

ROLAND VAZQUEZ (845) 616-7301

P.O. BOX 33, RED HOOK, NEW YORK 12571

COMPOSITION CLINIC / MASTER CLASS: 5 PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS

When we are writing, composing, or working out the structural domain of a new piece, it usually pays to carefully consider the proposed relationships between the 3 primary elements (melody, harmony, rhythm); here are 5 possible questions to consider and ask yourself during the writing process.

1] WHAT IS THE “CHARACTER” OF MY MELODY?

What is this “story” about? What is the purpose or intent of this piece?
(All music is going someplace... telling a story exploring an emotion)

2] WHAT IS THE PROPOSED “DOMAIN” OR HARMONIC FORM?

What is the form? What is the harmonic vocabulary? Where is the resolve?
(Not all music is 32 bar or II – V7 !!) Does your music have cadences or “shaped” performance directions?

3] WHERE IS THE RHYTHMIC FOCUS?

How does a proposed “groove” (or “non-groove”) support or define the dimensionality or direction of the piece? How is the rhythm also evolving?

4] WHERE (OR WHAT) IS THE MELODIC-HARMONIC SUBTEXT ?

What elements are supporting the “Theatre” of the piece? How is this piece intended to be experienced by the listener? What are we working to reveal?
(Anger? Joy?) Are we moving “into” or “out from” something or someone?
Why should my audience seriously listen to or “believe” this music?

5] IS THERE A CATHARSIS IN THIS PIECE?

Is there an emotional release associated with the hearing or performing of this piece? (*catharsis* is defined in psychology as a release of repressed emotion thru association with the cause)

“Music has purpose, and can be meaningful, when it is structurally sound while revealing relevance and truth ...”

SOME OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR COMPOSERS:

- DAILY PRACTICE (RELAXED, CONSISTENT, FOCUSED & UNFOCUSED)
- LISTEN & TRANSCRIBE (WRITE?)
- GENERATE COMMUNITY PERFORMANCES OF YOUR WORKS

Roland Vazquez

Roland Music/ RVCD

CONTACT: romu@rolandvazquez.com