

Music from other Worlds

**A portfolio of original compositions
with a critical analysis**

By

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Volume I

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Abstract

The basis of this composition is a portfolio of six original compositions with and analysis of each. All compositions have been composed under the title '*Music from other Worlds*'. These works range from small ensembles of just four instruments, to a large orchestral piece. The instruments used are greatly varied in each composition. Each work brings the listener into a new world created by a combination of different texture, timbres, subject matter, styles, and compositional techniques. This portfolio provided a constitution of the development of the compositional skills and styles first learnt in the undergraduate programme.

Volume 1

This contains an analysis of each piece under the following headings;

- 1. Background**
- 2. Musical Features**
- 3. Analysis**

It also contains a conclusion and a bibliography.

Volume 2

This contains the score of all six compositions and an accompanying CD with MIDI tracks and recordings. The pieces composed are as follows:

From under the Pitched (Bongos 1&2, Claves, Woodblock, Maracas, Gong, Marimba, Xylophone)

Trust in the Lord (Tenor 1&2, Baritone, Bass)

Disambiguation – (A series under subjection) (Flute, Clarinet, Bassoon, Trumpet, Horn)

Aslan's Song (Orchestral)

On Mulberry Street (Mezzo Soprano, Flute, Vibraphone, Harpsichord)

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I would like to thank my family for their constant help and support throughout the years.

However, this portfolio would not have been made possible without the assistance, guidance, and especially patience of my supervisor Dr Marian Ingoldsby, to whom I wish to offer my heartfelt thanks.

Introduction

The six compositions contained within this portfolio have been inspired by the idea of finding music from other worlds. i.e. *Disambiguation* explores the world of serialism, *Sepra in Domino* explores both the world of contemporary and the world of medieval choral music. The concept behind the title 'Music from other Worlds' is the following; since every generation is inevitably most strongly influenced by events, styles and ideas of its time, music changes from era to era. Each time a new genre or style is developed the older are pushed further away. This collection of works aims to provide a fusion of these different eras or worlds by connecting the tonality of the composers from the past (Beethoven, Haydn) with the atonality of current composers.

Another idea behind this title was that instruments and collections of instruments, for example the orchestra, are perceived as having certain roles in music, whether contemporary or otherwise. These works aim to take the contrasting roles and create a new world for them to inhabit.

The desire to create an individual voice was always paramount, and hence many compositional techniques were explored. Indeed, some were disregarded whilst others were the inspiration behind the compositions. However, though the shadows of the masters can be seen in these works, there most definitely are individual characteristics also to be found. Some of these are; the presence of strong melody line, the use of triplet rhythms, and a contrapuntal approach to composition.

The first composition *From Under the Pitched* leads the composer into the world of percussion. This rhythmic piece allowed for the exploration of rhythm, timbre and tones without melody being the focus, since previous compositions had melody as the principal feature. In conjunction with this exploration of timbre and tone; the character of each instrument was also

investigated. The main objective of the composition was not solely to explore a previously discovered world of percussion music, but rather through the use of many techniques create a different approach to this world.

Spera in Domino explores the world of choral and religious music. The desire was to create a fusion between traditional and atonal contemporary choral music. Text setting and colouring was also a world unfamiliar to the composer. Therefore, this piece provided an opportunity to explore many different worlds at the same time.

Disambiguation caused the composer to explore a style of composition previously undiscovered. Though serialism is from another time rather than another world, through the composer's love of melody and the rigorous detail and rules of serialism a new world was discovered. Alongside the exploration of serialism, was the use of an eclectic combination of instruments, which would not have been the natural choice of the composer.

In *Aslan's Song* it is evident that the world of orchestral music is being explored. Alongside this is the exploration of programmatic music. Discovering for one's self the role strong melody lines in contemporary music was vital to this piece. It provided an opportunity to amalgamate these two different approaches into a combined contemporary piece.

Vita Liliium is the composition most free from any boundaries. It not only breaks free from any confines, but also completely abandons the comfort zone of the composer. In order to create one own style one must fully experience how far the world of compositions can go, and henceforth decide on the boundaries of their compositional style. This piece also uses a traditional collection of instruments. This combination of traditional instruments being used in a contemporary style furthers establishes the concept of this portfolio.

On Mulberry Street showcases the composers favourite exhibits discovered through the creation of the portfolio. For example, it's has strong percussive elements learnt in the first piece. This composition uses the text setting skills of the choral piece. It also adopts the idea of having an eclectic combination of instruments, which was enjoyed in 'Disambiguation'. Melody is a tool used to depict the story of the text, a skill explored in the orchestral piece. However, it stills has strong contemporary features which were thoroughly explored in 'Vita Liliun'. This piece was a perfect culmination of the portfolio since it is thoroughly immersed in music from other worlds.

In conclusion, this portfolio is a representation of the journey of the composer, with the critical analysis providing greater insight into the details and processes of each composition.

Chapter 1

From Under the Pitched

Background

Whilst studying composition for the undergraduate programme, great emphasis was placed on composing works with strong melodic lines. This eventually grew to be the focal point of each composition, and without a melody the work seemed deficient. Rhythm was indeed seen as important, but only as it could contribute to and support the melody. However, during the Waterford Harvest Festival held in the summer of 2015, a percussion ensemble performed as part of the event. After listening for several minutes to a continuous series of complicated rhythms, the question was posed whether percussion instruments can be seen as equal in their importance as non-percussive instruments. This was a strange new world to explore, as it immediately removes the melodic aspect of composition and left one solely considering rhythm, texture, and timbre. Since melody was previously seen to be the most vital component of any composition, this piece instantly challenged this preconceived idea. It forced one to contemplate on and study deeper the roles which the three other components play in composition.

Percussion instruments are often seen as an accompaniment to pitched instruments, where their main role is to provide a beat or for dramatic emphasis. This piece aimed to bring these often forgotten instruments to the fore and place them in a paramount position before the listener. Even when one considers the orchestra and the physical placing of the instruments, the percussion family is furthest from the listener and hidden behind a myriad of pitched instruments.

This work aimed to lift this family of instruments from their classically placed seats to a position of prominence.

The composition was to be more than just a showpiece of the percussive and powerful side to these instruments. It provided an opportunity for percussive instruments to capture an audience and carry them to a world of entirely their own creating. Therefore, the work opens with the steady beat on the woodblock. Constancy and familiarity are themes to be found throughout the entire collection of works. A desire to give the listener a focal point and a base reference point led to the decision to have the woodblock play a steady crotchet beat for the first 44 bars of the piece. This gentle introduction allows the listener to enter the world of percussion on familiar ground before being whisked away to new lands.

Upon commencing the study of composition, one learns that the four requisite fundamentals are; rhythm, melody, texture and tone quality. Since rhythm was the first of these to be developed, indeed historians are in agreement that rhythm existed long before the other three elements; it was only natural that the first composition for this postgraduate would be written entirely for rhythm. It permitted one to enter the world of music from its source and experience music in its rawest form. Copland describes this concept when he says;

“An unadulterated rhythm is so immediate and direct in its effect upon us that we instinctively feel its primal origins. If we had any reason for suspecting our instinct in the matter, we could always turn to the music of savage tribes for verification. Today, as ever, it is music almost entirely of rhythm alone and often of an astonishing complexity. Not only the testimony of music itself but the close relationship of certain patterns of doing work to rhythmic patterns, and the natural tie-up between

bodily movement and basic rhythms are further proof, if proof were needed, that rhythm is the first of the musical elements.”¹

The selection of instruments was carefully made. At first, there was only one pair of bongos, but as the piece began to need a stronger base, the second bongo was added. These two instruments provide a leadership role in the work. They boldly bring the listener along from section to section, and flavour the piece with compelling and fervent material. The claves act as a treble counterpart to the woodblock. Their light and decorative style is a garnish to the firm and solid rhythms played by the other instruments.

The role of the two pitched percussion instruments was not a melodic one, but rather as a pitched alternative to percussion instruments. Their often repetitive and cyclical nature lulls the listener into a sense of security and familiarity. Having two pitched instruments rather than one, gave them a definite presence in the piece. The entrance of the maracas and the gong later in the piece provide different qualities and tones, which in turn provide variation and diversity. Each of the instruments used can be seen as strongly linked with different parts of the world, for example the bongos are essential in African music and the maracas in Caribbean music. By bringing these instruments out of their traditional worlds and uniting them in this piece, it creates an entirely new world where they are amalgamated and yet deeply individualistic.

¹ Copland, (2009), 27.

Musical Features

It was of vital importance that opening of this piece gently lead the listener into the world of percussion. The woodblock plays the role of the beat keeper, which can be seen as a traditional function of percussive instruments. However, the entry of the bongos in bar 7 is the first indication of changes yet to come. At first, this beat was written without the appoggiaturas, but they were finally added to give the simple beat a more elaborate and ornamental texture. The gentle nature of the opening section was composed to show a dimension of the character of percussion instruments that is rarely explored. Originally, the opening was shorter but eventually the solo wood block section was lengthened to make it more gradual. As the other instruments are introduced, the texture of the piece becomes more complex. Each instrument adds to the original steady crotchet beat to create a captivating sound. It was imperative that once the pitched instruments were introduced that they were not seen as introducing a melody and hence, their repetitive material is seen as more percussive than melodic. The listener can be accustomed to waiting for a melody or melodic instant in a piece of music; however, this piece aims to bring the listener through the entire work without feeling the absence of melody.

One particular difficulty encountered whilst composing this first section (bar 1- 46) was to keep the rhythms interesting yet without constant changes to avoid the feeling of inconsistency. One of the major aims of this work was for the listener to hear it as convincing composition, not merely a collection of rhythms. Therefore, it was quite difficult to know how far one could go with the creation of new rhythms without the piece losing a sense of unity. This was particularly difficult in the opening section. Initially, the rhythms of the second bongo were constantly changing however, on revising the piece after a couple of weeks it was decided that the use of a more regular patterns assisted to unify the piece.

This same approach was applied to the claves. Originally, the part was constantly changing but was altered so that it used a more accumulative technique. Initially, the claves works closely with the pulsing woodblock as it slips in and out of the steady beat using quavers. In bar 19, a semiquaver is introduced; in bar 30 a triplet quaver is used and a triplet semiquaver can be found in bar 41. This approach worked much better than merely adding random rhythms as it gave the piece a sense of continuity whilst still introducing new material.

The use of the triplet crotchet is a feature found in many of the pieces of this portfolio. In this work in particular, it provided a reference and/or unifying point for the listener. It is used simply at first alongside a minim (see Ex. 1.1) and continues to develop until it is surrounded with rhythms that are more complex.(see Ex. 1.2, 1.3)

Example 1.1: bar 18



Example 1.2: bar 24



Example 1.3: bar 35



One complication that one can experience when writing for percussion is the difficulty in sustaining interest. As the piece progress, finding different ways of achieving this became more challenging. However, after studying different works by composers such as Varese's *Ionisation*, several techniques were discovered. First was the omitting and inclusion of instruments from the texture, a technique which can be seen in John Cages 'Third Construction'. Though he only uses four percussionists, he has twenty seven instruments which he brings in and out of the composition as required. In the opening bars, the texture is

quite sparse and spacious. (see Ex. 1.4) However, this quickly changes into a totally different timbre when he adds tin cans and claves to the proceeding bars (see Ex. 1.5)

Example 1.4: Cage Third Construction, bars 1-4²

Example 1.4: Cage Third Construction, bars 1-4. The score is in 2/2 time with a tempo of quarter note = 108. It features four staves. The top staff is labeled "N.W. INDIAN RATTLE" and contains rests. The second staff is labeled "DRUMS (PLAY WITH FINGERS)" and contains a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with dynamics *mf* and *p*. The third staff is labeled "DRUMS" and contains a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with dynamic *mf*. The bottom staff contains rests.

Example 1.5: Cage Third Construction, bars 13-16³

Example 1.5: Cage Third Construction, bars 13-16. The score is in 2/2 time. It features four staves. The top staff is labeled "TIN CANS" and contains a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with dynamics *p* and *mf*. The second staff contains a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with dynamic *mf*. The third staff contains a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with dynamics *p* and *pp*. The bottom staff is labeled "CLAVES" and contains a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with dynamics *p* and *mf*. A fermata is placed over the final note of the claves staff.

² Cage & Madden, (1970), 1.

³ Ibid, 2.

This technique was adapted in *'From under the Pitched'*. The maracas were added to the final section to create variety and interest. This completely changed the timbre and mood of the piece and added a new and exciting layer to the texture. (see Ex. 1.6)

Example 1.6: From Under The Pitched, bars 112-113

The musical score for Example 1.6, bars 112-113, is presented in a multi-staff format. The tempo is marked as 100. The time signature is 2/4. The instruments listed are Bongos, Clv., Gong, Mrs., W.B., Xyl., and Mar. The Mar. part includes a 'Change to Maracas' instruction. The score shows a complex rhythmic pattern in the Mar. part, which alternates with simpler rhythms.

Upon the study of Edgar Varese's *'Ionisation'*, other techniques were discovered. One of these was the use of augmentation and diminution of rhythms. This was of great use whilst writing this work as it allows for moments of contrast and interest. In his work, Varese uses the military drum as a steady influence over the other instruments. The instrument commences with a complex rhythm (see Ex. 1.6), which continues to alternate with simpler rhythms. (see Ex. 1.7)

Example 1.6: Varese Ionisation, bars 8-12⁴

The musical score for Example 1.6 shows two staves for 'Tambour militaire' and 'Caisse roulante'. The music consists of a series of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests. Dynamic markings include 'p' and 'pp'. There are also some markings that look like 's' above certain notes.

Example 1.7: Varese Ionisation, bars 16-17⁵

The musical score for Example 1.7 shows two staves for 'Tambour militaire' and 'Caisse roulante'. The music is very sparse, with long rests and a few notes. Dynamic markings include 'pp'. There are also some markings that look like 's' above certain notes.

This approach was also used in this composition. Indeed, evidence of it can be seen in most of the instruments and it was found to be an effective technique to use when wishing to create a climatic point. However, one of the more obvious examples can be seen in the final section (bars 148-159) where the piece is slowly winding to a halt. Not only are the instruments gradually fading out, but the rhythm is also being broken down to a simpler form. (see Ex. 1.8) The desire was for the listener to hear the individual layers of rhythms, which were used in the section. A *rallentando* was also used here to highlight this effect.

⁴ Varese, (1990), 9.

⁵ Ibid., 10.

Example 1.8: From Under The Pitched, bars 151-156

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system, starting at bar 146, features active parts for Bongos (top two staves), Clavichord (Clv., third staff), Gong (fourth staff), Mrs. (fifth staff), W.B. (sixth staff), Xyl. (seventh staff), and Mar. (eighth staff). The second system, starting at bar 149, includes a 'rall.' marking above the staff. In this system, the Bongos, Clavichord, Gong, Mrs., and W.B. parts are silent, while the Xyl. and Mar. parts continue to play.

This idea of allowing the listener to hear with great clarity the different rhythms that the work comprised of and how these rhythms were constructed came from the artistic style called ‘Pointillism’. Pointillism “*Is a technique of neo-impressionist painting using tiny dots of various pure colours, which become blended in the viewer’s eye*”⁶. This section was to be a reverse of this

⁶ Stevenson, (2010), 1371.

concept by focusing the listener on the dots so that they could fully appreciate the beauty of the picture previously created.

Another concept was discovered upon the study of many percussion pieces. This was the placement of the instruments for the performance of the composition. In Iannis Xenakis composition '*Persephassa*', he gave great thought to this concept. For this piece, he had the instrumentalists surrounding the audience. (see Fig. 1)

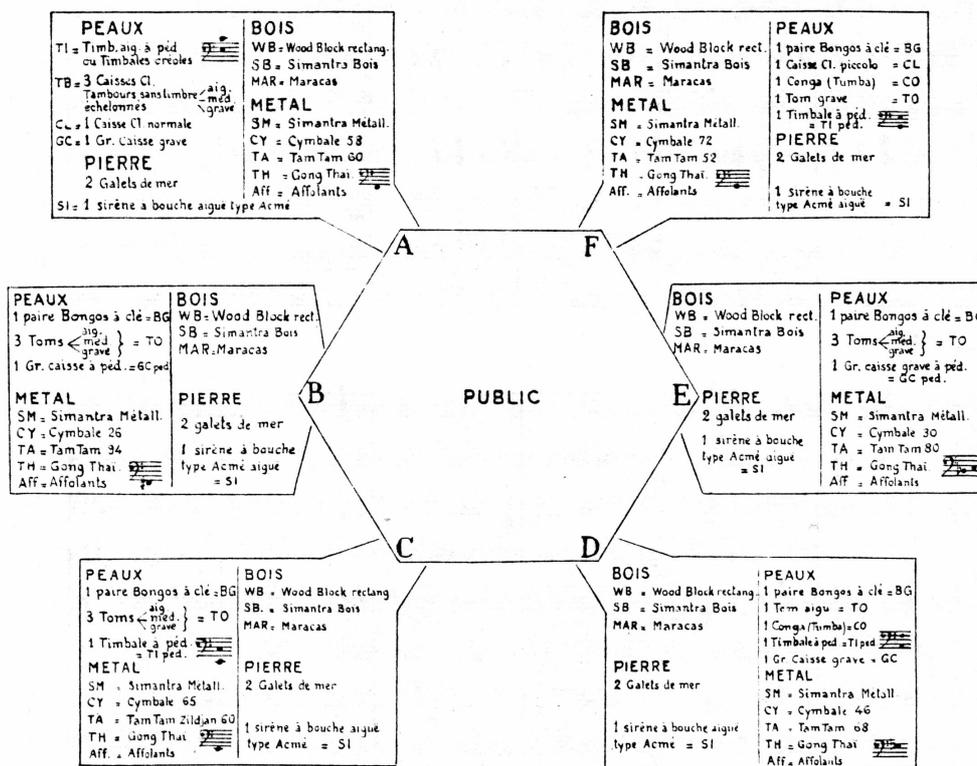
This was an entirely new concept and it started one thinking on whether the placement of instruments can enhance the listener's experience of the composition. Xenakis had a particular sound in mind when planning the layout of the instruments. He allowed the listener to experience the piece exactly as he wished by deciding beforehand where the instrumentalists were to be placed.

The idea was also adapted for this piece. (see Fig. 2) The reasons for the arrangement chosen were the following; by placing the instruments in a semicircle, it gave them the feeling of welcoming the listener into their group or world. The very shape of a semicircle reminds one of an embrace and therefore this was the one of the reasons for choosing it. By placing both bongos in the centre, it allowed them to be the focal point rather than the pitched percussion. Traditionally, pitched instruments are given the central position in ensembles however, since this piece was written to pay homage to rhythm and not the melody the strongest percussion instrument was placed in the centre.

Figure 1: Xenakis Persephassa⁷

persephassa

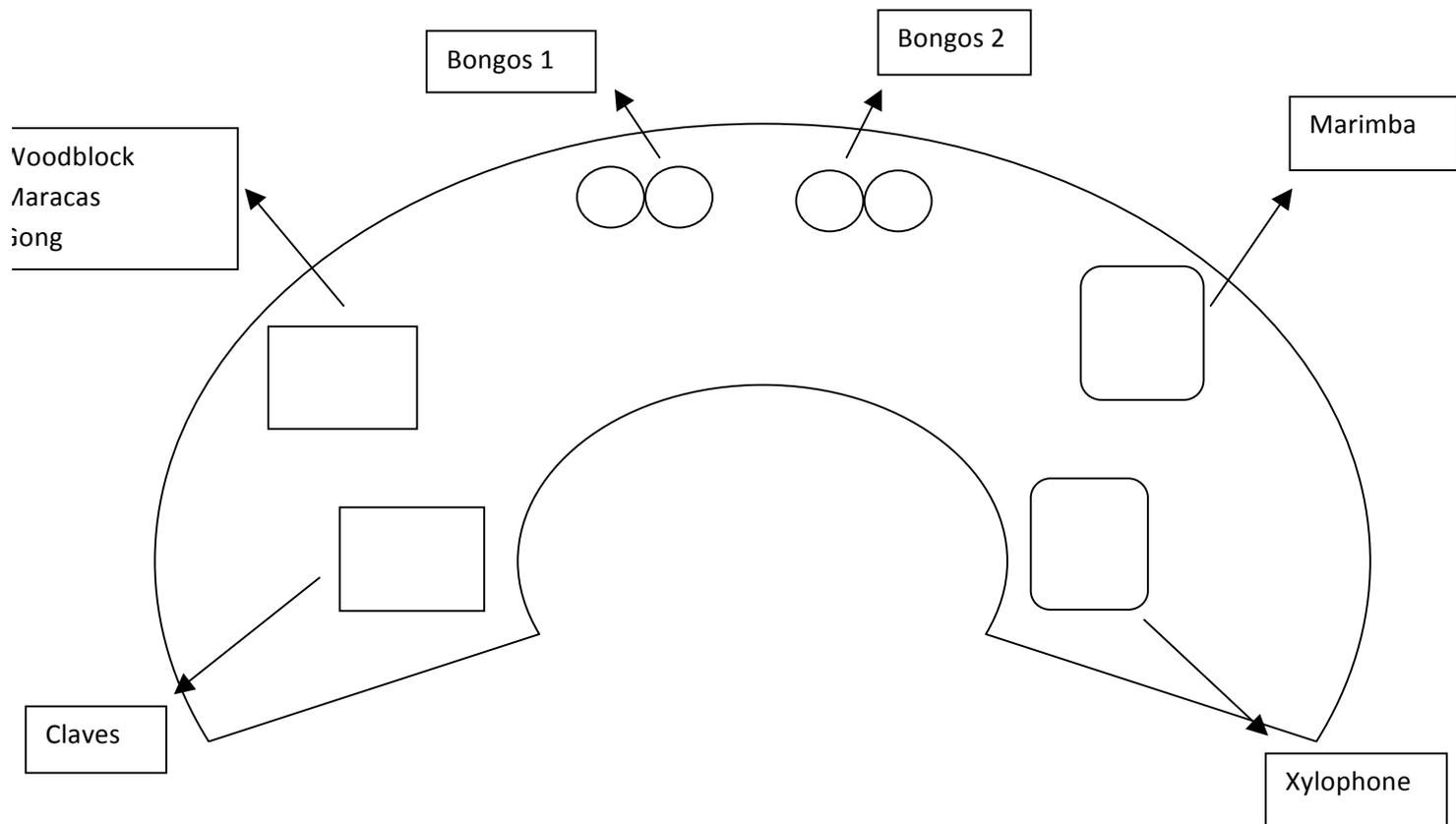
NOMENCLATURE DES INSTRUMENTS ET DISPOSITION DES 6 PERCUSSIONISTES



Les PEAUX sont des accordées et classées en 6 hauteurs de haut en bas de la portée supérieure
 Les AFFOLANTS sont des feuilles en acier très minces de dimensions 30X30cm environ qu'on agite en les tenant à la main.
 Les SIMANTRA METALLIQUES sont des tiges d'acier trempé très dur de 20mm de diamètre environ sur 11cm suspendues et qu'on frappe avec une batte de triangle ou une tête de métal.
 Les SIMANTRA BOIS sont des pièces de bois très dur et sonore de 60X6X2cm environ suspendues, frappées avec une batte de bois ou une baguette à tête dure ou métallique.
 Les GALETS de mer sont arrondis, de la taille d'une main posés sur un caoussin et qu'on frappe avec un deuxième galet de même taille environ.

⁷ Xenakis, (1978), 40.

Figure 2: From Under The Pitched - position of instruments



Analysis

Due to the percussive nature of this composition, the pitches used cannot be analysed since they do not play a melodic role. Therefore, great consideration was given to the structure of the work. For this composition and indeed for most of the compositions a narrative approach was taken. Here, the story of the percussive instruments is unfolded as the piece passes from section to section. The composition comprises of three sections, the first, and the last being of similar length.

Section 1(bars 1-46)

In the opening of this section, (bars 1-24) the instruments and rhythms are gradually and gently introduced. Initially, the rhythms are relatively simple but they gradually become more complex. These rhythms are then further explored in the following section, (bars 25-37) where one can see the instruments interacting and conversing. Features of this section are the exploration of the diminution and the augmentation of triplet figures, (see Ex. 1.9-1.11) and syncopation between the xylophone and the marimba. One other feature is the use of distinctly simple rhythms in conjunction with more complex ones. This allowed the music to remain interesting but refraining from confusing the listener with extremely complex rhythms.

Example 1.9: From Under The Pitched, bars 17-20



Example 1.10: From Under The Pitched, bars 33-35



Example 1.11: From Under The Pitched, bars 42-44



The section gradually comes to a close in bars 38-45. Here, new material is introduced in the xylophone as a signal to the listener that they are being lead into a different world/section. (bar 38) The rhythms heard in bars 43/44(see Ex. 1.11) are of great significance to this composition. They can be found in each section and provide connecting material between the different moods of the piece. They usually can be heard with sparse accompaniment or as a solo in order that their significance will not be missed. The *glissando* in the final bar (bar 46) of this section is a feature that can also be found in many of the compositions written for this portfolio. This dynamic ornament was used to create colour, dramatic emphasis and as a bridging tool between sections. The delight created by performing a *glissandi* on an instrument is one that can be enjoyed at any age. It has been observed and many occasions that when a child is placed before a piano, xylophone etc. one of the first things they will attempt to play is a *glissando*. Therefore, in these works, the *glissandi* is a reference to the child in all and an attempt to recreate the joy found when one first discovered the beauty of a *glissando*.

Section 2 (bars 47-112)

This is the longest section of the work and explores quite a different side of percussion instruments. Whereas the first section was quite rhythmical and fervent, this has a more elegant and cyclical nature. It opens quite sparsely with the emphasis being on the pitched instruments. It was vital that no true melody was to be found in this section hence the melodic cells were short and repeated in order to avoid any formation of thematic material. Since the figurations in the xylophone and the marimba were of an entrancing nature, it was vital that some moments of contrast or silence were introduced to keep the listener engaged. The 2/4 bar rest in bar 61 is the first such example. This technique was used also as linking material further on in the composition. The rhythm used in bars 43-44 is reintroduced here as both a connection between the sections and as a moment of relief from the absorbing textures of this section. Another way of maintaining interest was creating moments of great contrast. This can be seen in bars 99-101 (see Ex. 1.12) and again in bar 107.

Example 1.12: From Under The Pitched, bars 99-101

The musical score for Example 1.12, bars 99-101, is presented in a multi-staff format. The score begins at bar 94, indicated by a double bar line and the number '94'. The instruments listed on the left are Bongos (two staves), Clavichord (Clv.), Gong, Mridangam (Mrs.), W.B., Xylophone (Xyl.), and Marimba (Mar.).

The notation is as follows:

- Bongos:** Two staves. The first staff has a rest in bar 99, followed by a triplet of eighth notes in bar 100 and another triplet in bar 101. The second staff has a rest in bar 99, followed by a triplet of eighth notes in bar 100 and another triplet in bar 101. A dynamic marking of *f* is present in bar 100.
- Clv.:** A single staff. It has a rest in bar 99, followed by a triplet of eighth notes in bar 100 and another triplet in bar 101. A dynamic marking of *f* is present in bar 100.
- Gong:** A single staff with a rest in bar 99, 100, and 101.
- Mrs.:** A single staff with a rest in bar 99, 100, and 101.
- W.B.:** A single staff. It has a triplet of eighth notes in bar 99, followed by a triplet in bar 100 and another triplet in bar 101.
- Xyl.:** A single staff. It has a continuous eighth-note pattern in bar 99, followed by a rest in bar 100 and 101.
- Mar.:** A single staff. It has a continuous eighth-note pattern in bar 99, followed by a rest in bar 100 and 101.

Whereas the linking material used between the first and second section was relatively dramatic due to the use of *glissandi* and strong dynamics, this section ends much more quietly. The instruments are gradually withdrawn until only the two pitched instruments remain. A *ritenuto* was also added in order to bring the section to a complete close. The final bar of this section is a 2/4 bar rest which allowed for the introduction of new instruments and creates a link to a completely contrasting final section

Section 3 (bars 113-162)

The third and final section is only two bars longer than the first section making them almost equal in length. The concept of using a structure with two smaller sections on either side of a longer section came from triptych art. Triptych art is “*A set of three associated artistic, literary, or musical works intended to be appreciated together*”.⁸ In most cases, the first and the third are of equal height and the middle being the largest. This was the inspiration for the structure of this piece.

This section is a complete contrast to the two previous sections. Here, the maracas and the gong are introduced and the tone and texture vary greatly. The rhythms are quicker and busier and the use of the tremolos in the xylophone adds a different ambiance. Whereas the focus in the previous sections often fell on individual instruments or groups of instruments, the focus here is on the diverse textures and sounds that can be created when using the entire ensemble.

This section gathers momentum as it progresses. This can be seen in bars 128-132 where the pitched instruments are omitted and the character of the piece changes. The rhythm undergoes a gradual process of diminution and when

⁸ Oxford University Press, web ref.

the pitched instruments are reintroduced, there is a sense of anticipation and suspense. (see Ex. 1.13) The pitched instruments continue to rise in pitch and tension and finally come to a climatic point in bar 146 culminating with a resounding call from the gong. From this point, the rhythms start to slowly unwind and finally come to a complete halt in the latter half of bar 159

Example 1.13: From Under The Pitched, bars 131-133

However, just when the listener believes that they have returned safely from the exciting world of percussion, the last element of surprise is waiting. In bar 155 all the instruments return with great force to leave their final impression on the listener. (see Ex. 1.14) This element of surprise and shock acts as a cheeky farewell from the captivating and charismatic percussion instruments.

Example 1.14: From Under The Pitched, bars 152-156

Chapter 2

Spera in Domino

Spera in Domino

Lord, the cares of this life consume my thoughts,
And my vision marred by sin and guilt,
But though my flesh is opposed to You,
My heart is wholly Yours

For You said trust in the Lord
Whilst we dwell in this world,
And feed on Your faithfulness,
To delight myself in the power of Your name,
For the desires of my heart You will give.

Lord when I find myself envying this world
And wishing for an easier life,
I earnestly try to change my thoughts,
And focus not on all the strife,
But when the cloud of self-pity clears,
And the truth can clearly be seen
That the world has nought but empty words,
But Your arms uphold me.
For You said trust in the Lord
Whilst we dwell in this world,

And feed on Your faithfulness,
To delight myself in the power of Your name,
For the desires of my heart You will give.
Lord the salvation that You give,
Is the reason for my hope,
And Your constancy the reason for my trust,
Your everlasting mercy,
Grace and faithfulness,
Are the reasons for my love.

Chloe Keating

Background

The wish to compose a true choral piece began in the undergraduate programme when the world of choral music was briefly explored. The captivating and striking effect of a choir singing powerfully was momentarily tasted and left one hungry for more. The inspiration of this piece lies in Psalm 37. Initially, the original psalm was to be used as the text but due to the lack of metric direction in the word setting, a text was written based on the psalm. However, though the composer wrote the words used, all credit must be given to the psalmist for all the inspiration.

The skill of word setting was previously unexplored. Prior to this composition, the voice was only used singing an open vowel sound and played a more atmospheric role than that of this work. This composition desired to bring the world of sacred music and contemporary together. It was to explore areas such as word setting, writing for male voice only, choral composition, and texture in particular.

Texture was to be the main focus of this composition. This piece moves through moments of polyphony, homophony, and monophony. The desired aim was to keep the listener enthralled by constantly changing the texture of the piece yet refrain from fragmenting the piece. To fully achieve this, the world of choral music was fully explored and new composers of the genre discovered.

This choral piece was composed for two tenors and baritone and a bass. The traditional SATB choir was unappealing to the composer due to a large repertoire of music available. Therefore, a male voice choir was the obvious choice. In addition, a piece for SATB choir was composed for the

undergraduate portfolio and hence the desire to explore previously unknown territory was another factor considered when deciding on the voices to be used.

Musical Features

The text was to be the focal point of this composition. The objective was to have the words constantly clear even in moments of polyphony. To achieve this several techniques were used. Firstly, the harmonic material was composed to colour the words and the mood of the piece. This concept was seen in Sibelius' *Hymne Op21, No.2*, As he describes the weary man's unending kindness towards the needy, the bass line descends chromatically to depict the heaviness he feels (see Ex. 2.1) This is not the only example of this approach in this work. Later, the text goes as follows "*Corporis, Corporis tendens animique vires extimas, nusquam sibi parcat ipse*"⁹. (*Stretching the powers of body and mind to the limit, he never spares himself.*) Here the text rises chromatically to colour the word 'stretching'. (see Ex. 2.2)

Example 2.1: Sibelius Hymne Op21, No 2, bars 23-33¹⁰

The musical score for Example 2.1 is presented in two systems. The first system covers bars 23-33 and includes the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "suus mi - se - ris re - cu - sat, non o - pem fes -". The piano accompaniment features a chromatically descending bass line, starting on G4 and moving down to E3. Dynamics include *cresc.* and *f*. The second system covers bars 34-36 and includes the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "suus mi - se - ris re - cu - sat,". The piano accompaniment features a chromatically ascending bass line, starting on E3 and moving up to G4. Dynamics include *dim.* and *p*.

⁹ Breitkopf & Härtel, web ref.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Example 2.2: Sibelius Hymne Op21, No 2, bars 39-54¹¹

Un pochissimo allegro.

mp

Cor - po - ris ten - dens a - ni -

poco a poco cresc.

mi - que vi - res ex - ti - mas, nus - quam si - bi

largamente

f

par - cet ip - se. Blan - da vix il - lum fa - vet

This technique of colouring the text with the melodic contour was also used in ‘*Spera in Domino*’. One such example is the downward movement on the word ‘*consume*’ in bar 22, which assisted the listener to fully grasp the heaviness of the text. (see Ex. 2.3) However, one of the best examples of this can be seen in bars 63-65 where, as the text commences with ‘*Your arms uphold me*’ the voices enter consecutively with a rising motif that was inspired by the word ‘*uphold*’ (see Ex. 2.4)

¹¹Breitkopf & Härtel, web ref.

Example 2.3: Spera in Domino, bars 17-23

17

mf
Lord the cares of this life con-sume my thoughts, _____ and my

mp
Lord the cares of this life con - sume, con - sume my thoughts, and my

p
Lord the cares of this life con - sume my thoughts _____

mp
Lord cares of this world con - sume

Example 2.4: Spera in Domino, bars 63-69

63

f
Your arms. Your arms up - hold me. *ppp* For You said

f
Your arms. Your arms up - hold me.

f
Your arms. Your arms up - hold me.

f
Your arms. Your arms up - hold me.

Another method used to bring the text to the fore was creating moments of unison between all four voices. This was used sparingly in order that it strikes the listener when heard. This can also be seen in Saint-Saen's '*Aux Aviateurs Op 134*' The work moves from moments of harmony to octaves and it is in these unisons that the text is the sole focus of the piece. In bars 17 and 18 the text is "*Maître des mers et de la terre*"¹² (Master of the seas and the earth). To emphasise the force of this sentence, the four voices enter in unison. (see Ex.

¹² Durand & Cie, web ref.

2.5) In the choral piece for the MA, this technique was used in the chorus. At the words “*to delight myself in the power of Your name*”, the voices come together in unison to accentuate the feeling of joy and power.

Example 2.5: Saint-Saen Aux Aviateurs Op134, bars 39-54¹³

Texture was of paramount importance in this composition. It was vital that different textures were demonstrated throughout the work in order that the full versatility of the choral composition was explored. The piece opens quite free from any traditional texture. This creates an uncertainty as to the direction, which the piece will take. However, once the text commences the piece takes on a homophonic texture. This however is not true homophony as there is some independent movement. Brindle describes this texture as “*This gives an illusion of a richer polyphonic texture and relieves the sameness of homophony*”¹⁴ a technique which can be seen in Liszt ‘*Pater Noster III*’. His use of passing notes in only one of the four voices lightens the texture and yet does not disturb the

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴ Smith Brindle, (2002), 778-9.

clarity of the text. He uses this quite regularly throughout the work. (see Ex. 2.6) Evidence of this can be seen in the choral piece for the portfolio. There was a fear that the texture would be too heavy and solid and yet there remained the desire that the text be absolutely clear. Therefore, by adapting the method used by Liszt this desired effect was achieved. (see Ex. 2.7)

Example 2.6: Liszt Pater Noster III, bars 9-13¹⁵

Ad-ve-ni-at re-gnum tu-um:
 Ad-ve-ni-at re-gnum tu-um:
 Ad-ve-ni-at re-gnum tu-um:
 Ad-ve-ni-at re-gnum tu-um:

Example 2.7: Spera in Domino, bars 19-24

19
 8 *mf* Lord the cares of this life con-sume my thoughts, _____ and my vi - sion marred by
 8 *mp* Lord the cares of this life con - sume, con - sume my thoughts, and my vi sion marred by_
mp Lord the cares of this life con - sume my thoughts _____ vi - sion marred by
mp Lord cares of this world con - sume vi - sion

¹⁵Wolfrum, web ref.

Monophony was another texture explored in this composition. Monophony is known as the clearest of all textures and has roots in medieval and renaissance music. Though it is often seen as redundant in contemporary music, it can be of great effect when used in conjunction with other textures. Copland describes this as

“In late times, the use of monophony has usually been incidental. The music seems to pause for a moment, concentrating attention on a single line thereby producing an effect similar to an open landscape.”¹⁶

In bars 38-38, one can see the first example of monophony. Though it is not in the strictest sense in unison, it is in octaves, which is universally recognised as a monophonic texture in choral music. Here, this texture is used to add emphasis to the text, ‘*to delight myself in the power of Your name*’. Since prior to the chorus, the composition has a rather morbid and solemn tone, the desire that this section would be a clear indication of hope, led to the decision to write this in a monophonic texture. (see Ex. 2.8)

Example 2.8: Spera in Domino, bars 36-40

36

ness to de - light my-self in the po-wer of Your name, for the de-sires of my heart You will give.

mf world, to de - light my-self in the po-wer of Your name, for the de-sires of my heart you will give

ness to de - light my-self in the po-wer of Your name, for the de-sires of my heart you'll give

mf world de - light my-self in the po-wer of Your name, you will give

¹⁶ Copland, (2009), 82.

In bar 38 the monophonic section ends with a distinct chord. Brindle describes this approach as “*a strength and vitality which goes beyond what could have been achieved in octaves; the effect is striking*”.¹⁷

In addition to using the entire choir to create different textures, voices were also paired to demonstrate further examples. In bars 45-53, the two lower voices begin the second verse in a contrapuntal style. Though the bass sings the main melody, it is interwoven with the melody of the baritone. The baritone at times goes below the bass line in order to accentuate the feeling of the melodies being entwined. A complete contrast to this section can be seen in bars 79-89. Here only the two upper voices are used. They sing mainly in unison occasionally separating into harmony. The desire was for this section to be in a recitative style. The meter of the section is disrupted by the changing metronome mark, use of triplets and pause marks. The use of repeated notes alongside the aforementioned elements all assist to the creation of a completely contrasting section. From the many examples shown above it is clear that by varying the texture, it adds dimension to the composition and demonstrates the versatility of a male choir.

¹⁷ Smith Brindle, (2002), 80.

Analysis

The form of this composition was the first consideration. It was the first composition to have a returning section. The form consists of

Opening (bar 1-18)

Verse I (bar 19-31)

Chorus (bar 32-40)

Verse II (bar 41-68)

Chorus (bar 69-78)

Verse III (bar 49-100)

The first and third verses are shorter than the second verse. One reason for this is that at the start of the second verse the piece returns to the sustained notes heard in the opening section prior to commencing with the text. It was necessary that the structure of the piece be clearly determined in order that the piece followed a logical line.

This composition is the only composition using a key signature. The piece is written in the key of A major however, in order to emphasise the freedom of from the key signature the piece opens very ambiguously. Little regards is paid to the key signature until the entry of the lyrics. This was done in order to create a feeling of etherealness. It also demonstrates that a key signature need not be a leash around the composer's neck, but rather neatens the appearance of the piece due to fewer accidentals. The use and relevance of key signatures in contemporary music was greatly considered before commencing this composition. Indeed the eminent Irish composer John Buckley was approached and asked for his opinion on the subject. His reply was as follows:

Key signatures remain valid for contemporary compositions that are predominantly tonal or at least have some tonal centre(s); [...] I use common sense. If you use a key signature and find yourself constantly having to include accidentals to contradict the key signature, then it is best to avoid the key signature in the first place. If, on the other hand you don't use a key signature, but find yourself adding a flat before every B for a long stretch of music, then it would make sense to add a key signature.¹⁸

Upon considering this composition and the advice given by John Buckley, it was decided to utilise the key signature for this piece.

Opening/Verse 1 (bars 1-31)

The opening of this piece is quite free harmonically, with the focus being put on chord clusters rather than the key or harmonies. However, in bar 19 once the true hymn starts, the listener finds themselves back in the world of familiar hymns. This approach of combining both a contemporary and traditional style within the first couple of bars was used to demonstrate the combining of two very different worlds. It immediately reveals to the listeners the versatility which can be found in choral compositions.

Once the text commences the first tenor is marked louder than the other three voices. This was done in order to ensure that there would be a clear melody line and that the other three voices would not confuse the text due to their countermelodies and rhythms. This balance of dynamics between the vocal lines is constantly changing. Each voice has an opportunity to be the lead vocal

¹⁸Personal Communication, Email, 2016.

line and the consequential effect of different combinations of voices helps to keep the piece interesting.

Chorus (bars 32-40)

Whereas the opening section is quite dark and heavy due to the text describing the struggles of life, the chorus is in complete contrast. Instantly, the piece is strongly in the key of A major. This was done to emphasise the positivity felt by the psalmist when considering God's answer to the problems of life. In bar 37, all voices are singing in octaves and the mood of the piece is brighter and more uplifting. Great thought was given to the composition of the chorus since it was to be the only material to be repeated. The desire was to have the lyrics extremely easy to comprehend and for it to make a strong impression on the listener. Therefore, the melodic line is relatively simple yet striking.

Verse II (bars 41-68)

Though each verse has different melodic content, it was necessary that there was some unity between the verses. Therefore, the start of the second verse begins with the open vowel 'Ah' which was heard in the opening section. This not only acts as a moment of unity, but also as a time to reflect on the material prior to this. (see Ex. 2.9)

Example 2.9: Spera in Domino, bars 41-47

41

Ah _____
p

Ah _____
p

Lord when I find my - self en-vy-ing
p

Ah _____
p

Lord when I find my-self en-vy-ing this world and
mf

Once the text begins, it is clear that the texture is quite different to verse 1. The piece begins with the two lower voices singing in a contrapuntal style. In bar 54 the upper voices enter once again with the open vowel. The inspiration behind the inclusion of these upper voices lay in the text. Just as the text describes the '*cloud of self-pity*' clearing, the upper voices illustrates this by the opening of the harmonies and the texture which had heretofore been rather close. (see Ex. 2.10) The other important feature of this section is the combining of the two distinct styles heard in the opening and the first verse. In the first verse, there is no uniting of the contemporary opening section with the more traditional verse 1. However, here the 'ah's' still pay little or no attention to the time signature but the harmonies are much more sweeter and palatable

Example 2.10: Spera in Domino, bars 52-57

52

fo - cus not on strife

fo-cus not on all the strife but when the cloud of self pi - ty clears and the

This verse ends with all four voices singing the text. The melodic movement is mainly upwards to emphasis the lifting of the spirits as the focus returns once again to the chorus. Not only is there the rising motif in bars 63-65 as discussed previously, but also smaller upward flourishes, as see in bar 66 in to emphasise the more joyous feeling.

Verse III (bars 79-104)

After hearing the familiar material in the chorus, the third verse once again presents a completely different sound. Here, in contrast with the second verse, the two upper voices are now singing. The desire was that this section would pay homage to very early choral music in the medieval time, and fact that this piece was composed solely for male voices lent it very well to this genre. To achieve a recitative style, the metronome making was slowed down, *ritenuti* were used, as well as pause marks and triplet figures. (see Ex. 2.11) These all helped to create the style desired by the composer

Example 2.11: Spera in Domino, bars 78-82

78 $\text{♩} = 72$
 mp
 Lord the sal - va - tion that You give is the rea - son for my hope — and Your

The melodic content of this verse is also quite different. The voices commence singing in unison with occasional moments of harmony. It has a minor feel and uses close harmonies, however, once the four voices begin to sing, the harmonies open up. The piece remains in a minor key until the very last chord where it suddenly returns once again to A major. (see Ex. 2.12) This unexpected bright ending is another reminder that though this piece wanders thorough different eras of choral music, it never forgets that it is a piece composed for the world today.

Example 2.12: Spera in Domino, bars 97-104

97
 grace and faith - full - ness are the rea - sons For — my love For — my — love —
 grace and faith - full - ness are the rea - sons For — my love For — my — love —
 and faith - full - ness are the rea - sons For — my love For — my — love —
 and faith - full - ness are the rea - sons For my For — my — love —

Chapter 3

Disambiguation- A series under subjection

Background

The world of serialism is often seen as daunting, forbidding, and unattractive to the lyrical composer. The very word immediately places one in a vast world that is relatively unexplored. One can study serialism in great depth yet until one commences to compose in that style, the reality of the vastness of that world is not fully comprehended. Whereas the previous compositions were approached with excitement and eagerness, this work proved different. The approach to this composition was one of conquering a new domain. The rules of serialism were set so firmly that there was no fear of drifting from the defining features of the style. The understanding that these rules may and often are broken within the world of serialism was not unknown to the composer, however, in order to fully experience and to compose a truly serial piece these rules were strictly adhered to. The aim was to thoroughly explore and understand this world and then make it subject of the ear of a lyrical composer. Originally, Schoenberg invented serialism because he had “*the desire for a conscious control over the new means and forms*”¹⁹ This desire is still prevalent today, and therefore for this composition the aspiration was to have control over the impressive force of serialism; hence the title ‘*Disambiguation- A series under subjection*’.

Timbre was to be the main focus of this piece since harmony was largely non-tonal. For this reason, an eclectic mix of instruments was chosen; that being

¹⁹ Perle, (1995), 30.

flute, clarinet in A, bassoon, trumpet in Bb and French horn in F. This combination of instruments had never been utilised previously by the composer and therefore there were no preconceived sounds or roles for them to play. Also, as the timbre of this composition was to be abrasive interspersed with moments of gentle fluidity, the mixture of brass and woodwind was ideal.

Musical Features

The composition of the original series was given serious consideration prior to commencing. There are many different opinions as to the role of the series. Schoenberg focused on intervals and allowed any melodic or harmonic material to be naturally formed as a result. Berg however, took a different approach. In his book *'The Music of Alban Berg'* Jarman describes Bergs approach as follows.

“Berg also chooses sets that include formations of a kind reminiscent of tonal music and employs these sets in a way that emphasizes these traditional associations. While these characteristics have their origins in the set, the interval succession does not in itself form the sole referential element in the piece. The melodic contour or the tonal implications of the set [...] are assumed to be as important a feature of the set identity as interval succession and may, on occasions, be regarded as more important and take precedence over interval succession.”²⁰

Due to the desire to create a composition that was both written in the style of serialism and yet still have moment's melodic and harmonic content, the approach of Berg was adopted. In the first movement of his *'Lyric Suite'*, Berg keeps the first half of the original series mainly white notes while the second uses black notes. (see Ex. 3.1)

Example 3.1: Berg Lyric Suite, Original Series.²¹

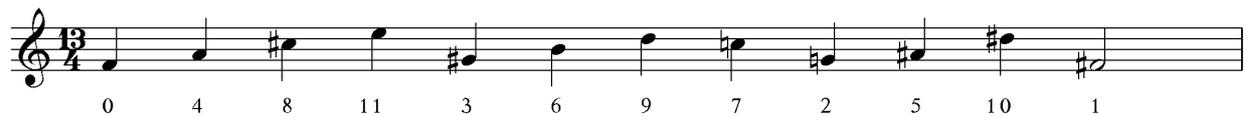


²⁰ Jarman, (1985), 81.

²¹ Ibid, 82.

This technique was also used for the series in this composition. The first half of the series is quite melodically structured whereas the second half has movement that is more chromatic. (see Ex. 3.2)

Example 3.2: Disambiguation, Original Series



Berg uses his series in triadic or chordal shapes throughout the movement, which are '*reminiscent of traditional music*'²². This chordal figuration also used in this series, once again adds a familiar sound to the unfamiliar style. Once the series was selected, the different versions of the series were planned out. A grid was made to further assist this and also to discover new permutations. (see Fig 3.1)

²² Jarman, (1979), 83.

Figure 3.1: Disambiguation, Permutations of series

0	4	8	11	3	6	9	7	2	5	10	1
4	8	11	3	6	9	7	2	5	10	1	0
8	11	3	6	9	7	2	5	10	1	0	4
11	3	6	9	7	2	5	10	1	0	4	8
3	6	9	7	2	5	10	1	0	4	8	11
6	9	7	2	5	10	1	0	4	8	11	3
9	7	2	5	10	1	0	4	8	11	3	6
7	2	5	10	1	0	4	8	11	3	6	9
2	5	10	1	0	4	8	11	3	6	9	7
5	10	1	0	4	8	11	3	6	9	7	2
10	1	0	4	8	11	3	6	9	7	2	5
1	0	4	8	11	3	6	9	7	2	5	10

Orange-6,7,5,1,4,11,9,2,10,0,8,3

Light Grey- 0,8,3,9,2,10,4,11,6,7,5,1

Dark Grey – 10,2,9,3,8,0,5,7,6,11,4,1

Pink- 3,8,0,10,2,9,6,11,4,1,5,7

Permutations



Several familiar features were used in this composition to make it more approachable to both the listener and the composer. Firstly, the work commences with a time signature of 6/8, a time signature is closely linked to an Irish jig. The use of quavers in this opening section again establishes this idea however, the dotted rhythms add interest and keep it from sounding too much like a traditional jig. In conjunction with the time signature, the presence of a melody helped to make world of atonal music more amenable. It is generally understood that melody is the least important factor in serial music and is determined by the intervals used and by varying rhythms. Reginald Smith Brindle describes melodies in atonal music as “*very free, almost improvisatory character*”²³ However, this piece aimed to have moments of formal melody and accompaniment. This is not a new approach in the world of serialism. Schoenberg himself used melodies with traditional characteristics in his later composition. An example of this can be seen in his 4th string quartet Op 37. (see Ex. 3.3) One primary example of melody in this composition can be seen in bars 14-20 (see Ex. 3.4).

Example 3.3: Schoenberg, 4th String Quartet, Op 37, bars 190-195²⁴

²³Smith Brindle, (1966), 26.

²⁴ Schirmer, web ref.

Example 3.4: Disambiguation, bars 14-17

The musical score for Example 3.4, 'Disambiguation, bars 14-17', is presented in two systems. The first system (bars 14-17) features a Flute (Fl.) part with a melodic line, while the Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), and Trumpet (Tpt.) parts are mostly silent. The Horn (Hn.) part plays a rhythmic pattern of repeated notes. The second system (bars 18-21) shows the Flute continuing its melodic line, the Trumpet playing a rhythmic pattern of repeated notes, and the Horn playing a similar rhythmic pattern. The Clarinet and Bassoon parts remain silent.

In the opening section of this composition, the texture is mainly homophonic interrupted with short bursts from the bassoon. However, in bar 14 a true melody is heard. This provides a link to the listener to the tonal world left behind and makes the piece take on a more familiar role. Examples of more traditional melodies can be seen throughout the entire composition. In bars 56-64 the flute plays a short mournful melody and in bars 87-96 the trumpet plays a melody that is formed using repeated notes.

Rhythm is also an important feature of this composition. Smith Brindle considers rhythm as the force behind atonal serial music. He believes that,

“Rhythms in atonal music must therefore take over part of the function of harmonic suggestion in tonal music. They must propel the music towards points of tension and climax, and also

lead the successions of sounds into periods of relaxation and repose”²⁵

Therefore, it is clear that the rhythms used need to constantly change in order to maintain the listener’s attention. Schoenberg also agrees that rhythms need to be varied in order to add variety to atonal music. He made a list of some of the different means in which rhythms can be changed.

“The rhythm is changed:

1. By modifying the length of the notes [...]
2. By note repetitions [...]
3. By repetition of certain rhythms [...]
4. By shifting rhythms to different beats [...]
5. By addition of upbeats [...]
6. By changing the metre [...]

Most of these techniques were used in this composition, one example being the augmentation and diminution of rhythms. However, rather than the series being played in either an augmented or diminutive styles, both were combined. This allowed the series to appear as a melody and gave it a more approachable sound. Initially, the series is heard with a dotted quaver, semiquaver motif. This is then augmented to a dotted crotchet, quaver followed by semiquavers that is a diminution of the original series. (see Ex. 3.5, 3.6)

Example 3.5: Disambiguation, bars 1-2

²⁵ Brindle, (1966), 25.

²⁶ Schoenberg, (1970), 10.



Example 3.6: Disambiguation, bars 14-16



Note repetition can be seen throughout the entire work. It is indeed one of the identifying and unifying characteristics of the composition. This is first heard in the trumpet line in bar 18. (see Ex. 3.7) Here, the trumpet provides a solidifying base to the rapidly changing surrounding lines. This figuration is heard again later on in the piece in bar 88, but this time played by the flute. Though it is quite difficult to fit atonal music into traditional structures, having different elements reappear throughout the composition allows for a sense of unity and structure.

Example 3.7: Disambiguation, bars 18-21



Towards the end of the work one particular rhythm is constantly repeated but in different forms. (see Ex. 3.8)

Example 3.8: Disambiguation, bars 106-107

(a)

This triplet rhythm becomes the pulse of the final section as it hurtles towards the finish line. The use of the triplet was a nod to traditional Irish dance and is also a feature found in many of the compositions in this portfolio. Though this section is interspersed with relatively erratic rhythms, this particular rhythm is quite traditional. However, the use of this rhythm is varied. In some sections, it acts as a dancelike motif, but in bars 114-116 and 129-132 it is reminiscent of a fanfare, which again provides a link to more familiar music. (see Ex. 3.9)

Example 3.9: Disambiguation, bars 114-117

The metre is constantly changing throughout the composition. Time signatures were the main method used to change it. The composition starts in 6/8 time and ends in 4/4 time. In between the two of these are 3/8 and 3/4 time.

This again added to the variety of the composition and allowed the rhythms to provide a momentum for the composition.

In general, the piece alternates between moments of excitement and exhilaration and moments of rest and repose. Rapidly flowing semiquavers are interrupted by syncopated minims. Often, in these slower sections, the metre is completely ignored and rhythmic symmetry is abandoned. This was to acknowledge that fact that though the desire was to compose an atonal piece that was tonally satisfactory, the knowledge of the style never was completely abandoned. The strong metric force of the quicker passages is diluted with the metric obscurity of the slower passages.

In conjunction with the triplet figuration, the use of a bars rest is another unifying feature of this portfolio. In many the compositions it is a 2/4 time bars rest that is used, however, in this composition it is a 3/8 time bar (bar 83). Smith Brindle considers silence as a very important feature of atonal music as it “*is the great contrast to rhythmic stress, to harmonic tension, and to rapid movement. It is the most effective means of forming phrases*”²⁷. In this composition, silence is used as an indication of the end of the phrase and the start of a new section. Previous to this bar, the piece had entered a slower and darker section and therefore the bars rest provided a moment of respite.

As well as exploring the world of serialism, the instruments used also needed a further understanding. Though these instruments had previously been used in other composition, this particular ensemble and genre made it a new experience. It was of great importance that each instrument would have an opportunity to demonstrate individual characteristics as well as playing a role as part of a group. Hence, tone colour of each instrument is thoroughly explored.

²⁷Smith Brindle, (1966), 26.

Different combinations of instruments were also used in order that different moods could be translated. A clear example of this is in bar 37 where the mood of the piece suddenly changes. Prior to this section, the instruments were playing a light dancelike motif. However, the augmentation of the notes allowed one to clearly hear the different timbres of each instrument. Also, the use of the lower register of the instruments changed the tone and mood of the piece. Finally, in bars 47-50 each instrument playing was given a role that demonstrates its versatility. The horn drops to an extremely low register that provides the piece with a low and fathomless bass. The bassoon has moved away from its jerky, *staccato* movement to a gentle syncopated melodic movement. The clarinet plays quirky trills, which enrich the texture of the section, and the flute moves away from the rapid *staccato* quavers and semiquavers to a gentle traditional motif. (see Ex. 3.10) These changes of textures continue throughout the piece in order that the listener would be captivated by the ever-changing moods.

Example 3.10: Disambiguation, bars 46-52

46 (d)

Fl.

Cl. (d) *trill* *trill* *trill* *trill* *trill* *trill*

Bsn. *p* (d-w-h)

Tpt. (d-w-b) *p*

Hn. *p*

Analysis

It has been shown above how the different permutations of the series were given a letter of the alphabet in order that it would be clearer which permutation was in use. The chart below shows which permutation is in use at any given time. (see Fig. 3.2)

Figure 3.2: Disambiguation, permutations.

Instrument	Bar	Series
All	1-34	A
Flute	35-36	B
Horn	35-46	D
Bassoon/Clarinet	37-41	C
Bassoon/Clarinet	42-46	H
Flute/Clarinet	47-55	D
Bassoon/Horn/Trumpet	47-55	D
Clarinet/Bassoon	56-65	G
Flute/Trumpet	56-65	H
Horn	56-64	H
Horn	64-79	D
Bassoon/Clarinet	65-69	C

Bassoon/Clarinet	70-74	H
Clarinet	74-82	A
Bassoon	75-79	H
Horn	80-81	A
Bassoon	81-86	A
Trumpet	87-91	C
Flute	88-95	A
Clarinet	91+ 95	A
Trumpet	92-96	I
Clarinet	93+96	D
Flute	96-105	E
Bassoon	100-105	E
Clarinet/Trumpet/Horn	97-110	F
Flute/Bassoon	106-117	A
Clarinet/Trumpet/Horn	111-117	A
Flute	118-122	C
Clarinet	118-122	D
Bassoon	118+120+122	C
Bassoon	119+121	D

Flute + Bassoon	123-133	A up 6 semitones
Clarinet/Trumpet/Horn	123-133	A up 6 semitones
Bassoon	134+136+138	C
Bassoon	135+137	D
Trumpet	134-149	H
Horn	134-149	D
Flute	139-148	D
Clarinet	139-149	C
Flute	149-150	G
Flute	150-154	F
Clarinet	150-158	F
Trumpet/Horn	150-158	F

Section 1 (Bar 1-36)

This composition is divided into three sections, each increasing in length as the piece progresses. The first section is the simplest with very few challenging harmonies or timbre. The piece opens with a jig like melody on the trumpet and horn with other instruments gradually joining. The majority of this section uses the original series in order that it would be recognisable when it appears later on in the work. The piece opens with a monophonic texture that gradually becomes more polyphonic but returns to the monophonic melody at

the end of the section. This is a very gentle and moderate beginning to the composition and demonstrates that serial music can utilise certain traditional features.

Section 2 (Bar 37-83)

The mood of this section is established from the very beginning. The metronome marking is slowed down to ♩ = 48. This allows the listener to better distinguish the different tones, timbres, and textures. In complete contrast to the previous section, this opens with slow moving chords paying little or no attention to the regular metre of the time signature. Initially, the chords are quite murky and ominous, but this clears a little when the flute enters with a little motif in bar 47. Also in this bar, the clarinet commences to play long trills. (see Ex. 3.10) This is a feature of the clarinet, which can be found throughout the piece, assists to break up the heaviness of the monophonic chords, and diverts attention from the dissonance of the harmonies.

Repeated *staccato* notes are used to soften the severe dissonance created by the harmonies. It also provided a sense of momentum and phrasing. Once the repeated notes commence in bar 56, they continue until the piece returns to the syncopated chords heard in the opening of this section. This section aimed to demonstrate the dark and light shades that can be created by altering small elements making the overall mood quite sombre and thoughtful.

In bar 74 the opening melody can be heard played on the lower register of the bassoon. This is an indication that the piece is emerging from the darkness into which it has slipped. However, in comparison to the obvious and strong melody in the opening section, this time when the melody returns it is camouflaged and accompanied with chordal movement on the surrounding

instruments. The flourish played by the clarinet in bar 79 was heard previously in bar 9 on the bassoon. This also acts as a connecting feature between both sections. In bar 80 the melody can be heard free from chordal accompaniment in the clear style of the opening section.

This section ends with a 3/8 bar rest, a feature found in many of the compositions in this portfolio. It provides a moment of respite after the tension heard previously and serves as a link to the third and final section.

Section 3 (Bar 84-158)

The third section has a different mood to the previous two sections. It is quite energetic and vibrant and has a more contrapuntal texture. The metronome marking changes again to $\text{♩}=60$ which is a little faster than the opening. This section opens quite similarly to the first section with a melody on one instrument. However, the layers quickly build up with each instrument adding a different timbre. When the flute enters in bar 88, it plays the motif that was heard on the trumpet in bar 18. This also acts as a link between the sections. This section quickly develops a polyphonic texture. With the addition of new layers and the *accelerando* in bar 97, there is a definite feeling of rising momentum and of waiting for a climactic moment. In bar 106 all the lines of music come together. Though the lines are relatively simple in texture, they are accompanied with dissonant chords that somewhat cloud the melody. However, in bar 114 the instruments play in unison creating a powerful moment. (see Ex. 3.11)

Shifting accented notes are another technique used to add rhythmic variety to the piece. They allow the music to break free from the bonds of the time signature and act as a catalyst to the climatic moments. The triplet section

returns in bar 124 but this time it ends with more force and a *ritenuto* in bar 132. This provides a signal to the listener that the piece is coming to a close.

Example 3.11: Disambiguation, bars 113-115

From the strong and straightforward fanfare, a light and sparkling section bursts through with a texture that has not been heard previously. When heard for the first time in bar 118, only woodwind instruments play it; however, when heard again in bar 134, it is the trumpet and the horn that take over the *staccato* notes. This constant changing of textures keeps the listener enthralled and spoilt by a constant array of new sounds.

From this section, the piece leads into a series of changes before concluding. The time signature changes to 3/4 in order that there would be a smoother transition to the 4/4 time in bar 148. The chords in bars 139-142 are reminiscent of the heavy chords heard in the previous section. However, here they are not quite as dissonant or syncopated. The clarinet commences the trills, which are a regular feature of the piece. The piece begins a winding semiquaver motif that slowly comes to a halt in bar 158. The fluid movement of the flute is

in contrast to the *staccato* quavers in the clarinet and the minims in the trumpet and horn. The final texture is layered, ranging from minims in the lower instruments to semiquavers in the flute providing a fitting and final tribute to serialism.

Chapter 4

Aslan's Song

Background

The fourth piece '*Aslan's Song*', proved to be the most challenging piece to begin. Since it is an orchestral piece, the vast amount of instruments, the variety of timbres and textures of each family and the scoring of the piece were immense obstacles to immediately face. The desire was that this piece would fully immerse itself into the enchanting world of orchestral music where all the delights that an orchestra can offer are to be found. However, many skills needed to be developed prior to writing. The orchestra can prove to be an unruly student if not properly tamed; however, once all the instruments are under the control of the composer, no sweeter sound that is more delightful is to be heard. Despite the difficulty of beginning this work, it was by far the most pleasurable to write. The innumerable amount of different combinations of timbres and textures at the composers disposal, indulges them with a wealth of material to work with. The hours of composition are rewarded by a richness of sound that no other ensemble can offer. The experience was discovered to be less daunting than expected and this work is infused with fanfares, waltzes, *tutti* and solos, all the best that an orchestra can offer.

Melody was to be the primary element explored in this work. Though it was inevitable that texture and tone quality were also to play a major role, the desire was that melody would be the predominant consideration. This idea needed some consideration before commencing this piece. Many composers and academics are in constant discussion whether melody is relevant in contemporary compositions. Upon researching this topic, it was discovered that

there are many different opinions. In his book, *'Settling the score'* Oliver discusses the role of melody in contemporary music. He observes, "*melody has remained central to the vast majority of music written in this as in previous centuries*"²⁸ but it has become more extreme and unpredictable than previous generations. Copland argues that the perception of melody has changed over the years and that regardless of which genre a melody is written in, it must complete its function in a composition "*It should be followed like a continuous thread which leads the listener through a piece from the very beginning to the very end.*"²⁹ Stravinsky considered melody to be an element of composition that never diminishes in importance. He discusses how melody was not as important in Renaissance and Middle Ages as it was in the Classical and Romantic era, but in the current era opinions are divided as to its importance. Stravinsky personal opinion is that

"Under the influence of the learned intellectualism that held sway among music-lovers of the serious sort, it was for a long time fashionable to disdain melody. I am beginning to think, in full agreement with the general public, that melody must keep its place at the summit of the hierarchy of elements that make up music."³⁰

Upon the consideration of all the opinions stated above it was determined that the skill of melody writing must be developed as part of this postgraduate study. It was determined that the orchestra was most suited to this style after reading Lawson's views on writing for the orchestra. In his book, he makes the valid point that from a financial point of view, an orchestra finds it difficult to find a large audience for extremely contemporary music. Indeed the musicians

²⁸ Oliver, (1991), 139.

²⁹ Copland, (2009), 47-8.

³⁰ Cross, (2003), 40.

themselves can be wary of and shy away from contemporary music due to less familiarity with the styles.³¹ However, the orchestra cannot be considered irrelevant in contemporary music. The diverseness of timbres, textures, and ambiance that it can create are indeed a wealth to a composer. Therefore, to compose a contemporary piece that would gently draw the orchestra into the current era became the primary aim of the piece. The wish was that the listener would find comfort in its melodic style whilst accepting the contemporary idiosyncrasies.

³¹ Lawson, (2003), 225.

Musical Features

This piece is based on a chapter in C.S Lewis' book '*The Magicians Nephew*' describing how the lion, Aslan, sings Narnia into being.

In the darkness something was happening at last. A voice had begun to sing. It was very far away and Digory found it hard to decide from what direction it was coming. Sometimes it seemed to come from all directions at once. Sometimes he almost thought it was coming out of the earth beneath them. Its lower notes were deep enough to be the voice of the earth herself. There were no words. There was hardly even a tune. [...] Then two wonders happened at the same moment. One was that the voice was suddenly joined by other voices; more voices than you could possibly count. They were in harmony with it, but far higher up the scale: cold tingling silvery voices. [...] Far away, and down near the horizon, the sky began to turn grey. A light wind, very fresh, began to stir. The sky, in that one place, grew slowly and steadily paler. You could see shapes of hills standing up dark against it. All the time the Voice went on singing.³²

The form and structure of this work were one of the first details to be considered. Due to the fact that this piece takes its inspiration from a descriptive passage, it naturally suited a programmatic form. The piece is divided into three sections, each describing a different scene from the chapter.

The initial opening scene uses several techniques to depict the vast emptiness of the darkness prior to Aslan's song. One method is the use of sustained notes in the lower strings; another is the absence of a true melody until bar 28, where it is introduced by clarinet. This melody is then subsequently

³² Lewis, (2002), 93-4.

passed between the different orchestral families until the entire orchestra enters with vigour in bar 44. This technique of initially having one instrument commencing the melody and then passing it between the different families prior to the entire orchestra joining in was found in Ravel's orchestration of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. The opening theme is played on the trumpet before being joined by more brass. It is then taken up by the strings and finally woodwind before the entire orchestra joins in. (see Ex. 4.1) It was essential that the opening section of this piece was true to the picture described by Lewis; that of out of a vast and empty nothingness, a beautiful world came forth.

Example 4.1: Mussorgsky Pictures at an Exhibition, Promenade, bars 5-9³³

³³ Ravel, web ref.

From this stately opening, the piece then continues on to the second section. A waltz was decided upon as the style most suited once the description of the creation of the trees was read.

There was certainly plenty to watch and to listen to. The tree which Digory had noticed was now a full-grown beech whose branches swayed gently above his head. They stood on cool, green grass, sprinkled with daisies and buttercups. A little way off, along the river bank, willows were growing.³⁴

The desire to compose a waltz for an orchestra is one that commenced many years prior whilst listening to the works of Strauss. Though this is a contemporary composition, the desire to acknowledge one of the greatest composers of the waltz was a consideration that needed to be made. Whilst studying the score of Johann Strauss II's '*Künstlerleben, n Walzer 1, Op. 316*' it was observed that his use of the chordal accompaniment in the strings was quite prevalent. He often alternated it or accompanied it with arpeggio figures in the other strings. (see Ex. 4.2)

Example 4.2: Strauss II, *Künstlerleben, Waltzer 1 Op. 316*, bars 11-18³⁵

The image shows a musical score for four string parts: Violin I (VI.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabasso (Cb.). The score covers bars 11 to 18. The Violin I part has a melodic line with dynamics *pp* and *f*. The other three parts provide a chordal accompaniment, with dynamics *pp* and *f* indicated. The time signature is 3/4.

³⁴ Lewis, (2002), 98-9.

³⁵ Keldorfer, web ref.

This technique was adapted for this composition. Initially, the accompaniment was very melodic with little or no chords; however, this was altered in order to add variety to the texture. (see Ex. 4.3) The use of a combination of *pizzicato* and *legato* notes was also inspired from Strauss' composition. However, it must be always remembered that though this section looks to Strauss for inspiration, a conscious decision to keep within the world of contemporary music was never forgotten. To substantiate this point, certain chromatic passages were added and moments of dissonance composed to prevent the piece from being excessively sweet. This section was designed to be a poignant climax of the composition, offering a sensitive and reflective moment between the powerful beginning and the comical yet vibrant ending.

Example 4.3: Aslan's Song, bars 102-108

The musical score for Example 4.3, 'Aslan's Song, bars 102-108', is written for five instruments: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score begins with a fermata on the first note of Violin I. The dynamics are marked as *p* (piano) for Violin I, *mp* (mezzo-piano) for Viola and Violoncello, and *p* (piano) for Double Bass. The score shows a melodic line for Violin I, a rhythmic accompaniment for Violin II, and a similar rhythmic accompaniment for Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass.

The third and final section was inspired by the description of the creation of the animals.

Can you imagine a stretch of grassy land bubbling like water in a pot? For that is really the best description of what was happening. In all directions it was swelling into humps. They were of very different sizes, some no

bigger than mole-hills, some as big as wheel-barrows, two the size of cottages. And the humps moved and swelled till they burst, and the crumbled earth poured out of them, and from each hump there came out an animal.³⁶

It was desired that this section would be in complete contrast to the previous one in order to further exhibit the range and diversity of an orchestra. Therefore, this section commences quite jagged and spikey. Upon consideration, it was decided that the bassoon would be best suited to depict the scenes described by Lewis, due to its low register and earthy timbre. It was an ideal instrument to portray the image of the little mounds of earth rising from the ground. Several works featuring bassoon were studied prior to commencing this section, however, Paul Hindemith's '*Concerto for trumpet, bassoon and Strings*' was one of the main inspirations.

Hindemith's use of the bassoon as a solo instrument is quite unique, and provides a new and exciting texture. He paired it with the trumpet that in turn created a distinct sound rarely heard before. His use of the combination of these two instruments has been described as the following. "*Hindemith joins these two disparate instruments in a most effective way, often resorting to rapid echolike exchanges*"³⁷ This was the reason that for this postgraduate composition, the trumpet enters after the bassoon providing counter rhythms and texture. (see Ex. 4.4 & 4.5) When the trumpet commences to play the melody alongside the bassoon, the bassoon drops down an octave to further exhibit diverse nature of the instrument. Hindemith also uses this technique in his concerto when he uses runs and scales to demonstrate the great range of the instrument. He also accompanies

³⁶ Lewis, (2002), 105.

³⁷ Roeder, (1994). 390.

the bassoon and trumpet with *pizzicato* strings. This inspired the use of this technique in this composition. It provided a light accompaniment to the bubbling melody line.

Example 4.4: Hindemith Concerto for Bassoon and Strings, Allegro Spiritoso, bars 13-16³⁸

Example 4.5: Aslan's Song, bars 159-162

The final influence Hindemith's concerto had was the use of syncopated rhythms in the bassoon line. This was used in this composition to add to the contemporary style and to give the piece a spasmodic feeling. (see Ex. 4.6 & 4.7)

³⁸ Von Fischer, web ref.

Example 4.6: Hindemith Concerto for Bassoon and Strings, Allegro Spiritoso,
bars 84-88³⁹



Example 4.7: Aslan's Song, bars 155-158.



The melody commenced by the bassoon is picked up first by the trumpet and then by the horn. The strings continue to act as an accompaniment to the melodic material. This was in contrast to the two previous sections where the strings were always one of the first three instruments to be given the melody. However, for this section they are never given the melody.

This segment then leads into a fanfare finale. When one considers orchestral works, it is clear that the fanfare plays an enormous role in the orchestral compositions. Rarely can one hear a more powerful sound than that of a fanfare played by an orchestra and therefore, this provided a fitting ending to this programmatic piece. It was inspired by the final words in the chapter that from which the previous excerpts were taken.

"Narnia, Narnia, Narnia, awake. Love. Think. Speak. Be walking trees. Be talking beasts. Be divine waters."⁴⁰

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Lewis, (2002), 108.

This section was seen as melodic translation of those words since the very definition of a fanfare is “*Music played by trumpets or other brass instruments, sometimes accompanied by percussion, for ceremonial purposes*”⁴¹ This was to be a fanfare in its truest form. The trumpet commences the fanfare that comes from within the bassoons melody. Initially, it is the only instrument playing the fanfare as the other instruments continue with the previous material. However, in bars 174-177 (see Ex. 4.8) all previous material is ceased and the trumpet is joined by the other brass instruments and timpani and cymbal; the cymbal being added for dramatic emphasis. From this point on, the full power of the orchestra is unleashed in order to provide a breath-taking and awe-inspiring finale.

Example 4.8: Aslan’s Song, bars 175-178

The musical score for Example 4.8, 'Aslan's Song, bars 175-178', is presented in a multi-staff format. The instruments included are Horns (Hn.), Trumpets (Tpt.), Trombones (Tbn.), Tubas (Tba.), Timpani (Timp.), and Cymbals (Cym.). The score is written in 4/4 time and features a dynamic range from mezzo-piano (mp) to fortissimo (fff). The music begins with a melodic fanfare in the trumpets, which is then joined by the other brass instruments and timpani and cymbal in the final bars, creating a full orchestral tutti.

⁴¹ Randel, (2003), 306.

Analysis

This composition is a programmatic piece comprised of three sections. Each section depicts a different scene and mood and hence, a great variety of textures, timbres, and harmonies can be found in this work.

Introduction (bars 1-27)

The composition commences with sustained notes in the low strings and low brass, interspersed with short ejaculations from timpani. There was an absence of any form of melody from the opening in order that the concept of emptiness was translated. Moments of dissonance and syncopated and shifting rhythms were also used to achieve this feeling. The pedal notes of G in the double bass and E in the bass trombone and tuba merely pay homage to the key of C major rather than being defining features of the key. The first suggestion of a melody is heard in bar 21 played by the horn. (see Ex. 4.9) This is not intended to be a true melody but rather a glimpse of the light yet to come. The viola is also introduced in bar 19 to once again give the feeling of emerging from a deep darkness.

Example 4.9: Aslan's Song, bars 21-28



Section 1 (bars 28-58)

The first appearance of a melody is heard in bar 28 played by a solo clarinet. This is the main theme of this section and it remains accompanied by the sustained notes heard in the introduction on the low strings. However, the viola begins moves up in register and the dissonance heard previously is relieved by gentle harmonies. The brass section is also removed in order that the melody would ring out as clear as possible. The oboe then picks up the melody with the clarinets providing a counter-melody. This light dialogue is continued until the upper strings take flight with the melody. On this occasion, it is the oboe that provides another counter-melody. The flutes are then introduced prior to a resting chord that heralds the arrival of the entire orchestra. This was to create the image of many instruments gradually creeping into the piece without one noticing and it is not until they all play together that one realises their existence.

Once the entire orchestra is playing, the piece takes on a rather contrapuntal style though the melody can still be clearly heard. (see Ex. 4.10) This section continues until it slowly unwinds in bars 51-58. The staccato markings in the wind and brass instruments act as punctuation markings, indicating that the close of this section. (see Ex. 4.11)

Example 4.10: Aslan's Song, bars 44-49

Musical score for Example 4.10: Aslan's Song, bars 44-49. The score is for a full orchestra and includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Horns (Hn.), Trumpet (Tpt.), Trombone (Tbn.), Tuba (Tba.), Timpani (Timp.), Cymbals (Cym.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Db.). The music is in 4/4 time and features a variety of dynamics including *mf*, *mp*, and *f*.

Example 4.11: Aslan's Song, bars 50-55

Musical score for Example 4.11: Aslan's Song, bars 50-55. The score is for a full orchestra and includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Horns (Hn.), and Double Bass (Db.). The music is in 4/4 time and features a variety of dynamics including *p*.

Link (bars 59-66)

This section was composed to provide passing material from the first part to the second. Immediately, there is a change of time signature and as it was the clarinet that brought the listener into this composition so it leads them out by playing a rising figuration until it reaches the key of A major. The chords are quite dissonant due to the use of added 7ths and chromatic passing notes.

Section 2 (bars 67-138)

The desire was that this section would be an elegant counterpart to the previous stately opening section. The tempo is quicker here with the metronome marking changing to $\text{♩}=110$ and the key changes to A major. All these features help to add a variety of textures, timbres, and harmonies and indicate a change of scene. The strings open this section with a combination *pizzicato* and *arco* notes. Initially, all were to play *arco*, but this was altered to avoid the accompanying material becoming monotonous. This section was first composed without the double-stops in the violin II and viola. However, after deliberation and experimentation they were added to the composition to once again explore a new variety of texture.

The flute begins the melody in this section. This is played quite high on the flutes register in order to give the listener a feeling of the music coming from far above and gradually floating down to the listeners. The melody is then picked up by violin. Here, it is slightly altered but remains mostly true to the original flute melody. However, when the oboe begins the melody it takes quite a chromatic and alternate turn. (see Ex. 4.12 -4.14) The bassoon also enters at here and the piece carries on towards bar 115 where there is a *ritenuto* as the violins perform what was desired be seen as a musical deep breath before the

entire orchestra join in the waltz. It was important that this moment was composed in this section to prevent the listener being overwhelmed by the constant melody and so that moments of poignancy could be found.

When the entire orchestra enters in bar 117, the listener is swept off their feet due to its enchanting gracefulness. The timpani are added in bar 125 to add to the dramatic ambiance. The melody begins a series of runs towards the end of this section to dramatize the final whirl of the trees before coming to rest in bar 138. A *ritenuto* at the end acts as a link to the third and final section.

Example 4.12: Aslan's Song, Flute, bars 71-86

Example 4.13: Aslan's Song, Violin 1, bars 87-101

Example 4.14: Aslan's Song, Oboe, bars 103-116

Section 3 (bars 139-192)

This section has four bars of opening material prior to the section fully commencing in bar 143. The change of time and key signature back to C major needed a moment to establish rather than pummelling the listener into the quirky third section. There is a 2/4 bar rest in this opening material. This is a feature that can be seen throughout many of the compositions for this portfolio. It allows the listener to find their bearings and offers a moment of respite. The true third section begins with the tempo changing to $q=100$. The strings are gradually introduced where they are playing a pizzicato accompaniment. Initially, the three strings are playing the same melody; however, this gradually changes with only the cello remaining true to the original motif. These changes were desired to be subtle and only perceivable at certain moments rather than having them as countermelodies. (see Ex. 4.15) The violin I is the only stringed instrument not to take part in this accompaniment.

Example 4.15: Aslan's Song, bars 158-161

The musical score for Example 4.15 consists of four staves. The top staff is for Violin II (Vln. II) in treble clef, showing a melodic line. The second staff is for Viola (Vla.) in bass clef, playing a rhythmic accompaniment. The third staff is for Cello (Vc.) in bass clef, also playing a rhythmic accompaniment. The bottom staff is for Double Bass (Db.) in bass clef, starting with a rest in the first bar and then playing a melodic line. The tempo is marked 'pp' (pianissimo) and 'pizz' (pizzicato).

The use of the bassoon in this section is purely for comic effect. One cannot help but smile when one hears its funny and jerky melodic line. Its staccato texture provides a great contrast to the melodic and lyrical previous

section. The bassoon commences and is soon joined by the trumpet and finally by the French horn. As the desire was that this would end in a satisfying fanfare, it remains strongly in the key of C major until it has fully commenced. The first sign of chromatic movement can be seen in bar 178 where the G# is introduced. Different chromatic harmonies continue to be subtly introduced. The best example of this is in bar 181. (see. Ex. 4.16) Here, the harmony changes without it being intrusive to the melody.

As the fanfare continues to progress, the force and dynamic nature of the orchestra is continuing to be displayed. However, in bar 183 there is a slight break to indicate the piece is coming to an end. The cymbal is introduced in bar 177. The presence of this instrument adds to the dramatic atmosphere and also adds weight to the percussion section. Each instrument in this final section plays a vital role in the dramatic ending. The piece hurtles along until it comes to an end. Whereas the first two sections gradually came to a close with either a *ritenuto* or a thinning of the texture, this section in contrast, ends powerfully and dramatically, a passionate adieu to the orchestral world.

Chapter 5

Vita Liliun

Background

This composition is in complete contrast to the melodic and tonal orchestral piece that was composed prior to this work. It takes a more dramatic, contemporary approach to composition and pushes the boundaries more than any of the previous compositions. However, with regards to instrumentation there was a wish to use a familiar ensemble with a strong history and lineage and place it in a contemporary environment. One can see clearly that this is not an eclectic combination of timbres and the listener will have many preconceived conceptions of what that piece may sound like. These conceptions are the very thing, which the composer wished to challenge. The instruments used are piano and string orchestra.(8,8,6,4,2,)

This composition is also the only piece to be freely atonal. The aim was not to create an aurally pleasing piece, but rather to have the composition pose as an contrast to the more melodic and lyrical works of this portfolio.

The work depicts the life of a lily from a bulb to a full flower and therefore, is quite programmatic and visual. The journey and experiences of the flower in this work are symbolist of the journey of the composer through an unfamiliar world. The reason for using the life of a flower for the inspiration is the following; the life of a lily is one that is relatively simple and straightforward and to which little thought is given. This piece aimed to take this modest story and demonstrate the complexities that happen behind the scenes. This indeed is one of the characterising features of this composition, that of the combination of the simple and the complex. It is also the only

composition to have an ABA format. This is also quite a traditional form, which again depicts the merging of both the traditional and contemporary worlds.

Musical Features

The instruments in this composition play very different roles. The piano represents the lily and the strings the world around it. For this reason, the piano remains the focal point of the piece for the entire composition. The strings are never allowed to take the focus away from the piano. This approach of using a subservient group was new in the context of the portfolio. Usually, the instruments are of equal importance and share melodic content and no instrument remains to the fore for overly long periods. However, in this composition it is the piano to which the listener's attention is drawn.

This same technique can be seen in Saint-Saën's '*Wedding Cake Op 76*'. Here, throughout the majority of the composition, the piano plays a more complex role and the string part can be seen as quite sparse and simplistic in comparison. (see Ex. 5.1) In the ensemble pieces composed prior to this, the instruments were seen as equal and it was important that each different voice be heard. However, it is not so in this composition. The piano dominates the work and the strings are never allowed to shine. Their only function is to enhance the music of the piano. They are used constantly as a unit not as five individual parts. This rather dominant and aggressive role of the piano again depicts the concept of contrast in this piece. The lily is often seen as a gentle and soft flower as opposed to the vibrant and vivacious rose, but this composition shows the lily using all the force of its surrounding environment to enable it to survive.

Example 5.1: Saint-Saën, ‘Wedding Cake, Op 76, bars 86-92⁴²

The image shows a musical score for Saint-Saën's 'Wedding Cake, Op 76, bars 86-92. The score is in B major and 3/4 time. It features a piano and a string quartet. The piano part is in the upper system, and the string quartet is in the lower system. The piano part has a melodic line with a slur over bars 86-92 and a fermata over bar 92. The string quartet provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. The score is marked with 'B' and 'pizz.' (pizzicato).

The other approach, which could have been considered, is that of having all the instruments play roles of equal importance. In the first movement of Hindemith's *The Four Temperaments* (see Ex. 5.2) there are moments where either the stings or the piano are not playing, allowing the other instrument to come to the fore. This approach was not taken due the desire to have the flower and its environment constantly connected and never separated.

⁴² Kalmus, web ref.

Example 5.2: Hindemith, *The Four Temperaments*, bars 25-29⁴³

The image shows a musical score for Hindemith's 'The Four Temperaments', bars 25-29. The score is in 3/4 time and marked 'Allegro assai (about 152)'. It features a piano introduction with a chromatic descending line in the right hand and a more active melodic line in the left hand. The score is written for piano and includes a double bar line with a repeat sign.

Another feature of this composition was the use of chromaticism. This again was a style not yet fully explored. In the first composition, the percussion piece, melodic content played an extremely minor role. In the choral piece, the desire was to allow the piece to be performed by amateurs and for the text to be the focal point of the work, therefore the melodic content was quite simplistic. In the serial composition, the melodic content was dictated by the series and the orchestral piece utilised strong melodic lines as one of its defining features. This was the first piece to fully explore the world of chromaticism and atonal composition. The use of the appoggiatura in the opening section was an ideal way of introducing the listener to this style. These appoggiaturas are both ascending and descending in order to prepare the listener for the unpredictability of the piece.

The semitone was to be the main interval of this composition. There are many different ways in which these semitones are presented, some of which are appoggiaturas, trills, and dissonant chords. Indeed, the main rising motif,

⁴³ New York: Associated Music Publishers, web ref.

emerging from the opening material and representing the growth of the lily, is composed of mainly semitones. (see Ex. 5.3)

Example 5.3: Vita Liliun, bars 34-37

The musical score for Example 5.3, 'Vita Liliun', bars 34-37, is presented in a multi-staff format. The top staff is for the Piano (Pno.), which begins at bar 34 with a 'cresc.' (crescendo) marking. The piano part features a complex rhythmic pattern of triplets in the right hand, while the left hand plays a steady, slow-moving line. Above the piano part, an 'accel.' (accelerando) marking is indicated. Below the piano part, the string parts are arranged in five staves: Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., Vc., and Db. All string parts are marked 'arco' and 'p' (piano) and play a sustained, slow-moving line. The Vln. 1 and Vln. 2 parts have a 'p' marking at the start of their line. The Vla., Vc., and Db. parts also have a 'p' marking at the start of their line.

Another feature of this composition is the unpredictable rhythms. This piece focused strongly on breaking free from the restraints the bar line places on music. This is a concept that has been discussed over many years. Composers are often analysing the merits of the bar line and its subsequent connotations with rhythm, meter, phrasing and even melodic content. In his book, Alcantara discusses the many roles of the bar line

“Bar lines can be normal, abnormal, neutral, prescriptive, essential, superfluous, and even downright harmful. There’s no convenient way of indicating, in ordinary music notation, all the possible roles of a bar line.”⁴⁴

⁴⁴ De Alcantara, (2011), 49.

Debussy's music also treats bar lines with ambiguity. Whilst setting the poem 'Le Son du Cor' to music he struggled with the accented downbeats naturally created. Arthur Wenk describes some of the methods he used to advert this.

- (a) "The suppression of the downbeat by tying notes across the barline; (See Ex. 5.4)
- (b) The establishment of a melodic pattern which cuts across the barline;⁴⁵ (See Ex. 5.5)

Example 5.4: Debussy, 3 Mélodies de Verlaine, Le Son du Cor, bars 5-8⁴⁶

p doux et expressif
Le son du cor s'afflige vers les bois D'une douleur on veut croire orphe.

Example 5.4: Debussy, 3 Mélodies de Verlaine, Le Son du Cor, bars 32-33⁴⁷

Et l'air a l'air d'être un soupir d'automne Tant il fait doux par ce soir mou.

⁴⁵ Wenk, (1976), 146.

⁴⁶ Hemelle, web ref.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

After considering these points and upon the study of many more scores, this same approach was taken in this composition. Little or no heed was taken to the traditional roles of the bar line. Many notes are tied across bars, melodic passages flow through with little regard, and shifting accented beats usurp the power of the bar line. This definite statement of freedom lends itself well to the concept of this piece; that of nature not being able to be defined or confined by man and the placing of manmade restrictions is rather ostentatious and futile.

The freedom experienced when composing with this approach in mind was liberating. It is not until one purposely defies the bar line that the realisation of its prominent role in music can be fully acknowledged. However, though this music broke free in this aspect, continuity and structure needed to be maintained elsewhere. One means of this was the use of ostinato passages. The definition of the ostinato describes the role it had in this piece.

“A fairly short melodic, rhythmic, or chordal phrase repeated continuously throughout a piece or section. Although it is one of the most common and effective continuity devices in music, ostinato is not merely repetitive, like the accompaniment to a Viennese waltz; it also has a structural or thematic function, or both”⁴⁸

The *ostinati* used in this composition are both melodic and rhythmic and can be found in the string section. Their constancy and repetitiveness provide a contrast to the unconventional and radical piano line.(see Ex. 5.5) This technique can also be seen in ‘Mars’ from Holst's orchestral suite ‘*The Planets*’. The work opens with the woodwind playing sustained chords and the strings and timpani playing both rhythmic and melodic ostinato figures. These ostinati return throughout the piece providing unifying links in each section. (see Ex. 5.6)

⁴⁸ Wilson, web ref.

Example 5.5: Vita Liliom bar 84

12

84

Pno.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

Example 5.6: Holst, The Planets, Mars, bars 1-5⁴⁹

I. Mars, the Bringer of War.

Allegro

2 Piccolos

2 Flutes

2 Oboes

English Horn

Bass Oboe

3 Clarinets in Bb

Bass Clarinet in Bb

3 Bassoons

Double Bassoon

6 Horns in F
I II III
IV V VI

4 Trumpets in C
I II
III IV

2 Tenor Trombones

Bass Trombone

Tenor Tuba in Bb

Bass Tuba

6 Timpani
(two players) I II

Side Drum

Cymbals

Bass Drum

Gong

Harp I

Harp II

Organ

1st Violins

2nd Violins

Violas

Violoncellos

Doublebasses

Allegro

⁴⁹ Boosey & Hawkes, web ref.

Analysis

This composition is divided into three sections (ABA¹). Each section depicts the different stages of the life of the flower and this dictates musical content.

Section 1(A) bar (1-41)

The piece opens in quite a sparse and sporadic manner. The music in the first twelve bars is limited to the interval of a second. The purpose was to illustrate the flower still in its bulb form, much undeveloped and barely peeking through the surface of the ground. The pitch, though it appears coincidental centres around F#. However, rhythm is the main feature of this section. The erratic movement creates a feeling of uncertainty as to whether or not the flower will succeed in breaking through the surface of the ground. Rests are also a defining feature of this section. They are scattered intermittently throughout to represent the unpredictability of nature.

Just as the flower grows gradually, so does the melodic and rhythmic content of the composition. The piece blossoms through the use of ascending runs in the strings. The culmination of this section is the growing motif, which commences, in the extreme lower register of the piano in bar 34. (see Ex. 5.3) This ascending configuration provides a climactic point in the piece that is repeated in the final section. It is comprised of two minor second intervals on either side of a major second interval. This return to the interval of the second pays homage to the origins of the piece. The fast rate of acceleration from the entry of the treble line in the piano, serves to paint the portrait of the flower growing very quickly on breaking through the earth.

Section 2(B) bar (42-100)

This section describes the flower as it develops rapidly and flaunts its beauty. However, after this period of display, the flower is hit by frost and wilts back down towards the earth. In contrast to the previous section, the texture is very busy and there are no rests except at the very end and the pitch centre moves to B. The section begins quite simply with only light flourishes in the treble in the piano. It quickly progresses, with each flourish becoming more intricate. The bass line in the piano begins an ostinato figure in bar 67 that becomes one of the identifying features of this section. It starts out quite simple but reappears in several different guises.

The pace of this section continues to accelerate and the tension accumulates as the listener prepares for impending doom. The piano has many moments of grandiosity, *glissandi*, trills, and triplets alternating with quintuplets abound. This extravagant use of embellishments is in character with how the flower is portrayed in this section. The use of trills and *glissandi* is also a common feature of many pieces in this portfolio.

Example 5.7: Vita Liliun, bars 75-77

The musical score for Example 5.7: Vita Liliun, bars 75-77, is presented in a standard orchestral format. The piano part (Pno.) is the most prominent, featuring a complex flourish in bar 75, marked 'gliss.' with a wavy line, and a trill in bar 76, also marked 'gliss.' with a wavy line. The strings (Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., Vc., Db.) play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, with triplets and quintuplets in bars 76 and 77. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

Bar 89 portrays the demise of the flower. The rapid and frantic semiquavers culminate on dissonant chords to bring the piece to an abrupt halt. This is immediately followed by feverish descending glissandi in the piano. (see Ex. 5.7) The strings then begin a repetitive figure that descends in semitones, a feature of the previous section. It eventually comes to a point of repose in bar 100, thus ending this wild and tempestuous section.

Example 5.7: Vita Liliun, bar 84

Section 3(A¹) bar (101-134)

This section shows the flower, weakened by its battle with the frost and once again trying to lift its head. The material of the opening returns, with the only difference being that the double bass now doubles the piano. However, the progression of the flower is more evident here though not as dramatic. The opening material is passed among the instruments and the texture becomes fuller and busier. The pitch centre of F# reappears.

In bar 116, the aforementioned growing motif is heard again. However, in contrast to the opening section where it is only heard once, here it is constantly repeated. Also in contrast to the opening section is that here it is accompanied

by staccato semiquavers whereas in the opening it is accompanied by sustained chords. The tension continues to build until bar 125 where the piano bursts through with a one bar flourish. After a brief call and answer period, the piano takes flight with a spectacular array of semiquavers. Here the lily is portrayed as natural and innocent. The piece comes to a close with a consonant chord in the final bar. This again is in contrast to the dissonant chords previously heard in the piece.

This piece was the embodiment of all the beauty that can be found in contemporary music. It demonstrates how far composition has come. Yet, though it is true to the contemporary genre, evidence still can be found all the genres that came before.

Chapter 6

On Mulberry Street

Background

This composition was inspired by the book ‘*And to think I saw it on Mulberry Street*’ by Dr Seuss. Born Theodore Seuss Geisel, the author of more than 60 books enjoyed huge success as a children’s author. Published in 1937, ‘*And to think I saw it on Mulberry Street*’ was his first book ever to be published. It is for this reason that it is less widely known as the popular ‘*Green Eggs and Ham*’ and ‘*The Cat in the Hat*’. A great lover of travel, Seuss was taking a boat journey when the rhythm of the boats engine caught his attention. From this rhythm the words ‘*And to think I saw it on Mulberry Street*’ popped into his head, and his first book was born.⁵⁰ It was here that he first used the popular and jaunty anapaestic tetrameter, which was to be the metre used in most of his books. This is a triple metre where two off beats are followed by an onbeat. (da da **da**, da da **da**)⁵¹

This was the first composition where the text determined the music. Its vivid and colourful descriptions lend themselves well to musical interpretations. This was one reason why an eclectic ensemble of instruments was chosen. These are as follows; Voice (Alto), Flute, Vibraphone, and Harpsichord. The desire to bring together instruments that flourished in the Medieval and Renaissance eras (i.e. harpsichord) alongside contemporary instruments (i.e.

⁵⁰ Woods, (2002), 10.

⁵¹ Carper & Attridge, (2003), 92.

vibraphone) was in keeping with the concept of this portfolio; that of bringing together features of music from totally different worlds.

The use of text that was appealing to children was another important feature of this piece. Contemporary music is often seen as strictly for the intellectuals of the world of music, however this piece aimed to bring this vast and learned world to the mind of a child. This concept is another example of the bringing together of two very different worlds, i.e. the world of children's music and the world of contemporary music and combining them to create a totally new world.

Musical Features

The text is the compelling force of this piece. It is of vital importance that the music at all times is in keeping with the text. The first method of achieving this was by the collection of instruments used. The text is, fictional, imaginative, and quirky and for this reason, a bizarre ensemble of instruments is used. The alto voice provides a clear delivery of the text, the flute is a classical instrument not often found in a jazz context. The vibraphone is a contemporary instrument with quite strong connotations with the contemporary world and the harpsichord is deeply rooted in the baroque period. Just as the text jumps from Mulberry Street, to reindeer and sleighs, to China, so the instruments were pulled from many different places and brought together.

Several musical quotations were used in this composition and this was the first time it seemed appropriate to do so in this portfolio. The majority of the quotes are from songs that are popular amongst by children. This was done to create moments of familiarity and recognition. The first quote can be heard in bars 53-54. Here, the lyrics are about reindeers and sleighs and hence, the quote from the popular Christmas song '*Jingle Bells*'. Here, the '*dashing through the snow*' line can be heard in the bass line of the harpsichord whilst the vibraphone is playing the '*jingle bells*' line. (see Ex. 6.1)

Example 6.1: On Mulberry Street, bars 50-55

50

M.S. it won't do at all a ze - bra is too small a rein - deer is bet - ter he's fast and he's fleet

Fl. *p*

Vib. *p* *pp*

Hpsd. *p* *mf*

The second quote, a fleeting gesture, can be seen in bar 88. This is from a children's song. *'Nellie the Elephant'*. (see Ex. 6.2) Again, this was suggested by the text and the flute plays the quote this time. The final quote is indeed the most recognisable. In the section prior the reference to the brass band, the mood of the piece changes and has a more 'jazzy' feel. Here, the theme from *'Colonel Bogey March'* can be heard, albeit quite fragmented. (see Ex. 6.3) The use of musical quotations provides moments of both interest and intrigue, and keeps the listener eager to see if they can spot any more. It also assists the composer in the creation of a certain mood.

Example 6.2: On Mulberry Street, bars 87-88

87 *ff* *ff*

M.S. *but*

Fl. *3*

Vib.

Hpsd. *mp*

Example 6.3: On Mulberry Street, bars 105-108

The musical score for 'On Mulberry Street' (bars 105-108) is presented in two systems. The first system (bars 105-108) shows the vocal line (M.S.) with a melodic line, the flute (Fl.) with a similar melodic line, and the vibraphone (Vib.) and piano (Hpsd.) providing a complex accompaniment with trills and tremolos. The second system (bars 109-112) continues the vocal and flute lines, with the vibraphone and piano parts featuring more sustained textures and trills. The score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#).

Being that this is the final piece in the portfolio, several different techniques previously developed in other compositions were included. The percussion piece *'From under the pitched'* used alternating time signatures as a means of indicating the beginning of a new section. However, in this composition they were not only used to indicate new sections, but also were dictated by the text. Just as timbre was explored in the serial piece *'Disambiguation'*, it was also a focal point in this piece given the diverse nature of the instrumentation. Extreme registers are used and the music moves from dramatic *staccato* movement to quieter and more sustained notes. This assisted to dramatize the narrative of the text and to give the listener a feeling that they are moving through a myriad of instruments, not just four. The choral piece *'Spera in Domino'* provided much insight into the craft of word setting. Whereas the concept and mood of the piece was completely different, the

techniques learnt in the process were of great assistance in writing this final composition.

The orchestral piece '*Aslan's Song*' is probably most similar to this piece through its use of strong melodic lines. The skill of writing memorable melodic lines was the objective of both of these compositions. The use of ostinato lines throughout the piece can also be heard in '*Vita Liliium*' (for piano and strings). This helped to maintain the momentum of the composition and act as connective tissue throughout the entire composition.

It can be seen from the examples mentioned above that this piece was an amalgamation of all the skills developed in the previous compositions. Nevertheless, many new skills and techniques were incorporated during this composition. One such skill was the use of rhythm as a means of painting a picture. It is obvious that the rhythms in the percussion piece are descriptive and colourful, but they are not describing any one particular scene. The vividness of the text in this composition made it necessary for all aspects of the composition to assist in the telling of the story. Therefore, the rhythms changed accordingly with the text. This use of illustrative rhythms can also be seen in the songs of Aaron Copland. When setting the '*The Chariot*' a poem by Emily Dickinson to music, he maintains the iambic rhythm in which the poem was written for the opening section. (see Ex. 6.4) Larry Starr comments upon this when he states that

“It is immediately apparent how carefully the composer articulates the essential rhythmic and metrical structure of the poet's stanza. Copland's basic rhythmic kernel is a unit of a sixteenth note followed by a dotted eighth note, corresponding

to the iambic foot unit of the poem and assuring the proper stress patterns when sung⁵²

Example 6.4: Copland, Twelve poems of Emily Dickenson, The Charriot, bars 4-7⁵³

However, Starr later points out that Copland was by no means confined to the metre of the poem. When ‘He’ (being death) is mentioned, the rhythm of the piece is disrupted and each time the duration lengthens. This was to create a feeling of death bringing everything to a halt.

This same technique was used in ‘*On Mulberry Street*’. The piece opens with a jaunty, swung rhythm that plods along as it describes the journey to and from school. However, every time a glimpse of doubt enters the text, the music comes to a standstill. (see Ex. 6.5) Like Copland, the desire was for the composer to remain in control of the delivery of the narrative at all times. However, the musical content of such hesitations constantly changes and the following material is not always a continuation of previous music. This again

⁵² Starr, (2002), 17.

⁵³ Copland, (2000), 42.

creates a feeling of anticipation as to how the story will unfold. This feature was in keeping with the unpredictability of the text.

Example 6.5: On Mulberry Street, bars 19-22

19 $\text{♩} = 80$

M-S. Mul-ber-ry street But that's no thing to tell
mf

Fl.

Vib. *mp*

Hpsd.

23 *rit.* $\text{♩} = 80$

M-S. of, it won't do of course just a bro ken down wag-on thats pulled by a horse. That can't

Fl.

Vib.

Hpsd. *p* *mp* *mp*

Just as the text leads the listener into an extremely imaginative world, so do the many different features of this composition. The listener is humoured with captivating nuggets of embellishments. There are trills, triplets, *ritenuti*, and changes of time signature, metronome markings, and dramatic dynamics. This very visual portrayal of the story is in keeping with the works of Dr Seuss. Not only is he known for his witty and captivating texts but also for his enchanting illustrations. This is also the reason why the musical content

changes with each different scenario. When sleighs and reindeer are mentioned, the piece is light and lilting, (see Ex. 6.6) however, when elephants come into the picture, the mood changes to that of a heavy and solid beat. (see Ex. 6.7) Once the brass band enters the story, the tempo accelerates and the swing element permeates the piece. This obvious use of colourful illustration throughout the piece is a reminder of the vividness of the imagination during youth.

Example 6.6: On Mulberry Street, bars 53-57

53

M.S. *small a rein-deer is bet-ter he's fast and he's fleet and he'd look migh-ty smart. on old*

Fl.

Vib.

Hpsd.

mp mp

Example 6.7: On Mulberry Street, bars 91-94

91

M-S. el - e phant pull ing a thing that's solight would whip it a round in the air like a ki - te

Fl. 3 3

Vib.

Hpsd. ff mp ff ff

95

There are several recurring themes in the piece. The opening *ostinato* figure is one such example. (see Ex. 6.8) Rather than representing one particular image, it acts as a leitmotif for the listener. The story line of the text is far from logical and realistic, and the listener is brought on a wild journey. Therefore, this ostinato figure acts as an anchor for the composition. Another common feature is the triplet crotchet. This acts as a means of slowing down the rapid progression of both music and text. It indicates to the listener that they now have a moment to breathe amidst the riotous happenings of the piece.

The next feature is the use of the spoken word. This song is set in the fanciful imagination of a child. Hence, the use of spoken word that bring the narrative alive and gives it a story-telling feel. The repetition and reoccurrences of these features gives the piece a sense of unity and of cohesiveness and assists the listener to become immersed in the bizarre world of Dr Seuss.

Example 6.8: On Mulberry Street, bars 1-4

The musical score is arranged in four staves, all in 4/4 time. The Mezzo-soprano and Flute parts are silent, indicated by whole rests. The Vibraphone part plays a steady eighth-note pattern starting in the first bar, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and accents. The Harpsichord part is silent in the first two bars and then enters in the third bar with a piano (*p*) dynamic, playing a series of chords with accents.

Mezzo-soprano

Flute

Vibraphone

Harpsichord

Analysis

Whereas the previous compositions were divided clearly into sections, this composition is somewhat different. Here, the piece follows the story of the text and therefore, natural divisions are made in the creation of different scenes. Consequently, this piece is divided into scenes rather than sections.

Scene 1(bar 1-48)

The piece opens with the vocalist reciting the first scene of the piece unaccompanied. Once they have finished the music begins and the first true scene begins. The piece is in a swung rhythm that continues for the entirety of the piece. This work is freely atonal and jazz influences can be seen throughout. Though this piece is atonal, certain chords provided inspiration for the material of the composition. In the first scene, the chord C⁶ is primarily used. Each line uses this basic chord as material for the first section. This chord then changes to a minor interpretation C-D-Eb-G-A in bar 19, which changes the mood of the piece. From bars 22-32, the chord used was Eb-F-G-Bb with an added C#. This more dissonant chord was inspired by the text as it depicts the boy struggling to create a story that would be of interest to his father.

Triplets are once again a reoccurring feature of this composition. However, here they have two main functions. The crotchet triplets are used to slow the piece down and to interrupt the jaunty flow and the quaver triplets were an effective means of fitting in a lot of text in a short space. (see Ex. 6.9) The use of triplets also acts as a unifying feature as in other compositions in this portfolio.

Example 6.9: On Mulberry Street, bars 43-45

43 5

M.S. *dri ver I saw were a char-i - ot- eer* *a gold and blue cha - ri - ot is*

Fl.

Vib.

Hpsd.

Scene 2 (bar 49-82)

The second scene is introduced by a brief change in the time signature. The material used was heard in the previous section but here it is changed to add interest and to colour the text. One means of achieving this was the use of musical extracts from other well-known songs as discussed previously. In bars 53-56 excerpts from the popular *'Jingle Bells'* can be heard. Another method of adding variety to previously heard material was by shifting the pitches to A-B-C#-F#. However, chromatic passing notes are used to show its freedom from any strict harmonic structure.

The text is at all times is the driving force of this piece. Therefore, it was not to be confined by the strict rules of time signature. The desire was for the piece would achieve its narrative feel by allowing the vocalist to dictate the pace. To accomplish this, moments of spoken word, changes in time signature and metronome markings, *'ritenuti'* and pauses were frequently used. The

vocalist dictates the pace as they wish rather than fitting in with a predetermined metre. (see Ex. 6.10)

Example 6.10: On Mulberry Street, bars 56-59

8 56 tempo libro A tempo ♩=100

M-S. and he'd look migh-ty smart on old Mul ber-ry street

Fl.

Vib. mp

Hpsd. mp p

The mood of the piece changes in bar 65. The jaunty easy flowing material is removed and a sharp and jagged concept ensues. This again allows the listener to feel as though they are on a journey, and assists to add to drama of the text. The pitch material also continues to change throughout the piece. However, in most cases it does retain the basic structure of the previous chords used.

Scene 2 (bar 83-100)

In this scene, the elephant is introduced. The harpsichord commences with heavy octaves depicting the elephant's footsteps. The flute then commences the melody, which finishes with a reference to the song 'Nellie the

Elephant'. The combination of instruments used in this scene is also different. Whereas previously the flute played a minor role, it now comes to the fore. This continues when the voice enters and the flute alternates between playing the melody alongside the vocal line and providing moments of countermelody.

This more sparse approach creates moments of clarity where each line of music can be clearly heard and makes for a dramatic contrast when all the instruments re-enter in the next section.

Scene 3 (bar 101-134)

Here once again was a complete change of mood. The melodic content for this scene was inspired by the text that describes a brass band at this point. For this reason the flute plays brief excerpts from '*Colonel Bogey March*'. However, the other instruments play a melody that is a reference to big band and jazz bands music. It is a catchy and fun melody that once again contains all the trills and whistles needed to colour the text. Initially, this section finished sooner and the opening material of the scene was not heard after the vocal line was finished. However, upon hearing the live performance of this piece, it was decided that the section ended too abruptly and that in order for it to leave an impression on the listener, it needed to be longer.

The links between sections needed careful consideration since the mood and concepts of the piece vary greatly. At the end of this section, the new scene is introduced by spoken word in the vocal line and also by several changes of time signature. Indeed this scene itself was introduced by alternating time signatures in order that it could move from the slow and steady plodding of an elephant to a fast and frenzied whirl of the brass band. (see Ex. 6.11) These techniques acted as glue, and gelled a bizarre and erratic piece together.

Example 6.11: On Mulberry Street, bars 100-104

100 $\text{♩} = 120$

M.S.

Fl. big_brass band

Vib.

Hpsd. *cresc* *cresc*

Scene 4 (bar 135-176)

The music used in this section was heard in previous sections. It brings all the sections to a close by allowing the listener to hear familiar material. Another reason for using material previously heard was to allow the text to be the focal point. The listener is not distracted by new content and therefore the final scene of the story can be clearly heard. The melody used for the text *'On Mulberry Street'* remained the same throughout the entire piece. This acts again as both an identifying and unifying feature. The desire was that the listener would leave with that little melody stuck in their head and that they would not even be able to say the title of the piece without singing it. For this reason, these are the last words of the piece and the instruments reinforce it.

Conclusion

To conclude, the aim of this portfolio was to have a greater and informed understanding of the craft of composition. This most certainly was achieved, and the desire to see the emergence of a personal style was realised. Due to the great variety of styles in this portfolio, there was an opportunity to experience many different genres. This led to a clearer concept as to the styles that are more appealing to the composer.

Alongside the experience gained throughout the composition of these works, was also the benefits found by studying many different composers and their compositions. This created a solid foundation on which one's ideas and opinions could be developed.

Each composition was a vital experience in the journey of the creation of this portfolio. The skills and techniques learnt in each one were of great importance and imperative for the development of the composer. In the first composition, '*From under the Pitched*' the composer was forced to focus on different aspects of composition due to the lack of melody. It is to be observed that one of the first skills to be learnt in composition is how to compose a four bar melody. This piece however, removed this foundational stone and allowed for the discovery other cornerstones in composition.

The second piece '*Spera in Domino*' developed the skill of word setting. It also was vital to the learning process, as it is an ensemble with a strong historic roots and therefore all have preconceived ideas as to the desired sound . This challenged the composer to acknowledge these traditional ties, yet refrain from becoming subject to them.

'*Disambiguation*' was the most challenging to compose since the laws of serialism bound it. It would not have been a style considered prior to this portfolio, however, upon completing a composition in the genre, it will most definitely be revisited.

'*Aslan's Song*' was challenging due to the enormity of the score. The manipulation of such a vast amount of instruments was most certainly the primary skill developed. Another was using the orchestra to its full potential, and allowing it to demonstrate but soft and strong sides.

'*Vita Liliium*' was an opportunity for the composer to explore a thoroughly contemporary style without the boundaries of serialism. Here, is a display of total freedom from all ties or historic roots. However, in keeping with the theme of uniting different worlds, a more traditional ensemble of instruments was chosen.

'*On Mulberry Street*' is the combination of all the different skill and ideas discovered in the previous compositions. i.e. it is not nearly as challenging to

the listener as '*Vita Liliium*', yet, similarly has a strong contemporary sound. It contains an eclectic combination of instruments as does *Disambiguation* and many rhythmic figurations found in *From Under the Pitched* can be seen. Therefore, it is evident that this was a journey of revelation for the composer and though it may not be complete, it assuredly was essential and enthralling.

The initial concept of the uniting and exploring different worlds in music was most assuredly achieved. Not only was the composer brought along this journey, but also the listener as they experience each work. This was most definitely a journey of revelation and discovery, and the composer can now claim the privilege of having explored music from other worlds.

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