

Political composition: a creative exploration of global socio-political issues through contemporary classical composition

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the research question: ‘how can the composition of contemporary classical music be an effective vessel for the exploration of socio-political issues?’ It consists of a folio of compositions, recordings, and an accompanying commentary. The compositions range from small solo study pieces to instrumental chamber music with fixed media and an orchestral piece.

This research straddles two distinct fields of composition – referential music and political music. Throughout music history, composers have not been afraid of referencing socio-political issues in their music. Examples can be seen in the academic discourse around composers such as Richard Wagner and antisemitism (*Parsifal*),¹ Hans Eisler and Marxism (*Hangmen also Die*),² and Frederic Rzewski and social justice (*Coming Together*).³ This practice research does not attempt to persuade a listener into following a political ideology; it instead engages with socio-political themes in the compositional process. It uses a practice-based reflexive methodology of composition, score analysis and reflection on my own thoughts through elements of autoethnography to develop a toolkit of rhetorical devices in compositional contexts as an investigation into the research question.

The socio-political backdrop of our world is ever-evolving. The compositions in this research specifically focus on events from 2019 to 2024. This includes the UK formally leaving the EU (*On Leaving You*), the COVID-19 pandemic (*From Home* and *The Anti-Masker*) and its political fallout (*Wonderland*), our continued attempt to grapple with climate change (*Drift*), the changes in American politics (*Our Better History* and *Equals*), the Middle East crisis (*For Gaza*), and the culture wars (*An Attack is Taking Place*).

The research concludes that composition can be used successfully as a vessel to explore global socio-political issues. The project provides a foundation for additional practice and research in this and related areas.

¹ Marc A. Weiner, *Richard Wagner and the Anti-Semitic Imagination* (U of Nebraska Press, 1997)

² Sally Bick, ‘A Double Life in Hollywood: Hanns Eisler’s Score for the Film *Hangmen Also Die* and the Covert Expressions of a Marxist Composer’, *The Musical Quarterly*, 93.1 (2010), pp. 90–143

³ Christian Asplund, ‘Frederic Rzewski and Spontaneous Political Music’, *Perspectives of New Music*, 33.1/2 (1995), pp. 418–41

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None of this would have been achievable without the wonderful performers, ensembles, conductors, commissioners, administrators, and dedicatees who have made the music in this project exist beyond the abstraction of dots on a page. There are too many individuals to list here but they know who they are. I am very appreciative of them all for their wonderful musicianship, time, energy, and commitment to the music.

To all the family and friends who have listened to me yap on about this over the years, an apology and a thank you. Apologies for the ramblings which although not obvious at the time (to you, or me) all helped develop the framing and narrative of this thesis and made it and the research clearer. Thank you for just being there, you're all wonderful.

A final thanks to Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and Birmingham City University research departments for putting up with my incessant emails and for being so supportive of my doctoral journey.

It's been a blast.

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Portfolio of compositions

The numbers below are included to help identify the submitted files for each composition including the scores and any accompanying material. (e.g. 01_On Leaving You – Nicholas Olsen – Full Score.pdf).

ON LEAVING YOU	OPEN SCORED ENSEMBLE	1
DRIFT	ENSEMBLE FLUTE, CLARINET, PERCUSSION, VIOLIN, VIOLA, VIOLONCELLO	2
FROM HOME	VARIOUS SOLOS, DUOS AND ENSEMBLES	3
GHOST LIGHT	SOLO FRENCH HORN	4
THE ANTI-MASKER	ENSEMBLE NARRATOR, CLARINET, BASSOON, TRUMPET, TROMBONE, PERCUSSION, VIOLIN, DOUBLE BASS	5
EQUALS	PIANO TRIO AND VIDEO	6
OUR BETTER HISTORY	OBOE AND ORGAN (OR DRONE)	7
SUMMER	STRING ORCHESTRA AND TENOR RECORDER	8
WONDERLAND	ENSEMBLE AND AUDIO FUTE, SOPRANO SAXOPHONE, BASSOON, FRENCH HORN, VIOLONCELLO, FIXED MEDIA	9
FOR GAZA	SOLO VIOLIN	10
AN ATTACK IS TAKING PLACE	SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA 2.2.2(1.2/BCL).2 4.2.3.1 T 2P STRINGS	11

Performance/recording credits

On Leaving You

Adam Lee (Clarinet), Archie Auger (Bassoon), Steve Halfyard (Piano), Heather Storer (Violin), Si Paton (Bass). Recorded virtually from various locations, December 2020

Drift

Glasgow Barons / Paul McAlinden (Conductor). Recorded at The Pearce Institute, Govan, Glasgow, November 2020

From Home (by movement)

I. Matthew McAllister (Guitar), II. Sam Ellis (Viola), III. Faidon Nalbantis (Piano), IV. Heather Storer (Violin), V. Valerie Barr (Accordion), VI. Edward Cohen (Piano) & Hebba Benyaghla (Piano), IX. Richard Scholfield (Tenor Saxophone), X. Tilly Green (Soprano) & Sam Proust (Piano), XI. Djordje Gajic (Accordion), XII. James Heathcote (Cello), XIII. Joanna Nicholson (Eb Clarinet), XV. Laura Browne (Electric Guitar), XVI. Katherine Wren (Viola d'amore), XVII. RBC Thallein Ensemble, XVIII. Anja Ormiston (Viola) & Aaron Morrison (Viola), XIX. Ciaran Jenkins (Cello) & Mike Jenkins (Spoken Word). Other movements are MIDI Realisation by Nicholas Olsen (Sibelius/Note Perfomer). Recorded virtually from various locations, March – July 2020

Ghost Light

Saar Berger (French Horn). Recorded in Germany, precise location unknown, November 2020

The Anti-Masker

Skipton Camerata / Ben Crick (Conductor) / Claire-Marie Seddon (Narrator). Recorded in Kala Sangam Arts Centre, Bradford, October 2020

Equals

Realisation by Nicholas Olsen (Sibelius/Note Perfomer), June 2021

Our Better History

Jacqueline FitzGibbon (Oboe), Martin Green (Organ). Live recording at St Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, San Diego, 9th January 2022

Summer

Glasgow Barons / Paul McAlinden (Conductor) / László Rózsa (Tenor Recorder). Recorded at Govan and Linthouse Parish Church, Govan, Glasgow, February 2022

Wonderland

Hadit Collective / Dexter Drown (Conductor). Live recording at The Woodman, Birmingham, 11th March 2022

For Gaza

Lydia Caines (Violin). Recorded in Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, December 2024

An Attack is Taking Place

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Symphony Orchestra / Michael Seal (Conductor). Live recording at Bradshaw Hall, Birmingham, 25th October 2024

During my teenage years I was torn between following one of two paths: music and composition or politics and speech writing. I am following my love of music rather than the draw of Downing Street or the West Wing and although I don't regret this choice at all, my very limited successes in political oratory - writing speeches for the winning candidate for Student Chair in college - gave me a buzz which I have never forgotten. I have never quite put my speechwriting Jack fully back in its box. As such, I have often wondered what the musical equivalent of Sam Seaborn, Toby Ziegler, or Will Bailey might look like. The inception of this research was born out of that interest.

This research considers how I, as a composer and researcher, can act as a socio-political speechwriter in the context of contemporary classical art music. To do this, it specifically considers the question:

How can the composition of contemporary classical music be an effective vessel for the exploration of socio-political issues?

This research question demands that the research situates itself in two separate, but interlinked, areas of composition: referential composition and political composition. Additionally, it positions itself parallel to the study of rhetoric (specifically rhetorical devices) in the field of communication. The thesis will explore some of the current and historic practice and research in these areas to underpin the research context.

Composers have not shied away from referencing contemporary socio-political issues in their compositional practice. There is no set rule book to do this; composers have approached this from many different angles in the past and contemporaneously. There is no formalised or shared process which we all adhere to when incorporating socio-political ideas into compositional practice. This project looks to formalise one method of doing this and this is outlined and investigated throughout this commentary. This research provides the foundation for a model that other composers may be able to utilise in the future.

There are many ways to approach the research question but given the scale of this project it is considered through the use of a toolkit of rhetorical devices in musical contexts. This research creates just one example of a toolkit of devices which composers could use in their own writing to engage with the world around them. This toolkit mimics how speechwriters consciously use rhetorical devices in their own work. One example in the speechwriter's toolkit is the use of the rule of three.⁴ Sometimes 'rule of three' is referred to as 'lists of three' (this commentary uses 'rule of three' throughout). In speechwriting, this device employs three words or phrases together to help create emphasis. Examples of this include Julius Caesar's 'veni, vidi, vici', the French Republic's slogan 'liberté, égalité, fraternité' [liberty, equality, fraternity] through to a more recent example: 'hands, space, face'. The research considers how the intentional incorporation of rhetorical devices, such as the rule of three, can be used in a musical context during the compositional process. The rule of three is explored in *From Home* for various solos, duos, and ensembles, *Equals* for piano trio and video and *An Attack is Taking Place* for symphony orchestra.

In this project, rhetorical devices have been used to develop musical counterpart devices to explore the research question. There is a myriad of devices which could have been used, but this research uses nine devices. These were chosen after a survey of rhetorical devices and selected due to the perceived musical nature of the devices. They are discussed in the toolkit chapter of this commentary and are: allusion and intertextuality, epanalepsis, exergasia and polyptoton, juxtaposition, irony, hyperbole, metaphor, personification, and the rule of three. The development of this practical toolkit is an original contribution to knowledge.

The research explores and documents the processes I have developed by engaging with the research question in a reflexive autoethnographic methodology. It considers how the rhetorical devices used in speech writing can be used as compositional practice and then uses score analysis and reflection in a development and feedback loop to improve this practice and develop the research. This is outlined and further discussed in the methodology chapter.

Due to the scope and size of the project, this research does not set out to review the way in which the music can change listeners' opinions on the political ideas or themes that the

⁴ J. Maxwell Atkinson, , *Our Masters' Voices: The Language and Body Language of Politics* (Methuen, 1984), pp. 57-64

compositions explore. Equally, the compositional process has not been informed by an interest in attempting to change listeners' opinions. However, it is important to recognise that art 'has the power to upset, to disturb, to make us question our assumptions, [and] to change us'.⁵ Any art which uses politics as an impetus, or within it as a developmental process, has the ability to cause a reaction or emotive response in its audience. This project does not consider or evaluate the listener's emotional response to the music, although this is an area that the research opens up to further study. Similarly, this research does not set out to create new music which a listener could declare is built with a toolkit of rhetorically informed devices. The research draws conclusions which may be useful in developing related practice and research areas by other composers and researchers in the future.

Between 2019 and 2024 the world changed dramatically, from the COVID crisis, political upheaval in the USA, the UK formally leaving the EU, and debates around climate change. We all have lived through huge shifts in the political and social world and many of these twists and turns could not have been foreseeable at the outset of this research. The compositions therefore have an almost diaristic element to them, which gave impetus for the pieces presented here. In other words, the compositional practice is my personal political responses to events during this period. The political and social volatility, in the context of this research project, helped define an approach which otherwise could become unwieldy.

Considering the above, to help contextualise the themes of the compositions, the practice presented explores: Brexit (*On Leaving You*), COVID-19 (*From Home*, *The Anti-Masker*, and *Wonderland*), climate change (*Drift*), elections in United States of America (*Our Better History* and *Equals*), the Middle East conflict (*For Gaza*) and the culture wars (*An Attack is Taking Place*).

This thesis consists of two parts: the practice (the compositions) and the commentary. The compositions are presented as full scores (pdfs). These are accompanied where possible by live recordings and where live recordings are not available, they are presented with a MIDI audio realisation. Two pieces, *From Home* and *Equals*, are presented as video files with embedded audio and an accompanying score. In the case of *From Home* only some movements are

⁵ Berys Nigel Gaut, *Art, Emotion and Ethics*, 1. publ. in paperback (Oxford Univ. Press, 2009), p. 1

presented as video files however a complete audio file of all movements has also been made available. The list below (presented chronologically) outlines the practice in this thesis giving the titles of the works, durations, instrumentations, and which toolkit devices they use:

Figure 1: Table of Compositions

Title	Duration	Instrumentation	Device(s)
<i>On Leaving You</i>	4'	Open scored ensemble	Exergasia & polyptoton Hyperbole
<i>Drift</i>	12'	Ensemble	Epanalepsis Juxtaposition
<i>From Home</i>	35'	Various (solos, duos and ensembles)	Allusion & intertextuality Irony Metaphor Personification Rule of three
<i>Ghost Light</i>	4'	Solo french horn	Hyperbole Metaphor
<i>The Anti-Masker</i>	6' 30"	Ensemble	Allusion & intertextuality Irony
<i>Equals</i>	10' 30"	Piano trio and video	Allusion & intertextuality Rule of three
<i>Our Better History</i>	4' 30"	Oboe and organ (or drone)	Exergasia & polyptoton Personification
<i>Summer</i>	10'	String orchestra and tenor recorder	Allusion & intertextuality Personification
<i>Wonderland</i>	5' 30"	Ensemble and audio	Allusion & intertextuality Irony Juxtaposition
<i>For Gaza</i>	1' 30"	Solo violin	Epanalepsis Metaphor
<i>An Attack is Taking Place</i>	9'	Symphony orchestra	Allusion & intertextuality Epanalepsis Exergasia & polyptoton Hyperbole Juxtaposition Metaphor Rule of three

While considering the above it is useful to note that *On Leaving You* for open scored ensemble, *Drift* for ensemble, and *From Home* for various solos, duos and ensembles are initial study pieces for the various rhetorical devices (the toolkit) considered in the research. *An Attack is Taking Place* for orchestra is the culminative piece of the research, and the other pieces are

works which engage with the reflexive autoethnographic methodology to explore one or more of the rhetorical devices.

In chapter 2, the commentary contextualises and situates the research in its wider context. Chapter 3 outlines and explains the reflexive autoethnographic methodology engaged in the project. Chapter 4 defines the terms and devices used in the toolkit. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 navigate and comment on the development of the practice research from initial study pieces, further study pieces, and the exploration of *An Attack is Taking Place*. The final chapter presents conclusions.

To fully study the research question of ‘how can the composition of contemporary classical music be an effective vessel for the exploration of socio-political issues?’, this commentary first explores how music has previously been used to explore non-musical ideas, then it specifically considers how music has been used to explore socio-political issues. There are two primary areas which need considering: referential music and political music. After situating the research within the field of composition, this chapter will then position both rhetoric and the rhetorical devices used in the research.

Referential music

From Hildegard of Bingen to Nicole Lizée, it is not a new concept for composers to find inspiration for their compositions from non-musical sources. Be it Haydn moaning about court life, Shostakovich trying to subvert the rule of Stalin, Bartók exploring his folk music ancestries, or Xian Xinghai using the musical themes of the cultural revolution, composers have long considered the world around them in their music. This chapter will explore just one group of composers with overlapping concerns to contextualise the research project. It will first consider Johann Sebastian Bach and Ralph Vaughan Williams; two composers who wrote very different music and are from different periods of music history. These composers are each considered here as they form a significant part of my musical heritage as a composer.

J.S. Bach’s musical embodiment of his Christian faith is written about frequently. In the introduction to Martin Geck’s *Bach*, John Butt writes that in the 19th Century J. S. Bach was seen by some in the Lutheran community as ‘the saviour from the crises then facing the church’, his music so imbued with his religion that he was ‘recast as the “fifth Evangelist”’.⁶ Ralph Vaughan Williams’ musical influences are well-documented; in his case discussions often focus on the inspiration he finds in England, its history, and its folk music. This was as of much interest to writers during Vaughan Williams’ own lifetime as it is today. Hubert Foss wrote in his study on Vaughan Williams that ‘his music is through and through saturated with the English people, with their native music, with their love of hymns, with all the fullness and all

⁶ Martin Geck, *Bach*, trans. by Anthea Bell, 1. ed (Haus Publ, 2003), p. viii

the limitations of their peculiar and complex character'.⁷ Although the cases of Bach and Vaughan Williams are arguably different, they are both situated in the world of referential composition. Moreover, in both cases the references seen in their music are arguably linked to their identity. Where Bach may be seen to be writing music of his faith and for the church, Vaughan Williams could be considered to be writing music saturated by his country.

The celebrated position accorded to Bach by the Lutheran community suggests that his music does something to express God. This, in turn, may suggest people can feel something in his music. In some cases, Bach's references to God are overt. The use of religious text, for example in his church cantatas such as *Ach Gott, vom Himmel sieh darein* (*Oh God, look down from heaven*), make it clear the work was written to be sung and performed during a church service. That said, not all composers agree that music can mean things. Igor Stravinsky considered the idea of music meaning something as essentially impossible. He wrote in his autobiography:

For I consider that music is, by its very nature, essentially powerless to express anything at all, whether a feeling, an attitude of mind, a psychological mood, a phenomenon of nature, etc. Expression has never been an inherent property of music. That is by no means the purpose of its existence. If, as is nearly always the case, music appears to express something, this is only an illusion and not a reality. It is simply an additional attribute which, by tacit and inveterate agreement, we have lent it, thrust upon it, as a label, a convention - in short, an aspect unconsciously or by force of habit, we have come to confuse with its essential being.⁸

Stravinsky may therefore argue that it is the location of the performance or the use of religious text which makes a listener *feel* the religious connotations in Bach's music and that it is not possible to see or feel that religious sentiment in the musical notes themselves. Following this logic further, the same could also be argued for Vaughan Williams' music. However, in his case, it might be harder to claim that the notes do not have their own non-musical connotations. Vaughan Williams employs English folk music in his own writing as both quotation and allusion. This folk music brings its own histories, cultural significance and references. For example, Vaughan Williams' *Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus* for string orchestra and harp

⁷ Hubert J. Foss, *Ralph Vaughan Williams: A Study* (George G. Harrap & Co Ltd, 1950), p. 60

⁸ Igor Stravinsky, *Igor Stravinsky An Autobiography* (Simon And Schuster, Inc., 1936), pp. 53-54

is deeply saturated with English folk melodies and therefore the notes themselves are referential. Vaughan Williams writes about this reference himself in the front matter of the score. They are ‘not exact replicas of traditional tunes but rather reminiscences of various versions in my own collection and those of others’.⁹ Here Vaughan Williams makes it clear that these references are part of the music.

It is clear that both examples of Bach and Vaughan Williams could be considered referential even if it can be argued that those references cannot be expressed in the musical notes themselves. This research does not look to further this specific discussion, but instead looks at the practical application of reference in the compositional process. One example of such practical referencing can be seen and heard in Louis Andriessen’s *De Materie* – a work for voices and large ensemble. It showcases how reference in the compositional process works in practice. Each of the four movements references something unique. The first movement harks back to shipbuilding in the Dutch empire through the continued repetitions of loud large chords.¹⁰ The second uses a structural device to ‘mirror the architectural plan of the cathedral of Reims in France’.¹¹ The third (*De Stijl*) explores the Dutch *de stijl* art movement by using sections of the orchestra as musical versions of the colours of Mondrian’s *Composition with Red, Yellow, and Blue*. The composer explains:

De Stijl is a musical image of Piet Mondrian’s ‘Composition with Red, Yellow, and Blue’ from 1927, but exclusively on a conceptual basis. Just like in a painting, five colors are confronted with each other in this work: the four sopranos and the trumpets, the five saxes, the trombones and guitars, the piano solo, and the lower instruments.¹²

The fourth movement uses ‘quotation of a solo piano *Pavane* that Andriessen’s father Hendrik had composed in 1927 to be choreographed by his oldest daughter’.¹³ In these examples,

⁹ Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Five Variants of ‘Dives and Lazarus’* (Oxford University Press, 1969), preface

¹⁰ Louis Andriessen, *Louis Andriessen - De Materie (Part I)* (Boosey and Hawkes, 1987), composer’s note

¹¹ Louis Andriessen, *Louis Andriessen - Hadewijch (De Materie Part II)* (Boosey and Hawkes, 1988), composer’s note

¹² John Henken, ‘De Materie (West Coast Premiere), Louis Andriessen’, *LA Phil*

<<https://www.laphil.com/musicdb/pieces/294/de-materie-west-coast-premiere>> [accessed 7 October 2024]

¹³ John Henken, ‘De Materie (West Coast Premiere), Louis Andriessen’

Andriessen can be seen clearly using references to non-musical ideas to aid his compositional practice. In the case of *De Materie*, it is clear from Andriessen's own words that much of what he is doing is pre-determined; it is part of his compositional process. This compositional process is therefore built referentially. In the case of *De Materie*, Andriessen uses references to shipbuilding, architecture, visual art, and memory. It is the practice-based implementation of ideas like those outlined above which are explored in this research. This application in practice allows for the exploration of the research question and allows for the study of how composition can be a vessel to explore ideas.

Composer James MacMillan is also no stranger to reference in his music. His work *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie* explores the post-reformation witch trial of Isobel Gowdie in Scotland.¹⁴ In his composer's note, James MacMillan writes:

Initially I was drawn by the dramatic and programmatic potential of this insane and terrible story but the work soon developed a far more emotional core as I attempted to draw together various strands in a single, complicated act of contrition. On behalf of the Scottish people the work craves absolution and offers Isobel Gowdie the mercy and humanity that was denied her in the last days of her life. To do this I have tried to capture the soul of Scotland in music and outer sections contain a multitude of chants, songs and litanies (real and imagined) coming together in a reflective outpouring – a prayer for the murdered woman.

This work is the Requiem that Isobel Gowdie never had.¹⁵

Phillip A. Cooke in *The Music of James MacMillan* suggests that MacMillan uses a collection of tools to develop the 'chants, songs and litanies'.¹⁶ Cook notes that 'these are half-heard, half-stated and often buried deep in texture, fragmented and not easily decipherable. The sources (that MacMillan has acknowledged) include the folksong *The Cruel Mother* and the *Lux aeterna* (let perpetual light shine) plainsong from the Requiem Mass'.¹⁷ Even the opening to

¹⁴ Phillip A. Cooke, *The Music of James MacMillan* (Boydell & Brewer, Incorporated, 2019) p. 47

¹⁵ James MacMillan, *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie* (Boosey and Hawkes, 1990), composer's note

¹⁶ Phillip A. Cooke, *The Music of James MacMillan*, p. 49

¹⁷ Phillip A. Cooke, *The Music of James MacMillan*, p. 49

Isobel Gowdie is arguably referential; the piece starts with a drone, which is idiomatic of Scottish music and purposefully sets a scene.¹⁸ Cooke suggests that MacMillan also engages in some elements of referential numerology in *Isobel Gowdie* where ‘the thirteen, full-orchestral chords [in bars 127-29] are hammered out as loudly as possible across the full range and register of the orchestra’.¹⁹ These thirteen chords ‘obviously relate to Isobel Gowdie confessing to joining a coven of thirteen, but the number also has had satanic connotations throughout history’.²⁰ MacMillan uses these referential devices to help develop his compositional process and musical ideas through the lens of the extra-musical elements he drew from in the composition process. Consequently, this music can be considered referential.

This research explores global socio-political issues and uses elements of referential composition – like those explored by Andriessen and MacMillan – in the compositional practice. Specifically, it explores through rhetorical devices as employed by political speechwriters.

Political music

This commentary will now consider the contextualisation of political music. Much of this background and situation draws on the arguments made by Courtney Brown in her seminal text *Politics in Music*. Brown’s text considers the transformations of politics in music from Beethoven to Bob Marley and Hip Hop. It is foundational in the underpinning of this research. Brown asserts in the opening to her book: ‘music is filled with political content’.²¹ It is not new for composers to find inspiration in the socio-political landscape they inhabit. For example, it would be hard to remove politics from Frederic Rzewski’s music; he wrote music which to listeners is inherently political. As Christian Asplund explores in his paper *Frederic Rzewski and Spontaneous Political Music*, politics runs through Rzewski’s practice ranging from the way he develops ideas to the use of politically provocative titles, such as *The People United*

¹⁸ Phillip A. Cooke, *The Music of James MacMillan*, p. 49

¹⁹ Phillip A. Cooke, *The Music of James MacMillan*, p. 51

²⁰ Phillip A. Cooke, *The Music of James MacMillan*, p. 51

²¹ Courtney Brown, *Politics in Music: Music and Political Transformation from Beethoven to Hip-Hop*, 1. ed (Farsight Press, 2007), p. 1

Will Never Be Defeated.²² This work uses a quotation of a Chilean song of the same name (*El pueblo unido jamás será vencido*) to overtly point listeners to the political nature of the musical theme which Rzewski then transformed through a series of musical variations.

There are two types of political music Brown discusses which need specific consideration here: music which engages with socio-political themes (political music), and music which engages with the politics of the composer (political manifesto music). Brown argues that music has the power to ‘directly influence the political evolution of society’ – this is political music.²³ In this research, ‘political music’ goes further; it is any music which interacts with political or socio-political ideas, but is not ‘political manifesto music’. Brown, in discussing ‘political manifesto music’, argues that for music to be ‘manifesto music’ it must do more than have political content.²⁴ The composer must have ‘a coherent set of political views, and the art needs to address at least the bulk of the complexity inherent in these views in a material part of his or her music’.²⁵ This would suggest that Rzewski’s music is political music but not political manifesto music. In conversation with Jim Kallenberg for the Platypus Affiliated Society, when asked if his music was political, Rzewski replied ‘of course’.²⁶ Later when discussing his own politics he said:

I did not do politics, I am a composer, I make music, but especially at that time, I did not even do that. You know, we were privileged Americans ... People had fun and called it “revolution”.²⁷

It is this separation of composer and politics, noted by Rzewski, that allows us to consider the music political but not manifesto music. Rzewski is different to, for example, Hanns Eisler,

²² Christian Asplund, ‘Frederic Rzewski and Spontaneous Political Music’

²³ Courtney Brown, *Politics in Music*, p. 1

²⁴ Courtney Brown, *Politics in Music*, p. 29

²⁵ Courtney Brown, *Politics in Music*, p. 29

²⁶ Jim Igor Kallenberg, ‘The Platypus Affiliated Society – Modern Today Means Old: A Discussion with Frederic Rzewski’, 2018 <<https://platypus1917.org/2018/10/01/modern-today-means-old-a-discussion-with-frederic-rzewski/>> [accessed 8 October 2024]

²⁷ Jim Igor Kallenberg, ‘The Platypus Affiliated Society – Modern Today Means Old: A Discussion with Frederic Rzewski’

even though Rzewski asserts his music is ‘in the tradition of Hanns Eisler’.²⁸ Eisler was a committed Marxist and did not shy away from using his political opinions in compositional contexts. For example, Sally Bick’s paper *A Double Life in Hollywood: Hanns Eisler’s Score for the Film Hangmen Also Die and the Covert Expressions of a Marxist Composer* explores his Marxist leanings in the score to the film *Hangmen also Die*. Eisler was asked to write the score by fellow Marxist playwright Bertolt Brecht.²⁹ Bick in her paper on Eisler’s score writes that:

The film's political, anti-Fascist theme originated with [Fritz] Lang [director], who appeared to support the composer's and playwright's political and ideological interests.³⁰

Unlike the example of Rzewski, Bick explores a comprehensive entanglement of Eisler’s politics and the music he was writing, thus evidencing that Eisler was writing political manifesto music. To help elucidate ‘political manifesto music’, Brown explores the music of Richard Wagner.³¹ Much has been written about Wagner and his politics, and more specifically a large body of work has been written about potential anti-semitism within his music.³² Wagner uses anarchist ideals in the plot of his four opera epic *Der Ring des Nibelungen* [*The Ring of the Nibelung*] (hereon in, *The Ring*).³³ *The Ring* tells the story of revolution in Siegfried and Brünnhilde where nature reclaims life on earth from the corruptible Gods.³⁴ In the case of *The Ring*, Wagner also has the full array of libretto, singers, orchestra, staging, plot and theatre at his command. He can use all these areas to make a case for his own political sensibilities through his music. Therefore, *The Ring* could be argued to be political manifesto music. That said, the example of Wagner and *The Ring* demonstrates that the line between political music

²⁸ Jim Igor Kallenberg, ‘The Platypus Affiliated Society – Modern Today Means Old: A Discussion with Frederic Rzewski’

²⁹ Sally Bick, ‘A Double Life in Hollywood: Hanns Eisler’s Score for the Film Hangmen Also Die and the Covert Expressions of a Marxist Composer’, *The Musical Quarterly*, 93.1 (2010), p. 90

³⁰ Sally Bick, ‘A Double Life in Hollywood: Hanns Eisler’s Score for the Film Hangmen Also Die and the Covert Expressions of a Marxist Composer’, p. 90

³¹ Courtney Brown, *Politics in Music*, pp. 29-66

³² See for example: Marc A. Weiner, *Richard Wagner and the Anti-Semitic Imagination*

³³ Courtney Brown, *Politics in Music*, p. 41

³⁴ Courtney Brown, *Politics in Music*, pp. 41-46

and political manifesto music can be blurred. In *The Guardian*, Matthew d’Ancona, writing about the politics of Wagner, explains that ‘his timeless music is not propaganda. It stirs the emotions and challenges the mind. But it does not dictate a trajectory or a course of action’.³⁵ In this research project, I do not set out to push a political manifesto of my own, therefore the music is ‘political music’, but not ‘political manifesto music’.

The overt politicisation and/or interplay of politics with art does exist in art forms beyond music but, even where there are clear parallels to the discussions in music, it is not useful to study other art forms in this project as the research question is so intrinsically connected to Western Art Music. However, it would be remiss not to note possible similarities. By way of brief consideration to contextualise this discussion, it is useful to note that these conversations do cross the artistic subject boundaries. For example, in visual art, Banksy’s street art embodies socio-political subjects. These include the refugee crisis, the Middle East conflict, and homelessness.³⁶ His art is overtly ‘anti-war, anti-capitalism and anti-establishment’.³⁷ Translating the above considerations of ‘political music’ and ‘political manifesto music’ into a visual art context could be a foundation for an argument that Banksy makes ‘political art’ or even ‘political manifesto art’. This is to suggest that Banksy’s art clearly is political in its content (political art) and may go some way to developing a manifesto of Banksy’s political opinions and ideals (political manifesto art).

Returning to the discussion on music, it is important to note that there can be significant overlap in the spheres of referential music and political music. Reconsidering the Vaughan Williams discussion in the context of political music means that it could be argued that Vaughan Williams’ music not only references the country he lives in but is nationalistic – or at the very least has nationalist tendencies. Brown suggests that ‘the nationalist movement in English

³⁵ Matthew d’Ancona, ‘The Politics of Wagner’s Ring’, *The Guardian*, 22 April 2016, section Music <<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2016/apr/22/matthew-dancona-the-politics-of-wagners-ring-cycle-opera-north>> [accessed 17 December 2024]

³⁶ Jonathan Jones, ‘Kissing Coppers to Rutting Rhinos: Banksy’s Artworks – Ranked!’, *The Guardian*, 14 August 2024, section Art and design <<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/article/2024/aug/14/banksy-artworks-ranked-street-artist>> [accessed 8 October 2024]

³⁷ Amanda Scardamaglia, ‘Banksy: Culture, Counterculture and Cancellation’, *Griffith Law Review*, 31.3 (2022), p. 418

music began with Ralph Vaughan Williams'.³⁸ Ruth Gipps was a student of Vaughan Williams and one of the leading composers in England in the generation after him. Gipps' own view was that Englishness was 'the defining characteristic of her compositional output'.³⁹ Jill Halstead, while considering Gipps' 'Englishness', writes:

Of course personal contact with Vaughan Williams was key to her affiliation to this national (and sometimes nationalist) school, yet the self consciously 'English' preoccupation of her work is a more complex matter than blind loyalty to the founding father of national music. As a movement, musical nationalism in England grew from the need to reestablish the familiar at a time of great social and political change. As the 'traditional' English way of life ... [allowed for] a withdrawal to a romanticized and ordered past, rather than an advance into an uncertain future.⁴⁰

It is clear therefore that Gipps' nationalist ideals, from the lineage of Vaughan Williams and recognised in her music, are socio-political. Vaughan Williams and Gipps' music inherently considers the world around them – in both cases their identities as English composers are fundamentally linked to their compositions. This is just one example of the overlap of referential and political music.

This chapter has now considered referential music and political music. This research does not purposefully explore any of my political ideologies, but rather it explores how I engage with socio-political themes; it is political music, but not political manifesto music. As noted in the introduction, there are potentially many ways to approach the research question. To engage with the construct of political music, I consider socio-political themes through the lens of a speechwriter by using adapted referential devices familiar to speechwriters.

³⁸ Courtney Brown, *Politics in Music*, p. 92

³⁹ Jill Halstead, *Ruth Gipps: Anti-Modernism, Nationalism and Difference in English Music* (Taylor & Francis Group, 2006), p. 101

⁴⁰ Jill Halstead, *Ruth Gipps: Anti-Modernism, Nationalism and Difference in English Music*, p. 101

Composers and speechwriters

There are some obvious parallels between the practice of composing and the practice of speechwriting. These include the need to work to a brief, consider structure and tempo, and manipulate dynamics and timbre. The commonality of the essential purposes of the roles of composers and speechwriters is clear; both are looking to control the established elements of their craft in an attempt to control the expectations and/or experiences of an audience. Political speechwriters, much like composers writing political music, do not specifically have to hold the same political views as those that they express in their work. Composers are free to write absolute music – music where the notes mean nothing beyond the notes themselves – or find inspiration for their music. The same is true for speechwriters. A speechwriter may be writing copy for a series of television adverts on Monday, a speech for a wedding carefully written to be recited after a glass of wine on Wednesday, and the victory speech outside the doors of Number 10 Downing Street on Friday. (That would be a *very* varied week of work.)

Composition and speechwriting are both forms of communication. The study on the art of effective communication in languages has a long history dating back to Aristotle's treatise *The Art of Rhetoric*, which underpins the construct of rhetoric. This commentary considers that foundation below.

Rhetoric and rhetorical devices

Aristotle's treatise on rhetoric is generally considered to be 'the most important single work on persuasion ever written'.⁴¹ Although much of Aristotle's treatise still holds true in contemporary thinking, when reading *The Art of Rhetoric* the examples are drawn from the rhetorical situations found in ancient Greece, for example the Greek Senate or a court of law. William M. Keith and Christian Oscar Lundberg's *The Essential Guide to Rhetoric* helps to give clear definitions and summaries of much of Aristotle's argument in a clear to understand narrative as well as giving practical examples of the application of rhetoric today. Given that

⁴¹ James L. Golden, Goodwin F. Berquist, William E. Coleman, and J. Michael Sproule, *The Rhetoric of Western Thought: From the Mediterranean World to the Global Setting* (Kendall Hunt Publishing Company, 2011) p. 67

this research does not look to explore the foundational arguments of Aristotle but rather acknowledge and refer to them, this thesis will frame much of the discussion below through the Keith and Lundberg text. Keith and Lundberg simply declare that ‘rhetoric has something to do with the relationship between language and persuasion’.⁴² Aristotle in *The Art of Rhetoric* considers there to be three ‘types of speech’. Keith and Lundberg outline these as:

- Forensic: ‘to determine what has happened in the past, such as arguing for guilt or innocence’.⁴³
- Epideictic: ‘to say how people should feel in the present and to assign praise or blame’.⁴⁴
- Deliberative: ‘to make a case for what people should or should not do in the future, such as avoiding harmful things and doing good’.⁴⁵

Although Keith and Lundberg argue that it may be too simplistic to consider all speeches fit within these areas, Aristotle’s work clearly highlighted the importance of academic study in this area.⁴⁶ The purpose of music composition has clear crossover with these areas too, for example, as discussed earlier, the political manifesto music of Eisler could be considered deliberative. That said, the more useful areas of consideration for the context of this research are Aristotle’s three rhetorical proofs. These consider the logic of an argument (logos), the credibility of the speaker (ethos) and the emotional element and attachment formed by a speech (pathos).⁴⁷

In creating these rhetorical proofs, speechwriters and orators use a variety of techniques in their writing to develop their arguments. The nuts-and-bolts techniques used to develop an argument, speech, or oration, have been written about at length and they are called ‘rhetorical

⁴² William M. Keith and Christian Oscar Lundberg, *The Essential Guide to Rhetoric* (Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2008), p. 3

⁴³ William M. Keith and Christian Oscar Lundberg, *The Essential Guide to Rhetoric*, p. 7

⁴⁴ William M. Keith and Christian Oscar Lundberg, *The Essential Guide to Rhetoric*, p. 7

⁴⁵ William M. Keith and Christian Oscar Lundberg, *The Essential Guide to Rhetoric*, p. 7

⁴⁶ William M. Keith and Christian Oscar Lundberg, *The Essential Guide to Rhetoric*, p. 7

⁴⁷ William M. Keith and Christian Oscar Lundberg, *The Essential Guide to Rhetoric*, pp. 36-40

devices'. Timothy Crews-Anderson and Mark Addis' chapter 'Rhetorical Devices and Informal Fallacies' in *Critical Thinking and Informal Logic* explains:

Not surprisingly, people who wish to convince others to adopt their positions do not always rely solely on attempts to establish sound and cogent arguments. People are often more interested in convincing rather than seeking the truth of the matter. Advertisers, advocates, politicians, political pundits, etc. (the list truly goes on and on) have developed quite an arsenal for levelling arguments or colouring the language of argumentation in such a way as to make the reasons for accepting their point of view seem to be much more compelling than they actually are. This need not be intentional; that is, a person's intent need not be deception to make use of these highly persuasive tactics.⁴⁸

It is the tools (rhetorical devices) used to 'convince others' which are of interest to this research. There are a number of books which aim to create a glossary of rhetorical terms (which includes rhetorical devices); these include *A Glossary of Rhetorical Terms* by Gregory T Howard. On its publisher's website, the synopsis describes that 'this resource contains over 400 rhetorical devices and definitions. These devices are the music notes of communication. Their study and proper use allow individuals to intricately orchestrate their thoughts and ideas into clear and beautiful statements, sentences, and speeches'.⁴⁹

It is fitting that Howard's synopsis should describe these devices in such a musical way; it is the 'arsenal' of devices to which Crews-Anderson and Addis refer that this project transposes into a musical context to study the research question. In essence, it uses musical versions of rhetorical devices as the vessel for the exploration of socio-political issues set out in the research question.

⁴⁸ Timothy Crews-Anderson and Mark Addis, *Critical Thinking and Informal Logic* (Humanities-Ebooks, LLP, 2007), p. 46 <<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/bcu/detail.action?docID=3306069>> [accessed 8 October 2024]

⁴⁹ 'A Glossary of Rhetorical Terms', *XlibrisUS* <<http://www.xlibris.com/en-gb/bookstore/bookdetails/777790-a-glossary-of-rhetorical-terms>> [accessed 8 October 2024]

It is important to note that although composers have used – both consciously and unconsciously – some of the devices which the research explores in other compositional contexts, this thesis develops a specific toolkit which investigates the purposeful incorporation of these devices. It does this to rationalise and catalogue the sometimes instinctive compositional processes so that other composers can do the same in the future. The nine rhetorical devices used are discussed and defined in Chapter 4 *Toolkit*.

This chapter considers the methodology employed to study the research question:

How can the composition of contemporary classical music be an effective vessel for the exploration of socio-political issues?

The previous chapter explored the context of this research. It outlined that the ‘exploration of socio-political issues’ would be undertaken by using musical rhetorical devices in compositional contexts. To do this, the research uses a reflexive methodology which is made up of practice as research (music composition) and a dynamic feedback and development loop in response to the practice research. The feedback and development loop considers score analysis of the practice research and personal self-reflection on the process. This methodology allows for consideration of the research question by practically and explicitly embedding the rhetorical devices into the compositions. This is followed by reflection on their use, further development and reimplementation.

Composition as research

In this project, composition (the practice) is the primary research output. Robin Nelson describes practice as research projects as ‘a research project in which practice is a key method of inquiry and where, in respect of the arts, a practice ... is submitted as substantial evidence of a research inquiry’.⁵⁰ In the case of this research, the practice has developed over the course of the project starting with smaller scale initial inquiry pieces leading to a large scale work for symphony orchestra rounding off the portfolio. The nature of a reflexive methodology means that the works in the portfolio are intrinsically linked. This commentary helps to articulate these links by drawing on key threads of developments. The pieces in the portfolio and their connections are discussed in more detail in chapters 5 to 7. Each work presented in the portfolio has been composed as part of the investigation of the research question; the practice is the

⁵⁰ Robin Nelson, *Practice As Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2013) pp. 8-9

inquiry into the composition of contemporary classical music and how it can act as an effective vessel for the exploration of socio-political issues.

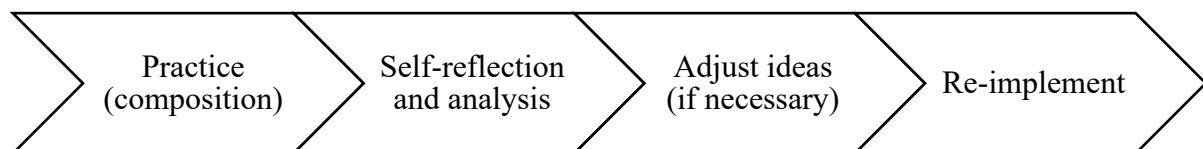
My own background as a composer is firmly engaged in music of the Western Art Music tradition, therefore my practice is part of the lineage of the composers discussed in the previous chapter. My compositional practice is generally sited within acoustic instrumental and vocal composition but also includes manipulated and found fixed media sources. The contemporary Western Art Music tradition therefore runs through the compositions presented in the portfolio and is a musical and stylistic limitation on the music composed in examination of the research question.

Chapters 5 to 7 illuminate the purposeful incorporation of rhetorical devices and outline the exploration of the research question. The examination of the research question uses the nine rhetorical devices briefly outlined earlier as the vessel of exploration, and these devices are explored in more detail in chapter 4.

A reflexive methodology; feedback and development loops

In this reflexive methodology the compositional practice is evaluated in a dynamic feedback and development loop. Andrew R. Brown and Andrew Sorensen in *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts* explain that ‘this feedback loop between speculation and experimentation is fundamental to research in many disciplines, and is also appropriate for research in the creative arts’.⁵¹ This research uses the feedback and development loop shown in figure 2.

Figure 2: The feedback and development loop



⁵¹ Andrew R. Brown and Andrew Sorensen, *Practice-Led Research, Research-Led Practice in the Creative Arts*, ed. by Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean (Edinburgh University Press, 2009) p. 153

Figure 2 shows that the feedback and development loops start and end with the practice (music composition). The middle section of this loop contains the self-reflection, analysis, and adjustment of ideas. Where useful in exploring the research question, this will be developed in chapters 5 to 7. The further re-implementation of additional practice follows, and this builds on the learnings of the middle sections of the feedback and development loop. By the very nature of practice-based research inquiry, the re-implementation segment of this feedback and development loop means the re-implementation of ideas explored through new practice inquires, and does not mean revising the individual research studies.

A diary writer, journalist, or auto-ethnographer?

As previously suggested, it would be difficult to consider this research without noting that the body of work completed has a diaristic or journalistic sensibility. In many respects, the music reflects the contemporaneous socio-political surroundings of when it was written. Auto-ethnography considers the wider context of research and specifically the author's position within that wider context. In *Methodologies for Practice Research*, Kath Woodward writes:

Auto-ethnography is a qualitative methodology which provides a way of not only acknowledging the role of the researcher, but also of reflecting upon that role and providing explanations of the connections between different elements which make up the practice of research. Most importantly, auto-ethnography provides a way of investigating and understanding personal and social worlds through a process which explicitly includes the researcher.⁵²

Carolyn Ellis goes further, and reflecting on her own auto-ethnography she writes: 'As an autoethnographer, I am both the author and focus of the story, the one who tells and the one who experiences, the observer and the observed... I am the person at the intersection of the personal and the cultural, thinking and observing as an ethnographer and writing and describing as a storyteller'.⁵³

⁵² Kath Woodward, *Methodologies for Practice Research: Approaches for Professional Doctorates*, ed. by Carol Costley and John Fulton (SAGE Publications, Ltd, 2019), p. 139

⁵³ Carolyn Ellis, *Revision: Autoethnographic Reflections on Life and Work*, Writing Lives--Ethnographic Narratives (Left Coast Press, 2009), p. 13

With these definitions in mind, it is useful to consider that in some respects this practice as research project also has elements of auto-ethnography. I am, as the composer, situated within the context of the ever-changing world – the music acts as the intersection that Ellis describes. The limitation is that the music does not however make me – as composer – ‘the story’, and in that sense, the music is purely research (as practice). The elements of practice and auto-ethnography combined make up the practical methodology employed in this research project.

As noted in previous chapters, the practical exploration of the research question is through the use of a ‘toolkit’ made up of musical versions of rhetorical devices. These musical rhetorical devices are derived from the rhetorical devices used by speechwriters in the forms of compositional techniques in practice. This chapter will give an overview of these rhetorical devices in the context of speechwriting and give definitions to them so that during the following chapters on practice, it will be possible to refer to these to see the parallels drawn in the portfolio.

The rhetorical devices in this toolkit are:

Allusion and intertextuality

Epanalepsis

Exergasia and polyptoton

Hyperbole

Irony

Juxtaposition

Metaphor

Personification

Rule of three

These nine devices were chosen after substantial surveying of the wider field of rhetorical devices because of the perceived links and connections between these nine devices in a speechwriting context to what may be possible in musical contexts. The chapters exploring the practice will outline that some devices, when transposed to a musical setting, are more effective than others. These devices are each defined and exemplified below. For ease of reference, noted with these definitions are the compositions in which the musical iterations of each device are present. These definitions solely focus on the uses of these devices in speechwriting and literary contexts.

Allusion and intertextuality

Present in: *From Home, The Anti-Masker, Equals, Summer, Wonderland, An Attack is Taking Place*

Allusion and intertextuality are grouped together as they are intrinsically interrelated. Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday express allusion as ‘an indirect reference within a text or utterance to a person, place, event, or another text or utterance’, these are generally recognisable for an audience, but this does not have to be the case.⁵⁴ Intertextuality is ‘the various links in form and content which bind any text to other texts’.⁵⁵ Martin Luther King Jr in his 1963 ‘I have a dream’ speech pronounced:

Fivescore years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation.⁵⁶

King Jr is using allusion to point towards the words and image of President Lincoln. Lincoln’s Gettysburg address also uses the word ‘score’ to measure time, and Lincoln was the president to sign the Emancipation Proclamation.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, *A Dictionary of Media and Communication* (Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2020), p. 183

⁵⁵ Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, *A Dictionary of Media and Communication*, p. 453

⁵⁶ Gary Younge, *The Speech: The Story Behind Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. ’s Dream* (Haymarket Books, 2013), pp. 9

⁵⁷ Abraham Lincoln, *Gettysburg Address Delivered at Gettysburg Pa. Nov. 19th, 1863. [n. p. n. d.]*, 1863, Printed Ephemera Collection, Portfolio 244, Folder 45 <<https://www.loc.gov/item/rbpe.24404500/>> [accessed 10 October 2024]

Epanalepsis

Present in: *Drift, For Gaza, An Attack is Taking Place*

Epanalepsis is ‘a figure by which the same word or clause is repeated after intervening matter’.⁵⁸ In his speech to the United Nations General Assembly in September 1961, President John F Kennedy declared: ‘Mankind must put an end to war or war will put an end to mankind’.⁵⁹ Epanalepsis is in action here with the words mankind and war being given emphasis.

Exergasia and polyptoton

Present in: *On Leaving You, Our Better History, An Attack is Taking Place*

Gideon O. Burton describes exergasia as the ‘repetition of the same idea, changing either its words, its delivery, or the general treatment it is given’.⁶⁰ This is a similar device to polyptoton (hence why these two devices are grouped together), which ‘[involves] the repetition of a word in different cases or inflections within the same sentence’.⁶¹ Lord Acton’s observation on mortality: ‘power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely’ uses polyptoton in the use of the word ‘absolute’.⁶²

⁵⁸ Oxford English Dictionary, ‘Epanalepsis, n.’ (Oxford University Press, 1891), Oxford English Dictionary <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1164486370>> [accessed 9 October 2024]

⁵⁹ JFK Library, ‘Address to the United Nations General Assembly | JFK Library’ <<https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/historic-speeches/address-to-the-united-nations-general-assembly>> [accessed 9 October 2024]

⁶⁰ Gideon O. Burton, ‘Exergasia’, *Silva Rhetoricae*, Brigham Young University <<https://rhetoric.byu.edu/Figures/E/exergasia.htm>> [accessed 10 October 2024]

⁶¹ Oxford English Dictionary, ‘Polyptoton, n.’, 2006 <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/polyptoton_n> [accessed 10 October 2024]

⁶² E. D. Hirsch Jr., Joseph F. Kett, and James Trefil, eds., ‘Power Tends to Corrupt; Absolute Power Corrupts Absolutely’, in *The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*, 3rd ed. (HarperCollins, 2002) <<https://link-gale-com.bcu.idm.oclc.org/apps/doc/A177456412/AONE?u=uce&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=1697662d>> [accessed 10 October 2024]

In the case of both exergasia and polyptoton, there is an emphasis on changing the inflection, case, or delivery of the words. This is the specific part of these two devices considered in this research, and is why they have been grouped together.

Hyperbole

Present in: *On Leaving You, Ghost Light, An Attack is Taking Place*

Chandler and Munday describe hyperbole as ‘a figure of speech involving emphatic exaggeration or overstatement, sometimes based on irony’.⁶³ Irony has been separated from hyperbole in this survey because these devices have been approached differently in the practice. Damon Linker, writing in *The Week* about political hyperbole, opens with his own hyperbolic jest: ‘America's addiction to hyperbolic rhetoric is an existential threat to the United States’.⁶⁴

Irony

Present in: *From Home, The Anti-Masker, Wonderland*

Irony is ‘typically, the expression of one’s intended meaning through language which, taken literally, appears on the surface to express the opposite – usually for humorous effect. The intended meaning is not in the message itself: the audience has to refer to context cues (for instance, nonverbal signals) in order to interpret its modality status (as literal, ironic, or a lie)’.⁶⁵

Anna Gornostaeva and Maria Semenovskaya note that ‘irony in speeches of certain political figures may sound quite bitter, especially if it refers to the opponents’.⁶⁶ They cite an example

⁶³ Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, *A Dictionary of Media and Communication*, p. 412

⁶⁴ Damon Linker, ‘Our Dangerous Addiction to Political Hyperbole’, *The Week UK*, 2019

<<https://theweek.com/articles/824408/dangerous-addiction-political-hyperbole>> [accessed 10 October 2024]

⁶⁵ Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, *A Dictionary of Media and Communication*, p. 456

⁶⁶ Anna Gornostaeva and Maria Semenovskaya, ‘Humour and Irony in Modern Political Discourse’, *IJASOS-International E-Journal of Advances in Social Sciences*, Vol. IV.12 (2018) p. 719

<<http://ijasos.ocerintjournals.org/en/download/article-file/615203>> [accessed 10 October 2024]

of Donald Trump talking about Hillary Clinton at the 2016 Al Smith Dinner: ‘I am sure Hillary is going to laugh quite a bit tonight, sometimes even at appropriate moments’.⁶⁷ Gornostaeva and Semenovskaya explain that ‘this remark conveys an implicit meaning, referring to a popular opinion that Hillary is devoid of sense of humour, and all her emotions, including smile and laughter, are planned before by her image makers’.⁶⁸ Gornostaeva and Semenovskaya note that irony is not always easy to understand, especially if you do not have the background of the situation, as this can lead to irony being mistaken for something else or overlooked entirely.⁶⁹

Juxtaposition

Present in: *Drift, Wonderland, An Attack is Taking Place*

Juxtaposition is ‘the act of positioning things next to each other, especially for comparison or contrast’.⁷⁰ In his paper ‘*We Seek Peace, But We Shall Not Surrender*’: JFK’s Use of Juxtaposition for Rhetorical Success in the Berlin Crisis, Kevin W. Dean argues that Kennedy uses juxtaposition throughout his orations in response to the Berlin crisis: ‘Perhaps the most celebrated illustrations of antithetical pairing can be seen in his inaugural address; for instance, “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.” Through antithesis, the presence of one phrase defines the other.’⁷¹

Metaphor

Present in: *From Home, Ghost Light, For Gaza, An Attack is Taking Place*

There are many different definitions of metaphor. Chandler and Munday define it as a ‘figure of speech (more strictly, a trope), in which something is described as if it were something else

⁶⁷ Anna Gornostaeva and Maria Semenovskaya, ‘Humour and Irony in Modern Political Discourse’, p. 719

⁶⁸ Anna Gornostaeva and Maria Semenovskaya, ‘Humour and Irony in Modern Political Discourse’, p. 719

⁶⁹ Anna Gornostaeva and Maria Semenovskaya, ‘Humour and Irony in Modern Political Discourse’, p. 720

⁷⁰ Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, *A Dictionary of Media and Communication*, p. 460

⁷¹ Kevin W. Dean, “‘We Seek Peace, But We Shall Not Surrender’: JFK’s Use of Juxtaposition for Rhetorical Success in the Berlin Crisis’, *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 21.3 (1991), p. 532

by virtue of some apparent similarity'.⁷² Andreas Musolff discusses metaphor in the Brexit debate and focuses on Boris Johnson's famous cake metaphor: 'You cannot have your cake and eat it' where Johnson uses a cake as a metaphor for Brexit.⁷³

Personification

Present in: *From Home, Our Better History, Summer*

Personification is 'the attribution of human form, nature, or characteristics to something; the representation of a thing or abstraction as a person'.⁷⁴ Barack Obama in his inaugural address (the subject of *Our Better History* for solo oboe and organ (or drone)) uses personification by '[referring] to countries or political movements as people'.⁷⁵ Andrew J. Gallagher explains that 'Obama refers to America as "a friend" of other nations, while earlier generations "faced down" fascism. Additionally, he speaks of dogmas as having the power to *strangle* our politics. Most famously, he described terrorists as a group of people to whom he would like to "extend a hand if they would unclench their fists"'.⁷⁶

Rule of three

Present in: *From Home, Equals, An Attack is Taking Place*

Max Atkinson refers to the rule of three as 'lists of three' and writes that 'in speeches, conversations and most other forms of communications, the most commonly used type of list contains three items, and an example of such a list has just been used to start this sentence'.⁷⁷

⁷² Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, *A Dictionary of Media and Communication*, p. 520

⁷³ Andreas Musolff, 'Hyperbole and Emotionalisation: Escalation of Pragmatic Effects of Proverb and Metaphor in the "Brexit" Debate', *Russian Journal of Linguistics*, 25.3 (2021), p. 628

⁷⁴ Oxford English Dictionary, 'Personification, n.', 2005 <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/personification_n> [accessed 10 October 2024]

⁷⁵ Andrew J. Gallagher, 'Flashback: Obama's 1st Inaugural Address', *Metaphors in American Politics*, 2016 <<http://www.politicalmetaphors.com/tag/personification/>> [accessed 10 October 2024]

⁷⁶ Andrew J. Gallagher, 'Flashback: Obama's 1st Inaugural Address'

⁷⁷ J. Maxwell Atkinson, *Our Masters' Voices: The Language and Body Language of Politics*, p. 57

Atkinson goes on to explain that ‘they have an air of unity or completeness about them’.⁷⁸ Examples of political slogans and mantra with three words which echo this effect are often heard in everyday political life; a recent example would be ‘get Brexit done’. Atkinson evidences that this rule of three stretches beyond mottos and political advertising, giving the example of Winston Churchill’s speech to the House of Commons in 1940: ‘Never in the field of human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few’.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ J. Maxwell Atkinson, *Our Masters’ Voices: The Language and Body Language of Politics*, p. 57

⁷⁹ J. Maxwell Atkinson, *Our Masters’ Voices: The Language and Body Language of Politics*, p. 127

The following three chapters explore examples of how the toolkit of rhetorical devices has been used in the compositional practice. The examples offered below are just some elements highlighted to help illuminate the investigation into the research question. The chapters will consider the portfolio of works piece by piece and will refer to the toolkit devices discussed in chapter 4. Here, they are transposed into a musical context. Readers should study and listen to each piece as they are discussed in order to get a full understanding of the development of the musical toolkit. This will allow readers to see and hear how the practice has developed across the project and therefore understand the nexus of practice and inquiry and its relationship with the research question.

On Leaving You

Toolkit used: exergasia & polyptoton, hyperbole

On Leaving You for open scored ensemble was written on the day the UK officially left the European Union (1st February 2020), and was the first study piece in this research.

The deployment of the toolkit in this instance is relatively crude. The musical use of exergasia and polyptoton is perhaps most obviously observable through the continuous repetition of a simple single line. Each time the line is performed, there is a slight change in dynamics either louder or quieter at the performer's discretion – this mirrors a change in intonation in speech. The musical line repeats asynchronously eleven times in total. The asynchronous nature of the line allows for changes in musical inflections or delivery to be highlighted.

The choice of eleven repetitions was an active consideration for two reasons. Firstly, so the piece feels overly exaggerated (mirroring hyperbole), which prolongs the performance to a point where the piece feels almost too long. Secondly, because it is one less than twelve; there are twelve stars on the EU flag which 'stand for the ideals of unity, solidarity and harmony

among the peoples of Europe’.⁸⁰ There are also only eleven notes present in this piece (in concert pitch) and the missing note, an E-natural, also follows a similar line of reasoning and is echoed in the title (the ‘E’ leaving the ‘U’). In each case, the employment of hyperbole reflects on Brexit.

Asking performers to perform this work on any instrument and at a tempo of their choosing between the indicated markings allows for various timbres to be present throughout a performance. This allows the repetitions of the line to be heard in different ways, which mirrors exergasia and polyptoton. The dynamic ranges offered to the performer (either *pianissimo* to *fortissimo* or the reverse) are also hyperbolic in their differences.

After completing the piece, I reflected on why *On Leaving You* was a good starting point to explore the toolkit and research question. The toolkit’s impact on the composition process was strong and each element had a clear compositional influence. This was something I wanted to follow through to further compositions. The open score nature of the work left quite a lot to chance, which did not always work with the formalised toolkit. Because of this, I decided that I would not pursue more of these open form pieces in the research project.

Drift

Toolkit used: epanalepsis, juxtaposition

Drift for ensemble is a work commissioned for the Glasgow Barons to respond to the then upcoming COP26 Climate Change Conference in Glasgow and the *Year of Rivers and Coasts* theme led by VisitScotland. As this was still the initial study phase of this research project, the piece developed from only a small amount of material to explore epanalepsis. I developed the idea to create two distinct examples of epanalepsis in the composition, one on a macro level and one on a micro level. On a macro level the piece is in ternary form (A B A). This form is ideal to explore the concept of ‘the same word or clause is repeated after intervening matter’.⁸¹ This can be seen in figure 3 (the very opening) and figure 4 (the very ending).

⁸⁰ European Union, ‘EU Flag’ <https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/symbols/european-flag_en> [accessed 10 October 2024]

⁸¹ Oxford English Dictionary, ‘Epanalepsis, n.’

Figure 3 – Opening of *Drift*: bars 1-6

Serene ♩ = 66

Flute

Clarinet in Bb

Vibraphone

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

soft mallets
motor on (slow) al. fine
sempre l.v.

p

pp

mp

pp

mp

pp

mp

Figure 4 – Closing bars of *Drift*: bars 172-176

172

Fl.

Cl.

Vib.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

pp

p

pp

mp

pp

mp

These sections both consist of similar musical material: sustained notes, G octaves in the vibraphone and harmonies based around the major 2nd of G-natural and A-natural. The musical material in these sections is also built from musical epanalepsis. The material wants to find a return to their initial home notes – so in the case of the very opening the vibraphone figure returns to the G octave idea even after the interference of the A-natural in the phrase. The B section sees a similar push and pull of harmony and non-harmony notes. For example, see the draw to return to the C-sharp from Figure E.

This work also explores how juxtaposition can be used to engage with themes around climate change. It does this by developing overtly contrasting musical material to be heard at the same time. At bar 45 (Fig C) for example, it juxtaposes long musical lines, representing the long and mostly steady history of the earth's climate, with short disjunct percussive ideas representing climate change. The idea here is to mirror the effects climate change is having on our world echoing sudden changes such as extremes in weather or flash flooding.

In many ways, *Drift* was intuitively a more successful piece than *On Leaving You*. Exploring these devices with the strict structural intent of epanalepsis provided a clear narrative to be formed with the juxtaposition adding an additional layer to the music. This juxtaposition allowed for an underlining of the narrative of the piece which is presented to the listener. In this case, it allowed for the climate change narrative to be foregrounded. This foregrounding is evidence of how the music can be an effective vessel for the exploration of socio-political issues. This is further explored in *From Home*.

From Home

Toolkit used: allusion & intertextuality, irony, metaphor, personification, rule of three

From Home for solos, duos, and ensembles is a collection of pieces which were composed during the COVID-19 lockdowns for musician friends. Each of the pieces explores a different element of that period investigating and considering the world we were living in. Presented as part of the folio are two different versions of the recording of *From Home*: the first is an mp3 file which presents all of the *From Home* movements in one file, and the second is a collection of some of the *From Home* videos which contextualise the project output. *From Home* was a perfect opportunity to expand the use of rhetorical devices in short study and character pieces. Only a few key examples of the devices used in the compositional process are explored below.

I. Lament from the *From Home* series was written for guitarist Matthew McAllister. The early days of the pandemic were filled with sudden change. There was a huge amount of loss in the news: loss of life, work, and routine. *Lament* is a metaphor for that loss. The metaphor plays out in the general harmonic considerations of the piece; the slow tempo, and the use of descriptive musical terms to parallel that loss with death. The piece slows gradually towards

the end mirroring the finality of loss; it is marked *morendo* (dying away) and ends *al niente* (to nothing).

In the early lockdowns, I found myself with more time than pre-COVID. I remember one evening deciding to download *The Sims 4* to pass the time. *The Sims* is a computer game franchise where the player creates Sims (virtual people) with an aim to keep them alive doing their daily routine and tasks. (Always remember to build a ladder in the swimming pool!) The Sims universe felt like an escape from the reality of the lack of ownership over one's own routine. The music of the Sims franchise was a soundtrack to my childhood, and I still distinctly remember the quasi-jazz piano music written for 'build mode'. Jerry Martin, Marc Russo, Kirk R. Casey and Dix Bruce's soundtrack is alluded to in *III. Downloading The Sims 4*. It does this by creating an almost ostinato bass line with flowing right-hand melodies synonymous with the Martin et al scores, but it is reframed here in the context of COVID-19. *Downloading The Sims 4* offsets the expected bassline patterns (e.g. Bars 13-16), disrupts the four semiquaver note patterns (e.g. Bars 15-16), and in an attempt to make the Sims world feel like it had been thrown upside down, inverts the bass line (Bars 20-23). These alterations and disruptions mirror the changes in our lives during COVID. The compositional process here was useful as a tool to explore the locked-down world around me; in some ways it was ironically freeing to be using a video game where the control of people is at its heart as a starting point for the composition.

Figure 5 – *III. Downloading The Sims 4*: bars 13-24

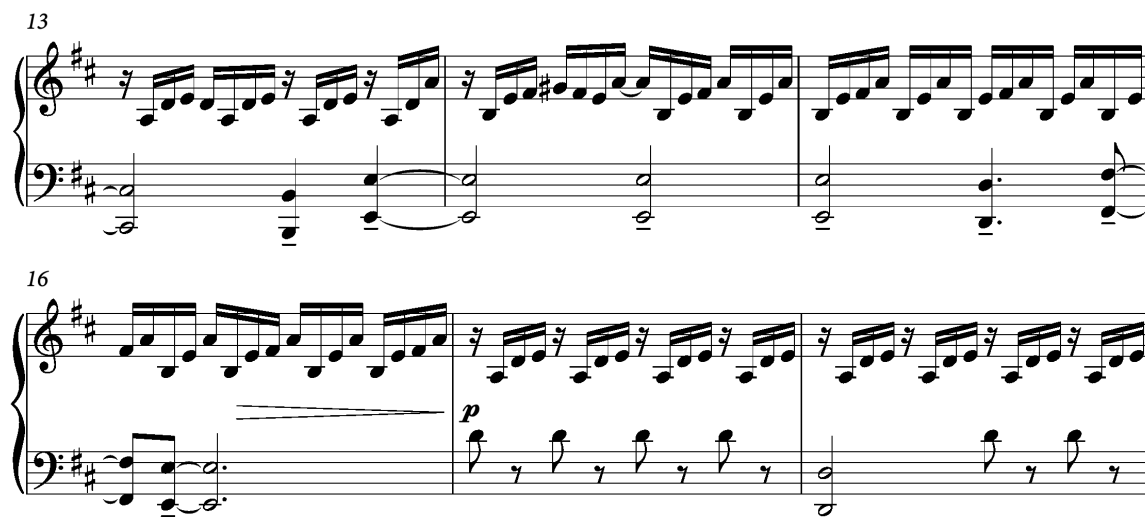


Figure 5 (cont.)



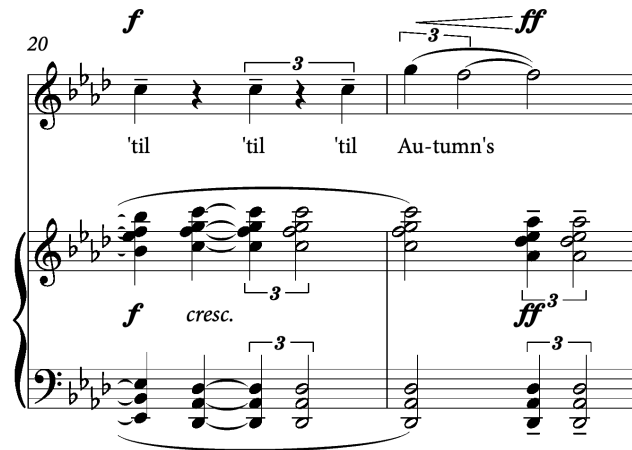
My routine in lockdown became punctuated by the briefings given daily by politicians and scientists about the progress of the pandemic. It was ironic that these briefings had an almost obsessive character which – to me at least – created an ill-effect beyond the attempt to reassure and inform. *IX. Daily Briefing* for tenor saxophone is ironic in its neurotic ceaseless semiquavers punctuated by slap tongue and pensive silence. *Daily Briefing* uses these techniques to create an ironic comment on the UK's generally slow and sluggish response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The *From Home* project allowed me to work not only with musician friends, but friends and colleagues from other disciplines. *X. Wishing* for voice and piano is a setting of a haiku by Keith Jewitt. Haiku is a 'poetic form divided into three phrases: five syllables, seven syllables, and five syllables'.⁸² The use of the three phrases and symmetrical shape of the haiku form were a practical backdrop to explore the use of the rule of three in the composition. To do this, *Wishing* emphasises, by using the rule of three, specific words within Jewitt's haiku. These words are: 'wishing', 'spring', 'everything', 'til', and 'clean'. The piece also uses these words to create an additional message relating to the COVID pandemic: 'wishing everything would

⁸² Stephen Kohl, 'Haiku', in *Encyclopedia of Modern Asia*, ed. by Karen Christensen and David Levinson (Charles Scribner's Sons, 2002), vol: ii, p. 474

be clean'. In the work, each of these words are repeated in whole (except for one instance of 'every' rather than 'everything') three times, implementing the rule of three (see e.g. bars 20-21, figure 6).

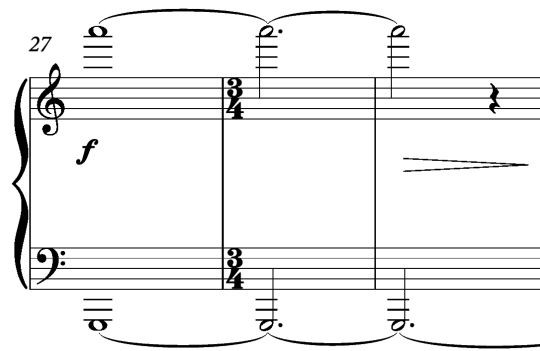
Figure 6 – *X. Wishing*: bars 20-21



During the early stages of the pandemic, we were bombarded with discussions around the access to and supply of hospital ventilators. The need was so great that the UK government 'placed an emergency order of 10,000 ventilators designed at breakneck speed by bagless vacuum cleaner company Dyson'.⁸³ *XI. Ventilator* for accordion is a musical personification of these life-supporting machines. The accordion's sound is produced by air being passed through the bellows and over a set of reeds by moving the bellows in and out – this makes it the ideal instrument to personify hospital ventilators. The opening bars of *XI. Ventilator* start with 'air sounds', directly mimicking the air passing through a hospital ventilator, and long sustained notes personify the long tone of hospital heart-monitoring equipment (see figure 7, bars 27-29).

⁸³ Kate Holton, Costas Pitas, and Paul Sandle, 'Britain Orders Ventilators from Vacuum-Maker Dyson as F1 Teams Stand Ready', *Reuters*, 26 March 2020, section World <<https://www.reuters.com/article/world/britain-orders-ventilators-from-vacuum-maker-dyson-as-f1-teams-stand-ready-idUSKBN21D2BB/>> [accessed 11 October 2024]

Figure 7 – XI: *Ventilator* bars 27-29



These pieces were developed from the foregrounding considered in *Drift*, where each piece has a clear message, narrative, or non-musical socio-political idea which it blatantly and unashamedly explores. For me, this was very successful, and all future pieces have this same narrative intention which does not hide behind a smokescreen. In other words, I wanted to ensure that all future studies in this research were obvious in their socio-political inception.

The success of the use of the toolkit within *From Home* acted as an impetus for the future compositions in this project; *From Home* essentially became the bedrock of the research. I allowed myself the opportunity – without fear or favour – to explore the world I found myself in. In the examples outlined above, the toolkit worked actively in conjunction with my compositional practice to reflect on and engage with the contemporary socio-political issues of the time. I felt that these pieces were cathartic; I found a way to explore, almost journalistically, the COVID pandemic – it was strangely positive. In *From Home*, I was able to employ my fast-paced and reactive compositional practice to develop the uses of the toolkit, reflecting on the changing events of the world around us. *From Home* had the added benefit of creating a community of musicians; the movements were each composed for individual musician friends and colleagues. The implementation of the toolkit was impacted by who was performing each movement. Therefore, I could write music which would play to their strengths. Although *From Home* is made up of twenty-one short character works – each with a distinct socio-political idea and voice running throughout it – for me, together they create a journal of the COVID pandemic in one coherent piece of music.

The artistic success of the work runs parallel to the research success, and they are intrinsically interlinked. Composing *From Home* gave me the opportunity to write twenty-one short character pieces exploring individual toolkit devices and this was pivotal to the development

of the research. These character pieces underpin the future practice research in the reflexive feedback loop. It is clear from my reflections that *From Home* is an effective vessel for the exploration of socio-political issues and was an excellent starting point for further practice research studies.

As outlined in the methodology chapter, these initial study pieces act as a preliminary set of research to consider how the composition of contemporary classical music can be an effective vessel in the exploration of socio-political issues. After completing these pieces, I reflected and analysed the initial attempt at using the toolkit. I was generally pleased with the overall implementation of the rhetorical devices within these compositions. The structural use of epanalepsis, the use of musical allusion and the juxtaposition of ideas were particularly useful in the compositional process. Epanalepsis was a helpful tool to navigate the structural intent of a piece and gave a focus to the narrative of composition from the outset. Allusion narrowed the ideas considered in the compositions; this made the act of composing easier and helped the music maintain a coherent narrative. Juxtaposition gave a clear sense of purposefulness when exploring explicitly different musical ideas and helped to make the music not feel forced.

I was less satisfied with the use of the rule of three which was quite restrictive in the compositional process, and use of metaphor was challenging to follow through from conception to implementation without it becoming either unruly or lost. These are two specific areas that the further study pieces (considered in chapter 6) explore in more depth. The further study pieces develop the toolkit, allowing re-implementation as outlined in the methodology. The initial study pieces concentrated on the individual use of these devices from the toolkit, and the further studies explore how using devices together can help to advance the exploration of the research question.

The reflexive methodology allows the constant reassessment, during the compositional process, of the practice research. As such, the initial studies in chapter 5 led to the reengagement of the toolkit devices explored in new compositional contexts, which are outlined in this chapter. After consideration of what did and did not work well and to further explore lines of inquiry into the research question, each of the rhetorical devices were used again in the pieces explored in chapter 6. Given my reflections after finishing *From Home*, I was keen to keep the momentum going but wanted to develop longer-form works after the short character pieces written as initial study pieces. To do this, the number of devices used from the toolkit within each of the further study pieces was limited to two or three toolkit devices.

Ghost Light

Toolkit used: hyperbole, metaphor

Ghost Light for solo french horn was commissioned as part of a larger project run by Saar Berger who asked twelve composers to write new pieces for the horn during the COVID pandemic. *Ghost Light* takes its name from the single light left shining in a mothballed theatre. The programme note reads:

A ghost light is left on at the centre of the stage when a theatre is in darkness. Do we leave the light on to appease ghosts or to ward them away?

In *Ghost Light*, the compositional use of metaphor is present before a single musical note has been considered. The conscious use of the emotive figure of a ghost light, in addition to the rhetorical questions posed in the programme note, frame the work in a way which asks the listener to consider the role of the solo horn. The composition places the performer on their own on stage in the same way that a ghost light would be on a stage in a theatre. To explore the rhetorical questions posed in the programme note, *Ghost Light* purposefully uses the horn in non-traditional ways, furthering the use of metaphor. The french horn is considered a monophonic instrument; it generally only produces one note at a time. However, in *Ghost Light*, the performer is asked to play the horn while singing/humming a top line (see e.g. bars

3-14, figure 8). This is an eerie effect which plays on perception of the single melodic line – the second line being treated as an attempt to play with (or perhaps ward away) the ghostly spirits. These ghostly lines return at the end of the piece as if ‘the light’ (the horn player) uses the middle section to play with and eventually fend off the spirits. The use of metaphor in this case was helpful for me when writing the work, and gave the piece a clear narrative whilst echoing the mothballed theatres during COVID 19.

Figure 8 – *Ghost Light*: bars 1-19

♩ = 68
Molto rubato
 air → pitched
 top line sung/hummed

(9)

8

14

poco vib. → molto vib.
 echo

pp *mp* *pp* *mf* *f* *ff* *fff* *niente*

Ghost Light also reexplores the hyperbole that was investigated in *On Leaving You* by overly exaggerating the musical material. In figure 8, we can see the gradual exaggerated *crescendo* from *niente* to *fortississimo* with a sudden reversal to *niente*. This works with the playful ghosts metaphor to enhance its effect.

This middle section develops the hyperbolic tendencies with exploration of disruptive dynamics, different timbral qualities (e.g. overtone *glissandi*, singing, and vibrato), and varied rhythmic alterations (e.g. feathered beamed *accelerandi*). The middle section (bars 20-57) becomes more agitated and more extreme, ending *al niente*. The final section recapitulates the

opening but with a more extreme range, allowing the metaphorical ghost to return once more to finish the piece.

In some ways, the use of metaphor in *Ghost Light* could be considered programmatic; the programmatic framing allows the clear metaphor to develop as a line of inquiry during the compositional process. It gives a strong grounding to the structure of a composition, and this use of metaphor as structure echoes how speechwriters may use metaphor to further or ground a narrative in their arguments. This was useful to note when considering how music can be a vessel for the exploration of socio-political ideas in contemporary classical composition.

I was pleased with *Ghost Light*; for me, it was a successful composition. It was well received by Saar Berger (the performer/commissioner), and Saar felt the piece worked well because of its metaphorical intent. I noted that I wanted to explore this further and develop more narrative through metaphor in future works in the project. This is explored in *For Gaza* for solo violin, which is discussed later in this chapter. The other important realisation during the compositional process of *Ghost Light* was the power of a single performer which was almost akin to an orator delivering a speech on stage. I wanted to further explore this characterisation of the performer. In *The Anti-Masker* for ensemble, I overtly place that ‘orator’ in the form of a narrator centre stage.

The Anti-Masker

Toolkit used: allusion & intertextuality, irony

Written for Skipton Camerata, *The Anti-Masker* uses a text by Kamal Kaan as impetus to tell the story of an overly in-your-face person refusing to wear a face covering during the COVID-19 pandemic. This story is told by a narrator and ensemble. The work’s theatrical elements offered a new space to develop the uses of the rhetorical toolkit. *The Anti-Masker* explores irony through the narrator’s text and props, the ensemble’s theatrical directions, and the musical material. Allusion and intertextuality are investigated through the use of musical quotation, musical directions, and the interplay between the ensemble and narrator.

Irony is embedded throughout the work – the very opening shows one example of this. The piece launches into a declaration of ‘rule britannia’ by the narrator with a single bar quotation

(intertextual reference) of the patriotic British song of the same name, coupled with a non-harmonic D-flat in the double bass. The D-flat creates an almost confused atmosphere and makes the ‘rule britannia’ feel overly forced. This, together with the militaristic snare drum, the narrators direction to ‘remain poised throughout the snare drum solo’, and the dramatic salute to and from the ensemble in bars 9 and 10, play into the irony in the opening. The dramatic shift in texture and timbre at figure A (to long interwoven lines) underpin this paradox.

The Anti-Masker uses several allusions and intertextual quotations throughout the piece in exploration of the research question. The opening, as previously discussed, uses quotation from *Rule Britannia*, and a further quotation appears in the clarinet from the upbeat of bar 124 to bar 128 (figure 9).

Figure 9 – *The Anti-Masker*: bars 123-128 (clarinet only)

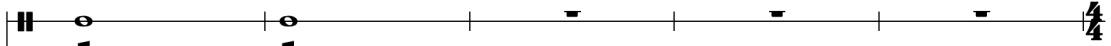


Irony working alongside allusion can also be seen in the narrator’s direction to ‘apply war paint’ at figure B. Here, the allusion is to the desire to fight (the mission of the anti-masker) and is ironic in its use of war paint. Historically, this would have been used to scare an opposing force, but in a modern context would likely be used as camouflage, so the narrator ends up not sticking out, but blending in. Another use of both allusion and irony working together can be seen in bars 118-122 in the interplay between the handbell and narrator (figure 10). The percussion player is directed to act ‘as if a town crier’ and shout ‘hear ye, hear ye!’. This invokes the use of a prop scroll by the narrator and breaks down the traditional ensemble/narrator relationship. This helps to underpin the allusion which aims to take the listener to a space of a public pronouncement (e.g. a town square).


Figure 10 – *The Anti-Masker*: bars 118-122 (percussion & narrator only)

Handbell

118 *as if a town crier*

H-bell 

Shout: "Hear ye, hear ye!"
ff

Nar. 

*unfurl the scroll
as if a town crier*

"masks did not prevent healthy people from picking up coronavirus"

On reflection, *The Anti-Masker* was almost too literal in the conveyance of its political message. That said, the toolkit's overt use of allusion and intertextual quotations was effective, and the use of both a narrator and text added a layer of compositional challenge. I had to navigate the push and pull of the text and the political ideas inherent in the musical allusions and quotations. The work is effective in using music to explore a socio-political idea. I wanted to take this idea further and consider how using pre-determined or pre-existing material without a live performer could be used as a vessel for exploring socio-political ideas in music. This led to the development of *Equals*, which uses a pre-existing video as the basis of the composition.

Equals

Toolkit used: allusion & intertextuality, rule of three

The 2020 US Election gripped the attention of the whole world with the incumbent President, Donald Trump, fighting for re-election against Joe Biden. In the programme note for *Equals*, I write:

Like many global observers, I was consumed by, and almost addicted to, the 2020 Election in the United States of America. It was during the election process, and the manoeuvres leading to polling day that I became particularly aware of the use of autocratic rhetoric, mistruths, and falsehoods used in the campaign. The purposeful and political use of lies and misinformation is not only found in America. They permeate our democratic societies around the world.

Equals explores this idea by using the 1946 Encyclopaedia Britannica film ‘Despotism’, which was used as classroom material in the USA in the post-war era to explore the tyrannical nature of Nazi Germany and the issues that authoritarian regimes would have if copied or mirrored in the USA. The film discusses two primary areas of concern when considering if a government is leaning towards despotism – respect and the concentration of power. It is the aspects of respect and power which are alluded to in the composition and form the basis of the compositional process. One example of allusion can be seen at letter E. The video at this point is discussing power, so the musical material takes the form of disjunct angular dogmatic material played *fortissimo*. Overt musical allusion is used throughout to connect the listener to the then recent US election. Two examples of these allusions are shown in Figures 11 and 12. The first is the violin motif in bars 32-34, which is a quotation from *Yankee Doodle*, the second appears from beat 3 of bar 96 to bar 97, quoting *Star Spangled Banner*.

Figure 11 – *Equals*: bars 32-34

Figure 12 – *Equals*: bars 96-98

Equals also engages with the rule of three, but it is more covert than its use in the initial study pieces. I decided to use this device more discreetly in the compositional process to create an opportunity to explore how ‘three’ can be used to influence compositional decisions. The instrumentation of *Equals* for example consists of three instruments – it is a piano trio for violin, cello and piano. The opening of the work shows another example of this rule of three where the musical figurations in the piano rely on the repetition of three notes (see figure 13). The first section of *Equals* is primarily three beats in a bar and the global structure of the work is in three parts. The ABC structure is A: bars 1 – 75, B: bars 76 – 118, C: bars 119 – 247.

Figure 13 – *Equals*: bars 1-4

I was delighted with the musical intent of *Equals* – the narrative of the piece was clear and effective. However, the implementation of the toolkit suffers a little by the intrinsic hindrance of the fixed state of the pre-existing video. The pacing, elements of structure and development of the work was pre-determined by the video, and this had a negative impact on the ability to fully explore the use of the toolkit. However, I found that using found video content was useful to help develop a compositional thought process around a socio-political idea. A version of this idea is also used in the composition of the culmination piece of this research (*An Attack is Taking Place*). I decided that it would be useful to consider how snippets of fixed media may be used to engage with the research question – this is explored in *Wonderland*.

As there were limitations of both setting a pre-existing video (*Equals*) and using text within the composition (*The Anti-Masker*), I wanted to explore instead how the use of pre-existing political speech could be used in conjunction with the toolkit to develop musical ideas. To do this, I reflected on the then contemporary American political landscape in *Our Better History*.

Our Better History

Toolkit used: exergasia & polyptoton, personification

Our Better History for oboe and organ (or drone) was commissioned by oboist Jacqueline FitzGibbon to be performed in St. Paul's Cathedral in San Diego. The piece, written in the second half of 2021, was written against a backdrop of disturbed politics in the USA. Donald Trump had been trying to claim victory in the 2020 election, and at the beginning of 2021 the world watched as rioters stormed the Capitol building in an attempt to stop the certification of Joe Biden. The work actively relates to these events by reflecting on St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians:

When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.
When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ 'Bible Gateway Passage: 1 Corinthians 13:11 - New International Version', *Bible Gateway*

<<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2013%3A11&version=NIV>> [accessed 2 November 2024]

Former US President Barack Obama echoed the scripture in his inaugural address:

We remain a young nation. But in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things. The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness.⁸⁵

Our Better History personifies the narrative of the scripture and Obama's speech to reflect on the contemporary politics of the day by personifying 'childish things'. The oboe personifies childishness, and the organ (or drone) personifies the constant of time. The musical line is playful in its intention, littered with spirited grace notes, and offset repetitions of notes which each mimic the 'talking', 'reasoning' and 'thinking' of a child written about in St Paul's letter. As the piece progresses, the childishness of the oboe grows to *fortissimo* in bar 60 and then eventually gives way to the personification of 'the becoming of man' in the scripture. From Bar 62 to the end, we then only hear reflections and refractions of the elements of childishness against the constant of time (figure 14).

Figure 14 – *Our Better History*: bars 62-73

62 A little slower (♩ = 50) *ff* *mf* *echo*

67 *f* *pp* *echo*

70 *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* Organ Pedals

⁸⁵ 'President Barack Obama's Inaugural Address', *Whitehouse.Gov*, 2009

<<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2009/01/21/president-barack-obamas-inaugural-address>>

[accessed 2 November 2024]

The use of exergasia and polyptoton in *Our Better History* builds on its development in *On Leaving You*. Exergasia and polyptoton is used in both the bible passage and in the Obama speech used in the inception of the work; the reiteration of musical ideas can be seen throughout the work. In *Our Better History*, the changes in ‘delivery’ and ‘treatment’ of the music are more clearly written out than the chance-type approach used in *On Leaving You*. The use of exergasia and polyptoton is intrinsically linked to the personification of the oboe and organ (or drone).

This use of the toolkit was very successful, and it was a useful way to develop musical ideas. As a composer, I was able to follow the pre-composed ideas of the political message and speech as delivered by Obama to develop the music. However, this partly limited what I was able to add to the work; it was hard to add my own intention and voice to Obama’s well-thought-out speech. It was at this point in the research project that I was commissioned to write a piece which was to draw inspiration from Vivaldi’s *Le quattro Stagioni* [*The Four Seasons*]. I saw this as an opportunity to develop this line of questioning by considering how a composition could relate to a previous piece of Western Art Music as opposed to a political speech and framing it in a socio-political context, thus allowing me to add socio-political content to a nonsocio-political backdrop.

Summer

Toolkit used: allusion & intertextuality, personification

Instead of considering the party politics of Westminster or the battles of the White House, *Summer* explores the society we live in by using allusion, intertextuality and personification. *Summer* is a concerto for tenor recorder and strings in three movements. It uses allusion and intertextual relationships to the structures and music of Vivaldi’s *L'estate* [*Summer*] from *The Four Seasons* as its starting point. Paul Everett in *Vivaldi: The ‘Four Seasons’ and other concertos, op. 8* notes that ‘commentators have naturally regarded Op.8 as the clearest manifestation of Vivaldi’s concern for extra-musical meaning’.⁸⁶ It is this early musical

⁸⁶ Paul Everett, *Vivaldi: The ‘Four Seasons’ and Other Concertos Op. 8*, Cambridge Music Handbooks (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 50

demonstration of reference which made it an interesting starting point for consideration when composing *Summer*.

Structurally, *Summer*'s allusions can be seen in the duration of the work, and the tempos and styles of its movements: fast, slow, fast, which mirror the *Allegro non molto*, *Adagio e piano* – *presto e forte*, *Presto* in the Vivaldi's *Summer*. Musically, the piece uses baroque-like ornamentation and figurations as further allusion to the Baroque world and refers to the 'bird-songs, winds and storms' which are present in Vivaldi's complete Op. 8.⁸⁷ *Summer* is a comment on the notion that although everyone engages with each day differently, humans have shared experiences. The music personifies the birds of Glasgow's Sauchiehall Street in the rising violent figures of the first movement. It characterises the delicate grey skies of the supposed Scottish summer by creating sparkling string harmonic chords which move slowly below the sunnier recorder line in the second movement. And finally, the third movement personifies the hill walks in easy reach of Glasgow.

After completing the piece, I reflected on the development of the work and realised that I ended up so fixated on the reinvention of Vivaldi's constructs within the composition that I lost the clear narrative I set out to achieve. I became preoccupied with considering how Vivaldi might have written aspects of the work rather than how I could use Vivaldi's music as an impetus for the inclusion of socio-political material. I decided to take a step back to reconsider the successes of the use of fixed-media (*Equals*) and combine this with the use of a political speech (*Our Better History*). These aspects are married together in *Wonderland* where I cut up and interspersed a speech given by Boris Johnson during 'Partygate'.

Wonderland

Toolkit used: allusion & intertextuality, irony, juxtaposition

Boris Johnson's 'Partygate' apology takes centre stage in *Wonderland* (for ensemble and audio). *Wonderland* uses the ensemble as a form of satire and parody to the words spoken by Johnson in the audio track. The use of Johnson's voice as an audio track is fundamentally an

⁸⁷ Paul Everett, *Vivaldi: The 'Four Seasons' and Other Concertos Op. 8*, p. 50

intertextual quotation. The audio track is a cut up and restitched version of Johnson’s speech to the House of Commons. Although parts are repeated for musical or dramatic effect, the narrative of Johnson’s remarks remain consistent with his apology. Johnson’s perceived insincerity is considered here by purposefully placing juxtaposing musical ideas with spoken words to offer an ironic or satirical comment. For example, the lazy and lethargic musical lines in the opening 6 bars (figure 15) offer a comment on Johnson’s seeming lack of real desire to apologise. (It has since transpired – after writing *Wonderland* – that Johnson regrets apologising for ‘Partygate’.⁸⁸)

Figure 15 – *Wonderland*: bars 1-6

♩ = 80

PLAY: WONDERLAND AUDIO FILE

Flute

Soprano Saxophone

Bassoon

Horn in F

Violoncello

Fixed Media

Mr. Speaker,
I want to apologise.

I know that
millions...

The short middle section (bars 58-68) of *Wonderland* offers a satirical intertextual quotation of The Black Eyed Peas’ *I Gotta Feeling* which ironically alerts the listener to the perceived absurdity of Johnson’s argument. I was pleased with the outcome of *Wonderland*. The use of pre-existing material interspersed with allusion and quotation was successful, and the satire I

⁸⁸ ‘Boris Johnson Tells ITV News He Regrets Apologising for Partygate | ITV News’

<<https://www.itv.com/news/2024-10-04/boris-johnson-tells-itv-news-he-regrets-apologising-for-partygate>>

[accessed 2 November 2024]

set out to achieve in the piece worked well. However, I found myself uneasy with how conspicuous the fixed media was throughout the work. For the final middle-study piece (*For Gaza*), I wanted to return to simplicity and re-explore how music without the additional layers (for example fixed media or narrator) to see how this could be used with ideas from the toolkit to further explore the research question.

For Gaza

Toolkit used: epanalepsis, metaphor

Written at the start of 2024, *For Gaza* for solo violin considers the conflict in Gaza and Israel. The work uses repeated, but altered, musical material (built with intervals of a major 2nd), with interjections of conflicting or agitating material throughout the piece. This musical material is representative of sadness, and their repetitions evoke and develop a feeling of desolation throughout the work. *For Gaza* uses these ideas, brevity, and musical interruptions (rests) as a metaphor for the human sadness brought about by the destruction of Gaza from war. The use of only a solo performer underpins this metaphor – the violin tells a human story. The musical material is frustrated, sad and agitated – the violin lines sigh (downward descending lower voice in bar 1), cry (short, repeated grace note figures in bars 5 and 6) and shout for help (the *fortissimo* in bar 9), all whilst being stuck in a devastated warzone (underpinned by long sustained notes and silences).

My earlier desire to return to simplicity is reflected in *For Gaza*, and this is one of the reasons why I consider it as one of the best examples of the use of the toolkit in exploring the research question. Its musical and non-musical narratives are both clear, and the musical lines are fundamentally born out of the effective use of the toolkit in the compositional process. This simplicity was a significant foundational idea used in *An Attack is Taking Place* – the final piece in the project.

These middle-study pieces helped to develop the practical use of the toolkit within the compositional practice. Their varied subject matter and the different uses of musical rhetorical devices each consider the research question and investigate how the composition of contemporary classical music can be an effective vessel of the exploration of the socio-political issues.

During the reflection on these middle-study pieces, there were several devices within the toolkit which were particularly useful in order to engage with socio-political issues. These were allusion and intertextuality, epanalepsis, and metaphor. Allusion and intertextuality, and epanalepsis both stood out after the initial study phase, while the use of metaphor in the middle-study pieces stood out as valuable when considering socio-political ideas in musical contexts. The middle-study pieces also evidence that the use of multiple devices within a piece made for more interesting musical development and made the compositional process easier. With several devices in use, I was helpfully limited in the decisions I could make as a composer, but free enough not to close off lines of musical enquiry. The devices in the toolkit also became more obviously useful for certain parts of the compositional process. I surveyed the devices and considered how I used them in the compositional process. I categorised them according to their usefulness for the creation of musical ideas, the narrative, or the structure depending on how I felt these devices worked best. By ‘musical ideas’, I am referring to the use of a device in aid of the creation of motifs or other note based ideas. By ‘narrative’, I mean the development of the larger ideas surrounding the work. By ‘structure’, I mean the development of the organisation of the piece as a whole or structural tools within the composition process. In some cases, the devices were equally useful in two categories. Figure 16 tabulates these categorisations:

Figure 16: Categorisation of the devices

Device	Category
Allusion & intertextuality	Musical ideas Structure
Epanalepsis	Structure
Exergasia & polyptoton	Musical ideas
Hyperbole	Musical ideas Narrative
Irony	Musical idea
Juxtaposition	Structure
Metaphor	Narrative
Personification	Musical ideas Narrative
Rule of three	Musical idea

I found while developing the middle-study pieces that irony and personification were the least useful in the compositional process as most of the ideas they created could have been developed in some other way (e.g. by another device). They were therefore not necessarily the most useful in exploring the use of socio-political material within compositional contexts.

I reflected on the middle-study pieces and decided that there were three underlying compositional principles which were useful to help integrate the devices and support the exploration of the research question. These principles were: ensuring a simplicity in approach, having a clearly constructed narrative, and allowing for the abstraction of non-musical socio-political material in musical ways through devices from the toolkit. These three areas were the foundation for the composition of *An Attack is Taking Place*.

Toolkit used: allusion & intertextuality, epanalepsis, exergasia & polyptoton, hyperbole, juxtaposition, metaphor, rule of three

After completing the middle-study pieces in this research, I composed one larger-scale work to implement the successful elements of the toolkit in a final piece of composition research. This work's development was based on the concept of the three anchor points described above: simplicity in approach, a clear narrative, and the abstraction of socio-political material in musical ways.

An Attack is Taking Place is a work for symphony orchestra written for the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Symphony Orchestra. The work draws influence from a CBS television documentary created in partnership with the US Federal Civil Defense Administration called *A Day Called X*. In the film, Portland 'is evacuated in anticipation of a nuclear air raid, after Soviet bombers had been detected by radar stations to the north'.⁸⁹ As *A Day Called X* progresses, the words 'AN ATTACK IS NOT TAKING PLACE' are inscribed over the video to avoid panic for those watching the film. The composition considers the culture wars through the lens of this film and other heightened tensions of the cold war period. *An Attack is Taking Place* looks to consider if the divisive discourse of the culture wars, when taken to the *nth* degree, allow room for any real and consequential debate.

As described in chapter 6, I categorised each of the toolkit devices as development tools for the compositional process. Figure 17 shows how the seven toolkit devices are used, based on their categorisation within *An Attack is Taking Place*.

⁸⁹ '71622 THE DAY CALLED "X" NUCLEAR ATTACK ON PORTLAND OREGON COLD WAR FILM', *PeriscopeFilm - Stock Footage*, 2023 <<https://stock.periscopefilm.com/71622-the-day-called-x-nuclear-attack-on-portland-oregon-cold-war-film/>> [accessed 4 November 2024]

Figure 17: Categorisation of the Toolkit used in *An Attack is Taking Place*

Category	Toolkit
Narrative	Hyperbole Metaphor
Structural	Epanalepsis Juxtaposition
Musical ideas	Allusion & intertextuality Exergasia & polyptoton Rule of three

In developing the piece, I first considered the narrative of the work, secondly its structure, and thirdly its musical ideas. This chapter considers each of these categories in turn and explores how their use in *An Attack is Taking Place* can be an effective vessel of the exploration of discourse in culture wars.

Figure 17 shows that *An Attack is Taking Place*'s narrative is based on hyperbole and metaphor. Rebecca Benson and Bobby Duffy, in research for King's College London's *John Smith Centre*, suggest that there are four sides in the culture wars - traditionalists, moderates, the disengaged and progressives.⁹⁰ The metaphor created through the piece considers two opposing and distinct voices; those of a 'progressive' and a 'traditionalist'. An imagined comparison or quasi-conversation between these two voices helps form the background-narrative of the work. *An Attack is Taking Place* uses this metaphor in tandem with the structural devices outlined below, attaching the progressive voice to the A sections and the traditionalist voice to the B section. The narrative is further exaggerated by hyperbolically exploring how the Cold War construct of Mutually Assured Destruction pushes things to a point of near excess.

The structure of *An Attack is Taking Place* is formed by the musical use of epanalepsis and juxtaposition. Epanalepsis creates an intrinsic outline structure to work from (A¹ B A²) and the use of juxtaposition further broadens the structural differences between the A and B sections,

⁹⁰ Rebecca Benson and Bobby Duffy, 'The Four Sides in the UK's "Culture Wars"', *John Smith Centre* <<https://www.johnsmithcentre.com/research/the-four-sides-in-the-uks-culture-wars/>> [accessed 4 November 2024]

offsetting them and creating purposeful contrast between them. In the context of the culture wars, this structure also feels apt. Discussions often start and end in similar places and often have another voice arguing an opposing view. The structure of this piece is:

A¹: bars 1-46

B: bars 47-108

A²: bars 109-144

In considering the structure of the piece, I made the decision that A¹ and A² would be generally quiet and slow, and that B would be louder and faster. The structural juxtaposition works in tandem with the narrative ideas of hyperbolic exploration of the Cold War and the two voices outlined in the consideration of the narrative of the work.

The musical material throughout the piece is developed from the use of three devices from the toolkit: allusion and intertextuality, exergasia and polyptoton, and rule of three. The use of Morse code in the piece comes from the source material which inspired the composition (communications during the Cold War). The Morse code is alluded to through the direct translation of the words ‘an attack is taking place’ into Morse code:

.- -. / .- - - .- -. -. -. / / - .- -. -. .. -. -. / .-- .-... .- -. .

I musically set this morse code figure by giving a rhythm to denote the long and short tones. This rhythm can be seen in various places throughout the work, but the first full iteration can be seen in lower woodwind, timpani, and tom-toms at bar 47 (figure 18)

Figure 18: Morse code allusion in *An Attack is Taking Place* (bars 47-53, part score)

47 $\text{♩} = 92$
Bass Clarinet in Bb
ff>

Bsn. 1
ff>

Bsn. 2
ff>

Timp.
ff>

Tom-t.
 $\text{♩} = 92$
Tom-toms
ff

50
B. Cl.
mf

Bsn. 1
mf

Bsn. 2
mf

Timp.
f

Tom-t.
f

In addition to the literal translation of the Morse code, *An Attack is Taking Place* calls on the woodwind section to improvise Morse-code-like figures in bars 78-90. This change of compositional context is a compositional use of exergasia and polyptoton – where similar material is used in different cases and with different delivery. *An Attack is Taking Place* has significant use of tubular bells throughout the piece. The tubular bells figures are in all but one case repeated three times. For example, in the first section, there are four repetitions of three present: bars 1-6, 8-16, 23-31 and 41-46. This use of the rule of three is an allusion to the knelling of three death bells. Exergasia and polyptoton is also employed with this motif; the bell material is offset in each iteration with rests and rhythmic variation. It is also played on a triangle in bars 103-110.

In addition to the allusion of the knelling death bells, there are two other intertextual quotations present. The final bar is a general pause bar which alludes to the final bar of Ludwig van

Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 (*Eroica*) which ends with a pause over the final rest. Beethoven had cancelled his dedication of *Eroica* after becoming disillusioned with Napoleon Bonaparte after he declared himself emperor.⁹¹ This altering of both Beethoven and Bonaparte's political expressions felt apt in the context of *An Attack is Taking Place*. The second intertextual quotation refers to *For Gaza* with its note choices focused around the interval of a second. As previously discussed, in *For Gaza* this note choice represents desolation. The tempo marking at the start of *An Attack is Taking Place* also hints at this; the piece is marked 'desolate'. The desolation here is not one of war, but one of political discourse.

Exergasia and polyptoton develop the material used in the piece by changing the tenses (e.g instrument, timbre, or rhythm) and delivery of the musical ideas. It is also used to play around with the delivery of similar musical lines across instruments. For example, bars 6-12 in flute 1, oboe 1, and clarinet 1 (figure 19), and bars 64-70 in flute 1 and oboe 1 (figure 20).

Figure 19: Exergasia and polyptoton in *An Attack is Taking Place* (bars 6-12, part score)

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Flute 1 (Fl. 1), Oboe 1 (Ob. 1), and Clarinet 1 (Cl. 1) across bars 6 to 12. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes from 4/4 to 2/4 and back to 4/4. The Flute 1 part starts with a whole rest in bar 6, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes in bars 7-12, marked with a *p* dynamic. The Oboe 1 part also starts with a whole rest in bar 6, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes in bars 7-12, marked with a *pp* dynamic in bar 7 and a *p* dynamic in bar 8. The Clarinet 1 part starts with a whole rest in bar 6, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes in bars 7-12, marked with a *pp* dynamic in bar 7 and a *p* dynamic in bar 8. The score illustrates exergasia and polyptoton through similar musical lines across instruments.

⁹¹ 'Beethoven and Napoleon', *History Today* <<https://www.historytoday.com/archive/music-time/beethoven-and-napoleon>> [accessed 5 November 2024]

Figure 20: Exergasia and polyptoton in *An Attack is Taking Place* (bars 64-70, part score)

The image displays a musical score for two instruments, Fl. 1 and Ob. 1, across two systems of staves. The first system covers bars 64 to 66, and the second system covers bars 67 to 69. The Fl. 1 staff begins with a box containing the letter 'F' above bar 64. Both staves feature dense, rapid sixteenth-note passages, often beamed together. Dynamic markings of *ff* (fortissimo) are present at the start of the first system. The key signature consists of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The notation includes various rests, including a whole rest in the Fl. 1 staff at the beginning of bar 67, and complex rhythmic groupings throughout.

I am delighted with how the interactions of the toolkit manifested themselves in *An Attack is Taking Place*. The work succeeds in developing the three most important ideas that came out of the middle development pieces: simplicity in approach, a clearly constructed narrative, and the abstraction of non-musical socio-political material in musical ways.

The compositional process for *An Attack is Taking Place* was fully engaged with the use of the toolkit, and the composition uses the rhetorical devices in musical contexts in ways outlined above. By engaging with the toolkit, the piece explores how the composition of contemporary classical music can be an effective vessel for the exploration of socio-political issues. As the final piece of practice within this research, it engaged with the lessons learnt from the previous studies and with the project's reflexive methodology which has underpinned the investigation into the research question throughout.

This research has examined how the composition of contemporary classical music can be an effective vessel for the exploration of socio-political issues. It has explored the research question through the lens of a toolkit made up of rhetorical devices transposed into musical contexts. The creation of a diverse portfolio of works has allowed me to examine the research question from a variety of different angles, and these explorations and studies provide a creative practice-based response to the inquiry. The practice includes solo works, mixed media and ensemble compositions and a large piece for symphony orchestra.

This project concludes that contemporary classical composition can successfully be used as a vessel to explore global socio-political issues through the creation of a portfolio of new works. It also determines that the toolkit of rhetorical devices presented here can be an effective way of formalising and systematising the compositional processes with a view to exploring the research question. This research however also resolves that there are limitations in using the toolkit. The restrictions imposed by the toolkit can be both positive and detrimental to the compositional process. As explored through the use of the auto-ethnographic reflexive methodology, the efficacy of the toolkit varied in the compositional studies – these are discussed more fully in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

The research concludes that the toolkit is most useful when the compositional approach is not overcomplicated, and when the toolkit is used in conjunction with a clear narrative. It is in these cases that the toolkit is most effective in musicalising global socio-political material and demonstrating how the composition of contemporary classical music can be an effective vessel for the exploration of socio-political issues. The toolkit developed throughout the project and allowed me to consider how composers can use the referential devices of speechwriters. This formalisation of the toolkit fills a knowledge gap in the current research landscape and creates a bedrock for future research. This research gap is situated in the fields of referential music and political music. It is crucial to note here that this research has solely focused on approaching the question from the use of a toolkit of rhetorical devices; this is a purposeful choice given the limitations on the scale of the project. There are other ways to approach the research question and these would be fascinating to consider in future projects.

Although my background as a composer and researcher with a longstanding interest in speechwriting has helped to develop the research throughout the project, the project has had some limitations worth noting. This research did not have the scope or time to engage with ethnographic methodologies such as audience and performer surveying and observation. This would also likely have changed the methodological approach away from practice research and required a reframing of the research question. The changing landscape of the world has also had a limitation on the project; the first years of research were conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited the types of performance and commissioning opportunities available. That said, these limitations proved successful in focusing the initial study phases of this research. The small character and study pieces were extremely valuable in my initial understanding of how the toolkit could be implemented.

This research opens additional questions in similar research fields to future study and affords the opportunity to extend the knowledge gained in this study into other areas. Therefore, the future of this research is multi-faceted. The practical future of the research could include myself and/or other composers taking the devices used in the toolkit and using them in future practice to explore their socio-political world in a formalised way. Composers may also find the research useful to develop their own toolkit in either socio-political or non-socio-political contexts. They may also choose to develop one or more devices in their own compositional contexts based on a similar approach or by choosing different rhetorical devices.

As a composer, I intend to take the learnings from this research beyond this project. I am planning to use elements of this approach in two pieces which I am currently writing. A horn concerto entitled *What Ever Happened to Mr Watson* will use the toolkit approach to develop a work based on the life of Alexander Graham Bell's lab assistant Thomas A. Watson. A second piece will use aspects of the toolkit in a collaborative approach with a librettist on the creation of a new song cycle about Capel Celyn. I am interested, in this case, to see how the interdisciplinary nature of working closely with a writer affects the uses of the toolkit approach. The foundation of this interdisciplinary approach was shaped during this research. These are just two examples where this research project has enhanced the thinking around my compositional practice.

Musicologists may develop future research from this project as it could open investigations into how the toolkit can be used as an analytical tool in musical contexts. This could especially

be the case where music is overtly interested in socio-political material. Future researchers could also be interested in considering the audience and performer viewpoint for the music created during this research and explore this through a more traditional ethnographic methodology. The research opens the possibility to speechwriters who are interested in composition considering what they can study in music to use in speechwriting contexts.

The practical application of the research is not limited to music or academia. There are practical uses for this research in considering what music would work well in augmenting orations or advertising. For example, this could be by considering how the use of the rule of three in a slogan can be mirrored using the toolkit's rule of three in a jingle or ditty. Similarly, visual artists and filmmakers may find similar ways to explore the research in their own practice.

Critically, this project has allowed me to develop my skills as a composer and researcher. It has formalised a way of exploring socio-political issues in composition and has consciously brought to the front of my mind instinctive elements of my own practice. The project has allowed me to work with many fantastic musicians and created a space for me to hone in on the research question. I have made a big step in bridging my love of composition and my interest in speechwriting. This research makes significant progress in developing approaches to writing music which explores the world we live in, and evidences how music can be a vessel for the exploration of socio-political issues. I do not foresee a future where composers and artists will not want to explore the world around them, and this research takes a step to developing a useable approach for the future. As Nina Simone said, 'an artist's duty, as far as I'm concerned, is to reflect the times'.⁹²

⁹² Martin George, 'Nina Simone: An Artist's Duty Is to Reflect the Times', *Culture Matters*, 2019
<<https://www.culturematters.org.uk/index.php/arts/music/item/3208-nina-simone-an-artist-s-duty-is-to-reflect-the-times#>> [accessed 12 November 2024]

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Score



On Leaving You

for open scored ensemble
Nicholas Olsen

On Leaving You

for any instrument(s)

Nicholas Olsen

On Leaving You can be performed on any instrument or by any ensemble of instruments.

When performed by multiple instruments, players must not synchronise their performances.

Each performer should play at a tempo between the indicated tempos.

Each repeat should be played in the same tempo.

Pitches can be played in any octave and the octaves of pitches do not have to be the same each repeat. When played on a transposing instrument, pitches can be played at concert or transposing pitch.

A break of up to 1 bar length may be taken between repeats.

Either of the dynamic forms can be used, and both sets can be in the same performance

e.g. one player may start quietly and crescendo while another may start loudly and diminuendo

Freely (♩ = 68 - ♩ = 82)

molto legato



1. ***pp***

2. - 10. *cresc. a cresc.*

11. ***ff***

or

1. ***ff***

2. - 10. *dim. a dim.*

11. ***pp***

1st February 2020

Full Score



Drift

for ensemble
Nicholas Olsen

nicholasolsenmusic.com

Drift

Instrumentation

Flute

Clarinet in Bb

Percussion (Vibraphone, 4 x Wood Blocks, 2 x Suspended Cymbals)

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

The score is presented in concert pitch.

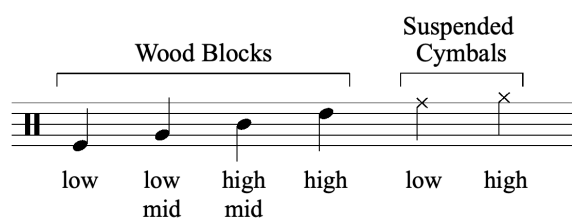
Duration

c. 10 minutes

Commissioned by The Glasgow Barons. To be premiered by The Glasgow Barons, conducted by Paul MacAlindin in Govan, Glasgow, in October 2020.

Performance Note

Percussion notation



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nicholas@nicholasolsenmusic.com

Drift

for mixed ensemble
commissioned by The Glasgow Barons

Nicholas Olsen

Serene ♩ = 66

Flute

Clarinet in Bb

Vibraphone

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

soft mallets
motor on (slow) al. fine
sempre l.v.

p

7

Fl.

Cl.

Vib.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

pp *mp* *pp* *mf* *p*

pp *mp* *pp* *mf* *p*

p

13

Fl.

Cl.

Vib.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

mp

p

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for measures 13 through 17. The score is for a woodwind and string ensemble. The Flute (Fl.) part has rests in measures 13-15 and enters in measure 16 with a half note G4. The Clarinet (Cl.) part has a half note F#4 in measure 13, followed by eighth notes G#4, A4, B4, and C5 in measures 14-15, and a half note F#4 in measure 16. The Vibraphone (Vib.) part has a continuous eighth-note pattern of G#4, A4, B4, and C5. The Violin (Vln.) part has a half note G4 in measure 13, followed by a half note F#4 in measure 14, and a half note G4 in measure 15. The Viola (Vla.) part has a half note G4 in measure 13, followed by a half note F#4 in measure 14, and a half note G4 in measure 15. The Violoncello (Vc.) part has a half note G4 in measure 13, followed by a half note F#4 in measure 14, and a half note G4 in measure 15. The score includes dynamic markings *mp* and *p*.

A

18

Fl.

Cl.

Vib.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

mp

mf

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for measures 18 through 22. The score is for a woodwind and string ensemble. The Flute (Fl.) part has a half note G4 in measure 18, followed by eighth notes A4, B4, and C5 in measure 19, and a half note G4 in measure 20. The Clarinet (Cl.) part has a half note F#4 in measure 18, followed by eighth notes G#4, A4, B4, and C5 in measure 19, and a half note F#4 in measure 20. The Vibraphone (Vib.) part has a continuous eighth-note pattern of G#4, A4, B4, and C5. The Violin (Vln.) part has a half note G4 in measure 18, followed by a half note F#4 in measure 19, and a half note G4 in measure 20. The Viola (Vla.) part has a half note G4 in measure 18, followed by a half note F#4 in measure 19, and a half note G4 in measure 20. The Violoncello (Vc.) part has a half note G4 in measure 18, followed by a half note F#4 in measure 19, and a half note G4 in measure 20. The score includes dynamic markings *mp* and *mf*.

22

Fl.

Cl.

Vib.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

f

f

f

p

p

p

To Perc.

26

Fl.

Cl.

Vib.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Percussion
very soft mallets

p

f

l.v.

mp *p*

mf *p*

mp *p*

mf *p*

mp *p*

mf *p*

31 **B**

Fl. *p*

Cl. *p*

Perc.

Vln. *pp* *sul D*

Vla. *pp* *sul C*

Vc. *pp* *sul G*

37

Fl.

Cl. *mp espress.* *3*

Perc.

Vln.

Vla. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

42

C

Fl.

Cl.

Perc.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

pp

hard sticks
p

pp

pp

46

Fl.

Cl.

Perc.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

f

f

f

f

49

Fl.

Cl.

Perc.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

ff

fff

ff

fff

ff

fff

D

52

Fl.

Cl.

Perc.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

f

ff

f

ff

f

ff

f

ff

f

ff

mf

Drift

7

55

Fl.

Cl.

Perc.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

p

pp

pp

pp

E

58

Fl.

Cl.

Perc.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

p espress.

61

Fl.

Cl.

Perc.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

64

Fl.

Cl.

Perc.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

67 **F**

Fl.

Cl.

Perc.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

ppp

p

70

Fl.

Cl.

Perc.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

3

3

Drift

G

79

Fl.

Cl.

Vib.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

pp

p

pp

83

Fl.

Cl.

Vib.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

To Perc.

H

I

Drift

13

102

Fl.

Cl.

Vib.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

pp

mf

mf

mf

mf

mf



A Tempo

108

Fl.

Cl.

Vib.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

mf

rit.

ff

mp espress. con Fed.

f

mf

f

mf

f

mf

K

118

121

121

Fl.

Cl.

Vib.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

ppp

p

ppp

ppp

p

ppp

p

ppp

p

ppp

124

Fl. *p* *ppp*

Cl. *ppp* *p*

Vib.

Vln. *ppp*

Vla. *p* *ppp*

Vc. *ppp* *p*

127 **L**

Fl. *mf*

Cl. *ppp* *pp* *mf* *legato*

Vib. *mf* *pp*

Vln. *p* *mf* *senza sord.*

Vla. *p* *mf* *senza sord.*

Vc. *ppp* *p* *mf* *senza sord.*

130

Fl. *ppp*

Cl. *pp*

Vib. *pp* *mf*

Vln. *ppp* *mf*

Vla. *ppp*

Vc. *ppp*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 130, 131, and 132. Measure 130 features a long flute melody. Measures 131 and 132 show a variety of textures with woodwinds, strings, and vibraphone. Dynamics include *ppp* (pianississimo), *pp* (pianissimo), and *mf* (mezzo-forte).

133

M

Fl. *pp* *mf*

Cl. *mf* *pp*

Vib. *pp* *pp* *mf*

Vln. *ppp* *mf*

Vla. *pp* *mf*

Vc. *mf* *ppp* *ppp*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 133, 134, and 135. Measure 133 has a box labeled 'M' above the flute staff. The music continues with complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic shifts. Dynamics include *pp*, *mf*, and *ppp*.

136

Fl. *pp* *p* *mf* *f*

Cl. *mf* *f*

Vib.

Vln. *ppp* *f*

Vla. *p* *mf* *f*

Vc. *mf* *ppp* *mf*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 136, 137, and 138. The Flute (Fl.) part begins in measure 136 with a *pp* dynamic, followed by a rest. In measure 137, it enters with a *p* dynamic, rising to *mf* and then *f* in measure 138. The Clarinet (Cl.) plays a continuous eighth-note pattern, starting at *mf* and reaching *f* by measure 138. The Vibraphone (Vib.) continues with the same eighth-note pattern. The Violin (Vln.) has a long note in measure 136, rests in 137, and enters in 138 with a *f* dynamic. The Viola (Vla.) plays eighth notes, starting at *p* in measure 137 and reaching *mf* and *f* in measure 138. The Violoncello (Vc.) has a long note in measure 136, rests in 137, and enters in 138 with a *mf* dynamic.

139

Fl. *p* *mf*

Cl. *p* *mf*

Vib.

Vln. *mf*

Vla. *p*

Vc. *f*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 139, 140, and 141. The Flute (Fl.) and Clarinet (Cl.) both play long notes, starting at *p* in measure 139 and rising to *mf* in measure 140. The Vibraphone (Vib.) continues with eighth notes, ending with a rest in measure 141. The Violin (Vln.) plays eighth notes at a *mf* dynamic. The Viola (Vla.) has a long note in measure 139, rests in 140, and enters in 141 with a *p* dynamic. The Violoncello (Vc.) plays a long note at a *f* dynamic throughout the system.

Drift

N

19

142

Fl.

Cl.

Vib.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

ff

ff

mf

ff

ff

mf

ff

p

mf

ff

145

Fl.

Cl.

Vib.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

p

p

ppp

mf

ppp

ppp

ppp

148

Fl.

Cl.

Vib.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

p

pp

ppp

151

O Slower ♩ = 56

Fl.

Cl.

Vib.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

ppp

pp

p

pp

p

mp

mp > p

Percussion
very soft mallets

Drift

21

157

Fl.

Cl.

Perc.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

pp

pp

f

p

mp

p

mp

p

pp

[illegible]

168

Fl.

Cl.

Vibraphone
medium mallets

Perc.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

mf

mp

mp

pp

mp

pp

mp

pp

172

Fl.

Cl.

Vib.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

pp

p



From Home

for various solos, duos, and ensembles
Nicholas Olsen

From Home

Programme Note

From Home is a collection of miniatures for different instruments to chronicle my thoughts and feelings throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Each piece is written specially for a friend to play and record during our collective self-isolations.

- I. Lament, for guitar
- II. Self-isolation, for viola
- III. Downloading The Sims 4, for piano
- IV. Having Company, for violin
- V. The Spare Room, for accordion
- VI. About Astrovirus, for two pianos
- VII. Lockdown, for two bass guitars
- VIII. No Rush, for tuba
- IX. Daily Briefing, for tenor saxophone
- X. Wishing, for voice and piano
- XI. Ventilator, for accordion
- XII. Closed, for cello
- XIII. No Fly, for Eb clarinet
- XIV. Sun In An Empty Room, for clarinet and horn
- XV. COVIDiots, for electric guitar
- XVI. Cummings and Goings, for viola d'amore
- XVII. If I'm There, for ensemble
- XVIII. New Normal, for two violas
- XIX. Wind-songs, for cello and spoken word

Further information about the From Home Project can be found online:
www.nicholasolsenmusic.com/works/from-home/

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nicholas@nicholasolsenmusic.com

From Home

Nicholas Olsen

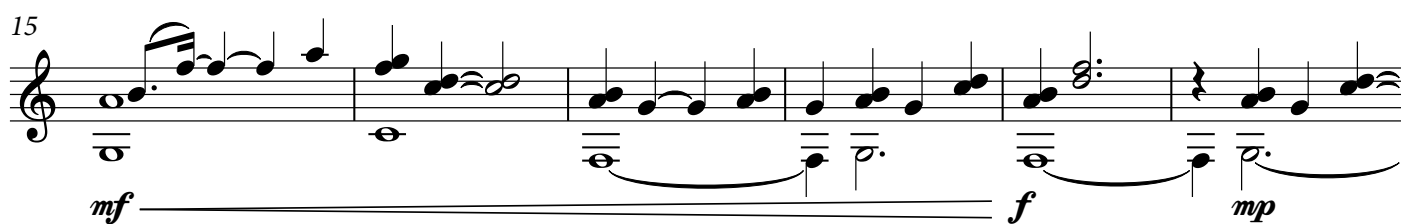
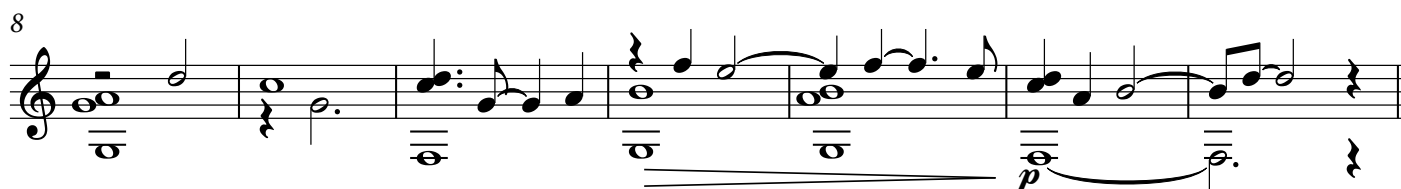
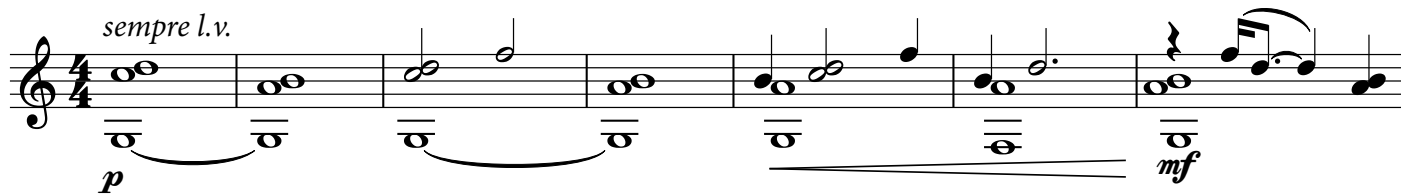
I. Lament for guitar

for Matthew McAllister

♩ = 58

⑤ = G

sempre l.v.



Glasgow, March 2020

From Home

Nicholas Olsen

II. Self-isolation for viola

for Sam Ellis

♩ = 104

ff fff ff fff ff

7 f 3 3 ff p f p

11 f p mf f p f

16 ff p ff

21 mf p pp

From Home
II. for viola

27 ♩ = 76

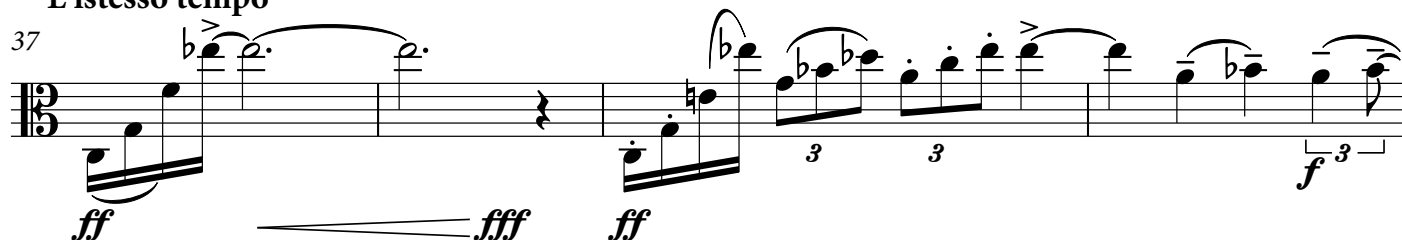


32

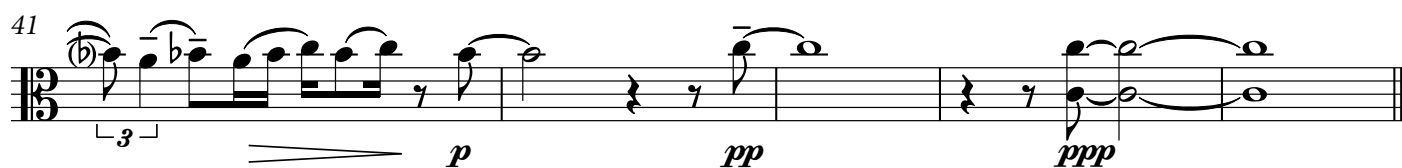


L'istesso tempo

37



41



Glasgow. March 2020

From Home

Nicholas Olsen

III. Downloading The Sims 4 for piano

for Faidon Nalbantis

$\text{♩} = 84$
molto legato

First system of the musical score, measures 1-3. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4. The music is written for piano. The right hand features a continuous eighth-note pattern. The left hand has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics include *pp cresc.* in measure 1 and *mp* in measure 3.

Second system of the musical score, measures 4-6. The musical notation continues with the same eighth-note patterns in both hands.

Third system of the musical score, measures 7-9. Measure 9 features a crescendo leading to a *mf* dynamic. The right hand has a slur over the final two measures, and the left hand has a triplet in measure 9.

Fourth system of the musical score, measures 10-12. Measure 11 features a *f* dynamic. The right hand has a triplet in measure 11. The system concludes with a whole note chord in the right hand and a half note in the left hand in measure 12.

From Home
III. for piano

13

Measures 13-15 of the piano score. The right hand features a continuous eighth-note melody in D major. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes, including a half-note chord in measure 14.

16

Measures 16-18. Measure 16 continues the eighth-note melody. Measure 17 includes a piano (*p*) dynamic marking and a crescendo hairpin. The left hand features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests.

19

Measures 19-20. Measure 19 continues the eighth-note melody. Measure 20 includes a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic marking and a crescendo hairpin. The left hand has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests, with a final measure featuring a treble clef and a dotted half note.

21

Measures 21-23. Measure 21 includes a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic marking and a crescendo hairpin. The right hand continues the eighth-note melody. The left hand features a bass line with eighth notes and rests, including an octave sign (8) in measure 21.

From Home
III. for piano

23

Musical score for measures 23-25. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). Measure 23 features a treble staff with a continuous eighth-note melody and a bass staff with a dotted half-note chord. Measure 24 has a treble staff with a half-note rest followed by a sixteenth-note melody and a bass staff with a sixteenth-note melody. Measure 25 has a treble staff with a sixteenth-note melody and a bass staff with a sixteenth-note melody. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is present in measure 25.

26

Musical score for measures 26-28. Measure 26 has a treble staff with a sixteenth-note melody and a bass staff with a sixteenth-note melody. Measure 27 has a treble staff with a sixteenth-note melody and a bass staff with a half-note chord. Measure 28 has a treble staff with a sixteenth-note melody and a bass staff with a half-note chord. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is present in measure 27.

29

Musical score for measures 29-30. Measure 29 has a treble staff with a sixteenth-note melody and a bass staff with a half-note chord. Measure 30 has a treble staff with a sixteenth-note melody and a bass staff with a half-note chord.

poco rit.

31

Musical score for measures 31-32. Measure 31 has a treble staff with a sixteenth-note melody and a bass staff with a half-note chord. Measure 32 has a treble staff with a sixteenth-note melody and a bass staff with a half-note chord. A dynamic marking of *ppp* (pianissimo) is present in measure 32.

From Home

Nicholas Olsen

IV. Having Company for violin

for Heather Storer

♩ = 80

pp

mf

8

p

16

sempre p

'ah'

mp

mf

pp

22

ah'

mf

f

pp

30

'ah'

(pp)

p

38

pp

44

ppp

Glasgow, March 2020

From Home

Nicholas Olsen

V. The Spare Room for accordion

for Valerie Barr

♩ = 62

Measures 1-7 of the musical score. The piece is in 4/4 time. The right hand features a melody with triplets and slurs, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with sustained chords and moving lines. Dynamic markings include *pp*, *mf*, and *pp* in the first system, and *mf*, *pp*, and *mf* in the second system.

Measures 8-14 of the musical score. The right hand continues the melodic line with triplets and slurs. The left hand features a more active bass line with triplets and slurs. Dynamic markings include *f*, *pp*, *mf*, and *pp* in the first system, and *f* and *pp* in the second system.

Measures 15-21 of the musical score. The right hand features a melody with triplets and slurs, and a dashed line indicates an octave register change. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with sustained chords and moving lines. Dynamic markings include *pp*, *p*, *pp*, *f*, *p*, *pp*, *p*, *pp*, and *f* in the first system, and *pp*, *p*, *pp*, and *f* in the second system.

Measures 22-28 of the musical score. The right hand features a melody with triplets and slurs, and a dashed line indicates an octave register change. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with sustained chords and moving lines. Dynamic markings include *p*, *pp*, *pp*, *mf*, and *ppp* in the first system, and *pp*, *mf*, and *ppp* in the second system.

Glasgow, March 2020

From Home

Nicholas Olsen

VI. About Astrovirus for two pianos

for Ed Cohen and Hebba Benyaghla

$\text{♩} = 106$

The first system of the musical score consists of two grand staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. It contains two measures of music, each starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The bottom staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. It also contains two measures of music, each starting with a *con Rdo.* (con Rondo) marking. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some notes beamed together. There are also some notes with a half-flat (b) marking.

p

con Rdo.

$\text{♩} = 106$

p

con Rdo.



3

The second system of the musical score consists of two grand staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. It contains two measures of music, each starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The bottom staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. It also contains two measures of music, each starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some notes beamed together. There are also some notes with a half-flat (b) marking. The first measure of the bottom staff has a forte (*f*) dynamic marking, and the second measure has a piano (*p*) dynamic marking.

p

f

p

From Home
VI. for two piano

5

Musical score for measures 5 and 6. The score is for two pianos. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 4/4. The first system consists of two staves. The upper staff has a treble clef and contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a half note with a flat (Bb) in measure 5 and a half note with a flat (Bb) in measure 6. The lower staff has a bass clef and contains a harmonic line with a forte (f) dynamic in measure 5, a piano (p) dynamic in measure 6, and a forte (f) dynamic in measure 7. The second system also consists of two staves. The upper staff has a treble clef and contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a half note with a flat (Bb) in measure 5 and a half note with a flat (Bb) in measure 6. The lower staff has a bass clef and contains a harmonic line with a forte (f) dynamic in measure 5, a piano (p) dynamic in measure 6, and a forte (f) dynamic in measure 7.



7

Musical score for measures 7, 8, and 9. The score is for two pianos. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 4/4. The first system consists of two staves. The upper staff has a treble clef and contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a half note with a flat (Bb) in measure 7 and a half note with a flat (Bb) in measure 8. The lower staff has a bass clef and contains a harmonic line with a piano (p) dynamic in measure 7. The second system consists of two staves. The upper staff has a treble clef and contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a half note with a flat (Bb) in measure 8 and a half note with a flat (Bb) in measure 9. The lower staff has a bass clef and contains a harmonic line with a forte (ff) dynamic in measure 8. The third system consists of two staves. The upper staff has a treble clef and contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a half note with a flat (Bb) in measure 9. The lower staff has a bass clef and contains a harmonic line with a forte (ff) dynamic in measure 9.

From Home
VI. for two piano

10

Measures 10-12 of the piece. The score is for two pianos. Measure 10 features a treble staff with a rapid sixteenth-note run and a bass staff with a similar pattern. Measure 11 shows a dynamic shift from *pp* to *ff*. Measure 12 continues the *ff* texture. A first ending bracket is present at the end of measure 12.

13

Measures 13-15 of the piece. Measure 13 has a first ending bracket. Measure 14 features a dynamic shift from *p* to *mf*. Measure 15 features a dynamic shift from *f* to *f*. The score includes complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings.

16

Measures 16-18 of the piece. Measure 16 features a dynamic shift from *f* to *f*. Measure 17 features a dynamic shift from *f* to *f*. Measure 18 features a dynamic shift from *f* to *f*. The score includes complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings.

From Home
VI. for two piano

18

pp

pp

This system contains measures 18 and 19. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The right hand plays a continuous eighth-note melody with slurs and ties, featuring a half-flat (b) in measures 18 and 19. The left hand plays a supporting melody with slurs and ties. Dynamics are marked *pp* (pianissimo) in both hands.

20

f *p* *p*

This system contains measures 20 and 21. The right hand continues the eighth-note melody. The left hand features a large slur spanning across the bar line, with a forte (*f*) dynamic in measure 20 and a piano (*p*) dynamic in measure 21. A half-flat (b) is present in the right hand in measure 20. Dynamics *f* and *p* are also marked in the left hand.

22

f *p* *p* *f*

This system contains measures 22 and 23. The right hand continues the eighth-note melody. The left hand features a large slur spanning across the bar line, with a forte (*f*) dynamic in measure 22 and piano (*p*) dynamics in measure 23. A half-flat (b) is present in the right hand in measure 22. Dynamics *f* and *p* are also marked in the left hand.

From Home
VI. for two piano

24

Measures 24-25 of the musical score. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The score is written for two pianos. Measure 24 features a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a single note. Measure 25 continues the treble staff with eighth notes and the bass staff with a series of eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *mf* is present in the right-hand piano part.

26

Measures 26-28 of the musical score. Measure 26 features a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a series of eighth notes. Measure 27 features a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a series of eighth notes. Measure 28 features a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a series of eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *mf* is present in the right-hand piano part.

29

Measures 29-31 of the musical score. Measure 29 features a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a series of eighth notes. Measure 30 features a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a series of eighth notes. Measure 31 features a treble staff with a series of eighth notes and a bass staff with a series of eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *ff* is present in the right-hand piano part. A dynamic marking of *ppp* is present in the left-hand piano part. A dynamic marking of *ff* is present in the right-hand piano part.

From Home
VI. for two piano

33

This system contains measures 33 through 38. It features two grand staves. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature changes from 8/8 to 2/4 at measure 34. The music is characterized by dense, sustained chords in the upper register of the right hand and more active, moving lines in the left hand. Dynamic markings include *f* (forte) and *p* (piano).

39

This system contains measures 39 through 44. It features two grand staves. The key signature remains three sharps. The time signature is 2/4. The music continues with dense textures. Dynamic markings include *p* (piano), *f* (forte), and *fff* (fortissimo). The system concludes with a double bar line.

Glasgow, March 2020

From Home

Nicholas Olsen

VII. Lockdown for two bass guitars

for Si Paton and Zygy Oliver

♩ = 116

The musical score is written for two bass guitars in 4/4 time, with a tempo of 116 beats per minute. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The score is divided into four systems, each with two staves. The first system (measures 1-6) features a mix of eighth and quarter notes with dynamic markings of *f*, *mf*, and *f*. The second system (measures 7-11) includes a crescendo leading to a *p* (piano) dynamic. The third system (measures 12-15) continues with *f* dynamics. The fourth system (measures 16-19) features a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic followed by a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic. The score concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 19.

From Home
VII. Lockdown

20

Two staves of music. The top staff begins with a *ff* dynamic and contains a series of eighth-note triplets, some with accidentals. The bottom staff also begins with a *ff* dynamic and contains eighth-note triplets. The music concludes with a sharp sign on the final note of the bottom staff.

25

Two staves of music. The top staff features eighth-note triplets and a half note, with a *pp* dynamic marking. The bottom staff contains eighth-note triplets and a triplet of eighth notes, also marked *pp*.

30

Two staves of music. The top staff includes eighth-note triplets and a half note, with dynamics *mf* and *pp*. The bottom staff features eighth-note triplets and a triplet of eighth notes, with dynamics *mf* and *pp*.

35

Two staves of music. The top staff starts with a *ff* dynamic and contains eighth-note triplets and a half note. The bottom staff begins with a *ff* dynamic and includes eighth-note triplets and a triplet of eighth notes.

From Home
VII. Lockdown

40

p

44

mf *f*

48

f *ff*

Glasgow, March 2020

From Home

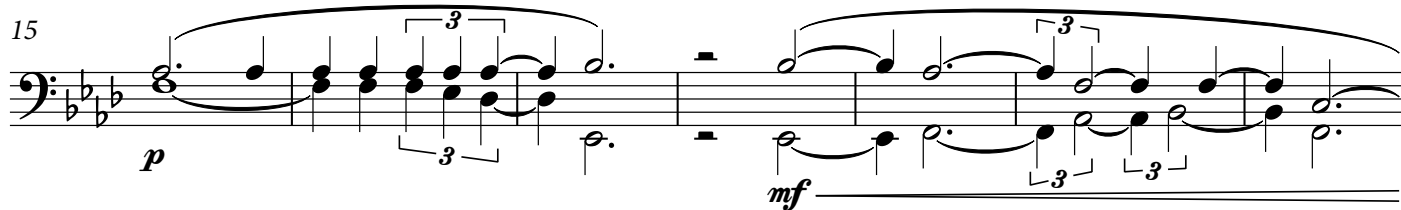
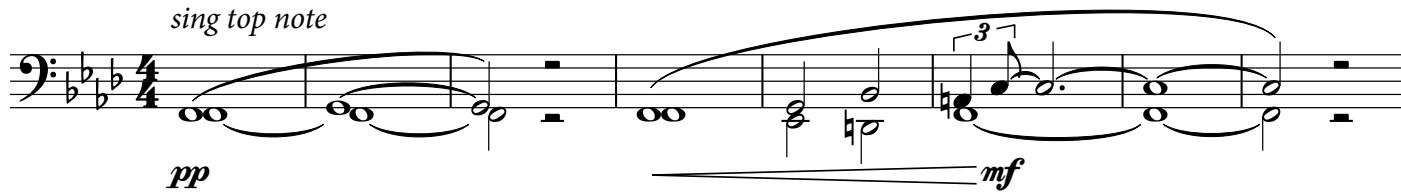
Nicholas Olsen

VIII. No Rush for tuba

for Matthew Chinn

♩ = 72

sing top note



From Home

Nicholas Olsen

IX. Daily Briefing for tenor saxophone

for Richard Scholfield

$\text{♩} = 92$

The musical score is written for tenor saxophone in 4/4 time, with a tempo of quarter note = 92. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score consists of 16 measures, divided into four systems of four measures each. Measure numbers 3, 6, 8, 10, 13, and 16 are indicated at the start of their respective lines. Dynamics include *f* (forte), *pp* (pianissimo), *p* (piano), *ff* (fortissimo), and *mf* (mezzo-forte). Performance techniques such as 'slap tongue' and 'ord.' (ordinary) are marked above specific notes. The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, sixteenth, and dotted notes), rests, and articulation marks like slurs and accents.

3

6 *slap tongue* *ord.* *slap tongue* *ord.*

8

10 *slap tongue* *ord.*

13

16

From Home
IX. Daily Briefing

18 *f*

21 *ff* *slap tongue* *ff*

26 *ord.* *ff* *f*

30 *p* *f*

32 *slap t.* *ord.* *pp* *f*

35 *mf* *mp* *p* *pp*

The musical score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. It begins at measure 18 with a forte (f) dynamic. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The tempo is indicated by a '7' over a quarter note. The score includes various articulations such as slurs, accents, and slurs with 'pizz' (pizzicato) markings. Dynamics range from fortissimo (ff) to pianissimo (pp). The piece concludes at measure 35 with a final double bar line.

Glasgow. April 2020

From Home

Nicholas Olsen
Haiku: Keith Jewitt

X. *Wishing, for voice and piano*

for Tilly Green and Sam Prouse

Wishing away Spring –
June, July, everything
‘til Autumn’s clean air.

- Keith Jewitt

♩ = 68

p *mp* *p*

Wish ing _____ Wish ing _____ Wish-ing a - way _____

♩ = 68

p

con Ad.

6 *mp* *pp* *mp*

Spring a - way Spring Spring _____ June _____

mp *pp* *mp*

From Home

X. Wishing

12

mf *f*

Ju-ly_ e-ve-ry e-ve-ry-thing_ e-ve-ry- thing_

18

f *ff*

'til 'til 'til Au-tumn's clean air_

23

p *pp*

clean air_ clean air_

p *pp*

al niente

From Home

Nicholas Olsen

XI. Ventilator, for accordion

for Djordje Gajic

♩ = 92

Measures 1-8 of the piece. The music is in 4/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) has whole rests for measures 1-6 and a series of eighth notes in measure 7. The left hand (bass clef) has a series of eighth notes in measures 1-6 and a series of eighth notes in measure 7. Dynamics include *pp* and *f* with crescendo and decrescendo markings. A note in measure 1 is marked with a circled 'x' and the text "'air' sound".

Measures 9-13 of the piece. The right hand has a series of eighth notes in measure 9, a whole note in measure 10, and a series of eighth notes in measures 11-13. The left hand has a series of eighth notes in measure 9, a whole note in measure 10, and a series of eighth notes in measures 11-13. Dynamics include *pp* and *f* with crescendo and decrescendo markings. A triplet of eighth notes in measure 9 is marked with a '3' and a bracket.

Measures 14-15 of the piece. The right hand has a series of eighth notes in measure 14 and a series of eighth notes in measure 15. The left hand has a series of eighth notes in measure 14 and a series of eighth notes in measure 15. Dynamics include *pp* and *f* with crescendo and decrescendo markings. A triplet of eighth notes in measure 14 is marked with a '3' and a bracket.

Measures 16-20 of the piece. The right hand has a series of eighth notes in measure 16, a series of eighth notes in measure 17, a series of eighth notes in measure 18, a series of eighth notes in measure 19, and a whole note in measure 20. The left hand has a series of eighth notes in measure 16, a series of eighth notes in measure 17, a series of eighth notes in measure 18, a series of eighth notes in measure 19, and a whole note in measure 20. Dynamics include *pp*, *fff*, and *no dim.* with crescendo and decrescendo markings. A triplet of eighth notes in measure 18 is marked with a '3' and a bracket.

From Home
XI. Ventilator

21

pp < f pp < f p

Measures 21-25: Treble clef has rests in measures 21-22, then chords in 23-24, and a descending eighth-note scale in 25. Bass clef has chords in 21-22, rests in 23-24, and a descending eighth-note scale in 25. Dynamics: *pp* < *f* (measures 21-22), *pp* < *f* (measures 23-24), *p* (measure 25). Time signatures: 3/4, 3/4, 4/4, 4/4, 4/4.

26

mf f

Measures 26-30: Treble clef has eighth-note triplets in 26-27, rests in 28-29, and a whole note in 30. Bass clef has eighth-note triplets in 26-27, rests in 28-29, and a whole note in 30. Dynamics: *mf* (measures 26-27), *f* (measures 28-30). Time signatures: 3/4, 3/4, 4/4, 4/4, 4/4.

30

pp < f p ff

Measures 31-33: Treble clef has eighth-note triplets in 31-32, and chords in 33. Bass clef has eighth-note triplets in 31-32, and chords in 33. Dynamics: *pp* < *f* (measures 31-32), *p* (measure 33), *ff* (measure 33). Time signatures: 4/4, 4/4, 4/4.

34

pp f p

Measures 34-35: Treble clef has eighth-note triplets in 34-35. Bass clef has rests in 34-35. Dynamics: *pp* < *f* (measure 34), *p* (measure 35). Time signatures: 4/4, 4/4.

36

ff

Measures 36-37: Treble clef has eighth-note triplets in 36-37. Bass clef has eighth-note triplets in 36-37. Dynamics: *ff* (measures 36-37). Time signatures: 4/4, 4/4.

From Home

XI. Ventilator

38 *8va-*

40 *b.s.*
ffff

43 *no dim.* *rubato* *pp* *3*

48 *ppp* *pp* *f*

53 *pp* *mp* *al niente*

From Home

Nicholas Olsen

XII. Closed, for cello

for James Heathcote

Staff 1: $\text{♩} = 128$. Dynamics: *ff* (beginning), *fff* (end). Includes a "scratch tone" instruction with an arrow pointing to a specific note.

Staff 2: $\text{♩} = 64$. Dynamics: *p*, *mf*, *mp*. Includes a triplet of eighth notes.

Staff 3: Dynamics: *f*, *p*. Includes a triplet of eighth notes.

Staff 4: *sul pont.* Dynamics: *mp*, *mf*. Includes a triplet of eighth notes.

Staff 5: *nat.* Dynamics: *f*, *p*, *pp*. Includes a triplet of eighth notes.

Staff 6: Dynamics: *ff*, *pp*. Includes a triplet of eighth notes.

From Home

Nicholas Olsen

XIII. No Fly, for Eb clarinet

for Joanna Nicholson

♩ = 92

The musical score is written for Eb clarinet in 4/4 time, with a tempo of 92 beats per minute. It consists of six staves of music, numbered 1 through 25. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score includes various dynamics: *p* (piano), *ff* (fortissimo), *f* (forte), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *mf* (mezzo-forte). It also features articulations such as accents (>), slurs, and triplets (3). The music includes complex rhythms, including sixteenth-note runs and rests.

1

7

12

17

22

25

29 *f*

32

36 *f*

39 *mf* *p*

43 *fp* *ff*

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef. It begins at measure 29 with a series of eighth-note triplets, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The time signature changes from 4/4 to 2/4 at measure 32, then back to 4/4 at measure 36. The melody continues with various rhythmic patterns, including eighth notes, quarter notes, and half notes, often grouped with slurs and accents. Dynamics vary throughout, including mezzo-forte (*mf*), piano (*p*), fortissimo (*ff*), and fortissimo-piano (*fp*). The score ends at measure 43 with a double bar line.

Glasgow. April 2020

From Home

Nicholas Olsen

XIV. Sun In An Empty Room for clarinet and horn

for Matthew Giraldo and Robert Newth

♩ = 78

Clarinet in B♭

Horn in F

pp *p* *p* *mp* *p* *<*

7

mf *f*

11

f *pp*

14

mf *pp* *pp*

From Home
XIV. Sun In An Empty Room

17

p *f*

21

mf *p* *p* *p*

23

pp *p* *pp* *pp*

Glasgow. May 2020

From Home

Nicholas Olsen

XV. COVIDiots, for electric guitar

for Laura Browne

♩ = 92

⑥ = D

sempre distortion

Measures 1-4 of the piece. The notation is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first measure contains a sixteenth-note triplet marked with an accent (>) and a fortissimo (ff) dynamic. The second measure has a half note with a flat (B-flat) and a piano (pp) dynamic. The third measure has a half note with a flat (B-flat) and a fortissimo (ff) dynamic. The fourth measure has a half note with a flat (B-flat) and a piano (pp) dynamic. The piece ends with a 2/4 time signature change and a final 4/4 measure.

Measures 5-6 of the piece. The notation is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first measure contains a sixteenth-note triplet marked with an accent (>) and a piano (pp) dynamic. The second measure has a half note with a flat (B-flat) and a piano (pp) dynamic.

Measures 7-8 of the piece. The notation is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first measure contains a sixteenth-note triplet marked with an accent (>) and a piano (pp) dynamic. The second measure has a half note with a flat (B-flat) and a piano (pp) dynamic. The piece ends with a 2/4 time signature change and a final 4/4 measure.

Measures 9-10 of the piece. The notation is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first measure contains a sixteenth-note triplet marked with an accent (>) and a piano (pp) dynamic. The second measure has a half note with a flat (B-flat) and a piano (pp) dynamic. The piece ends with a 2/4 time signature change and a final 4/4 measure.

Measures 11-12 of the piece. The notation is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first measure contains a sixteenth-note triplet marked with an accent (>) and a piano (pp) dynamic. The second measure has a half note with a flat (B-flat) and a piano (pp) dynamic. The piece ends with a 2/4 time signature change and a final 4/4 measure.

Measures 13-14 of the piece. The notation is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first measure contains a sixteenth-note triplet marked with an accent (>) and a piano (pp) dynamic. The second measure has a half note with a flat (B-flat) and a piano (pp) dynamic. The piece ends with a 2/4 time signature change and a final 4/4 measure.

16

Musical notation for measures 16-18. Measure 16 has a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a bass line. Measure 17 continues the melody. Measure 18 has a final chord in 4/4 time.

19

Musical notation for measures 19-22. Measure 19 has a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a bass line. Measure 20 has a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a bass line. Measure 21 has a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a bass line. Measure 22 has a final chord in 4/4 time.

23

p espress.

Musical notation for measures 23-25. Measure 23 has a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a bass line. Measure 24 has a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a bass line. Measure 25 has a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a bass line.

26

rit. 3

Musical notation for measures 26-27. Measure 26 has a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a bass line. Measure 27 has a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a bass line.

28 A Tempo ($\text{♩} = 92$)

Musical notation for measures 28-30. Measure 28 has a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a bass line. Measure 29 has a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a bass line. Measure 30 has a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a bass line.

31


Musical notation for measures 31-33. Measure 31 has a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a bass line. Measure 32 has a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a bass line. Measure 33 has a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a bass line.

From Home

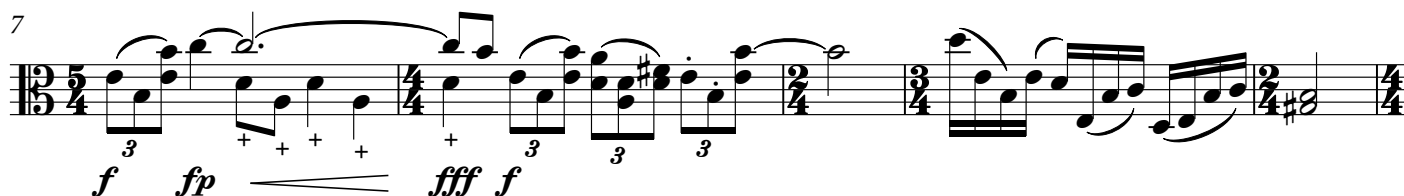
Nicholas Olsen

XVI. Cummings and Goings for viola d'amore

for Katherine Wren

Scordatura: 

♩ = 86



Glasgow. May 2020

From Home

Nicholas Olsen
Haiku: Keith Jewitt

XVII. *If I'm There, for ensemble*

for the Thallein Ensemble

The last whiff of may:
And the hope of next year's may
If I'm there to sniff.

- Keith Jewitt

The musical score is for a scene from 'The Last Whiff of May'. It features six instruments: Flute, Clarinet in Bb, Bassoon, Harp, Baritone, and Violoncello. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 68. The key signature has four flats (Bb, Eb, Ab, Db) and the time signature is 4/4.

Flute: Plays a melodic line starting in the second measure with a mezzo-forte (*mp*) dynamic, followed by a piano (*pp*) section in the third measure, and then mezzo-forte (*mp*) again in the fifth measure.

Clarinet in Bb: Mirrors the Flute's melodic line, also starting with mezzo-forte (*mp*), piano (*pp*) in the third measure, and mezzo-forte (*mp*) in the fifth measure.

Bassoon: Provides a rhythmic accompaniment with a series of eighth notes, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic and transitioning to mezzo-forte (*pp*) in the third measure.

Harp: Provides a continuous arpeggiated accompaniment, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic.

Baritone: Enters in the fourth measure with the lyrics "The last whiff of may". The music is marked mezzo-forte (*mp*) and expressive (*espress.*).

Violoncello: Provides a low-frequency accompaniment, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic and transitioning to mezzo-forte (*pp*) in the fourth measure.

6

Fl. *pp* *p* *pp* *f dolce*

Cl. *pp* *pp* *f dolce*

Bsn.

Hp. *mf*

Bar. *mf* *ff*

Vc. *p* *mf*

of may _____ and the hope

11

Fl. *subito pp*

Cl. *subito pp* *mp*

Bsn. *pp*

Hp. *subito pp*

Bar. *mp*

Vc. *pp*

and the hope of next year's_ may _____
con sord.

From Home
XVII. If I'm There

16

Fl. *mp* *f* subito *p*

Cl. *f* subito *p* *pp*

Bsn. *mp* *f* subito *p*

Hp. *mp* *f* subito *p*

Bar. *mf* 3 *ff* *mp* 3
if I'm there to sniff if I'm there to to

Vc. *mp* *f* subito *p*

21

Fl. *pp* *ppp*

Cl. *ppp*

Bsn. *pp* *ppp*

Hp. *pp*

Bar. *p*
sniff

Vc. *pp* *ppp*

From Home

Nicholas Olsen

XVIII. New Normal for two violas

for Anja Ormiston and Aaron Morrison

$\text{♩} = 88$

0 *sim.*

Viola 1

sempre f

IV *sim.*

Viola 2

sempre f

5

ff

8

ff

12

3

sul pont.
IV

subito pp

fff

16 *sim.*

sul pont.
IV

pp

sim.

f

19

f *p* *mf* *p*

p *f* *p* *mf*

23

mf *p* *f* *mf*

p *mf* *f*

27

f

mf ord.

ord.

30

f *mf* *f*

mf

33

mp *p* *pp*

The musical score is written for a grand piano with two staves. It begins at measure 16 with a 'sim.' (simile) instruction. The left hand features a 'sul pont. IV' (sustained pedal point on the fourth degree) marked 'pp' (pianissimo). The right hand has a triplet of eighth notes marked 'sim.' and 'f' (forte). The score continues through measures 19, 23, 27, 30, and 33. Measure 27 includes a key signature change to D major and a time signature change to 4/4. Measure 30 includes a key signature change to B minor and a time signature change to 3/4. The piece concludes at measure 33 with a final 'pp' (pianissimo) marking. Dynamics such as 'mf' (mezzo-forte) and 'f' (forte) are used throughout to indicate volume changes. Articulation marks like accents and slurs are present to guide the performer's touch.

From Home

Nicholas Olsen
Poem: Mike Jenkins

XIX. Wind-songs for cello and spoken voice

for Mike Jenkins

♩ = 86

Spoken Voice

Violoncello

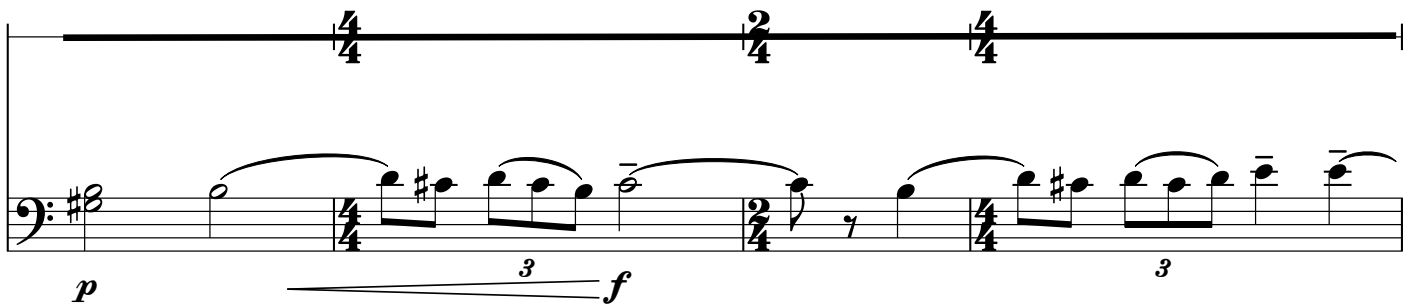
p *mf*

spoken voice enters

5

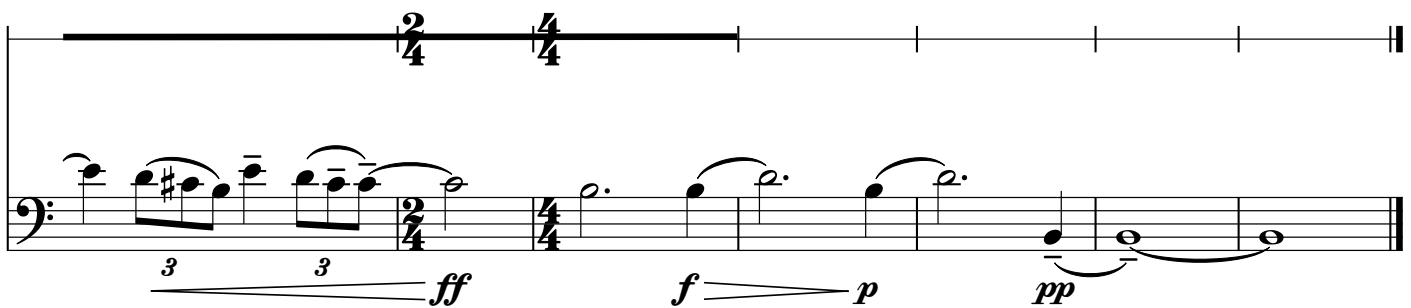
10

14



18

poco rit.



Glasgow. July 2020

WIND-SONGS

Mike Jenkins

The songs of the world are like winds
Warm or cold , gentle or raging.

We are carried by them like birds
To different landscapes and climes.

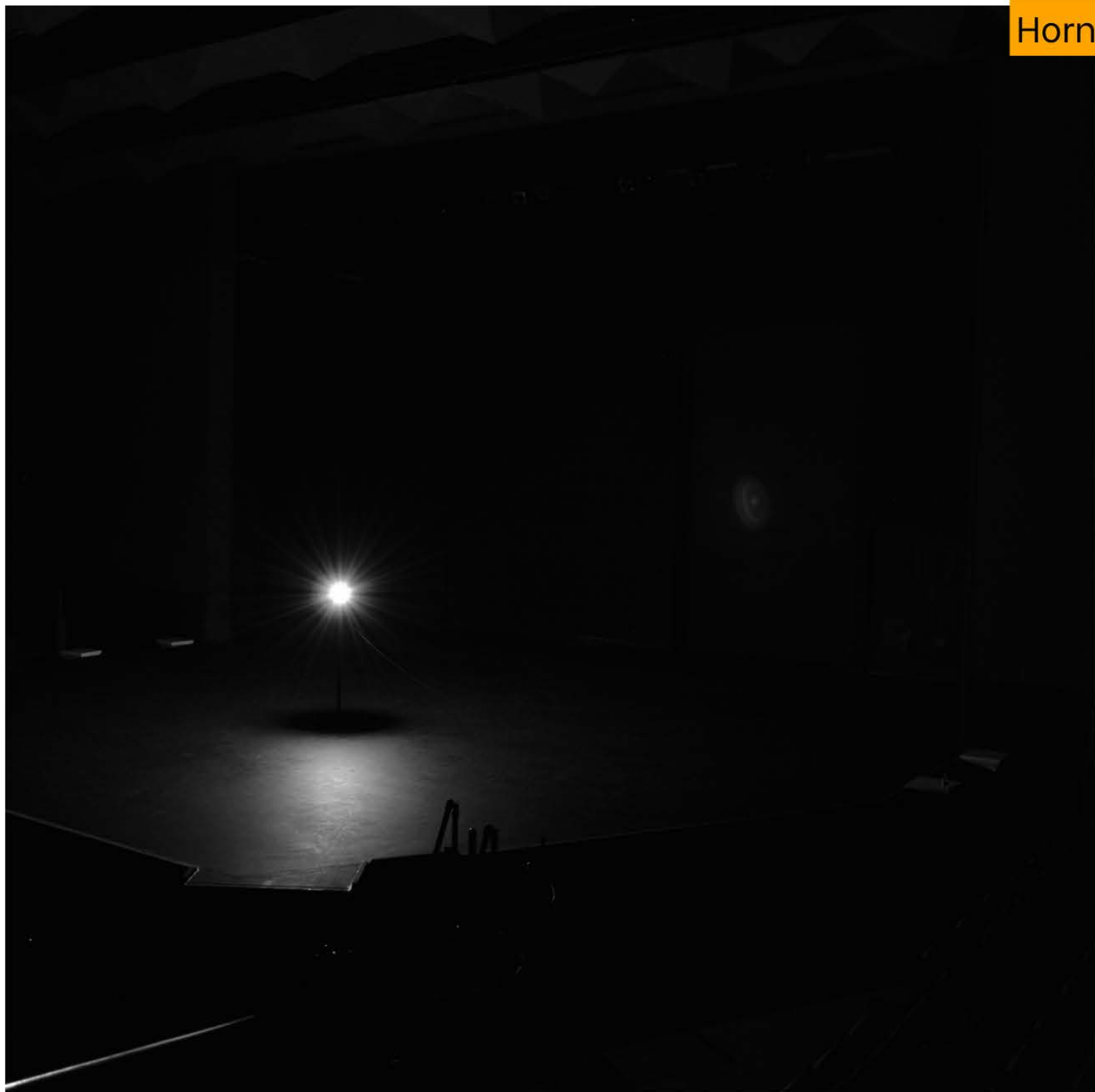
They can be dangerous or stirring,
Making wrecks or catching sails.

Each note grows wings,
Each stave's the air streaming.

The songs of the world bring stories
Of struggle, love and beginnings.

You can pull down the blinds,
Or stride out boldly and sing.

Horn



Ghost Light

for solo horn
Nicholas Olsen

nicholasolsenmusic.com

Ghost Light

Instrumentation

Horn in F

Duration

c. 4 minutes

Commissioned by Saar Berger.

Programme Note

A ghost light is left on at the centre of the stage when a theatre is in darkness. Do we leave the light on to appease ghosts or to ward them away?

Ghost Light was written for and is dedicated to Saar Berger.

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nicholas@nicholasolsenmusic.com

for Saar Berger

Ghost Light

for horn in F

Nicholas Olsen

♩ = 68

Molto rubato

air —————> pitched top line sung/hummed (9)

pp

8

mp *pp* *mf*

14 poco vib. —————> molto vib. echo

f *ff* *fff* niente

20 senza vib. echo

f *pp* *ff*

23 top line sung/hummed

p *f*

28 —————> sing out , overtone gliss. overtone gliss. poco vib. —————>

p *mf* *pp* *f*

33 molto vib. gliss. overtone gliss. top note sung echo

ff *p* niente

37 overtone gliss. echo - 1/2 valve legato poco vib. flz. nat. 3

mf *pp* *f* *ff*

41 poco vib. top line sung/hummed senza vib. sing out

p *f* *fff*

47 molto vib. gliss.

gliss.

49 senza vib. sweetly 3 3

subito pp *mf*

52

legato

echo

echo

f

57

→ air

poco vib.

hummed

mf

mp

62

play

p

ppp

65

top line
sung/hummed

→ air
pulsating

pp



The Anti-Masker

for ensemble
Nicholas Olsen

The Anti-Masker

Instrumentation

Clarinet in B \flat
Bassoon

Trumpet in B \flat
Trombone

Percussion (Snare Drum, Vibraphone, Suspended Cymbal, Pedal Bass Drum, Handbell (any pitch))

Narrator (props: war paint, scroll in the style of a town crier)

Violin
Double Bass

The score is presented in concert pitch.

Duration

c. 6 minutes 30 seconds

Commissioned by Skipton Camerata

Text by Kamal Kaan

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nicholas@nicholasolsenmusic.com

commissioned by Skipton Camerata

Nicholas Olsen
Text: Kamal Kaan

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A

11

Cl. *mp espress.*

Bsn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

S. D.

Nar.

Vln. *mp espress.*

Db.

A

17

Cl. *mp espress.* *mf*

Bsn. *p*

Tpt. *p*

Tbn. *p*

Vibraphone

S. D. *mp espress.*

Nar. *Smugly*

When they said you had to wear a mask to go out, I went ta Boots, got the most luxurious facemask money could buy. Went home, cleansed...

Vln. *mp espress.* *mf*

Db. *p*

B

23

Cl.

Bsn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Vib.

Nar.

apply warpaint

Vln.

Db.

mp espress.

mf

p

mf

p

p

p



B

29

Cl.

Bsn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Vib.

Nar.

angrily

Vln.

Db.

p

f

f

ff

f

p

f

p

f

... put on a shade of rouge went out into the streets.
I was getting right weird looks – I was like

Awrite love, you gotta problem?

I am wearing a facemask. What? It's not the right one? Well baaa off ya sheep.
You carry on doing what you're brainwashed to think and I'll carry on with my life.

C

D

E

55

Cl.

Bsn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Vib.

Nar.

Vln.

Db.

pp

pp

pp

etc.

E



60

Cl.

Bsn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Vib.

Nar.

Vln.

Db.

pp

p

p

mf

slowly - with purposeful pauses in between words

Nowadays everyone just rubs it in your face. It's all over social media. So bloody boring. Who killed the internet?
It used to be about just funny cat videos. But now - you can start a revolution with your phone.

mp

mp

66

Cl.

Bsn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Vib.

Nar.

Vln.

Db.

mp

mp

mp

mf

mf

71

Cl.

Bsn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Vib.

Nar.

Vln.

Db.

mf

fff

pp

fff

mf

fff

fff

f

fff

pp

fff

F

F

(b)

79

Cl. *fff* *pp*

Bsn. *fff*

Tpt. *fff* *p*

Tbn. *fff* *p*

Vib. *fff* To Perc.

Nar. *over annunciated, brashly*
it's met - a - phor - i - cal

Vln. *fff* *pp*

Db. *fff*

85 **G**

Cl. *p* *mf*

Bsn. *p* *mf*

Tpt. *mf*

Tbn. *mf*

Vib.

Nar.

Vln. *p* *mf*

Db. *p* *mf*

100

Cl.

Bsn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Percussion
Susp. Cymbal
Snare Drum
Pedal Bass Drum *soft mallets sempre l.v.*

Nar.

Vln.

Db.

pp

pp

pp

p

p

mp

mf

f

108 **I** Repeat until Narrator is finished and then play repeat once more.

Cl.

Bsn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Perc.

Nar.

earnestly

cresc. last time

They wanna gag you. If you don't speak out now, then no-one hears ya voice. They wanna see us all walking around, cut off from each other. They don't want us to smile they just want us to be quiet and obey. If everyone did that, then there wouldn't have been all those protests around the world for Black Lives Matter.

I Repeat until Narrator is finished and then play repeat once more.

Vln.

Db.

111

Cl.

Bsn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Perc.

Nar.

Vln.

Db.

To H-bell

You do know it's proven that they don't actually protect you.

117 **J**

Cl. *mf* *f* *mf* *espress.* *molto rubato*

Bsn. *mf* *f*

Tpt. *mf* *f*

Tbn. *mf* *f* *p*

Perc. Handbell
as if a town crier
Shout: "Hear ye, hear ye!"
ff

Nar. unfurl the scroll
as if a town crier
"masks did not prevent healthy people from picking up coronavirus"

Vln. *mf* *f* *p*

Db. *mf* *f*

125

Cl. *p*

Bsn. *p*

Tpt.

Tbn.

H-bell

Nar.

Vln.

Db.

K

129

Cl.

Bsn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

H-bell

Nar.

Vln.

Db.

as if a town crier

more angrily
still as if a town crier

eyes fixated on audience until the end

"masks did not prevent healthy people from picking up coronavirus"

L

136

Cl.

Bsn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

H-bell

Nar.

Vln.

Db.

Glasgow. September 2020

Full Score



Equals

for piano trio and video
Nicholas Olsen

nicholasolsenmusic.com

Equals

Instrumentation

Violin

Violoncello

Piano

Fixed Media - video with audio

Performance/technical notes

This piece is to be performed with the video "*Equals.mov*".

The video should be projected onto a large presenter screen (akin to a classroom projector). If no projector and screen is available, the video can be played on a large monitor or similar. The screen/monitor should be set up in front of the piano, but behind the violin and cello. The monitor should not obscure the view of the pianist to the audience or the line of sight for the trio.

Audio embedded in the video should be played through two PA speakers placed in front of the ensemble.

This piece is to be performed to a click track provided by the composer. There are two 'empty' click track bars before bar 1.

QLab or similar software should be used to ensure the video, audio, and click track are synchronous.

Duration

c. 10 minutes 30 seconds

Programme note

Like many global observers, I was consumed by, and almost addicted to, the 2020 Election in the United States of America. It was during the election process, and the manoeuvres leading to polling day that I became particularly aware of the use of autocratic rhetoric, mistruths, and falsehoods used in the campaign. The purposeful and political use of lies and misinformation is not only found in America. They permeate our democratic societies around the world.

Equals explores despotism by reflecting on a 1946 Encyclopaedia Britannica classroom film.

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nicholas@nicholasolsenmusic.com

Equals

for piano trio and video

Nicholas Olsen

$\text{♩} = 80$

Violin

Violoncello

Piano

5

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

9

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

12

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

f

15

A

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

pp

20

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

mf

p

23

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

port.

mp

mf

26

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

f

29

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

p

mf

ff

f

32 **B**

Vln. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Pno.

36

Vln.

Vc. *mf*

Pno. *pp*

40

Vln. *fff*

Vc. *fff*

Pno. *(pp)* *f* *fff*

44 C

Vln. *fp* *mf* *p*

Vc. *fp* *mf*

Pno. *ff* *pp*

48

Vln. *mf* *p*

Vc. *p*

Pno. *f* *pp*

52

Vln. *mf*

Vc. *mf* *p* *mf*

Pno. *f* *pp* *f*

56 **D**

Vln. *subito ff*

Vc. *subito ff*

Pno. *mf*

Measures 56-59. Violin and Viola parts have a triplet of eighth notes marked *subito ff*. Piano part has a continuous eighth-note accompaniment marked *mf*.

60

Vln. *mf* *p*

Vc.

Pno.

Measures 60-62. Violin part has a melodic line with accents and a dynamic change from *mf* to *p*. Viola and Piano parts continue with their respective patterns.

63

Vln.

Vc. *p*

Pno. *p*

Measures 63-65. Violin part has a sustained melodic line. Viola and Piano parts have eighth-note accompaniment marked *p*.

66

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

f

69

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

p

72

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

p

76 **E** sul pont. etc.

Vln. *ff*

Vc. sul pont. etc. *ff*

Pno. *ff*

Measures 76-79: Violin and Viola play a rapid sixteenth-note pattern marked "sul pont." and "ff". The Piano part has a rest in measure 76, then enters in measure 77 with a low, sustained chord marked "ff".

80

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

Measures 80-83: Violin and Viola continue the sixteenth-note pattern. The Piano part features a more active bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes.

84

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

Measures 84-87: Violin and Viola continue the sixteenth-note pattern. The Piano part continues with a complex bass line featuring many accidentals.

88

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

92

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

95

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

ord.

f

mf

ff

99 **F** sul pont. *sim.* *any high note*

Vln. *ff* *sfz*

Vc. *ff* *sim.* *sfz*

Pno. *ff*

103

Vln. *sfz*

Vc. *sfz*

Pno.

106

Vln. *sfz*

Vc. *sfz*

Pno.

110

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

Measures 110-112. Vln. and Vc. parts feature triplets and accents, with dynamic markings *sfz*. Pno. part features a complex bass line with triplets and chords.

113

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

Measures 113-115. Vln. and Vc. parts continue with triplets and accents, with dynamic markings *sfz*. Pno. part continues with a complex bass line.

116

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

Measures 116-118. Vln. and Vc. parts feature triplets and accents, with dynamic markings *sfz*. Pno. part features a complex bass line with triplets and chords.

119 **G** ♩ = 92

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

125

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

p

129 **H**

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

ord.

p

132

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

136

ord.

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

f

p

f

mf

138

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

140

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

142

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

gliss.

fff

8va

fff

144 **I**

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

mf

Measures 144-145. Violin and Viola parts are silent. Piano part features a complex melodic line with many accidentals and a steady bass line. Dynamic is *mf*.

146

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

p

Measures 146-147. Violin and Viola parts are silent. Piano part continues with complex figures. Viola part has a single note in measure 147. Dynamic is *p*.

148

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

f

mf

Measures 148-151. Violin part has a melodic line with many accidentals. Viola part has a sustained note with a sharp. Piano part has complex figures. Dynamics are *f* and *mf*.

150

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

mf

152

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

gliss.

ff

p

J

155

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

p

159

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

mf

mf

3

162

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

mf

3

3

165

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

p

p

3

168

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

K

ppp *mp* *pp*

ppp *mp* *pp* *mp*

pp

174

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

gliss.

mp *pp* *mp* *pp* *mf* *p*

pp *mp* *pp* *mf* *p* *mp*

3 *mp* *mf*

8va

con Rad. espress.

182

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

gliss.

mp *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp*

pp *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *pp*

p *mf* *p*

189

Vln. *mp* *pp* *gliss.* *mp* *pp* *mf* *sul pont.*

Vc. *mp* *pp* *mf* *sul pont.*

Pno. *mp* *mf* *8va*

Detailed description: This system covers measures 189 to 195. The Violin I part begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic, followed by a piano (*pp*) section with a glissando (*gliss.*) marking. It then returns to *mp*, followed by another *pp* section, and ends with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) section marked *sul pont.* The Violoncello part mirrors the violin's dynamics, starting at *mp*, dipping to *pp*, and then moving to *mf* *sul pont.* The Piano part features a mezzo-piano (*mp*) section with triplets, followed by a mezzo-forte (*mf*) section. An *8va* marking indicates an octave shift in the upper register.

196

Vln. *f* *fff*

Vc. *f* *fff*

Pno.

Detailed description: This system covers measures 196 to 202. The Violin I part is marked forte (*f*) and fortissimo (*fff*). The Violoncello part also features *f* and *fff* dynamics. The Piano part is silent, indicated by whole rests in both staves. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 and back to 4/4.

203 **L** Tempo I (♩ = 80)

Vln. *ff* *3*

Vc. pulsating ad lib. scratch tones. *f* *ad lib.*

Pno. *ff* *Red.*

Detailed description: This system covers measures 203 to 209. The Violin I part is marked fortissimo (*ff*) and includes a triplet (*3*) marking. The Violoncello part is marked *f* and includes a fortissimo (*ff*) section with a *Red.* marking. The Piano part is marked fortissimo (*ff*) and includes a *Red.* marking. The time signature is 4/4.

207

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

3

210

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

3

213

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

3

M

217

Vln. *con sord.*
p *ppp* *pp* *p* *ppp*

Vc. *con sord.*
p *ppp* *pp* *p* *ppp*

Pno. *p*
con ~~no~~ espress.

223

Vln. *pp* *p* *ppp*

Vc. *pp* *p* *ppp*

Pno.

228

Vln. *gliss.*
pp *p* *ppp*

Vc. *pp* *p* *ppp*

Pno.

234

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

239

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

243

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

8va-----

mf

8va-----



Our Better History

for oboe and organ (or electronic drone)
Nicholas Olsen

Our Better History

Instrumentation

Solo Oboe

Organ (*if an organ is not available, this part may be played by an electronic drone*)

Duration

c. 4 minutes 30 seconds

Commissioned by Jacqueline FitzGibbon for performance at St. Paul's Cathedral San Diego, California, United States of America.

Programme Note

Our Better History aims to create a moment to reflect on the words of Barack Obama's inaugural address in which he echoes St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. St Paul's letter asks us to put away 'childish things' as we grow older and Obama's address asks us to choose our own better history. These are the choices we make as a society.

"We remain a young nation. But in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things. The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness."

- Barack Obama, Inaugural Address as President of the United States of America, 2009

"When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me."

- 1st Letter to the Corinthians. 13:11

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www.nicholasolsenmusic.com

Our Better History

for solo oboe and organ

Nicholas Olsen

Reflective ♩ = 60
molto rubato

molto rubato

Oboe

Organ Pedals

al fine

pp

pp

p

f

7

ff

sub p

12

f

p

echo

mf

f

18

pp

ff

24

echo

pp

p

f

ff

29

p

echo

33

ff

pp

37

f *pp* *echo* 3

41

mf 3

48

p *mf* 3 3

52

f *ff* *p* *echo*

57

p *ff* 3 3

62 A little slower ($\text{♩} = 50$)

ff *mf* *echo*

67

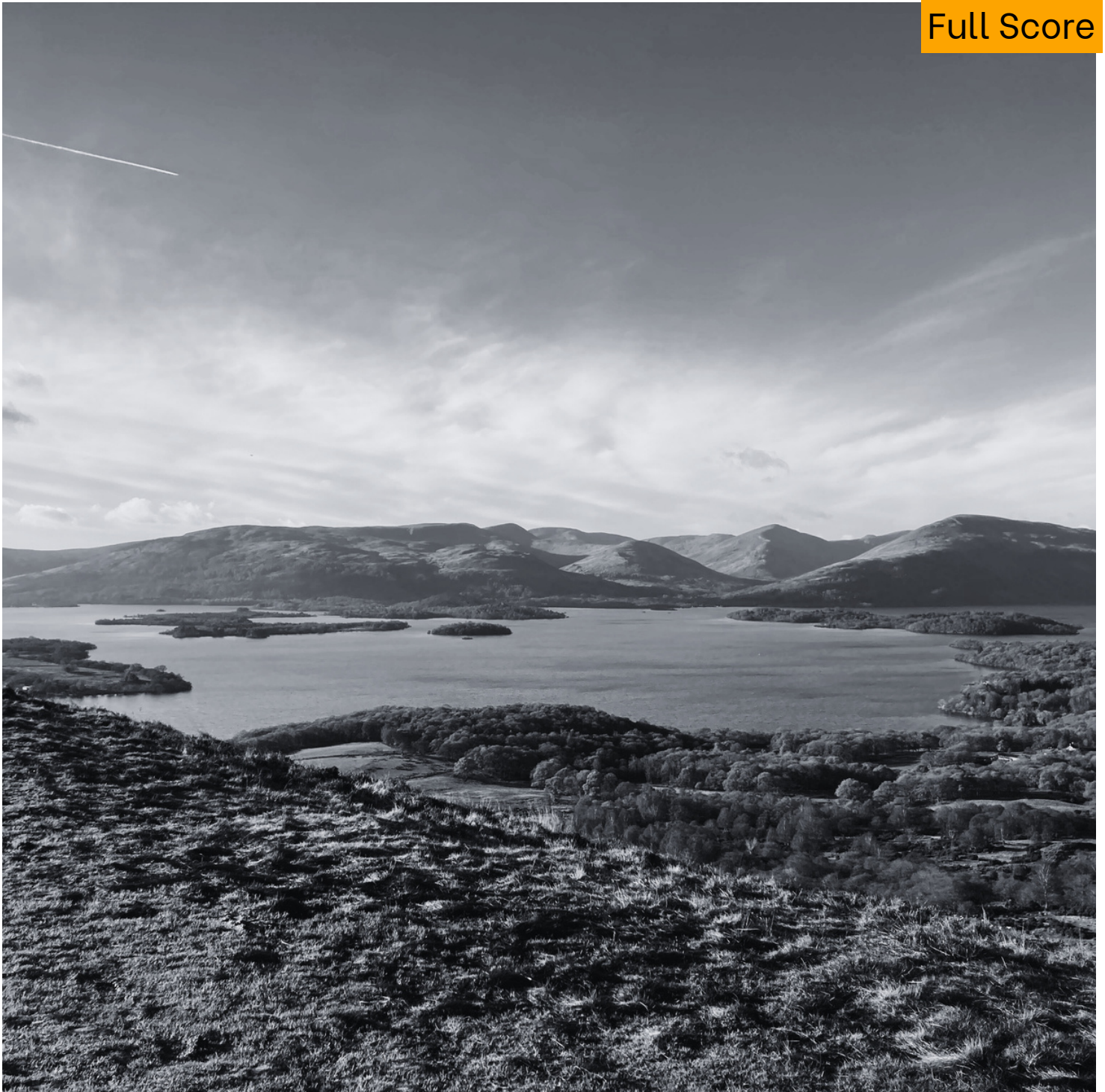
f *pp* *echo* 3 3

70

mf *pp* *mf* *pp* *echo*

Organ Pedals

Full Score



Summer

for tenor recorder and strings
Nicholas Olsen

Summer

- I. Birds
- II. Grey
- III. Peak

Instrumentation

Tenor Recorder
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass

This piece was composed specifically for the Helder Evo Tenor Recorder, however it can be performed on any Tenor Recorder.

Duration

c. 10 minutes

Commissioned by The Glasgow Barons. To be premiered by The Glasgow Barons and László Rózsa (recorder) conducted by Paul MacAlindin in Govan, Glasgow, in February 2021.

Performance Note

- Trills throughout are semitone trills to an upper note
- All grace notes are played on the beat

Programme Note

Commissioned by the Glasgow Barons, *Summer* is inspired by Antonio Vivaldi's G Minor Concerto from *The Four Seasons*. It considers summer in Glasgow, a city in which experiencing all four seasons in one day is commonplace throughout the year.

Summer takes its ideas from the swirling cacophony of birds that preside over Sauchiehall Street and the west coast beaches, the looming grey skies and cool air on a summer's evening, and the local population making an escape to the glorious mountains and lochs of the Trossachs and beyond.

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nicholas@nicholasolsenmusic.com

Summer

I. Birds

Nicholas Olsen

Erratic ♩ = 72

Tenor Recorder

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

5

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

7

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

ff

f *ff*

f *ff*

f *ff*

f *ff*

f

(o)

9

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

ff *mf*

trem.

p

trem.

p

p

p

(d)

mf

11

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

mf

mf

mf

mf

mf

Measure 11: T. Rec. starts with a melodic line featuring triplets and a fermata. Vln. I and II play sustained chords. Vc. and Db. play eighth-note patterns. Dynamics include *mf* and *f*.

Measure 12: Similar instrumentation and dynamics.

13

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

mf

f

sub. p

sub. p

p

mf

mf

Measure 13: T. Rec. starts with a melodic line featuring triplets and a fermata. Vln. I and II play sustained chords. Vc. and Db. play eighth-note patterns. Dynamics include *mf* and *f*.

Measure 14: Similar instrumentation and dynamics.

Measure 15: Similar instrumentation and dynamics.

16

T. Rec.

3

tr

5

ff

mf

rubato

p

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

Measures 16-18. T. Rec. starts with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a tremolo, then a quintuplet of sixteenth notes marked *ff*. This is followed by a rubato section with a *mf* dynamic, and ends with a *p* dynamic. Vln. I, Vln. II, and Vla. have long notes with hairpins. Vc. and Db. have whole rests.

19

T. Rec.

Vln. I

mf

Vln. II

mf

Vla.

mf

Vc.

mf

Db.

mf

Measures 19-20. T. Rec. has a half note and a whole rest. Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., Vc., and Db. have eighth notes and quarter notes, mostly marked *mf*.

21 *alternative fingering ad lib.*

T. Rec. *f*

Vln. I *f*

Vln. II *f*

Vla. *f*

Vc. *f*

Db. *f*

25

T. Rec. *mf*
solo, ghostly
con sord.

Vln. I *pp*

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

31

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

tutti (con sord.)

mf

tutti (con sord.)

mf

Summer

7

34

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

con sord.

mf

con sord.

mf

con sord.

mf

[illegible]

Quasi cadenza
molto rubato

39

T. Rec. *ff* 3

Vln. I *mf*

Vln. II *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vc.

Db.

In tempo (♩ = 72)

40

T. Rec.

Vln. I *mf* 3

Vln. II *mf* 3

Vla. *mf* 3

Vc. *mf* 3

Db. *p*

senza sord.

42

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

45 **A little slower** ♩ = 66

T. Rec. *f* *espress.* *ff*

Vln. I *p* pizz. arco, ricochet (♩)

Vln. II *f* *mf* arco, ricochet (♩)

Vla. *f* *mf* arco, ricochet (♩)

Vc. *f* pizz. if no C extension play 8va

Db. *f*

48

T. Rec.

mf

5

Vln. I

Vln. II

ricochet (♩)

mf

Vla.

arco, ricochet (♩)

mf

Vc.

mf

Db.

51

T. Rec.

mf 3

Vln. I

solo, con sord.

p 5 *mf*

tr

Vln. II

ricochet (♩)

mp

Vla.

ricochet (♩)

mp

Vc.

ricochet (♩)

mp

Db.

53

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

mp

mp

mp

p

mp

ricochet (♩)

ricochet (♩)

ricochet (♩)

5

3

fr

55

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

p

ppp

pp

pp

ricochet (♩)

fr

II. Grey

Delicately ♩ = 60

senza vib. → molto vib. s.v.

Tenor Recorder

p

tutti (senza sord.)

Violin I

pp

Violin II

pp

Viola

pp

Violoncello

pp

Double Bass

arco pizz. arco

mp 3

4 → m.v. s.v.

T. Rec.

mp *p* *mp*

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

pizz. arco pizz. arco

3

7

T. Rec. *pp* *mp* *3* *5* *7* *3*

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

10

T. Rec. *mp* *3* *mf* *3* *p* *mp* *3* *mf* *3* *p*
vib. ord. alternative fingering ad lib. alternative fingering ad lib.

Vln. I *p*

Vln. II *p*

Vla. *p*

Vc. *p* *mp*

Db. *mp* *p*

mp

 $\leq f$

23

T. Rec. *ff*

Vln. I *ff* *p* *mp* 3

Vln. II *ff* *pp*

Vla. *ff* *pp*

Vc. *ff* *pp*

Db. *ff* *pp*

29

A little slower ($\text{♩} = 56$)

T. Rec. *pp* *mf* 5 7

Vln. I 3 *mf* *p* solo

Vln. II *p* *mf* *p* solo

Vla. *p* *mf* *p* solo

Vc. *p* *mf* *p* solo

Db. *p* *mf*

32

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

Measures 32-34. T. Rec. (Trumpet) plays a complex melodic line with triplets and quintuplets. Vln. I (Violin I) and Vln. II (Violin II) play sustained chords. Vla. (Viola) plays eighth notes. Vc. (Violoncello) and Db. (Double Bass) play sustained chords.

35

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

Measures 35-38. T. Rec. (Trumpet) plays a complex melodic line with triplets and quintuplets. Vln. I (Violin I) and Vln. II (Violin II) play sustained chords. Vla. (Viola) plays eighth notes. Vc. (Violoncello) and Db. (Double Bass) play sustained chords.

Summer

17

39

T. Rec.

mp *p* *mp* *pp* *p*

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

42

T. Rec.

pp *ppp*

Vln. I

ppp

Vln. II

Vla.

ppp

Vc.

ppp

Db.

III. Peak

Nimble ♩ = 92

Tenor Recorder

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

3

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

pizz.

pp

5 (solo)
T. Rec. *mf* *espress.*

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

8

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

11

T. Rec.

poco

f

Vln. I

p

Vln. II

p

(pizz.)

Vla.

p

(pizz.)

Vc.

p

Db.

14

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

17

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

f

mp

mp

mp

arco

3

20

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

3

ff

ff

mf

mf

mf

arco

mp

p

23

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

26

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

Summer

23

29

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. *arco* *mp*

Vc.

Db.

32

T. Rec.

Vln. I *mp* *mf*

Vln. II *mp* *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Db.

38

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

43

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

46

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

49

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

ff

mf

mf

52

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

55

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

sub pp *mf*

59

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

fff

mp espress. 3

f *fff* *p*

f *fff* *p*

f *fff* *p*

f *fff* *p*

f *fff* *p*

solo

solo

63

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

3

3

66

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

69

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

mf

1/2 desks

1/2 desks

pizz. (solo)

p

pizz. (solo)

p

pizz. solo

p

72

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

Measures 72-74: T. Rec. (Melody), Vln. I (Sixteenth-note pattern), Vln. II (Sixteenth-note pattern), Vla. (Silent), Vc. (Silent), Db. (Eighth-note pattern in measure 72).

75

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

Measures 75-77: T. Rec. (Melody), Vln. I (Sixteenth-note pattern), Vln. II (Sixteenth-note pattern), Vla. (Silent), Vc. (Silent), Db. (Silent).

78

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

p

solo

pp

solo

pp

(solo)

pp

(solo)

pp

81

rit.

T. Rec.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

pp

morendo

ppp

ppp

(solo)

pp

morendo

3

Full Score



Wonderland

for ensemble and fixed media
Nicholas Olsen

Wonderland

Instrumentation

Flute
Soprano Saxophone
Bassoon
Horn in F
Violoncello
Fixed media (audio file)

Score in C

Duration

c. 5 minutes

Commissioned by The Hadit Collective.

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nicholas@nicholasolsenmusic.com

Wonderland

Nicholas Olsen

♩ = 80

PLAY: WONDERLAND AUDIO FILE

FLAT: WONDERLAND AUDIO FILE

Flute

Soprano Saxophone

Bassoon

Horn in F

Violoncello

Fixed Media

4/4 Mr. Speaker,
I want to apologise. | 3/4 | 4/4 I know that
millions... |

7

Fl.

Sop. Sax.

Bsn.

Hn.

Vc.

F. M.

$\frac{2}{4}$ I know the... $\frac{4}{4}$ | - | - Unable to mourn | - | - Unable to live their...

Or to do the things...

[illegible]

28 ♩ = 92

Fl. *p* *mf*

Sop. Sax. *p* *mf*

Bsn. *p* *mf* 3

Hn. *p* *mf* *mf*

Vc. *p* *mf*

F. M. 4/4 And though I cannot anticipate...

35

Fl. *f* *p*

Sop. Sax. *f* *p*

Bsn. *f*

Hn. *f* *p*

Vc. *f* *p* 3

F. M. And I must take responsibility...

And I must
take responsibility...

49

Fl.

Sop. Sax.

Bsn.

Hn.

Vc.

F. M.

3

mf

p

mf

p

mf

p

mf

p

Wonderland

5

56 $\text{♩} = 120$

Fl. *subito ff*

Sop. Sax. *subito ff*

Bsn. *subito ff*

Hn. *subito ff*

Vc. *subito ff*

F. M. $\frac{2}{4}$...event. || $\frac{4}{4}$ | | |

62

Fl.

Sop. Sax.

Bsn.

Hn.

Vc.

F. M. | | |

65

Fl.

Sop. Sax.

Bsn.

Hn.

Vc.

F. M.

I believe implicitly that
this was a work event...

$\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

68 Tempo I ($\text{♩} = 80$)

Fl.

Sop. Sax.

Bsn.

Hn.

Vc.

F. M.

ff *pp* *pp* *pp*

ff *pp* *pp* *pp*

pp *pp* *pp* *pp*

ff *pp* *pp* *pp*

ff *pp* *pp* *pp*

$\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

But Mr. Speaker...

Wonderland

7

74

74

Fl.

Sop. Sax.

Bsn.

Hn.

Vc.

F. M.

2/4 4/4

82

Fl.

Sop. Sax.

Bsn.

Hn.

Vc.

mp

mp

pp *mp*

7 People who suffered terribly...

87

Fl. *ff* *pp*

Sop. Sax. *ff* *pp*

Bsn. *pp*

Hn. *ff* *pp*

Vc. *ff* *pp*

F. M. | | And all I ask is that Sue Gray... | | And all I ask is that Sue Gray... |

92

Fl.

Sop. Sax.

Bsn.

Hn.

Vc. *p*

F. M. | | | | FIXED MEDIA | END |

Wonderland

9

98

Fl.

Sop. Sax.

Bsn.

Hn.

Vc.

F. M.

p

mp

104

Fl.

Sop. Sax.

Bsn.

Hn.

Vc.

F. M.

mf

mp

109

Fl.

Sop.
Sax.

Bsn.

Hn.

Vc.

F. M.

pp

mf

p

pp

pp

The musical score for 'Wonderland' begins at measure 109. The Flute (Fl.) part features a long note with a crescendo leading to a piano (pp) dynamic. The Soprano Saxophone (Sop. Sax.) and Bassoon (Bsn.) parts have rests. The Horn (Hn.) part has a melodic line starting with a piano (p) dynamic and ending with a pianissimo (pp) dynamic. The Violoncello (Vc.) part has a long note with a crescendo leading to a pianissimo (pp) dynamic. The F. M. (First Musician) part has a series of vertical lines indicating rests.



Solo Violin

For Gaza

for ensemble
Nicholas Olsen

nicholasolsenmusic.com

For Gaza**Instrumentation**

Solo Violin

Duration

c. 1 minute 30 seconds

Programme Note

For Gaza

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For Gaza

for Solo Violin

Nicholas Olsen

$\text{♩} = 52$

p *mp* *p* *pp*

7

mp *mf* *ff* *mf*

13 *glassy*

p *pp*

Cardiff, January 2024



An Attack is Taking Place

for symphony orchestra
Nicholas Olsen

An Attack is Taking Place

Instrumentation

Symphony Orchestra

2 Flutes
 2 Oboes
 2 Clarinets (2nd doubling Bass Clarinet)
 2 Bassoons

 4 Horns
 2 Trumpets
 3 Trombones (2 Tenor Trombones and 1 Bass Trombone)
 Tuba

Timpani

Percussion (2 Players)

Percussion 1: Tubular Bells (shared with perc 2), Xylophone, Vibraphone (shared with perc 2), Triangle.
 Percussion 2: Vibraphone (shared with perc 1), Tom-Toms x4 (high, medium-high, medium-low, and low), Tam-tam, Snare Drum, Tubular Bells (Shared with perc 1)

Violin I
 Violin II
 Viola
 Violoncello
 Double Bass

Score in C

Duration

c. 9 minutes

Programme Note

An Attack is Taking Place derives its title from a Cold War-era information film that prominently displayed the words “AN ATTACK IS NOT TAKING PLACE” at key moments throughout the film. The composition uses this and other references to the era's heightened tensions to reflect on the "culture wars" unfolding today. The work considers whether this divisive discourse, if taken to the extreme, leaves room for human decency and meaningful political debate in our society today.

An Attack is Taking Place is a culmination piece of my PhD research and is dedicated to my Mum and Dad.

An Attack is Taking Place was commissioned for the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Symphony Orchestra and received its premiere conducted by Michael Seal at The Bradshaw Hall in Birmingham on October 25, 2024.

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An Attack is Taking Place

Nicholas Olsen

Desolate $\text{♩} = 50$

Flute 1

Flute 2

Oboe 1

Oboe 2

Clarinet 1 in B♭

Clarinet 2 in B♭

Bassoon 1

Bassoon 2

Horn 1 in F

Horn 2 in F

Horn 3 in F

Horn 4 in F

Trumpet 1 in B♭

Trumpet 2 in B♭

Trombone 1

Trombone 2

Bass Trombone

Tuba

Timpani

Desolate $\text{♩} = 50$
Tubular Bells
distant

Vibraphone

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

13 **A**

Fl. 1 *p* *mp*

Fl. 2 *p* *mp* *mf*

Ob. 1 *mf* *mf*

Ob. 2 *mf* *mf*

Cl. 1 *mf* *mf*

Cl. 2 *mf* *mf*

Bsn. 1 *p*

Bsn. 2 *p*

Hn. 1 *mf* *pp* *p*

Hn. 2 *p*

Hn. 3 *p*

Hn. 4 *p*

Tpt. 1 *pp* *mf*

Tpt. 2 *p*

Tbn. 1 *p*

Tbn. 2 *p*

B. Tbn. *open* *p*

Tba. *open* *p*

Timp.

B

Tub. B. *mf*

Vib. *mp* *mf* *p* *mf*

A

Vln. I *mp* *poco* *p*

Vln. II *mp* *poco* *p*

Vla. *mp* *poco* *p*

Vc. *mp* *poco* *p*

Db. *mp* *poco*

29

C

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Hn. 3

Hn. 4

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Tub. B.

Vib.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

f *mp*

f

f *mp* *mf*

f

f

To B. Cl.

f

f

f

f

f

mp *mf*

p

pp *mp* *p* *poco* *unis* *p*

pp *p* *poco* *p*

pp *p* *poco* *p*

pp *p* *poco* *p* *s*

pp *p* *poco* *p*

[D] $\text{♩} = 92$

FL 1 *ff*

FL 2 *ff*

Ob. 1 *ff*

Ob. 2 *ff* *mf*

Cl. 1 *ff* *mf*

B. Cl. Bass Clarinet in Bb *ff*

Bsn. 1 *ff*

Bsn. 2 *ff*

Hn. 1 *ff*

Hn. 2 *ff*

Hn. 3 *ff*

Hn. 4 *ff*

Tpt. 1 *ff* *mf*

Tpt. 2 *ff* *mf*

Tbn. 1 *ff*

Tbn. 2 *ff*

B. Tbn. *ff*

Tba. *ff*

Timp. *ff*

[D] $\text{♩} = 92$

Tub. B. *ff*

Tom-toms *ff*

[D] $\text{♩} = 92$

Vln. I *ff*

Vln. II *stacc.* *ff*

Vla. *stacc.* *ff*

Vc. *ff*

Db. *ff*

E

53

Fl. 1 *mf*

Fl. 2 *mf*

Ob. 1 *mf*

Ob. 2 *pp*

Cl. 1 *pp*

B. Cl. *mf*

Bsn. 1 *mf*

Bsn. 2 *mf*

Hn. 1 *mf*

Hn. 2 *mf*

Hn. 3 *mf*

Hn. 4 *mf*

Tpt. 1 *p*

Tpt. 2 *p*

Tbn. 1 *mf*

Tbn. 2 *mf*

B. Tbn. *mf*

Tba. *mf*

Timp. *f*

Xylophone *mf*

Tom-T. *f*

E

Vln. I *mf*

Vln. II *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Db. *mf*

58

Fl. 1 *pp* *mf* *p* *ff* *ff*

Fl. 2 *pp* *mf* *p* *ff* *ff*

Ob. 1 *p* *pp* *mf* *p* *pp* *mf*

Ob. 2 *p* *pp* *mf* *p* *pp* *mf*

Cl. 1 *mf* *p* *pp* *mf* *p*

B. Cl. *mf* *p* *pp* *mf* *p*

Bsn. 1 *p* *pp* *mf* *p*

Bsn. 2 *p* *pp* *mf* *p*

Hn. 1 *fff* *f* *mf* *p*

Hn. 2 *fff* *f* *mf* *p*

Hn. 3 *fff* *f* *mf* *p*

Hn. 4 *fff* *f* *mf* *p*

Tpt. 1 *ff* *mf* *ff*

Tpt. 2 *mf* *f* *mf* *ff*

Tbn. 1 *mf* *f* *mf*

Tbn. 2 *mf* *f* *mf*

B. Tbn. *mf* *f* *mf* *p*

Tba. *mf* *f* *mf* *p*

Timp.

Xyl.

Tom-T.

Vln. I *ff* *mf* *9*

Vln. II *ff* *mf* *9*

Vla. *ff* *mf* *9*

Vc. *ff* *mf* *9*

Db.

70

Fl. 1

sub *pp*

Fl. 2

sub *pp*

Ob. 1

sub *pp*

Ob. 2

sub *pp*

CL. 1

sub *pp*

B. Cl.

sub *pp*

Bsn. 1

sub *pp*

Bsn. 2

sub *pp*

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Hn. 3

Hn. 4

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

sub *pp*

Tba.

sub *pp*

Timp.

Xyl.

Tom-t.

Vln. I

mp

pp

Vln. II

mp

pp

Vla.

mp

pp

Vc.

mp

pp

Db.

The musical score is for 'The Firebird' by Igor Stravinsky, featuring a large orchestra and solo voices. The score is in 3/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings. The instruments and parts included are:

- Fl. 1, Fl. 2
- Ob. 1, Ob. 2
- Cl. 1, B. Cl.
- Bsn. 1, Bsn. 2
- Hn. 1, Hn. 2, Hn. 3, Hn. 4
- Tpt. 1, Tpt. 2
- Tbn. 1, Tbn. 2, B. Tbn.
- Tba.
- Timp.
- Vibraphone
- Xyl.
- Tam-tam
- Vln. I, Vln. II
- Vla.
- Vc.
- Db.

The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings (e.g., *p*, *mf*). The score is divided into measures, with some measures containing multiple notes and rests. The score is written in a standard musical notation style, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 3/4.

83

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Cl. 1

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hrn. 1

Hrn. 2

Hrn. 3

Hrn. 4

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Vib.

T.-T.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

This musical score page contains measures 83 through 89. The instrumentation includes Flutes 1 and 2, Oboes 1 and 2, Clarinet 1, Bass Clarinet, Bassoons 1 and 2, Horns 1 through 4, Trumpets 1 and 2, Trombones 1 and 2, Baritone Trombone, Tuba, Timpani, Vibraphone, Tom-tom, Violins I and II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. Measures 83-86 feature woodwinds and bassoons playing eighth-note patterns with triplets. Measures 87-89 feature a complex texture with woodwinds, brass (Tbn. 1, Tbn. 2, B. Tbn., Tba.) playing sustained notes with slurs, and strings (Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., Vc., Db.) playing sixteenth-note patterns with slurs. The Vibraphone and Tom-tom are also present in measures 83-86.

[illegible]

97

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Cl. 1

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Hn. 3

Hn. 4

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Xyl.

S. D.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Cardiff, July - September 2024