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Synthesising Folk Influences and Contemporary Compositional Techniques in Pursuit of an Original Musical Language

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SYNTHESISING FOLK INFLUENCES AND CONTEMPORARY COMPOSITIONAL TECHNIQUES IN PURSUIT OF AN ORIGINAL MUSICAL LANGUAGE

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This thesis is submitted to the Dublin Institute of Technology, Conservatory of Music and Drama in the College of Arts and Tourism for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

December 2015.

Research Supervisor: Dr. Gráinne Mulvey.
ABSTRACT

Synthesising folk influences and contemporary compositional techniques in pursuit of an original musical language.

As both a traditional Irish musician and composer, I am always striving to effectively fuse folk music and contemporary compositional techniques together. From a young age, I was immersed in all aspects of Irish folk culture from music to folklore and these early influences have become a fundamental source of inspiration for my works. This research project examines how the syntheses of ethnic music with contemporary techniques, have informed my composition portfolio and culminated in the development of my individual approach, where timbre and folk idioms combine to form a distinctive stylistic genre.

Many composers have delved into this area in the past, Seóirse Bodley, Eric Sweeney and Donnacha Dennehy are three Irish composers that I have highlighted as contrasting examples of how this integration of styles has emerged and been established. Throughout the body of this thesis, I explore how a new approach to the juxtaposition of folk music, narrative, structure, harmony, melody, rhythm and timbre relates to the overall stylistic sonic resultant.

The accompanying portfolio consists of ten compositions ranging from solo to orchestral and including electronic music. Three original Irish jigs and one Finnish joik (a Sámi folk song), form the basis from which the majority of folk material is extracted. The range of instrumental forces utilised, explores the transformation of the folk tunes in various acoustic guises and with regard to the electronic medium which allows for re-synthesis in another contextual framework.
DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis which I now submit for examination for the award of PhD, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others, save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

This thesis was prepared according to the regulations for postgraduate study by research of Dublin Institute of Technology and has not been submitted in whole or in part for another award in any other third level institution.

The work reported on this thesis conforms to the principles and requirements of the DIT’s guidelines for ethics in research.

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Signature____________________________ Date_22/1/16___________

Alyson Barber
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I extend my gratitude to Eric Sweeney, Donnacha Dennehy, the staff at the CMC and to all the performers involved in this project, for aiding me with this research and bringing life to my music: Jane O’Leary, Martin Johnson, Madeleine Staunton, Elaine Clarke, Paul Roe, Noel Eccles, Denise Kelly, Lynda O’Connor, George Fox, ConTempo (Bogdan Sofei, Ingrid Nicola, Andreea Banciu and Adrian Mantu), Galway Adult Strings, DIT Symphony Orchestra, Joe O’Farrell, David Brophy, DIT Harp Ensemble, Ramin Haghjoo, Katri Suominen, Adam Guinan, Ivan Kenny and Sharon O’Leary.

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Finally to my amazing family, Áine for listening to me waffle and rant, my aunts for all the hot dinners and a cosy bed whenever I needed one in Dublin. To my brother and parents for their endless love, wisdom, kind words when needed, occasional shove in the right direction and financial support, throughout my many, many years of study; words will never express my love and gratitude. Last, but definitely not least, Stephen Malone, my lovely, soon to be husband, without your shoulder to lean on over the last four years, this project would not have been possible; I look forward to our wonderful future together.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Influences on my music.

"Is iomáí sort ceoil atá ann, mar a dúirt an fear a raibh an trúmpa maide aige"
(There are many different sorts of music, as the man with the wooden trumpet
said.) The past. Influences from various forms of ‘modern’ music and also
traditional Irish music. The future? Now there’s an interesting thought...

This personal statement by Seóirse Bodley from his biography on the Contemporary
Music Centre’s (CMC) website is extremely relevant to every composer as we are all
products of our past and present influences.

I am a composer and I am a traditional Irish musician. These are my two ‘masks’, as
Sir Peter Maxwell Davies might call them. From a young age I played the Irish flute
and tin whistle, I grew up in surroundings where all aspects of Irish culture from music
to folklore were encouraged and embraced. I am also fortunate to be of a generation
that is widely travelled, therefore I have come to appreciate other cultures and their
music. I was privileged to have been invited to Finland to perform both Irish and local
to folk music several times and my studies brought me to live in London for several years,
where I came into contact with arguably some of today’s most talented composers. All
of these influences have had a bearing on me as both a composer and a traditional Irish
musician.

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2 Seóirse Bodley, the Contemporary Music Centre Biographies. http://cmc.ie/composers/composer.cfm?
composerID=8 (accessed 16 February 2015).
During this lecture Davies described how he had different personalities as a composer and he called these
his ‘masks’. During a creative transcriptions workshop given by Davis on 14 March 2008 at the Royal
Academy of Music London, he encouraged me to consider my ‘masks’ as an Irish musician and as a
composer.
In the past I found it difficult to combine these folk influences with my classical music training. I separated them because I was unable, at that time, to find a way to retain the purity and integrity of the folk tunes whilst combining them with contemporary composition practices. However, as part of my research I have used these elements to act as the fundamental source of material in most of my recent works. The portfolio which compliments this thesis is a representation of how ethnic and contemporary idioms can be synthesised.

1.2 How previous composers have fused different genres together.

My music is a product of a generation where it has become acceptable for both Irish and contemporary music to coexist. This has been made possible by those who have come before me, as they laid the foundations for current composers. This fusion of two styles is not a uniquely Irish or a twenty-first century issue. Ethnic music has been an inspiration in many of the works by composers such as Debussy, Bartók, Kódaly, Sibelius and Messiaen, to name a few European composers. Indeed in Irish history it is widely accepted that the traditional Irish harper and composer Turlough O’Carolan, born in 1670, was influenced by Italian composers such as Corelli and Geminiani. *O’Carolan’s Concerto* is a prime example of this influence. The Irish music collector Edward Bunting referred to Corelli when discussing this piece.

‘the practitioner will perceive evident imitations of Corelli, in which the exuberant fancy of that admired composer is happily copied’.4

This quote was not very flattering but in his defence O’Carolan was ahead of his time. One only has to read the account by Walker (whose *Life of Carolan* was published in the

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Irish Bard in 1786), to establish how the integration of high art and ethnic Irish music became a reality.

‘In the beginning of the last century, the then Lord Mayo brought from Dublin a celebrated Italian performer, to spend some time at his seat in the country. Carolan who was at the time on a visit at his lordships, found himself greatly neglected; and complained of it one day in the presence of the foreigner. “When you play in as masterly a manner as he does,” replied his lordship, “you shall not be overlooked.” Carolan wagered with the musician, that though he was almost a stranger to Italian music, yet he would follow him in any piece he played; and that he himself would afterward play a voluntary, in which the Italian should not follow him. The proposal was acceded to and Carolan was victorious’.  

O’Carolan was well respected throughout Ireland and he gave Irish composers a platform to find fresh approaches to the fusion of Irish folk tunes and contemporary classical music. Examples of these composers include; Charles Villiers Stanford, Hamilton Harty, Séan Ó’ Riada, Seóirse Bodley, Michael Ó’Suilleabhain, Eric Sweeney, Bill Whelan, Gerald Barry, Donnacha Dennehy and David Flynn.

The compositional styles of these Irish composers vary greatly, from Ó’Riada and his orchestral arrangements of Irish tunes, to Flynn who focusses on the detail of ornaments within dance tunes. Seóirse Bodley and Eric Sweeney are two established Irish composers who have vastly different approaches in using Irish ethnic music as a source of material. I cite these composers for this very reason, to show this diversity. In the coming chapter Donnacha Dennehy will also be discussed as he has utilised aspects of both styles, fusing them together.

5 O’Sullivan, 90.
1.3 Seóirse Bodley—Avant–garde meets folk music.

Bodley stated;

‘as time goes on you develop, especially if you were born in the time and place that I was. You were exposed to different musical influences, often quite radically different over a period. Either you responded to these or you didn’t’.  

This radical difference in styles is very noticeable in Bodley’s compositions, where the influence of folk and avant-garde music is evident. Axel Klein described Bodley’s *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* as a ‘creative conflict’ between folk music and art music. Bodley is well versed in Irish music, developing his own notational apparatus for Irish rhythms and ornaments. This is evident in the notes of *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*. In his article, which was published in *Éigse Cheol Tíre* 1973, Bodley explains his new notational developments in more detail.

Between 1963 and 1965 Bodley made several trips to Darmstadt, where he was exposed to avant-garde music and the second Viennese school. Gareth Cox quoted Bodley as describing his period at Darmstadt as ‘a most exciting and stimulating time’, which led him to believe that ‘serial and post-serial music was almost the only way that music could develop’. This development in his music led to the juxtaposition of this ‘new music’ with folk music. *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* and *A Small White Cloud Drifts Over Ireland* are two examples of these contrasting styles.

Prior to the broadcasting of *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* on RTÉ radio in 1972

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the presenter described the piece in the following way:

‘It’s a work of sharp contrast and musical eruptions rather than sustained loudness. The musical content derives from two main elements; a newly composed melody in sean-nós style which wanders through the piece in various guises, sometimes varied, sometimes stated in full, sometimes in part. At the end it’s transmuted into a fragment of the tune *A Spalpín a Rúin*, suggesting that the melody represents in a way the working journeyman through a strange landscape. The balance of the music is derived from various elements, avant-garde irregularity and dissonance. Simple chords used as blocks are not developed in the more usual relationships [this section of the pre-concert talk was indecipherable and so has been omitted] In all it is a musical investigation of the north as a state of mind’.

Bodley’s juxtaposition of chromaticism and modality form the structural foundations of this work’s syntax. The polarity between the air and the chromatic dissonance makes for a constant ‘aural power’ struggle and eventually, towards the end of the work, the modal air triumphs. In this piece Bodley integrates sections of the air followed by chords and chromatic dissonance.

There are five different types of material in this work, each consisting of either chromatic dissonant material or the modal elements derived from the *sean-nós* style ‘air’. For ease of interpretation these segments have been laid out in the following table.

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Table 1.1: A breakdown of the different sections of *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, referring to the types of material used within each section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment,</th>
<th>Chromatic or modal.</th>
<th>Description of material.</th>
<th>Location.*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Chromatic dissonance.</td>
<td><em>Fortissimo</em> cluster chord.</td>
<td>Bar 17, bottom of page three.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B 2</td>
<td>Chromatic.</td>
<td>Chromatic broken chords mixed with short ornamented notes. This is a condensed version of B 1, with chromaticism in octave displacement.</td>
<td>Bar 18–25, first system page four.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B 3</td>
<td>Chromatic.</td>
<td>This is a development of the broken chromatic chords from B 1. The third last bar of this section refers to the ‘air’.</td>
<td>Bar 27, end of page four to bar 33 second system page five.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D / B 1</td>
<td>Chromatic dissonance.</td>
<td>This section is a combination of black dyad cluster trills, which are contrasted with short ornamented notes from B 1.</td>
<td>Bar 34 to bar 36, second system page six.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D / A 1</td>
<td>Modal/ chromatic dissonance.</td>
<td>Dyad cluster trills are juxtaposed with material derived from the ‘air’. The ‘air’ segment starts the same as A 1, but it is the slightly varied. It is also lengthened by one bar.</td>
<td>Bar 37 to bar 42, second system page seven.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B 1</td>
<td>Chromatic.</td>
<td>The short ornamented notes from B 1 re-emerge for one bar.</td>
<td>Bar 43, last bar page seven.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E 1</td>
<td>Chromatic.</td>
<td>Jig rhythmic material consists of repeated G triplet quavers. The last bar of this section suggests material from the ‘air’.</td>
<td>Bar 44, start of page eight to bar 48, first bar page nine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B 1</td>
<td>Chromatic.</td>
<td>Ornamented notes of varying lengths.</td>
<td>Bar 49, first system page nine to bar 55, first system page ten.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 2 / B 1 / B 3</td>
<td>Modal juxtaposed with chromatic notes.</td>
<td>The modal air has moved to the bass clef in piano one and is extended. In this section it starts to morph into a fragment of <em>A Spalpín a Rún</em>. Short ornamented notes from B 1 and</td>
<td>Bar 56 to bar 72, first system page thirteen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These locations are taken from the original score for two hands, as some sections do not contain bar lines in one or both of the parts, page numbers are included for accuracy.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment.</th>
<th>Chromatic or modal.</th>
<th>Description of material.</th>
<th>Location.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E 2</td>
<td>Chromatic.</td>
<td>The last bar from E1 which is rhythmic jig material, re-appears again, linking back to the ‘air’ tune.</td>
<td>Bar 73 page thirteen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 1</td>
<td>Modal.</td>
<td>The exact ‘air’ segment from bar 1 is introduced once more, this time in the treble clef.</td>
<td>Bar 76, second system, page thirteen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B 1</td>
<td>Chromatic.</td>
<td>Short chromatic ornamented notes are sandwiched between these A sections.</td>
<td>Bar 79, start of page fourteen to bar 88, first system page sixteen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 3</td>
<td>Modal.</td>
<td>A modal segment of the opening (bars 2 and 3) appearing in the treble clef.</td>
<td>Bar 89, first system page sixteen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen from table 1.1 *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* is a continual succession of chromatic and modal material. At points however, the cross fertilisation of these two disparate materials meet. For example in the section marked ‘slow air speed’, the air which is in the Phrygian mode is juxtaposed with black dyad clusters. These clusters, along with the B flat in left the hand of piano two, result in pentatonicism. The merger of these separate materials forms a bi-modal texture (figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: Clusters in *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* bar 38.\(^\text{10}\)

\(^{10}\) Seóirse Bodley, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North for Two Pianos* (Dublin: the Contemporary Music Centre Ltd., 1972), 6.
Throughout the ‘air’ sections, Bodley cultivates the original modal material of the newly composed ‘air’, morphing it into the ‘air’; *A Spalpín a Rúin*. When expanding the melody Bodley stays very close to the original rhythmic and melodic material by extending it, rather than developing it.

*A Small White Cloud Drifts Over Ireland* for orchestra is another example as to how Bodley juxtaposes newly composed jigs and reels with atonal segments and chords. An example of this is at bar 20, where a jig appears in the solo violin, as fragments of the jig in the preceding bars prepare for this moment. This jig is accompanied by clusters in the strings and xylophone (figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2: *A Small White Cloud Drifts Over Ireland*, bar 20.¹¹

¹¹ Gareth Cox, 80.
Thirteen bars before J, jig fragments re-appear in the oboes, with chords in the harp. The strings continue in clusters with the flutes taking a fragment of the jig. This leads to an ‘air’ in the flute, two bars after K, in the *Andante* section. Bodley continually uses fragments of the tunes followed by atonal segments, block chords and clusters. The juxtaposition of atonality and the ethnic Irish tunes might be considered an incongruous merger of materials. However, the result of these styles still allows the tunes to appear as foreground, above the orchestral texture. Many of Bodley’s other works such as *The Tight Rope Walker Presents a Rose* also show such extreme polarities by the juxtaposition of these two genres. However, this synthesis works successfully as he has an in-depth knowledge of Irish music and is successful in using it as a tool when crafting a new composition. Bodley’s style is unique and has had a profound effect on how Irish music is fused with contemporary art music today.

**1.4 Eric Sweeney—Minimalism meets folk music.**

Unlike Bodley, Eric Sweeney never adopted twelve tone serialist techniques, however ‘certain serial patterns had become recurring elements in several earlier pieces such as *The World a Haunting* is’.*\(^{12}\) Sweeney also explored the use of polyrhythms in his works, this will be discussed in more detail later in this section. When talking about minimalist techniques Sweeney stated:

‘A lot of American minimalist composers I find boring. What attracts me to so much of that music are the ideals behind it: this new way of looking at music, it is this, more than the actual music, I find exciting’.*\(^{13}\)

From the early 1980’s Sweeney started to explore the use of Irish music in a minimalist

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12 Eric Sweeney, 2.
way, cohesively fusing the two techniques together. In an interview with Jonathan Grimes in the Contemporary Music Centre (CMC), Sweeney revealed how this interest came about:

‘I had a growing interest in Irish traditional music and around 1982 an American minimalist composer, Michael Hunt, came to Ireland to do research on Irish composers. He gave me a lot of recordings of music that I hadn’t heard, and this opened up a new way of thinking about music. I remember talking to him about the possibility of using Irish traditional music with minimalist techniques; he seemed quite interested and encouraged me to have a go. American minimalism and Irish traditional music may seem very different fishes, but it occurred to me that they have a lot in common: they use repetition, varied repetition and they’re tonal or modal. I began to experiment with these techniques’.

In his PhD thesis, Sweeney describes how he refined this approach by experimenting with rhythmic and melodic fragments in an improvisational manner and examining the outcome; without a clearly defined plan for the work in progress. He also studied existing Irish dance tunes, eventually writing some bars of an Irish style jig. Examples of this new style of writing can be seen in the works which are discussed in the following sections.

In *Dance Music I*, Sweeney uses a jig as a compositional tool. He noticed that the jig contained a lot of repetition and after eliminating the repeated patterns he was left with four bars. He started to think of these bars as a melodic series, using them throughout the piece. *Dance Music II* for orchestra utilises the tune *Sliabh na mBan*. This tune is

14 Jonathan Grimes.
15 Eric Sweeney, 5.
16 Ibid., 5.
introduced by a few notes from the melody. Successive notes are then added in the subsequent phrases, presenting us with short melodic series’. This serial technique is used throughout Sweeney’s works; *The Blackberry Blossom* for solo piano is a clear example. This piece uses a reel of the same name. Hamilton Harty also used this tune in his Irish Symphony. In this work Sweeney takes the first five notes of the tune and uses them as a repetitive motif in the left hand of the piano from bar 5, the falling pattern in the right hand is also taken from these opening notes of the reel (figure 1.3, 1.4). The opening chord which Sweeney describes as the ‘bell chord’, is taken from notes three, four and six of the reel (figure 1.5).\(^{18}\)

Figure 1.3: *The Blackberry Blossom*.

![Figure 1.3: The Blackberry Blossom](image)

Figure 1.4: *The Blackberry Blossom Reel*: There are many versions of this tune, however this version is taken from Sweeney’s thesis.\(^{19}\)

![Figure 1.4: The Blackberry Blossom Reel](image)

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\(^{17}\) Ibid., 41.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 104.

\(^{19}\) Ibid.
The Rakes of Clonmel and Thornton’s Reel are two other examples of pieces which use cells taken from the original dance tune. In The Rakes of Clonmel the opening two-bar melodic pattern is taken from the first bar of the jig. In Thornton’s Reel, Sweeney has taken notes; four, seven, eight and nine to form the melodic cell as the opening pattern in the work (figure 1.6 and 1.7).

Deirdre uses two Irish tunes and a Japanese folk tune. The entire first movement of the work is based on McCanaty’s Reel and once again the reel is used to form a pitch series.
The reel is also present and among many sections of the third movement, strongly featuring in the flutes’ ostinato line.

*Deirdre* is also a good example of how Sweeney uses polyrhythms. While this piece is in 4/4, the overlapping ostinato patterns in the first movement give the effect of 4/4, 2/4, 9/8, 7/8, 10/8, 7/8 and 5/8 between the different parts. Polyrhythms within standard time signatures can be seen in many of his works. *Ceol Rince Ros Mhic Threoin* is a good example of this. While this piece is in 6/8, piano one alternates between 5/4 and 4/4, piano two and three are following 9/8 ostinato patterns (figure 1.8).

Figure 1.8: *Ceol Rince Ros Mhic Threoin.*

Unlike the two previous works, *The Blackberry Blossom* is written for a solo performer, During the compositional process of this piece, Sweeney had to look at alternative methods, to achieve polyrhythms within a work for a solo instrument. To combat this problem, Sweeney presented the main themes in different registers. However, like

20 Ibid., 20.
21 Ibid., 104.
many of his works, this piece still uses quite a narrow registral range.

Throughout the preceding examples, I have highlighted how Sweeney used minimalist and polyrhythmic techniques alongside Irish dance tunes. While these tunes can be explicitly heard in many of his works, he has managed to fuse these successfully together with the aforementioned elements, by allowing the folk tune to be used as a melodic reservoir, assisting in the proliferation of motivic cells and the phrase expansion. This is in stark contrast to Bodley who juxtaposes the seemingly incongruous, achieving a ‘dramatic effect’. Bodley and Sweeney represent just two contrasting examples of how folk tunes can be used in contemporary music writing. As mentioned at the start of this chapter, this is not a new idea, but I believe that there are many more possibilities in how folk tunes can be used for investigative purposes.

1.5 Donnacha Dennehy—Merging of two styles.

In the following section I will discuss Donnacha Dennehy (born in 1970), while many of his works use Irish folk music as a source of material, they cross between the compositional styles of Bodley and Sweeney.

Dennehy is a well established Irish composer who has gained international acclaim, his works have been performed at festivals worldwide and he is the founding member of the Crash Ensemble. His own studies brought him to the University of Illinois, IRCAM and the Netherlands. Previously he lectured at Trinity College Dublin and was appointed a global scholar at Princeton University in 2012, becoming a member of staff in 2014. Dennehy’s major works include Grá agus Bás and That The Night Came, both of which were released by Noneesuch records in 2011. This discussion will

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22 Ibid., 4.
concentrate on *Grá agus Bás*, as this work has become one of his most iconic pieces, receiving outstanding reviews across the globe; the Guardian, the Washington Post, and the Bangkok Post, to name but a few sources. This work is scored for Irish the *sean-nós* singer *Iarla Ó Lionáird*, piccolo, flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, trombone, electric guitar, percussion, violin, viola, cello, double bass and electronics. Dennehy combines both the minimalist techniques seen in Sweeney’s works alongside an Irish air, this juxtaposition of idioms is reminiscent of Bodley’s compositional style and it is this fusion of techniques which make this work unique.

1.5.1 The use of an Irish ‘air’ in *Grá agus Bás*.

The lyrics for this composition are taken from the third verse of the Irish ‘air’ *Aisling Geal*, they are as follows:

‘A phlúr na bhfear, mo shlad na déinse,
Dá tiocfadh sa ghreann dúinn clann,
‘s im ghoist im aonar bheinn romhat sa stlí’ ²⁴

*Grá agus Bás*, however does not use all of the above lyrics, instead Dennehy, selectively utilises sections of the text. The composer created a new melody for this work, discarding the original which belonged to *Aisling Geal*.

Ornamentation is an important feature of traditional Irish ‘airs’, they are generally intuitively sung by the performer and are rarely transcribed. Dennehy has followed this tradition in his work by limiting the notation of these ornaments to the start of the piece, in other sections ornamental notes are left to the discretion of the performer. This

technique is in contrast to Bodley, who created his own notational language in order to include all of the required ornamentation, enabling a consistent performance each time.

In *Grá agus Bás*, the melody occurs mainly in the vocal part, with limited melodic or rhythmic variations, this task is undertaken by the instrumental lines. The vocal melody commences with the pitches C, D and E, slowly expanding down to B flat and then to A. Certain words such as ‘*an ghníomh*’ (the act), are highlighted in the vocal part by use of long pitch durations and repetition (figure 1.9). Varying rhythmic durations in the instrumental parts (bar 17, figure 1.9) re-emphasise the notes from this text. This helps to establish the original melody for later in the work. (figure 1.9).

Figure 1.9: *An ghníomh*, bar 12 and varying rhythmic durations bar 17.  

Vocal sections are interrupted by instrumental segments and every time that this phrase (*an ghníomh*) re-occurs in the vocal part, it is in the foreground. The long pitch durations associated with this text are utilised to slow down the overall pacing of the work, without changing the actual tempo.

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25 Ibid., 2.
Other featured words include: ‘go mbeifeá’ and ‘a phlúr’. ‘A phlúr’, is stressed by distorted electronic chords at bar 109 and again at bar 192. Vocally both sections are melodically and rhythmically similar. At bar 109 the viola imitates the vocal part rhythmically, by repeating the notes A and B flat instead of B flat and C. This rhythmic material is developed further in the instrumental sections.

As stated, the vocal part is prominently in the foreground of this work, by continuously floating above the texture. This is similar to Bodley’s use of the Irish jig, in *A Small White Cloud Drifts Over Ireland*, when it appears above the texture of the orchestra. Dennehy also juxtaposes the vocal sections with rhythmic instrumental segments, reminiscent of Bodley’s *A Narrow Road to the Deep North*, where he contrasts modal ‘air’ fragments, with dissonant sections. While the material in the instrumental segments in *Grá agus Bás* has been rhythmically developed from the vocal line, it has been completely transformed away from the original thus creating the effect of fresh material. For example the repeated high C notes in the vibraphone and electric guitar at bar 171, is a rhythmic development of the words ‘go mbeifeá’ (figure 1.10). However, this segment which is located between the rehearsal marks J-K occurs directly after a section based on the words ‘an gníomh’ (as seen in figure 1.9) creating a juxtaposition between the two textures.
1.5.2 Minimalism in *Grá agus Bás*.

While Sweeney was one of the first Irish composers to establish minimalist techniques within his writing style, Dennehy has since developed this style. However, unlike Sweeney, Dennehy has not created cells directly based on notes from dance tunes.

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26 Ibid., 18.
From the opening of *Grá agus Bás*, Dennehy has set up a repetitive semiquaver pattern which commences in the cello (figure 1.11), moving to the viola, clarinet and flute by bar 43, spreading throughout the ensemble. At bar 52 this semiquaver pattern can be seen as triplet semiquavers (figure 1.12), also at this point a cell utilising the notes B, C and D appears at different rhythmic rates, it can be seen in the electronic parts (figure 1.12). Throughout the work this minimalist texture is contrasted with the melody in the vocal part, once again reflecting Bodley’s usage of disparate materials.

As with Sweeney’s music, polyrhythms and cross rhythms feature within this work, occurring within the instrumental sections (an example of this can be seen at bar 171, refer to figure 1.10). However unlike Sweeney, who utilises cross rhythms throughout an entire work (*Ceol Rince Ros Mhic Threoin*), Dennehy employs them sporadically, contrasting them with the repeated semiquaver patterns thus continuously generating interesting rhythmical conflicts within the work (figure 1.10).

Figure 1.11: *Grá agus Bás*, bar 12; repeated semiquaver pattern in the cello.  

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27 Ibid., 2.
1.5.3 Colour: Timbre within *Grá agus Bás*.

Very few extended techniques are deployed within this work, the timbral shades utilised are mainly limited to the standard coloristic effects achievable by an individual instrument. In the strings this is limited to *sul ponticello* and *sul tasto*, small segments of *pizzicato* and natural harmonics briefly feature at the beginning of the work and again as part of the semiquaver pattern at bar 354 (figure 13). Vocally some colouristic instructions are given, for example: ‘whispered text’, ‘audible breath’ or ‘nasal and

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28 Ibid., 6.
strong’. However, on the whole the timbral variations within this part, are generated by the tone colour of Ó Lionáird’s unique voice, his intuitive usage of ornamentation and natural vocal inflections, continually change the colour of this line. The other main timbral shades, are supplied by the electronics when they are deployed, these are also used to emphasise the text.

Figure 1.13: Violin harmonics within the semiquaver patterns, bar 354.\(^{29}\)

Aspects such as the placement of the pitches (in a wide or narrow range between the parts) and the usage of texture (thick or thin), can all be utilised to reinforce the colour of a work. At the start of Grá agus Bás, high string harmonics create space between the instruments, gradually these move inwards. In segments, space between the parts is generated by the high piccolo, the electronics lines and violin harmonics within the semiquaver patterns (figure 1.13). However, throughout the work, the pitch material continually returns to the central ranges of each instrument. This along with the dense semiquaver patterns, creates a heavy texture throughout the work, clouding the

\(^{29}\) Ibid., 38.
1.6 How the compositional techniques of Bodley, Sweeney and Dennehy provide context for my portfolio.

In the previous sections I have examined how Irish music has been utilised by Bodley and Sweeney, I have also discussed how Dennehy has combined both of these styles to form a new voice. All three of these composers have approached the integration of traditional Irish and contemporary music with different, but yet equally valid methods. Each style is well developed and I feel that it is not necessary to further explore these techniques within my music as it would be akin to re-creating a work that has already been written.

However, while researching the above works of these composers, I observed how restricted they were in relation to their usage of folk music, Bodley juxtaposed styles of modal folk material and contemporary techniques, Sweeney employed minimalistic techniques to a folk tune, while Dennehy juxtaposed both folk music with contemporary instruments such as electronics and minimalism. Unlike Sweeney, he did not use the original folk melody to generate his cells. From these observations it was noticed, that a folk tune has not had an all-encompassing effect, on the melody, rhythm or structure in any of the works discussed. However, most importantly, I have established that all of these composers have limited their exploration of timbre within the mentioned pieces and so, I believe that this is a significant area which warrants further research throughout the composition of the accompanying portfolio.
1.7 Aims of the thesis and accompanying portfolio.

In the following thesis I aim show how this portfolio contributes in an original way to compositional practices by:

- investigating how folk music can be used to structure a composition.
- exploring how a piece of folk music can inform the melodic line and how it can be used to generate different styles of harmony.
- discussing how folk music can be used to create interesting rhythms within a work by scrutinising different pieces within the portfolio.
- discussing and looking at examples as to how I have explored the development of timbre within my works thus demonstrating the importance of colour within each work.

1.8 Thesis structure.

Chapter 2 The use of folk music and its traditions within this portfolio.

This chapter examines the folk tunes which have influenced the pieces within this portfolio by discussing where their geographical origin and what type of folk tunes they are. This chapter also considers the importance of the background and the narrative associated with the tunes, by exploring how the folk tunes and their traditions have influenced this portfolio throughout the entire compositional process.

Chapter 3 Structure.

This chapter describes the structural methodology which is utilised throughout this portfolio and discusses how folk music has influenced this process. This chapter also examines how the Fibonacci series and the proportions of golden section, along with the
tripartite form of the narratives associated with the folk tunes, have informed the structure of many of the works. Future possibilities relating to the use of folk music as a structural tool is also considered within this chapter

Chapter 4 Harmony and the melodic line.
This chapter examines the harmonic processes which are utilised during the composition of this portfolio. The application of modality, chord generation and pitch elongation are all techniques which are scrutinised. How melodic cells and intervals are manipulated to simulate the harmony of a work is also discussed. Additionally the application and development of these methods in future compositions is considered.

Chapter 5 Rhythm.
This chapter discusses how folk tunes may be used to rhythmically enhance a new work, by examining rhythmic components of Irish folk tunes. Elements such as triplets, and Irish rolls are considered, along with how the rhythmic durations of these features can be manipulated to form new material. This chapter also focuses on the utilisation of heterophony and space within the works of this portfolio, exploring with how the employment of these techniques strengthens the overall rhythm in a composition.

Chapter 6 Colour: the use of timbre.
The use of colour is very important in all of my works. This chapter discusses the use of timbre within the portfolio, it also considers how folk music and the narrative can be an influencing factor in this area. In order to discuss timbre, this chapter explores the different coloristic techniques which are used within works from the portfolio, examining how and why these techniques are utilised. Throughout the compositions, certain timbral effects have been developed, the reasons behind their development and
their practical usage is analysed across the different works.

**Chapter 7 Conclusion.**

This chapter draws together the results of the previous chapters, by focusing on how folk music can be used to structure a composition, how it can inform the melodic line, how it can be used to generate different harmonic processes and finally how the folk tune informs the colour of a work, thus demonstrating how my music contributes to the discipline of composition. This chapter also considers further development of these processes, in particular the utilisation of timbre within my future works.
2.1 Introduction.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the use of folk music as a source of material is a common feature within my works. I use the term folk music as opposed to Irish music as I utilise both an ethnic ‘tune’ from Finland and traditional Irish jigs as sources. Within the genre of folk music the term ‘tune’, is used when referring to a piece of folk music.

With regard to the use of Irish music within my works, my two ‘masks’ are always in conflict. In Chapter One I referred to how I am both a traditional Irish performer and a contemporary composer. As a performer I want to keep the music in its original form and preserve it, as it has been for centuries, for the next generation. I have great respect for great players such as Tommy Peoples and Mary Bergin. Recordings of their performances, their playing styles and tune variations continue to influence young musicians in this traditional style of playing. While the music grows and develops from performer to performer, these slight nuances stay within the genre pertaining to structures and rules that have being subconsciously formed over generations, retaining the pure essence of the folk tune.

However, in stark contrast to my performance beliefs, my ‘mask’ as a composer is interested in how to develop new music by exploring fresh ways in which different genres can be fused. I am fascinated as to how the colours of different playing styles and instruments can enhance a composition and how the melodies, rhythms, structures
and even the history of pieces from different genres or cultures, can blend together. I find the possibilities and results of fusion exciting and I also believe that in order for traditional musics to survive they must develop, grow and explore new avenues; albeit this is in conflict with my performance ‘mask’.

The now well documented revival of Irish music in the twentieth century is due to musicians such as; O’Riada and Ceoltóirí Chualann through to the Bothy Band, Horslips, Moving Hearts, De Dannan, Altan, Gráda, and Bill Whelan. All these musicians have helped to popularise Irish music for both international and national audiences. Perhaps as a consequence, recent times have shown a growth in the uptake of Irish instruments among young children. As previously stated, it is critical to preserve the music and its traditions for the next generation and in order to fully understand the music, it is important to have a widespread national dissemination of this ethnic tradition in schools and other scholarly institutions.

2.2 Folk tunes used in my portfolio and the pieces which they have influenced.

As mentioned in Chapter One I have learnt to embrace the fact that my compositions are influenced by folk music. Three different approaches to creatively utilising folk material within the portfolio are outlined below:

1. Throughout this portfolio I have used four different folk tunes, three Irish jigs and a Finnish joik. The three jigs are self composed, while the joik is a traditional folk song from Lapland. When utilising folk music during the compositional process, I will generally compose my own ‘tune’. As I have too much reverence for the music and so am uncomfortable with tearing another composer’s work apart. Folk tunes are used to inform structure (Chapter Three),
melody (Chapter Four) and rhythm (Chapter Five). Table 2.1 is a list of the folk tunes and the works which they have influenced. Scores and recordings of all of these pieces can be found in the appendix.

2. The compositions which do not utilise a folk tune, are based on modes or melodic cells which are modal in style. This utilisation of this technique is a direct result of years of studying and performing Irish music, as it has become a sound world to which my ear will naturally follow (Grecian Swans, Cloughlea, and The Long Wave).

3. The narrative associated with the tunes or the background of a work, is used to inform the timbre, the rhythms, structure and harmonic language of a piece of music.

Table 2.1 Folk tunes used in the portfolio.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of tune</th>
<th>Tune type</th>
<th>Work(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Day to Remember</td>
<td>Jig</td>
<td>A Day to Remember, An Draíocht, Oíche Geal, Viylyn, Súil Siar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairy’s Jig</td>
<td>Jig</td>
<td>Illusions, Veils.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distracting Lucy</td>
<td>Jig</td>
<td>Distractions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanene Laillal</td>
<td>Joik</td>
<td>Oíche Geal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 A brief description of Irish jigs.

The jig is one of the oldest types of Irish dance tunes. The three most common types of jigs are:


6/8 jigs are the most common types of jigs performed, their rhythms usually follow this \( \frac{3}{4} \) \( \frac{1}{4} \) \( \frac{3}{4} \) \( \frac{1}{4} \) pattern. Slip jigs are the oldest of the three; traditionally they were played as battle marches. They contain more crotchet quaver rhythms than 6/8 jigs. Slides are most commonly found and played in the Sliabh Luachra Gaeltacht in Co. Kerry; they are bouncy in style containing the most crotchet quaver rhythms.

Jigs are usually played in a ‘set’ which contains two or three tunes played consecutively. Each tune is played two or three times. A ‘round’ is the name given to one play through of a tune. Generally most jigs are in binary form, with each part repeated twice. In single jigs, each part is only played once, with at least three rounds of the tune.

The three self composed jigs are all in 6/8 and follow the standard form of AABB, although *A Day to Remember* can also be played as a single jig, an example of this can be seen in its arrangement for flute and piano, also called *A Day to Remember* (found in the appendix).

2.4 Harmony in Irish folk music.

Traditionally Irish folk tunes are single melodic lines. When played on instruments such as harps or accordions performers will harmonise *ad-libitum* with chords such as I, IV, or V. The canon of Irish folk music stretches back for centuries. The exact dates for many tunes are unknown. However, the harmony that a piece of folk music uses can help to put it into chronological order in relation to other tunes. The oldest folk tunes are pentatonic and an example of this is the ancient air *The King of the Blind*. Modes

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were used in folk music as they suited the non-chromatic traditional instruments that were widely available during the time in which the pieces were composed, for example whistles, flutes and pipes. While harps were always capable of chromatic music they were performed only by those who spent many years studying and learning their craft, these bards were held in high regard throughout the country. In more recent times the introduction of instruments such as fiddles, chromatic accordions and keyed flutes, has allowed for the harmony of the tunes to fully develop into diatonic keys. However as the modal sound is so firmly engrained in this idiom, new folk tunes will utilise either diatonic or modal scales, sometimes they may even move between the two.

2.5 The joik.

A joik is a traditional chant or folk song from Lapland belonging to the Sámi people. Geographically Lapland stretches across parts of Russia, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Hanene Laillal is from the Finnish section of this region. Traditionally joik were performed only by the Sámi people. The joik itself is an oral tradition and contains continuously changing time signatures which make it difficult to learn. In more recent times, composers have slowly started to arrange them orchestrally. The reserved usage of the joik however, may have more to do with their historical context rather than their time signatures.

The joik has become a symbol of the Sámi people, who, like many indigenous people have had a checkered political history with their neighbours. Historically the central figure of a Sámi village was the Noaidi (shaman). The Noaidi was a mediator between the natural and supernatural world. The joik was an important part of the rites that he/she would perform.\(^{31}\)

Below Krister Stoor surmises a description of a joik.

‘Joik are descriptive in nature; one does not joik for someone or something, one joiks it into being. Thus, the joik serves as a connective device which spans the past and present. Any given joik performance is part of a non-ending whole that exists in a realm accessible to those who can interpret it; the performer and the audience’.\(^{32}\)

Due to these unchristian connections, joiking was actively discouraged, and by the late nineteenth century it was only considered possible to joik when it was safe to do so, either alone or in the company of immediate family.\(^{33}\) Like many folk traditions the joik enjoyed a revival in the late twentieth century.

### 2.5.1 Why a joik was used as a musical source.

*An Draíocht* and *Oíche Geal* for solo flute and orchestra are both based on the narrative associated with the jig *A Day to Remember*, which can be found in the appendix. In this story a group of cloaked men cast a spell to try to heal a dying wood therefore ending an eternal winter.

On my first trip to Finland in May 2012, my folk group *Viiski* performed many concerts in Lapland. In order to get to our destination we took a twelve hour overnight train north, from Helsinki to Rovaniemi (just inside Lapland). Even though it was May, the snows had not yet melted in the north of the country. In the morning when we awoke, the exact landscape depicted in the short story was presented to us. I had already

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learned many Finnish folk tunes for the tour. As a result, during my stay there, this
ingress in their music led me to inquire about the local folk tunes and so I was given the
joik, Hanene Laillal. I felt the symbolism behind the joik and the landscape to which it
belonged, complemented the previously mentioned narrative, thus Hanene Laillal
became a source of material for Oíche Geal.

2.6 The importance of a tune’s background or history.

As with all cultures which have folk traditions, the story teller, or in Ireland the
Seanchai, was of great importance. They passed stories aurally through the generations
keeping a record of the local history, local folklore, morals, and other words of wisdom
which were deemed important. This tradition of storytelling would often accompany
the folk music before a tune was played. Nearly every tune has a story behind it, from
the jig A Day to Remember which involves an elaborate narrative to O’Carolan’s
Concerto which also has an interesting narrative backdrop. The backgrounds behind
these tunes provide similar records for the Irish music archival canon as the Seanchai
stories. It is common practice for musicians to pass the information about the tune on to
audiences during the performances. I have written narratives to coexist with some of
the tunes I have composed and this has been an informative device during the
compositional process. The backgrounds to all three of my jigs are in the appendix.

2.6.1 The use of the narrative in works which did not utilise a folk tune during the
compositional process.

I have come to appreciate that this narrative or background information cannot be
separated from the folk tunes. It is an important part of the music and because of this, it
has influenced my music. Narrative also forms a very important role and starting point
for the pieces which did not use one of the four mentioned folk tunes during the
compositional process. In these pieces a narrative was either derived from the surrounding landscape or the instrumentation. Below is a short background taken from the programme notes for each of the three pieces in my portfolio which fall into this group.

2.6.1.1 Grecian Swans; for four spatial harps.

The swan was a bird of old-world mythologies. It was the sacred bird of Apollo, the symbolic bird of Zeus and it has also appeared in many legends connected to ancient gods and music. Swans themselves can be found connected with lyres (a relation of the harp) in depictions on ancient tombs in Crete, where archaeologists have found swan-neck lyres dating from 2000 BCE.\footnote{Leopold Vorreiter, ‘The Swan-Neck Lyres of Minoan-Mycenean Culture’, \textit{The Galpin Society Journal}, 28 (April 1975), 93–94.} This research into the harps of old and harps of new formed a melting pot of ideas from which this piece grew.

2.6.1.2 The Long Wave; for string orchestra.

Many parts of Galway city are surrounded by water, be it the river Corrib, the canals or the sea. \textit{The Long Wave} refers to the waves at Silver Strand beach just outside the city. One evening I noticed how slowly the waves flowed across the bay. Gathering height as they travelled, they eventually lapped up against the calm and tranquil shore, pulling the stones and sand in the backwash. These sounds informed the timbre and texture of this piece.

2.6.1.3 Cloughlea; for bass clarinet.

Cloughlea is a small town-land near Sixmilebridge in Co. Clare, Ireland. The inspiration for this piece grew from the sights and sounds I absorbed, while walking down a small quiet country lane during a visit to this area. From the far end of this lane
Bunratty castle towers in the distance. At one point in history this lane would have formed an access route to the castle across the fields.

2.7 How folk tunes and their traditions have influenced this portfolio.

When folk tunes and their traditions are used as a source of material for my works, they have an all-encompassing effect on each piece. They can influence the structure, the harmonic processes utilised (for example the generation of chords), the melodic line, the rhythms, and timbre within each composition. However when creatively used, folk tunes do not only influence one area, but often several in each work. Pieces such as *Oíche Geal* and *An Draiocht* (for wooden flute and violin) are perfect examples of this, as their compositional methods have been guided in all of these areas. The following is a table of the accompanying works and the areas where they have been influenced by folk tunes. Each of the areas listed below will be discussed in detail in the coming chapters.

Table 2.2: A list of the works in the portfolio and the areas in which each piece has been influenced by the creative use of folk music.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Harmonic processes utilised</th>
<th>Melodic line</th>
<th>Rhythms</th>
<th>Timbre</th>
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<td>Cloughlea</td>
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<td>Distractions</td>
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CHAPTER 3

STRUCTURE

3.1 Introduction.

Every composer has their own methods as to how to approach the area of structure. In twentieth and twenty-first century works, structure takes a myriad of formations and basically anything that can inform musical discourse can be used. In my case the focal sources for structuring my works have been: timelines, twentieth century techniques, narrative and folk music. The following paragraphs will elaborate on these subjects.

3.2 Timelines.

When listening to a piece of music, we feel its duration in time, minutes and seconds, not in bars as we do when we are analysing a work. During the pre-compositional process, I think in terms of time; counting the work in seconds rather than by bars. Bar numbers are added to the score at a later stage. By this method I can establish a rough estimate as to the overall duration, though some flexibility is necessary. At the start of every piece I will construct a timeline; melodic, harmonic, timbre and rhythmic ideas will then be added to this template. An example of this can be seen in figure 3.1 which is a basic timeline used in the composition for Oíche Geal.

Figure 3.1: Basic timeline for Oíche Geal.
This is a skill which I learnt from the composer Simon Bainbridge while studying in London. I find this method extremely useful when structuring ideas on the manuscript page. It aids the pacing, both visually and aurally prior to the composition of the piece, acting as a skeleton plan.

3.3 Fibonacci series and the golden section.

The Fibonacci series and the use of the golden section are both contemporary compositional techniques which are widely used. It is well established that the properties of the Fibonacci series is seen throughout nature and that it has been utilised in art, architecture, in the proportions of the sky versus landscape and of course, in structuring a musical work. The sequence of numbers pertaining to the Fibonacci is as follows: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21 [...]. Mathematically it can be worked out as: a+b:a=a:b. We are aware that by using this technique that the climax of a piece can happen at either one third or two thirds of the way through the work (most commonly occurring two thirds of the way through). This climatic section is known as ‘the golden section’. By dividing amount of bars of the piece by 1.618 one can find the exact bar in which ‘the golden section’ occurs. Smaller markers within each section of the work can also occur at the same ratio as above.

Much research has been carried out into the Fibonacci series and the golden section, by people such as Jonathan Kramer. He has cited composers who have used this method from Bartók to Stockhausen and has written a very detailed account of their work in his article *The Fibonacci Series in Twentieth-Century Music*, published in the ‘Journal of Music Theory’.

While there is evidence of this series in earlier works by composers during the baroque
and renaissance periods, it is widely accepted that Debussy was one of the first modern composers to consciously use this method after studying Japanese prints and that this can be seen particularly in his work *La Mer*. Erno Lendvai in his book *Bela Bartok: An Analysis of His Music* examined in particular the first movement of Bartók’s *Music for Percussion Strings and Celesta* which shows the golden section symmetry from beginning to end. Stockhausen also used this method in relation to form, when composing *Klavierstück IX*, and Nono in *Il Canto Sospeso*, used it to influence note duration.\

3.3.1 The use of golden section principles in my works.

It is common knowledge that this proportion is universally accepted as aesthetically pleasing and in my work I refer to it often as a ‘blueprint’ for governing the direction and structure of pieces. However, I never use it literally, because to do so can result in a sterile exercise in ‘number crunching’, which can make for a very boring aural experience. For the most part when structuring a work, I will construct my timeline in three sections, intending to reach the climax by at least the end of the second timeline. Smaller markers, in similar ratios are also aimed for within these sections. Of course, I am aware that some flexibility has to be considered to allow ideas to develop their full potential. Nevertheless, this method of planning is one that I find fruitful.

3.4 The influence of narrative on structure.

As I mentioned in the previous chapter the narrative which is related to folk tunes, has been used to influence many of the works in the portfolio. Throughout folklore and ancient mythology, the number three is very prevalent. Two examples from Irish legends which highlight this number are: *The Children of Lir* and *Tír na nÓg*. In *The

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Children of Lir, the swans are sent to spend three hundred years on three different lakes and in Tír na nÓg, three hundred years had passed by the time Oisín returned to Ireland.

Besides the number three being an important feature mentioned in Irish folklore, often the stories themselves can also be divided in three. This is also true for the narratives associated with my folk tunes. The narrative related to the jig A Day to Remember is a good example of this. Here the first section lasts until the chanting starts, heralding the second section and leading to the final part; which is about the repercussions of the former sections. The number three is also relevant in Oíche Geal, An Draíocht, Veils (for concert orchestra), and Illusions (for flute, bass clarinet and string quartet). These are all works which are equally based on narratives.

The Long Wave is another prime example of this tripartite structure. For example, section one is based on waves pulling the shingles on the shore, the second section refers to the tense anticipation of watching waves cross a bay and finally the third section is like the sand in the backwash as the sea retreats.

While I have mentioned that the golden section is one reason why I structure my works in three, the narrative supports this ideal. Within each section of the works, the narrative can also influence the ‘colour’ or timbre used; this will be discussed further in Chapter Six.

3.5 Pieces which are not structured in tripartite form.

While most of my works adhere to the previously mentioned structure, the two electronic pieces which have been included in this portfolio do not deliberately make overtures to this form.
*Violyn* (for violin and tape) is through composed, while it alludes to the previous format, it was conceived as one continuous movement. However, it could be argued that here again, the natural feel for the tripartite form influenced me subconsciously.

*Súil Siar* (for electronics and visuals) albeit based again on the narrative associated with the jig *A Day to Remember*, only contains two sections about darkness and light. The narrative was given to videographer George Fox, who interpreted it and created a video of moving from these two states. Chapter Six will be discuss this work in more detail.

### 3.6 How folk music influenced the structure of the pieces within this portfolio.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the three jigs which I utilised in this portfolio all have two parts (A, B). The *joik* (the Finnish tune, *Hanene Laillal*) used in this portfolio can be divided into three (A, B, C). *Hanene Laillal* is a short eight bar folk song which follows an A, B, A, C pattern. However, while the first bar of each section contains similar rhythmic motifs, the melodies and time signatures between segments vary.

When structuring each of the pieces which creatively utilise folk music during the compositional process (*Oíche Geal, An Draiocht, Veils, Illusions, and Distractions*—for piano, violin and cello), I designated parts of the tunes to correlate with different sections of each work. The natural flow of the jig’s structure helped in defining where each part of the jig would appear in a piece. *Oíche Geal* is an example of this, as here this procedure is more obvious than in other works. This piece is structured around the natural pattern of the tune, as both a double and single jig. Section one of the work follows the AA BB pattern of the tune as a double jig and section two follows the AB, AB, AB pattern of the tune as a single jig. The third section is influenced by the *joik* (figure 3.2).
Figure 3.2: Insertion of parts of the folk tunes in the original timeline for *Oíche Geal*.

In *An Draíocht* the AABB pattern is also prevalent (figure 3.3) with examples from the B material seen in the second section of the work at bar 45 (figure 3.4) and the A material seen in bar 76 (figure 3.5). In this instance the folk tune material is used melodically, harmonically and rhythmically, this will be discussed further in the following chapters.
Figure 3.3: Insertion of parts of the folk tune in the original timeline for *An Draiocht*.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
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<th>75&quot;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>100&quot;</td>
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<td>150&quot;</td>
<td>175&quot;</td>
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<tr>
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<td>225&quot;</td>
<td>250&quot;</td>
<td>275&quot;</td>
<td>300&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A = A part of jig tune  
B = B part of jig tune

Figure 3.4: *An Draiocht*, B material at bar 45.

Figure 3.5: *An Draiocht*, A material at bar 76.
3.7 Future possibilities for the use of folk music in influencing the structure of works.

I have looked at two ways in which folk music has influenced the structure of my works:

- the jig has influenced the overall form of the work as the narratives associated with the jigs have implied a tripartite structure.
- the internal part structure of the jigs (AABB or AB, AB, AB) determined where certain melodic, harmonic and rhythmic material was to be placed.

These are two examples in which folk music is used to inform the structure of compositions within this portfolio. In future works I believe that it would be possible to develop the second method, by further examination of the internal structure of a tune’s parts, for example the repetition of phrases or of certain keys notes. These could then be used to influence the placing of certain melodic and rhythmic material within a new composition.
CHAPTER 4

HARMONY AND THE MELODIC LINE

4.1 Introduction.

During the compositional careers of most composers, they will at some point experiment with a harmonic process that does not work. However without failure one will never have successes. Thankfully I have had positive experiences while composing the works in this portfolio, though past projects have taught me to be more selective with how I construct my harmony for each individual piece.

After organising the structure of a new work, my next step is to look at the harmonies and melodic lines that I wish to use. Previously I have mentioned that all of my works have a background (or narrative) attached to them. This depicts the sound world and atmosphere for each piece, in turn influencing the harmonic processes utilised when composing. In relation to the pieces within this portfolio these processes are approached differently for each work. Works such as *An Draíocht* and *Oíche Geal* are based on pentatonic and whole-tone scales, with the latter employing pitch rotation techniques to generate chords. Both of these works also use an elongated melodic line in the style of an ‘air’ based on the jig, *A Day to Remember*. Some works use melodic cells which are developed, while in others the pitches are arranged superimposing black pentatony with white modality, which eventually progress to chromatic saturation, gradually exhibiting the full pitch aggregate. *Cloughlea* is an exploration of intervallic accretion, there are no hierarchical pitches governing the form, it is just based on an organic conception of increasing densities. *The Long Wave* utilises a simple harmonic construct because of the limited performing abilities of the players involved. This chapter will discuss each of these processes, with reference to the works in which they have been employed.
4.2 The use of modes in traditional Irish music.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the canon of folk music consists of tunes that are hundreds of years old and therefore are rooted in the use of modality. New tunes are constantly being added to the vast repertoire, albeit many are still affiliated to the modal system. However, the stultification regarding the development of some traditional instruments, allows only modal scales and certain diatonic scales related to the key of the instrument to be utilised; for example in the uilleann pipes, whistles, some accordions and un-keyed flutes. While instruments such as harps and fiddles are fully chromatic the majority of the older repertoire was developed to suit the previously mentioned instrumental list, as they were the most accessible instruments to the general public in times past. The majority of the newly composed music is written so that it can be performed on all traditional instruments, including those that are un-chromatic (uilleann pipes, whistles, un-keyed flutes). This is to avoid difficulties when playing these instruments combined with chromatic instruments, but it justifies the reason why the modal system is still prevalent in contemporary folk tunes. On considering this fact, some of my jigs deliberately avoid the chromatic system due to my flute’s instrumental limitations (it is an un-keyed wooden flute). Conversely and obversely, when writing for orchestra I have rectified this problem by using systems that allow for both the modal and chromatic to coexist.

Some composers such as Steve Cooney have written new chromatic tunes, but these pieces are limited to chromatic instruments such as the concertina and fiddle. However regardless of the instrumental limitations, traditional music is largely an aural idiom because the modal sound has been embedded in the performers ears, when writing new tunes they will often write modal music subconsciously.
4.2.1 The use of modes and scales in contemporary music.

Throughout the twentieth century composers recognised the value of modes as a compositional tool and developed new ways to utilise them within their music. Debussy and Messiaen, were among the first composers to develop the use of a modal system within contemporary music. Debussy fused the whole-tone and pentatonic scales generating a new sound palette for composers to explore, while Messiaen's modes of limited transposition devised a system of scales that could only be transposed a number of times before returning to the original, these scales are devised by utilising the technique of pitch rotation. As we are aware, these techniques are standard compositional practices today.

4.2.2 How I have used modality to compose the works within this portfolio.

The harmonic framework used in both An Draiocht and Oíche Geal is based on modes and scales. As the narrative behind these pieces is based on a spell, I was aware that the combined sonorities of both the pentatonic and whole-tone scales would appropriately achieve the atmosphere and sound world which I wished to portray within these works. In order to generate notes which would realise this sonic palette, the pitches of the jig A Day to Remember were transformed into two new scales:

- a five note scale, inspired by the structure of the pentatonic scale.
- a whole-tone scale starting on the note B.

Two different versions of the jig consisting of pitches from these two scales were then composed.

Just as a pentatonic scale is based on the first, second, third, fifth and sixth notes of the
major scale, I have generated a five note scale by extracting the first, second, third, fifth and sixth notes from the original jig mode. Here however, the five notes of this new scale do not have the same intervallic relationships as those in a true pentatonic scale. I chose not to alter the intervals, retaining the original modal pitches within this new five note scale; the whole-tone scale was used to take on the mantle of containing new pitch material. Throughout *Oíche Geal*, *An Draíocht* and *Distractions* I created five notes scales and chords in a similar fashion to this pitch extraction method.

As previously mentioned, the whole-tone scale used in both *An Draíocht* and *Oíche Geal* commenced on the pitch B. This note was chosen as it is a recurring feature in the jig melody. Examples of the three scales used in *Oíche Geal* and *An Draíocht* can be seen in figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: The pitches derived from the jig *A Day to Remember*; the original mode, the five note scale and the whole-tone scale.

### 4.2.2.1 How modality is used in *An Draíocht*.

*An Draíocht* opens with the five note form of the jig; throughout the second section of the work the pitches are slowly exchanged and transformed from one scale to another in order to produce the whole-tone scale by the end of this section. Gradually this same process is used to include the aggregate of the original jig’s pitches by the end of the work. This exchange process starts at bar 34, when the C natural is exchanged for C sharp in figure 4.2. Another example is seen at bar 43 (figure 4.3) where the note A is
first introduced. These pitches are used both horizontally and vertically between both the flute and violin parts.

Figure 4.2: An Draíocht bars 32–37; C natural is exchanged for C sharp.

Figure 4.3: An Draíocht bars 43–45; introduction of the pitch A.

4.2.2.2 How modality is used in Oíche Geal.

As previously mentioned, Oíche Geal utilises both the jig and the joik throughout its compositional process. As this is a larger work for solo flute and symphony orchestra it
required more harmonic planning and structuring than *An Draíocht*, because of the extensive sonic palette available in an ensemble of performers on this scale. The three versions of the jig (the original, the five note and whole-tone), alongside the *joik*, are utilised in this work. These tunes are used both vertically and linearly; the latter will be discussed later in this chapter.

I applied the techniques of pitch rotation, transposition by semitones and fourths or fifths to the three jig versions and to the *joik*, forming new lines. From these lines I extracted over one hundred, five note chords (eleven examples of these chords can be seen at figure 4.4). I extracted these chords by using the same process mentioned in section 4.2.2, from these, I then chose thirty-two chords which had similar properties and intervallic relationships, arranging them by ear and according to the jig part structure referred to at figure 3.2. Towards the end of the second section of this A and B jig part structure, I included chords derived from the *joik*. Throughout the compositional process, I reduced the rate of chord progression to further slow down the harmonic rate of change. I used each of these chords in both a linear form in individual instruments and also vertically throughout the entire orchestra.
Figure 4.4: *Oíche Geal*, examples of chords derived from the original mode, from the first pitch rotation and from transposition by semitones, a fourth or a fifth.

4.2.2.3 How modality is used in *Distractions*.

In *Distractions*, I also used the technique of pitch rotation to generate chords. Here the pitches from the jig *Distracting Lucy* were rotated. The second, third and fourth rotations were then transposed by a tritone, the original rotations and the transposition resulted in eleven rows. I then extracted thirty-eight four note chords and once again these were arranged by ear so that they would blend seamlessly into one another (examples of twenty of these chords can be seen at figure 4.5). The chords used in sections one and three of this work are based on the pitch rotations, while the chords from the second section are based on the tritone rows. As in *Oíche Geal*, these chords are used vertically and horizontally throughout the parts.
4.3 Elongation of the folk tune into an ‘air’ forming a new melodic line and how this line is used during the compositional process.

In Chapter Two I spoke about how I am continuously attempting to find new ways to sensitively utilise folk music without destroying the essence of the tune. When using folk music in new compositions the composer cannot expect the classical performer to play the tune with the same intonations, freedom and style as a folk musician. While there are a few musicians such as Zoe Conway and Nolliag Casey (both violinist/fiddle players) who successfully cross between the two genres, most players find it difficult. This is even more demanding if they are from a different culture and are unaware of Irish folk music practices. For these reasons when I superimpose Irish traditional ornamentation on a melodic line, I will write out the cuts or rolls as accurately as possible, or I will extend the line following the contour of the folk tune, thus temporally expanding the jig to form a timeless ‘air’.

The first stage in this process can be seen in the traditional arrangement of *A Day to Remember for Flute and Piano*. In the first section of this piece, the jig melody is found...
in the piano part. This line is slightly elongated by augmenting the rhythmic durations of some of the pitches. In this section the jig, is also condensed and varied.

Figure: 4.6 Augmentation of the rhythm from of the jig *A Day to Remember* as seen in the piano part, bars 1–5 of *A Day to Remember for Flute and Piano*.

The next step in this process occurs in both *An Draíocht* and *Oíche Geal*. Here the jig melody is slowly unfolded by following the melodic contour of the original jig line and further stretching of the pitch durations occur. This is a method which I have personally found successful in generating new material for my works; the following sections of this thesis are examples of how this process has been applied within the various pieces of the accompanying portfolio.

4.3.1 How the melodic line is constructed in *Oíche Geal*.

*Oíche Geal*, a concerto for flute and orchestra is the best illustration of this motivic proliferation process, as the extended melody in the solo flute part forms the backbone to the entire work, informing the motivic development in the orchestral accompaniment. The protracted melody follows the same chord structure and progression as referred to earlier in relation to this piece. This stretched version of the jig melody lasts approximately fifteen minutes and can be referenced in the appendix of this thesis. During the composition of the concerto, sections of the solo flute line were cut because there was literally too much material and this ensured a natural organic progression
shared between soloist and orchestra.

Below is an excerpt from the final flute part starting at bar 16 and the following twenty-one bars are an example as to how the melody line from the first two bars of the jig, has been expanded (figure 4.7 and figure 4.8). This same elongation process was also applied to the joik, but because I have such reverence for the ethnic folk tradition in Ireland and this Finnish joik is obviously not my own folk song, I was very reluctant to tamper with it as much. Instead it is only slightly varied in comparison to the jig.

Figure 4.7: The first two bars from the jig, *A Day to Remember*.

Figure 4.8: Bar 16, solo flute part from *Oíche Geal*. This is an example of the development of the first two bars from the jig, *A Day to Remember*.
4.3.2 How the melodic line is constructed in *An Draíocht*.

As mentioned before, *An Draíocht* for flute and violin also uses the same technique of line elongation, with this line appearing once again in the flute part. Unlike *Oíche Geal* the melodic line in *An Draíocht* was not composed as a separate entity but was written in conjunction with the violin part. The first twenty-nine bars of this work are all based on the first bar of the jig, with the first section in its entirety primarily based on only the first two bars of this tune. In the second section of *An Draíocht*, the ‘B’ part of the jig is not used in chronological formation, but parts of it were exploited and referred to throughout this section and indeed the manifestation of this process can be found in the complete work. An example of this can be seen in the second section of the work, starting at bar 37 (figure 4.9).

Figure 4.9: *An Draíocht* bar 37; material is based on the start and the end of the ‘B’ part of the jig, *A Day to Remember*.

4.3.3 How the melodic line is constructed in *Violyn*.

As with the two previous works *Violyn* also used the jig *A Day to Remember* as a material source. However in this work the line was not elongated, instead electronic techniques such as pitch shifting, reverberation and manual editing of the original jig were used to manipulate the melody line. In some sections this process is juxtaposed with the live part when the original jig is exposed, for example at nine minutes thirty-five...
one seconds, the jig melody appears in both parts transposed down a tone (figure 4.10). The reason for the transposition of the jig is to avail of the open strings and their natural resonance.

Figure 4.10: Violy 9’ 31”.

4.3.4 How the melodic line is constructed in Illusions and Veils.

Both Illusions and Veils use a melodic line derived from Fairy’s Jig to inform their pitch material. However, the method of elongation used in Illusions and in Veils is not as explicit as it is in Oíche Geal and An Draiocht. When this extension process is utilised in Illusions, it is assigned to the viola part and generally the jig material has been delineated by rhythmic augmentation; an example of this can be seen from bar 30 to bar 43 (figure 4.11), where the first two bars of the jig have undergone this transformation process.

In Veils the jig melody line is shared between the instruments, starting with the trumpet, moving to the oboes in short segments and then followed by the horn part. Unlike Oíche Geal the elongated jig was not written as one continuous part and so it is only found in short fragments.
4.4 Melodic cells.

Another compositional process which I employed while constructing the harmony for my works, was the use of melodic cells. Unlike Sweeney who uses cells in a minimalist style, I took motivic cells from the jigs which were developed independently. My works have utilised the cells in two ways:

1. as a basis for the work and pertaining to all aspects of its expansion. Unlike the folk tune, which is an entity in itself, cellular development allows for proliferation of motifs but only applies to the particular work in question.

2. as small melodic cells that are taken from the folk tunes and are integrated into the works.
4.4.1 How I use small melodic cells as a basis for a work.

*Grecian Swans*, for four classical harps utilises two melodic cells as the foundation for the whole composition. Prior to composing this work I wrote two short melodic cells each consisting of six pitches (figure 4.12). I chose to use these cells as fixed pitch material, because one of my concerns was that the players giving the first performance were students. Obviously the use of pedalling is a particularly crucial point in this matter and in this instance I decided to use modality to alleviate the problem.

Figure 4.12: The two cells which were used in *Grecian Swans*.

![Cells](image)

The pitches from cell one were assigned to harps one and four, with harps two and three utilising the notes from cell two. Dissonance is created by gradual linear transformation whereby pitch aggregates remain the same in harps one and four. However, harps two and three occasionally take pitch material from cell one. An example of dissonance can be seen from bar 8 to bar 14, where the notes C and C sharp are pitted against each other (figure 4.13). The cells are unfolded slowly with the second pitch (the note B) from the first cell not appearing until bar fourteen. The second pitch (the note F) from cell two, does not occur until much later at bar 27 and the aggregate of cell one is not complete until bar 56, when the *arpeggio* chords appear.
Figure 4.13: Dissonance between the two melodic cells used in *Grecian Swans*, bars 8–14.

Another example of how a melodic cell can be used as the basis for a whole work can be seen in *Súil Siar*. This work is composed around the cell seen in figure 4.14. The held notes in the flute at the start of *Súil Siar* are based on the pitches E and G. In the jig *A Day to Remember*, the notes E and G are important notes in both the A and B jig parts respectively. These notes are then pitch shifted to match the melodic material in the piano which is completely derived from this embryo. Gradually the notes of the cell are unfolded throughout the first section of this work and we hear it in its entirety at the start of the ‘flower’ section where the melody becomes foreground. From this point onwards the melodic material is over-saturated with many versions of canon, layering, heterophony and with much electronic manipulation, adding to the palette of sonic
transformation; all this while the visuals increase in speed.

Figure 4.14: Melodic cell used in the piano part of Súil Siar:

\[\text{Music notation image}\]

4.4.2 The integration of small melodic cells into my compositions.

Within some of the works from this portfolio, small melodic cells were taken from the jigs and used as a source for the melody lines. *Illusions* and *Veils* are good examples of this process, as in both of these works all of the melodic material is derived directly from *Fairy’s Jig*. In *Illusions*, the first example of this can be seen at bar 9 in the second violin part (figure 4.15). The falling third motif is taken from notes of the cell based on bar 1 of the jig. This particular interval was used at this register due to my appreciation of its eerie sound quality which I required for the soundscape of the piece to depict the fairy world. Further expansion of this interval occurs, moving it closer to the original jig cell at bar 21 in the flute part. Another example of this cell extension is in the bass clarinet part at bar 20; this occurs again at bar 22 in the second violin part (figure 4.16). Along with this cell expansion, it is also transposed. The flute part from bar 88 is a good example of this; here the cell is continuously shifting in pitch and duration (figure 4.17).
Figure 4.15: *Illusions*, bar 9 second violin part; example of motif derived from the notes of the cell based on bar 1 of *Fairy’s Jig*.

![Figure 4.15: Illusions, bar 9 second violin part; example of motif derived from the notes of the cell based on bar 1 of Fairy’s Jig.](image)

Figure 4.16: *Illusions*, from bar 19; the cell from bar 1 of *Fairy’s Jig* is elongated.

![Figure 4.16: Illusions, from bar 19; the cell from bar 1 of Fairy’s Jig is elongated.](image)
Figure 4.17: *Illusions*, from bar 88 flute part; the cell from *Fairy's Jig* shifts in pitch and duration.

*Veils* has utilised the same cell as *Illusions*; this time the interval between the pitches has changed to a fifth and is inverted. An example of this can be seen at bar 9 in the trumpet part (figure 4.18). This cell expands into a melodic line by bar 23 and it is found throughout the whole work in a similar fashion to *Illusions* (an example can be seen at bar 32 in the viola part). This cell elongates further to form motifs which are seen in bar 56 in the viola part and at bar 77 in the bassoon part. Another melodic cell from bar 4 of the jig can also be found throughout this work. Examples of this cell expansion can be found from bar 48 to 52 in the horn and trumpet parts (figure 4.19) and from bar 60 in the woodwind (figure 4.20). Bar 15 of the jig provides a third cell, examples of which can be seen at bar 74 in the oboes (figure 4.21) and again at bar 81. As with *Illusions*, all of the melodic material in this piece is developed from short cells which are taken from the original jig.
Figure 4.18: *Veils*, bar 9 trumpet part; cell from *Fairy’s Jig*.

![Veils, bar 9 trumpet part; cell from *Fairy’s Jig*.](image)

Figure 4.19: *Veils*, bar 48; example of cell expansion in the horn and trumpet.

![Veils, bar 48; example of cell expansion in the horn and trumpet.](image)

Figure 4.20: *Veils*, bar 60; example of cell expansion in the woodwind.

![Veils, bar 60; example of cell expansion in the woodwind.](image)
4.5 Black versus white.

When constructing the harmony for both *Illusions* and *Veils*, I considered the idea of generating chords and using pitch rotation in a similar fashion to *Oíche Geal* and *Distractions*. However it soon became apparent that this process was far too complex for the simple nature of the narrative, atmosphere and sound world which I wished to create for these pieces. Therefore I chose a simpler harmonic process by arranging the pitches; black versus white. This process was influenced by the narrative of the jig and the idea of the fairy world shimmering behind the real world.

*Illusions* opens with black notes, these represent the fairy world and are gradually unfolded. In the second section the white notes are slowly unfolded to form the full aggregate of twelve pitches. In the third section of the work the pitches start to disappear leaving the notes A, A flat, B, G, E flat, F, and G behind.

*Veils* uses a similar process, but moves in the opposite direction; from white to dark notes. Once again the white notes symbolise the real world with the black notes symbolising the fairy world. As the black pitches are slowly introduced, different doubling instruments have similar pitch material; for example at bar 52 between the
Figure 4.22: *Veils*, bar 52; oboes and trumpet with similar pitch material.

Slowly as all of the pitches are introduced, the doubling instruments begin to separate intervalically, first by a semitone, then a tone and finally a tritone. An example of this can be seen at bar 96 in the oboes and trumpet (figure 4.23). This intervallic separation represents the two worlds shifting apart. Slowly as the worlds move back together in the third section of the work, black notes start to disappear. Some black pitches are left behind replacing their white counterparts as ‘changelings’, thus resulting in the following pitches: A flat, B flat, B, C, D Flat, D, E, E flat, F and G.
4.6 The use of intervals.

The above works are all examples of harmonic systems which I have utilised. However some pieces required a different approach; in particular Cloughlea for solo bass clarinet. As this is a single line instrument, I decided to base the harmony of this work on intervallic expansion. Starting with a tone, the pitches unfold outwards to a fourth, then a fifth, eventually expanding outwards to include the use of multi-phonics. In this work I wanted to explore the range and capabilities of the bass clarinet by using this process. As mentioned in the previous chapter this piece is structured in three sections. After the widest part of the work at the end of the second section, the arc closes back in on itself as the intervallic material contracts. This process of using intervals as a harmonic and melodic tool, is one which I have previously explored in my work Twists and Turns for solo viola. As this piece worked successfully, I decided to apply the same techniques to
this composition, even though the bass clarinet and viola differ greatly, this intervallic process is interchangeable between instruments.

4.7 String finger patterns used to generate melody.

The final harmonic process I used in this portfolio may be heard in *The Long Wave*. This piece was written for an amateur string orchestra whose capabilities ranged in standard from beginners to grade eight, with most players falling into the beginner to intermediate category. As tuning can be an issue with this level of string playing, I decided to keep my pitch material simple. Each line was developed around the three finger string patterns, all in first position on the instrument. In the second section the pitches from these three finger patterns were repeated and varied at different rhythmic rates. Some liberty was taken by moving outside of these pitches when necessary. For ease of tuning and intonation, open strings were used when the opportunity arose. Throughout this whole piece the emphasis was on keeping the melody as simple as possible.

4.8 The possibilities for these harmonic processes to be developed in future works.

Throughout this chapter I discussed how folk tunes have been allowed to influence the harmonic processes utilised within each work, for example the use of chords generated from new versions of the folk tunes or black versus white notes. I have also demonstrated how folk tunes can be employed to generate extensive melodic lines and cells, from which entire pieces can be based. Throughout the composition of this portfolio, I have found that my harmonic language has developed, two examples of this can be seen in the above mentioned utilisation of melodic cells and chord generation processes.

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36 Basic finger patterns used when learning to play a string instrument. In first position, each pattern consists of four notes, the open string and three consecutive notes on the same string. For example G A B C or D E F sharp A.
Grecian Swans was the first work composed for this portfolio and as previously discussed it is based entirely on two cells. While these cells are modal, they are not derived from any of the folk tunes found in the appendix. This process of using melodic embryos is developed further in both Illusions and Veils, where the cells in both of these works are taken directly from Fairy’s Jig. As examined these cells are elongated into melodic lines, appearing both vertically and horizontally throughout the works. They have been inverted and transposed when and where necessary. Between the works Oíche Geal and Distractions, the process of generating chords from a folk tune is also developed. Both works utilised chords derived from modal folk melodies, a five note version of the folk tunes, various pitch rotations and transpositions. This chord generation process which was initially developed for Oíche Geal, applied the chords both linearly and vertically throughout the piece, across the entire orchestra. Distractions focuses on blending pitches, by integrating the notes of consecutive chords and by allowing the strings of all three instruments to resonate, in order to create the desired still and spatial texture at the beginning of the work.

I believe that the melodic cell processes that have been applied to Illusions and Veils could be developed further, this combined with the chord generation method used in Distractions could provide an interesting synthesis in future works. There is also much more to be explored with the use of electronics. In Vielyn and Súil Siar I experimented with the lines harmonically, by pitch shifting them in semitones, tones, tritones and fifths. In Vielyn I also moved the line by a few cents, where necessary reverb was also used to distort the melodic lines. Electronics open up a whole new harmonic sound world, I would be curious to see the results if they were used to manipulate chords generated from the above process. A work based on this could prove intriguing.
CHAPTER 5
RHYTHM

5.1 Introduction.
Previously I discussed the harmonic and melodic processes which are utilised within the accompanying portfolio. In this chapter I consider rhythm and how certain aspects, pertaining to the folk tunes inform the generation of rhythmic material and how these elements are integrated into the fabric of the compositions. Along with the aforementioned, I will also investigate how rhythmic tools such as heterophony and the utilisation of space and silence are inserted into the music and how they enhance the sonic palette of the works.

5.2 How folk tunes have rhythmically enhanced this portfolio of compositions.
As mentioned in previous chapters, folk music has an all-encompassing effect on my compositions. Both the folk tunes themselves and their related narratives inform the overall structure, the harmonic process employed, the melodic line, the colour (this aspect is discussed in Chapter Six) and rhythmic material. In the following section I give reference as to how rhythmic features of both the jigs and the joik have been incorporated into the portfolio of works.

5.2.1 Rhythmic features derived from the jigs.
Irish folk music, is a reservoir for rhythmic material. In the following sections I examine how elements such as triplets, ornamental ‘rolls’, along with rhythmic manipulation of the overall tune has enhanced my compositions.
5.2.1.1 Triplets.

The triplet is a reoccurring feature throughout the my works and this element which is taken directly from the jigs, is used not only to decorate the rhythmic flow of the works, but also to outline the melody of the associated dance tune. In my compositions the triplet is manipulated into the following rhythms:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{\textbullet - - - - \textbullet - - - - \textbullet - - - -} \\
\end{array}
\]

While these are only slight variations, they add subtle changes to the established rhythms of the compositions, enhancing the overall flow of the work. Two examples of where the triplet has being inserted into the compositions can be seen in *Veils* from bar 84 (figure 5.1) and in the bassoon and in *An Draiocht* at bar 29 (figure 5.2).

Figure 5.1: *Veils*, bassoon from bar 84.

Figure 5.2: *An Draiocht*, bar 29.

Along with these subtle changes, the triplet is juxtaposed with patterns such as five in
the time of one, or six in the time of one, these are orchestrated both linearly and horizontally throughout the parts. *Veils* is a prime example of both the juxtaposition of rhythmic patterns and how the fluctuation between six, five and three generates momentum; these rhythms are utilised to propel this music forward to a new *tempo* (figure 5.3). This technique is also used in *Oíche Geal, Illusions, Veils, Distractions* and *Cloughlea*.

Figure 5.3: *Veils*, bar 90; rhythmic patterns in flutes and oboes.

An example of alternating rhythms can also to found in *Oíche Geal*, here there is a descending rhythmic motif in the woodwind and strings, which contracts intervalically, the lower it descends into the bass instruments. This example is seen at bar 237, the piccolo commences the motif with intervals of fourths and as it moves through the orchestra it contracts to thirds, then minor thirds and by the time this pattern reaches the lowest cello notes it is reduced to a major second. Rhythmically this descending pattern varies from triplets to semiquavers creating a cascading motion to the timing of the music (figure 5.4).
Figure 5.4: *Oiche Geal*, bar 237–240; descending motif.
5.2.1.2 Rolls.

A traditional Irish ‘roll’ is an ornament which contains a quick succession of notes, where the principle note, the note above, the principle note, the note below and the principle are played. Due to the free and ‘varying nature’ of a ‘roll’, the issue of notation is one which has been widely explored and debated by composers. As I have previously mentioned both Seóirse Bodley and David Flynn have addressed these issues. I use the term ‘varying nature’, as depending on the folk tune, the performer may alter the speed of the ornament, by emphasising different notes of the ‘roll’, thus temporally changing its tone and resonance. In this folk idiom the ‘roll’ is not notated, it as is played intuitively, resulting in performance variations. If a composer wishes to have a ‘roll’ performed in a classical setting he/she must be aware that these slight nuances are difficult to achieve, as the ornament has to be notated to allow further performance opportunities outside of Ireland. I chose to notate my ‘rolls’ and have found that the following patterns best achieve the rhythmic design of the Irish ‘roll’ (figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5: The Irish ‘roll’.

Many of my works employ these ‘roll’ patterns. In some pieces I utilise these rhythms for ornamental purposes (A Day to Remember for Flute and Piano) and in others as a temporal propellant by adding momentum. Both Cloughlea and An Draiocht employ this technique. In An Draiocht the ‘roll’ which is a feature of the B section of the jig is seen throughout the flute part, for example in bars 53 to 58 (figure 5.6), here it is used to
propel the music forward as ‘the spell’ is taking place, adding to the atmosphere of unease. Quick harmonic glissandi to the highest note possible in the violin, contrast with fast rolls and flutter tongue passages in the flute. These are employed to create the desired sound palette at the climax of the work (figure 5.7). Other occurrences where the ‘roll’ is utilised as a colouristic feature will be further discussed in Chapter Six, when discussing timbre.

Figure 5.6: An Draíocht, bars 53-58; Irish roll in the flute part.

Figure 5.7: An Draíocht, bar 61; harmonic glissandi in the violin.
5.2.1.3 Manipulation of the rhythmic durations of the jig.

Chapter Four discussed the pitch duration augmentation of the jig *A Day to Remember*, here the notes are extended, forming a thirteen minute version of the original tune, for solo flute. This rhythmic manipulation was also imposed on fragments of *Fairy's Jig*. For example in *Veils* the material from the first melodic cell (based on bar 1 of the jig) is rhythmically extended at bar 106 in the horn part (figure 5.8). Towards the end of the work, the rhythm of this same cell is elongated further (figure 5.9, bar 221 in the crotales). As mentioned in Chapter Four, this was one of three melodic cells which are utilised throughout this work. This rhythmical extension process has been applied to melodic material throughout all of the works which are based on jig material.

Figure 5.8: *Veils*, bar 106; horn.

![Figure 5.8](image)

Figure 5.9: *Veils*, bar 221; crotales.

![Figure 5.9](image)

5.2.2 How rhythmic properties of the joik feature in *Oíche Geal*.

As previously discussed the *joik* is utilised exclusively, in *Oíche Geal*. Fragments of the *joik* appear rhythmically throughout both the first and second sections of this work. The *joik* appears in its totality during the final section of the composition. The rhythm which from the first bar of the *joik* can be found initially in the trumpets at bar 74
Gradually this rhythmic motif is manipulated, by elongation and heterophony, moving throughout the orchestra by the climax of the work. The joik's rhythm was used, not only to stitch material belonging to the two folk tunes together (A Day to Remember and Hanene Liallal), but also to add colour, by inserting a contrasting rhythmic motif within the first two sections of the composition. These techniques are employed so as to prepare the listener for the new tune (Hanane Liallal) in the third section of the piece, creating a seamless transition.

Figure 5.10: Oíche Geal, bar 74; example of joik rhythm in the trumpets.

5.3 The use of heterophony.

As alluded to in the previous section, heterophony is another important rhythmic technique employed throughout my music. In Oíche Geal this technique was utilised to create rhythmically interesting patterns within the joik sections, by creating polyrhythms. An example of this can be seen at bar 130 in the horns (figure 5.11).

Figure 5.11: Oíche Geal, from bar 129; horns.
Within my portfolio the most effective example of this techniques application, is in *Veils*, as this work employs both heterophony and rhythmic manipulation conjointly, throughout the majority of the work. In *Veils* certain instruments double or ‘shadow’ each other (I discuss these instrumental groupings further in Chapter Six). These ‘shadow instruments’ commence with similar rhythmic material. Throughout the work, as these instruments separate from each other (both rhythmically and melodically), heterophony is used to express this division. Gradually the rhythm is slightly manipulated in tandem with heterophony. For example at bar 77 between the bassoon and trombone parts (figure 5.12), the bassoon starts two beats after the trombone, with its line containing slight rhythmic variations. These techniques form an important component of this work, as they reflect the narrative, when both the fairy and real worlds separate.

Figure 5.12: *Veils*, bar 77; heterophony between the bassoon and trombone.

### 5.4 Space.

When writing a piece of music it is important to let the ideas breathe and develop, I find that this is essential at the start of a work, so as the listener can aurally digest each new idea. It also aids the construction of the sound world of each piece, by adding to the desired atmosphere. While pauses or rests, are the most effective way to insert space
into a rhythmic line (this method can be seen in all of my pieces), Distractions utilises space to explore the resonance of the sustained piano and string chords. The slow tempo and long note durations allow for the decay of each note, thus creating time for the listener to absorb the sonic material (figure 5.13).

Figure 5.13: Distractions, from bar 1.

5.5 The importance of the utilisation of different rhythmic techniques.

Throughout this chapter I have discussed the different rhythmic techniques which I have utilised within my portfolio. These methods have aided the sonic enhancement of each piece by developing the rhythmic texture and engaging with the desired sound world associated with each narrative. Triplets, heterophony, rhythm manipulation, ‘rolls’, insertion of pauses and prolonged resonance are all used to achieve this goal, by expanding the rhythmic material. Without this development the pieces would remain sterile and uninteresting, they would be unable to effectively communicate the sonic palette. It is important for the growth of each piece that rhythm and its manipulation is considered when writing a new work. I have found the above rhythmic techniques to be the most effective during the compositional process.
CHAPTER 6

COLOUR: THE USE OF TIMBRE

6.1 Introduction.

When composing, timbral colour features as an integral part of the work. Careful choice of instrumentation, placement of range, extended techniques, and the use of rhythm all enhance the sonic palette. It is essential that the colour of each work is considered prior to its composition, this will aid in the careful selection of instruments, ranges and techniques which are to be used in a piece. Before, during and after the construction of my structural and harmonic plans, I am always aware of the colour, or ‘sound world’, which I wish to define. As a personal guideline, when the related narrative is been formed I start to conceptualise the related atmosphere, sounds and timbres. For example, I can equate the above analogy with a walk in the forest whereby visual, aural and sensory perceptions are stimulated—one is aware of leaves on the ground, twigs falling, the wind blowing the trees and the smell of the forest. Even the types of trees themselves have their own aural properties.

All these senses are encompassing and equate with the method I use to generate my sonic palettes of timbres—every acoustic and instrumental aspect has to be considered. For example in Oiche Geal I wanted to create a still, cold atmosphere, when I happened upon the timbre of a bowed vibraphone I recognised that this was the sound that I was seeking and so it was employed at the start of the work.

Along with intuition, narrative and timbre are the other main factors which influenced the colour of my works. When discussing narratives and orchestration it is similar to the anecdote of the chicken and the egg. In some works the narrative will inform the
instrumentation (mainly pieces which creatively use the folk tunes; *Oíche Geal, An Draíocht, Illusions, Veils* and *Disractions*) and in others the reverse. Chapters Three and Four discussed the narrative and how it has influenced the structure, harmony and melody. This chapter considers it in relation to timbre, within the works which best highlight these areas.

6.2 How colour is used in the works which utilise folk tunes.

In order to discuss the area of colour (timbre), I examine the pieces which have used the jigs; *A Day to Remember* and *Fairy’s Jig*. I have selected pieces related to these jigs, as they are associated with the largest works within the portfolio.

6.2.1 The use of colour in works related to the jig *A Day to Remember*.

As previously stated this jig and the narrative associated with it, influenced the works *A Day to Remember, An Draíocht, Oíche Geal, Violyn* and *Súil Siar*. In the three acoustic works the flute is the common instrument, chosen because throughout history it has been linked with spells and nature,\(^{37}\) and this is one example as to how the narrative has affected the choice of instruments.

6.2.1.1 *A Day to Remember*.

When composing this piece I wanted to capture the jovial atmosphere from the end of the narrative. As this piece was written for a wedding, I felt that this section of the story was the most appropriate. Unlike the other works which were influenced by the same jig, this is the only one which utilises it in its pure form; no extended colouristic techniques were used in either the flute or the piano as I wanted to keep this piece close to the original jig, due to the context in which it was to be performed. Colour in this

A piece is achieved by the flute players’ interpretation of the jig, the variations they use when performing and the tone colour that they add to certain notes. This is all determined by their individual playing style. Some flute players have a ‘bark’ in their tone and play with a bounce, highlighting the rhythmical elements in the tune with the breath and a strong tone; for example the Belfast flute player Harry Bradley. The playing style of others such as Matt Molloy (member of the Chieftains and the Bothy Band) is more fluid and ornamented as is Mary Bergin (member of Dordán, while she is mainly know for her unique style of tin whistle playing, she uses the same techniques on the flute) who emphasises the rhythm with Irish ornaments such as the rolls and cuts.

This piece is written for a traditional player or a classical player who is able to cross convincingly between the two genres. I chose to include A Day to Remember for Flute and Piano in this research discussion as I felt it demonstrated the diverse approaches in which an Irish jig can be used to inform a new work, in contrast to how this jig was utilised within An Draíocht, Oíche Geal, Violyn and Súil Síar.

6.2.1.2 An Draíocht.

An Draíocht is the next work which is based on this same jig. The piece focuses on the atmosphere in the second section of the narrative where ‘the spell’ is taking place. A wooden flute was specified for this work, as it is mellower and closer in timbre to the violin and this allowed me to concentrate on blending the timbres of both instruments together to give the impression of one instrument, in sections of the work. The following are similar colouristic traits that occur between both the wooden flute and violin, without utilising extend techniques:

- the lowest notes in the wooden flute and the same pitches in the violin, (particularly if the violin is played flautando), have a similar tone colour.
• a hard low D in the flute, blends seamlessly with an open D drone in the violin, this is most successful when the D drone on the violin is initiated with an attack.
• the higher range of the second register in the wooden flute is similar in timbre to sul ponticello notes in the violin at the same register.

Examples of this amalgamation of timbres, utilising extended techniques can be seen in when air in the flute is juxtaposed with white noise in the violin at bar 102 (figure 5.1). Also when key clicks and key rattles in the flute, are fused with col legno jeté in the violin at bars 7 to 9 (figure 5.2).

Figure 6.1: An Draíocht, bar 102; air in the flute, white noise in the violin.

Figure 6.2: An Draíocht, bar 7–9; key rattles in the flute and jeté in the violin.
While writing this piece it was important to consider the tone colour of each instrument at different ranges, in order to cohesively blend the timbres together or to juxtapose them as required. A prime example of the merger can be seen at bar 26 (figure 6.3). At this point both instruments explore their lower registers, with the pitches falling within an octave of each other. At this range the wooden flute is mellower, enabling the combination of the lowest notes on the G string of the violin. I deliberately chose to rotate the violin pitches around the G sharp and not the open G string, as a stopped string inserts a tenseness, into the texture of the work.

Figure 6.3: An Draiocht, bar 25–28.

An example of the juxtaposition of the tone colour can be seen between bar 67 and 73 (figure 6.4). Here the flute is in the higher range of its second register, reaching up to its third octave C sharp. At this range the tone of the flute is slightly harsher and tenser in sound, due to the extra lip pressure and air needed to produce these pitches by the performer. I deliberately juxtaposed this with the softer pure tones of the natural string harmonics, as the differing timbres reflects the atmosphere of the narrative during this section of the work.

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Another example as to how tone colour was used to achieve the sound world from the narrative is at bar 77, where the violin plays accelerated *tremolandi* while moving between *sul ponticello* and natural playing which is juxtaposed against successive Irish rolls in the flute (figure 6.5).

Figure 6.5: *An Draiocht*, bar 77; Irish rolls in the flute part juxtaposed with *sul ponticello* violin tremolando.
During the compositional process of this work, every note and timbral effect was carefully chosen to blend with one another, in order to add to the dramaticism of the piece.

6.2.1.3 *Oíche Geal.*

When discussing the use of timbre, within works based on the tune *A Day to Remember* *Oíche Geal* is the most important, as unlike the previous two pieces which were based on sections of the narrative, this work captures the atmosphere of the entire story from start to finish. *Oíche Geal* begins with the clunking of wooden wind chimes, white noise in the strings and air in the woodwind. This is followed by key rattles and *jeté* while the double bass forms the floor of the soundscape. These are extended techniques which I experimented with in *An Draíocht.* As discussed in the previous section they were deliberately chosen due to their closeness in timbre and their colour is part of the desired sound world which I wished to create. Adding to this sonic landscape, the first violins enter with harmonics, juxtaposed with low bass notes. The bowed vibraphone is used to emphasise the cold atmosphere of the narrative. The solo flute line is used to cut through the texture by moving between *sul pont* and *molto vibrato.* From the start of the piece the flutter tongue grace notes underline the solo flutes role, allowing it to distinctively stand apart from the woodwind section. Sing and play is another technique which is exclusive to this solo instrument. An example of this can be seen at bar 24 where the solo flute outlines the first bar of the jig. This timbre contrasts with the texture established by the orchestra and again this technique is employed to distinguish the solo flute from the other woodwind instruments.

The ‘shimmering effect’ is first seen in its embryonic stage at bar 26 (figure 6.6). This coloristic effect is created by swiftly alternating between two notes, rapidly accelerating
and decelerating in tempo, while moving between air and tone, piano and forte. This ‘shimmering effect’ is transferred throughout the orchestra adding to the texture of the work.

Figure 6.6: Oíche Geal, bar 26, flute; ‘shimmering effect’.

Another colouristic feature which can be seen is in the third section of this work, is between the harp, trumpets and flutes at bar 229. Here bis bigliandi in the harp is synthesised with the tremelandi between the notes C and E flat in trumpet one, while trumpet two rapidly opens and closes the mute on a sustained C note. At the same time flute one alternates rapidly between the pitches E flat and G (‘shimmering effect’) (figure 6.7). The use of bis bigliandi, which I explored in extent in Grecian Swans, was deliberately added to this ‘shimmering effect’ as it brightens the combined timbre at this point, enabling this fusion to represent the sound world of ‘the spell’ as it envelopes the forest. At this point trumpet mutes are utilised to enhance the texture, however throughout the work they are employed to emphasise different sections of the composition. Their removal on a sustained notes in segments such as bar 101 in the trumpets, alter not only the dynamic level of the instrument, but also the pitch and colour of the held note.

Throughout Oíche Geal every colouristic feature was carefully and attentively placed in
order to synthesise the timbres cohesively, while continuously incorporating them into the overall structure.

Figure 6.7: Oíche Geal, bar 229; shimmering in the flute.

6.2.1.4 Violyn and Súil Siar.

Violyn was the first of two electronic pieces written for this portfolio and my compositional approach to both works differed greatly. In this piece I experimented
with the pure tone colour of the acoustic violin against one that was electronically
synthesised. I was interested in both fusing and juxtaposing the two together and the
resultant colour. As part of the pre-compositional process for Violyn, I recorded the
violinist Lynda O’Connor. During this session she performed the jig in its pure form
along with extended techniques which included left hand pizzicato combined with col
legno jeté and open strings rapidly moving between trem. accel. and trem. rall., while
alternating from sul ponticello to sul tasto. Samples of the session were edited,
arranged and treated with ad-verb, pitch shifters, de-noisers and echo to manipulate the
colour of the lines, two examples of this editing process are:

1 I took the effect of rapidly moving from trem. accel to trem. rall., I lengthened
it, slowed it down, layered it and pitch shifted it down to form the drone for the
tape part. De-noisers and echo were also added to this track.

2 I took the Irish roll from the B section of the tune, overlaid/re-layered it onto
itself many times. I also inverted and reverted it, applying temporal changes
both increasing and decreasing the speed of the roll. Once these treatments were
complete, I added pitch shifters and reverb to the various tracks where the ‘new
rolls’ were inserted. Due to the over use of treatments, the timbre of these ‘new
rolls’ were completely altered, adding colour to the electronic part.

Once the tape track was complete, the live part was composed around it. As so many
different effects and treatments were included in the tape part, I decided to keep the
colour palette of the live instrument to a minimal by using only sul ponticello and sul
tasto, combined with sparse col legno and left hand pizzicato to vary the timbre. I chose
these particular effects as they were also included in the pre-treated tape part.
Throughout sections of this work I juxtaposed both the acoustic and tape parts together. In the quieter segments, it was important that the live instrument remained pure in sound so as to cut through the electronic texture. In other sections I fused the two sound palettes together, deliberately allowing the ‘live’ part to be swamped by the tape part in order to combine the texture seamlessly.

As referred to in Chapter Two, *Súil Siar* was written in reaction to the visual track, which was originally influenced by the narrative. This is in contrast to the compositional process used in *Violyn*. The instruments used in this work are wooden flute, violin and midi piano. Similar to *An Draíocht*, the flute and violin were chosen due to their close timbral relationship (refer to 6.2.1.2. for the timbral similarities of the wooden flute and violin). The role of the piano was to introduce a new vibrant colour for the second section of this work, as it required a structurally different approach. When piano notes are struck and allowed to resonate there is a sharp tone colour to the quality of a sustained note, this is juxtaposed with mellow flute and violin. In the first section of this work, sporadic piano notes are used as a decorative device to interrupt the texture, emphasising the scene change and salient features in the visual. These intermittent notes are then assembled together in the second section of this piece to form the melodic cell discussed in Chapter Four (shown at figure 4.14). The harsh tone quality of the piano in this section contrasts with the mellow flute and violin lines in the first section. In the second part of this work the piano also moves to the foreground differentiating it from the start of the work.

When creating the electronic part for this piece I recorded sustained open D and G notes on the violin. These were then overlaid/re-layered several times, and treated with adverb and platinum verb; they were also pitch shifted. Similar processes were applied to
the flute lines, where I recorded the notes E and G and used the ‘shimmer effect’, first seen in *Oíche Geal* (see flute part figure 6.7). At this point the ‘shimmer effect’ is used in the flute line for the seascape visuals, it was also employed to add a hint of colour at important moments throughout the work by blurring the harmonic progression of the sustained violin and flute lines. I decided to overuse reverb so as to convey a programmatic reflection of the lonely and desolate scene portrayed by the visual.

### 6.2.2. The use of colour in works related to *Fairy’s Jig*.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, this jig aided the compositional process in both *Illusions* and *Veils*. As with all of my works the timbral effects which I have utilised in these pieces were carefully chosen so as to accurately portray the desired atmosphere within each work. In this section I am choosing to discuss only *Veils*, as it is the larger of the two works and therefore employs more examples of the techniques which warrant discussion.

#### 6.2.2.1 Veils.

Chapter Four referred to the division of black and white pitches between both the ‘fairy world’ and the ‘real world’. During the pre-compositional process the instruments also succumbed to a similar division. The table below displays how this separation took place.

**Table 6.1 The division of instruments in *Veils*.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fairy world</th>
<th>Real word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woodwind</td>
<td>Brass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percussion</td>
<td>Percussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violin 1</td>
<td>Violin 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viola</td>
<td>Cello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double bass</td>
<td>Double Bass</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While composing this work I ventured to complete much research into the timbre of the brass and woodwind instruments, in particular the similarities and differences of the tone quality of each instrument at different tessituras. For example the trumpet in its upper register and the oboe in its middle range sound homogeneous, at this point the trumpet has a nasal quality to the colour of its notes (this is prior to introducing any mutes). The horn and clarinet also have similar traits in their upper and middle registers respectively. Figure 6.8 displays the ranges in which these instruments colouristically cross over.

Figure 6.8: The ranges in which instruments have similar sonorous traits.

![Figure 6.8: The ranges in which instruments have similar sonorous traits.](image)

This research allowed me to pair different instruments from the groups in the table 6.1 against each other. Chapter Four mentioned doubling instruments that separated intervallically. These doubling or ‘shadowing’ instruments are grouped as follows:

- Trumpet against oboe.
- Horn against clarinet.
- Trombone against bassoon.
- Tuba against bass clarinet.

As these instruments separate intervallically, they also separate rhythmically, as described in Chapter Five in section ‘5.3: The use of heterophony’.

*This instrument was later omitted prior to commencing the composition of this piece, as I decided that that this bass instrument was not necessary for the texture of the work.*
The ‘shimmering effect’ from the woodwind of Oíche Geal was also used in this work. However, in Veils it appears in both the woodwind and the brass enhancing the colour and re-enforcing the sound world of this piece (figure 6.9). The timbre of this effect when solely used in the woodwind is similar to the wind whistling through trees and it is cold, when a trumpet performs this effect, it adds brightness. Throughout Veils, the trumpet is given the main melodic line and this line is later transferred to its ‘shadow’, the oboe. By assigning the melody to the trumpet part, it allowed the melody, at this point, to be explored by means of timbral transformation in the trumpets using mutes, flutter tongue and tremolandi. Another important feature of this work is the registral extremes between the low bass notes and the high harmonics. This creates a large space thus enabling the other instruments to cut through the texture.

Figure 6.9: Veils, bar 43; ‘shimmering effect’ in the brass.

6.3 Works which did not use a folk tune during the compositional process.

The use of timbre is equally as important in these works as they are in the previous, but while the previous compositions use folk tunes as a musical reservoir, at this point the narrative takes precedence. In order to demonstrate this, I will be highlighting the use of timbre in The Long Wave and Cloughlea.
6.3.1 *The Long Wave.*

Previously when I referred to *The Long Wave*, I discussed how it was written for amateur string orchestra. For this reason I decided to explore the possibilities of extended techniques, employing them to help ease the players into the performance.

As the background associated with this piece was related to the sea, white noise is used to reflect the constant hum created by the moving waves. I decided to experiment with *pizzicato*, by using it to reflect the sound of pebbles in the backwash on the shore. In order to achieve this timbre, the players were asked to mute the strings with the left hand while randomly plucking the strings with the right. I chose to notate this with boxes, because to transcribe the exact rhythms out would have been far too complex for the group and so would have been counterproductive (figure 6.10). Gradually the *pizzicato*, spreads throughout the orchestra developing into *col legno* while still muting the strings; the use of *sul ponticello* and *sul tasto* with *tremolando* in the viola part, is intended to cut through the *pizzicato* timbre. When a performer rapidly plays *tremolando* on the lower open strings, while quickly moving between *sul ponticello* and *sul tasto*, the strings start to resonate producing the upper partials. While this technique is also very successful on the viola, the size of the cello produces a much richer texture, particular if played on the open C string. When both the orchestra and listener are seated on a wooden floor on the same level, the rapid continual low resonance of the C note, causes vibrations which can be physically felt by the listener, while aurally the brightness of the strings upper partials cuts through the texture. This technique distinctively occurs in the cello towards the end of this work (when the *pizzicato* returns), it is used to enhance the overall sonic experience for the listener. *Oíche Geal* and *Veils* also avail of this technique in the cello section, while *Violyn* experimented with it by applying electronics and manipulating it into a low sustained drone.
In the middle section of *The Long Wave*, pitches are slowly introduced extending into a melodic line. This section does not include any extended techniques, contrasting with the outer sections, thus creating a more tranquil atmosphere. Chapter Four discussed the performers influence over the pitch material. It is always important to consider the ensemble when commencing a composition. If this approach is carefully undertaken from the outset, amateurs can produce as pleasing a result as a professional ensemble. When such attention is given, the composer does not have to compromise his/her sonic palette.

Figure 6.10: *The Long Wave*, bar 6; muted strings with *pizzicato*.

6.3.2 *Cloughlea*.

At the beginning of this work I experimented with the different tone colours which were achievable by the one pitch in the bass clarinet. Sub-tones, normal tones, air, key clicks and breathy key clicks were all slowly unfolded. This work also avails of the coloristic
‘shimmering effect’ from *Oíche Geal* in order to move between different registers of the instrument. As the piece expands outwards the rhythms twist around the pitches in ornamentation and this gives way to the first Irish roll at mark 45 (figure 6.11), eventually leading to a succession of rolls by the end of line 52 (figure 6.12).

Figure 6.11: *Cloughlea*, mark 45; the first Irish roll in the work.

![Figure 6.11: Cloughlea, mark 45; the first Irish roll in the work.](image)

Figure 6.12: *Cloughlea*, mark 52; successive Irish rolls.

![Figure 6.12: Cloughlea, mark 52; successive Irish rolls.](image)

The Irish roll is also seen many times throughout this work. Rhythmically it is used to propel the music forward, while melodically it is used as tool to aid the movement between the different registers of the instrument. This is similar to the usage of the previously mentioned ‘shimmering effect’. An example of this can be seen above in figure 6.12. Here the roll was used to jump between octaves. Due to the design of wind instruments (in particular flutes and clarinets) quick octave displacement is easily achievable, enabling a seamless leap between registers. The full spectrum of the sonic palette is produced as the aggregate of these timbres and these ornaments are juxtaposed against the multi-phonics. Each multi-phonics which is embedded in this work was carefully selected in conjunction with the player Paul Roe, in order to produce a precise
tone colour for the sound world of the piece, at an exact moment when a multiphonic was articulated. Their usage enabled me to explore a wide range of tone colour in this piece, from air, to the lower and upper partials of the multi-phonics. When composing for a single line instrument I feel that it is important to utilise as much of the colour of that instrument as possible. Exploring the range and different timbral techniques available to the instrument is a prime way to develop the desired sound world.
7.1 How do my creative practices contribute in an original way to existing compositional practices?

In Chapter One I discussed how many Irish composers have experimented with the synthesis of Irish music within their works and how they have laid the ground work for my generation to follow on from. I examined the works of Seóirse Bodley, Eric Sweeney and Donnacha Dennehy. From this research I concluded that each of these composers had sufficiently developed their own writing styles. Their techniques of juxtaposing the idioms of Irish folk music with contemporary music and utilising dance tunes in minimalist ways did not require further development. However from studying their music, I identified that the use of timbre in relation to Irish music is an area which warrants further exploration, I feel that this subject was not being fully explored in the works which I considered.

In 1958, on the ‘Young Composers at Work’ series on RTÉ Radio One, Seóirse Bodley gave the following interview on his views in relation to the use of Irish music in contemporary composition.

‘The greatest danger which faces the Irish composer is that of false nationalism. In other words, he must not write music in an Irish style out of a sense of duty...The Irish composer who wishes to avoid false nationalism must be careful that he does not substitute another false ideal for it. I should like to compose music that would be well constructed, reflect my own experience and background and be written in the contemporary idiom without regards for
Today Bodley’s views are as acutely relevant as ever before. It is important that composers write music based on what has influenced them most, or an area that they find intriguing which warrants further exploration. This is why I use folk music in my compositions and why I have such an interest in the overall timbre of a work.

Chapter One outlined the research aims for this project, to demonstrate how my creative practices add to existing compositional techniques. The results will be discussed below.

7.1.1 The use of folk music when structuring a composition.

The first aim outlined in Chapter One was to investigate how folk music can be used to structure a composition. Throughout the background research for thesis, I noticed that folk tunes were not used to form the overall shape of a work. Chapter Three examined how jigs are employed as a structural tool in several of the accompanying works. The internal part structure (AA BB) of a jig is utilised to decide where specific rhythmic, melodic and timbral material occurs. This structure also governs when and where harmonic changes take place. Oíche Geal and An Draíocht are prime examples of this technique. Detailed timelines are provided to display which parts of the jig effect these works and where in the composition they occur. The background or narrative associated with a folk tune is the second way in which the jig aids the structural process. Here the overall shape of the composition follows the same formation as the narrative. This is a feature of every work within the portfolio and it is a re-occurring technique which is utilised when structuring my works on the whole. I feel that this is a procedure which has not being previously scrutinised and so this portfolio of works is an example as to how jigs can be used during structural phase, when writing a contemporary piece of music.

38 Gareth Cox, 26.
7.1.2 How folk music is used to inform the melodic line and generate different harmonic processes.

The second area examined in this thesis was how a piece of folk music can inform the melodic line and how it can generate different harmonic processes. Chapter Four discussed the elongation of the melody of the jig *A Day to Remember*. Here note durations are stretched and the pitches are slowly unfolded to form a thirteen minute melodic line for solo flute. This line is used as the skeleton for *Oíche Geal* (this melody line can be found in the appendix).

*Grecian Swans* and *Súil Siar* utilise cells which are modal in construction. Due to years of studying and performing folk music, the timbre of a modal scale is one which is pleasing to my ear. All of the melodic material is derived directly from these embryos and informs every section of these works. This use of melodic cells is further developed in *Illusions* and *Veils*. Both of these works utilise cells that are taken from *Fairy’s Jig*. However, they are not used in a minimalist way like Sweeney, but instead the pitches are inverted, reverted, and transposed. The pitch elongation process which is seen in *Oíche Geal* is further developed in *Illusions* and *Veils* by superimposing it onto the melodic cells, stretching them into longer lines.

Harmonic processes such as the use of black notes against white, and chord generation are also employed throughout this portfolio. In order to create the atmosphere of the narrative associated with *Fairy’s Jig, Illusions* and *Veils* utilise the harmonic process of juxtaposing black pitches with white. In these works the notes unfold slowly, overlapping the black and white pitches forming the aggregate. This harmonic process
was deliberately chosen due to the resultant timbre of these pitches when deployed in this manner. In *Oíche Geal*, five note chords are generated from the jig *A Day to Remember* and the *joik*. These chords are derived from the original mode, from the pitch rotation and from transpositions by semitones, fourths and fifths. The chords were then arranged by ear, blending into each other. This technique was further developed in *Distractions*, by focusing on the fusion of the resonance of the chords. In this work, four note chords were generated from the original mode of *Distracting Lucy*, from pitch rotation and tritone transposition of the second, third and fourth rotations. Eleven rows were produced, resulting in the extraction of thirty-eight chords. These chords were again arranged by ear, however this time attention was given to the resonance of the piano and held string notes, space was provided to facilitate the merging of chords.

The paragraphs above are examples of how folk tunes are used to inform the melodic line, and how they are be used to generate harmonic processes for new works. These methods which have been developed throughout this portfolio, display novel ways in which folk tunes can be manipulated to create contemporary compositions.

### 7.1.3 How folk music can be used to create different rhythms.

Chapter Five discussed the different rhythmic techniques which I have utilised within my portfolio. The rhythms of the jigs and the *joik* were manipulated by elongating the pitch durations in *Oíche Geal*. *Veils* developed this process by employing both expansion and heterophony simultaneously, thus transforming the line, generating interesting rhythmic ramifications. An example of this is evident in *Veils* at bar 77 between the bassoon and trombone (figure 5.12), where this process has produced two contrasting rhythmic lines, which have grown organically from the same source. Another rhythmic technique employed in this portfolio is the variation of the triplet
pattern. The triplet and its variations are juxtaposed with semiquavers in the time of five and six to generate momentum, Irish ‘rolls’, are also utilised for the same purpose. The timbral quality of the fast rhythmic roll is also accounted for so as to contrast or blend it with other rhythmic features such as glissandi as appropriate; seen in An Draiocht and Oíche Geal.

This expansional development of the jigs pitch duration and the use of features such as triplets and ‘rolls’ is unique within these works. They are techniques which are developed throughout this portfolio and add to existing methodologies associated with the rhythmic usage of folk material.

### 7.1.4 The importance of timbre within a work.

The final aim of this research was to demonstrate the importance of timbre within my work by discussing and looking at examples of how I have explored its development within my works.

Timbre is the most important feature of my works. As mentioned in Chapter One it is an area which I believe has been neglected by many composers. During the conception of every piece I visualise the narrative associated with the folk tunes or compositions. This visualisation dictates the timbre of the work. As discussed in Chapter Six Oíche Geal is a prime example of this. The opening of the narrative associated with the piece is still, tense and cold. This translates into bowed vibraphone, ‘shimmering flutes’, high glass like strings and a low droning bass line. The middle of the narrative contains yellows and oranges of a bonfire and the ‘spell’, this lends to spiraling brass lines as they are warm in colour.
During the composition of this portfolio extensive research was carried out in relation to the timbre of instruments at different ranges and dynamics, along with the colour of both standard and extended techniques; I also examined how the aforementioned can be combined or juxtaposed between the different instruments. The results are most evident in *An Draiocht* and *Veils*. *An Draiocht* blends the wooden flute and violin together to form one instrument, while *Veils* ‘shadows’ certain instruments such as the oboe and trumpet. At points the overlapping timbral relationships of these instruments are exploited, while in other sections the contrasting colours of trumpet and oboe were deliberate. This work utilises opposing instruments to represent the real and fairy worlds associated with the narrative of *Fairy’s Jig*.

Throughout this portfolio certain timbral techniques are developed, for example the ‘shimmering effect’ (described in full in Chapter Six). This effect first appears in *Cloughlea* to help move between registers. In *Oíche Geal* its colour is altered by paring it with *bisbiglandi* harp and muted trumpets to represent the atmosphere after the ‘spell’. *Illusions* utilises ‘the shimmering effect’ to reflect the sound of the wind whistling through the woods, while in *Veils* the trumpet brightens the colour of this technique in compassion to its implementation in the flute.

Another example of a timbral effect which is developed throughout the portfolio, is the use of rapidly moving *sul tastó* and *sul ponticello*, with fast *tremolando* in a circular bowing motion. While this technique is a feature of past works, in *The Long Wave* it was deliberately chosen due to the low resonate bass and high harmonic notes it produces. This effect was further developed in *Violyin*, by allowing the player to occasionally *pizzicato* the neighboring string, thus producing a sound similar to a helicopter. This was then electronically altered to form the drone in the electronic part.
The original recording also features in the electronic track, however reverb has been added to it. This effect is used to swamp the live instrument in certain sections of this work.

The examples above reveal how the close examination of timbre and the development of specific coloristic effects are all important features of this portfolio as they enhance the texture of each work. From the outset of each work I have a clear concept of its sound world; the timbre, rhythms, melodic and harmonic material are all chosen in order to create this sonic palette. This acute awareness of the sound world of each work in the pre-compositional stages is what drives my music to consider the colour/timbre throughout the entire writing process. From the pieces that I studied of established composers, I observed that close attention to timbre is an area which stands my music apart from other works, thus allowing it to add a new voice to the field of composition.

7.1.5 Final conclusions.

Throughout this thesis I have provided detailed accounts as to how I have utilised folk musics within my works, allowing me to develop my own sound palette by exploring a synthesis of the colour and techniques available from both the folk and contemporary idioms. Folk music on a whole has guided my writing style on both the macro and micro levels, from the overall sound world of the work to the smaller rhythmic or melodic cells which run throughout each piece. It has been a source of material for the works within this portfolio.

In conclusion this research has provided:

- new methods of utilising folk music for structuring compositions.
- new methods of generating harmonic processes from a folk tune.
• new methods of extracting and developing rhythmic material from folk tunes.

• detailed accounts of the colouristic techniques which are employed throughout the portfolio and how it is this awareness and exploration that enables my music to add an original compositional voice to this discipline.

• a basis for the exploration of synthesising different colouristic techniques by blending different instrumental groupings. This is an area which can be continually added to as a library of colours and sounds. These can then be utilised as required.

• a platform for new works to develop. Further compositions could combine the chord generation process with more emphasis on timbre. This would be particularly fruitful in a work for small ensemble, or a work for voice and electronics. In a piece for ensemble, the emphasis on blending of chords and their displacement at different registers and positions combined with the extended coloristic techniques available (instrument depending) could furnish fascinating results.

In relation to a work for voice and electronics, Dennehy’s *Grá agus Bás* displayed how a good singer can change the timbre of a piece. While he utilised the performers natural inflections to enhance the colour palette, I would be interested in developing extended techniques which can be performed by all singers who specialise in contemporary music and blending these with electronics. This is a medium which I have yet to fully explore and the possible outcomes are both interesting and endless.
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**8.2 Scores.**


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RTÉ/261, RTÉ Concert Orchestra, Prionnsías Ó Duinn (cond.) (1989).

Sweeney, Eric. *Dance Music III*, the Contemporary Music Centre sound archive

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Sweeney, Eric. *Thornton's Reel*, recording courtesy of Eric Sweeney, John Feeley
APPENDIX
### i. Sections in each work in chronological order.

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<th>Work</th>
<th>Section 1</th>
<th>Section 2</th>
<th>Section 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Day to Remember</td>
<td>Bar 1 to bar 12.</td>
<td>From bar 13 to end.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Draíocht</td>
<td>Bar 1 to bar 36.</td>
<td>From bar 37 to bar 66.</td>
<td>From bar 67 to the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grecian Swans</td>
<td>Bar 1 to bar 41.</td>
<td>From bar 42 to bar 83.</td>
<td>From bar 84 to the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oíche Geal</td>
<td>Bar 1 to bar 77.</td>
<td>From bar 78 to bar 203.</td>
<td>From bar 204 to the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Long Wave</td>
<td>Bar 1 to bar 32.</td>
<td>From bar 33 to bar 97.</td>
<td>From bar 98 to the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloughlea</td>
<td>From the beginning to the start of the held note at the end of the system marked 41.</td>
<td>From the start of the held note at the end of the system marked 41 to crotchet =120 (system marked 80).</td>
<td>From crotchet =120 (system marked 80) to the end of the work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illusions</td>
<td>Bar 1 to bar 32.</td>
<td>From bar 33 to bar 84.</td>
<td>From bar 85 to the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veils</td>
<td>Bar 1 to bar 52.</td>
<td>From bar 53 to bar 169.</td>
<td>From bar 170 to the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violyn</td>
<td>This piece was through composed with no deliberate sections.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Súil Siar</td>
<td>From the start until the flower section.</td>
<td>From the flower section to the end.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distractions</td>
<td>Bar 1 to bar 57.</td>
<td>From bar 58 to bar 86.</td>
<td>From bar 87 to the end.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ii. Scores of folk tunes and the pieces they were used in.

This section contains scores for the folk tunes used in the compositions of this portfolio, along with mentioning which works they influenced.

ii.i A Day to Remember used in: A Day to Remember, An Draiocht, Oíche Geal, Violyn and Súil Siar.

A Day to Remember

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ii.ii Hanene Laillal used in: Oíche Geal.39

Hanene Laillal

ii.iii *Fairy’s Jig* used in: *Illusions and Veils.*

*Fairy’s Jig*  
Alyson Barber

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ii.iv *Distracting Lucy* used in: *Distractions.*

*Distracting Lucy*  
Alyson Barber

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iii. Narrative and background for jigs.

This section contains the backgrounds and narratives attached to the three jigs which are used in this portfolio.

iii.i *A Day to Remember.*

On a cold, cloudless, moonlit night, frozen snow lies on brown blades of grass, the ground is frozen solid. Beside a dead forest there is a circular clearing. From over the hill a line of fiery torches begins to appear, winding down a flattened path towards the centre of a clearing. The cloaked individuals who are carrying these torches begin to gather around a bonfire. The hairs on the arms of one young novice are standing up with goose bumps. He is anxious for the spell to work.

At the edge of the forest a group of small animals gather. The men’s anxiety is felt by the animals. They too are hoping the spell will work and that the never ending winter will cease. The trees are now dying, as is everything connected to them.

As the wind rustles through the branches of the trees, the leader of the cloaked group begins to chant. To one skinny little field mouse who is watching in awe, it sounds like mumbling. Their words have no meaning to him. Perhaps if he could move closer, he would understand.

The hum of voices increases, the young novice can see his breath. He is trying to concentrate on the task at hand. He knows he must keep his mind clear and not break the circle. As he closes his eyes he notices a crazy little field mouse moving too close to the fire. He endeavours not to notice the smell of burning fur as the mouse scampers away back to the safety of the wood.
As the chanting increases in volume the novice can feel the energy in the circle growing with intensity, he feels pressure to break the circle but knows he must not.

From the edge of the forest the numbers of onlookers grow. They notice a bright clear white light radiating from the men. Slowly it increases, gradually becoming brighter and brighter; the rays of light emanating from each man join in the centre high above the bonfire. It swirls back and forth, right to left, displaying bright blues, purples, greens and whites. The animals can tell that the light is living. Suddenly the light explodes straight upwards before mushrooming out to cover the forest with a brilliant umbrella.

The field mouse notices one of the younger men falling to the ground, but he is quickly distracted by the sight above his head.

As quickly as the light explodes upwards, the blue blanket which forms over the canopy of the forest dissipates, falling like raindrops to the ground. As droplets of light land on every branch, leaf, and blade of grass, gradually the colour of life returns.

Feeling embarrassed that he gave way to the pressure from the energy too soon, the young novice rubs his back as he climbs up from the damp ground hoping it will not damage the spell. Looking around, expecting looks of disgust on the Elders’ faces, he sees the opposite. Smiles of joy are beaming from ear to ear. Perhaps they did not notice him falling at the last second!

As the men return over the hill, the animals remain to celebrate. Moving through the trees, one of the squirrels carries some nuts to the festivities, dropping one without
realising. As it falls to forest floor it lands on some brown grass, coming to rest against a dead sapling.

**iii.ii Fairy’s Jig.**

Prior to writing this jig I was researching local folklore. This led me to stories about fairies and how even to this day some people, particularly those from the country, will still not enter a fairy ring for fear of repercussions. This interest in folklore stems from my youth. Growing up in west Co. Galway, the lane on which I lived is called Bóthar na Sioga (the road of the fairies). Local folklore told of how on Halloween night the fairies would march up the lane moving between their summer and winter forts. Many of the surrounding fields contained fairy forts, so as a child, this story seemed perfectly reasonable. In Connemara it was believed that by dressing little boys up as girls they would be protected from being taken by the fairies and being exchanged for a changeling child. Photographs exist from as late as the mid twentieth century of this practice. Some people believed that the fairy world existed in a different dimension, shimmering behind ours.

Stories have been passed down through the generations that the seventeenth century harper and composer Turlough O’Carolan received his music from the fairies in his dreams. However these are just stories which have grown like Chinese whispers after he wrote the piece *Sí beag Sí mhór.* This piece is about two hills where contemporary folklore claimed the Fianna fought a fairy army. It is perhaps this local folklore that has fuelled the anecdotes about O’Carolan and the fairies.

This jig represents the mischievous nature of the fairies, the note E flat which is not commonly used in Irish dance music reflects this nature; as it is a pitch which is difficult
to play on many Irish traditional instruments.

iii.iii *Distracting Lucy*.

Lucy is my niece who was born in October 2014. As she was the first grandchild in my family, this caused a lot of commotion. On the day that she arrived I was ‘trying’ to compose but needless to say I got very little writing done as every few minutes my phone would buzz as it received messages from various friends and family. Each time this happened, I would lose track of what I was working on, resulting in one extra bar in each part of the jig. I decided to retain these bars as they inform the character of the tune.
iv. Score for *A Day to Remember* for Irish flute and Piano.

The following is the score for *A Day to Remember for Irish flute and piano*. This piece has been included in the appendix as it represents a more traditional usage of the Irish jig as opposed to the way in which the jig has been manipulated in the works *An Draíocht, Oíche Geal, Violyn* and *Súil Síar*. 
A DAY TO REMEMBER

Alyson Barber
A Day to Remember

For traditional Irish flute and piano

Alyson Barber

Score in C

Duration circa…1' 30”

This piece was first preformed by Alyson Barber and Annie O' Hanlon at the Hudson Bay Hotel on 13 October 2011
A Day to Remember: This is an arrangement of the traditional Irish jig with the same name. Both the jig and the arrangement were written for my brothers wedding. This piece was written as the bridal entrance, so ideally it should not be performed too fast. However this is at the discretion of the performers. As this recording was made on a different occasion liberties were taken by increasing the tempo. A Day to Remember should be played with a lot of freedom; the flute player should play from memory with the pianist as accompanist. As the flute part was written for a traditional Irish flute, phrasing and breathing has been deliberately omitted, from the score as this is at the discretionary instinct of the flute player. While some Irish rolls have been marked on the score, other ornaments and variations are at the discretion of the flute player.

= the sign for an Irish roll, here the principle note, the note above, note below and the principle note, should be played in quick succession.
A Day To Remember
For Simon and Carol

Alyson Barber

Con Rubatto

Trad Irish flute

Con Rubatto

Piano

Fl.

Pno.

Fl.

Pno.

\*$\sim$ sim.
v. The original flute part for *Oíche Geal* before it was edited.

The following is the original solo flute part written for *Oíche Geal*, which formed a skeleton for the main body of the orchestral work. During the compositional process this part was edited, whereby various sections were completely omitted from the final piece. These bars have been marked with a box on the following score. In some cases, these ‘edits’ were extracted to deliberately create space in the solo flute part, giving the performer a rest and in other situations new material was inserted to expand the work where necessary. This has resulted in an extra bar towards the end of the work in the final version of the main orchestral piece.
Oíche Geal

*Original solo flute part.*

Alyson Barber

Duration circa… 15’ 30”
Notation and Intonation.

Everything in this box is now omitted from the final flute part.

(s.v.) = *senza vibrato.*

(m.v.) = *molto vibrato.*

(a.) = *air.*

(t.) = *tone.*

[Diagram]

= breathy tone; ½ air, ½ tone.

= sung note.

= normal key click.

= percussive tongue key click.

(a.)  (t.) = gradually move between air and tone.

= note *accel.*: gradually increase the speed of the notes.

= note *rall.*: gradually decrease the speed of the notes.

All accidentals last for the duration of the bar, unless cancelled by a natural sign.

Where possible the piece should be played with freedom.

All grace notes are to be played before the beat.

All trill notes are given.
Oíche Geal

Original flute melody, which is an elongated version of the jig A Day to Remember

Alyson Barber

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LIST OF COMPOSITIONS WRITTEN FOR THIS RESEARCH AND THEIR PERFORMANCES.

2011.

The jig *A Day to Remember*. First performed by Viiksi in Oulu, Finland 16 May 2013. Subsequently performed by Viiksi in Rovaniemi, Finland 17 and 18 May 2013 and at various traditional Irish music sessions. Recorded by the composer.

*A Day to Remember* (for flute and piano). First performed by Alyson Barber and Annie O’Hanlon at the Hudson Bay Hotel, 13 October 2011. Subsequently recorded by Alyson Barber and Ramin Haghjoo, January 2015.

2012.

*An Draíocht* (for flute and violin). First performed by Elaine Clarke and Madeleine Staunton at the Contemporary Music Centre, 11 February 2012. Subsequently performed at the Soundscape festival in Maccagno Italy, 2 July 2013.

*Grecian Swans* (for four spatial harps). First performed by the DIT harp ensemble at the Contemporary Music Centre New Music Marathon Day, DIT Rathmines, 9 March 2012.


*Oíche Geal* (for solo flute, and symphony orchestra). Workshopped by Joe O’Farrell and the DIT Symphony Orchestra, conducted by David Brophy, March 2013.

2013.

*The Long Wave* (for amateur string orchestra). First performed by ConTempo and the
Galway Adult Strings conducted by David Clarke, at St Marys College, Galway, 17 November 2013. Subsequently performed by the Galway Adult Strings at St Marys College, Galway, 23 May 2014.

*Fairy’s Jig*. Performed at various sessions, recorded by Sharon O’Leary.


*Cloughlea* (for bass clarinet). Recorded by Paul Roe, 4 March 2015.

2014.

*Illusions* (for flute, bass clarinet, two violins, viola and cello). First performed by Concorde (Madeleine Staunton and Paul Roe) and ConTempo (Bogdan Sofei, Ingrid Nicola, Andreea Banciu and Adrian Mantu) at the Aula Maxima NUIG, Galway, 8 February 2014. Subsequently performed by Concorde and ConTempo at the RHA gallery, Dublin, 30 March 2014.

*Veils* (for concert orchestra). Workshopped by the DIT Symphony Orchestra conducted by David Brophy, March 2014 and March 2015.

*Violyn* (for solo violin and tape). Recorded by Elaine Clarke, 7 May 2015.

*Súil Siar* (for visuals and tape).

*Distracting Lucy*. Performed at various sessions, recorded by the composer.

*Distractions* (for piano, violin and cello). Recorded by Elaine Clarke, Martin Johnson and Jane O’Leary, 7 May 2015.