Sigil I

Leafy
with love
banks and
the green
waters
of the canal

A Dyptych for
Harp, Vibraphone, and Double String Quartet
(On a Poem by Patrick Kavanagh)
Circa 7 mins.

Eoin Mulvany
2016
This work, for Harp, Vibraphone, and Double String Quartet, is loosely based on a transliteration of the opening lines of Patrick Kavanagh's 'Canal Bank Walk'. The music depicts the idea of temporal and spiritual bridges in the shape of the Samuel Beckett Bridge in Dublin, and a bridge-like Willow overhang on the Canal in Rathmines. It imagines both as being like the Aeolian harp; wind-blown and used as a means to communicate a hidden message: a bridge between this and the other world. The message communicated in this first movement contains the words of the subtitle: "Leafy with love banks and the green waters os the canal".

In movement two of this work, Sigil II, the transliteration of the phrase: "Pouring redemption for me that I... grow with nature as before I grew", forms the harmonic and melodic material for the music.

**Instrumentation:**

_Harp_
_Vibraphone_
_Two First Violins_
_Two Second Violins_
_Two Violas_
_Two Violoncelli_

**Staging:**

The String Players should divide into two Quartets, one on stage right, the other on stage left. The Harp and the Vibraphone should be placed towards the back in the centre between the two quartets. It is preferable that the quartets should mirror each other with violins to the fore, and that all should form an open semi-circle around the conductor. The score is arranged with the quartets seperated to aid the conducting of this piece.

**Programme:**

A sigil is a pagan device to allow a communication between the temporal world and the spirit world. It generally manifests as a pattern drawn in the air or on paper, which communicates a message, a spell, or a wish, using a set template array of letters and numbers.

For this piece, I used a 'magic number' square, often used to generate sigils, equating the numbers to letters, then translating into notes to achieve the chordal spellings for the phonemes of Canal Bank Walk, a poem by Patrick Kavanagh. These phonemes form the musical material with which to paint the sigil through sound into the air. Echoing effects throughout evoke the transmission of the resulting message into the spirit world, and also the light play on the Dublin canal of the poem.
Sigil I

\[ \text{Con Sord.} \quad \text{Alla punta di arco} \]

\[ \text{Con Sord.} \quad \text{Alla punta di arco} \quad \text{Slow wobble tone} \]

\[ \text{Con Sord.} \quad \text{Alla punta di arco} \quad \text{MST} \quad \text{Sul A} \]

\[ \text{Con Sord.} \quad \text{Alla punta di arco} \]

\[ \text{Con Sord.} \quad \text{Alla punta di arco} \quad \text{Di arco} \]

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\[ \text{Con Sord.} \quad \text{Alla punta di arco} \quad \text{Di arco} \]
Slow wobble tone
MST Sul A

f  G\textsuperscript{#}\textsuperscript{T} f

B

MSP CL. Sopra Pont.
and the green waters of the canal
And the green waters of the canal (Banks)