

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude first and foremost to Andrew, Ethan, Jay, and Thomas, the brilliant and hard-working artists who have dedicated themselves to my music for the past term. The advice, cooperation, creativity, and friendship that I have received from this band has been invaluable and I couldn't thank them enough. The music we perform tonight has been conceived by me, but none of it would exist in its current form without their input and talented musicianship. I also want to thank them for being so willing to bare their personal stories with the audience, something I was not totally comfortable asking them to do. My thanks to the Brass ensemble who were willing to look at my music, uncomfortable as some of it may be to perform, and just roll with it. A particularly big thanks to Jonathan and Dmitri for their part in that. And to Kellin and Katie who are such amazing vocalists it's astonishing. Thanks to Greg, Leah, Andrew, Chris, and Rainer who are taking care of all the tech needs for this show on very little notice. Life is so much easier when you surround yourself with talented people. I'm sure every one of you are thankful as well for the wonderful food provided by Janiele Shirley, Ariel Andrew, Abe Weissman, and Megan Diehl. Also, thanks to Leah Teplin for the awesome drawing of me.

My deepest gratitude also goes to my professors who have helped me realize my work and hone my skills throughout my time at Bennington. A very special thanks must be given to the music faculty and staff, particularly Allen Shawn, Nick Brooke, Tom Bogdan, Jonathan Myers, Tom Bergeron, John Kirk (who I really regret never taking a class with), Kanako Seki, Bob Singley, and especially Kitty Brazelton, who has reached in through my ear and squeezed my brain dry for the past three years. She is a teacher who, no matter how many times I fought, struggled, or doubted myself, never gave up on me. I will never be able to express how much that has meant and affected my growth as a musician, and a person. I am also always thankful for Sue Jones and Susie Reiss, the women who keep Jennings running and listen to my complaints on a very regular basis as well as Linda Hurley, the queen of VAPA. And to Susan Sgorbati and Danny Michaelson, who encouraged me to never stop using my skills and passions to pursue peace and justice in the world and cared deeply and honestly about every single conversation I ever had with them. I have not and will never have a more important mentor than these two have been to me. I would never have accomplished half as much as I have at this school were it not for them. And finally, to my family, the most important source of stability in my life who have always supported me and believed in my abilities, through all of my anxiety, fear, frustration, anger, and sadness. I wouldn't have been anything without them.

"Self-Reflection"

A musical collage created by Amitai Yizhar Gross with
the help of many



Saturday, May 28th, 2011
Martha Hill

Heartstrings: A Gentlemen's String Band

Amitai Gross - Guitar, Voice, and Pen
Andrew Fridae - Guitar, Saw, and Ukulele
Ethan Woods - Saw, and Bass
Jay Schunter - Guitar, and Percussion
Thomas Seeger - Banjo

The Bennington College Brass Sextet

Directed by Jonathan Myers
Conducted by Dmitri Glickman

Trumpets - Amitai Gross and Alison Cho
Trombones - Rowan Lockery and Amanda Plunket
Horn - Julia Sippel
Tuba - Jonathan Myers

The Dreilege Geist Trio

Amitai Gross
Kellin Cavanaugh
Katie Rudman

Sound by Greg Obis
Lighting by Leah Woodsum
Film Crew: Andrew Duff, Chris Platika, Rainer Hunt

Stories of Personal Growth

Myself

Brass Prelude

With Others

Trumpet Solo Improvisation

Eternity and Mystery

Songs While I Was Angry

Disregarded Prophecy

Will the Circle be Unbroken

Old Socrates

Lungs

Trumpet Solo Improvisation

"Dreilege Geist" *text by Kellin Cavanaugh*

Introduction

Confrontation

Regret

Stories: I am fascinated by the three scenarios of human growth that are often referred to as Man Vs. Self, Man Vs. Man, and Man Vs. God (or Nature). I understand these as interactions to grow from rather than adversarial settings as they are often depicted. Even more interesting to me is their correlation with the famous quote of Rabbi Hillel, “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And when I am for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?” The three parts to this question and the three scenarios of growth recognize our tripartite existence, based on our experiences that we have alone, the ones we share with others, and the ones in which we learn to question the greatest mysteries of the universe, which some may call God, nature, randomness, or eternity. These mysteries of life, death, love, time, space, etc.

Over time, the band began sharing stories with each other that represented these different experiences. The stories they have chosen to share tonight are personal and crucial to their individual growth, though it may not seem that way to you, although that’s not the point, is it?

Dreilege Geist: German for the “Tripartite Soul,” this was written for Whose Opera this term. When Kellin Cavanaugh and I first began working on the piece, I told her I was interested in a story in which the focus of the audience was not on the subject itself, but on the observers. With this she began to work on the role of the Id, Ego, and Super Ego as observers of the body they inhabit. The story revolves around the extreme difference between the Id and Super Ego, and the role of the Ego as the mediator between the two. However, when their host is subjected to potentially grievous harm, such as a rape, the dilemma becomes unbearable. The Id wishes to defend the body by killing the perpetrator, but the Super Ego fears for their moral standing. Wishing to do what feels “right” she protests. The Ego rationally sides with the Id, but the Super Ego is not willing to give up and attacks the Id. Trying to stop the attack, the Ego interjects and is accidentally killed by the Super Ego, resulting in a new moral crisis. Suddenly, the focus is no longer on the subject, but the observers. What you will witness is the result of textual slash-and-burn as well as collaborative vocal improvisation from musicians who mostly feel more comfortable in that sort of setting.

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