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‘Music and Nature’

A Folio of Original Compositions for

Various Instruments with

Detailed Analyses

Submission for the Degree of Masters of Arts
Music

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Supervised by Dr. Marian Ingoldsby

Volume 1

Volume 1

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Declaration

I hereby certify that all of the work contained in the submission of this portfolio is my own.

Rowan Sherlock

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Marian Ingoldsby for all her years of support whilst undertaking both my B.A and M.A in music; her expertise and assistance whilst creating this portfolio of compositions and accompanying analysis have proved to be invaluable.

I would also like to thank all other members of staff on the Music degree course at W.I.T for all of their support and advice, and especially to those who helped me realise composition performances and recordings, with a special thanks to Ruth Flynn for her visuals for '*Drips*'.

Particular thanks to my family and friends for their support, whom without, it would not have been possible for me to complete any of this work.

Abstract

The basis of this thesis is a portfolio of eight original compositions with analyses of each individual composition. All of the compositions have been composed under the working title of '*Nature and Music*'; the compositions include solo works, works for small and large ensembles ranging from solo violin, piano, to small wind ensemble, to large orchestra. These works are a continuation of the development of compositional skill and style which I learned and developed at undergraduate level. They have all been based on various aspects of nature; water, trees, wind etc.

This submission has been divided into two volumes:

Volume 1

This contains the analyses of all eight compositions. Each analysis is presented under the following headings:

- Introduction
- Analysis
- Compositional Approach
- Rhythmic Techniques
- Harmonic Style
- Formal Structures
- Instrumentation/Orchestration
- Sonorities/Texture/Timbre

Volume 2

This contains the scores of all of the eight compositions, presenting the analyses under the same headings as volume 1. This volume also includes the conclusion and bibliography.

An accompanying CD containing MIDI tracks and recordings of the works accompanies volume 2, along with a separate DVD featuring a visual clip to accompany '*Drips*'

CD Track List

Track:	Title:	File Type:
Track 1:	Babbling Brook	Recording
Track 2:	Storm at Sea	Recording
Track 3:	Drips	Recording
Track 4:	Still Water	Recording
Track 5:	Changing of the Seasons	Live Recording
Track 6:	Voice of the Trees	MIDI Sequence
Track 7:	Incendios Forestales!	MIDI Sequence
Track 8:	Mechanical Wind	MIDI Sequence

(N.B: some of the MIDI versions of these pieces have not performed the exact changes in tempi which I have indicated within the music)

DVD:

This features a visual clip which was created to accompany ‘*Drips*’ as part of a collaboration project – the MIDI track did not perform the changes in tempi, however the visual is intended to be used as an accompaniment for live performance of the piece. This collaboration was completed with Ruth Flynn, a Visual Art MA student of WIT.

Introduction

“I tried to discover, in the rumour of forests and waves, words that other men could not hear, and I pricked up my ears to listen to the revelation of their harmony.”

— Gustave Flaubert, *November*¹

This composition-based research is centred on the title of ‘nature and music’. It is an indirect follow-up of my undergraduate compositions which were also nature-based works, which depicted such ideas and images as the elements (fire, water, wind and earth), as well as various living creatures such as insects.

I have chosen this as my topic/title for the M.A, as nature and the natural workings of the planet are amongst some of the greatest influences on my life and my musical writing, e.g. the movement of water in the rivers and sea, the sounds of animals and birds, the immense power of the wind. My style of composition is that of depiction and imagery; I enjoy creating pieces that can form an image in the mind without the necessity of having complex programme notes to explain why the composer has written in a particular style, what the music is ‘supposed to’ be depicting.

“For, while as a painter I feel that I have in my possession the means of moving others in the direction in which I myself am driven, I doubt whether I can give the same sure lead by the use of words alone”.²

I enjoy a style and genre of music that exists purely to be enjoyed as an experience in itself, to mentally transport the listener to an alternative time and space. My pieces are intended to be self-explanatory, and are sometimes unpredictable, much like nature and the workings of the natural world.

“That’s a danger with over-honing what you say in music, or in anything. One doesn’t want to reduce it beyond its point of logical indefensibility – one doesn’t want it to be explicable. Music should be inexplicable.”³

¹ Flaubert, G (1987). *November*. New York: Carroll and Graf.

² Klee, P (1966). *On Modern Art*, London: Faber and Faber.

In the past, nature has been a great influence on the work many composers, many of whom have found inspiration from their travels across the world, from the countryside of their homeland. A well-known and well-documented example of this would be French composer Claude Debussy, who was renowned for composing 'nature music' in relation to water, the beauty of his national countryside and the sky above.

Within my own style of composition, I intend to write predominantly for piano and stringed instruments, in particular the violin, as this is an instrument close to my heart. I hope to utilise these instruments and others in every which way necessary as to portray various aspects of nature; through the use of extended techniques on the instruments themselves, the use of timbre, various layerings of sound, some repetitive and minimalistic phrasing and patterns, and through the use of pitch and texture. I hope to depict nature through the use of sound as opposed to vocally, lyrically or phonetically.

Many composers that have been influential to my style of composing have also written works which depict various aspects of nature e.g. Messiaen, Delius, Vaughan Williams, Debussy, Britten, Vivaldi, Takemitsu. The intention is not to have the compositions stored away upon completion, but to have each one performed in a live setting at every opportunity possible, and to have all of my works recorded and catalogued.

Within these compositions, there is a certain unity of style which runs throughout. I tend to use a relatively minimalist approach to composition; through initial preparation, the timbre, harmonic style, texture and occasionally the structure. I find that music does not have to be overly-complicated to be effective. Through the correct usage of these compositional formalities, I believe that a piece can portray anything that a composer intends. Simply through the use of just a solitary note can one convey a number of emotions, by altering it through the uses of rhythm, dynamics, instrumentation, extended techniques on the instrument.

Each composition will be discussed under six different headings; compositional approach, rhythmic techniques, harmonic style, formal structures, instrumentation/orchestration and sonorities/texture/timbre. I believe that these are the key components to any composition; without any of these, one cannot successfully portray an idea/emotion within a musical work. A number of these headings overlap from piece to piece;

³ Ades, T. (2012). *Full of Noises*, London: Faber & Faber.

this can be construed as a natural happening, as each composer eventually discovers a unique formula that works.

Chapter 1

Four-Movement Suite

for

Solo Piano

-Water Suite-

Babbling Brook

‘Babbling Brook’ -Mvt.1 from ‘Water Suite’-

“Well, but you two are dancing around in your iridescent little downpour, whooping and stomping as sane people ought to do when they encounter a thing so miraculous as water.”

— Marilynne Robinson¹

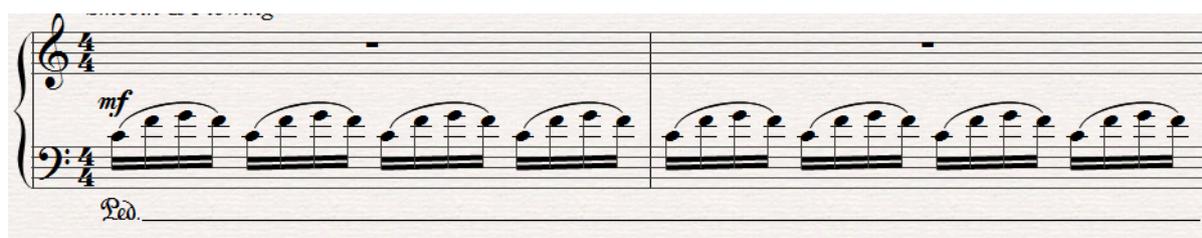
Introduction

This piece is the first movement of my four-movement solo piano suite ‘*Water Suite*’; based around the theme of water. The piece is intended to replicate the sounds of a small stream/brook that bubbles and winds its way from a small source to the large open ocean.

Analysis

This movement begins with a four-note motif in the bass clef, to be played by the right hand, see **Fig.1.1**. The reason for the swapping of hands for this was a personal preference of mine, as I found that the four-note motif was slightly easier to control with the right hand.

Fig.1.1. bb.1-2



The left hand enters in bar 3 with some solitary notes, occasionally with some decorative grace notes to add some character, see **Fig.1.2**. Continuous use of the sustain pedal once again aids this piece in creating a slightly more *legato* feeling, and creates a sense of smoothness and fluidity. I attempted to avoid any sharp harmonic or melodic movements in this piece as to enhance the inner visual experience.

¹ Robinson, M (1980). *Gilead*. London: Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 119

Fig.1.1. bb.3-4

In bars 9-10 *ritardando* is marked; the pulling and pushing of tempo is a common feature of this piece, as when I imagine a running stream, it is not a constant movement; rather it meanders and slows, as well as speeds up, sometimes it almost becoming stagnant before eventually moving on again, see **Fig.1.3**. I also made a large use of dynamics, creating a ‘swelling’ feeling at times by the use of *crescendos* and *diminuendo* ‘hairpins’.

Fig.1.3. bb.9-10

The four-note motif notes remain the same until bar 19, where the harmonic mood shifts ever so slightly. The rhythmic movement does remain the same however, with the four-semiquaver motif continuing to ‘bubble along’. In bars 26-30 the left hand crotchets are now marked to be played up an octave, creating a bit more space between the two lines of music. Bars 30-34 now see this line drop back down an octave and begin to slow, marking the end of this passage of music, finally concluding with a long *fermata*, see **Fig.1.4**.

Fig.1.4. bb.32-34

Bars 35-49 see the introduction of ‘new’ material; new in the sense that the four-note motif that has been running along thus far has now ceased, the tempo has dropped significantly, the right and left hand have now swapped back to ‘regular’ positions and the harmonic structure is a lot more chordal than previously, see **Fig.1.5**. This section is unique to the piece and doesn’t occur again. Some of the melodic motifs within it have been recycled later on in the piece in some variation, but the overall structure and movement of this section is through-composed. The use of ‘rolling’ chords creates a slightly more watery, rippling effect in the music. This set of bars is intended to be quite delicate, and I have attempted to achieve this with the use of a quiet dynamic marking and some of the material has been written quite high in the register of the piano.

Fig.1.5. bb.35-40

Bar 50 sees the introduction of a new triplet motif that continues onwards from here until the end of this movement, see **Fig.1.6**. From here until the end of the piece, the sense of the

music is a lot more solid and steady than was previously heard. The dynamic has risen slightly now up to *mf*, and the tempo has also moved up a notch. It now has a sense of direction, mirroring the movement of a stream/brook - as it begins its life as a small trickle, winding and meandering almost aimlessly, gravity and nature takes over after a long distance and it almost has a sense of what its aim is now; it has a purpose and a direction.

Fig.1.6. bb.52-55

52 (8)

The right-hand melody in bars 61-68 sees the reintroduction of the melody that was used in the previous section, but it has been altered slightly in order to fit in with the triplet movement of this section see **Fig.1.7**. The same notes have been used, but have been remoulded as to disguise them.

Fig.1.7. bb.59-62

59 (8)

8va

During bars 70-73, the left hand plays on its own here, similar to the first two bars of the movement, with a significant *crescendo* leading into the final section of this movement, see **Fig.1.8**.

Fig.1.8. bb.71-73

The final section of this movement is from bars 74-84. The piece now opens a lot more through the use of a louder dynamic marking, an extensive use of octaves in the right hand, and the alternating of the right hand from treble to bass clef and vice versa, which creates a wider range see **Fig.1.9**. This final section represents where this long and winding brook has finally reached its destination and is now opening up into the ocean. It is no longer a simple trickling stream, but is now a part of the wider picture of nature. The term ‘bell like’ is marked on the music above bar 74; this is just a simple performance direction for the performer not to play this octave motif too heavily, but rather imagine a large set of peeling bells, welcoming the small travelling stream into the ocean.

Fig.1.9. bb.82-84

Compositional Approach

This piece was composed whilst sitting at a piano, imagining a small stream working its way down from the top of a mountain until it reaches the base, where it eventually enters into the ocean. I searched online for a number of images of brooks and streams as to gain some visual influence for this work. I have also spent a lot of time walking through the Comeragh Mountains where upon I came across the Mahon Falls, which is a waterfall which forms a river near the summit of the mountains, and eventually works and winds its way down through rocky terrain and the boggy mountainous landscape.

My intention for the piece was to begin on a small scale and somewhat innocently, as a small trickle of water would, and then to gradually pick up momentum and size to finally end up as part of a larger picture. As with the majority of my compositions, I did not begin the piece with a particular key signature in mind, rather I allowed for this to happen organically. I find that composing with a key in mind from the offset pigeon-holes the composer and limits the tonality and the development of the piece. If the piece is written in a more atonal style from the beginning then it allows for it to breathe and develop into the final product naturally. The piece may however develop into a clear key by the end of the piece, or even earlier in some cases, but I prefer for this just to ‘happen’; just like in nature, where everything is not pre-determined, life and growth takes on a mind of their own, the idea of fate plays a strong part in nature, and so I have attempted to re-create this idea within my compositional style.

Rhythmic Techniques

As this piece depicts a moving entity, thus the music is in a constant state of motion. There is one section within this movement where the music becomes in any way stationary, which is used to break up the piece. This stationary section is also necessary in order to depict the natural part of the stream’s life, as it may come to a standstill or form a pool during its journey. There is never a moment during this piece of complete silence; although there may be a pause or a held note, use of the sustain pedal results in a constant ‘sound’ throughout. I have made much use of triplet rhythms during this movement as triplets push time forward, creating a sense of forward momentum, suiting the imagery of this movement. Through playing through this piece on the piano, others playing it, and listening through the use of computer software; specific tempi have been selected for each section within the piece and have been depicted accordingly. As is the style of the majority of my pieces, these tempi are not to be taken strictly; they are more recommendations than strict guidelines. Taking

performance directions strictly and obediently can occasionally take away from the overall effect of the music. Once the performer understands what is to be portrayed within a piece's sections and subsections, then these changes in tempo should occur naturally anyway.

Harmonic Style

The harmonies within this piece tend to be relatively simple, I avoided the use of any complex chordal progressions and the music tends to flow in a more melodic style. This piece avoids any large harmonic clashes and overly-complicated chords and harmonies as I found this to be not in-keeping with the style of the piece or the intention of the imagery. '*Babbling Brook*' is a thin and sparsely harmonised piece, from beginning to end it tends to be a single line moving in the left-hand against a single line moving in the right hand. There are occasionally periods throughout where chords are used, but even at this, they are quite widely spaced and are directed to be played as upward moving 'ripples', in order to avoid any heavy 'block' chords.

Formal Structures

With the majority of my compositions, I do not create a structure for the pieces initially, rather I begin with an idea or an image, then I sit down with an instrument, create some small basic ideas and motifs, then I put pen to paper and then input it into the computer. A structure for the piece evolves whilst I am composing. When I decide that one idea or section has been completed I then begin to work on the following 'section', but this has not been all pre-determined. As can be seen within my style of composing, the majority of these various compositional tools and formalities have not been forced; they have been allowed to occur naturally as I write. Only occasionally will I pre-determine the structure of a piece if I believe that it is necessary to avoid shapelessness.

Instrumentation/Orchestration

As a pianist myself, I thoroughly enjoy writing for solo piano as I can sit at the piano and play through various sections of my compositions and decide and be more specific about various aspects of the pieces. I found that solo piano suited the idea of depicting water as it has a very wide range which can be utilised for various nuances and expressing different imagery. I also found that due to a piano having a sustain pedal, the various lines of music can be blurred over each other and slightly more spread out, which enhances the idea and mental visualization of moving water – I have been very specific throughout this suite of

pieces for the use of the sustain pedal. Through playing the pieces and having other pianists do so as well, I have decided and finalized where and when the sustain pedal should be used and where it should be omitted.

Sonorities/Texture/Timbre

The texture of '*Babbling Brook*' is quite thin and sparse. The image of a moving stream of water in one's mind is that of simplicity and purity, so this is how the sonority has been kept throughout. This movement tends to move in single lines in both the left and the right hand with just the use of the sustain pedal and dynamics creating any sense of thickness to the texture.

-Water Suite-
Storm at Sea

‘Storm at Sea’
-Mvt.2 from ‘Water Suite’-

“Nature’s music is never over; her silences are pauses, not conclusions.”
 - Mary Webb²

Introduction

This piece is movement no.2 from my solo-piano suite ‘*Water Suite*’; based around the theme of water. The aim of the piece is to replicate the sounds of a large storm occurring out in the middle of the sea/ocean, it has one of the larger ‘soundscapes’ of this suite, and is also the longest in duration.

Analysis

This movement begins with a three-note upward-moving motif in the left hand for the first eight bars, it is written to be played legato, using the sustain pedal, and quiet in dynamic level, see **Fig.2.1**. This piece begins with the ‘calm before the storm’ type effect.

Fig.2.1. bb.1-4

The image shows the first four bars of the musical score for 'Storm at Sea'. The score is written for piano in 4/4 time. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 70, and the mood is 'slowly and solemnly'. The dynamic is marked as *mp*. The right hand (treble clef) is silent, indicated by a whole rest in each bar. The left hand (bass clef) plays a three-note upward-moving motif in each bar, starting on a B-flat. The notes are connected by a slur, and a sustain pedal is indicated by a line labeled 'Ped.' that spans the entire four-bar phrase.

Bars 9-20 sees the introduction of the right hand to this piece as it moves in contrary motion to the left hand, but still playing a simple melody. These few bars contain a *crescendo* leading

² Webb, M (1917). *The Spring Of Joy*. London: J.M Dent.

into a *diminuendo* at one point, which breaks up the stillness of the music that has occurred thus far. The left hand also rises up one octave at bar 13, and this section comes to a conclusion with an upward arpeggiated chord which is suspended with a long pause, see **Fig.2.2**.

Fig.2.2. bb.18-20

Bars 21-37 introduce a new, faster-moving section of music, where an arpeggiated triplet-motif has been used in the left hand. The tempo marking has been indicated to increase from the previous 70 bpm up to a much nippier 100 bpm. The right hand joins with its own triplet-motif a few bars later; this triplet movement creates a great sense of momentum within the piece, see **Fig.2.3**. The use of ‘hairpin’ dynamics creates a feeling of swells on the sea surface, indicating that something bigger is to come.

Fig.2.3. bb.22-25

Bars 38-47, the left hand continues playing the triplet motif, keeping the piece moving along, whilst the right hand now introduces new musical material. The material in the right hand which I created is intended to be similar to that of a sea shanty, it is to be memorable, and for one to be able to whistle, see **Fig.2.4**. For this section of the movement I was imagining an image of well-worn fishermen on an old, rusty fishing vessel, whistling this tune whilst going about their business on board the boat, whilst in the distance there is a sense of unrest, the ship begins to pitch slightly from side to side.

Fig.2.4. bb.38-40

The musical score for Figure 2.4, measures 38-40, is presented in a grand staff. The left hand (bass clef) maintains a steady triplet motif throughout. The right hand (treble clef) begins with a melodic line in measure 38, which continues into measure 39 where it becomes more rhythmic and includes a dynamic marking of *f*. The piece ends in measure 40 with a *Ped.* marking.

Bars 48-57, this section of the movement is similar to the previous one, with the same triplet motif being played out in the left hand, whilst new material appears in the right. I hoped for the material in the right hand to be similar to the previous in the sense that I wanted it to be a memorable tune. This right hand melody here is to be played an octave higher than written, and has also been doubled in octaves, see **Fig.2.5**.

Fig.2.5. bb.46-49

The musical score for Figure 2.5, measures 46-49, is presented in a grand staff. The left hand (bass clef) maintains a steady triplet motif throughout. The right hand (treble clef) begins with a melodic line in measure 46, which continues into measure 48 where it becomes more rhythmic and includes a dynamic marking of *8va*. The piece ends in measure 49 with a *Ped.* marking.

Bars 58-67 see the introduction of ‘darker’ musical material. The left hand maintains the triplet motif, which by now has become a constant layer of sound at the bottom of this movement, like a layer of sand on the ocean floor, see **Fig.2.6**. The right hand is now marked to be played in the bass clef, and undercuts the left hand by playing material at a lower register. The material in the right hand is slower, accented, and heavier in every sense, it sounds quite dark and languid.

Fig.2.6. bb.58-61

Bars 68-77 a new motif in the right hand; still moving in a triplet-type feel, this section is now marked *senza ped* and is also marked to be played using the *una corda* pedal which softens this section. It has a dance-like feel to it due to the crispness of the *senza ped* effect and the use of the interval of a third. This section has been marked ‘*crisp*’ to underpin the fact that these bars are now slightly drier without the sustain pedal, the intention of this is to be quite punctuated and crisp, and that the performer is not to be tempted to use the sustain pedal or to play this *legato*.

Fig.2.7. bb.66-68

Bars 78-84 sees more new material introduced; a taunting children’s tune centred on three notes, enters in the right hand followed by a descending triplet passage, see **Fig.2.8**. The

previously heard triplet motif in the left hand is still moving along beneath this with some changes to tonality and the occasional straight quaver in order to pull back the momentum somewhat.

Fig.2.8. bb.79-81

Bars 85-94 are the reintroduction of material that has been previously heard during bars 38-47, see **Fig.2.9**. I felt the necessity to repeat some material in this movement, as it is one of the longer movements of the suite; it required some repetition in order to avoid becoming a full piece of several disparate sections of music and creates a sense of overall unity.

Fig.2.9. bb.87-88

Bars 95-116 can be seen as the beginning of the end for the storm, and for this movement. The triplet motif of this movement finally takes complete control. The right hand enters with a slightly off-beat triplet motif of its own, resulting in a swirling, monotonous, almost hypnotic movement against the left hand, see **Fig.2.10**. At bar 104 the previous number of bars from this 'section' is repeated up an octave and is marked to be played very quiet with a marking of *pp*. The descending triplet motif that was previously heard in this movement in bar 80 can be heard again at bar 101 and 114, but this time up an octave each time.

Fig.2.10. bb.95-97

The final 'section' of this movement from bar 117 until the end is a stand-alone section, as it is unlike any previous section. It is the end of the storm, the demise of anything that was in the path of its great power and might; it can be construed as just the remnants of what was there before. The ever-solid triplet motif that had been so strong and important during the opening of this movement is heard in short fragments. The majority of the music has now dropped down quite low in rang, resulting in a dark sounding finale. The use of semitone clashes against a constant pulsating C note creates a sense of unease towards the end of the movement, suggesting that perhaps this will not be the last storm, see **Fig.2.11**.

Fig.2.11. bb.129-133

129

The musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in bass clef and contains a melodic line. It begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note with a sharp sign (F#), and then a series of eighth and quarter notes with various accidentals and slurs. The lower staff is also in bass clef and contains a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The notes are grouped into measures, and there are two 'Ped.' markings at the end of the first and second measures.

Compositional Approach

For this composition, I intended to create a more exciting and ‘edgy’ piece of music in comparison to the other three movements from this suite. The other more sedate and dormant movements create a great contrast to ‘*Storm at Sea*’, which plays to the benefit of the piece in enhancing its powerful effect.

I had numerous ideas in my head for this movement, various images and scenes which played constantly like a film stuck on repeat. I imagined a dark ocean, with large fishing boats bobbing along the surface, working away. Off in the distance, a looming black cloud is encroaching on the horizon, bringing rough seas, torrential rain and darkness to all beneath. The sense of motion within this movement is constant. I began writing this piece with the idea of using a minor key, but did not want to set a particular tonal area until later. The piece as a whole is not necessarily set in a particular key signature, but it does however begin to take on a C minor tonality through natural formation and progression.

As is with many of my compositions, this piece formed itself organically as I was working. There were no ideas or order to the music set in stone beforehand, just several various loose images in my mind that I hoped to portray through this medium. The piece begins calmly, like the lull before a storm, eventually picking up in tonal quality and in speed, reaching a climactic point when the storm eventually lands, and then dies away to nothing once more. I have found myself using this ‘arch’ shape to my compositions quite regularly, and unintentionally, as I find that it is one of the more ‘natural’ shapes to music. This shape of progression is similar to the movement of nature, in how the seasons change, how animals move across the planet, and how creatures grow, live and die.

Rhythmic Techniques

Similar to other movements of the ‘*Water Suite*’, ‘*Storm at Sea*’ uses several triplet figurations. The triplet rhythm creates a sense of forward momentum which is ideally suited to the movement of a storm.

Apart from any ‘pause’ marks at the ending of ‘sections’, this movement never stops until it is completely over. This was done intentionally in order to avoid any stagnancy and to push on the overall feeling of movement and urgency. Instead of using clear breaks or rests, a calm feeling was achieved through the use diminishing the dynamics instead of the tempi.

The music is written in two separate tempo directions; at the beginning of the movement the indicated tempo is set at 70bpm. After the ‘lull’ section at the beginning, when the storm begins to pick up pace, I have indicated the tempo to rise by 30bpm up to 100bpm. As a

result of my unintentional use of the 'arch' shape in the overall structure of this movement, '*Storm at Sea*' ends at 70bpm again like it was originally set in the beginning.

Harmonic Style

The style of harmony used within this movement tends to be a relatively 'simple' one. Due to the fact that this movement moves along at such a quick rate, the use of larger chords hindered the rhythmic progression, so heavy use of this was avoided. Where there has been a wider 'spread' in the harmony, I have instead opted for harmonic intervals of octaves, thirds and fifths, as at speed, these would be less complicated for the performer, and leave room for the air clear for a more melodic line to emerge.

Formal Structures

A common method of approach to my compositions, is to not set out a formal structure for the piece; the structure forms itself during the composition process. The majority of my works tend to follow an 'arch' type structure; where the piece begins small (in dynamic level, momentum, texture etc.) grows into something larger, and then eventually dies away again and reverts either back to its original state or to something even less than was at the beginning. This shape and structure is the most natural of structures, as it is what the ear is accustomed to and expects. Composing the 'expected' is not always necessarily a good thing, as if this technique is used too clearly; the music can become predictable and occasionally almost boring/monotonous. However, in keeping with my title of 'nature and music', I found that this natural structure of growth and decay reflected the organic movements of life itself, and aided in achieving the intended sounds and images.

Instrumentation/Orchestration

As a pianist, I thoroughly enjoy writing for this instrument as I can sit at a piano and play through various sections of my compositions and decide upon and be more specific about various aspects of the pieces, in comparison to writing 'freely' with simply manuscript paper or a computer in front of me. Upon composing '*Water Suite*' I discovered that the piano suited the idea of depicting water quite well, as it has a very wide range which can be utilised for various nuances and expressing different imagery. This wide range of the instrument allowed for a lot of creativeness within '*Storm at Sea*' in particular as it allowed an element of freedom for the depiction of various images and states of water, from calm and still, to

tense and writhing, to the more vicious and animated, to all be realised through this composition.

Sonorities/Texture/Timbre

The texture of '*Storm at Sea*' is a mixture of thin, medium, to some quite heavy sections. The piano proved to be the perfect instrument for depicting such a range of images, as it was possible to create a sense of calm by writing relatively thin and sparsely textured sections, and some much larger and 'heavier' sections to recreate the imagery of large waves and stormy conditions at sea. The use of the sustain pedal in this movement of the suite once again proved key to achieving some of the timbral effects, creating blurred lines and a more fluid sound to section of the music.

-Water Suite-
Drips

‘Drips’
-Mvt.3 from ‘Water Suite’-

“Water is the driving force in nature.”
 — Leonardo da Vinci³

Introduction

This piece is movement no.3 of my four-movement solo piano suite ‘*Water Suite*’, based around the theme of water. ‘*Drips*’ is one of the more contemporary movements of the suite due to the clashing tonalities, sparse textures, off-set rhythms and extensive use of the sustain pedal to create blurred lines between both the right and left hand, and between different sections of the music.

The piece was composed during the severe wet months of the end of 2013, so the influence of dripping water was abundant and unavoidable, and worked out to my benefit as for when I needed any sort of influence for new material; I just had to stop and listen to the sounds around me. During the night this was particularly strong, as the darkness and silence of the night seems to increase the perceived volume of outside sounds – the rainwater dripping from clogged gutters, the pitter-patter of small drops on the ceiling window in my bedroom, even the echoing, monotonous sound of drips falling from the bathroom taps into the sink seem as loud as timpani strikes.

For this piece, I wanted to create a self-expressing piece of music depicting the variations of randomness and occasional monotony of dripping water. I have attempted to do this using a range of compositional techniques, aimed particularly for the use of solo piano. For example I used a wide range of the instrument, particularly the higher echelons of the instrument, with occasional low-range sounds. I tried to stay away from using the middle-range of the instrument too much as I found that this took away some of the effect of the piece by decreasing the randomness of notes slightly. When a person imagines the sound of a drop of water, they tend to imagine a high-pitched solitary tone, similar to that of a single strike on a triangle.

³ Da Vinci, L (2009). *Leonardo Da Vinci’s Water Theory: on the origin and fate of water*. London: International Association of Hydrological Sciences

Analysis

For the first 8 bars of this piece, I have composed a small motif in the higher range of the right-hand part of the piano, making use of the sustain pedal and offbeat patterns from the beginning, see **Fig.3.1**. In bar 9, the left hand begins, playing a similar motif but with slightly less movement than the right. I made the use of some semitone clashes and also use of the tritone interval to create a sense of unease, possibly the beginning of a rainstorm.

Fig.3.1. bb.1-6

The image shows a musical score for the first six measures of a piece. The music is written in 4/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) plays a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *mp*. The melody consists of eighth notes and quarter notes, with some slurs and ties. The left hand (bass clef) is mostly silent, with a 'Ped.' marking below the first measure. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

Bars 17-28 see the introduction of a new rhythmic motif in the left hand, it is a simple and monotonous rhythm which reflects the sound of steady dripping water, see **Fig.3.2**, whilst the right hand plays a simple rhythm with some semitone clashes a couple of octaves above.

Fig.3.2. bb.20-24

The image shows a musical score for measures 20-24. The music is in 4/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) plays a simple melody with a dynamic marking of *f*. The left hand (bass clef) plays a steady eighth-note rhythm. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The number '20' is written above the first measure of the right hand.

Bar 24 comes crashing to the listeners ears, as a *sforzando* semitone clashing rippled chord bursts through in the right-hand above the steady, dripping left-hand rhythm, see **Fig.3.3**.

Fig.3.3. bb.20-25

Bars 28-44 are the introduction of a new melodic motif between both hands. It is a slow, almost serenading melody, yet still with a sense of unrest due to the use of sustain pedal, semitone and rhythmic movement. The rhythmic movement in the right hand is subtle here; each time it enters after the left-hand, it has shifted back by a quaver as to prevent any monotony in this section, see **Fig.3.4. bb.27-33**.

Fig.3.4. bb.27-33

Bars 44-60 are another new section for this movement. The tempo moves down a gear, shifting from 100 bpm down to 90 bpm. The first sound we hear is a loud, low, sustained E flat in the left hand followed by a motif in the right-hand being played in the higher register of the piano, creating a large gap between both hands which forms a sense of space. The low left hand E flat is repeated at unpredictable intervals as to keep the low rumbling effect ongoing throughout, see **Fig.3.5**.

Fig.3.5. bb.47-51

After a long *ritardando* ending the previous section, this section has a new motif enter in the left-hand. It is a descending motif using the interval of a perfect 4th in each bar of the left hand, whilst the right hand plays a slow, creeping descending motif in octaves in the higher register of the instrument.

The next section in bars 69-81 is one of the more striking parts of this movement due to the rhythms and tonalities. The use of semitone clashes and tritones in this set of bars creates a sense of unrest, and the use of silence via the rests also helps to add to this tension, see **Fig.3.6**. The sustain pedal is left out for the majority of this section as to enhance the sense of space. It is only used a couple of times as to blur the melodic line between bars. This section really aims to show off the randomness of water, how the dripping rhythms and crashing of larger pools of liquid can happen around the same period of time due to water collecting, perhaps in a gutter or flat roof.

Fig.3.6. bb.74-77

The section from bars 82-99 is another quite varying one in this piece. It sees the use of a rippling harmonic chordal motif for the first time, as opposed to the previously sparse, melodic motifs, see **Fig.3.7**. The piece once again shifts down a gear, moving from 90 bpm to 80 bpm. The time signature also changes to 3/4 for these few bars, and the '*una corda*' pedal

is now used for the first time. The dynamic marking is '*p*', as I intended for this section to be a quiet and fragile part of the movement. Both hands are now written up towards the higher register of the piano, creating an almost cold/glassy/icy effect for this motif. The contrast between the widely-spaced perfect 5ths and octaves in the left-hand, against the more jarring tritone intervals in the right hand, results in an open, yet still slightly tense section of the movement.

Fig.3.7. bb.82-91

The musical score for Figure 3.7, measures 82-91, is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 80. The dynamic marking is piano (*p*). The right hand plays chords with tritone intervals, while the left hand plays widely spaced perfect 5ths and octaves. Pedal points are indicated at the bottom of the score.

Bars 99-end of this movement see the re-introduction of an earlier motif that was used during bars 28-44, see **Fig.3.8**. This final section resembles the end of a period of heavy rain. The final few drops of water are dripping to the ground; it is quite delicate, but still slightly random. I have created a sense of delicate randomness by making use of a soft dynamic marking, some off-beat patterns in the right-hand that don't quite fit into the left hand movement, along with the use of octaves and semitone movement.

Fig.3.8. bb.101-105

The musical score for Figure 3.8, measures 101-105, is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The dynamic marking is piano (*p*). The right hand plays a melodic line with octaves and semitone movement, while the left hand plays a rhythmic pattern. Pedal points are indicated at the bottom of the score.

The movement finally ends with a long *fermata* low D sharp in the left hand, which enters after a slightly shorter *fermata* in both hands, as to create a final sense of unease and tension, see **Fig.3.9**.

Fig.3.9. bb.111-115

The image displays a musical score for five measures, numbered 111 to 115. The score is written on two staves. The upper staff uses a treble clef and contains several chords and rests. The lower staff uses a bass clef and contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, some with slurs. A dashed line at the top is labeled with a circled '8', and a dashed line at the bottom is labeled '8^{bb}'. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Compositional Approach

Whilst I was composing this piece, there was quite a heavy wet season in the country, with severe flooding due to increased rainfall. This was coincidentally occurring during the period which I was writing this piece, and turned out to be a huge benefit to me as the sight and sound of falling rain influenced many sections of this work. The idea behind this movement is to replicate the sounds of dripping water, and put it into a musical sense. It is a slightly more 'random' composition than most of my works, as the influences that I was hearing and seeing were never regular patterns or sound. The main sounds that influenced me for this piece were: raindrops falling from a clogged gutter, drops falling onto a large skylight on the ceiling of my bedroom, the dripping water from a faucet in a friend's house that seemed to be extraordinarily loud and audible throughout the building.

Like the majority of my compositions, I did not set out to write this movement with a particular key in mind, instead, just like falling water, it was allowed to do as it pleased. I decided on a beginning note and simply worked and progressed from there. Due to rhythm not being of such importance in this piece due to the fact that it is somewhat more random than most, I decided that the most important aspect of this movement would be the tonal qualities as to convey the imagery of dripping water successfully.

Rhythmic Techniques

Rhythm plays a key part in conveying the imagery of this work correctly. Due to the randomness of dripping water, the rhythms would also be somewhat random. What makes them 'random' during the piece is that they don't fall into any sort of strict structure, whilst I was quite careful about selecting where certain notes were placed etc as to successfully create the sense of random selection. I decided on the placement of notes throughout this piece by playing it through numerous times on a piano and transcribing what I was playing any time I was satisfied with particular rhythms and groupings of the notes etc.

This movement of the '*Water Suite*' has been marked as '*rubato*' at the beginning of the piece, which translates as 'freely'. Although the rhythms have been decided upon, the performer is once again not to attempt to follow these as strictly and rigidly as some of my other compositions; one is expected to almost forget that bar lines even exist in this piece, as the only real part that they play is to put some form of overall shape on the piece.

I have marked in any changes in tempo, but assured to keep these changes to a minimal difference as to create a smoother overall shape for the piece. If I were to create drastic changes in tempo for this piece it would have made the effect slightly more 'jerky' than I

intended, and I did test this out before deciding against it. The most that this piece changes in tempo is from 100 bpm down to 80 bpm, but this is gradual and not a sharp change in the piece.

Harmonic Style

For the majority of this movement, I have used single line phrases in both the right and the left hand of the piano, whilst avoiding any unnecessary substantial chordal movement. Any chords that I have used are placed relatively high in the piano register as to add to the overall effect of the piece.

I have used quite a lot of tritone and semitone movement within this piece; I found through my compositional practices, a number of other compositions of mine and of others which I have studied, that these two particular harmonic devices create a sense of unease and unrest. This sense of unease is paramount to the overall feeling of this movement; dripping water can have a feeling of relaxation, which has been touched on within this piece, but for the majority of the time it has a slightly more subduing affect.

Formal Structures

For the structure of this piece, I firstly created a list of ideas for 'sections' within the movement, and then approached how to achieve the transition between each section. A set structure such as 'A-B-A-C-A' was not planned beforehand; rather it was allowed to happen in a slightly more organic sense. In-keeping with the title of 'nature and music', similar to rainfall, it is not necessarily planned, whereas you may know or predict that the rain is soon to come, it is not set in stone as for when this is to begin, or when it is to end, and this is how I have 'structured' this movement. The only form of structure set on this piece is the way in which it begins quiet, thin and resonant, builds up slightly more towards the middle of the movement, and then eventually fades away to nothing again. This is the natural structure and feeling of falling water, it begins slowly and steadily, reaches a climax and then eventually dies away again.

Instrumentation/Orchestration

'Drips' is a movement from my solo-piano suite '*Water Suite*', so naturally it is scored for just one piano. I found that the use of solo piano for depicting dripping water in the case of this movement was ideal. The instrument has a vast range from low to high notes, which can be utilised to re-create the various sounds and senses of falling water, whether it is small

droplets landing upon a window, or larger splashes crashing to the earth. The use of this vast range also plays a major part in creating a sense of spaciousness within this movement. I have made quite a lot of use of the sustain pedal in this movement, similar to my other movements of the '*Water Suite*' as it helps to blur the lines between bars and sections. Although '*Drips*' is a slightly more sparse and fractured movement, I still wanted to have a sense of fluidity do it, and I found that the use of the sustain pedal was one of the most successful ways in achieving this for solo piano.

Sonorities/Texture/Timbre

The texture of '*Drips*' is quite thin, quite often with just single notes being played in the right and left hand of the piano, with the occasional chord crashing down as to replicated the sound and effect of a larger splash of water hitting the ground. For the full movement I have kept the texture in this style, using a wide range of the piano to create a sense of spaciousness as I was not using large chords to achieve this. I also made a lot of use of the sustain pedal to bulk out the overall sound slightly, and I have directed the use of this quite specifically throughout the piece.

-Water Suite-
Still Water

‘Still Water’
-Mvt.4 from ‘Water Suite’-

“A lake is a landscape's most beautiful and expressive feature. It is Earth's eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature.”

- Henry David Thoreau⁴

Introduction

This piece is the fourth and final movement of my solo piano suite ‘*Water Suite*’; based around the theme of water. This movement is intended to evoke images in the mind of the listeners of non-moving water, possibly that of a lake. It is a unique movement from this suite in this way, as that the other three movements have involved some form of flowing or moving water, whereas this one represents stationary water.

Analysis

From the beginning of this movement up to bar 10, there is a section of chordal music, where I have made use of ‘quartal’ harmonies; that is, the distance between the notes tends to be based around the interval of a fourth. Every second bar changes its time signature from 4/4 to 5/4; I decided to use this technique instead of staying in 4/4 throughout as it makes it more natural for the performer to read as it simplifies the counting procedure, see **Fig.4.1**.

Fig.4.1. bb.1-6

The musical score for the first six bars of 'Still Water' is presented in a grand staff. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 60, and the dynamic is piano (p). The time signature alternates between 4/4 and 5/4 every second bar. The right hand consists of a sequence of chords, with the time signature changing from 4/4 to 5/4 in the second bar, 5/4 to 4/4 in the third, 4/4 to 5/4 in the fourth, 5/4 to 4/4 in the fifth, and 4/4 to 5/4 in the sixth. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment. Pedal markings are present at the end of bars 2, 4, and 6. A 'Sola' marking is present above the right hand in bar 5.

⁴ Thoreau, H.D (1854). *Walden*. Boston: Ticknor and Fields.

After a long pause at the end of bar 9, the music settles into the 4/4 time signature for a number of bars with the introduction of a new melodic motif in the right hand, whilst the left hand plays single long notes for four bars, see **Fig.4.2**. After these four bars, the motif continues in the right hand, now played an octave higher, whilst the left hand plays a passage of music with more movement.

Fig.4.2. bb.7-12

The musical score for Figure 4.2 shows measures 7 through 12. It is written in 4/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) begins in measure 7 with a series of chords. In measure 10, a dynamic marking of *mf* is indicated. The left hand (bass clef) plays single long notes. Pedal markings are present at the bottom of the staves, with a double bar line and a dashed line indicating a change in the pedal point.

In bar 18 the music now changes again to a 5/4 time signature, the moving motif in the left hand continues playing, whilst a new motif enters in the right hand which is based on quartal harmonies, and remains to be played an octave higher than marked. Each bar is marked with a ‘hairpin’ dynamic phrase (*crescendo* to a *diminuendo* straight away) to create a slight swell sound, purely to reduce any monotony in the dynamics, see **Fig.4.3**. It also represents the sounds of small waves lapping against the shore of a lake. No matter how still the water in a lake may be, there will always be some slight movement. I found that realising this effect through the use of dynamics was more subtle than changing the musical material itself. This section ends with a *ritardando* (gradually slowing down) marking, and finally ends with a pause.

Fig.4.3. bb.18-21

The musical score for Figure 4.3 shows measures 18 through 21. It is written in 5/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) plays quartal harmonies, and the left hand (bass clef) plays a moving motif. Hairpin dynamic markings are used throughout the section to create a swell effect. Pedal markings are present at the bottom of the staves, with a double bar line and a dashed line indicating a change in the pedal point.

At bar 26, the music then moves into a mixture of 4/4 and 5/4 time signatures once again, with a reprise of the opening ‘section’ or quartal chords, now played to be performed two octaves higher than written, see **Fig.4.4**.

Fig.4.4. bb.27-29

The image shows a musical score for measures 27-29. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. A dashed horizontal line is drawn above the treble staff, indicating a two-octave transposition. The time signature alternates between 5/4 and 4/4. Vertical arrows point to specific notes in both staves, and a circled '15' is above the first measure.

Bar 30 now sees the introduction of new material. The ‘section’ begins is written in a 6/4 time signature. When originally composed, I had used a triplet motif in 4/4 instead of this 6/4 pattern, but I found the music to be slightly too cluttered looking for the performer, and also, as the music is to be performed relatively slowly, the 6/4 visually suited this as it prevents the performer from rushing, see **Fig.4.5**. This is one of the drawbacks I have discovered of using triplets; because it tends to look like a lot of notes, performers tend to rush them as it appears that the music is moving along in a faster fashion. For this movement in particular, as the theme is ‘still water’, I did not want to take this risk, hence I opted for the more relaxed looking 6/4 approach to this section.

Fig.4.5. bb.32-34

The image shows a musical score for measures 32-34. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The time signature is 6/4. The right hand plays an accented off-beat quaver motif, and the left hand plays a simple three-note crotchet motif. Pedal markings are present below the left hand.

The left hand plays a simple three-note crotchet motif for this section, whilst the right hand plays an accented off-beat quaver motif which pushes this section, whilst avoiding the risk of

the performer rushing as the solid left hand part stabilizes the speed. In bar 37 this phrase is repeated, with the difference of the right hand motif now being written in unison octaves and marked to be played an octave higher than written. This section has also been enhanced with the use of dynamics; the right hand phrases are now marked to be performed with a *crescendo* leading from a very quiet *p* marking to a substantially different *f* marking, see **Fig.4.6**. The result of this dynamic change is a slight swell in the music, reminiscent of small lapping waves at the edge of a lake.

Fig.4.6. bb.38-39

During bars 42-45 the left hand continues playing the simple three-note motif, with every second bar now changing from a 6/4 to 5/4 time signature. The right hand plays the same quartal chords as appeared at the beginning of this movement; however they are now sustained for longer and are also now marked to be played an octave higher than previously written. These four bars also rise and fade dynamically.

Bars 46-61 now see the introduction of the triplet motif which is synonymous not only with this suite of music, but also within my own style of composition, see **Fig.4.7**. It is a simple but useful compositional tool which I have grown very fond of during my term of composing this M.A portfolio, and it is a sound which I have become accustomed to.

Fig.4.7. bb.45-48

Bar 48 the right hand begins with an almost Irish traditional-feel. The music has been marked to be played ‘*spritely*’ for this section as to ensure that the performer does not drag the music too much after the previous calmer sections. Bars 50-51 is a child-like tune in the right hand, which is a reference to a section of music from a previous movement from this suite (‘*Babbling Brook*’), see **Fig.4.8**. The left hand three-note motif moves upwards by a tone for these two bars, and then when this ‘child-like’ tune repeats once again in bars 54-55 the left hand motif now moves down a tone, creating a happy-feeling, major tonality section of music which is unique within this movement.

Fig.4.8. bb.49-52

From bars 56-61 the music begins to wind down slightly again. The left hand triplet-motif has by now worked its way downwards by six tones, creating a much lower feeling to the music. The right hand ‘*spritely*’ music has by now ceased, and has been replaced with longer, sustained, accented semibreve chords, see **Fig.4.9**.

1Fig.4.9. bb.57-60

Bars 62 to the end of the piece are a reprise of the opening section from this movement. The main difference between this final section and that from the beginning of the movement is that the 5/4 time signature has not been used here. Due to the previous section ending in 4/4, I have decided to leave the remaining number of bars in 4/4 as to create a sense of continuity and ease to the music, see **Fig4.10**. I found that in doing so it aided the performer in keeping a smooth line of music throughout by avoiding any ‘bumpiness’ from the changing of time signatures.

Fig.4.10. bb.66-71

Compositional Approach

For this composition, I hoped to create a more placid work in comparison to the other movements from '*Water Suite*'. The music contained within this movement reflects the calming effect that water can cause, such as a lake or a pond, without waves or flowing and gushing streams, the water instead sits there, reflecting everything above and around it.

Each movement contained within '*Water Suite*' are very different in comparison, and this is no different with '*Still Water*'; as all other movements depict differing forms of moving water at various speeds, such as crashing waves at sea, dripping rain or winding streams, I took a different approach at attempting to compose this movement. Composing a movement to effectively represent a still entity proved to be a challenge, but through the correct usage of chords, harmony, tempi and dynamics I eventually achieved the sound that I had originally imagined for this piece.

This movement has been through-composed, similar to my other compositions; a format or structure had not been initially set out; instead a set of images and ideas were construed and kept in mind at all time whilst playing the piano to come up with ideas for chords, harmonies and motifs etc. As a result, this movement contains a wide selection of single-line melodies with some more chordal progressions.

Rhythmic Techniques

With regards to rhythm for '*Still Water*', it was intended to keep the rhythm relatively minimal throughout, as any complex movement would cause an adverse effect upon the intended soundscape of the piece.

This movement contains sustained chordal progressions along with some slow-moving single-note lines, the rhythms do not venture far past this as I found it to be unnecessary to do so. At the beginning of the piece, it has been marked as '*tempo rubato*' (free tempo); this allows the performer some leniency with regards to overall speed and pushing and pulling the tempo from section to section. It is hoped that this would not be exaggerated, as doing so may take away from the overall effect of stillness.

The piece travels through various time signatures, from 4/4, 5/4 to 6/4. I found that using various time signatures helped with the phrasing of certain sections of the movement and reduced the risk of creating unnecessary emphasis on particular notes or chords.

Harmonic Style

The harmonic style of this movement is heavily based on the use of a quartal technique. I found that the tonal qualities of quartal harmonies enhanced the overall sound and imagery of stillness and serenity as it creates a sense of spaciousness between notes; avoiding the over-use of intervals of thirds and fifths which could possibly result in a sense of a key signature for the piece, which I hoped to avoid. This movement avoids semitone clashes and any other abrasive sounding harmonies such as tritones, and there is a sense of space between all lines of music through the use of a wide range on the piano. Through the use of these techniques within the piece, '*Still Water*' is unique amongst the other movements of the suite in its harmonic style, resulting in a more gentle and atmospheric piece in comparison.

Formal Structures

For '*Still Water*', a formal structure had not been pre-determined for the piece. The piece moves through various sections which can be clearly seen and heard as separate sections within the piece, but like my other compositions, '*Still Water*' has been through-composed, i.e. once I found that a section had come to an end, I then moved onto a new section. The result of composing in this way is a more fluid and natural sounding piece of music, as it avoids any sharp turns or stops in the overall structure.

Instrumentation/Orchestration

'*Still Water*' has been composed for solo piano. Through my period of postgraduate studies, I have developed a passion for composing for piano as I found that almost any imagery or idea can be portrayed through the use of this instrument. The reason for this is that it is one of the most versatile instruments, capable of creating minute to magnanimous soundscapes through its extensive range, three pedals, and vast dynamic capabilities.

Sonorities/Texture/Timbre

The texture of this movement ranges from thin to medium throughout. I have avoided the use of any thick chordal movement or anything too thin either, as I imagined the sound of still water to be a constant layer of sound. The use of the sustain pedal and chord 'rippling' have combined to form this sound layer, as well as avoiding any very low-range note, apart from the final note.

Chapter 2

Appassionato

for

Solo Violin

-Changing of the Seasons-

‘Changing of the Seasons’

“If you look deep enough you will see music; the heart of nature being everywhere music”.

- Thomas Carlyle⁵

Introduction

‘*Changing of the Seasons*’ is a stand-alone piece in my MA portfolio of compositions. It is an ‘*appassionata*’ for solo violin, depicting the journey travelled in nature from season to season. This work is unique within this portfolio, as I have used particular key signatures and much clearer, indicated sections within the music. As it is the only solo violin work within this portfolio, it is relatively substantial in size and is approximately 9 and a half minutes in length when performed live.

The term ‘*appassionata*’ is an Italian term which translates literally to mean ‘passionately’. In classical music it is used when indicating for a piece to be performed ‘in an impassioned manner’. I have utilised this term for this composition which is a blend of contemporary styling and a more classical based form of composition. A lot of my influence for this work came from works by composers and works such as Beethoven’s solo piano work ‘*Piano Sonata no.23*’, Vieuxtemps’ work for solo violin and orchestra ‘*Appassionata Op. 35*’ and Wieniawski’s op.20 ‘*Fantaisie Brillante Faust*’ for solo violin and orchestra.

This work, similar to others in the portfolio, is an ‘aural journey’; it is intended to transport the performer and the listener through all four seasons - depicting the cold and fragile months, the happier and more loving warm periods, the changing from bare nothingness to great green expansive foliage and all the times in between.

This piece was the first composition of this MA; having taken classical violin performance as a minor study for my BA degree, there was always a plan to create a solo violin work, and in so doing produce a relatively expansive work. It was intended to utilize a number of compositional techniques in addition to techniques on the instrument itself as to successfully

⁵ Carlyle, T (1966). *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press. 83-84

portray the imagery and emotions of nature and the seasons and as to form a piece that is as enjoyable for the performer and the listener alike.

Analysis

The piece begins in the key of G minor, opening with a widely spread tonic chord, which creates a startling and emotional introduction to the work, see **Fig.5.1**. The piece has initially been marked as '*molto espressivo, rubato, con molto vibrato*', which translates as 'very expressively, freely, with much vibrato'. I wanted to use classical Italian terminology for this work as this older period and style of composition provided a great influence for me. Using some of the European performance directions creates a greater sense of emotion for when the performer is studying the work. For some inexplicable reason, during my course of composing music, I found that using English terminology when it came to performance directions etc visually did not create the same sense of 'seriousness' or urgency as the Italian or French equivalents managed to.

Fig.5.1 bb.1-3

The image shows a musical score for Violin, measures 1-3. The key signature is G minor (one flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 100. The first bar starts with a wide tonic chord (G-Bb-D) and has dynamics *p* and *ff*. The second bar has a dynamic of *ff*. The third bar has a dynamic of *f*. The score includes performance markings such as 'V' (vibrato) and 'A' (accelerando).

Within the first bar, the dynamic level moves from *p* to *ff* immediately, followed by a stepwise moving phrase from bar 2-7, ending with a sustained tonic note in bar 8, see **Fig.5.2**. The end of this phrase contains an *accelerando* and a *ritardando* close to each other, which creates a 'push-pull' type effect. Any of these time-altering markings within the piece are left to the discretion of the performer for how much or how little they wish to move away from the original tempo, as is marked at the beginning of the piece with the '*rubato*' (freely) direction.

Fig.5.2. bb.7-8

The following phrase is similar to that of the beginning as it begins with another expansive chord, this time of different tonality, see **Fig.5.3**, then followed by a six-bar phrase, ending with a *rit, accel*, marking, over a quick triplet motif, finally ending with a paused note quite high on the violin's register.

Fig.5.3. bb.7-10

The following section (**B**) spans from bar 16 to bar 31. This section contains a semiquaver triplet phrase which creates a sequence of arpeggiated patterns moving from the low G string across to the highest E string on the instrument, see **Fig.5.4**. This section of the piece is marked to be performed in a 'steady and controlled' fashion, as altering the tempo here is unnecessary and affects the flow from each arpeggio pattern, it has also been marked to be performed at a slightly slower tempo than the beginning, now moving down from 100bpm to 80bpm. This entire section remains in the key of G minor, and this is stamped by the final chord and high-pitched note in bar 31.

Fig.5.4. bb.16-17

The following section (C) begins at bar 32. This section is more melodic and smooth than the previously heard sections. After a short break in the music, indicated by a (‘) at the end of the previous phrase, the music is now marked *con sord*; this translated to ‘with mute’. The performer is now expected to quickly place their mute onto the instrument for this section of the piece. This technique of ‘muting’ is more often used in larger-scale orchestral works for entire string sections as opposed to solo violin works, but I found that the difference in the tonal quality between a muted violin and an un-muted one would be quite effective in depicting the differences between varying section of the work. It is intended to be a rapid and subtle movement, not to take away from the piece, but rather to enhance the aural experience. This section of the piece is short but at the same time emotional. The dynamics have now reduced to *mp*, and the use of vibrato has been reminded once again. Double-stopping has been used in this section as well as many other times during the piece. This is where the violinist plays more two notes together on the instrument, creating harmonies, often sounding like two violins playing a duet, see **Fig.5.5**. After the first four bars of this section, they are then repeated for another four, now written up two octaves higher. This phrase ends with another short break (‘) allowing for the performer to now remove the mute again (*senza sord*), followed by a two-bar link between section (C) and section (D).

Fig.5.5. bb.30-35

The image shows a musical score for violin, measures 30-35. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat. It begins at measure 30 with a triplet of eighth notes. Measures 31-32 feature double-stops with vibrato. Measure 33 is marked '8va' and 'con sord.' with a tempo of 70. Measures 34-35 are marked 'mp legato, con molto vib.' and 'mf'.

Section (D) is one of the longest sections within this piece, stretching from bar 41 to bar 92. It is the most intense section of the piece, both melodically and dynamically. The music has now moved back to the original 100bpm, and the performance direction of ‘*detache, con fuoco*’ (detached, with fire) indicates a section of much more movement and vividness. This section of the work resembles the drastic change during the autumnal seasons; the leaves are changing from luscious green to fiery red, to placid brown and then eventually falling to the ground and disappearing altogether, see **Fig.5.6**. The intense and drastic change in this section has been created by using triplet motifs combined with trills, tremolos, accents, double-stops and some semitone clashes. For this section I have also made use of rests, creating a sense of contrast a slight ‘breathing space’ within, absence of rests or having the

line of music continuous made it very tiresome for both physically for the performer and aurally for the listener; this sense of space in the music holds the interest for both parties, see **Fig.5.7**. I have also made use of an echoing technique within this number of bars; bars 60-61 are played quietly and are then repeated in bars 62-63 at a louder dynamic level (with some melodic variation). I have used this technique again in bars 66-69. This section ends in bar 92 on a paused harmonic note D, with a break after this final note as to once again allow for the performer to engage the mute for the following section.

Fig.5.6. bb.41-43

Fig.5.7. bb.58-60

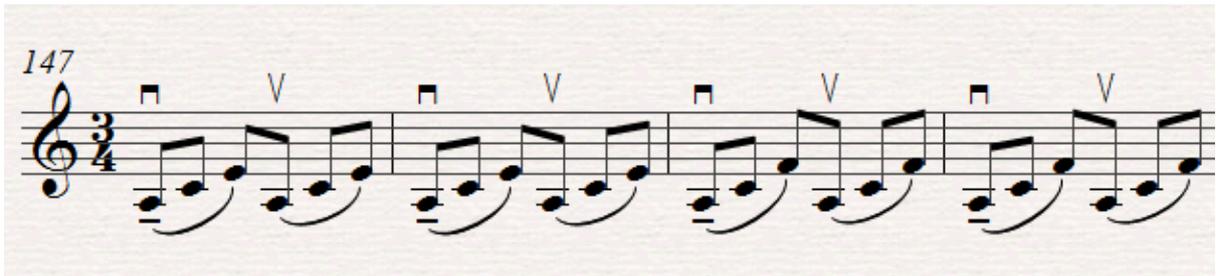
The following section (**E**) is another muted section full of languid emotion, similar to section (**C**). This section is muted like the previous slow section, and the first four bars are marked to be played only on one string. This creates a much more mellow sound than having the performer crossing onto the higher, slightly thinner sounding strings, see **Fig.5.8**. The use of *glissando* (sliding from one note to the next) is much more abundant here in this section, as it creates a smoother texture, avoiding any gaps or bumps between notes. The echo technique has been utilised in this section also, with the eight-bar phrase at bars 93-100 being repeated at a higher octave and a louder dynamic in bars 101-108. The section ends with a freely cascading cadenza pattern, ending on a paused 'A' note, which acts as a transition note into the next section; this can almost be seen as the dominant chord (chord V) of the following section which is in D minor, creating a cadence into section (**F**). A small break has also been marked in the music after this note, allowing time for the performer to remove the mute for the next section.

Fig.5.8. bb.93-97

Section (F) covers bars 117-146. It is quite different to any previous section as the key has now shifted from G minor to the dominant key of D minor, and the time signature has also changed from 4/4 to 2/4. This section has been marked ‘*senza sord*’, but is also at a dynamic level of *pp*. Even though utilising the mute quiets the instrument, *pp* can still be achieved on the instrument without it, and has a very different timbre to a *pp* with the mute engaged as it has a slightly crisper/drier sound, see **Fig.5.9**. The echo technique is still being used in this section, with a number of bars being repeated at a different dynamic level, e.g. bars 117-125 repeated at bars 126-135. This section ends with a number of ‘turn’ ornaments above various notes, adding some decoration to this piece.

Fig.5.9. bb.116-123

Section (G) begins at bar 147 and ends at bar 171. The key signature has changed again for this section, now moving into the dominant of the previous key, moving from D minor to a loose tonality of A minor. The time signature has also changed, extending in length from 2/4 to 3/4. The bars for this section are grouped in three pairs of quavers, but are phrased in two pairs for each bar, i.e. three notes per bow-stroke, see **Fig.5.10** In bar 155 I have introduced triplets into the rhythm of these phrases as to keep the interest of the listener as it sways the rhythm slightly and reduces the risk of monotony of this amount of regular quavers within a section.

Fig.5.10. bb.147-150

Section (H) is the penultimate section of this piece, and the piece as a whole begins to wind down. It is quite a short section in comparison to some of the others of this work, lasting a mere eleven bars in total. The tempo now reduces slightly to 90bpm, the mute is engaged again, and the beginning of the section is marked to be played ‘Sul D’; all of which help to reduce the piece in dynamic level and speed, see **Fig.5.11**. The material used in this section is a slight repeat of section (E), recycling this material in a different way. This section is relatively quiet in dynamic level, the majority of it being marked *mf* until the end of the section where it fades away into *mp* at the beginning of section (I).

Fig.5.11. bb.171-175

Section (I) begins at bar 184 and finishes at the end of the piece at bar 196. This final section is a repeat of the melodic material used in section (C). It is the quietest section of the entire piece, dynamically not moving above *mp*. It has been marked to be performed *legato* (smoothly) and with lots of vibrato, creating a very sweet and soft ending to the work, see **Fig.5.12**. The mute is still engaged for this final section, enhancing the ‘dying away’ feeling to the piece, which is also reiterated by the final few bars which have been marked ‘fade to nothing’ with a *ritardando* coinciding with this. The piece ends in the original key of G minor, finally coming to a close with a paused harmonic G.

Fig.5.12. bb.184-187

I
184 *legato, con molto vib.*

The musical score consists of four measures. The first measure begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It contains a melodic line starting on G4, moving to F4, E4, and D4, with a vibrato marking (v) above the F4. The second measure continues the melodic line with notes D4, C4, B3, and A3, also marked with vibrato. The third measure features a melodic line with notes G3, F3, E3, and D3, with vibrato markings above the G3, F3, and E3. The fourth measure concludes the phrase with notes C3, B2, and A2, with a vibrato marking above the C3 and a first ending bracket labeled 'I' above the final note. Dynamic markings 'mp' are placed below the first and third measures. The score is marked 'legato, con molto vib.' at the beginning.

Compositional Approach

This piece was the first work of my MA portfolio which I attempted on completion of the BA in Music. Having taken violin performance as a minor subject in fourth year, I always wanted to compose a solo violin piece. Much of my influence for this was taken from composers such as Ernest Bloch, Henry Vieuxtemps and contemporary English composer Graham Whettam. I have always had a passion for ‘emotional’ violin works, and this was my approach to ‘*Changing of the Seasons*’; I wanted it to be expressive and meaningful, whilst simultaneously conveying the intended image of trees, of their prowess, to create a voice for them as they are the true life force of the world and the key element of nature.

Rhythmic Techniques

This piece uses many rhythmic techniques and variations of rhythmic ideas. As it is a solo violin work, the use of varying rhythms is quite important in order to sustain interest and as an aid to depicting the imagery along with the actual melodic line. Much use has been made of triplet rhythmic figurations within this work; as can be seen in other compositions in this portfolio. Triplets invariably appear at some stage within the pieces. I find that the use of this technique helps to move a piece along, which in particular for a solo work such as this, is of great benefit so as to avoid any feeling of stagnancy in the music. The time signature occasionally changes towards the end of piece (e.g. section (F), from 4/4 to 3/4 to 2/4 etc.) This occurs at the beginning of some sections, and was necessary as to obtain the correct note groupings and as an aid for the performer, as keeping the entire piece in one time signature of 4/4 could be cause for confusion.

Harmonic Style

The harmonic style of this piece is not overly-complicated due to this being a solo work. The piece does however occasionally make use of double-stopping and ‘raked’ chords in the violin, creating harmonies and some chordal movement. These are used more for the purpose of effect rather than having any influence on the harmonic style of the piece. ‘*Changing of the Seasons*’ begins clearly in the key of G minor, varying throughout the piece, moving into D minor and A minor at a stage. This harmonic style and structure was not predetermined before the piece was begun, rather it happened naturally as the piece progressed.

Formal Structures

As is with the majority of my compositions, I did not create a structure for this work initially, rather I began with an idea and image of trees having a voice, then I sat down with my violin, created some small sketches and motifs, then I put pen to paper and then input it into the computer. The final structure for this piece that can be seen now occurred whilst the work was being created. When I decided that one idea or section had been exhausted or stated enough, I then began work on the following 'section', but this had not all been pre-determined. As can be seen within my style of composing, the majority of these various compositional tools and formalities have not been forced; they have been allowed to occur naturally as I write. Only occasionally will I pre-determine the structure of a piece if I believe that it is necessary as to avoid shapelessness.

Instrumentation/Orchestration

As a violinist myself, I thoroughly enjoy writing for this instrument as I can have it at hand and play through various sections of my compositions and decide and be more specific about various aspects of the pieces. I was also able to make very slight but effective adjustments to the music by using various techniques on the instrument such as *glissando*, using the mute, inputting certain articulations and specific bowings etc. I found that even though it was always an intention of mine to create a solo violin work, the violin suited the ideas and imagery of this work quite well, as the violin as an instrument is quite flexible in both its techniques and sounds, which provided a wide range of options to be utilised for various nuances and expressing the different imagery of trees.

Sonorities/Texture/Timbre

Due to '*Changing of the Seasons*' being a solo violin work, the opportunity for altering texture and timbre were quite minimal. I have attempted to affect these elements by making heavy use of dynamics as well as using various techniques for the instrument itself such as utilising the mute, double-stopping, particular bowings and phrasing etc.

Chapter 3

String Trio & Piano

Scored for:

Violin, Viola, Cello, Piano

-Voice of the Trees-

‘Voice of the Trees’

“The woods were my Ritalin. Nature calmed me, focused me, and yet excited my senses.”

— Richard Louv⁶

Introduction

‘*Voice of the Trees*’ is a stand-alone work within my M.A portfolio of compositions - it is scored for violin, viola, cello and piano. This piece is written with the imagery of trees, forests and wooded areas in mind, depicting their movement, growth and stature. The piece as a whole has a very earthy and grounded tone to it, which with the low tones of the cello and the use of some minimalist patterns and techniques in the piano part help to achieve this overall effect. The imagery of trees is relatively difficult to depict when not using wind instruments and without using any sort of vocals, so to achieve this I have not composed this piece with just one image in mind, rather that of trees as a whole as to create an overall effect.

This piece was composed similarly to some of my other works, without a set key or a pre-determined structure; I instead began writing the piece (piano part first), and then after an amount of time, it took on its own structure, key and tonality. I found this way of composing to be a much more natural and organic way, which really suited this piece in particular, as a tree does not grow in a pre-determine way, whereas it may have a certain type of foliage and trunk pattern etc, the size, how fast it grows, the shape which it takes on can vary depending on various outside elements which are controlling it, which is very similar to a music composition.

Analysis

This piece has been divided into sections which are marked on the music by ‘boxed text’, e.g. **A**, **B** etc. This has been done for rehearsal purposes rather than defining a set structure on the work. Markings were inputted once the piece was complete and once these ‘sections’ had formed naturally by themselves.

⁶ Louv, R (2008). *Last Child in the Woods*. New York: Algonquin Books

The piece begins with a simple one-note motif in the right-hand, which alternates in octaves, whilst the cello plays a long, sustained melody low in the instruments register, which helps to ground the piece from the off, see **Fig.7.1**. This simple introduction is section (A), which lasts until bar 10 where it comes to a close with a final paused C note in both instrument lines.

Fig.7.1. bb.1-4

In bar 11, section (B) begins. The cello continues to play long sustained notes, whilst the piano now plays a slightly more melodic line, now utilising both hands, see **Fig.7.2**. The tempo for this section has now increased from 100bpm up to 120bpm, thus moving the piece along.

Fig.7.2. bb.12-16

Introducing of a pair of semiquavers into the piano line at bar 12 and cello line at bar 15 acts as a decoration to the melodic line as a whole; this helps to create a slightly more traditional feel to this piece. Section (B) comes to a point of rest at bar 20 where the piano and cello line pause, and then the viola enters at bar 21. The viola's music line is similar to that of the cello, playing long sustained notes which form a harmony against the cello, see **Fig.7.3**. Section (B) now comes to a close at bar 30, whereupon the three instruments which have been playing thus far pause in unison. This technique of pausing at the end of a section is a technique which I have developed within my own compositions and have used in many of my works; I find that in doing so, it acts as a full stop or a comma between phrases, and allows room for

the piece to breathe. Without these small points of rest the music can sometimes become both monotonous and relentless with the sections and phrasing not being heard clearly.

Fig.7.3. bb.22-26

The image shows a musical score for measures 22-26. It consists of three staves: Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The Viola part has a melodic line with some rests. The Violoncello part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Piano part has a complex texture with many sixteenth notes and rests. Pedal points (Ped.) are indicated at the bottom of the piano staff for each measure.

At bar 31, section (C) begins. The violin now enters for the first time in this piece, with a high-registered melody, which has been marked to be played '*espressivo, con molto vibrato*' (expressive, with lots of vibrato). The viola takes two bars rest, whilst the cello switches to playing *pizzicato* (pluck the strings). In doing so, it allows for the new violin line to soar above the other instruments and to be heard more clearly in the overall mix. The piano repeats the same line of music which it played in section (B), but at an octave higher than previously. The viola enters again at bar 33, playing a lower and quieter harmonic line to the violin melody, see **Fig.7.4**.

Fig.7.4. bb.32-36

The image shows a musical score for measures 32-36. It consists of four staves: Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The Violin part has a high-registered melodic line with many slurs and vibrato markings. The Viola part has a harmonic line with some rests. The Violoncello part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, marked with a *p* (piano) dynamic. The Piano part has a complex texture with many sixteenth notes and rests. Pedal points (Ped.) are indicated at the bottom of the piano staff for each measure.

Section (D) begins at bar 41. The violin plays the same melody which it had in section (C), but at an octave lower. The piano continues to play its line of quavers which it has been doing so far, while the rhythm in the cello changes completely; playing a *pizzicato* triplet pattern, this aids to keep up the rhythmic interest in the piece and begins to push it along, see **Fig.7.5**. In bar 50 the cello ceases playing triplets and instead plays a straight crotchet pattern which shows that this section is coming to an end and that the piece is moving on as a whole. Also in bar 50, the piano repeats the one-note line of music which it had at the opening section of the piece.

Fig.7.5. bb.42-46

The image shows a musical score for measures 42 to 46. It consists of four staves: Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Cello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The Violin part starts at measure 42 with a melody of quarter notes and eighth notes. The Viola part is mostly silent, with a few notes in measure 43. The Cello part plays a triplet pattern of eighth notes. The Piano part has a complex texture with moving chords in the left hand and a one-note pattern in the right hand. Pedal markings (Ped.) are present at the bottom of the piano staff.

Section (E) begins halfway through bar 53. For this section the music has opened up harmonically and aurally. The violin, viola and cello play a series of chords which move in unison (the cello is now *arco*), whilst the left-hand plays moving chords in unison with the strings, whilst the right-hand continues to play the one-note pattern from the opening section, see **Fig.7.6**. The musical line rises and falls in this section in an arch shape, a technique which I have often used, not only within melodic lines, but also as an overall structure for pieces. This section is relatively louder in dynamic level than has previously been heard; with each of the strings being marked *mf* whilst the piano line is marked at a louder *f*. This section tapers off at the beginning of bar 67 which sees the beginning of the following section (F).

Fig.7.6. bb.52-56

Fig. 7.6 shows a musical score for measures 52-56. The instruments are Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Cello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.). The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The score features a complex texture with triplets and accents. The Cello part is marked 'arco' and 'mf'. The Piano part is marked 'f'. Pedal points are indicated at the bottom of the score.

Section (F) begins similar to the opening section of the piece. The piano has a simple line of music, using both hands however as opposed to the beginning in which the piano just used the right-hand, and the cello plays a low-register line of sustained notes, see Fig.7.7. This section is intended as a point of rest between the previous section, (which was the ‘biggest’ section so far), and the next section which as we will see, is quite prominent.

Fig.7.7. bb.68-72

Fig. 7.7 shows a musical score for measures 68-72. The instruments are Cello (Vc.) and Piano (Pno.). The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The Cello part is a simple line of music. The Piano part is a simple line of music. Pedal points are indicated at the bottom of the score.

Section (G) begins halfway through bar 81. The piano line from the previous section continues on, whilst the cello plays a long sustained G note. The viola remains silent for the first two bars of this section, as each instrument enters in sequence. Firstly, the violin enters in bar 81 with a single-note quaver pattern, then in bar 83 the viola enters with a similar pattern, and finally in bar 85, the cello ceases playing the long sustained note and enters with a single line motif similar to the other two stringed instruments. The combination of these notes playing in unison, their accented patterns, and the intervals between each instrument,

creates a quite tense and as a result, unique section here, see **Fig.7.8**. The left-hand of the piano for this section is now playing quite heavy pairs of accented notes in octave intervals which add to the overall effect of this section. This section starts to wind down in bar 104, where the violin stops playing the continuous triplet-quaver passage and moves to long sustained notes. After three bars of the violin playing these long notes, the viola joins with longer sustained notes, and after one bar of this, the cello now joins with its own sustained notes. These notes disappear in sequence; the violin stops playing in bar 112, the viola stops in bar 113, and the cello in bar 114, which is also the first bar of the following and final section (**H**). Before each of the stringed instruments stops playing at the end of section (**G**) they also fade out on a *diminuendo*, see **Fig.7.9**.

Fig.7.8. bb.83-87

The image shows a musical score for measures 83 to 87. The score is arranged in four systems. The first system contains the Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Cello (Vc.) staves. The second system contains the Piano (Pno.) staff. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/8. The Violin part consists of a continuous triplet-quaver passage. The Viola and Cello parts enter with sustained notes. The Piano part features heavy pairs of accented notes in octave intervals. The score includes dynamic markings such as *diminuendo* and *Ped.* (pedal) at the bottom of the piano staff.

Fig.7.9. bb.111-114

The musical score for Fig. 7.9 shows measures 111 to 114. The instruments are Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.). Measures 111 and 112 show the beginning of a section. Measures 113 and 114 are marked with a box labeled 'H', indicating the start of Section H. The piano part features a complex texture with multiple voices in both hands, including a 'Ped.' (pedal) marking in measure 113.

Section (H) begins at bar 114, from here until the end at bar 132 this is a solo piano passage. The piano continues to play the same passage which it had in the previous section, but now with some minor alterations in the left hand harmony. Gradually as these bars progress, the texture slowly becomes sparser, until the final few bars which has now reduced to just a single line in the right and left hand, see Fig.7.10.

Fig.7.10. bb.129-132

The musical score for Fig. 7.10 shows measures 129 to 132. The instruments are Violoncello (Vc.) and Piano (Pno.). Measures 129 and 130 show the beginning of a section. Measures 131 and 132 are marked with a box labeled 'H', indicating the end of Section H. The piano part features a complex texture with multiple voices in both hands.

Compositional Approach

This piece is the only work within my portfolio with this particular instrumentation of violin, viola, cello and piano. For the majority of this piece, I composed the piano part first and then followed in a 'layered' approach; composing one line at a time on top of this. I wrote the cello line next, followed by viola and then violin. The intention of this piece was to create a more sonorous work than the others of this portfolio, as it is not depicting a moving entity such as water or fire; so as a result, the approach to this work was a more harmonic and timbral one than of clear melodies and motifs.

Rhythmic Techniques

Within '*Voice of the Trees*', the rhythms which I have selected are not overly complex, as I found that using any form of complicated rhythms would take away from the overall effect of the piece. I have approached this piece with a more minimalist approach in comparison to the other works. I have made some use of triplet figurations during the piece, but one of the more dominant rhythmic techniques which I have used is a way of finishing and beginning sections leading into one another. This technique involves a rhythmic layering within the instruments, whereas one instrument begins playing, then the next, then the next etc. This works well as to ease the music into a section, or if used in the opposite way, i.e. one instrument stops playing, then the next etc if aids in the music from stopping abruptly. This piece does not change time signature, it remains in 4/4 as to keep it some way solid and grounded throughout, which adds to the overall effect of the music.

Harmonic Style

Unlike most of my other works in this portfolio, '*Voice of the Trees*' makes use of clear key signatures. Once again however, this key signature was not put in place until after I had completed the composition. After composing almost half of the work, it had naturally rested into the key of Eflat major. The piece remains in this key for the majority, moving briefly into the subdominant of Aflat major for a period of time towards the end. The harmonies between the instruments themselves play an important role throughout, as this piece is not as rhythmic as the others, the tonalities and timbre created by these harmonies are the dominant force.

Formal Structures

A structure for this piece was not laid out beforehand; rather it occurred naturally whilst composing. Sections have been marked throughout the piece with the use of 'boxed text', e.g. **A, B, D**, etc but these were added post-completion of the piece. These 'sections' begin where the previous has clearly ended or where new material has been introduced. The section markings are more for rehearsal purposes than anything else. The piece travels through eight separate sections, marked **A-H**, during the entire 132 bars.

Instrumentation/Orchestration

With regards to the instrumentation for '*Voice of the Trees*', I decided upon piano, violin, viola and cello as these are instruments which I am familiar with their strengths and weaknesses, techniques which can be used, their tonal qualities, and as well as this, I had an idea of performers whom I wished to perform this piece during various concerts with the possibility of having a recording made at some stage. I also selected these instruments in particular as I found that this combination created an almost 'earthy' tone when playing either solo or in unison, which suited the intended effect of this work.

Sonorities/Texture/Timbre

Making use of this selection of instruments provided a wide scope for varying textures and timbres within the piece, as they could be given solo passages, duets, trios or for all four to be directed to play in unison. The textures during this work vary from thin solo piano passages to much thicker passages where all four instruments play together. This creates a wider soundscape throughout the work, and also helps in recreating the sound of a wooded area, which similar to the sound of this piece, can vary from dense to sparse.

Chapter 4

Orchestral Work

Scored (in C) for:

Flute, Clarinet, Trumpet, Trombone, Timpani, Bass Drum, Cymbals, Tom-Toms, Woodblocks, Glockenspiel, Piano, Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Cello,
Double Bass

-Incendios Forestales!-

‘Incendios Forestales!’

“A woodland in full colour is as awesome as a forest fire, in magnitude at least, but a single tree is like a dancing tongue of flame to warm the heart.”

- Hal Borland⁷

Introduction

‘*Incendios Forestales!*’ is the most substantial work of this portfolio in both instrumentation and time length; it is a large orchestral work intended to depict the imagery of a raging forest fire. The piece has an almost Latin-American feel to it at certain points; this coupled with the fact that forest fires are quite common in South-American countries has led to ‘*Incendios Forestales!*’ (Spanish for ‘*Forest Fires!*’) being chosen as the working title for this piece.

Analysis

The analysis for ‘*Incendios Forestales!*’ has been divided into sections for ease of both writing and reading as this piece is relatively large. These sections coincide with the sections marked on the music.

Section (A) -The piece begins with a single timpani drum playing a military-style rhythm solo for two bars, then being joined by the bass drum playing a succession of steady crotchet beats with the piano playing a triplet-crotchet pattern in the left hand, see **Fig.6.1**. Both percussion instruments have been marked at the dynamic level of *p* whilst the piano is marked up slightly at *mf*.

Fig.6.1. bb.1-4

The musical score for measures 1-4 shows three staves: Trombone, Timpani, and Bass Drum. The time signature is 4/4. The Trombone staff is silent. The Timpani staff begins with a 'constant pulse' of eighth notes (quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note) marked *p*. The Bass Drum staff begins with a 'steady' pattern of quarter notes marked *mf*. A section marker 'A' is placed above the first measure of the Timpani part.

⁷ Borland, H (2008). *Quiet Moments for a Mother's Heart*. Paisley: Baker Publishing Group.

In bar 5, the piano now plays a succession of semiquavers of the same note as before, whilst the double-bass section now joins, taking over the pianos previous triplet rhythm. Bar 6 sees the introduction of the cymbal and brass; both which feature regularly during this piece. The cymbal plays a single ‘crash’ at the beginning of the bar, whilst the trumpets and trombones play a two-note tritone motif; the tonality of which causes a sense of tension. The right hand of the piano also enters in bar 6, playing a tritone interval based on the same notes as the trumpets and trombones, but now with a different rhythm.

Fig.6.2. bb.5-7

In bar 9 the string section now begins with the violas and cellos entering. The violas begin with a three-note motif, whilst the cellos play a crotchet-quaver *pizzicato* line which remains relatively constant for the following sixty-five bars, with some minimal alterations in rhythm and pitch, see **Fig.6.3**. The right hand of the piano continues to play the tritone motif, but is now marked down an octave here at bar 10.

Fig.6.3. bb.8-10

Section (B) - At bar 13, section (B) begins. The brass section now ceases, whilst a motif played by the violin I section enters with the flutes in unison at a higher octave, see **Fig.6.4**. These two instrumental groups remain in unison until bar 17. The tonality for this section has changed, whilst the instruments from the previous section remain playing similar material to

before, the E flats are now raised to E naturals, creating an overall more major feel. In bar 16, the violin II section now enter, playing a repeat of the motif which the violin I had been playing, the right hand of the piano now becomes more rhythmically active.

Fig.6.4. bb.13-14

The image displays a musical score for measures 13 and 14. On the left, the piano part is shown with a *legato* marking and a dynamic of *mf*. The right hand features a melodic line with a box 'B' over the first measure and a 'V' over the second measure, indicating a change in articulation. The left hand has a rhythmic pattern with two triplet markings. On the right, the string parts are shown: Violin I (Vln. I) and Violin II (Vln. II) both play the melodic motif from the piano's right hand. The Viola (Vla.) part has a rhythmic pattern similar to the piano's left hand. The Violoncello (Vc.) and Contrabass (Cb.) parts provide a steady bass line. The Cb. part has a long note in the first measure that spans across the second measure.

From bar 18-22, the flutes now play a fragmented version of what the violin I is playing, and then rejoins in total unison in bar 23. In bar 22, the viola section now takes over the motif which has been heard in violin I and II. From bars 25-28 the music moves up in dynamic and range level, reaching an audible high-point in bar 28, which is then succeeded in bar 29 by a descending pattern from the piano leading into the beginning of the following section, see **Fig.6.4.**

Fig.6.4. bb.29-30

Section (C) – This section is relatively short in comparison to others within the piece, as it last from bars 30-35. Here the flute can be heard to play the previous melody, now on its own as opposed to in unison with violin I, see **Fig.6.5**. From bar 32-35 some of the instruments now gradually become louder, which is seen to lead into the following section of the piece. The timpani is quite active here from bars 34-35, playing a series of semiquavers whilst making a *crescendo* into the beginning of the next section.

Fig.6.5. bb.29-31

Section (D) – As this section begins, the trumpets now take over the main melody from the flutes whilst the flutes, clarinets, violin I and violas play a descending motif which passes from group to group; creating an aural feeling of movement around the orchestra, like a fire spreading from one area to another. Violin II and violas are now playing a series of semiquavers in conjunction with the piano which creates a constant layer of sound beneath

the melody in trumpets, see **Fig.6.6**. In bar 41 the violin I section plays a sequence of quavers outlining the chord of A minor, whilst violin II plays a small descending rhythmic motif, which represents an emergency ‘Morse Code’ call. The trombones also enter here, playing long sustained notes in the low register. The section ends with a sustained A in both violin I and II along with other instruments playing an A in varying rhythms, whilst the music fades out with the use of a *diminuendo* leading into the following section.

Fig.6.6. bb.40-42

The image shows a musical score for measures 40-42. It consists of five staves: Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The Violin I part starts with a sustained A note in measure 40, followed by a sequence of quavers in measures 41 and 42. The Violin II part plays a descending rhythmic motif of quavers. The Viola part plays a rhythmic pattern of quavers, marked *mf*. The Violoncello part plays a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes. The Contrabass part plays a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes, with triplets indicated by a '3' over the notes.

Section (E) – This section begins at bar 50 with a motif in the right hand of the piano, which has been marked to be played an octave higher than written. Underneath this, violin I continues to play a sustained A which has lingered on from the previous section (like smoke from a fire), which underpins the clear change to a more A minor feeling part of ‘*Incendios Forestales!*’. In bar 52 the trumpets now enter with the previous descending ‘Morse Code’ motif which had been heard in the violas; this combined with cymbal crashes and timpani hits results in a ‘striking’ section of the piece. Occasionally the left hand of the piano changes note from an A to an accented G as to break up the overall sound, keeping up the interest of the listener. In bar 56 the flutes now enter with a loud offbeat semiquaver passage, which is then imitated by the clarinets in bar 58, but now a quaver beat earlier. In bar 59 violin I resumes playing with a tremolo A, whilst at the end of this bar the violin II begins the offbeat motif on the last quaver beat of this bar which begins to sway the rhythmic feel of the piece, see **Fig.6.7**. This motif is repeated in the viola section at bar 62 but has now been altered to ascend, with a resulting contrary motion movement between the violas and the clarinets.

Fig.6.7. bb.58-60

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Piano (Pno.), Violin I (Vln. I), and Violin II (Vln. II). The Piano part consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a continuous semiquaver pattern. A dashed line above the treble staff indicates a repeat or continuation. Pedal markings ('Ped.') are placed below the bass staff. Violin I has a single staff with a sustained tremolo chord starting in measure 59, marked with a forte 'f' dynamic. Violin II has a single staff with accented semiquavers in measure 59, also marked with a forte 'f' dynamic.

In bar 65 the clarinets are silent, whilst the violin I, II and violas play a sequence of accented semiquavers which causes an overall feeling of tension in the piece. By bar 68 all evidence of the offbeat semiquaver passage has now ceased and has been replaced by constant semiquavers, with trumpets and trombones playing triplet quavers in bars 68-69. The right hand of the piano stops playing semiquavers in bar 70 which has now been taken over by the clarinets, whilst the piano has now taken over the triplet quaver passage from the trumpets and trombones. Violins I, II and violas now play sustained tremolo notes which forms the chord of A minor, see **Fig.6.8**, whilst the right hand of the piano begins to wind down by playing a triplet figuration which doubles in speed each two bars from crotchets to minims, eventually finishing on a semibreve. This section ends with sustained notes in the trombones and violin I, II and violas, whilst other instruments are either silent or still playing material which they have been playing previously.

Fig.6.8. bb.70-72

The image shows a musical score for measures 70-72. It includes five staves: Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabasso (Cb.). The Violin I, II, and Viola parts are marked *mf* and play sustained notes. The Violoncello and Contrabasso parts are marked *f* and play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

Section (F) – This section begins halfway through bar 75, where the right hand of the piano enters with a semiquaver passage, and the glockenspiel can be heard for the first time in the piece playing an offbeat semiquaver motif. The motif in the glockenspiel part has been marked as *f* and ‘*don’t dampen between notes*’; this has been instructed as it is preferable to have these notes sustained over the quaver rests in order to blur the melodic line, see Fig.6.8. The sustained notes in the violin I, II and viola parts are held over from the end of the previous section, and drop out in sequence.

Fig.6.8. bb.74-76

The image shows a musical score for measures 74-76. It includes three staves: Glockenspiel (Glock.), Piano (Pno.), and Violin I (Vln. I). The Glockenspiel part is marked *f* and has the instruction ‘*don’t dampen between notes*’. The Piano part is marked *f* and plays a semiquaver passage. The Violin I part is marked *f* and plays a sustained note.

In bar 80 the right hand of the piano now takes over from the glockenspiel, playing a small semiquaver motif whilst the glockenspiel is now playing a sequence of offbeat solitary

quavers. The timpani re-enters here, playing a drum roll followed by a pair of offbeat quavers, which repeats until bar 86, see **Fig.6.9**. The focal point for this section of the piece is a solo cello line which lasts from bar 80-87; this solo melody becomes the main motif for the remainder of this section.

Fig.6.9. bb.80-82

The image shows two pages of a musical score. The left page features a solo cello line with the following markings: '(solo)', 'arco', 'con sord', and 'mf'. The right page shows three staves: Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabasso (Cb.). The Viola staff has a whole rest. The Violoncello staff has a melodic line starting with a half note, followed by a quarter note, and then a half note. The Contrabasso staff has a whole rest.

The left hand of the piano enters at the end of bar 88 playing a repeated low A in an offbeat quaver pattern which lends an ominous feeling to the piece, see **Fig.6.10**. The solo melody previously played by solo cello is now repeated by the trombone section in bar 91, with an alteration to pitch. The bass drum joins the trombones here, playing a series of crotchet beats creating a steady pulse for this part of section (F). This steady pulse is offset in bar 93 as the double-basses enter with an accented triplet crotchet passage. In bar 95 the cello rejoins playing in unison with the trombones, whilst a solo viola enters here with a similar melody at a different pitch. The piece continues in this vein until bar 102.

Fig.6.10. bb.88-90

The image shows two pages of a musical score. The left page shows piano accompaniment with a repeated quaver pattern in the right hand and a low A in the left hand. The right page shows two staves: Glockenspiel (Glock.) and Piano (Pno.). The Glockenspiel staff has a repeated quaver pattern. The Piano staff has a repeated quaver pattern in the right hand and a low A in the left hand. The piano part includes markings for 'Ped.' (pedal) in the right hand.

At bar 102, the right hand of the piano enters with a repeat of a melody which it has previously played during section (E) and at other times. Violin I enters with the 'Morse Code' motif, whilst the violas and cellos continue to play their previous material now marked *tutti* for the whole section. Trombones and bass drum have now dropped out, whilst the

glockenspiel has changed its rhythm to triplet minims, which, combined with the triplet crotchets in the double-bass section creates a sense of unease in the music. Violin II rejoins in bar 104 with the ‘Morse Code’ motif, but slightly altered as it uses melodic material instead of a sequence of one constant note, see **Fig.6.11**. This section winds down in bar 109, with the violin I and violin II sections sustaining tied semibreves, and then joined by the violas and cellos whilst the double-basses drop out.

Fig.6.11. bb.103-105

Section (G) – Section (G) sees the introduction of new musical material, a complete change in feel to the piece caused by a change in time signature, tonality and a heavy use of percussion. The piano enters at the beginning of the section in bar 111 with a quirky Latin-style chordal motif which is played solo. At bar 115, a solo trumpet joins with a rhythmic *forte* melody which enters with a single cymbal crash, see **Fig.6.12**.

Fig.6.12. bb.115-117

In bar 119 the tom-tom, woodblock, glockenspiel and full string section (with the exception of double-basses) enter together. The tom-toms play a complex accented rhythm which creates a sense of drive to this section of the piece whilst the strings play accented *ff* quaver crotchets. The glockenspiel plays an offbeat semiquaver/quaver rhythm which repeats in each bar until coming to an end at bar 136.

At bar 127, the woodblock enters for two bars, precluding the entry of a melodic *arco* line in the violin I section at bar 129. This melodic line is based on the trumpet melody, with a

variation on the original motif's rhythm, violin II then joins violin I for two bars at an octave below at bars 135-136 leading to sustained notes in the string section, see **Fig.6.13**, along with a short contrary motion passage between the flutes and clarinets precluding the beginning of the following section.

Fig.6.13. bb.135-137

The musical score for measures 135-137 features five staves: Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Cello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.).
 - **Violin I:** Plays a rhythmic motif of eighth notes with accents. In measure 137, it plays a triplet of eighth notes.
 - **Violin II:** Plays a similar rhythmic motif, an octave below Violin I. In measure 137, it also plays a triplet.
 - **Viola and Cello:** Play a simple rhythmic pattern of quarter notes with accents. Both parts are marked *arco*.
 - **Contrabass:** Remains silent throughout the three measures.

Section (H) – Section (H) begins at bar 138 with sustained notes in the string section, flutes and clarinets; this aids in the transition between section (G) and this section. At bar 139 the Latin-style motif in the piano from the previous section is repeated accompanied by some rhythmic unison percussion between the timpani and tom-toms with occasional cymbal crashes. The solo trumpet melody from section (G) now appears again but this time for solo violin. This is then accompanied by a counter-melody in violin II with a simple rhythmic passage in the cello section. The trumpets reappear in bar 151 with an altered version of the violin I melody which helps to bring the ‘tune’ to the fore. At bar 155 this melody ends, with the violins (I and II) and the cello section playing out the ending of the ‘*Incendios Forestales!*’ for the final six bars with a rhythmic motif, final ending with a *sfz* accented crotchet played by the strings (omitting the violas) and a cymbal crash, see **Fig.6.14**.

Fig.6.15. bb.157-160

The image displays a musical score for five instruments: Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabasso (Cb.). The score is organized into five measures across three systems. The first system contains measures 157 and 158. The second system contains measures 159 and 160. The third system contains measure 161. The Vln. I and Vc. parts feature complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth-note runs and triplets. The Vln. II part has a similar rhythmic pattern. The Vla. part is mostly silent, with a few notes in measure 160. The Cb. part is also mostly silent, with a few notes in measure 160. Dynamics include *sfz!* (sforzando) and *v* (accents). The score is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C).

Compositional Approach

My approach to composing '*Incendios Forestales!*' was to create an orchestral work to replicate the sounds and imagery of a raging forest fire across a Latin-American country. I also hoped as an end result for this work to be accessible for both youth and professional groups alike. I did not approach this work with any set ideas for structure, or key signatures, but I did have a group of particular instruments in mind before undertaking this work. As a member of a youth orchestra, accessing instruments and players of particular instruments can sometimes prove to be quite a challenge. There are a couple of these which from time to time seem to be something of a rarity, so I have intentionally omitted these instruments from the composition, and focused on the ones that are slightly more common (excluded instruments include: oboe, French horn, cor Anglais, bassoon, piccolo and tuba). I filled out the missing timbral qualities of these instruments by adding a number of percussion instruments and piano which played a key part in achieving the sounds which I had intended. This work was composed at the piano and with my violin at hand; I also discussed with tutors and musicians of various instruments the capabilities of their instruments, such as trumpet and flute, in order to gain necessary practical knowledge for composing this piece.

Rhythmic Techniques

The use of rhythm plays a key role within this piece, as is with the majority of my works. For this piece in particular, it travels through two time signatures; 4/4 and 7/8. However, within these two time signatures, the use of rhythmic variation such as steady pulses, offbeat patterns, triplet figurations, accented passages and rests all play an important part in achieving the intended result.

Harmonic Style

The harmonic style of this piece varies from section to section; it shifts from heavily layered areas to some quite sparse parts with just one or two instruments playing together. I have also used some solo passages for cello, violin and trumpet thus breaking up the overall harmonic structure and texture. With regard to particular keys, the piece was originally set up as an atonal work, without a key in mind. During the compositional process, keys were naturally formed, such as G minor and A minor, but these were never pre-determined.

Formal Structures

For this work and in keeping with my style of composition, a formal structure for '*Incendios Forestales!*' was not laid out beforehand, rather it occurred naturally during the composition process. After completion of the work, it was realised that the piece could be divided into eight sections (**A-H**), which would not only aid the rehearsal and performance of the work, but also the study and understanding of it. The entire work lasts for approximately eight and a half minutes, a longer section taking up to two minutes, alongside some short, almost transitional sections.

Instrumentation/Orchestration

For this work, I had a group of particular instruments in mind. The choice of these instruments was a practical one for reasons that as a member of a youth orchestra, accessing instruments and players of particular instruments can occasionally prove to be a challenge. There are a couple of these groups of instruments which often appear to be quite difficult to obtain, so I have intentionally left out these instruments from the composition, and instead have focused on the ones that are generally more. Any missing timbral qualities from absence of these instruments have been compensated by adding a number of percussion instruments which played a key part in achieving the sounds which I had intended and also by utilising the piano which has a wide range, covering any 'missing' low or high ranges.

Sonorities/Texture/Timbre

The texture of this work varies from section to section, moving from some quite dense sections to some much more sparse passages with just a couple of instruments playing.

Chapter 5

Woodwind Trio

Scored (in C) for:

Flute, Clarinet, Bassoon

-Mechanical Wind-

‘Mechanical Wind’

“*Wind does not discriminate – it touches everyone, everything*”

- Lish McBride⁸

Introduction

‘*Mechanical Wind*’ is a standalone piece within this composition portfolio. It has been written for a woodwind trio consisting of flute, clarinet and bassoon. The overall theme and idea of this piece was to create a piece of music to represent the imagery of wind, but in a less traditional style than expected. Instead of creating an airy and light piece as one would imagine a piece about wind to sound, I decided to create a more moving and mechanised piece of music, representing how the power of wind can be harnessed to create new forms of energy. The end result of ‘*Mechanical Wind*’ was a more rigid and emotionless piece in comparison to the others contained within this portfolio, contrasting greatly with the more organic and heavily pedalled and blurred piano works.

This piece has been composed in a more minimalistic style in comparison to my other works, having taken influence from several compositions by modern contemporary composers such as Steve Reich, Philip Glass, Ludovico Einaudi, Gyorgi Ligeti, and Michael Nyman.

Analysis

The piece begins at section (A) with a five-bar arpeggiated nine-note semiquaver motif by the clarinet. Each time this group of nine notes repeats, the music has been marked at the dynamic level of *mf* and increases to *f* by the end of each group, with an accented final note each time, see **Fig.8.1**. At bar 6, it is marked as *simile* which indicates that this dynamic style is to be continued from here on in; this avoids cluttering the music score with unnecessary dynamic and articulation markings.

⁸ Mc Bride, L (2012). *Necromancing the Stone*. New York: Henry Holt and Co.

Fig.8.1. bb.1-3

Musical score for measures 1-3. The Flute part is silent. The Clarinet in B \flat and Bassoon play a semiquaver motif. Dynamics are marked *f* and *mf*. A section marker 'A' is present above the first measure.

In bar 6, the bassoon now joins the clarinet, playing a similar semiquaver motif with the same rhythm, but articulated slightly differently as the passage is not as *legato* as that which the clarinet has. These two instruments play in unison for the following five bars, with the bassoon using the same dynamic markings as the clarinet had been previously.

In bar 11, the flute now enters, also playing a similar nine-note semiquaver motif like the other two instruments, with the same dynamic markings, but now using a more *legato* group of notes in comparison to the clarinet and bassoon and at a higher range, see **Fig.7.2**. This style of unison playing is quite prominent within this piece, and continues here in this section until section (B) which begins at bar 16.

Fig.8.2. bb.10-12

Musical score for measures 10-12. The Flute (Fl.) enters in measure 10. The Clarinet (Cl.) and Bassoon (Bsn.) continue their semiquaver motif. Dynamics are marked *mf*, *f*, and *mf*. The word *simile* is written above the Bassoon part in measure 11.

Section (B): This section begins at bar 16, where the clarinet and bassoon continue to play the same motif which they had been doing so in the previous section, but now a new motif enters in the flute line. The flute plays a sequence of short, accented quavers and semiquavers creating an almost dance-like feel to the music above the other two lines in the clarinet and bassoon, see **Fig.8.3**. At the end of bar 20, the flute ends with a group of three semiquavers, which are rhythmically in unison with the other two instruments, and then repeats itself for the following bar in four groups of these three semiquavers, which sounds similar to a

skipping record. The following two bars see the clarinet and bassoon repeat this once again, whilst the flute enters with a more melodic and *legato* passage of music on top of these stagnant semiquaver trios. In bar 23, the clarinet now ceases its groups of semiquavers and joins in unison with the flutes smoother semiquaver passage until bar 26. Bars 26-30 are a repeat of the first five bars of section (B).

Fig.8.3. bb.16-18

Section (C): This section begins at bar 31 where the flute continues to play the sequence of short, accented notes, whilst underneath this some new material in the clarinet and bassoon enters; these two instruments are now playing long sustained notes in parallel fifths and octaves until bar 35, with some short breath marks (‘) indicated. In bar 36 the clarinet now plays the same short-note motif which the flute had been playing, but now at a quaver later than the flute. This offsets the so-far steady feel to the piece and creates a sense of forward momentum. Until bar 40, the bassoon continues with its long sustained notes. In bar 41 the sustained notes have ceased in all instruments, and the bassoon now begins to play a sequence of offbeat semiquaver pairs with the occasional three-note group, see **Fig.8.4**. The final beat of bar 49 sees the first triplet within this piece, a rhythmic technique which has been utilised within each of my compositions at some stage. In bar 46, the flute and clarinet play in unison and then in the following bar fall out of unison once again as the clarinet now plays a semiquaver before the flute each time. In bar 50, these two instruments meet in unison again, and then fall out in the following bar. The music from bars 41-45 is now repeated in bars 54-58. This section ends with a *ritardando* and a *diminuendo* in each instrument, which leads into the beginning of section (D).

Fig.8.4. bb.41-43

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), and Bassoon (Bsn.). The score is for measures 41 to 43. The Flute and Clarinet parts are in the treble clef, and the Bassoon part is in the bass clef. The time signature is 3/4. The Flute and Clarinet parts play a sequence of notes with accents and dynamic markings. The Bassoon part plays a simple descending motif. The dynamic marking 'mf' is indicated at the beginning of the Bassoon part.

Section **(D)**: This section begins at bar 59, and is quite different to previously heard material in a number of ways. The tempo has now slowed down to a steadier 75bpm, with all instruments playing at a quieter dynamic level of *p*. Each instrument plays long semibreves in unison for three bars ending with a *crescendo* to a short accented quaver note. This is the first time that any sort of chordal progression has been as dominant within the piece, see **Fig.8.5**. This sequence of semibreves followed by a short quaver ends in bar 74. At bar 75, some new material begins, but not so different to warrant being titled as a new section, as the tonal quality is similar. This subsection as it were, can be seen as a conversation between the flute and clarinet. A crotchet and quaver in the flute, is then played by the clarinet a quaver later each time, creating a ‘call and answer’ type feel. Each crotchet-quaver pair has been marked with a *diminuendo* creating a swell feel, and has been then marked as *simile* in bar 77 to indicate that this dynamic style should be continued. In bar 79 the bassoon enters with a simple descending motif for four bars, which then occurs again from bars 83-86 with a variation on the rhythm, and now the clarinet and flute have swapped roles. The clarinet now calls, and the flute answers, but playing similar material to that heard previously. This section ends in bar 90 with a long *fermata* on the final note/rest in each instrumental line.

Fig.8.5. bb.60-66

Musical score for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), and Bassoon (Bsn.) from measures 60 to 66. The score is in 2/4 time. The Flute and Clarinet parts play a short-note motif starting in measure 63, marked *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). The Bassoon part plays a long sustained note in measure 63, marked *f*, and then a long sustained note in measure 64, marked *p*. The motif is repeated in measures 65 and 66.

Section (E): This section is one of the shortest within ‘*Mechanical Wind*’ and is a sort of reprise/bridge section as it contains a repeat of the motivic material which was used in section (B) in the flute line. The section begins with this short-note motif, with an *accelerando* as to raise the music back up to the original tempo of 100bpm by bar 93. In bar 95 the bassoon enters with some long sustained notes creating an underlying layer of sound, whilst in bar 98 the clarinet enters with the same material as the flute but now at a quaver beat later, see **Fig.8.6**.

Fig.8.6. bb.97-99

Musical score for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), and Bassoon (Bsn.) from measures 97 to 99. The score is in 2/4 time. The Flute part plays a fragmented and rhythmic motif starting in measure 97, marked *mf* (mezzo-forte). The Clarinet part enters in measure 98, playing the same motif as the flute but at a quaver beat later. The Bassoon part plays a steady accented crotchet pulse in measure 99.

Section (F): This section begins in bar 103 with a fragmented and rhythmic motif in the clarinet line which plays solo for two bars, and then joined in unison by the flute in bar 105, see **Fig.8.7**. These two instruments remain in unison until bar 110 where the flute now takes over the solo fragmented motif for two bars. The bassoon joins in with a steady accented crotchet pulse beneath this in bar 112 for the final two bars of this short section.

Fig.8.7. bb.103-105

Section (G): This is the penultimate section to this piece; a lot of material that has been previously heard now begins to be recycled and regenerated from here to the end, which complements the theme of this piece, and also rounds off the structure of the piece in an overall arc shape. The bassoon continues its steady accented crotchet pattern whilst the flute now takes remains playing the fragmented, rhythmic motif. The clarinet now takes up the original opening arpeggiated motif that was heard at the beginning of the ‘*Mechanical Wind*’. In bar 118 the bassoon now begins to play the arpeggiated motif which it had done so in section (A) of this piece, with the flute then joining in bar 119, resulting in a recap of the first section of the piece where each instrument first began playing in unison, see **Fig.8.8**. In bar 124 the time signature now changes to 5/4. The bassoon continues to play its two-note rhythmic motif while the flute and clarinet play long sustained notes based on the same material from the chordal pattern in section (D), until the end of this section.

Fig.8.7. bb.118-120

Section (H): this is the final section of ‘*Mechanical Wind*’. The bassoon continues to play the rhythmic material which it has been previously doing so, but now with some beats removed from the sequence, enhancing the overall rhythmic effect. After playing solo for two bars, the

clarinet now joins in bar 134 playing a similar rhythm to the bassoon, but with some more melodic material. In bars 138-139 both instruments are in unison, whilst the clarinet's melodic line changes to a more solid stream of notes for these two bars accompanied by flute playing sustained falling notes. The music continues in this vein for a couple of bars until the end of the movement in bar 144 where the bassoon plays out the piece solo, ending abruptly with a '*sfz!*' semiquaver, see **Fig.8.9**.

Fig.8.9. bb.142-144

The musical score for measures 142-144 is presented in three staves. The Flute (Fl.) staff is in treble clef and contains whole rests for all measures. The Clarinet (Cl.) staff is in treble clef and plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents in measures 142-143, followed by a solid stream of eighth notes in measures 144-145. The Bassoon (Bsn.) staff is in bass clef and plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents in measures 142-143, followed by a solid stream of eighth notes in measures 144-145. The piece concludes in measure 145 with a semiquaver note marked with a forte accent (*sfz*).

Compositional Approach

The compositional approach which I took for writing '*Mechanical Wind*' was quite different to how I approached the majority of pieces within this portfolio, as it is one of the only minimalist styled pieces. A lot of the influence for his work came from listening to and studying compositions by composers such as Steve Reich, Philip Glass and Michael Nyman. I have attempted to use some of their compositional techniques with regards to rhythms and structure for the piece, whilst also keeping the work original and with my own 'stamp' on it. My knowledge for the instruments involved in this piece is was somewhat limited before taking on this work, but after researching the instruments and discussing with tutors of the particular instruments, I soon learned of the limitations and techniques which could be both utilised and avoided whilst creating the piece. Writing this piece also proved to be a very different experience for me in comparison to the others, as I generally compose music whilst sitting at the piano or with my violin at hand which I could not really do this for '*Mechanical Wind*', so I had to develop a new technique of composing using any of my gained knowledge

whilst also studying pre-existing scores for woodwind, such as sonatas for bassoon by Josef Stamitz and more recently Ligeti's '6 *Bagatelles*' for wind quintet.

Like the majority of my compositions, I did not approach this work with a particular structure or key in mind, rather with an image of the power of wind being harnessed and changed into something more mechanical. This piece attempts to recreate the imagery of the more natural sides of wind, whilst also depicting its power and potential to create something larger and more rigid.

Rhythmic Techniques

Rhythm plays an important role within this piece. From the opening solo clarinet line, until the final semiquaver of the piece, the music moves through various rhythmic motifs and moves through two time signatures of 4/4 and 5/4. Rhythmic techniques and variation have been utilised throughout this work in particular as to make the most out of the three instruments which I have selected for the piece. Occasionally the rhythm visually appears to be more complicated than it is, but upon listening to the piece, a performer would be able to gain a feel for the piece and perform it with relative ease.

Harmonic Style

The harmonic style of this piece was not taken into consideration before composing, but it has developed into a relatively open- sounding piece, by using an abundance of fifths and thirds, whilst avoiding any jarring harmonies of semitones, sevenths or tritones. This aids in creating a wider and more moving sense to the piece, which suits the imagery of wind and openness.

Formal Structures

As is in-keeping with my compositional style, a formal structure for '*Mechanical Wind*' was not pre-determined when composing this piece. The piece moves through eight sections, (A)-(H), which were labelled post-completion. The piece begins with a particular motif, develops this, alters it rhythmically and melodically and is thrown around from instrument to

instrument, with the piece eventually ending with an overall sound similar to the piece's introduction resulting in an overall arc shape structure to '*Mechanical Wind*'.

Instrumentation/Orchestration

The instrumentation for this piece was mainly chosen as a personal challenge for me. Being proficient in my knowledge of stringed instruments, I wanted to develop my skills in writing for wind instruments. I used this opportunity to increase this knowledge by studying various solo scores for these instruments, listening to solo recordings of these instruments and wind ensembles and by also discussing with wind players and wind instrument tutors any performance and compositional techniques.

Sonorities/Texture/Timbre

'*Mechanical Wind*' is a minimalist piece, and with just three solo line wind instruments, the scope for expanding on texture or timbre was relatively limited, so dynamics play an important role in affecting the texture and sonorities of the piece.