COMPOSITION PORTFOLIO

Ten Compositions and Commentaries.

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December 1998.
THESIS CONTAINS TAPE CASSETTE
ABSTRACT

The world of contemporary music is a vast, wonderful and yet daunting place. There are so many different styles that it is impossible to classify them. Today, composers are exploring a wide gamut of techniques, introducing notions and ideas from other artistic, scientific and mathematical worlds. There are so many different avenues to explore that there is a danger of becoming too specialised as a reaction to all the possibilities.

Whatever way one chooses to work, the composer's aim is still to bring an idea from its embryonic stage to a work that fits together as a cohesive, logical whole. Over my period of study for the PhD, I have explored a number of techniques to this end, specifically, instrumental technique, and the relationship between structure and the art of expanding motifs. My portfolio consists of ten compositions and commentaries thereon which represents the overall development in my work from Too Many Avenues (1995) up to La Corbière (1998).
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for Saxophone, Cello and Piano

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for Soprano and four Percussionists

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COMMENTARIES ON WORKS

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INTRODUCTION

I began my studies at the University of York in January 1995. Prior to this period I completed a Master of Arts Degree in Composition at The Queen’s University of Belfast.

I achieved a certain degree of technical proficiency in my time in Belfast, particularly in the area of rhythmic procedures and in mastering the art of notation. I spent considerable time studying scores to explore and analyse various textures. The core areas during the course of my study were extended techniques on instruments and the art of orchestration.

Since I undertook the Masters Degree on a part-time basis, I did not have the chance to interact with other colleagues in this discipline to the extent that I would have liked. I felt that I missed out by not having the opportunity to discuss ideas and concepts that can make such a difference to one’s approach to composition.

Although this was a very fruitful period in my development, I nevertheless was aware that there were other important areas of knowledge and technique that I needed to address. My first concern was to become more proficient in utilising techniques relating to structure. My instinct in the past had been to write intuitively and to let structure take its own shape.

A related area of concern to me was that of organising material. I feel that in the past, my work contained too many ideas and there was a tendency to ignore the possibilities within small motifs. I did not always see the possibilities in the smallest cell of information. By contrast, an example of how I remedied this can be seen in Maelstrom (1996), where all the consequences grow out of the
first four notes. I could see that technical proficiency and more efficient organisation of material would enable me to express myself in a more satisfying way.

In 1994, I was fortunate to win the Composers' Class of the Young Musician of the Future Competition in Ireland. This was the catalyst in providing a further opportunity for study, as I met my present supervisor, Professor Nicola LeFanu, (who adjudicated in the competition) after the award ceremony.

Coming to the University of York provided me with the right environment to achieve my aims. I could now take advantage of all the marvellous opportunities available in a vibrant centre of musical learning such as 1, access to library with books and scores, 2, opportunities to work and trade ideas with other composers, 3, to write for various combinations of instruments, 4, the experience of working with instrumentalists and, 5, participating in workshops with professional ensembles. It was hugely helpful to be able to hear my compositions being performed and experimentation was greatly facilitated in an environment where results could be immediately heard. In general, I felt that there were no limitations to what could be tried and there was access to a huge reservoir of ideas and techniques.

In a period of approximately 4 years, I have built up a series of pieces ranging from small forces to full orchestra. I now feel that I can formulate ideas more rapidly, I am better equipped to organise material and I have an increased knowledge of instrumentation and orchestration. I am altogether happier with my technique and am better prepared to take on commissions, feeling confident that I can rise to the challenges that are ahead.
TOO MANY AVENUES  (1995)
for octet

Too Many Avenues was composed during the Advanced Composition Course at Dartington International Summer School. The "Icebreaker Ensemble" had an unusual line-up consisting of wind, saxophones, electric guitar, bass guitar and percussion. Each member of the ensemble played several instruments, so I was able, for example, to write for piano and guitar, both played by the same person. This was an interesting situation.

The title parallels the problems of being stuck in a maze. There are many directions one can take, but the problem is in deciding which one will lead to the centre, or the way out?

Composing it involved a more intuitive process than in my later pieces. The first two phrases in the tenor and baritone saxophone form the basis from which all other events unfold, evolving by drawing on specific pitches from these phrases (see example 1). There are five sections in this piece.

All five form one continuous movement, mirroring the many paths within the maze itself. These are as follows:

section 1: bar 1 to 25,
section 2: bar 26 to 33,
section 3: bar 34 to 46,
section 4: bar 47 to 81,
section 5: bar 82 to 95.

The first section comprises mainly arabesque figures, which centre on 5ths, 4ths, semitones and tritones. To see their evolution, see example 1, 1a, 1b and 2a. When the bass part takes over the motif at bar 15, there is a further expansion based on the opening intervals. Example 2b and 3a illustrate the vertical relationships derived from these intervals. Triads serve as cadential points as well as points which relieve intervallic tension (see example 3(b)). The triads
transpose in semitones, underpinned by the blues scales (based on these triads) in the bass part. The final rhythmic flourish restates the opening material.

The rhythmic language evolves from the arabesques and the opening phrases in the saxophones. Small arabesques evolve into larger rhythmic units, or into homophonic sections. Thus all initial material presented is addressed later. These procedures are developed more systematically in later pieces.
Ex. 1  "Too Many Avenues"

Opening pitch material 1995

Baritone Saxophone. First 4 Bars.

Tenor Saxophone Pitch Material
First 4 Bars.

Example 1(a)

Ex 1(b)

Bass.
BARIS
Ex 2(a) "Too Many Avenues"

Sop. Saxophone
BAR 26 (Not transposed)

Ex 2(b) Not Transposed

Alt. Sax

Bass. BAR 26 to 28

Bass Guitar (Aug 4th interval outlined)
Ex. 3a

Too Many Avenues

Bar 48
Ex. 3b

Bar 82 to 83.

Soprano Transposed.
Woburn Struggles On draws its inspiration from a Samuel Beckett play called Cascando (meaning tumbling or faltering). Woburn, a tramp, represents the creative artist and his or her struggle in realising artistic aims. Woburn is constantly trying to push a boat out to sea. This mirrors the artist's struggle in trying to fulfil himself or herself in a particular craft. Woburn eventually pushes this boat out to sea, but even then, he is uncertain of his destiny. He is torn between his domicile and the vastness of the sea which symbolises unknown territory and isolation. Although this piece is not programmatic, it nevertheless attempts to mirror Woburn's endeavours.

Struggle is the main issue in this piece. I have attempted to depict this by deliberate slow cross rhythms in the opening section, particularly emphasising 4:7 in the opening bar and 5:4 at bar 8, in regular crotchets. These cross rhythms eventually diminish in time, as exemplified at bar 25, where triplet minimis against four crotches are followed by triplet crotchets against four quavers in bar 26, finally contracting to triplet quavers against two quavers. After this section the metric modulation quickens the pace and cross rhythms diminish to form semiquavers, as at bar 48, where cello and double bass are pitted against each other in a 4:5 cross rhythm. In the Beckett play, Woburn moves the boat closer to the sea each time he attempts to push it out; the diminishing cross rhythms are my metaphor for his progress.

The harmonic and melodic language provide another metaphor to portray this struggle, through the use of seventeen chords based on the overtone series which move from maximal dissonance to consonance. (When upper partials are
transposed out of their native context to the bass parts the naturally consonant harmonics are transformed to convey dissonance.) Example 1, which is based on the fundamental note C, shows the opening chord of the piece and the various notes extracted from the series. In example 2, the double bass plays the fundamental note D, while the rest of the instruments play notes extracted from the overtone series.

Example 3 illustrates one of the cluster chords used in close formation at bar 12. These chords were devised as alternative material to the chords based on the overtone series and serve as an extra reservoir of material to depict struggle.

My intention was to concentrate principally on texture, but an elusive flute melody penetrates the texture in the last section from bar 102 to bar 114, underpinned by sustained chords in the strings and arabesques in the celesta part. The rhythmic motion is gradually stilled. Thus Woburn’s mission is accomplished, despite an aura of uncertainty, since he is still unsure of his destiny.
C. overtone Series

Wobaber Struggles On Ex 1

Opening Chord Bar 2
(quarter-tone inflection)
Woburn Struggles On" Ex. 2.

Overtone Series Based on D:

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

Bar Log

Trombone

Celesta

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

Cello

"000"
"Wolken Struggles On" Ex 3.

Bar 12: Example of cluster chord.

Chord in cluster
SOUNDSCAPE (1996)  
for instrumental trio and electronics

Soundscape was written during the Avante Garde Composition Course, Schwaz, Austria, which I attended in September 1996.

Each participant was required to write for specific instrumental forces and to incorporate a part for electronics. We were introduced to the use of various electronic equipment and techniques involving the use of, for example, midi, graphics and samplers. Because the course lasted only two weeks, it was not feasible to explore all facets in depth and I chose the Yamaha GX77 midi Sampler. This gave me quite a large palate of pre-recorded sounds to investigate, and eventually I settled on a few specific types which I felt would blend effectively with the textures which I wished to compose with the instrumental ensemble. These samples ranged from low rumbling noises to percussive and low pitched sustained sounds. Different transpositions of the samples via the midi keyboard produce a timbral variation of the original sound source.

I used 3 sets of pitch material and set 4 was based on the overtone series starting on the fundamental C (see example 1).

As is apparent from example 1, each set has pitches in common; thus it is possible to metamorphose one into the other without dramatically changing the overall character of each individual strand. None of these sets are stated directly as they function as a reservoir of material both melodically and harmonically. The quartertones are used as inflections and serve to shade particular pitches.

There are six salient sections in this piece:

section 1: bar 1 to 48,
section 2: bar 49 to 109,
section 3: bar 110 to 122,
section 4: bar 123 to 146,
section 5: bar 147 to 160,
section 6: bar 161 to 208 (coda.)

Each section leads directly into the next. The first section is full of rapid antiphonal gestures in both the strings and percussion parts, while the electronic part acts as a sustained background. Initially the pitch material is almost indiscernible as I wanted each gesture to unfold and expand gradually as the piece progressed. (See examples 2 and 5.) As the gestures expand pitches are mixed from each set. For example, in the last section of the piece, the violin part from bar 184 uses notes from set 1, 3 and 4 at bar 192, while the electronic part uses set 4 (see example 3). Similarly, the cello line at bar 195 juxtaposes set 3 and 4 until the end (see example 4). My pitch processes work essentially in a linear fashion; the harmonic soundworld is a result of melodic strands gradually stretching as the piece moves in time.
Ex 1. Set 1

Set 2.

Set 3.

Set 4.
"soundscape" Ex 2.

Bar 8 to 9.

Perfect 5th.

Set 3

Tone

Cello Bar 9

5th

4th

Set 1

Aug 4th

Bar 14 VLN.

Augmented 4th.
Soundscapes' Ex 3.

Set 1

Set 3

Violin Bar 184 to 188

Part of Set 4
"Soundscape" Ex. 4.

Set 3

Cello Bar 195 to 199.

Part of Set 4.

Cello Bar 205
"Soundscape" Ex 5.

Cello bar 83
Ostinato
Contracted

Violin
Ostinato
Similar intervals
bar 88 (last beat)
Contracted

Cello
bar 126
Expanded.
RELENTLESS (1996)
for violin and piano

This piece is a purely intuitive composition. Its title mirrors the music because it is like one continuous breath from beginning to end. The lack of repose is somewhat taxing on the players. Initially the piano has the dominant role; its rhythmic and harmonic motion move at a faster pace in comparison to the violin part. The latter is confined to long sustained double stopping, which outlines one continuous melodic strand. Gradually, however, the violin part begins to move at a quicker pace, so there is a shift in roles by bar 33 (example 1). The piano here is confined to reiterating chords while the violin begins to dominate the texture and at bar 57 takes over the rapid demi-semiquaver, semiquaver motifs. The piano part is pushed to the background until bar 71 where it unleashes itself with more ferocity and the violin returns to its sustained notes. At the metric modulation, bar 89, both parts begin to work together and material is shared between them up until bar 121. By this point, both parts have exhausted all the former material and the piano ends at extreme registers, while the violin ends on its lowest note, G, the pedal on which it commenced.
BAR 33
Violin AND Piano

Relentless.
Unlike my later pieces, Maelstrom does not rely on any specific system. This piece was conceived intuitively, so that everything that transpires in the music is a result of the first four notes that are presented in each of the string parts (see example 1(a)). The first movement is a prelude to the second, introducing several isolated gestures, which evolve in the course of the piece. For example, at bar 4, the cello inverts the initial intervals set up at the beginning, playing pizzicato. This has repercussions at bar 5, where the first long melodic phrase begins to unfold (see example 2(a)). As the piece progresses, this melodic motif expands (eg. bars 23 to 28, violin 1 and 2) The other motifs evolve in a similar fashion. By the end of the movement, all parts ascend to harmonics, a semitone apart, mirroring the contracted opening.

Movement 2 is a culmination of all the elements in Movement 1, expanding or magnifying them. For example, the motif at bar 6, Movement 1, is presented in the opening of Movement 2 and developed into longer musical phrases (see example 2(b)). The climax is a sustained dance of cross-rhythms derived from the pizzicato figures in the first movement. In the coda the rhythmic values are gradually augmented, leading to an elimination of the arabesque figures.
Example 16

\[ F\# = F^7 \text{ Semitone} \quad 0 = \text{perfect 4th} \]

\[ 8 = \text{Major 3rd} \quad \#8 = \text{Aug. 4th} \]

\[ \#00 = \text{Tonic} \quad 0 = \text{Dim Octave (maj 7th)} \]

\[ 0 = \text{perfect 5th} \quad 0 = \text{Minor 6th} \]

\[ 0 = \text{minor 7th} \quad 0 = \text{Minor 9th} \]
Ex. 2a. Maelstrom.

Cello Bar 4

Cello Bar 5 to 9.
Defiance was composed for the virtuoso saxophonist John-Edward Kelly and the Alloys Ensemble. John-Edward Kelly possesses a saxophone built in 1928, according to the original acoustical specifications of Adolphe Sax. The reed and conical bore of this design allows the player to sustain a wider range of notes than normal, from \[ \text{example 1} \] to \[ \text{example 2} \]. Kelly can play very fast passages in the higher register, is able to execute quarter tones in all registers, and can achieve a wide range of multiphonics. Notes on all these facets of saxophone playing written by John-Edward Kelly enabled me to explore many of these technical aspects available to him and his particular instrument. (I was also pleased to have had the opportunity of hearing him rehearse Professor Nicola LeFanu’s Saxophone Concerto in Bristol, which exploited many of these musical techniques.)

I based this piece on twenty-four hexachords (see example 1) related by a loose form of metamorphosis. The opening two minutes of music are based on the first and second hexachords, the source of both horizontal and vertical pitch material (see example 2). One can find four chords juxtaposed at bar 107; in the ensuing bars, chords 13, 14, 15 and 16 are in operation, and this procedure continues chronologically, moving through the chart of chords. When all are the hexachords have been introduced, the chain of metamorphosis is varied, all the hexachords being chosen freely and intuitively from the chart.

Some of these hexachords are similar to cluster formations, and are associated with rapid scalar passages or motifs in arabesques. Other hexachords have diatonic implications if spelled in close formation. The latter serve as a basis for relieving tension at certain cadential points. This is particularly evident
from the fifth section to the end, where chords 21, 22, 23, and 24 are juxtaposed, but chord 21 is emphasised by prolongation, creating a feeling of A₆ modality.

The rhythmic language is mainly derived intuitively. I spent a considerable time devising exercises through which to explore cross-rhythms. The opening rhythmic motif is derived from the 4:7 cross rhythm in semiquavers and is exemplified in the following example: \texttt{\textbackslash m} \texttt{\textbackslash m} \texttt{\textbackslash m} \texttt{\textbackslash m} \texttt{\textbackslash m} \texttt{\textbackslash m} \texttt{\textbackslash m} \texttt{\textbackslash m} \texttt{\textbackslash m}.

Throughout various sections of the piece I used palindromes derived from the above in full and in part. For example, the piano in the opening states the final two units of the 4:7 cross rhythm as follows: \texttt{\textbackslash m} \texttt{\textbackslash m}.

Another rhythmic feature is the use of arabesques either in rhythmic durations or in free time, as in the second section of the piece from bar 46 to 77, where constant rhythmic motion prevails. These rhythmic motifs run their course but are stilled from bar 151 to 181 (the fourth section). At bar 167, a melody unfolds in slow rhythmic motion in contrast to these busier textures.

The final, modal section is a free accompanied cadenza for the saxophone with passing references to the earlier palindromic ideas.
SEXTET UNO (1997)  
for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano and percussion

This sextet was commissioned by the Concorde Ensemble which champions contemporary music in Ireland and abroad. It was premiered in February, 1998 in the National Concert Hall, Dublin.

This piece was inspired by a David Attenborough documentary on eels. I was fascinated by the long cyclic journey undertaken by the eels from the Sargasso Sea to the rivers and ponds of continental Europe, only to return to the Sargasso to spawn and die.

This journey functioned as a premise for structuring the piece, mirroring the seven stages of an eel's existence in one continuous movement, as follows:

- section 1: bar 1 to 54,
- section 2: bar 55 to 103,
- section 3: bar 104 to 162,
- section 4: bar 163 to 207,
- section 5: bar 208 to 262,
- section 6: bar 263 to 281,
- section 7: bar 282 to 303.

I devised a graph which enabled me to monitor the piece and it helped in deciding the type of music which would, perhaps, suggest this journey. For instance, the opening consists of tremolandi in the strings and occasional arabesques in the piano in an attempt to convey the birth of the elver.

I devised 30 types of chords as a reservoir of harmonic and linear material (see example 1). The opening uses a mixture of chords 26 and 27, evoking a bitonal flavour in order to create suspense and tension.
I chose chords from my chart with similar intervalic properties, which would allow me to gradually metamorphose one chord into another (see example 2). These chords generate the horizontal as well as the vertical material of the music. The piece is primarily concerned with texture, so there are few places where explicit melody appears. At bar 189 in the crotale, a type of ephemeral melody is allowed, though it is rather overwhelmed by the ostinato in the piano and the long sustained notes in the other instruments.

For the most part I have used arabesque figures which expand into larger rhythmic lines. Homophonic passages such as at bar 104 to 162, or from bar 262 to 274, serve as a culmination of these figures, confirming their initial purpose and importance to the development of the piece. In short, the micro-rhythms become macro phrases; that is, a magnified version of the beginning.
Ex. 1

Sextet UNO.
b 168 P.F.
choir 28

Sextet und. Ex. 3.

Bar 167-168 using notes from chord 3 enharm. 
Piccolo: $b\#$ $b\#$ $b\#$ $b\#$ $b\#$

Bar 174 Piano

Bar 184 Piano
Part of chord 3

Bar 188 Hole Transformation.

Clarinet
Violin note from chord 28.

Chord 28
Tone
$S\#$

Chord 3 $m_3$
Tone
$N^7$ Inverted = Tone

Similar Intervals.
DIVERGE AND MERGE (1997)
for orchestra

Diverge and Merge was commissioned by the University of York Orchestra and was premiered by them on the 10th December 1997. It was later performed by the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland on the 6th February 1998. It is a response to the vivid lines and curvatures which dominate a sketch of two mountain slopes by the African artist James Dorothy. The sketch was a literal stimulus in creating both the gestures and the larger structures of the piece.

Like Sextet Uno this is a one movement piece, comprising four main sections, sub-divided into nine smaller ones. The four main sections are as follows:

section 1: bar 1 to 66,
section 2: bar 67 to 94,
section 3: bar 95 to 129,
section 4: bar 130 to 176.

I organised my pitch material into a matrix, in the form of a magic square (see example 1). In example 1 the horizontal row represents the prime. The first vertical row to the left of the square represents the inversion.

Example 1

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= Prime

= Inversion
The horizontal strands represent transpositions of the prime, vertical strands represent transpositions of the inversion (see example 2). There are various random ways of accessing this matrix. For this piece, I used material in vertical or horizontal formats as opposed to my later piece, Horrendous Elation, where I accessed specific areas of the matrix framework in a spiral fashion (this is discussed further in the note on the later piece).

The opening section utilises the matrix in various ways. In example 3, eleven pitches are presented both from the prime and the inversion. The horns' motifs use pitches 3 to 9 in linear manner, while vertically the harmony concentrates on the pitches E and F. Later, at bar 10, more pitches from the prime are included in the harmonic framework. The pitch material accumulates to the point of chromatic saturation. Eleven of the pitches of the prime are notated in canon at various rhythmic speeds from bar 53 to 66 (see example 4), omitting the 12th pitch C#, which is reserved until bar 67 for a cadential point. Here the register is at its highest point in the piece, mirroring the apex of the mountain sketch.

This section is then followed by semiquaver activity from bar 86 to 94, centring on the semitone intervals within the prime. These intervals are integral to the texture of the piece. Where rhythmic activity occurs with arabesque figures, the main interval is the semitone and tone. Thus this type of texture is used to create an unsynchronised web of sound, devoid of melodic delineation. In the last section, from bar 130 to 176, a dense web of sound at a slower speed is created by accumulating all the horizontal pitch material from the matrix in stratified counterpoint.

Example 6 is the collection of rhythmic cells which I devised to function as a palate somewhat analagous to the chord palates I have used in previous pieces.
As in previous works the small motifs expand in the course of the piece. The cells call up one another and accumulate into larger groupings by association. The way they actually work can be observed in example 7. A brief synopsis of this piece can be seen in example 8.
Ex. 2

R.I. = Retrograde Inversion
Ex. 3 (a) Opening

Horn 1

Horn 2

Prime = E, F, B, B, A, D, A, C, F#, G, E, C#

Horn 1 = B, A, D, A, G, omitting F# the 9th pitch
Horn 2 = B, B, A, D, A, F#, omitting C the 8th pitch

3(b) Bar 10. Pitch material vertically

Horn 1 and 2

Trumpet 1 + 2

Trumpet 3

Tuba

Pitch 4

Pitch 6

Pitch 9

Pitch 8

Pitch 5

Pitch 11

Pitch 3

Pitch 6
EX. 4.
Tr 1. bar 53 to 56. Eleven pitches presented from prime
Ex. 5. TR1. b. 160. THREE STRANDS of matrix linearly.

DIVERT AND MERGE.

TR2. 6th Row

TR3. Last Row

etc.
Ex. 6

(a) \( \text{Rhythmic figures} \)

(b) \( \text{(augmented)} \)

(c) \( \text{augmented} \)

(d) \( \text{dim} \)

(e) \( \text{(or \( 5 \))} \)

Augmented

(f)

(g)

(h)

(i)
Ex. 7

Examples above (e) in Flute + Oboe at Bar 15
HORRENDOUS ELATION (1998)  
for orchestra

_Horrendous Elation_ for Orchestra was commissioned by the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland and the Ulster Orchestra of Northern Ireland.

As in _Diverge and Merge_, I used a magic square as the matrix of all melodic and harmonic material (see example 1), but I wished to clarify further my use of pitch material in building up a palate of intervallic associations. Example 2 illustrates my use of the first six pitches of the prime and the inversion which, in aggregate, have the following pitches in common: $E^b$, D, E and A. However, the harp introduces the pitches F and C, (part of the inversion), while the second violin parts have F# and C# (part of the prime). These four pitches in various formations are used frequently as part of the harmonic soundworld in the piece having the property of being able to structure both symmetrical and asymmetrical chords (see example 3).

A new device employed throughout this piece is spiral motion within the matrix framework which gave me a concise method of honing in on specific areas of the matrix. (It also economises in the use of pitch material.) Example 4 illustrates how I used the top left corner of the matrix, commencing at bar 6 in the vibraphone part. At bar 10, the piccolo begins a series of spirals which transfer to other wind instruments in canon until bar 19. Later on, this device is broadened to incorporate linear strands of the matrix. An example of this procedure can be heard at bar 112 in the cor-anglais, starting on the note G, (the 10th pitch of the prime). It moves linearly to B, $B^b$, $E^b$, D, E, A, thence to C (the 7th pitch of the prime) and finally to F, $A^b$, G, B, $B^b$. 


I found the spiral, both as device and metaphor, to be a useful tool for building up strands of material as well as enlarging the proportions of the piece. In hindsight, certain passages in *Diverge and Merge*, could have been improved by using this technique, and I determined to achieve a clarity and economy of pitch material in the present work in order to bring out subtleties of detail and proportion.

The use of rhythm in this piece is largely intuitive, although exercises converting the pitches of the matrix to numbers allowed me to explore various rhythmic patterns, some of which I found to my purpose.
Ex. 2. Horrendous Elation.

Strings: First 6 pitches of prime:

\[ E^b, D, E, A, C^#, F. \]

Harp: First 6 pitches in inversion:

\[ E^b, E, D, A, F, C \]

Harp bar 2.

etc.
Ex 3. Harmonic Language.

Symmetrical Chord

Tone: Cor Anglais, or Tone Inverted

Bar 30. Asymmetrical Chords.

Trum 1.

Trum 2.

Trum 3.

Tuba.

Bass Cl.

Bar 40 in lower wind.

Contra Bass
EX4

Spiral Motion. — Horrendous Elation

\[ \text{Vibraphone, Bar 6.} \]

\[ \text{Vibraphone, Bar 9.} \]

\[ \text{Piccolo Spiral from Bar 10 to Bar 12.} \]
LA CORBIÈRE (1998)
for soprano and four percussionists

In 1998 I was very fortunate to have met Anne Le Marquard Hartigan, a published poet, sculptor and painter. She subsequently sent me a collection of her poetry called Immortal Sins. I was very impressed by this collection and decided to set one of her works in this volume, La Corbière, for soprano voice and four percussionists.

La Corbière is based on a harrowing account of the shipwreck of a boatload of French women, prostitutes, who had been shipped to Jersey for the entertainment of Nazi soldiers during World War II. On the return to France, their ship was wrecked in fog, on the very rocky coastline of La Corbière. The bodies were never recovered and were seen for days, sometimes alone, sometimes in clusters, their peroxide hair floating on the waves.

To me, the poem is extremely emotive and powerful in its use of language. I was drawn to its play on words, its imagery and symbolism. The poem works on a number of levels. On the one hand, it is a requiem for these women, lamenting the awful life these women had and regretting their demise. It also depicts the hypocrisy of mankind, in that had there been 'ordinary' citizens in the shipwreck, they would almost certainly have been saved, but it was because these women were prostitutes that nobody bothered to attempt a rescue.

In setting this poem, I avoided string instruments, feeling that their association with war documentaries where they are often used to evoke sadness and despair might sound too sentimental or clichéd. I chose tuned and untuned percussion, favouring metallic and skin sounds. The tubular bell sounds are used to evoke the bell used when fog obscures the coastline; bells are use at religious
services too, so I used them in connection with the Latin phrase ‘requiem aeternam dona eis domine’.

The text is spartan; the stanzas are mainly of broken sentences such as, ‘Lot their lot Deserved.’ There are passages based on word play such as ‘Corbière hair air air air air’. In response, I used a variety of vocal techniques. Two in particular are sprechgesang, (half sung, half spoken), and sprechstimme (spoken). Chant-like vocal lines are used to highlight the use of alliteration or where religious connotations occur. Quarter tone inflections convey a grieving or mournful effect (see example 1). Alliteration in the text is also reflected by the use of verbal rhythms in the percussion parts as at system 12 where the tom-toms mirror the verbal rhythms of the mechanical soprano chant.

The initial pitch material is the notes C, F# and G, until system 9, where the notes E, D and their quarter tone inflections open up the range, albeit limited, between $\frac{1}{4}$-note. This constriction conveys the sense of mourning. Not until E, the 17th system, is the vocal part allowed to expand further. At this point the mood changes to evoke a secure world which addresses home life, and the many ‘traditional’ roles of the female. This is reflected in the expansion of the register and the opening up of the harmonic soundworld (see example 2 and 2b)

Throughout the work, the shades of my harmonic palate are related to associations within the text: mother, bread, sweet, pink, baby etc. Likewise, the instrumental textures structure the work by reflecting the mood of each section of the poem.

The process of opening out, as the child grows to adulthood, is reversed at system 25 where the mood becomes stark, nervous and fearful. In the last violent
section, rolls on thunder sheet, low tom-tom and tam-tam build up resonances which lead to the climax (system 38). The piece closes with the voice singing a broken chant, accompanied by occasional interjections on the tubular bells.

I have enjoyed my time in York immensely. I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Nicola LeFanu, for all her unstinting help, encouragement and accessibility during my time at study. Finally, many thanks to my brother, Ger, for his help and support.
Ex 1. La Corbière

Soprano Chant-like

Chant using Alliteration.

Other Chant-like Passages mirrored by percussion.
Ex 2 (a) Part of La Corbière Ex. 2 (a)
System 19, celesta.

Ex 2 (b) System 19 into 20

Db modality
To C modality

System 19 End
System 20
"TWO MANY AVENUES".

GRAINNE MULVEY.
1995.
"TOO MANY AVENUES".
1995.
FOR 8 PERFORMERS.
DURATION: 4' 11".

SCORE TRANSPOSED.

INSTRUMENTATION:

PLAYER 1: FLUTE, TREBLE FLUTE IN G, PICCOLO.

PLAYER 2: ALTO FLUTE, TREBLE FLUTE IN G.

PLAYER 3: TENOR SAXOPHONE IN B♭, SOPRANO SAXOPHONE IN B♭.

PLAYER 4: BARITONE SAXOPHONE IN E♭, ALTO SAXOPHONE IN E♭.

PLAYER 5: PIANO, DRUM KIT:

Hi HAT:
+ = CLOSED, O = OPENED.

ELECTRIC BASS GUITAR, (BASS 2) AND ELECTRIC GUITAR.

PLAYER 6: PERCUSSION: OCTOPADS (5 TOMS):

3 CONGAS: MARIMBA.

PLAYER 7: CELLO.

PLAYER 8: ELECTRIC BASS GUITAR (BASS 1)

ALL SHARPS AND FLATS LAST FOR DURATION OF BAR UNLESS MARKED BY A ♭ SIGN.
[Music notation page]
Woburn
Struggles On
for chamber orchestra

Grainne Mulvey
1996
S O U N D S C A P E.

G. MULVEY.

1996.

DURATION CIRCA 10 MINS.

S C O R E I N C.

INSTRUMENTATION.

VIOLIN.

CELLO.

PERCUSSION:

VIABRAPHONE, LOW CYMBAL; \( \text{\texttt{\textasciitilde\textasciitilde}} \), HIGH CYMBAL (BOWED); \( \text{\texttt{\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde}} \) AND \( \text{\texttt{\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde}} \).

HIGH TAM TAM; \( \text{\texttt{\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde}} \), LOW TAM TAM; \( \text{\texttt{\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde}} \).

4 TOM TOMS (HIGH TO LOW) \( \text{\texttt{\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde}} \), SNARE DRUM; \( \text{\texttt{\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde}} \).

BASS DRUM; \( \text{\texttt{\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde}} \), 4 CHINESE GONGS \( \text{\texttt{\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde}} \), 3 CHINESE BOWLS, \( \text{\texttt{\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde}} \).

M3 CHIMES, FINGER CYMBALS; \( \text{\texttt{\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde}} \), \( \text{\texttt{\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde}} \), \( \text{\texttt{\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde\textasciitilde}} \).

TAPE: YAMAHA GX77 USING KEYBOARD (MIDI).

\( \frac{1}{4} = \frac{3}{4} \) SHARP, \( \# = \frac{3}{4} \) SHARP, \( \frac{1}{4} = \frac{3}{4} \) FLAT, \( \phi = \frac{3}{4} \) FLAT.

ALL FLATS AND SHARPS LAST FOR DURATION OF BAR UNLESS MARKED BY \( \frac{1}{4} \) SIGN.
VLN 4

V.C. 4

Vib 4

Tape 4

To I 52

To I 52.
RELENTLESS.

FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO.

GRAINNE MULVEY
1996.
RELENTLESS.

1996. G. MULVEY.

DURATION CIRCA 10 MINUTES.

INSTRUMENTATION.

VIOLIN.

PIANO.

+= LEFT HAND PIZZ IN VIOLIN.

= AS FAST AS POSSIBLE, EITHER FOR DURATION
OF BAR OR NOTE.

+= 1/4 SHARP, # = 3/4 SHARP, d = 1/4 FLAT, Æ = 3/4 FLAT.

ALL FLATS AND SHARPS LAST FOR DURATION OF BAR UNLESS
MARKED BY ¼ SIGN.
"MAELSTROM"

FOR STRING QUARTET.

GRAINNE MULVEY.
1996.
"MAELSTROM"

FOR STRING QUARTET.
1996.

DURATION CIRCA. 12 MINUTES.

VIOLIN 1.

VIOLIN 2.

VIOLA.

CELLO.

NOTATIONS.

= AS FAST AS POSSIBLE.

= REPEAT FOR DURATION OF BAR, OR BARS.

= ACCELL.

= RITARD.

$\sharpslash^1_4 = \text{SHARP}, \quad \#\# = \frac{3}{4} \text{SHARP}, \quad \flat = \frac{1}{4} \text{FLAT}, \quad \phi\frac{3}{4} = \text{FLAT}.$

ALL FLATS AND SHARPS LAST FOR THE DURATION OF A BAR, UNLESS MARKED WITH A $\frac{1}{4}$ SIGN.
Maelstrom
for String Quartet
G. Nulvey 1996
Mov. 2 "Maelstrom"
DEFIANCE.

1997.

COMMISSIONED BY JOHN EDWARD KELLY.
FOR THE ALLOYS ENSEMBLE.

GRAINNE MULVEY.
1997.
This piece was originally written for a saxophone built in 1928 according to the original acoustical specifications of Adolphe Sax. It transpires that an extra one and a half octaves can be obtained, hence the extremely high register in places. An ossia has been appended for players who possess the modern saxophone.
DEFIANCE.

1997.
DURATION CIRCA. 11 MINUTES.

SCORE IN C.

INSTRUMENTATION:
ALTO SAXOPHONE IN E♭.
CELLO.
Piano.

NOTATIONS:

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{\#} & = \text{SLOW BECOMING FAST.} \\
\text{\#} & = \text{FAST BECOMING SLOW.} \\
\text{\#} & = \text{REPEAT FIRST NOTE OF BEAT.} \\
\text{\#} & = 5 \text{ NOTES TO BRACKETED MEASURE ABOVE.}
\end{align*} \]

\begin{align*}
\text{PIANO: PREPARE NOTES FOR INSIDE OF PIANO IN SLOW SECTION:} \\
\text{\#} & = \text{HAND CLUSTERS.} \\
\text{\#} & = \text{ELBOW CLUSTERS.}
\end{align*}
Pedal VERY LIGHTLY.
SEXTET UNO.

DEDICATED TO JANE O'LEARY AND CONCORDE.

GRAINNE MULVEY
1997.
SEXTET UNO.

COMMISSIONED BY CONCORDE WITH FUNDS PROVIDED BY THE ARTS COUNCIL OF IRELAND.

DURATION CIRCA. 13½ MINUTES.

SCORE IN C.

INSTRUMENTATION:

1. PICCOLO, FLUTE, ALTO FLUTE.
2. CLARINET IN B♭, BASS CLARINET B♭.
3. VIOLIN.
4. CELLO.
5. PERCUSSION: VIBRAPHONE. CROTALES:

   TOMS FROM HIGH TO LOW:

6. PIANO.

NOTATION.

ALL FLATS AND SHARPS LAST FOR THE DURATION OF A BAR EXCEPT WHEN CANCELLED BY A NATURAL.

QUARTER TONES: + = 1/4 SHARP, # = 3/4 SHARP, d = 3/4 FLAT, ♭ = 3/4 FLAT.

↑ = HIGHEST NOTE POSSIBLE.

= SLOW BECOMING FAST.

= FAST BECOMING SLOW.

= SLOW TO FAST TO SLOW.
= AS FAST AS POSSIBLE WITHIN SPECIFIED DURATION IN BRACKET.

= REPEAT NOTES IN BOX AND CONTINUE AS LONG AS THE LINE IS IN PLACE.

= REPEAT SAME NOTE FIGURATION AS BEFORE.

= BLACK NOTE CLUSTER  = CROCHET.

= CHROMATIC NOTE CLUSTER.

= QUAVER CLUSTER ETC.

+ ON CLARINET = SLAP TONGUE, BARTOK PIZZ.

° = BARTOK PIZZ.

PEDAL IN PIANO USED AT PLAYERS DISCRETION EXCEPT WHERE A LOT OF NOTES OCCUR, THEN IT SHOULD BE USED SPARINGLY. THE SAME PRINCIPLE APPLIES TO VIBRAPHONE. STICKS USED AT DISCRETION, EXCEPT WHEN SHOWN.
Prepare 6 MALLETS.

Expressive

Order Ref. No. 12714
DIVERGE

AND

MERGE

for orchestra

DEDICATED TO

Brendan and Josephine Mulvey, (my parents!),

my supervisor Professor Nicola Le Fanu

and conductor Dr. John Stringer

Géraldine Mulvey 1997


Duration Approx 10 minutes.

Score in C.

Instrumentation:

1. Piccolo.
2. Flutes.
2. Oboes.
1. Cor Anglais.
2. Clarinets B♭.
4. Horns in F.
3. Trumpets B♭.
3. Trombones.
1. Tuba.
Celesta.
Harp.
Timpani.

Percussion:

Percussion 1: Sticks: High, Medium and Low
Xylophone and Crotales.

Percussion 2: Temple Blocks: High, Medium and Low
Vibraphone and Tubular Bells.

Percussion 3: Bass Drum, and Tam Tam.

Strings: Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Cello, Double Bass.

All sharps and flats last for the duration of meter unless canceled by ♯ sign.

♯ = 1/2 Sharp.  ♯♯ = 1/4 Sharp.
♭ = 1/2 Flat.  ♮ = 1/4 Flat.

 andre as fast as possible.

 = Repeat Group of Notes for Duration of Bar.
 = Repeat Particular Note for Duration of Beat.
"Terrorous Elation."

1998

Commissioned by R.T.E.
And the Ulster Orchestra.

In Memoriam
MARGARET LONG
Score in C

Dur. Circa 12 mins.

Instrumentation:
1 Piccolo.
2 Flutes.
3 Oboes.
4 Cor Anglais.
2 Clarinets in E.
1 Bass Clarinet.
2 Bassoons.
1 Contra Bassoon.
4 Horns in F.
3 Trumpets in B♭ (optional C).
3 Trombones.
1 Tuba.
1 Celesta.
1 Harp.
Timpani = 4
Percussion 1 = Vibraphone, Xylophone, Tam-Tam, 5 Tam-Tams, Crotales, Tubular Bells.

Percussion 2 = Low Tam-Tam, Vibraphone, Crotales, Grand Cassa.

Percussion 3 = 5 Congas, Bell, Bells, Low Tam-Tam.

Strings
Violin V. 1 = (1), (2), (3), (4) div.
Violin V. 2 = (1), (2), div.
Violin 1
Violin 2
Cello 1
Cello 2
Double Bass.

[Note: C = 1/4 sharp, H = 3/4 sharp, D = 1/4 flat, B = 3/4 flat.]

Repeat Box for duration of bar or duration marked in or over box.

N.B. All Slurs and Sharps last for duration of bar unless marked by a slant.

ie: \( \underline{1} \)

\( \underline{III} \) = as fast as possible

\( \boxed{III} \) = free time.
"La Corbière"

Based on text by
Anne le marquand Hartigan.

Gráinne Mulvey
1998
"La Corbière" text by Anne Le Marquand Hartigan.

Circa. 10 mins.

Score in C.

Scored for:
Soprano.
4 Percussionists.

Percussion 1 = Maracas, Rainmaker, Celesta, Bamboo Chimes, Claves.

Percussion 2 = Tubular Bells, 5 Tone Toms, Vibraphone, Gran Cassa, 1 Bow.

Percussion 3 = Bamboo Chimes, Low Tam Tam, 3 Cymbals, 1 Bow, 1 Metal Beater, 1 Basin of Water for Chinese Gong, Gradually Immersed in Water: Crotales.

Percussion 4 = Gran Cassa, Vibra Slap, 5 Cowbells Bowed and Tuned as follows: Thunder Sheet, 3 Cymbals, 1 Bow.

Voice: x = spoken, or whispered  = spechgesang (half sung, half spoken)

Notation:  = ¼ tone flat,  = ¾ tone flat,  = ¼ tone sharp,  = ¾ tone sharp.
Percussion Positions:

Per. 1

Per. 2

Per. 3

Per. 4
Excerpts from "La Corbière"
Poem by Anne Le Marquand Hartigan.

Corbière Corbière
hair hair ae-ae-air
Corbière bier Corbière bière La Corbière
Requiem aeternam dona eis domine
Corpus, Christi, Corpus, Christi,
Lot their lot get their lot Deserved
their lot harlot harlot harlot harlot
WHORE:
WHORE WHORE WHORE WHORE WHORE
WHORE WHORE WHORE WHORE WHORE
Harlot Har lot Har lot Harlot Harlot Har lot
Rise up ye strong whores.
Sisters rise up strong.
Strong Sisters
Wronged Sisters.
I will weep for thee
maun for thee
in the strong salt sea will long for thee
sing for thee sea sister water sister
banshee for thee
weep for thee as the salt sea weep for thee

Stop clop clop flop smack lack back
the rock teeth the rock teeth the teeth
the grate grind grit growl the suck back
shoal growl hiss hawl hiss hawl hiss hawl
geavel drawl drawdown suckback
whooooorree.

Nothing.
There is nothing.
Nothing but sea
Terrible as sin.
A lining fallen from the grey sky.
Nothing.
Bereft Bereft Bereft.

Marriage home Mother child
good sweet clean Bread home
bed Sheets white Mother
now found safe clean
safe bread found soft
warm mother Baby pink clean
sweet home soft good warm
when now safe always together
Pure Good
warm bread white now food
warm cozy Mother sister child
gentle good Holy now gentle
never soft always good always
always all ways all ways
ways ways ways ways

Apart Gap
Broken open now alert
not alert not now please
Here. Don't Please stop
Don't No Not that
Mother said please don't
No not. I don't
Like this like this
Like this like this
Like this like this
Not that
Like this Not that
that that that that that that
No one is coming.
No one is coming
No one is coming with arms to dip
No strong arms to dip down you out from
The sea's terror. No one.

There are no tears,
Only a harsh gulls cry.

Your lovers, Your time-machines.
Your nothing, Your holes.
Your forgetting, Your guilt-holder.
Your silences, Your dirt, Your rubbish.
Your hate, Your violence.
Your punchball, Your face, Your Mother.
Your enemy, Your lies, Your memory.
Your toilet, Your headache, Your madness.
Your money, YOURS, Your expense account.
Your throw away, Your useless, Your dustbin.
Your disposable, Your waste, Possessed.
Owned for an hour, Bought, Sold.
Less than cattle, Herded.
There is nothing. Nothing but sea.

Senza tempo

Whispered, spoken softly.

To celesta

To vibraphone

To crotales

To symbols, high, med., and low (...)

Straight, flat, empty. Soon. Terrible as tin. A lining fallen from the grey sky. Nothing...
becoming a whisper

breathing at first (becoming stronger)

cold wet mud

(Spoken. (Matter of fact, but with concern.)

Ripped

(ABSTRACT) Afloat in a shark's belly

A LUNCH FOR LOBSTERS

with Heinz Sick Scenes

Don't dampen

Copyright: Maccopus Ltd 1974
The eyelids float apart. The peroxide hair slimmed teeth and nose bridges litter the floorbed.

To Chinese: Low gong + basin of water.

HJ = 80 Approx.

G.P. (sweat, becoming louder little by little)
(Loud and Declamatory)

Less than cattle — HEARD.

Do NOT DAMPEN.

Violently

Violently

Cresc.

FF Cresc.

FF Cresc.

FF Cresc.

Whispered

(cymbal stack)

PPP

G. Hudsey '98