

Devin Sanclemente tells of an oncoming symphony: A four act “musical” creation of his that is his mind’s unique imaginings, anxieties and history made real whilst asking a question: “Can I be myself and connect successfully with others at the same time”? With Autism, he’s never been so sure. But with his symphony, he dares to answer.

The first movement puts Devin’s human condition at display. His physical mannerisms are erratic and either charming or uniquely disarming beyond control. His outer voice’s loud volume and his poetic and quirky word choice is only bested by his constant inner monologue. Beneath these natural eccentricities rests a gentle heart that only wishes to interact and understand others. But such unique qualities are often met with confusion, frustration and anger. Despite constant rejection, Devin has grown without creating an interpersonal facade, and has no interest in that. For better or worse, he can only be himself.

Devin says what he wants in spite of what he always gets: To delight and amaze others with who he is. This second movement searches for how Devin can please others, and theorizes that all social successes occur when one is especially in a great mood and highly energetic. Obsessed with the concept of always having energy to the point of perfection, Devin’s second act of his symphony concludes on a failed note. With an exhausted body and a burnt out mind, Devin craves more energy, and for the first time in his life, essentially craving perfection.

Act three begins with a dialogue in response to failed human interactions. Devin is frustrated that modern people have trouble being honest with their emotions, and hiding behind texting and polite gestures and actions to manipulate others. The symphony continues, and he begins to realize that being a people pleaser and being consistently authentic are impossible to do at once, and refuses to deal with this reality. Devin sees other people get by with hiding their emotions and wearing a facade, or a mask. The symphony takes a darker and far more angry tone as Devin holds his breath and willingly dives deep into the act of running away from himself; into his own “mask”. The facade reveals its true nature: a judgmental inner voice that wears down the life-force of the subject. The third movement becomes so dissonant that the music stops, and Devin collapses, gasping for air.

Act four begins quiet, with Devin attempting to piece himself back together. Realizing that he has hit such an extreme low, Devin concludes it is do or die: Rise up with full gusto, or cease living. As the self doubt begins to take its final swing, Devin counters and dissolves this mask he’s created with a renewed appreciation for his own nature. The love from others can come later, and for the time being, Devin rediscovers what he loves about how he expresses himself, and thus, himself as a person.