

Rehearsing Russell's *Rejuvenations*
A Documentation of My Experiences in Working with the San Luis Obispo Youth Symphony

A Senior Project
presented to
the Faculty of the Music Department at
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Arts

by
Midel Bartolome Barizo

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

This paper is a written collection of my experiences while I worked with the Concert Orchestra and Academy Strings ensembles of the San Luis Obispo Youth Symphony from March through May 2014. The Youth Symphony's finale concert was a celebratory event because the 2013-2014 concert cycle marked the fiftieth anniversary of the organization. To celebrate, Cal Poly Music Department professor, Dr. Craig Russell, composed a piece for the Concert Orchestra and Academy Strings to premier at the concert.

Prior to working with the ensembles, I met with Dr. Russell to understand his piece, *Rejuvenations*. After these meetings, I met with the Concert Orchestra's and Academy Strings' conductors for their approval to let me work with their students. Following that, I met with the Youth Symphony's manager to schedule my rehearsal days. Next, I created general lesson plans for the rehearsals. After each of these rehearsals, I used these plans and then created a specific plan for the following rehearsal. I attended the Youth Symphony's finale concert to see the progress the student musicians had made and how beneficial my coaching was to their performance.

Throughout this process, I wrote down my experiences, plans, and analyses in order to document them for this paper. This paper contains the preliminary steps to the project (including my Project Proposal which was submitted prior to the process of this project), the detailed lesson plans, and a formal log of my experiences teaching the Concert Orchestra and Academy Strings students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The San Luis Obispo Youth Symphony

Nancy, Pamela, Kathy, Carol, Ginette, Tanya, & Joseph: I feel so lucky to have worked with your students. Thank you for letting me take part in rehearsals!

Students: I wish I could mention all of you! Thank you all for helping me grow as a music educator and conductor!

The San Luis Obispo Music Education Director, Youth Symphony Manager and Intern Team

I've said it once, I'll say it again. You are the group of people that make Mondays bearable.

Mrs. Castillo: Thank you for your encouragement and for keeping us all sane!

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Doctor Craig Russell

What a joy it was to work with a composer who greeted every task of every day with a smile. Thank you for *Rejuvenations*!

The Cal Poly Music Department

Faculty, Staff, and Music Majors: Thank you for every lecture, class, lesson, homework assignment, rehearsal, paper, presentation, performance, master class, recital, conversation, and hug in my time at Cal Poly. I could not have survived the Musicianship series, History series, juries, and seemingly endless C3d's and P1e's without each and every one of you.

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DECEMBER 2, 2013 – PROJECT PROPOSAL

**Written and submitted prior to the rehearsal process with the Youth Symphony students*

For my senior project, I am hoping to work with the Concert Orchestra of the San Luis Obispo Youth Symphony in sectional and full rehearsals during the Spring 2014 quarter for their fiftieth anniversary Finale Concert to be presented on May 25th. In particular, I would like to focus on Dr. Craig Russell's commissioned work, *Rejuvenations*. I have interned as an Administrative Assistant to the SLOYS Manager, Issy Roberts, since the Fall 2010 quarter. During that time, I established a solid rapport with her as well as the ensembles' conductors, instrument coaches, and students.

During my time thus far at Cal Poly, I have taken the following courses that have prepared me for this senior project: the Conducting series, Orchestration, Instrumental Literature and Rehearsal Techniques, as well as violin lessons. I had been a member of the Cal Poly Symphony for four years and can apply the experiences I had, both in full rehearsals as well as sectionals, to the students with whom I will work. In addition, I have observed almost every rehearsal that Concert Orchestra Conductor Nancy Nagano has lead during my time as an intern for the Youth Symphony. This has familiarized me with the dynamic and skill set of this group as a whole. I have also had the opportunity to lead violin sectionals with this group of students in the past.

In preparation for the sectionals and rehearsals with the Concert Orchestra, I would work with Dr. Russell during the Winter 2014 quarter to see the development of the composition and gain a thorough understanding of both the piece as a whole and the individual string parts so that I could lead productive and effective rehearsals and sectionals. When I have a solid understanding of the sound that Dr. Russell wants to create with this group, I would use the remainder of the Winter 2014 quarter to lesson-plan and map out what sections I would plan to rehearse on a week to week basis as the Youth Symphony has rehearsals weekly on Mondays.

Come the Spring 2014 quarter, I would rehearse the full orchestra once and lead string sectionals periodically during the preparation for the Finale Concert of this concert cycle in May. I met with Conductor Nancy Nagano and expressed my interest in conducting the group and leading string sectionals and she was immediately supportive. She suggested that I lead a full rehearsal closer to the concert after I have worked with the violinists and observed her rehearsals. During the weeks of rehearsals, I would watch Conductor Nagano conduct full rehearsals in preparation for my own as well as sectionals.

The writing components of this project would be the lesson plans as well as a summary of my experiences in working with Dr. Russell and Conductor Nagano. I would write out lesson plans detailing the specific passages that would be tackled and the aspects of the musicality that the students are expected to express within those passages for each sectional. Furthermore, these plans would serve as an outline for the sectionals themselves. They would describe my reasoning for choosing the various phrases to cover, and a step-by-step plan for each section.

Following that, I would lead a rehearsal of the full ensemble about two weeks prior to their concert date. At this point, the musicians should be comfortable enough to do a run-through of Dr. Russell's piece. I plan to assess the progress of the string musicians in the context of the entire piece with the entire ensemble, as well as fine-tune the piece as a whole. The lesson plan for the full rehearsal would have the same structure as the lesson plans for the sectionals; however, the plans of action would be more specific because there would be more musicians. The lesson plans would be completed prior to any rehearsals I would be leading with Concert Orchestra, but they could change during the Spring 2014 quarter as I observe and take notes on the rehearsals that Conductor Nagano has with the ensemble. Any changes made throughout the course of the rehearsals I would be included in the final write up of my week to week documentation.

To supplement the process of the project as a whole, I would write a summary of my experiences after the Youth Symphony's finale concert. This section would be a reflection on my journey as I rehearsed the students. I would discuss their performance at the finale concert, as well as what aspects of my rehearsals were beneficial. Furthermore, I would include a discussion of the unanticipated parts of the project that arose throughout the process.

In conclusion, this project is made up of two parts. The first part is working with Dr. Russell on string articulations and lesson-planning throughout the Winter 2014 quarter. The second part is the rehearsals of violins, all strings, and the full Concert Orchestra all under the instruction of their conductor, Nancy Nagano. Both of these parts would be supplemented with a written portion which include the lesson plans and the final write-up.

JANUARY–MAY 2014 – CHANGES IN STRUCTURE

I learned that *Rejuvenations* was to be played by an ensemble that combined the Concert Orchestra ensemble of the Youth Symphony as well as the Academy Strings ensemble. This hugely affected my project structure. First, the range of ability of the musicians involved in Concert Orchestra and Academy strings is much more varied than that of the Concert Orchestra alone. Secondly, I needed to meet with the conductor of Academy Strings, Carol Kersten, and get her approval to teach and rehearse her students. Both of these points will be further discussed in the “Obtaining Approval from the Conductors” section.

I realized that Concert Orchestra would receive half of the rehearsal time that I had originally planned because I also needed to work with Academy Strings and I wanted each ensemble to have equal rehearsal time with me. I also wanted equal opportunity to conduct both groups. Virtually every sectional and rehearsal I lead between the two ensembles had a different group of students rather than being strictly first violin, second violin, or viola sectionals and full ensemble rehearsals.

Instead of meeting with Conductors Nagano and Kersten separately, I spoke with them at the beginnings of rehearsals to see if they had sections that they wanted me to work on in addition to the ones that I had planned for.

THE SAN LUIS OBISPO YOUTH SYMPHONY

An Overview of the Two Ensembles

The San Luis Obispo Youth Symphony has four ensembles in which string players can participate. These groups are: Super Bows!, Preparatory Strings, Academy Strings, and Concert Orchestra. Each group is geared toward coaching students of varying levels and performing music appropriate to their abilities. Students begin in Super Bows! and as they continue to improve, they move on to the more advanced groups (Preparatory Strings, Academy Strings, and Concert Orchestra, respectively).

For this project, I rehearsed the violin and viola students that are in Academy Strings and Concert Orchestra. The Concert Orchestra is the organization's most advanced ensemble. It is a symphonic orchestra (contains strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion) and consists of students who have had the most playing experience as well as the longest involvement with the Youth Symphony. It is led by Conductor Nancy Nagano and string coaches Pamela Sheffler and Kathleen Hill. Academy Strings is the second-most advanced ensemble. It differs from Concert Orchestra because it is a string orchestra, not a symphonic orchestra. This ensemble is directed by Conductor Carol Kersten and string coaches Ginette Reitz, Tanya Streder, and Joseph Shanks.

Enrollment in Academy Strings is the precedent for being enrolled in Concert Orchestra. This means that the Academy Strings students do not have the same amount of experience and skills as their peers in the more advanced ensemble. In addition to that, Conductor Nagano is extremely selective when choosing her musicians for Concert Orchestra when auditions are held. The students that she feels are not quite ready for Concert Orchestra get placed in Academy Strings. Having said that, Conductor Kersten places students in Academy Strings that she feels have surpassed the level of the ensemble below them, Preparatory strings. This results in the wide range of ability in Academy Strings.


Obtaining Approval from the Conductors



In preparation for this project, I met with Conductor Nancy Nagano to ask if she was willing to let me work with her students as the concert cycle and my project progressed. Conductor Nagano was very supportive of this project and she agreed to let me coach the Concert Orchestra violinists and violists. Once I learned that the Academy Strings were also premiering *Rejuvenations*, I realized I needed to meet with their director, Conductor Carol Kersten for her consent. Like Conductor Nagano, Conductor Kersten was also immediately receptive to the project and excitedly agreed to let me coach the Academy Strings violinists and violists.

Scheduling with the Youth Symphony Manager





Although I had interned for the Youth Symphony and was aware of the general schedule of their rehearsals, I met with Youth Symphony Manager, Issy Roberts, to create a timeline of the sectionals I would be leading. In this meeting, we discussed that there would be eight rehearsals from March 10, 2014 until May 19, 2014. Of the nine rehearsals during those months, I had a schedule conflict on March 17, 2014 but was able to attend and coach for the remaining rehearsals. I learned that the first rehearsal was a tutti rehearsal and the students would be sight-reading. The following rehearsals would consist of tutti rehearsals and sectionals. When Concert Orchestra was scheduled for sectionals, Academy Strings was scheduled for a tutti rehearsal and vice versa. Lastly, the rehearsal on May 19, 2014 was scheduled to be a tutti rehearsal combining Concert Orchestra and Academy Strings as the large ensemble they would perform as for the premier of *Rejuvenations*. This meant that the framework of my rehearsals would be as follows: tutti rehearsal, three Concert Orchestra sectionals and three Academy Strings sectionals that alternated week to week, and then a tutti rehearsal with the combined ensemble.


KEY TERMS

- Accent- emphasis on a given note, marked as “ > ” above the individual note
- Arco- using the bow to create sound
- Bow- the stick used to play the *arco* articulations of stringed instruments
- Crescendo- (crescendi, pl.) a steady increase of volume, marked as “ < ” under the all notes where the increase should occur
- Decrescendo- (decrescendi, pl.) a steady decrease of volume, marked as “ > ” under all the notes where the decrease should occur. Not to be confused with accents
- Divisi- divided
- Dotted notes- dots lengthen the measurement of a note by half of the note's original value. For example, a quarter note is a measurement of music that lasts the length of one beat, but a dotted quarter note is a measurement of music that lasts the length of one and a half beats
- Double stop- this term is used to describe when a violinist angles the bow so that when he or she plays, the bow is making contact with two strings, and thus he or she is playing two notes at once
- Down bow- marked as “ II ” above a note. This tells the musician to pull the bow downward on the string, starting at the frog. Down bows are usually utilized on the strong beats of a measure
- Eighth notes-  a measurement of music that lasts the length of one-half a beat in 4/4 time
- Forte- (abbreviated *f*) loudly. Multiple *f*'s (i.e. *ff*, fortissimo) mean an increase of the intensity of the loudness

- Frog- the bottom end of the bow; the portion that is held in the right hand
- Grace notes: note ornamentations that accent the note to which they are leading
- Half note:  a measurement of music that lasts two beats in 4/4 time
- Harmony- an accompaniment to that melody. Sometimes called a counter-melody
- Legato- this articulation means to play a section smoothly and connected, sometimes marked with a bar “ – ” above the notes
- Melody- the line of music that the composer wants the listener to focus on
- Meter- relates to the time and the division of music per measure and is notated as two numbers stacked on top of each other (or number/number, i.e. 4/4). The top number indicates how many beats there are per measure. The bottom number indicates what kind of note gets the beat. The meter 4/4 means that there are four beats per measure, and a quarter note gets one beat
- Mezzo- - (abbreviated *m-*) “somewhat;” (i.e. *mezzo forte* means “somewhat loud”)
- Ostinato- a repeated melodic and/or rhythmic pattern
- Phrase- a “sentence” within the melody, sometimes marked with “ ^ ” above the melodic line
- Piano- (abbreviated *p*) softly. Multiple p's (i.e. *pp* pianissimo) mean an increase of the intensity of the softness
- Pizzicato- plucking the strings with one's fingers to create sound
- Quarter note-  a measurement of music that lasts the length of one beat in 4/4 time
- Retake- (also “lift,” marked as “ ' ”) when playing, the general rule is that players will alternate between down bow and up bow. Occasionally, a section will end on a down bow and the following section needs to start with a down bow as well. In this case, the

musician needs to reset their bow at the frog to be able to play another down bow

- Sixteenth note-  a measurement of music that lasts the length of one-fourth of a beat in 4/4 time
- Slur- an articulation where one plays several notes in one bow direction (down bow or up bow); marked as “” above the specific notes. Slurs usually do not last more than one measure. Not to be confused with phrases
- Soli- a group solo that is highlighted in the context of the piece
- Solo- a melody meant to be played by only one musician
- Staccato- this articulation means to play a section broken and abrupt, marked as having “” above the individual notes
- Subdivision- music is written in a given meter and the conductor communicates the beats while he or she is leading the group. The subdivisions are the further breakdown of time. For example, in 4/4 meter, there are four quarter note beats. Thus, the subdivision is eight eighth notes beats
- Syncopation- generally, notes are played on the beats of the meter. When notes are played on the subdivisions, they are said to be syncopated
- Tempo- (tempi, pl.) the speed that the music is played
- Tie- playing two notes of different value as one long note; marked with the articulation “” over the two notes. Not to be confused with slurs or phrases. For example, an eighth note tied to a half note would sound like one note that is played for two and a half beats
- Tip- the top end of the bow, opposite of the frog
- Tutti- all, everyone; indicating the entire ensemble

- Up bow- marked as “ V ” above the note. This tells the musician to push the bow upward on the string, starting at the tip. Up bows are usually utilized on the weak beats of a measure
- Viola- a four stringed orchestral instrument. Its strings are all a perfect fifth apart from their neighboring strings; their pitches are C G D A. The viola also has a lower sounding range than the violin
- Violin- a four-stringed orchestral instrument. Its strings are all a perfect fifth apart from their neighboring strings; their pitches are G D A E
- Whole note-  a measurement of music that lasts four beats in 4/4 time

THE PARTS

Milly Barizo - Official Bowings 4/28/14

Violin 1

Rejuvenations

Craig H. Russell

Spirito ($\text{♩} = 86$)

1. The Train North

staccato

Divisi f p

Unis. mf

5 connected f

staccato

Div.

10 Unis. mf

f

14 A Divisi p legato

21

31

B staccato Divisi f p

Unis. mf

connected f

45 staccato Div. mf

Unis.

50 rit. mp p

Violin 1

opposite contrast

7

2. A Tango

Craig H. Russell

Moderato (♩ = c. 108)

Handwritten notes: *opposite contrast*

Violin 1 score for "2. A Tango" by Craig H. Russell. The tempo is Moderato (♩ = c. 108). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 4/4.

The score consists of several staves of music with dynamic markings and performance instructions:

- Staff 1 (Measures 1-7): Dynamics include *p*, *f*, *mf*, and *mp*. A handwritten note *opposite contrast* is written above the staff.
- Staff 2 (Measures 8-11): Dynamics include *f* and *mp*.
- Staff 3 (Measures 12-15): Dynamics include *mp*, *p*, *f*, *mf*, and *mp*. A handwritten note *opposite contrast* is written above the staff.
- Staff 4 (Measures 16-25): Dynamics include *f* and *mp*. A handwritten note *opposite contrast* is written above the staff.
- Staff 5 (Measures 26-30): Dynamics include *f*. A handwritten note *opposite contrast* is written above the staff.
- Staff 6 (Measures 31-34): Dynamics include *mp* and *f*. A handwritten note *opposite contrast* is written above the staff.
- Staff 7 (Measures 35-40): Dynamics include *mf* and *f*. A handwritten note *opposite contrast* is written above the staff.

Additional markings and notes:

- Measure 16: *Concertmaster al*
- Measure 26: *ON BEAT*
- Measure 27: *Unis.*
- Measure 31: *206*
- Measure 35: *12*
- Measure 36: *C*

8

A Tango

52 *ff* *mp* *f* *mp* *p*

57 *f* *f* *mf* *mp* *ff*

61 *f* *ff*

The musical score is written on three staves in 2/4 time, featuring a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The notation includes various musical symbols such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and rests, along with dynamic markings (*ff*, *mp*, *f*, *mf*, *p*) and articulation marks (accents, slurs, and hairpins). Above the staves, there are handwritten-style annotations: vertical lines and slanted marks above measures 52-56, and vertical lines and slanted marks above measures 57-61. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 61.

Waim

15

Violin 1

3. Starfish (a blessing)

Craig H. Russell

Moderato (♩ = c. 108)

Handwritten musical score for "The Rose Tree". The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef. It begins with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 5/4. The first measure is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The score includes several time signature changes: 6/4, 3/2, 5/4, 6/4, 3/2, 5/4, 6/4, and 3/2. A key signature change to two flats (B-flat and E-flat) occurs at measure 16. The score includes a repeat sign at measure 23. Handwritten annotations include "A" and "B" in boxes, "rit." (ritardando), and "a tempo". There are also various musical symbols like "V" and "Π" written above the staff.

Violin 1

4. Turlough's Harp

Craig H. Russell

Allegro Moderato (♩. = c. 108)

Handwritten annotations: *ff* above measure 1, *f* above measure 27.

Measures 1-4: *f*

Measures 5-8: *p*

Measures 9-12: *p*

Measures 13-16: *p*

Measures 17-19: *f*

Measures 20-23: *p*

Measures 24-26: *mp < f*, *mp < f*, *mp < f*, *mp < f*, *mp < f*, *mp < f*

Measures 27-30: *ff*, *f*

20

Turlough's Harp

30 *f*

33 *p*

37 *f* *p*

41 *mf*

45 *f*

MullyBary - Original Bowings 4/28/14

Violin 2

Rejuvenations

Craig H. Russell

Spirito (♩ = 86)

1. The Train North

staccato Divisi
f p
mf
Unis.
5
staccato Div. 2
f
12
Unis.
mf
A legato p
27
Div. Unis. Div.
36
Unis. B staccato Divisi f p
42
Unis. mf
46
staccato Div. Unis. p mf
50
rit. Divisi mp p

Craig H. Russell, © copyright 2014

Violin 2

2. A Tango

Craig H. Russell

7

**exciting
whispering*

Moderato (♩ = c. 108)

4

p *f* *mf* *mp*

8 *f* *mp* *f* *mp* *p*

13 *mp* *mf* *mp* *f* *mf* *f*

17 *mp* *f* **A**

21

27 *f*

33 *mp* *f* **B** 4 *mp*

43

8

A Tango

48 C

52

57

61

This musical score is for a piece titled "A Tango" by Barizo 24. It consists of four staves of music, numbered 48 through 61. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is common time (C). The score includes various musical notations such as eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Above the staves, there are handwritten-style markings: "V" for accents and "C" for a specific measure. The dynamics range from *ff* (fortissimo) to *p* (piano). The piece concludes with a double bar line at measure 61.

mf *f* *mf*

ff *mp* *f* *mp* *p*

mp *mf* *mp* *f*

f *ff*

con sordino

15

Violin 2

3. Starfish (a blessing)

Craig H. Russell

Moderato (♩ = c. 108)

p

8 *Divisi* *Unis.* *legato*

14 *Divisi* **A**

20 *rit.* **B** *a tempo* *Divisi* *Unis.*

27

Violin 2

4. Turlough's Harp

Craig H. Russell

19

Handwritten: doubling 1st

Allegro Moderato (♩. = c. 108)

5

9 Div. Unis. *p* **A**

14 *mf* *f*

18 *p*

22 *mp < f* *mp < f* *mp < f* *mp < f* *mp < f* *mp < f* Div. Unis.

26 Div. Unis. *mp < f* *mp < f* *ff* Div. Unis. Div.

29 **B** Unis. *mp* *f*

20

Turlough's Harp

The musical score for "Turlough's Harp" is written on four staves of music. The key signature is G minor (three flats). The score includes the following measures and dynamics:

- Staff 1 (Measures 33-36): Measure 33 starts with a *p* (piano) dynamic. Measures 34-36 continue the melodic line.
- Staff 2 (Measures 37-40): Measure 37 starts with a *f* (forte) dynamic. Measure 39 has a *p* (piano) dynamic. Measures 40-42 continue the melodic line.
- Staff 3 (Measures 41-44): Measure 41 starts with a *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic. Measures 42-44 continue the melodic line.
- Staff 4 (Measures 45-48): Measure 45 starts with a *f* (forte) dynamic. Measures 46-48 continue the melodic line, ending with a double bar line.

Articulation marks, including slurs and accents, are present throughout the score. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Viola

Rejuvenations

Craig H. Russell

1. The Train North

Spirito (♩ = 86)

Divisi Unis.

staccato *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

5 *f* *f* *p* staccato

10 *f* *mf* *f*

14 **A** *p* legato

22

31

B Divisi Unis.

staccato *f* *p* *p* *f* *p* *f* *f*

45 *f* *p* staccato

50 *mp* *p* rit.

viola

7

2. A Tango

Craig H. Russell

Moderato (♩ = c. 108)

Viola

7

2. A Tango

Craig H. Russell

Moderato ($\text{♩} = \text{c. } 108$)

4

p

f

mf

mp

8

f

mp

< f >

12

mp

p

f

sim

17

p

A

pizz.

mf

22

27

3

arco

mf

35

B

f

mp

3

mp

marchés 2nds

42

8

A Tango

47 
51 
55 
60 

Viola

15

3. Starfish (a blessing)

Craig H. Russell

Moderato (♩ = c. 108)

p

7

12

legato

A

23

rit.

B *a tempo*

28

Viola

4. Turlough's Harp

Craig H. Russell

Allegro Moderato (♩. = c. 108)

f

Div.

Unis.

5

10

Unis.

p

14

f

18

p

22

mp < *f* *mp* < *f* *mp* < *f* *mp* < *f*

Div.

25

mp < *f* *mp* < *f* *mp* < *f* *mp* < *f* *ff*

Unis.

28

f

f

sim

like run II

always one beat

A

20

B

Turlough's Harp

The musical score for "Turlough's Harp" is written in 12/8 time and consists of four staves. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The score includes various dynamics and articulations:

- Staff 1 (Measures 1-4):** Starts with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. Measure 1 has a square articulation mark. Measure 4 has a forte (*f*) dynamic. Above measures 3 and 4 are several square and V-shaped articulation marks.
- Staff 2 (Measures 5-8):** Starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measure 6 has a forte (*f*) dynamic. Above measures 5 and 6 are square and V-shaped articulation marks.
- Staff 3 (Measures 9-12):** Starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measure 10 has a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. Measure 12 has a forte (*f*) dynamic. Above measures 9 and 10 are square and V-shaped articulation marks.
- Staff 4 (Measures 13-16):** Starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. Measure 14 has a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measure 16 has a forte (*f*) dynamic. Above measures 13 and 14 are square and V-shaped articulation marks.

MEETINGS WITH DR. CRAIG RUSSELL Discussing My Role in His Compositional Process

While I was creating this project, I met with Dr. Russell in November 2014 to discuss how involved he was willing to let me be. In our meeting, I expressed that I wanted to coach the students come time of the rehearsals that would be held for the finale concert. Dr. Russell offered to let me help him decide on the bowing articulations for the string parts of his *Rejuvenations*. We discussed that once the composition was completed, I would meet with him again to play the violin and viola parts to figure out logical articulations. After that, I would use the notes I have from this meeting and apply them to the Concert Orchestra and Academy Strings tutti rehearsals and sectionals.

Understanding *Rejuvenations*

Direct Quotes and Fragments from Dr. Russell's Email, February 22, 2014

“The Train North” (Movement 1)

I like the Bartok-esque angular rhythms. Basically, this depicts my trip to Vancouver, Canada, this past Christmas to visit my sister Lib and my brother Bob and their families during the holidays. You can hear the repetitious rotations of train wheels but a changing landscape all around. A middle section is a pause of self reflection (and the snow-covered evergreen trees in Oregon were gorgeous—the majesty of Mother Nature and a well balanced inter tranquility show up in the middle section). Then, the train powers onward, getting closer and closer to Vancouver.

“A Tango” (Movement 2)

Here is the Tango. Sultry. Actually, it is passionately sexy—although I won't state it that bluntly to the kids in the orchestra. But I am sure that they can figure it out! I love this movement. Argentina has given us such a fantastic and thrilling genre. I know the Spanish have it, dating back to *cante hondo*, but Piazzola and the like made it something quite different.

“Starfish (A Blessing)” (Movement 3)

This is the contemplative "prayer." Reverential. Consolation. Inspiring, humble, brilliant and down-to-earth all at the same time. But just the other day in our SLO Tribune a lead story had the headline "Wasting disease killing starfish in SLO County." There was a picture of starfish with the caption "A starfish that has sea star withering syndrome is missing one arm and has tissue damage to another." I felt like that starfish.

I'm doing my best, but often I feel like I'm missing something in my life, missing an "arm" and feeling "tissue-damaged." But the inner feeling of contentment and gratitude is how I get through all that stuff. And I LOVE starfishes. They are just so immediately fascinating to any human being who sees one! And ... they have five arms. And ... my "blessing" is written in five pulses to the bar. Perfect. I guess I've written a musical starfish (even though I only figured out my title recently, long after having composed the continuity sketch). I like the work. Simple. Pretty. Grateful.

“Turlough's Harp” (Movement 4)

In fact, I think this is my favorite movement. It reminds me of Bob, my brother, who loves all things Irish. This sounds like Bob's heart to me. The title is a clear nod to Turlough O'Carolan, the famous and beloved Irish composer from the eighteenth century. He was blind and was a harpist.

The movement has a rollicking, rambunctious, irrepressible joy that just exudes emotion in each bar. Nobody could feel grumpy after hearing this piece. I love the way that I land on the most shockingly surprising destinations, but with each "landing," it feels exactly right—at least to me. There are some crunchy chords, but I like them just like that. And the hollow fifths sound like hunting horns, evoking a pastoral setting (the Irish landscape?)

My Interpretations from a Meeting with Dr. Russell, February 24, 2014

“The Train North” (Movement 1)

There are various sections of this movement repeated, but Dr. Russell wanted for the phrase to “say something differently” each time it was repeated. The analogy he made was that when one is traveling on a train, the journey and one's surroundings are constantly changing even though one is on the same path.

“A Tango” (Movement 2)

The most important part of “A Tango” is being able to provide the imagery for the audience through the great contrasts in the playing techniques used throughout the movement. This contrast needs to be made extremely clear through the musicians' execution. The opening and closing sections also embrace the rest of the movement, similarly to the way a dancer would hold his partner during a performance.

“Starfish (A Blessing)” (Movement 3)

The simplicity of this movement is what makes it beautiful; inversely, keeping the sound

simple requires immense amounts of control. This movement is also the only one of the four of *Rejuvenations* to have constant and abrupt meter changes. In addition, the majority of this piece is written in an asymmetrical meter. The breath and the phrasing of the melody between all three high string parts line up, even though the individual parts have different melodies. The string sections will need to be in total synchronization with themselves as well as aware of the others for a harmonious sound.

“Turlough's Harp” (Movement 4)

This movement is very cheerful. The introduction and conclusion in the violin parts paint the picture of a dance (in a similar way to the second movement). Bowing lightly, or “with air” is crucial to the bouncy sound that this movement should have.

Dr. Russell's Instructions from Rehearsal on March 10, 2014

Dr. Russell observed the students sight-reading *Rejuvenations* and he provided Conductor Nancy Nagano and the ensemble with specific notes for each movement of the piece. For “The Train North,” he told the students that the most important part of this piece was to paint the picture of the landscape. The breakdown “A Tango” was, “Two percent notes, forty-eight percent dynamics, and fifty percent attitude.” Dr. Russell then explained that “Starfish (A Blessing),” was supposed to be pretty, and that it was about healing after sickness. Finally, “Turlough's Harp,” was supposed to sound like an Irish jig, and that keeping the imagery of people dancing was important.

PRELIMINARY LESSON PLANS

**Written and submitted prior to the rehearsal process with the Youth Symphony*

Violins

“The Train North” (Movement 1)

Measures 1 and 41 are marked *divisi*, but I think that the Concert Orchestra violinists can play these double stops confidently for a strong sound. I will coach the Academy String violinists to be able to play them successfully. The rhythm in measures 3 and 4 repeat themselves throughout this movement, but Dr. Russell wants each one to sound slightly different than the rest. I think working with the students on attaining the right amount of consistency versus contrast is key for this movement. The A section needs to be very smooth; in a way, it is one long phrase unlike the introduction and the B section which have very distinct two-bar or four-bar phrases.

“A Tango” (Movement 2)

The theme of this movement relies on the constant, but fluid, change in the dynamics. I think that the aspect that will need the most focus is starting the musicians quietly enough so that the crescendi in the long notes of the phrases are smooth and dramatic. Similarly to “The Train North,” the introduction and the conclusion of this movement mirror each other. I will work with the musicians to keep the same energy and passion up for the entire tango. Section A consists of a first violin and second violin soli. The intonation of that section will be a huge focal point of my sectionals.

“Starfish (A Blessing)” (Movement 3)

The focus of the sectionals on this piece will be to keep the sound connected and getting the students comfortable with asymmetrical and constantly changing meters. The first violins generally have the moving line and the second violins have the supporting notes for the chords underneath the first violins' melody.

“Turlough's Harp” (Movement 4)

Differentiating between the grace notes and the triplet patterns utilized in this movement will be a challenge. It depends on the quickness and cleanness of the grace notes and keeping the triplets in the phrases even. In addition, there are accents marked on the staccato dotted quarter notes in section A; the articulations in this section will need work. In this movement, the two violin sections often have unison parts so rehearsal notes from one group will transfer well to the next.

Violas

“The Train North” (Movement 1)

The rhythms for the viola are simple and steady. Their stability is what will keep the violins from rushing, so a huge focal point of the viola's sectionals will be keeping a steady tempo.

“A Tango” (Movement 2)

The violas are primarily with the violins for this movement, except for their ostinato during the violin soli at section A. Again, keeping a steady tempo is crucial as rushing is bound to happen with the syncopated rhythms written.

“Starfish (A Blessing)” Movement 3

The viola part is similar to the first and second violin part; their parts contain both a moving melody and harmonies supporting other. I plan on working on the mixed meter with the students.

“Turlough's Harp” (Movement 4)

Again, the viola is serving as a supporting voice; the focus on the sectionals will be on tuning the supporting notes and keeping the ostinati steady.

WEEK TO WEEK DOCUMENTATION

March 10, 2014 – Concert Orchestra, Full Ensemble Sight Reading, Observer

Lesson Plan; Based on Notes from General Lesson Plans

This rehearsal was Concert Orchestra's first time playing *Rejuvenations* so I planned to use this time to take notes on their performance and compare those notes to the general lesson plan I had created prior to this date.

Rehearsal Overview

The Concert Orchestra students read through *Rejuvenations* very well. Dr. Craig Russell was present at this rehearsal and was able to give general instructions to the students, Conductor Nagano, and me regarding how he wants his piece to be played.

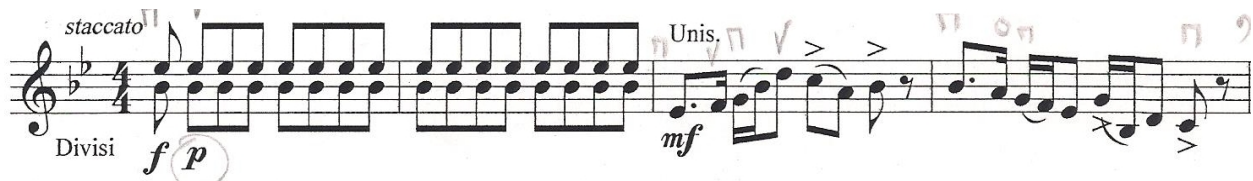
Specific Notes

While writing down my observations and comparing them to the skeleton of my lesson plans, I saw that the strings players needed immediate coaching on the dynamic changes and the syncopated rhythms throughout the piece. Although I was writing down these observations, it was still difficult to process the phrases that just the violins and violas needed to work on because I was listening to every instrument playing this composition all at once.

The points Dr. Russell made to the students were all paraphrases of what we had discussed in our meetings and emails prior to the rehearsals. I wrote down instructions corresponding to the different parts on my copy of the sheet music so that I could create a specific plan for the first violins at the following rehearsal.

Planning for the Following Rehearsals

“The Train North” (Movement 1)



- The piano that follows the forte in the first measure of this system was not exaggerated enough; this difference in dynamic repeats throughout the movement
 - Tell students to make the difference blatant
- The tempo was dragging in the third and fourth measures
 - Work with students to make dotted rhythms exact; do not rush the sixteenth notes



- The second violins were not holding the legato note long enough
- Conductor Nagano, “You don't want to lean the train back;” find the balance
- The staccato notes were too heavy
 - Tell students to play swiftly

“A Tango” (Movement 2)

- The students played the notes correctly but there was not enough tension
- Tension is key for the contrast in this movement
- The beginning and ending felt robotic
 - Tell students to play more smoothly

- EXPRESS PASSION AND DRAMA

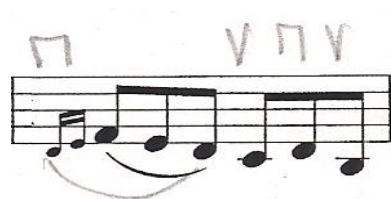
- Over-exaggerate to the students

“Starfish (A Blessing)” (Movement 3)



- The piano was not soft enough in volume; it sounded weak
 - Tell students to lower the volume but to play with support and a heavier bow
- Tell students to focus on their sound; the first violin, second violin, and viola parts are all moving at different times and then connect at measures like the fourth one in the figure
- Note to self: Make sure conducting patterns are clearly different between the meters utilized in this movement
 - Especially emphasize the 2/2 and 3/2 bars!

“Turlough's Harp” (Movement 4)



- This rhythm repeats several times in this movement

- Emphasize importance of the grace notes leading up to the eighth notes
- Tell students to make the slurred notes very different from the ones following

March 31, 2014 – Concert Orchestra, Violin Sectional, Conductor

Lesson Plan; Based on Notes from March 10, 2014

Based on my observations from the previous, I decided to focus on the various dotted and syncopated rhythms in all four movements of the first violin parts. I planned to rehearse the various rhythms repeatedly until the section played it exactly and in unison. Once I was confident that the violinists were playing a given phrase consistently correctly, I would have them focus on the dynamics of the piece. I would tell them to over-exaggerate the dynamics to convey the drama they needed to create in the differences between *forte* and *piano*. After working on the rhythms and dynamics separately, I would tell the musicians to combine the points made so that they would play the rhythms more accurately and create a dramatic contrast in volume in the piece in comparison to the execution of the rhythms and dynamics during their first run-through. I planned to work on all four movements with the first violins.

Rehearsal Overview

Even though this was the first sectional I was rehearsing, I already had a surprise. I thought I would be working with the first violins and second violins separately, but I learned that their sectionals are held together. I adjusted my lesson plans to work on the first two movements with the two violin sections instead of all four movements with just one group.

These students took direction really well and were much more instinctive than I had expected them to be. Whenever I corrected a rhythm, the violinists immediately fixed it. I came into the sectional expecting to need to explain my directions further once I had given them, but these students automatically adapted to the way I was coaching them to play. As the sectional progressed, I realized I over-planned for these students. I had written several observations in my music that I wanted to correct in this sectional, but in the time between the previous rehearsal and this one, the students had practiced and already fixed several of these mistakes.

Due to the students' efficiency and ability to take direction, I was able to rehearse all four movements despite having double the amount of students present. This rehearsal went extremely well, but this also worried me because I was afraid that my sectionals would end up very redundant. Having said that, I pinpointed sections to work on for the following sectional that were different from the ones that had been rehearsed at this one.

Specific Notes

For the first movement, I rehearsed the dynamic markings by having the students play the measures with *piano* marked immediately after *forte* repeatedly. Each time the students played the measure, I would tell them to play their *piano* softer and their *forte* louder. Once the students were playing the two dynamics with the degree of difference that I desired, I told them, "Now, make it musical. Currently, you're playing notes. I want you to make music." The students understood that they were playing all the technical aspects correctly, but the message of the music was not coming across. After a few more repetitions, they played it successfully.

I rehearsed the rhythms in a similar fashion. I had the musicians play the measures out of context so we could dissect the rhythm to play it exactly. First, I spoke the rhythm to the musicians. Then, I had them repeat it to me verbally before playing it on their instruments so that they could process the rhythm in two different ways. I also had them clap the rhythms so they could hear whether or not they were in unison.

While rehearsing the second movement, I found that the students understood what I wanted them to convey if I was being overtly dramatic in my explanations. I worked on keeping the energy of the students (and myself) high throughout this movement's rehearsal.

Once we began the third movement, the energy remained extremely high and we needed to calm down from the heightened passion of the tango. I had the students set down their instruments and take three deep breaths. I had them reset their instruments and I whispered my

tempo and emphasized my breathing to make the students play calmly. Their entrance mirrored the mood I was trying to portray. This movement required the most concentration from me because it had very many meter changes. The rest of the rehearsal of this movement focused on staying calm.

Finally, I rehearsed rhythmic entrances in the fourth movement. I focused on the grace notes leading into the three eighth notes because that pattern began several phrases in this movement. I told the musicians that their energy needed to be as high as it was in the second movement; the difference was, “A Tango” needed to be passionate and “Turlough's Harp” needed to be light-hearted.

Planning for the Following Rehearsals

“The Train North” (Movement 1)



- The forte to piano sections still need work
 - MUCH improvement from last week!
- The violins and violas need to tune the notes they are playing with each other
- Have Concert Orchestra play double stops and Academy Strings play *divisi*
- Rhythms of dotted passages improved, but simple rhythms like these ones now need work

“A Tango” (Movement 2)



- Rarely do second violins get to shine! This is an example of their soli
 - Make sure second violins come in strongly on both the first eighth note and the eighth note tied to the half note
- The tied eighth note and half note is the “landing point”
 - Tell the students to accent this note more than the first

“Starfish (A Blessing)” (Movement 3)

- Note to self: snap beats when conducting to ensure consistency from musicians
- The legato lines are already clean and beautiful
 - Having said that, this movement needs some more air; the legato lines tended to be too heavy

“Turlough's Harp” (Movement 4)



- Similar to “Starfish,” this movement also needs air
 - Especially in sections like this
- The first violins (left) have the same rhythm as the second violins (right)
 - The melodies of each group were moving in different directions
 - Tell group to focus on their notes independent of the other section's melodies

April 7, 2014 – Academy Strings, First Violin Sectional, Conductor

Lesson Plan; Based on Notes from March 10 & 31, 2014

After an efficient sectional with the Concert Orchestra violins, I came into the Academy Strings first violin section rehearsal confidently. I had not observed these students in their sight reading through *Rejuvenations*, but I felt that I had a thorough understanding of the piece and a successful rehearsal the previous week. I intended to follow the lesson plan I created for the first violins of Concert Orchestra with this group. If time allowed, I planned to incorporate some of the plans I created for the next Concert Orchestra sectional into the Academy Strings sectional as a trial run.

Rehearsal Overview

Much to my surprise and frustration, this sectional did not run as smoothly as the one before. As stated in the “Overview of the Two Ensembles” section, the students enrolled in Academy Strings are younger and less experienced than those in Concert Orchestra. As I started to rehearse the students, I realized that while I over-planned for Concert Orchestra, I under-planned for Academy Strings. Thankfully, I had asked the Academy Strings first violin coach, Ginette Reitz, to sit in on their sectional so that she and I alternated on conducting and instructing the students.

The range of ability is much wider in this group; getting a consistent sound from them was more challenging than doing so with the Concert Orchestra students. I had to work with the Academy Strings first violins note by note for tuning; additionally, I had to take tempi much slower and then gradually speed up. While I planned to work on both the first and second movements of *Rejuvenations* like I had in the previous rehearsal, I only got to work through “The Train North.”

Specific Notes

We spent fifteen minutes on the articulations in the introduction of the movement and really differentiating between staccato and legato. The process I used to work on the articulations with these students was similar to the process I used to work on the dynamics with the Concert Orchestra violins. The contrast between these two articulations is automatic for older students, but younger musicians need constant reminders that *legato* is smooth and *staccato* is abrupt or broken. I told the students to over-exaggerate this difference, much like I told the Concert Orchestra violins. I found that these students understood instructions better when there was an analogy attached to it. When I wanted them to play legato, I told them to imagine that they were painting a wall and that they needed to make sure the paint was even. When I wanted them to play staccato, I told them to play like a robot so that their movements would be jerky. The students understood these analogies and applied them to the articulations. From there, I told the students that in addition to applying those qualities to the piece, they needed to make it musical so it is enjoyable for them, the conductor, and the audience to listen to.

It is common practice that new sections of a piece or movement will begin with a down bow even if the section prior to it ends with a down bow. Another automatic nuance for older students is doing a retake of the bow to begin the next section. The younger students did not do this automatically; there were a few run-throughs where half the students were doing opposite bowings from their peers. This made me realize that these students need every bowing direction marked for them. The older students only need a bow marking at the beginning of a phrase because they understand the alternating patterns and will take a retake (if needed) at the next phrase. A huge portion of the Academy Strings rehearsal was spent just writing in the bowings on their parts.

I was disappointed that I could not work on the movement as a whole because the

students needed very focused rehearsal time on the mechanics of the piece. This rehearsal made me realize that while I may have had plans that were too detailed for the Concert Orchestra rehearsal, I came into this sectional somewhat unprepared in both lesson plans and state of mind. I was also disappointed because aside from entering bowings for all of the parts, I hardly had any new material to create further lesson plans for the weeks to come.

Planning for the Following Rehearsals

- Note to self: Mark in EVERY bow direction for second violins and violas
- Note to self: Integrate lesson plans from this sectional, and March 10 & 31, 2014

April 21, 2014 – Concert Orchestra, Violins Sectional, Conductor

Lesson Plan; Based on March 31, 2014 and April 7, 2014

I wanted to focus on the harmonies of the double stops in the first movement because I spent the last rehearsal focusing on the dynamics and rhythms. I also decided to rehearse the second violin soli in the second movement and encourage them to play strongly. I planned to work on getting a smooth and not heavily weighted sound from the students during the third movement. Similarly to that, I wanted to emphasize that the fourth movement should have a similar lightness, even though it greatly differs from the preceding movement in tempo and style.

The first rehearsal was extremely technical; it focused on the aspects of the piece that were written on the page. To contrast, I decided to use this rehearsal to draw out musical expression from the students' playing after working on the intonation of their harmonies. To do so, I planned to explain the story, feeling, or image that the students needed to convey in the various movements, then tell them to keep that in mind as I conducted them during a run-through.

Rehearsal Overview

Because the Academy Strings sectional went well with their coach present and the last Concert Orchestra sectional was very productive, I asked Concert Orchestra Violin Coach, Pamela Sheffler, to play with the second violins and give commentary on their soli section. As the rehearsal went on, Sheffler was able to pick out little nuances that I had not noticed in the previous sectional because she knew this group extremely well and had extensively worked with them.

Specific notes

I spent ten minutes having the violins play the notes of their double stops. First, I tuned each of the four notes being played between the two groups individually. Next, I had the first

violins tune their double stop, and the seconds tune theirs by playing the notes and holding them continually instead of at note length value. After that, I had all four groups play their notes. I stopped the groups and told them to listen to each other. Then, I told the groups to hold out their notes and I held my hands clasped in front of them. I then instructed them to play more and more out of tune the further I pulled my hands away from each other, and then to fix their tuning as I brought my hands closer together. The visual aspect paired with the aural aspect helped the students to improve their intonation.

That much of my lesson plan was successful, so I decided to move on to the emotions needed in the tango. This relied on the second violin soli, so I immediately worked on that section. I noticed that the students were accenting the first eighth note more than the eighth note tied to the half note. I made an analogy that each of these measures was like a “wind-up” and a “pitch” in baseball. The first eighth note was the “wind-up,” and it needed to be strong to set up for the strong “pitch,” the eighth note tied to the half note. This made it clear that the second accent was more important.

While the students' energy was up, I decided to work on the fourth movement after the second. I had the students play the section that had repeated triplet eighth notes followed by a staccato quarter note. This section was very similar to the section we worked on in “A Tango” because the relation of the triplets to the quarter note was “wind-up” and “pitch” as well; however, all the violins had this rhythm and now the first violins worked on executing the rhythm the way that the second violins had already been working on. Luckily, the lesson plans I made coincided with each other.

Planning for the Following Week

- Note to self: the following incipits are sections that represent the images that need to be portrayed

“The Train North” (Movement 1)



- This is part of the A section which is supposed to depict the landscape
- Tell the students to play smoothly, picture nature as they're playing

“A Tango” (Movement 2)

- This transition from the introduction to the A section exemplifies the drama needed
 - They are equally dramatic in different ways and they MUST be different
- The first part has a lot of rests in between the notes and staccato markings
 - Don't miss the drop in dynamics to *mezzo piano*
- The A section has a lot of slurs and should be played more connected
 - Play *forte* and strongly

“Starfish (A Blessing)” (Movement 3)



- Even though there are accented notes, this exemplifies the tranquility this movement should convey
 - Bring out the slurs
 - Accents should be emphasized, but not forceful
- Focus on smooth legato lines
 - Tell the students to imagine a calm and quiet day at the beach for “Starfish”

“Turlough's Harp” (Movement 4)



- This movement is a happy jig!
- The alternating slurred notes and separate notes in the third measure of this section demonstrate the bouncy and dancing quality of this movement
 - Tell students to play this *forte* but not heavily
 - This movement needs to feel like music that dancers can dance to

April 28, 2014 – Academy Strings, Tutti Rehearsal, Conductor

Lesson Plan; Based on Notes from April 7 & 21, 2014

Similar to the second sectional I lead with the Concert Orchestra violins, I planned to utilize this sectional with the Academy Strings second violinists to work on the emotional expression in their performance. I decided to focus on articulations first, as it is important for the students have the accuracy of the notes prior to manipulating their playing to make it more expressive. The younger students in this ensemble also need more coaching on the mechanics, but once I felt that they confidently played the correct rhythms and notes, I could then incorporate the story into their rehearsal. After the last Academy Strings sectional, I also came into this rehearsal with every bowing marked so that I did not have to spend rehearsal time figuring out the bowings to dictate to the students.

Rehearsal Overview

This rehearsal was yet another surprise that Academy Strings had for me. I was originally scheduled to work with the second violins, but I had to rehearse the first violins, violas, and celli as well. Half of Academy Strings was rehearsing for a separate concert so I rehearsed all the students who were not participating in it. This was nerve-wracking because I had not studied the cello part as thoroughly as the violin and viola parts, nor had I planned a lesson to rehearse the celli.

At the beginning of the rehearsal, I had the students play through the first movement to warm up their fingers and get them ready to work on sections of the piece during rehearsal. I noticed that a lot of the musicians were not completely focused on playing and were not putting in their best efforts to play. In an effort to get them to try harder, I introduced the students to Dr. Craig Russell, who was present at this rehearsal. Once the students realized that they were playing the composition for the composer himself, they immediately intensified their focus and

efforts. They played with more energy which was partially fueled by excitement, and partially by nerves.

Although I planned to use this rehearsal to work on articulations first and then follow with the emotions, it turned into a rehearsal focusing solely on the story that needed to be conveyed. I corrected certain rhythmic passages throughout the sectional, but that came secondary to working on the musical expression.

This rehearsal made me realize that aiming to conduct the full group was more than I could handle. Having to focus in on four parts instead of just one or two was dizzying. Luckily, Dr. Russell was there to help give notes to the students and explain how he envisioned them playing the composition. In addition to that, Academy Strings Viola Coach Joseph Shanks was also present during the rehearsal and was able to assist me in working on on the chosen sections in a timely manner. With this group, I only had time to rehearse three of the four movements.

Additionally, this rehearsal is the one that made me realize that although I had studied the violin and viola parts diligently and knew the map of the composition fairly well, I would not be ready to conduct the full symphonic orchestra. I met with my senior project advisor, Professor India D'Avignon to discuss my concerns and we decided that I would focus on rehearsing the strings and give general notes at tutti rehearsals, rather than working to conduct the ensemble.

Specific Notes

I rehearsed the first three movements of *Rejuvenations*. When we began with “The Train North,” the nervous energy was affecting the rhythms of the piece. Dr. Russell told them to relax. I told the students to envision the soothing train ride. Once they calmed down, they played the rhythms more accurately and precisely. I worked with them on the dotted eighth-sixteenth note rhythms in the movement to get it exact.

Afterward, I moved on to “A Tango.” As difficult as it was to get the Concert Orchestra

violins to create a big contrast in this movement, it was even more difficult to do so with the Academy Strings violins. We worked on correcting measure 8 specifically. I kept explaining to the students that the dynamic switch had to be extremely different, but I still was not getting the desired sound from the group. Needless to say, I was getting frustrated. Thankfully, Dr. Russell stepped in. He told the students to imagine that all of a sudden they got extremely hungry. He had them count out the rhythm and then angrily yell “I AM SO HUNGRY!” in the rhythm of the eighth notes. Afterward, they applied the attitude shift from calm to angry, and kept the phrase “I AM SO HUNGRY!” in mind as they played their eighth notes. That time, the articulations and dynamic shift were exactly what Dr. Russell and I tried to get the students play.

Next, I rehearsed “Starfish (A Blessing).” I had to get the students to change their mindset after the intensity of the last movement. Dr. Russell suggested to imagine like they were skating. I told the students to set down their instruments and make the gliding motion of skating while I played the melody for them. After a few measures, I told them to apply that idea to the entire piece. Having a kinesthetic activity to accompany the analogy aided the students in correcting their playing styles. I told the musicians to keep imagining the gliding motion while playing “Starfish (A Blessing)” and they played with the most smooth and connected tone that I had gotten them to play thus far.

Planning for the Following Rehearsal

- The next rehearsal in my schedule was a viola sectional with the Concert Orchestra.

Luckily, I had violists in my sectional so I can accurately plan for the next one.

“The Train North” (Movement 1)



- The violas are paired with the second violins on this section
- I worked with the second violins on this rhythm; work with the violas so that the two sections match



- None of the higher strings have this many moving notes at the end of the first movement
 - Tell the violas to bring this out

“A Tango” (Movement 2)



- The violas have this ostinato under the violins' melody at section A
- They are paired with the celli and can bring this melody out
- The violins are playing their melody forte and arco; tell the violists to bring out their pizzicato

“Starfish (A Blessing)” (Movement 3)

- The main notes that the violas needs is that their parts are marked piano but they are so outnumbered that they can play their parts at a mezzo piano level so that their harmonies are heard underneath the other string parts

“Turlough's Harp” (Movement 4)



- I worked on this rhythm before, but not on the drastic dynamics
- This needs to be an even bigger difference because there are so many less violists than violinists

May 5, 2014 – Concert Orchestra Violins and Violas Sectional, Conductor

Lesson Plan; Based on Notes from March 10, 2014 and April 28, 2014

The viola part had mainly supporting roles; the sections I chose to rehearse focused on those in which they were highlighted, or sections where they are paired with another string group on the melody. These sections include the ending of the first movement, pairing with the second violins in the second movement, and the huge dynamic differences that are marked in the fourth movement.

Rehearsal Overview

This day was designated for the Concert Orchestra violas, but due to some schedule shifting, I was working with the violins as well. This sectional was beneficial to the violins because they could hear the harmonies that were supporting the melodies. This was helpful to the violas because they are the one group that can continually play strongly throughout the piece because they are so outnumbered. I focused a lot of my attention to the violas so that they had as much coaching as their peers. It was such a contrast to encourage volume and a more powerful sound with the violas because I constantly had to tell the violins to tone down their sound.

Specific Notes

The violas and second violins had paired sections in the introduction and conclusion of the first movement. There were about three times as many second violins as there were violas. Because of this, I told the viola students to emphasize their harmony as they were playing a supporting line for the second violins and were greatly outnumbered.

At the April 21, 2014 rehearsal, I worked with the second violins on their soli; the violas also had a soli. Theirs was a harmony to that of the second violins, but they needed to play the same rhythms. I told the violas to apply the same concept of the “wind-up” and “pitch” when playing the supporting melody for the second violins. I had the second violins and violas play the

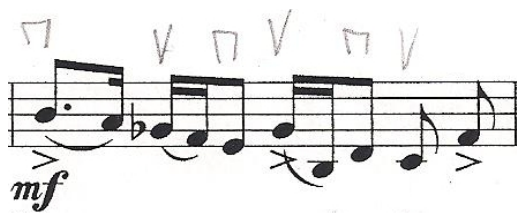
soli together so they knew what to listen for in each others parts.

The first fifteen measures of the fourth movement contain steady rhythms. While simple rhythms may not seem to need the most work, I thought that it was important to rehearse them because the violas' rhythms were supposed to help the timing of the violin's rhythms. If the violas were consistent, the violins were consistent. The remainder of the movement had all the strings on similar rhythms and melodies, so I used the last bit of rehearsal time to work with the three sections as a whole instead of working with the violins and violas in isolation.

Planning for the Following Week

- Note to self: The next rehearsal that I would be able to work with the Concert Orchestra would have been the tutti rehearsal on May 19. Because of this, I would not be able to work with these violists in another sectional. The following examples are additional parts where the violas must be heard

“The Train North” (Movement 1)



- All the strings have this rhythm at this bar
- Tell the students to emphasize it

“A Tango” (Movement 2)



- Make sure the violists match with the second violinists

“Starfish (A Blessing)” (Movement 3)



- This entrance contains the same notes as the introduction of the movement but needs to be softer with the same amount of energy

“Turlough's Harp” (Movement 4)



May 12, 2014 – Concert Orchestra and Academy Strings Combined Rehearsal, Observer &
Academy Strings Viola Sectional, Conductor

Lesson Plan; Based on Notes from April 28, 2014 and May 5, 2014

Similarly to the previous viola rehearsal, I planned to use this sectional to work with the violas on sections where they were either highlighted or paired with a section.

Rehearsal Overview, Combined Rehearsal

This rehearsal was the biggest surprise of this senior project. On the schedule, Concert Orchestra and Academy Strings were combining for a tutti rehearsal on May 19, 2014; I came to this rehearsal and realized that half of the rehearsal time was allotted for the *Rejuvenations* combined orchestra. This was the first time that the full group premiering this piece at the concert was rehearsing together. We had Concert Orchestra (winds, brass, and percussion included) mixed with Academy Strings. There was some nervous energy within the group, and Conductor Nagano had to restart the piece three or four times to get the group to settle into its huge sound. I immediately noticed that the dynamic contrasts would need to be exaggerated even more than I had emphasized to the musicians in sectionals.

Because the ensembles combined, there were double the amount of musicians. All of the students had fairly equal amounts of tutti rehearsals and sectionals where I worked with them and it was interesting to get an opportunity to see the combined group sooner than I had originally expected.

Specific Notes, Combined Rehearsal

As an observer, the notes I took differed from the notes I took as a conductor. When I was coaching the students personally, I was able to create my lesson plan, execute or change it, and then analyze my thought process as I worked with the students. As an observer, I took notes on the second and fourth movements at rehearsal, wrote down Conductor Nagano's instructions for the students, and then analyzed them from my perspective based on my lesson plans and

understanding of *Rejuvenations*.

The section of “A Tango” that needed the most work was the contrast of the dynamics at measures 7 and 8. The ensemble sounded like they were not putting enough effort into playing the *forte* section; Conductor Nagano told them it sounded like they were “swimming” along, and it felt like they were “sinking.” These descending eighth notes needed to sound very strong after the smooth and reserved notes prior. In my sectionals and tutti rehearsals, I constantly told the students to play like they suddenly got angry and to use that anger to have a strongly supported performance. Attaining the difference in dynamics was continually the greatest challenge of the piece.

The second violins' rhythm at section A of “A Tango” is independent from the rest of the orchestra. The most beneficial direction given to them was “play stronger.” because their sound had much more support and musicality than if they were told to “play louder.” Telling them to play louder drew a harsh sound from them that was very robotic.

A reiterated point is that the first and second violins represented the partners dancing this tango. The older students had a better grasp of this concept since the Concert Orchestra violins always held sectionals together; however, the younger students were either in a tutti rehearsal or in a sectional containing just their own section. This tango needed to be a conversation between the parts; the first and second violins needed to play cooperatively.

The main notes given to the violins during “Turlough's Harp” were regarding dynamics. Each student could notice the difference of his or her own dynamics, but Conductor Nagano made the point that because the group playing this piece is so massive, the dynamics need to be exaggerated even further. I told the students, “If the music is marked *forte*, play loudly enough for someone across the room to hear you. If it's marked *piano*, play quietly enough that your stand partner can't hear you.”

Rehearsal Overview, Viola Sectional

Because the first half of this rehearsal day was designated for the combined orchestras, that greatly reduced my time to work with the Academy Strings violas. Their coach, Joseph Shanks, was also there to work with them on other music; this further limited my time with the violists. Instead of rehearsing the music with them, I demonstrated the corrections that I wanted them to make and had them mark their individual parts.

Specific Notes, Viola Sectional

Like the Concert Orchestra viola sectional, I told the Academy Strings violists that even though their music is marked “piano,” they could play out because they were so outnumbered in the ensemble. This was especially so during “Starfish (A Blessing).” I told them to keep their legato lines very smooth.

Next, I instructed them to look at “Turlough's Harp.” I focused on the opening and the B section of this movement since they mirrored each other and because the violas' rhythm keep the violins steady. In this movement, I told them to play loudly but with support, since this movement was supposed to sound like an Irish dance.

Planning for the Following Week

I did not create lesson plans for the following week because I was an observer at the final tutti rehearsal for the combined group premiering *Rejuvenations*.

May 19, 2014 – Final Concert Orchestra and Academy Strings Combined Rehearsal, Observer

Lesson Plan

I did not create a lesson plan for this tutti rehearsal because I was observing.

Rehearsal Overview

Conductor Nagano focused on rehearsing movements 3 and 4 because the first two movements were very strong. Additionally, “Starfish (A Blessing)” and “Turlough's Harp” had not received as much tutti rehearsal time and the concert was approaching very quickly. Conductor Nagano worked backward and began with the fourth movement, then the third. The ensemble did rehearse “The Train North” and “A Tango” but minimal notes were given to allow for apt rehearsal time for the second half of the piece.

Specific Notes

The dance quality of the fourth movement had definitely improved, but at times, it was still too weighted. The dancers being depicted need to sound like they are light on their feet and able to move quickly.

The violins were told to really make an entrance, and not just to sneak in at all of the major sections. I noticed that the violins were not making strong entrances, which was frustrating because I spent a lot of my sectionals working on those measures to make sure they played with support and confidence, which they had done many times in prior rehearsals.

Conductor Nagano focused on giving notes to the low strings, particularly for the contrast of their dynamics at the end of the piece. These notes were connected but not necessarily relevant to the notes I gave to the students in my sectionals. At this rehearsal, the violins and violas were not given too many working notes.

When that movement was finished, the ensemble moved on to play the third movement. I noticed that the first beat of the 5/4 measures tended to feel hesitant and dragged. The students

tended to want to play in 6/4 so that it would feel symmetrical; this would thus drag out beat five and cause the students to come in late on beat one.

The importance of using breath to unify the section was mentioned to the violins. Because these instruments don't physically require air to create sound, violinists often forget how much help breathing together can be. When the violins breathed together, their entrances were much more together.

Planning for the Following Rehearsals

- None! Rehearsals were over and the concert was the following week!

CONCERT DAY AND A REFLECTION ON MY EXPERIENCE

The rehearsal schedule for the Youth Symphony falls into a timeline that is very similar to the quarter system at Cal Poly. The students had nine weeks and eight rehearsals total to put together several pieces for the finale concert on May 25, 2014. If that was not enough pressure, this year's Youth Symphony finale concert was in celebration of fifty years of a successful organization! Furthermore, we had our founder, Dr. Wachtang “Botso” Korisheli, and Maestro Kent Nagano guest conduct our students.

The *Rejuvenations* premier was in the middle of the second half of the concert. Because I in the audience, I could not take notes on their performance. This also allowed me to enjoy the music that my students were creating instead of reviewing prior notes I had made or marking down sections that I felt still needed more work.

“The Train North” started with a great deal of energy and surprised the audience. The sound of the conversation between the higher-ranged and the lower-ranged instruments filled out the Harman Hall in the Performing Arts Center at Cal Poly. The students played the transition and the difference in quality between the brisk introduction and the peaceful A section extremely well. The ending of the piece felt like the train had arrived at its destination. It was the perfect introduction to the musical tour that the audience was about to take.

“A Tango” began with the same energy but it was very contained and mysterious. The bassi and celli had a soft but excited pizzicato that set up the dance of the violins and violas. I felt that for how much effort got put into the dynamic contrast at measure 8, it was not as noticeable as it could have been, but I also feel like part of that was how the sound was traveling in the hall. The violins' melody at section A was rich and passionate. It also had a heavier sound in contrast to the lighter part of the tango at the beginning of the piece. When section B was approaching, I got very nervous knowing that the second violins and violas (generally the

instruments playing the harmonies) were about to have their soli... but they played it strongly and with passion. The tango ended with a very strong fortissimo on the last two beats and the audience could not help but applaud, even though the musicians were still in between movements of the work.

“Starfish (A Blessing)” came in as a quiet surprise for the audience. It was almost ethereal and captivated everyone. The students' legato playing at a *piano* dynamic had the audience members on the edge of their seats. The musicians' rich and sweet tones conveyed the reflection that Dr. Craig Russell had wanted to come out of this movement. The solo violin melody was heard over the rest of the ensemble. As a whole, this movement was well supported, and although it was played more slowly, the constantly moving quarter note medley portrayed continued progression. This movement also received applause from the audience.

“Turlough's Harp,” like “Starfish (A Blessing),” came in as a surprise for the audience; however, this movement began *forte* and rambunctiously. This movement was often compared to the second movement because they both portrayed dances. They were clearly very different from each other because rather than a passionate tango between two partners, this represented an Irish jig at a party with a group of dancers. The students successfully executed their grace notes leading up to the triplet eighth notes. This piece exuded joy for the musicians, coaches, conductors, composer, audience members, and me. I could not have been more proud of my musicians after they played their final note of this piece.

Looking back at my experience, the most valuable and most unexpected result of this project is how clear but expressive my conducting has become. At the sectionals I lead at the beginning of the concert cycle, I found myself verbally explaining how I wanted the students to play or articulate various passages. As the rehearsals went on, I found that the instructions I would say to them would be for spot checking, as opposed to verbal instructions on how to play.

Part of that is definitely that the students were adapting to my conducting style, but I feel like the bigger part is that I grew as a conductor as I rehearsed the musicians and practiced conducting week to week.

On the topic of verbal communication, working with two different student groups really challenged me. Concert Orchestra is our most advanced ensemble at the Youth Symphony and its members are the most advanced and oldest players; conducting them was extremely nerve-wracking because I felt intimidated by these students' abilities. On the other hand, Academy Strings is an intermediate group and thus there is a wide range of ability and age. While Concert Orchestra has mainly high school students, Academy Strings has students from elementary school, middle school, and high school. Figuring out the different ways to successfully communicate and instruct the different age groups was extremely valuable.

Lastly, I feel extremely lucky to have worked with the Youth Symphony conductors and coaches as colleagues to further the music education of these students. This was an extremely fulfilling experience for me, as a musician, teacher, and conductor. While this project continually morphed and there were several surprises along the way, I could not be more grateful or satisfied with the end result.