

Program Note

The title of this piece refers to an internet-made figure named Slenderman. Waukesha specifically refers to the grave events occurring in a location not far from where I grew up in Wisconsin. Slenderman first appeared June 8, 2009 on the 'Something Awful' forums under a thread titled 'Create Paranormal images.' He was created as abnormally tall man in a business suit, with a pale white body and featureless face. Since then, many have contributed to the folklore surrounding this figure. Marble Hornets, a series of videos uploaded to Youtube, was my first interaction with Slenderman. He became widely popularized, and simultaneously feared.

In 2014, two twelve-year-old girls of a Wisconsin suburb near Waukesha stabbed their friend 19 times. Morgan Geyser and Anissa Weier confessed to luring their friend, Peyton 'Bella' Leutner, into the woods to be attacked. The two believed that Slenderman lives in a mansion in the woods in northern Wisconsin, and they would save their families from his threats by proving their loyalty and joining him to live forever. This piece is my musical interpretation of the process through which the character was created online, the girls came to simultaneously fear and adore him, and their motivation to plot murder upon their friend. It is also about the power the current generation holds in creating stories such as these. Peyton Leutner was found, and recovered from the 19 stab attack in a nearby hospital. Morgan Geyser and Anissa Weier were tried in Wisconsin court, and have been sentenced with time in jail, as well as mental health treatments.

For the Performer

I encourage you to use your imagination in how the music depicts the story. I will offer my conception of the piece as a way to approach the extended techniques, and other interpretive decisions. The opening is meant to depict the creation of Slenderman, building a motive out of nothingness. As the melody becomes fully realized, so does the mythology of Slenderman. He makes his first interruptive appearance just before m. 34. The sounds in the strings are evocative of static noises from the video games when Slenderman appears. The following passage in the piano represents the idealization of the Slenderman figure by Geyser and Weier. After this, their glorification intertwines with the developing legend in a vicious cycle. The piano's idealization becomes obsessive, as the string motive undergoes an additive process. The combination of obsession and developing legends leads to the plotting of such an attack. This builds to the very end, where 19 piano strikes represent each stabbing of Payton Leutner.