

Morgantown, WV

February 28, 2021

The 2021 College of Creative Arts Faculty/Student Mentored Research Award Committee

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Yu-Chun Chien. I am a Visiting Assistant Professor of theory and composition in the School of Music at West Virginia University College of Creative Arts. I received my Doctor of Musical Arts and Master of Music degrees at Manhattan School of Music in New York, and my Bachelor of Music degree at the Taipei National University of the Arts in Taiwan. I am also active as a composer and pianist. My compositions and arrangements have been performed and/or published in Asia, America, and Europe.

Anthony J. Panebianco is currently a student in my composition studio. He is one of the most talented, hardworking, and professional students I have encountered during more than nine years of college teaching. His compositions and presentations always exhibit a high level of effort and care. He is most eager to learn, and I have seen his knowledge and insights are constantly growing. I am very confident that he will continue to do so in his life.

As a composer, Anthony's works present diverse aspects; they are disciplined and structural, and yet creative and experimental. They also reflect the solid and strong musical foundation he possesses, as well as his interest in writing music based on what he grew up listening to. Furthermore, he is committed to exploring musical expressions, which are not restrained by any academic or stylistic boundaries.

Lindy from *Suite of New American Dances* has been Anthony's focus for the current compositional season and is our entry for this year's Faculty/Student Mentored Research exhibition. *Lindy* excellently manifests his compositional interest, in particular the interdisciplinary dedications in music education, conducting, and composition. The piece pays homage to one of the seminal works in wind band literature, Robert Russell Bennett's *Suite of Old American Dance*. Based on the same sonata-allegro form as "Cakewalk", the first movement of Bennett's suite, *Lindy* features allusions to its predecessor's melody and to familiar standards of the Jazz age. Not only does it evoke the sounds of America's heritage, but it integrates pop sensitivities with traditional band orchestrating techniques, resulting in an authentic musical language.

We have discussed the works progress on a weekly basis piece since Fall of 2020. After brainstorming compositional inspirations and thoughts, we then began to analyze and research Jazz idiom,

the formal structure of “Cakewalk”, and of Bennett’s life. Rather than outlining the short score, a standard practice used by arrangers, I encouraged him to compose the wind band score in full directly; in this manner, the orchestration and texture would be clearly seen and realized in detail. While encouraging him to write what was felt, I channeled his thinking into ways he had not been aware, while providing my insights and motivating him to think from different dimensions; we discussed and debated compositional decisions and their need to be thoughtful, rather than arbitrary. To further widen and reinforce Anthony’s perspectives, we have researched a variety of contemporary composers’ music to discuss in our lessons and incorporate into Anthony’s thought construction process; as a composer it is crucial for us to be involved with our aural, psychological, and social surroundings, and to stimulate imagination and artistic openness, further cultivating one’s intellectual and critical thinking.

Dr. Scott Tobias has discussed the possibility of involving the WVU Wind Symphony through a professional reading and feasible public performance the work in the future, as well as their support in the project as a whole. I believe that composition is a type of social activity, in which communication, responses, and interaction between all parties involved are as important as the sound material. Through collaborations with players and conductors, a composer is able to hear the music outside of the imagination, to experiment with different approaches towards an instrument, discuss ideas in a mutual safe space, and express a musical idea for others to critically examine. The composer learns to articulate their compositional thoughts clearly and properly speak for oneself when receiving exacting, but valuable feedback from their peers. If the collaboration between Anthony and the WVU Wind Symphony is fulfilled, it would be a wonderful opportunity for everyone involved to learn and grow, further enriching our WVU community.

Working with Anthony I have found that not only is he utterly open and curious but is also humble to differing insights that help him improve. He is constantly searching for diverse inspirations and approaches to transform his imagined sound into composition in an intimate and personal manner and bringing that to the forefront of his teaching and learning as well. We thank you very much for your time and consideration and are excited to show you the product of much hard work and collaboration.

Sincerely,



Dr. Yu-Chun Chien

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