Lucy Mary McPhee

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Herstory: A study into the representation of women, explored through composition

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Volume II

Portfolio Commentary

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Abstract

Throughout European and Christian history, the act of representing female figures in a creative context has been largely undertaken by men. My exploration indicates that female figures are often underrepresented or misrepresented throughout history with popular views today still heavily influenced by a patriarchal society. This PhD aims to explore the representation of female figures, as well as female health and social issues from my perspective as a woman, through a portfolio of music compositions. I have presented two pieces exploring each figure, each piece offers a different perspective. Figures examined include Mary, the mother of Jesus; Mary Magdalene and Eve from the Bible; Kassiani, a Byzantine poet, composer and hymnographer; as well as Blodeuwedd, Arianrhod and Branwen from The Mabinogi (Welsh Folklore stories). One piece in each pair aims to explore the traditional presentation of these characters, which involves accepting male ideas. The other piece then takes on one of the two forms. The piece either reimagines the story from my own perspective and lived experiences as a woman, alternatively, I consider research done whilst writing the piece. In these cases, the research suggests that the initial representation is incorrect. More recent works in the portfolio explore topics that are taboo, such as maternal mental health and disability, chronic pain or illness. These topics are becoming more frequently discussed in the media, however, are still seldom discussed in general discourse. This PhD also examines my own compositional practice and its development, my use of ciphers and modes (amongst other technical issues), addressing how they have changed through this process. I explored how I use these devices to aid the programmatic elements of my music, as well as the development from instrumental programmatic music to instrumental music which includes text.

Contents

<u>List of Pieces</u>
Chronological order

Blodeuwedd   (for Violin 1, 2, Viola, Cello, Double Bass,
                                Clarinet in B flat, Bassoon and French Horn)

Point of View   (for Wind Orchestra)

Journeying   (for Wind Quintet)

Eve   (for mixed ability String Orchestra)

Adoration   (for solo Harp)

Breathe   (for solo Vibraphone)

Fallen into Sins   (for solo Female Voice, Bass Clarinet, viola
                                 Cello and Harp)

Agape   (for solo Violin)

Ternion   (for Full Orchestra)

One in Five   (for Violin and Flute/Alto Flute)

Branwen   (for Bass flute/flute, Bassoon and Piano)

The Magdalene   (for solo Viola)

Arianrhod's Castle   (for solo Guitar)

She's With Me   (for Alto Saxophone and Piano)

Legacy   (for solo Female Voice, Vibraphone, Harp,
                                Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola and Cello)

Invisible, to you   (for Violin, Robo-Recorder, Flute and French Horn)

Speak   (for Alto Flute, Viola and Cello

List of Examples

Chapter 1 Perspective and Representation

Example 1.1   Opening statement of *The Magdalene* (bars 1-5)

Example 1.2   Full statement of 'Strong' cipher (bar 40)

Example 1.3   Initial use of 'Independent' cipher (bars 14-16)

Example 1.4   Initial use of 'Relatable' cipher (bars 80-84)

Example 1.5   'Silence' cipher, *Speak*

Example 1.6   Statement of 'Silence' cipher (bars 8-12)

Example 1.7   Example of tutti rest before letter B (bars 41-46)

Example 1.8   Example of interjection (bars 13-14)

Example 1.9   Example of interjections (bars 16-18)

Chapter 2 Compositional Technique

Example 2.1   Berlin Rotations

Example 2.2   'Blodeuwedd' cipher

Example 2.3   '8891440.4203' cipher

Example 2.4   *Journeying* melody fragment (Clarinet bars 1-3)

Example 2.5   *Journeying* motif i (Clarinet bar 7)

Example 2.6   *Journeying* motif ii (Flute bar 15)

Example 2.7   'Caer Arianrhod' cipher

Example 2.8   Wave motif *Arianrhod's Castle* (bars 1-6)

Example 2.9   Wave motif variation 1, *Arianrhod's Castle* (bars 18-21)

Example 2.10   'Arianrhod' cipher, *She's with me*

Example 2.11   'Adoration' cipher, full statement in *Ternion* (bars 34-43)

Chapter 3 Programme Music and Storytelling

List of Figures

List of Tables

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Introduction

This PhD submission consists of a composition portfolio and accompanying commentary exploring the context of the works alongside the development of my compositional style and approach. It aims to explore the following research questions and aims:

- How have the female figures of the Bible and the Mabinogi been represented, historically and in modern society?

- Have any of these figures been misrepresented? If so, how?

- How can I give these figures a more realistic representation from a female perspective?

- How are women represented in society today and can I raise awareness of unfamiliar stories, characters, and social issues through my music?

My research indicates that female figures are often underrepresented or misrepresented. The understanding of these figures today is still heavily influenced by a patriarchal society. This can be seen in a range of media, including art, music, literature and film, which can be problematic.

Due to the representation of female figures being an integral part of this study it is important to lay out my feminist influences. I am writing from the perspective of a female, Roman Catholic, hearing impaired composer. It can feel contradictory in today's society to be a Catholic with feminist views, especially when your religion is anchored within the patriarchal beliefs. However, I agree with journalist Kristina Keneally that the reality of an 'all-male Catholic hierarchy completely failing to understand what it is like to be a woman…' is the 'precise reason the church needs input from feminist[s]'[1]. The Church, however, is

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[1] Kristina Keaneally, *I'm a Catholic Feminist, and my church needs me more than ever,* https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jan/29/im-a-catholic-feminist-and-my-church-needs-me-more-than-ever, accessed 12.12.2022

making some effort to 'reflect more deeply upon the dignity of women'.[2] Attemps have been

made to raise the profile of women, for example, on the 10th June 2016, Pope Francis elevated

Mary Magdalene's memorial day and made it a feast day. However, most would say this is

still not enough when women cannot hold a position of power within the Church or the

Vatican. I understand that some of the religious figures I explore in this thesis are seen

differently depending on your religion or background. For example, Mary, the mother of

Jesus, and Eve are viewed differently in Catholisism compared to the beliefs of Judaism and

Islam. My music and beliefs are based on my background, upbringing, and my research into

these areas.

Feminist musicology has become increasingly important in recent history. Since 1970,

musicologists such as Marcia Citron, Susan McClary, Suzanne Cusick and Marianne Kielian-

Gilbert have paved the way for the acknowledgement of women's participation within the

music industry. Their work has led to a number of anthologies featuring known female

composers, as well as music being uncovered by unknown female composers.[3] Before this,

'even a cursory glance at these musical activities reveals that works by women are absent

from the canon'.[4] A woman's role 'lay instead in her role as helpmate, or muse, to successful

male composers'.[5] This attitude can be seen in all artforms and '…there was a lack of access

to artistic education [which] had historically prevented women…from becoming "great"

artists'.[6]

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[2] Elise Harris, *Mary Magdalene – 'Apostle to the Apostles'- gets upgraded feast day*
https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/34020/mary-magdalene--apostle-to-the-apostles--gets-upgraded-feast-day, 2016, accessed 12.12.2022.
[3] Kimberly Reitsma, A New Approach: The Feminist Musicology Studies of Susan McClary and Marcia J. Citron (Ohio: Cedarville University, 2014)
[4] Marcia J. Citron, 'Gender, professionalism and the Musical Canon', *The Journal of Musicology* (California:University of California Press, 1990) p.102
[5] Marcia J. Citron, 'Gender, professionalism and the Musical Canon', *The Journal of Musicology* (California:University of California Press, 1990) p.111
[6] Paris Spies-Gans, 'Why Do We Think There Have Been No Great Women Artists? Revisiting Linda Nochlin and the Archive' *The Art Bulletin,* (New York:Routledge), 2022, p.70.

In general, I have found that my views align with twenty-first century feminist literature such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *We Should All Be Feminists*[7] and *Dear Ijeawele, or a Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen suggestions*[8], Rupi Kaur's poetry as found in The *Sun and her Flowers*[9], *milk and honey*[10] and *homebody*[11], Deborah Frances-White *The Guilty Feminist*[12], *Bad Feminist Essays*[13] by Roxanne Gay, *Everyday Sexism* by Laura Bates[14] and *Invisible Women*[15] by Caroline Criado Perez. These books have in various ways, shaped my thinking about being a woman and a feminist (or 'bad' feminist) today. Before undertaking my PhD, I struggled to call myself a feminist, holding stereotypical beliefs that to be a feminist you had to be actively protesting, you must be consistently body confident, cannot wear pink or want to take your husband's surname, to name a few. The word 'feminism' itself was intimidating to me. However, the books listed above are some examples of modern literature breaking down what feminism is in a modern world, reassuring women today that you can be a feminist whilst also having preferences, likes or interests that don't conform with traditional feminist views. The authors suggest that activism within your immediate circle is as important as on a global scale. Kaur's simple and visually appealing poems draw attention to a number of topics or issues that affect women today. I appreciate her attempts at raising awareness of such issues and wish to do the same with my work. *Invisible Women* by Caroline Criado Perez is another key text that opened my eyes to the gender data gap that occurs in many different areas of society. One could argue that this stems from a lack of

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[7] Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *We Should All Be Feminists,* (London: Fourth Estate, 2014).
[8] Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Dear Ijeawele, or a Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions,* (London: Fourth Estate, 2018).
[9] Rupi Kaur, *The Sun and her Flowers,* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2017).
[10] Rupi Kaur, *milk and honey,* (Kansas: Andrew McMell Publishing, 2015).
[11] Rupi Kaur, *homebody,* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2020).
[12] Deborah Frances.- White, *The Guilty Feminist* (London: Virago Press, 2020).
[13] Roxanne Gay, *Bad Feminist Essays,* (New York: Harper Collins Publisher, 2014).
[14] Laura Bates, *Everyday Sexism,* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2014).
[15] Caroline Criado Perez, *Invisible Women, exposing data bias in a world designed for men,* (London: Penguin Random house, 2019).

female scientists to first acknowledge the disparity. However, if women are not aware of this, how can we ever bridge this gap?

Two texts that were useful to see how literature has changed depending on the wave of feminism occurring are Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*[16] and Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch*.[17] Although I feel these texts are not as easily accessible and less immediately relatable to me as a woman today, they can be considered to be foundational texts in the history of feminist literature. Beauvoir's discussion about Eve's representation was particularly interesting, and feeds into the discussion on her character in Chapter One. *The Female Eunuch* appealed less to me, with its 'feisty tone'.[18] However, it is valuable to consider Greer's view of male representation and objectification of women, especially, when this is in relation to the belief of how the patriarchal system can and has manifested itself into how women see and value themselves.

There are a number of female composers who have inspired me and influenced my work over the years, some of whom will be explored in further detail throughout this thesis. One of the pieces that initiated thoughts about my PhD is Grace Williams' *Ave Stella Maris*[19] (Hail Star of the Sea). It made me think about Mary, Jesus' mother and her various presentations and role within Catholicism. In addition to this, it also spurred thoughts of how composers' approach this in their music. Although *Ave Stella Maris* and the topic of Mary as Star of the Sea did not continue to become a strong focus of my research, it began to inform my thoughts around Mary, the mother of Jesus, and later expand to the other female figures I have explored.

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[16] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (London: Vintage Books, 2011), First published *Le Duexième sexe*, 1949

[17] Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch*, (London: Fourth Estate, 2012).

[18] Jone Johnson Lewis, *Germaine Greer Quotes*, https://www.thoughtco.com/germaine-greer-quotes-3530088, [accessed 15.06.2022].

[19] Grace Williams, *Ave Maris Stella (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).

My instrumental music is often influenced by the music I have performed and have an infinity to, examples include *Light of Sothis*[20] and *Laguna Madre*[21] by Amy Quate, both directly influenced my piece *She's with me* (explored in Chapter 2). Vocal writing is becoming increasingly important to me as a composer and female composers have been the main influences of my vocal writing. Some key pieces here are *Cruel Mother*[22], by Sarah Dacey, *4.05*[23] by Emily Hall and *My Guardian Angel*[24], by Judith Weir. Other female composers who have greatly influenced my work include but are not limited to Errolyn Wallen (*The Paradis Flies*[25] is the work I have seen that takes accessibility into account) Sarah Lianne Lewis (*Sunflowers in Autumn*[26]), Lynne Plowman, Sally Beamish, Yfat Soul Zizzo, Carol Jones and Amy Clarkson. Some of these composers and works will be linked to my work throughout this thesis.

In this thesis, the biblical figures examined include: Mary, the mother of Jesus; Mary Magdalene and Eve. The figures from The Mabinogi (Welsh Folklore stories) include Blodeuwedd, Arianrhod and Branwen. An additional figure that I have examined through her connection to Mary Magdalene is Kassiani, the Byzantine poet, composer and hymnographer (810-865AD). My primary source for the religious aspects of this study is the Bible[27] and for the Mabinogi my primary source is the translation of the full text by Sioned Davies.[28] In works where I explore figures from the Bible or the Mabinogi, I have written pairs of pieces to show two different representations of the figure. The first piece of each pair aims to explore the traditional presentation of these figures, which often involves accepting the

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[20] Amy Quate, *Light of Sothis,* (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1982).
[21] Amy Quate, *Laguna Madre,* (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1988).
[22] Sarah Dacey, *Cruel Mother,* (York: University of York Music Press, 2008).
[23] Emily Hall, *4.05,* (printed by composer).
[24] Judith Weir, *My Guardian Angel,* (London: Chester Music, 2002).
[25] Errolyn Wallen, *The Paradis Flies,* Jenny Sealey, *RWCMD : Cardiff, 05.05.2022.*
[26] Sarah Lianne Lewis, *Sunflowers in Autumn,* (printed by composer).
[27] The Holy Bible, *The New Jerusalem Bible : Study Edition,* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2019).
[28] Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion, A New Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

implied male view of these figures. The second piece then takes on one of two forms, either reimagining the story from my own perspective and lived experiences as a woman, or, reflecting on my research, that suggests the traditional representation is incorrect. After writing these six pairs of pieces on the above figures, I began to explore female social issues, which are, in my opinion, still considered taboo topics. This shift happened organically, resulting in a desire to raise awareness of important female social issues and how they are presented in today's society. This section includes a piece on maternal mental health and a piece on disability and chronic pain or illness. Although these social topics are becoming more discussed on the news and social media[29], they are still considered taboo in day-to-day discourse, these issues are not necessarily considered exclusively female issues. It is important to me to raise awareness of the interesting, strong women portrayed in the little-known stories of the Mabinogi, alongside the women of the Bible whom Western society claims to know well. However, it is now even more important to me to raise awareness and highlight the importance of women's issues, as well as the lack of funding and research.

In Chapter One I investigate the perspectives and representations of the figures listed above. I explore each figure and how they are traditionally represented, explaining how I have attempted to portray an alternative representation. This chapter explores Mary Magdalene's representation in my works *Agape* and *The Magdalene*. This example was particularly pertinent as the research I conducted on Mary Magdalene fundamentally changed my opinion of her character, moving away from the traditional depiction. Kassiani is examined partially through her own representation of Mary Magdalene in her hymn

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[29] Rachel Schraer, *Mental health: More help for new and expectant mothers in England,* https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-56639858, [accessed 14.07.2022]; Gem O'Reilly, *What's it like living with an invisible disability?* https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-london-61903090, [accessed 14.07.2022]; Megan Morgan, *Endometriosis: 'There's a fire inside my uterus'*, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-60738948, [accessed 14.07.2022]

Kassiani's hymn.[30] *Fallen into Sins* explores the lyrics to her hymn and *Speak* considers one

of her epigrams or moral sayings. The commentary then considers the female figures in the

Mabinogi. Blodeuwedd is explored through *Blodeuwedd* and *Point of View*, Arianrhod is

explored through *Arianrhod's Castle* and *She's with me*, while Branwen is explored through

an eponymous two-movement piece.

Chapter Two explains my compositional technique and how I have developed my

approaches through the course of this PhD. This includes providing context to and breaking

down my use of ciphers and how I utilise them in different ways in relation to *Ternion*, *The

Magdalene* and *Breathe*. This section touches on two pre-doctoral pieces prior to

commencing my doctoral study to further explore how I arrived at the processes I employ

today. This chapter also examines the shift from a more chromatic sound world to a modal

one, this process is seen in *Journeying*, which was written as a modal exploration and

harmonisation study, rather than based on a character or story. Finally, this chapter also

explores how I approach harmony, rhythm, and structure in my compositions.

Chapter Three explores the concept of programme music and story-telling through music,

an essential part of my PhD and compositional practice. It begins by exploring semantics and

how this can be problematic within programme music, as well as how I endeavour to

overcome some of these issues. This chapter goes on to explore how I attempt to portray

stories in my music, initially, through my use of ciphers, melody and structure then later,

alongside text. It explores my work both with and without text and details the progression

from one to the other during the course of this PhD. It discusses *Blodeuwedd*, *Point of View*,

Ternion and *The Magdalene* in relation to programmatic music and how I aim to take

elements of the story to create the foundations of the musical material. It then goes on to

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[30] Kassiani, *The Hymn of Kassiane*, St. Symeon Orthodox Church Choir, (2010),
https://open.spotify.com/album/6rf87LO9ERacK5fu07gcnB [accessed 12.12.2019].

explore *Arianrhod's Castle* and *She's with me*, *One in Five*, *Invisible, to you* and *Legacy* to explore a few ways in which I have used text to aid my narrative and to give my music explicit meaning.

Chapter 1
Perspective and Representation

> 'Representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men; they describe it from their own point of view, which they confuse with the absolute truth.'[31]
> Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*

Over the course of my PhD, I have been exploring the representation of several female figures. This has included Eve, Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Mary Magdalene in the Bible[32] and Blodeuwedd, Arianrhod and Branwen from *The Mabinogion*.[33] I have attempted to show different representations of the figures in my project by creating pairs of pieces [see Table 1.1], with each pair focusing on a different individual. My first musical response in each pair is inspired by either her story and figure as found in the original source, artwork, literature, or poetry; and the second piece of each pair focuses on an alternative perspective.

Character / Person / Issue	Date of Composition	Name of Piece One	Name of Piece Two	Date of Composition
Blodeuwedd	November 2018	*Blodeuwedd*	*Point of View*	August 2019
N/A	October 2019	*Journeying*		
Eve	December 2019	*Eve*	*Breathe*	January 2020
Mary, Mother of Jesus	January 2020	*Adoration*	*Ternion*	June 2020
Kassiani	Feb 2020	*Fallen into Sins*	*Speak*	May 2022
Mary Magdalene	May 2020	*Agape*	*The Magdalene*	April 2021
Branwen	March 2021	*Branwen (Movement 1)*	*Branwen (Movement 2)*	
Arianrhod	September 2021	*Arianrhod's Castle*	*She's with me*	November 2021
Social Issues	September 2020	*One in 5*	*Invisible, to you*	February 2022
Social Issues	January 2022	*Legacy*		

Table 1.1. List of works, date of composition and character or issue involved

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[31] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (London: Vintage Books, 2011), p.166. First published *Le Duexième sexe*, 1949.

[32] The Holy Bible, *Revised New Jerusalem Bible, Study Edition*, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 2019).

[33] Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion, A new translation by Sioned Davies*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

In terms of the biblical figures, each initial piece explores the historical, biblical, or popular portrayal of these women. This implies accepting traditional portrayals of these women, which are implicitly male representations. I then researched and formed my own opinion on the characters or topics, this research then formed the basis of the second pieces which aim to counter the patriarchal representation.

In the case of figures in *The Mabinogion*, the first piece (or movement in *Branwen*) focuses on telling the traditional story of the figure programmatically. The second is rooted in my lived experiences as a woman and my responses to the figure and her original portrayal in *The Mabinogion*, or other secondary sources and seek a more female-oriented perspective. In the second of each pair, I particularly aim to give these women a voice and agency through my music. Some are featured more than others in music, art and literature; however, I believe their stories deserve to be foregrounded and discussed.

Most mainstream portrayals of these women reflect the opinions of male thinkers and creators, meaning the representation tends to follow the beliefs of the patriarchal system, whether this be the beliefs of the 'classic patriarchy of the Roman Catholic church'[34] or alternatively, the social concept of the patriarchal society 'ruled or controlled by men'.[35]

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[34] Helen Rose Ebaugh, *Gender and Society, Patriarchal bargain and latent avenues of Social Mobility; Nuns in the Roman Catholic Church* (California: Sage Publications, September 1993), p. 401.
[35] Cambridge dictionary, *Meaning of patriarchal in English*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/patriarchal> [accessed 12.04.2022].

Mary Magdalene

Mary Magdalene was a disciple of Jesus, and in the Gospels her name is mentioned ten times at four incidents across the four Gospels. She is the second most mentioned woman therein. Two additional occasions see unnamed women who are historically identified as Mary Magdalene, however there is no evidence to support this. Luke's Gospel implies that one of these women was healed by Jesus, suggesting she was a sinner.[36] The 'spirits and infinites' that afflicted people in Jesus' time – which we would recognise as mental illnesses or neurological disorders today - were attributed to demonic possession.[37]

Mary Magdalene is the perfect example of a character being misconstrued throughout history. The main misconceptions are that she was a sinner, a prostitute, or the wife of Jesus. The earliest evidence of the idea that she was a sinner and prostitute has been traced to Pope Gregory the Great, in his Easter sermon of the 6th Century[38] (likely 591)[39]. Early leaders of the church were uncomfortable that Jesus empowered women, and one response was to brand Mary a prostitute.[40] The Second Vatican Council denounced the misinterpretation in 1969 when Biblical evidence was reviewed.[41] The next paragraphs explore the three misrepresentations of her character.

Artists have typically represented Mary in three ways to present her as a sinner or prostitute: at the foot of the cross, penitent (e.g. Van Der Weyden and Caravaggio, see appendix 1 and 2) or in ecstasy (e.g. Caravaggio, see appendix 3). Each representation has

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[36] The Holy Bible, *Revised New Jerusalem Bible, Study Edition*, Luke 8: 1-3, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 2019), p. 1961.

[37] T. J Wray, *Good Girls, Bad girls of the New Testament: Their Enduring Lessons* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016) p79.

[38] Gregory the Great, *Forty Gospel Homilies, homily 33*, trans. Dom David Hurst (Georgia: Georgia Press, 2009).

[39] Christopher L.C.E Witcombe, *Investigating Mary Magdalene*, http://arthistoryresources.net/investigating-mary-magdalen/mm-gregory-homily-33.html, [accessed 03.08.2022].

[40] Sarah Pruitt, *How early Church leaders downplayed Mary Magdalene's Influence* <https://www.history.com/news/mary-magdalene-jesus-wife-prostitute-saint> [accessed 01.11.2020].

[41] Alon Bernstein and Isaac Scharf, *Mary Magdalene's image gets new look from Church for Modern age*, https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2018/03/30/mary-magdalenes-image-gets-new-look-from-church-for-modern-age [accessed 01.11.2020].

consistent features. At the foot of the cross, symbolically, she is invariably depicted as a prostitute. Portrayals of a repentant sinner feature dark colours and Mary praying for forgiveness. Portrayals of Mary in ecstasy depict the last thirty years of her life, destitute, repenting in a cave in Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, in Provence (e.g Giotto see appendix 4).

Mary Magdalene's depiction in *Jesus Christ Superstar*[42] has continued to present her as a prostitute since its premiere in 1971. The staging and libretto heavily sexualise her character and the lyrics of her solo 'I don't know how to love him'[43] support her portrayal as a prostitute. Lyracist Tim Rice confirmed he was not aiming to deliver 'a deep underlying message.'[44] He wished to portray a woman who was in awe of the man she desired, without knowing why; she did not consider Jesus to be supernatural.[45] Yet, in an interview with Jo Lampert, who played Mary in the 2018 Lyric Opera of Chicago production, stated: '…this is "I've dealt with brothers, fathers, suitors, but this person makes me want to be something different."'[46] During Mary's lifetime women were generally oppressed due to the restrictions of the Torah, however the 'lives of women in the first-century Greco-Roman world varied wildly depending on their economic and social status.'[47] Although I agree with Lampert's interpretation, it does not seem to me to be the obvious interpretation in *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

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[42] Andrew Lloyd Webber, The Shows Must Go On, *Jesus Christ Superstar, The Shows Must Go On!*,[Youtube], (02.04.2020), https://www.timeout.com/news/jesus-christ-superstar-tim-minchin-on-why-you-should-stream-the-show-this-weekend-040920, [accessed 02.04.2020].

[43] Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, *I don't know how to love him*, (New York: Universal Publishing Group, Warner Chappell Music, Inc.1970).

[44] Tim Rice, 'Honestly not sure what my point of view was…', [Twitter post], (@SirTimRice, 19.02.2021).

[45] IBID.

[46] Olivia Sava, *Jo Lampert on modernising Mary Magdalene in Jesus Christ Superstar* <https://www.todaytix.com/insider/chicago/posts/jo-lampert-on-modernizing-mary-magdalene-in-jesus-christ-superstar> [accessed 18/02/2021].

[47] Barbara Reid, *The Jerome Biblical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022), p. 2005.

The Da Vinci Code[48] presents Jesus and Mary as being married and having children together. This storyline derives from the 1955 novel *The Last Temptation of Christ*.[49] Artwork has also alluded to her pregnancy (e.g. Van Der Weyden and Caravaggio, see appendix 1 and 2 respectively). Such interpretations either imply that Mary was carrying Jesus' child or, more allegorically she was carrying the word of God.[50] Secondly, it implies that Jesus gave Mary instructions to continue His ministry after His death. Most of Brown's research is drawn from the 1982 bestseller *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*,[51] which is now seen as an unreliable source that confuses fact and fiction.[52]

Agape for solo violin was written before undertaking any extensive research on Mary's character. This meant my opinion was purely based on what I knew through my faith and knowledge. Agape (agapē) is the highest form of love in Ancient Greek philosophy. The piece focuses on her relationship with Jesus and her love for him. From my faith, I knew she was one of the first people Jesus appeared to after His death. *Agape* is written from Mary Magdalene's perspective and reflects that even if she did love Jesus in a romantic sense, she knew it would remain unrequited. I wanted *Agape* to be a love song exploring the longing of being close to Jesus, whether in a romantic sense, or a spiritual sense. I used the word 'relatable' to create the material for the cipher (ciphers are explained and explored further in Chapter 2) to imply that Mary Magdalene is arguably a more approachable character for modern women than Mary, mother of Jesus. Mary, the mother of Jesus is the ideal to which many Christian women aspire, despite this being an essentially unachievable goal.

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[48] Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code*, (London: Transworld Publishers, Corgi Books, 2004).
[49] Nikos Kazantazakis, *The Last Temptation of Christ,* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998).
[50] Waldemar Januszczak, *Mary Magdalene: Art's Scarlet Woman*, BBC4, <https://learningonscreen.ac.uk/ondemand/index.php/prog/0EAE127E?bcast=123882808> aired 16th March 2020.
[51] Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* (New York: Dell, 2004).
[52] Bart D. Ehrman, *Truth and Fiction in The Da Vinci Code* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

The Magdalene for solo viola is the partner piece to *Agape*. The concept originates from an ongoing excavation in Magdala.[53] As it does today, when a location is attributed to a woman's name in the Bible, it indicates she is wealthy or of higher social status, in the ancient world this equals power. This offers an alternative viewpoint that Mary was perhaps an older and influential character who served as Jesus' confidant and friend.[54] Some artists have depicted her as an older woman, such as dell'Arca (1463) [see appendix 5] and Donatello [see appendix 6].

I used three ciphers to create melodic material: 'strong', independent' and 'relatable' (incorporating the cipher from *Agape)*. These choices were directly influenced by my research and portrays elements of her personality. My perspective began changing due to the supposition that Mary Magdalene was likely an independent, older woman who could afford to decide to travel and support Jesus in His ministry. Nevertheless, I retained the 'relatable' cipher as this aspect remained a constant for me.

The Magdalene is also written from Mary's perspective. The initial performance direction on the score is 'Strong, but not aggressive'. I reflected on what strength is to me, and when placing myself in Mary's position, what strength may have been to her. In my opinion, this strength was manifested in her being assertive, but quietly confident, undeterred by the patriarchal world in which she lived. The first two bars aim to evoke this concept, before a dimuendo (to *sul pont*) [Example 1.1] which aims to evoke the ways in which women's voices were (and still are) silenced. This phrase is developed and becomes less hesitant in each repetition until its full statement in bar 40-41 [Example 1.2]. The material at letter A represents the 'independent' cipher, portraying Mary's decision to follow and support Jesus [Example 1.3].

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[53] Magdala Centre, *About Magdala, The Story,* https://www.magdala.org/about-magdala-2/ [accessed 26.07.2022].

[54] T. J Wray, *Good Girls, Bad girls,* p. 81-90.

Example 1.1. Opening statement *of The Magdalene* (bars 1-5)
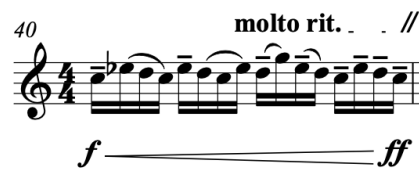
Example 1.2. Full statement of 'Strong' cipher (bar 40)

Example 1.3. Initial use of 'Independent' cipher (bars 14-16)

At letters C and D the material changes solely to the 'relatable' material [Example 1.4]. The material is warm and longing, as it was in *Agape*; however, I also wanted this to be a reflection on how far Mary has come emotionally. I now believe that it also acts as a reflection of my research on Mary Magdalene and echoes how far my understanding of her character has developed.
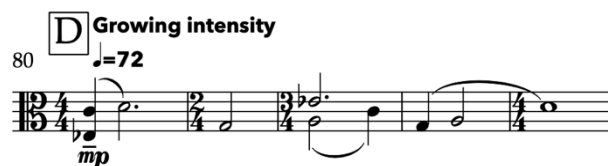
Example 1.4. Initial use of 'Relatable' cipher (bars 80-84)

In hindsight, I consider my initial opinion of Mary Magdalene with mixed feelings. Knowing now about her misrepresentation, I understand how skewed my view had been. I still believe that her love for Jesus was unconditional, however, I now believe she was the older, wealthy influential character. I see her as even more of a role model for young Catholic women than before. Some people find comfort in her portrayal as a repentant sinner, an abject figure begging forgiveness, but surely today she is more influential as the strong, independent character who followed what she believed was right. She has agency and the ability to actively engage and change situations.

Kassiani

Kassiani, also known as Kassia (810AD to 865 AD) was a Byzantine abbess, composer, poet, hymnographer and early feminist.[55] She is one of only two women writers of the Byzantine era whose names have survived the journey through history.[56] Kassiani was born into a wealthy family who were associated with the imperial court in Constantinople.[57] *Kassiani's hymn*, (*Kyrie hē en pollais)* is the only 'penitential hymn on Mary Magdalene'.[58] By the Ninth Century the representation of Mary Magdalene was firmly established in religious thinking and when *Kassiani's hymn* is performed (traditionally on the Tuesday of Holy Week within the Greek Orthodox Church) it demonstrates how the misconceptions have endured.

My work on Kassiani was initially influenced by the song *The Hymn of Kassiani*, by singer-songwriter Frank Turner.[59] His 2019 album *No Man's Land* explores the stories of

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[55] Frank Turner and Liz James, *The Hymn of Kassiani, Frank Turner's Tales from No Man's Land* [audio podcast], (London: Xtra Mile Recordings and Somethin' Else production), aired 7.08.2019.
[56] IBID.
[57] Diane Touliatos, *Kassia,* https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.abc.cardiff.ac.uk/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000040895, (Grove Music Online, 2001).
[58] IBID.
[59] Frank Turner, *Tales from No Man's Land* [audio podcast], aired 7.08.2019.

thirteen historical women who are little known or forgotten. His podcast series *Frank Turner's Tales from No Man's Land* includes a discussion of each figure with an expert on the topic.[60] He was criticized for 'mansplaining'[61] and it was suggested that the female 'voices are relentlessly overshadowed by his own.'[62] He responded stating that 'these are stories that have not and are not being told right now, and I think they deserve to be.'[63] With the exception of Turner, the album features exclusively female performers and production team. He identifies as an 'unwavering ally of all things feminist',[64] and believes that 'it is important for men to acknowledge how women have been subjugated and mistreated'.[65] It is interesting to consider whether a woman producing and releasing this album would have received a more positive reception. My criticism of the album is that five of the thirteen songs are written in the first person, including *The Hymn of Kassiani*. This creates an uncomfortable but conventional situation where Turner is ventriloquising women's stories, similar to some classical songs, lieder, and opera, where the same has happened for centuries. In my view, however, although Turner may not be able to relate to the lived experiences of the characters he is singing about, he can empathise with them.

In the fifth line of *Kassiani's hymn*, the pronouns change to 'I' or 'me' as Kassiani moves from describing Mary Magdalene to Kassiani ventriloquizing Mary's thoughts, or at least those traditionally attributed to her by the early Church. Kassiani's ventriloquizing is different to that of Turner's. I do not believe that Kassiani empathises with Mary Magdalene,

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[60] Frank Turner, *Tales from No Man's Land* [audio podcast], aired 7.08.2019.
[61] Roisin O'Connor, *Frank Turner Review, No Man's Land: More a case of Extreme mansplaining*, <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/reviews/frank-turner-review-no-mans-land-tracklist-tour-sister-rosetta-tour-a9047916.html>, [accessed 15.04.2022].
[62] Will Richards, *Frank Turner - No Man's land review*, <https://www.nme.com/reviews/frank-turner-no-mans-land-review-2536324>, [accessed 15.04.2022].
[63] Frank Turner, *Thoughts on No Man's Land*, <https://frank-turner.com/2019/07/14/thoughts-on-no-mans-land/> (frankturner.com, July 2019) [accessed 29.03.2022].
[64] Clair McAllister, *Album Review: Frank Turner - No Man's Land*, <https://www.xsnoize.com/album-review-frank-turner-no-mans-land/>, [accessed 15.04.2022].
[65] Mark Savage, *Mark Turner excavates history's forgotten women*, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-49253812>, [accessed 19.04.2022].

as Turner does with Kassiani. However, Kassiani's viewpoint was widely accepted at the time the text was written. In her hymn, I believe Kassiani's disapproving and condescending tone is influenced by Pope Gregory's Sermon.

Fallen into Sins and *Speak* are a pair of pieces written about Kassiani's work, rather than her character. The two pieces do not explore the same topic as I have done with other pairs. I chose *Kassiani's hymn* and wrote *Fallen into Sins* before my extensive research on Mary Magdalene, explored above. However, I now believe it is imperative to show how misinformation about Mary Magdalene's character has been presented through history, even by women like Kassiani. Kassiani's text supports the misconceptions about Mary Magdalene. However, *Kassiani's Hymn* clearly illustrates reasons why Mary Magdalene is still misunderstood. The fact that Kassiani's work is used today in the Greek Orthodox Church today is admirable, due her having survived through history. However, it heavily implies that the Orthodox Church's understanding of Mary Magdalene matches the misconceptions explored in the paragraphs above. On the other hand, *Speak* sets one of her epigrams or moral sayings and explores another of her most famous works.

Fallen into Sins focuses on a section of the text from *Kassiani's Hymn* about Mary Magdalene [Figure 1.1]. There are many translations of the text, I have used the 2010 St. Symeon Orthodox Church choir recording as my primary source.[66]

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[66] Kassiani, *The Hymn of Kassiane*, St. Symeon Orthodox Church Choir, (2010), https://open.spotify.com/album/6rf87LO9ERacK5fu07gcnB [accessed 12.12.2019].

The woman who had fallen into many sins, O Lord

Yet when she perceived thy divinity

She joined the ranks of myrrh-bearing women.

In tears she brought thee myrrh before thy burial

She cried. Woe is me!

For I live in the night of licentiousness,

Shrouded in the dark and moonless love of sin.

Figure 1.1. Text used in *Fallen into sins*

At letter A, bar 39, the musical direction states 'Expressively, storytelling'. The singer is telling Kassiani's version of Mary Magdalene's story and I wanted to focus on the shift in the personal pronouns from 'she' to 'I'. The text is sung throughout the piece, however the singer should speak the words 'For I live in the night of licentiousness' to draw attention to the line. The mood and expression changes here, directed to be performed 'hauntingly' until the end of the piece.

Speak focuses on one of Kassiani's epigrams or moral sayings: 'I hate silence, when it's time to speak.'[67] My research has led me to reject Kassiani's representation of Mary Magdalene, so I therefore wanted to explore other aspects of her work to avoid re-ventriloquising her words.

This epigram is part of a set, all starting with the words 'I hate…'[68] I chose this epigram as I believe it represents Kassiani's frustration at being an intelligent woman and not being taken seriously. Kassiani took part in the Bride Show to become the wife of Emperor

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[67] Kathleen Forrest, *Kassiani: The Enduring Works of a Trailblazing Female Composer*, https://www.allclassical.org/kassiani-the-eduring-works-of-a-trailblazing-female-compser/, [accessed 04.08.2022].
[68] Robert Ellsberg, *Blessed Among Us: Day by Day with Saintly Witnesses*, (Minnesota: Liturgical Press,2016) p.516.

Theophilos[69] and he is said to have rejected her because of her flippant reply. I imagine this epigram to be part of her response to that.

The epigram is spoken at the start of the piece and thus draws attention to Kassiani's work. Additionally, the epigram inspired me musically. The piece depicts the silence before speaking. The cipher is created from the world 'silence' [Example 1.5]. This is heard in full in the opening section (bars 1-12) [Example 1.6]. This section is repeated throughout the piece, in different transpositions and always represents silence.

Example 1.5. 'Silence' cipher, *Speak*

Example 1.6. Statement of 'silence' cipher (bars 8-12)

As seen in example 1.6, there are rests of varying lengths throughout the extract, this continues throughout the rest of the piece [Example 1.7]. This is a literal representation of the silence. In between the repeated sections shown in example 1.6, the rest of the piece consists of interjections that are developed [Example 1.8 and 1.9] whilst a melody is trying to break

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[69] Frank Turner and Liz James, *The Hymn of Kassiani, Frank Turner's Tales from No Man's Land* [audio podcast], (London: Xtra Mile Recordings and Somethin' Else production), aired 7.08.2019.

through the texture. This melody is seen in full at letters E-F. This melody represents

Kassiani, and her struggle to be heard, listened to, and understood.

Example 1.7. Example of tutti rest before letter B (bars 41-46)

Example 1.8. Example of Interjection (bars 13-14)

Example 1.9. Example of Interjections (bars 16-18)

Eve

Eve's Biblical 'story, along with other… images, [and] other ideas, shapes the Western ideology of women.'[70] In his book, *Eve, the history of an idea*, John A. Phillips argues that 'The history of the interpretation of Eve modern scholars hold, is largely a history of misunderstanding and malice…'[71] The result is that 'it is assumed that Eve was created with a greater capacity to sin than Adam.'[72] Consequently, as Lydia Figes observes, 'Eve's story has had a more profoundly negative impact on women than any other mythological or Biblical story.'[73]

Eve, like other Biblical characters, has a role in multiple religious and non-religious contexts, but, according to Catholic tradition: Eve was created from Adam's rib, as a companion or 'helper' for him. 'God did not spontaneously choose to create her for herself',[74] she was created for Adam's benefit. Additionally, in Catholic tradition she is known for succumbing to Satan's temptations and eating the fruit that brought the fall of mankind as well as being presented as the fallen women in a range of sources. The hierarchy of the Roman Catholic church attempted to change Eve's presentation, by calling Mary, the mother of God, the 'second Eve'.[75] Catholics accepted this suggestion due to the relationship between Mary and the concept that with her 'the world was beginning again.'[76]

Two more recent portrayals of Eve begin to counter the traditional views. *Good Omens*[77] portrays Eve (and Adam) as black characters. I believe this addresses the idea of the

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[70] John A. Phillips, *Eve, The History of an Idea,* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984) p. xi.
[71] IBID.
[72] John A. Phillips, *Eve, The History of an Idea*, p. 36.
[73] Lydia Figes, *From the Garden of Eden to 'Killing Eve': deconstructing the first woman in art*, https://artuk.org/discover/stories/from-the-garden-of-eden-to-killing-eve-deconstructing-the-first-woman-in-art, 2019 (Art UK, July 2019) [accessed 26.05.2022]
[74] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (London: Vintage Books, 2011), p. 165.
[75] Cardinal John Henry Newman, *Mary, The Second Eve*, (Gastonia: TAN books, 2009), Chapter 4; John A. Phillips, *Eve, The History of an Idea*, p.146.
[76] Denis Meehan, *The Furrow, The Second Eve,* (Leinster: The Furrow, 1954), p. 245.
[77] Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchet, *Good Omens* (Narrativia, Amazon Studios and BBC Studios, 2019) directed by Douglas Mackinnon.

mitochondrial Eve, the theory that all living females have descended from a single maternal ancestor who is likely to have lived in Africa.[78] Another recent portrayal of Eve in modern media can be seen in *Killing Eve*[79] (based on the novel series Villanelle[80]). Figes draws an interesting connection between *Killing Eve* and the Biblical Eve. She suggests that both protagonists, Villanelle and Eve Polastri 'embody two sides of the traditional portrayals of Eve, the 'wicked woman' and the 'disobedient woman'.[81] Throughout the series Polastri is increasingly tempted into sin by Villanelle, who you could argue also represents the fruit in the programme.

George Ezra has recently featured Eve in the lyrics of his new song *Green Green Grass*.[82] He subscribes to the biblical idea of Eve, however, the lyrics are somewhat contradictory in terms of how they represent her. He starts, 'We go together, Adam and Eve, but the girl is so much more than just another apple thief.' We can hope that he is leading on to a more contemporary representation of Eve. However, he continues '…Yeah she's a genius, watch and learn, how she sets the world on fire just to watch the sucker burn.' Ezra acknowledges that Eve is a 'genius', however, this is still associated with the end of the world and humanity. He continues the traditional representation of Eve, and therefore women, which in 2022 is alarming.

Eve is the first piece of this pair. It is based on the creation story in the Bible, Genesis (Chapter 3) and explores Eve's temptation by the Satan. The three main sections of the piece suggest the idea of life before the temptation, the temptation itself and finally the disorientation Adam and Eve experienced after The Fall. However, in my second piece,

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[78] Jane Gitschier, 'All about Mitochondrial Eve: An Interview with Rebecca Cann', *Plos Genetics*, Volume 6, Issue 5, (May 2010), p. 1, e1000959; Rebecca L. Cann, Mark Stoneking and Allan C. Wilson, 'Mitochondrial DNA and human evolution', *Nature*, Volume 325, (January 1987), pp. 31-36.

[79] Phoebe Waller-Bridge, Laura Neal, Suzanne Heathcote, *Killing Eve* (BBC, 2018-2022).

[80] Luke Jennings, *Codename Villanelle*, (London: Mulholland, 2018).

[81] Lydia Figes, *From the Garden of Eden to 'Killing Eve': deconstructing the first woman in art,* [accessed 26/05/2022].

[82] George Ezra, *Gold Rush Kid, Green Green Grass,* (London : Sony Music Entertainment UK, 2022).

Breathe, I wanted to present her in a different light, that doesn't accept the idea of The Fall,

'…but rather…a rise, a transition from infancy to adulthood.'[83] There is a focus on

knowledge being good, not evil; taking an alternative viewpoint which explores the idea that

Eve took control of her own destiny. *Breathe* is explored further in Chapter 2.

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[83] John A. Phillips, *Eve, The History of an Idea*, p.78.

Mary, the Mother of God

Mary, the mother of Jesus, has traditionally been presented in many ways, from the perfect virginal mother, the second Eve, to the Star of the Sea, to name but a few. One piece I have written for my PhD which is not included in the portfolio is *Ponder in your heart*. This examines the important moments in Jesus' life, but from Mary's perspective as his mother. *Ponder in your heart*, was inspired by Sarah Dacey's *Cruel Mother*. *Ponder in your heart* was the first vocal piece I wrote and has greatly influenced my vocal writing to date. I enjoyed the lower alto range in *Cruel Mother* and wanted to try this in my own music. In addition to this I was inspired by Dacey's use of vocal sounds in addition to the chosen text. However, in my portfolio, my focus is on her presentation within the adoration scene, which traditionally portrays the Magi visiting Jesus. This can be seen in numerous Renaissance paintings, two examples of which are Monaco and Rosselli's *Adoration of the Magi* [appendix 7 and 8]. In these examples, the viewers' attention is drawn to the Magi and Jesus. My work explores Da Vinci's portrayal of the adoration scene [Figure 1.2].

Figure 1.2. Leonardo da Vinci, *Adoration of the Magi*

I believe Mary is at the focal point of this work. Da Vinci wanted to explore an 'Adoration scene' rather than the defined narrative of the 'King's arrival'.[84] This was unlike others before him. The only painting similar to da Vinci's is Lippi's painting [appendix 9]. He takes on the same pyramidal composition as da Vinci. This is explored in further detail in chapters 2 and 3, in relation to *Ternion*.

Unlike other pairs of pieces in the portfolio which present uninformed and informed representations of a figure in turn, my response to Mary aims to portray two different perspectives on the painting.

Adoration explores how I imagine Mary's thoughts and feelings in the situation depicted in the painting. The cipher and material derived and developed represents Mary, this is heard as a recurring A section throughout the piece. The other sections aim to depict her thoughts and feelings about her situation and what is happening, ranging from calm and composed to anxiety.

On the other hand, *Ternion* aims to explore the painting from the perspective of someone viewing it in a gallery. It begins with the viewer observing Mary at the focal point, before going to explore the events of the mid and background. The viewer's gaze then returns to Mary at the focal point at the conclusion of the piece. Da Vinci purposefully uses pyramidal composition in order to draw attention to Mary, placing her at the focal point of the pyramid. Both pieces will be explored in further analytical detail in Chapters 2 and 3.

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[84] Martin Kemp, *Leonardo by Leonardo* (New York: Callaway, 2019) p. 44.

The Mabinogi

The Mabinogion is a collection of Welsh folklore stories collated in two manuscripts

dating from the fourteenth century: the White Book of Rhydderch (1300-1325) and the Red

Book of Hergest (1375-1425).[85] The title translates as 'Story of Youth'[86] and the stories have

been passed down orally. There are eleven tales[87] but I have focused on the four main

branches (or parts), the stories of 'Pwyll', 'Branwen', 'Manawydan' and 'Math'. They are

more than just tales of magic and suspense and the difficulties the protagonists' experiences

are of direct relevance to their historical audiences. They present ethical dilemmas

concerning moral, political and legal issues, similarly to pagan morality plays. Historians

now believe the four branches are a guide that conveyed appropriate moral behaviour that

was 'essential for a society to survive'[88] and gives an insight into ancient Welsh society.[89] In

some respects, however, the stories of the Mabinogi contradict historical truths. There is a

great sense of irony where the female characters drive the stories, however, generally they

have little agency or voice. In reality, women were tied to fourteenth-century Celtic societal

traditions, making them commodities in a man's market: 'a woman's worth was valued at

half her brother's […] when she married, her worth dropped to a third of her husbands.'[90]

My approach to portraying the female figures of *The Mabinogion* has been different

to my approach to portraying Biblical figures. In these instances, my interpretations

demonstrate how I imagine the stories to transpire whilst imagining myself as the character

involved. This is in addition to being inspired by several secondary sources, hence allowing

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[85] Sandra M. Dunkin, edited by Robert Crowcroft and John Canon, *The Oxford Companion to British History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
[86] Sioned Davies, *The Essay, An introduction to the Mabinogion,* (BBC Radio 3 22:45pm 14/11/2016) [accessed 13/01/2022].
[87] IBID.
[88] IBID.
[89] Patrick Ford, *The Mabinogion,*<https://www.encyclopedia.com/arts/culture-magazines/mabinogion> [accessed 14/04/2022].
[90] Roberta L. Valente, *Crossing the Borders of Gender in Math* (London: Routledge, 1996) p. 334.

for a centring of real, female experience in the stories, rather than the imagined lives of muted figures. I believe the female figures of *The Mabinogion* are fascinating and I hope to introduce them to a wider audience.

Blodeuwedd

Blodeuwedd (flower face) is one of the female characters in the fourth branch of *The Mabinogion*, of all the women in the stories she is arguably the 'freest woman'.[91] Although Arianrhod (the second female figure in the fourth branch) enjoys some freedoms, her life and actions are very much controlled or manipulated by Gwydion and Llew (her brother and son). Blodeuwedd however, is the opposite. She is created by Gwydion solely as a wife for Lleu Llaw. She is created entirely without agency, and yet is able to construct her own future and leave him.

There are three contemporary classical works written on the subject of Blodeuwedd but they do not all portray her story in *The Mabinogion*. They are *Blodeuwedd* by Martin Iddon[92], *Blodeuwedd* by Guto Puw[93] and *Floraison* by John McCabe.[94] In the programme note included in the score, Iddon writes that his 'cycle does not seek to tell the Blodeuwedd story programmatically, but rather reflects upon the themes which surround it.'[95] Puw's piece focuses on similar themes and although the poem he sets by Nesta Wyn Jones mentions Gwydion, the magician, by name, Blodeuwedd herself is not named.[96] In his programme note, McCabe states that *Floraison* ('flowering or blossoming') depicts the flower maiden and love goddess Blodeuwedd. McCabe states that the inspiration for the piece 'was that of a flower

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[91] Ceridwen Lloyd- Morgan, *Gender and violence,* (Tubingen: Max Niemeyer Publishing house, 2001), p. 72.
[92] Martin Iddon, *Blodeuwedd: Song Cycle for Baritone and Piano* (Oxford: Composer's Edition, 2018).
[93] Guto Puw, *Blodeuwedd* [email to Guto Puw 11.03.2020].
[94] John McCabe, *Floraison* (London: Novello and Co, 1975).
[95] Martin Iddon, *Blodeuwedd: Song Cycle for Baritone and Piano*.
[96] Guto Puw, *Blodeuwedd,* [email to Guto Puw 11.03.2020]

gradually opening and closing'.[97] In their works, all three men disregard the experiences of Blodeuwedd as a women and choose to focus on other elements of the story.

My pieces *Blodeuwedd* and *Point of View* are based on her story contained within the fourth branch, titled 'Math'. I have summarised her story below:

Gwynedd is ruled by King Math fab Mathonwy, whose feet must always be held by a virgin, except for when he is at war. Math's nephew, Gilfaethwy is infatuated with Goewin, the current royal maiden foot holder. He works with his brother, Gwydion, to start a war with Dyfed to enable him to become closer to Goewin. When Math is at war, both Gilfaethwy and Gwydion rape her. Gwydion proposes Arianrhod, his sister, to be the new foot holder. Math magically tests her virginity and she immediately gives birth to a son. Arianrhod is ashamed so therefore rejects the boy, who Gwydion incubates in the chest at the bottom of his bed. Arianrhod places a curse on him that he cannot be given a name, bear arms or have a human wife. Gwydion tricks her into naming him Lleu Llaw Gyffes and arming him. To counteract the third curse, the magicians create a woman for him from flowers, Blodeuwedd. Blodeuwedd has an affair with Lleu's friend, Gronw, and the two lovers conspire to murder Lleu. Struck by the spear thrown by Gronw, Lleu transforms into an eagle and flies away. He is tracked and turned back into his human form by the magicians. Gwydion turns the fleeing Blodeuwedd into an owl.[98]

Blodeuwedd, the first of two pieces, closely follows her story in the *Mabinogion*. It has four movements: Earth, recounting her creation; Life, depicting her life and falling in

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[97] John McCabe, *The Goddess Trilogy (1975)* https://www.wisemusicclassical.com/work/12460/The-Goddess-Trilogy--John-McCabe/ (Wise Music Classical, John McCabe, 1991).

[98] Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion, A New Translation* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

love with Gronw; Death, evoking her part in Lleu's death; and Flight, depicting Blodeuwedd being transformed into an owl. It features two ciphers, 'Blodeuwedd' in the first two movements and '8891440.4203' in the second two movements. I will further explore the choice and use of the ciphers in Chapter 2.

The second piece, *Point of View,* is based on my interpretation of the story, inspired by Barbara Donley's *Arianrhod: A Welsh Myth Retold.*[99] Although the piece is through-composed, there are seven main sections to tell the story from Blodeuwedd's point of view: Coming into consciousness/dreaming, Life, Falling in love with Gronw, Killing Llew Llaw, Being with Gronw, Blodeuwedd and Gronw being forced apart, and Reunited. The two works are created from the same cipher material, with some of the material from *Blodeuwedd* being directly quoted in *Point of View*. This is explored further in Chapter 3.

Blodeuwedd is a strong character, she is 'inventive and determined'[100] and knew that she wanted to be with Gronw. However, this meant going against her pre-ordained duty of being married to Lleu Llaw. The story follows the historical tradition of 'punish[ing] any women who transgresses the rules of that order.'[101] Nevertheless, Blodeuwedd made her decision and carried out her plan.

Blodeuwedd is akin to Eve: she is created specifically for Lleu Llaw, as Eve was for Adam. Moreover, both women use their agency: in Blodeuwedd's case this leads to her affair and ultimately her death and in Eve's case she is blamed by Christian Doctrine for the fall of mankind.

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[99] Barbara Donley, *Arianrhod, A Welsh Myth Retold,* (Oakland: Stone Circle Press, 1987).
[100] Ceridwen Lloyd- Morgan, *Gender and violence,* p.72.
[101] Ceridwen Lloyd- Morgan, *Gender and violence,* p.73.

Arianrhod

Arianrhod is an exceptional female figure in the Mabinogi. Her story is also featured in the fourth branch (summarised above). She is 'the only woman in the Mabinogion to have no defined obligatory bonds to any man.'[102] Her fortress is named after her, Caer Arianrhod which further 'suggests her independent power' and 'independence from conventional rules of female behaviour.'[103]

Fertility and motherhood are important themes in the Mabinogi, however they are integral to Arianrhod's story. Arianrhod is shamed by her brother Gwydion who is 'certainly the father of her children.'[104] It is unclear whether she is complicit, or if she is raped. She is an absent mother and does not want to know her son. He brings her shame and she wreaks her revenge. Arianrhod disowns him 'and walks away from her shame' as well as 'threatening the boy's ability to fulfil his obligations as a man.'[105] The curses she places on him mean he is unable to be named, have a human wife, or bear arms. This would have been disastrous and would have strongly resonated with the audience of the stories.

Arianrhod translates as silver disk or wheel.[106] She is not only known for her story in the Mabinogi but is also a prominent figure in Celtic religion as the goddess of reincarnation.[107] Like Blodeuwedd, her story is situated within constellations and her name is a Welsh name for the Corona Borealis constellation.[108] Personally, another important reference arises from the 1992 film *Hedd Wyn*,[109] which was my first introduction to Arianrhod as a figure of Celtic mythology, before I became aware of her character within the Mabinogi.

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[102] Roberta L. Valente, *Crossing the Borders of Gender in Math*, p.338.
[103] Roberta L. Valente, *Crossing the Borders of Gender*, p. 336.
[104] Ceridwen Lloyd- Morgan, *Gender and violence*, p. 71.
[105] Roberta L. Valente, *Crossing the Borders of Gender*, p. 338.
[106] James MacKillop, A dictionary of Celtic Mythology (Oxford University Press, 2004).
[107] IBID.
[108] Paul Cornish, *Summer Stargazing* (Bristol: We The Curious, August 2018).
[109] *Hedd Wyn*, dir. by Paul Turner, (Northern Arts Entertainment, 1992).

There are multiple musical works written about Arianrhod. These include *Môr Arianrhod* by Catrin Finch, *Yng Nghaer Arianrhod* by Dalwyn Henshall, *Castle of Arianrhod* by John McCabe and *The Castle of Arianrhod* by David Woolridge. These draw upon two themes I have also explored in my works *Arianrhod's Castle* and *She's with me*: the association with the sea (môr) and her castle (caer or nghaer).

Similar to my works on Mary, the mother of God, the pair of pieces on Arianrhod also take a different approach to other pairs. These pieces explore two different elements of her representation in addition to her story in the Mabinogi.

Arianrhod's Castle takes two extracts of poetry from two poets which is to be spoken at the start of each movement. The first movement is inspired by the text 'Under the water the icy castle sleeps. The legendary ruins of Caer Arianrhod are quietly hiding underneath the waves.'[110] The second movement explores the text 'If you linger here, transfixed by the beauty of what you see, then you will be captive forever. But, if you have the strength to turn and walk out of the spiral castle, then the hidden secret of House Arianrhod will be revealed to you.'[111] The only aforementioned work that uses text to portray her character is David Woolridge's *The Castle of Arianrhod*. Woolridge's piece also focuses on a different poem for each movement although not all his choices focus on Arianrhod's character, or her castle.[112]

Both my chosen texts have a relationship to Arianrhod's presentation in *The Mabinogion*. Her castle is a sign of her power and independence. In the second movement I focus on 'beauty' and the 'spiral castle'. It is unclear whether the poetry refers to Arianrhod's beauty, or the beauty of the castle, yet, while writing, I imagined both. In addition to

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[110] Margo Wolfe, *The Tor Stone A journey through the Mists*, <https://torstone.org/featured-articles/at-the-shore-of-caer-arianrhod?fbclid=IwAR2QiJXtHaDaJiRCfwODeysNFokF552W6Iyn0RyGSKDlD5Be0PthOBZkUYU> [accessed 31.01.2022].
[111] Lyn Webster Wilde, *Becoming the Enchanter* (London: Ebury Digital, 2011) p. 4409, <Kindle Ed.> [accessed 28.07.2022].
[112] David Woolridge, *The Castle of Arianrhod, mixed chorus, string orchestra, harp and percussion op. 47,* (Bridgewater: Hinchinbroke Music, 1988).

conflating the 'spiral castle' and the silver wheel, imagining never-ending spiral staircases weaving around one another, I use the text and imagery to create the music, which along with the spoken text at the start of each movement gives the listener the opportunity to create their own imagery.

She's with Me explores Arianrhod's portrayal in the Welsh film *Hedd Wyn*. *Hedd Wyn* explores the life and story of poet Ellis Evans, who entered a poem into the poetry competition of the national Eisteddfod before he was enlisted in the British Army in February 1917. He later died on the first day of the Battle of Passchendaele (July 1917). He posthumously won the highest prize in the Eisteddfod for his poetry, the Bard's Chair, however, due to this untimely death it was famously draped in a black sheet.

In the film, there is a scene in which Ellis talks about Arianrhod, the moon, being a source of comfort to him, this scene has remained in my memory. Evans was brought up in a traditional, rural Welsh community that would have referred to the moon as Arianrhod. During the scene he states, 'She's with me. Arianrhod. The ancient name for the moon.'[113] I have always enjoyed the presentation of Arianrhod as a protector and source of comfort for all, which has resonated with me, especially throughout the recent Covid 19 lockdowns.

Branwen

Branwen is only known from the Mabinogi, where the second branch is named after her: 'Branwen, Daughter of Llyr'. Branwen is 'subject to the absolute power of her male relatives.'[114] She is introduced as 'Branwen, daughter of Llyr', and subsequently, when her brothers give her to Matholwch as a bride, she is known for her beauty, as 'she was the most beautiful girl in the world.'[115] She is punished gravely for her brother's actions and in fact,

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[113] *Hedd Wyn*, Paul Turner, Shan Davies (S4C, 1992)
[114] Ceridwen Lloyd- Morgan, *Gender and violence in the four branches of the Mabinogi, in Bernhard Maier, Stefan Zimmer & Christiane Batke, eds*.,(Tübingen:Max Neimeyer, 2001) pp. 70-71.
[115] Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion, A New Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 23.

throughout the four branches 'violence against women is presented as normal and acceptable.'[116] Although this branch of the Mabinogi is named after Branwen, she is very much absent from the story, and her voice is only 'heard' in four sentences towards the end of the story. There are women in the other branches who play a bigger role in the storyline, yet the branch is not named after them. The story is summarised below.

Branwen's brothers take the decision for her to be married to Matholwch, King of Ireland. However, one brother is unhappy that he has not been included in the decision and insults Matholwch by attacking and killing his horses. Branwen moves to Ireland with her husband and lives with him and their son. However, her life is turned upside down when the news spreads about the attack on Matholwch's horses and she is sent to work as a maid in the kitchens. Her brothers come to rescue her and many are killed in the war that ensues between Matholwch and Branwen's family. Branwen believes this is her fault and she dies of a broken heart.

Branwen has the least agency of the female characters within the Mabinogi. Her spoken text is limited throughout and she does not speak unless spoken to. When Matholwch's men ask her advice about the imminent attack she replies saying 'I know what it is: the men of the Island of the Mighty coming over, having heard of my punishment.' However, after this she does not speak until the end, saying, 'Oh son of God, woe that I was ever born. Two good islands have been laid waste because of me.'[117] It was not Branwen's fault that her brothers started the war.

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[116] Ceridwen Lloyd- Morgan, *Gender and violence* p.70.
[117] Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion, A New Translation* (Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 23.

There is one other musical work written about her story, James Macmillan's opera *The Sacrifice*. The opera is 'based on the Branwen story of the… Mabinogion'.[118] However Rhian Evans of the Guardian suggests that '…in reworking the story… the Mabinogion's great cultural legacy are [is] mostly lost.'[119]

My work, *Branwen,* consists of two movements. The first movement focuses on her role as 'the daughter of' or 'the sister of,' who was 'the most beautiful girl in the world.'[120] The melodic material of this movement is created from two ciphers, 'Branwen' and 'Property'. The mood of the music is dark, and the material is slow and controlled. This will be explored further in Chapter 3 (Programme music and Storytelling).

The second movement solely utilises the 'Branwen' cipher. This is not audible to the listener, however, I wanted to evoke a sense of determination which I hope is obvious in the character of the music. This is to suggest that she is no longer anyone's property or controlled. I wanted the movement to explore the concept of Branwen being assertive in her story and standing up to the men in her life.

This chapter has explored the presentation of the female figures I have researched from the Bible and the Mabinogi. It details where misconceptions have occurred along with the multiple representations of others. It explores how I have attempted to give these figures a voice and more agency than in previous representations.

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[118] Michael Symmons Roberts, *The Sacrifice*, <https://symmonsroberts.com/work/the-sacrifice/> [accessed 25.07.2020].
[119] Rhian Evans, *The Sacrifice,* https://www.theguardian.com/music/2007/sep/24/classicalmusicandopera1, [accessed 25.07.2022].
[120] Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion,* p. 23.

Chapter 2
Compositional Technique

Ciphers

Ciphers - 'transforming text… into a musical motif[121]- have been used by numerous composers. Well-known examples include J.S Bach's BACH motif as seen in *The Art of Fugue,* Brahms's AGAHE motif[122] that he uses as dedication to his lost love Agathe von Siebold in his *String Sextet no. 2*, and Schumann who used ciphers throughout his music in various different ways.[123] In more recent years, composers including Shostakovich, Ravel, Debussy, Poulenc, Elgar, Messiaen, Schoenberg, Berg and Maxwell Davies have used ciphers to generate their material and, at times, to encode messages into their work. Although she did not utilise ciphers specifically Lili Boulanger did feature numerology in many of her works and she 'attached "mystical significance to the number thirteen"'.[124]

Traditionally, the use of ciphers is divided into two systems, the German tradition and the system created by Ravel in 1909.[125] The German tradition uses the letters of the alphabet directly in combination with German note names, whereas Ravel's system typically used solfège names or the 7 x 4 system (explained below).[126] However, the way ciphers are used has become more fluid throughout the twentieth century. The German tradition is seen most clearly in the BACH (B natural, A, C, B flat) cipher example, as well as Shostakovich's DSCH (D, E flat, C, B natural) motif. In the German system, a B natural is used for B, B flat is used for H and E flat is used for S; Schumann uses SCHA (E flat, C, B natural, A) to

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[121] Amy MacKenzie, *Someone made an algorithm that turns your name into a musical cipher,* https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/musical-cipher-algorithm/, [accessed 20.07.2022].
[122] Jenny Maclay, *Clarinet Cryptograms: Are there hidden messages in our repertoire?* https://jennyclarinet.com/2020/10/clarinet-cryptograms-are-there-hidden-messages-in-our-repertoire/, [accessed 27.07.2022]
[123] Eric Sams, *The Schumann Cyphers* (London: Novello and Company Ltd, 1966), pp. 392-400.
[124] Bonnie Jo Dopp, 'Numerology and Cryptography in the Music of Lili Boulanger', *The Music Quarterly*, (Autumn 1994), pp. 556-583.
[125] Eric Sams, *Cryptography, Musical,* https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000006915 (Oxford: Grove Music Online, 2001)
[126] Eric Sams, 'Did Schumann use Ciphers?', *The Musical Times,* 1965, pp. 584 – 591.

represent himself in *Carnival*. The French system involves writing out a diatonic scale (A-G) and then writing the letters H-N, O-U and V-Z underneath it to create a four-column table, the notes are chosen based on which column each letter appears in. [see Table 2.1]. Examples of this can be found in the works of Ravel and Elgar.[127] Messiaen developed his own system in the 1960s which he called 'communicable language', where he sets all 26 letters of the modern Roman alphabet.[128] This can be seen in his piece *Méditations sur le mystère de la Sainte Trinité*.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
H	I	J	K	L	M	N
O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
V	W	X	Y	Z		

Table 2.1. Ravel's cipher system

The system I have developed is based on Ravel's system. This system allows a simple way of translating a letter of the English language into a musical note. I work with ciphers differently in each piece with a varying degree of flexibility as a way to work the context and background of the piece into the music. I am aware that certain elements will not always be audible to the listener, but I always communicate the important elements in a programme note. This process will be examined further in Chapter 3.

In this chapter I will start by explaining how my use of ciphers has evolved. I will then go on to explain how I have used ciphers programmatically, semi-programmatically or solely as a technique to create material. My use of ciphers has developed with the aim of

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[127] Maurice Ravel, *Minuette sur le nom d'Haydn* (Paris: Durand and Cie, 1910), Edward Elgar, *Allegretto, Duet for violin and pianoforte on a theme of five notes* (London: Schott and Co., 1889).
[128] Andrew Shenton, *Messiaen's Language of Mystical Love, Speaking with the Tongues of Men and of Angels: Messiaen's 'langue communicable'* (Oxford: Routledge, 2016), p. 225.

giving me more control over the material I generate. There have been five evolutions of my system, the last being the system I use today. I started using ciphers towards the end of my undergraduate degree as a tool to connect my music to extramusical content (this will be explored further in Chapter 3). My use of ciphers quickly became a staple in my workflow, I found them easy to work with and I was happy with the results. This has been solidified over the course of my PhD. As will be explained below, this process has allowed me to become more flexible with my use of ciphers, given me more ways to work with them, as well as giving me more satisfaction with the music I am creating.

Evolution 1

Evolution 1, based on Ravel's system, utilises the following pattern:

- Choose a scale, usually C major or a chromatic scale starting on C (at this point I was not thinking in terms of modes and had not explored modal music).

- Write out the alphabet below the scale of choice, similar to Table 1 (above).

- Choose word[s] to create ciphers. At this point, this meant trying several different words to find material that I wanted to use and felt inspired by.

- Choose one or more ciphers to function as melodic and motivic material.

- Use the cipher[s] to create rows and row rotations using the rotational array technique[129] as seen in Stravinsky's later works, as well as some of those by Boulez and Knussen,[130] These can be thought of as secondary materials or used to build harmonies.

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[129] Joseph N. Straus, Stravinsky's "Construction of Twelve Verticals": An Aspect of Harmony in the Serial Music, *Music Theory Spectrum,* Vol. 21 No. 1, 1999, pp. 43-73.
[130] Julian Anderson, 'Harmonic Practices in Oliver Knussen's Music since 1988', *Tempo,* Vol. 57, No. 223, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 3.

This initial approach meant that I took control of the word I used to create the cipher. However, I would not be critical of the material the cipher would create. More often than not, in this initial technique I would use the first word that was most relevant to the piece, even if the material was unsuitable. During this working process, I concentrated on creating the rotations of the cipher material and the development that came with this.

This is demonstrated in my pre-doctoral work *Deciphered* for piano sextet which was written in 2017.[131] This piece explores the work done at Bletchley Park during the Second World War by codebreakers. The pianos are organised into three sets of two with each pair exploring and deciphering their own cipher. Below is an example of how I rotated the original cipher 'Berlin' [Example 2.1].
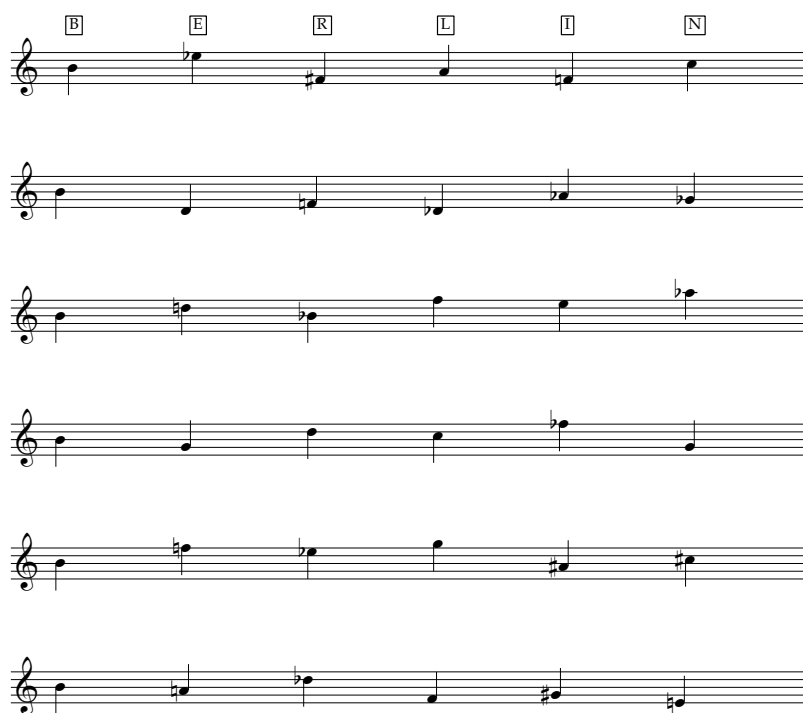
Example 2.1. Berlin rotations

[131] Lucy McPhee, *Deciphered*, (Unpublished composition, 2017)

<u>Evolution 2</u>

Evolution 2 involved being more fastidious about the choice of words, although I used scales in the same way to create the cipher. However, I would no longer settle for the first material or word I generated, even if it was the most appropriate for the topic, being more interested in the material. On occasions this involved generating many different words in order to find material I was happy with. Sometimes, I would use a different scale (chromatic/major/minor) with the same set of words if I was not feeling inspired by the material that was initially produced. I usually have a strong instinct towards a cipher and the material it produces; sometimes, even just looking at the material, I can have ideas on how I would like to use and develop a cipher. I began to look for specific qualities in the materials that were created, knowing that I would enjoy working with that material. This includes a focus on the melodic shape and/or the potential of the material to be fragmented (with a view to development). I am drawn to intervals of seconds or sevenths to create dissonances within the harmony. Although I do not regularly use a system to create or develop rhythms within my work, if a cipher includes repeated notes, these notes are sometimes considered as double note values, such as in the opening theme in *Ternion* (see Example 7 later in the chapter). In other cases, the repeated notes are used as a feature of the motif. In *Transmitting*[132], another pre-doctoral work written in 2017, I used morse code to generate rhythmic material. In Evolution 2 I still use the row rotations but not as frequently, and the focus is often on the cipher itself.

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[132] Lucy McPhee, *Transmitting*, https://youtu.be/JWjgdMMtx5o (Psappha, July 2017)

Hardwired (my final pre-doctoral piece) and *Blodeuwedd* were the first two pieces where I concentrated on the use of transpositions rather than row rotations. The two ciphers used in *Blodeuwedd* were created from a chromatic scale. The 'Blodeuwedd' cipher [Example 2.2] is used in the first two movements of the piece and the '8891440.4203' cipher [Example 2.3] is used in the latter movements. The second cipher '8891440.4203' refers to the fact that there is a constellation called Blodeuwedd in Welsh cosmology. Blodeuwedd is known as Andromeda M49; Andromeda is 8891440.4203 parsecs (2.744 x 10^{20} kilometres) from Earth.

Example 2.2. 'Blodeuwedd' cipher

Example 2.3. '8891440.4203' cipher

Instead of using row rotations, I transposed the whole cipher onto each note of the chromatic scale. This gave me a choice of twelve transpositions to work from, as a way to create harmonic structure, or as a form of development.

Evolution 3

In late 2019, I re-evaluated my approach to using ciphers. I see this third evolution as a midpoint between my previous method and my current method. *Journeying* is the result of this re-evaluation and, rather than using ciphers, it used modes. Thereafter, I began to use modes along with ciphers in my work. The aim of this piece was to explore the dorian scale beginning on C, with a flattened second degree (D flat), also known as the melodic minor mode two, transposed at various points in the piece. To replace the process of creating a

cipher, I improvised on my saxophone to create a melodic fragment and two other motifs. This material was used as the main material and thought of as the equivalent to ciphers [Examples 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6]. Example 2.6 includes the addition of an E natural, however, this does remove it from the melodic minor mode two.

Example 2.4. *Journeying* melody fragment (Clarinet bars 1-3)

Example 2.5. *Journeying m*otif i (Clarinet bar 7)

Example 2.6. *Journeying m*otif ii (Flute bar 15)

In each fragment, there is a focus on the minor second which develops throughout the piece. *Journeying* was initially written for solo soprano saxophone, then later I expanded the instrumentation and harmonised the work. For the expanded version, my focus was on the qualities of the flattened 2nd interval, creating dissonance within the harmony. I use transpositions of the scale to outline the harmonic structure, as well as using the transpositions of the motif as an additional way to build my harmonies. *Journeying* was a helpful exercise to revisit creating modal music and, by taking a step back from using a cipher, it meant I could reflect on why using ciphers is important to my music.

Evolution 4

Evolution 4 is the system that has been established since writing *Journeying*. This system has been used through much of my PhD and can be schematised as follows:

- Choose a modal scale and decide whether it should be adapted (e.g. Flattened second, sharpened fifth).

- Apply Ravel's system to the choice of modal scale.

- Choose words related to the topic I am writing about and transcribe the ciphers arising from them.

- Choose the material I am most inspired by, based on the quality of the motif.

- Write out the transpositions of both the cipher and the complete mode, before drafting sketches and writing the piece.

The adaptations in Evolution 4 could be considered minor; however, changing to a modal sound world with which I am happy has made a big difference to me. In terms of workflow, I generate a limited number of ciphers in order to find the one I am most inspired by, whilst still being more critical of the material. My work thus tends to use less chromaticism and dissonance than in earlier pieces, which nevertheless still remains an important feature of my work. If I wish for more dissonance within a piece then I tailor my choice of mode, giving me more control over the chromaticism and dissonance.

Evolution 5

In 2021 I began to experiment further with the use of ciphers, including the use of infinity series in my work. These can be seen most clearly in the pair of pieces *Arianrhod's Castle* and *She's with me*.

Arianrhod's Castle was the first piece I wrote applying Nørgård's Infinity series technique,[133] which can be seen mostly clearly in the first movement (especially bars 7-16).

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[133] Yu Hin Au, Christopher Drexler-Lemire and Jeffery Shallit, 'Notes and note pairs in Nørgård's Infinity series', *Journal of Mathematics & Music*, 11/1 (2017), pp. 1-19, DOI: 10.1080/17459737.2017.1299807.

This has involved writing a page of an infinity series, starting on the notes G and A. I then applied my chosen cipher 'caer Arianrhod' (Arianrhod's castle) to the first thirteen notes of the infinity series to create my cipher motif [Example 2.7]:

Example 2.7. 'Caer Arianrhod' cipher

The opening line explores the first two notes of the infinity series, G and A, with the addition of an E to incorporate the open bottom string of the guitar [Example 2.8]. Later in Chapter 3, I refer to this as the 'wave' motif. This motif is repeated in bars 18-21, this time incorporating F, B and A, the next three notes of the infinity series [Example 2.9].
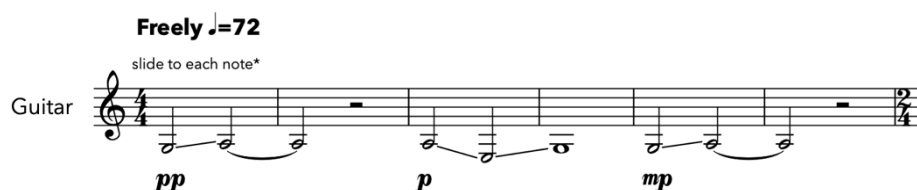
Example 2.8. Wave motif *Arianrhod's Castle* (bars 1-6)

Example 2.9. Wave motif variation 1, *Arianrhod's Castle* (bars 18-21)

The next bars (22-26) use the following twelve notes of the infinity series to develop the 'wave' motif. This includes the addition of an A in bar 22 and finishing on an A in bar 26. From letter B, to the end of this movement, the harmony and harmonic structure are developed through transpositions of the material I have already introduced in the first section.

I did not use all of the infinity series that was generated, but rather used it just to create the initial cipher material.

I used a similar system in *She's with me*, utilising an infinity series based on the pitch centre of A. This time D and G are the starting pitches of my infinity series, the perfect fourth pitch and the minor seventh above the A tonal centre respectively. Forty-seven is the atomic number of silver and, in Celtic mythology, Arianrhod is known as the silver wheel. The cipher for *She's with me* is 'Arianrhod' so I took the first nine notes of the infinity series to create the cipher material [Example 2.10]. Similarly to *Arianrhod's Castle,* I use as much of the infinity series as necessary to create my base ideas and harmonies before then using transpositions of the material to complete the piece.

Example 2.10. 'Arianrhod' cipher, *She's with me*

She's with me is directly inspired by *Light of Sothis* by Amy Quate. Firstly, the topic is similar within both pieces – *Light of Sothis* is based on Sothis, the star aspect of the goddess Isis who is said to bring beauty, prosperity and life.[134] However, more specifically, I was particularly inspired by the melodic shapes, harmony and how the saxophone and piano interact within the first movement, 'Grace'.

Programmatic approaches within my use of ciphers

Working with ciphers gives my music a meaning beyond the notes with a message encoded into the music. In much of my work, the ciphers have a musical character to reflect the words I am using. A cipher can be used as a leitmotif to represent figures or ideas as in

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[134] Amy Quate, *Light of Sothis,* (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1982).

Adoration, where the cipher always represents Mary. The ciphers are not created in conjunction with a set rhythm. I choose the rhythm associated with each cipher instinctively, however, this is then loosely associated with the melodic material within each piece. Overall, ciphers are used melodically, and are often fragmented melodically and rhythmically. In other works, such as *Ternion*, the ciphers are not obviously audible or linked to a figure but are used semi-programmatically as a device to develop the story. In terms of *Ternion*, this is linked to da Vinci's 'pyramidal composition'. The material can be 'read' when analysing the score, but, if I want the ideas and ciphers to be audible, I add further explanation within the programme note. However, the meaning and my use of ciphers is most obvious to the listener when they are used programmatically and when they take on the character of the words used. The ciphers are not intentionally created with the character in mind and in general this is considered. This concept is explored fully in Chapter 3.

The Magdalene will be explored in further detail later in this chapter, however, it is a good example of how I use ciphers programmatically. The three ciphers used in this piece are 'strong', 'independent' and 'relatable', as explained in Chapter 1. I pictured Mary Magdalene going about her life, independently, having a strong character amongst the male figures within Jesus' circle. The 'strong' cipher features in the opening section (until letter A). It is strong in character and dynamic and uses the strength of the bottom range of the viola. In contrast, the material created from the 'independent' cipher is lighter in character and the line is more disjunct. I wanted to recreate the light feeling one experiences when one is independent and spirited and does not have to rely on others. I hope the listener would recognise the character of the music and relate it to the information about the story in the programme note.

Throughout my PhD, the concept of storytelling has been imperative, however, the listener does not have to be aware of the meaning that is coded into my music. This can be

applied to *Breathe*, written about Eve's search for knowledge. This is the only piece in my portfolio where I have not discussed the story within the programme note. Here, the ciphers are symbolic, as well as a compositional device. In general, the words chosen to create the ciphers are always related to the topic of the piece and highlight aspects of the topic I wish to focus on. I think of this in similar terms to how Maxwell Davies saw his use of ciphers, symbolism and magic squares: 'it gave him an intellectual means of uniting musical ideas with the supra-musical.'[135] My use of ciphers is not based on a number symbolism approach, it uses the meaning of the cipher words to inscribe the meaning into the main elements of my music e.g. melody, harmony and structure.

    Ternion, based on da Vinci's painting 'Adoration of the Magi', is a good example of how I used ciphers semi-programmatically. The 'adoration' cipher is introduced in three, two-note fragments and one, three-note fragment in the crotale part in bars 17-27. It is then introduced in its full form in the solo flute at the upbeat to letter A [Example 2.11].

Example 2.11. 'Adoration' cipher full statement in *Ternion* (bars 34-43)

Example 2.12. Motivic material from figure E, based on 'Adoration' cipher (bars 136 – 141)

    The first fragment of the cipher, the major third, (C - E, the first two notes in example 2.11) is vitally important throughout the piece, especially in the outer two sections. As da

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[135] Nicholas Jones and Richard McGregor, *The Music of Peter Maxwell Davies*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), p. 54.

Vinci used pyramidal composition in his painting to place Mary at the focal point of the work, I have used thirds throughout the piece to represent this.[136] From bar 93, the music draws away from the material deriving from the 'adoration' cipher and the major 3rd fragment. This signifies the gaze of the observer moving away from the focal point. At letter E [Example 2.12], there is a slight refocus on the major 3rd, even though the motivic material is different. This is to represent Mary coming back into focus every time the observer's eyes fall on her while exploring the painting. However, the material comes back into focus at letter J with the return to the opening material, again reflecting the observer's gaze returning to Mary at the 'apex of a stable…pyramid'.[137] In the opening, and subsequently the section from J, I attempted to recreate an intimacy to show that when the viewer focuses on the centre of the painting, he/she is looking directly at Mary, despite the range of activity in the background of the painting. This reflects how I initially felt while viewing the painting. The opening builds from just two solo string players to a full tutti section at letter A. I attempted the opposite from letter J, the number of players in the string section decreasing as the piece concludes.

Adoration is the second piece in my pair of pieces based on da Vinci's painting. The focus of this piece is an exploration of how I imagine Mary may have reacted, physically and emotionally, to her surroundings and the situation she was placed in. Although she may appear calm, when you consider the crowds that surround her to see Jesus, it is likely she would have been anything but calm. Nevertheless, the 'adoration' cipher [Example 2.13] directly represents Mary's inner power and composure in the face of the activity around her.

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[136] Beth Harris and Steven Zucker, *Adoration of the Magi*, <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/renaissance-reformation/high-ren-florence-rome/leonardo-da-vinci/v/leonardo-da-vinci-adoration-of-the-magi-1481-mov>, [accessed 11.05.2020].
[137] Martin Kemp, Robert B. Simon and Margaret Dalivalle, *Salvator Mundi and the collecting of Leonardo in the Stuart Courts*, (Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2019) pp. 58-59.

I imagined her mindfully staying calm and trusting in God's plan. The form of the piece

attempts to represent this, and a return to the calm centre can be seen from the repeating

section A material, creating a rondo form (see Table 2.2). This highlights the difference

between *Ternion* and *Adoration*: the first representing da Vinci's idealised male gaze; the

second, Mary's emotional experience as a new mother. The word used to create the cipher in

both pieces is the same ('adoration') and while the shape of the motif is very similar

[Example 2.13 and 2.14], the materials are fragmented and used differently throughout. The

first four notes of both motifs differ rhythmically, while the latter half of the *Adoration* cipher

is fragmented and developed separately to the first half. In *Ternion* the cipher is developed

melodically in full.

Example 2.13. *Adoration* 'Adoration' cipher

Example 2.14. *Ternion* 'Adoration' cipher

Sections	Bars
Section A	1-19
Section B	20-69
Section A1	70-79
Section C	80-108
Section A2	109-116 (end)

Table 2.2. *Adoration*, form

Throughout the piece, the 'adoration' cipher material that represents Mary is

minimally developed and remains untransposed. I think of the A section as a refrain, aiming

to make Mary an identifiable, unchanging character within the piece, reflecting her presentation in Catholicism, while also implying that, in my opinion, her extraordinary experiences did not affect her character.

Breathe is the best example of using ciphers freely. This will be explored in detail in the harmony and harmonic section below.

Harmony and Harmonic Structure

As my use of ciphers has developed and my choice of harmonic approach has changed, so has my use of harmony. When I have used row rotations in the past, each row usually had a different set of notes, which although technically related to the original cipher, were not always recognisable. The rows were giving me highly chromatic material to work with, which I enjoyed; however, I was finding that it was not focused enough for me to create a cohesive piece where the material can be traced back to the original cipher. Over the course of my PhD, my ciphers always contribute to my harmonic approach and in general the harmony is created from the cipher row and its subsequent transpositions. More recently I have been considering the harmonic structures in my work and their relationship to the programmatic stories I am telling. During the earlier stages of my PhD, I was aware I was not paying enough attention to harmonic structure and there were issues with my pieces becoming static. Below, I discuss my approaches to harmony and harmonic structure.

Ternion is a clear example of how I developed the harmonic structure in relation to the programmatic idea behind the piece. Due to the importance of the pyramidal composition of da Vinci's work and its relationship to the major 3rd (explained above), I structured *Ternion* harmonically using a circle of thirds. I have used similar systems in other pieces, *Legacy* also uses a circle of 3rds, whereas *Branwen* uses a circle of 4ths. In general, I take the

'root' or first note of the mode and/or cipher motif as my tonal centre and the harmonic basis

for a section, and then cycle around the transpositions as in a circle of thirds or fifths (see

Table 2.3).

Bar Number	Tonal centre
1 - 61	C
62 - 115	E
116 - 190	G#/A flat
191 - 212	E/C
213 – end	C

Table 2.3. *Ternion* harmonic structure

The Magdalene is an example of how I work with material that has been created using

multiple ciphers and where I consciously tried to create a harmonic relationship between the

three ciphers. This was to ensure that the transpositions and harmonic progression throughout

the piece was more cohesive. I used the melodic minor mode 5 (an Aeolian scale with a

sharpened third) and its transpositions. Each cipher was created using the same mode and

thus each cipher is based on the same original E transposition. Even though each cipher starts

on a different note, they are all created from the same modality. When the materials are used

simultaneously during the piece, they are in the same transposition, however, the materials

remain identifiable throughout. Normally, as with pieces using one cipher, I think of each

cipher horizontally to create harmonies, I am reasonably strict and normally only use the

notes of the cipher to create my harmonies. This means, in *The Magdalene*, where 'strong'

and 'independent' are combined, I have the choice of pitches from both ciphers to combine

and create harmonies.

The first two bars of the piece use the transposition of the mode on D, quickly moving to the F transposition in bar 3, featuring the 'strong' cipher. The music alternates between these two transpositions before settling into the 'independent' cipher in the original E transposition at bar 17 (letter A). From letter A to B, the 'strong' material interrupts the 'independent' material. The first instance of this can be seen in bars 23 and 24, where both materials are in the same transposition, which allowed me to combine these two motifs more cohesively in this section.

Breathe, a sister piece to *Eve*, demonstrates another example of how I have recently approached harmony, as well as how I use ciphers freely. This is also the first piece I have successfully written using free notation. This was influenced by Sarah Lianne Lewis' *Sunflowers in Autumn*[138] which is one of the first pieces that uses free notation and harmony in a way that related to my compositional style. In *Breathe,* I feel the free notation compliments my attempt at using ciphers freely.

Eve explored the biblical story, the temptation of Adam and Eve, with Eve being represented as the person in the wrong, whereas *Breathe* reinterprets this as Eve's search for knowledge. I created the cipher 'knowledge' [Example 2.15] - and built nine chords, one on each note of the cipher for the word 'knowledge' [Example 2.16].


Example 2.15. 'Knowledge' cipher, *Breathe*

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138 Sarah Lianne Lewis, *Sunflowers in Autumn,* (printed by composer).

Example 2.16. 'Knowledge' cipher with chords, *Breathe*

These chords were constructed freely, by ear and created from the notes of the mode as well as additional notes and transpositions. The note of the cipher is also not always the root of the chord. The scale was created using the Lydian scale on F with a sharpened 5th, however the notes that are present in the cipher itself do not articulate the mode. This is due to the material used in *Breathe* originating from the chords, rather than solely the cipher as with other pieces. The chords created include both B flat and B natural, C sharp and C, as well as E flat and E natural so the material does not necessarily read as F Lydian with a sharpened 5th. The melody that is introduced in the first full phrase of the piece, is created from the first chord of the sequence [Example 2.16]. This features the sharpened 5th (spelt enharmonically as D flat) which towards the end of the phrase changes to C natural to add chromatic movement [Example 2.17]. This first phrase introduces the material, melodic and rhythmic, that is fragmented and developed throughout. This is created from the first two chords in example 2.16.
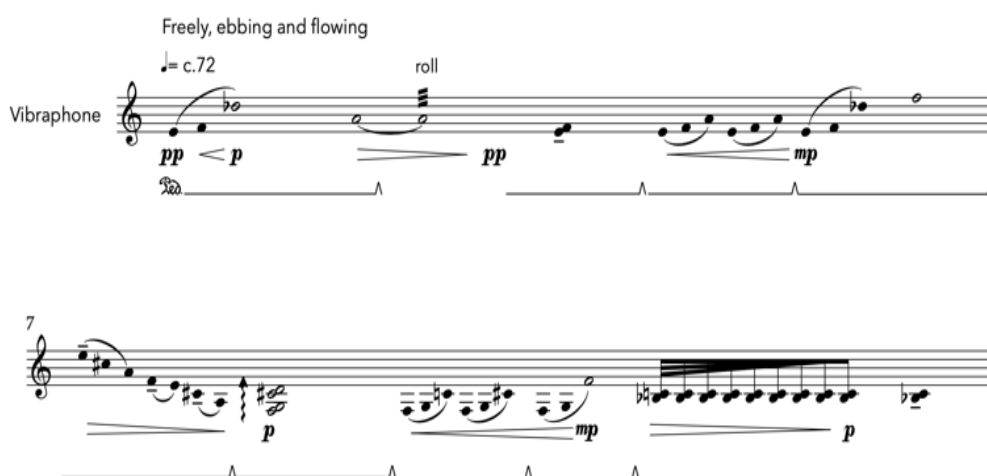
Example 2.17. First phrase, *Breathe* (beginning to end of second stanza)

Throughout the piece, the notes of the cipher, along with the assigned chords, are introduced one by one. When a note and chord are introduced, these notes are then available to be added to the harmony at any point. For example, chord one [Example 2.16] is explored in the opening system and a half, until the first feathered beam motif [penultimate group of notes in example 2.17], while chord two follows in the next system and a half until the next feather-beam motif. As the piece continues and the material becomes more developed, I am less strict with the use of each chord harmonically. For example, when I reach chord five [Example 2.16], I use any of the notes and harmony in any of the four previous chords. Chords 6 and 7 [Example 2.16] are the same, due to the letters 'L' and 'E' (of 'knowledge') both falling under the note 'G' in the cipher. This does mean that, towards the end of the piece, the harmony is not as strictly aligned to the cipher as at the beginning, accommodating the building of the harmony that has occurred beforehand. Thus, the cipher is used differently in *Breathe* to all of my other work. The cipher is never heard as a full material (as in Example 2.15), but the melodic materials and fragments are created freely from the notes in chord one [Example 2.16], which are, in turn, developed according to the rest of the cipher chords. I wanted to imply that the build in harmony throughout the piece represents Eve's success in finding knowledge at the end of the piece.

Structure

In general, I aim to structure my work based on the programmatic story I am trying to portray. One example of this can be seen in *Ternion*. In this instance, the piece is structured based on the viewer observing da Vinci's painting *Adoration of the Magi*. In a ternary structure, both A sections explore the viewer's focus on Mary. The use of the cycle of major 3rds (as described above) also assists in creating the structure and harmonic structure, even if the latter does not exactly correspond to the over-arching A B A(1) form. The B section aims

to portray musically the contrast in the mid-ground and background of the painting. The music becomes more energetic and imitates the activity in the painting. The viewer's gaze shifts, taking in the crowds, the horse fight, or even finding the elephant in the background. This happens before returning to the A1 section where the viewer's gaze settles back on Mary, the focal point of the painting.

Another two examples can be seen in the pair of pieces written about Blodeuwedd; *Blodeuwedd* and *Point of View*. *Blodeuwedd* focusses on her story as told in the primary source. The piece is split into four movements, each focusing on a different element of her story; 'Earth', 'Life', 'Death' and 'Flight'. As mentioned above, the first two movements focus on the 'Blodeuwedd' cipher, while the last two movements focus on the '8891440.4203' cipher. In contrast to this, *Point of View* is a through-composed piece in a single movement which is played continuously, yet it aims to depict seven events in a re-imagination of Blodeuwedd's story. Each section is depicted by a change of character in the music.

Journeying is another piece that has helped my approach to structure and pacing. The solo soprano saxophone version was originally a ternary structure, with the B section being an obvious contrast through a change in character and tempo. However, in the final wind quintet version, the tempo and character stays reasonably consistent throughout. Thus I rewrote the middle section, seeing it as an expansion and development of materials that I used in the opening A section.

Rhythm

There is not a specific rhythmic technique that I use consistently whilst composing. The majority of rhythms are composed instinctively, by ear. Usually when working with a material closely, I can hear the direction in which I would like the material to develop,

especially melodically. In the past, I have explored the use of rhythmic ciphers through the use of morse code when writing percussion pieces. However, this is not a technique I have used in other instrumental music.

Furthermore, I have recently attempted to create a system where I assign letters of the alphabet to rhythms, in a similar way to my approach with notes to create ciphers. I wanted to experiment and see if there was a system I could use to incorporate ciphers and their symbolism into my whole approach. I created the rhythmic cipher by assigning each letter of the alphabet a rhythm. I then applied this to the same word as I used for the melodic cipher. I attempted the rhythmic and melodic cipher together and found it was not producing the desired effect. One of the main reasons for this is due to the rhythmic cipher being longer than the melodic cipher, which meant the system didn't work musically. I am still to create a successful piece using this system. *Breathe* was the piece that evolved from the melodic material created after I had disregarded the rhythmic stipulations.

One in Five, is one example of rhythm being integral to the story of the music. The piece takes the experience of an anonymous mother from a local choir in Bridgend called *Maternal Harmony*. The choir consists of mothers who are struggling or who have struggled with peri-natal maternal mental health issues. The name of the piece – *One in Five* – comes from the fact that in the UK it is reported that up to one in five women suffer from peri-natal maternal mental health issues.[139]

The use of the crotchet triplet motif within the original cipher is important, especially in the outer two sections. It is lively and upbeat and represents life and living before the birth, and post-natal depression [Example 2.18].

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[139] Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, *Maternal Mental health – women's voices,* https://www.rcog.org.uk/for-the-public/rcog-engagement-listening-to-patients/maternal-mental-health-womens-voices/#:~:text=As%20many%20as%20one%20in,the%20first%20year%20after%20birth., [accessed 24.08.2022].

Example 2.18. 'One in Five' motif (bars 18-19)

From letter D to F, the mood and character of the piece changes. This is heard in the change from crotchet triplets to minim triplets in the violin at bar 72 [Example 2.19]. The minim triplets are often notated with tenuto markings and are to be played heavily. When this occurs, I wanted to illustrate that although childbirth and peri-natal mental health issues are difficult experiences, it is something that can be overcome with help. Overall, the topic of mental health, let alone maternal mental health, is thought of as taboo. Although there has been progression on the visibility of these topics, there is still a long way to go. This will be explored further in Chapter 3. Many women do not come forward for help due to the stigma, as well as the fear that their child will be taken away from them.[140]

Example 2.19. Minim variation of crotchet triplet (bars 72-74)

This chapter has explored the technical aspects of my work, including my use of ciphers and the shift to writing modal music, as well as my use of melody, harmony, rhythm, and structure. It details how the use of these techniques has developed over the course of this

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[140] Elizabeth Ford, Hannah Roomi, Hannah Hugh and Harm van Marwijk, *Understanding barriers to women seeking and receiving help for perinatal mental health problems in UK general practice* (Primary Health Care Research & Development: Cambridge University Press) p.156.

PhD. In Chapter 3, I will consider how these techniques and systems aid my process in order

to create programmatic or narrative music.

Chapter 3
Programme music and Storytelling

> 'Above all, we must not confuse music's meaning, properly speaking, with translation of that meaning, since verbalizing music's meaning is itself a special type of symbolization'[141]
> Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse*

Programme music is 'Music of a narrative or descriptive kind… the term is often extended to all music that attempts to represent extramusical concepts without resorting to sung words.'[142] Some musicologists believe that '…what passes for representation might often be more accurately described as imitation…'.[143] Stein suggests that 'In a broad sense, any musical work with some type of extra-musical association is programmatic'.[144]

Nattiez observes that '…human beings are symbolic animals; confronted with a trace they will seek to interpret it, to give it meaning',[145] suggesting that even when a piece is not explicitly programmatic, human nature means that we will try to understand the musical symbols presented to us to create a personal meaning. This could include creating a narrative, reading emotional intent or simply imagining colours. On the other hand, Swain suggests that '…agreement is essential for any useful meaning to exist' and that listeners should arrive at the same meaning.[146] I believe that even with the presence of a programme note, it is unrealistic for listeners to all arrive at the same meaning. This idea will be explored throughout the chapter.

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[141] Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Towards a Semiology in Music*, translated Carolyn Abbate, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 124.

[142] Roger Scruton, *Programme Music* (Grove Music Online, 20th Jan 2001) [accessed 16th August 2021].

[143] ibid.

[144] Leon Stein, *Structure and Style,* (Evanston: Summy-Birchard, 1962), pp. 172-173.

[145] Nattiez, *Music and Discourse*, p. 125.

[146] Joseph P. Swain, 'The Range of Musical Semantics', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,* Vol. 54, (New Jersey: Wiley, 1996), p. 135.

A common nineteenth-century form of programme music is the 'symphonic poem' or 'tone poem'.[147] Composers who have used this form include, but are not limited to, Liszt, Strauss, Beethoven, Berlioz, Mussorgsky, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Debussy, Messiaen, Schoenberg and Maxwell Davies. Scruton argues that the '…greatest step towards true programme music in the Romantic sense was not made by Beethoven but by Berlioz…'[148] due to his introduction of the *idée fixe*, which in turn was a substantial step towards the Wagnerian leitmotif.[149] Composers began to use *idée fixes* or leitmotifs to represent characters, ideas or situations as well as build the structure and story of the music.

Throughout his career, Stravinsky had strong opinions about programme music, stating in 1924: 'I consider that music is only able to solve musical problems; and nothing else, neither the literary nor the picturesque, can be in music of any real interest.'[150] In 1936 Stravinsky remarked that '…music is, by its very nature, essentially powerless to express anything at all.'[151] When he was challenged in 1956, he rephrased his remark to explain that '…it was not so much that music is powerless to express anything, but that music expresses itself.'[152] I am aware that ultimately it is down to the listener to interpret music and, this is an issue I consider while writing programme music. As Nattiez suggests, 'if we compel the composer to write in terms of what the listener is able to hear, we flirt with the danger of freezing the evolution of musical language.'[153] Each new agent that listens to the work, performer or listener, brings their own meaning to the music as there are 'no works that dictate one single meaning.'[154]

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[147] Encyclopedia Britannica, 'Symphonic poem' <https://www.britannica.com/art/symphonic-poem> [accessed 17.08.2021]
[148] Scruton, *Programme Music*, [accessed 16th August 2021].
[149] ibid.
[150] Emily Frey, *Stravinsky in Context, Chapter 23: Stravinsky versus Literature*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), p. 205.
[151] Igor Stravinsky, *An Autobiography,* (London: Calder & Boyars Ltd, 1975), p. 53. First published 1936.
[152] Daniel K.L Chua, *Stravinsky in Context, Chapter 35: 'Music is by its very nature, essentially powerless to express anything at all,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), p. 313.
[153] Nattiez, *Music and Discourse*, p. 99.
[154] Nattiez, *Music and Discourse*, p. 83.

I aim to write a detailed programme note to go with a piece. Liszt 'defined a program as any preface in intelligible language added to a piece of instrumental music, by means of which the composer intends to guard the listener against a wrong poetical interpretation'.[155] Alternatively, Schoenberg 'believed that written or spoken programs were negative additions to works because they could limit a listener's response.'[156] Not all composers will write about or discuss explicitly their programmatic influences in a programme note. Yet, within my programme notes, I give the listener information about the majority if not all the following factors to aid in their understanding of what I aim to portray: influences for the piece, the story, ciphers used, and any other relevant information. However, in my programme notes, I do not go into explicit detail about how different musical materials and developments relate to the story. A listener's reading may differ from mine, and I would expect that. I hope they will read my programme note but do not wish to limit their response. I aim for a mid-point between Liszt's and Schoenberg's suggestions: to give the listener enough ideas and materials to stimulate an imaginative response, but without expecting them to follow a story or concept bar by bar.

Over the last few years, the intention of my programme music has changed. Initially, in my instrumental music, I relied on my programme notes to explain the representations of the figures I have researched. However, it has become increasingly important for the meaning of my music to be explicit to the audience, especially where the piece considers how a figure or social topic has been represented. This has meant a shift to writing music with text, whether sung, narrated, or using poetry (spoken by the musician at the start of the piece). Where text is used within the piece, I would consider my music to be poetic or narrative, rather than programmatic. Writing music with text has coincided with a shift to writing about

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[155] Stein, *Structure and Style,* p. 171.
[156] Walter B. Bailey, *Programmatic Elements in the works of Schoenberg*, (Ann Arbour: UMI Research press, 2007), p. 160.

topics that are important to me as a woman, and which are often thought of as taboo; this includes a move away from the under- and misrepresentation - often by men - of female figures from the Bible and the Mabinogi.

Programmatic Approaches in Instrumental Music

I describe my music as programmatic, although my approach varies depending on the piece I am writing and the story I am trying to tell. In my current practice, I use ciphers to generate materials which are used programmatically, semi-programmatically, as well as abstractly as previously discussed in the Chapter 2. These ciphers are used to represent a figure, idea or situation; cipher material is subsequently used to tell the narrative points, story, or ideas. The narration points are not explicit to a listener in every piece; however, the development of the motif can help determine a narrative. As mentioned previously, although I provide a programme note, it does not explicitly link the ideas or points of narration to the musical materials. In general, these are left to the audience's imagination. If there is an important point of narration, however, then it will be explained in the programme note.

The titles of my work are always related to the topic of the piece. Nattiez observes that 'if so many composers have chosen to write works with explicitly literary titles, this must be because they have the confidence in music's semantic possibilities.'[157] Composers may disagree with this statement, they may use a literary title because they might be trying to evoke or engage with specific poetic or programmatic associations, rather than specific semantic meaning. With regard to my own music, the title is only effective alongside the accompanying programme note, or text used within the piece. My response to other composers' work is similar: I aim to understand what a composer is trying to do to the best of my ability, whilst connecting their music to my own experiences. If their work is based on a

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[157] Nattiez, *Music and Discourse,* p. 127.

story or poem, I like to know this so I can visualise the imagery, as Nattiez says, 'I have to know that I'm dealing with a symphonic poem in order to approach the work with the intention of hearing it as a narrative.'[158]

Two examples of how my programme notes give the listener the information they need to understand the story are found in *Blodeuwedd* and *Point of View,* based on Blodeuwedd's character. In both programme notes I retell her story as it is told in the primary source as well as the important contextual narrative which includes other characters. I aim to keep the synopsis as brief as possible. Generally, I always assume the listener has no knowledge of the story or topic. After the synopsis, I list the movement or section titles which match the story depicted in each movement (or section). This is particularly important with *Blodeuwedd* and *Point of View*, so readers can see clearly where the similarities and differences fall within both stories. On the other hand, this is less important for the listener as it is very unlikely that they will hear the pieces in the same context, especially in a concert setting. Additionally, in *Point of View*, I explain how this piece attempts to tell Blodeuwedd's story from her point of view, as well as how the two pieces differ in their representation. As with all my pairs of pieces, each piece can stand alone, and the listener does not have to listen to one to understand the other.

The pieces are also linked in terms of musical materials, to show the similarities and differences within the storylines. For example, the introductory material of *Blodeuwedd* in the viola, cello and bass bars 1 - 23 [Example 3.1], echoes the material in bars 26-40 [Example 3.2] of *Point of View*. In both pieces, the material represents Blodeuwedd's awakening after the magicians have created her from the earth. I chose the low strings in *Blodeuwedd* to create a dark, earthy atmosphere. I wanted to echo this in *Point of View*, choosing mainly bass register instruments, together with a melody line in the lowest register of the oboe.

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[158] Nattiez, *Music and Discourse,* p. 127.

Example 3.1. Score example of 'awakening' material. *Blodeuwedd* (bars 1 – 10)

Example 3.2. Score example of 'awakening' material, *Point of View* (bars 23 -32)

It should be noted that *Point of View* starts in a different place programmatically to *Blodeuwedd*, reimagining the start of her story. As *Point of View* is written from Blodeuwedd's perspective, I wanted the piece to start with the image of her unconscious and dreaming; she is not aware that the magicians are creating her. The melody portraying her dreaming is played by the solo tenor saxophone line at the start of *Point of View* [Example 3.3]. This material is not heard in *Blodeuwedd*.

The two pieces also connect programmatically through the 'life' theme. In *Blodeuwedd* this appears in movement 2 and the theme is introduced on the French horn at bar 5. The main difference between the two pieces in this instance is the change from simple and asymmetrical time signatures in *Blodeuwedd* [Example 3.4] to solely asymmetrical metre (5/8) in *Point of View* [Example 3.5]. Thus, the same material is used but the metre and rhythm are altered subtly to anchor the theme to Blodeuwedd's own point of view, placing the emphasis on slightly different places in the bar and phrase.

Example 3.3. Score example of 'dreaming' material, *Point of View* (Tenor Saxophone bars 1 -6)

Example 3.4. Horn introduction of 'life' theme in *Blodeuwedd* (bars 5-8)

Example 3.5. Trombone introduction 'life' theme in *Point of View* (bars 55 – 59)

The character of the 'life' theme of *Point of View* is more menacing than in *Blodeuwedd*. This was intentional and is created with the use of the lower brass and the dynamics. In the primary source, Blodeuwedd would like to kill Lleu Llaw so that she can be with Gronw. In *Point of View*, I wanted the character of the music to convey her plotting to kill Lleu Llaw, and the piece climaxes in bars 129-133 which represents the murder. This is where the stories of the two pieces diverge: *Blodeuwedd* follows the primary source and *Point of View* explores a mixture of *Arianrhod, A Welsh Myth Retold*[159] and my own ideas of how the story could end. The last two movements of *Blodeuwedd* thus focus on her death (movement 3) and her transformation into an owl (movement 4). These two movements are linked by the development of the same material suggesting the flight of an owl, first seen in both violin 1 and 2, movement 3, bar 5 [Example 3.6].
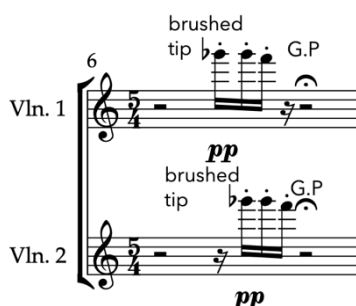
Example 3.6. Melodic material *Blodeuwedd* movements 3 and 4 (bar 6).

Further to this, in bar 34 of movement 4, some melodic elements of movement 2, 'Life', are introduced and developed alongside the new material of this movement. The reintroduction of the 'life' material implies that Blodeuwedd lives on, even if she has been shape-shifted by the magicians into an owl.

In *Point of View*, section C aims to portray how Blodeuwedd was able to be with Gronw, for love, rather than with Lleu Llaw for duty. Historians have increasingly

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[159] Barbara Donley, *Arianrhod: A Welsh Myth Retold* (Oakland: Stone Circle Press, 1987*)*.

problematised the idea of consent within Medieval relationships.[160] I decided to create a harmonious conversation between Blodeuwedd and Gronw which depicts their love and their desire to be together. This can be seen in the flute duet, starting at bar 134. It is based on the flute solo from bar 19 at the beginning of the piece [Example 3.7]. The conversation is accompanied sparsely by the glockenspiel until the rest of the woodwinds enter at bar 51.

Example 3.7. 'Love' theme, *Point of View* (bar 134 – 145)

Example 3.8. Example of flourishes and stab chords, letter D, *Point of View* (bar 174 – 176)

However, this scene is fleeting, and they are forced apart again at letter D. This is suggested by the sudden change in the character of the music [Example 3.8]. The stab chords and the

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[160] Gwen Seabourne, *Imprisoning Medieval Women: The Non-Judicial Confinement and Abduction of Women in England, c.1170-1509* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 152-53.

flourishes in the woodwind are suggestive of the aggressive forcing apart of the pair. The octave unison melody in the bass parts add a menacing quality to the section [Example 3.9].
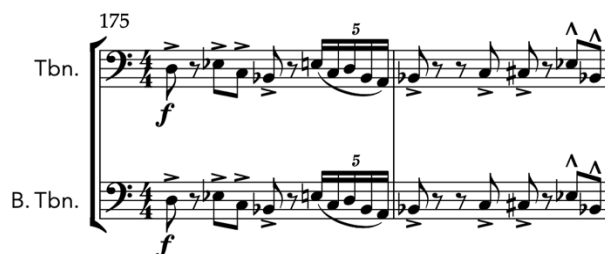
Example 3.9. Bass melody fragment, letter D (bar 175 -176)

The final section begins at bar 196. From this point, each melodic motif that has been introduced throughout the piece is played together, suggesting that Blodeuwedd and Gronw have been reunited. The last melodic statement of the piece is the original life theme, first heard in the bass trombone (bar 55) in *Point of View*; however, now we hear it in the French horn. This links the pieces as the first statement of the 'life' theme in *Blodeuwedd* is also in the French horn part.

Example 3.10. Glockenspiel augmentation (bar 196 -199)

Pieces with text

Musicologist Emily Frey suggests that 'one of the surest ways to make music "real"
was to yoke it to something more concrete, like words'.[161] During the latter half of my PhD, I
have consistently used text in my work, including poetry, narration and sung text. This is first
seen in the pair of pieces written about Arianrhod's character, *Arianrhod's Castle* and *She's
with me*. However, since this pair, my topics of interest have changed. I have striven to write
music to raise awareness of female social issues that are not frequently discussed or are
considered taboo. Topics such as maternal mental health, disability, invisible or chronic
illnesses and women's health are becoming more openly discussed in the news, on television
programmes and social media.[162] I would like to contribute to this discussion of topics such as
disability, female-specific issues and feminism through my music and believe that using such
topics as a basis can raise awareness and hopefully act as a conversation starter. In these
pieces the programme note is important to give factual information and the pieces include
text to convey the meaning explicitly. There are several composers who write about their
experiences and the experiences of others to raise awareness of certain topics. Shiori Usui
depicts her experiences of eczema through her piece *From Scratch*[163]. She says that she
'…hope(s) the music can relate to them the emotional and psychological aspect of having
eczema…'. Another composer who has written a number of pieces about the representation
of women is Laura Bowler. Although Bowler's compositional style is different to mine, I am
highly inspired by the topics she portrays in her work, this can be seen in her *The Blue*

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[161] Frey, *Stravinsky in Context*, p. 206.

[162] Rachel Schraer, *Mental Health: More help for new and expectant mothers in England*,
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-56639858, [accessed 14.07.22]; Smitha Mundasad, *England appoints
ambassador to shake up women's health*, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-61827013 [17.06.22]; Hannah
Devlin, *Menopause, endometriosis and more: four ways England is failing women*,
https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/jun/02/menopause-endometriosis-and-more-four-ways-england-is-
failing-women [accessed 21.07.22]; India Rakusen, *28 ish days later* [audio podcast], (London: BBC), aired
March 2022.

[163] Shiori Usui, *From Scratch,* (Berlin: Ricordi Berlin, 2017).

Woman, Feminine Hygiene and *Feminiti*. In terms of disability, I was highly inspired by Rose Ayling-Ellis' appearance on Strictly Come Dancing in 2021. Ayling-Ellis is a deaf actress, and in part of one of her routines with her partner Giovani Pernice, the audience saw them both dancing without music to illustrate how Rose experiences dancing.[164] Her journey on the programme made me consider my own hearing impairment and how similar impairments or deafness affects accessibility within classical music. Another influential figure is musician Dame Evelyn Glennie, a deaf percussionist and composer. Today, she is seen as a 'global superstar', however, 'initially [she was] unable to enter the Royal Academy of Music or the Royal College of Music', subsequently the 'Academy changed their mind about Evelyn's deafness being a problem'.[165]

Subsequently, I saw Erollyn Wallen's *The Paradis Flies*[166] which tells the story of Maria – Theresia von Paradis, a blind woman, pianist, composer and touring musician. The performance utilises sign language, captioning and audio description as a way to make the production accessible to all. These instances have inspired me to consider what can be done to make contemporary classical music more accessible to the D/deaf community. This is something I started to explore through *Invisible, to you* (examined below), however it is a project I would like to explore further after my PhD.

Further to this, regarding feminism, Ethel Smyth is an additional influential figure, she was a prominent feminist and composer who wrote music in support of the feminist cause, one of these pieces includes *The March of Women*[167], which was 'adopted as the anthem to The Women's Social and Political Union.[168] She paved the way for women today to write music about topics that matter to them.

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[164] BBC Strictly Come Dancing, *Rose Ayling-Ellis and Giovanni Pernice dance Couple's Choice,* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QejOzrlovTQ, Youtube, accessed 01.01.2023.
[165] Evelyn Glennie, *Timeline of Evelyn's Journey,* https://www.evelyn.co.uk, accessed 30.12.2022.
[166] Errolyn Wallen, *The Paradis Flies,* Jenny Sealey, *RWCMD : Cardiff, 05.05.2022.*
[167] Ethyl Smyth, *The March of the Women*, (London:The Women's Press, 1911).
[168] The British Library, *Ethyl Smyth,* https://www.bl.uk/people/ethel-smyth, (accessed 31.01.2023).

In the next paragraph, I will first explore the pair of pieces written about Arianrhod's character and how the text is used to influence the music, before going on to examine the pieces written about female social issues.

As discussed in Chapter One, *Arianrhod's Castle* is a piece for solo guitar, in which each of the two movements is preceded by a poetic quotation. These describe the imagery explored in the piece and should be recited out loud by the performer. This creates a mid-point between my music that is solely programmatic, and my music that uses sung text/narration. Arianrhod is the only woman in the Mabinogi who is not dependent on a man, an unusual situation as at the time of the Mabinogi women owning or inheriting land only happened in very special circumstances.[169] The first movement of *Arianrhod's Castle* focuses on the lines 'Under the water the icy castle sleeps. The legendary ruins of Caer Arianrhod are quietly hiding under the waves.'[170] It evokes the imagery of Arianrhod's castle emerging through the waves, and the icy cold water surrounding it. It is said that you can see Arianrhod's earthly home 900m west of Gwynedd mainland (North Wales), near Llandwrog;[171] at low tide, one can see a crown-like shape that the legend says is the top of her castle.

The opening (bars 1 – 6) represents waves. Waves come to shore in sets and the last wave is the largest before the pattern resets. This is portrayed through my use of dynamics, each statement is larger and louder than the previous [Example 3.11]. The glissando/slide also aims to evoke imagery of the wax and wane of the waves. This idea returns and is

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[169] Morfydd E. Owen and Dafydd Jenkins (eds), *The Welsh Law of Women*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2017), p. 86.

[170] Margo Wolfe, 'The Tor Stone. A journey through the Mists', <https://torstone.org/featured-articles/at-the-shore-of-caer-arianrhod?fbclid=IwAR2QiJXtHaDaJiRCfwODeysNFokF552W6Iyn0RyGSKDlD5Be0PthOBZkUYU> [accessed 31.01.2022].

[171] T. Driver, 'Caer Arianrhod Reef, Llandwrog', *Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales*, <https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/411089/> [accessed 18 October 2021].
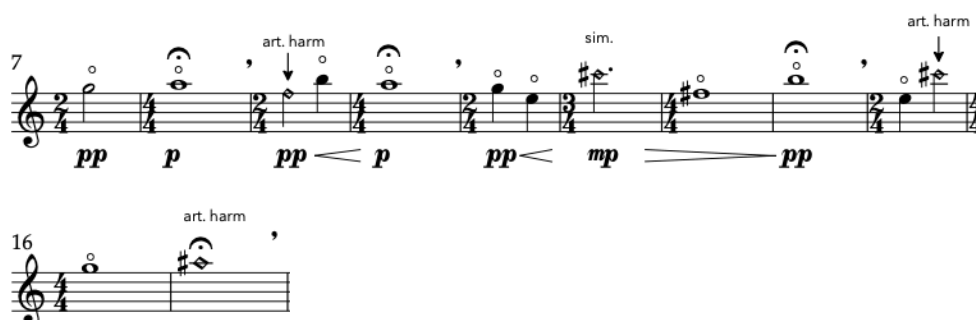
developed in bars 18-30, 41-44 and 63-68. This motif explores material from the rest of the

infinity series, as well as its transpositions [Example 2.7, chapter 2].
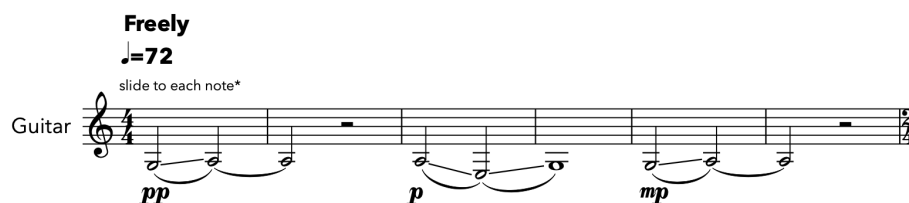
Example 3.11. 'Waves' motif (bars 1-6)

Example 3.12. 'Caer Arianrhod' cipher

Example 3.13. Full statement of 'Caer Arianrhod' cipher (bars 7 – 17)

The other main melodic idea in this movement also derives from the 'Caer Arianrhod'

cipher [Example 3.12]. This is introduced in full (bars 7 – 17) and depicts the castle emerging

from the waves - the material is repeated on two other occasions through the movement. In

the original statement [Example 3.13], the extra A sharp is not part of the 'Caer Arianrhod'

cipher, but it is the next note of the infinity series. I include it on three occasions where this

material is used, both in the original pitch and transposed versions. There is no programmatic

significance to this detail - I like how it sounds and how it naturally finishes the phrase. The

use of harmonics represents the 'icy castle' and where possible, I have used natural

harmonics to create an open, full sound [Example 3.14]. I prefer the sound of these

harmonics, as well as believing the open, full sound represents the 'icy' castle better than

artificial harmonics would.

Example 3.14. Fragment of 'Caer Arianrhod' cipher (bars 73 -76)

The second movement focuses on the phrase 'If you linger here, transfixed by the

beauty of what you see, then you will be captive forever. But, if you have the strength to turn

and walk out of the spiral castle, then the hidden secret of House Arianrhod will be revealed

to you.'[172] It is created from the same cipher as the first movement, transposed to start on C. It

is static and played freely, creating the image of someone lingering. This is supported by the

tempo marking and word 'Transfixed' in the score. The harmony is static and does not

change until bar 17, also implying lingering. The first melodic motif of significance in this

movement derives from the 'Caer Arianrhod' cipher [Example 3.12]. However, in this

movement, the first four notes are omitted (Caer) and the focus is on the rest of the cipher

(nine notes) [Example 3.15]. In the score this is found in bars 13-15 (C transposition)

[Example 3.16]. This represents the 'beauty of what you see', whether Arianrhod herself, or

her kingdom. This is implied through the change to the upper register of the guitar, as well as

much of the harmony being in thirds. This material is used, fragmented, and developed at

bars 25-26, 30, 32, 35, 50-51 and 52-54. The return to the material in its original transposition

is meant to suggest a cyclical procedure, in addition to the material being created from an

infinity series.[173] It implies the spiralling of the castle, as well as the continuation of the cycle

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[172] Lyn Webster Wilde, *Becoming the Enchanter* (London: Ebury Digital, 2011) p. 4409, <Kindle Ed.>
[accessed 28.07.2022].
[173] Yu Hin Au, Christopher Drexler-Lemire and Jeffery Shallit, 'Notes and note pairs in Nørgård's Infinity
series', *Journal of Mathematics & Music*, 11/1 (2017), pp. 1-19, DOI: 10.1080/17459737.2017.1299807.

in which people are entrapped by the beauty of Arianrhod and her castle. Another cyclic reference is found in the literal translation of Arianrhod in wider Celtic beliefs as the 'silver wheel'.

Example 3.15. 'Arianrhod' cipher fragment, used in movement two

Example 3.16. Use of 'Arianrhod' cipher in movement 2 (bars 12-14)

One in Five, *Invisible, to you* and *Legacy* focus on social issues faced by women today. While these topics are becoming more openly discussed, in most cases the issues are still under-researched and lack resources to combat them. The use of text in these pieces means that the meaning is explicit. The pieces take on a dramatic or poetic character which removes them from the programme music genre.

As previously mentioned in Chapter Two, *One in Five* presents the anonymous contribution of a mother who experienced peri-natal mental health struggles. Research has shown that in '50% of cases, no discussion of this [these] issue[s] takes place' and 'one reason for this is that women experience barriers to disclosing symptoms of perinatal mental illness.'[174] Amongst the most common were psychiatric symptoms impairing women's ability to access

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[174] Elizabeth Ford, Hannah Roomi, Hannah Hugh and Harm van Marwijk, *Understanding barriers to women seeking and receiving help for perinatal mental health problems in UK general practice* (Primary Health Care Research & Development: Cambridge University Press), p.156.

care, social stigma surrounding mental health and the fear of child protection services.[175]

Generally, motherhood is seen as a central life goal and a 'natural vocation'[176] for women and

research has shown that 'Fear of negative evaluation by others may enhance the effects of

self-discrepancy especially for shame'.[177] Although high expectations on mothers may 'stem

from a positive view on motherhood'[178] it means that women can feel pressure to be the

perfect mother, which adds to 'feelings of increased maternal guilt, lower self-efficacy beliefs

and higher stress levels'.[179] Recently there have been a number of documentaries and

television shows exploring and raising awareness of different forms of maternal mental

health, for example, *Mothers on the Edge*,[180] *My Baby, Psychosis and Me*,[181] and

Eastenders.[182]

　　As previously mentioned, the text used in *One in Five* uses extracts from a paragraph

a mother sent me about her experiences, documenting her struggle with mental health after

the birth of her daughter. This piece was written with her full knowledge and approval. The

full text can be seen in Figure 3.1, where the sentences used are highlighted; my focus has

been on post-natal depression due to her experiences. The text is narrated as part of the

music, throughout the piece. The aim was for the music to echo the sentiment of the text and

link it to key expressive words. I then applied the key words to decide on a character for each

development of the cipher, as I did in *The Magdalene*.

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[175] Chelsea Young, Honora Burnett et al, 'Embedded Maternal Mental Heath Care in a Paediatric Primary Care Clinic: A Qualitative Exploration of Mothers' Experiences', *Academic Pediatrics*, 19/8 (2019), pp. 934-941.
[176] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (London: Vintage Books, 2011), First published *Le Duexième sexe,* 1949, p. 573.
[177] Miriam Liss, Holly H. Schiffrin & Kathryn M. Rizzo, 'Maternal Guilt and Shame: The Role of Self-discrepancy and Fear of Negative Evaluation', *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 19/8 (2012), pp. 1112-1119.
[178] Anna Rotkirch and Kristiina Janhunen, 'Maternal Guilt', *National Library of Medicince*, Evol Psychol (2010), 90-196.
[179] Anna Rotkirch and Kristiina Janhunen, 'Maternal Guilt', Psychol (2010), 90-196.
[180] Louis Theroux, *Mothers on the Edge,* (BBC, November 2003).
[181] Rebecca Burrell, *My Baby, Psychosis and Me* (BBC, February 2016).
[182] Clare Dolman, *Stacey's Story: Home at last* (BBC, April 2016).

I had bad experiences of mental health in general before having my first daughter. My father had severe mental health problems to the point where he wasn't very capable as a parent. I always vowed that my children would never know the pain that I did growing up. I wanted to do everything the right way and I feel that this mind set set me up for my own first brush with a mental health issue.

I had a picture in my mind of what life would be like when my baby came. It would be perfect. I had began to aspire to this golden image of motherhood. Mothers are repeated and strong, they bare the pain of childbirth and the come out the other side a different person. That's what the books told me and I wanted to feel like this so badly. I talked to my baby every hour of the day telling her how much she was loved and wanted.

I had to be induced and my daughter's birth ended in a crash cesarean. I felt robbed of the experience of actual child birth. In my eyes it was the first failure. A flippant comment from a friend sealed the deal where she said "I'm the only 1 out of the circle who actually gave birth" she would be so hurt if she knew the effect it had on me but that comment became my first black cloud.

Breastfeeding. Dont let me give in I had begged my husband and within a week i wanted to give in. My poor little one had lost 9% of her body weight. I persevered, I fed her constantly, I became a feeding machine. Visitors came and went. I'd hide in the back room feeding because I couldn't get it right enough to avoid flashing my brother or my grandad or other men in the family who, even though tried to be supportive, were clearly as uncomfortable as I was.

My daughter didn't know how to close her eyes and when she did mine would stay open.
 The breaking point came when I told my husband that I didn't deserve our little girl and to call social services because something bad would happen to her. I wasn't good enough.

Thank god for the wonderful sympathetic GP that listened to all of this and told me that although it wasn't normal or fair to feel this way it was more common than women care to admit. Between her and my husband , they helped me save myself.

Figure 3.1. *One in Five* full text

As explained in Chapter Two, I use musical motifs to accompany the text and the material is used and developed in a programmatic way to highlight the main parts of her story. The opening introduces the crotchet triplet rhythms, which builds and develops throughout the introduction. This crotchet triplet rhythm transforms into the 'one in five cipher' at bars 18-19 [Example 2.18 in Chapter 2].

Example 3.17. Developed 'one in five' motif, Flute and Violin (bars 32 – 34)

At letter B, bar 32, the texture changes and double stops in the violin are introduced while the flute has a developed version of the 'one in five' motif [Example 3.17]. This is strong and determined at *forte* dynamic and aims to represent the lines spoken so far: 'I

vowed that my children would never know the pain I did growing up… I wanted to do everything the right way'. At letter C a larger extract of the text is used and therefore the musical ideas change at a quicker pace too. I wanted these few bars to represent the 'golden image of motherhood' [Example 3.18]. The active texture in the flute paired with the sustained harmony of the violin creates a glowing and relaxed atmosphere. This returns quickly to the stab-like chords at bar 56. The repetition of this material associates it with the phrase 'mothers are strong' and can be seen at bar 56 and 67. I also feel an uneasiness and tension in this material, as I wanted to imply that women and mothers do not have to be strong in the traditional way society expects them to be. The material in section C flits quickly between calmer material and the stronger material. This underpins the conflict that is to come in the piece, as well as the conflict many mothers feel [Example 3.19].

Example 3.18. 'Golden image of motherhood', *One in Five, Flute and Violin* (bars 49 – 52)

Example 3.19. Fluctuations between the calmer and stronger material, *One in Five* (bars 53 – 56)

At letter F the music suddenly becomes very active and frenetic [Example 3.20]. The 'one in five' motif is played in its original form in the upper register of the violin. It is accompanied by a rhythmically diminished and developed version in the flute. This is to represent the panic that can come before a 'breaking point' at bar 138, which leads into section G. Section G revisits material from letter E, but at letter G it is transposed: at letter E it is suggesting a realisation that something is wrong, while at section G it is a realisation that help is needed. The crotchet triplets are reintroduced as a sign that recovery is starting. The 'one in five' motif returns in full at bar 174 as I wanted to use the same material as at the start of the piece but developed to suggest that things can get better.

Example 3.20. First bar of letter F, *One in Five* (bar 121)

Invisible, to you, the sister piece for *One in Five*, explores the concept of invisible disabilities and illnesses. Although the topics are different, they are related by the fact that they are both based on real-life medical situations which remain taboo subjects in wider society. Invisible disabilities are, of course, not explicitly a female issue, yet I explore the topic through my own experiences, part of which involves endometriosis[183] (a chronic illness in women). Whilst writing this piece I was able to work with musicians who are deaf, have a hearing impairment (like myself), or another disability. Musically, this piece aims to portray

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[183] Endometriosis UK, *Understanding Endometriosis,* https://www.endometriosis-uk.org/understanding-endometriosis [accessed 02.08.2022]

tinnitus, a condition that I, along with two other members of the performing ensemble suffer with. Tinnitus is a common condition 'usually caused by an underlying condition' and causes 'ringing. buzzing, hissing, whistling or other white noise' to be heard.[184] We were able to discuss our experiences so that the varying sounds and disruptive nature of tinnitus could be portrayed. Alongside the portrayal of tinnitus, my experiences of endometriosis helped to shape and express my ideas of hidden disabilities and illnesses.

The piece uses electronics to play spoken samples relating to such disabilities and to raise awareness of things disabled people would like able-bodied people to be aware of. As of December 2020, around 21% of adults in the UK reported having a disability and it is estimated that approximately 70% of these disabilities are invisible.[185] As part of a workshop, I had open discussions with the musicians about the best phrases to use:

1. Not all disabilities are visible.

2. Some of the challenges I face include the barriers society has created.

3. We will do all we can so that you don't see us suffering.

4. We have to take a day at a time, what was easy yesterday may be impossible today. This is frustrating for us too.

The original piece was written for flute, violin, French horn and recorder and electronics, this is the version that has been discussed below and is included in the portfolio. However, I have since reworked the piece for flute, violin and electronics, which is included in the appendix. I believe the textures are clearer and more effective in this version, however, I wanted to submit the original score with the recording in this instance.

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[184] British Tinnitus Association, What is Tinnitus? https://www.tinnitus.org.uk/Pages/FAQs/Category/what-is-tinnitus?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI4s6786io-QIVlO3tCh23bg_8EAAYASAAEgISFvD_BwE [accessed 02.08.2022]

[185] Abbi Hobbs, 'Approved work: Invisible disabilities', *UK Parliament*, 2 November 2021.

The melodic elements of *Invisible, to you* are created from another infinity series and cipher combination. The first two notes of this infinity series are common tinnitus pitches, especially within our group (A and E). The cipher is created from the word disability [Example 3.21]. The full statement of this motif can be seen in bars 9-18. The A is prominent in the melody and acts as a return point in between the phrases.

Example 3.21. 'Disability' cipher, *Invisible, to you*

The first tinnitus motif is introduced in the violin in bar 3, and throughout the piece the tinnitus material is always pitched on A sharp [Example 3.22]. I recognise this contradicts my cipher and infinity series, yet it ensures that the material is recognisable, as well as creating dissonance to disrupt the harmony, suggesting the disruption tinnitus creates in people's lives. The slow vibrato portrays a pulsing or 'wah wah' sound that some people experience. The tinnitus material is developed with other characteristics throughout the rest of the piece [Examples 3.23, 3.24 and 3.25].
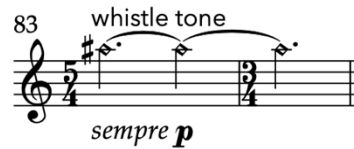

Example 3.22. Introduction of tinnitus material (bars 3 – 9)

Example 3.23. Tinnitus material development, *Invisible, to you* (bars – 38-39)

Example 3.24. Tinnitus material development, Flute *Invisible, to you* (bars 55-56)

Example 3.25. Tinnitus material development, *Invisible, to you* (bars 83-84)

The tinnitus material runs alongside the melodic material introduced in the opening, which is developed through the piece. As the music becomes louder and busier, the tinnitus material either becomes less obvious (e.g. bars 46-48) or more obvious (bars e.g. 38-45) as I wanted to suggest that while tinnitus can be unobtrusive in day-to-day life, when you first notice the condition, it can consume your every thought.

The opening material returns in its original forms in the final section, bar 75 to the end, and the violin now plays the original flute melody from bar 83. The tinnitus material is more obvious here due to the sparser texture. The final bar features the flute playing the tinnitus material, which is sustained after the other instruments diminuendo to nothing, giving the audience the effect of experiencing the condition themselves.

Legacy is based on the poem of the same name by Rupi Kaur. It is a three-movement piece: 'The Sacrifices', 'I stand' and 'Taller'. The outer two movements are instrumental, while the middle movement explores the text, sung by a solo female voice. The outer two movements are also nevertheless inspired by the poem [Figure 3.2].

I stand
on the sacrifices
of a million women before me
thinking
what can I do
to make this mountain taller
so the women after me
can see further

Figure 3.2. *Legacy*, Rupi Kaur

This text resonates deeply with my feminist beliefs. Feminism has often been seen as an extreme, often negative topic by many, however, this should not be the case: 'The word feminism has connotations that some women dislike […] we need to start asking each other why that is.'[186] *The Guilty Feminist* podcast started in 2015 when it was originally hosted by comedians Deborah Frances-White and Sofie Hagen and is now a popular book and live theatre show. It discusses feminism in a context that is relatable to women today, covering topics such as body positivity, confidence, the #metoo movement and the power of saying yes (or no) in the right situations. In her book, Frances-White suggests that she believes that the podcast has been so popular because women 'realised they didn't have to be perfect or even consistent to be a force for meaningful change'.[187] She suggests that 'the reason *The Guilty Feminist* became popular is because it allows us to include our whole selves, even the parts that want to watch romantic comedies'.[188] I think that some women still believe that feminism has to be starving yourself like Emily Davison or burning your bra like the feminists in the 60s, that is to say extreme and intimidating. This is not the case, although their actions paved the way for the different struggles women face today.

Kaur's poem highlights the importance of women standing up for what they believe in and fighting for what is important, thus making the life better for future generations of women. This, and the desire to raise awareness of these topics, is a major motivation for my music. Books such as *Invisible Women*[189] and *Everyday Sexism*[190] have driven this interest. *Invisible Women* discusses how 'Most of recorded human history is one big data gap' and how many elements of society are tailored towards men's needs: 'The stories we tell ourselves about our past, present and future. They are all marked – disfigured – by a female-

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[186] Deborah Frances-White, *The Guilty Feminist* (London: Virago Press, 2020), p. 258.
[187] Frances-White, *The Guilty Feminist*, p. xi.
[188] Frances-White, *The Guilty Feminist*, p. 109.
[189] Caroline Criado Perez, *Invisible Women, exposing data bias in a world designed for men* (London: Penguin Random House, 2019).
[190] Laura Bates, *Everyday Sexism* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2014).

shaped absent presence. This is the data gap.'[191] In her book *Everyday Sexism*, Bates states that she was told 'you women in the UK have no idea how lucky you are […] you're making a fuss about nothing. You're overreacting...' and she wondered '…how it was possible for there to be so much evidence of the existence of sexism alongside so much protest to the contrary?'[192] With pieces such as *Legacy* (as well as *One in Five* and *Invisible, to you*) I aim for my music to draw attention to such topics, to suggest changes I would like to see in society, and to present a perspective that the audience may not have already considered.

The vocal writing in these pieces is the culmination of my exploration of using text in different ways in my work. The vocal writing in *Legacy* is inspired by Emily Hall's *4.05* and a piece I wrote in response to Hall's work; *This is the last time* (solo voice) (not included in this portfolio). I feel *This is the last time* was a turning point for my vocal writing in terms of the melody line and text setting and I aimed to continue this work in Legacy. The harmonies within Hall's *4.05* really appeal to me and I wanted to see how I could recreate a similar effect with a piece for solo voice and ensemble.

The harmonic and melodic material of *Legacy* is created from an infinity series based on a C phrygidorian scale. I create a cipher from the first six notes of the infinity series, using the word 'legacy' [Example 3.26]. This infinity series, which is used in the first two movements, gave me mostly minor and diminished intervals to work with. In the third movement I changed some of the minor and diminished intervals to major or perfect ones [Example 3.27] as I wanted the music to reflect the hopeful tone of the programmatic ideas. This ensured that the contour of the melodies in each movement are the same and recognisable, yet the tone is very different.

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[191] Criado Perez, *Invisible Women*, p. xi.
[192] Bates, *Everyday Sexism*, p. 13.

Example 3.26. *Legacy*, cipher motif (minor)

Example 3.27. *Legacy*, cipher motif (major)

The first movement, 'The Sacrifices', starts in the lowest register of the violins, on a G tonal centre. This opening material (bars 1-20) returns at the end of the third movement, 'Taller'. At this point, the material is four octaves higher than the original statement in the first movement to suggest the journey from the bottom of the mountain at the start of the piece, to the top of the mountain at the end. In addition to this, the final bar of the piece features a unison (octave displaced) G. This is to imply everyone standing and working together.

The second movement is musically organised as a chorus and four verses [Table 3.1]. This enabled me to pace the text in such a way as to give the audience time to digest its importance, especially in the verses.

Intro	1-12	Instrumental
Chorus	13-19	I stand (x4)
Verse 1	20-27	I stand on the sacrifices of a million women before me
Chorus	28-34	I stand (x4)
Verse 2	35-40	I stand thinking what can I do to make this mountain taller
Chorus	41-47	I stand (x4)
Verse 3	48-54	I stand so the women after me can see further
Chorus	55-62	I stand (x4)
Verse 1a	63-71	I stand on the sacrifices of a million women before me I stand
Coda	72-78	Instrumental

Table 3.1. *Legacy*, Structure

Overall, every chorus is the same, musically and textually, apart from minimal changes concerning dynamics and some connecting phrases. The dynamics grow throughout each verse, meaning that each chorus is louder than the last, supporting the depiction of journeying up the mountain. This crescendo lasts until letter J (bar 55) and a diminuendo starts at bar 61 as the chorus ends as I wanted to create an intimacy and calmness for verse 1a and the coda. Thus the texture from letter K, bar 63, is much sparser. The last two statements of 'I stand' at letter L (bars 68-71) are quiet, almost whispered, to imply that asserting beliefs does not have to be a noisy affair but it is the more intimate, everyday changes each individual makes that can be more powerful and educational to those surrounding them.

As mentioned earlier, the final movement, 'Taller', explores the 'legacy' motif with mostly major or perfect intervals [Example 3.27]. The opening of this movement echoes the texture of the opening of the first movement; both start on the tonal centre of G but the harmony differs. This movement is meant to be triumphant and suggest the journey has been successful.

Over the course of my PhD, my music has taken a step away from traditional programme music, due to the current focus on using text alongside my music. However, as explored at the beginning of the chapter, Stein states that 'any musical work with some type of extra-musical association is programmatic', therefore I believe my music is essentially programme music. The extra-musical influences are, and always have been, an integral part of my work and it has become increasingly important for this meaning to be explicit, especially when the topic is raising awareness of a social issue. I enjoy telling stories through my music and believe it gives my music a purpose.

Conclusion

Over the course of this commentary, I have aimed to answer the research questions stated in the introduction.

- How have the female figures of the Bible and the Mabinogi been represented, historically and in modern society?
- Have any of these figures been misrepresented? If so, how?
- How can I give these figures a more realistic representation from a woman's perspective?
- How are women represented in society today and can I raise awareness of unfamiliar stories, characters, and social issues through my music?

I believe the research questions have been answered and, overall, produced the results I was expecting. The figures can be, and have been, assigned a traditional feminine archetype(s) which pre-empts how they have been presented throughout history.

The Biblical women have a richer history of representation and thus have been presented consistently and these presentations have persisted within today's society. However, as expected, their presentation has been heavily influenced by patriarchal beliefs, influenced by the traditional patriarchal society and the patriarchy of the Roman Catholic church. I believe both Mary Magdalene and Eve have been misrepresented.

Mary Magdalene's representation, especially within artwork, but more recently in *Jesus Christ Superstar* and the *Da Vinci Code* have continued to present her as a sinner, a prostitute, or the wife of Jesus. On the other hand, it is extremely hopeful to learn that

Lampert, who portrayed Mary Magdalene in *Jesus Christ Superstar,* did more research into her portrayal in order to give her more agency.[193]

The Old Testament character who has had an unfavourable representation throughout history is Eve. Although her traditional representation continues to be negative, as demonstrated in Ezra's 2022 release *Green Green Grass* it is also hopeful to see this is starting to be given a more historically correct presentation as seen in *Good Omens*, or further explored in programmes such as *Killing Eve*. I believe she has been unfairly blamed for seeking knowledge, which I have attempted to portray in *Breathe*, as well as believing that this blame should be equally shared with Adam.

In his painting, *Adoration of the Magi*, da Vinci goes a long way to try to present Mary, the mother of God, at the focal point of the painting. Compared to other adoration scenes painted during the same time period, only one other placed Mary in the centre of the painting. Although she is known as Jesus' mother, a Virgin, or the Star of the Sea, da Vinci's painting places her in the centre of the story, rather than her just being seen as Jesus' mother, protected by Joseph.

Similarly, in the Mabinogi, the way women were portrayed has been highly affected by the patriarchal society in which they were created. The stories of Blodeuwedd, Arianrhod and Branwen give the reader an insight into what life would have been like for women in Medieval Wales and it has been fulfilling to give these female figures a voice when it had otherwise been taken away from them.

It has been highly beneficial and of great interest to learn about the other figures and to place them at the forefront of my work, meaning that they are no longer just overlooked

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[193] Olivia Sava, *Jo Lampert on modernising Mary Magdalene in Jesus Christ Superstar* <https://www.todaytix.com/insider/chicago/posts/jo-lampert-on-modernizing-mary-magdalene-in-jesus-christ-superstar> [accessed 18/02/2021].

female figures within their stories. My research has shown that society did not give the female figures the voice or agency they deserved and my musical interpretations have attempted to present a different perspective on these characters and issues. Recent works based on the characters of the Mabinogion have mostly been created by men (Guto Puw, Dalwyn Hensall, Martin Iddon, John McCabe and David Woolridge). Female social issues are becoming a more popular topic for composers to explore, composers who have written pieces on these issues include Errolyn Wallen, Laura Bowler and Shiori Usui.

Any further studies on this topic could consider Rhiannon, another principal female figure featuring mainly in the first branch of the Mabinogi, or women of the Old Testament such as Delilah, Esther Rachel, Rebecca, Ruth and Sarah. Another approach could be to explore the equivalent figures of other religions or cultures. Exploring these additional figures, especially those of the Old Testament, would help us to understand if the women of the Old Testament have had the same treatment as those from the New Testament. I believe these women to be less acknowledged in modern society than the women of the New Testament it would be of interest to explore and raise awareness of their characters.

Towards the end of my PhD, my focus shifted from the representation of female figures, to looking at the representation of women's health and social issues. From this point onwards in my portfolio, I used text within my work, resulting in the meaning of my music, and the stories I was trying to tell, being more explicit. My pieces on maternal mental health (*One in Five)* and chronic illness, disability and invisible illnesses (*Invisible, to you*) aim to raise awareness of topics that are not spoken about freely, as well as adding to the conversation about these subjects with reliable information and resources. *Legacy* is an important piece within my portfolio, and in effect, summarises the ideas and beliefs behind my portfolio. It

expresses the thoughts that drive my interest in writing music to raise awareness of taboo social issues while also expressing my views on feminism.

The refocusing of interest to writing about women's health and social issues towards the end of my portfolio has proved to be a pivotal turning point in my work. I envisage myself continuing to explore similar topics over the next few years, for example writing pieces on endometriosis and menopause, as well as exploring Caroline Criado Perez's book *Invisible Women* in further detail, in order to draw more attention to the gender data gap.

Invisible, to you was written as part of the CoDI Lead scheme, which involved the chosen composers to work with D/deaf or disabled musicians. This scheme was truly inspiring and I fully intend to continue my research into how disabled musicians and audiences interact with contemporary music, in particular D/deaf audiences.

My research has proved to be an important personal exploration into my religion, my views on feminism and how women are presented in society today. In addition to this, I have realised how important it is for me to be able to portray and raise awareness of specific female health and social issues in my work going forward. My experiences of a hearing impairment and endometriosis mean that I would like to continue advocating for, and raising awareness of issues that are not experienced by everyone. Writing *Invisible to you* opened my own eyes, I have realised the importance of being vulnerable as a tool to raise awareness and make change.

Finally, my research questions have resulted in an in-depth exploration of the representation of women and has led me into further ventures to examine taboo subjects. By exploring these subjects through my compositions, I hope to create a new medium through which female representation, disability, invisible illness and, in the future, additional taboo topics can be discussed, thus giving a voice to previously silenced topics. As Dr Sarah Hill

states, '…what we consider "normal" is something that is based on a male ideal that is not even accurate.'[194]

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[194] India Rakusen, Dr Sarah Hill, *28ish days later, Day Seven: Oestrogen Rising,* [podcast], (BBC Sounds, 21.03.2022).

Appendix

1. Rogier Van der Weyden Triptych

2. Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio *Mary Magdalene*
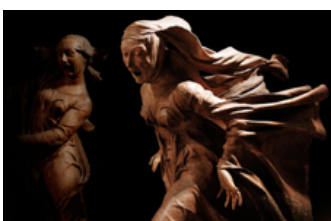

3. Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio *Mary in Ecstasy*

4. Giotto di Bondone fresco in the Magdalene Chapel

5. Niccolo dell'Arca *Lamentation Over the Dead Christ*

6. Donatello (Donato di Niccolò di Betto Bardi *Penitent Mary*

7. Lorenzo Monaco *Adoration of the Magi*

8. Cosimo Rosselli *Adoration of the Magi*

9. Filippino Lippi *Adoration of the Magi*

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