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An introduction for the singer to the solo vocal works of Nigel Butterley with particular emphasis on his works between 1976 and 2003

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**AN INTRODUCTION FOR THE SINGER TO THE SOLO VOCAL
WORKS OF NIGEL BUTTERLEY WITH PARTICULAR
EMPHASIS ON HIS WORKS BETWEEN 1976 AND 2003**

A Monograph

**Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts**

in

The School of Music

by

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December 2004**

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ABSTRACT

Nigel Butterley (b. 1935), an Australian composer, has composed a considerable number of work for the solo voice ranging from an unaccompanied song to works for voice and piano and works for voice and multiple instruments including a cycle for soprano and orchestra. While not well known in the United States his vocal music, together with the rest of body of work, merits consideration and performance.

The primary focus of this paper will be three of Butterley's later works for solo voice which were composed after 1976. They are *The Owl* (1983); *The Woven Light* (1994) and *Frogs* (1995). The intention is to give the singer a guide for the preparation of these works, with full exploration of the text which drives the setting of each of these works.

Text is the prime impetus for Butterley to create and shape the vocal music he writes. Therefore, for each of the works discussed in this paper, consideration of the text alone is important. Butterley's concern for the text leads him to find the connections and themes that are woven within the text and then to create an appropriate musical language which will bring the text alive by enhancing its meaning. He uses motifs as an important tool to illustrate the textual connections. In order for the singer to fully portray the drama of the text it is necessary to understand these connections in the music. The shape of the vocal line also reflects the text and its meaning. These and other musical vocabulary are used by Butterley in each of the works considered to heighten the text and create an environment where the singer can fully interpret the drama of the text. This document will point out Butterley's musical guideposts which can aid the singer in the preparation of each of these works.

Also useful to the singer would be a consideration of the composer and his work.

Chapter One will give some brief biographical details about Nigel Butterley and his approach to composition for the solo voice. The second chapter will give an introduction to Butterley's early vocal works. Two of the three works discussed in this paper are major works for which a singer may have trouble assembling the required instrumental forces. Chapter Two, together with providing further information about Butterley's approach to vocal composition, also gives the singer a chance to explore works of a simpler nature. Chapters Three to Five will look at each of these works to seek the musical clues Butterley offers to the full interpretation of the text which is being set. For *The Owl* the singer plunges into the full drama of the text where the journey. For *The Woven Light* the singer seeks to understand the journey which the text describes. In *Frogs*, there is a search for the persona behind the text.

The paper concludes with a summary of Butterley's approach to the composition of solo vocal music and advice he has to offer the singer preparing an interpretation of these worthwhile works.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF NIGEL BUTTERLEY

Background

Australian composer Nigel Butterley (b.1935) is an independent composer and thinker who has contributed interesting and challenging works to the vocal literature. As a child he was surrounded by books and art, which developed his love of literature and language. One of his most popular books is his *Shorter Oxford Dictionary*. This background informs his approach to composition. His solo vocal works are the product of a love of language and intense interest in the spiritual. This results in works which use interesting and fulfilling texts, set as a personal response to both their meaning and cadence.

While Butterley has not amassed a large body of solo vocal works, the works he has written for solo voice are worthy of consideration by the singer interested in contemporary vocal music. The intent of this paper is to give the singer some background information about Nigel Butterley and his approach to composing for the voice. His early vocal works, composed between 1952 and 1975 will be briefly described. His three solo vocal works composed between 1976 and 2003, *The Owl*, *The Woven Light* and *Frogs* will be discussed in greater detail. The intention is to give the singer a guide to the demands and rewards inherent in any performance of Butterley's difficult and challenging vocal music. He is intent on choosing texts which interest and inspire him. The texts of the three works which will be considered in detail all have a feminist perspective, a theme which permeates most of his composition. Thus, a singer performing his vocal works will find the exploration both stimulating and demanding.

While not well-known in the United States, Nigel Butterley has earned respect from Australian musicians as an important and influential composer. Andrew Ford

(b. 1957), an influential Australian critic and composer himself, writes of Butterley:

there is no composer in Australia whose work is held in such high regard by every faction amongst his colleagues: every composer in the country seems to admire Butterley's work. Yet his music has not always captured the public's imagination to the same degree as that of his contemporaries..."¹

Richard Toop (b. 1945), an Australian musicologist, says of Butterley:

Three basic questions underlie Butterley's work as a composer. The first is a deeply personal (rather than institutional) religious experience. Second is the belief that art exists to probe every cranny of emotional experience: it can elevate and console, but it can provoke and disturb. The third conviction, probably the most important, is that the pursuit of one's true self is ultimately more important than the adoption of passing trends, whether populist or elitist... Both the man and his music radiate belief in the capacity of art to go on saying meaningful things to those with even half an ear to hear.²

These comments by Ford and Toop express sentiments that drew me to explore further the vocal works of Nigel Butterley. As an Australian I was interested in learning more about an Australian composer. Yet what finally interested me about this composer had little to do with his being Australian. It was instead his views about composition and the use of poetry in composition which kindled my interest. He is a fascinating individual, who commands my utmost respect, as well as a composer whose vocal works offer singers the challenging experience of learning difficult music with rewarding and many-layered texts. His vocal music poses difficult questions rather than easy answers, and invites the singer to explore complex ideas.

¹Andrew Ford, *Composer to Composer* (Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1993), 164.

²Graeme Skinner, "Nigel Butterley, *From Sorrowing Earth*," (liner notes), ABC Classics, 1995, compact disc.

In 1993 Butterley presented ten one-hour radio shows entitled *Music with a Future*, explaining pieces he believed to be important major works of the twentieth century. He said of his approach to presenting modern music:

People often say they find some modern music difficult to understand. Enjoyment need not wait for understanding and I think being willing to listen is the most important thing. An understanding of the structure and technical aspects of the music may come with more familiarity. On the other hand, some knowledge of the composer as a person and familiarity with the circumstances behind a piece of music can be both enlightening and interesting.³

This sentiment reflects the reason for including a biography of Butterley. As a singer I am interested in more than simply the music. The person behind the music also offers important insights into his compositions.

Biography

Nigel Butterley was born in Epping, a suburb of Sydney, in 1935. From childhood he kept a list of his compositions, including a piece written when he was nine years old.⁴ At fifteen years of age he knew he wanted to be a composer. He told Ford that he recalled the exact moment:

I remember standing in the garden - like St. Augustine! Why do these things always happen in gardens? Anyway, I was standing in the garden at home in Beecroft, and I just thought, yes, I want to be a composer.

But in retrospect there were other signs. I started learning the piano when I was a boy, and I remember sitting at the kitchen table: late afternoon, the sun streaming in, and it was very hot. I was sitting there with my toy piano and I had music, although I couldn't read it. My name significantly was Miss Fairy, and I was giving my mother a music lesson while she was trying to cook the dinner.⁵

³ Nigel Butterley, "Music with a future," *2MBS-FM Program Guide*, April 1993, 14.

⁴ Nigel Butterley, Interview by author, tape recording of phone conversation, Atlanta, USA and Sydney, Australia, 21 March, 2004.

⁵ Ford, 165.

He began composition lessons at the New South Wales Conservatorium of Music in Sydney, where he enrolled part time after graduating from Sydney Grammar School.⁶ At the same time he was a member of the choir in St. Andrew's Cathedral, an Anglican (Episcopal) cathedral.⁷ At the Conservatorium he studied with Noel Nickson and Raymond Hanson. He stated that his study with Hanson was "particularly concerned with the harmonic aspect. Noel Nickson was more academic but I was mainly doing harmony with them rather than composition."⁸ Butterley never undertook formal full-time post-secondary education.⁹

While continuing his part time music studies he worked for the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC),¹⁰ starting in the music department as a trainee in 1955.¹¹ He worked in various capacities at the ABC between 1955 and 1972 including some time working in the religious department.¹²

⁶Graeme Skinner, 'The Woven Light', *Meet the Music Teaching Kit*, (Adelaide: Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, 1994), 10.

⁷ Ibid., 10.

⁸ Unpublished interview by unknown, in *Interviews with Australian musicians (1986 - 1988)*, held by the Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia, 61.

⁹ Skinner, 1994, 10.

¹⁰The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (formerly Australian Broadcasting Commission), Australia's only national non-commercial broadcaster, is funded by the Australian Federal government. It includes a national television channel, various national and regional radio. For 60 years it also run Symphony Orchestras in each of the State Capitals. The symphony orchestras are now subsidiary, yet independent, companies of the ABC. The ABC also has a recording label.

¹¹ Skinner, 1994, 10.

¹² Skinner, 1994, 10.

He went to England in 1961 hoping to study with Michael Tippett (1905 - 1998).

Butterley was drawn to Tippett not only through his compositions, but also through his writings. In an interview with Andrew Ford he said:

Because I haven't got an analytical, academic sort of mind, I'm drawn to things more through feeling and intuition, and I just responded to Michael Tippett. I don't know how much of his music I actually heard-I'd certainly heard the concerto for Double String Orchestra-but I'd read about Tippett and I knew that he was someone I would respond to. So I wrote to him and asked if I could have composition lessons - that was 1962. He wrote back and said that he didn't teach, but he recommended Priaulx Rainier..."¹³

Butterley did not have many lessons with Rainier but she was very influential in his development as a composer.¹⁴

Priaulx (Ivy) Rainier (1903 - 1986) was South African-born of 'English-Huguenot origin.'¹⁵ She moved to London to study violin at the Royal Academy of Music in 1920. She continued to live in London as a violinist and teacher until she received a grant in 1935 which allowed her to concentrate on composition. She studied with Nadia Boulanger for three months, and was professor of composition at the Royal Academy of Music from 1943 -1961.

Butterley said of his studies with Rainier that:

she was the right person at the right time. She helped me to loosen up and to open up to a freer sort of structure... [she] helped me open up my style so that the first pieces that I wrote after studying with her were much freer. I knew something would happen but I didn't know what.¹⁶

¹³ Ford, 166.

¹⁴ Ibid., 166.

¹⁵ Kemp and Herbert Van der Spuy, 'Priaulx (Ivy) Rainier,' *The New Grove Dictionary of Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 19 March 2004), <<http://grovemusic.com>>

¹⁶ Unpublished interview, 1986, 61.

He has also noted about his studies with Rainier:

As a young man, what inspired me about Priaulx was the same thing that inspired me about Patrick White. They were two artists I looked to for an example of absolute conviction in what they were doing.¹⁷

He also said of his teacher:

Priaulx never turned out pot-boilers. In fact she was so single-minded, she would never write in the same genre twice. For instance, when she wrote a string quartet way back in the 1930's, that was it. She never wrote another one.¹⁸

This independence of style and determination to experiment and develop is also manifest in Butterley's approach to composition. In 1963 he wrote his first work since studying with Rainier, *Laudes*.¹⁹ She had said to him that it did not matter if he used a note row or not. "In *Laudes* I did use note rows a bit, but after a while I'd get sick of it and the music would just take over. But it was quite a useful starting point."²⁰

In 1966 he won the Italia Prize for *In the Head the Fire*, a radio work commissioned by the then Australian Broadcasting Commission. Together with prize money of £3,250, Butterley won credit in Australia for bringing recognition of Australian music to the world stage. The general manager of the ABC, T. Duckmanton, stated that the award was "a

¹⁷ Skinner, 1994, 10. Patrick White (1912 - 1990) was an Australian novelist, short story writer and playwright. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1973 'for an epic and psychological narrative art which has introduced a new continent into literature.' (Quoting from the 1973 Press Release from the Swedish Academy, available on line at <http://www.nobel.se/literature/laureates/1973/press.html>). His novels include *The Tree of Man*, *Voss*, and *The Solid Mandala*.

¹⁸ Graeme Skinner, "After the ebb, The tide always turns," *Sydney Morning Herald*, August 16, 1991, 41.

¹⁹ *Laudes* is scored for Flute/alto flute, clarinet/bass clarinet, horn, trumpet, violin, viola, violoncello, and piano.

²⁰ Ford, 167.

milestone in Australia's musical history."²¹ Also entered in the competition that year was Luciano Berio's *Laborintus II*.²² The texts for *In the Head the Fire* were taken from various religious sources in a variety of languages. Texts included excerpts from the dead sea scrolls.²³

Other important events in Butterley's professional life include:

- 1965 Composed *The White-Throated Warbler* - written for recorder, it is one of Butterley's most performed works. It was inspired by Couperin's *The Nightingale in Love*. "The title of the piece was supplied by Australian ornithologist Alec Chisholm, who identified the birdsong when the composer whistled it to him over the phone."²⁴ At the time Butterley was not particularly aware of Messiaen's use of birdsong.
- 1973 - 1991 Lecturer in contemporary music at the Newcastle School of Music, retiring in 1991.
- 1978 Visiting scholar at Northwestern University in Illinois.
- 1979 Composer in residence at University of Melbourne.²⁵

²¹James Murdoch, *Australian Contemporary Composers* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1983), 44.

²²Jill Sykes, "Nigel Butterley at Fifty," *Newsletter of the Australasian Performing Right Association*, October, 1985, 9.

²³ Ibid., 9.

²⁴ Elliot Gyger, *There Came a Wind Like a Bugle: Chamber Music by Nigel Butterley* (liner notes), Tall Poppies TP 142, 2001, compact disc.

²⁵ Catherine Flaherty, *Nigel Butterley' Vocal Music: a Study of Stylistic Development* (unpublished Bachelor of Arts Honors Thesis, University of New England, Australia, 1987), 8.

- 1985 Awarded the Australia Council Composer Fellowship. This grant of \$30,000 enabled Butterley to work full time as a composer for one year.
- 1988 Composed *Lawrence Hargrave Flying Alone*.²⁶ Butterley's only opera, it was commissioned and performed by the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. The librettist was James McDonald, with whom he also collaborated for *The Owl*.
- 1991 Named a Member of the Order of Australia.²⁷
- 1992 *From the Sorrowing Earth* won the Sounds Australian Award for best composition by an Australian.
- 1996 Awarded an honorary Doctorate of Musical Arts from the University Newcastle.
- 2001 Won the Paul Lowin Orchestral Prizes for *Spell of Creation* described by the judges as "emotionally and richly layered" and "building to a conclusion of 'genuine power'."²⁸
- 2003 Ian Potter Music Orchestral Award given to Butterley to compose a work for community orchestra. Butterley is currently working on this composition which is due for performance in May 2005. It takes its title from the last lines of Kathleen

²⁶ Lawrence Hargrave (1850-1915) was an Australian aviator whose research relating to box kites and flight is often credited as having aided the Wright brothers in their pursuit of flight. Their documents, however, make no mention of Hargrave's work.

²⁷ In 1975, the Order of Australia was established by the Queen as 'an Australian society of honor for the purpose of according recognition to Australian citizens and other persons for achievement or for meritorious service.' The Governor General of Australia makes the awards upon recommendation of the Council for the Order of Australia.

²⁸ Jennifer Sexton, 'Grace notes - Nigel Butterley, Composer,' *The Australian*, October 26, 2001, Features, p. 22.

Raine's poem *The Moment*.²⁹ The title of the work is *Never this sun, and never again this watcher*.³⁰

Although retired from Newcastle Conservatorium of music, Butterley continues to teach. He currently has three students from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.³¹ He also enjoys leading continuing education classes about particular composers or themes in music. Last year he directed "The Spiritual Journey in the Twentieth Century," a series about spirituality in music.³²

Early articles about Butterley refer to his strong religious upbringing and his strong Christian faith. He no longer regards himself as a Christian, but is very aware of and concerned with spiritual matters. He notes that although previous writers have exaggerated his Anglican upbringing, Christianity is an important background in his composition. When we discussed his sense of humor he stated that "it is true that the stained-glass image has been overemphasized."³³ Spirituality, though, is a part of his compositional life. In an interview about *Spell of Creation* he was asked whether or not some of the composers who influenced him, including Vaughan Williams and Michael Tippett, could be described as religious.

Yes, but with a very small 'r'. Vaughan Williams was an agnostic, Tippett described himself as a pluralist, and so it's not the specifically Christian music or specifically religious poetry that attracts me, but something which is much wider and broader than that, and in recent years I've been drawn through Kathleen Raine of course, to

²⁹Kathleen Raine, *The Collected Poems of Kathleen Raine* (Washington D.C.: Counterpoint, 2001), 96 - 98.

³⁰Nigel Butterley, Interview by author, 2004.

³¹Ibid., 2004.

³²Ibid., 2004.

³³Ibid., 2004.

the writings of other traditions than the Christian traditions, and through reading Karen Armstrong's 'A History of God', I've realized how close Jewish and Christian and Muslim thought is in the mystical aspect of that thought. And that's something you don't realize when you hear about all the fights between all the different religious traditions, to realize that the mystical traditions share so much in common, not only the European ones but also Buddhism and Hindu belief, there's so much in common, and that is what interests Kathleen Raine and the other people concerned with work with the Temenos Academy which she founded. That I find very exciting and interesting, the similarities between things rather than the differences.³⁴

In another interview about the *Spell of Creation* he said "The work is about a sense of the sacred....It is concerned with the otherness of things, the reality beyond the every day – that's what excites me to write music."³⁵

Butterley is also a respected pianist, and is particularly known for his performance of contemporary music. John Cage, Tippett, Olivier Messiaen (1872- 1958) and Alban Berg (1885 - 1935) are among the composers he plays most frequently. He participated in the Australian premier of Arnold Schönberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* in 1958.³⁶ He has released a CD of John Cage's music in 1995 titled *Cage: Sonatas and Interludes*, which included solo piano works by Cage and a Cage song cycle, *The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs*, performed with Gerald English.

Influences on Butterley

Butterley is known as an independent composer who does not subscribe to any particular school or style of composition. Nevertheless he does not compose in a vacuum, and has studied and admired many great composers. In response to a question about the

³⁴Nigel Butterley, interview by Stephen Critenden, *The Religion Report*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, 6 June 2001.

³⁵ Chelsea Clark, "Lifting the Spell," *The Daily Telegraph* 1 June 2001 , Features, 113.

³⁶ Michael Barkle, 'Nigel Butterley', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 20 March 2004), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>.

influences on his music he states that, significant composers were “first, a long time ago,” Vaughan Williams, Benjamin Britten, Bela Bartok and Paul Hindemith. More recently he has been influenced by Tippett, John Cage,³⁷ and Messiaen, of whom he notes:

What interests me in Messiaen [is] the sound of his music, the religious background, harmonies, the rhythmic influences which he derives from Indian music, his techniques of musical composition. I use those to some extent. Though my music doesn't sound like Messiaen.³⁸

He experimented with Messiaen's modes of limited transposition parts of *The Owl*, although he is quick to point out that it does not sound like Messiaen.³⁹ While discussing various influences he notes:

But then you could say that anything in your life could be an influence in some way or another. These were the obvious influences. They all become part of you, and the music that you write is what you are. My job is to write the music and not to sit down and analyze it.⁴⁰

He notes how his influences have developed:

Earlier influences are less obvious. By the time you get to fifty you have obviously absorbed those things that were new to you 20-30 years ago, you've absorbed them and got what you want from them. But I haven't rejected anything. My style has gone on along its own particular line rather than changing... The sort of melodic shapes, the sort of harmonies and the texture in my music was all there before. Some aspects are emphasized more now than they were then, the gentler aspects, the richer harmonies rather than the more harsh harmonies. There's been no conscious or unconscious effort to change my style or follow some particular trend. Often it is misleading to pigeonhole into styles for example, new romantic etc.⁴¹

In this discussion he rejects ideas which characterize his music as becoming more tonal in

³⁷Unpublished interview by unknown, 1986-1988, 60.

³⁸ Ibid., 60.

³⁹ Butterley, interview by the author, 2004.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 60 - 61.

⁴¹Ibid., 63.

reaction to the compositional complexities of the 1950's and 60's. He does not consciously react against or for a style.⁴²

He admits that his “music has become more mellow, with more feeling for key patterns... Which means I need to make sure I don’t stay in the same key. Music is no longer so atonal that it’s almost impossible to remember the tune.”⁴³

Characteristics of His Solo Vocal Works

Butterley's music is neither easy listening nor easy performing. His hope is that both with time and some familiarity, his music is rewarding for both the listener and the performer. Characteristics of his solo vocal music that combine to make the music difficult are:

- atonality
- lack of key signatures
- frequent changes of meter
- use of complex rhythms including the use of triplets and even larger divisions of the beat and the frequent use of ties over beats and measures.
- use of the full range of the voice to reflect the needs of the text

Characteristics of his solo vocal music that give greater satisfaction with greater familiarity are:

- the use of motifs in both the vocal and instrumental lines to give works unity and to heighten understanding of the text

⁴²Ibid., 62.

⁴³ Amber De Nardi, "Turning silence into sound: Composers talk about inspiration," *2MBS-FM Program Guide*, August 1983, p.13.

- the clear relationship of rhythm of the vocal line to speech rhythms
- use of *melisma* in the vocal line as tool to heighten understanding of or to illustrate the text. As he responds to the needs of the text, he moves away from simple replication of speech rhythms using *melisma* and the lengthening of notes.
- attention to the intonation and musical flow of the spoken word in setting the vocal line
- use of contrasting instrumental textures to underscore meaning and to define structure.
- the choice of texts which have a feminist theme

While he does not seek to write difficult music for its own sake, Butterley said of understanding his music:

When we listen to something new, we naturally try to relate it to something else. But if we can listen to a piece of music for itself and try to find something that is in the music, than just make comparison. After hearing something 2 or 3 times it is often surprising how after you think something is absolutely revolting the first time can be something enjoyable and rewarding.⁴⁴

He states, "It's more rewarding than knowing everything about a composition after just one hearing." Butterley is not impressed by music that "will make an immediate impression - and make the same impression the next time and the next time. My music takes a bit of working on. I think that with lots of things, you have to do a bit of work. When you read T.S. Elliot's poetry, you don't get it all at the first reading. I sometimes think I would like to write music like that..."⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Unpublished interview by unknown, 1986-1988, 66.

⁴⁵ Jill Sykes, "Chilling night of the owl," *Sydney Sun-Herald*, 12 July 1987, p. 11.

Toop has described Butterley as both:

a romantic and an ecstatic... This is shown with his fascination - obsession - with soaring lines. There is this typical shape in his writing where you go up a step and then you whizz up higher, maybe come down a little and creep up. And the melody is always going up and up... It would be almost impossible for Nigel to be influenced by a composer unless he were able to find some kind of mystical or ecstatic content in their work. And it would never be a material influence. It would be the influence of the spirit inside the music, not its external techniques.⁴⁶

In an interview celebrating his 60th birthday Butterley observed:

You get to any age, forty, fifty, or sixty, and you think: 'I am beginning to find out what's what'... For instance I am now, the last two or three years more comfortable with strings than I've ever been before... I am also more open to more obviously tonal or modal melodies than I was 25 years ago. When I was young everything had to be new. You had to wear different clothes, eat different food, everything was experimental. Nowadays we've gone to the other extreme, but I've gone looking for what is new, though at the same time I now don't avoid the more familiar.⁴⁷

Of his process of writing he says:

There are two aspects to writing any sort of music, one aspect is your craft, the other aspect is your imagination. So many pieces are done with the skills you have learnt, other pieces are motivated by a strong desire to express something inside you into a piece and so your craft is brought into service. I'm more interested now in the second category, in writing pieces which are motivated by a strong desire to write this piece of music.⁴⁸

He also notes that composing is both challenging and hard work. "Well it is for me and therefore I write slowly....You're forever thinking one day you're going to write your best work. That keeps you going."⁴⁹ In an interview celebrating his 50th birthday he stated:

I tend to do things slowly rather than suddenly... And so my style has developed over practically 30 years, and it goes on in that sort of direction. I know the sort of music I want to write, and it will change. But it is a gradual change. I think that in

⁴⁶ Skinner, CD liner notes, 1995.

⁴⁷ Laurie Strachan, "Beyond 60," *The Weekend Australian*, 3 June 1995, p. 10R.

⁴⁸ Unpublished interview by unknown, 64.

⁴⁹ De Nardi, 1983, 13.

those Blake songs there were possible phrases and chords that I was still using in the Owl - though not, perhaps, consciously.⁵⁰

He has also noted however, that often what he writes is dictated by who is paying him. He notes “Most of the things I’ve written have been commissions. I find it stimulating and I don’t accept a commission unless I want to do it... I like to have a long time to think about a piece - to let it all germinate slowly...”⁵¹

The structure of his songs is driven by his response to the text. Motifs inspired by themes or images in the text are common in his vocal work. In cycles, motifs serve to give the entire work a greater coherence.

Butterley has said on his approach to setting words:

For me the main reason for writing vocal music has always been to respond to the poet and the poem, and to present the words to the listener as clearly and strongly as I can. The meaning and the emotional power of words always predominate, even when it’s been the sound of them that’s initially attracted me....for me the word comes first. But music must not be just a superficial addition; it must not merely illustrate, or copy speech; to be strong enough to project the words it must, paradoxically, command the listener’s attention....As Kathleen Raine put in a letter to me, quoting Yeats at the end: “I’m glad you find my poems good to set to your music. I suppose that is because I used as few words as possible, and that leaves space for the music to unfold, to prolong the moment of contemplation.”⁵²

Of setting words, he stated in an interview about his choral work *Spell of Creation* that, particularly in setting English works, he is concerned with the setting the natural rhythm of the words.

⁵⁰ Jill Sykes, 1987, p. 6.

⁵¹ De Nardi, 1983, 17.

⁵² Nigel Butterley, *Words Into Music: A Composer's Response to Poetry* (Armidale, University of New England: 1999), 8 - 10.

Some composers don't bother with that sort of thing....Then there is someone like Michael Tippett, a strong influence on me, who only uses words as a starting point, after which the music takes over. To him words can be played around with and distorted since once set to music they are no longer important.⁵³

For Butterley the rhythm and the meaning of the words are important influences in setting and accompanying the words.

Butterley and the Poets

Much of what he has written for voice has been influenced by his study of poets like William Blake, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson and Kathleen Raine. The texts he chooses to set are generally a response to both the poet and the poetry, and a recurring theme in his selection has been an attraction to the poetic sense of the inner-world. There is also a feminist quality evident in many of the texts he chooses to set. This is particularly evident in the three primary works considered in this paper.

Butterley has often noted that he finds inspiration for his music from poetry. Some important poets to him are William Blake, John Donne, Kathleen Raine, Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman. He has commented that "I must stress it's not just poetry which inspires me; poets must also."⁵⁴ In another interview he observed that it is "the same with composers: it's not just the one work I respond to, but the composer and his/her whole world, that I respond to."⁵⁵ In a lecture about his compositional approach, he stated

It's hardly ever happened that I've seen a particular poem and wanted to set it to music. Usually it's a slower process, of becoming interested in the life and thought and personality of a poet, as well as the writings, both prose and poetry, and gradually

⁵³ Annarosa Reyneke, "Spell of Creation: When music follows words," *2MBS-FM Program Guide*, September 2001, p.12.

⁵⁴ Ibid.,13.

⁵⁵ Katherine Kemp, Unpublished interview with Nigel Butterley (Sydney 1998), held by Australian Music Center, 11.

feeling the need to respond musically in some way - as in the orchestral *Meditations of Thomas Traherne*.⁵⁶

Examples of the way poetry influences Butterley's work abound. His first major orchestral work, *Meditations of Thomas Traherne* (1968) was Butterley's response to writings of Traherne (c.1638 - 1674), a 17th century Christian poet. In his program notes for this work Butterley wrote of Traherne's spirituality:

His mysticism does not involve withdrawal from the world, but enjoyment of reality. He sees man, God and nature as essentially related, and continually stresses the infinite possibilities of man and nature, rather than their limitations. His confidence, that (in the words of Blake) 'if doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear as it is... *infinite*,' is supported by his distinctive ability to recapture the singleness and purity of vision of the child, with its wholehearted wonder at the very existence of things.⁵⁷

Another major orchestral work, *From Sorrowing Earth*, takes inspiration from the poetry of Kathleen Raine - although its title is not directly from one of Raine's poems. He included a poem from her *Selected Poems* (1988) as an epigram in the score:

Polluted tide,
Desecrated earth destroyed:
Yet one green leaf opens for the heart
The shelter of a great forest⁵⁸

As already noted, the orchestral work on which he is currently working, *Never this sun, and never again this watcher*, takes its title from a poem by Kathleen Raine.

Several of his works have been inspired by the English Jesuit poet Gerald Manley Hopkins (including *Goldengrove* for string orchestra), although he has not actually ever set any of

⁵⁶ Nigel Butterley, *Word's Into Music: A Composer's Response to Poetry* (Armidale, University of New England:1999), 7-8.

⁵⁷ Skinner, Compact Disc liner notes, 1995.

⁵⁸ Raine, *Selected Poems* (Great Barrington, MA: Inner Traditions/ Lindisfarne Press Book, 1988), 117.

Hopkins texts. Appended to the score of his *Of Wood* for cello is a quotation from the Hindu Taittiriya Brahmana: “Brahman was the wood, Brahman the tree from which they shaped heaven and earth.”⁵⁹

The poetry is also an important element in supplying the structure of a composition, and Butterley notes that “A very advantageous thing about setting words is that the structure is already suggested. Of course you can manipulate it. You can have instrumental interludes or not...”⁶⁰ He mentioned this in the context of a discussion about the difference between composing for voice and composing for orchestra. Writing for the voice “is much easier,” as the structure is supplied. He also noted “I enjoy playing around with the words because it’s much easier and enjoyable than writing music. I am becoming more and more interested in words and I love my *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*.”⁶¹

He traces this love of literature partly back to his childhood. His father was the secretary for the Australian English Society which promoted English literature.

My father’s study was a favorite place of mine because he had lots of books... I used to love just sitting there and playing with books... I grew up with words and also paintings because he was an amateur painter. We had lots of art books and things. Words and music and art were just something I grew up with... They were just natural to me.⁶²

His love of language has not translated to a desire to write poetry himself. The closest he has come to writing for his own compositions was to make his own translations of two poems by the famous poet of Tang China, Du Fu (Tu Fu) for his choral work, *Spring Ending*.

⁵⁹ Gyger, CD liner notes, 2001.

⁶⁰ Nigel Butterley, Interview by author, 2004.

⁶¹ Ibid., 2004.

⁶² Ibid., 2004.

Unhappy with available translations, which either had “horrible English or were not true to the text,” he made his own translation with the help of several Chinese speakers and poets.⁶³

Butterley’s Place in Australian Classical Music

Ford has described Butterley as, “the Third Man of Australian Music... he belongs to the generation of Peter Sculthorpe (b.1929) and David Meale (b. 1932) and yet for some reason he is always mentioned last.”⁶⁴

In another article Ford observes:

In the beginning there was Sculthorpe, Meale and Butterley. The ‘beginning’ was about 1963, and there was not much popular discrimination between these three ‘experimentalists’, ‘avante-garde-ists’, young Turks or whatever the description might have been. Things then became clearer. Sculthorpe became ‘the voice of Australia’... Meale... appeared to be the very model of a European avante-garde composer..and [later] became overnight the champion of new romanticism.... Nigel Butterley on the other had, has had a different problem: he never fitted-even superficially- into any pigeonhole. Such is the 20th century consumerism , that the inability to be categorised leads to neglect. ⁶⁵

Nigel Butterley is not well-known outside of Australia. This is perhaps partly explained by the demise of his Australian publisher, Albert and Sons. The reason may also be found in a comment made in an interview:

For me, writing the piece is enough. I don’t have the time or the temperament to rush around promoting my work. After it is written, I’m more interested in the next piece. But I am worried that, while there are many notable exceptions, many Australian musicians are not interested in performing Australian music. We need to have our work included in both local performances and in the repertoire of touring groups.”⁶⁶

Of his role as an Australian composer he notes that:

⁶³ Ibid., 2004.

⁶⁴ Andrew Ford, "The Third Man," *ABC Radio 24 Hours*, June 2002, p. 98.

⁶⁵ Ford, 1993, 164.

⁶⁶ De Nardi, 1983, 17.

Nothing of my music makes any attempt to be Australian. It's something that I don't want to do deliberately just because I happen to be Australian.⁶⁷

In response to questions by Andrew Ford about his attitude to a "national identity" in music he stated:

I am interested in and respect the new realization of the spiritual in aboriginal life, and this is something I would like to read more about. But I do not know any Aboriginal people; I haven't really had any experience of Aboriginal culture. It's not something I would essentially feel a part of, whereas Europe is.⁶⁸

Butterley has been a composer for over fifty years, during which he has received numerous awards and commissions. He has grown and developed his craft as an individual, generally choosing not to be associated with any single school of composition. He has been a radio producer, a teacher, and a composer, and has seldom been able to be simply a composer. He has not been a prolific composer due to the other demands on his time, and the fact that composition is a time-consuming task for him.

Although Butterley is a respected composer in Australia, he does not believe his music currently has the support of the ABC, whose programming controls so much of the classical music which the general public in Australia hear. This is partly why he turned to writing a composition for community orchestra.⁶⁹ Although one of the 'big three,' he has failed to achieve the public recognition of either Sculthorpe or Meale. His music is probably the least instantly accessible, which is not a point of concern for Butterley. He believes it is more rewarding to listen to a piece several times to understand it. Although that may be true, the difficulties of getting a contemporary Australian work performed more than once are

⁶⁷ Unpublished interview by unknown, in *Interviews with Australian Musicians (1986 - 1988)*, held by the Australian Music Center, 65.

⁶⁸ Ford, 1993, 165.

⁶⁹ Nigel Butterley, Interview by author, 2004.

considerable. An indication that there are some people interested in listening to Butterley more than once is found in the release in 2001 of a compact disc containing a variety of works by Butterley entitled *There Came a Wind Like a Bugle*.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Nigel Butterley, *There Came a Wind Like a Bugle*, compact disc recording, Tall Poppies TP 142, 2001.

CHAPTER 2

AN OVERVIEW OF BUTTERLEY'S SOLO VOCAL WORKS

Butterley's Earliest Works for Voice

Prior to studying with Priaulx Rainer Butterley wrote three works for voice and piano. These were *Three Serenades* (1954), *Six Blake songs* (1956), and *Child in Nature* (1957). Catherine Flaherty suggests that these early works show 'both a conservative style... and the formation of a more modern style influenced by the works of Benjamin Britten.'¹ She notes however, that when looking for general characteristics in Butterley's music, one should always bear in mind Butterley's words, '... everything I write needs to be different from what I have written before.... Each work has its own identity...' ²

*Three Serenades*³

Flaherty states that Butterley considers *Three Serenades* for tenor and piano 'more original and more fresh musically than some of the works he wrote later.' She suggests this is a consequence of 'the power of the imagery suggested in Sacheverell Sitwell's words. These unique images inspired a new direction in Butterley's style, whereas if the words were in a more traditional vain, Butterley would initially consider a "Vaughan Williams [sort] of style.'" ⁴

¹ Catherine Flaherty, *Nigel Butterley's Vocal Music: a Study of Stylistic Development* (unpublished Bachelor of Arts Honors Thesis, University of New England, Australia, 1987), 9.

² Ibid. 9.

³ Nigel Butterley, *Three Serenades: for tenor and piano* (St Leonard's, Australia: Australian Music Center, 1990).

⁴ Flaherty, 1987,10.

She notes that the influence of Britten, whom Butterley at the time considered more modern, is particularly evident in these songs.⁵ The poems are serenades number one, two, and five, from ten poems entitled *Serenades* by Sacheverell Sitwell, published in *The Hundred and one Harlequins* in 1922.

Sacheverell Sitwell (1897-1988), brother of Edith (1887-1964) and Osbert Sitwell (1902-1969), was the youngest of the three sibling-poets. G.A. Cervasco, in his observations of the three Sitwells, states that ‘Sacheverell, perhaps the most erudite of the three, followed his own interest and wrote poetically insightful studies of music, art and architecture in a rich and rhythmic prose,’⁶ the likes of which would always appeal to Butterley.

Flaherty notes that the influence of Britten’s folk song settings seems particularly evident in these songs. She compares the style of these songs to Britten’s *O Waly Waly*, ‘where a concise musical idea is used in the accompaniment to emulate the overall mood or atmosphere of the song, which may be described as a motivic ostinato pattern. This provides a foundation upon which the words and melody are free to extend and develop.’⁷

The use of a motivic *ostinato* pattern is an important characteristic of the cycle. Other characteristics evident throughout the cycle include primarily syllabic setting of words, use of *melisma* to emphasize or illustrate particular words or meaning, and primacy of speech rhythms in the voice line resulting in the common use of triplets in the vocal line and frequent changes in meter. The vocal line is often step wise, aiding the singer inexperienced with less tonal music. *Three Serenades* is a short cycle of approximately 6 minutes.

⁵ Ibid., 10.

⁶ G.A. Cervasco, *The Sitwells: Edith, Osbert, and Sacheverell* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987).

⁷ Flaherty, 1987,10.

1. 'Sigh soft, sigh softly'

In this poem the poet appeals to various aspects of nature to be quiet, for *Mellula* to look from her balcony, and then 'My strings shall sing.'

Range: E₄ to F[♯]₅

Average Range: G₄ to D₅

Tempo: *Leggero* ♩ = c.54

2. 'Answer again, you burning streams'

In this poem the poet seems to revel in the heat of fire and perhaps passion. This is a short, somewhat declamatory song, with a considerable number of repeated notes. The vocal line has a small range but a somewhat high *tessitura* for the tenor. The voice generally moves stepwise.

Range: A₄ to G₅

Average Range: B₄ to F₅

Tempo: *Maestoso* ♩ = c.60

3. 'Low winds, soft light, and the crumbling waves'

This is most lyrical song in this cycle. The poet describes how the sights of the scene which 'add a paradise to our kiss...' and the sounds of the scene combine, so that 'this voice that sings shall ease your fears.'

Range: E^b₄ to A₅

Average Range: A₄ to E₅

Tempo: *Calmato* ♩ = c.56

*Six Blake Songs*⁸

Six Blake Songs was written for baritone and piano in 1956 and revised in 1996. The cycle is also published in an edition for mezzo soprano. Flaherty suggests that this cycle shows evidence of the influence of Vaughan Williams, whom Butterley regarded as a more traditional composer.⁹ She does note, however, that Butterley did not hear Vaughan Williams' settings of Blake, *Ten Blake Settings for Voice and Oboe* (1957) and *Job* (1930) until after he had written his own *Blake Songs*.

In the introduction to the published editions of these songs Butterley states:

I was fortunate in being introduced to some of Blake's poems at an early age. And I remember being quite young - and rather astonished - when I learnt that Blake was a great artist as well as a poet!

Later, choosing to set his poems to music, I was no doubt stimulated by Britten's wonderful setting of *The Sick Rose*, in his *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*. I can't remember how I came to select these particular poems, but I did realize that the first three, born of 'experience', needed a different approach from the others, poems of 'innocence', and that the settings were influenced respectively by Britten, and by Warlock and Vaughan Williams.

The songs were written between July 1955 and January 1956. In revising them forty years later I was careful to retain the style, to try and make them as I would have written them at the time given a little more skill and experience. The vocal lines are virtually unchanged, and much of the revision entails enharmonic changes and simplified barring.

To Tirzah (c.1803) comes from *Songs of Experience*, and the *Land of Dreams* is from the Pickering Manuscript of about the same date. *To My Mirtle* is found in Blake's Notebook, compiled about 1789-93. *The Shepherd* is one of the *Songs of Innocence* (1789), and the final two poems come from *Poetical Sketches*, a collection of juvenilia published in 1783.

⁸ Nigel Butterley, *Six Blake Songs for Baritone and Piano* (Claremont: Hovea Music Press, 1997).

⁹ Flaherty, 1987, 15.

He also notes that, ‘the songs may be presented singly or in any grouping performers might judge appropriate.’¹⁰

The piano accompaniment for these songs is homophonic. Stepwise motion in the vocal line is even more evident than in *Three Serenades*. Repeated notes in the vocal line are also common. *Melisma* is rarely used in this cycle. The vocal lines lie primarily in the lower and middle range of the voice.

1. ‘To Tirzah’

Tirzah is the capital of the northern Kingdom of Israel. In other poems, Blake associates Tirzah with the ‘heathen tribes of Amalek, Canaan, and Moeb and their cruelties.’ Tirzah is also one of the daughters of Zelophehad, who were allowed to inherit from him since he had no sons. Here the poet, rejecting his mother for her cruelty, states:

The Death of Jesus set me free,
Then what have I to do with thee.

Range: B₂ to D₄

Average Range: F₃ to C₄

Tempo: *pesante* ♩ = c.54

2. ‘To My Mirtle’ [sic.]

Here the poet asks the myrtle tree how he, sick and weary, should be bound to the beautiful tree.

Range: D^b₃ to D^b₄

Average Range: E₃ to B₃

Tempo: *Andante grazioso* ♩ = c.46

¹⁰Butterley, *Six Blake Songs*, ii.

3. 'The Land of Dreams'

In this poem a father wakes to ask his son why he weeps. The son describes seeing his mother in the Land of Dreams, which caused him to weep for joy. He asks when he can return to this land to see his mother again. The father says he too has wandered in the Land of Dreams, and the child observes that the Land of Dreams is more desirable than being awake.

Range: A_2 to D_4

Average Range: D_3 to A_3

Tempo: *Lento* $\text{♩} = c.60$

4. 'The Shepherd'

This pastoral song describes the idyllic life of the Shepherd.

Range: B_2 to E_4

Average Range: F_3 to C_4

Tempo: *Andante grazioso* $\text{♩} = 50$

5. 'To the Evening Star'

Here the poet speaks to the evening star calling on it to 'light thy bright torch of love' and to spread its dew to protect many from the dangers of the oncoming night.

Range: B_2 to E_4

Average Range: F_3 to C_4

Tempo: *Andante tranquillo* $\text{♩} = 56-63$

6. 'Love and Harmony Combine'

This poem describes the fruits of the intertwining of two souls.

Range: B_2 to $F\sharp_4$

Average Range: F_3 to D_4

Tempo: *Allegro Giocoso* ♩ = c.112

Child in Nature¹¹

Child in Nature, for soprano and piano, consists of seven songs using poetry by Robin Gurr (b.1934). It was completed in 1957. The poems are published as a set titled *Child in Nature* in Gurr's volume of poetry titled *Song is a Mirror*.¹² As in *Three Serenades*, Butterley clearly relies on the use of motives in the accompaniment to set the tone of each piece. Flaherty reports Butterley believed the text encouraged this technique '... because the poems are short and they each evoke their own atmosphere, I think I was able to capture some of that in the music...' ¹³ Robin Gurr was a singing student and Butterley was her accompanist when this cycle was written.

The cycle lasts about 11 minutes.

1. 'The Child'

The first song begins with a playful canon in the piano. The voice, somewhat independent of the accompaniment, describes the girl, seemingly careless in the outdoors. There is the portent that all is not well, however, when the linear nature of the accompaniment is replaced by chords.

Range: E♭₄ to G♭₅

Average Range: G₄ to D₅

Tempo: *Leggero* ♩ = 84

¹¹ Nigel Butterley, *Child in Nature* (St Leonards, Australia: Australian Music Center, 1957).

¹² Robin Gurr, *Song is a Mirror* (Sydney: Edwards & Shaw, 1963), 19-25.

¹³ Flaherty, 1987, 20.

2. 'The Bird'

Throughout this song there is a rising motif suggesting the call of a bird. This repeated and sometimes varied motif is only interrupted when the poet is 'earth bound' and seemingly separated from the beauty of the bird's song. The vocal line rises with the description of the sun settled 'on the spreading of his wing.'

Range: $D\flat_4$ to A_5

Average Range: B_4 to F_5

Tempo: *Andante Gracioso* $\text{♩} = 58$

3. 'Brown Jack'

This song describes the call of the 'brown jack,' in which the poet hears 'the pain of pity in your song.' It is much more chordal than those preceding it. The dark harmonies suggest a somber mood. A brown jack is probably a speckled warbler, also known as a 'speckled jack.'

Range: $D\flat_4$ to G_5

Average Range: F_4 to D_5

Tempo: *Risoluto* $\text{♩} = 69$

4. 'Spider's Web'

This song describes a spider web blown by the wind. A circular motif in this song suggests the spinning of the web by the spider.

Range: E_4 to G_5

Average Range: G_4 to E_5

Tempo: *Allegretto, Leggero* $\text{♩} = 160$

5. 'The Cricket'

This song observes the sound of a cricket disturbing the sleeper's dreams. A dream-like state of the sleeper is suggested by a rising melodic pattern in the piano accompaniment. This is interrupted by a simple flourish, introducing the noise of a cricket.

Range: D₄ to G₅

Average Range: G₄to D₅

Tempo: *Lento tranquillo* ♩ = 48

6. 'The Wind and the Song'

This song describes wind as the bringer of 'hurt for the hot heart, fire for the living,' and of death. The voice begins and ends the song unaccompanied. When the piano enters it provides support with rising and falling arched motifs.

Range: F₄to G₅

Average Range: G₄to D₅

Tempo: *Andante* ♩ = 44

7. 'A Dark Glow About Me'

The anticipation of death is the subject of this song. The song and the cycle conclude with the statement, 'Then I shall know that the twilight ends in darkness, and the shore slips forever under the sea.' The accompaniment for this final song is chordal.

Range: D₄to G₅

Average Range: G₄to D₅

Tempo: *Lento* ♩ = 76

Works for Unaccompanied Voice or Voice and Solo Instrument

*Joseph and Mary*¹⁴

In 1959 Butterley completed *Joseph and Mary*, a carol for voice and solo flute. It is his only work for voice and single accompanying instrument other than the piano. The text is from the seventeenth century, and tells the story of Joseph who married Mary, his 'dearest dear.' The words 'dearest dear' are repeated in connection with various people, and are used finally to describe Jesus. *Joseph and Mary* was first performed by Australian soprano Marilyn Richardson,¹⁵ who subsequently recorded Butterley's *Sometimes with One I Love*, and for whom he wrote *The Woven Light*. The voice setting for this work is primarily syllabic. *Melisma* is used for the repetition of the words 'dearest dear,' which highlights the centrality of these words to the carol.

Range: D \flat ₄ to A \flat ₅

Average Range: G₄ to E₅

Tempo: *Allegretto semplice*

*Song of Christ the Rock*¹⁶

Song of Christ the Rock was written for unaccompanied voice and was completed in 1962 while he was studying with Priaulx Rainer.¹⁷ The current published edition was revised in 1984. The text for the first half of the song is from Isaiah 28:16 and Romans 9:33, which

¹⁴ Nigel Butterley, *Joseph and Mary: Carol for Voice and Flute* (Sydney: Albert & Son Pty. Ltd., 1970).

¹⁵ Flaherty, 1987, 27.

¹⁶ Nigel Butterley, *Song of Christ the Rock* (Claremont, Western Australia: Hovea Music Press, 2000).

¹⁷ Flaherty, 1987, 30.

speak of the ‘precious corner stone’ laid in Zion. The text for the second half of the song comes from an American Shaker Hymn, *Willow Tree*, printed in Edward D. Andrews, *The Gift to be Simple*, from a transcription made by Mary Hazard at Lebanon, New York. This work was originally published beginning on D₄. It is also published beginning on E₄, D_♭₄ and C₃. A note with the D₄ edition states ‘This song should lie fairly low in the voice, and the passages at “whoever believes on him...” should sound rather secretive.’¹⁸

The song is in two parts divided by the different sources of text. The sections are separated by a pause over a half note rest. There is considerable use of *melisma* in this song to add emphasis to particular words, and also when there are repeated words. The frequent use of *melisma* suggests an ecstatic quality very much in fitting with the sentiments of the text.

Edition beginning on C₃

Range: G_♯₃ to E_♭₃

Average Range: C₃ to G₃

Edition beginning on D₄

Range: A_♯₃ to F₅

Average Range: D₄ to A₄

Edition beginning on D_♭₄

Range: A₃ to E₅

Average Range: D_♭₄ to A_♭₄

Edition beginning on E₄

Range: C₄ to G₅

Average Range: E₄ to B₄

¹⁸ Butterley, *Song of Christ the Rock*, 2000, 4.

Butterley also wrote two songs, *Traveler's Songs*, for an ABC radio feature, with text by Mango McCallum. These songs are not offered by the composer for sale or performance.

Works for Solo Voice and Instrumental Ensemble

*Carmina*¹⁹

Carmina (1968, revised 1990), for medium voice and wind quintet (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Horn and Bassoon) was Butterley's first work for voice and instrumental ensemble and his first work in a language other than English.

Commissioned by the Australian Performing Rights Association (APRA), Butterley said of this work:

The work is intended to be relaxed and lyrical, with no great philosophical overtones - just four rather beautiful Latin poems about springtime, a little dog, a salmon and the river Moselle...²⁰

Butterley explained to Flaherty that his break from the use of texts in English fulfilled a desire to set another language, with the sound of Latin being appealing.²¹

The cycle uses the texts of four Latin poems. Interestingly, the titles of the songs are in English, while the lyrics are in Latin. The instrumental lines for the songs use both polyphony and homophony. The instrumentation tends to be sparse, and one instrumental line often finishes as another begins. It is not uncommon for the voice to be unaccompanied or accompanied by only one instrument. Vocal *melisma* is very common and again there are frequent changes of meter.

¹⁹ Nigel Butterley, *Carmina, for medium voice and wind quintet. Composer's autograph* (St Leonards, Australia: Australian Music Center, 1990).

²⁰ Flaherty, 1987, 35 -36.

²¹ Ibid., 36.

1. 'I Feel that Winter has Gone'

Poet: Pentadius (C290 AD)

In this poem the poet observes nature now that Winter has given way to Spring. He describes the blossoming of nature as the earth warms.

Range: A₃ to E₅

Average Range: D₄to B₄

Tempo: Slow, starts $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 56$ *Rubato, Expressivo*

2. 'The Little Dog'

Poet: Luxorius (C500AD.)

Here the poet describes his puppy which is small, obedient and graceful.

Range: G₃to G₅

Average Range: F₄to C₅

Tempo: Fast, $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 112$ *Leggero*

3. 'A Salmon'

Poet: Ausonius (310 -395 AD)

This poem comes from *Mosella*, which Flaherty describes as Ausonius's 'most outstanding work.'²² *Mosella* is 'among other things, a didactic poem and a travel poem, containing comparisons, epyllia, catalogues of rivers and fish, ecphraseis, and perhaps a partly ideological message.'²³

In this excerpt the poet observes the salmon, noting its color and the beatings of its tail. He

²² Ibid., 37.

²³ Vincent Hunink, 'Review of Paul Dräger (trans.), *Ausonius. Mosella*.' In *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2002.11.12 (Accessed June 30 2004), <<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/bmcr/2002/2002-11-12.html>>

notes that the salmon will eventually be someone's dinner.

This song uses aleatoric technique. The instructions for the song are:

[A] Voice independent of instruments. Freely, but no slower. Instruments repeat whole segment in tempo until voice has finished, then clarinet leads into [B].

[C] Voice independent of instruments. Freely, but no slower. Instruments repeat whole segment in tempo until voice has finished, then bassoon leads into [D].²⁴

Range: A₃ to F[♯]₅

Average Range: D₄ to A₄

Tempo: Fast, ♩ = 76

4. 'By the River in Spring'

Poet: Tiberianus (C335 AD)

The poet describes a river flowing through a grove. He describes the lushness of the scene and the sounds of the birds.

Range: A₃ to F₅

Average Range: E₄ to B₄

Tempo: *Rubato Expressivo* ♩ = c. 56

Sometimes with One I love²⁵

While not strictly written for solo voice, *Sometimes with One I Love* for soprano, baritone, speaker, flute, clarinet, horn, two violoncellos and piano, is worth mentioning to obtain a better overview of Butterley's work. Butterley has characterized this work as one in

²⁴Butterley, *Carmina*, 13.

²⁵Butterley, *Sometimes with One I Love*. For soprano, baritone, male speaker and sextet. Composer's autograph (Grosvenor Place, NSW: Australian Music Center, 1976).

which he realized his fully-matured style.²⁶ Texts for this work come from the preface and several poems of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (1855).²⁷ While the songs were written to be performed as a whole, they may be performed individually as well.²⁸ Walt Whitman's texts have inspired some of Butterley's other compositions. *Uttering Joyous Leaves* (1981), written for piano and commissioned by the Sydney Piano Competition, takes its title from a Whitman poem. Butterley's radiophonic work for actors and instruments, *Watershore* (1977) uses texts by Whitman.²⁹

This work has extremely lyrical moments as well as singing which approaches *sprechstimme*. There is again careful attention to the rhythm of the words. The setting of speech rhythms in the vocal line is at its clearest in the fifth song, where there is a duet between the speaker and the baritone, who sing and say the same words. The vocal line melds seamlessly with the spoken line. Although the songs may be performed separately, the motifs give a certain unity to the work as a whole.

Butterley's Solo Work Between 1976 and 2003

The next three chapters will be devoted to a more thorough exploration of Butterley's song output after 1976. The first, *The Owl*, is Butterley's first excursion into a somewhat theatrical medium. Following *the Owl*, Butterley returned to a poet who inspires him, setting six poems by Kathleen Raine for soprano and orchestra entitled *The Woven Light*. Finally I

²⁶ Flaherty, 1987, 44.

²⁷ Ibid., 44.

²⁸ Ibid., 37.

²⁹ Elliot Gyger, *There Came a Wind Like a Bugle: Chamber Music by Nigel Butterley*. Compact Disc liner notes, Tall Poppies TP 142, 2001.

will consider Butterley's 1995 composition *Frogs*, where Butterley returns to the medium of voice and piano.

CHAPTER 3

THE OWL

Introduction to *The Owl*

The Owl, for soprano, flute, clarinet, violin, cello, percussion and piano, is a powerful semi-theatrical work which both in subject matter and musical characteristics is typical of Butterley's style. *The Owl* shows a woman discovering her identity and power upon the death of her husband. The feminist theme which runs through this work, as a woman rejects the expectations of the patriarchal world which so long has limited her and embraces her own power and wisdom, is another example of Butterley's clear interest in feminism.

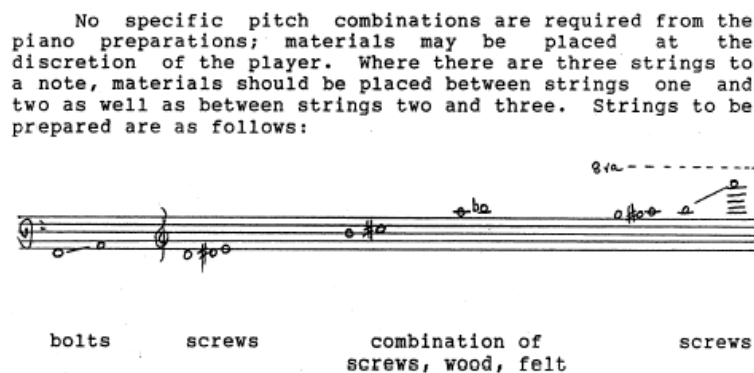
The general characteristics of Butterley's vocal compositions described in chapter one are found in this work. It is a challenging work for the singer to prepare and perform because of those characteristics. The work is atonal, although there are moments of lyricism. There are no key signatures. The rhythm is complex, with frequent changes of meter and divisions of beats ranging from duplets and triplets to quintuplets and septuplets. Often instruments and voice will have different divisions of a beat simultaneously. The rhythm for the voice, while difficult, is very much based on speech rhythms. Where the voice breaks away from this with held-notes and use of *melisma*, it is done to serve the text and drama of the work. The use of motifs also serves to heighten both the musical structure and the meaning of the text.

The vocal range of this work is B \flat ₃ to A₅. For the majority of the work the vocal line lies in the middle and lower part of the soprano range, with moments which venture into the higher parts of the voice.

After providing some background to the composition *The Owl*, this chapter will look closely at the complex text which is the basis of the composition and the musical aspects of the work which will help the singer prepare a dramatic interpretation. Finally there will be a consideration of the challenges presented to singer preparing *The Owl* and a brief summary of some of the previous performances of the work.

Instrumentation

The work is written for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, percussion and piano. Each player except the cellist is required to play more than one instrument. A portion of the work requires prepared piano. Example 1 provides instructions for the preparation of piano.



Example 1: *The Owl*, Notes, i.

The pianist is also required to play the organ. The instructions for the organ read,

The 'organ' originally used was a small CASIO electronic keyboard. Any similar instrument may be used. It should be small enough to be placed above the piano Keyboard in front of the music stand.

The flute part requires flute, piccolo, and alto flute. The violin part uses viola. The clarinet part requires a B flat and a bass clarinet. The percussion part requires marimba, vibes, bass drum, 4 tom tom, bongos, 2 cymbals, 2 gongs, guiro, 2 wood blocks, 2 temple blocks, chimes, crotale, glockenspiel, 2 maracas, and castanets.

Background

The Owl was commissioned by the Seymour Group for their annual Opera and Music Theatre program.¹ Stuart Challender, the group's director from 1981 -1983, commissioned Butterley to write a work for the group to perform with soprano Joan Carden.² The intention was that the work have some theatrical potential.³ The text, an extended poem, was provided by James McDonald. The story for the text was McDonald's. Butterley was involved with the text only at the stage of working to trim away some of what he regarded as wordiness.⁴ McDonald's provisional title for the work was *The Woman Within* however, they soon came to the agreement that *The Owl* would be a more evocative title.⁵ In an interview prior to the work's completion Butterley states:

It's exciting to be writing for a great opera singer... She has a great dignity as an artist and a wonderfully vulnerable, human quality particularly in the lower range of her voice. I want to make a vehicle for her special qualities. Even more exciting is the fact that she has never sung contemporary music before. This is certainly contemporary... It hasn't even been written yet.⁶

¹ The Seymour Group, with a core of seven members, specializes in the performance of contemporary works. They collaborate with performers and organizations throughout Australia. Since its formation in 1976, the Seymour Group has commissioned over 50 works.

² Joan Carden has appeared in opera and concerts throughout the world. She made her debut at Covent Garden in 1974 singing Gilda in *Rigoletto*. In 1978 she made her debut at the Metropolitan Opera singing Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*. She was awarded the Order of the British Empire in 1982 and the Order of Australia in 1998.

³ Nigel Butterley, Email to the author, June 28, 2004.

⁴ Nigel Butterley, Interview by author, 2004.

⁵ Nigel Butterley, Email to the author, June 28, 2004.

⁶ Nadine Amadio, 'About Music with Nadine Amadio: New Work By Nigel Butterley,' *24 Hours*, August, 1983 16 - 17.

The process of writing *The Owl* was not a totally satisfactory one for Butterley. He states in a lecture about words and music:

The difficulties of this sort of collaboration are notorious, and in the end I found it unsatisfactory to be using a text which is neither self-sufficient, a completed poem or something that I could control as if it were my own.⁷

In a discussion with the author, Butterley revealed that he encountered a major difficulty finding a suitable librettist. Beginning in the 1960's he had been urged to write an opera, but had not managed to find the right librettist for the endeavor. Butterley believed he needed someone who would be able to create a structure for a theatrical piece.

Eventually he chose James McDonald as the librettist for his opera *Lawrence Hargrave Flying Home*. Only in his twenties at the time, McDonald had been suggested to Butterley by a mutual friend as a possible librettist for *Lawrence Hargrave*. Butterley felt that he would be an appropriate co-creator because in addition to being a writer, McDonald had worked in theater in Canberra. 'I thought that it was essential that I have someone with some sort of experience and feeling for theater.... when I found someone who had some theater experience and had ability with words I just sort of latched on to him.' When *The Owl* project came up, while they were working on *Lawrence Hargrave*, they both felt it was obvious that it would be good practice to do *The Owl* before the opera.⁸

Butterley describes the *The Owl* as 'semi-theatrical.' 'Rather than standing there behind a music stand you could stand there and walk and do a few things like that, but it is hardly a drama.' Joan Carden carried a candle on stage.

⁷ Nigel Butterley, *Word's Into Music: A Composer's Response to Poetry* (Armidale: University of New England, 1999), 10.

⁸ Nigel Butterley, Interview by author, 2004.

The Owl is not Butterley's favorite work.

Looking back, I'm not very keen on the libretto but the music that came out of it works... certainly the latter parts of it where the music is using Messiaen's modes... but I don't think it sounds like Messiaen. I think that part is quite good. It's not my favorite piece of mine but people have done it and people like it but I certainly can see the draw backs.

The Text

The Owl sets an extended poem in which a widow, confronted with the death of her husband, finds a new sense of freedom rather than despair. Throughout her married life the woman has conformed to societal expectations as a good wife to her husband. With the death of her husband, the long-suppressed desire for independence rises to the surface. She resents the patriarchal expectations of her husband, society, and the church. However, the power that these expectations have exercised is not easily dismissed. Throughout the work there is a battle between the ingrained response that is required by society and the primal urge within her to fully express her true nature. Through this conflict we see her emotions fluctuate. As she deals with these conflicting expectations she sees several visions which are emblematic of her struggle. There are moments of extreme emotion and moments of suppression of any real feeling. In the end her healed authentic self emerges whole and complete.

The extended poem is divided into stanzas of various lengths. The length of the poem and the work itself make it difficult to understand as whole without finding some understanding of the smaller units within the whole. While neither McDonald nor Butterley broke the work down into distinct and named sections it is useful for the singer to do so in order to understand the unfolding drama of this work. I have therefore separated the text into sections which reflect the different focuses of the widow through the work.

While there are no headings or distinct breaks in McDonald's text there are clearly points where the widow's mind shifts sharply from one image or thought to another. There is a brief explanation of each section. I have named these different sections to reflect the focus or sentiment of the section.

The Funeral

The black of burial
The other mourners
My partners in this dance of death
About the gravel of his grave.

I saw a face in the coffin
Contorted in content
A false smile
For behind him the gate was open
Wide for all to see.
And the black dog has begun to bark.

A good man.
A solid man.
Forthright Christian.
Peter the rock, the rock, the rock.

And I, I am the ruin
the rubble of his grave
A good wife.
A solid wife.
But I am the rubble .
The gravel of his grave.

The black scarab
Forging a fortress
Of caked, sun-cracked dung
Sapped of moisture.
Cold before he died.

So humble, faithful
So staid and predictable.
But the gate is wide open
The black dog barks
And others join, scenting blood.

The Owl begins with a woman beside the grave of her dead husband. To the other mourners at the funeral she plays the role of the grieving widow. He was ‘a good man. A solid man forthright Christian. Peter the rock.’ The allusion to Peter as ‘the rock’ is a reference to Simon Peter, who Jesus named Peter (from the Greek *Petros*, meaning ‘rock’), stating, ‘upon you I shall build my church.’ This suggests the strong connection her husband had to the church and to being seen as an upright Christian. However, inside she is bitter about the relationship of twenty years which has made her ‘the rubble, the gravel of his grave.’

The Confrontation

With your death I drew the first breath
in twenty wasted years.
The black facade assumed for your funeral.
fails to shroud my inner ecstasy.
I am flooded with freedom, sweet and clear
with solitude.
I glisten in your absence.

Oh my love, my love
How we hated, hated, hated.

You drowned me in sobriety
You laughed at my fantasies
At my fascination for the owl.

She addresses her husband directly, describing the freedom she experiences as a result of his death. Released from the bonds of their relationship she feels free for the first time. She reflects on how dismissive he was of her ‘fascination for the owl’ which symbolized so much to her. For her the owl was a symbol of freedom and wisdom which she associates with the spirit of Athena.

The Owl

The owl. The owl
Bird of Athens.
Spirit of Athena.
Proud Nocturnal.
So wise in mind
And fleet of feather.
Her eyes large and direct.
Her lids heavy with inner vision
Her soul brighter, brighter than ecstasy.

In mythology the owl is sometimes associated with the goddess Athena, daughter of Zeus and Metis. Athena was not born but instead ‘sprang into being fully formed and fully armed from the head of her father after Zeus had swallowed the pregnant Metis.’⁹ A warrior goddess, Athena never fell in love and remained a virgin. She was also a goddess of peaceful crafts including cooking, spinning, and weaving. She passed into the Roman pantheon as Minerva. She is particularly well known for her wisdom and courage. In Greek mythology wisdom is also associated with cunning and craft.

The Candle

Yes Peter
I am now the owl
Alone in my room
With your strange witness -
This chapel candle
That I've yet to light.

I remember you holding it like a guilty child.
An apology for resisting my need for space
my sense of self.
It conjures up childhood.
And the muttered Hail Mary's
Full of grace ,the Lord is with thee

⁹ Arthur Cotterell, *A Dictionary of World Mythology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 146.

Blessed is the fruit of thy womb
Blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

The widow is now 'the owl,' a 'strange witness' to the scene of her husband's body in the chapel. By him is an unlit candle, which recalls for her the image of her husband holding a candle, 'like a guilty child, an apology for resisting my need for space, my sense of self.' This image suggests her husband's demand for physical intimacy when she had no desire to reciprocate. The candle also serves to stir in the singer's mind the memory of Mass as a child and 'the muttered "Hail Mary's,"' a memory significant for its association with her husband's relation to the church. This recollection evokes a recitation of the chant 'Blessed is the fruit of thy womb.'

The Ritual

Of thy womb, thy womb.
My womb, swollen, and ,fruitful
Beside my barren betrothed -
The puppet ,father.

The Rabbi presides a haze of grey beard.
He looks down through carrion eyes.
Pours water into earthenware.
Mixes a fist of dust from the tabernacle floor.

Yiten Adonai otach le-ala
Velishvua betoch amech
Betet Adonai et yerechech nofelet
Ve-et bitnech tsava.

From the vile vessel .
She is ordered to drink.
for guilt
The bitter water that causeth the curse
Will abort her tell-tale womb.

Yiten Adonai otach le-ala
Yiten Adonai otach le-ala.
But Joseph interposes -

She is pure. She is pure.
Takes the mixture to drink for himself.
She is pure. She is pure. She is pure.

The image of the blessed womb is juxtaposed with her own womb. This evolves to the image of a Rabbi performing a rite to establish whether a women has been adulterous. She describes a rabbi who ‘looks down with carrion eyes’ and performs a ritual which in Mosaic Judaism was called *Sotah*. It is a ritual of the ‘Faithless wife,’ to be performed on a woman suspected of infidelity. The procedure is described in Numbers 5:11-33:

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Speak to the Israelites and say to them; ‘If a man’s wife goes astray and is unfaithful to him by sleeping with another man, and this is hidden from her husband and her impurity is undetected (since there is not witness against her and she has not been caught in the act), and if feelings of jealousy come over the husband and he suspects his wife is impure... Then he is to take his wife to the priest....The priest shall bring her and have her stand before the Lord. Then he shall take some holy water in a clay jar and put some dust from the tabernacle floor into the water. After the priest has had the woman stand before the Lord, he shall loosen her hair and place in her hand the reminder offering, the grain offering for jealousy, while he himself holds the bitter water that brings a curse. Then the priest shall put the woman under oath and say to her, “If no other man has slept with you and you have not gone astray and become impure while married to your husband, may this bitter water that brings the curse not harm you. But if you have gone astray while married to your husband and you have defiled yourself by sleeping with a man other than your husband” - here the priest is to put the woman under the curse of the oath - “ may the Lord cause your people to curse and denounce you when he causes your thigh to waste away and your abdomen to swell. May this water that brings a curse enter your body also your abdomen swell and your thigh waste away.” Then the woman is to say, “Amen. So be it...”¹⁰

As her vision unfolds, she interposes the Hebraic chant, using the words of the Rabbi.

Yiten Adonai otach le-ala
Velishvua betoch amech
Betet Adonai et yerechech nofelet
Ve-et bitnech tsava.

¹⁰ Numbers 5:11-33, New International Version.

This translates as ‘Lord make thee a curse and an oath among people, when the lord doth make thy thigh to fall away, and thy belly to swell.’

Old testament ritual and Mary’s New Testament dilemma become intertwined as Joseph states emphatically, ‘She is pure.’ This mixture of New and Old Testament allusions suggests Mary’s purity according to Old Testament rituals. Joseph protests Mary’s innocence to those who may suggest she had been unfaithful to him.

A Realization

The bitter water that causeth the curse
Poisoned, poisoned the seed of love.

Peter, how many ulcers fed upon the hate
we harboured
Hate dressed as honour. A clean face
blank as whitewash.
But rest, rest, for I will not word the truth
to pit the plaster.
Our secret sleeps. How could I tell a daughter.
Blessed is the fruit of thy womb. My womb.

The New Testament image evolves to an understanding of the widow’s relationship with her husband. She sings, ‘The bitter water that causeth the curse poisoned, poisoned the seed of love.’ Later in the work we learn that her only child was not her husband’s child, but that her pregnancy was the reason for her marriage. ‘The poisoned seed of love’ suggests that her husband knew that the child was not his, but that he always protested her innocence to the world. Any love he initially may have held for her was killed by the fact that he was not the father of her child. The bitter water, with its concomitant jealousy, has poisoned whatever seed of love may have existed early in their relationship.

The Seduction and Betrayal

Childhoods pass like seasons.
My daughter's, my own.
Once I lay in Paradise.
Eden, source of the four rivers
Flowing to replenish
North, East, South, West.
Landscape of childhoods, of the soul.
Innocence nestled in her sylvan bower
Beneath the Tree of Knowledge.

I lie beneath benevolent branches
Oblivious to the silent serpent
Who shares the Tree.
(The same snake that Mary treads underfoot -
Guards the fruit forbidden.)

Scales slide over bark
Worms infest the apple!
My bed becomes nettled
My rest disturbed.
He rears his serpent head.
To summon Adam, his shadow.
Threatening. Magnificent.
I am prey. They are hunter.
I am innocence. I am prey.
Vestal virgin deceived
Awaiting, to be taken
As a bud to flower.
Willingly I ride
The wild wind of desire.
Our bodies merge into foliage.
The wind murmurs and dies.

The body of Eve
Nailed to the Tree of Knowledge.
Crucified she cries, she cries.
Convicted carnal criminal.
Crucified she cries, she cries.

Blessed is the fruit.
Bruised, bruised is the fruit.

Her mind then slips back to the innocence of her youth. She experiences visions of Eden and paradise, oblivious to the threat posed to this innocence by the snake. She is seduced at first willingly. 'Willingly I ride the wild wind of desire. Our bodies merge into foliage.' She realizes however that she is now defiled, a 'carnal criminal.' She is prey to be used by and discarded by her seducer. Again there is a mixture of Old and New Testament images. 'The body of Eve nailed to the Tree of Knowledge. Crucified she cries...'

Revenge

Was I pretty,
I suppose I was
Pretty enough to hide the bruise.
The prey pursues the hunter.
Peter-Menelaus
Snared in this web of golden hair.

I Played the role
Followed the path
Teased, tantalized.
I was hunter. He was prey
I stroked the flanks
Of the wooden horse,
To tantalize, to tempt.

Wooden panels, iron frame
Ominous in stature, size.
Grecian gift abandoned
At the impenetrable gates of Troy.
But I knew the secret
I saw a face through the panels.
Warriors waiting within.
I stroked the flanks
Of the wooden horse
To tease the men concealed.
Reveal yourself
Submit to my beauty.

She decides not to be the prey but to be the hunter. She describes how, she, the victim, becomes the seducer and she uses her various feminine wiles to win the hand of her

husband. There may be some connection here with the idea of cunning associated with the wisdom of Athena. The singer alludes to Helen of Troy, ‘I stroked the flanks of the wooden horse to tantalize, to tempt.’¹¹ She sees beyond the veneer of her husband and appeals to his inner vanity and desire for conquest.

Understanding

Peter, I married for an honour imposed.
My downfall. Your triumph.
I should have faced disgrace to be a mother
And friend to my child within. -
Not wife to a corpse.
For twenty years we destroyed. We are one
with the blame.
But I have birth. You have death.
I am flooded with freedom, with ecstasy.
The gate is open. The chains lie broken.

She seduces and marries him. ‘My down fall. Your triumph.’ Her pregnancy could have meant disgrace. Marriage for her meant that she found a father for her child. As an impotent man, by marrying her, Peter obtained a child. She recognizes the consequences of her past decisions. She admits that they both share guilt in their loveless marriage... ‘We are one with the blame.’ However, she also understands that she now has the opportunity of freedom.

Reconciliation with Self

Over all things sleeping
The owl flies.
Above Eve nailed to the Tree.
Above Helen stroking the flanks.
Above Mary offered the bitter water.
The owl flies
Free, high, wise

¹¹ It is interesting to note that in Greek mythology Ulysses, who devised the strategy of the Trojan horse, was a follower of Athena.

Over all things sleeping.

I am the magical Morrigan
In her island of mystery.
I am the mystical Theresa
In her vision of ecstasy
I, I am Athena
The owl, the owl.
Free, high, wise.
I am wisdom
I am majesty.
Freedom in my wings
Power in my breast.
I am Athena, the owl
With wisdom, with majesty.
Past in shadow
Future in sight.
The owl of freedom
The owl of Wisdom.

She turns to the owl who has been a presence throughout her life and who witnesses the unfolding and repeating of history. The owl is above it all, 'Free, high, wise.' Now free of her husband she is free. She meditates on the image of the owl and believes she is now one with the owl, 'free, high and wise.'

The Text As Musical Drama

The ten sections which mark the different focuses of the widow are reflected in the structure of the music. The instrumentation helps create the atmosphere in which the singer finds herself both in reality and in her mind. Prior to the discussion of how the music in each section reflects the drama of the text, are charts which break down some of the musical characteristics of the work summarizing the changes in meter, tempo, vocal registration, dynamics and instrumentation as the work unfolds. Following each chart is a discussion of some of the more important elements for the singer to consider in preparation for the dramatic interpretation of that section.

Table 1: Section 1 - The Funeral

Measure Number	Text	Meter	Tempo	Vocal		Instrumentation	Inst.		Observations
				Dynamics	Register		Dynamics	Texture	
1 - 10		4/4	$\text{♩} = 42$			Clarinet, strings, percussion and piano (dissonant chords with no sense of direction of harmonic direction)	<i>pp</i> dynamics remain static	homophonic	Introduction has a static feel creating atmosphere with little forward momentum
11	The black of burial	4/4		none specified	Low to middle	Clarinet, string, percussion and piano continue chords		homophonic	
16	My partners in this dance of death					Flute enters with a solo line on 'death' - preview of vocal line in m. 46 for 'gravel of his grave.'	<i>p</i>	flute the only melodic material	
17	About the gravel of his grave.		<i>Poco Accell</i>						
18	I saw a face in the coffin		$\text{♩} = 60$	<i>f</i>	middle to upper middle	Flute, clarinet, viola, percussion, marcato chords in higher registers	<i>f-pp < f > mp</i>		Quickening tempo, higher registers, and louder and changing dynamics suggest greater tension
21	Contorted in content	5/8							
22	A false smile	4/4							
3	For behind him the gate was open			<i>mf</i>	middle	Fragmented bursts from instruments and chord in piano introduces the text.	<i>mf</i>		Instrumental fragments suggest sudden thoughts or burst of emotion
25	Wide for all to see.			<i>mf < > mf</i>	A5 - high	Instruments join in rhythmic unison with on 'wide' with succession of 8 th notes	<i>f</i>		
27	And the black dog has begun to bark.			<i>p</i>	lower	Bongos are particularly prominent Flute, clarinet and piano also play	<i>pp</i>		
30			<i>poco rit.</i> $\text{♩} = 42$			clarinet, strings, percussion, piano play variation of opening measures			Return to the chords and the atmosphere of the opening, mm. 1-10
33		2/4							
34	A good man. A solid man. Forthright Christian. Peter the rock, the rock, the rock	no meter		<i>p</i>	Low and medium low	Chord in Organ only			Mantra, chant like
35									
36		5/8, 4/4	$\text{♩} = 92$	<i>f</i>	High to low and middle	All instruments, fast rising lines. Organ chord and piano only	<i>f</i> <i>f</i>		Sudden change of momentum, lurch forward
37		3/8							

(table continued)

38 40	And I, I am the ruin the rubble of his grave	3/4, 4/4	$\text{♩} = 54$	$p < >$	Middle Low - repeated D4	Organ chord Viola solo - variation of 'grave of grave, cf m.16 and m. 46	p	Duet voice and viola	
42 46	A good wife. A solid wife. But I am the rubble . The gravel of his grave.	3/8		pp	Low Middle to low	Organ - Single chord			Recitative-like Voice finally sings the melody previously played by the instruments accompanying the phrase
47 48		3/4 4/4		pp		Flute, clarinet and strings	pp, mp		
50	The black scærb Forging a fortress Of caked, sun-cracked dung Sapped of moist ure. Cold before he died.	7/8 3/4 3/8 4/4		mf $pp \text{ sub}$	Low to middle Middle to medium high	flute, clarinet and strings		Homophonic	
55	So humble, faithful So staid and predictable.	No meter	Freely (♩ = 60)	p $f > p$	Low Upper middle to low	single chord in the organ			Recitative-like
56 60 62	But the gate is wide open The black dog barks And others join, scenting blood.	4/4, 3/4, 5/8 4/4 3/4	$\text{♩} = 60$	f p	Low to high Middle	Flute, clarinet, viola precede 'the gate is open wide' Bongs return for the dogs piano motif	ff pp		
63 64		3/8 4/4	<i>poco rit.</i> $\text{♩} = 54$			Instrumental interlude flute, clarinet, viola cello, primarily rhythmic and chordal, not melodic	mp p	homophonic	

Section 1 - The Funeral

The work opens bleakly with an oppressive atmosphere created by the pianissimo introduction played by the clarinet, strings, percussion and piano. The funereal atmosphere is created by the slow tempo, $\text{♩} = 42$ and dissonant chords created by the ensemble which have very little sense of rhythmic or harmonic direction.

A musical score for the first four measures of a piece. The score is written for a large ensemble, including strings (violin, viola, cello, double bass), woodwinds (flute, clarinet, bassoon), and piano. The tempo is marked as $\text{♩} = 42$. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The score shows a complex, dissonant texture with many overlapping notes and rests. The piano part is marked *pp* (pianissimo). The woodwinds and strings also play in a sparse, atmospheric manner.

Example 2: *The Owl*, mm. 1-4.

In example 2 only in the first measure do the instruments coincide on the down beat. This is the only time for the next ten bars that there is articulation of a note on the down beat. Also, the rhythm of neither the piano nor the percussion coincides with the other instruments. Together with irregular lengths of the held notes, this all helps create a lack of rhythmic direction.

After ten measures of this static introduction the voice enters, describing the scene of the burial over the chords which begin the work. The text setting is primarily syllabic,

breaking into *melisma* for the words ‘mourners’ and ‘dance’

The *melisma* for ‘mourners’ suggests the wailing of mourning. The *melisma* of ‘dance’ suggests a rather contorted dance.



Example 3: *The Owl*, mm. 13-15.

In example 3 the melisma for mourners is stepwise, reflecting the idea of a wail of mourning. The melisma for the dance moves around considerably with some large leaps in reflective of a somewhat contorted dance.

In the phrase ‘this dance of death about the gravel of his grave,’ the voice, arrives at D₄, relatively low in a soprano’s range, and repeats this note for the rest of the phrase, suggesting an emptiness and lack of emotion. There is no movement forward but a static dullness in the vocal line. Over the voice the flute plays a melody which anticipates the vocal line for the third mention of the ‘gravel of his grave’ in measure 46 (example 10). The flute motif is marked in the red box in example 4 and accompanies the voice as it sings ‘about the gravel of his grave.’

This static moment for the singer is interrupted as the flute quickly rises from a register low in its range to the highest octave of its range, climaxing with repeated E₆ (example 4). There is a *poco accelerando* and in measure 18 a new faster tempo, $\text{♩} = 60$. This sudden flourish suggests a sudden thought or vision which strikes the singer. She sings ‘I saw a face through the coffin, contorted incontent.’ The flute, clarinet, and viola

accompany this phrase in stark rhythmic chords which recall the sound of an alarm.

(example 4, mm18-19). This creates a sense of stress and anxiety, almost to a point of foreboding.

The image shows a musical score for a scene from 'The Owl'. It consists of a vocal line (Soprano) and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is marked 'Loco Acceler.' and 'cresc.' and includes a red box highlighting a phrase in measures 16-18. The piano accompaniment includes 'Tom-toms' and 'f' markings. The lyrics are: 'death about the grave of his grave. saw a face through the coffin'.

Example 4: *The Owl*, mm. 16-19

From its entrance the voice remains in the lower and middle vocal range. This again indicates perhaps numbness in the singer. With mention of 'the face in the coffin' the vocal line moves a little higher, and the vocal line begins to include larger intervals as a greater sense of distress seems to overtake the singer. Two intervals of a ninth occur as she describes his face as 'contorted incontent.' The most dramatic ninth occurs as she describes why his face holds a 'false smile,' because 'behind him the gate is open wide.'

There is word painting in this wide jump to an A₅. This is also the highest point of the vocal line up to this point in the work, suggesting the singer's heightened emotion.



Example 5: *The Owl*, mm. 24-25.

In example 5 the intervals increase in size before a final leap to A₅.

The bongos enter when the singer hears a black dog barking in the distance.

Subsequently, whenever the dogs are mentioned the bongos also play, perhaps suggesting a quickening of the heart rhythm for fear of the dogs.

A musical score snippet for three parts: bongos, voice, and piano. The bongos part (top) has a dynamic of *pp* and features a triplet. The voice part (middle) has a dynamic of *mf* and includes lyrics "for all to see" and "and the black dog had barked". The piano part (bottom) has a dynamic of *ff* and includes a triplet. The score is marked with various dynamics and rhythmic notations.

Example 6: *The Owl*, mm. 26-27.

In example 6 the bongos appear above the voice as she sings of the dogs beginning to bark.

The complexity of the rhythm with triplets in the voice and bongos against quadruplets in the piano, is made all the more difficult by the frequent use of rests which offset the rhythm even more.

The singer, however, gets control of her emotions. This is suggested by the recurrence in measures 30-33 of the static chords heard in the opening measures. It is as if she sublimates her anger and stress by pushing them deep within.

Example 7: *The Owl*, mm. 28-31.

The similarities of example 7 to example 8, include the instrumentation, lack of harmonic rhythm and use of dissonance.

Accompanied only by a sustained chord in the organ, she recalls the words said about her husband, ‘A good man, a solid man, forthright Christian, Peter the Rock,’ (example 8). She sings this within the narrow range of a third. There is a sense of gaining control of her emotions by a mantric repetition of what they have said to her, and of what she knows she is expected to think. The instruments break in on this restraint, however, when they enter *forte* with arpeggios rhythmically in unison. The contour of the last three notes in each of the flourishes of the flute, clarinet and viola is similar to the contour of the vocal line for ‘open wide’ in measure 20. This suggests a shift in the mind of the singer back to distress and her control is broken. She repeats ‘the rock,’ but this time the vocal line includes a leap of a tenth, the largest leap in the vocal line to this point in the work.

Handwritten musical score for "The Owl" (mm. 33-37). The score is written on ten staves. The top five staves (treble, alto, tenor, baritone, and bass clefs) show a melodic line with triplets and dynamic markings like "f" and "fz". The bottom five staves (treble, alto, tenor, baritone, and bass clefs) show a vocal line with lyrics: "a good man, a solid man, forthright Christian, Peter the Rock." and "The". There are also performance instructions like "freely (♩ = 60)", "Metacast", "wood blocks", and "(vibrato)".

Handwritten musical score for "The Owl" (mm. 33-37). The score is written on ten staves. The top five staves (treble, alto, tenor, baritone, and bass clefs) show a melodic line with triplets and dynamic markings like "f" and "fz". The bottom five staves (treble, alto, tenor, baritone, and bass clefs) show a vocal line with lyrics: "a good man, a solid man, forthright Christian, Peter the Rock." and "The". There are also performance instructions like "freely (♩ = 60)", "Metacast", "wood blocks", and "(vibrato)".

Example 8: *The Owl*, mm. 33-37.

In example 8 the accompanying instruments appear suddenly and briefly for a single measure.

Rebelling against societal expectations of her reaction to her husband's death she sings, 'and I,' starting on an $E\flat_5$, yet her energy dies and she falls from this note to return to the repeated notes on a D_4 as she states 'I am the ruin, the rubble of his grave.' The voice is this time accompanied by the viola with a variation of the melody of the flute accompaniment of the same words in measures 16-17 (see example 4). The variation however, is higher and contains larger intervals than the motif played by the flute.

The image shows a musical score for Example 9, measures 36-42 of *The Owl*. The score is written in 3/8 time and includes a vocal line and instrumental accompaniment for flute, viola, and cello. The vocal line includes lyrics: "rock, the rock, and I am the ruin, the rubble of his grave." The viola part has a red box highlighting a specific melodic variation. The cello part also has a red box highlighting a specific melodic variation. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (p, f), articulation (acc), and performance instructions (non vibrato).

Example 9: *The Owl*, mm. 36-42 (compare with example 4, mm 16-19).

The motif in the viola is outline in red. The voice returns to D₄ in example 9. This suggests the rising emotions which the singer is still trying to keep under control. There is clearly a primal struggle occurring in this woman's soul, a struggle between her demands on herself to meet the expectations of society, and her desire to be true to the unleashing of her own surging emotions.

Symbolic of the widow reigning in her emotions, she returns to the statement of what people expect of her, 'A good wife, a solid wife.' The notes for this phrase are a transposition of those for the phrase, 'a good man, a solid man,' (compare example 9 with the example below) as though this were the repetition of a mantra that has been part of her psyche for the many years of her marriage.

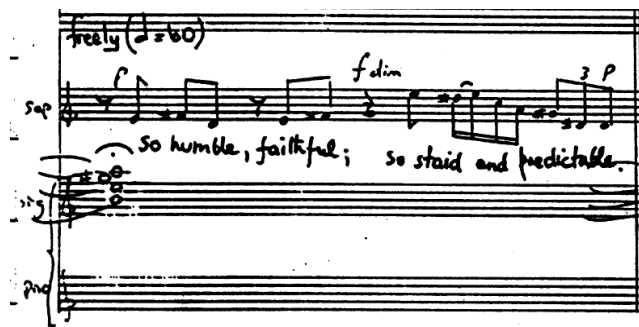


Example 10: *The Owl*, mm. 42-46.

Her control over her emotions does not last long, however, as a sudden leap of a ninth introduces the phrase 'But I am the rubble, the gravel of his grave.' The singer now uses the motif that has accompanied the 'gravel of his grave' in measures 16-17 and 41-41 (Examples 4 and 9). This time she is accompanied only by a single note in the viola. Changing the vocal line for this phrase from using a dull repetition on D₄ to using the motif that accompanied the previous statements, suggests that she is allowing herself to listen to her inner voices which are calling her to break free of the bonds of meeting the expectations of others. She is beginning to appreciate the impact of her husband's death on her emotions. She is no longer an automaton. The *pianissimo* marking of this phrase

suggests that the widow is still tentative about recognizing her own real feelings.

The widow compares her husband with a scarab, ‘forging a fortress of caked sun-cracked dung, sapped of moisture cold before he died.’ The association with the scarab, an insect which feeds on dung, clearly shows her disdain for her husband. But she again controls her emotions singing ‘so humble , faithful’ with another transposition of the melodic motif employed for ‘a good man’(example 8). She seems to be starting the mantra again; however, even more quickly she eschews the notes representative of previous mantras by stating critically, beginning *forte* and in a higher register ‘so staid and predictable.’ As with previous recitations of the mantra she is accompanied only by a chord in the organ.



Example 11: *The Owl*, m. 55.

In example 11 the use of the low register in the voice during the first phrase contrasts with the upper middle register *forte* outburst of ‘so staid and predictable.’ After this statement the flute, clarinet and viola break in quickly-rising lines, (example 12), which takes them high in their ranges, and mark her return to a state of agitation. In example 12 the instruments enter *forte* and quickly rise to high repeated notes.

Again she observes that the gate is open wide and the bongos signal a return of the barking dog, (example 13). Her anxiety level rises.



Example 12: *The Owl*, mm. 56-58.

Example 13: *The Owl*, mm. 60-63.

The vocal line describing the barking dog slightly example 13 than for the earlier description of the barking dog in example 6. The may also suggest a heightening of emotion in the widow. In both examples the rhythm of the bongos is present.

This section concludes with the instruments playing chords reminiscent of the opening measures of the work, but this time the note values are much shorter and there is a

greater sense of rhythmic direction. In example 14, not only is duration of the notes decreased, but the tempo is increased from $\text{♩} = 42$ in the opening measures to $\text{♩} = 52$ in measure 64. By alluding to the opening bars, but having a greater sense of urgency and direction, we see that the singer has moved beyond the dullness of mind which marked the beginning of this work. This marks the end of the first section of the work.



Example 14: *The Owl*, mm. 64-67.

Section 2 - The Confrontation

The second section of the work overlaps slightly with the first. It begins with solo piano rising from low in the bass to $C\text{♯}_6$ (example 15). This marks a new stage in the widow's psychological development. She moves from observation of the scene around her to directly addressing her husband. She is no longer trying to repress her instincts, and instead communicates her true feelings free from the filter of society's expectations. The rising line in the piano suggests the blossoming of an inner strength from deep within the singer. There is a sense of confidence as she sings accompanied only by the piano, 'With your death I draw the first breath in 25 years. This black facade assumed for your funeral fails to shroud my inner ecstasy. I am flooded with freedom.'

Table 2: Section 2 - The Confrontation

Measure Number	Text	Meter	Tempo	Vocal		Instrumentation			Inst.		Observations
				Dynamics	Register				Dynamics	Texture	
68		4/4, 5/8	♩ = 54-60			piano solo			<i>mf, f, f, p, f, p</i>	Improvisatory feel, use of dissonant chords and arpeggios	
71	With your death I drew the first breath in twenty wasted years.	4/4	♩ = 54-60	<i>mp</i>	Middle	Piano accompanies voice.			<i>f</i>		
77	The black facade assumed for your funeral fails to shroud my inner ecstasy.	7/8 3/4, 3/8, 4/4			Moves between high, middle and low	Viola and cello and marimba take over at first in unison with voice and then develop own direction with variation of vocal line.			<i>ppp < p ></i>		
79	I am flooded with freedom, sweet and clear with solitude.	3/4, 4/4	<i>Poco Meno Mosso</i>								
86	I glisten in your absence.	5/4, 4/4		<i>p, mf > p</i>	High	Piano (freely) leads arpeggio leads to 'glisten.' Holds chord with marimba under 'glisten.' 'Absence' is unaccompanied.					'glisten' is a sublime moment of ecstasy - use of melisma and the chord surround the voice also create the celestial image.
88	Oh my love, my love How we hated, hated, hated. You drowned me in sobriety			<i>pp</i> <i>ff</i> <i>p</i>	Middle - repeated A4	Vln accompanies the voice			<i>pp</i> <i>< ff</i> <i>ff, p > < f</i>	Improvisatory feel to violin	
92	You laughed at my fantasies At my fascination for the owl.			<i>f ></i> <i>p</i>	Middle to low	Cello takes over accompaniment			<i>f > p > pp</i>	Improvisatory feel to violin	

Melismas are used to enhance the meaning of such words as ‘ecstasy’, ‘flooded’ and ‘freedom,’ as she exults in the freedom which her husband’s death has brought her. The *melisma* used in measures 76-78 in example 15 is an example of the extended *melisma* used several times in this section.

The climax of these emotions occurs as she leaps to A₅, the highest note in the work, ‘I glisten with your absence’. Word painting is evident as the voice lingers on this note and alternates between A₅ and G₅ to suggest ‘glistening.’ The word ‘absence’ is unaccompanied and followed by several beats of silence. The singer is alone. There is a sense of power in the silence (example 16).

The musical score for Example 15, measures 68-78, is presented in three systems. The first system shows the piano accompaniment with dynamic markings of *mf*, *f*, and *p*. The second system shows the soprano voice part with the lyrics: "draw the first breath in twenty wasted years. This luck facade all shed for your funeral, my in-". The third system shows the piano accompaniment with dynamic markings of *mf* and *f*. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Example 15: *The Owl*, mm. 68-78.



Example 16: *The Owl* mm. 85-87.

Quietly she talks almost fondly to her husband, singing *pianissimo*, ‘Oh my love, my love’ all on repeated A4. However, her demeanor quickly changes as she continues *fortissimo*, ‘how we hated, hated, hated.’ For this phrase she is accompanied by the solo violin.

She accuses him, ‘you laughed at my fantasies, at my fascination for the owl’ accompanied by the solo cello. There is a diminuendo from the *forte* of ‘you laughed’ to the *piano* of ‘my fascination with the owl.’ There is a sense even now that she is not able to defy her husband confidently. She retreats inward.

Section 3 - The Owl

The clarinet, motif using an octave leap motif, heralds the owl and, with it, a new section of the work. This motive suggests perhaps the hooting of the owl. The clarinet ‘owl’ motif in example 16 is enclosed in a red box.

Example 17 illustrates the beginning of a section which has no meter, as the singer, in an almost trance-like state, muses on the owl. The clarinet, piano and the tubular bells for this section are free from the tempo and rhythm of the voice. Three bars of material are to be repeated freely until the voice has finished the sections meditation.

Table 3: Section 3 -The Owl

Measure Number	Text	Vocal			Inst.			Observations
		Meter	Tempo	Dynamics	Register	Instrumentation	Dynamics	Texture
100						At the mention of the owl we hear the motive of the owl - octave leap in clarinet. Piano begins <i>ostinato</i> which will continue through the next section - Freely (j = c. 40)	<i>ppp</i>	This motif is repeated in measure 290 at second mediation on the owl
102	The owl. The owl Bird of Athens. Spirit of Athena. Proud Nocturnal. So wise in mind And fleet of feather. Her eyes large and direct. Her lids heavy with inner vision	no meter	Freely (j = c. 60) (voice)	<i>no dynamic mentioned</i>	Low and middle	Piano continues three bar motif. Chords in tubal bells - Freely (j = c. 48) . Multiphonics in the clarinet 'Player chooses three low multiphonics, as rich and gong-like as possible, and without any tonal feeling.'	<i>P</i> <i>pp</i> <i>pp</i>	Meditation has feel of freedom, able to proceed at own pace.
103	Her soul brighter, brighter than ecstasy.				Low rises to high	Previous instruments continue, Cello enters with soaring line - accompanying voice (<i>col voce</i>)	<i>pp</i>	'Brighter' has a free Improvisatory feel.

Handwritten musical score for 'The Owl' (mm. 100-102). The score includes staves for fl (flute), cl (clarinet), vln (violin), vc (viola), and pf (piano). The clarinet part has a red box highlighting a specific passage. The piano part includes a 'gong' section and 'tubular bells' section. The vocal line (singer) is at the bottom with lyrics: 'The owl, the owl, bird of Athens, spirit of A-the-na,'. A footnote at the bottom states: '* Player chooses three low Multiphonics, as rich and gong-like as possible, and without any tonal feeling.'

Example 17: *The Owl*, mm. 100-102.

In this section three bars of material are to be repeated freely until the voice has finished her meditation. The clarinet 'chooses three low multiphonics, as rich and gong-like as possible, and without any tonal feeling.' The independence of the vocal line from the instrumental lines reflects the widows release from having to comply with demands of others. The singer briefly describes the owl. The vocal line as she sings 'the owl, the owl' provides a melodic motif which will return later in the work during another meditation on the owl (example 36, mm.290 -294).

Initially the word setting of the description is primarily syllabic and in the lower and middle part of the singer's range. As she describes the soul of the owl, the singer moves to the higher part of her range and there is greater use of *melisma*, which suggests an ecstatic quality to the description. These *melismas* suggest the soaring owl as it circles and glides.



Example 18: *The Owl*, m. 103.

In example 18 there is a continued lack of meter as the voice sings in an extended soaring *melisma*. The clarinet and piano each continue their own independent *obligato* throughout this example.

Section 4 - The Candle

When she again talks to her husband Peter she, accompanied initially by cello and viola, recalls the image of his holding the candle ‘like a guilty child.’ Her remembrance gives way to a chanting of ‘Hail Mary, full of grace, blessed is the fruit of thy womb’ on repeated C₄’s. Once again this chant on repetitive low notes, C₄, suggests her attempt to maintain control over her swelling emotions. In its lower range a flute *obligato*, ‘freely-independent of the voice,’¹² accompanies the chant.

¹² Butterley, *The Owl*, 15.

Table 4: Section 4 – The Candle

Measure Number	Text	Meter	Vocal			Instrumentation			Inst.		Observations
			Tempo	Dynamics	Register				Dynamics	Texture	
104 105	Yes Peter I am now the owl	5/4	$\text{♩} = 60$	<i>p</i>	Lower and middle	viola and cello accompany the voice	<i>pp</i> < <i>p</i> .	Accomp. sparse	<i>pp</i> < <i>p</i> .		
107	Alone in my room	7/8									
111	With your strange witness - This chapel candle That I've yet to light.	4/4	<i>Pui Mosso</i> ($\text{♩} = 80$)								
111 115 117 119	I remember you holding it like a guilty child. An apology for resisting my need for space, my sense of self. It conjures up childhood. The muttered Hail Mary's	3/8, 3/4 3/8, 3/4 5/8	<i>pui Mosso</i> ($\text{♩} = 80$)	<i>mp</i>	Middle	Piano primary accompaniment, mainly chordal Viola gives brief melodic line ‘					
120	Full of grace ,the Lord is with thee Blessed is the fruit of thy womb Blessed is the fruit of thy womb. Of thy womb, thy womb.	No meter	(freely - indep. of flute	<i>pp</i> <i>mp</i> <i>cresc</i>	Low-repeated C4	Flute plays obligato ‘Freely independent of the voice ‘stop early if necessary of repeat, if necessary) Single organ chord below.	<i>pp</i> (<i>non cresc.</i>)		<i>pp</i> (<i>non cresc.</i>)		Recitative-like

Example 19: *The Owl*, mm. 120-121.

In example 19 the voice and flute (marked in red) are again free of a meter and independent of each other and a sustained chord in the organ plays underneath.

The spell is broken by a sudden *fortissimo* entry from all the instruments, accentuated by a *fortissimo* pizzicato from the drum and block. Once again something snaps inside of her. Beginning on G₆ she exclaims, 'My womb, swollen and fruitful beside my barren betrothed, the puppet father,' (example 20). The instruments accompany the singer with jagged lines, perhaps indicating the turmoil within the widow. In measure 121 of example 20 the singer is *forte* and the instruments are *fortissimo* as they rise to their higher registers. This is a tremendous contrast to the controlled chant low in the voice seen example 19.

Example 20: *The Owl*, mm. 121-124.

Section 5 - The Ritual

A new image bursts forth for the singer. The vocal line rises and falls reflecting her conflicted state, and she envisions a scene of the Rabbi performing the *Sotah* ritual. The description of the rite is initially accompanied by the instruments playing in their middle and upper ranges. From a description of the rabbi's action she turns to quoting the rabbi and sings the Hebrew chant *forte*, primarily in the middle and upper register of the voice. The chant is accompanied by an *obligato* in the piccolo, which is a transposed variation of the flute *obligato* which accompanied the chanted 'Hail Mary's' in measure 120 (example 19). This *obligato* is more than an octave higher than its first occurrence. This Hebraic chant is far more disturbing to the widow. In example 21 the piccolo *obligato* over the chant is metered, unlike the flute *obligato* of example 19. The vocal line is also in a higher register in this example

Table 5: Section 5 - The Ritual

Measure Number	Text	Vocal			Instrumentation			Inst.		Observations
		Meter	Tempo	Dynamics	Register			Dynamics	Texture	
121	My womb, swollen, and, fruitful Beside my barren betrothed - The puppet, father.	4/4 3/8 3/4 3/8	f		High descending to middle to low.	Drum breaks the calm mood all instruments join.		ff	Jagged, broken	Trance broken.
126		4/4	j = 48			Drum enters with rhythm independent of rubato of other instruments - continues to m. 147 (j = 54) All instruments, <i>marcato</i> chords		sf>p		
127	The Rabbi presides a haze of grey beard. He looks down through carrion eyes. Pours water into earthenware. Mixes a fist of dust from the tabernacle floor.			mp	Middle			mp	Homophonic	
131		3/8				Flourish from flute and clarinet		f		
132	Yiten Adonai otach le-ala Velishvua betoch amech Betet Adonai et yerechech nofelet Ve-et bitnech tsava.	4/4		f	Middle to high	Piccolo plays <i>obligato</i> (related to <i>obligato</i> of flute in m. 120), single chord in organ and drum.		mf		
139	From the vile vessel . She is ordered to drink. for guilt the bitter water that causeth the curse Will abort her tell-tale womb.				Middle to low	Flourish from flute and clarinet - similar to m. 131 All instruments and drums continue, similar material to m. 127-131.		f mp		
142	Yiten Adonai otach le-ala Yiten Adonai otach le-ala.			pp	high to medium	Piccolo <i>obligato</i> , organ chord, drum beat continues		pp		

(table continued)

145	But Joseph interposes - She is pure.		$\text{♩} = 108$	<i>ff</i>	Medium high to low	Clarinet, viola and piano in rhythmic unison. Flute, cello, organ and glockenspiel	<i>ff</i> <i>ff</i>		Contrast of instrumentation between when describing actions of Joseph and his words, 'he is pure.'
147	She is pure.	3/4, 4/4 2/4							
150	Takes the mixture to drink for himself.	3/8 4/4				Clarinet, viola and piano in rhythmic unison. Flute, cello, organ and glockenspiel	<i>ff, mf>p></i> <i>p</i>		Suggests judgement exists despite her protestations
156	She is pure.		rit.			Clarinet, viola and cello recall the tune to 'Yiten Adonal...' m.132-133			

Example 21: *The Owl*, mm. 132-136.

She describes more of the ritual and then returns to the chant, again accompanied by an *obligato* in the piccolo, this time lower than the previous piccolo *obligato*. The singer sings the chant *pianissimo* on its second occurrence.

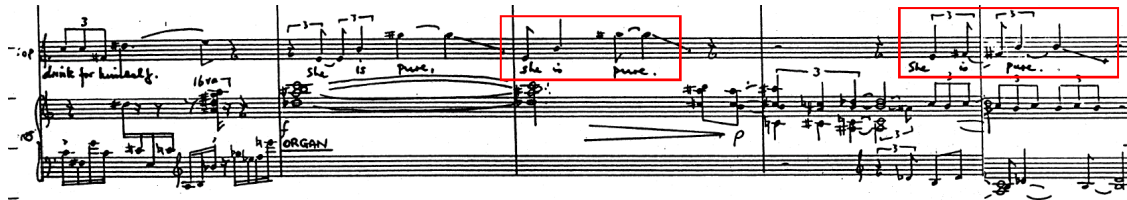
Throughout the description of the rite, up to the conclusion of the second chant, in measures 126 to 144 the drums play their own rhythmic *obligato*, (example 19). The notes for the full score state:

Bars 126-144: the main temp ($\text{♩} = 48$) may be rubato, but the drum tempo ($= 54$) should remain constant. Synchronization is not necessary. In bar 144 crotchet [quarter note] beats may be added (on the higher drum) if necessary, or beats may be deleted.¹³

The conclusion of the second chant brings a forte flourish in the drums and return to the jagged, fragmented instrumental lines that preceded the description of the rite. The singer continues with a harsh accompaniment, ‘Joseph interposes, she is pure.’ For each repetition

¹³ Butterley, *The Owl*, notes page, unnumbered.

of ‘she is pure,’ the vocal line rises to G \sharp ₅ and then dies away from the high note on a descending slur. Joseph’s final affirmation of Mary’s purity however, remains in the lower part of her voice and only rises to B₄ before falling away in a descending slur.



Example 22: The Owl, mm 152-156.

In this example the initial higher statements of ‘she is pure’ contrast with the final lower statement with the voice falling away with each utterance. The descending slurs from high notes together with the placement of the final statement lower in the voice may be reflective of the widows’s knowledge that in fact the child does not belong to her husband. True to her conflicted state, she is feels guilt even as she pleads her innocence.

Section 6 - A Realization

There is silence before the widow sings unaccompanied, ‘The bitter water that causes the curse poisoned the seed of love.’ The silence around the voice in example 23 perhaps indicates a realization within the woman, separate from the other voices and expectations, that she may bear some culpability in the relationship. The tempo is slowed to $\text{♩} = 54$ and her agitation lessens as the singer, accompanied only by the piano, addresses her husband Peter about the hate, masquerading as honor, which he harbored for her. The vocal line stays within the lower and middle range of the singer, reflecting a calmness that has overtaken her.

Table 6: Section 6 - A Realization

Measure Number	Text	Meter	Vocal			Instrumentation			Inst.		Observations
			Tempo	Dynamics	Register				Dynamics	Texture	
158	The bitter water that causeth the curse Poisoned, poisoned the seed of love.	4/4	$\text{♩} = 54$ (freely)	<i>p</i>	Middle and low	Unaccompanied					A moment of realization.
161	Peter, how many ulcers fed upon the hate we harboured	5/8	<i>Allegretto</i>	<i>mp</i> <i>f</i> <i>mf</i> <i>mp</i> <i>p</i>	Middle to low	Piano Accompanies voice			<i>mp</i> <i>f</i> <i>mf</i> <i>p</i> <i>pp</i> < <i>p</i> > <i>pp</i>		
162	Hate dressed as honour. A clean face blank as whitewash. But rest, rest, for I will not word the truth to pit the plaster. Our secret sleeps. How could I tell a daughter.	5/8, 4/4 3/8 4/4									
171	Blessed is the fruit of thy womb. My womb.				Low, repeated C4	Chord in organ. cello repeats motif of mm. 169-170			<i>pp</i> < <i>p</i>		

Example 23: *The Owl*, mm. 156-159.

While recognizing the deep division in their relationship she tells him to rest in the knowledge that she will not tell their daughter that he is not her father.

Example 24: *The Owl*, mm. 162-163.

The middle range of the vocal line in example 24 is typical of the vocal line during this section.

She then returns to her chant on a repeated C₄, ‘Blessed is the fruit of thy womb.’ She concludes this chant with ‘My womb’ but this time, rather than the emotional outburst of measure 121 which begins on G₅, (example 20) she begins on A₄ with a transposition of the melody of the earlier outburst.



Example 25: *The Owl*, mm. 171-172.

In examples 25 and 19 the singer chants on repeated C₄'s. Example 25 contrasts however, with example 20, in the setting of ‘my womb.’ In the example 20 there is a *forte* outburst high in the singer’s vocal range. In example 25 there is a lower, less angry statement of ‘my womb.’ Her attainment of some measure of calm completes another stage in the singer’s journey through the work.

Section 7 - The Betrayal and Seduction

An instrumental interlude creates a completely different mood. The vibraphone enters first, followed by alto flute, cello and violin. Each instrument develops and varies its own motif, seemingly independent of each other. The motifs often have combinations of triplets, quintuplets, and even septuplets. The strings for the first part of this section are playing artificial harmonics. Combined with the use of the vibraphone, this creates an ethereal sound. There is no sense of a down beat. The articulation of a note on the first beat of the bar is very rare. While the instrumentation appears rather dense the dynamic for all the instruments is *pianissimo*.

Table 7: Section 7 - The Betrayal and Seduction

Measure Number	Text	Meter	Vocal			Inst.			Observations
			Tempo	Dynamics	Register	Instrumentation	Dynamics	Texture	
173 174		5/4	<i>Poco rit</i> ♩ = 48			Vibraphone and flute duet, piano obbligato underneath clarinet and cello join	<i>pp</i>	polyphonic	
177	Childhoods pass like seasons. My daughter's, my own. Once I lay in Paradise. Eden, source of the four rivers Flowing to replenish North, East, South, West. Landscape of childhoods, of the soul. Innocence nestled in her sylvan bower Beneath the Tree of Knowledge. I lie beneath benevolent branches Oblivious to the silent serpent Who shares the Tree. (The same snake that Mary treads underfoot - Guards the fruit forbidden.)			<i>p</i> <i>ppp < p</i>	middle high moves between high and medium	Flute, violin, cello, vibraphone and piano repeat and develop their own motifs. Clarinet joins (<i>p</i>) - could be representation of serpent.	<i>pp</i> Dynamic remains constant.		
190	Scales slide over bark Worms infest the apple! My bed becomes nettled My rest disturbed.		<i>Accl</i> <i>poco a poco</i>			Vibraphone ceases, replaced by castanets. New motifs in the other instruments.	<>, <>		Harsher sound as paradise is disturbed - slow acceleration indicates slow realization of situation
	He rears his serpent head. To summon Adam, his shadow. Threatening Magnificent.					Instruments move to higher registers. Organ and piano enter. Maracas. Instrumental motifs become more fragmented			
196 197	I am prey. They are hunter. I am innocence. I am prey	3/8, 5/4	Piu Accel ♩ = 96	<i>none specified</i>	High Middle	<i>ff</i> bass drum followed by rhythmic unison of flute, clarinet, violin, cello and piano, marcato Drums join - driving beat, 16 th notes, short fragments in other instruments.	<i>ff</i>	Homophonic	Harshness of music suggests the violence



Example 26: *The Owl* mm. 173-177.

In example 26 the seeming rhythmic and melodic independence of each instrumental line is evident

A new vision appears. She recalls her youth and how she once lay in Paradise. The paradise she describes is Eden, ‘source of the four rivers flowing to replenish North, South, East and West.’ She was ‘innocence nestled in her sylvan bower beneath the tree of knowledge,’ oblivious to the snake which will bring her downfall. There is a sense of serenity and stasis as the singer revels in this Paradise.

However, at the mention of the ‘silent serpent who shares the tree’ the clarinet enters with a slowly rising and falling line like a snake slithering. The entrance of the clarinet is marked in red in example 27. In measure 190 the tempo increases. In measure 191 the vibraphone is replaced by castanets. The strings cease using artificial harmonics. The peace of the vision of Paradise gives way to a agitation and a sense of foreboding. The rhythmic and melodic independence of the other instrumental lines continues.

The image displays two pages of a musical score. The top page features a vocal line with lyrics: "branches, oblivious to the silent serpent who slithers the tree. (The same snake that underfoot guards the fruit forbidden.)". A red box highlights a specific passage in the vocal line. The bottom page shows instrumental parts, including "CASTANETS", "ACCEL POLO A POLO", and "PRE-PRÉ STOPS (violin and vib.)".

Example 27: *The Owl* mm. 187-192.

The agitation in the orchestra increases with the each of the instruments playing fast rising and falling fragments, (example 28). The voice describes the intrusion 'He rears his serpent head to summon Adam his shadow. Threatening. Magnificent.' In example 28 the rising and falling contours of both the instrumental and vocal lines is apparent.

As she sings 'I am Prey and they are hunter.' The anxiety of the singer is reflected by her high registration, singing between $F\sharp_5$ and A_5 . The agitation in both the voice and accompaniment subsides as she sings 'willingly I ride the wild wind of desire.' The vocal

line descends to B \flat 3 as she sings *piano*, ‘the wind murmurs and dies,’ (measures 204-205 in example 29).

The surrender suggested by this quietness is broken by *fortissimo* chords accompanying a *fortissimo* vocal outburst, ‘The body of Eve nailed to the tree of knowledge.’ (example 29: mm. 205 -206) There may have been surrender and submission during her youth, but now the singer recognizes her rage at what happened. She evokes the image of the Christa rather than the Christus of her youth. There is a contrast between the two textures in the ensemble. The initial outburst and the statement ‘convicted carnal criminal are accompanied by dissonant *fortissimo* chords in the piano and strings. ‘Crucified she cries’ is accompanied by less strident *mezzo forte* lines in the flute and clarinet

Fl.

cl.

ln.

lc.

rc.

MARACAS

PIANO

ORGAN

L.H. PIANO

He rears his Serpent head to summon Adam his shadow. Threatening. Magnificent.

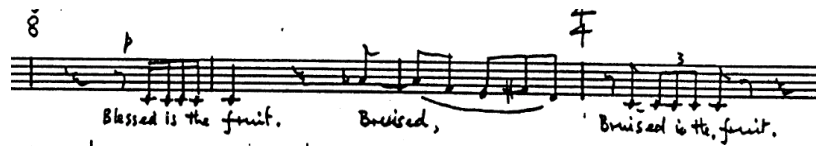
Example 28: *The Owl* mm. 194-195.

Example 29: *The Owl* mm. 203-206.

Example 30: *The Owl* mm. 207-211.

Example 30 demonstrate the contrasting textures accompanying the voice in this section.

As she sings her final ‘Crucified she cries’ her agitation seems to subside as she sings, ‘Blessed is the fruit, Bruised, Bruised is the fruit.’ Repeated notes on C₄ accompany a return of this phrase. Again she is gaining control of her emotions and returning to the trance-like state which gives her some relief from the tremendous passions which threaten to engulf her. *Melisma* is used only on the word ‘bruised’ suggesting the realization of her woundedness after so many years of subjugation. She is no longer ‘pure.’ She sublimates the feelings this may evoke, returning to C₄.



Example 31: *The Owl*, mm 214-217.

Example 31 is the third time she returns to C₄ and to her chant. Examples 19 and 25 are the first two occurrences of the chant.

Section 8 - Revenge

A solo in the viola leads into and accompanies the singer’s somewhat detached musing, ‘Was I pretty, I suppose I was. Pretty enough to hide the bruise.’ Her detachment ceases as she describes how the prey became the hunter and she won the hand of her husband. The tempo accelerates to $\text{♩} = 120$. The use of short motifs and single notes, both *staccato* and *marcato*, in the instrumental ensemble suggest drive and determination. There is no lyricism in the accompaniment. This underscores the lack of love she feels as she manipulates her husband into marriage. The use of bongos and temple blocks also help to create the sense of heightened tension.

Table 8: Section 8 - Revenge

Measure Number	Text	Vocal			Inst.			Observations
		Meter	Tempo	Dynamics	Register	Instrumentation	Dynamics	Texture
218 220	Was I pretty, I suppose I was Pretty enough to hide the bruise.	3/4				Solo cello	<i>p</i>	
223		4/4	<i>Accel.</i>			Flute, clarinet, viola, cello in rhythmic unison rise to repeated high notes	<i>p</i> < > <i>mp</i> > <i>m</i> < <i>f</i>	
226	The prey pursues the hunter.		$\text{♩} = 120$	<i>f</i>	High	Flute, clarinet, viola, cello, staccato separated chords	<i>f</i>	
	Peter-Menelaus Shared in this web of golden hair.					Cymbal and clarinet		
230	I Played the role Followed the path Teased, tantalized. I was hunter. He was prey I stroked the flanks Of the wooden horse To tantalize, to tempt.	4/4 5/4 3/4 4/4 5/4			High	Staccato chords in piano, flute, clarinet, viola, cello staccato, a lot of high repeated notes, bongos join. Temple blocks Bongos	<i>f</i>	
245	But I knew the secret I saw a face through the panels. Warriors waiting within. I stroked the flanks Of the wooden horse To tease the men concealed. Reveal yourself Submit to my beauty.	4/4 5/4 4/4		<i>f</i>	High	Staccato notes sparse and separated.	<i>f</i>	
256			rit.		Middle	After 8 th note of silence, clarinet is heard alone with fall from B4 to held C4	<i>fp</i>	The driving momentum of the previous measures has been suddenly halted

The singer first sings *forte* and higher in the voice ‘I was hunter, he was prey.’ She moves to *mezzo piano* at one stage when she is describing the ‘wooden panels, iron frame,’ reflecting the way she achieved her conquest, through persuasion, not force. However, her anger comes out as she returns to *forte* as she sings of her tactics. Her drive however, suddenly halts after she sings ‘submit to my beauty,’ the clarinet plays a simple 7th leap down to a sustained C4, (measure 256 of example 32).

Handwritten musical score for measures 255-260 of Example 32. The score includes staves for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Violin (Vla.), Viola (Vla.), Bassoon (Bb.), and Piano (p.). The tempo is marked 'RIT.' and the time signature is '1=54'. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score shows the singer's part with lyrics: 'submit to my beauty.' and 'After, I married for an honour imposed.' The piano part features a 7th leap down to a sustained C4 in measure 256. The score is marked with 'f' for forte and 'p' for mezzo piano.

Example 32: *The Owl* mm. 255-260.

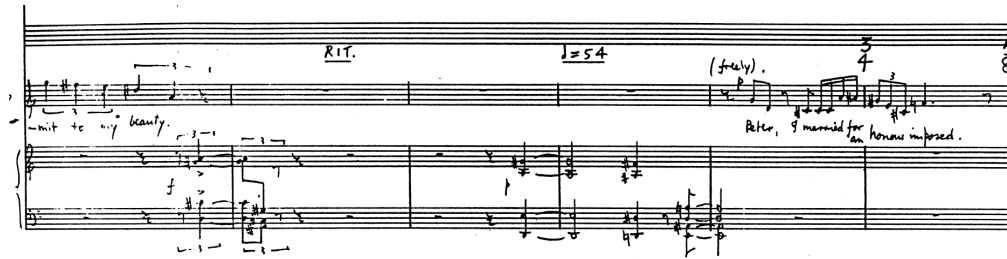
In measure 258 of example 32, the beginning of section nine, focus again turns to the husband. The piano is now the single accompanying instrument, as the widow addresses her husband.

Table 9: Section 9 - Understanding

Measure Number	Text	Meter	Tempo	Vocal		Vocal		Inst.		Observations
				Dynamics	Register	Dynamics	Texture			
258			$\text{♩} = 54$			Under held C4 in clarinet, piano plays chords	p			
259	Peter, I married for an honour imposed.	3/4	(Freely)		low	Held chord in piano then unaccompanied			Addressing husband again only single instrument accompanying.	
261	My downfall. Your triumph. I should have faced disgrace to be a mother And friend to my child within. - Not wife to a corpse.	5/8 5/4		$mp<f$ p pp		Cello, many repeated notes	mp p			
266	For twenty years we dest royed. We are one with the blame.				Low	Piano	p			
270	But I have birth. You have death. I am flooded with freedom, with ecstasy.	5/8, 3/4 5/8 2/4,3/8, 4/4,3/8, 4/4,7/8,5/8 4/4		$p<mf, mp$ f	Middle Middle to medium high Middle	Piano recalls material of first duet with voice in section 2	$p<f$ $f, p, f, >mp,$ $<f$			
281	The gate is open. The chains lie broken.		<i>Poco</i> <i>Meno</i> <i>Mosso</i> ($\text{♩} = c.$ 48)							
282		4/4, 7/8, 4/4, 3/8, 4/4, 2/4,	$\text{♩} = 84$			viola and cello duet interlude recalls previous melodic material	f $>$ $p >$		Celebratory duet reflects the new felt freedom of the widow	

Section 9 - Understanding

The pace and agitation subside as the tempo slows to $\text{♩} = 54$. Juxtaposed against the high emotions of the previous section, we see the widow speak quietly and directly to Peter, (example 33). Her first sentence is unaccompanied.



Example 33: The Owl, mm. 256-260.

There is a sense that with expression of her revenge in the previous section she is able to step aside from the anger. The viola then joins as she sings 'My downfall, your triumph.' Unaccompanied she sings *pianissimo* on repeated D₄, 'Not wife to a corpse.'

The piano accompanies her final statements to her husband, as she realizes they 'are one with the blame.' Following this statement on a repeated C₄ in the voice, the piano repeats the material from measure 69-71(example 15), from the second section of the work where the widow is also directly addressing her husband. The piano continues a rhapsodic accompaniment of the singer as she exults again in her freedom and ecstasy. Measures 69-81 mark the first point in the work where the widow realized the freedom that comes with the death of her husband. Both the vocal and piano lines in measures 268-282 quote from material in the earlier section. Example 34 and example 15 have many similarities of both vocal melodic line and piano accompaniment. The text is a variation of the text in the section two. The vocal line of extended *melisma* for the words 'flooded,' 'freedom,' and

‘ecstasy’ is the same. The order in which these words appear however, is changed. This section is a confirmation that the singer is liberated from her husband and from the things which would hold her back. With the words, ‘the gate is open. The chains lie open,’ she achieves resolution. She is free.

Handwritten musical score for 'The Owl' mm. 265-280. The score is written on three systems of staves. The first system (mm. 265-270) features a vocal line with lyrics 'For twenty years destroyed. We are one with the blame.' and a piano accompaniment. The second system (mm. 271-280) continues the vocal line with lyrics 'But I have birth. You have death. I am' and includes dynamic markings like 'p', 'mf', 'mp', 'f', and 'cresc.'. The third system (mm. 281-290) shows the vocal line with lyrics 'flooded with fire, down with ac' and continues the piano accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and fingerings.

Example 34: *The Owl* mm. 265-280.

Table 10: Section 10 - Reconciliation with Self

Measure Number	Text	Vocal			Inst.				
		Meter	Tempo	Dynamics	Register	Instrumentation	Dynamics	Texture	Observations
290		9/8	♩=84			clarinet - owl motif Instruments accompanying this on the first appearance are used again, piano, tubular bells and gong	<i>ppp</i>		Recalls mm 100 - 102
293	Over all things sleeping The owl flies. Above Eve nailed to the Tree. Above Helen stroking the flanks. Above Mary offered the bitter water. The owl flies Free, high, wise Over all things sleeping.	9/8	♩=84	<i>p</i>	Medium high and middle	Instruments join i individually, suggestion of a fugue. Piano m 290, Flute, m291 Clarinet, m.292 Cello has most interaction with voice, recalls mebdies of vocal line	<i>p</i> <i>pp</i> <i>p</i>	Polyphonic	At various moments one of the instruments will double the voice.
300	I am the magical Morrigan In her island of mystery. I am the mystical Theresa In her vision of ecstasy I, I am Athena The owl, the owl. Free, high, wise. I am wisdom I am majesty. Freedom in my wings Power in my breast. I am Athena, the owl With wisdom, with majesty. Past in shadow Future in sight. The owl of freedom The owl of Wisdom				Low Middle High and Middle				
320				<i>pp</i>					
322						Flute, Clarinet, Cello, Marimba piano bring motifs to a close and end on held chord.	<i>pp></i>		Not a dramatic ending but instead a calm ending reflecting the peace the widow has found

Section 10 - Reconciliation with Self

A triumphant and celebratory duet of viola and cello follows, quoting and varying material from earlier in the vocal line in which the singer was first describing the owl and her fascination with it. An example of the use of quotation is found in measures 286-288 where the viola employs a transposition of the vocal line of measure 103 for the word 'brighter,' (compare the boxed viola part in example 35 with example 18).

Example 35: *The Owl* mm.282-290.

The duet shown in example 35, which suggests a surge of joy, leads into a meditation on the owl and singer's connectedness with this powerful being. The meditation, the concluding section of this work, is introduced by the same simple motif used when the owl was first mentioned in measures 99-100 (example 17), an octave leap in the clarinet. The piano and the tubular bells, the only instruments to accompany the singer in her first meditation on the owl, begin with the same motifs that they played throughout the first meditation. This time they only use this material for three bars before it merges and continues to evolve entire ensemble. Before the singer begins to articulate her

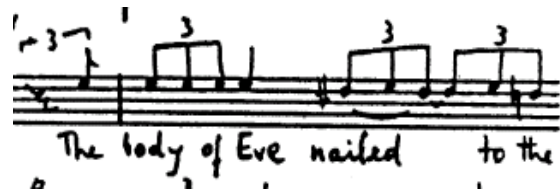
feelings, the cello quotes from the first mention of the owl in the vocal line in section 3, measure 102, (example 17). It is as if the cello is her inner voice which sings ‘the owl, the owl’ which causes the singer to respond ‘Over all things sleeping the owl flies.’

Example 36: *The Owl*, mm. 290-294.

As if resolving the images which have so disturbed her through this monodrama, she sings ‘that owl has seen Eve nailed to the tree of knowledge, Helen using the wiles of seduction, and Mary on trial.’ For each reference, the vocal line employs a variation of material used earlier in the work to recall the same image.

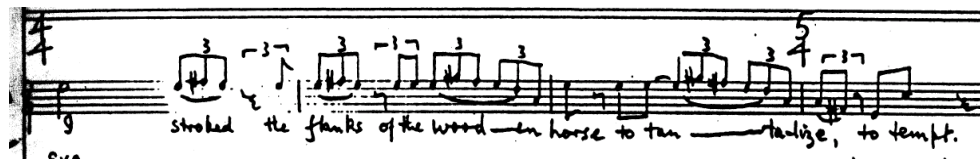
Example 37: *The Owl*, mm. 296-298.

Example 37 shows the vocal line for this final section. In the following three examples from earlier in the work we see a distinct melodic similarity when there is mention of similar images.



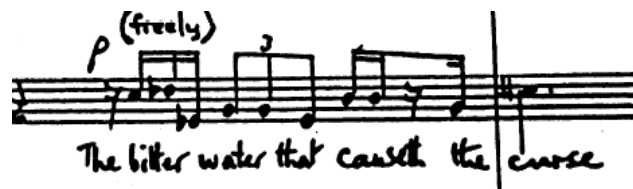
Example 38: *The Owl*, mm. 205-207.

The melody in example 38 is related to the melody in measure 296 of example 37.



Example 39: *The Owl*, mm. 235-238.

The melody in example 39 is related to the melody in measure 297 of example 37.



Example 40: *The Owl*, m. 139.

A relationship between the melody in example 40 and the melody in measure 298 of example 37 is also evident.

The owl has watched over her throughout all the momentous events in her life. She is now able to detach herself from the pain of those incidents. She claims the powers she now has, free from the constraint of her husband. She is the 'magical morrigan,' a creature in Celtic mythology who is associated with battle, strife and fertility. She is 'the mystical Teresa' alluding to the Spanish mystic who wrote a devotional treatise about her

experiences of religious ecstasy. She is Athena, the Owl, 'Free. High, Wise.' She concludes with the statement, 'Past in shadow, future in sight. The owl of freedom. The owl of wisdom.' The vocal line for the final two statements about the owl are a transposition of vocal line when the owl is first mentioned in measure 102 (example 17).



Example 41: *The Owl*, mm. 319-322.

The accompaniment for this last section recalls the air of mystery and calm created in the earlier section of the work where she describes Eden prior to her fall. Like section three the instruments proceed with their own motifs somewhat independent of each other. There is no sense of strong rhythm. There are no drums. This time there is a marimba rather than a vibraphone. The violin and cello use harmonics. There is again a sense of mystery and calm. The work concludes as she finds peace in the persona of the owl, 'The owl of freedom. The owl of wisdom.' The voice and the instruments conclude *pianissimo*. It is not a dramatic end but rather the reaching of a place of quietness after a tumultuous personal journey. The instruments in the concluding three measures of the work continue to decrescendo from a *pianissimo* marking, (example 42).



Example 42: *The Owl*, mm. 325-327.

Challenges for the Singer

The vocal range for the work presents its own challenges. A considerable amount of the work lies between D_4 and A_5 . The challenge is not to overly weight the voice, so as to tire it for a time when the voice must soar for the high passages, which usually reflect joy or freedom in the singer.

A considerable challenge is found in clearly articulating the complex text of this work. Because the majority of the vocal line lies in the middle to lower part of the vocal range, the singer is more able to concentrate on true vowels without having to resort to vowel modification. Higher notes are often associated with *melisma*, which can allow the singer to enjoy these notes without having to be as concerned with articulating a large amount of text.

The drama too presents the singer with the challenge of weighing the needs of the drama against the need to preserve the voice for a twenty-five minute performance with very little time for recovery through the work. There are moments of extreme emotion, and the singer needs to learn what lines she must draw for herself between giving over to the drama and preserving the needs of a healthy vocal production.

One of the most difficult tasks which confronts the singer preparing this work is the assembly of skilled musicians for the instrumental ensemble. Because of the work's daunting atonality and rhythmic complexity, both singer and instrumentalists would benefit from the guidance of a conductor.

Other Performances of the Work

Joan Carden has performed *The Owl* on two occasions. Her first performance was with the Seymour Group in 1983. A review of this performance states:

Butterley's musical thought is always complex and though *The Owl* is often remarkably beautiful - an eloquently pure flute melody accompanying the Ave Maria, and a quiet conclusion to the words, 'the owl of freedom, the owl of wisdom,' are examples - the piece did not quite soar... What it did have was a superb performance by that great soprano, Joan Carden... She brought all her skills to bear: a fine dramatic sense, the brilliance of her upper register, the warmth of her low notes, and above all, the precisely pitched clarity of her tone.¹⁴

Carden again performed the work with the Seymour Group in the concert celebrating the 10th birthday of the Seymour Group in 1987. A review of this performance describes *The Owl* as, '... a chilling piece, a cry of freedom from a woman who has just seen her husband to the grave.' Of Carden's performance the review says:

¹⁴ John Carmody, 'The night Belonged to Carden,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 December, 1983, p22.

Carden's dramatic strength as a singer invests *The Owl* with the extremes of bitter pragmatism and mysterious ecstasy. She gets around the technical complexities with practiced ease and concentrates on pouring out this striking mixture of venom and bliss.¹⁵

Carden again performed *The Owl* in 2001 in a concert organized by Opera Australia. In this performance there was no staging and a reviewer commented that, 'She sang from behind a lectern, which impeded her ability to communicate with the chamber ensemble accompanying her and so took away from the work's subtle lyrics.'¹⁶

The Owl has been performed at least once in the United States in a concert of Australian music in New York in March 1986. The concert featured works by various Australian composers including Peter Sculthorpe. *The Owl* was performed by 'soprano-actress Meg Chilcott. The reviewer was not very impressed by the work. He writes:

On the first hearing, the music seems drab, and what is more it did not sound perceptibly different as it turned from musing to sudden revelation of bitterness, dramatic narrative or ecstasy... At my seat, a stray beam of light from the lobby area made it possible to follow the four-page text; three listeners sitting near me in the dark estimated afterward that they had understood effectively 4, 8, and 10 percent of Miss Chilcott's delivery. For a piece that stakes almost everything on the words, the impact of that circumstance can be easily imagined.¹⁷

This review serves to point out several important challenges of the work. For a performance to be effective, the text must be communicated clearly. The music clearly provides for different textures and dynamic levels as the widow experiences various stages of dealing with the death of her husband. Clearly understanding the sections will help performers provide the contrasts that make *The Owl* work musically and dramatically.

¹⁵ Jill Sykes, 'Chilling night of the owl,' *Sydney Sun-Herald*, 12 July, 1987, p.4.

¹⁶ Hilary Schrubbs, "Visuals steal the limelight," *The Australian*, July 16, 2001, Features, p15.

¹⁷ Will Crutchfield, "Music: Of and By Australians," *The New York Times*, March 13, 1986, p24C.

Summary

This work is a tremendous emotional journey for the singer. Reminiscent of the operatic mad scene, the singer experiences present and past, reality and visions, and a vast spectrum of accompanying emotions. Throughout the work the imaginative accompaniment goes a long way to aid the singer in achieving the various moods of this complex character. Perhaps, as Butterley suggests, the work may be a bit wordy, but the challenge is to get beyond the wordiness and use the rhythmic, tonal, and harmonic variety in the music to portray the powerful emotional journey of this woman.

CHAPTER 4

THE WOVEN LIGHT

Introduction to *The Woven Light*

The Woven Light, for soprano and orchestra, is a song cycle setting six poems by Kathleen Raine. In this work Butterley turns the poet who has been an important inspiration to him for the last twenty years and finds six wonderful songs exploring the journey to self knowledge and connection with the world beyond our present knowledge.

This work, like *The Owl*, is a challenging work for the singer to prepare and perform because of characteristics which are similar to *The Owl*. Again there are no key signatures and there is rhythmic complexity created by frequent changes of meter. The vocal rhythm however in this work is not as complex as *The Owl*. Triples are the largest division of beats in the vocal line. The frequent use of triplets in the vocal line is a clear Butterley trait resulting from his concern with setting speech rhythms. The rhythm for the voice, while difficult is very much based on speech patterns. *Melisma* breaks away from speech rhythms to reflect the meaning, and intonation of the poetry. Motifs are very important in this work providing connections throughout the work.

The vocal range of this work is B \flat ₃ to A₅. While the majority of the work lies within the middle and lower register of the voice there are moments when the voice is able to soar in the upper register to express the heightened emotion of the text.

The orchestration requires, flute, piccolo (doubling alto flute), oboe, English horn, B \flat clarinet, bass clarinet in B \flat (doubling B \flat clarinet), bassoon, 3 horns in F, B \flat , 3 trombones, timpani, percussion (glockenspiel, tubular bells, suspended cymbal, crash

cymbals, 3 tom-toms, tam tam and bass drum) and strings (violin 1 and 2, viola, cello and double bass).

This chapter will provide background to this work and will look more closely at the life of Kathleen Raine who has been an important influence on Butterley in more than just the composition of this work. This will be followed by a consideration of the each song in the cycle beginning with the text in light of the life and interests of Kathleen Raine and secondly, Butterley's setting of the text and how it helps the singer render a compelling rendition of the text and the music. Finally there will be a discussion of the challenges presented to singer preparing the work and a brief summary of some of the previous performances of the work.

Background

The Woven Light is the product of a commission by the Australian Broadcasting Commission to write an orchestral cycle for Australian soprano Marilyn Richardson and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.¹ At the time of the commission Butterley was working on a cycle for piano and voice using Kathleen Raine's poetry. Butterley had been approached by mezzo soprano Elizabeth Campbell and pianist, Anthony Fogg to write a cycle for them. The writing of that cycle, *The Kindling Fire*, has not been pursued. Anthony Fogg, who was also working in programming with ABC, arranged for the commission of the orchestral cycle to be performed by Richardson.² Butterley chose to set six poems by Kathleen Raine in this cycle.

¹The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) maintains a symphony orchestra in each of Australia's state capitals.

² Nigel Butterley, Interview by author, 2004.

For many years Raine has been an important figure in Butterley's creative life . Over several years friends and colleagues had suggested to Butterley that he might be interested in the writings of Kathleen Raine. Around 1990 he finally read her collection *The Oracle of the Heart* (1980), and he recalls that:

Soon after I read her work, I knew I wanted to respond to it. I was drawn initially by the sound of the words, her ability to use ordinary words in a fresh way and, more importantly, what she was writing about.

She is concerned with what she calls the 'sense of the sacred,' or to use a word of Blake's, the world of the 'imagination.' This appeals to me much more than poetry which is concerned with the everyday, or the political or the mundane. Although she writes in a language which is of today, what she is writing about is of a significance or on a matter which is not confined to any particular time.³

When he was seeking poems for Campbell's cycle he decided to look at Raine's *Collected Poems* and a mutual friend gave him Raine's address. "So I wrote to her and told her about myself and all that sort of thing, and asked for permission; and since then we've been corresponding."⁴

Raine has featured prominently in Butterley's creative life since this first contact.

In my discussion with Butterley about Raine he said:

In the last 12 years I've had the poetry of Kathleen Raine and its not only her work but she herself who is so inspiring to me... She has a real feeling for the sound of words and her words are fresh but often very simple.... She is for me just what I needed as far as poetry is concerned not only because of the content but also the sound which is so musical. Sometimes I go to hear a work or go to a concert and someone has chosen a text and I think, 'Why on earth did you choose that?' It's all consonants and there is not rhythm in it... they do things with it not the sort of thing

³ Daniel House, "Butterley's Odyssey Woven Into a Song Cycle," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 September, 1994, Spectrum, p.15.

⁴ Katherine Kemp, Unpublished interview with Nigel Butterley (Sydney May 1998), held by the Australian Music Center, p.3.

that appeals to me. I've got to have rhythm, rich range of sounds as well as consonants...⁵

Butterley used Raine's poetry, along with texts by Hildegard of Bingen, Henry Vaughan, and Julian of Norwich, as well as with selections from the *Book of Baal* and the Taittiriya Brahama in his *Spell of Creation* (2001), a large choral work for soprano, baritone, semi chorus, double choir and orchestra.⁶ Two choral works, *Paradise Unseen* (2001) for two sopranos, alto, tenor, baritone and bass (or for SATBarB choir) and *Sleep* (1992) for SSATBB choir, also set texts by Raine. Raine has clearly been Butterley's muse. He finds in her both a person whom he understands intellectually and spiritually, and also someone who provides him with the raw material in a form that helps him to make music.

In discussing this work with a reporter interested in the form of *The Woven Light* he said:

... the main thing you need to know is about the poetry. The music is my response not just to those particular poems, but to Kathleen Raine. I began to write in Siena, but I don't think that had any conscious effect on it. Certainly it was nice to be [there], as Kathleen Raine said in a letter 'I hope the Woven light of Siena will inspire you.' I began it there and finished it at home. Like all these things, it evolved over quite a long period, and those six poems which I chose came from a shortlist of fifteen, and that came from reading all Kathleen Raine's poetry and gradually getting some that I wanted to use and thought I could respond to. Which was not looking at a particular poem and saying 'Oh! There's a tune for this one!' but just to look at the poem as a whole. The actual musical ideas for them weren't clear at all until I started to set them. I chose them as a set of six poems, as a cycle that would work, before I had much in the way of musical ideas.⁷

⁵ Nigel Butterley, Interview by the author, 2004

⁶ Annarosa Reyneke, "Spell of Creation: When music follows words," *2MBS-FM Program Guide*, September 2001, p.13.

⁷ Katherine Kemp, Unpublished interview with Nigel Butterley (Sydney, May 1998), held by the Australian Music Center, p. 10.

Preparation of *The Woven Light* requires the singer to have an understanding of both the text and the musical structure, as well as how they work together. Graeme Skinner, in his “Meet the Music” Teaching Kit, prepared for the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, gives useful insight into some of the structural elements of the work. Later in this chapter I will expand on his analysis, particularly concentrating on the clues the musical structure offers the singer about the work. A greater understanding and appreciation of the texts used can be found reading Raine’s three volume autobiography, *Farewell Happy Fields*,⁸ *The Land Unknown*,⁹ and *The Lion’s Mouth*.¹⁰ These books provide important insights into her poetry. To understand more of Raine is also to understand what drew Butterley to her work and what he asks the performers to bring to *The Woven Light*.

Kathleen Raine

Kathleen Jessie Raine was born in Ilford, Essex in 1908. She died July 6, 2003. Her parents were school teachers in London. In 1929 she received a M.A. in natural sciences from Girton College, Cambridge University. In addition to her own poetry, she is well respected for her work on William Blake, about whose work she has written several volumes. In 1980 she co-founded the *Temenos Review*, “a journal devoted to the arts of the Imagination,” the purpose of which was to ‘give space to poets, artists, writers and thinkers

⁸ Kathleen Raine, *Farewell Happy Fields* (New York: George Brazilla, Inc., 1977).

⁹ Kathleen Raine, *The Land Unknown* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1975).

¹⁰ Kathleen Raine, *The Lion's Mouth: Concluding Chapters of Autobiography* (New York: George Braziller, Inc, 1978).

who subscribed to the belief that man is firstly a spiritual creature with spiritual needs which have to be nourished if we are to fulfil our potential and be happy.¹¹

In the introduction to her *The Land Unknown*, Raine explains her reason for writing the autobiography:

I wrote this record... under a kind of inner compulsion. To write my story, to retrace my life, was an attempt to discover some meaning in it. Above all I wanted to discover when, and why, I had lost the thread, and what the pattern was that I broke and, even some possibility of finding the lost clue again. And in trying to discover what my own life had been, I wished to discover what a life, as such is, or can be.¹²

Raine's autobiography offers the singer insights into her journey to discover meaning. From her entire poetic output written over a span of about 30 years, several poems written after her biography can enhance a performer's understanding of Butterley's cycle. While not trying to give the singer a definitive literal interpretation of the poems, I think the context of the poems and the poet gives the singer some tools with which to prepare and perform this work.

In *Farewell Happy Fields* Raine describes her youth. She grew up primarily in Ilford, a London suburb, a place where she was not happy. For a part of her childhood she lived with her aunt in Bavington, Northumbria, a more rural area, where she was happiest, for here she felt closest to her inner reality. Growing up in Ilford she felt pressured to be what she was not. She believed herself to be a poet and found truth and inner reality in the

¹¹ Temenos Academy website. (Accessed 20 June 20, 2003), <http://www.temenosacademy.org/temenos_history.html>

¹² Raine, K. (1978). *The Lion's Mouth: Concluding Chapters of Autobiography*. New York, George Braziller, Inc., p 8.

imagination. In Ilford she felt pressure to conform to the material reality about her, and felt that her inner life and poetry, which she saw as the way to truth, were stifled.

In a 1998 interview about a previous performance of *The Woven Light*, Butterley offered this revealing passage from *Farewell Happy Fields*:

Paradise is a state of being in which outer and inner reality are one, the world in harmony with imagination. All poetry tells of that vision, all poets remember, or seek to remember and recreate what all know at heart to be a mere fleeting illusion, but the norm we never cease to seek and to create (however often it may be destroyed) because in that state alone lies felicity. To be exiled from Eden is our greatest sorrow, and some forget, or try to forget, because it is too painful, to recreate too difficult... Ultimately the many are sustained by those images of a lost perfection held before them by the justification of those who refuse to accept as our norm those unrealities the world calls real.¹³

The Unknown Land describes her time at Cambridge and her two unsuccessful marriages to Cambridge professors. At Cambridge she studied natural sciences, convinced that she did not need to be told how to think about literature. Meanwhile, she felt the pressure of the Cambridge world of literary criticism and modernism, which she found to be the antitheses of imagination and of poetry. She had desired Cambridge so greatly because it marked an escape from Ilford. It was not, however an escape to greater self-knowledge. She admits that she entered both marriages not loving the men she was marrying. When she experienced her first feeling of what she described as natural love, she left her second husband. She believed that this overwhelming love allowed her to rediscover the world of her imagination and her inner life. This love was mostly long distance, as her lover went to war. In a sense the love was in her imagination. The

¹³Katherine Kemp, Unpublished interview with Nigel Butterley (Sydney: May 1998), held by the Australian Music Center, 3, quoting *Farewell Happy Fields*.

relationship did not continue very long after his return. With this love, however, she believed she had regained a relationship with the source of her poetry.

In the third volume, *The Lion's Mouth*, Raine chronicles her path to self-knowledge through her love for Gavin Maxwell, a Scottish naturalist and writer.¹⁴ This love was based on what she believed was a shared understanding of the inner life. It was purely platonic. Early on in their relationship, Maxwell told Raine he was a homosexual and would never marry her. The relationship lasted many years and was filled with much pain and anguish. In the end, Maxwell denied that he had ever felt the relationship that Raine had perceived. I do not think she ever quite accepted this, but from the highs and extreme lows of this relationship, Raine grew in self-knowledge and shared this experience with her readers.

The three volumes of autobiography give useful background for interpretation of the poems included in *The Woven Light*. Central to the poems selected by Butterley for the cycle is an idea of something beyond our present reality which we seek yet may not know. The poet has had glimpses of another reality which, in the fifth song of the cycle, she calls “The woven light of which all these things are made...”¹⁵ Her autobiography is in a sense about her path to glimpses of the ‘woven light’ and separation from it. The poems selected for this cycle can be interpreted as an encapsulation of an individual’s journey in seeking self-knowledge. They can also be interpreted as a series of observations about epistemology. The cycle does not give a literal history, but offers the listener an

¹⁴Maxwell is perhaps best known for his novel “Ring of Bright Water” which takes its title from a poem by Raine.

¹⁵ Kathleen Raine, “Hidden” in *The Presence: Poems 1884-87* (Great Barrington, MA: Inner Traditions/Lindisfarne Press, 1987), 65.

opportunity to reflect on aspects of life, moments of revelation, and moments of the spiritual isolation.

In interpreting the poems selected for this cycle, the singer can perhaps bear in mind Raine's commentary on the nature of poetry:

Poetry is in its proper nature the language of the soul; that its proper function is to create images of an inner order for all to share, to open into every present those secret doors, those ways in; to consecrate and redeem for every generation some parcel of the surrounding waste.¹⁶

Structure of the Cycle

Butterley conceived of the cycle as a whole, and the connections between the individual songs make the performance of the whole more than the sum of each song considered in isolation. This work is not six songs that would each work equally well if they were performed as single units.

The first two songs of the cycle are self-contained, although each ends with a pause over the final bar line, suggesting a momentum towards, or an expectation of, something to follow. The third song is connected to the fourth by the final note in the voice, which overlaps with the beginning flute and alto-flute duet of the fourth song. There is a pause before the fifth song, where the voice begins unaccompanied. The fifth elides with the sixth and final song when the final measures of the former develop towards the beginning measures of the latter.

This is a very tightly organized cycle. Throughout the composition motifs work to communicate the composer's vision of the poetry. Understanding the use of these motifs will help the singer communicate the intent of the work. Outlined below are some of the

¹⁶ Kathleen Raine, *The Inner Journey of Poet* (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1982), 88.

important motifs and how they are used within the cycle. The intention is to demonstrate how these motifs will aid the singer's preparation and performance of this work.

In an interview Butterley said of the organization of the work:

Light is the symbol for the eternal and is the central climax of the piece... It was the only predetermined instrumental motif. I wrote that first because I wanted to be sure it would work. But the way I write for the voice is determined by the words - the vocal line, the instrumental motifs and the structure of the work. It is different, for example from the way that Stravinsky sets words. For him the words are the starting point but aren't individually used for the poetic sound or meaning. They can be almost distorted because they set off musical ideas that take over.

I tend to be at the other extreme. I have to stop myself from just illustrating the words. It (the music) must have a sense of its own. Even though there are motifs such as light and water they must have their own musical coherence as well as relate to the words they are associated with.¹⁷

He went on to note that there is also a relationship between motifs and instrumental colors.

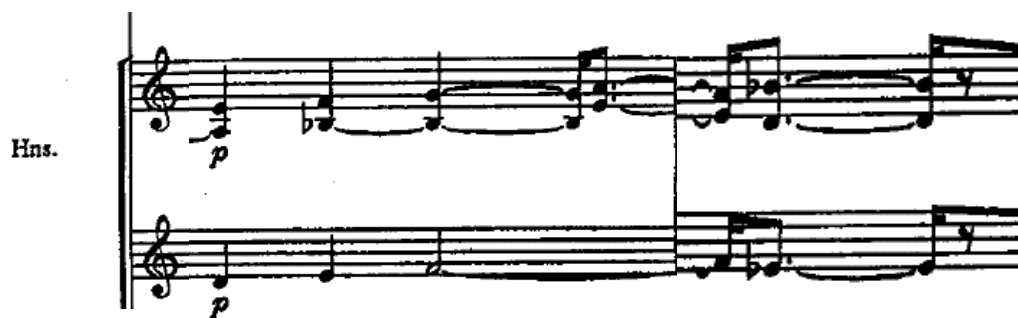
The flute has associations with song and innocence, the cor-anglais and horns with love and warmth. He associates the bass clarinet with earth and the trombones with mystery and power.¹⁸

Skinner describes the main orchestral motif as the 'light' motif, 'a repeating sequence of five ascending chords (their top notes rising scalewise)' and he outlines its primary appearances.¹⁹ It occurs initially in the first song as the horns accompany the words, "Yet have glimpsed the bright mountain beyond the mountain."

¹⁷ Daniel House, "Butterley's Odessey Woven Into a Song Cycle," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 September, 1994, *Spectrum*, p.15.

¹⁸ Ibid., p 15.

¹⁹ Graeme Skinner, 'The Woven Light', *Meet the Music Teaching Kit*, (Adelaide: Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, 1994), 13-14.



Example 43: *The Woven Light*, Song I, mm. 83-86.

The ‘light’ motif in example 43 appears throughout the cycle. Its appearance will be discussed in individual songs.

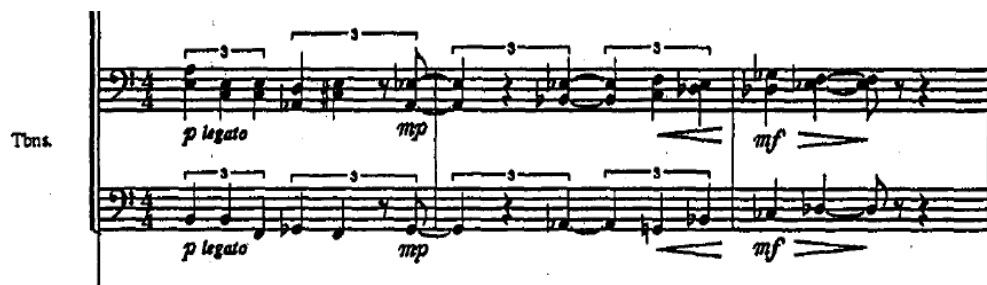
Skinner notes the following other motifs:

‘Water’ motif



Example 44: *The Woven Light*, Song I, mm. 43-44.

‘Trombone Mystery’ motif



Example 45: *The Woven Light*, Song I, mm. 31-33.

‘Love’ motif



Example 46: *The Woven Light*, Song III, mm. 1-4.

‘Kathleen’ motif



Example 47: *The Woven Light*, Song III, mm. 4-8.

‘Raine’ motif

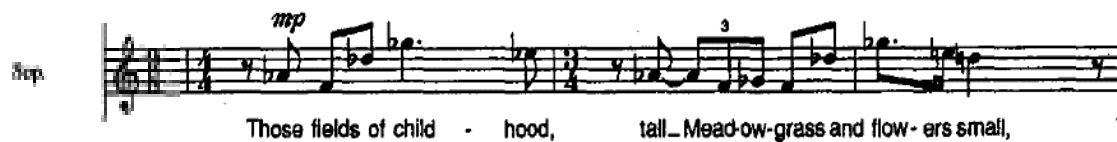


Example 48: *The Woven Light*, Song III, mm. 14-17.

Skinner does not describe some other melodic motifs of which he singer should also be aware. I have named these motifs according to words and ideas with which they are

associated. They also contribute to the cycles unity and greater overall meaning. These motifs include:

‘Memories of childhood’ motif



Example 49: *The Woven Light*, Song III, mm. 22-24.

This motif appears when the text refers to some of the good memories of childhood.

Two motifs seem to be associated with birds and magic.



Example 50: *The Woven Light*, Song I, mm. 28-30.



Example 51: *The Woven Light*, Song I, mm. 29-30.

Butterley uses these motifs throughout the cycle to illustrate and heighten the text.

This results in an incredibly organized work.

Song One - The Text

I came too late to the hills: they were swept bare
Winters before I was born of song and story,
Of spell or speech with power of oracle or invocation,

The great ash long dead by a roofless house, its branches rotten,
The voice of the crows an inarticulate cry,
And from the wells and springs the holy water ebbed away.

A child I ran in the wind on a withered moor
Crying out after those great presences who were not there,
Long lost in the forgetfulness of the forgotten.

Only the archaic forms themselves could tell
In sacred speech of hoodie on grey stone, or hawk in air,
Of Eden where the lonely rowan bends over the dark pool.

Yet I have glimpsed the bright mountain behind the mountain,
Knowledge under the leaves, tasted the bitter berries red,
Drunk water cold and clear from an inexhaustible hidden fountain.²⁰

Raine titled this poem *The Wilderness*. It comes from her collection "The Hollow Hill" published in 1965. Raine believed she had a special connection with the land, the people and the history of Scotland.

In my infancy the pattern of my life was already indelibly drawn; there began my longing from that legendary land which some call Eden, some Erin, some Zion, some Tibet; I called it Scotland.

From Scotland my people had come, my mother's people; for my father's people were never my people, in any living sense... if from my mother's side I inherited however small a portion in the memories of Scotland embodied in song, speech, and heroic story my father stood for progress, education and future. These two influences formed me; but if I am grateful for the education for which I was subjected by my father, it is because it has given me that sad knowledge of 'good lost, and evil won', and the words in which to lament the destruction of tradition by education; for my maternal inheritance is too far away from me, too meager for me to have preserved more than as a shadow and a sense of its loss. Yet as far as I

²⁰ *The Wilderness* from Raine, Kathleen, *The Collected Poems of Kathleen Raine* (Washington DC: Counterpoint Press, 2001), 132. © Perseus Books Group. Reprinted by permission.

have been carried from my origins, meager as was my inheritance, the poet in me is my mother's daughter, and owes more to the lost birthright than to all the extraneous book learning I have since acquired.²¹

From Bavington in Northumbria Raine could see the hills of Scotland.

The Cheviots were the hills to which (in the words then familiar, for the learning by heart of the psalms was no less a part of my childhood than the hills themselves) I lifted mine eyes; from them came my help. To this day a range of distant hills is to me like a promise of paradise. Beyond those hills, so they told me, lay Scotland, over the Border; our own country.²²

In my infancy the resolution to go straight back to my true native land was pure and passionate; little did I then know the great distance of that journey back. So near the Border, all that was to be loved and desired, all of which the songs told, seemed to be not quite out of reach, near enough to arouse and to betray hope continually.²³

She visited Scotland with Gavin Maxwell, and his connection with Scotland played an important part in the initiation of their relationship. In a description of her first visit with Maxwell to Scotland, we see how she was aware of a separation from it.

Here was the country 'over the border', the boundless country of mountain and sea and isle...My mother's country although she had never herself known it.... for me it was like a recovery of lost identity, a re-grafting to an old root, though long severed when I was born." She told of the bards listening to the stories of local poets "In such company I found myself not, as in England, too much a poet, but not poet enough, for I could neither sing nor recite as all did here, their learning all stored in their memory. I had been away too long by several generations..."²⁴

²¹ Kathleen Raine, *Farewell Happy Fields* (New York: George Brazilla, Inc., 1977), 19 -20.

²² Ibid., 20.

²³ Ibid., 21.

²⁴ Kathleen Raine, *The Lion's Mouth: Concluding Chapters of Autobiography* (New York: George Braziller, Inc, 1978), 35 -36.

These quotes set the background for this first poem. The hills are those of Scotland, and they sharpen her sense of separation from that which she associates with Eden.

As a child in Bavington, Raine loved to wander the moors. Describing her mother, Raine writes:

Doubtless from her I inherited my love of wandering the moors; for not so long before my birth she herself had been the young girl who among that same heather recited to the winds *Comus* and *Samson Agonistes*, of which she knew all, and *Paradise Lost*, of which she knew all by heart.²⁵

Throughout her biography Raine mentions wandering the moors. Raine also writes of what she believes to be the poetic, perhaps magical, nature of birds:

Poetry is not... words on the page, but birds in the air, in the dusk, against the wind in the high blue air; it was trees, it was stones and springs, and ever-changing face of things which communicated knowledge words could only remotely capture or evoke.

Eden is for Raine the symbol of connection with the truth of the inner light.

Song One - Music Reflecting Text

The poem for this song is divided into five stanzas. Each stanza is separated by an orchestral interlude. The setting of the words in this song is primarily syllabic.

The orchestral introduction of the first song gives a taste of the material which will be heard throughout the cycle. The orchestral lines in the introduction are linear and fragmentary. This sets a tone for the singer to bring together various parts of her life and memory in order to reach some understanding of the meaning of her life as a whole.

The voice is preceded by a descending line in the oboe beginning in m.9. This line leads to the starting note of the soprano, which seems to rise from this line (example 52).

²⁵ Ibid., 19.

Table 11: Song One - 'I came too late to the Hills'

Measure Number	Text	Meter	Tempo	Vocal		Register	Instrumentation	Texture	Observations
				Dynamics					
1 3 5 7 8 9 10 11		4/4 3/8 4/4 5/4 4/4	$\text{♩}=88$				B. clar., tmbs., timp., vla, vc, enter bsn ob. and cl. join flute and vln 1 & 2 enter vlms use harmonics melodic line in ob. leads to entrance of voice	polyphonic	
12 14 17 20 22 28	I came too late to the hills: they were swept bare Winters before I was born of song and story, Of spell or speech with power of oracle or invocation,	4/4 3/4, 3/8, 3/4 4/4, 3/4 3/8, 5/4, 4/4, 3/8 5/4	<i>poco sostenuto</i> <i>a tempo</i>	<i>P</i> <i>mp</i> <i>p</i> <i>mp</i> <i>p</i>	low to middle low		strings continue through this section. bsn, tmbs. flute clarinet, timp. fl. - 'memories of childhood' motif		
29 31		4/4, 3/8 4/4,					trpt, ob. tbn, B. clar.		
33	The great ash long dead by a roofless house, its branches rotten, The voice of the crows an inarticulate cry, And from the wells and springs the holy water ebbed away.	4/4 3/4, 5/8 5/4 4/4, 5/8 3/4	poco rit.	<i>mf</i> <i>mp</i> <i>p</i>	middle to upper		Strs, picc., ob., cl., B. cl, Tpt. continues through verse		
45		4/4, 5/8, 4/4	a tempo				bsn., B.Cl, tmbs., timp., cello		
51 55	A child I ran in the wind on a withered moor Crying out after those great presences who were not there, Long lost in the forgetfulness of the forgotten.	2/4, 5/8, 4/4 5/4	poco sostenuto a tempo	<i>mf</i> <i>mp</i> <i>p</i>	middle		Strs, fl. picc., ob., EH, cl., B. cl, bsn Strs., tmbs., all WW Ob. and tom tom only	homophonic	point of climax as all instruments join together briefly.

(table continued)

63	Only the archaic forms themselves could tell In sacred speech of hoodie on grey stone, or hawk in air, Of Eden	3/4, 3/8 3/4, 5/8 3/4, 4/4, 5/8, 3/4, 4/4	<i>poco rit</i> <i>poco meno</i> <i>mosso</i> <i>a tempo</i>	<i>p</i> <i>p<pp</i> <i>mp</i>	low to middle low	strs. and tbn. strs, fl., A. Fl., db. tpt. tubular bells. Strs. continue, laying of A. Fl, EH. B. Cl. bsn.	homophonic	'Bird' motifs
75	where the lonely rowan bends over the dark pool.	3/4, 7/8, 4/						'Water' motifs
76								
82	Yet I have glimpsed the bright mountain behind the mountain, Knowledge under the leaves, tasted the bitter berries red, Drunk water cold and clear from an inexhaustible hidden fountain	4/4	$\underline{1}=88$ meno mosso	<i>f</i>	high middle low	Strs., Full WW, hns, tbn join		Light motif used throughout this verse. Greatest climax of the song
95 97		4/4 5/8, 4/4 5/8, 4/4	Tempo 1 (ma poco meno mosso)			Str, cl. B.Cl. picc. tbns, final chord hns., Db. and picc.		After the climax the orchestra <i>diminuendos</i> to <i>pp</i>

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff is for Oboe (Ob.) and the bottom staff is for Soprano (Sop.). The Oboe part has two red boxes highlighting specific melodic phrases. The Soprano part includes the lyrics 'I came too late to the hills:'. The music is in a key with one flat and a 3/4 time signature.

Example 52: *The Woven Light*, Song I, mm. 9-17.

Significantly, Butterley usually helps the singer by giving a melodic or harmonic reference for the singer to find her note. Butterley commented in our discussion that when he composed for the voice he was always concerned to give the singer a frame of reference:

I always make sure that I can pitch something myself. I sing everything myself so that if it's a work for unaccompanied voices I go through it singing one part and playing the others on the piano and making sure that I can pitch it and if its is a work for voice and instruments I play the instrumental parts and try to pitch the entries....I probably err on the side of caution in that way but I think that makes it easier for the singers and therefore if its not too difficult they are going to enjoy it more. Of course my music is always more difficult than I intend it to be but I try to make it as singable as possible.²⁶

The material in winds in the first stanza remains rather fragmented. The strings provide the greatest support for the vocal line. The word setting for this stanza includes brief use of *melisma* in the lyrical setting of the words 'of song and story.' The lyricism of this line, together with the first use of *melisma*, suggests an enjoyment of the memory of the songs and stories of the singer's youth.

²⁶ Butterley, Interview by the author, 2004.



Example 53: *The Woven Light*, Song I, mm. 21-23

Example 53 shows the first use of *melisma* in the work.

Accompanying this text the flute plays a version of what I have described as the ‘Memories of Childhood’ motif. The underlying idea is the connection between the ‘song and story’ of the past and Raine’s feeling of some connection with it as a child.



Example 54: *The Woven Light*, Song I, mm. 21-24.

In example 54, the boxes indicate the notes which represent a transposition of the ‘memories of childhood motif,’ (example 49), which is varied in this melody played by the flute.

After the line ‘or speech with power of oracle or invocation,’ the motifs associated with birds and magic (examples 50 and 51) are played by the trumpet and oboe. These are followed by the ‘Trombone mystery’ motif in measures 31-33 (example 45). It is appropriate that the motif follows material associated with magic and mystical power.

The accompaniment for the second stanza is more chordal and less fragmented than the first stanza, although small fragments continue to appear. At the end of this stanza

there is the first appearance of the water motif with the mention of the 'holy water' (example 44).

Before the third stanza the orchestration again becomes more fragmented, with instruments contributing musical ideas which anticipate the third stanza. During this stanza the accompaniment becomes more homophonic to give the music its first real climax with the chords surrounding 'the great presences.'

poco sostenuto

54

Fl.

Picc.

Ob.

E.H.

Cl.

B. Clar.

Bsn.

Horn

Tpt.

Tbn.

Timp.

Perc.

Sop.

out al-ter those great pre-sen-ces who were

Vin. 1

Vin. 2

Via.

Vo.

Db.

poco sostenuto

div.

div.

div.

arco

Example 55: *The Woven Light*,
Song I, mm. 54-57.

In example 34 the orchestra and voice join forces to with similar rhythms at the mention of the ‘great presences.’

Accompanying the lines, ‘who were not there, Long lost in the forgetfulness,’ is material from measure 9 of the introduction of this song.



Example 56: *The Woven Light*, Song I, mm. 58-61.

The material in the oboe in example 52 is first seen in the introduction of song in the oboe in measure 9.

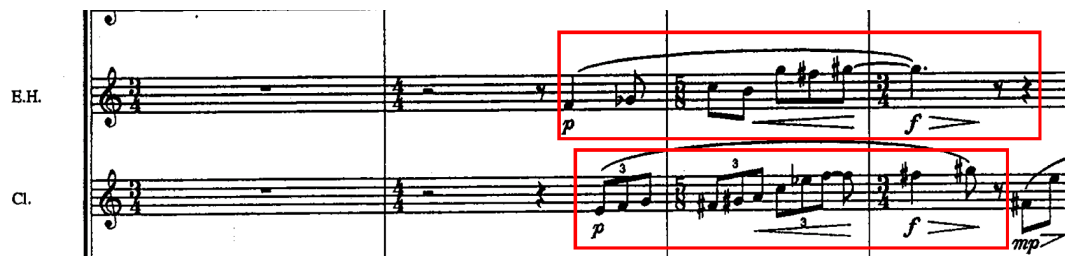
There is only a one measure interlude before the next stanza. The melodic material of the first lines of the fourth stanza (example 57) is the same whole tone scale used by the first violin in the final orchestral statement of the cycle (example 58). This may be the musical allusion to Raine’s statement in the final poem of the cycle that the poet does not know what will happen in the end. The music suggests that the archaic forms know what will happen, and that there is a plan beyond our understanding.

Example 57: *The Woven Light*, Song I, mm. 63-66.



Example 58: *The Woven Light*, Song VI, mm. 27-30.

After the voice sings of ‘sacred speech of hoodie on gray stone or hawk in air’ the motifs associated with birds and magic are again present. This time they are in the English horn and clarinet.



Example 59: *The Woven Light*, Song I, mm. 68-70.

Example 59 includes in the motifs associated with birds and magic seen also in examples 50 and 51.

The mention of Eden is the next point of rest and impact in the song. The description of Eden is accompanied by chords similar to those accompanying ‘the great presences.’ It is also the same pitch in the voice (compare example 55 with example 60). This suggests a connection between Eden and those ‘great presences.’

Example 60: *The Woven Light*, Song I, mm. 70-72.

Mention of the ‘dark pool’ provides a variation of the water motif in measures 77 - 78.

Example 61: *The Woven Light*, Song I, mm. 77-78.

Example 61 is a variation of the water motif, first seen in measures 43-44, example 47.

The fragmentary material in the bridge to the next section recalls briefly the music of the introduction, and then brings us the climax of the song, which is accompanied by the light motif in various manifestations as the singer sings ‘Yet I have glimpsed the bright mountain beyond the mountain,...’ Throughout this stanza, there is a sense of being in touch with the inner world and the ‘light’ motif is heard. A variation of the water motif is heard again in measure 94–96 after there has been mention of the water ‘from an inexhaustible fountain.’



Example 62: *The Woven Light*, Song I, mm. 94-96.

The song concludes with various fragments from the orchestra, including a fragment of a variation of the ‘trombone mystery’ motif.

A musical score for measures 97-101 of *The Woven Light*, Song I. The score includes staves for Fl., Picc., Ob., E.H., Cl., B. Clar., Bsn., Hrn., Tpt., Tbn., Timp., and Perc. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score shows various orchestral parts, including woodwinds, brass, and percussion. A yellow box highlights the 'trombone mystery' motif in the Tbn. part, measures 99-100. A red box highlights a variation of this motif in the Tbn. part, measures 99-100. The dynamic marking *pp* (pianissimo) is present in several places. The percussion part includes a 'tam tam' section in measure 101.

Example 63: *The Woven Light*, Song I, mm. 97-101.

In example 63 the variation of the ‘trombone mystery’ motif is marked in red.

Song Two - The Text

I have heard all day the voices
On the hills the loud winds
Utter from no place, clamour
Of bodies of air, speeding, whirling
Stream of invisible
Elements crying that are not,
Were, may be, living
The fields of the grass, lifting
Leaves of the forests, are not, have been, would be
Breath of all sentient beings, long lamentation
For living and loving and knowing, states of being
The wondering winds cannot
Discover for ever all their seeking and wailing.²⁷

‘I have heard all day the voices’ is titled *Winds*, and comes from the collection *The Oracle in the Heart* (1980). In the second volume of her biography, Raine describes her time at Cambridge and the modernist pressure to dwell on the ordinary. Imagination was not encouraged, and God was dead. There was tremendous pressure for cynicism. She wrote of her time at Cambridge:

I had hitherto looked in poetry for the sublime, listened for the resonance of ‘the eternal, in and through the temporal’ of which Coleridge speaks; but I was now entering a world for which there was no eternal; a literature of the temporal was what in Cambridge I encountered.... There I discovered that the beauties I had hitherto found in Milton and the Romantics were not the imagination, but imaginary; it was I who had failed to understand that where I had seen beauty, there was none. I and my simple kind had not the courage to retort that, if this be so, there is more value in the illusion than in the reality; still less that to have seen beauty, to have been moved by feeling, is a fact which cannot be argued away.²⁸

²⁷ *Winds* from Raine, Kathleen, *The Collected Poems of Kathleen Raine* (Washington DC: Counterpoint Press, 2001), 257. © Perseus Books Group. Reprinted by permission.

²⁸ Kathleen Raine, *The Land Unknown* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1985), 29.

Raine was aware that there were many voices in her generation which rejected the world of the imagination. She realized, however, that for all their perceived knowledge, these people did not really understand the world or its possibilities.

Song Two - Music Reflecting the Text

Faster than the first song this song conveys a greater sense of urgency. It is a single stanza. The song begins with wave-like rising and falling of lines in the orchestra

The image displays a musical score for the opening measures (mm. 1-6) of Song II. The score is written for a woodwind section, including Flute, Alto Flute, Oboe, English Horn, Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, and Bassoon. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The score shows the following dynamics and articulations: Flute (mp), Alto Flute (mp), Oboe (mp), English Horn (mp), Clarinet (p), Bass Clarinet (mp), and Bassoon (mp). The music features wave-like rising and falling lines in the winds, with some melismas indicated by slurs and fermatas.

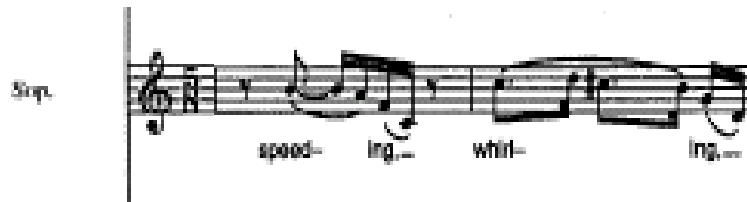
Example 64: *The Woven Light*, Song II, mm. 1-6.

Example 64 demonstrates the rise and fall of the winds in the opening measures of the second song. This could suggest the various voices the poet is hearing. There is greater use of *melisma* in this song, and many of the shorter *melismas* are used with words associated with movement- 'speeding', 'whirling', 'wand'ring winds' and 'seeking'. Example 65 illustrates the shorter *melismas*.

Table 12: Song Two - ‘I’ve heard all day the voices’

Measure Number	Text	Vocal				Instrumentation	Texture	Observations
		Meter	Tempo	Dynamics	Register			
1		2/8, 6/8, 5/8	$\text{♩} = 184$			A. fl., ob., EH., cl, B. cl. bsn, trt. vln1, vln2, vla, vc.	polyphonic	rising and falling instrumental lines, rarely more than three instruments or groups of instruments play
7	I have heard all day the voices	4/8		<i>mp</i>	middle	fl., A. fl., ob., EH., cl, B. cl., bsn., trt. vln 1, vln 2, vla, vc.	polyphonic	
13	On the hills the loud winds Utter from no place, clamour	6/8 5/8			upper middle	(Continue through the verse - never all playing at the same time		
27	Of bodies of air, speeding, whirling Stream of invisible Elements crying that are not, Were, may be, living	4/8 5/8 6/8 5/8, 6/8 4/8, 5/8 6/8		<i>mf</i>	middle		more homophonic	In this less trouble section the accompaniment is less fragmented
39	The fields of the grass, lifting	5/8		<i>mp</i>				
44	Leaves of the forests, are not, have been, would be	6/8						
48	Breath of all sentient beings, long lamentation	5/8, 9/8 9/8, 5/8 6/8, 9/8 4/8, 6/8 4/8		<i>p</i> < <i>f</i> <i>mf</i> <i>p</i>	high low middle low			
57	For living and loving and knowing, states of being The wondering winds cannot Discover for ever for all their seeking and wailing.	6/8 5/8 9/8 5/8, 6/8						
85 60		6/8 4/8, 6/8						return to rising and fall motifs

The *melismas* for words, 'living', 'loving' and 'knowing' are longer. These words are associated with what the poet sees as important, as opposed to the meaningless voices about nothing. The singer dwells on these because this is what the poet is really seeking.



Example 65: *The Woven Light*, Song II, mm.15-16.



Example 66: *The Woven Light* Song II, mm. 22-23.



Example 67: *The Woven Light*, Song II, mm. 42-47.

Examples 66 and 67 demonstrate the longer *melismas* used for more valued words. The first section of the poem which describes the voices is accompanied orchestrally by motivic fragments that suggest those voices. At the mention of 'the fields of grass' there seems to be a greater lyricism and calmness. The melodic material of the vocal line is a

variation of the 'memories of childhood' melodic motif (example 49) suggesting a connection between memory of 'those fields of childhood' of the third song and the memory of the fields mentioned in this song. The harmonic material is also similar.

Example 68: *The Woven Light Song II*, mm. 27-30.

The more angular accompaniment returns at the end, where the vocal line contains three long *melismas* in succession for the words, 'living', 'loving,' and 'knowing.' Each succeeding *melisma* has a slower change of notes than the one before, and each becomes progressively more calm. This suggests that by merely contemplating aspects of the inner world, the singer becomes more serene.

After this momentary calm, the voices of the rising and falling motifs of the orchestra return. The voice concludes with a melodic line that is similar to the rise and fall of the instrumental lines. The orchestra concludes the song with a final rise and fall of material and a final unresolved chord. In example 69 the rise and fall of the instrumental line in the winds is particularly clear in the English horn.

Example 69: *The Woven Light Song II*, mm. 58-63.

Song Three - The Text

It is time, heart, to recall
 To recollect, regather all:
 The grain is grown,
 Reap what was sown .
 And bring into the barn your corn.

Those fields of childhood, tall
 Meadow-grass and flowers small,
 The elm whose dusky leaves
 Patterned the sky with dreams innumerable
 And labyrinthine vein and vine
 And wandering tendrils green,
 Have grown a seed so small -
 A single thought contains them all.

The white birds on their tireless wings return,
 Spent feather, flesh and bone let fall,
 And the blue distances of sea and sky
 Close within the closing eye
 As everywhere comes nowhere home.

Draw in my heart
 Those golden rays whose threads of light
 The visible veil of world have woven
 And through the needle's eye
 Upon that river bright
 Travels the laden sun
 Back from its voyage through the night.

We depart and part,
We fail and fall
Till love calls home
All who our separate lonely ways have gone.²⁹

This poem is the second part of the longer poem *The Hollow Hill*,³⁰ which was dedicated to Willa Muir. Willa and her husband Edwin Muir³¹ were long-time friends of Raine. The poems of *The Hollow Hill* look at those material things associated with death and also what is beyond death. The sixth and last poem of *The Hollow Hill* perhaps gives greater context to the poems that precede it, and also to the poetry used in this cycle.

One night in a dream
The poet who had died a year ago
Led me up the ancient tower of stone.
Towards us out of the dark blew such sweet air
It was the warm breath of the spirit, I knew,
Fragrant with wild thyme that grew
In childhood's fields; he led me on,
Touched a thin partition, and was gone.
Beyond the fallen barrier
Bright over the sweet meadows rose the sun.³²

In the context of the *Hollow Hill* the poem can be interpreted to be about preparing for death and understanding death as journey home to love. In the context of this cycle it can be interpreted as a reflection on the past as a way of seeking self-knowledge. There is

²⁹ 'It is time heart to recall' from Raine, Kathleen, *The Collected Poems of Kathleen Raine* (Washington DC: Counterpoint Press, 2001), 116-117. © Perseus Books Group. Reprinted by permission.

³⁰ Kathleen Raine, *The Collected Poems of Kathleen Raine* (Washington D.C.: Counterpoint, 2001), 115 - 120.

³¹ Edwin Muir (1887 - 1959) was a British visionary poet, novelist and critic.

³² 'One night in a dream.' from Raine, Kathleen, *The Collected Poems of Kathleen Raine* (Washington DC: Counterpoint Press, 2001), 120. © Perseus Books Group. Reprinted by permission.

recognition that in the past there are lessons to be learned which pertain to the present. There is a seeking of the connection between the material and the spiritual world, which the poet seems to have lost. There is a realization that through her life there have been times of strong connection with the spiritual world, but also that there have been times of vast separation from that world. She believes that ultimately the connection of love will prevail.

Both in her autobiography and in many of her other poems, Raine provides images which may heighten the understanding of this poem. Her autobiography has many references to the fields and flowers which she loved in her youth. Flowers and nature are important recurring images throughout her autobiography. Although there were many unhappy aspects of Ilford, she did have some favorable memories of it associated with nature. One of those important memories was a row of elm trees. She wrote:

... from the front windows we could watch the sun slowly setting misty fields bordered with pollarded elms; 'Essex maidens' they were called, ... their lace-like dusky leaves heaped in cumulus forms. At their foot the hedgerow plants flourished, white stitch-wort, white Jack-by-the-hedge, white foam of cowparsley. Even so near London people still walked along country roads enjoying green hedges and birds and flowers.³³

Also in Ilford she began to study biology. Her studies revealed a marvelous new world.

She wrote of her studies:

Dispossessed as I was of my paradise I still clung, during my school years to its receding fringes. There were not rivers or crags or burns anymore; no longer even torbid Essex lanes and misty fields and hedgerow elms. I turned then to nature's minute worlds, and botany became a passion. I entered these strange green labyrinths of interior spaces, the cells and tissues of plants, and there my imagination found refuge in a world of form and beauty inviolate.... My shrines now were those green inviolate spaces of cell and vein, nucleus and astral body.

³³ Kathleen Raine, *Farewell Happy Fields* (New York: George Brazilla, Inc., 1977), 94-94.

These too were spaces inaccessible to man, outside his narrow territory, untainted by his vulgarity, inaccessible to his stupid destructivity.³⁴

Of memories of her youth she writes, ‘ Memory has composed those days of my childhood into one continuous day of late spring and early summer.’³⁵ While they are powerful images, chronology and the passing of time are not really an important part of the memory. Rather, it is the feeling of well-being associated with the images that is paramount to her.

In the third stanza there is an allusion to death with the mention of the ‘white birds on their tireless wings return.’ In the fifth poem of *The Hollow Hill* the white bird is associated with death. The last four lines of the poem are:

But when a soul departs, a white bird flies:
Gull , Gannet, tern or swan? Not these,
Another kind of bird
Into the emptiness untrammelled soars.³⁶

In the fourth stanza Raine seeks the connection with the light which for her is associated with Paradise or Eden. In *The Lion’s Mouth*, she describes times when she was connected to Eden:

Eden is rather a state than a place; yet it is a state that makes it own those places in which we have experienced that state. As a child at Bavington I had experienced that happiness of finding in all about me the reflected radiance of what I then was-myself. At Martindale I had entered it again, as it seems through the magic of natural love. Now for a third time I was to be allowed to return from exile; and

³⁴ Ibid.,116.

³⁵ Ibid.,81-82.

³⁶ Kathleen Raine, *The Collected Poems of Kathleen Raine* (Washington D.C.,:Counterpoint, 2001),120.

again through love, though in a different mode, as if at each return, some deeper insight had been given into a reality in itself ever the same.³⁷

The final stanza recognizes the separation of the inner life from others as life is experienced. The reason for writing her autobiography was in part to explore why her glimpses of Paradise never resulted in a knowledge of its fullness.

Song Three - Music Reflecting the Text

The third song in the cycle is the longest of the work, and it can be characterized as the point where the poet seeks to understand the present by recalling actions of the past and in doing so regaining awareness of the inner life. In returning there is a celebration of the inner life once again revealed. The tempo of this song is markedly slower than the first two songs ($\text{♩} = c.46$). This suggests the singer is at this stage ready to consider and digest rather than simply react to the voices of the world around her.

There are five stanzas. Each stanza is separated by an orchestral interlude. This song is laden with motifs. Example 70 provides the first six measures of the third song. It begins with the 'love' motif, followed by the 'Katherine' motif, followed again by the 'love' motif.⁷

The 'Kathleen' motif is in the dorian mode. It also contains a transposition of the melodic notes of the 'light' motif suggesting perhaps a connection between Butterley's response to the inner light of Kathleen Raine. The 'love' motif occurs just prior to the entrance of the voice (example 71).

In the last two lines of the first stanza the flute, suggesting youth, plays the 'Raine' motif (example 72).

³⁷ Kathleen Raine, *The Lion's Mouth: Concluding Chapters of Autobiography* (New York: George Braziller, Inc, 1978),⁷

Table 13: Song Three ‘It is time heart, to recall’

Measure Number	Text	Meter	Tempo	Vocal			Instrumentation			Texture	Observations
				Dynamics	Register						
1		12/8	♩. = 46				strings			'love' motif 'Raine' motif	
10	It is time, heart, to recall To recollect, regather all: The grain is grown, Reap what was sown . And bring into the barn your corn.	3/4, 38, 3/4 4/4, 7/8, 12/8	♩. = ♩ <i>poco accel.</i>	<i>p</i>	middle		strings Fl. 'Raine' motif	homophonic			
19										'Love' motif	
21	Those fields of childhood, tall Meadow-grass and flowers small, The elm whose dusky leaves	4/4, 3/4	Poco piu mosso	<i>mp</i>	middle to high		strs and flutes				
26	Patterned the sky with dreams innumerable And labyrinthine vein and vine And wandering tendrils green, Have grown a seed so small -	4/4	tempo II - ♩ = 56	<i>p</i> <i>mp</i>	middle		horns and cl join			'Trombone mystery' motif	
32	A single thought contains them all.	7/8, 4/4, 3/4	tempo I - ♩ = 46 a tempo I ♩ = ♩. <i>poco accel</i>	<i>p</i>	low		tbns	homophonic		'Love' motif, 'Kathleen' motif	
39	The white birds on their tireless wings return, Spent feather, flesh and bone let fall, And the blue distances of sea and sky Close with in the closing eye As everywhere comes nowhere home.	3/4 3/8, 4/4 3/8 5/4, 4/4	Tempo I ♩ = 46 acell ♩ = 46 Tempo II ♩ = 56 poco stringendo rit. a Tempo II		upper middle		fl. A. Fl, EH, cl. Bsn. Str. join strings strings, fl. hns, EH, Cl. Bsn per. Full orchestra			'Love' motif Trombone mystery' motif 'fields of childhood' motif slow building of forces for climax of song	
50											
51											
56											
59											
65											

(table continued)

68	Draw in my heart Those golden rays whose threads of light The visible veil of world have woven And through the needle's eye Upon that river bright Travels the laden sun Back from its voyage through the night	4/4		<i>f</i> <i>mf</i>	middle to high	full orchestra		Climax of song coincide with idea of light 'Light' motif
90 92		5/4	<i>poco</i> <i>sostenuto</i> <i>a tempo</i> <i>II</i>			hns, tpt and tmbs only		
94	We depart and part, We fail and fall Till love calls home All who our separate lonely ways have gone	5/8, 5/4	<i>poco</i> memo <i>mosso</i> ♩ = 50 <i>poco</i> rit ♩ = 72	<i>p</i>	middle low	Strings and percussion only		Beginning of Song IV

Soprano

Tempo I ♩ = 46

'Kathleen' motif

p semplice

div.

p

ppp *mp* *pp*

p

ppp *mp* *pp*

p espress.

p

'love' motif

ppp *mp* *pp*

p

Double Bass

Example 70: *The Woven Light*, Song III, mm. 1-6.

sost. a tempo I

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

unis.

p

mp

Vla.

p

mp

solo

p

mp

Vc.

p

mp

gli altri

p

mf

Db.

mf

Example 71: *The Woven Light*, Song III, mm. 7-9.

14

Fl.

mp

'Raine' motif

A. Fl.

Ob.

E.H.

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Bsn.

Hns.

Tpt.

Tbns.

Timp.

Perc.

Sop.

all: The grain is grown, Reap what was sown And bring In-to the barn your com. ———

Example 72: *The Woven Light*, Song III, mm. 14-18.

The use of the 'Raine' motif seen in example 72 is appropriate because the poem suggests 'It is time heart to recall.' This leads to recollection of youth and in these very personal poems there is a sense of Raine recalling her youth.

The first and second stanzas are separated by the 'love motif.'

The second stanza, describing the 'fields of childhood,' as previously discussed provides the melodic material for the 'memories of childhood' motif (example 28).

The vocal line for the 'labyrinthine vein' uses similar melodic material to that found in the fourth song which speaks of 'forest labyrinths that vein a sunlit leaf against a window pane.' This can be seen by comparing example 73 and 74.

Example 73: *The Woven Light*, Song III, mm. 29-30.

Example 74: *The Woven Light*, Song IV, mm. 37-39.

The last line of this stanza is illustrated to some extent by the accompaniment. The clarinets and horns all join the voice for the words ‘a single thought contains them all,’ symbolizing the convergence of various elements to one point. This can be seen in example 75.

The image displays a musical score for Example 75, featuring ten staves. The instruments and parts are labeled on the left: Cl. 1, Cl. 2, Bsn., Bbn., Tpt., Tuba, Timp., Perc., and Sop. The score is written in 4/4 time. The vocal part (Sop.) has the lyrics: "grown a seed so small A single thought con-tains them all...". The instrumental parts include various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *pp* and *p*. The percussion part includes a "bass drum" section.

Example 75: *The Woven Light*, Song III, mm. 31-34.

In measure 33 of example 75 the majority of the instruments converge on D₄.

This is followed by the 'trombone mystery' motif, a portion of the 'love' motif, and finally, the 'Kathleen' motif before the voice returns in the third stanza seen in example 76.

At the conclusion of the third stanza a fragment of the 'love' motif is followed by a variation of the 'trombone mystery' motif. The 'trombone mystery' motif is overlapped by the 'memories of childhood' motif. Example 77 illustrates the sequence of these motifs.

a tempo I $\leftarrow \bullet = \bullet \rightarrow$ poco accel. $\bullet = 50$

Fl. *mp espress.*

A. Fl. 'Kathleen' motif

Ob.

E.H.

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Bsn.

Hrn.

Tpt.

Tbns. 'Trombone mystery' motif

Timp.

Perc. *pp*

Sop. all. _____

a tempo I $\leftarrow \bullet = \bullet \rightarrow$ poco accel. $\bullet = 50$

Vln. 1

Vln. 2 *unis. p*

Vla. *unis. p*

Vc. 'love' motif *mp espress.*

gli altri p *tutti div. in 2 p*

Example 76: *The Woven Light*, Song III, mm. 33-36.

Example 77: *The Woven Light*, Song III mm. 51-55.

The flute and violin then introduce variations of the ‘memories of childhood’ motif in measures 54-55 leading the song towards its climax. The variations of the ‘memories of childhood’ motif introduced by the violin and flute from measure 54 and following, move the song towards its climax.

The full forces of the orchestra come together, and out of this blossoming of a rich orchestral sound the singer seeks to have the light of the inner life truly become part of her as she sings ‘ Draw in my heart those golden rays whose threads of light the visible veil of

world have woven.’ The ‘light’ motif seen in example 78 is an important part of the bringing together of the full orchestral resources.

The musical score for Example 78, *The Woven Light, Song III*, measures 61-65. The score is written for a full orchestra and includes a vocal line. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 61-65) includes a vocal line and a string section. The second system (measures 66-70) includes a woodwind section, a brass section, and a percussion section. The score includes various dynamics, articulations, and performance instructions. A yellow box highlights the 'light' motif in measure 64. A red box encloses the section marked 'a tempo II' in measures 66-70. The score includes the following markings:

- Measure 61:** *rit.* (ritardando), *pp cresc.* (pianissimo crescendo), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *pp sub.* (pianissimo subito).
- Measure 62:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*
- Measure 63:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*
- Measure 64:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *light motif* (highlighted in yellow).
- Measure 65:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*
- Measure 66:** *a tempo II* (enclosed in a red box), *cresc.* (crescendo), *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 67:** *a tempo II* (enclosed in a red box), *cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 68:** *a tempo II* (enclosed in a red box), *cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 69:** *a tempo II* (enclosed in a red box), *cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 70:** *a tempo II* (enclosed in a red box), *cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 71:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 72:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 73:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 74:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 75:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 76:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 77:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 78:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 79:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 80:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 81:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 82:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 83:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 84:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 85:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 86:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 87:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 88:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 89:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 90:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 91:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 92:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 93:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 94:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 95:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 96:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 97:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 98:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 99:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.
- Measure 100:** *pp cresc.*, *mf*, *pp sub.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*, *pp cresc.*.

Example 78: *The Woven Light*, Song III, mm. 61-65.

66

Fl. *ff dim.* *mf*

Picc. *ff dim.* *mf*

Ob. *ff dim.* *mf*

E.H. *ff dim.* *mf*

Cl. 1 *ff dim.* *mf*

Cl. 2 *ff dim.* *mf*

Bsn. *ff dim.* *mp*

Hrn. *ff dim.* *mp*

Tpt. *mf* *ff dim.* *mp*

Tbns. *ff dim.* *mp*

Timp. *ff dim.* *mp*

Perc. *ff dim.* *p*

Sop. *f* Draw In my

Vln. 1 *ff dim.* *mp*

Vln. 2 *ff dim.* *mp*

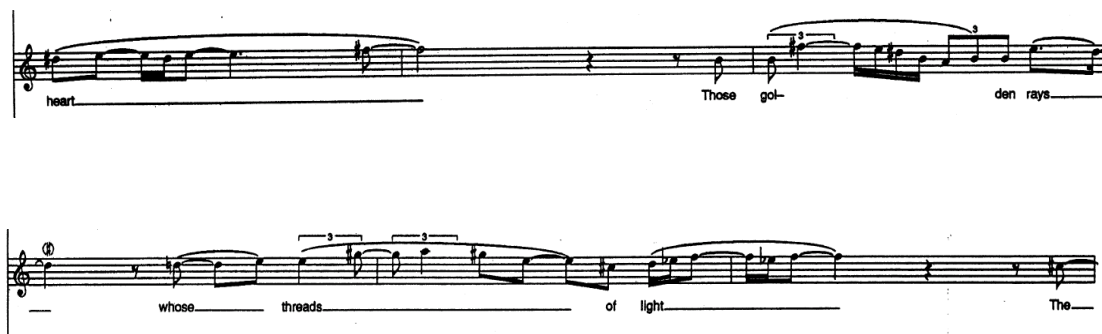
Vla. *ff dim.* *mp* *unis.*

Vc. *ff dim.* *mp* *f*

Db. *ff dim.* *f*

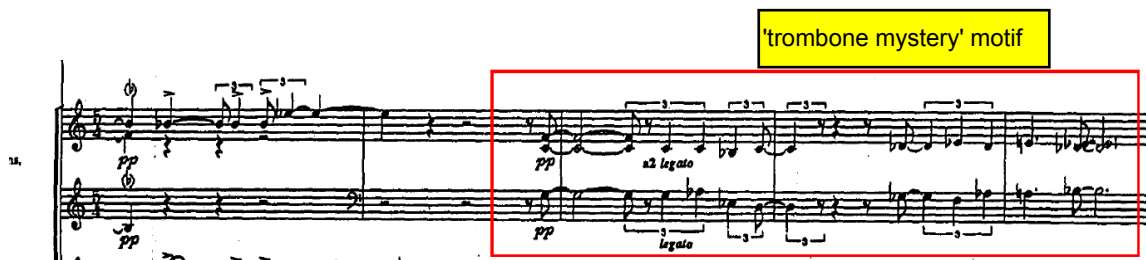
Example 79: *The Woven Light*, Song III, mm. 66-68.

In example 78 the full forces of the orchestra join the before the singer begins to sing of the ‘golden rays of light.’ A musical climax is created by the crescendo in the instruments from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo* and by the rising instrumental lines. In example 79 the singer joins with the orchestra singing *forte*. The full orchestra plays for the entirety of this stanza. There is a sense of ecstasy and celebration in the orchestration caused by the bringing together of all the musical forces. This ecstasy is also reflected in the singer’s considerable use of *melisma*.



Example 80: *The Woven Light*, Song III, mm. 69-74.

Example 80 gives three examples of the use of extended *melisma* as the singer contemplates connection with the inner world which she seeks. This joyous stanza is followed by the return of the ‘trombone mystery’ motif.



Example 81: *The Woven Light*, Song III, mm. 90-94.

The 'trombone mystery' motif in example 81 follows the ecstasy of contemplating light and precedes the final stanza.

This final stanza is much quieter and is accompanied in part by the 'love' motif.

Example 82: *The Woven Light*, Song III, mm.95-99.

In example 82, which includes the conclusion of this song, after the climax a few measures before, the winds are silent and the string accompaniment is *pianissimo*. This quietness does not deny the ecstasy of the previous stanza, but suggests a quieter contemplation of the realities of having and losing contact with the inner life and with love. The final two melodic notes are accompanied by a simple third in the viola and horns. The final note of the singer and the viola and horns are held in to the fifth song as the flutes join in duet with a variation of the 'Raine' motif.

3 Horns

1. + +

pp

2. + +

pp

Trumpet

3 Trombones

Timpani

pp

Percussion

Soprano

gone.

$\text{♩} = 72$

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

sul tasto (non div.)

pp

Violoncello

Double Bass

Example 83: *The Woven Light*, Song IV, m. 1

Song Four - The Text

As my feet grow slow I travel
More light than when a child I wandered
Thinking to find the rainbow foot
Of that elusive place none reaches ever, though we climb
The shining mountain, trace
Stream to the source none finds in the wet moss
Of the cold hill. Sight tireless
Crosses the ever-running waves to the far blue
Isles, or explores
Infinite the living spaces of the small
Forest labyrinths that vein
A sunlit leaf against a window-pane.³⁸

This untitled poem first appeared in *The Oracle in the Heart*, and does not appear in her final *Collected Poems*. It initially calls to mind a story told in the first volume of Raine's autobiography when in Bavington she set out with her mother and aunt to the 'wild hills o'Wannies.' These hills were to Raine 'the very place the wildness-in-itself of all hills. I only had to reach the Wannies to be in the essential world.' She describes the day she believed o'Wannies were the destination:

We came to the little crag where in the warren there were always a few black rabbits among the brown-I knew the place well later. Wild it seemed, without wall or man-made road, the creatures wild in the rocks, and far and wide. Was this-'the Wild Hills o'Wannie'! No, I was told, farther on, could I not see them in the distance! And there - so memory has composed the picture, or imagination has - the sun was setting their crests on fire with gold, and we were walking along the green road of the long summer day towards those bright hills until it seemed to me I could see the purple of the heather on their slopes. We were on our way, we were going to the place itself....

The party stopped for tea with friends and then headed back home....

I must have given a good deal of trouble, for not for one moment did I relinquish my quest, or realize that this was the end and not the beginning of that for which we

³⁸ Kathleen Raine, *Oracle of the Heart*, (Portlaoise: Dolmen Press in association with Allen and Unwin, 1980), 55.

had come. The fair promises had all been a ruse to keep a baby happy on a walk across those long Northumbrian pastures....

They promised that I should go there 'someday'- that beautiful horizon of time, where as upon mountains distant in space, resides that same imagined beauty. They thought I would forget, as soon as they themselves, my purpose to go to that place; but I was, on that day, not the baby in the push-car but the self I was later to become, or already was. At last poetry came to my aid, and I fell into a chant, repeating the magic phrase over and over until the words became a sort of mantra. 'I want to go to the wild hills o'Wannie.' By incantation I tried to bring near the far bright beauty of the hills. In need of magic for so specific an end I discovered the use of poetry.³⁹

The second half of the poems describes some of those ways she seeks knowledge of the inner life. Whereas in the first half there is a determined effort, a pursuit of various paths, the second half of the poem instead observes and the poet allows what is there to speak to her. 'Sight tireless crosses the ever of running waves...' Rather than exhausting herself with effort she can observe and see both far and near. In observing the intricacies of nature she finds greater knowledge. Of her botanical studies in Cambridge she wrote:

We spend long enchanted hours in the little botany laboratory, learning to cut and stain specimens for the microscope, to make detailed drawings of the marvellous structured beauty of plant tissues; a world where form and meaning were one and divisible.⁴⁰

This poem is about seeking. The story is emblematic of Raine's continual search for understanding. As a child she explored the moors and world about her, often with little regard for others. In her early adult life, her exploration of the inner life sometimes hurt people around her. As she grew older she continued to explore for meaning, but perhaps with more concern for

³⁹ Kathleen Raine, *Farewell Happy Fields* (New York: George Brazilla, Inc., 1977),23 - 24.

⁴⁰ Kathleen Raine, *The Land Unknown* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1975),11.

the effect of (that isolating) behavior on other people. In her autobiography she regrets the hurt that she may have caused some people in her own struggle for self-knowledge.

Song Four - Music Reflecting Text

Although the fourth poem is a single stanza, Butterley divides the musical ideas into two parts. From the final notes of the third song comes a beautiful duet between the flute and alto flute.

The image shows a musical score for Flute and Alto Flute. The top staff is labeled 'Flute' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Alto Flute'. The score begins with a tempo marking of 72. A yellow box labeled 'variation of Raine motif' covers measures 1 through 4. A red box labeled 'variation of Kathleen motif' covers measures 5 and 6. The tempo marking 'poco sost.' is written above measure 4, and 'a tempo' is written above measure 5.

Example 84: *The Woven Light*, Song IV, mm.1-6.

In example 84 the duet begins with a fragment and variation of the ‘Raine’ motif (example 48) and concludes with a fragment of the ‘Kathleen’ motif (example 46). The use of flutes in example 84 suggest the memory of youth. This can suggest to the singer a recollection of youth before she sings ‘As my feet grow old I travel more light.’

The climax of the song again occurs with a mention of the experience of the inner life in the section referring to the ‘shining mountain.’ The melodic material in the voice is

Table 14: Song Four - ‘As my feet grow old’

Measure Number	Text	Vocal					Instrumentation	Texture	Observations
		Meter	Tempo	Dynamics	Register				
1 8		5/4 4/4	♩ = 72				fl. duet. hns, vla, tpt.		variation of 'Raine' motif and 'Kathleen' motif
10	As my feet grow slow I travel More light than when a child I wandered Thinking to find the rainbow foot Of that elusive place none reaches ever,	4/4		<i>p</i>	middle		various instrumental lines		
17 18	though we climb the shining mountain, trace Stream to the source none finds in the wet moss Of the cold hill.	38/ 5/8 5/4 4/4 3/8, 5/4	poco rit. poco meno mosso ♩ = 63	<i>pp</i> <i>p</i> < <i>f</i> <i>mp</i> <i>p</i>	high middle to low		full strgs, fl, A. fl, Ob., Cl, Hns	homophonic	majority of orchestra join in climax 'Water' motif
24		5/4 7/8	♩ = 72				vc. db., B. Cl., bsn.		
27	Sight tireless Crosses the ever-running waves to the far blue Isles, or explores Infinite the living spaces of the small Forest labyrinths that vein A sunlit leaf against a window pane	4/4 5/4 7/8, 4/4 3/4, 4/4 3/2, 3/8		<i>p</i> <i>mf mp</i> <i>p</i>	middle		strs continue to end WW and brass continue interspersed		

Example 85: *The Woven Light*, Song
IV mm.17-19.

de

In example 85 the full forces of the orchestra briefly join forces and the voice briefly rises to a higher register creating a moment of heightened emotion.

The 'water' motif is again evident at the mention of the 'stream to the source.'

The musical score for Example 86 shows measures 19-20 of Song IV from *The Woven Light*. The score includes staves for B. Clar., Bsn., Hns., Tpt., Tbn., Timp., Perc., and Sop. A red box highlights the 'water' motif in the woodwinds. The vocal line is at the bottom with lyrics: 'trace Stream to the source none finds... in the wet moss'. The 'water' motif is a sixteenth-note triplet figure, first appearing in measure 19 and continuing into measure 20. The B. Clar. and Hns. parts play this motif, while the Bsn. part plays a similar figure. The Tpt. part plays a sustained note. The Tbn. part plays a sustained note. The Timp. part plays a sustained note. The Perc. part plays a 'suspended cymbal scrape' in measure 20. The Sop. part plays the vocal line, which includes the lyrics 'trace Stream to the source none finds... in the wet moss'.

Example 86: *The Woven Light*, Song IV, mm.19-20.

In measure 20 of example 86 the full force orchestra as gone and the voice has returned to the middle register after the climax seen in example 85.

There is two-bar orchestral interlude after the words ‘of the cold hill.’ This occurs even though the next text is a continuation of the seventh line of the poem.

Tempo I ♩ = 72

Fl.

A. Fl.

Ob.

E.H.

Cl. 1

B. Clar.

Bsn.

Hrn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Timp.

Perc.

Sop.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla. solo

Vc.

Db.

cold hill.

tom-toms

glockenspiel

Slight.

poco piu mosso ♩ = 84

unle. con sord.

tutti unle. con sord. arco

div. in 3 arco

half only pizz.

Example 87: *The Woven Light*, Song IV, mm.22-27.

The musical division in example 87 highlights the juxtaposition of the two approaches to seeking connection with the inner light. In the first half there is effort, and in the second half there is observation.

Song Five - The Text

Today the curtain is down
The veil drawn over the face,
World only its aspect,
Tree, brick wall, dusty leaves

Of ivy, a bird
Shaken loose from the dust
It is the colour of. Nothing
Means or is.

Yet I saw once
The woven light of which all these are made
Otherwise than this. To have seen
Is to know always.⁴¹

This poem, titled *Hidden*, was first printed in *The Presence*. The poem starts with a description of separation from the inner world. Separation is a key theme in Raine's autobiography. One particular occasion provides a useful observation. While estranged from Maxwell, Raine visited him at his home in Sandaig. For her, Sandaig had been an Eden; a place where she had felt happy and close to the inner world. She wrote:

There is for each creature an invisible thread, or beam, which draws it home; and for me that thread drew me still to Gavin's rowan-tree between the waterfall of the burn with its fringe of birch and alder... But now I found that Gavin had built about his house that palisade of high wooden palings... I went through the visible gate, indeed; but by invisible gates I was barred out; a gate was closed within every bud on every twig of birch and alder, closed in rock and water and fern and heather

⁴¹ Hidden from Raine, Kathleen, *The Presence: Poems 1894/87* Great Barrington, MA: Inner Traditions/Lindisfarne Press, 1987), 65.© Lindsifarne Books. Reprinted by permission.

sweet- air, closed in sky and sea and the line of the hills of Skye, in the grey rocks
by the shore where I went alone to weep comfortless tears...⁴²

The poem is one of hope, because although there is separation, there has been the
experience of connection with the inner world. The experience of this connection is never
totally lost. Raine wrote in her introduction to *Farewell Happy Fields*:

And as surely as we each enact the Fall so have we memories of Paradise. My own
refuge, a source of wisdom and poetry, inexhaustible to this day... What is art and
poetry of the world but the record of remembered Paradise and the lament of our
exile? We tell one another, we remind one another, we seek ever to recreate, here
on earth, what we saw and knew once, elsewhere and forever.⁴³

Song Five - Music Reflecting Text

This is the shortest of the six songs. The voice begins unaccompanied.

1 $\text{♩} = 48$

Flute

Piccolo

Oboe

English Horn

Clarinet 1

Clarinet 2

Bassoon

Soprano

p *3*

To-day the cur-tain is down The veil drawn o-ver the face, World on-ly its as-pect, Tree, brick wall, dust-y leaves Of I - vy,

Example 88: *The Woven Light* Song V mm.1-8.

⁴² Kathleen Raine, *The Lion's Mouth: Concluding Chapters of Autobiography* (New York: George Braziller, Inc, 1978),

⁴³ Kathleen Raine, *Farewell Happy Fields* (New York: George Brazilla, Inc., 1977), 7-8.

Table 15: Song Five - ‘Today the curtain is down’

Measure Number	Text	Meter	Vocal			Instrumentation	Texture	Observations
			Tempo	Dynamics	Register			
1	Today the curtain is down The veil drawn over the face, World only its aspect, Tree, brick wall, dusty leaves	7/8	♩=48	<i>p semplice</i>	low to middle	unaccompanied voice picc. two notes, D ₄ o E ₄		sense of isolation
7						picc.		
9-10	Of ivy, a bird Shaken loose from the dust It is the colour of	3/8 3/4, 3/8 3/4				ob. and EH enter		
13	Nothing							
14-15	Means or is.	5/8, 3/4						
17	Yet I	5/4	Poco piu mosso, ♩=56	<i>p < f</i>	builds to high	all strings except vc. fl., Cl. 1 & 2, horns, & perc. with strings Picc. enters	homophonic	‘light’ motif prevalent Climax of work as sing of ‘woven light
18	saw once	5/8, 3/4, 7/8, 4/4	♩=52	<i>dim. p</i>				
19	The woven light	7/8, 3/4, 3/8, 3/4		<i>mp</i> <i>p</i>	middle to low			
	of which all these are made Otherwise than this.							
	To have seen Is to know always.	5/8, 4/4 3/4	poco rit.					

In example 88 there is a sense of isolation for the singer made very clear by the silence around the voice. The winds enter first with the piccolo followed by oboe and English horn followed by two beats of silence as seen in example 89.

Example 89: *The Woven Light* Song V, mm.9-16.

This silence in measure 16, while it may suggest the isolation of the singer, it also marks a point where the focus shifts from isolation to a recollection of wholeness when the singer saw once, ‘the woven light of which all things are made.’ After the sparseness of accompaniment seen in example 89, the instrumental forces build to climax as the poet turns to recollection of ‘the woven light.’ The ‘light’ motif is heard in the winds as indicated in example 90. Also with the ‘woven light,’ the voice moves from syllabic word setting to *melisma*. In example 90 the vocal line *melisma* for ‘light’ is set high, symbolic of the ecstasy and heightened sense of experiencing the inner world.

17 *poco più mosso* ♩ = 56

Fl. *f mf*

Picc. *'light' motif* *p*

Ob.

E.H.

Cl. 1 *f mf*

Cl. 2 *f mf*

Bsn.

Hrns. *f mf*

Tbns.

Timp. *mf*

Perc. *tubular bells* *p*

Sop. *p* *f*
Yet I saw once The wo - ven light

poco più mosso ♩ = 56

Vln. 1 *p cresc.* *f* *p*

Vln. 2 *p cresc.* *f* *p*

Vla. *p cresc.* *f* *p < mp*

Vc. *p cresc.* *f* *p < mp*

Example 90: *The Woven Light*, Song V, mm. 17-21.

The trombones, representing power and mystery, appear as the voice sings 'otherwise than this.' It is appropriate that this representation of mystery and power is heard at the same time as 'woven light' accompanied by the 'light' motif.

22

Fl. *rit.* $\text{♩} = 52$ *dim.* *p* **'light' motif**

Picc. *dim.* *p* *to alto flute*

Ob. *dim.* *p*

E.H. *dim.* *p*

Cl. 1 *dim.* *p* *mf* *p*

Cl. 2 *dim.* *p* *mf* *p*

Bsn. *dim.* *p*

Hns. *dim.* *p*

Tbns. *pp* *mf* **'trombone mystery' motif**

Timp. *pp*

Perc. *mf* *tutti tutti*

Sop. *dim.* *p*

of...which all...these are...made...Oth-er-wise...than this...

Example 91: *The Woven Light*, Song V, mm. 22-27.

Song Six - The Text

Reader, I would tell
If I knew,
That all shall be well,

All darkness gone,
All lives made whole,
Hearts healed that were broken,

Would tell of joy reborn,
Of wrongs made right,
Of harms forgiven,

But do not know
How what is done
Can ever not be,
Though love would wish it so.⁴⁴

This poem is the third poem in a series four poems titled *An Old Story*, first published *The Presence*. This set of poems deals with the questions associated with life's unexpected outcomes. The second poem of *An Old Story* is a useful introduction to the sixth and final poem of the cycle.

This was not what I meant,
My life amiss

From Day to day
How did I lose my way
From moment to moment?

The hours run on
Through the unkind act,
The lifelong loss,

But what is done
Long outlasts
Deed and doer,

⁴⁴ 'Reader I would tell if I knew.' from Raine, Kathleen, *The Collected Poems of Kathleen Raine* (Washington DC: Counterpoint Press, 2001), 120. © Perseus Books Group. Reprinted by permission.

There is no end.
From life to life
We repair what we can.

I have done what I am,
Am what I have done,
Yet meant far other.⁴⁵

The poem chosen for the cycle sums up where Raine is at the end of her autobiography. In the final volume about her life's journey she admits that she has done much that has hurt people. She also seems to come to terms with this and finds an ability to move on. With the acceptance that life will not be perfect, she finds the ability to live with what is. This poem is also perhaps a comment on the world as a whole, which Raine believes is becoming further separated from the invisible life. Butterley noted that she had once told him that 'she found 'hope' the most difficult of the three virtues.'⁴⁶

Song Six - Music Reflecting Text

There are four stanzas in this poem. The fifth song leads straight in to the final song with a variation of the 'love' motif in the lower strings. The 'love' motif pervades the song. In example 9 the boxes outline the two variations of the 'love' motif which open this final song of the cycle.

The voice enters in a very simple way after the second statement of the 'love' motif in variation. The notes of the vocal line for 'all shall be well' are accompanied by a chord using the same notes played by the french horns and English horn, instruments associated with love and warmth. Example 93 shows the connection between the voice

⁴⁵ 'Who so well as the lost.' from Raine, Kathleen, *The Collected Poems of Kathleen Raine* (Washington DC: Counterpoint Press, 2001), 293. © Perseus Books Group. Reprinted by permission..

⁴⁶ Nigel Butterley, Interview by author, 2004.

Table 16: Song Six - ‘Reader I would tell if I knew’

Measure Number	Text	Meter	Vocal			Instrumentation	Texture	Observations
			Tempo	Dynamics	Register			
1	Reader, I would tell if I knew, That all shall be well,	6/8, 5/8	$\text{♩} = 88$ ($\text{♩} = 114$)	<i>p</i>	middle	vln, celb, Db.	homophonic	‘love’ motif
7 8		6/8 5/8 5/5		<i>f</i> > mp	high to middle	vln, vln only		
11-12		6/8	<i>rit.</i> $\text{♩} = 88$		middle	vln 1&2, vln, vc.		
13 14 15		4/4, 7/8 4/4	<i>rit. mosso</i> $\text{♩} = 88$	<i>p</i> <i>< mp</i> <i>> p</i>	middle	vln 1&2, vln, vc. continue		
17	Would tell of joy reborn, Of wrongs made right, Of harms forgiven,			<i>mp</i> <i>f</i>				
20	But do not know How what is done Can ever not be, Though			<i>p</i>	low to upper middle			
23	love would wish it so.	6/8, 5/8, 9/8	<i>rit.</i> $\text{♩} = 88$	<i>< f</i> <i>rit.</i>	middle	vln 1&2, vln, vc. continue joined by Db. horns and timpani play single note each		‘Love’ motif ends very simple and quietly
28								

and the two instrumental lines. In example 93 at the conclusion of the first stanza of this song there is also two bars of the ‘love’ motif.

Example 92: *The Woven Light*, Song VI, mm. 1-7.

In the second stanza the flute enters briefly with a line which recalls the vocal line ‘all shall be well’(example 94). The association of the flute with innocence suggests perhaps a longing in the singer for a time of innocence when there was no doubt that everything will turn out well. The notes in the red box in example 94 area transposition down a half-step from the vocal line for ‘all shall be well’ (example 93).

The final three stanzas elide. The vocal line for ‘harms forgiven’ (example 95) is a also transposition of vocal line for ‘all will be well.’ In example 95 the vocal line of ‘all shall be well’(example 92) has now been transposed down a full step. This repetition of

melodic idea ties in with the idea of that all will be well because there is love and there has been reconciliation.

8 *piu mosso* ♩ = 48 *rit.* ♩ = 38

Fl.

E.H.

Bsn.

Hrn.

Timp.

Sop.

cresc.

I would tell... if I knew That all... all shall be well...

f *mp* *mf* *p*

'memories of childhood' motif

piu mosso ♩ = 48 *rit.* ♩ = 38

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vcl.

Db.

tutti div. in 2 (arco) *pizz* *p* *arco* *f* *p* *mf* *mp*

div. *p* *mp*

'love' motif

Example 93: *The Woven Light*, Song VI mm.8-12.

13 *piu mosso* ♩ = 48

Fl.

R.H.

Bsn.

Hns.

Timp.

Sop.

All dark-ness gone, All lives made whole, Hearts healed that were broken,

Example 94: *The Woven Light* Song VI, mm. 13-17.

Sop.

Of harms for-giv-en,

Example 95: *The Woven Light* Song VI m.19.

The orchestra accompanies the voice for the final statement, ‘that love would wish it so,’ with the ‘love’ motif, example 96. The accompaniment of the final statement in the voice also recalls the harmony of the vocal line ‘all shall be well.’ The orchestra repeats the ‘love’ motif. The inclusion of the horns briefly holding a fourth, in measure 28-29 of example 9, is a reminder of love and warmth. The work concludes with the whole tone motif and a simple third in the strings completes the work.

The simplicity and calmness of this ending suggests a call to love stripped of the perceived complications of life that have been mentioned earlier in the cycle. We do not know if all will be well but there is a calm acceptance of where the journey has lead. Life is not complicated in the end.

Challenges for the Singer

This cycle presents the singer with similar challenges to the *The Owl*. The singer is again confronted with difficult rhythms and atonality. The work also sits rather low for the soprano while still including passages where the voice may revel in the upper register.

Butterley has yet to hear a performance with which he is thoroughly pleased. He explains this as partly due to where the vocal line sits:

Unfortunately it’s written so the voice needs to be fairly strong in the lower part, as well as having a high range, but its not really for a mezzo. It’s a slightly awkward voice part. I’m not good terribly good at getting exactly the right range, certainly for soprano voice... It takes a slightly special sort of soprano to get the right quality and range.⁴⁷

This sums up the difficulty of this work. While it contains a considerable number of passages that are low in the soprano’s range, the orchestration shows that Butterley knows the lower part of the voice does not always carry best.

⁴⁷ Nigel Butterley, Interview by author, 2004.

Butterley chooses instrumentation that is much less dense in the lower vocal passages. The challenge for the singer is make sure the Raine's words are communicated. The fact that this work lies more in the middle of the singer's range may help the intelligibility of the words.

The text for this cycle is dense and complex. For a truly convincing performance of the work the singer must reach an understanding for herself of the meaning of the text but also must clearly articulate the text for the audience. Clear articulation of the text is always a challenge for the singer and but for the complete performance of this work it must be one of the prime concerns.

Performances of the Woven Light

The work was first performed by Marilyn Richardson with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. Butterley said of writing for Richardson:

I wrote the piece for Marilyn Richardson towards the end of her career, so I didn't want it to sit too high, or have lots of quiet, sustained notes. It wasn't a problem - any sort of limitation is not a problem, it's a help really, because it helps you to focus. But it did mean that the *tessitura* of the work is.... not mezzo, but not quite soprano, so it's slightly difficult to place.... Ideally, what I would like is a singer she has very, very clear enunciation and a very steady tone...⁴⁸

A review of Richardson's performance of the work with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra states:

Never a slave to fashions of style, his recent large-scale works notably *From Sorrowing Earth* and *The Woven Light* continue the integrity of Nigel Butterley's explorations of a very distinctive expressive and, to some ears, even mystical space.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Katherine Kemp, Unpublished interview, 1998, pp. 9-10.

⁴⁹ Raymond Chapman Smith, "First Performance a Premier Effort," *The Adelaide Advertiser*, 3 June, 1998, p. 19.

The work has subsequently been performed by American soprano, Lucy Shelton and by Australian soprano Margaret Medlyn.

Lucy Shelton performed the cycle with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra September 3, 1994. The reviewer of this performance was particularly impressed by the cycle, both its text and musical setting of the text writing:

If a majority of human beings were able to respond to a work like this with the understanding and honesty of poet and composer, there mere voicing of its concerns would be decisive. As it is, the cycle is of a quality that deserves to echo and re-echo through our memories and consciences.⁵⁰

A review of Margaret Medlyn's performance with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra on July 17, 1998 gives some insight into the work. The reviewer comments:

His orchestration tends... to be dense, making for a breathtaking contrast at those moments where the transcendental is glimpsed, such as at the climax of the third song. In interpreting the songs Margaret Medlyn sang with great conviction and authority, having clearly mastered the sometimes austere vocal lines with-out losing her lovely bright tone.⁵¹

The comments about the cycle by the reviewers of the Richardson and Shelton performances both give a glimpse of what can attract a singer to this work. The cycle is a work of great power and depth. It is a difficult work to approach but a successful performance has the potential for tremendous impact.

⁵⁰ Roger Covell, "Song cycle quality should echo through the memory," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 September, 1994, p.19.

⁵¹ Gordon Kerry, "Apocalyptic Exuberance," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 July 1998, p. 14.

CHAPTER 5

FROGS

Introduction to *Frogs*

Frogs is a very short cycle of three songs for high voice and piano, using three Emily Dickinson poems, each of which mentions frogs. Through witty observation of frogs Dickinson parodies pomposity and an over developed sense of worth. The cycle should last approximately two minutes and ten seconds.

The characteristics of Butterley's vocal composition described earlier in this paper are evident in this cycle in miniature, and despite its brevity the cycle requires careful study and attention to the detail. The songs are atonal with complex rhythms. There are no key signatures, and as in *The Owl* and *The Woven Light* there are frequent changes of meter. Motifs impart a sense of unity upon the work as a whole. In such a short work it is interesting to see the tremendous detail that Butterley has employed to set these three charming and witty little poems by Emily Dickinson.

The vocal range of this work is C₄ to G₅. The range and tessitura of each song will be discussed below. After providing some background to the composition *Frogs*, this chapter will look briefly at Emily Dickinson followed by a consideration of each song and how it works both on its own and in the context of the cycle. Finally there will be a consideration of the challenges presented to singer preparing the work.

Background

The brief cycle *Frogs* sets three short poems by Emily Dickinson. It was written

for tenor Gerald English to perform at a recital celebrating his seventieth birthday.¹

Known for his championing of new music, English sang only new compositions in his birthday recital.²

This is Butterley's first work composed for voice and piano since the *Blake Songs*. He had worked on two arrangements of poems by Robert Burns, but the singer he had been working with 'disappeared and never gave me the proper version of the words so that is in abeyance.'³

Butterley composed *Frogs* with English particularly in mind.

I wrote that piece deliberately using those poems because I knew that Gerald didn't have much voice left. Of course his annunciation has always been extremely clear... I didn't want to write something with long lyrical vocal lines and long vowels and things because that wasn't something he would do beautifully.⁴

Butterley came across the poems when he was working on the cycle *There Came a Wind Like a Bugle* (1987) for the *Song Company*.⁵ The cycle sets ten poems by Dickinson for a *capella* vocal octet. At one stage he had noted in a concordance of Dickinson's poems that

¹ Born in England, English became active in Australian classical music in the mid 1970's, having already had a successful career in England. A reviewer of the concert for his 70th birthday wrote 'in the '70's English's artistry was something of a legend for his clarity of words, pitch precision and grace with baroque ornamentation, and in his expertise with complex contemporary scores which he had recorded with some of the giants of the 20th century - Stravinsky, Henze, Tippett and Berio.' Peter McCallum, 'Composer's Birthday Gifts Produce Stylish English Lessons.' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 November, 1995, News and Features, Arts, 22.

² Ibid., 22.

³ Nigel Butterley, Interview by author, 2004.

⁴ Ibid., 2004

⁵ The Song Company is a Sydney-based vocal ensemble currently consisting of six voices. It purports to be Australia's only full-time professional vocal ensemble. At the time the Dickinson cycle was commissioned the group consisted of eight voices.

it was possible to search for particular words within the texts of her poetry. He reports he found five poems about frogs in her work and chose to set three of them.⁶

This cycle is not Butterley's first display of his sense of humor. In 1972 he and comedian Barry Humphries collaborated to write *First Day Covers*, subtitled *A Philharmonic Philatelia*, for one of Humphries' performance personas, Dame Edna Everage. An example of the humor in this work was the representation of the great white shark by a 'conflation of Schubert's 'Trout' with a tuba playing 'What shall we do with the drunken sailor.'⁷

Compared to many of Dickinson's other poems, the three poems selected for this cycle are rather simple and straightforward. Nevertheless, it may be useful for the singer to have some background on the poet and her poems. While Emily Dickinson (1830 - 1886) was a prolific writer, only seven of her poems were published while she was alive, and even these were published anonymously. She lived a considerable part of her life in isolation in Amherst. While she did not travel herself, she maintained close friendships through correspondence and enjoying visits to her home by friends and family. After Emily's death her sister discovered over 1700 poems which have subsequently been published. Initially published with 'corrections' made to appeal to the literary taste of the time, subsequent publications have been more faithful to the poet's original intent.⁸ While much of Dickinson's poetry is serious, these poems show some of the humor in her poetry.

⁶ Interview by the author

⁷ Gordon Kerry, *Weaving Light: Nigel Butterley at Sixty* (accessed on June 13, 2004) <<http://www.users.bigpond.com/gkerry/Butterley.htm>>

⁸ Carroll Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Style and Literature*. (Redmond, WA: Pst... Inc, 1996), 249.

She took a particular interest in nature, and her poetry and correspondence are full of her observations of the natural world about her. The sounds of frogs are featured not only in her poems, but also in her correspondence. Her attitude toward frogs is perhaps best summed up in a letter to Thomas Wentworth Higginson,⁹ to whom she had sent several poems for his consideration. She wrote, 'You ask of my Companions Hill - Sir - and the Sundown - and a Dog - large as myself... They are better than Beings... and the noise in the Pool, at Noon - excels my Piano.'¹⁰

In a letter to her friend Mrs Samuel Bowles, she wrote, 'The Frogs sing sweet - today - They have such pretty - lazy - times - how nice , to be a Frog!' Thomas Johnson, who compiled the three volumes of Dickinson's letters, notes after this letter that 'it was not long before this letter was written that ED probably wrote the poem beginning 'I'm nobody,' ' the third poem in this cycle.'¹¹

Song One

The long sigh of the Frog
Upon a Summer's Day
Enacts intoxication
Upon the Revery -
But his receding Swell
Substantiates a Peace
That makes the Ear inordinate
For corporal release -

⁹ Higginson had written an article 'Letter to a Young Contributor' for the Atlantic Monthly in which he offered practical advice for young writers. Thomas H. Johnson, ed., *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*. (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1958), 403.

¹⁰ Thomas H. Johnson, ed., *The Letters of Emily Dickinson, Volume II*. (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1958), 404.

¹¹ Thomas H. Johnson, ed., *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*. (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1958), 406.

Range: C₄ to F₅

Average Range: A₄ to E₄

Tempo: *Larguido*: ♩ c.54

Table 17: Song One - ‘The long sigh of a frog’

Measure Number	Text	Meter	Tempo	Vocal Dynamics	Vocal Range	Piano Dynamics	Texture/ Observations
1-2	The long sigh of the Frog	4/4, 2/4	♩=54	<i>p</i>	middle	<i>p</i>	Rhythms of the voice and piano different. There are points where the two line up to give sense of ensemble. Accompaniment often chordal.
2-3	Upon a Summer's Day	7/8			low to middle		
4	Enacts intoxication	4/4					
	Upon the Revery -				upper middle		
6-7	But his receding Swell	5/8, 3/8		<i>mp</i> >		< <i>mp</i> >	
8	Substantiates a Peace	4/4			lower middle		
9	That makes the Ear inordinate	3/4					
10-12	For corporal release -	3/8, 4/4				<i>pp</i>	

The direction, *languido*, sets the tone of the song, which has a lazy quality, somewhat like ‘the long sigh of a frog.’ The vocal line is syllabic. The rhythm of the words is, true to Butterley’s style, related to speech rhythms. Word-painting in the vocal line is evident. In the first line, ‘long’ is the longest note in the phrase. The vocal line descends from ‘long’ in a sigh (example 97).

Handwritten musical score for 'The long sigh of a frog'. The tempo is marked 'Larguido: ♩ = 54'. The voice part is on a single staff with lyrics 'The long sigh of the Frog Upon a'. The piano part is on two staves. The voice part has a long note on 'long' and a descending line. The piano part has chords and a triplet in the right hand.

Example 97: *Frogs*, Song I, mm.1-2.

In example 97 the held note for ‘long’ fits both the poetic rhythm and the meaning of the text.

‘Intoxication’ is set as a quintuplet with the last quintuplet as a rest. This suggests a lack of rhythm or unsteadiness, perhaps brought on by intoxication.



Example 98: *Frogs*, Song I, mm. 4-5.

In example 98 there are a variety of beat divisions found in measure 4. In addition, although in measure four the beginning of each beat coincides with the voice and the piano, the division of each beat is different.

The use of similar melodic material in the vocal line is significant, conveying a connection between the ideas expressed. The pitches ‘upon the revery’ are the same as ‘the ear inordinate,’ although the rhythm and accompaniment are different.



Example 99: *Frogs*, Song I, m.9.

The pitches of the vocal line in example 98 for ‘upon the revery’ are the same as the vocal line in example 99.

‘Receding’ is a transposition of the vocal line ‘sigh of a frog’ (example 96) conveying a sense of the frog’s receding sigh.



Example 100: *Frogs*, Song I, m.6.

In example 100 the vocal line for ‘receding’ is a third higher than the vocal line for ‘sigh of a frog.’ Although highly organized, the piano accompaniment is somewhat whimsical. The accompaniment of the first measure under the words ‘The long sigh of the frog’ is repeated in the fifth measure, suggesting repetition of the frog’s sigh. This can be seen comparing example 97 and example 98. The repetition of this material in the accompaniment suggests a reverie on the sound of the frog. Even as the voice, the piano too engages in word painting. The accompaniment rises and falls symmetrically with ‘his receding swell,’ (example 100). Throughout the song Butterley employs varied and similar chords which are sometimes enharmonically altered.

This poem was included in a letter to Higginson in 1876. The sentence introducing the poem states, 'I was always told that conjecture surpassed Discovery, but it must have been spoken in caricature, for it is not true - ' Following the poem she writes, ' Would you but guide Your scholar.' ¹²

Song Two

His Mansion in the Pool
The Frog forsakes -
He rises on a Log
And statements makes -
His Auditors two Worlds
Deducting me -
The Orator of April
Is hoarse Today -
His Mittens at his Feet
No Hand hath he -
His eloquence a Bubble
As Fame should be -
Applaud him to discover
To your chagrin
Demosthenes has vanished
In Waters Green -

Range: D#₄ to G#₅

Average Range: B₃ to F₅

Tempo: ♩= 66

This poem observes the frog in all his pomposity. The poet is derisive of the frog's self-importance: 'his eloquence a bubble.' He speaks to the world of the pond and the world beyond the pond. There is also observation of the listener, who is fooled by the orator's words and is upset by the fact that the orator has disappeared. 'Demosthenes' (384 - 322

¹² Thomas H. Johnson, ed., *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*. (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1958), 554.

BC) was a Greek orator who is best known for his speeches which called for the people of Athens to rise up against Philip of Macedonia. Hazel describes him as ‘a complex and ambiguous figure who was quite often prepared to compromise with what he disapproved of to keep himself at the head of affairs.... He is remembered for his powerful speeches, which were composed with a clarity of style that was unequalled by his rivals.’¹³

The vocal line is again syllabic. The use of staccato on ‘statements makes’ suggests the orator forcefully and deliberately stating his case.

Table 18 - Song Two - ‘His Mansion in the Pool the Frog Forsakes’

Measure Number	Text	Meter	Tempo	Vocal Dynamics	Vocal Range	Piano Dynamics	Texture/ Observations
1	His Mansion in the Pool	7/8, 4/4	♩ 66	<i>f</i>		<i>f</i>	Piano often uses rising and falling septuplets.
3	The Frog forsakes -					<i>>, f</i>	
4	He rises on a Log	5/8, 4/4				<i>mf</i>	
5	And statements makes -					<i><>, f</i>	
7	His Auditors two Worlds	3/4		<i>mp</i>		<i>> mp</i>	
7	Deducting me -		<i>Poco Accel.</i>				Greater use of chords
9	The Orator of April		♩ 77	<i>mf</i>		<i>mf</i>	
9	Is hoarse Today -						
10	His Mittens at his Feet	3/8, 3/4					
12	No Hand hath he -		<i>Poco Rit.</i>			<i>></i>	
12	His eloquence a Bubble	3/8, 3/4				<i>mp, ></i>	
15	As Fame should be -		♩ 66	<i>mp</i>		<i>mp</i>	
15	Applaud him to discover		Accel. al fine			<i>< mf</i>	
17	To your chagrin			<i>mf</i>			
17	Demosthenes has vanished						
18	In Waters Green -			<i>p</i>		<i>p</i>	

¹³ John Hazel, *Who's Who in the Greek World* (London: New York Routledge, e book, 2000), 80.



Example 101: *Frogs*, Song II, m.4.

In example 101 the simplicity of the vocal rhythm compared to the rhythmic complexity of the accompaniment is evident.

Staccato is also used on 'eloquence a bubble' (example 102) and 'Demosthenes has vanished' (example 103).



Example 102: *Frogs*, Song II, mm.11-12.



Example 103: *Frogs*, Song

II, mm.16-17.

The vocal lines for these two phrases in examples 102 and 103 are the same rhythmically, and are almost an exact transposition of each other. Both of these phrases call to mind the transient and illusory nature of the orator.

As in the first song, the piano accompaniment develops similar material in subtle variation throughout the song. The accompaniment for the last four lines of the poem moves away from the motifs of the first part of the song, reflecting a shift in focus from the frog to the listener. Compare the accompaniment seen in examples 101 and 102 to that of example 103.

Example 104: *Frogs*, Song II, mm.14-16.

For the majority of the measures prior to measures 14 and 16 there is a rise and fall in the piano line. In measure 15 and 16 of example 103 the rhythm of the piano slows to sparse chords.

The final three quintuplets of the song each employs fragments from a whole tone scale hinting a magical yet whimsical quality to the frog's disappearance into the water. Notice that in example 105 both the voice and the piano employ the whole tone scale.



Example 105: *Frogs*,

Song II, mm.18-19.

Song Three

I'm Nobody! Who are you?
 Are you -Nobody -Too?
 Then there's a pair of us?
 Don't tell! they'd advertise -you know!
 How dreary -to be -Somebody!
 How public -like a Frog -
 To tell one's name -the livelong June -
 To an admiring Bog!

Range: D **b**4 to G5

Average Range:F4 to C54

Tempo: *Languido*: **q** = c.54

This is probably the best-known of Dickinson's poems used in this cycle. A commentary on this poem also gives helpful hints to performance of the whole cycle.

The very popular "I'm Nobody! Who are you!", on the surface, may seem a slight performance, but it is not a superficial poem. On the biographical level, the poem perhaps reflects Dickinson's resentment of shallow writers who gain undeserved attention. Or she may be satirizing the character and situation of people who loom large in the eyes of society — people whom we call "somebodies." Taking assurance from the company of a fellow nobody, the speaker pretends to be worried that they will be held up to public shame for their failure to compete for attention. However, the sudden transition to a denunciation of "somebodies" suggests that if one gains notice as a nobody, it makes one into a kind of somebody. Clearly she prefers a position of invisibility, where she can take her own measure. The somebodies sit in the middle of bogs, a nasty representation of society, and the somebodies bellow to people who will admire them for their names alone. The poet seems to be mildly congratulating herself that unlike the vulgar and pretentious

somebodys, she is shy and sensitive. The poem is jocular, amusing, and surely a bit defensive, and its psychology and satire are keen.¹⁴

Table 19 - Song Three - 'I'm Nobody'

Measure Number	Text	Meter	Tempo	Vocal Dynamics	Vocal Range	Piano Dynamics	Texture/ Observations
1	I'm Nobody!	5/4	$\text{♩} = 144$	<i>f</i>	middle	<i>f</i> >	Sparse accompaniment. Combination of chords and more melodic accompaniment
2	Who are you?			<i>mp</i>		<i>mp</i>	
3	Are you -						
3	Nobody -Too?			<i>f</i>		<i>f, mp</i>	
4	Then there's a pair of us?			<i>mf</i>		<i>mf</i>	
5	Don't tell!	3/4,		<i>mp</i>		<i>mp</i>	
6	they'd advertise -you know!	5/8, 5/4				<i>f</i>	
8	How dreary -					>	
9	to be -Somebody!	5/8, 3/4			medium	<i>mf, f</i>	
11	How public -				high		
12	like a Frog -	3/8, 5/8,				<i>mf</i>	
14	To tell one's name -the livelong	4/4		<i>mp,</i>			
	June -			<i>f</i>	high to	<i>mp,</i>	
16	To an admiring	5/8, 3/4			low	<i>f</i>	
18	Bog!						

Musically this song clearly relates to material from earlier songs in the cycle. The vocal line for 'How public like a frog' is a transposition of the vocal line for 'the long sigh of a frog' from the first song.



Example 106: *Frogs*, Song III, mm.11-13.

¹⁴ Marcus Mordecai, *Cliffs Notes On – Emily Dickinson Selected Poems : Notes* (Lincoln, Nebraska: Cliff Notes, 1999), 62.

The vocal line in example 106 is a transposition one tone higher than the vocal line in example 99 from the first song in the cycle.

The vocal line for ‘to tell ones name the livelong June’ recalls the melody, if not the rhythm, of ‘Demosthenes has vanished.’ To connect these ideas is pertinent, as both are related to the idea of self-promotion.



Example 107: *Frogs*, Song III, mm. 3-4.

The similarities of the vocal line in examples 107 and 103 are evident.

Word-painting is evident in the rising vocal line for the two questions asked by the poet. In example 108 the vocal line for each question is created by a rising melodic fragment.



Example 108: *Frogs*, Song III, mm. 14-15.

Of the three songs in the cycle, the accompaniment for this song follows most closely the vocal line. It is also the most sparse. Its lack of pretense is reflective of the poem's sentiment.

Challenges for the Singer

While this is a very short cycle the need for careful preparation of the work should not be disregarded. The rhythm for the singer is difficult, but the recognition of the speech rhythms helps to appreciate and understand the rhythm as written. For the complete success of this cycle, detailed attention must be given to the ensemble between the singer and piano. The piano is often playing different rhythms to the voice. It is important for each performer to understand how the two parts work together.

Of great importance in a successful performance of the work is the clear enunciation of the very witty text. The singer must, as with so much of Butterley's vocal composition, strive to allow the text to be understood, being aware of not simply the written music but the musical sound of the words themselves.

The brevity of the cycle is also a challenge in performance. There is considerable detail about dynamics for such a short cycle. Also, there is no chance to warm into the songs. The singer needs to be able to establish a persona instantly in order to allow the songs to speak.

Summary

This quirky little cycle would be a worthwhile inclusion in a recital providing opportunity for both musical and literary wit. Its brevity provides the opportunity to share clearly modern music while not taxing an audience who may not necessarily be accustomed to less tonal, less melodic music. It provides another setting of Dickinson's

poetry which may provide an interesting contrast to a cycle setting some of her more serious songs.

Effective performance of this cycle does not require vocal stamina, but rather demands attention to clear articulation of the words which provide the true wit of the cycle.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The three works on which I have focused in this paper have differences and similarities, but all reveal important aspects of Nigel Butterley's approach to composing for the voice. His works provide considerable challenges to the singer, but they are challenges worth the effort.

Frogs and *Woven Light*, while very different in scope, typify the inspiration to compose that Butterley finds in poetry. The poets of both cycles have inspired Butterley by their lives and their poetry. The poetry also drives the structure of the cycles and the choice of devices which give the cycles internal cohesion. To Butterley, it is important to understand fully the poems he is setting. He is concerned not only with the poem's meaning, but also with how the sounds of the words enhance its meaning. The frustrations he experienced while composing *The Owl* demonstrate clearly how much his vocal music is inspired and guided by the structure of the text.

Throughout the body of the vocal works mentioned in this monograph, one notices distinct characteristics of Butterley's writing for the voice. Most evident is the importance of speech-like rhythms in the vocal line. Butterley was ever preoccupied with composing a vocal line in rhythmic harmony with the patterns of speech in the poetry. To this end he employed frequent change of meters. Triplets are another common device he uses to capture the declamatory style. This can mean that the singer, confronted with preparation of one of Butterley's works, may at first feel daunted by the complexity of the rhythms. The challenge is to get beyond the initial fear and work with the rhythms to discover the underlying flow of speech patterns which enhance the text.

Setting the natural rhythm of speech does not necessarily result in a syllabic vocal line. Use of shorter and extended *melisma* is also important in Butterley's vocal writing, in order to heighten the meaning of various words or the emotions they convey.

Related to the importance Butterley places on the text is his use of motifs. He uses motifs to highlight particular words or ideas and to bring continuity to a work. An observation of his use of motifs in a particular work will help the singer understand connections that Butterley has drawn from the texts.

Butterley does not write pretty tunes that are at once remembered. As such, learning his vocal music can be a demanding task. Even though his music is not strictly tonal, there is enough musical continuity for the singer to maintain their bearings and find the necessary pitches. Thus, the singer does not need to have perfect pitch. As a singer himself, Butterley has a feel for vocalism and avoids making unhealthy vocal demands on the singer. In writing for the three professional classical singers for whom these works were composed, he was mindful of the particular needs of each voice, a fact which any singer should find particularly gratifying.

Although there are not many 'pretty tunes,' there are moments of great lyricism and sweeping vocal lines. There are also more angular vocal lines. The quality of the vocal line is again driven by Butterley's reaction to the text.

One of the difficulties Butterley has faced in writing for soprano, is finding the most appropriate *tessitura* for the singer. Both *The Owl* and *The Woven Light*, while written for sopranos, were written for sopranos towards the end of their careers. This means that neither work dwells for too long in the upper registers of the voice, while they still give the voice the chance to shine in the upper register. A considerable amount of both works lies in the lower to middle register. A particular problem for the soprano is to find the correct weight in the lower

voice to project over the instrumental accompaniment. This can present a key challenge when combined with Butterley's preference for minimal vibrato from the singer.

Because Butterley chooses only texts which he considered worthwhile, the singer can honor his wishes by treating the vocal line and the text with equal importance. Butterley's strength is that while still believing in the importance of words, he manages to write powerful music which enhances the poetry without being subservient to it. As Butterley spent considerable time trying to understand the texts he chose to set, so must the singer take this important step when preparing to perform his work. His meticulously slow musical crafting of the text begs the singer to make every effort to understand fully what is embodied in the powerful music he writes. If the singer simply takes care to observe all the instructions written in the score, the performance will be complete.

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APPENDIX A

LIST OF WORKS

Opera

Lawrence Hargrave Flying Alone (op, 2, J. McDonald), 1988, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Other Dramatic Works

In the Head the Fire, (radio score) Tenor, baritone, male speaker, SATB choir, organ (doubling portative organ), piano, 1966, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Watershore (radio score, W. Whitman), Female speaker, 3 male speakers, flute, percussion, prepared piano, 3 violoncellos, 1978, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Orchestral

Meditations of Thomas Traherne, Recorder ensemble and orchestra, 1968.

Pentad, 1968, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Refractions, strings and wind quintet, 1969, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Explorations, piano and orchestra, 1970, Sydney : J. Albert & Son., c1970.

Violin Concerto, 1970, revised 1975, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Fire in the Heavens, 1973, Sydney : J. Albert & Son, c1985.

Symphony., 1985, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Goldengrove, string orchestra, 1982, revised 1993, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

In Passing, 1982; Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

From Sorrowing Earth, 1991, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia

Poverty: traditional Welsh carol, 1992: Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, St Leonards, Sydney, Australia

Choral

(Poet listed in parenthesis)

The True Samaritan (anon., W. Austin, W. Dunbar), SATB, 1958, rev. 1976; Sydney : J.Albert & Son., c1976.

Prayer During Sickness (R. Herrick), SATB, 1960.

Who Build on Hope (B. Beaver), SATB, org, 1960, Ps, c, SATB, 1961.

What shall I render to the Lord?, SATB, 1965.

No Man is an Island (J. Donne), SSSSAAAATTTTBBBBB, 1977, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Flower in the crannied wall (A. Tennyson), SSAATTBB, 1980, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

There came a Wind like a Bugle (E. Dickinson), SSAATTBB, 1987, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Sleep (K. Raine), SSATBB, 1992, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Spring's Ending (Du Fu), SATB, 1997, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Three Choral Works, (Psalms and R Herrick), SATB, 1999, Claremont, W.A.: Hovea Music Press, 1999.

Paradise Unseen (K. Raine) SATBarB, 2001, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Spell of Creation, (K.Raine, Hildegard of Bingen, H. Vaughan, Julian of Norwich, and from the Book of Baal and the Taittiriya Brahmana), soprano and baritone solos, semichorus, double choir and orchestra / by Nigel Butterley, 2000, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Solo vocal

3 Serenades (S. Sitwell), tenor and piano, 1954, rev. 1993; Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

6 Blake Songs, medium voice and piano, 1956, rev. 1996, Claremont: Hovea Press.

Child in Nature (R. Gurr), soprano and piano, 1957 Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, St Leonards, Sydney, Australia.

Joseph and Mary (trad.), soprano and flute, 1959; Sydney : Albert & Son, c1970.

Song of Christ the Rock (trad.), solo voice, 1962, Claremont: Hovea Press.

Carmina (4 Latin Poems of Spring), medium voice, flute, clarinet, horn and bassoon, 1968, rev. 1990 Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia

Sometimes with One I Love (W. Whitman), Soprano, baritone, male speaker, flute, clarinet, horn, 2 violoncellos, piano, 1976, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, St Leonards, Sydney, Australia.

The Owl (McDonald), Soprano, flute, violin viola, cello, piano and percussion, 1983, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

The Woven Light (K. Raine), 1994, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, St Leonards, Sydney, Australia.

Frogs (E. Dickinson), Tenor and piano, 1995

Chamber music and Solo Instruments

3 Pieces, organ, 1961–79.

Laudes, Flute/alto flute, clarinet/bass clarinet, horn, trumpet, violin, viola, violoncello, piano. 1963, Sydney : J.Albert & Son., c1965.

String Quartet No. 1, 1965, Sydney : J.Albert & Son, c1969.

The White-Throated Warbler, sopranino recorder and harpsichord, 1965, Armidale, N.S.W.: Orpheus Music, c2001.

Music for Sunrise, descant, treble and tenor recorders, flute and seven percussion, 1967, Armidale, N.S.W. : Orpheus Music, 2004

Variations: for wind quintet, piano, and recorded piano, 1967, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney: Australia.

Voices: for flute, oboe, clarinet, horn & bassoon, 1971, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

String Quartet no.2, 1974, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Fanfare and Processional, 4 trumpets, 2 trombones, 2 timpani, 1977; Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Evanston Song, flute and piano, 1978, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Trio, for clarinet, cello and piano, 1979, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

String Quartet no.3, 1980, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Conversation Pieces, flute and piano, 1982, Melbourne: Allans Publishing, c1989

Forest I, viola and piano, 1990, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

The Wind Stirs Gently, flute and violincello, 1992, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

The Wind Stirs Gently, arranged for flute and piano, 1992, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Forest II, trumpet and piano, 1993, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Of Wood, violincello, 1995, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

String Quartet no.4, 1995, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Music for the Fire on the Snow, clarinet in E flat, undated, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Keyboard

Arioso, piano (1960). Sydney: J Albert and Son, c1965.

Fanfare for a ceremony, organ, 1961, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Toccata, piano, 1960, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Comment on a Popular Song: piano, 1960. Sydney: J Albert and Son, c1965.

Circle-citadels, organ, 1989, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Grevillea, piano, 1985, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Piano Games, piano, 1970, Sydney : J. Albert, c1973.

Letter from Hardy's Bay, prepared piano, 1971, Sydney : J. Albert & Son, c1972.

Lawrence Hargrave Flying Alone, piano, 1981, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

Uttering Joyous Leaves, piano, 1981, Facsimile score held by Australian Music Center, Sydney, Australia.

APPENDIX B
LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM NIGEL BUTTERLEY

From: Nigel Butterley <nigelbut@bigpond.net.au> on 08/31/2004 04:34 PM ZE10

Sent by: Nigel Butterley <nigelbut@bigpond.net.au>

To: <amccubb@lsu.edu>
cc:

Subject: FW: Monograph - Permission to use material

--
Nigel Butterley
57 Temple Street
Stanmore 2048
NSW
ph/fax - 02 9569 3221
nigelbut@bigpond.net.au

From: Alison R Mccubbin <amccubb@lsu.edu>
Date: Sun, 29 Aug 2004 01:12:43 -0500
To: Nigel Butterley <nigelbut@bigpond.net.au>
Subject: Monograph - Permission to use material

Dear Professor Butterley:

As we have discussed I am completing a Doctorate of Musical Arts at Louisiana State University entitled "An Introduction for the Singer to the solo works of Nigel Butterley with particular emphasis on his works between 1976 and 2003." I would like your permission to reprint in my monograph excerpts from the following:

'The Owl'
'The Woven Light'
'Frogs'

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Sincerely,

Alison McCubbin

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Nigel Butterley
57 Temple Street
Stanmore 2048
NSW
ph/fax - 02 9569 3221
nigelbut@bigpond.net.au

Date: 30-08-04

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The Wilderness - page 132
Winds - page 257
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No. 4 - "Who so well as the lost" - page 293

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I would like your permission to reprint in my monograph the following poems in its entirety:

TITLE: The Presence: Poems 1984/87
AUTHOR: Kathleen Raine
Publisher: Lindisfarne Press
YEAR: 1987
ISBN: 0-89281-082-3 or 0-940262-20-7 (my copy had both numbers included)
Poem: "Hidden" found on page 65

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Date: 8/30/04

VITA

Alison Rosemary McCubbin came from studies at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music in Brisbane, Australia, to study voice at Louisiana State University where she completed both a Masters and a Doctoral degree in Music. Prior to her studies in music she received a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws from the Australian National University.

In her doctoral studies she majored in voice and minored in vocal pedagogy. She is particularly interested in working with beginner adult singing students. While continuing to pursue both performance and teaching she is also working in the area of international education.