Australian piano music 1980-2010 from a pianist’s perspective: a presentation of two performance events

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (by creative work and dissertation)

21 December 2011

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Abstract

The interpretation and performance of new Australian solo piano music 1980-2010 are both under-researched. The ten representative solo piano works upon which this thesis is based were written by two distinct generations of composers between 1980 and 1994, and 1994 and 2010 respectively. These two periods contain a wealth of compositions that range across numerous genres, styles, compositional methods, idioms and musical languages which, as I shall argue below, nevertheless constitute a degree of consistency in style and approach in each case.

Due to a number of key historical, socio-cultural and professional factors, examination of the two periods reveals a multi-faceted shift in compositional style between the first and second generations. These factors include the composer’s professional development; the impact of Australianism, modernism, post-modernism and polystylism; the extraordinary growth of emphasis on pianistic virtuosity resulting from the commissioning of new works; and the reduction in the emphasis on national identity as expressed in references to the Australian landscape and Indigenous Australian music. External factors such as the support of commissions by the Australian Council for new works also play a role.

This dissertation delineates the role of the pianist in the interpretation of the selected works and formulates a theory of performance that may be applied more generally to this oeuvre. I based my interpretations of this mostly atonal literature on a new model of dynamic form, derived from my assessment of the composers’ compositional methods, including the form or ‘shape’ of the dynamic markings throughout the score. In interpreting the styles, idioms and character, I examined the implications in the scores for the pianist’s gestures and approach to dynamic markings and sonic qualities. My theory of dynamic form is based on the notion that the dynamic markings throughout the score – referred to as ‘dynamic scheme’ – provide a general indication of dynamic intensity throughout a work. As the interpretative process progresses, the resulting ‘sketch’ of the dynamic form is tempered, or at times significantly altered, as other factors that influence variations in the dynamic intensity are taken into account.
Traditional models of dynamic form, which tend to assume the inevitability of links between such musical elements as tempo, rhythmic vigour and harmony, run the risk of ignoring surprising new musical relationships that are continually presented by composers of new music. From the performer’s perspective, this methodology also has the benefit of ensuring that every facet of the music has been rigorously examined.
Declaration of Originality

This is to certify that

i. the portfolio comprises only my original work towards the PhD, except where indicated in the Preface,

ii. due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,

iii. the thesis is of fewer than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

.................................
Rohan David Murray

Dated this 21st day of December 2011
Acknowledgements

This research would not have been possible without the untiring efforts and skill of Professor Margaret Kartomi, Dr. Donna Coleman, Dr. David Kram, Associate Professor Tony Gould, Professor Gary McPherson, Dr. Barry Bignell, Dr. Robert Vincs and Associate Professor Mark Pollard. I also wish to thank Elizabeth Sellars, who has been of great help and support throughout the PhD project. I wish to thank Professor Max Cooke, O.A.M., whose teaching over many years has given me the necessary musical and technical skills to understand and perform this challenging repertoire. The help and support of the Australian Music Centre has also been crucial in obtaining scores and publications.
Index of Figures .................................................................................................................... 10
Index of Tables ..................................................................................................................... 10
Chapter One ......................................................................................................................... 11
  Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 11
  Organisation of the study .................................................................................................... 16
  Methodology ....................................................................................................................... 17
  Methodology applied .......................................................................................................... 21
  Rationale ............................................................................................................................. 29
Chapter Two – Literature Review and Repertoire Review .................................................... 33
  Literature Review ............................................................................................................... 33
  Texts that focus on a particular composition in detail ........................................................ 34
  Analysis and performance practice .................................................................................... 34
  Biographical and autobiographical texts on individual composers .................................... 36
  Historical surveys ............................................................................................................. 38
  Survey of the repertoire ..................................................................................................... 42
  Character pieces and miniatures .......................................................................................... 43
  Works with descriptive titles .............................................................................................. 44
  Large scale multi-movement works .................................................................................... 44
  Shorter sonatas and sonatinas ............................................................................................. 45
  Single-movement virtuoso works ......................................................................................... 46
  Summary of the “themes” ..................................................................................................... 47
  Colonialism and instrumentation ....................................................................................... 49
  Historical context and the tyranny of distance ..................................................................... 50
  Creative development .......................................................................................................... 51
  Globalisation and technology .............................................................................................. 51
  Modernism ........................................................................................................................... 52
  Eclecticism and post-modernism ........................................................................................ 53
  Patronage ............................................................................................................................. 55
  Indigenous culture and ‘Jindyworobakism’ ........................................................................... 57
Chapter Three – New Piano Music by Virtuoso Pianists ....................................................... 58
  Concluding Comments to Chapter 3 .................................................................................. 58
Chapter Four – Works written between 1994 and 2010 ....................................................... 60
  Cambewarra (1980) by David Lumsdaine (1931 - ) ............................................................. 62
  Kumari (1983) by Ross Edwards (1943 - ) ........................................................................ 74
  Mountains (1982) by Peter Sculthorpe (1929 - ) ............................................................... 83
  Concluding Comments to Chapter 3 .................................................................................. 125
  Fas/Nefas for solo piano (2001) by Jane Stanley (1976 - ) .................................................... 128
  Fas ........................................................................................................................................ 139
  Nefarious Dance ................................................................................................................... 147
  Alba (1994) by Tim Dargaville (1962 - ) ........................................................................... 153
  Five Bagatelles (1994) by Carl Vine (1954 - ) .................................................................... 171
  Third Piano Sonata (2007) by Carl Vine (1954 - ) .............................................................. 183
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abraço (2000) by Gerard Brophy (1953 - )</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concluding Comments to Chapter 4</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Five – Summary and conclusions</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A – Glossary of terms</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B – Examples of cells in the opening of Nefas</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C – Dargaville, Alba, cells</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D – Edwards, Kumari, cells in movement 1</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E – Edwards, Kumari, cells in the second movement</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discography</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Resources</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Index of Musical Examples

Example 1 – Lumsdaine, Cambewarra, opening bars .......................................................... 63
Example 2 – Lumsdaine, Cambewarra, “Chorale” .............................................................. 64
Example 3 – Lumsdaine, Cambewarra, page 10, systems 1, 2 and 3 ................................................ 68
Example 4 – Lumsdaine, Cambewarra, page 1, system 3, measure 2 ........................................ 72
Example 5 – Lumsdaine, Cambewarra, page 10, system 5 ...................................................... 73
Example 6 – Lumsdaine, Cambewarra, page 3, system 4 ....................................................... 73
Example 7 – Edwards, Kumari, systems 6 and 7, opening tableau ......................................... 76
Example 8 – Sculthorpe, Mountains, bars 35-37 ................................................................. 84
Example 9 – Sculthorpe, Mountains, opening bars .............................................................. 86
Example 10 – Sculthorpe, Mountains, bars 19-21 ............................................................... 86
Example 11 – Sculthorpe, Mountains, bars 35-37 ............................................................... 87
Example 12 – Humble, Eight Bagatelles, first bagatelle, opening bars .......................... 101
Example 13 – Humble, Eight Bagatelles, first bagatelle, bars 13-14 (false ending) ............ 101
Example 14 – Humble, Eight Bagatelles, second bagatelle, opening bars ......................... 102
Example 15 – Humble, Eight Bagatelles, third bagatelle, opening bars .......................... 103
Example 16 – Humble, Eight Bagatelles, fourth bagatelle, opening bars ......................... 103
Example 17 – Humble, Eight Bagatelles, fifth bagatelle, opening bars .......................... 103
Example 18 – Humble, Eight Bagatelles, fifth bagatelle, bar 7 ..................................... 104
Example 19 – Humble, Eight Bagatelles, sixth bagatelle, opening bars .......................... 104
Example 20 – Humble, Eight Bagatelles, seventh bagatelle, opening bars .................... 105
Example 21 – Humble, Eight Bagatelles, eighth bagatelle, opening bars ........................ 105
Example 22 – Ghandar, Dahab, opening bars ................................................................. 110
Example 23 – Ghandar, Four Bagatelles, opening bars ..................................................... 110
Example 24 – Ghandar, Four Bagatelles, opening cell ....................................................... 111
Example 25 – Ghandar, Four Bagatelles, comparison of opening bar and bar 8 ............ 111
Example 26 – Ghandar, Four Bagatelles, right hand, bars 5 and 6 and the row ........... 112
Example 27 – Ghandar, Four Bagatelles, second bagatelle, opening bars ...................... 113
Example 28 – Ghandar, Four Bagatelles, second bagatelle, bar 22 .............................. 114
Example 29 – Ghandar, Four Bagatelles, third bagatelle, bars 27-32 ............................. 115
Example 30 – Ghandar, Four Bagatelles, fourth bagatelle, bar 42 ............................... 116
Example 31 – Stanley, Fas/Nefas, pitches in the row ...................................................... 132
Example 32 – Stanley, Nefas, bar 17, right hand ............................................................... 132
Example 33 – Stanley, Nefas, bar 34 ............................................................................ 132
Example 34 – Stanley, Nefas, bars 81-83 ........................................................................ 133
Example 35 – Stanley, Nefas, opening bars .................................................................. 133
Example 36 – Stanley, Nefas, bar 53 ............................................................................. 136
Example 37 – Stanley, Nefas, bar 10 ............................................................................. 136
Example 38 – Stanley, Nefas, bars 97-99 ....................................................................... 138
Example 39 – Stanley, Fas, opening bars ...................................................................... 140
Example 40 – Stanley, Fas, bars 49-53 ....................................................................... 142
Example 41 – Stanley, Fas, bars 87-88 ....................................................................... 143
Example 42 – Stanley, Fas, bars 34-35 ...................................................................... 144
Example 43 – Stanley, Fas, bar 46 ............................................................................. 144
Example 44 – Stanley, Fas, grace-note figures from bars 25-30 .................................... 145
Index of Figures

Figure 1 – Lumsdaine, *Cambewarra* – Dynamic Scheme Graph ........................................ 66
Figure 2 – Edwards, *Kumari* – Dynamic Scheme Graph .................................................... 78
Figure 3 – Sculthorpe, *Mountains* – Dynamic Scheme Graph ........................................ 85
Figure 4 – Humble, *Eight Bagatelles* – Dynamic Scheme Graph (Cycle) ......................... 93
Figure 5 – Humble, *Eight Bagatelles*, first bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph ............ 94
Figure 6 – Humble, *Eight Bagatelles*, second bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph ....... 94
Figure 7 – Humble, *Eight Bagatelles*, third bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph .......... 95
Figure 8 – Humble, *Eight Bagatelles*, fourth bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph ....... 95
Figure 9 – Humble, *Eight Bagatelles*, fifth bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph .......... 96
Figure 10 – Humble, *Eight Bagatelles*, sixth bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph ....... 97
Figure 11 – Humble, *Eight Bagatelles*, seventh bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph ... 97
Figure 12 – Humble, *Eight Bagatelles*, eighth bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph ...... 98
Figure 13 – Ghandar, *Four Bagatelles*, first bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph .... 117
Figure 14 – Ghandar, *Four Bagatelles*, second bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph ... 117
Figure 15 – Ghandar, *Four Bagatelles*, third bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph .... 118
Figure 16 – Ghandar, *Four Bagatelles*, fourth bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph ... 118
Figure 17 – Ghandar, *Four Bagatelles* – Dynamic Scheme Graph (Cycle) .................. 119
Figure 18 – Stanley, *Fas/Nefas* – Dynamic Scheme Graph (Cycle) ............................... 130
Figure 19 – Stanley, *Nefas* – Dynamic Scheme Graph ..................................................... 131
Figure 20 – Stanley, *Fas* – Dynamic Scheme Graph .......................................................... 141
Figure 21 – Stanley, *Nefarious Dance* – Dynamic Scheme Graph ................................... 148
Figure 22 – Dargaville, *Alba* – Dynamic Scheme Graph ................................................ 161
Figure 23 – Vine, *Five Bagatelles* – Dynamic Scheme Graph (Cycle) ........................... 175
Figure 24 – Vine, *Five Bagatelles*, first bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph ............. 175
Figure 25 – Vine, *Five Bagatelles*, second bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph .......... 176
Figure 26 – Vine, *Five Bagatelles*, third bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph ............ 176
Figure 27 – Vine, *Five Bagatelles*, fourth bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph .......... 177
Figure 28 – Vine, *Third Piano Sonata* – Dynamic Scheme Graph ................................. 190
Figure 29 – Brophy, *Abraço* – Dynamic Scheme Graph ................................................. 202

Index of Tables

Table 1 – Dargaville, *Alba* – summary of cells and harmonic properties ....................... 155
Table 2 – Vine, *Third Piano Sonata*, movement one – Vine’s “several ideas” ............... 189
Chapter One

Introduction

The repertoire of Australian contemporary solo piano music examined in this dissertation was written by two generations of composers in 1980-1994 and 1994-2010 respectively. It contains a wealth of compositions that range across numerous genres, styles, compositional methods, idioms and musical languages which, as I shall argue below, nevertheless demonstrate a degree of consistency in style and approach. This repertoire has benefited from being written in a period that coincides with the advent of the Australia Council in 1975, the Australian government’s arts funding body, and its provision of high level funding for music composition. The repertoire crosses the full spectrum of music-conceptual complexity and sheer technical difficulty. At the higher end of this spectrum are numerous exciting virtuoso compositions that deserve in particular to be researched and publicly performed, a selection of which I have chosen for this project.

It is useful to consider the period 1980-2010 in the context of the history of Australian piano music. The Australian composer, scholar and pianist Larry Sitsky divides the piano music of the twentieth century into three generations of composers, namely those born (i) up to 1913, (ii) between 1913 and 1942 and (iii) after 1942. The observations that arise from this line of inquiry can provide an insight into the factors that have influenced a broad range of composers during the period in question. As David Lumsdaine confirms (Gilbert, undated, p.73), composers born in the 1920s were almost universally urged to travel to Europe, and most particularly to Britain, to undertake their professional training.

Sitsky’s classification of the relevant composers into generations is appropriate as a framework, within which many fascinating observations can be made. However, it needs to be used with caution. My research suggests that a slightly different generation-based periodisation may be appropriate. I propose that Australian piano composers over the past century or so be classified between those born before, and those born after 1943.
As in all classifications, there are some composers whose birth and production dates overlap the borders of the two periods. For example, Peter Sculthorpe (born in 1929) was Ross Edwards’ (born in 1943) teacher. Nonetheless, their inclusion within the same ‘generation’ takes into account the fact that their compositional styles are quite closely aligned. Later composers follow distinctly different paths.

From the early twentieth century, a relatively clear-cut bifurcation occurred between two ‘brands,’ as it were, of ‘Australianist’ composers. The first is best described as those who believed in creating uniquely Australian music from the sounds of the Australian landscape and Indigenous music (early examples include the composer Henry Tate) and composers who believed that an Australian musical identity ought to be forged from the colonial aspect of Australian culture and its ties with Europe. Percy Grainger was perhaps the most significant early exponent of the latter variety.

Towards the later years of his life – in the 1950s – Grainger was influenced musically by the modernist movement. A new generation of composers – of which Keith Humble was a prominent figure – continued to develop the concept of Australianist music, though based in Europe. During the 1960s, the Indigenous Australianist strand, sometimes referred to as Jindyworobakism, reached its zenith (Carrigan, 1994, pp. 8-9). Clive Douglas was perhaps its most prominent exponent.

Serial modernism and Australianism continued into the 1970s and 1980s, with a further strand of Asian music incorporated in the 1970s, in particular. Surprisingly, it was the composers who had mostly expressed interest in the Australian landscape and Indigenous culture who were drawn to Asian musical influences. This group included composers such as Ross Edwards and Peter Sculthorpe.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the composers who had been born in the 1940s and onwards showed a propensity to use aspects of commercial popular music in their work, with Ross Edwards and Carl Vine providing excellent examples of this trend. The older generation of composers was far less inclined to incorporate popular music into its work during this period. Where previously Australian music was dominated by Australianism and modernism, an expansion in the 1980s and into the mid-1990s saw an unmistakable shift towards post-modernism. In this dissertation I have assumed that ‘post-modernism’ transcends modernism, rather than being a mere reaction against modernism. From the
mid-1990s and onwards modernist styles co-existed with post-modernist ones. Serialism continued to be used, but in the form of integral serialism or total organisation, with particular emphasis on serial rhythm.

As intimated above, the advent of the Australia Council in 1975, as part of the Whitlam Government’s ‘Australianisation’ policy led to the awarding of high-level government funding for music, which has had important implications for the funding of new composition. Coupled with this important development was the emergence of a bevy of brilliant piano soloists, especially Michael Kieran Harvey and Ian Munro, who have chosen to dedicate significant time and energy to commissioning new works in recent years.

**Professional context**

As a performer, my research aims to stimulate further interest in and research into the repertoire and to guide others in their research and preparation of works from this repertoire for performance while also providing some much needed information about several lesser known composers through my personal interviews with them. My research into the chosen repertoire has been instigated in part by a desire to help other pianists and students to play it. Many artists who encounter post-1980 Australian solo piano music for the first time when working professionally will likely be preparing the works for performance in a short time-frame. Most university graduates can be expected to have a technical facility and stylistic familiarity derived from intensive study of pre-twentieth century tonal music practices, but many of the principles that apply to tonal music are, on occasion, entirely reversed in the performance of contemporary music, as I shall show below.

There is a danger that performers without the appropriate research and training will distort and homogenise new musical styles by merely superimposing existing stylistic and gestural habits. The result of such an approach would almost inevitably produce inappropriate interpretations, resembling those of romantic or classical pieces that the listener would find to be less than well written. To achieve a successful performance, it is vital that the performer perceives the distinctiveness of the composer’s
musical language. The fact that most composers of Australian and other new music explore highly individualised compositional methods and styles requires that the performer research the types of dilemmas that confront the composer as he/she attempts to transcribe new and complex music into a performance score.

My interest in contemporary Australian music for solo piano stemmed from hearing an early performance of Carl Vine’s *First Piano Sonata* by Michael Kieran Harvey, who subsequently became one of my mentors. Kieran Harvey’s rare gift of being able to present new music with distinctiveness, persuasiveness and an unmistakable personal hallmark proves that this repertoire is a rich new resource of musical meanings and pianistic possibilities. Other outstanding contributors such as Ian Munro and the late Keith Humble have likewise demonstrated that the repertoire of this period can be rewarding and interesting.

As an exponent of this repertoire, I have become aware of the fact that there has been a steady flow of works commissioned – often with the support of the Australia Council – and performed only once or twice in public and only by the premiering artist; moreover, the works are not always recorded. Another of the many problems is that relatively little scholarly attention has been given to the process of preparing this repertoire for performance. Artists who are busy premiering their works seldom write about their experiences; and thus a considerable volume of music is written, performed and then all but forgotten. Serious performance of this repertoire by students at tertiary level is relatively uncommon. Postgraduate research, with a few outstanding exceptions, is also rare. This field is impoverished by a lack of research.

**Delimitations of the topic**

This study is necessarily limited to an analysis of factors that influence my original pianistic performance methodology of the chosen repertoire and its relevance to Australian piano music as a whole. It cannot, of course refer to all, or even to a significant number of Australian pianists who are involved in the performance of contemporary Australian solo repertoire. There are numerous pianists who continue to contribute significantly to the performance of these works. My research indicates that the
presence of brilliant soloists in the Australian concert landscape, such as Michael Kieran Harvey and Ian Munro has had an impact on commissions throughout this period. I have not examined critical reviews of specific performances, as criticism is a distinct and highly specialised field of its own. Doubtless, a dedicated study of the critical reviews of piano performances throughout the period would be of value.

This study does not aim to provide a detailed review of the relevant professionally released recordings, which would be peripheral to the issue of establishing and applying my original performance methodology. However, I have been indirectly influenced by a number of performers and their work (see the Discography). Likewise, I have not attempted to provide an in-depth comparison of my performances with those of other artists, except where I found such a comparison was necessary for creating a context for certain performance decisions.

In selecting works for my two recital programs – one comprising works written in 1980-1994 and the other in 1994-2010 – I have endeavoured principally to produce engaging programmes that would demonstrate something of the diversity of genres, styles and compositional methods in this period, as well as the main compositional themes, such as Australianism, modernism, post-modernism, serialism (including integral serialism) and polystylistism. However, it was not my aim to cover every genre, style and compositional method used throughout the period.

This study excludes all of the composers included in Sitsky’s ‘First Generation’ of composers and does not make detailed comparisons between composers from Australia and composers from outside Australia. There is almost no limit to the number of international composers that one could cite as having influenced Australian piano music in the last thirty years. I have endeavoured to make references to influential composers from outside Australia to the extent that they demonstrate a particular compositional method and its origins, or where the use of similar themes or motives suggested a direct influence.

Nor have I dealt in detail with the valuable editing work of new Australian piano music by Melbourne’s former Latrobe University music school. Research on Keith Humble’s work in establishing composition and improvisatory programmes at Latrobe has been the subject of some research via the papers of Keith Humble held in the
National Library of Australia. However, I focused only on Humble’s *Eight Bagatelles* and his compositional ideas. My reading of Humble’s papers indicates that they are a rich source of information about Humble and provide considerable insight into the philosophies and methods behind his work.

It was not my intention in carrying out this study to address pedagogical issues, except to the extent that some of my findings could be used, in some degree as an aid to students in learning this specialised repertoire. As the works selected are amongst some of the most challenging in the repertoire, my research may help professional pianists and postgraduate level students. Nor have I discussed the various methods involved in learning these two challenging recital programmes, as the question of learning methods is vast and the literature, both from a piano pedagogic and a psycho-cognitive point of view is equally vast. This topic warrants another study.

I chose not to deal in detail with my own piano technique in my two recitals. In a few works it was necessary that I discuss the extreme technical challenges of the writing. I do not have the space to make a dedicated study of the mechanics of the human body and its relevance in producing particular sounds.

**Organisation of the study**

I will now outline the methodology I applied in researching and preparing my interpretations of each work. As each work provided its own challenges I will discuss the approach taken in each work separately in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Two will outline the literature regarding Australian music performance, as well as texts dealing with performance research.

Chapter Three will examine five works written between 1980 and 1994. I discuss and apply my methodological approach to the issues of preparing each work for performance. My approach is based on the information gleaned from my research of each composer and his/her compositional method. Where applicable, I will include comments by composers about their work. I also provide an outline of my performance decisions in
my preparation of the selected works for performance and comment on the extent to which these decisions resulted from the research in general.

Chapter Four will examine five works written between 1994 and 2010. As with Chapter Two, I set out my methodological approach to performance preparation, with selected references to my research, including any interviews. The material in Chapters Two and Three provides a working insight into my own theory of performance interpretation and contributes to the relatively new field of Performance Research.

Chapter Five will summarise the findings and make a series of observations that have arisen in relation to the performance of the works under study. I have included a glossary of terms used as Appendix A. The reader will also note that there are further Appendices of musical examples that are variously referred to throughout this dissertation.

**Methodology**

One of the great challenges for the performer of contemporary Australian solo piano music lies in the sheer diversity of compositional methods, styles, idioms and influences. The variety of musical styles continues to expand. The performer must comprehend and interpret new musical languages. It is an exciting task, but one that necessitates a well developed sense of divergences and convergences of new and existing styles. This necessitates research, analysis and experimentation into the many facets of the chosen works in the performer’s preparation for recital performance. In order to establish a framework for dealing with each composition, it was crucial to adopt a rigorous though flexible approach to interpretation.

I took the view that dynamic markings remain one of the most reliable indicators of dynamic form in a composition, though I am equally convinced that dynamic markings or the ‘dynamic scheme,’ as I will refer to it, should not be relied upon as the sole indicator of dynamic form. My use of the concept of dynamic scheme and its relationship with dynamic form enabled quick apprehension of the points in the score where the composer had sought to create emphases using dynamics. The approach of analysts such as John Rink (2002) and others is to construct a model that provides a summary of the dynamic
form with all its facets. One of the problems with using such an approach in the process of interpretation is that contemporary composers frequently create new contexts and new uses for many of the elements of music. I have taken the view that it is risky in such a context to amalgamate two or more elements into a single scheme. With markedly different styles in each work (and even sometimes within a work), I found it more productive to form a clear picture of the composer’s use of dynamics alone and to apply my own reasoning to the use of the various devices around the peaks in the dynamic scheme.

In this way I can comfortably discuss any differences between the dynamic scheme and the dynamic form (as described in Appendix A). I am confident that the use of extremely high volume seldom occurs at the less intense moments of the dynamic form. This, of course, does not mean that the peak in the dynamic scheme will always be the same as the peak in the dynamic form. However, the overall shape of the dynamic scheme and the various peaks and troughs can then be isolated and analysed in light of other musical elements.

In developing my approach, I was mindful of the many facets of musical performance and the complex relationship between a musical score and a musical work. In bringing the notated score ‘to life’, in interpretation and performance, I considered the composer’s compositional background and training as well as the compositional method, musical style, idiom and character, including gesture and gesture-specific performance directions, form, the scheme of dynamic markings, dynamic form, the composer’s expressive markings, general approach to performance indications throughout the score, approach to tempo, harmony, rhythmic issues such as swing, any special composer-specific notational issues, articulation and accentuation, phraseology, textural diversity, voicing, pedalling, touch and sound quality.

The primary sources comprise the written scores and interviews with the chosen composers. Secondary sources included biographical texts about composers, texts dealing with interpretation and a small number of recordings, where applicable. The research comprised of five parts: the selection of works for their historical significance in Australian piano composition since 1980; analysis of the structures and styles of the
written scores; interviews with composers about their lives and views on their works; experimentation with the sonic aspects of the works and the preparation for performance.

In the process of researching the selected works for performance it became apparent that the existing descriptions of traditional genres would be inadequate to describe this diverse repertoire. A survey of all the available piano works written throughout this period was necessary to ascertain the most useful ways of classifying and describing the genres. As many of the compositions were available at the Australian Music Centre in Sydney, my two extended visits to the Centre enabled me to complete the process of reviewing the repertoire, appropriate published and unpublished articles and to develop five genre categories for use throughout the analysis.

Research of available material about composers often provided information about the compositional methods they used, which helped me select the works and identify their salient stylistic and idiomatic features. At this stage, I interviewed some composers, particularly where the information in the literature was insufficient. Although the interviews provide some insight into the likely stylistic and idiomatic features of works, I did not aim to procure a statement of compositional intention. After tracing the compositional method of the composers I inquired into the aspects of genre type and form, including dynamic scheme and dynamic form. Research into gesture and stylistic features followed and this necessarily included articulation, tempo, rhythmic execution and textural setting.

I found that my examination of the genre and form – including the dynamic scheme – of each composition was particularly useful where the traditional harmonic relationships between sections were not in evidence. Where no underlying harmonic relationship exists, the dynamic model for the work can be an indicator of the larger form. Having found the maximal peak in dynamics, the performer can then read back to the beginning and to the end, locating and possibly scaling the relative peaks and troughs in dynamics within the remainder of the work. Sections where the loudest dynamics were sustained were considered to be the most climactic and were scaled accordingly. Likewise, the sections where the lowest dynamic occurred were often considered to be the beginnings and ends of larger dynamic shapes within the work.
In much contemporary music, tempi are marked fastidiously. However, the performer often needs to insert minute fluctuations in tempo and minute fluctuations in rhythm can be used to enhance a sense of gesture, which can also be relevant to the sense of ‘feel.’ In this context, the notion of ‘feel’ has been applied to mean a heaviness or lightness in the rhythmic execution, or a sense of forward momentum or steadiness of tempo. Feel can also consist of and indeed, usually results from, a combination of these factors. To give an example, where music was found to incorporate elements of blues swing, note values were slightly evened out and tempo was kept relatively steady, so that the effect of the music was less vigorous than a literal reading of the score would suggest.

Experimentation and performance preparation often commenced simultaneously, once research and analysis was completed. However, the purposes of these two inextricably linked processes were vastly different. Experimentation involved exploring different sounds and the extent to which the acoustic properties of the instrument lent themselves to particular interpretive possibilities. Sometimes this involved experimentation with dynamics, as certain textures were found to be more vulnerable to indistinctiveness at low dynamics than others. General preparation for performance also involved kinaesthetic learning and experimenting to find ways of applying the analysis and research findings.

Often during preparatory states, two or more alternate ways of interpreting certain passages within the music arose, which necessitated experimentation to decide on the most convincing approach. In a number of cases, this resulted in decisions that would not have been arrived at through analysis alone, for it involved further consideration of the ramifications of these spontaneous impulses for the interpretation as a whole.

The process of preparing works for recital performance necessitates the incorporation of the research, analysis and experimentation into a coherent interpretation. As musical performance is an artistic pursuit, a conflict can sometimes emerge between the dynamically convincing aspects and the analytically and theoretically persuasive facets. Frequently a difficult decision has to be made between analytical and theoretical conclusions and creative impulses. Where the analytical models are being extended to deal with a new musical language, the more dynamically persuasive approach needs to be chosen, in my experience.
In addition, it is often necessary to revise the initial analytical and theoretical conclusions, or to re-orient oneself after the experimentation process. When this occurs the analysis is nonetheless of benefit to the performer, in considering the manner in which other aspects of the interpretation might be affected. Analytical reasoning may be effectively ‘re-calibrated’ and extended, though not discarded.

In summary, I found that the above approach assisted me greatly in preparing each work for recital performance, enabling me to reach original interpretations that would not have been arrived at through a less rigorous interpretive method.

**Methodology applied**

*Eight Bagatelles* by Keith Humble

As the title suggests, the *Eight Bagatelles* by Keith Humble comprise of a cycle of miniatures. Keith Humble passed away in 1995, but interviews by John Whiteoak and Anthony Hughes were of particular importance in comprehending Humble’s compositional method and his unique musical language.

Two excellent studies by Hughes (2001) and Walker (2004) provide detailed analysis of Humble’s compositional method and with particular reference to the *Eight Bagatelles*. It was unnecessary to provide detailed analysis of the compositional method and composing out process in this study, but a number of observations from the above studies formed the basis of my understanding of the work. It was necessary to trace the dynamic scheme within the cycle and within each miniature, as this assisted in assessing the dynamic form. Subtle variations in tempo were used in the *Eight Bagatelles*, to assist in the sense of forward motion that Humble requests in most of the faster movements in the cycle. In the slower movements, Humble took a varied approach to marking *rubato* and comparison of the manner of Humble’s markings in the different movements made it possible to produce an interpretation that was consistent throughout the cycle.
*Fas/Nefas* by Jane Stanley

*Fas/Nefas* comprises of a cycle of works, each bearing a descriptive title. The musical material was based on the concept contained in the title. This concept was revealed in the notes accompanying the piece in the published edition. In preparing *Fas/Nefas* for performance as part of this project, the author had the experience of having performed the premiere of the cycle on 12 October 2005. Further research was undertaken in preparing the work for performance as part of this project.

I interviewed Jane Stanley on 23 December 2005 and discussed in some detail the concept behind *Fas/Nefas*, as well as aspects of the compositional method. Articles by Stanley and by Andrew Robbie were used in understanding the compositional method of the works. Research and analysis revealed a serial pitch selection method and *talea-colour* technique. These devices were then traced through each of the movements.¹

The dynamic scheme was traced to find the moments of greatest sustained peaks and troughs in dynamics. The peak was found to occur in *Nefas* and *Fas* approximately half way into the movement, whereas in *Nefarious Dance*, the greatest peak is in the final bar. Once the peaks were established it was necessary to read back through the less extreme peaks in the score, as well as the troughs in dynamics, so as to develop a method of scaling that would set apart the moments of greatest dynamic intensity.

In Stanley’s music the style, idiom and character are highly idiosyncratic. A relatively instinctive approach was employed in approaching gesture and style. Decisions were largely made on the basis of the reaction to the different pitch, articulation, textural and rhythmic combinations when playing the piece for the first time. There are moments of jazz swing in *Nefas* and some moments of quasi-ballad writing in *Fas*. In relatively few instances, the music benefitted from subtle variations of the notated rhythms.

I made only small number of tempo decisions in *Fas/Nefas*. Most of these occurred in *Fas*, where the writing suggested gradual shifts in tempo over longer sections. This required the various points of marked tempo to be established as reference points for the sections where the tempo gradually shifts. Experimentation was crucial in

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¹ I acknowledge the assistance of Dr Donna Coleman in identifying the use of *talea-colour* technique at an early stage in my analysis.
*Fas/Nefas* as the idiosyncratic musical language had relatively little relationship with existing musical languages. Experimentation included voicing of certain pitches, such as balancing the sonorities between the extreme upper register of the instrument with those in the middle and lower register. In *Nefas*, this also involved experimentation with the drone in the left hand, to decide whether certain combinations of pitches would be more convincing than others throughout the opening section. In *Fas*, experimentation was essential, particularly in the opening bar, where the player is required to play a note and then cause another note to be heard in the sympathetic resonance of the instrument.

The various decisions made from the process of experimentation in *Fas/Nefas* supplemented rather than contradicted the analysis. However, in some instances, I varied the pedal markings slightly from the composer’s literal markings, particularly through use of flutter pedal technique.

*Alba* by Tim Dargaville

Tim Dargaville’s music has been the subject of relatively little scholarly work, so the interview with the composer was of great importance in obtaining information about compositional method, influences and the concept behind *Alba*. The interview revealed a number of aspects to Dargaville’s music that were traced further through detailed analysis of his work.

Dargaville’s compositional method in *Alba* employed aspects of total organisation, *talea-colour* and West African drumming techniques. An understanding of these facets was used to develop a sense of gesture and an approach to rhythm generally. Tempo is mostly marked fastidiously throughout *Alba*. The marking “slow and delicate” required some interpretation. The composer volunteered a comment about the premiere performance and premiere recordings, saying that he believed the opening section might have been more successful at a slower tempo. I decided to experiment with the option of playing the opening very slowly and I also trialled subtle localised variation in tempo, to enhance the sense of gesture throughout the remainder of the work.

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2 The only exception is the opening 6 measures of the work, which are unmeasured and without metronome markings.
The dynamic scheme followed an end-accented model. This led to decisions to scale the dynamics throughout the work towards the end and many dynamics were scaled lower than marked. The best balance between the particular pitch combinations at different registers of the instrument is seldom evident from the score and finding the best approach requires time at the keyboard.

Dargaville’s use of textures spanning the entire compass of the instrument required careful consideration of the way in which voices were selected and differentiated within the texture. The time spent playing these passages and exploring different possibilities resulted in distinctive approaches to the sound in each instance.

*Third Piano Sonata* by Carl Vine

Carl Vine was unavailable for interview in relation to the *Third Piano Sonata* or the *Five Bagatelles*. Some primary information was available about Vine’s music and his approach to composition. This information was invaluable in understanding the presence of aspects of jazz as well as aspects of popular music. This information was applied in interpreting style and gesture in Vine’s work. The relatively traditional genre of the sonata, as well as the frequent use of archaic form types within the work make points of emphasis and pauses logical. These are mostly marked by the composer. However, there were numerous voicing decisions that were made in extension of the instructions in the score.

Research of Vine’s earlier piano works revealed that he demands obedience to his meticulous markings. However, the initial recording of his *First Piano Sonata* by premiering artist, Michael Kieran Harvey revealed a number of persuasive departures from the exact markings, especially in the area of tempo and articulation. Tempo in the *Third Piano Sonata* was mostly played as marked, although occasionally a slightly faster tempo was taken, particularly in the more exciting passages.

Voicing and pedalling decisions evolved through a process of planning and trialling the different possibilities identified in the analysis. This also affected decisions for balancing chords and textures. In the area of pedalling most decisions involved breaking the marked pedalling with ‘flutter’ pedalling, so as to give clarity to certain
gestures within the texture, whilst maintaining the sense of resonance. On occasion, where pedalling was not marked, I decided to use a small amount of pedalling, to assist in maintaining the sense of resonance.

*Five Bagatelles* by Carl Vine

A limited amount of specific information was available in relation to the *Five Bagatelles* and the published score contains a helpful description of the circumstances in which the work was written.

Vine’s compositional method in the *Five Bagatelles* is less methodical than that of many of the other composers selected for this project. His musical language is more ‘intuitive’ and has a strong relationship with harmony and modality. Thus, I found it more useful to analyse the relationship with harmony and make comparisons with his other works for solo piano, including the three piano sonatas. The five movements traverse five different styles and musical languages, each requiring careful consideration of the different approaches that could be taken to articulation and feel, in particular. The dynamic form for each miniature was useful in giving a sense of the dynamic scoring throughout the cycle and also helped to understand the form of each movement within the cycle.

Tempo in the *Five Bagatelles* (as with most of Vine’s compositions) is specifically marked in most instances. However, after trialling each movement some variation from the exact tempo was found to be effective. The sense of gesture varies between the movements with the different styles used. The different styles also necessitated variations in the voicing of the texture, with some movements lending themselves to a more traditional outer voice orientation and in some instances Vine’s use of polyphony hints at possible resolutions at different moments in each hand.

*Abraço* by Gerard Brophy

General information about Brophy’s compositional method was obtained from the literature, though the available information was inadequate. Gerard Brophy was
interviewed to obtain primary information about Abraço, including stylistic influences and compositional method.

The compositional method involves the blending of compositional ideas derived from a number of styles. Most of the recognised styles involved are from improvisatory traditions, with jazz and salsa being the most prominent. Locating elements of these styles throughout the work uncovered interpretive possibilities, which then became the subject of experimentation. Tempo in Abraço is marked exactly at the beginning. Some localised variations of tempo were used in places where a ‘heavier feel’ was warranted. This usually also involved minute flattening out of some rhythms.

Abraço follows an end-accented dynamic model with the result that scaling decisions have to be made throughout the work, so as to avoid the situation where the work fails to build to the last bar. The different textural scorings throughout the score necessitate an approach to dynamics that is sensitive to the overall dynamic model. The decision was made to consider each of the textures against the textural setting and dynamic marking at the end of the piece.

Brophy’s pedal markings are extremely sparing in Abraço, with just 18 pedal markings (most of them brief) in 22 pages of music. The first seven pages of the work do not contain any pedalling indications, necessitating careful evaluation of how and when pedalling should be used. Various possibilities were compared at the keyboard and incorporated into the interpretation. The combination of styles in Abraço also necessitated playing and comparison of different stylistic approaches throughout the work. The results of these decisions were then fed back through the analysis to achieve consistency where necessary.

Cambewarra by David Lumsdaine

Information about David Lumsdaine’s compositional technique is available in the literature. The use of recorded bird-song and archaic devices was traced through the composition and was of assistance making stylistic decisions as well as decisions for pedalling and articulation. Cambewarra is best understood as belonging to the genre of ‘work with a descriptive title.’ The title was of assistance in comprehending the work as
were the composer’s notes accompanying the score. It was clear that the work was meant
to convey a sense of the natural environment and consequently, the musical gestures were
expected to be relatively spontaneous, rather than subjects in the sense of germinal
subject development.

Tempo in Lumsdaine’s music is carefully marked and was usually executed
according to markings. However, some fluctuation in tempo was used at selected points.
The form of Cambewarra comprises three large sections, though these are not related by
any traditional form model. For the most part the writing is not climactic, though the
coda suggests an end-accented model. I concluded that the dynamics ought to be scaled
to produce variety between the sections, especially by using different types of sounds
from the instrument. This involved the use of una corda at selected moments, as well as
different scaling of touch throughout.

Decisions such as balance, dynamics, voicing and pedalling were made after
different approaches were compared at the piano. In the instances where Lumsdaine
weaves chorale and bird-song together, there was extensive experimentation, to balance
the need for resonance in the chorale writing with clarity in the bird-song figurations.
These decisions were then traced back through the composition and compared for
consistency.

*Kumari* by Ross Edwards

A significant amount of general information is available about Ross Edwards and
his compositional methods, so he was not interviewed for this purpose. Some information
is also available in relation to his piano music. The literature revealed that Edwards has
commonly used archetypes in his writing and that he has two distinctive styles of writing.
*Kumari* is an example of Edwards’ more austere, hermetic writing, which was of great
relevance to its interpretation. It is also of relevance that the work is meant to convey a
sense of place. This makes the use of an end-accented model less feasible. The sense of
constant stillness mandates only minor fluctuations or ‘ripples’ in the dynamic form.

The genre traits of *Kumari* are perhaps the most obscure. The work bears a
descriptive title and is generally non-climactic. Analysis revealed that the work is
comprised of a series of repeated cells. Decisions regarding dynamic scaling were mostly
directed towards delineating repeated cells and different elements within each cell (where
applicable).

Tempo in *Kumari* is mostly very slow and rhythmic markings are mostly interpreted as a series of gestures, rather than exact rhythmic values. Elements of localised harmonic movement were present throughout *Kumari*, which suggested an approach to voicing that would convey the fleeting moments of goal-directedness. The exact approach to balance and voicing of the various ‘archetypes’ or cells in *Kumari* only became apparent from exploration of different options at the instrument. More general voicing rules were then applied throughout the work, with subtle variations made to reflect the slightly different compositional approach taken when cells repeat.

*Mountains* by Peter Sculthorpe

A significant amount of information is available regarding Peter Sculthorpe as composer and for this reason, Sculthorpe was not interviewed in relation to *Mountains*. The work takes its descriptive title from the Mountains of Tasmania and the title bears heavily upon the music. The compositional method of the work is based on a series of cells that focus on the interval of the minor second and its concomitants, the major seventh and the minor ninth. Sculthorpe describes the jagged gestures in the writing as being directly symbolic of his recollection of mountains in Tasmania. Unlike some of Sculthorpe’s other evocations of the natural landscape, *Mountains* has a clearly defined dynamic form, with an overall sense of gravity towards and away from that point. Dynamic form was considered, having regard to the pitch cells that were set up early in the work and their progress throughout the work was highly instructive as to the shape of the dynamic form.

*Four Bagatelles* by Ann Ghandar

A limited amount of general information was available about composer Ann Ghandar. The composer was not available for interview, but primary information about
the *Four Bagatelles* was available in the printed score. The set is briefly mentioned in an article by the composer. The pitch selection for the *Four Bagatelles* utilises a serial method, wherein the first three letters of the word ‘bamatelle’ are the first three pitches of the row. Analysis of the row throughout the cycle was then traced, which revealed the predominant use of certain segments in the first and third bagatelles. The genre was vital in understanding the crossover between serialism and arcane stylistic writing, such as the use of waltz. These observations informed decisions about texture, style, gesture and pedalling. Tempi were mostly indicated in traditional Italian markings and closely related to decisions about gesture. Different tempo possibilities as well as other decisions around pedalling, balance and articulation were all trialled at the keyboard. Tempo decisions arrived at in practice supplemented the markings in the notated score.

**Rationale**

It may seem obvious to state that notated music does not ‘contain’ a musical work and yet the printed score is still commonly referred to by musicians as ‘the music.’ The exact role of the notated score in the process of transporting musical ideas from the composer’s imagination through a performer into the ears of an audience is frequently misunderstood. A simple analogy could be made with the mathematical concept of ‘information rate’ propounded by mathematicians such as Kelly and others (see Kelly, 1956). This is the theory that in transmitting intermingled and multifaceted data from one medium to another, some of the information will almost invariably be lost.

However, the process of written musical composition and its presentation in a public performance context is all the more complex. Here, it is not merely a process of transmitting *information* but instead of transmitting *meaning*. Consequently, the different ‘actors’ in the process (being the composer, performer and audience) play a significant role in shaping the work. Very few performance scores can produce a dynamically engaging and sophisticated performance without the performer’s contribution in applying his or her understanding of the way in which the various musical elements relate to one
another and as it were, ‘filling in the gaps’ constituted by the musical elements that were either impractical or impossible to notate.

The view taken herein is that the printed score offers a series of inevitably simplistic instructions. The necessity for simplicity in the instructions is traditionally a result of the need for expediency. In contemporary music, composers have sought to provide more detailed instructions for performers than in previous eras, apparently in an attempt to reduce the level of uncertainty in the interpretation process. This is perhaps also a result of composers' understandings of the inherent difficulty for performers in comprehending new musical languages. Nonetheless, the increase in markings results in a larger number of symbols requiring interpretation and hence a risk exists that the markings may lead to greater confusion. As Edward Elgar once remarked, “I’ve done everything I can to help musicians, but my efforts appear only to confuse them” (Philip, 2004, p. 181).

The denoted meaning of musical symbols is more easily able to exclude certain meanings than to include exact meanings. An example would be a pianissimo dynamic, where the exact loudness is unknown, though it is obvious that one ought not play the passage as loudly as possible. Often, pianissimo will not be the softest dynamic in a piece of music, so it would not be appropriate to play as softly as possible. In certain music one might consider using the una corda device to provide a more muted sound where pianissimo is marked. These decisions will depend upon the dynamic model for the work, as well as the extent to which una corda is used to vary tone (rather than dynamic) elsewhere in the piece.

The approach to staccato can vary significantly from one composer to another. Its literal meaning is to play a note detached so that it sounds for exactly half its note value and is immediately followed by a rest of half the note value. Nonetheless, in some styles, the approach of most performers, and almost certainly the better stylistic view, is to play staccato detached, but not short. This can also vary within a given style, depending upon whether the marking occurs within a melodic line or as part of an accompaniment. Where it is marked in a melodic context, it may be a convenient means of indicating a break in the sound, rather than an absolute note value. The examples of pianissimo and staccato are amongst many such examples. Many contemporary styles require a particular ‘feel,’ which will often involve deliberate distortions of rhythm and tempo. Once again, these
are stylistic decisions that require the performer to deviate slightly from the literal meaning of the notated symbols, so as to achieve the most convincing artistic reading.

The almost infinite facets of musical sound and musical artistry are all but incapable of simple description and the above examples demonstrate that even the most fundamental notated symbols can mean slightly different things to different composers (and also to different performers). A further complication exists in that musical notation does not include an unequivocal descriptor for the execution of idiom, gesture or style. A combination of rhythm, *tenuto, staccato*, accents, phrasing, textural setting can assist, but the limitations inherent in these markings still necessitate careful consideration and usually some experimentation.

The information gathered from composers in this project was used as a guide to understanding how a given work was written and what stylistic, gestural and idiomatic influences might be present. This information should be used carefully, as the use of interviews to determine ‘intention’ may result in a dictatorial approach to interpretation, where the composer might be imagined ‘looking over the performer’s shoulder.’ This may well eliminate convincing interpretive options that may not have been evident to the composer and is also likely to stifle the freedom of thought that leads to subtle and spontaneous interpretive decisions, where the performer reacts to sounds as they occur in performance. In this project, information obtained from composers was used to extend the pallet of possibilities, rather than to narrow it. None of the composers interviewed expressed a desire to prohibit specific interpretive possibilities, nor to dictate their intentions.

Genre and form, including dynamic form, were vital to understanding how the various sections within a given work related to one another. Genre often has implications for form and also for dynamics. One might often find for example, that miniatures benefit from a less extreme dynamic scaling than more elongated forms, such as the sonata. Generally, the model for the dynamic scheme of each composition was invaluable in finding the greatest and most sustained peaks and troughs within each work. Dynamic scheme can be useful in determining whether a work is ‘climactic’ in the sense of an ‘end-accented’ dynamic model, or exhibits more sporadic dynamic distribution. One of the greatest dangers in failing to comprehend dynamic form is the situation where the
louder dynamics, in particular, all sound similar. This will frequently lead the listener to the conclusion that the work has no dynamic shape.

Gesture and style in contemporary music are among the most difficult attributes to understand and execute. Whilst composers mostly provide very clear indications as to tempo, minute variations and manipulations of tempo can be relevant to form, gesture, idiom and style. As with articulation markings, rhythm and tempo will, to some extent, inform decisions about gesture, but only indirectly. The expressions ‘on the front of the beat’ and ‘on the back of the beat’ are sometimes referred to, such as where gestures are light or precipitous, or conversely where they are heavy or grand. These subtle manipulations should not be confused with a change in the underlying tempo, as any change in the marked tempo in these instances is almost immeasurably small and localised – often through subtle manipulations of rhythm within a single bar or two bars. In some jazz-inspired music, for example, the execution of tempo ‘on the back of beat’ combined with the flattening out of dotted rhythms into triplet rhythms, or even gently lilting duplets, is used to create a suave or lazy ‘feel.’

The use of experimentation with sound as a further layer to understanding compositions may, in some sense, appear to be at odds with the notion of rigour. However, where new musical languages are created, experimentation is vital, as appropriate interpretive practices only begin to form during the interpretation process. The approach taken in this project assumes that the best interpretation is faithful to the score and yet sensitive to possibilities that are extraneous to, or which extend the notated score.
Chapter Two – Literature Review and Repertoire Review

Literature Review

Introduction

The literature for this study required consideration of general principles of performance research, as well as research of individual composers and their compositional methods. Consequently, the literature can be broadly delineated into four categories of subject area, namely:

1. Analysis methodologies and theories of performance practice.
2. Texts that focus on a particular musical composition in detail.
3. Biographical and autobiographical works pertaining to individual composers.
4. Historical surveys of Australian contemporary repertoire that identify key themes of composition within historical parameters, including texts that identify, compare and describe contemporary music in light of significant socio-cultural and socio-political phenomena.

There are numerous texts that deal with two or more of the abovementioned areas. Indeed, in most of the texts that deal with socio-cultural phenomena, socio-political phenomena and aesthetics are set out in a framework that relates each phenomenon to significant events in history. Texts dealing with analysis methodologies and performance practice almost always have a historical context as well, if only to set a context for the broad distinction between ‘tonal’ and diatonic pitch selection, as distinct from serialism, pantonality and other techniques distinctive of the twentieth century.

Even texts that focus on a single selected composition for analysis will invariably provide some historical context to the composer and the work in question. Thus, the broad concept of history is highly relevant to most musical phenomena and most texts
that deal with those phenomena. In this thesis I have assumed some familiarity with historical events in the period under study and some knowledge of the key concepts in the vast literature on that topic. As the primary focus of this study is on a select group of compositions composed since 1980, the texts dealing with broader historical, social and analytical methodologies are referred to only where directly relevant to one or more of the compositions under examination.

**Texts that focus on a particular composition in detail**

A number of dissertations in recent years have consisted of specific analyses of selected compositions. These included Anthony Hughes’ valuable analysis of the compositional method in the *Eight Bagatelles* of Keith Humble. Zubin Kanga’s undergraduate analysis of David Lumsdaine’s *Cambewarra* provides insights into Lumsdaine’s compositional method, influences and use of bird and insect sounds.

**Analysis and performance practice**

**Compositional method and analysis**

Published texts dealing with performance and analysis methods are common, especially in the area of serial composition. In my serial analysis, I have benefited from the work of the following authors: Arnold Schoenberg, Milton Babbitt, Allen Forte, Christopher Hasty, Andrew Mead, Silvina Milstein, Robert Morris, John Rahn, Joseph Strauss, Charles Wuorinen, Effie Carlson, Jack Douthett and John Clough. My understanding of many of the key concepts in this thesis has been informed by the work of Babbitt and Forte in particular.

**Performance Practice**

In the area of performance practice, Wallace Berry’s seminal text, titled *Musical Structure and Performance* provides a practical approach to performance-based analysis. Other texts pertaining to performance practice have been informative, but I have found
texts that present the analysis of works by isolating and describing the performance-related issues, most useful. Robert Philip’s text (2004) on the history of recorded performance in the twentieth century makes numerous observations about the shifting approach to stylistic interpretation and specific performance issues, such as the extent to which composers adhere to their own markings when performing their own music. Kenji Fujimura’s recent PhD dissertation provides an insightful analogy between reading comprehension and the interpretation of a musical work, with both involving layers of understanding and processes that enable numerous layers to be comprehended simultaneously (Fujimura, 2008).

John Rink (2002) provides a useful model for assessing dynamic intensity throughout a work, particularly utilising the relationship between tempo and dynamics. Roy Howat (1995) provides an insightful description of the factors involved in interpreting a musical score. Wallace Berry (1987) also deals in some detail with the nature of the relationship between the concepts of tonality, melody, harmony, texture and rhythm. Wilfrid Mellers (1992) cites the general distinction between and ongoing controversy about, the concept of a musical performer as an intermediary or interpreter.

More recently, Julian Hellaby has formulated an approach to analysing musical interpretation, with a set of criteria referred to as “era-style” (awareness of relevant stylistic considerations), “topical mode” (approach to the composer’s markings) and tempo (Hellaby, 2009). Alfred Brendel’s Musical Thoughts and After-thoughts (1976) is an invaluable text on the relationship between a musical text and a musical work. My working understanding of the relationship between a notated score and a musical performance has also been heavily influenced by the late Luciano Berio’s curiously titled text, Remembering the Future (Berio, 2006).

Whilst I will not deal extensively with piano technique in this study, I have been greatly influenced by the work of my long-time mentor, Professor Max Cooke and his text, entitled Tone, Touch and Technique (Cooke, 1985). Other general texts that have informed my view of the interpretive process and the relationship between the concept of compositional intention and performance practice include Roland Barthes’ Death of the Author (1967) and Beardsley and Wimsat’s The Verbal Icon (1954). Nicholas Cook’s

**Biographical and autobiographical texts on individual composers**

As this study focuses on individual composers and specific works by those composers, it makes use of the relevant biographical, autobiographical and analytical literature. A considerable number of works have been written about Peter Sculthorpe and Ross Edwards and some material was available about Keith Humble, David Lumsdaine, Carl Vine, Gerard Brophy and Ann Ghandar. Very little has been written about Tim Dargaville or Jane Stanley.

*Peter Sculthorpe*

Several texts describe the work of Peter Sculthorpe, most notably those by Michael Hannan (Hannan, 1982) and Deborah Hayes (Hayes, 1993), who examine Sculthorpe’s life and areas of compositional preoccupations, with some more detailed discussion of selected works. Graeme Skinner’s recent work on Peter Sculthorpe (Skinner, 2007) is almost certain to become the authoritative biographical text, owing to the exhaustive depth with which its subject’s life and compositional career are appraised.

*Ross Edwards*

A number of articles describe the general concepts and the compositional philosophies of Ross Edwards, of which the work of Paul Stanhope (1994) and Michael Hannan (1986) are perhaps the most significant. More specific and relevant analysis and discussion can be found in Jeanell Carrigan’s Master of Music thesis (1994), which explores the role of the Australian landscape and natural environment and Asian influences in selected chamber works by Edwards and Sculthorpe.
Keith Humble

The body of scholarly work about Keith Humble is relatively small, despite Humble’s standing as an Australian composer, performer and educator. Hughes discusses the *Eight Bagatelles* (2001), which are presented in fastidious detail and comprise in many respects the crystallisation of Humble’s compositional technique. Hughes’ first-hand knowledge of Humble’s serial method in the latter years of his life is particularly insightful. A detailed comparison of the *Fourth Piano Sonata* and the second of Humble’s *Eight Bagatelles* for piano was compiled more recently by Allan Walker (Walker, 2004), which outlines the use of “mottos” in Humble’s writing. The *Eight Bagatelles* are available in an outstanding, thoroughly researched published edition by Kim Bastin for Astra Music (Bastin, 1999). Similar work has yet to be undertaken in relation to Humble’s other piano works, which include four piano sonatas. At present these works are only available in the form of handwritten performance scores that can be challenging to read.

David Lumsdaine

Michael Hall’s biographical text, *Between Two Worlds* (Hall, 2003) examines the life and work of David Lumsdaine. Other important contributions have been made in respect of Lumsdaine’s compositional philosophies and methods, such as those by Schultz (undated), Williams (1988), Cooke (1973), Hall (1992), Lefanu and Gilbert (undated), Lumsdaine (undated) and most recently Hooper (2008). A study by Zubin Kanga (2006) focuses on David Lumsdaine’s solo piano epic, *Cambewarra*. My analysis of *Cambewarra* and my interview with the composer were both undertaken before Kanga’s work became available, but Kanga’s work contains a discussion of Lumsdaine’s compositional philosophies. Kanga discuses the various phases in *Cambewarra* and includes some comparisons of Olivier Messiaen’s use of bird sounds and alludes to further research at Indiana University into David Lumsdaine’s work.
Tim Dargaville

No dedicated scholarly work is available on Tim Dargaville’s music. Dargaville is mentioned briefly in Larry Sitsky’s text, *Australian Piano Music of the Twentieth Century* (Sitsky, 2005), where mention is made of four works for solo piano, namely *Canticles* (1992), *Alba* (1994), *Night Song* (1999) and *Negra* (1999). Sitsky describes *Alba* as demonstrating “impressive control over slowly growing intensity as well as a good understanding of keyboard sonorities” (Sitsky, 2005: p. 228). He comments that *Alba* and *Negra* are the more substantial of the four works examined.

Jane Stanley

The music of Jane Stanley has been the subject of two known scholarly works, one by Stanley (2002) and the other by Andrew Robbie (2004). Stanley’s own text provides details of the schematisation of isometres and isorhythms within her work. Robbie’s essay discusses Stanley’s compositional method, particularly in light of the pitch selection process, largely using traditional serial analysis.

Carl Vine

As yet, there is no comprehensive biography of Carl Vine. His work has been mentioned in a number of essays, particularly by Dench (1992 and 1994) and the composer has given a number of interviews. In 2001, I received an email from Carl Vine regarding his views on the interpretation of his *First Piano Sonata*. Larry Sitsky also provides a brief description of the *Five Bagatelles* (Sitsky, 2005, p. 243).

Historical surveys

A complement to Roger Covell’s seminal text (Covell, 1967) is composer/performer Larry Sitsky’s recent survey of Australian piano music in the twentieth century (Sitsky, 2005). Sitsky’s work provides very brief descriptions and some
analyses of each of the composers listed in this study. Sitsky approaches the works of the last thirty years, mostly from the perspective of their relationship with modernism, post-modernism and popular music. Sitsky provides a model framework for examining the repertoire as a whole.

Carrigan’s doctoral dissertation (now in its third published edition) provides an exhaustive catalogue of all contemporary Australian piano works since 1975. Carrigan’s work has made it possible for scholars, teachers and performers to refer to most works from this sizeable repertoire (some 1,149 works) with relative ease, although it does not present detailed analysis of the compositional style, philosophy, or performance practice. Carrigan’s extensive text provides some biographical information about the composers and brief discussions of each work.

*Musicological texts cataloguing important socio-cultural and socio-political phenomena*

A number of comprehensive texts trace the development of musical institutions and traditions that affect performers and composers in Australia, including the *Oxford Companion to Australian Music* (Bebbington, 1997), *Currency Companion to Music and Dance in Australia* (Whiteoak and Scott-Maxwell, 2003) and *The Dictionary of Performing Arts in Australia* (1996).

*Texts describing “Themes”*

The most significant account of the history of compositional trends and methods and their relationship with the socio-historical and socio-political phenomena is Roger Covell’s *Themes Of A New Society* (1967). This text is essentially a summary of major cultural themes or ideals, rather than actual musical material and compositional preoccupation prior to 1967. Covell’s work provided a starting point for many scholars of Australian music, including the present study. I have examined and commented on his list of themes in the light of events since 1967. In a later work, Covell examined the future and prospects of Australian music and concluded that a lack of professional opportunities
for performers and a general lack of funding for composers were significant factors in performance and composition respectively (Covell, 1970).

Whilst Covell (1967) identified a number of emerging themes or influences on composers up to around 1967, Carrigan (1994) and others have identified a number of other themes in the last thirty years. These include colonialism, creative development, Jindyworobakism, traditionalism, Australianism and the inauguration of major musical institutions. Linda Kouvaris (1998) cites numerous other themes, including Australianism, post-modernism, modernism, non-Western influences, adaptation of popular musics, feminism, tonality, experimentation and genre-crossing.

A relatively small number of musicologists have appraised the major factors that have directly influenced contemporary composers and performers of Australian new music. This study will not examine or attempt to make findings in relation to the popular music tradition. Since 1967 a number of musicologists and musicologist/performers have contributed work in the area of contemporary Australian music. One of the most influential is Jeanell Carrigan (Carrigan, 1994). Gordon Kerry’s *New classic music: composing Australia* (2008) provides general information about contemporary composition in Australia, across a range of instruments and styles.

In setting out a history of Australian piano music of the twentieth century, Larry Sitsky’s encyclopaedic text relates generations of composers with compositional trends such as romanticism, neoclassicism, modernism, retrospection, Australian composers, maximalism, minimalism and pluralism (Sitsky, 2005). Other texts of general significance in the field include Andrew Ford’s *Composer to Composer* (Ford, 1999), which is a survey of compositional philosophies of selected composers, some of whom emanate from Australia. Ford focuses on the ideals of individual composers, making some reference to specific compositions, rather than analysing the works or the performance practice.

Another useful source of first-hand interviews with composers was compiled by Dench and Shanahan in two articles entitled *An Emotional Geography Of Australian Music* and *An Emotional Geography Of Australian Music II* (Dench, 1992 and 1994 respectively). As with Ford, Dench and Shanahan focus primarily on compositional
methods and ideals. As the title suggests, some effort has been made to present composers within a metaphorical ‘geography.’

**Texts and primary sources in relation to Indigenous music**

Indigenous Australian music is described in Covell’s work primarily in the context of musical *Jindyworobakism*, which will be referred to in subsequent chapters. The prevalence of Indigenous music as a compositional theme prior to 1967 suggests the need for further exploration from 1980 onwards. Accordingly, I have examined the current literature, as well as some earlier sources in the form of sound recordings of tribal music (Elkin, 1953). Henry Tate was one of the first Australian composers to compile a catalogue of Indigenous music. Subsequently, Elkin and Jones created a catalogue of recordings of a significant body of tribal music between 1949 and 1958 (Covell, 1967: p. 77).

The emergence of new Indigenous styles in Australia is presented by Gibson and Dunbar-Hall, whose text also offers a cultural topography of Indigenous music in Australia (Dunbar-Hall, 2004). This work provides highly relevant information on the relevant socio-cultural trends and a particularly useful insight into the sense of place in Aboriginal culture and music, which is a factor in a number of composers’ work in the period under examination. However, I have found the concept of *Jindyworobakism* to be far less prominent in recent years. It seems to have made way for collaborations that involve indigenous musicians and indigenous instruments. As such, it seems likely that works for solo piano which utilise indigenous themes will become even less prevalent in the years to come.

**Acculturation and ethnomusicological considerations**

Related to Indigenous music is the issue of acculturation, which is of wide-ranging significance, particularly in relation to the *Jindyworobak* tradition. Charles

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3 Examples include: Peter Sculthorpe’s *Beethoven Variations for Didgeridoo And Orchestra* (2006); William Barton’s *Concerto for Didgeridoo And Orchestra*; Phillip Glass’ *Voices for Organ, Didgeridoo and Narrator* (2001); Phillip Bracanin’s *Concerto for Didgeridoo And Orchestra* (2002).
Hamm’s text (Hamm, 1975) provides a general, though insightful view of the relationship between functionality, socio-cultural context and acculturation with reference to early composers, as well as contemporary examples. Another illuminating text is *The Musical Construction of Place* (Stokes, 1994), which provides a series of case studies dealing with the relationship between music, culture and place across a wide range of cultures.

*Survey of the repertoire*

My survey of the repertoire commenced after reviewing Carrigan’s thorough catalogue of works. During my visits to the Australian Music Centre in 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007 and 2008, I was able to view a considerable number of the printed scores, as well as some of the articles referred to in my survey of the literature. I concluded that the piano repertoire since 1980 has almost certainly been shaped significantly by many socio-cultural factors and also by the highly individual and original compositional styles and ideals of the prominent composers of this period. For convenience, I have divided the genres throughout this period into five categories.

*Genre and form*

Covell observed that genre choices in the early history of Australian composition were mostly very traditional (Covell, 1967, chapter 2). In the period under study, many changes have occurred in respect of genre, manifested less as a rejection of existing norms than as the extension of existing categories and the creation of new genres. Inevitably, where works are classified into genre, there is some overlap between the categories. The five genre descriptions are:

1. Character pieces and miniatures.
2. Works with descriptive titles of between 8 and 20 minutes duration.
3. Large scale multi-movement works.
4. *Sonatas* and *sonatinas*.
5. Single movement virtuoso works.
Of the two traditional genre types – miniature/character piece, sonata/sonatina – both were found to exist mostly in a relatively diminutive form. Most of the larger scale compositions in this period were identified not as sonatas, but by descriptive titles. Likewise, a number of works of equivalent length to the sonatas were found, but the form of the compositions and titles suggested little if any relationship with the sonata/sonatina genre; I have therefore designated them an additional category. The single movement virtuoso work in most cases did not match the description of existing genre types for single movement compositions. Most of these works were of around 12 to 15 minutes in duration.

**Character pieces and miniatures**

The traditional genre known as the character piece can be found in works written after 1980, as can ironically titled works based on traditional genre titles. There are numerous sets of Variations, Rhapsodies, *Fantasias*, Tone Poems, *Scherzi*, *Minuets*, Miniatures, *Polonaises*, *Fugues*, *Toccatas* and *Nocturnes*, as well as a number of Ballads. Of all these titles, the ballad is perhaps the one with the strongest relationship with the history of music in Australia. Covell suggests that the “drawing room ballad” was one of the major influences on the bulk of Australian composition (Covell, 1967: p. 23). Numerous examples of ballad settings can be found in the work of Grainger and others in the early part of the twentieth century. This type of writing has been far less common in recent years, with composers favouring bagatelles and other miniatures.

Of the 1,149 works examined by Carrigan (Carrigan, 2004), the vast majority of works are miniatures and sets of miniatures of less than 5 minutes in duration, or sets of works that are shorter than 5 minutes in duration. A significant number of sets and cycles of miniatures exist and a surprisingly large number of these works are titled *Bagatelles*. For the purposes of this thesis, the term ‘bagatelle’ will be referred to within the categories of miniatures. Indeed, most of the bagatelles referred to are very short, though many are deeply expressive and serious compositions. Thus, the traditional conception of the bagatelle from its use by Couperin and others is not followed. The propensity of a wide range of composers to distil sophisticated and complex musical ideas into tiny
microcosms is a phenomenon of the twentieth century and is highly reminiscent of Anton
Webern, in particular.

Works with descriptive titles

A further selection of moderate-scale quasi-programmatic solo works also needs
to be taken into consideration. For the most part, these are larger than most character
pieces and bear more descriptive titles. They include Katia Tiutiunnik’s *Agressi sunt
mare tenebrarum in eo esset exploraturi* and *Bhairawa*, Mark Pollard’s *A Handful of
Rain* and *The Prayer of Tears*, Vivienne Olive’s *The Dream Gardens* and *Five Australian
Landscapes*, Wendy Hiscocks’ *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn*, Moya Henderson’s
*Cross-Hatching, or ‘Raark,’* Michael Hannan’s *Voices in the Sky*, Gerald Glynn’s
*Filigrees IV*, Helen Gifford’s *Toccata Attacca*, Jennifer Fowler’s *Music for Piano –
Ascending and Descending*, Andrew Byrne’s *Six Dances*, Bruce Cale’s *Coalesce* and
Jane Stanley’s *Fas/Nefas*.

Most of these works are between 14 and 17 minutes in duration. However, short
tone-paintings such as Sculthorpe’s *Callabona*, as well as works such as *Etymalong* and
*Kumari* by Ross Edwards, have been included in this the category of works with
descriptive titles. Notably, most are single-movement compositions; and most of them
have a tangible relationship between the text of the title and the music. The significance
of the title extends well beyond genre identification. Jane Stanley’s *Fas/Nefas* receives its
title from the word ‘nefarious,’ and this concept underpins the concept of “lawlessness
and depravity” in the “sound-world” of the composition (Stanley, 2001).

Large scale multi-movement works

Large-scale works are represented considerably more rarely. For the recital
performer, it is no doubt this category of work that draws the most interest, because a
large-scale work is far more likely to be used as a dramatic centre-piece in a recital
program. Composers who have contributed major works in this category include David
Lumsdaine, Julian Yu, Carl Vine, Lesleigh Karen Thompson, several works by Colin Spiers, Larry Sitsky, Andrew Noel Schultz, John Polglase, Miloslav Penicka, Ralph Middenway, Martin Matther, Richard Maddox, Linda Kouvaris, Elena Kats-Chernin, Michael Horsphol, Stuart Greenbaum, Mary Finsterer, Ann Carr-Boyd, Gerard Brophy, Brenton Broadstock, Michael Bertram, Robert Allworth, Ann Ghandar, Geoffrey Allen and Stephen Benfall. There is also a mammoth 13-movement work, called *Atlantis Variations*, by Derek Strahan, which has a duration of over 50 minutes. The majority of these works are suites and sonatas, or are strongly suggestive of these genres. Most of these larger compositions contain numerous movements and are of more than 20 minutes in duration. In most instances there are discernible relationships between the thematic material in the different movements. However, as with conventional compositions, the longer movement breaks tend to coincide with more marked variations in thematic material between the movements and they result in smaller scale form types within the movements.

David Lumsdaine’s *Cambewarra*, meaning ‘smoky mountain,’ and Karen Thompson’s *Mad Men, Mad Times* overlap two of the categories, in that they also bear descriptive titles. *Cambewarra* has been selected for detailed analysis in this dissertation. An observation can be readily be made that *Cambewarra* does not resemble any traditional genre or form. Lumsdaine has indicated that sections of the work have been performed as stand-alone solo compositions, with the composer’s approval (Lumsdaine, 2005).

**Shorter sonatas and sonatinas**

The shorter sonatas and *sonatinas* are similar in certain respects to the large scale multi-movement compositions. The bulk of these compositions, which are of 8-15 minutes duration include Keith Humble’s *Fourth Piano Sonata*, Nigel Westlake’s *Piano Sonata*, Bozidar Kos’ *Piano Sonata*, Alan Holley’s *Piano Sonata* and *Sonatina* by Eric Gross. The single most important factor that distinguishes these compositions from many other works of similar length is their relationship with the traditional genre of the sonata.
Of the works mentioned above, the author has carried out analysis of Keith Humble’s *Fourth Piano Sonata*, David Joseph’s *Rhapsody* and Nigel Westlake’s *Piano Sonata*. The Westlake sonata, whilst not clearly divided into movements, has a definite ‘slow-fast-slow’ form and has something of a recapitulation of the first subject in the first movement. David Joseph’s *Rhapsody* contains something a recapitulation of some material even though the work is mostly rhapsodic, as its title suggests. There are some elements of cyclic form in Joseph’s work. Carl Vine’s *Third Piano Sonata* has been selected for detailed analysis below. This work has a definite relationship with the traditional sonata genre and with traditional sonata form.

**Single-movement virtuoso works**

A further genus consists of vigorous single movement works of approximately 10 minutes in duration. The works in this group present perhaps the most consistently virtuosic writing for the instrument of all the pieces. Prime examples include *Stroke* by Michael Smetanin, *Alba* by Tim Dargaville and *Rhapsody* by David Joseph. Other examples that are not included in Carrigan’s survey include Brendan Colbert’s *Agité III* and Tim Dargaville’s *Negra*. Dargaville’s *Alba* has been selected for performance and analysis as part of this project. Whilst the titles are not traditional and genre-based, they are not patently descriptive.

**Genre and Style**

Most of the works in this period are relatively short in duration. Even in the case of the relatively larger-scale compositions, most are shorter than 20 minutes. In the case of David Lumsdaine’s *Cambewarra*, the composer’s desire to capture a sense of his experiences in listening to sounds of the environment over an extended period of time required a larger scale of composition. Works with descriptive titles in this period have tended to have less traditional relationships between their various themes, motives and
cells than the single movement, virtuosic works, notwithstanding the similarities of scale and the fact that many of the works consist of only a single movement.

**Summary of the “themes”**

Given Australia’s relatively short colonial history and more recently its multicultural society, many coexisting cultural forces are reflected in its new music. I have already mentioned the six major themes identified by Roger Covell, being colonialism, traditionalism, *Jindyworobakism*, Australianism, centralism, creative development.

Carrigan (1994) focuses on the following themes:

1. The music and culture of Asian Countries.
2. Australian landscape and soundscape.
3. “The music, instruments and culture of the Australian Aborigines.”
   (Carrigan, 1994)

Carrigan’s thesis, *Towards an Australian Style* examines these three themes in works by Edwards and Sculthorpe, to assess whether there is evidence of an ‘Australian style.’ Kouvaris provides a list of themes that have been pervasive since 1980 (Kouvaris, 1998: p. 52), namely:

1. Australianism.
2. Post-modernism/modernism.
3. Non-Western influences.
4. Adaptation of popular musics.
5. Feminism, tonality.
7. Genre-crossing.
The themes referred to by Larry Sitsky in reference to the ‘Third Generation’ of composers can be summarised as follows:

1. Modernism.
2. Maximalism.
3. Minimalism.
4. Australianism.
5. Pluralism: popular music/jazz/neotonality. (Sitsky, 2005)

The author has determined the following ten themes to be relevant to the composers selected for the present project:

1. Colonialism.
2. Historical context and the tyranny of distance.
3. Creative Development.
4. Virtuosi.
5. Globalisation and technology.
6. Modernism (including Maximalism).
7. Eclecticism and Post-Modernism (including Minimalism).
10. Indigenous culture and Jindyworobakism.

Other themes, such as the significance of feminism as well as the timing and significance of socio-cultural and political events are relevant to the repertoire, but have been less prominent in the literature and have not been dealt with in detail.
**Colonialism and instrumentation**

By Australian colonialism is meant Australia’s socio-cultural and political links to Britain. In the early years of colonisation, aspects of Britain’s musical culture were infused with influences from mainland Europe in Australian composition. There was also a powerful musical association with the folk music of Ireland. As Covell demonstrates, early composers and performers alike travelled to Britain and mainland Europe to develop their craft and to pursue careers where more opportunities could be found. In recent decades, colonial influences have diminished in Australian composition to some extent, although many of the leading composers and teachers were heavily influenced by colonialism in their formative years. Of the composers whose works have been selected for analysis in this study, David Lumsdaine provides the clearest example of a composer who migrated to England at an early stage in his career, though his work still elicits a strong relationship with Australia through his use of titles and naturally occurring sounds of the Australian landscape.

**The piano in Australia**

The piano was central to musical culture in the Australian Colonies, both among professionals and amateurs. One of the items aboard the First Fleet was a piano, belonging to the Surgeon-General, George Worgan, and Worgan gave piano lessons to many of the ladies of the Colony (Covell, 1967: p. 42). Oscar Comettant, an official French juror at the 1888 Centennial International Exhibition held in Melbourne, estimated at the time that 700,000 pianos had been shipped to Australia since the beginnings of European settlement (Covell, 1967: p. 20).

**Indigenous instrumentation and Jindyworobak**

A number of composers since around the 1940s have incorporated Indigenous instrumentation in their concert music compositions. This relatively new trend coincides
with a reduction in the number of adaptations of Indigenous music set for entirely traditional western European instruments. Whilst this study deals primarily with solo piano music, this new collaborative genre suggests that composers desired to combine Indigenous music and western Art music rather than writing western Art music that appropriates novel elements from Indigenous Music. This new approach is vastly different from the earlier approach, taken by composers such as Isaac Nathan, who sought to ‘set’ and ‘improve’ Indigenous music in a western context (Covell: p. 68).

**Historical context and the tyranny of distance**

There is a clear link between the so-called colonialist and creative development themes in early Australian performance, composition and education. The vast distance between Australia and Europe was a significant factor in shaping music-making and training in the Colonies. Great expense – and in the early stages, great risk – was involved for any Australian musician seeking to travel abroad. Access to quality performances of European Art music in Australia was reserved for the privileged few. It took several years for items of news as well as musical scores to move back and forth from Europe in the early days, while in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century – with steam-ships and eventually jet aeroplane travel – the tyranny of distance, as it applies to geography, remained an impediment for young composers and musicians wishing to travel to Europe. These factors were of great significance in the period examined by Covell. Even with international airline transport today, the cost and time involved in travelling from Australia to other continents is considerable, as is the time and effort involved in travelling between capital cities within Australia.

Information sharing, technology and globalisation have enabled composers in Australia today to correspond with composers and performers on the other side of the world instantaneously and easily. The implications of this phenomenon for professional development and for music more generally may be better assessed some years hence. Its role is already significant, at least in so far as the exchange of scholarly work, catalogues and recordings is concerned.
Creative development

The so-called creative development theme has gradually altered throughout the last 50 years, with many young musicians and composers seeking training in mainland Europe and the U.S.A. Previously, creative development was synonymous with a history of migration by young professionals to the United Kingdom. Like many other young composers, David Lumsdaine set off for Europe early in his career. Lumsdaine describes this phenomenon as the “the great migration” (Gilbert, undated: p. 73). A perception has long existed that Australian composers must travel abroad, particularly to London, in order to receive adequate training (Gilbert, ibid.; Covell: p. 26). Lumsdaine spent most of his working life in England and became a significant figure in English composition, both as composer and as teacher.

Keith Humble travelled to England at the completion of his undergraduate tertiary studies. He was subsequently enticed to join the lively contemporary music scene in Paris where he undertook further training with René Leibowitz. Humble became interested in the Second Viennese School and later in the Darmstadt School, although he always considered himself an improviser in the jazz idiom – owing to his early musical training in Australia.

Of the younger composers surveyed, Jane Stanley pursued much of her professional training in Australia and some in the U.S.A. Tim Dargaville undertook the bulk of his training in Australia, apart from periodic studies overseas, including Carnatic music in Bangalore. Carnatic music, characterised by rhythmic complexity, has interested other Australian composers, including Kate Neal and David Pye.

Globalisation and technology

Since the 1990s, many Australian composers have been influenced by developments in technology, a topic that remains beyond the scope of this study. In compositions for the piano, the use of pre-recorded sounds and multimedia has been one area of direct significance in recent years.

4 In 1953.
Likewise, the implications for performers and composers offered by the omnipresence of the internet over the last ten years have been immense, providing access to library records including biographical information about composers as well as bibliographies, discographies, sound samples, repertoire lists and public events featuring composers from the Australian Music Centre library from any part of the country or from around the world.

In 2001 the composer Matthew Hindson wrote of the immense advantages to composers in being able to promote and self-publish their work via the internet (Hindson, 2001). Hindson also designed and maintains websites for fellow composers, Ross Edwards and Paul Stanhope. These sites contain biographies, lists of works, events featuring their work and numerous other resources.

**Modernism**

Modernism in the visual arts extends as far back as the Humanist movement of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Gardner, 2006, p. 453). Many musicologists divide modernism into two periods. The first embraces the early twentieth century, beginning with Arnold Schoenberg in 1908. The second period commences after World War II (1945) and includes the Darmstadt School. The term should be understood primarily as a philosophical and aesthetic movement, rather than as an epoch. Musical modernism, which was engaged in by the Darmstadt School in the 1960s, does not presume to define a compositional method, even though many of the most prominent Modernist composers used serialism in their work, including Pierre Boulez, Milton Babbitt, Luigi Nono and Karlheinz Stockhausen. Others such as Olivier Messiaen, Witold Lutoslawski, Györgi Ligeti, Elliot Carter and Iannis Xenakis have been far more interested in other processes for determining pitch selection and other compositional elements.

Xenakis famously wrote that he perceived a “crisis in serial music,” in that “Linear polyphony destroys itself by its very complexity; what one hears is in reality is nothing but a mass of notes in various registers” (Xenakis, 1971: p. 8). He was more interested in mathematical logic and was one of the most significant modernist composers. Prominent modernist composer Olivier Messiaen avoided serial composition for most of his career. However, most prominent modernist composers have used
serialism to varying degrees. For this reason, it is illogical to discuss modernism without reference to Arnold Schoenberg and the Second Viennese School.

The concept of modernism in Australian music can be traced at least as far back as the later works of Percy Grainger, though its more general influence in Australia is contemporaneous with the Darmstadt School in the 1960s and its impact was most prominent between approximately 1960 and 1990. Modernism in Australia begins ostensibly with atonality and particularly serialism and extends at least as far as the 1960s through composers such as Richard Meale, Nigel Butterley and Peter Sculthorpe in Australia and includes serialist composers such as Humble and Banks. Examples of bird call, modes of limited transposition and occasionally quite primal modes, such as the pentatonic mode with corresponding harmonies in basic triadic setting, can be found in many compositions by Australian composers in the period under study. The use of natural sounds such as bird calls and insect sounds almost certainly points to the influence of Olivier Messiaen.

Eclecticism and post-modernism

The concept of post-modernism permits numerous definitions and descriptors. It is not a mere reaction against modernism, for it embraces various compositional techniques, styles, idioms and influences that were used by modernists. Post-modernism has other characteristics that are either new or that pre-date modernism.

The concept of eclecticism predates and also co-exists with the concept of post-modernism. It refers to the willingness among composers to accept and collate various techniques, methods, styles and idioms into a single work. ‘Cosmopolitan eclecticism’ refers to the use of ‘non-western’ styles, techniques and methods and can be traced at least as far back as Debussy. Nineteenth-century composer Saint-Saëns was accused of eclecticism (Dahlhaus, 1989: p. 289).

David Kramer (2002) provides the following summary of post-modernism in music:
1. It is not simply a repudiation of modernism or its continuation, but has aspects of both a break and an extension.
2. It is on some levels and in some ways, ironic.
3. It does not respect boundaries between sonorities and procedures of the past and of the present.
4. It challenges barriers between ‘high’ and ‘low’ styles, referring to the schism between commercial popular music and the so-called ‘art music’ tradition.
5. It shows disdain for the often unquestioned value of structural unity.
6. It questions the mutual exclusivity of elitist and populist values.
7. It avoids totalising forms (e.g. does not want entire pieces to be tonal or serial, or cast in a prescribed formal mould).
8. It considers music not as autonomous, but as relevant to cultural, social and political contexts.
9. It includes quotations of, or references to, music of many traditions and cultures.
10. It considers technology not only as a way to preserve and transmit music, but also as deeply implicated in the production and essence of music.
11. It embraces contradictions.
12. It distrusts binary oppositions.
13. It includes fragmentations and discontinuities.
14. It encompasses pluralism and eclecticism.
15. It presents multiple meanings and multiple temporalities.
16. It locates meaning and even structure in listeners, more than in scores, performances or composers (2002).

There appears to be some overlap between the music of the vernacular (popular) and cultivated (art) traditions.

Jean-François Lyotard refers to a modern incredulity towards the grand recits (grand narratives) of modernism and argues instead in favour of petits recits (small narratives), which are less likely to result in naïve generalised philosophies (Lyotard, 1984). The concept of grands recits in modernist art is arguably mirrored by the desire for absolutes, such as the all-encompassing compositional method known as total organisation. A
further example of the *grands recits* in the modernist movement is the concept of breaking with the past – a feature of post-World War II modernism. In the piano literature an excellent example of the attempt to break from the past is Pierre Boulez’s *Second Piano Sonata*. Boulez has since suggested that composers are not to be described as modern, they simply express themselves according to the “co-ordinates of [their] time” (Ford, 1999, p. 24). Lyotard also suggests of art that eclecticism, to the extent that it embraces styles designed to be consumable and encourages artists to produce such works, leads to an aesthetic implicitly worse than bad taste, namely “no taste at all” (Taylor, 2006: p. 200).

**Patronage**

Prior to the 1970s, the bulk of compositions produced in Australia were privately funded, either by benefactors, or by the composers themselves (Gross, 1971: p. 25). The inauguration of the Fellowship of Australian Composers in 1959 undoubtedly made positive inroads into the perception of Australian composers and their work (Gross, 1971: p. 25). However, the Fellowship was notably under-resourced and as Penberthy notes, after ten years of the Fellowship, composers were still reliant for funding on “all sorts of philanthropic organisations” (Penberthy, 1971: p. 43). Notable exceptions included rare commissions from symphony orchestras and opportunities created for some composers in University departments as a means of financial survival. Covell (1967) observed that the lack of patronage was a major impediment to composers focusing on their composition as a professional endeavour in the years prior to 1967. Patronage in the traditional sense has been relatively rare in Australia. Traditional sources of patronage in Europe in the nineteenth century, such as the nobility and the tradition of the professional ‘court composer’ were not present.

**The Fellowship, ‘Australianisation’ and the Australia Council**

One of the most significant factors for Australian piano music post-1980 was the
Australian Government’s ‘New Australian Arts’ policy, which was associated with the Whitlam Government’s larger ‘Australainisation’ objective. The ‘New Australian Arts’ policy resulted in high-level political involvement in the Arts and much needed funding to some composers through the Australia Council. The Australia Council has undoubtedly allowed some composers to focus more on their composition than before. Whilst the Australia Council has provided much needed funding, it has also been criticised for its selection criteria. In 1984, Larry Sitsky described much of the music emanating from Arts Council Funding as “Kitsch.” These views are analysed and reproduced in his more recent text in which he refers to the “anti-composer” (Sitsky, 2005: p. 275). Andrew Ford describes the Council as preferring “innovation” over “excellence,” commenting that innovation is far easier to quantify than excellence (see generally Ford, 1994). Of the ten compositions presented in this dissertation, the works by Vine, Stanley and Dargaville were funded by the Australia Council. There has been, and will probably continue to be, debate about the appropriateness of high-level political involvement in the Arts. Likewise, strong opinions exist as to whether the Australia Council’s criteria for funding provides support where it is most deserved, or where it is most needed.

**Individuality and culture**

Martin Wesley-Smith suggests that young composers are most influenced in their choice of idiom by their teacher’s work (1971: p. 71). In the context of an art form requiring ‘individualism,’ there is a danger that the pressure to conform to accepted norms may intimidate the young composer so that his/her individualism disappears (1971: p. 72). Despite the financial improvements for contemporary Australian composers, there almost certainly remains a complex and yet fundamental question of how to find identity as a composer and simply what to write.

**History and timing**

Covell suggests that Australia’s musical history since 1788 includes an immigrant
folk tradition of possibly in excess of 600 Australian folk tunes (Covell, 1967: p. 35). Some contemporary composers have selected folk melodies as the basis for compositions. Peter Sculthorpe’s *Port Essington* is one notable example, consisting of a folk melody in the modes of the Irish folk tradition. Covell notes that a vast proportion of Australian folk songs sound “like derivative Irish songs of Cockney music-hall ditties” (Covell, 1967: p. 33). The use of folk-songs by Australian composers for the piano has been relatively limited since 1980.

**Indigenous culture and ‘Jindyworobakism’**

In the musical context *Jindyworobak* refers to the combination of Indigenous Australian music and philosophy – particularly the spiritual associations of the land (the Dreaming) – with aspects of European music and thought. The musical *Jindyworobak* movement mirrored the *Jindyworobak* movement in literature, which began in the 1930s and 1940s (see generally Saintilan, chapter 4). Carrigan suggested that the musical movement, which is most strongly associated with Clive Douglas (1903-1977), emerged as part of a conscious endeavour by composers in the 1960s to create uniquely Australian music (Carrigan, 1994, pp. 8-9). The use of elements of Indigenous music is far more common in the older generation of composers (such as Edwards, Sculthorpe and Ghandar) than among the younger composers in the period under study. One younger composer, Andrew Schultz, expressed concern that the appropriation of Indigenous music may result in the trivialisation of Indigenous culture, rather than its appreciation (Schultz, 1991: p. 9).

There is certainly no shortage of Indigenous music in Australia. Strehlow claims to have gathered some 4,270 ‘Aboriginal verses’ from central Australia (Strehlow, 1971, p. xiv). Nonetheless, a more common practice has been to attempt to capture aspects of the Indigenous concept of environment and belonging to the land. The music of Peter Sculthorpe, David Lumsdaine and Ross Edwards demonstrate this concept, which is relatively rare amongst the younger generation of composers.


Australianism and individualism

Labels such as ‘Australianness’ and ‘Australian style,’ are vague and broad, potentially encompassing nearly every aspect of culture and society. In *Towards an Australian Style* (1994) Carrigan discusses the question of whether a style has emerged that is unmistakably referable to Australia. She suggests that an Australian style may have emerged as “…the development of a personal style through conscious awareness of nationality coupled with the sense of adventure gained by using as yet unexplored sound cultures” (Carrigan, 1994: p. 9). She describes the concept of “Australianism” in contemporary Australian music as the “merging of national identity into a personal style” (Carrigan, 1994: p. 9) and compares this process with the work of twentieth century composers such as Bartók, Kodaly, Vaughan Williams, Copland and Ives (Carrigan, 1994: p. 9). Sitsky lists Robert Allworth, Moya Henderson, Ross Edwards, Colin Bright, Chester Schultz and Anne Boyd as belonging to the vein of Australian/Australianist composers.

Commissions of New Piano Music by Virtuoso Pianists

Another significant, but under-recognised contribution to the shift in style between Sitsky’s second and third generations of composers is the decision by several outstanding virtuoso pianists to devote considerable time, energy and resources to the commissioning of new piano music. Because of their extraordinary pianistic capabilities, composers were inspired, if not challenged to write increasingly virtuosic and demanding works for them to play. These works have come to typify the repertoire of Sitsky’s third generation of composers and are commonly in the genre of single movement virtuoso works.

Australianisation

The sentiments expressed by the Whitlam Government in its ‘Australianisation’ policy of the late 1970s were clearly not shared by every Australian composer.
Composers continued to travel overseas for training after 1980 and most of them had no interest in expressing Australian identity. Composers were heavily influenced by prominent twentieth century European composers. Sitsky wrote “there was a time in the seventies, when Sydney composers felt that they had to prove their Australian identity, by writing music inspired by Asia” (Sitsky, 2005: p. 252). Writing in 1997, Peter Sculthorpe suggested that the music of Asia (notably Japan and Bali) continued to be a positive force in Australian composition (1997: p. 30).

Hence, a broad and eclectic pallet of influences from around the world may be traced in the works selected for this project. Australian composers, especially if they have studied abroad, have often focused on an established compositional method from Europe. For example, Keith Humble and David Lumsdaine became influential in the European compositional scene. David Lumsdaine became a mentor to some of the finest English composers of the latter twentieth century, including Michael Clarke and John Tavener. In this sense, Lumsdaine’s career is reminiscent of the much earlier career of Arthur Benjamin, whose students in London included Benjamin Britten.

Two Generations of composers

As noted above, Larry Sitsky (2005) divided Australian composers into three generations: those born before 1913, those born between 1913 and 1942 and those born in or after 1943. The composers presented in the next chapter were all born in or before 1943, locating them fairly well within Sitsky’s second generation of composers. The composers presented in Chapter Four were all born well after 1943, with Jane Stanley being the youngest (born in 1976).

Selection of Repertoire

The repertoire chosen for analysis and performance in this study provides a cross-section of the main ‘themes,’ genres and performance challenges that have pervaded Australian solo piano music since 1980, as well as the two generations of composers, whose work has been prevalent throughout this period.
Chapter Three – Works from 1980 to 2000

Introduction to performance research

In the two following chapters I will apply my theory of performance research, based on theories derived from the literature and from my own experience as a performer of new Australian solo piano music. My approach is based on my own approach to the musical style and structure of a composition.

In doing this, I have found that a knowledge of the compositional method is vital in understanding how a work has been constructed. This approach requires some caution and I am careful to avoid hastily concluding that the ‘seams’ in a composer’s tapestry necessarily define the artistic parameters. After all, the most dynamically successful decision may frequently be to ‘conceal the seams.’

The concepts of style, idiom and character are vital to understanding issues such as gesture and the general approach to issues such as rubato, articulation and pedalling. In analysing these facets in each work, I create musical analogies particularly where polystylistic polystylism⁵ is at play and I describe the reasoning that has led me to interpretive decisions regarding rubato, articulation and rhythm.

I have given systematic attention to the question of dynamic form within each composition and in the case of cycles of works, I have applied this reasoning both to each individual work within the cycle and to the cycle as a whole. In formulating my approach I have considered particularly the work of Rink (2002) and Cook (2007) in assessing dynamic intensity and depicting dynamic form graphically. However, I have a strong preference for retaining a separation (at least for the purposes of analysis and discussion) between factors such as dynamics, tempo, texture, rhythm, agogic, rubato, articulation, pitch selection and melody. Each of these factors contributes to dynamic form and hence, I have elected to produce a Dynamic Scheme Graph, to show only the changing levels of dynamics within the composition and then discuss each other element with reference to

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⁵ Definition in Appendix A.
the graph. Each of the graphs contains a second line indicating the approximate progress of the dynamic form throughout each composition.

In the discussions of the works, I demonstrate how the dynamic form differs from the Dynamic Scheme Graph as a result of other factors. The advantage of this approach is that it is easy to apply the Dynamic Scheme Graph and then compare dynamics alone with other factors without blurring the relationship between the other factors. Almost any given factor can contradict the Dynamic Scheme in a musical work.

Tempo markings and dynamic markings are dealt with specifically, as both benefit from a thorough and systematic approach. Some composers provide approximate tempo markings, sometimes with a suggested range and other composers provide exact markings. In the case of Carl Vine, research suggests that his tempo markings should be strictly observed and that any variations should err on the faster side. There is always a possibility to achieve a range within a given dynamic marking. I have applied the findings from the Dynamic Scheme Graph and observations about dynamic form towards scaling the dynamics, where appropriate, so as to ensure that the major peak in the form is not overshadowed by smaller peaks, or ‘spikes’ in dynamics, at earlier (or later) moments.

I have chosen to look separately in most cases at the specific issue of the composer’s expressive markings. I distinguish ‘expressive markings’ from ‘performance directions,’ on the basis that performance directions comprise of familiar instructions on how to execute some specific aspect of the score. ‘Expressive markings’ are quite different and import a strong subjective element in describing the desired outcome. In quite a few instances, there is little indication as to the manner of execution of the desired outcome. Further issues that have proved to be of some value are considerations of whether a composer is a pianist or non-pianist. I have found that this had implications for decisions regarding pianistic issues, such as pedalling and voicing, in particular.
Cambewarra (1980) by David Lumsdaine (1931 - )

Compositional method and musical language

David Lumsdaine’s compositional style is intensely personal and relates to his need for “getting out,” which he refers to as his need to experience the physical environment (Lumsdaine, 2005). The composer has written a number of works that relate to the physical environment and his experiences of it. Schultz suggests that “his [Lumsdaine’s] experience in observing the Australian landscape and natural environment has found expression in his creative work overall” (Schultz, 1991: p. 128).

The following analysis was presented in part for the first of my two lecture demonstrations on 14 December 2004. I performed Cambewarra in the first full recital presented for this PhD project on 27 May 2005. The work was commissioned by Peter Lawson and premiered at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester on 23 January 1981. The title is an Indigenous Australian word meaning “smoky mountain” (Hall, 2003: p. 75) and refers to a strip of coastal plain that:

looks eastward across a strip of coastal plain to the Pacific Ocean; North and South runs the eastern escarpment of the Great Dividing Range; at its foot to the west are the rich pastures of Kangaroo Valley, cleared by settlers in the middle of the last century…the original rainforest lives on in the gulleys [sic.] and sheer slopes of the mountain and remains the home of an extraordinarily rich variety of plants and creatures. The piano piece takes its name from this place where it was conceived on the morning of 31.12.78 (Lumsdaine, 1980, title page).

The musical language of Cambewarra is non-tonal. It is a blend of two musical languages, namely: naturally occurring sounds (such as in Example 1) and the chorale (such as in Example 2). As Lumsdaine commented, Australia is blessed with some extraordinary naturally occurring sounds that vary greatly from those of the Northern
Hemisphere, in that Australian bird calls are generally “lower and slower,” which makes them more adaptable for use in compositions (Lumsdaine, 2005).

Lumsdaine’s exact method for collecting bird and insect sounds involves recording the sounds electronically. He describes this process as being akin to “…a painter using photography to frame things at the time” (Lumsdaine, 2005). He maintains that the recording is a document of the specific sounds; yet the recording itself is far less important than the act of making it, because it forces the composer to listen in a particular way, just as a painter sees the world differently on drawing it (Lumsdaine, 2005).

Lumsdaine describes his use of bird calls as a summary of the sound of many different bird calls occurring simultaneously. The toccatas in Cambewarra include whipbirds, currawongs and magpies (Lumsdaine, 2005). However, the composer does not confine himself to bird-sounds. Cicadas and other contributors to the natural sound world are all part of the “harmony of the place” (Lumsdaine, 2005).

Example 1 – Lumsdaine, Cambewarra, opening bars

Lumsdaine’s approach to pitch selection is more intuitive than systematic. Gilbert writes of his discussions with Lumsdaine that “the detail of the [pitches] unfolding in a piece
was a constant source of fascination, because they were elegant organisms in their own right which seemed to exist independently of him” (Gilbert, undated: p. 118).

The several chorales that pervade *Cambewarra* are derived not from known melodies or chorales but from the composer’s “memories of chorales and chorale-like procedures” (Lumsdaine, 2005). The voice-leading in the chorales is often ambiguous, although in most instances a single melodic line can be traced through the writing. The thread makes its way through the various voices, rather than the more traditional approach of being confined to a single voice for an extended period. In the first chorale (Example 2), the melody begins on D♭, which is repeated and then gradually moves downward to B♭. However, the registration of the chords as a whole does not follow this pattern. Rather, the supporting tones move almost entirely in counter direction to the melody. Lumsdaine observes that the work is in the vein of a tapestry, in that various musical elements are weaved together in a way that is largely intuitive (Lumsdaine, 2005).

**Example 2** – Lumsdaine, *Cambewarra*, “Chorale”

As *Cambewarra* emulates the experience of a place and not merely the sounds of the place, the concept of the “harmony of the place” extends beyond the overtone relationships that create the musical harmonies. The composer’s desire to document his experience in a particular place sets up a complex relationship between his selection of musical material and the actual sounds experienced at the time. The chorale in this
context might be best understood as an introspective narrative of the composer’s own experience in listening to the naturally occurring sounds. Despite its arcane appearance, the language of the chorale in *Cambewarra* is harmonically progressive and contains only co-ordinate harmonies.

**A non-pianist composer**

Whilst Lumsdaine is not a pianist, his work evinces an adept understanding of the various ways in which texture and timbre, in particular, can be used to create an impression of naturally occurring sounds on the piano. His piano writing is technically challenging, but can mostly be executed by applying piano techniques that have been in existence from at least as far back as the nineteenth century. The one major exception to this statement is Lumsdaine’s very particular use of all three pedals on the piano, with the *sostenuto* pedal as it were, ‘reigniting’ the pitches held under the pedal with sympathetic resonance. This aspect of Lumsdaine’s writing makes it clear that he has a well developed knowledge of the sonic possibilities that can be created using the different pedals on the piano.

**Form, Dynamic Form and Dynamic Scheme**

The form of the work is highly sophisticated and organic. Lumsdaine describes it as a three movement work, in which “all three movements are related to one another like the same landscape at different hours” (Lumsdaine, 1980, introductory notes). The work is performed without movement breaks and some lengthy silences occur within the three movements. There is an interesting marking at the end of the work, with a phrase-line extending beyond the final pitches, which suggests that the silence at the end of the work is to be ‘played.’ Each movement begins with a *toccata*-like figure, which Lumsdaine describes as outlining the “harmonic centre.”

The movements are located within the composer’s handwritten score as follows: movement one lasts from the beginning of the work until the top system on page 7; movement two begins in the second system of page 7 and finishes in the third system on
page 15; the third movement begins in the fourth system on page 15. The opening movement is dominated by more contemplative, chorale-like writing and short fragments from the opening *toccata*.

As the work is largely unmeasured, I prepared a graph to show the dynamic scheme, on the basis of my estimations of the durations. The graph demonstrates a dense collection of peaks in the second half of the work, with a number of increases to *sfff* and *fff* towards the end of the second movement and even to *ffff* in the third movement (see Figure 1). Thus, there is a steady climb in the dynamic level throughout the work, which coincides with the increased vigour of the sounds experienced by the composer, throughout the day on which he collected the sounds (Lumsdaine, 2005). It also makes for quite a convincing end-accented model. Lumsdaine’s comments regarding the experience of recording and collecting the sounds suggest that the sounds became more intense throughout the course of the day (Lumsdaine, 2005).

The dynamic form mostly mirrors the dynamic scheme with three main exceptions. The peak in the dynamic form certainly occurs during the *coda*, but its dynamic markings do not maintain the same intensity in the remainder of the third movement. Many of the quieter moments in the opening movement and even the rests, when taken in context, create a sense of tension at times in the early part of the work. The chorale writing is generally gentle, and exhibits the least tension of all the musical elements, even when it appears with the bird-song elements interwoven through it, such as on page 10 (see Example 3).

**Figure 1** – Lumsdaine, *Cambewarra* – Dynamic Scheme Graph
Style, idiom and character

Lumsdaine’s compositional style is highly personal and does not strictly adhere to any existing style or idiom. He is an avid admirer of Olivier Messiaen and has a particular interest in the Catalogue d’Oiseaux (Lumsdaine, 2005). In some respects, the compositional method in Cambewarra – in particular the combination of bird-song with chorale – resembles the approach taken in the outer movements of Messiaen’s Visions de l’Amen for two pianos. However, Lumsdaine’s use of bird-sounds in Cambewarra differs from Messiaen’s method in a number of significant respects. Whilst the “toccata-like” openings to the three movements are derived from naturally occurring sounds taken from the natural environment, the composer does not attempt an accurate portrayal of any specific bird (Lumsdaine, 2005). Instead, the bird and insect sounds serve as a “model for the creation of his own material” (Hall, 2003: p. 75).

The opening movement develops the contemplative chorale in three verses, with the bird sounds fragmented and developed only in short bursts until the latter stages of the movement. The balance alters in the second movement, with the second statement of the toccata receiving further development. This movement contains the best balance between the chorale and the sonorities of the environment. At times Lumsdaine is able to combine the sounds of birds and the environment in a chorale setting. This is perhaps one of the most enthralling moments in the work. The effect for the listener here is that the distilled environmental sounds are superimposed upon the composer’s introspective narrative, so that the sense of place truly merges with the composer’s experience.
This treatment of the chorale of itself is vastly different from its treatment in the first movement. It is based on triadic harmonies, though it remains largely calm in effect and free from any strong sense of goal direction. The bird call elements weave their way through the chorale and create a certain intensity over the top of the chorale.

Another stylistic feature of this movement is Lumsdaine’s very particular approach to scoring *rubato*. The score bears the instruction “throughout the second movement ‘poco rit.’ implies a slackening of tension rather than tempo” (Lumsdaine, 1980). The presence of two *cadenzas* in this movement might otherwise have implied a far more liberal approach to tempo, but this is not consistent with other markings in the score. Much of this movement is scored with bar lines and time signatures, so the listener is provided with a sense that the rhythm is constant throughout the second movement, notwithstanding the fact that the time signature is seldom maintained for more than a few bars at a time. The second movement contains the most diverse textural and stylistic elements.
The final movement is comprised almost exclusively of elements derived from naturally occurring sounds. Lumsdaine develops the third instance of the toccata extensively. The chorale is shifted to the background and only fleeting fragments of the chorale appear throughout the remainder of the movement. The final movement is a virtual antithesis of the opening movement. The natural sounds in the third movement maintain a relentless continuity through Lumsdaine’s unique technique of summarising simultaneously occurring sounds into a tapestry of notes, rhythms and articulations on the piano.

The third movement can be divided into two main sections. The start of page 21 marks the beginning of the coda. Until this point the writing has vacillated between silences, delicate and barely audible treble flourishes, moments of dynamic intensity and even moments of a climactic character. The coda itself is a veritable menagerie of bird-sounds and resembles in some respects the approach taken in Messiaen’s Oiseaux Exotiques.

**Tempo**

The opening tempo was read slightly above the marking of 96 per crotchet beat (at approximately 100-104 per crotchet), though with some spontaneous variations, in keeping with the evident bird-like gestures in the writing. The upper limit on the tempo is defined by the clarity with which the articulation in the various flitting gestures can be maintained. The tempo of 100-104 per crotchet balanced these conflicting needs and still provided scope for increases in tempo where rubato was used. Other tempi in the score were treated as marked.

**Approach to dynamic markings**

One of the tasks for the performer is to identify and shape the various layers in the chorale. In the opening pages, the middle voice was played two full dynamic markings louder than the other parts, in order to give a sense of a central vocal line (see Example
At later instances, the chorale was often voiced in favour of the upper voice, such as in Example 3.

Having regard to the discrepancy between the dynamic form and the dynamic scheme in the coda section of the work, I elected to ‘read down’ the dynamic markings in the final stages of the second movement through to the early part of the third movement and to ‘read up’ the dynamic markings in the coda. The coda is generally less relentless in its dynamic markings, with numerous minute troughs in dynamics, to break up the often jagged gestures in the writing.

**Performance decisions**

The use of two quite distinct musical languages throughout Cambewarra results in an approach to gesture and *agogic* that calls for a sympathetic reading of the vocal line in the chorale and a more idiosyncratic and impulsive approach to the bird-like gestures. Whilst Lumsdaine does not ‘document’ bird-sounds in his work, the sense of indeterminateness of different birds interjecting is maintained. It is perhaps for this reason that the rests in the work are of such importance that the composer even marks the rest at the end of the work.

Another useful indication as to the composer’s approach to *rubato* was found in the marking early in the second movement, which reads “Throughout the 2\textsuperscript{nd} movement *poco rit.*’ implies a slackening of tension rather than tempo.” Some ambiguity remains for the performer to ascertain exactly what is meant by tension in this context, though it does seem apparent that Lumsdaine is referring to fluctuations in dynamic form. Most of the *poco rit.* markings throughout the second movement are no longer than two or three chords and there is usually no traditional subordinate harmonic relationship. The approach taken to this marking was to treat the various instances of *poco rit.* as having a gestural shape, with a slight tapering off in the rhythmic intensity through the *poco rit.* bars. Lumsdaine’s very particular approach to the *poco rit.* marking was interpreted as having broader implications for the treatment of *rubato* throughout the movement. I interpreted this marking to be suggestive of a general sense of the movement as being ‘on
the front of the beat’ and impulsive. This appears to be confirmed by the numerous *accelerandi* and by markings such as “brilliant.”

**Pedalling**

Much of *Cambewarra* is unmeasured, and note groupings leave a great deal to the performer’s discretion. In a number of instances, Lumsdaine marks quite lengthy sustaining pedal, which might tend to detract from the clarity of the bird-song gestures in places. However, the knowledge of Lumsdaine’s more symbolic approach to bird-song gestures (as distinct from literal transcription) supported the view that these markings are an application of a bird-song gesture and do not require the same clarity of articulation as a single-line bird-song in every instance. This occurs in the opening bars, where a long pedal is marked over a series of demisemiquavers (see Example 1). If one were to approach this gesture with the view that it is a single line bird-song, it would almost certainly be played without pedal, or with a minimal flutter pedal. The approach taken in this project was to treat this fragment as one derived from a thrush call, but more generally as a series of pitches that give a sense of the “harmony of the place.”

The playing should have enough clarity to sustain a sense of shape for the gestures, but with the pedal providing a sense of the sound echoing in the landscape and of the many sounds blending together. The balance of these two objectives was achieved using a relatively heavy flutter pedalling. Throughout the score Lumsdaine interchanges the three pedals for different effects. Whilst he marks the pedalling in the opening bars throughout the various bird-song gestures, the composer also marks on page 10: “use P. [pedal] throughout cadenza with discretion – never cloud the texture.” Generally the approach to the sustaining pedal was to attempt to balance the need for resonance in the often shrill, bird-like gestures, with the often conflicting need to maintain the clarity and definition within those gestures. The combination of the middle pedal and the right pedal is frequently used to create sympathetic resonances. In the early part of the score, such as in the fourth system, the middle pedal opens certain pitches to resonate sympathetically to the active bass part. Here, some experimentation was used with the various possible
approaches to balance in the left hand to compensate for the fact that certain pitches would naturally resonate more than others under the *sostenuto* pedal.

**The composer’s markings**

In some instances, Lumsdaine’s performance markings define the effect that is sought more than the method by which it might be achieved. On the opening page the marking “*ppp but close*” is used in relation to a short figuration that occurs high in the treble register (see Example 4).

**Example 4** – Lumsdaine, *Cambewarra*, page 1, system 3, measure 2

![Example 4](image)

The intention of this unusual marking is that the sound should be extremely soft, but somehow convey a sense of proximity. A very slight hair-pin swell was used in the dynamics in this gesture to give an amplified sense of dynamic breadth, whilst still maintaining the sense that the overall dynamic was very soft. The *staccato* marking is somewhat illusory, as there are no dampers in this register of the piano. Similarly, in the fifth system on page 10, the marking “*ff sub. close, hard and brilliant*” suggests that the sense of proximity be achieved. I decided to treat the *staccato* markings as being slightly longer than their literal meaning (being half the value of the note). I believed that the slight reduction in the gaps between sounds would convey more of a sense that the sound source was closer.
Example 5 – Lumsdaine, *Cambewarra*, page 10, system 5

Another ambiguous marking at system 4 on page 3 reads “*pp* floating.” The dynamics and articulation markings are clear, but the concept of “floating” could be read in the sense of *tenuto*, or in stark contradiction, it could be read with a sense of forward motion, as part of the same gesture.

Example 6 – Lumsdaine, *Cambewarra*, page 3, system 4

The approach taken was to treat the marking as connoting a sense that the chords were part of a single gesture or shape, but to attempt to achieve this with only very subtle variation from the rhythms and underlying tempo. The first chord in the bar was extended in value slightly and the tops of the chords were voiced, to give a sense of a single melody linking the chords, in the manner of a vocal gesture (see Example 6).

Compositional method and musical language

Edwards draws upon and appropriates naturally occurring sounds from the physical landscape near his home in eastern New South Wales. In particular, he is interested in rhythms and sounds of insect life and declares that these sounds are central to many of his compositions. According to Hannan:

Edwards became fascinated by the balance of predictability and unpredictability in the rhythms of nature, for example in the starting, stopping and sudden volume changes of a chorus of cicadas. Months were spent refining the musical material and its elongated temporal organization. In ordering the events of the piece the composer was trying to achieve an asymmetrical quality without disturbing the flow. (Hannan, 1986: p. 14)

Edwards refers to his method of listening to sounds and then generating cells as a process of distilling (Carrigan, 1994: p. 43). The distilled products of this process in turn become small musical cells and are manipulated in subtle ways, usually and primarily in relation to rhythm. In this sense, Edwards’ compositional style is similar to that of Olivier Messiaen, although Edwards is distinctly less systematic in his manipulation of cells. Cells are not manipulated with ‘value-adding’ or ‘non-retrogradable rhythms’ in Edwards’ work, but via more intuitive processes.6

Edwards is not a practising concert pianist, though his work for the piano evinces a clear understanding of the relationship between the hands and the capacity for polyphonic textures. Kumari appears to be orchestrally inspired and could comfortably be scored for an ensemble. The method of applying repeated cells is similar to some of John Cage’s works, such as Metamorphosis. Both composers made extensive use of the

6 Edwards discussed the similarities and differences between his compositional style and that of Olivier Messiaen in the interview with Carrigan on 23 June 1994.
technique of composing from tiny fragments. Having regard to this fact, it is incumbent on the pianist to consider the different possibilities that can be achieved with different sounds from the instrument.

Edwards’ compositions are mostly harmonically uncomplicated, but texturally and rhythmically diverse. Kumari is based on the idea of “purity, untainted by the world.” The work is one of the series of ‘sacred works,’ which Edwards suggests are characteristically austere, still, quiet and contemplative in nature. Edwards has said that his sacred pieces have no sense of climax or resolution (Edwards, 1992: p. 28). Edwards had, in the late 1970s, begun to turn away from traditional European musical forms and says of this period:

During this time, all of my serious listening during this period was done sitting in the bush listening more carefully than most of us get a chance to do to the natural sounds…it helped me to come to terms with the fact that all of the world’s music must have originated, in some way from the sounds of nature. (Stanhope, 1994: p. 9)

Stanhope refers to Zen Buddhism in his analysis of Edwards’ works from this period and includes Kumari in a list of contemplative works that he calls “the sacred series,” that “all relate to the musical language pioneered in Mountain Village” (Stanhope, 1994: p. 10). The only other solo piano work of this series is Etymalong. The majority of the other sacred works are chamber works involving piano. The “bell-like archetypes,” comprising of sonorities set in the extreme lower and upper register of the instrument are present in all of the works of the sacred series and any sense of ‘direction’ in the traditional sense of development is absent. Despite the desire to avoid ‘direction’ or any sense of climax in his work, there are fleeting examples of relatively traditional subordinate harmonies in Kumari.
Approach to time, rhythm and metre

*Kumari* has no time signature and the music reveals itself very gradually. Long pedal markings ensure that the sound continues, albeit often scarcely. For the most part, tritones, major sevenths, major and minor ninths predominate, in a way that has little relationship to traditional harmonic progressions.

Example 7 – Edwards, *Kumari*, systems 6 and 7, opening tableau

The work has no underlying sense of pulse. The rhythmic devices are important, as they signify particular gestures within the texture. Edwards repeats a series of short cells throughout. *Kumari* is rather reminiscent of Sculthorpe’s comments in relation to ‘development’ the avoidance of a sense of development in the traditional sense. Indeed, it is the timelessness of the metric framework and subtle relationships between the various cells that give the work its spiritual or meditative effect. There are eleven different cells in the first movement of *Kumari* and five cells in the second movement (see Appendix D and E).
The use of the different cells

Ten of the eleven cells in the first movement of *Kumari* (the exceptions being the tenth cell) contain minor seconds or intervallic concomitants (such as augmented octaves, double octaves or major sevenths), which are invariably expressed either vertically or in quick succession. Given that the tempo of the work is relatively slow and there is no time signature, this intervallic relationship with rhythm becomes more significant. Every grace-note figure occurs in the context of one of the intervals listed, namely the minor second or a concomitant thereof.

Unlike the first movement, the predominant interval in the second movement is the major second. The second movement is sparser and the two instances of the minor second occur at the fastest-moving moments. Thus, the rule correlating intervals with speed is maintained in both movements, with the most traditionally dissonant intervals related to the most rapid movement. From the harmonic standpoint, this use of particular intervals relates to a functional conception of the secundal chord structures.

Thus Edwards approach to pitch selection is certainly not emancipated from hierarchy, but the prioritisation of secundal material does not relate to any specific melodic contrapuntal conception of harmonic functionality. Prioritisation or ‘subordination’ does not occur within a regular rhythmic subdivision.

Form, Dynamic Form and Dynamic Scheme

*Kumari* is best understood as two tableaus, exploring a similar concept of texture evolving through time. The texture does not ‘serve’ a form that is defined by an ursatz model. Despite this fact, the Dynamic Scheme Graph was of considerable use. In both movements, the peak in the dynamic scheme is at the start of the movement and there is a steady decline away from that point. This was suggestive of a dynamic form in which the intensity has something of a ripple effect, so that the opening bars act as the source of the ripple and the increasingly smaller peaks are interspersed among increasingly larger troughs (see Figure 2).
Perhaps the first and most obvious observation that might be made of the Dynamic Scheme graph is that the upper range does not exceed *mf*. The first tableau is the more active, with a series of grace-note figures. There is relatively more ‘subordination’ of harmonies in this movement, which is in large part a result of the harmonic innuendo, produced by the $E_b^{13}$ chord and the $B^b^9$ chords in cells 2 and 4 respectively. The result is that the opening movement, albeit having more vigour, also has fleeting moments of quasi-resolution.

**Style, idiom and character**

The style is unique and best understood by Edwards’ own description of the “sacred series” of works as “musical contemplation objects” (Edwards, 1992, p. 28). The blending of elements of popular music and more obscure harmonic relationships results in a sound that is generally approachable for the listener and in an aesthetic that is contemplative and intimate. Similarities can be found between Edwards and John Cage, as both were students of Zen Buddhism and composed from tiny cells or fragments. Unlike Cage however, Edwards uses some very simple harmonic progressions, which in some instances give rise to ‘tension-release’ cells. Edwards uses evident triadic harmonies and some of his cells are derived from popular music (Edwards, 1989).
**Tempo**

The approach in this project was to apply a tempo of approximately 40-45 per crotchet in the opening tableau. There was some variation in tempo between the different cells. The gently ebbing quavers in cell 2, for example, were more expansive and the *tenuto* marking was applied in a somewhat exaggerated fashion, to give the cell a sense of a slower tempo overall. In the second tableau the underlying tempo was very slightly faster than the marked tempo, though in certain gestures the tempo was entirely slower. The quaver movement in cell 3 was very much slower than the underlying tempo. The exaggerated approach to *tenuto* here was similar to the approach taken to cell 2 in the opening tableau.

**Approach to dynamic markings**

The scoring of dynamics throughout *Kumari* is regular and mostly meticulous. However, in cell 4 in the opening tableau, the *ppp* scoring in the left hand all too easily results in a loss of resonance. Thus, this marking was read at approximately *pp* and the right hand was also altered upwards slightly to between *p* and *pp*. Towards the end of the opening tableau the many occurrences of cell 11 are each marked *pp*. I decided to make a gradual *diminuendo* towards the end of the tableau in the last five systems. In the opening of the second tableau the marking of *p* in cell 1 was read slightly higher and cell 2 was read close to *f* in order to ensure resonance and avoid the likely shrillness of the upper register. Generally, the voicing in the second tableau was read to highlight the extremities of register. Cells 2 and 4 were generally read slightly higher than their dynamic markings would suggest.

**Performance decisions**

The performer’s task in performing *Kumari* requires, above all else, careful consideration and control of the scaling of dynamics and the need to be able to articulate many different levels of touch at the lower end of the dynamic spectrum. Further
consideration is required of the accenting and *tenuto* marks throughout the work. For the most part the traditional accents occur in the upper register, to highlight the treble ‘archetypes,’ with the *tenuti* distributed throughout the register of the instrument. This reflects the acoustic properties of the instrument and the fact that such a sparse composition with lengthy sustain-pedal markings is unlikely to carry the archetypes in the upper treble, by virtue of the less resonant upper register of the instrument. It is essential that these sounds in the upper register have a bell-like quality that balances the texture. The *tenuto* markings in this context have been interpreted as more subtle points of focus within phrases, even though the phrasings are very short. The phrasings in *Kumari* are more in the nature of gestures within the texture, rather than the more traditional situation of texture supporting the phrasing.

A difficult decision had to be made in both tableaus in relation to the question of scaling of dynamics in accordance with my conception of the dynamic form as a gradual downward motion. To some extent Edwards has scored the gradual decrease in dynamics towards the end, with a carefully structured spacing of the peaks and troughs in dynamics. Nonetheless, towards the end of the both tableaus there was a subtle scaling down of the marked dynamic markings.

The use of fleeting triadic harmony required consideration of the possible harmonic inferences and the best manner in which they might be executed. In cell 1, I preferred to keep a balance between the three pitches in the right hand rather than voicing C♮ at the top, as one might ordinarily do. This first white-note cluster had an effect akin to a splash or a gong and thus was in keeping with the concept of the gradual subsidence of the ripples. In cell 2, the D♭-C♮ interval with the *tenuto* was treated as having emphasis more than any extension of time. This involved not only C♮ but also the D♭ and assisted in enhancing the dissonant quality of the thirteenth (C♮) in the harmony. Unlike cell 1, a slight voicing preference towards the top voice was preferred. My approach here was far more in keeping with the more triadic sound. The cell, along with cells 6, 9, 10 and 11 mirrors the dynamic scheme of the tableau as a whole. In cells 3 and 5, I preferred to prioritise the top voice. In cell 5, there was some triadic reference in the sounds and this
benefited from a strengthening of the upper voice and in cell 3, the spacing between the cluster in the bottom register and the B♭ an octave above was better balanced with some emphasis on the B♭. In cell 4, it was important to ensure that the D♭ (second note in the right hand) was played slightly above the marked dynamic, to ensure that it had sufficient resonance to ensure projection in the upper register. A literal reading of the dynamic markings would have resulted in this gesture sounding dull.

Cell 6 benefitted from a relatively bright treatment of the upper grace note, whilst still prioritising the F♯. Once again, the tenuto was viewed primarily as an indicator of localised dynamic accent, rather than as a significant extension of the note length. Cell 7 benefitted from a rather firmer dynamic than the mp marking on the upper sonority. Once again, there is a danger of this figure sounding dull in the context of the texture. My approach to voicing meant that each archetype added a beaming feature to the texture, instead of disappearing within the heavy pedal. Cell 8 required very little difference in its treatment from the literal marking, save that the B♮ required a slightly higher dynamic reading to ensure that it was heard under pedal after the thick chord before. This was essentially a matter of ensuring that the upper voice F♯-B♭ were both voiced a level higher than the chord. In cell 9 the E♯ was played somewhat more loudly than its pp marking, so as to ensure that the phrase connection between the G♯ in the treble could be heard. In cell 11, the grace-note figures were played very gently to give the tenuto greater emphasis. The chords were voiced with prioritisation to the top notes so that the phrase would protrude through the texture.

The voicing and dynamic decisions in the second tableau were less complicated than in the first tableau. Most of these were single chord entities and for cells 1, 3 and 4, I elected to give priority to the top note. However, for cell 2 I took a similar approach to the opening of the first tableau, namely to have an even voicing for these two pitches. In pitch cell 5, the B♭ was given priority, but this need had to be balanced against the need
to ensure that the sense of phrasing carried through from the B♭ to the A♯ and that the A♯ had sufficient resonance to carry through for its full length.

**The composer’s markings**

Edwards’ markings in *Kumari* are exclusively in the manner of direct instructions, such as dynamic, rhythm, emphasis and articulation, rather than any traditional expressive indications. This approach is, in many respects, clearer to follow than the alternative, though it leaves some questions unanswered. It is in this sense that research assisted in preparing the work for performance. The understanding of the concept of “musical contemplation objects” and the application of Zen Buddhism was important in understanding the absence of any traditional goal directed model and ultimately, in understanding the work as having the unusual ‘start-accented’ model.
Mountains (1982) by Peter Sculthorpe (1929 - )

Compositional method and musical language

Mountains was written for the Sydney International Piano Competition in 1982 and was dedicated to the esteemed Australian pianist and teacher, Rex Hobcroft. The work was premiered by Gabriella Pusner on 4 July 1981 and the performance notes state that the work is “a response to the mountainous terrain of Tasmania, often know as ‘Isle of Mountains,’ where the composer was born” (Sculthorpe, 1981, introductory notes). Sculthorpe is not a pianist, though his writing for piano demonstrates a clear understanding of the possibilities available in writing for the instrument. The four-part voicing throughout much of the work suggests that the writing may have been conceived in terms of a vocal or orchestral texture. The low E♮ and D♭ bass notes in the middle section are suggestive of a timpani or low gong.

The language of the writing is economical and contains unmistakable harmonic references, though the exact harmonic language is ambiguous. The opening motive centres upon the pitches E♮–G♭–B♭, being either a double diminished triad, built on E♮, or hinting at an incomplete seventh chord built on G♮. The relative thinness of the texture, the separation between the voices, as well as the actual harmonies chosen makes the voice-leading more determinative of the sense of direction in the music than the harmony. The voice-leading in the right hand follows a gradual ascent in the opening measures to the forte at bar 11. This gradually subsides to a further ambiguous cadential point at bars 15 through 18. There are two different harmonies used, namely the opening chord, built on E♮ and a further chord apparently hinting at C♭7. When examined more closely, these two harmonies are intervallically equivalent mirror images of one another. Both hinge upon the pitches of G♭-B♭ and have a major second added (below and above respectively).
In the ensuing section from bars 19 through 34, Sculthorpe introduces a new cell, comprised of a half diminished E\(^{13}\) chord in the top part of the right hand, with an A\(^{b}\)–E\(^{\#}\) sonority below. The new element is repeated five times before the transition at bar 35 where the new element becomes the primary focus. It is typical of Sculthorpe’s compositional technique to apply two main ideas that are interwoven.

From bar 35, the A\(^{b}\)–E\(^{\#}\) fragment is expanded. As with the harmonic material in the opening of the work, this left hand cell is derived from a pair of smaller three-note pitch cells, which are the mirror image of each other and which pivot from the same pitch, namely E\(^{\#}\) (see Example 8).

**Example 8** – Sculthorpe, *Mountains*, bars 35-37

In both instances the intervallic make-up is a minor third and then a minor second. The material in the right hand applies and extends the material introduced at bar 20. Relatively traditional harmonies are utilised in the right hand from bars 56 through 61, with a B\(^{b}\) and F\(^{\#}\) dominant sevenths.

**Form, Dynamic Form and Dynamic Scheme**

The form of *Mountains* is a relatively simple A-B-A form,\(^7\) although the recapitulation commences in transposition and in a slightly abbreviated form. The work

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\(^7\) The “A” section is Bars 1 through 34; the “B” section from bar 35 through 61 and the recapitulation from bar 62 through 82.
follows a relatively symmetrical dynamic scheme, with the peak in marked dynamics occurring in the 56th bar (of 82 bars). The scoring in the early part of the work is bold and heavy, though the texture remains sparse and transparent throughout the opening section.

Figure 3 – Sculthorpe, *Mountains* – Dynamic Scheme Graph

The dynamic form has a rather different shape from the dynamic scheme in this instance. The bold opening gestures are forthright and have some coordinate harmonic relationships, but these phrases occur in short bursts and are declaratory without being ominous. The dynamic form commences a steady climb, from the introduction of the second motive at bar 20. The gradual exploration of this eerie figure high in the treble builds a sense of foreboding, though the dynamic remains ever so gentle. From bar 37 there is a further upward gradation in the dynamic form, as the crescendo gains dynamic momentum to its climax at bar 56.

**Style, idiom and character**

Sculthorpe’s music does not follow any existing style or idiom. His use of ambiguous harmonic references could be faintly likened to any number of twentieth century composers, including Bartók, Poulenc and Stravinsky, though there is no striking resemblance. Sculthorpe does not employ complex rhythmic devices (beyond the occasional 3-against-2 rhythm) and *Mountains*, even at its most agitated moments, does
not have an appreciable rhythmic drive. Instead, *Mountains* is very much in the style of a landscape tone-painting. The heavy, drone-like sonority in the bass of the piano might be thought of visually as the ground level at the foot of the mountains (see Example 9).

**Example 9** – Sculthorpe, *Mountains*, opening bars

As the work progresses, the jagged figures that appear fleetingly in the upper register can almost be visualised as peaks through clouds (see Example 10).

**Example 10** – Sculthorpe, *Mountains*, bars 19-21

*Mountains* is unusually climactic amongst Sculthorpe’s piano works (see Example 11). Many of his other short works for piano, such as *Callabonna*, *A Little Book of Hours* and *Night Pieces* have little or no appreciable sense of climax. The sense of arrival at the climax at bar 56 is of a Romantic ilk, particularly with the surprising inclusion of evident seventh chords in the right hand and the broadening implied by the *poco meno mosso* marking and the **fff** dynamic.
However, *Mountains* is unsentimental in its gestures and in expression. Unlike many tone-paintings of the nineteenth century, Sculthorpe avoids clichéd gestures.

**Tempo**

My reading of the tempo in *Mountains* was slightly above the marked tempo of c. 66 per crotchet, namely around 72–74 per crotchet. This allowed the voice-leading in semibreves and minims to have continuity and to avoid excess decay. Where the second motive is introduced in its fragmentary form at bar 20, I elected to keep the tempo on the back of the beat and to flatten out the rhythmic values slightly. From bar 35, I preferred a marginally slower tempo than 72 per crotchet initially. This gave a sense of ‘setting up’ the patterns in the left hand. From bar 37, the tempo was almost exactly at the marked tempo, though often ‘on the back of the beat.’ The marking of *poco meno mosso* at 56 was read as suggesting only a slight broadening. From bar 62 I elected to keep a similar tempo as in the opening but to employ some *rubato* where the fragments of the second motive appeared. This enhanced the sense of dying away over the last 11 bars of the work.

**Approach to dynamic markings**

The dynamic markings in *Mountains* were very logical and unambiguous. The range of dynamics from *ppp* to *fff* is relatively large for a work of only 82 bars. At the opening, I chose a voicing that balanced the conflicting need to prioritise the top voice,
with the need to produce a grand textural effect. The use of *legato*-fingering was of assistance in keeping a smooth line in the top voice, which also assisted in drawing attention to that voice, without having to prioritise the line too heavily. From bar 20 the dynamic *pp* appears in relation to the second motive, which appears high in the treble. I elected to voice the top and bottom notes in these sonorities. The A♭ in the bottom part of the right hand was particularly important in providing definition to the texture. From bar 37 the texture was clearly in the vein of melody and accompaniment, with the left hand merely repeating a colouring pattern built on the same five pitches (C♮-Db-Em-G♭-A♭) throughout. Consequently, I preferred to continue the marking of *pp* in the left hand from bar 35 and read the *p* marking at bar 37 as applying only to the right hand. Whilst I chose to prioritise the right hand over the left hand throughout this section, I preferred to take a relatively equal approach to voicing within the right hand, except where the writing reached high into the treble where I tended to voice more in favour of the upper pitches.

**Performance decisions**

The performer’s task in performing *Mountains* requires a developed sense of the textural and other devices used by the composer. The building throughout the ‘B’ section naturally gathers weight by virtue of the gradual increase in the number of low bass notes added. Thus, the temptation, particularly at bar 50 to ‘over-play’ the *ff* must be resisted. *Tenuto* markings in this score were treated both as localised dynamic accents and as subtle extensions of note values. The work commences with *tenuti* in bars 1 and 3. These *tenuti* are not repeated at bar 62, which is in keeping with the fact that this final section of the work is something of an epilogue. On this basis, I elected to read down the dynamics in the final section. The marking of accents in *Mountains* is very sparing. Sculthorpe marks only four accents in the entire work, namely at bars 50, 51, 53 and 54. These coincide with the *crescendo* from *ff* to *fff* through bars 50 to 56. The accents occur on an off-beat where the pitches are comprised of Db-A♮ and on another dissonant A♭-Db-E♭ chord, which also occurs on the off-beat. Rather than taking a heavy approach to all
sonorities in this section, I preferred to treat the strong beats at bars 50 and 53 together with the marked accents as having the most dynamic weight.

**Pedalling**

The score contains only four pedal markings. Three of these markings simply state “with pedal,” and the fourth is merely an indication of the pattern at bar 35, as a two-bar pedal point. In the opening of the work, I elected to keep a long pedal through each of the short three and four bar phrases with very slight flutter pedal to avoid excessive clouding of voicing. Any gaps in the pedal could be compensated for with finger legato. In the ‘B’ section of the work, long pedals of approximately four bars each were used.

**Interpreting the composer’s markings**

Sculthorpe marks a double-dot over the semiquaver up-beat in the gesture at bar 37 and in each instance where it occurs later. I interpreted this to be suggestive of a heavy first beat, particularly in the left hand, as well as the relatively short semiquaver. I also reached the conclusion that this was an appropriate place for a change of pedal, to catch the heavy bass chord and to provide clarity to the gesture in the right hand.

Sculthorpe’s score contains relatively scarce markings of expression. The markings of *Solenne* in the opening and *Risoluto; solenne* at bar 62 confirm the sense that the writing is declamatory and unsentimental. Hence, the approach taken to phrasing did not over-romanticise the ends of phrases. The marking of *Estatico* at bar 37 well conveys the precipitous nature and effect of the writing, but as a performance direction it gives relatively little instruction on the method for achieving that effect. The left hand throughout this section is akin to a continuing drone punctuated by the low gong sound (played by the right hand). This part does not develop any harmonic idea, but simply thickens out, as the right hand becomes more emphatic. I interpreted this section of the work as having two crucial features that would greatly influence the extent to which the writing conveyed a sense of being “ecstatic.” The first of these was the sense of the right
hand evolving. In a number of instances, this involved chromatic voice-leading, such as at bars 41 and 45. In these instances, additional emphasis was applied towards the final quaver in the bar. I also made the decision to mark the increasingly wide range of the writing in the right hand by voicing the upper notes in the higher chords and the lower notes in the lower chords. The other crucial feature was the low gong sound played by the right hand crossing over in each instance. I chose to give increasingly greater weight to the gong throughout this section, which underpinned the extravagant fervour building in the right hand.

Keith Humble

Keith Humble spent much of his compositional career in Europe, where he studied with René Leibowitz and went on to become the musical director of the Centre de Musique in Paris. The Eight Bagatelles were written towards the end of Keith Humble’s life and at a time when the composer was aware of the terminal illness that would claim his life on 23 May 1995.

Compositional method and musical language

Pitch selection

It is unnecessary to analyse Keith Humble’s compositional method in great detail here. A short summary is provided for convenience, as the work of Anthony Hughes (Hughes, 2001) provides an exhaustive examination of Humble’s compositional method in the Eight Bagatelles and the work of Alan Walker (Walker, 2004) is also illuminating.

Humble approaches the question of pitch selection by generating linear aggregates from a segment (in this case \{0, 1, 4, 7\})\(^8\) and then applying a cyclic permuting procedure. This differs from the more conventional square table of aggregates. Upon selecting the segment Humble envisages all twelve pitches in order around a clock-face, omitting the four pitches of the derivative segment. As an example, a derivative of \{0, 1, 4, 7\} would leave the complement set \{2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11\}. Thus, Humble creates a binary partition of each aggregate.

In composing out, Humble then subdivides the aggregate into complementary unordered collections (Hughes, 2001: p. 31). Hughes quotes Humble as having made the following comment on his composing out process:

\(^8\) I have applied Humble’s own delineation of G# as 0.
I look at the sets vertically and not horizontally. Subsets, derived from a set and its transposition, will equal or a set and its inversion will equal. Subsets with common tones are not repeated, thinking in a vertical sense. Order is not necessarily relevant, more gesture. My background as a jazz musician was homophonic, not contrapuntal. I insist that what I am doing is intuitive. (Hughes, ibid.: pp. 27-28)

The above comment suggests some similarity with the so-called Third Stream of composition, namely a meeting point between jazz and serialism. Humble constantly hints at extended harmonies and his idiom frequently exhibits strong jazz references. Every movement of the Eight Bagatelles commences with the four-note derivative pitch set of the cycle. Walker aptly describes the derivative set as a “motto,” (Walker, 2004) and I will apply Walker’s terminology here.

The motto in Eight Bagatelles creates great versatility for composing out and carries an inherent harmonic ambiguity. When taken as a single chord the four notes hint at various resolutions, not unlike Wagner’s ‘Tristan’ chord. The particular manner in which Humble then combines the various pitches enables him to achieve an almost constant ambiguity between the harmonic and linear languages. Humble’s own statements about his writing suggest that the harmonic aspect is paramount, notwithstanding that it was derived from a serial method.

Form, Dynamic Form and Dynamic Scheme

The Eight Bagatelles follow a relatively simple form. Each miniature is quite self-contained. The third bagatelle bears a dedication that indicates the work is a farewell⁹ and the Sixth Bagatelle is titled “E.K.E.,” apparently a reference to Duke Ellington. The cycle is dedicated to Humble’s wife, Jill. I have taken the view that the cycle is a series of miniatures that are quite probably related by the theme of ‘dedication’ and ‘farewell.’ There are clear breaks at the end of every movement except, rather ironically, the final movement, which ends abruptly with an off-beat accent. The absence of any attacca

⁹ “For Tony P. ... Adieu.”
indication or similar suggests that the movements are performed with some separation and therefore, that each movement can be savoured in its own right.

The Dynamic Scheme Graph of the cycle demonstrates that the most sustained dynamic peaks in the cycle occur in the first and second bagatelles and particularly in the second bagatelle, where the dynamic only drops below forte in one fleeting instance (at bar 25).

**Figure 4** – Humble, *Eight Bagatelles* – Dynamic Scheme Graph (Cycle)

![Dynamic Scheme Graph](image)

Whilst the different movements within the cycle are quite independent in some respects, their arrangement within the cycle leads to a sense of the cycle having a front-accented dynamic scheme. From the point of view of dynamic form, the picture is very different. The third bagatelle is by far the peak in the dynamic form. The writing is emotive and peaks at the end of the movement.

When taken on its own, the first bagatelle has an end-accented dynamic scheme (see Figure 5). The dynamic form is very similar, though the phrase from bar 6 through 9 has a logical increase in intensity, which suggests a *crescendo* in dynamics to bar 9 and then a *diminuendo* through bars 9 and 10.
The second bagatelle is vastly different from all of the other movements, in its sheer relentlessness at the upper end of the dynamic range (see Figure 6).

A decision was needed here between the three *fortissimo* peaks. I elected to treat the first *ff* peak at bar 22 as having less intensity than either of the subsequent peaks. The *ff* marking here is more to ensure brightness in the chord on the first beat. The second *ff* (at bar 36) is at the beginning of a gradual build-up in intensity towards the end of the work and accordingly, I elected to read this *ff* down slightly. The dynamic form then follows several short peaks and troughs that climb towards the very last chord.

The third bagatelle also followed a predominantly end-accented model in its dynamic scheme. However, the dynamic scheme suggests a resolution in the final bars,
whereas there is no resolution. The final chords are of the same emotive intensity as the peak at bar 19. There are two peaks in dynamic form, the first is at bar 13, which is curtailed abruptly much in the nature of a ‘false’ ending. The second and largest peak can be seen towards the end of the work (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7** – Humble, *Eight Bagatelles*, third bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph

![Dynamic Scheme Graph](image)

The dynamic scheme in the fourth bagatelle was relatively difficult to graph, as the changes in dynamics were extremely frequent. However, the graph arrived at was still useful in providing a sense of where the most sustained peaks and troughs occurred (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8** – Humble, *Eight Bagatelles*, fourth bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph

![Dynamic Scheme Graph](image)
The Dynamic Scheme Graph in the fourth bagatelle shows a peak at around bars 7 through 10 and a smaller peak in the opening bars. The writing in this movement entails numerous off-beat accents and does not give a strong sense of a structured dynamic form. The Dynamic Scheme Graph in the fifth bagatelle demonstrates a clear peak at bar 11. This is also the peak in the dynamic form. The complete polyphonic writing from bar 9 builds suddenly through bar 10 to the heavy chords in both hands. The dynamic scoring in the earlier and later stages moves towards and away from the peak in intensity in bars 11 and 12.

Figure 9 – Humble, *Eight Bagatelles*, fifth bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph

The Dynamic Scheme Graph in the sixth bagatelle suggests a series of three peaks, each slightly larger than the one before (see Figure 10). This is mostly consistent with the sense of dynamic form, save that the very last bars do not drop significantly in dynamic intensity.
The Dynamic Scheme Graph in the seventh bagatelle suggests that the biggest peak occurs in the early part of the work (see Figure 11). I regarded the dynamic peak as being at bars 8 through 10, which roughly corresponds with the dynamic markings. This section is characterised by chromatic voice-leading and unresolved harmonic references, which build and then reach an interrupted ending at bar 24, where the writing suddenly shifts to a gentler, lyrical language, far more in the vein of homophony than polyphony. This movement contains some of the most poignant and intense writing in the cycle, but the dynamic marking does not exceed \textit{mf}.
The Dynamic Scheme Graph in the final movement in the cycle suggests that the writing is generally intense throughout (see Figure 12). This does not accord with the Dynamic Form. Generally, the dynamics in this movement were scored relatively high, but the writing is playful and quite light in feel for the most part. The peak in dynamic form occurs at bars 16 through 17, where the use of articulation markings that deliberately cross over the beat with off-beat accents of shortening periods suggests a sense of building in intensity. Another secondary peak in dynamic form occurs at bars 29 through 30.

**Figure 12** – Humble, *Eight Bagatelles*, eighth bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph

*Tempo and interpreting the composer’s markings*

The vast majority of Humble’s expressive markings in *Eight Bagatelles* are strongly related to tempo. For this reason, the two issues will be combined in the following paragraphs. Humble’s expressive markings are mostly plain language English words, with a mixture of French and traditional Italian terms also present. Humble uses almost exclusively English words to define tempi and also provides a metronome marking in all movements but the fifth. The presence of metronome indications alongside expressive indications suggests that the expressive markings are far more indicative of other factors, such as the feel of the music. In the opening bagatelle, the indication “Moving” with a tempo marking of 120-126 per crotchet seems to suggest a sense of
forward-momentum. One of the first questions to be resolved is whether the marking of 120-126 suggests that the underlying tempo might be a matter of discretion and might vary within this range from one performance to another, or whether the marking suggests a slight variation of the underlying tempo within the work. I preferred to take the view that there would be some variation in the underlying tempo throughout the work, between approximately 116 per crotchet and 126 per crotchet. The other expressive marking in the first bagatelle of dans l’ambiance at bar 19 defines the desired effect very clearly. However, the marking of pp and a relatively even approach to touch achieves this outcome. It seems clear from the marking of “slower” at bar 20 that Humble does not wish for the tempo to change significantly until bar 20.

In the second bagatelle, there are no expressive markings or indications as to the approach to tempo. This is perhaps because the composer has been extremely fastidious in his markings of rubato through some ten tempo markings in the short 50 bar work, as well as numerous indicators of agogic, including tenuti and use of fermata. I preferred a faster tempo of approximately 88 per crotchet, as this tempo, combined with the various rubato markings seemed to assist in conveying the sense of restlessness that seems inherent in the polyphonic writing.

The third bagatelle has a very clear indication that the performer is to use rubato. The marking “very slow, molto rubato” seems to suggest an acceptance by the composer that any attempt to mark every instance of rubato will result in an excessively complicated score that overloads the performer with information. Humble also uses the term cantabile in the third bagatelle. I elected to apply this to the upper voice in the texture for the most part. However, at bars 18 and 19, this switches to the left hand. The marking “poco f (warm)” is somewhat ambiguous. In the tradition of piano teaching and playing, the term ‘warm’ is typically used in relation to a tone that has a resonant, singing quality. I preferred to use some pedal here to add to the resonance. My underlying tempo here was 66 per quaver, which is approximately in the middle range of the composer’s marking of 60-72. Here the tempo was relatively elastic.

The only expressive indication in the fourth bagatelle is “Move it,” with a tempo marking of crotchet equals 104-108. Here, I preferred a faster underlying tempo of approximately 126 per crotchet, as this seemed more in keeping with the marking of
“Move it.” I elected to keep the tempo mostly steady, though occasionally on the front of the beat, such as at bar 4 and bars 8 through 9. Again, the marking of cantabile at bar 12 suggests a more resonant sound.

The marking of “Deliberately” and “Agitato” in the fifth bagatelle is in some sense a contradiction. This is the only movement in which Humble uses no metronome marking and also the only movement in which he indicates tempo with a traditional Italian marking. In many instances, I would regard Agitato as requiring a sense of urgency and therefore a more ‘on the front of the beat’ feel. However, the marking “Deliberately” suggests that the sense of “agitation” or urgency might be achieved through the use of accents and other techniques. When reading through the remainder of the score, there are numerous accents and tenuti, which confirm this view. Many of the accents are placed on off-beats. Humble uses two distinctive tempi in the fifth bagatelle, a tendency that can also be seen in the opening movement of his Fourth Piano Sonata. The second tempo in the fifth bagatelle appears at the end of bar 6 and is marked simply “Tempo II Sweetly.” I selected a tempo of approximately 132 per minim for the Agitato and around 96 per minim for the ‘Sweetly’ character. The writing in the ‘Sweetly’ tempo is obviously lyrical and quite contrapuntal. There are tantalising harmonic references that benefit from a slower tempo, as well as a more ‘on the back of the beat’ feel.

The sixth bagatelle contains the marking “Bounce easily (and intimately).” The tempo marking of 116-120 per crotchet was played slightly faster, at approximately 126 per crotchet. This tempo still enabled the sense of a gentle quasi-swing that seemed inherent in the writing. The concept of ‘intimacy’ in this context was interpreted as suggesting that the sound overall should not be aggressive. This was particularly relevant to the various articulation markings, where I elected to take the staccato markings a little longer than their exact length, so as to avoid an overly percussive effect.

The tempo marking of “Very slow” in the seventh bagatelle was interpreted a little faster than marked, at approximately 88-92 per crotchet. This gave more scope for balancing rubato and a sense of flow in the music.

The tempo marking in the eighth bagatelle (“Quick”; quaver equals 138-144) suggests a sense that the music is exciting. I preferred an underlying tempo of
approximately 136-138 rather than the faster end of the suggested range. This bagatelle lends itself to a rather playful reading.

*Style, idiom and character*

A broad view of the cycle of *Eight Bagatelles* reveals that there is great variety in the writing between each bagatelle. Whilst there is a general sense that the works are a lament, there is also reason to conclude that each movement points to some part of Humble’s training and musical background. The first bagatelle appears to point to Schoenberg and Berg and the Second Viennese School. The writing here is subtle and relatively less connected with the concept of jazz than some of the later movements. The sense of rhythm is relatively strict and the use of accents is seldom appropriate. I also took the view that phrasing in this movement was best interpreted with a generally longer conception of phraseology.

I interpreted bars 1 through 4 as a single phrase and the pick-up into bar 5 commences a further four-bar phrase into bar 9 (see Example 12).

**Example 12** – Humble, *Eight Bagatelles*, first bagatelle, opening bars

From bar 9, a single phrase carries through to the start of bar 19, with a momentary false ending at bar 14 (see Example 13).

**Example 13** – Humble, *Eight Bagatelles*, first bagatelle, bars 13-14 (false ending)
The quavers throughout this section did not move forward until bars 16 and 17, with an appreciable broadening over the last beat of bar 17. This plaintive gesture closely resembles a theme from the third movement of Shostakovich’s *Fifth Symphony* and is imbued with a similar sense of tragedy.

The second bagatelle is almost certainly a reference to the chorales of J.S. Bach. Indeed, Walker notes that the third movement of Humble’s *Fourth Piano Sonata* is derived from Bach’s chorale, BWV 60 (Walker, 2004: p. 163). The characterisation here is fascinating. The opening 19 bars are very much in the contrapuntal style of Bach and the phraseology is unmistakably of an 8 bar phrase followed by a 10 bar phrase. I had a definite preference for maintaining a strong sense of legato in the left hand, so as to give the listener the sense of a vocal texture (albeit in three parts, rather than four) (see Example 14).

**Example 14** – Humble, *Eight Bagatelles*, second bagatelle, opening bars

![Example 14](image)

At bar 20, the sudden interjection is a light reference to jazz rhythm (particularly the cross rhythm at bars 22-24) and a much shorter approach to phraseology. Here the writing is somewhat brash and the intervals suggest a slightly more optimistic feel. From bar 25 however, the chromatic voice-leading in the upper part and the relentless descending minor seconds interchanged between the hands confirm that the ending is anything but optimistic.

The third bagatelle conveys an unmistakable sense of tragedy. Harmonically and in its mood, this movement resembles the *Sehr Langsam*, the sixth of Schoenberg’s *Sechs Kleine Klavierstücke*, opus 19. Humble’s markings of articulation in this movement are given in greater detail than most of the other movements. In the opening bars, Humble
uses *tenuto* markings, phrased *staccato* markings, non-*staccato* phrases and *tenuto* markings (see Example 15).

**Example 15** – Humble, *Eight Bagatelles*, third bagatelle, opening bars

The fourth bagatelle is well in the style of *Third Stream* composition, with brief jazz-inspired interjections and short, pointillistic phrases throughout (see Example 16).

**Example 16** – Humble, *Eight Bagatelles*, fourth bagatelle, opening bars

The final seven bars share some similarities with the mixture of a calm melodic line against quite jagged, *staccato* chords, which is reminiscent of moments in Prokofiev’s *Visions Fugitives*. The fifth bagatelle has numerous off-beat accents but not the same sense of a jazz ‘groove.’ The music seldom settles into enough of a sense of pulse to establish any off-beat (see Example 17).

**Example 17** – Humble, *Eight Bagatelles*, fifth bagatelle, opening bars
This writing resembles that of Boulez and others, though the curious interlude at the second tempo hints at bi-tonality and again faintly resembles the more lyrical piano writing of Prokofiev, such as in the Second Piano Concerto and the Third Piano Concerto (see Example 18).

**Example 18** – Humble, *Eight Bagatelles*, fifth bagatelle, bar 7

![Example 18 - Humble, Eight Bagatelles, fifth bagatelle, bar 7](image)

The jagged, unsettled feel remains and even intensifies towards the end of the movement.

The sixth bagatelle carries by far the strongest jazz influence. Unlike his practice in the previous movement, here Humble sets up a sense of ongoing pulse (or ‘groove’) and this is maintained through a series of very carefully notated off-beat accents (see Example 19).

**Example 19** – Humble, *Eight Bagatelles*, sixth bagatelle, opening bars

![Example 19 - Humble, Eight Bagatelles, sixth bagatelle, opening bars](image)

The seventh miniature in the cycle bears some similarities in style and gesture to the third bagatelle. Here the writing is highly emotive and numerous pauses and points of emphasis within each phrase demonstrate that Humble is at pains to achieve a very specific sense of gesture.
The final miniature in the cycle is playful and ironic, with numerous off-beat accents (see Example 21).

This movement mostly requires a steady tempo, but benefits from a sense of the tempo being stretched very slightly to enhance the sense of irony at select moments.

**Further performance decisions**

One of the key aspects in playing Humble’s music is in formulating an appropriate concept of sound and understanding the composer’s unique musical background. Whilst Humble was a jazz musician, he was also an astute pianist and had a mastery of the possibilities for different sounds on the instrument. His textures in the *Eight Bagatelles* are mostly uncomplicated and benefit from a refined approach to balance and quality of sound.

In the opening bagatelle the voicing of the texture is vital, particularly in the more lyrical moments, such as bars 5-6 and later from bars 11 through 19, where the upper voice in the right hand needs to project with a beautiful singing sound. Transparency in the texture is important, but it is equally important that the various layers in the texture
can be heard. I chose to restrict pedalling in this movement, as Humble gives an indication at bars 19 through 20 that implies he is ‘reserving’ the sound of a wash of notes under pedal for this moment. To overuse the pedal early on would be inappropriate. In the earlier stages, particularly the more lyrical moments, I used mostly flutter pedal, to enhance resonance in the melodic part, but always being careful not to blur pitches together.

In the second bagatelle it was important to balance the texture in such a way as to ensure that the melody in the right hand projected, but also to maintain interest in the left hand, as this is truly polyphonic writing. At 19, I preferred an altogether brighter sound, with particular emphasis on the top voice in the chords, as the mood is quite different for these five bars. From bar 35, the duplet minims alternate between the right hand and the left hand. I attempted to maintain a sense of these minims being part of a single *crescendo* line. This meant giving this voice priority within the texture, all the way to the peak of the *crescendo* at bar 46.

The third bagatelle requires a highly lyrical approach to voicing and sound production (as the *cantabile* marking stipulates). Humble is very specific in maintaining multiple layers in the texture, such as at bar 2, where the voicing is split in both hands between sustained crotchets and quavers (see Example 15). I have formed the view, based on Humble’s extensive use of other accent markings throughout the *Eight Bagatelles*, that he uses *tenuto* both to extend the note value and also to add emphasis. I interpreted the presence of phrasing over *staccato* notes to mean that the sound should be detached, without being short and that the notes were part of the same gesture.

In addition to *tenuto* markings, Humble uses *staccato*, *marcato* and also the less common *martellato* or ‘vertical accent’ marking. To avoid confusion I will briefly explain the approach I have taken to each of these markings in Humble’s *Eight Bagatelles*. I have treated *marcato* or ‘horizontal accents’ as accents requiring an increase in loudness for the note in question. The *martellato*, or ‘vertical accent’ is both an increase in loudness over a note, as well as a detachment in the sound. In other words, this latter marking is akin to a combination of *marcato* and *staccato*. In the occasional instances where Humble has applied *martellato* and *staccato* together, I have taken the
view that this is intended to shorten the value of the note to a quarter of its length and give an accent in loudness (see Example 19).

My approach to staccato varies slightly across the eight movements of the cycle and the variation can be explained in terms of the difference in styles. As a general rule, I preferred longer staccato notes at the slower tempi and where the rhythmic scoring is relatively more orthodox. Much of the more ironic, off-beat writing at faster tempi benefitted from more percussive treatment. This included passages such as the later stages of the fourth bagatelle and throughout much of sixth bagatelle and eighth bagatelle. This general principle in *Eight Bagatelles* mirrors the distinction between the presence of jazz and more traditional Western Art music styles.

The luftpause in *Eight Bagatelles* have a very significant role, as they are placed at structurally important moments. Applying the reasoning Howat suggests of looking through the score at the various markings and then reading back and applying a consistent approach (see generally Howat, 1995), I formed the conclusion that the luftpause at bar 13 was the key to understanding Humble’s approach to this marking. The only effective reading at bar 13 was to treat the marking as suggesting a very small break in the sound.

Similarly, at bar 18 the B♯ in the left hand functions as a pick-up from the phrase leading into bar 18, which has a sense of ‘false ending’ on the fifth quaver beat of the bar. This highly emotive gesture into bar 19 requires a sense of momentum. Re-applying these conclusions to bar 13 and bar 5, I concluded that the p downbeat of bar 14 is intended to surprise. At bar 5, the luftpause was most effective when the tenuto on the second quaver of the bar was extended in length slightly. I used flutter pedal throughout the third bagatelle to assist with resonance, always being sure not to blur sounds together.

Perhaps the greatest challenge in performing the fourth bagatelle was in maintaining the differing levels of dynamics in extremely quick succession, particularly at the lower end of the spectrum and also in maintaining consistency in the application of articulation markings throughout.

The fifth bagatelle required control of the various jagged gestures, as well as a totally different mood and sound at bar 7 and later at bar 13. I used some flutter pedal throughout this miniature, to assist with achieving the articulation markings, which could not be achieved using finger legato only. At bars 7 and 13, I preferred to use a relatively
heavy *legato* pedal with changes on every crotchet. The luscious writing at this point benefited from a more resonant sound.

The sixth bagatelle seemed most effective when the tempo was kept very steady and only a small amount of flutter pedalling was used at key moments, such as in bar 5 and fleetingly on the crotchet at the end of bar 9.

The seventh bagatelle has a transparent texture that is homophonically conceived. There is, in my view, a definite sense of this miniature being conceived with vocal style in mind. Accordingly, I sought a quite different sound in the right hand, to project through the texture. Humble marks a single long pedal marking in the second and third bars of this miniature, which I interpreted as confirming that the melody in the right hand has primacy in the texture and requires maximum resonance. However, I was reluctant to continue the pedalling of a full two bars length throughout the melodic sections, as this seemed likely to result in the melody becoming blurred. Instead, I used a hybrid approach to pedalling, between a heavy *legato* pedal and instances of flutter pedalling to assist in maintaining the melody throughout. Where appropriate, the phraseology benefited from some subtle stretching of the tempo before the semiquaver passage at bar 12 and again in bar 26, followed by a very deliberate and measured *accelerando* for the ensuing semiquaver passages.
**Four Bagatelles (1994) by Ann Ghandar (1943 - )**

**Ann Ghandar**

Relatively little has been written about the work of Ann Ghandar. Ghandar studied piano with Lance Dossor and Larry Sitsky and studied composition with Richard Meale, then with Jonathon Harvey in the United Kingdom. Her early compositional output was heavily grounded in tonality, though from the 1970s onwards the composer began to experiment with more progressive techniques. Of her twenty compositions for solo piano, most are miniatures, with the exception of the Piano Suite and Reflections. Ghandar has a keen interest in sounds inspired by visual stimuli and particularly by different colours (Ghandar, 2002: p. 12). This is evident in compositions such as Photophoresis and Reflections. The composer was also influenced in the 1990s by naturally occurring sounds, such as insects, birds and frogs (Ghandar, 2002: p. 14).

*Four Bagatelles* (1994) is part of a series of works entitled the “Yitpi” series. The word “Yitpi” means seed, soul and will from the language of the Kaurna people, an Aboriginal tribe that inhabited the Adelaide Plains (Ghandar, 1994). *Four Bagatelles* comprises four sections of a single work, rather than a collection of miniatures. The only pauses between the movements are denoted by the fermate on the last notes of the first bagatelle and the third bagatelle.

The pitch material for these four small works is taken from the word ‘Bagatelle.’ The first bagatelle begins with the pitches B♭-A-G-(at)-E-(lle) in the right hand. The use of words as the basis for pitch selection is a recurring theme in Ghandar’s writing and bears some similarity with Keith Humble’s use of four-note mottos (see generally Walker, 2004). Shortly before composing the *Four Bagatelles*, Ghandar used this technique in another miniature, titled Dahab. In Dahab, Ghandar derives the pitches D-A-H (following the German pitch convention of treating B♭ as “H” and B♭ as “B”) (see Example 22).
Example 22 – Ghandar, *Dahab*, opening bars

In the *Four Bagatelles*, the pitch selection process leads to the predominance of seconds and its concomitant seventh. Only four segments of three notes or more throughout the piece absent the interval of a second or seventh in the right hand. An interval tally of the right-hand (excluding the chorale at bars 11-12) reveals that some sixty-two percent of all intervals in the right-hand in the first bagatelle are seconds or sevenths. A similar tally of the intervals played in the left hand produced a slightly higher figure of sixty-five percent. These intervals give the sonorities a rather ‘closed’ sound, further reflecting the prevalence of the B-A-G-E motto applying various order operators, including retrograde and inversion.

Example 23 – Ghandar, *Four Bagatelles*, opening bars
Example 23 begins with B-A-G-E in the right hand. The B♭-A-G-(at)-E-(lle) cell is repeated throughout the first bagatelle with exactly the same registration and scoring. The second ‘A’ in the word ‘bagatelle’ is omitted from the cell (see Example 24).

**Example 24** – Ghandar, *Four Bagatelles*, opening cell

The rhythm of the first three notes, B-A-G closely shadows the natural syllabic rhythm of the word ‘Ba-ga-telle,’ with the second and third notes as the shortest and longest syllables respectively. The lengthy ‘telle’ is represented by a crotchet. Thus, Ghandar has moulded both pitch selection and rhythm from the cell. In many instances the pitch selection in the left hand mirrors the pitch selection in the right hand. This occurs in the opening bar, where the pitches are C♭-C♯-E♭-F♯ (see Example 25). This occurs again at bar 8 in a different setting. The first four notes in each hand have the prime form 0, 1, 3, 6. In both instances, the next pitch to occur is the semitone between the fourth pitch in the right hand and the fourth pitch in the left hand respectively.

**Example 25** – Ghandar, *Four Bagatelles*, comparison of opening bar and bar 8

As a derivative set, the pitches 0, 1, 3, 6 produce the complement set 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 with the prime form 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9. The derivative and complement sets are heard sequentially in prime form in the right hand at bar 5. Here the B-A-G-E motive
commences on F and is inverted. For ease of comparison, the starting pitch is taken as 0 in Example 26 (below).

**Example 26** – Ghandar, *Four Bagatelles*, right hand, bars 5 and 6 and the row

![Example 26](image)

*Composing out and rhythmic variation*

Ghandar uses the B-A-G-E cell and fragments as the opening bar of each of five three-bar units in the first movement and the cell is always stated in 5/4 time. The first unit states the cell in its entirety and both of the next two statements (bars 4 and 7 respectively) shorten the remainder of the cell, so that bar 7 states the cell in its shortest form throughout the work. Here, the bar comprises simply B-A-G-E. The cell is finally restated in its entirety in bar 13 in the same rhythm as in the opening bar, albeit in retrograde.

Bar 10 states the cell in retrograde minus the B and the A. Essentially, Ghandar has applied the same system to formulating these final two statements of the B-A-G cell as in the second and third statements, although the cell is conceived of first in retrograde and is then abbreviated. The form of abbreviation used is a simple process of augmenting the penultimate crotchet, so as to create a minim and thereby displacing the material from the last crotchet beat. However, the displaced material is not displaced into the next bar; rather it is replaced by the augmented beat.

In bar 7, it is the third beat that is augmented, to become a dotted minim. In bars 4 and 10 the rhythmic replacement is caused by the augmentation of the fourth beat, so that the first and final of the five statements of the B-A-G-E cell occur in its complete form. In this sense, the system of augmented rhythmic ‘replacement’ is applied in a palindrome, which can be expressed in a number of ways. Perhaps the simplest and clearest of these is simply to express the final rhythmic value in the bar of each of the five statements of B-A-G in order, namely: 1-2-3-2-1. Ghandar re-uses elements of the cell in the closing
moments of the first movement, thereby perhaps extending the length of the pitch collection in the final statement of B-A-G. Each bar derived from the central cell is set apart from others in the piece by a dramatically different dynamic treatment. These bars are always scored \textit{ff} with most of the remainder of the work scored \textit{p} and \textit{pp}.

The harmonic language in the first movement has some relationship with the language of the Second Viennese School and in particular, of Alban Berg. The chorale at bars 11 and 12 shares unmistakable similarities with Anton Webern’s \textit{Variationen für Klavier}, opus 27. The second of the \textit{Four Bagatelles} is also built almost entirely from the interval of a second. Here the second is also represented by inversions and extensions as a seventh or a fourteenth, though rarely as a ninth. The composer freely interchanges the major and minor variants of the interval. Here, the B♭-A♮-G♮ cell is transposed to F♯-F♮-Eb (see Example 27).

\begin{example}
\textit{Example 27} – Ghandar, \textit{Four Bagatelles}, second bagatelle, opening bars
\end{example}

These three notes are almost always stated in the order F♮-F♯-Eb (or A♮-B♭-G♮ in the original register). The cells are less clearly delineated in the overall structure of the movement. Rather they are incorporated into a larger, highly chromatic scoring. This bagatelle has a prominent minimalist aspect, particularly in the left hand, where the C♯-B♮ cell is repeated with an alternation of D♮ and E♮ (see Example 27). In the right hand the B♭-A♮-G♮ cell is cycled with only two other developing cells that emerge high in the treble register. The first of these is the G♯-C♯-F♮ cell. The second of these is B♭-E♭-G♯,
which emerges in bar 20. This cell is almost an intervallic replica of the previous one. The only difference is the interval between the top two notes, which is a fifth in the first cell (G♯ to C♯) and a tritone in the second cell (B♭ to E♯). The second alternating cell receives its own accompaniment, based on the pitches A♯-G♯-F♯-D♯.

Ghandar’s approach is highly economical for the majority of this second bagatelle with only five cells used (three cells in the right hand and two cells in the left hand). The exception occurs at bar 22 where the composer suddenly interposes two new four note cells; one in the left hand – comprised of B♮-B♭-A♮-F♯ – and one in the right hand – comprised of F♯-E♯-G♯-G# (see Example 28).

**Example 28** – Ghandar, *Four Bagatelles*, second bagatelle, bar 22

The articulation and dynamics suddenly change to *staccato* and *f* and the rhythmic divisions shift to semiquavers, where the rest of the work is divided into quavers and larger note values. This is the only time in the second bagatelle that the dynamics exceed *p* and the remainder of the work is heavily pedalled, suggesting a blended *legato* sound. Thus, this single bar is an unexpected interlude, which dissipates as abruptly as it is introduced.

The pitch selection in the third bagatelle is vastly different from that of the first two. Here, the intervals are far more open, in the sense that there are very few intervals of a second or a concomitant thereof. Intervals of thirds and fourths are common here, with many triadic groupings suggested horizontally. Ghandar has used a series of intervallic cells in the right hand, juxtaposed against harmonies comprised of altered seventh chords and composites of the three-note B♯-A♯-G♯ cell.
Example 29 – Ghandar, *Four Bagatelles*, third bagatelle, bars 27-32

The third bagatelle, “In Waltz Tempo,” begins with the pitches G♮-C♮-F♮ in the right hand – two perfect fifths – and contains a near full statement of the row\(^\text{10}\) in retrograde transposition. For convenience and given that E♭ is the starting pitch (ending pitch in retrograde), it is designated as 0 in Example 29 (above). In the left hand the bass note and chord are often comprised of B♮-A♮-G♮. In the very opening bars, the first three pitches comprise one transposition of B♮-A♮-G♮, as F♯-E♮-D#. In the left hand, Ghandar is more willing to use small fragments of the row in a quite typical nineteenth-century waltz texture.

The pitch selection in the left hand results in a sense of extended harmonies, with a series of apparently altered and sharpened ninth chords, which in turn gives a sense of irony to the writing. The use of altered and ambiguous ninth chords in the left hand bears some similarities with Keith Humble’s later style.

In *Waltz*, Ghandar has elected to use mostly elements from the second hexachord in the row in retrograde. An exception can be found at bars 35 through 39, where 10 of the 12 pitches of the row are stated in retrograde. The consecutive perfect fourths in the second hexachord give a consonant sound, albeit with an open-ended quality. This is in marked contrast to the approach taken in the first bagatelle, where the early stages of the row are more prevalent.

\(^{10}\) The seventh pitch in the row (pitch class 2) occurs only in the left hand.
The final movement in the *Four Bagatelles* is comprised almost entirely of pairs of triadic chords and three-note quartal harmonies, with occasional altered seventh chords (see Example 30). The pitch selection here has much less direct relationship with the B-A-G-E cell.

**Example 30** – Ghandar, *Four Bagatelles*, fourth bagatelle, bar 42

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\begin{verbatim}
\textit{Presto}
\end{verbatim}
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The dynamic treatment of these chords emphasises the quartal harmonies and seventh chords with \textit{f} and \textit{ff}, thus continuing the use of implied harmony in the context of serial pitch selection. The motoric rhythmic setting of this movement in its \textit{presto} tempo provides an exciting ending to the set. It is noticeable that the register of this final bagatelle is generally lower than the register in the second and third bagatelles. This provides a relatively equal register balance in the set as a whole. Likewise, the tempi of the first and last bagatelles are more lively than those of the inner movements. As well as these similarities, Ghandar has returned at this point to delineating particular cells with specific dynamic treatment, as in the opening bagatelle.

**Form, Dynamic Form and Dynamic Scheme**

*Four Bagatelles* is in the form of a cycle of miniatures. The \textit{attacca} between the first and second movements confirms the view of the four miniatures as a single work, rather than as a series of discrete compositions. It was nonetheless useful to look at the form within each miniature, particularly in establishing similarities between the four movements. The movements were not through-composed, as the opening fragment in each case is repeated more than once, with some evidence of development. This lends a logical reading to the sense of dynamic form within each miniature.
The opening movement is best understood as having traits of *rondo* form, rather than a sense of development of the opening cell. The ‘bagatelle’ cell takes a declaratory role. In each case it subsides abruptly and an entirely new character is introduced. The dynamic form has elements of an end-accented model, with the B♭-A-G-(at)-E-(lle) cell elaborated in bars 13 and 14 (in retrograde). The final bar is much in the guise of a whisper, comprising of only three crotchet beats. The dynamic scheme reflects this as five steep peaks and five troughs (see Figure 13). As indicated, the dynamic form is suggestive of an end-accented model and the dynamic scheme was moderated somewhat in performance, to give greater force to the final **ff** marking.

**Figure 13** – Ghandar, *Four Bagatelles*, first bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph

In the second movement, the dynamic scheme was shaped more towards the middle of the movement (bar 22), with a distinct tapering in the last 3 bars (see Figure 14).

**Figure 14** – Ghandar, *Four Bagatelles*, second bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph
The dynamic scheme mostly reflects the dynamic form here, save that the $f$ at bar 22 does not represent a significant increase in musical intensity. It is an entirely self-sufficient moment of louder and faster writing, which appears and disappears equally abruptly. Thus, the dynamic form is very much flatter than the dynamic scheme.

In the third movement, the dynamic form tapers towards the last 5 bars, with the fragmentation and diminution of the opening cell. The unusual left hand melody at bars 45-46 marks the point of greatest intensity within the movement.

**Figure 15** – Ghandar, *Four Bagatelles*, third bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph

The opening 18 bars (27 through 43) retain the same dynamic marking. The dynamic form does not entirely follow the dynamic scheme. The dynamic form in the opening builds slightly towards the peak at bar 45 and there is a steady decline from bar 46 to the end of the movement, which is not reflected in the dynamic scheme. The dynamic scheme in the final movement peaks at bar 69, with a smaller peak at bar 64 (third bar of the ten-bar miniature).

**Figure 16** – Ghandar, *Four Bagatelles*, fourth bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph
The dynamic form of this movement is quite different from its dynamic scheme. The combination of sudden dynamic accents in the opening bars gives considerable intensity to the writing. The build-up from bars 66 through 68 has greater intensity than the actual climax in the dynamic scheme at bar 69. The final two bars are like an epilogue, much as in the opening movement of the cycle.

Having considered the dynamic form within each miniature, it is also of some use to consider the cycle as a whole. The dynamic scheme has a symmetrical shape, with the greatest intensity in the outer movements. The dynamic form follows a similar shape, though the most sustained intensity is in the opening movement (see Figure 17).

**Figure 17** – Ghandar, *Four Bagatelles* – Dynamic Scheme Graph (Cycle)

![Dynamic Scheme Graph](image)

**Style, idiom and character**

The opening movement of the *Four Bagatelles* bears elements of *recitative*, with length pauses between many of the short repeated fragments. The idiom is relatively esoteric, with aspects of pointillism and fleeting references to the harmonic and stylistic language of the Second Viennese School, particularly at bars 11 and 12, where the use of chorale is combined with a series of ambiguous, co-ordinate harmonies. The second movement is minimalist. The use of three pitches from the row in each hand facilitates repetition and their scoring as quavers within a 6/4 time signature ensures that the cells are scored with rhythmic displacement in many instances. The waltz-like scoring, whilst having a clear relationship with the nineteenth-century piano tradition, is unmistakably
related to the Neo-Classical serial works of Schoenberg, such as his waltz from *Fünf Klavierstücke*, opus 23, though Ghandar is more faithful to the traditional waltz texture, as one might find in the works of Chopin and others. The final movement has similarities with the second movement in its rhythmic simplicity and repetition. Elements of minimalism can again be identified. The use of rapidly interchanged adjacent triadic chords between the hands is a signature technique in the piano works of Sergei Prokofiev.\(^\text{11}\)

**Tempo**

The curious linking of the four movements suggested that it was worth investigating the possibility that unity of tempo existed across the four movements. This would, in all probability, have meant that the crotchet in the opening movement and the third movement might be equal to the quaver in the second movement and the minim in the final movement. However, after experimentation, this procedure left the second movement too slow. The alternative of taking the crotchet in the first movement as the crotchet beat in the second movement would have left the second movement far too fast. My eventual tempo choices made the tempo of each movement slightly distinct from every other movement.

The *animato* marking in the opening movement was interpreted as indication of character rather than of tempo, though in the busier passages I decided to play slightly on the front of the beat. Given the relationship between the pitches and the rhythm of the word ‘bagatelle,’ I decided to keep the tempo of this movement similar to the speed at which the word ‘bagatelle’ might be spoken in the ordinary course of speech. Although not mandated by use of the word as a source of rhythm and pitch material, the writing overall is quite conversational in this opening movement and hence the relationship between word and music seemed fitting. This indication provided a wide range, from approximately 72 per crotchet up to around 96 per crotchet. A tempo far beyond 96 per crotchet tended to sound rushed, though a tempo well below 84 sounded too relaxed for the *animato* character, particularly in the semiquaver section. Thus, the tempo in the

\(^{11}\) See for example *Piano Concerto No. 3*, opus 26, movement one and *Visions Fugitives* opus 22.
upper range (c. 90-92 per crotchet) was preferred. Whilst comprised of the same pitch row, the *Poco meno mosso* carries, in each case, a sudden change in the writing. Much of the contrast is created with the change in dynamics from *fortissimo* to *pianissimo* and a significant change in tempo is not necessary. Here the tempo was lowered to approximately 86 per crotchet. The more lyrical writing here benefits more from a sense of being ‘on the back of the beat,’ rather than significantly slower.

The *Andante* marking in the second movement would, in the usual course, suggest a tempo in the order of 72-84 per crotchet. As the writing is, almost without exception in quavers, it was decided that a tempo on the faster end of *Andante* would be preferable. The tempo was set at approximately 82-84 per crotchet. The tempo chosen for the third movement was approximately 40 per dotted minim. Historical examples give an enormous disparity between possible tempi for the waltz. Certain of Strauss’ waltzes suggest that tempo might be as slow as 40 per dotted minim, whereas works such as Chopin’s *Grande Waltz-Brillante* in Eb, opus 18 suggests the upper limit may well be in excess of 80 per dotted minim. I chose a relatively slow tempo, partly in response to the complex pitch relationships within the work. Many of the faster historical examples of the waltz include only a single harmony within most bars, with a passing tone between the pitches within that harmony. Such an approach to harmony permits a faster tempo to be comprehensible to the listener. Many of the slower historical examples exhibit more frequent harmonic shifts. As Ghandar’s writing relies on complex pitch relationships, it seems reasonable for those relationships to unfold on the slower end of the waltz tempo. The tempo in the final movement was set at approximately 116 per minim, which promoted clarity. There was little cause for *rubato*, as the idiom is reliant upon rhythmic irony, with sudden changes in register and unexpected interruptions used to great effect in the writing.

*Approach to dynamic markings*

The *fortissimo* at the end of the first movement was interpreted as being slightly louder than the four *fortissimo* markings that precede it. This was done to highlight the sense of the dynamic form as an end-accented model. At bar 9, I preferred a *crescendo* to
the literal reading, which would assume that bar 10 is *subito ff*. In the second bagatelle, the dynamic markings were mostly kept flat, though the pitches in the upper register were often played at a slightly higher dynamic level, so as to enable them to resonate and also to define the outer parameters of the texture. The opening dynamic in the third bagatelle remains for the first 18 bars. I elected to use small peaks and troughs, to shape the two long phrases in this section and the start of a third phrase, which develops at bar 4. My dynamic shaping of these phrases followed the relatively traditional approach, of aligning dynamic range with *tessitura* in the right hand. The *tessitura* usually peaked in the first half of each phrase. For example, in the opening phrase the peak in dynamic is at the A♯-F♯ in the right hand in bars 28-29 (see Example 29). Dynamic level is perhaps the single most important factor in creating contrast in the final bagatelle and the markings were interpreted as reflecting the idea of sudden contrasts, with minimal use of dynamics to shape phrases within the same dynamic level.

*Further performance decisions*

*Approach to sound production*

In the first bagatelle, I found that the two different characters required quite different approaches to the type of sound and approach to articulation. The opening character does not require any finger *legato* and the composer is clear in her instructions that the pedal is to be held through. I opted to play this gesture with a heavy detached approach though with the pedal held through. This resulted in a boisterous sound. The *poco meno mosso* benefits from a gentler sound, as the writing suggests instead a sense of lyricism. The texture has a homophonic appearance and I chose to interpret the upper voice with a *cantabile* sound.

In the second bagatelle whilst there is no phrasing marked, I preferred to keep the non-pedalled sections (with the exception of bar 22) *legato*. The contrast between finger *legato* and pedalled sound is still quite stark, as the textural writing in the pedalled
sections covers a broad range of the instrument, whereas the non-pedalled writing is much thinner in texture and far more melodic.

The third bagatelle has an unmistakably melodic style in the right hand, which benefits from being projected and from a relatively heavy legato approach throughout. I preferred to keep the left hand legato as much as possible, as any other approach seemed likely to be disruptive of the right hand. This was different at bars 45 through 46, where the intention was obviously for the left hand to take over.

The fourth bagatelle lacks a sense of melody, other than incidental relationships of voicing arising within the texture. As the writing features ironic juxtaposition of frequently dissonant triadic chords, the sound did not require a cantabile style. I opted for a far dryer approach to sound. The absence of articulation marking left open the possibility for either legato or staccato playing. I found that a relatively short approach to articulation and a more percussive sound enhanced the sense of irony that was generally evident in the writing.

**Pedalling**

The pedalling in the *Four Bagatelles* varied considerably across the four movements. The second and fourth bagatelles bore a number of similarities in the area of pedalling, in that both movements contained a relatively simple use of pedal and I did not depart from the composer’s markings.

In the opening bagatelle, there is a block pedal for the B♭-A-G-(at)-E-(lle) cell, but there is no pedal marking where the poco meno mosso moments occur. A literal reading of this marking would result in passages such as the left hand in bar 5 sounding unnecessarily broken up. I preferred to ensure that the polyphonic texture at these moments had maximum clarity and that pedal at selected moments would enable the sense of line to be preserved with clarity. I practised these passages without pedal, to isolate the moments where a fleeting moment of pedal would be necessary. Towards the end of bar 6, the re-introduction of the dotted rhythmic pattern and the low bass notes were suggestive of a small crescendo. A slightly heavier pedal here assisted with the crescendo and with delineating the ‘cross-over,’ as it were, of thematic material. At bar 9,
I preferred to use a small amount of pedal, as the left hand pattern was continued from the previous bar. This added to the resonance of the notes in the upper register. From bars 11 through 12, pedal was necessary, as finger legato was not sufficient to maintain a smooth transition from one chord to the next. Whilst in some instances, finger legato was possible, I generally prefer not to alternate pedal legato with finger legato, as the quality of sound changes. Thus, in this instance, it was far preferable to use pedal legato between each chord.

In the third bagatelle, the question of pedalling was a complex one, as the texture frequently resembled a traditional nineteenth-century waltz, with the low bass note at the beginning of the bar and the two note sonority in the middle register on the second and third beats. However, the resonant properties of the sonorities differ significantly from a nineteenth-century waltz, as there is not an evident triadic relationship between the pitches. The pitch relationships are unmistakably linear. Therefore, I preferred to prioritise clarity as much as possible. Some pedal was necessary, to maintain the legato lines in the right hand at times as well as the legato transitions from the low notes in the left hand to the pitches in the middle register. Generally, where pedal was used, it was only for a single crotchet beat. Whilst the pedalling in the third bagatelle was not executed in the sense of a nineteenth-century waltz, the sense of irony was found to be most effective when the work was interpreted with an approach to textural balance and gesture, similar to that which would be used in a nineteenth-century waltz. The low bass notes in the left hand were given some priority within the texture and where appropriate, the sense of lilt across the three beats in the bar enhanced the sense of gesture (see Example 29). This outcome was achieved by making the first and third pitches in the bar slightly longer.
**Concluding Comments to Chapter 3**

*Cambewarra* by David Lumsdaine

The systematic approach I adopted in my interpretation of *Cambewarra* led me to understand the music more deeply than I would have by merely reading the score and preparing it in accordance with the composer’s instructions. In a number of instances, the instructions gave an impression of the effect required, but not of the manner of achieving it. My eventual understanding of the composer’s compositional method and comparison of his use of different devices within that context led me to approach *rubato* in the second movement on the basis of a series of deductions about his other markings.

Generally, the progress throughout the work, from an emphasis on the composer’s own thoughts (as represented in the chorale) towards writing that is entirely dominated by bird-song led me to conclude that, whilst the composer approves of performances of sections of *Cambewarra* as short ‘stand-alone’ compositions, the work, when taken as a whole, mirrors a developmental model. This in turn influenced my approach to dynamic markings, particularly in relation to the scaling of dynamics in the *coda*.

*Kumari* by Ross Edwards

The research of the compositional method revealed that the various gestures in *Kumari* – some of which elicited fleeting moments of tonal gravity – were mere “musical contemplation objects” within a deliberately non-climactic musical tapestry (see generally Edwards, 1992). The understanding of Edwards’ interest in Zen Buddhism and popular music led to an approach to phrasing and voicing in particular that permitted the various hints at tonal direction to be articulated, yet with a distinct absence of any sense of developmental drama.

*Mountains* by Peter Sculthorpe

The interpretive approach to *Mountains* benefited from the systematic research of
Sculthorpe’s compositional method and formal analysis, by providing a very clear sense of the ‘architecture.’ I was then able to feed back through the score, using the various observations made at a structural level, particularly in the area of dynamics, so that the scaling towards the dynamic peak was gradual. The knowledge of Sculthorpe’s compositional style and his avowed interest in the Australian landscape also suggested that expressive possibilities in his music ought not be sentimentalised. Indeed, the conception of *Mountains* was almost certainly that of a tone painting and the grand gestures in the writing were interpreted largely as physical and spiritual forms, without being emotive.

_Eight Bagatelles_ by Keith Humble

The subtle style of Keith Humble’s writing, particularly the use of polystylism such as jazz and serialism required an understanding of the composer’s unique compositional method and his relationship with different musical styles. Throughout the _Eight Bagatelles_, I have been able to perceive and execute subtle differences, especially in the areas of sound production and appropriate use of _rubato_, as a result of having become familiar with Humble’s unique musical language. The dynamic form in _Eight Bagatelles_ shows that the dynamic peaks become progressively more ambiguous as the cycle progresses. The sense of a ‘point of arrival’ is unmistakable in the first three movements and to a lesser extent, in movement four, but is all but absent in the remaining four movements. The process of reading back through the score, to compare Humble’s use of certain markings in different contexts, was also invaluable in reaching a relatively consistent approach to articulation markings and to other performance directions, such as _tenuti_ and accents.

_Four Bagatelles_ by Ann Ghandar

The approach to performance research and interpretation in the _Four Bagatelles_ of Ann Ghandar resulted in a subtle approach to sound production, style, articulation and pedalling. In the area of sound production, the observations about the different styles throughout the cycle resulted in quite different approaches. The finger _legato_ approach to
the second cell in the opening movement helped to provide a relatively dry, but melodic sound, which contrasted well with the boisterous opening cell. The use of the row throughout the cycle showed that relatively more dissonant intervals were used in the second movement and far more consonant intervals in the third movement. This confirmed that the effect of the second bagatelle was mostly textural and therefore, it was not appropriate to over-Romanticise the short phrases. In the third bagatelle, the presence of a more consonant segment of the row was in keeping with the waltz style. Here I found it effective to use a subtle balance of flutter pedal and heavy finger legato, in keeping with my notion that this movement was intended to be overtly lyrical. In the fourth bagatelle, after experimentation with various approaches to articulation and in consideration of the approach taken in earlier movements, I found that a shorter approach to articulation was dynamically effective and created a suitable contrast with the other movements in the cycle. My performance of the cycle as a whole was influenced by my understanding of the fact that the dynamic form of the individual movements was quite diverse. The analysis of dynamic form was of great assistance in clarifying the stylistic diversity within these movements. The level of impact of the climaxes within each movement differed greatly according to the style. In the opening movement, the extremes of dynamics occurred throughout, but the very final bar is not in the same order as a gradually building climax. The writing here is volatile. This realisation fed back through decisions regarding the execution of dynamics elsewhere. The second movement had little or no climactic impact, being rather an interchange between two different textures. The third movement had the most clearly crafted sense of climax, though the writing was, overall, gentle and lyrical. The final movement, whilst having a significant peak in dynamics, has the counterbalancing element of humour, which counteracts any true impact from the build-up of dynamics late in the work. These findings, in turn influenced my decision to take a short articulation to the quaver passages, so as to enhance the sense of humour that was seemingly so inherent in the writing.
Chapter Four – Works written between 1994 and 2010

_Fas/Nefas_ for solo piano (2001) by Jane Stanley (1976 - )

I: _Nefas_ (For Bernadette Harvey-Balkus)

II: _Fas_ (In memoriam Peter Platt)

III: _Nefarious Dance_ (In memoriam Dulcie Holland)

_Compositional method and musical language_

_SERIALISM AND “ORGANIC LOGIC” IN _FAS/NEFAS_

Stanley’s music is strongly grounded in the language of serialism, though her work is pervaded by an organic logic, which draws upon some existing compositional techniques, including _bricolage_ and _collage_, which are combined in a unique fashion. The composer describes an underlying logic of “self-similarity” in _Fas_. This concept is based upon a form of logic that is similar to that of geometric fractals – figures in which “at every level, from the tiniest detail to the total form, the same basic shapes are involved” (Stanley, 2002: p. 1). Stanley gives the example of a tree branch separating into two branches, which may then separate into two more and so on. This idea was famously formulated by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in 1790 in his essay, _Metamorphosis of Plants_ and was of great importance to Anton Webern (Johnson, 1999: p. 217).

The process of assembling tiny fractals, re-organising them and combining them in slightly different ways throughout the composition is characteristic of Stanley’s use of _bricolage_. The fact that each cell is derived from an underlying row is suggestive of the

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12 _Fas/Nefas_ for solo piano: _Nefas_ commissioned by Bernadette Harvey-Balkus, premiered by Bernadette Harvey-Balkus, November 9, 2001, The Studio, Sydney Opera House; _Fas_ premiered by Andrew Robbie, April 24, 2002, Great Hall, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia; _Nefarious Dance_ premiered by Andrew Robbie, October 21, 2000, Great Hall, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia; _Fas/Nefas_ cycle first performed by Rohan Murray, _On the Edge of Sunset Series_, Melbourne Festival, October 12, 2005, BMW Edge, Federation Square, Melbourne, Australia.
concept of “total organisation,” as outlined by Griffiths (1995: p. 31). In Stanley’s work, there is scope for ideas that emerge in the compositional process to self-generate.

Stanley also applies the Fibonacci number sequence in the duration of sections in *Fas* and makes the observation that the further one moves along the Fibonacci series, the closer is the relationship of any two adjacent numbers to a ratio of the golden mean. An example of the Fibonacci sequence in Stanley’s music is the 8, 16, 26, 40 bar sequences in *Fas*. Stanley has indicated that the use of the Fibonacci number sequence and the Golden Ratio are no longer deliberate components of her compositional technique (Stanley, 2005).

*Pitch Selection in Fas/Nefas*

The pitch row is comprised of 13 pitches, though only 11 pitch classes, with E♯ unrepresented and pitch classes A♭ and B♭ duplicated (see Example 31). Throughout the opening section of the work, the row is divided into small cells or “fractals” (Stanley, 2005).

*Nefas*

*Form, Dynamic Form and Dynamic Scheme*

The Dynamic Scheme Graph for the cycle reveals that the final movement contains the most significant peak in dynamic markings in the final bars. The textural scoring at that point is extremely heavy and this assists in giving the sense of the cycle as having an end-accented model (see Figure 18).

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13 The fourth sequence was expanded by two bars.
Figure 18 – Stanley, *Fas/Nefas* – Dynamic Scheme Graph (Cycle)

*Nefas* is comprised of three sections of 27 bars, 54 bars and 29 bars respectively. Surprisingly, this symmetrical shape was not intended by Stanley (Stanley, 2005). The composer indicates that the work has many smaller subdivisions that were more significant in the compositional process. For example, the opening of the work is comprised of twelve nine-bar isorhythms, with an additional two bars (6/16 bar at 82 and the final bar) to complete the 110 bars in the work. As with many of her early compositions, Stanley made her pitch selections for this work on the basis of a pre-formed skeletal *isomelos* (Stanley, 2005). Notes are chosen and then others simply function as ‘passing tones’ within the larger structure. An example of this practice can be found in the opening of *Nefas*, where the isomelos pitch is D♭ in the right hand and the other pitches, such as the D♮ one octave above is a passing tone.

The opening 27 bar section then comprises three sets of nine-bar isorhythms. From the start of the bar 28 (start of the second section), the same isorhythm is cycled twice more. In the second phase of the piece the isorhythm is altered in four places. In addition to the added bars at 82 and 110, the sixth and seventh instances of the isorhythm (bars 54 and 63 respectively) the isorhythm commences with a 2/4 bar instead of a 3/4 bar. Stanley’s approach to isorhythms in *Nefas* involves incremental changes to relatively large schemes. The isorhythm model places metric emphases in appropriate places within the isomelos.
The Dynamic Scheme Graph in *Nefas* shows the peak in dynamic marking to be at the very end of the work (see Figure 19). However, the most sustained peak in dynamics occurs at bars 71 through 80 (approximately two thirds of the way through the work). Another significant peak occurs from bars 46 through 52, though the scoring here is far less relentless and the writing is suggestive of a number of troughs in dynamic intensity.

**Figure 19 – Stanley, Nefas – Dynamic Scheme Graph**

Stanley’s use of intervals at 71 through 80 has a more ‘open’ quality than throughout most of the rest of *Nefas*. By this I mean that she avoids almost entirely the interval of the minor second and most of the major seconds are expressed as sevenths and ninths. Generally, this results in a sound that encompasses more of the piano register and that is more striking.

**Pitch Selection and Composing Out in Nefas**

The pitch cells are set out in Appendix B, with each pitch cell denoted by its appearance within the row in Example 31 (below). It can be seen that the row contains two intervalically identical segments.
Example 31 – Stanley, Fas/Nefas, pitches in the row

The pitch cells for the first episode of Nefas are all taken from the first nine pitches in the row, which are first heard at bar 17 (see Example 32).

Example 32 – Stanley, Nefas, bar 17, right hand

After establishing a ‘pitch area’ early on in Nefas comprising of D♭ and D♯, Stanley introduces “a distant” call from bars 10 through 15, thus broadening the pitch selection in the right hand from two pitches to four. The entire row is first introduced in full by a succinct statement in the right hand at bar 34. Just as in the opening section, Stanley establishes a pitch area before increasing the level of randomness in the sound by using larger segments of the row (see Example 33).

Example 33 – Stanley, Nefas, bar 34
At bar 81, Stanley takes an entirely different approach to the use of the row. The new episode is humorous and clearly jazz-inspired. Stanley uses elements of counterpoint, as well as dissonant harmonies interspersed in the left hand. The composing out process here integrates the pitches of the row between the left and right hand. The section begins with a clear statement of the row commencing on the sixth pitch in the row (E♭) (see Example 34).

Example 34 – Stanley, Nefas, bars 81-83

Approach to Texture in Nefas

The impact of the writing here is achieved through incremental textural accumulation. The effect of left hand in this section is primarily textural, consisting of a cluster of notes in the lower register of the piano (see Example 35). Nonetheless, for the performer, considerable experimentation goes into the alternation of pitches in this tremolo.

Example 35 – Stanley, Nefas, opening bars
Four out of five of the notes allocated for tremolo selection are separated by a semitone. The bottom note comprises the only whole-tone interval and its use diversifies the interval structure and the effect of the tremolo. The pitch selection and order in the right-hand is entirely selected by the composer, rather than left to the discretion of the performer. The work proceeds for nine bars, with only two different pitches in the right hand (Db and D♭ one octave above).

**Style, idiom and character**

*Nefas* is mostly composed in a highly individualised and esoteric style, characterised by a sense of chaos and pointillism. Stanley describes the sound world of *Nefas* as “laden with signifiers of lawlessness and depravity.” The composer refers to the “dark, low register of the piano” and a “jagged, pointillist” harmonic vocabulary (Stanley, 2001). The use of swing in the latter section of the work merely involves the use of a single attribute from jazz rather than being in a jazz style, although most of the row in the right hand is scored within the same register. The remainder of the work mostly imbues a sense of volatility and chaos, largely as a result of the striking, pointillistic gestures throughout. Texture in *Nefas* varies from a drone-like scoring of the left hand to pointillism in both hands and a fleeting moment of counterpoint at bars 81-83.

**Tempo**

The tempo is marked by a metronome scoring at the opening of the work, though from bar 81, the decision was taken to relax the tempo temporarily with the marking “Tenderly (molto rubato, swung).” The momentary relaxation in tempo lasts a few bars and is then followed by a varying tempo (in keeping with the sense of rubato). These decisions were heavily influenced by the presence of contrasting gestures. Some more lyrical gestures were interpreted as being in keeping with the “Tenderly” marking and were interpreted ‘on the back of the beat.’ More violent interjections were interpreted as having more forward momentum.
Approach to dynamic markings

Throughout the cycle, Stanley utilises the marking *p poss.* as well as *p* and *pp*. In certain instances, such as in the opening bars, *p poss.* is found in relatively close proximity to markings of *pp* and *p*. At bar 10 the marking *p poss.* appears with the further annotation “barely audible.” The decision was made to treat *p poss.* as equivalent to *ppp*. At the opening of the work, the marking coincides with the sustained use of pedal and hence, it is difficult to keep the dynamic extremely soft. Some flutter pedalling was used, to avoid excessive resonance. This marking, as well as *f poss.* was used at structurally significant points within the work. In the opening section, the overall dynamic scheme is scaled between *pp* and *f*,\(^{14}\) thus suggesting that this section is altogether softer than the ensuing sections, which both include dynamics exceeding *f*. The *f* markings in this section were interpreted as being on the lower end of *f* than those in the two ensuing sections.

A similar link between structure and the marking *f poss.* was applied in the next section. The single use of the marking *f poss.* at bar 45 is structurally significant, as it immediately precedes the longest sustained use of the *ff* dynamic. This is one of only two sustained peaks in dynamics in *Nefas*.\(^ {15}\) Once these two points were located, the dynamics throughout the remainder of the work were scaled, to ensure that the two peaks would be clearly louder than other loud dynamics. There was one exception to this principle in the last three bars, which were also scaled as loudly as possible.

Performance decisions

As well as the decisions pertaining to pedalling and interpretation of dynamics, I decided to voice the pointillistic gestures in such a way as to highlight their shape. This often involved voicing out the upper notes in the higher register and the lower notes in the lower register. An example of this approach occurs at bar 53, where the top notes in

\(^{14}\) Save for one very brief peak at bar 28.

\(^{15}\) The other occurs at bars 74 through 78.
the upper chords (A♮-B♭-B♭-B♭) are emphasised. Likewise, in the bass the G♮ and cluster F♯-G♮-A♭ is made to project through the texture (see Example 36).

**Example 36** – Stanley, *Nefas*, bar 53

![Example 36 - Stanley, Nefas, bar 53]

The *tremolo* at bar 28 (B♭, D♭, E♭) has a distinct E♭7 sound, which is completed when pitch cell 2 enters on the second crotchet. The tempo marking of *mezzo forte* here was followed in the right hand. In the left hand, a slight accent was given to the very start of the *tremolo*, so as to capture all three pitches under pedal, but the dynamic was otherwise played *piano*, which increased to a gentle *mezzo piano* under pedal.

The sheer complexity of Stanley’s musical language requires careful consideration at a conceptual level. Once the various gestures were identified, a number of decisions were made about sound that only became clear during practice. In the opening bars, the balance between the D♮ and the D♭ was most effective when the D♭ was treated at a slightly higher dynamic than the D♮. In this way, the D♮ sounds much like a powerful overtone rising from the rumbling bass texture (see Example 35). A similar approach was taken with the second cell, introduced at bar 10. Here, the decision was made to give slightly more weight to the A♮ (see Example 37).

**Example 37** – Stanley, *Nefas*, bar 10

![Example 37 - Stanley, Nefas, bar 10]
This decision was, in part, arrived at by feeding back decisions made later in the work. The cell occurs at bar 28 where it is scored in the middle register with a rather conventional Eb\(^7\) harmony.

**Interpreting the composer’s markings**

Stanley’s expressive markings mostly apply to the manner of executing the desired outcome rather than being a description of the outcome. Sometimes Stanley provides both, such as at bar 10, where “a distant call” is supplemented by the instructions “\(p\) poss. (barely audible).” However, there are a number of exceptions. The first expressive marking in the score reads “Rapidly Bubbling,” which suggests a particular sound and approach to tempo. I took the view that this marking required a sense of constant forward momentum. I also believed it was important for the “rapid, random alternation of pitches” to provide constant motion, rather than consisting of sporadic interjections.

From bar 22, the marking “building maniacally” was interpreted to mean that the tempo moved forward and the grace-note figures were intended to be a distraction from the exact rhythmic values. The physical impossibility of some such rhythms (such as at bar 22) appears to confirm this sense of chaos and is in keeping with the style of the writing.

The marking “with relief” at bar 28 coincides with the more consonant harmony. This was in keeping with my decision to treat the A\(\#\) - G\(\#\) in the right hand as an accented dissonance. The sense of “randomness” referred to in bars 1, 28, 37 and 105 in the left hand creates some sense of discretion. Arguably, the performer might interpret this to mean that the incidence of pitches in the left hand should not be planned at all. I found that some planning was useful. Generally, in the opening bars I preferred to start most bars with the D\# somewhere near the start of the bar and to use the G\(\#\) and A\(\flat\) relatively less than the other three pitches. At bar 28, I preferred to start the bar with the B\(\flat\), but use the D\(\flat\)-E\(\flat\) with greater frequency.
The marking “with surprise” at bar 36 is implied, to some extent, by the sudden change in dynamic from \( f \) to \( ff \). I chose a relatively aggressive approach to the sound here. The marking “with determination” at bar 46 does not of itself explain the type of playing required here. The pedal marking “pedalling: shape into a continuous line, but avoid excessive resonance” gives the distinct impression that \textit{legato} pedalling should be used. I chose to take a rather bombastic and heavy accent to the rhythm.

The marking “Tenderly (\textit{molto rubato, swung})” at bar 81 is quite clear and again demonstrates Stanley’s propensity to combine description of the desired outcome with an instruction to achieve the outcome. In interpreting the swing feel in this section, some difficulties emerged where asymmetrical metres interchanged with symmetrical metres, such as at bars 93 through 94 and 97 through 98. At 93 and 94 I preferred to keep the swing oriented to the downbeats by simply shortening the semiquaver immediately following the quaver in each instance. At bar 98 I elected to lengthen the fourth semiquaver in the bar so as to keep the swing oriented towards the downbeat in the following bar, as the figure in bar 99 had something of a blues sound with the marked accents on the off-beat (see Example 38).

\textbf{Example 38 – Stanley, Nefas, bars 97-99}

The marking “slither” at bar 105 in the left hand is not accompanied by any indication of which pitches to use. I attempted to use a combination of white and black notes so as to avoid sounding excessively diatonic. Rather than merely “slithering” by \textit{glissando} I preferred to play random pitches in the left hand using different fingers. This decision also meant that I could be more flexible, in having small rises and falls within the rapid ascent. This approach seemed to capture the sense of “slithering.”
**Technical Issues**

The extreme pointillistic writing in *Nefas* required careful consideration of the various pianistic techniques used to execute large leaps and to maintain the dynamic contrast within this type of writing. From bars 38 through 45, the right hand crosses over the left hand in large leaps, whilst the left hand continues with the drone-like *tremolo*. This passage required considerable slow practice to build a strong kinaesthetic habit and also required a gradual refinement of the crossing movement so that the shoulders were constantly free of unnecessary tension.

**Fas**

**Pitch Selection**

According to Stanley, the composing out process in *Fas* employs *talea-colour* technique and a predetermined isorhythm/isomelos skeleton (see generally Stanley, 2002). This use of the row is very different from that found in most of *Nefas*. Of the pitch cells introduced in *Nefas*, cells 1, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12 make only fleeting appearances in *Fas*. Pitch Cell numbers 13 and 14 are not heard at all. Pitch cells 2, 3, 4, 7, 11, 15, 16, 17 and 18 appear regularly. As with *Nefas*, pitch cell 2 (A♮-G♯) plays an important role early in *Fas*. After the two full statements of the row in the opening bars, pitch cell 2 is the first fragment to appear from bar 18 where it is interspersed with cell 11.

The first new pitch cell in *Fas* is derived from the tenth and twelfth pitches in the row (pitch classes 3 and 6), which are both contained in the second of the two congruent tetrachords. A further dyad of the sixth and seventh pitches in the row (pitch classes 6 and 7) is used extensively and is frequently embellished with a D♯.

Several cluster chords are used throughout *Fas*. These can be found at bars 33, 36, 37, 39 and extensively from bars 47 through 67. A four-note cell is introduced at bar 80, comprising of pitch classes 0, 3, 7 and 9. The relationship of these pitch classes is that of
a combination of the first two pitches of the tetrachords, beginning on the ninth and thirteenth\textsuperscript{16} pitches in the row respectively, namely:

\begin{align*}
0 &- 7 - 5 - 11 \\
10 &- 3 - 8 - 6
\end{align*}

The approach to cell manipulation in \textit{Fas} is altogether more organic and overall more linear than in \textit{Nefas}. Fractals here are mostly mere embellishments to the underlying \textit{colour} whereas in \textit{Nefas} the fractals were interposed for such extensive periods that some quite extensive pitch areas were created from tiny fragments of the row.

\textit{Composing out}

Whilst the pitch selections in \textit{Fas} are made from the same tone row as in \textit{Nefas}, the way in which the row is applied in the composing out process differs significantly. Whereas \textit{Nefas} begins with a single repeated dyad and drone, \textit{Fas} commences with a complete statement of the row in a single line texture (see Example 39).

\textbf{Example 39} – Stanley, \textit{Fas}, opening bars

The exposed, slow moving texture, with its periodic \textit{sforzando} interjections over an otherwise whispered melody, mimics vocal \textit{Sprechstimme}. Here the repetition of certain gestures suggests repetition of a concept, as in the gradual refinement of a single thought

\textsuperscript{16} Pitches 13, 1, 2, 3 (noting that Stanley uses a 13-pitch row).
of a hypothetical protagonist. The absence of any accompaniment in the early stages lends itself to the view that these utterances are introspective. This further confirms the notion that these are almost the unspoken utterances of its protagonist.

**Dynamic Scheme and Dynamic form**

The dynamic form of *Fas* is intrinsically linked with the thickening of texture and is structured towards the latter stages of the work where the combined effect of louder dynamics, thick texture and broad-winged scoring adds gravity to the writing.

**Figure 20** – Stanley, *Fas* – Dynamic Scheme Graph

However, the dynamic form required careful consideration, as there were several competing attributes. Whilst the texture gradually builds towards a small focal point at bars 56-61, a more sustained peak in loudness and continued rhythmic momentum occurs from bars 83 through 105. The scoring of this continued climax is mostly through a thinner texture from bar 83, albeit that the dynamic is *ff*. This *ff* needs to be interpreted having regard to earlier instances of *ff*, such as bars 60 to 61 and as early as bars 38-39.

As well as using a relatively thin texture from bar 83, the scoring of the two hands at this point is mostly towards the middle register of the instrument and there are relatively few large leaps in register. The voice-leading in the right hand is especially smooth and maintains a sense of a single, continuous melody. The pedalling throughout
this section is marked in large blocks, mostly whole bars. This is of some assistance in maintaining the resonance and grandeur of the writing, but of itself is not sufficient, without the ‘reading down’ as it were, of the earlier ff markings.

**Style, idiom and character**

The style of *Fas* is remarkably different from the style in *Nefas* or *Nefarious Dance* and was interpreted as being akin to a slower movement within a sonata. The more intimate approach in *Fas*, as well as the unmistakable references to vocal writing, particularly at the very beginning, convey fragility, set between the “aggression” and “depravity”\(^\text{17}\) of *Nefas* and the “violence”\(^\text{18}\) of *Nefarious Dance*. The use of bird-sound in bars 16 through 33 of *Fas* distinguishes *Fas* from the outer movements in the cycle. Whilst references to bird-song occur in subsequent bars, these are interspersed during a gradual shift in the writing, which includes a series of cluster chords, mostly in the upper register (see Example 40) and more melodic and occasionally contrapuntal writing in the latter stages (see Example 41).

**Example 40** – Stanley, *Fas*, bars 49-53

![Example 40](image)

The heavy cluster material from bars 49 through 67 is gradually replaced, as the more melodic, often consonant material occurs from bar 70 onwards.

---

\(^{17}\) As per the composer’s notes accompanying *Fas/Nefas*.

\(^{18}\) As per the composer’s markings, such as at bar 146.
Example 41 – Stanley, Fas, bars 87-88

**Approach to tempo**

Some variation in tempo was used in Fas, mostly in the form of gradual *accelerandi*, rather than fleeting, localised instances of *rubato*. The decision was taken to vary the composer’s marking (*c. crotchet = 63*) at the beginning, to a slightly slower tempo of approximately 56-58 per crotchet. The tempo is maintained for the first three lines of the work, until a number of short bird-like gestures are introduced from bar 17.

**Approach to dynamic markings**

Analysis of the dynamic form of Nefas provided an understanding of the major focal points within the work and of the scaling of dynamics towards bar 105, which in turn necessitated some ‘reading down’ of louder dynamics, leading from bars 49 through 105. I decided to interpret the markings at bars 33, 36 and 38-39 as being almost at the peak of dynamics, as the material is quite distinct from the writing from bar 49 and this section is separated by softer dynamics through bars 40 to 45.

**Performance decisions**

Pitch cell 2 occurs at most major structural points in Fas, namely at the point of transition after the initial recitative-like introduction at bar 18; at bars 34-36 (after the ‘bird-song’ interlude); at bar 46 (shortly before the heavy cluster material is introduced)
and at bars 68 through 71 (at the start of the final climax). This fact was taken to support the view that this tiny fractal has a symbolic association.

The cell appears mostly as a grace-note figure, though the register and scoring vary (see Example 42 and Example 43). As pitch cell 2 was used at important structural points in *Nefas* and identified as a “distant call,” its pitch relationship was treated in *Fas* as having the same accent on the A♯, irrespective of the pitch order. This was despite the fact that, in most instances, there is no delineation in dynamic and no accent. However, in the opening gesture of *Fas*, the A♯ appears as a *sforzando*, with an accent and the G♯ is marked *ppp* (see Example 39).

**Example 42** – Stanley, *Fas*, bars 34-35

![Example 42](image)

**Example 43** – Stanley, *Fas*, bar 46

![Example 43](image)

The grace-note figures throughout *Fas* were interpreted so that the grace notes from below were weaker than the grace notes from above. This decision is based on the approach taken to the grace notes that include pitch-cell 2. In the grace-note figure including the C♯-B♯, the B♯ was given emphasis (see Example 44). This was based in part on the reading of this figure as an embellishment of pitch cell 14 (as identified in
Two grace-note figures appear before a crushed A♭-B♭ sonority, namely a D♮ and an F♮ from above (see Example 44). The approach to these figures was to give the grace notes almost equal weight. As the grace notes occurred from above and almost complete a B♮ harmony, a brighter approach to the higher pitch helps to define this apparent entendre.

Example 44 – Stanley, Fas, grace-note figures from bars 25-30

The B♭-A♮ grace-note figure was interpreted with a weak-strong accentuation, much like pitch cell 2 (which it resembles). However, very slightly more weight is given towards the grace note in this grouping than with pitch cell 2.

The approach to cluster chords in Fas was usually to voice clusters in the upper register in favour of the upper notes and to voice in favour of the bottom notes in the lower registers at lower dynamics. In some instances at louder dynamics and especially where the chords contain five or more pitches, the chords were voiced evenly to give a greater sense of weight to the texture.

In the final phase of Fas (from bar 68 onwards), whilst the writing is particularly melodic in appearance, there are no phrase markings. After experimentation I decided
that the traditional romantic approach of following melodic contour with loudness, did not produce a convincing result. Far more convincing outcomes were arrived at, by analysing the pitch selection groupings. The outcome of this inquiry produced several possibilities that were immediately logical and applied where small fragments were repeated several times. In some cases, the fragment is extended and in some cases it contracts. I made the decision to increase the dynamic where the fragments extended and I decreased the dynamic where fragments contracted. This decision is based in part on extrapolation from Stanley’s marking at bars 70 through 73 where the fragment initially expands and then suddenly contracts. This corresponds initially with a crescendo and a sudden mp marking where the fragment contracts. Applying this method throughout the remainder of the work produced a convincing reading.

**Technical issues**

One of the greatest challenges in performing *Fas* is to achieve the many layers of dynamic and tonal control. The unusual scoring in the opening bar requires the *staccato sforzando* A♮ to be caught by the pedal (see Example 39). This requires a powerful *sforzando* and the player needs to depress the pedal almost at the same time that the damper (firstly activated by the key mechanism) touches the string. Stanley is generally more exacting with the placement of pedal in *Fas* than in *Nefas*. At times the pedal marking lasts for lengthy periods and is used to maintain resonance, particularly in the quieter moments. Here it is important for the player to execute the fine differences between the softer dynamics with a keen sense of the extent to which the position of bass tones within the isomelos can be used to add resonance to the pitches in the upper register.

The G♮ in the first bar under pedal will tend to build resonance, so that the *pp* that follows will sound louder than desired. Likewise, the E♭ in the bass will tend to build resonance for the A♮ (*pp*) in the following bar (see bars 3-4 in Example 39). Later in the work, pedalling is less specific. The pedal is marked continuously from bars 48 through
to 63. Here, some pedal changes will be required in order that the quite different textural and dynamic settings can be heard. For example, from bar 49, the crescendo to f in a thick texture is followed by a sparse pp. In order to achieve this effect, changes or half-changes of the pedal are necessary. Bars 49-50 resemble and seem to develop from the climactic material that precedes this moment (see Example 40).

**Nefarious Dance**

**Composing out in Nefarious Dance**

Stanley’s approach to pitch selection in *Nefarious Dance* bears more similarities with the approach taken in *Nefas* than in *Fas*. Here, the use of fragmentation is at its most extreme, though the use of pointillism is less constant. Whilst large leaps in register occur, they are mostly used as punctuation or emphasis (see Example 45).

**Example 45** – Stanley, *Nefarious Dance*, opening bars

The use of fragments in *Nefarious Dance* differs from the approach taken in the two preceding movements in the cycle. The use of tiny fragments for the most part resembles *Nefas*. However, no single fragment is used exclusively in the way that pitch cell 1 occurs at the start of *Nefas*. As with *Nefas*, pitch cell two occurs at significant structural points within the work. This includes the very opening, bar 28, bar 74 and bars 133 through 145. The cell is expanded to a three-note cell, namely A♯-G♯-Db, being pitch classes 7-5-11 (see Example 45).
**Style, idiom and character**

The style of *Nefarious Dance* is highly individual and as diverse as the descriptions within the work, which vary from “mysterious,” “violent” and “explosive” to “gentle” and “sweet.” Stanley uses the combination of extreme dissonance and register separation to embellish the relatively transparent voice-leading that ensues in the middle register throughout much of the work. In building towards the more climactic moments, much of the writing is concentrated in the extreme registers, though the actual peaks in dynamics usually correspond with the re-introduction of the quasi-anthemic material, first introduced in the opening bar (such as in Example 46).

**Example 46** – Stanley, *Nefarious Dance*, bars 28-29

![Example 46](image)

**Form, Dynamic Form and Dynamic Scheme**

The Dynamic Scheme Graph for *Nefarious Dance* is clearly an end-accented model (see Figure 21).

**Figure 21** – Stanley, *Nefarious Dance* – Dynamic Scheme Graph
The form does not follow any traditional model and is best understood as being through-composed. From the point of view of Dynamic Form, *Nefarious Dance* is quite complex and must be considered in the light of its form type. There are two pitch cells that are established in a manner resembling a sense of ‘development.’ The three-note version of pitch cell 2 occurs throughout the opening page where a second cell is introduced at bar 15, built from the last four pitches in the row, namely C♮-F♮-B♭-A♭. For convenience, I will refer to these to cells as $a$ and $b$ respectively. The interplay between these two main cells hints at subject development. There is however, no linking of the two subjects in the final phase of the work. The *coda*, whilst bearing some incidental pitch relationships with $a$ and $b$, does not link the cells together, but focuses mostly on $a$.

In drawing together the relationship between $a$ and $b$ and the dynamic form, it is apparent that $a$ has a climactic quality and $b$ has a calmer quality. This is, in part reflected in the Dynamic Scheme. There are many *forte* markings within the work and given the use of the extreme *fff* marking in the final 15 bars, the work will all too readily sound relentless. Thus, there was a need to prioritise in loudness as between the *f* markings in particular.

**Approach to tempo**

As with the two earlier movements in the cycle, the tempo for *Nefarious Dance* is expressed approximately. The decision was taken to apply the tempo as marked at the opening, with some subtle variation at selected points. These include holding the tempo back very slightly with introduction of the new theme “gently” at bar 15 (and again at bar 53, but not at bar 91). Whilst the concept of loudness and pace might suggest forward motion at this point, there is an unmistakable timidity in the effect of the writing, which is best achieved by holding back the tempo, as if to sound uncertain. The approach to tempo in general has a precipitous quality, in keeping with the volatility in the writing, though most variations in tempo are extremely small. The tempo is held back to a minute degree at bar 28, with the sense of grandeur in the climactic writing here (see Example 46).

The *rubato* indications at bars 39 and 86 are similar in many respects, as both lead into the “gentle” interludes at bars 53 and 91 respectively. At bar 39, it was assumed that
the fastidious dynamic markings sought to add grandeur to the louder moments. This is confirmed by the use of cluster chords in many of the louder moments. Applying the principles described by Berry and others, I decided to hold the tempo back slightly in these moments and to move forward in the softer dynamics, particularly where the writing is in a single line.

**Approach to dynamic markings**

Dynamic scaling in *Nefarious Dance* presents many challenges. The score is littered with violent *ff* interjections and has a climactic final phase, which commences *ff* and ensues for 40 bars (bars 121 through 161). At the lower level of the dynamic range, the expressive *p* markings at bars 15, 53 and 91 were interpreted as being slightly louder than the *p* markings elsewhere. Many of the other markings of *p*, *mp* and *mf* were interpreted at the lower end of the scale for those markings. There is a risk of the work sounding loud throughout. The *f* markings at bars 16 through 18 were read on the lower end of the marking, so as to maintain a sense of distinctiveness between the occurrences of cells α and β.

**Interpreting the composer’s markings**

The composer’s expressive markings in *Nefarious Dance* mostly give a sense of effect, as well as the execution of the effect. Perhaps the only significant exception to this was the marking “With great freedom, but mysteriously” at the opening. I applied the concept of “freedom” as implying that *rubato* and *agogic* might be applied liberally throughout the work. The marking “mysteriously” is more difficult to define. I interpreted this marking to suggest that the use of *rubato* and *agogic* should not result in the gestures sounding deliberate or laboured. In practice, I preferred to keep a sense of the tempo as being on the front of the beat and sought to avoid too many instances where the underlying tempo might seem to have dropped. Stanley gives clear indications where *rubato* might be effective, such as in bars 39 and 86.
In some carefully selected instances where the dynamic was very loud, some broadening was used to give a sense of grandeur to the gestures. An example of this can be found at bar 28, where the marking “Explosively, rhythmically precise” suggested a sense of the writing being broader and perhaps slightly on the back of the beat. The marking of “Explosive” is quite apt and applies particularly well to the low bass cluster chords that punctuate the writing. The marking “rhythmically precise” at bars 28 and 76 is unusual and confirms the view that rubato might be applied liberally elsewhere.

The marking “gently” at bars 15, 53 and 91 seemingly has a clear meaning. However, the slight difference between “Gently,” “Gently, sweetly” and “Gently, sweetly (but more hurried than before)” required further examination. I took the view that “Gently” suggested a legato approach to phrasing at a soft dynamic, with some rubato within the phrase to give a sense of direction. I also preferred to keep the phrase longer, rather than to punctuate the phrasing deliberately with a sense of beat. I also elected to voice the left hand much more lightly than the right hand to give a sense of transparency to the writing and draw attention to the melody. When similar writing occurs at bar 53, the phrase is more elaborated. I employed slightly more rubato here initially, with the tempo held back slightly.

From bar 58, there is a clear sense of building towards the ff at bar 62 and I chose to keep the tempo moving forward. This was a more chaotic and abrupt sense of building than in many other places in the work. The third marking of “gently” carries the additional instruction of the tempo being “hurried.” I took the view that the ensuing section was comprised of deliberately incomplete phrase fragments, each of one to two bars in length. These fragments surge forward and constantly give the sense that they will reach a point of resolution without ever doing so.

**Performance decisions**

*Nefarious Dance* explores the dynamic and expressive extremes of the instrument from “Sweetly” and “Gently” to “Explosive.” A number of variations in the use of pedal assisted in reaching this end. The “Gentle” character was most effective with a maximal finger-legato and a light flutter pedal to maintain a sense of resonance. When this motive
returns at bar 91, I used a slightly longer flutter pedal and deliberately blurred some pitches together to tie in with the sense of the music hurrying forward and generally having a more chaotic effect.

The “Explosive” motive was generally approached with a relatively aggressive attack. This is a very different approach to sound production from that which I would use in pre-twentieth century repertoire. This involves a more ‘downward’ attack at the keyboard, rather than producing the sound ‘from on the keys.’ By this, I mean that in more traditional repertoire, my practice is to use an approach where the mechanism of the arm pushes against my body weight to create the sound and the fingers literally spring from the keys. In Nefarious Dance, I was prepared to allow my body weight to move forward into the keys, which resulted in a more percussive sound.
Alba (1994) by Tim Dargaville (1962 - )

Tim Dargaville

Tim Dargaville studied composition with Richard Meale and Keith Humble and studied piano with Michael Kieran Harvey. He also studied percussion with Master Drummer Kobla Ladzekpo and Sri TAS Mani and has a great interest in music from Africa and India.

Alba

Dargaville’s harmonic language vacillates between occasional atonality, pantonality and at other times altered modality. Rhythmically, his music is imbued with West African tribal rhythms – an area of the art form that the composer has studied in some depth. Dargaville has written two large-scale works for solo piano, Alba (1994) and Negra (1999) and both works were composed for pianist Michael Kieran Harvey. As with Stanley, Dargaville notes that his compositional method is constantly changing and that he would no longer write works in this style. He points out that rhythm is one of the main compositional forces in these compositions (Dargaville, 2005).

Alba begins with a lengthy ad libitum introduction. The score contains broken bar lines and numerous fermate to indicate the moments of rhythmic accent and pitch groupings. The work evolves organically via subtle transformation of similar rhythmic material and pitch material, as well as the use of ostinato. Some similarities can be found between Nefas and Dargaville’s Alba in this regard.

Pitch selection

The pitch selection in Alba is remarkably economical, with all of the material for the work derived from the opening measures. The opening measures combine a sequence built on the Dorian mode, with occasional chromatic passing tones added and with more
progressive interval class sequencing. When discussing his pitch selection, Dargaville indicated that he did not choose to adhere to any existing mode (Dargaville, 2005).

The material in the opening measures does not consist of subordinate harmonies, but rather of co-ordinate harmonies, as defined by Dahlhaus (1990). The only consistent harmonic support is comprised of a low B½-C#-D½ chord, which forms a deep bell-like drone throughout the opening measures and extends into the following episode of the work (see Example 47). Dargaville opens the work with a three-note cluster in the bass. The interval structure bears similarities with the opening bars of Keith Humble’s *Eight Bagatelles*, Humble’s *Fourth Piano Sonata* and also the first of Carl Vine’s *Five Bagatelles*. The pitch cell in this instance comprises three of the four notes that open the *Five Bagatelles* of Carl Vine, namely (B½)-C#-D½-E½.

Example 47 – Dargaville, *Alba*, bar 1

![Example 47](image)

**Composing out**

There are two main pitch areas in the opening measure, comprising of the four-note set 0, 2, 3, 5 followed by two intervallically identical tetrachords with a distinctly modal flavour, followed by a series of pitches demonstrating the seed for a pitch class model that becomes prominent later in the work. The approach to pitch organisation is serial, though the composer has built in the freedom to change the order of pitches, where necessary and also to applying ‘germinating’ procedures, such as the interval class model.
Despite the closed, dissonant quality of the opening chord cluster, the ‘introductory’ section of Alba contains examples of traditional harmonic progressions and also contains seven repeated pitch cells, here designated Alpha (α), Beta (β), Gamma (γ) Delta (δ), Epsilon (ε), Zeta (ζ) and Eta (η). The cells are set out in Appendix C. These cells are used throughout most of the remainder of the work and often are combined in sequence. The cells are diverse in their pitch make-up and have varying degrees of harmonic reference. Rather than describing every pitch cell and its harmonic relationships in detail, I have presented a summary of the manner in which the cells are used and a brief summary of the harmonic properties of each (see Table 1).

**Table 1** – Dargaville, Alba – summary of cells and harmonic properties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cell</th>
<th>Harmonic or other reference/ function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>α</td>
<td>Highly dissonant, mostly functioning as a drone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>β</td>
<td>Dissonant, some ambiguity between references to major and minor harmony. Frequently appears in sequence with α.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>γ</td>
<td>Consonant with open fifths and a sense of extended ninth harmony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>δ</td>
<td>Highly consonant with two open fifths hinting at B♭⁹. Frequently combined with γ, which produces an enharmonic equivalent to a 13th chord built on G with a sharpened 7th pitch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ε</td>
<td>Highly consonant and triadic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ζ</td>
<td>Sense of chromatic progression between triadic harmonies of G-minor and B-major.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>η</td>
<td>Pitches in sequence in a diatonic scale. Adjacent and not strongly harmonic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When presented together, the first two cells (α and β) hint at a ninth chord built on B. The ambiguity between the major and minor qualities between the D♮ and D♯ and also between F♮ and F♯ is reminiscent in some respects of the major/ minor ambiguity employed in Bartók’s *Allegro Barbaro* and subsequently in *Marcia* in Bartók’s *Sixth String Quartet* (see generally Karpati, 1994: pp. 433-458). The combined effect of the slow tempo and disparate pitch settings hints at harmony, and the absence of any formal metre lends an unassuming stillness to the opening gestures.

The pedal throughout the introduction has important implications for the performer’s sense of harmony in the writing. In the opening systems, Dargaville scores a primary scheme of pitches against a texture saturated with pedal and an elaborate series of harmonic references. By combining cells ε, ζ and η in the opening system, four interlocking triadic harmonies is inferred, commencing with a D-major harmony, which shares it’s D♮ with a G-minor harmony, then B-major to Bb-major (see Example 48).

**Example 48** – Dargaville, *Alba*, voice-leading in the opening system

![Example 48](image)

The ensuing section of the work is again based on a group of cells that are repeated in cycle (see Example 49).

**Example 49** – Dargaville, *Alba*, right hand, bottom system, page 2 (unmeasured)

![Example 49](image)

Due to the grace note and the unison, there are 14 distinct vertical entities, but E♯ does not appear in this sequence.
The unfolding of the intervals at bar 2 occurs with even more uniformity than in the opening systems. Three pitch regions are methodically propagated from the first three pitches (G♯, B♭, C♯) with adjacent semitones. The pitch selection is ostensibly an alternating interval class sequence of classes 4-5 (see Example 50).

**Example 50** – Dargaville, *Alba*, alternating interval class sequence at bar 2

![Example 50](image)

The basis for this pitch class sequence is introduced in the opening system where it occurs in the form 3-4-5-4-5 (Example 51).

**Example 51** – Dargaville, *Alba*, interval class sequence from the opening system

![Example 51](image)

By the fifth and sixth systems of the work, the cell gradually evolves so that all seven cells are revealed (see Example 52).

**Example 52** – Dargaville, *Alba*, third system, page 2 (unmeasured)

![Example 52](image)
Rhythmic schematisation in Alba

By way of illustration, I will demonstrate the type of rhythmic schematisation used in Alba. From measures 7 through 10 the composer applies a sixteen unit rhythmic palindrome. The writing here closely resembles the fourteenth and fifteenth century motet tradition of talea-colour, a technique similar to the hocket used by Louis Andriessen in Hoketus. When interviewed, Dargaville confirmed that Louis Andriessen has been a major influence on his writing (Dargaville, 2005). The rhythmic values from the seven occurrences of the cell in the middle stave are set out below.

```
3-1-2-1-1-2-1-1-2-1-1-1-2
1-3-3-1-2-1-1-2-1-1-2
1-2-(2)-1-3-3-1-2-1-1-2-1-1-2
1-1-2-1-(2)-1-3-3-1-2-1-1-2-1
1-2-1-1-1-2-(2)-1-3-3-1-2-1-1-1
2-1-1-2-1-1-2-(2)-1-3-3-1-2-1
1-1-2-1-1-2-1-1-2-(2)-1-3-3-(3-1)\textsuperscript{19}
```

The isorhythm (or talea) $3-1-2-1-1-2-1-1-2-1-1-2-3$ is shifted by two rhythmic values for each repetition of the cell. Thus, at the point the pattern ends, the next version of the isorhythm would be:

```
3-1-2-1-1-2-1-1-2-1-2-1-1-2-3\textsuperscript{20}
```

Agawu describes three principal modes of West African drumming, namely speech, signal and dance (1987: p. 415). Dance mode is characterised by the regularisation of complex rhythmic patterns. It is also a common practice in dance mode for one part to provide a more complex setting of another layer within the texture, so that

\textsuperscript{19} Bold font indicates the first and last values in the series.

\textsuperscript{20} The two consecutive dashes demonstrate the middle of a near complete palindrome.
both occur simultaneously, but with the more complex layer of rhythm supporting the other (Agawu, 1987: ibid.). Dargaville uses a technique of this type at bar 2 in *Alba*. In Example 53, the middle voice provides a rhythmically and motivically complex version of the principal part contained in the top stave.

**Example 53** – Dargaville, *Alba*, bar 2

The top stave in the right hand doubles selected pitches from the middle stave. Whilst these are expressed as quavers, the actual note lengths vary from a semiquaver length to a crotchet. The dynamic scheme suggests that the upper part is to be the most prominent. In practice, the less resonant quality of the upper register of the instrument requires a greater dynamic to achieve the overall effect, which is predominantly a textural quality. The middle stave maintains a sense of pulse throughout.

There is frequent use of repeated *ostinato* in *Alba*. From bar 2, for example, the left hand follows an obvious pattern through four cycles (see Example 54).
In each of the above examples, the underlying quasi-harmonic pattern resembles a IV-I cadence (see Example 55).

The pitch material is incrementally altered during the four cycles, albeit within a similar isometre. The third statement of the isometre is an exact rhythmic replica, in every respect, of the first statement. The remainder of the work proceeds similarly with each section being part of a new isorhythm/isometre paradigm. The extensive use of talea-colour in Dargaville’s work is an example of the phenomenon Curt Sachs refers to as metric “dissonance” (Sachs, 1953: p. 41) namely, where two serial elements are cycled against each other. Similarities can be found here between Stanley’s use of
“isomelos/isorhythm” and skeletal planning in *Fas/Nefas*. The highly sophisticated pre-planning of both pitch material and self-generating rhythmic patterns is perhaps the most striking similarity.

Similarities are evident here between Dargaville’s approach to rhythm and cell transformation and the work of Olivier Messiaen. As with Messiaen, the transformation of pitch cells is carried out with meticulous detail and the use of non-retrogradable rhythms is also present. Messiaen’s inclination to incorporate less organised elements, such as bird calls and occasionally primal harmonies is an important difference. Dargaville is less inclined to juxtapose primal harmonies against idiosyncratic writing.

**Form, Dynamic Form and Dynamic Scheme**

*Alba* is composed in a series of episodes with elements of subject development. The manner in which cells are combined in the final bars is reminiscent of cyclic form, though the work is largely episodic, rather than cyclic. The Dynamic Scheme Graph shows an obvious end-accented model (see Figure 22).

**Figure 22** – Dargaville, *Alba* – Dynamic Scheme Graph

The first significant peak in the dynamic scheme occurs at bar 27 and peaks again shortly thereafter, at bars 53, 91, 111, 141 and 149 through to the end. Whilst the
dynamic form of *Alba* is also an end-accented model, the various peaks and troughs in the dynamic scheme were prioritised and are discussed further below.

**Style, idiom and character**

From the stylistic perspective *Alba* is an interesting cross-pollination of ancient traditions, such as West African drumming and traditional *talea-colour*, together with progressive elements of total organisation and hints at elements of jazz, particularly in the interweaving of references to modality and serial elements. Dargaville’s writing is truly eclectic and results in an intensely personal and unique sound. When interviewed about *Alba*, Dargaville described the work as something of a study in rhythm (Dargaville, 2005). The relative stability in the combination of pitches throughout *Alba* leads to a considerable level of self-similarity between the sections, notwithstanding the elaborate rhythmic planning.

**Tempo**

Dargaville emphasised to me his view that the opening gestures should be extremely slow (Dargaville, 2005). The tempo in the opening pages of *Alba* was found to be most successful at a tempo of between 30 and 32 per crotchet. Consideration was given to the tempo in the ensuing section (69 per crotchet) and the decision was made not to create unity of tempo, but to maintain a sense of timelessness in the opening pages. The tempo of 69 in the ensuing section was treated approximately as marked, or very slightly slower, at around 66 to 69. Unity of tempo is maintained through this section, with the semiquavers at system 7 (bottom of page 2) at 92 per dotted semiquaver, in compound quadruple time. The sense of unity of semiquaver speed is maintained in the main through various metric modulations, until bar 115, where the semiquavers suddenly accelerate to 92 per semiquaver quintuplet. This shift in tempo is maintained for the remainder of the work through numerous metric modulations with one exception and was executed in accordance with the composer’s metronome markings.

---
21 At bars 123, 132, 140, 141, 149, 157, 165 and 185.
Approach to dynamic markings

Throughout the first 28 bars of Alba (five pages, including two pages that are unmeasured), the writing is scored across three staves. In the first four systems, there is only one dynamic marking of ppp, though there are several small crescendi and diminuendi. The overall effect in these opening systems is largely unclimactic. Within the texture, certain pitches are scored to be held over, though much of the writing is scored with long pedal markings. The interpretation taken in this project was to treat the longer pitches in this section as a primary scheme and as having a louder dynamic marking. It was also decided to maintain a legato line between these pitches using finger legato. The pitches at the top of the instrument were played at the upper end of the dynamic markings, so as to ensure their presence in the texture.

At the sixth system, the dynamic increases to mp (after a short crescendo in the fifth system) and it is from this point that the dynamics begin a gradual ascent. From the seventh system, Dargaville scores three distinct dynamic markings for each stave. Based purely on the dynamic markings, there is no evidence of a climax. Markings at bar 11 and 24 suggest only subito shifts. However, the decision was taken to make a gradual climax from midway through the fifth system to the end of bar 37. The treatment of the mp dynamic in the left hand from bar 2 (eighth system) was treated more loudly than in the two preceding systems. A melodic line emerges at this point in the middle of the left hand and was voiced at or slightly above mp. From bar 24, the left hand dynamic was read slightly louder than mf and continued to build to bar 37.

From bar 38, the p marking was read as having three layers, namely, a central melodic line (read as p or slightly louder), a bass ostinato, (read at around p or slightly below) and various grace-note figures that are mostly read as pp. Occasionally, the melody crosses through the grace-note figures and is voiced accordingly. From bar 54, the marking of mf was read down slightly, so as to prevent the crescendo to bar 64 from being excessively loud. At bar 84, the mp dynamic was voiced slightly below the marking, as this point marks a significant shift in the writing. It is from this point that the

At bar 175, the semiquavers are scored at 116 per dotted crotchet, which gives a sense of the quavers as triplets.
vigorous semiquavers remain constant. At various points throughout the gradual crescendo that follows on from bar 84, the louder markings are frequently in danger of being overplayed. For this reason, the f markings at bars 120, 136 and 175 were played very slightly below f.

*Dynamic scaling at the higher end of the dynamic range*

The first peak at bar 27 was highest in the scale of f. I took the view that this moment concluded the introductory phase of the work and a lengthy climax from the very beginning of the measured section of the work (bar 2). The f at bar 53 was little more than an indication of relatively strident gestures and hence was on the lower end of f. The absence of any other device to suggest a sense of impact or building confirms this view.

The peak at bar 91 was higher in priority and the dynamic intensity continued to climb through to bar 94, before a subito mp at bar 95. This was an example of a deliberately insinuated climax, which was abruptly curtailed. The f at bar 111 continues to climb to bar 115. Whilst the marking at 115 is confirmed by the composer as f, the composer provides another hint, in the form of the expressive marking “dynamic” (see Example 56). My view is that the composer was endeavouring to ‘save,’ as it were, the louder dynamics for the lengthy climax to follow and sought to achieve a sense of impact at bar 115 via other means. However, there is a practical limit to how successfully this can be achieved. Consequently, I treated the f at bar 111 to be slightly on the lower end of f, as I believed that, even with the use of other devices at bar 115, there still needed to be a slight upward graduation within the realms of f at that point.

The other devices I refer to are partly inherent in the writing. The rapid, similar motion semiquavers, combined with phrase groupings in differing numbers of pitches, give a sense of rhythmic excitement. The absence of pedal (as per the composer’s express marking) will typically result in less resonance, though it will also result in a slightly thinner and more percussive sound.
I found that emphasis at the start of the phrasing groups added to the excitement and sense of dynamic intensity. This avoided the sense of the $f$ dynamic being ‘overplayed.’ The peak at bar 141 was on the lower end of $f$. Here, the $f$ gestures are interspersed with $mf$ gestures. I also read the $mf$ gestures at the lower end of $mf$ so as to ‘save’ the loudness for the lengthy crescendo from bar 149 to the end. The dynamic form has a smoother sense of building than the dynamic scheme suggests. The dynamics, textural setting and tempo gradually drive the work to its tumultuous conclusion.

**Interpreting the Composer’s Expressive Markings**

Dargaville’s expressive markings mostly indicate the desired outcome, rather than the manner of execution and most of his expressive markings occur at key structural points within the work. The very first indication in the score, “slow and delicate,” is relatively clear as to its execution, though the marking of “delicate” can have a number of applications. It can apply to the type of sound used and it can also apply to the evenness of touch and the use of rubato. I took the view that the opening gestures ought to have an eerie stillness and that this marking meant for the pitches to be played gently and evenly. The opening gestures carry an intriguing indeterminateness of sound, owing largely to the pitch selection and large register leaps and yet there is a sense of deliberateness in the fermate and voicing out of the primary scheme.\(^\text{23}\)

\[^{23}\text{Comprising of E}_\flat\text{-E}_\flat\text{-G}_\natural\text{-F}_\natural\text{-D}_\flat\text{-D}_\flat\text{-A}_\natural\text{-B}_\flat\text{-B}_\natural\text{-C}_\natural\text{-B}_\flat\text{-C}_\natural\text{-E}_\flat\text{-E}_\flat\text{-F}_\natural\text{-F}_\natural\text{-D}_\flat\text{-D}_\flat\text{-A}_\natural\text{-B}_\flat\text{-A}_\natural\text{-B}_\flat\text{-C}_\natural\text{-C}_\flat\text{-B}_\flat\text{-A}_\natural\text{-G}_\natural\text{-C}_\natural\text{-A}_\natural\text{-A}_\natural\text{-F}_\natural\text{ in the middle stave.}\]
I took the view that the marking “as a lament” at bar 2 (system 11) suggests a more melodic element. Dargaville provides an indication here that there is a scheme in the bass part, which is marked *mp* whereas the other voices are only *p*. I chose to maintain this melody, via the bottom note in the chords in the middle register in the left hand (see bar 3) and I followed a relatively traditional approach to shaping the phrase, in accordance with the direction of the *tessitura*, though the G in bar 3 needed some additional resonance in order to maintain continuity in the melody (see Example 57).

**Example 57** – Dargaville, *Alba*, bars 2-4

The marking “distant, eerie” at bar 30 is by no means clear as to the manner of execution (see Example 58). I chose to keep the tempo slightly on the back of the beat here, rather than for the writing to sound rushed or excessively rhythmic. The structural importance of this phase of the work is that it introduces a short motive in the right hand that undergoes development throughout the remainder of the work and appears at other structurally significant moments, such as at bars 75, 105, 165 and then in an altered form at bar 171.

**Example 58** – Dargaville, *Alba*, bars 30-33
The marking of “with a quiet intensity” at bar 75 again indicates a desired outcome, but the means of execution requires careful consideration of the factors inherent in the writing (see Example 59). Here, the interplay resulting from the *talea-colour* technique keeps a certain excitement in the writing. I found that a strict approach to tempo in this section was essential and that the shaping of the phrase in the right hand was best achieved mostly through dynamics and a slight accent in loudness at the start of the phrase.

**Example 59** – Dargaville, *Alba*, bars 75-77

The markings later in the work, namely “with passion” (bar 158) and “wild” (bar 175) are relatively self-explanatory. By the latter stages in the work, the tempo is moving forward considerably. At bar 158 (“with passion”), I treated the phrases in the right hand as being in pairs. I found it convincing to place the start of the first phrase in each pair (see Example 60).

**Example 60** – Dargaville, *Alba*, bars 157-158
At bar 175, the marking “wild” coincides with a series of jagged and contradictory rhythmic schemes between the hands. Dargaville is very explicit at this point as to accents (see Example 61). By this point in the work, the accents in both hands were extremely pronounced and I elected to emphasise the pattern in the bass more each time it appeared. This helped to maintain a sense of climax throughout the repeated sequence.

Example 61 – Dargaville, Alba, bars 175-178

Performance decisions

The sense of climax in Alba is matched by increasingly exciting rhythmic and textural writing. I judged that subtle variations in the use of tempo were also appropriate. The sense of timelessness in the opening gestures is magnified by the use of various fermate and an implied sense of the tempo being as expansive as possible.

As the work progresses, the more exciting semiquaver passages lend themselves to a sense of the tempo being kept on the front of the beat in many instances (see Example 61). This point marks the peak in my use of forward propulsion of tempo, and there is a very slight sense of the tempo pulling back at bar 185, where the grand gestures suggest that the tempo should be more exact. In my view, there is no sense that the final chord in Alba is a point of arrival and thus it was not appropriate to slow in the final measure. I chose to keep the tempo moving in the final measure and used only a very small delay in the large chords in the right hand at bar 185, which restate the gestures from bar 158 (see Example 60).
Sound production in *Alba* involves some extremely subtle use of voicing and texture. Generally, I was disinclined to use an aggressive style of approach to sound, as much of the writing was lyrical. From bar 2 onwards, I decided that the texture was something of a hybrid between homophony and polyphony, with the latter being the more appropriate description. However, for the purposes of sound, the use of a low bass drone suggested that the texture was still built upon the pitches in the bass. Hence, I chose to maintain resonance in the bass and voice the bass notes in favour of the bottom pitch. The pattern of the low bass drone continues throughout bars 15 to 29 and becomes increasingly thick, before a significant shift at bar 30 where the sound becomes altogether ethereal and based around the melody in the right hand. Here, I preferred to maintain a sense of the melody projecting with a singing tone through the relatively thin texture. This melody and the approach to sound continue in large part through to bar 63 where a relatively bass-oriented texture returns. Again, I was careful to ensure that the bass remained resonant throughout this section.

From bar 75, the approach to sound and voicing is quite different. Here, the sonority of the left hand is not sustained by a long pedal and the textural scoring is polyphonic. I elected to voice more towards the top of the right hand here, with the left hand more as a constantly changing rhythmic punctuation. This approach continues throughout the ensuing sections up to the start of bar 113 where the two hands shift to similar motion and I opted for a relatively dry approach to the writing in similar motion. Likewise from bars 123 to 131, I elected to maximise clarity in the left hand and voice the texture to the top voice in the right hand.

From bar 148 I started to include some flutter pedal, as the sound needed greater resonance and this also created an appealing colouring effect. I opted for a fairly sparing flutter pedal, so as to avoid excessive blurring of notes. From bar 158 to the end of the work, the texture builds in the left hand, by becoming increasingly low in register and thick in scoring, so that the point of greatest impact in the last two bars is a logical climax in texture. The amount of pedal throughout this section increased gradually. Throughout much of this section the excitement continues to be created by the cycling of material between the hands or “metric dissonance.” Accordingly, the right hand balanced slightly
above the bottom note in the left hand, with the other notes in the left hand being far less prominent.

**Technical Issues**

Throughout the opening phases of *Alba*, considerable difficulties exist in the material crossing hands at high speed. The practice method employed here employed considerable slow practice, whilst attempting to relax the shoulders to keep the mechanism through the arm as free from tension as possible.

From bar 97 the use of consecutive tenths in the right hand was extremely difficult to execute at a soft dynamic without tension. The practice method applied to these passages involved slow practice in which closure of the hand between each chord minimised the tension that can build up when the hand is continuously extended. This practice method was combined with practice ‘in rhythms,’ involving the alternation of rhythms across the combinations of pitches, so as to practice all shifts at a relatively higher speed and a relatively lower speed.
Five Bagatelles (1994) by Carl Vine (1954 - )

Carl Vine

Carl Vine has spoken of an “underlying message” in his music, which is the most pervasive force in his composing (Vine, in Dench, 1992: p. 26). His intention is to communicate at “the deepest subliminal level” (Vine, in Dench, 1992: p. 25). He notes that he has received criticism for his use of evident triadic harmony. Vine freely incorporates elements of jazz, popular music, South-American music and metric modulation.

Five Bagatelles

Vine composed the Five Bagatelles in response to an invitation to play at an International A.I.D.S. fundraiser event (Vine, 1994, title page). Threnody for all of the innocent victims was written for that charity function and Vine decided to add the other four works to give Threnody a context. Threnody is in stark contrast with the three sonatas and the other bagatelles in this set. The pitch material centres upon a rather primal mode and the texture comprises a melody in fifths with a bass support. The remaining four bagatelles feature different styles and examples of stylistic ‘pluralism’ (being the blending of different styles), particularly in the first and third movements.

The first bagatelle features dark, mysterious seventh and ninth intervals over a low, sustained bass pedal. Vine utilises numerous quartal harmonies juxtaposed against consecutive triadic harmonies. The work is in binary form with a brief coda. An uncanny resemblance can be found between the interval choices in the opening bar of the first of the Five Bagatelles and the opening of the Fourth Piano Sonata of Keith Humble, written only three years earlier. The opening statement of four tones, in both instances, consists of two sets of minor seconds. In its idiom, the first of the Eight Bagatelles is perhaps the least easily recognisable of the cycle. It is highly chromatic at the outset and Vine builds upon the interval of a second (mainly the minor second) and its concomitants, the seventh and the ninth (see Example 62).
Many more intervals are added to produce a gradual opening out into the B-section of the work (from bar 10), but the interval of the second continues to have prevalence.

**Example 62** – Vine, *Five Bagatelles*, first bagatelle, opening bar

An interval tally reveals that the opening section (bars 1-11) contains more than seventy percent seconds and concomitants, being sevenths and ninths. From this point the intervals become more diverse, although the second and its concomitants remain predominant. In the opening movement of Keith Humble’s *Fourth Piano Sonata*, the prevalence of these intervals is even higher – nearly 80 percent. For Humble, this was part of a meticulously planned, cyclic permuting pitch selection process and Humble’s technique is influenced by his background as a jazz improviser. Carl Vine’s compositional method is still more intuitive and less systematic (see generally Dench, 1992: p. 26).

Elements of the second bagatelle suggest the influence of African and Afro-Cuban music, with its frequent metric modulations and repetition of the “3-3-2” rhythm.

**Example 63** – Vine, *Five Bagatelles*, second bagatelle, bars 73-74
This movement also exhibits considerable similarities with passages in all three of the piano sonatas. The constantly changing time signatures, with the continuing semiquavers throughout are characteristic of Vine’s work.

The third bagatelle relates more closely to a contemporary popular ballad style of composition. The introduction and epilogue in the third bagatelle bears some similarity with the opening of the First Piano Sonata, in the use of multiple semi-tone dissonances. Here the sound is closed and quite dark, with conflicting minor seventh harmonies under pedal. The fourth bagatelle is in a heavy blues swing style, with an ostinato in the left hand. Here, the element of comedy is clearly present, with a light duple rhythm forming an interlude between each episode (see Example 64). The swing element is embellished further each time it occurs.

Example 64 – Vine, Five Bagatelles, fourth bagatelle, bars 8-10

Vine’s compositional method in the Five Bagatelles belongs well within the realm of post-modernism. Thus, the performance requires familiarity with each of the styles and particularly a sense of the different approaches to rubato and metric scoring. The aesthetic of Vine’s music is non-esoteric and easily approachable. In listening to the works, there is a clear sense of well-known styles being brought together with elements of contemporary Art music, which are tastefully interwoven. Similarities can be found with the craftsmanship of Aaron Copland, particularly in the use of ostinato. The Five
Bagatelles provide five quite different glimpses into Vine’s writing. There are relatively few common thematic or rhythmic elements between each of the bagatelles.

**Form, Dynamic Form and Dynamic Scheme**

The Dynamic Scheme Graph for the cycle demonstrates a sustained peak in the latter stages of the second bagatelle, namely from bars 62 to 85. However, the writing in the second bagatelle is by no means the most emotive in the cycle and the dynamic form of the cycle is quite different from the dynamic scheme. The rather brash, playful second bagatelle features frequent interchanges in dynamics from one bar to the next and the arrival at a sustained *f* from bar 62 is more ironic than climactic. The gradual *crescendo* from bars 10 through 20 in the opening miniature, with its complex texture and chromatic sequencing, is perhaps the peak in dynamic form in the cycle.

The third bagatelle opens mysteriously and seemingly sets up similar ideas to the opening movement. However, this is by way of introduction only. This movement is a gentle ballad. The fourth bagatelle is heavier in feel and of greater dynamic thrust than the second or third bagatelles. It bears much in common with the second bagatelle, in its sudden interchanges between dynamics from one bar to the next.

The final bagatelle stands on its own within the dynamic form. The Dynamic Scheme Graph, when taken literally, is useless in determining the dynamic form. In fact, there are no changes in the dynamics, as the middle stave continues to be *mp* throughout. This movement instead can be understood as a series of mostly two-bar phrases, built on a simple E-flat scale, with traditional harmonic resolutions. The writing changes at bars 13 through 16 where the only four-bar phrase occurs. The peak in *tessitura* occurs at bar 12 and the larger dynamic phrase resolves at bars 13 through 16. The work has a distinctive ‘tailing off’ in the final bars. Thus, the dynamic form ebbs and flows, with a minor rise approximately half way into the work and moves away from this point.
The Dynamic Scheme Graph in the opening bagatelle suggests two peaks, with the first being slightly more sustained, but the second reaching a higher point (see Figure 24). The dynamic form differs, as it is clear that the drop in dynamic marking at bars 15 through 17 is something of a ‘re-take,’ as it were, rather than a new beginning. Thus the dynamic form continues in a steady climb from bars 10 through 20.

In the second bagatelle, the dynamic form moves strongly in the direction of the end of the work, suggesting an end-accented model. However, the level of intensity in this movement does not change significantly for most of the work. The heavier dynamic
in the latter stages does not result in an end-accented model, as the work ends with a jocular ‘throw away’ gesture.

**Figure 25** – Vine, *Five Bagatelles*, second bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph

![Dynamic Scheme Graph](image)

The third bagatelle mostly remains within the lower end of the dynamic range. The small peak at bar 7 only marks a peak in the introductory material. The relatively more sustained peak at bars 12 through 14 is far more in line with the highest point in the dynamic form. Here, the thickness of an embellished texture gives some sense of gravity to the writing, though the overall sense of this movement is relatively light-hearted.

**Figure 26** – Vine, *Five Bagatelles*, third bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph

![Dynamic Scheme Graph](image)

The fourth bagatelle appears to have a very stilted dynamic scheme. Vine inventively combines faster rhythmic subdivisions with the softer dynamic, which
contrasts with the lazy feel of the heavily swung triplets to maintain the excitement throughout the movement. There is something of a climax in the material from bars 25 through 28, which appears on the Dynamic Scheme Graph as the sustained peak towards the end (see Figure 27).

**Figure 27** – Vine, *Five Bagatelles*, fourth bagatelle – Dynamic Scheme Graph

I elected not to include a separate Dynamic Scheme Graph for the fifth bagatelle, since the dynamic marking remains the same throughout, though Vine marks a separate dynamic marking for each stave. However, the phrasing is subtle but emotive and suggests that there should be variation in dynamic within each phrase.

**Approach to dynamic markings**

Vine’s dynamic markings throughout the *Five Bagatelles* are mostly very specific and do not call upon the performer to infer a great deal. In the opening movement however, I chose to read the *p* dynamic at bar 26 at a slightly higher level than the *p* marking in the opening bars. At bar 26, despite the register transfers, there is more of a sense of voice-leading in the right-hand part. From bars 12 through 20 in the opening bagatelle, I found that giving precedence to the uppermost voice in the texture gave greater clarity. In the second bagatelle, the tendency is for the sound to build up excessively. There is a particular danger where the sudden changes of dynamics occur in short blocks that the softer dynamic is not sufficiently soft. I endeavoured to read the *p*
dynamics closer to \textit{pp} in these instances. In the third bagatelle I considered the \textit{p} marking at bar 8 to be best executed closer to \textit{mp} in the right hand, as this is a clear example of Vine’s more lyrical writing. This meant that the marking at bar 12 in the right hand had to be read on the louder end of \textit{mp}.

In the fourth bagatelle the dynamic markings are mostly interchanged at opposite ends of the spectrum. Whilst the first \textit{p} marking at bar 6 benefits from a reading at the lower end of \textit{p}, the passage at bars 10 and 11 benefited from a slightly brighter reading, particularly of the upper notes in the texture. At bar 14, the somewhat comical gesture worked well when voiced at the upper end of \textit{p}, as there is a melodic fragment in the upper voice. The contrast with the \textit{pp} at bar 16 is then even more effective. In the final bagatelle, I elected to follow the \textit{tessitura} of the middle stave to determine the small peaks and troughs within the \textit{mp} dynamic. The greatest peak was reached at bar 12 where the dynamic reaches almost as high as \textit{mf} in the middle stave (see Example 65).


\textit{Tempo}

The tempo marking of 50 per crotchet in the first bagatelle varies in a number of places, according to the composer’s markings and I preferred to take a slightly more expansive approach in the opening measures. I chose to set an underlying tempo of around 46 per crotchet, whilst still maintaining a ‘one-in-a-bar’ feel. From bar 3, there is a clear sense of gesture moving forward at the start of the bar and holding back at the end of the bar. By this point, my tempo pushes to approximately 54-58 at the start of the bar. From bar 8, I maintained a sense of the underlying tempo getting slightly faster in each
ensuing bar. At bar 12, I preferred a slightly faster tempo than the marking of 75 per crotchet. This came as a logical consequence of the forward motion in the preceding bars. There is a sense of ‘elasticity’ in the tempo in this movement, which is relatively unusual in Vine’s piano music.

The tempo in the second bagatelle remains unvaried throughout. This movement relies upon its rhythmic excitement, such as off-beat accents and carefully designed phrasings that cut across the many metric modulations. The underlying tempo of 136 per crotchet was executed very slightly faster, at around 140 per crotchet. This added to the sense of excitement in the writing.

In the third bagatelle the opening tempo was played as marked. From bar 8, the marked tempo of 50 per crotchet makes it very difficult to avoid the phrases sounding broken up. I found that an underlying tempo of approximately 54-56 per crotchet made it possible to have more of a sense of line in each phrase. From bar 12, I preferred to push the tempo forward a little above the marked tempo at the start of the bar before the cedez, as this made the overall sense of gesture more pronounced.

I executed the tempo in the fourth bagatelle exactly as marked. Here, I found it effective to keep the sense of tempo ‘on the back of the beat,’ which seemed to be in keeping with heavy blues swing feel. In the final movement Threnody, I preferred to read the tempo somewhat slower than marked, at around 46-48 per crotchet. The crucial factor here was to maintain a sense of direction in each phrase. This tempo choice allowed me to achieve the desired effect, whilst also giving time for the delicate modal harmonies to be heard.

**Interpreting the composer’s markings**

Many of Vine’s expressive markings in Five Bagatelles are in the manner of descriptions of the desired outcome. In the opening bagatelle, the marking of “Darkly” is obviously an indication of a particular quality of sound. I interpreted this marking, coupled with its lengthy pedal markings to be suggestive of an approach both to sound and to phrasing. As to the phrasing, it seems apparent in the opening measures that the more logical phraseology is to treat the ‘gong-like’ bass note on the first beat as the goal
and the point of departure, much along the lines of a ‘cycle’ of similar phrases. A vocal approach to *tessitura* might suggest that the phrases ought to build towards the notes in the upper register. However, the sound of the treble notes, emerging somewhat mysteriously from the gong-like bass, was far more effective in conveying a sense of ‘stillness’ in the writing.

The marking of *Leggero e legato* in the second bagatelle, whilst having a well-understood meaning in the traditional Italian usage (‘lightly and smoothly’), could be read as being inconsistent with the marked phrasings. One might infer, for example, that the presence of phrase-lines in certain instances suggests a detached approach elsewhere. In Vine’s *First Piano Sonata*, the marking of *Legato* is interpreted in the premiere recording as exactly the opposite and to great effect. The writing here is similar. I elected to take the view that an excessively *legato* approach would result in a sense of the sounds being blurred. Much of the appeal in the writing here is in the rapid rhythmic figures and constantly changing pulse. These seem to benefit more from a slightly detached approach, in the places where phrasing indications are absent.

The marking of “Gently” in the final bagatelle is quite a clear performance direction. The overall dynamic marking throughout the movement remains constant and the sense of ‘gentleness’ may well refer to the type of sound and the overall approach to phrasing. I interpreted this marking to suggest that the phrases should never move forward excessively and that the peaks and troughs in dynamics would be relatively small.

**Further performance decisions**

One of the primary considerations in playing Carl Vine’s music lies in the different types of sound that apply across the different styles he uses. In the first bagatelle, I chose to make a difference in the quality of sound between the opening measures and the section from bar 12. The sound in the opening measures is gentle, though requiring mostly a balanced approach to the texture. From bar 12, as the textural setting is more deliberate, I preferred a relatively more transparent approach to the sound, projecting the accented pitches with a singing quality and avoiding any sense of harshness.
The second bagatelle required a rather different approach to sound. For the most part, the writing here obtains its effect from the rapid rhythmic shifts and equally sudden changes in dynamics. I preferred a less resonant sound here, other than at bars 63 through 72 where a brief moment of melody projects through the texture. There is no pedal marked in this movement. I occasionally chose to use a very light flutter pedal at the beginning of the phrase, such as at bar 7 and again at bar 87. This was principally a device to add emphasis, by momentarily increasing resonance, but without giving a blurred quality to the texture.

The approach to sound in the third bagatelle was different again. Here the texture mostly benefited from a rather exaggerated approach to the singing upper voice in the right hand. The performance direction of *con pedale* at bars 8 through 11 is unusually non-specific in the context of Vine’s keyboard writing. I took this to mean that Vine recognised that the pedalling would be fluttered. I sought to achieve maximum finger *legato* in this section and use the fluttered pedal as a device for enhancing the resonant, singing quality of the sound in the right hand. In bars 12 through 15, Vine’s pedal marking suggests no pedalling in the latter part of the bar. I took this to mean that a blurred sound in the latter part of the bar was best avoided.

**Example 66** – Vine, *Five Bagatelles*, third bagatelle, bars 12-13

As the right hand melody continues through the bar, the sudden absence of pedal would result in the sound abruptly becoming thin. I chose to use a fluttered pedal over the last two crotchet beats at this point.

The fourth bagatelle requires an altogether different sound from the remainder of the movements, especially in the opening motive. Here, the writing benefits from a rather coarse approach to the sound to match the heavy swing quality. I took a relatively
detached approach to the articulation and placed considerable accent on various off-beat quavers to enhance the sense of swing. The short interludes at bars 6 through 7, then 10 through 11, benefited from an entirely different approach to the sound. I elected to make each of the phrasings as *legato* as possible and to keep the touch even, as the sense of swing is quite deliberately absent.

In the fifth bagatelle the approach to sound production is again a core issue. As the writing has a strong modal flavour, the low bass notes in particular need to have a full, resonant sound, in order to support the two lines within the texture. The quality of sound here has a strong relationship with the concept of vocal style, suggesting a projected melodic line.
Third Piano Sonata (2007) by Carl Vine (1954 - )

The Third Piano Sonata was written in 2007 for pianist, Elizabeth Schumann and premiered by her at Zipper Hall, Los Angeles on 11 May 2007.

Compositional method

As Vine’s compositional method is not serial, the relationship between the pitch selection process and the scoring process is less rigidly delineated. Therefore, I will provide a brief commentary on his compositional method in the Third Piano Sonata, using examples to demonstrate the various harmonies, modes and rhythmic devices used throughout the work.

Fantasia

In keeping with Vine’s comments about his use of evident triadic harmonies, his Third Piano Sonata commences in a lyrical homophonic setting, containing broad-winged triadic chords, with the melody set well apart in the right hand. There are some similarities in the texture, between these opening 14 bars and the middle section of the opening movement of Vine’s Second Piano Sonata, as well as the end of the opening movement of his First Piano Sonata. The breadth of the texture here is reminiscent of Vine’s fifth bagatelle, as are the harmonies, though there are no sevenths, ninths or thirteenths present. Nonetheless, the relationship between the harmonies is more obscure. The opening A-minor harmony resolves to C# (bar 6) and the D-minor harmony from bar 7 reaches a point of rest with a G# harmony (bar 14) (see Example 67).
The open triadic chords are combined with smooth, stepwise motion and sequencing in the upper stave. Within the accompaniment, Vine has maintained a line in the upper voice, which moves almost exclusively in whole tones and semitones and functions as a gentle counterpoint to the melodic line in the upper part.

Some harmonic functionality is maintained at the conclusion of the introduction, with bar 15 commencing in C#-minor. From this moment, the harmonic language is permeated by sevenths, ninths and thirteenth, as well as some basic triadic harmonies. Importantly, the relationship between each harmony is far more goal-directed during the next 33 bars, but the relationship is characterised by a largely chromatic bass line. An anthemic eight bar theme is introduced at bars 15 through 22 and subsequently at bar 33.

The subject itself is set in a luscious four-part texture, with a descending chromatic figure in the lower part in each hand. Within the larger eight-bar phrase are two smaller blocks of four bars so that bar 18 functions as both the end of the first four bars and the second crotchet beat comprises the pick-up to the second half of the theme.

The next phase of the *Fantasia* (bars 49 through 96) continues with a relatively similar compositional method. Here the writing comprises of extended triadic figurations in the left hand with a rather more mysterious flourish in the right hand, which develops into a series of rising and falling modal figurations. There is a quasi-improvisatory quality in the writing in the right hand. At bar 97, Vine introduces an unmistakably military sound with short triadic chords marking each beat and an agitated chromatic melody in the right hand.
**Rondo**

In the *Rondo*, Vine builds cross-rhythm patterns in the right hand against a steady bass line (see Example 69).

**Example 69** – Vine, *Third Piano Sonata*, bar 129

![Example 69](image)

Later from bar 163, the composer introduces a more lyrical style of writing, though the melody is supported by bubbling demisemiquavers in the left hand (see Example 70).

**Example 70** – Vine, *Third Piano Sonata*, bar 165

![Example 70](image)

**Theme and Variations**

The ensuing *Theme and Variations* movement, as its name suggests, is composed from an arcane technique involving the material from the opening bars of the work. The approach to *Theme and Variations* here does not utilise this method in the Classical or
Baroque sense of embellishing an underlying skeleton. Vine ‘re-casts’ the material and explores alternate ways of developing the same ‘idea,’ to apply Vine’s own terminology. I have taken the view that the idea is a musical rather than thematic effect. The re-exploration of the theme at bar 237 is in an entirely new guise with a strong flavour of the Dorian mode. The open intervals and the often stepwise motion in the left hand both resemble fragments of both the left hand and right hand parts in the theme (see Example 71).

**Example 71** – Vine, *Third Piano Sonata*, bars 237-238

Likewise, the variation from bar 255 has some similarity in the left hand part with the left hand part in the previous variation and the theme (see Example 72).

**Example 72** – Vine, *Third Piano Sonata*, bars 255-256

From the performer’s point of view, it is important to understand that each variation contains harmonic references that can be explored with relatively familiar approaches to melodic shaping and phraseology.
Presto

The Presto movement is a true finale. Here the writing has constant verve and excitement created in large part by the use of metric modulations. The frequent interchange between duplet and triplet groupings for the semiquavers results in a constantly shifting sense of beat (despite the relatively stable metre). The pitch selection results in a quartal flavour in the main (see Example 73).

Example 73 – Vine, *Third Piano Sonata*, bars 281-284

![Example 73](image)

Even the use of sevenths throughout this section can be explained as being derived from a pair of fourths with the middle pitch silent. This method of pitch selection is very similar to the opening of Vine’s *First Piano Sonata*. The finale however, is not relentless in its rapid forward motion. The interlude from bars 361 through 402 is far more typical of Vine’s more lyrical writing, though the flavour of quartal harmony is maintained initially. From bars 370 through to 402, Vine has utilised a quasi-improvisatory homophonic texture with an obvious use of the Dorian mode built on E♭ over a stable left hand pattern (see Example 74).

Example 74 – Vine, *Third Piano Sonata*, bar 382 (left hand)

![Example 74](image)
Form, Dynamic Form and Dynamic Scheme

The sonata is comprised of four movements with no break between the movements. Vine writes of the four movements:

The Fantasia introduces several ideas which reappear in various guises in the other movements, but also includes some isolated and undeveloped declamatory material. The Rondo explores a simple rhythmic motive while the Variations develop the chordal theme from the opening of the work. The Presto is a self-contained ternary structure that echoes thematic components from much that preceded it. (Vine, 2007)

The “several ideas” in the Fantasia occur in the order set out in Table 2.

Table 2 – Vine, Third Piano Sonata, movement one – Vine’s “several ideas”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bars</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 through 14</td>
<td>“Chordal theme”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 through 48</td>
<td>Development of chromatically descending melodic motive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49 through 96</td>
<td>Modal theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97 through 128</td>
<td>Modal theme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Dynamic Scheme Graph for Third Piano Sonata suggests that the first half of the work may contain the most climactic writing (see Figure 28), though the highest level of dynamic marking can be seen in the very last bars. There are two lengthy troughs in the dynamic scheme, which translate to bars 206-302 and 361-418 respectively. One observation that can be made about the two extended dynamic troughs is that both traverse boundaries between slow melodic writing and fast, rhythmic writing. Thus, it is
seemed unlikely that the dynamic scheme and dynamic form would be entirely consistent.

**Figure 28** – Vine, *Third Piano Sonata* – Dynamic Scheme Graph

The dynamic form in *Third Piano Sonata* peaks at the end the work, just as the Dynamic Scheme suggests. The Dynamic Scheme Graph well demonstrates the dynamic form in the opening of the work that is intensely climactic, though with one trough at bars 29 through 32. This represents a brief reprieve between the re-statement of the climactic material from bar 15. The thickening of texture at bars 15 through 22 provides a logical climactic quality, yet its first incarnation at bar 22 occurs within a *diminuendo*. The textural build-up creates a sense of latent intensity from bar 33.

There are a number of important differences between the dynamic scheme and the dynamic form. There is, for example, a sharp shift in dynamic intensity from bar 281 onwards where Vine introduces rapid semiquaver figurations with numerous off-beat accents and non-metrically oriented phrasing. This contradicts the dynamic scheme, which shows no appreciable change at bar 281. Another discrepancy between the dynamic form and the dynamic scheme is the passage from bar 49 through 96. Owing to the fleeting *f* and *ff* markings through this section it appears on the graph to have significant dynamic peaks. However, the actual impact of these peaks is minimal in the larger dynamic form. This section comprises of very simple harmonies and only localised
examples of dynamic intensity, usually as short as a single bar and sometimes only half a bar. Thus, the level of intensity remains relatively still throughout.

*Style, idiom and character*

The sonata exhibits a number of stylistic attributes, which I will discuss in the order in which they appear within the work. The broad-winged texture in the opening phase of the work might well have been orchestrally conceived. In some respects, the majestic chords share some ground with the orchestral writing of Vaughan-Williams and could even be likened to the opening of Messiaen’s *Regard du Père* from *Vingt Regards sur l’Enfant-Jésus*. The lush polyphonic texture from bar 15 through to bar 48 is similar to Vine’s own writing in the early stages of *Second Piano Sonata* and his *Piano Concerto*. The *Theme and Variations* continues in a similar style to the opening of the *Fantasia*. The writing is non-climactic and reflective. Some similarity exists with the work of Elliot Carter, particularly in the use of metric modulations. This is the case in the *Rondo* and the *Presto*, though the *Presto* has an unusual combination of jazz, as well as popular ballad style in the more lyrical sections.

*Tempo*

In his notes accompanying his *First Piano Sonata*, Vine wrote that tempo markings were absolute (Vine, 1991). However, the premiere recording of that work by Michael Kieran Harvey contains several departures from the marked tempi, which in most instances involved a faster tempo than the marked tempo. There is no such note accompanying the *Third Piano Sonata*. However, it is assumed that, in the main, Vine has given very careful attention to the question of tempo and any departures from the markings should be subtle and made only with good reason. Vine’s music seldom benefits from extravagant use of *rubato*. In the main, *rubato* has been avoided, or used only sparingly. The frequent markings of *senza rall.* might have been interpreted to suggest only a small number of instances where *rubato* ought not be applied. However,
the alternative view is preferred, namely: that *rallentandi* are best avoided, except where marked.

Vine occasionally uses the term *poco rall.* (bars 31 and 375) and also uses the French *cédez un peu* (at bar 148). Whilst the literal meaning of these terms connotes the concept of “little” (*poco* and *peu*) and yield or slacken (*rallentando* and *cédez*), the view taken here is that *poco rall.* connotes a gradual slackening of tempo and that *cédez* connotes an immediate and slight decrease in tempo. I interpreted *Morendo* (*‘dying’*) in the usual way to mean a gradual slackening of tempo and a simultaneous *decrescendo* (such as at bars 272 and 398). However, this marking was read with subtlety, which is consistent with many of Vine’s other markings.

The opening tempo (crotchet equals 60) is marked exactly by the composer and a slowing of tempo is marked from bar 7 (crotchet equals 50). These markings were interpreted as maximum tempi, though both are almost exact. Anything above the markings in this case is likely to detract from the sense of stillness. The resplendent three-part scoring at this point does not benefit from any variation in tempo, save for occasional placement of chords slightly before or after the beat. The marking from bar 15 was taken ‘on the front of the beat’ for the most part and very slightly above the marked tempo. The more chromatic writing at this point provides a clear forward momentum.

The *poco rall.* marking at bar 31 is interpreted in keeping with Vine’s general approach to *rubato*. Despite the marking “(*…più…*)” at bar 32, it was preferred to keep the slackening of tempo to a minimum throughout bars 31-32. The tempo at bar 33 is very slightly less ‘on the front of the beat’ than at bar 15 (despite containing the same material and the instruction “*come sopra*”). This very slight difference is in keeping with the longer climactic material that follows to bar 48 and that the tempo moves forward in an extremely small degree to the middle of bar 41, from which point the overall tempo becomes less precipitous through the rich triadic chords that lead to bar 48.

The tempo from bar 49 was executed very slightly above the marked tempo (crotchet equals 72). The tempo sits at approximately 74-76, with a sense of the tempo being on the back of the beat for the most part. At bar 97, I found that a slightly faster tempo of 126 per crotchet (in preference to the marked tempo of 120 per crotchet) added to the excitement of this section without detracting from any relevant tempo relationship
between the sections. The *rondo* tempo of 90 for a crotchet seemed most effective in time and with minute slowing of the tempo at key points, such as at the end of the *crescendo* at bars 136, 140 and 157. Much of the writing in the upper part in this section is melodic and many of the melodic fragments commence on an off-beat semiquaver. The sense of gesture is quite heavy at this point and if the tempo is pushed, the melodic fragments tend to sound shapeless and facile.

The *cédez un peu* at bar 148 was interpreted as a very slight and sudden change in tempo for bars 148 and 149. The variations at bar 215 commence in a tempo of 66 per crotchet with no new tempo at bar 223. I preferred to keep the tempo slightly on the back of the beat. The tempo from bar 237 is marked as 90 per dotted quaver. Again, the combination of lyricism and grand harmonies benefit from a tempo slightly on the back of the beat and from taking time to place the bass note on selected downbeats, such as at bars 240 and 243. The remaining tempo markings in the work were interpreted exactly as marked. I found it effective to keep the tempo here slightly on the front of the beat, though with some caution, as the rhythmic gestures should not lose their shape.

**Approach to dynamic markings**

Vine is often meticulous in scoring different layers within the texture at different dynamics. In the opening of *Third Piano Sonata* the upper voice is given precedence over the thick triadic scoring below (see Example 67). The priority here is to ensure that the triadic harmonies (marked *pianissimo*) are resonant. Some priority was given to the outer voices of the chords and the *piano* dynamic in the melodic upper voice was closer to *mf*.

From bar 15, the approach to dynamics and voicing is more complex. Vine marks *mf* for the top voice and *mp* in the middle of the system. The approach taken to dynamics here was based on the observation that the four distinct textural elements – a transcendent melody at the top, a counter melody, bass and harmonic accompaniment – needed to be carefully distinguished despite the composer’s marking of only two different dynamics. The order of priority was to treat the upper melody as having primacy in the dynamic scheme, with the minimbs in the bass having secondary importance, followed by the counter melody in the right hand and lastly, the harmonic figurations in the left hand.
This effectively meant that the bass line was given a gentle *mf* dynamic, rather than the suggested *mp*. The other two incidental voices were both read within the upper realm of *p*, rather than *mp*.

The repeat of this material at bar 33 was started slightly softer than at bar 15 (despite the identical dynamic markings). As well as being softer over all, I decided to read down the dynamics of the middle voices to give a more transparent approach to the texture. The tempo the second time is almost exactly metronomic, with relatively few gestural emphases. The justification for this different approach is that the larger gestures that follow from bar 40 onwards will have greater impact if the sense of gravity in the earlier gestures is kept relatively in check. The function of this writing at bar 15 is quite different, as it is the very first strident gesture in the piece.

From bar 49, the main dynamic consideration lies in the treatment of consecutive *ff* markings. From bars 57 through 61 I elected to treat the first of the three *ff* markings (end of bar 57) as the strongest and the two that follow as progressively softer, though the stepping down in dynamics is subtle. The writing at this point follows a gradual descending pattern in the right hand from bars 57 through 69. The second time this occurs at bar 83, a slightly lesser *ff* is used, though the accents are more pronounced. This is in keeping with the different scoring of the material at bars 77 through 81, which occurs first at bars 53 through 56 as *ff*, whereas at bars 77 through 81 the marking is only *f*. The *ff* marking at bar 57 was interpreted as indicating the composer’s intention for a gradual *decrescendo* from bars 57 through 74.

Most of the ensuing dynamic markings were meticulously marked and were followed exactly. However, at bar 237, the blanket marking of *p* for the entire texture was moderated in accordance with the different layers in the texture (see Example 71). The right hand, high in the treble was voiced well above the left hand and was approximately *mp*. In the left hand, the bass line was voiced above the gentle counterpoint in the middle register. From bar 255, the extremely soft dynamic was interpreted mostly as marked, though the very top note in the right hand was voiced slightly above the lower tone in the octave. From bar 281, the *p* dynamic was played slightly below *p*, whilst maintaining the sense of agitation and movement.
Interpreting the composer’s markings

It is significant that there is not a single expressive marking in Vine’s Third Piano Sonata. The exclusive use of performance directions manifests an unequivocal intention to minimise the need for interpretation. Nonetheless, as I have demonstrated, this necessitates a methodical and consistent approach to the composer’s performance directions. Of the composers presented in this study, Vine is the only composer to have taken such an extreme approach to expressive markings. The reader will recall that Vine included a number of expressive markings in his Five Bagatelles. Vine’s Second Piano Sonata (1997) contains no expressive markings and thus his shift in approach appears to have occurred in the years between 1994 and 1997.

Performance decisions

As with the Five Bagatelles, the approach to sound production in Vine’s Third Piano Sonata is subtle and requires careful consideration of the different textures and stylistic approaches throughout. My concept of sound in Third Piano Sonata is different from my approach in the Five Bagatelles and also differs from the approach taken in my previous performances of the two earlier sonatas. There is an obvious shift in the style of writing, which is generally more lyrical than his earlier sonatas. The style of lyrical writing sometimes resembles gestures one might associate with late nineteenth-century Romanticism. However, I have taken the view that such gestures should not be approached with the same type of sound one might use in nineteenth-century repertoire. Where the composer employs thick chordal textures, such as in the opening bars, I prefer a more transparent approach to the sound with more deliberate voicing towards the outer voices, especially the top. I also found that the overall approach to these types of gestures is more effective when they are not exaggerated. Vine’s work is affected by popular music as well as jazz where the aesthetic is far less reliant on rubato and more reliant on use of complex rhythmic effects, in particular.

Gerard Brophy

Gerard Brophy began his musical studies on the guitar and worked with the Brazilian guitarist Turibio Santos and the Argentine composer Mauricio Kagel. His work as composer often reflects his interest in the “extraordinary musical panorama” of South American music (Brophy, 2010) and bears many hallmarks of his training on the guitar. His pitch selection has a strong harmonic basis.

Brophy’s compositional method draws heavily on material gathered from his listening experiences. The composer prefers to determine the title or concept for a composition before anything else is decided, though he is not averse to using tonality and explains that the “gravity of tonality” is an important theme in his work. In relation to form, the composer does not operate from any conscious preconceptions.

After deciding upon a title for a composition, Brophy creates and refines musical ideas that correspond with the underlying concept in the title. From this process, form will emerge organically as a consequence of the logical and intrinsic relationship between the musical cells and themes (Brophy, 2010). Sitsky describes Brophy as a “refined” “maximalist” composer, though he notes that elements of minimalism are also present in Abraço (Sitsky, 2005: p. 241).

Compositional Method

Abraço (literally ‘to embrace’) draws upon the influences from South American music and in particular the rhythmic and harmonic aspects. The work is dedicated to another of Brophy’s former teachers, Franco Donatoni, who passed away in 2000. Dr. Donna Coleman gave the world premiere performances in Melbourne’s Federation Hall in March 2001 and premiered it in a dozen cities in Europe and the U.S.A. in concert tours that same year. Brophy describes Donatoni’s influence on his writing as instilling rigour and an economic approach to the material, such that “nothing goes to waste” (Brophy, 2010). Brophy goes on to explain Donatoni’s influence, as requiring an
understanding that everything in a musical work is intrinsically interconnected. As with Carl Vine’s *Third Piano Sonata*, Brophy’s compositional method is relatively intuitive and without a marked delineation between the pitch selection process and the scoring of pitches in the music. Consequently, I will present a brief summary of the manner in which Brophy combines musical elements throughout *Abraço*.

**Harmony**

The harmony in *Abraço* is dominated throughout by augmented seventh chord sequences in second inversion with an added thirteenth (see bars 1-3). The harmonies and bass pitches in the opening bars are set out in Example 75\(^{24}\) with the opening bars set out in Example 79.

**Example 75** – Brophy, *Abraço*, harmonies and bass pitches in the opening bars

\[\text{Ab}^{+7(7)}(33)\text{ID} \quad \text{Fm}^{7(33)}\text{ID} \quad \text{Ab}^{+7(7)}(33)\text{ID} \quad \text{Bb}^{+7(7)}(33)\text{ID} \quad \text{Bb}^{+7(7)}(33)\text{ID} \quad \text{A}^{7(7)}(33)\text{ID} \quad \text{G}^{7(7)}(33)\text{ID}\]

The persistent seventh harmonies with the added thirteenth are sequenced to produce a thickening of the melodic line in similar motion until bar three where they occur in contrary motion. These harmonies are used less in the traditional goal-directed sense, but rather as a textural device used to reinforce the melodic line. The presence of both major and minor seconds within each chord lends a closed quality to the sound. These harmonic procedures occur throughout much of the opening phase of the *Abraço*. Brophy also utilises examples of quartal harmony, such as at bars 19-21 (see Example 76).

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\(^{24}\) For chord diagrams, the convention (+) will be used to indicate a raised tone within a chord and (-) will be used to indicate a flattened tone within a chord. Roman numerals in brackets after the label indicate inversions and the letter “m” indicates a minor chord. An underlined figure in brackets indicates an added pitch.
From bar 160 the scale form shifts to the blues scale built on A. The final harmony in the phrase can be rationalised as an A-minor thirteenth harmony (sharp 13). The writing here confirms the complex relationship between Brazilian and Argentine grooves and the blues tradition. A heavier approach to rhythm is taken at this point in keeping with the blues style suggested by the pitch selection.

Later in the work, the harmonies become quite basic in places, such as from bar 254, which comprise of mere arpeggiations of a G⁹ chord (see Example 78).

Example 76 – Brophy, Abraço, bars 19-21

Example 77 – Brophy, Abraço, bar 160

Example 78 – Brophy, Abraço, bar 254
Approach to metre

Throughout most of the first half of the work, Brophy changes the metre as frequently as every one or two bars. ‘Square’ or other conventional rhythms are seldom maintained for more than three bars. However, in the latter stages of the work, Brophy introduces a 4/4 rhythm (see Example 77) which lasts for 28 bars and provides the framework for a transition between a thick four-pitch texture to a simpler, more focused unison texture. This does not result in a diminution of rhythmic intensity. The phrases are longer from this point on and are frequently marked across two or more bars. The rhythmic make-up of the bridging cells throughout the work is usually a 3-2, 3-2-2 or 3-3-2 break-up, with the latter being most common.

Form, Dynamic Form and Dynamic Scheme

The form of the work is strophic, with a number of developmental cells interposed with more transitional cells. The primary seven-note cell in the right hand is repeated throughout the first 123 bars of the work, usually as a four-note fragment (see Example 79).

Example 79 – Brophy, Abraço, opening bars
This occurs 18 times\textsuperscript{25} and has a developmental quality as distinct from a transitional quality. The cell introduced in the third bar is repeated some 11 times in its exact state\textsuperscript{26} as well as numerous variants and one nearly exact statement at bar 70. This second developmental cell is repeated in various guises and is frequently followed by an almost exact repetition of itself commencing a fourth higher or occasionally in other settings. A further developmental cell is introduced at bar 19 (see Example 76). The pitch material introduced at this point is re-used on various occasions.

The first bridging cell is introduced in bar 7 and functions in each of its incarnations as a segue to recurrences of the first developmental cell (see Example 80). This transitional cell is comprised of identical intervallic and rhythmic material of one bar’s length transposed down a major second in each successive bar. The harmonic content is simply a minor seventh followed by a dominant seventh, giving the impression of a secondary dominant $\text{II}_m$-$\text{V}$-$\text{I}$ cadence, but in each instance, instead of reaching the tonic, a further minor seventh, built on the supertonic intervenes. There is no resolution, as the third bar leads to an F-minor ninth chord. The downward spiralling fifths in the left hand give a sense of endlessness to these gestures. This use of the minor supertonic ninth chord is prevalent in Samba music and is also found in the \textit{bossa nova} style.

\textbf{Example 80} – Brophy, \textit{Abraço}, bars 7-9

Another short bridging cell is introduced at bar 23, which is used again at bar 58 (see Example 81).

\textsuperscript{25} At bars 1-2, 4-5, 10-11, 16-17, 27, 30, 35, 41, 46, 49, 51, 62-63, 68-69, 74-75, 80, 112, 116 and 120.
\textsuperscript{26} At bars 3, 6, 12, 18, 28, 31, 36, 42, 47, 52 and 66.
As with the previous transitional cell, the pitch material is derived from the sequencing of short short fragments. Bars 25-26 (third and fourth bars above) follow a similarly open-ended descent as in descent as in the previous bridge cell (see Example 81).

Example 81). Here the middle voice of the left hand steps down by a major second with the outer voices in the left hand similarly following a downward pattern.

A new textural and rhythmic scoring is introduced at bar 124. Brophy gradually reintroduces cells from the opening 123 bars, including one brief restatement of the first two bars of the piece at bars 220-221. From bar 124 Brophy takes 11 vertical units and simply interposes semiquaver rests to change the placement of accents against the metre and also to change the overall placement of the metre as against the start and end of the phrase (see Example 82).

The Dynamic Scheme Graph confirms that there are no dynamic markings below p (see Figure 29). The graph also shows a lengthy period in the middle of the work where the dynamic appears to remain the same. The dynamic form in Abraço differs from the Dynamic Scheme Graph most significantly in this region though the Dynamic Scheme Graph was of great assistance in identifying this lengthy plateau. I was conscious when
preparing the work that there was a risk of the work sounding relentless. I formed the view that the work adheres to an end-accented model and that Brophy is relying on the performer to rationalise the impact of the different sections of the work and to understand that texture tends to contribute to the sense of a continuing crescendo.

**Figure 29** – Brophy, *Abraço* – Dynamic Scheme Graph

![Dynamic Scheme Graph](image)

**Style, idiom and character**

The use of a fast chorale-like setting in the principal motive reveals something of the influence of missionaries on African-inspired South American music (see Example 79). There are examples of *salsa* as well as *bossa nova* style, particularly in the bridging cell that is introduced at bar 7 (see Example 80). The frequent 3-3-2 rhythmic pattern is a common *zabumba* drum pattern in the family of northeastern Brazilian grooves related to the *baião*, though such grooves are usually written in square time signatures, such as 4/4 (Arana, 2004: p. 79). Brophy has adapted the rhythmic patterns to fit with a more complex scoring.

Texture and sound in *Abraço* resembles, in some respects, the Brazilian brass band sound. The thick textures in the early stages of the work give a sense of a full brass ensemble whereas the more virtuosic interlude is based more in percussion and suggests a smaller group of players, perhaps even a percussion solo. The *coda* has a sense of a fanfare, with a combination of the powerful rhythmic aspect together with the full brass
ensemble sound. The rhythmic drive and excitement as well as some of the harmonic material mirrors in many respects the opening movement of Ginastera’s *First Piano Sonata*. According to Brophy, the forward driving motion of the writing is reminiscent of the personal character of the work’s dedicatee (Brophy, 2010).

**Tempo**

Brophy marks only a single tempo marking for the whole of *Abraço*, save for a few short *accelerandi*. The first of these occurs at bar 122, which immediately precedes a significant change in the writing. The decision was made to maintain slightly more excited tempo at bar 124 of approximately 130 per crotchet (rather than 126 per crotchet). A similar marking occurs at bars 138 and 152. At bar 188, the marking of *ff, gran sonoro* was treated as a slightly broader tempo, so as to convey the sense of grandeur in the thickly textured gestures. The tempo is picked up again at bar 196. In the *coda*, the marking at bar 254 (*più f, impassioned and unrestrained*) would, on its face appear to suggest a faster tempo. Instead, the tempo was held at this point and a greater sense of rhythmic drive was used in accordance with the sense of grandeur in the gestures.

**Approach to dynamic markings**

I elected to read down the dynamics in as many instances as possible. In the opening bars for example, I read the marking of *f* as somewhere between *mp* and *mf* and I sought to gain maximum impact from the accents and hairpin *crescendo* markings. The marking of *p* at bar 7 was read even at the lower end of *p*.

Whilst Brophy’s dynamic markings throughout *Abraço* are mostly fastidiously marked, the lower end of the dynamic markings can leave the performer without enough opportunities for respite and the work can sound relentless. As demonstrated above, a literal reading of the dynamic scheme would result in a lengthy plateau in dynamics from approximately bars 88 to 195, which would easily result in the work sounding monotonous. I elected to ‘read down’ many of the lower dynamic markings and ‘save’ the higher end of *forte* for the peak at bars 188-195. I was also keen to ensure that the
peak at bars 188-195 did not overpower the peak at the end of the work. The use of sustaining pedal was of assistance in building the level of resonance in the final climax and thus overcoming this problem.

*Interpreting the composer’s markings*

Brophy utilises only four expressive markings throughout *Abraço*. The first of these, at the opening of the work – “always exhilarating and exuberant” – seemed relatively clear in its meaning. I took this to mean an exciting sense of rhythmic drive and off-beat accents with the tempo frequently ‘on the front of the beat.’ The marking “gran sonoro” (grand sonority) at bar 188 appeared with the dynamic marking *ff* and hence appeared to refer to the type of sound and gesture. My approach at this point was to treat these heavily scored triadic chords with an equally balanced and full sound. The accents on each chord also appeared to suggest that there might be a very slight broadening to enhance the sense of gravity in these gestures (see Example 83). This is confirmed by the various accents and *tenuto* markings in the score. I took the view that the use of *tenuto* and accent over the same note is a clear indication to extend the value of the note as well as giving it a dynamic accent. Applying this on the first beat of the bar gives a sense of the first beat as the start of the gesture, which seemed effective. The use of multiple accent markings appeared to me to confirm the argument for some general broadening here.

**Example 83** – Brophy, *Abraço*, bars 188-189
The marking “impassioned and unrestrained” suggested the notion of the tempo moving forward slightly. I elected not to apply this to dynamics as the accompanying marking “più f” already deals with the change in dynamics at that point (see Example 78). I interpreted the final expressive marking “wild” as suggesting that the forward motion in tempo should continue, rather than the traditional notion of broadening out at the heavier moment. The ending of Abraço occurs abruptly and doubtless with some degree of humour.

**Performance decisions**

Throughout much of Abraço there is a sense that the style mingles jazz, blues and Brazilian music. The difference is subtle, but implies a very slight sense of swing at times. In the opening measures, I elected to apply a subtle sense of swing in certain of the gestures, such as at bars 7-10. This type of gesture can very easily sound repetitive and mechanical if played entirely in time. The use of pedal in Abraço requires careful attention. Brophy is remarkably sparing in his scoring of pedal. I took the view that Brophy was prepared to trust in the performer’s discretion to determine the appropriate amount of pedal. The sustaining pedal was used mostly in a flutter technique in the first half of the work, with the general rule being to ensure that the rapidly changing harmonies are not blurred together.

In the climactic ‘solo’ section from bar 124, I preferred to use pedal only in the arpeggiations and to maintain maximum clarity in the more jagged, off-beat rhythmic patterns (see Example 82). From bar 230, I chose to use as much flutter pedal as possible as the writing follows almost exactly the same pattern for the ensuing 36 bars and there is a risk of the dynamic level building prematurely as a result of the resonance under pedal. I elected to use a more constant pedal from bar 254 with roughly a single or two pedal changes per bar until the end of the work.
Concluding Comments to Chapter 4

Fas/Nefas by Jane Stanley

The systematic approach taken to the interpretive issues in Fas/Nefas resulted in a unique approach to the use of rubato and sound production in particular. An understanding of the form and compositional method resulted in a thorough comprehension of the consistencies and differences between the use of cells across the three movements in the cycle. This led to decisions such as keeping the strong-weak accenting of cell 2 across the three movements.

My notion of Fas as having being largely conceived from Sprechstimme and bird calls led to an interpretation wherein I utilised a more resonant sound throughout the opening measures and a drier sound where possible in the bird call gestures to emphasise the flitting gestures in the writing.

The analysis of the use of different cells in Nefarious Dance led to delineation between two significant conflicting elements in the music. My understanding of the compositional method made it possible to follow the manner in which these unfolded throughout the movement. In certain instances, my conclusions about the idiom led me to the conclusion that was appropriate in places to use a relatively forced sound, quite unlike any sound I would use in more conventional repertoire.

Alba by Tim Dargaville

The Dynamic Scheme Graph demonstrated that Alba was a masterful example of an end-accented climactic model. A closer examination of the compositional method and the use of tempo throughout indicated that tempo and dynamics were both inextricably related to dynamic intensity. The sense of endlessness at the opening of the work created by the many fermate in the score and the slow tempo are in stark opposition to the forward motion I applied in the latter stages of the work. This is one example where a dynamic form graph aligning tempo and dynamics would have been very successful, though it would not, in all probability have added to my interpretation.
Five Bagatelles by Carl Vine

Carl Vine’s comments regarding the interpretation of his music raise the question of compositional intention and the composer’s authority. Nonetheless, there were a number of expressive markings in Five Bagatelles that required interpretation. My resolutions in relation to the various expressive markings resulted in other decisions as to the quality of sound as well as issues such as pedalling, articulation and voicing.

The dynamic form of the different movements varied quite considerably and this was in keeping with the fact that the level of dynamic variation in each movement also varied according to the style. The third bagatelle, for example, was in a gentle popular ballad style and was simply not suited to any significant climactic treatment. In direct contrast, the first, second and fourth movements each had climactic qualities despite their shortness of duration.

The use of the dynamic form analysis assisted in clarifying the particular impact of the highest points in dynamics and hence also the question of whether the most significant point in the dynamic scheme corresponded with a culmination of a climax, or a false peak or even a random event. This in turn influenced my understanding of the style of each movement, such as whether the style was light-hearted, climactic or primarily textural in its effect (such as with Ross Edwards’ Kumari). The consideration given to the different stylistic approaches in each of the five movements led to quite distinctive approaches to sound production in each movement.

Third Piano Sonata by Carl Vine

As Vine offers no expressive markings (only performance directions) in his Third Piano Sonata, my task was confined mostly to issues of sound production, style, voicing and subtle use of pedalling. The Dynamic Scheme Graph helped to show several large peaks in loudness and this was crucial in scaling the use of similar dynamic markings at several structurally important points. My familiarity with Vine’s style in his earlier
compositions assisted me in understanding the type of sound and the subtle approach to the use of *rubato* and *agogic* throughout the score.

*Abraço* by Gerard Brophy

One of the most fundamental aspects in interpreting *Abraço* was in understanding the different stylistic influences on the writing. This resulted in an approach to rhythm that was exacting in many instances and allowed for very subtle use of swing in other instances. The overall approach to sound benefited from the understanding of the various Brazilian ensembles, with particular emphasis on the use of heavy brass sound in places.

My Dynamic Scheme Graph revealed that the point of dynamic peak at the end of the work required careful attention to avoid a sense of relentlessness in the writing. This was overcome using a systematic approach to scaling accents and the different textures in the writing towards the end.
Chapter Five – Summary and conclusions

Summary

This project represents the first application of systematic performance research in the field of Australian solo piano music composed between 1980-2010. It has aimed to present two engaging programs of works from that repertoire. The works selected for performance demonstrated a broad cross-section of the genres, compositional methods, styles, idioms and general approaches to piano writing over those thirty years.

The works examined could broadly be divided into those written between 1980 and 1994 and those written from 1994 to 2010. This division translated into two generations of composers and the compositional methods in these respective periods are suggestive of quite different eras. The early period splits firmly between two broad styles of writing, namely: composers of the serial modernist group (Humble and Ghandar) and composers whose work is influenced by factors such as the Australian landscape and Zen Buddhism (Sculthorpe, Edwards and Lumsdaine).

The latter period shows a marked shift in style, particularly from the standpoint of rhythm. All of these composers employed a high level of rhythmic complexity, including the use of frequently changing time signatures. In the case of Dargaville and Stanley, being the two youngest composers, there were high levels of rhythmic planning, in the form of isorhythms and talea-colour in addition to serial pitch planning.

Carl Vine and Gerard Brophy demonstrated a willingness to include tonality and aspects of polystylistism. Carl Vine has been criticised heavily in the past for doing so and this aspect of his writing is well within the realm of post-modernism.

Afterthoughts on the interpretive process

The greatest challenge in preparing the ten works for public performance was to arrive at an interpretive approach that would be rigorous enough to apply to a broad range of styles. It has been a central assumption in this study that the musical score presents a series of possibilities that may or may not lead the performer to a dynamically successful performance, depending upon how the score is read and the manner in which the
composer’s markings are supplemented by insightful artistic decisions. It is inherent in this approach that I seek to take full consideration of the various symbols notated in the score and to supplement these indications with a series of decisions that are based on a well-informed understanding of the compositional method, style and the overall structure of the composition.

I maintain that the score is akin to a set of instructions used by performers to ‘bring a musical work to life.’ It follows that the performer should ascertain as many possible indications of the musical meaning as possible. The information gleaned from the research was of considerable use in the interpretative process.

In applying my interpretative methodology to the five works selected from Sitsky’s second generation, I found a number of similarities in the types of issues that arose. One of the most obvious issues was that the use of tonality was mostly absent from the writing. The dynamic forms in these works varied from there being no sense of climax, such as in *Kumari* and Ghandar’s second bagatelle to a relatively traditional model with a climax such as in *Mountains*. It is worth noting that works selected from the first generation, with the exception of *Cambewarra*, were all relatively short. The use of genre by composers of this period more commonly involved shorter forms, such as bagatelles and miniatures.

The five works selected from the third generation were generally in longer forms, which reflects the fact that the writing of large-scale virtuoso works has been more common amongst composers from the third generation. The research enabled me to decipher the use of various systems for organising rhythm and pitch selection, which assisted me in identifying key structural points.

In this project, which entailed the presentation of works from two generations of composers across a period of some thirty years, I have demonstrated a number of prevalent themes and a number of shifts in compositional style that have occurred.

The historical research suggested that the composers who were active throughout this period were likely to have been influenced by ‘Australianism,’ modernism and postmodernism in particular. Other factors were likely to include the music of Asia, polystylistic and the adaptation of popular music.
Genre-crossing made it difficult to classify works at times. Tonality has increased in its importance throughout this period. Feminism was not a theme that was prominent in the literature or the repertoire, though the number of female composers throughout the period was significant. The influence of the music of Asia has been less prominent since 1994 and the concept of ‘Australianism’ has likewise dwindled to an extent during this period, notwithstanding the continuing support of the Australian Council, the inception of which occurred under the auspices of the Whitlam Government’s ‘Australianisation’ policy.

As performance research is a relatively new field, it is necessary to be inventive in developing approaches to interpreting new Australian piano music. My approach has been to examine the main musical elements and their role in the dynamic form. That is to say, I prefer to look at the different musical elements in isolation, rather than attempting to group elements together. In the field of new music where composers constantly seek to re-invent ways of achieving dynamic intensity within their writing, many of the relationships that one might assume in more conventional repertoire are non-existent or even reversed entirely. The works selected for performance are among the most challenging in the period. It is hoped that this approach may be useful to other scholars and performers of contemporary Australian piano music in researching and performing new works. Apart from Sculthorpe and Lumsdaine, there are no biographies of the composers under study. However, my interviews with composers provided some biographical information and information about their compositional methods.

Of the various performance issues that have arisen in the study, the use of expressive markings, as distinct from performance directions, has again raised the question of the relationship between the music work, the composer’s intention and the written score. Whilst the Third Piano Sonata stands as testament to Carl Vine’s desire to minimise the need for ‘interpretation,’ the printed score indicates that the work has been revised three times since it was written and therefore, that the first performances in the United States and Australia in 2007 were appreciably different to other performances in 2008 and onwards, including my performance in 2010. In my experience it is not unusual for composers to change the written score after a pianist has performed the work in
public. Indeed, in my experience composers have even changed notes and other markings shortly before a public performance.

Busy performers seldom write about the process of performing music. Much of the performance tradition is handed down from teacher to student. I hope that this research will make some inroads into the lacuna in musicological thought that deals with the philosophical and practical process of interpreting and performing contemporary Australian solo piano music and will stimulate further studies and dialogue about this rich and under-researched repertoire.
Appendix A – Glossary of terms

agogic – accenting a note by extending its time value or playing it slightly late or early

composing out/composing out process – the manner in which serial elements are applied within a composition and should be understood as the process of applying pitches in a composition as distinct from the pitch selection process

co-ordinate harmony – harmonies that exhibit only partial or fleeting sense of goal orientation

dynamic form - the variation in the general emotive intensity throughout a composition

dynamic scheme – a measure of the fluctuations in dynamic markings throughout a musical work

end-accented – a work in which the peak in dynamic form is near to the end

expressive markings – the composer’s descriptions of the type of sound or expressive effect expected of the performer and can be distinguished from performance directions (see below)

extended harmonies – a term of convenience referring to combinations of pitches that are not capable of conventional harmonic description

feel – a term of convenience to describe situations in which subtle variations in tempo or rhythm (or both) are used to capture certain stylistic and idiomatic traits in the music. An example is the use of a lazy swing feel where the distinctiveness in rhythmic markings is diminished and subtle variations in tempo are used to convey the sense of ‘laziness’ or ‘suaveness’
finger legato – the process of maintaining a legato sound using overlap between pitches caused by overlap of touch as distinct from the use of the pedal.

flutter pedal – the use of numerous rapid pedal changes within a short space of time and frequently used as a means of increasing resonance in a given passage whilst maintaining clarity of articulation

integral serialism – see “total organisation”

interval class – the collection of all pitch class intervals that are complementary inversions of one another

interval class vector – a tally indicating the interval classes present in any given set

maximal evenness – the relative uniformity of pitch class distribution within a given pitch set

musical language – a term of convenience to refer to the combination of pitch selection and composing out of pitches

new music – works that employ novel techniques that extend the boundaries of a style and expressive possibilities

normal form – a way of expressing a set vertically so that the interval between the lowest and highest pitches is as small as possible.

order operators – the process which alter the register or order of a set without ever altering the sequence of pitches, including transposition, inversion, retrogression, rotation
performance directions – to be distinguished from expressive markings on the basis that these are directions for what the performer is to do, rather than a description of the desired effect

polystylism – the use of different compositional styles within a composition

prime form – expression of a pitch set so that the lowest pitch is designated “O”

quartal harmony – the use of harmonies derived from the stacking of fourths on top of each other, frequently including tritones

subordinate harmony – harmonies which have a clear goal orientation as distinct from harmonies that have fleeting or ambiguous harmonic reference

swung – variations of duplet note values so that the first note is longer than marked and the second note is shorter than marked

total organisation – a method of serial composition that usually involves rhythm and pitch, but can also involve other musical elements
**Appendix B – Examples of cells in the opening of *Nefas***

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Appendix C – Dargaville, *Alba*, cells

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Appendix D – Edwards, *Kumari*, cells in movement 1

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Appendix E – Edwards, *Kumari*, cells in the second movement

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| 1 | ![Diagram 1](image1)
| 2 | ![Diagram 2](image2)
| 3 | ![Diagram 3](image3)
| 4 | ![Diagram 4](image4)
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Unpublished

http://hdl.handle.net/11343/36950

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