

Music Award

Caleigh Little, Western Pines Middle School (grade 8)

“A Story of Hope” is a three-part piece that I wrote because I wanted to try something new. I had never really written a piece of music before this; my original plan was to write essay. Then I decided that I wanted to take a different approach. What better way to express something like hope than with music? Nothing is more powerful than the kind of impact that music can have on people. A simple line can change someone’s whole perspective and I think that’s amazing. Music isn’t just something you listen to, it’s something you *feel*.

Of all the quotes I could have chosen for this project, I was most drawn to a quote by Dalai Lama. “When we meet real tragedy in life, we can react in two ways – either by losing hope and falling into self-destructive habits, or by using the challenge to find our inner strength.” When planning my piece, I decided to break it into three parts. First, I would focus on the tragedy itself. Then, I would move to a more aggressive part of the piece that would represent what happens if you lose hope and start to spiral out of control into a more “self-destructive” state of mind. The third and final part of my piece would go back to that tragedy but instead, continue with a more hopeful way of dealing with it.

Originally, the piece started at the fifth measure which leads to the trombone solo. I wanted more to go into the first part before the solo so I kept trying different things until I finally thought of using what’s called a “*dies irae*.” It may sound familiar since it is used in a lot of different pieces – especially ones in movies. A “*dies irae*” is best known for being the “sound of death.” A perfect fit for part one.

The second part of my piece was meant to be aggressive and scary and sort of chaotic. It began with the tuba part which introduced the next section of the piece and referenced the part at measures five and six. It then continued to add in more and more instruments until measure 28, the height of part two. To me, the most obvious way to end part two was with a bang. Then silence.

After a moment of silence, the listener is brought back to the beginning of the piece: the tragedy. Instead of the trombone playing the solo, I decided to use the euphonium, since it’s a much calmer and lighter instrument. The french horn played the last solo which wrapped the whole thing up. Each instrument would slowly start to join in leading to the end of the piece where everyone was together. Before the last chord, the horn plays one final tune as a way of saying “don’t forget.”

Though I was faced with many challenges in making this piece, I never lost hope. I stayed persistent and created something that I was proud of.