

A4 Portfolio of Compositions

By Jonathan Read

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of MMus.

Department of Music, University of Sheffield:

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Summary of Compositions

Movement for Clarinet and Piano (2011) – Duration 3’20”

“Robin Hood and the Pedlar” (2011) and “The Mermaid”
(2013) from *Two English Folk-Songs with Piano*
Accompaniment – Duration 7’ (inclusive)

Movement for String Quartet: A Winter Opus (2012-3) –
Duration 5’30”

Summary of Compositions

Contents (in chronological order)

Movement for Clarinet and Piano (2011) – A4 Portfolio – Duration 3’20”

Robin Hood and the Pedlar from *Two English Folk-Songs with Piano Accompaniment* (2011) – A4 Portfolio – Duration 3’00”

Juxtapositions for Oboe* (2012) – A3 Portfolio – Duration 4’

Autumnal Sketches* (for Chamber Orchestra) (2012) – A3 Portfolio – Duration 7’30”

Movement for String Quartet: A Winter Opus (2012-3) – A4 Portfolio – Duration 5’30”

The Mermaid from *Two English Folk-Songs with Piano Accompaniment* (2013) – A4 Portfolio – Duration 4’00”

Metamorphosis for Piano* (2013) – A3 Portfolio – Duration Flexible

*Recordings are included – attached at the back of the A3 Portfolio

Summary: There have been two preoccupations in my compositions to date. The first, minimalist processes, have often been explored in “exercise pieces” whilst the second, folk music influences, have been explicit and failed to be incorporated convincingly into an art-music setting. Given this portfolio offered a fresh start to compositional work it seemed a convenient time to attempt to produce convincing works in these areas.

My earliest work, *Movement for Clarinet and Piano*, explored lyrical writing in a fast movement setting and actually fills the role of a final movement in an earlier work *Sonatina for Clarinet*. *Robin Hood and the Pedlar* was the first of two folk-songs where I was able to explore minimalist ideas in a folk-song setting as well and my treatment

of the folk song was provoked by my dissertation project in M.Mus and the claim, by Percy Grainger, that complete folk-songs could not be made fit for the concert hall.

Juxtapositions for Oboe and *Autumnal Sketches* were both written for specific people/ensembles. The former work was part of a department project collaborating with Christopher Redgate and his *21st Century Oboe* project. To be able to write for such an accomplished performer allowed me to explore extended techniques whilst not compromising elements of lyricism which I consider inherent to my compositional style, and also value in solo instrumental work. *Autumnal Sketches* was the result of a successful application to write for one of the university ensembles and it allowed me finally develop ideas and material I had been wanted to use for a long time. One of the main challenges here was to incorporate minimalist techniques in ways which enhanced both the rhythmic drive and melodic aspects of the material I was developing.

Movement for String Quartet is another example of a piece developing from existing material I was excited to use. It took 8 months to complete the work although it is one of my most rewarding pieces and, I believe, is a good example of how I aim to write for String Quartet.

The second of two folk-songs, *The Mermaid*, is a continuation of a much larger project to explore setting folk-songs as art-songs. The story was chosen because it enabled me to explore fluid accompaniment writing against a regular strophic structure with a view to developing this in larger works.

The final work in this portfolio aimed to demonstrate many of the minimalist techniques I was interested in but presented in such a way that it was coherent as a performance piece. *Metamorphosis for Piano* is very successful in this respect as it demonstrates both idiomatic minimalist writing as well as fluent use of the techniques in a more expressive way.