

Faculty/Student mentored research project proposal 2021

“Wait for Me” from *Hadestown*

Video Performance Project by Ashley Knox, Katherine Martin, EJ Wogaman

Faculty Mentor: Cynthia Babin Anderson

Mentor Statement:

The WVU Oboe Studio has long promoted familiarity with styles of music that are outside the traditional art music canon. In our double reed ensembles, students have played music from jazz idioms, folk styles, rock and roll, Broadway, etc., usually in arrangements provided by me and specific to the students enrolled. This project is the first time students themselves have undertaken the task of preparing the performance and the arrangement of music from a current Broadway show.

In March 2020, members of the studio (including Ashley, Katie, and EJ) traveled to New York City to see performances of the New York Philharmonic and the Broadway production of *Hadestown*. We saw the original, Tony award winning cast. A week later, all of New York City, including Broadway, was shut down by the corona virus, and everyone’s WVU life and study was interrupted as well. Our ability to collaborate and grow as musicians with one another is still in a state of suspension.

I planned to create an arrangement from *Hadestown* for performance by our double reed ensemble. But as Ashley, Katie, EJ and I talked about our memories of that trip and the impact that show left on us, we decided to make this into a group project instead. We chose “Wait for Me,” the emotional climax of the show, as the perfect song to convey the determination of the principal character to defy death and retrieve his beloved, in spite of all odds – a sentiment that seems especially relevant during this time of covid. I acquired the music score. Ashley created the arrangement, which features the three of them (and me) as the principal instrumental voices, each playing a different member of the oboe family (oboe, oboe d’amore, English horn). Working with our CAC recording engineers, Ashley edited the sound and audio. EJ coordinated and staged the vocalists who participated in our project. Katie created the overlay of credits and closed captioning in the video. We performed and recorded the work with classmates from the voice program and the bassoon studio, including Dr. Lynn Hileman.

This project is presented by three oboe students pursuing vastly different career goals: EJ is a music education major who plans a career as a public school music teacher; Ashley is a composition major envisioning a career composing music for video games; Katie is an Art Education major specializing in photography. Each of them contributed to this project in the way that best suits their unique talents – as teacher and music coach; as music arranger and audio editor; as visual editor. In addition to the talents they brought to the creation of the video, they performed on their instruments with great technical skill and expression. The spirit of collaboration among applied studios and across disciplines is evident in the final project.