Commentary on a Portfolio of Original Compositions

PhD, Vol. 1

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This work is dedicated to Grandpa. Still much missed.

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Preface

'The truth is that the things that occupy me in life I find impossible to articulate in words. Music allows me to speak.'

These were the final lines from my application to Cardiff University to study for a PhD in musical composition. Having had the pleasure of spending four years articulating my thoughts in music, I now have the onerous problem of trying to explain my music in words.

But my attitude to composition provides a way through this impasse. To my mind, a composer should first and foremost be a competent craftsman. Writing a piece of music is, for me, analogous to constructing a building. A building must have an underlying shape – say cruciform or E-plan; an internal structure – for example in the design of arch or buttress; and it will have surface detail – as in the ornamental elaboration of Decorated Gothic cathedrals·. Once the building is complete we can argue about what it means, but that will not help to explain the technical process by which it came to be there.

What follows is a technical description of how my music came into being. Except where it impinges on broad issues of style, I will leave psychological motivations and meaning, interesting as they may be, to one side. The first chapter will describe the questions I was seeking to answer when embarking upon this PhD, the context in which I see myself operating as a composer as well as describing some important musical models. There will then follow, in chapter two, a technical description of how

my music is constructed in relation to all of the pieces in the folio except for *The Ruffian on the Stair*. That piece will be the subject of the final chapter, where it will be analysed in light of the technical features outlined in chapter two. My rationale for this selection is that *The Ruffian on the Stair,* being the last and by far the largest work of my PhD, sums up my technical position, acting as the culmination of all the thought processes that have gone into this period of research. It also, as I will show, points the way towards future developments.

Chapter One

Context, Issues and Models

Art is an act of communication, which makes no sense without a real or imagined audience.[1]

The Audience

The concept of an audience was first made apparent to me as a performer of the piano and trumpet, both of which I learned from an early age. I loved playing, eventually participating in county and Welsh youth music-making but, from the beginning, was never entirely comfortable in front of an audience. I felt a strong need to connect with people through playing but my propensity to nerves, not to mention my technical deficiencies, often got in the way. Composition came to interest me, not simply because I loved the act itself, but because it enabled me to perfect something in my own time and only then present it to an audience. Just as when performing, however, the aim was always to connect to and to give others pleasure.

This is, perhaps, a dangerous statement for a composer who aspires to write art music to make. I respond to this by asserting that no amount of wanting to please an audience would make me write music that does not please me. I could not, for example, write in a minimalist style, despite its popularity, since it is not a genre that gives me much listening pleasure. Neither does giving pleasure necessarily rule out challenging an audience, either technically or in the underlying psychological message

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[1] Scruton, Roger 'Understanding Music *Philosophy and Interpretation'*, p. 180 (Continuum UK: London 2009).

your music is trying to convey. The very act of coming to grips with something 'difficult' can itself be pleasurable.

Trying too hard to satisfy an audience, with the implication that one is not being artistically honest is, perhaps, the criticism that a composer most fears. I believe, however, that playing to the gallery can come in many forms. An audience can consist of all sorts of people: the general public, friends, family, parents of the pupils you teach, critics (real or imagined), or the people who teach you. Players are also a part of the audience. Whilst composers may justify their choices to be a certain type of composer at one end with high artistic reasoning or, at the other, with base financial considerations, it is my belief that some concentrate too much on satisfying one or other of these audiences. I, however, have always had the suspicion that choosing to be a certain type of composer is unnecessary. Most composers, for example, have in them the ability to enjoy writing or listening to a good tonal melody. I would, perhaps, go further and express suspicion of them if they were not. Similarly, I think that anyone might also recognize the expressive strengths of serialism, atonality, Messiean modes of limited transposition, the aleatoric or any of the myriad of styles that have, at one time or another, been at the cutting edge of Western musical thought. What I do not understand is that one must choose to be a writer of predominantly one of these genres. It is the desire to find a way of connecting with as much stylistic range as possible, but in an integrated manner, that is the main preoccupation of this PhD.

Background

I began this PhD in 2007. A sense of creative exhaustion after finishing my master's degree in 2005 had led to me taking a year out, working at a Pembrokeshire hotel before driving a campervan around Spain for three months. Having left teaching in order to pursue musical composition with more rigour, the master's period had left me wondering what my music was for and especially for whom I was writing it. I needed time to consider the best move forward.

My master's degree had been a time of open-minded investigation, especially of modernist repertoire. This had entirely been my intention when beginning since, though I had studied twentieth-century music during my first degree, I had been resistant to it. I had begun composing at an early age and had become well versed in writing tonal music. These early works, written up to the age of 18, had been inspired by a mixed bag of tonal composers that included John Rutter, John Williams, Monteverdi, Purcell, Handel, Bach, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Berlioz and Mahler. What attracted me to tonality, and still does, was the ability to order its elements to produce argument, tension and climax. I would hardly go so far as to say that I mastered tonal writing, but I did become adept at realising quite complicated and ambitious pieces in this style, evidenced by my preoccupation with contrapuntal writing. Hardly a piece of mine did not have a contrapuntal texture: there was a *Fugue for Brass;* the almost entirely contrapuntal *Gloria in Excelsis Deo,* for brass band; *Wir Christenleut Toccata*, an organ work with a long opening canon and central contrapuntal development; and *Fantasia for Orchestra,* with an eight-part fugal exposition.

It had quickly become clear to me when I had arrived at Surrey University to study for my first degree, however, that a style based upon the certainties of tonal harmony, no matter how technically competent, was not likely to lead to me being taken seriously. With better-informed colleagues and teaching staff, the audience had become more sophisticated, but my own tastes had not. Whilst I could at this stage have avoided taking composition as an option, allowing me to address a different, more appreciative, audience with my tonal music, I never really considered this. I was too curious to understand what I was not fully appreciating about the twentieth-century music that we studied. What I could not do, however, was simply adopt one of these styles as a basis for my own. I saw several colleagues do just this and felt that this was artistically dishonest; I was, possibly unfairly, suspicious that they did it just to satisfy the academic audience they were addressing. My remaining time at Surrey as a composer was marked by unsuccessful attempts to reconcile the tonal music that I loved writing in my youth with the twentieth-century music I studied as part of the course.

On finishing at Surrey, the necessity of making a living led to me training as a schoolteacher. This decision represented something of a regression to the old certainties of tonal composition. Being a teacher allowed me to write a considerable amount of *gebrauchsmusik* for the children I taught. Stylistic questions became secondary to those of usefulness, ease of performance and educational value. I do not regret this at all, having always agreed with Benjamin Britten's observation that 'It is better to be a bad composer writing for society than to be a bad composer writing

against it. At least your work can be of *some* use.'[2] A composer whose music encompasses a broad range – which is what I aspire to be – should be capable of writing utilitarian music for amateurs. Despite this, it does not mean that one should exclusively do this. My studies at Surrey had left their mark; there remained within me the desire to write more serious concert music, which in my educational pieces sometimes manifested itself in passages that stretched or exceeded the limits of what was possible. Also, around this time I became involved with Composers of Wales, a group of musicians with a more professional outlook. Meeting with other composers, the first time I had done so since university, made me realize that I wanted to reengage with composition in a more professional manner.

I left teaching and in 2004 enrolled on a master's degree course at Cardiff University. With this came the determination to renew my composing with a more open-minded approach to twentieth-century repertoire. This was vital since, in search of inspiration, my most important step forward came through a study of the post-war avant-garde. The things I found most useful were indicative of my thinking as a composer, since I responded most to composers whose music, despite the avant-garde label, had successfully managed to find a place within or form a dialogue with popular culture. This was, nevertheless, a visceral response in me to their music, not simply the desire also to win such a place. Of most importance was the music of György Ligeti, a composer famous, of course, for having achieved a degree of popularity through Stanley Kubrick's use of his music in the film *2001*. This association no doubt helped Ligeti become better known but, in my opinion, it is the music itself, rather than external associations, that allowed it to be appreciated by a wider audience. The

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[2] Benjamin Britten in interview with *The New York Times*, quoted in Carpenter, Humphrey 'Benjamin Britten *A Biography'*, p. 441 (Faber and Faber: London 1992).

musical surfaces of his 1960s works, especially in their use of densely worked micropolyphony, are enormously complicated, but are contained in structures that are easily followed by the listener. So simple are they, in fact, that they may often be reduced to graphic scores: *Volumina,* for example, feels like a graphic score version of some of his vast micropolyphonic pieces like *Apparitions* and *Atmosphères.* Also important is his use of emergent pitches[3] in pieces like *Continuum* for harpsichord, *Chamber Concerto* or *Atmosphères.* Even where their exact pitch class is of no absolute significance, their use serves to give the listener clues to the shape of a piece and, especially after passages of dissonant micropolyphony, the feeling, or possibly the illusion, of resolution.

Musical Issues and Context

At the end of the master's I realized that, despite reaching a rapprochement with more contemporary music, it had resulted in two problems. First, my style had become derivative. If tonality can result in banality and cliché the same, as points out Roger Scruton, can occur in the revolt against it, and my music had its fair share of such gestures: 'cluster chords, explosions of cross-rhythms on the brass, exaggerated tessitura and a constant searching for effect'[4]. This was especially true of the final piece of my master's portfolio, *Movements for Orchestra,* a work that, furthermore, was high indebted to that fascination in the sixties and seventies, exemplified by Ligeti's *Apparitions* and *Atmosphères* and Boulez's *Notations,* for writing works where every single

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[3] In those moments where all the voice-leading leads inexorably to one or two pitches, even where the pitch itself doesn't actually emerge, as in *Atmosphères,* bar 39.
[4] Scruton, Roger 'Understanding Music *Philosophy and Interpretation',* p. 223 (Continuum UK: London 2009).

instrument, including all the strings have individual parts. The two outer movements were also based upon graphic score tonal plans that were clearly derived from Ligeti.

The second was related to the context in which I see myself operating as a composer. I had successfully challenged my own preconceptions against the most 'difficult' music through my study of modernism. I had grown to love many of the pieces of the repertoire. So in writing in this style I was at least being consistent with my desire only to produce works that could give me aesthetic pleasure. At the same time, however, I felt that I had made that false choice I described at the beginning of this chapter. I had pursued the goal of compositional purity, perhaps as a desire to demonstrate my seriousness in the eyes and ears of the academic audience I was addressing. These pieces, with pages and pages of dense micropolyphony, were well received, something I now find ironic given how derivative they were.

The problem was that, whilst retaining the desire to write serious art music, I also retained the desire to communicate with as wide an audience as possible. At the very simplest level I wanted my music to be useful, as had been my attitude when writing *gebrauchsmusik* for schoolchildren. In terms of my place within the community I see myself as being in the mould of composers such as Benjamin Britten, Judith Weir or Peter Maxwell Davies: capable of writing the most serious concert music, but also, if needed, able to adapt my style, without compromising it, in order to be able to write for amateurs. The style I had cultivated in my master's was not fulfilling this view of myself, but neither would a return to the clichés of my tonal past. I needed to find another way.

Philosophical and Cultural Issues

It was this question that had led to my resistance to other models of composing during my first degree. This was especially true of serialism which, when applied in its strictest sense, appeared to me to be limited in its expressive range; it seemed to give the musical surface a constant state of emotional anguish that didn't really reflect the human condition. Theodor Adorno, one of the main cheerleaders of the serial style and a writer who, in my opinion, has much to answer for, said: 'Modern music...has taken upon itself all the darkness and guilt of the world. Its fortune lies in the perception of misfortune; all of its beauty is in denying itself the illusion of beauty.'[5] Adorno's problem was that he tended to mix his criticism with his Marxism, mistaking more popular genres of music as capitalist forms of enslavement, conversely associating serialism with 'utopia'.[6] Leaving aside the fact that it is a mistake to view an art as subtle as music in such binary terms ('enslavement' and 'utopia'), Adorno's view misses an essential point about the human condition: in actual fact life isn't always about 'darkness and guilt'. As a result, to be truly representative, sometimes music should be beautiful or radiant or to contain aspects of praise or positivity. I don't think that it is possible to achieve this is a consistently serial style.

As such, to me it is a great sadness that twentieth-century music was so often obsessed with this musical system. It is easy to see how a musician of the stature of Pierre

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[5] Adorno, Theodor *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 133 (The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc: New York, 2004).

[6] For a fuller discussion of this see chapter 13, 'Why read Adorno' in Scruton, Roger 'Understanding Music *Philosophy and Interpretation'* (Continuum UK: London, 2009).

Boulez could come to believe in 'the necessity of the dodecaphonic language'.[7] The direction of musical history – the breakdown of the tonal system, the music of Schoenberg and Webern – suggested its inevitability. So too did the movement in other forms of art, especially in modernist architecture, whose stated or implied manifestos eerily mirror those of the modernist movement in music. But, just as modernist concrete edifices proved to be unpopular amongst the people for whom they had been built[8], so did the new musical style fail to win a wide audience.

Simon Frith, in his essay *Towards an aesthetic of popular music* writes that a critical assumption often made is that 'Serious music matters because it transcends social forces; popular music is aesthetically worthless because it is determined by them.'[9] This strikes me as a peculiarly twentieth-century attitude. Even if the patronage received by composers such as Bach, Mozart or Haydn – that of church or court – might seem as rarefied as that given by arts bodies today, the result was not music that was incomprehensible to the man in the street. And even once composers had been emancipated from such forces, their music only became complicated at rate with which the audience could keep up, as the enthusiastic reception of Richard Strauss tone poems or, perhaps most poignantly, Schoenberg's early tonal works *Verklärte Nacht* and *Gurrelieder* demonstrate. Schoenberg's next steps after these pieces – his atonal/expressionist works and then serialism – may seem logical, but there was something about this new style that made it difficult for audiences to comprehend. This seems as true one hundred years later as it was then.

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[7] 'Any musician who has not felt…the necessity of the dodecaphonic language is OF NO USE' to give the famous full version. Quoted by Hopkins, G.W. and Griffiths, Paul. 'Boulez, Pierre.' Grove Music Online. Accessed 8 May, 2012 (www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/03708).
[8] I refer here to modernist architecture created for general use. One-off buildings for wealthy patrons or the architects themselves tend to be, unsurprising enough, much more aesthetically pleasing.
[9] Frith, Simon 'Towards an aesthetic of popular music' from *Music and Society* (ed. Leppert, Richard and McClary, Susan), p133 (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1987).

Schoenberg's mistake, I believe, was to think that serialism could have the same organizing power as tonality. Roger Scruton writes eloquently on this subject when comparing Schoenberg's response to the crisis in tonality with that of Janácek. Whilst Janácek looked to renew tonality by appropriating native folk music, presenting tonal chords in new ways or by the use of 'repetition, ostinato and accompanying figures',[10] Schoenberg believed that he could replace tonality completely, in the process reinvigorating the German symphonic tradition:

> The new music was to be as organized and as authoritative as the tonal symphony, with the same kind of organic interdependence among its parts, and the same depth of structure…The assumption was that the traditional concert audience would be reborn, and music once again assume its place at the heart of the metropolitan culture. The enterprise failed…because the serial system remained a merely intellectual device, with no ability to address the ear..'[11]

I would challenge the notion that serialism cannot address the ear – as I have said, I think it is very capable at representing certain kinds of human emotions – but I would agree that, by treating every note as equal, a composition runs the risk of losing a listener by not feeling rooted in some kind of pitch logic. I would, furthermore, agree with another criticism Scruton makes of serialism, that 'by emancipating dissonance you lose it'.[12] Not only is the striking and subsequent resolution of dissonance a means of generating forward momentum, but the availability of consonance allows the possibility of writing music that is more positive in nature, providing variety and interest for the listener.

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[10] Scruton, Roger, p. 171 'Understanding Music *Philosophy and Interpretation*' (Continuum UK: London, 2009).
[11] ibid, p. 175.
[12] ibid. p. 181.

If modernist trends had led to a dead-end for me, the obvious solution, at the outset of the PhD, was to consider a more postmodern approach, mixing genres and 'revelling in the rubble'[13] of twentieth-century music in order to produce something that, in its unique mixture, I might identify as my own. In deciding my approach to this I return to the architectural analogy of my preface. If I believe a piece of music can be compared to a single building, so too might it be compared to a whole street:

> Ravishing beauties are less important in the aesthetics of architecture than things that fit appropriately together, creating a continuous narrative as in a street or square, where nothing stands out in particular, and good manners prevail.[14]

I believe that a piece of music might mix many things, but so too do I believe that it should aim for consistency of approach. Juxtapositions of, say, dissonance and consonance should make contextual sense, otherwise there should be transitional material between in order to avoid a sense of stylistic dislocation. This belief derives from my own continuing fascination with modernist principles. I retain a great deal of admiration for composers whose systems produced works of great artistic integrity and purity, even if I feel that in some sense their rules produced works that are of limited emotional range. Rules also serve another more practical purpose: they make composition easier. In a sense the first thing a composer must do when beginning a new piece is to close off a number of options, otherwise the work runs the danger of becoming, to paraphrase Auden, a chaos that ends in a mad jumble of beautiful scraps.[15] These sensibilities provided me with important clues about where and where not I would find suitable inspiration for my own music.

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[13] McClary, Susan, chapter title from *Conventional Wisdom*, pp.139-168 (University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2001).

[14] Scruton, Roger, p. 171 *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction*, p. 10 (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2011).

[15] Taken from a letter W.H. Auden wrote to Benjamin Britten: 'Bohemian chaos alone ends in a mad jumble of beautiful scraps.' Quoted in Carpenter, Humphrey *'Benjamin Britten A Biography'*, p. 163 (Faber and Faber: London 1992).

My sensibilities – the conflicting desire to embrace variety and yet to impose on this a kind of modernist order – made it easy to rule out certain models of musical postmodernism. John Zorn's *Spillane,* for example, exemplifies the postmodern idea of cultural flattening, the belief that high and low culture can be equally as valid, through the inclusion of 'free jazz, cartoon soundtracks, Igor Stravinsky, punk, easy listening exotica, surf guitar, Ennio Morricone and many others'.[16] Similarly, Schnittke's Concerto Grosso No.1, where the baroque pastiche third movement contrasts abruptly with the surrounding, more modernist music, or Berio's *Sinfonia,* whose collage of quotes from famous works of the repertoire is underlaid with the third movement scherzo from Mahler's Second Symphony are, in their dialogues with the past, very typically postmodern. I have no objection to these kinds of eclectic mixes, especially as I aim to incorporate variety into my own music. In all these cases, however, and whilst I do find the musical results highly engaging, their sharp juxtapositions of material run counter to my desire for more stylistic integration.

Not all aspects of postmodernism lead to this kind of sharp juxtaposition. Minimalism, for example, is a style that, precisely because it can be so pared down, is capable of remarkable purity. To me, however, it often displays an aspect of postmodernism with which I definitely do not sympathise, that of surface over depth. Susan McClary illustrates this with an analysis of the opening of Philip Glass's *Glassworks,* concluding that 'with serialism one was assured that a subject still lurked somewhere in that tormented texture, even if it couldn't be detected: here the self *is* the surface, is nothing *but* surface.'[17] Whilst it would be wrong to characterize minimalist music

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[16] Ward, Glenn *Understand Postmodernism*, p. 36 (Hodder Education: London, 2010).
[17] McClary, Susan, *Conventional Wisdom*, pp. 144 (University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2001).

through one piece, the tendency to pare down compositional elements to their bare essentials *is* an essential feature of the style. It is a tendency that runs, in my opinion, the danger of cheapening the finished article. Such a piece might be momentarily appealing to the ear, but its simplicity – whether it be in the use of straightforward chords, constant repetition or mechanical processes like phasing – can mean that it is too easily understood, and that appeal wears off quickly. To draw an analogy with art, Frederic Jameson, in *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Capitalism* compares two paintings that feature shoes. The first, *Peasant Shoes* (1885) by Van Gogh, he identifies as being modernist, the other, *Diamond Dust Shoes,* by Andy Warhol, as postmodernist. Quoting Heidegger, he says that the former suggests a hidden world associated with the shoe, 'the heavy tread of the peasant woman, the loneliness of the field path, the hut in the clearing, the worn and broken instruments of labor in the furrows and at the hearth.'[18] The picture has depth, a network of allusions that maintains the interest of the viewer. The Warhol, on the other hand, 'no longer speaks to us with the immediacy of Van Gogh's footgear; indeed, I am tempted to say that it does not really speak to us at all.'[19] It can be taken in, consumed, very quickly and, as such, its appeal is short-lived.

The Warhol, in its flat imagery, exhibits a kind of purity that is familiar in minimalist music. The analogy I have just made with art is not, however, exact. My quote from McClary also contains an implied criticism of serialism. Whilst, she says, one was assured that in serialism the subject lurks in the texture, sometimes one has to take this on face value, since the subject cannot, in fact, be heard. So in musical terms

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[18] Jameson, Frederic *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Capitalism,* p. 8 (Duke University Press: Durham 1997)
[19] ibid.

modernism is sometimes as guilty as minimalism, since if the subject cannot be heard, what is the point of it being there? As a result, and whilst eschewing minimalism, the purity of modernism, most especially in a serial form, is not attractive to me either. I prefer depth that is borne of audible musical processes. This, to my mind, is best achieved by drawing upon a wide range of musical processes. Whilst this may include serialism, it must be integrated in a way that makes sense to a listener. My argument, in other words, is for more eclectic forms of postmodernism that are combined as seamlessly as possible.

Musical Models

It should be clear that, on beginning this PhD, I had a number of contradictions to resolve. I find that systems other than tonality provide useful compositional tools, but that their exclusive use can lead to limited expressiveness. I prefer integration and consistency in a composition whilst also valuing variety. I want a piece of music to retain a sense of long-term pitch logic, but without resorting to full-blown tonality. I don't want to pander to an audience, but I would like to include elements that provide points of access. The composers that were important to me during the course of this PhD were those whose works achieve successful integration of a number of musical elements, resulting in works of broader communicative power; and those whose work provided useful pitch models for integrating this variety.

Two British composers who were of importance, Benjamin Britten and William Mathias, would both be regarded as conservative, a label that I think completely misinterprets their creative outlook. Rather than wishing to belong to any school or to

regard composition as governed by some kind of Germanic determinism, these composers synthesized their styles from what they found useful to them, and in doing so were able to embrace a wide range of technical features, including elements of tonality, serialism, bitonality and (in the case of Mathias) Messiaen's harmonic techniques. This gives their music a wide expressive range, something that I find extremely attractive.

To get a feel for this range, in Britten one only has to compare works such as *The Little Sweep, Noyes Fludde* and *The Golden Vanity* with such pieces as *Death in Venice* and the *War Requiem.*[20] It would be difficult to imagine a composer more concerned with compositional purity, say a Boulez or a Babbitt, being able to encompass such variety. There is also an element of this within pieces. One thinks, for example, of *Death in Venice,* with the contrast between the serial-inspired music with which the opera opens (and becomes associated with the character of Aschenbach[21]), the use of Mahlerian harmony (especially before Scene 17) and the simplicity of the gamelan-inspired music associated with Tadzio. Similarly, in the music of William Mathias, works written at a similar time show a marked difference in harmonic style according to their brief. Compare, for example, the celebratory tonal simplicity of *Vivat Regina* (op. 75) with the dark clustered nature of *Helios* (op.76). Surprisingly, both works *sound* like William Mathias. Or, within the same piece, the triadic F major-centred nature of the *Pleni sunt caeli* at rehearsal mark 72 of *Lux Aeterna* with, shortly afterwards, the very dissonant accompaniment to the *Agnus Dei* at rehearsal mark 80.

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[20] I do not think it is unfair to compare his works for children with his more weighty pieces, especially in the context of my subsequent point (that single works also contain such variety). The style of Britten's works for amateurs was not as a result of him 'dumbing-down', but part of his natural compositional range.

[21] For further discussion, see Evans, Peter *The Music of Benjamin Britten,* p. 526 (J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd: London, 1989).

Also important to me was the music of Oliver Knussen, Judith Weir and Thomas Adès. Again their attraction for me derived from their broader harmonic styles. Judith Weir's music admits elements of both modality (especially through her oft-noted interest in folk song) and tonality, but even so, she 'is often surprised that she should be labelled so readily a tonal composer when many of her structures don't conform in a tonally functional way.'[22] An example of her range might be found, for example, in *I Broke off a Golden Branch*, where the serenity of the opening 'is countered by the impassioned opening and progressively darker (Ligetian) textures of the second movement.'[23] Similarly, Adès, in the movement *O Albion* from *Arcadiana*, writes a homage to Elgar in E♭ that fits into the much richer tonal style that surrounds it. His *America*, for mezzo soprano and large orchestra and optional chorus, is also full of vivid tonal contrasts, the opening bars, for example, a evoking a Coplandesque sound world that contrasts with the dissonant texture beginning at the end of bar 4.

I would say that the music of Oliver Knussen contains fewer of the types of juxtapositions that I have identified above.[24] What fascinated me about his music was that works such as *Flourish with Fireworks* or the *Whitman Settings* seemed to have a non-tonal pitch-centeredness that rendered an apparently 'difficult' musical surface comprehensible. This would be true, for example, in the strong tonicization of the pitch A in *When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer* from the *Whitman Settings.* Towards the final stages of my PhD I learnt that this pitch-centeredness has much to do with

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[22] Weir, Judith and Wright, David 'Weir to Now?' *The Musical Times*, vol. 134, no. 1806 (Aug 1993), p. 434.

[23] ibid, p. 433.

[24] An obvious exception to this might be his *Two Organa* though, given that the first movement grew out of a commission for a white note musical box, this feels very much like an exception.

Knussen's use of rotational serialism. This led to me making limited use of the system in *The Ruffian on the Stair*, a fact I will deal with in greater depth in the final chapter of this commentary, which will analyse that work in detail.

Tonicization through the emphasizing of key pitches would become an important method of creating structural coherence in this portfolio. I have already mentioned the emergent pitches of Ligeti that served as a great inspiration during my master's degree. My idea of emergent pitches, however, was that they should provide a greater sense of pitch logic to a piece of music. This could stabilize and 'ground' a piece of music, and also provide the possibility of wider quasi-tonal argument. In this respect several other composers were to provide useful models.

Despite the fact that a year of study with Ligeti led to a three-year compositional silence from South Korean composer Unsuk Chin, she was clearly influenced by him. *Acrostic Wordplay,* for example, came after this three-year period and takes texts from Michael Ende's *Endless Story* and, a favourite of Ligeti too, Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland.* It uses the texts very freely and with great humour, evoking not necessarily the sound world but the playfulness of Ligeti's *Aventures.* Of more interest to me, however, was the fact that each movement 'is constructed around a controlling pitch centre'.[25] Whilst Ligeti was not averse to repeating pitches, sometimes, as in *Continuum,* for harpsichord, this could give the impression of obsession. In Chin's music, however, the controlling pitch grounds the texture, without the listener necessarily being aware of its presence or function. Other examples of this include, Double Concerto (2002),

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[25] Unsuk, Chin, programme note to *Acrostic Wordplay*. Boosey and Hawkes Online. Accessed 8 May, 2012 (www.boosey.com/pages/cr/catalogue/cat_detail.asp?musicid=7177).

which feels like an enormous elaboration of a tonic that never entirely disappears, or *Lament of a Bald Singer* from *Gougalon* (2009), which is built entirely over the pitch G.

Though the example of Chin was useful, in a sense one controlling pitch throughout seemed to me to be too obvious a solution, since it provided little potential for longer pitch-based arguments. A more subtle type of pitch argument would be that found in the first movement of *Jeux Venitiens* by Witold Lutosławski. Here, the pitch E is tonicized in 'B' and 'D' sections by only being allowed to appear very obviously in solo instruments. The pitch centre becomes the goal pitch at the end of the movement, where the texture moves decisively towards it (even though it finally occurs together with D#) in a manner that recalls Ligeti, though the result is much more a feeling of an argument that has been concluded. The example of this work was important to me especially in *Maghreb,* where there is a pitch based argument based around F (though, as I will show in Chapter Two, this is complicated by other matters) and, in a different sense, in *Djemma el Fna,* whose controlled aleatoricism owes something to this work.

The use of a ground pitch, more commonly referred to as a 'pivot note' is also common practice in the music of Henri Dutilleux. Dutilleux has remarked that he is 'not at heart an atonal composer',[26] and sometimes it is possible to suspect that his choice of pivot notes owe something to tonal reasoning, even if they cannot be heard to function in this way. This is true, for example, in his Second Symphony. In the first movement the pivot begins on pitch B, moving to E at 38-80 and back to B at 91-103. There then follows a central section without a pivot, before the pitch B is reasserted at bar 243 to the end. Caroline Potter notes: 'It is tempting to describe these three

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[26] Dutilleux, Henri and Nichols, Roger 'Progressive Growth. Henri Dutilleux in Conversation with Roger Nichols' *The Musical Times.* vol. 135, no. 1812, Feb 1994, p. 89.

sections as an exposition, development and recapitulation….There are also vestiges of traditional sonata form in the presence of two focal notes in the "exposition"".[27] Whilst others have argued this movement might be seen in the context of other forms[28] and Potter herself hesitates to call the pivot E a 'subdominant', I think it is fair to argue that Dutilleux's choice of pitches here shows vestiges of tonal reasoning and the statement of a 'tonic' pivot, departure from it and subsequent restatement helps to give the movement a sense of coherence.

This kind of long-term tonal coherence is also audible in the music of Benjamin Britten. *Our Hunting Fathers,* for example, operates on a tonal ground plan centred mainly on D (the Prologue, on C, is the exception to this) whilst *Les Illuminations* takes this to a higher level of sophistication, setting up a tritonal conflict in the opening movement that becomes a driving force in the tonal plan of the rest of the work. What especially fascinates me about a work like *Our Hunting Fathers,* however, is that surface features, in this case the 'motto' theme containing the notes A, F♯, D E and F, could be used to drive the tonal structure of an entire movement. This occurs in *Dance of Death,* for example, where the motto is transposed to F, D♭, B♭, C and D. The first four notes of the cell are then used as interjections throughout the movement, the final note D, the 'tonic' of the whole work, being reserved for the end of the movement (rehearsal mark 58). This kind of linking of surface and background features reached its most perfect expression in Britten's *The Turn of the Screw,* a work that also manages to reconcile elements of both tonality and serialism. That work was a significant point

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[27] Potter, Caroline *Henri Dutilleux, his life and works,* p.107 (Ashgate Publishing House: Vermont 1997).
[28] Beltran, Mauricio and Morris, Christian 'Between the Pages. *Composition Procedures in Dutilleux's Second Symphony',* paper presented to the Sacher Perspectives Conference at Cardiff University, March 17, 2012.

of influence for me when writing my chamber opera *The Ruffian on the Stair.* As such, I will discuss it in more detail in the final chapter of this commentary.

My reason for stressing the importance of these tonal models here is that, during the course of this PhD, I came to use similar kinds of pitch logic as a means of giving coherence to each piece. Surface motivic features, I realized, could be linked to middle and background features. In creating quasi-tonal areas I could tonicize notes by repetition, by otherwise drawing attention to them in the texture or even by tonal references. In this manner, because there was an underlying pitch structure, parts would have direction, since there was always purpose and logic in the voice-leading. Most importantly of all, however, was the fact that, within and between these quasi-tonal areas, I came to realize I could introduce much more variety. The manner in which I did this, the technical aspects I admitted within this structure and the manner in which I attempted to achieve this without stylistic dislocation are the subjects of the next chapter.

Chapter Two

Compositional Style

Pitch Structures

As in the works described in the previous chapter, the music presented in this portfolio has strong mid-ground pitch logic. Of all these pieces, *Hommage* is one of the most indebted to Ligeti, though it also shows a more tonally-inspired approach. It was conceived as being based around scale degrees $\hat{1}$, $\hat{4}$, $\hat{5}$ and $\hat{1}$ in the key of A. As in the last chapter, where I referred to the use of pivot notes in Dutilleux, this could be heard as implying a chordal relationship of I, IV, V, I, though in reality these chords do not appear in the musical texture. The other parts are, however, directed roughly towards these pitch area in terms of their voice-leading (see ex. 1). The double bass at the opening and at bar 8 a tone lower, before reaching the pitch E at the third beat of 2. In the harpsichord the semiquaver voice-leading at 7 is towards D, and at bar 12 towards E. The level of chromatic freedom in harpsichord and double bass, not to mention the use of clusters in the harpsichord has, however, an obfuscatory effect upon this 'progression'. As such, and in terms of pitch logic, it is perhaps better understood in terms of the clearing clusters described at the end of the first movement of Lutosławski's *Jeux Venitiens*. The oboe line provides enough of a hint of the pitch A for the movement towards it at the end to make aural sense.

Ex. 1 Planned pitch centres of *Hommage*

The same might be said of *Mwg*, where a planned pitch structure is rendered ambiguous by the level of surface chromatic saturation. The piece was conceived as the fight and final failure of the pitch centres A/E to assert themselves against the pitch B♭. The diminished triad in bar 12 and the subsequent voice-leading before bar 15 suggests a movement towards A. This emerges briefly at bar 15 before reverting back to a diminished chord at bar 19 that suggests the E–B♭ pitches briefly heard in the flute and trumpet in bar 5. This might easily resolve onto A, but instead B♭ exerts itself from between bars 22 and 39. Bar 40 provides a plaintive hint of A in an unstable dominant 7th form before being cast aside. At bar 67, which might be labelled 'development', the tritone/diminished seventh idea from the opening is now heard a semitone lower (E♭ briefly in the flute over a long held A in the piano and cello), still suggesting the emergence of A as the more important pitch. The strong tonicization of A in the cello and piano left hand at bar 111 seems to confirm this. The coda, which grows out of the ambiguous cluster of notes at bar 139, suggests a movement towards a 'tonic' target note. The final piece of voice-leading at bar 150 could imply a movement to either A or B♭. It is appropriate, however, that the matter is ultimately left hanging with a loud cluster, since in reality neither pitch is sufficiently prominent to qualify as a tonic.

Djemaa el Fna is based upon a more concrete pitch scheme. Here the harmonic starting point of the piece, which eventually became its final destination, was a piece of pentatonic Gnawa music I heard whilst staying at a riad in Marrakech, Morocco. I wanted to finish the piece with a recollection of this music and so it seemed also to make sense to infuse the underlying pitch structure with something similar. The

pentatonic scale used was of the simplest type, based upon the circle of fifths, so the underlying pitch scheme makes extensive use of rising fourths (see ex. 2).[1]
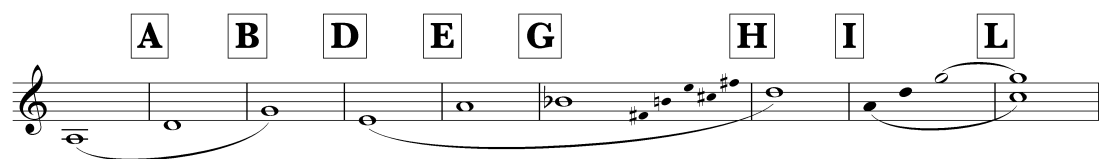
Ex. 2 *Djemaa el Fna* **background harmonic scheme (shown in B♭)**

The pitches shown are tonicized by being emphasized within the texture, though this process is, again, quite ambiguous. The opening gesture in the group 1 trumpets end on the pitch A, though it is hemmed-in with an A♯ and A♭. This acts as a kind of upbeat into the piece. At a bar before A and A itself, the pitch D is favoured, both in terms of it being placed prominently within the group 2, 3 and 4 statements, but also by being the only pitch that is allowed to appear in all three. At rehearsal marks B to C, the pitch G is also allowed to appear throughout all four groups (though it is not the only pitch to do so) and is again given particular prominence: solo trumpet 1 ends on this pitch at the second bar of B, half of group 1 start on it, solo trumpet 10 plays a long G before rehearsal mark C and it is the highest note in solo trumpet 28.

A similar process occurs at the subsequent rehearsal marks, even though as the texture builds, so too does the ambiguity. Almost to counter this, before the final build at H, the fundamental pitch structure is allowed briefly to come to the surface in trumpets 10, 11 and 12 in the third bar of G, further preparing the way for the unambiguous statement of fourths in group 2 two bars before J. The arrival of the note G in this group at J heralds the G pentatonic (notes G, A, B, D and E) in group 3 at K and,

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[1] Note that this scheme, and my subsequent discussion of it, refers to the final statement of the material, where all 36 trumpets play together (see the performing notes of *Djemaa el Fna* for more details). My discussion will use the transposed pitches in B♭.

with the statement of the Gnawa melody, in group 2 at L. G might be the final 'key', but the group 1 entry at the second bar of L which, as well as encompassing the notes of G pentatonic, also contain those of C major. Similarly, group 4, starting at the third bar of L, outlines a four-note collection of E♭, F, G and B♭. This turns out to be another pentatonic collection missing the note C, which only appears complete in the last two bars, with the final 'tonic' appearing in trumpet 28 in the final bar.

In *Maghreb,* the large-scale pitch structure (ex. 3) also relates to a surface motivic feature, except that in this case it is a note row (ex. 4). At the opening, the note F is

Ex. 3 Underlying pitch structure of *Maghreb*

Ex. 4 *Maghreb* note row (transposition P7)

heavily tonicized by use of repetition. The pitch centre G at 32 is more ambiguous, especially because of the E♭–G♭ motive in L (Left) alto saxophone. The pitch centre A, however, emerges in an almost unambiguous A minor chord at bar 40, which implies (though at some level of remove) a V–I progression to the pitch centre D at bar 52. The pitch centres at bars 52, 61, 70 and 78, which are derived from the note row, are intentionally made clear by the prominent appearance of the pitch in the electric guitar. After bar 78 the musical surface becomes ambiguous with no pitch favoured until the emergence of C at bar 100. As at 40–51, this, though again at a level of remove, prepares the way for the return of the 'tonic' pitch of F at bar 120.

Tonal allusions are inevitably strong in the four organ works in this portfolio because of the appearance of tonal melodies. This is most obvious in *Herr, ich habe missgehandelt, Warum sollt ich mich denn grämen* and *Prelude on Hyfrydol*, where the choral melodies appear unaltered. I will discuss their integration in the next section, where I shall look in more detail at surface harmonic procedures. *Chorale from Lyra Davidica*,[2] is something

Ex. 5 *Easter Hymn*, the tune that is the basis of *Chorale from Lyra Davidica*

of a special case, since the original melody is largely disguised. The work uses the tune *Easter Hymn* (ex. 5). Despite a great deal of surface ambiguity, the background pitch structure begins by following the original melody before departing and then returning. Hence the opening melody begins on C and is harmonized by a chord drawn from the C scale. Bar 10 also makes an allusion to bar 5 of the original melody, being centred on the pitch of F. Subsequent pitch centres depart from the original, though a tonally based circle of fifths process gradually draws us back to the original pitch area. Bars 27–30 hint at A (or possibly E, which is also valid in this context, being the dominant of A), with the pitch area asserting itself more strongly at bar 31. Bar 37 hints at D (the

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[2] When discussing this piece, bar numbers always refer to the organ version of the work.

highest note in the pedal), which in turn draws us back to the pitch area of G at bar 44. This is the most important moment of the piece, since it refers directly to bar 13 of *Easter Hymn* and is the only place where the melody is allowed to appear unaltered. Again the note G is allowed to act as a 'dominant', preparing the way for the 'tonic' pitch of C at the top and bottom of the texture in the final bar.

The pitch structure underlying *Lost Places* is entirely derived from the intentionally ambiguous opening C to C♯ gesture in the piano. To the listener this may imply either pitch area as being a tonic, though the subsequent entries by violin and viola do nothing to confirm this. A stronger clue is given in bars 4–5, where the collection of notes (D, E, F♯ and G♯) give a hint of V^7 in A. Hence, the C–C♯ opening is actually implying a major-minor movement in this key. The tonal ambiguities of the opening are played upon in the subsequent tonicization of pitches. Hence *Menevia* begins with a motive in the piano that might suggest any of the three tonal areas implied at the opening: the left hand rocks between the pitches C, E and A (suggesting either A minor or C major), whilst the black notes in the right hand obfuscate with flats more suggestive of D♭. After a long build-up the pitch A only fully asserts itself at bar 56. This leads to a slow central section at bar 78 that explores the C/C♯/A idea. Examples of this can be found in the opening gesture in the violin and viola at bar 78, the movement towards A at bar 90, the mirrored intervals in violin and cello at bar 92, the appearance of C major/minor at bars 99–100 and the arrival of the pitch D♭ in the piano at bar 106. Another long build-up eventually leads to a kind of recapitulation at bar 142, which again begins with all three keys being implied. Development is interspersed with distant reminders of the major/minor motive at bars 178 and 187. At bar 210 the fairly unambiguous arrival of A major/minor only serves

as a link (i.e. V in D) to the arrival of D major/minor at bars 217 to 220, itself a link to the emergence of G, the pitch centre of the next movement.

'because of the sun…' has a ternary fast-slow-fast structure (see more detailed discussion under 'Form and Tradition'). The outer sections revolve largely around the pitch centre of G, thought not without surface references to the A/C/C♯ motive of the opening of the piece. The most critical of these occur at bars 274 and at 572, which are based upon the three keys of G, B♭ and B major played together, a straightforward transposition of this note cell. The slow central section begins with a more overt reference to the A/C/C♯ idea. Hence at bar 301 the viola implies the key of D♭, followed by the violin suggesting C at 302, the final note of the cello implying A at 303. There is also a move to the dominant of A at 322, with hints in the piano of A major/minor at bar 333 followed by a more definite statement at 362. The movement ends with a short recapitulation of the opening of the central section, its references to the opening home keys of C/C♯/A providing a link to the final movement. *The Old Rectory* is the final clinching of the tonal argument that has underpinned the rest of the work. The opening bar is built around chords based upon A minor, C minor and D♭ major and the subsequent string solos, at bar 13 (cello), 19 (viola) and 79 (violin), play upon these pitch areas and on the major/minor theme. At bar 90, which precedes a final tutti, the harmony is allowed to flower, Mahler-like, briefly to C major/minor before reaching, at bar 108, the definitive statement of A major, before sinking to a final close in A minor.

Surface Pitch and Harmony

My preference for music that incorporates a wide harmonic range is reflected in the type of elements that I incorporate into my musical surfaces. My aim is smoothly to integrate as much variety as possible, allowing passages of high chromatic saturation and dissonance at one extreme to total consonance and even tonal chord progressions at the other.

a) Voice-leading

The fundamental structures outlined above provide the framework for my music. This acts as my guarantee that the music will have a strong overall structure. Good voice-leading ensures that pitch areas are joined-up and that individual lines have direction and purpose. This is especially helpful when writing contrapuntal lines. The opening of *Herr, ich habe missgehandelt,* for example, is made up of two parts in a kind of free imitation. The pitch starts centred round A, A minor being the key of the chorale melody. The right hand is shaped by a movement from a' to a" during the first 13 bars. This happens by gradual upward movement that also emphasizes this key area; hence the unfolding of an A minor triad over bars 2, 4 and 7. This is followed by a continued reaching upwards towards the target pitch of a": E♭ at bar 8, F then F♯ at 9,[3] to G at bar 11, the final note of bar 13 being a G♯. This, in turn, prepares the way for the appearance of the chorale melody in the pedals and the pitch A in the right hand. Notice how, from bar 9, the left hand continues the same process but in mirror image, with a long E at bar 9, followed by a D in bar 10, a C♯ in 11, a B in 12, and a final B♭ in bar 13.

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[3] Notice how, even though there is an 'overshoot' in bar 9, since it takes in the pitch b" too, that the actual note a" is studiously avoided.

Connectedness doesn't necessarily mean conjunct movement. Parts may leap as, for example, when part of a chord sequence that makes reference to a tonal progression. Hence the second piano chord at bar 273 in '*because of the sun…*' is acting as a bitonal dominant. The strongly tonal pitch movement of F♯ to B between the left hand and the cello pizzicatos at 274, coupled with B♭ in the right hand, give a strong impression of V–I in B, but the F♯ and the D in the piano at bar 273 also give the impression of V–I in G.

Instances of this kind of joined-up writing abound in my music. Some examples include:

- similar lead-in to the chorale melody (as compared to *Herr, ich habe missgehandelt)* at bar 14 in *Warum sollt ich mich denn grämen.*

- near or altered V–I progressions at bars 3, 6, 11 and, arguably, 27 of *Prelude on Hyfrydol.*

- voice-leading towards bars 40, 47, 94 etc. in *Mwg.*

- the gradual build towards bar 37 in *Menevia* from *Lost Places*, or the gradual upward movement towards the pitch G at the end of the same movement.

- joined-up movement with an octave or more displacement. At bar 151 of '*because of the sun…',* for example, the lines reach towards an A, which is then heard at 154 in the bottom register of the cello.

- bars 5–12 of *The Old Rectory,* which hone-in on the pitch A, or at bars 70–78, where individual lines close in on G.

- repeatedly in *Maghreb* individual lines are directed towards the next pitch area: towards the pitch E at bar 61, to B at bar 70, to F at bar 78 and, perhaps most obviously, to C at bars 98–100.

b) Chord clusters and chromatic density

To be able to move between extreme dissonance and consonance one must be able to control the level of harmonic density within the texture at any time. One of the ways I achieve this smoothly is through the use of graduated chord clusters. *Chorale from Lyra*

Ex. 6. Clusters in *Chorale from Lyra Davidica*

Davidica, provides one example of this. At bars 20–25 not only does the overall chromatic density increase, but the arrangement of notes in the left hand becomes more dissonant (see boxed areas in ex. 6). This build in tension is released by the sudden juxtaposition of a much less dissonant texture at bar 27. At bars 38–43, however, the process is reversed, so that the very dissonant collection with which it starts moves smoothly to the relative consonance of the pentatonic collection at bar 44, already noted as the most important moment of the work.

Examples of chord clusters being used in this way can be found in other of my pieces here presented, for example in *Mwg*, which is essentially a study of chords becoming clusters and vice versa; in *'because of the sun…'* between bars 515–551; and in *Prelude on Hyfrydol* bars 7–11, 19–24 and 43–47 (a process that is then reversed in the subsequent two bars). The importance of graduated harmonic density may be also found, however, in textures where clusters themselves are not present. I have already described, for example, the build to the first entry of the chorale melody in *Herr, ich habe missgehandelt.* It is no coincidence that on that entry the texture, which up to this point has been fairly freely chromatic, for two beats is entirely made up of notes of the A minor scale, the same being true of the first two beats of bar 18. On the second entry too, at bar 37,[4] the texture clears only to include notes that form part of the A minor scale, though over the subsequent three bars the chromatic saturation and dissonance between left and right hands is gradually increased. On a larger scale, *Djemaa el Fna* was originally conceived as a progression from dense microtonal harmony to a pentatonic scale. It became obvious that this was not practical, so the piece eventually was reworked to become a smooth transition from fully chromatic to

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[4] Though this is the second bar of the chorale entry, the first has been treated almost as an upbeat into this.

pentatonic harmony. Even given that it became clear during composition that this smooth approach was too simplistic, elements of transition remain.

c) **Other harmonic factors (twelve-note collections, serialism, modes, tonality)**

Another way of controlling surface chromatic density is by mixing many systems of composition without favouring any one. Whilst it would be possible to juxtapose abruptly, say, a serial melody with a tonally harmonized melody, I prefer to mix systems without stylistic dislocation; I prefer smooth integration of material.

The thematic material of several of these works is a twelve-note melody, though it is rare that it is transformed with any consistency (i.e. using serial techniques) during the rest of the piece. I experimented with several serial ideas for *Lost Places*, though all were eventually rejected. Having said that, the opening is still based upon a half-stated, half-implied twelve-note collection that relates to the A/C/C♯ motivic relationships already described. If one takes the C, C♯, D, E♭ and F opening notes (bars 1–3) and then inverts it to produce C, B, B♭, A and G, the remaining notes are E, F♯ and G♯, precisely the notes played upon in bars 4–5, which suggest the key of E, dominant of the implied A major/minor in the piano's opening gesture. This obscure serial reasoning, effectively inaudible in the texture, does not, however, play any further role within the piece.

The thematic materials of *Mwg* (bars 6–11) and *Chorale from Lyra Davidica* (bar 1), are also twelve-note collections that were originally intended to be manipulated using serial techniques. Until my extensive use of rotational serialism, which will be a subject

in my next chapter, *Maghreb* was the only piece to make greater use of note rows (see ex. 4), though even here their serial manipulation is limited to transpositions of the prime row. The note row appears melodically in the guitar at bar 9 (P0) and at 39 (loosely based on P2). As already noted, P7 forms part of the background pitch structure from bar 52 and the three notes in electric guitar at bars 79–82 are essentially a continuation of the note row on the surface.

Other patterns are, however, just as important within the piece. For example, *Maghreb* makes extensive use of the octatonic scale, including at bars 70–73 in R (Right) alto saxophone, R trumpet 1 and 2 and in R horn; and at bar 78 in the L (Left) group of instruments. The mixture of transpositions of this scale guarantees twelve-note saturation. There is also an artificial scale (see ex. 7, hereafter referred to as 'AS'), for example at bar 39 in F (Front) clarinet 1, F alto saxophone, F clarinet 2, F trumpet 1

Artificial Scale, Transposition 0 (AS0)

Chains of Thirds, Transposition 0 (T0)

Ex. 7 Artificial scale and chain of thirds from *Maghreb*

Mode 3.0

Mode 3.1

Mode 3.2

Mode 3.3

Ex. 8 Mode 3 in *because of the sun…*

and F horn (AS0); or at bars 71–77 in F flute 1, F oboe, F flute 2 and F clarinet (AS11). There is also a motive based upon major and minor thirds (see ex. 7, henceforth labelled 'T'). This four-note cell appears both harmonically – for example: bar 51, beats 3 and 4 in L flute 2, L alto saxophone, L clarinet 1 and L trumpet 1 are based around T9 (notes C♯, E, E♭ and G) – and melodically – bars 48–49 in L trumpet 1 and L horn are made up of the notes of T10 (notes D, F, E and G♯). As mentioned, there are also moments of much lower chromatic density and consonant chords (e.g. bars 137–9). A similar kind of mix can be found in the other pieces presented here. *'because of the sun…'* from *Lost places,* for instance, contains passages based on mode 3 of Messiaen's modes of limited transposition (ex. 8). See, for example, the use of mode 3.0 from bar 8 and at bar 119 or 3.1 at bar 91. But where the notes I want don't seem to be suggested by the scales I am using, I am happy to go on instinct, as at bar 176, which begins using 3.2 but quickly becomes more freely chromatic. Similarly, and within quite a small space of time, there will be a high degree of scalic flux. A good example of this can be found in *Menevia,* in the piano from bar 36: at bars 36–40 the part is highly chromatic, at 41 it contains hints of F minor, at 42 E and E♭ major, at 43 it is more chromatic again, at 44 there are hints of C major that grow in ambiguity until it becomes chromatic again at 47. The point of showing this is that scales are adapted according to the circumstances; I find it difficult to stay with one pattern for any length of time since it provokes, to my ears, a horrible sameness.
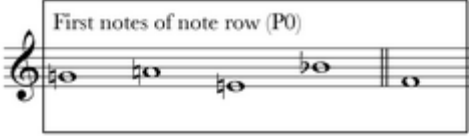
I have already shown how tonality can inform underlying structures within the pieces here presented, but it also can be allowed to appear on the surface. Given my tendency to use a wide range of scale patterns, incorporating major and minor scales presents me with few difficulties, though I usually preserve them for important

moments, such as the notes derived from the A minor scale on the entry of the chorale tune in *Herr, ich habe missgehandelt* (see discussion above). Tonal chord progressions I approach with more caution, but they are still permitted. I still prefer them to sound unforced, however. Sometimes this is achieved by making the tonal reference fleeting. Bars 76–77 in *Herr, ich habe missgehandelt*, for instance, suggest a V^7–I progression in F major. We are actually, however, moving to C at bar 81, so this is actually a play on the classic tonal trick of making a passing modulation to the subdominant (i.e. F in C major) as a means of confirming the eventual arrival of the tonic. In *The Old Rectory*, the tonal passage from bar 92, with its play on C major/minor and A minor, is a natural conclusion, as already explained, to the tonal argument that has underpinned the whole work. In *Prelude on Hyfrydol*, the eventual emergence of the tonal harmonization at bar 105 is prepared by the use of the tonal scales of D major at bars 7, 38 and 57 (inflected with a lydian G♯) and A major/minor at bar 15. Note that at first the tonal progressions are adulterated with heavy dissonance, retaining a link with much of the earlier harmonic flavour. The dissonance builds drastically at bars 115–116. It is as if the texture has nowhere else to go except for the straightforward tonal harmonization of the final part of the hymn tune that appears at bar 117.

Organic Unity

Ex. 9 illustrates how the various components that make up the surface of *Maghreb* are interlinked. The first notes of the note row generate the main musical material (bar 9), leaving the pitch F, which becomes the work's underlying pitch centre. The major and minor thirds also derive from the note row, again ignoring those notes associated with the pitch centre F. The use of the octatonic may be viewed as a natural extension of the note row, or deriving from the twin thirds idea. The semitonal conflict implicit
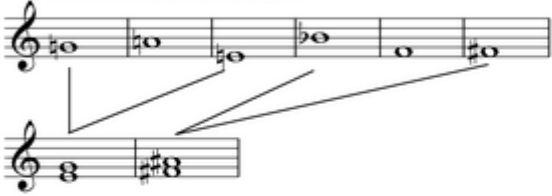
Ex. 9 Derivation of material in *Maghreb*

between the thirds (the E/G and F♯/A♯) and the pitch F is also made explicit on the surface by the frequent stabbing major 7th motive (bar 10, for example). It also helps to generate the artificial scale: the E/F conflict is reflected in the placing of two octatonic scales one after another, from the middle of which is drawn the resulting artificial scale. These links are similar to those already described in *Djemaa el Fna* (the

rising fifths on the surface and background structure) and in *Lost Places* (the A major/minor theme). In a style where I allow myself the luxury of using a wide range of stylistic features (tonality, serialism, Messiaen's modes of limited transposition, other modes, free chromaticism), it is important for me, where appropriate, to impose some kind of binding order on these elements.

Even ignoring harmonic factors, the surfaces of my works tend to be governed by a high degree of organic unity. This is coupled with a fairly old-fashioned view of thematic development. *Warum sollt ich mich denn grämen* is an unusual piece for me, since it was based upon the concept that, except for a few key moments, the right hand and pedal parts should *not* be integrated with the chorale melody, which is like an impostor in their conversation. As free as the non-chorale material may appear at first sight, it is, however, based upon the repetition and development of a few key motives (see ex. 10). The most important of these are M1 and M2. M4, which I class as an isolated

Ex. 10 Thematic material in *Warum sollt ich mich denn grämen*

single-note gesture, might almost be said to derive from the isolation of the initial statements of M1. M3 I use to describe less a motive than a falling gesture. This, in turn, could be heard as a reversal of M2.

It would be possible to perform an entire analysis of the surface of the music with reference to these ideas. Their use in the opening, where the material is introduced, can be taken for granted, so I will focus on another area, from bar 13, just before the appearance of the chorale melody, to bar 37, which marks the tonal conclusion of the first entry. It begins with M4, the isolated single-note gesture, which at bars 13–15 is stretched and extended until the re-entry of M1 at 17. This is now given an answering phrase that links it to a statement of M3 in the right hand and a hint of M2 in the pedal (bar 17 last 1½ beats). Note that the statement of M3, which lasts until bar 20, is much more intensified than in its initial appearance, suggesting the rejection of the chorale melody. This links to another little statement of M4, the final gesture of bar 20. This seems to open outwards in the right hand at bar 21, with M1 in the pedal. There then follows a much-expanded statement of M2 at bars 23–4, and of M4 followed by M2 at bar 26. The high D♯ at 27 marks a reference to M4. M2 appears in the right hand at bar 28, with the pedals playing M1 in the final beat of the bar. In bars 29 and 30 M1 gradually breaks up in the pedals, with freer writing in the right hand. This then leads to the 'Furiously' section at bars 31–36, which is an elongated statement of M3 that leads to M4 at bar 37.

Similar surface unity and subsequent development of a few motives can be found in all my works. Most of the material of *Mwg*, for example, is derived from the opening gesture in the piano, the theme in flute and trumpet at bar 5 and the cello pizzicatos at

bar 12. *Chorale from Lyra Davidica* is based upon the material heard in the opening two bars: the right hand melody in bar 1, the chords in the left hand in the same bar and the theme split between right hand and pedals in bar 2. *Prelude on Hyfrydol* consists of a framing idea, first heard at bars 1–3; a theme in the manuals in bars 7–8 that derives from the hymn tune; the material in the manuals at bars 28 and 29; and the gesture first heard at bar 41 (which actually emerges from the earlier idea at bar 7). *Herr, ich habe missgehandelt* takes a slightly different approach to creating unity. The surface material derives, although sometimes quite subtly, from the chorale tune (see ex. 11) on which the piece is based. The material does not appear in the manuals all at once.

Ex. 11 Chorale tune *Herr, ich habe missgehandelt*

Instead, each entry of the chorale melody is prefaced with a section exploring its shape. Hence, the entries at bars 1–13 are based upon the fall-rise-fall shape of bars 1–4 of the chorale melody, bars 22–35 of the fall and rise shape of bars 4–5 and bars 47–75 on bars 6–8. On each occasion the shape of the material is constantly developed and spun out so that its origin and function (i.e. preparing the arrival of the chorale melody) is not too obvious.

Form and Tradition

The forms of the pieces presented here may derive from aspects of the composing brief or include traditional elements, but everywhere the preference is always for

clarity. *Lost Places,* for example, is in three movements with a prelude, a shape that owes much to classical/romantic forms. This dialogue with old forms is nothing new, and places my music in a context that can be traced from works such as Webern's op. 24 *Konzert für neun Instrumente,* Schoenberg's *Variationen für Orchester* and Bartók's concertos and string quartets through to works such as Maxwell Davies' Symphony No. 1, Weir's Piano Concerto and Adès' Piano Quintet. *Menevia* is a kind of triple statement and development of thematic material: from the opening to bar 77, from bars 78–141, and from bar 142 to the end. *'because of the sun…'* has a simple ternary shape (bars 1–300, bars 301–418 and 419 to the end). The final section is in some respects a repeat of the first (though in fact much of the material is re-written or intensified), and this was a conscious reference to the scherzo-trio-scherzo (repeated) shape of romantic scherzos. And just as a scherzo might be extended to ABABA rondo shape, I even hint at this at 630 with a apparent repeat of the slow 'trio' section, which is then hurriedly cast aside (in the manner of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, third movement). The final movement is a series of repetitions of the opening chordal pattern in the piano (bars 1–6) interspersed or elided with instrumental solos and a final closing tutti. There is also a fast central section (bars 37–77) in which all instruments play.

The chorale preludes are, perhaps, a special case, since the presence of the chorale tune automatically gives the piece a sense of shape. There is also, however, a kind of conscious engagement with tradition in both *Herr, ich habe missgehandelt* and in *Prelude on Hyfrydol,* where the entire opening section is repeated as in Bach's *Wachet auf* or *Wer nur den lieben Gott läβt walten* from his *Schübler Chorales.* This suggests a binary-type structure that, in turn, might suggest sonata forms. This is perhaps most marked in *Prelude on*

Hyfrydol, where the constant building of pitch and the elaboration of musical material from bar 75 have something of an air of 'development' about them. The return of the framing idea at bar 128, though this is brought rapidly to a conclusion, has an air of 'recapitulation'.

Much of the time the musical material of *Mwg* is sharply juxtaposed. This owes something to the example of Stravinsky's *Symphonies of Winds,* though my experience of it was more absorbed through Tippett's Piano Sonata No.2 or in the later music of William Mathias. But sonata form seems ever to lurk in the background, even if the piece can't be made to fit exactly. The relaxation of tension from bar 50 has something of an air of 'transition', though a second subject never properly arrives. Instead we are taken straight to 'development' at bar 67. The reappearance of the bongo solo at 133 suggests recapitulation, and the listener might suspect that the subsequent build is leading to this. Instead, the piece is rounded-off with a sardonic note-cluster.

A Note on the Blues

Whilst training as a secondary school teacher I learned a little about the blues, though this amounted to not much more than an introduction to the simplest twelve-bar blues chord pattern and the blues scale. The aim was to have enough information to enable pupils to write and improvise basic melodies over a twelve-bar blues. The key of choice for this tended to be A, since this allowed us to keep our teaching simple enough to include pupils of all abilities. I think it is fair to say that the repeated experience of improvising over the twelve-bar blues pattern in this key as a

demonstration to pupils has left a mark in my music. This is perhaps most obvious in *The Ruffian on the Stair,* where this influence is stylistically quite obvious (see next chapter). Even where it is not, it continues to exercise an influence in two other ways. My choice of keys is usually made on practical grounds – natural playing ranges of instruments, for example. But even now if I sit at a piano I find my fingers drawn towards the key of A and the twelve-bar blues, so it is perhaps inevitable that this has found its way into the 'key' choice of some of the pieces in this folio: *Lost Places, Hommage, Herr, ich habe missgehandelt,*[5] and *The Ruffian on the Stair.* My tendency to inflect the third degree of the scale so that it can either be major or minor; as in *Lost Places* or in *Maghreb* (with the major, minor third note cell) or, again, in *The Ruffian on the Stair* (see next chapter); also partially derives from my experience of using the blues scale,[6] where the second degree (effectively the third degree in the corresponding major/minor scale) may be similarly inflected.

Djemaa el Fna and the Aleatoric

Djemaa el Fna is the only work in this portfolio to make extended use of aleatoric techniques. The reasons for this were practical as much as aesthetic. As said, I had had to abandon my first attempt (which eventually became *Maghreb)* at fulfilling the request for a piece for 36 trumpets, because it was too difficult given that the ensemble was to contain amateur players and that we were only to have an hour or so of rehearsal time. In attempting to recreate the bustling atmosphere of Marrakech's famous square, however, I wanted a texture as lively as that so carefully written out in

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[5] Though this was the pitch of the chorale material.
[6] I am taking here the most basic definition of the blues scale. In A, this would be the notes A, C, D, D#, E, G and A. Hence, if the second degree is inflected to C#, in tonal terms it creates a major/minor feel.

Maghreb. A more aleatoric approach was the obvious solution, since the improvisatory freedom allowed players much more latitude in the accuracy of their playing without detracting from the overall effect. The inspiration for this type of writing came as much from classroom work with schoolchildren[7] as with knowledge of pieces such as Lutosławski's *Jeux Vénitiens,* Berio's *Circles* or Ligeti's *Aventures.* Whilst this is the only piece in this folio to have adopted such an approach, I do consider this type of writing a facet of my style as represented by an earlier work, *Dum Juventus Floruit.*[8] As such, it is a method of writing I would happily return to if the situation suggested it.

Metre

Much of the music here presented contains a great deal of metrical ambiguity. This tends to be achieved, obviously enough, either by the use of rapidly changing time signatures or by writing rhythms that intentionally ignore bar lines. And, just as elements of tonality help to emphasize and provide contrast to tonally ambiguous sections (and vice versa), disrupted metre is given meaning by placing it in a context where there is also plenty of rhythmic stability. On a local level, for example, metrical ambiguity can help to build tension. In *Prelude on Hyfrydol* the metre becomes increasingly disrupted from around bar 89 with the inclusion of 5/8 and 15/16 time signatures. This helps to build tension, with the release arriving at bar 101 with a firm 4/4 signature that heralds the final arrival of the hymn melody. A similar process occurs in *Mwg* at bar 103, where the metrical instability created by the parts playing intentionally ambiguous notation helps build tension before a more metrical 'release'

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[7] Where, for example, a theme such as 'Spooky Story' might be set and the children would compose an improvisatory work using a graphic score.

[8] That work, written during my master's degree, was for sixteen-part choir and solo flute and may be heard at www.christianmorris.net.

at bar 111. Metrical ambiguity sometimes also helps to provide contrast. The entire movement of *The Old Rectory* from *Lost Places,* for example, is constructed on a four-square minim pattern heard in the piano, giving the movement the feeling of a dirge. This might, however, be monotonous to the ears if it were not for the much more ambiguous material that is first heard at bar 33 and more fully elaborated upon at bar 55. Rhythmic disruption may also be combined with harmonic disruption, the one helping to emphasize the other. It has also been shown, for example, how tonal ambiguity is at its most reduced in the important structural moments of *Herr, ich habe missgehandelt.* This process is reflected in the work's metre. The opening bars, for example, are intentionally ambiguous, with an opening accelerando, a sequence of changing time signatures and ambiguous surface rhythmic patterning. By bar 8, however, the metre begins to settle, especially so at bars 10 to 13, where the on-the-beat nature is emphasized by a sequence-like phrase structure. All this helps to prepare the entry of the similarly rhythmically unambiguous chorale melody at bar 14.

Metrical shifts such as these may exist for other dramatic reasons. *Warum sollt ich mich denn grämen* is based around the idea of conflict between the 'conversation' in the right hand plus pedals and the chorale melody in the left hand. This is also reflected on a rhythmic level, the 'conversation' being metrically ambiguous, the chorale tune not. In the brief moments where the conversation is reconciled to the chorale, as at bar 50 and bar 54, the metre is much less ambiguous. Metre as a means of reflecting a dramatic agenda is of importance too in *Ruffian on the Stair* (see section 'Metre and Drama' in Chapter Three). Finally, metre may have wider structural significance. One of the principles underlying *Djemaa el Fna,* for example, is that the material of

each group should be contrasted, and one of the ways this is achieved is by the use of a clear sense of metre in group 3, the other groups being more ambiguous. It might also be noted that when all groups come together at the end it is eventually the sense of metre that triumphs, the final pages much dominated by the 'on the bar' nature of the transformed musical material. A sense of this type of transition also occurs in *Maghreb* where, apart from the more clear-cut opening bars that provide a hint of what is to come, the opening is highly metrically ambiguous. This begins to dissipate by bar 32 (note, for example the emphasizing of main beats that occurs in the front group of instruments at bars 34 and 35), eventually with on-the-beat fanfares occurring at 55. Stability leads not to climax as in *Djemaa el Fna*, however, but to eventual disintegration at bar 100. This then takes us back to the metrical ambiguity of the opening (from bar 123) that, despite the contrast at bar 146 and even in the closing bars, remains the dominant force for the rest of the piece.

Instrumentation and Instrumental Colour

Choice of instrumentation tends to arise naturally from the circumstances in which the piece came into being. *Hommage* was written using the instrumentation of Dutilleux's *Les citations* and, with contributions from other Cardiff University composers, presented to the French master on his visit to the Music School in 2008. The unusual instrumentation of *Mwg* was based upon that of the group for which I was writing. The trumpet part was originally intended for myself. *Djemaa el Fna* was my response to a request to write a piece for 36 trumpets as a companion piece to Harrison Birtwistle's *Static Mobile. Maghreb,* too, arose from that request, since it was my first attempt to write the piece. When it became obvious that it was too ambitious

given limitations of rehearsal time, I decided to rewrite for a more easy to assemble group of 36 instruments, whilst also adding a part for electric guitar. *Lost Places* started life as a workshop piece with the Schubert Quartet, who were resident at the time at Cardiff University. The organ pieces[9] are the only ones that did not arise from any particular brief but, rather, arise from my own longstanding interest in the instrument. *Lyra Davidica* was orchestrated for the BBC National Orchestra of Wales' Welsh Composers' Showcase event, where it was selected for performance and later broadcast on BBC Radio.

In some ways my attitude to instrumentation in the organ works represents my overall attitude to instrumental colour. I wrote in the preface to them that I consider that their registration might be adapted to circumstances or, more necessarily, to the instrument in question. That is not to say that instrumental colour is something that doesn't interest me. There are plenty of specific moments in this folio where instrumental colour is very much part of the effect: in the final low pedal C (this was imagined for the 32' open wood stop at St. Davids Cathedral[10]) in *Chorale from Lyra Davidica*, in the use of cup and straight mutes in *Djemaa el Fna* and in many places in *Maghreb*.[11] I think it is fair to say, however, that instrumental colour is more of an incidental quality rather than something that defines the structure of my music. That I have always considered to be the job of the notes. In this sense it is not, perhaps, surprising that orchestrating *Chorale from Lyra Davidica* presented me with few qualms. In doing so I had to make decisions about orchestral colour but, since the crucial argument of the music was not tied to the original instrument, this did not present me

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[9] And *Ruffian on the Stair,* but I will deal with this in chapter three.
[10] And, as such, it was fortuitous that the piece was eventually played on that instrument.
[11] One specific example: notice how the clarinet sound dominates the texture at bars 80-81, before being taken over by the flutes in the subsequent three bars.

with any difficulties. In this sense it would be possible to orchestrate the piece in different ways without compromising its internal logic.

Chapter Three

An Analysis of *The Ruffian on the Stair*

Background

I first got to know the works of Joe Orton by reading his *Diaries,* which give a hilarious and candid account of his life, work and sexual adventures from December 1966 until his murder in August 1967. There then followed a prolonged period of getting to know his entire œuvre, including those works that lay unpublished until after his death, such as *The Boy Hairdresser* and *Head to Toe.* Orton is chiefly known as the playwright of the three farce masterpieces *Entertaining Mr. Sloane, Loot* and *What the Butler Saw.* The work that first won him recognition, however, was a radio play he wrote whilst in prison for defacing library books, *The Ruffian on the Stair.* It was later revised and converted into a stage play. When casting around for a play that might be useable as a libretto for an opera I suddenly remembered this work. Not only did its bleak nature appeal to me, but it also required relatively simple staging, a cast of just three characters and was also short enough to make a one-act opera. I approached the Orton estate in 2009 for permission to adapt and to set the stage play. After several conversations and email exchanges with Orton's sister, Leonie Barnett, this permission was granted.

The Adaptation

I am extremely grateful to Leonie Barnett for granting me permission to do this without any interference, since it allowed me to concentrate on dramatic and musical

requirements without having to worry too much about faithfulness to the source material. As it turned out, however, the process of adaptation required little tampering with Orton's words. Orton was a playwright given to a short, pithy sentences – not for nothing was he known as the 'Oscar Wilde of Welfare State gentility'[1] – that have a strong sense of rhythm. My main task, therefore, was to remove the text that was digression, or that could be represented in music, leaving the absolute bare bones of the story. What I was left with, however, was still the language of Orton.

I also divided the first scene into two, making it a one-act libretto in six scenes rather than five. This decision was marginal and was only made to reflect the passage of time between Mike leaving the house and Wilson's first appearance.[2] In fact, since the lights do not fade during the interlude (in which Joyce continues to occupy herself in the house), the effect is not dissimilar from the five-scene structure of the original.

Text setting

In terms of text setting, I was much influenced by Janáček's concept of 'speech-melody' as described by John Tyrrell in his biography of the composer. The idea, as points out Tyrrell, is not faithfully to represent speech in music but 'to provide a musical stylisation which may well be helpful to represent and characterize a spoken phrase'.[3] He goes on to sum up their importance for the composer:

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[1] Ronald Bryden, *The Observer*, 2nd October 1966. Quoted by John Lahr in his *Editor's Note* that prefaces the *Orton Diaries*, p.12 (Methuen: London, 1998).

[2] See synopsis in the score.

[3] Tyrrell, John *Janáček, Years of A Life, vol. 1(1854-1914) The Lonely Blackbird* (Faber and Faber: London, 2006), p.478

Compare Act I of *Jenufa*, written before Janáček made any speech-melody notations, with Acts 2 and 3, written after the accumulation of several hundred…and one can see an advance in the settings of Preissová's text…The aria-recitative division that can be found in his early operas including Act I of *Jenufa* falls away. The voice parts that had largely sustained the melody and melodic structure no longer do so automatically, a function now often taken over by the orchestra. This allows the voice part to become irregular and more speechlike.[4]

It is precisely this approach that I adopted in setting the text of *The Ruffian on the Stair*. The rhythm, contours and freedom of speech define the vocal lines, the orchestra more often carries melodic and thematic structures. The 'more often' aspect of this definition is important, since it still leaves the possibility of melodic content in the vocal lines, vital for variety and interest. As such, I sought out moments within the text that could be turned into solos or duets, which could naturally become more melodic without interrupting the dramatic flow. Examples of such moments include: in scene one,[5] as Mike leaves, his exchanges with Joyce suggested a duet (also a good structural ploy to round off the section); and in scene two where Wilson sings about his job ('I'm a Gents hairdresser') and later about his sense of loss ('They were unique') suggested good opportunities for solos. The difference between the two types of writing can be heard clearly in the first scene. As the scene opens, the important melodic material, which will (see my discussion under 'Other Thematic Material', below) feature later on in the opera, is almost entirely confined to the orchestral parts: the material starting at bar 1 in clarinet, bassoon and horn; the reference to the *Tristan* chord at bar 10; and the falling woodwind figure at bars 15–16, which comes to represent the van. Over this, the vocal writing is rhythmically free, not confined to repeating melodic

[4] ibid, p.484
[5] See score for complete libretto.

structures and is largely syllabic. It is speech-like. But at bars 103–111, the aforementioned 'duet', the orchestral musical material first heard in the prelude is momentarily allowed into the vocal parts. Here the rhythm is more regular, melodic lines repeat and the lines are more melismatic; there is a sense of the words being fit to the music. The point is that these moments are allowed to happen naturally, without interrupting the dramatic flow, unlike, for example, in *The Rake's Progress* by Stravinsky, where the drama is to a certain degree held-up by musical numbers.

The Ruffian theme

Much of the thematic content of the work is derived from a single twelve-note theme that I shall call the 'Ruffian theme' (ex. 11). The inspiration for doing this came from

Ex. 11 Ruffian theme

a study of thematic development in Britten's *Turn of the Screw*. It is well documented how that piece is dominated by one single theme (ex. 12).[6] In fact, the work is

Ex. 12 *Turn of the Screw* note row

effectively a two-hour set of variations upon it, affecting the music on all levels: from surface thematic material to the work's tonal plan. The material that derives from it creates a complicated web of musical relationships that help to underline points in the

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[6] See, for example, Stein, Erwin ''The Turn of the Screw' and Its Musical Idiom' *Tempo*, No. 34, Winter, 1954-1955, pp. 6-14.

drama. I was not aiming to emulate Britten's comprehensive use of such a theme, but I did want it to have a similar kind of role in *The Ruffian on the Stair.*

a) The nature of the theme

Britten's theme is built as a sequence of fourths that to some extent suggest the idea of a screw turning. It is almost certain that, in pre-planning his note-row in this way, he was inspired by similar procedures in the music of Alban Berg. Berg's example was certainly an influence on me, most especially his Violin Concerto where, for example, the final whole tones of the note row prepare the ground for the entry of the chorale melody *Es ist genug.* My row also has certain inherent qualities. First, it might be noted that the first notes of the row – G, A, D, C, C♯ – are highly suggestive of the A blues scale with the inflected third (see my discussion of this under 'A Note on the Blues' in chapter two). The theme is most associated with the character of Wilson, who is young, handsome and outwardly charming. In the opera his charm, which successfully gains him entrance to the house when Joyce is alone and also makes him attractive to Mike, is represented by blues influenced music, especially in the frequent use of guitar, kit and plucked bass whenever he is on stage. This seductive quality is therefore already inherent in the row itself.

The pitch centre of A also becomes related to Wilson, a key used to project the notion of innocence in *Turn of the Screw* and other of Britten's works. My row also contains another pitch reference. At one end there is the major second of A to G, at the other, furthest away as it were, A♭ to B♭. The upwards movement of a major second becomes an important theme within the work but so, as I will show, does the idea of conflict between pitch areas suggested by each end of the theme.

a) Technical treatment of the theme

Much of the time the Ruffian theme is developed using the technique of rotational serialism as favoured by Stravinsky in his late works, and more recently by Oliver Knussen.[7] By rotating the row and then transposing it back to its starting pitch one arrives at a series of transpositions as outlined in ex. 13. The advantage to me in using this type of serial transformation is that, by transposing the row back onto its starting pitch, it preserves a sense of pitch centeredness. For reference I have labelled each rotational transformation R1, R2 etc. In addition to this, each transformation may be transposed upwards in the normal manner. Hence, the Ruffian theme in its original form would be R0.0. In its original form transposed upwards by one semitone it would be R0.1, by two semitones R0.2 etc. Similarly R5.0 would be rotation 5 (see ex. 13), but R5.1 would be rotation 5 transposed up by a semitone, R5.2, rotation 5 transposed upwards by two semitones.

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[7] As so vividly described by Julian Anderson in his two-part article, 'Harmonic Practices in Oliver Knussen's Music since 1988.' See bibliography.

Ex. 13 Rotational transformation of Ruffian theme

In analysing the five-note row of Knussen's *Flourish with Fireworks,* Julian Anderson notes that a 'complication of this technique, and one often found in Stravinsky's late pieces, is that the sequence of five rotations may be aligned vertically to be stated simultaneously as chords.'[8] In the same way, again looking at ex. 13, chords can be read vertically on the grid. I decided to allow a maximum of five notes per chord. Reading downwards from the first note in R0 the first, of course, contains only the note G. If one takes the second note of R0 and then reads downwards, a chord containing the notes E, F, G♯, A and C is produced. These notes I label RC1 (i.e. 'Rotation Chord' 1), as shown in ex. 14. I have then moved to the next note of R0, and again read downwards. This time, however, I have left out the note F to keep the chord to five notes, a decision made on purely subjective grounds. This produces the chord RC2 (see ex. 14). To explore fully the intervallic properties of each chord, I

Ex. 14 Ruffian Chords

then inverted each four times. Ex. 15 illustrates this process for chord RC1. I then transposed the chord back to its starting pitch, to produce the chords labelled RC1.0, RC1.1, RC1.2, RC1.3 and RC1.4 (ex. 16). This process was repeated for chords RC1–RC12, giving me a large harmonic palette, all of which is related to the original Ruffian melody.

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[8] Anderson, Julian 'Harmonic Practices in Oliver Knussen's Music since 1988: Part I' *Tempo,* no. 221, Jul, 2002, p.6.
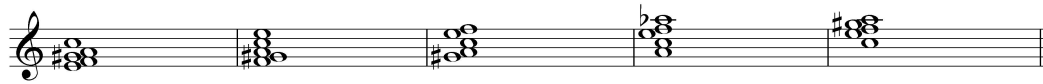
Ex. 15 Ruffian chord RC1 inverted

Ex. 16 Inverted chords transposed

The Ruffian Theme in Context

The Ruffian theme, in both its guise as a melody and as chords, is most associated with the character of Wilson. Almost all of his material derives, in one way or another, from the Ruffian theme and, as such, it is used either when he is on stage or, alternatively, when an allusion is being made to his character.

a) **The Ruffian theme as seducer**

The charming, seductive side of Wilson's character is represented by use of the Ruffian theme, as heard, for example, in the use of R0.9 in his first entry at scene two (ex. 17). Here he weaves a line that seductively snakes around, almost as if he were trying to ensnare Joyce. As if to emphasize his youth and 'cool' it is underlined by the blues influenced instrumentation of guitar, kit, piano and string bass. This type of characterization of Wilson becomes his default face in the opera; the side of himself he presents to Joyce and Wilson to make them like him. The chords in the strings in bar

Ex. 17 The Ruffian theme in Wilson's vocal line.

20 of the same scene derive from the rotation chords as described above (ex. 18): the pitch G is effectively Rotation 'Chord' 0.0 (it contains only this pitch class), which alternates between statements of RC1.0 in bar 21, RC2.0 in bar 22 and RC3.0 in bar 23. It is cast over the hesitating 'prostitution' material (see section 'Other Thematic Material', below) that represents Joyce in alto flute and contrabassoon. The chords help to underline her indecision, but they also, perhaps, cast a halo, almost as if Wilson is casting his spell over her. Compare this, for example, to the moment where Mike has just met Wilson in scene five (bar 67). After an initial and obvious spark of attraction, Joyce persuades Mike to asks some serious questions of Wilson. Wilson's response from bar 103 is based upon the opening notes of the row, accompanied by

Ex. 18 Use of Rotation Chords in Scene Two

the halo effect in the strings (starting on RC9.0, transposed down a semitone). The effect, especially accompanied by the increased activity in guitar is predictable: Wilson tells him to bring his things into the house.

b) The Ruffian theme as tormentor

The Ruffian theme also underlies Wilson's moments of greatest torment – in scene two, bar 96 and in scene five, bar 178 – where he describes his sense of loss. In scene two, for example, the chords in the strings are taken freely from the rotation chord material. It starts at bar 96 with RC1.0, moving to RC1.1 at bar 100, RC11.2 at 102, RC11.3 at 103–107 (excluding the pitch A that appears in the cello at bar 106), RC6.0 at bar 108, RC6.2 at bar 109 and finally RC8.0 at bar 114. At bar 178, scene five, the starting point is again RC1.0, though this time the chords are allowed to expand naturally from this point without necessarily being exactly derived from the rotation chords. Despite this, their obvious similarity to the opening chord, most notably the fact that they contain major and minor thirds, means that it is easy to hear that they are related to it.

The Ruffian theme also underpins moments where Wilson is threatening others. For example, in scene two at bar 148 Wilson threatens Joyce with the lines 'Do you know, I could murder you? Easy as that. That's how these assaults on lonely women are committed.' Underpinning this are swirling statements of the Ruffian theme in the upper strings and piano, which eventually lead to their unison use in the strings at bar 156. Similarly, the line 'Is your husband passionate with you?' is sung to R6.0 at bar 162. In scene five, bar 262, just after Wilson has told Mike that his brother was run down, the Ruffian theme makes a similar kind of appearance as when Wilson

threatened to hurt Joyce in scene two; appearing in the violins to cap a long build-up of tension. The unison material that appears in scene two, bar 156 also appears at bar 150, scene six. Here Mike is actually threatening Wilson with a gun, eventually shooting him. The use of the Ruffian theme material serves to underline that by doing this he is actually doing Wilson's bidding, because he wants to die.

There is also an important musical theme in the opera that consists of a series of three-note chords. It is first heard over the Ruffian theme in the first seven bars in the guitar part (ex. 19). As such, this may be considered Ruffian theme derived too. It is further heard from bar 26 in the prelude, both in widely spaced chords in the guitar and, more closely together, in the strings and woodwind (bars 27–29). It also aids the build-up to the moment where Wilson threatens to murder Joyce in scene two (see bars 128–

Ex. 19 Three-note chord idea

139 in upper strings and woodwind). A version of this frames interlude three (bars 1–3, 25–27 and 42–49) and then goes on to appear throughout scene four, where an unseen intruder threatens Joyce. The implication here is that this person is, indeed, Wilson, though one might argue that the fact that this material is least obviously derived from the Ruffian theme adds a level of ambiguity, supporting the idea that she does not actually see him.[9]

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[9] An idea further supported by the lack of guitar in scene 4, the instrument that is most associated with Wilson.

c) Catholicism, Irishness and the Ruffian theme

In scene three, bar 82, Mike tells Joyce that, like their neighbour Mary, Joyce should derive strength from her Catholic faith. In reality, this is just another demonstration of his lack of concern for Joyce, since his suggestion that she see a priest has more to do with the fact that he is unable or unwilling to offer her any support. The message is 'grin and bear it'. Ex. 20, shows how this 'Catholic' material derives from the Ruffian theme. This is an important moment since, for much of scene three, because Wilson is absent, so too is the theme that relates to him. Here, however, this sets up a link with his character. The payoff for this comes in scene five at bar 78, where Wilson sings 'You're Irish!' At bar 81 the guitar and woodwind refer back to this theme, hence making the obvious link between Irishness and Catholicism, which immediately impresses Mike who then, at bar 85 sings 'Come on in.' A further reference to the theme is made at bars 144–145, where Mike explains that Joyce 'has no religious feelings'.

Ex. 20 The Catholic/Irish theme as derived from the Ruffian theme

Other Thematic Material

As said, the Ruffian theme is most strongly associated with Wilson and so it follows that it is mostly used when he is on stage or is being referred to in some way. Aside from the Ruffian theme, however, there is other thematic material that helps to give form to the drama and also provide the type of musical organic unity as described in chapter two. Some of these themes are simple leitmotifs that help to underline important themes in the plot. I have already mentioned, for example, the 'van' idea at bars 15–18, scene one. This appears in different guises every time the van is subsequently mentioned: at bar 83, scene one; bar 87, scene two, and inverted in the long statement at bars 255–264, scene five. Similarly, the appearance of the gun is characterized by the martial sounds of the timpani, for example at bar 194, scene two and at bar 347, scene five. There is also a triplet idea that acts as a kind of 'fate' motive throughout the opera. It is first heard in the bassoon in bars 10–24 of the prelude. At the end of the first interlude, at bar 15, its importance becomes clearer as it is associated with the doorbell, a link it retains throughout the rest of the opera (see scene four, bars 40 and 110–116; scene five, bars 39–41; and scene six, bar 7). The suggestion here is that it is fate in the form of death – i.e. 'The Ruffian on the Stair' – that is knocking on the door.

Non-Ruffian themes also become associated with characters. As already mentioned, there is the *Tristan* chord, which I use sparingly to underline the possible sexual connotations of Mike's words and actions: at bar 10, scene one ('I'm meeting a man in the toilet') or bars 66–74, scene five (where Mike first meets Wilson, the implication being that he is sexually attracted to him). There is also the 'sleazy' material that

becomes associated with Joyce. It is highly syncopated and is first heard working its way from the lower to upper string at bars 40–55, scene one. This is the first moment that Joyce refers to her past as a prostitute and it is subsequently used to suggest this aspect of her character. For example, at bar 20, scene two it appears in the contrabassoon and alto flute. Here Wilson has just asked to come into the house. The theme partly suggests her indecision but also that, in letting Wilson in, she might have amorous intent. In scene five, from bar 326, it is used in a slightly different way. Here Wilson hints that he has slept with 'Maddy' (i.e. Joyce, Maddy being her old 'trade' name), and the theme is a reminder that she used to be a prostitute and might easily be capable of such an act.

Sometimes thematic material is used to suggest links between characters. The music of the first scene, for example, comes to represent the link between Mike and Joyce. For example, the horn, bassoon and clarinet idea at bar 1 is used much later on, from bar 447–514, scene five for the confrontation between the two. Similarly the duet between Joyce and Mike in scene one (from bar 96), is quoted directly at bar 177, scene six, just after Wilson has died. Their 'togetherness' is also underlined by the fact that the 'Ruffian' theme appears much less when they are alone. Similarly, though Mike and Wilson might not be considered to have much in common, one parallel is drawn between them in the musical material. When Mike sings of his fear of losing Joyce (bar 418, scene five), crucially it is to the same material used by Wilson (bar 115, scene two) earlier on except, to emphasize that he is referring to Joyce, it uses a tonal plan based around their material in scene one, bar 96.

Broader stylistic features of *The Ruffian on the Stair*

    a) **Rotational serialism in context**

The use of rotational serialism in the opera may be seen as a natural extension of those stylistic features examined in chapter two, where I showed the importance to me of clearly tonicizing pitch areas. Rotational serialism, where transformations keep a sense of pitch centeredness by retaining the same starting note, fits smoothly into this style. Ex. 21, taken from scene six, gives a clear example of this in action. From bar 44 the pitch centre is A. To prepare for this, a tonal reference is made in the previous bar, with both Joyce and the double bass ending on the pitch E. The arrival of the pitch A is clearly announced by Joyce at bar 44, followed by Wilson at bars 45–46. The musical material in the other instruments from bars 45–50 is all based upon the note row transposed up by two semitones (hence the second number of each label is a '2' e.g. 11.2, 10.2, 2.2 etc.) so that it starts on the pitch A, helping to tonicize this note. It will be noticed that I have further emphasized this by highlighting notes that form part of an A major/minor triad: the last two notes in the lower strings (bar 46), the pitch C–C♯ movement in Wilson's line at bars 48–49 and the movement to the pitch E at the end of bar 50 in the guitar and piano.

Ex. 21. Use of rotational transformation on the musical surface

b) Tonality, modes, clusters

Just as those pieces examined in chapter 2 do not exclusively use one method of organizing the musical surface, neither is rotational serialism the whole picture here either. As in the rest of the pieces in this folio, my aim is smoothly to embrace as much stylistic variation as is possible: there are plenty of moments where the musical surface becomes markedly less chromatically saturated, where it includes other modes (including tonal, modal and modes of limited transposition) or where the chords move in a way that suggests tonal writing. There are always dramatic reasons for these choices. For example, at bars 96–104, scene one, the texture stays firmly around B♭, moving to A♭ at 105. Both times the 'keys' are really mixed modes since they include major and minor thirds (to my ears always suggestive of the inflected blues scale) and lydian raised fourths. There is incidental dissonance, as in the flute, oboe and piano gesture at bar 98, though the texture is more marked by the consonance of the chords in clarinet, bassoon and horn. The relatively benign texture here helps to cap the first scene (further reinforced by the use of the material again in interlude one) whilst also suggesting a moment of normality between Joyce and Mike; the simple act of a woman fussing around her partner, who is going out.

This kind of surface simplicity also becomes associated with the concept of 'truth' in the opera; when a character says something really heartfelt it is unencumbered by conflicting emotions so may be said more straightforwardly. An example of this would be the relative simplicity of Wilson's descriptions of his despair at losing his brother in scene two, starting at bar 96 and in scene five, starting at bar 178. Similarly, Mike's statement of love towards Joyce at bars 418–446 in scene five is extremely consonant

and uncomplicated, made more so in that it comes straight after a dissonant section filled with rage and conflict in which he eventually decides to kill Joyce.

In these and other sections the harmony may suggest tonality. The end of Mike's statement of love for Joyce in scene five at bar 439, for example, is capped with chromatic harmony suggesting, via Mahler, Mike's longing for Joyce, or perhaps his fear of being alone. Similarly, at bar 40 in scene two, Wilson sings about his profession using pitches from the Ruffian theme.[10] It is harmonized straightforwardly with chords that slide downwards from $E^{\flat 6}$, to D7, to $D^{\flat 6}$, C^{maj7} to B. It feels tonal, because of the familiarity of the chords and the voice leading in the strings, without really being so. One might add that the slippery nature of the chord progressions perhaps underlines that, though Wilson's descriptions are apparently honest – we've no reason to believe he isn't a gent's hairdresser – his motives for trying to present a good face to Joyce might also be very slippery indeed. Similar tonally suggestive moments can be found in many parts of the opera: the piano interjections at bars 3–6 in interlude 1; from bars 115–127 in scene two; the music that becomes associated with Joyce in scene three (bars 43–49 in the piano, for example); much of the music in the 'Suddenly quick and agitated' section from bars 47–140 in scene five; and the obvious V–I cadence at the end of the opera (bars 254–256, scene six).

I also make occasional use of modes of limited transposition within the opera, especially of the octatonic. Sometimes, as described in chapter two, this is merely part of a wider effort to fill the chromatic space, avoiding reference to tonality. For example, in scene five at bar 356, the fact that the flute makes use of the octatonic is

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[10] One of the few examples in the opera that use classical serialism; Wilson's melody consisting of the notes of retrograde inversion 11.

purely incidental. The other woodwind parts do not follow any obvious pattern and anyway obscure its presence. This kind of rushing woodwind figure is common within the opera and, whilst on each occasion it may include scales of limited transposition, the main purpose is to create a rushing effect with good chromatic coverage. Bar 447, scene five, however, is an example of more consistent use of the octatonic scale. Here, the darker feel to the scale[11] becomes associated with Mike's suspicions about Joyce's motives. As if to emphasize this, when Joyce innocently responds 'I thought he was staying here' and 'Do I want him to?' the octatonic disappears and makes way for the 'innocent' keys of C and A major respectively.

Just as in the works in chapter two, chromatic density may be controlled by the means of graduated chord clusters. Scene four, for example, opens with dense clusters in the piano to suggest the bleakness of Joyce's situation. To avoid their disappearance sounding too abrupt they gradually become less clustered, until they produce the material at bar 11 in the piano, which is also heard later, at bar 92. In the same scene, between bars 74 and 81 the reverse occurs; the piano clusters gradually becoming denser. Here they represent the growing tension of Joyce's situation as the intruder throws missiles through the windows. A similar such build-up of tension occurs in scene five, bars 281–287, where major chords in the wind gradually become more dissonant as Mike desperately attempts to get rid of Wilson.

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[11] i.e. darker than the use of the major scales with which it is contrasted.

c) **Metre and drama**

Metrical ambiguity plays a part in the opera just as in the other pieces described in this folio, though this is largely through the use of rapidly changing time signatures (rather than ignoring barlines). This type of writing becomes most associated with Mike, for example at the beginning of scene three, or at scene five, from bar 365. Combined with the angular writing in bassoons and horn, the effect is to make him sound rather pompous. Metre has, however, a different and much more important role within this scene and, later, in scene five. In the exchange between Mike and Joyce at the opening of scene three, they each sing at different tempi, as if to emphasize that they are not communicating on the same wavelength. When the music eventually settles to one tempo, at bar 42, it is the speed of the music associated with Mike. Joyce, however sings against this, effectively at her old tempo but in three in a bar against Mike's four. This is most clear, for example, at bars 57–61 and 69–78 (ex. 22), though it continues throughout the scene. It serves to underline the idea that Mike

Ex. 22 Implied dual time signatures

does not listen to nor care for Joyce, except perhaps insofar as her absence makes his own life difficult. In scene five there is an exact mirror image of this type of metrical dislocation. At bar 47 a 'quick and agitated tempo' of four in the bar is set that reflects Joyce's agitated state at seeing Wilson on the doorstep. At first, at bar 71, Mike seems to be on Joyce's metrical wavelength. With the appearance of the *Tristan* chord in the background and his first view of the attractive Wilson, however, he starts to sing in three in the bar against the underlying time signature. Wilson answers him in this metre and the two continue to interact in this way, separate from Joyce, who always remains in four, until the section ends at bar 140. The effect, once again, is to isolate Joyce, this time emphasizing Wilson's spell over Mike.

Ruffian Theme and Structure

The overall shape of the opera, with its scenes separated by interludes, was, again, inspired by Britten's *Turn of the Screw.* And, just as Britten used the 'screw' theme to guide the middleground pitch argument, a similar type of process, though not so comprehensive, underlies this opera. The use of a theme to unite both surface and background also resembles processes described in chapter two of this commentary.

As described above, the Ruffian theme begins with a rising whole tone (G–A) and ends with a rising whole tone (A♭–B♭). I have also described that the opening of the scale suggests to me the blues scale in A. As such, this key (and, to a lesser extent, G) represents Wilson within the opera. Conversely, at the other end, B♭ (and also to some extent A♭) pitch centres come to represent Joyce and Wilson. This pitch dichotomy is gradually unfolded during the course of the work. The opera opens with a statement

of the note row, the first bar-and-a-half emphasising notes from the A minor scale, it is capped, at bar 7 with a statement also suggestive of A, though this is disrupted by the presence of the note A♯ (B♭) at bar 9, finally coming to rest on the note E. This paves the way for B♭ at bar 10, the note E being carried on in the triplet 'fate' theme in the bassoon. The new theme at bar 10, furthermore, repeats a tone lower, on A♭ at bar 13, the penultimate note of the Ruffian theme. As in the opening, there is a hint of A at bar 26, B♭ more strongly at bar 52.

Scene one, featuring Joyce and Mike, ends triumphantly with the B♭/A♭ from the prelude but scene two, where Wilson appears, strongly tends toward the pitch centre of A until bar 156, where G becomes the main pitch centre, a role it retains in the following prelude. Scene three begins ambiguously in the wind, before suggesting B on Mike's first vocal entry at bar 5 and then G♯ at bar 9. Joyce, however, seems to be mentally still with Wilson, hinting at A at bars 21 and 32 and G at bar 29. Once the music settles into one tempo, however, at bar 43 the predominant key becomes G♯ (i.e. A♭). The middle section (bars 82–122) I have shown to be based around the Ruffian theme, so it is appropriate that the key centres suggest Wilson: C at 82 (relative of A minor), moving eventually to F (bar 87) – note how this key centre is linked to Ruffian chord 1.0[12] – and E at bar 103. In the final section, from bar 123, however, it is G♯ that dominates. Interlude three eventually moves unambiguously to Wilson's pitch area of A at bar 37. This pitch area dominates the opening of scene four until Joyce's line 'You think it would draw me closer to somebody'. It does not, however, dominate the rest of the scene, as one might expect if it is Wilson breaking in. This is partly because the nervous, dramatic nature of the music means that the

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[12] As exactly used in the two sections where Wilson describes his love for his brother (bar 96, scene two and bar 178, scene 5).

'tonality' is often very ambiguous. Also, however, the lack of Wilson's pitch area adds a level of ambiguity as to who really is at the door.

Bars 1–46 of scene five are dominated by A♭/G♭, a simple downward transposition of Mike and Joyce's pitch areas that also keeps them tonally distant from Wilson. When Wilson appears at bar 47 his influence draws the music, especially that of Mike, towards his own tonal sphere, triumphantly arriving at A minor at bar 131. At bar 178, Wilson's 'loss' solo relates directly to his earlier one in scene two (bar 96), hinting at both A minor and F minor via use of RC1.0. Significantly, when he begins to sing of his anguish at bar 215, it begins by hinting at B♭ minor, almost as if he is making a reference towards Mike as the source of his pain. As his threats grow stronger, however, so too does his use of his own tonal area: especially at bars 244–264, where he shows Mike the picture of his brother; bars 288–297, just before he asks why Mike killed his brother; and at bars 326–358, where he threatens to sleep with Joyce. As soon as he leaves the stage, the pitch centre moves back to G♯ (A♭) for Mike's solo at bar 362 and to G♭ at bar 403 and back to B♭ at bar 417. This last key is an extremely important arrival, since it links back to Mike's relationship with Joyce as described in scene one, a fact emphasized by the subsequent move to A♭ at bar 430. Bars 447–456, where Joyce returns, sets up intentionally mixed tonal messages. Mike appears to be centred on F♯, Joyce on C major and A major, and this seems to fuel Mike's suspicion that she has had relations with Wilson. This eventually leads to him attacking her at bar 494 in their home pitch area of B♭. Interlude five takes us to A once more, a reminder of Wilson but also a tonal preparation for scene six; a circle of fifths movement takes us to D at bar 17 and G, the starting pitch of scene six, at bar 21.

The notes of the pitch areas that make up scene six, up to the point where Wilson dies, outline a complete statement of the Ruffian theme in its original form (see ex. 11): G at the opening, A at bar 26, D at bar 60, C at bar 76. C♯ doesn't form a pitch area of its own, but is instead implied by the movement back to A at bar 86, where C and C♯ function, of course, as the blues inflected major-minor third. It is made as clear as possible by its loud appearance in the horn at bar 86. Pitch B from the Ruffian theme appears at bar 99, E at bar 111, F at bar 131, F♯ at 150. At bar 156, D♯ is the lowest in the timpani (and in the texture), though this is probably the least audible of the statements. G♯ appears at bar 156, providing, at bar 176, the anacrusis for the final pitch of B♭ at bar 177, which takes us back to the tonal area of Mike and Joyce. After this the music sinks downwards in whole tones: A♭ at bar 183, G♭ at bar 192 and E at bar 201. Bars 211–226 are largely based around the conflicting key areas of B♭ and A major/minor, as if as a summing-up of the entire argument of the opera. This is further emphasized at bar 249–252, which outline A and B♭ major triads. The C chord at bar 253 then seems to act as an intermediary, allowing final resolution, with a perfect cadence into F major.

Postscript

As I look back upon my postgraduate studies, I can see that my master's degree and this doctorate form one period of research and study. It is difficult for me to divide the two. If I were to try, I would say that my master's represented a period of exploration, the doctorate of consolidation. In my master's I located the tools that I needed to compose with linear freedom without the scaffolding of traditional tonality. By the end of that period, however, this had resulted in a style, especially in my orchestral work *Movements,* that was heavily indebted to Ligeti. To an extent this influence can still be seen in earlier pieces in this portfolio, such as *Hommage* and *Maghreb.* I hope, however, that, in their greater harmonic range, they also show a more individual approach. Essentially it is this effort to incorporate an increasing harmonic range without stylistic dislocation that marks the arc of subsequent pieces in this submission.

One regret of my PhD was that I did not use rotational serialism sooner. Whilst I find it difficult to imagine a situation where I would just use one method to compose, it has been an extremely useful component to add to my stylistic mix. As to my future style, I will allow myself to speculate only a little. The types of structural frameworks that my pieces have and their tendency to emphasize pitch structures I do not think will change. This kind of loose framework still, however, allows the integration of new elements in the future. What these elements might be, however, it is impossible to say.

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