

Programme Notes

Over the rainbow

Composed by Harold Arlen and Yip Harburg, over the rainbow was composed for the film 'The Wizard of Oz'. Having been removed at an advance screening by MGM executives the song would not have featured in the final release were it not for pressure from the associate producer. However, in 2001 the song was voted the greatest song of the twentieth century.¹ Originally sung by Judy Garland, the ballad has been covered by many notable artists, in many different genres. Artists that have covered over the rainbow include Frank Sinatra and Aretha Franklin. I will be interpreting it as a solo jazz instrumental for guitar. The songs simple melody and AABA structure offer lots of options for reharmonization.

Spain

Written by the late Chick Corea in 1971, Spain is a jazz instrumental that received two Grammy nominations following its release. The piece, arguably Chick Corea's best known work fuses the sounds of jazz and latin music and is now considered to be a modern jazz standard. Covered by a number of artists such as Stevie Wonder and Béla Fleck the piece moves between two syncopated A and B sections before transitioning to a solo C section. I chose this piece due to the difficult rhythms in the syncopated sections and to demonstrate how my playing has improved throughout the year as I played this piece as an audition at the start of the year.

Waves

Waves is an instrumental-rock guitar piece by Guthrie Govan. Written at the age of 19, waves demonstrates Guthrie Govan's virtuosity on the instrument. Guthrie is an English guitarist who has played alongside the likes of Steven Wilson and Hans Zimmer. After dropping out of Oxford University to pursue a career in music Guthrie was pronounced Guitarist of the Year in 1993 by the Guitarist Magazine. This helped progress his career along with the release of his first solo album in 2006 'Erotic Cakes'. Waves features a flowing intro section with lots of fast slides considered the 'head' of the piece before moving into a solo section which modulates key. I chose this piece as I found the intro to be technically challenging and improvising over the solo section, harmonically challenging.

Cissy Strut

Recorded in 1969 by the Meters, Cissy Strut is a popular funk track that was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2011. It is a simple track which alternates between A and B sections. Due to its simplicity, it offers lots of space for improvisation. Unlike jazz improvisation where often the chords dictate what you can play, Cissy Strut offers a great deal of freedom. One of the reasons I chose this piece was to practice structuring an improvisation, that starts, builds and resolves properly.

¹ Shapiro, G., 2017. 'Over the Rainbow': The Story Behind the Song of the Century. [online] Columbia News. Available at: <<https://news.columbia.edu/news/over-rainbow-story-behind-song-century>> [Accessed 15 April 2021].