changing up the solo order in order to avoid becoming monotonous, but in the performance the order remained the same as the other tunes. This wasn’t a huge deal, but it would have been nice to generate some interest that way.

On “Castles,” the vocalist did a great job interpreting the melody. There was one interval she missed, but the note she hit was in the chord, so it wouldn’t be noticed by anyone who didn’t know the tune. The guitar countermelody on the second repetition of the A section sounded a little tentative and didn’t quite line up with the vocals. I was pleasantly surprised as to how well my bass clarinet projected, but there were one or two squeaks that disrupted the flow. Overall, the texture felt a tad thin, and if I perform this in the future, I might like to add more instruments. The tempo might need to be a hair faster as well. I thought the solos went really well and fit the vibe of the tune. The climactic section and the outro were both really together.

“Creepy Crawlies” was the strongest piece of the program. The energy was great across the band. I chipped one of the high notes on the melody, but overall the presentation was good. My solo built a good amount of energy but was meandering at times. I could’ve built a stronger climax to help push the piece even further. The drum solo went well, and even though the drummer was playing polyrhythms over the ostinato, the rest of the band held it down well and

didn't lose the beat. The tune ended perfectly together and created a nice amount of explosive energy to end the recital.

I'm thankful to have had such a strong band to play my music. It was difficult, but their hard work paid off. Even though there are lots of things I need to work on, my own improvement leading up to this recital was significant. With all of my health issues, I'm surprised I was able to write that much music in such a short amount of time, let alone be able to perform it. This recital was a huge milestone for me, and I have my work cut out for me going forward.