DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF TWO ENSEMBLE PIECES:

GUILT AND CATACLYSM IN KAILUA

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAIʻI AT MĀNOA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

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By

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COMMENTS

Before submitting this paper to the committee, I took feedback into consideration. The section on extramusical inspiration for *Cataclysm in Kailua* has been modified and truncated. Also, I have strengthened my argument as to why *Cataclysm in Kailua* is in sonata form, not ABCBA form. Part of the *Guilt* analysis chapter had theoretical errors, and the comments allowed me to see where I misinterpreted my work. Thank you, Dr. Donald Womack, Dr. Thomas Osborne, and Dr. Takuma Itoh for reviewing my paper and scores.
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ABSTRACT

"Cataclysm in Kailua" and "Guilt" reflect emotional dialogue. The topic of industrial growth, progress and respect for the environment is complex. Both pieces entertain contrasting material representing conflicting opinions. In "Guilt," the opinions are more transparent because of the text. My goal was to present multiple perspectives on this issue, prompting dialogue as a result. Writing two adjunct pieces that can be performed either apart or together gave me opportunity to diversify instrumentation and present alternate approaches to the related theme. In addition to presenting my ability to write works for a variety of instruments, the purpose of this master’s thesis is to shed light on socio-economic issues. To highlight a variety of perspectives, I wrote two contrasting music compositions, each hoping to spark conversations about our purpose, responsibilities and relationship to the unique place that is Hawai‘i.
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PREFACE

Two seemingly disparate pieces comprise the master’s thesis. *Cataclysm in Kailua* and *Guilt* both contrast in instrumentation, harmonic approach, and mood, but are united in extramusical impetus. Although not mentioned explicitly in either piece, the inspiration grew from similar contexts. Both pieces focus on issues related to environmental concerns stemming from economic growth in Hawai‘i, and the island of Oahu in particular. In this paper, the meaning behind each work is discussed, then dissected in context with compositional decisions. Each piece is analyzed regarding harmonic construction, compositional techniques used, and performance results.

*Guilt* and *Cataclysm* are single movement ensemble pieces. *Cataclysm* has unorthodox instrumentation, as it calls for select wind and brass instruments but a full string section, and a limited selection of percussion. I chose to include non-Western instrumental elements in *Guilt*. *Guilt* utilizes voice, piano, and sanjo ajaeng. The ajaeng’s uniquely vague pitch production, as well as its remarkable vibrato capabilities, and distinct timbre, drew me to write for it.

In addition to presenting my ability to write works for a variety of instruments, the purpose of this master’s thesis is to shed light on socio-economic issues. To highlight a variety of perspectives, I wrote two contrasting music compositions, each hoping to spark conversations about our purpose, responsibilities and relationship to the unique place that is Hawai‘i.
CHAPTER II
Cataclysm in Kailua

CATACLYSM AS POLITICAL COMMENTARY

The role of the artist in the context of the piece is to present a topic that receives little attention, thereby sparking conversation. The purpose of this political piece is to address an issue with the hopes of propelling a situation to light. Specifically, the motivation behind Cataclysm in Kailua is political; the goal is to cause the listener to think about housing problems, which is evident in Kailua and representative of a state-wide problem.

Music is often a vehicle used to communicate political opinions. Cataclysm in Kailua follows a lineage of political pieces. The political situation in Kailua is not comparable to the oppression experienced in 20th century Soviet Europe, but I mention the composers and pieces in the following paragraph as examples of monumental and influential political compositions.

Dmitry Shostakovich (1906-1975), under the USSR, had to conform to imposed stylistic parameters. Although he lived under censorship, he managed to “forge (sic) a musical language of colossal emotional power.”

Polish composer Penderecki (1933) invoked the subject of healing from war and trauma in the choral work Passio et mors domini nostri Jesu Christi secundum Lucam (1960-63). The famous Tren [Threnody: To the Victims of Hiroshima] (1960) expresses the suffering of the Japanese bombing victims at the end of World War II.

Before composing Cataclysm in Kailua, I studied the works of Shostakovich, Penderecki, and other politically-minded composers. Though there is not one socio-political composition

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that I used as inspiration, during my studies I found pieces like the ones by Shostakovich and Penderecki to be emotionally and intellectually compelling. Composers can find purpose and meaning in creating art that speaks to social situations, as I found with composing *Cataclysm in Kailua*. This is not to imply that music without political impetus has less meaning or value to society. Writing with socio-political intent can be a meaningful avenue towards creating.

**EXTRAMUSICAL IMPETUS FOR CATACLYSM IN KAILUA**

Kailua is a small residential community on the Windward side of the island of Oahu, with a population of 38,635 people.² Over the last ten years, Kailua has experienced significant economic growth and popularity among tourists and Oahu residents alike. The town center has grown to include the arrival of large chains, several restaurants and boutiques. Once President Barack Obama and his family started vacationing in Kailua on a regular basis, Kailua became a hip place to live and vacation.³

*Cataclysm in Kailua* comments on the economic boon and commercialization of Kailua’s beaches, and, specifically, a housing issue. While it would be reductive to assert that economic growth has had greater negative consequences than positive outcomes for the Kailua locals, drastic change has affected the town over the past decade.⁴

At the outset of this project, my goal was to create a satirical piece that mocks the minute problems that Kailua residents complain about. For many Kailua residents who have lived there when the town was considered the countryside, the town’s shift in character forced the residents

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⁴ The US Census population count for Kailua in 2000 is 36,513; Kailua grew by 2,122 over ten years.
to adjust to a busier pace of life. Tourists are bused in daily, congesting the roads and the
beaches. Minor annoyances like increased traffic, and the unwelcome arrival of a Target mega-
store, have made headlines. Kailua is a laissez-faire beach town where the greatest letdown has
been the state budget cut for the Kailua Town Fireworks for the Fourth of July. The residents
opposed to the changes have loudly voiced their objections in the media. Initially, I set out to jest
that the issues in Kailua are minuscule compared to other problems that the rest of Oahu and the
State of Hawai‘i face. The current First Family vacations here. Kailua seems idyllic.

However, a less visible problem exists in Kailua. Business owners and homeowners have
greatly benefitted financially from the growth, while lower-middle and lower income families
have been pushed out. With Cataclysm in Kailua, I wanted to bring attention to the consequences
that have come with Kailua’s economic success.

With Kailua’s gentrification, lower-income families living in the town have been facing
mounting problems. An affordable housing building, comprised of 217 units, was torn down in
2013 to make way for new condominiums along Kailua Road, forcing many to relocate to other
areas of the island, or become homeless. In 2006, the developers began to evict their tenants in
the Kailua Road apartments, they provided no answers as to where the tenants should relocate.
Affordable housing in Hawai‘i is elusive. Those who are struggling to make rent payments and
do not have the option to move in with other family members have limited living options. For
someone working for minimum wage in Hawai‘i (which is the Federal minimum wage rate,
$7.25), their monthly income after withholdings is $900. As this paper is being written in mid-2013, the median price for a two-bedroom rental in Honolulu is $1,700.\textsuperscript{5}

The section of land where the low-income rental units are has enormous value. The buildings, according to local Honolulu media articles, were never meant for low-income renters. Rats, roaches, City & County code-violating septic tanks, and rotting infrastructure lowered the value of the properties, keeping the rent low.\textsuperscript{6} When the new buildings are completed and put on the market at the end of 2013, the price per unit will be listed for $600,000,\textsuperscript{7} well above what the low-income residents can afford.

Once the leases expired in 2008, the property owners ended up suing tenants to force them to leave. Many of the tenants ended up homeless across the street in the District Park. This created even more desperate situations for people already doing their best to survive. In July 2013, a homeless man in the park was stabbed to death. For many of these newly homeless families, their greatest concern becomes safety and survival.\textsuperscript{8}

SEMANTICS OF “CATACLYSM”

The word “Cataclysm” holds strong implications. The title appears striking, and potentially melodramatic without context. By definition, cataclysm means “a large-scale and

\textsuperscript{5}Zillow, "Honolulu Home Prices and Home Values in HI - Zillow Local Info." Zillow: Real Estate, Apartments, Mortgage & Home Values in the US. http://www.zillow.com/local-info/HI-Honolulu-home-value/r_18615/


\textsuperscript{7}Nakaso, Aguiar. “Low-cost housing in Kailua all but over.”

\textsuperscript{8}LeBlanc, Adrian, Random family: love, drugs, trouble, and coming of age in the Bronx. (New York: Scribner, 2003).
violent event in the natural world.” It seems questionable that a beautiful beach town and cataclysm should exist in the same phrase. I initially chose cataclysm for the phonetic alliteration (Ka and Ka) and, paradoxically, the its potential to be viewed as irony. “A cataclysm in pleasant Kailua? Surely you jest!” was the reaction aimed for initially. After providing context to the piece in my program notes, I allow the listener to develop her or his own conclusion as to whether Kailua’s morphing is cataclysmic, reasonable, or laughable. As implied in the previous section, however, even a desirable town like Kailua has its issues beneath the picture-perfect exterior.

INSTRUMENTATION & FORM DIAGRAM

1 Flute
1 Oboe
1 Clarinet in Bb
1 Bassoon

2 Horns in F
1 Tuba

Percussion (1 player: 2 timpani, 1 woodblock)

3-6 Violin I
3-6 Violin II
2-4 Viola
1-3 Cello
1 Bass
Figure 2.0. Diagram for *Cataclysm in Kailua*

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CHAPTER III
Form & Analysis: Expanded Sonata Form

IMPETUS

The method I took in constructing Cataclysm in Kailua intentionally draws from the sonata form. I aimed to write a piece that has a purposeful structure, yet sounds like it does not have overt organization. Voices are often pitted against each other, their ideas fighting for attention. The result is meant to sound like a conversation in which no side listens to the other. It may be difficult to convince the listener that the silences or staggered entrances are purposeful, but the risk was taken.

The form of *Cataclysm* can be broken into four main sections: The first and second sections introduce the main melodic ideas, the third section develops ideas from the first and second sections, and the fourth and final section reiterates truncated ideas from the first and second sections in different order, acting as a conclusion.

*Cataclysm* is in sonata form. Like sonata form, *Cataclysm* has an exposition, a development, and a recapitulation. Most importantly, *Cataclysm* embodies the spirit of sonata form. The piece embarks on a journey, causing the exposition to be interpreted differently at the
end of the recapitulation than when the exposition was first heard. Simply put, after the journey, there is a resolution. Webster eloquently articulates sonata form defined as: “Each movement grows bar by bar and phrase by phrase, with the meaning of each event depending on its function in the structure and dramatic context.”

Philosophically, Cataclysm is in sonata form. However, Cataclysm also has a non-traditional exposition, an extra round-like section, and a recapitulation that recalls ideas from the exposition and round sections. Traditional sonata form is founded in tonality, and Cataclysm is not functionally tonal. Cataclysm may not be functionally tonal, but other techniques are present that act in a similar manner, e.g., building and releasing tension. This interpretation of sonata form may be pushing the boundaries of the traditional definition of sonata form, but Cataclysm is not completely alien to the sonata form’s core.

My initial form for Cataclysm was ABCA. Cataclysm became an updated reworking of the sonata form while I was completing the piece. I see and hear the piece more clearly as an expanded and modified sonata form than as ABCA. The following chapter will present the reasons for this interpretation. In this following chapter, I present the reasons why.

EXPOSITION

Like the exposition section in sonata form, Cataclysm has two short, contrasting motives that serve as primary and secondary groups to the piece. Cataclysm opens with a bassoon whole note followed with a rising chromatic line that dissipates into silence. All attention focuses on a

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lone voice punctuating the silence. I have it appear in bassoon, horn and tuba at various junctures in the piece. Each time, it is meant to sound naked and awkward, as if stating an unpleasant truth. As expected in sonata form, the motive is the primary group. This idea returns throughout the piece. The group is disjunct with dotted rhythms, adhering to the stereotype of a primary group (mm. 1-7).\textsuperscript{10} (see Figure 3.0).

Figure 3.0: *Cataclysm in Kailua*, mm. 1-2

The opening motive is immediately repeated in altered form. After the bassoon, the strings follow with a forte pizzicato gesture. The bassoon returns with the opening motive, with moderate pitch changes given to add interest and direction.

Following the primary group, the transition proceeds immediately after (mm. 7-17). All entrances by the strings and winds are staggered. Since the piece is not tonal, there cannot be the modulation that would be expected in sonata form. Neither is there intervallic transposition. There are no apparent melodic lines for the listener to grab hold of. The purpose of a transition is to move from one idea to the next, which this material does.

\textsuperscript{10} James Webster, “Sonata Form.”
Instead of introducing the secondary group after the transition, the primary group reappears (Primary group repeat (PG), mm. 17-24). The purpose of repeating the group is to make it memorable, and to provide a cue that the material is important. The line is doubled in octaves by the oboe and bassoon. PG is repeated with the clarinet and oboe playing in parallel fourths while the oboe joins in homophony (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: *Cataclysm in Kailua*, return of the primary group, mm. 20-25
After the thematic material and PR, another short transition follows (T2, mm. 25-33). The triplet (rising minor third + descending minor second) resurfaces throughout the piece. It is the rhythmic pattern from the principal group disguised in retrograde. The m3+m2 appears in all instruments in multiple instances. The second transition uses the triplet motive in various ways to disperse tension from motive PR and gently weave the music into the second group (mm. 32-4). The second group (S) appears with *piano* dynamic indications in the cello and viola: staccato eighth notes playing a motive made of an ascending perfect fifth to create a repetitious bass line (Figure 3.2). The result is a second group that sounds hidden behind the transition texture.

**Figure 3.2. Cataclysm in Kailua, the secondary group makes an appearance, mm. 34-37**

Once the brief transition following S finishes, the closing section (K, mm. 40-48) presents contrasting material. All of competing textures and lines converge in the closing section. Its robust character and homophonic texture differs from all previous materials both in the second transition and in the whole exposition. A non-traditional cadence is reached; the violin
tremolos and the ascending line through the woodwinds create tension to an arrival, signaling the end of the exposition.\textsuperscript{11}

The character and texture in the exposition is symbolic of the lack of productive discourse in addressing Kailua’s gentrification. Two main ideas are presented in the exposition that are not given ample spotlight. First, the bassoon carries the primary group, then it becomes lost in the dense texture once the ensemble enters. Next, when strings present the second group, their lines are hardly audible. The exposition opens the piece and presents two main ideas that are developed throughout its entirety. The primary group holds the spotlight then gets swallowed, like a hesitant voice overwhelmed as the discordant voices drown it into the texture. The intended analogy is a conversation in which no participant is aware of any other voice except its own. Each instrument is fighting for the spotlight, representative of a group of people concerned about the town’s changes, but unable to agree upon ways to address its problems. The symbolism ties into my overarching concern with Kailua’s gentrification.

ROUND

Following the exposition, a typical development section takes previous material and explores several iterations of the main groups. In \textit{Cataclysm in Kailua}, a round is placed where a development would normally be expected. Instead of going from the exposition to the development, a round is placed between the typical sections.

To illustrate the significance of the intended differences between a traditional sonata form and what transpires in \textit{Cataclysm}, compare the stages of bread baking with the sonata form. In

\begin{flushleft}
\footnotesize\textsuperscript{11} The Harvard Dictionary of Music defines cadence as “melodic or harmonic configuration that creates a sense of repose or resolution...In works that largely abandon tonality [sic], cadential gestures may rely on traditional rhythmic and melodic elements.” (131)
\end{flushleft}
the exposition, the main ingredients are all placed into the mixing bowl. The development is akin
to the dough being twisted into various forms like pretzels, braids, baguettes, morning buns, and
boules, to name a few. Then the bread is baked and set to cool, like the recapitulation. Everybody
knows what to expect to smell and taste from the ingredients that were thrown in at the
beginning, but upon consuming the final product, the whole process becomes resolved.

   A development immediately following the exposition did not work in Cataclysm. It
required an intermediary section. The groups in the exposition were presented only a few times;
the piece needed another section. Like the resting stage, when the bread is kept in the dark while
the yeast wakes up and stretches the dough into its gorgeous texture, the piece required time to
rise. Why not throw in a passage that has familiar elements yet is completely contrasting in
texture, harmony, rhythm and character, and make it fit within the whole? The middle section,
which I labeled a round, was my answer.\footnote{12}

   The structure of the round is straightforward and predictable, one long exertion of the
same melodic material presented eight times in various arrangements. Its staggered entrances and
circular phrases fit closely to the definition of a round (Figure 3.3).\footnote{13} The section is noticeably
tonal, never fully realized in triads, but is heard fluctuating between C major and minor
nonetheless. Also contrary to the exposition, each voice gets to present most of its phrase
material before another voice enters and continues the thread.

"The essence of the round is its sense of stasis and circularity. It is a type of canon, but a limited one, since in a round the subsequent voices cannot transpose the melody's pitch, alter its rhythm or enter in an irregular time sequence." (Johnson)}

\footnote{13}{Ibid.}
DEVELOPMENT

In the development (mm. 122-171), motives from the exposition and some elements from the round section are expanded upon in various ways. Tension gradually builds through the section as motives grow in length and volume. Instability is palatable because of the quickly-changing, often conflicting rhythmic ideas between the instruments.

At the start of the development, the motive from the second group makes a lengthy appearance in the cello and viola. A contrasting melodic line in the oboe plays smoothly in mid-register. A horn echoes fragments of the oboe line. The oboe and horn sound almost together with the strings, but are rhythmically independent as so to create tension. (Figure 3.4).
The second group fades out, implying that the line does not have enough momentum to continue. As stated earlier, the parts often overlap each other, which symbolizes a discussion riddled with interruptions. The viola and cello appear in the beginning of the development, but are not given dynamic or melodic prominence. The oboe is the sole instrument given a line with commanding presence; it has the forefront from mm. 128-132. The primary group weaves itself back into the texture at m. 141. The strings disband and the winds continue the momentum, thickening the texture with familiar triplet figures: The primary group gets augmented,
transposed, and truncated. The strings reenter with held pitches chosen nearly at random, to create an intensely dissonant sound. Instead of having the strings play a harmonic progression, the passage contains a line that moves slowly upward. (Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5: *Cataclysm in Kailua*, primary group variations, mm. 147-150.

All participating instruments come to a cadence at m. 155 (Figure 3.6), where material from the closing section is expected to arrive. Instead, the timpani usher in a false recapitulation. At this juncture, the listener has been given many passages of instability, and the false arrival is meant to trick the audience into believing the piece is approaching the end.
After the measures of homophony and stasis (mm. 155-165), purely textural material follows. Here, the apex of tension and instability is obvious. The parts have no prospect of being heard as individual lines, and launch into complete, mostly organized, chaos. To reflect the feeling of disorder, instructions are written for the performers to play any notes of their own accord. Specific instructions are still given, yet the notes themselves are arbitrary (Figure 3.6. *Cataclysm in Kailua*, mm. 154-158)
If interpreting the development as continued dialogue from the exposition, the development takes the material from the exposition and adds more miscommunication and bickering to the conversation. The development, in essence, is akin to the traditional sonata form development, as it “develops the material and increases the complexity of texture...In a psychological sense, this tension is the climax of the movement. At the same time, it prepares the structural climax, the simultaneous return which begins the recapitulation.”14 Certainly, this is true of the development section in *Cataclysm*. The apex of tension is present right before the

14 David Johnson, “Round.”
recapitulation (Figure 3.7). Overall in the development, *Cataclysm* remains true to the nature of the sonata form.

RECAPITULATION

The recapitulation is supposed to return previous material, functioning as a conclusion to what adventures were explored in the development. In the common practice period, the recapitulation “functions as a relaxation of tension or as a triumph over difficulties.”¹⁵ In *Cataclysm*, the spirit of the recapitulation remains present. The groups return to emphasize their importance, and earlier harmonies return as well. Closing material from the exposition arrives, nearly verbatim, though with an intensified sound due to the orchestration. Perhaps the voices are starting to agree with each other; they come together (Figure 3.7: m. 171). It is a significant psychological resolution to the struggle heard throughout the piece.

Although the recapitulation is not in traditional PTSK order (K, round, P, K (+ T, T2), SP), *Cataclysm in Kailua* restates the same motives, textures, and pitches from the beginning of the piece. What does differ is the length of the recapitulation: It is shorter in relationship to the other sections of the piece. The momentum of the piece at this point calls to be wound down and concluded. Motives reappear briefly in immediately recognizable ways, though most of them appear in different instruments.

The immense amount of tension built in the development calls for an arrival, and a satisfying one. The closing material (K) provides it at mm. 171-4. Two phrases of the triplet (m3+m2) motive are played, followed by meter changes that include material from the round

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¹⁵ James Webster, “Sonata Form.”
(mm. 175-81). Instead of simply finishing the section after the two phrases (K), parts of the melody from the round section are integrated. By connecting the two ideas, it shows the congruity of the round section with the piece as a whole.

The tuba initiates the secondary group. Once the horns begin imitating, the group abruptly ends, and the primary group returns. The primary group is as naked as it was in the opening statement, though now in the tuba (Figure 3.8). The tuba as a solo instrument recalls humor. This time, the horn imitates with an echo (mm. 215-16).

![Figure 3.8: Cataclysm in Kailua, tuba and horn, mm. 210-215](image)

_Cataclysm in Kailua_ concludes with the primary group in homophony in all the woodwinds, though part of it has been heard previously in m. 182. String pizzicato follow after a long, silent pause. The wood block has a short solo to finish the piece.

The final measures of _Cataclysm_ are again meant to reflect discussion. The woodwinds in unison give the impression that finally, at the end of the recapitulation, agreements have been made. The wood block adjourns the meeting as if it were a gavel (Figure 3.9). The end of the piece is meant to give an optimistic conclusion. In _Cataclysm in Kailua_, the voices come to a
consensus. Once the parts have the opportunity to finish their phrases, it sounds as if the instruments become aware and respectful of each other.

Figure 3.9. Cataclysm in Kailua, final measures, mm. 224-227
CHAPTER IV
Guilt

RELATIONSHIP TO CATAclySM IN KAILUA

The piece that makes up the second part of the thesis, Guilt, appears unrelated to Cataclysm in Kailua. Cataclysm is a stark contrast to Guilt. Cataclysm looks outward at social issues; Guilt is reflective and has characters. Whereas Cataclysm is nearly musical narration, Guilt uses words set to repetitive melodic material. Harmonically, modes and intervals structure Guilt. Guilt is in ABA form. The instrumentation calls for piano, SATB choir, solo soprano, and sanjo ajaeng (the Korean bowed zither with eight strings). Though the dissimilarities are numerous, the strength of the relationship between the two pieces lies in their extramusical context.

Guilt represents inner dialogue on the same topics that Cataclysm in Kailua addresses. Like siblings who are polar opposites in character and complexion, a genetic thread weaves through both. With Cataclysm, I tore at the surface of social injustice. Cataclysm points fingers at where problems lie in a community. Guilt is about responsibility on an individual level; it explores how one is responsible for the oppression of others, from one level of hierarchy to the next. Cataclysm shouts for change, Guilt ruminates on whether the changes would matter.

Guilt has personal implications, but it is not autobiographical. I used first person as a narrative, but the “I” in the text is not my persona. Where the autobiographical line ends and begins is not relevant to the piece. I prefer to let the music live on its own without needing to elaborate on my life, as it is irrelevant.
Let all unravel
Let all unfold
Let all be what is
Let all be left alone

All will be well
All will be what is
All will correct itself
All arrive

(When I was little I asked)
When I was little I worried
When I was little my mother said
You are destined to create change,
is is the burden of your generation!

(When I was little I wondered)
When I was little I worried
I wondered, will we rise
when the time arrives

Let all unravel
Let all unfold
Let all be left alone

Abandoned task passed on
to the next
one.

(Someone else will arise)

When I was little my mother said
Let all unravel
Let all unfold
Let all be what is
Let all be left alone
Alone
IMPETUS

When I decided to write a vocal piece for the thesis, the *sanjo ajaeng* was a natural choice to compose for in addition to choir, as I had the opportunity to collaborate with a virtuosic *ajaeng* player at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. First, many outstanding performers from the Asia-Pacific region collaborate at the university, like Seola Kim, a renowned *ajaeng* player. I was privileged to be able to work directly with her as I was composing for *ajaeng*, and then was further graced with having her perform *Guilt* for its premiere. Second, *ajaeng* fit my vision of *Guilt* because of its characteristic ability to use a wide range of vibrato. In contrast with the piano’s percussive nature and its pitch accuracy, the *ajaeng*’s unique vibrato techniques and ability to sustain pitches *ajaeng* was a perfect companion.

After first choosing the instrumentation, I next wrote the text, as my goal while composing was to embody the context of the words. One advantage of composing the text as well is having the luxury of crafting the words around the music, from the overall form to the details. While I was writing the text, I was attentive to the consonant and vowel sounds. I was aware of how the syllables would project. Where the text phrases repeat, the music often returns in a similar fashion. I used the phrases as a template for the outline of the piece as well. Hence the form of the piece closely adheres to the structure of the poem.

The first section reiterates two ideas: *Let all be as it is, and all will be as it is meant to be*. The repetitive phrases are like a mantra. Only after the second section does the context of the first section become clear. The narrator’s perspective is unveiled (“When I was little”).

Anxiety from the onset of adulthood becomes a theme. First it is a personal task (“you are destined”),

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then it becomes a burden of an entire generation (“It is the burden of your generation!”). The final section repeats words and motives from the first section, but introduces new text. “Abandoned task passed on / to the next one” indicates a conclusion. The words imply that the following generation will take care of what the present could not, as the generation before thought. The final stanza takes the mantra from the first section but adds a phrase that changes the meaning. What the mother says, the daughter has said, and the daughter will say to her children. As the words are cyclical, so are the problems, and so are the duties. It makes the text confusing because the mother embodies opposing perspectives, as does the daughter. It implies that one must change the direction of society, and one should let the world go on its natural course. The inherent conflict allowed me to see where the tension and emphasis in the music should naturally be.

Determining the harmonic and intervallic structures before writing Guilt helped map out a consistent sound. The harmonic framework for the piece is built loosely using synthetic modes as well as diatonic scales. Different techniques are utilized; mainly chromaticism, polytonality, juxtaposition, and repetition. Modes and intervals serve as the initial basis for most of the compositional decisions throughout Guilt. Tension is created either through increasing volume, range, or rhythmic intensity. The rhythmic techniques that appear consistently are isorhythmic motives and composite meters.

A detailed harmonic analysis of Guilt follows.

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17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
Figure 4.1. *Guilt*, outline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORM</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>Transition</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>a’</td>
<td>introductory material</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>b’</td>
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<td>45-66</td>
<td></td>
<td>78-100</td>
<td>101-117</td>
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<tr>
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<td>mm. 28-31</td>
<td>piano motive “b” (m. 75)</td>
<td>“Let all unravel” (mm. 25-27)</td>
<td>piano motive “b” (m. 75)</td>
<td>“When I was little” (mm. 86-88)</td>
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<td>doubling voice parts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>drone</td>
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<td>D dorian b5</td>
<td></td>
<td>A Ionian/aeolian (soprano)</td>
<td>A aeolian → various (choir)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>A aeolian → doubling voice parts (piano, jaeng)</td>
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<td>D, Doubling (piano)</td>
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CHAPTER V
Harmonic Construction of Guilt

INTRODUCTION & A SECTION

This chapter is an analysis of Guilt; it elaborates on the minutiae in the form and its harmonic skeleton (Figure 4.1). Although the form is ABA, the relationships within each section are not necessarily linear. B borrows ideas from A, and the A return has passages that originate from B. Section by section, this chapter articulates the compositional details, giving context to the piece as a whole.

The introduction foreshadows the A section. Its purpose is to create the atmosphere that is present throughout the piece. The ajaeng births the piece out of silence. It starts with a gentle semitone (E to F) that swells to G. The line grows to encompass more pitches. Once it settles on B (mm. 8-9), the piano enters. Until the piano enters, the pitch center (or scale) is not clear. E, F, G, Ab and B are the only notes from measures 1-8. The scale fragment is a hint of what scale follows once the piano arrives.

The simplest way to describe the mode used in the ajaeng from measures 1-20 is a D dorian flat 5 mode. The piano loosely uses a D locrian scale from measures 9-65. Chromaticism is heavily used throughout the passage, making it difficult to determine where D locrian ends. Although the piece opens on E and the introduction closes on E, the central pitch is D. The voices open on D in unison (m. 25), and the piano emphasizes A often in the introduction, acting as if it were functional tonality (Figure 4.2).
The A section melody was crafted loosely from the D locrian scale, though the intervals more than the scale compositionally determined the phrases. Opting for disjunct, dissonant intervals, most of the emphasis in the soprano line is on tritone and major seventh intervals. The passage is stepwise with occasional thirds, making the larger intervals more noticeable (mm. 25-34). The alto, tenor, and bass parts are heavily dissonant throughout the A section. Since the parts are demanding pitch wise, I consistently made sure that the rhythm in one voice is similar (if not exactly the same) in another part. For example, the soprano is grouped with the bass and the tenor is grouped with the alto (mm. 31-34). The piano and ajaeng, however, are independent from the voices for the entire first stanza. While the ajaeng is in D dorian, the piano is
polymodal, utilizing melodic fragments that suggest D locrian and D dorian, as well as the raised
sixth and seventh degrees of D minor. Having all the voices use D as the central pitch gives an
anchor.

In the second stanza (mm. 46-66), all parts become polytonal. The piano repeats a
pattern, a chromatic pattern of major thirds oscillating between E and E flat major (Figure 4.3,
a). This pattern is an expansion of the piano motive in mm. 25-27. Using parallelism, the alto and
tenor are exactly transposed up a parallel fifth apart from the soprano. The voice ensemble flips
between A major and E major triads. The ensemble reaches a cadence on a chord built on
seconds and sevenths in the piano, and those voices are doubled in the voice parts except in the
tenor (Figure 4.3, b). The chord is an A major 7 with added 2 and 6 scale degrees. The resulting
sound is heavily dissonant, meant to symbolize that the voices may doubt that “all will be well.”
As the phrase “All will be well” returns, so does the material that accompanied it the first time. However, the mode changes from E ionian to an E locrian/aeolian scale (E, F#, G, A, Bb, C, D). The accidentals are inverted from mm. 47-8 in mm. 55-6. However, the modal instability lasts only for a brief few measures before D becomes the central note once more. Between m. 59
and 60, D major creeps in (Figure 4.3, b). The homophony on the last beat of 60 makes it a noticeable D major 7 chord. All of the G, D, and B flats, in addition to the strong D major 7 chord in m. 60, makes it almost sound as if the piece should eventually land in G minor. This sense passes quickly, though, as the material moves on to reach an unexpected climax to a G# major chord spelled out through all parts (Figure 4.4). In summary, the phrenetic changing of modes and tonal center leads to a sense of instability. When the music “arrives” on G# major, the contrast is meant to make it sound like a moment of contrasting clarity.

Figure 4.4. Guilt, voices in homophony, arriving in G# major, m. 66
B SECTION

In the second section, B, the repeating rhythmic motive (Figure 4.5) is most important. It is introduced and carried through in the piano. Throughout the section, the rhythmic motive drops in, only to reenter for dramatic effect. Although most of the piece may not have a melodic section that people will remember, the rhythmic motive is infectious.

The soprano solo (mm. 78-85) is a crucial section of the piece. The soloist introduces the character role in the text. For polyrhythmic interest, the soprano solo is situated between the rhythmic motive in the piano. The passage is dramatic because of the high range achieved in the soprano (high Bb), contrasting dynamics, and polyrhythm.
For increased contrast from the A section, the vocal harmonies are quartal. The *ajaeng* and piano are in A aeolian, with minor exceptions. The soprano solo flirts between A ionian and A aeolian. Once all four voices arrive in measure 90, polymodality is reintroduced, yet the modes are more closely related than in section A. In summary, the three main ideas propelling the B section are the rhythmic motive, polyrhythm, and contrasting polymodality.

The material following the solo section drops into an opposing mood, crawling from the ashes left from the B section maelstrom. The bass section acts as the phoenix. As the piano drifts into silence, the *ajaeng* leaves its role as drone (mm. 87-95), and the bass section restarts the
momentum. For the majority of the sections when the voices are present, the *ajaeng* meanders in scalar motion, independent from the texture in the piano or voices. Sporadically, it will interject a doubling with the piano for contrast (m. 85).

The next phrase repeats textual material from the soprano solo, but with a change in mood. The soprano represents a revelation or release of emotional burden, while the chorus portrays the words introspectively. The inspiration for this section came from the genre of fifteenth century motets; Although not set to sacred Latin text, the essence of the genre is present. The section is predominantly in “imitative polyphony in the manner of Palestrina, a serious, solemn style...all voices participate equally in presenting motivic material.” Each voice has independence, though not ubiquitously. Initially, there are two distinct voices (rhythmic or exact pitch doubling). As the passage develops, the voices become homophonic, leading without interruption or transition to the return of A material.

**RETURN OF A**

The structure of A when it returns (mm. 118-152) is different from the initial A section because it presents material differently and in a different order. Toward the end of the piece, starting from m. 153, the opening section of original A is repeated verbatim. At the start of the return of A, “Let all unravel” is intense, juxtaposition clashing perfect fourths (C♯ and F♯ in bass and tenor, C and F in alto and soprano voices). The large distance between the lower and upper parts help to distinguish the parts. The piano is the instrument that gives a center. Its fortissimo doubling on D in the range extremities forces the four voices to be heard in the context in D as

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tonic. Therefore, the voices are accentuating the discordant tones between D major and minor (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6. *Guilt*, each diagram represents the groupings, mm. 119-121

“Abandoned task” is the last instance where new text is present (mm. 127-142).

However, the music originates from the second half of the B section (mm. 101-117). More true to the original nature of a late motet, the passage has four independent voices working in a style similar to Palestrina. No development occurs. The voices are given space from each other (mm.
144-152). The section functions as a transition back to the final material, which is a repetition of the first two phrases from the start of Guilt.

The end of the piece recalls truncated parts of the introduction and the rhythmic motive from the B section. The purpose in having a coda is to release tension and affirm the end. “Alone” is the final word of the piece, chosen for specific reasons. The open, vowel-heavy sound of alone, and the ending “n” sound allows the voices to finish on a round consonant. The somber context of the text compelled me to fade all instruments into silence. While the mood of the majority of the piece is recalcitrant and discordant, it felt more appropriate to present a resigned closing.

WORD PAINTING

Word painting is an important technique throughout Guilt. The text contains numerous opportunities to have the music portray the words. The definition of word painting is “the use of musical gesture(s) in a work with an actual or implied text to reflect, often pictorially, the literal or figurative meaning of a word or phrase.”20 The technique is commonly used in vocal music, and has historical significance stemming from the Renaissance.21

Each stanza contains at least one word that recalls a visual representation in the music. For example, “unfold” equals a melismatic line that weaves along as if each voice were unfolding to a conclusion (mm. 31-35, 120-121). “Left alone” in the second stanza was an obvious choice: make a single voice in the ensemble be the last to depart. Each time “left alone”


21 Ibid.
appears in the text, a voice part has the solo (mm. 43-44, bass; 125-126, tenor; 172-173, tenor). “Arrive” equals musical arrival at a cadence the first time (m. 66), or homophony, symbolizing arriving together, the final time (m. 114).

More subtle instances of word painting also serve an important role in *Guilt*. The first time “When I was little my mother said” appears in the upper voices, the mood is reflective. The legato timbre in the piano with a repeating, stagnant line creates an atmosphere like an echo or dream, reminiscent of a distant memory (mm. 147-149). “Burden” is felt heavily, as the loud dynamic and low octave Ds in the piano; the rhythmic value and harmonic tension emphasized all add to the severe sound. “Passed on” is passed through each voice part. Overall, the purpose of word painting in *Guilt* is to create poetic connections between the text and the music.
CHAPTER VI
Conclusion and Reflection

The composition process throughout *Cataclysm in Kailua* and *Guilt* wrought a number of challenges, both musical and extramusical. *Guilt* challenged me to write for *sanjo ajaeng*, an instrument outside of my cultural repertoire. The goal was to remain true to the *ajaeng*’s essence. Working with a virtuosic *ajaeng* player was crucial to creating the musical result I imagined when conceiving the piece. While *Cataclysm in Kailua* may call for traditional Western instruments, it was my first large-scale piece that included winds and brass. The most challenging part about composing *Cataclysm* was achieving balance. Orchestrating *Cataclysm* with the concern that certain instruments would swallow other parts would cause me to avoid writing for the same ensemble again. In hindsight, it may have been better to write for orchestra than the selection in *Cataclysm*.

Apart from the technical tasks, writing about specific issues forced me to think in detail about the subject matter in each piece. *Guilt* was especially difficult: Having text makes the opinions concrete. The courage to be forthright about ideas during the composition process and in the performance process was a significant part of my growth as a composer, albeit often invisible.

From grasping instrumentation, working with large-scale forms, and implementing harmonic techniques, to writing about issues I sincerely care about, *Guilt* and *Cataclysm in Kailua* are a culmination of my education at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.
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