SOMETHING ABOUT MARYBELL

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*Something About Marybell* is a children’s book with audio compact disk, in which I combined three art forms: storytelling, illustrating, and music composition. The nature of the story reflects my love of animals, which has been the essence of all my previous works as well. Beyond the technical matters I practiced and obstacles I encountered while working on each of the aforementioned art forms, the most important point I discovered was that all three were consistently interrelated, and I never could develop one medium without considering the others.

Working on this project also was a journey to trace my major influences in different subjects. My drawing style is influenced by cartoons and animation films, which are now considered significant artistic styles in Japanese subculture. My music composition reflects a broad influence from many composers’ works working in a variety of genres, especially piano works, of all eras. There are two specific works I studied as model works for this project: Poulenc’s *L’Histoire de Babar le petit éléphant* (The Story of Babar the Little Elephant) and Prokofiev’s *Peter and the Wolf*. It was a challenge to blend one stylistic approach into another to accurately realize my musical conception.
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PART I

FROM INCEPTION TO COMPLETION: A CHILDREN’S BOOK
Chapter 1: Introduction

Previous Works

More than ten years before I decided my thesis project for the Master of Arts degree would be a children’s book with audio CD in 2004, I completed several music compositions that were motivated by observing various animals, primarily a cat named Pooh. That concept dates back to my first year in college in Japan when my family and I welcomed our first feline pet to our house. We named the cat Pooh from “Winnie the Pooh,” because it had fluffy mixed colored fur around its body that reminded me of a little pooh bear.

Pooh was a stray kitten. One rainy afternoon, I was on my way home from college, and I heard a kitten crying from the edge of a small river nearby the college. I could not ignore this kitten trembling in the shivery, cold weather, so I took it home with me. Since that day, Pooh became a member of my family and grew up as a happy house cat.

As I daily observed Pooh growing up, I learned certain physical expressions cats make to show their feelings. For example, a cat’s tail is an interesting body part used to express its feelings. The ways cats swish their tails convey various emotions just as individual human beings have their unique way of showing their feelings. Soon, I also discovered that cats communicate their emotions through facial expressions as well as changing the tone in their voices. I was so fascinated by all these experiences with Pooh that one day I sat at my piano and started mimicking his physical expressions and improvising them in sounds.

This experience naturally inspired me to write my first “animal piece”- Pooh the Cat Suite for piano solo- in 1992. The piece has four small movements: 1. “Adventurous Pooh” 2. “A mischievous kitten” 3. “Pooh’s lullaby” 4. “Pooh and a fry.” After completing the piece and having it performed in public, I realized I had gone through a different mental process to
compose this piece than I had for any of my previous pieces. Prior to composing this piece, I would always think about instrumentation first and try to create certain motives and themes. In contrast, composing the Pooh piece flowed naturally from my happy state of mind in order to communicate back to my cat Pooh, sharing these wonderful and special feelings that one could only find in the friendship between an animal and a human being. Also, this was a first piece I dedicated to someone special in my life; it was dedicated to Pooh, of course.

Due to the success of *Pooh the Cat Suite*, many listeners encouraged me to compose a sequential piece about animals. A year later in 1993, I composed another animal piece titled *Waltz for 瞑図美* (pronounced Ne-Zu-Mi) for alto saxophone and piano. 瞑図美 was my fantasy cat. The beauty of the piece was about sleeping well and having lots of interesting dreams in life. I depicted the fantasy dream world that 瞑図美 saw while it slept in this piece.

In 1994, I composed and performed my second Pooh piece, *Pooh the Cat Suite Part II, for clarinet and piano*. The piece includes three movements: 1. “Good Morning, Pooh!” 2. “Are you half asleep?” 3. “Struggling with Pooh in a bath.” When I started composing the piece, I decided to choose a different instrument than piano to make a contrast in instrumentation from two of my previous pieces. When I thought of what instrument would play my cat Pooh, clarinet was the first instrument that came to mind. The influence of Prokofiev’s *Peter and the Wolf* led to my association of a clarinet with the cat. (I will discuss the influence of Prokofiev and other music composers in a later chapter.) I liked the idea of a duet to represent the interaction of two individuals, a cat and myself, communicating with each other in a dialogue.

After completing two sequential works about my cat Pooh as well as *Waltz for 瞑図美*, I realized having a story line and a visual image in my creative process would help my music compositions evolve more naturally. I also thought about my true motivation and style in music
composition. When writing a piece, I have discovered that I feel comfortable following the stylistic forms and harmonies of particular aspects of classical music and other styles. However, I had to develop my own style to express my compositional ideal. I used the lesson I learned from composing those three works and applied them later in my senior composition recital in 2001 at the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas.

After I came to the United States to work on my Bachelor’s degree in music composition in 1996, I composed several electro-acoustic music pieces as well as instrumental pieces. For my senior composition recital in the spring of 2001, I created an adventure story about my cat named Marsy and other pets and animals that I met since moving to this country. I composed pieces for each character and drew illustrations of them as part of a multi media piece. A prologue opened the recital program, which was read by a storyteller, sitting in the center of a theater, and was followed by an electro-acoustic piece. Marsy, the Martian Cat (2000), Pooh the Cat Suite for Clarinet and Piano (1994), Dalai Goes to Canine for string quartet (1999), Queroquè the Frog: An Autobiography for small ensemble (2001), and Last Temptation of Marsy for improvisation (2001) were all performed according to the scenes in the story. The storyteller opened each scene by reading the story line which was then followed by the musical performance. Illustrations were presented on a screen board facing the audience in a slide-show style. The last piece of the program, an electro-acoustic composition titled Marsy’s Final Return to Planet ‘Nya-gon’, immediately followed the previous improvisation piece without a break. During the silence at the end of the performance of the last piece, the storyteller read an epilogue that closed the program.
Motivation toward Children’s Book with Sound

After completing my senior composition recital, I became even more interested in combining sound, visual art and literature in one work. Therefore, I started looking for other musical works that were written for story settings or words. Several composers of the twentieth century created musical pieces for literature and words. Twentieth century composers Sergei Prokofiev, Maurice Ravel, Francis Poulenc and Eric Satie have influenced me the most. When I listened to compositions such as Prokofiev’s *Peter and the Wolf*, Poulenc’s *L’Histoire de Babar le petit éléphant* and other pastoral works, I felt a strong desire to listen to these pieces with illustrated books. The music itself had remarkable power to attract an audience’s ears and make listeners imagine the vivid details of the story. A narration that accompanies the music brings out even more reality in the sound. At one point, I read *The Story of Babar* by Jean de Brunhoff while listening to the piano solo piece, which was set to the story, composed by Poulenc. What a delightful experience it was to listen to the music with an illustrated book!

The story book combined with music can be a powerful yet sensitive tool that can carry some disciplinary and moral messages to a young audience. Also, the audio experience gives children alternative ways to understanding narrative and story.¹ John Ellis suggests, “Sound holds attention more consistently than image and provide a continuity that holds across momentary lapses of attention.”² It is advantageous to use audio sound such as narrative and music as a form of communication between the work and audience because “It provides a continuity of narrative for children, which exceeds the stop and start, rhythmic page turning of reading a conventional picture book.”³ Creating a good balance in terms of tempo and rhythm

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³ Clark, 2.
between illustration, story and music was vital to my work to keep audience’s motivation going during performance. I often thought how my music and its audio CD would affect the entire work of my book while composing pieces. I was afraid to disturb some audiences’ reading paces by controlling the tempo of the storyline through music losing their curiosity towards the work itself. Audiobooks require readers to have a greater level of simultaneous participation compared to picture books. Clark describes, “But the audiobook does not need to provide the same experience as reading; rather, it seeks to provide something quite different that works in terms of that medium. One child may relish the experience of ‘static moments’ provided by reading a picture book, while another may value more the momentum and sensory nature of sound.”

As I initially aimed *Something About Marybell* at young audiences, it was my task to provide them various levels for accessing and enjoying the work. Audiobooks can be more accessible than picture books for children when considering the variety of individual requirements and reading comprehension skills they may have. Audio CD for the book can give more opportunities for children to control their own narratives. “This sense of power and ownership is important for the increasingly independent reader, giving them a freedom, hitherto unknown, the ability to terminate a narrative and move around it at will.” Audiobooks are also accessible in various places and situations, such as in the car, which is impractical with traditional books. Clark explains, “Moreover, this physical control encourages manual dexterity and an entrance into the adult world of electronic media.” Most importantly, audio can transmit a love of story that the written word and illustrated picture may not always capable of perfectly transmitting to the readers.

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Thus, making an audiobook is an effective way of communication between a creator and young audience. It is important for young, developing readers to have more than one gateway to enter into the world of story and encourage them to experience the nature of audio, which is different from traditional picture book narratives. Considering these advantages of audiobooks and the aspects audio are capable of providing for the young readers, I affirmed my intention for *Something About Marybell* to be an audiobook.

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Chapter 2: Creative Thoughts and Processes

Creating a Story

When I first started thinking about the story for my book, I had no details of the storyline. The only thing I had in mind was to write a story that reflected my curiosity toward animals similarly to my previous works. Then I started wondering about characters in the story. As my previous works had animal themes, I decided to create a character that shared both animal and human characteristics in its physical appearance. This is how the main character “Marybell” was born. Marybell is a little girl who was born with a beautiful long cattail. As soon as I decided upon the description of this character, I felt the urge to draw the character on paper. The creation from the initial visualization of the character, to the first rendering took two weeks. From the drawing of this character, the storyline naturally unfolded and I started adding more and more details to the story outline.

As I added more specific details to the storyline, I began seeing the world through Marybell’s eyes and filtering ideas through her mind. After deciding character-settings for Marybell’s early childhood life, during which she was kept inside the mansion by her mother who was afraid that people outside their world would notice her daughter’s strange physical appearance, I knew I had to create another important character who would show Marybell a way to appreciate things in a unique way and encourage her when she faced obstacles in the story. The idea of co-character “Marsy,” a giant cat with fluffy feathered wings, developed in my mind.

Creating this life-sized cat character that could communicate with human beings and share adventures in the story, was truly my dream come true. I gave this character the name Marsy, from my real pet cat named Marsy, which was also the subject from a previous work. As I sketched both Marsy and Marybell on drawing paper, I noticed something curious; Marsy and
Marybell both had a physical trait that they wished to trade: Marsy, a giant cat with fluffy feathered wings and an ugly stubby tail, desired Marybell’s long beautiful cattail and Marybell wanted to trade her cattail for Marsy’s fluffy feathered wings so that she could fly out to see the world. Then I imagined how they would look together if Marybell rode on Marsy’s back while flying in the sky. Marsy would look like a cat with a proper tail and Marybell would finally be able to go outside the mansion wall. The story continued to grow after I visualized the interaction between both the characters and the adventures they might share.

The first obstacle to writing the story occurred in the scene when Marybell and Marsy fly down on a playground to meet with other young children. It is the scene that Marybell, for the first time in her life, visits the real world beyond her mansion wall and meets other children her age. I felt I had to carefully develop Marybell’s inner thoughts to provide a meaningful insight on this character. At the same time I thought this was a good place in the story to convey a moral message to the audience through the character’s mind. The scene in which Marybell, after being teased by a group of children, helps one of those mean children who is stuck in a tall tree, represents her inner strength and tender heart that one hopes to find in all human beings. Marybell’s brave action opens up other children’s hearts and they all become friends.

Toward the end of the story, I described how other children were really envious of Marybell’s cattail. This scene somewhat relates to my daily observation of small children at the music school where I teach; the small children tend to be very curious about other small children who appear differently. For example, if one child has a bandage on a finger, other children want to look the same as this child and put bandages on their fingers. If one child places a book on a table upside down, the rest of children all follow what this child did and turn their books upside down on a table. Based on my experience, I imagined the inner thoughts of those children in the
story, probably wanting to look like a child with a beautiful, long tail, just like Marybell.

Also, in the last scene of the story, I expressed an expectation of Marybell starting to go to a school with other children. The outcome of the storyline in which Marybell overcame her obstacles and began exploring social avenues with others formed so naturally that it quickly motivated me to write a sequel story about Marybell and her school life as a future project.

Elements and Influences

As I was drawing the illustrations for the book, it was fascinating to notice that the geographical description in my drawings reflected the places where I grew up. A small seaside town where the story takes place in the book reminded me of where I was born and grew up in southern Japan. I believe, regardless of one’s intention, the geographical element is somewhat reflected in one’s creative product. For example, inside the famous children’s book Madeline, written by French author Ludwig Bemelmans, scenes of people enjoying their time at a corner café next to the beautiful architecture in Paris in the early twentieth century are vividly reproduced, instantly pulling the reader’s curious mind into the story. To me, geographical and cultural elements are the two most important impressions revealed while reading a children’s book. These elements usually appear conspicuously in the book as illustrations that most likely reflect the author’s living environment.

Also in music, both geographical and cultural elements can be great influences and creative forces on one’s product. Toru Takemitsu describes, “In our world there are human actions and individual emotions expressed through music that cannot be expressed by words. This sensitivity to sound, however, varies widely according to location and society.” Human senses are likely to be cultivated by location, culture and its society, and different sensitivities to sound, art, and literature can result in a variety of unique products. These creative products of
art, music, and literature provide a global experience for audiences, including small children. Audiobooks, in comparison with traditional picture books, are highly capable of providing a cross-cultural global experience to children with presence of music. Takemitsu says, “As a composer I think about music not as a mere reaction of pleasant pastime but as something that is part of a large human experience.” I find making an audiobook for children a very meaningful experience to give them the opportunity for a brand-new experience.

It is also important, as a children’s book author, that activities and products illustrated in a book are things which small children can recognize from their past memory and connect to their real lives. In most children’s books I have read, characters, regardless of gender, age, geographical background, and even species do what normal children would enjoy doing in their everyday lives, such as playing, studying, eating, and sleeping. For example, *The Story of Babar*, written by Jean de Brunhoff, depicts the environment and life in both a great forest and early twentieth-century France through the little elephant Babar’s adventures. It is probably a very amusing experience for little children to find that what Babar does in the story could be associated with what they would normally do in everyday life. Babar runs away from the danger of cruel hunters in the great forest and arrives in a city in France, where Babar sees many beautiful houses, cars, and people dressed up nicely for the first time in his life. Babar meets a very nice old lady who gives Babar her purse for buying new clothes. Babar shops for new clothes and goes to the photographer to have his picture taken. Brunhoff vividly illustrates the landscapes and the style of living in France. It is fascinating to see the classic cars, old-style elevator, and camera as well as the attire people wear for going out, through the illustration. The story also contains a moral message through the experiences of Babar. For example, the scene in

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which hunters kill Babar’s mother could bring up the issue of cruelty and inhumanity. Babar grows up to be a mature, elephant in the story in the same way human beings mature. This book truly gave me a strong insight into my story.

In *Something About Marybell*, there was no doubt in my mind that I wanted to make Marybell’s character, despite her strange physical trait, as similar as possible to normal little girls around age six to eight. Also Marsy, like Babar, acts like a normal human being in the story; he eats meals, takes a bath, sleeps on a bed, and most importantly, feels compassion toward people, especially his best friend Marybell.

*Study of Watercolor*

The writing and illustrating of the book were done together. The literary and the visual images of the story always appeared in tandem in my mind. However, when I decided to color some of my illustrations, I had to address my inexperience of techniques and knowledge of painting. I had drawn cartoons and painted them in my own style since childhood, and I did not have any formal training in studio art. Therefore, I decided to take a drawing course in the School of Visual Arts at the University of North Texas. Professor Rob Erdle introduced me to the fascinating world of watercolor and demonstrated basic techniques during independent study sessions.

First, he showed me a collection of different watercolor papers and demonstrated how each paper absorbs water differently to affect the gradation of color. Then I bought a few of the most common watercolor papers, such as Arches, Fabriano, Lanaquarelle and painted on those papers for the study. I worked on approximately fifteen watercolor paintings before starting the illustrations. At first I struggled drawing a draft on a watercolor paper in both pencil and pen because some types of watercolor paper, especially the cold-pressed papers, leave a smear and
eraser mark easily on the surface. I even tried to draw a draft on tracing paper first then transferred it through carbon paper onto watercolor paper. This method worked best on a paper that is thicker and rougher on the surface, so I chose Arches 300 lb. Rough paper for my book. Gradation in color is something that I developed slowly over time. It was really a new subject for me to learn about color relation and scheme. For example, all colors have infinite shades and hues that bring slightly different tones to different types of papers. I especially enjoyed the coordination of blue and yellow; Windsor blue was the best match to almost all kinds of yellows. It was a challenge for me to draw a texture in my painting such as the texture in carpeting and drapey. Three-dimensional and perspective drawings are types that I wish to further pursue.

My drawing style was often a focus of our discussion during our first few lessons. Professor Erdle pointed out that my drawings have a strong influence from Japanese animations and cartoons. He encouraged the development of my own final style. I practiced drawing in different styles; this was one of the most demanding efforts in producing the book. I tried both caricature and realism, but I always ended up drawing cartoon-like characters so I eventually decided on simplicity in the final product. I drew a simple dot for characters’ eyes and tried not to draw too many lines for the texture of characters’ hair and clothes, as well. I compensated by using more gradation in color to bring out each character. It was very challenging to sketch each character from a different angle, especially Marsy. I tried to sketch a profile of my real pet cat several times at home, but I could not incorporate the results into my character sketches. Professor Erdle then suggested that I make a cat figure in clay. It took me a whole week to make one figure. I doubted this idea at first and thought this might be a waste of time; however, I realized myself that I began understanding the characteristics of my figure more clearly as I continued shaping it. In the final analysis, these art lessons encouraged me to continue
practicing in watercolor, a technique I will continue to use in my future projects.

*Composing Panels*

I had to consider the textual layout for each page while composing pictures along the storyline before coloring them. This led to considerations about the tempo of this story. The length of the text on each scene would affect the way the drawings were composed on a panel. Too much balance would tax children’s attention spans. Through the consideration on the balance between illustration and text for each scene, some scenes were described over one whole page in illustration with either no text or only a few words. I felt colorful visual images would be more powerful than words for describing the story to a child for the first time. This point also made me consider the correlation in style between the illustration and written texts. The writing style should somehow match the style of illustration and also be suitable for younger readers. Considering all these points, I determined exactly how many panels I had to draw, for which scenes in the storyline, and where the texts would appear on each panel. I also asked several people who were involved with small children to read and provide further input. After completing about two-thirds of the panels, I then realized the pacing of this story should somehow relate to the tempo and character of the music for this story, varying motif lengths to hold interest. Once the scope of the entire project came into focus, I started hearing the music that I wished for each panel as I composed and illustrated the panels.

*Composing Music Pieces*

The initial intent was to blend all three aspects of story, illustration and music together. As a narrator can describe the story orally and an illustrator can enhance the story visually, music can express the story sonically. Each piece of music has to depict each scene vividly in sound, so I used the pictures and storylines to encourage musical improvisation at the piano at the initial
stage of the music composition. From this improvisation I determined the thematic characters which would be used. I also had to be conscious about the intended audience of my work, which would be children. I reviewed other pieces of music written for children’s stories, such as Prokofiev’s *Peter and the Wolf*, Poulenc’s *L’Histoire de Babar*, and other familiar works of music from cartoons or animated films that children have enjoyed, and compared them with other, broader styles of music to see if there were any special characteristics in the music written specifically for children’s works.

These works for children shared certain characteristics: 1. Themes, motives, or special melodies represented the characters in a story, 2. These themes were usually comical and light-spirited melodic lines that could be captured by children’s ears and stored inside their memories throughout the work, 3. There were no complex forms or structures found in each piece of music, 4. Harmonic and rhythmic patterns suggested specific motions or events taking place in a scene of the story, 5. Music, story and visual image were closely linked with one another to create a whole work. Based on these elements that I gleaned from other works of music, I developed a clear picture of the music that I would write for my story. The sound had to be attractive to children’s ears and it should not be challenging to their sensitivity. It should also have similar characteristic elements in harmony, melody and rhythm that carry certain meanings and connections to the story. The audience with repeated listening could gradually discover these elements and hopefully the audience would discover music as one of several levels on which they could enjoy this book.

In conclusion, I came to know my musical language deeper through the process of composing for this project. Story and illustration were always interconnected with the music and they inspired and stimulated my creativity to express this story acoustically. Music, art, and
literature have always interacted with each other symbiotically, creating a synthesis between the
three elements in the creation of the book. Now the question is how my senses of creativity that
was shaped throughout my life naturally came to my mind. I am going to trace my inspirations
towards music composition and art in the later chapters. I performed the complete work of
Something About Marybell twice in public. First performance was held on August 12, 2007 at
Chandler Center for the Arts in Chandler, Arizona, and the second performance was on
September 22, 2007 at Changing Hands Bookstore in Tempe, Arizona. After the performances, I
recorded the entire music compositions and narratives in two separate recording dates at Red
Mountain Recording Studio in Tempe, Arizona, to create an audio CD that was included to the
book.

Photography

While composing the music, I also started looking for a local photographer who could
photograph my paintings. After a long search, Joe and Mollie Schiavo from Reflections
Photography & Design in Phoenix, Arizona, photographed all my paintings and also helped me
find the printing company to make a hard-bound copy. I learned that there was an appropriate
paper size for my paintings to be photographed while observing the photography process.
Digitizing the illustrated panels was challenging. Initially, we had hoped to scan the panels with
a high resolution scanner and then make any color corrections via Photoshop. This turned out to
be a far more difficult prospect than originally proposed. The paper size was larger than most
commonly available digital scanners making it unreasonable to purchase a scanned copy.
Additionally, the paper ratio was 3:4; a far less common format than 2:3, 4:5, or 5:7. I used
22x30 inch size paper for the watercolor papers for the open pages and folded the papers into
half for the single pages, which gives 3:4 paper ratio. We decided to photograph the panels with
a digital camera and then crop the edges. Doing this, however, introduced a new challenge:
keeping the lighting at a consistent 5000 degrees Kelvin White Balance. In a scanning
environment, one does not need to worry about stray light because it is mostly a closed system.
Photographing it introduces possible light input from the lens to the paper being photographed.
Keeping the white balance correct was instrumental in keeping color uniform throughout the
photo of each panel. If this had been imprecise, the photos would have taken on a yellow or
magenta cast ruining the original color of the artwork, and thus not displaying the artist’s proper
vision. In the end, I used a standard strobe at low intensity and close range to obtain the desired
results. Following the photography session, we worked on color adjustment for each panel using
Adobe Photoshop. We then added the story text to the panels and created a master file that was
sent to the publishing company later. We both spent many hours finding a printing company that
specializes in the custom sized books within my budget. Schiavo finally found one
printing/publishing company in Maine that accepted all the conditions of my project. I was
especially pleased to notice that the rough surface of the watercolor paper that I used appeared
clearly on each page. I also discovered some aspects of my style of drawing that I would want to
try in a different way for future projects, such as adding thicker outlines to the characters and
landscapes. I would also want to try different kinds of watercolor papers, such as cold press and
hot press in different weight.
Chapter 3: Inspirations and Influences

Piano Works from Early Childhood

Since I have been playing the piano from my early childhood, this instrument has become my chosen device to express my inner thoughts and creativity. The piano works of various composers have perhaps inspired and influenced my music composition the most. I have learned that many composers in music history have written numerous piano solo works, a number of which were written specifically for children. As I recall repertoires from my childhood, I particularly remember Burgmüller’s Opus 100, *Twenty-Five Easy and Progressive Studies for Pianoforte*, Tchaikovsky’s *The Seasons, Children’s Album*, and Schumann’s *Scenes from Childhood* among other famous piano pieces that piano students around the world usually study at some point in their lives. Those repertoires were particularly memorable because they consisted of small pieces, all of which had unique titles that small children could easily associate with something familiar from everyday life. Also, these repertoires, especially Burgmüller’s Opus 100 were composed to accommodate the physical limitation of small hands. For example, there are no octave intervals found in these twenty five small pieces (the widest interval is a seventh). The above listed repertoires all have a simple texture, with a clear melodic motif, rhythmic unity and a clear harmonic language. Listening was, and is now, the best way for me to observe and learn music. I now believe that my exposure to and experience of playing and studying the piano works of my early childhood deeply influenced the music in *Something About Marybell*.

*Francis Poulenc: The Story of Babar the Little Elephant*

There are works of two composers created for children that I listened to during the composition of *Something About Marybell*; among them are Prokofiev’s *Peter and the Wolf,*
Francis Poulenc’s L’Histoire De Babar.

Francis Poulenc’s The Story of Babar the Elephant for Piano and Narrator (1940-45) is another major work that inspired my creation. In 1940, Poulenc as a favor for his little niece, improvised music for the famous children’s story L’Histoire de Babar, which was first published in 1933. Poulenc’s work was not formally published until 1945, and the piece was later orchestrated by Jean Françaix in 1962. As I listened to the piece with a picture book of Babar the Little Elephant in hand, I felt that the music was effectively describing the story along with the illustrations and narrative voice. Each piece accurately captures the feeling of the scenes throughout the work. In the beginning, Poulenc set the calm, peaceful feeling of a lullaby to the opening scene in which little Babar was rocked by his mother while sleeping safely. A series of major seventh harmonies create a mysterious, yet peaceful, atmosphere in the beginning and conjures up a far away fantasy land where Babar was born.

Even though Poulenc does not associate a specific melody with each character as Prokofiev did in Peter and the Wolf, the characteristics of each scene are vividly portrayed in sound. For example, in the scene in which fast growing Babar plays with other baby elephants who dig in the sand with a shell, the continuous motion of sixteenth notes in lower registers hints at the baby elephant’s loud stamping noise.
In the music of Babar having a lovely ride on his mother’s back, Poulenc expresses the
teacher elephant’s calm, solemn demeanor by using a harmonized melody in the lower register
that creates a dense, heavy feeling of an elephant walking.

As I mentioned earlier in this paper, geographical and cultural elements are the two of the
most important elements in a children’s book. The author Jean de Brunhoff brilliantly illustrates
the state of fun and luxurious life in Paris in the 1940s where the story actually takes place.
Babar states in the story, “Really, they are very well dressed. I would like to have some fine
clothes, too! I wonder how I can get them?”

Readers can learn the cultural sensibilities of Parisians that wearing good clothes and eating fine meals are important to their culture. Poulenc

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vividly expresses those cultural elements through numerous pictorial devices along with the kinds of stylized forms such as nocturnes, grand marches, waltzes and French folk music. The piece for the scene in which Babar met a very nice, rich old lady in Paris who gladly gave him money to buy fancy suits has the flavor of a chanson.

Figure 4 – The Story of Babar the Little Elephant, mm. 84-93.

One of my favorite sections of the piece in the entire music of Babar is the piece for the scene in which Babar drives out in the car that the old lady bought him. The notes played in the syncopated rhythm below the melody line put me in the mind of Babar driving his car gracefully

and honking at other cars.

Figure 5 – *The story of Babar the Little Elephant*, mm. 136-138.

These gestures and stylized forms of music seem cliché outside the framework of the piece, but they become special as they appear combined with texts throughout the entire work, which even create a realistic feeling in this fairy tale. Poulenc expresses different characteristics in his music, from comical to somber, and his desire to express even a trivial detail of the story in his music is evident in the specification of articulation marks, tempo marks and other expression marks on the score. In the end, the original version of the work for piano and narration was particularly impressive. The expressive capability of the piano in Poulenc’s work motivated me to score *Something About Marybell* for piano solo with narration.

I tried a similar stylistic approach to Poulenc’s Babar the Little Elephant and also used stylized forms in my composition. For example, “Prologue,” “Welcome Friends,” and “Epilogue” employ the forms of waltz, and “Walking into the Forest” is in the style of a march. I also found a similarity in Poulenc’s use of tonality, where he seems to associate particular keys with certain feelings or sense of atmosphere. For example, B minor is the key Poulenc tends to use to express a dark, serious mood, and F major seems to stand for relief and warmth. This approach of assigning a specific relationship between the key area and abstract meanings is also
evident in most of Poulenc’s songs. “Furthermore, ideas always came to him in particular keys and he never transposed them; for example, the Key of D-flat major seems to have been a key of relaxation and in it the fourth degree tends to be sharpened.\textsuperscript{11}

Poulenc’s music is also highly melodious which is another similarity between the music of \textit{Babar the Little Elephant} and \textit{Something About Marybell}. Even though Poulenc was not necessarily inventive with regard to texture, rhythm and harmony, melody was certainly the most important element in his music and he found a way to represent melodies within the framework of other composers’ invention.\textsuperscript{12}

\textit{Sergei Prokofiev: Peter and the Wolf}

Sergei Prokofiev composed the symphonic tale for children \textit{Peter and the Wolf} Op.67 in April, 1936. The piece was commissioned by Central Children’s Theater, which was newly opened during that year in Moscow. Natalia Satz, the owner of the theater, hoped that all young children in the Soviet Union would be introduced to the instrumentation of a symphony orchestra and would listen to more symphonic music as a result. She wanted to encourage children to be able to enjoy symphonic music in the same way that they enjoyed reading books.\textsuperscript{13} Satz also recommended the work be a symphonic fairy tale with the musical development coordinated with a narration\textsuperscript{14}. Prokofiev initially did not take the roll of writing the story until he saw Satz presenting a scenario written by Nina Saksenskaya in rhyming couplets one day. Prokofiev rejected it immediately for the reason that, “The balance between words and music in a work like this is very delicate. The words must know their place, otherwise they may lead the listener’s

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Ibid.}, 211.
\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid.}
attention astray, instead of helping their perception of the music.”\textsuperscript{15} Hence, Prokofiev made a decision to write the text of this story, and it was initially titled \textit{How Peter Outwitted the Wolf}.\textsuperscript{16}

Prokofiev assigned a different instrument of the orchestra to each character in the story: Peter is represented by the String Quartet, the Bird by the flute, the Duck by the Oboe, the Cat by the Clarinet, the Grandfather by the Bassoon, the Wolf by the three Horns, and the rifle shots by the Kettle Drum and the Bass drum. There is also a separate motif to each character. Prokofiev mentions in his forward to the work that it is desirable to show these instruments to the children and to play the consequent motifs so that the children would recognize the sonorities of instruments during the performance.

\textbf{Figure 6a} – The Bird, mm. 23-24.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{bird.png}
\caption{The Bird, mm. 23-24.}
\end{figure}

\textbf{Figure 6b} – The Duck, mm. 59-63.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{duck.png}
\caption{The Duck, mm. 59-63.}
\end{figure}

\textbf{Figure 6c} – The Cat, mm. 125-129.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{cat.png}
\caption{The Cat, mm. 125-129.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
The piece was created for a specific educational purpose, which was to teach children how to listen to the different tone colors in symphonic music and to open their curiosity to the music. The fundamental difference between *Peter and the Wolf* and *L’histoire de Babar* was that the former was created for specific educational purpose while the latter was initially created through the intuitive process of improvisation. All motifs in Peter and the Wolf successfully
convey the characteristics of individual character. The motif for the bird sounds just like the bird twittering on the tree and the motif for the duck makes us easily imagine the picture of a duck leisurely sailing down a brook. Israel V-Nestyev suggests, “Remembering the simplicity of a child’s perception, the composer did not hesitate to use the most traditional descriptive devices – clear grace notes and delicate figurations of the flute to portray the chirping of the birds, deafening blows on the kettledrum and drums for the hunter’s rifle shots.”

The selection of instruments and well-developed melodies for each character has important roles in interweaving the fantasy with reality. After experiencing the whole work, the audience would probably be convinced that the oboe was best suited for a duck and the clarinet for a cat. The way in which Prokofiev introduced the characters of the story through different instruments also conveyed the characteristics of those instruments in terms of tone colors, different pitch ranges, and technical capabilities. Prokofiev illustrates how the music keeps developing throughout the piece by dividing the work into three main parts (exposition, development section and recapitulation section) in the work. Throughout these three parts, Prokofiev shows how a single motif can be modified to create different moods and feelings for the characters. For example, Peter’s theme in the opening section expresses the fearless, mischievous nature of Peter’s personality and in the end, “Peter’s theme is transformed from a light, carefree tune into a pompous, sharply accented march.” I believe the piece has long been a model work for me and a motivation to create Something About Marybell ever since I first listened to the piece in my childhood. The work clearly illustrates how one can develop story and music together, merging them into one major, cohesive work. The work also inspires me to orchestrate Something About Marybell, which I believe will be my future project.

\[17 \text{Ibid.}, 280.\]
\[18 \text{Ibid.}, 281.\]
Chapter 4: Conclusion

_Something About Marybell_ is a children’s book with audio CD in which I combined three art forms: storytelling, illustrating, and composing music. It is a story about little girl name Marybell, who is born with a cattail. She conquers many obstacles with her best friend, a cat name Marsy, and opens her life into the future. While working on the book, I considered and learned many things on each subject. The nature of the story reflects my love of all animals, which has always been the essence of all my previous works as well. The experience I had from my previous works with animal themes, helped me develop this project. Beyond all the technical matters I practiced and obstacles I encountered while painting, writing the story, and composing music, the most important point I discovered was that all three subjects were consistently interrelated with each other, and I never could develop one medium without considering the other media.

Visualization of each character through drawing always helped me develop the conception of the storyline. I could envision the direction of the story clearly when I looked at the illustrations, and this process of realizing the storyline through the visual image of the characters also revealed the sense of music I desired for each event of the story. My imagination became more realistic when I started coloring the illustrations in watercolor. It was the unity between story, illustration and music I found through the creative process which was also a vital aspect of stylizing my imagination.

Working on this project also was a journey to trace my major influences in different subjects. My drawing style is influenced by cartoons and animation films, which are now considered significant artistic styles in Japanese subculture. My music composition has a broad influence from many composers’ works from a variety of genres, especially piano works, of all
eras. It was a challenge to blend one stylistic approach into another to accurately realize my musical conception. There were two specific works I studied as model works for my project: Poulenc’s *L’Histoire de Babar le petit éléphant* and Prokofiev’s *Peter and the Wolf.*

It was interesting to learn about two different initial motivations and creative environments for both works. I found several elements in both works that closely relate to the concept of my book. As Prokofiev set different instruments from the symphony orchestra and motifs to each character in the story, I wrote each character of my story a different motif with distinctive pianistic coloring. The work was also my first influence for describing both human and animal characters in music. Feeling and enjoying the tone color of different instruments associated with each character made me think of the possibility for my music to be orchestrated in the future.

I was deeply impressed, and felt enormous interest when I listened to several CDs of *L’Histoire de Babar* performed by different artists, in terms of the various possibilities of the performance medium and its stylistic approach, from which I decided my music for the project should be a piano solo with narration. Intimacy between the performer and audience was a factor I always anticipated for performance, alongside stage settings and performance styles, which were elements I always felt important to my work. Poulenc’s pianistic approach accompanying every event in the story captured all my senses and spurred my desire to perform my pieces for the book on my own. The piano score of *L’Histoire de Babar* showed how specifically Poulenc described the mood and characteristics of the piece to be performed which would make a difference in enhancing the original story. I also tried to describe my music as specifically as possible on the score which made me realize the detail of my pieces vividly.

In the end, love of creating a story, painting, and composing music has always been the
center of my life, which led me to create a children’s book with music. I learned many new things from the difficulties and issues I faced on all subjects I dealt with throughout my creation process. Creating a children’s book also made me realize the existence of my inner child, which I hope all adult readers discover on their own while reading my book. Creative motivation always comes from what is central in my mind, both consciously and unconsciously. As it has always been my best method to express my inner thoughts and emotions though composing music and drawing pictures, I want to continue this style of self expression in my future. I am already filled with my new motivation and ideas for creating a sequel story of *Something About Marybell*. I truly hope this project continues long into the future and becomes my life’s work.
Works Cited


PART II

SOMETHING ABOUT MARYBELL
1. Prologue

Once upon a time, there was a pretty mansion on a hill in a small village by the sea. Inside the mansion lived a beautiful daughter and her mother. Many more people lived there just to wait on them.
...From the outside, you would think this was the best life, but inside the mansion, people were not very happy.
2. Meet Marybell

"Meet Marybell, the beautiful daughter, a girl full of curiosity and high spirits as all young children are."

Allegro (M.M. \( \frac{\text{d}}{\text{o}} = \text{c. 132} \))
"But can you guess why she looks sad...?"

"What is that peeking out from under her dress?!!"
3. Marybell Sits by Her Window

Tranquille $\frac{4}{4}$ = 72

"Day after day, Marybell sat by her window..."

"...watching the world go by..."

"...all the while wishing she could be out there."
"One sunny morning, as she sat by her window watching the world go by, something unusual passed before her. "What was that?" She squealed, "a flying cat!?"
Indeed it was - a giant, flying cat with fluffy, feathered wings!"
4. Marsy’s Theme
"I must find that cat and ask how it got wings," Marybell thought.
So, for the very first time, she left a mansion by a back door thinking,
"I won't get caught if I sneak out this way."
Quietly, she walked toward the forest where the cat had flown, thinking,
"I have to move quickly so no one will see me."
5. Walking into the Forest
6. At the Open Meadow

At the edge of the forest, marybell stopped when she came upon a meadow. "Oh, there it is! My cat with fluffy, feathered wings! Should I make noise or try to sneak up on him?" she asked herself. "I don't want to scare him away!"

Adagio \( \text{\it{p}} \)}
She tried to sneak but startled him away and he flapped his wings to take off.

"Please don't go! Please stay!" she pleaded. "I need to talk to you! I have questions! I didn't mean to scare you! My name is Marybell. Do you have a name? Can you talk?" She spoke so quickly, she ran out of breath.

The cat studied her and finally spoke in a very gentle voice.
"I've seen you before, looking out your window. You never noticed me high up in the air or perched in the tree tops. My name is Marsy, and I will not run away from you because I do not think you will hurt me."
"Of course I won't," Marybell replied, this time more slowly.
"How did you get those beautiful wings?" Marybell asked.
"How did you get that beautiful tail?" Marsy asked.
"I would gladly trade my tail for your wings," Marybell answered.
"Then I could go outside and fly away free and maybe even make some friends!"
"Perhaps we can share," suggested Marsy. "If you climb on my back, we can fly together and I will look like I have a beautiful, long tail instead of my stubby, fluffy one!"
"Put your arms around my neck, but not too tight," Marsy said.
"Then I will run to take off."

"Whee! You run fast!!" Marybell cried.

"HERE WE GO!!!"
8. Fly High!

"They flew high in the sky and Marybell saw the whole village spread out below!"

Tempo Rubato

Repeat this pattern several times to represent the wind

poco a poco cresc.
Allegro  \( \text{M.M.} \frac{1}{2} = \text{c.} 120 \) with excitement
"Can you take me down to where those children are playing?" Marybell asked.

"Sure thing!" Marsy replied as he softly dipped to the ground.
"Hi everyone! My name is Marybell and I live up on the hill. This is my new friend, Marsy. Do you want to play with us?"
She spoke quickly, breathless with excitement at the possibility of finding some friends.

Their replies came fast and furious:
"You've gotta be kidding!"
"What's with you, weirdo?"
"What planet did you come from?"
"Look at her! She's got a tail sticking out of her dress!"
"Yuk! Is it catching?"
Keep away from us, you freak! Go away!!"
9. Mean Children
Poor Marybell was sobbing as marsy led her away from the group. "We'll just go back to the meadow. We still have each other." Marsy tried to cheer her. "Just take me home," Marybell sniffled. "My mother was right." She climbed on Marsy's back and started to run. "Flying always makes ME feel better!"
10. Sad Marybell

\[ \text{sadly... } \text{ \( \frac{m}{82} \)} \]

\[ \text{\( \frac{p}{4} \)} \]

\[ \text{\( \frac{cresc.}{4} \)} \]

\[ \text{\( \frac{mp}{4} \)} \]

\[ \text{\( \frac{mf}{4} \)} \]

\[ \text{\( \frac{\text{tempo rubato}}{4} \)} \]

\[ \text{\( \frac{mf \ dim e rit.}{4} \)} \]
Just then, they heard someone else crying. The mean kids were pointing up at the big tree.
A little boy was stuck in the highest branch with his tiny, furry cat. They were both too afraid to move. Forgetting how sad she had just been, Marybell asked, "Can we get him, Marsy?"

"We're on our way! Hold on!!"
Bravely (♩ = c. 120) The little boy was sobbing. "Somebody help me!"
"Grab onto my tail!" Marybell shouted. "We will carry you down!"
The little boy grabbed her tail in one hand and his tiny, furry cat in the other hand.

Very slowly and carefully, they set the little boy on the ground.
12. Hurrah!

Now the mean kids were amazed. They watched with their mouths open and fingers pointing.
Marybell and Marsy could hear them say:
"Oh WOW!" "Did you see that?" "That's awesome!!!
The tallest, meanest boy of the bunch ran over to his little brother.
"I don't know what to say!" he fumbled. "Thank you! What are your names again?"

"I'm Marybell and this is my new friend, Marsy," she said proudly.
"I'm Tombo," the boy said. "This little dare devil is my brother, Chuuta. Thank you so much for helping him!" He added, "We'd like to be your friends. We're sorry we teased you."

The other children came forward slowly at first, then suddenly they shouted their questions:

"What's it like to fly?"
"How did you get that tail?"
"Can we have a ride sometime?"
"Where do you live?"

Marybell was full of newfound happiness. "Would you like to come over tomorrow afternoon?
I live in the mansion up the hill."

Tombo accepted for all of them. "See you tomorrow afternoon!"
13. Flying Back Home
Together, Marsy and Marybell flew home. They were both so tired from their adventure.
Of course, Mother met them at the door.

"I've been so worried. Where...where...wh.." she stammered.

"Wh-what is that giant cat with fluffy feathered wings doing HERE!!?"
14. Surprise!
"Mother," Marybell began, "this is Marsy, me new best friend! May he stay with us? Please?"

Her mother was so happy to hear the words "my new best friend" coming from her daughter's lips she exclaimed, "of course he may stay!" She smiled and said, "I'm sure you two are hungry. Let me ring the maids for something to eat and you can tell me all about your day."

When Marybell and Marsy saw all the delicious food on the table, their faces were shining with excitement.

"Is this food all for us?" "Oh! Let's eat!!"

They ran and hopped up into their chairs to gobble the delicious feast.
15. Yum-yum-yum!
"I'm so full..."

"I can't eat another bite..."

"Dessert!?"
During dinner, mother got another surprise when Marsy actually spoke. Together, the two told her all about the day and their new friends, how children were mean until the amazing rescue.

"Now they're coming over tomorrow. If it's okay?" Marybell asked.

"Of course it is, dear," Mother replied. "I'm sure the maids will love to cook for a happy party!"

After dinner, the maids drew a bath for the two happy friends. Marybell and Marsy both jumped into the bubbles.

"This is my first bath!" Marsy exclaimed. "And I'm not even afraid to get wet because I'm with you."

"Taking a bath always makes me sleepy." Marybell yawned.
16. Bubble Bath

Relax and swing $\frac{j}{4} = 80$
Mother told them a bed time story.
She tucked them both in, kissing Marybell and stroking Marsy's fluffy feathered wings.
They both drifted off to sleep, each dreaming sweet dreams about tomorrow's visit.
17. Lullaby
Next afternoon, all the children came to visit.
They brought a ribbon for Marybell and a brush for Marsy.
The girls even made a wreath of flowers for Marybell to wear.

"You have such pretty hair," they said.
18. Welcome Friends
"Why don't we go outside and play hide and seek?"
Marybell suggested.

"The forest will be perfect!"

While they played, the children admitted they were jealous Marybell
had something they didn't have. Her tail was quite beautiful, they said.

"Can we feel it?" they asked Marybell.

"Can we touch your fluffy feathered wings?" they asked Marsy.

One of the children said, "I bet that ribbon would look great on your tail!"
"It just might." Marybell agreed.
19. Hide and Seek
Back at the house, Mother and the maids had prepared a feast of snacks, including cake!

"This is as fun as a birthday party!" the children exclaimed.

"Why haven't we seen you at school?" one of them asked Marybell.

"She answered honestly, "My mother didn't want all the kids to tease about my tail. She knew it would hurt me."

"Well, you sure don't have to worry about that now," said Tombo.

"I'll take care of anybody who makes fun of you!"

And all the other children happily agreed.
20. Epilogue

Allegro moderato (bright and happily)
Once upon a time, there was a pretty mansion on a hill in a small village by the sea. Inside the mansion lived a big, fluffy cat with wings, a beautiful daughter and mother. Many more friends came each day to visit and play. This was the best life, and the people and the cat inside are very happy.
While brushing Marsy’s fluffy feathered wings, Marybell asked, "Do you think Mother will let me go to school? I really want to go to school with Tombo and Chuuta and all our other friends."
"I'm sure she will," he answered. Then, like a very good friend, he added, "I can't wait to see you make even more friends at school!"
They both smiled happily.

Finale