

Program note:

The initial inspiration for *The Long Walk* was my experience of walking from my school at New England Conservatory to my Dorchester dwelling, an almost 4-mile journey that takes a little over 80 minutes each way. I made the trip by foot due to financial necessity, near-penniless as a student new to Boston, yet determined to honor my commitments. It was thus necessary to get to my destination in a different way than normal. It was a taxing undertaking that forced me to reflect on the consequences of my choices. I have constructed the work in two movements which may be performed separately or together. Both movements together have a total length of 30 minutes.

Movement I has the title “*Learning Curve*,” and depicts my initial overconfidence and sense of adventure in taking this new journey. This manifests itself in an opening heroic fanfare, played in unison by the entire orchestra. Shortly into *Learning Curve*, however, the music disintegrates in much the same way as my initial confidence. As the scale of the undertaking sinks in, this grows into an alarm verging on despair. Over the course of the rest of the movement the music slowly rebuilds itself into a more complex and mature version of that initial determination and drive. Movement II has the title “*Imminent Mastery*,” and depicts the same journey after it has become more familiar and surmountable. This movement is rhythmically steadier and driving, with only a brief lapse into fear about halfway through with the use of extended techniques in the strings. This movement displays the more natural confidence that was only apocryphal in the first movement.

Overall, the work is a sonic depiction of my long walk to and from home, inspired not only by my observations of various landmarks but the toll it took physically and emotionally, thus creating a unique soundscape of my impressions of this specific stretch of Boston. It is a journey that feels different in warm weather than it does in the cold. It is a journey that feels very different during the day than it does at night. However, it is also a trip through a fascinating and diverse cross-section of Boston's architecture as well as its humanity. I manifest this most directly using the found object percussion--the most unusual part of the sound world. The idea for using found objects in this piece was directly inspired by the stretch of Massachusetts Avenue that passes through Boston's South End. The debris along the sidewalk and behind the yards of chain link fencing was both unsettling and strangely evocative. While it was in fact refuse, I could not help but think of the human stories behind the things they've thrown away.

In this piece I explore the isolation of poverty, as well as inequality, loneliness, dignity and hope. All of these things manifest themselves differently in different artists. To me, poverty and isolation are concerns not only tied to physical and financial concerns, but also to a certain psychological poverty and isolation. These were all things I had to overcome in order to keep my commitments, and complete my education--and thus have become my personal way to find dignity and hope. The piece, therefore, not only explores physical landscapes but emotional ones as well.

Source:

<https://www.google.com/maps/dir/87+Dix+Street,+Dorchester,+MA+02122,+USA/New+England+Conservatory+of+Music,+Huntington+Avenue,+Boston,+MA/@42.3273457,-71.0711215,3639m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m1!1e3!4m1!1e3!1m5!1m1!1sox89e37ba26e084a6b:oxd450d5498bca5113!2m2!1d-71.0576231!2d42.2958011!1m5!1m1!1sox89e37a19cef935ad:ox99f4fd7a1b5d3980!2m2!1d-71.0863764!2d42.3409299!3e2?hl=en>

