

Rubato

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Rubato: In music; subtle rhythmic manipulation creating movement

As a passionate classical musician, I am particularly intrigued by the way music swells through our minds and bodies creating movement within us that is unmatched by any other stimulus. With this fascination of movement, I wanted to create an artwork that reflected the multisensory experience that is listening to a musical composition.

I began this process by researching different ways artists have represented music through art. I felt moved by Georgia O'Keefe's representation of music through colour and shape, but felt it did not portray the physical sense of movement I desired. This was accompanied by a visit to the Art Gallery of South Australia where I saw works from Edwaert Collier and Jean-Jaques Bachelier. These still-lives portrayed different aspects of the musical process, mostly the moments between the music, but I felt they still portrayed movement through composition. From this I analysed the works of Eadweard Muybridge and Marcel Duchamp and explored aspects of Futurism. This allowed me to experiment with how I wanted to represent the movement I feel from music. This involved investigating whether the movement was conveyed better to the audience through the hands or the instrument. After completing several charcoal drawings using photos of my own clarinet, I found the movement was more visible through moving the instrument. It was best seen in a landscape composition of the clarinet from different angles, as it represented the fluidity and movement that occurs when in a performance.

The decision to work with charcoal in a realistic style was influenced by my desire to connect the audience to how I feel during a performance. I looked at works from artists such as Dylan Eakin, who creates hyper-realistic portraits and felt that I could feel the depth of emotion within each piece due to the realistic style. I felt that the black and white colour palette would allow the piece to be naturally emotive, much like music, and place the audience's focus on the movement of the instrument. The lack of colour also enhances the contrast and tone within the piece, becoming symbiotic with music in the sense that music and art present the monochromatic expression of cathartic antithesis. Working with charcoal on a large scale enabled me to create deep contrasts in texture and tone, defining the form and representing the realist style. Therefore, the audiences' connectivity to the piece was enhanced.

This drawing represented the movement I feel physically when performing and listening to music, so I felt it necessary to continue my body of work and address the internal movement of emotions sparked by music. To contrast the physical aspect represented in two dimensional drawing, I felt it necessary to represent the internal emotions through three dimensional sculpture. I also understood that I wanted to create a multi-sensory experience for the audience. To capture this, I began looking at sculptures that create music and was particularly inspired by the work by Anna Lin and Mike Tonkin, 'Singing

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'Ringing Tree'. The work displayed movement through shape and expressed sound through the wind blowing through the cylindrical stacked shapes that create the sculpture. I explored this further by bending PVC pipes with hot sand to create organic shapes. This took much trial and error to develop an efficient method to bend the pipes and also restricted the size of the pipes I could bend.

I was inspired by the works of David McLeod. His pieces were both uniform and fluid, allowing you to feel the movement and connectivity within them. This sense of connectivity was extremely important to carry into my own work as it was reflective of the harmony within musical compositions, specifically the classical era of music.

The cylindrical shape of the pipes allowed them to produce sound when air is blown through, reflecting the symmetry between music and art. It was essential to me that the sculpture produced sound, as it allows the viewer to connect more deeply to the artwork by engaging all their senses. The cylindrical shape of pipes allowed the creation of smooth, organic shapes and form, reflecting the fluid and natural sounds created by the pipes. The monotone white colour of the pipes allowed for the creation of tone through shadow, placing the focus on the movement of the shapes and the symbolism of the white colour reflects the peace and illumination found in the sounds produced by the sculpture.

I created three of these sculptures, all different but uniform to reflect different classical musical periods and composers. I felt that the large, but tightly wound sculpture reflects the passionate and aggressive Romantic works of composers such as Prokofiev and Stravinsky. The smaller and more playful sculpture with free form and overlapping shapes reflects the curiosity and exploration found within 20th Century classical music, specifically through composers such as Gershwin or Miriam Hyde. The final sculpture of medium size and simple composition reflects the traditional Gregorian chants played during the Medieval and Renaissance eras of classical music.

To accompany the piece, I created a piece of music by recording the sounds produced when air is blown through the pipe sculptures. I recorded each pipe individually and overlaid them dependent on the note produced to create chords. This was very difficult as the pipes all produced notes that were either too similar to each other or did not sound cohesive with the rest of the chord. Using the small range of notes from the sculptures I was able to create two chords, most of which exist in a non-diatonic four-part harmony. To accentuate the chords and provide a connection to both pieces in my body of work, I recorded a melody and underlying chords on my clarinet. This melody provided drive through the music whilst remaining relatively atonal, rubato and legato, reflecting the organic shapes of the sculptures.

Through the connectivity of auditory and visual stimuli, 'Rubato' represents how music resonates through the human body to create movement both externally and internally.