

a short untitled piece for Soren Kierkegaard, inspired by Fear and Trembling and the effect it had on me. It was performed on a frequency modulation synthesizer, in two voices. I tried to capture the elusive timbre of a church organ, building each voice by modulating pure sine tones and creating texture only using harmonic dissonance and by overdriving my synthesizer, which was meant to emulate the bone-shaking resonance created by a pipe organ during the most intense portions of a performance.

This choice in instrumentation should also be reflected in the mode of composition, and of the overall conception of the piece. Another inspiration in this respect was Alyosha's enigmatic kiss after the "Grand Inquisitor." I wanted to evoke the infinite complexity, richness, and mystery that lies in the simplicity of faith and love by composing a piece that, though quite modest in structure and composition, hints at the organic synthesis and transcendent beauty that great art is able to achieve. Of course I failed in this regard (this is why I'm a student and not a musician), but still I'm proud of what I made. The lack of a title is my attempt at modesty: sometimes titling a piece is too inhibitive in that it immediately impresses the will of the composer on the listener, thereby limiting the piece's flexibility and openness to personal interpretation. Indeed this flexibility is more or less the entire point of this piece.

It's a bit ironic that this piece should be composed for pipe organ, an instrument which has nowadays become nearly synonymous with sacred music, when Kierkegaard (and indeed nearly everyone we've read this semester) was so famously dissatisfied with organized religion. This choice is justified by the purely aesthetic qualities of the instrumentation – the uniformity of the gain of an organ tone (i.e. the tone stays at close to the same amplitude for the entirety of a note, in contrast to most other instruments) makes it ideal for contemplative drone music, in some sense using this choice to divorce a piece from its instrumentation, rendering a composition in its purest and most essential form. Symbolically this choice is akin to the act of infinite resignation, insofar as it entails divorcing oneself from one's earthly possessions and aspirations. The two ascendant progressions in this piece therefore reflect the movement toward faith in embracing the absurd. That is, this aspirant structure is meant to call to mind the departure from the pleasures and sorrows of the worldly, or in other words of passing from the ethical to the religious stage. Note also that there are two such passages – even though the first progression "fails" and restarts about halfway through the piece, it once again begins to rise, in spite of itself and its inherent absurdity. Ideally this piece would be repeated several times over, in order to mirror the eternal hope of a knight of faith.