# [Thesis]

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## Preface

This commentary is submitted, along with my portfolio of compositions (and accompanying compact disk) in fulfillment of my PhD in composition. The purpose is to provide an accompaniment to my portfolio of compositions, to give insight into the works within it, and to discuss the scores with regard to their relevant aesthetical concerns and compositional techniques. I will also assess the works in the context of compositional practices past and present.

Writing this commentary is slightly curious by its very nature: as the composer I have a deep and even emotional connection to the scores yet must try to distance myself sufficiently from them to be objective about discussing them. Despite the nature of this task I do come at it knowing exactly what my compositional intentions were at the time of writing the various works in the portfolio. It is also of interest that this research degree has been a process of personal and compositional development over a period of four years to what I have come to consider my compositional 'voice'. This development will be charted and recurring devices and the musical means which I now rely on in writing my music will be identified and examined.

The discussion of works in this commentary will start with the general and gradually focus throughout the course of writing to the specific in the final chapter. In the first chapter I will discuss some of the more general aspects of my compositions and look at principal compositional concerns, seeking to illuminate and examine the sources from where I take my inspiration (both musical and extra-musical). In this chapter I will also assess my work in terms of its cultural context. The second chapter will look

at a variety of compositional techniques and devices I use in my work (with reference to specific examples) and will put them into a context according to the canon of twentieth and twenty-first century acoustic concert music. The third and final chapter will take the form of an analysis of the three works at the core of the portfolio of compositions in this submission: *Blodeugerdd* for baritone voice and piano, Cromlech: Viola Sonata for viola and piano and Meddylun for orchestra. These pieces, whilst apparently very different in their natures represent the core of the submission in a variety of ways. They cover the time span of this project in its entirety: Blodeugerdd is the earliest work in the portfolio and Meddylun was one of the last completed scores. Additionally they demonstrate my ability to compose in two of the facets required by the PhD (to write for large instrumental forces and to work in large time scales). Whilst there is no long orchestral work in my portfolio the chamber works Blodeugerdd and Cromlech: Viola Sonata deal in large time scales and the eight minute orchestral concert overture Meddylun is a detail-packed score for large forces. Through applying the sort of techniques I used in writing Meddylun and dealing with a large ensemble to the sort of large time scale approach used in Blodeugerdd or Cromlech: Viola Sonata I should be able to write a long orchestral work in the future.

I am hugely grateful to have been able to complete this project which allowed me four years of relatively uninterrupted composing time and permitted me to mature both in terms of my music and compositional abilities and in a more personal way. There are a variety of people whose help throughout the course of my PhD I would like to acknowledge: Firstly my supervisor Professor Anthony Powers whose advice and constructive criticisms have been invaluable to me. Other members of staff too, must

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be mentioned for their support, encouragement and guidance: perhaps most that of Dr. Richard Elfyn Jones and Dr. Arlene Elizabeth Sierra, although I am of course hugely grateful and indebted to the entire faculty of Cardiff University Music School. My peer group of research students also require a mention for their support, encouragement and friendship. Also a number of performers must be thanked: most notably baritone Jeremy Huw Williams who generously allowed me to write him what evolved into my first professional engagement *Blodeugerdd* (included in this submission) and performed the work on more than one occasion. Following Williams a variety of performers and ensembles commissioned me to write them pieces and this has lead to the many of the works in this portfolio receiving professional performances. I must also thank festival directors John Metcalf, Peter Reynolds, David Campbell and Guto Pryderi Puw for including my work in their events.

# **Chapter One - Background and Influences**

My music is, naturally, informed by my background and as such this places me in the unavoidable position of having to talk about myself. Prior to postgraduate study in Cardiff University Music School I read music at City University, London and concurrently studied the oboe and cor anglais at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. My family is from Pontypool, Gwent and although I was born and mostly educated in England it would be fair to say I have inherited my parents' nationalist tendencies. This nationalism manifests itself substantially in my compositions meaning that many of the scores submitted here are heavily 'Welsh' in character indeed, the influence of composers, notably Charles Ives, using vernacular traditions in their work can be identified, as we shall see later.

More specific 'Welshisms' are present in my work also. Throughout my PhD (and indeed before starting it) I have been fascinated by *cerdd dafod* (lit. tongue-craft), that is Welsh strict metre poetry which exists in a great variety of forms, each of which with its own rules controlling the number of rhymes, their position and the length and number of lines; within these lines there are further rules which must be applied with regard to assonance and alliteration, called *cynghanedd* (lit. chiming). These rules can be perhaps most accurately discussed by a poet who writes in them, and as such Twm Morys explains:

"There are four basic types [of cynghanedd] (with dozens of sub-types and variations):

*Llusg* ('drag') in which the sound immediately before the caesura is 'dragged' into the stressed syllable of the last word of the line:

You are nót/ like an ótter

Sain ('sound'), in which there are two caesuras, the word before the first caesura rhyming with the word before the second caesura, and the word before the second alliterating with the last word in the line:

Bé/ a búdgie/ or bádger

$$E/B - J E/B - J$$

*Traws* ('bridge'), in which all the consonants under stress this side of the caesura are repeated on the other side, leaving an unstressed 'hole' in the middle, like a bridge:

Or a fish/ if you prefér

r f- /( ) r f-

*Croes* ('cross'), in which all the syllables this side of the caesura are stressed, and are all repeated on the other side:

All útterlý/ ótterlike:

L t rl-/ t rl-"<sup>1</sup>

Of the various strict metres to which these rules are applied the *cywydd* and the *englyn* are by far the most common. Morys goes on to introduce them thus:

"*Cywydd* is a poem of any length made up of rhyming couplets of sevensyllable lines, the rhyme being alternately accented and unaccented, or *vice versa*. When I was [talking about all this] in Canada ... I decided to try and compose some examples in English. Here is one:

My First Love Was a Plover

A cywydd for Canadians

My first love was a plover; Beautiful things her wings were. Tiny eyes shining at night – Though mainly in the moonlight. We ate leeks at a lakeside, I caressed her crest, and cried All night. Then the Kite called, Unshaven and disheveled.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Twm Morys: http://people.brunel.ac.uk/~acsrrrm/entertext/2\_2\_pdfs/morys.pdf

He saw from the bristling sedge My playmate's handsome plumage. She made a tryst, kissed the kite So dearly in the starlight. I thought of only one thing: My plover lover leaving."<sup>1</sup>

Whilst there are (as we shall see in chapter two) a variety of versions of the *englyn* Morys gives an example of one of the most common (*unodl union*):

"You are nót like an ótter – Útterly Unótterlike, rather Bé a búdgie or bádger Or a fish, if you prefér."<sup>1</sup>

It is, however nothing new for me (as a Welsh composer) to be using these patterns to create shapes and self-contained structures in my music. Rather, one might say that I am continuing a tradition started by David Wynne (in works such as 6 chân i denor a thelyn) and Grace Williams. Indeed, in his 'New Grove' article Malcolm Boyd describes William's work: "Many of the later pieces... are deeply national in feeling (e.g. Ballads for Orchestra, Carillons, the Missa cambrensis and Castell Caernarfon).

Although they include no actual folk melodies they are shaped by the rhythms and cadences of old Welsh poetry and oratory."<sup>2</sup> More recently this work has been continued by Guro Pryderi Puw (in *Trioled*) although this example is of interest since Puw (sometimes regarded as a nationalist composer) chooses not a Welsh but a French verse (*triolet*) as his starting point.

The traditional practice of pennillion singing is also worthy of mention here. Initially explored in musical composition by Williams in her 1955 work *Pennillion* the eponymous practice involves the singing of an improvised melody (normally using strict metre poetry) set to the accompaniment of a (repeated) Welsh air or traditional tune played on the harp. William Leathart describes it thus:

Pennillion chanting . . . consists in singing stanzas, either attached or detached, of various lengths and metres, to any tune which the harper may play; for it is irregular, and in fact not allowable, for any particular one to be chosen. Two, three, or four bars having been played, the singer takes it up, and this is done according to the pennill, or stanza, may suit – he must end precisely with the strain, he therefore commences in any part he may please. To the stranger it has the appearance of beginning in the middle of a line or verse, but which is

<sup>2</sup> M. Boyd Grace Williams from New Grove Vol 27 (Macmillan London 2001), 407.

not the case. Different tunes require a different number of verses to complete it; sometimes only one, sometimes four or six.<sup>3</sup>

The (occasional) antiphony between singer(s) and harpist is something that has prompted certain textures and approaches to text settings in this portfolio, as we shall see in the following chapter.

While the use of these forms is essentially just a personal compositional tool, I am keen (since they are frequently present in title, programme note and sonic event) for their use to have a greater significance that an audience might pick up on. Indeed, as I see it they seek to resolve the conflict between lyricism and its antidote in my music. Along with certain other predominantly Welsh stylistic approaches I have explored (*Blodeugerdd* and *Mydrau Barddonol* include a folk song and folk dance respectively); one could hear a certain ethnomusicological dimension in my compositions.

As suggested earlier, echoes of an Ivesian aesthetic seem to apply broadly to my compositions. The works seem overall to be more of a continuum than an axis or a polarity in terms of historical progression and tradition. Their essence is more of a furtive looking back over one's shoulder to the (however distant) traditions and practices which have been amalgamated and developed to form them, rather than a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> W. Leathart: *Welsh Penillion* (London 1825), 12 – 13, quoted in M. Boyd : *Grace Williams* (Cardiff 1980), 83, originally quoted in W. S. Williams: *Welsh National Music and Dance* (London, n. d.), 83.

confrontation developing, reacting against or a pushing forwards from an already vibrant Welsh cultural tradition.

Some of these pieces (e.g. *Blodeugerdd* and *Mydrau Barddonol*) are eclectic in their nature and although eclecticism is something I shall come back to in due course, it must be mentioned here that (unlike Ives but more akin to Williams) I tend to avoid using known or (so-called) traditional Welsh materials. My position is an unusual one: although I write (these days) completely from within a Welsh sensibility it would be fair to say that since I learnt the language - its associated musical uses and traditional practices (e.g. *cerdd dant*) - as an adult, I started out as a nationalist composer mostly looking in on the Welsh sensibility and as such felt somehow unqualified to use direct quotation from my own cultural tradition. That is not to say that learning the language made me 'more Welsh'; rather it facilitated a greater understanding and sensitivity to the art and musical traditions of my nation. This 'immersion' is exemplified in the portfolio through *Meddylun* (the final completed score) being the only work to include any direct quotation (the underlying cantus firmus-like hymn), as we shall see in the last chapter.

My performance background lies in the double reed instruments and this, I believe, is at least in part responsible for the large volume of chamber music in my portfolio; indeed while in London I played significantly more chamber music than orchestral works. As a result of this there are certain types of ensembles I feel I know from an internal perspective and this has had a profound effect on the sort of music I write and the types of group I am interested in working with. It cannot be said with any real significance that I compose in any one particular style any more than it can be said that my music is 'style-less'; rather it is more polystylisitic since many pieces (e.g. Blodeugerdd and Mydrau Barddonol) have a variety of styles within in them. This eclectic tendency can in fact (most likely) be traced back to my time in London: my undergraduate dissertation was a study of eclecticism in twentieth century music with specific reference to Adès and his work Asyla. Along with more recent in-depth studies of works such as Arcadiana and Living Toys by Adès and Berio's A – ronne, Sinfonia and Folk Songs. This fascination with eclecticism has emerged in my recent music. Since one can be eclectic in more than one way, an important distinction needs to be made: as suggested above my eclecticism is not a rearrangement and/or development of pre-existing musical materials as for example in Sinfonia. Rather, as is the case in the work of Adès (or Schnittke), I am eclectic by assimilation and am interested in absorbing different styles into my own musical language (with no, or at least minimal direct quotation). This inclusion of a mélange of styles presents the composer with the challenge of making the piece 'hang together' as a cohesive whole and not merely seem like a series of juxtaposed pastiches.

In his *Arcadiana*, Adès moves with fluidity and fluency through various styles passing tango, twelve bar blues and a tonal 'chorale' along the way using figuration reminiscent of Elgar, Schubert and Mozart. However, the piece remains 'Adès' in character, and indeed, it could in fact be said that this plurality is Adès' most recognizable musical fingerprint. In his case, the cohesion is achieved through the composer's profound ear for detail in the score, leaving its listener in no doubt that every note was considered in the minutest detail. Adès' careful (and considered)

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repetition of certain textures and voicings helps solidify his works. This is something that I have tried to emulate in my own compositions and will be discussed in depth in the next chapter.

Since it is also subject to this eclectic tendency the question of my harmonic language is relevant here. This is one of several pre-compositional decisions I tend to make before any preliminary sketch work or improvisations take place. The final decision is informed by a variety of factors ranging from the instruments being used, their properties and the initial impetus for writing the piece; through to extra-musical sources. The final outcome of these considerations will often result in a series of groups of specific intervals that are applied to the different elements which are being used on the most fundamental level to construct the textures within the piece; I will explain this approach to texture fully in due course. In other instances the harmonic language may just involve the choice of a specific mode or scale pattern. In the case of the 'elements' approach the various sets of intervals from the various textural elements used normally include all the standard chromatic intervals in an all interval tetrachord. Therefore my harmonic language could be described as being broadly pantonal since it is in essence chromatic/atonal but from time to time moves freely through tonal and modal centres according to stylistic context. I recall a conversation I had with my first teacher Rhian Samuel at City University during which she (in seeking to broaden my horizons) explained how a period of writing 12 tone serial music might prove to be 'harmonically liberating'. Given that Stephen Banfield

explains of Samuel's own music "12 - note procedures are residual"<sup>4</sup> we can assume it was advice once given her. As we shall see in the final chapter it was advice I took and is a technique I have occasionally re-visited.

I have long found the music of Xenakis some of the most interesting of its time and his work has had an effect on my attitude towards, and method of constructing, line (that is, melodic line) in my music. Around the same time as Xenakis was exploring his set theory technique used in works such as *Herma* (1960-61), he became increasingly fascinated with probability and stochastic principles. This developed from *Achorripsis* (1956 -1957) into the set of six 'ST' works (completed 1962). Every detail of the musical means in these six independent pieces was generated by a computerised probability programme written by the composer for the 7090 IBM computer in Paris. Following the 'stochastic' works Xenakis' compositional style changed and he developed his technique of arborescences or 'random walks'. The development of this technique at the start of the 1970's came (in part) out of his fascination with Brownian motion as explored in earlier works such as Pithoprakta (1955-56). Xenakis says: "The idea of arborescences cropped up in an instant, I don't know how. I just caught myself doing it."<sup>5</sup> He also claims that that the arborescences are only "distantly related" to probability but have more to do with "causality,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Stephen Banfield: Rhian Samuel In *The New Grove Dictionary of Women Composers* (Macmillan London 1994), 403.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Balint Andras Varga: Conversations with Iannis Xenakis, (Faber and Faber London 1996) 6.

repetition and consequently variation."<sup>6</sup> On the actual construction of the arborescence shapes, Xenakis tells us:

We start with a point in space...In order for it to exist the point has to continually repeat itself. In this way a line is formed which can have any shape. Any point on the line can also reproduce itself and bring about an arborescence ... This can occur freely or according to rules and can become as complicated as lightning or the veins of the body.<sup>6</sup>

With regard to my own compositions, while Xenakis' arborescences have been instrumental in informing the way in which I construct melodic lines, I do so according to my own rules. I consider the melodic material in a piece one of the textural elements mentioned above and as such it is assigned its own set of intervals. In essence the interval between any two pitches within a line can be any one from the set of intervals assigned to it. There is then not the feel of a 'random walk' but more that of an intuitively derived line according to a controlled set of intervallic classes. Sequential figuration is also commonplace, although this can be traced back to my strong focus on baroque chamber music I played in my earlier career as a performer.

The influence of Xenakis also extends beyond the melodic and/or linear: through reading his scores and writings I have at times employed some mathematical elements

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Balint Andras Varga: Conversations with Iannis Xenakis, (Faber and Faber London 1996) 8

in my pieces. It is well known that composers ranging from Bartók (in his *Dance suite*) through to Stockhausen (in his *Klavierstück IX*) and recently Simon Holt have used the Fibonacci series as a tool in their work governing a variety of compositional decisions ranging from pitch selection and rhythmic values through to proportion and the architecture of the piece as a whole. Similar devices are to be found in my own compositions and although they are more often using the prime numbers or Pi's integers rather than the more common Fibonacci series, comparisons can be drawn with the approaches taken by those composers.

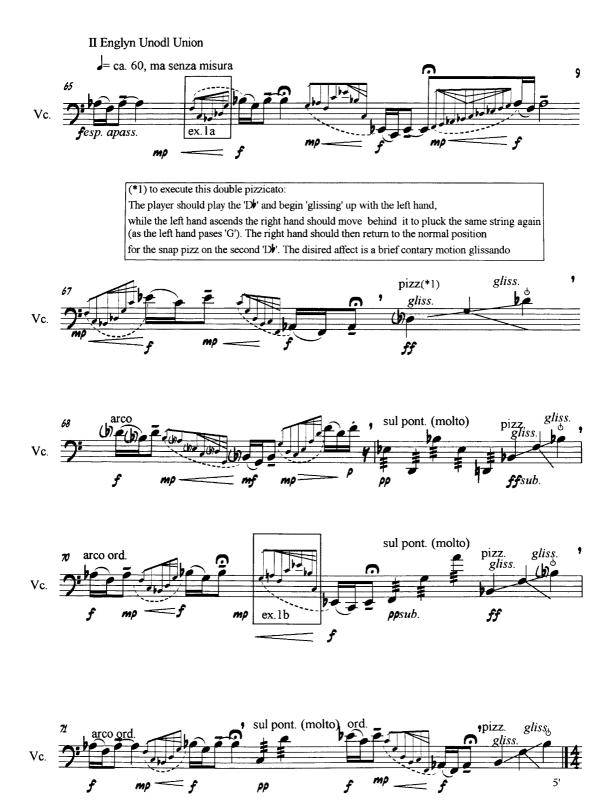
As mentioned above my approach to texture in my compositions involves a number of elements which can be moved through the ensemble/pitch space and rotated about each other for variety in a fashion akin to traditional invertible counterpoint. This approach to textural organisation is similar to that identified by Caroline Rae in the work of Maurice Ohana (in works such as *Sibylle and Anneau du Tamarit*)<sup>7</sup>.

Since I have come to realise that performers frequently have relatively little rehearsal time to learn new works my approach to rhythm/metre is performer sensitive: while phrase and bar lengths are frequently irregular they are always notated in crotchet beats and there is a tendency towards (so-called) simple time (particularly 4/4).



<sup>7</sup> Caroline Rae: *The Music of Maurice Ohana* (Ashgate, Aldershot 2000) 198.

To conclude this chapter and exemplify many of the devices and stylistic idiosyncrasies discussed above here is the second (solo) movement from *Y Garreg Ddial: 'Cello Sonata*.



Ex. 1: Y Garreg Ddial: 'Cello Sonata b. 65-73

The movement uses the structure of the Welsh poetic stanza *englyn unodl union* as a frame work and as such is cast in thirty syllables over four lines (of ten, six, seven and seven syllables) which could be exemplified thus:

XXXXXXA - XXX

XXXXXA

XXXXXXA

# XXXXXXA

In the example the passing of a syllable ('X') is marked by the recurring slurred minor third figure and the rhyme ('A'); in this instance the contrary motion *pizzicato glissandi* is introduced on the seventh syllable of the first line and reiterated at the end of the subsequent lines. The example serves as a harmonic 'bridge' between the outer movements of the sonata and, like the first movement is in the *Hypophrygian* mode but sees the introduction of the 'D natural' in bar 69 and the A natural' in bar 70 changing the scale pattern to that used in the third movement. Since the example is monophonic there is only one layer (element) to its texture which sees piobaireachd (pibroch) like figuration based on permutations of a simple one branched arborescence separating the syllables. The basic arborescence figure is identified as ex.1a:

One such permutation, using two juxtaposed branches shows diminution, augmentation and inversion (ex.1b):

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# **Chapter Two – Some Examples in Context**

Having introduced and discussed my musical language in a general manner in the first chapter, I will in this chapter, look at specific examples from pieces in my submitted portfolio and, in order to illuminate the compositional tools, devices and processes used in writing them, compare them to other examples taken both from my own work included here and the works of other composers, past and present. This process will not, however, be a strictly analytical one. Rather, my approach will be empirical and more concerned with comparing and contrasting the various examples.

The chapter will be split into three distinct parts respectively dealing with pitched material, musical form/architecture, and texture.

## **Pitched Material**

I shall devote the first half of this section to a discussion of pitched material primarily concerned with melodic line before moving to look at pitched material in a harmonic sense later. Continuing from where I left off in the last chapter, the first piece I wish to discuss here is the 'cello sonata *Y Garreg Ddial*' ('The Revenge Stone'). This will serve not only to highlight in detail my approach to pitch in melody and line but also to show how this has evolved and developed throughout the course of my PhD: The first movement of the sonata *Afon Llwyd* ('Grey River') is, in fact, the first music I wrote during the PhD with which I was not displeased. At the time I never saw it being more than a short 'cello study. However, after Nia Harries had performed the piece a few times she commissioned its expansion into the complete sonata submitted here. As the completion of the work took place during the third year of research the piece can be used to chart my development well.

The first movement is a mostly slow and expressive 'cello song which was written quickly and broadly intuitively, adhering to a harmonic language which I decided upon pre-compositionally during an improvisation at the piano (something I rarely do these days). It is essentially modal, as is the first song in the cycle *Blodeugerdd*. Since I plan to include a detailed study of the songs in the final chapter I shall only look at the 'cello piece here. The pre-compositional decision regarding harmony mentioned above resulted in the scale C sharp, D, E, F sharp, G, A, B, (C sharp) being used as a starting point for the melodic (and harmonic) material. This means the piece is in fact Hypophrygian in nature. This is demonstrated here in the opening bars:



Ex. 2: Y Garreg Ddial: 'cello Sonata (bb.1-6)

As we can see, only the pitches found in the Hypophrygian scale (starting on C sharp) are used in the passage (and indeed the entire movement). The 'cello melody was written quickly and intuitively and was subjected to little in the way of revision. Closer examination reveals a considerable 'leaning' towards the intervals of the tone, the perfect fifth and the minor third, their inversions and transpositions of these intervals at the octave; all of which can be found in the modal scale used as a starting point. Indeed, further examination reveals that the highly polarised piano accompaniment also fits the same scheme. This style of modal writing is similar to that encountered in the music of Vaughan Williams as the following example using

semi-tones, fifths and thirds from the opening of the fifth of his *Ten Blake Songs* for voice and oboe (a piece I previously performed regularly) demonstrates:



Ex, 3: Vaughan Williams' Ten Blake Songs (5. The Lamb) (bb.1-3)

While I was never consciously trying to emulate Vaughan Williams' music, this style of modal writing is something that has stuck with me and represents a technique that I have, periodically, returned to, as we shall see.

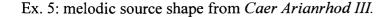
Since the very brief, solo second movement (actually composed as a 'transition' after the third movement was completed) was discussed in the first chapter I will move now to look at the main technique used in constructing the pitched melodic/linear material in the sonata's final, fast movement. The movement is itself in sonata form and since the second (slower) subject material was borrowed and developed from an earlier, abandoned orchestral piece it is the faster first subject material I shall concentrate on here. This example is in fact the first occasion I used the technique influenced by Xenakis' arborescences identified in chapter one. The source shape for this subject (constructed from two thirds and two tones) is seen here (ex. 4):

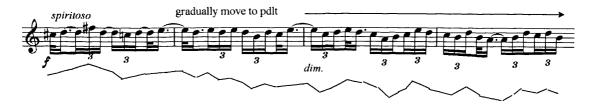


# Ex. 4: melodic 'source shape' from Y Garreg Ddial III.

As the movement progresses, the shape is subjected to various tentative developments using devices such as retrograde, inversion and retrograde-inversion frequently depending on sequential movement. I explored and developed this technique further in *Cromlech: Viola Sonata* (which I will discuss in detail in the next chapter) until it reached what I have come to consider as its maturity in the harp sonata *Caer Arianrhod.* In this piece the shape is not preserved in its entirety and different portions of the source shape 'grow' out of each other from any given point in the shape at any time. Tansy Davies, who also cites Xenakis as an influence on her work has also been known to use an approach similar to this (in her 2007 orchestral score *Streamlines*, for example). The development is then more organic and the sense of the intuitively derived line according to a set of intervals begins to be felt. The source shape (ex. 5) and initial development (ex. 6) from the opening of the third movement of *Caer Arianrhod* exemplify this here:





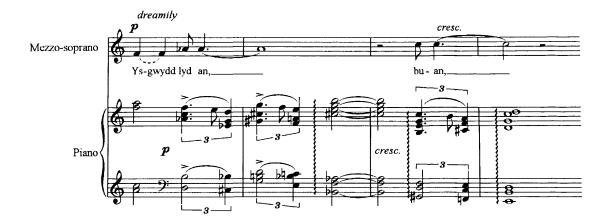


Ex. 6: Caer Arianrhod (bb. 145-148)

Moving now to look at pitched material in a more harmonic context I will return briefly to the 'cello sonata Y Garreg Ddial. As mentioned above, the first movement is Hypophrygian and indeed modality is a recurring theme in my music with almost every score having a modal passage at some point (probably influenced by the folk music of my native Wales); Ystwyth: String Quartet No. 1 has a Lydian last movement, although this example is also concerned with a Grace Williams reference as we will see in due course. Since the intervals being used to create melodic line ultimately also create harmony by sounding with those which are used in the other textural elements or with each other, the question of harmonic language is directly linked to that of pitch class. Ultimately this means most works are atonal. However, as a result of the eclectic tendency mentioned in the last chapter, a few pieces (like the first movement of the 'cello sonata) do have a prescribed harmonic language according to some sort of pre-compositional decision. One such decision was made before setting Hedd Wyn's beutifully evocative and pastoral englyn in the four part female voices vocal miniature Haul Ar Fynydd. The piece was composed using pitch classes 0, 2, 4, 6 and 8, meaning that the piece has a distinctly 'whole tone' feel to it. Elsewhere in the portfolio, The Old Valley (the third piece in the song cycle In Chains for soprano and piano) which was written (with a sub-dedication) as a sixtieth birthday gift for John Metcalf- inhabits its dedicatee's preferred harmonic world and contains only 'white note' harmonies.

#### Form/Architecture

There are, in my music, certain architectonic devices and approaches to form/structure which I have used repeatedly and which I have come to depend upon as an integral part of my lingua franca. Although present in both instrumental and vocal works in the portfolio, the first of these pertains to text (specifically Welsh poetry composed in strict metre). There exists (in Welsh strict metre poetry) the concept of the *odl* (lit. rhyme). This describes the poet's application of cynghanedd (as introduced in the first chapter) to the type of metre he/she chooses to write in as well as the rhyming words themselves. This is something I have been acutely aware of while writing my portfolio and have used as a structuring tool; most notably in the vocal works where (more often than not) I have used the *odl* prescribed by the poet to shape the vocal line in the score. In *In Chains*, although the texts are all in English they were all (in part) selected because they are written in cynghanedd (famously difficult in English). Indeed, in writing this work I quite deliberately composed the soprano line to highlight the prescribed odl. This is, however, nothing new and perhaps shows the influence of other Welsh speaking composers setting texts in their native language. Indeed, it is present in the music of Guto Pryderi Puw (in his Dawns y sêr for example) and not least in the Welsh language settings of my former teacher Rhian Samuel, most notably in her Cerddi Hynafol / Ancient Songs, as this example from Crys y Mab (the third piece in the cycle) demonstrates:



Ex. 7: Rhian Samuel's Cerddi Hynafol /Ancient Songs (3. Crys y Mab) (bb.25-28).

Here Samuel sets the *cynghanedd* between the words 'lydan' and 'buan' identically and rhythmically positioned over the same part of the piano's triplet accompanying figure. By contrast, in my own vocal settings, while the textural context (i.e. accompaniment) of the rhyme changes the vocal line itself preserves and highlights the *odl*, as we see in this example from *In Chains*:



Ex. 8: In Chains (V. My First Love Was A Plover) (bb. 4-7)

As mentioned above, the context of the *odl* is different in this example although the vocal line preserves it: the *cynghanedd llusg* between the words 'love' and 'plover' being set to the identical descending minor third glissando. This approach to text setting, although most evident in *In Chains* is, in fact identifiable (in part) in all the vocal works in the portfolio: in the case of *Haul Ar Fynydd* while the text setting is more fragmentary and the *cynghanedd* is not always set in the same way as in the examples above, the syllables which pertain to the rhyme itself ('oedd' in this instance) are always set the same way: the contrary motion glissando.

Furthermore the same approach can be found in the instrumental works in my portfolio: most obviously in *Mydrau Barddonol* ('Poetic Metres') for eight players. The piece is, in fact, a suite of musical *englynion* (englyns) including an example of each of the eight different types of englyn metre. Since there are no words there is, obviously no prescribed *cynghanedd* and as such no *odl* to set. However, since in writing the piece I followed the syllable patterns prescribed by the various englyn metres there was a sub-conscious 'rhyme' of sorts and as with the approach taken in *Haul Ar Fynydd*, it is this which has the same music each time. Various attitudes are taken regarding what exactly constitutes rhyme in music ranging from a recurring chord voicing (as heard in in *IV. Englyn Unodl Crwc*) to repetitions in texture, instrumentation and/or gesture (elsewhere in the suit). Guto Pryderi Puw takes a similar approach in his 2001 work *Trioled* (which also takes a strict metre poem as a starting point: *triolet*). In his note for this work (which only contains two types of line 'a' and 'b') Puw explains: "To achieve musical allegory of the original poetic measure I concentrated on the orchestration which is divided into two contrasting sub-

sections ['a' and 'b'], the string instruments (including the piano) and the saxophone and keyboard duet."<sup>8</sup>

*Fel Cathod Bach* ('Like Kittens', the last movement of *Ystwyth: String Quartet no. 1*) also requires discussion here: this piece is a sort of Grace Williams tribute and as such has a number of features reminiscent of her work. Most notably perhaps are the scotch snaps and the sharpened fourths, although the movement also borrows its structure from Williams' score *Penillion*. In her note for that work Williams writes:

Penillion is the Welsh word for stanzas. Penillion singing, traditional in Wales for centuries, is essentially narrative in style. It gives the impression of being a free improvisation, sung to the accompaniment of a Welsh air played on the harp. This orchestral suite breaks with tradition in many respects: it does not include any Welsh airs, and there is not always a contrast between the Penillion and the accompaniment. Nevertheless, it retains the narrative style, stanza form, and many melodic and rhythmic characteristics of traditional Penillion.<sup>9</sup>

In my quartet the recitative character and the contrast between solo and accompaniment characteristic of the tradition are retained, as is the improvisatory feel. Like Williams' work, mine includes no authentic Welsh airs, opting instead for a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Puw, Guto Pryderi : Notes (from Trioled) (AWY Music Bethesda 2001)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Williams, Grace: *Notes* (from *Penillion*) (Oxford University Press London 1992)

homogenous pianissimo string texture as the members of the quartet take turns in having the narrative-like solos. I, however, have not tried to use the traditional melodic and rhythmic characteristics in my solos, instead using a musical language more influenced by Williams' idiom. The solos themselves (all further examples of englyn *unodl union*) use the same approach as *Mydrau Barddonol* and *Haul Ar Fynydd*, preserving the rhyme each time it occurs.

In many of the works submitted here there is a recurring approach to form/structure: frequently I find that I am writing in two (or more) interlocked and simultaneously developing structures. This, I believe, since the first completed work in the portfolio was *Blodeugerdd* was probably initially influenced by Brittens' *Songs and Proverbs of William Blake*, a work I studied in detail while writing my own cycle. I also recall a memorable performance of (my supervisor) Powers' *The Memory Room* (for solo piano) which employs a similar technique. Other composers too have been known to use form of this type, ranging from Adès (in *Arcadiana*) to Tansy Davies (in her 2001 piano score *Loopholes and lynchpins*). In addition to these, Joseph Phibbs says 'I often find myself trying to write music in which different structures are evolving simultaneously...<sup>10</sup>

With regard to my own compositions included here the most relevant examples (excluding *Blodeugerdd* and *Cromlech: Viola Sonata* which I shall be discussing later) are to be found in all pieces which have multiple movements. *Mydrau* 

<sup>10</sup> Phibbs, Joseph: http://www.bmic.co.uk/Composers/cv\_details.asp?ComposerID=1678

*Barddonol* ('Poetic Metres') is cast in eight movements and has two cycles taking place at once: the odd numbered movements (which all use the same material as a starting point), and the even numbered movements (which all exhibit some sort of eclectic tendency). A similar case is to be found in *Rhai Llestri* (*'Some* Vessels'), although here the form is more developed and combined with the 'musical poetry' discussed above. In this seven movement work the even and odd numbered movements each take (and interlock) two highly polarised types of music before coming together in the seventh movement to resolve the conflict. Additionally, movements one, three, five and seven would form a musical *englyn unodl union* (if extracted) and play continuously.

Overall there is a dependency on traditional forms in the portfolio. It includes a string quartet, an overture and sonatas: titles alluding to historic forms which today carry a vast range of connotations regarding exactly what one might expect to find within them. Indeed, it is fair to say that one would find all these things in the pieces included here (although not perhaps in the manner that one might expect!). Indeed, in each instance a piece has a title (normally in Welsh) and is sub-titled *Viola Sonata* (or the like). To me the Welsh word (frequently programmatic or concerned with the initial inspiration for the piece) is its title and the English sub-titles/translations have been added for accessibility. Despite this, the English sub-titles are equally relevant to what the piece is: all the works described as '*Sonata*' relate in a way to traditional sonata form, and each contain their own expositions, developments and recapitulations (of sorts). The word sonata of course comes from the Latin *sonare* (to sound) as opposed to *cantare* (to sing) and simply means a played (as opposed to a sung) piece; indeed it is with this justification that some composers (e.g. Macmillan)

call pieces sonatas when sometimes they have little to do with the traditional connotations of the term.

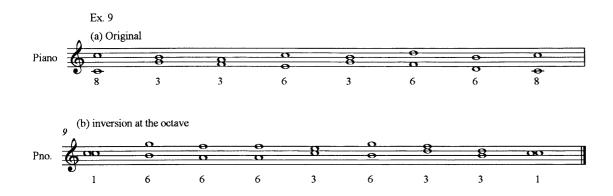
There are, of course, examples of composers literally using architecture as a starting point in their music, most notably Xenakis in his *Metastasis* (1954) whose dense glissandi relate to the vague parabolic shapes of the short lived Phillips Pavilion at the 1958 Brussels World's Fair (which the composer himself largely designed). More recently and openly influenced by Xenakis, Tansy Davies has been known to base her music on the buildings of Iraqi architect Zaha Hadid (in orchestral scores).

#### Texture

As mentioned previously my approach to texture is concerned with multiple elements which function as layers or blocks that can be rotated about each other so that they are heard with altering and developing relationships to each other. The technique is comparable with mosaics in art: indeed a number of composers who have used similar devices have titled scores *mosaic* (Rhian Samuel and David Wynne, for example). As mentioned before, the technique is related to that of invertible counterpoint. In his New Grove article William Drabkin introduces the discipline thus:

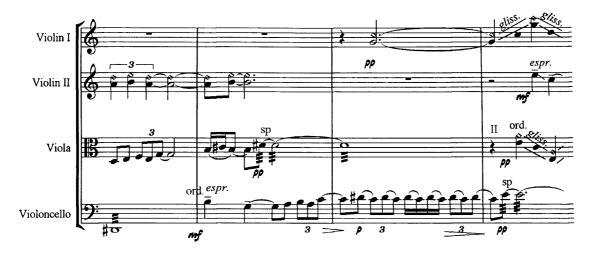
The contrapuntal design of two or more parts in a polyphonic texture so that any of these parts may serve as the highest part or as the bass. Invertible counterpoint involving two (three, four) parts is called double (triple, quadruple) counterpoint.

The underlying principle of invertible counterpoint is the INVERSION of intervals with respect to some fixed interval. For instance, ex. 9a shows a cantus firmus (given in semibreves) with a note-against-note solution beneath, and in ex, 9b the same two parts are inverted 'at the octave'. The lower part is moved up an octave, and the intervals between the two parts become the complements of those in the original setting: unisons become octaves, 3rds become 6ths and 6ths become 3rds.<sup>11</sup>

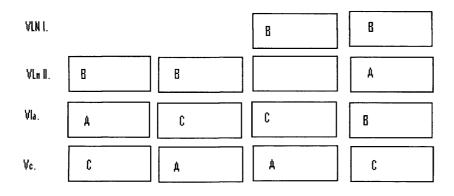


The approach taken in my own music is, however, less concerned with the intervallic classes and more with a simple process of rotation around an imaginary 'axis' (often a unison pitch or octave). In this example (10a) from *Aber* ('Estuary') (the first movement of *Ystwyth: String Quartet no.1*) which demonstrates the rotational technique, the texture is constructed from three elements (blocks): 'a' the modal thematic material, 'b' the artificial harmonic and 'c' the pianissimo tremolando. The rotation is perhaps clearer in the diagram (ex. 10b)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Drabkin, William: *Invertible Counterpoint* from New Grove vol. 12 (Macmillan London 2001) 512

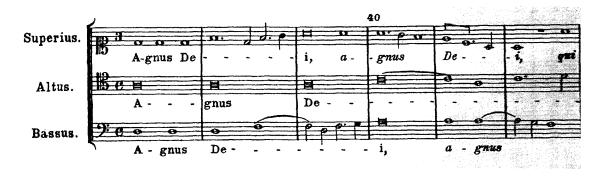


Ex. 10a: Ystwyth: String Quartet no. One I. (bb. 10-13)



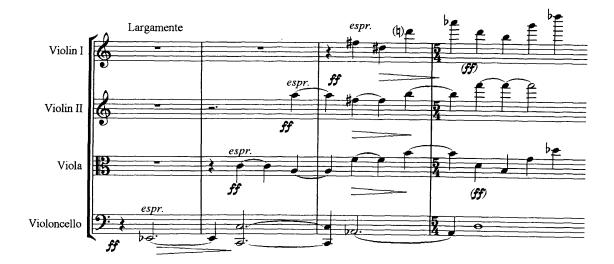
Ex. 10b: 'Textural diagram' Ystwyth String Quartet no. One I. (bb. 10-13)

There is one other significant recurring device which I have used (at some points) to create textures in a number of the pieces in the portfolio. The mensuration or polation canon is a renaissance device which I recall first encountering while playing the crumhorn in an early music group in Somerset. The device (which might be compared to heterophony) is like a type of imitative counterpoint which sees two (or more) voices playing/singing the same melodic line at the same time but each at their own speed. Examples are to be found in works by Tallis and Josquin Des Prés:



Ex. 11: Josquin Des Prés's Missa L'Homme Armé Agnus Dei I. (bb.37-42)

In my portfolio the technique is employed in pieces such as *Meddylun* ('Mindscape') (which I will discuss in the next chapter) and *Ystwyth: String Quartet no. 1.* Unlike the renaissance example my own works use a unison/octave pitch between any two parts to give rise to another statement of the line at that transposition. Thus the canon is harmonically/intervalically accumulative and harmonically denser with each added part. The example here shows this technique in practice in a four-part texture:



Ex. 12: Mensuration canon from Ystwyth: String Quartet no. 1 (bb. 98-101)

# **Chapter Three – A Closer Look**

This final chapter will be devoted to a more detailed study of three of the works at the core of my portfolio: *Blodeugerdd* ('Anthology', the earliest completed score) for baritone and piano, *Meddylun* ('Mindscape', the most recent work) for orchestra, and *Cromlech: Viola Sonata* for viola and piano. The viola sonata dates from about halfway through my research and can be used to illuminate certain practices 'mid-development'. Additionally the differences in forces/scale of the three works mean that they can be seen to represent the extremes of my compositional 'poles'. My approach will not be methodologically analytical, since I write from the unique perspective of being able to say with absolute certainty what my intentions were and what compositional tools/processes I was employing at the time, but will, therefore be broadly empirical and rooted in observation and comparison.

## Blodeugerdd ('Anthology')

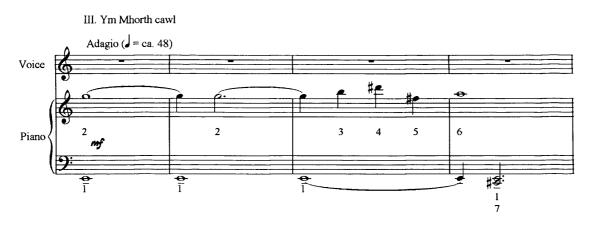
This work was the first completed score from my period of research with which I was happy (although the first movement of what later grew into Y Garreg Ddial: 'Cello Sonata had also been written by this time). The initial impetus for writing the piece came when I was introduced to baritone Jeremy Huw Williams through a mutual friend and he graciously accepted my offer to write him a piece. Around the same time friend and poet Lisa Mansel lent me her copy of Blodeugerdd O Farddoniaeth Gymraeg yr Ugeinfed Ganrif ('An anthology of Twentieth Century Welsh [language] Poetry'). As I read the collection I became fascinated by the changing compositional styles of the various poets and hit upon the idea of setting a text from each quarter of the century in the piece for Jeremy. As it happens, the two central texts are from nearly the same period; but since their authors worked principally in their respective quarters of the century (albeit with some overlap) and I am very fond of the poems, I decided to allow them. The earliest sketches for the piece are for the first song Y Pabi *Coch* ('The Red Poppy'), and do in fact survive (almost intact) in the final score. Like the 'cello piece I discussed in the last chapter (which pre-dates these sketches by only a matter of days) the material here is modal in nature using the scale C, D flat, E flat, F, G, A, B, (C) as a starting point for the harmonic and melodic language. As with the 'cello piece this decision came about as the result of an improvisation at the piano. This of course means that, also in common with Afon Llwyd ('Grey River') the first song in the cycle uses the Hypophrygian mode as its harmonic and melodic starting point. However, less like the 'cello piece but more akin to the Vaughan Williams example (ex. 3) in the last chapter, the intervals of the tone, semi-tone, fifth and minor third seem predominant. The song unfolds in a sort of ritornello form with a high and

very free piano figure repeatedly recurring (although in different guises) between stanzas of the text. The accompaniment takes two forms: for the most part it is a supportive harmonic wash around the voice, frequently providing its pitches. On the other hand there are points (normally within the *ritornelli* passages), where the piano moves rhythmically, even if not always harmonically against the singer.

It was after completing the first draft for this song that it occurred to me that the Vaughan Williams-like writing was almost contemporary with the text. This realisation gave way to a starting point for not just the next song, since they were initially written in sequence but for the rest of the cycle. As it turned out, although the songs were drafted in the correct order, the third and fourth pieces underwent substantial revision before they were sent to Jeremy.

The second song *Ym Mhorth cawl* ('In Porthcawl') contains two eclectic references tying it to the second quarter of the twentieth century: The first of these is serial material referring to the composers of the Second Viennese School, all active during the relevant period. While the style of the serial technique is not obviously akin to that of any one of these composers (as shown in ex. 13), it is perhaps closest to Berg's idiom since there are various harmonic implications in the row and its employment. The rules of traditional serialism are sometimes broken according to whimsy by using small retrogrades mid-row; but for the most part the character and shape of the row is preserved. The row and an analysis of its initial employment are given here:





### Ex 13a: tone row from Ym Mhorthcawl ('In Porthcawl')

Ex 13b: serial technique in *Blodeugerdd* (bb.56-60)

This tentative exploration of the tone row continues beyond the given example to explore the row in its entirety, albeit with a number of 'rule breaks' to form the piano's introductory material. The movement then gives way to the second eclectic reference which takes the form of a quite public 'nod' to the work of Britten, who was of course well established as a composer by this time. The reference is not, however concerned with work of Britten's dating from the relevant quarter of the twentieth century but has more in common with the first song in his *Songs and Proverbs of William Blake* of 1965 (a work which I will return to in due course). The exact nature of the reference is concerned with the texture, to be precise the *agitato* quaver quintuplets of the piano in opposition with the comparatively 'four square' setting of the text with the parts coming together for the ends of phrases. Like the first piece, this song also unfolds in a sort of *ritornello* form with developments of the serial material returning between verses of the text and then again at the movement's close, ending with a retrograde of the opening material at prime one.

The third song  $T\hat{y}$ 'r *Ysgol* ('The School House') sets a text which is almost a contemporary of the second movement's, so there are similarities in the musical referencing of the settings. This song's accompaniment also takes serialism as a starting point, although here it is the total serialism of Pierre Boulez as explored in works such as *Structures, book I* for two pianos to which the texture refers. There are three simultaneous rows at work in the recurring piano episodes (this movement also being cast in a sort of *ritornello* form). The employment of the rows in this instance is less rigorous except in the case of pitch where the row is always maintained: The duration and dynamic rows are of interest since they are of unconventional lengths (containing three and seven values respectively); their employment however, seems on the whole more intuitive. This also to applies to articulations which despite recurring in a predictable order were not composed according to a prescribed serial pattern. This example gives the three rows and their initial employment:



ppp, pp, p, np, mf, f, ff

Ex 14a: pitch, duration and dynamic rows from  $T\hat{y}$  'r Ysgol ('The School House')



Ex 14b: total serial-like technique in *Blodeugerdd* (bb.158)

The final song in the cycle is the closest to direct pastiche and takes the form of a Welsh folk song, a reference to Berio's *Folk Songs* of 1964 but also to the increase in the number of composers (re)turning to tonality in the last quarter of the twentieth century. The constant spread chords and triplet figurations of the piano are to my ear not unlike the repeated air played on the harp during a performance of traditional *pennillion* singing (as introduced in the first chapter).

Britten's *Songs and Proverbs of William Blake* for baritone and piano (Op. 74) was one of the scores I spent a great time studying before and while writing my own baritone cycle. Indeed, it was this work which gave me the idea to include interludes between the songs using newly commissioned words which act as contemporary 'touchstones' to the ear, as I hear them. It is these interludes which separate the songs that give the overall cycle a *ritornello*-like structure which is echoed in the internal structure of many of the songs themselves. In contrast to the songs, the recitative-like interludes are all spoken, use prepared piano, and take spectralism as a starting point for their harmonic languages, all opening with the same distinct ascending movement through the harmonic series. Composed by Lowri Roberts, the newly written words of these passages act in a manner akin to a Greek chorus, providing an internal critique on the cycle: initially mocking but later approving of the work as it progresses. This internal small-scale cycle running concurrently with the larger scale cycle of the songs themselves means the piece might be seen to fold in on itself, in a way.

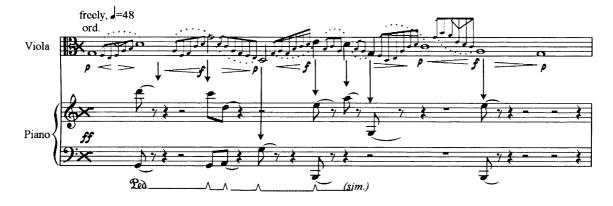
### Cromlech: Viola Sonata

Halfway through my research and shortly after completing *Y* Garreg Ddial: 'Cello Sonata, I was asked for a piece by Philip Heyman. There are, as we shall see, similarities between the two sonatas. This piece's title refers to Cromlech Pentre Ifan, a megalithic burial site on the West Wales coast. The location sees one huge rock supported by four smaller ones: this was the initial impetus for the piece's five movement structure. As with the 'cello piece I was conscious that by calling it a sonata it should relate somehow to traditional sonata form. The work in fact comprises two simultaneous cycles: movements 1, 3 and 5 can be compared to the exposition, development and recapitulation sections of traditional sonata form, while numbers 2 and 4 are (mostly) solo interludes using poetic metres as a starting point. The two subject materials for the piece were musical responses to the landscape around the Cromlech and can both be related to the earlier 'cello sonata: the first subject, akin to the example above (ex. 5) from the last movement of *Y* Garreg Ddial: 'Cello Sonata, is a response to the rock of the *cromlech* and is a jagged and angular figure using a short geometric shape as a starting point. Tansy Davies' viola piece

*Small Black Stone* (2000) sees a similarly angular musical response to rock. The second subject material, a response to the unspoilt hillside running down to the sea is more akin to the first movement of *Y Garreg Ddial: 'Cello Sonata*. It takes the form of a (Vaughan Williams-like) flowing mixolydian line. Both subjects are given here in their initial forms:



Ex 15a: first subject material source shape from Cromlech: Viola Sonata



Ex 15b: second subject material, Cromlech: Viola Sonata (bb. 48)

The second movement is the first of the two englyn-based interludes for (mostly) solo viola, and is *unodl union*. Philip Heyman first approached me for a piece during a concert which included an earlier work of mine *Gorsedd Pont-y-pŵl* which used the physical measurements of a stone circle to predetermine its overall structure and harmonic rhythm, a technique I returned to in *Cylch* ('Cycle'), the second movement of *Ystwyth: String Quartet No. 1*. Philip plays on a *Pellegrina pomposa* model viola: a five string instrument that is ergonomically designed to project better. The instrument's design means its shape is unconventional having one slightly exaggerated shoulder. He asked me if I could somehow incorporate the instrument's

design into my piece for him, as I had the stone circle in *Gorsedd Pont-y-pŵl*. To assist me in this challenge the following 'technical' drawing was delivered to my work-space:

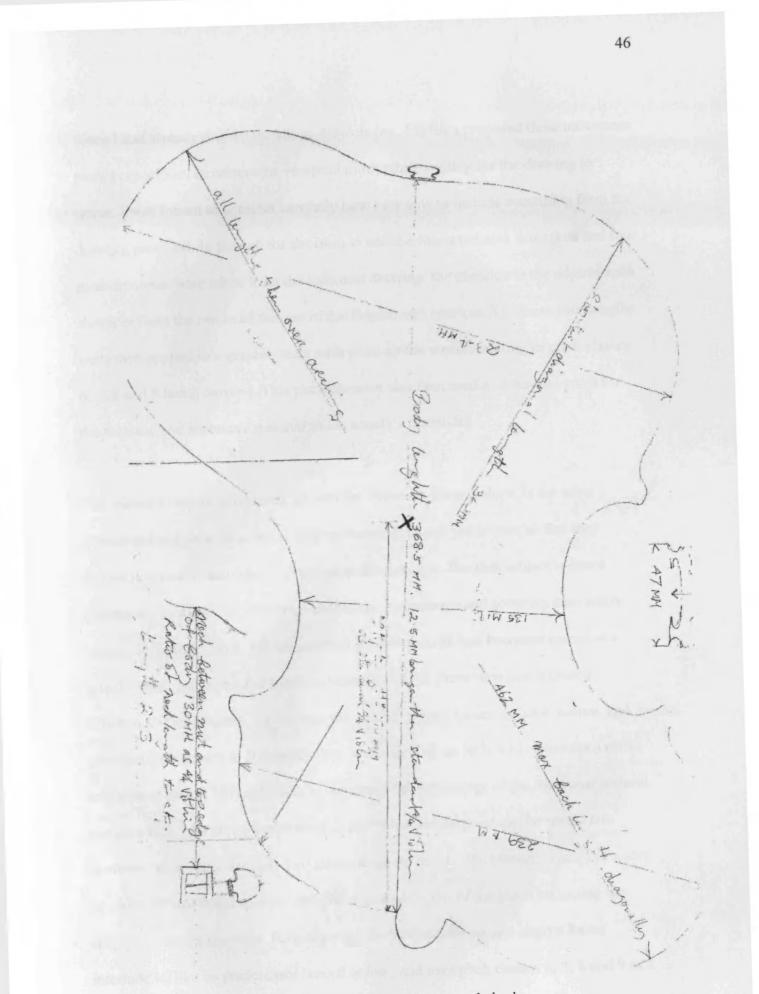


Fig 1: technical drawing for Philip's viola pomposa's body

Since I had already drafted the above subjects (ex. 15) for a proposed three movement piece (exposition, development, recapitulation) while waiting for the drawing to arrive, I was forced to consider carefully how best now to include something from the drawing provided. In the end the decision to add the two interludes was taken and four measurements were taken from the technical drawing: the distance to the edge of cach shoulder from the centre of the end of the fingerboard (marked X). These four lengths were then applied to a graphic scale with pitch up the x axis resulting in pitch classes 6, 7, 8 and 9 being derived. This pitch class set was then used as a starting point for the melodic and harmonic material in the sonata's interludes.

The sonata's central movement, as with the stones of the *cromlech*, is the most substantial and sees the original subject materials developed in turn so that they evolve to contain each other's principle characteristics. The first subject is heard (frequently sequentially) moving between the instruments and covering their entire ranges. Eventually (at b. 86) the material is slowed down and becomes spread in a broad, highly polarised and spacious treatment of the shape now heard shared between all three voices. By contrast the second subject looses its 'free' nature, and after being subjected to precise rhythms and speeding up (at b. 113) becomes a manic and violent dance. Throughout this movement the beginnings of the rotational texture device which I previously compared to invertible counterpoint can be seen. Here however, since there are only two elements to the texture the essence is more of a sort of imitative call and response; with the accented chords of the piano becoming the snap pizzicato of the viola. Following this movement, the second englyn-based interlude is, like its predecessor '*unodl union*', and uses pitch classes 6, 7, 8 and 9 as a

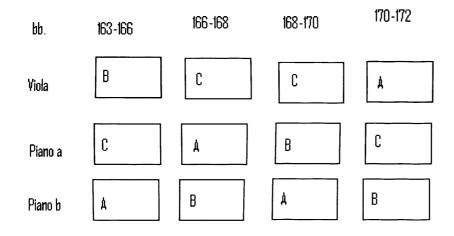
starting point. This time however, the piano is lured by the material and adds its own timbre.

The final movement sees a synthesis with both subjects returning to their original states but retaining some of their 'learnt' qualities from the development: the second subject now has a strict rhythm forced upon it; the first retains some of the more polarised nature. Throughout the final passage of this movement a number of what I consider my principal compositional fingerprints can be seen, as this example shows:



Ex. 16: Cromlech: Viola Sonata (bb.162-172)

This passage shows the initial source shape for the first subject material now used in the developed, freer way creating the first example in my research of an intuitively derived line according to a set of pitch classes; here using classes 1, 3 and 4 (all found in the original source shape). This example is also the earliest use of the 'rotational' textural approach using more than two elements, exemplified here:



Ex 17: textural diagram, Cromlech: Viola Sonata (bb. 163-172)

Here we see the melody/line ('A'), the quiet *tremolandi* ('B') and the accented chords/*pizzicati* ('C') being rotated about each other in this three element texture.

# Meddylun ('Mindscape')

This eight minute concert overture was the last work to be completed during the course of my PhD. The first sketches for the piece take the form of a sort of textural projection planning the rotation of the textural elements around each other and through the different sections of the orchestra. I had already decided (pre-compositionally) that the work would (sic) to be built using three basic source materials. In 2000 (during the final year of my degree) I suffered a major stroke while playing the cor anglais in college. Shortly after my brain surgery and while in intensive therapy I made a few short piano sketches for my friend and fellow student Peter Billington:

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Fig 2: 'Stroke' piano sketch one

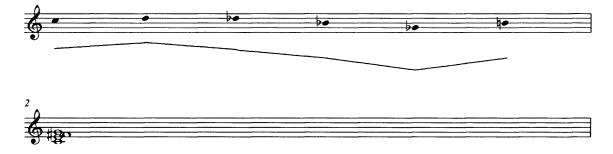
I saw writing *Meddylun* (the work's title is a suggested Welsh version of the English word 'mindscape') as a chance to revisit the 'stroke' sketches (there are three in total), thereby salvaging some material from this otherwise difficult period in my life. Eventually, after some time studying the pieces I picked the section (circled in fig. 2 above) as a source for the pitch classes used to create intervals in the melodic/linear material in the work. This decision resulted in pitch classes 1, 2, 3 and 4 being selected as a starting point for the melodic/linear material. On further consideration and because of the potentially highly chromatic set of intervals this pitch class set might produce (as it stood) I decided to add class 5 to the group, an interval used heavily in the third sketch and adding the possibility of the perfect fourth to the melodic material. This decision also informed the second building block for the piece: a major chord with an augmented fourth (e.g. C, E, F sharp and G) built to include the only interval not obtainable from the pitch class set pertaining to the melodic material. The third source material (and the only direct quotation in the portfolio) is ten chords from the start of the early Welsh hymn *O lesu, Derbyn Ni*.

These three source materials are subjected to various distortions/treatments, as we shall see in due course, but are used to 'fill out' the initial sketch for the piece concerning the rotational texture:

Figure	A	В	C	D	Е	F	G	Н	Ι
Wind	A	A	A	В	В	C	С	B/C	A
Brass	В	С	С	A	A	В	В	B/C	С
Strings	С	В	В	С	С	А	А	B/C	В

## Ex 18: Textural chart for *Meddylun* (complete)

Derived from the first sketches for the work, this chart (where 'A' is the melodic material, 'B' the chord and 'C' the hymn) remains accurate for the finished score, albeit with additional freer passages at the beginning and end, and the inclusion of percussion. The source materials (and one possible shape for the melodic pitch class set) are identified here:



Ex 19: melodic pitch class set ('A') and chord ('B') 'building blocks' from *Meddylun*.

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	:d.ta	1,	:d :r.d	f	:f,	:fe	S	:	:s,.d	d	

Fig 4: Source material for Meddylun hymn quotation ('C').

The inclusion of the hymn quotation here is the most obvious instance of the Ivesian aesthetic mentioned in the first chapter: Ives uses hymn quotes in numerous works (e.g. *The Housatonic at Stockbridge* from *Three Places In New England (An Orchestral Set)* and *Symphonies 1 & 4)*. *Meddylun* opens with a flourish with the entire orchestra playing material from pitch class set 'A', as identified above. From **A** the strings play a serene and drawn out statement of the hymn material in its original form. Above this cantus firmus-like hearing of the hymn material, wind solos play fleeting figures using material derived form pitch class set 'A', echoing the ascending figures of the opening bars. The brass section punctuates the texture with an independently developing figure using the chord voicing at specific points predetermined by the decimal points of the mathematical number Pi (3.141 etc.). In fact the positioning of the chord voicing throughout the piece is a temporal

representation of Pi to 80 decimal points, with the decimal place values relating directly to the number of beats rest between interjections of the chord. Figures **B** to **D** see a drastic change in mood: although still in the wind instruments (but now with the support of the harp and pitched percussion) the melodic material is now transformed into a dance-like figure racing up and down sequentially through the section's tessitura. The pi-determined punctuating chords cut through the texture on pizzicato and later *col legno* ricochet strings. The muted brass play the hymn tune which now appears in its first distortion. In order to better understand the hymn tune and provide a more approachable starting point for any distortions I was to apply to it, I converted the solfege notation of the original into a series of numbers for a matrix by labeling do 1, re 2, mi 3 etc. resulting in the following numerical matrix:

3	1	3	1	2	3	4	5	3	2
1	6	5	6	7	1	7	1	1	7
5	3	3	3	5	5	5	5	5	5
1	6	3	6	5	1	2	3	l	5

T. C	TT		. •
H10 3	Hymn	quotation	matrix
IIg J.	11 9 11 11 1	quotation	mania.

By taking this matrix and applying different systems to the numbers, I was able to produce a variety of distortions to the hymn while still retaining its original proportions. This first application takes the approach 1=C, 2=D, 3=E etc. using a white note modal scale. The passage from **D** to **F** sees the texture rotate so that the

hymn is now in the *lontano* front desks of the *divisi* strings which play within the harmonic series of the *pizzicato* notes from the remainder of their sections, using a distortion based on the chromatic scale: 1=C, 2=C sharp, 3=D etc. Over the distant string chords muted trombones play more sedate material using the intervals from the melodic source material while the wind interject with an independently developing *staccato* figure using the chord voicing and positioned according to pi. In the following passage (up to G) we hear a further rotation of the source materials: the hymn is now a wind chorale, the stopped horns and trumpets using cap mutes punctuate using the chord voicing and the melodic material in the strings takes the form of a *martellato* left hand mensuration canon:



Ex 20: mensuration canon form *Meddylun* (bb.105-113)

Figure **G** sees a return of material reminiscent of the opening with all the orchestra playing fleeting figures relating to the melodic source material. The tuned percussion play the punctuating chord and as the texture thickens we reach the work's climax at **H**. The climax takes the form of a *tutti* seeing the entire orchestra playing the most chromatically distorted statement of the hymn in the piece. Here however, the distortion is achieved through combining the hymn matrix with the pitch classes from the punctuating chord source material. The pitches are obtained by applying pitch classes from the 'stinger' chord ('B') to the numerical hymn matrix ('C') using the following system:

Pitch	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
From								
Matrix								
Pitch	2	3	5	6	7	8	7	2
Class								
From								
Chord								

Fig 6: 'stinger' chord pitch class orientated hymn distortion matrix

This passage also features the tam-tam and power drill in the percussion; the latter an oblique tongue-in-cheek reference to the burr holes procedure I had undergone and to the brackets and screws which survive in my head to this day. The climax hymn statement plays for durations dictated (in crotchet beats) by the next 10 integers of pi.

From figure I we hear a development of the earlier dance-like material, again on wind solos supported by the chord ('B') in the *arpeggiated pizzicato* strings. The muted brass play a version of the hymn tune, now in a less chromatic form by way of resolution. At J the music is again reminiscent of the opening but this time with the orchestra sharing material from all three structural elements: solo wind, vibraphone and 'celli play the hymn (now completely resolved and heard as it was at the outset). The brass and upper strings share melodic fragments relating to 'A' and/or the chord 'B'. K sees the texture become more fragmentary as the last statement of the hymn fades before finally it thickens again and races to its conclusion with a re-statement of earlier material.

### In Conclusion

To complete this commentary it seems most appropriate that I say a little about my current compositional activities and plans for the future. My current work in progress, will resume and be something of a departure for me. Although cast in a familiar genre: song cycle, this time for countertenor and piano, commissioned by lestyn Davies. It will be the first time that I have set a text in English not written by a Welsh poet. The chosen words are Tiffany Atkinson's Four Poems For from her debut collection Kink and Particle and have been selected for their clear and powerful imagery and stark contrasts and juxtapositions. Since there is neither cynghanedd nor odl to adhere to (that is, no internal prescribed rhyming system, either real or imagined), the setting will, as in the instrumental works in this portfolio not relating to poetic metres, be more intuitive. The text is made up of four short poems and the initial sketches show them linked with piano interludes to create a single span of music not unlike *Blodeugerdd*'s structure. Scores yet to be started in any way include an overture using Welsh folk materials as a starting point for medium sized orchestra and a wind quintet. In these works I hope to carry forward a number of the compositional techniques and tools I have been using and developing throughout the course of this PhD: most significantly, the rotational textural device used in this portfolio with up to three elements, but in these new works exploring the possibilities of increasing the number of elements used. Since I have had pleasing results with this technique so far I believe it can continue to bear musical fruits and be developed further. In the case of the wind quintet for example it would be possible to explore textures containing up to five elements that might be rotated about one another and the orchestral piece offers the possibility of denser textures still. I also hope to further

develop the linear/melodic device. In the works for large forces from his arborescence period (e.g. 1971's *Erikthon* for piano and orchestra) Xenakis was able to create complex frameworks of arborescence patterns with large scale tree shapes spread throughout the orchestra (in some instances with certain instruments only contributing one or two notes to the overall shape). However, the hearing of the orchestral *tutti* produces the shape in its entirety in sonic event (whether the listener is conscious of it or not). Similarly with my arbitrary line produced according to a limited set of intervals the line might be spread throughout an ensemble so that only the hearing of all the parts together will reproduce the line in its entirety. This 'sharing' of the line might also be likened to Klangfarbenmelodie as employed by Webern and Schoenberg, the latter perhaps most notably in his *Five Pieces for Orchestra* (Op. 16).

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# Blodeugerdd

Blodeugerdd ('Anthology') is a set of four songs and three interludes, written for Jeremy Huw Williams and Nigel Foster. The four songs form an anthology of twentieth century Welsh (language) poetry, each taking its text from a poet working in each of the four quarters of the twentieth century (the first from the period 1900-1925, the second from 1925-1950 etc.). A second 'anthology' also runs through the work: this takes the form of a historical survey of twentieth century compositional approaches. To this end each of the texts is set to music typical of its era and musical references are made to composers of each period (Vaughan Williams, Britten and Berg, Boulez and Berio respectively). The interludes separating the songs act as contemporary touchstones and use especially written couplets by Lowri Roberts (to whom I am hugely grateful). These are more recitative-like in style and use prepared piano.

Instrumentation:

Baritone and piano

Duration c20 minutes

**Performance Notes** 

\*Piano preparation: A house brick (used as a mute) should be wrapped in a duster and placed on the strings inside the piano (between the player and the dampers). This should affect:

\*Sut I baratoi y piano: Rhaid rhoi bricsen ty (mewn cadach) I mewn ir piano ar y llinynau (rhwng y chwaraewr ar mudanod). Er mwyn effeithio:

**8**15 \ || (length of brick) Pianc downwrds from this pitch)

### Cerddi Blodeugerdd:

### I Y Pabi Coch (I.D. Hooson)

Roedd gwlith y bore ar dy foch Yn ddafnau arian, flodyn coch, A haul Mehefin drwy'r prynhawn Yn bwrw'i aur i'th gwpan llawn.

Tithau ymhlith dy frodyr fyrdd Yn dawnsio'n hoyw ar gwrlid gwyrdd Cynefin fro dy dylwyth glân, A'th sidan wisg yn fflam o dân.

Ond rhywun â didostur law A'th gipiodd o'th gynefin draw I estron fro, a chyn y wawr Syrthiaist a'th waed yn lliwio'r llawr.

### II Toriad Un (Lowri Roberts)

O'r Pabi I'r Porth ag ynddo gawl, Beth ydyw'r cyswllt, onid oes sawl? Gyfansoddwr, gerddor, cymaint dy frys, Pam uno'r rhain heb 'styried, heb chwys?

### III Ym Mhorth- cawl (William Evans (Wil Ifan))

Drwy'r dydd daw llef y durtur drist O'i chawell melyn ger y ty. Beth yw ei llais? Rhyw ddwyster pêr A loes caethiwed, gofid cu, A chenedlaethau o hiraeth gwyllt Am rywbeth gollwyd, ddyddiau fu.

Daeth nos, a mud yw'r cawell hesg, Distaw yw miri'r byd y, awr; Ond dros y morfrwyn crwydra cri Y dyfnder lleddf yn disgwyl gwawr,-Y durtur lwyd a gaeodd Duw Tu ôl I'r twyni tywod mawr!

### **Blodeugerdd Poetry:**

### I The Red Poppy (I D Hooson)

The morning dew was on your cheek: a silver droplet, red flower, And the June sunshine through the afternoon filling your cup with gold.

And you amongst your myriad brothers Dancing gayly on a green coverlet. The familiar home of your fair family, Your cloak of silk a flame of fire.

But someone with merciless hand snatched you from your habitat, away: to an alien vale where, before the dawn You fell, your blood colouring the floor.

### II Break One (Lowri Roberts)

From the Poppy to the port and into the mix, what is the connection, aren't there several? Composer, musician despite your urgency, why join these without consideration, without thought?

### III In Porthcawl (William Evans (Wil Ifan))

By day comes the cry of the sad turtledove from its yellow cage near the house. What is its voice? A sweet solemnity: a loved one's imprisoned pain, generations of wild longing, for something lost, days gone by

Night comes, and the rush cage is voiceless; silent is the merriment of the world at this hour. But over the sea-reads a plaintive cry roams: The deep plaintive awaiting dawn the grey turtledove which God has locked beyond the great sand dunes!

#### IV Toriad Dau (Lowri Roberts)

Wil Ifan, glan môr, ffair wyllt y De, Ti Haitsh, ty'r ysgol, tawelych y lle. Nodau - drefnwr, sain – grëwr, paham gwneud hyn,

boddi heniaith ein bairdd â'th fodern sain syn?

#### V Ty'r Ysgol (T. H. Parry-Williams)

Mae'r cyrn yn mygu er pob awel groes, A rhywun yno weithiau'n 'sgubo'r llawr Ac agor y ffenestri, er nad oes Neb uno'n byw ar ôl y chwalfa fawr; Dim ond am fis o wyliau, mwy neu lai, Yn Awst, er mwyn cael seibiant bach o'r dre

A throi o gwmpas dipyn, nes bod rhai Yn synnu'n gweld yn symud hyd y lle; A phawb yn holi beth sy'n peri o hyd I ni, sydd wedi colli tad a mam, Gadw'r hen le, a ninnau hyd y byd,-Ond felly y mae-hi, ac ni wn paham, Onid rhag ofn i'r ddau sydd yn y gro Synhwyro rywsut fod y drws ynghlo.

#### VI Toriad Tri (Lowri Roberts)

Do, las-gerddor, bu hen dynnu coes, ond diolch sydd raid am i ti greu newydd oes, Unaist hen a newydd, Gogledd a De, Cydosod, cydganu, creu cywaith fel gwe.

#### IV Break Two (Lowri Roberts)

Wil Ifan, on the coast, the wild fair of the South,

T. H, the school house, the calm of the place.

Note-arranger, sound-creator, why do this, drown the old language of our poets in this modern sound?

#### V The School House (T. H. Parry-Williams)

The chimneys smoke whatever breezes blow

and someone sometimes sweeps the floor and opens windows wide, though no one now

has lived here since the family went its way

save for a month or so in summer heat, when needing to escape the town we stay and walk the lanes. Then those we meet,

surprised that people occupy this place, will ask why we, with father, mother gone, still feel some obligation to maintain an old house which no one needs now we've moved on.

But there it is — and how can I explain? Perhaps we fear that those two in the ground

Might somehow sense that the door has been locked.

#### VI Breoak Three (Lowri Roberts)

Yes, young musician 'tis but a leg pull, but we have to thank you for creating a new world

Uniting old and new, North and South; set together, sung together, creating a fellowship like a web.

#### VII Nant yr Eira (Iorwerth C. Peate)

Mae tylluanod heno yn Nôl-y-garreg-wen, Mae'r glaswellt tros y buarth a'r muriau'n llwyd gan gen,

a thros ei gardd plu'r gweunydd a daenodd yno'u llen.

Tros fawnog lom Cwmderwen, mae'r plu yn amdo gwyn,

a'r ddwy das fel dau lygaid nad ydynt mwy ynghyn,

a'r sêr yn llu canhwyllau draw ar allorau'r bryn.

Benwynion gwan y gweunydd, beth yw'r hudoliaeth flin

a droes yn sgrwd bob atgof a'r rhostir hen y sgrin?

'Dim, namyn gormes Amser a dry bob gwiw yn grin,'

Ni ddychwel yr hen leisiau yn ol i Fiwla trwy

Flin drais y ddwylath gweryd; bu'n ormod iddynt hwy.

Bydd dawel calon ysig, a phaid a'u disgwyl mwy.

Y mwynder hen a geraist, ffoes ar annychwel hynt,

Diflannodd gyda'r hafau bereidd-dra'r amser gynt.

Nid erys dim ond cryndod plu'r gweunydd yn y gwynt.

#### VII Snow Stream (Iorwerth C. Pete)

The owls, tonight, are behind the white rock,

There is grass over the yard and its walls greying with lichen and over her garden the moor's feathers

have scattered Over Cwn-Derwen's peaty soils, its

feather's are a white shroud, And the two stacks like two eyes which

are no more alight, And the stars a host of candles' over the

hill's altars.

The flimsy white-heads of the meadow, what is this weary enchantment which has turned into a shroud? every remembrance and moorland on the backdrop of the screen. Nothing, except time's oppression which withers each thing of worth

The old voices will not return to Beula through the treason of two-yards of soil; it was too much for them.

Be still, bruised heart, and don't expect them any more.

The old gentleness, which you loved, has flown to return no more along with the summers has disappeared the mellowness of long ago Nothing remains: Just a flutter of the moor's feathers in the wind.

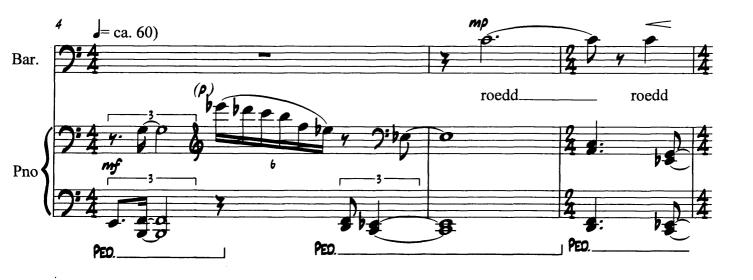
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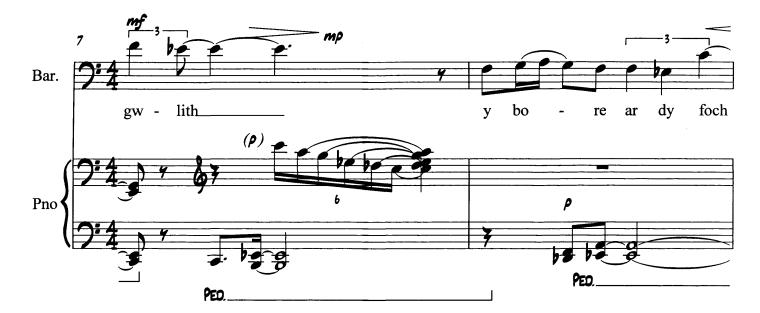
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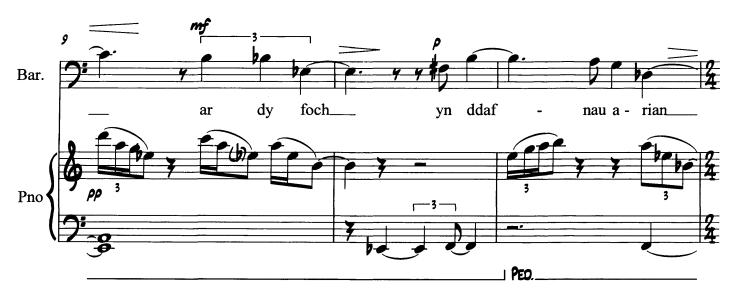
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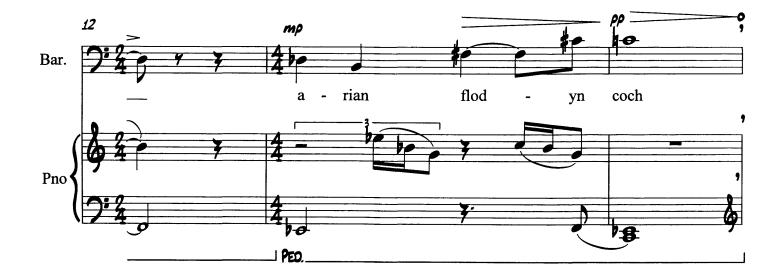
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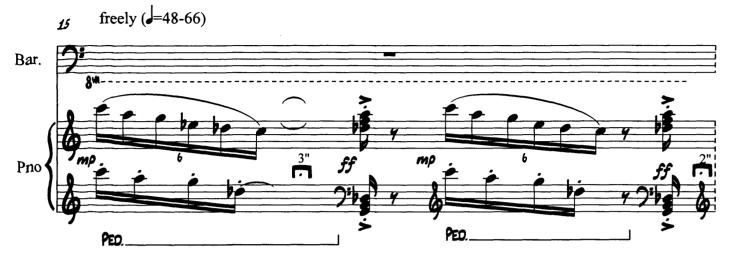


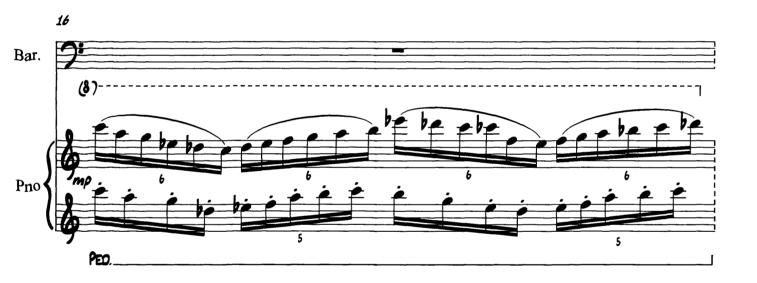


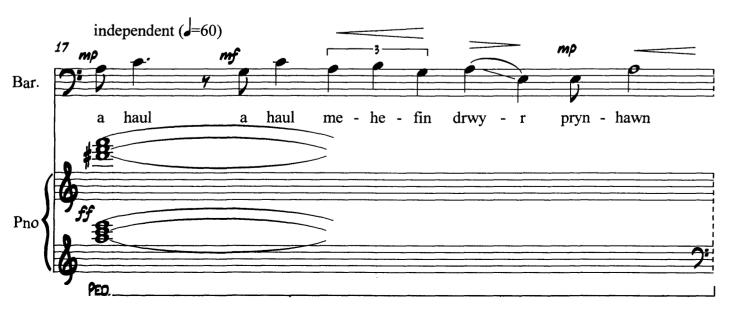




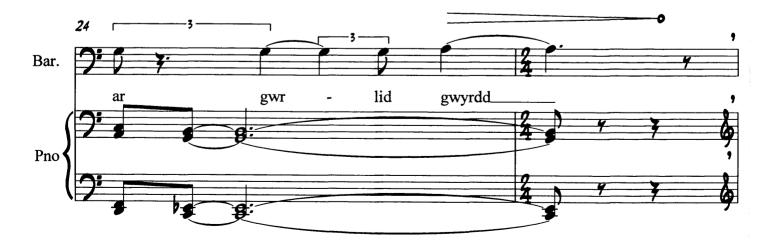






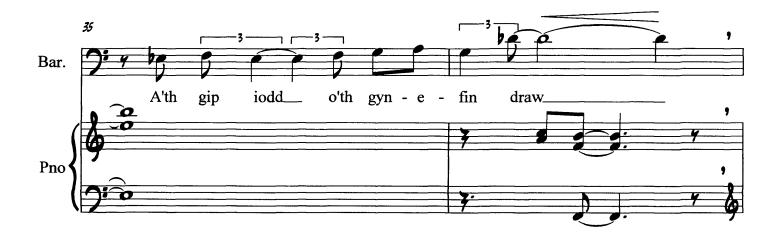


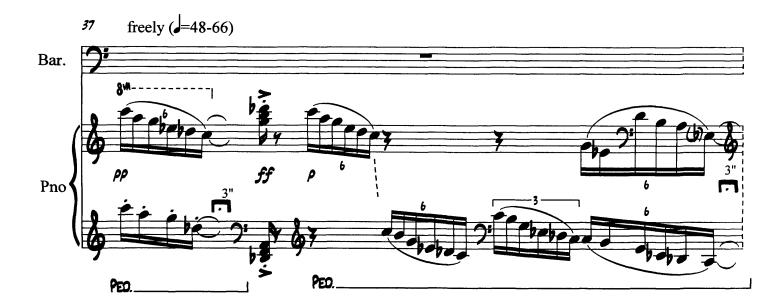


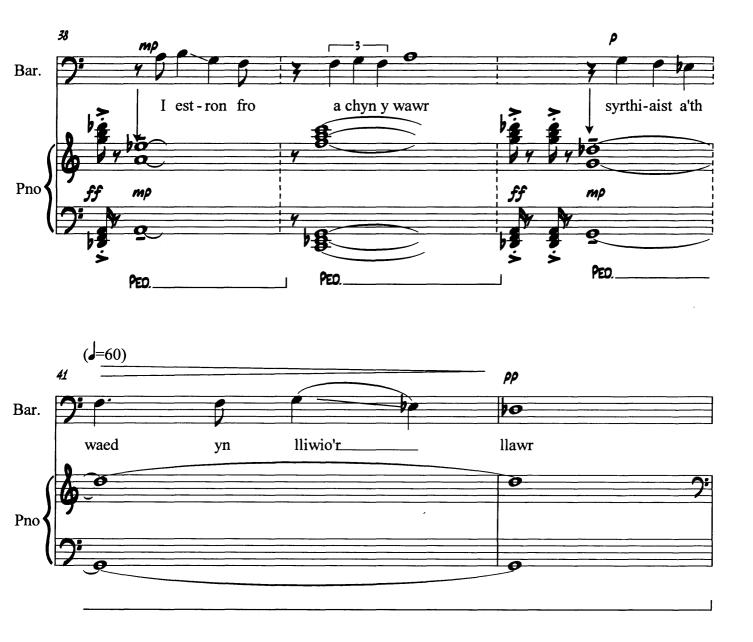




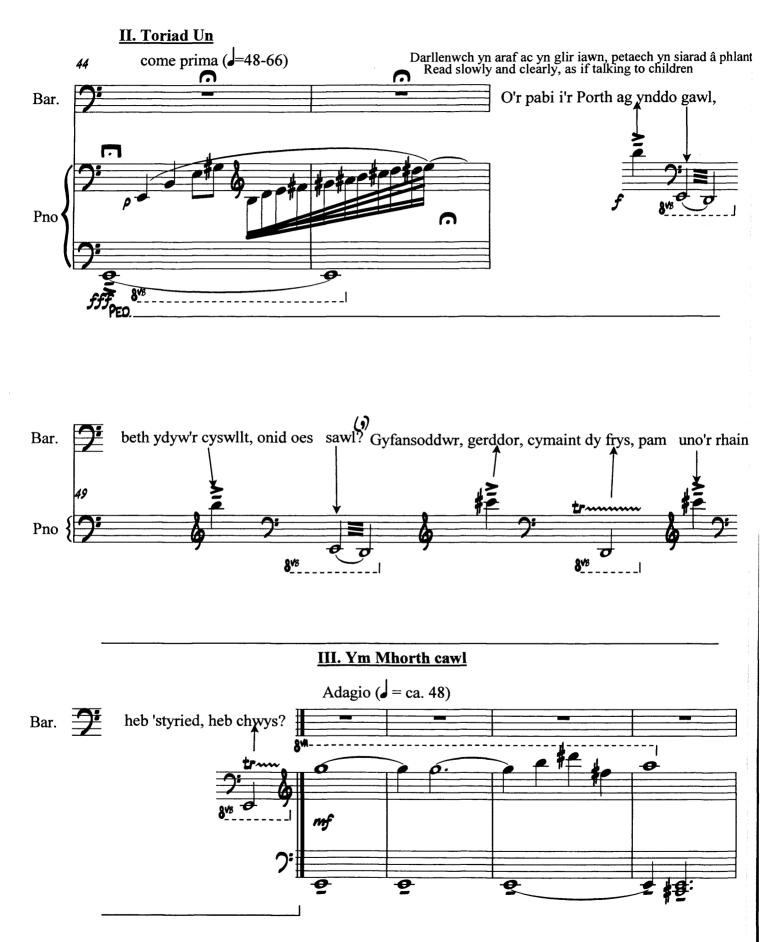


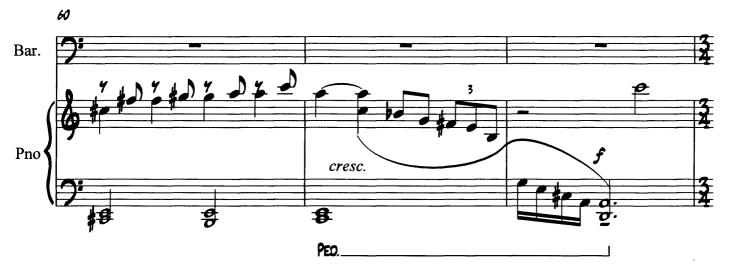












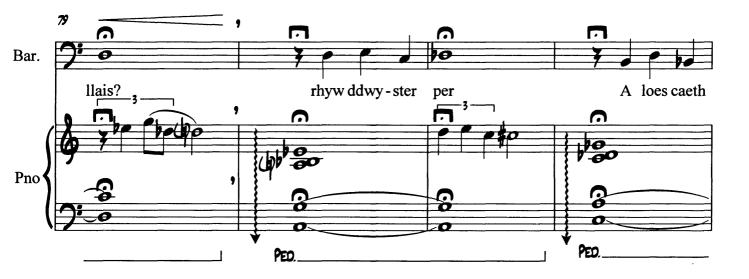


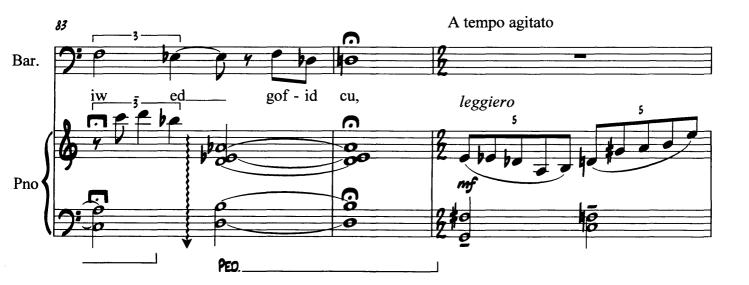


















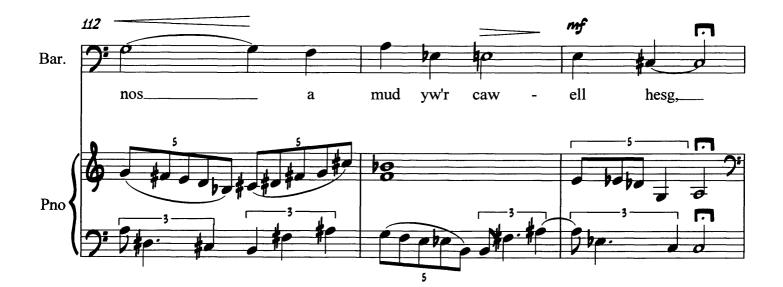




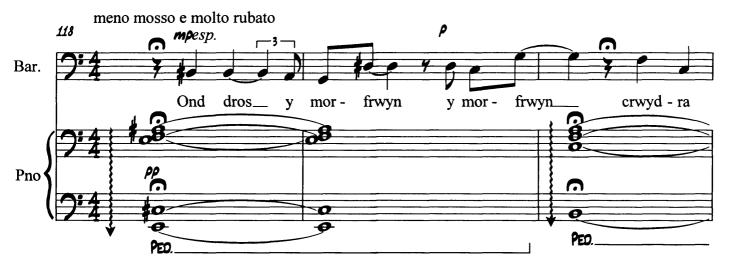


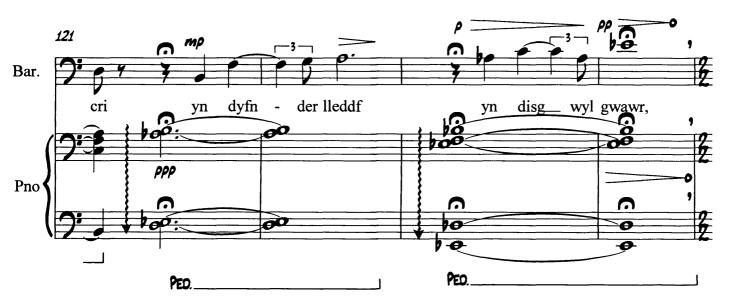


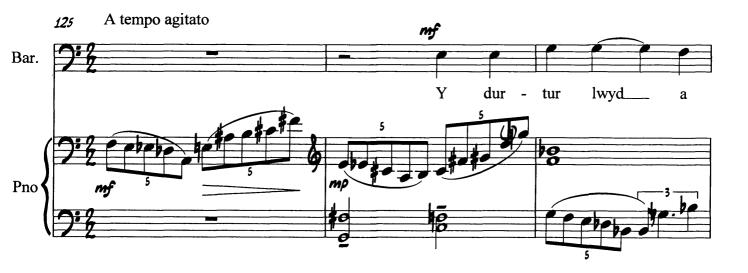






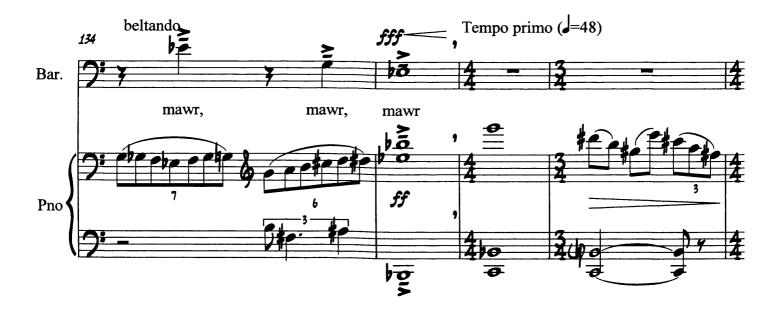


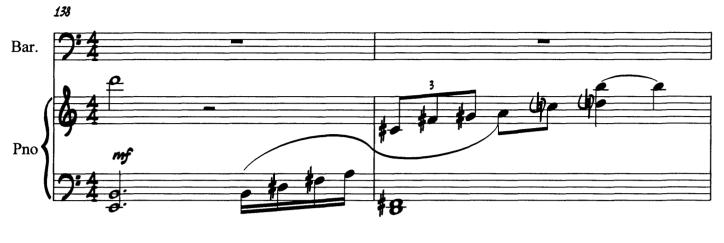








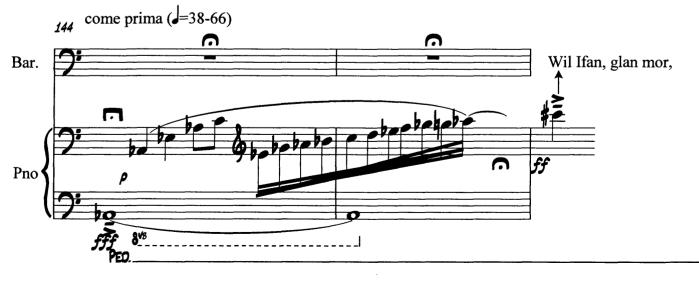


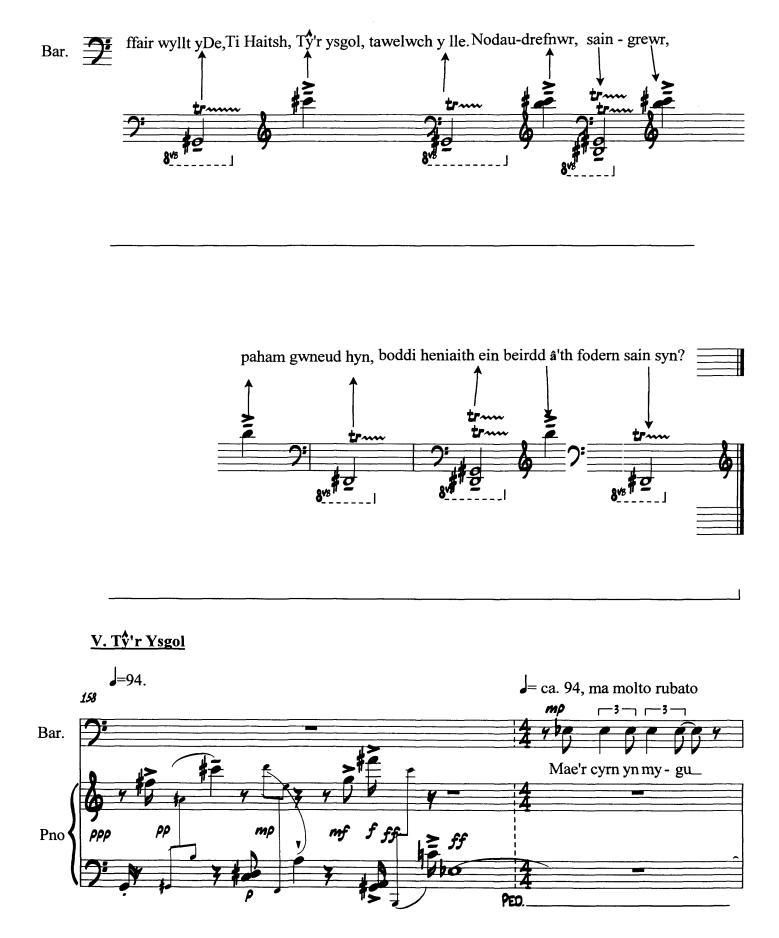


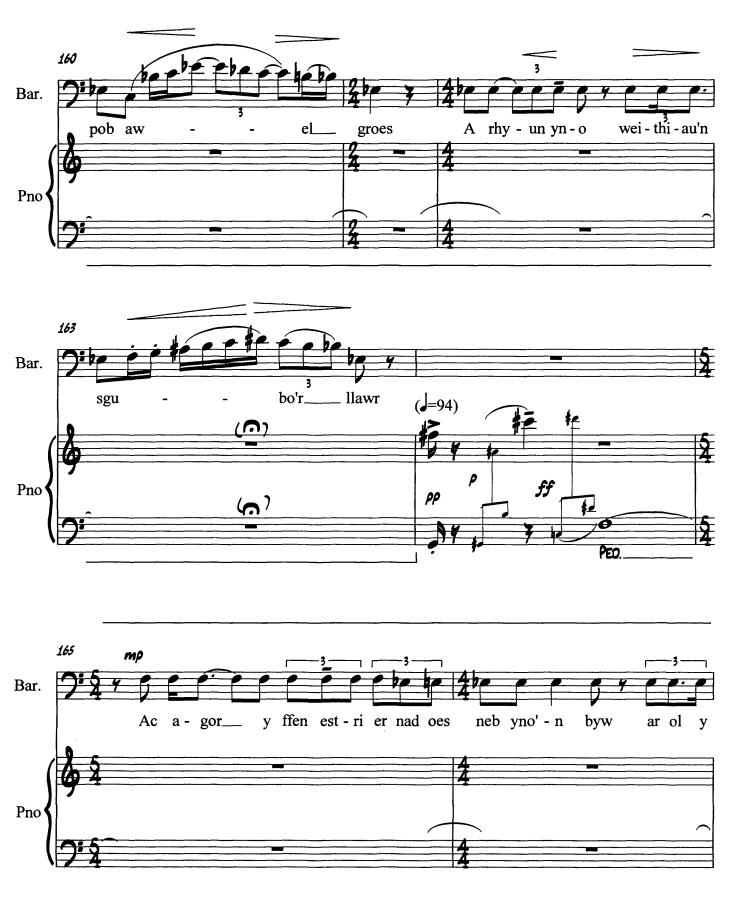


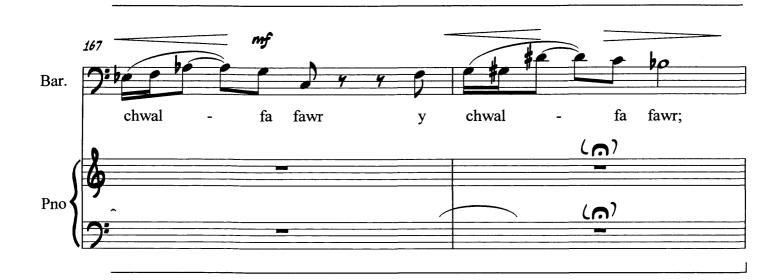


IV. Toriad Dau



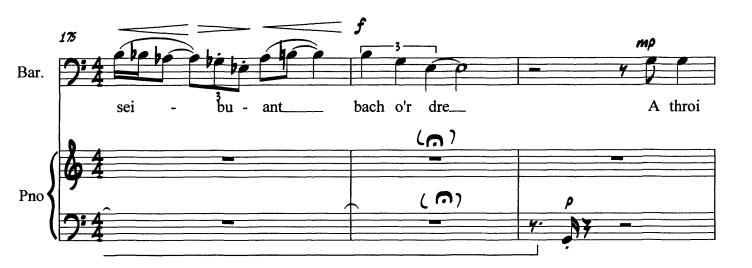






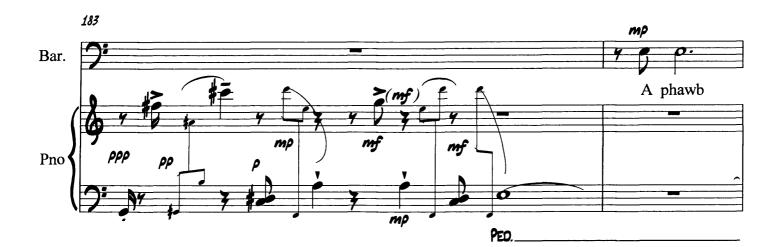


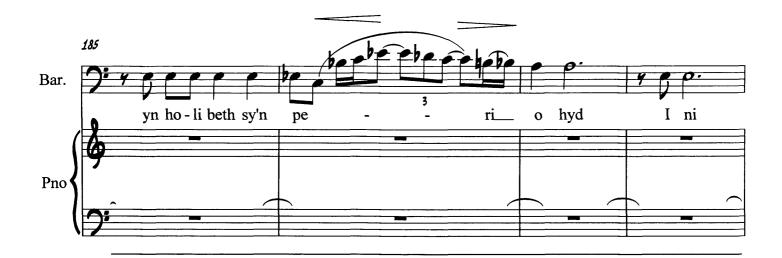




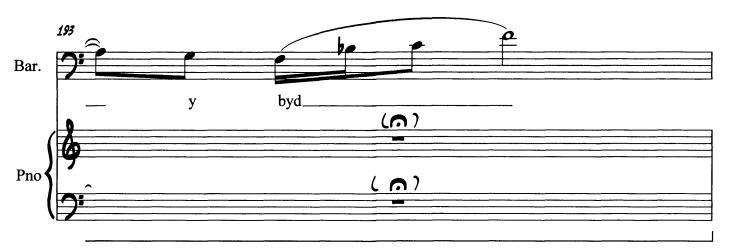




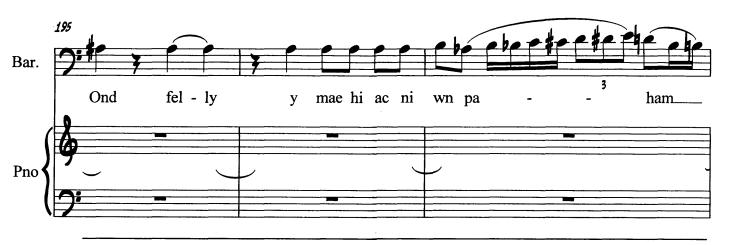


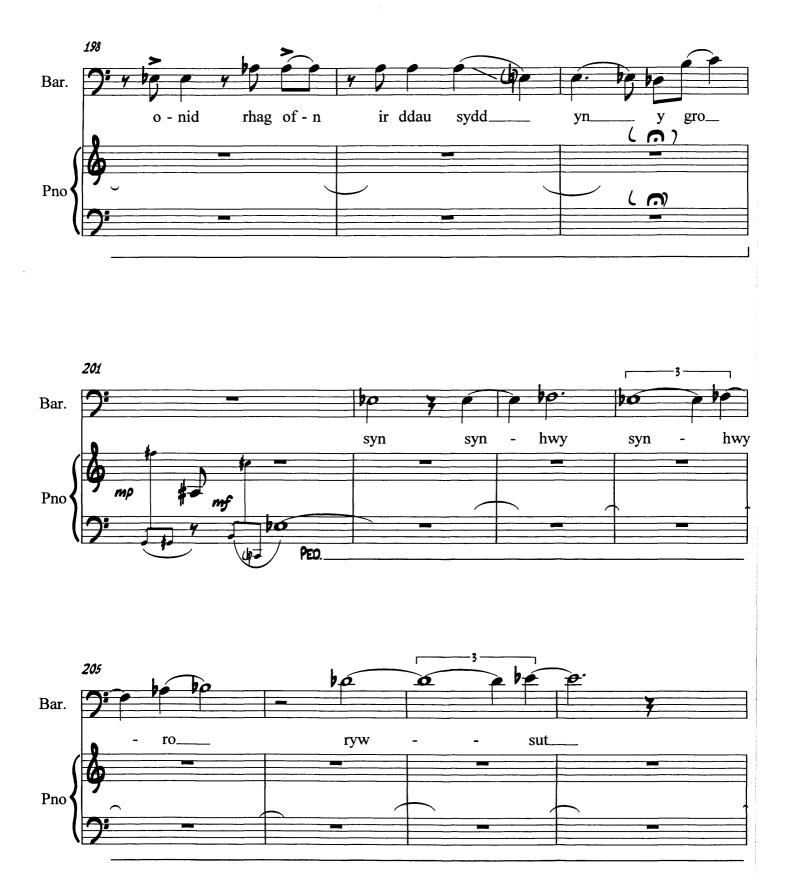


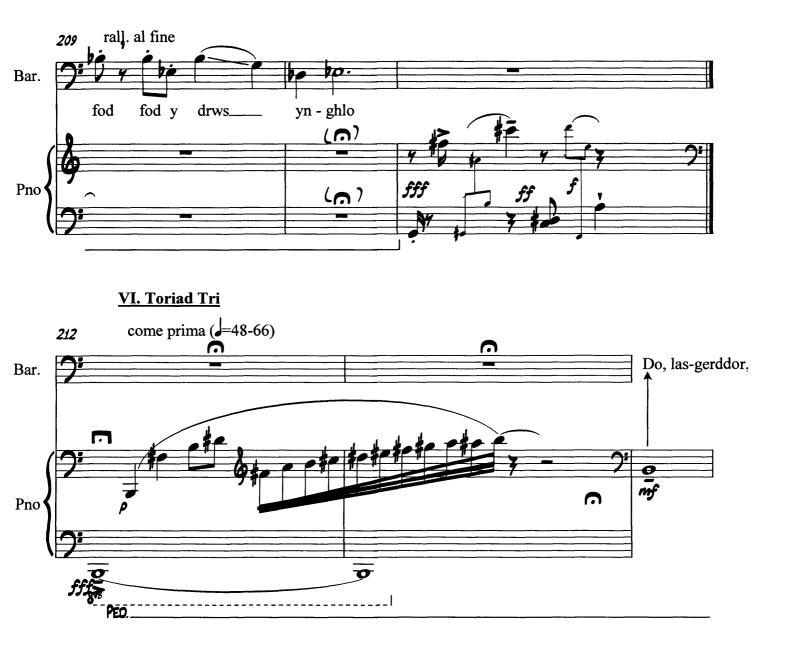


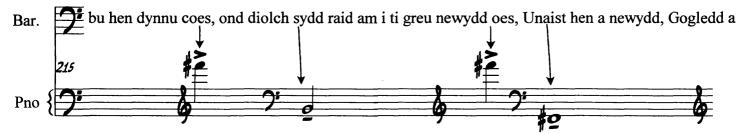








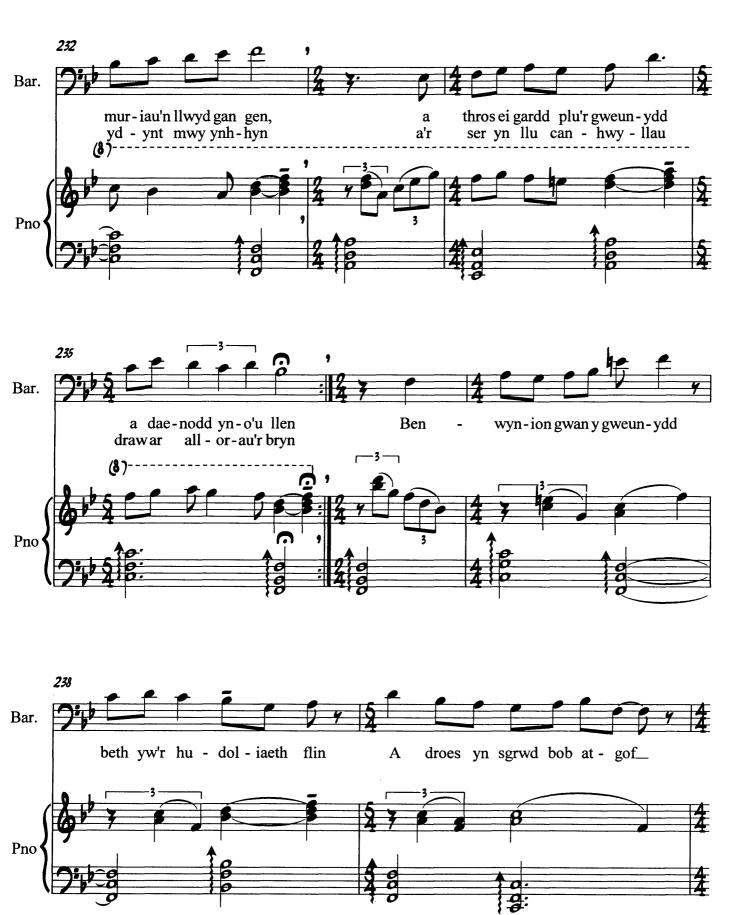




## VII. Nant Yr Eira

Con moto (=72-86), folk-like

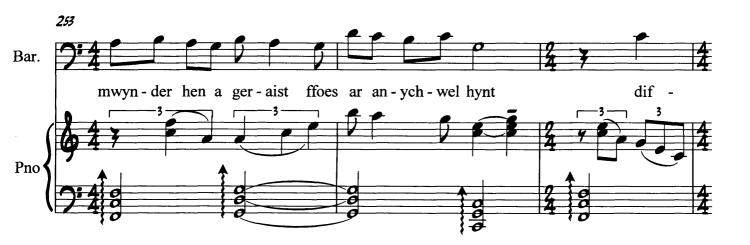




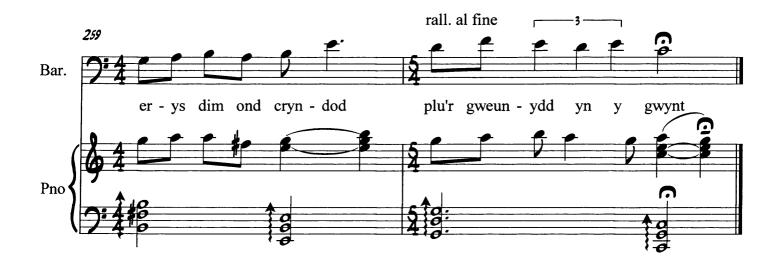


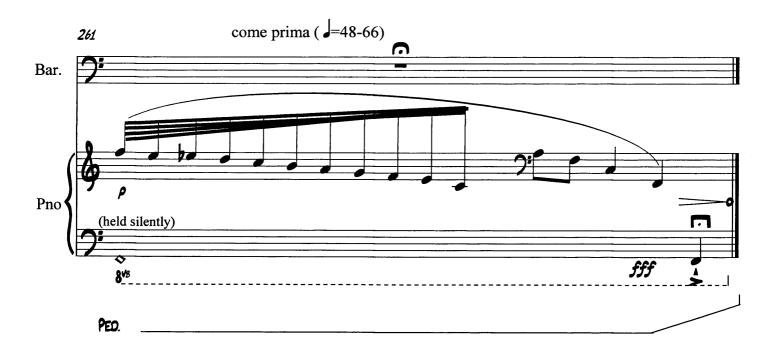












Caerdydd 2004

### **Caer Arianrhod:**

### Harp Sonata

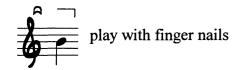
Caer Arianrhod is the modern Welsh name for Aurora Borealis (the Northern Lights) but is also an important location for some of the more sinister turns in the fourth branch of the Mabinogion. These contrasting ideas inspired the sounds used for the lighter and darker corners of the piece respectively. The work uses a three movement structure with the second and third movements developing episodes from the opening sonata form movement.

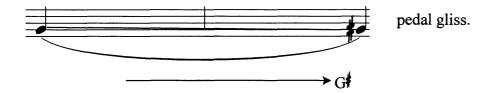
Instrumentation:

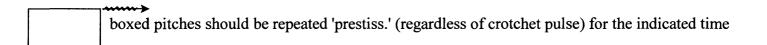
Harp

Duration c12 minutes

Performance Notes:









move a finger nail against and away from a vibrating string (distorting the sound) and eventually damping the string

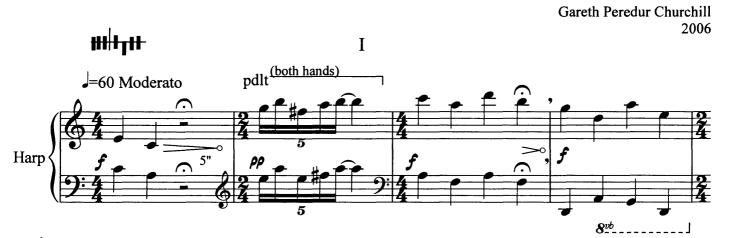
hard stop the played string at the table with the other hand (creating a dry plucked sound)

2	strike the lowest strings w	vith the j	palm of the l	hand
			<i>i</i>	

nstructions 'top' and 'pdlt' refer to playing close to the table and top of the strings respectively; onally 'tpdlt' is used for very close to the table.

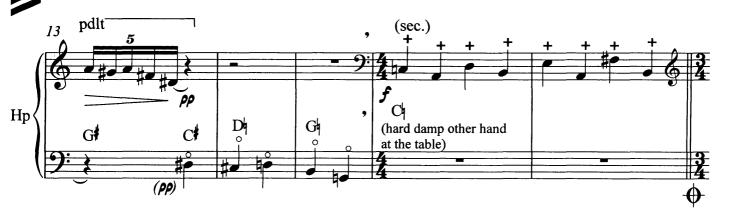
# Caer Arianrhod:

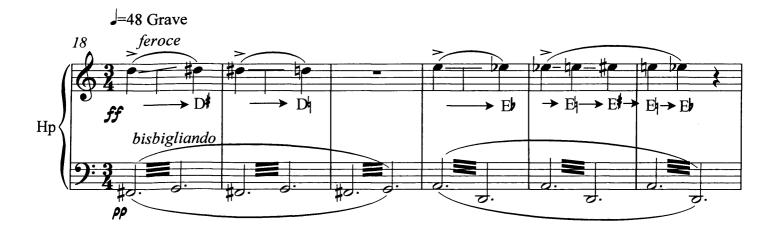
# Harp Sonata

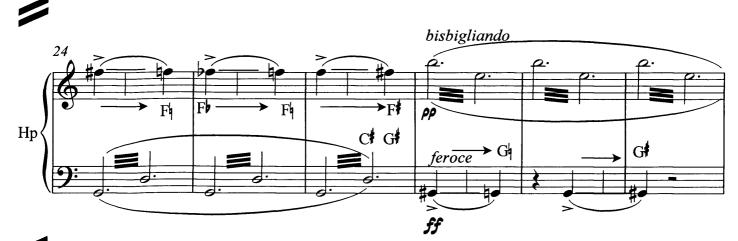














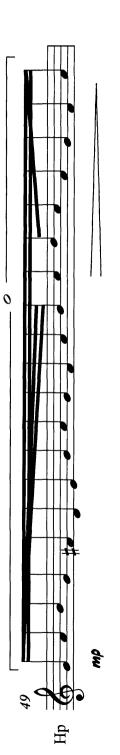
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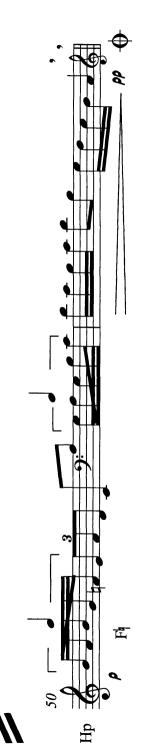


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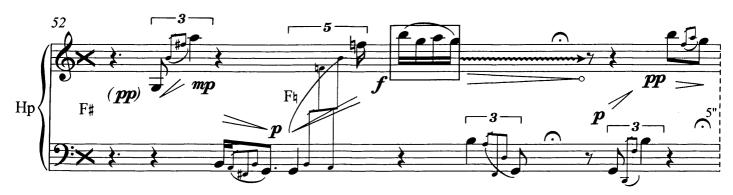
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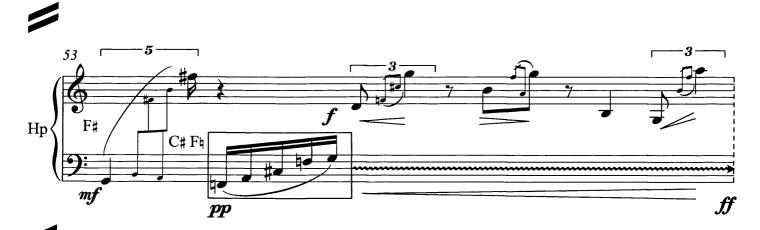






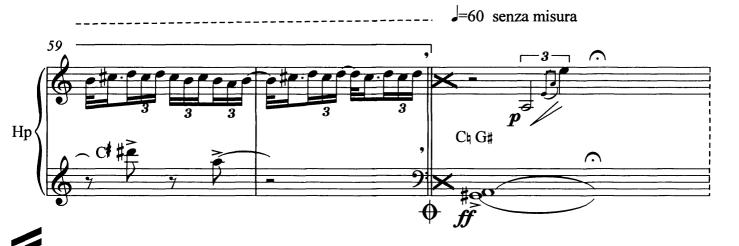
=48 senza misura; serene

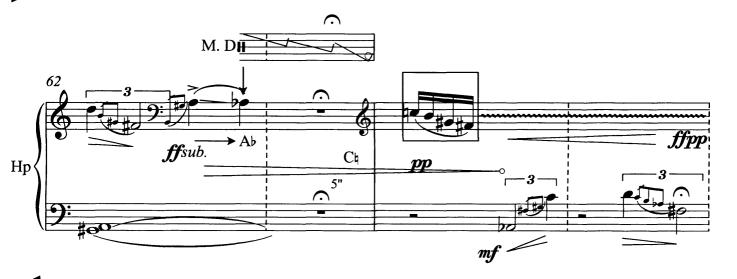


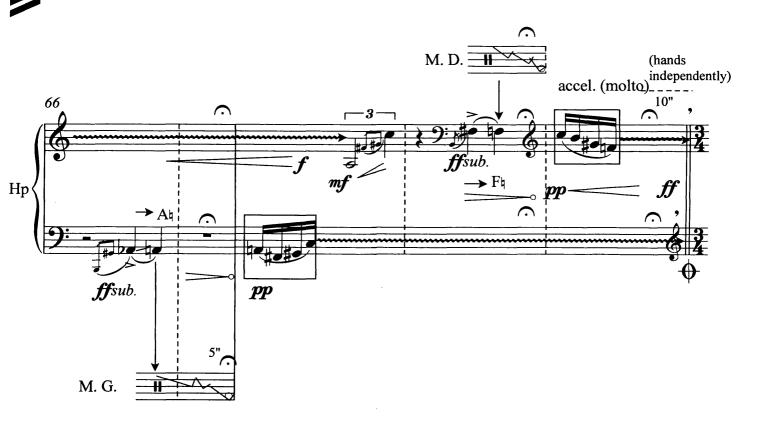


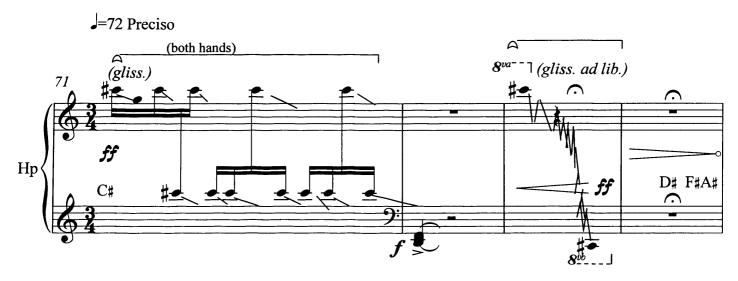


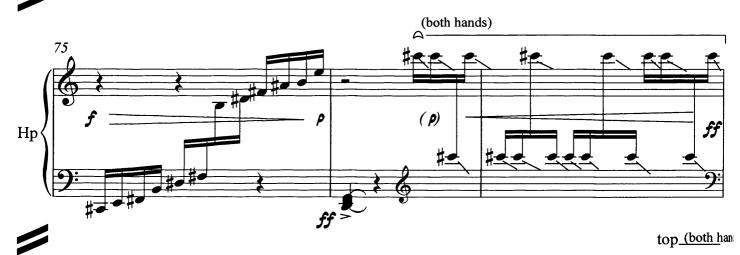




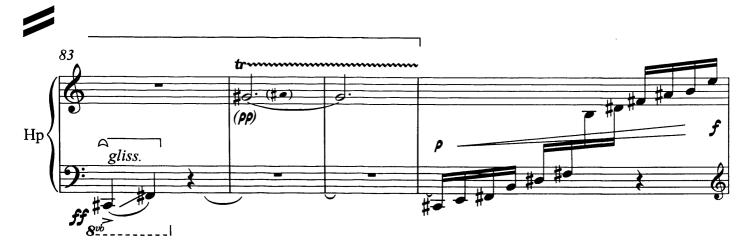


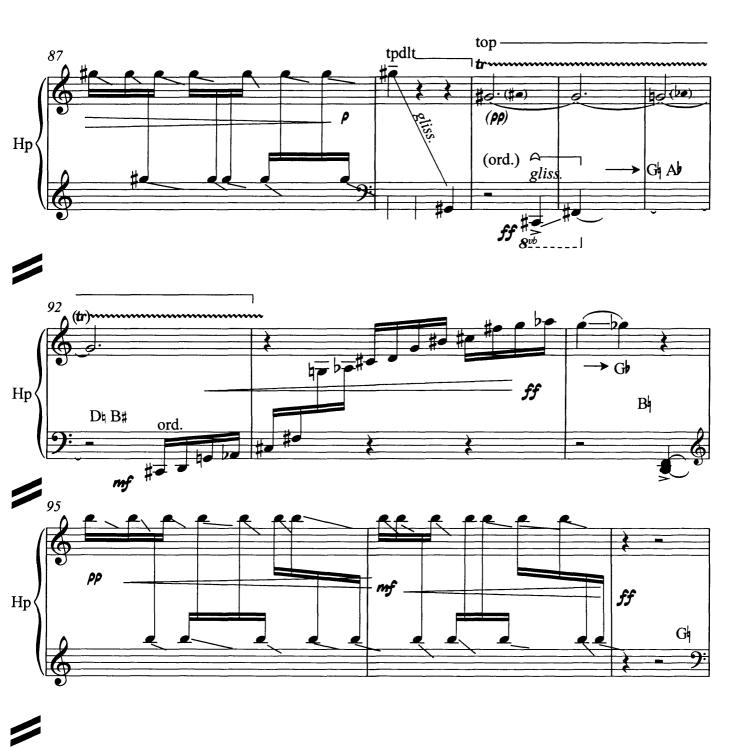


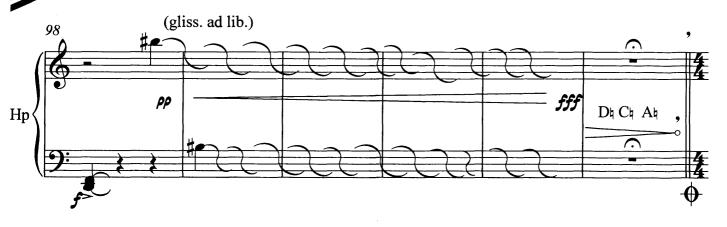




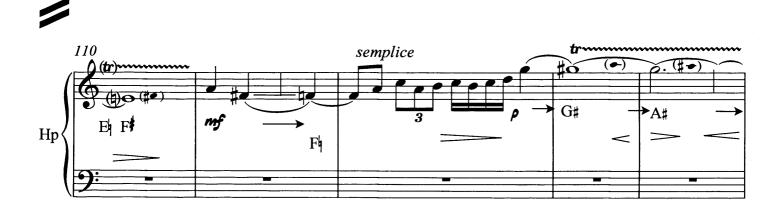




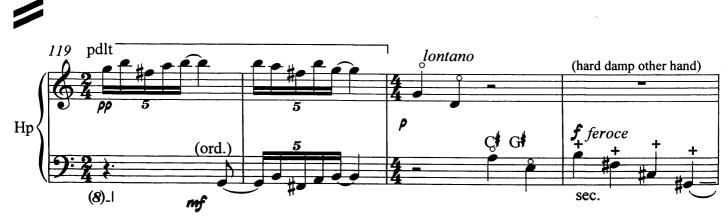




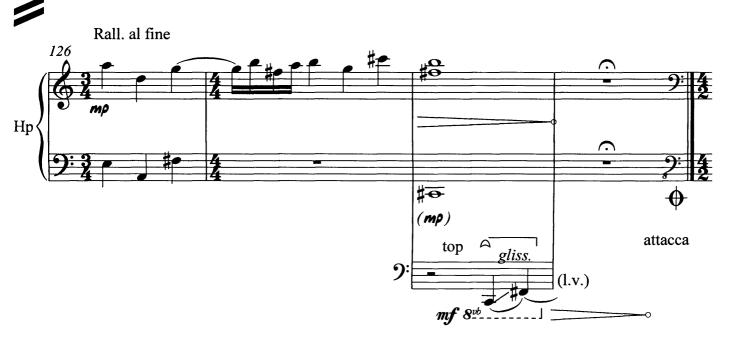


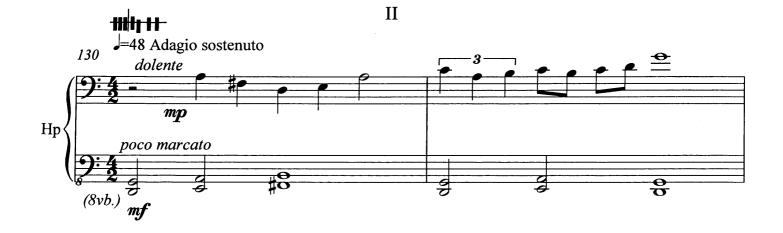




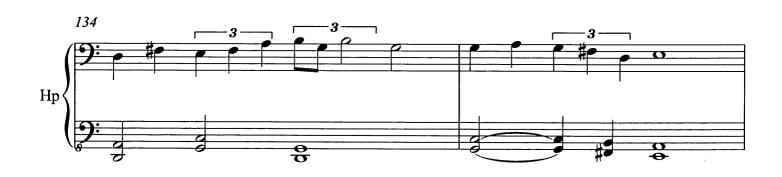












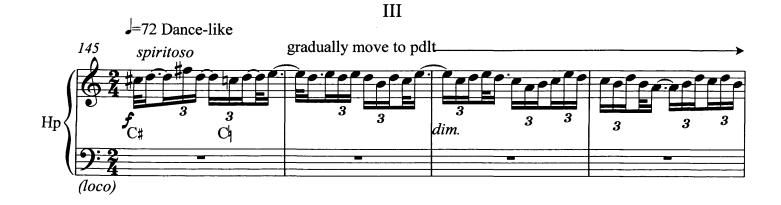


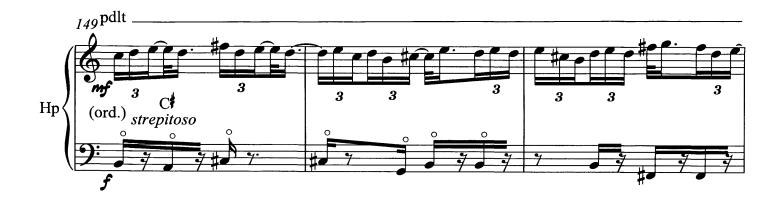








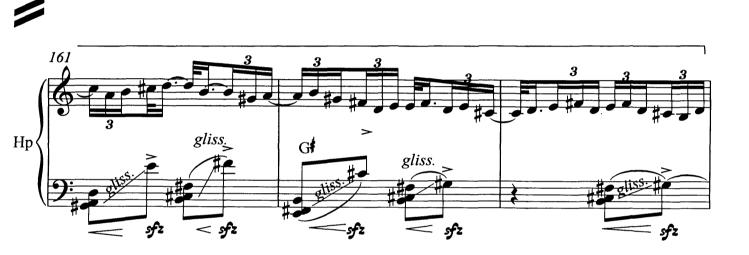


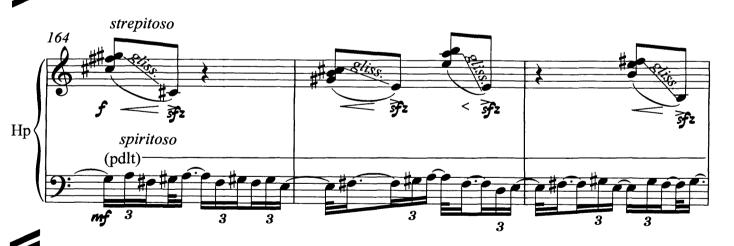










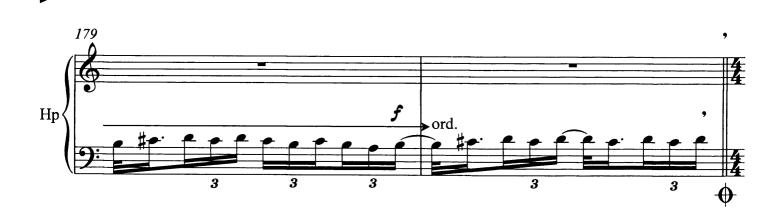


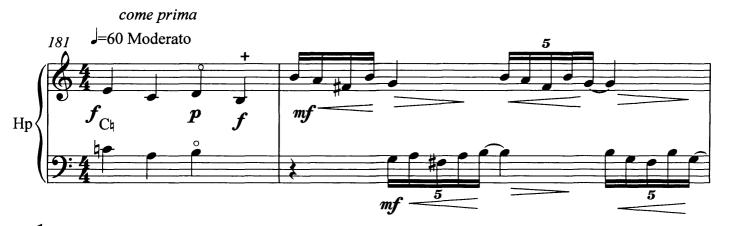




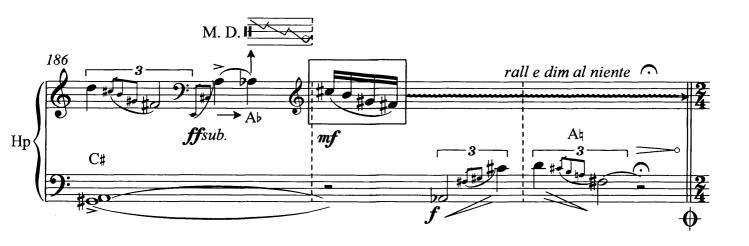


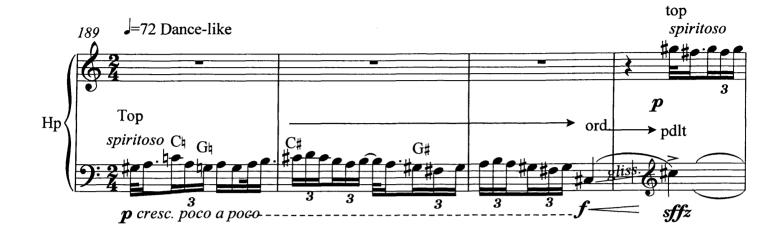


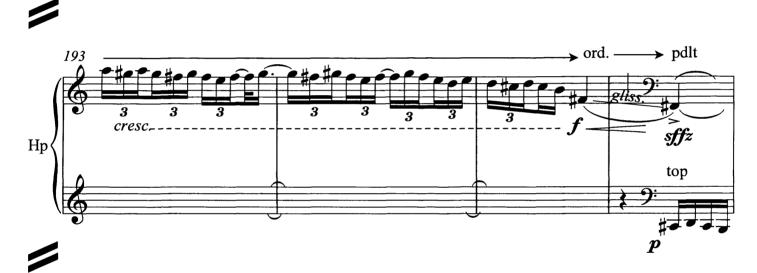


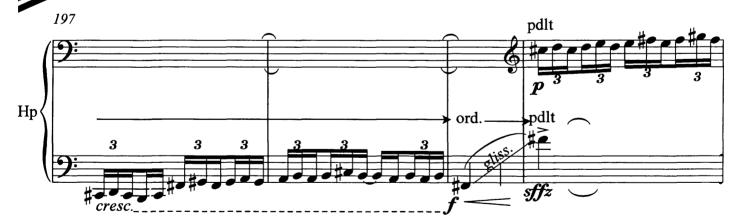


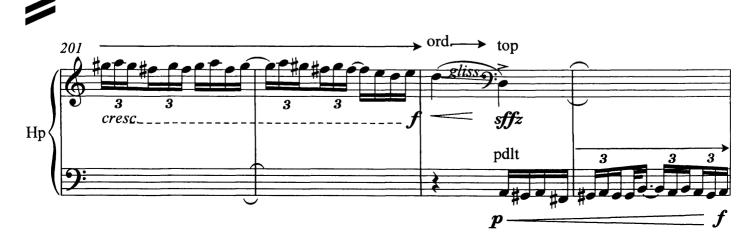


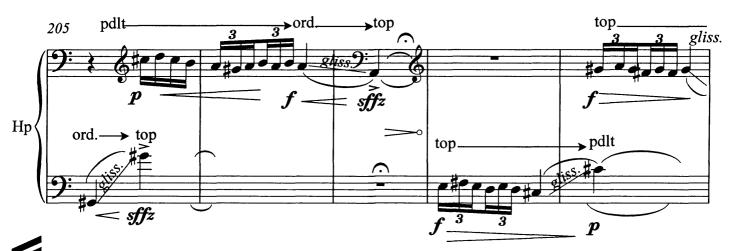


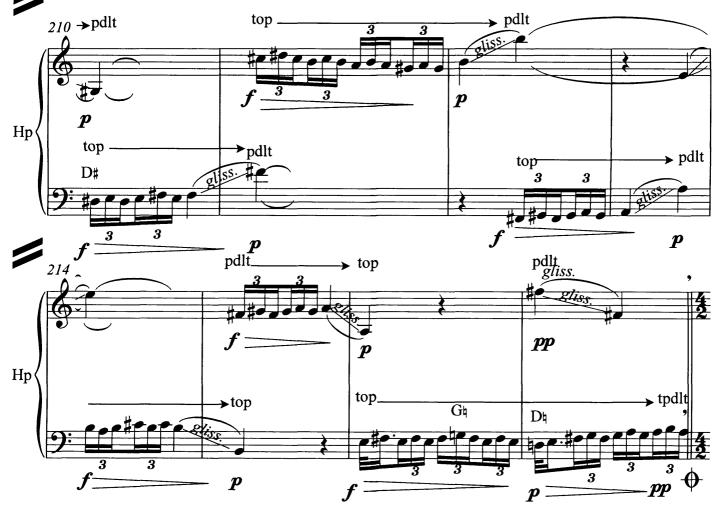














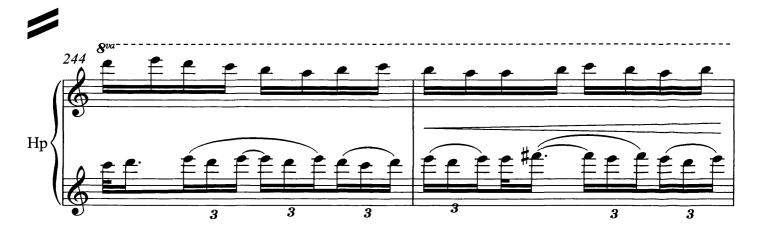


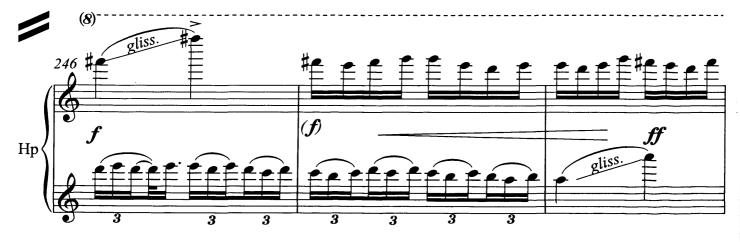


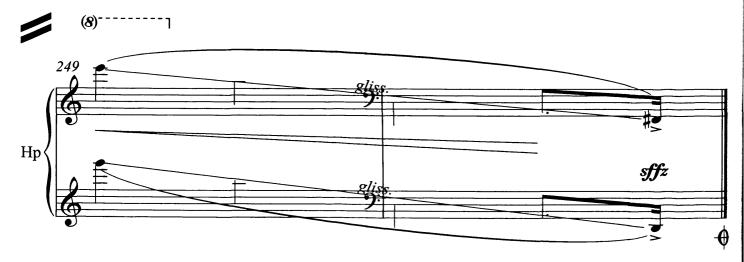












## **Cromlech: Viola Sonata**

Written for Philip Heyman, my viola sonata is an explosion of a traditional sonata form movement: Cast in five movements; the first, third and fifth can be likened to the exposition, development and recapitulation sections of traditional sonata form. The second and fourth movements, scored for [mostly] solo viola, act as interludes and borrow their structures from the Welsh poetic genre englyn unodl union. The works title refers to Cromlech Pentre Ifan in West Wales. I was struck by the atmosphere of this location and the juxtaposition of five large rocks with the rolling hill-side. These two items provided the starting points for the first and second subject materials of my sonata; which also sees its largest section (the third movement) supported by four smaller ones.

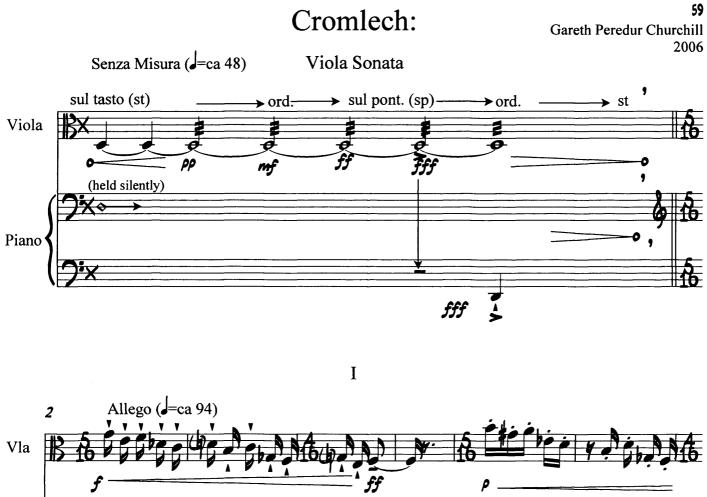
In the passage from bar 48 a large amount of freedom is intended in the viola part: The accacaturi are not all fast and not all in the same bow; the dotted slurs are used to show which notes belong to which in the phrase (the piano should follow the viola).

Instrumentation:

Viola and piano

Duration c15 minutes







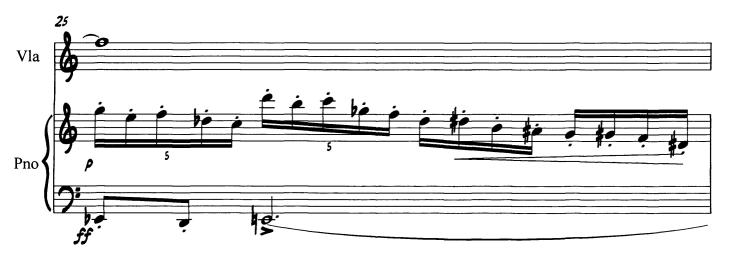


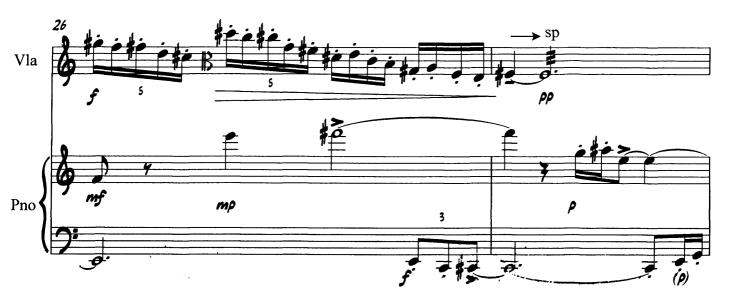






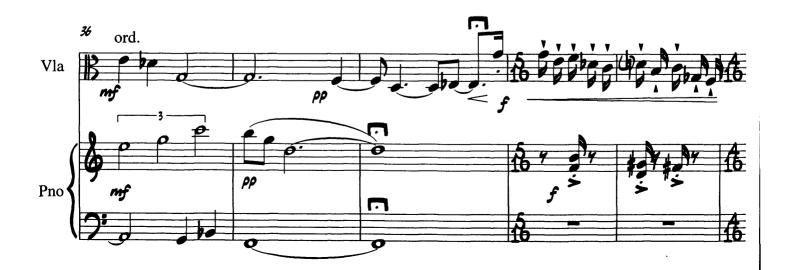












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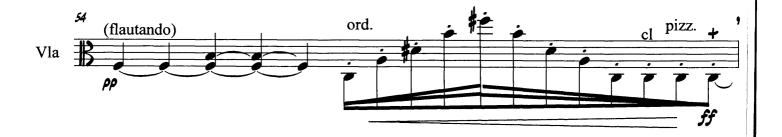
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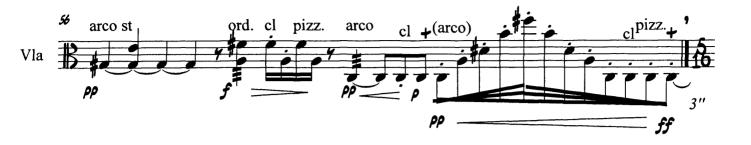






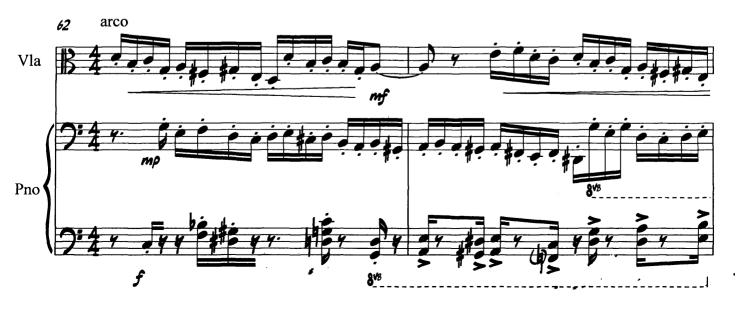






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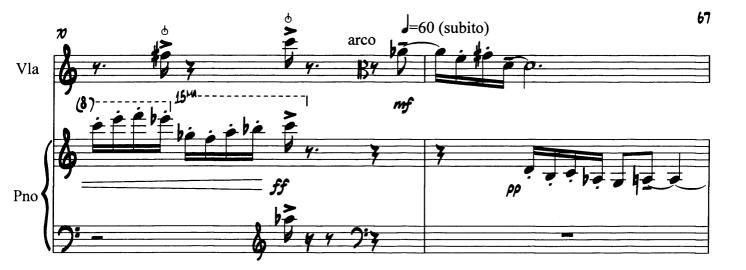






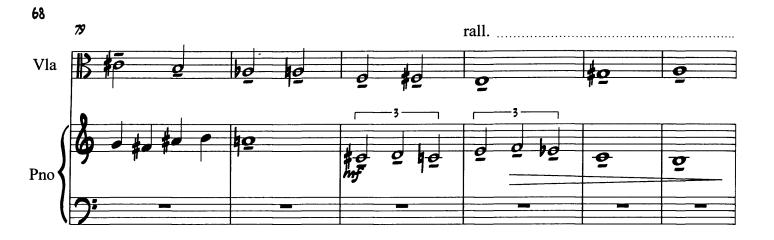


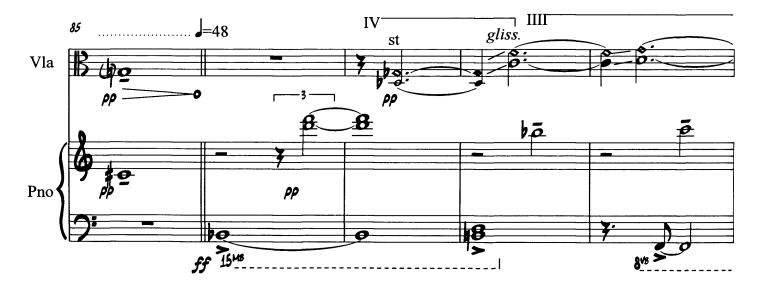








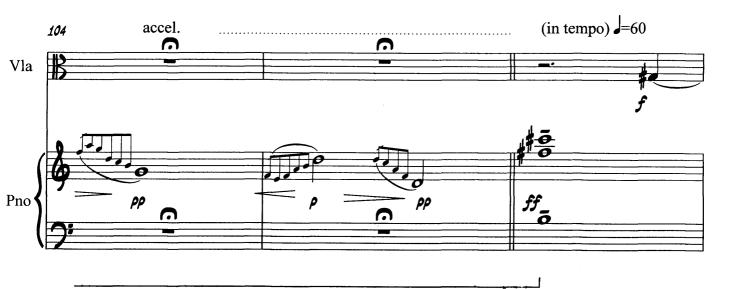




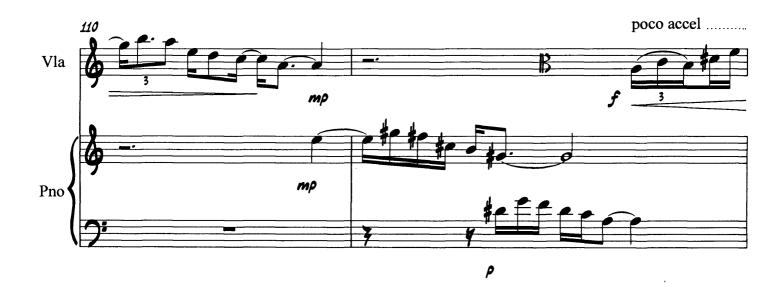
























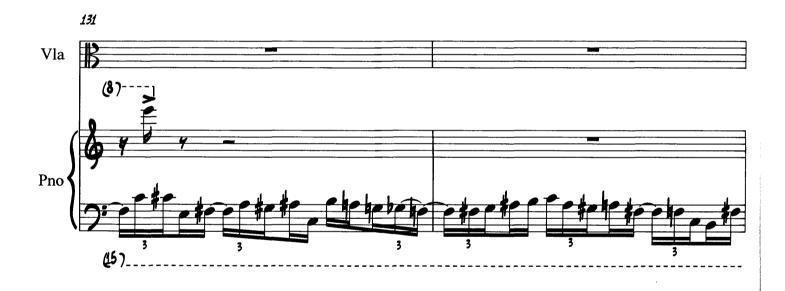




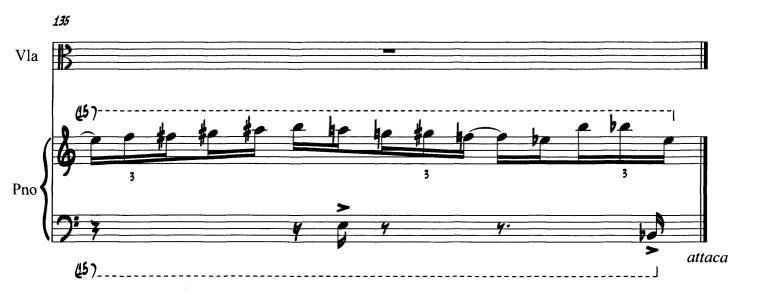


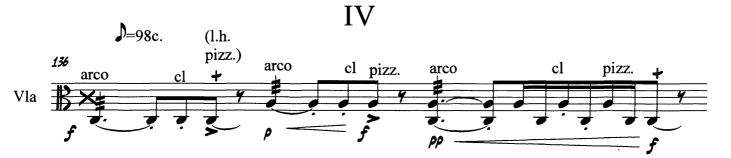












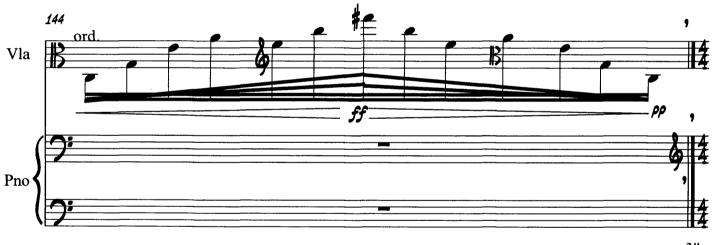




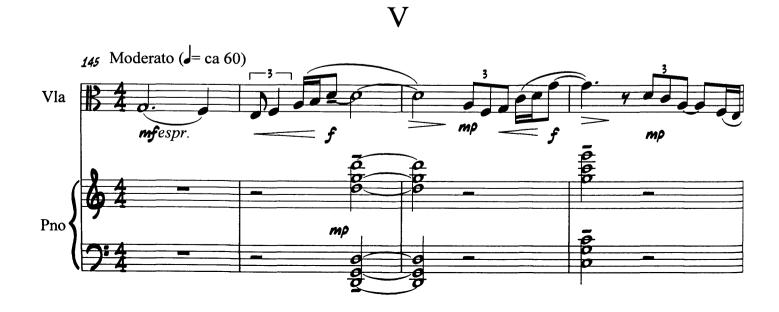




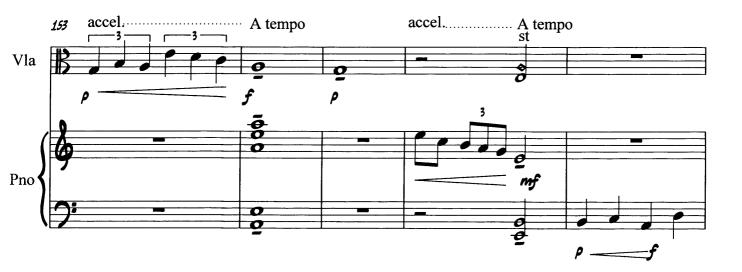


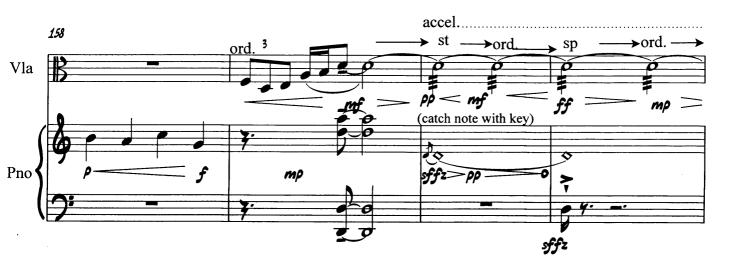


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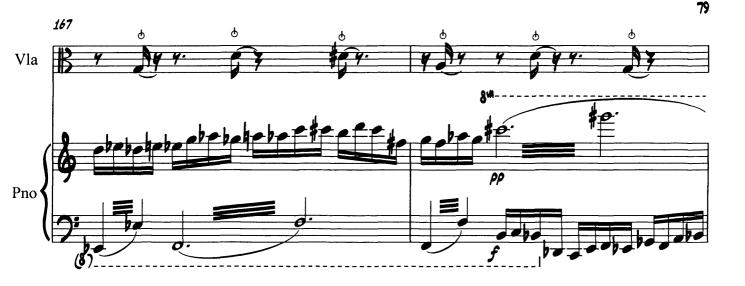




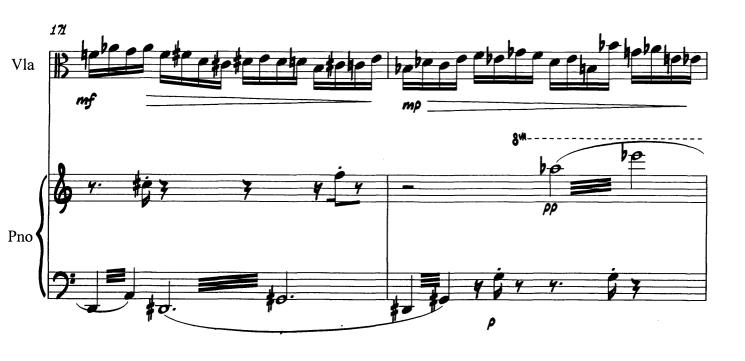














Caerdydd 20%

## Haul Ar Fynydd

This short setting of Hedd Wyn's beautifully evocative eponymous englyn was made in response to a commission from the Vivace Singers in 2005. My setting follows the rhyming pattern for the englyn as set out by the poet and the same music (the contrary motion glissando) is heard each time the rhyme occurs; additionally the 'whole-tone' harmonic language is a response to the pastoral subject material of the text.

Instrumentaion:

Female voices (SSAA)

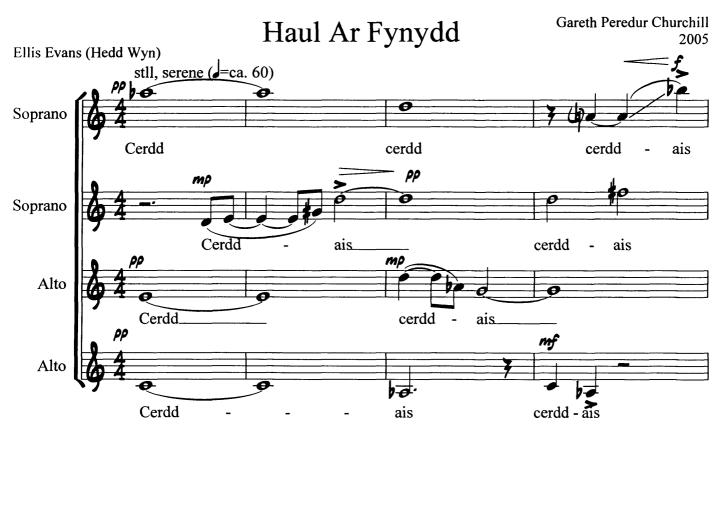
Duration c3 minutes

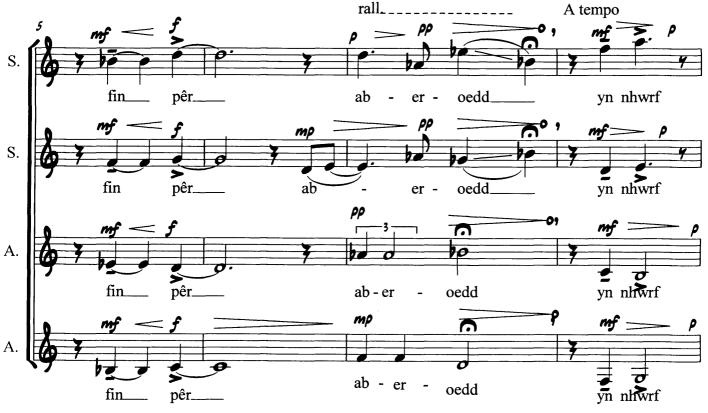
Haul Ar Fynydd (Ellis Evans (Hedd Wyn))

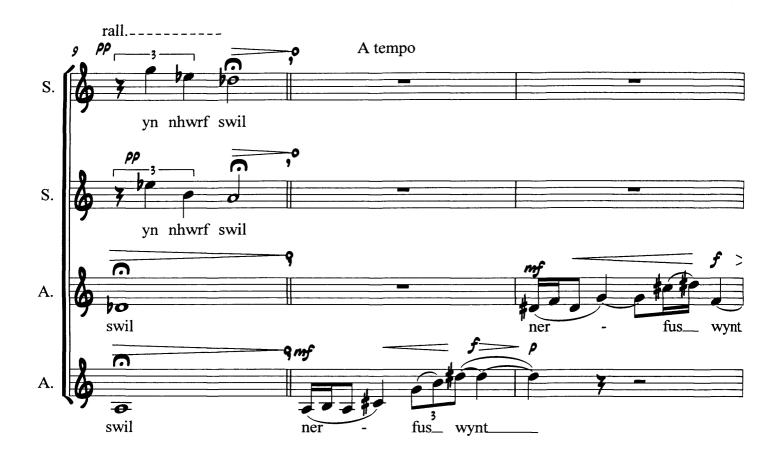
Cerddais fin pêr aberoedd – yn nhwrf swil Nerfus wynt y ffriddoedd; A braich wen yr heulwen oedd Am hen wddw'r mynyddoedd.

Sun On a Mountain I walked along sweet estuaries – At the centre of the nervous breeze of the meadows. As the white arm of the sun was a necklace over the mountains.

(translation by the composer)

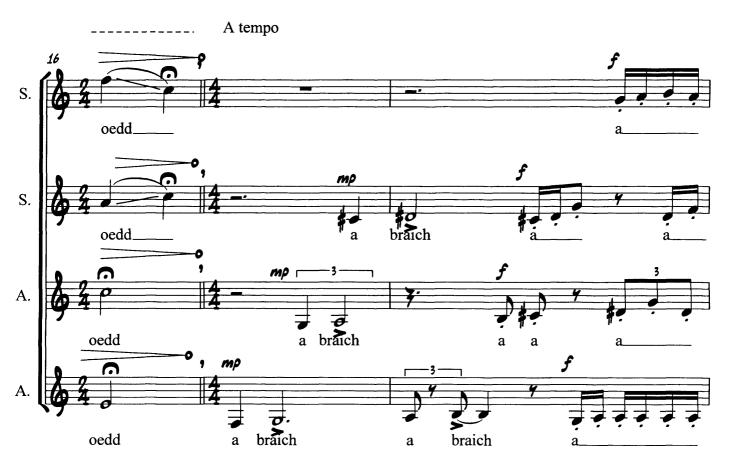








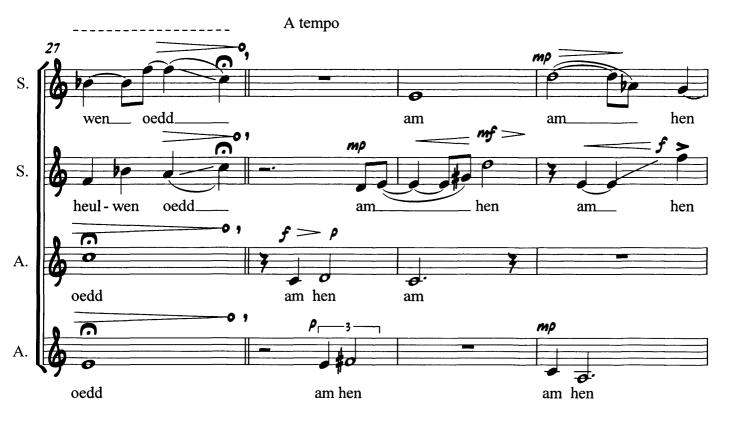
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Caerdydd 2005

## In Chains

In writing this work, my first song cycle in English, I looked to the work of Welsh poets writing in English as a starting point. I discovered a text by Twm Morys written not only in English but also in Cynghanedd (lit. chiming), a unique style of Welsh writing using rules prescribing patterns of alliteration, assonance and rhyming patterns. Eventually enough texts in 'English Cynghanedd' were found to complete the set. The works title was inspired by Mererid Hopwood's book 'Singing In Chains' (a study and introduction to cynghanedd). Here it refers to the way in which the three songs seem 'chained' into their harmonic languages and in this respect the two shorter (solo soprano) 'link' movements are links in the chain bridging the harmonic languages.

Instrumentation Soprano and piano

Duration c10 minutes

#### In Chains Poems:

- I. I Have Seen The Diva (Twm Morys)
- I. have seen the diva, sir,
- Mending your salamander.
- I knew she'd been beaten hard
- For losing half your lizard.
- And I've seen the diva's sons
- Drugging comodo dragons
- In Peking. They was singing,
- And the gecko echoing.
- When we kissed I noticed newts
- With oboes in her thighboots.

II. Link One (anon.)

- Into the blast of winter take that warmth;
- Take that wise demeanour,
- Sleet her humility slur
- Let humanity mourn her.

III. The Old Valley (Frederick James Willians)

- Where the little stream is gleaming
- All is serene and bells ring;
- I stroll, its course I follow:
- In flood where memories flow
- Tough indeed to find a way,
- Hawthorn has claimed the pathway.
- No homestead and green meadow,
- Below I ken, no blue cow.
- Old Anne, church lady away,

Is sound asleep this Sunday.

Below the bank so tranquil

To a remote country mill

Oft I come - a welcome home

Ready, eternal freedom;

But the joy of boyhood

Now bereft the neighbourhood.

IV. Link Two ('Passing the Graveyard' Gerallt Lloyd Owen)

On every grave I hear a groan, A sigh as old as creation, Unmeasured in emotion -Could it be, maybe, my own?

V. My First Love Was A Plover

My first love was a plover. (Twm Morys)

Beautiful things her wings were.

Tiny eyes shining at night,

(though mostly in the moonlight).

We ate leeks at a lakeside,

I caressed her crest and cried

All night. Then the kite called,

Unshaven and dishevelled.

He saw from the bristling sedge

My playmate's hadsome plumage.

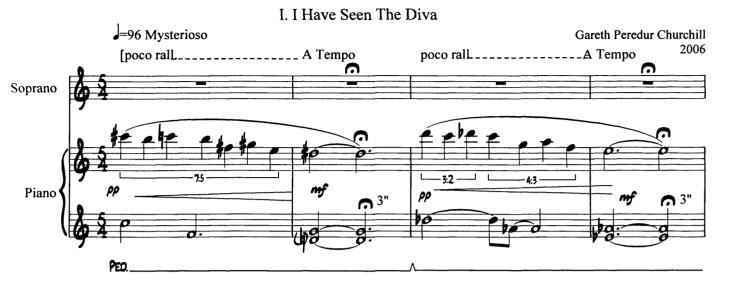
She made a tryst, kissed the kite

So dearly in the starlight.

I thought of only one thing:

My plover lover leaving.

# Ar Gyfer Helen Field In Chains

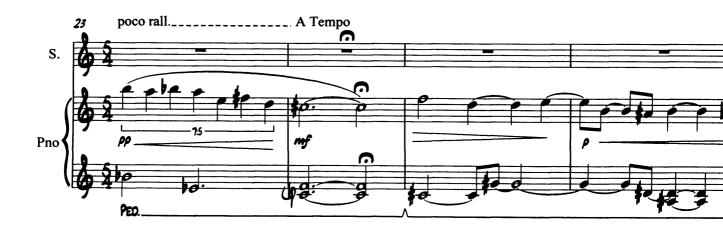












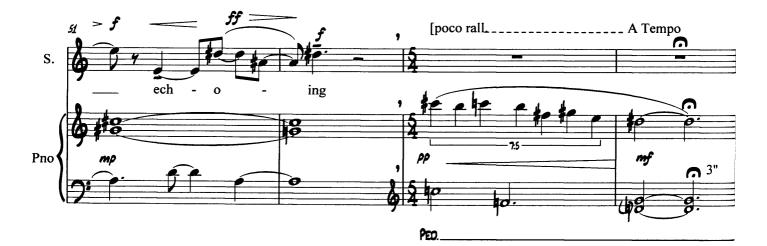


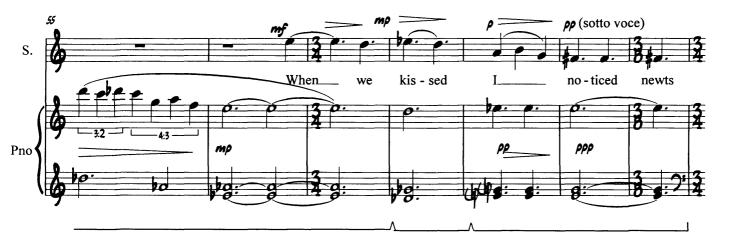




















II. Link One



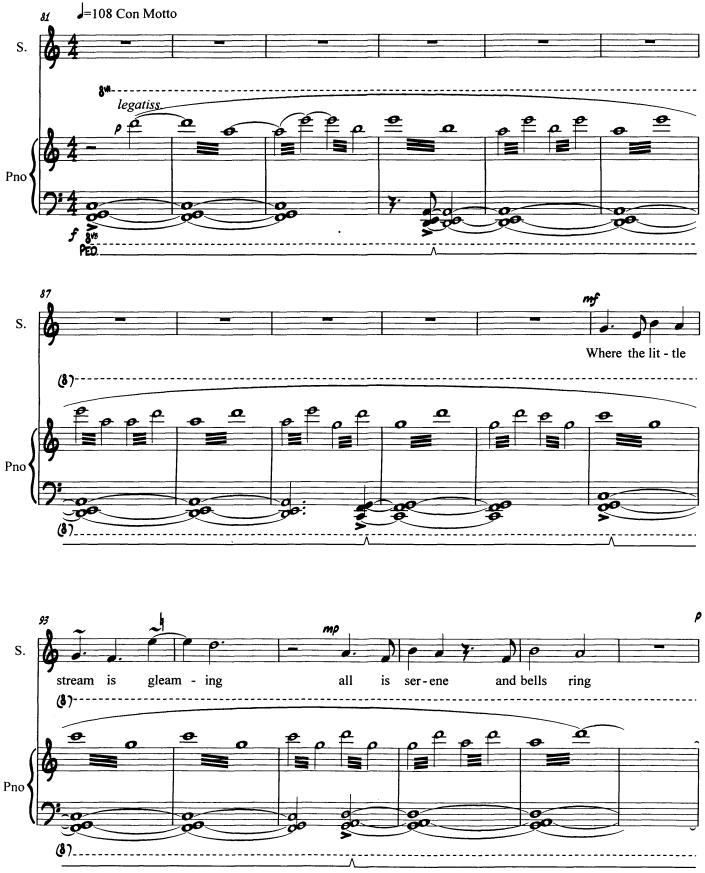


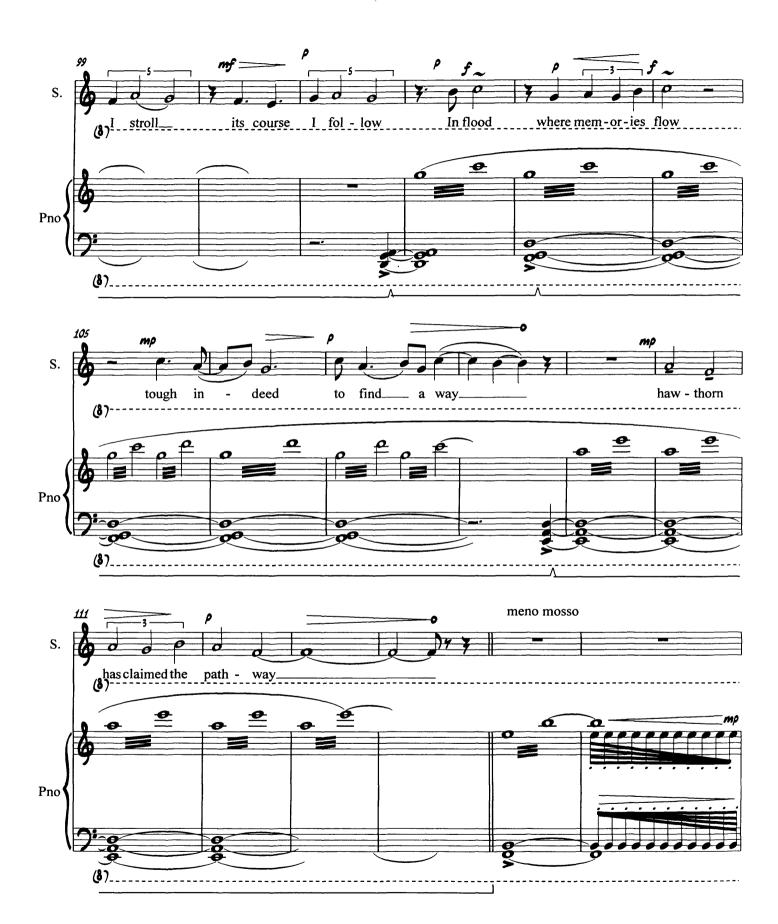
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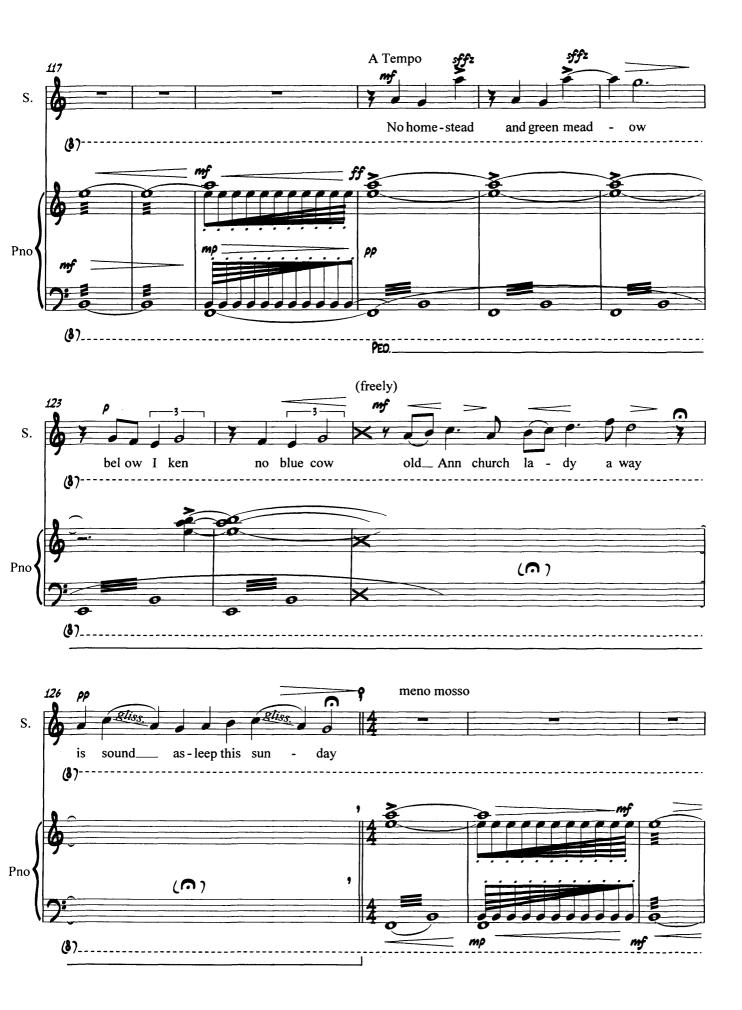


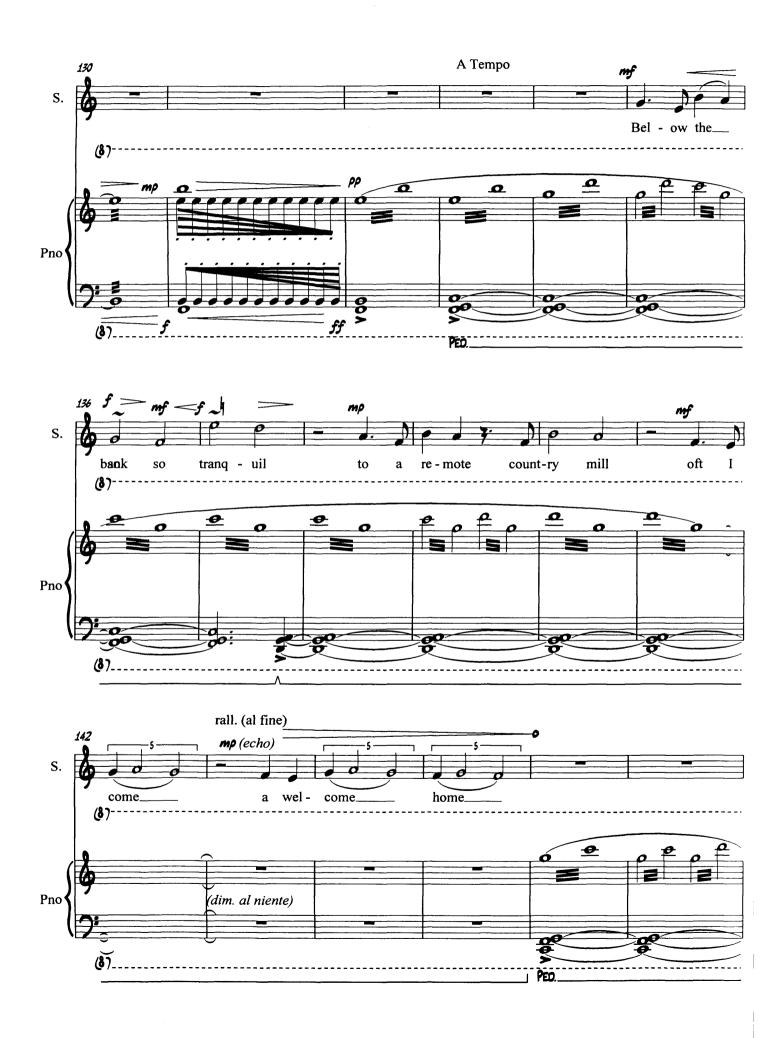


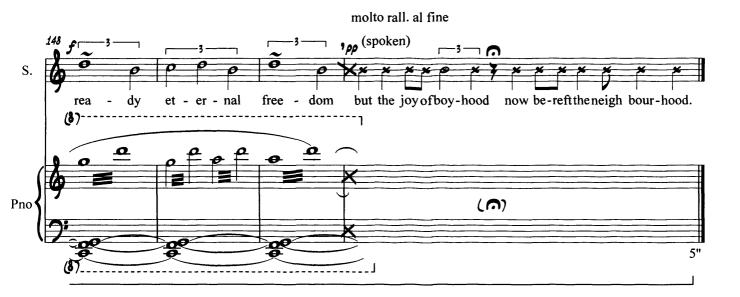
III. The Old Valley

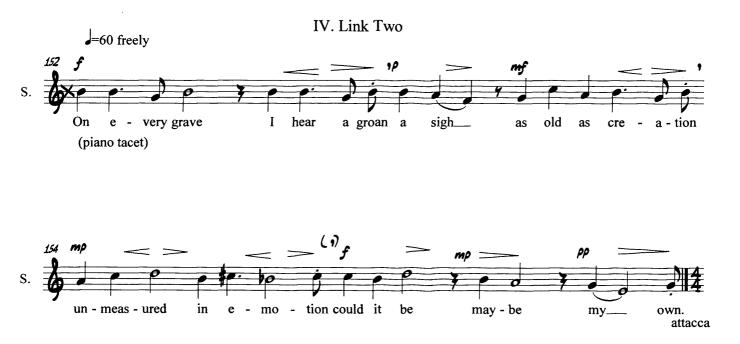


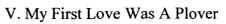










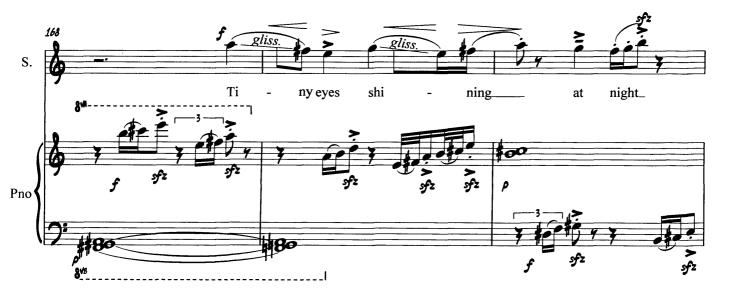


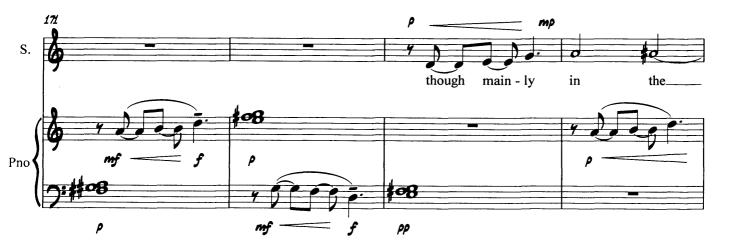


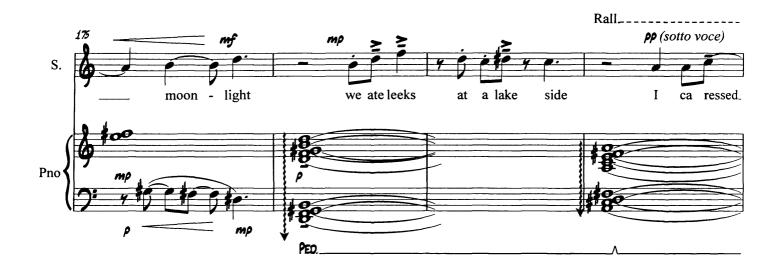


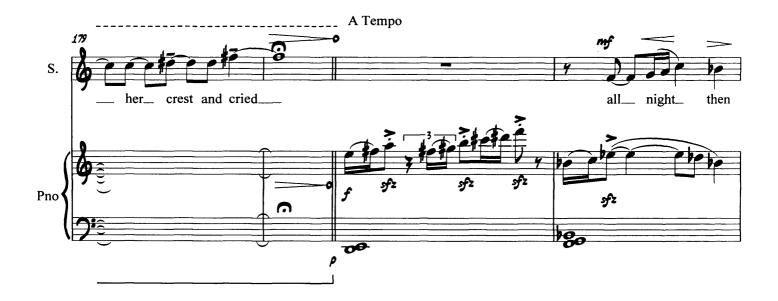






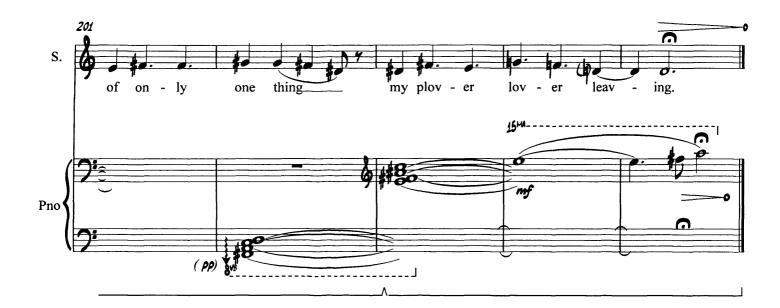












### Meddylun (Mindscape)

This concert overture is constructed from three main elements. The starting point for the thematic material in the piece came from a set of short piano sketches I made in hospital whilst being treated for stroke. An early Welsh hymn tune is heard continually throughout the work (although frequently subjected to some sort of distortion). Thirdly there is a musical representation of the number Pi running through the piece where the decimal places have been used to pre-determine where musical events occur in the score.

Instrumentation:

2 Flutes	$(2^{nd} = piccolo),$
2 Oboes	$(2^{nd} = cor anglais in F),$
2 Clarinets in B flat	$(2^{nd} = bass clarinet in B flat)$
2 Bassoons	$(2^{nd} = double bassoon),$
2 Horns in F,	
2 Trumpets in B flat	
2 Trombones,	
Timpani,	
Percussion (2 players)	*
Harp,	
Strings.	
Score in C.	

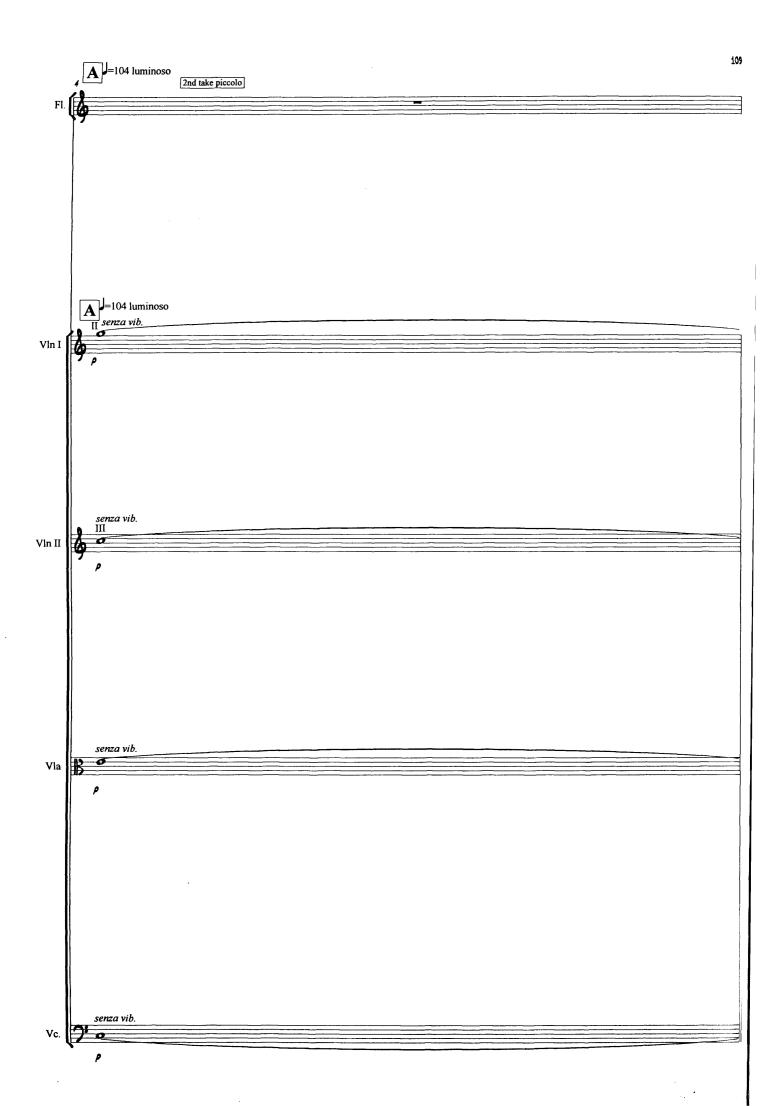
\*Percussion requirements:

Player one = marimba, whip, tam tam.

Player two = vibraphone, suspended cymbal, wind chimes, cordless power drill.

Duration c8 minutes





























































## Mydrau Barddonol / Poetic Metres

I was initially attracted to this eight instrument ensemble by a performance of Schubert's' octet, D803 (given by the Revolutionary Drawing Room Ensemble in Cardiff). When the LCMG asked me for a piece it seemed like the perfect opportunity to write for this dark-hued, yet enchanting group of instruments.

The eight short pieces that make up Mydrau Barddonol (Poetic Metres) are musical examples of the eight different types of Englyn (an ancient Welsh poetic genre). Each has specific rules controlling number of lines, syllables within a line and where rhymes occur.

Movements I, III, V, VII and VIII all draw upon the same material, while II, IV and VI display some sort of eclectic tendency: II (Englyn Milwr / Soldiers' Englyn) depends heavily on the instruments also present in Stravinsky's 'A Soldiers' Tale'. IV (Englyn Unodl Crwc) is a mini sonata and borrows a chord voicing from the Schubert octet whilst VI (Englyn Proest Dalgron) is a folk dance, which draws upon the music of my native Wales. Rhymes are displayed in the work through repetitions in texture, instrumentation and gesture.

Instrumentation:

Clarinet in B flat (= Bass Clarinet in B flat), Bassoon, Horn n F, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass (with low c extension), Score in C Duration circa 10 minutes





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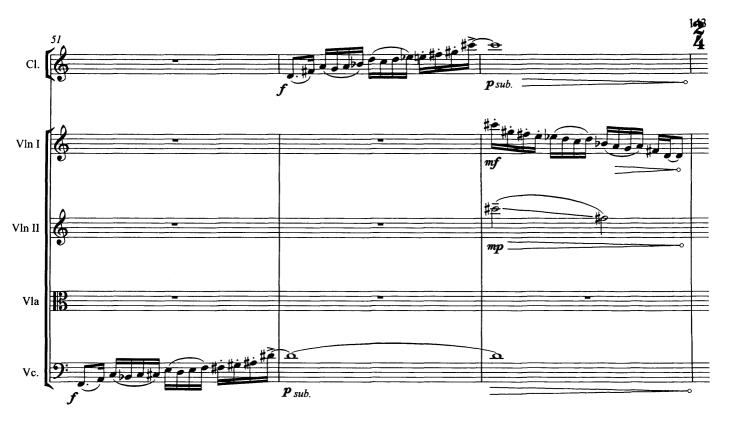








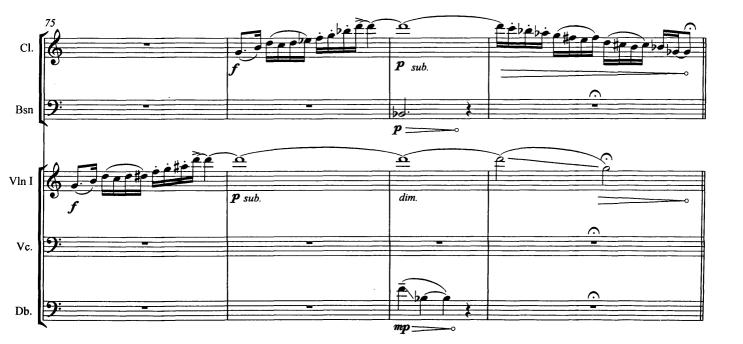


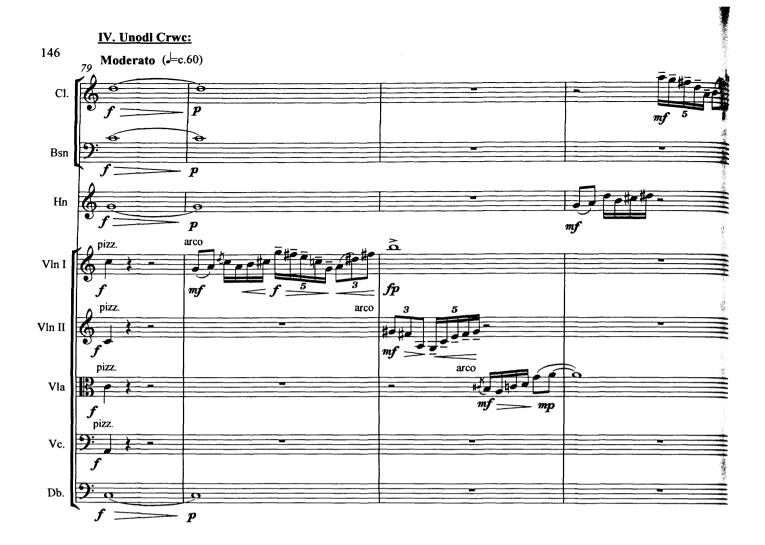












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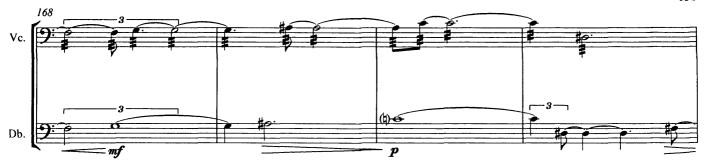


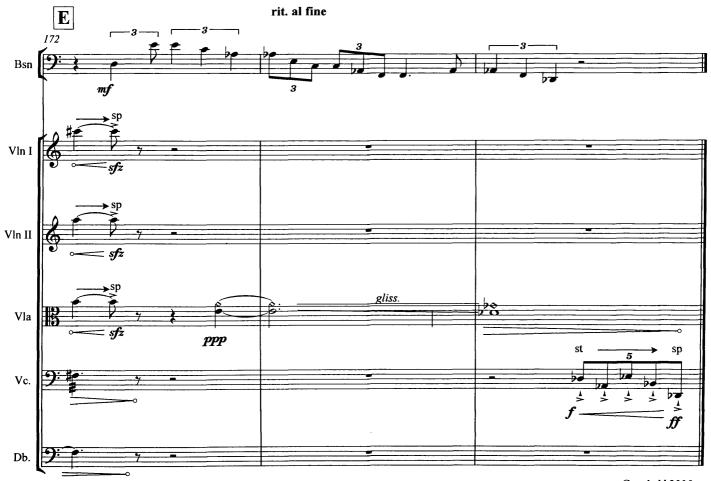






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Caerdydd 2005

## Rhai Llestri (Some Vessels)

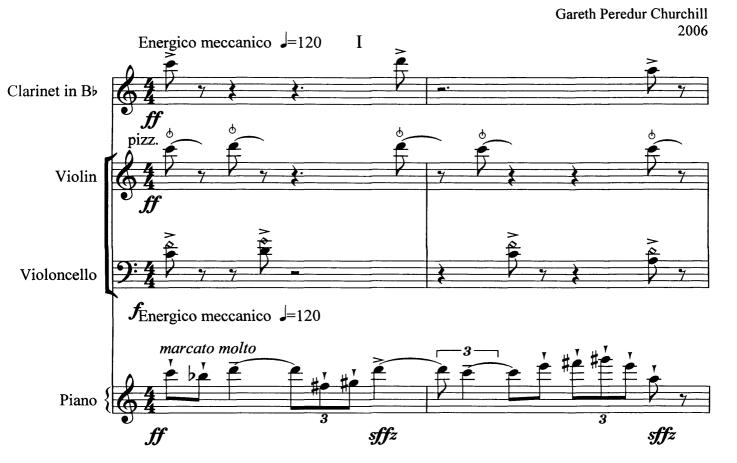
This work presents two simultaneously developing sets of musical 'vessels': The first set (the odd numbered movements) is essentially fast , angular and take pitch classes 1,3,5 and 7 as a harmonic starting point; these movements (if extracted) would play continuously and form a musical englyn (a Welsh poetic stanza). The second cycle (the even numbered movents) by contrast is mostly slow, serene and takes pitch classes 2, 4 and 6 as a starting point. The final seventh movement sees material metrically altered so that the contrasting musics can be superimposed and the harmonic languages interlocked.

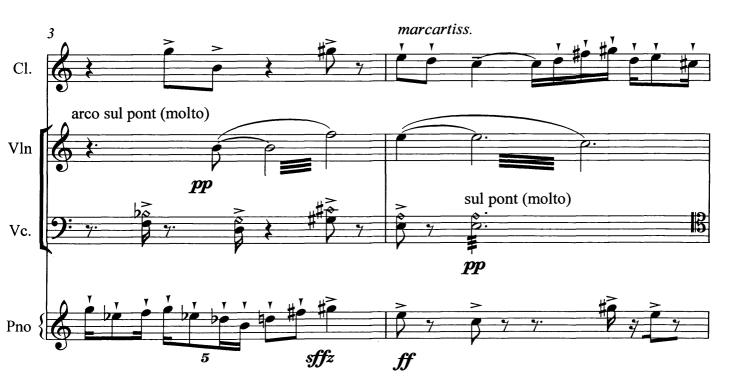
Instrumentation:

Clarinet in B flat, Violin, Violoncello, Piano. Score in C

Duration c8 minutes

## Rhai Llestri (some vessels)

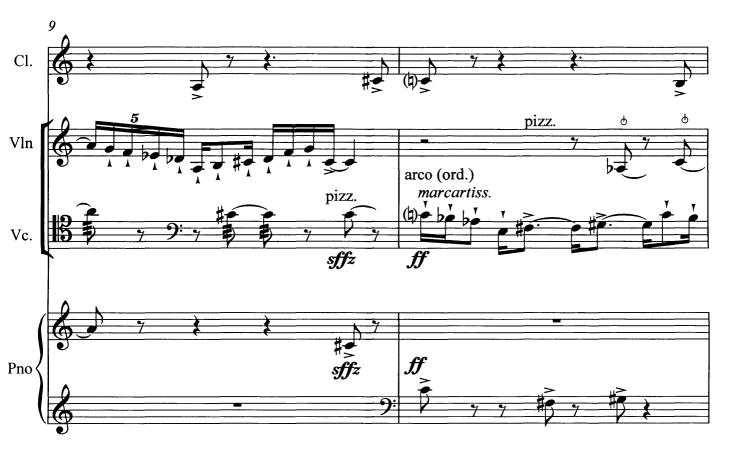


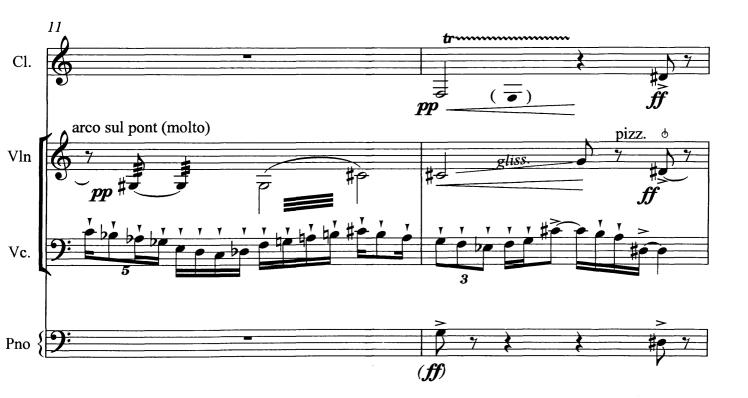


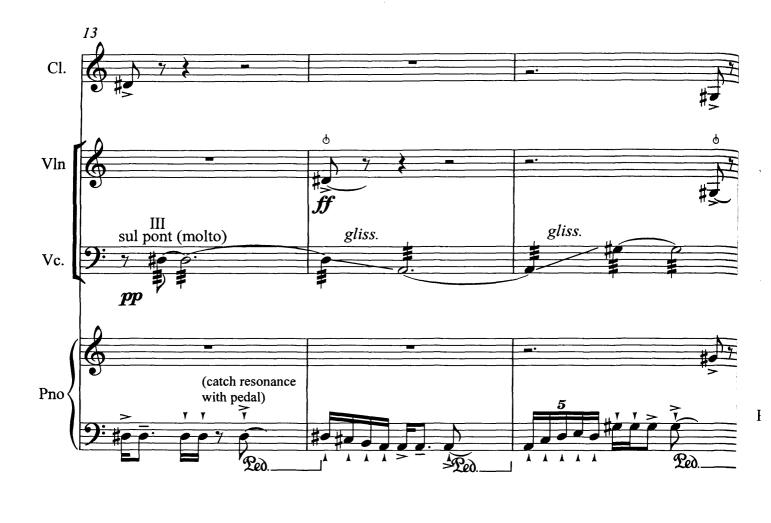


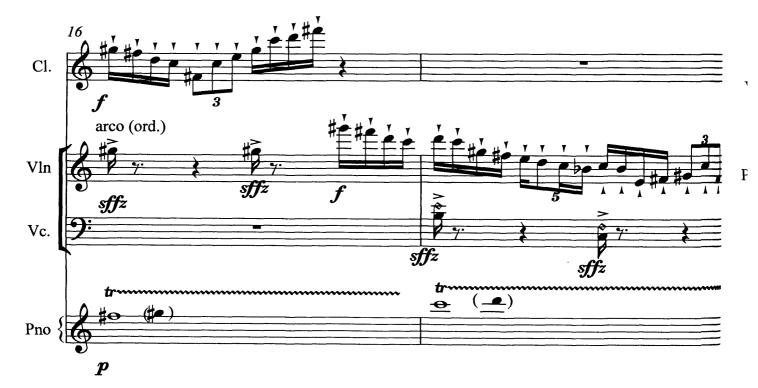


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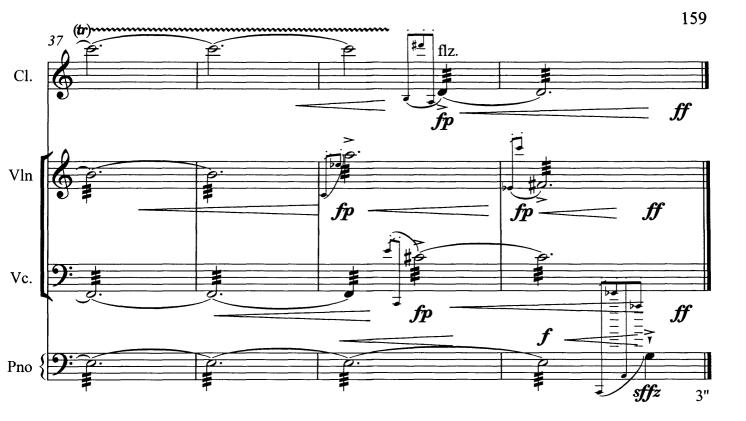












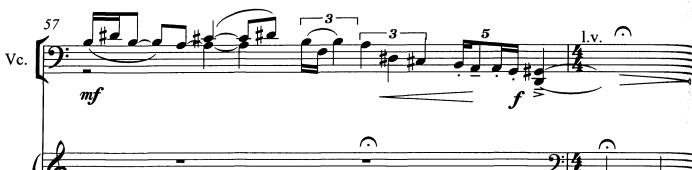
Moderato ma senza misura J=60

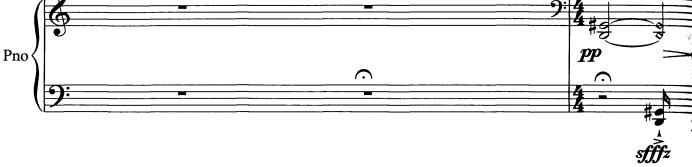


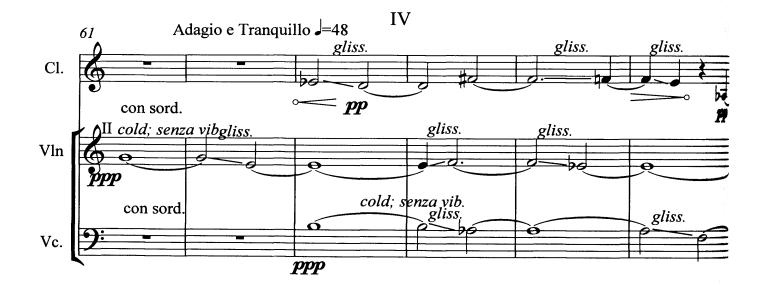


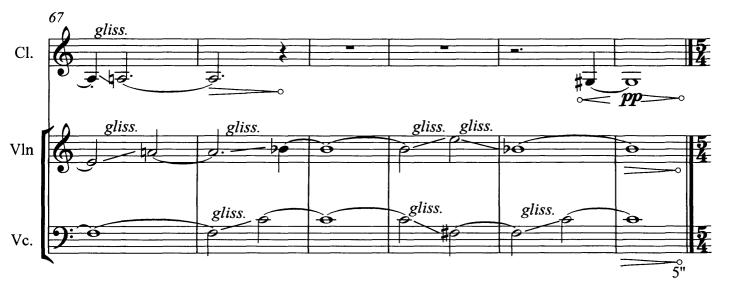




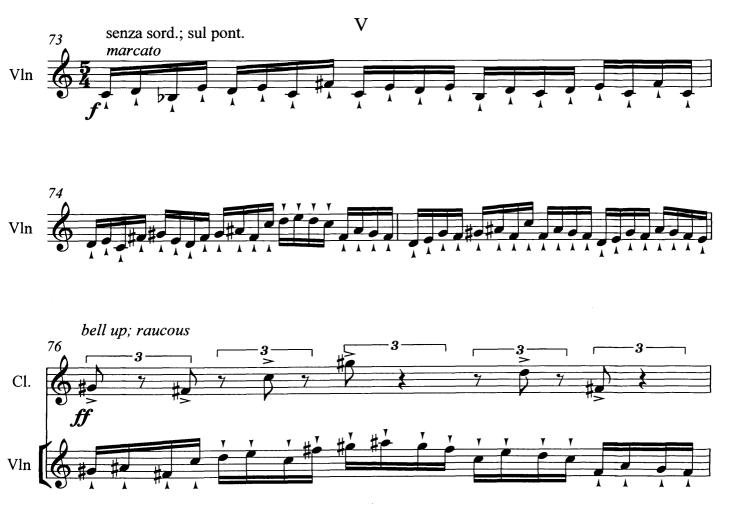




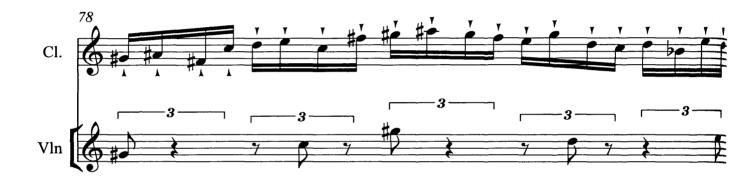


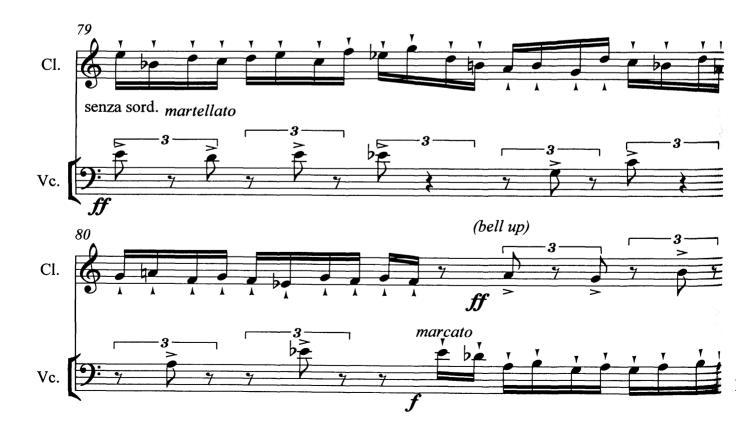


Allegro e tempestoso J=120



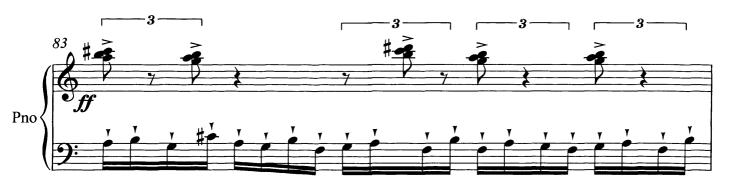




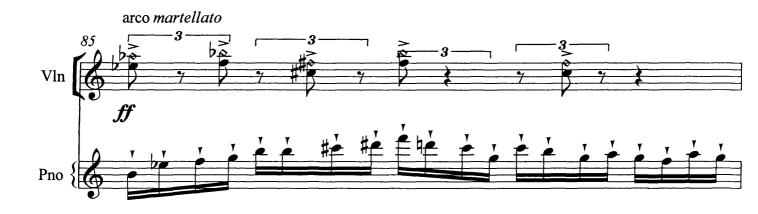


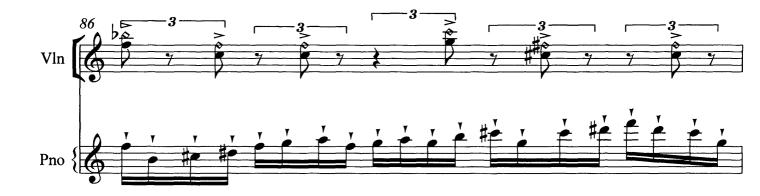


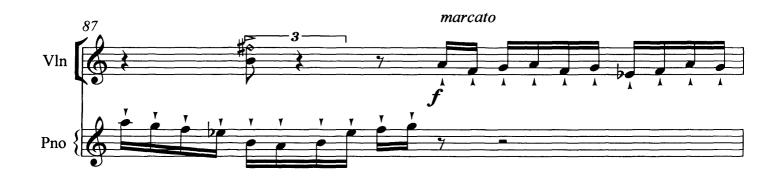


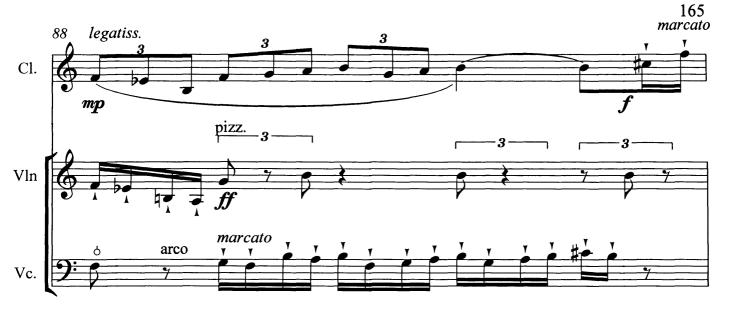


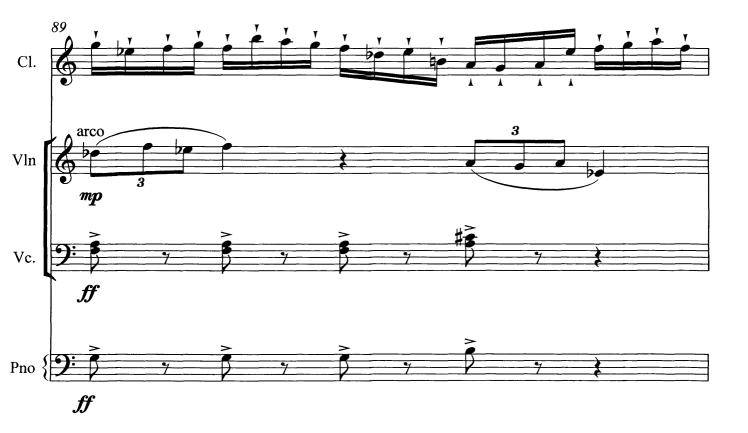












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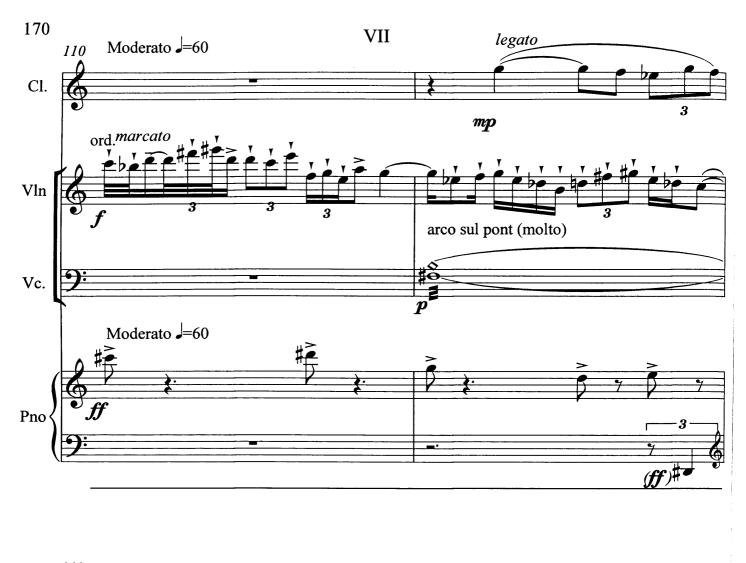


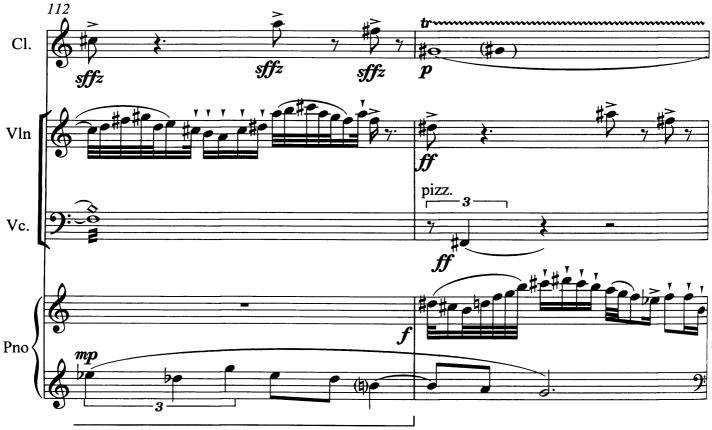


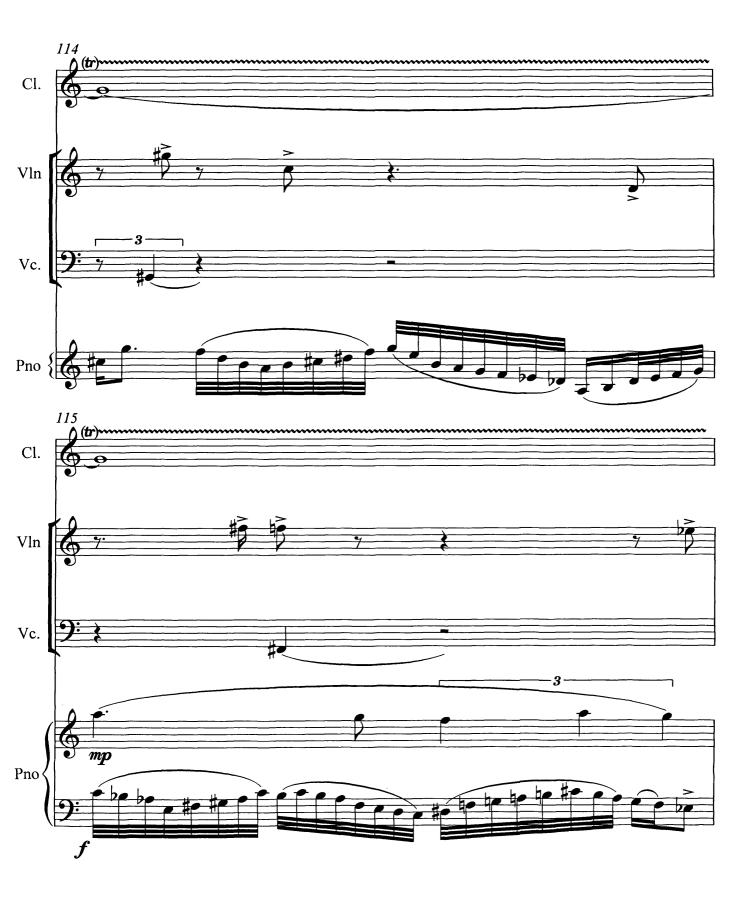




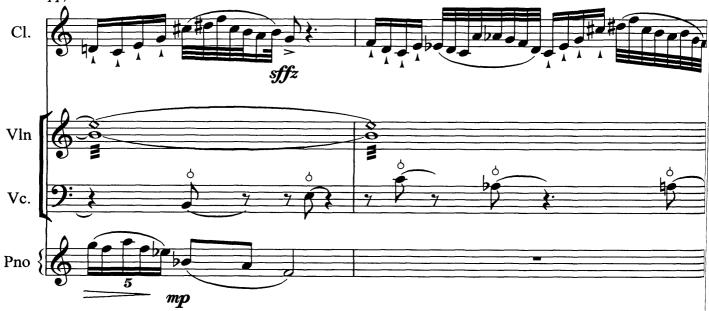
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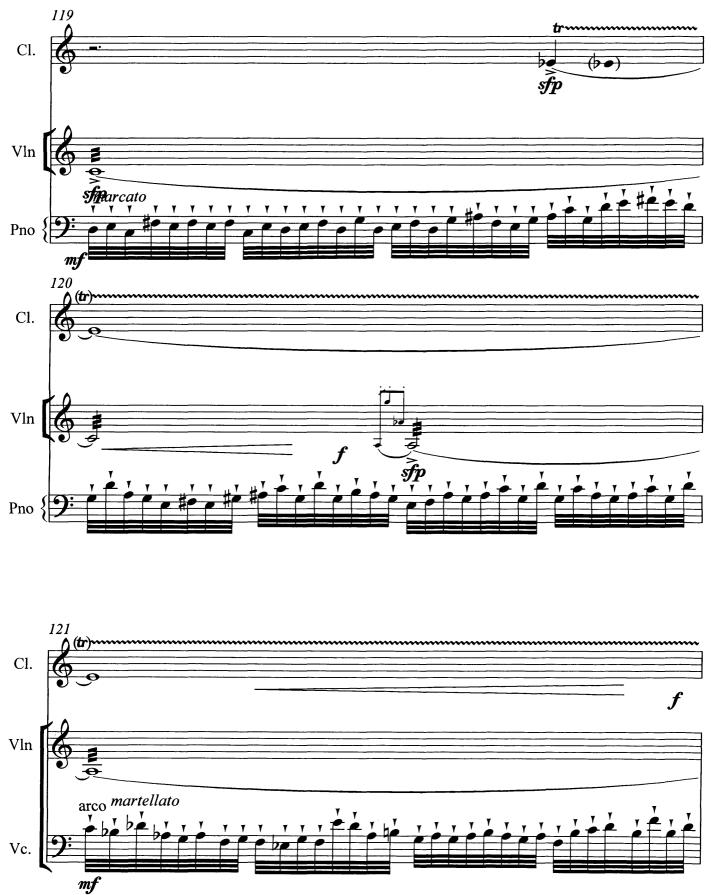


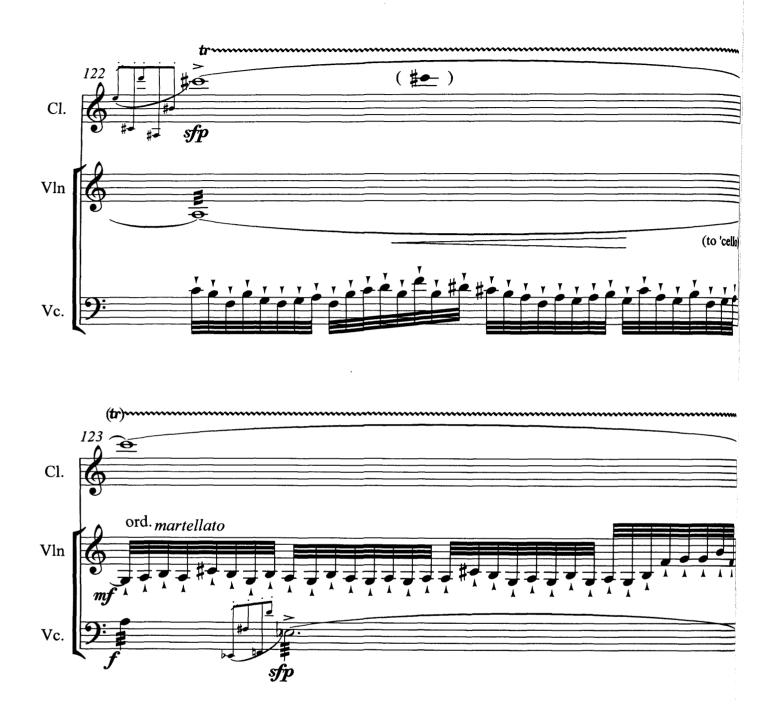


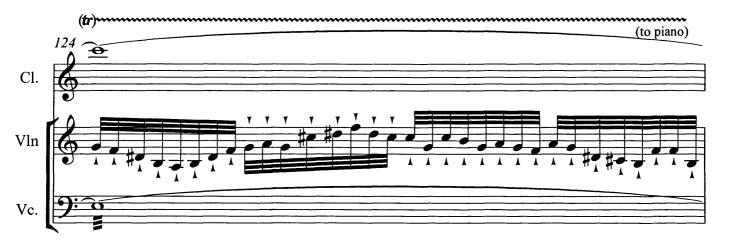


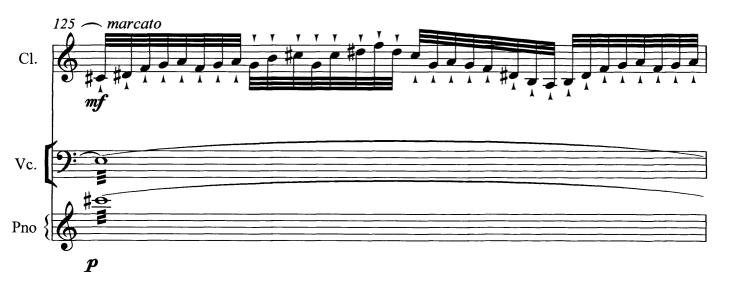


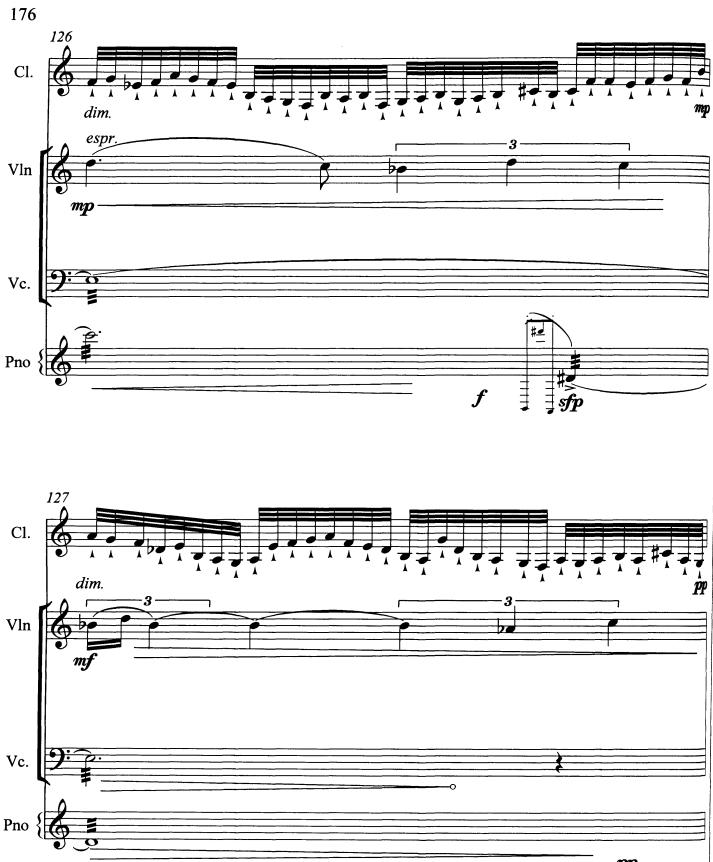




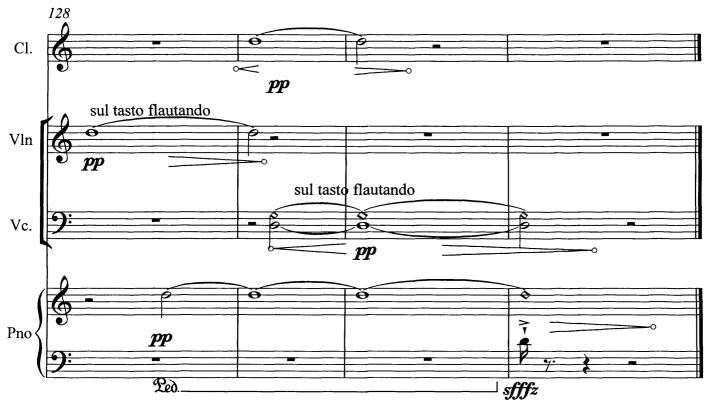








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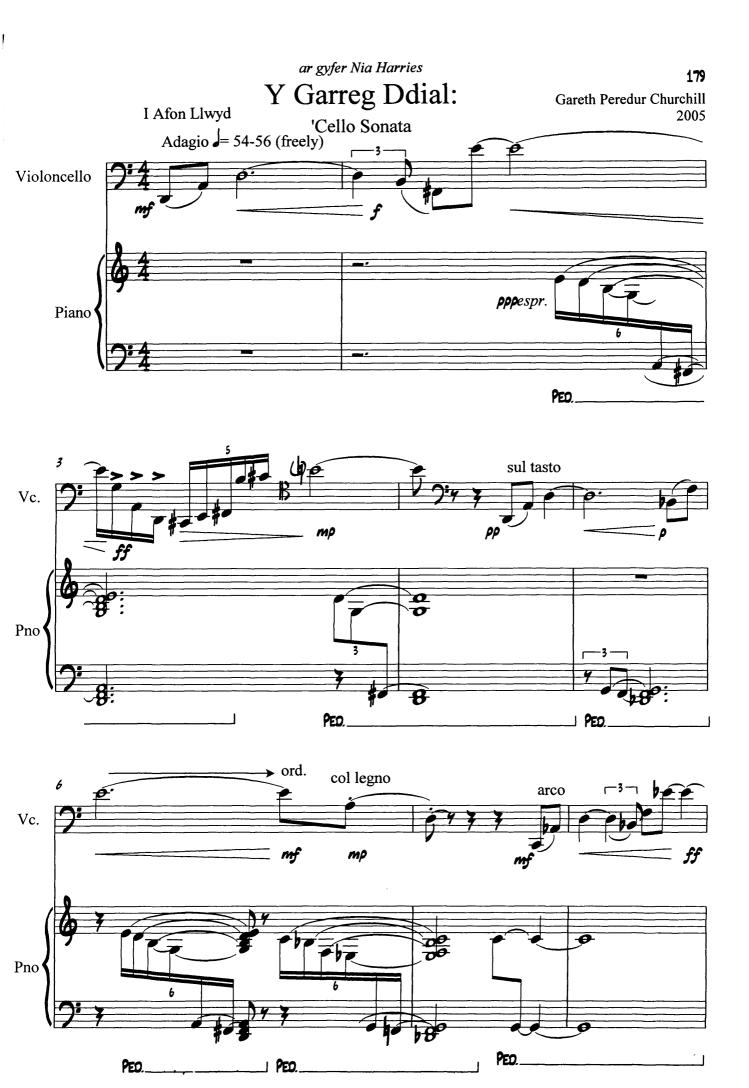
## Y Garreg Ddial: 'Cello Sonata

The title of this work Y Garreg Ddial ('The Revenge Stone') is borrowed from a landmark in my native Gwent (South Wales) near Crughywel (Crickhowell); the Revenge Stone marks the site where Welsh locals struck back at the Norman lord who was oppressing them. With regards to the piece this is reflected through frequent instrumental 'power struggles' and through the way that the instruments dominate one another in turn.

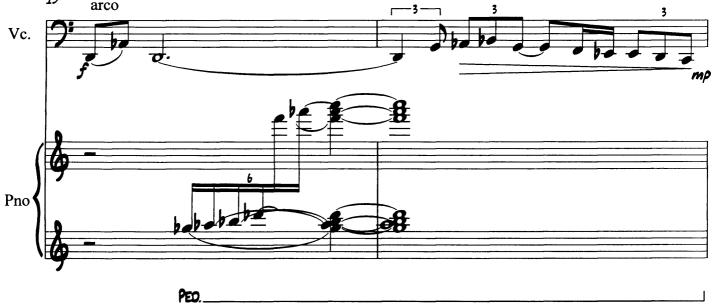
Instrumentation:

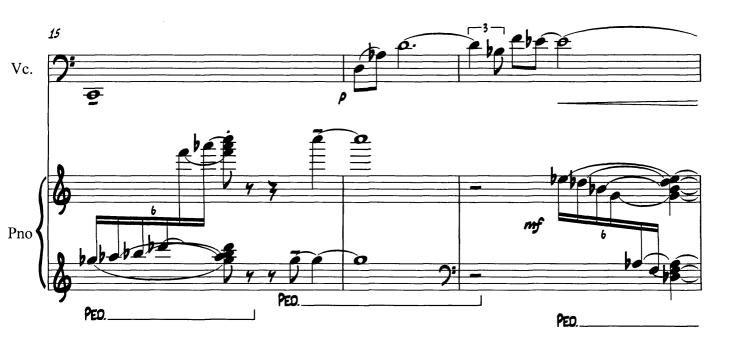
Violoncello and piano

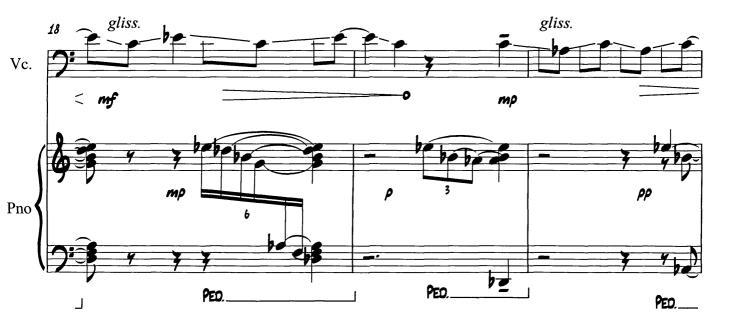
Duration c12 minutes









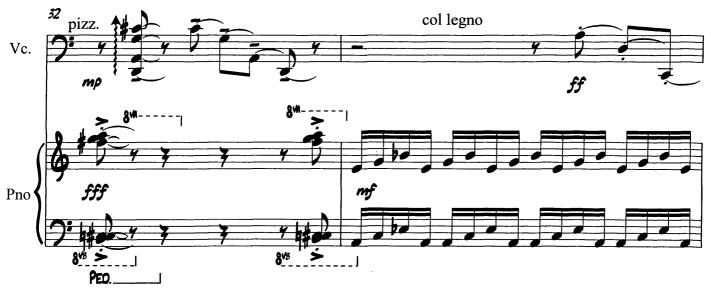


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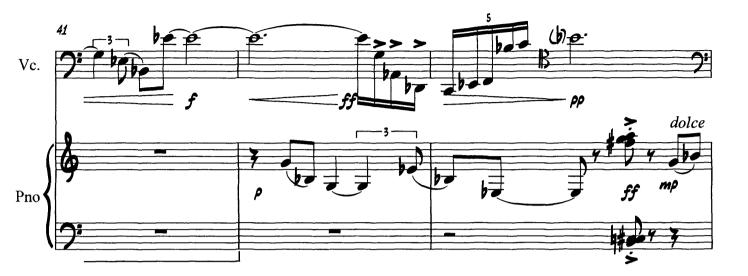


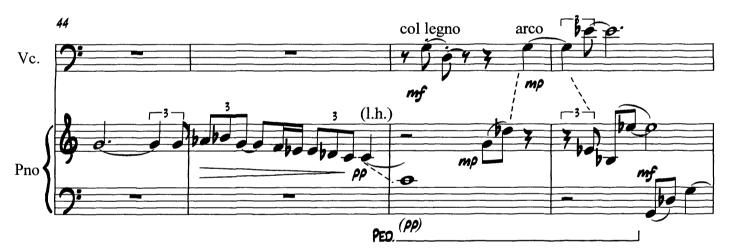


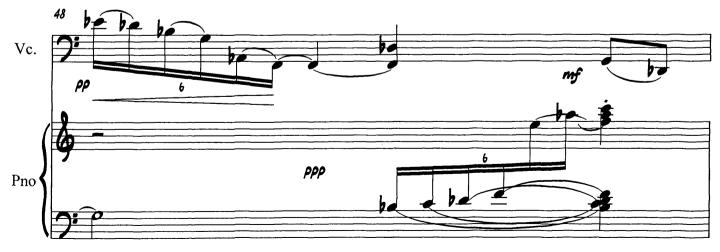




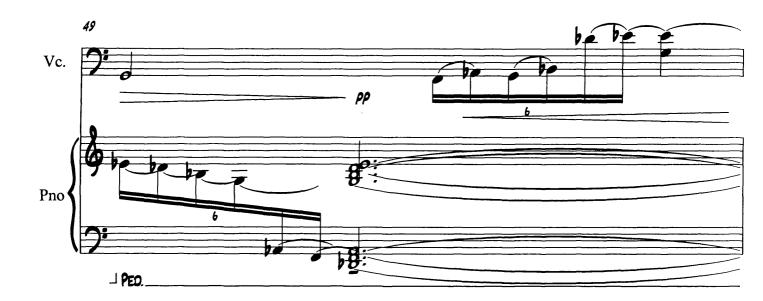


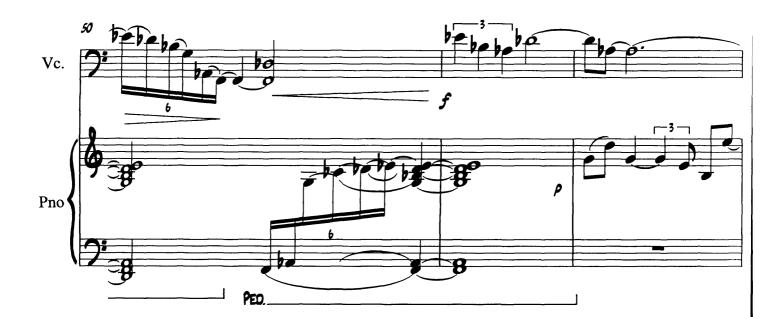


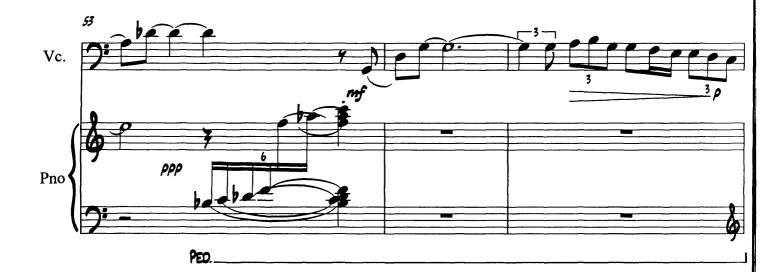




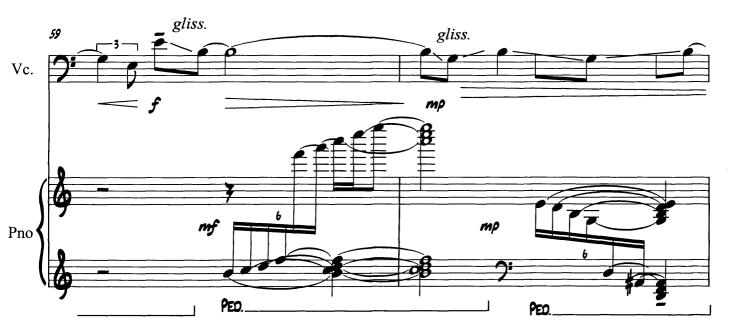
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(\*1) to execute this double pizzicato:

The player should play the 'D  $\flat$ ' and begin 'glissing' up with the left hand,

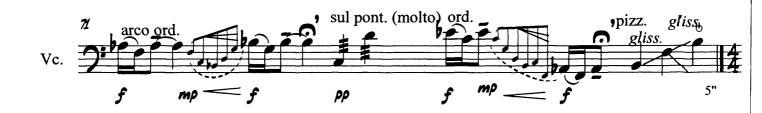
while the left hand ascends the right hand should move behind it to pluck the same string again (as the left hand pases 'G'). The right hand should then return to the normal position for the again has a second 'D  $\mathbf{k}$ '. The disired effect is a brief center, motion glies and

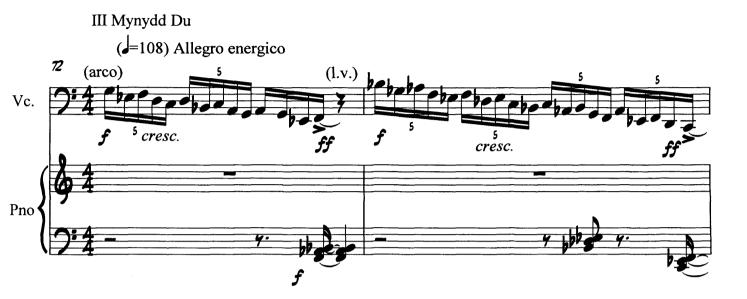
for the snap pizz on the second 'D **b**'. The disired affect is a brief contary motion glissando















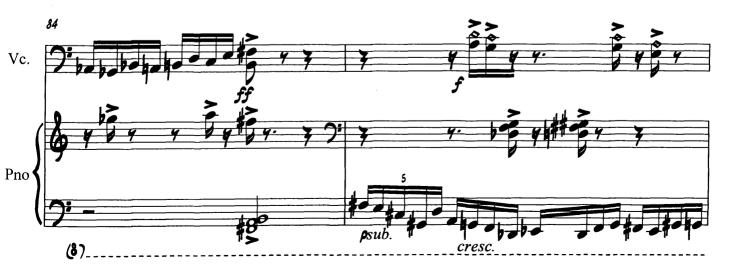


















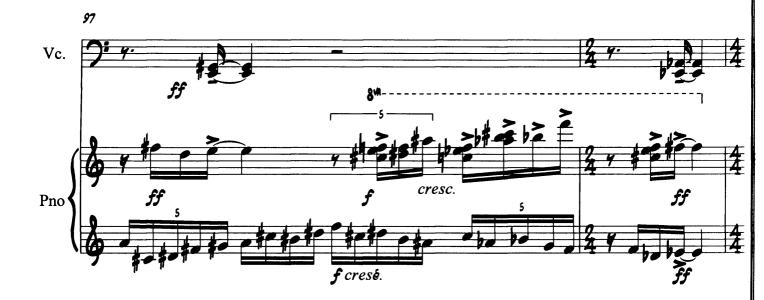
















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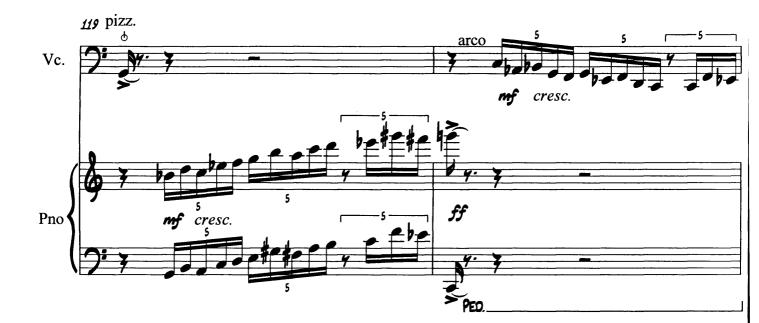
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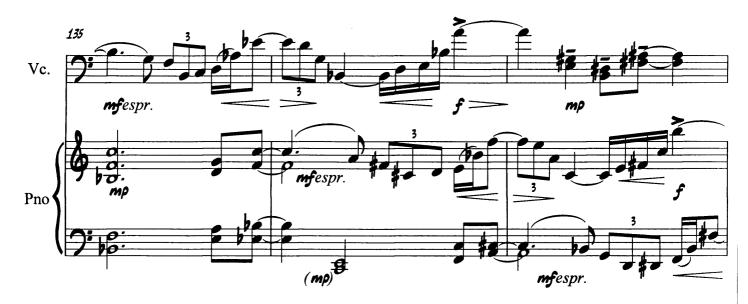


7:3 - bobo bo 4 of bobo of 4

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mp cresc.







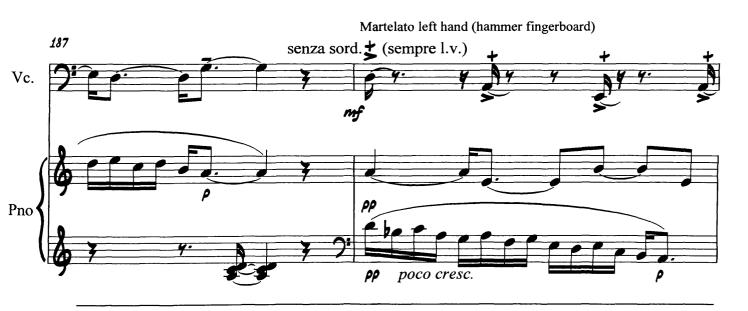






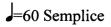






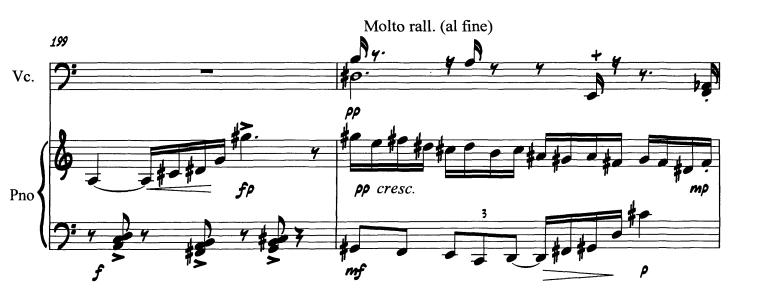
















Caerdydd May2004-Dec2005

## Ystwyth: String Quartet no. 1

My first string quartet 'Ystwyth' comprises three movements, each of which were inspired by locations on, or close to the river Ystwyth as it flows to its mouth in Cardigan Bay. The first movement 'Aber' (estuary) took its starting point from the estuary at dovey junction, where occasional land masses surface from the expansive marsh- land of the estuary: Similarly in the piece, a modal theme repeatedly surfaces from a (mostly) homogenous string texture. The second movement 'Cylch' (cycle) is based upon the gorsedd stone circle in the grounds of Aberystwyth castle (near the river's mouth). The quartet move through a cycle of harmonic 'fields', the durations of which are dictated by the physical distances between the stones in the circle. A short theme (representing the circle's altar) is heard from all parts of the circle and builds to the movement's climax before returning to the opening material as the cycle is complete. The finale 'Fel Cathod Bach' (like kittens) is a tribute to one of Wales' Finest composers, Grace Williams: Its structure is based upon Welsh Penillion singing (as is one of Williams' best works) and it is dependent on scotch snaps and Lydian (raised) fourths, both fingerprints of Williams' music. The title was inspired by a dieing tree on Bronglais Hill, Aberystwyth which reminded me of M. R. James' story 'The Ash Tree', in which James describes the movement of the creatures living inside the tree as being 'like a kitten'; this prompted the sounds and delicato nature of the recitative solos. Additionally, the works title 'Ystwyth' (flexible) refers to the way that often a small number of musical ideas are wound around each other to create textures.

Duration thirteen minutes.





