

***Always Looking Upwards: An Original
Composition for Trumpet and Piano***

A Senior Honors Research Project by

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Always Looking Upwards

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Score for *Always Looking Upwards*

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Audio Recording: Zachary Richards’ Senior Trumpet Recital- 04/11/2010- CD Track I

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Introduction

This project focused on the creation of an original composition for solo trumpet accompanied by piano based on a programmatic setting of the sky. Preparation for the project included research pertaining both to musical ideas that suitably portrayed the sky in many forms as well as compositional techniques for the genre. The writing of the two parts gave many challenges as a great understanding was needed of the techniques and abilities required to play each of the instruments. A personal performance of the piece was also needed, requiring several rehearsals to determine the playability of both parts and the ways in which they interacted. The purpose of this project was to determine whether the literature in this genre and instrumentation could be suitably added for the benefit of the musical repertoire.

The outcome of the piece depended upon both performers being able to perform the composition taking into consideration technical issues, endurance problems, and especially part interactions. Advanced college level and professional level players were the intended demographic for performers of the piece. Each part was crafted to be challenging, yet playable, with an emphasis on the parts interacting with each other to create a sound that would suggest a picture of the sky in its many forms for the listener. This required upwards of seven rehearsals between the two performers for a performance of the piece on April 11th, 2010 as part of the requirements for a senior trumpet recital.

Musical Influence

Several years of private instrumental and music theory study have reinforced and shown how the combination of piano and trumpet can be very effective for musical conveyance of ideas. Over ten years of playing the trumpet in ensemble and accompanied solo settings allowed for observance of standard repertoire for both trumpet and piano that helped influence the ideas set forth in this composition. Influence also came through the many frameworks of the sky observed over many clear nights, stormy evenings, and beautiful days around the world, specifically those from the mountains of Switzerland. Specific pieces used as references included *Concerto for Trumpet* by Joseph Haydn, *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* by Kent Kennan, *Fantaisie and Variations on "The Carnival of Venice"* by J.B. Arban, and *Nightsongs* by Richard Peaslee. Each of these pieces contained styles, musical ideas, and compositional techniques that influenced the ideas used in *Always Looking Upwards* while the piece remained original in form and overall musical concept.

The idea for the piece first came while traveling with the Ohio Ambassadors of Music on a trip across Europe in 2003. It remained unwritten as more ideas evolved until this project opened an opportunity to finally bring the composition into reality. Although specific musical content was sparse at the beginning of the project, consisting of only an opening melody and a few other short ideas, the general concept of the overall form was solid. The piece was to consist of two movements representing day and night and several sections representing anything from a perfectly clear sky to a terrible thunderstorm. The title came from the way of best observing that which was so inspiring, always looking upwards towards the sky.

Always Looking Upwards: Analysis

Movement I “Day”; Section A

Section A begins the movement and ends at measure 29. The tempo remains constant throughout the piece at quarter note = 86 beats per measure in common time meter. It starts with a motif in the piano consisting of the open and static sounding intervals of a perfect fifth, a perfect fourth, and an octave emphasizing the key of F major. This two measure long motif repeats as an ostinato with small occasional variations throughout the entire section similar to the accompaniment in *Fantaisie and Variations on “The Carnival of Venice”* (Arban 5). The trumpet enters at the end of measure 4 with a soaring melody based on the pentatonic scale. The melody stays in the upper-middle register of the trumpet and gives a very open yet intense feeling as to symbolize the sun rising on a beautiful clear day. This open intervallic sound is inspired by the second movement of Kennan’s *Sonata* (5). Measure 13 holds a cadence point where the trumpet descends back to the middle range and the piano leaves the ostinato for two measures. This return is varied when the piano leaves the key of F major and cadences on d minor.

The piano then returns to the ostinato in F major in measure 15 and the trumpet reenters now in the mid-to-low range. The melody is still based on the pentatonic scale, but is now more rhythmically varied emphasizing a more syncopated feel. Imitative fragments are scattered over the ostinato in the piano part, specifically in measures 18, 20, 21, and 27. The music begins to simplify and lowers dynamically in the trumpet part while the piano part picks up energy taking the piece into the next section at measure 30. Section A is illustrated in Table One on page 6.

Table One: Movement I “Day”; Section A- measures 1-29

Measure numbers	Compositional/ Musical Concepts	Dynamic Analysis	Textural Analysis	Meter/Rhythmic Analysis
1-4	Establishment of the ostinato in F major consisting of open/static intervals	Medium loud	Piano ostinato spanning over three octaves only	4/4
5-12	Trumpet enters with melody based around pentatonic scale	Medium loud	Piano ostinato continues; trumpet melody in upper-middle register	
13-14	Piano now emphasizes d minor	Quieting from medium loud	Piano leaves ostinato; trumpet goes down to middle register	
15-17	Piano returns to F major, Trumpet reenters with melody	Moderately soft	Piano returns to ostinato; trumpet in middle-to-low range	Still 4/4, but with some syncopated rhythms
18-21			The upper hand of the piano adds imitative material of the trumpet melody	
22-26			Piano returns to ostinato	
27			More trumpet imitation in the piano part	
28-29	Trumpet simplifies, piano picks up energy	Trumpet quiets while piano gets louder		

Movement I “Day”; Section B

This section begins with a rhythmic and harmonic transition from measures 30-35. The entire section lasts until measure 65. The transition consists of the piano moving from the duple feel to a triple feel stretching out the feeling of time, yet creating a small instability, such as the feeling as a distant storm on the horizon approaches. The harmonic changes head to the dominant emphasized in the bass-line as to increase the slight tension. At the end of measure 35, the trumpet reenters with a melody similar to that of the original, but rhythmically augmented and inverted intervallically. The trumpet still remains in a duple feel as to add to the tension and continues to be based on the F major pentatonic scale, although there is now more emphasis on

the dominant. An ostinato remains in the left hand of the piano while the right hand imitates the trumpet melody an octave higher and two beats later, creating an echo effect. This general idea lasts until measure 51 with some dynamic and textural increases and decreases. The entire section from measure 35-51 is intended to create the uneasy feeling from the long wait as a storm moves in.

Starting at measure 52 the trumpet completely simplifies to long quiet whole notes while the piano continues the ostinato harmonically with rhythmic variation. The section continues to wind down to measure 61 with an arpeggiated chord in the piano consisting of four perfect fifths stacked on top of four perfect fourths, giving a very open yet unstable feel as if the storm had arrived, but had not yet begun to rain. From measure 62-64 the piano slowly builds up with a rhythmic motif that increases in complexity as to simulate a short moment of rain. The section finally ends at measure 65 with an arpeggiated I 6/4 chord in the piano. This section is illustrated in its entirety in Table Two on page 8.

Movement I “Day”; Cadenza

The trumpet cadenza begins on count 3 of measure 65 leading to measure 80. It starts with pick-ups into a trill which then leads into another soaring melody like the calm before the storm, which is emphasized with light octave jumps. The cadenza then becomes more complex in measure 72 with a scalar motive that is repeated inspired by Haydn’s *Concerto* (4). Measure 76 begins a chromatic scalar ascension to a climactic high concert C then back down to a trill that leads into Section C. The whole cadenza is a representation of the calm before the storm leading into a seemingly instant downpour. It is illustrated in Table Three on page 8.

Table Two: Movement I “Day”; Section B- measures 30-65

Measure numbers	Compositional/ Musical Concepts	Dynamic Analysis	Textural Analysis	Meter/Rhythmic Analysis
30-35	Piano plays rhythmic and harmonic transition to duple feel and dominant center	Begins loud and quiets to moderately soft	The piano plays scalar motives in the right hand while the left hand emphasizes the rhythmic and harmonic changes	The feeling transitions from a strong duple to a strong triple
36-39	Trumpet enters with intervallically inverted and rhythmically augmented melody, Piano continues new ostinato with imitation in right hand	Moderately soft	Trumpet is mid-range with a melody based on pentatonic scale. Piano left hand ostinato spans 3 octaves while imitation is an octave higher and two beats later	Trumpet remains in duple while the piano emphasizes triple
40-45		Increases for three measures then decreases for three measures	Trumpet and piano right hand move into upper register then to middle register	
46-51		Overall decrease to very soft	Texture begins to simplify	
52-60	Trumpet and piano parts both simplify themselves	Very soft	Very simple	Trumpet uses whole notes while piano rhythmically varies on ostinato
61	Piano arpeggio consists of a chord of stacked fifths over a chord of stacked fourths		Piano arpeggio	Time momentarily seems to stop
62-65	Transition to cadenza	Soft increasing to loud	Harmonically simple to complex ending on a I6/4 chord	Rhythmically simple to complex

Table Three: Movement I “Day”; Cadenza- measures 65-80

Measure numbers	Compositional/ Musical Concepts	Dynamic Analysis	Textural Analysis	Meter/Rhythmic Analysis
65-71	Trumpet cadenza with calm melody	Loud then soft	Trumpet in mid-upper register	Time is mostly free
72-75	Trumpet descending scalar material	Two measures medium; two soft	Two measure motive repeated again	Free but accelerating
76-79	Chromatic material leading to climax and back down	Medium to loud to louder	Starts mid-range then to high-range then back down	Still free with more acceleration
80	Trill on scale degree 7	Loud to louder	Mid-range	

Movement I “Day”; Section C

This section will end the movement lasting from measures 81-100. The tempo resumes right away, however, the feeling of time doubles as the piano plays a pounding sixteenth-note triplet motive in the bass as well as fast scalar passages in the right hand. This represents a torrential downpour with large raindrops pounding the ground while the trumpet begins with a still simplistic melody overtop of the piano representing the howling winds of the storm. In a big contrast to earlier diatonic harmonies, the harmony begins to follow more chromatic relations starting with F, moving to Ab in measure 83, Bb in measure 84, G in 85, Eb in 86, back to F in 87, Db in 88, C in 89, and lands back on F in 90. During this section the trumpet begins to get more and more complex and plays back-and-forth with the piano with scalar patterns leading to a large climactic cadence at measure 90, symbolizing the center of the storm.

The music then goes from the loudest part yet down to a soft section in the span of two measures, quickly, just as storms often come and go. Measures 92-100 are a section influenced by the end of a storm, as one hears the random raindrops on the roof as the storm dies. The piano begins with chromatic trills taking the tonality away from F. A muted trumpet then joins also trilling and the two instruments go back and forth with atonal chromatic activity and trills creating a cloud of sound. The section and movement finally ends with the muted trumpet playing a whole note on concert A while the piano trills and settles on the A as to set the mood for A minor, the chromatic mediant to F. Section C is illustrated in Table Four on page 10.

Table Four: Movement I “Day”; Section C- measures 81-100

Measure numbers	Compositional/ Musical Concepts	Dynamic Analysis	Textural Analysis	Meter/Rhythmic Analysis
81	Piano right hand begins rhythmic figures while left hand plays scalar motifs in F Mixolydian and Lydian	Begins loud and decreases to medium loud	Thick with octave shifts in left hand of the piano	Remains in 4/4 but the feeling of time doubles and the triple verses duple remains
82	Trumpet enters with simplistic melody still in F Mixolydian	Medium loud	Piano remains the same; Trumpet is in mid-upper register	Trumpet melody emphasizes duple over piano triple
83	Ab Lydian			Trumpet begins to syncopate rhythms
84	Bb Mixolydian			
85	G Mixolydian in first inversion		Trumpet uses fast scalar motifs	
86	Eb Mixolydian	Grows to loud	This is the thickest texture of this section	The trumpet is now playing complex fast rhythms
87	F Lydian	Loud		
88	Db Major			Trumpet simplifies, but piano remains complex
89	C as a dominant to F	Growing from loud to louder		
90-91	Climax of the first movement in F	Begins at louder, but quickly decreases to moderately soft	Trumpet finishes; piano left hand stops pounding; piano right hand goes into chromatic scale based on F	Rhythmic activity begins to slow down
92	Piano plays trills taking the tonality from F	Moderately soft	Piano is playing thin chromatic trills	Time appears to suddenly lose consistency
93-98	Trumpet enters with more trills and a Harmon mute	Mismatching swells in both trumpet and piano	The texture thins and thickens back and forth with chromatic motifs and trills	
99-100	Trills die down and slow to a stop	Slowly dying away	Becomes very thin	Time slows to a halt

Movement II “Night”; Section A

This movement begins as the first ends, with both parts coming to a halt on a concert A. Section A begins in measure 102 with the piano playing an accompanied melody similar in style to the first melody presented in the piece. It is however different as the melody is based on A minor pentatonic while the accompaniment uses syncopated triads based in the key of A minor. There are also metric changes throughout the section such as measure 105 in 3/4 and 108 in 5/4, inspired by the techniques used in the first movement of Kennan’s *Sonata* (2). These differences are designed to give an uneasy feeling such as what one might feel after the sun has set on a stormy day, but the storm still lingers waiting to finish.

The activity in the piano decreases to measure 113 and the trumpet enters, again with a similar feel to the first melody, but based on A minor pentatonic and in the lower-middle register. The piano continues the left hand syncopated accompaniment occasionally punctuated with chords in the right hand adding to the trumpet melody. Starting in measure 118 the meter again begins alternating 3/4 with 5/4, while the trumpet and piano right hand exchange a fast triplet motif which helps the music to chromatically modulate to the key of C minor at measure 121. The music also gets louder and more active both in the trumpet melody and the piano right hand, as if the winds were to pick up, but the storm still holds off.

The dynamics quickly decrease by measure 125, reinforcing lingering calm, then slowly grows back to measure 129 where it modulates back to A minor. It then repeats the music from the previous C minor section with a few differences, as if the wind were to pick up even stronger. As before, the music calms as the trumpet ends in measure 136 with a decrescendoing whole

note. The piano then uses scalar activity for two measures taking the music to the next section at measure 138. A complete illustration of Section A can be found in Table Five.

Table Five: Movement II “Night”; Section A- measures 102-137

Measure numbers	Compositional/ Musical Concepts	Dynamic Analysis	Textural Analysis	Meter/Rhythmic Analysis
102-104	Piano begins melody in A minor pentatonic and accompaniment in A minor	Medium loud	Piano right hand is in high register, left hand in mid register with thick triads	4/4, left hand accompaniment uses syncopated rhythms
105				3/4
106-107				4/4
108				5/4
109-113	Piano winds down using descending lines	Decreasing to soft	Left hand triads fade into descending line	4/4
114-117	Trumpet enters with melody based in A minor pentatonic; Piano continues accompaniment and adds right hand	Moderately soft	Trumpet enters in mid-low register; piano returns to accompaniment	Piano returns to syncopated accompaniment
118-119	Trumpet and piano exchange a modulatory motif			3/4; Trumpet and piano exchange a sixteenth note triplet figure
120	Chromatic modulation to C minor	Increasing to loud		5/4; triplet figure continues
121-123	C minor	Loud	Trumpet and piano right hand move into mid-upper register	4/4; Rhythms in both instruments become more active
124		Decreasing to moderately soft		3/4
125-128	Modulating back to A minor	Moderately soft	Music calms and then picks back up	4/4
129-131	A minor	Medium loud	Trumpet and piano right hand move into mid-upper register	
132				3/4
133-135			Music calming down	4/4
136-137	Scalar material in the piano leads to next section	Decreasing to soft	Texture thins as trumpet finishes and piano moves to scalar activity	Syncopation in piano left hand ends

Movement II “Night”; Section B

This section lasts from measures 138-172 creating an air of mystery as the left hand of the piano plays a tremolo between A’s in the lower register symbolizing distant thunder. The trumpet enters at the end of measure 138 with a somewhat triumphant sounding melody while the right hand of the piano interjects with high dissonant motifs like distant intermittent bolts of lightning. The music begins growing texturally and dynamically at measure 143 and continues to grow as the piano and trumpet call and answer each other such as one might see the distant lightning and then hear the thunder a few seconds later.

In measure 147 a new idea enters as the trumpet and right hand of the piano uses descending scalar material as though the storm finally breaks and rain begins to fall. The left hand of the piano begins a very disjoint and unpredictable rhythmic pattern suggestive of chaos. The trumpet reenters in measure 149 with a new, very rhythmically active melody while the left hand of the piano continues and the right hand continues with the intermittent dissonant motifs. Measure 153 contains a three note unison motif as if the lightning and thunder briefly synchronize. The music then grows on its way to a modulation to C minor marked by another unison accented motif. This next area also changes meter going between 3/4 and 5/4 as it grows even more to the climax of the entire piece at measure 164.

The climax is marked by a loud accented unison rhythmic figure spanning one and a half measures. This symbolizes being at the center of the storm as the lightning and thunder rage together while the wind and rain smash down. The music then comes quickly down and back up over the next measure and repeats the unison figure. This down and up repeats again, this time spread over two measures as the unison figure returns for the final time in measure 171. Section

B finally ends as the unison figure leads into a dramatic thinning of texture and dynamic as the trumpet drops out and the piano uses a descending scale to move into the next section. The main part of the storm has now passed and quickly begins to die out. Section B is illustrated in Table Six.

Table Six: Movement II “Night”; Section B- measures 138-172

Measure numbers	Compositional/ Musical Concepts	Dynamic Analysis	Textural Analysis	Meter/Rhythmic Analysis
138	Piano left hand begins tremolo on low A's	Very soft	Only piano left hand in low octave	Momentary loss of time
139	Trumpet enters with triumphant melody, Piano right hand begins high motifs	Soft	Trumpet enters mid-range; Piano right hand enters in upper register	Time continues to sound loose
140				3/4
141-142				4/4
143		Getting louder		3/4
144-146	Energy picks up quickly	Medium loud	Piano left hand stops tremolo; trumpet and piano left hand begin imitating each other	4/4; Definite time returns with sixteenth-note rhythmic activity
147-148	Scalar activity emphasizing A	Loud	Piano left hand begins low rhythms	Rhythms become very active
149-152	New rhythmic section	Medium loud	Trumpet enters with rhythmic melody, piano right hand adds high motifs	
153				Short unison rhythmic motif
154-156	Modulating to C minor			
157-159	C minor			3/4; More short unison motifs
160-161				5/4
162-163	Modulating back to A minor			3/4
164-166	A minor; Climax of composition	Very loud to very soft and back up	Unison accented motif into soft transition	4/4; Unison rhythmic motif
167-170	Repeat of climax motif	Very loud to very soft and back up	Unison accented motif into extended soft transition	
171-172	Final repeat of climax motif; transitional	Very loud to moderately soft	Unison accented motif into piano scalar transition	Final unison rhythmic motif into transition

Movement II “Night”; Section C

This section is essentially an extended transition back to the original idea from measures 173-190. The piano brings back the low tremolo and the trumpet uses a metered trill similar in concept to some of the transitions in *Nightsongs* (Peaslee 2). This symbolizes the storm as it begins to die and move away. The piano continues with tremolos moving around chromatically and adding occasional octatonic scalar activity, all still in the lower register. The trumpet and right hand of the piano begin to add short intermittent high-register motifs as if the lightning is slowly dissipating. This all builds up slowly through measure 182 as though the storm is building back up for one last downpour. Then suddenly the texture changes in measure 183 to an idea similar to the end of the first movement with trills on unpredictable pitches in both instruments, as the final bit of rain falls to the ground. The trills thin out into some scalar motion moving back to F major, but to add a brighter sound to the ending, measure 190 suddenly modulates up a half-step to F# major. Table Seven on page 16 fully illustrates Section C.

Movement II “Night”; Coda

The coda consists of the final 34 measures of *Always Looking Upwards*, returning to the original overall sound introduced at the beginning of the composition. It begins with a short piano transition using material from both the first and second movements, establishing the key of F#. The trumpet enters in measure 197 to add to the transition while the piano shifts to the very first arpeggio motif, as though a new day has come and the sky has returned to the beautiful clear bliss. In measure 202 the original melodic theme returns in the trumpet, again in the upper-register, but rhythmically simplified, as if the sky had become even more clear and simplistic. The trumpet then uses the very first two note motif of the melody over and over in different

rhythmic variations to bring the piece to a resolution. Measure 220 momentarily moves to B major as a plagal cadence bringing the end of the piece on a soft unison F#. The Coda is illustrated in Table Eight.

Table Seven: Movement II “Night”; Section C- measures 173-190

Measure numbers	Compositional/ Musical Concepts	Dynamic Analysis	Textural Analysis	Meter/Rhythmic Analysis
173-174	Beginning of transition	Moderately soft	Trumpet plays low metered trill; piano begins low tremolos	4/4; Time is loose
175-176	Piano left hand adds octatonic scales; Trumpet and piano right hand motifs	Medium loud	Trumpet and piano right hand add high range motifs	
177			Trumpet is high; piano is low	3/4
178-182	Energy is picking up	Increasing to loud	Texture thickens	4/4; Time is defined
183-187	Unpredictable trills	Starts loud and decreases	Texture changes to thin trills in both	Time seems to stop
188-189	Scalar activity leading to F major	Decreasing to soft	Slow medium range scales	Time returns and slows
190	Sudden change to F#	Soft	Settles in mid-range	Time stops

Table Eight: Movement II “Night”; Coda- measures 191-224

Measure numbers	Compositional/ Musical Concepts	Dynamic Analysis	Textural Analysis	Meter/Rhythmic Analysis
191-194	Piano transition establishing F#	Medium loud	Open melody in piano right hand while left hand arpeggiates F# major	4/4; eighth note pulse
195-196	Original arpeggio motif returns in piano	Decreasing to moderately soft		
197-201	Trumpet enters with transitional melody	Moderately soft		
202-211	Original melody returns in trumpet	Medium loud	Trumpet melody in upper-register	Simplistic with some syncopation
212-216	Trumpet two-note motif; piano adds transitional material	Loud decreasing to moderately soft	Piano texture thickens; Trumpets goes high to low	
217-219	Piano returns to arpeggio material	Decreasing	Thinning	
220-221	Piano arpeggiates B chord plagal cadence	Decreasing	Decreasing	Slowing
222-223	Return to F#	Decreasing	Decreasing	Slowing
224	Unison F#	Very soft	Very thin	Time stops

Conclusions

The final performance of *Always Looking Upwards* achieved its goals as many listeners commented on its effects. A summary was provided in the program notes to all in attendance giving a basis for interpretation of the music. Many commented on the effective compositional techniques painting the pictures of the sky. The music seemed to inspire thoughts and memories throughout the audience. For example, some were able to imagine a day riding a bike or in a car as they watched a sunny clear sky, while others remembered childhood nightmares of terrible storms. Many also inquired about publication, which seems the next logical step as the piece has met its goals as an effective and playable yet challenging work.

The experience of composing this work was extremely satisfying in addition to being a real achievement. The research required to create a unique and original work with compositional techniques inspired by other pieces was extensive. Writing the piece with all of its facets and then rehearsing and performing it effectively took a great deal of time and effort. The original composition can now take its place in the repertoire of this genre and give something different for performers to use. Seeing the piece finally come to fruition and to be so successful has opened more opportunities for more successful works in the future. *Always Looking Upwards* will hopefully continue to inspire thought among its performers and listeners for years to come.

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