

"The Ballad of Cicero:" Telling the story of the political changes in Rome during the Augustinian Revolution through music.

The Problem: The transition of the Roman republic into the Roman Empire was a time of enormous complexity and political convolutions. I have reflected on how modern songs, or even folk songs, tell similar stories of the complexities of other times, and wondered if it were possible to use music to illuminate this time period, through the lens of the historian. I gathered sources and set about building the foundations as per more typical historical research, but then interpreted my findings through music.

Medium: I used the song as the canvas for my work, "The Ballad of Cicero." The guitar and my voice were the paint themselves, and History the frame. I chose to have a blues affected guitar, to give my song a tradition-oriented feel, as well as provide a raw aestheticism which was also fluid. My vocals are plain, almost spoken so as to intertwine with the guitar. My lyrics tell a narrative centered on a "new man," in this case meaning a follower of Julius Caesar who rose to prominence from obscurity, as he finds himself embroiled in the Roman Revolution. I make heavy use of metaphors, and reference other time periods and even pop-culture, in an effort to relate and contextualize this period.

Conclusion: I believe writing and composing this song has allowed me some insights into the nature of the Augustinian revolution, and has significantly more personalized the matter. These people lived and thought as fully functional humans, something that time occasionally muddies, and that is easier to understand through a recognizable medium.

As a final note, it is my personal wish to see fewer boundaries between methods of thinking, incorporating art in with other methods of thought, because all contain powerful lenses through which we can view our world.