Portfolio of Original Compositions

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List of Scores

1. *Multiple Infection* (2010) for clarinet, cello, percussion and piano. Performed and recorded by Psappha in concert on 30 April 2010 in their Beat the Rush Hour concert series at the Martin Harris Centre, Manchester. Duration: 7 minutes 40 seconds. The recording is of an earlier version to that presented in the accompanying portfolio.

2. *Contrasting Spectrum* (2011) for flute, clarinet, violin, cello and piano. Performed by Psappha in April 2011 in an evening concert at the Martin Harris centre, recorded by the BBC. Duration: 10 minutes 40 seconds. The recording is of an earlier version to that presented in the accompanying portfolio.

3. *Splintering Factions* (2012) for chamber orchestra. Performed by the University of Manchester Symphony Orchestra in concert on 13 December 2012 at the Martin Harris Centre for Music and Drama. Duration: 5 minutes.


5. *Memoriam retinebimus* (2014) for SATB choir and soloists (4 male and 2 females). Performed by The University of Manchester Cosmo Singers on 25 November 2014 as part of the University of Manchester World War I Centenary Commemoration Event, Whitworth Hall, Manchester. Duration: 6 minutes 45 seconds.


7. *Relentless Continuum* (2015-2016) for symphony orchestra. Part 1 was performed by the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra on 26 January 2016 as part of the New Music North West Festival at Media City, UK. It was broadcast on Hear and Now, BBC Radio 3 on 6 February 2016. Part 2 is yet to be premiered. Duration: c. 32 minutes, (Part 1: c. 7 minutes; Part 2: c. 25 minutes).

Total duration: c. 1 hour 23 minutes.
List of Recordings

The USB stick can be found in the CD pouch in the box.

Track 1 - *Multiple Infection* 7 minutes 40 seconds

*The recording is of an earlier version to that presented in the accompanying portfolio.*

Track 2 - *Contrasting Spectrum* 10 minutes 40 seconds

*The recording is of an earlier version to that presented in the accompanying portfolio.*

Track 3 - *Splintering Factions* 5 minutes

Track 4 - *Chinese Whispers* 5 minutes

Track 5 - *Memoriam retinebimus* 6 minutes 45 seconds

Track 6 - *Sporos* 15 minutes 30 seconds

Track 7 - *Relentless Continuum* 7 minutes (part 1 only)

Total duration: c. 58 minutes.
Abstract

The objective in this compositional research has been to create a portfolio of compositions with the goal of developing my musical language. This has been achieved through a portfolio that explores characterisation, transformation, dialogue, interaction, contrast and, latterly, timbre in the context of a teleological framework.

Seven works are presented for a range of instrumental and vocal forces according to the opportunities taken throughout the research period. The majority of the works in the portfolio are under 10 minutes in duration and the final two cumulative works explore longer timeframes of c.15 and c.30 minutes respectively.

The seven pieces are presented in the order of completion:


This portfolio also includes an analytical commentary in eight chapters prefaced with an opening section (part one) introducing the author and compositional research. This part also presents elements of the author’s musical language including a short introduction of characterisation, teleology, transformation, dialogue, interaction, contrast and timbre with a brief discussion of notable influences that led to the implementation of these elements. Lastly, part two details the seven pieces of the portfolio in the form of musical commentaries over seven chapters, one piece being discussed in each chapter. The last chapter presents reflections and evaluations on the portfolio and future goals.
**Declaration**

No portion of the work referred to in this portfolio has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification at this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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Dedication

Dedicated to the memory of my late father, who always supported and believed in me whatever path I took.
Acknowledgements

I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Kevin Malone whose patience, guidance and encouragement have enabled me to develop as a composer in ways I never thought possible.

I am also grateful to my husband Stephen who has shown unfailing patience and enthusiasm and my mother who has been a constant encourager and support throughout my life and especially in my music-making. I would also like to express my thanks to other members of my family who have shown great interest in my music and been willing to read this commentary. I could not have done it without you all.
PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

a. About the Author

I started composing seriously at the age of 14 through the encouragement of my school music teacher, Peter Rose, who wrote musicals in partnership with the World Wildlife Fund for his school musicians. At a similar period, I attended Lindsay String Quartet concerts at the University of Manchester and other local concerts which introduced me to Classical and Romantic works that made great use of transformational growth. A significant example was Franz Liszt's Transcendental Etude No. 8 for piano. The number of different variations that the opening, dramatic impetuous theme goes through, including its change to being accompanied by ethereal arpeggios, takes the listener on an unexpected and exciting journey leading to a clear goal. I was aware of the parallels of this developmental shape to processes of growth that I saw around me in the world, including that embedded into the creation around us and that which is integral to human life and existence. My early works, therefore, possessed these hallmarks of transformation and teleology and their presence is still clear today.

I was, however, introduced to contemporary works throughout my undergraduate studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the University of Bristol and later as a Masters student at the University of Manchester. One notable example was Igor Stravinsky's Rite of Spring and the dynamic, rhythmic intensity and vibrant, changing orchestral colours which opened up a wealth of new possibilities, thus generating a desire to create bold contrasts and varied instrumental colours.

It has been a great privilege to continue studying at the University of Manchester as a research student and studying part-time has given considerable space to develop my aesthetic and technique in a highly stimulating and challenging environment. In particular, this has involved moving away from an intuitive approach with respect to small scale decisions in favour of greater control as well as focusing more on the parameter of timbre (seen in the final two pieces of the portfolio). This process has helped to clarify my intentions as a composer and, through many performance opportunities, workshops and rehearsals, has afforded the opportunity to communicate more effectively. The Quatuor Danel have been particularly influential in their encouragement to define not only the overall character of a work through clear performance direction, but also to ensure that this is realised in the fabric of the music. This has impacted my compositional approach allowing a clearer representation of my intentions. It has also prepared me for life beyond the PhD which has led to me gaining a place on the London Philharmonic Orchestra's Young Composer Programme 2016-17.
b. Important Aspects of my Musical Language

Throughout the course of the PhD the development of my musical language has occurred through the implementation of the following elements: characterisation, teleology, transformation, contrast and timbre. The commentaries in part two detail the extent to which they were employed, but this section seeks to introduce them along with a brief introduction to significant models.

i. Characterisation

As already noted, melodic transformation and development were early compositional interests and throughout the duration of the PhD these were applied through the lens of characterising musical material. Two composers were of particular interest in this pursuit: firstly, the music of Elliott Carter and his String Quartet No. 2 due to the characterisation of the four instruments in the quartet. The way in which Carter gives each instrument a unique identity in rhythm, freedom and strictness (Gagné et al., 1982, p. 94) was of immediate interest. Secondly, the programme note in the preface of the score of Magnus Lindberg’s *Corrente* was influential, stating that “…narrative aspects of the material are enhanced by giving the musical characters different roles as they affect one another during the piece” (Lindberg 1992 p. iii). The notion of characters affecting one another became a central concern, as did suggesting conflict and resolution as a foundation for creating a narrative formal shape for the characters to inhabit.

ii. Teleology

The logic, pattern and symmetry of teleological forms have always impacted me due to their potential of embodying the elements of conflict and resolution. Aristotle’s description of the tragedy was an important factor in my early considerations on form:

A whole is that which has a beginning, a middle and an end. A beginning is that which does not itself follow anything by casual necessity, but after which something naturally is or comes to be. An end, on the contrary, is that which which itself naturally follows some other thing, either by necessity, or as a rule, but has nothing following it. A middle is that which follows something as some other thing follows it (Classics.mit.edu, n.d.).

Aristotle goes on to say that a well-constructed plot should contain these three elements. This three-part plot structure was expressed in diagrammatic form by German playwright and novelist Gustav Freytag (Example 1) as Herman, Jahn and Ryan illustrate: “The three points of the triangle are used to represent a play’s introduction (A), climax, (B), and catastrophe, (C)” (Herman et al., 2005, p.189).

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¹ Musical characters is a term I will use throughout the PhD commentary to describe aspects of the musical material. Sometimes the term ‘character’ refers to a motif and other times, as in *Multiple Infection*, denotes a whole section encompassing every instrument at that point. The language of ‘character’ was chosen due to its visceral quality. It also became an important element in the conception of the piece as I considered my music as a dramatic narrative discourse where characters exist and interact.
Example 1: Freytag’s Pyramid illustrating the shape of three-part plot structures.

![Freytag's Pyramid](image)

The key components of Aristotle’s well-ordered plot remain in Freytag’s shape, brought about by the causal necessity of the inner sections (referred to by Freytag as rising action, climax and falling action). Particular inspirational facets were the presence of the inciting incident that caused the rising action and the resolution point initiating the final denouement (Herman et al., 2005, p.189). The new percussion-initiated idea presented at the outset of part two of *Relentless Continuum* (bar 221+) is the large-scale inciting incident leading to the reprise of the opening material. Resolution is only found after opposing ideas are finally silenced leading to final denouement.

Furthermore, this causal, teleological shape is something paralleled in my own worldview as a Christian. On a foundational level, the progression of our world as expressed in the Bible from creation to new creation, from Eden to the new heavens and the new earth, presents a teleological form. This shape could be represented as an inverted Freytag pyramid (Example 2) something that Vaughan Roberts (Roberts 2002, p. 157) expresses as a clear ascent (Example 3 on page 15).

Example 2: The biblical world order represented as an inverted Freytag pyramid.

![Biblical World Order](image)

It should be noted that the specific ascent of Example 3 is not present in my work. Rather a teleological shape with the causal element present in Aristotle and Freytag’s work served as a model for the forms I favoured, inhabiting a degree of resolution after conflict generally at the end point of the work. The overall formal shape of each piece in this portfolio is detailed within the forthcoming chapters in part two, showing the broad movement from calm through opposition or conflict to resolution.
Along with these influences, several composers have served as models in the pursuit of teleology and resolution. Composers favouring forms that move from crisis to resolution have been particularly influential. In her book on Dimitri Shostakovich’s String Quartets Nos. 1-7, Kuhn (2010, p.191) comments that Shostakovich reaches an “early deforming crisis” during the exposition of the first movement of his String Quartet No. 5, an element that continues in the rest of the exposition and in the development causing great instability (Example 4).

Example 4: Plan of the first movement of Shostakovich’s String Quartet No. 5, (Kuhn, 2010, p.190).

The resolution in this movement does not come at the expected point at the recapitulation, but instead is hinted at later as the theme is exposed without the crisis-ridden fragmentary guise of the opening. This focus on disconnected themes coming together at the end was utilised in Splintering Factions as disparate, fragmentary ideas come together in a final integrated unison.
iii. Transformations

The works in this portfolio all exhibit a focus on transformation and interaction between musical characters. The music of composers of the Second Viennese School, characterised by ordered and tightly constructed material, highlighted another way of creating transformations and change. One instance is Alban Berg’s Violin Concerto due to the tight control of the pitch material through serial construction, leading to coherency and familiarity of pitch.

Although I have never written a rigorous serial work and my soundworld is very different to those of the Second Viennese School, some aspects of serial procedures have been employed. One example is in Relentless Continuum where a seven-note row (F, E flat, G flat, D, A flat, G, A) became the basis of the whole piece. It was gradually revealed during the introduction (bars 1-68) and disclosed fully in unison at the climax at bar 69, continuing to bar 104. This row also became the basis of the harmony at the beginning of the piece (one example being bars 2-3 which will be illustrated in Examples 58 and 69 on pages 61 and 62).

Henry Dutilleux’s technique of metamorphosis was striking in his orchestral work Métaboles where the music gradually transforms from one state to another. After hearing this piece, I was keen to write music that evidenced a slower rate of change and a greater emphasis on timbre to highlight contrast (an example being Sporos).

iv. Contrast and Timbre

Due to the preoccupation with creating unique musical characters, contrast became a very important element of my work. I was drawn to the work of Theo Van Doesberg and his Composition VII (The Three Graces) and Wassily Kandinsky’s painting Pfeile [Arrows]. Both these works exhibit a measure of contrast in colour and shape but also achieve coherency due to a degree of repetition.

These elements can be seen in Example 5 (on page 17) where Doesberg employs a varied colour palate of blues, yellows, reds and whites in his Composition VII to present stark contrast. However, the unity determined through the use of repeated squares and rectangles suggests coherency. Furthermore, the internal pattern of the colour formation is striking, creating a degree of uniformity with parallel yellow shapes across the top of the painting, set at right angles with smaller white rectangles.

Similarly, Kandinsky’s Pfeile displays a degree of contrast through shape and colour while maintaining coherency through repeated geometric shapes and a degree of recurring colour patterns (Example 6 on page 17). The recurring arrows present unity and coherency, but their use is never predictable. The contrast of the colour of the arrows and their combination with squares or arrowheads of varying sizes creates variety. The inclusion of the rectangles and lines on the outer edges of the painting create a boundary and connection with the straight lines in the arrows, but also distinction. Conversely, diversity is presented by the presence of circles and organic shapes, setting up contrast and variety with the largely geometric foreground.
Example 5: Theo Van Doesberg’s *Composition VII (The Three Graces)*, (Doesberg Graces, n.d).

Example 6: Kandinsky’s *Pfeile* [Arrows], (christies.com, n.d).
Composers that make great use of sharply defined contrast, through the parameter of timbre were particularly influential and George Crumb’s *Black Angels* is no exception. The number of extended techniques are used to great effect causing the string quartet to sound completely unique. “Threnody III: Night of the Electric Insects” is a particularly prominent instance, where a combination of extremely quiet dynamics, high sul ponticello, glissandi and intervals such as the tritone, major seventh and eleventh creates a unnerving and horrifying soundworld that is only heightened by the performance direction of ‘disembodied and incorporeal.’

At the time of discovering this piece I took part in a workshop with the Quatuor Danel. They made comments regarding the importance of boldly presenting an intention, clearly describing it and representing this in the very fabric of the music itself. What Crumb achieved in this quartet exemplified this and led to a very different approach in writing my quartet, *Sporos*. After listening to Crumb’s piece, the main concern was using the timbral possibilities of the quartet to achieve the intentions of recreating in sound the growth of a seed rather than relying on thematic development.
Multiple Infection focuses on the elements of characterisation and thus creates a context for interactions and transformations to take place. The title suggests particular types of interaction and transformation, the main one being ‘infection’. The term infection came about due to its visceral qualities allowing for parallels to human interactions. The time-based nature of infection was one that resonated with me due to the desire to create narrative, teleological forms and also had personal significance due to my father being very ill with various infections at the time of writing. Furthermore, my pre-compositional decision was to prioritise the parameters of tempo, rhythm, texture, melodic shape and instrumentation in creating the individual character identities. A polytriadic harmonic language was applied throughout the piece to suggest coherence and unity, as a consistent approach was employed through changing characters.

Several composers provided strong models and influences. A key inspiration was Carter, and in particular, his String Quartet No. 2. Gagné and Caras record Carter’s own comments on his quartet:

I think I chose a repertory of characters in which there were various degrees of freedom and strictness; I invented characters around this. I think what started it originally was a musical idea: in which there would be 2 or 3, or even at max 4, very distinct events occurring, which would all be quite clear to the listener. It was out of this that a plan began to evolve in which there would be really quite strikingly different kinds of characters... The choice of the type of characters came after the idea of how you would keep these people separate, how you would keep each one quite clear. The idea that one like the cello would move by very small steps rhythmically, so that it would get slower and faster in small degrees while the first violin would jump from very slow notes to fast ones - well, this immediately would suggest certain kinds of emotional feelings to me… (Gagné et al.,1982, p. 94)

Carter’s creation of a repertory of characters personally resonated with me and his analogy of ‘keeping these people separate’ was one I shared. It was also interesting to read his own assessment of his Second Quartet and, in particular, see his expectation of the listener being able to clearly perceive the unique identities of his characters through the distinct emotional impact created from varying rhythmic treatments. In response to this, an early concern in Multiple Infection was to create separate characters that the audience would be able to perceive.

Witold Lutosławski’s Cello Concerto (1968-70) was another influential reference point. Kaczyński suggests that a common feature “… is the interruption of every episode with something that is repeated in ever different variations” (Kaczyński, T. and Lutosławski, W. 1984, p.21). The way that disruptive trumpets and later the brass interrupt the grazioso solo in the introduction and the soloist’s attempt at soliloquy in the first movement sets up a striking dialogue. As a result of these models, I intended to create several distinct musical characters that would interact and undergo infection.

To achieve this aim, the initial, pre-compositional workings included notes denoting varied characters and identities that in turn would regulate and shape the other musical parameters in the piece (in particular the tempo, rhythm, texture, melodic shape and instrumentation). From these initial sketches, the creation of...
contrasting material became the focus of the early compositional process. For example, the first character was created through the combination of a dotted, 6/8 dance-like rhythm, a high, ascending clarinet line (which takes the lead melodic role) an instrumental combination of Eb clarinet, pizzicato cello, vibraslap, staccato and accented piano homophonic chords and forte and fortissimo dynamics. This grouping was intended to imply confidence and an abundance of energy. (See Example 7 on page 21. In unbarred passages in all examples, accidentals only apply to the notehead which follows).

Similarly, the second and third characters were distinguished by contrasting features. The goal of the second was to create an expressive and delicate nature in contrast to the first. This character led by the cello part was accompanied with piano and tambourine and further distinguished by a descending cello line (with an intervallic predominance of minor 3rds, 6ths, tritones and 4ths), a slower tempo, legato articulation, quiet dynamics with occasional mezzo piano and forte crescendos. The absence of the clarinet was intentional, serving as a technique of interruption in bar 54 and thus indicating a return to the opening character 1. The three musical characters are shown in Example 8 (page 22).

The creation of these opposing characters shaped the form of the piece, the goal being to move from an unopposed opening through opposition to resolution, broadly mirroring the three-point teleological shapes outlined in Examples 2 and 3 in the Introduction.

Furthermore, distinct, separate sections were created, each focusing on one character with the first appearing three times. This was intended to highlight the effect that the intervening, opposing characters 2 and 3 had on character 1 through its second and third appearances (Example 9).

Example 9: Structural sections, *Multiple Infection*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 1 (bars 1-28)</th>
<th>Section 2 (bars 29-58)</th>
<th>Section 3 (bars 58-107)</th>
<th>Section 4 (bars 107-148)</th>
<th>Section 5 (bars 149-164)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Character 1</td>
<td>Character 2</td>
<td>Character 1</td>
<td>Character 3</td>
<td>Character 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The arrival of character 2 at bar 29 was planned to suggest an effect not dissimilar to the inciting incident, and create structural opposition (Herman et al., 2005, p.189). For a formal outline of the piece, see Example 10 on page 23. This opposition was further suggested and explored through infection and interruption.

a. Infection

Example 11 (on page 24) highlights the process of infection in the latter stages of the piece where character 1 returns but displays qualities of the intervening characters. The disjunct shape of the clarinet melody, inclusion of the tambourine instead of the vibraslap, the slower piano chords not following the rhythm of the clarinet, and the arco cello, not totally following the clarinet rhythm, all indicate a measure of infection from characters 2 and 3.
Example 7: Characteristics of character 1, achieving a unique energetic and dance-like identity, *Multiple Infection*. (All pitches are at sounding pitch)
Example 8: The three characters composed for *Multiple Infection*.

**Character 1: bars 1-4**

\( j = c. 192 \) chaotic with energy, boldness and vitality

**Character 2: bars 29-32**

\( j = c. 52 \) with much expression and feeling

**Character 3: bars 107-111**

\( j = c. 60 \) with fidelity and resignation
Example 10: Formal plan of *Multiple Infection* denoting the progression from resolution to opposition back to resolution.

**CALM:** Opening Character (Bars 1-28)

**OPPOSITION/INTERRUPTION** (with expression and feeling) (Bars 29-58)

**OPENING CHARACTER/INFECTED** Bars 58-107

**OPPOSITION/INTERRUPTION** (with timidity and resignation) (Bars 107-148)

**VICTORY:** Opening Character returns (Bars 149-164)

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Rising Action \[\rightarrow\] CLIMAX \[\leftarrow\] Falling Action

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**Key:**

- Material continues through next block
- Moves to next contrasting block with no overlap of material

**Overall shape:**

Rest - opposition - resolution
b. Interruption

A second way that opposition was communicated was through interruption. In the example below (Example 12) a lack of fluidity occurs as the energetic, dotted clarinet and piano rhythms are suddenly disturbed as the cello part fails to return to its opening pizzicato line and instead continues to present the legato, expressive line that identified character 2. Moreover, the tempo fluctuates and so the identity of the once energetic and resilient opening character is changed.

Example 12: An example of interruption, Multiple Infection, bars 67-72.

The final appearance of the opening character (bars 149-164) does manifest the wounds of infection, but despite this suggests a degree of resolution due to the familiar energetic identity returning.
HARMONY

The harmonic choices in this piece were strongly influenced by the striking, individual soundworld of Olivier Messiaen. The second prelude from his eight Preludes, "Chant d'extase dans un paysage triste", presents a case in point with a passage of polytonal harmonies that served as a model in the development of my musical aesthetic (Example 13).

Example 13: Harmony in Messiaen's Prelude 'Chant d'extase dans un paysage triste', bars 16-17.

The first character in Multiple Infection regularly comprised of a combination of three-note diatonic chords and also three-note cluster chords prioritising the interval of the major second. The close voicing of the chords and narrow distance between the hands in the piano part were chosen to represent the chaotic nature of the character (Example 14).

Example 14: Polytriadic harmony in character 1, Multiple Infection, bars 1-3.

The second and third characters share diatonic combinations and the narrow distance between the hands is intended to create coherence between the differing characters, although the register is higher to create variety with the opening section and reflect the expressive and calm nature of music.
EVALUATION

On reflection this piece had some strong elements, namely the timbral colours generated in the energetic opening part through the instrumental combination of the Eb clarinet, pizzicato cello and vibraslap. It did seem that the opening character, in particular, was attractive in its dynamic energy, something Michael Finnissy suggested in a masterclass at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM). He also stated that it sounded like intentionally-fast music, a rare category in the contemporary music world. It was also noted that the piece also explored the intended interactions through the means of infection and interruption and working with contrasting characters was fascinating and embodied within it the potential for further exploration.

In the RNCM masterclass, Finnissy suggested that there was a lack of surprise due to the structure being an elaborate A, B, A, C, A rondo form. He felt that the sectional form led to structural predictability and his suggestion was to “throw the pages in the air to reorder the piece.”

This comment stayed with me and impacted future compositional decisions, especially in the realm of structure. Going forward, the desire was to create less predictable formal shapes and, in view of this, I was aware that the sense of interruption could have been stronger by creating more extreme contrasts in the characters themselves and also by using other parameters more vividly (for example, dynamics, silence, register and tempo) to greater effect.

Several revisions were made after the initial premiere. On reflection, the intended infection and interruption of character 2 in the second section of the piece (at bars 68-70, 75-76, 78, 81-83) was not as clear as intended due to the consistent quick tempo. To make the infection clearer, I changed the tempo to crotchet = 52 to give the impression of a sudden break in the flow of the energetic music. Secondly, pizzicato cello was added in bars 137 - 147 to foreshadow the final appearance of the character 1, coinciding with the gradual accelerando moving into the final appearance of character 1.
CHAPTER 2
Contrasting Spectrum (2011)

Now comes the most difficult task of all - the welding together of all that material so that it makes a coherent whole. In the finished product, everything must be in its place.
(Copland 1957, p. 29).

After participating in the masterclass with Michael Finnissy, Aaron Copland’s sentiment was one that resonated strongly when starting Contrasting spectrum. The process of finding a solution to the structural predictability of Multiple Infection came through a two-fold process, the first coming about after reading Carter’s own words about his chamber piece, Instances. Carter expressed his intention of being “...very interested in not having a development... But to have separate ideas - like instances that are presented, but having them somehow connected with each other.” (Emmery 2013, p. 22) From this, I decided to create separate blocks or instances that would be separate to the creation of characters (coined as ‘contexts’). The characters would travel through these contexts, thus exploring interactions. Coherence was sought through the recurrence of familiar characters over time as they went through change due to their varied experiences in the changing environments. It was also felt that the presence of several contexts would allow for the existence of new, non-recurring ideas, moving away from the structural predictability of Multiple Infection.

The third movement of Béla Bartók’s String Quartet No. 2 was another significant model. A degree of coherence was suggested through the recurring figure in bars 19-21; 25-7; 29-31; 65-67; and 69-70 in the midst of four otherwise unconnected sections. This procedure, in particular, served as a departure point for a further solution to break the structural predictability found in Multiple Infection, namely through the creation of a new motif that would be presented in a fragmentary form earlier in the piece before developing into the concluding figure of the work as a whole (thus I named it a ‘resolutionary figure’). Moreover, the purpose of this new figure was to explore a contrasting method of suggesting resolution, rather than ending the piece with a reprise of the opening section as I had done in Multiple Infection. See Example 15 (on page 28) for a formal plan of Contrasting Spectrum.

After deciding on the formal shape of the piece, the initial departure point in writing Contrasting Spectrum was very similar to Multiple Infection, that of creating contrasting characters that would feature as the primary material of the work. The first character made use almost exclusively of the leap of a major or minor 3rd or major 6th followed by a scalar ascent or descent in flute and piano (indicated by the blue box in Example 16 on page 29) forte and fortissimo dynamics, (green box) violin glissandi (black box) and an accented piano and cello accompaniment (purple box). The purpose of this with the extremely fast tempo (indicated by the red box in Example 16) was to create a character with an energetic nature, verging on madness.
Example 15: Formal plan of *Contrasting Spectrum*.
This was contrasted by a pianissimo (indicated by the green boxes in Example 17 on page 30) disjunct character 2 (indicated by the blue circle) where staccato and pizzicato figures (indicated by the purple box) and a slower tempo (red box) combined to suggest a light, joyful and mechanical character.

In contrast to the relatively brief appearance of the opening character in Multiple Infection, I decided to extend the initial appearance of the main characters in this piece over a longer period, giving rise to familiarity before departure.

This led to an extended opening section, a 67-bar introduction, where there was slight development of these characters, but the most significant transformations were reserved for the interaction with the contexts (starting at bar 68). Some examples of this modest development in the introduction include retrograde of the scalic direction of character 1 (bars 13-15) extension of the initial, fragmented material and removal of the triplet scalic idea focusing in on the glissandi and cello accented figure (both can be seen in bars 42-46).
After this introduction, the piano was given the role of ‘spokesperson’ representing the characters in the midst of the varying contexts. The nature of these interactions was influenced by the way that a person may interact or be affect by their environment or context, as follows:

i. Being unaffected by a context.
ii. Being affected and so transformed by the context.
iii. Being strongly affected and so become conformed to the context around it, thus loosing its own identity.

Example 18 on page 31 illustrates the five contexts that the piano travels through, along with any affects or transformations that came about during those interactions.

HARMONY

At this point in my transforming aesthetic, the approach to harmony was still very much a polytriadic one, consistent with *Multiple Infection*, but looking towards a method favouring intervallic quality over tonal reference. An example of the polytriadic approach can be seen in bar 253 in the piano part where the chords of A major and G sharp diminished are superimposed (Example 19, page 31).
Example 18: The way in which the piano (representing the main characters) is affected by the five contexts in *Contrasting Spectrum*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expressive quality of the context</td>
<td>Calm</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Powerfully with vigour</td>
<td>Expressive and confidently</td>
<td>Dreamily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manner in which the main character (represented by the piano) is affected by the context</td>
<td>Pushed higher registraly according to the ascending line of the context, but endures if only with a chordal gesture that looks back to the left hand figure in bar 2 Piano is silent</td>
<td>The piano remains throughout but immediately takes on the identity of the context and loses its own individuality</td>
<td>Here the piano is led into playing only the material from the context as opposed to elements from its own character and so loses its own individuality</td>
<td>In the first section (bars 253-256) the piano retains some sense of independence and references the chordal gesture from the left hand of the opening character (bar 2). However, it soon succumbs to glissandi, conforming to the context around it (bars 258-261)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


However, due to the desire to imply rest and unrest, a harmonic approach favouring the intervallic quality of chords enabled me to parallel the overarching teleology more clearly. Open voiced chords were associated with rest and those voiced closely with unrest (Hanson, 1960).\(^2\) Similarly, Paul Hindemith's Series Two intervallic principles, ordering the twelve intervals in decreasing order of consonance, was relevant (Hindemith, 1941). Although Hindemith’s principles are not applied consistently in my own music, his theory (and that of Howard Hanson), provided a departure point in considering how I could work with pitch in a post-tonal context to suggest rest and unrest.

An illustration of this can be seen in Example 20 (page 32) where the defining interval is the 5th at the start of the phrase in the upper and lower voices. However, smaller intervals are employed as the phrase

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\(^2\) The work of Howard Hanson and his labelling of intervals as consonant and dissonant was influential, (Cohen 2004). His theory was that the 4th, 5th and 6th were consonant and so implied rest and the 2nd, 7th and tritone were dissonant, and expressed unrest. Although I do not solely subscribe to his definitions and believe strongly that interval quality is not an objective matter but one affected by context, I did find his findings inspirational and sought to experiment with his approach.
progresses, leading to a set of chords where the voicing and interval size become smaller (in the upper line). The aim of this was to suggest unrest due to the combination of close intervallic harmony with fortissimo dynamics, accents, and a disjunct melodic line.

Example 20: Harmonic progressions suggesting increasing unrest, *Contrasting Spectrum*, bars 276-283.

Another example of this can be seen in bars 117-121 where the calm context is characterised by open-voiced, widely spaced harmonies in flute, clarinet, violin and cello, while the piano part (representing the opening character) gradually favours smaller intervals, especially in the bass suggesting increasing tension. This was further strengthened by its rising contour, poco accelerando, accents, absence of longer rhythmic values and increasing dynamics to fortissimo (Example 21).

Example 21: Contrast of the piano harmony and that of the calm context, *Contrasting Spectrum*, bars 117-121.
EVALUATION

On reflection, even though the aim of creating a less predictable structure was arrived at to some extent, it is possible to conclude that this was not achieved to the greatest degree. This piece still relied on clear sections that existed without interruption for a sustained period. After writing the piece, I was directed to the music of Edgard Varèse as a possible model of bold, unpredictable change. *Octandre* struck me as a piece that made use of stark changes on the small scale, including variety in articulation, rhythmic movement and stasis and instrumental and dynamic extremes leading me to consider the extent to which my contrasts were most effective (*Octandre* bars 1-21).

Furthermore, in view of the fact that my overall intentions were achieved in part and not fully, a helpful metaphor was given to me that helped to evaluate this initial approach as a composer. I was asked to imagine a box with a central mark. My work, even at times of intentional stark contrast, was suggested to be close to this centre point, failing to push out to the edges and take risks (Example 22). After looking at Varèse’s *Octandre*, I really did appreciate this statement.

Example 22: Diagram to illustrate my initial compositional approach.

This comment stayed with me and, in many ways, does reflect a risk-averse personality. The desire to creating greater contrasts became a particular goal, and the challenge of writing a piece for chamber orchestra with a multiplicity of orchestral colours and a duo for two vibrant personalities, (Marc Danel and Vlad Bogdanas) presented wonderful opportunities to begin this departure.

Several revisions were made after the first performance of this piece. Firstly, the piano part was amended at rehearsal letter M, to play the ‘resolutionary figure.’ This was intended to set up the precedent that when no other conclusion could be found, a so far unheard figure comes in to act as the means of progress and resolution, (foreshadowing the concluding piano music from bars 332-end). Secondly, the slow, dreamily, free section from rehearsal letter S was amended in the following ways: the wind glissandi were taken out from rehearsal letter T, the piano glissandi were moved from the keys to the strings (bars 257-260) and the string glissandi were combined with harmonics. These changes were intended to create the most delicate and quiet effect, something that was not achieved as intended in the original attempt.
A central focus in *Splintering Factions* was on the element of harmony and its potential of suggesting further contrast and more directly reflecting the large scale structural intentions. Rigorous harmonic decisions leading to a predefined, solid technique were a central concern, steering away from the an intuitive, bi-tonal approach that defined *Multiple Infection* and to some extent *Contrasting Spectrum*.

*Splintering Factions*, however, was no exception in working with contrasting musical characters. The following table illustrates initial pre-compositional decisions where different character identities were suggested (Example 23).

Example 23: Pre-compositional decisions to suggest variety between the four musical characters, *Splintering Factions*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Rhythm</th>
<th>Register</th>
<th>Dynamic</th>
<th>Articulation</th>
<th>Instrumentation</th>
<th>Presence in <em>Splintering Factions</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Semiquavers and tupets</td>
<td>Mid-high</td>
<td>$p$</td>
<td>Slurred</td>
<td>Wind; strings (including high glissando and trills in wind)</td>
<td>Bars 1-5; 20-55; 63-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Quavers in 3/8</td>
<td>Mid-high</td>
<td>$mf$</td>
<td>Staccato</td>
<td>Wind and strings</td>
<td>Bars 6-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Long values achieved with ties</td>
<td>Low-mid</td>
<td>$p$</td>
<td>Legato</td>
<td>Brass</td>
<td>Bars 31-36; 43-45; 53-66; 76-119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Dotted semiquaver, quaver and retrograde</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>$ff$</td>
<td>Accented</td>
<td>Strings</td>
<td>Bars 85-86; 92-93; 95-119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From this initial process, a formal plan was created with a progression from opposition to unity (Example 24, on page 35).

The decision was made to imply opposition through sudden changes from one musical character to another, or by two or more characters existing in a battle. Conversely, unity was suggested through the peaceful coexistence of differing characters which is ultimately revealed through a new character being manifest through an amalgamation of previous ones presenting in unison to suggest a final resolution (Example 25 on page 36). Elements of the four characters are present from the ascending, scalaric patterns of character A to the dotted, accented string-based gesture of character D (bars 188-end).
Example 24: Formal plan of Splintering Factions.
Example 25: The means of suggesting unity in *Splintering Factions*: the new character created out of the fusion of characters A, B and D, (bars 188-end).
As with the two pieces already discussed in the portfolio, contrasting approaches to musical parameters were employed to give each character unique identity, as shown in the table in Example 23 on page 34. The issue of how these different characters would interact was paramount and the technique of infection was employed again, due to a desire to see one character change the nature of another. However, in *Multiple Infection* the examples of infection could be said to have been limited due to their presentation alongside one another preventing real internal change taking place. For this reason, the term fusion was preferred to describe this mode of interaction in *Splintering Factions*, ensuring that the very core of the material was affected. An illustration of this can be seen in bars 122-130 where elements from characters A and B are combined, changing the very identity of the original two characters (Example 26).

Example 26: The fusion of characters A and B to create a new identity, *Splintering Factions*. (Example taken from the piccolo part, bars 122-130).

There are three elements involved in achieving this fusion: firstly, the intervallic leaps of a 3rd, taken from character B (bars 1-6 in Example 26). Secondly, familiar elements of ascending, legato lines and trills initially presented in character A (bars 7-9 in Example 26). Finally, elements from both characters A and B, namely a disjunct melodic shape, staccato articulation and trills are present and are fused together in bars 122-177, reflecting the overall formal intention of tension, unrest and opposition. As a result, the characters lose something of their own individual identity and instead are fused in a rather unhappy situation. The disparity in performance directions from the initial bright and vibrant description at bar 6 to one of anger at bar 122 heightens this. The turbulent, changing dynamics, the *forte* pizzicato and the gradual decay and descent of the fused idea, culminating at bar 176 with only a single *pianissimo* G sharp. This strategy of fusion is not always attached to structural unrest, however, and as previously shown in Example 25, it became the means of resolution.
HARMONY

After reflecting on the lack of harmonic consistency in *Contrasting spectrum*, I did aim to create a more consistent harmonic language through a more rigorous, predefined approach. Example 27 illustrates the premise that chords were chosen by intervallic quality rather than by a polytonal combination. The first character was limited to the interval classes 2, 3 and 4 (major 2nd, minor 3rd and major 3rd) and almost exclusively built on the interval of minor 3rd. The second character was limited to the interval classes of 3, 4, 5 and 6 (minor 3rd, major 3rd, perfect 4th and tritone) and was built on the interval of a 4th.

Example 27: The ascending harmonic construction of character A, *Splintering Factions*.

Finally, the brass family (character C) was constructed through harmony based exclusively on the interval of a 4th, and then re-voiced to create smooth horizontal lines.

The overall formal goal of moving from opposition to unity was mirrored in the harmonic language to a greater extent than in previous works. An occurrence of this can be seen as the brass engage in opposition with the new character D at the onset of the greatest opposition (from bars 87-119). As the brass phrases progress, the interval construction changing to a closer voiced palette favouring the intervals of the second and third, imply increased tension (Example 28). In this way, the interaction with character D caused transformation that changes the very fabric of the brass character. On a large scale this sets up the need for resolution and therefore explains the decision to bring the ideas together at the end in unity, thus dissipating this previous tension.

Example 28: The harmonic transformation of character C due to opposition with character D, *Splintering Factions*.
EVALUATION

As already mentioned, this piece did mark a significant development towards a more rigorous compositional technique particularly in the realm of harmony as small and large scale concerns were paralleled more consistently. However, it was interesting at this point to reflect on Finnissy’s comment on structure to “throw the pages in the air” at the point of attempting to gain greater control on harmony and pitch. It struck me that I would not attempt to do this with my pitches and caused me to wonder whether this would ever be an option. I was also very keen to change the approach which relied on creating new material to propel the musical narrative forward, towards one that relied on fewer ideas. As a result, the next major goal was to work in a more unified, economical context.
CHAPTER 4

*Chinese Whispers (2013)*

The limitations of suggesting variety through the creation of contrasting characters became clear after writing *Splintering Factions* and the desire to explore characterisation within a different context was a central concern. The next two pieces in the portfolio, *Chinese Whispers* and *Memoriam retinebimus*, included the common approach of creating a musical dialogue apart from the creation of several musical characters. The opportunity to write a duo for Marc Danel and Vlad Bogdanas immediately set into motion a desire to encapsulate something of their energy and character in the work. Significant models that made use of dialogue were sought (namely Ann Wuehler’s play *Traces of Memory* and George Rochberg’s *Duo Concertante*). Wuehler’s work was an early influence due to the casting (only two female characters), short duration of around 10 minutes, the setting in the present and the fact that there is no scene change for the duration of the play. The setting is: “Beside Highway 50, somewhere in the middle of Nevada… Light is early morning, summer. Time is now” (Wuehler, 2006, p.1).

When analysing the play, questions of how audience interest would be held and variety would be achieved within this set of constraints were paramount. The initial observations were:

i. As the characters grow in trust for one another they share material and cease to speak at cross purposes. For example, at the end of the play the resistance that the two characters have for one another dissipates somewhat as Phoebe finally confesses her secret (Example 29).

Example 29: Phoebe’s declaration showing a degree of trust in *Traces of Memory*, (Wuehler, 2006, p.10).

PHOEBE: Fine, whatever. You wanna know what I did?

[Takes a deep breath.]

I beat the hell out of the skank my boyfriend was banging. I put her in the hospital. You know what? She DIED. The bitch never woke up. I got real problems, you psycho weirdo. I’m not making this up. Not like you. Nobody burns their kids and their dog up. Nobody.

ii. Interest is generated through creating several smaller goal orientated cells within the larger whole, thus keeping the audience involved and interested. One instance can be found in the opening dialogue where each character introduces their reason for being on the side of the highway. After this exchange, a natural break is achieved through silence and Ruth’s next comment, “I love this old highway,” which generates a change of content and pace (Wuehler, 2006, p. 3).

iii. There are several surprises in the narrative, namely Ruth’s shock confession which is hinted at earlier, but passed off as ‘burning trash.’ The real explanation is more shocking and keeps the audience involved until it is revealed (Example 30 on page 41).

RUTH

Two strangers on a road less traveled-- that’s the point. I told you something, gave you my trust. I’ve just confessed to arson. As you pointed out, a punishable offence. Especially when you left three children tied up in the kitchen. Watching the microwave.

[Silence.]

That annoying border collie puppy my husband insisted on buying for five hundred dollars. Five hundred dollars!! I haven’t had a pair of new pants for three years and he goes and buys a five hundred dollar dog. People dump free dogs around here all the time. It was too much.

From these observations I made a note of several interactions that I wanted to consider as part of the dialogue in *Chinese Whispers* including the creation of:

i. An increased trajectory of shared material as the piece progressed to reflect a growing sense of trust.
ii. Clear sections highlighted by new content that would initiate important changes of material, possibly inaugurated with silence.
iii. Surprises in the course of the piece to generate a sense of interest and unpredictability.

In addition to this play, a piece that made a strong impression was George Rochberg’s *Duo Concertante*. The opening is striking in the way that an initial statement in the violin is not completed in the cello. As Example 31 shows a descent from E-F or F-E is present in both the violin and cello as well as the ending on the minor 6th double stop. However, the cello answers in the ‘wrong’ register and with the ‘wrong’ articulation setting up the need for continuation. These subtle differences create a sense of independence and a need for continued dialogue.

Example 31: Dialogue in Rochberg’s *Duo Concertante*, bars 1-2.

It is interesting to observe the way that Rochberg brings back familiar material through the piece with changes in texture, articulation, register and timbre. Bars 17-21 present one such case, where the opening gesture returns but this time in an extended form presented homophonically with the cello rather than in the imitative manner of the opening. This exhibits new articulations, a wider registral compass and new timbral effects, namely pizzicati resulting in coherence, but never predictability, due to the subtle variety (Example 32 on page 42).
In response to these observations, in *Chinese Whispers* I was interested in considering:

i. Moments where both instruments would present related gestures with contrasting, independent facets.

ii. A return of gestures with varying treatments, especially in the parameter of texture.

To achieve these goals, the compositional approach in *Chinese Whispers* was different to the earlier works. Rather than working with pre-composed pitch and rhythmic material and then deciding how these characters would interact, the main focus was to let the nature of the dialogue control the parameters at any given point. The characters were defined as the individual performers rather than by predefined motifs. The starting point was to decide on the general shape of the piece, the mid point being the most fragile at bars 89+ (Example 33 on page 43).

This fragility was suggested through a lack of direction as the pitch set of the viola reduced to F sharp and D sharp, accompanied with microtonal inflections (in violin which centres around the pitch F sharp), sul ponticello technique and muted playing along with the slowest tempo marking in the piece. From this point, however, victory was inevitable as the violin bursts forth with the viola following close behind.

Beyond these general formal decisions, structural conclusions were made. Six distinct sections were created, each with the purpose of exploring a contrasting mode of dialogue.

The opening introduction was written with the aim of establishing the two characters in a tentative dialogue. In a similar way to the opening of Rochberg’s *Duo Concertante*, parallel material was presented in both parts but with facets of individuality. To accomplish this, I included rhythmic groups of twos and threes and the same dynamic shape in both parts in a loose imitative fashion (Example 34 on page 44. The red squares indicate the groups of three and the blue groups of two or four. The dynamic imitation is indicated by the purple squares). This was intended to show an appreciation and awareness of the other, despite clear variety in pitch and shape.
Example 33: The shape of *Chinese Whispers* towards central fragility, ending in victory.

**Bars 1-26**
TENTATIVE DIALOGUE

**Bars 27-52**
OPPOSITION and INDEPENDENCE
Violin aggressive, Viola sweetly and confidently

**Bars 53-62**
OPPOSITION and INDEPENDENCE with viola victory

**Bars 63-112**
DIALOGUE:
Viola leads and violin follows until the violin ebbs away in bar 84 and then imitates the viola from bars 90-112

**Bars 113-135**
DIALOGUE:
Violin leads and viola follows

**Bars 136 - end**
INDEPENDENCE and RESOLUTION

**Introduction:**
Opening tentative dialogue

**Section 1:** Opposition

**Section 2:** Dialogue

**Conclusion:**
Independence

**Overall Shape:**
*Opposition - resolution* through independence
The number of pitches employed and shared was another means of reflecting the essence of the changing dialogue. The opening, tentative conversation was suggested through an accumulative pitch process (Example 35) reminiscent of the way that a hesitant conversation may begin with few words and develop over time. Furthermore, each instrument possessed a unique pitch set implying a degree of independence.

Frederic Rzewski’s additive pitch process in *Les moutons de panurge* was a strong influence here (Example 36) but I was keen to execute the additive process in a more free manner, allowing repeated pitches within sections and exploring a greater registral compass.

In contrast to this opening tentative dialogue, a sudden flourish at bars 21-22 of nine new pitches in the viola part with a dynamic of *forte*, accents and high register was intended to represent confidence and assertion (Example 37, on page 45).
Creating pre-defined musical characters and this set the trajectory away from this approach in future pieces. Microtonal passages (and vibrato). It was interesting to consider the way that this had happened apart from contrast had been achieved through changes of register, dynamics, technique (including sul ponticello, microtonal passages) and vibrato. After the performance of this piece, Marc Danel and Vlad Bogdanas commented that a good amount of contrast had been achieved through changes of register, dynamics, technique (including sul ponticello, microtonal passages) and vibrato. It was interesting to consider the way that this had happened apart from creating pre-defined musical characters and this set the trajectory away from this approach in future pieces.

EVALUATION

After the performance of this piece, Marc Danel and Vlad Bogdanas commented that a good amount of contrast had been achieved through changes of register, dynamics, technique (including sul ponticello, microtonal passages) and vibrato. It was interesting to consider the way that this had happened apart from creating pre-defined musical characters and this set the trajectory away from this approach in future pieces.
Memoriam retinebimus was commissioned to be performed in the University of Manchester World War I Centenary Commemoration Event and presented a wonderful opportunity to write for voices. Being asked to create my own text was a challenge, but the desire to represent staff and students of the past and present helped to limit the possibilities. The initial idea was to use quotations from students and staff involved in the University at the time of the war. I also desired to use the University motto “Cognitio, Sapientia, Humanitas” (“Knowledge, Wisdom, Humanity”) to give the opportunity, as a current student, to honour past staff and students in their sacrifice. This decision raised a question of how to present these two opposing texts.

In answer to this question, Copland’s In the Beginning was a significant influence due to his use of choir and solo mezzo-soprano voice to highlight different parts of the biblical Genesis narrative. From this, two distinct blocks were constructed, one presenting the words of staff and students from the past and the other, the University motto. The two groups were further distinguished through use of language and tone. The University motto would be sung in Latin by the choir adopting a whispered tone for the most part in a polyphonic manner. Conversely, the solo group would sing in English and come together in homophonic arrival points.

Further observations of Copland’s In the Beginning included his approach to structure mirroring the Genesis text with the natural breaks into days. This struck me as a possible solution for the structure of Memoriam retinebimus. I decided on three combinations of the voices: choir alone, choir and solo group and solo group alone, each outlining different part of the texts (Example 40, on page 47). The desire to create structural unpredictability in view of engaging the audience and keeping their interest led to varying the treatment and the order of material.

The piece begins with the choir introducing the first word of the University motto, “Cognitio” (bars 1-17). They return three times in the piece, singing alone without the solo group, and each time present a different part of the University motto. (The second time “Sapientia” (bars 17-46) and the third “Humanitas” (bars 46-70)). Once the opening choir section had been followed by the solo group (bars 9-16) I was keen not to repeat this choir-solo group alternating pattern again. Instead, the choir “Sapientia” entry at bars 17-27 was followed by two successive occurrences of the solo group (in bars 27-37 and 41-46) presenting the texts “The long hours creep by with leaden feet” and "It seems that time itself were dead" (Noakes, 2010, p.72).

Structural variety was devised through the arrival of a new texture in bars 70-84, where the solo group sing alone for the first and only time with, “I haven't lost hope. I have only postponed it” (Hovell and Tout, n.d.). This text is placed here to function as a climax reflecting the sacrifice and duty of those engaged in the war effort due to the harrowing and poignant message delivered in this quotation.

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3 This quotation is taken from unpublished letters from M. Hovell to Professor Tout, used with permission from Dr. James Hopkins who provided copies of the letters for use in writing this piece.
Example 40: Formal plan of *Memoriam retinebimus*.
Another element perceived in Copland’s *In the Beginning* was the sense of coherency he achieved through a predominant and consistent use of disjunct melodic shapes in the choir part (apart from the contrasting conjunct shape of the closing motif declaring “And the evening and the morning were the first/second day”) seen in Example 41:

Example 41: Disjunct vocal lines in Copland’s *In the Beginning*.

Thus, in *Memoriam retinebimus* coherency was suggested through the treatment of pitch. The pitch material of the choir and solo group is almost without exception generated through stepwise motion, each phrase beginning with a unison pitch or solo voice (for example bars 1, 15, 28 and 85).

Furthermore, to reflect this scalar and conjunct melodic identity, the harmony was characterised through a predominance of major and minor seconds, presented in the solo voice group at the opening and not initially in the choir to suggest a separation of those in the past and present.

However, as shown in Example 42 (on page 49) harmonic infection was suggested as the choir harmonies gradually began to include the interval of the second suggesting a strong reaction to the horrors revealed throughout the piece by the solo group. This is most clearly seen as the two ‘worlds’ unite in bars 96-105 to exclaim “we will remember them” sharing material for the first and only time in the piece with the harmonic identity of the second taking prominence.

**EVALUATION**

The challenge of writing for voices was a welcome one enabling me to consider my research theme from a slightly different perspective. One of the main differences was the opportunity to work with material from the past and present, considering ways of combining and distinguishing these different worlds. (This was later explored in *Revelation*, a five-minute piece written in 2015 for the Kokoro Ensemble, in association with researchers into Old Hispanic chant at the University of Bristol).4

A masterclass with Christopher Fox at the RNCM in February 2015 helped me to evaluate this piece further. His suggestion was that the piece felt rather condensed. He commented that it could quite easily be extended to ten minutes or more. This did consolidate a personal awareness and desire to work within larger timeframes, something that the final two pieces addressed. On reflection it was clear that the piece could benefit from some relaxation of rhythmic repetition, for example. The section from bars 9-16 is a case in point

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4 *Revelation* (2015) is not included in this portfolio, but did present an opportunity to work in the context of two opposing worlds, the first one being the world of the Old Hispanic Chant and the second, the contemporary ‘world’, so to speak. In writing this piece, I sought to create two distinct musical blocks that interrupted one another but then began to interweave as the piece progressed, presenting a means of resolution at the end as both worlds combined.
where the solo group present a long melisma on the word ‘hangs.’ This is intentionally extended over 5 beats, but I can certainly see how the repeating semiquaver pattern on the second beat of each bar could be relaxed to represent the “hanging” sentiment further.

Example 42: Harmony in the solo group, constructed with harmonies including the major second, infecting the choir harmonies.

Bars 9-16.

Bars 28-105.
CHAPTER 6
*Sporos* (2015)

This quartet can be said to be a turning point in my output due to the focus on elements of register and timbre. It is worth noting that the increasing preoccupation throughout this portfolio regarding large scale intentions were reflected more clearly in small scale decisions. The larger timeframe that I imposed also required a different approach to composition, enabling, ironically, a more economical and concise approach with a view to achieving a coherent whole.

At this point, I became increasingly interested in composers that made use of varying timbres in their music and especially those that created marked contrasts. One such example was Brian Ferneyhough, a composer that I had not been previously acquainted with. When listening to his String Quartet No. 3, the clearly defined gestures created through an inventive use of register, timbre and dynamics were striking (Example 43).

Example 43: The inventive use of timbre in Ferneyhough’s String Quartet No. 3, bars 1-2.

The extreme dynamic swell in the opening gesture accompanied by a rising, glissandi figure, all played non-vibrato, sets up a bold and convincing opening that is immediately contrasted with a lower, timid, sul ponticello gesture. The clear identity created in this opening segment led to further evaluation of my own works, and, in particular, I was keen to consider an approach that achieved similar stark contrasts in future works.

Crumb’s *Black Angels* was another extremely significant work and the contrasts achieved through extreme dynamics, performance techniques, rhythm and timbre combined to achieve his clear goals of representing the most diverse elements of good and evil, as noted in the introduction on page 18.

Apart from these musical influences, *The Parable of the Sower* (The Holy Bible, 2001, p. 986, Matthew 13:1-9) was a direct stimulus for this piece as it embodied several features present in the research goals, namely the strong central identity of the seed, allowing for characterisation and a teleological goal. It also
presented an opportunity to fulfil the plan of working with one musical idea throughout a piece due to the ongoing presence of the seed throughout the parable, existing through various contexts including struggle and decay.

As a result, the intention of this piece was to represent the progress and development of a seed and Example 44 highlights its varying interactions in the parable used to create a possible formal shape. The text is ordered according to the descriptions of the state of the seed (left column). The results of its interaction with the various elements (birds, path, rocky places, thorns and the sun) can be seen in the middle and right columns and are grouped as positive or negative according to their result.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where the seed was planted</th>
<th>Result - negative</th>
<th>Result - positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As he was scattering the seed (Matthew 13 verse 3)</td>
<td>...and the birds came and ate it up (verse 4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some fell along the path</td>
<td></td>
<td>But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. (verse 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some fell on rocky places where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. (verse 5).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other seed fell among thorns (verse 7)</td>
<td>which grew up and choked the plants. (verse 7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still other seed fell on good soil (verse 8)</td>
<td></td>
<td>where it produced a crop - a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. (verse 8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From these early influences, large scale formal decisions were made. The broad shape of the parable from the seed failing to grow due to outside opposition to a final, hundredfold growth presented a clear teleological shape and distinct structural arrival points. The formal plan can be seen in Example 45 (on page 52) where the broad two-sectional shape is coined as a death → life progression.
Example 45: Formal plan of *Sporos*.

Bars 1-46
Attempts at growth from the pitch G

Bars 47-88
Attempts at growth from the pitch Db - losing to G prominence

Bars 89-156
Attempts to reach extremes from G, but stuck at G

Bars 157-188
Ascending scalic gestures attempting to develop but pulled into G gravity

Bars 155-188
Ascending scalic gestures attempting to develop but pulled into G gravity

Bars 189-237
Ascending scalic gestures but end up on top G gravity

Bars 238-45
Solo on top G

Bars 246-end
Whole registral compass reached

Structural Shape: **Death** (reduction to gravitational pitch) - **Life** (unstoppable growth)
After settling upon the large scale shape, it was then possible to make the small scale decisions and the parameters of timbre and register were consistently paramount in my thinking. In a similar way to Lutosławski who defined the sections of his string quartet with changes in the mode of playing, the decision was made to define each section with a different playing technique to reflect the seed’s growth (Example 46) as well as considering carefully how the other parameters could mirror these intentions.

Example 46: Sectional definition through mode of playing in Sporos.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section (bars)</th>
<th>Techniques used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bars 1-88 (in two parts: 1-46 and 47-88)</td>
<td>Sul pont and non-vib. glissandi, tremolo and very quiet dynamics. Some bursts of a very high register at fff attempt to force development, but fail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bars 89 - 188</td>
<td>Glissandi, accents, crescendo, hints at scratch tones, tremolo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bars 189 - 259</td>
<td>Sudden bursts in the higher register, accents, loud dynamics and col legno battuto (pianissimo). Sempre sul pont., tremolo and ppp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bars 260 - 438</td>
<td>Accents, crescendos, registral expansion and scalic rising tuplets.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the above table illustrates, playing technique was a very important element used to indicate the progression and growth of the seed: for example, the direction to play with minimal vibrato (bars 89-188) combined with the gradual reduction down to the opening G pitch accompanied with the new timbral effect of the scratch tone. This suggests limited growth despite ascending scalic passages and forte and fortissimo moments and by the end of the section at bar 188 leads to another ultimate failure of growth, culminating in heightened rhythmic activity accompanied with a ppp dynamic and circling pitch cells around the familiar pitch centre G (Example 47).

Example 47: Rhythmic activity and pitch stasis, Sporos, bars 148-151.

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5 Rae comments of the main movement of Lutosławski’s String Quartet:

“The formal unfolding is defined primarily by changes in the mode of playing: arco (to Fig. 14); pizzicato (Figs 14-24); arco again (Figs 24-9); sul pont (Figs 29-35); arco flautando, for the violins (Figs 35-9 with a fortissimo reappearance of the distorted pizz. signal transplanted from the introductory movement.” (Rae, C. 1994. p.94)
In terms of my transforming aesthetic, this approach allowed greater control of the small scale elements and presented a context to elevate the parameters of performance technique and timbre. The intention was to create more stark contrasts and therefore bring a greater identity to each section of the piece. Moreover, each of the sections in the piece was given a clear registral area being closely related to harmonic choices (Example 48. The boxes indicate the primary pitch centre of G moving to Db as the section progresses, back to G again). The width of the registral area and the return back to the single pitch G each time illustrates the lack of growth.

Example 48: Registral, timbral and harmonic decisions to indicate limited growth, Sporos, bars 1-88.

Moreover, I was keen to develop my harmonic language and, in particular, ensure that any harmonic decisions closely reflected large scale goals. Elevating the parameter of timbre did cause me to concentrate on developing a particular soundworld rather than transforming melodic themes. I decided to work with a single G pitch and consider changing the quality of tone and timbre to reference the various stages of growth. At the outset, sul ponticello and a non-vibrato tone were applied to the open G. Ways to embellish this single pitch were considered along with further pitch inflections and changes, glissandi and tremolos, seeking to imply slight growth and embellishment (Example 49 on page 55).
Some seed fell along the path and when the birds came, they devoured it emerging, almost inaudible and non-vibrato.

As Example 48 highlights on page 54 the harmony was based around the G pitch centre. Even as the pitch bandwidth increases, the pitch G remains, reflecting the devouring process affecting the development of the seed. The first part of the opening section, ending at bar 46, therefore ends as the piece started, with a single **ppp** G pitch coloured with tremolo and portamento (Example 50).

Example 50: The state of the seed at the end of part 1, section 1, Sporos, bars 44-46.

Even in the second part of section 1, bars 47-88, which has a pitch centre of Db and extends the registral bandwidth considerably. The ending is similar to that of bars 44-46 as all the instruments return to the opening G pitch (Example 51 on page 56). No lasting or significant growth had occurred due to the opposing elements achieving their intended devastation.
Example 51: The end of section 1, Sporos, bars 84-88.

The process of more diligently mirroring large scale intentions on the small scale was also reflected in the treatment of rhythm in Sporos. In general terms, rapid moving semiquaver tuplets represented development and significant growth of the seed and longer values interspersed with silence reflected lack of progress (Example 52 on page 57).
Example 52: Rhythmic activity mirroring growth in Sporos.

Bars 1-2, viola

Bars 427-429, full quartet

Bars 49-52, violin and viola

Bars 109-11, viola

Bars 144-147, full quartet

Bars 165-168, violins
EVALUATION

There is a divided approach in this piece. The final section with its growth and menacing victorious character is predominantly driven by a very regular rhythmic cell (Example 54, on page 59). This was intentional to contrast the very free almost pulseless opening. However, it was interesting to study works that had a different approach, one example being Chaya Czernowin’s String Quartet. She exhibits a consistency of approach throughout the whole piece. This can be seen in the manner that the quartet represents different viewpoints of the Wat Arun, “Temple of Dawn,” in Thailand. To do this the quartet either plays as a single unit or presents single, fractured parts. Both types are met with a remarkably consistent method, particularly in timbre and register. Bars 36-37 present an example of the single composite structure as the quartet presents unified glissandi - vibrato peaks (Example 53).

Example 53: The quartet representing a single composite view of the Temple of Dawn, Czernowin String Quartet, bars 36-37.
Example 54: A repetitive rhythmic cell in the final section of Sporos, bars 347-350.

Fragmented version of the rhythmic cell in viola: focusing on the tied semiquavers.

Fragmented version of the rhythmic cell in viola: focusing on the dotted rhythms and quaver - semiquaver combination.
In contrast, an instance of the fractured view of the temple can be seen in bars 215-217 as the quartet presents different articulations of the pitches G and E (Example 55).


In conclusion, there is a consistency and stability in Czernowin’s musical aesthetic which I found attractive and wish to explore. Furthermore, Lucia Dlugoszewski’s *Fire, Fragile, Flight* and her representation of falling leaves in sound was an inspiration (Dlugoszewski, 2008). This concept of mirroring a process in a work is something I would like to revisit in the future.
CHAPTER 7
Relentless Continuum (2015-2016)

The goal in Relentless Continuum was to work in a more economical fashion, building on techniques that were first demonstrated in Sporos, namely economy of pitch material and development and growth indicated by registral and instrumental expansion. When writing this piece, I listened to Harrison Birtwistle’s Refrains and Choruses for wind quintet (1957) where the element of repetition is explored extensively. Hearing this caused me to consider the affect of viewing a Calder mobile, seeing a familiar object from different angles. In response to these influences, combined with the desire to avoid the pattern of creating interest through the formation of new material, a seven-note row was created which became the main pitch material used to generate both melodic lines and harmonies in Relentless Continuum (Example 56).

Example 56: The seven-note row from which the majority of the pitch material is generated in Relentless Continuum.

The introductory section of the piece (bars 1-220) sees this opening pitch material unfold and grow into a wind and string unison at bar 69, later joined by lower brass in bar 80. As the title suggests, this theme is reluctant to disappear despite its transformation into narrowing, overlapping gestures that suggest a decline (bars 107-128). However, the theme, with characteristic rhythms accumulated and established at the unison climax in bar 69, hovers above the orchestra in solo violin from bar 129, refusing to diminish in any way. It does seem to have finally been defeated by a new bright, staccato idea introduced in bar 161, but this assumption is short lived as its relentless character is manifest through a determined presence in the extremes of the orchestra (Eb clarinet, trombones, tuba and double basses from bar 188).

Furthermore, coherency and relentlessness were not only implied by the repeated horizontal use of the seven-note row, but also through its appearance vertically as the harmonic basis for much of the piece. Even at the very opening before the theme was fully established and identified, the intervallic construction of the seven-note row was present in the harmony in the high strings (Example 57).

Example 57: The appearance in vertical form of the seven-note row, Relentless Continuum, bars 2-7.
Utmost economy was therefore sought as the piece progressed and thus the row was presented vertically and horizontally at the same time (Example 58).


![Diagram showing vertical and horizontal presentations of the row]

This small-scale consistency is also reflected in the large-scale form of the work. The piece is divided into two parts (bars 1-220 and bars 221-757) the first acting as an introduction to the more substantial second part. (See Example 59, on page 63 for a formal plan of the piece as a whole).

Within this broad plan, the individual sections were characterised by the success of the opening theme and, in particular, by its victory. For instance, the opening two sections in the second part of the piece (bars 221-286 and bars 287-340) see a new percussion-initiated idea seek to gain prominence. The previous energetic, staccato theme continues while the percussion-initiated idea is stated in the double bass (bars 227-228) and later by lower strings (bars 235-239). In response to this, the energetic, staccato theme breaks down, coinciding with the registral and instrumental expansion of the percussion-initiated idea. At the end of this section, the energetic, staccato theme is fragmented leading to the clear establishment of the percussion-initiated theme (bars 287-340). This is further suggested by the instrumental expansion to tutti strings (bars 299-307) and finally through the wind imitating the tremolo strings and percussion rolls with trills (bars 309-323). Thus the two aforementioned sections are characterised by the introduction and the establishment of the new percussion-initiated theme.
In terms of orchestration, Judith Weir’s *Heroic Strokes of the Bow* (1992) was a significant model. In her programme note, Klee’s painting *Heroische Bogenstriche* (1938) “seems to show a simple pattern of violin bows and pegs against a hypnotic blue background” (Music Sales Classical, n.d.), something she sought to represent in her piece. She, therefore, begins with repeated strikes all attempting to evoke the energy applied to a bow. Her careful ordering of instrumental colours over the first sixteen chord strikes is noteworthy. As the piece progresses, these strikes of the bow extend over time and there is an instrumental and dynamic growth corresponding to the increase of energy (Example 60, page 64). However, there is still a clear reference and link to the earliest occurrences of those figures as she opens the gesture in bar 364 with the horns and violins 1 and 2, a partnership that existed from the opening bars but this time coloured with pizzicato lower strings and extended over 10 bars in total (from bars 363-372).

Example 59: The formal shape of *Relentless Continuum*. 
As a result of this model, I was keen to use the orchestra as a means of evoking familiarity when the main theme (derived from the seven-note row) was presented. An instance of this can be seen in the latter section.
of the introductory part of the piece from bars 188-220 where the Eb clarinet, trombones, tuba and double bass declare the return of the relentless theme. This premise continues even when the relentless theme is concealed in the second section of the piece (Example 61, but without the Eb clarinet in the high register).

Example 61: The recurring instrumental combination of trombones, tuba, double bass and clarinets to identify the relentless theme orchestrally, *Relentless Continuum*, section 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bar number</th>
<th>Instrumentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>221-223</td>
<td>Trombone 2, tuba and double basses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>227-229</td>
<td>Trombones, tuba and double basses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>252-256</td>
<td>Bassoons, violin 2, violas, cellos and double basses, followed by trombones and tuba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>272-278</td>
<td>Violas, cellos and double basses followed by trombones and tuba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>299-307</td>
<td>Trumpet, trombones, tuba and tutti strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>348-353</td>
<td>Trombones, tuba and tutti strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>366-374</td>
<td>Oboe 2, clarinets, trombones, tuba and tutti strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>393-407</td>
<td>Wind, trumpets, trombones, tuba and tutti strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>533-543</td>
<td>Tutti orchestra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relentlessness of the opening theme was therefore reflected by the ongoing presence of the row harmonically and melodically and also through the return of familiar orchestration. Furthermore, rhythmic parallels were employed to strengthen this further. The relentless theme was constructed with the following rhythmic identity (Example 62). These rhythmic values gradually return as the percussion-initiated theme reveals itself as the opening one (bars 69-75).

Example 62: The rhythmic identity of the relentless theme, *Relentless Continuum*.

As mentioned at the opening of this chapter, I was keen to continue the technique of registral expansion to suggest growth and development of the disguised relentless theme. It was initially introduced in the lowest register of the orchestra (in double basses, trombone 2 and tuba in bars 221-223) and gradually expanded. This growth continued from the lowest instruments as viola and cellos were added to the initial ensemble in bars 235-239. The gradual expansion led to the full string section joining the double basses, trombones and tuba in bars 299-307. However, at this point, the registral expansion was not extensive, being presented just over three octaves higher to where they began (Example 63, page 66). The final victory of this theme (bars 500-545) combines with wind and brass pitches punching through the texture clearly revealing the original seven-note row.

It also begins to show the melodic hallmarks of the relentless theme as it gradually undergoes further melodic and rhythmic transformation (Example 64 on page 67).
Example 63: Registral expansion to suggest thematic growth, *Relentless Continuum.*
Example 64: The melodic identity of the percussion-initiated theme, revealing itself to be a disguised version of the relentless theme, *Relentless Continuum*, bars 427-429 (violin part).

After the percussion-initiated theme is revealed to be the relentless one, I was keen to bring the piece back to the calm character of the opening. A possible model in attempting to achieve these goals came from Simon Bainbridge and his comment on the last movement of his *Garden of Earthly delights*. He said of this piece, "I chose to retrograde the whole of the first movement as a literal palindrome since it returns the listener to the world of the work's beginning, and thus evokes a sense of memory" (Miller 2013, p. 38).

Although the coda of *Relentless Continuum* is not a literal palindrome, I was nonetheless keen to evoke familiarity through a degree of retrograde and symmetry. The opening calm, rippling music returns at bar 704, providing a retrogradic dramatic shape from energy to calmness, in contrast to the increasing agitation in the introduction (Example 65, page 68). The aim was to express familiarity and suggest that the relentless theme had indeed succeeded in its relentlessness, despite the opposition as the piece returned clearly to its home origins.

EVALUATION

The first part (introduction) of this piece was performed by the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra in January 2016 as part of the New Music North West Festival. By this point in my development, I felt that I had more control over the detail of my work and had exhibited greater rigour, leading to a piece that more clearly reflected my intensions.

I had previously started compositions with the fullest representation of an idea, using the remainder of the piece to develop, transform and establish it. However, it can be argued that the modification of this process led to a greater familiarity of material when it was finally revealed and did, therefore, create a more unified piece. The experience of writing in this way over a 30-minute timescale instilled greater discipline and, in many ways, consolidated my aesthetic.
Example 65: Inversion of the introductory material to evoke a sense of familiarity, *Relentless Continuum*, flute part comparing bars 32-42 and bars 686-694.

Bars 32-42, flutes

Bars 686-694, flute

Pitch retrograde of bars 34-37

Pitch retrograde of bars 38-40
CHAPTER 8
Reflections and Future Goals

The process of evaluating my work has been an incredibly helpful one. It has allowed me to identify aspects of my compositional aesthetic that are fixed and those that I would like to build on, against features that are more fluid and would like to deviate from. Broadly speaking, I am eager to continue working within a teleological framework as this has provided a helpful way to communicate with my audience, paralleling teleological shapes and trajectories in the world in which we live, thus providing some familiarity in the midst of an unfamiliar soundworld.

Moreover, it has been striking to consider works that seek to represent processes in sound and, therefore, I seek to use this as a departure point for future pieces. As I have mentioned, Dlugoszewski’s *Fire, Fragile, Flight* representing the process of falling leaves has had a strong impact on me. Furthermore, at the BBC Proms this year (2016) I heard a performance of Emily Howard’s concerto for orchestra, *Torus*, which aims to reflect the movement around the surface of a torus. The strings reflect the surface of the torus which is derailed by sudden percussion and brass outbursts. This results in a work that exhibits contrasting moments of lyricism and chaos and, as such, is extremely attractive ensuring that the audience are captivated by the frequent changes in tempo, character and instrumental combination.

As a result, I wish to continue to develop my compositional aesthetic through new stimuli and departure points that do not demand melodic transformation and development. It can be argued that this process did begin with the last two portfolio pieces, *Sporos* and *Relentless Continuum*.

In conclusion, my compositional goals are to gain a more stable aesthetic as I write works with a strong teleological shape and a greater emphasis on the element of timbre to reveal a more adventurous approach to create the most extreme contrasts.

In July 2016 I gained a place on the London Philharmonic Orchestra’s (LPO) Young Composer programme 2016-17, working with the LPO’s composer in residence Magnus Lindberg. This scheme culminates in the performance of a ten-minute orchestral work at St. John Smith Square in July 2017 and, therefore, has presented a wonderful opportunity to begin to experiment with these new concepts. At the point of writing this chapter I had the opportunity to write for four players of the LPO. I was asked “to write a short work or fragments for clarinet, horn, violin and cello treating the instruments as orchestrally as possible,”6 to be performed in a workshop on 17th October 2016. The result of this was *Fractus*, a work that afforded the opportunity to implement my desire to execute a clear teleological process in sound, that of ice breaking on the surface of a lake or river. Broadly speaking, I used the parameters of timbre, dynamics and articulation to illustrate the process of fracturing. The piece begins with a seamless and still texture. Movement is suggested through a subtle timbral changes, rather than pitch development or transformation of melodic and rhythmic themes (Example 66, page 70). In Example 66 dynamic changes are indicated by circles, timbral changes and variation of tone by squares:

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6 Brief set by Magnus Lindberg in October 2016.
Example 66: Timbral inflections suggesting subtle change, Fractus, bars 1-12.

To create the greatest variety the opening subdued section was contrasted with fortissimo, detached, staccato and accented gestures that covered a greater registral area, suggesting considerable movement and progress in the fracturing process (Example 67, page 71):
Example 67: The representation of breaking of ice achieved through variety in dynamics, timbre and articulation, Fractus, bars 30-37.

It was interesting to go through the process of evaluation of this piece with the other composers on the scheme. They commented (after hearing my previous works Chinese Whispers and Relentless Continuum) that the approach in this piece was driven by timbral concerns rather than being characterised by strong traits of lyricism and thematic development. Furthermore, it was commented that the intention of representing the process of ice breaking in sound was clearly executed, something that was a great relief.

Another facet of my work is in the field of education and this will be developed throughout the year with the LPO as I attend many of their education projects. The opportunities to work with young people and facilitate composition has brought to my attention different approaches to writing and I would like to take time to consider the viability of incorporating these elements into my own work. For example, I attended a training event with Rachel Leach, an LPO animateur, who devises many projects with young people. In the introductory session of the LPO scheme, she set the composers a task to select an object in the room we were in and choose three words to describe it. These words would become the basis of a new piece played by a group of three Future First performers selected at random. I chose the words linear, circular and

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7 The Foyle Future First is a programme run by the London Philharmonic Orchestra for young performers who work with LPO players for a year. There are several opportunities through the year for the Young Composers to collaborate with these players.
narrowing as a response to a conical light in the room and gave each performer (trumpet, violin and percussion) one word to represent in music. I was able to direct them towards a soundworld that I had imagined from these words and then stipulated an order for these gestures to appear, creating a short piece. This short work was performed in the next session and was combined with the four other works that were created by the other composers to make a longer piece.

As a result of this experience, I am keen to explore new directions and found the above approach incredibly liberating due to the potential of creating music that I would have never imagined without this point of departure. I hope to try many of these ideas, along with the desire to be more adventurous, as I work towards the new orchestral piece that will be premiered by the LPO in July 2017.
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**Recordings (without the score):**


**Scores:**


OTHER INFLUENTIAL SCORES:


