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# After the Towers Fell: Musical Responses to 9/11

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

AFTER THE TOWERS FELL:  
MUSICAL RESPONSES TO 9/11

By

Andrew Robertson Claassen

A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty  
of the University of Miami  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Music

Coral Gables, Florida

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Andrew Robertson Claassen

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The tragic and devastating September 11 attacks resulted in a variety of original musical responses. Exemplary works expressed their reactions through overt 9/11-centric dialogues to express themes of mourning, military retribution, dissent and commemoration. An examination of such works concludes that effective musical responses express a direct message clarified by supporting musical and/or textual materials. Musical materials can accentuate the specific thematic message of the responsive work as they often evoke images and emotions reminiscent of the attacks and their aftermath. Compositional techniques used in these works are often reminiscent of historical works written in similar circumstances. The recurrence of these historical approaches illuminates the timeless compositional design of historical examples and exemplifies modern advancements in music composition and production. A comparison between classical and popular post-9/11 musical compositions concludes that certain classical and popular genres deal with responsive themes more effectively than others. A recommendation for further study is enclosed.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Turned TV on for quick election check when CNN switched  
to picture of World Trade Center #1  
with surreal gaping hole blowing dark smoke out a new mouth.  
Witnesses still in shock were describing a plane flying  
directly into the building's side  
when a second plane suddenly crashed Twin Tower 2  
and orange flames & monstrous dust rolls began replacing  
the city's world renowned skyline.  
Soon the big city's tallest buildings crumbled, one at a time—  
with 50,000 individual heartbeats working in Twin Bodies,  
it was clear this horror going to be planetfelt.<sup>1</sup>

The events of September 11, 2001 are forever engraved upon the hearts and minds of families and loved ones of those who lost their lives, the country and the world. The terrorist hijacking of four airliners—two crashing into the New York World Trade Center, a third crashing into the Pentagon and a fourth crashing in rural western Pennsylvania—resulted in the worst acts of terrorism in American history. The synchronized commandeering of four commercial aircrafts, the premeditated assault on symbolic targets and the slaying of innocent lives proved catastrophic and tragic events.

In the immediate aftermath of the attack, the nation reacted instinctively by simply trying to make sense of the catastrophe, a process demonstrated through acts of mourning and commemoration. Effusions of anguished bereavement and remembrance—represented through ribbons, candles, flowers, personal mementos and other symbols—exemplified such efforts to recover.<sup>2</sup> Two types of national unification ceremonies predominated in the aftermath of 9/11: the reorganization of concerts, award ceremonies and sporting events into commemorative observances; and the organization

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<sup>1</sup> Eliot Katz, "When The Skyline Crumbles," in *Poetry After 9/11: An Anthology of New York Poets*, 2nd ed. (Hoboken: Melville House Publishing, 2002), 23.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Stein, "Music, Mourning, and Consolation," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 52 (Summer, 2004): 783-811.



of special memorial services, like ones held at the World Trade Center for firefighters and police officers, to commemorate and honor the lost and the living. Reorganization of regularly planned events into 9/11 commemorative observances was ever-present in the months that followed. The already touring Philadelphia Orchestra included the “Star Spangled Banner” as part of its post-9/11 emotional performances and the Country Music Association converted its annual awards ceremony in November 2001 into a patriotic outpouring of American nationalism. Radio stations modified regular programming to broadcast shows devoted specifically to listener requested musical responses. Sporting events, following a suspended period of mourning, resumed contests with individual commemorative ceremonies. Ceremonies often included emotional renditions of the national anthem, additional patriotic songs, such as “God Bless America,” and audience chants of “USA!”

Newly scheduled memorial events occurred frequently in the ensuing months. Musicians and performers partook in immediately scheduled rock concerts to raise money for victims of the attacks. On September 21, only ten days after the attacks, stations in the U.S. and abroad broadcasted the first mass-mediated benefit concert, *America: A Tribute to Heroes*. More concerts followed on the weekend of October 20-21: *The Concert for New York City* (New York), *United We Stand* (Washington DC), *Country Freedom Concert* (Nashville) and *Music Without Borders: Live* (Toronto). These tribute concerts united millions of viewers, as they sought to raise funds and bind together a wounded nation.<sup>3</sup> Members of Congress clearly exemplified music’s capacity

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<sup>3</sup> Susan Fast and Karen Pegley, “Music and Canadian Nationhood Post 9/11: An Analysis of *Music Without Borders: Live*,” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 18 (April, 2006): 18-39.

for unification after they first assembled on the steps of the Capitol and spontaneously joined in the singing of “God Bless America.”<sup>4</sup> Following Congress’s initial musical performance and numerous tribute concerts in the early months of the aftermath, it was apparent that music would take on a significant role as America fought to recuperate in the wake of its attack.

Following 9/11, Americans observed the production of a broad range of original musical responses. From readily consumable popular songs to complex classical works, songwriters and composers together produced over hundreds of new musical compositions with either casual reference to the tragedy, or a specific focus on the event and its aftermath. The seemingly innumerable outpourings of remembrance have illustrated every facet of the tragedy’s aftermath, but most can be grouped into four predominant themes: mourning, righteous anger, political dissent and commemoration. The following compositional elements account for what makes these over-arching themes apparent within a given 9/11 musical work: representative musical materials that portray nationalistic or militant imagery and that evoke specific emotions such as shock and grief; a text, when applicable, concentrated on a specific 9/11 dialogue, which is supported by a meaningful musical construction. This study will bring attention to exemplary works for each classification, based on their musical and/or textual materials. The exemplary works are chosen for the purpose of illustrating characteristics unique to each category; each work discussed possesses a compositional design typical of its larger

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<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Karl. “Congress vows unity, reprisals for attacks,” <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/11/congress.terrorism/> (accessed February 3, 2009). On the evening of September 11, lawmakers gathered on the steps of the Capitol for a symbolic display of unity and an apparently spontaneous chorus of “God Bless America,” marking one of the earliest documented musical responses to 9/11. J. Martin Daughtry discusses the significance and symbolism of the moment more in depth in his introduction to *Music in the Post-9/11 World*.

categorization. Exemplary works are also selected due to the availability of scores and recordings.

Classifying these varied works will help clarify the approach and content of 9/11 musical responses. In a time of varying and changing emotions and ideologies, these musical works serve to illustrate America's post 9/11 state of unrest, through the varied artistic means of reflection, questioning, rallying and protesting. These layered reactions stem from emotional, political and historical underpinnings. Based on the complex body of works focusing on the tragedy, the subsequent chapters raise the following questions: what functions do these works serve; what features might they share; how are specific emotions or political ideals expressed musically in 9/11 works?

While the works I discuss are clearly distinguishable from each other, not all 9/11 works fit such a clean categorization; in fact, some 9/11 compositions cross categories. One work that illustrates this interconnectedness is Stephen Hartke's "Symphony No. 3," which is both political and music of mourning. Together with the Hilliard Ensemble, the New York Philharmonic, conducted by Lorin Maazel, premiered the large-scale work for countertenor, two tenors, and baritone soli with orchestra on September 18, 2003. Hartke bases the text of the symphony on an old English elegy titled "The Ruin." In this poem, the anonymous author depicts the ruins of an ancient Roman city by envisioning the magnificence of the now destroyed civilization. In the two fast sections of the work, the second and fourth, Hartke evokes the opulence and majesty of the kingdom that once stood through the use of ascending triplet runs in the woodwinds, loud and bombastic attacks in the brass and percussion, and short, rhythmic phrases sung by the voices. A heightened use of chromaticism and shifting time signatures combine to recreate the

city's destruction. Hartke draws upon this image of the fallen Roman city to make a political commentary on American society; he likens the might of the Roman Empire and its impending demise to American economic and militant imperialism and hubris.

Hartke's work is also music of mourning as it laments both the destroyed Roman city referenced in the poem and the 9/11 catastrophe. The text of the slow sections, the first and third, focuses on the physical descriptions of the city's ruins. The voices primarily sing in close and dissonant harmonies without the use of a clearly recognizable melody or tonality. The chromatic and closely harmonized writing contributes to an eerie, somber and lamenting music. Just as "Symphony No. 3" is both political and mourning, musical responses to immensely tragic events often carry multiple messages. Similar to Hartke's work, some other historical examples in this century include Benjamin Britten's "War Requiem" and Krzysztof Penderecki's "Polish Requiem," two works expressed both mourning and a political message.

This study seeks to understand the emotional and political frameworks of 9/11 musical works through analysis and discussion, as well as a historical contextualization of selected musical examples. Applying a historical lens helps uncover what effect or influence historical works, written in similar circumstances, might have on current 9/11 works. Although the September 11 attacks were a singular event in American history, unlike any historical catastrophe on U.S. soil, the event is comparable to the 1941 Pearl Harbor attack for the following reasons: both events were a surprise attack on a strategic American location during a time when the country was not overtly at war; both events resulted in a swift American military response; both events resulted in an outpouring of original musical responses specific to the tragedy.

In comparing and contrasting modern day 9/11 works to historical models, such as music written in response to the Pearl Harbor attack and the Vietnam War, one is able to explore various and surprisingly similar approaches to composing music written in reaction to catastrophic events. Each responsive category—mourning, call-to-arms, political dissent and commemoration—possesses historical models, which serve to define their specific forms and their compositional makeup. In drawing such comparisons, I will use the defining factors of effective historical examples to evaluate the effectiveness of modern day 9/11 works. These defining factors are determined by an examination of recurring compositional techniques within each responsive category. The effectiveness of a work can be determined by the clarity of its message, the support or detracting of its musical construction and by the use of compositional techniques characteristic of its responsive category. Through historical comparison one can examine whether a work clearly illustrates its message, encapsulating a definite 9/11 responsorial dialogue, or if it is intellectually ambiguous. Historical comparison also questions whether or not the methods used in producing such a message reflect historical models.

While it might seem that texted music has a greater capacity to clarify the overarching message of a work, both instrumental music and music with text produce effective musical reactions to catastrophic events. The two genres differ in that music with text clarifies the work's overall thematic message by using specific textual references supported by musical materials. These works rely on the text to convey meaning. Instrumental music, however, allows for individuals to attach their own specific meaning through learned responses to music. We learn to respond in certain ways to music in society through social occasions such as weddings and funerals. Some

elements of music with which we have learned to associate specific emotions, such as joy or sadness, include: major or minor tonalities, fast or slow tempos and ascending or descending melodies. Stephen Hartke's 9/11 composition "Beyond Words," discussed later, is an example of how the immense scale of tragedy and shock after 9/11 was beyond words to describe. The purely instrumental piece conveys a powerful and poignant message of devastation and grief solely through musical materials. The work's lack of text enables the listener to attach to the work their individual meaning and interpretation. Samuel Barber's "Adagio for Strings," is a prime historical example whereby an instrumental work's moving message goes beyond words. Barber arranged the work for choir in 1967 as a setting of the "Agnus Dei," yet the instrumental string orchestra version remains more popular.

This study will explore an eclectic collection of musical reactions, ranging from country to classical genres. Through this consideration, I observe a relationship in which certain genres deal with responsive themes more effectively than others. I examine how certain popular music traditions are more fitting for militant and dissenting themes, and how the use of specific musical elements allow for this congruence. Likewise, I investigate how classical works might yield them a better fit for mourning or commemorative themes. Rather than focusing on issues of reception and audience, these observations are made through analyzing the musical makeup and the relationship between music and text in 9/11 works. A genre's propensity for dealing with specific themes and emotions is also aligned to historical musical models. Through historical comparison, a noticeable correlation is apparent in which certain musical genres are traditionally more effective in dealing with specific responsive themes.

## Literature Review

As post 9/11 hysteria has calmed—commissions for 9/11 works have subsided, memorial concerts have receded to annual anniversaries and the spotlight has primarily shifted to the Iraq War—scholarship focusing on the visibly important role of music in the wake of 9/11 has increasingly emerged. One of the earliest publications is a roundtable discussion featured in *ECHO: A Music-Centered Journal*.<sup>5</sup>

Ethnomusicologists representing the U.S., Afghanistan, South Asia and the Middle East contribute to an informed and international perspective on music's humane function in the wake of the attacks. Initiated only one month after the attacks, the roundtable features a unique outlook, in which scholars discuss the efficacy of music both in their own lives and in the cultures they observe. Hiromi Lorraine Sakata discusses the traditional place of music in Afghanistan and in doing so, she also illuminates the unique role of music in Western culture. According to Sakata, in the West, music is often used to unite a community for the purposes of mourning and remembrance. She speaks of the subsequent national concerts organized in memory of the victims of the attacks to both remember and memorialize.

Ali Jihad Racy explains how music addresses three emotional areas: mourning, the need for uplifting or mental/social reconnection and a sense of reassurance, recovery and strength. Music's efficacy, according to Racy, stems from its acquired symbolic connotations and its inherently flexible or even abstract message. As result of music's adaptable or intangible nature, one is free to reinterpret or recontextualize musical

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<sup>5</sup> Timothy Rice, Hiromi Lorraine Sakata, Ali Jihad Racy, Nazir Jairazbhoy, Gage Averill, and Anne Elise Thomas. "Musical Perspectives on Sept. 11: A Roundtable on Music, Community, Politics, and Violence," *ECHO: A Music-Centered Journal* 3 (December 2001).

expressions in various creative or affective ways. The capability of music to be reorientated or recontextualized into an individualized realization is a fundamental concept in considering the function and efficacy of 9/11 responsorial works. It helps to understand how and why so many people turned to music for consolation. Racy certainly raises the notion in the roundtable, yet refrains from exploring it further. Due to the article's lack of deeper investigation, through means of musical analysis, a number of questions remain unanswered. Do some 9/11 musical responses possess a greater propensity for reinterpretation? If so, do specific compositional techniques contribute to such a tendency? Upon providing these musical responses with a historical contextualization, does a trend of such compositional practices emerge? To better understand the function and effectiveness of 9/11 responsive works, a closer examination that includes musical analysis and historical contextualization is essential.

The role of music in mourning and trauma in the aftermath of 9/11 is also the subject of Alexander Stein's 2004 publication.<sup>6</sup> Based on his own recovery following the traumatic impact of 9/11 as a New York psychoanalyst and pianist, Stein explores the functions of music in the mourning process, both as a response to trauma and as an aesthetic expression connected with grief. He discusses the relationship between outward expressions of loss and consolation and their correlating musical forms. In order to draw such comparisons, Stein lists a basic categorization of music's various functions:

Music can be composed or listened to (1) for grieving, (2) for solace and comfort, (3) to provide a sense of belonging, (4) to provide a sense of hope that life can go on, and (5) to provide a sense of triumph over adversity.

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<sup>6</sup> Alexander Stein, "Music, Mourning, and Consolation," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 52 (Summer, 2004): 783-811.



These five functions present a good framework for understanding and exploring the specific roles of 9/11 musical responses. Stein also includes a definition of mourning music, which forms the basis for his discussion:

Fundamentally, mourning music is music listened to or composed to commemorate a death or loss, or otherwise used to express feelings associated with grief and bereavement. Such works are aesthetic representations in response to a traumatic event and involve what can be called *auditory symbolism*.

In defining mourning music, Stein successfully encapsulates the basic function of mourning music as a music designed to express feelings of grief and bereavement. He uses this term, *mourning music*, in an all-encompassing manner and suggests that it covers a variety of different functions: commemoration, celebration, protest and dissent. In my opinion, these differing functions are represented more clearly in specific types of 9/11 musical responses and cannot be lumped into one defining category. By grouping these different functions into one large category, Stein ignores the meaningful and distinctive musical constructions of 9/11 musical responses. Stein's opinion of the role of musical analysis in his research helps to explain for the apparent lack of a deeper context: "While technically detailed musical analyses of specific works can be illuminating, sophisticated musical knowledge is not in my view a requisite for understanding the psychological facets of aesthetic response" (793). While a general perception of a work is achievable apart from the use of analysis, an investigation of the work's musical and/or textual materials can bring forth a deeper understanding of the work's meaningful design. An analytical lens is therefore essential to sufficiently explore the role and efficacy of music written in response to the September 11 attacks.

The principal work of scholarship that focuses on the central role of music in the wake of 9/11 is *Music in the Post-9/11 World*.<sup>7</sup> This is the first book to examine the subject, and approaches it in a comprehensive manner. Born out of the UCLA roundtable discussion aforementioned, several scholars contribute essays that engage post-9/11 artistic expression and commentary within the U.S. and beyond. In approaching the topic, scholars consider popular and classical genres and utilize a wide range of methods.

Reebee Garofalo's essay, "Pop Goes to War, 2001-2004: U.S. Popular Music After 9/11," discusses the narrowed diversity of voices in popular music responses. He focuses on initial popular music reactions to 9/11, the role of country music in supporting military action, conservative activism of corporate radio, musicians' responses to government hindrance of political protest and ineffectual attempts by progressive musicians to engage the political process. Garoffalo employs a detailed account of concerts produced in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, and discusses the political content of 9/11 responsive songs. He illustrates how patriotic country music served to promote retributive military action, a stance that clearly endorsed the Bush administration policy. His example of the Dixie Chicks' 2003 anti-Bush stance, and resultant seventy-four station ban, illustrates the fact that not only were dissenting responses unpopular, but radio stations largely suppressed such songs. Garoffalo presents a politically concentric commentary, which sheds light on ideals of censorship and freedom of speech. His commentary is very important because it stresses that the main mode of expression in 9/11 popular music is one of patriotism and support of military action. While Garoffalo

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<sup>7</sup> Jonathan Ritter and J. Martin Daughtry. *Music in the Post-9/11 World* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

refers to many responsorial songs, it is often only in passing, and lacks a thorough musical and textual analysis; he refrains from discussing the musical materials of 9/11 political or patriotic songs.

In his essay, “Have You Forgotten,” Peter J. Schmelz focuses on country music singer/songwriter Darryl Worley’s song of enraged remembrance, to illustrate how the country “hit” embodied the national retributive sentiment in the wake of 9/11. Reaffirming the political sentiments of co-contributor Reebee Garofalo, Schmelz describes how country music, specifically Worley’s “Have You Forgotten,” coincided with the ideologies of the Bush administration to draw a connecting line between the 9/11 attacks and the Hussein regime in Iraq. Schmelz discusses the genesis of the country music anthem by considering World War II and Vietnam pro-war songs, as well as other 9/11 responses, and uses these models to determine the effectiveness of Worley’s song. He descriptively engages the lyrics of the song to illustrate its symbolism and meaning, and even if briefly, he points out how the music serves to enhance the song’s identifiable and affecting nature. By engaging with the textual and musical elements, Schmelz is able to explain from a compositional standpoint how “Have You Forgotten” forms an effective patriotic response. Schmelz’s analytical approach and integration of a wide range of biographical and historical materials combine to portray a richer understanding of Darryl Worley’s song, as well as a greater understanding of the role of country music in the wake of 9/11. His approach in evaluating the effectiveness of country music songs forms a model for my own encounters with similar country music 9/11 responses.

While many 9/11 popular music responses—especially those within country music—displayed a patriotic tone and an endorsement of military action, not all consisted

of such political rhetoric. Bruce Springsteen's album, *The Rising*, represents music of mourning as it seeks to celebrate those who lost and risked their lives, as well as help the nation grieve. Springsteen's post 9/11 albums, *The Rising* and *Devils and Dust*, and his public pronouncements are the subject of Bryan Garman's essay, "Models of Charity and Spirit: Bruce Springsteen, 9/11, and the War on Terror." In this essay, Garman argues that Springsteen's work promotes tenets of redemption and reconciliation, themes that starkly contrast with the jingoistic sentiments preached by Darryl Worley and Toby Keith. Garman focuses on "My City of Ruins," a song written by Springsteen prior to 9/11 which took on new meaning in the event's aftermath, to illustrate the songwriter's use of spiritual symbolism. He touches on "The Rising," another 9/11 response on Springsteen's album, to rearticulate the theme of religious symbolism. The author examines Springsteen's recent writings and publicity materials to demonstrate how the songwriter encourages a grieving America to mourn and remember the tragedy. Garman thoughtfully analyzes the lyrics, yet examines little of Springsteen's music. He primarily discusses Springsteen's meaning and inspiration for the album, *The Rising*, through a greater focus on bibliographic materials. By concentrating on only two songs from the album, one written before 9/11, Garman leaves much room for further commentary on Springsteen's 9/11 responses; his attention to meaning and symbolism also allows for additional discussion of musical elements and the efficacy of Springsteen's songs.

Peter Tregear's essay, "For alle Menschen? Classical Music and Remembrance after 9/11," focuses on John Adams's *On the Transmigration of Souls* (2002), as well as other historical works performed in the aftermath, to discuss concepts of nationality and transcendence in commemorative 9/11 classical music responses. He argues that 9/11

commemorative works sought to stand outside their particular cultural and social setting in order that they might project a sense of universality. Tregear draws upon a quote from John Adams to illustrate this notion; in the quote Adams explains that he sought to create something that transcended time, much like great art does. Tregear examines how Adams's use of musical language and particular musical references serve to place the work in a dehistoricized aesthetic frame. Examples of Adams's musical language include the chorus's text, assembled from phrases on missing-persons notices and memorials, along with a prerecorded tape, comprised of city noise and additional voices reading the names of the dead. The author argues that this slowly shifting textual collage does not present an overall narrative for the work; rather, it gives the work the character of a ritualistic incantation, providing a transcendent quality. In his discussion of Adams's use of musical references, Tregear examines the following elements: mournful tones from an offstage solo trumpet reminiscent of Charles Ives's *Unanswered Question*, numerous popular musical idioms, repetitive scales, and harmonies and rhythms referencing pop and jazz gestures. He suggests that the composer's mixing up of various contexts and the ritualistic repetition of these different textures results in a transcendent nature. Tregear further explores the concept of transcendence by examining Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, one of the most-performed commemorative works after 9/11. While the interpretation of some 9/11 classical music commemorative works as vehicles of transcendence is a valid reading, it does not hold true for every work. I argue that many composers sought to memorialize 9/11 by recreating the same sense of chaos and confusion, an effect most evident in Adams's *Transmigration*. Rather than situating a work outside its particular cultural and social setting, this compositional technique

commemorates the event by placing it in a specific, recognizable context: the day of commemoration, September 11, 2001.

Where the ethnomusicological contributors in *Music in the Post-9/11 World* approach post-9/11 music from such a broad sociological perspective, the interrelationship between text and musical production is my primary consideration. The social dynamics of audience, meaning and reception are important considerations for this topic, but they extend outside the scope of this particular project.

### **Methodology**

The analysis that merely describes musical events is like the translation that passes over all meaning, that passes over the ‘truly poetic’. To go beyond mechanical conversions of musical notation into written words, analysis must uncover something beyond or behind the mere sonic surface.<sup>8</sup>

David Beard and Kenneth Gloag, in *Musicology: The Key Concepts*, explain how musical analysis often describes musical features that are not obvious in a score but surface from consideration of theoretical ideas that are developed in specific historical and cultural contexts. They illustrate the fact that although it does not always reveal itself, analysis results from an interaction between the music, music theory, aesthetics and history. It is my aim to bring a sense of clarity and understanding—to uncover something beyond the mere sonic surface—to the various approaches and contents of 9/11 musical responses through the means of analysis.

I will utilize analysis to focus on specific musical materials that serve to bring internal coherence to 9/11 musical reactions, and to their greater responsorial themes. The various themes of musical reactions illustrate the variety of approaches and attitudes

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<sup>8</sup> David Beard and Kenneth Gloag, *Musicology: The Key Concepts* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

apparent in music written in the aftermath of 9/11. This sound-oriented analysis will focus on the important role of text and the way music enhances the lyrics.

I will draw historical context into my analytical discourse as I align 9/11 musical responses to historical models. I will examine the musical materials of historical examples in order to achieve two things: to illustrate similar compositional approaches in composing catastrophic responsive works, and to determine the efficacy of modern day 9/11 works. In turn, I hope to convey an informed understanding of 9/11 musical responses based on their historical context.

The following chapters present a detailed discussion of the different forms of music, instrumental and vocal works, written in response to the September 11 attacks and their historical examples. Chapter Two explores 9/11 music of mourning, music used to express feelings of grief and bereavement. It includes a discussion of Somtow Sucharitkul, "Requiem: in Memoriam 9/11," Stephen Hartke, "Beyond Words," Cindy McTee, "Adagio," and Bruce Springsteen's album, *The Rising*. Chapter Three discusses patriotic and militant war songs through an examination of Darryl Worley, "Have You Forgotten," Toby Keith, "Courtesy of the Red, White, & Blue (The Angry American)," Neil Young, "Let's Roll," and Wu-Tang Clan, "Rules." Chapter Four examines dissenting, political songs through analysis of Saul Williams, "September 12<sup>th</sup>," Nas, "Rule," Mr. Lif, "Home of the Brave," and Ani DiFranco, "Self-Evident." Chapter Five focuses on 9/11 commemorative works by discussing John Adams, "On the Transmigration of Souls," and Alan Jackson, "Where Were You (When the World Stopped Turning)." Music of mourning and commemoration, as discussed in Chapters Two and Five, share elements in their musical construction. Both forms utilize a

“shocking effect” and a “languishing effect” as a reminder of the catastrophe’s devastation and tragedy. The two forms differ, however, in their over-arching thematic message, which is mainly clarified through the textual element. A strong emphasis on mourning and recovery distinguishes music of mourning from commemorative or tribute works, which dwell less on personal recovery and more on immortalizing the day of tragedy and honoring its heroes.



## CHAPTER 2: MUSIC OF MOURNING

At its most essential, music of mourning can be defined as music used to express feelings of grief and bereavement, aesthetic representations written in response to a traumatic event. While a number of musical works might serve a mourning function, certain musical forms are especially suited to it. Exemplary works include requiems, funereal and memorial music, laments, dirges, spirituals, elegies and other works dedicated to the purpose of mourning.<sup>9</sup> In the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001, an abundance of works that symbolize expressions of trauma and loss endure. These works are characterized by their musical materials, which help to distinguish their overall function as music of mourning.

Two compositional techniques characteristic of 9/11 music of mourning are a “shocking effect” and a “languishing effect.” A “shocking effect” functions as a reminder of the chaos and confusion experienced on the day of devastation. It is often characterized by a hard juxtaposition of dissonance and consonance, as well as loud and soft dynamic contrasts. Abrupt interruptions of fluctuating tempos and chromaticism also indicate this effect. In contrast, a “languishing effect” serves to mourn loss and trauma through specific musical materials: slower tempos, softer dynamics, descending lyrical lines, minor tonalities and primarily a tonal harmony.

### **Somtow Sucharitkul, “Requiem: in Memoriam 9/11”**

Commissioned by the government of Thailand, Somtow Sucharitkul composed his *Requiem: in Memoriam 9/11* in memory of the September 11 tragedy. The three-

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<sup>9</sup> Alexander Stein, "Music, Mourning, and Consolation," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 52 (Summer, 2004): 783-811.

movement work received its premiere on January 11, 2002 during a concert for world peace held at the Thailand Cultural Center. The title, “Requiem,” implies the musical form of the traditional Latin Requiem Mass, yet Somtow’s work is not nearly a Mass in the customary fashion. Rather than adopting the musical form of the Latin Requiem Mass, Somtow adopts the symbolic meaning associated with the Requiem. George Pollock explains the inherent meaning associated with the Latin Requiem Mass:

Requiem, rest, was to become the leading theme of the mass for the dead and subsequently became the requiem mass. However, rest, sleep, and peace, the main subjects of the music sung at burial or memorial rites, directly suggested immortality and eventual resurrection.<sup>10</sup>

Discussing the nature of his own “Requiem” (and its apparent departure from what is commonly understood as a requiem) Somtow states:

This elegy doesn’t use the words of any established religion. Its lyrics will not come from liturgical texts, but are taken from the works of great American poets – Whitman, Dickinson and Eliot. They are meditations and about conflict, death, love and hope.<sup>11</sup>

By labeling his work as an elegy, and not a requiem, Somtow further illustrates the fact that his “Requiem” implies only a symbolic, rather than formal, association with the traditional requiem mass. In his preparation of the work, the lines from T.S. Eliot’s “Four Quartets” were at the forefront of Somtow’s thoughts. These lines would subsequently form the text of his first movement, “Devastation.” Somtow states, “I cried, and then I began composing the requiem. At that point, it was no longer about politics...it

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<sup>10</sup> George H. Pollock, “Mourning and Memorialization Through Music,” in *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Music*, ed. Stuart Feder, Richard L. Karmel, and George H. Pollock (New York: International Universities Press, 1990), 195-208.

<sup>11</sup> Lekha Shankar, “A Triumph Rises from a Tragedy,” Somtow Sucharitkul website, <http://www.somtow.com/press.html> (accessed February 3, 2009).

was about finding hope, conciliation and renewal in the ruins.”<sup>12</sup> The bereavement expressed in a requiem, not its traditional formal structure, apparently influenced Somtow to write his own.

The mournful quality and healing function of the requiem make it the seemingly prototypical form of mourning music. George Pollock describes this unique personal and communal mourning role of the requiem,

The personal Latin requiem mass had its origin in original prayers for and to the dead but became a vehicle for the expression of a composers’ feelings following the loss of a parent, child, or an idealized figure; as such, it can be considered an expressive, sublimated aspect of the mourning process. However, in addition, it has also been a means of publicly memorializing the dead as well as immortalizing the creator, whose musical work “lives” on after he is no longer present.<sup>13</sup>

The profound mournful and therapeutic qualities of the requiem are clearly observable after 9/11 through an international memorial concert called the “Rolling Requiem.” This concert was a “worldwide choral commemoration of all those lost and those who helped others on September 11, 1001” in which nearly two hundred choirs, from around the world, performed Mozart’s Requiem. The concert began at 8:46AM on the one year anniversary of the first attack on the World Trade Center.<sup>14</sup>

Although he did not participate in the “Rolling Requiem,” Somtow spoke of his deep respect for the work upon leading its performance for a Tsunami relief concert in January 2005: “Mozart’s Requiem is the world’s most recognizable anthem of

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> George H. Pollock, “Mourning and Memorialization Through Music,” in *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Music*, ed. Stuart Feder, Richard L. Karmel, and George H. Pollock (New York: International Universities Press, 1990), 195-208.

<sup>14</sup> “The Rolling Requiem,” rolling requiem website, <http://www.rollingrequiem.org> (accessed February 23, 2009).

bereavement and healing...a wonderful avenue for people from all walks of life to be together, experiencing shared emotions, healing, and redemption.”<sup>15</sup> Somtow’s determining to write a requiem is clearly based on his personal association with 9/11 and a desire for personal and communal healing.

My feelings about the tragedy in New York and Washington are very personal. I have friends right now digging in the rubble for bodies, helping on the anthrax team. In the 1970s, I even worked in a small office in the Pentagon, helping then Secretary of the Navy William Middendorf with music arrangements. I’m a child of both Thailand and America.<sup>16</sup>

When you write music you're contemplative and in a world of your own. But the final music is social and is a joint act of creation. That's what Requiem is about—the personal interpretation of public grief.<sup>17</sup>

Composed for orchestra and chorus, the first movement of Somtow’s Requiem, “Devastation,” draws on the fourth of T.S. Eliot’s “Four Quartets” for its text.

The dove descending breaks the air  
 With flame of incandescent terror  
 Of which the tongues declare  
 The one discharge from sin and error.  
 The only hope, or else despair  
 Lies in the choice of pyre of pyre—  
 To be redeemed from fire by fire.

Who then devised the torment? Love.  
 Love is the unfamiliar name  
 Behind the hands that wove  
 The intolerable shirt of flame  
 Which human power cannot remove,  
 We only live, only suspire  
 Consumed by either fire or fire.

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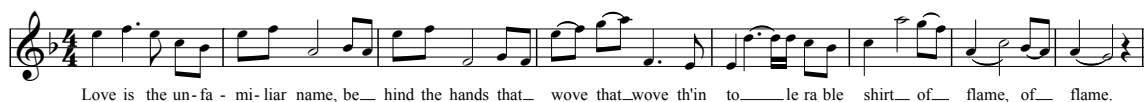
<sup>15</sup> C.J. Crowley, “Mozart Requiem,” Somtow Sucharitkul website, <http://www.somtow.com/press.html> (accessed February 3, 2009)

<sup>16</sup> “Somtow Sucharitkul. Requiem: In Memoriam 9/11,” cdbaby website, <http://cdbaby.com/cd/somtow> (accessed May 11, 2009).

<sup>17</sup> Lekha Shankar, “A Triumph Rises from a Tragedy,” Somtow Sucharitkul website, <http://www.somtow.com/press.html> (accessed February 3, 2009).

Somtow begins “Devastation” with a sudden and fast attack of percussion and brass, which enlivens the first two lines of the poem sung by the chorus, and evokes an initial atmosphere of animated chaos. The sense of terror is augmented by the use of thirty-second note runs and loud percussion hits. He balances this early chaos by setting lines three through seven of the first stanza to a slower chromatic section of building intensity and energy. Soon after, the chaos returns just as bold as before, as the beginning section is repeated. The terror is later subdued, as the second stanza receives an entirely different setting. Somtow writes a beautiful and lush melody, repeating the word “love.” The melody is filled with a sense of anguish as it lingers on the leading tone before progressing.

**Figure 2.1** *Requiem: in Memoriam 9/11, Devastation* mm. 179-186



In this first movement, Somtow’s musical constructions of a shocking musical section countered by a beautiful and lamenting melody serve as two expressive representations specific to the catastrophe—bewilderment and lament. This realization is consistent among other music of mourning works written in response to 9/11, as it captures both the shock and confusion of the tragic day, as well as the subsequent expressions of loss and grief.

The second movement, “Mourning,” is a measured and somber chorale to the text of Emily Dickinson’s “Ample Make This Bed.” The nature of this writing is very melodic and tonal, utilizes an easily accessible harmonic structure and hearkens back to

the style of English sacred choral music. The chorale is interspersed with two separate soprano solos, with texts from Dickinson's "There's Something Quieter than Sleep" and "Far from Love the Heavenly Father." The text used in this movement is illustrative of the requiem's predominant theme of rest, or eternal sleep, by its use of evocative words: "bed," "mattress," "pillow," and "sleep." Somtow's musical materials enhance the textual focus on rest; he utilizes a calm, lyrical and tonal music. As this music counters the chaotic music of the previous movement, it makes the focus on rest all the more effective.

"Ample Make This Bed"  
 Ample make this bed.  
 Make this bed with awe;  
 In it wait 'til judgment break  
 Excellent and fair.

Be its mattress straight,  
 Be its pillow round;  
 Let no sunrise' yellow noise  
 Interrupt this ground.

"Far from Love the Heavenly Father"  
 Far from Love the Heavenly Father  
 Leads the Chosen Child,  
 Oftener through Realm of Briar  
 Than the Meadow mild.  
 Oftener by the Claw of Dragon  
 Than the Hand of Friend  
 Guides the Little One predestined  
 To the Native Land.

"There's something quieter than sleep"  
 There's something quieter than sleep  
 Within this inner room!  
 It wears a sprig upon its breast—  
 And will not tell its name.

Some touch it, and some kiss it—  
 Some chafe its idle hand—  
 It has simple gravity

I do not understand!

While simple-hearted neighbors  
 Chat of the “Early dead”—  
 We—prone to periphrasis  
 Remark that Birds have fled.

The third, and final, movement, “Hope,” consists of two sections; the composer uses Walt Whitman’s poem, “Reconciliation,” in the first section, for solo soprano. The second section is on the text of Emily Dickinson’s “On this Wondrous Sea.” Somtow is not the first composer to have drawn on the poetry of Walt Whitman for historical music of mourning. Paul Hindemith wrote *When Lilacs Last in the Door-Yard Bloomed- A Requiem for Those We Love* (1945) to commemorate the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt and those who had fallen in the Second World War. Arthur Bliss dedicated *Morning Heroes* (1930) to the memory of his brother, and all other comrades killed in battle. Ralph Vaughan Williams’s *Dona Nobis Pacem* (1936), which reflects the horrors of war, similarly uses Whitman’s “Reconciliation” for its text.

WORD over all, beautiful as the sky!  
 Beautiful that war, and all its deeds of carnage, must in time be utterly lost;  
 That the hands of the sisters Death and Night, incessantly softly wash again,  
 and ever again, this soil’d world:  
 ... For my enemy is dead—a man divine as myself is dead;  
 I look where he lies, white-faced and still, in the coffin—I draw near;  
 I bend down, and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the coffin.

Somtow opens the third movement with the string section playing a dissonant and chromatic fugue. After the fugue reaches its conclusion, the soprano majestically enters with full support from the orchestra to declare that war is utterly lost. This moment marks an end to the dissonance, and a return to clearly tonal harmony. Somtow continues in this tonal manner as the chorus enters singing Emily Dickinson’s “On this Wondrous Sea.”

On this wondrous sea,  
 Sailing silently,  
 Ho! Pilot, ho!  
 Knowest thou the shore  
 Where no breakers roar,  
 Where the storm is o'er?

In the silent west  
 Many sails at rest,  
 Their anchors fast;  
 Thither I pilot the,  
 Land, ho! Eternity!  
 Ashore at last!

The chorus echoes, “Ashore, ashore, ashore at last” in the closing bars as a message of hope resonates throughout the last section.

### **Stephen Hartke, “Beyond Words”**

Stephen Hartke’s, *Beyond Words*, commissioned by the Opus One Piano Quartet, the Pittsburgh Chamber Music Society and the Cleveland Chamber Music Society, is a single movement work for violin, viola, cello and piano. Hartke composed it in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, between October 22<sup>nd</sup> and December 4, 2001, and premiered December 12, 2001. On his compositional process, Hartke states, “Rarely have I found it so difficult to work on a piece but rarely has it seemed so absolutely imperative that I do so.”<sup>18</sup> A premise that would resonate among 9/11 composers, Hartke echoes the fact that composers underwent a personal bereavement experience in composing 9/11 music of mourning, and in turn produced a work of art for communal bereavement.

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<sup>18</sup> Stephen Hartke, “Beyond Words,” Stephen Hartke website, <http://www.stephenhartke.com/Hartke/Beyond.html> (accessed February 20, 2009).



The use of specific musical materials makes clear the lamenting nature of *Beyond Words*; these traits help to distinguish the work as music of mourning. The use of calm hushed dynamics, predominantly restrained tempi, straightforward and even spare thematic motifs evoke an attitude of reverence and somberness. Musical motifs utilize descending lyrical lines to represent sadness, and the gradual layering of instruments augments the depth and intensity of grief. Nuanced gestures, demonstrated through moments of intensification followed by diminution establish feelings of grief and enhance the melancholy motifs. The construction of a chromatic harmony, ambiguous tonalities and delayed or abandoned resolutions establish a sense of prolonged longing. These elements of musical composition coalesce to evoke feelings of yearning melancholy, to create a sonic environment that can be experienced as lyrical, inward, reflective, and at times, tense, and that invites the listener to experience an introspective or meditative journey.

Understanding the historical context of *Beyond Words* helps to better understand Hartke's compositional approach and illustrates recurring historical techniques in composing music of mourning. Discussing his musical inspiration Hartke states,

As the opening material began to take shape, I found that certain turns of phrase echoed the beginning of Thomas Tallis' setting of the first verses of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, which, of course are concerned with a catastrophe befalling a great city. Therefore, I decided to go a step further and to pattern the entire single movement piece on the Tallis. Each of its six sections corresponds in general texture and affect to a section of the model and certain of Tallis' motives have been absorbed into my melodic lines.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Stephen Hartke, "Beyond Words," Stephen Hartke website, <http://www.stephenhartke.com/Hartke/Beyond.html> (accessed February 20, 2009).

Historically, the biblical Book of Lamentations mourns the desolation of Judah after Jerusalem's destruction in 580 B.C. Each of the book's five chapters contain twenty-two lines—the same number of consonants in the Hebrew alphabet—and each line begins with its respective letter in the Hebrew alphabet, forming an acrostic.<sup>20</sup> Palestrina, Victoria, Lassus, Tallis and Byrd have composed the best-known settings of the Lamentations. The plainsong melodic formula or “tone” for the Lamentations is of ancient Jewish origin and, like the composers mentioned above, is used in Thomas Tallis's setting.

Tallis's lyrical treatment of the “tone” becomes the primary motive, and consists of an initial sustained pitch, followed by downward moving notes, otherwise described as an intense moment of tension followed by a prolonged and eventual release. Composers often set the Lamentations with contrapuntal freedom, including a great deal of chordal writing, with frequent use of imitation and contrasted note values, all of which result in beautiful and elaborate textures. The imitative and lyrical nature of Tallis's “tone” is illustrated in the opening bars of the first movement to his *Lamentations of Jeremiah*, *Incipit lamentatio*.

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<sup>20</sup> Alec Robertson, *Requiem: Music of Mourning and Consolation* (London: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., Publishers, 1967), 161.

Figure 2.2 *Lamentations of Jeremiah, Incipit lamentatio* mm. 1-4

Lamentations I á 5 - (Klgl. 1, 1&2) Thomas Tallis 1505 - 1585

In - ci - pit la - men - ta - ti - o le - re - mi - ae pro - phe - tae, pro - phe -  
 In - ci - pit la - men - ta - ti - o

Strikingly, Hartke's opening demonstrates many of the same motivic and imitative qualities used in Tallis's setting. Similar to the *Lamentations*, the descending motif accentuates the melancholy nature of this piece.

Figure 2.3 *Beyond Words* mm. 1-10

Very quiet and simple ( $\text{♩} = 66-80$ , starting slowly but flexing the tempo as needed)

Violin *p* (with very little vibrato at first - almost like a viol in tone color)

(gradually playing with more vibrato)

(with very little vibrato at first - almost like a viol in tone color)

[2] with increasing warmth

(gradually playing with more vibrato)

While the melodic direction and counterpoint of the violin, viola and cello are noticeably rooted in the style of Tallis's *Lamentations*, Hartke utilizes the piano in a unique and personal manner. The role of the piano is not inspired by Tallis. Rather, the piano plays high and loud chords that interrupt the counterpoint in the strings.

It is as if the piano were in shock and unable to participate with the others, but gradually it is drawn into the discourse and becomes a full partner in the concluding pages of the work.<sup>21</sup>

**Figure 2.4** *Beyond Words* mm. 30-33

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Beyond Words" by Stephen Hartke, measures 30 through 33. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system contains three staves: the top staff is for the Violin (Vn.), the middle for the Viola (Vla.), and the bottom for the Cello (Vcl.). The second system contains two staves for the Piano (Pn.). The music is in 4/4 time. The string parts feature melodic lines with dynamic markings of *p* and *pp*. The piano part is characterized by high and loud chords, as indicated by the *pp* marking and the high register of the notes. A box containing the number "7" is located at the beginning of the first staff. The piano part begins with a *div.* (divisi) marking.

This “shocking effect” created by the piano—distinguished by high and loud chords—can be interpreted as a reminder of the shock of 9/11. The compositional practice of realizing a 9/11 “shocking effect” is one that occurs commonly in 9/11 musical responses.

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<sup>21</sup> Stephen Hartke, “Beyond Words,” Stephen Hartke website, <http://www.stephenhartke.com/Hartke/Beyond.html> (accessed February 20, 2009).

### Cindy McTee, “Adagio”

Dr. Cindy McTee, accomplished composer and professor of Composition at the University of North Texas, wrote *Adagio* in the wake of the events that followed the horror of September 11, 2001. Adapted from her *Agnus Dei* for organ, the work for string orchestra forms the second movement of her *Symphony No. 1: Ballet for Orchestra*. The National Symphony Orchestra—led by music director, Leonard Slatkin—commissioned the work. McTee draws upon the historical model of the Latin Requiem Mass, specifically the *Agnus Dei*, to create her music of mourning. Historically, the *Agnus Dei* is a section of the Requiem Mass that consists of an almost entirely syllabic setting.

**Figure 2.5** *Agnus Dei*



The text of the *Agnus Dei* pleads with the Creator to grant the deceased eternal rest, a cry that illustrates the mournful character of the section, “O Lamb of God that takest away The sins of the world, grant them rest.”<sup>22</sup> Rather than using this traditional plainsong melody, McTee incorporates a hauntingly beautiful melody quoted from Krzysztof Penderecki’s *Agnus Dei*.

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<sup>22</sup> Alec Robertson, *Requiem: Music of Mourning and Consolation* (London: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., Publishers, 1967).

**Figure 2.6** *Adagio* mm. 155-158



This phrase first appears in its entirety in m. 155 of *Adagio*, and until then is gradually drawn out from its first three notes (Ab, G, F). By stressing this minor third interval for eight minutes, and slowly building to the full melodic phrase, McTee establishes a deeply melancholy setting. The implied text combined with the lush string writing augments the effectiveness of *Adagio*.

While McTee utilizes a clearly mournful melody by quoting Penderecki's *Agnus Dei*, she also makes use of a more dissonant theme, which works against the beautiful melody. In measure fifteen—after establishing the minor third interval (Ab, G, F)—the violas interject a strident chromatic line (C, C#, E, Eb). This initial gesture, subsequently supported by the second violins, cellos, and basses, builds in intensity and tempo, undergoes two heightening transpositions and culminates in a resolute release in measure twenty-one. As a result, a “shocking effect” occurs, in that the fluctuating chromatic line disrupts the lyrical, mournful theme. McTee intensifies this moment in measures 23-27 by juxtaposing both the mournful and the dissonant themes to create a moment of utmost tension and dissonance. The interaction between a chromatic and tonal harmonic language, as exemplified by these two opposing themes, results in a complex expression of intense, and at times aggressive, lachrymosity.

As is the case with most music of mourning, *Adagio* expresses a sense of hope, rather than dwelling entirely on the tragic. This becomes apparent as McTee incorporates the special use of major tonalities in her work. Although written in an open key

signature, the primary tonality of this work is F minor; the main mourning melody (Ab, G, F) helps to outline this sense of F minor. The first true establishment of a major tonality arrives at measure forty-four. In this instance, McTee writes a seamless harmonic descent: Fm  $\Rightarrow$  Cm/Eb  $\Rightarrow$  Db. She creates a prolonged suspension (Eb-Db) on the Db major chord, which serves to extend this brief, yet beautiful moment. Yet, more effective is the glorious moment created at measure 150, in which she moves from Fm  $\Rightarrow$  Cm/Eb  $\Rightarrow$  Db  $\Rightarrow$  Bb  $\Rightarrow$  C. McTee brings the simple major V chord, C major, to life by writing a lyrical line in the violas and second violins (C, D, E). The ascending scale-like motive serves to ground the brief sense of C-major tonality, before quickly returning to F minor. These brief moments of hope are reminiscent of those in Barber's *Adagio for Strings*, a work performed frequently following 9/11. McTee acknowledges occasional harmonic references to Barber's *Adagio for Strings* in the forward to her score. McTee's *Adagio* resonates with many post-9/11 music of mourning responses through its integration of a grieving and shocking evocation of the aftermath of 9/11, and interjectory moments of hope.

### **Bruce Springsteen, "The Rising"**

American Rock & Roll icon, Bruce Springsteen, returned from over a decade's absence from the musical spotlight to produce his 9/11 responsorial album, *The Rising*. Reuniting with his E Street Band, *The Rising* was Springsteen's first album since the 1984 patriotic megahit, *Born in the U.S.A.* Considered a leading force in popular music for the last three decades and a Rock & Roll working-class hero, Springsteen's music speaks to everyday lives—particularly America's small-town, blue-collar heartland—and

has earned him comparisons to the likes of John Steinbeck and Woody Guthrie. Therefore, it was no shock to his fans when he produced the album; not only did his supporters expect a 9/11 response from “The Boss,” but according to Springsteen, they needed it. In his interview with *Rolling Stone* Springsteen recalls the moment he realized his need to make *The Rising*. A few days after September 11, Springsteen was leaving the beach. A man drove by and yelled, “We need ya!” and then drove away. Springsteen recalls:

And I thought, well, I've probably been a part of this guy's life for a while, and people wanna see other people they know, they wanna be around things they're familiar with. So he may need to see me right about now. That made me sense, like, 'Oh, I have a job to do.' Our band, hopefully, we were built to be there when the chips are down. That was part of the idea of the band, to provide support.<sup>23</sup>

*The Rising* represents Springsteen’s “calling” to impart an avenue for mourning and healing in the aftermath of 9/11. Rather than preaching a vengeful message of retribution, Springsteen focuses on bereavement themes of lament and recovery to comfort those in need of an explanation for the unfathomable. While the fifteen-song album can be considered as one cohesive 9/11 response, an examination of exemplary songs will sufficiently illuminate the mourning capacity of Springsteen’s album.

“Lonesome Day,” the album’s opening track, is a representation of the bitter grief and vengefulness experienced by one who lost a loved one during 9/11, and who must now persevere in the aftermath of tragedy. The song evokes an early lamenting mood through an introduction of strings and acoustic guitar, before launching into a guitar-driven Rock anthem. Springsteen soon after laments over basic I and IV chords, “Baby,

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<sup>23</sup> Mark Binelli and Rob Sheffield, “Bruce Springsteen's American Gospel,” *Rolling Stone*, August 22, 2002.



once I thought I knew/ Everything I needed to know about you/ Your sweet whisper,  
Your tender touch/ But I didn't really know that much.” Upon the fifth line of the first  
verse, a vi chord is played, the first minor chord of the song, whereupon Springsteen  
sings, “Joke's on me, but it's gonna be okay/ If I can just get through this lonesome day.”  
Following the word “just,” the music pauses and Springsteen’s voice soars above the  
texture to proclaim the song’s message, “get through this lonesome day.” After this first  
verse, a short instrumental section follows, where the strings are again featured, but in  
this instance they perform guitar-like riffs, rather than legato lines. This change in  
character in the strings represents the song’s overall thematic shift from mourning to  
perseverance.

The second verse follows the same musical form as the first; it calls to mind  
images of the twin towers’ destruction, which also serve as a metaphor for overwhelming  
grief: “Hell's brewin' dark sun's on the rise/ This storm'll blow through by and by.”  
Springsteen expresses feelings of retaliation, but soon overcomes his revenge by a  
commitment to persevere: “House is on fire, Viper's in the grass/ A little revenge and this  
too shall pass/ This too shall pass, I'm gonna pray/ Right now all I got's this lonesome  
day.” Springsteen communicates a warning against retaliation: “Better ask questions  
before you shoot/ Deceit and betrayal’s bitter fruit/ It's hard to swallow, come time to  
pay/ That taste on your tongue don't easily slip away” and rearticulates the persevering  
message: “It's all right. It's all right. It's all right.” The simple arrangement of this song,  
its major tonality and upbeat tempo support the overall positive outlook of Springsteen’s  
message, that although life can be fraught with trials and uncertainty, it is precious and  
worthy of being lived as such. Springsteen’s speech-like lyrics and timeless musical

arrangement—hearkening back to his 1980s *Born in the U.S.A.*—combine to make the work easily understood and identifiable.

“You’re Missing” is a heartfelt portrayal of the sorrowful experience of losing a loved one. The introduction comprises of a gradual building of musical elements that serve to establish a clearly melancholy mood. The order of musical materials includes a slowly developing synthesizer pad, which is accompanied by a gently arpeggiated chords in the piano (I, vi), and then joined by a straightforward drumbeat combined with a lyrical cello melody. These elements join together to create a tender and contemplative setting in which Springsteen sings: “Shirts in the closet, shoes in the hall/ Mama's in the kitchen, baby and all/ Everything is everything/ Everything is everything/ But you're missing.” Following the first verse, the introduction is repeated; except, in this instance, the cello line is doubled by sustained electric guitar, which results in an augmented “languishing effect.”

In the second verse, Springsteen continues to describe the process of dealing with loss: “Coffee cups on the counter, jackets on the chair/ Papers on the doorstep, but you're not there/ Everything is everything/ Everything is everything/ But you're missing.” He proceeds to the chorus, “You're missing when I shut out the lights/ You're missing when I close my eyes/ You're missing when I see the sun rise/ You're missing.” The chorus makes use of a new chord progression, yet continually reinforces the vi chord, keeping the mood mournful and reflective. Prior to the final verse, the introductory phrase returns, and is again subtly altered for effect. On this occasion, a flute, not the cello, accompanies the piano chords; also, the drumbeat stops and a distorted bass drum sounds on the downbeat of each measure. The reverberating and distorted bass drum sounds

very similar to that of an explosion—possibly the sought after effect. The result is an ethereal ambiance for which Springsteen can add his final afterthought, “God's drifting in heaven, Devil's in the mailbox/ I got dust on my shoes, nothing but teardrops.” In *You're Missing* Springsteen maintains a sorrowful tone and unlike *Lonesome Day*, refrains from being uplifting. Through analyzing this song on its own, it appears that Springsteen acts out of character by dwelling on the tragic. Yet, by considering the album in its entirety, it is apparent that the following song, the title track, will supply an inspirational follow up to its predecessor.

“The Rising,” the title track to Springsteen’s 9/11 response, is the only song on the album wherein Springsteen begins singing without an instrumental introduction. He directly addresses the shock and trauma with a single strum on the electric guitar, and cries unashamedly, “Can't see nothin' in front of me/ Can't see nothin' coming up behind/ I make my way through this darkness/ I can't feel nothing but this chain that binds me/ Lost track of how far I've gone,/ How far I've gone, how high I've climbed/ On my back's a sixty pound stone,/ On my shoulder a half mile line.” The burden of grief and the struggle to bear it is clearly demonstrated in the first verse. Yet, this song portrays an uplifting message, as Springsteen immediately follows the first verse with an inviting chorus, “Come on up for the rising./ Come on up, lay your hands in mine./ Come on up for the rising./ Come on up for the rising tonight.”

Springsteen writes four more verses of similar substance as he expresses feelings of loss and longing. He returns to the chorus just as before, to counter each mournful verse with an uplifting call to rise above despondency. The chord structure and melody of the verses and chorus are simple and identical; based over two chords—IV and I—

Springsteen's melody in both sections repeats the same shape as he begins on the subdominant, and finishes each line on the tonic. The monotonousness of the verses and chorus begs for melodic and harmonic change, and is satisfied as a third section of wordless "La, la, la, la" is sung over a new chord structure ( $V \Rightarrow I \Rightarrow IV \Rightarrow I \Rightarrow V \Rightarrow I \Rightarrow vi$ ). It is no coincidence that this moment marks the only point of melodic and harmonic change in the entire song. Although it supplies much needed variety to the overall form of the song, this act of wordlessness also represents a personal, and almost childlike, freeing response. It elicits audience identification with the content of the song through a special moment of effortless participation. It specifically represents a liberating response to Springsteen's call to rise, and is an embodiment of the album's mission to offer support to those in mourning.

The title of Bruce Springsteen's 9/11 album, *The Rising*, might be misleading to its audience, especially those consumed with vengeful retribution. Rather than echoing the responses of many popular music artists, his concern is not with a national uprising but with a rising above: the transcending of ever-increasing losses and ancient hatreds.<sup>24</sup>

After examining 9/11 music of mourning examples, a recurrence of effective compositional techniques is apparent. These techniques include a "shocking effect," a "languishing effect" and an overall thematic focus on mourning and recovery. A "shocking effect" evokes specific devastating images and feelings of trauma experienced during the tragedy through the use of musical and/or textual materials. A "languishing effect" recalls tragic imagery and emotions through specific musical instruments, such as sustained electric guitar tones, legato strings and synthesizer pad. The thematic focus of

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<sup>24</sup> Kurt Loder, "The Rising," *Rolling Stone*, August 22, 2002, 81-82.

mourning music is characterized by a stress on mourning the lost and recovering in the wake of the tragedies. This strong emphasis on mourning and recovery distinguishes music of mourning from commemorative or tribute works, which dwell less on personal recovery and more on immortalizing the day of tragedy and honoring its heroes.

Upon investigating both classical and popular music of mourning examples, the similar compositional design is noticeable between the two genres. Despite differences in instrumentation, both genres yield effective and mournful works. While classical works have the propensity to produce a more serious and abstract response—due to their complex textures and harmonies—popular works have the capacity to achieve a more personal and unifying effect. The simple musical materials and participatory element of popular responses make those songs more effective in achieving a communal mourning function.

### CHAPTER 3: “WE’LL PUT A BOOT IN YOUR ASS, IT’S THE AMERICAN WAY” SONGS OF RIGHTEOUS ANGER: A CALL-TO-ARMS

We’re going to find out who did this and we’re going after the bastards.

Orrin Hatch, Utah Senator

The message has to be that we’re gonna hunt you down and we’re gonna find you and we’re gonna make you pay that price... We’re not gonna let you attack our innocent people and walk away, because if we do there will be more attacks.<sup>25</sup>

Richard Shelby, Alabama Senator

In the wake of the events of September 11th, along with mourning, retribution and/or support for military action formed the basis of the most successful 9/11 musical responses. Patriotic music became an exceptionally effective way to demonstrate boldness in the face of disheartening attacks while honoring the lost and the living. In the aftermath of the tragedy, patriotic songs were ubiquitous; examples of their frequent use include the reopening of Wall Street, memorial services, sporting events and subsequent musical concerts. Based on its widespread success and popularity, as evidenced by a constant presence on popular music charts and popular music awards or nominations, patriotic music written in response to 9/11 presents an intriguing subject. An examination of its musical makeup—i.e., themes of national humiliation, pride, and violence demonstrated through the use of clichéd patriotic phrases and nationalistic imagery—will illustrate how songwriters encapsulated and channeled the vengeful frame of mind of the American people. An alignment to historical patriotic songs will illustrate historically consistent songwriting techniques, and in turn will present an illuminating context in discussing the effectiveness of 9/11 patriotic responses.

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<sup>25</sup> Jonathan Karl, “Congress vows unity, reprisals for attacks,” CNN, <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/11/congress.terrorism/> (accessed February 3, 2009). These quotes were taken outside the Capitol on the same occasion wherein congress joined together to sing *God Bless America*. The bipartisan stand for immediate retaliation represents the nation’s emotional zealousness for swift retribution.

### **Darryl Worley, “Have You Forgotten”**

Darryl Worley wrote “Have You Forgotten,” the title track to his 2003 album, as the result of a transforming experience, wherein he visited and performed for U.S. troops stationed in Afghanistan, Kuwait and Uzbekistan. The moving visits motivated Worley to question his nation’s support of their troops and apparent need for retaliation. The moving song recalls the images and emotions experienced on the tragic day, and draws on these emotions to support military action. “Have You Forgotten” remained the number one song on the 2003 Billboard “Hot Country Singles & Tracks” for seven weeks. It earned two Academy of Country Music nominations for “Single of the Year” and “Song of the Year” in 2003. Its popular and nationalist appeal is the result of specific patriotic compositional procedures.

The song features a pedal steel guitar accompanied by gospel organ, acoustic and electric guitars and drums. The pedal steel guitar is sonically similar to the sound of sustained electric guitar tones, and achieves the same result as legato strings; the instrument produces a clear, smooth and continuous tone through the performer’s sliding from one pitch to the next. The pedal steel guitar is often used to evoke feelings of sadness or loss in country music; accordingly, it produces a “languishing effect” by its close resemblance to the act of weeping. Worley uses the instrument to achieve this effect as he recalls the tragic emotions felt in the aftermath of 9/11. Expressive moments of the pedal steel guitar, in combination with specific lyrics of the chorus—specifically the words, “forgotten,” “day,” “towers” and “Pentagon”—produce a graphic and gut-wrenching refrain.

Have you **forgotten** how it felt that **day**-  
To see your homeland under fire

And her people blown away?  
 Have you **forgotten** when those **towers** fell?  
 We had neighbors still inside going through a living hell.  
 And you say we shouldn't worry 'bout Bin Laden.  
 Have you forgotten?

Have you **forgotten** all the people **killed**?  
 Some went down like heroes in that Pennsylvania **field**.  
 Have you **forgotten** about our **Pentagon**?  
 All the loved ones that we lost and those left to carry on.  
 Don't you tell me not to worry about Bin Laden.  
 Have you forgotten?

Through the enhancing effect of distorted electric guitars and powerful drums, Worley establishes a vivid and possibly painful re-creation of the tragedy in his chorus, which systematically sets up his call to military action. He manipulates his audience's emotions through a stirring up of painful memories. He draws upon these feelings of shock and grief to establish a sense of national pride and honor, as Worley questions Americans' loyalty and support for their country. This methodically crafted sentiment of indebtedness calls for necessary acts of patriotism, specifically the support of military action. He demonstrates his call for military action in the first and second verses.

I hear people saying we don't need this war.  
 But, I say there're some things worth fighting for.  
 What about our freedom and this piece of ground?  
 We didn't get to keep 'em by backing down.  
 They say we don't realize the mess we're getting in.  
 Before you start your preaching let me ask you this my friend.

They took all the footage off my TV,  
 Said it's too disturbing for you and me.  
 It'll just breed anger that's what the experts say.  
 If it was up to me I'd show it every day.  
 Some say this country's just out looking for a fight.  
 After 9/11, man I'd have to say that's right.

Worley makes use of a transitional section, a bridge, to solidify his obligatory call-to-arms. Set apart by a military, Civil War inspired march-like snare drum roll as



well as Civil War inspired fiddling, Worley sings, “I’ve been there with the soldiers / Who’ve gone away to war / And you can bet that they remember / Just what they’re fighting for.” Worley takes aim against Americans who oppose military action, as he argues that American soldiers are fighting on behalf of their nation and those who suffered as a result of 9/11. His argument can be summarized as such: if the American troops are fighting the nation’s 9/11 attackers—and you, an American citizen, support U.S. troops—then you ought to support military action. To rearticulate America’s indebtedness to its soldiers and the subsequent need for military support, Worley follows the bridge with a return of the chorus, and an additional declaration, “Have you forgotten?”

While his song exhibits the use of many modern production techniques, instruments and textual associations, Worley’s patriotic anthem is reminiscent of historical compositional practices used to write patriotic music in response to Pearl Harbor. The compositional approach of drawing upon the nation’s memory of a recent surprise attack to write a patriotic popular song is not an original technique. In fact, Don Reid and Sammy Kaye’s “Remember Pearl Harbor, (1941)” the most popular Pearl Harbor-titled song, demonstrates the same practice, albeit in a less graphic and audacious manner.<sup>26</sup>

History in ev'ry century  
 Records an act that lives forevermore.  
 We'll recall, as into line we fall  
 The thing that happened on Hawaii's shore.

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<sup>26</sup> The Authentic History Center: Primary Sources from American Popular Culture, “American Attitudes Toward The Japanese Part 2: Pearl Harbor In Music,” <http://www.authentichistory.com/ww2/music/PHattitudes.html> (accessed March 2, 2009).

Let's remember Pearl Harbor  
 As we go to meet the foe.  
 Let's remember Pearl Harbor  
 As we did the Alamo.

We will always remember  
 how they died for Liberty.  
 Let's remember Pearl Harbor  
 And go on to victory.

While not in the country rock style of “Have You Forgotten,” the music is in the popular music style of its time. “Remember Pearl Harbor” uses a powerful and driving music in the 1940s Big Band style. Similar to Worley’s song, the use of a military march-like drumbeat is also used to evoke the imagery of going to war. Where “Have You Forgotten” utilizes an electric guitar solo between its chorus and bridge, to further strengthen its emboldening call to military action, “Remember Pearl Harbor” closes the song with a solo chorus played by a brass section. The military trumpet call supports the song’s patriotic theme by rearticulating its memorable battle cry.

### **Toby Keith, "Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue (The Angry American)"**

Toby Keith’s “Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue” is regarded as one of the most controversial, yet popular songs written in response to the September 11 attacks. The overtly arrogant and jingoistic work warns America’s attackers of a certain “hell” to be paid for their cowardly attacks. Evoking a plethora of clichéd phrases and patriotic imagery, the song portrays military action as the only possible response to 9/11, and as a unanimous American response. Keith speaks on behalf of the nation in his lyrics, and

describes a military response as “the American way.” In an interview with *Rolling Stone*, he defends the song’s militant stance as simply being patriotic.<sup>27</sup>

It sucks ass that I have to defend myself for being patriotic...Looking back, I'm glad I did it. I'm not saying every time we disagree with somebody we should go to war. But they attacked us. We knew who did it. We had to stop them from doing it again. For me, it's like sticking your head in the sand if you criticize my song. They said, ‘You should have more tact.’ There's nothing tactful about war. There's nothing tactful about flying a plane into a building. You don't have to have more tact.

The notoriously opinionated Oklahoma country songwriter and entertainer, and former semi-pro football player, wrote the belligerent anthem only a few weeks after 9/11, and six months after his father, an Army veteran, died in a car accident. In 2002, “Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue” peaked at number one on the Billboard chart, “Hot Country Singles & Tracks,” and number twenty-five on the “Billboard Hot 100.” Keith won numerous awards for his song in 2002 and 2003, notably the 2003 BMI Country Award and the 2003 American Music Awards Favorite Country Music Album, *Unleashed*. The popularity and success of the song illustrates how the response struck a resonant chord with aggressively patriotic listeners. The overuse of nationalistic emblems produces a readily available anthem for a vengeful and patriotic audience.

Refraining from any elaborate or ornate introduction, Keith begins the song with a single large strum of his acoustic guitar, whereupon he candidly sings,

American girls and American guys  
Will always stand up and salute;  
Will always recognize  
When we see ol' glory flying,  
There's a lot of men dead,

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<sup>27</sup> Mark Binelli, “Country Grammar: The Battle Hymn of Toby Keith,” *Rollingstone.com*, January 6, 2004, [http://www.rollingstone.com/news/story/5938887/country\\_grammar](http://www.rollingstone.com/news/story/5938887/country_grammar) (accessed March 2, 2009).

So we can sleep in peace at night when we lay down our head.

In this first verse, he immediately establishes a sense of national identity as he describes how all Americans will always honor their flag and their troops. Now supported by a driving electric guitar, Keith makes use of a more personal and specific approach in the second verse, as he tells of his deceased father's serving in the army, and sacrifice for his nation's freedom. His father's patriotic example of displaying the American flag outside their home serves to exemplify what honorable and loyal Americans should do.

My daddy served in the army,  
Where he lost his right eye.  
But he flew a flag out in our yard 'til the day that he died.  
He wanted my mother, my brother, my sister and me  
To grow up and live happy in the land of the free.

The first two verses combine to establish a sense of national pride through continual references to American nationalistic imagery, such as the time-honored traditions of observing the flag and honoring the American troops. Keith's reference to patriotic family traditions, a subject close to many people, further intensifies the personal feelings of loss and patriotism. Building in volume and intensity, the third verse draws upon this previously established national identity to justify the defense against any such defaming attacks.

Now this nation that I love has fallen under attack.  
A mighty sucker punch came flying in from somewhere in the back.  
Soon as we could see clearly through our big black eye,  
Man we lit up your world like the Fourth of July.

The last line of the third verse initiates the subsequently violent chorus, which is enlivened by the entrance of a powerful drumbeat, electric guitars and rock organ.

Hey! Uncle Sam put your name at the top of his list,  
And the Statue of Liberty started shaking her fist.  
And the eagle will fly,

And there's gonna be Hell,  
 When you hear Mother Freedom start ringing her bell!  
 It's gonna feel like the whole wide world is raining down on you,  
 Brought to you courtesy of the Red, White and Blue!

In the chorus, Keith now addresses the nation's attackers through a series of threats. The four threats are to be delivered by a different American symbol—Uncle Sam, the Statue of Liberty, the eagle and Mother Freedom—and are enveloped under the most significant image of American iconography, the flag. The in-your-face patriotic chorus lets loose, as an instrumental section takes over; an electric guitar solo leads this section as the brash message is further solidified.

The final verse begins at a slower tempo and returns to the basic acoustic guitar accompaniment of the first verse, where upon Keith sings,

Oh, Justice will be served and the battle will rage.  
 This big dog will fight when you rattle his cage.  
 You'll be sorry that you messed with the U.S. of A.  
 'Cause we'll put a boot in your ass,  
 It's the American way.

The ironically tender musical moment created upon the phrase, “U.S. of A.” is immediately countered by a bolstering surge of electric guitars and drums that build in intensity and tempo to support the defiant message, “‘Cause we'll put a boot in your ass, / It's the American way.” The chorus returns once more, and after chanting “Of the Red, White and Blue / Of my Red, White and Blue” the song ends with one resolute and assertive chord.

In the wake of the Pearl Harbor attacks many Americans were similarly angry and seeking revenge. Much like Toby Keith, the performer, Carson Robison, earned a living and reputation as a cowboy and hillbilly artist throughout the 1920s and 1930s. His two 1941 patriotic recordings appeared on the A and B sides of his December, 1941 Bluebird

release, and are especially notable for their themes of revenge and anger. Robison's "Remember Pearl Harbor," a common name for Pearl Harbor responses, is strikingly similar to Keith's patriotic song:

Remember Pearl Harbor, when you sight down the barrel of your gun.  
Remember Pearl Harbor, never stop, 'til you drop every one.  
Give 'em bomb for bomb, give 'em shell for shell.  
Kill a hundred rats for every boy that fell.  
Remember Pearl Harbor, wipe the Jap from the map, give 'em hell.

Dawn on a Sunday morning, dawn on the wide blue sea,  
A warrior isle of sunshine lay so peacefully.  
Then from the sky without warning the vultures swarmed to attack.  
Hiding behind their "peace talk," they stabbed our boys in the back.

Remember Pearl Harbor, every hour, every day that we live.  
Remember Pearl Harbor, and the crime we can never forgive.  
Through the sweat and toil, through the blood and tears  
Keep this battle cry ringing in our ears.  
Remember Pearl Harbor, let this song keep us strong through the years...<sup>28</sup>

The references of hell and of a cowardly surprise attack are identical in the two works, and so is the violent response. Robison's recording of "We're Gonna Have To Slap The Dirty Little Jap (And Uncle Sam's The Guy Who Can Do It)," written by Bob Miller, exhibits an equivalent technique of appropriating American nationalistic symbols to support retaliation.

We're gonna have to slap the dirty little Jap  
And Uncle Sam's the guy who can do it.  
We'll skin the streak of yellow from this sneaky little fellow  
And he'll think a cyclone hit him when he's thru it.  
We'll take the double crosser to the old woodshed.  
We'll start on his bottom and go to his head.  
When we get thru with him he'll wish that he was dead.  
We gotta slap the dirty little Jap.

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<sup>28</sup> The Authentic History Center: Primary Sources from American Popular Culture, "American Attitudes Toward The Japanese Part 2: Pearl Harbor In Music," <http://www.authentichistory.com/ww2/music/PHattitudes.html> (accessed March 2, 2009).

We're gonna have to slap the dirty little Jap  
 And Uncle Sam's the guy who can do it.  
 The Japs and all their hooley will be changed into chop suey,  
 And the rising sun will set when we get thru it.  
 Their alibi for fighting is to save their face,  
 For ancestors waiting in celestial space.  
 We'll kick their precious face down to the other place.  
 We gotta slap the dirty little Jap.

The parallel references to Uncle Sam are conspicuous and so is the likening of American retaliation to a natural act of weather: Robison's cyclone and Keith's rain. The use of a consistent rhyme scheme, together with the depiction of physical violence, further demonstrates a uniformity of songwriting techniques. Like Keith's "Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue," Robison's recordings possess a musical style typical of its popular culture; the musical style of Robison's recordings is in the 1940s Big Band style. The consistencies observed in the patriotic songs of these two performers illustrate effective compositional practices in writing patriotic music in reaction to surprise attacks.

### **Neil Young, "Let's Roll"**

In March 2002, Neil Young, a folk-country-rock artist whose career has endured four decades, released his homage, "Let's Roll," on behalf of the passengers and crew of Flight 93. The phrase by which the song is titled, "Let's Roll," is based on the heroic words and actions of passenger, Todd Beamer. Just before he and a number of fellow passengers mounted a life-or-death charge for the cockpit, where the terrorists had seized control, passenger Todd Beamer issued the order, "Let's Roll." The lengthy emergency phone call between Beamer and Lisa Jefferson, a telephone operator outside Chicago, made the clearly distinguishable rallying cry audible. The cry, "Let's Roll" has since been immortalized and promoted as an American patriotic battle cry. The phrase is now

inscribed on Air Force planes, city fire trucks, athletic uniforms, as well as numerous t-shirts, baseball caps and 9/11 souvenir memorabilia.<sup>29</sup> Young's tribute reenacts the famous emergency phone call through song, and also comments on the moral decision of fighting against evil in the wake of September 11<sup>th</sup>. An adopted rallying cry for Americans, "Let's Roll" reached number thirty-two on Billboard's "Mainstream Rock Tracks" chart, while the album, *Are You Passionate* peaked at number ten on "The Billboard 200." Its position on the 2002 Billboard charts—a year of public preoccupation with patriotic music—and its being embraced as a post-9/11 battle cry, marks its appeal as a song of national unification.

The evocative introduction of the song consists of an electronically distorted hum, clearly representing the sound of the plane's engines, and is followed by the ring of a cellular phone. Soon after, drums, bass, rock organ and electric guitar enter to a guitar riff-driven and minor blues-based medium groove. Young, with his raspy and bluesy voice, sings the first verse,

I know I said I love you, I know you know it's true.  
I've got to put the phone down, and do what we got to do.  
One's standing in the aisle way, two more at the door.  
We've got to get inside there before they kill some more.

Time is runnin' out. Let's roll.  
Time is runnin' out. Let's roll.

In the first verse, Young artistically depicts Todd Beamer's phone call and subsequent preparing of his fellow passengers for an attack on their hijackers. Young continues his depiction of the events that transpired on Flight 93 in his second verse.

No time for indecision, we've got to make a move.

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<sup>29</sup> Peter Perl, "Hallowed Ground," *The Washington Post*, May 12, 2002.



I hope that we're forgiven, for what we got to.  
 How this all got started, I'll never understand,  
 I hope someone can fly this thing, and get us back to land.

Time is runnin' out. Let's roll.  
 Time is runnin' out. Let's roll.

The second line creatively summarizes what was recorded as the passengers reciting “The Lord’s Prayer” and the twenty-third Psalm prior to their attempted siege.

The bridge section, unlike the previous verses, is marked by a register change in Young’s voice and the use of a new chord progression. Where the first two verses are sung in a low range, similar to that of a spoken voice, the bridge is sung one octave higher and supported with more powerful playing from the band.

No one has the answer, but one thing is true.  
 You've got to turn on evil when it's coming after you.  
 You've gotta face it down, and when it tries to hide,  
 You've gotta go in after it and never be denied.

Time is runnin' out, let's roll.

The change in musical character at this point coincides with the change in the singer’s point of view; this bridge section marks a moment of commentary from Young, and not a retelling of the story of Flight 93. The message of this commentary preaches a relentless pursuit of the riddance of evil, particularly when one stands in evil’s path. The more communal final verse transfers the boldness of Beamer and his fellow passengers to a collective “we.”

Let's roll for freedom. Let's roll for love.  
 We're going after Satan on the wings of a dove.  
 Let's roll for justice. Let's roll for truth,  
 Let's not let our children grow up fearful in their youth.

Time is runnin' out, let's roll.  
 Time is runnin' out, let's roll.  
 Time is runnin' out, let's roll.

The bridge, together with the final verse, exits the storyteller mode, and enters the territory of social commentary. The call for the collective “us” to “roll” for ideals of freedom, or liberty, and justice—values easily associated with America’s Pledge of Allegiance—evokes a nationalistic tone. The bridge’s metaphorical reference, in which evil comes after you and then hides, can easily be related to Osama Bin Laden, the spearhead of the 9/11 attacks, as he fled his walled Afghan compound in December 2001 to retreat into oblivion, before finally surfacing in 2004 to claim responsibility for the attacks. Though Young’s meaning is not specifically clear in the bridge and final verse, it is easy to see how his audience interpreted these sections as referring specifically to an American military response. Although in late April 2006, Young recorded *Living with War*, a blunt protest album consisting of songs such as the unfaltering "Let's Impeach the President," the nation has adopted the catch phrase, “Let’s Roll” as a military battle cry.

### **Wu-Tang Clan, "Rules"**

The Wu-Tang Clan, a Staten Island based hip-hop group, emerged in the mid 1990s to become a revolutionary hip-hop phenomenon. What set them apart from other rappers was their unusually large team of rap artists and their distinct musical style. An assembly of nine MCs, each with an individual rapping style, the Clan has produced numerous group projects, as well as copious individual side projects—making them one of the most lucrative hip-hop teams in the business. All nine members work under a number of pseudonyms, but they are best known as RZA, GZA/Genius, Ol' Dirty Bastard, Method Man, Raekwon, Ghostface, Masta Killa, Inspectah Deck, U-God and Masta Killa. The group’s name originates from a mighty and mythical martial arts sword wielded by an unconquerable army of warriors. The name insinuates aggression and

violence—themes that permeate the group’s recognizable musical style. The Clan’s style can be characterized as a dark and layered soundscape comprised of thick and straight beats, eerie piano riffs, and minimal electronic samples. Over these ethereal backing tracks, the MCs’ rapping includes portrayals of vicious violence, martial arts references and a twisted humor.

Wu-Tang Clan’s September 11<sup>th</sup> response, “Rules,” appears on their 2001 album, “Iron Flag.” The song exhibits a characteristically violent and aggressive verbal assault on America’s 9/11 attackers. “Rules,” like many call-to-arms songs, recalls the sorrow and grief experienced by Americans in the wake of the tragedy through its introduction. This grievous reminder, typically created through touching and tragic reminiscing, is often drawn upon as subsequent justification for military retaliation. Yet, in Clan’s aggressive and insensitive treatment of mourning, they refuse to entertain any such notion of grief, and essentially call for Americans to buck up.

All you hoes be cryin’ for these bitches.  
All you niggaz be cryin’ for these hoes.

Following this assertive introduction, Ghostface, named Dennis Coles, presents the opening verse.

Who the fuck knocked our buildings down?  
Who the man behind the World Trade massacres, step up now!  
Where the four planes at huh? Is you insane bitch?  
Fly that shit over my hood and get blown to bits!  
No disrespect, that's where I rest my head.  
I understand you gotta rest yours true, nigga my people's dead.  
America, together we stand, divided we fall.  
Mr. Bush sit down, I'm in charge of the war!

Coles’s response illustrates a realistic and outraged disbelief, and demands that the 9/11 attackers take ownership for their cowardly acts. He threatens that were this to happen in

his neighborhood, he would have shot the planes down himself. Although unrealistic, the display of pure bravado demonstrates an emboldening stance with which the audience can identify. The beckoning of Americans to unite, followed by Coles's declaring himself in charge of a military response, further demonstrates a call-to-arms, to be lead by Ghostface, himself. The chorus of the song, lead by Method Man, is an unwavering and unifying anthem, in which the entire Clan serves to stand up for their nation.

Y'all know the rules, we don't fuck with fools man.  
How the fuck did we get so cool man?  
Never, ever disrespect my crew.  
If ya fuck with Wu, we gots ta fuck wit you.

While realistically, the Clan's bullying poses no actual threat to the Taliban, the metaphorical demonstration of the Clan's boldness to stand in the face of its enemies forms a unifying and strengthening battle cry for its vengeful audience.

The ferocious and defensive stance demonstrated by the Wu-Tang Clan is typical of American war music, particularly Carson Robison's 1941 war songs. In the Wu-Tang Clan's "Rules," the enemy is slandered and dehumanized, as it is referred to as a female dog. As is the case in many American war-related songs, Carson Robison's popular novelty songs utilized the same dehumanizing practice. In Robison's songs, the Japanese are depicted as rats, skunks and other irritating animals to be "murdered," "skinned," and have their hides nailed to the wall. Robison's 1941 song, "Get Your Gun and Come Along (We're Fixin' to Kill a Skunk)" exhibits many of the same qualities evident in the Wu-Tang Clan's "Rules." Robison's spoken word delivery of the verses, rather than a sung melody, resembles that of the Clan's rap style. He defends his "home" by threatening to take up his gun and kill the enemy, just as the Clan threatens to defend

their neighborhood by shooting down the planes. His aggressive and attacking tone are clearly illustrated in his lyrics.

Old Uncle Sam come down the road, tall and straight and slim.  
 He had a shotgun in his hand and his face was hard and grim.  
 His heels was kickin up the dust with every step he took,  
 And when I asked him what was wrong his whiskers fairly shook.  
 I ain't got time to talk says he, I'm in a powerful stew.  
 So get your gun and come along, we've got a job to do.  
 A varmint's hangin 'round my house, sneaky dirty feller,  
 And the stripes that's runnin' down his back ain't white,  
 in fact they's yellor.

So get your gun and come along we're fixin' to kill a skunk.  
 We've done it before and we'll do it again and neighbor that's no bunk.  
 Everyone in the USA is sick of the little punk.  
 So get your gun and come along we're fixin' to kill a skunk.

This varmint's had his way too long spreadin' his awful smell.  
 And messin' up a lotta homes where decent people dwell.  
 But now he's gone a little too far, struttin' and prancin' about.  
 'Cause when he gets in my neighborhood brother he better look out.

I like my home the way it is and I like it more every day.  
 And as long as I'm able to pack this gun, I'm gonna keep it that way.  
 But I know how to deal with him, I've handled his kind before.  
 It won't be fun, but the job'll be done and I'll nail his hide to the door...<sup>30</sup>

The close resemblance between patriotic songs written in response to Pearl Harbor and 9/11 patriotic responses demonstrates a continued use of specific textual materials in writing war music of righteous anger. The fact that these practices are repeated in responsive works separated by over six decades illustrates that patriotic music makes use of certain textual elements in order to be effective; i.e., nationalistic imagery, reference to national tragedy, condemnation of the enemy, call for military response.

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<sup>30</sup> The Authentic History Center: Primary Sources from American Popular Culture, "American Attitudes Toward The Japanese Part 2: Pearl Harbor In Music," <http://www.authentichistory.com/ww2/music/PHattitudes.html> (accessed March 2, 2009).

When situated in a popular music context, these elements coalesce to augment the effectiveness of a patriotic song. Country music and hip-hop styles are representative of popular music's predisposition for dealing with patriotic and militant themes more effectively than classical music. The freedom of country and hip-hop artists to speak their mind through controversial and sometimes-explicit lyrics enables them to produce a rousing and militant music. The lack of classical post-9/11 militant musical responses, and the abundance of popular ones help to support this notion.

## CHAPTER 4: VOICES OF DISSENT—POLITICAL SONGS

Although the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup> brought forth musical outpourings from a diverse range of artists and composers, responses that achieved popularity and financial success were predominantly of a homogeneous and patriotic character. Works that communicated a supportive and healing message, songs that applauded military retaliation and also commemorative works that paid tribute to victims were more prevalent and accepted in the wake of the tragedy than music protesting America's response to the attacks. Yet in the aftermath of 9/11, some artists wrote and recorded political songs that expressed overt opinions of dissent and a specific opposition to military response. The majority of these political responses came from hip-hop and spoken-word artists considered to be more artistic than popular, as the primary content of popular rap albums focused on partying, not politicizing. These modern day political songs exhibit a compositional design reminiscent of a historical approach to writing political songs; a method established during the 1903s-40s folk music revival.

A youthful belief that the older generation had incurably made a mess of the world personified the 1930s and 40s folk music revival. Revival leaders, such as Pete Seeger and Alan Lomax, encouraged college students and intellectuals to contribute to a unifying populist folksong. Folksingers and folksong arrangers revived old styles yet also composed new songs with individual or political content. Political songwriter Woody Guthrie argued that all people have a right and responsibility to expose dehumanization and injustice whenever it is encountered. He stressed that singing against oppression is as natural as talking. As a result, many of the early political songs challenged politicians and factory owners through the form of a "talking" or "yelling"

song.<sup>31</sup> The 1930s and 40s marked a peaked interest in American folksong and hymnody, as well as the establishing of an American idiom in Western art music. Vietnam anti-war songs, which exhibit a striking resemblance to post-9/11 political songs, carry on the protest song design.

R. Serge Denisoff, *Sing A Song of Social Significance*, explores the historical design of political music, as established during the 1903s-40s Folk Music Revival, and describes protest songs as such:

Protest songs basically stress the lyric or intellectual aspect of a song by attempting to convince the listener that something is wrong and in need of alteration. A good musical structure can either be beneficial to the message or it can be distracting. An effective protest song ideally should be both lyrically and musically convincing.<sup>32</sup>

While Denisoff's description is accurate and helpful, it lacks a discussion of the "musical structure" of a protest song. A discussion of the musical materials explains how protest songs can be "musically convincing." The "talking" or "yelling" protest song established by Woody Guthrie emphasizes the narrator's voice and de-emphasizes musical accompaniment. The secondary musical accompaniment, mainly comprised of simple chords played on the acoustic guitar, can enliven the spoken or sung words of the performer. For instance, minor tonalities often support dissenting themes, while recurring major chords can enhance uplifting or uprising themes. Heavily rhythmic or rather sedated strumming patterns can greatly alter the mood and energy of the song. The formal design of a protest song can also contribute to a song's being musically convincing. The use of a sing-along chorus, comprising of a recognizable and recurring

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<sup>31</sup> Wayne Hampton, *Guerrilla Minstrels: John Lennon, Joe Hill, Woody Guthrie, and Bob Dylan* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986).

<sup>32</sup> R. Serge. Denisoff, *Sing a Song of Social Significance*, 2nd ed., (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1983).



melody, produces a unifying function by means of listener participation. The songwriter often uses a bridge, or transition section, to solidify his or her stance, or to present new insight. Unique to protest music is the understanding that an overly elaborate musical structure that takes precedence over the important lyrics makes an ineffective protest song. Likewise, a non-supporting musical structure can lead to intellectual rambling or an ineffective political message. The effective protest song uses musical materials in a meaningful manner, to strengthen and clarify its message.

The early protest song bears a close resemblance to post-9/11 hip-hop political songs, wherein the “rhymes,” or spoken lyrics, performed by the rapper are of utmost importance. The modern day hip-hop protest song also uses its musical materials in a supporting and elucidatory manner. Modern developments like the electronic drumbeat and electronic sampling methods clarify the message of the lyrics and also play a defining role in distinguishing rap artists from one another. For instance, a deep and straight drumbeat combined with distorted sampling effects and/or syncopated scratching can demonstrate a more angry and defiant tone. Whereas, a light and syncopated drumbeat that uses clearer sampling and scratching effects can help to produce a reflective and less aggressive point of view. One can easily argue that in hip-hop, production techniques, specifically the beat defines the rapper. The modern concept of sampling, or quoting previously recorded material, has the capacity to impart new, and often-complex meanings to a song. Quoting a musical excerpt, spoken voice, or sound effect from another context can supply another layer of musical materials that bolsters the performer’s message. Similar to the early protest song, overly produced hip-hop political songs, as well as ones lacking in production can result in an ineffective message.

By employing Denisoff's description of protest songs, we can define an effective political song as defined as one that presents a distinct objection and convinces its audience of the prescribed solution. The effective political song focuses on the textual element and makes meaningful use of musical materials to support the text-focused argument. Musical materials do not outshine the lyrics in an effective political song; rather, they support and often accentuate the message. A political song that is both textually and musically convincing is considered effective. This chapter discusses the effectiveness of 9/11 political songs and their continuance of a historical approach through an examination of 9/11 political responses, a comparison to protest songs of the Vietnam anti-war movement and an application of the effective political song's definition.

### **Saul Williams, "September 12<sup>th</sup>"**

Influential poet, spoken word artist and MC, Saul Williams, released the 9/11 responsorial album, "Not in My Name" in May 2003. The protest album consists of anti-war reactions inspired by the events that followed September 11<sup>th</sup>. Discussing the lack of 9/11 politically conscious artistic responses and his motivation for recording the album, Williams states in an interview with Michael Slate,

We're in that moment where if we don't speak up now in the same way that just occurred in England [referring to major anti-war demonstrations in England]—if the American people do not find a way to say in mass "We are against this! We are against this!"—then these further atrocities are about to occur in our names... At any time, whether it be a soldier or a civilian from another country that is killed by something that comes from this country, it happens in our name. They don't say the name of the soldier that killed the other soldier. They say an American soldier, someone fighting for America. Well, what are we fighting for? What am I fighting for? Because what I'm fighting for doesn't seem to be the same thing that the regime that's in power seems to be fighting for. That needs

to be said. And if other people feel the same way they need to say it, otherwise no one is going to know it.<sup>33</sup>

“What are we fighting for” became the founding question of Williams’s political song. He wrote “September 12<sup>th</sup>” to stand against the American war on terror after realizing that he fought for freedom of speech and equality, whereas the Bush regime fought a war of violence. Williams’s defiant stance resonates with what lies at the core of protest music, that something is wrong and in need of changing. In “September 12<sup>th</sup>,” Williams’s contention is with the U.S. government’s quickly prescribed military response; his anthem represents the otherwise quieted voice of dissent that cries, “No, not in my name.”

The music of Saul Williams consists of an unusual combination of spoken word and hip-hop styles. His rock-rap poems, similar in style to *Rage Against the Machine*, exhibit a defiant and morally concentric preaching. Against the backdrop of a minor synth pad and thick electronic beat, Williams condemns the patriotic call to war in the first verse of “September 12<sup>th</sup>.”

Two autumns and I haven't changed enough.  
 It's September 12th and the sky is falling, the sun is risen.  
 A city built to phallic dimensions has undergone circumcision,  
 eight days under Judaic law.  
 Dear diary, I'm fiery. Divine winds, my friend,  
 took me back to the beginning  
 when I swore it was the end.  
 From the fiery depths found the ocean within,  
 my penmanship sails the strait through my lips.  
 I'm hip to your games, hip to the science of war;  
 propaganda make me fight but what am I fighting for?  
 My way of life, beans and rice, give or take less or more  
 see through the eyes of the poor, plus I'm black to the core.  
 Ignorance is on tour booking stadiums and more,

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<sup>33</sup> Michael Slate, “Saul Williams: Poet in Amazing Times,” <http://rwor.org> (accessed March 2, 2009).

the days of Hitler painted pictures patriotic with gore.  
 You raise your flags on the land snatching bald eagles' claw  
 and stamp the symbol on your currency to finance your war.

He recalls the nationalistic imagery that was so effective, in the weeks after 9/11, in the enlistment of national military support. The chorus, which forms the anthem and title for the entire album, takes a firm stance against the war.

I'm saying, no—not in my name, not in my life,  
 not by my hands, that ain't my fight—not in my name.  
 You wage a war against terrorists and violence  
 and try to wave your guns and fear us all into silence.

I'm saying, no—not in my name, not in my life,  
 not by my hands, that ain't my fight—not in my name.

You built your empire with natives and slaves  
 like the truth won't resurrect waging war from its grave.

One essential element in the construction of protest songs is the establishing of unity. Williams's creation and promotion of solidarity is a gradual process; his timely use of specific textual and musical materials promotes this gradual development.

Williams sings the first verse alone and makes personal observations of discontent. The first chorus, though, includes the voices of children, who shout along with Williams, "No—not in my name, not in my life." The remainder of the chorus is then yelled downward by another voice from the distance, "You wage a war against terrorists and violence / and try to wave your guns and fear us all into silence." The third verse is a communal outcry against war, as the collective "we" is used and numerous voices deliver an opposing declaration.

We got brothers on the sideline, ready for the frontline.  
 Tell me when it's my time, won't you tell me?  
 We got women on the sidelines ready for the frontline.  
 Tell me when it's my time, won't you tell me?  
 You won't put it in your headline; people, are we that blind?

Do we need a headline? Do we really?  
 If we only see what they want us to see,  
 we'll only be what they want us to be: fighting in their army!

We pledge resistance.  
 We pledge to defend civil liberties against social and political repression.  
 We pledge alliance with those who have come under attack  
 for voicing opposition to the war.  
 We pledge to make common cause with the people of the world  
 to bring about justice, freedom and peace.  
 Another world is possible and we pledge to make it real.

Williams points out his problem or discontent with society most clearly in the final verse. He argues that war is a continual cycle of bloodshed and hatred, and that America's seeking justice through war will only repeat the spiral of hate-filled violence.

It's not about opposing armies;  
 armies oppose the ancient truths of the shamans and swamis.  
 It's not about retaliation;  
 your history of war does nothing more than scar imagination,  
 increase security, religious purity.  
 Your blindfolded justice makes you trust in fortuity like it's random.  
 It's tandom: fuck you and damn them.  
 You teach to attack and then question who planned them.

Saul Williams's political response is extremely effective due to its supporting musical structure and its convincing text-focused message. His initial question, "what are we fighting for" echoes the dissenting voices of wars past, specifically Vietnam, and drives the theme of many similar 9/11 political songs.

"And it's one, two, three, what are we fighting for?" That was the question asked by Country Joe McDonald in his 1969 Vietnam anti-war song, "Feel Like I'm Fixing to Die." The folksong strikes a resemblance to Saul Williams's "September 12<sup>th</sup>" as it is based on the same fundamental anti-war question. Country Joe's anti-war song, however, is a satire on the tragedies of war and on the willing enlistment of Americans

caught up in nationalistic retribution. He makes fun of patriotic imagery, like Uncle Sam, pokes fun at the government for getting themselves into trouble.

Come on all of you big strong men,  
 Uncle Sam needs your help again.  
 He's got himself in a terrible jam  
 Way down yonder in Vietnam.  
 So put down your books and pick up a gun,  
 We're gonna have a whole lotta fun.

*And it's one, two, three, what are we fighting for?  
 Don't ask me I don't give a damn, next stop is Vietnam.  
 And it's five, six, seven, open up the pearly gates.  
 Ain't no time to wonder why, whoopee we're all gonna die.*

Come on Wall Street don't be slow,  
 Why man this war is a go-go.  
 There's plenty good money to be made  
 By supplying the army with the tools of its trade.  
 Let's hope and pray that if they drop the bomb,  
 They drop it on the Viet Cong.

Come on generals, let's move fast,  
 Your big chance has come at last.  
 Now you can go out and get those reds  
 'Cause the only good commie is the one that's dead.  
 And you know that peace can only be won  
 When we've blown 'em all to kingdom come.

Come on mothers throughout the land  
 Pack your boys off to Vietnam.  
 Come on fathers don't hesitate,  
 Send your sons off before it's too late.  
 And you can be the first ones on your block  
 To have your boy come home in a box.

The lively strumming and major guitar chords make it an ironically fun and lively song.

While a satirical response, "Feel Like I'm Fixing to Die" is a profound commentary on the sorrows and brutalities of war.

## Nas, “Rule”

In December 2001, soon after the attacks, hip-hop artist, Nas released one of the earliest political reactions in music. Appearing on his album *Stillmatic*—the 2002 “Billboard 200” #5 album—“Rule” is an intelligent and clever response that remixes the 1985 Tears for Fears song, “Everybody Wants to Rule the World.” “Rule” draws upon the inherent meaning in “Everybody Wants to Rule the World”—humanity’s desire for power and the miserable results of warfare—to voice his own social commentary that the world should unite for peace rather than war. In his unique musical style, Nas utilizes a realistic and poetic storytelling to deliver his anti-war message.

Much like Saul Williams’s “September 12<sup>th</sup>,” before stressing his anti-war message, Nas begins “Rule” with a personal story of his challenged upbringing and his observations of humanity:

Yo, I come from the housing tenement buildings,  
 Unlimited killings, menaces marked for death,  
 Better known as the projects where junkies and rock heads dwell  
 Though I owe to it my success.  
 With survival of the fittest, everyday is a chal';  
 I would think I'm a part of U.S.A. and be proud.  
 Confronted with racism, started to feel foreign-  
 Like, the darker you are the realer your problems.  
 I reached for the stars but I just kept slippin';  
 On this life mission, never know what's next.  
 Ancient kings from Egypt, up to Julius Caesar  
 Had a piece of the globe, every continent.  
 Yo, there's Asia, Africa, Europe, France, Japan  
 Pakistan, America, Afghanistan.  
 Yo, there's Protestants, Jews, Blacks, Arabics  
 Call a truce, world peace, stop actin' like savages.  
 No war, we should take time and think  
 The bombs and tanks makes mankind extinct.  
 But since the beginning of time it's been men with arms fightin'  
 Lost lives in the Towers and Pentagon.  
 Why then must it go on? We must stop the killin'.  
 Tell me why we die, we all God's children.

In the last lines of the verse he questions whether the eternal cycle of death and violence must continue; he essentially asks, “What are we fighting for?” His remedy for the problems of society is presented in the chorus,

All this hate can't last forever, (uh, c'mon)  
 It's time that we stand together. (yeah, for the world)  
 Everybody wants to rule the world. (what, what, what, what, what, c'mon)  
 World (peace), world (peace), world (peace), world.

While Nas uses mostly new text in the chorus, the melody of the chorus, as well as the entire phrase “everybody wants to rule the world” are exact quotes from the 1985 hit. The chorus is sung by a female voice and Nas comments at the end of each line, as (indicated by parentheses). Through his commenting and not singing the chorus, Nas separates himself from the power hungry world; he counters by suggesting unification for world peace. By including a female supporting vocalist at the chorus, the call for world peace is metaphorically extended to all men and women. Also, by quoting a sixteen-year-old song—whose meaning transcends time—Nas seeks to establish his call for world peace as a timeless message.

The second verse further demonstrates Nas’s problems with society, as he discusses America’s greed. He argues that the nation’s need for war is due to its insatiable appetite for goods and resources.

... 'Cause, everybody wants a shot, in this land of opportunity.  
 Look at what this country's got.  
 There shouldn't be nobody homeless.  
 How can the president fix other problems when he ain't fixed home yet.  
 The earth wasn't made for one man to rule alone,  
 To all colors increases, to home it belongs.  
 I want land, mansions, banks and gold,  
 The diamonds in Africa, oil in my control,  
 The world's natural resources, all its residuals...



After one more verse, he then rearticulates his solution to the problem, a call for world peace, by repeating the chorus. In the final section of the song, Nas presents a spoken stanza accompanied by faint military trumpet and snare drum. Based on the musical background and the textual content, his commentary is reminiscent of a eulogy.

Yo, niggas ain't forget shit, know what I'm sayin?  
 Niggas ain't forget nothin'.  
 Men, women and children killed by the police and shit,  
 Niggas ain't gon' forget that, you know what I mean?  
 Yo, what this war just show me is like, whatever you want out of life,  
 Whatever you feel is rightfully yours, go out and take it.  
 Even if that means blood and death.  
 You know, that's what I was raised up on, that's what this country's about.  
 This is what my country is, and my country's a muthafucka.

In this afterthought, it seems that Nas has abandoned his hope for peace, and he has come to the conclusion that his country—the nation he has pleaded with—will continue to pursue its own interests. Just as the bleak message of “Everybody Wants to Rule the World” has continued to hold true as history repeats itself, Nas’s cry for world peace seems fruitless, even to him.

The futile and cyclical nature of war, as expressed in Nas’s “Rule,” has endured as a common theme among anti-war songs, and is the over-arching theme in Phil Ochs’s 1965, “I Ain’t Marching Anymore.” The Vietnam anti-war song depicts the metaphorical soldier who has fought historical wars such as the battle of New Orleans, the battle of Little Big Horn, the Mexican Revolution, World Wars I and II. In his fighting experience, the soldier looks back upon the devastation of war, and questions whether or not war was worthwhile. He resolves that he will not march any more.

Oh I marched to the battle of New Orleans  
 At the end of the early British war.  
 The young land started growing,

The young blood started flowing,  
But I ain't marching anymore.

For I've killed my share of Indians  
In a thousand different fights.  
I was there at the Little Big Horn.  
I heard many men lying, I saw many more dying,  
But I ain't marching anymore.

*It's always the old to lead us to the war,  
It's always the young to fall.  
Now look at all we've won with the saber and the gun,  
Tell me is it worth it all?*

For I stole California from the Mexican land,  
Fought in the bloody Civil War.  
Yes, I even killed my brothers  
And so many others, but I ain't marching anymore.

For I marched to the battles of the German trench  
In a war that was bound to end all wars.  
Oh I must have killed a million men  
And now they want me back again,  
But I ain't marching anymore.

For I flew the final mission in the Japanese sky,  
Set off the mighty mushroom roar.  
When I saw the cities burning I knew that I was learning  
That I ain't marching anymore.

Now the labor leader's screaming when they close the missile plants,  
United Fruit screams at the Cuban shore,  
Call it Peace or call it Treason,  
Call it Love or call it Reason,  
But I ain't marching any more, No I ain't marching any more.

As each verse makes reference to a different historical war, and he dwells on the destruction caused by each battle, Ochs illustrates the endless futility of war. He argues that generation upon generation has sought violence to solve its problems, only to become part of a destructive and never-ending cycle. Ochs uses basic acoustic guitar chords and rhythmic strumming to accompany his protest song. Ochs intensifies the

strength of his strumming during the final line of each verse, as if to bolster the weight and importance of his statement: “But I ain’t marchin’ anymore.” The simplicity of the musical structure, the enhancing musical materials and the memorable sing-along chorus help to establish “I Ain’t Marching Anymore” as an effective example of early protest music and a model for current post-9/11 political responses.

### **Mr. Lif, “Home of the Brave”**

Boston rapper Mr. Lif, born Jeffrey Haynes, released the album *Emergency Rations* in June 2002. The concept album tells a fictitious story where government agents have kidnapped the rapper during a live concert. The album’s faultfinding political songs illustrate the grounds for Mr. Lif’s fictitious kidnapping, as they directly attack issues of civil rights, censorship and U.S. foreign policy. “Home of the Brave” represents Haynes’s uncompromising assault on U.S. foreign policy. He opens the song with an unaccompanied reading from John F. Kennedy’s *The Meaning of Courage*:

Whenever we stand against the flow of opinion on strongly contested issues, a man does what he must. Despite his personal consequences, despite of obstacles, dangers and pressures, that is the basis of all human morality.

The introductory quotation establishes an emphasis on self-expression, specifically a defiant position. By quoting John F. Kennedy, a nationally revered and significant figurehead, Haynes recognizes bold self-expression as the song’s primary tenet, and implies that a sense of nobility and validation are inherent in his upcoming commentary.

His first verse is delivered from his pretended position in jail, where he is being punished for his confrontational songs. In the lyrics of the verse, he finds fault with the government and police by focusing on subjects of racial discrimination and greed. He

describes his personal struggles of living with societal inequality. Haynes tells in his story that the power of self-expression and his strong mind, reinforced by reading, are what enables him to break out of prison. He suggests that a solution is necessary to remedy these social injustices, but does not specifically propose one at this point in the song. Yet, his primary stress on self-expression and opposition of the status quo, as demonstrated in the introduction and first verse, suggests his overarching message and likely solution. The lyrics of the first verse state:

Now let's talk about self-expression, true expression.  
 Open your minds without question.  
 No doubt, tell me what you're thinking about.  
 Let's try to set aside pride and clout.  
 Can you believe I feel the same exact way you do?  
 You truly do believe these modern ways have fooled you.  
 Systems exist so we never meet each other.  
 Pretty soon from now that I'll long the word "brother."

And that's true if they see you walking with a crew.  
 If you don't know, that means more than two.  
 I'll tell you what they'll do.  
 They'll pull over, hunt you over,  
 Kick your ass, nightstick to your shoulder.

I know it's unjust, as if it wasn't enough.  
 If you try to fight back they're locking your ass up.  
 And Chuck already told you that a cell is hell,  
 But I'm waiting for the phone so I'll sit for a spell.  
 Call the guard, tell him I'm a piece of God  
 With no beliefs in his streets or his boulevards.  
 I eat, read so my mental is hard  
 And the heat from my anger just melted the bars.

They reach for their guns so I put them to sleep  
 Break the chains and put the shoes back on my feet  
 He's on the loose with no discernible scars or marks,  
 Just the mind of Mandela and the heart of Rosa Parks.

So I dip, time to see the governor and mayor,  
 Tell them life ain't fair and see if they care.  
 Well they do, but only if they are the heir.

So they appear to have a heart and make a flair,  
 But they haven't done shit for us and that's a fact.  
 Their only function is to keep the funny money where it's at.  
 And it causes pain, stress,  
 Ask me if we need a different way of life (yes).

His discontents are more specific in the second verse, where he is critical of the Bush administration and the decision to go to war, as well as the media who only reinforce the imagery and language of America's fight against terror. He interprets Bush's call for military action, and the "war on terror" as a conspiracy theory. In this theory, the former president is depicted as a bloodthirsty power monger who manipulates the American public in order to assure a second presidential term and to control the world's natural resources. Haynes considers the media as another component of Bush's ploy to manipulate Americans. In an attempt to fight any such influence, he condemns the American flag, and refuses to be caught up in post-9/11 patriotism. The lyrics of the second verse state:

Headline: Bush steals the presidency.  
 He needs the backing of the media; what could the remedy be?  
 The country's headed for recession reminiscent of the Great Depression.  
 Are lives worth a world of power? Easy question.  
 Planes hit the towers and the Pentagon,  
 Killing those the government wasn't dependent on.  
 It's easy to control the scared so they keep us in fear  
 With their favorite Middle Eastern demon named Bin Laden this year.

Bush disguises blood lust as patriotism  
 Convincing the living to love "Operation Let's Get 'Em."  
 But when he realized we don't support their attacks,  
 They needed something to distract, hmm, anthrax.  
 This further demonizes Afghans,  
 So Americans cheer while we kill their innocent families.  
 And what better place to start a war,  
 To build a pipeline, to get the oil that they had wanted before?  
 America supported the Taliban  
 To get Russia out of Afghanistan.  
 That's how they got the arms in.

They're in a war against the Northern Alliance  
And we can't build a pipeline in hostile environments.

Here's what your history books won't show:  
You're a dead man for fucking with American dough.  
They killed several birds with one stone,  
While you're at home with anti-terrorism up in your dome.

But my eyes are wide open and my TV is off.  
Great, 'cause I save on my electricity cost.  
And you can wave that piece of shit flag if you dare,  
But they killed us because we've been killing them for years.

The music used in “Home of the Brave” is minimal and does not actively support the lyrics. The musical materials include a Latin-inspired, syncopated beat and an eight-note keyboard riff, which outlines a minor triad. While the minor riff supports a dissenting negative message, the song lacks the use of other supporting instruments/voices and musical elements—chord structure, melody and variety of form. The form of “Home of the Brave” consists of only two verses in which Mr. Lif, caught up in his fictional story, rambles. Mr. Lif uses no chorus or other sections. In other political songs, a chorus serves as a unifying anthem, and a bridge can allow the author to solidify his or her dissenting message. “Home of the Brave,” however possesses a plain and deficient form which results in a directionless and vague textual message. The lack of musical materials in combination with unconvincing lyrics results in an ineffective political message.

### **Ani DiFranco, “Self-Evident”**

Poet and singer/songwriter Ani DiFranco released the album *So Much Shouting, So Much Laughter* on September 10, 2002, the day before the one-year anniversary of 9/11. The songs on the album deal with issues like rape, abortion, sexism and politics.

"Self Evident" is a protest poem/song that recalls the shock and tragedy of the attacks and disputes the consequent American retributive military response. DiFranco finds fault with former president Bush, the American government and the media. Similar to Mr. Lif in "Home of the Brave," she portrays Bush and the American government as manipulators whose aim is to control the world's natural resources and secure an international American stronghold through the means of war. She views the media as part of a greater plan to propagate feelings of nationalistic retribution among Americans. DiFranco presents her dissenting opinion in "Self-Evident" through an ever-evolving web of dramatic speech and song. A musical hybrid of Laurie Anderson and Suzanne Vega, DiFranco's theatrical music expresses an empowering and angry message alleviated by an honest confessionism.

DiFranco begins her narrative by recalling the shock and confusion of the tragic day. Though sincere, she portrays a cynical tone in her remembrance. She suggests America deserved its attack, because of its long display of arrogance. She describes the flood of people and cars trying to avoid the destruction of the towers as closer to war than the actual "war on terror." While she respects the lost, she takes a shot at American foreign policy in the first verse:

Once upon a time, we were moonshine  
 Rushing down the throat of a giraffe.  
 Yes, rushing down the long hallway  
 Despite what the p.a. announcement says.  
 Yes, rushing down the long stairs with the whiskey of eternity,  
 Fermented and distilled to eighteen minutes,  
 Burning down our throats, down the hall  
 Down the stairs, in a building so tall that it will always be there.  
 Yes, it's part of a pair, there on the bow of noah's ark.  
 The most prestigious couple just kickin' back parked.  
 Against a perfectly blue sky, on a morning beatific  
 In its Indian summer breeze, on the day that America fell to its knees.

After strutting around for a century without saying thank you or please.

And the shock was subsonic,  
 And the smoke was deafening between the setup and the punch line,  
 'Cause we were all on time for work that day.  
 We all boarded that plane for to fly,  
 And then while the fires were raging we all climbed up on the windowsill.  
 And then we all held hands and jumped into the sky,

And every borough looked up when it heard the first blast,  
 And then every dumb action movie was summarily surpassed.  
 And the exodus uptown by foot and motorcar  
 Looked more like war than anything I've seen so far.

By recalling the tragedies of 9/11, DiFranco evokes feelings of humility and revenge felt on the tragic day. In the next verse she reminds her audience how America got into war: through the Bush administration's connection between the 9/11 attacks, Al Qaeda and Iraq. Where patriotic music encapsulates and channels the vengeful frame of mind of the American people to support the Bush administration's justification for war, DiFranco disputes that popular line of thought. She seeks to improve America's image by proposing a riddance of American arrogance and greed in the second verse:

And we hold these truths to be self-evident.  
 Number one: George W. Bush is not president.  
 Number two: America is not a true democracy.  
 Number three: The media is not fooling me...  
 Give back the night its distant whistle,  
 Give the darkness back its soul.  
 Give the big oil companies the finger finally  
 And relearn how to rock-n-roll.  
 Yes, the lessons are all around us, and a change is waiting there,  
 So it's time to pick through the rubble, clean the streets, and clear the air.  
 Get our government to pull its big dick out of the sand  
 Of someone else's desert, put it back in its pants  
 And quit the hypocritical chants of freedom forever...  
 Three thousand some poems disguised as people,  
 On an almost too perfect day,  
 Should be more than pawns in some asshole's passion play.  
 So now it's your job and it's my job  
 To make it that way, to make sure they didn't die in vain.



DiFranco's empowering message urges her audience to be agents of change, to stand against Operation Iraqi Freedom and to "clean the air" of American arrogance and greed.

The musical materials play a minor, yet supporting role in this poem/song; the primary emphasis is on the dramatic speaking and sometimes singing of DiFranco. Ambient electric guitar tones, in a minor key, most often serve as the song's backdrop. Drums and bass enter at crucial times, such as the moment where DiFranco states her three truths. In this instance, the power and depth of the drums and bass create a sense of gravity and boldness, which enhance the important moment of poignant lyrics. The continuous form of the song, combined with the lack of chorus and recognizable melody, results in an intellectual rambling. The lack of a communally participatory music, such as a returning sing-along chorus or other unifying techniques—elements required to properly support a political song's message—produces an interesting, yet verbose and ineffective protest song.

Upon examining the textual and musical materials of post 9/11 political songs and aligning them to historical models written in similar circumstances, it is apparent that specific compositional techniques can be followed to produce effective modern political responses. An effective protest song raises a clear, dissenting objection and seeks to convince its audience of the song's prescribed remedy. To achieve both clarity of its message and persuasiveness, an effective protest song focuses on the textual element, most often through spoken word and periodic song, and uses musical materials in a meaningful and supporting manner. Supporting musical materials are most often characterized by an overall subservient musical construction, in which elements such as chord structure, form, melody and production effects support and do not supersede the

lyrics. While modern production techniques have supplied new and vital advancements in delivering a political message, the overall method and practices utilized by post-9/11 political songs are consistent with the early protest song design.

## CHAPTER 5: MEMORIALIZING 9/11—COMMEMORATIVE WORKS

I feel this way about it. World trade means world peace, and consequently the World Trade Center buildings in New York ... had a bigger purpose than just to provide room for tenants. The World Trade Center is a living symbol of man's dedication to world peace ... Beyond the compelling need to make this a monument to world peace, the World Trade Center should, because of its importance, become a representation of man's belief in humanity, his need for individual dignity, his beliefs in the cooperation of men, and through cooperation, his ability to find greatness.<sup>34</sup>

Minoru Yamasaki, World Trade Center architect, 1970s

The World Trade Center catastrophes represented not just an assault on American lives, but also a strategic attack on key symbolic American monuments. Destroying the 110-story Manhattan landmark was an assault on America's dedication to world peace and international ideals of humanity, dignity and cooperation. The attempted destruction of the Pentagon represented a potential devastation of the seat of U.S. military power in Washington. The hijacking of American airliners and the crashing into American monuments was a demoralizing and humiliating attack on America's national identity.

As composers and songwriters attempted to memorialize, or commemorate September 11<sup>th</sup>, they sought to create a monument of their own that paid tribute to the lost and the living. These commemorative works are able to memorialize 9/11 through an evoking of specific emotions and feelings experienced on the day of the attacks. Similar to mourning music, recollections of devastating and shocking images also recreate the tragic event. Meaningful musical and textual elements such as the “shocking effect” and “languishing effect” help achieve these effects. Yet uniquely, the message of the commemorative work is not solely focused on bereavement, nor is it a militant war song. A commemorative work provides a message of hope for the living and/or honors the dead

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<sup>34</sup> Valerie Bodden, *The 9/11 Terror Attacks* (Mankato: Creative Education, 2007), 8.

to pay tribute to the victims of the attacks. It differs from mourning music through its immortalization of the significant catastrophic day in history. It primarily emphasizes the day of tragedy and not recovery, as is the case in mourning music. This concentration is noticeable as the text of 9/11 commemorative works focuses on the tragic day, or as songwriter Darryl Worley sings, “That September day.” Rather than dwelling on the aftermath of the attacks and recovery efforts, Worley’s commemorative work centers on the question, “Where were you when the world stopped turning?” To answer the question, he recreates various possible reactions to the shocking news of the attacks. Similarly, John Adams creates a picture of the day of devastation through the use of previously recorded New York City street sounds and the reading of the names of the dead. These elements help to establish a time-specific work, which Adams calls a “memory space.” The unique compositional characteristics of these two works establish specificity to September 11, 2001, unlike 9/11 mourning music. Their distinguishable design sets them apart as commemorative memorials.

### **John Adams, “On the Transmigration of Souls”**

On September 19, 2002, the New York Philharmonic, directed by Lorin Maazel, premiered John Adams’s “On the Transmigration of Souls” (2002). The multifaceted, large-scale single-movement work is written for orchestra, chorus, children's chorus and pre-recorded soundtrack. While *Transmigration* is an incredibly complex work, and a comprehensive analysis is beyond the scope of this study, some general observations can be made that illustrate its commemorative character. Prior to writing the piece, Adams visited the Ground Zero site, where he accompanied policemen who had been in the midst of the chaos on a guided tour of the destroyed buildings. Upon visiting the

devastated ruins of the World Trade Center, Adams witnessed a lingering mysteriousness and somberness in the area. This stirring experience moved him to make a work of art that would speak directly to people's emotions and that would help Americans cope with these suddenly overwhelming difficulties. Adams sought to encapsulate the mood and feelings experienced after the attacks by creating a timeless musical monument specific to the occasion of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

My desire in writing this piece is to achieve in musical terms the same sort of feeling one gets upon entering one of those old, majestic cathedrals in France or Italy. When you walk into the Chartres Cathedral, for example, you experience an immediate sense of something otherworldly. You feel you are in the presence of many souls, generations upon generations of them, and you sense their collected energy as if they were all congregated or clustered in that one spot.

And even though you might be with a group of people, or the cathedral itself filled with other churchgoers or tourists, you feel very much alone with your thoughts and you find them focused in a most extraordinary and spiritual way.<sup>35</sup>

Rather than using misleading words like “requiem” or “memorial” that suggest compositional designs not shared by his work, such as the Requiem Mass or lament, Adams calls the piece a “memory space.” “It’s a place where you can go and be alone with your thoughts and emotions. The link to a particular historical event—in this case to 9/11—is there if you want to contemplate it.”<sup>36</sup> He is able to create this link to the event through dense textures of evocative material specific to the tragedy. The piece superimposes previously recorded street sounds and the reading of victims' names by friends and family members, on live material performed by a children's chorus, an adult

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<sup>35</sup> Boosey and Hawkes, “Interview with John Adams about ‘On the Transmigration of Souls,’ ” <http://www.boosey.com/cr/music/On-the-Transmigration-of-Souls/26239> (accessed February 12, 2009).

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

chorus, and an orchestra. The text used in the work consists of the names of victims of the tragedy as well as phrases drawn from missing-persons signs that had been posted by the families of the victims in the area around Ground Zero. Expressions like “He was the apple of my father’s eye,” or “She looks so full of life in that picture” are characteristic of these missing-persons signs.

The work utilizes primarily slow and moderate tempos combined with a somber and eerie harmony. The dissonance is a direct result of Adams’s counterpoint, but also the consequence of an interesting compositional technique. *Transmigration* calls for a quarter-tone piano and quarter-tone violin ensemble; by tuning the instruments sharp, the pitches sound one-quarter tone higher than written. While the rest of the orchestra uses standard tuning, the effect of the quarter-tone instruments is a continual dissonance that permeates the work. The piece also includes moments of intense sound. These moments are characterized by sudden attacks by the brass and adult choir, with interspersed chromatic ones from the children’s choir. Similar to other commemorative works, the fast and bombastic sections evoke the chaos reminiscent of the World Trade Center attacks, and the slow, dissonant sections evoke the grievous shock and confusion. The many intertwining and dense textures result in a bewildering effect for listeners. The immense layers of sound envelop listeners and situate them in this created “memory space.” While other 9/11 commemorative works possess a metaphorical reference to the event, *Transmigration* is uniquely specific to the tragedy. Its utterance of the names of the dead and reading of missing-persons signs, supported by a meaningful and supporting musical construction, produces an effective musical monument of the catastrophe.

### **Alan Jackson, "Where Were You (When the World Stopped Turning)"**

Endearing country music singer/songwriter Alan Jackson began writing his September 11<sup>th</sup> tribute one month after the tragedy. In his attempt to articulate the whirlwind of emotions and thoughts he was experiencing, he determined that he wanted to write neither a patriotic nor a vengeful song. Rather, Jackson states, "I didn't want to forget about how I felt and how I knew other people felt that day."<sup>37</sup> Jackson sought to honor the lost and the living by writing an artistic 9/11 memorial devoid of any militant or political stance. His song immortalizes the tragic day through a recollection of unforgettable and painful images and an evocation of the myriad emotions experienced. Jackson first performed his 9/11 commemoration at the November 7, 2001 Country Music Association awards show. Upon widespread praise and demand, Jackson quickly released the song on his album, *Drive*, on January 15, 2002. By February 2, 2002, the album had already reached the number one position on "The Billboard 200" and soon after, *Drive* climbed the charts to reach the number one spot on the 2002 *Billboard* "Top Country Albums." "Where Were You (When The World Stopped Turning)" peaked at number one on the 2001 "Hot Country Singles & Tracks" and number twenty-eight on the 2002 "The Billboard Hot 100." Clearly, the song achieved enormous popularity from not only the country music community, but from popular music fans as well. The song's effective musical construction contributes to its identifiable commemorative form and to its overall success. An examination of its musical composition will demonstrate how the

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<sup>37</sup> Linda Owen, "Story Behind the Song: Alan Jackson's 'Where Were You (When the World Stopped Turning),' " *Christianitytoday.com*, January 1, 2003, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/tc/2003/janfeb/14.14.html> (accessed March 15, 2009).

textual and musical materials work together to create an effective commemorative response.

The song begins tenderly, as a string section gradually builds to the entrance of an arpeggiated acoustic guitar, the subtle swell of a mandolin and the soft playing of hand percussion. Upon this warm backdrop of light percussion and stringed instruments, which outline the opening major chord, Jackson gently sings,

Where were you when the world stopped turning on that September day?  
 Were you in the yard with your wife and children,  
 Or working on some stage in L.A.?  
 Did you stand there in shock at the site of that black smoke  
 Rising against that blue sky?  
 Did you shout out in anger in fear for your neighbor,  
 Or did you just sit down and cry?

Jackson recalls the painful imagery of the destroyed World Trade Center, and asks the listener to remember where they were on the tragic day. He extends the question to celebrities and to less famous people, and asks them to consider their initial reaction. He presents a series of possible reactions—shock, anger, grief, joy, pride, prayer and hope—that demonstrate a wide range of emotions.

Did you weep for the children who lost their dear loved ones,  
 And pray for the ones who don't know?  
 Did you rejoice for the people who walked from the rubble,  
 And sob for the ones left below?  
 Did you burst out with pride for the red white and blue,  
 And the heroes who died just doing what they do?  
 Did you look up to **heaven** for some kind of answer,  
 And look at **yourself** at what really matters?

In the first stanza, a fiddle emerges out of the texture to support each possible scenario.

In the second stanza, a steel guitar performs the same function and enhances key moments of the verse, as illustrated by the bold text. Upon the word “heaven,” the steel guitar ascends in pitch, and then descends upon the word “yourself.” The expressive



word painting, combined with the languishing sound of the steel guitar, enhances these moments of sad reminiscing.

In the chorus, Jackson inspires an identifiable hope and rest through a general sense of spirituality.

I'm just a singer of simple songs,  
 I'm not a real political man.  
 I watch CNN but I'm not sure I can tell you  
 The difference in Iraq and Iran.  
 But I know Jesus and I talk to God,  
 And I remember this from when I was young:  
 Faith, hope and love are some good things he gave us,  
 And the greatest is love.

By using such metaphors as “knowing Jesus” and “talking to God,” Jackson achieves a sense of religious vagueness, or spirituality, which simply tells his audience that he believes in Jesus Christ and that he prays to God. While “knowing Jesus” is often understood by evangelical Christians as not only believing in God at a conceptual level, but also having a relationship with God through his son, Jesus Christ, Jackson does not overtly articulate this. Rather, he conveys a general spirituality, and simply demonstrates that he believes in God and that he prays. As a result, this religiousness could be applied to a number of formal religions, and increases the song’s capacity for public appeal. Similarly, Jackson presents a vague representation of Scripture by paraphrasing the Biblical passage, 1 Corinthians 13:13, “And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love” (NIV). By paraphrasing the Scripture verse into his own words, and presenting it as a childhood memory, he removes any former religious specificity, and expresses a general spirituality. Much can be said of Jackson’s use of unspecific “religiousness” or postmodern “spirituality” to create a message of popular

appeal, but, simply stated, he establishes a message capable of universal identification by remaining spiritual, and unspecific to any formal religion.

The third and fourth verses continue to present possible scenarios wherein people learned of the 9/11 catastrophes. After asking his audience where they were on the tragic day, Jackson widens his community of listeners by referring to teachers and truck drivers.

Where were you when the world stopped turning on that September day;  
Teaching a class full of innocent children  
Or driving down some cold interstate?  
Did you feel guilty cause you're a survivor;  
In a crowded room did you feel alone?  
Did you call up your mother and tell her you love her?  
Did you dust off that Bible at home?

Did you open your eyes and hope it never happened,  
Close your eyes and not go to sleep?  
Did you notice the sunset the first time in ages,  
Speak with some stranger on the street?  
Did you lay down at night and think of tomorrow,  
Go out and buy you a gun?  
Did you turn off that violent old movie you're watching,  
And turn on "I Love Lucy" reruns?  
Did you go to a church and hold hands with some strangers?  
Stand in line and give your own blood?  
Did you just stay home and cling tight to your family,  
Thank God you had somebody to love?

In these two stanzas Jackson emphasizes love and relationships, the main emphasis of the chorus as well. While he uses the fiddle and steel guitar to support the first two verses, he employs an electric guitar with a tremolo effect in the third verse. The fourth verse marks a combination of fiddle, steel guitar, electric guitar and mandolin that supplies musical support to Jackson's questions. The song ends with two choruses, and one last question, "Where were you when the world stopped turning on that September day?"

Jackson's song can be characterized as a commemorative response based on its recurring reminder of the specific day of the tragedy, as illustrated through descriptive

imagery and an evoking of varied emotions. Its overall thematic message is distinguishable from other 9/11 musical responses, as it focuses on honoring the lost and the living by primarily remembering the tragic day, and not concentrating on bereavement or political themes. Jackson's commemorative song is effective because of its supporting use of musical materials and its universal appeal. The meaningful use of musical form and instruments enhance the song's overall musical structure. By addressing an audience representative of different economic and religious backgrounds, the song exhibits a capacity for widespread identification. It also has a strong sense of unification, as many of the activities he suggests are ones that cross race, class, ethnic, and gender lines. These activities are also actions that draw people together. The song's wide popularity, as represented by its fixture on top of country and popular music charts, affirms its effective and appealing construction.

Alan Jackson's "Where Were You (When the World Stopped Turning)" is reminiscent of similar Pearl Harbor commemorations. While the majority of Pearl Harbor musical responses were militant patriotic anthems, two early songs exhibit a commemorative quality. On December 17, 1941 just ten days after the Pearl Harbor attacks, Alfred Bryan, Willie Raskin, and Gerald Marks published "We'll Always Remember Pearl Harbor." The short, romantic ballad avoids the use of a patriotic or vengeful message, and instead, focuses on remembering and honoring those who lost their lives in the attacks.

We'll always remember Pearl Harbor,  
 Brightest jewel of the blue southern sea.  
 Our lips will be saying Pearl Harbor  
 On each bead of our Rosary.  
 The angels will smile on Pearl Harbor  
 'Till the last leaf will fall from the tree.

We'll always remember Pearl Harbor,  
Our harbor of memory.

Like Jackson's commemoration, the song includes religious symbolism, through the reference to the rosary and angels. Yet, in this case, the exclusive focus on Catholicism disregards the wide range of beliefs held by America's Protestant, Jewish and non-religious citizens. John Bush Jones, in *The Songs That Fought the War*, argues that "the song's parochialism kept some performers and recording companies away from it."<sup>38</sup>

Johnny Noble's 1942 commemoration, "Remember Pearl Harbor" illustrates another short tribute song form the era.

Remember Pearl Harbor on a beautiful morn,  
Remember Pearl Harbor and what came with the dawn.  
A foe lighted on us with bombs bursting in air,  
But they couldn't beat us for our flag was still waving there.  
Our Army and Navy just fought with all their might,  
And our planes from the air shot the foe right out of sight.  
Remember Pearl Harbor, remember-  
And the boys who died for liberty.

Noble's song similarly describes the devastating attacks with descriptive imagery. He focuses on honoring the tragedy through remembrance, and refrains from delivering a military retributive message.

The close examination of September 11<sup>th</sup> commemorative musical works demonstrates a consistent compositional approach. Composers and songwriters focus on immortalizing the day of the attacks through descriptive and evocative imagery. Textual materials often describe the actual devastation of the 9/11 attacks, or use a metaphorical comparison to them. Musical materials recreate the emotions and moods experienced on

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<sup>38</sup> John Bush Jones, *The songs that fought the war: Popular music and the home front* (Waltham, University Press of New England, 2006), 150.

the commemorated day through a “shocking effect” and sometimes, a “languishing effect.” The over-arching theme of the work stresses a tribute to the victims of the attacks and an immortalizing of the tragic day, and does not focus on bereavement, military action or politics. The historical comparison to Pearl Harbor commemorations demonstrates that the 1940s works utilized a similar compositional approach. Yet, modern advancements in musical production, performance technologies and musical style have clearly distinguished 9/11 commemorations from their predecessors.

### **Conclusion**

The tragic and devastating September 11 attacks resulted in an assortment of original musical responses. Exemplary works expressed their reactions through overt 9/11-centric dialogues to focus on themes of mourning, military retribution, dissent and commemoration. These four categories are distinguished by a recognizable and meaningful compositional design and an overarching thematic message. An examination of such works concludes that effective musical responses express a direct message clarified by supporting musical and/or textual materials. Compositional materials can accentuate the specific thematic message of the responsive work as they often evoke images and emotions reminiscent of the attacks and their aftermath. The “shocking effect” and “languishing effect” are examples of characteristic techniques in which composers and songwriters recreate a sense of chaos or grief. Compositional techniques used in these works are often reminiscent of historical works written in similar circumstances. The recurrence of these historical approaches illuminates the timeless compositional design of historical examples and exemplifies modern advancements in music composition and production.

A comparison between classical and popular post-9/11 musical compositions yields the observation that classical works are well fitted for mourning and best suited for commemorative expressions. The musical characteristics observed in post-9/11 classic works and previously understood traditions of classical music illustrate such a conclusion. The formal quality of classical music can accentuate a commemorative theme as it honors the lost and the living. The densely layered soundscape possible in classical music works can immortalize the event by recreating feelings of shock, terror and bewilderment—an effect fundamental to commemorative works. The listener can ascribe their individual interpretation and meaning to classical instrumental works, enhancing the work’s effectiveness. While popular music does not achieve the same effectiveness in its commemorations, it also deals effectively with expressions of mourning. Popular music is most effective in expressing patriotic military retribution and political dissent. The artistic freedom licensed to country and hip-hop artists permits them to write and perform controversial and often explicit songs. The participatory nature of popular music, in contrast to the appreciatory character of classical music, has a unification function and broader appeal for popular music listeners. Despite their differences, classical and popular post-9/11 responses often utilize similar compositional approaches—i.e., the “shocking effect” and “languishing effect” as well as similar responsive themes—through the means of different instruments and production techniques. The similar approaches exhibited by works from different genres further illuminate the historical compositional designs of music written in response to devastating attacks.

While this study limited itself to music written exclusively in response to the September 11 attacks, a similar study can be extended to music written in response to the Iraq War. While the content of Iraq War musical examples primarily expresses anti-war and/or patriotic militant sentiments, the growing repertoire has yet to be examined and discussed. Such a study can align Iraq War musical reactions to Pearl Harbor and Vietnam musical examples to demonstrate a possible recurrence of compositional techniques and approaches. By focusing on Iraq War musical reactions, one can consider musical, social, cultural and political contexts. As many American popular music artists in recent years have visited U.S. troops stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan, one could consider the thematic content of music performed at the home front verses music performed for the troops. Nevertheless, the strategies and methods used in this study have the potential to be utilized in future research projects of a similar design.

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