AN EXAMINATION OF LUKAS LIGETI’S THINKING SONGS: AN ANALYSIS OF COMPOSITIONAL TECHNIQUES FOR LIGETI’S CONTEMPORARY SOLO MARIMBA COMPOSITION

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ABSTRACT

Thinking Songs by Lukas Ligeti is a contemporary solo five-octave marimba work containing five movements. Thinking Songs is expansive in terms of length, content, and marimba technique. This study explores compositional influences throughout the piece and unveils influences in both Western Classical music and African music. This document contains seven chapters and a bibliography. Each movement unveils unique compositional influences that will be explored. Movement One, “Dance,” reveals the music of the Chopi people and timbila xylophones to be a compositional influence. The standard lamento bass line, as well as György Kurtág, are stylistic influences in movement II, “Lamento.” Movement III, “Four-Part Invention,” finds its influence in the inventions and fugues of J.S. Bach. Movement IV, “Scherzo,” utilizes a prepared marimba and quotes a waltz in the third movement of Mahler’s Symphony No. 7. The final movement, “Two-Part Invention,” is influenced by amadinda music merging with the American music trend of the second half of the 20th century, minimalism. Lukas Ligeti merges styles from African music and traditional Western Classical music, as well as styles from different eras of music to create an expansive solo five-octave marimba work.