Portfolio of Compositions

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Abstract

This portfolio of compositions contains ten pieces, composed between 2012 and 2016. It is a mixed portfolio, representative of a broad range of my musical interests rather than one which specialises exclusively on a single facet of my output.

There are several strands of thought which emerge from this portfolio; I regard them as inter-connected and braided together throughout my work. They are fundamental to my composing and are central to the development of my personal musical language. For the sake of concision and cohesion I have grouped them into three sections:

1) the search for clarity, at all levels but particularly that of form and design,

2) exploring aspects of repetition within these pieces, and

3) the influence of cinematic practice upon the compositional process, specifically the impact of visual techniques (such as film editing) on the assembly of musical structures.

That discussion is followed by commentaries on the individual pieces included in this portfolio.

Contents

List of Scores

(in chronological order)

Velocity

string quartet – 10 minutes
composed spring 2012

Apocalypse

unaccompanied chorus SATB, with soprano soloists – 25 minutes
composed summer/autumn 2012

Six Downie Nocturnes

viola and piano – 13 minutes
composed spring 2013

Strata

orchestra – 13 minutes
composed summer/autumn 2013

Strike

flute, bass clarinet, violin, cello and piano – 12 minutes 45 secs.
composed summer/autumn 2014

Batubulan

piano solo – 12 minutes
composed winter 2014/15

Rough Cut

violin solo – 5 minutes
composed spring 2015

Gentle

soprano and marimba - 8 minutes
composed spring 2015

Pandora

soprano, speaker, large ensemble and film – 25 minutes
composed autumn 2014 – summer 2015

Hiraeth (Piano Trio)

violin, cello and piano – 14 minutes
composed autumn 2015

List of Recordings

CD 1

1. Velocity
   Ligeti String Quartet

2. Apocalypse
   The 24, director Robert Hollingworth

3. Six Downie Nocturnes
   Rosalind Ventris (viola) and Lara Dodds-Eden (piano)

4. Strata
   Orchestra of Opera North, conductor Justin Doyle

5. Strike
   Dark Inventions Ensemble, conductor Christopher Leedham

CD 2

1. Batubulan
   Jin Hyung Lim (piano)

2. Rough Cut
   Peter Sheppard Skaerved (violin)

3. Gentle
   PercusSing: Ana Beard Fernandez (soprano) and Zoë Craven (marimba)

4. Hiraeth
   Albany Trio

Supplementary recordings

5. Apocalypse
   Danish Radio Vocal Ensemble, conductor Robert Hollingworth

6. Strata
   Brno Philharmonic Orchestra, conductor Mikel Toms

Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed to the creation of this work and offered their guidance, support and - most importantly - belief. I owe them all a huge debt of gratitude.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and that I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University.

All sources are acknowledged as references.

1)   The Search for Clarity

In all of my compositions I seek economy of means, intending to achieve the clearest statement of form and content. Each element of a piece is assessed as to how it advances the expressive and structural intentions of the music; I generally seek to avoid musical elements which I consider to be purely decorative or colouristic. I tend to conceive and critique my music in terms of its gesture and architecture rather than any nuances of texture, colour and effect (which are – often very welcome - by-products of what I regard as the more fundamental processes). My primary concern is the clarity of experience for the listener.

The composers who interest me the most and who have exerted the greatest influence on my composing over a lengthy period, namely Stravinsky and Birtwistle, both appear to share something of this quest to balance invention and economy in order to achieve clarity of form and structure. The first of Stravinsky's *Three Pieces for String Quartet* (1914), for example, is not only extremely economical in length but also in gesture and thrifty use of musical material.

(Fig.1. Stravinsky: Three Pieces for String Quartet, I, bars x – x)

As Roman Vlad writes: "there is no development of the themes, no modulation. At no time do they constitute discursive elements between the various instruments. Each theme is rigorously confined to a strict area of the tonal compass … and is not allowed to go beyond a certain limit of tone colour."[1]

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[1] Roman Vlad, *Stravinsky*, (Oxford: OUP, 1967), 52.

Similarly, Birtwistle's music, whilst multi-layered and highly complex at some times, is also often described as primeval, as a sort of formalised ritual; his work is often based on simple binary opposition such as the verses and refrains of his early works, the protagonist-versus-chorus of his instrumental rituals (such as *Melancholia I* of 1976) or the horizontal (cantus) versus vertical (continuum) of *Secret Theatre* (1984). Many of my pieces begin from simple models such as this, and in many cases they adopt a block-like construction not dissimilar to some Birtwistle: the clearly defined sections and the layered orchestration of *Strata* is amongst the clearest examples of this in my work.

The influence of minimalism is also apparent in my approach to clarity, yet it owes little to the early process-driven works of Steve Reich, nor am I really concerned with perceivable systems or psychoacoustic effects (although the elemental simplicity of intent and economy of means is something I find alluring, and their 'rediscovery' of pulse and modality is certainly significant in my writing). The evident repetition in my compositions (which I consider in greater detail below) operates on a different level than that of the early minimalists, tending towards repetition of larger blocks rather than small cells. Of much greater significance is the influence of the more developed 'post minimal' music, such as in the energy and drive of Nancarrow's cross rhythms, Steve Martland's (via Louis Andriessen's) interlocking hockets or the dance patterns of John Adams, and in the sublime, pared-down beauty of Arvo Pärt which can be perceived in the outer movements of the *Six Downie Nocturnes,* the ending of *Hiraeth* and in the final song of *Gentle*, for example. The significant difference between the majority of this music and my own is that I conceive of my work as being fundamentally dialectic and concerned with resolving musical issues or at least bringing different ideas into close proximity and exploring their opposing properties. The closest my work comes to a perceivable process is possibly in the passages of accumulating generative patterns in which the musical content is developed through gradual revelation, such as the slow, repetitive unfolding of the text in *Apocalypse* or the evolution of material in *Strata*. But rather than being the influence of Reich or Glass, this has more in common with the 'infinity series' developed by Per Nørgård (which evolves from an initial cell as a sort of musical fractal process), or with Frederick Rzewski's *Moutons de Panurge* (1969), both of which have long fascinated me.

2)   Exploring Repetition

I have always admitted repetition to my music; to me it provides a framework around which the larger structures are built. Since I regard clarity of structure as being of paramount importance it seems essential that I create distinctive, recognisable landmarks in my work which act as pillars supporting those structures, and signposts which direct the listener through the musical labyrinth. Repetition of those landmarks underpins my quest for clarity of structure; according to Smyth "repetition is the simplest and most pervasive agent by which musical forms are generated, without it, coherent musical form is virtually inconceivable".[2]

Again, Stravinsky and Birtwistle are key influences: "As with Stravinsky, repetition is at the heart of Birtwistle's music, and yet things rarely repeat exactly."[3] The recurring features in my pieces act as landmarks, recognisably the same but always changed through context, environment, instrumentation, tempo and dynamic to offer something recognisably the same but different. Birtwistle (quoted by Michael Hall) describes a similar experience influencing musical structure in his *Endless Parade* (1986-87) following a visit to Lucca,

> a medieval labyrinth of streets encircled by impressive walls. My visit coincided with Festa and a long procession of *tableax vivants* snaked its way through narrow streets. I became interested in the number of ways you could observe the event: as a bystander, watching each float pass by, each strikingly individual yet part of a whole; or you could wander through the side alleys, hearing the parade a street away, glimpsing it at a corner, meeting head on what a moment ago you saw from behind. Each time the viewpoint was different yet instantly identified as part of one body.[4]

Michael Hall also notes that 'musical objects' are "introduced, varied, rearranged, expanded or reduced to fragments"[5] to assemble the musical structure, in a manner not dissimilar from the concepts of 'montage' in my own work, considered below (ibid).

This resonates strongly with ideas proposed by writers from Copernicus to Deleuze, namely that repetition itself is subject to change and evolution and in that sense there can be no literal repetition, since the repeated subject is changed by time, context and by the changes within ourselves; as Heraclitus suggested, man cannot step twice into the same river since both river and man will have changed. Like Birtwistle (and unlike Messiaen) very little of the large-scale repetition in my music is duplicated literally on the page, and on the few occasions when it appears to be so, the passing of time and the musical experience changes the context. Margulis concurs, telling us that "context shifts perceptual, cognitive and emotional orientation such that a passage which recurs verbatim can take on not only wholly different meanings, but also wholly different surroundings. Context determines what a passage ultimately is, and this on-the-one-hand obvious but on-the-other-hand surprising

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[2] David H. Smyth, "Balanced Interruption and the Formal Repeat," *Music Theory Spectrum* 15 (1993): 76.

[3] Jonathan Cross, *Harrison Birtwistle: Man, Mind, Music*, (London: Faber and Faber, 2000), 9.

[4] In Michael Hall, *Harrison Birtwistle in Recent Years*, (London: Robson Books, 1998), 62.

[5] Ibid., 62.

fact makes repetition a powerful example of the difference between surface content and meaning."[6]

Repetition in my work sometimes passes from one piece to another. This in itself is not altogether uncommon: many composers have spoken of beginning a piece with a fragment of a previous work[7]. The clearest example in my portfolio occurs at the opening of *Rough Cut* which quotes directly a repeating motif from the opening of *Strike* and as in the earlier piece it repeats and develops it, but then it moves away, taking a very different direction and exploring a new range of possibilities. This suggests two quite different processes at work. Firstly there is the notion of starting with the familiar and moving into unfamiliar territory; this could be regarded as a naturally organic musical development based around a heightening of tension and sense of exploration. Secondly, and more interesting for me, it strongly implies that these musical 'modules' might have an existence beyond the pieces in which they first occur. They can become independent, like three-dimensional objects which can be held up and passed around. The more they are repeated, the greater their independence from their original function and the more easily they can become integrated into different contexts and 'seen' from different perspectives. "Repetition tends to reify a passage – to set it apart from the surrounding context as a 'thing' to be mused upon, abstractly considered, and conceptualised as a unit."[8]

But beyond this, I have a perpetual sense that I am always occupied in the writing of a larger, overarching piece, and with each new work I attempt to capture something of the essence of that bigger piece more completely than before (although that is probably an impossible task, rather like seeing the whole of a three-dimensional object in a single glance). Each new work adds an additional, hitherto unforeseen dimension to something bigger. For example, the opening melody of *Pandora* is freely developed from a passage taken from the incidental music I composed for a production of Wedekend's *Lulu* plays in 1994: it isn't simply a matter of turning to a familiar starting point, there is also a strong sense of completing unfinished work and linking present with past to contribute to reinforce this sense of a greater whole. So there are aspects of my work which sometimes recur from one piece to another: these include harmonic progressions that move upwards or downwards in cycles of thirds (such as in the chorale which 'bookends' *Apocalypse,* or the slow music of *Hiraeth*), hocket and interlocking patterns (as heard extensively in *Strike* and *Velocity*), descending scalic passages (heard most clearly in the outer movements of *Six Downie Nocturnes* and the final song of *Gentle*) and melodic lines and fragmentary gestures which are contained within the space of a major or minor third (such as the opening gesture of *Velocity* and the first song of *Gentle*). Again, there are actually very few literal repetitions from one work to another but often a very strong family resemblance, the sense that they share genetic material and firmly belong together.

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[6] Elizabeth Helmuth Margulis, *On Repeat: How Music plays the Mind*, (New York: OUP, 2014), 30.
[7] "Rather than start with blank pages, start with a fragment of something you've done before – take it in different directions, sometimes overt, sometimes hidden". (Arlene Sierra, composers' seminar, University of York 5.5.15).
[8] Margulis, *On Repeat*, 43.

To illustrate this further I will consider the *Six Downie Nocturnes* in terms of their repetition and their referencing of pre-existing material. The overarching structure is itself repetitive in that the six individual movements are in fact three pairs of pieces, each of which develops an idea in different directions or presents a different facet of that idea, so each movement is heard twice in different guises. *Nocturnes* III and V draw upon a melodic theme (material from an earlier song) in the viola line, quoted almost literally in III but distorted and fragmented in V. *Nocturnes* I and VI are based around a chord sequence based on ascending major and minor thirds in the piano accompaniment; I make use of a similar chordal framework in both *Apocalypse* and *Pandora* but in those pieces the chord sequence is rather more regular and diatonic. In these outer movements the viola plays a languid descending scalic melody, largely in harmonics. *Nocturnes* II and IV both begin with an identical aggressive gesture which relates to the opening gesture of *Velocity* but is significantly more developed and extended here. But whereas in *Nocturne* II the viola outlasts the piano and finally 'sings' with a lyrical voice, in *Nocturne* IV this is reversed and the piano continues long after the viola has subsided. Naturally, there is also a great deal of music which is new in my work and unique to these pieces. These include the use of simple metric modulations in II and IV and the ringing octaves to denote phrases, the fluid temporal relationship between viola, LH and RH of the piano in III, and the processes used for breaking down melodic and harmonic material in V, for example.

This preoccupation with repeating ideas from one work to another is possibly more frequently encountered in visual art than in music: Paul Cezanne's numerous paintings of Mont Sainte-Victoire are perhaps the most extreme example. In his later years Cezanne made more than eighty different images of the same landscape in both oil and watercolour, nearly always from a similar viewpoint but exploring different approaches to technique, light and colour on each occasion. He describes it in a letter to Zola as "a beautiful motif."[9] This seems a particularly 'musical' approach in that the paintings are no longer primarily concerned with the subject (a depiction of the mountain) but with something much less tangible; he was "a pioneer of abstract art because of the apparent subordination of subject matter to design."[10] I enjoy the comparison and value seeing a collection of them brought together as highly as viewing the individual original paintings; Jonathan Cross also discusses Cezanne in relation to Birtwistle, in terms that help to frame an understanding of my own repetition:

> In the Mont Sainte-Victoire paintings he keeps returning to the same subject matter, to the same object, and viewing it in different ways, from different perspectives. In a sense, the artist's understanding of the whole can only be fully appreciated in the context of all the versions. Moreover, no one version has a greater authority or authenticity than any other, such relativism being another aspect of his modernity.[11]

[9] Alex Danchev, *The Letters of Paul Cezanne*,(London: Thames and Hudson, 2013) 167.

[10] G.H. Hamilton, *Painting and Sculpture in Europe 1880-1940*, (Yale: Yale University Press, 1967), 67.

[11] Jonathan Cross, *Birtwistle*, 17.

3)   Sounding the Visual

Discussion of painting leads directly into a third area of activity: I have been interested for many years in the relationship between music and visual stimulus. Painting and sculpture have proved thought-provoking and influential but only as much as the business of *seeing* itself: distance and perspective, movement and travel, light, shade, shapes, patterns and processes of change.

Again, the influences of Stravinsky and Birtwistle are clearly felt upon my work. Roman Vlad speaks of the 'rigidity' of one of Stravinsky's themes "as in a Byzantine mosaic or painting, it constitutes the aggregate of a whole series of geometrical segments or solid pieces."[12] Birtwistle often discusses his music in visual terms, such as in his introduction to the score of *Silbury Air* (1977): "I have often alluded to my music of landscape, presenting musical ideas through the juxtaposition and repetition of static blocks, or, preferable in my terminology, 'objects'"[13]. He continues to insist that these objects can be repeated, juxtaposed and changed; as three dimensional objects they hold a particular fascination since they necessitate consideration of time and movement - they cannot be seen in their entirety in a single moment.

My main area of compositional interest related to visual art might be described as structural and/or technical transfer, taking models from the structures of a sculpture, an image or a film – analysing that structure, its relationship with space or time, how it is 'read' – and attempting to transfer some of those principles to musical composition. Whilst there are examples in my portfolio of the influence of two-dimensional art (such as in *Strata*), it is the medium of film which has become a particular preoccupation, and a great deal of my recent music has applied aspects of cinematic technique as a starting point or compositional principle. Not only are they both time-based art, film and music share the ability to affect the perception of time passing; film makers often discuss their work in musical terms "not merely putting music forward as a simile but in fact as something actually tied to their procedures."[14] With the advent of sound in film, many early film makers began to conceptualise film as a form of recorded theatre, but the best of them were clearly aware that music, rather than theatre, provided a closer and more appropriate model. According to Hitchcock, D W Griffith "treated film as something other than theatre, taking the camera and moving it from its position at the proscenium arch."[15] Significantly, "Griffith began to set the strips of film together in a sequence and rhythm which came to be known as montage, it took the action outside the confines of time and space, even as they apply to the theatre. In being anti-literary and purely cinematic art, cinema…becomes a truly abstract art, like music."[16]

My interest in film should emphatically not imply descriptive or programmatic music. It has little to do with film music itself but is much more concerned with how films are assembled,

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[12] Vlad, *Stravinsky*, 52.

[13] Harrison Birtwistle, *Silbury Air*, (London: Universal Edition, 1977), preface to score.

[14] David Schroeder, *Hitchcock's Ear*, (London: Continuum, 2012), 15.

[15] S. Gottlieb, ed. *Hitchcock on Hitchcock: Selected Writings and Interviews,* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1995), 165.

[16] Ibid., 165.

and it attempts to discover and develop musical parallels for the ways in which moving images are manipulated and combined to make new meanings: "even though most films are a mosaic of fractured images and fragmented narratives, we have little problem piecing them together into something complete."[17]

It is not difficult to find interesting correspondences between the techniques of the film maker and the concerns of the composer, particularly in terms of how their materials are ordered, joined and juxtaposed. Film editors employ a wide range of methods of combining shots to produce a coherent narrative: there are many different types of transitions when moving from one shot to another, many different relationships established between shots when combined and an established body of theory to determine conventions and orthodoxies, particularly surrounding notions of montage.

Continuity editing was established by film makers in the first decades of the twentieth century; it is generally now regarded as a more conservative method of editing and seeks to achieve an effortless realism, presenting the viewer "with an image of the world that is ordered, coherent and structured"[18] through a series of rules which serve to establish a natural sense of continuity within the narrative. Music has its own paradigm of continuity, much longer-established and taking a variety of forms which are usually expressed in terms of phrase patterns, harmonic movement, melodic development and recognised formal structures. Traditionally in music, and in film, transitions are generally made smooth and inconspicuous, the creators employing a range of techniques to maintain that sense of continuity and flow. In film that usually means finding commonalities between shots, to create an impression of seamlessness, of one shot following naturally on from another in order to maintain the credibility of the narrative, and to keep the mind of the viewer fixed firmly upon the plot rather than allowing them to be distracted by the structure which underpins it.

In my music I am much more interested in acquiring the techniques of discontinuity editing and montage, where the film maker is concerned less with conventional narrative and a logical temporal progression and much more with constructing meaning from the juxtaposition of unrelated elements. The earliest master of film montage was Sergei Eisenstein who developed a range of dialectical techniques which had hard-hitting resonances in terms of their visual emotional impact and the power of their political messages; the basic principle of montage is that "two film pieces, of a kind, placed together, inevitably combine into a new concept, a new quality, arising out of that juxtaposition."[19] According to David Schroeder "montage…became the most important principle in filmmaking, not only as a technique but as that which gave a film its expressive and emotional essence…finding the difference between the world itself and the fractured way we experience it."[20] One of the earliest examples of Eisenstein's montage occurs towards the end of the film *Strike* (1925) in which he cross-cuts non-diegetic shots of cattle being slaughtered with shots of striking workers being massacred by the pre-revolutionary police,

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[17] Robert Edgar, John Marland, Steve Rawle, *The Language of Film,* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), 8.
[18] Ibid., 150.
[19] Sergei Eisenstein, trans. and ed. Jay Leyda, *The Film Sense,* (London: Harvest, 1968), 14.
[20] Schroeder, *Hitchcock's Ear*, 28.

forcefully making a brutal political comment. (See notes to my composition *Strike*, below).
Eisenstein certainly made use of tonal montage (namely, contrasting shots with sharply
defined tonal areas) but made greater use of rhythmic montage; he realised that controlling
the pace of cutting in passages of montage he could have a profound impact on the viewer
(which he developed to powerful effect in the famous 'Odessa Steps' sequence in his
Battleship Potemkin of 1925) in which he varied the rate of change of shots to bring about
an accelerating pace in the film's movement and a significant rise in tension for the viewer.

Eisenstein was clearly aware of the musical implications of montage: in 1925 he wrote that
"the future of montage lies in musical composition"[21] which suggests that he may not have
been aware of Stravinsky's experiments with montage-like forms, most evident in works
such as the *Three Pieces for String Quartet* (1918) and employed most effectively in the
Symphonies of Wind Instruments of 1920 which proceeds "by abrupt juxtaposition of
strongly dissimilar material; ideas may be repeated, varied, even changed, but
development…takes place hardly at all."[22] To me, the piece seems to move like a series of
filmed shots, disconnected in time and place, subjected to editing which allowed no
smoothing of transitions or softening of edges; as Eisenstein indicated, the montage process
has the potential to create something new and possibly unexpected from these fragments,
in this case a powerful ritual with "almost inexplicable impetus and unity."[23]

Montage is by no means the only cinematic technique which offers the potential to transfer
to compositional process. (I will discuss their application within my portfolio below, when
considering the pieces individually).

- Intercutting (or cross cutting) is similar to montage in some respects; it occurs when
  two scenes are shown in quick alternation, to create the impression of simultaneity
  of action in different locations. Intercutting is usually employed in the build up
  towards a climax.
- Assembly Editing is a type of montage where the intention is less to use juxtaposition
  of difference to create what Eisenstein called a 'new concept' but is instead "the
  creative construction of a scene through the assembly of separate pieces of film, the
  resulting scene being a kind of mosaic of shots producing a larger idea."[24] Jennifer
  Van Sijjl cites the shower scene in Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) as a notable example of
  assembly.

Filmmakers use an array of techniques for manipulating their control of time, or at least our
perceptions of the passing of time.

- Slow motion and time compression (fast motion) offer contrasts to real or clock time,
  and usually indicate two different states of mind or at least an otherworldliness and
  detachment from normality, such as in *Raging Bull* (Scorsese, 1980) where slow
  motion indicates boxer Jake's slide into unconsciousness following a severe beating.

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[21] Sergei Eisenstein, ed. Glenny and Taylor, *Towards a Theory of Montage,* (London: Tauris, 2010), 4.
[22] Michael Oliver, *Igor Stravinsky,* (London: Robson Books, 2008), 96.
[23] Ibid., 96
[24] Jennifer Van Sijjl, *Cinematic Storytelling*, (Studio City California: Michael Weiss, 2005), 52.

- Freeze frames stop the motion when a single frame is 'frozen' on the screen like a photograph. As such that image takes on an iconic significance, an outstanding moment in the film. It is also effectively used as a means of transition: the old is held static until the new appears, like a fermata in music.

- Overlapping Action occurs where the individual shots in an assembly or montage overlap time, so that one starts earlier than the previous shot ended, making the whole sequence longer than it would otherwise be in real time, heightening the sense of anticipation. Used effectively, the viewer won't notice the abrupt jolts back in time; the classic example of a train hurtling towards disaster but seemingly never getting any closer to the broken bridge has become something of a cliché.

- Prolepsis and analepsis (commonly foreshadowing and flashback) are staple techniques of the filmmaker for breaking the natural flow of time, providing creative opportunities to disturb the audience's expectations. This can allow for the creation of more complex narrative structures, using memory or premonition to create a more multi-dimensional experience, such as in *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) or *Citizen Kane* (1941). *Barton Fink* (Coen Brothers 1991) includes more than eighty examples of foreshadowing, and as Barton himself reminds us: 'all the world is disjointed and off-kilter'.

Filmmakers use a very wide range of techniques to effect transition which can in many cases be applied to music. These include:

- Crossfade/dissolve: a cut is softened as one shot fades out as another fades up. Dissolves can be brief or extended depending on how soft the editor wants the effect to be. Dissolves are often used to indicate the passage of time or (as in *Citizen Kane*) to create an impression of grandeur and size.

- Jump Cut: this is an abrupt form of transition which was generally regarded as an error in continuity editing; typically it occurs in a sequential series of shots that makes the subject appear to jump from one spot to the other without a natural sense of continuity, as if some frames have been cut from a scene. The result is a jarring surprise which can add impact and heighten tension.

- Smash Cut: similar to the jump cut, the smash cut involves a sudden and unexpected change of image to surprise the viewer, emphasised by a sudden change in the soundtrack or unexpected switch from wide shot to close up.

- Mise-en-Scène is effectively the absence of editing. It refers to a scene in which the action plays out in front of a camera which runs continuously; interest is created through zoom and camera movement. The dramatic effect is generally the opposite of montage, calming, relaxing and often creating a timeless (or at least a slowing) sensation, paradoxically since action unfolds in real time.

- Split screen cinema (which is used extensively by Tarantino in *Kill Bill*, 2003, for example) can offer parallel multiple narratives, a sort of simultaneous montage technique offering the possibility that we might concurrently experience different pacing, action, timing and style.

All of the above cinematic techniques have been consciously explored, developed in musical terms and applied to one or more of the compositions in this portfolio. Some, when

transferred from film to composition, are not in fact far removed from conventional musical practice. What is distinctive here in my work is the range of cinematic techniques which are deliberately employed, exploring more closely than previously the commonalities and differences between two time-based media through these specific techniques, and the broad parallels between seeing and hearing.

4)   Commentaries

I take a broadly phenomenological approach to discussing my music: I am interested mostly in the gestures of the music, their effect on the listener and how they combine to form longer structures. I do not attempt a detailed musical analysis of the pieces here since in my experience that rarely offers insight into the composer's expressive intentions. Instead I will discuss the pieces largely in terms of the overarching themes discussed above, clarity, repetition and cinematic transfer. "All analysis is poised uncomfortably between realism and reduction: the only thing as useless as an analysis which cannot be related to experience is one that does not simplify the phenomenon it purports to explain."[25]

i.   Velocity

As a former brass player I have a natural affinity with writing for voices and for wind instruments where common issues of range and breath control have a significant influence, impacting on phrasing and musical contours; on the other hand I have lacked confidence in my ability to write imaginatively and idiomatically for strings, so a secondary ambition of this portfolio was to confront this challenge: a string quartet, a piano trio (*Hiraeth*) and solo pieces for violin and viola are included.

Velocity, for string quartet, was composed in the spring of 2012 and first performed by the Ligeti Quartet in May that year. It is a companion piece to my earlier *Vertigo* string quartet which was based on a theme from Bernard Herrmann's film music. Whilst the earlier work was a journey from my original material towards Herrmann's theme, *Velocity* does not quote directly from Herrmann but it does emulate the falling gesture in the suspended cadences which are a striking characteristic of Herrmann's score; it also borrows some of my original thematic material from my Vertigo quartet, most notably the opening 'alarum' gesture which recurs in various guises throughout the score. The concept of the companion piece was thought-provoking: the two pieces shared some materials and yet were structurally and expressively quite distinct. They inform one another to the extent that it would be helpful for the understanding of one to know the other, but they don't form an organic or logical sequence so are certainly not intended to be played as adjacent 'movements' in performance. (At the premiere of *Velocity*, *Vertigo* was performed in the first half of the concert with *Velocity* after the interval; for me that was a satisfactory separation.

The title refers to one of the simple premises behind the work and one of the initial formative decisions, namely the phenomenon that closer objects appear to move more quickly than distant ones (according to the laws of kinematics), so in the music the fast passages are nearly always in the foreground (i.e. at a louder dynamic level) than the slower passages in an attempt to create a dynamic, three-dimensional quality to the music where surprise and inevitability could co-exist. I created a scale of tempi and intensity which operates consistently through the piece, although as with all systems in my music it

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[25] Nicholas Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia,* (Oxford: OUP, 1998), 135.

becomes subject to change according to context. A parallel in film might be the calm of a long shot compared to the intensity of an extreme close-up.

The opening paragraph of *Velocity* fulfils several functions: firstly it establishes the time difference between the fast, loud music in the viola and the soft, sustained sounds of the other instruments. There is an immediate sense of perspective and almost a 'freeze frame' moment when the initial burst of energy is halted in its tracks. Secondly, the opening establishes D as a tonal centre and outlines the minor third as an important structural unit. The falling scale evolves on successive utterances, in the harmonics of the first violin. The first cadential suspension occurs in bar 26, and at bar 29 a new tempo layer is introduced, a derivative of the opening alarum, now slower and softer; these elements form a steady processional montage, interrupted at bar 60 by the first extended loud passage: a rapid hocket which is again developed from the opening viola motif. This template (a montage of slow, soft elements leading to explosive outburst) is applied in successive cycles; the lengths of sections differ in order to affect irregularity and surprise. In the second phase a high, sustained line in violins (which breaks the dynamic rule of the work in order to provide a suggestion of lyricism) begins to emerge against a mechanical, metronomic ticking accompaniment. The longest passage of soft music is abruptly interrupted by the final extended explosion of hocketing monody (from J) which proves climactic; from letter N the intensity gradually subsides leading to a return of the opening music, the loud outbursts once again become momentary interjections rather than the primary foreground activity.

ii.   Apocalypse

Apocalypse was composed in the summer and autumn of 2012 but not performed until the summer of 2014 when it was presented during the York Festival of Ideas, in a programme of new choral music given by The 24 under the direction of Robert Hollingworth.

All Saints Church in North Street, York contains some of the oldest and most beautiful examples of medieval stained glass in Europe. Particularly dramatic is the so-called *Prick of Conscience* window – based on a Middle English poem of the same name – which includes a series of fifteen tableaux comprising image and text, each of which depicts a scene from the last fifteen days of the world. In the first nine panels we witness the physical destruction of the earth, followed by buildings (including All Saints Church itself) before mankind and all living things are destroyed. It is a simple moralistic tale to persuade sinners to repent; at the top of the window the virtuous are escorted into heaven whilst at the base others are taken by demons into hell.

 In *Apocalypse* I present a text which is drawn from the *Prick of Conscience* poem both in its original form and simultaneously in a modern translation (by poet Daniela Nunnari and myself – see Appendix 1) in a setting for unaccompanied SATB chorus (which sometimes divides into SSAATTBB), with high soprano soloist and, later in the piece, two additional sopranos who sing antiphonally from either side of the choir. They are the leading protagonists in the drama, angels of the apocalypse perhaps, extending the range of the choir both in terms of pitch and space. The music evolves in both space and in sound: it begins with the upper voices surrounding the audience and only gradually moving into concert formation, just as the music emerges out of the initial single note drone on A into more expansive harmony.

In my setting of the text, the narrative unfolds in the usual chronological sequence but increasingly refers back to earlier events in the sequence to create a sort of montage which grows in density and complexity as the extent of the apocalypse becomes apparent, just as the eye might explore the detail of the window at will to create one's own 'disaster movie', complete with flashbacks and premonitions. The unfolding of the text can be represented as follows (Roman numerals indicate use of the original Middle English text):

Bar:									
10	1								
22	2								
32	3	1							
45	4	2							
58	5	II							
77	6	III							
89	7								
101	8	1	2	3	4	5			
120	9	VII							
140	10	6	8						
169	11	1	3	IV					
191	12	2	5	7					
227	13	6	9	10	12				
241	14	1	4	7	8	10	11	12	13
164	15	1							

(Fig. 2. Apocalypse, distribution of text)

The 'chorale' which is introduced for the first day is central to maintaining a sense of unity in an otherwise very divergent piece; it returns at the close to frame the work as a whole. Its harmony introduces the rising minor third as a principle building block, and its outline recurs in an accompanying role at the fourth, fifth, eighth, tenth, thirteenth and fifteenth days but its influence is felt more widely still, such as in the bass ostinato below the second day or in the melodic use of the minor third in seventh day (solo sopranos, bar 219) or in the lower voices in the final bars, for example.

Since the first performance of *Apocalypse* I have made an alternative version (at the request of the Danish Radio Vocal Ensemble) in which the piece is divided into four separate movements to allow *Apocalypse* to be performed in such a way as it recurs throughout an evening performance, complemented by music of other composers which is thematically related. The sections of Apocalypse on either side of the newly-inserted breaks concatenate to give the impression of a seamless continuity.

iii.   Six Downie Nocturnes

This set of duets for viola and piano was composed in the spring of 2013 and first performed in May that year by Rosalind Ventris and Lara Dodds-Eden as part of the Late Music concert series. Martin Downie was a ceramic artist and for a short time Dean of the Faculty of Arts at York St John University; he died following a brief illness in November 2012. The six short movements of the work comprise three pairs of pieces arranged in the sequence A B C B C A although the second iterations are always developed or varied to make each piece an individual entity.

A – which provides the outer movements of the set – is a slow lament based on a harmonic progression of rising major and minor thirds, producing a sequence of chords which includes minor triads on all twelve chromatic tones. Above that simple chordal accompaniment, the viola plays a sustained, plaintive descending phrase, played almost entirely in harmonics. Variation in the second iteration is slight: the accompaniment retains the same chord progression (although durations are changed and chords sometimes employed in different inversions) and the melodic line in the viola tends to include longer phrases than previously.

B is a fast 'scorevole' movement, a modest tribute to Elliott Carter, who had also died while I was composing this piece. The viola alternates between stabbing, aggressive music and more lyrical melodic fragments whilst the piano plays the role of timekeeper, maintaining a ticking pulse which is punctuated at the start of each phrase by a ringing octave. The music moves through a sequence of simple metric modulations which permits certain elements (such as the aggressive viola music) to remain at a constant pace throughout whilst other parts (including the mechanistic piano) increases in tempo before slowing down again at the close; the approach to musical time is multidimensional. In *Nocturne* 2 the viola's aggressive music overcomes the piano allowing the player to finally 'sing out' a cantabile melody – a theme which first emerges here but comes to full fruition in the music of C. In *Nocturne* 4 however the roles are reversed and the aggressive music seems to banish the viola's attempts to sing, leaving only the bare piano pulse exposed at the close. This is a single narrative, retold with two different - but equally valid - endings.

The music of C is an instrumental realisation of one of the songs from my earlier 'Three Songs of Peril': *The Day the Sky Turned Black*. In *Nocturne* 4 the viola plays the lyrical, sequential melody of the song (in C minor) which appears to emerge out of the final moments of the preceding movement and which is harmonised at phrase ends by the left hand of the piano in its lowest register; there is no metre, the pianist simply responds to the viola's timing. Meanwhile the right hand of the piano plays a regular chromatic pulse which is maintained deliberately out of time with the viola and LH, creating an uneasy tension in performance. In the second iteration of C, the piano's pulse has become an irregular 'chorale' whilst the viola melody – hopefully still recognisable – is split into smaller fragments, often separated by high harmonics, linking it also to the music of A.

iv.   Strata

Strata was composed in the Spring and Summer of 2013 for an orchestra of 2.2.2.2/2.2.3.0/timps/2 perc/piano/harp/strings. It was first performed by the Orchestra of Opera North (conductor Justin Doyle) in Leeds in November 2014 and was subsequently recorded for commercial release by the Brno Philharmonic Orchestra (Mikel Toms) in June 2015. The initial impetus came from a striking visual image: in 2007 I had collaborated with conceptual artist Rory McBeth on several short pieces for an exhibition at Leeds Art Gallery entitled *Rank: Depicting the Social Order*, which included examples of visual art used to portray class divisions in society. One of the works shown in the exhibition was a dramatic poster dating from the earliest days of the American trades' union movement which depicted the different classes of society as a pyramid – not unlike the layers of a wedding cake – with the monarchy (and money) at the top and the workers at the base, supporting the whole edifice (see Appendix 2). The poster makes a blunt, naïve statement intended to raise political awareness in a sector of society hitherto unrepresented; I responded to its immediacy and empathised with the sentiments which had motivated it. It haunted me long after the exhibition had ended, and seemed ripe for musical interpretation. Although the strength of the image suggested an almost literal 'transcription' of the visual structure into music, to create a musical movement for each of the layers of the pyramid, from the outset I wanted to resist the obvious temptation to compose music which was simply representational or descriptive.

As noted above, the process of gradual revelation of material is a recurring structural device in my work, and initially I planned a musical form based on the gradual unfolding of five musical elements representing the strata:

> A AB ABC ABCD ABCDE

 so that with each successive cycle the music ascends further into the structure, one layer at a time.

> A. Slow, relentless additive process, starting with a single accented chord which is gradually expanded into a two-bar phrase.
> B. Fast, chattering hocket using the whole orchestral range: mechanical and percussive.
> C. Aggressive, angry music centred around the brass section, featuring rapid repeated notes, as if the hocket of A has been forcibly compressed into a single line.
> D. A slow chorale for strings reinforced by solo woodwind, featuring descending melodic lines, accompanied by soft, rhythmic chiming: piano, harp and tuned percussion.
> E. Pure, sustained string tones, often harmonics, always played very softly.

At a late stage in the composition I decided to remove A from the unfolding process and use it instead to frame the work. This was primarily because the impact of A seemed too bold to bear extensive repetition (it would have appeared five times in total) but also because I saw that section as representing the whole piece, in microcosm: both section A and the

work as a whole are based on the same unfolding process, and as such I felt that A needed to stand outside of that process. Consequently the final structure is better described:

A B BC BCD BCDE BCDEA

At the outset the sections are short and very sharply delineated and differentiated. As the piece progresses, however, the sections become longer, musical materials are developed and the sections begin to bleed (or crossfade) into one another, transitions becoming more blurred and new sonic relationships are created during the periods of transition.

The orchestration is block-orientated, based around the whole orchestra or either instrumental families or other subdivisions which cross family groups (such as the chiming group in section D, for example). There are also a number of short but significant solo lines which increasingly interrupt as the piece progresses, particularly in later iterations of section A where they often appear in opposition to the prevailing tutti – the plea of the single voice set against the crowd - or in the longer lines of D.

The concluding section of the music returns to the dramatic repetition of the opening, although it is distorted at first, only gradually returning to sharp focus in the final bars.

v. Strike

Strike is composed for the instrumentation of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912): flute, clarinet, violin, cello and piano although it makes extensive use of piccolo and bass clarinet: these doublings (which open up a more dramatic range of timbral contrasts) was strongly influenced by a hearing of Peter Maxwell Davies' *Antechrist* (1967) in summer 2014. *Strike* was composed during the autumn of 2014 and first performed in Hong Kong by the Avant Music Ensemble in April 2015 and then included in the York Spring Festival of New Music the following month, performed by Dark Inventions.

The work takes its title from the first full-length feature film by Sergei Eisenstein (*Stachka,* from 1925), which depicts an industrial dispute in 1903 by the factory workers in pre-revolutionary Russia and their subsequent suppression by the authorities. It is remembered particularly today for a vivid, climactic montage sequence near the end of the film in which the violent conclusion of the strike action is cross-cut with footage of cattle being slaughtered. Eisenstein's influential essay, *Montage of Attractions* (in which he first outlines the concept of montage in film making) was written between *Strike's* production and its first public showing; in this he describes the art and technique of motion picture editing in which contrasting shots or sequences are alternated or immediately juxtaposed to affect emotional or intellectual responses, usually resulting in a quickening of pace or a heightening of dramatic tension in the film.

Much of the film is devoted to images of machines and the repetitive toil of heavy industry. Another theme is collectivism in opposition to individualism, which is reflected in the scoring of my piece in that the five instruments are playing for almost the whole duration with few significant rests or extended solo passages; although this music begins with an exposed passage for piccolo it is almost entirely a collective effort where none of the protagonists gain prominence for any lengthy period.

The music is in three main parts: an opening section which contrasts the individual (usually the piccolo) against the collective and explores different types of transition, a softly pulsing second inner section, and a third extended 'montage' section which leads into an epilogue, offering a gentle resolution.

The opening section begins with the obsessive repetition of a short motif on the piccolo.

(Fig 3. Strike: bars 1 – 4)

This alternates throughout the first part with a 'broken chorale' which is defined by a descending (mixolydian) bass line. Both ideas develop: the piccolo figure first becomes a duet with violin (bar 23), then a much slower line (for picc. then bass clarinet, from bar 42) and is then transformed into a dance-like solo (bar 46) and ensemble (bar 78); it relates to the upper line of the chorale (bars 10-14) whilst fragments of the motif regularly appear in

isolation (61, 66 etc.). The chorale idea appears complete (bars 10-21) and then is 'deconstructed' on successive appearances; sometimes short sections are isolated and prolonged (bars 36-40 tutti and 40-45 in violin and piano) and from bar 58 onwards it is subject to an 'unfolding' process in which it is gradually reassembled.

The second part (from bar 85) was envisioned as a 'mise en scene' consisting of a continuous movement – the dry ticking of stings and piano – into which flashbacks from the first part intrude, including the dance-like figure. The third main section is an extended montage, beginning at bar 135 with the first of a series of loud interruptions. Other musical ideas are added, some new (such as the twisting rhythmic unison which first appears at bar 156) whilst others reference earlier material (such as the piccolo motif from the opening which emerges in a new context at bar 182. The continuum of the second part becomes just one element in the montage.

From bar 270 more familiar material from the opening section returns, leading to the epilogue at bar 290, a distilled version of the broken chorale, with the piccolo motif – now much slower, and in a lower octave – present at the close.

vi.   Batubulan

I visited Bali in the summer of 2014 and passed through the town of Batubulan several times on the road to Ubud; I also attended kekak and barong performances there. My piano solo was composed in winter months following that visit and it draws upon two particular aspects of Balinese culture, namely the complex cyclic Balinese calendar (so complex and multilayered that the Balinese themselves often employ specialists to interpret the calendar on their behalf) and the powerful impact of repetition which characterises Balinese art. Batubulan is a centre for stone sculpture (the name translates into English as 'moon stone') and all of the roads are lined with armies of stone statues, each field containing countless identical examples. Their approach to art appears fundamentally different to western practice in that whether depicting gods, flowers, cats, temple icons or abstract designs, each sculptor specialises in only one design, repeated endlessly. Similarly, the musicians I met knew only one performance type which they were able to reproduce flawlessly and effortlessly on a daily basis but saw no need to branch out into other performance disciplines.

My first point of departure for *Batubulan* was the Balinese calendar. In fact the Balinese use two calendars (in addition to the Gregorian calendar), the luni-solar Saka year which regulates the frequency of agricultural tasks, and the pawukon which is the main organiser of rites and holy days. What makes the pawukon so distinctive "is that it is made up of ten different types of weeks or cycles, known as wara. Each wara is comprised of a different number of days, ranging from one day to ten days. All ten wara run simultaneously through each pawukon cycle and together they make up the wewaren system."[26] So on any one day, ten different days (one from each of the ten wara) may coincide. "The conjugations of their different qualities will determine the general quality and relative strength or weakness of the actual 24-hour period concerned. The main Balinese rituals are designed to fall on the 'strong' days in the pawukon cycle."[27] (One result of this system is that each day can fall into one of two types: 'full days' when something of special significance takes place (such as a temple ritual or a local market) or 'empty days' when very little takes place; the linear passage of time is blunted and it becomes more punctual than durational, as it is in the West. Balinese time 'pulses' rather than moving relentlessly forwards.

I was naturally drawn to the multilayered cyclic repetition of the pawukon structure and wanted to compose a ritualistic, 'pulsing' piece, where the entries of different musical elements were determined by a series of simultaneous cyclic processes. It was to be a serene yet monumental piece, constructed of clearly defined blocks, static at times but elsewhere calm, playful or ecstatic. I began by situating a number of principal musical ideas into a grid not unlike the tika used by the Balinese. My intention was to place the elements onto the grid according to their assigned roles in a number of musical cycles. But I confess that after the first stages of planning the music assumed an inner logic of its own and my adherence to the formal cyclic structure became less strict. In effect, what the cyclic calendar ultimately provided was a model for a slow montage structure in which the

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[26] Cocteau and Breguet, *Time, Rites and Festivals in Bali,* (Indonesia: BAB Publishing, 2013), 44.
[27] Ibid., 46.

transitions (at least in the first instance) were mediated by silence rather than hard-edged cuts.

There are other Balinese influences on the piece such as the derivation of pitch material from the intervals of the five-note pelog scale (in its most generally accepted Western reading) divided into two units: a minor third and a semitone. Another is the thematic use of the rallentando, something I normally avoid in my work, preferring unprepared tempo changes.

The principal musical elements in *Batubulan* are as follows:

- Slow, softly pulsing repeated notes and chords. The harmony defines the minor third and semitone of the pelog scale (from bar 1). Later in the piece this recurs at in a double tempo variant (bar 126).
- Pianissimo bell effect: a high chord immediately followed by another in a much lower register (bar 15).
- Scherzando: an irregular rhythmic pattern (bar 59). Initially appearances serve as brief interruptions but later in the piece longer sections evolve (bar 140). Fragments accompany other elements (such as in bars 127 and 131).
- Calmo: a soft, broken chorale in mid-high register, again with a ringing, bell-like quality (bar 103). This material - and the toccata below - is based on overlapping descending scales, stratified in octaves.
- An ecstatic toccata spread across a wide range of the keyboard, staccato and fortissimo. This bursts into life at what would be the most auspicious point in the pawukon series of cycles at bar 225.

In *Batubulan* the five highly differentiated musical types, each with their individual rhythmic 'feel' are unified and brought together by a constant underlying pulse which is broken only by the use of rallentando. In *Rough Cut* I took a rather different approach, even though (like *Batubulan*) the concept is still one of montage or mosaic.

vii.   Rough Cut

Rough Cut, for solo violin, was composed in the spring of 2015 in response to a call for scores by the CMRC; it was performed by Peter Sheppard-Skaerved in his recital in the NCEM in June that year and it received an official premiere at Wilton's Music Hall, London in February 2016.

The title is borrowed from an aspect of film making: a 'rough cut' is the second stage of digital editing, after the initial assembly of scenes but before the 'final cut' is produced. At this stage the narrative may be clear but movement between scenes will not be smooth and the film will appear unfinished, possibly even a little crude; in making the rough cut the editor will move blocks around into different arrangements to find the best sequence and will experiment with timings and durations of scenes to find suitable proportions, to control the pace, create or release tension and maybe start to build up sections of montage where scenes are alternated to suggest simultaneous streams of activity. This process closely mirrors my approach to building musical structures during composition. However in this piece, more than elsewhere, I adopt a freer, more improvisatory approach to invention which allows the blocks to borrow from one another, imitate and develop in a more organic and less architectural manner. The editing is still discontinuous but the 'clips' have more in common, suggesting an underlying narrative and a clear sense of direction.

Rough Cut is cast in six short movements, played without breaks, which are shaped in an almost symmetrical form around two quick movements:

I	II	III	IV	V	VI
100 – 80 bpm	160 bpm	100 bpm	100 bpm	160 bpm	80 bpm +rall

(Fig. 4. Rough Cut, structural outline)

The first movement begins with an opening motif borrowed from *Strike*, repeated as in the earlier work. But whereas in *Strike* the motif remains as one of two cornerstones of the work, in *Rough Cut* the ideas multiply and each one demonstrates the potential to morph into something else. So in bar six, for example, the opening motif is extended into a downward scale which reappears in bars 12, 20 and 25, and goes on to provide most of the musical material in the fourth movement (from bar 91). The tonal centre of D becomes established between the initial statements of the repeated motif, in sustained notes at first but then in pulsing quavers. By the end of the movement the motif has expanded into lyrical melody and the tempo has slowed to 80 bpm, preparing the performer for the second movement which immediately doubles the speed.

The second movement comprises two main elements which alternate: a high scorrevole and a martellato outburst developed from the soft pulses of the first movement. To this a third element is later added: a darkly lyrical theme in the lowest octave which seems to prolong some of the short motifs from the first movement. The third movement returns to the opening tempo and its most distinctive idea is that of the falling motif from the opening, now much slower and gradually unfolding into the extended downward scale. These

statements are separated by the martallato outbursts from II, now more melodically developed, and by a slow broken melody in harmonics which anticipates their appearance in VI. Movement IV is almost entirely developed from the downward scale, broken by a continuation of the martellato from III but resolving into the melodic fragments and soft pulsing quavers from I. V intercuts between scorevole and martellato and VI traces three series' of slow, broken descending scales in pizzicato, harmonics and low register (senza vibrato) notes and a long, slow rallentando towards the close.

Rough Cut is allowing me to take my concern with repetition and from one piece to another into a different direction: inspired by Berio's reworking of some of his solo *Sequenzas* into the *Chemins* (and other) compositions, I am planning an expanded version of *Rough Cut* for violin with nine solo strings: double quartet plus bass. My intention is that the solo violin part remains essentially intact but that rests (and some long notes) are extended in time in order to accommodate the ensemble, particularly between movements, which will also serve to further clarify the structure.

viii. Gentle

Gentle is a set of three short songs which set fragments of texts by the 13th century Sufi mystic poet and Islamic scholar who we know today as Rumi (more correctly: Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī) whose words I have set previously: I am attracted to his writing because its enigmatic, transparent quality allows space for music to contribute meaning and his very long poetic works splinter easily into self-contained fragments. I had composed these three simple songs for soprano and piano in the autumn of 2013, and reworked them for voice and marimba in the spring of 2014 at the invitation of the performers Ana Beard Fernandez and Zoe Craven.

These songs were originally composed for the voice of Deborah Catterall who is an early music specialist; consequently I chose to explore forms and techniques which would accommodate her voice, range and musical outlook. The first song, *The Firmness Under You*, is modelled on a Purcellian ground bass aria; the harmonic sequence repeats a nine-bar phrase three times although in the second half of the song (from bar 28) this is modified slightly and compressed to an eight-bar cycle in order to allow the text underlay to be more naturally spaced and shortening the rests between the singer's phrases.

The second song, *Dance*, features a more declamatory melody composed over a toccata-like marimba ostinato; it moves through an ascending harmonic sequence in two bar phrases. The theme of the central section is first presented in an improvisatory introduction and the song concludes with a reflective coda which extends the rising harmonic sequence.

The melody of the final song, *Gently*, consists almost entirely of a descending A major scale which takes full advantage of the expressive potential of the rising seventh interval, obviously needed to maintain the descent within the singer's range. The accompaniment is a broken chorale, not unlike a Bach keyboard minuet in its distribution of pitches, although in keeping with the instruction 'Fragile – almost faltering' it frequently omits expected notes in order to hinder a regular sense of forward motion.

ix.   Pandora

Pandora is a complex, multi-layered piece for large ensemble, actor and soprano voice, with film and optional dance. The sources are Franz Wedekind's *Lulu* plays, as recreated by GW Pabst in his 1929 film *Pandora's Box*, and a text derived from a prose poem by Amy Christmas called *Velvet Revolver* (see Appendix 3). The visual element comprises five three-minute films which have been created using material from Pabst's original film. During performance they are projected onto three screens above and behind the instrumental ensemble where there are also raised platforms for the singer and speaking actress; the films will not run continuously during the music so the focus will shift from visual to musical, from instrumental to vocal and from spoken to sung text.

The instrumentation of *Pandora* was influenced by that of the Dutch ensemble *Orkest De Ereprijs*: double quartets of wind and brass soloists with rhythm section comprising electric guitar and bass plus piano and drums. I was impressed by the 'full frontal' impact of their sound and struck by the similarity with the early dance bands of the 1920s, making a direct link with the film. I collaborated with film maker Paul Butler to create five short 'episodes' from Pabst's film to be shown at specified moments in the score. Given my interest in cinematic techniques it seemed valuable to experiment with film and to re-apply some of the techniques I had borrowed for my composition back into film, so Paul Butler's work uses the some of the montage techniques, flashbacks and slow motion repetitions that I have used musically. Consequently (and deliberately) the film doesn't attempt to convey a strong sense of narrative; Pabst described his film as 'Variations on a Theme of Wedekind' and this new cutting is a further deconstructed re-telling, one layer of a multimedia experience alongside layers of music and spoken text (and optional dance). In his book '*Analysing Musical Multimedia*' Nicholas Cook identifies three types of relationship between music and other media: conformance, complementation and contest.[28] (In *Pandora* I have chosen to explore the latter two since they would appear to offer a richer and more interesting multimedia experience where no single strand of the narrative is allowed to dominate. The sound of the instrumental ensemble and the stylization of some musical material are intended to evoke the broader tone of the film and establish an immediate 'fit' but on a different level the films were not edited to the music (nor was the music composed to correspond to the film's cut) in order to establish independent rhythmic layers. Again, the influence of Eisenstein is felt: "the matching of picture and sound…may be built upon a combination of elements, without attempting to conceal the resulting dissonance between the aurals and the visuals."[29]

The structure of *Pandora* is best shown graphically to represent the multi-layered approach to its architecture and the overlapping of the elements.

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[28] Nicholas Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia,* (Oxford: OUP, 1998), 98.
[29] Sergei Eisenstein, trans. and ed. Jay Leyda, *The Film Sense,* (London: Harvest, 1968), p72.

Time (mins, apprx)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Film		1				2				3				4				5		
Instrumental Music	Prologue	A				B1	B2			C		D			E			F		
Soprano	1					2				3						4		5		
Actor	Prologue											Velvet Revolver								Epilogue
Dance (optional)	‖‖	‖‖	‖‖	‖‖	‖‖	‖‖	‖‖	‖‖	‖‖	‖‖	‖‖	‖‖	‖‖	‖‖	‖‖	‖‖	‖‖	‖‖		

(Fig.5. Pandora, structural outline)

I felt it was important that there should be regular breaks between the films in order to ensure that there are moments when music is to be the main focal point for the audience. The soprano's five 'arias' all coincide and overlap with sections of film but all (apart from the last) also correspond with breaks between films. The spoken text of *Velvet Revolver* (where actress and soprano combine for the only time) is positioned centrally in the score, otherwise the actress provides only the prologue and epilogue. I have included an optional dance element in this timeline for illustrative purposes, as another possible layer in the structure; if space and resources allow I would like three representations of the central protagonist in song, spoken word and movement. The light shading on the chart above indicates where the dance performer might move into the performing space or where lights might lift her into the foreground. The timings are fixed but approximate and they should not indicate a highly sectional structure; although many of the musical transitions are hard-edged, the overlapping and interweaving of elements - and the regular shifts of focus - are intended to produce a musical and theatrical experience which is integrated and continuous.

x.   Hiraeth (Piano Trio)

Hiraeth was commissioned by Late Music concert series for the Albany Piano Trio; it will receive its first performance in April 2016.

Hiraeth is a Welsh word for which there is possibly no direct English translation although my interpretation is that of a homesickness for a place you cannot return to or that never was; a grief for one's lost past. (Along with the Cornish 'hireth' it is said to be similar in meaning to the Portuguese 'saudade', one of the key elements of Fado). It is a title which might have suited several of my pieces where repetition places an emphasis on memory but which seems especially appropriate here in terms of the long, elegiac final paragraph. From the outset, two sharply contrasted musics alternate in an extreme juxtaposition with clearly delineated 'edits' and no sense of transition; this music is sectionalised and highly differentiated, like two narratives which are seemingly unrelated but move in parallel. There is no precise arithmetical tempo relationship but the Allegro music is slightly more than double the speed of the Lento.

The Allegro is played in emphatic octaves: chromatic, angular semiquavers, always fortissimo and generally played in short, explosive outbursts as if each occurrence was just a small splinter off a bigger whole. These are subject to a range of variation techniques including the incorporation of additive rhythms (and other rhythmic displacement), fragmentation into pointillist hocketing, and the looping of short motifs. To this an extension is added (first heard at bar 26) and other variants emerge before a more extended 'complete' statement of the Allegro music occurs (between bars 106 and 146) which proves to be its final appearance, as if the longer iteration had exhausted its energies.

The Lento music is almost static at first, firmly centred on middle D and only very slowly moving outwards to define the harmonic basis of a cyclic 'chorale' before gradually incorporating short strands of melodic material, developed from layered descending scales, in the strings. Its statements are longer than those of the Allegro – further emphasising the violence of the loud outbursts -and are nearly always concluded by a plaintive pizzicato cello note which breaks the continuity. After the Allegro music has exhausted itself all that remains is the chorale, fragile and fragmented but ultimately proving the more durable.

Appendix 1:

The 'Prick of Conscience' (Apocalypse)

In a modern realisation by Daniela Nunnari and David Lancaster

On the first of the fifteen days
The sea shall rise (as the book says)
About as high as a mountain,
Full forty cubits tall for certain.
And the waves will rise up and stand
Just like a hill does on the land.

On the second day the sea will retreat,
that men will see what lies beneath.

On the third day, the sea will seem plain
And return to its calm state again
Just like it had been before,
rising or falling no more.

On the fourth day, there will a wonder be:
The strangest creatures of the sea
Shall come together and make such a clamouring
That it shall be hideous to men's' hearing,
But what their clamour will signify
No-one may know but God almighty.

On the fifth day, the sea will burn
And all other waters as they run.
And this will last from sunrise
Until the sun sets in the skies.

On the sixth day a bloody dew
Will hang from trees, and spring up on the grass below.

On the seventh day, tall buildings will fall,
Along with great castles, then towers and all.

On the eighth day, hard rocks and stones
Will strike together all at once
And each of them shall the other down cast
And against each other hurtle fast.
So that each stone on a different path

Will sunder the other into three parts.

On the ninth day there will be a great earth-quake
And all countries on earth will shake.
So great a noise there was never heard,
Than this one now, in all the world.

On the tenth day – for so it is given
The earth shall be made plain and even,
For hills and valleys shall turned be
Into desert, and made even to see.

The eleventh day, people will come out
Of caves and holes, and wend about
Like madmen, who've lost their wit;
And no-one shall speak to the others they meet.

On the twelfth day, the stars and all
The planets from high heavens shall fall.

On the thirteenth day shall dead men's bones
Be put back together and rise all alone,
And above their graves they will stand;
This shall befall throughout the land.

On the fourteenth day all that live then
Shall die: children, men and women.
For they will with them rise again
Who before were dead - to joy, or pain.

On the fifteenth day, this shall betide:
All the world where we now reside
Will burn with flames which will not dispel.
Until the utter end of Hell.

Appendix 2:

Velvet Revolver – by Amy Christmas (Pandora)

Tonight I am watching a friend's heart break, set to music.

Music like a sack of heartbeats, split and spilled across the floor, caught beneath skin. The pulses of lesser known gods, powerful but erratic, unpredictable, unsure of their own muscles that are picked out in electric light, blue and green and gold. And these little deities amass, throng, clamour. Hands outstretched or clasping, reaching skyward for each other, lips finding lips and tasting sticky liquor. No smoke in here, although there should be, and you can still see it even if it's not real, odourless and without structure, just because it fits the scene, and this is a place that is all about the way things fit.

Heart in mouth, heart in hand, hand in glove.

Deceptively expensive, artful gloves.

Silhouettes of fingers in the dark.

She is skinny and sewn-together and avian, skin woven with feathers of experience, sometimes proud as peacock in bright colours: slick turquoise and quicksilver; sometimes she is unassuming off-heat camouflage to protect her in the wild. Tonight, however, she is worn out greys and diluted blacks, tired and still trying, but there's a beauty there breathing strongly beneath whatever cracks her surface is showing.

And tonight she is baring her bones.

Her killer is onstage, a little higher in his own mind than in actual fact, and he fills a space that might suffocate him if he tries for air too quickly. The acoustics of the room are terrible, and though it looks as if he truly believes the words he is singing, it hardly matters because he can't be clearly heard, and the lyrics are lost in static and reverberating echoes of scratched strings, and the meaning is lost somewhere else entirely.

I am silently beseeching her to tear up that map and send up a flare.

Watching her watching him is like shuffling through a tarot deck in fast forward, a deck where all the images have been represented with birds: common garden species, exotic strains, native familiars; the endangered and nearly extinct and already history; mythical breeds and artistic renderings. She is hot-pink flamingo demi-plié in water, red-breasted yuletide robin flitting through snow, lonely eagle, circling vulture, plunging kestrel, morbid crow, fragile hummingbird, flocks of starlings, solitary and silent and ocean-pulled albatross.

 This card and that.

High Priestess and Lover, Emperor and Mastery, The World and the Fool.

He is chickenshit, seeds and grain, a waterdish, a flimsy nest in ravaged branches, a stamping ground.

Hehasagunhehasagunhehasagun.

The place has no windows, no glass for her to crash into, and we're watching her watching him and waiting for her feathers to fall. And they do, peeling away like so many tiny masks, dropping to her feet where they are trampled by the crowd and stick to the soles of strangers' shoes.
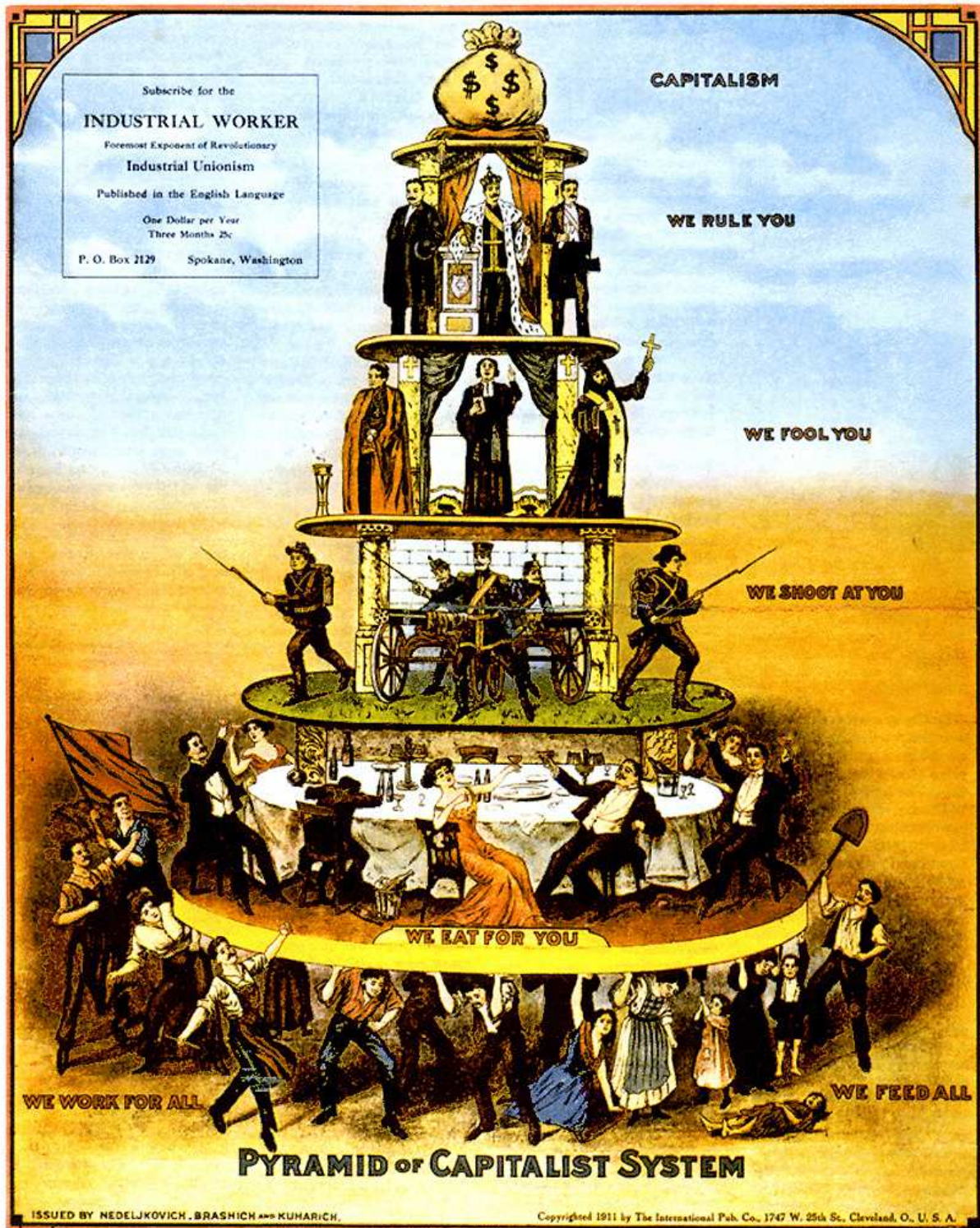
And she is naked, shivering, slippery and white. And there is fire, and there is fire, and she is glowing.

And even if her home is far away, even if she can't find her way back, she'll leave a trail for us to try and follow, with symbols chalked up on doors and walls along the way, all of the arrows pointing up, to a place he cannot reach.

She is an angel with talons, and the sky belongs to her.

Appendix 3:

The Pyramid of the Capitalist System (Strata)

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