

Berklee College of Music

Love Never Let You Down

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Degree of
Master of Music in Scoring for Films, Television and Video Games

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Abstract

The purpose and intent of this project is not only to reflect on the things that I learned and achieved in Berklee College of Music, especially focusing on my London Recording Project, for my maturity in musical aspects as a composer <**Love Never Let You Down**>, but also to suggest the better way to record in London Air Studio in the future. To do this, I will describe how I prepared the London recording specifically, how I overcome the difficulties in this process, and Musical Analysis related to each scene of the film. Finally, I will explain how all these processes affected my musical growth.

Keywords: film scoring, compositional process, reflective paper, orchestration.

Acknowledgement

For me, every moment of life in Berklee was a continuation of big challenges. I am sincerely thankful to everyone who helped me a lot. First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to SFTV friends in Berklee Valencia. When I have some difficulties, they were willing to help me out even with their busy schedule. Above all, I am particularly grateful to Oscar Lundberg and Rahulraj Thankappan who were sincerely care about me both emotionally and in practicality when I felt anxiety about preparing for the London Cue.

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I highly appreciate to Hwan Sung Cho, a teacher that I respect the most, and all of my friends in Korea, who gave their full materials and emotional supports. Therefore, I can successfully complete the final project without giving up here.

Last but not least, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my beloved family. Without their love, support, and dedication, I would not be able to complete this Master's degree in Berklee. Thus, I dedicated my final project here in Berklee, **<Love Never Let You Down>** to my "Love", parents.

1. Experience of Berklee : What I have learned

I think that Berklee's curriculum consists of essentials to successfully complete the London recording. In particular, thanks to the experience of several recording sessions in the course, I was able to see what I should be careful in terms of the London project. In eight recording sessions before the London recording, I made full scores and parts, and Protocols session for clicks by myself, preparing conducting on my pieces. Through this experiences, I underwent several trials and errors, and this gave me a good understanding of the entire recording process. As a result, I could prepare for London recording comfortably.

In Advanced Scoring class, Lucio had emphasized the importance of analyzing each scene in the film, and we discussed and shared ideas about the scenes and situations of various genre of movies. I had written for Romantic, Sword duel or Comedy, Thriller, couple of main titles, and Epic movies or TV series. Based on this, I realized the differences between composing classical piece in general and music for film, and I was able to develop the ability to distinguish how to organize music according to the movie genre or each scene as well.

Moreover, Alfons had taught us composing the orchestral music in orchestration class, we should consider the weight of each section, how many musicians were playing, the dynamics, the range of instruments in order to make a well-balanced sound. Of course, I orchestrated music without difficulties even before I attended at Berklee, but this class had helped me to develop my orchestration technique even more advanced than ever. At that time, I realized that I would consider the weight of sections. This progress led me to create my 51-pieces orchestral music for London more perfectly.

Lastly, in Recording Edit Mixing Technique classes, I was able to learn how to mix well with orchestral music; the use of the equalizer (EQ) for each section, the way to control of compressor and reverbs, the use of Rx7 to remove noises, mastering. Especially in terms of the EQ, I did not know

which frequency I would cut or boost in the first semester. However, Pablo introduced a book ¹“Audio Production and Critical Listening: Technical Ear Training” and a program called “Critical Ear Trainer” in which we can train ourselves to distinguish exact frequency. After studying and practicing regularly using them, I was able to use EQ more accurately than before. Plus, he taught us how to make the template, which is suitable for orchestral music, and it is really useful for me to mix on my works. Indeed, all these practices and studies in this class enabled me to efficiently mix my London piece.

2. Preparation before Composition

2.1. Searching for Visual Media

I had spent a lot of time on looking for the original score. I made two-pages pdf resources that described the purpose and the detail of London recording, and then explained the project to my acquaintances based on it. Fortunately, thanks to my career as an anchor on TV news in Korea, people around me are on the station and they introduced me to some famous directors and animators. They showed a favorable attitude and were very interested in my London recording. Nevertheless, I got disappointed that the videos that they sent me were not suitable for my project. The project is for 51-pieces orchestral music, but most of their works were suitable for small ensembles or electronic sounds, not for large orchestral sounds. In addition, a documentary film received from a famous Korean director contained sexually suggestive and unconventional contents so, I could not choose it for my CE. I wanted that the video I would choose as my final project contains meaningful story and contents, as well as the desire to draw a bright and hopeful future because it is my musical belief. In the end, I had to go back to the beginning, looking for visual media again in Vimeo, and finally I found the one which was fitted well with my London piece.

2.2. About animation ² <Love Never Let You Down>

¹ Audio Production and Critical Listening: Technical Ear Training (2nd edition), written by Jason Corey, released in August 2016.

² <Love Never Let You Down>, produced by Zombi Studio in Brazil, 2018.

What I chose for my London recording is the animation titled **<Love Never Let You Down>**. Most of all, I liked the title and the warm atmosphere in it. Usually, there are many cases in which the title implies the story of the film, so I expected a lot about it even before I watched the film. It is heart-warming animation follows the powerful and inspiring journey of a child patient navigating cancer. It subverts the stigma associated with the disease by focusing on the enduring power of love. To be more specific, a young girl, who suddenly lost her health, falls into a sad nightmare and has a hard time but, she overcomes the situation with love from her family and eventually meet them. Therefore, I thought that the main message of this short film is that “warm love and affection” between people is the key to overcoming difficulties in our lives, and I really liked this philosophical message at the time.

In addition to the main subject as I mentioned before, I was attracted to the main character because I believed that she is in the same situation as me. In detail, It was the first time that I studied abroad with staying away from my family, so I faced difficult circumstances frequently in this process, but I have gotten over these matters in the end.

3. Composition and Music Analysis

3.1. Musical Ideas and Theme and Development : Related to the story of the film

A	Happy life, a little girl and her dog	~0:15	measure 1~8
B	The girl's fainting and hospital	~0:41	measure 9~20
C	A sad dream 1.	~1:07	measure 21~30
D	A sad dream 2	~1:29	measure 31~40
E	Light and hope and doggy	~1:57	measure 41~50
F	The process of recovery	~2:18	measure 51~57
G	Happy Ending, the joy of reuniting with family	~2:36	measure 58~65

Figure 1. Moa Kang. *<Love Never Let You Down>* Whole Structure

At first, I wrote a simple main theme, and then made various moods according to the scene changes with using the same melody but differentiating the instrumentation and emotion. However,

there were some difficulties in doing like that. This was due to the fact that I knew that this main melody would influence the whole mood of the movie, which gave me a lot of burden. Finally, I decided to make a main theme using the Korean traditional major scale (C-D-E-G-A), Since I had studied Korean traditional music and composition for a long time (see fig. 2). I also thought that this Korean traditional musical skill is unique. Hence, I used the most unique and advanced musical skills according to my life.



Figure 2. Moa Kang. <Love Never Let You Down> Main Theme for 1st Clarinet and 1st Flute

After that, I pondered the utilization and development of the main theme that I composed. I decided to refer ³the sequence of “Married Life” from the animation <Up>, music by Michael Giacchino. The scene where the relationship between two main characters, Ellie and Carl is being shown as time passes from their marriage to the heroine, Ellie’s death. In this film, Giacchino uses the same melody but with differentiating the instrumentation according to the scene changes from happy daily life to the sad and dark situation. I paid attention to this point and applied it to my music.

I orchestrated A part (mm. 1~8) where the girl spends happy time with her little dog, with a bright and lovely feeling of Disney style, using woodwinds’ counter melodies and string pizzicato.

At the B part (mm. 9-20), the girl who wakes up and finds herself in a hospital and then sees her parents talking with a doctor seriously. In this part, I especially refer to the sequence of <Up>, which I mentioned above. The key is to differentiate the mood, from happy daily life to dark situation, through changes in instrumentation, dynamics, and tempo, without changes in melody line. In the <Up>, Giacchino chose this way to maximize the reversed feeling. In the scene, two main characters

³ “Married Life” from animation <Up>, produced by Pixar Animation Studios and released by Walt Disney Pictures, music by Michael Giacchino, 2009. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PD7qi8VK_o

are married and have a happy life, but suddenly suffer to the pain of miscarriage. Thus, bright music with brass and full strings turns into a piano solo or a very simple string pad with a soft dynamics and a slow tempo, naturally leading to sad scene.

Based on this musical idea, at the scene (mm.15~19) in which a girl who enjoyed a bright daily life suddenly collapsed and was hospitalized, I used a slow and *pp* clarinet solo and cello pad without changing the melody line (see fig. 3).



Figure 3. Moa Kang. <Love Never Let You Down> mm. 15~19, for Bb Clarinet part

I considered many options at the scene where the girl wanders into a sad dream in the movie (mm. 31~50) because I did not know how I express the mood and the situation. Therefore, I tried to understand the feelings of the heroin. Even with the situation in which she can not know where she is herself, the girl would have been puzzled and afraid, and she would have felt sad, looking at the shadows of her family and dog. She wants to catch and touch them but unfortunately, it is impossible.

To express this complex feeling, I used 7th minor major chord in a row ; C minor-Major 7th - B minor-Major 7th - C minor-Major 7th - Eb minor-Major 7th. However, when I was finishing composing this part, I became to be aware of that it felt more like a thriller than the feelings of 6-year-old child. For that reason, I thought about what the problem was, and decided to listen to various animated music such as Disney and Pixar to find out better way to approach to the scene.

After all, I realized that it was an issue of Instrumentation, so I determined to change the arrangement of the instruments with leaving the chord progression and melody intact. Both violin 1 and 2 were charge of the main melody at first, but I let only violin 1 part play it with octave divisi technique to adjust the intensity of the melody, adding flute trills and glockenspiel to make the most of

the animation's characteristics. Furthermore, by lessening the dynamics of the brass part, I could alleviate too much serious mood that I created originally.

However, there was a bigger problem in the scene (mm.31~40). The heroine looks at herself with a sick, bald face, tumbles down and is trapped in a giant pill's pouch. At first, I tried to highlight the seriousness of the situation where the main character faces by using several brass instruments with the dynamics of "*ff*," but I realized that it was also too much. In other words, the mood was too serious for a little young girl to go through and feel. Considering the feature of the genre of the animation, I needed different color of the sounds. Eventually, both trumpets and horns, which played main melody previously, were replaced by woodwinds and string section with shaker and tambourine; the brass part was limited to only the rhythmical parts.

In both E and F parts (mm. 41~57,) the process of recovery of her illness, I used the main theme again. Glockenspiel and sustain string section gradually expand and louder, signaling the light of the hope and then the main melody comes out, suggesting that the girl will recover her disease. I particularly paid attention to this scene because I felt that the girl who overcomes her difficulties and discovers the light of the hope was similar to the memories that I had experienced here at Berklee. Additionally, I realized that the process like that is more valuable than anything else in our lives.

In the climax E part, with high string section playing main-theme melody, the counter melodies from horns and cellos appears, and then the brass and all the other instruments gradually appear one by one. This makes the situation more dramatic. After that I used Tutti until she opens her eyes and regains her health condition. Also, from that part of the scene, all the instruments play with sustain technique to continue the touched moments and lingering imagery for a while.

4. Preparation for Recording

4.1. Score and Parts

Most importantly, I have considered checking several times for scores and the parts before the recording. As I prepared for the London recording, I realized once again that we should focus on to

small details about the score and the parts because we have to secure the best result within the limited time, which was 18 minutes at the Air studio. In particular, in the case of parts, which the performers directly watch and play, I had to check all the details, including the number of the bars in the line considering the musical context, the dynamics, and pre clicks. Due to the fact that I had to create an suitable environment for players so that they could concentrate more on their playing comfortably without any questions about my score.

It is also important to have enough time before the recording since we should give out our parts and full scores to the performers and producers and never know when something might come up. Hence, it is better to have enough time to prepare the recording just in case.

Lastly, to minimize the noise of shuffling the paper of the score, we are encouraged to use the special paper provided by the Berklee. Gaining this paper in London is not easy so, it is better to print all the scores and the parts on the campus before leaving Valencia.

4.2. Conducting

It was very exciting and thrilling experience for me to conduct on my own orchestral piece in London at Air Studio. In fact, before that, I did not like conducting myself since I was not used to do it in front of many people. However, at the fall semester, I had several opportunities to conduct on my music in the recording sessions and took the conducting class as well. Through this experience, I began to feel a little bit confident and interested in doing it.

In fact, I tried to improve my conducting skills all the time because I was in envy of my classmates who are really good at conducting. Thus, I took a note about trials and errors that I experienced in each recording session. Based on it, I tried to refined the deficiencies. In particular, I did not know where I look during conducting, so I looked at very carefully when other people do it comparing to mine.

In terms of the London recording, I tried to be careful not to make the mistakes that I did before, and at least show the confident appearance. In my piece for London project, there are many

meter and tempo changes, so it is not easy to conduct; Especially at the marker D (mm. 34~50, see fig. 4). Therefore, I focus more on practicing this part.

Figure 4. Moya Kang. *Love Never Let You Down*. mm. 33~39, Woodwinds section

I still have some struggles when I conduct in front of people, but one thing that I know is that my skill has improved considerably than before.

Finally, the thing that we should keep in mind is to be careful when shuffling the paper of the score not to make the noise during the recording. This is why we need to tape the scores and parts in a proper way as well.

5. Conclusion

London Recording was everything that I have learned here in the Berklee's Master course for a year. In this process, I was extremely busy and had hard time, but learned a lot of things. In addition to working as a composer, I became a multiplayer, including orchestrator, programmer, scorer, conductor. Sometimes, it gave me a lot of burden but, whenever I got some difficulties, I tried to keep calm and do my best, which resulted in a successful recording in London at Air Studio.

In this process, I could understand exactly each step of recording session, the industry deeply through collaboration with various professionals, and find myself growing up as an artist.

As I mentioned above, I tried to find original score for a long time, contacting with many directors and artists. In this course I was able to learn methodological skills to collaborate with people

in other fields. In addition, I had the opportunity to work with some directors who are interested in my music, even though it was not suitable for my London project, luckily, which led me to work with professionals in other fields after the graduation.

It was not easy for me to spend time here in Berklee Valencia, but whenever I felt discouraged, SFTV friends helped me out and also there were professors who always believe in me. Due to their consideration, I am going to graduate soon. I am a little sad at the time, but it is clear that I have grown up more as an artist through my experience over the past year, and I am sure that this will lead me to a brighter future.

My final project in Berklee master's course, **<Love Never Let You Down>** is a music that I wanted to contain my personal wishes and musical belief. I believe that "love" is the main key to overcoming the matters and moving forward without giving up.