Increasing the Inclusion of Women Composers in the Wind Band Repertoire: Pale As Centuries by Sarah Kirkland Snider

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INCREASING THE INCLUSION OF WOMEN COMPOSERS IN THE WIND BAND REPERTOIRE: 
PALE AS CENTURIES BY SARAH KIRKLAND SNIDER

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by

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August 2019
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The assembly of this project would not have been possible without the support of several very important people. First, I would like to express my eternal gratitude to Sarah Kirkland Snider for her trust and benevolence. I am indebted to the members of my committee for their wisdom and support throughout this process. Dr. Damon Talley, Dr. Ann Marie Stanley, Dr. Dennis Llinás, Dr. Jun Heo and my graduate advisor Dr. Joseph Skillen have provided me with exquisite models of erudite academics and resplendent human beings.

I am also especially grateful for the constant support from Dr. Damon Talley, Manship Associate Professor of Conducting and Director of Bands, Dr. Dennis Llinás, Associate Director of Bands, and Dr. Kelvin Jones, Assistant Director of Bands all at Louisiana State University. As teachers and mentors these gentlemen have guided me through a rigorous course of study which has culminated in my transcription and this document.

I am thankful for all of my colleagues that I have had the fortune to collaborate with throughout my graduate study. Especially Mr. F. Mack Wood, Dr. Kayoko Dan, Music Director of the Chattanooga Symphony, Mrs. Kara Duplantier, Mr. Steve Koivisto, Mr. Rob Dowie, Mr. Paul Scheffel, Mr. Gary English, Mr. Mark Bonner, Jr., Dr. Chasse Duplantis, Miss Julia E. Tatum, Mr. Nick Doshier, Mr. Joseph Meinweiser, Mr. Manuel Treviño, and Mr. Sean McLean. I have learned more from these individuals than I could ever properly acknowledge.

I would like to acknowledge my professors at Louisiana State University in the areas of Music Theory, Music Education and Musicology for their scholarship and pedagogical acumen. In particular, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Andreas Giger, Dr. Jeffrey Perry, Dr. James Byo, Dr. Allison McFarland, Dr. Inessa Bazayev, Dr. Dan Isbell, and Dr. Jane Cassidy, Vice-Provost at Louisiana State University.
I would also like to thank the many teachers and mentors that have helped me get to this point. Among these are Professor Jerry Junkin, Vincent R. and Jane D. DiNino Chair for the Director of Bands at the University of Texas, Mr. John Hinojosa, Director of Bands at McAdams Junior High School in Dickenson, Texas, Dr. Robert Duke, Director for the Center for Music and Human Learning at the University of Texas at Austin, Mr. Erik Johnson, Owner and Founder of Innovative Percussion, Inc., Professor George Frock, Professor of Percussion (retired) at the University of Texas at Austin, Professor Paula Crider, Associate Director of Bands (retired) at The University of Texas at Austin, Dr. Kevin Sedatole, Director of Bands at Michigan State University, Mr. Ferdinand Vollmar, Assistant Professor of Music and Human Learning (retired) at The University of Texas at Austin, Dr. Cindy Houston, Director of Bands (retired) at Murchison Middle School, Com. Jeff Lightsey, Principal at New Braunfels High School Ninth Grade Center, Mr. John David Janda, Director of Fine Arts at Tomball Independent School District, Mr. Don Haynes, Director of Fine Arts (retired) at Austin Independent School District, Dr. Scott Hanna, Associate Director of Bands at the University of Texas at Austin, Mr. Van Henry, Director of Bands (retired) at A&M Consolidated High School in College Station, Texas, Mr. John Goforth, Director of Bands (retired) and Mrs. Jan Garverick, Director of Orchestras both at Douglas MacArthur High School in San Antonio, Texas, Mr. Kerry Taylor, Director of Bands at Westlake High School in Austin, Texas, Mr. Jeffrey Fiedler, former Director of the Cavaliers Drum and Bugle Corps, Mr. Mark Chambers, Director of Bands (retired) at Ronald Reagan High School in San Antonio, Texas, Miss Dana Pradervand, Director of Bands at Oak Ridge High School in Conroe, Texas, Dr. Albert Lo, Director of Bands at Austin Community College, Dr. Monica Ruiz-Mills, Assistant Superintendent, San Marcos Independent School District, Dr. Timothy Muffitt, Music Director of the Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra,
Professor Larry Rachleff, Director of Orchestras at Rice University, Dr. Rob Carnochan, Director of Bands at the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida, Dr. Mallory Thompson, Director of Bands at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, Professor Steve Davis, Director of Bands at the University of Missouri at Kansas City, and Dr. Frank Wickes, Director of Bands Emeritus at Louisiana State University.

I am grateful to have found true friendship in several exceptional people. These people have been there to support my dreams physically, emotionally and financially. Among my true friends that I’d like to acknowledge are Mr. Jason Dimiceli, Mr. Charles Christopher II, Mr. Jason Younts, Mr. Joshua Shepherd, Mr. David McGahee, Mrs. Charlotte Allmon-Justice, Mr. Matthew Foster, Mrs. Amanda Mariño Stevenson, Mr. Joel Johnson, Mr. Adam Beshears, Mr. Chris Barrera, Mr. Paul Pape, Mr. Jed Leach, Mr. Joey Lowrance, Mrs. Emily Tanner-Patterson, Mr. Manuel Maldanado, Mr. Robert Cameron, Mr. Rick Scruggs, Mr. Tyrell Denton and Mr. Roland Chavez.

I would like to acknowledge my family for their lifelong support and unconditional love. My sister Chanel is my first and oldest friend and my greatest hero. My brother Jakari is my only brother in the world and is one of the most hardworking, devout people I’ve ever known. My sister, Amber is a passionate soul on a constant search for truth and enlightenment. My parents, William and Elaine Moody were my first music teachers and I am thankful for every lesson they ever gave me. My mother tells the story of laying me on the bed as an infant and watching me light up to the sound of Flashlight by George Clinton and Parliament Funkadelic. I still have the same reaction to this day. My grandmother Ruby tells the story of taking me to church with her every Sunday and sitting me in her lap. She recounts that I was the most well-behaved baby until the choir got up and filled the church with the sound of music. I would also like to thank my
father, Mr. Johnny Ray Croomes, Jr. for his constant support and unconditional love. Thanks to my wonderful family I found my calling early and have been on that path since then. My inspiration for this project comes from each of you.
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ABSTRACT

Women composers are underrepresented in the wind band medium. This study aims to determine the major factors for the disparity between men and women composers. I’ve transcribed a contemporary chamber music piece, *Pale As Centuries* by Sarah Kirkland Snider, for the wind band. Expanding on Snider’s existing work for chamber ensemble I will explore her compositional style and reinterpret the piece using the colors of the wind band.

A review of the literature focuses on trends within western music in the United States over the last century and establishes a documented history of institutionalized marginalization. In an interview with Snider I was able to interpret her perspective on her music as well as gender roles in music composition. Analysis of the piece supports Snider’s responses and reveals characteristics of her musical voice. This informed my decisions throughout the transcription process. The goal of the project is to offer a critique of the current inequity between men and women composers and submit a piece to the repertoire that exhibits the viability of compositions by women within the wind band.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Music is a fundamentally human experience shared by mankind through the centuries. All of the regions and countries in the world have their own form of musical expression. The western musical tradition is filled with music for all occasions, including worship, celebration, entertainment, protest and conflict. Traditionally this music has been composed by men. There are occasional outliers such as Hildegard of Bingen, Marie Jaquet de la Guerre, Clara Schumann, or Ruth Crawford Seeger, but the field of music composition has been dominated by men in all genres of western music. The wind band medium of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has followed the common practice of providing a repertoire monopolized by male composers. All people experience music from their own perspective yet the dominant voice of the music we experience as a whole is from a single demographic. The landscape of wind band music lacks an equitable representation from women. Increasing the inclusion of women composers would carve a musical landscape more representative of the population which is comprised of essentially equal parts men and women.

The genesis of this project began out of my desire to bring attention to the lack of representation of African American composers. As the project began to take shape I made the decision to shift the focus from African Americans to women. I made that decision because I anticipated that I would learn more by conducting research into an issue concerning a group in which I lack personal perspective. I chose to write a transcription for the project rather than write about a piece that currently resides in the wind band repertoire because I felt like it was of greater value to introduce a unique sound to the wind band in order to keep the medium moving forward.
The wind band repertoire has been comprised of transcriptions of orchestral works and operatic overtures since the inception of the medium. The concept of transcription from chamber music to wind band is less common although there are historic transcriptions of chamber music, such as the Mendelssohn *Overture for Band*, Opus 24 transcribed by the composer in 1838 which began as the *Nocturno (Notturno)* composed in 1924 for flute, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, trumpet and bass.

The work of Sarah Kirkland Snider stands as an example of music written by a female composer with depth and authenticity. Snider composes mainly for chamber music ensembles and orchestra but has yet to compose for the wind band. As in other genres there are some compositions that currently exist for wind band that were composed by women, however Sarah Kirkland Snider’s voice has been acclaimed as an important representative of 21st century trends in composition.¹

I was originally drawn to the music of Sarah Kirkland Snider because of her eclectic compositional style and purity of musical instinct. A major commonality that I’ve discovered in Snider’s work is the way that she presents a transparent musical idea and then pairs in with another idea with greater complexity and depth. The minimalist vocal chant at the beginning of *The River* from Snider’s orchestral song cycle, *UNREMEMBERED*, sets an enigmatic tone and is then paired with an ominous song style accompanied by a patient electronic back beat. Snider’s *In Two Worlds* is her personal journey through the gradual loss of a loved one and is characterized by a solitary lachrymose cello joined by a hauntingly beautiful flute and violin.

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duet. The piece tells Snider’s emotional story through her exploration of various timbres and harmonic structures. *Pale As Centuries* draws on Snider’s use of unique harmonies and her juxtaposition of contrasting lyrical and rhythmic styles. Also, the piece has extremely inventive melodic lines that Snider patiently spins out over time as well as a tapestry of divergent accompaniment figures. Snider’s instrumentation contains piano and guitar which are both chordal instruments, flute and clarinet which are extremely versatile single-note melodic instruments and a double bass outlining the harmony and occasionally sharing melodic responsibilities. This piece lends itself well to transcription in view of the infinite possibilities for color study within Snider’s brilliant rhythmic and harmonic language. The wind band provides a myriad of timbres in which to explore the compositional landscape of *Pale As Centuries*. The combination of Snider’s unique compositional style and her high-profile stature within the greater composition community has the potential to bring attention to the issue of underrepresentation of female composers by encouraging conductors to program her music and inspiring more women composers to write for the medium.
CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is a body of research suggesting that greater representation of women composers can lead to greater participation by women in the profession of music composition.² It has also been suggested that the landscape of music composition and musical life will be more reflective of contemporary society through more significant representation of women composers.³ The purpose of this study is to examine the under representation of women composers of symphonic literature in the United States from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present.

Traditional gender roles in society have been a major cause of the marginalization of women composers. The contributions of women composers have largely been left out of the overall written history of music. Historically women have been denied educational opportunities in composition due to systemic prejudice which still exists today, though to a lesser degree.⁴ There are countless textbooks written on the history of American music, and while there are mentions of several women patrons and performers, there are seldom “token” references to women composers.⁵ Most music history classes organize music by the period in which it existed but never address the significance of the lack of diversity concerning composers. This approach overlooks several cultural issues related to music throughout recorded history. One of the standards listed in the National Standards for Music Education is “understanding music in

⁴ Ibid, 8.
relation to history and culture."\(^6\) This makes a case for greater recognition of the music of American women composers due to their immense contributions to the literature dating as far back as the Colonial era. The marginalization of women composers has also impacted women in the black community. Historically, black women musicians have been relegated to singers, choir directors and accompanists. The role of composer, even within the black culture, has been traditionally reserved for men. African-Americans have long struggled to gain acceptance as composers of serious art music.\(^7\) This has created a two-fold barrier of sexism and racism for black women composers. There have been hundreds of women composers throughout the history of the United States, but due to the traditional role of women in society they have not been afforded the same education, training or exposure as their male counterparts.\(^8\) In the early part of the twentieth century, composition as a field of study in American colleges and universities was seldom available to women. Gender as a prerequisite was often applied to women in the areas of publication and performance of their music.\(^9\) In March 1900, the magazine The Musician began a new feature called the Women's Page in an effort to bring attention to the contributions of women in music. This was in reaction to the common belief that music composition was a

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masculine endeavor. The *Women's Page* represents an immense cultural shift in American musical life at the turn of the century.\(^\text{10}\)

The evolution of the women’s rights movement in the twentieth century has created more opportunities for the inclusion of women composers. For much of the twentieth century, a commonly held belief, in continuation from previous eras, was that music composition was a field reserved exclusively for men. While this belief seems antiquated in contemporary American society, the many advances made by women throughout the twentieth century had not yet taken place. The women’s rights movement in the 1890s was a societal catalyst for the emergence of women composers in the 1900s.\(^\text{11}\) There were scores of women composers in the 1800s that were marginalized as unserious and mediocre. In his book, *Women in Music* written in 1880, George Upton proclaimed that women were incapable of composing.\(^\text{12}\) This is a direct reflection of the view of women in professional society at that time. The Boston Symphony Orchestras performed its first works by women composers Margaret Lang and Amy Beach in 1893 and 1896 respectively. These unprecedented events provided the proof that women could compose music for the orchestra.\(^\text{13}\) Since that time women composers have made a steady march of progress leading to the founding of several organizations to advance the cause of promoting women composers such as the League of Women Composers in 1975, American Women Composers, Inc. in 1976 and the New England Women’s Symphony. The mission of these organizations has been to record and publish the music of past and present women composers. There were also

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\(^\text{11}\) Ibid., 105.


Women’s Symphonies established during this time such as the New England Women’s Symphony (NEWS), that programmed music by women composers and invited women conductors to lead the orchestra as well.\textsuperscript{14} The women’s rights movement, in conjunction with the early formation of the civil rights movements in some major metropolitan cities, allowed for the advancement of black women composers. Florence Price, a graduate of the New England Conservatory in piano and organ performance and faculty member of Clark University in Atlanta and Shorter College in Little Rock, Arkansas was the first black woman composer who achieved some notoriety in 1930s Chicago with her Symphony in E minor. Her achievements served as a beacon of hope for other black women composers in the Chicago area who later achieved success in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and elsewhere throughout the mid to late 1900s.\textsuperscript{15}

Greater recognition of the contributions of women composers can result in more significant participation by women in the field of music composition. Vagts asks the question “How many works by women composers have been played, purchased or heard in the last year?” She then states that the most common answer to this question is very few to none.\textsuperscript{16} The most important reason for these questions is the lack of and need for role models for female students. Baker makes the major point that inclusion of women in textbooks on the history of composition will increase the likelihood of the continued pursuit of careers in music composition by

women. There have been publishing companies that have been created to promote the music of female composers. There are courses that have been created at colleges and universities devoted to the study of music by women composers. The necessity for these courses draws a direct lineage back to the earlier creation of the Women’s Page in The Musician meant to address the lack of representation of women composers. The act of composing music involves creating a version of life from a personal perspective. The creator draws on their own life experiences in the context of the current society. Gender in music is largely connected to society in terms of power and authority. The same can be said for most professions but the inequity in music composition is especially glaring and prodigious. For these reasons, the work of women composers should be more widely included in music curriculum in order to give a more accurate reflection of society as a whole. In addition, female students should be afforded role models to provide examples and inspiration for the possibility of a career in music composition. Finally, all students should be educated with a perspective in which historical inaccuracies are corrected.

Women comprise a major demographic in society with an essential voice in the American musical landscape. This voice must be heard with absolute clarity in order to paint a more complete portrait of musical life in America.

18 Ibid., 5.
CHAPTER 3. INTERVIEW RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

As part of the transcription process, I conducted an interview with the composer of *Pale As Centuries*, Sarah Kirkland Snider. We met via Skype to discuss topics ranging from her history and training in music composition to the compositional devices used in the piece as well as her views on the reception and treatment of women composers presently and historically.

Snider is a contemporary composer of New Music from Princeton, New Jersey. She began as a composer at an early age. According to Snider, as a child she was always making up tunes in her head and singing things. As a pianist and cellist, her early musical influences were based on her interactions with her piano teacher and orchestra conductor. These influences would include Mozart, Beethoven and Bach to a lesser degree. Then, at about eight or nine she began writing some ideas down. Around this time, she became more influenced by the pop music being played at home by her parents such as the Beatles, Simon and Garfunkel and Elton John. Later at age twelve she began to become more serious about composing but wrote in secret. She didn’t show anyone including her piano teacher. Her musical influences at this time turned more toward the titans of the romantic era such as Debussy and Chopin. Snider didn’t have a formal composition lesson until she was twenty-five. She wrote in secret for over a decade, from age thirteen to twenty-five mainly because she didn’t see music composition as “viable career path.” As discussed earlier in the literature review, Snider’s view is identical to those of women at the turn of the twentieth century who believed that music composition was a field reserved exclusively for men. She didn’t know of any living composers, to say nothing of female composers.

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21 Sarah Kirkland Snider (composer) in discussion with the author, April 2019
22 Snider, discussion
While in College Snider studied law and psychology. She received a Bachelor of Arts from Wesleyan University and moved to New York City where she started working full-time for a legal firm and writing music for a friend’s theater production off-Broadway. Once she found that she was needing to take days off of work in order to write music she realized that she was happier writing music than she was working at the law job.\textsuperscript{10} At this point Snider made the decision to devote herself to music composition as a career and seek an advanced degree in the field. While at Yale, Snider’s influences expanded to Stravinsky and living composers such as Meredith Monk, David Lang, Philip Glass and Steve Reich. Another major influence, as evidenced in her work \textit{Pale as Centuries} was Louis Andriessen. Andriessen is a Dutch composer and composition professor at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague and was a guest lecturer at Yale University. He is a leading figure in the International new music scene and his style is characterized by his use of nontraditional harmony and instrumentation.\textsuperscript{24} Snider went through a period, while in grad school at Yale where she listened to Andriessen’s music exclusively. According to Snider she composed in the style of Andriessen in her mid to late thirties and there is still a lot of harmony similar to that of Andriessen’s in her music.\textsuperscript{25}

In her composition process for \textit{Pale as Centuries}, Snider says that she had a harmonic obsession with stacked sixth intervals. She discovered this harmonic language while writing a string quartet in 2002 and it has become a signature of her compositional style moving forward since that time. She doesn’t take major or minor tonality into consideration but normally uses combinations of major and minor sixths.\textsuperscript{26} The piece began with Snider’s experimentation of

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} Snider, discussion
\item \textsuperscript{25} Snider, discussion
\item \textsuperscript{26} Snider, discussion
\end{itemize}}
these harmonies in the opening guitar line. As the piece progressed, she made the decision to create more interest by contrasting the lyrical, open sound with a contrasting character that was more rhythmic and active which manifests in the piano line introduced at Letter A. The unfolding of the piece became a juxtaposition of these two thematic ideas.

The piece was written for the NOW Ensemble, which is a group of musicians dedicated to performing and recording new chamber music for the twenty-first century. The instrumentation for the group is nontraditional which gives them a unique ensemble sound. The group is a quintet consisting of the Artistic Director, Mark Dancigers on electric guitar, Managing Director, Michael Mizrahi on piano, Logan Coale on double bass, Alicia Lee on clarinet and Alex Sopp on flute. In addition, founding member Judd Greenstein and Patrick Burke are composer members of the group. In her composition process Snider thoughtfully wrote with these particular musicians in mind. She attended Yale with most of them and has a personal friendship with all of the members of the ensemble. These friendships were all integral in Snider’s compositional process. She likens the process to having dinner with a friend and that friend bringing out one side of her personality and another friend bringing out another side of her personality. These different sides of her compositional personality were all brought into the music. Snider says that she shares common interests with the group in terms of aesthetics, an openness to melody and an openness to storytelling and narrative. She describes this style as process-oriented minimalism in the compositional spirit of Steve Reich and John Adams. Her approach is a postmodernist concept in which melodic ideas can be more intuitive rather than derivative of a compositional system. Snider’s shared vision with the NOW Ensemble for the

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27 Snider, discussion
29 Snider, discussion
conception of the piece gave her the freedom to write with an organic, loving relationship to the music.\textsuperscript{30}

Snider is also a co-founder of New Amsterdam Records with fellow composers Judd Greenstein and William Britelle. Their record label is based out of Brooklyn, New York which was founded on the principles of community, artistic diversity and stylistic freedom.\textsuperscript{31} The label is home to new music composers and artists such as Ted Hearne, John Luther Adams, 2013 Pulitzer Prize winning composer, Caroline Shaw, Missy Mazzoli, British composer, Anna Clyne, David Little, Roomful of Teeth, NOW Ensemble, Third Coast Percussion and countless other contemporary voices in the New Music genre.\textsuperscript{32} Several of the aforementioned composers are accomplished women in the new music scene yet there is not one piece of music in the wind band repertoire among them. Snider describes the compositional ideology as the removal of the separation between “church and state” that currently exists between pop music and classical or between any existing genres of music. Snider considers New Amsterdam Records to be a home for composers to feel comfortable composing music that brings all of the music that they love into their classical music.\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Pale as Centuries} is in itself a musical microcosm of Snider’s ideology in as much as the piece weaves elements of several musical genres such as rock, minimalism and jazz in a seamless tapestry of lyrical melody and rhythmic drive.

Snider states that the role of women composers traditionally has been problematic but is slowly moving in a positive direction. The root of the issue is and always has been inequity. Men tend to be given opportunities based on potential and women have needed to prove themselves a

\textsuperscript{30} Snider, discussion
\textsuperscript{31} New Amsterdam Records, “History/Mission”. https://www.newamrecords.com/about
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{33} Snider, discussion
certain amount of times before an opportunity is presented.\textsuperscript{34} While wheels of progress are gradually turning, the rate in which they turn is still stagnant and lethargic. Snider characterizes Classical and New music of the twentieth century as being a very white, male European descended entity.\textsuperscript{35} Looking back on the last century from a historical perspective, the commonly accepted musicological body of knowledge supports Snider’s claim with a few minor exceptions. There have been a large number of potentially great women composers who weren’t granted the opportunity to be heard due to traditional gender roles in society. Snider goes on to say that during that same span of time, women composers and composers of color found wider acceptance in the pop genre so more women and people of color were attracted to the pop idiom because they felt like there was an opportunity for musical expression and professional growth. This movement spawned a desire for greater aesthetic openness in classical music which can only be achieved through greater inclusion and diversity of perspectives and cultures.\textsuperscript{36} This is where Snider began to find her own voice through advanced study at Yale University and a like-minded community of composers and artists.

Sarah Kirkland Snider has yet to compose a piece for the Wind Band medium so this transcription of \textit{Pale as Centuries} currently serves as her only work in the repertoire. Snider considers the Wind Band to be an untapped medium overall. Some composers write music exclusively for Wind Band and these are the ones that the band community are the most familiar with. Other composers never investigate the medium and write for several other major mediums such as opera, symphony orchestra, and chamber music and choral ensembles.\textsuperscript{37} This is yet

\begin{footnotes}
\item[34] Snider, discussion
\item[35] Ibid.
\item[36] Ibid.
\item[37] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
another division within the world of music composition that if reconciled could spawn several new voices of Women composers in the Wind Band repertoire. Snider has a unique insight into the contemporary New Music scene, the recording industry and the historical marginalization of Women composers. These factors combined with her overall talent and artistry as a composer endow her music with a level purity and authenticity that make her voice necessary in the modern wind band medium.
CHAPTER 4. FORMAL ANALYSIS AND TRANSCRIPTION

*Pale As Centuries* is a piece in the contemporary New Music repertoire, however the overall form of the piece is a twenty-first century approach to sonata form of the classical period of the late eighteenth century. The essential tripartite formal segments are all present with some divergent structural elements therein (Fig. 1). I’ve approached the transcription as an opportunity for a color study. In each formal segment, I’ve provided a linear progression through the orchestration of increasingly dynamic instrument colors corresponding to Snider’s use of increasing density and rhythmic complexity. I’ve also added a layer of metallic color throughout that fulfills the harmonic function of the electric guitar in the vibraphone and marks the introduction of new instrument colors in triangle, orchestra bells, crotales and suspended cymbal. In the transcription, the flute, clarinet and piano maintain a large amount of the original material to provide continuity between the original work and the transcription. Once these colors

![Figure 1. Formal Analysis Timeline and Chart](image-url)
introduce thematic material I’ve chosen to add instruments not present in the original in
doublings to create a new color palette in the transcription. Another key element to transcription
is the treatment of the clarinet in the chalumeau register. I’ve revoiced some of the major
soloistic moments for euphonium and horn due to their tonal similarities in the middle-voice
register in addition to their ability to project in a wind band setting.

EXPOSITION

The exposition (mm. 1-82) presents the first two themes of the piece sequentially and
then concurrently. The opening phrase begins with Theme I voiced in the solo electric guitar.
This theme is characterized by stacked sixths which is one of Snider’s preferred compositional
devices. The piece starts at a wistful 100 beats per minute on a G major chord in first
inversion built on a minor sixth (B-G) beneath a major sixth (A-F#), then moves in contrary
motion outward, to finally collapse the intervals into a three-note sustained chord (G-F#-D#).
In m. 5 the solo electric guitar begins the same theme and extends the motivic motion of the
stacked sixths and ends the phrase returning to the initial chord in mm. 5-7 (Fig. 2).

![Figure 2. Theme I (mm. 1-7)](image)

The second phrase (mm. 8-15) starts identically to the first phrase (mm. 1-7) to which Snider
writes a phrase extension that lands on C major chord in first inversion (E-C-G) that repeats

38 Snider, discussion
twice as if it were heard as an echo. The tonal center is E harmonic minor.\textsuperscript{[40]} In the transcription, I chose to voice the electric guitar music of the first phrase (mm. 1-7) in four voice clarinet chamber ensemble and vibraphone. This combination provides the sustain of the clarinet and the metallic decay of the vibraphone. At the second phrase restatement (m. 8), I chose to add density but maintain the light texture so I added bass clarinet in the upper register for blend and darkness of color. At m. 12, I marked the downbeat with crotales and triangle to accentuate the entrance of the bassoon color. Finally, at m. 17 I reduced the texture back down to B flat clarinet and vibraphone on the “echoes” as if in an orchestrational palindrome.

At letter A the piano introduces Theme II which is characterized by a driving, syncopated eighth note rhythmic motive consisting of two and three eighth note groupings with the tempo increases to and animated 126-130 beats per minute (Fig. 3). Four measures later at m. 26, the flute enters in canon with Theme II followed two measures later by the clarinet playing the theme in canon as well. In the transcription, I maintained the original instrumentation and doubled the piano part in the vibraphone at mm. 27-29 to add metallic brilliance to the line before going into letter B.\textsuperscript{[41]}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure3.png}
\caption{Theme II (mm. 22-23)}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure4.png}
\caption{Theme II (mm. 22-23)}
\end{figure}

At letter B Snider overlays Themes I and II and introduces the full instrumentation (Fig. 4). The flute, clarinet and right-hand piano continue their canonic treatment of Theme II while

\textsuperscript{[40]} Ibid., 1.

the electric guitar returns with the Theme I this time joined by left-hand piano and double bass.\textsuperscript{42} In the transcription, I’ve maintained the original parts for flute, clarinet, piano and double bass. I’ve also doubled the string bass in bass clarinet and doubled the right-hand piano in the oboe and vibraphone with some coloring in the orchestra bells to build continuity of the metallic brilliance. I then revoiced the electric guitar presentation of Theme I for saxophone quartet and bassoons to reintroduce the theme with a more vibrant combination of colors. Finally, the syncopated rhythmic build in the left-hand piano at mm. 49-54 is represented in the first introduction of the brass. Muted trombones enter at m. 49, horns join at 51 and muted trumpets and tuba enter at m. 53.

These voices were added gradually to give the piece a linear progression through orchestration by starting the piece with soft, muted colors and then building to letter C with a continuous introduction of increasingly dynamic instrument colors.

\textsuperscript{42}Ibid., 2-4.
At letter C Snider continues to juxtapose Themes I and II. Here Theme I is presented in the double bass and left-hand piano on sustained chords. The clarinet and piano continue their presentation of Theme II while the flute introduces a melody consisting of parts of Theme I offset from the double bass/left-hand piano and parts of Theme II. Underpinning this intricate interplay between the two themes is the electric guitar strumming a steady quarter note progression in E harmonic minor which finally lands on a phrase extension on C major in first inversion, (E-C-G) reminiscent of the extension from mm. 17-21. The solo guitar brings the exposition to a close on a soft pianissimo dynamic and provides continuity going into the transition at letter D (Fig. 5).

Figure 5. Electric Guitar (mm. 81-84) Transition from C⁶ at the end of the Exposition to E min at the beginning of the Development

In the transcription, I’ve presented the flute solo in a combination of flute in octaves, oboes, and solo trumpet. This blend of colors is extremely bright and stands out above the ensemble to bring attention to this new rhythmic presentation of Theme I. In contrast, the standard rhythmic presentation of Theme I is transcribed from double bass and left-hand piano to a low voice blend of baritone saxophone, trombones and tuba. This juxtaposes the two presentations of Theme I in extreme bright and dark instrument colors. I’ve also included a flourish in the vibraphone and orchestra bells on the beginning of the phrase to draw greater attention to this moment. Theme II is presented in saxophone quartet and clarinets in canon and the strumming in the guitar is presented in the bassoons, vibraphone and marimba. At m. 76 the

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horns and trombones join the strumming motive with clarinets joining two bars later at m. 78. At m. 79 there is a gradual diminution of voices beginning with trombones, then horns with only clarinets, vibraphone and marimba remaining to the end of the exposition.

DEVELOPMENT

The development section (mm. 83-186) takes the piece in several directions with florid solos and occasional accompaniment written in contrasting styles. The development has a direct linear connection to the exposition through the rhythmic continuity in the electric guitar. The exposition ends with solo guitar on a C⁶ and the development begins with the guitar maintaining the E in the bass and the G in the soprano. Between these common tones the middle voice C moves down by half step to B natural, returning the tonality to E minor (Fig. 5).44

![Figure 6. Transition motive at letter D (mm. 83-83)](image)

Letter D provides transitionary material from the exposition into the development. The clarinet plays a melodic figure in the chalumeau register reminiscent of Theme I and is harmonized by the double bass in a pizzicato style (Fig. 6). The bass continues the phrase with a heartbeat motive occurring on the upbeats of beat three and beat one consecutively. The motive is played on a C which gives the E minor chord established in the guitar a momentary character

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of a C major\textsuperscript{7} tonality. The flute then enters with the first sixteenth notes of the piece which foreshadows faster rhythmic motion to come in the development. Snider repetitively ornaments F# with a lower mordent oscillating from F# to E and then back to F#. This ornamentation takes place in the lowest register of the flute, giving the mordents a dark hue in variation from the aforementioned double bass heartbeat motive. At m. 91 the piano plays the same transitionary rhythmic motive as heard earlier in the clarinet and double bass as the flute traverses from the low register F# up two octaves to F# above the staff in a rhythmic fashion alternating between triplets and sixteenth notes. Snider ends the flourish with a beat of sextuplets landing on a sustained E just below the middle register F#. In the piano, Snider goes back to the use of intervallic sixths in the right hand, however this time they are obscured by a minor second at the base of the chord.\textsuperscript{45}

In the transcription, I’ve saved the introduction of the euphonium for the clarinet solo moment on the transitionary motive at letter D in the original composition. The euphonium color is preferred here for the similarity of range to the chalumeau clarinet and the unique timbre. I’ve also chosen to maintain the original double bass part throughout this transitionary section. I’ve added the timpani to the heart beat motive to heighten the effect of the motive with a pounding reinforcement in pitched membrane percussion. In addition, I’ve maintained the composer’s original scoring for flute, the right-hand piano is scored in the clarinets and the left hand is doubled in bass clarinet and tuba to expand the low voice orchestration.

Snider introduces Theme III at letter E in full instrumentation. The thematic material is presented in a minimalist trio sonata style in E harmonic minor (Fig. 7). The two upper lines are voiced in flute, clarinet and piano while the complimentary basso continuo is voiced in electric

guitar and double bass. This theme is characterized by a two-beat anacrusis on quarter notes written in a staccato style followed by a lyrical phrase. The phrase rhythm is two measures and repeats with growing intensity. Another salient feature of Theme III is the crescendo from piano to mezzo forte and then back to piano. As the phrase repeats these dynamics increase in volume proportionately. At m. 101 Snider introduces additional accompaniment figures to the theme. These figures add color and complexity to the existing theme. The electric guitar has a more rhythmically active, syncopated line on a C sus\(^{(64)}\) chord comprised of a stacked perfect fourth and tritone (G-C-F\#). The piano presents the earlier right hand melody harmonized in parallel sixths, which is consistent with Snider’s compositional device from Theme I. The left hand piano part is also harmonized, but mostly in fifths on C and G. This line takes beat two out of context into the adjacent lower octave and accents the beat for added emphasis. This motive is repeated every two bars as well, matching the phrase rhythm of Theme III. Additionally, the double bass now alternates between an arco glissando traversing from low C to an octave above C in the staff and the earlier basso continuo. Lastly, the flute line becomes more independent with contrasting rhythmic variations on Theme III which transforms into Theme IV.\(^{46}\)

In the transcription, I retained the flute and clarinet parts on their original instrumentation but transposed the parts up an octave for greater clarity within the larger ensemble. The piano part has been scored for second and third clarinets and bassoons in harmony. The electric guitar and double bass parts were transcribed for saxophone quartet with the alto I, II and tenor parts being derived from guitar and baritone part originating from the double bass. At m. 101 the glissandi in the double bass have been transcribed for trombones and then the bass trombone joins the baritone saxophone on the basso continuo component of the theme. In m. 108 I added

all trombones and tuba to the basso continuo leading into letter F with a suspended cymbal roll for greater dramatic effect on the phrase ending which leads seamlessly into the next thematic presentation.

At letter F Snider introduces Theme IV and briefly returns to Theme I. This section starts at fortissimo which is the strongest dynamic in the piece to this point. Theme IV is presented in flute, clarinet and right-hand piano and Theme I returns in electric guitar, left-hand piano and double bass. Theme IV is a complex layering of triplet and sixteenth note rhythms sounding simultaneously (Fig. 8). The flute and clarinet present one element of the theme in arpeggiated triplets ascending and descending on an E minor chord with F# and A passing tones at the conclusion of the line. These two instruments play this component of the theme in two beat canon. The piano presents the complimentary element of the theme in a duple meter dance.
rhythm comprised of legato sixteenth notes and staccato eighth notes. The adjacent sixteenth notes are presented in descending intervallic sixths that outline an F# min6 chord resolving to C# minor. In m. 114 the guitar infuses a repetitive, accented two sixteenth note motive evocative of the progressive rock vernacular in Theme I. Additionally, at m. 116 the double bass initiates a driving eighth note rhythm that outlines the harmony for the remainder of letter F. At m. 132 the flute and clarinet become more closely aligned, only separated by a single triplet partial and the guitar joins the double bass rhythmically while resolving the phrase on an E min\(^{(maj9)}\). Finally, the passage builds to a powerful triple forte and ends abruptly.\(^{47}\)

Figure 8. Theme IV (mm. 109-111, original)

In the transcription, I’ve maintained the flute and clarinet scoring while adding second flute for sonority and oboe an octave below the flute and doubling the clarinet in second and third clarinet also for sonority. The instrumentation of the dance rhythms in the piano is maintained in the piano and joined by vibraphone, marimba and orchestra bells. The keyboard percussion adds color and tactile weight to the motive. Theme I in the guitar is presented in alto and tenor saxophones, trumpets and horns while the left-hand piano presentation of Theme I is now heard in bassoons and euphonium. The double bass part is presented in tuba and baritone

saxophone. The progressive rock motive in the guitar at m. 114 is now heard in trumpet, horn and trombone for color and orchestral edge. At m. 117 the dance rhythm component of Theme IV shifts orchestration to the alto saxophone and the flute voice is now double in piccolo from mm. 121-127. The full ensemble is present in mm. 131-133 as the passage builds in intensity to its conclusion.

At letter G Snider continues the canonic treatment of the triplet component of Theme IV in flute and clarinet. The guitar with muted strings presents an improvisation of “scrabbly, scratchy sounds”\(^48\) on indeterminate chords while the double bass contributes to the phrase with

an accented, sustained B flat occurring on beat two. At m. 144 the guitar begins an eighth note motive on G minor in first inversion (G min⁶).⁴⁹ In the transcription, I’ve continued the earlier orchestration of Theme IV. The indeterminate guitar part has been rescored for snare drum, tom-tom and bass drum. The G minor 6 chord heard in the guitar has been rescored for a three-part clarinet section. The double bass part is now presented in bassoons and bass trombone. Lastly, the passage ends with two beats of silence to cleanse the aural palette in anticipation of the introduction of the final theme.

![Figure 11. Theme IV (mm. 117-121, transcription)](image)

The piece has been operating at an animated tempo of 126-130 beats per minute from letter A through F, then at letter H the composer shifts the tempo to a slightly relaxed tempo of 108-112 beats per minute. Theme IV continues in the flute and clarinet in canon. The guitar now

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⁴⁹ Ibid., 13-14.
presents a strumming eighth note motor rhythm on a G major\(^6\) chord (B-G-D) alternating with a D flat\(^6\) chord (F-Db-Ab). This is the first appearance of D flat tonality in the piece (Fig 9).

The piano has a sustained G major\(^9\) chord on the downbeat and then repeats the chord on the upbeat of count four. This presentation is repeated and then, at m. 153, the piano shifts to Theme IV in the right-hand while maintaining a repetitive G major chord on an open fifth with a B written a sixth below the G as a grace note ornament. The rhythmic treatment of the left-hand piano is consistent with the earlier passage on G major\(^9\). In m. 153 Snider introduces the fifth and final new theme in the flute (Fig. 10). The theme is characterized by a free, ethereal style in which most of the pitch changes occur on the upbeat so the pulse becomes slightly obscured. The second time through Theme V the melody is presented in clarinet and the flute introduces a harmonized countermelody written in a register just slightly above the clarinet on sustained notes that outline the contour of the melodic theme to be heard as a stylized echo.\(^{50}\)

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\(^{50}\) Sarah Kirkland Snider, *Pale As Centuries.* (New York City, NY: G. Schirmer, 2011), 14-16.
In the transcription, I chose to maintain the flute scoring from the previous passage and place the clarinet music in the oboes utilizing the local octave and the octave below for depth of timbre and support from the low register. The guitar part has been reorchestrated for three-part clarinet choir so that the strumming eighth note motive is consistent with the previous passage at m. 144. The G major chord in the piano is now voiced for the saxophone quartet, and the original piano and double bass part have been voiced for bassoons. I also chose to add a hi-hat to the rhythmic strumming motive to accentuate the new tempo at letter H. The presentation of Theme V is now doubled in trumpet and oboe. I chose these two colors in combination because of the brilliance of the trumpet and the sensitivity of the oboe. I chose the same combination for the countermelody so the line could function as an echo for the melody in time and in tone.

![Figure 14. Theme V variation (mm.169-170)](image)

At letter I, the guitar continues the strumming motive on a G major 6 chord and then progresses to B flat major, then F major and finally to F min. Theme V is now presented as a slight variation in the clarinet (Fig. 11). The theme maintains all of the character with some rhythmic and pitch variation. The second time through the theme at m.173 the flute joins with a countermelody similar to m. 161, but this time Snider subtly places the flute in the register below the clarinet rather than above like the earlier countermelody from letter H. In mm. 169-170 the piano presents a soft, rhythmically active motive characterized by two consecutive sixteenth notes on a minor second (C#-D) on beat one and two and then in the next measure the same motive is repeated off the beat (Fig. 12). This two measure phrase rhythm is then repeated in
mm. 171-172 with a G major 7 chord (G-D-F#) in the left hand in syncopation. In m. 173 and 175 the syncopated rhythm in the left hand is repeated on an F sus(♯4) chord. The double bass enters the phrase at m. 171 on a sustained high G at a piano dynamic. At m. 173 the bass moves to A and the G# on the pickup into m. 175.\(^5\)

![Figure 15. Piano motive at letter I (mm. 169-170)](image)

In the transcription, I’ve continued the clarinet scoring of the electric guitar strumming motive from letter H. The right-hand piano motive has been orchestrated in tenor saxophone and the left-hand syncopated harmonies are heard in muted trombones. Finally, the double bass sustained line is scored for euphonium and bassoon.

![Figure 16. Transition motive at J in canon (mm. 176-177)](image)

At letter J, the tempo accelerates slightly to 112-116 beats per minute. This phrase is the final section of the development and functions as a transition into the recapitulation. Snider presents a cascading eighth note motive that is heard in canon between the flute, clarinet and piano (Fig. 13). She also obscures the phrase rhythm by extending mm. 177-178 to 5/4 time. At m. 177 Snider alludes to Theme I in the electric guitar with the same rhythm and intervallic device of stacked sixths. The harmony is raised one half step from the original G major⁹ in first inversion to A flat major⁹ in first inversion at m. 183. Snider creates a dialogue between the left-hand piano and double bass in which both parts have the same motive (F-C-G-F) heard at contrasting speeds. The double bass begins the dialogue with the motive heard in pizzicato eighth notes, and the piano answers with the motive in slurred quarter note triplets (Fig. 14). This motive builds underneath the three-part canon and accelerates into letter K, bringing the development to its conclusion.⁵²

![Figure 17. Dialogue between piano and double bass (mm. 183-185)](image)

In the transcription, I’ve chosen to maintain the original scoring for flute, rearrange the clarinet part for oboe and shift the clarinet voice to the piano part for the transitionary motive at letter J. I selected these three instruments for the canon due to their distinct individual tone

qualities and light texture as well as their ability to blend with each other. The double bass part at m. 183 is maintained in the original instrumentation and doubled in the tuba. The responsorial material in the piano is now scored for euphonium and bassoons. I chose these combinations of timbres for the dialogue due to their versatility and their artistic capacity to express the character of the original dialogue.

RECAPITULATION

The recapitulation section (mm. 187-222) returns the focus of the piece back to the opening themes and then gains momentum as it builds to a frenetic conclusion. Snider adds some decoration and technical embellishment but essentially the themes maintain their rhythmic and harmonic integrity with the exception of one final harmonic shift in the coda.

At letter K, Snider reintroduces Theme II in the right-hand piano and revitalizes the tempo to 126-130 beats per minute so it is heard exactly as it was at letter A. The difference here is that Snider delicately adorns the theme with a dialogue between clarinet and arco double bass. This dialogue is characterized by two notes on the first two partials of a quarter note triplet. These notes are heard on F# and the up a half step on G. The flute enters with Theme II at m.
189, similar to letter A and then the clarinet disengages from the dialogue with the double bass and joins Theme II to complete Snider’s presentation of the theme in three-part canon. The double bass continues on the two-note motive now as a short monologue beneath the swirling theme.\(^5^3\)

In the transcription, I’ve maintained the original scoring canonic theme for piano, flute and clarinet. This is consistent with my earlier treatment of Theme II at letter A. I chose to voice the dialogue in muted brass and crotales to reestablish the metallic timbre from earlier in the transcription.

At letter L, Snider reintroduces Theme I as Theme II is continues from the previous phrase. This passage is identical to mm. 30-48 at letter B.\(^5^4\) In the transcription, I’ve chosen to voice Theme I in bassoons, saxophone quartet and full brass which is the largest orchestration of the theme. Theme I is first heard in the muted, homogenous color of clarinet choir, then in saxophone quartet and horns. Each iteration of the theme is heard in a progressively larger and more colorful orchestration so I’ve selected an expansive instrumentation to give the theme a grand final presentation.

Letter M serves as a coda and is framed in the same C\(^6\) quarter note motive from earlier at mm. 78-82. Snider’ instruction here is “A Hair More Energy”. Theme II maintains instrumentation and canonic treatment but is slightly altered harmonically. Snider has shifted every appearance of B in the pattern up one half step to a C and the places quarter notes in the double bass on E to reinforce the C major chord in first inversion. The left hand of the piano presents a C\(^4/2\) chord in a syncopated rhythm characterized by an entrance on the downbeat of the


\(^{54}\) Ibid., 19-21.
phrase and then all of the entrances occur on after the beat (Fig. 15). These after beat entrances occur once in the measure, then twice and then three times within a measure. At m. 218 Snider instructs “Still More Energy” and accents the quarter notes in electric guitar and double bass. The syncopation in the left hand of the piano now occurs on all of the upbeats (Fig. 14). At m. 22 the flute continues Theme II in sixteenth notes, doubling the eighth notes and the piano also continues Theme II in sixteenth notes in octaves shifting to extreme register (Fig. 16). At m. 221 The electric guitar, left-hand piano and double bass play three accented eighth notes in unison ending on the downbeat of the final measure as Theme II is heard in flute, clarinet and right-hand piano bringing the piece to an abrupt denouement.\(^55\)

In the transcription, I’ve maintained the instrumentation of Theme II from the previous phrase. The C\(^6\) motor rhythm in the guitar and double bass is heard in tuba, double bass and timpani. The C\(^{4/2}\) chord in left-hand piano is heard in tenor and baritone saxophones, and full brass except the tuba and the syncopation in reinforced in the tom-toms. Finally, the sixteenth note variations of Theme II are heard in flute, piano, vibraphone, marimba, tom-toms, snare drum and bass drum.

Figure 20. Flute and R.H. Piano variation of Theme I (mm. 221-222)
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

Recent research has suggested that the landscape of music composition and musical life will be more reflective of contemporary society through more significant representation of women composers.\textsuperscript{56} While progress has been made in certain mediums over the last few decades, such as Popular music and contemporary New Music, the wind band medium has yet to make a significant move in that direction. Over the course of the past year, as this document has been created, a very small number of academic institutions have prioritized works by women in their concert programming efforts.\textsuperscript{57} By increasing the inclusion of women composers in the wind band repertoire this trend has the potential to experience exponential growth over the next few years.

For this project, I’ve chosen to make a contribution to the wind ensemble repertoire by transcribing a work by a woman composer. Several factors were considered in the selection of the composer and the work most fit for the transcription. I decided that a contemporary composer would work best for several reasons. First, a contemporary composer has the potential for availability during the transcription process for guidance and insight. Next, a contemporary composer has a broad perspective of historical practices in the field up to the present day. Lastly and most importantly, a contemporary composer has a current voice in the New Music scene. The composer who meets all of the pertinent criteria is Sarah Kirkland Snider of Princeton, New Jersey. Her compositional style is based on her environmental exposure to Classical composers such as Mozart and Chopin as well as Popular music artists of her generation such as the Beatles.

and Simon and Garfunkel. This fusion of western art music and popular song is at the precise intersection of artistic merit and folk appeal that would provide a resonant voice in which to submit a new piece by a woman composer to the wind band repertoire.

Snider’s catalogue is a collection of works for voice and electronica, orchestral song cycle and chamber music. I chose one of her chamber works because the transcription process from chamber music to wind band is unique. Also, transcription from a modest instrumentation to a full wind band instrumentation allows for an extensive color study through orchestration. Ultimately, I chose Pale As Centuries in view of its elegant themes and Snider’s intuitive compositional style. The way that she uses classical and minimalist elements of form simultaneously makes the piece intriguing and illustrates Snider’s freedom to juxtapose styles and maintain artistic integrity. Snider’s harmonic language is both sophisticated and transparent. Her inclination to write stacked intervallic sixths conveys an ethereal sound that translates to extended harmonies such as G major $^9$ and F sus ($^4$) in analysis.

The rehearsal process for Pale As Centuries began on March 18th, 2019 with the Louisiana State University Wind Ensemble. I had the privilege to conduct the group in rehearsal and their performance of my transcription. We rehearsed six times for an average of twenty-five minutes per rehearsal. I recorded all rehearsals on a video camcorder and an audio recording unit as well. The first read of the piece was an accurate reflection of the transcription with some areas for musical growth. Moving forward, I was able to reflect on the ensemble’s performance after each rehearsal and make revisions as the piece evolved. Pale As Centuries was performed on Wednesday, April 24th, 2019 by the Louisiana State University Wind Ensemble at the Student Union Theater. The piece opened a concert which also featured Dr. Willis Delony on piano.

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performing Greg Yasinitsky’s *Jazz Concerto* with the composer in attendance, and Symphony No. 3 for large wind ensemble: *Circus Maximus* by John Corigliano. Due to the eclectic nature of the concert, the audience was a diverse blend of pianists, composers, jazz musicians and the usual wind ensemble concert attendees. The performance was genuine and filled with a high level of musicianship. The soloistic moments throughout the piece reached their peak in terms of warmth and beauty. While the performance wasn’t perfect, there were moments that genuinely embodied the spirit of the piece. The performance was well received and I have since been approached by conductors of other ensembles interested in programming the work for their ensembles on upcoming concerts.

Through the creation of this transcription I’ve learned a great deal about orchestration for wind band, the contemporary new music genre, and the historical context of women composers within the overall women’s rights movement. One of the greatest lessons I’ve gained in these areas is how to expand individual melodic lines in a chamber setting to allow them to project within the wind band while maintaining appropriate balance with the other countermelodic and harmonic lines. This has allowed me to write a transcription that maintains the integrity of the original piece. Snider said of the transcription “You’ve taken my piece from black and white and put it in color.”

Additionally, a substantial amount of the contemporary new music is being composed for non-traditional instrumentation in smaller ensembles in comparison to the symphony orchestra and the wind band.

Another lesson that I have learned through my research is that there are several pieces currently in the wind band medium composed by women. These pieces don’t get programmed as frequently as pieces written by man. Historical accuracy is critical for students seeking to be

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musically educated just as in any other academic discipline. If the only version of music history that is presented is revisionist and omits the contributions of women composers the result will most likely be a lack of participation by women in the field of composition. This is why representation matters. Throughout the rehearsal process members of the ensemble commented to me about their enjoyment of the piece and began listening to other works by Snider because of their exposure to *Pale As Centuries*. As a music educator, I plan to include lessons based around women composers in my courses moving forward. As a conducting teacher I will include excerpts of music written by women which will hopefully encourage the students to seek more information about these composers. Also, as a teacher of wind literature I plan to include works by women composers in relation to their contemporaries for a more historically accurate approach. More research is needed on the subject, however the fact that there is already interest in programming *Pale As Centuries* for future performances and that a graduate student from another institution has since reached out to Snider to propose a their own wind band transcription of another work in her catalogue indicates that the potential for increasing the inclusion of women composers in the wind band repertoire has the possibility to reshape the musical landscape to more accurately reflect our society.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX A. IRB EXEMPTION APPROVAL

ACTION ON EXEMPTION APPROVAL REQUEST

TO: Clifton Croomes  
Music  
FROM: Dennis Landin  
Chair, Institutional Review Board  
DATE: May 2, 2019  
RE: IRB# E11701  
TITLE: Wind Band Transcription of Pale as Centuries by Sarah Kirkland Snider  

Review Date: 5/2/2019  
Approved X Disapproved  
Approval Date: 5/2/2019  
Approval Expiration Date: 5/1/2022  
Signed Consent Waived?: Yes  
Re-review frequency: (three years unless otherwise stated)  
LSU Proposal Number (if applicable):  

By: Dennis Landin, Chairman  

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING – Continuing approval is CONDITIONAL on:  
1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects*  
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.  
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.  
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.  
5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants, including notification of new information that might affect consent.  
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.  
8. SPECIAL NOTE: When emailing more than one recipient, make sure you use bcc. Approvals will automatically be closed by the IRB on the expiration date unless the PI requests a continuation.  

* All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU's Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at http://www.lsuedu/irb

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APPENDIX B. CONSENT FORM

Consent Form Script for Sarah Kirkland Snider Interview

1. The title of this study is Wind Band Transcription of Pale as Centuries by Sarah Kirkland Snider Interview.
2. The purpose of this study is to ascertain details about the genesis of the piece, Snider’s history as a composer and her thoughts on women composers in society. Sarah Kirkland Snider will complete an interview.
3. There is no known risk
4. The benefits of the study are that it exposes musicians in the wind band medium to the music of Sarah Kirkland Snider.
5. The contact info for investigators is as follows
   Principal Investigator: Cliff Croomes, 210-835-7999, ccroom2@lsu (available 10am-4pm)
   Co-Investigator: Ann Marie Stanley, 585-261-7050, astanley1@lsu.edu (available 10am-4pm)
6. The interview will take place via Skype.
7. The study will have on subject, Sarah Kirkland Snider.
8. Data gathered from the interview will remain confidential unless release is legally compelled
9. The subject was chosen because she is the composer of the piece, Pale as Centuries.
10. There will be no financial compensation for the interview.
11. Participation in the interview is voluntary and the subject may change their mind and withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they may otherwise be entitled.
12. The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigators. For injury or illness, call your physician, or the Student Health Center if you are an LSU student. If I have questions about subject’s rights or other concerns, I can contact Dennis Landin, Chairman, LSU Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, or www.lsu.edu/research. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the researcher’s obligation to provide me with a copy of this consent form if verbally agreed upon by me.”
APPENDIX C. TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH SARAH KIRKLAND SNIDER

Sarah K. Snider: 00:01 When I was a kid, I was just always making up tunes in my head and singing things. And then, I guess when I was about eight or nine, I started writing a couple ideas down. And then, when I was 12 or 13, I got more serious about it but I didn't show it to anybody. I didn't show my piano teacher or anything. And I didn't have my first composition lesson until I was 25.

Cliff Croomes: 00:28 Really?

Sarah K. Snider: 00:29 Yeah.

Cliff Croomes: 00:30 Okay.

Sarah K. Snider: 00:33 So, I had this whole block of time between 13 and 25 when I was writing music, but just for myself, and not showing it to anyone, not thinking of it as a viable career path.

Cliff Croomes: 00:45 Okay.

Sarah K. Snider: 00:49 Yeah. So, I kind of took a left turn into the career at a later stage than most people do.

Cliff Croomes: 00:57 Okay. So, were you going to be a pianist?

Sarah K. Snider: 01:01 No, I was thinking about actually going into law or psychology. I thought that ... I just didn't think that I could make a living in music. You know? And I didn't know of any living composers, let alone female composers. And so, when I was in college, it was just what do I do to make a living? And I'll write music on the side for myself. But then, when I got to New York and started working full-time, I was writing music for friend's theater productions in New York City off Broadway.

Cliff Croomes: 01:40 Okay.

Sarah K. Snider: 01:42 And I was really enjoying that. And I found that I was needing to take off days from my job in order to write the music and I realized that I was much happier writing the music than I was working at the law job.

Cliff Croomes: 01:56 Sure. Right.
Sarah K. Snider: 01:56 So, I realized that I needed to get serious about this music thing and get some advanced degrees and get more knowledge and learn how to do this better so that I could try to make a go of it as a career. But it was a pretty late revelation as composers go. So, I didn't start my masters degree until I was 29. And now, I'm 45. You're probably trying to figure out the math. So yeah, I was a late starter. We'll just put it that way.

Cliff Croomes: 02:35 I didn't start my masters until I was 37.

Sarah K. Snider: 02:40 Oh really?

Cliff Croomes: 02:41 Yeah.

Sarah K. Snider: 02:42 Wait, how old are you?

Cliff Croomes: 02:43 41.

Sarah K. Snider: 02:44 Oh my gosh. Okay.

Cliff Croomes: 02:46 42. 42.

Sarah K. Snider: 02:47 Yes, so you're my brother.

Cliff Croomes: 02:50 Yeah, that's right.

Sarah K. Snider: 02:52 We're compadres. Okay. So yeah, wow, that's cool. So you were a late decider too?

Cliff Croomes: 02:59 Right. I was just going to ... I actually started history pre-law in school.

Sarah K. Snider: 03:05 Really? No way. Oh my gosh. Oh. What did you play? What instrument were you?

Cliff Croomes: 03:12 I am a percussionist.

Sarah K. Snider: 03:14 Okay. So, you had been a percussionist since you were younger?

Cliff Croomes: 03:19 Right. I started out in church actually.

Sarah K. Snider: 03:22 Oh cool. Wow. When you were how old?

Cliff Croomes: 03:26 I was in fifth grade.
Sarah K. Snider: 03:28 Okay.

Cliff Croomes: 03:29 Yeah.

Sarah K. Snider: 03:30 Wow, wow. That's cool. And so, like me, you got to college and you were like okay, I've got to figure out a career and you thought maybe law and ... How did you decide to go into music?

Cliff Croomes: 03:43 It's pretty similar. I would be spending more time and picking up more gigs on the music side and the professor was just like why don't you just do this?

Sarah K. Snider: 04:03 Yeah.

Cliff Croomes: 04:03 And that's where I ended up.

Sarah K. Snider: 04:04 Totally. You get to the point where you're just like oh, right. It's so obvious.

Cliff Croomes: 04:09 Exactly.

Sarah K. Snider: 04:09 All the signs are pointing to this is what I should be doing even if it's a harder path. I'm already on that harder path.

Cliff Croomes: 04:17 Right.

Sarah K. Snider: 04:19 Just get through it. Yeah.

Cliff Croomes: 04:19 And you're just happier and all of that.


Cliff Croomes: 04:25 Okay.

Sarah K. Snider: 04:27 Yeah.

Cliff Croomes: 04:30 Early on, who were your major influences?

Sarah K. Snider: 04:36 Early on, I mean, I guess it depends on how early you want to go. My first favorite composer was Mozart and my teacher, my piano teacher ... I studied piano and then I also studied cello. So, kids only know the music that their teachers give them or that their parents introduce them to.

Cliff Croomes: 05:00 Sure.
Sarah K. Snider: 05:01 And my parents only played pop music at home. It was only the Beatles, and Simon and Garfunkel, and Elton John and stuff like that. So, the only classical music I knew was the stuff that my piano and cello teachers and orchestra conductors gave me. So, it was Mozart and Beethoven and a little bit of Bach. And then, Debussy and Chopin became my favorite composers for a while.

Cliff Croomes: 05:30 Okay.

Sarah K. Snider: 05:32 Yeah. But I had never heard of Stravinsky or anything like that until I got to college. And then, in my 20s, I started learning more about some living composers like Meredith Monk and David Lang and the [inaudible 00:05:50] composers and Philip Glass and Steve Reich. I liked a lot of the music that I was hearing there and actually you mentioned Louis Andriessen, he was a huge influence for me. You totally nailed that, yeah.

Cliff Croomes: 06:06 Yeah, I was listening to something of his and I was like I wonder if there's a thread here.

Sarah K. Snider: 06:13 Totally, totally. Yeah, very direct thread, yeah. I really fell in love with his music especially when I was in grad school at Yale. I went through a period where I was only listening to Andriessen's music.

Cliff Croomes: 06:30 Wow.

Sarah K. Snider: 06:32 Yeah. So, yeah, you really nailed that one. So, that was like my early 30s, I went through this intense Andriessen period. And I guess I wrote this in my mid to late 30s. But yeah, there's still a lot of that harmony, I think, in my music.

Cliff Croomes: 06:54 Yeah. It's beautiful.

Sarah K. Snider: 06:56 Thank you.

Cliff Croomes: 06:57 I love it.

Sarah K. Snider: 06:58 Thank you. Oh, sorry, my husband. I'm quasi babysitting as I talk to you.

Cliff Croomes: 07:11 Okay.
It's okay. The kids are downstairs just for a little changing of the guard with our babysitter.

Sarah K. Snider: 07:20 So yeah.

Cliff Croomes: 07:22 Okay, so with Pale As Centuries, what was the origin of that piece?

Sarah K. Snider: 07:29 So yeah, you asked me about the harmony and the tonality in your questions.

Cliff Croomes: 07:36 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sarah K. Snider: 07:39 I have this obsession with stacked sixth chords, stacked sixth intervals.

Cliff Croomes: 07:45 Okay.

Sarah K. Snider: 07:47 Creating, I don't even bother to really think about whether it's ultimately a major or minor chord but it's usually combinations of major and minor sixths. And yeah, this was this harmonic obsession I've had since 2002 when I first wrote this string quartet and stumbled upon this harmonic world and I've been entranced by it ever since. And so, I could point this out in the score but the opening guitar line is just like these stacked sixth chords.

Cliff Croomes: 08:29 I see that.

Sarah K. Snider: 08:30 It's just me messing around with those. Yeah. So, that's how the piece began was just with that opening guitar line, just mess ing around with those chords. And then I thought how do I make more of a piece out of this? I thought maybe it would be interesting to have some idea that's very opposite of that guitar line like opposite in character and opposite feeling and more rhythmic and active.

Cliff Croomes: 09:00 Right.

Sarah K. Snider: 09:00 So, then I came up with the piano line and then it was like how do I make these two things fit together. Yeah. So then you get started and then you have your quest which is to make these two opposite ideas fit together in some way. And the rest of the piece just kind of unfolded itself from there.
Cliff Croomes: 09:22 Okay.

Sarah K. Snider: 09:23 Yeah.

Cliff Croomes: 09:26 There's a part, letter D, where ... Let me get up here.

Sarah K. Snider: 09:36 I'm sorry, I don't have the score in front of me.

Cliff Croomes: 09:38 Well, it's the piano ostinato's been going [inaudible 00:09:44].

Sarah K. Snider: 09:46 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Cliff Croomes: 09:47 And then, there's a transition. The piece kind of comes to a note, that letter D, and then, there's this beautiful low clarinet. And against a low flute sound.

Sarah K. Snider: 10:02 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Cliff Croomes: 10:03 That's one of my favorite parts of the piece.

Sarah K. Snider: 10:07 Oh cool. Thank you, yeah. I think I know what you're talking about that duh duh duh duh duh.

Cliff Croomes: 10:13 Yeah.


Cliff Croomes: 10:20 So, if you just talk a little bit about that section and I know you work with the NOW Ensemble. Were you thinking about those players or?

Sarah K. Snider: 10:34 Yeah, totally. Yeah. I was very much thinking about those players. Some of those players, well actually, most of them, I was in grad school with.

Cliff Croomes: 10:45 Oh?

Sarah K. Snider: 10:46 So, I knew them really well, yeah. So, we were friends and everything and writing for your friends, it's really fun and it's really you feel at liberty to just be yourself and you kind of ... It's like you know how having dinner with a certain friend will bring out one side of your personality more than having dinner with a different friend?

Cliff Croomes: 11:10 Sure.
Sarah K. Snider: 11:10 With a different personality? So, it's like I find that when I'm writing for ... if I know the people I'm writing for, if I know them pretty well, whatever vibe I have with them winds up being brought into the music.

Cliff Croomes: 11:23 Right.

Sarah K. Snider: 11:26 So yeah, this music, we have a lot of common interests in terms of aesthetics and liking a lot of different kinds of music and an openness to melody and an openness to storytelling and narrative. And certain things that have aesthetically not always been in vogue in the last 20 years in musical academia.

Cliff Croomes: 11:52 Sure.

Sarah K. Snider: 11:52 Like modern music, new music, there are certain ... there's lots of schools of thought in different competing ideologies. And at Yale, my friends and I wanted to have more openness aesthetically and wanted there to be more ... I don't know, stop me if I'm getting too ethereal but you know with like minimalism and Steve Reich and John Adams, it's process-oriented minimalism.

Cliff Croomes: 12:28 Sure.

Sarah K. Snider: 12:28 Where you've got systems and like mathematical algorithms that determine your choices. And there's this idea, which was itself still a pretty postmodernist concept. And we were wanting to embrace a greater melodic openness where your ideas can be intuitive and heard just like write what you hear instead of trying to derive everything from systems and processes and algorithms but really just having a more open intuitive approach to composition, which is to say more open to melody and groove and things like that.

Cliff Croomes: 13:14 That seems like it's the product would be more organic that way.

Sarah K. Snider: 13:22 Yeah, perhaps. I guess it's in the ears of the beholder as to how ... For me, it would be more organic, for sure, because I'm just ... A lot of what we were taught in grad school was kind of fighting the voices in your head because the voices in your head come often from pop music and so-called low culture or whatever. And our teachers were often telling us
oh, if you're hearing something, then it's not original so ignore the ideas that you're hearing and instead use your brain to come up with weirdness that you can't imagine.

Cliff Croomes: 14:09 Okay.

Sarah K. Snider: 14:13 And we were always feeling like no man, it's cool to hear stuff and we want to write down what we're hearing. And there's validity in that and there can be rigor in that too. And so, we were just this kind of ideological, we just felt like no, we want to have the freedom to write what we're hearing and to have that organic sort of loving relationship with music instead of having it be this thing that you're extruding via math equations and stuff.

Cliff Croomes: 14:47 Right, right.

Sarah K. Snider: 14:49 So, anyway, which is just to say that all the players in NOW Ensemble are very ... They're just great musicians but also just great people and very open-minded and yeah. So, it enabled me to feel free to write whatever I wanted to write.

Cliff Croomes: 15:06 Right, okay. Okay.

Sarah K. Snider: 15:08 Yeah.

Cliff Croomes: 15:11 With Amsterdam Records-


Claif Croomes: 15:16 ... Yeah, New Amsterdam Records, I was reading that you're the co-founder of that which is amazing. It's absolutely amazing.

Sarah K. Snider: 15:26 Thank you. Oh thanks.

Cliff Croomes: 15:29 So, how did all of that come about?

Sarah K. Snider: 15:32 Yeah. Well, it's actually this is a good segue way from the last question because we were trying to do the same thing with the record label that I was talking about with the compositional ideology and it was all part of the same conversation like let's create a home for composers to feel comfortable writing whatever they want to write, bringing all of the music that they love into their classical music.
And not having this separation of church and state with pop and classical or jazz and classical or whatever. But bringing it all together and writing from one single musical mind of influences. You know? So, we wanted to create a home for that kind of music and we wanted to create more concerts and opportunities for that music to get heard. So, not just home for recordings but really a network of infrastructure to support those kind of composers, and to support them in a broader sense.

So, that's really the idea behind it. Can you hear me okay?

Beautifully.

Okay, great.

Can you still hear me?

Totally, yeah. I just wanted to make sure.

So, within what we're just talking about finding a home for composers to feel free, what is your take on the role of women composers in the overall composition role? Have you seen a change or are we still not where we need to be?

I think there's been a really amazing change in the past few years in particular. A lot of positive steps are being taken to correct a lot of the problems. And that's really encouraging. But I do still think we've got a long ways to go. It's going to take ... Right now, men tend to be given opportunities based on potential and women need to prove themselves a certain number of times in order to be given an opportunity. And I think it's going to take a long time for that to level out and correct itself.

And you know, in order for most classical programming to show equity in terms of gender and race, that's going to take a long time. I think it's going to take a long time because most of these institutions that we're talking about are slow to evolve. They're pretty stuck in their ways.
Cliff Croomes: 18:26 Right.

Sarah K. Snider: 18:26 And so, good things are happening but I wish they were happening faster I guess is the short answer. But I do think that these questions are related to this idea of desiring greater aesthetic openness in classical music because part of the problem with new music and classical music in the 20th century in particular was that it became this very white male European descended entity.

Cliff Croomes: 19:05 Sure.

Sarah K. Snider: 19:05 And when you have other kinds of influences coming into the picture, and you have people of other backgrounds, people of other ... who are not just men because women felt more comfortable in pop music or they were welcomed into pop music earlier than they have been into classical. So, you've got influences from pop music means that you're going to have more women attracted to the field of classical as well.

Cliff Croomes: 19:35 Right.

Sarah K. Snider: 19:39 So, it is sort of a ... It's an intertwined issue, I think. Aesthetics and inclusion and diversity, it's all related and it's all part of the problem with classical music that needs fixing. Just greater inclusion, greater diversity, of perspectives and backgrounds.

Cliff Croomes: 20:04 You know, I want to go back to something that you said earlier which I agree with everything you're saying with male composers, it's a lot based on potential where women need to prove themselves.


Cliff Croomes: 20:17 I was at a talk, a forum, in Chicago with Jennifer Higdon and a guy stood up and said, "Well, you know, this seems like this is giving women license to write bad pieces and they should be played just because they're women."

Sarah K. Snider: 20:36 Wow.

Cliff Croomes: 20:38 Right, exactly. And she went right back at him and said, "You know, guys have been getting away with writing bad pieces for centuries."
Cliff Croomes: 20:53 It was so funny that you went right in on that.
Sarah K. Snider: 20:57 Yeah. That's a great comeback. That's the thing is we tend to ... Oftentimes, people are afraid to have an opinion about something unless somebody else has endorsed it, has sanctioned it, you know? And so, so often we depend on this inherited canon from critics or past music teachers or somebody who says, "This gets the stamp of approval."
Cliff Croomes: 21:27 Right.
Sarah K. Snider: 21:28 "This is good music and you should study this." And we all kind of blindly accept it and say, "Oh yeah, this is the genius stuff here." But we actually, it's so political. It's so much more complicated than that and there are so many pieces that we have yet to discover in history that have been written that I'm sure are equally as good as the ones that we know of now that we consider masterpieces. You know?
Cliff Croomes: 21:53 Right. That just got buried for one reason or another.
Sarah K. Snider: 21:55 Yeah, that just got buried, yeah. And so many potentially great composers who didn't have an opportunity to be heard. It's going to be very interesting, I think, in the next several hundred years to see what happens with classical music now that the playing field is sort of leveling a bit, it will be really interesting to see because it's not just about connections anymore as it always was before.
Cliff Croomes: 22:23 Right, right. Well, I think getting to hear a lot of different musical perspectives is starting to ... there's something happening.
Cliff Croomes: 22:38 Which is great.
Cliff Croomes: 22:40 Yeah.
Sarah K. Snider: 22:41 Yeah. It's really amazing. Because you start to realize too that there's so much potential there for bridging cultural
misunderstandings and classical music has so much in common with ... European classical music has a lot more in common with musics around the world than people appreciate. And once you start unpacking those or bringing those languages together and realizing how much they have in common, it's like it just opens up the ability to relate to different people in a much more interesting way. And it makes the concert hall a place where we could reflect on all these things that we have in common instead of finding other reasons to be like no this is this hermetically sealed white culture.

Cliff Croomes: 23:39 It must be like this.
Sarah K. Snider: 23:40 It's so exciting to me, the possibilities for music, that have not been explored. The different ways that music can go, the different fusions that can happen, are just so exciting to me. I feel like we're just at the very beginning of seeing what happens there.
Cliff Croomes: 23:56 Great. I'm loving watching you talk about this and how excited you're getting.
Sarah K. Snider: 24:04 I just think it's yeah. I'm very, very optimistic about the future of classical music. Yeah.
Cliff Croomes: 24:12 Great. So, what projects are you currently working on or are upcoming for you?
Sarah K. Snider: 24:19 So, I'm working on an orchestra piece for the New York Phil is actually commissioning ... I don't know if you heard about this but they're commissioning 19 women. They'd only commissioned a handful of women in their 150-year history.
Cliff Croomes: 24:39 Sure.
Sarah K. Snider: 24:40 Now they're commissioning 19 women over the course of the next two years to celebrate the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage in the United States.
Cliff Croomes: 24:50 Really?

Cliff Croomes: 24:53 Okay.

Sarah K. Snider: 24:54 It's cool. Perhaps even more awesome would be just commissioning 19 women.

Cliff Croomes: 25:00 Sure.

Sarah K. Snider: 25:01 But still, it's really cool. If you're going to celebrate something, you might as well ... You've got to celebrate that. So, I'm writing a piece for that occasion. And I'm also working on starting an opera about Hildegard von Bingen, the composer.

Cliff Croomes: 25:20 Yeah.

Sarah K. Snider: 25:21 So yeah. And then, I've got some other little chamber projects that I'm working on.

Cliff Croomes: 25:27 Wow. So you've got multiple things you're working on?

Sarah K. Snider: 25:33 Yeah, yeah. I kind of tend to do that. I like to let a lot of things gestate for a while and think on them. And then, I tend to write quickly. Actually, that's not true. I don't write quickly at all. I write slowly and intensively for a long time is more like it but I still like to let things gestate for a while first.

Cliff Croomes: 25:59 Great. Okay, so you're writing in your head a lot?


Cliff Croomes: 26:08 So, just last question here, and thank you so much for your time. This has been great.

Sarah K. Snider: 26:15 Sure, my pleasure. Yeah, my pleasure.

Cliff Croomes: 26:17 Do you have any interest in writing for the band medium any time?

Sarah K. Snider: 26:22 Yeah, I do and I'm going to. In a couple years, I have been commissioned for a wind band consortium. Excuse me. It's like UNC ... It's one of the UNC's.

Cliff Croomes: 26:38 Okay.
Sarah K. Snider: 26:38 And then, a few different university wind bands have put together within this consortium. So, I'll be writing like a 15-minute wind band piece.

Cliff Croomes: 26:50 That's fantastic.

Sarah K. Snider: 26:51 Yeah, I'm excited about it. It's something that I've wanted to do for a while actually. I really love the Stravinsky Symphony of Wind Instruments is one of my favorite pieces.

Cliff Croomes: 27:04 Yes, yes, absolutely.

Sarah K. Snider: 27:04 So, ever since discovering that piece, I've wanted to write for wind ensemble. So, yeah, I'm excited about that, yeah.

Cliff Croomes: 27:14 I think that would be a great addition to the wind ensemble repertoire.


Cliff Croomes: 27:24 Yeah.

Sarah K. Snider: 27:25 Well, yeah, I think a lot of people ... a lot more people should be writing for wind band. It's untapped greatness there. I mean, it's pretty tapped. There are a lot of different ... there's a big repertoire for it but I think it tends to be this area where certain composers just stay and then other composers never investigate it.

Cliff Croomes: 27:47 Right, right.

Sarah K. Snider: 27:48 I think more composers should check it out because yeah. There's so many awesome wind bands in this country. It's amazing.

Cliff Croomes: 27:55 There's so many color choices, stuff like that.

Sarah K. Snider: 27:58 Yeah, exactly. As you showed in your transcription, it's like you can make this sound like a whole orchestra. It's amazing.

Cliff Croomes: 28:07 Thank you.

Cliff Croomes: 28:12 I'm going to go back and make sure that I have all the pitches correct. Like you said, there was something that kept occurring. If you wouldn't mind sending me some notes and I will make sure we can fix everything in the score.

Sarah K. Snider: 28:30 Sure. Because it may have been too that there some wrong notes on my end in the parts or something. So, yeah, we'll do that. We'll check and make sure it's right.

Cliff Croomes: 28:42 Great. Well, thank you so much.

Sarah K. Snider: 28:45 Oh, my pleasure, Cliff. It's great to meet you and I'm so honored that you wanted to transcribe the piece. It means a lot to me. I'm really flattered so thank you.

Cliff Croomes: 28:56 Absolutely.

Sarah K. Snider: 28:56 Thank you. It's an honor to hear through you.

Cliff Croomes: 28:58 Thank you for trusting me with the music.

Sarah K. Snider: 28:59 Oh my gosh, my pleasure. It's an honor to hear it through your ears. Yeah.

Cliff Croomes: 29:07 All right. Well, you have a great afternoon.

Sarah K. Snider: 29:10 Thank you.

Cliff Croomes: 29:11 And like I said, we're performing it on April 24th.


Cliff Croomes: 29:16 So, I'll send you the invitation to everything. It will be live streamed and ...


Cliff Croomes: 29:22 ... it will be great.

Sarah K. Snider: 29:22 Fantastic. We can put it out on the social media, yeah.

Cliff Croomes: 29:26 That would be fantastic.
Sarah K. Snider: 29:28 Awesome. All right. Well, I look forward to, yeah ... We'll talk about the notes and stuff but I'm excited to hear it. I'm excited for you.

Cliff Croomes: 29:38 Well, thank you so much.

Sarah K. Snider: 29:42 Yeah, thank you. And good luck with your presentation.

Cliff Croomes: 29:44 Tell Steve I said hello.

Sarah K. Snider: 29:45 I will, I will. He said hi too. Yeah, absolutely.

Cliff Croomes: 29:50 All right, have a great afternoon.

Sarah K. Snider: 29:51 Okay, thanks, you too, Cliff. All right.

Cliff Croomes: 29:54 Bye-bye.

Sarah K. Snider: 29:54 Take care, bye.
VITA

Clifton G. Croomes is a Graduate Assistant for the Louisiana State University Department of Bands. He is in his second year of a Doctor of Musical Arts degree after earning his Master of Music degree in 2017 from LSU. Prior to his time at LSU Mr. Croomes taught middle school and high school band in the Austin and San Antonio areas for fourteen years, most notably at Douglas MacArthur High School and Georgetown High School where he was the Director of Bands from 2011-2015. Mr. Croomes is an active adjudicator and clinician throughout Louisiana and Texas and has worked with ensembles internationally, most notably in Europe and Japan. Mr. Croomes is originally from the Houston area where his family still resides and he earned his Bachelor of Music Education from The University of Texas at Austin.