

Sleepyhead

for tenor saxophone and piano

Robbie McCarthy

2011

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In the winter of 2010, I spent several weeks traveling the United States. The three main movements of "Sleepyhead" were composed in the three places I traveled that holiday season: Los Angeles, New York, and Phoenix.

Visiting my family in Los Angeles for holiday break, I began banging out a few pop songs on a practice room piano while I was waiting for my brother to finish rehearsal. Driving to dinner together, we casually talked about instrumental music's influence on the indie-rock scene. More and more mainstream acts are featuring skillful instrumentalists to add a new layer of complexity to otherwise simple arrangements. I thought a lot about the music I listen to for fun, and wondered what place it would have in the concert hall. For the next few days, I planned out what would eventually become this piece:

What would happen if the simplicity of popular music infiltrated the concert hall instead of the instrumentalists sneaking onto the main stage?

Upon arriving in New York City, I immediately fell asleep on the couch of our hotel room. It was at this moment that my omnipresent brother quoted pop-musician Jason Mraz. "Wake up! How can you sleep at a time like this, unless the dreamer is the real you?!" (I notice that about myself. I sleep way too much. What was I doing snoring on a stinky fifty year-old pink couch when I could have been exploring the greatest city on the planet? I really did enjoy my dreams though. Maybe too much now that I look back on it.) The trip ended with the break-up show of "As Tall As Lions", one of my most recently discovered favorite bands. To date, that show was one of my favorite musical moments in my life. I bought their last album, and failed at first to notice the title of the last track: "Sleepyhead".

Back to school in Phoenix, Arizona, I started compiling the material I wrote during my travels. Distinct themes were nowhere to be found, but what I did have were tonal and harmonic moods of the places I went. I then turned to my favorite pop artists and tried to emulate the feel and lyric nature of their melodies. My explanation of the movements are as follows:

- I. Wake Up Everyone (Los Angeles, CA) - my ideal 'wake-up' soundtrack, bringing back the happy memories of my childhood home. Contains imitative elements of As Tall As Lions, The Fray, Freddy and Francine, and Snow Patrol.
- II. How Can You Sleep at a Time Like This? (New York, NY) - a jazz-influenced song inspired by how at-home I feel amongst the hustle-and-bustle in the Big Apple. Contains imitative elements of Alicia Keys, The Fray, Freddy and Francine, and Sufjan Stevens.
- III. Unless the Dreamer is the Real You (Phoenix, AZ) - the soundtrack to my dreams, a pseudo-impressionist canvas to paint a singer's lyrics, (or in this case the soloist's melody.) Contains imitative elements of Freddy and Francine, and John Coltrane.

During performance I prefer that the movement titles are read aloud by the soloist during the fermata rests (after the double-bar-lines) in the solo part. The pianist should feel free to pedal liberally throughout.

- Robbie McCarthy, 2/2011

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I. Wake Up, Everyone
♩ = 132

freely

Tenor Sax.

Piano

Sax.

Piano

Sax.

Piano

Sax.

Piano

Sleepyhead

2

35

Sax.

Piano

40

Sax.

Piano

46

Sax.

Piano

52

Sax.

Piano

58

Sax.

Piano

mp

p

mf

rit.

f

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64 *a tempo*

Sax.

Piano

leg.

71

Sax.

Piano

77 *rit.* *a tempo*

Sax.

Piano

mf

II. How Can You Sleep at a Time Like This?
♩. = 56

83

Sax.

Piano

p *mp*

91

Sax.

Piano

mp

Sleepyhead

4

Sax. ⁹⁷ *mp*

Piano

Sax. ¹⁰²

Piano ¹⁰²

Sax. ¹⁰⁸

Piano ¹⁰⁸

Sax. ¹¹⁴ *f*

Piano ¹¹⁴ *f*

Sax. ¹²⁰ *f*

Piano ¹²⁰

Rea

Sleepyhead

Sax. *mp*

Piano *mp*

Sax. *p*

Piano

Sax. *mf*

Piano

Sax. *mf*

Piano

Sax. *mp* *mf*

Piano

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Sax. 143 *mp*

Piano 143

III. Unless the Dreamer is the Real You

♩ = 120

Sax. 147 *rit.*

Piano 147 *Reo.*

Sax. 152

Piano 152 *p* *Reo.*

Sax. 155

Piano 155 *Reo.*

Sax. 158 *mp*

Piano 158 *Reo.*

Sleepyhead

This page of musical notation covers measures 160 through 171. The key signature is E major (three sharps) and the time signature is 4/4. The score is written for Saxophone (Sax.) and Piano (Piano).

- Measures 160-161:** The Saxophone part begins with a melodic line starting on a half note G#4, followed by quarter notes A#4, B4, and C#5, then a half note D5. The Piano part features a dense texture of beamed sixteenth notes in the right hand, while the left hand has a simple bass line with a half note G#2 and a quarter note A#2.
- Measures 162-163:** The Saxophone part continues with a half note D5, then a quarter note E5, and a half note F#5. The Piano part maintains the complex sixteenth-note pattern in the right hand, with the left hand adding a half note B2 and a quarter note C#3.
- Measures 164-165:** The Saxophone part plays a half note G#5, then a quarter note A#5, and a half note B5. The Piano part continues with the same sixteenth-note texture, with the left hand adding a half note D3 and a quarter note E3.
- Measures 166-167:** The Saxophone part has a half note C#6, then a quarter note D6, and a half note E6. The Piano part continues with the sixteenth-note pattern, with the left hand adding a half note F#3 and a quarter note G#3.
- Measures 168-169:** The Saxophone part plays a half note F#6, then a quarter note G#6, and a half note A6. The Piano part continues with the sixteenth-note pattern, with the left hand adding a half note B3 and a quarter note C#4.
- Measures 170-171:** The Saxophone part plays a half note B6, then a quarter note C#7, and a half note D7. The Piano part continues with the sixteenth-note pattern, with the left hand adding a half note D4 and a quarter note E4.

The notation includes various musical symbols such as accidentals, dynamics (mf, mp), and articulation marks (accents, slurs). The piano part is characterized by a constant stream of beamed sixteenth notes, creating a rhythmic foundation for the saxophone melody.

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8

Sax. 175 *mp*

Piano 175

Sax. 179 *ff*

Piano 179 *ff* *Rec.*

Sax. 183

Piano 183 *

Sax. 187

Piano 187 *ff* *Rec.*

Sax. 192

Piano 192 *mp* *ff* *