## Dan Miller's Senior Show Dean Carriage Barn May 26, 2011

1. <u>The Creep (2011)</u>

For Violin and Piano Emily Call Allen Shawn

This piece was written for Emily Call. Emily has continuously been gracious enough to dedicate her time to learning my pieces and she always works tirelessly to ensure that they are performed perfectly.

*The Creep* was intended to be a transition between her senior show and mine. Emily would be performing from the "classical" repertoire so I wanted a piece that would address that and then transition into my own compositional world. The primary theme, a chromatic syncopated melody, is supposed to represent the inevitable creeping of history into our lives and is frequently accompanied by more "classical" harmonies and rhythms. As that theme spirals outward into more complex ideas a second theme takes over which is mostly consonant open intervals and contains less movement. I intend this to be an assurance to the audience that even though my later pieces tend to be dissonant there are hidden moments of stark beauty. The final movement of *The Creep* weaves these two themes together and produces a harmonic language that I often use in my pieces.

## 2. String Quartet No. 1 (2011)

Jennifer Schwartzs Emily Call Melanie Dexter George Dilthey

This piece was inspired by Henryk Górecki (1933-2010). Gorecki started his career as a modernist serialist and was considered to be very avant-garde. Throughout the years, however, he began to move into a more relentlessly tonal and minimalist language. The Kronos Quartet premiered his 3<sup>rd</sup> string quartet in 2007 entitled *Songs are Sung....* a piece which ruminates entirely about death. This piece was so small, fragile, and tender that compared to what I had previously listened to it almost seemed like a non-event.

My first string quartet opens with a 13 measure cannon. The entrances are spaced 7 measures apart. After each repetition, the element is transposed up a diatonic 5<sup>th</sup>. This process produces continuously changing close pan diatonic harmonies while still maintaining one continuous melody. In between these cannons, a rhythmically complex brooding motive slowly expands from close intervals like minor seconds to major thirds and fifths in simple rhythms, but then quickly flees back into chromaticism. It's this concept, complexity flirting with and finally accepting simplicity, that embodies the work. The final cannon is the element from the original cannon retrograded, which makes it sound minor.

## 3. <u>Air Coerced to Move (2011)</u>

For Woodwind Quartet, String Quintet, and Piano Holly Mutascio Lyndon Moors Jonathan Greene Jerry Lanoue Kate Lyczkowski Jennifer Schwartz Emily Call Melanie Dexter George Dilthey Harrison Dilthey Nick Brooke (conductor)

This piece was originally conceived as a duo concerto between the flute and the piano, but now primarily features the flute with the piano representing a more percussive and powerfully interjecting voice. This piece is in a sonata form with two themes that are contrasted, developed, and finally unified. The opening theme, heard in the flute, is all about the minor second. This theme is expanded and developed throughout the piece and is heard regularly throughout the ensemble in different forms. The second theme is made up of two contrasting intervalic motives, one emphasizing the minor third and the other the perfect fourth. These themes are allowed to freely develop and come to represent two contrasting aspects of the harmonic series: the upper harmonics, where the intervals are close and more dissonant, and the lower harmonics where intervals are further spaced and more consonant. The piece lives in the upper harmonics and reaches down regularly into the lower harmonics.

Towards the end of the development, there is a cadenza of all instruments freely playing a diatonic scale up and down between a perfect fourth. This free section is followed by a contrasting cadenza for the flute and piano alone. Together they introduce material not yet heard in the piece. The new material is based on the acoustic scale, which is the 12 tone equal tempered approximation of the first seven intervals represented in the harmonic series. The new material then translates into the recapitulation and completes the sonorities of earlier material by forming a bridge between the upper and lower harmonics in the harmonic series.

## Composer's Notes:

I'd like to thank Allen Shawn, Nick Brooke, Kitty Brazelton, Suzanne Jones and the rest of the Bennington College music faculty. You've all been endlessly inspirational and have tirelessly dedicated so much time to my personal growth. I am truly lucky to have such wonderful professors and my successes could not have been possible without their educational and musical talent.

Thanks to all of the performers who have dedicated their time to making this concert happen. It truly means a lot to me to be able to demonstrate my musical growth over the last four years to my friends and family.

I'd also like to thank Andrew McIntyre, my advisor and math professor, who has been equally inspirational and generous with his time. Andrew has continuously inspired me to be more precise and critical with my thoughts and this sensibility will undoubtedly serve me in all of my life long pursuits.

Thank you to the entire Bennington College faculty, as well.

Finally, I'd like to thank everyone I have been friends with over the years. You've all meant the world to me and truly made this place a home for me. Thank you.