PORTFOLIO

OF

COMPOSITIONS

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PhD

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Music

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Abstract

This Portfolio of Compositions consists of eight scores, recordings on CD and commentary on my creative process. The pieces are: (1) *Stone Structures*, for cello and piano; (2) *The Path of the Thousand Doors*, for three snare drums; (3) *Four Poems for Guitar*, for guitar solo; (4) *Night View*, for flute and piano; (5) *The Path of the Old Oaks*, for chamber ensemble; (6) *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*, for female voice with finger cymbals, and flute; (7) *Poema Místico*, for speaking pianist with amplified voice; and, (8) *Paths Between the Wind and the Sea*, for full orchestra. They were composed in York between October 2009 and February 2013.

The work presented here is the result of my intense compositional practice, development of techniques, research, reflection, and experimentation with performers. The main aspect focused in the compositional process of the pieces in this folio was the creation of textures – those that results from the overlapping of gestures in combination or, in a greater degree, of the overlapping of textures, i.e. multilayered textures. For me, the use of these overlapping of gestures or multilayered textures is an important compositional tool that helps to create directionality, contrast, ambiguity, transition in different hierarchical levels and between sections, and continuity in an atonal musical discourse – either in clear-cut multimovement pieces, or in larger-scale single movement pieces.

List of Contents

List of Figures and Tables

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[1] Reproduced with the permission of The British Museum.

List of Accompanying Material

a) Scores:

1 Title: *Stone Structures*

Instrumentation: cello and piano
Period of composition: Oct 2009-Feb 2010
Approximation duration: 7'

2 Title: *The Path of the Thousand Doors*

Instrumentation: three snare drums
Period of composition: Mar 2010-Jun 2010
Approximation duration: 6'30''

3 Title: *Four Poems for Guitar*

Instrumentation: guitar solo
Period of composition: Jan 2011-Mar 2011
Approximation duration: 7'

4 Title: *Night View*

Instrumentation: flute and piano
Period of composition: May 2011-Sep 2011
Approximation duration: 7'

5 Title: *The Path of the Old Oaks*

Instrumentation: flute/piccolo, clarinet/bass clarinet, violin, cello, piano, percussion (3)
Period of composition: Oct 2011-Feb 2012
Approximation duration: 10'

6 Title: *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*

Instrumentation: female voice with finger cymbals, and flute
Period of composition: Feb 2012
Approximation duration: 6'30''

7 Title: *Poema Místico*

Instrumentation: speaking pianist with amplified voice
Period of composition: July 2012-Dec 2012
Approximation duration: 10'

8 Title: *Paths between the Wind and the Sea*

Instrumentation: full orchestra
Period of composition: May 2012-Feb 2013
Approximation duration: 11'

b) Audio CD

1. *Night View*

   Performed by Jenni Cohen (flute) and Rebecca Alexander (piano)
   Live recording
   The Chimera Ensemble concert
   2 March 2012, at Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall, York

2. *Four Poems for Guitar*

   Performed by Stefan Östersjö (Orpheus Institute, Ghent)
   Edited live recording
   Composer's workshop - Public Reading of New Compositions
   9 May 2011, at Rymer Auditorium, York

3. *Poema Místico*

   Performed by Luciane Cardassi (speaking pianist with voice amplified)
   Live recording
   9 January 2013, Rolston Recital Hall, Banff, Canada

4. *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*

   Performed by Joanna Färnqvist (female voice with finger cymbals) and Christian
   Färnqvist (flute)
   Live performance
   York Composers Collective concert
   1 March 2012 – Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall, York

5. *The Path of the Thousand Doors*

   Performed by Enrico Bertelli
   Recorded by superimposition
   5 June 2011, at the University of York

6. *The Path of the Old Oaks*

   Performed Sarah Morpurgo (flute and piccolo), Hannah Raban (clarinet and bass
   clarinet), Yanan Qi (piano), Jess Conway (violin), Paul Sild (cello), Callum Spiers,
   Azlee Babar and Zoe Craven (percussion), Chris Leedham (conductor)
   Live performance
   The Chimera Ensemble concert
   22 June 2012 – Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall, York

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I wish to thank to The British Museum for the permission to reproduce in this folio the work Night View of the Eight Famous Places of Kanazawa, by Utagawa Hiroshige.

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Finally, I am extremely grateful to CAPES Foundation, from Brazil, for the grant I received to undertake my PhD studies in York.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that I am the sole author of this commentary and all the musical compositions presented in this folio. This commentary has not been presented elsewhere or used for other purposes.

Lourdes Joséli da Rocha Saraiva

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Previous Influences

> ...experience is filtered through the composer's mind, both at a conscious and at an unconscious level: only forms of experience that have a particular resonance for him will contribute to the creative process.[2]
>
> – Jonathan Harvey

My academic journey in music started with a piano undergraduate course at UFRGS (Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul), in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 1986, where I studied a variety of styles of piano repertoire, including Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Brazilian and Contemporary; however, my interest in studying composition arose before I concluded this course and thus I changed to the composition course, studying under the supervision of Dr. Celso Loureiro Chaves. After a gap of a few years, I took a Masters course in composition – in the same university – under the supervision of Dr. Antonio Borges Cunha.

Debussy, Stravinsky, Bartók, Schoenberg, Webern, Varèse, Boulez and Berio, were some of the composers who I remember being covered in both my composition courses. During my undergraduate composition course I was particularly interested in the multilayered techniques of Stravinsky, especially in his polyrhythmic approach (*The Rite of Spring)*; in the use of timbre by Debussy (*Prélude à l'aprés-midi d'un faune*); in Bartók (*Music for Strings Percussion and Celesta*); Webern (*Five Pieces for Orchestra*); and Berio (particularly the extended playing techniques of his *Sequenzas*). In this period, my musical language was already devoted to free chromaticism and by the use of contrast to shape micro- and macro-musical structure. During my Masters course I explored a wide variety of timbres and different techniques of rhythm and pitch multiplication, in solo pieces such as Espiral (*Spiral*), for trumpet, and Memórias *de um Rio Irlandês* (*Memories of an Irish River*), for flute. The latter was my first piece that evoked cross-cultural elements – in this case, Irish folk music and Celtic Art. At this time, my interest in the relationship between text and music was awakened by some of the pieces analysed in the composers' seminars by Dr. Chaves and Dr. Cunha, particularly in the opera *Pélleas et Mélisande* (1902)*,* by Debussy; and *Circles* (1960) – text by E.E. Cummings, for female voice, harp, and two percussionists – by Luciano Berio. Therefore, stimulated by the diversity of possibilities to be explored in the relationship between text and music, I composed two pieces based on poems: (1) *Gitanjali*,

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[2] Harvey, *Music and Inspiration*, 40.

based on Rabindranath Tagore poem, for clarinet, percussion and piano; and (2) *Alma Errante*, based on poems by Fernando Pessoa, for baritone and chamber ensemble.

1.2 Creative Process, Concerns and Influences

The creative process is a very complex subject to approach because it involves a web of conscious and unconscious interconnected aspects, and reconciling knowledge and intuition with the composer's expressive need. However, as a brief introduction I will approach, in general terms, some aspects of my creative process – obviously the ones I am conscious about – as well as my concerns as a composer and the main musical aspects I focused on to develop my pieces.

My creative process can be motivated by a variety of different stimuli:

- from musical elements – a musical gesture explored on the piano, folk music, a conception of timbral transformations or an idea of a specific texture;
- from extra-musical elements – a poem, a painting, an architectural shape etc;
- from the everyday world – this can be a scene in nature, a noise from a machine suggesting a rhythm or a texture, etc.

The influences that occur during the compositional process of a piece can be diverse, and some of the pieces in this folio were influenced by several of the factors described above. For example, in *The Path of the Thousand Doors*, for three snare drums, I had a mixture of musical and literary influences, or in *Four Poems for Guitar*, I had both literary and everyday world influences.

After I have found the initial impetus, the compositional process is unfolded in an organic way; it is a step-by-step process of reflection, experimentation, transformation, combination, multiplication, relationship, and discovery.

For me, a strict pre-compositional plan, including a pre-elaborated structure or a pre-determined pitch set projected in the whole structure, does not always work, because the music itself sometimes 'takes' a different trajectory. For this reason, I instead prefer to generate my pitch material through free chromaticism and to establish the pitch relationships alongside the compositional process. However, I usually have in mind a narrative plan which is unveiled at some point during the compositional process and which also helps me to give identity and direction to the music.

Directionality was one of the main concerns in the pieces composed in this folio and it is related to texture. According to Cope:

> Understanding the roles that texture and modulations play in composition helps composers control and vary their music raw materials. Sculpting and molding textures, for example, allows composers to create direction in their music. Modulating parameters other than pitch increases the resources for composers to create transitions on many hierarchical levels. [3]

My work on this focuses on building single textures by overlapping gestures in combination, or by overlapping different textures – 'multilayered textures' which I used in my orchestral piece. In this folio I developed different ways of building single textures and multilayered textures, which resulted in both small clear-cut structures and also larger-scale pieces. The latter was mainly influenced by Witold Lutosławski's chain technique, as I will explain later.

Along with my concern about texture I also focused on timbre as an important element to define my musical language.

1.3 About the Commentary of the Pieces

The commentary on the pieces is organised into three groups, discussed in chapters 2 to chapter 4, with chapter 5 presenting my conclusions.

Chapter 2 presents two pieces characterised by their cyclic structure and piano accompaniments: *Stone Structures* for cello and piano and *Night View* for flute and piano. *Stone Structures* was the first step into my PhD studies. In this piece I explored some techniques of overlapping gestures through construction and deconstruction of the initial harmonic material in different musical dimensions: horizontal plane (strands of chords), vertical plane (blocks of chords) and diagonal plane (the display of chords in canon). In *Night View* the texture is built by overlapping gestures that evoke elements of Japanese traditional music, such as the shakuhachi idiom translated into the flute, and the use of irregular rhythms.

Chapter 3 consists of three pieces that present different ways to confront the relationship between text and music. In *Four Poems for Guitar* the text, by the Spanish

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[3] Cope, *Techniques of the Contemporary Composer*, 99.

poet Luis de Góngora, is not audible in the music; it is only a stimulus to the compositional process – this situation is described by Pierre Boulez as 'centre and absence'. According to Stacey, 'centre and absence is a term widely used by Pierre Boulez to describe a situation in which a text is at the centre of the creative process, but may not be audible for a variety of reasons'.[4] In contrast, in *Poema Místico*, the poem is audible. It was first constructed by myself, and then deconstructed when I set it to music. *The Lake Isle of Innisfree,* which sets a W.B. Yeats' poem, also presents the text as audible and furthermore uses it in full: it therefore informs the whole musical process.

Chapter 4 describes 'The Path trilogy', a group of independent pieces that share similar compositional principles: *The Path of the Thousand Doors*, for three snare drums; *The Path of the Old Oaks*, for chamber ensemble; and *Paths between the Wind and the Sea*, for full orchestra. I have chosen to use 'path' in the title of each piece of this trilogy because of its conceptual proximity to the musical idea of linearity: the word 'path' can mean 'a course of action or way of achieving a specified result.'[5] The pieces were composed for different instrumental groups, which made it possible for me to explore, overlapping gestures, timbre and also to explore multilayered textures – in the case of the orchestral piece. As a compositional strategy for expressing musical fluidity and continuity, the overlapping gestures technique I used has at its heart the idea that before one line ends its phrase, new lines emerge in a continuous flux. This idea has been gradually influenced by my research on Lutosławski's 'chain' technique:

> Three of Lutosławski's late works bear the same generic Polish title of Łańcuch, which translates into English as 'Chain'. This title denotes the use of a technique, designed to achieve formal continuity, whereby successive phrases of musical material are overlapped, neither beginning nor ending at the same time. His prime purpose in exploring and exploiting this principle has been the search for alternative ways of building a large-scale form, and to replace conventional structuring in clear-cut sections.[6]

The first piece of the trilogy is *The Path of the Thousand Doors* (2010), for three snare drums. It was composed during my first year in York before I studied Lutosławski's 'chain' technique. This piece explores 'timbral modulation' as the primary way of creating structural continuity: the appearance of a new timbre has the role of introducing and

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[4] Stacey, *Contemporary Music Review*, 1989.
[5] Oxford Dictionaries website.
[6] Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, 178.

connecting sections. This principle is very similar in concept to Lutosławski's chain technique and is also used to create continuity. The second piece of the trilogy is *The Path of the Old Oaks* (2011-12), for chamber ensemble. In this piece I used specific gestures to connect and also to integrate the sections, and overlapping gestures in different speeds. The last piece of this group is *Paths between the Wind and the Sea* (2012-13), for full orchestra. In this case, as I had to deal with a mass of instruments, I could explore the multilayered texture technique in connection with a wide variety of timbral combinations.

Chapter 5 presents the conclusion of my compositional procedures developed in my eight pieces and how the work presented here has informed my perspective for future work.

2. Overlapping Gestures in Multisection/Multimovement Pieces

2.1 *Stone Structures*

Stone Structures, for cello and piano, was the first piece composed as part of my PhD portfolio. It is a one-movement work lasting approximately seven minutes.

This piece was inspired by ancient sacred sites in Britain including stone circles (**Figure 1**) and the ruins of St Mary's Abbey, in York, hence the title. Stone circles gave the piece its cyclic structure and the individual standing stones inspired me to use a sequence of chords in sections A, A^1, A^2, A^3, A^4, A^5; the ruins of St Mary's Abbey suggested the fragmented gestures in sections B, C, D and B^1.

Fig. 1 Stone Circle – Ring of Brodgar, Orkey Islands, Scotland.[7]

Despite the fact that they were built centuries apart, they both represent a link between the material and transcendental worlds. This link is represented by the upward lines on standing stone circles and the characteristic pointed arches on the medieval architecture of St Mary's. According to Aniela Jaffé:

> Dr. M.-L. Von Franz[8] has explained the circle (or sphere) as a symbol of the Self. It expresses the totality of the psyche in all its aspects, including the relationship between man and the whole of nature. Whether the symbol of the circle appears in primitive sun

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[7] Photo from my own authorship.
[8] Marie-Louise von Franz was a Jungian psychologist.

worship or modern religion, in myths or dreams... it always points

to the single most vital aspect of life – its ultimate wholeness.[9]

Musically, the sense of wholeness of the piece, in Franz's sense, is represented by its cyclic structure.

2.1.1 Structural Organisation

Stone Structures consists of twelve short contrasting sections. Sections A, A^1, A^2, A^3, A^4 and A^5 present a dramatic cello line accompanied by a 'solid' sequence of piano chords. Sections B, C, D and B^1 present a pointillistic texture generated mostly through transformations of the harmonic material of section A. The cyclic structure is broken by two episodes in imitative counterpoint (bars 29-31 and 60-63) in a faster tempo than the rest of the piece. This results in another cyclic level in terms of time (**Table 1**).

time	sections	bar	length	Material
♩=40	A	1-8	8	cello line accompanied by piano chords
	B	9-14	6	fragmented gestures - gestures in septuplets
	A^1	15-20	6	variation 1
	C	21-28	8	fragmented gestures - gestures in quintuplets
♩=65	Episode I	29-31	3	imitative counterpoint
♩=40	A^2	32-37	6	variation 2
	D	38-51	14	fragmented free gestures
	A^3	52-59	8	variation 3
♩=65	Episode II	60-63	4	imitative counterpoint
♩=40	A^4	64-73	10	variation 4 register in the in piano chords is expanded
	B^1	74-76	3	recapitulation of septuplets (from B section)
	A^5	77-81	5	recapitulation of expanded register in piano chords (from A^4)

Table 1 Stone Structures: structural *organization*

The alternation between chordal and pointillistic textures results in a dialogue between linearity and non-linearity – this creates a sense of tension in the piece. The second episode (bars 60-63) finally breaks this by leading to the climactic point at the end of the piece, where the unstable line of the cello and the piano chords expand to the extremes of the instruments' registers.

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[9] Jaffé, *Man and his Symbols*, 266.

2.1.2 Melodic Organisation in Sections A, A^1, A^2, A^3, A^4 and A^5

The introductory section presents the main pitch material from which the whole piece unfolds, with the cello governing the melodic plane of the piece. The main cello theme (**Figure 2**) is generated by chromatic aggregation and it is organised in layers of adjacent pitches [D♭-C; F-G♭-G; etc]. In its first four bars, it presents three adjacent chromatic groupings: D♭-C; F-G♭-G; and B♭-B, which are expanded in register in the last four bars. The first and last notes are also related by adjacent chromatic pitches, D♭-C.

Fig. 2 Stone Structures: section A, bars 1-8, cello theme:
chromatic aggregation.

This cello melody is deconstructed in section A^1 and in A^2, and it returns in section A^3 transposed a fifth up with variants on pitch and rhythm. At the climactic sections A^4 and A^5 this melody is replaced by a continuous arrhythmic tremolo mostly in augmented fourths.

2.1.3 Harmonic Organisation in Sections A, A^1, A^2, A^3, A^4 and A^5

The cello line in section A is sustained by a harmonic progression of five chords in the piano, each one with six different notes. They are arranged in an arch-like shape (**Figure 3**): chords x, x^1, x^2, and x^3 have the same collection of intervals in common – minor second, augmented fourth, and perfect fifth – with variants on chords x and x^3 (in its three lower notes). In contrast, chord y in the central position consists of an augmented D major chord in its lower notes. The harmonic sequence was created by interval combination, by transposition, and by transposition and inversion.

Fig. 3 Stone Structures: section A, bars 2-7:
piano harmonic progression in root position and its transformations.

The harmonic progression is deconstructed within the piece in various ways into variants (**Table 2**):

- Firstly, by dividing them into two independent strands: the three high notes as strand 1, and three lower notes as strand 2. Thus, section A[1] presents only strand 1 transposed a half tone up and unfolded in a canon at the fifth. Section A[2] presents only strand 2, also transposed a half tone up and also unfolded in a canon at to fifth.

- Secondly, section A[3] interlocks both strands again and transposes them a half tone up.

- Finally, in sections A[4] and A[5] the harmonic progression returns at its original pitch and is presented three times in an arch-like shape (A[4], A[4'], A[5]). At the edges of the arch (A[4] and A[5]) the dynamic is *ff*. It starts in the middle register so that the edges move outwards in opposite directions, towards the extreme registers of the piano. However, in the centre of the arch the level of dynamic subsides to *mf-f* and it primarily focuses on the middle register.

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	A	**A¹**	**A²**	**A³**	**A⁴**	**A⁴′** **extension**	**A⁵**
strand	strand 1 + 2: original pitch	strand 1: transposed ½ tone up; canon at the fifth	strand 2: transposed ½ tone up; canon at the fifth	strand 1 + 2: transposed ½ tone up	strand 1 + 2: returns to its original pitch		
bar	1-8	15-20	32-37	52-59	64-68	69-73	77-81
register	high	low	high	middle to high	middle/low to extreme high/low	middle/low to high/middle	middle to extreme high/low

Table 2 Stone Structures: sections A, A¹, A², A³, A⁴ and A⁵ variations.

2.1.4 Melodic and Harmonic Organisation in Sections B, C, D and B[1]

The cello lines in sections B, C, D and B[1] are constructed from the pitch content of the cello material in section A and combine this content with independent material.

The piano part consists of short, self-contained gestures which are unfolded in septuplets in section B, in quintuplets in section C, and freely elaborated in section D. Sections B and D are constructed from the harmonic material in section A; however, section C is composed mostly from free chromatic material, creating another structural arch with B and D. In section B the vertical material of the piano part of section A (**Figure 3**) is now arranged onto the horizontal plane (**Figure 4**).

Fig.4 Stone Structures: section B, bar 9:
piano chords from section A arrayed horizontally.[10]

In section C, the free chromatic material is based on the same principle from which I composed the initial melodic line of the cello in Section A (**Figure 2**) – by using chromatic aggregation in layers (**Figure 5**).

Fig. 5 Stone Structures: section C, bar 21: chromatic aggregation.

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[10] Occasionally, enharmonic spelling is used on the score for reading convenience – e.g., F♯-G♯ = G♭-A♭.

In section D, the harmonic material was generated by breaking the harmonic groups (**Figure 3**); this was done by omitting some pitches resulting in new harmonies (**Figure 6**).

Fig. 6 Stone Structures: section D, bars 38-42.

The relationship between cello and piano in these sections was not composed in the traditional sense of an accompanied melody; instead, the cello acts on an almost independent level. However, both cello and piano have the rhythmic irregularity of gestures in common. Like a fragmented mosaic, this gives the music an abstract character.

Music and architecture have been linked throughout music history. Arch shapes in medieval architecture and circular forms are metaphorical ways to create musical sense by recurrence and symmetry.

2.2 Night View

Night View, for flute and piano, was pre-premiered by Chimera Ensemble in the Flute Fantasia concert in February 2012, at the Department of Music, and a month later premiered in the Chimera concert.

This is my second piece for flute that explores cross-cultural elements – in this case, Japanese traditional art and music. The first piece, composed during my Masters course in Brazil, *Memories of an Irish River* (1999) for flute solo, explored elements of Irish folk music. The Japanese aesthetic approach was instigated by the last movement of *Four Poems for Guitar, A Cherry Tree in the Autumn* (see chapter 3).

Night View was inspired by a triptych by Japanese artist Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858), Night View of the Eight Famous Places of Kanazawa (1857), (**Figure 7**), and by the shakuhachi[11] sound idiom – in this case, translated into the flute.

Fig. 7 Utagawa Hiroshige: Night View of the Eight Famous Places of Kanazawa
(Reproduced with the permission of The British Museum)

There are four aspects of Hiroshige's triptych which informed my initial choices about structure and material for *Night View*: (1) the three panels of the painting were projected into the three main movements *of Night View*; (2) the contrasting lines of the landscape – zigzagging shore in contrast to the horizon line at the background – were an inspiration to combine long durational values with rhythmic gestures; (3) the diversity of elements in the central panel – the moon, a flock of geese etc – suggested a greater density of texture in the central movement; (4) the limited use of colour (shades of blue and grey) was translated into an economical use of pitches.

The shakuhachi sound idiom has been widely used in flute repertoire by Japanese contemporary composers: for example, Kazuo Fukushima's *Mei* (1962), Toru Takemitsu's *Voice* (1971) and Toshio Hosokawa's *Vertical Song I* (1994). From these examples, I particularly investigated Hosokawa's *Vertical Song I* for flute solo, due to its timbral impact and the diversity of air noise: '...different levels of air noise and other contemporary techniques subtly inflect or vary each pitch, creating a surface of seemingly infinite variety. Many notes emerge from and return to unpitched noise or silence'.[12] Another piece which caught my attention was Riōhei Hirose's *Meditation,* in this case for recorder. *Meditation* is

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[11] Traditional Japanese bamboo flute.
[12] Boyle, *Music of Japan Today*, 149.

similar to Hosokawa's timbral approach due to its use of continuously changing and transforming nuances of sonic colour.

Along with my investigation into Hosokawa's *Vertical Song I* and Riōhei Hirose's *Meditation*, I also did an audio analysis of a recording by Kifū Mitsuhashi,[13] a Japanese shakuhachi master. From this audio analysis I focused on two features of shakuhachi[14] music that I explored in *Night View*: extended playing techniques and unpredictable melodic contours. The techniques I used are: *glissandi*; microtonal pitch bending; grace notes; and *muraiki*, 'an explosive breath'[15] with great timbral impact. In terms of the unpredictable melodic contour, I found my own auditory impressions reflected in this comment by Gerald Groemer[16]:

> The sounds heard in the most traditional shakuhachi music are usually not so much melodies in the Western sense of the word as they are a carefully composed series of short motives, phrases, and pitch cells played in a highly flexible rhythm and sometimes separated by long rests. Many varieties of grace notes, *portamenti*, pitch bending, explosive bursts of air, flutter tonguing, finger tremolos, vibrato and much else charge each pitch or phrase with great intensity and musical meaning.

The allusion to the shakuhachi sonority acts as an essential part of *Night View*'s sound syntax and aesthetic meaning. In terms of aesthetic, *Night View* is a reverence to nature – to its beauty and balance – which are elements closely related to Japanese music aesthetics. According to Blasdel,

> instruments like the Shakuhachi provide us with a living, vital connection with natural tones. Performance techniques such as *muraiki* and *taname* have their origins in natural sounds: wind and bird cries. A performer cannot execute such techniques if these sounds have not been thoroughly experienced in nature.[17]

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[13] Mitsuhashi, shakuhachi. *The Art of the Shakuhachi Vol I*, CD, 2002.
[14] For deeper information on shakuhachi techniques see Blasdel, *The Shakuhachi a Manual for Learning*.
[15] Lependorf, *Perspectives of New Music*, 235.
[16] Groemer, liner note to *The Art of the Shakuhachi Vol.I, CD*, 2002.
[17] Quoted in Richards and Tanosaki, *Music of Japan Today*, 131.

2.2.1 Spirituality and Silence (*Ma*)

Another element that I integrated into the aesthetic of *Night View* is the spiritual side of the shakuhachi:

> …the *shakuhachi* also became a favorite instrument of the beggar-monks known as *komosō* (after the later sixteenth century, *komusō*)…The *komusō* thought of themselves not as mere musicians or entertainers; instead they regarded their activity as a form of the Zen practice, *suizen* ("blowing meditation")… The pieces that they played, the *honkyoku*, were designed to allow them to achieve Buddhist enlightenment.[18]

Musically, spirituality in *Night View* is expressed through (1) the introspective character; (2) the stage setup – the flautist uses three separated music stands (representing Hiroshige's triptych) and conducts the performance like a ritual in three stages; (3) the performer's gestures – stillness during pauses – and slow gestures during silence; and (4) the silence (*ma*) between parts.

According to Yoshioka '...*ma* can be found in any form of art ... or in any entity that involves two parts that create a visual or temporal space'.[19] In *Night View ma* is a free space for reflection between the parts: a reflection on what has just been listened to, and what is or is not expected later. Furthermore, *ma* in *Night View* represents a moment of theatrical expression when performers are asked to be still in pauses and to slowly move at specific points during the performance.

2.2.2 Structure and Pitch Organisation

In a similar way to *Stone Structures* for cello and piano, *Night View* presents a cyclic structure. Its three main movements are alternated with two intermezzos and a coda. To some extent this is the result of the interlocking of two contrasting triptychs (**Figure 8**), which are distinguished primarily by their instrumentation, character and melodic material. Triptych 1 is characterized by greater degree of dynamic and rhythmic contrast and diversity of melodic material resulting in an instable character; and it always presents the flute and the piano together. In contrast, triptych 2 is characterized by dynamic and

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[18] Groemer, liner note *to The Art of the Shakuhachi Vol.1*. CD, 2002.
[19] Yoshioka, *Music of Japan Today*, 178.

rhythmic stability and similar melodic material resulting in a calm character. In triptych 2 only intermezzo 1 and coda are written for solo flute to create structural points of textural contrast, i.e. intermezzo 1 as a bridge between movement 1 and 2, and the coda as a conclusion; intermezzo 2, in contrast, presents the flute and the piano together to break the listener expectation as the melody presented in intermezzo 1 is now accompanied by a canon by the piano.
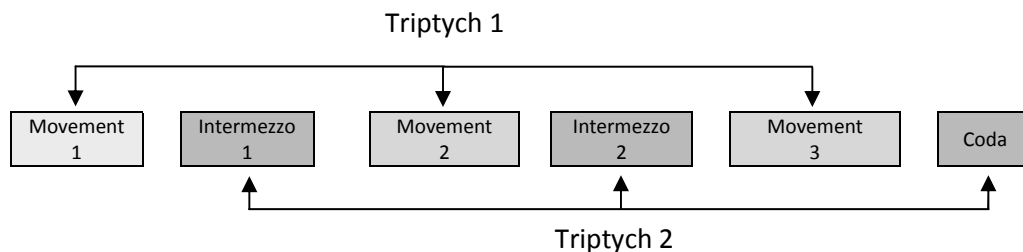
Fig. 8 Night View: interlocking of two triptychs.

As in my other pieces, I used a free chromatic language to create the pitch material, with emphasis on specific pitches at structural points (**Figure 9**). Each movement of triptych 1 starts with a different chromatic note, descending stepwise from G♯ (movement 1), to G (movement 2), and F♯ (movement 3). Movement 1 focuses on the tritone G♯ and D, which acts as a recurrent motif interval. Movement 2, as the central part, unfolds in a continuous transformation without any motivic reference. Movement 3 focuses on F♯, which acts as a motif when emerging grace notes are included around it. In contrast, triptych 2 focuses on the chromatic group C♯, D, D♯, E (D♭ – D – E♭ – E).
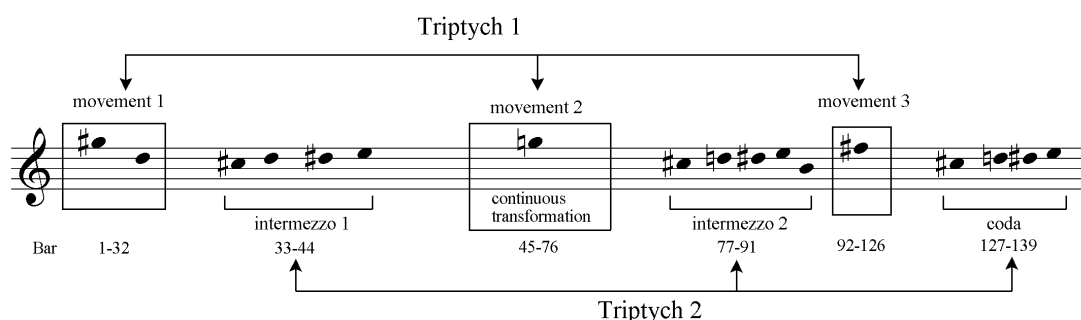
Fig. 9 Night View: basic pitch structure.

2.2.3 Textural Organisation

Night View consists of two layers, the flute and the piano parts – the flute is in the foreground and the piano is in the background. They both establish a dialogue in

continuous 'overlapping gestures' – a compositional tool that I used in whole movements in 'The Path trilogy' (see chapter 4) – meaning that before one gesture ends, another gesture appears.[20]

In *Night View* overlapping gestures unfold in contrasting rhythmic combinations; as before, long durational values are followed by fast rhythmic gestures. In the long durational values I explored gradual timbral variation: for example, progressing between extreme levels of dynamic, usually from soft to loud; different vibrato oscillation; flutter-tonguing and *muraiki*. The latter is explored in two ways: by the simple production of air noise (bars 46-47) or by changing from a pitch to noise in timbre modulation (bars 93-98) – e.g. by using the piano F♯ doubling the flute (bars 93-98) which then progresses to *muraiki*.

Night View's musical narrative differs from the other pieces in that I do not seek to present a specific climactic point, because climactic points are already part of the melodic sound syntax (e.g. *muraiki,* and other points of loud dynamics). However, like the other pieces in this folio, *Night View* presents a confrontation between contrasting elements; in local gestures, rhythm, texture, and in the relationship between the parts – (for example, the heterogeneity of triptych 1 and the homogeneity of triptych 2). *Night View* also shares with other pieces a similar treatment of chromatic pitch material, the idea of continuous overlapping gestures, and the use of timbre as a structural element.

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[20] At this point it is worth adding that during the gestural elaboration of *Night View* I have included a unique ambiguous melodic point (bar 55), a C natural in soft dynamic, just after an explosive C♯ in the bar before. It acts at the same time as a resting point and as a starting point for a new gesture. I used this principle in a more complex level in *Paths between the Wind and the Sea*, a whole movement for full orchestra, where ambiguous structural points are included to balance connections between sections (see bar 60).

3. 'Multilayering' Text and Music

Poetry and music: two sacred monsters often pitted against each other!

– Pierre Boulez[21]

3.1 Four Poems for Guitar

As the title suggests, *Four Poems for Guitar* is a four movement piece written to be workshopped and performed by Stefan Östersjö in 2011 at the Rymer Auditorium, York.

In this piece I used a sonnet by Spanish poet Luis de Góngora (1561-1627), *De un Caminante Enfermo que se Enamoró donde fue Hospedado*[22] (*About an ill wayfarer who fell in love where he was lodged*), as my initial impetus in composing the first movement. I then selected complementary gestures from the first movement as the main cells used to build the textures of the rest of the piece.

The title of the second movement, *El Peregrino* is related to the Góngora's poem (first line). However, the titles of the third and four movements were suggested by the nature of the gestures I selected from the first movement. Therefore, the title of *Quantic Leap* represents the impulsive character of sextuplets and septuplets derived from the quintuplets of the first movement (bar 15); and the title of *A Cherry Tree in the Autumn* was informed by the delicacy of the main theme in harmonics, a 'dropping' arpeggio (suggested by the final arpeggio of movement one, bars 48-50).

Therefore, the musical narrative consists of the introductory first movement, followed by three movements: a transitional movement, II – *El Peregrino*; a climactic and impulsive movement, III – *Quantic Leap*; and a conclusive and quiet movement, IV – *A Cherry Tree in the Autumn*.

Góngora's sonnet presents a dramatic narrative which I felt could nourish my musical ideas in a piece for guitar.

Descaminado, enfermo, **peregrino**,
en **tenebrosa noche**, **con pie incierto**
la confusión pisando del desierto,
voces en vano dio, pasos sin tino.

Repetido latir, si no vecino,
distinto, oyó de can siempre despierto,

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[21] Boulez, *Orientations*, 183.
[22] *Góngora, Sonetos Completos*, 138.

y en pastoral albergue mal cubierto,
piedad halló, si no halló camino.

Salió el Sol, y entre armiños escondida,
soñolienta beldad con dulce saña
salteó al no bien sano pasajero.

Pagará el hospedaje con la vida;
más le valiera errar en la montaña
que morir de la suerte que yo muero.

Luis de Góngora

The poem describes a lost and ill pilgrim (*Descaminado, enfermo, peregrino*) looking for a shelter in the night; he eventually finds a shepherd's cottage and there, he finds a woman with whom he falls in love. What happens next is ambiguous because the poem concludes by saying that he will pay for his lodging with his life. A literary analysis of this poem is beyond the scope of this portfolio. However, for me, what is important, is its dramatic and ambiguous imagery, which I tried to project into the musical character of the first movement.

In order to create the dramatic character of the first movement I composed a variety of gestures, such as: long phrases; short gestures in triplet and quintuplet; accelerando gestures; percussive gestures; glissando gestures; and long durational values in arpeggios. This heterogeneity of gestures was suggested by some of the poetic images in the text, such as: *en tenebrosa noche* [*in a tenebrous night*]; *con pie incierto* [*with indecisive foot*] and *Salió el Sol* [*the sun rose*].

3.1.1 Structure and Pitch Organisation

The first movement consists of three parts: part 1 (bars 1-26); part 2 (bars 27-30), a short transition; and a conclusive part (bars 31-50) that subsides with a very delicate arpeggio in harmonics. From bars 1-11, all pitches of the chromatic scale (having E as the first pitch) are used, with exception of F and G♭. E is an important pitch as it appears at both edges of the whole movement: bar 1, opening note theme; and bar 50, the extreme register of the arpeggio. The missing F and G♭ from bars 1-11 are compensated for in bars 12-27 – E-**F**-**G♭** are now the focus. In bar 31 the theme is recapitulated and now transposed a fifth below (beginning on A). I chose to transpose by a fifth for structural reasons, as the fifth is the first interval that appears in this movement. From bar 43-50 the arpeggiated theme is finally recapitulated and E is reinforced in the final chords (**Figure 10**).

Fig. 10 Four Poems for Guitar: I – De un Caminante Enfermo que se Enamoró donde fue Hospedado: basic pitch structure.

In contrast, the second movement, *El Peregrino* is predominantly unfolded in arpeggios. However, it also consists of three phrases: phrase 1 (bars 51-56); phrase 2 (bars 57-62) and phrase 3 (bar 63-76). Each part presents a melodic 'curve' reaching a climactic point always in '*rasgueado'*. In terms of pitch content, D and C assume important structural roles in phrases 1 and 2 (**Figure 11**) and, in order to create a structural connection with the first movement, the piece is concluded with B – a fifth higher than the last main note of movement 1, E.

Fig. 11 Four Poems for Guitar: II – El Peregrino:
basic pitch structure.

Quantic Leap, the third movement*,* consists of three parts: part 1 (bars 77-85), an introduction; part 2 (bars 86-102), development; part 3 (bars 103-107), climax. The main idea consists of a dialogue between sextuplets and gestures with contrasting timbre. The sextuplets give the idea of spinning points whilst the surrounding gestures are like pieces of a mobile: each is independent, but they can also affect each other as they move. They are organised in different levels of register and – despite the fact that they do not overlap to create a more complex texture, as I composed in 'The Path trilogy' – they can be perceived in different layers. The pitch organisation is also very simple. In the introduction the sextuplets consist mainly with D-G-D♭(C♯)-F-B-B♭(A♯); and in the development and climax with C-C♯-D.

When I was composing the last movement, *A Cherry Tree in the Autumn*, I found myself sitting in front of a cherry blossom tree at my home in York. I was amazed by its

delicate pink petals gently falling on the ground. I related that image to a Japanese haiku, a short poem that evokes images of the natural world. In my imaginary musical 'haiku' I also included some elements from traditional Japanese music. These were based on pieces for the shamisen[23] and the koto[24] – I had the opportunity to listen live to a performance by a traditional Japanese group in Teatro São Pedro, in Porto Alegre, Brazil – and on the Japanese folk song, *Depicting the Cranes in their Nest* for shakuhachi. I created the main theme suggested by the koto 'timbre', a descending arpeggio in harmonics (bars 108-112), and from the Japanese folk song I used trills (bars 118;123), a microtone (bars 127-128) and a melodic outline of its main theme (bars 120-121).

In terms of structure this movement is planned in an arch shape: section A (bars 108-117), as introduction; section B (bars 118-131) as development; and section A[1] (bars 132-139) as a concluding part.

In terms of rhythm it contrasts two opposing forces: 'static' moments focused on a single pitch or a chord in long durational values (section A, second part of section B, and section A[1]), and 'kinetic' moments, like the repetitive interval contours at the beginning of section B (bars 118; 120-121; 123).

In terms of pitch content the theme provides the notes that are arranged in important structural points. The first three pitches C♯-F-B are arranged as a new melody (in this case as the melodic outline of the Japanese folk tune, bars 120-121) and also when the section subsides, bars 126-127; the last two notes, D-G♯ acts as the conclusive pitches of the whole movement. Also the first two notes of the opening theme are transformed by chromatic outward movement (F-F♯, C♯-C); in section B they mark the extreme points (F♯, bar 118, and C, bar 128-129). F♯ to C is also the penultimate harmonic interval of this movement.

3.2 *Poema Místico* (*Mystic Poem*)

Poema Místico (Mystic Poem), for speaking pianist, was commissioned by Brazilian-Canadian pianist Luciane Cardassi and was premiered on 9th January 2013 at The Rolston Recital Hall, Banff, Canada.

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[23] Shamisen: 'A traditional Japanese three stringed lute with a square body, played with a large plectrum.' (Oxford Dictionaries website).

[24] Koto: 'A Japanese zither about six feet long, with thirteen strings passed over small movable bridge.' (Oxford Dictionaries website).

This piece is based on two prose poems of my own, written especially for this composition: I – *Quando o dia encontra a noite* (*When the day meets the night)* and II – Janelas *para o infinito*[25] (*Windows to the infinite)*.

The poems, written in Portuguese, evoke the 'mystic' moment of sunset – the gradual change from light into darkness – in multiple metaphorical meanings. A proper translation of these poems into English is not available at the moment and a literary translation could make them lose their expressive meaning. However, an English translation is given for some key words or phrases as a reference.

Quando o dia encontra a noite
(When the day meets the night)

Angélica luminescência
De púrpuros desejos.

De paciência amorosa
Pelo êxtase gentil e doce
de contemplação mútua.

Ascensão lápis-lazúli
Que acolhe com beijos cristais
A presença do teu suave repouso.

Eterno ciclo ritual
desdobrado pelo tempo
Em múltiplos altares
De sublimes formas.

Venerável arcano,
De eterna beleza
incansavelmente
tu ensinas a harmonia
das diferenças.

– Lourdes Saraiva

Janelas para o infinito (Windows to the infinite)

Hipnótica miríade de formas entrelaçadas,
Que seguem o seu curso,
Como dança   infinita de opostos.

– Lourdes Saraiva

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[25] This poem was originally named 'Haikai', but afterwards I decided to change it to *Janelas para o Infinito* which better fits the poem meaning.

3.2.1 Structure – Overlapping Text and Music – Voice Treatment

Poema Místico is a single movement of ten minutes duration, and it consists of three contrasting parts: part 1 (bars 1-71), part 2 (bars 72-206) and part 3 (bars 207-223). Poem I is combined with the music in fragments in the three parts. However, poem II is presented as a whole at the end of part 2 (bars 202-206).

3.2.2 Part 1 – a Continuous Transformation

In part 1 the principle of fragmentation is used not only in the voice/text but also in the piano part. The piano combines different types of gesture that unfold in distinct hierarchic levels: fast gestures in the foreground; sustained notes in the middleground; and low pedal notes in the background. The voice/text interacts with all levels of the piano (bar 1, *Angélica* and low G, background, and bar 31, *ca* and D, foreground), to create a whole multilayered combination of fragments, like a mosaic.

The rhythm is flexible – a series of short and long gestures unfold in a gradual and continuously changing way, but with a clear dialogue between voice and piano – this is very similar to the principle I used in the movement three of *Night View,* for flute and piano.

Some of the words from poem 1 are used in isolation or in groups: repeated, retrograded, and deconstructed. For example, I selected some consonants, vowels and syllables derived from specific words to create timbral contrast and for moments that use the poem in an abstract way: *ce* (bar 2) from *lumines**cê**ncia* (bar 1 - *luminescence*); *s* (bar 10) from *púrpuro**s*** (*purple*)[26] and *desejo**s*** (bar 8-9, *desire*). The vocalist, amplified for clarity, performs the poem using different timbres: whispered; between whispered and spoken; recited; and sung, to create contrasting levels of expression.

In the first stage of composition I created separated blocks of sections; in the second stage, these blocks were combined by focusing on the balance between static and motoric activity at boundaries – for example, from bar 11 to12, and from bar 57 to 58.

3.2.3 Part 2 – 'The wheel of time'

Part 1 is connected with part 2 with the verse *Eterno ciclo ritual, desdobrado pelo tempo (Eternal ritual cycle, unfolded by time)* – a metaphor for the periodicity of nature and to the 'wheel of time which constantly changes everything'. This is expressed musically

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[26] In Portuguese colours can be used in plural.

through the 'obsessive' recurrence of a chromatic phrase (bar 72) played by the piano and reinforced primarily by the recited word *tempo* (*time*).

In the texture this recurrent phrase acts as the main axis with which complementary gestures – notes and short phrases – are presented to create a dialogue in overlapping gestures. The recurrent phrase is subtly varied and the complementary gestures are multiplied by using different levels of register in the piano. The recurrent phrase is also occasionally interrupted by fast *ff* gestures in metric modulation – by changing the time signature from 3/4 to 3/8 and by using the previous division as the new pulse (for example bar 103 and bar 111) this acts as a more explicit contrasting element.

All this material is unfolded in a new long durational time span (part 2 is twice the length of part 1) reaching a climax in bars 189-197 and subsiding in bars 198-206 before the coda.

3.2.4 Part 3 – Coda – A Kaleidoscopic Gesture[27]

The texture of the coda (bars 207-223) is a musical metaphor for the meaning of the verses just recited in the last bars of part 1: *formas entrelaçadas* (*interlaced shapes*) is a poetic reference to the mix of the colours produced during the sunset. Musically this is projected in a 'kaleidoscopic gesture' in the piano, starting with a repetition of A♭, in unison, then joined by a repeated G, and unfolded in a chromatic gesture (derived from the recurrent gesture of part 2) in a canon, which is gradually deviated from with desynchronised accents. The idea of repetitive patterns and of their rhythmic deviations was particularly inspired by the Étude 9, *Vertige*[28] by György Ligeti.

3.3 *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*

The Lake Isle of Innisfree for female voice with finger cymbals, and flute, was premiered in March 2012, in a YOCOCO[29] concert at the Music Department in York. The piece is based on the famous poem with the same title by William Butler Yeats.[30]

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[27] I have been inspired for this title from Steinitz, *Music of Imagination*, Chapter 7 title, 'A Gestural Kaleidoscope', p. 167.
[28] For deeper information about the *Études for Piano* by György Ligeti see, Steinitz, György *Ligeti Music of Imagination*, pp.277-314.
[29] 'York Collective Composers', an open group of student composers of the Music Department.
[30] Yeats, *Poems*, 24.

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

I WILL arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

– W. B. Yeats

This piece was originally part of a song cycle based on a selection of Yeats' poems that I composed in 2010. The first version was about two minutes long. However, I felt that the piece itself had the potential to be an independent whole movement and I recomposed it into the more extensive piece presented here.

During the compositional process of this second version, I had the opportunity to workshop sketches with the singer Joanna Färnqvist and the flautist Christian Färnqvist. Working with particular performers was very important in the compositional process because I could gain a clear picture of the singer's voice capabilities and its possible combinations with the different flute sonorities through experimentation during workshops.

The text is in first person and the narrator dreams to escape from the big city (*while I stand on the road way or on the pavements grey*) to find peace in nature (*And I shall have some piece there ... to where the cricket sings*). Musically, to perform the text, I imagined a character for the singer, who is in a dreamy state. In her monologue, she expresses erratic feelings, from contentment to melancholia, which is reflected by the use of different vocal techniques (tonal voice[31], sung, whispered and spoken voice) and by her movements during performance. In contrast to the staging of *Night View* – where the performers move slowly at a ceremonial pace – in this piece the singer is free to walk to the centre of the stage, to interact with the flautist (who stands in the middle) and also to improvise gestures with the finger cymbals, which she plays at intersectional points. For a more spontaneous performance the score had to be memorized by the singer. Furthermore, the rhythm,

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[31] By 'tonal voice' I mean a voice with prominent inflectional qualities, closer to *spreshstimme*.

accent, and the haunted mood of her voice were based on a recording[32] of the poem read by Yeats himself.

The flute participates actively with the voice by reacting to it in a mimetic and a non-mimetic way. As a mimetic example, the sextuplet in bar 52 is a response to the text, *to where the cricket sings*, in bar 50-51 and repeated in bar 52. The flute also recites fragments of the text as it plays ('speak-flute'), as a response to the voice: e.g. bar 15, *free* from *Innisfree* played by the voice in bar 13; and the homophonic recitation with the voice, bar 19, *cabin*, in a percussive effect. The flute also acts to delineate important structural points: as soloist in the introduction, and as bridges in order to connect sections. It is also written in an erratic melodic and rhythmic style, with larger intervals and short phrasal groups reflecting the vocal contour. In this 'erratic style' I used chromatic aggregation organised in layers of adjacent pitches (**Figure 12,** *x*, *y* and *z*), to create greater melodic complexity – the same principle I used in *Stone Structures* (cello introduction).
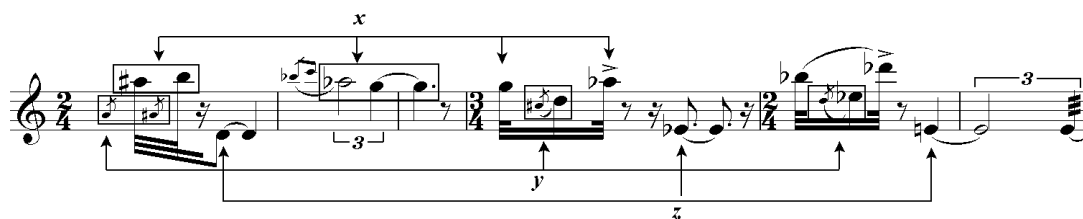

Fig. 12 The Lake Isle of Innisfree: flute introduction, bars 1-6:
layers of chromatic aggregation (x, y, and z).

In this piece I wanted to use the text as a whole. Its three stanzas are mostly projected musically in three sections: section 1, bars 11-33; section 2, bars 34-65; section 3, bars 66-115. A coda is added as a contrasting sung ending by using the last verse, *I hear it in the deep heart's core*, bars 116-132.

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[32] BBC website.

4. 'The Path Trilogy'

4.1 The Path of the Thousand Doors

> If the doors of perception were cleansed everything
> would appear to man as it is, infinite.[33]
>
> – William Blake

The Path of the Thousand Doors is a piece for three snare drums written in March 2010 for Enrico Bertelli, then a PhD student at the Department of Music. It was premiered at the Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik, Darmstadt on 30th July 2010 and was performed by Enrico and percussionists of the Ferienkurse in the final concert of the percussion workshop.[34] Initially the commission was for one snare drum accompanied by two recorded tracks, but at the moment it exists as a live trio and also as a studio recording made by Enrico in 2011.

Due to some irregular rhythmic features in the first sketches, Enrico requested that I create some homophonic points in the composition for the purpose of orientation in performance and also some improvised sections for *ad libitum* performance of extended techniques, which I determined in relation to the through-composed parts.

4.1.1 Initial Impetus

The specifics of this commission strongly influenced my compositional choices:

- Firstly, the piece was initially conceived for one player, accompanied by two recorded tracks played through speakers which I related to an electro-acoustic performance. Thus, my first compositional stage focused on the elaboration of timbral material by generating a chart of extended techniques. That allowed me to generate an alternative sound syntax, simulating to a degree an 'electro-acoustic' performance.
- Secondly, the use of extended techniques would reinforce my intention to remove the snare drum from its traditional military music associations,

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[33] Quoted in Huxley, *The Doors of Perception*, blank page.
[34] Unfortunately the Darmstadt live version was not recorded due to a technical problem. *The Path of the Thousand Doors* was also performed by Chimera Ensemble in 2011 at the Music Department at University of York.

dictated by belligerent and regular rhythms. In contrast, I worked primarily on combinations of irregular rhythmic patterns that also allowed me to generate more complex textures.

- Finally, the unpitched nature of the snare drum inspired me to explore and choose extended techniques which, when presented in opposition, permitted tonal contrast. Consequently, I entered into the 'complex territory of pitched noise'.

4.1.2 Literary Influences

In this piece, I wanted to offer a particular sonic experience: to take the listener into a kind of 'alternative state of consciousness' by means of the gradual, continuous and, in some sense hypnotic, colouristic transformation of musical patterns. I took the inspiration for my title from a book by Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception* (1954).

Huxley's interest in spirituality and philosophical mysticism is well known. In May 1953 he tried to have a mystical experience by taking a drug called mescalin,[35] which he details in *The Doors of Perception*:

Half an hour after swallowing the drug I became aware of a slow dance of golden lights. A little later there were sumptuous red surfaces swelling and expanding from bright nodes of energy that vibrated with a continuously changing, patterned life.[36]

Huxley's description of his experience of alternative states of consciousness uses rich poetic imagery, which I relate to characteristic musical elements employed in *The Path of the Thousand Doors*: 'slow dance of golden lights', 'surfaces expanding', 'energy that vibrated', 'continuously changing' and 'patterned life'.

These images, for me, have in common the idea of combined patterns in continuous movement as an organic entity. Musically, it is suggested in terms of timbral and spatial modulation, which will be explained below.

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[35] Mescalin: 'A small soft blue-green spineless cactus, native to Mexico and the southern US'. (Oxford Dictionaries website).

[36] Huxley, *The Doors of Perception*, 4.

4.1.3 Musical Influences: the 'Continuous changing, patterned life' of *Monochrome* by Maki Ishii and *Continuum* by György Ligeti

As a pianist myself, I have always been interested in percussion instruments. Drums especially, as one of the oldest known instruments, evoke for me the imagery of primitive times when nature and the sense of the sacred were inseparable. To a degree I feel that this connection is still present in our unconscious mind and it is evoked every time we listen to the sound of thunder, for example.

Some time ago, I had the opportunity to see the famous Japanese percussion ensemble, Kodō, in Porto Alegre and I also watched the video 'Kodō Live in Acropolis'. I was particularly impressed by a piece called *Monochrome* (1976) by the Japanese composer Maki Ishii (1936-2003), especially because its texture and sonority were different from the typical rhythmic Kodō repertoire. In an article about this piece Kuniharu Akiyama writes:

> Before composing this work, he lived together in a commune with
> the members of Ondekoza drum ensemble (the precursor of Kodō)
> for six months, experimenting with the development of techniques
> until then outside the range of Japanese drummers. Examples of
> these new techniques in "Monochrome" include the proliferation
> of continuous drum strokes beginning from *pppp*, and flawless
> repetition by the ensemble of different figures with contrasting
> accentuation. [37]

The principles of 'patterned life' of 'continuous drum strokes' and 'contrasting accentuations' were the two basic elements of *Monochrome* that inspired my introductory section.

Another piece which influenced the general conception of *The Path of the Thousand Doors* was *Continuum* for harpsichord, by György Ligeti. The idea of kaleidoscopic multi-layered pattern-repetitions represented a fascinating field to be explored:

> Rhythm in *Continuum* operates on three levels. The foreground
> pulses clatter incessantly. A secondary level relates to the rate at
> which the patterns repeat. This varies according to the number of

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[37] Akiyama, *'Monochrome – The Emotional Aesthetic of Japanese Drums and Maki Ishii's "Non-musical Time"'*, 169.

pitches in each pattern: i.e. patterns containing few notes repeat more frequently; those with more notes repeat less frequently. Then there is the speed at which the pitch choices (rather than their quantity) change. The pace of such harmonic change results in a corresponding third-level rhythm.[38]

Continuity in *The Path of the Thousand Doors* is achieved by continuously changing phrasal activity employed within a texture of overlapping gestures in a ratio combination. The 4/4 time signature is only for performance orientation, as there is no metric regularity. The foreground of the piece is determined by accentuation and rhythmic phrases. Dynamic nuances give a dimension of depth, and timbral modulation governs the transitions between sections.

4.1.4 Timbral and Spatial Modulation

According to Cope,[39] *modulation* 'can be defined as a smooth transition from one state to another. In tonal languages, *modulation* refers to the movement from one key centre to another, usually by the use of a chord common to both keys. In the twentieth century modulation has been expanded to include a new vocabulary of possible uses'. Timbral modulation 'involves slowly changing the colour of a sound usually by overlapping instruments of similar timbres'.[40] However in my piece, timbral modulation refers to the process of gradually changing a pre-established texture with a specific timbral characteristic into another by the emergence of a new timbral gesture which is not necessarily similar to the previous timbre.

By spatial modulation, I mean the use of space for a panning effect, like a flux of energy moving among different points in space.

As mentioned above, the pre-compositional stage of *The Path of the Thousand Doors* started with the conception of timbral material created using a chart of extended techniques. This chart consists of: rustling sounds by brushes; groaning sounds created by playing with a superball mallet; metallic sounds created by crotales on the drums (described on the score and not in the key notes); ordinary strokes (flam, drag, buzz rolls); and strokes exploring tonal contrast, such as different levels of register. Tonal contrast is achieved by striking different parts of the sticks on the rim (see key notes 4-6) or on each

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[38] Steinitz, *György Ligeti Music of Imagination*, 165.
[39] Cope, *Techniques of the Contemporary Composer*, 108.
[40] Ibid., 113.

other (9-10), and also by its variations in glissandi: number 7 as a variant of 4-6 and number 11, an 'unpitched glissandi', produced by stick scrape – a variant of 9-10.

Having such a variety of colouristic possibilities I gradually created a vocabulary of gestures that I could combine in a variety of ways. However, facing such a diversity of colour, I was aware that it was essential to maintain balance in shaping the identity of a piece. With this in mind, I projected the general structure as a type of arc shape, moving from a more economical use of timbres (in homogeneous textures) to a more varied use of them (in heterogeneous textures), concluding the piece with a recapitulation of the first ideas. Its overall structure is thus characterised by an expanding and contracting movement of textures (**Table 3**).

Section	Structural function	Bars	Length	Timbral material
A	Introduction	1-18	18	high, medium, low strokes on the rim + buzz rolls
B	Interlude	19-28	10	buzz roll + ord. stroke + bounce
A'	Recapitulation	29-56	28	high, medium, low strokes on the rim + ord. strokes + rim shot
C	Development	57-86	30	brushes + ord. stroke + rim shot + stick shots + elbow gliss. bounces + crotales + stick scrape + buzz roll + medium, low strokes on the rim
D		87-118	32	ord. stroke + rim shot + stick shots + high, medium, low strokes on the rim + stick scrape + 'whale sounds' superball stick
A''	Recapitulation	119-128	10	'cascade sounds' + ord. stroke + buzz roll

Table 3 The Path of the Thousand Doors: structure.

The transition from a pre-established texture into another was made through timbral modulation. It was created by adding new gestures of different or similar timbre so that a greater textural complexity could be generated (**Figure 13**).

Fig.13 The Path of the Thousand Doors: bars 55-58: timbral modulation.

4.1.5 Layering 'Patterned life' – Spatial Modulation – Creating Textures and Techniques

Spatial modulation was an important aspect which influenced the choice of techniques in this piece. Canonic imitative techniques and the projection of rhythmic phrases by accentuation were, I felt, the best tools for generating a panning effect.

Canonic imitative techniques are used in the opening section (**Figure 14**), in which the gesture moves in a spiral between performers. They are later expanded into glissandi in its recapitulation (**Figure 15**).

Fig.14 The Path of the Thousand Doors: bars 2-9: canon in three voices.

Fig.15 The Path of the Thousand Doors: bars 36-40:
canon with expanded gestures in glissandi from the opening section.

The projection of rhythmic phrases by accentuation is generated through both what could be termed as 'hidden ratio associations', as well as through regular rhythmic patterns. 'Hidden ratio associations' are created through transformations and are used to create rhythmic instability (**Figure 16 and 17**). This technique was used to break the established regularity of the canon in the opening section.
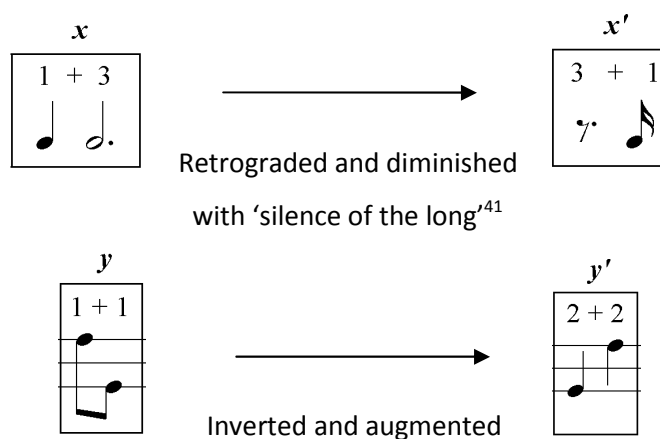

Fig.16 The Path of the Thousand Doors: bars 11-13: transformations.

Fig.17 The Path of the Thousand Doors: bars 11-13: projection of rhythmic phrases by accentuation. Technique of alternation of transformations.

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[41] Expression used by Boulez, *Orientations*, 140.

In contrast, the projection of regular rhythmic patterns is used to generate momentary metric stability (**Figure 18**).

Fig.18 The Path of the Thousand Doors: bars 50-51:
projection of a regular rhythmic phrase.

Extended techniques have been used in different periods and for different aesthetic purposes. Heinrich Biber (1644-1704), for example, in his programmatic piece *Battalia à 10* (1673), for strings and continuo, simulated the sound of a snare drum by requiring the bass player to stroke the bow on strings interlocked by a sheet of paper, thereby creating a sonorous and expressive percussive effect. Luciano Berio (1925-2003) in his fourteen *Sequenzas*, has deeply explored extended techniques for different solo instruments.

4.2 *The Path of the Old Oaks*

Being passionate about trees, mythology and folklore, I came across a book by anthropologist W.Y. Evans-Wentz, *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries,* when I was developing my first ideas about this piece.[42] This book represents an invaluable survey of fairy belief in the British Islands – it contains reports from several people who claim to have made contact with 'the little people'.[43] Inspired by this book's imagery I composed *The Path of the Old Oaks*.

Oak trees are remarkable because of their longevity and because of their sacred and magical meaning:

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[42] This book was later used by J.R.R.Tolkien as inspiration for his literary work.

[43] According to Evans-Wentz, 'the little people' is 'a term besides *Good People* and *Kind People,* used by peasantry in Lough Gur region, in Ireland, referring to the fairies'. *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries,* 82.

In the case of sacred trees, more may be added about the Druids and their relation to the Fairy-Faith, for it is well known that the Druids held the oak and its mistletoe in great religious veneration, and it is generally thought that most of the famous Druid schools were in the midst of sacred oak-groves or forests.[44]

The Path of the Old Oaks depicts this magical universe musically through its character, sonority and gestures. The title evokes an imaginary path of old oak trees as the general scene from which the musical narrative unfolds. This consists of four movements: I – *Whispers in the Wood*, an introductory movement; II – *Spells and Charms*, a transitional movement; III – *The Little People*, a climactic movement; and, IV – *The Fairy Bridge*, a concluding movement.

Each movement presents a specific theme or motif. They all have in common a melodic structure composed by chromatic aggregation – similar to the technique used in the cello opening theme of *Stone Structures*, as explained above. This also serves as an essential aspect of the piece not only for creating local musical expression and singular character, but also for shaping the overall identity of the piece.

The introductory part, *Whispers in the Wood*, has an extended theme, always preceded by the tam-tam. This theme is presented initially in the quintuplet piano gesture that concludes at bar 11 in a climax in *f*, and is recapitulated by the piccolo and by the clarinet to reinforce its amusing character (bars 17-31). However, this time it is presented with subdivision in four and it also reaches a climax at its conclusion. At this point the movement gradually subsides and the theme is recapitulated by the quintuplet marimba gesture (bars 40; 42); finally, the bass clarinet (bar 43) presents a retrograded and transformed version of part of this marimba fragment (bar 40, beat 4).

The second movement, *Spells and Charms*, is presented in two sections: in the first section (bars 53-81), the piano – as in the previous movement – presents a long melody introduced by a short chromatic motif in the nonuplet gesture (bar 58); in the second section (bars 82-100), this motif is presented in as a septuplet and is melodically expanded. It is more prominent for being obsessively recapitulated and it is also accompanied by the piccolo, in order to enhance its enigmatic character.

The third movement, *The Little People*, like the previous movement, also consists of two sections. The first presents a long introduction (bars 101-118) consisting of a combination of asynchronous overlapping gestures grouped by instruments: flute/clarinet; marimba; metal percussion (triangle, medium and large cymbal, tam-tam and tubular bells);

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[44] Ibid., 433.

piano; and violin/cello. After that, the quintuplet motif is presented by the violin and by the cello in bars 119-121 before it subsides. As an element of surprise, suddenly the theme of the first movement reappears in the glockenspiel, the marimba and the piano in *f*, (bars 124-126) acting as a turning point to signal the return of the texture of the introduction (bars 128-137). The quintuplet violin/cello motif returns three times leading to an unexpected percussive climax in imitative technique (bongos, congas, tom-tom, and wood blocks), leaving only the cello, acting in a percussive role, to play a C in Bartók pizzicato.

The last movement, *The Fairy Bridge*, is introduced by a 'haunted' tam-tam sonority, before unfolding gradually in a long and 'ethereal' piano theme. The septuplet glockenspiel gesture reappears with different pitches, like a rhythmic 'shade' of the previous piano motif in the second movement.

The Path of the Old Oaks is played without a break. To generate a greater sense of identity within the whole structure its four parts are linked by specific gestures:

a) Between the first and the second part there are two linking gestures: the last two notes played by the flute (A-D♯, bar 51) and the piano chord (F − A − D♯ - A,[45] bars 51-53). The piano chord has the role of reinforcing the A and D♯ notes of the flute, as well as concluding its line. These two pitches follow throughout the second part as a background pedal played by the timpani in glissandi that, alongside the theme, acts to sustain the character in this part.

b) Between the second and the third part the long C played by the clarinet (bars 97-101) is extended in bar 104, but this time it is accompanied by the flute in unison. There is also a second gesture, a cluster played by the piano (bar 98), which is recapitulated in the start of the third part (bar 102).

c) Between the third and fourth parts I extended the dramatic tom-tom gesture (bar 164), which gradually subsides at the beginning of the last part (bars 169-171) as the 'ethereal' character emerges played by the strings and the piano.

In terms of pitch organisation, despite the fact that I have worked with free chromatic material, I had in mind the creation of structural points through groups of pitches.

The piece opens with a harmony in fourths (F-B♭-E♭, bars 3-4). These notes are related to some pitches in 'theme 1', in the piano at bar 5. From the opening harmony, B♭ acts as an important note as it concludes the first climactic point in this part (bar 11) and it also reappears within the piece at different structural points. This part concludes with a

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[45] It is worth adding that, coincidentally, the letters F-A-D-A forms a Portuguese word which means 'fairy'.

variation on the opening harmony: by chromatic approximation I replaced B♭ with A (bars 51-52).

The concluding harmony of the end of part I presents A and D♯ (E♭), which, as mentioned above, recur periodically as a pedal in the timpani, in glissandi, throughout part II. Theme 2 is introduced in bar 58 and it presents a chromatic sequence B-C-D♭, which will be concluded by the return of Bb (bar 78) in the piano. This part concludes with C, presented by the clarinet (bar 97).

In the third part (C), it reappears in the clarinet with the flute (bars 104-115 and bars 133-137). Theme 3 played by violin and cello in quintuplets appears in bar 119, and I consciously added a C as its highest note. Theme 1 is suddenly recapitulated by the glockenspiel, marimba and the piano (bars 124-126), which announces an episodic passage leading to recapitulation of theme 3 (bars 138-143).

The final part presents the complete chromatic scale in the piano, the violin and the cello. A♯ (B♭) is again present as a pedal in the violin and cello till the end. The piece is concluded with a whole tone piano chord as a distinctive final gesture.

4.2.1 Textural Organisation

The textural organisation in *The Path of the Old Oaks* consists of three basic layers: a foreground presenting themes; a middleground containing segments of emergent gestures; and a background, which generally has a pedal function. By predetermining these three layers my aim was to create musical continuity within a clear texture. The middleground has an important role in providing this continuity because it introduces or connects themes, creates episodes and also connects sections. An important feature is what I term overlapping gestures: the beginning of a new gesture takes place before a previous gesture finishes. I would compare it to the continuous movement of the waves breaking on the sea shore.

Another important aspect of the texture in this piece is the overlapping of different speeds, but keeping a main overall tempo. Basically, the greater quantity of subdivisions in the beat the faster the speed is. I have used this principle in a very simple way in the opening part of *Whispers in the Wood* (bars 1-16). This part consists of three levels of speed: the fastest layer is provided the quintuplet piano gesture; the second level is presented by flute and clarinet moving at a slow pace; and the third level is a 'static' pedal in the violin, cello and bass drum. In this piece the result of this principle is a very clear and

simple texture; however, I reached greater complexity with this principle in the symphonic domain in my last piece *Paths between the Wind and the Sea*, for full orchestra.

4.3 *Paths between the Wind and the Sea*

> The sea is multiple, it moves, and it is dense and cohesive. Its multiplicity lies in its waves; they constitute it. ...The wind coming from outside them determines their motion;[46]
>
> – Elias Canetti

Paths between the Wind and the Sea (2012-13), for full orchestra, was the last piece composed as part of my PhD portfolio.

The title refers to two natural forces in constant interaction and movement – the wind and the sea – a metaphor for the textural multiplicity, contrasting elements, continuity, and larger instrumental forces employed in this piece.

Paths between the Wind and the Sea is a single movement piece that unfolds in ten sections. In terms of musical narrative, the sections are arranged in five parts: each one has a distinct character, which in turn creates an arch shape in the overall structure (**Table 4**).

Bar	Section	Musical narrative	Character
1-7	**1**	**1-Introduction**	calm
8-33	**2**		enigmatic
34-60	**3**		
61-84	**4**	**2-Transition**	dolce
85-105	**5**	**3-Climax**	martial
106-148	**6**		humorous, light
148-214	**7**		martial
215-246	**8**	**4-Extended climax**	agitated
246-322	**9**	**5-Conclusion**	enigmatic
323-335	**10**		calm

Table 4 Paths between the Wind and the Sea:
music narrative organisation.

The piece unfolds in a continuous and mostly gradually changing texture, created by constantly interpenetrating and interchanging structural ideas. The main idea is the

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[46] Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, 80.

recurrent minor third. Except for section 1, it is constantly present at different structural levels: in the foreground as a motif, transformed and multiplied in themes and melodies; in the middleground as complementary gestures; and in the background, mainly played by the first violins.

The techniques used in this piece are inspired by Lutosławski's idea of recurrent melodic gestures organised in layers. However, I did not use it in any predetermined chord aggregation or interval pair techniques to construct twelve-note chords – as Lutosławski employed in some of his pieces – because, as I wrote before, my compositional impetus frequently points to different directions when I try using pre-determined groups of pitches. In this piece, instead, I used the idea of recurrent melodic gestures in a chromatic language dictated by my expressive needs.

Paths between the Wind and the Sea primarily consists of three basic types of layers: layers of continuous 'short phrase variations' for a 'kinetic' effect, where the rhythmic activity is more intense; layers of a few pitches, with long durational values, which move gradually, for a 'near static' effect; and layers of extended chords for a completely 'static' effect, like the horns from bar 148.

 For more blurred textures, the layers of short phrase variations are grouped in close registers; for a more clear texture, the layers of a few pitches, like the strings in the introduction, are distributed across a wide register.

4.3.1 Multilayered Textures

The enigmatic atmosphere of the introduction (bars 1-60) is unfolded by a gradual instrumental accumulation through overlapping of gestures: section 1, the harp and the strings; section 2, the woodwinds, a horn, and the strings; section 3, instrumental tutti. The combination of 'kinetic' and near 'static' layers gives an effect of coexistence of different tempi. However, the main tempo is actually kept and this is simply done by dividing the beat into small values (sextuplets, quintuplets etc.) in 'short phrase variation' to create the faster speed layers (woodwind and brass parts) and by multiplying the beat creating the long durational values (string part). The string part here is the background and it has an important role because it connects and gives continuity with the contrasting sections that follow. It accompanies the transition (bars 61-84) and the first part of the martial climax (bars 85-105).

The transition is a return of the instrumentation of section 1 (the harp and the strings) but it is presented in a different character, which is created by the new overlapping of gestures from the harp and the added piano.

The climax consists of three parts. The first part (section 5, bars 85-105) introduces the martial character. The 'near' static string layer appears in higher register to give greater dramatic intensity, and the minor third motif is presented by piccolo and trumpet. In the second part (section 6, bars 106-148), in order to confound the listeners' expectation, there occurs a sudden change of discourse: the martial character is interrupted by the humorous scherzando section whilst the minor third motif from the previous section now has the role of complementary gesture because a new piano theme governs the section from bar 113 to 115, which also includes minor third. The third and last part of the climax (section 7, bars 148-214) returns to the initial martial character by thickening the texture and by emphasizing the piccolo motif, which now acts as the main theme. The climactic point is reached in bar 191 and gradually subsides, clearing the texture by emphasizing the string background.

In order to further break the listener's expectations, I expanded the climax by adding a contrasting section: the 'Agitato' section (bars 215-246). Here the multilayered texture presents overlapping gestures in running scales accompanied by a polyrhythmic background played in tremolos by the viola and the cello. The running scales originate from a colourful gesture played by the piccolos in bar 192. It has a very dramatic effect and seeks to evoke the feeling of waves in conflict. The piccolo motif from scherzando section (piccolo, bars 107-108) returns again, but this time it is played by the bassoon (bars 219-220; and bars 222-223), which 'submerges' it in the 'waves' played by the other instruments.

The concluding part consists of a fusion of the gestures used in all the previous sections. It also adds new gestures created by derivation from old gestures. The cor anglais opening gesture (bars 252-254) recalls the previous occurrence in section 3 (bars 34-37) but in a subdivision of four. Its pitch content is based on the diminished tetrachord (G♯-B-D-F) emphasizing the minor third motif. The multilayered texture is organised by the alternation of different 'thematic textural blocks': a homophonic group of flutes and clarinets (bars 268-269); a polyphonic group of flutes (bars 273-284); and a polyphonic group of harp and flutes (bars 304-309). They act as 'sound clouds' and have their own identity. They coexist with the middleground and the background gestures; however, they are used linearly in alternation. The piece concludes in a quiet coda (section 10, bars 323-335) with the brass recapitulating the same harmonic material played by the strings in section 1.

5. Conclusion

> Composition consists principally of injecting a system of links into naïve musical ideas.[47]
>
> — György Ligeti

All the pieces in this folio use extra-musical elements as initial compositional impetus: architecture, literature, and the visual arts. They stimulate imagination in the creative process, suggesting elements such as gestures, motifs, rhythm, character, sonority, and structure, which 'filtered through the composer's mind'[48] generate music.

Stone Structures presents the seeds of multilayered texture. The idea of organising the material in layers is taken a stage further in all subsequent pieces. *Night View*, despite using the principles of overlapping gestures and rhythmic irregularity as in the other pieces, stands on its own in this portfolio in terms of sonority by borrowing the characteristic sound of shakuhachi from Japanese traditional music.

Four Poems for Guitar, *Poema Místico*, and *The Lake Isle of Innisfree* represent three different aspects to work with text and I think it is always a rich territory to be explored.

Paths of the Thousand Doors shows the use of overlapping gestures combined with extended playing techniques can be used to generate a more complex sound syntax. *Path of the Old Oaks,* shows my first experiments in creating the 'sensation' of multilayering different tempi but keeping a main overall tempo — 'basically the greater quantity of subdivisions in the beat the faster the speed is'. *Paths between the Wind and the Sea* represents the 'climactic point' in my four years of intense compositional activity in York. It gathers all my previous techniques, and its use of 'multilayered textures' creates moments of ambiguity, and transition of motifs between different hierarchical levels, generating a greater level of textural complexity.

At the end of four years of intense compositional practice and research I conclude that the principles that inform all the pieces in this folio seem simple: a minor third motif to generate an orchestral piece, or even a zigzag line from a Japanese painting to suggest a fast rhythmic gesture. However, bringing these simple principles to fruition through the use of overlapping gestures in combination and of multilayered texture technique was a complex process, and represents an important step in my compositional 'path' pointing to new investigation in this field for my future pieces.

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[47] Quoted Steinitz, *György Ligeti: Music of Imagination*, 167.
[48] Harvey, *Music and Inspiration*, 40.

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[49] 'Tongue ram' definition in the key note of *The Lake Isle of Innisfree.*