Composition Portfolio

Brendan Breslin

Masters in Music
Royal Irish Academy of Music
2014 - 2016
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Preface

The following is a descriptive analysis and interpretation of a body of work spanning two years during my Masters of Music postgraduate course in the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Dublin. I will endeavor to give a broad picture of the thematic elements within the larger portfolio collection, highlight the main influences that have contributed to the works, and also discuss in some detail the processes by which my compositions find completion.

In order to create a concise composition commentary around my portfolio it is important to recognize the influences prior to initiating the Masters course, as well as understand the main contributors to any works undertaken in the last two years. It is my hope that discussing this will indicate what I feel in myself to be a change in compositional voice and direction.

I will also take the opportunity in commentary to discuss possible relevance for future work; processes that were efficient or had greatest reward, devices that proved to be of little benefit, and sketches or ideas that perhaps haven't seen their fulfillment and will benefit from reflection in this document.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff in The Royal Irish Academy of Music, and more especially Prof. Kevin O'Connell, Head of Composition. I am indebted to his counsel and advice on all matters of compositional thought and output through out the last two years, which has largely lead to the broadening of concept and approach within my work. It is my belief that, as a result of undertaking this course, I am now better equipped as a musician, composer and conductor. With a considered approach this document will serve as a lasting reminder and foundation for further progression in my skill set, most especially within my compositions.
Introduction

Whilst a student in secondary school in Strabane in Northern Ireland some 18 years ago I was afforded the opportunity to arrange and compose for local available ensembles such as brass band, through the 'A' Level modular syllabus. This is essentially where any form of interest in either arranging or composing begins, and to this day, much of my musical language and characteristic nuance is directly borne of this grounding. As a music student of St. Colman's High School in Strabane I was privileged at an early age to engage in various forms of musical outlet;

• The Strabane Concert Brass Band.
• The North Western Education Library board percussion ensemble and wind band.
• The Ulster Youth Orchestra.
• The North Western Big Band.

As a result of engaging in music for the most part from a popular stream, I have developed a good sense of the structural integrity and language from these genres. Through these facilities I feel I have developed a keen sense of voicing, instrumental knowledge in ability, range and integral nuance, and a broad grasp of ensemble relationships with repertoire, environment, preparations and performance.

As a result of engaging with such ensembles largely tasked in the popular stream of music, the main thematic structures have had some influence upon my internal compositional voice; a somewhat tonal and diatonic universe has been the main backdrop to most of my work. In undertaking the Masters of Music course in the Royal Irish Academy of Music, I have made it my goal amongst others, to develop my language and delve into new territory, through a more expressive approach to harmony and rhythm, and a more scrutinized look at motif in how and when to utilize it.
Compositional influences and process

Through the period covered by this portfolio I have been lucky enough to avail of writing stimulus within and outside of the Royal Irish Academy of Music. This has led in no small part to a relatively diverse set of works, spanning genre and instrumentation.

In year one of the course I was fortunate to engage in a reflective project, considering Pierrot Lunaire by Arnold Schonberg. Focusing on a specific work, and more over a specific movement gave a great sense of aesthetic and understanding of the language. That in itself provided a strong base on which to compose a work in response, either aesthetically pleasing or contradictory in some part. The only issue I might draw from this was my own concern for my work to sit amongst not only the Schonberg original, but to have some relevance to the other composers’ response. However, in the context of this specific project I felt it necessary to immerse myself in the surrounds of Pierrot Lunaire, in order to explore a sound world distinctly original and unlike any popular streams.

Other works contained within my portfolio have been created due to external influences outside of the Royal Irish Academy of Music. One of the large ensemble works, ‘Ages of Erin’ for drum corps band and percussion, was commissioned by an Irish based ensemble visiting America in the summer of 2015. Due to the inherent nature of the events and performances for which this work was required, it has a decidedly tonal and popular feel to it for the most part.

‘Ages of Erin’- uilleann pipes motif, bars 6-10

The overall piece is a set of musical snap shots of Ireland through the ages, some of the main contributory events that have shaped the country in some part. In this specific
case, the music is essentially audience orientated- the audience in this case expecting a cliché adoption of traditional Irish folk music. As such, the adoption of appropriate instrumentation, melody and harmony is paramount.

In another example of external influence, I engaged in writing a saxophone quartet suite for a colleague and his ensemble, The Chatham Row Saxophone Quartet. With little or no criteria set before me other than a general time frame of ten to twelve minutes, I found this work to be more of an enjoyable process from a derivation point of view, assessing appropriate stimuli to compose the work. As a result of this marked sense of freedom, I found the process outside of the norm; setting a source theme and material and writing accordingly.

I have always been inspired by the literary world for my works, in no small part because of my own family's interests, including my mother who worked as an English teacher in secondary education. ‘Of Stone & Stream’ written for symphony orchestra, manifests itself from W.B. Yeats poem 'Easter 1916'. Given the commemorative period in which this portfolio is written, as well as my fondness for this particular poem, I thought it appropriate to try and align music to some sense of the sentiment of this important literary work, or at the very least respond to some of the main themes within the poem that bear greatest significance one hundred years on.

The most fundamental and influential idea within the portfolio is found within the Piano Études. As suggested by Prof. Kevin O'Connell, a set of études based upon intervals would aid a more considered approach to what is a basic but paramount element of composition. The suggestion of piano also benefitting with the immersion into the most fundamental of all compositional tools. This work was the most liberating of all the portfolio, and stood as a good starter project to develop my collection of work. As a limited pianist, and having never really engaged fully with a piano in a more considered
way (sound, feel, register, intervals, intrinsic capabilities and boundaries etc.), these set of études facilitated a careful approach to the instrument, and it’s integral role (which I had until now failed to acknowledge) in the large amount of composition that I, and indeed many others produce.

Whilst this last compositional influence was my first main project for the MA portfolio, I discuss this last as it had the greatest bearing upon the process of writing in the last two years. Previous to commencing the MA course the process by which I would compose music was largely influenced by my approach to arranging. Score work largely produced directly to computer, and with little exploration into score alternatives and sketching, and very little interaction with the piano. Having really indulged the process of writing by hand (some twelve years since last I had) whilst seated at the piano, I realized that whilst my rate of output had decreased, the overall work quality and sketch consistency had increased significantly.

Having soon acknowledged the change in writing and it’s resulting affect, the work that I have completed in the last two years contained within this document is for the main part resulting from the process of;

- Formulation of/interaction with a stimulus or project theme
- Piano work including initial motif and harmony consideration
- Sketch generation, including multiple ideas for specific sections of work
- Streamlining and definition of a first edit score
- Score analysis, and editing including substitution of other sketch’s
- Final score edit

In the case where I have followed this process, there have been examples of further points of process subsequently, as a result of performers insight and feedback. Typically this hasn’t resulted in any further development of or substitution of sketch ideas, more a general concern for layout, articulation and dynamic issues, or integral performance
issues with the material I have provided.

I feel it is important to note the change of compositional process described above, as much to highlight the change for myself and it’s resulting factors, and to be aware that the process of composing can have an overwhelming affect to the final score.
Thematic analysis

Melody & Harmony

Here I will discuss the various linear passages contained within the portfolio that have some significance toward melody. The more determinable properties of melody can be;

• The contour of the melody
• Range and register
• Patterns such as phrases, sequences, motifs
• Ornamentation or embellishment
• Modulation
• Forms of pitch adjustment, bends or slides etc.
• Range of melody
• Melodic features that belong with particular genres and styles

I have combined melody and harmony in this discussion as the two in my opinion can be so integrally linked. For the most part of my writing, I have always and continue to change between melody before harmony and vice versa. In some cases, the two become prevalent simultaneously, but typically in my process of producing sketches, one will predetermine the other.

The form of melodic shape in this portfolio has taken on various shape, and for various reasons. In the example of the Soprano voice from the ‘Magnificat’, the melody has been developed to ensure that it is attainable by singer, has a relatively level contour to avoid any sense of angular activity and is for the most part modal, relaying a sense of reflection and assuredness.
As the piece progresses and a greater understanding of Mary’s story develops, so does the need for the melody to reciprocate and show a sense of exultation. Now the melody achieves an uplifting sense of acknowledgement and humility.

The intervals are slightly extended and a cleaner sense of contour is now achieved. In this instance it is important to note that the melodies for the vocalist have been consciously constructed to ensure that the general lines are that which are attainable and appropriate, but that the melody is enhanced by its direction in lieu of the words syllables. Again, from the example above the melody initially can afford a fifth leap as the lower, ‘For’ is a rounder and darker syllable, and leads to ‘he’ which benefits from not being overtly low in the voice as it is normally a flatter and thin sound. The melody can afford to travel higher again with the close to the word ‘migh-ty’, with a more acute attack to the note this time.

I have tried to achieve various styles of melodic interpretation throughout the portfolio. Some are more constrained due to the general surrounds of the composition requirements. In the following example from ‘Ages of Erin’ the melodies for the most
part require a form of reference or inference to socially accepts concepts of music in film and media.

So here then, when an ‘Irish Blessing’ is called upon we find a typically tonal and lamenting air with an appropriate peak and fall.

This is an example of what I regard as popular harmonic language- the use of common progression for I, II, IV, V, and VI chords. As previously discussed, I find the pathway relatively straight forward in this writing, less so for more complex score makeup.

In other instances where the general language is freer and/or more complex I have considered the melody with a greater sense of diversity. Within the Saxophone Quartet ‘Triple Complex’ a self generated stimulus lead to a greater development of melody throughout all three movements. In the following example taken from the third movement, we see the Soprano Saxophone taking the main motif clearly defined by Solo line.

With all parts considered had the solo marking been left out from Soprano Saxophone
here, we would still assume the Soprano to have the primary material—its angular activity and syncopated sense of harmony within its own staff confines would lead us to believe it has important material.

The overall harmony is reciprocal of the melody in terms of displacement of more secure three part harmony, and even then the chordal structure is less obvious to the listener with regular use of diminished seventh chords. With strong contemporary jazz influences clear, some harmonies fail to sound together in this specific example. In an example such as this I tend to read the harmonies in a lateral sense—general colour of bar or phrase rather than a note by note account.

Having analysed the portfolio and compared various contour patterns, more specifically how and where they occur, it is clear that there a common link in my writing between diatonic material and extended melodic contour. For the most part, when the general language of the piece is a little more ambiguous the melodic lines remain less sustained, and are interrupted through angular movement and frequency change. The degree by which rests are displaced through motifs also increases, as well as the occurrence of notes outside of the main harmonies. Whilst the correlation between exploratory writing and diverse melody are apparent, it may be a worthwhile venture to apply the same the diversity in contour, frequency, rests and unusual framework to melodies belonging to harmonic language that is obviously tonal.
Rhythm

I have always had a keen interest in rhythm, namely it’s role and various effects upon music. As a young musician studying percussion I became fascinated at an early age with the complex nature of rhythm, of it’s various guises; how can one single rhythmic phrase be notated in so many different ways, leading to so many different performance interpretations. The psychology of the music interpretation is vast an ever investigated world, and this rhythmic element is one of the most important factors in music interpretation and performance. Through years of score study I have analyzed and evaluated various composers approach to the notational process, and in some cases valuing this over harmony and motif.

As a musician and conductor I have grown ever frustrated at composers use of complex rhythm, in cases where it is seemingly complex for complex sake. So then, where possible in the portfolio, and any other considered writing, I will try to ensure the rhythmic interpretation isn’t overly complex unless required, for e.g. why write an overtly difficult passage in 9/4 at an adagio tempo, when 9/8 will achieve a greater understanding by performer, and therefore listener.

I have always believed the boundaries of rhythm to be less secure than one would assume (given a somewhat mathematical basis). In the subsequent examples laid out from the Saxophone Quartet I deal with a number of factors, and rhythm is one of the central figures. Mvt I shown here clearly shows definitive rhythmic material, repeated exactly by each player after the correct instance of rest.
‘Reactivate’ – Mvt I, b.1 – 6

In this case the sounding of rhythmic material is entirely dependent upon reading, as would normally be the case, and the parts existing within the same framework of tempo and metre.

However, in Mvt II of which a single part is shown below, each player whilst still retaining a largely consistent set of rhythms and rests, plays now with in different metre and tempo, simply co-existing within the same environment playing space. As a result, compiling a score for this is virtually impossible, as defining the comparative placement of notes would ultimately negate the exercise.

‘Reactivate’, Mvt II, cello part instructions
This idea of breaking rhythmic boundaries continues into Mvt III, this time enabled through the audio perception of others performing- each player given a very unique set of instructions and material, some of which a direct reference to Mvt I & II, but now reacting to others in a form of cueing system. Just like in Mvt II, the boundaries and lines are very much erased, but now the rhythmical material is sounding in response to each other, so now definitive sense of tempo, metre and style can be ascertained.

Whilst such an approach isn’t necessarily pushing the limits to standardized notated scoring, rhythm depends largely upon the elements of pattern and movement to achieve it’s effects. The parallel comparison of ‘beats’ existing in art is an interesting notion, and one that could be of further investigation in a co artistic and musical element. Just like above there is some sense of a timed beat as coordinated by sight, sound and time.
**Form, Tempo & Metre**

General form and structure of the works within the portfolio follow a similar set of patterns, largely due to contributing influences and the composing stimulus in each case;

- Vocal works are typically short succinct sections/mvts from a larger body of work
- Chamber elements typically following a 2/3 mvt form
- Larger ensemble works are descriptive tone poems of sort, however ‘Ages of Erin’ is more definitively subdivided into five main parts; ‘Of Stone & Stream’ has three main sections.

The two main chamber groups contained within in the shape of Saxophone and String Quartet, both have three movement suites, but with varying degrees of duration. In the case of the Saxophone quartet, ‘Triple Complex’ sustains a typical fast-slow-fast displacement of general tempo, specifically to align itself to the subject matter;

Mvt I – the build of anxious and depressive elements, the tempo begins moderately and builds with disruptive rhythm and metre, as well as harmonic indifference to tonality.

Mvt II – chemical and systemic treatment with medicine, a slow and expressive movement whilst generally diatonic contains moments of unease to reaffirm the artificial sense of relaxation.

Mvt III – the resulting mental and physical state at odds with each other, a fast and stable movement lasting in 4/4 for the most part, with various interruptions of syncopation as another reminder of the artificial blissful state.

Through out the works here I have remained firm to typically western adoption of metre, relying rather on the disruption of rhythm within a standard metre bar. However,
in the case of ‘Of Stone & Stream’, in the second main section use of 3/8, 5/8 and 7/8 bars helps to add the sense of accented interruption;

‘Of Stone & Stream’, b. 67 - 74
Texture & Dynamics

Through the last two years of developing this portfolio I have noted a definitive change in approaching texture of scores and dynamics. My scores previously to this portfolio would for example, contain a large concern for doubling instruments in large ensembles, unnecessarily in the most part. Dynamically, my writing would have been largely undressed with expression, and also quite monotone, with a reliance upon performer for variance, exaggeration, and actually realizing the compositional voice on my behalf.

‘Of Stone and Stream’ contains two good examples of texture and dynamics as paramount to the overall score, as much as rhythm harmony and melody;
The previous example is a clear indication of a lightly textured score, as is required from the previous 20-30 bars having contained more robustly scored music. However, the next example is a clear indication of doubling and reinforcement of line and dynamics, in this case warranted and predetermined as the section is directly influenced by the notion of stream, river and mass body of water.
Continued portfolio progression & remarks

I am delighted to present a relatively coherent body of work such as this portfolio, as it is to date the most conscientious and formative approach to composition that I have sustained. Whilst I feel there is much to admire, it also provides a great learning aid, and has helped form a number of definitive processes in my composing that I will endeavor to adhere to. I hope to explore further some of the elements contained within this commentary, as there is much more language to be found within these.

As well as developing processes and a portfolio, I have come to realize the importance of developing and the nature of stimulus. The projects adhered to through the last two years have been of huge benefit in many ways, in no small part due to the wide net cast upon genre.

It is my hope that the following scores will highlight a developing compositional voice, and adherence to important and collaborative elements such as tempo, melody, harmony, and rhythm.

Ultimately I hope that this document will serve as a good reminder of work done, and a strong foundation for composing in the future.
Piano Études

For Piano

by

Brendan Breslin
Score Preface

Instrumentation and transposition details:

Piano in C

Duration:

15’ 45”

Date of completion:

December, 2014

Composition notes:

These set of Piano Études include seven parts based upon interval relationship, and one final Étude Résumé as a general summation to close the set. They are intended as a means to explore the intervallic harmonies, combined with varied rhythmic formulae for each etude. They can be utilized as exercises for familiarizing oneself with the sound world of the piano, and developing muscle memory.
Étude No.1
Unison/Octave Interval

Brendan Breslin
Étude No. 2
Second Interval

Brendan Breslin
Étude No. 5
Fifth Interval

Brendan Breslin

Piano

Moderato

3

Pno.

6

Pno.

8

Pno.
Prestissimo (as fast as possible)

Étude No.6
Sixth Interval

Brendan Breslin
Etude No.7
Seventh Interval

Brendan Breslin
Emoji - Music

For Piano

by

Brendan Breslin
Score Preface

Instrumentation and transposition details:

Piano in C

Duration:

2’ 00”

Date of completion:

April, 2016

Composition notes:

Emoji – Music is designed as a fun exercise for pianists to explore the various sounds, styles and techniques from their instrument. It also serves in part as a teaching aid for theory- learning the major and minor chord relationships for e.g., and finally as a means of developing interest in composition, developing the performers own performance prowess. The pianists can avail of various methods of performance, adding voice over themselves or supplying the script to audience in advance.
Meet Mr Emoji- the character that will lead you through the music!

Through his simple yet affective stories, performers can help describe his journey, feelings and surrounds through the use of music.

Try to best capture Mr Emoji’s stories by playing what’s written, writing your own, and expanding the story!

**NOTES:**

The following scores are designed as a fun guide to exploring the piano using stories told through emoticons, through the eyes of Mr Emoji.

The emoticons are designed to signify people, places, objects and feelings.

Where notes are provided the player is expected to play as written.

Where example notes are provided the player is expected to try various possibilities themselves.

Where general instructions are provided the player is expected to try various possibilities themselves.

These last two points mean some composing for the player as well- try and find music that imitates the story best, but avoid using any popular references to the exact music of films, t.v., shows etc.

**PERFORMING OPTIONS:**

*Play the music only*- test your performing/composing ability, play for friends and family and see what they think the story is about after playing.

*Play the music whilst reciting the story lines between musical inserts*- play the story and tell the story yourself, or have a friend/family member do the talking.

*Play the music, give the listener(s) the story insert provided*- let people read the story for themselves as you play the music.

*Play the music, let the listeners watch the live video*- let people watch the animated video as you play the music.

= Play any notes in general area of keyboard, as appropriate to the story requirements
Mr Emoji...

was walking home...

when he got a sudden shock...

Press as many notes as possible with arms
by a large dog!

Like a barking dog

Mr Emoji . . .

Quick & quirky

doesn't like dogs. . .

Sadly
he loves cats . . .

especially when they purr!

He thinks cats are cool!
Mr Emoji . . .

Quick & quirky

Ran as fast as he could . . .

Running tempo - hand palms down on keyboard

All the way home!

Soft and content
‘Magnificat’
from Beata Maria Nativity
For Soprano and chamber group

by
Brendan Breslin
Score Preface

Instrumentation and transposition details:

Soprano

Clarinet in Bb

Organ in C

(Score in C)

Duration:

4’ 40”

Date:

December, 2015
Composition notes:

Written as part of an overall set of Nativity movements, in a modern telling of the Christmas event. Here we find Mary’s declaration. The language is largely modal throughout, but most material is derived from notes E, F and G- where note A has been used by other composers to signify the Earth, so E, F and G are essentially leading to the furthest point away before returning, to signify a heavenly influence. The consistent return of quintuplet is based upon syllable inflection - ‘Hand–maid–of–the–Lord”.


50

S. & Cl.

Organ.

10

Be-hold 1 am the hand-maid of the Lord;

powerful, reed

S. & Cl.

Organ.

11 f

Let it be cor-ding to your word.

My soul mag-ni-

13 f

lies the Lord, and my spi rit re-joucs in God my sav-iour for he has re

S. & Cl.

Organ.

15 f

16 mf

for he has re

S. & Cl.

Organ.
gar - ded
the low - est
tate
of
his
hand
mai-den.

Hence - forth
all gen-er-a-tions will call

me bless-ed.
For he who is migh-ty

soft, airy tone
S. has done great things for me.

Cl. holy is his

Org. cutting, reed

S. and holy

Cl. cutting, reed

Org.

S. "Meno mosso = 38"

Cl. powerful, brassy

Org.
soft, airy tone
‘Nacht’ from

Responses to Pierrot Lunaire

For Soprano and chamber group

by

Brendan Breslin
Score Preface

Instrumentation and transposition details:

Bass Clarinet in Bb  Violincello in C
Soprano in C  Piano in C

Duration:

2’ 50”

Date of completion:

May, 2015

Composition notes:

This vocal work with chamber group is part of a larger selection of compositions by other composers, in response to Pierrot Lunaire by Arnold Schoenberg. The text is taken directly from the original No. 8 Nacht. In keeping with the original, this composition tries to portray some of the overall sense of night time and darkness, as well as reference to some of the specific text contained within. The overall sense of melodrama isn’t lost in this singular entity of the larger work.
Nacht

Bass Clarinet in B

Adagio \( \frac{3}{4} \) = 44

Violoncello

Voice

Adagio \( \frac{3}{4} \) = 44

Piano

Ab  F\#  A  E5  G  F  E  F  Db

3

B. Cl.

rit.

Ve.

rit.

Voice

Pno.

A tempo

Black gigantic butterflies, have

A tempo

Pno.

Brendan Breslin
blot-ed out the shining sun. Like a

sor-cer's sealed book

ri-zon sleeps in silence. From
the murky depths for - got - ten va - pours.

rise, to mur - der the mer - y

Black gig - an - tie but - ter - flies have blot - ted out
23

And from heaven to-wards the earth sinking down heavy pin-ions all un-seen de-

21 Grave \( j = 34 \)

Grave \( j = 34 \)

molto accel.
Adagio \( \frac{1}{4} \) = 44

Black giant butterflies

A 15 D B
‘Triple Complex’

For Saxophone Quartet

by

Brendan Breslin
Score Preface

Instrumentation and transposition details:

Soprano Saxophone in Bb          Alto Saxophone in Eb
Tenor Saxophone in Bb             Baritone Saxophone in Eb

(Score is transposed)

Duration:

12’ 15”

Date of completion:

December, 2015

Composition notes:

Written specifically for the Chatham Row Saxophone Quartet, this is a three-movement suite where the faster outer movements surround the slow second movement. Influenced by the colloquial term by the same name, referred to by doctors for the medical treatment of certain depressive tendencies of patients. The entire suite has an integrally unsettled feel harmonically and rhythmically for the most part, highlighting the medical stimulus and its effects.
LONG PAUSE
release in aggressive manner

detune down
release in aggressive manner

LONG PAUSE
release in aggressive manner

detune up
release in aggressive manner

LONG PAUSE
release in aggressive manner
Triple Complex

3. Balance

Soprano Saxophone

Alto Saxophone

Tenor Saxophone

Baritone Saxophone

Vivace $\frac{4}{4}$ = 144

```
5
Soprano Sax.
Alto Sax.
Tenor Sax.
Baritone Sax.
```

```
9
Soprano Sax.
Alto Sax.
Tenor Sax.
Baritone Sax.
```

```
13
Soprano Sax.
Alto Sax.
Tenor Sax.
Baritone Sax.
```

*accentuate vowel sounds

pp

pp

pp

pp
‘Strength & Grace’

For Irish Traditional chamber group

by

Brendan Breslin
Score Preface

Instrumentation and transposition details:

Voice (mixed) in C  Traditional Harp in C
Acoustic Guitar in C  Violin
Viola  Violincello
Percussion

(Score is transposed)

Duration:

4’ 00”

Date of completion:

April, 2016

Composition notes:

This traditional genre work was created specifically for a chamber group of this nature. It is inspired by the common personality traits of my four daughters, and the piece finds itself in two large sections as a result- a medium paced flowing lilt and a fast paced and determined dash to finish.
Strength & Grace

*Please note voice score to be sung by all performers who are able to
five appropriately for male and female registers

Slowly \( \dot{=52} \)

Voices

Harp

Acoustic Guitar

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

Percussion

freely, without strict rhythm

Graceful lilt \( \dot{=94} \)

Voice

To D. Whistle

Graceful lilt \( \dot{=94} \)

Harp

freely

take D. Whistle

A. Gtr.

(harp arpeggio)

Vln.

(harp arpeggio)

Vla.

(harp arpeggio)

Vc.

(harp arpeggio)

Perc.
T. Whistle/Vocal

Hp.

A. Gtr.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Perc.

Voice

Hp.

A. Gtr.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Djembe

With purpose \( \text{\textdaggerdbl} \frac{128}{1} \)

Tap on body of guitar (low-high)

Clap hands

Gliss.

Clap hands

Djembe

With purpose \( \text{\textdaggerdbl} \frac{128}{1} \)

Gliss.

Clap hands

Djembe

2nd time only

(poco ad lib)

Voice

Hp.

A. Gtr.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Djembe

With purpose \( \text{\textdaggerdbl} \frac{128}{1} \)

Gliss.

Clap hands

Djembe

2nd time only

(poco ad lib)
‘Reactivate’

For String Quartet

by

Brendan Breslin
Score Preface

Instrumentation and transposition details:

Violin I  Violin II
Viola  Violincello

(Score in C)

Duration:

6’ 25”

Date of completion:

February, 2016

Composition notes:

This piece is a three movement suite written in response to Igor Stravinsky’s, ‘Three Pieces for String Quartet’. It is based around sound and music production generated by three main influences: Optic- we read and then play/sing, Metronomic- we play/sing according to time, and finally Sonic, we play/sing according to other audible triggers.
'Reactivate'

Mvt. 1 - Optic

Violin I  
Violin II  
Viola  
Violoncello  

PLEASE NOTE: Mvt I & III are scored conventionally, whilst Mvt II does not have a score due to its inherent nature. Please find the four individual parts contained within.
* In this mvt. the quartet each have separate metres and tempi. The parts should be played simultaneously.
* The final note in each part should NOT sound together; all parts should finish within an approximate 2 second time frame.
* All parts begin with at least one silent bar to synchronise a 'close finish'. I suggest using silent metronomes, initiated at the same time.

- order of entries at the beginning: VIOLIN I (2 secs in), VIOLIN II (7 secs in), VIOLA (10 secs in), CELLO (24 secs in)

\( \text{\textit{Mvt. 2 - Metronomic}} \)

1. \( \text{\textit{Brendan Breslin}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Reactivate'}} \)

\( \text{\textit{J = 80}} \) \( \text{\textit{sul tasto}} \) \( \text{\textit{(1)}} \) \( \text{\textit{f}} \) \( \text{\textit{simile}} \)

\( \text{\textit{p}} \) \( \text{\textit{(7)}} \) \( \text{\textit{p}} \) \( \text{\textit{f}} \) \( \text{\textit{p}} \) \( \text{\textit{f}} \) \( \text{\textit{simile}} \)
Violin 1

56
\( p \)  \( f \)  \( \text{simile} \)

61
\( \sum \)  \( (1) \)  \( (4) \)

66
\( \sum \)  \( \text{naturale} \)  \( \text{very short!} \)  \( pp \)

\( \sigma \)  \( \sigma \)  \( \sigma \)  \( \sigma \)
'Reactivate'
Mvt. 2 - Metronomic

* In this mvt. the quartet each have separate metres and tempi. The parts should be played simultaneously.
* The final note in each part should NOT sound together; all parts should finish within an approximate 2 second time frame.
* All parts begin with at least one silent bar to synchronise a 'close finish'. I suggest using silent metronomes, initiated at the same time.

- order of entries at the beginning: VIOLIN I (2 secs in), VIOLIN II (7 secs in), VIOLA (10 secs in), CELLO (24 secs in)

\( \text{Reactivating...} \)

\( q=72 \) sul tasto

* Brendan Breslin
Viola

46

p f p f p f p f p f p f p f p f p f p f

49

sul tasto

p f p f p f p f p f p f p f p f p f p f

56

p f p f p f p f p f p f p f p f p f p f

59

p f p f p f p f p f

66


69

nat.

very short!

ff
* In this mvt. the quartet each have separate metres and tempi. The parts should be played simultaneously.
* The final note in each part should NOT sound together; all parts should finish within an approximate 2 second time frame.
* All parts begin with at least one silent bar to synchronise a 'close finish'. I suggest using silent metronomes, initiated at the same time.

Order of entries at the beginning: VIOLIN I (2 secs in), VIOLIN II (7 secs in), VIOLA (10 secs in), CELLO (24 secs in)

very short!
* In this mvt, the quartet are to play largely based upon audio cues scored throughout. Players are asked to turn to opposite direction of typical performance layout, ensuring that all are facing away from each other.

* Entries will be marked with 4 main descriptions:
  1. **LEAD**: instrument/voice to play first, when ready and appropriate after each pause bar, as per tempi, dynamics and articulations marked.
  2. **2ND, 3RD, 4TH**: instrument to be played freely in order denoted, following on from preceding instrument/voice. Instruments should attempt to reciprocate tempo, dynamics and style in this instance. Timing of entries are at the discretion of the individual - does not need to be in time with LEAD metre.
  3. **QUICKLY** - instruments to play following entry of LEAD, freely, in any order, enter as quickly as possible.
  4. **SLOWLY** - instruments to play following entry of LEAD, freely, in any order, enter in a delayed manner.

Paused notes can be released in any order, when deemed appropriate, after all four instruments/voices have sounded. Players should follow any technique changes exactly.

**Entries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Violin I</strong></th>
<th><strong>Violin II</strong></th>
<th><strong>Viola</strong></th>
<th><strong>Violoncello</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whispered: 'Act'</td>
<td>Whispered: 'Tiv'</td>
<td>LEAD</td>
<td>Whispered: 'Mte'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tempo** $j = 60$

**Tempo** $j = 46$

**Tempo** $j = 46$

**Tempo** $j = 46$
‘Ages of Erin’

For Drum Corps band and Percussion

by

Brendan Breslin
Score Preface

Instrumentation and transposition details:

Trumpet in Bb       Mellophone in F
Baritone in C       Tuba in C
Uilleann Pipes in D Tin Whistle in D
Fiddle in C         Soprano Saxophone in Bb
Accordion in C      Keyboards in C
Marimba             Vibraphone
Glockenspiel        Chimes
Timpani             Auxiliary Percussion

(Score is transposed)

Duration:

12’ 00”

Date of completion:

December, 2014
Composition notes:

‘Ages of Erin’ is a commissioned work, composed for a touring band to the United Stats of America from Ireland. The concept for the piece is to display snap shots of Irish history of the main themes of Irish life. The piece uses some duly accepted notions of Irish melody and air, as well as the more pulsating and percussive themes found in traditional Irish music.

The piece also contains a voice over in the context of performance, the narrator to the story who imparts his knowledge of Ireland and also any contemporary themes worth noting.
‘Of Stone & Stream’

For Symphony Orchestra

by

Brendan Breslin
Score Preface

Instrumentation and transposition details:

- Flute in C
- Clarinet in Bb
- Horn in F
- Trombone in C
- Timpani
- Harp in C
- Viola
- Contrabass
- Oboe in C
- Bassoon in C
- Trumpet in Bb
- Tuba in C
- Percussion
- Violin I & II in C
- Violincello

(Score is for orchestra transposed)

Duration:

13’ 30”

Date of completion:

March, 2016
Composition notes:

‘Of Stone & Stream’ is an orchestral episode, influenced directly by the work ‘Easter 1916’ by W. B. Yeats, regarding the Easter Rising of that year in Ireland. The poem contains a great deal of reference to nature and geography, speaking of the stone and stream directly upon one occasion.

This work draws some musical parallels to the general tone of the poem, and directly references the inference of water; it’s power, and the stone amongst it all.

‘Of Stone & Stream’ is in three main sections, opening maestoso, a quicker scherzo and a final slow finale drawn out for utmost impact. The entire work centers upon A and Bb, and the exploration of how they relate and clash, and can expand to further develop into other materials.
Faster, with intent  \( \cdot \) 64/68