

A Decade Through Music



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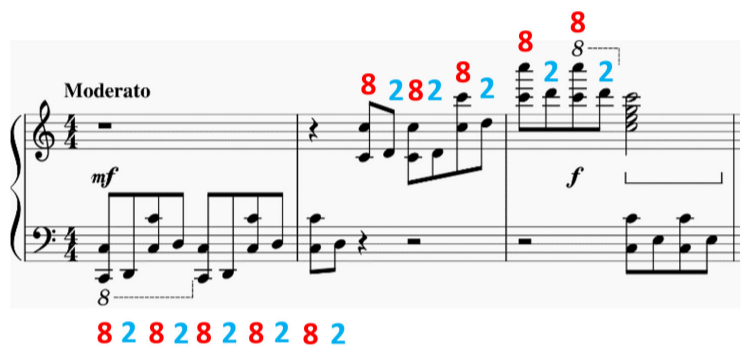
The aim of "A Decade Through Music" is to express selected worldwide events and my personal response to them through melodies. Unique, personally composed musical themes represent certain points in history from 2010 to the end of 2019. Some of these events were political, there were social movements, human achievements and tragedies that also caused loss of life. The themes are combined to create a 12 minute piano piece which was written on the programme MuseScore©.

In this composition I wanted to communicate my intrigue for what goes on around the world through music, and the piano was my way of expressing this. In 2011 we moved to Zürich from the UK and I had to learn a new language. In order to help myself learn German, I would read the newspaper on the bus on my way to school. I would also cut out and keep the events I found most interesting in a scrapbook. Some of the stories kept in my scrapbook are included in the piano composition.

2010

A Decade Through Music is composed using the Rondo form. A Rondo consists of two sections that alternate with each other. One repeats (chorus) and the other contrasts (verse). The composition has 10 verses (blue, left) representing each of the 10 years. These verses vary in length depending on how many events were included. The chorus (red, left) is played in between each year and it begins with the chiming of Big Ben (red, right). This establishes a feeling of continuity throughout the piece while creating a link to London, the capital of my home country.

Chorus



2011

The themes were composed by looking at the way events occurred, the sounds that may have been heard and the way people could have reacted. In music, major keys represent happy sounds while minor keys represent sadness. The composition includes major keys representing achievements and minor keys to communicate tragedy.

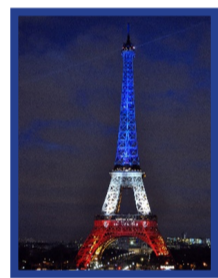
2012



January 2014: The Burj Khalifa was opened on 4th January. It is the tallest building in the world at 828m.

Quaver octave intervals (8) alternating with a D (2), the second note of the C-major scale. This creates an 82828 pattern which corresponds to the height of the Burj Khalifa.

2013

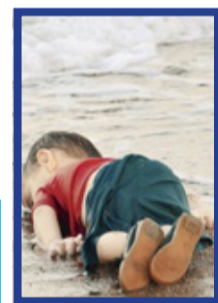


November 2015: On 15th November three bombs exploded in Paris in a coordinated terrorist attack by ISIS. 130 people were killed.

The explosions are represented by the repetition of three low pitched, raucous and loud chords (DFA^bA).

2014

2015



Throughout 2015: The European migrant crisis reached a peak when over 1 Mio. people applied for asylum in the EU after fleeing from armed conflict in places like Syria and Afghanistan.

The crisis is composed in G minor. A sad, eerie melody flowing up and down represents waves in the ocean and boats arriving off the Mediterranean Sea.

2016

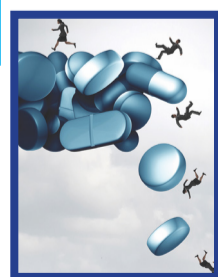


June 2016: On 26th June the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union.

The British National Anthem 'God save the Queen' in G major (blue) ends in a climbing G minor scale (red) to represent the decision to leave the EU. The change from a 'happy' to a 'sad' key is chosen because I personally find Brexit a very sad event as it has caused great division in the United Kingdom.

2017

2018



Throughout 2016: Painkiller overdoses killed more than 42,000 people in the United States. This was the ongoing opioid crisis' highest annual death toll of the decade.

A theme representing the flow of daily life is repeatedly interrupted by dissonant and consonant second and third interval chords (red) to represent the addiction to opioids that disrupts daily life.

2019

"A Decade Through Music" ends with a dissonant and unexpected chord representing the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, creating a continuation into the next decade. Composing the next "Decade Through Music" is an idea I already have and it would include the challenges of vaccine distribution and overcrowded intensive care units. Though the pandemic is not the only event that has headlined worldwide news. In 2020 alone George Floyd's death sparked protests across the globe fighting against racism, 210 people were killed in an explosion in Lebanon and Kamala Harris was elected the first female African-American Vice President of the United States. These events have already given me some inspiration for an original piano composition representing the decade from 2020 to the end of 2029.