

About The Work

This piece was written for the Silk Ruby Trio as part of the Peabody Honor Ensemble Project. For this project a student ensemble is featured for the year, and a composer is selected to write a piece for them. When researching the string trio repertoire in preparation for this piece, I was surprised to see how small the output is for this ensemble, especially when compared to the closely related string quartet. Therefore, I wanted to write a piece that demonstrated that this ensemble deserves to be on equal footing with the string quartet. It seemed to me that three string players was plenty to work with and was capable of producing a lush and full-bodied sound. It was this sentiment that inspired the opening of the piece, a series of double stops. I was in a way interested in aurally concealing how many performers were in this piece, and therefore double stops permeate the entire composition.

I first learned about the idea of emergence as it pertained to biology, however it has far reaching applications. Emergence is a phenomenon where something is observed to have properties that its component parts do not have. It is only when these smaller units interact with one another that these properties emerge. While writing this piece I began thinking about the ways that music can be said to have emergent properties. Therefore I wanted the primary compositional material for the piece to be something very simple and elemental. I ultimately decided on a diatonic scale with some turns in it, a figure simple enough that one could use it as a warm-up exercise. As this interacts with the surrounding musical material, the collective sounds take on dramatic and emotional significance. I feel that this idea of emergence is at the heart of my love for composition and art in general. I am amazed that collections of sounds, which have no actual significance in themselves, are able to be combined in ways that communicate deep and profound emotional experiences.