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Beyond the 'Gothic': Havergal Brian and his Orchestral Music of the 1930s

Martin O'Leary

This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy to the School of Music, Trinity College, University of Dublin



DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at any other university, and that it is entirely my own work. I agree that the library may lend or copy the thesis upon request.

Martin O'Leary

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The task of completing this thesis would have been impossible without the help of a large number of people. My supervisor. Dr. Martin Adams, has been a constant source of encouragement and constructive criticism, in particular as this large project neared completion. His willingness to discuss and exchange ideas has been invaluable.

My thanks to the Havergal Brian Estate for their permission to study — and quote from — the substantial compositional materials deposited in the library of the Royal College of Music in London. My thanks also to Christopher Barnet and the various staff members who disappeared deep into the library, only to return with the Brian materials I requested. They were also of great help with regard to the considerable task of photocopying such large scores as clearly as possible to enhance my study of them away from the library.

I have received encouragement from many people more closely connected to Brian than myself, guidance which made me feel that the man himself might not have frowned upon my endeavour to explain things he avoided discussing (at least in print). To David J. Brown, ex-Secretary and Chairman of the Havergal Brian Society, who greatly facilitated my approach to the crucial compositional materials, and to Malcolm MacDonald, who answered many queries while nudging my research gently forward, my thanks. Jurgen Schaarwächter was responsible for bringing my earlier research into Brian — and in particular my Master's thesis on the Sixth Symphony — to a wider public in his pioneering compilation of articles published in the Havergal Brian Society Newsletter (see bibliography). More recently, Alan Marshall and Kevin Mandry have reminded me, in their capacity as committee members of the Society, that there are people as curious about Brian as myself. The Newsletter itself has been a constant source of stimulating — and contrasting — views on the composer at the centre of this thesis. My thanks to all who, by their contributions over the last twentythree years, have prodded and helped develop my thoughts about the music.

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My final acknowledgement is to Brian himself. It is a tragedy that he never heard the two symphonies that form a central part of this thesis. My work on this project fades into insignificance when compared with his decades of sustained composition in the face of almost total neglect. My work is a tribute to — and a justification of — his perseverance.

SUMMARY

This thesis presents the most detailed study yet of the music of the English composer William Havergal Brian (1876–1972). It concentrates on the orchestral music written in a single decade — the 1930s — at a time when he was arguably at the height of his powers. The music of this decade follows on form the completion of his most famous — and notorious — work, the massive *Gothic* Symphony (No. 1). The works written during this decade, and in particular the two symphonies (the second and third), were crucial in establishing a forward path after the singular symphonic scale and nature of the *Gothic*. This manner of symphonic composition would be sustained and developed through a total of thirty two symphonies, the last written in 1968, when the composer was ninety-two.

The early chapters of the thesis discuss Brian within a wider musical context. Chapter one considers a selection of early orchestral works, from two points of view. They are discussed with regard to how they reflect influences on the young Brian, and also how they show early signs of compositional traits that recur much later in his career, and particularly in the three central works of the thesis.

Chapter two views the symphonic scene in England from the advent of Edward Elgar (1858–1934) up to works and composers contemporary with the two symphonies of Brian central to the thesis. As with the early works, there are shared concerns with fellow composers, as well as significant differences. Brian emerges as a distinctive contributor to the English symphonic literature.

Chapter three discusses the *Gothic* symphony — and Brian's article on the subject of its creation — to establish its crucial place in the output of the composer. The chapter also traces characteristics that recur — in different contexts — in the next two symphonies.

Chapter four to six discuss in turn — in great detail — the Symphony No. 2, No. 3 and the Violin Concerto.

The Conclusion summarises the findings of the thesis and widens the context in a final discussion of Brian, his work and its significance.

Appendices one to three tabulate — with commentary — the compositional source materials for the three works discussed in chapters four to six.

Appendix four chronicles the performances to date of the three central works.

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A note on the music examples

Unless otherwise specified, the music examples are taken from works by Havergal Brian. The majority of the music examples in this thesis come from the short scores of the three main works under discussion. These short scores (and the full scores) can be studied in the library of the Royal College of Music, where they are housed. The examples reflect, as closely as possible, the look and layout of the source. Brian's notation is idiosyncratic in these scores. He wrote top and bottom parts with stems upward and downward respectively, regardless of their positions on the stave. Though technically incorrect, the layout does reveal Brian's view of much of the material as predominantly contrapuntal in texture. Details such as phrasing are often ambiguous, perhaps revealing the haste to progress to the stage of writing a full score. The examples taken from the surviving sketch pages are presented in the same manner. There are also some examples reduced by the author from the full score. These occur either when there are changes of a substantial nature between short and full score, or when the passage in the example does not appear at all in the short score, being added in by Brian at the full score stage.

The scores are marked by rehearsal numbers, rather than consecutive bar numbers for each movement. The numbering of the three scores in figures is not consistent. In the two symphonies, a figure has been inserted by hand every ten bars. In the case of the Violin Concerto, the numbering is more erratic. A figure may contain as few as four, or as many as twelve bars. The numberings do, however — in the absence of bar numbers — provide useful reference points within each score. They are used for that purpose in the detailed studies that follow in this thesis.

Brian seldom wrote any instrumental indications in his short scores or sketch pages. In the music examples, I have indicated the orchestration in square brackets and italics. All indications in other type are by Brian. The instrumental abbreviations used in the music examples are given on the next page.

LIST OF INSTRUMENTAL ABBREVIATIONS

Picc	Piccolo
Fl	Flute
Ob	Oboc
C.A.	Cor Anglais
Cl	Clarinet
B Cl	Bass Clarinet
Bn	Bassoon
Cbn	Contrabassoon
Tpt	Trumpet
Hn	French Horn
Tbn	Trombone
Tba	Tuba
Timp	Timpani
Cel	Celeste
Glock	Glockenspiel
Xyl	Xylophone
Hp	Harp
Pno	Piano
Org	Organ
Vln	Violin
Vla	Viola
Cello	Violoncello
D.B.	Double Bass

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PREFACE

The musicologist Hans Keller once wrote with regard to the Austrian composer Arnold Schönberg (1874–1951) that he was 'more talked about than played'.¹ This observation applies even more to the English composer William Havergal Brian (1876–1972). Brian's longevity and extensive output contain enough startling statistics to keep him talked about for a considerable time. For example, his first symphony, the massive Gothic (1919–27) is listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the longest ever written. In total he wrote thirty two symphonies, twenty two of them after he had turned eighty. Given the fame of the Gothic in comparison with the other symphonies - or is it notoriety? — it should be pointed out that while its successors are not written on a similarly enormous scale, their range is nonetheless considerable. For example, the Fourth Symphony, Das Siegeslied (1932-33). lasts just under an hour and requires a very large orchestra, chorus and soloists. By contrast, the aptly tilted Symphonia brevis (No.22, written in 1964–5) is purely orchestral — though the forces are still considerable --- and lasts just under ten minutes. The Gothic is unique rather than typical, and to a degree it stands apart from the rest. This thesis examines the purely orchestral works written in the decade following the completion of that massive work.

In addition to the above statistics, there is also the matter of Brian's bad luck with regard to autograph scores. The full score of his first opera. *The Tigers* (1917–29) was lost for several years, only to be recovered five years after the composer's death in a Chinese laundry, formerly a publishing house. His largest work, a choral and orchestral setting of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (1937–44), exists only in vocal score format, for the full score is missing. When he left the score of his (first) Violin Concerto (1934) on a train and subsequently failed to recover it, he proceeded to write a second concerto (written in 1934–5, to be discussed in detail in chapter 6) using what themes he could recall from the disappeared score. If nothing else, this immediate replacement of a lost work demonstrates the extent of Brian's devotion to composition, a devotion that lasted for almost seven decades through the vicissitudes of his long and eventful life.

¹ Hans Keller, 'Schönberg: Violin Concerto, op. 36. Piano Concerto, op. 42⁺, sleeve notes for record Turnabout TV 34051S, 1969.

Thanks to his very long life-span, Brian was both a friend of Edward Elgar (1857– 1934) — arguably the most significant English composer since Henry Purcell (1659– 95) — and a witness to the break-up of the Beatles, arguably the world's most significant force in popular music in the latter stages of the twentieth century. His composing career thus spans from the Late-Romantic era, dominated in England by the figure of Elgar, to the early careers of the so-called Manchester school of composers, Alexander Goehr (1932-), Harrison Birtwistle (1934-) and Peter Maxwell Davies (1934-). In fact, Brian was an interested listener to both the premiere of Elgar's early cantata *King Olaf*, op.36 (1896), which he attended, and which he said inspired him to begin his long composing career, and the early works of the generation of composers mentioned above. It is indicative of the extraordinary span of Brian's composing career that works such as Maxwell Davies' *Second Fantasia on John Taverner's In Nomine* (1964) and Birtwistle's *Tragoedia* (1965) are contemporary with his late corpus of symphonies.

In addition to being a prolific and long-lived composer. Havergal Brian was also a neglected one. The successes of his early years were followed, after the break-up of his first marriage and a subsequent move to London, by decades of obscurity until his work began to receive attention when the composer was nearing his ninth decade. He first heard one of his symphonies when No.8 (1949) was broadcast in 1954 by the BBC. He was then seventy-eight. He lived long enough to see a rebirth of interest in his output, thanks largely to the services of Robert Simpson (1921–97), who secured a commitment to broadcast all of Brian's symphonies. Simpson, himself a distinguished composer of eleven symphonies, was working as a producer for the BBC at the time. The first commercial recording of any of Brian's work took place during the last summer of his life, by the Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra under James Loughran and Eric Pinkett.² The recent recording of several of the symphonies in performances for the Marco Polo label has finally begun to address, as yet in an incomplete manner, the unavailability of professional interpretations of this music, which is often challenging for both performer and listener.

² Brian: *Symphony No. 10. Symphony No. 21*: Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra, James Loughran (No.10) and Eric Pinkett (No. 21), Unicorn LP RHS 313, 1973.

Many of the first performances of Brian symphonies have been of a perfunctory nature, due to pressures of time and the dubious quality of performing materials. Brian's notation — as noted above in relation to the music examples — is idiosyncratic at times, and orchestral parts hand-written by others often contained errors in transcription as a consequence. These are far more likely in the absence of an authoritative published score. The Marco Polo recordings of the last few years, while variable, have at least been produced with more rehearsal time and clearer orchestral parts (often done using a music programme on computer). The importance of accuracy in realising the compositional intentions of Brian is — as for any composer — fundamental to any attempt to assess his music.

Two of the three works that form the centrepiece of this thesis have been successfully recorded commercially — Symphony No. 3 (1931–2) and the Violin Concerto (1934–5) — while the other work, the Symphony No. 2 (1930–1), is adequately played (see Discography). The recording was made, however, without the full complement of sixteen horns required for the third movement, the 'Battle' scherzo. In this regard, the more accurate performances and recordings of Brian in recent years have an important part to play in securing for him a status better than neglect.

My first encounter with the music of Havergal Brian came with the broadcast of four late symphonies early in 1979 (Nos. 27, 29, 31 and 32). I listened with curiosity to hear this music that was neglected, and heard a distinctive voice, if an unfamiliar one. The broadcast of a live performance of the legendary *Gothic* the following year made an even stronger impression. I joined the Havergal Brian Society as a consequence of that *Gothic* broadcast, and since then have been getting to know and hear more and more of his extensive output. Although — as a composer myself — I felt sympathetic towards the plight of Brian and his neglected output. I realised that Brian could be best served by a dispassionate exploration of his musical language, rather than by an uncritical plea for salvation and belated recognition. Brian deserved — or rather needed — treatment no different from any other composer, neglected or exalted.

It is impossible to state with finality exactly how Brian's compositional process worked — he is hardly unique in that respect — but it is clear from what follows that the composer worked out his ideas with deliberation and craft, in order to arrive at the finished scores of the three works. On the basis of those scores, and taking the wider context into consideration. Brian emerges as a distinctive voice in British symphonic writing of the nineteen thirties — at the very least. He had something individual to say, and worked at his ideas in order to say it as clearly as possible. What he said emerges clearly in the detailed discussion of Symphonies 2, 3 and the Violin Concerto in the central chapters of this thesis, separated from the sensational stories that can beset anyone becoming acquainted with Brian and his music for the first time.

Uncritical commentary is as damaging to the celebrated as it is to the lesser known. For Brian to be assessed as a composer pure and simple, without any qualifying adjectival description, his music needs to be seen in a similar manner, as music pure and simple (or perhaps not so simple). The question as to whether Brian will ever become a popular composer is an unanswerable one, but as the composer himself once wrote, 'Fortunately, in music, popularity does not affect quality'.³ The Brian works discussed below — from the early pieces to the three orchestral works that form the centrepiece of the thesis — are becoming better known as a result of the recordings of recent years. Music will always make its own way once it is heard. And Brian is a composer who deserves to be heard.

³ Havergal Brian. On popularity (and Elgar. Reger. Harty, ...) on the official Havergal Brian website: <u>http://www</u> musicweb.uk.net/brian/, 31 March 2003.

INTRODUCTION

What kind of symphonism is this?' — this question was raised by the late Hugh Ottaway. in a review of the first commercial recording of the Symphonies Nos. 8 (1949) and 9 (1951) by the English composer Havergal Brian (1876–1972).¹ This thesis focuses on a particular period in the lengthy composing career of Brian, after the completion of his first symphony, the massive *Gothic* (1919–27), and before he began work on *Prometheus Unbound* (1937–44). which is his longest work in any medium. The three purely orchestral works discussed at length below — the Symphonies Nos. 2 (1930–1) and 3 (1931–2) and the Violin Concerto (1934–5) — reflect his approach to the task of composing for the orchestral medium after finishing his largest, and most singular symphony. This detailed examination of three of Brian's pivotal scores from the 1930s offers the closest glimpse yet into the workings of his creative mind, at a time when he was arguably at the height of his powers.

This period also includes vocal works, namely the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies *Das Siegeslied* (1932–3) and *Wine of Summer* (1937), but the three works chosen share a preoccupation with the purely orchestral medium. They also share a concern with the solistic treatment of a particular instrument or group of instruments in each work. This ranges from the four concertante groups of four horns in the 'Battle ' scherzo of Symphony No. 2, and the two solo piano parts in Symphony No. 3 — particularly prominent in the first of its four movements — to the Violin Concerto, which represents a clear culmination of this compositional thread. Further to this, my research into the manuscript sources of the first movement of the Third Symphony reveals that Brian may well have planned the piece initially as a concerto for one or two pianos and orchestra (see chapter 5 below).

Brian's long and eventful life has been the subject of three biographies, and the thirty two symphonies which form a major part of his artistic legacy are the subject of three volumes of commentary by the foremost Brian scholar. Malcolm MacDonald.² The biographies chronicle the stages in Brian's life, from a potential successor to Elgar, through the years of neglect after the First World War, to the revival of interest in his

¹Hugh Ottaway, review of *Havergal Brian: Symphonies Nos. 8 and 9* in *Hi-Fi News & Record Review*, July 1978.

² See the bibliography for details.

music as the composer reached his ninth decade. Malcolm MacDonald's three-volume study of the symphonic output details the nature of each symphony in turn, in the manner of insightful programme notes. The bulk of the third volume then discusses the characteristic features of Brian's style, and provides the most detailed single commentary on his musical language as a whole yet written.

In the absence of an autobiography or a detailed commentary on the music by its composer, one is left with the music itself and the sometime sensational facts of his biography. The former forms the basis for, and the raison d'être of this thesis. The latter is detailed in the three biographies of the composer published to date (see bibliography). Of these three, the Eastaugh does not attempt a comprehensive survey of the music. The two Nettel books offer introductory commentaries on some works (sometimes with music examples) but do not attempt the sort of extended critical assessment found in the third volume of Malcolm MacDonald's books on the symphonies. The following thesis represents the most detailed commentaries on any of Brian's works — with the exception of the *Gothic* — yet written. There is much more to be said — and written — about the extensive output of this composer. The five operas, for example, have not received nearly as much attention as the symphonies.

In 1974, two years after the death of the composer, the Havergal Brian Society was founded by two enthusiasts. Martin Grossel and James Reid Baxter. The *Newsletter* it publishes every two months has amassed a considerable amount of literature on the composer, a selection of which formed the basis for Jurgen Schaarwächter's *HB: Aspects of Havergal Brian*, published by Ashgate in 1997 (see bibliography). In addition to this, the Society has lobbied successfully for performances and recordings of Brian's output, as well as offering a reward which led to the recovery of the full score of *The Tigers* in 1977, mentioned above.

A neglected composer such as Brian needs a champion — or a society of enthusiasts dedicated to championing his cause — but his music also needs to be objectively appraised. To evaluate the music as fully as possible, two different but complementary approaches are taken in the following thesis. Firstly, by means of a study of sources such as sketch pages and short scores, it is possible to determine how Brian arrived at the final scores of the two symphonies and the Violin Concerto that form the

centrepiece of this thesis. This results in the most detailed insight yet into his compositional method from a comparison of the various compositional source materials. From the earliest surviving sketch material to the finished score of each work, the clear picture emerges of a composer single-mindedly and deliberately working towards the most effective realisation of his compositional ideas.

The music of each separate movement in the three central works is treated in turn, staring with an overview, and proceeding to a detailed exposition of the chief elements that shape each one. The approach does not seek to impose a structure on the music from the outside, but rather to extrapolate compositional priorities and emphases from the material itself. Thus, for example, the first movement of the Symphony No. 2 is discussed both in terms of a sonata structure, and in terms of the telling use of the orchestral forces to drive the music to its climax. The discussion of the opening movement of the Symphony No. 3 details how Brian tellingly employs two pianos in a concertante manner, which blends the symphonic with influences from the concerto genre, and a study of the sketches and short score provides many clues to how Brian sought to reconcile the demands of concerto and symphony. The Violin Concerto, by contrast, represents a comparable fusion from the opposite perspective, as Brian's symphonic manner is given a new context in the genre of concerto, as discussed below. The labels used to define sections — and indeed the division into those sections outlined in the commentary — represent one view of the music, but by no means the only one. Other commentators may differ in their approach, and their conclusions. The value of the following commentaries — apart from the unprecedented detail in which they examine the three central Brian works - lies in their acknowledgement of the importance of Brian's own compositional materials (namely the sketches and short scores) in forming the approach to the finished work. Assessing what Brian was attempting in each work thus informs judgement of the finished piece as the end product of a deliberate creative process.

Understanding Brian's compositional aims is crucial in assessing his achievement. The composer, however, was not particularly forthcoming on this matter, either in letters or in written commentaries or articles about his work. The case of his article entitled 'How the Gothic Symphony came to be written' is typical of this, as discussed below in the chapter on that mammoth work. His comment to Nicholas Slominsky that 'The

Symphonies compose themselves' was made towards the end of a long life blighted by neglect, and one can interpret this bland statement as a protective mask.³ His continual composition in the face of almost total neglect — twenty-two symphonies after the age of eighty, for example — speaks far more forcefully of an attitude of fortitude rather than indifference.

The second approach to the case of Brian and his music in this thesis presents a comparison of the music of Brian with that of his main contemporaries. This reveals much commonality of thought, as well as important differences. The discussion of early works by Brian below shows that he both learned, and stood apart from his contemporaries. The influences that shape a young composer can offer an insight into how the developing style in the music reflects ideas from contemporaries and predecessors. An individual voice is often the result of a developing ability to absorb and transform those influences. As he continued to compose and develop. Brian's approach inevitably became more and more subject to his individual way of thinking. The striking individuality of works such as the Second and Third Symphonies and the Violin Concerto can thus be traced back to the earlier works, and through them influences from other composers. The following chapters on the early works, and the music of his English contemporaries in the symphonic field, both trace these points of similarity and divergence.

³ Brian quoted in MacDonald. The Symphonies, vol. 3, 81

CHAPTER ONE THE EARLY ORCHESTRAL WORKS

Introduction

The works discussed below offer a cross section of the output of the young Brian, prior to his beginning work on the two defining works which signal the arrival of his maturity, the comic opera *The Tigers* (1917–29) and the *Gothic* Symphony (1919–27). They are selected on the basis of the ways in which they reflect influences on the young composer, as well as for the manner in which they contain features which anticipate some of those found in the three works that form the centrepiece of this thesis, namely Symphony No. 2 (1930–31). Symphony No. 3 (1931–2) and the Violin Concerto (1934–5). They provided the composer with some of his earliest opportunities to write for the orchestral medium, with which he remained fascinated throughout the remainder of his career. The fact that he heard performances of these works also contributed toward his developing skill in the art of orchestration. They are very assured, while also hinting here and there at the more distinctive sound of later Brian.

The influence of Edward Elgar, mentioned in the previous chapter as perhaps the most important inspiration for the young Havergal Brian, is most notable, particularly in relation to For Valour (1904-06) and In Memoriam (1910). Richard Strauss is another seminal figure. his influence being most prominent in relation to Doctor Merryheart (1911–12). Further to these clear influences, there is an abiding concern with one of the burning issues of the day, namely the presence or absence of an extra-musical programme for a work. In this regard, there is a parallel between the thinking of Brian and Elgar. Brian described In Memoriam (1910) as a 'symphonic poem' but did not provide a detailed programme for the work, beyond a division into three scenes. Elgar described his *Falstaff* (1913) as a 'symphonic study' and published an explanatory programme prior to the premiere, but the titles of sections outlined in the programme do not appear in the published score. These details reflect a shared uncertainty with regard to how much extra-musical information to reveal in order for the piece to make the best impression. There is also a concern, given the use of the term 'symphonic' in the subtitle to each work, that the musical argument should be taken seriously above and beyond the presence — or absence — of a programme.

Brian's ambiguous attitude in this matter can also be related to that of Gustav Mahler (1860–1911), who presented programmes for some of his earlier symphonies, only to subsequently withdraw them in a desire to let the music stand on its own. The case of his First Symphony is perhaps most illuminating in this respect. At its first performance in Budapest in 1889, the work was billed as a Symphonic Poem in two parts. For a subsequent performance in Hamburg in 1893, Mahler provided a new overall title ('Titan: a tone poem in symphonic form'), titles for each individual movement, and maintained the division into two parts. When the work was published in 1899, however, it was simply called Symphony No. 1 in D major.

Mahler admitted, in a letter to the critic Max Marshalk, written in 1896, that the title and explanatory notes (the latter not used in the booklet for the Budapest premiere) post-dated the composition of the work.⁴ In a letter to another critic, Richard Batha, written later the same year. he elucidates his attitude at this stage of his compositional career:

If I have occasionally given them [Symphonies 1 to 3] titles, it was in order to provide pointers to where feeling is meant to change into imagining.⁵

The later Mahler symphonies are devoid of programmatic trappings. The Symphony No. 8 (1906) does set the final scene of Goethe's *Faust* as its second part, but the music is not programmatic, tending rather towards the realm of oratorio. This absence of programmatic material in relation to his later work may explain the tendency on the composer's part to strip away retrospectively any such associations from his earlier symphonic essays. There is a parallel here with the case of Brian. His comments regarding the relationship of his Second Symphony (1930–31) to a programme drawn from Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773) are discussed below (see chapter 4). They reflect a similar conclusion to that of Mahler — as Brian neared the end of his long life — that the music should stand on its own merits.

With regard to the earlier works, it is *Doctor Merryheart* (1911–12) that is the most

⁴ Gustav Mahler, Letter of 20 March, 1896; trans. in Knud Martner (ed.), *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler* (Faber and Faher, 1979), 177-8.

⁵ Gustav Mahler, Letter of 18 November, 1896; trans. In Martner (ed.). Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler, 197-8.

programmatic, whereas the other four works discussed below can, to a certain degree, be said to make use of titles in order to achieve what Mahler expressed, namely the changing of feeling into imagining. In this manner, titles such as *For Valour* and *In Memoriam* in particular, and *Fantastic Variations* and *Festal Dance* to a lesser degree, give the listener an insight into the musical world imagined by the young Brian. It is a world of developing ideas and growing assurance, where influences from contemporaries and traits familiar from later Brian works mix in a manner typical of the early output of many composers.

It is one of the most fascinating aspects of these early works to observe these characteristics of the later composer in their earliest incarnations. Features such as the lack of transition between ideas and the related use of blocks of material throughout the progress of a piece are hallmarks of these early works, as well as their much later successors. The use of discontinuity as an important part of his compositional manner, while not as prominent a feature as it would later become, nonetheless features to a certain extent in these works. This indicates strongly that this feature was not purely a later development — when the composer was writing his works without hearing the majority of them — but was a conscious device in the years when Brian's work was far more regularly performed. A personal approach to the use of tonal harmony is indicated in these early works by the avoidance of the dominant in cadential passages. The importance of orchestral texture in a structural sense — perhaps gleaned form that inspirational hearing of the atmospheric opening of Elgar's King Oluf (1896) — can also be traced through these early efforts. The tendency to vary ideas considerably when being restated, present in both these early works and their successors, shows a commonality of thought with the symphonic manner of a contemporary such as Gustav Mahler. Taken as a whole, despite the different sound worlds, there is a consistency of approach to certain compositional parameters on the part of Brian from these early works of the first years of the twentieth century, right through to his final works of the late 1960s. These early efforts, then, form an integral part in tracing the development of Brian's compositional language up to the point where he wrote the works central to this thesis.

Concert Overture 'For Valour' (1904-06)

This work, completed in 1904 and revised (to what extent we do not know) in 1906, was first performed at a Henry Wood Promenade Concert in 1907, the most successful year of Brian's career. The *English Suite No. 1*(1903–4) was also performed at the Proms that year.⁶ The Victorian overtones implicit in the title (which is part of the legend on the Victoria Cross, awarded for bravery in the armed forces of the British Empire) are to a large extent borne out in the broadly heroic tone of much of the work. It is perhaps typical of Brian's unorthodox approach that a work that carries within it the spirit of the (military) march should stride forth at the outset in 3/4 rather than 4/4. It is very much of its time, both in being written for a large late-romantic orchestra, with the addition of organ, and also with regard to the ambiguity between the associative title, and the lack of a programme. It is described by Brian as a 'Concert Overture' rather than a tone poem, a generic title it shares with *In the South* 1903–4) by Elgar. The music certainly contains echoes of both Elgar and Strauss, but there are also individual touches which prefigure some traits of the composer's later works.

For Valour is described by Malcolm MacDonald as being in sonata form, while the orthodoxy of the restatements of the thematic groups also strongly suggests a ternary feel, with the 'development' section serving as a central contrast." The labelling of sections is of less importance than the fact that the broad outline of the form is related to that of a work such as the *Tragic Overture*, op. 81 (1881) by Johannes Brahms (1833–97). The central section of that work can be viewed both as a development of the opening ideas, and as a slower contrast to the outer sections of the work. The central 'development' section in the Brian concentrates on the rhythm of the opening bar of the first theme, presenting it in changing contexts, rather than maintaining the character of its initial appearance. This anticipates to a certain degree the allusive developmental processes found in later Brian. The sonata idea is nonetheless treated with more fluidity between parts in *For Valour* than is the case in the first movement of the later Second Symphony (1930–31) (see chapter 4). This would support the contention that the relatively orthodox nature of the later movement is related to its

⁶ Malcolm MacDonald, Brian: For Valour, Doctor Merryheart, Symphonies nos. 11 and 15, sleeve notes for compact disc Marco Polo 8.223588, 2000.2.

⁷ Ibid. 3.

role in the context of that work as essentially introductory, rather than a lack of compositional sophistication on the part of the composer.

One of the more subtly effective features of For Valour is the composer's handling of the moment of recapitulation. This begins, not with the striving opening theme, but with the quieter second strain of the first subject group. What follows is a relatively orthodox restatement of the rest of the main themes, but with the opening re-appearing tellingly at a climactic moment. The re-placement of the opening is thus rendered highly effective in its new context. Instead of being a point of departure, as at the outset, it now appears as a point of dramatic arrival. This shuffling of constituent ideas is part of the fluidity referred to above. The first movement of the Violin Concerto (1934-5) reveals a much more radical rethinking of the moment of return, with a drastic compression of the opening bars only appearing before a new, calmer section ensues (at fig.27: 6). In this later case an entire opening paragraph is compressed into just four bars. What these moments in For Valour and the Violin Concerto share, however, is a concern that the onward momentum of the music, and its processes of development and renewal, are not arrested by too literal a gesture of repetition. This lack of literal repetition is typical of the later style, but the idea behind it also informs parts of this early work.

The end of *For Valour* is one of its weaknesses, being rather overdone, while at the same time being too short. There is little in the way of a coda, and instead the work seems to impose a sense of finality by sheer volume. Brian was often — in his later work — to display a difficulty with creating a fitting end to his works. The sketches for the end of the Third Symphony (1931–32) reveal this difficulty, as discussed in chapter 5. This shows a tendency on Brian's part to opt sometimes for the abruptly dismissive rather than the appropriately conclusive. In the case of the Third Symphony, however, the ending — if rather sudden in its immediate context — can be related to music heard much earlier in the work. The conclusion of *For Valour*, by contrast, does not contain such dramatic resonance.

For Valour shares with the first movement of the Second Symphony (1930–31), perhaps coincidentally, a common use of the key areas of C and E. C (major) is the

tonic in the early work, as opposed to E (minor) in the first movement of the symphony. The second strand of the first subject group of the present work is presented in E major, in both the exposition and restatement, but with enhanced orchestration in the latter. This also suggests a further parallel with the opening movement of No. 2, where the second subject group is treated in a similar manner. The implication is that Brian, even in this early work, favoured varying statements of his material by textural additions rather than harmonic or melodic changes. Incidentally, the pairing of these two particular tonalities (C and E) also recurs in other early works discussed below, suggesting a fondness for these key areas on the part of the young Brian. It is important to note, however, that the character of the music in these keys differs in each work, thus avoiding any hint of monotony.

Of further interest in For Valour is the composer's use of the augmented triad. This chord is not a common element in his later music, but it is the manner of his use of it in the present context that is of more relevance than the fact of its occurrence. At three climactic points, the triad of C-E-G sharp is heard. The first time it leads, after a reduction in orchestration, to the first appearance of the second subject group, in the key of the dominant, G major. Its second occurrence is central to a move from E major to C major, at the end of the exposition, and its final use is located close to the end of the work, where it alternates briefly with triads of E minor. Its neutral role in triadic language is exploited by Brian to mark these sectional divisions. The fact that it contains both the pitches C and E — and thus the capability of suggesting either key area — enables it to link these two tonal areas, central to the harmonic structure of the work, without the extensive use of modulation. Brian's later music is noted for the general absence of modulations between key areas. as will be discussed below in relation to the three works that form the centrepiece of this thesis. The use of the augmented triad in the present work can thus be related to a central facet of Brian's musical language throughout his career, namely the avoidance of modulation. If the sound of the triad is atypical in Brian's work, its function is more characteristic.

A further trait typical of the later composer is his use of sequence between thematic statements, once again effectively avoiding modulation. The blocks of thematic statement separated by these passages stand all the more clearly in relief as a consequence, anticipating the block-like separations of material found in later works.

For Valour also contains instances of his habit of halting at a climactic moment before resuming, after a pause, with contrasting material. This feature anticipates one of the most frequently noted aspects of his later style, termed 'productive discontinuity' by John Pickard.⁸ Its occurrence here reveals that it was an important part of the composer's manner of discourse even at this early stage of his career.

Fantastic Variations on an Old Rhyme (1907)

In 1907 and 1908, the young Brian worked at his first work bearing the title 'Symphony'. This was a programmatic piece in four movements with the overall title of A Fantastic Symphony. The spectre of Hector Berlioz (1803-69) and his epochmaking Symphonie Fantastique (1830) may have led the young composer to revise his scheme, especially when one considers that his work, like the Berlioz, contained a 'March to the Scaffold'. In a 1909 letter to Herbert Thompson, the music critic of the *Yorkshire Post*, Brian mentions this movement in the context of what had become by then a three-movement Humorous Legend on 'Three Blind Mice'.⁹ At some stage after this Brian decided to disband the work further. He allowed the first and last movements to stand independently, and appears to have abandoned the central scherzo. The opening movement became Fantastic Variations on an Old Rhyme, and the finale acquired the title Festal Dance. When preparing these scores for publication, Brian wrote to Granville Bantock in 1912 that he had 'purged the variations on "mice" of its worst crudities'. Published in 1914. the Fantastic Variations received its premiere under Lyell Taylor in 1921, in Brighton, where it was cut to some degree. The first uncut performance took place two years later under Sir Dan Godfrey, and the work was also conducted by Donald Toyey in Edinburgh in 1934, which accounts for the inclusion of an analysis of the piece in volume 6 of his famous Essays in Musical Analysis.10

This work is representative of the satirical, humorous and whimsical side of Brian. He would go on to write three so-called 'Comedy Overtures' — *Doctor Merryheart* (1911–12). *The Tinker's Wedding* (1948) and *The Jolly Miller* (1962) — and an Opera

⁸ John Pickard, 'Havergal Brian's productive discontinuity. With a comment by Martyn Becker' in *HB*: Aspects of Havergal Brian, Jurgen Schaarwächter (ed.), (Ashgate, 1997), 93-104.

⁹ Malcolm MacDonald, 'Havergal Brian (1876-1972): Fantastic Variations on an Old Rhyme, Symphonies Nos. 20 and 25', sleeve notes for compact disc Marco Polo 8.223731, 1995, 2. ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

— *The Tigers* (1917–29) — which anticipates, in some respects, the anarchic humour of the Monty Python television series of the 1970s. It seems likely that the changes of title that occurred, as well as the changes in context, were accompanied by revisions of some nature. Brian's comment to Bantock — quoted above — may go some way toward explaining how the three-movement work described to Thompson, which he said lasted 'forty five minutes' has come down to us as two intact parts of that threemovement scheme. The two surviving pieces barely extend to twenty minutes in total, leaving a huge span for the central scherzo (called, intriguingly, 'The Bogey Man'), which seems extremely unlikely. As with many of Brian's early works, there are more tantalising mentions of scores — many of which seem to have been lost — than hard evidence of the exact sequence, and size, of his output at this time.

The *Fantastic Variations* was published without any programmatic information, which may reflect Brian's desire to let the purely musical aspect of the piece be taken more seriously than might have been the case otherwise. It is interesting to note, in relation to this, that Donald Tovey, writing in volume 6 of his 'Essays in Musical Analysis' described the second main melodic idea of the *Fantastic Variations* as being representative of the human feminine element.¹¹ He may well have gleaned this information from a conversation with the composer, but if that is the case, Brian chose not to tell him of his addition of a policeman to the saga, as love-interest. This representative of the forces of law and order is as much a lampoon as the later incarnations found in *The Tigers* (1917–29), as well as in the *Three Illuminations* for piano (1916). The police officer in the present work, as Brian related to Thompson, 'makes Love to Farmer's Wife (all Caruso)'.

The use of the variation principle implied in the title is blended with other considerations (whose presence in the work may be due to the original programme) resulting in a sense of fluidity beyond the periodic sections often found in a variation work. The variations in the present work can be viewed as dramatic episodes in the unfolding of the programme, with the presence of additional thematic material further diluting the notion of periodic variations on a single theme. The slow movement of the Violin Concerto (1934–5) is also a set of variations (the theme of which is treated in

¹¹ Tovey quoted in *Ibid.*, 3.

passacaglia-like fashion), and one can see a relationship between the handling of the form in the two pieces. Both feature independent material which is also subject to development and variation, resulting in a flexible handling of the form in each work, and a broader range of ideas being used. The idea of character variations in the *Fantastic Variations* also permits Brian to develop his materials in an allusive manner which prefigures his later developmental procedures, as the restraint imposed by the adoption of periodic variations is put to one side.

The *Fantastic Variations* present us with a further instance of Brian's fondness for using C and E as complementary tonal areas in his early work. The piece begins in E major with the eponymous theme, following it with a second statement in C major. Further to this, the second melodic idea, which, we can deduce from Brian's letter to Thompson, represented the Farmer's wife, is also initially heard in C major. There are two 'chase' sequences in the work, the second of which further uses C major as its starting point. These uses of the flattened submediant suggest that Brian liked to use the latter as a substitute for the more traditional dominant key in his tonal hierarchy. This avoidance of the dominant was to remain a constant element in the harmonic thinking of the composer throughout his career.

The florid melodic writing used at the point of the appearance of the police officer in the work is certainly intended for comic effect in the present context. Perhaps the policeman is of Italian origin, as the phrase 'all Caruso' implies. This florid writing, however, also prefigures the sort of ornate melodies found in certain later works, such as occurs in the slower episodes of the Eighth Symphony (1949). where the orchestra is treated in a comparably virtuoso manner. The nature of this particular variation is therefore that of a character portrait. This presents a clear link with the approach of Elgar and Strauss to the use of variation form. The idea of character variations is central both to Elgar's *Enigma* Variations (1898–9) and to Strauss's *Don Quixote* (1896–7). The latter is subtitled 'Fantastic Variations on a Theme of Knightly Character'. A further link between the work of Brian and his great German contemporary is provided by the nostalgic coda of the *Fantastic Variations*. This is brushed aside by the abrupt conclusion in a manner analogous to the conclusion of Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel* (1894–5).

There are also two passing allusions to the music of Wagner (and the 'Ring' cycle in particular, a suitably large target for satirical sideswipes) which add to the sense of mischief in the Brian work. The augmented triad, noted above in relation to its use in *For Valour*, makes a climactic appearance here, but in the present work the rhythm used raises the distinct spectre of the Valkyries, as does the horn writing. After the rodents have lost their tails — or, perhaps. Eulenspiegel-like, their heads — a solo for timpani, on C sharp, presents a shadowy allusion to 'Siegfried's Funeral Music' from *Götterdämmerung* (1869–74). The finale of Brian's Second Symphony (1930–31) reflects the influence of this music far more pervasively in a serious context, as discussed below, and in so explicit a manner that it can be heard as a homage, as opposed to the irreverent allusions in the present work.

The second 'chase' sequence anticipates the practice of the later Brian in its rapid alternation between sections of the orchestra, in a manner which could be viewed — in relation to a narrative programme — as focusing in turn on the pursuer, and the pursued. These abrupt changes of focus anticipate the elliptical manner of discourse characteristic of a much later Brian work such as the Symphony No. 17 (1960–61), where the technique is found alongside examples of the 'productive discontinuity' described by John Pickard.¹² Unlike the finale of the Second Symphony, which also makes notable use of discontinuity as it unfolds, the present work does not feature this personal device to any significant degree. It is clear, from all three 'Comedy' Overtures which Brian would go on to write (see the following discussion of *Doctor Merryheart*, the first of these) that the use of discontinuity was not necessarily excluded from a comic context, but the discourse here is not subject to such purposeful disruption.

One should not overlook the fact that the first work by Brian to bear the title 'Symphony' (of which the present work constituted the opening movement) is a deliberately satirical, not to say flippant, contribution to the genre. This attitude of subversion is also present, but in a far more profound manner, in the *Gothic* Symphony (1919–27), which, in its hugely different way, is just as unorthodox an essay in the form. Perhaps Brian felt, as he broke the *Fantastic Symphony* up into independent

¹² John Pickard, 'Havergal Brian's productive discontinuity', in *HB. Aspects if Havergal Brian*. Shaarwächter (ed.), 100-101.

pieces, that something of the brevity which forms the soul of wit was lost in a forty five minute symphonic caricature. The 'purging' of the present piece also suggests a desire to condense the joke, as it were. This may have led to an imbalance between the two 'chase' sequences in the score as it stands, but the *Fantastic Variations* are quite succinct as a consequence. They display enough craft and sophistication in the working out of very basic material to suggest the composer was capable of weightier things.

Festal Dance (1908)

The original title for this piece, as the finale of the *Fantastic Symphony* (1907–08), was 'Dance of the Farmer's Wife'. It is likely that this score, like the *Fantastic Variations* (1907), was revised prior to its publication in 1914. It received its premiere in December of that year under Sir Granville Bantock, and was one of the very few Brian scores to retain a slender presence in the orchestral repertoire in England, at least in the inter-war years. It received further performances under Bantock, as well as featuring in Prom concerts under Sir Henry Wood in 1920 and 1935.¹³ It is as close as Brian got to what might be termed an orchestral 'Lollipop', and no doubt its brevity and sparkle were contributing factors in its modest success.

The form can be described as ternary, with the central fugato as the contrasting section. Alternately it can be viewed as a modified sonata design, with both subjects in the tonic in exposition and restatement, and the contrapuntal centrepiece replacing a more orthodox development of motives. The dance element is of paramount importance, and the work can be heard purely as a rhythmic study without resource to any detailed programmatic associations.

The work begins with the percussion section setting out the rhythmic backbone of the outer sections of the work, and the writing for this section of the orchestra is one of the most advanced features of the piece, anticipating as it does the composer's later treatment of this orchestral division. The chief rhythmic gesture informs the work in a way which looks forward to the scherzo of the Third Symphony, written more than two decades later (1931–32). There is actually a resemblance between the two figures,

¹³ Malcolm MacDonald, 'Havergal Brain (1872-1976): In Memoriam, Festal Dance, Symphony No. 17, Symphony No. 32', sleeve notes for compact disc Marco Polo 8.223481, 1993, 5.

despite the disparity of time signatures. The *Festal Dance* is in 3/4, whereas the later movement in 2/4

The relationship between E and C major is once again a prominent feature, with outer sections in the former key surrounding the central fugato in the latter. The link to the tonalities used in the *Fantastic variations on an Old Rhyme* is clear, and could well be a remnant of a desire to unify on some level the four original movements of the *Fantastic Symphony*. Further to this is the appearance, in the second melodic strain, of the three note descending figure which begins the old rhyme on which the *Fantastic Variations* is based. Whether these veiled musical references to the departed mice was of programmatic significance is not known, but if the farmer's wife is dancing a dance of triumph, the pang of remorse which the reminiscence of their tune might suggest does not greatly influence her mood. These tonal and motivic references may have been augmented by further unifying links in the original slow movement and scherzo. However, Brian, when dismantling his first work to bear the title 'Symphony', decided that each of the former movements was to be self-sufficient. In this regard, the *Festal Dance* is best viewed as a movement in the manner of a scherzo, despite its original place as the finale of the *Fantastic Symphony*.

Sequences are used in a manner which anticipates their incorporation into the fabric of later pieces. They are used to separate out thematic statements in a manner which complements the feeling of a structure that moves in blocks of material, rather than gradual changes from one idea — or one harmonic area — to the next. One characteristic harmonic feature, however, is a major factor in the coda of the work. As the chief rhythmic idea builds towards an excited close to the work, its re-iterations of E major are answered by horn chords which studiously avoid the dominant. This climaxes in the penultimate blast from the brass with a chord of B flat major — the furthest point harmonically from the tonic. In such a context, a perfect cadence would be inappropriate, so Brian brings this ebullient work to a close via the flattened supertonic. It is this type of gesture which saves the present work, as well as the early works in general, from blandness, by contributing a distinctive colour to the harmonic language.

Another feature which anticipates the later style of the composer is the lack of transition between sections. There is none between the first and second strains, nor is there a gradual progression leading to the central fugato. or from it back to the opening material. Rather does Brian use contrasting orchestral textures to differentiate between the various divisions of his musical narrative. The fugato subject is first heard in cellos and basses as the orchestral forces — and the dynamic level — are summarily reduced. This is Brian's first foray into sustained instrumental counterpoint, and its unorthodox nature, and the initial focus on the lower register, prefigure traits of the linear style found in his later symphonies. Brian was to maintain a fondness for the lower registers throughout his long composing career. As Robert Simpson has commented: 'he thinks from the bottom upwards, not from the top down'.¹⁴

In Memoriam (1910)

In Memoriam is subtitled 'tone poem', but all that survives of what may have originally been a detailed programme is a division of the work into three 'scenes', the outer ones in C major, and the central one in E major. The manuscript score displays evidence of the deletion of a programme which, according to Malcolm MacDonald, concerned a funeral ceremony.¹⁵ The further subtitle of 'Homage to an Artist' has led to much speculation as to the particular inspiration for the memorial tone of the piece. In the absence of a definite source of external stimulus, *In Memoriam* occupies a similar middleground between absolute and programme music to the other early works discussed in this chapter. It was composed in 1910, and published three years later, but was only performed twice in Brian's lifetime, both times by the Scottish Orchestra under Sir Landon Ronald in 1921

The use of C major and E major as important harmonic areas once again reflects Brian's fondness for them at this point in his career. The sequence of keys in *In Memorium* sees an elevated, brighter character given to the central use of E major, in contrast to the more sombre tone of the outer sections, which are somewhat in the character of a solemn funeral march in C major. The central scene bears the initial inscription 'Andante ma solenne e religioso', which suggests the type of mood the

¹⁴ 'Robert Simpson in conversation with Stephen Johnson' in *HB. Aspects of Havergal Brian*, ed. Jurgen Schaarwächter, Ashgate, 1997, 168.

¹⁵ MacDonald, sleeve notes for compact disc Marco Polo 8.223481, 1993, 3.

composer. perhaps in initial response to a programme, may have wished to capture. One can infer from this that the outer sections in C major are, by contrast, more earthbound. It is interesting to note in relation to this associative use of the two key areas how the coda aspires to end in E major (literally floating upwards in harp and tremolo strings) before returning to earth with the last few bars of C major.

Like *Festal Dance*, the opening of *In Memoriam* is scored for percussion, as if to provide the rhythmic undercurrent of the music at the outset. The tonic of C major is approached through a progression which starts in Ab major. after the march rhythm on the note C on timpani which opens the work. This use of Ab major suggests an approach to C minor — rather than major, which proves to be the case — for the ensuing music. The type of opening harmonic gambit found here recurs in later Brian, notably at the start of three Symphonies — Nos. 8 (1949). 10 (1953–4) and 13 (1959) (the latter also centred, like *In Memoriam*, on C major). The beginning of the earlier work shares with these later ones the character of an introductory call to attention, before the main thematic and harmonic areas are presented.

The Elgarian tone of much of the work suggests a parallel with the work of the older composer, already noted above as providing the spur for the young Brian to pursue a career as composer with his *King Olaf* (1896). The term 'nobilmente', so beloved of Elgar, seems apposite for *In Memorium* as well, although this descriptive term is not actually used by the younger composer. A comparison of Brian's opening melody (heard after the brief introduction referred to above) with the long tune which begins Elgar's Symphony No. 1 (1907–08), however, offers points of purely musical comparison that suggest the latter work was a potent influence on the younger composer. The Brian melody is presented in the manner of a slow march, with the accompaniment characterised by chords — in a halting rhythm similar in effect to the accompaniment used by Elgar for his slow, march like melody— which lend a tentative nature to the processional evoked by the music. The sombre tone of each passage is achieved in part by a similar concentration on the middle register for the orchestration of the melody, set in relief by the richer texture of the accompanying chords.

Parallels between *In Memorium* and the music of Elgar can also be heard if one compares the Brian work with the second movement of the Elgar Symphony No.2 in Eb major, composed almost exactly contemporary with the Brian work, but finished and premiered in the following year (1911). In fact, the two works offer interesting points of confluence and divergence. Brian chooses major keys to capture his elegiac mood, in contrast to the use of C minor in the Elgar slow movement. Both, however, can be heard as memorials to an era in England, marked by the passing of King Edward VII in the same year as the composition of the Brian work. The Elgar symphony is, in fact, dedicated to the memory of the King, but this does not imply that that event was the inspiration for the work. Brian, by comparison, in one of the few comments about any of his early works, denied that *In Memoriam* was related to the passing of the monarch.

There are further points of comparison with the music of Richard Strauss, who exerted a strong influence on the young Brian, and whose tone poems were to be wittily sent up in *Doctor Merryheart* (1911–12), as we shall see. One particular Straussian echo occurs in the final climax of the *In Memoriam*, where a sumptuous C major chord is given a Straussian ecstatic stretch by the added sixth (A) on high violins at the apex of the build-up. This is strongly redolent of the final climax of *Tod und Verklarung* (1889), with which the Brian shares the general subject matter. Just before the end of the Brian work, the manner in which *In Memoriam* alternates between the high register writing in E major, and the answer in C major in the lower register can be related to the famous end of Strauss's *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (1895). A similar disparity of register and key is present between B major (top) and C major (bottom) at the conclusion of the Strauss work. The Brian, however, does not end with the deliberate and famous non-resolution of the Strauss piece, but the imbalance created by the brief final emphasis on the tonic does leave a feeling of ambiguity at the conclusion of *In Memoriam*.

The idea of a noble apotheosis has a clear precedent in *Siegfried's Funeral Music* from Richard Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* (1869–74), in particular in the use of halting march rhythms and exalted climactic passages. The relationship is even more conspicuous in the case of the final movement of the Brian Second Symphony (1930–31), where the gestures are —deliberately in the opinion of the author — very closely

related to the music for the funeral procession of Wagner's hero. Oddly enough, given that both composers focused extensively on march rhythms, there is no substantial evidence of the influence of Mahler in the present work, but the reputation of the latter had not yet spread to England, where Strauss enjoyed greater acclaim.

In addition to these clear echoes of his Late-Romantic contemporaries, *In Memoriam* also contains characteristics which anticipate the later work of Havergal Brian. There are instances of discontinuity in the work, but the device is used in a different manner from that of the later symphonies. For example, a subsidiary idea, first heard in E minor early in the 'First Scene', consists of a triplet figure which is repeated as dynamics and orchestral texture accumulate. On each appearance, this figure breaks off at a high point, only to be followed by a contrast in both dynamics and texture. The harmonic area, however, does not change across this dynamic and textural divide, providing an element of continuity which counteracts the disruptions in other parameters. The sense of disruption is much more pronounced in later works, where even the thread of harmonic continuity is not maintained, so that the break in the musical fabric is more total in effect. The frequent use of this technique in a work such as the Symphony No. 17 (1960–61) contributes greatly towards its challenging, initially unsettling impact.

One of the most effective moments of *In Memorium* is found at the juncture between the end of the second scene and the beginning of the third. The culmination of scene two sees an orchestral build-up in E major, complemented by an increase in tempo. At the climax — effectively the beginning of the final scene — the music immediately cuts back to the original slow tempo, and the original key of C major, for a fully scored repeat of the main theme of the opening scene. The abruptness of the change is dramatically effective, and Brian would return to this device in the 'Battle' scherzo of the Second Symphony (1930–31), to create an almost cinematic sense of perspective using four spatially separated groups of four horns (see the discussion of this movement in chapter 4).

Another characteristic of the later work of the composer in this early piece is the blocklike treatment of instrumental groups within the orchestra. The sense of perspective achieved in this manner is not unrelated to the use of acoustic space mentioned above

in relation to the scherzo of the Second Symphony. This technique is most clearly deployed in the initial stages of the second scene of *In Memoriam*, where strings, hushed and warmly scored, alternate with brass and harp interpolations. The writing for strings here anticipates, both in terms of the key, as well as the general use of a rich lower register, a similar contrast of texture and mood in the finale of the Second Symphony (1930–31), within a movement which is equally sombre and funereal.

Like the earlier For Valour (1904–06) — to which it can be seen as an epitaph — In Memoriam is very much of its time, but it is a work in which it is possible to discern stronger portents of the later stylistic development of the composer. The structural use of orchestral blocks, the productive use of discontinuity, and the varied use of thematic material in restatement all clearly foreshadow the more distinctive musical grammar of the older Brian. Slow marches figure prominently as part of Brian's sonic landscape ---in later as well as earlier works — most potently in the second movement of the *Gothic* (1919-27). The elegiac tone so characteristic of In Memorium can also be heard in a different stylistic context in the final movements of both the Second (1930-31) and Third Symphonies (1931–32). both of which are fully discussed below. The early symphonic poem could serve as an introduction to the composer in a more immediate style — or a more familiar one — than the later, more trenchant works in a manner not dissimilar to the early works of Arnold Schönberg, such as the hugely popular Verklärte Nacht (1899). Brian's In Memoriam could. given the chance, prove equally popular. It is a polished achievement, and provides a fine culmination to the serious side of Brian encountered in these early orchestral works.

Comedy Overture No.1 "Doctor Merryheart" (1911–12)

This accomplished work represents the culmination of the humorous strand in Brian's early orchestral output. It also represents a sophisticated return to the principles of variation form already explored in the *Fantastic Variations on an Old Rhyme* (1907) as well as the *Burlesque Variations on an Original Theme* (1903). The relationship to a programme is, at least on one level, less ambiguous than in the other works of this period, in that each variation is given a descriptive title, as is the coda to the work.

These run as follows:16

Section	Title
Theme	Doctor Merryheart
Variation 1	Whimsies and Sunshadows
Variation 2	Smiles and Storms
Variation 3	Dreams. Asleep in the arms of Venus
Variation 4	Merryheart as a chivalrous knight chases Bluebeard
Variation 5	Merryheart fights a Dragon
Variation 6	Merryheart leads a procession of heroes
Variation 7	Merryheart awakes
Coda	The dance of Merryheart

Table EW 1: Sections of 'Doctor Merryheart'

The character of Merryheart was almost certainly an invention of Brian's, and can in some aspects be viewed as a self-portrait (as is the case with Strauss in relation to the hero of *Ein Heldenleben*). There is an introductory note to the score (published soon after the first performance of the work in 1913) which adds another layer of whimsy to the programmatic titles which are tabulated above. The note sets out a character sketch of the Doctor which is at best fanciful, and at times deliberately irrelevant to the work at hand. It describes, for example, a theory propounded by the 'smiling Doctor' that 'the sun, moon, earth and "all that therein is" are part of a vast diatonic scale, having its tonic in the centre of the Milky Way', but that 'there are no chromatics'.

Beyond the flippancy of the above commentary, it is worth noting that the principal theme depicting the Doctor does, in fact, consist of diatonic scales in contrary motion, and that the composer later described the Comedy Overture as a `continuous set of symphonic variations on two converging lines`. One searches in vain for penetrating analytical points in the Brian introductory note, but it should not be dismissed out of hand, as there are insights, however fleeting, into the mind of the composer. There is, for example, the following passage:

¹⁶ Titles quoted in MacDonald, 'Havergal Brian (1876-1072): For Valour. Doctor Merryheart, Symphonies Nos. 11 and 15', 5-6.

He [Merryheart] was a great dreamer. In his dreams he was prone to loud mutterings, and was known to exclaim 'I must shoot that lion'. He suffered from nightmares, and various ghosts would pass before him.¹⁷

The importance of the dream world is apparent from the titles of the individual variations, even allowing for the absence of the lion. Perhaps the dragon represents a more knightly choice of nemesis. This has the twin benefits of invoking the spirit of St. George, the patron saint of England, while also allowing Brian to allude to Siegfried (1857–69). the third of the four music dramas that make up the epic cycle Der Ring des Nibelungen by Richard Wagner (1813-83). In the latter the hero Siegfried fights the dragon Fafner. But beyond the whimsy of this passage, it is known that Brian attached great importance to his dreams, from references to them in his article How the Gothic Symphony came to be written, discussed below in the chapter on that mammoth work. Ghosts — referred to in the quotation above — also figure prominently in the narrative of his first opera The Tigers (1917–29), where a similarly comic tone is mixed with a darker satirical commentary on the futility of war. The closest the present work comes to a nightmare is in the dragon sequence, but even there the elusive character of the music suggests that the confrontation can be heard as consisting of more shadows than substance. The present work is, in fact, devoid of darker undertones, and can be viewed simply as a confident display of compositional skills by the maturing composer.

The relationship to certain tone poems of Richard Strauss is immediately apparent, and it seems likely that the work was intended as an affectionate send-up of part of the programmatic output of the latter. For example, the depiction of the eponymous Doctor in a great sweep of exuberant opening music brings the magnificent beginning of *Ein Heldenleben* (1898) to mind, and there is a further parallel between the depiction of the two characters. Each is represented, not by a single theme, but by a group of ideas which can be subject to variation and development to portray the character in his subsequent adventures. The use of character variations, common to both Brian's earlier essays in the form, the *Burlesque Variations on an Original Theme* (1903) and the *Fantastic Variations on an Old Rhyme* (1907) also invokes Strauss's *Don Quixote*

¹⁷ Brian quoted in *Ibid.*, 5.

(1896–97). The subtitle to that Strauss work. 'Fantastic variations on a theme of Knightly character' underlines further the kinship between the two pieces, particularly when one considers the sort of adventures experienced by Doctor Merryheart in variations 4 and 5 noted in the above table. The beginning of the final dance of Merryheart invokes the spirit of the dance of Till Eulenspiegel in the Strauss tonepoem of 1894–95 whose brilliant wit may well have served as a model for Brian. This is at the point where Till has skipped away from an encounter with some increasingly portentous scholars. The implied tilt at intellectualism is a feature that unites the two works, especially considering the deliberate blind alleys in Brian's introductory note, discussed above.

The shadow of Elgar has retreated from the prominent position it occupied in relation to In Memoriam (1910), although in the 'procession of heroes' section, there is a return to a 'nobilmente' style which echoes the tone of the bulk of the earlier Brian symphonic poem. There is also a curious, if perhaps coincidental parallel with Elgar's Falstaff, written in 1913, a year after Brian finished his Comedy Overture. Both focus on a comic hero, albeit with more of a serious tone in parts of the Elgar than in the Brian, and both modify thematic ideas associated with the eponymous character to invoke episodic escapades as each work progresses. There is also a 'Dream Interlude' in the Elgar, which serves the purpose of broadening the expressive scope of the piece, while also hinting at the more subdued music that comes towards the end of the work. Brian, writing on a smaller time-scale — *Falstaff* is approximately twice as long as Doctor Merryheart — uses his dream world to expand on the whimsy central to his comic conception. The ambiguous attitude of Brian to programmatic elements - see the discussion of the Symphony No. 2 below — finds an echo in the older composer with regard to *Falstaff*, labelled as a 'symphonic study' rather than a tone poem. Elgar wrote to Gerald Cumberland as follows in 1913:

> But it must not be imagined that my orchestral poem is programme music — that is provides a series of incidents with connecting links such as we have, for example, in Richard Strauss's 'Ein Heldenleben' or in the same composer's 'Domestic' Symphony. Nothing has been farther from my intention. All I have striven to do is to paint a musical portrait — or, rather, a sketch portrait.¹⁸

¹⁸ Quoted in Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life* (Oxford University Press, 1984), 649.

The cautionary tone of this passage is undermined by Elgar's use of the word 'poem' in his description of the piece. This ambivalence is also evident in the descriptions given by Brian to the early works of his under discussion. Whereas *In Memoriam* — without a detailed programme beyond the division into three scenes — was labelled as a tone poem by the composer, *Doctor Merryheart* — programmatic details and all — is classified as a Comedy Overture.

Doctor Merryheart begins and ends in E major, and also features C major quite importantly as a secondary key area. In this manner, the work continues the fondness for these keys in the four early works discussed above. The music written in E major has an extrovert, energetic character which may be associated with the music in that key in Festal Dance (1908), rather than the more celestial tone of the central scene of In Memorium (1910). However, there is also a wider harmonic palette used in the Comedy Overture than in the earlier pieces. This may be taken as a reflection of a broadening of the scope of the work of the young composer, towards the two culminating works of the next years. his first symphony (the Gothic) and his first opera (The Tigers). Examples of this are found in variation four (in G minor) and five (in F minor). The key of the sixth variation, C major, and its tone — for which the Elgarian term 'nobilmente' is apposite —refers back to In Memoriam, and this use of C major provides further evidence of Brian's focus on E and C majors in the early works under discussion. Further to this, the coda takes C major as its starting point before the work ends with an approach to the tonic — from F major, the flattened supertonic. as in the earlier Festal Dance — which typically avoids any hint of a perfect cadence.

The use of discontinuity in *Doctor Merryheart* is as prominent — if not more so — than in the case of *In Memoriam*, but its application in the Comedy Overture serves humorous, rather than dramatic ends. There is more to its use than the purely comic, however. There are three prominent and related examples of discontinuity in the work which can also interpreted as marking significant sectional divisions within the piece. The three examples discussed below effectively mark the end respectively of an opening section, a central one, and a varied restatement of the opening. The work can be seen as a sophisticated blend of variation form and sonata structure if one regards

the sections which conclude with discontinuity as exposition, development and recapitulation respectively.

There is an abrupt halt after the presentation of the opening group of themes representing Merryheart, followed by a change of mood and texture. The effect is to cut off the swaggering progress of the music portraying the Doctor, as if to puncture any heroic aspirations that may be present. From a musical point of view, this unresolved break-off point robs the opening section — or exposition — of a concluding cadence, and sets a precedent for this type of split found between variations later in the work.

The second instance of discontinuity occurs between variations six and seven, and can be heard as a depiction of the sudden waking of the Doctor from his dreams. His heroic status is undercut by the rather subdued — one is tempted to say sleepy — beginning of variation seven, which functions effectively as a recapitulation of the opening of the work. Incidentally, this subdued beginning of variation seven contradicts the assertion in the previously discussed introductory note that Merryheart 'always awoke in a state of great excitement'.

The final instance of discontinuity occurs at the end of this variation, in a manner which clearly echoes the expectant conclusion of the opening part of the piece. It is followed by the light-hearted depiction of the (light-footed) Dance of Merryheart. In each of the three cases, the expectant halt is followed by a reduction in levels of dynamics and orchestral density, and a concurrent sense of whimsy as the music continues in a more offhand manner. This device recurs in the two later Comedy Overtures, *The Tinker's Wedding* (No. 2, 1948) and *The Jolly Miller* (No. 3, 1962) despite the change of style in the intervening years. This consistency in compositional manner across five decades suggests a conscious use of this device on the part of the composer as part of his comical musical armoury

Brian retained a fondness for this work in later years, even though there is a copy of the published score with annotations in blue pencil which indicates that he considered revisions at some stage. However, these were never carried out, and in a 1922 letter to Bantock, Brian declared that he considered *Doctor Merryheart* 'the best thing I've

done apart from the opera [*The Tigers*]'. It was the first work of his to be broadcast by the BBC, in 1934. The proximity of the dates of completion (1912), first performance (1913) and publication (1913) suggest a realisation that this was a work with which he was satisfied, and may also reflect an urgency to present it before the musical public. Brian's patent desire to have this early work performed and published soon after completion contrasts with the feigned indifference to performances associated with his later years. This contrast suggests that the later attitude was a result of neglect suffered, or alternately that the old man masked his true feelings in relation to his works by such an attitude.

As a whole, the work transcends the clear divisions implied in variation form by frequently joining one variation to the next. This follows on from the fluid handling of variation form found in the earlier *Fantastic Variations*, discussed above. The first two variations of *Doctor Merryheart* present a case in point, reflecting the similarity of tone implicit in their respective titles. There is also a smooth transition from the fight with the dragon in variation 5 to the 'procession of heroes' in the succeeding variation, as one can imagine the suitably chastened dragon receding into the distance as the eponymous hero assumes heroic status.

The piece as a whole unfolds with a confidence which is perhaps reflected in the deliberate anomalies in the note which accompanies the published score. It is as if the composer is providing the programmatic information as a guide, while at the same time allowing for the necessity of the music to stand on its own. In this sense there is a link to Mahler (as considered in the introduction to this chapter), and his ambiguity with regard to programmatic descriptions and titles (with regard to his Third Symphony (1895–96), for example). Despite the Straussian parallels considered above, the language of the Brian piece is an important precursor to the more individual, but related music of much of *The Tigers*.

Conclusion

The bulk of the next two decades would see Brian working in succession on, respectively, a massive comic opera (*The Tigers*), and his equally massive first symphony (the '*Gothic*'). It is an oversimplification to see these two extraordinary works purely as climactic explorations of his comic and symphonic sides, since each is

composed of much more than the humorous and the serious respectively. But once he had fully explored the contrasting, yet linked worlds of these two pillars of his output, he must have felt fully equipped to face any compositional challenge.

Before a detailed discussion of the three orchestral works of the 1930s which embody this challenge, namely the Symphony No. 2 (1930–31), Symphony No. 3 (1931–32) and the Violin Concerto (1934–35), it is timely to survey the symphonic output of the most significant of Brian's contemporaries. The composers discussed in the following chapter all accepted the challenge of symphonic writing, as did Brian. However, the availability of their works in multiple recordings contrasts vividly with the situation regarding the thirty-two symphonies of Brian. Although this state of affairs has improved in recent years, there is still no complete cycle of Brian symphonies available on CD, let alone the existence of two or more commercial recordings of the same work.

Further to this is the fact that neither of the Brian symphonies under discussion was heard until after the composer's death, whereas the symphonic career of the four composers considered below were more public ones. The reception history of their works raises the unanswerable question of how Brian's symphonic works might have been received at the time of their composition. It is possible, however — and this is a crucial element in assessing the uniqueness of Brian's work — to draw comparisons between these more publicly successful symphonies and Brian's hidden output of the 1930s. What emerges clearly from this comparison — even more clearly than in the case of the early works discussed above, given Brian's greater experience at this stage — is the singular nature of Brian's thought as manifest in the three works under discussion. The works stand apart from their notable surroundings, and as such must also be assessed in terms of Brian's developing personal style. This assessment forms the centrepiece of this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO THE SYMPHONY IN ENGLAND: ELGAR AND AFTER

Elgar

It is in the two symphonies of Edward Elgar (1857-1934) that some of the clearest roots of Brian's symphonism may be found. From his earliest years Brian was an admirer of his great predecessor. It was the first performance of Elgar's King Olaf in 1896 that inspired the young Brian to venture down the path of composition (as noted in chapter 1). The younger composer sought the advice of Elgar after this occasion with regard to a compositional career, as noted by Nettel.¹⁹ The two composers remained in contact until after 1909, which was the last time they met (at the Musical League Festival).²⁰ After Brian's move to London in 1914, there was little communication between the two men, but despite the cooling of their initial friendship, Brian wrote of Elgar, on the occasion of the latter's death in 1934, that 'none more than he has carried the standard of musicianship higher²¹ For his part, Elgar had 'particularly mentioned Havergal Brian' as one of the most promising of the younger generation of composers in a 1905 interview.²² The two Elgar symphonies — No. 1 in A flat major (1908) and No. 2 in E flat major (1910) — provided prototypes for an English symphonic manner in Late-Romantic vein. In this regard the two Brian symphonies discussed in the present thesis - his second (1930-31) and third (1931-32) — are notable for their attempt to address and develop the particular legacy of these works.

Elgar's Symphony No. 1 was almost immediately recognised as a masterpiece, both in England and further afield. Hans Richter, who directed the premiere in Manchester on 3 December 1908, famously declared, when rehearsing the London Symphony Orchestra for the first performance in the English capital, that the work was 'the greatest symphony of modern times, written by the greatest modern composer ...and

¹⁹ Reginald Nettel, Ordeal by Music (Oxford University Press, 1945). 12.

²⁰ Malcolm MacDonald (ed), *Havergal Brian on Music, Volume One: British Music* (Toccata Press, 1986), 65.

²¹ Havergal Brian, 'Edward Elgar 1857–1934', in Havergal Brian on Music, vol. 1, 80.

²² Quoted in Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life* (Oxford University Press, 1984), 481.

not only in this country²³ Ernest Newman wrote that it was 'a work of not merely English but of European significance²⁴ The work was conducted soon after its premiere by Arthur Nikisch in Leipzig, and by Walter Damrosch in New York.

Elgar had spoken on the subject of symphonic composition in a lecture delivered in 1905 at Birmingham when he declared that 'the Symphony without a programme is the highest development of art'.²⁵ He later wrote to Walford Davies in relation to his First Symphony in the following terms:

There is no programme beyond a wide experience of human life with a great charity (love) and a *massive* hope in the future²⁶

The contemporary reaction to Elgar's First Symphony — and in particular its relation to the vexed issue of programmatic elements in a symphonic context — is reflected by the following comments from a review by Samuel Langford of the *Manchester Guardian*:

To Elgar, as to every thoughtful musician, the conflict which has raged in music for the past eighty years between the rhapsodic and the architectural schools or between programme music and absolute music has presented a difficulty...But now, he [Elgar] has tackled the problem in earnest: he has put away his self-accusation of dilletantism and has written a Symphony, but without forsaking his old rhapsodic style at all. And in so doing he has shown the true solution of the problem. He has refertilised the symphonic form by infusing into it the best ideas that could be gathered from the practice of the writers of symphonic poems.²⁷

The contrast between the famous opening motto theme of the symphony and the first subject of the ensuing Allegro has been interpreted by Jerrold Northrop Moore as a potent example of 'the need to test traditional diatonic ideals with chromatic questions'.²⁸ This dichotomy is also a main feature of the harmonic language of the

²³ Quoted in Michael Hurd, *Elgar* (Faber and Faber, 1969), 44.

²⁴ Quoted in Moore, Elgar. 546.

²⁵ Quoted in Robert Anderson, Elgar (J.M.Dent, London, 1993), 321.

²⁶ Quoted in Ibid., 330.

²⁷ Quoted in Moore, Elgar, 545.

²⁸ Ibid., 521.

Brian works discussed in the body of this thesis. The strong contrast between the two subjects of the opening movement of Brian's Symphony No. 2 (1930–31) is a clear reflection of this, as discussed below. In the first movement of No. 3 the harmonic range is equally wide. The double statements of the two main themes of that movement allow Brian to further explore areas of harmonic contrast. In each case, the first version of each theme is much more diatonically harmonised than the second one. The Elgar Symphony No. 1 begins with an opening motto melody — marked Andante (nobilmente e semplice) by the composer — the relationship of which to the main theme of the first scene of Brian's *In Memoriam* (1910) has been noted above in chapter 1. This reflection of the influence of Elgar's language in Brian's early music is unsurprising, given the personal as well as musical relationship discussed above. By the time of Brian's *Gothic* symphony (1919–27) the influence has been more fully absorbed, and the voice of the mature Brian predominates.

The Symphony No. 2 in E flat Major, op. 63 (1910) offered further inspiration for the young Brian, and remained a potent influence when he himself addressed the symphonic form some years later. The relationship between the slow movement of the symphony and Brian's *In Memorium* (1910) has already been noted in chapter 1. The overall shape of Elgar's Symphony No. 2, however — and indeed the general character of each of the four movements — find a strong echo two decades later in Brian's Third Symphony (1931–2). Elgar conducted the first performance of his Second Symphony in the Queen's Hall, London, on 24 May 1911. Both it and the Brian Symphony No. 3 are in four movements. The first two movements of both works are the weightiest, with a lighter touch and reduction of scale in the last two movements. The scherzo comes third in each case, followed by a moderately paced finale based on a lyrical melody heard at the outset. Elgar ends his symphony in a calm manner, recalling the opening theme of his first movement. Brian, on the other hand, eschews calm acceptance at the end of his work (No. 3), closing with a blazing peroration more in the nature of an aggressive dismissal than a summation.

The theme which begins the Elgar symphony in such a forthright manner — and returns as if transfigured at the close of the finale — could be said to invoke the 'Spirit of Delight' found in the Shelley motto at the head of the score. The manner of its becalmed final appearance in the symphony suggests a comparison with the

concluding section of Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben* (1898). 'The Hero's Withdrawal from the World and Fulfilment of his Mission'. Strauss also refers back to the ebullient opening of his work as his tone poem draws to a close. Further to this, the Strauss work makes its concerns explicit by means of the programmatic titles of its six sections. As Strauss himself wrote, while he was at work on the piece:

Since Beethoven's *Eroica* is so very unpopular with our conductors, and therefore only seldom played, I am now composing, to fill a pressing need, a larger tone-poem entitled 'A Hero's Life' (admittedly without Funeral March, but still in E flat major, with a great number of horns, by which heroism is always measured.).²⁹

The victory of the hero over his foes (in the 'Battle ' section) is undermined by the uneasy calm at the end of the work ('The Hero's Withdrawal from the World and Fulfilment of his Mission'). The parallel with the calm ending of the Elgar work in the same key may suggest a similar path in that work from the 'Spirit of Delight' heard at the outset. Brian — by contrast — offers a very different closing gesture in his Symphony No. 3 with the abrupt final peroration (illustrated in chapter 5 as 3:54). This suggests that, for him, the calm acceptance found in the Elgar and Strauss works was as alien as the triumphant ending of the *Eroica* was for the latter two composers in their respective works. The use of the same tonic as the Beethoven and Strauss works in the Elgar Symphony No. 2 raises interesting points with regard to the character of the latter. One can speculate whether it was intended as a Late-Romantic commentary on the heroic idealism of the Beethoven, as is arguably the case with the Strauss work. It is significant that the key and tone of the second movement of the Elgar bear comparison with the great funeral march that is the second movement of the *Eroica*.

Elgar expressed his views on the future of the symphony — and the relevance of the achievement of Strauss — in the following terms:

It seems to me that because the greatest genius of our days. Richard Strauss, recognises the Symphonic Poem as a fit vehicle for his splendid achievements, some writers are inclined to be positive that the symphony is dead. Perhaps the form is somewhat battered by the illusage of some of its admirers, although some modern Symphonies still

²⁹ Quoted in Stephan Kohler, 'Richard Strauss: Ein Heldenleben, op 40°, sleeve notes for gramophone recording Decca SET 601, 1979.

testify to its validity; but when the looked-for genius comes, it may be absolutely revived.³⁰

The fact that this was expressed before Elgar had written his First Symphony may indicate that the writer saw himself as the 'looked-for' composer in symphonic vein. The fusing of elements drawn from the realm of the symphonic poem, to which Strauss had contributed so notably, with those from the symphony proper was open to interpretation as a viable forward direction. Brian, in fact, can be said to have followed this line of development. He explored the programmatic aspect in his early orchestral works — as discussed in chapter 1 — while also establishing facets of his personal style that would serve him well in his later symphonic career. Characteristics of his early, programmatic works could thus be seen to serve equally well in the symphonies written two decades later, which are free of published programmes. This shows a tendency to fuse the two genres to some degree on Brian's part, akin to the refertilising of the symphonic form mentioned by Langford.

Further to this, however, it must be noted that Brian's comments, about his Symphony No. 2 (1930–31) in particular, reveal an ambiguity with regard to titles or subtitles for the work. His comments on the relationship of this work to Goethe's Götz von Berlichingen — discussed below in the chapter on Symphony No.2 — are a clear example of this ambiguous attitude. The third movement of the symphony, which Brian said described the battles of Götz, presents a dramatic instance of extra-musical associations — in this case the use of four spatially separated groups of four horns being treated to a process of textural accumulation as the music heads towards its climax. The particular idea for this movement may have sprung from the Goethe play, but the technical devices used are consistent with those found in the other movements of the symphony, where the extra-musical idea is more general. It is possible to view the fusion — in the 'Battle' scherzo — of the process of textural growth with the evocative power of the music — present in the four spatially separated groups of horns — as a successful blend of what Langford described with regard to the Elgar first symphony, as programmatic and absolute elements. The evocative power of the music of the 'Battle' scherzo can be traced back to the programmatic early works discussed above. This shows Brian adapting ideas from the realm of the symphonic poem to the

³⁰ Quoted in Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Elgar*, 480.

more absolute context of a symphony

Vaughan Williams

A different approach to symphonic writing is found in the work of Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958). He lived a long creative life, like Brian. The first four of his nine symphonies span from the early years of the twentieth century to the middle of the nineteen thirties, and can thus be considered in relation to the works written by Brian during the same period. The first three symphonic essays appeared with titles and without numbers, a practise ended when his next work in the genre appeared as Symphony in F minor in 1935. A Sea Symphony (1903–09), the first to be written, shares with Brian's first symphony, the *Gothic* (1919–27) the use of a chorus and soloists. The large canvas is roughly comparable to that of Brian's Symphony No. 4, Das Siegeslied (1932-3) rather than the Gothic, but the manner of the two works is entirely different, related to the texts set in each case. It is also noteworthy that Vaughan Williams sanctioned the separate performance of any of the four movements of the Sea Symphony. This may well have been done 'as a concession to choral societies who cannot cope with the whole work in performance', as noted by A. E. F. Dickinson in his book on the composer,³¹ but it does call into question the symphonic continuity of the whole. The work could perhaps be more accurately titled A Symphony of Sea Songs, which would make clear the connection with such works as the Songs of the Sea (1904) by Stanford and the Sea Pictures (1897-9) of Elgar.

Vaughan Williams's second contribution to the genre, titled *A London* Symphony (1913–18) is a major landmark in English symphonic writing. It can be listened to as an evocation of the capital city which blends the literally illustrative — as in the appearances at the opening and close of the work of the chimes of Westminster's 'Big Ben' — with a symphonic sense of scale and contrast. Brian wrote succinctly of it in *Musical Opinion* that it depicts 'the atmosphere of a city inside the framework of a symphony'.³² Brian also drew attention to the musical links between movements when writing on the composer for *Musical Opinion*, noting that the 'reference to the three previous movements inside the development of the fourth movement is a masterly

³¹ A.E.F. Dickinson, Vaughan Williams (Faber and Faber, 1963), 186.

³² Havergal Brian, 'Vaughan Williams in Rehearsal' in *Havergal Brian on Music*, vol.1, Malcolm MacDonald (ed.), 313-4.

piece of musicianship and psychological construction³³ The title of the work encourages the listener to seek out evocations of the sights and sounds of London in the music, and this aspect places the work within the broadly rhapsodic, programmatic sphere. Like Brian and Mahler, Vaughan Williams expressed contrasting — not to say contradictory — views on the relative importance of the illustrative elements in the music at different times in his life. As Michael Kennedy comments:

The composer bedevilled the issue by insisting that the various London landmarks which appear in the work are 'accidentals, not essentials', and that the symphony ought to be called 'Symphony by a Londoner'. Later he relented and disclosed that the 'life of London (including possibly its sights and sounds)... suggested an attempt at expression'.³⁴

There is a development of particular colours to suggest and sustain an imaginative mood or atmosphere throughout the work. The opening and close of the symphony are indicative of this, as the music captures a picture of London at opposite ends of the day. The recall of the opening sounds of the symphony close to its end also frames the symphony in an effective way, implying an organic unity in the musical material (in a quasi-cyclic manner) which enhances the overall design of the work. This blends the rhapsodic — or illustrative — with the symphonic in a manner which could be taken as a further example of the blend commented on by Langford (see above) in reference to Elgar.

The third movement of the *London*, subtitled 'Nocturne' presents a striking example of the mixture of symphonic and rhapsodic elements. The opening section is repeated (in the manner of the first part of a traditional scherzo), and there is a contrasting section which can be viewed as a trio. However, there is no reprise of the scherzo, and the movement moves onward with new material which darkens the tone towards the end. The closed form of a classical movement has thus been supplanted by a greater emphasis on an ongoing sense of continuity with regard to the mood. This is even more prevalent in the original (1913) version of the symphony, as can be heard in a

³³ Havergal Brian, 'The music of Ralph Vaughan Williams' in *Havergal Brain on Music*, vol.1, Malcolm MacDonald (ed.), 314-21.

³⁴ Michael Kennedy, The works of Ralph Vaughan Williams' (Oxford University Press, 1964), 136.

recent recording.³⁵ The 'Battle' scherzo of Brian's second symphony (1930–31) exhibits a comparable concern with narrative over a more closed form, concentrating as it does on the accumulation of ostinatos on the four groups of horns as the music heads towards its dramatic culmination. There is a quiet coda, as in the Vaughan Williams movement, and it is interesting to note the dramatic nature of the beginning of the ensuing final movement in each work. The Brian scherzo, however, is more single-minded in its concerns than the corresponding movement of the 'London' Symphony, as the composer eschews a contrasting section to offset the textural buildup central to his movement. The scherzo of Brian's next symphony, the Third (1931-2), fuses this idea of textural accumulation with a more classically based layout, including a central 'Viennese' trio. This use of a distinctive local colour is paralleled in the 'Nocturne' by the evocation of a mouth-organ and accordion to suggest Cockney London. The heavier orchestration of the latter stages of the Brian scherzo ensures that the symphonic momentum is carried over in to the finale, suggesting a kinship with the manner, if not the sound world, of the 'Nocturne' from the Vaughan Willliams work. A further link with the two Brian symphonies central to this thesis — in relation to the extravagant orchestral textures -is suggested by the following observation by Michael Kennedy on the 'London' Symphony:

It is the natural successor to Elgar's two brilliantly scored symphonies; and a certain opulence and richness of sound place it within its period.³⁶

The next Vaughan Williams Symphony, his third, subtitled *A Pastoral Symphony* (1921) is a further development of the rhapsodic, atmospheric style, to the extent that there are very few climactic gestures in the whole work, lending it a contemplative manner. Brian wrote that it 'suggests that quality of shyness which eludes the obvious'.³⁷ He also drew attention to the 'original stroke of genius' in the finale, with particular reference to the use of a wordless vocal solo at the outset.³⁸ This use of a wordless vocal solo — suggesting a faraway voice in relation to the orchestral body — is paralleled by the sense of distance evoked by the horn solo in the finale of the Brian Third Symphony, written ten years later. The context, however, is utterly different.

³⁵ Vaughan Williams, *A London Symphony*. London Symphony Orchestra. Richard Hickox, compact disc Chandos CHAN 9902, 2001.

³⁶ Michael Kennedy, The works of Ralph Vaughan Williams, 140.

³⁷ Brian. 'Vaughan Williams in Rehearsal' in MacDonald (ed.). Op cit. 313.

³⁸ Brian, 'The music of Ralph Vaughan Williams's in MacDonald (ed.). Op cit., 316.

Vaughan Williams uses the solo voice as a focal point in both the second and fourth movements, whereas Brian uses the solo horn to offer a momentary glimpse of a different perspective to that of the main body of his final movement. For Vaughan Williams, contemplation is central; to Brian it is incidental. The suggestion of spatial distance in Brian's music is discussed below in relation to this use of the solo horn (see the chapter on Symphony No. 3).

The Vaughan Williams Symphony in F minor (1931–4). which was first performed on 10 April 1935. offers the strongest possible contrast to the preceding symphony. This contrast, and the dark, violent nature of much of the music has led to speculation that it reflects on the deepening political crisis in Europe at the time. However, the composer himself made no such connection, and in the following remark adopts an attitude of disdain not far removed from the stoicism characteristic — in his later years in particular — of Havergal Brian: 'Take it or leave it, for that is nearly all I can tell you about it'.³⁹ The author of the book from which the above remark is quoted remarks in conclusion that 'Political or mythical images or concerns may supply a framework for music, but they cannot shape a symphony, a theme, or a progression'.⁴⁰ This reflects the attitude of many composers to their music and its relationship to a programme, from Vaughan Williams himself, to Gustav Mahler (see the discussion in chapter 1) and, of course, Havergal Brian.

The Symphony in F minor is the first Vaughan Williams symphony not to have a descriptive title, and contains his most intense concentration on motivic and thematic developments and cross-references up to that time. The rhapsodic nature of the preceding symphony has been replaced by a musical argument of a more purely motivic nature. The change of emphasis in the Vaughan Williams F minor Symphony (No. 4) is underlined by a comparison of the Epilogue which brings this symphony to a close with that of *A London Symphony* of two decades earlier. The latter is an atmospheric evocation of the eponymous city at the close of day, which, as mentioned above, neatly rounds off the musical narrative of the work at the same time. The Epilogue of the fourth, however, is a fully worked-out fugue — the subject of which is based on the opening of the entire symphony — which culminates in the literal recall

 ³⁹ Quoted in A.E.F. Dickinson, *Vaughan Williams* (Faber and Faber, 1963), 308.
 ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 309.

of the opening gesture of the work before the emphatic conclusion. There are no obvious extra-musical associations, and the use of fugue emphasises this purely thematic apogee to the developmental procedures of the work.

The stormy mood of the Symphony No. 4 — described by Brian as being of 'tremendous tragic intensity⁽⁴⁾ — has parallels in the music of roughly contemporary symphonies such as William Walton's first (1932–5) and Arnold Bax's sixth (1934), both discussed below, the fourth of Dmitri Shostakovich (1936), and Brian's own fourth, *Das Siegeslied* (1932–3). The extent to which the deepening political crisis in Europe affected the tone of these works varies from one to the other. However, neither the Brian — first performed in 1967 — nor the Shostakovich, which had a similarly long wait until 1961 to be performed, can have influenced any of the other works cited. The Bax, Vaughan Willams and Walton were all premiered in 1935, a fact which points to a common susceptibility to the tenor of the times, but renders unlikely the idea that any one may have been written as a reaction to any of the others.

The remaining symphonies of Vaughan Williams build on both the rhapsodic and the more motivic styles. The latter is best characterised perhaps by the apocalyptic fury of the sixth (1948), a clear sequel to the manner of the fourth symphony of thirteen years previously. The extraordinary finale of that work — played pianissimo throughout – has been interpreted as a vision of a desolate landscape ravaged by war, but this view was dispelled by the composer in the following remarks to Michael Kennedy:

With regard to the last movement of my No. 6. I do NOT BELIEVE IN meanings and mottoes, as you know, but I think we can get in words nearest to the substance of my last movement in "We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded by a sleep".⁴²

The composer contradicts himself wonderfully here by providing a 'motto' and possible meaning in an extra-musical source after denying his faith in them. This ambiguity has parallels in Brian — see his comments on the Symphony No. 2 in the chapter on that work — as well as with other composers such as Elgar and Mahler.

⁴¹ Brian, 'The Music of Ralph Vaughan Williams' in Havergal Brain on Music, vol.1 318.

⁴² Quoted in Kennedy, The works of Ralph Vaughan Williams, 302.

The rhapsodic, illustrative side of Vaughan Williams's symphonic manner resurfaces in the rhapsodic tone painting of his next symphony, the seventh, subtitled *Sinfonia Antartica* (1953), a glacial counterpart to the landscapes evoked in the third, the *Pastoral* (1921). Vaughan Williams completed his late symphonic output by the addition of two further symphonies, in 1956 and 1958. The slow movement of No. 9 is based on two elements, a flügel horn solo, and a contrasting march. In fact the juxtaposition of these two divergent ideas suggests a parallel with one of Brian's most controversial compositional practises. As Kennedy comments, the frequent changes of tempo are 'a deliberate manifestation of restless energy'.⁴³ Brian's use of 'productive discontinuity' often achieves a similar effect (see John Pickard's article). Kennedy further remarks of the overall structure of the symphony that it is 'unconventional within a conventional design'.⁴⁴ The correspondence between this comment and Brian's on his Second Symphony that it was 'in the orthodox four movements — but very unorthodox inside' is of interest in tracing any common factors in the approach of the two men to the task of writing symphonies.⁴⁵

Vaughan Williams lived to the age of eighty-six. and his continuing creative vitality was remarkable. What distinguishes the later output of both Vaughan Williams and Brian is the constant striving for new means of symphonic composition, and a diversity of approaches that would be noteworthy in a composer of any age. Brian's later symphonic output, particularly from the eighth symphony (1949) onwards, represents a great contrast with his earlier manner. This is true to the extent that, as Harold Truscott has observed, 'the Brian of the 1960s is a very different Brian from the composer of before the First World War'.⁴⁶ Michael Kennedy comments on this aspect of the Vaughan Williams ninth —and last — symphony, premiered just four months before his death in 1958.

The last of them [No. 9] asserts that he remained unpredictable and independent to the end, and that his mental vigour was astonishing.⁴⁷

⁴³ Kennedy, The works of Ralph Vaughan Williams, 370.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 369.

⁴⁵ Quoted in MacDonald, sleeve notes for compact disc Marco Polo 8.223790, 1997, 3.

⁴⁶ Harold Truscott. *Havergal Brian* in *The Symphony 2: Elgar to the Present Day*. Robert Simpson (ed.), (Penguin Books, 1967), 140-152.

⁴⁷ Kennedy, The works of Ralph Vaughan Williams, 371.

The fact that Brian also continued to explore new manners of symphonic thought is all the more remarkable given the almost total neglect from which he suffered at this time. This is in sharp contrast to the position of Vaughan Williams as the revered senior figure of English music up to the time of his death in 1958.

Bax

The seven symphonies of Arnold Bax (1883-1953) were composed between 1922 and 1939, and so are roughly contemporary with the first five of Brian's symphonies. In fact. Brian's first article for Musical Opinion was written on the subject of Bax's first symphony, premiered in November 1922. The article was actually written as an introduction to the work before its first performance, in the nature of a programme note.⁴⁸ Bax was supposed to write a reciprocal article on Brian's First Symphony (which the latter was working on at the time) in due course, but when the *Gothic* was published by Cranz in 1932. Bax demurred, understandably deterred by the sheer size of the Gothic, and without having heard it. The Brian article is a laudatory introduction to the symphonic debut of his younger contemporary - who, he declared, had the potential 'to become a great symphonist'. It is also of interest in relation to what it reveals of Brian's views on symphonic writing at the time he was working on the Gothic (the most ambitious symphonic work he was ever to write). He praised Bax's faculty for uninterrupted continuous thinking without which works on a large scale are impossible', an observation which would appear to be contradicted by the use of discontinuity in his own symphonic work, as documented by John Pickard.⁴⁹ The article on Bax documents his appreciation of a quality in the work of another composer that seems at odds with the nature of his own style. It can also be taken to infer that his own use of discontinuity was a deliberate attempt to subvert what the above comment recognises as a necessary quality for the composition of works 'on a large scale'. This approach may have been adopted out of discontent with that more continuous style in his own music — balanced by a keen appreciation of it in the works of others, such as Bax — or as a compositional challenge. This is of less significance than the fact that the compositional practices in his mature music were deliberately adopted rather than

⁴⁸ Havergal Brian, 'The First Symphony of Arnold Bax' in MacDonald (ed.), *Havergal Brian on Music*, 233-40.

⁴⁹ John Pickard, 'Havergal Brian's productive discontinuity. With a comment by Martyn Becker' in *HB*. *Aspects of Havergal Brian*, Jurgen Shcaarwächter (ed.), (Ashgate, 1997), 93-104.

arrived at as a result of a lack of technical ability. The skill of early orchestral works discussed above clearly negates this notion. Further to this, the study of his short scores and surviving pencil sketches reveals that the broad span of his musical argument in each movement was largely intact from an early stage. The clarification of detail was the main pre-occupation as he approached the final full score (see appendices 1 to3 for a summary of these points in relation to the three works central to this thesis). The above comment in relation to Bax reveals Brian's level of appreciation and understanding for the work of an esteemed colleague, and places his own approach to symphonic writing in context.

Brian writes of the Bax Symphony No. 1 that 'the music tells its own tale', and this quality can be applied to Bax's symphonic output as a whole, although the evocation of landscape — or, more often, seascape — is a recurring feature. The absence of either subtitle or programme betrays the desire of the composer to allow the music to be assessed on its intrinsic qualities, but like Brian his symphonic work could be prompted by external ideas. The Symphony No.3 (1928-9) is prefaced, in short score, by a quote from Nietzsche ('My wisdom became pregnant on lonely mountains, upon barren stone she brought forth her young'), but the published full score is devoid of this reference.⁵⁰ There is a parallel here with both Brian's Second Symphony (1930–31), linked by its composer to Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*, but eschewing any such reference in the composer's autograph full score, and the following symphony. The full score of Brian's Third (1931–2) had the word 'Altarus' written on it, but it was subsequently almost completely erased, as if to suppress any extra-musical associations.

One clear distinction between Bax and Brian lies in their use of an 'Epilogue' at the end of their symphonic works. Four out of the seven Bax symphonies — nos. 3,5.6 and 7 — end with an 'Epilogue'. Vaughan Williams also used this term to describe the closing music of both his *London* and F minor symphonies. as discussed above. There is a similar implication in all three composers that the concluding music stands outside the main dramatic thrust of the Symphony, while encapsulating the spirit of the preceding music in a summarising manner. The tone is often reflective in Bax, but

⁵⁰ Quoted in Lewis Foreman. Bax: The Complete Symphonies, sleeve-notes to CHAN 8910.

abruptly dismissive in Brian, when used at the end of his Third Symphony (1931–2). With the exception of No. 5 (1932), the Bax 'Epilogues' are reflective postludes which steer the music towards a calm close. This type of reflective calm is rarely found in Brian's works, and Brian's comment on the Bax Symphony No. 1, that it 'breathes defiance and triumph' can be said to apply equally aptly to the Epilogue of his own Third Symphony. As MacDonald has noted of the end of Brian's work, 'here is no Baxian meditation', as the music echoes his own description of the Bax First Symphony, full of what may neatly be termed defiant triumph.⁵¹

Both composers share the use of richly layered textures (often fuelled by ostinatos) to create an atmospheric backdrop — as in the concluding movement of Bax's Symphony No. 3 (1928-9). Both have incorporated the piano and organ into the large orchestras deployed in their works. Bax uses organ in nos. 2 (1924-6) and 4 (1930), and piano in nos. 2 (1925). The harmonic language of Bax betrays at times the influence of Delius in terms of the richly coloured palette found in the music, and this is wedded with the gestural flambovance and sense of scale of Elgar. This blend of the rhapsodic style of the former with the symphonic sweep of the latter is also present in the work of Brian, but the results are very different. With Bax, the expressive world is very much his own, and less wide-ranging than that found in the Brian symphonies of the time. The use of triadic and non-triadic harmonic idioms in the first movement of the Brian Symphony No. 3 reflects this difference in language. To some degree, the concentration on a three-movement form in all seven Bax symphonies is an outward manifestation of this reflection of an inner world with relatively fixed horizons. Brian's work, by contrast, constantly threatens to break its boundaries, so disparate are the juxtapositions and range of textures found therein. The first movement of the Symphony No. 3 provides the most striking and large-scale example of this inclusiveness. Brian's continuing exploration of new symphonic possibilities in the works of his later years is a further manifestation of this trend, whereas Bax, after his Seventh Symphony (1939), wrote no further essays in the genre, although he lived for a further fourteen years.

⁵¹ MacDonald, The Symphonies, vol.1, 87.

Bax's Fifth Symphony (1932) is cited by Lewis Foreman as having 'confirmed his standing as the leading British symphonist after Elgar', although 'formal difficulties still bothered some commentators'.⁵² Whether those formal difficulties were a result of an imbalance between the programmatic and absolute elements (to return to the terms used by Sanuel Langford) is debatable, but Bax's position as a notable follower in the path of Elgar was secure and remains so today. This contrasts with the obscurity in which Brian worked on his symphonic works, both in the early nineteen thirties and later.

Bax's symphonies can be said to continue the tradition to which Elgar made such a notable contribution, but, like Vaughan Williams, there is more national colour in his music in contrast to the case of Brian, whose music reflects a more international, eclectic mix of elements. This national colouring reflects the strong ties felt by Bax towards Ireland, and can be clearly detected in early tone poems such as *In the Faery Hills* (1909) and *The Garden of Fand* (1916). The Celtic and the English sound worlds surface in Brian's music from time to time. The Celtic can be heard in his Sixth Symphony, the *Sinfonia Tragica* (1948), which started its life as an operatic prelude to a setting of Synge's *Deirdre of the Sorrows*, whereas the English is found in more isolated examples of folk-like or, on other occasions, 'nobilmente' melodic writing. However the styles are less pervasive on the whole. The two composers share the common heritage of Late Romanticism, from Elgar and Delius, but their differing artistic temperaments resulted in a unique approach to the task of symphonic composition of the part of each composer.

Conclusion

Like the Bax Fifth Symphony, the first of William Walton (1932–35) was hailed as the most significant successor to the two symphonies of Elgar when it was given its first complete performance in 1935. Brian wrote at the time that the composer 'has all contemporary modernist tendencies at his finger-tips, and directs them to his own individual purpose'.⁵³ As a significant contribution to the English symphonic tradition, it makes for an interesting comparison with the Brian works with which it is roughly

⁵² Foreman, sleeve notes to CHAN 8910.

⁵³ Havergal Brian, 'William Walton' in *Havergal Brian on Music*, vol. 1, Malcolm MacDonald (ed.), (Toccata Press, 1986), 350-1.

contemporary. The terse, Sibelian manner of its opening movement in particular offers a strong contrast with the inclusive approach of Brian. not least in the blend of tonal and non-tonal languages, as discussed below in relation to the opening movement of the Third Symphony (1931–2). The Walton symphony was commercially recorded by Decca in December 1935, just over a month after the first performance of the completed work.⁵⁴ This immediate recognition contrasts vividly with the case of Brian, who lived just long enough to be present — aged 96! — at the recording sessions of the first commercial recording of any of his music (by the Leicestershire Schools Synphony Orchestra), but died just before the record was commercially released. Brian's output from this time remained unknown and unheard until three decades later. and none of his symphonies was heard at all until 1954 (No. 8). It is idle to speculate on what the critical and public reaction might have been to Brian's Second and Third Symphonies at the time when they were newly written. The foregoing survey of symphonic writing of that era indicates, however, that his position would have been as unique then as it appears in retrospect today. As was the case for the greater part of his creative life — even in the early years — Brian does not fit in with his contemporaries: he stands apart from them. This becomes even more apparent when one considers the opening work in Brian's long symphonic canon. the enormous Gothic (1919-27).

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to fully discuss this astonishing work, but it is important to trace its relationship to its immediate successors to show how crucial a part of Brian's development it constituted. The consequences of composing such a hugely ambitious work for the nature of its successors is also of importance. However much the *Gothic* may stand apart from its successors in the symphonic genre — as well as contemporary efforts by other composers discussed in the foregoing — it nevertheless must be viewed in relation to them, however disproportionate that relationship may be. The disproportion becomes even more pronounced with the shorter, later symphonies of Brian. One can thus trace how Brian benefited from the experience of the composition of the *Gothic* when writing the two symphonies which form the centrepiece of this thesis.

⁵⁴ Michael Kennedy, Portrait of Walton (Oxford University Press, 1989), 85.

CHAPTER THREE THE 'GOTHIC' SYMPHONY

Introduction

When Brian was asked, towards the end of his life, which work of his he considered the greatest, he unhesitatingly chose the *Gothic*.⁵⁵ A composer's opinion of his own work may often be taken at little more than face value, especially when the work referred to was written over forty years previously. Nevertheless the size and scope of the *Gothic*, as well as its place at the head of a long and varied symphonic career, lend it a special significance quite apart from its intrinsic merits. It is not only the longest symphony written by Brian, and scored for the largest forces, but it is also his most ambitious work in the genre — by far his largest work outside the operatic sphere other than *Prometheus Unbound* (1937–44). This is partly a question of scale (both in terms of duration and forces required), and partly related to the enormous expressive and stylistic range of the piece.

The *Gothic*, the first of Brian's thirty-two symphonies is his most famous work. Its inclusion in the *Guinness Book of Records* as the longest symphony ever written has assured it a unique place in the annals of music history. It was written between 1919 and 1927, published by Cranz & Co. in 1932, and first performed by partly amateur forces under Bryan Fairfax in 1961. The first fully professional performance took place under Sir Adrian Boult in the Royal Albert Hall in 1966 — attended by the ninety year old composer — and the work has been performed in each decade since then. The advent of a studio recording in 1990 has taken the work to a far wider public than would ever have been possible through live performances alone, given the enormous forces required.⁵⁶

The *Gothic* has been written about more than any other work of the composer. It was, for example, the subject of a book published by the Havergal Brian Society in 1978.

⁵⁵ 'Robert Simpson in conversation with Stephen Johnson' in *HB: Aspects of Havergal Brian*, ed. Jurgen Schaarwächter, Ashgate, 1997, 170.

⁵⁰ Havergal Brian. "*Gothic*" Symphony. Jenisova. Peckova, Dolezal. Mikulas, Slovak Philharmoinc Choir, Slovak Opera Chorus. Slovak Folk Ensemble Chorus. Lucnica Chorus, Bratislava City Choir, Bratislava Children's Choir. Youth Echo Choir. Pavol Prochazka (chorus director). CSR Symphony (Bratislava), Slovak Philharmonic. Ondrej Lenard (conductor). Marco Polo 8.223280-1 (2 CD set).

This contains two analytical studies of the work, one by Harold Truscott and the other by Paul Rapoport.⁵⁷ It also contains a reprint of an article by Havergal Brian himself entitled 'How the Gothic Symphony came to be written', originally published in the *Modern Mystic* in 1938. In addition to the chapter on the work in volume one of Malcolm MacDonald's three-volume study of the entire symphonic output, there have been many articles and letters published in the newsletter of the Havergal Brian Society about the work. These ensure that it continues to be a topic of debate, even among those who — one would imagine — know it better than most. This level of interest can be partly attributed to its legendary — not to say notorious — status. However the contrasting approaches to purely musical issues by Harold Truscott and Paul Rapoport in the 'Two Studies' book offers compelling testimony that there is musical substance beyond the sensational nature of the size and duration of Brian's first symphony.

Brian on the Gothic

The Brian article referred to above is unique in that it represents the only published instance of the composer writing on the subject of his own music. At least that is what one would assume from the title of the article. That title, however, is perhaps a shade misleading, in that it might lead one to conclude that the composer reveals how he went about the composition of this massive work. What the article does detail, however, is how Havergal Brian came to the point in his life where he wrote the *Gothic*. The article is more selective autobiography than musical commentary. In short, it describes how the *Gothic* came to be written, rather than <u>how</u> it was written. The forces that shaped Brian's personality and imagination are revealed from his own perspective, and thus the composer is uniquely portrayed in his own words. With reveal how Brian worked on the internal details of organisation and balance, details that receive detailed scrutiny in the commentaries by both Truscott and Rapoport. At one point, for example, he states: 'The actual composition of the Gothic Symphony was a matter for the composer only'.⁵⁸

³⁷ Harold Truscott and Paul Rapoport. *Havergal Brian's Gothic Symphony: Two Studies* (The Havergal Brain Society, 1978).

⁵⁸ Havergal Brian, 'How the Gothic Symphony came to be written' in *Havergal Brian's Gothic Symphony: Two Studies*, (The Havergal Brian Society, 1978), 87.

This reflects an attitude to composition as a private matter, the details of which are only of importance to Brian himself, which is at odds with the care with which he sought to preserve his sketches and short scores. Within these sources the very detail can be studied which, for the most part, he studiously avoided revealing in his written and recorded comments. The sense of mystery in the above comment is complemented by a sense of mission in the following observation:

> I instinctively felt I was at the beginning of the biggest quest of my life. And it was written in the deep silences of the night...⁵⁹

At one stage in the article Brian seems about to provide some insight into the technical side of composing, only to reinstate the sense of mystery, and further frustrate the curious reader by an observation on the work, and its finale in particular, which borders on the banal:

Each work presents a new problem in technique, a process evolved during its creation and never repeated, and it is beyond the intelligence of any composer to describe what that process is. The composition of the Gothic Symphony presented no problems beyond the usual vexatious one of the finale - should it be instrumental or choral.⁶⁰

The idea that Brian found the composition of a mammoth work like the *Gothic* unproblematic seems untenable, given the fact that he spent eight years working on the piece. He is also known to have written some of his piano works (the Preludes and Fugues in C minor and D minor/major, and the Double Fugue in Eb. written c.1924) as studies for fugal techniques employed in the choral sections of the work. It stretches credibility that the sole problem encountered during his eight years of work on this piece was the (minor?) irritation of deciding whether to opt for a choral finale or not.

There are also passages in the article where Brian approaches the topic of the *Gothic* in an oblique manner which parallels the use of perspective and surprising juxtapositions as part of his musical language. The following description of the South Downs. situated near where he was living at the time, is typical of this manner:

⁵⁹ Ibid., 86.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 87.

I can think of nothing more mentally invigorating than gazing at miles of freshly made ploughed furrows, uniform and symmetrical, glistening purple red in the autumn morning light, unbroken by a single hedge, over the vast rolling downs. This I have always felt to be the pivot of the Gothic Symphony — a work which I was compelled to write.⁶¹

The idea of a natural setting being the 'pivot' for such a massive choral and orchestral work is full of mysticism and poetry, and quite revealing of Brian's attitude to the profound origins of his creative impulses. The following remark — that the work was something that Brian 'felt compelled to write'— is by contrast disarmingly bland and uninformative. This juxtaposition — at a slight stretch — can be related to the purely musical juxtaposition of contrasts that form such a significant part of his musical manner. The sense of mission is clear from the conclusion of the above passage, a sense which pervades the article quite strongly. The methods used by Brian to fulfil this mission remain undisclosed. However, Brian does pay a touching tribute to the friendships formed during the successful early years of his career in the following passage, showing that the picture of the composer turning out massive symphonies in splendid isolation from his contemporaries and colleagues does not quite fit. This supports the foregoing consideration of Brian in relation to his contemporaries being as subject to influences and receptive to help as any developing artist:

As this is the first article I have ever written about my work, and I most definitely will not write again, I should like to say that such a work as the 'Gothic Symphony' would have been impossible but for the kindnesses I've received from Elgar, Bantock, Delius, Wood, Beecham, Ronald, Canon Gorton, John Coates, and Ernest Newman. My visits to them in their homes, sitting chatting, smoking a pipe before the fire, the warmly vitalising effect of a glass of wine at dinner, a flash of the eyes and a smile across the table - they are over now, but my big works would not have been written but for these good fellows.⁶²

In conclusion, the article is a curious mixture of the anecdotal, the banal and the uniquely revealing, sometimes within the space of a few sentences. The unique characteristics that go to make up the personality of Havergal Brian the composer are revealed from his own quirky perspective, but one searches in vain for any insight into the technical aspects of composing such a massive work. The fact that Brian chose not

⁶¹ Ibid., 86.

⁶² Ibid., 86.

to detail any such technical matters in the article is at odds with his preservation of preliminary compositional materials throughout his long life. Leaving his sketches and short scores without verbal commentary is perhaps his idiosyncratic way of letting the music — quite literally — speak for itself.

An overview of the Gothic

The symphony divides into two parts of unequal length. Each part has been said by Malcolm MacDonald to enshrine a different approach to symphonic writing on Brian's part. The first part consists of three instrumental movements. They are characterised by MacDonald as belonging to a 'classicizing' tendency in Brian's writing, wherein he [•]came to (often uneasy) terms with traditional symphonic designs^{•,63} They correspond to a degree to the first three movements of many a purely instrumental four movement symphony — namely an allegro based on sonata principles, followed by a slow movement and scherzo — but within a widening expressive and stylistic range. This widening range comprises the 'uneasy' element referred to by MacDonald, and it culminates in the huge second part of the work. This encompasses a massive setting of the 'Te Deum' and follows the end of the third movement scherzo without a break. It contains what Macdonald describes as 'a more radical approach' to symphonic writing 'combining free, allusive development with 'anti-symphonic' contrasts'.⁶⁴ This second part of the Gothic also follows a path of increasing stylistic and expressive diversity. This sense of outgrowth is one of the most compelling features of the work as a whole, and is perhaps reflected in the relative duration of the two parts, with the choral part being approximately double the length of the instrumental section which precedes it.

The opening of the choral part of the symphony does not return to territory similar to the opening (instrumental) movement, but rather takes on a whole new dimension with the addition of the massive choral forces. Brian directs that the whole work should be played without a break, so that the choral music comes as a direct continuation of the journey undertaken in the instrumental music, rather than a fresh beginning to the work after an interval — however short — that would disrupt both concentration and continuity. The orchestral trilogy has, nonetheless, been performed separately on occasion, but this was also the case with a work the finale of which demands large

⁶³ MacDonald. The Symphonies. vol.3, 274.

¹⁴ Ibid., 274.

forces — if not on the massive scale of the *Gothic* — namely the '*Resurrection*' Symphony (1888–94) of Gustav Mahler.⁶⁵ In each case the full scope of the composer's vision emerges only when the symphony is performed complete. The Brian symphony, like the Mahler, is conceived as one piece in two parts — which are disparately scored — rather than as two separate works.

The *Gothic* has been variously described as consisting of either four or six movements by Brian scholars. The symphony emerges as a four-movement work if the setting of the 'Te Deum' is considered as the mammoth choral finale, which makes the overall layout of the *Gothic* analogous to the form of the most famous choral symphony, Beethoven's Ninth (1818–23). Paul Rapoport proposes this division of the symphony into four movements in his part of the 'Two Studies' book. He has also written on how the nature of Brian's setting of the Latin text of praise can be interpreted as a spiritual update — in 20th century terms — of the Schiller *Ode to Joy*, the text set by Beethoven in the finale of that epoch making work. This comparison, however, does not extend to the relative length of the movements in each work— the finale of Beethoven's work is not on the same massive scale as the 'Te Deum' of the *Gothic*.

The symphony has also been divided into six movements — by both MacDonald and Truscott — by defining the setting of the 'Te Deum' as consisting of three further movements, played without a break. There is symmetry — not present in terms of duration — implied in this division of the work into two parts of three movements each, one instrumental and one choral. The following discussion of the work favours this six-movement division of the *Gothic*. Both views have considerable merits, however, and the curious reader is referred to the 'Two Studies' book for the most extended exposition of both views of the work. In addition to these approaches, the chapter on the *Gothic* in the first of Malcolm MacDonald's three volumes on the Brian symphonies charts the moment to moment progress of the work. His colourful commentary is both informative and perceptive, and captures the spirit of this huge work admirably.

⁶⁵ Egon Gartenberg, Mahler: The man and his music (Cassell, London, 1978), 265.

The Gothic has been described by MacDonald as 'Brian's most crucial and personal work^{1,60} He further notes that its sheer size and scale can appear to dwarf the remainder of the composer's symphonic output. This is compounded by the fact that it is Brian's best known work, and as a consequence may be assumed to be representative by those unfamiliar with the rest of his extensive oeuvre. The uniqueness of the Gothic is of less concern to the Brian scholar, however, than the manner in which — as the first in a long line of symphonies — it can be said to pave the way for the works which followed. It is in the details, rather than the imposing shadow cast by the huge scale of the entire conception, that the composer can be seen to have established a way of working which would stand him in good stead over the next four decades of symphonic writing. The sheer scale of the *Gothic* marks it as a singular work, but not an isolated one. The Second and Third Symphonies tackle the legacy of the Gothic head-on -how could it be otherwise? - while addressing the question of symphonic composition on a less massive scale. Through these two large but not mammoth symphonies, Brian arrives — in the Violin Concerto of 1934–5 — at a more concise style removed from the huge scale of the Gothic, a style that paves the way for the more concentrated manner of his later symphonic output.

The Gothic in context

a) Texture as form

It is hardly surprising that one of the chef legacies of the *Gothic* is a fondness for very rich and detailed orchestral writing. The massive orchestral textures in the second and third movements of the *Gothic* —before the entry of the extra orchestral forces plus the vocal and choral additions for the 'Te Deum' — leave their mark on parts of the succeeding two symphonies in terms of a similar extravagance of textural detail. Brian uses these rich textures in two different structural contexts, both in the *Gothic* and the succeeding two symphonies. The first occurs within what MacDonald describes as Brian's 'classicizing' manner. This concerns the second movement of the *Gothic* in particular, wherein the main theme is presented in ever richer orchestral textures as the movement progresses, resulting in some of the most massive orchestral sonorities ever penned by the composer. This progressive enrichment of texture within the context of thematic restatement —the latter being the 'traditional' element of design in this

⁶⁶ MacDonald, The Symphonies, vol.3, 273.

context — recurs in the opening movement of both succeeding symphonies. A comparison is included of the scoring of successive appearances of both first and second subject groups in the first movement of No.2 in the discussion below (see chapter 4). The subject groups are more heavily scored as the movement moves towards its climactic outburst.

In the opening movement of No. 3 — which features a double statement of each thematic group in the exposition — the second presentation of each group is more fully scored than the first. In the case of the D major theme which begins the second group, the accompaniment all but drowns out the melody line on its second appearance. These instances reflect a growing impatience with the idea of literal restatement on the part of the composer, culminating in a version of the D major theme mentioned above which is all but unrecognisable from its initial presentation.

The third movement of the *Gothic* shows Brian's rich scoring in a second formal context. The idea here is not one of thematic enrichment, for as MacDonald observes, the thematic connections in this movement are 'noticeably loose'.^{o?} Rather does the orchestration serve to articulate what the same writer described, in the passage quoted above, as Brian's more radical symphonic style. This type of writing recurs in the second movement of the Symphony No.2 (which was the first of the four movements of that symphony to be composed), where, as discussed below, the motivic links between sections are indeed 'loose'. The importance of texture in the structure of that movement is paramount, to the extent that thematicism is relegated to the point where there is nothing that can be called a main theme. What this movement shares with the third movement of the *Gothic* is a sense of expansiveness, also characterised by MacDonald as a type of symphonism which 'may be "open" in form, but by no means formless'.⁶⁸ The formal organisation of the second movement of No.2 is fully treated below.

The first movement of Symphony No.3 can be seen as a blend of the radical and classical symphonic styles discussed above. The classical element can be traced through formal aspects which owe something to the origins of the piece as a concerto

⁶⁷ MacDonald, The Symphonies, vol.1, 36.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 36.

for one, or possibly two pianos (as detailed in chapter 5). This results in the double statement of clear first and second subject groups (each given a texturally enriched restatement after a linking interlude), as well as a cadenza for the two solo instruments. The greatly enriched restatements of these thematic blocks have been discussed above. Between the two statements of the second subject group, however, Brian inserts a passage, effectively an interlude, which contains, as MacDonald notes 'one of the most astonishing masses of orchestral sound in modern music'.⁶⁹ While it is debatable if this music can be called 'anti-symphonic' — since it clearly occupies an important place in Brian's concept of symphonic discourse — the expansiveness of parts of the *Gothic* can be heard to have borne fruit in the nature of this extraordinary passage. Brian has thus juxtaposed his classical manner (the second thematic group) with one of his most radical textural explorations (the interlude) to telling effect, an effect that is personal to Brian, and to his own unique symphonic style.

b) Harmonic and formal ideas

The first movement of the Gothic has been cited by MacDonald as 'the least successful part of the symphony' and, if one regards it as an exercise in orthodox sonata design, the departures from that blueprint can be construed as weaknesses.⁷⁶ Harold Truscott takes a different view however, characterising the form of the movement as a 'purposeful avoidance of sonata form'.⁷¹ A comparison of the opening movements of Symphonies 1 and 2 reveals some shared features which show how Brian built on the achievement of the opening movement of the Gothic when writing the first movement of its successor. In the opening movement (in D minor) of the Gothic, the lyrical second theme is first heard in D flat major, and soon afterwards is restated and developed in D major. This use of the tonic major for the second subject material is even more pronounced in the opening movement of No.2. which is in E minor. The second subject group of that movement begins in E major on its initial appearance, in what I refer to in my commentary below as the exposition. Further to this, however, the theme also appears in E major later in the movement, in the recapitulation. Brian uses the tonic as a launching point for the main sectional divisions of the opening movements of the Gothic and its successor (i.e., presentation, development and

⁶⁹ Ibid., 76.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 26.

⁷¹ Truscott, 'The First Movement' in *Two Studies*, 19.

restatement of themes, with the addition of a slow introduction in No. 2). As a consequence he intensifies the contrast between the major and minor mode of the tonic key to a significant degree in these movements.

Given the sense of expansiveness noted above as a characteristic of each part of the Gothic, it is also possible to view the opening instrumental movement as introductory. This is even more pronounced in the case of the Second Symphony, as will be discussed below. This introductory nature explains the relatively fixed horizons in both opening movements, a sense emphasised by the use of the same key centre — with a contrast of mode — in the presentation of subject groups. The minor mode of the opening subject is followed in each case by the major mode of the second subject. One can thus see that the idea behind Brian's use of two very different subject groups in both opening movements —that of a contrast primarily of mode rather than key — is more clearly focused in the case of Symphony No.2. The use of the tonic major in the Second Symphony signifies an even more radical deviation from the idea of key contrast than that found in the Gothic, and its effect is to intensify the contrast of mode which is central to both movements. This avoidance of one of the conventions of sonata style writing is thus the product of a consciously different approach on Brian's part, rather than the result of a formal weakness. In addition, one should note that the discussion above is based around what the music contains, rather than what it does not include. Criticising the music for what it is not often misses the point of assessing the music as what it is, and drawing conclusions from there.

A further example of how the composer rethinks the role of the tonic key is found in the first movement of No.3. A sense of expansiveness is a major characteristic of the opening movement, in contrast to the precedent set in the first two symphonies. Brian, however, still uses the tonic at key structural moments in this first movement. The exposition, development, cadenza for the two pianos and coda all begin in the tonic key of C sharp minor. The overall harmonic framework is broader, however. The second subject, for example, is first heard in D major, and returns in a highly coloured E major before the cadenza for the two pianos. The inclusion of solo instrument(s) appears to have determined this broader framework, in that Brian colours the double statements of both thematic groups in the exposition with harmonic variety. The second statement in each case is also more elaborate texturally — with the addition of

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the two solo pianos — as well as richer harmonically. Brian rejects the contrast of mode between subject groups used in the opening movement of No.2 in favour of a much wider palette. Indeed, the idea of contrast (which can be declared as central to much symphonic thought) is pivotal to the first movement of each of the first three symphonies. This is initially found in the opening movement of the *Gothic*, as Paul Rapoport has noted in his division of the material of this movement into two opposing types, namely 'calm' and 'turbulent'.⁷² This contrast is intensified and developed in the first movements of the next two symphonies. To Brian, therefore, this contrast of type became more significant than the classically based contrast of key, and this opposition of gesture, tone and texture remained central to Brian's concept of symphonic writing, right through to his last works of the late 1960s.

c) Spatial separation

The fifth movement of the *Gothic* sets just four words of the text of the 'Te Deum'. The words 'Judex crederis esse venturus' (We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge) inspire Brian to some of his most massive textures in this extraordinary work. The division of the female voices into four groups of four parts each at the beginning of the movement strongly anticipates the similar division into four groups of four horns in the 'Battle' scherzo of Symphony No.2. The exploration of acoustic space in the latter movement is also found in the second part of the *Gothic* in the writing for four separate brass bands. Although this has been reduced to two on occasion — also the case in the recent Marco Polo recording of No.2, which uses eight rather than sixteen horns — MacDonald argues that 'in view of the spatial conception of the whole' the specific requirements listed in the score should be observed. He also notes that the four choral parts mentioned above should likewise be spatially separated:

If possible, the four half-choirs should be ranged in a vast semi-circle above and behind the orchestra, each with a brass orchestra behind it.⁷³

Brian, in fact, is being precise rather than merely extravagant. In the opening of the 'Judex' movement he relates each acoustic space to a distinct harmonic area. The four female half choirs sing chords of E minor, D minor. G major and A minor respectively.

⁷² Rapoport, 'The First Movement', in Two Studies., 59-60.

⁷³ MacDonald, *The Symphonies*, vol.1, 42.

Although none is pre-eminent in the total sonority produced, the spatial separation requested in the score reflects Brian's concern —even in massive textures such as the present one — for clarity. In the 'Battle' scherzo each group of horns is given a distinctive fanfare-like idea, which is a further instance of Brian's desire for clarity amid complex textures. In this movement, Brian deploys his massive sonorities differently. Rather than beginning with all four groups of horns — as he does with the female half-choirs in the 'Judex' movement of the *Gothic* — he uses them together to mark the climax of two build-ups in the 'Battle' scherzo, to enormously powerful effect. In fact, as I discuss below, this scherzo can be considered, to a degree, as a study in textural contrasts and build-up

There is a further bulwark against a sense of mass confusion in the type of harmonic language used by the composer in both the 'Judex' and 'Battle' movements. In each instance the harmony at crucial points is modal. Mention has already been made of the four chords superimposed at the beginning of the *Gothic* movement. The resultant sonority consists entirely of white notes — all the notes of the C major scale are present. The use of modes in the fanfare material of the 'Battle' scherzo is considered in detail below. MacDonald speaks succinctly in his commentary of the 'evocative combination of C and D' and further notes that 'the material of the scherzo is in fact the most diatonic in the symphony'. ⁷⁴ This complexity is acutely judged by Brian, so that at no point — however complex — does the music become incoherent or unintelligible. There is always a thread through the labyrinthine complexes of sound conjured up by his fertile. expanding imagination to guide the listener.

Conclusion

It is beyond the scope of the present commentary to do full justice to the extraordinary sweep and scope of the *Gothic*. The music covers a huge expressive range over the course of its playing time of almost two hours, and within that span contains a synthesis of elements of Brian's compositional style. Like many a work from the central part of the creative life of its composer, it draws from the past and anticipates the future. There are clear developments from the type of writing found in earlier works — one can trace a path back from the slow march of the second movement to

⁷⁴ Ibid., 65,66

the manner of a work such as *In Memoriam* (1910) for example — as well as pointers to the manner in which the composer would develop his language over the next four decades of writing symphonies. Within the 'Judex' movement, for example, there are two orchestral interludes that prefigure a later orchestral style for Brian. The first anticipates the pithy, concentrated gestural style of the later symphonies, found in a work such as the Symphony No.17 (1960–61). The second clearly points the way toward the iridescent and richly scored textures which form such a characteristic feature of the second movement of Symphony No. 2, written just three years later. The fact that both these interludes end expectantly, followed by the re-entry of the chorus as if from a different perspective, also foreshadows the abrupt change of direction and focus which are a prevalent — and controversial — feature of Brian's later style. This type of discontinuity can be seen, in his largest symphony, to be an essential feature of the hugely expansive language and time-scale of the piece, and not something arrived at as a consequence of a more concentrated manner in his later symphonies.

The abruptness which characterises this type of discontinuity — and which has proved a challenge to listeners new to this music - is not 'anti-symphonic' for Brian. In fact, the opposite is the case. From the outset of his symphonic career, the deliberate use of this manner — which appears abrupt and disruptive on the surface — can be discerned as an essential building block in his manner of discourse. In the shorter, later symphonies the reduced time-scale accentuates this seeming unwillingness - or inability, depending on the view taken — to compose in long, sustained paragraphs. Yet continuity is just as important as discontinuity for Brian. We have noted how he praised Arnold Bax for 'the wonderful faculty' of 'uninterrupted continuous thinking' of his Symphony No.1 (1921-2), and Brian's symphonic output reveals a concern with an unbroken argument in two chief ways. The first reflection of this can be seen in the number of the symphonies that are cast in a single movement. There are twelve of these, which is more than for any other number of movements.⁷⁵ Even in the multimovement works, however, there is often a continuity of thought that crosses the silences between movements, so that there is a pause, but not a break in the musical discourse.

⁷⁸ See MacDonald, *The Symphonies*, vol. 3, 187 for a table of the number of movements in the symphonies.

As MacDonald has written on the nature and size of the *Gothic*, 'the work is so vast as to be almost beyond understanding on a single hearing⁷⁶ However, the same claim may be made on behalf of several works of lesser size and duration by Brian and also by many other composers, and should not be regarded as a barrier for the listener to the present symphony. In relation to this, it should be noted that the reception of audiences has been very favourable to the live performances. The prolonged ovation in the Albert Hall in 1966 — when the work received its first fully professional performance under Sir Adrian Boult — can also be partly attributed to the emotion engendered by the presence of the ninety-year-old composer. The mythical status of the Gothic has cast a huge shadow over the succeeding symphonies. This applies to such an extent that it comes as a great surprise to many who enquire further about the work of the composer to discover that his shortest symphony - No. 22 (1964-5) - is a mere 10 minutes long. This misconception — that all Brian's symphonies are on a similar scale to the *Gothic* — is easily dispelled thanks to the increasing number of recordings of the other symphonies commercially available, but the aura of a composer engaged on impractical monstrosities has proven an obstacle to Brian being taken seriously. There is an important distinction between a composer who writes a hugely ambitious work and does not expect to hear it. and one who does not care whether the finished piece is performed or not. As Reginald Nettel has observed, the Gothic 'was written by Brian for his own satisfaction' but this is hardly a unique observation on the relationship between a creative artist and his/her work.⁷⁷ One can only speculate on the sense of satisfaction and pride felt by the ninety year old composer in 1966, on the occasion of the first fully professional performance of the Gothic. In this regard - and taking Brian's reticence on creative matters generally, as noted above — one should not read too much into the fact that all Brian had to say after the performance in the Royal Albert Hall — and the standing ovation he received — was the following: 'It gets you behind the knees, doesn't it, all this sitting down?".78

Malcolm MacDonald offers the view that that the *Gothic* as a whole is concerned with 'the continuing validity for the present time of the achievements and standards of

⁷⁶ MacDonald, The Symphonies, vol. 1, 25-6.

⁷⁷ 'Reginald 'Reginald Nettel, Havergal Brian: The Man and his Music (Dobson, 1976). 146.

⁷⁸ Brian quoted in MacDonald, The Symphonies, vol.3, 82.

previous cultural eras^{7,79} One could extend this interpretation into a view of the *Gothic* as a summing up of the considerable range of achievements in symphonic writing since Beethoven (underlined by the choral finale, and Rapoport's view of it as referred to above). One can spend quite a lot of time and energy finding echoes of past symphonic works in the vast canvas of the *Gothic* — from Beethoven, through Berlioz to Bruckner and Mahler — from passing thematic resemblance to more esoteric notions of scale and aesthetic outlook. The danger is of losing sight of Brian's wood for all the symphonic trees, and commenting less on what makes the *Gothic* the particular work it is, and more on its general context. However wide that context may be, it cannot be seen as an excuse for excesses of every kind in the finished work. The *Gotihc*, however ingenuous this claim may sound — despite its enormity — is just another symphony, and must be assessed on its own symphonic credentials.

One may regard the *Gothic* as an extravagant failure or one of the greatest of all English symphonies. MacDonald remarks that it is 'central to the traditions of the European symphony'.⁸⁰ Its importance to Brian lies in the fact that the engagement that the work represents on such a massive scale with the European symphonic tradition freed him to pursue an independent path in the succeeding works. He can hardly have foreseen that the path would lead to works at the opposite end of the spectrum in terms of concentrated utterance and drastically reduced time-scale, but the *Gothic* is clearly representative of a unique approach to symphonic writing. The huge outward journey of the work lends it a special quality which has been characterised by MacDonald as follows: 'formal perfection is beside the point: it is the intensity of the vision that counts'.⁸¹

That vision, to have full impact, must be communicated as clearly as possible, and this was the challenge Brian would face in the succeeding works, without the luxury, and the dangers, of the massive canvas used in his First Symphony. One can interpret the sombre nature of the Second Symphony as a continuation of the dark mood which dominates the closing minutes of the *Gothic*. Brian was to write symphonies which formed groupings within the thirty-two — such as Nos. 8 (1949), 9 (1951) and 10

[&]quot; Ibid. 274.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 274.

⁸¹ MacDonald, The Symphonies, vol. 1, 55.

(1953–54) which he described as 'brothers'⁸² — so that continuity is often strongly implied between successive works. The character of the symphonic output as a whole is very wide ranging —from the stark gestures of No.12 (1957) to the exuberance and brilliance of No.16 (1960), to pick but two disparate yet equally distinctive works. But MacDonald is correct when he asserts, with regard to the thirty-one symphonies which came after it, that 'without the experience of the *Gothic* they would never have been possible'.⁸³

It is possible to regard the *Gothic* as the first work in which the distinctive voice of the three pieces that form the bulk of this thesis can be fully discerned. The completion of The Tigers in 1929 is also of great significance in this regard. In the view of Malcolm MacDonald, 'The Tigers constitutes a more original conception, more perfectly achieved than the *Gothic*⁸⁴. It is beyond the scope of the present thesis to examine this more fully, but what should also be noted, in relation to the above comment, are MacDonald's remarks on Brian's massive first symphony -quoted above - in relation to formal perfection. What is unique about the relationship between the Gothic and the works that followed it, is that the latter do not expand on the possibilities suggested in the former: given the scale of the Gothic such a prospect is unlikely. But they can be said to build on the achievement of that massive work, but --of necessity - on a reduced scale. That reduced scale, however, is still very large, in particular in relation to the Symphonies 2 to 4. The challenge for Brian was not how to surpass the Gothic, but how to move on and develop beyond the imposing shadow cast by his first symphony. The fact that Brian found sufficient inspiration to sustain another thirty-one symphonies is one of the more remarkable facets of his long creative life.

⁸² Brian quoted in MacDonald. The Symphonies. vol.1, 147.

⁸³ MacDonald. The Symphonies, vol.1, 55.

⁸⁴ MacDonald. The Symphonies, vol.3, 274.

CHAPTER FOUR SYMPHONY NO 2 IN E MINOR (1930 -31)

1. Adagio Solenne — Allegro Assai

- 2. Andante Sostenuto
- 3. Allegro Assai
- 4. Lento Maestoso e Mesto

Instrumentation: 4 Flutes (3rd and 4th doubling Piccolo), 4 Oboes (3rd and 4th doubling Cor Anglais), 4 Clarinets (3rd and 4th doubling Bass Clarinet), 4 Bassoons (4th doubling Contrabassoon), 6 Horns (16 Horns ad. lib. in the 3rd movement), 4 Trumpets, 4 Trombones, 2 Bass Tubas, 6 Timpani (3 players), Bass Drum, Cymbals, Side drum. Celeste. Glockenspiel, Xylophone, Bell in F, 2 Harps, 2 Pianos. Organ, Strings⁸⁵

Introduction

After the completion of the *Gothic* Symphony in 1927, Brian turned back to work on his comic opera *The Tigers*, begun in 1917. The vocal and orchestral scores of this huge opus were complete by the end of 1929, and in June 1930 he began sketching a new piece. This turned out to be the slow second movement of his Second Symphony. The remaining three movements that make up the work were then written in numerical order, and the short score of the new symphony was completed within five months, on 26 October 1930. The orchestration took until 6 April the next year. The composer considered the finished work as his third symphony at that time — the *Fantastic Symphony* still being considered as No.1 despite being broken up into individual pieces — and the new score retained this numbering until Brian revised his symphonic catalogue in 1967. At that late stage he finally excluded the humorous early work — no longer extant in its complete original symphonic state — from the canon.⁸⁶ The Symphony No.2 was not performed during Brian's lifetime. It received its premiere on 19 May 1973, seven months after the death of the composer, in a largely amateur

⁸⁵ Taken from the full score in the library of the Royal College of Music. Brian does not list all instruments on the title page. The 'Bell in F' appears in the closing stages of the finale.

⁸⁶ MacDonald, *The Symphonies*, vol.1,56.

performance in Brighton by the Kensington Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Leslie Head.⁸⁷

Brian was slightly more forthcoming about the ideas behind his Second Symphony than was usually his habit. His remarks about the extra-musical inspiration for the work reveal a change of attitude towards the idea of 'absolute' music and its programmatic opposite as he grew older. Reginald Nettel, writing in *Ordeal by Music* in 1945, presumably after consulting the composer, asserted that there was a correlation between the four movements of the symphony and aspects of the play *Götz von Berlichingen* (1770) by Goethe:

the four movements are associated in the composer's mind with various aspects of the character of Götz. The first, his resolution, the second, his domestic piety and love of his children, the third, the smell of battle, and the fourth, his death.⁸⁸

This attitude changed in his later years, to the extent that he wrote, in 1972, to Graham Hatton of *Musica Viva* — who were intent on publishing the scores of Brian, which were mostly in manuscript — that the symphony was about 'MAN in his cosmic loneliness: ambition, loves, battles, death'.⁸⁹

There is no mention of Goethe — or Götz — here, but the contradiction is only apparent, as the descriptive terms used above are comparable to the earlier ones related to Goethe, but de-personalised and made more universal. This move away from the representational is a reflection of most of Brian's symphonic career during the intervening years, although it does not always apply, as MacDonald has shown, for example, with regard to Symphony No. 30 (1967) and its relationship to Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*.⁹⁰

Before the Second Symphony, with the exception of the *Gothic*, Brian had written orchestral music of a mainly representational type, as in the early tone poems

⁸⁷ For further performance details, see appendix 4.

⁸⁸ Reginald Nettel, Ordeal by Music: the Strange Case of Havergal Brian. (Oxford University Press, 1945), 123.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Malcolm MacDonald, 'Havergal Brian (1876-1972): Festival Fanfare, Symphony No. 2', sleeve notes for compact disc Marco Polo 8.223790, 1997,4.

⁹⁰ MacDonald, The Symphonies, vol. 3, 11-15.

discussed above and the first four *English Suites*. The *Gothic* can be viewed on one level as an attempt to fuse the symphonic and non-symphonic traditions, and Symphony No.2 continues that ambition. By the time of the Third Symphony, which was completed only one year later, we have only the enigmatic word 'Altarus' as a clue to extra- musical stimulus: in this respect at least, the Second is a transitional work.⁹¹ It is also, after the offbeat, deliberately false start of the *Fantastic Symphony* (1907–08) and the "ne plus ultra" of the *Gothic* (1919–27), a third beginning to his career as composer of symphonies.

While Brian referred jokingly to No. 2 as his 'Little Symphony' — in comparison with the Gothic most of the entire symphonic repertoire could be considered a reduction in scale! — it is a large-scale work, both in terms of duration and orchestration. There are two pianos, organ, three sets of timpani and sixteen horns required in addition to the requirements of a late romantic orchestra. The work plays for almost fifty five minutes in the recent Marco Polo recording,⁹² and at least on the surface appears more closely related to the symphonic tradition than its imposing predecessor. Brian described the symphony as ' in the orthodox four movements - but very unorthodox inside' in a letter to Robert Simpson.⁹³ The first part of this comment can be accepted as accurate with the qualification that a slow finale was more exceptional than Brian seems to imply. As to the 'inside' of the work, the following discussion should make clear what the composer meant by this part of the quoted comment. The four movement layout bears comparison with works such as Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony, the *Pathetique* (1893) and Mahler's Ninth (1908–09), in particular in relation to the idea of a slow finale. The purely instrumental scoring of the piece anticipates the similar nature — if not duration — of the bulk of Brian's future output in what was to become a prolific symphonic career for the composer. After the Gothic, only two further symphonies no.4, Das Siegeslied (1932–33) and no.5, The Wine of Summer (1937) — would contain vocal writing.

⁹¹ See the introduction to chapter 6 below in relation to this title and No. 3.

⁹² Havergal Brian, *Symphony No. 2, Festival Fanfare*, Moscow Symphony Orchestra, Tony Rowe, compact disc Marco Polo 8.223790, 1997.

⁹³ Brian quoted in Ibid., 3.

Brian broke off from the scoring of No.2 during the winter of 1930 to compose the recently rediscovered *Battle Song* for brass band. Only the short score of this work survives, but its existence and timing are intriguing, given that the third movement of No.2 has been called the 'Battle' scherzo, and also bearing in mind the prominent writing for sixteen French horns in that particular movement.⁹⁴ The compositional chronology of the four movements of no. 2 is noted in the composer's hand on the final page of the ink short score. The following is written there:

Order of Composition

2nd Movement. Commenced in June 1930 continued in July First movement written on Aug 17th 1930 Third } (4th) Finale } written between Aug 17th }

and September 1st }

1930

This working short score completed From pencil sketches on Oct 26th 1930

The address of Jaspar Road follows this information. The inscription indicates that Brian wanted to chronicle the creative path of the work, rather than conceal it. He surely means that the first movement was finished — rather than 'written', which implies it was completely composed — on the given date, but the inscription makes clear that the ink score — or 'working short score' as he terms it — was to form the basis for the full score. It represented a clarification of the pencil sketches. Based on the surviving evidence, these would appear to have constituted a complete pencil sketch of the work, as in the case of the work which followed immediately, the Third Symphony. All of the surviving pencil sketch material for the Second Symphony is in fact found on the reverse of pages of the ink short score of the Third, which makes their survival a matter of chance. It seems that once Brian had clarified his pencil sketches, he had no particular desire to preserve them in their entirety. There are ten

⁹⁴ For more detail on the rediscovery and nature of this score, see Malcom Madonald, 'Brian's *The Battle Song &* 15 Transcriptions', *The Havergal Brian Society Newsletter*, 125 (May-June 1996): 3-6, and 127 (September-October 1996): 2-4.

surviving pages of pencil sketches for the Symphony No.2. These consist of seven consecutive pages (numbered 2 to 8) of the first movement, one from the scherzo (numbered 6), and two for the finale (numbered 1 and 2). These are discussed in appendix 1.

The chronology noted above is of interest in relation to the nature of the musical discourse in each movement. The first movement to be written was the rhapsodic second (slow) movement. It was the first symphonic movement composed after the completion of the Gothic, and its expansive writing is a clear continuation of the type of writing found in the choral second part of that work. It eschews thematic repetition to a large degree, as will be discussed below. This freely developing movement was followed in order of composition by a first movement that adheres more closely to the outward conventions of sonata form than do most of the first movements of Brian's symphonies. This first movement also contains a far greater element of thematic restatement than the second one. The so-called 'Battle' scherzo, with its steady accumulation of ostinatos and consistent forward momentum towards a dramatic climax, also eschews thematic argument in favour of textural expansion. It is in its turn followed in order of composition by a finale that relies heavily on repetition of the opening gesture for its cumulative impact. Thus, during the composition of the work the composer has twice followed a movement with very little repetition (the second and third in order of performance) by a movement that relies heavily on restatements of material in its layout (the first movement and the finale). The influence of the two types of writing found in the Gothic and discussed in the chapter on that work namely the classically related and the more open-ended — can be detected. The work in fact alternates between the two types of writing over its four movements. Malcolm MacDonald's contention that the Symphony begins in one century and ends in the previous one is a provocative assessment of this stylistic diversity,⁹⁵ but doesn't quite fit in relation to the points made above about the nature of each successive movement. It does, however expose a split within the symphony. As with the Gothic, No.2 is not a unified whole — it has a fractured quality to which MacDonald is partly referring in the above comment. It is significant that Brian's next Symphony (written hard on the heels of No.2) falls into a comparable four movement plan, and maintains the wide

⁹⁵ MacDonald. The Symphonies, vol. 3, 276.

stylistic and expressive scope of No.2, but is arguably realised with greater assurance and overall consistency. The level of invention in No.2 is very high, however, and the work contains some of his most striking textural ideas and explorations. particularly in the middle two movements.

Adagio Solenne — Allegro Assai

Overview

The statement by the composer — quoted above — in relation to 'the orthodox four movements' of the symphony can be said to apply to the first movement if one describes it in terms of a sonata allegro, complete with slow introduction. The broad sectional divisions of this type of movement apply to the main divisions of the opening movement as detailed in the table below.

Place in score	score Description	
Bar 1 to 4:5	Slow introduction	
4:6 to 12:1	Exposition	
12:2 to 19:9	Development	
19:10 to 25:4	Recapitulation	
25:5 to 27:9	Coda	

Table 2:1: First movement sectional divisions

This corresponds to the 'outside' view —the 'orthodox' part — of the movement as described by the composer. On this level, the lack of any significant thematic modifications between the exposition and recapitulation correspond to the 'classical' line in Brian's writing, already commented on in relation to the *Gothic*. However, the 'inside' of the movement —beyond the thematic surface — reveals a process of textural enrichment which represents a further development of this side of Brian's symphonism as also seen in (other) parts of the *Gothic*. It is this aspect of the music that can be seen as 'unorthodox' and part of the more exploratory side of Brian's creative nature. This dichotomy between surface and detail relates to the function of this opening movement as essentially introductory. It sets out the oppositions that are central to the symphony — between darkness and lyricism, between sparse and full textures, and between growth and collapse — and that will be developed in the

remaining movements. The lack of thematic modification allows these oppositions to stand out all the more clearly. The textural narrative — discussed below — culminates in the climactic collapse of the movement, a passage that will recur with great dramatic resonance in the finale.

Adagio solenne

The Second Symphony begins by presenting a significant thematic idea in three successive versions that present a process of textural growth. This opening idea is subsequently referred to during the course of the Allegro part of the movement, and creates a link between the two parts across the change in speed between them. It is possible to view this slow introduction in two ways by separating out the thematic and textural processes. The thematic argument is outlined in table 2:2 below. The textural narrative will be discussed in due course. Both thematic and textural lines of development culminate in the beginning of the ensuing Allegro assai. It should be noted that both aspects discussed below work in tandem as the music unfolds. They are treated separately for the sake of clarity. The related development of theme and texture is a principle that will be developed, not only in the ensuing Allegro assai, but also across the four movements of the symphony.

Thematic argument: (a) The opening theme

The following table gives a thematic overview of the slow opening section of the movement.

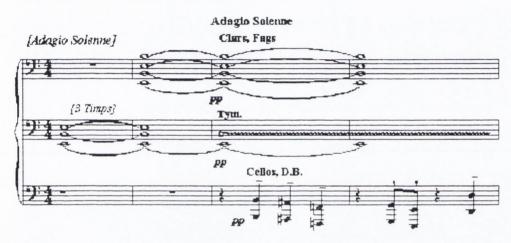
Place in score	Description
Bar 1 to 1:1	Theme 1 (ex 2:1)
1:2 to 1:10	Contrast 1 (ex 2:2)
2:1 to 2:9	Theme 1(ii)
2:10 to 3:7	Contrast 2 (ex 2:3)
3:8 to 4:5	Theme 1(iii)

Table 2:2: Slow Introduction: sectional divisions

The opening idea, labelled as 'Theme 1' in the table above, is stated three times in the course of the Adagio, interspersed with two contrasting ideas. It is interesting to note, in the context of the two areas of theme and texture mentioned above, that Brian

begins his Second Symphony not with a theme, but with two bars of texture. The interval present —that of a perfect fifth, heard on timpani, joined in the second bar by clarinets and bassoons — is one frequently encountered in Brian's endings, particularly in the later symphonies. Here it begins the music, and is to have an important part to play as the music progresses. These two bars are not found in the ink short score, however. Brian only added them in when writing the full score. The following example includes the opening two bars in short score format. Brian's short score begins as at the third bar of the example.

EXAMPLE 2:1(a)



Symphony no.2, 1, bars 1-4 (reduced by the author)

Despite being an afterthought, however, the first two bars are crucial — as the first sounds heard in the work — in setting the context for what follows. The addition of these two bars ensures that the listener has been drawn into the sound world of the work by the time the opening idea is heard. Here, at the outset, the two bars create a harmonic and textural backdrop for the opening theme of the work. Brian follows them with the eight bar theme quoted below.

EXAMPLE 2:1(b)

Symphony No.2, 1, bars 3-10 (bass part only)



The rhythmic and intervallic nature of the pizzicato bass is immediate and clearly presented. The opening contour, using intervals of a minor second and augmented third, are recalled in the fifth bar. lending a certain periodicity to the line, emphasised by the use of the same rhythm. The shape of these opening bars is alluded to in other parts of the idea (see a and b in example 2:1 above for these motives), lending a motivic unity to the idea that counteracts the fragmentary, hesitant nature of its presentation. These recurrent shapes are also used strikingly by Brian later in the allegro section of the movement, as will be detailed below. The fact that these motivic shapes recur in the Allegro section of the movement lends a further significance to the clarity of their initial presentation at this early point of the musical discourse.

This theme contains all twelve pitches within the octave. a fact which might lead to the thought that there is some sort of serial procedure at work. In fact, Brian was an early champion of the music of Arnold Schönberg — the pioneer of serialism — in England, as his writings in *Musical Opinion* show.⁹⁶ but the inclusion of all twelve pitches in the present context is less an act of homage to the Austrian master than a setting of a wide harmonic context for this opening movement of the present symphony. The twelve pitches are not presented as a row — wherein each pitch would be presented once before any one is repeated — but are rather the consequence of this wide harmonic palette. There is no suggestion of serial procedure here (or, for that matter, elsewhere in Brain's output).

⁹⁶ See MacDonald, The Symphonies, vol. 3, 150-51, for a summary of these writings by Brian.

It is significant that the two rhyming bars referred to above — the first and fifth, which share the same rhythmic and intervallic shape — begin, respectively, on B and E. These are, as already observed, the two notes which form the harmonic backdrop for example 2:1. The fact that these two notes correspond to the tonic and dominant of E in traditional harmonic theory implies a closer relationship to tonal rather than serial practice. In the latter manner of composition the idea of 'twelve tones which are related only to one another' is of pivotal importance. The primacy of B and E in the Brian ensures that other pitches in these opening bars are heard in relation to them. There is a harmonic pull exerted by the two sustained pitches that precludes the equality of all twelve pitches implied in orthodox serial practise. This opening juxtaposition presents us with a microcosm of what the Symphony will explore in macrocosm in terms of its harmonic language. The contrast between the static fifth and the mobile bass line prefigures later oppositions between different types of material in the work. Further to this, the tonal pull of the sustained fifth against the non-triadic bass line will be expanded to a contrast between, and juxtaposition of, the tonally centred and harmonically free-ranging as the work unfolds.

It is worth a closer inspection of the above example to see how non-serial is Brian's use of the twelve pitches. The table below details the number of times each pitch occurs in the thirty four note theme:

Pitch	Number of occurrences	
С	1	
C sharp	1	
D	1	
D sharp	4	
E	4	
F	4	
F sharp	1	
G	5	
G sharp	1	
А	2	
A sharp	5	
В	5	

Table 2:3: Pitch occurrence in Example 2:1

Taking into consideration the sustained fifth E-B against the line whose pitches are represented in the above table, the fact that E. G and B are all amongst the most frequently used pitches would indicate a strong pull towards E minor in the idea as a whole. The immediate succession of these notes —E. G and B — would suggest a tonic of E minor even more strongly. This, however, does not occur, but two notes of the triad are heard in close proximity. G is followed by E at two points, once in the second bar, and once across the bar-line into the last bar of the idea. However, B and E never appear in direct succession. The other pitches most frequently used are D sharp and F (both semitonally adjacent to E) and A sharp (semitonally adjacent to B). Bearing in mind that the above table does not chronicle the order of appearance of pitches in the bass idea, it is nonetheless significant that the notes of the tonic triad and their adjacent semitones are the most frequently used.

The opening line is. in fact, more memorable for the motivic shapes presented than for the appearance of all twelve semitones within the octave during its course. This lends a greater significance to these motivic shapes in the music of this opening section of the first movement. The broad harmonic palette opened out by this opening idea is typical of Brian's style at this point in his symphonic career, as will be seen in the next work he was to write, the Third Symphony (1931-32) (see the chapter on this work).

(b) Contrasting ideas

The first contrasting idea (referred to as Contrast 1 in table 2:2), beginning at fig.1, features a gesture that alternates between three short figures: each occupies a different registral space — respectively, bottom, top and middle — and each is based on a distinctive rhythmic gesture:

EXAMPLE 2:2

Symphony No.2, 1, 1:2-3



The orchestral colours are similarly contrasted: bassoons are followed by flutes and oboes, with the fanfare-like rhythm — a Brian fingerprint — given to horns. This sequence of rhythms and colours is varied and intensified for eight bars before a crescendo followed by a descending scale where flutes and oboes are joined by violins 1 leads to the second statement of the opening idea. After this more fully scored version of example 2:1, the second contrast comes in the form of a melody on cellos:

EXAMPLE 2:3

Symphony No.2, 1. 2:10 to 3:2 (cellos)



This idea incorporates references to example 2:1 above, in the manner in which both make frequent use of offbeats. The use of a perfect fifth in the opening bar forms a

clear link with the perfect fifth which opened the whole work; on clarinets, bassoons and timpani. The third statement of the opening idea —in its fullest scoring — then leads directly into the Allegro Assai.

Texture as form

The introduction can also be seen to unfold a process of textural growth that culminates in the Allegro Assai. There is a constant use of tremolandi throughout the section, from the E-B on timpani. bassoons and clarinets that accompanies example 2:1 above, to the string tremolandi which are present in the rest of the Adagio introduction. Each time the opening idea returns it is more fully scored, and this gives the whole passage a sense of direction and momentum towards the Allegro. Within the slow introduction, the opening pizzicato bass idea is heard three times. The scoring of each appearance is presented below:

Place in Score	Bar 1	2:1	3:8
Orchestration			2 Piccolos
		4 Flutes	2 Flutes
		4 Oboes	4 Oboes
	2 Clarinets	4 Clarinets	4 Clarinets
	2 Bass Clarinets		
	4 Bassoons	3 Bassoons	3 Bassoons
		Contrabassoon	Contrabassoon
		4 Horns	2 Horns
			2 Trombones
			2 Tubas
	3 Timpani		
			2 Harps
	Cellos/ Basses	Strings (divisi)	Strings (divisi)

 Table 2:4: Scoring of Example 2:1

The table clearly shows how crucial the increase in orchestral weight is as a contributory factor in the push towards the ensuing Allegro assai.

Brian requests an increase in tempo on each repetition of the opening theme: at fig. 2 he writes Con anima, and at 3:8 Più anima. These changes in tempo imply that the composer sought to counteract the repetition of thematic material by an ongoing sense of forward movement. The sense of urgency implied both in the richer textures and the increases in tempo pushes effectively towards the arrival point of the Allegro Assai. Tempo and texture contribute toward a sense of onward momentum. In contrast to this the repetition of thematic ideas, discussed above, creates a cyclic sense of return. There is therefore a tension between the thematic aspect of this introduction, and other parameters of tempo and texture. This dichotomy is followed through in the main body of the movement, where a superficial resemblance to sonata outline —encompassing a large degree of literal repetition of thematic ideas — is counteracted by a comparable process of textural accumulation as the movement heads toward its climax.

Allegro Assai

Relation to sonata design

The following presents an overview of the Allegro part of the first movement according to the sections of a sonata design:

Place in score	Description		
<u>4:6 to 12:1</u>	Exposition		
4:6 to 6:9	First subject group		
6:10 to 7:1	Transition		
7:2 to 9:5	Second subject group		
9:6 to 12:1	Codetta and Transition		
<u>12:2 to 19:9</u>	Development		
12:2 to 14:4	First subject group developed		
14:5 to 16:1	Slow introduction idea developed		
16:2 to 18:5	Second subject group developed		
18:6 to 19:9	Transition		
19:10 to 25:4	Recapitulation		
19:10 to 22:9	First subject group		
22:10	Transition		
23:1 to 25:4	Second subject group		
<u>25:5 to 27:9</u>	Coda		
25:5 to 26:6	Climax		
26:7 to 27:9	Conclusion		

 Table 2:5: Allegro Assai: sectional subdivisions

This division according to presentations of thematic material follows quite strictly the sectional layout of a sonata allegro with two contrasting subjects (or two subject groups, as is the case here). This 'orthodox' thematic layout is combined with a harmonic scheme which presents a more original — and 'unorthodox' — approach. As mentioned in the chapter on the *Gothic*, the contrast between the two subject groups is not one of key, but one of mode. The first subject group begins with a stormy idea presented in a strongly coloured E minor:

EXAMPLE 2:4

Symphony No.2, 1.4:6-9



The lyrical beginning of the second subject group, quoted below, contrasts with this in terms of orchestration and dynamics, as well as the contrast in mode mentioned above. It is more lightly scored than the above extract, and is in E major.

EXAMPLE 2:5

Symphony No.2, 1,7:2-5



As can be seen from the examples above, the combined elements of contrast mentioned result in two subject groups of strongly differing character. There is a rhythmic similarity between the first bar of each idea, however. When the two groups return at 19:10 and 23:1 respectively, in the recapitulation, the contrast in mode is identical to that found in the exposition. The contrast of character, on the other hand, is further emphasised by the fuller orchestration of each group. The first idea is even more stormy, the second even more luxuriantly lyrical. This intensification of the contrast between the two groups culminates in the climax of the entire movement, followed by a rapid disintegration in the coda. Rather than attempting to integrate his two subject groups as the movement progresses. Brian effectively pushes them further and further apart, leading to the explosive climax mentioned above. This represents a radically different approach to the internal dynamics of a sonata design than that adopted by Jean Sibelius — in the first movement of his Symphony No.3 (1907), for example, where the development reveals the close connection between the two opening subjects. Brian is concerned rather with maintaining and developing the

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separateness of the two subject groups — with disunity rather than unity. The identical contrast of mode in the exposition and recapitulation serves to emphasise this aspect of the musical argument.

Subject Groups

The term 'subject group' is used above since the passages beginning with examples 2:4 and 2:5 both subdivide into smaller motivic and textural units. The two subject groups present a similar sequence. Each consists of three strands, the central one of which is more lightly scored than the ideas on either side of it. In the case of the first subject group, example 2:4, in which strings are dominant, is followed by a second idea, heard on solo woodwind instruments:

EXAMPLE 2:6

Symphony No.2. 1.5:4-6 (top line of ss)



This in turn is succeeded by an idea that features imitation between top and bottom in a fuller orchestral texture where lines are doubled in a manner closer to the more stormy character of the opening idea in the group:

EXAMPLE 2:7

Symphony No.2, 1,5:8-6:1



The transition to the second subject group noted in table 2:5 consists of two bars of minim chords on trumpets, trombones and tubas which prepare the way harmonically for the E major tonality of the opening of that group:

EXAMPLE 2:8

Symphony No.2, 1,6:10-7:1



The second subject group, like the first, also has three distinctive motives. After example 2:5, a second melodic strand begins as follows at 7:10:

EXAMPLE 2:9

Symphony No.2, **1**,7:10-8:2 (top line)



This is followed by the third strand at 8:9, and although all three feature strings melodically, example 2:9 above is more lightly scored than the ideas on either side of it. The third strand commences as follows:

EXAMPLE 2:10

Symphony No.2. 1.8:9-9:2 (top line)



There are three statements each of the first and second subject strands in the present movement, two of which are largely equivalent in terms of length, and the third of which extends the opening idea of each group. The two equivalent statements occur in the sections referred to in the above table as exposition and recapitulation, the extended statements of the first idea of each group in the development section. The second full appearance of example 2:4 does, in fact, correspond to a restatement, in that examples 2:6 to 2:8 follow the opening idea of the group in the same sequence as earlier in the piece, but a comparison of the relative duration of each section is revealing:

Motive	Exposition	Recapitulation
Example 2:4(first subject 1)	8 bars	8 bars
Example 2:6 (first subject 2)	4 bars	4 bars
Example 2:7 (first subject 3)	12 bars	18 bars
Example 2:8 (transition)	2 bars	1 bar

Table 2:6: Comparison of exposition with recapitulation

Example 2:7 above is given a double statement in the recapitulation, as well as being scored more heavily than was the case earlier in the movement. The effect of this is to increase the sense of momentum and urgency, and this effect is compounded by the reduction of the two-bar transition that followed it in the exposition to a single bar at this juncture. In the short score there still is a two bar transition, with the second of the two bars crossed over in pencil, suggesting a late change of mind on Brian's part.

Texture as form

The push towards the climax of the movement is achieved, not by a greater concentration in the presentation of the two thematic groups, as considered above, but through a sense of growing textural weight and orchestration. The transitional bar preceding the second subject group is more heavily scored in the recapitulation, and the second subject itself is given richer textures than earlier in the movement. This textural accumulation registers all the more strongly with the listener due to the fact that the basic shape of both the main ideas is not greatly transformed from their initial appearances. Both melodic outline and key are essentially unchanged. The importance of orchestral weight in the unfolding narrative of the movement is of prime importance in creating a sense of forward momentum. The role of orchestration is also crucial here in presenting these ideas distinctly. This manner of discourse is clearly related to the way Brian treats the opening theme of the slow introduction, as discussed above. Turning to the opening of what is referred to in the above overview as the first subject group, the consistency of Brian's approach in this area becomes apparent. The three columns in the table below refer to presentations of this material that can be said to correspond to the beginnings of the exposition, development and recapitulation sections in the earlier overview of the movement:

Place in score	4:6 to 5:3	12:2 to 12:9	19:10 to 20:7
Orchestration	2 Piccolos		Piccolo
	2 Flutes	4 Flutes	3 Flutes
		3 Oboes	3 Oboes
	4 Clarinets	3 Clarinets	3 Clarinets
		3 Bassoons	3 Bassoons
		Contrabassoon	Contrabassoon
		4 Horns	6 Horns
	4 Trumpets	4 Trumpets	4 Trumpets
			2 Trombones
			3 Tubas
			Timpani
			2 Harps
	Strings (divisi)	Strings (divisi)	Strings (divisi0

Table 2:7: Scoring of Example 2:4

It is the relative lack of thematic modifications in each successive re-appearance that serves to highlight the significance of the textural changes referred to in the above table. The increase in orchestral weight is readily perceptible, and gives the music a sense of onward momentum towards the climactic point at 25:5.

With regard to the first idea of the second subject group, a different, but not contradictory picture emerges. Reference will be made below to the changes of key and register that Brian chooses for this idea in the central portion of the movement. These differences in presentation lead to a greater similarity between the first and last statements of the idea (in the exposition and recapitulation respectively). As the next table shows, there is a textural growth parallel to that presented in tables 2:4 and 2:7 in this case which further underlines the consistency in the application of this principle of growing orchestral weight on Brian's part.

Place in Score	7:2	23:1
Orchestration		Piccolo
	4 Flutes	3 Flutes
	2 Oboes	3 Oboes
	Cor Anglais	Cor Anglais
	2 Clarinets	3 Clarinets
	Bass Clarinet	Bass Clarinet
	3 Bassoons	3 Bassoons
		Contrabassoon
	6 Horns	6 Horns
		4 Trumpets
		4 Trombones
		2 Tubas
	Glockenspiel	Glockenspiel
	Celeste	
	2 Harps	2 Harps
	Strings (divisi)	Strings (divisi)

Table 2:8: Scoring of Example 2:5

Development of ideas

The following table details the sequence of ideas found in this central span of the movement. Graham Saxby, in an article on this work published in *HB: Aspects of Havergal Brian*, remarks that this portion of the movement is 'short and very complex'.⁹⁷ Table 2:9 below presents a rather simpler layout than Saxby implies. It is of note that Brian presents a block-like sequence similar to that found in the exposition. The development of the slow introduction material effectively functions as a transition between the two subject groups of the exposition, which maintain their

⁹⁷ Graham Saxby, 'Havergal Brian's Second Symphony' in *HB: Aspects of Havergal Brian*, Jurgen Schaarwächter (ed.), (Ashgate, 1997), 170–193.

separateness and clear melodic and motivic identity.

Place in score	Description
12:2 to 14:4	First subject group (example 2:4)
14:5 to 16:1	Slow Introduction material (example 2:1)
16:2 to 18:5	Second subject group (example 2:5)
18:6 to 19:9	Transition to Recapitulation

Table 2:9: Sections within the development

The clarity of the layout is enhanced by the fact that Brian focuses on the opening idea of each subject group — namely examples 2:4 and 2:5 respectively — and ignores the other (subsidiary) ideas, illustrated above. The opening subject of each group is heard in a new orchestral context, discussed below. The section as a whole serves to further emphasise the separateness of the two subject groups — as represented by their opening ideas — rather than to transform them. In short, Brian develops the idea of disunity between the themes rather than the themes themselves.

(a) The first subject group

In this section of the movement, Brian once again chooses not to follow one of the cornerstones of traditional sonata design writing at this point, namely the avoidance of the tonic. This part of the movement starts with example 2:4 above, where it is presented at the same pitch level for the first two bars as its first appearance — in a highly coloured E minor, as mentioned earlier — before moving on in a new direction. The treatment of example 2:4 stretches to twenty three bars (from its initial span of eight in the exposition), without recourse to the other elements of the first subject group. Between 12:2 and 14:4 this idea is presented in a manner which comes across as a unified textural block. The orchestration is fuller than was the case on its initial appearance. At 14:5 — marked Tranquillo e semplice — the rhythm and orchestral texture change completely. When the material from the slow introduction succeeds this passage, it is effectively filling the gap between examples 2:4 and 2:5 in place of the other ideas — examples 2:6 and 2:7 above — from the first subject group.

(b) The second subject group

Example 2:5 is heard in two different guises in this central portion of the movement, both of which can be viewed as developmental, but in regard to different aspects of the theme. At 16:2 it is presented in C major, on solo violoncello, accompanied by solo violin and viola, as well as pizzicato cellos and basses, and its eight bars are extended for a further eight, using the rhythm and intervals of the opening bar. The theme is varied both in terms of key and texture. The original eight bar melody, however, is heard unaltered on solo cello. The lighter scoring introduces a chamber music-like transparency that offsets the build up of orchestral textures characteristic of Brian's treatment of the opening of the first subject, as just discussed. This contrast in orchestral weight enhances the sense of separation between the two subject groups. At 17:8 the subject returns in E major, but in the bass. The accompaniment is in triplet crotchets, and this continues as the texture builds up, culminating in the restatement of the first subject group at 19:10 (the start of the recapitulation referred to in the synopsis above). This textural variation is both welcome and finely judged in view of the fact that Brian brings the theme back later in the movement, as mentioned above, in a manner close to its original presentation, once again in E major. It is clearly recognisable in the present instance, but gives the music a fresh impetus due to the textural variety. The idea of using the tonic key in the central portion of the movement is also of importance in the first movement of Symphony No. 3, but in a different manner. The opening of the bass version of the theme is illustrated below:

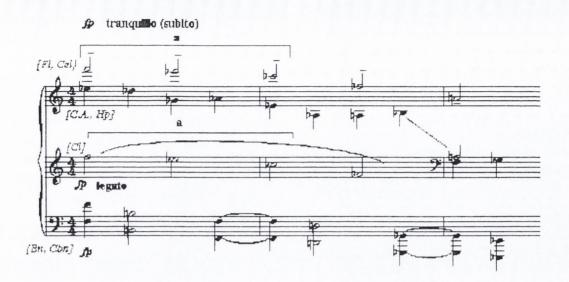
Symphony No.2, 1.17:8 to 18:1



(c) Return of slow introduction material

As stated above, the opening idea of the Symphony is not limited to appearances in the slow introduction, but is referred to in later stages of the movement. The first of these occurs between 9:6 and 10:7, in the section referred to in table 2:5 as 'Codetta and Transition', where a three-part texture is presented in three successive arrangements. The first of these begins as at example 2:12:

Symphony No.2, 1.9:6-8



The part on the middle of the three staves uses the opening intervals of example 2:1 from the very beginning of the symphony (bracketed as 'a'). It is doubled on the top — as can be seen — in flute and celesta. It retains its place in the centre of the texture in the next two presentations of this material, but without the upper doubling. These bars are illustrated as example 2:13 below. This shows how the elements that make up the texture of example 2:12 are effectively shuffled around by the composer, but without affecting the gestural continuity. The relationship between the three successive blocks is clearly audible, despite the changes in internal detail.

Symphony No.2, 1.9:8-10:4



The top and bottom parts exchange places from the second to the third presentation of the material. As far as pitch is concerned, the top part is transposed up a major second from example 2:12 to the top system of 2:13, and then up a further semitone in the bass register for its third appearance (in the bottom system). The bottom part of example 2:12 is initially transposed up a major third, and then up a semitone, but with an E flat — rather than the exact transposed note. E natural — as the second note in the sequence. The middle part is altered even further as far as intervals are concerned, from its initial reference to the opening of the first theme of the symphony. The rhythm is unchanged, however, so that the successive versions share a common factor which relates one to the other. Literal restatement, for once in this movement, is replaced by the type of allusive development of ideas that is typical of the style of later Brian.

The ties to the opening of the movement — after the beginning of example 2:12 — are tenuous here, but significant in view of the nature of a restatement of the opening bass idea at 14:5, in the development section. Brian doubles the length of the original notes

for their appearance here — and later — at a quicker tempo. The effect is close to a superimposition of the earlier Adagio with the present Allegro. It creates the sense that the manner of the slow introduction has impinged on the quicker music of the movement. Further to that is the feeling that the slow music has continued its course — but beneath the surface of the piece — until its re-emergence at the present point.

The scoring of the present passage, mainly for high woodwind, will also be a feature of the later passage in the development (at 14:5). The two passages also have a similar function in their different contexts. Both lead away from more heavily orchestrated spans to music with a more delicate scoring. The parallels are thus related to texture and function, rather than being of a thematic nature. This allusiveness, where a relationship between two passages is more readily sensed than described, is a typical characteristic of the later Brian symphonies, where a similarity of profile unites material more than direct thematic restatement.

The next references back to the opening material — fragmentary in nature — are dotted throughout the section following on from the one just discussed. This 'transition' is characterised by semiquaver runs on lower strings, the pitch content of which gave Brian some trouble, as can be seen in the short score and surviving sketch pages (these are discussed in appendix 1). Between these semiquaver passages Brian interpolates clear references back to fragments of the opening theme of the symphony. The three short references are presented below as example 2:14 (a). (b) and (c), in which form their relation to the beginning of example 2:1 above is clear.

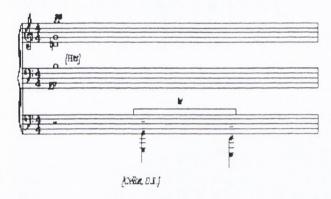
EXAMPLE 2:14(a)

Symphony No.2, 1,10:6-7



EXAMPLE 2:14(b)

Symphony No.2, 1,11:1



EXAMPLE 2:14(c)

Symphony No.2, 1,11:4-5



This segmentation of the opening seems designed to maintain a thread of connection between the present passage and the rest of the movement, and the fact that the passage does not recur renders it quite incidental in the overall scheme. At a similar juncture later in the Allegro, its place — and that of the preceding passage — are taken by the climactic gesture of the movement. It serves its function in the present instance, but there is no place for a similar passage later in the piece.

Between 14:6 and 16:2, in the development section, the opening bass idea forms the focus for a passage whose relation to that between 9:6 and 10:7 has already been discussed. The idea is presented —as earlier, at 9:7 and the following bars — in augmentation. The original bass register is replaced by giving the idea to two flutes, oboe, first harp and glockenspiel. It begins a minor third lower than its initial appearance, but at 15:2 the original pitches are restated (from the fourteenth note onwards). The bass line of the present passage consists of groups of four upward moving crotchets in cellos, basses and bassoons up to 15:4, followed by a descending pattern still in crotchets. The arpeggio-like shape, however, does not provide a diatonic basis for the music, and, as for the opening pizzicato bass, all twelve pitches are used during its course. The harmonic freedom of the passage is tempered by the rhythmic regularity of the writing, so that this is a further instance of texture and rhythm unifying a span of the music, even though here an earlier theme is being used. The theme is recognisable, but the surrounding orchestral writing is very different from the tremolos that accompanied the first appearance of the idea. The beginning of this passage is illustrated below.

EXAMPLE 2:15

Symphony No.2, 1, 14:5 -7



The Climax

The climax of the movement occurs at 25:5. and is marked by the arrival of a new idea that is to recur in the finale to great cumulative effect:

EXAMPLE 2:16

Symphony No.2, 1,25:5-8



However carefully prepared this climax may be by the preceding textural build-up, there is still an element of surprise when it arrives, caused partly by the fact that it is a largely new idea, and partly by the full scoring — the fullest in the entire movement. The arrival of this idea is less the end product of progressive motivic developments than an interruption, in its immediate surroundings, of a restatement of a sequence of ideas heard earlier in the movement. It replaces the music of the 'Codetta and Transition' from the parallel passage in the exposition. Its appearance is therefore unprepared with regard to its immediate surroundings. Graham Saxby imaginatively describes it as being 'like the sudden materializing of dome dark power'.⁹⁸ The element of surprise in this gesture is crucial in the present movement, whereas there is a sense of inevitability about its reappearance at the climax of the finale. Clearly Brian intended the gesture to reappear with great resonance as the culmination of the final movement. The placing of this interruption close to the end of the first movement is of note. It retains its resonance better because there is nothing but a sepulchral coda to follow it.

⁹⁸ Saxby, 'Havergal Brian's Second Symphony', 179.

There is, nonetheless, one clear motivic link with a pivotal idea from much earlier in the movement. The opening intervals of the bass idea which begins the movement (see example 2:1) occur twice in the four bars quoted, at opposite ends of the texture, bracket above as 'a'. The first three notes of the top part — containing the reference to this opening idea — are imitated two bars later in the bass, and the textural exchanges noted in the passage beginning at 9:6 (the music that it essentially replaces) are here redeployed to powerful effect. This climactic point is more a dynamic and textural focus than a thematic one, which is the ultimate manifestation of what the composer meant when he referred to the unorthodox character at the 'inside' of this movement.

The short score of this passage — as reproduced in the example above — gives only a limited idea of its overwhelming impact in full orchestral scoring, through the dynamic indications and the use of octaves. The lack of any instrumental indications whatsoever provides no clue as to how the composer heard the passage in his head (beyond its climactic volume), but the motivic connections to the opening idea of the Symphony underline its importance in the scheme of the movement. This is emphasised in the scoring by the inclusion of two cymbal clashes. This is the only time these percussion instruments are featured in the movement, and perhaps reflects the influence of Anton Bruckner. One has only to think of the slow movements of the Seventh (1881–3) and Eighth (1884–7) Symphonies of the Austrian master to see — and hear — a parallel use of the same climactic percussion gesture. albeit in music of a very different character.

After this outburst, the remainder of the Brian movement is concerned with a dissolution of all elements, to the point where the music dies away with tremolos and pizzicato notes, returning to the textural point of departure of the piece. The sense of completion of a cycle of events is largely countered by the dominating impact of example 2:16. Any sense of finality is provisional, as the symmetry implied by the close textural ties between the opening and close of the movement are undercut by the placing of this explosive climax very close to the end, rather than — in a more symmetrical fashion — close to the centre.

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Conclusion

The first movement, like its counterpart in the *Gothic*, is relatively brief. The straightforward nature of the thematic argument, combined with a singular focus on the climax as the textural and gestural highpoint, emphasise its preparatory function in response to the symphony as a whole, and the next movement in particular. As Graham Saxby observes:

the first movement does not have the weight that one might expect of a traditional first movement: it is more of a curtain-raiser, setting the scene both thematically and in terms of orchestration for the rest of the symphony.⁹⁹

The logic of Brian's approach in this movement is borne out by the fact that all things point towards the climactic gesture of the movement at. 25:5. The textural line of development, present in the slow introduction, and detailed in the above discussion, is made easier to discern due to the relative lack of significant transformation of thematic complexes. The distinctions between the thematic groups in this movement are consistently enhanced by their scoring as the music progresses. The extreme culmination of this process comes with the textural highpoint of the climactic idea, followed by a return to the sepulchral texture of the opening of the symphony. There is a sense of the themes accumulating weight as the movement moves towards its culmination. The movement culminates in disintegration rather than integration, and this is indicative of how strongly individual is Brian's approach to symphonic composition.

The element of surprise close to the end of a movement has precedents in the symphonies of Robert Schumann. Though the effect is different, one is reminded of the delightful introduction of a new, lyrical melody close to the end of the first movement of his 'Spring' Symphony (1841), where freshness is the end result: the patent good humour of the music is given a new impetus, and one may not be too far from the composer's intentions to state that the effect is comparable to the invigoration felt at the arrival of Spring itself. In the Brian movement just discussed the effect is considerably darker and more powerful, and the resonance set up is exploited in the

⁹⁹ Saxby, 'Havergal Brian's Second Symphony', 175.

finale in a way comparable with the Fourth Symphony (1876) of Tchaikovsky. When the fateful fanfares of the opening of that symphony return to cut across the feverish joy of the finale, an acute musical and psychological blow is dealt. One is thrown back to the earlier appearance of the gesture, and the feeling is created that the power has been simmering underneath the surface of the intervening music, waiting to erupt once more. In this respect, the climactic gesture of the Brian has a comparably fateful resonance when it reappears in the final movement of his symphony. One can relate this to the quasi-programmatic ideas referred to earlier by proposing that Götz's ambitions and/or resolution in the first movement presage his death in the finale of the symphony. The musical resonance may have had a dramatic origin, but the nature and context of Brian's climactic gesture assures it a significance that is purely musical. Having thrown down this marker for the culmination of the work. Brian proceeds to a second movement that plots a different course, and broadens the expressive scope of the work considerably.

Andante Sostenuto

Overview

The second movement of the Second Symphony, as has been noted earlier, was the first in order of composition. It is therefore the first symphonic movement written by Brian after the completion — in late 1927 — of the huge, sprawling edifice of the *Gothic*. The wide-ranging invention of the latter work, and of its second part in particular, have left their mark on this movement, and to a lesser degree on the one written immediately after it, which opens the present work. Malcolm MacDonald comments on the first two movements of the Symphony No.2 that they are 'among the most 'modern' music Brian ever composed'.¹⁰⁰ The range of orchestral invention in the second movement in particular —noted above as a trait of the 'radical' second part of the *Gothic* — is one of its most remarkable characteristics. MacDonald writes, with regard to the formal layout of the movement that it 'conforms to no traditional pattern'.¹⁰¹ This movement certainly contains the most rhapsodic music in the symphony, and within that context, continues the emphasis on textural contrasts that

¹⁰⁰ MacDonald, The Symphonies. vol.3, 275.

¹⁰¹ MacDonald, The Symphonies, vol. 1, 62

were such a prominent part of the first movement.

In this second movement the music derives its sense of continuity from a combination of textural contrasts and rhythmic/motivic allusion rather than an ongoing process of development and modification related to a main idea. As Saxby observes:

Its structure is one of continuous development by thematic metamorphosis, with the introduction of new and contrasting material at two points.¹⁰²

These allusions occur in relation to three distinct melodic ideas, each of which contains a motive which is used as a binding element for one of the three large sections that make up the movement. The flamboyantly scored orchestral textures characteristic of the movement culminate — in the final, third span — in a richly scored theme that is the most extended and memorable idea of this second, slow movement of the symphony. The following table refers to this division of the music, as well as the chief musical idea for each part.

Place in score	Description	Main idea
27:10 to 32:5	Section one	Example 2:17
32:6 to 36:2	Section two	Example 2:18
36:3 to 42:6	Section three	Example 2:19

Table 2:10: Second movement sections

The extension and development of the opening idea of the movement, and of 'c' in particular (see example 2:17 below), in varying textural contexts, suggests a relation to variation form. If one extends this comparison to the entire movement, the layout of the musical material can be said to correspond to three successive variation-like sections, although this should not be taken to apply too strictly. Further to this is the literary allusion to *Götz von Berlichingen* referred to in *Ordeal by Music* — quoted above — which, by implication, draws in musical influences from the realm of the symphonic poem and a freer, more rhapsodic style inspired by a programme. Since Brian stated that the present movement referred to the loves of Goethe's eponymous hero, it is not too fanciful to suggest that the tripartite nature of the movement could

¹⁰² Saxby, 'Havergal Brian's Second Symphony', 181.

refer to three loves in particular — or perhaps to three types of love. However, Saxby notes:

As Götz (in the play) is a happily married man, the term 'loves' must imply, in addition to his wife, his sister Maria, his two closest friends Selbitz and Sicklingen, his squire Georg, and the false friend Weislingen.¹⁰³

Whatever the original impulse may have been, the extra-musical inspiration can add to our understanding of the work, but it does not, by itself, provide the key to the nature of the musical discourse. The motivic allusions in the Andante serve to provide a connecting thread throughout the many and varied textures conjured up by the composer, giving a sense of continuity to the wide-ranging course of the music.

The three main ideas

The movement begins as shown in example 2:17 below:

EXAMPLE 2:17

Symphony No.2, II, 27:10 –28:3



This melody, which begins the Andante Sostenuto at the simplest textural level — an unaccompanied melodic line, here given to a cor anglais solo — features the main unifying thread of the opening span of the movement (labelled "c" in the example). It is a starting point rather than a main theme, however, and it never returns in exactly the same way. For example, it is immediately restated, on oboe, accompanied by divisi violas and cellos, two clarinets, two bass clarinets, two cors anglais and second oboe, but extended from four to five bars, so that a process of variation and elaboration is immediately begun. The opening span begun by this idea culminates in a passage marked 'poco piu animato: sempre pesante possible (each note hard and heavy)', and

¹⁰³ Ibid., 192.

after a change of texture, the second span of the movement begins with a new idea at 32:6, seen below in example 2:18:

EXAMPLE 2:18

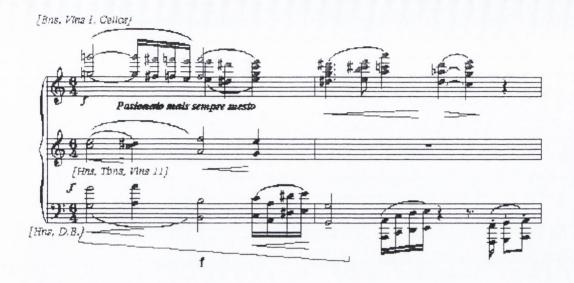
Symphony No.2, II, 32:6-7



In a manner comparable to example 2:17, this, too, contains a unifying motive for the ensuing passages (marked "d" in the example) which is subsequently heard in a wide variety of textural contexts. These are considered in detail below. The above excerpt from the short score has two noteworthy features. Firstly, it includes an idea not transferred — for whatever reason — to the full score by the composer. The lower part on the top stave was excised by Brian, perhaps to further emphasise the contrast with the preceding music, as well as to mark more strongly the onset of a new section in the movement. In addition to this, the bottom stave is realised — in full score — as groups of three repeated crotchets on harp and timpani for each note of the short score. The unattached ties in the short score may be a shorthand version of this pattern.

The end of the second span of the movement and the beginning of the third are not marked by the sort of change of texture and motif found at 32:6. Moreover, in the third section of the movement Brian changes his approach, since the idea which is most prominent in the latter represents a point of arrival in the musical discourse, rather than the point of departure represented by examples 2:17 and 2:18 above. The climactic melody of this third section is shown below as example 2:19:

Symphony No.2, II, 40:5-6



This idea can also be viewed as the climax of the entire movement, since it is the culmination point as far as textural richness is concerned. In contrast to the previous example, the short score excerpt here gives but a taste of the richness of texture found in the full score at this point, with a welter of semiquaver scales surrounding the lines of the extract. Following this flamboyant high-point, the music tapers away to thinner textures — as had happened in the first movement — before a final two-bar cadence brings the movement to rest in E major.

The following discussion of the movement treats each section — characterised and dominated in their different ways by each of the music examples above — in succession. The conclusion than addresses the question of the entire movement, and the issues of unity and continuity raised by such a tripartite division of this large, discursive span of slow music.

Section 1: Fig. 27:10 to 32:5

This section is considered as a unit because of the continual references to the rhythmic shape 'c' as seen in example 2:17. It is never absent for more than a few bars, and is often heard at the beginning of several successive bars within the freely developing textures. After the climactic rhythmic development of 'c' from fig. 31:5 in

'development 4', the music changes direction and focus at 32:6, from which point 'd' becomes the dominant unifying rhythmic shape. A summary of the divisions within this section of the movement is presented below as table 2:11:

Place in score	Description
27:10 to 28:10	Opening and Development 1
29:1 to 29:5	Development 2
29:6 and 29:7	Contrast (stopped horns)
29:8 to 31:4	Development 3
31:5 to 32:5	Poco piu Animato (Development 4)

Table 2:11: Subdivisions of section 1

The details behind the outline given in the table above provide illuminating insights into Brian's compositional practice in this movement. The first two 'developments' consist of textural build-ups. The division between the two is marked by a reduction in the dynamic level, from f to mp, and a parallel lightening of the orchestral texture. This is clearer in the orchestral score than in the short score, quoted below. In the latter the dynamic change is marked at 28:10 rather than the next bar. What the short score does reveal, however, is the continuous nature of Brian's thought, devoid of orchestral colourings.

Symphony No.2, II, 28:9-29:2



The quaver movement creates a link between 28:10 and 29:1 in spite of the change in dynamics. This link helps the music to convey a larger sense of flow, by maintaining rhythmic shape across a change in texture. Brian is careful to maintain this type of continuity as the diverse textures of this elaborate movement unfold. The continuity of Brian's thought as revealed in his short score will also be discussed in relation to the first movement of the Symphony No.3, where a big break in texture between 10:6 and 7 (see example 3:10) reveals a strong continuity when studied in that format. The latter instance shows Brian deliberately creating discontinuity in the orchestral layout of the music, despite the clear continuity of thought revealed by the texture of the short score.

The culmination of the second development — at 29:5, leads to a very different gesture, illustrated below as example 2:21. The martial rhythms played by the stopped horns at 29:6 and 7 introduce a strong element of contrast which broadens the expressive scope of the movement as well as hinting at the funeral march to come in the finale. The break in continuity is more complete in this instance. Saxby describes

example 2:21 as being 'like the sudden appearance and disappearance of a spectre'.¹⁰⁴

EXAMPLE 2:21

Symphony No.2, II, 29:6-7



The static nature of the material in these bars contrasts with the freely expanding nature of the preceding music, a contrast that the composer exploits at several points throughout the movement. The nature of this expansion can be seen in the examples which follow. Example 2:22, from the third 'development' referred to in the above table, shows motif 'c' appearing in a dialogue between top and bottom of the texture in successive bars:

EXAMPLE 2:22

Symphony No.2, II, 30:3-4



The next extract is from the beginning of the 'Poco piu animato' section which follows the culmination of this third developmental section. The change of tempo complements

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 182.

the change in texture and gesture at this point, which is why it is described in the table above as 'development 4'. Although 'x' is the basis for the exchange between chords and bass-line, the resultant passage takes the music in a new direction, away from the predominantly lyrical textures of the earlier part of the movement.

EXAMPLE 2:23

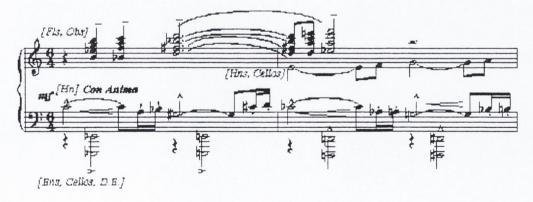
Symphony No.2, II, 31:5-6



In contrast to this, an example of the blurring of distinctions, or perhaps the blending of opposites, is illustrated in example 2:24, wherein the stopped horns characteristic of example 2:21 are present in more elaborate textural surroundings as part of the third 'development' section noted in table 2:11. It is also noteworthy that both examples 2:20 and 2:22 share an emphasis on the second beat that has been mentioned in connection with 'c' above: in the following extract this is emphasised by the bass drum.

EXAMPLE 2:24

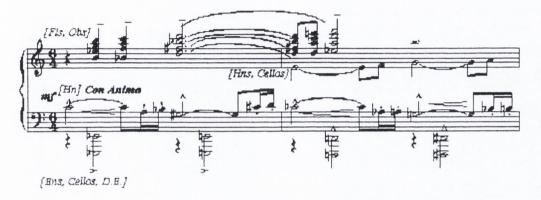
Symphony No.2, II, 30:5-6



The use of sequence —whether exact or approximate — is a characteristic Brian trait. His use of sequential repetition is varied, depending on context. Often the repetition of an idea creates tension, but Brian's use of this device is not limited to bars which raise the level of tension in the music. Example 2:20 above shows the use of sequence in a passage which lowers the intensity after the climax of the first development. Example 2:25 shows a different use of the sequential idea. This illustrates two climactic bars in the midst of the third developmental section. The orchestration adds to the climactic effect with the use of timpani playing a three-part chord at the beginning of both bars.

EXAMPLE 2:25

Symphony No.2, II, 31:1-2



The bars quoted above prefigure the climactic gesture at fig. 31:5 — where the timpani significantly return — in a manner analogous to the crest of one big wave anticipating a bigger wave to follow. The ebb and flow of this music is, indeed, wave-like, and the sense of a rhapsodic onward journey is stronger than that of a tightly controlled argument between contrasting motives. In typical Brian fashion, the music of this section of the movement halts expectantly. The change of direction represented — apparently — by the start of the next section at 32:6 is representative of a discontinuity which anticipates the later Brian symphonies, although beneath the changing surface at this point there are continuing concerns which provide a sense of direction and momentum as the movement progresses. These will be discussed in the conclusion to the commentary on this movement.

Section 2: Fig 32:6 to 36:2

This section of the movement shares certain characteristics with the opening span, in that there is a recurring rhythmic idea (see 'd' in example 2:18) which lends a sense of unity to the varied textures of the music, as well as the use of quasi-sequential repetition at times. The broad outline of a span which concentrates on textural variety,

allied with a motivic idea presented in several different contexts, holds true for both sections. There is also the common use of contrasting gestures, although in the present section this contrast appears in a more extended form than was the case in the first section of the movement. Malcolm MacDonald discerns 'a suggestion of ternary form' in the use of motif 'd', but the huge disparity between the textures surrounding it at the beginning and close of this section tends to counteract the sense of return implied in such a formal principle.¹⁰⁵ There are also references to 'd' in both the 'link' and 'contrast' sections, although their function is different, as the labels imply. If there is a central contrast in the ternary layout suggested by MacDonald, it is in relation to function rather than motif. The following table details the subdivisions within this section of the movement:

Place in score	Description
32:6 to 33:3	Statement 1
33:4 to 33:8	Statement 2
33:9 to 34:2	Statement 3
34:3 to 34:7	Link
34:8 to 35:6	Contrast
35:7 to 36:2	Statement 4

 Table 2:12: Subdivisions of section 2

If one considers that statements 2, 3 and 4 above vary greatly from statement 1 - as well as from each other — a link with variation form can be perceived. This is a characteristic shared with the opening span. The division of the music into textural blocks also tends towards this interpretation, but the sense of fantasy here is very different from the effect found in the slow movement of the Violin Concerto, where the relationship of the variations to the opening theme is much closer overall. This will be discussed in the chapter on that work.

(a) Statement material

The beginning of statement 1 has already been quoted as example 2:18. Each 'statement' features a distinctive orchestral texture. After the expectant pause at the end of the first span of the movement, there is a complete change of orchestration for

¹⁰⁵ MacDonald, The Symphonies, vol. 1, 64.

'statement'1. The quasi-sequential end of 'statement' 1 — commented on below and illustrated as example 2:29 — is scored for strings. The onset of 'statement' 2 in contrast sees the addition of woodwind, horns and harps. In a similar manner, there are changes of orchestration for the beginning of each of the next two 'statements' — a reduction for the third and an increase for the fourth — that emphasise the importance of texture in terms of these sectional divisions. In fact, each sectional subdivision noted in the above table is marked by a change in orchestration, culminating in the rich textures of 'statement 4', colourfully described by Malcolm MacDonald. Figure 'd' returns, in his words 'on clarinets against a glittering background of celesta chords, harp glissandi, and a 4-part susurration from flutter-tongue flutes'.¹⁰⁶ The short score of this passage is illustrated below.

EXAMPLE 2:26

Symphony No.2, II, 35:7-8



(b) Contrast and link

The 'contrast' between these statements is provided by jagged gestures on heavy brass with tremolo strings. The abrupt change of tone is reminiscent of the 'stopped horns' passage referred to in table 2:11, in the opening span of the movement, illustrated as example 2:21. This represents a typical instance of Brian forging a relationship between ideas which do not share motivic or rhythmic material, but function in comparable ways in their different contexts. As MacDonald says, 'Brian is able to use *similar* themes to suggest relationships without exact parallels'.¹⁰⁷ The common

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, 64.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 64.

function is complemented by a similarity of type: both passages are harder edged than the surrounding music and have a comparable disruptive effect. The 'contrast' is illustrated in the following example:

EXAMPLE 2:27

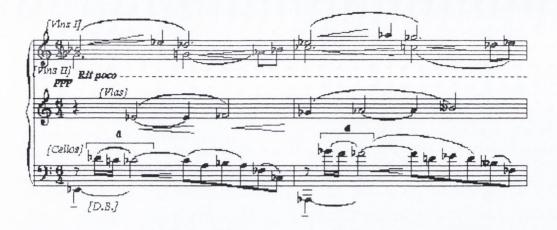
Symphony No.2, II, 34:8-10



The third bar of the above example incorporates 'd' from the 'statement' sections of this part of the movement (as seen in example 2:18). This forges a subtle link between two strongly contrasting blocks of material. It would be stretching the point unduly. however, to suggest that, because of this connection, the present passage could be regarded as another 'statement'. Moreover, the 'statement' passages all begin with 'd', which is not the case here. The allusion is typical of the flexible attitude to his material in this movement on Brian's part.

The 'link' which bridges the gap between 'statement 3' and the 'contrast' discussed above begins with a two-bar sequential idea scored for strings. The second bar repeats the material of the first transposed up a perfect fourth. As can be seen in the following example, 'd' is once again featured —this time as an inner part — on cellos.

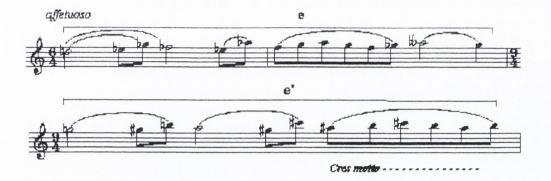
Symphony No.2, II, 34:3-4



It is because of this use of 'd' as an accompanying figure, rather than a melodic line at the top of the texture, that the present passage is not called a 'statement'. The reference to 'd' is analogous to the connection cited above in example 2:27. In each case Brian has created a motivic link between sections of contrasting character rather than using completely different material. The use of sequence in the above extract also distinguishes this section from those labelled as 'statements'. The latter are largely free of sequential material.

There is, however, a partial use of sequence in the 'statement 1' section. This section consists of three initial bars, scored mainly for wind, followed by four in which the strings predominate. A solo horn bridges the gap between the wind and string sections. As can be seen in the following example, the sequence — which starts with the second of the four bars scored for the string section — is not completed; segment 'e' is only partly restated at a transposed level before 'statement 2' begins. Two bars of 6/4 are followed by a 9/4 bar, by which means Brian effectively cuts out the last three crotchets of the second 6/4 bar. The arrival of 'statement 2' coincides with the return of the 6/4 time signature, marking the three bars quoted as transitional.

Symphony No.2, II, 33:1-3 (1st violins)



'Statement 4' leads without a pause into the next section of the movement. In contrast to the end of section one, there is no expectant pause here. Continuity is maintained . There is a change of orchestration, and 'd' is no longer present, but the tone is consistent from the end of 'statement 4'. To some degree, the latter serves as a transition from the stark textures of the preceding 'contrast' section, to the richly accompanied horn solo which begins the third stage of the movement. The fact that the structural divide implied in the present sectional discussion of the music of this movement is not readily audible, in terms of a break in continuity or a clear change of direction or emphasis, serves to re-enforce the smoothness of the transition achieved. This latter trait is more notable for its deliberate absence than its subtle presence in the bulk of the music of Brian, particularly in the later works, where discontinuity is more consistently a feature than an uninterrupted flow of musical ideas.

Section 3: Fig 36:3 to 42:6

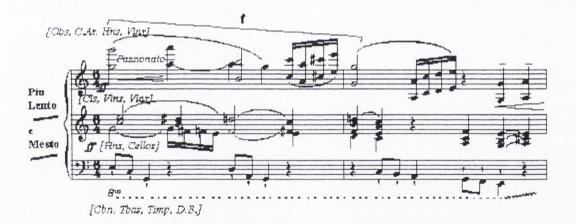
(a) The main melody

The focus in this final, climactic section of the movement is on a melodic idea which is heard on three separate occasions. The first two appearances are scored for the same forces, but the second subdivides instrumental families in an even richer manner than the first. This second appearance forms the textural climax of the entire movement, and the orchestral sonority at this point is memorably described by MacDonald as surrounding the melody line with 'a blizzard of glittering scales on flutes. oboes, harps, violins and violas, changing soon to flutter-tonguing woodwind, tremolo violas and harp glissandi'.¹⁰⁸ These first two appearances are followed by a greatly reduced texture for the third statement, after which the textures thin out further before the final cadence into E major which brings the movement to its close.

The three statements are not identical, but they share a melodic outline that can be seen in the following examples, marked as 'f'. This common shape marks each of the three appearances out clearly from the surrounding music, and their effect is to give this final span of the movement a clearer structural outline than the more allusive relationships of material in the earlier sections. The three examples are taken from the short score, and while making the relationship between the three statements clear, provide no real hint of the extraordinary welter of orchestral activity in the full score in the first two cases.

EXAMPLE 2:30(a)

Symphony No.2, II, 38:6-7



¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 65.

EXAMPLE 2:30(b)

Symphony No.2, II, 40:5-6



EXAMPLE 2:30(c)

Symphony No.2, II, 41:8-9



Table 2:13 below details how these melodic statements are framed, and provides an overview of this last span of the movement:

Place in Score	Description
36:3 to 37:1	Horn Melody
37:2 to 37:10	Canon and build-up (example 2:36)
38:1 and 38:2	Contrast (example 2:35)
38:3 to 38:5	Transition (example 2:32)
38:6 to 38:10	Melody 1 (example 2:30(a))
39:1 to 40:4	Interlude
40:5 to 41:5	Melody 2 (example 2:30(b))
41:6 and 41:7	Link
41:8 to 42:1	Melody 3 (example 2:30(c))
42:2 to 42:6	Coda

Table 2:13: Subdivisions of section 3

(b) Motivic ideas related to the main melody

The pervasive influence of the shape illustrated in the examples above in the present section is evidenced by the many references to the rhythm of its opening bar dotted throughout this span of music. Before the melody makes its first appearance at 38:6, the bars which follow the opening horn solo of this section make use of the minim/crotchet rhythmic figure of the first bar of the melody (a minim followed by a crotchet), as well as sharing a similar profile in terms of intervals. The higher of the two first violin parts from these bars is shown in the following example:

EXAMPLE 2:31

Symphony No.2, **II**, 36:8-37:1 (1st violins)



This anticipation of the rhythmic shape of example 2:30(a) may be said to contribute towards the sense of arrival felt when the latter is heard for the first time, a sense added to by the flamboyance of the orchestration at that point. There is a further use of the minim/crotchet rhythm — in the bars immediately preceding the arrival of example

2:30(a) — in fig. 38: 3 and 4, although there is a different profile as far as intervals are concerned. Coming as they do after the 'contrast' at fig. 38:1 and 2, these bars effect a transition from the harder texture of those bars to the florid presentation of melody statement 1.

EXAMPLE 2:32

Symphony No.2, II, 38:3-4 (flute)



In the substantial passage between the first and second melody statements. Brian uses the minim/crotchet rhythm once again, this time as the basis for a three-bar antiphonal exchange between top and bottom of the orchestral texture. These bars are also noteworthy for their sequential nature, as well as the fact that the harder brass sound — from the 'contrast' section — is an important element of the orchestral texture at this point. It shows the composer drawing together different strands of the musical language used throughout this movement as it approaches its peroration. The cumulative power of this repeated gesture is dispelled by a return to thinner textures in the bars before the majestic appearance of example 2:30(b) at fig. 40:4. The repeated gesture is shown in the following example from the short score:

Symphony No.2. II, 39:7-9



After the flurry of semiquaver patterns that characterise the second melody statement (see the quote from MacDonald above), there is a further use of sequence — this time more approximate — in the bass, as the climax moves towards the coda of the movement. As can be seen, shape 'f' is an important element here. The sound of the bars, however, due to the scoring, is closer to the antiphonal exchange just quoted. They are scored with prominent parts for trombones and tubas. This comparability of texture and gesture is quite clearly a major tactic of Brian's, given the frequency of its use throughout this movement. The sense is thus created that these gestures belong together, and the result is a unifying thread, difficult to define in precise terms, but clearly audible as a characteristic element in the sound world of the movement. Example 2:34 shows the trombone and tuba parts of the bars just discussed.

Symphony No.2. II, 41:3-4 (bottom line of ss)

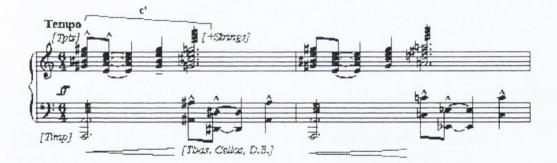


(c) Contrasts and Links

Although the formal layout of this third section is different from that of the two sections discussed above. Brian does display a consistency in his use of certain types of material. The 'contrast' section, for example, repeats a tactic from earlier in the movement of breaking the flow of lyrical ideas by a harder edged gesture. As in the earlier examples, the gesture is repeated, and features the brass section prominently.

EXAMPLE 2:35

Symphony No.2, II, 38:1-2

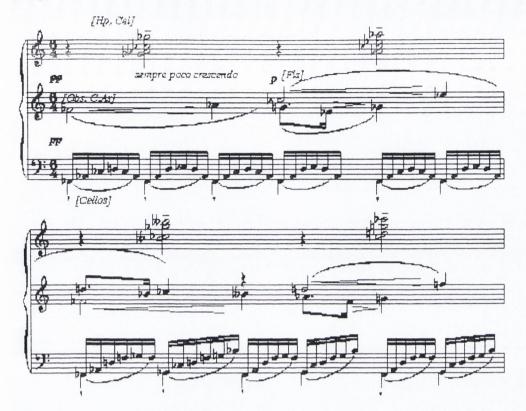


The fluency of forward movement found in the melodic sections is contrasted with the static nature of the above gesture. The excerpt above includes a reference to the opening intervals of the cor anglais melody that began the movement (see example 2:17 above) — bracketed as "c" — but the context is utterly different. This difference undermines any sense that the use of these intervals is an attempt to suggest unity across the entire movement, but the use of the opening shape here represents an impressive feat of motivic transformation, if an isolated one. The 'canon and build-up' section from table 2:13 furnishes another example of this type of static passage. The canon is between two oboes and cors anglais, and the four flutes following. This is

illustrated below.

EXAMPLE 2:36

Symphony No.2, II, 37:2 and 3



What ties this otherwise isolated gesture in with the rest of the surrounding music is the richness of the accompanying textures, with rapid note patterns in divided strings. These patterns are not found in the short score, as the example above illustrates. Brian thus can be seen to treat the orchestration as a structural task, adding in elements of texture to suggest links with other passages in the music as he transfers the material from short to full score.

Canon is often used as part of an ongoing contrapuntal argument in much of Brian's music, in particular in the later symphonies, but here the static nature of the accompaniment accentuates the circular motion of the canon. The regularity of the repetition — at a distance of three crotchets — contrasts with the fluidity of much of the surrounding music. This sense of marking time, amidst a proliferation of richly lyrical textures, betrays a link, in terms of function, with the 'contrasts' in the earlier sections of the movement referred to above. In short, the succession of rich textures that dominate the aural landscape of this movement is temporarily halted. A further use

of static gestures is found close to the end of the movement, before the third melodic statement. The dotted rhythms on flutes, and the repeated harp arpeggio of C sharp major are countered by two rising figures, on solo oboe and clarinet, which are followed by the third melodic statement in the next bar. These can be seen in the middle stave and the uppermost part in the top stave in the short score of these two bars, as shown in the next example. The quaver figure in the bass provides a link to example 2:30 (c), which follows on directly from the present extract.

EXAMPLE 2:37

Symphony No.2, II, 41:6-7



The Coda

After the third statement of the main melody of the final section, there is a reduction in orchestral texture and dynamics, as the solo cor anglais re-appears. The Andante Sostenuto had begun with an unaccompanied solo on the same distinctive toned instrument (see example 2:17). This return of the opening instrumental colour close to the end suggests a parallel to the first movement in terms of the use of a framing sound world. The process of reduction in orchestral forces also parallels a similar path followed at the end of the first movement, although here there is more a sense of ebbing away than the sense of disintegration pervading the final bars of the opening movement.

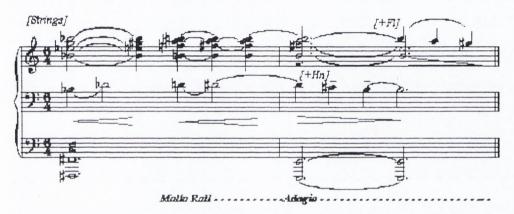
After the cor anglais solo, the second movement ends with a cadence which MacDonald describes as 'a kind of harmonic shiver'.¹⁰⁹ The tentative nature of this final resolution onto a chord of E major is beautifully achieved, but stands somewhat

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 65.

apart from the preceding music. Although this cadential ending has the effect of an afterthought there is no evidence in the short score to suggest that Brian added it in at a later date, as was the case with the endings to the finales of both No.2 and No.3 (discussed below). In a succinct manner, the two bars quoted below encapsulate a blend of tonal and more chromatic elements found not just throughout the present movement, but the entire work. The formality is curiously affecting, given the rhapsodic nature of much that has gone before it.

EXAMPLE 2:38

Symphony No.2, II, 42:5 and 6



Conclusion

The overall trajectory of this lengthy movement, from solo cor anglais to a richly textured orchestral highpoint, is outlined by two contrasting melodies (examples 2:17 and 2:19 above), and the sheer variety of textures in between these poles presents the listener with a potentially bewildering diversity of material. Beyond a consistency of tempo and time signature, Brian's periodic changes of rhythmic and motivic focus can create the impression that the movement meanders rather than having a strong sense of direction. In the absence of a single, dominant melody, the relationships between the many gestures and the many textures become more important in assessing the success of the movement. Brian's consistency in these areas — discussed above — can be seen as contributing towards the coherence and clarity of the movement. so that there are unifying elements within the undoubted diversity of the music.

The rhapsodic character of the present movement is perhaps the fullest exploration of this type of symphonic discourse found in Brian's work after the second part of the

Gothic. The blend of the 'rhapsodic and architectural' aspects of symphonic writing referred to by Samuel Langford — see chapter 3 above — is problematic.

All the references to the opening rhythm of example 2:17 in the third span, as well as the three appearances of the main melody of the section itself, lend a more immediate sense of cohesion to this concluding part of the movement. There is certainly a sense of the musical argument coming into clearer focus in the latter stages of the Andante sostenuto, although the rhapsodic nature is not by any means abandoned. In the slow movement of his next symphony. Brian uses a similarly prominent melody to provide focus. However the melody appears throughout that movement — at the beginning, middle and end respectively — and as a consequence gives the musical argument a clearer, more singular trajectory. The balance between invention and form —or between rhapsody and architecture — is more satisfactory in the latter movement. This will be discussed in due course, but a comparison with the present movement shows a similar inventiveness — as here, the textural richness is remarkable — but within a less discursive argument.

Bearing in mind the admiration Brian felt for the music of Frederick Delius — see chapter 5 below for a comparison of the slow movement of the Violin Concerto (1934–35) with Delius's *Brigg Fair* — the rhapsodic nature of the present movement can be related to the thinking of the older composer. Brian wrote his most substantial single article for *Musical Opinion* on Delius and admitted near its conclusion that its nature was 'more enthusiastic than critical'.¹¹⁰ The admiration he felt for his older contemporary is evident in the many descriptive passages on works of Delius contained in the article. They highlight the qualities that he appreciated in the distinctive music of his older contemporary. As an example of this, he remarks on the *Mass of Life* (1904–05):

The music is the thing, and it must stand or fall on its merits as a continuous series of soliloquies. It is a chain of wonderful thoughts.¹¹¹

With regard to the formal sense in the music, his appreciation was no less keen.

 ¹¹⁰ Havergal Brian, 'The Art of Frederick Delius's in *Havergal Brian on Music*, vol.1, ed. Malcolm MacDonald (Toccata Press, 1986), 100-131.
 ¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 129.

his sense of design is so exquisitely balanced that the elision of one bar would wreck the whole. In this way his art resembles a highly polished art of improvisation — with this difference, that what appears as improvisation in the art of Delius is the outcome of long brooding.¹¹²

It is possible to see in the movement under discussion a similar chain of thoughts amid a loose-limbed structure that creates a rhapsodic feel that can be characterised as improvisatory. The formal cohesion praised by Brian in his above remarks make the following comment of Delius himself in relation to form of interest, especially in the context of the present movement.

One can't define form in so many words, but if I was asked, I should say it was nothing more than imparting spiritual unity to one's thought.¹¹³

Deryck Cooke, in the article from which the above quote is taken, defines 'rhapsody' — in relation to the music of Delius, but applicable to the present movement by Brian — as 'that miraculous freedom... from all the clanking machinery of traditional formal methods'.¹¹⁴ It has been noted above how the first movement undercuts a sonata design layout with inner details more related to a process of textural accumulation. In the second movement the exploration of texture is parallel to that of the opening movement, but the outer shell of a more traditional formal pattern is absent. It is debatable if the overall cohesion of the movement is enhanced by its prevalent rhapsodic manner, or if the lack of an over-reaching single structural span results in a loose sense of progression. The orchestral invention in the movement is superbly sustained for its considerable duration. As MacDonald notes 'The variety and brilliance of the scoring, by turns stark, subdued, shimmering and incandescent, is astonishing'.¹¹⁵

The present movement is written in a harmonic language that can best be described as enhanced triadic, but without any sense of an overriding key-centre. The expressive but non-triadic nature of the opening cor anglais solo is thus an appropriate starting point for the expansive harmonic language of the movement. The contrast of

¹¹² Ibid., 103-4.

¹¹³ Quoted in Deryck Cooke, *Delius and Form: A Vindication*, in Vindications: Essays on Romantic Music (Faber and Faber, 1982), 123-42.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 128.

¹¹⁵ MacDonald, The Symphonies, vol.1, 63.

harmonically static passages with more mobile episodes with a sense of harmonic movement neatly avoids the monotony that could result from undifferentiated harmonic freedom. The final cadence, in this context, does not sound like a return to a home key, but is rather a point of harmonic repose and consonance at the end of a long, eventful journey. The unadorned triad which brings the movement to a close —just! is no more than a local harmonic goal. Any stronger sense of finality is avoided, and it is rather a question of the music coming to a temporary halt — before the onset of the 'Battle' scherzo —on a sonority which is a consonant resting point for the elaborate harmonic language of the movement.

It is interesting to note that Brian, in his later symphonies (as well as in the *Gothic* as mentioned above), advocated only a short pause between individual movements, so as to maintain the continuity of thought so characteristic of his work. The gap between movements is really nothing more than a pause for breath, and this is the case with regard to the Andante and Scherzo in the present work. The provisional nature of the E major cadence just discussed functions effectively in this manner within the larger context of the entire symphony.

Allegro Assai

Overview

In stark contrast to the complexities of the second movement, with its freely inventive sense of rhapsody, and many-sided musical discourse, the succeeding Allegro assai is extraordinarily single- minded in its approach. and far more direct in its effect. It is known as the 'Battle' Scherzo, although it is worth noting that Brian does not identify it as a scherzo in either the short or full scores, simply identifying it by number — '3' in the short score, 'III' in the full score — and the initial tempo mark. Until the climax the movement is entirely sustained at that opening tempo — Allegro asai — which adds to the mechanical feel of the music. There are none of the slight adjustments of speed requested in Brian's tempo directions for the slow movement. The basic material of the third movement is also noteworthy for the absence of any lyricism, in sharp contrast to the predominantly lyrical character of the preceding one. If the present movement can be considered as a scherzo — and its placing as the third of four

movements within a symphony as well as its general character would support this view — it is a scherzo without a contrasting trio section. This lack of contrast enhances the direct effect of the music. From the outset there is a sense of momentum that is enhanced by the consistent tempo. There are two main culminations of this relentless build-up of tension — at 55:2 and 63:5 — and once the second, most powerful culmination of the build-up has been reached, the music recedes into the distance before the onset of the funereal final movement.

The layout of the music is hugely dependent on two elements, which will be considered in detail below. The first of these relates to texture, namely the use of the four groups of four horns required by the movement in addition to the already substantial orchestral forces required for the symphony. On the front page of the full score, Brian describes these four groups as 'ad lib'. However, a look at the short score reveals that he went to considerable pains to deploy the extra instruments as effectively as possible, so that their use — and inclusion — is anything but haphazard (or optional). He numbers each group of horns as it makes an appearance in the music of the short score, and reserves the full use of all sixteen for the two climaxes mentioned above. The contrasting use of 'open' and 'closed' sonorities for alternating groups, as well as the placing of the final horn solo 'in the distance' imply a spatial dimension to the music. The contrast in material given to the groups is enhanced if they are spatially separated in the performance space.

The Four Horn Groups

One could make an extended study of virtuoso writing for the French horn from Brian's deployment of his sixteen soloists on this instrument in this 'Battle' Scherzo. Given that there are four groups of four horns deployed here, and noting their spatially separated treatment in the music, the analogy with the four corners of the earth — or the four points of the compass — is irresistible. All four groups of horns are heard together at two points in the movement, as noted above. In each case their simultaneous appearance represents the culmination of a textural build-up, whereas in the rest of the movement they are used selectively to highlight contrasts in motive and colour. The use of the four groups is detailed in the following two tables, each of which documents in turn how Brian plans the use of his sixteen concertante horns in the approach to the two climaxes.

Place in Score	Horn Group(s)
45:2	1
49:7	2
50:5	3
	2
51:10	4
52:10	1
53:8	2
54:7	1
	2
	3
	4

Table 2:14(a) First build-up: Horn groups

Table 2:14(b) Second build-up: Horn groups

Place in Score	Horn Group(s)
55:3	1
55:9	2 (I and III)
	3 (I and III)
	4 (I and III)
57:1	2
	3 (I and III)
57:9	1
	3
61:2	1
	2
	3
	4
65:8	1 (I)

The two tables clearly reveal how central a part texture plays in the shaping of this astonishing movement, in a manner that is more stark and single-minded than either of

the first two movements of the symphony. All things move towards the two textural climaxes, and after the second of them, the movement recedes into the distance in a manner which is even more pictorial and evocative than the reduction in forces at the conclusion of both preceding movements. At this point in the short score, the composer has directed that the final horn solo be 'in the distance'. In the full score, he expands on this direction in the following words: 'Far away in the distance, growing gradually imperceptible'' The importance of the spatial dimension could hardly be clearer. The combination of a textural and spatial narrative is one of the most original — and successful — features of this singular movement.

Given the importance of texture and space, it is not surprising that the thematic argument is based more on repetition of ideas — and ostinatos — than on development and transformation. The first section referred to in table 2:14(a) above, featuring the first group of horns, presents what may be referred to as the most important thematic shape of the movement. This opening idea on the horns is also heard — on the solo horn — in the final section from the second table, close to the end of the movement, and thus can be said to provide an effective frame for the main body of music. In addition to this, it forms the basis for three other sections from the above tables, two of which immediately precede the two places where all four of the horn groups are heard together, and the third of which begins the second part of the movement (at fig. 55:3). The examples below show the first appearance of this theme, and the beginning of the second part of the movement. where the basic intervals appear in three different rhythmic contexts, one of which is also at a different pitch level:

EXAMPLE 2:39(a)

Symphony No.2, III, 45:2-6



EXAMPLE 2:39(b)

Symphony No.2. III. 55: 2-5



These examples show how the open intervals characteristic of natural or valveless horn writing permeate the material given to these instruments to a major extent. The association with hunting calls is also pervasive, and combined with the use of acoustic space, lends a visceral edge to the onward rush toward the climaxes. The octave span encompassed by the shape bracketed as 'g' in both examples is filled out by perfect fourths and major seconds, which results in a pentatonic outline. The resultant intervallic shape is not dissimilar to the opening horn call of *Das Lied von Der Erde* (1907-08). Mahler's late masterpiece. In the latter context, the pentatonic idea is used to suggest an oriental colour inspired by the Chinese texts being set (albeit in Hans Bethge's German translations). The Brian work, in contrast, uses the pentatonic shape to lend an elemental, impersonal edge to the horn fanfares that permeate the movement. Indeed, Brian dehumanises his musical language to an almost total degree as his 'Battle' unfolds, and it is only in the distant final solo for horn that a human —or individual — voice can be discerned.

As can be seen from the above tables. Brian uses the four groups of horns as contrasting sound blocks in the initial stages of each half of the movement before summoning their collective power at the two climaxes. After the first passage for the first group, for example — illustrated above as example 2:39(a) — the second group enters with contrasting material which is marked 'Echo-closed' in the full score. This contrasts with the implied — although unspecified in the score — 'open' sound of the first group. This contrast between the groups suggests a distance which would be enhanced in performance by placing the second group at a physical remove from the

first. This opening exchange of sonorities is followed by one in which the third group, playing 'open'. are in their turn contrasted with the second group, which re-enter four bars later playing 'closed'. As the textures accumulate, the music — or the horns — appears to arrive at the climax from several directions at once. No military expertise is required to see how superbly apposite is the use of this musical metaphor by Brian to represent the fields of battle experienced by Götz, the eponymous hero of the early play by Goethe identified by Brian as an important inspiration for the symphony.

Ostinato

The prevalent use of ostinatos is the second distinctive characteristic of this movement. This is a continuation and intensification of the kind of textures found in the third movement of the *Gothic*. There is no relief from the relentless onward tread of the ostinatos which dominate the musical — and metaphorical — battlefield of this scherzo. The use of ostinato here is all-pervasive: indeed the movement can be viewed as an étude-like exercise in the application of this particular compositional device just as it can be viewed as a study in horn writing. There are two types of ostinato used by Brian in this movement. The first is essentially static in nature: both rhythm and pitch content are constant. The second type — referred to as 'mobile' in tables 2:15(a) and (b) below — features alterations in pitch content as it progresses while maintaining the consistent rhythmic shape implied in the term 'ostinato'

There are three rhythmic shapes used by Brian for the ostinatos found in this movement, of which the first two are far more prevalent. The third shape is only used on one occasion — in the approach to the first climax of the movement — and at that point it is combined with type B, as can be seen from table 2:15(a), and music example 2:41. Each type is a one-bar rhythmic shape within the 6/8 time signature. An example of ostinato types 'A' and 'B' follows.

EXAMPLE 2:40(a): Ostinato type 'A'

Symphony No.2, III, 44:10 -45:1



EXAMPLE 2:40(b): Ostinato type 'B'

Symphony No.2, III, 49:7-8



These two rhythmic types underpin most of the music of the movement, and contribute significantly to the sense of relentless onward momentum. Further examples of these shapes — with different pitch content — are illustrated in the following discussion.

The tables which follow show how the pitch content becomes more mobile in the push toward the two climaxes of the movement — at fig. 55:2 and 63:5 respectively — although there is a difference in the approach to each culmination. The 'mobile' type of ostinato figure is far more important in the build-up to the second, main climax. This results in a greater sense of excitement as all elements in the music are in a state of flux as they press onwards towards the climactic point at 63:5. There is then a return to a static ostinato — on harp — as the music retreats towards the ambiguous last few bars of the movement.

Place in Score	Ostinato	Туре
44:10	Al	Static
49:7	B1	Static
50:3	B2	Static
51:10	B3	Static
52:8	A2	Static
53:8	B4	Static
54:7	B5	Static
	C1	Mobile

Table 2:15(a) Ostinatos to first climax

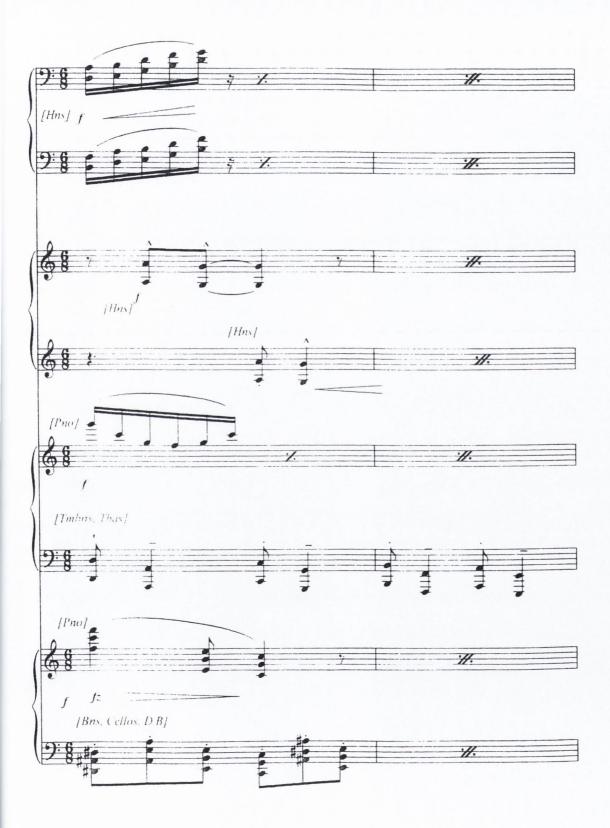
Table 2:15(b) Ostinatos to second climax

Place in Score	Ostinato	Туре
55:3	B6	Static
55:9	B7	Static
56:8	B8	Static
57:8	B9	Static
58:8	A3	Mobile
61:2	B10	Mobile
62:2	B11	Mobile
64:7	B12	Static

At 54:7, the only example in the first part of the movement of a mobile ostinato is heard, but against a static version of rhythmic shape 'B'. The superimposition of the two ostinatos at this point is an important part of the build-up to the first climax of the movement. The layout of the short score of these bars, as it reaches its fullest expanse of the movement — and indeed of the entire symphony — on eight staves reflects the textural complexity.

EXAMPLE 2:41

Symphony No.2. III. 54:7-8



The example above shows the first point in the movement where the four groups of horns play together. To parallel this moment in his accompanying textures. Brian presents two ostinato patterns, each occupying two of the four staves below. The top one (played by piano 1, trombones and tubas) is typical in its use of gapped scales, whereas the bottom one (given to piano 2, bassoons and strings) shows the filling-in of octaves found in other ideas of the movement. It is possible to trace the two ostinatos here back to their origins earlier in the movement, but what makes a far more immediate impression on the listener is the sense of growing excitement achieved by the accumulation of textural layers.

After a short gap — marked by parallel lines in the full score — the second part of the movement begins with the horns playing example 2:39(b) above. The degree of superimposition of motives in that example signals an increase in textural complexity, and this is amplified by the contradictory tonal centres implied in the ideas. The B flat/E flat centre of the top two parts is contrasted with the bottom horn part, which revolves around C. Since each horn part uses the same sequence of intervals — perfect fourth-major second-perfect fourth filling out the octave — the overlapping of modes is readily perceptible, and the resultant sonority launches the music towards its second, main climax.

The most significant change in the build-up to the second climax occurs at 58:8, when ostinato A3 begins a sequence of mobile pitch patterns as the music becomes increasingly frenetic. The bottom two staves of the short score at this point are illustrated below.

EXAMPLE 2:42

Symphony No.2, III. 58:8-10



As part of this second build-up of textures and motives. Brian introduces, in ostinatos B7 and B8. descending patterns which feature both pentatonic and whole-tone elements. Example 2:43(a) below shows ostinato B7, which is based on a pentatonic scale. At 56:8, the pattern changes to that shown as example 2:43(b), which is almost a complete whole-tone scale. Only the F natural is missing. This is ostinato B8.

EXAMPLE 2:43(a)

Symphony No.2, III, 55:9



ÈXAMPLE 2:43(b)

Symphony No.2. III. 56: 8



The following example shows ostinato B9, another descending pattern used by Brian (from 57:8) which combines elements of both types of scale found in ostinatos B7 and B8. The first three notes form part of a whole-tone scale, whereas the final three are part of a pentatonic formation. These first three notes also form a clear link with example 2:42(b) above. Taken as a single unit, the use of both G sharp and G natural within one pattern reflects the greater harmonic complexity of this part of the movement.

EXAMPLE 2:43(c)



Texture as form

If one considers the role of the orchestration throughout the movement, it becomes evident that the subdivisions referred to in the table above are mirrored in the way that Brian surrounds the four groups of horns with varied blocks of accompaniment as the ostinatos change. Each new ostinato is given a different instrumental colouring, and the two culmination points mentioned above are echoed in the weighting of the accompanying textures. With such a large degree of local repetition in the music, the role of orchestration in lending a sense of direction and momentum is paramount. On this level, the seemingly extravagant demand for sixteen horns is, in fact, a crucial element in the unfolding acoustic drama of the scherzo. This primary concern with texture has been commented on in relation to the preceding two movements, and unites the contrasting surfaces of these apparently disparate parts of the symphony. The following table omits the four groups of horns in the consideration of orchestral texture, since this is detailed in tables 2:14(a) and (b) above. It also includes almost the entire movement in its layout. The opening bars of the movement - preceding the first ostinato patern and the initial entry of horn group 1 — are excluded. Towards the end of the movement the climax and aftermath, plus the note by note unfolding of the final chord of the movement are omitted.

Place in Score	Ostinato	Orchestration
44:10	A1	2 Pianos, 3 Timpani, Cellos, Basses
49:7	B1	2 Harps, Cellos, Basses
50:3	B2	4 Bassoons, 2 Timpani, Cellos, Basses
51:10	B3	Strings
52:8	A2	2 Pianos, 3 Timpani, Cellos, Basses
53:8	B4	2 Pianos, Strings
54:7	B4,B5,C1	3 Bassoons, Contrabassoon, 4 Trombones, 2 Tubas, Xylophone

Table 2:16(a) First build-up: scoring of ostinatos

Place in Score	Ostinato	Orchestration
55:3	B6	2 Flutes, 2 Oboes, Cor Anglais, 2 Clarinets. Bass
		Clarinet, Timpani
55:9	B7	2 Pianos, Violas (1/2), Cellos, Basses
56:8	B8	3 Bassoons, Contrabassoon, 2 Pianos, Violins (1/2),
		Violas (1/2), Cellos Basses
57:8	B9	As above
58:8	A3	4 Flutes, 2 Oboes, Cor Anglais, 2 Clarinets, Bass
		Clarinet, 3 bassoons, Contrabassoon, 3 Trumpets, 2
		Timpani, Organ, Strings
61:2	B10	As above + 1 Trumpet
62:2	B11	As above + 2 Pianos, Xylophone, Snare Drum
64:7	B12	Harp

 Table 2:16(b) Second build-up and Coda: scoring of ostinatos

The entry for the final ostinato requires some further comment. In the full score, the ostinato begins at 64:7 on the bottom of two staves which are bracketed together as 'Arpa 1 and II', with the '1' opposite the treble clef, and 'II' opposite the bass clef. In this bass clef part, however, the composer has written 'a 2' where the arpeggio pattern begins. On the next system, the two bracketed staves have '2 Arpa' written beside them, and on the following system this is changed to 'Arpa'. Taking the context into consideration, which is a subdued and lightly scored passage, all the above annotations, with the exception of the rather puzzling 'a 2' can be understood to refer to a single harp part at this point. There is no need for the second player to double the one playing, as the 'a 2' would imply. The other possibility is that the composer wishes the single harpist to play the notes of the arpeggios of the ostinato with both hands simultaneously, although this would not enhance the delicacy characteristic of the passage.

Harmonic language

The movement is framed by an introduction and conclusion which each present gradually unfolding chords, the harmonies of which form the basis for much of the ostinato-based material of the music. At the beginning of the Scherzo, the two harps spell out. note by note, a chord shown in example 2:44(a). Against this chord is heard an ostinato pattern on violins and violas which is based on two notes, C and G. this is illustrated as example 2:44(b). The harp chord is built up from an opening D, moving downwards, whereas the string motives centre around C. Taken together, the resultant pentatonic scale is a significant pointer to the use of gapped scales in much of the material of the main body of the movement. The pentatonic scale is shown in example 2:44(c)

EXAMPLE 2:44(a)

Symphony No.2, III, 44:1-3



EXAMPLE 2:44(b) Symphony No.2, III, 42:8 to 43:1



EXAMPLE 2:44(c)

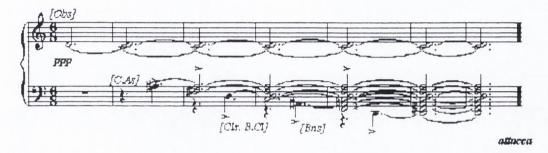
Pentatonic scale 1



The pull of two different harmonic orbits is subtly presented in this opening, with neither C nor D reigning supreme. This is borne out in the main body of the scherzo by the increasing use of overlapping ostinato patterns based on gapped scales. The final chord of the movement unfolds in a similar manner to the opening one, from the initial D on oboe, but the basis on this occasion is the whole -tone scale, which has also figured in some of the motivic material heard earlier. This final chord, however, does not provide a resolution, nor does it attempt one: it is more of a dissolution, leaving a sense of incompleteness which propels the music onwards without a pause into the finale.

EXAMPLE 2:45

Symphony No.2, III, 67:2-8



The forty four bar theme heard from the first horn group, beginning at 44:10, is based on a pentatonic scale, related but not identical to the one implied at the start of the movement. The long notes at the end of phrases present an intriguing example of the tonal ambiguity referred to above. The notes C. E. and G are prolonged at the end of the initial phrases. In contrast to this the note D is featured climactically at 48:6, before the final phrase ends with a long C. The accompaniment to this long melody is based around D, as can be seen in the following example taken from the short score. The primary notes, presented in octave doublings, are D. A and B flat, with the octave filled out in each case by a middle note a perfect fifth above the lower note of the octave. There is a strong sense of D minor to the harmony, but without the sharpened leading note C sharp. As a consequence of this the C natural of the horn melody can be heard, either as part of a pentatonic scale on D, or as a contrasting tonal centre of its own, as at the very beginning of the movement.

EXAMPLE 2:46(a)

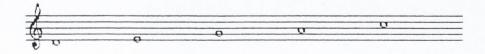
Symphony No.2, III, 45:2-5



The use of gapped scales in the fanfare illustrated above contrasts strongly with the passages which use ostinato throughout the scherzo. where a more fully coloured harmonic idiom is used. The combination of these two types of harmonic colouring sets a distinctive tone for the music in the process.

The pentatonic scale which forms the basis for the forty four bar solo by the first group of horns — the beginning of which is shown above — differs in one note from the one quoted above as example 2:44(c). Instead of the F, there is an E. This results in a different pentatonic formation, which is illustrated below as pentatonic scale 2.

EXAMPLE 2:46(b) Pentatonic scale 2



It is also worthy of comment that there is no B natural in either of the above mentioned scales. The significance of this resides in the fact that the exclusion of this pitch — the leading note to C — has an effect similar to that caused by the avoidance of C sharp

mentioned above in relation to D minor. Brian sustains this distinctive harmonic outline throughout the whole movement.

Ostinato B2 — see table 2:15(a) — presents us with an example of Brian developing the characteristics discussed above. The horn parts here are centred around E flat rather than D, and the accompaniment again uses filled-in octaves. this time on four bassoons, timpani, cellos and basses. Taken together, the resultant pentatonic scale proves to be a transposition of the one found in the forty four bar horn melody, underlining the consistent use of a certain type of harmonic language on Brian's part as a unifying device in the movement.

EXAMPLE 2:47(a)

Symphony No.2, III, 50: 5-6



EXAMPLE 2:47(b)

Pentatonic scale 3

po po po po

The climax

As the climax of the movement approaches, Brian uses a rhythmic shape — heard for the first time much earlier in the movement — to highlight the increasing sense of excitement. At the end of the forty four bar solo for the first group of horns just discussed, a peak is reached, both in terms of register and dynamics, signalled by the figure of two semiquavers followed by a long note, as illustrated in the following example.

EXAMPLE 2:48(a)

Symphony No.2. III. 49: 2-6



This distinctive figure is also featured at other points throughout the movement, and when it returns in both horns and trumpets at 62:9. Brian uses it, at first once, and then twice per bar as the excitement mounts. It is a clear signal to the listener that another high point has been reached, and manages to be both immediate in its impact, as well as being appropriately placed within the broader context of the movement. Its function in each case as illustrated is cumulative, and Brian increases the intensity in a thrilling manner at the climax of the movement by condensing it rhythmically, as can be seen in the last two bars of the following example.

EXAMPLE 2:48(b)

Symphony No.2. III. 62:9- 63:4



The harmonic gesture which caps this exciting build-up is startlingly simple and effective, as four times a chord which combines B flat minor and A flat major is followed by a D minor chord on the last semiquaver of each bar. The effect is rather similar to the snap of an elastic band. It is as if, in a condensed manner, the music's path from a centre of D to the flat keys in the course of the movement is being both summarised, and cancelled out. The idea of suddenly pulling the music back to its tonal centre and starting point — but without the gradual processes of modulation and tonic preparation — is one which shall figure prominently in the harmonic structure of the first movement of Brian's next symphony, his third. The present gesture is shown as example 2:49.

EXAMPLE 2:49

Symphony No.2, III, 63: 5-8



Conclusion

This movement does not conclude with any sense of resolution. Instead, the harmonically neutral sound of the whole-tone based final chord is left hanging over the short silence before the beginning of the finale. This chord can be seen in example 2:45 above. Brian's 'attacca' marking confirms his intention that the last movement should follow hard on the heels of the third. The flickering string ostinatos from the very beginning of the movement are recalled over this ambiguous final chord to emphasise the connection between opposite ends of the Scherzo, which function as introduction and coda, respectively, to the main action of the central span. Both beginning and end of the movement are linked by the superimposition of D and C as possible tonal centres. However neither C nor D reigns supreme. The starting point of both the initial and final chord is D. lending that pitch a certain primacy, but the string ostinatos, which cut across the opening and closing chords, focus on C in a way which undermines, in each case, the tonal orbit implied by the chord. One could describe the effect of this as bitonal, but what is more relevant to the success of the Scherzo is the consistency with which the composer develops this distinctive sonority throughout the movement, as detailed.

There is a readily perceptible unity of purpose underlying the musical language of this Scherzo. However the additional instrumental resources required, and the concentration on ostinato within the scherzo ensure that, in the wider context of the symphony, the 'Battle' scherzo stands apart. The blending of tonal and non-tonal elements characteristic of the first two movements find an echo here to some degree, but it is the absence of any chromatic writing that really stands out when one listens to the scherzo. It is not a question of the musical language of the third movement being

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any less advanced — which the absence of chromaticism might imply — than that of parts of the opening two movements, but more a question of a shift in harmonic focus. The exploration of ideas central to the movement is no less inventive and adventurous than was the case in the opening two movements, and the compositional skills in evidence are no less impressive.

I do not feel the Malcolm MacDonald's contention that 'The third and fourth movements...revert to a much more late-Romantic symphonic conception' is fully borne out by the third movement (the finale will be discussed in this regard in due course).¹¹⁶ A comparison with any scherzo from the symphonies of Anton Bruckner readily reveals a comparable use of ostinato, and a similar use of long term build-ups of orchestral texture, leading to equally powerful climactic moments. But although the origins of the language and techniques of the basic material may lie in the scherzos of the Austrian master, the treatment of these ideas is decidedly un-Brucknerian. It is the structural alignment of orchestration with ostinatos in the music of Stravinsky, as in *Le Sacre du Printemps*, that finds a parallel in the compositional practise of Brian in the present movement.

The extravagance of the instrumental demands can be related to the legacy of the *Gothic* — and the part of the choral part of the symphony that sets the words 'Judex crederis esse venturus' using four additional brass bands in addition to the huge four part chorus in particular. Brian's exploration of the acoustic space in the present movement, while looking back to the example of Berlioz in his Requiem — and the *Dies Irae* movement in particular — also anticipates the polyorchestral works of post war composers such as Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928–) — in *Gruppen* (1955–57) for three orchestras. and *Carré* (1959–60) for four orchestral and choral groups — and Elliott Carter (1908–) — in his *A Symphony of Three Orchestras* (1976–77).

The depiction of the battles of *Götz von Berlichingen* — mentioned by Brian in both his comments on the symphony quoted above — result in one of Brian's boldest creative strokes in his handling of large orchestral forces. The prevalent use of ostinato rhythms in a 6/8 time signature, and the presence of the four spatially separated groups

¹¹⁶ MacDonald, The Symphonies, vol. 3, 276-7.

of four horns, whose material is largely fanfare-based, may also suggest the image of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. The associative qualities of the music are certainly very strong, but what makes the movement so strikingly effective is the single -minded approach of the composer to his musical materials.

If one briefly considers another 'battle', namely that found in *Ein Heldenleben* (1897– 98) by Richard Strauss — a composer for whom Brian felt great admiration (the *Gothic* Symphony is dedicated to the German master) — it can be seen just how far away the scherzo of the Symphony No.2 has moved from the late-Romantic illustrative style. The section of the Strauss tone-poem is a brilliantly constructed din, using orchestral noise and clashing themes, familiar from the earlier parts of the tone-poem,. to portray an onomatopaeic battlefield of opposing forces. The literal clash of the themes, representing the eponymous hero and his enemies, is part of the fun. The Brian battle, however, is non-specific and much more monolithic, so that it is exciting, but does not engage our sympathies one way or the other. It is a battle presented as a clash of elemental forces, rather than a clash between hero and villains. Brian contrasts this objectivity with the more subjective music of the dark finale to follow. One could assert that the figure of Götz von Berlichingen has temporarily stepped to one side for the duration of this elemental battle, only to resume centre stage in the funereal, subjective tread of the finale.

Lento Maestoso e Mesto

Overview

The slow final movement is the culmination of the entire symphony. Malcolm MacDonald has written of it that 'it contains its [the symphony's] greatest and most deeply-felt music¹¹⁷ It certainly contains the most expressive music of the symphony, and as if to emphasise this, it is also the movement that most patently betrays its Romantic roots. MacDonald has commented on this, in his third volume on the symphonies — which reflects a later opinion of the work than the one just quoted — that, as a consequence 'The symphony ends in a previous century to the one in which it

¹¹⁷ MacDonald, The Symphonies, vol.1, 68.

began^{1,118} As if to counteract this feeling. Brian is at pains to forge musically unifying links with the first movement, as will be discussed below. The re-appearance of the climactic idea from the opening movement in the latter stages of the finale is certainly an impressive moment, but the movement as a whole has two contrasting — not to say irreconcilable — functions. It attempts both the widening of the expressive language of the symphony, and — as its culminating movement — seeks to draw together the disparate threads of the previous three movements. The earlier stages of the finale are concerned with the former, and the approach to the final climax and dissolution with the latter. The impression is thus created of a patently Wagnerian first part — see example 2:50 below — followed by music which is much more closely related to the rest of the symphony. In short, the finale is part epilogue, and part final act, with the former preceding the latter. Graham Saxby is aware of this relationship to earlier funeral marches when he writes:

The overall impression is of a gigantic funeral march, complete with appropriate triplet figures and other motivic material which proclaim its kinship with its distinguished predecessors in the *Eroica* Symphony and *Götterdämmering*.¹¹⁹

The idea of a slow, cathartic finale can be traced to works such as Mahler's Ninth Symphony (1909), and, perhaps most famously, Tchaikovsky's Sixth (1893). The move away from a heaven storming, triumphant finale had given way, in these Late Romantic works, to an ultimate destination of either resignation or acceptance. This was not limited to the symphonic canon: both Strauss's *Ein Heldenlehen* (1898) and Schönberg's *Pelleas und Melisande* (1902) end with substantial passages of slow music. The idea of an epilogue to the main events of a work has been commented on above with regard to two of Brian's English contemporaries. Vaughan Williams and Bax. The present movement, however, despite its valedictory tone, is too lengthy to be heard as a postscript to movements one to three. There is a tension between the move towards an all-encompassing climax, and the static nature of some of the material, and the latter quality is exacerbated by the amount of repetition, particularly in the first half of the movement.

¹¹⁸ MacDonald, The Symphonies, vol.3, 270.

¹¹⁹ Saxby, 'Havergal Brian's Second Symphony', 187-8.

There is far more repetition used across this movement than was the case in any of the three preceding ones, and this concern with gestural repetition represents a move away from the textural concerns of the earlier parts of the work. There is great cumulative power in the music, as references to the first movement in particular are drawn into the procession of ideas that leads to the sepulchral conclusion. As MacDonald has written, 'It does not reconcile the conflicts of the preceding movements: rather it intensifies and thus somehow ennobles them', and the effect is certainly cathartic.¹²⁰ The broader sections of the movement are presented in the following table, from which one can get a glimpse of how the composer orders his material.

Place in Score	Description	Example(s)	
67:9	Statement 1	2:50; 2:52(a); 2:52(b)	
69:5	Statement 2	2:50; 2:52(a); 2:52(b)	
70:8	Development	2:50	
75:1	Statement 3	2:50: 2:52(a); 2:52(b)	
77:1	Interlude and Climax	2:57	
84:5	Culmination and Link	2:60	
85:9	Statement 4	2:52(b): 2:52(a); 2:51	

Table 2:17: Final movement: sections

The division of the movement according to the sections in the above table reveals a certain resemblance to rondo form. However when one notes the prominent use of variants of example 2:50 in the 'development' section, it becomes clear that the contrasts central to episodes within a rondo are not followed here. The appearances of example 2:50 in the 'development' are detailed in the section on that part of the movement. In fact the 'Interlude and Climax' section is the only substantial part of this extensive movement not to feature the opening idea at all. The final statements of this example are presented as part of a sepulchral coda, wherein the three ideas that opened the movement are heard — as noted in the table above — in reverse order.

In the second part of the movement (from fig. 77 onwards) Brian turns to a concern of the earlier movements — that of texture — as a means of moving the musical argument forward. The copious use of repetition early in the movement gives way to a

¹²⁰ MacDonald, The Symphonies, vol. 1, 68.

non-repetitive path to the climax, before the return of earlier themes —and their final repetition — effectively brings the music to a close. The 'interlude' section begins with a melody, new to the movement, scored for much subdivided lower strings, and culminates — at the climax — in full orchestral gestures. The nature of the thematic material, and its use, corresponds to the predominantly lyrical style of the second movement, rather than the earlier parts of the present one, which results in a lack of consistency in approach across the breadth of the finale. One can draw a connection between the use of repetition and stasis, with the contrast provided by the lyrical interlude in the second half of the movement as representative of growth. The finale as a whole can then be interpreted as a depiction of the numbing effect of grief, with an attempt to move beyond it represented by the 'interlude'. There is certainly a tragic feel to the concluding pages of the symphony, as if the music has attempted to move beyond the funereal concerns of the opening idea — with the distinct echoes of *Siegfried's Funeral Music* from *Götterdämmerung* (1869-74) — but cannot ultimately escape its pervasive influence.

The opening idea

The movement opens as shown at example 2:50, and the listener is at once presented with a distinctive gesture which will frequently punctuate the music. The dark, oppressive tone is also immediately established. The resemblance to Wagner noted above is so strong that it seems deliberate, especially when one considers the association of the present movement with the death of *Götz von Berlichingen* in Brian's comments quoted above, and its funereal atmosphere and tread. The gesture may be described as a slow flourish, and the pause mark, combined with the ritardando at the end, ensure that it is free in timing. lending to it a certain air of improvisation

EXAMPLE 2:50

Symphony No.2, IV. 67:9



This opening is not repeated exactly at any subsequent appearance, but the shape of the gesture, with its opening urgent rising semitone, followed by an undulating consequent which pushes upwards at the end, is instantly recognisable whenever it is heard. Table 2:18 below chronicles the many appearances of this idea. The varied pitches at the opening and close of the idea are detailed, as well as the overall range of the gesture. The discrepancies here indicate that it is the gestural shape that matters, rather than the pitch content, as the music unfolds.

Place in score	First pitch	Last pitch	Range
68:9	G	F sharp	Major ninth
69:5	G sharp	F sharp	Major ninth
70:8	D sharp	F sharp	Major tenth
71:2	A sharp	F sharp	Major ninth
71:6	E	С	Octave
71:10	D sharp	E	Major tenth
72:2	D sharp	C	Octave
72:4	C sharp	E	Major tenth
75:1	А	D flat	Diminished twelfth
75:6	A sharp	D	Perfect twelfth
87:1	D sharp	G	Minor seventh
87:3	В	G	Minor seventh

These appearances of the opening idea are not placed at regular intervals during the course of the finale. Bearing in mind that a figure number in the score occurs every ten bars or so, one can see that, after the initial two statements, there is a concentration on the gesture at figs. 71 and 72. This is followed by two appearances close to each other in fig. 75. The longest stretch between two statements occurs between figs. 75 and 87. This encompasses the interlude and the climax of the movement as outlined in table 2:17. There are two final statements as the movement draws to a close. The final one is illustrated below

EXAMPLE 2:51

Symphony No.2, IV, 87:3



Graham Saxby remarks about this gesture that 'its banality contrasts oddly with the nobility of the music it so frequently interrupts'. He further notes:

The frequent repetition of this fussy little phrase serves not so much to increase tension as to provoke irritation. It seems to have been one of Brian's rare miscalculations.¹²¹

If the banality is deliberate — and the sketches and short score show that the final form was arrived at carefully — the frustration it arouses as it interrupts the noble flow of the music is perhaps overdone in the central section of the movement, between figs 71 and 72. But elsewhere Brian judges the effect of the Wagnerian reminiscence acutely. The opening two statements of example 2:50 are each part of a sequence of ideas that constitute the 'statement' material of table 2:17. They are followed in each case by a melody which begins by referring to example 2:16 from the opening movement, and finally a fanfare-like rhythm on horns. These two ideas are shown below as examples 2:52(a) and (b).

¹²¹ Saxby, 'Havergal Brian's Second Symphony', 188.

EXAMPLE 2:52(a)

Symphony No.2. IV. 67:10-68:4



EXAMPLE 2:52(b) Symphony No.2, **IV**, 69:1-4



The succeeding entries of the opening idea all serve to interrupt the flow of the music, and there is great tension as these interruptions occur more and more frequently, culminating in the appearances at two bar intervals between figs. 71:10 and 71:4. This marks the most recurrent use of this idea in the movement, and it is clear that the frequent repetitions of the idea at this point are increasing tension rather than marking major structural subdivisions. The punctuation — or interruption — by this idea has moved in this section from a macro to a micro level.

In the closing stages of the finale, after the main climax of the movement, there is a return of this sequence of ideas heard earlier. but in the reverse order. The link follows the return of an earlier theme — example 2:60 — as culmination of the climactic uses of the *Götterdämmerung* related rhythms seen in example 2:54. It follows the climactic moment, and eventually leads to the return of example 2:52(b). The most significant aspect of the reversal of the order of ideas at this point lies in example 2:52(a) being heard before, rather than after 2:50. Thus Brian brings back the opening idea of the

long movement as the end of the process of thinning out textures. The slow finale as a whole is thus framed with appearances of this gesture. It ushers the movement in, and also signals its dissolution. It is significant that the pitch range of the idea is at its smallest for the final two appearances detailed in table 2:18. The idea is less expansive than earlier in the finale, and contributes to the sense of impending closure. The gesture is but a pale echo of its former, more urgent self, as a comparison of example 2:51 with 2:50 clearly reveals.

Development section

The 'development' section from table 2:17 above is broken down into its component parts in table 2:19. From this one can see that it is in the early parts of this section of the movement in particular that the opening gesture (example 2:50) is dominant.

Place in score	Description
70:8 to 71:1	2:50 + Consequent 1
71:2 to 71:5	2:50 + Consequent 2
71:6 to 71:9	2:50 + Consequent 3
71:10 to 72:1	2:50 + Consequent 4
72:2 to 72:3	2:50 + Consequent 5
72:4 to 72:10	2:50 + Culmination (2:53)
73:1 to 73:5	2:55
73:6 to 74:1	2:52(b): Static
74:2 to 74:10	Textural growth and Extinction

Table 2:19: Subdivisions of development

The impression created by the multiple repetitions of example 2:50, with a different sequel on each occasion, is that of a frustrated series of attempts to branch out from the narrow confines of the expressive world governed by that gesture. There is a sense of oppression at this juncture, which is capped by the 'culmination' — at 72:7 — referred to above. This climactic gesture refers back to the climax of the first movement — and 'a' from examples 2:1 and 2: 16 — and is the first instance in the finale of that idea being taken up as an equally important climactic element of the present movement. In this respect, it points the way forward to later references to this idea in the finale. The following example from the short score shows its first appearance in the movement.

EXAMPLE 2:53

Symphony No.2. IV. 72:7-10



In addition to the orchestral forces noted in the above example, strings (divided) — whose material is nowhere to be seen in the short score — contribute significantly to the welter of sound. This passage thus offers further evidence of the importance of orchestration — at the full score stage — as part of the creative process for Brian. This passage is marked 'Grandioso' in both the short and full score, and its textural richness also brings to mind the similarly elaborate scoring of certain cumulative parts of the second movement. By recalling key moments in two previous movements, Brian is placing an added weight behind the present gesture, which reaches beyond the immediate context of the finale — and its increasingly tense repetitions of example 2:50 — to draw together all four movements of the work. The fact that Brian returns to this gestural and textural shape at the ultimate climax of the movement — at 84:5 — only serves to emphasise the purposefulness of this reference to earlier events. It is as if the whole work has been leading up to that final climax. The example above thus forms an important part of that cumulative build-up.

The 'consequents' referred to in the table also introduce, at fig.72. and in each of the next five bars, a gesture which is to feature prominently in the climactic sequence of events at. 84:2. The bar begins with a chord played on the first two semiquavers, as

shown in example 2:54. The rhythmic placement is another allusion to Siegfried's Funeral Music, and the similarity of mood only serves to heighten the comparison. This gesture is given a varied restatement a little later on. at 75:3 and 7, where the chord is played on the first three, rather than the first two semiguavers of the bar. The power of these gestures is considerable, and to accuse the composer of a lack of originality is to miss the point. The music is as appropriate for the expressive purposes of Brian as it was for Richard Wagner, and Brian saw himself as part of the continuance of that heritage His writings for Musical Opinion reveal his admiration for the great German. He described him as 'a phenomenal genius'¹²² and praised his facility for writing continuous contrapuntal music¹²³ The latter quality can be traced to Brian's very last symphonic works of the nineteen sixties, such as Symphony No. 31 (1968). This admiration for things German is also borne out by his setting of the German language. rather than his native English, in several key vocal works (such as the Fourth Symphony. Das Siegeslied, and the Operas Turandot and Faust). The present reference to Wagner is more of an allusion than a direct quote, and a knowing nod in the direction of a famous example of Germanic funeral music, indeed one of the most famous examples in the literature.

EXAMPLE 2:54

Symphony No.2. IV. 72:1-2



Following on from the first climax of the movement at 72:10. Brian introduces a new idea which is related to example 2:52(a) — and in particular the second bar of that melody — and will recur before the end. This latter appearance is in a similar context

¹²² Havergal Brian, 'Gustav Holst: an English Composer' in *Havergal Brian on Music, vol. 1: British Music,* Malcolm MacDonald (ed.), (Toccata Press, 1986), 288-293.

¹²³ Havergal Brian, 'Arnold Cooke' in Op. cit., 331-5.

to the present one. coming after a climax, in fact the culmination of the whole movement (at fig. 84:8). In each case it is followed by a reference to 2:52(b), with which it also shares some common material, namely the triplet quavers. These connections between ideas are typical of Brian in that they help to create the impression that the ideas belong together, despite their separate identities.

EXAMPLE 2:55

Symphony No.2. IV. 73:1-5



This sense of connection is also relevant to the 'static' appearance of 2:52(b) at this juncture. Throughout the symphony. Brian has used fanfare-like material in a similar manner — and will also do so in his next symphony — particularly in the second movement, where the contrast between this type of gesture and more freely developing passages was crucial to the dialectic of the movement. It is interesting to note that it leads in the present case into a more discursive section. The opening idea of the movement plays no part here, and the interest is held by a build-up of orchestral texture, linked largely by the use of dotted rhythms. This is a short build-up, however, and it is brusquely dismissed after eight bars by a thunderous E flat roll on two timpani an octave apart, supported by cellos and basses. This is illustrated as example 2:56 below. This affront to continuity is succeeded by the return of the opening idea of the movement (at fig. 75:1).

EXAMPLE 2:56

Symphony No.2. IV. 74:8-10



Brian repeats the dismissive gesture on timpani only 4 bars later, this time on an F natural, before the initial sequence of three ideas is restated. This has the effect of reaffirming the dark mood of the opening of the movement. The return of 2:50 twice in close succession is well judged here, in that the resonance it has acquired from earlier appearances gives it an added associative power. Brian is careful not to overuse it, especially given the six consecutive appearances between fig.70:8 and 72:4 (as detailed in table 2:19) — where, perhaps its use is excessive. The result of this is that the contrasting string melody which begins at fig.77:1 is both a surprising, welcome change of direction, and a compositional necessity if the movement is not to become too repetitive or static.

Interlude and climax

The next table charts the events from that new melody to the climax of the movement, described in table 2:17 as 'interlude and climax'. There are three factors crucial to the distinctiveness of this part of the movement. Firstly, there is the absence of 2:50, so dominant in the movement up to this point. This is complemented by the change of focus to expansive melodic writing, beginning as at example 2:57. The concentration on textural development towards climactic gestures also marks this section off from the rest of the movement. although the idea of accumulating textures was — briefly — a feature of the 'development' section just discussed. At the same time Brian creates a strong link with the manner of discourse in the previous three movements of the symphony, as noted above, as he moves the movement — and the entire symphony — towards its ultimate climax.

Place in score Description	
77:1 to 80:5	Melody (example 2:57) and textural build-up 1
80:6 to 80:9	Climax 1
80:10 to 81:7	Textural build-up 2 (examples 2:62, 2:64)
81:8 to 82:1	Climax 2
82:2 to 82:6	Static interlude (example 2:63)
82:7 to 83:4	Climax 3 (example 2:61)
83:5 to 84:1	Textural build-up 3 (example 2:65)
84:2 to 84:8	Climax 4 (example 2:60)

Table 2:20: Subdivisions of Interlude and Climax

This part of the movement begins with one of the most sustained pieces of lyrical writing found in the entire work. It sets a different tone to the earlier music of the movement, both in terms of the warm sound of divided cellos and double basses, and the clear major mode of the tonic (E) at the start. The opening is illustrated below.

EXAMPLE 2:57

Symphony No.2, IV, 77:1-2



From this starting-point, Brian gradually adds to the orchestral texture, until the first climax at 80:6 recalls the teeming textures of the first and second movements. Violas, also divided, are added after sixteen bars of the melody, with the violins completing the string complement with horns, clarinets and bassoons also joining in, after a further six bars. The sense of an expanding texture is keenly felt, due to the increasing brightness of the string tone as the upper members of that section of the orchestra add their voices. The melodic writing is also expansive, but Brian unifies his melodic inspiration by the repetition of a distinctive falling figure, as well as introducing a subtle element of imitation between top and bottom at the very start of the melody, as can be seen in example 2:57 (bracketed as 'h'). This brief hint at a canonic relationship between treble and bass would be developed to a greater extent in both the Third Symphony and the Violin Concerto, as well as in many of the later works, where long polyphonic stretches often include canon between different parts of the texture.

The falling shape is heard twice in close succession in the early part of the melody, as shown in example 2:58 (bracketed as 'i' and 'j').

EXAMPLE 2:58

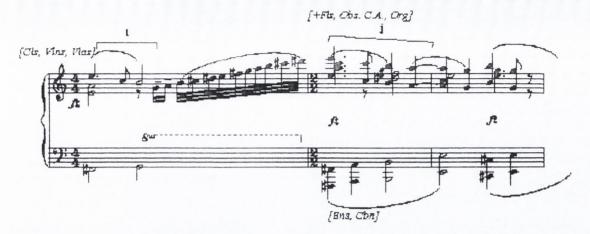
Symphony No.2, IV. 77:9-10



Further on, after a single bar of static contrast — which, once again, bears a family kinship to example 2:52(b), and in particular to the 'static' passage based on it between 73:6 and 74:1 — the rich textures return with this falling motive in augmentation in successive bars, as bracketed. The change to 2/2 results in the second bar doubling the speed of the first, as Brian moves towards his first culmination point. This is illustrated as example 2:59.

EXAMPLE 2:59

Symphony No.2, IV, 79:9-10



One of the most intriguing things about these repetitions is their placement by Brian. The idea of a melodic statement, or phrase, and its consequent, or answering phrase, is often rooted in the close resemblance between the overall shape of each melodic unit. Thus one phrase can be heard to 'answer' the other, as between successive phrases. But Brian includes his repetitions as part of a freely expanding melodic passage, so that they appear in different contexts each time. Their appearance may therefore be surprising, but it is anything but arbitrary. The composer is striving for, and to a large degree succeeds in achieving, a sense of melodic spontaneity, or, indeed, rhapsody. This feeling of rhapsody was noted in particular in relation to the second movement. The difference here is that the contrast with the earlier part of the movement, with its insistent repetitions of example 2:50, is stronger — and on a larger time scale — than any contrast within the slow movement.

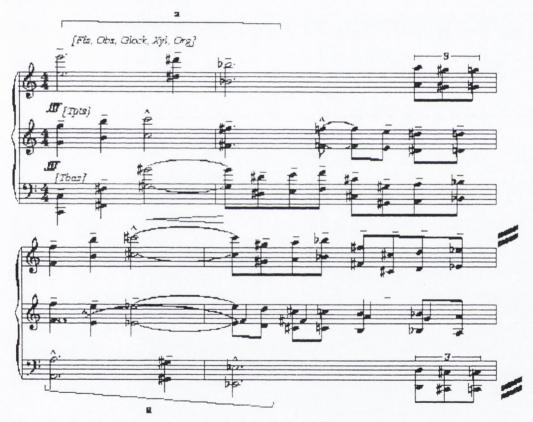
The four climaxes of this finale are carefully weighed so that the biggest of them is both a culmination of texture, and thematically the most resonant. Both climax 1 and climax 4 refer to the 'Grandioso' section from earlier in the movement — see example 2:53 above — and therefore, by extension, back to the climax of the first movement of the symphony, and in particular to figure 'a'. Climax 4 also refers to the rhythmic figure of two semiquavers quoted in example 2:54. These two outer climaxes are similarly fully scored, but whereas the first uses a single cymbal clash from the range of percussion on offer, the fourth adds timpani, xylophone, glockenspiel and gong to the welter of orchestral sound. A comparison of climax 1 with climax 4 reveals the

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care taken by Brian with regard to the relative weighting of the climaxes, in that the addition of tuned percussion to the latter sonority gives an added sheen to the timbre at that point. The culminating fourth climax is illustrated below. This example bears comparison with example 2:53 above. The gestures are closely related, and Brian underlines this by a comparable use of the orchestra. Like the earlier example, the orchestral score for the bars that are illustrated below contain additional textures for divided strings. The similarity of gesture and orchestration ensures that example 2:60 is heard in relation to — and as a development and intensification of — the earlier passage.

EXAMPLE 2:60

Symphony No.2, IV, 84:5-8



The second of the four climaxes is capped by the addition of organ, two harps, cymbal and side drum to an already full scoring. However, the forces are reduced after a single bar, leading to the next, 'static' subsection. The fact that this second climax is not thematically referential renders its significance more local. The succeeding 'static' passage comes complete with subdued fanfares, which provide the rhythmic basis for the more mobile consequent that forms the third climax. The latter consists of a sequence-like four bar unit, with a rise of a semitone, from C natural to C sharp, after the first two bars. As the example shows, the repetition of rhythm is exact, that of pitches varied. This type of gesture has been an intermittent feature of the musical landscape of the symphony, so that its resonance is more general than particular. The relative lack of rich textural detail also ensures that this is not heard as the ultimate high point in comparison to climaxes 1 and 4.

EXAMPLE 2:61

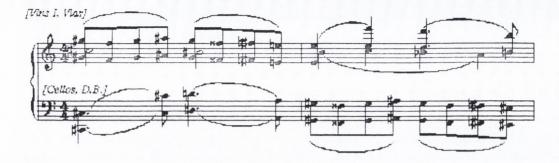
Symphony No.2, IV, 82:7-10



In the music between these points of culmination. Brian uses compositional devices typical of him. Rhythmic imitation between the top and bottom of a texture is seen at the beginning of the build-up to the second climax. The essentially contrapuntal mode of thought found here would become a prevalent characteristic of his later symphonies. This characteristic of his work comes across very clearly from an inspection of the layout of much of the material in his short scores, where the part writing is evident. The following example shows the start of the second textural build-up as written in the short score

EXAMPLE 2:62

Symphony No.2, IV, 80:10-81:1



The next extract shows a typical use of similarity of profile between ideas, which is also a recurrent Brian fingerprint. The 'static' music between climaxes 2 and 3 has already been mentioned. Beneath the fanfares, one can see the use of imitation once again, on this occasion at the half-bar. The shape of the four quavers refers back to example 2:62, but the context is quite different. Further to this is the figure in the bass, which can be viewed as an anticipation of the bass figures found at the third climactic point, as quoted above in example 2:61. The frequency of these occurrences of instances of family resemblance between ideas throughout the music of Brian discounts the notion that they are haphazard, or merely coincidental.

EXAMPLE 2:63

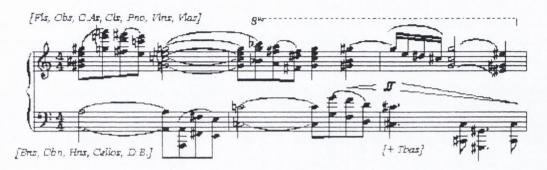
Symphony No.2. IV. 82:2-3



There are also instances of quasi-sequential repetition of ideas as part of the build-ups. The first of these occurs as part of the second textural build-up, and is illustrated as example 2:64 below. The second starts the approach to the fourth climax, and is shown as example 2:65. In each case, the rhythm is repeated exactly, but the approach to interval content varies somewhat. In example 2:65, neither top nor bottom of the texture maintain the same interval structure for the two bars. The intervals are the same in the first two bars of example 2:64, but are then altered in the third bar.

EXAMPLE 2:64

Symphony No.2, IV. 81:6-8



EXAMPLE 2:65

Symphony No.2, IV, 83:5-6



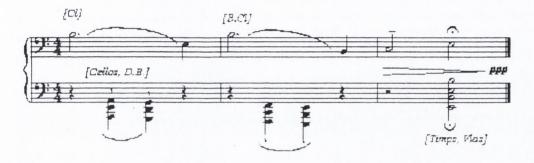
Coda and Conclusion

After the shattering power of the climax illustrated as example 2:60. Brian follows the manner of the closing bars of each of the first three movements in the conclusion to this finale. As earlier, there is a rapid retreat into shadowy textures as the music heads toward a subdued conclusion. Reference has been made above to how Brian reverses the order of the three ideas that opened the movement — quoted as examples 2:50, 52(a) and 52(b) respectively — as part of the sepulchral retreat of the final moments of the symphony. There is also a reference back to the opening of the entire work at the

very end, in the use of that favourite final sonority of Brian's, the bare fifth. In this instance, the C (natural) which immediately precedes the final chord strongly suggests the minor mode, and there is a sense of the work having come full circle, from a premonition of tragedy at the outset, to the darkness of this final sonority. This is illustrated below as example 2:66.

EXAMPLE 2:66

Symphony No.2, IV, 87:6-8



However, the final bare fifth in the above example is not present in the short score of the final bars, but was put in by Brian at the full score stage, and has been added to the above example by the author of this thesis. As the following example shows, the short score ends with an unaccompanied melodic line in the upper of the two staves.

EXAMPLE 2:67

Symphony No.2, IV, 87:6-8



Thus the bare fifth which — very effectively in the score as performed — links the opposite ends of this large symphony was an afterthought — and an inspired one — by the composer. The fact that neither the beginning nor the end — two of the most important parts of a work, to put it bluntly — of the Symphony No.2 were determined until a relatively late stage in the creative process by Brian is one of the more curious revelations of the short score. The short score of the next symphony — to be discussed

in turn — also reveals that Brian's ending was an afterthought. As Malcolm MacDonald observes, beginnings and endings were 'problematical areas' for Brian.¹²⁴

In each movement of the symphony. Brian places his main climax close to the end, and follows it with music which retreats quite hastily from textural richness to a sparse close. This contributes in a significant way to the tragic sense that dominates the emotional tone of this symphony. The lack of a brighter ending to any of the movements may intensify the feeling of gloom, but there is also a consequent lack of variety across the symphony. In contrast to this, the Sixth Symphony (1903-04) of Gustav Mahler offers a different 'Tragic' proposition. In that huge work, the jubilant ending of the first movement offers the strongest possible contrast with the dark final pages of the finale. The contrast between the two endings has the twin effect of broadening the expressive scope of the work as a whole, and intensifying the feeling of tragedy as the finale draws to a close. In the Brian work, by contrast, there is nothing to offset the dark — or, at best, in the second and third movements, tentative — conclusion of each movement.

The beginning and end of the finale are acutely judged, and the contrast provided by the richly divided string melody is welcome, as well as widening the expressive scope of the movement. The problem lies with the six consecutive repetitions of the opening gesture. It is almost as if Brian is using repetition to emphasise how crucial that device is in relation to the language of this part of the work, but stresses the point too much. Disruption of continuity can be effective — as Brian's use of this technique proves throughout his output — but successive uses of this compositional device can become predictable, and the power of understatement — and the consequent tension generated by stasis — is lost. The onward dynamic in the movement, as opposed to moment to moment continuity, is held in abeyance while a sequence of ideas is repeated. The contrast provided by the string melody is a vital part of the movement, but it is arguable that it arrives too late. The intervening restatement of the opening three ideas exacerbates this sense of the music looking back on itself rather than pushing onward to its dramatic culmination. The finale, then, can come across as a little too long.

¹²⁴ Macdonald, The Symphonies, vol.3, 91.

to allow for careful pacing — the opening gesture, as often as not, has sounded somewhat incoate rather than urgent.

Taking the entire symphony into account, the division into two pairs of movements emerges. The succinct first movement is followed by the discursive second, and a similar relationship exists between the third movement and the finale. This pairing results in a lack of balance at the outer edges of the symphony. While the first movement can be regarded as a prelude to the second, the same cannot be said for the third and fourth. The 'Battle' scherzo is a focal point of the symphony, especially in terms of visceral excitement and textural accumulation. The finale is the movement of greatest weight in the symphony, and is not in any sense an epilogue to the powerful third. It is interesting to note that the order of composition of the movements results in a similar disposition of weight to that of the next symphony, which he began a mere six days after finishing No.2. In the Third, the first movement is much longer than its counterpart in the Second, and while both second movements contain music of a comparable rhapsodic quality, that of No.3 is both more tightly organised, and shorter than its predecessor in No.2. Both third movements stand apart from the surrounding movements in terms of language, and Brian also ends No.3 with a slow movement, but one which relies less on repetition than its counterpart. In some senses, then, No.3 can be seen as a second run at the type of symphonic organisation attempted in No.2, and the result is a more successful work. The different material, of course, means that they are very different listening experiences. They both contain impressive music, but No.3 seems more succinct — despite being slightly longer — because of its greater internal unity.

Malcolm MacDonald's contention that 'the actual thematic materials are not sufficiently striking' in the opening two movements of Symphony No.2 is perhaps a matter for personal taste.¹²⁵ The foregoing discussion has highlighted the straightforward presentation of these ideas in the opening movement by the composer — and argued that this is done in order to make the textural accumulation all the more apparent. MacDonald further offers, in relation to the first two movements that 'The music is highly interesting but not (for me) amongst Brian's most compelling'.¹²⁶ He

¹²⁵ Ibid., 275.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 275.

finds more 'memorable ideas' in the latter two movements.¹²⁷ This view highlights a difference between the first two movements and the concluding pair borne out by the preceding discussion. The first two movements are quite discursive, the second in particular, whereas the latter two are more single-minded in their approach. The manner in which Brian utilises his straightforward material in the opening movement in particular is precisely what makes it memorable. The textural explorations of the opening two movements — arguably their most distinctive feature — are fully detailed above. Graham Saxby refers to this command of orchestral texture when he notes that these parts of the symphony 'widen the limits of timbre and texture in orchestral music to an unprecedented extent'.¹²⁸ A comparison of the slow movement of No.2 with that of No.3, however, does reveal a tighter grip on the material in the latter. The main melody provides a clear focus, lacking in the corresponding movement of No.2, without any lessening of the textural inventiveness characteristic of Brian.

There is also a more satisfactory balance between unity and a wide expressive scope in No. 3. The clearest example of this can be found in the scherzo, which offers a separate expressive world from the rest of the symphony. There are also subtle links with the other movements — to be discussed in turn — which ensure that the contrast enhances the scope of the symphony, by providing the listener with a clear sense of relief from the concerns of the other three movements. This relief is lacking in the Symphony No.2, where the balance between concentration and expansiveness is more problematic. The weaknesses of the Symphony No.2 are a matter of structure and internal balance rather than material. With different material in his next symphony, Brian was able to create a more satisfying structure and internal balance. The *Gothic* testifies to the fact that expansiveness was not a problem for Brian. The Symphony No.3 mixes these apparently contradictory qualities in a uniquely personal, and more satisfactory manner.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 275

¹²⁸ Saxby, 'Havergal Brian's Second Symphony'. 191.

CHAPTER FIVE SYMPHONY NO 3 IN C SHARP MINOR

- 1. Andante Moderato e Sempre Sostenuto e Marcato
- 2. Lento Sempre Marcato e Rubato
- 3. Allegro Vivace
- 4. Lento Solenne

Instrumentation: 4 Flutes (3rd and 4th doubling Piccolo),¹²⁹ 4 Oboes (3rd and 4th doubling Cor Anglais), 4 Clarinets (3rd and 4th doubling Bass Clarinet), 4 Bassoons, Contrabassoon, 8 Horns, 4 Trumpets, 2 Tenor Trombones, Bass Trombone, Contrabass Trombone, 2 Bass Tubas, 6 Timpani, Bass Drum, Cymbals, Gong, Side Drum, Tenor Drum, Triangle, Tambourine, Castanets, Celeste, Glockenspiel, Xylophone, 2 Harps, 2 Pianos, Organ (ad. lib.), Strings.¹³⁰

Introduction

Brian finished the full score of his Second Symphony on April 6th, 1931. Six days later, he began the process of sketching out a new piece. This was to become his Third Symphony, but the evidence of the sketches and short score suggests that it may well have begun life as another sort of work, namely a concerto for one, or two pianos and orchestra. This issue is discussed below. Brian's Third Symphony, like his second, was composed in the following stages, based on the surviving manuscript material: pencil sketches, pencil short score, ink short score, and final full score. This sequence of compositional stages served the composer well, for he followed it until the last works of his career, written in his nineties.¹³¹

The manuscript material in relation to the Third Symphony consists of eight pages of

¹²⁹ Jeremy Marchant lists 2 extra piccolos (see the Supplement to Havergal Brian Society Newsletters 144 and 145), but a closer examination of the score reveals that Brian left out an instruction to change to piccolos at 45: 10 in the second movement. This makes this passage playable using the forces listed above.

¹³⁰ Tenor Drum, Tambourine and Castanets are not listed on the title page of the score in the library of the Royal College of Music. The former is required in the opening movement, the latter two in the closing stages of the third movement.

¹³¹ See MacDonald. *The Symphonies*, vol. 3, 86. for a table of the manuscript materials for Brian's symphonic output.

sketch material, a short score written in ink, and the full score. Some of the eight pages of pencil sketches are fragmentary, but there are also four consecutively numbered pages of a pencil short score, among which is the last page of a presumably complete draft, dated 'Thursday, July 16th, 1931'. This date is corroborated by a letter from Brian to Granville Bantock. This letter also gives the following information about the pencil short score:¹³²

- 1) the sketch of the first movement was finished on May 23rd, 1931
- 2) the second movement was begun on June 21st and completed on July 1st
- 3) the finale was completed on July 16th
- 4) the scherzo was sketched out on July 17^{th} and 18^{th} .

The ink short score is forty-eight pages long, and has an inscription at the end of the final movement which reads: 'Commenced Sunday, July 12th, Finished Thursday July 16th'. The fact that both pencil and ink copies of the final movement have the same completion date could infer that Brian worked almost simultaneously on the two short scores. This would mean that he wrote out the scherzo — the final movement in order of composition — in both ink and pencil in two days. It is more likely that he wished to have identical dates on both versions of the short score, to document the initial drafting of the material. The survival of pages of the pencil short score of No. 3, as are the surviving pencil sketches for No. 2. This supports the view that Brian considered his pencil short score expendable once they were superseded by the ink version, but wished to commemorate the chronology. In fact he preserved the ink short scores of most of his works. The speed with which this short score was written out thus implies the pre-existence of a complete preliminary pencil score, which was used as the basis for the ink copy. The full score has the following inscriptions:

- at the end of the first movement : 'Score completed Sunday January 10th, 1932' (the date of January 10th is also written in brackets);
- 2) at the end of the second movement : 'Saturday March 19 1932';
- 3) at the end of the third movement : 'Friday April 22 1932';

¹³² Letter quoted in David Brown, 'Havergal Brian, Symphony No. 3', sleeve notes for compact disc Hyperion CDA66334, 1989, 3-4.

4) at the end of the final movement : 'Score Completed Sat evening May 28 1932' and, to the left of this: 'In Studio 1 Jasper Road London SE 19'

As with the Second Symphony, therefore, the movements were composed in a different order to the sequence in which they appear in the finished work. In the present case, the scherzo, written out of sequence (as the dates in the letter to Bantock indicate), stands apart from the other movements in terms of both the nature of the musical language and the mood evoked. The orchestration of the sketches was clearly a vital part of the creative process for Brian, as opposed to an exercise of a technical nature, taking the best part of a year to accomplish. A comparison of short score and full score reveals many new textural ideas - often of a subsidiary nature - in the latter, while the broad musical argument remains largely intact. This broad vision was also the main impetus behind the pencil short score, and, given the speed at which the ink short score was completed, it seems very likely that the latter did not incorporate any major modifications by the composer. Brian had written to Bantock on July 20th, 1931: 'It will take a long time to decipher and write out my sketches':¹³³ perhaps the ink short score represented a necessary clarification of his pencil notation before the production of a full score. A comparison of one of the surviving pages of the pencil draft (numbered 14) with its ink counterpart bears this out, and is discussed below.

The cover page of the full score has the word 'Altarus' partly erased from it. The provenance and meaning of this word are unclear, and have been the subject of much speculation,¹³⁴ and there is even a website devoted to this mysterious topic.¹³⁵ It may have had some programmatic significance for Brian, or perhaps was a coined word to convey the idea of great (or greatest) height. The heroic striving of much of the music could reflect this. There may have been some astrological or mythological significance. It may also be that Brian simply mis-spelt or incorrectly remembered the term with which he wished to inscribe the score of this work. If he wished to convey a sense of mystery and power by this term, the music more than adequately compensates for the lack of a clear link with this enigmatic word. In typical Brian

¹³³ Brian quoted in Brown, 'Havergal Brian, Symphony No. 3', 4.

¹³⁴ See Martyn Becker, 'Brian's Third Symphony' in *HB: Aspect of Havergal Brian*, ed. Jurgen Schaarwächter, Ashgate, 1997, 193-7.

¹³⁵ htpp://www. Binternet.com/~j.b.w/alta.htm. 23 March 2004.

fashion it was firstly written and then — in keeping with his attitude to programmatic ideas in general — partly but not completely erased.

The immediacy with which work on the third followed the completion of the second points to an urgency on the part of the composer to sustain a creative burst. In addition to this, it may also suggest a continuity of thought shared between the two works. There are, indeed, some shared musical concerns between the two works, which can be taken to infer that Brian wished to develop, in No. 3, the type of symphonic thinking found in the earlier piece. Both end with extended slow movements, and have third movements which stand apart from the rest of the symphony in terms of style and language. Further to this, each slow (second) movement is shaped around passages of great textural richness. It is the first movements of each work, however, which differ most from each other. That of No. 2 is smaller in scope than the succeeding second movement, whereas the opening movement of No. 3 is the largest of the four movements that make up that symphony. The preludial nature of the opening movement of No. 2 - discussed above in chapter 5 - presents a strong contrast to the greater scale and weight of the first movement of No. 3, although both begin with an introduction in slow tempo. In the latter case, however, the succeeding passage is actually marked Piu Lento, which effectively makes the opening bars a quicker, rather than slower prelude to the main tempo of that movement. The fact that the opening movement of No. 3 was initially conceived as the first movement of a Concerto finds reflection in its larger scale. This includes double statements of thematic material in a manner related to the practice of a composer such as Mozart in his Piano Concertos, as outlined below.

It is important to distinguish between Brian effectively doing a re-run of No. 2 when writing No. 3, which is clearly not the case, and learning, and drawing upon the experience of writing his Second Symphony when embarking upon his third. It has been suggested in conversation with the author by Irish composer Kevin O'Connell that each successive work by a composer represents — to some degree — a critique of the preceding one. There is certainly an accurate observation here, in that a composer will naturally become more self-critical and exacting in each successive work. The point acquires further resonance when successive works are written within the same genre, as is the case with Brian's Second and Third Symphonies. The composer will

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also endeavour to explore new ideas in succeeding works, whether they be expressive, technical, or a combination of the two. The matter of compositional technique, and its development, is a separate issue from the thematic and expressive character of a composition, however. Thus the tragic world of Brian's Second Symphony is followed by the 'expansive, objective, heroic and lyrical' world of No.3.¹³⁶ However, a comparison of the compositional techniques used in the two works does suggest that the composer wished to develop his symphonic skills in the third, building upon the achievement of No. 2. With the Fourth Symphony, Das Siegeslied (1932-3), Brian's interests returned to the type of writing found in the 'Te Deum' setting which forms the second part of the Gothic (1919-27). The purely instrumental nature of both the Second and Third Symphonies relates more pertinently to the first, instrumental part of that huge work. Part of the challenge for Brian in these works was to write instrumental music which did not pave the way for a choral peroration, but could generate, sustain and conclude a self-sufficient musical argument. This would remain a challenge for the composer as far as his nineties, since after the Fifth Symphony, Wine of Summer (1937), Brian never again included a vocal part in any of the Symphonies.

Andante Moderato e Sempre Sostenuto e Marcato

Overview

The divisions in the opening movement of Symphony No. 3, detailed in table 3:1 below, show that sections of the music can be seen to correspond to the components of a sonata structure. Malcolm Macdonald has described it as 'retaining a sonata basis'.¹³⁷ However, the inclusion of a cadenza-like passage, as well as the double statements of thematic groups betray the influence of the concerto principle on the composer's thinking in this movement. The question of the concerto-like origins of the first movement will be more fully treated below. Brian's comment to Bantock, in a letter of 25 May 1931 — after the completion of the pencil short score of the first movement — that he had 'resolved the Concerto into a Symphony' neatly summarises the process of redefinition evidenced by the surviving pages of the pencil short score, as well as the

¹³⁶ Brown, 'Havergal Brian, Symphony No. 3', 4.

¹³⁷ MacDonald, *The Symphonies*, vol.1, 73.

ink short score.¹³⁸ After that resolution. Brian treated the two piano parts far less prominently in the remaining three movements of the symphony, and the design is no longer a cross-fertilisation of concerto and symphony as in this opening movement. Table 3:1 below presents an overview of the movement:

Place in score	Description					
Bar 1 to 2:4	Introduction					
2:5 to 3:2	First subject 1					
3:3 to 4:1	Interlude 1					
4:2 to 4:8	First subject 2					
4:9 to 5:9	Transition					
5:10 to 7:4	Second subject 1					
7:5 to 8:10	Interlude 2					
9:1 to 10:6	Second subject 2					
10:7 to 11:7	Transition					
11:8 to 15:5	Development 1					
15:6 to 16:3	Development 2					
16:4 to 19:6	Development 3					
19:7 to 21:6	Development 4					
21:7 to 23:2	Transition					
23:3 to 24:10	Second subject					
25:1 to 27:2	Transition					
27:3 to 29:2	Cadenza					
29:3 to 31:3	Coda					

 Table 3:1: First movement sections

As in the case of the first movement of No. 2, the present opening movement is framed by related passages at a different tempo from the bulk of the music, in the nature of an introduction and epilogue. Like No. 2, the effect is of opening out the harmonic palette at the beginning of the movement, and of closing it back in at the end. In each case, the tone of the work is strongly defined by the nature of the opening gestures. Furthermore, the thematic material heard at the outset proves to be of great

¹³⁸ Quoted in Brown, 'Havergal Brian, Symphony No. 3', 3.

significance throughout the movement. The brooding atmosphere of No. 2 contrasts strongly with the forward moving march rhythms heard at the outset of No. 3. MacDonald has aptly characterised this opening as possessing 'a strong, deliberate forward motion, full of a sense of heroic purpose'.¹³⁹ Martyn Becker has written that there is 'a tremendous sense of powerful doggedness in this music, a great sense of purpose which can be felt from the outset'.¹⁴⁰ The opening rhythms — which bear a distinct, if unlikely relationship to the well-known 'Habanera' from Bizet's *Carmen* (1873-4) as noted by Becker — return triumphantly at the conclusion of the movement. This contrasts strongly with the end of the first movement of No. 2, which retreats into the shadows from whence it came. In the case of the first movement of No. 3 the latent power of the opening gesture is fully realised. The opening and conclusion of the first movement of No. 3 can be seen in examples 3:1(a) and (b) below.

Harmonic language

(a) Tonal centricity

The introduction and coda both centre on the key of C sharp minor, and thus provide an important frame for the varied harmonic language of the main body of the movement. As in No. 2, there is a contrast therein between passages rooted in triadic harmony, and those of a less triadic nature. In No. 3, the beginning and conclusion of the movement are like pillars which introduce, and re-enforce the tonic respectively. The change of mode, from purposeful minor at the start to triumphant major at the end, is also emblematic of the path of the entire symphony. The coda of the final movement, in fact, is prefigured in the first movement, a characteristic also discernible between the endings of the outer movements of No. 2. Examples 3:1(a) and (b) show the beginning and end of the movement respectively:

¹³⁹ MacDonald, *The Symphonies*, vol.1, 74.

¹⁴⁰ Martyn Becker, 'Brian's Third Symphony', in *HB: Aspects of Havergal Brian*, Jurgen Schaarwächter (ed.), Ashgate, 1997, 193-97.

EXAMPLE 3:1(a)

Symphony No. 3,1 bars 1-3 (reduced by the author)



EXAMPLE 3:1(b)

Symphony No. 3,1, 31: 2-3.



A comparison of the following example, taken from the short score, with example 3:1(a) above, which is a reduction by the author from the full score, shows Brian — as in the case of the opening of the Symphony No. 2 — reaching a definitive opening gesture only at the full score stage. The dotted rhythm which is so prevalent in the finished work is less clearly defined in the short score. Brian's alterations give the opening a much greater sense of impetus. This is another clear instance of the full score giving the composer one last chance to polish his material. We shall see another instance of this creative clarification in the coda of the last movement, which — like the final bars of the previous symphony — differ from what is found in the short score. The short score of the opening bars are given below:

EXAMPLE 3:1(c)

Symphony No. 3.1 bars 1-3 (short score)



Both introduction and coda can be seen to feature D major prominently as an important auxiliary key, to some degree fulfilling the function of a traditional dominant, in that D major often leads directly to the tonic, C sharp minor. This can be clearly seen in example 3:1(b) above. The four bars immediately preceding this are built up over a bass line centred on D, in the manner of the opening of the movement, making the shift to C sharp major at the start of example 3:1(b) all the more effective and dramatic. This distinctive use of key areas contributes to the successful incorporation of triadic tonality into the music, in that the most important harmonic inter-relationships are clearly presented at the outset. The triadic nature of the material presented in the key areas of C sharp and D throughout the movement offers a unifying thread, while also referring back to the strongly key centred introduction. This triadic material also presents a more local contrast to several intervening passages which can be described as not possessing any binding sense of key, or diatonic harmonic language. The following example, soon after the opening of the movement, shows that the initial departure from a bass-line rooted on C sharp, is to a D, whence the music is emphatically pulled back. The importance of D as a secondary key in relation to C sharp minor, is thus presented in concentrated form at both ends of this large movement, showing the composer tellingly relating small scale events to the large scale organisation.

EXAMPLE 3:2(a)

Symphony No. 3,1, bars 5-6 (reduced by the author)



As in the case of the opening of the movement, Brian has only arrived at a definitive rhythmic shape for these bars at the full score stage. The following example shows the above bars as they appear in the short score:

EXAMPLE 3:2(b)

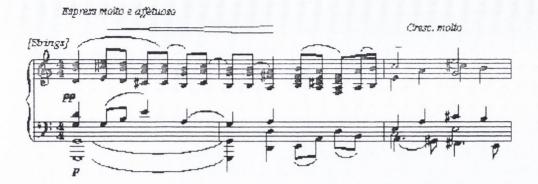
Symphony No. 3.1, bars 5-6 (short score)



The fact that the second subject referred to in table 3:1 above is initially presented in D major is a further instance of the close relationship between the two key-areas. Example 3:3 below shows the opening bars of the second subject, in its first appearance in the movement:

EXAMPLE 3:3

Symphony No. 3.1. 5:9 -6:1.



The more common choice of a contrasting key at this juncture would often be the relative major, in this case E major. This is eschewed here, but it is intriguing, and further evidence of his original approach to the use of key areas, that Brian does place his second subject partly in the latter key when it returns later in the movement (at 23:3). It moves from an A major beginning to E major, as the initial version — the beginning of which is quoted above — had moved from D to A major. Rather than being a contrast, however, the relative major in the present instance (E major) is used more as a counterfoil to the tonic (minor) than as a source of harmonic conflict at this point by Brian. This is reflected in the use of a common pitch. G sharp, between the two key areas in the lead-up to the cadenza for the two pianos, based in C sharp minor, which follows the conclusion of the restatement of the second subject. This enhances the continuity between the two harmonic areas rather than the contrast.

The main body of the movement makes further telling use of D as an important secondary key. The fact that C sharp and D are a semitone apart means that Brian can present the latter as a displaced version of the former. This is, in effect, what happens at the very end of the movement, as mentioned above, where a build-up in D major is suddenly wrenched back to C sharp major for the final bars. A further example of this occurs at 11:8 and 12:4, in the 'development 1' section. The section begins with a martial gesture in 6/4 marked Allegro con Brio. This is repeated at 12:4, but transposed up a semitone to D minor. The effect is similar to that of a phrase and answering phrase, with the proximity making the rise in pitch readily perceptible.

EXAMPLE 3:4(a)

Symphony No. 3.1.11:8



EXAMPLE 3:4(b)

Symphony No. 3,1,12:4



(b) Development sections

Brian's use of the tonic key is crucial to his planning of the central portion of the movement. As was the case in the first movement of No. 2. he uses the tonic key as an important reference point as this portion of the movement unfolds. It is used as a sort of launching pad for the various subsections referred to in table 3:1 above as 'developments' one to four. Each subdivision is begun by a statement of material in C sharp minor which is closely related to the beginning of the movement — quoted above as example 3:1(a) — or to the subsequent first subject, presented below as example 3:5.

EXAMPLE 3:5

Symphony No.3, 1.2:5-6:violins



The second appearance of this theme at 4:2 (see table 3:1), is illustrated below as example 3:17, from which it can be seen that the theme retains its original character far more closely than is the case with the second subject, as will be outlined below. The first two developments, which begin at 11:8 and 15:6 respectively, are closely related to the opening of the work, rather than the first subject illustrated above. The beginning of 'development 1' has been included above as example 3:4(a), while the beginning of the second anticipates, in the piano writing illustrated below as example 3:6, the type of gesture which will characterise the climactic cadenza (compare the following with example 3:16 below).

EXAMPLE 3:6

Symphony No. 3,1,15:6-7



The next two 'developments' refer explicitly to the first subject (example 3:5 above), the third using its opening as the basis for a canon. and the fourth continuing with the subject over an accompaniment based, once again, on canon. The ongoing sense of development in each case counteracts any strong sense of thematic return, although one could describe these two instances as the double restatement of the first subject, within a continuously evolving sonata structure. While it is true that these allusions to first subject material provide aural reference points, the strongest gesture of restatement is provided by the E major version of the second subject, which leads to

the cadenza. The beginnings of the treatments of first subject material in 'developments' three and four are illustrated below.

EXAMPLE 3:7(a)

Symphony No. 3.1,16:7-8.



EXAMPLE 3:7(b)

Symphony No. 3.1.19:8-9



The rhythm of the first subject is also referred to in a striking passage which follows the developmental passages just discussed. Four bars for strings, marked 'slower' by the composer, separate the end of 'development 4' from the 'transition' referred to in table 3:1. The latter begins as shown in the following example, and the relationship of its opening bar to the opening of subject 1 is clear. The writing for timpani, seen on the bottom stave of the short score excerpt below, anticipates the interpolations on that instrument in the cadenza. It is arguable that this subsection is, once again,

developmental in nature, but it is better viewed as a transition to the restatement of the second subject which follows, in that the context is different from that of the beginnings of 'developments' one to four. This justifies the choice of key by Brian, namely D minor, rather than the tonic, as in the case of the above examples. The shift upwards of a semitone makes the return to C sharp minor for the cadenza all the more emphatic, while also providing further evidence of Brian's purposeful use of the former key as a counterfoil to the latter.

EXAMPLE 3:8

Symphony No. 3,1,21:7-8



(c) The non - tonal passages

In each of the three passages in the following table, which are discussed in turn below, the non-tonal stretch of music is preceded by one in which the harmony is quite static, and connections to the two main themes of the movement are tenuous. The music appears to be winding down at these points, but the non-tonal passages effect an increase in forward momentum (partly through the use of repetitive rhythmic patterns). The unexpected juxtaposition with the preceding music imparts a sense of journeying onward. The effect in each case also seems calculated to be destabilising and

unsettling.

Place in score	Description			
7:5 to 11:7:				
(i) 7:5 to 8:10	Interlude 2			
(ii) 9:1 to 10:6	Second subject 2			
(iii) 10:7 to 11:7	Transition			
14:1 to 15:5	Development 1			
18:5 to 19:6	Development 3			

Table 3:2: Non-tonal passages

At the end of these passages, there is an increasing focus on selected pitch-groups, which prepares for a return to key-centred music: the tonic of C sharp minor follows in each instance. In their immediate contexts, these passages have the character of interludes. They are also imaginative side-steps from the march-like music which dominates much of the first movement. The unsettling impact of these passages is a typical result of the discontinuity noted by John Pickard as one of the most distinctive — and controversial — aspects of Brian's style.¹⁴¹ The sense of immediate continuity is avoided, in favour of abrupt changes of direction (or perspective).

1: 7:5 to 11:7

This large span of music consists of the second statement of the second subject of the movement, framed by music which follows its initial appearance, and a succeeding passage which ultimately leads back to the tonic key. These three subsections are separated from each other by caesuras — notated as two parallel vertical lines in the full score — and are quite distinct from one another as far as texture is concerned. The fact that the music immediately preceding this broad span is largely diatonic helps to create the very unsettling impact of the present passages, while also separating the paragraphs quite sharply from a harmonic point of view.

¹⁴¹ See John Pickard, 'Havergal Brian's productive discontinuity. With a comment by Martyn Becker' in *HB: Aspects of Havergal Brian*, Jurgen Schaarwachter (ed.), (Ashgate, 1997), 93-104.

(i) 7:6 to 8:10 (Interlude)

Malcolm MacDonald has written of the opening bars of the present passage as 'one of the most astonishing masses of orchestral sound in modern music'.¹⁴² It divides into two units of two bars each in which descending scale patterns are surrounded by enormously rich textures: the strings. for example are divided into sixteen parts, half of which are 'open', and half 'con sordini', according to the composer's instructions in the full score. The two piano parts of these bars can be seen in example 3:19(b) below. There is a partial use of whole-tones in the harmony, but texture is the strongest and most memorable aspect of the music. Brian never refers to the substance of these bars again, but their textural richness is paralleled by several passages throughout the rest of the symphony. This richness of texture is a characteristic shared with Symphony No. 2, as well as the orchestral texture in the first part of the *Gothic*. The following bars of 'Interlude 2' are similarly subdivided according to sequential repetition. Two bars of dotted rhythms on piano one coupled with demisemiquaver flourishes on flutes and oboes are followed by four bars in which the two pianos are accompanied by dotted rhythms on low brass. Then three bars featuring semiquavers on piano one and flutes are succeeded by a repeated one-bar summons on both pianos (supported by strings and horns on the first beat). The second version of the second subject follows after an expectant caesura. The continuity of this passage is more a question of the succession of striking textures than of any thematic development or harmonic device such as modulation. If anything, it is the gestures and textures that are treated sequentially rather than melodic patterns or keys. The following example shows the final bar of semiquavers followed by the repeated one-bar summons.

¹⁴² Malcolm MacDonald, The Symphonies, vol.1, 76.

EXAMPLE 3:9

Symphony No. 3.1.8:8-10.



(ii) 9:1 to 10:6 (Second Subject 2)

The present version of the second subject is heard as a greatly varied restatement of its first appearance (quoted above as example 3:3). It acts as a counterfoil to that version by making use of the same melody. However, the melody was supported by the harmony in the first version; here, the melody is all but overwhelmed by the surrounding texture. The beginning of this passage is shown below as example 3:18(a). Perhaps Brian is standing an age-old idea on its head at this point. In many Classical

and Romantic works, the repetition of a theme would often include some melodic variation, whereas the surrounding harmonies would remain substantially the same — as, for example, in the early stages of a set of variations such as the Brahms *Variations on the St. Antony Chorale (1873)*. In the present case, the melody is unchanged, but the texture — or accompaniment — around it is totally transformed: little wonder that the effect is so disconcerting. What was initially perceived as an almost Elgarian melody has been transformed into a multi-layered textural exploration of almost Ivesian proportions (MacDonald mentions Stockhausen's *Punkte* of 1952 in reference to the nature of this passage).¹⁴³ Furthermore, rather than strengthening the impact of the melody, this elaborate restatement undermines it by making the melodic line just one element of a hugely diverse sonority, and it contributes in a disruptive way to the perceptible unity of the musical discourse. In short, the melodic line is rendered less, rather than more memorable by its repetition.

This transformation of the character of the second subject is in direct contrast to the case of the first subject, as outlined above. Shostakovich presents a comparable case in the first movement of his Fourth Symphony (1936), where the themes swap characteristics between the exposition and recapitulation. as noted by Hugh Ottaway in his guide to the symphonies of the Soviet composer.¹⁴⁴ In that instance, however, a huge developmental passage separates the two appearances of the thematic groups, in contrast to the proximity of the two statements in Brian. As he moves through the second version of the second subject. Brian progresses from triplet quavers to sextuplet semiquavers as the accompanying textures become ever more elaborate and overwhelming. The passage breaks off at a high point as the melodic element reaches its final bar. In the short score, interestingly, the parallel lines are not present which mark the break between this section and the succeeding bars in the full score. This is shown in the following example, where the continuity in terms of rhythm and pitch is readily visible.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 76.

¹⁴⁴ Hugh Ottaway, Shostakovich Symphonies (BBC Publications, 1978), 21.

EXAMPLE 3:10

Symphony No. 3,1,10:6-7.



When orchestrating this music Brian chose to undermine this continuity, not alone by the caesura, but by a complete change in orchestral texture, as well as dynamics at the point of the parallel lines (between the first and second bars of the above example). The result is one of the composer's trademark uses of (apparent) discontinuity.

(iii) 10:7 to 11:7 (Transition)

This music connects the previously discussed passage with the arrival back in C sharp minor at 11:8. It therefore effects a transition from the non key-centred to the key-centred. This is achieved through a gradual emergence of pitches adjacent to C sharp: their emphasis prepares the way for C sharp minor to emerge as the logical goal of the passage. Initially, Brian prominently features a melodic shape taken from the fourth bar of the second subject. This can be seen in the top stave of the second bar of example 3:10 above. It is marked 'k' in both examples.

EXAMPLE 3:11

Symphony No. 3.1. 6:2-3:violins



This pattern of a step upward followed by a leap downward changes, in 13:4, to a step downward followed by a leap downward, as the pitch content centres around G, D and C. The gradual focus on to C and D, the two pitches semitonally adjacent to C sharp can be seen in the table below.

Pitches			
A,G,D,C			
D,C,G,E			
D.C.G			
D.C.G			

ab	le	3	:3	:	F	00	cus	on	C	and	D	
-												

Brian has thus moved from a non-centred use of pitch material, via a focus on repeated pitch groups, to a strong sense of key at 11:8. In effect, Brian has placed this non-tonal passage so that it fills the space between D major and C sharp minor, the two principal keys of the movement — as noted above — but without effecting a tonally based modulation to get from one to the other. The result is that the re-instatement of C sharp minor comes as a surprise and gives a fresh impetus to the music, rather than representing a harmonic step backwards towards the beginning of the movement. In short, the symphonic momentum is enhanced by the placing of this long passage, despite — or perhaps on account of — the surface discontinuities which characterise it.

2: 14:1 to 15:5

This passage, from 'development 1', is preceded by a single bar on timpani, playing dotted rhythms on the note G, which essentially marks time. It begins with a further use of 'k' from the second subject (see example 3:10 above):



Both the top and bottom parts of the orchestral texture between 14:1 and 15:5 use all twelve pitches within the octave, although there is no question of their use bearing any resemblance to serial practice. The question of serial practise in Brian was discussed in relation to the opening of the Symphony No. 2 above. This use of all twelve pitches does, however, indicate the non-diatonic nature of the passage as a whole. In 15:5 the music culminates in a chord of F major: the bass line has begun a descent three bars earlier, and continues to move downwards, as far as a D on the last beat of 15: 5 which is succeeded by the C sharp of the next bar. Though there are some ties to earlier passages (such as 'k' above) and the passage is closer to the material of the second subject than anything else in the movement. It has a rhapsodic feel, and thus contrasts with the clear relationship between the ensuing paragraph and the first subject, the beginning of which can be seen in example 3:6. The thinning out of the orchestral texture — as well as the diminuendo— is strongly countered by the Allegro speed and the driven sound of the next passage, which features the two pianos prominently. Tonal instability is contrasted with, and followed by, a strong presentation of the tonic. The passage is in the nature of an interlude between the related beginnings of 'developments' one and two, both of which have their origins in the opening of the movement, as well as using the tonic key. The contrast is thus both thematic and harmonic. It is likely that Brian judged it too soon to refer explicitly to the second subject at this point, as it had recently been stated twice in full, but chose to allusively recall its manner in the present passage.

3: 18:5 to 19:6

This span. like the one just discussed, is framed by two episodes in C sharp minor, which in this instance present material related to the first subject, and it once again offers a strong contrast to the music on either side of it. It begins with a change of

speed to Piu Allegro e con brio and is characterised by the following idea, the rhythm of which assumes an ostinato-like function:

EXAMPLE 3:13

Symphony No. 3,1,18:5: ostinato



As can be seen, the first beat uses the same pitches as the second (thus echoing the rhythm) and the four quavers consist of repeated notes. This repetitive patterning is altered in the last four bars of the paragraph, to disruptive effect. Brian can be seen here to combine extremely free harmonic and intervallic writing with a very tight control of rhythm and gesture, so that at no time are all the musical parameters in a state of flux. There is no suggestion of a triadic basis for the harmony, nor is there repetition of harmonic elements, but the rhythm counteracts this by acting as a clearly audible common element from bar to bar. To prepare for the return of C sharp minor at the beginning of the next section, Brian introduces an enharmonic change in the first violin line, and bass notes which approach the C sharp minor centred tonality to come can be seen in the example below:

EXAMPLE 3:14

Symphony No. 3.1. 19:4-7: top and bottom lines only



These methods of approach to the tonic may arise from Brian's habit of avoiding the dominant of more traditional tonal practice. but the increased focus on certain pitches is also an effective way of bridging the divide between key and the absence of key.

The coexistence of tonal and non-tonal harmonic idioms within a symphony is one of Brian's most significant contributions to the development of the genre. It can be seen as an extrapolation from the oft-quoted dictum of Gustav Mahler that 'the Symphony must be like the world. It must contain everything'.¹⁴⁵ Mahler himself had provided, in the Tenth Symphomy (1910), a tantalising glimpse of the possible road his symphonic development might have taken with the nine-note chord which climaxes each of the outer movements, but there is an important distinction here. The Mahler chord represents the culmination of the harmonic intensity found in particular in the opening Adagio, but it is still tied, in however distant a fashion, to the triadic language at the root of the music. In effect, the chord is a hugely elaborated dominant of F sharp major, the tonic key of the movement. This reading of the chord is confirmed by Mahler himself close to the end of the Adagio, where there is another long chord built on C sharp, but with the level of dissonance — and the dynamic — greatly reduced. One chord can be heard as a resolution of the tensions of the other, and once that resolution has taken place, all that is needed is the final tonic chord to conclude the

¹⁴⁵ Quoted in *Gustav Mahler: Memories and Letters* (Alma Mahler, ed. Donald Mitchell), John Murray, 1973, 297 (footnote).

Adagio. The two relevant chords are reproduced below:

EXAMPLE 3:15

Mahler: Symphony No. 10.1: two chords



The tension in the music is thus related to the triadic basis of all the dissonance, even the extreme case of the first chord of the example above. In the Brian movement, by contrast, the tension arises from the contrast between the triadic and the non-tonal. They are opposites, and separate from one another. Their existence side by side is an important part of the dialectic of Brian's language. A clear example of this is furnished by the two presentations of the second subject in the exposition. The harmony of the first is not enriched by the harmony of the second version: rather the harmonic palette is diversified and broadened, not to say contradicted. The melodic repetition provides the thread of continuity for the listener. To a lesser extent, this is also the case with the two presentations of the first subject in the opening section of the movement.

Cadenza

The cadenza referred to in table 3:1 is placed between the end of the restatement of the second subject and the onset of the coda of the movement. Its positioning suggests a parallel with the Classical concerto model, as exemplified by the first movement of Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto (1800), but the nature of the musical statement at this point contradicts such a comparison. The unadorned nature of the gesture illustrated as example 3:16 below stands in relief from much of the richly textured music of other parts of the present movement, but is closely related, both rhythmically and in its basic harmony, to the opening — and closing — music. This section, like the coda, begins and ends with tonic harmony. The latter, as already mentioned, closes off the movement by returning to the material with which it began, whereas the former, consisting of four statements of a rhythmic unit which begins and ends with tonic

chords, is akin to a skeletal harmonic summary of the entire movement. It can be seen, in fact, as more of an anti-cadenza, since it is not a virtuoso showcase for the two pianists. Nor does it elaborate in the manner of an improvisation on the main ideas of the movement, in the manner of both of the cadenzas Serge Rachmaninov wrote for the first movement of his Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor. op 30 (1909). Instead of presenting the basic ideas at their most elaborate — which he had already done in the earlier parts of the movement - in the manner of the Rachmaninov work, Brian presents, in this passage, a reduction of the essential characteristics of the movement to their most basic form. The repeated emphasis on C sharp minor, separated by expanding harmonies, is a microcosmic version of the harmonic progress of the entire movement, as detailed above. In this manner, and in terms of the stark instrumentation for the two solo pianos plus timpani, it represents the focal point of the movement, before the advent of the coda, which, as if by sheer momentum, drives the music to a major key conclusion. The pencil sketch of this pivotal passage does not survive, so that one cannot be certain if Brian originally considered something more elaborate and virtuosic before he had 'resolved the Concerto into a Symphony'. The first four-bar unit of the cadenza is shown below.

EXAMPLE 3:16

Symphony No. 3.1.27:3-6



Concerto origins: the role of the two pianos

The double appearances of the first and second subjects have been cited above as evidence of the possible origins of this first movement as a concerto for one, or two pianos. To consider this matter further, it is crucial to examine the writing for the two pianos in the movement, as well as the layout of the short score sketch for the movement. The Brian remark quoted earlier, from a letter to Bantock, that he had 'resolved the Concerto into a Symphony', is revealing because it throws some light on how Brian's thoughts changed in relation to the new work on which he was engaged. At some point — and the surviving sketch pages and short score provide some clues as to where — Brian decided he was writing Symphony No. 3 rather than (Double) Piano Concerto No.1. However, the fact that Brian eventually gave a prominent role in the first movement to two pianos rather than one begs the question of whether the Concerto was, in the initial stages, intended, in fact, for two solo instruments. Brian had included two pianos in the final two movements of Symphony No. 2, but their use in those movements was. on the whole, less prominent and solistic than is the case in

No. 3, and in particular in the present first movement. A comparison of the first movements of Nos.2 and 3 also reveals some structural differences that can be attributed to an engagement with the concerto principle on the part of the latter, as shown in table 3:1. The double statements of both thematic groups in the first part of the present movement, as well as the climactic placing of a cadenza for the two pianos plus timpani, can be regarded as signs of an ordering of ideas into concerto style. For the purposes of comparison, the following table chronicles the sequence of thematic presentations in the opening sections of the first movement of the Piano Concerto No. 23 in A major, K488 (1788) by Mozart. This work is representative of the classical application of the concerto principle by its greatest exponent. Though it is unlikely that Brian sought to model his work on this particular example, the basic idea of incorporating a solo instrument — or possibly two — within an exposition of thematic material makes for an interesting comparison.

Theme	Orchestration
1	0
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	0
Exposition wit	h piano
Theme	Orchestration
1	Р
2	0
3	Р
4	P + O
2	0
6	0

Table 3:4 Mozart:	K488:	Exposition
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The idea of a double statement of themes separated into two distinct sections, the beginning of the second marked by the first entry of the soloist. is fused, in the Brian, into a single exposition within which the double statements of the two main themes of

the movement are located. To explore this idea further, it is instructive to chronicle the role of the two pianos throughout the entire movement. In the table below, I have characterised the role of the two pianos in the entire movement in three ways: 1) orchestral (doubled by the surrounding orchestra): O; 2) soloistic: S; 3) Absent: ___. This enables one to see a presentation of the material in a manner which has analogies with the first movement of a hypothetical concerto, where orchestra and solo instrument(s) share and alternate material.

Section	Role of two pianos	Description	
Bar 1 to 2:4	O Introduction		
2:5 to 3:2		First subject 1	
3:3 to 4:1	S	Interlude	
4:2 to 4:8	0	First subject 2	
4:9 to 4:10		Transition	
5:1 to 5:9	S		
5:10 to 6:5		Second subject 1	
6:6 to 6:9	0		
6:10 to 7:4			
7:5 to 8:10	S	Interlude	
9:1 to 10:6	0	Second subject 2	
10:7 to 11:7	S	Transition	
11:8 to 15:5		Development 1	
15:6 to 16:1	S	Development 2	
16:2 to 16:3			
16:4 to 19:6	S	Development 3	
19:7 to 21:6		Development 4	
21:7 to 23:2	S	Transition	
23:3 to 24:10	S	Second subject	
25:1 to 25:8		Transition	
25:9 to 26:7	0		
26:8 to 27:2	_		
27:3 to 29:2	S	Cadenza	
29:3 to 29:7		Coda	
29:8 to 31:3	0		

Table 3:5 Brian: The two pianos

The table shows that Brian elaborates his structure with considerable care taken as to the presence or absence of the two pianos. With each of the subjects, the first presentation of the theme is purely orchestral, with the pianos added in a textural role when the theme is repeated. The Brian movement is structured so that the two presentations of each subject can be heard in relative proximity, and the changes made rendered more immediate as a consequence. Thereafter, the movement alternates between sections which include the two pianos, and passages which exclude them.

The four 'developments' offer a well-contrasted series of subsections, alternating between a prominent role for the two pianos (as in the beginning of developments 2 and 3), and purely orchestral textures (as in developments 1 and 4). Brian uses the presence, or absence, of the two pianos as an aural guide to subdivisions in the presentation of material. The orchestration, and in particular the detail with regard to the two piano parts, is structurally conceived. This alignment of orchestral colouring with structure is equally effective in concerto or symphony (as will be seen in the Violin Concerto). There is also the matter of the build-up to the Cadenza, where the writing for the two pianos is less prominent: at that point, both are playing tremolos. It makes strategic sense to leave the solo instrument(s) out in the lead-up to a central display in a concerto, even if that central display is more of a stark gesture, as is the case here. In this regard, it is interesting to note that the tremolos are not found in the short score.

In the coda, furthermore, the layout of the short score could be interpreted as implying a purely orchestral texture, which would suggest a further parallel with the conventions of concerto writing. Once Brian had 'resolved' his dilemma as to what type of work was being written. he was in danger of being left with a score which was, in terms of genre, neither fish nor fowl. His concern was to integrate the two prominent — rather than soloistic — piano parts into a texture conveying a symphonic argument. The differences between short and full scores, as well as the layout of the former, offer intriguing insights into the methods adopted by the composer to create a fully integrated symphonic movement from initial sketches which were written when he thought he was composing a concerto. and not a symphony. The few pages of pencil sketches which have survived help to further round out the likely path of Brian's thinking with regard to the exact nature and, perhaps genre of this first movement.

The layout of the short score

The short score of the first movement is laid out on a varying number of staves per system, from two up to six (see the table in appendix 2). This contrasts with the first movement of Symphony No. 2, where the entire movement is written on systems of three staves. It also contrasts with the short score of the remainder of the present symphony, where changes of layout are not nearly so frequent. While some of the changes can be explained by a desire for clarity in the notation of passages with varying degrees of textural density, the positioning of the material allotted to the two pianos in the full score raises some interesting points. A comparison with the short score of the Violin Concerto reveals a greater degree of clarity and consistency in the layout of the latter. The bulk of the short score of the Concerto is laid out on systems of three staves each, with the solo violin part on the top stave of the three. If one looks at the short score of the present movement bearing the likely layout of the short score of a (single) piano concerto in mind, the placing of the material allotted to the two pianos — in the full score — throws some light on the possible direction of Brian's thought on the concerto/symphony matter.

Section	Number of Staves	Position of piano parts	
Bar 1 to 2:4	2		
4:2 to4:8	4	1.2,3,4	
6:6 to 6:9 2		1,2	
9:1 to 10:6 4		2,3.4	
29:8 to 31:3	2	1.2	

Table 3:6: Piano parts in the short score

The table above details the placing of the material in the short score which is played by the two pianos in the passages labelled 'O' in table 3:3. The middle column chronicles the number of staves in each system of the short score at these points. The beginning and end of the movement are both written on 2 staves in the short score, with the slight difference that there are 3 staves per system at the end, the middle one being empty. There is no indication of a division of material between solo instrument(s) and orchestra. The layout could be taken as indicative of an orchestral introduction and coda of a concerto movement. When Brian recast the movement as the initial part of a symphony with two prominent piano parts, he chose to integrate the two instruments

into the orchestral texture at both points, but without giving them any independent material which would highlight a solo role at these points.

The second and fourth rows refer to the second versions of the first and second subjects respectively, and the third relates to a short passage from the first appearance of the second subject. The latter can be seen as similar to the case of the opening and closing of the movement. Brian chose to integrate the two pianos as orchestral participants, but not to feature them prominently. The second version of the first subject is the first occasion on which the short score occupies four staves, and a look at the example below raises the possibility that the top two staves were intended for the solo instrument(s), and the bottom two for the orchestral accompaniment. The fact that Brian did not follow this through when writing out the full score may be accounted for by the change from concerto to symphony. One cannot be conclusive, given the lack of instrumental indications in Brian's short scores on the whole, but the top two staves are certainly playable by a single pianist, and in their use of arpeggio patterns, could have been conceived with that instrument in mind.

EXAMPLE 3:17

Symphony No. 3,1,4:2-3



The case of the second version of the second subject is more complex. The appearance of the short score is no more or less conclusive than the example just discussed. It is

shown below as example 3:18 (a). The top two staves are playable by a single pianist, and the bottom two staves are certainly in the character of an accompaniment to the melody on the top of the four staves. When Brian came to orchestrate the passage, however, he redistributed the material. The melody from the top system is scored for violins 1, II, and oboes, and the chords from that system are shared by cors anglais, muted horns and muted trumpets. The two piano parts from the full score are reproduced as example 3:18(b), and one can readily see how the composer has elaborated on the short score material to write more fully for the two pianos. He may have decided against giving the melody to the piano(s) in order to integrate the two pianos in the second statement of the first subject. The thematic restatements are thus related to an ongoing process of textural enrichment within a symphonic argument, rather than a momentary highlighting of the soloist(s) within the framework of a concerto.

EXAMPLE 3:18(a)

Symphony No. 3,1,9:1-2



[Bns, Hrs, Pno 1, Vlas, Celler, D.B.]

EXAMPLE 3:18(b)

Symphony No. 3.1.9:1-2: two piano parts



It is noteworthy that none of the material in any of the short score passages discussed above — given to the two pianos in the full score — is written out on four staves, the format which would most readily imply the use of two solo instruments, as opposed to one. At the beginning and end of the movement, the two pianos are playing as one. Elsewhere, the writing is expanded from the short score material by the use of octave doublings, and general expansions of the range of the basic idea, to fully utilise the two instruments, as in example 3:16 above. In the passages labelled as 'S' in table 3:3 above, the picture emerges as in table 3:5:

Section	Number of Staves	Description	Piano parts
3:3 to 4:1	2	Interlude	1,2
5:1 to5:9	6	Transition	3,4
7:5 to 8:10	4	Interlude	1,2
10:7 to 11:7	4	Transition	3,4
15:6 to 19:6	4	Developments 2 and 3	1,2
21:7 to 23:2	6	Transition	3,4
23:3 to 24:10	4	Second Subject	3,4
25:9 to 26:7	4	Transition	Not in SS

Table 3:7: Position of the piano parts in solistic passages

The conclusion that can be drawn from the above table is that, with the exception of the appearance of the second subject before the cadenza (at 23:3), Brian chooses to write independent material for his solo instrument(s) exclusively in linking passages. The four central 'developments' are divided as follows: the central two include the pianos, while the external two exclude them from the texture. The first passage referred to in the table above (beginning at 3:3) uses piano one only, with a sparse orchestral accompaniment for woodwind, horn and cellos. The piano writing is arpeggio based, and unchanged from short to full score.

The interlude which begins at 7:5 offers, in the short score, one of the rare instances of Brian including tentative instrumental indications as part of the sketch. It also demonstrates how the composer expands on the possibilities suggested by the sketch when writing the passage in full score. The scoring of this passage is aptly described by Malcolm MacDonald in the words quoted above as 'an astonishing mass of orchestral sound'. The first bar of this passage in short score is shown as example 3:19(a) below, with the 2 piano parts from the full score following as example 3:19(b).

EXAMPLE 3:19(a)

Symphony No. 3,1,7:5



EXAMPLE 3:19(b)

Brian; Symphony No. 3,1,7:5: two piano parts



At 7:5, the short score expands from two to four staves. The two indications as to the celesta part are indicative of Brian's confusion as to the exact use of the distinctive colour of that instrument, beyond its definite part in his aural sound world at this point of the creative process. In the event, the celesta plays chords rather than the semiquavers towards which the line is pointing in the short score. Those semiquavers hint at the proliferation of demisemiquaver murmurs in divided strings — as well as in piano two, as can be seen above — in the full score. The top two staves of the short score have, once again a pianistic look to them, but there is nothing to indicate the presence of, or necessity for, two pianos, as opposed to one.

In the case of the passage beginning at 10:7, and the return of the second subject at 23:3, the rhythmic shape of the gesture found on the third and fourth staves of the short score system is altered slightly in the full score by the addition of repeated notes. However, there is nothing in either passage to suggest two pianos would be necessary. 'Developments' two and three are separated in the full score by a two-bar link. There is no trace of these two bars in the short score. The addition of the two bars helps the listener to differentiate between blocks of material in this central portion of the movement. They are striking, both for the rhythmic shape (seen in example 3:20), and the absence of the two pianos, which otherwise would have been playing continuously through 'developments' two and three.

EXAMPLE 3:20

Symphony No. 3.1,16:2-3: violins I



*Development 3' begins with a canon between both pianos. In the short score, this begins slightly differently, and is written on two staves, with single notes on each stave. This looks like a single piano part, and Brian simply expands it in the full score by giving each one of the two staves of the short score to one of the pianos, and then expanding the single notes into octaves for each player. At 25:9, both pianos play tremolos, but these are not present in the short score, as mentioned above. If Brian was still thinking of the movement as the first of a concerto at this stage, then the absence of any pianistic material immediately before the cadenza makes strategic sense. When he 'resolved' his concerto/symphony problem, he chose to use his two pianos at this point in a colouristic but not soloistic way, with tremolos.

While it is not possible, from the evidence of the surviving sketches and short score, to determine an exact point at which Brian decided his emerging work was going to be a symphony rather than a concerto, it is possible to pinpoint the passage which made the composer opt for two pianos as opposed to one. At 21:7, the short score expands, for the second time in the movement, to six staves per system. The earlier instance, at 5:1, is effectively occupying four staves, since the second and fifth of the six are almost completely empty. The middle two staves at 21:7 contain the second piano part of the full score. The first piano part is neither present nor hinted at in the short score, so this is another instance of Brian making more effective use of the two pianos in the final score, once the decision had been made that two pianos were necessary.

It is fortunate that the pencil sketch for the passage beginning at 21:7 survives, as well as the short score. The page is numbered '14' in both the pencil and ink versions, implying that the two sketches had corresponded in layout up to that point. The pencil sketch pages for the first movement of Symphony No. 2 also bear this pattern out. Brian must have felt that a similar layout for both stages was of benefit in clarifying his ideas as the work progressed towards a full score, as well as perhaps limiting the likelihood of mistakes in transcription from pencil to ink. The sketch page (14) is written on twenty four-stave paper, whereas this page of the short score, which had used either twenty four or twenty six-stave paper to that point, is written on twenty eight staves. This implies Brian gave some thought to the layout of his material at this juncture. The movement returns to using twenty four stave paper only for the last page. The pencil sketch is grouped in systems of five staves each, in contrast to the six staves found on each system of the short score page. This results in a discrepancy between sketch and short score: the final system of the pencil sketch corresponds with the top of page fifteen of the short score.

The internal evidence of the surviving materials shows that this passage gave Brian quite a bit of trouble. The first three bars of the pencil sketch are presented below as example 3:21. The sketch is unusual and revealing for a number of reasons. The

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number of instrumental indications is noteworthy, as is their internal contradiction with regard to the two places where 'Pfte' is written. While it is possible that these referred to two pianos, the material which is most pianistic is located on the third stave, and it is this which forms the basis for the two piano parts in the full score. The change in the bracketing of the systems in the third bar of the example is also striking.

EXAMPLE 3:21

Symphony No. 3,1,21:7-9 [sketch page 14]





The short score page containing this passage begins as at example 3:22 below. The 'hn' inscription is maintained, but the 'pizz' and 'Orch' annotations have been left out. The crucial element, however, is the inclusion of a circled '1' and '2' on this page. They are seen within a rectangle in the following example. Not only do the two numbers correspond to the beginning of the pencil sketch part marked 'Pfte', and the point where that material expands to two staves respectively, but a look at the full score reveals that pianos one and two enter at precisely those points.

EXAMPLE 3:22

Symphony No. 3,1,21:7-9



In order to expand the two-stave material of the short score to two piano parts, Brian simply doubles each individual line, as shown in example 3:23. The difficulty of playing the material, as written in the short score, as 'quiet as possible' and 'elfin-like', is greatly reduced by the inclusion of a second piano, and the re-thinking of the passage. In order to achieve a particular delicacy of sound, then, Brian appears to have realised that two pianos were better — or quieter — than one, and then adjusted the

rest of the writing for piano(s) in the movement accordingly.

EXAMPLE 3:23

Symphony No. 3,1,21:7-9: two piano parts



Poco Lento

The point at which the second circled number is found in the short score does not suddenly become unplayable by a single pianist, but the figuration of double notes in the right hand — which would involve a significant increase in technical demands for a single pianist — begins in the next bar. The short score of the Scherzo of the Second Symphony shows Brian using numbers in a comparable way to establish which one of the four groups of four horns in that movement is playing at any point. In addition to this, the numerical indications are borne out by the layout of the music in the full score. It seems likely from the foregoing that this was a key passage in determining for Brian exactly what sort of work he was engaged on, and may have been crucial in prompting him to 'resolve the concerto into a symphony'.

Conclusion

It is not possible to be conclusive as to whether the reasons for Brian deciding to change the genre of the emerging work from concerto to symphony were practical, compositional, or a combination. In terms of performance practicalities, he had already written a hugely expansive, and potentially expensive pair of works in the *Gothic* symphony and his comic opera *The Tigers*, not to mention the sixteen horns plus large orchestral forces required by Symphony No. 2. Economic considerations, then, were hardly a priority. Brian was a composer who chose, and needed to work with an unfettered mind. If the resultant work was impractical or extravagant, it was the outcome of his creative outpourings. The Third Symphony is actually on a smaller scale than its predecessor in terms of performance requirements, but is arguably more ambitious in compositional scope. The latter is more relevant to an assessment of Brian's development as a composer than the statistics related to the number of performers required.

Malcolm MacDonald notes that the score of the Third was sent to Henry Wood, and may well have been seen by Edward Clark at the BBC.¹⁴⁶ This dispels the notion that Brian created in an ivory tower, not bothering with the practicalities of getting to hear his work. One wonders what Clark, a pupil of Arnold Schonberg, would have made of the juxtaposition of tonal and non-tonal elements in the first movement in particular. If Brian decided that a symphony with two prominent piano parts — playable by orchestra members rather than guest soloists, one presumes - was a more viable economic proposition than a Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra, then the work was no more fortunate in securing a performance of this work than any others of this time. He never heard it, as it was premiered two years after his death (see appendix 4). Compositionally, however, his assessment that the musical discourse unfolding on his sketch pages was of a symphonic nature, resulted in a rethinking of the piano writing. Instead of a solo part in a possible concerto, his piano based ideas came to encompass the concertante use of two instruments, but not in such a manner as to detract from the ongoing symphonic dialectic by indulgence in passages of virtuoso display. The result, to his credit, is a strikingly original structure for this first movement, which can be interpreted, not too fancifully, as a tug-of-war between concerto and symphony. Once

¹⁴⁶ MacDonald, The Symphonies, vol. 1, 72.

this movement had been successfully completed, or. as he termed it, 'resolved', the path the rest of the work was to follow became clearer.

Lento Sempre Marcato e Rubato

Overview

This movement can be broadly divided into sections as in the following table. Within each of the broad passages tabulated, there are further subdivisions which will be detailed in due course. The relationship to a rondo-type formal layout is clear, and the central idea of thematic return gives the intervening music the character of episodes, whether they are related to the earlier ideas or not.

Section	Description
31:4 to 32:8	Introduction
32:8 to 35:6	Main theme and continuation 1
35:7 to 37:2	Interlude
37:3 to 40:1	Development 1
40:2 to 42:4	Main theme and continuation 2
42:5 to 48:2	Development 2
48:3 to 51:10	Main theme and continuation 3
52:1 to 53:3	Coda

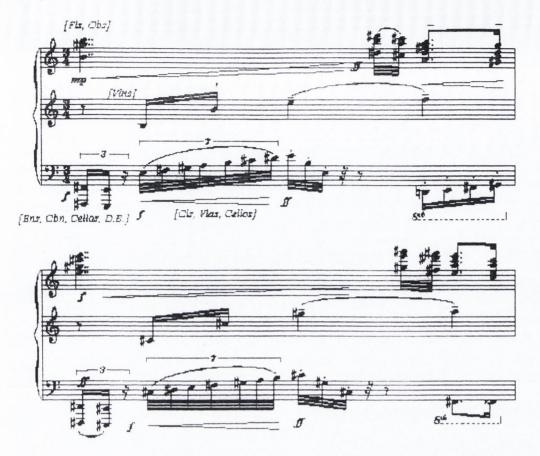
Table 3:8: Second movement sections

The 'main theme'

The 'main theme' sections above contain a span of music in which the shape of the opening bars of the main melody of the movement is heard, with a different continuation in each case. These distinctive initial bars, with their closely related gestural shape, are used as signposts in the movement. They occur, broadly speaking, at the beginning, middle and end, and provide strong aural reference points for the listener. The passages that follow bear a family resemblance, in that they each constitute a lyrical outgrowth from the gesture of the opening bars of the theme, shown below as example 3:24.

EXAMPLE 3:24

Symphony No. 3.11. 32:9-10



This recurrent use of a strongly recognisable gesture, combined with a different continuation in each case, shows Brian's balance of the need for repetition and the tendency towards inspired rhapsody at its most acute. The connection between the three passages is both heard, and felt. In each instance, Brian contrasts the lyrical sweep of the theme with music of a more static, repetitive nature. The static gesture is different in each case, but the functional use of contrast is similar. In all three versions of the melody, the contrast comes afterwards, as part of a transition to the next section of the piece. In the first and third appearances, however, the lyrical melody itself is also punctuated by music of a different character. The kinship between these contrasts is typical of Brian's symphonic manner, in its avoidance of exact repetition, in favour of creating links between ideas with regard to gesture and function. It is important to note that this allusiveness results, not from a lack of creative discipline, but from a fresh approach to ways of integrating a symphonic argument, since Brian applies it with such consistency. The first punctuation is quoted below, and one can readily see the use of repetition, almost as if marking time before the next phase of lyrical writing, wherein the semiquaver ripples — thrice heard — are followed by a fanfare-like summons (on French horn) and its echo.

EXAMPLE 3:25

Symphony No. 3.II. 34:4-7



The ensuing lyrical melody (which begins at 34:9) is followed by a violin solo, which leads to two four-bar chorale-like phrases. whose formal character is enhanced by the cadences which end each, the first imperfect, and the second perfect, both in B major. The first four bar unit is shown below as example 3:26.

EXAMPLE 3:26

Symphony No. 3.II. 36:5-8



There is an archaic quality here (also present in the third movement) which also characterises the sequel to the second presentation of the main theme. The key this time (at 41:7) is G major, presented in stately dotted rhythms. The stability created by this repetition is offset, in a manner typical of the composer, by the beginning of the next section, the second 'development' in the distant key of C sharp minor.

EXAMPLE 3:27

Symphony No. 3.11. 41:7-10



The harmony in the above case is static, which further enhances the feeling of marking time before the more fluid harmonies of the succeeding music. In the climactic presentation of the main theme (starting at 48:3), there are two repetitive gestures, using block chords, which contrast strongly with the lyrical flow of the surrounding music. They are similar in tone and function, but not related in any precise motivic sense. The importance of gesture to Brian is clearly illustrated in these two different ideas, which are comparable yet strongly individualised.

EXAMPLE 3:28(a)

Symphony No. 3, II, 49:6-7



EXAMPLE 3:28(b)

Symphony No. 3.II. 51:4-5



Both ideas are harmonically as well as gesturally disruptive in context, contrasting with the broadly diatonic spans of lyrical music in E major. The contrast between an expansive harmonic vocabulary, encompassing diatonic and more freely chromatic elements, and episodes of a more static nature, has also been noted with regard to the second movement of Symphony No. 2. In the present movement, the dialectic of opposing types of musical ideas is rendered more immediate by the use of thematic repetition. There is an extra thread running through the movement for the listener to follow, and the absence of such a thread in the corresponding movement of the Second Symphony results in the latter creating a more diffuse impression than the present movement.

Instrumental solos

A further unifying thread through the present movement is provided by a significant use of instrumental solos, culminating in the rhapsodic arabesques given to solo violin in 'development 2'. As the table below shows, these are all found in sections where the main theme is absent, and their intimate — if elaborate — character is an effective solo foil to the flamboyant orchestration associated with the main theme.

Place in score	Description	Solo instrument	
32:3 to 32:8	Introduction	Violin	
35:7 to 35:10	Interlude	Flute	
36:1 to 36:4		Violin	
42:10 to 44:6	Development 2	Violin	
45:4 to 45:5		Trumpet	
52:1 to 52:8	Coda	Oboe	
52:9 to 53:3		Flute	

Table 3:9: Instrumental solos

The positioning of the most extended solo (on violin) at the midway point of the movement — at 42:10 — is significant, suggesting a still centre which offers a different perspective to the more elaborate passages centred around the main theme. There is a sense of distance created, as if the music is in another world from the bulk of the movement, an effect heightened by the improvisational feel of the solo part at this point. One can also detect a logical succession in the nature of these solo passages, which can be most clearly borne out by a comparison of the opening solo for violin with the solo flute part of the closing bars. The former is anticipatory of the character of the central solo in its rhapsodic nature, whereas the latter is static, both in terms of pitch and rhythm. If one is an opening gesture, the other is just as clearly winding the music down to a close. The two solo parts are illustrated below.

EXAMPLE 3:29(a)

Symphony No. 3.II. 32:3-5: violin solo



EXAMPLE 3:29(b) Symphony No. 3.II. 52:9-53:3: flute solo



The solo violin plays an important role in much of Brian's symphonic writing throughout his career. The use of a single instrument at once carries with it a personal, intimate tone of vocal - and therefore human - communication. Many of the symphonies have a solo for the violin at the still centre of a slow movement or section. One of the most striking examples occurs in the slow movement of the Symphony No. 7 (1948). The sense of holding time in abevance, found in the central solo of the present movement, is also present in the Violin Concerto, in an extended reverie for the soloist in the finale. In that work Brian goes so far as to write perforated bar-lines, as if to suspend the pulse of the movement. Even though the latter passage can be felt in 4/4, the other-worldly atmosphere is on a parallel with the suspension of time implied by the conceit in the notation. The rhapsodic use of the solo violin also conjures up the spirit of a composer such as Ralph Vaughan Williams in a work such as The Lark Ascending (1914, rev. 1920), and in fact represents one of the few points of contact between Brian and his great contemporary. The visionary aspect of this type of writing is often the essence of a Vaughan Williams work — such as A Pastoral Symphony (1921), considered in chapter 2 —whereas for Brian it is but one aspect of a far more wide-ranging stylistic palette.

Developments and allusions

Brian also includes passages of a more developmental nature, which contrast with the intimacy of the solos just discussed, and contribute to the symphonic nature of the piece, in terms of a thematic or motivic argument. The two 'developments' mentioned in table 3:6 above demonstrate a number of ways of binding the music together to create a coherent and wide-ranging narrative. The first of these — beginning at 37:3 — is mainly built on a short rhythmic figure found in the violin solo which begins in the tenth bar of the movement. The latter is illustrated as example 3:29(a) above. This figure is used as a sort of omnipresent fingerprint as the music moves from a two-part exchange based on it — seen as example 3:30(a) below — through some tense harmonies, to an imposing climax, shown as example 3:30(b). This recalls the martial-type music characteristic of the opening and closing of the first movement, though, in typical Brian fashion, without any direst motivic connection or quotation.

EXAMPLE 3:30(a)

Symphony No. 3.II. 37:2-4



EXAMPLE 3:30(b)

Symphony No. 3.11, 38:7-10



The sequel to the climax illustrated above is provided by another few bars where the rhythm provides the greatest element of continuity. once again in the manner of an ostinato. After this a close recall of the end of the first violin solo leads to the second presentation of the main theme of the movement. The end of both passages can be compared in examples 3:31(a) and (b) below. This use of part of an earlier idea to prepare for a large gesture of restatement demonstrates another instance of Brian's clear use of aural signposts in the present movement. in contrast to the parallel movement in Symphony No. 2. One expects the recall of the end of the violin solo — heard this time on solo flute — to lead to the main theme, as it had earlier. Brian is content to allow this to happen, probably because of the different continuation of that theme, once its distinctive opening has been heard. The music is moving forward through restatement, rather than retreating into it, so the momentum is not lost.

EXAMPLE 3:31(a)

Symphony No. 3.II. 32:7-8: solo violin



EXAMPLE 3:31(b)

Symphony No. 3.II. 39:10-40:1: solo flute



The second 'development' (from 42:5) is more varied, including at its core the extensive rhapsodic violin solo referred to earlier. Before this, there is a short passage rooted in C sharp minor, which summons up the spirit, if not the letter, of the first movement. Apart from the use of the central key of the opening movement, there is a melody on divided first and second violins which is reminiscent of a passage from 'development 3' of that movement. The repeated C sharps at the beginning of each bar also recall the use of that pitch as a root of the harmony at the outset of several sections of the opening movement, as discussed above. The resemblance between the string melodies is a question of sonority and register as much as anything else. The relationship between the two is clearly audible, however, and succeeds in binding the two movements together in a manner other than that of direct thematic recall.

EXAMPLE 3:32(a)

Symphony No. 3.I. 17:5-7: violins I and II



EXAMPLE 3:32(b)

Symphony No. 3.II. 42:5-7: violins I and II

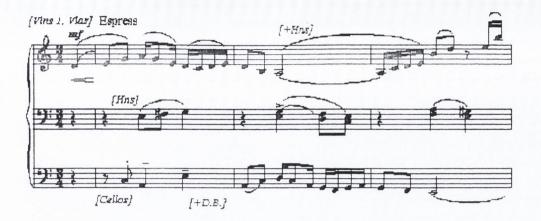


A further example of this kind of allusive relationship is furnished where the two pianos enter the movement for the first time. At this point A minor is the key, once again underpinned at the start of each bar of the texture, and thus recalling the use of C sharp minor earlier in this movement, as well as in the opening one. The texture at this point is strongly akin to that found at 7:5 in the opening movement in its detail and delicacy (see examples 3:19(a) and (b) above). The recall of the two pianos at this stage is also of significance in establishing an element of continuity, with particular regard to sonority, between the two movements, although the two instruments are never used as prominently as was the case in several instances in the first movement. They are, however, a crucial element in this climactic section, adding a distinctive colour and weight to the orchestral texture around the third version of the main theme (from 48:3 onwards).

It is debatable whether passages such as the ones referred to above are developmental, or more in the nature of interludes. For Brian, the dividing line was sometimes an ambiguous one, especially when one considers his use of allusion rather than strict thematic recall as an important binding element in his musical language. If one function of a developmental passage is to generate forward movement, then the following example, coming on the heels of the central violin solo, is representative of a typical Brian use of canon to furnish that momentum. The build-up that follows is interrupted by the A minor texture referred to above, before it resumes and leads to the third recall of the main theme. The dialogue between top and bottom of the texture ensures that both parts are active, as opposed to the use of slow moving chords to accompany the bulk of the solo for violin at the centre of the movement.

EXAMPLE 3:33

Symphony No. 3, II. 44:7-9



Conclusion

This movement, taken as a whole, is less wide-ranging than the first, which is the reverse of what Brian had done in his previous symphony. There is a kinship between the two movements, however, which is achieved by some of the subtle means mentioned above, and this establishes a continuity within the symphony. Three of the four movements of the present work are large-scale. and feature substantial passages of music moving at a moderate speed or slower. While this throws the third movement into high relief, it is also important for each big movement to offer a different perspective on the symphonic argument, to avoid the risk of duplication or monotony. Brian partly achieves this through a contrast in moods. The first movement is doggedly heroic, amongst many other things, whereas the second movement is more lyrical, and due to the lighter textures with instrumental solos. of a gentler character. Becker describes it as 'the most pictorially evocative of the four [movements]¹⁴⁷ It is a contrast to the first movement, while being a continuation of some of its characteristics. This blending of contrast and unity can be described as an almost universal trait of symphonic composition, especially within the central European tradition which Brian so greatly admired. The symphonies of Bruckner and Mahler present particularly striking instances of this concern with integration and contrast on a generous time-scale.

¹⁴⁷ Becker, 'Brian's Third Symphony'. 195.

The particular influence of Bruckner on the present movement should be noted. The tripartite presentation of a main theme, with the final appearance as the climactic one, betrays a knowledge of the slow movements of the Austrian master, in particular those of his last three symphonies. The coda, too, with its more withdrawn character, has parallels with the way Bruckner draws these movements to a close, after scaling the climactic heights. Both composers also like to present their material in distinctive textural blocks, and the issue of continuity is acutely relevant to their individual approach to musical grammar.

In terms of relative length, the first two movements of the Brian symphony also offer a comparison with the corresponding movements of the *Eroica* Symphony of Beethoven. There is the shared element of dramatic continuity, with the second movement in each case taking place under the shadow of the experience of the opening movement, rather than providing some light relief. The music becomes multi-dimensional as a result of this approach. Brian, too, one feels, is concerned with the heroic in his first movement, but reflects on it from a lyrical, rather than an elegiac perspective in the succeeding part of the symphony. In each case, too, the third movement is a necessary contrast before the finale brings the dramatic narrative to a conclusion.

A comparison of the slow movement of Symphony No. 2 with the present movement shows some interesting points of convergence, as well as important differences. Both movements are centred on elaborately scored melodic ideas, and in broad terms contrast richly scored lyrical passages with static, harder edged sonorities. The element of rhapsody is combined with subtle motivic connections and allusions, so that a symphonic discipline is balanced with freer elements. Both movements are centred around the key of E major, although the present one begins in A minor and ends with a bare fifth (E-B) whose context leans more towards the minor than the major. This is illustrated in example 3:29(c) below. The short score is written on three staves, with the middle one empty: the following example leaves out this stave.

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EXAMPLE 3:29(c)

Symphony No. 3, II, 52:9-53:3



The three presentations of the main theme of the present movement, however, all occur in E major. It is this tripartite appearance of the main melodic idea which represents the most crucial difference between the two slow movements. The main, climactic melody of the second movement of No. 2 only appears fully towards the end, with the earlier sections having different focal ideas. The melody is the point of arrival of the movement, whereas in the case of the slow movement of No. 3, it is both that and a point of departure. The natural consequence of this is that the present movement seems more focused as a whole than its counterpart in No. 2. If one regards this central focus as a symphonic trait (as in the slow movements of the last three Bruckner symphonies mentioned above, for example), then it becomes clear that Brian has adjusted the balance between the rhapsodic and symphonic — see the quote from Samuel Langford discussed in chapter 3 — in favour of the latter in the present movement. It is also worth noting that the use of thematic repetition is more consistent across the four movements of No. 3, whereas in No. 2 the two inner movements both eschew repetition, whilst the outer pair embrace it. This greater consistency of approach shows the composer striving for a more tightly unified work in the Third Symphony, without displacing his customary inventiveness and sense of fantasy.

Allegro Vivace

Overview

This movement — the last of the symphony to be written — took Brian but two days of, no doubt, feverish work to sketch out in short score. The sketches of this movement may have been the ones most in need of 'deciphering', as Brian mentioned in the letter

to Bantock quoted above, given the rate of production. The speed with which this scherzo was written may have been made more possible by the fact that the other three movements were already finished. He knew the context of the present movement, and how that would determine its content. As it emerged, it stands apart from the other movements of the symphony. This separation is enhanced by the scoring, in which Brian chooses to omit the two pianos, which were so prominent in the first movement, if less so in the second. The lack of contrapuntal passages is also a decisive factor in determining the relative simplicity and directness of the scherzo. The music of the movement is either chordal — driven by crisp fanfares — or based on melody and accompaniment. Both these characteristic features are easier to absorb on a first hearing than the tough contrapuntal textures typical of much of the composer's writing. This gives the movement less of a through-composed feel, and more of a block-like structure, despite, or perhaps because of, the speed with which it was written. An outline of the sectional structure is given in the following table.

Place in score	Section	Number of bars
53:4 to 60:6	А	73
60:7 to 63:10	В	34
64:1 to 67:1	A1	31
67:2 to 75:1	С	80
75:2 to 80:9	A2	58
80:10 to 82:4	B1	15
82:5 to 83:8	A3/Coda	14

Table 3:10: Third movement sections

The layout of the material bears some resemblance to that of a rondo, but Brian's description of it as a scherzo leads one to conclude that section 'C' above can be considered the trio. The relative length of each section supports this view, in that the 'C' section is significantly longer than the combined number of bars of the two 'B' sections. Alternately, one could think of the movement as a scherzo with two trios (section B constituting the first trio). However, in the case of the use of this form by a composer such as Robert Schumann, each trio was heard only once during the course of the movement — as in, for example, the scherzo of his Symphony No. 2 in C major, op. 61 (1845-6) — whereas Brian features the 'B' material twice in the course of the

movement. The similarity of scoring between the 'B' and 'C' sections in the Brian both are dominated by strings — means that one can interpret the former as an anticipation of the latter, or at least note on a kinship between the two sections. That kinship is underlined by their contrast with the opening material. This would be consistent with Brian's use of such kinship between materials without resource to direct motivic reference found throughout his output. The transformation of the scoring of section 'B' when it recurs as 'B1' contrasts with the case of section 'C', which stands separate at the heart of the movement. The symmetry around this centre allows one to view the movement as a scherzo with a central contrast of a more relaxed nature (in other words, with one trio), as in a movement such as the third of Anton Bruckner's Fourth Symphony (in its well known 1878-80 revision).

There is a clear differentiation of material between the sections of the movement, emphasised by changes in gesture, time-signature and orchestration. The 'A' sections are written in 2/4, the 'B' in 6/8, and the central 'C' section is in 3/4. Further to this, the movement opens and closes in A major, whereas the two contrasting sections both appear in F major. When 'B' is restated as 'B1', the key is A major, as the movement rushes to its conclusion. The opening of each section is illustrated below.

EXAMPLE 3:34(a)

Symphony No. 3.III. 53:4-5



EXAMPLE 3:34(b)

Symphony No. 3,III. 60:7-10



EXAMPLE 3:34(c)

Symphony No. 3.III, 67:2-5



The initial scoring of both the 'B' and 'C' sections for strings —as well as the shared key — creates a link between them, in contrast to the more extrovert manner of the scoring of the carnival-like 'A' sections. This clear demarcation of ideas ensures that the movement is the most immediate — and the least complex — of the Third Symphony.

Texture as form

In the context of the complete work, the present movement comes as a sort of highspirited light relief from the weightier concerns and struggles of the other three movements. The apparent lack of progression in the emotional narrative of the symphony for the bulk of this movement is countered by the heavier scoring in the latter stages, referred to earlier in relation to section 'B1', but also present in 'A2' and 'A3'. The 'B' section takes on some of the carnival atmosphere of the 'A' music when it is restated in heavier scoring. The table below details the scoring of both versions of the 'B' sections as well as the opening 'A' section, and its resumption after the central 'C' passage as 'A2'.

Section	А	A2	В	B1
Instrumentation	Piccolo	2 Piccolos		
	3 Flutes	2 Flutes	Flute	4 Flutes
	3 Oboes	4 Oboes		4 Oboes
	3 Clarinets	4 Clarinets		4 Clarinets
	3 Bassoons	4 Bassoons		4 Bassoons
		Contrabassoon		
	4 Horns	8 Horns		4 Horns
	3 Trumpets	4 Trumpets		
		4 Trombones		
		2 Tubas		
	Timpani	Timpani		
		Side Drum		Tambourine
		Cymbal		
		Bass Drum		
				2 Harps
	Strings	Strings	2 solo violins	Strings
			Solo viola	
			Solo cello	

Table 3:11: Orchestral textures

One can interpret this heavier scoring in two ways. It can be taken as an indicator of greater exuberance as the scherzo moves towards its close, or — alternately — as a portent of the resumption of the central concerns of the symphony — and as a consequence a darker mood — in the Finale. The latter interpretation suggests a parallel with the *Pathetique* Symphony (1893) of Tchaikovsky, where the musical impetus is carried across from the forceful ending of the third movement's march to the beginning of the final, desolate Adagio. This renders the respective endings less as a conclusion or answer, than as a question, which is answered in the music of the final movement. Resolution becomes rhetoric because of the added emphasis, and there is suspense in the air as to how the fourth movement will begin in relation to the ending

of the third. In both cases, the answer to the question posed at the end of the third movement is that the issues of the earlier part of the symphony are to be tackled again (or, alternatively, that they can no longer be avoided). The beginning of the fourth movement in each case has a fatalistic air to it, combining surprise — in its immediate context — with a sense of inevitability, and the drawing together of threads from the wider context of the work. Furthermore, the over-scoring in the latter stages of the music undercuts any sense of finality of the endings of the respective third movements, and the danger of the listener feeling that the symphony is over is averted. In short, the endings — ironically — are too conclusive to be final.

Harmonic language

The scherzo is characterised by a more diatonic harmonic language then the other movements of the symphony, and also by a much more prominent use of repetition, both on the small and the large scale. This relative simplicity of the harmonic language gives the music a directness that can be described as a 'popular' feel. The 2/4 sections certainly contain music of a public nature, as can be seen in example 3:34(a) above. To some extent, this makes the scherzo the least personal of the four movements of the Symphony, yet the voice is nonetheless unmistakable as that of Havergal Brian, albeit while using a less broad stylistic range than that found in the other movements of the work. The avoidance of the traditional dominant, in favour of other paths to the tonic chord, is one characteristic harmonic feature that strongly colours the present movement. That other path often involves the subdominant, as can be seen between the second and third bars in the next example.

EXAMPLE 3:35

Symphony No. 3.III. 53:10-54:2



This writing in block common chords is a major feature of the scherzo, and Brian chooses to end the movement with a chord progression of that type, which involves the dominant, but as the antepenultimate, rather than the penultimate chord. This effective, if slightly unconventional use of the dominant is a crucial factor in how Brian makes the use of common chords personal in this movement. The music sounds familiar, yet not predictable or bland. Example 3:36 shows the end of the movement.

EXAMPLE 3:36

Symphony No. 3,III, 83:3-8



The next example, which comes immediately before the bars just quoted, shows the composer using more dissonant chords, but still based, like the above excerpt, around the stepwise movement of diatonic chord types. It is the forceful use of contrary motion here that produces the distinctive harmonic flavour of the passage, rather than any desire to follow more diatonic progressions. The clear directional motion of the top and bottom results in the chords that make up the harmony here, rather than the parts being adjusted to fit in with a more conventional, or diatonic, progression. The suggestion of bitonality is the result of a typical juxtaposition of chords based on one

triad, and those which result from the clash of two different ones. The final chord of the following example, where the top chord is E flat minor, and the bottom G flat major, presents a clear instance of such a bitonal clash.

EXAMPLE 3:37

Symphony No. 3, III, 82:10-83:2



Just before this example there comes an even more striking juxtaposition of the triadic and the non-triadic, which still contains a strong directional sense, because of the voice-leading involved. The use of the dominant here comes as more of a surprise than anything else, due to the non-preparatory, and non-diatonic chords immediately preceding it. The harsh sound of these chords, complemented by the hard-edged scoring, is also a factor in undercutting the festive tone at the end of the movement, mentioned above in relation to texture. This juxtaposition of different levels of dissonance can be seen as a continuation, on a smaller scale, of the coexistence of the tonal and non-tonal in the first movement of the Symphony.

EXAMPLE 3:38

Symphony No. 3,III, 82:8-10 (first quaver)



This important element of the harmonic vocabulary of the movement ensures that passing allusions to Dvorak (71:2 to 5, in the central 'C' section — where the spirit of a Slavonic Dance is present) — and Mahler (71:10 to 72:3, also from the 'C' section, with its naïve, landler-like feel) do not disrupt the consistency of the language. These

allusions can be interpreted as nods of acknowledgement in the direction of music of a kindred tone. These passing allusions can also be said to contribute to the 'popular' aspect of this movement referred to earlier.

Conclusion

A possible model for the 2/4 music of the scherzo could be the third movement of Brahms's Fourth Symphony (1884–85). Apart from the shared time signature, the music of each is extrovert and exuberant, in contrast with the rest of each respective symphony. In addition, both are set in the submediant of their respective central tonalities, the Brahms being in C major within the context of a symphony in E minor, paralleled by Brian's use of A major within the context of a symphony centred in C sharp minor. The impetus of each movement, and in particular its main material, is primarily rhythmic, lending a sense of visceral excitement to each movement which broadens the expressive scope of the symphony in each case. There is an open-air quality to the main sections of each piece, which contrasts with the more internalised emotional worlds of the other movements of the respective symphonies. Although the Brian could never be said to sound like Brahms, the music of section 'C' in particular does have a Viennese feel to it, as Brian confirmed in the following comment from the same letter to Granville Bantock as the earlier quote in relation to deciphering sketches.

As I heard the slow movement in a very slow 3 - 1 had to evolve a 2/4 Scherzo which sounds as though it had been written in Vienna.¹⁴⁸

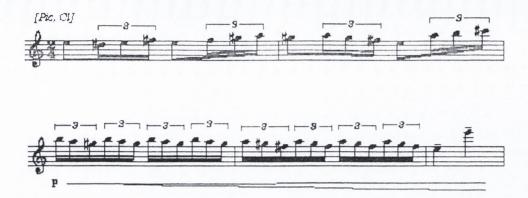
That remark to Bantock makes clear that Brian consciously sought to allude to a Viennese style and manner in this third movement. The waltz-like rhythms of the trio provide the strongest Viennese element. This allusion to the Austrian capital in the musical manner of the trio can be construed as an affectionate homage. if not a pastiche that is partly tongue-in-cheek. Taking this temporary geographical relocation as a starting point, one can infer a journey of a particular sort in this movement, from the English fairground sounds of the 2/4 material, to the cafés of Vienna, and back again. The swirling woodwind triplets — seen in example 3:39 below — certainly evoke the carnival atmosphere, tracing a path back to a much earlier work, the first of

¹⁴⁸ Quoted in Brown, 'Havergal Brian, Symphony No. 3', 4.

Brian's five English Suites. written in 1902-4.

EXAMPLE 3:39

Symphony No. 3,III, 55:2-6 (top part)



The present scherzo is based on a clearly articulated contrast of moods. The complementary contrast of textures gives the music its colour and variety. It is almost as if Brian wrote the present movement as a relaxation after the prolonged labour on the other three parts of the symphony — bearing in mind that it followed so quickly on the heels of the Second Symphony — but with a keen sense of its place within the overall plan of the work. There is a sense of flow in the finished product which is almost disarming, a very rare quality in Brian's mature output.

Lento Solenne

Overview

The impact of the finale of No. 3 is more concentrated than that of the finale of the preceding symphony, due to the clarity of contrast between static gestures, and a more developmental musical discourse. There is a balance more successfully achieved in this finale between repetition and forward momentum than that found in the corresponding movement of the Second Symphony. The static elements in the present movement are relatively brief, and function as momentary contrasts which broaden the scope of the music without sacrificing a sense of direction. An overview of the finale is given in the table below.

Place in Score	Description
83:9 to 87:7	Introduction and Subject 1 (examples 3:40(a) and (b)
87:8 to 88:4	Interlude
88:5 to 89:9	Development 1
89:10 to 94:4	Subject 2(x3) [examples 3:45 (a), (b) and (c)] and Development 2
94:5 to 96:1	Development 3
96:2 to 98:3	Link1 and Subject 1
98:4 to 99:8	Link 2 and Subject 2
99:9 to 100:5	Coda

Table 3:12: Fourth movement sections

The resemblance to a sonata structure can be perceived if one regards the 'Interlude' and 'Development 1' sections jointly as an extended transition between the first and second subjects in sonata terms. The avoidance of literal repetition in much of the music of Gustav Mahler suggest a kinship in the thinking of Brian and one of his greatest contemporaries on this point.

As far as the key structure of the finale is concerned, there is another nod in the direction of the key relations within sonata form in the case of the second subject, although the connection occurs when the theme is restated, rather than on its first appearance. This relationship was also observed with regard to the second subject of the opening movement, thus establishing a link between the two outer movements. The first appearance in the finale — corresponding to the exposition of a sonata design begins in the distant key of C major. When it returns, however, toward the end of the movement — corresponding to a recapitulation — it is pitched a major third higher, in E major, the relative major of the tonic C sharp minor. This is the key often used in the exposition of a minor key sonata movement for the second subject, as happens in the finale of the Tchaikovsky Pathetique. However, the later appearance of the second subject here, while centred melodically in E major, is harmonised in a highly coloured C sharp minor, providing a further example of Brian viewing a key and its relative as complementary. rather than contrasting opposites (see example 3:47(b) below). This is underlined by the similarity of texture that surrounds both subjects in their final appearances in the movement, as illustrated in examples 3: 47(a) and (b). The first

subject, on the other hand, returns in the tonic of C sharp minor, in which key it was also heard on its first appearance early in the movement. Brian is eschewing the harmonic and thematic contrast between subjects as a source of tension in the music at this point, and presents textural growth as an important element in relation to both subjects as the movement unfolds. Because the two subjects are related in mood, the movement as a whole has a unified feel, particularly in the latter stages, and one can view the varied presentations of both subjects as developments of that common central mood.

The linking of sections in some descriptions in the above table testifies to the smoothness of transition between the two concerned, and lends the music of the finale a greater sense of consistency than the corresponding movement of No. 2. The first statement of the second subject, at 89:10, initiates a passage of increasingly elaborate textures, culminating in the entry of the first subject in the manner shown in example 3:43 — which is clearly a development of that idea — as the beginning of 'Development 2'. The fact that there is no break in the continuity effectively binds the whole passage together. The successive statements of the second theme, as illustrated in examples 3:45(a), (b) and (c) below, may suggest a link with the first movement — see table 3:1 above — and the double statements of both main subjects therein. However the influence of the concerto principle is far less prevalent than was the case with that movement, as discussed above.

This link with the first movement is, however, strengthened by the re-introduction of the two pianos in the finale. although they are featured to a less prominent degree here than in the opening movement. In the case of the two sections later in the movement, the links leading to the restatements of both subjects patently mark time for a few bars in each case. The basic material of each link is illustrated below as examples 3:51 and 3:52(b). The purpose in each case is to clearly separate two larger musical paragraphs on either side of the bars in question. This careful pacing of the musical events is an important part of the clarity of thought in the finale, showing a greater concentration than the corresponding movement of the Second Symphony. and contributes towards a clearer sense of purposeful direction.

Thematic material

a) The first subject

The movement begins, after the thunderous A major conclusion of the scherzo, with two horns sustaining an octave on G sharp, which provides a backdrop to the opening melody on bass clarinet. At a stroke, Brian has banished the mood of the scherzo, and set a new, more sombre mood. I have labelled this melody as the 'Introduction' in table 3:9 since it leads to the string melody which I designate as the first subject, but in typical Brian fashion the matter is a little more complex. The bass clarinet melody never returns, but its opening is closely related to the opening of the first subject which follows it. The opening of the two ideas are shown below.

EXAMPLE 3:40(a)

Symphony No. 3.IV. 83:10-84:3: bass clarinet



EXAMPLE 3:40(b)

Symphony No. 3, IV. 85:4-8: top line



The first subject is more richly scored than the bass clarinet idea, and this growth in textural richness culminates much later in the return of the first subject at 96:5, in what can be described as the recapitulation. At that juncture, there is a curious discrepancy between the short and full scores. The former begins, as earlier in the movement, with the notes E-D sharp-C sharp, with a second voice placed a sixth below (as G sharp-F sharp-E). In the full score, these lines are given to first and second violins respectively, but the first violin part is changed, so that it begins with the notes G sharp-F sharp-E. This represents a change of mind on the composer's part in order to enhance the beginning of the melody at this point. This change is also consistent with Brian's habit of not restating ideas exactly in his music, although the degree of change is relatively

minimal. The change in melodic profile is affecting, and lends a new poignancy to the theme, with the downward leap of a major sixth between the third and fourth notes becoming an octave. It adds appropriately to the expressiveness of the subject at that point in the movement. The beginning of the subject is shown below as it appears in the first violins in the full score at this point.

EXAMPLE 3:41

Symphony No. 3, IV, 96:5-7: violins I



There are three further references to this subject in the finale. A terse, contrapuntal exchange based on the opening initiates 'Development 1' in a manner typical of the composer, in that the imitation is not exact, and the texture monolithic, with heavy brass to the fore.

EXAMPLE 3:42

Symphony No. 3.IV. 88:6-7



The second reference occurs in a passage which follows on from the initial appearance of the second subject. The smoothness of the change at this point has been noted above. The abrupt change of direction and texture more prevalent in Brian's musical discourse is temporarily eschewed as the composer builds towards a point of arrival at the beginning of 'Development 3'. This, when it arrives, represents a decisive change of direction. The use of the opening of the first subject in imitation is curiously notated in the short score, with smaller notes in pencil for one of the parts, suggesting it may have been added as an afterthought. The effect created in the passage is of the shadow of the first subject looming ever larger as the music gathers momentum toward 'Development 3'. The example below reproduces the notation of the short score, at which point it expands from three to four staves per system. There are slight changes between this and the full score with regard to the rhythm of the top and bottom parts. The layout of the short score is considered in appendix 2.

EXAMPLE 3:43

Symphony No. 3.IV. 93:5-7



The urgent start of 'Development 3' includes the third appearance of the opening of subject one, and as can be seen below. represents a further intensification of the mood in this central portion of the movement. It is also a typical re-invention of the idea, in which the original character is completely transformed. The organic development of motives, as employed by a composer like Sibelius — for example in the first movement of his Third Symphony (1904-7) — is in stark contrast to Brian's methods

here, which owe much to the ideas of variation form. Indeed, the examples just quoted can be regarded as equivalent to the beginnings of individual variations of the first subject, before its elaborate restatement later in the finale (at 96:5), where it is also further varied, but more in terms of the accompanying textures than melodic contour. This connection between developmental passages and an ongoing set of variations has also been noted in relation to the central portion of the first movement, resulting in each case in clearly differentiated sections —or blocks — within the musical discourse.

EXAMPLE 3:44

Symphony No. 3.IV. 94:6-7



b) The second subject

Brian's treatment of his second subject (which begins at 89:10, marked Andante Moderato in the full score) contrasts with the use of the first subject in some respects. It is initially heard three times in succession, in contrasting and expanding textures, before its return at 98:7, in the fullest texture of all (in what functions as a recapitulation, as with the return of subject one at 96:5). This process of textural enrichment, as opposed to organic development of motives, is consistent with his treatment of both subjects in the opening movement, as well as being a feature of the opening movement of the Second Symphony. The three beginnings are illustrated below as they appear in the short score. As in the case of example 3:43 above, there are slight rhythmic changes between 3: 45(b) and 3:45(c) and the parallel passages in the full score.

EXAMPLE 3:45(a)

Symphony No. 3.IV. 89:10-90:1



EXAMPLE 3:45(b)

Symphony No. 3, IV, 91:3-4



EXAMPLE 3:45(c)

Symphony No. 3.IV, 92:5-6



While the double statements of both themes in the first movement could be interpreted as elements of a concerto like-plan for that movement, this is not quite the case here. The second and third statements of the present second subject do, however, feature the two pianos more prominently than was the case in earlier statements. As mentioned above, this is one instance of the composer using a smoother join between sections than is usually his practise. It is difficult to try to pinpoint an exact place for the start of a central 'development' section at this juncture — even allowing for the presence of 'development 1' prior to this point — but the canonic entries based on the first subject quoted above as example 3:43 signal a clear change of thematic focus in the musical argument. As the texture builds up, there is a further link to the first movement, when the accompaniment comes to dominate the music, in this instance to the exclusion of any thematic ideas related to either subject. This develops from the idea of an accompaniment seeming to overwhelm the second version of the second subject of the opening movement. The culmination of the present passage is the beginning of 'development 3', which comes after a typically expectant Brian hiatus. The texture from just before this is illustrated below.

EXAMPLE 3:46

Symphony No. 3, IV. 94:1-2



When the second subject returns toward the end of the movement, it shares a common character with the version of the first subject which has immediately preceded it. The accompanying semiquavers and descending quaver chords are closely linked to the accompanying textures for the first subject. The result of this shared character is a greater sense of continuity and momentum as the movement moves toward its conclusion. The fact that the ending is of a surprising nature when it arrives does not detract from the effectiveness of the music before it as it builds up a sense of anticipation. The start of each subject in this section is illustrated below (note the beginning of the first subject, and how it differs from the full score version, part of which was illustrated as example 3:42).

EXAMPLE 3:47(a)

Symphony No. 3, IV. 96:5-6



EXAMPLE 3:47(b)

Symphony No. 3.IV, 98:7-8



Repetition and stasis

As in the first and second movements, Brian features repetitive gestures to arrest the progress of freely expanding musical paragraphs. This is illustrated by two instances from the early part of the movement. Before the arrival of the 'Interlude' mentioned in table 3:9, the presentation of the first subject culminates in a repetitive gesture shown

below. As can be seen, it is stated three times in succession, and effectively marks time. It is followed by bars which recede toward the distance from which the ensuing fanfares of the 'Interlude' are heard, and marks a transition from an expanding discourse to a passage which seems to hold forward momentum in abeyance.

EXAMPLE 3:48

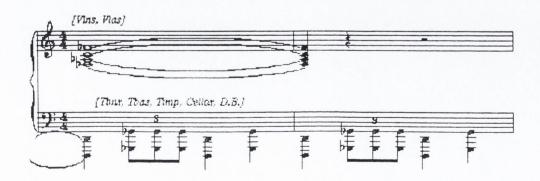
Symphony No. 3, IV, 87:2-3



The second repeated gesture comes at the climax of 'development 1', and similarly leads to a dissolution of tension, in this case represented by the arrival of the second subject a few bars later. The effect is similar to the earlier example, in that an expanding span of music is arrested by the suggestion of stasis in the immediate repetition of the idea. The music moves away from the preceding material to a new idea. In that sense, the effect is transitional, with the repeated gesture as the beginning of that transition.

EXAMPLE 3:49

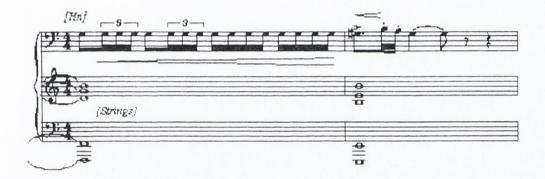
Symphony No. 3, IV, 89:6-7



Stasis is even more powerfully suggested in the two fanfares which are heard from 87:8, in the aforementioned 'Interlude', the first on trumpet, echoed poetically by the horn after a change in the accompanying chord. Becker writes of this passage that 'time stands still'.¹⁴⁹ This gesture also introduces an element of perspective, with the suggestion of physical distance between the foreground gestures which precede the fanfares, and the fanfares themselves. Both are marked 'far away in the distance' in the full score. This suggestion of a distant landscape — which can be traced back to the fanfares which interrupt the progress of Beethoven's *Leonora Overture No. 3* (1805-6) — anticipates a major feature of Brian's Sixth Symphony, the *Sinfonia Tragica* (1948). In fact, the fanfare on horn concludes with an anticipation of a key figure in one of the fanfare motives of the Sixth, as illustrated below.

EXAMPLE 3:50(a)

Symphony No. 3.IV. 88:3-4



EXAMPLE 3:50(b)

Symphony No. 6, 9:1-3



The pre-echo, as it were, is almost certainly coincidental. To return to the distant fanfares in No. 3: they have the effect of suggesting a world beyond the more immediate concerns of the main symphonic argument. The evocative use of muted brass solos suggests a kinship with the music of Gustav Mahler, but the effect is very

¹⁴⁹ Becker, 'Brian's Third Symphony', 197.

different. The closest parallel in terms of the suggestion of a distant world lies in the use of cowbells atmospherically in the central portion of the first movement of Mahler's Sixth Symphony (1903-4). In each case, time appears to be magically suspended as a sense of calm contemplation replaces the struggles of the surrounding music.

In the latter stages of the present movement, Brian re-introduces both main themes with short, ostinato-like figures on piano (both playing in unison the first time; the first piano alone the second). The type of figure used — and the instrumentation chosen — link the two passages closely. Intriguingly, both underwent modification between short score and full score. In the first instance (at 96:2) there is a bar in the full score, illustrated below, which is not written out in the short score. Instead, Brian has circled the 4-note figure on the first beat of the following bar of short score (as it appears in the example), and written '1 bar' in the left-hand margin.

EXAMPLE 3:51

Symphony No. 3, IV, 96: 2: piano part



What this small, but significant modification demonstrates, is a concern with pacing on Brian's part, as well as a desire to create a clear link between the final presentations of each subject. The piano link to the second subject is present in the short score, but was modified in terms of detail at the full score stage by the composer. The short score version — illustrated as example 3:52(a) below — presents a written-out rallentando in a fashion typical of Alban Berg in a work such as the *Praludium* of his *Three Pieces for Orchestra*, op 6 (1914), as the time values-broaden. The full score version — example 3:52(b) — is less rigorous, and also differs in pitch content. The final four notes of each end on E, but this four-note pattern is used once only in the full score. The greater use of repetition in the full score results in the final four notes being more effective as a disruption of the pattern, and a preparation for the second subject. Brian may also have modified the passage as the last four notes of example 3:52(a) are the same as the first four of the ensuing second subject. as illustrated in example 3:47(b)

above. As a result of the change made by Brian the version found in the full score avoids this duplication.

EXAMPLE 3:52(a)

Symphony No. 3.IV. 98:4-6: bottom stave (short score)



EXAMPLE 3:52(b)

Symphony No. 3, IV, 98:4-6: piano part (full score)



The two pianos

With regard to the role of the two pianos in this final movement, the instances just discussed are as close as they get to being featured in a soloistic context in the music. They are also heard prominently in the passage between example 3:48 above and the distant fanfares, but they are prominent there because of the relatively thin orchestral texture, and not due to any bravura writing. In fact, to single them out for special consideration with regard to the present movement is as appropriate, or inappropriate, as singling out, for example, the two harps. The distinctive colour of the piano(s) may be relatively uncommon in a symphonic work. Bartok's *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste* did not appear until 1936, nor Stravinsky's *Symphony in Three Movements* until 1945, to mention but two prominent examples. Here the two pianos have much less to do in the present movement than in the opening one. In addition to this, there is no evidence in the short score of the finale, which is written on systems of two, three or four staves throughout, to suggest an original conception of the musical discourse in terms of solo instrument(s) and orchestra. In this respect, their inclusion is more

closely related to their use in the final two movements of Symphony No. 2. They are part of a rich orchestral palette, but not especially prominent.

The short score and the coda

The short score of the present movement reveals another fascinating detail in relation to the coda. The change of tone for the final peroration of the symphony is quite sudden in its immediate context, although it does have roots in some of the starker gestures from earlier in the movement. In the short score, it is startling to find that the most striking gesture of these final bars - the triumphant leap from a chord of C sharp major to one of F major. and back again, is not written in ink, but added in pencil, as an afterthought. This is further evidence of the fact that Brian, as MacDonald has noted, was often unsure as to the specific shape of his beginnings and endings.¹⁵⁰ Here, the final gesture is far more stark, not to say perfunctory, and much less personal, in the form in which it is found in the short score. The added bar is written in pencil across the end of the ink score, where Brian has noted 'Commenced Sunday July 12, Finished Thursday July 16'. The surviving last page of the pencil short score has no sign of the additions found in pencil in the corresponding page of the short score. Example 3:53 below presents the final bars of the short score.

EXAMPLE 3:53

Symphony No. 3, IV, 100:3-5



The use of the subdominant minor with added sixth in the penultimate bar of the above example is a feature familiar from the final cadences of *Tristan und Isolde* (1857-9)

¹⁵⁰ MacDonald, The Symphonies, vol. 3, 191-3.

and Gotterdämmerung (1870-4) by Richard Wagner. Both of these endings suggest a calm resolution to the dramatic tensions of those music dramas. However, the shadow of the German composer looms much larger in the finale of the Symphony No.2, as noted above. In addition to this, it is noteworthy that both the Wagner works referred to end quietly. The lack of dynamic indications in the bars quoted above leaves open the question of the tone of the ending of the Brian, at least in theory. The hairpin denoting a crescendo in the bar before, however, would support the contention that the composer, from the start, envisaged a loud ending. The calm endings favoured by Wagner in the two examples cited are, therefore, defiantly contradicted by the tone of the Brian ending as written in full score. This is all the more intriguing when one takes into account that the Brian movement has been moving toward a conclusion that would be similar in tone to the cited Wagner endings. before the abrupt about-face represented by the coda as it stands. It is doubtful if Brian sought to directly contradict the sort of endings in the Wagner works in his final, defiant gesture, but the end of the Symphony No.3 is certainly the antithesis of the peaceful retreat so characteristic of Late Romanticism. Once again, Brian stands apart. The following example is my own transcription into short score of the conclusion of the symphony as Brian wrote it in the full score.

EXAMPLE 3:54

Symphony No. 3, IV. 100:3-6 [full score: reduced by the author]



Conclusion and context

The Third Symphony shares with its predecessor the idea of a slow final movement, and, as a consequence, a comparison of the two finales is instructive, revealing how Brian approached the writing of the movement in a different way in No. 3. It is clear that the finale of the Third benefits from the experience gained in the composition of a slow concluding movement to the previous symphony. Both movements act as an emotional climacteric for each symphony, and bring the narrative of the work to its ultimate destination. Both are based around two melodic ideas, but there are differences in the organisation of these ideas. The second melody of the finale of No. 2 (see example 2:53 in the chapter on No.2) comes as a displaced central contrast, and does not recur after it is extensively treated. It leads to the climax of the movement, and of the whole work, followed by the dark conclusion of the Symphony. The second subject of the finale of the Third, however, is heard in two places within a movement which can be viewed as broadly related to a sonata structure. The second appearance of subject two, however, does lead straight to the climactic conclusion of the movement,

suggesting a certain connection with the preceding symphony. Those conclusions, however, are in complete contrast to each other. The bleak, spectral end to Symphony No. 2 confirms the tragic bias of that work. The blazing, brazenly triumphant conclusion to No. 3 could hardly be more different. Interestingly, the end of each finale is also akin to the end of the first movement of each work, suggesting a unity which extends across the whole of each symphony. The effect is of the finale confirming, in its final bars, what was implied in the end of the opening movement.

The concept of a slow final movement was a typical trait of many Late-Romantic scores of a symphonic nature as discussed above. The notion of an anti-finale, such as that of Tchaikovsky's Pathetique (1893), is also an important precedent set with regard to slow final movements, but the finale of Brian's Symphony No. 3 does not follow that example beyond the slow tempo. As mentioned above, it is an integral part of the drama of the symphony, and in no sense an epilogue to, or reaction against, that drama, as is the case with the finale of Tchaikovsky's work. However, the idea of a piece ending in calm, rather than triumph, is of importance to Brian's conception. The final movement of Mahler's Third Symphony (1895–96), and the concluding section of Strauss's Ein Heldenleben (1898) are indicative of this trend among close contemporaries of Brian. There is also the example of Elgar's Symphony No. 2 (1910), which seeks, and ultimately finds a spirit of calm, after a final movement that is notable for its lyrical content. If one disregards momentarily the blazing coda of the Brian movement, the parallel with the example of his great English predecessor is even more striking. The abrupt change of tone for that coda has led some listeners to feel that the ending of the Brian is merely tacked on, but it is typical of the composer to lead the listener to expect one thing -in this case a calm ending - and then provide its opposite.

In the broader context of the Symphony, the end echoes the triumphant coda of the first movement, in a fashion which recalls the practise of Bruckner, whose final movements often end with codas which refer to earlier themes from the symphony in question. The stark unisons which end the outer movements of his Fifth Symphony (1875–78) represent a clear example of this, but he often recalls thematic shapes as well in his concluding perorations. This desire to tie in the outer pillars of a massive symphonic structure can also be traced in the work of Gustav Mahler — his First

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(1888) and Eighth (1906) Symphonies, for example — and in the case of both Brian and Mahler the common debt to Bruckner is clear. Indeed, the elegiac tone — as well as the choice of key — of Brian's final movement is reminiscent, in a general way, of one of the great Austrian's most renowned achievements, namely the slow movement of his Symphony No.7 (1881–83). The fact that this great elegy was written at the time of Wagner's death provides a further link in the musical chain. Without seeking to draw too many threads extravagantly together, what the foregoing discussion reveals is the clear Germanic provenance of the Brian Third Symphony, as well as Nos. 1,2 and 4.

It is interesting to note that the triumphal tone of the coda of the final movement of No. 3 is immediately followed, in the Brian symphonic canon, by the Handelian splendour of the opening of his Fourth Symphony (1932–33). This mammoth work sets Psalm 68 for solo soprano, substantial choral forces, and huge orchestra. It has been interpreted as a critique of Hitler's rise to power, and the culture of racial superiority which results in the blood-letting slaughter of supposed racial inferiors and opponents.¹⁵¹ The fact that Richard Wagner was a musical figurehead for the Nazi regime only serves to add a further layer of possible subtext to the final bars of the present work. Brian writes 'Epilogue' over the final four bars, but the suggestion of Arnold Bax — whose own Third Symphony (1928) ends with a very different 'Epilogue' — is quickly dispelled by the martial, triumphal tone of the Brian, which can be said to banish any calm reflection by sheer force of gesture.

These concluding bars have been described by Malcolm MacDonald as 'bringing the symphony full circle, back to where it started, despite all the struggles to escape the cruel weight of C sharp minor'.¹⁵² However, as noted above, the work ends in C sharp major, so that it escapes the mode — at least — of the opening key of the work in the blazing final peroration. The tone, however, is comparable, in terms of the manner in which 'the trudging rhythms of the first movement gradually impose themselves on the latter stages of the finale'.¹⁵³ Martyn Becker describes the tone at the end of the finale

¹⁵¹ See MacDonald, The Symphonies, vol. 1, 89-90.

¹⁵² MacDonald, The Symphonies. vol.3, 277.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 276.

as one of 'ultimate frustration'.¹⁵⁴ Whether one agrees with MacDonald or not — that the ending is an expression of frustration rather than triumph — is perhaps dependent on a personal response to the music, and the character of a particular performance.

But he is correct to assert that the Symphony No.3 is 'Brian's first wholly successful symphony'. The balance between cohesion and expansiveness is more fully achieved than in the preceding symphony, so that Brian's characteristic inventiveness is harnessed to a greater sense of structural clarity. The function of the scherzo is crucial in this area, as it 'broadens and lightens the symphony's emotional range', as MacDonald observes.¹⁵⁵ It is this latter quality of lightness that is absent from the preceding symphony. Like the Symphony No.2, many 'diverse elements are brought into collision' during the course of the work, but the order imposed by the composer is more convincing. The balance between freedom of invention and the need to impose creative discipline on that invention is a more assured one in the present work. Without sacrificing the wilder aspects encountered in the Gothic and its sizeable successor, the Symphony No.3 integrates 'genuinely 20th-century material into seemingly traditional 4-movement late-Romantic symphonic dimensions¹⁵⁶ This blend of innovation and tradition within a strongly personal language is a sign of Brian's greater maturity as a composer. The next work to be discussed sees Brian tackling another traditional orchestral genre, that of the concerto, in a comparable manner, and with comparable success. This time the shape of the emerging work was clear — especially given the lost predecessor in the same genre — and the challenge was almost an inversion of that faced by Brian in the opening movement of the Third. The Violin Concerto sees the composer adapting the conventions of concerto writing to his symphonic manner. The result is a typically individual synthesis of his natural expansiveness and the demands of a display piece for solo instrument and orchestra.

¹⁵⁴ Becker, 'Brian's Third Symphony', 195.

¹⁵⁵ MacDonald, The Symphonies, vol. 3, 276.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 276.

CHAPTER SIX VIOLIN CONCERTO IN C MAJOR

1. Allegro Moderato

2. Lento

3. Allegro Fuoco

Instrumentation: 3 Flutes (3rd doubling Piccolo), 2 Oboes, Cor Anglais, 2 Clarinets, Bass Clarinet, 3 Bassoons (3rd doubling Contrabassoon). 4 Horns, 3 Trumpets, 2 Tenor Trombones, 1 Bass Trombone. Bass Tuba, Timpani, Bass Drum, Cymbals, Side Drum, Glockenspiel, Xylophone, Harp, Solo Violin, Strings.¹⁵⁷

Introduction

The title page of the full score of this work, published by United Music Publishers, provides the outline of a tale of misfortune and doggedness that is typical of Brian. After the completion of the Fourth Symphony, Das Siegeslied, in December 1933, the composer opted to tackle a different challenge. but one which follows on logically from some of the compositional areas of interest explored by him in preceding works. Each of the four symphonies completed to that date had featured an important violin solo at some point (as would continue to be the case for the rest of his lengthy symphonic career). Further to this, as we have seen, he had begun the Third Symphony as a Concerto for piano (or two pianos) and orchestra. The origins of the first movement of No.3 in particular in the concerto genre had left a strong imprint on the shape of the finished score of that movement. Now, after another mammoth choral and orchestral work — the Symphony No.4 'Das Siegeslied' (1932-33) — which builds on the achievement of the choral parts of the Gothic. he sketched out a concerto for violin and orchestra, which he finished in short score on 7 June, 1934. The following day, as he made the journey from his home in the south of London to Victoria Station, his case, and with it the short score of the new work, vanished.

Brian went so far as to advertise in three national newspapers for the lost score, and to

¹⁵⁷ These forces are listed in the facsimile of Brian's full score published by United Music Publishers.

seek it in lost property offices, but no trace of the work has ever been found.¹⁵⁸ With commendable courage. Brian set to work, in August of the same year, to sketch out a new concerto, but drawing on what he could remember of its lost predecessor. On the title page, whose contents are reproduced below, this new piece is referred to as 'No.2'. This designation acknowledges both the importance in Brian's mind of the vanished work — even though it was likely to remain a ghostly number, and nothing more, in his catalogue — and the independence of the latter by giving the new work a different number.

CONCERTO

for

Violin and Orchestra

Composed by

HAVERGAL BRIAN

No.1 Concerto was lost at Victoria Station on June 8th, 1934 No.2 commenced in August 1934

Sketches completed on November 10th, 1934 in the Conservatory at No.1, Jasper Road, SE19.

No sketches remained of No.1 at the time it was lost - such themes as could be remembered I wrote down and have used them in this Concerto (No.2).

Orchestral Score completed June 8th 1935 Havergal Brian

Beyond the sorry tale of a score lost and then replaced by a related one, some speculation is prompted by the foregoing chronicle, and in particular Brian's

¹⁵⁸ Malcolm MacDonald, 'Havergal Brian, Violin Concerto, Symphony No. 18, The Jolly Miller (Overture)', sleeve notes for compact disc Marco Polo 8.223479, 1993, 3.

comments about 'such themes' as he could recall. Which themes in No2 did Brian remember from the original work? The fact that certain melodic ideas stand out in their surroundings in the Concerto No.2 may suggest that they are interpolations from a work of a different character. In this regard the second subjects of the outer movements — both given to the solo instrument — are in sharp contrast to the surrounding material. This music is more chromatic, particularly in the first movement. However this juxtaposition of the triadic and the more freely chromatic has been observed in both the second and third symphonies, and indeed is also a feature of *Das Siegeslied*. Brian, as a violinist himself, may simply have chosen to give the solo instrument some rewarding and direct melodic ideas. In the finished work, these ideas offer a vivid contrast to passages where the soloist is engaged in an energetic textural complex with the orchestra, and has to struggle to be heard, as is strikingly the case at the outset of the opening movement.

Brian does not say whether he used those themes he did recall in the same place in the surviving concerto as was the case in the lost one. The method of presenting thematic blocks, separated from each other by pauses, which may lend itself to the suggestion that themes can be — or have been — inserted at certain points without undue disruption of an intricate web of developing ideas or transitions. is not unique to the Violin Concerto. The absence of transition is a consistent stylistic hallmark of Brian's musical discourse, as noted above, so that no particular claims with regard to the insertion of remembered themes can be sustained for the present work.

It is interesting — if ultimately inconclusive due to lack of evidence — to speculate on whether the double run Brian had at a Violin Concerto exerted an influence on the formal outline of the surviving work. The surviving Concerto is one of the composer's most cogently argued scores, as well as one of the most immediately appealing from a melodic point of view. The clarity of its outline may be a result of certain formal choices — such as the use of a passacaglia for the slow movement — but it is likely that the experience of composing the initial work was of benefit in writing the second. Perhaps the fact that Brian finished 'No.2' exactly a year after the disappearance of 'No.1' is an acknowledgement of this on Brian's part, as well as a touching coincidence. Certainly, as has been argued above, the experience of writing Symphony No.2 was of benefit to the composer when he wrote its successor, so a similar growth

in assurance is likely in the case of the two Violin Concertos, even if the cause for the development was unfortunate. The peculiar history of the Violin Concerto, however, does not detract from the need to assess the work independently of the circumstances that may have contributed to the shape of the finished composition. A comparison with the two symphonies discussed above reveals a move towards a greater textural simplicity at times, as well as the incorporation of more melodic material that can be attributed to the composer's desire to showcase the lyrical character of the solo instrument. There is no loss in inventiveness, but the direct appeal of some of the melodies used is one of the most striking features of the work.

Allegro Vivace

Overview: a symphonic concerto

In the present work, the techniques discussed above in relation to Symphonies 2 and 3 are mixed with elements of display for the solo instrument — such as the cadenzas in the outer movements — resulting in a personal approach to the writing of a concerto characteristic of Brian. The unusual approach to the concerto principle found in the first movement, detailed below, supports the contention that Brian's approach to the task of writing a concerto was largely, in fact, a symphonic one. The juxtaposition of the tonal and the non-tonal — a striking feature in the musical language of both his second and third symphonies — is underlined in the opening movement of the concerto by the strong contrast between the first and second subject material. This contrast can be allied to the similar conflict found in many sonata style movements, where a strong first subject or first subject group — as here — is followed by a lyrical second subject. Brian's idiosyncratic approach to sonata style has been noted in relation to the opening movements of both Symphony No.2 and No.3, and his handling of the sonata outline in the present opening movement is no less personal.

The table which follows divides the first movement according to terms associated with sonata structure — apart from the inclusion of a cadenza. It shows how Brian modifies the basic sonata shape to weight events towards a culmination in the coda.

Place in score	Description
Bar 1 to 4:7	First subject group (example vc1, 6)
5:1 to 10:6	Second subject group (example vc15)
11:1 to 16:4	Development
17:1 to 21:4	Restatement of first subject group
22:1 to 26:5	Accompanied cadenza (example vc10)
27:1 to 30:3	'New' theme (example vc3)
31:1 to 33:5	Restatement of second subject group and coda

Table VC 1: First movement sections

He articulates this weighting in two ways. Firstly, he presents a seemingly new theme after the accompanied violin cadenza as a point of departure for the latter stages of the movement. Secondly, by the late placing of the restatement of the lyrical second subject — after the cadenza and the 'new' theme — he alters the sequence of events to direct events clearly toward the calm conclusion of the movement. The lyrical character of that theme then leads quite naturally to the quiet conclusion. The fact that the second subject is heard in the dominant key at first, and returns in the tonic later in the movement, further underlines the debt to a sonata style structure.

The freshness of the 'new' theme is not compromised by the fact that it is. in fact, a combination of motivic shapes used throughout the movement, as will be shown below. This melodic idea is a memorable manifestation of the lyrical quality noted above in relation to the concerto. Its derivation — at least in part — from motivic ideas heard earlier in the movement is evidence of Brian's skill at integrating his contrasting ideas within a unified movement. If the theme was one of those remembered — and transplanted — from the lost concerto, these motivic links ensure that it belongs in its surroundings and indeed forms a vital part of the present work. Further to this, the inclusion of a 'new' theme close to the end of the movement shows Brian following on from the practise of the opening movement of his Symphony No.2, where a climactic new idea leads to the rapid disintegration of textures in the coda. The effect here, however, is completely different as the 'new' theme in this instance characterises the calm sequel to the more turbulent music of the earlier parts of the movement, and leads to a sonorous resolution of tension rather than a dissolution.

Another way to regard the juxtaposition of the two subject groups which dominate the movement is as being symptomatic of an opposition between two different types of musical statement which can be perceived in much of Brian's music of this time. The opening movement of the Concerto presents a musical journey from a stormy opening to a calm conclusion, in which the lyrical and the contrapuntal are contrasted. It was noted above that Paul Rapoport had written of a contrast between two types of music, namely turbulent and calm, in reference to the first movement of the *Gothic*. From this angle, the movement can be neatly summarised as the type of musical journey from the former state to the latter as mentioned above, with the 'new' melody as the crucial turning point. This marks the 'new' melody as the climactic point of the movement. and it is significant, given the stormy, complex textures which open the piece, that Brian opts for a quiet highpoint rather than a further intensification of the complexities of the opening. The weighting of the movement towards the latter stages then asserts its significance as it guides the listener along the path of Brian's musical argument.

This journey towards a quiet conclusion has been noted in both the final movements of Symphonies 2 and 3, and is emblematic of much Late Romantic music. This type of ending is found in music which exerted a powerful influence on Brian. Two of these works are by composers who were discussed in the chapter on the early output. The Symphony No.2 (1910-11) by Elgar concludes its final movement in such a manner, as does Strauss's epic tone poem 'Ein Heldenleben', written in 1898. In contrast to these examples, however, Brian concludes his final movement here with a resounding cadence topped by a reverberating cymbal clash. This rounds off the finale in a demonstrative manner in keeping with the bright, extrovert world of much of that movement, and in vivid contrast to the subdued final moments of the opening one. Interestingly, this contrast between endings has also been noted by Anthony Payne in relation to the music of Elgar - and was a determining factor in his decision to end his 'elaboration of the sketches' for the third symphony quietly. This is in contrast to the emphatic ending to the first movement of that work, which was left in sketch form by Elgar. He left no sketch material relating to the end of the symphony. Payne notes that:

When a first movement ended vigorously, as in the Second Symphony, or indeed the present work [the Third Synphony], then the Finale would do the opposite, and vice versa.¹⁵⁹

The parallel with the Brian Violin Concerto may be no more than the use of a similar strategy across the outer movements of a multi-movement work, but it shows — at the very least — that Brian's thinking on these matters ran along similar lines to that of his great predecessor.

The opening gesture

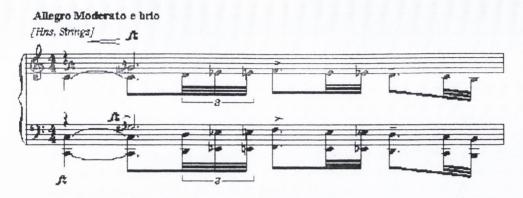
The Concerto begins in a manner which immediately marks the nature of Brian's individual approach to the genre. The soloist enters after the first bar, and at once we are plunged *in medias res.* Indeed, the opening paragraph contains some of the most complex textures of the entire movement, and at once begins a treatment of ideas that is typical of Brian's developmental — or symphonic — writing in its close argument and swiftness of thought. This first subject group gives the listener little time to settle, as the music surges stormily forward until an expectant pause brings a complete contrast with the arrival of the second subject. This is far more straightforward from the points of view of texture, harmony and melodic shape. There is a contrast of keys between the strongly coloured tonic minor and the dominant major, and the lack of transition between the end of the first subject group and the following second subject is a Brian trait familiar from much of his music. The second subject is discussed further below.

The sparing use Brian makes of the opening gesture is noteworthy. It returns once during the course of the movement, and is extended on that occasion, which is placed immediately before the arrival of the 'new' melody. Brian also alters its function, from a rhetorical herald of the stormy opening mood to a transition which lowers the tension before the 'new' melody makes its first appearance. At the very start of the Concerto it acts as an imposing anticipatory bar before the entry of the soloist, circling chromatically around the central note C.

¹⁵⁹ Anthony Payne, *Elgar's Third Symphony, the story of the reconstruction*, (Faber and Faber, 1998), 107-08.

EXAMPLE VC 1

Violin Concerto I. bar 1



This circling around C is strongly coloured by chromatic notes that suggest neither the major nor minor mode, and as such it presages the non-diatonic language of much of the opening paragraph of music. Its second appearance in the movement — just before the first appearance of the 'new' theme — also begins by circling around C, but as it extends it moves to a close on G, as can be seen in example VC 2 below. The prominent B flats and A flats lend the passage a strong sense of C minor at this point. This effectively prepares the way for the key of E flat major in which the ensuing new melody starts.

EXAMPLE VC 2

Violin Concerto I, 27: 1-5



The repetition of the gesture re-introduces C, the nominal tonic of the movement, and is thus a useful reference point. It is immediately preceded — in a strongly disjunct manner typical of Brian — by a descending scale in octaves on the solo violin in C sharp minor. This marks the end of the accompanied cadenza, and signals the onset of a new section of the movement. The change in function mentioned above also underlines the difference in emphasis between the beginning of the concerto, and this passage, close to the end of the first movement. The urgent summons of example vc1 is extended and transformed to form the link represented by example VC 2. This successful adaptation of a key gesture — the first sounds the listener hears — parallels the skill with which Brian forges links between his 'new' melody and material familiar from earlier in the movement.

The 'new' melody

The calm span of music (from fig.27) displays Brian's powers of allusive motivic development at their most acute, as well as being a passage of great melodic appeal. As a blend of elements from the first subject group into a fresh shape, the 'new'melody succeeds in coming both as a surprise and as the logical goal of the movement on a broader scale. In the immediate context, the transition represented by example VC 2 above ensures that the melody is a point of arrival. The thematic focus present in the

melody (illustrated below) represents the culmination of such developments in the movement. This is emphasised by the fact that it is the only melody in the entire movement which is presented twice in immediate succession, firstly on clarinets and bassoons — a mellow colouring favoured by Brian — and then by the soloist with orchestral accompaniment. The initial appearance is quoted in full below, to show the fluidity of Brian's melodic thinking at this juncture.

EXAMPLE VC 3

Violin Concerto I. 27: 6-12



The version which follows with solo violin leading, includes a canon between the latter (doubled by second violins, in octaves, and solo flute) and solo cor anglais and horn. We have already observed Brian's fondness for contrapuntal imitation, and its frequent use as a developmental feature, for example in the opening movement of Symphony No. 3. Here, the use of strict canon enhances the texture of the melody on its repetition, while further underlining the importance of this passage in the movement as a whole. The spacious treatment of this melody is unusual in Brian, and therefore all the more noteworthy.

EXAMPLE VC 4

Violin Concerto I, 28: 1-3



Motivic ideas

As the examples which follow demonstrate, two ideas from the opening passsage of stormy music that constitutes the first subject group are crucial elements in the shape of the 'new' melody. These are bracketed as "1" and "m" in example VC 5(a) below. Their modifications are shown in example VC 5(b). The coherence of this opening movement is greatly enhanced by the deployment of distinctive melodic and/or motivic ideas such as '1' and 'm' to signal important points along the musical path.

EXAMPLE VC 5(a)

Violin Concerto I, bars 2-4, solo violin part



EXAMPLE VC 5(b)

Violin Concerto I, 27: 6-12, clarinet part



A look at the melodic line of examples VC 3 and 5 above shows how Brian reconstitutes the motives in the first quote to give a completely different feel in the second example. The differences in orchestration and dynamics, as well the tempo indications of the full score, namely Allegro Moderato at the opening, and Lento at fig.27:6 (there are no such annotations in the short score) enhance this effect. The following discussion details the instances of '1' and 'm' respectively throughout the movement, showing how fluid and resourceful is Brian's use of these small but significant ideas.

(a) Motif 'L'

The bars which immediately follow the opening gesture (illustrated as example VC 1 above), mark the onset of a freely developing span which presents a series of motives which are to prove crucial to the ongoing musical argument, before reaching their apogee in examples VC 3 and 4. The short score of the beginning of this passage does not include the parallel lines found in the full score between the third and fourth beats of the first bar of the extract, but does have tempo indications which denote a similar effect (see the Rit and Tempo markings). In performance, these have the unsettling effect of disturbing the listener's sense of pulse in the music, almost as soon as it has been established. This contrasts very vividly with the strong sense of calm continuity characteristic of the second subject.

EXAMPLE VC 6

Violin Concerto 1, bars 2-4



Brian's use of gestural and motivic repetition to map out the various parts of his movement can also be seen in his treatment of "I" from example VC 5(a), which is the first entry of the soloist in the work. Table 3 details the most prominent appearances of this shape, which by consequence comes to acquire something of the character of a head-motif. In fact, it is heard at both the beginning and end of this movement, and the contrast between those presentations highlights the progression of the musical argument.

Place in score	Description
Bar 2	Exposition
4:1	Exposition
17:1	Restatement
19:1	Restatement
22:1	Accompanied cadenza
33:3	Coda

Table VC 2: Appearances of motif "l"

It is interesting to note that motif '1' is not featured during the development section mentioned in table 1. This supports the contention that is used to mark significant divisions between sections, rather than as part of an ongoing block of material. The dual appearance in the exposition offers a link — albeit a tangential one — with the idea of a double statement of themes in a concerto, one for orchestra, and one featuring the soloist. This idea of a double statement of themes was a significant factor in the layout of the opening movement of Symphony No.3, as detailed in the chapter on that work. Here, however, Brian introduces idea "1" in the solo instrument first, and it is heard subsequently as part of an ongoing development from the opening in the orchestra. This subsequent appearance is shown as example VC 7, which provides only an outline of the rich orchestral detail at this point in the full score.

EXAMPLE VC 7

Violin Concerto 1, 4:1-2



The double restatement of this idea is similarly placed. One can regard the appearance at fig. 17 as signalling the beginning of a recapitulation, but one in which themes are

still being developed in new ways. In contrast to the C minor tonality of "l" in bar 2, here the key suggested is C major. The example below is a further illustration of the flexibility with which Brian treats his ideas.

EXAMPLE VC 8

Violin Concerto 1, 17:1-3



If this is interpreted as being symptomatic of a brighter mood, the second appearance in the restatement, at fig. 19 is in Brian's toughest contrapuntal vein. Indeed the scoring of this passage anticipates the hard-edged sonorities (with prominent glockenspiel, snare drums, bass drum and cymbals) which were to feature significantly in his later symphonies.

EXAMPLE VC 9

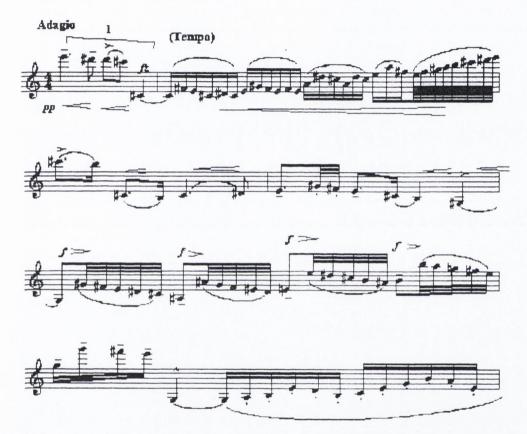
Violin Concerto 1, 19:1-3



At the start of the accompanied cadenza, the rhythmic shape of "l" is maintained, but there is a two-octave drop between the fourth and fifth notes which greatly exaggerates the downward curve of the idea. The continuation is rhapsodic and light textured, in contrast to the start of the movement. The rhapsodic nature of the material at this point and its highly ornate character exhibit something of the character of an accompanied reverie. The capricious and virtuosic writing for the solo instrument lends itself to the idea of a cadenza.

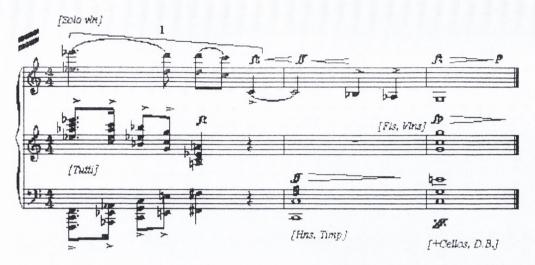
EXAMPLE VC 10

Violin Concerto 1. 22:1-23:3



The final appearance of "1" comes at the end of the movement, once again in the solo instrument. As in the above example there is a drop of two octaves, from the highest note of the violin octave to the succeeding C. The C major chord in the orchestra is darkened by the final descending line of the soloist, which moves from C to G via B flat and A flat. These final four notes also echo the beginning of the new melody in an allusive way typical of Brian, as well as referring back to the bars immediately preceding the arrival of that new melody, quoted above as example VC 2.

Violin Concerto 1. 33:3-5



(b) Motif 'M'

The genealogy of the 'new' melody is effectively completed by comparing the figure "m" in the second bar with another prominent idea from the first subject group, first heard in the bar before fig.1. This idea is heard equally prominently on two other occasions later in the movement, before it is heard in a different context in the closing stages. The four semiquaver idea, rising and falling by step, is deprived of the tie linking the first of the four to the preceding crotchet, but the closeness of the relationship is nonetheless apparent.

EXAMPLE VC 12

Violin Concerto I, 1: 1-2



Indeed, the composer emphasises the closeness of this connection by the appearance of example VC 12, starting in the key of G flat major, immediately after the version of the 'new' melody whose beginning is quoted as example VC 5(b).

Brian's treatment of example VC 12 is somewhat atypical, in that the fluid treatment of motif 'l' is contrasted with the unchanging nature of 'm' on its three subsequent appearances in the movement. The table below chronicles these appearances, and the narrow range shown by the keys used seems indicative of a desire to retain the sound quality of the initial version, and thereby make it clearly recognisable on each reappearance. The non-developmental nature of these instances means that they stand out in relief from the surrounding music, and create clearly audible signposts throughout the movement.

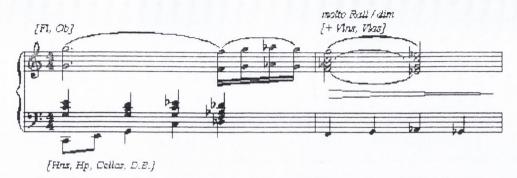
Place in score	Description	Key
Bar 10	Exposition	E flat major
18:1	Restatement	F major
21:1	Restatement	E major
28:8	After 'new' theme	G flat major

Table VC 3: Appearances of motif 'm'

The triadic nature of the idea is used to restore a sense of key centre after some less tonally stable music in each instance apart form the final one. This is an important factor in preparing the ear for the stable harmonies that accompany the new melody, and is further evidence of the care Brian takes to integrate the triadic and non-triadic in his musical language, as he had done in the opening movement of the Third Symphony.

Further to these examples, idea "m" is referred to in two cases in a calmer context than the more striving tone of the four appearances tabulated above. At fig. 21:3 and 4 it is varied somewhat, but the four semiquavers link these two bars, illustrated below, to example VC 12. They occur immediately before the accompanied cadenza, and immediately after the third appearance from table VC 3. This proximity serves to underline the connection between the two ideas.

Violin Concerto 1, 21: 3-4



The other variant of 'm' follows immediately the appearance of the 'new' melody and the fourth and final occurrence of example VC 12 in the movement which follows it. This sequential passage makes further use of the essence of example VC 12, but once again without the tied note. The beginning of this sequence — in typical Brian fashion it is rhythmically exact but varied in terms of pitch transpositions — is shown below as it appears in the short score, without the flourishes found in the solo violin part of the full score. Motif "m" is bracketed.

EXAMPLE VC 14

Violin Concerto 1, 29: 1-2



The transformations of motives just detailed define the Lento span which begins with the 'new' melody as developmental, as well as a culmination of such processes in the movement. If one thinks of these developmental processes as intensifying the musical argument, however, that is not the effect here. The music winds down in the bars immediately preceding the new melody — illustrated above as example VC 2 — in a way which makes the closing section of the movement a cathartic point of repose. The effect is not so much one of triumph or a release of tension, as a transcendence of that tension, which had featured so strongly earlier in the movement. This final reference to the shape of the latter is further evidence of the dramatic course of the movement, from the external and forceful, to the internal and subdued

The second subject

In contrast to the various contexts in which Brian makes reference to the ideas just discussed from the beginning of the first subject group, the second subject is only heard twice in full in the movement. There are some change made to the detail, but not the overall character of the melody. The second time it appears — at 33:1 as detailed in table 1 — the third of its four two-bar phrases is altered. However, the opening phrase is instantly recognisable. The melodic shape is straightforward, and the triadic harmonies which support it offer a strong contrast with the first subject material. It first appears, at fig.5, with a harmonic support which begins and ends in G major. It is quoted in full below to illustrate the relative simplicity of its nature.

EXAMPLE VC 15

Violin Concerto 1, 5:1-6:1 (solo violin)





The clear emphasis on G major lends a closed quality to the melodic and harmonic statement, which is accentuated by the music which precedes and follows it. A development from the first subject group halts expectantly in the bar before the theme

enters (as shown in example VC 16(a)), in such a way that the voice leading may suggest G major as a possible goal. However the pause paves the way for the complete change of tone and texture that follows. This type of expectant pause is one of the fingerprints of Brian's style, particularly in the later works. After the melodic and harmonic closure of the fourth phrase, Brian opens the music out once again by the change to 12/8 for the next span, which uses the figure of four semiquavers from the first bar of the theme as part of a developing passage. This change is shown in example VC 16(b).

EXAMPLE VC 16(a)

Violin Concerto 1. 4:6-7



EXAMPLE VC 16(b)

Violin Concerto 1, 6:1-2 (solo violin)



The relative self-sufficiency of this theme, and the manner in which it stands out in relief from the surrounding music. leads one to speculate if this theme — and its accompanying harmony, were remembered from the vanished Concerto No.1. One may also ponder if it is inserted into the present work at a similar juncture to that occupied in the latter. Whether that was the case or not, the contrast with the surrounding music can also be read as an extreme presentation of the dichotomy between stormy and calm passages symptomatic of this first movement. Brian, an

experienced composer by this time, was unlikely to include a theme on a whim of memory, and takes care to integrate it into the broad context of the type of discourse found in the movement. The use of parts of this theme in other contexts shows Brian taking measures to integrate the theme into the fabric of the movement, whatever its origins may have been. This parallels the case of the other most memorable melodic idea in the movement, the 'new' melody already discussed.

The beginning of the first of these instances has already been illustrated in example VC 16(b), and is typical of Brian's developmental practise, in that the relationship to the original material is clear, but not too close. The reference to 'n' from example VC 15 — closely related to 'm' discussed above — in example VC 16(b) is allusive, but none the less clear for that. The emphasis is rather on presenting ideas such as 'n' in new contexts. The second clear reference, this time to the start of example VC 15, is shown as example VC 17, and initiates a passage which echoes the lighter tone of the melody as it progresses, but using florid writing for the soloist which anticipates the accompanied cadenza later in the movement. This is part of what was referred to in table VC 1 as the development.

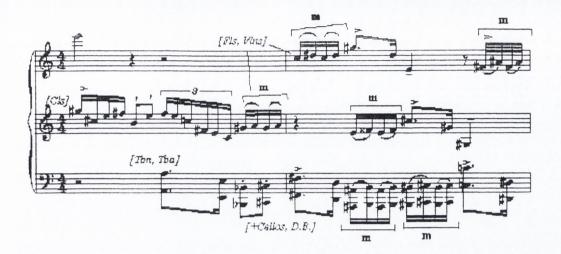
Violin Concerto 1, 13:1-2



The development section

This section of the movement begins as in example VC 18. This beginning refers to elements of both subject groups, in particular in the use of semiquavers. While the motivic elements are more closely related to the second subject — in particular 'm' as bracketed in the example — the tone of the passage is reminiscent of the opening paragraph of the movement. This suggests a greater focus on textural blocks, and the contrasts between them, than on a purely thematic argument. As we have seen, this textural focus was a prominent characteristic of both the Second and Third Symphonies.

Violin Concerto 1, 11:1-2



Three further brief examples from developmental passages will serve to show the links forged by Brian to keep a unifying thread running through the wide range of his musical invention in this movement. The first occurs in the opening span for soloist and orchestra, and features a four semiquaver figure which, in inverted form, is a prominent motif in the lyrical second subject (see the first bar of example VC 15).

EXAMPLE VC 19

Violin Concerto 1. 3:2-3 (solo violin)



The inverted form of this motif figures prominently around fig.12. as well as a twonote idea which is related to example VC 12. The two ideas are treated in a mosaic-like fashion which results in the music constantly assuming new shapes. These can be seen in the score to be derived from earlier motives, but not in a way which draws a parallel between their overall shapes. This elusiveness, or allusiveness, is a trait of Brian's developmental practise, and may result from a desire to avoid too much literal restatement of ideas. and to compose in a freely developing, almost improvisatory manner.

Violin Concerto 1, 12:1-2 (1st violins)



The third extract is once again heard in violins as part of an orchestral texture, and uses the four semiquaver idea in another context, this time countered by a different rhythmic figure in the solo part. The effect of an intense dialogue between soloist and orchestra, in which the former is in frequent danger of being submerged by the latter, is characteristic of much of the writing for soloist and orchestra in combination in the opening movement. In fact the opening section of the movement consists of just such a textural mix, with the solo violin engaged in an unequal exchange with the orchestral forces. The present passage clearly refers back to that textural battleground.

EXAMPLE VC 21

Violin Concerto 1, 15:4-16:2 (solo violin and 1st violins)



Balance between soloist and orchestra

The imbalance just referred to is a main characteristic of the earlier parts of this opening movement. The sense of struggle thus engendered is beautifully countered by the lyrical concluding stages, once the 'new' melody has been introduced. A closer examination of how the composer divides the material between solo instrument and the orchestra reveals the care taken by Brian to achieve the balance that contributes to the success of the movement as a whole. In fact, the contrast between purely orchestral

textures and passages which feature soloist and orchestra simultaneously is one of the crucial elements in the structure of the movement. In this respect, the Violin Concerto displays an imaginative adoption of the concerto principle. The longest span without the soloist comes with the restatement of the first subject material, as can be seen in the following table, which charts the relationship between soloist and orchestra throughout the movement according to the terms of table 1.

Place in score	Number of bars	Description	Scoring
Bar 1 to 4:1	40	First subject group	Violin/Orchestra
4:1: to 4:7	7		Orchestra
5:1 to 11:1	39	Second subject group	Violin/Orchestra
11:1 to 12:5	12	Development	Orchestra
13:1 to 16:4	18		Violin/Orchestra
17:1 to 21:4	35	Restatement of subject 1	Orchestra
22:1 to 26:5	19	Accompanied cadenza	Violin/Orchestra
27:1 to 27:12	12	Link and 'new' melody	Orchestra
28:1 to 33:5	35	'New' melody and coda	Violin/Orchestra

Table VC 4: Sections and their scoring

The table shows clearly that Brian uses the instrumental disposition of his forces to mark significant structural moments in the movement. The seven bar gap inserted before the second subject — from 4:1 to 4:7 — maximises the impact of the entry of that subject on the solo instrument. The gap also emphasises a change in the nature of the textures featuring orchestra and solo instrument. The relationship between soloist and orchestra is combative in the opening paragraph. The second subject, by contrast, presents the two as mutually complementary, with the orchestra providing a sympathetic accompaniment to the melody played by the violin. The contrast between these two textural types is resolved in the final section of the movement, with the 'new' melody as a signal for the change. There is a four and a half bar gap in the final lyrical section from 28:1 before the solo instrument plays the second subject for the final time. This is not given a separate entry in the table because the effect, as just described, is similar to that earlier in the movement, but without a change in the nature of the musical discourse. The serene, lyrical flow of the music remains constant to the final bars.

As the table illustrates Brian divides his development section into two distinct spans, one featuring the soloist, and the other scored exclusively for the orchestra. This manner of dividing spans of music was also observed in the first movement of the Third Symphony, with regard to the use of the two pianos (see table 3:3 in the chapter on that movement). The technique of alternating between textures that feature the solo instrument(s) and purely orchestral sections is common to both concerto and symphony. The decision to give the restatement of the first subject to the orchestra alone is clearly predicated by the placing of the accompanied cadenza immediately afterwards. The double statement of the new theme has already been noted, and how the sympathetic, rather than combative nature of the orchestral accompaniment at that point is a significant factor in the passage being viewed as the culmination of the movement. This reflects the fact that the relationship between soloist and orchestra is one of the prime factors in creating a satisfactory and clear musical shape to the movement.

Conclusion

If we compare the calm of examples VC 3 and 4 with the turbulent beginning of the work (ex VC 6), the type of journey represented by this first movement becomes clear. The symphonic nature of the discourse of this opening movement is coloured by the prominent use of a solo instrument, much as the symphonic discourse of the opening movement of Symphony No.3 is coloured by the often soloistic writing for the two pianos. The writing of the symphony --- and the problems it raised with regard to the treatment of the solo instruments -- was a crucial forerunner of Brian's technique in the present work. He may have 'resolved the Concerto into a Symphony', but the struggle to balance two prominently featured pianos with a large orchestra — and the resultant type of discourse — have an important part to play in determining what type of concerto Brian would write. He eschews display for its own sake here - to some extent that comes in the cadenza of the finale — which is not to say that the solo part is anything less than extremely taxing. In contrast to the first movement of the Third Symphony, which has double statements of both themes in the opening section — and arguably, as a consequence, a closer relationship to a traditional concerto — Brian eschews the double statement of themes. The exception to this — significantly — is the 'new' theme. This marks clearly the significance of this melody — and its manner of presentation — within the context of the whole movement.

One can neatly summarise the relationship between concerto and symphony in these two Brian works by stating that the uniqueness of the first movement of No.3 stems from the influence of the concerto principle, whereas the individuality of the first movement of the Violin Concerto is a result of the adoption of Brian's unique symphonic manner to the demands of writing a concerto. This cross-fertilisation is not unique to Brian, with the most striking example of a fusion of genres coming with the title — and the nature — of the Cello Symphony, op.68 (1963) by Benjamin Britten (1913–76). The relationship between solo instrument and orchestra alters somewhat with the succeeding movements of the two works. In the Third Symphony, the pianos are recalled, but not used as prominently, at least partly because Brian had 'resolved the Concerto into a Symphony'. In the Violin Concerto, the relationship between soloist and orchestra is approached from varying perspectives in the slow movement and finale, but without diluting the prominent role of the solo violin.

Lento

Overview

According to Malcolm MacDonald, this movement is 'cast as a passacaglia'.¹⁶⁰ He goes on to describe it as 'a superb demonstration of his (Brian's) powers of variation'. This description accurately characterises one of Brian's most cogent and tightly argued movements. The twin disciplines of passacaglia and variation forms are blended with a more rhapsodic element to produce a structure that is at once fluid, and clearly delineated. The theme of the movement is announced in the bass — thus the resemblance to a passacaglia — and thereafter presented in a succession of different textural and harmonic contexts, as is the case in variation form. The table below shows a sectional division of the movement, as well as the length of those sections.

¹⁶⁰ MacDonald, 'Havergal Brain, Violin Concerto, Symphony No.18, The Jolly Miller (Overture), 6.

Place in score	Description	Number of bars
33:6 to 33:13	Theme	8
34:1 to 35:2	Variation 1	8
35:3 to 36:7	Variation 2 + link	11
37:1 to 38:4	Variation 3 + link	10
39:1 to 40:5	Variation 4	11
41:1 to 41:8	Variation 5	8
42:1 to 42:8	Variation 6	8
43:1 to 43:8	Variation 7	8
44:1 to 45:4	Variation 8	8
46:1 to 49:2	Link + Variation 9	17
49:3 to 50:4	Variation 10	8
50:5 to 51:6	Variation 11	8
52:1 to 53:5	Development	15
54:1 to 55:5	Interlude + Link	13
56:1 to 56:8	Variation 12	8
57:1 to 57:4	Link	4
57:5 to 58:8	Variation 13	8
58:9 to 58:12	Coda	4

Table VC 5: Second movement sections

As can be seen in the above table, the length of the theme is subject to variation as the movement unfolds, and in fact there is a link established between individual variations and what are referred to above as, respectively, development and interlude in this area. The Link and Variation 9 section, as the furthest removed from the length of the original theme, paves the way for the two more rhapsodic sections which follow it. This deviation from the periodicity of the theme is one way in which Brian links the variations with the freer passages.

The table below details the note — which often corresponds to a diatonic key — on which each appearance of the passacaglia theme begins. The importance of C and A both here and in the coda — see example VC 27(b) below — show Brian skilfully

linking the smaller details of his design to the larger conception of the structure of the movement.

Section	First note
Theme	С
Variation 1	С
Variation 2	С
Variation 3	А
Variation 4	А
Variation 5	А
Variation 6	А
Variation 7	А
Variation 8	B flat
Variation 9	G
Variation 10	С
Variation 11	С
Variation 12	С
Variation 13	С

Table VC 6: Opening pitch of passacaglia theme

Brian's success in this movement lies in the skill with which he blends the tightly argued variations with freer, more rhapsodic music, in which latter sections he can indulge his characteristic inventiveness and sense of improvisational fantasy. The blend of rhapsody and variation works as a unity, with neither supplanting the other as the movement unfolds: in fact the two types of writing complement each other. A possible model for the blend referred to above can be found in a work by Frederick Delius, a composer Brian greatly admired, as can be seen in the articles he wrote on him for *Musical Opinion*.¹⁶¹ Delius's *Brigg Fair* (1907), described by its composer as 'an English Rhapsody' is cast as a set of variations which also incorporates freer material. This free material — which can be characterised as rhapsodic — is first heard at the beginning of the work, as an atmospheric prelude to the arrival of the main theme. The successful mix of the distinctive sound world of the composer with the

¹⁶¹ See the articles in Malcolm MacDonald (ed.), *Havergal Brian on Music, vol. 1: British Music* (Toccata Press, 1986), 99-145.

demands of variation form represents a similar confluence of seemingly disparate compositional approaches as Brian's fusion of the symphonic with the rhapsodic (which was, as we have seen, also a factor in Symphonies 2 and 3). This comparison is discussed in more detail below.

Thematic material: variation and development

Brian's theme is constructed as an 8-bar unit which subdivides into four phrases of two bars each, as can be seen in example VC 22.

EXAMPLE VC 22

Violin Concerto 11, 33:6-13 (bass)



Brian paves the way for the freer passages later in the movement by following a path found in many sets of variations, namely the progressive distancing of the relationship between theme and each successive variation. A fine example of this type of gradual development from the premise of the opening theme may be found in the last movement of the Fourth Symphony (1884) of Johannes Brahms (1833-97), which is also written as a passacaglia. In the present movement the first three variations are all very closely related to the original theme, and are roughly the same length with a link accounting for the extra bars in variations 2 and 3. In the fourth variation Brian introduces the first change of time signature in the movement, from 3/4 to 4/4. In addition to this he includes additional bars between segments of the original bass line. This process can be seen in example VC 23 below. The smaller stave includes the original passacaglia transposed and rhythmically altered to correspond with the stave above. It clearly reveals the addition of new material to the passacaglia theme in the fifth bar, as well as the rhythmic displacement which fits the theme into the new time signature.

Violin Concerto 11. 39:1-40:5



The eighth and ninth bars of the above example also contain new material, with the former clearly developing the triplets from the previous bar, and the latter extending the idea of downward steps typical of much of the theme. This shows Brian moving away from strict adherence to the outline of the original bass line within a clearly defined variation structure that is nonetheless still closely related to the original shape.

This idea of extension and development is carried even further in variation 8, whose extensive reworking of the original bass line is quoted in example VC 24. The example, like example VC 23, presents the original theme transposed to B flat underneath this, making both the connection to the original, and the freer material used, quite apparent.

Violin Concerto 11. 44:1-45:4



It is but a short step from the freedom shown above in the treatment of the main theme, to the writing found in the episodes in this movement where the variation sequence is broken. It is apt that the variation which follows the example just quoted is the most elaborate: not only does it incorporate freer material — see example VC 28 below — but there are three different time signatures (4/2, 3/2 and 2/2) used in its course. Following this, the placement of two variations of eight bars each is acute: a sense of the original shape — and length — of the theme is reintroduced before the onset of the most freely developmental music in the movement.

As the movement progresses, the journey from theme, via freely developing variations, to independent material unfolds with clarity. Brian's treatment of his theme progresses in a carefully graded fashion toward greater freedom. As the relationship between theme and variation becomes progressively more remote, the ear is led towards an acceptance of the independent material without a loss of continuity or coherence. Thus the thread of the original theme is not lost, and the 'Development' and 'Interlude and Link' passages are rendered more effective because of the contrast with the immediately preceding variations.

Link passages

The links referred to in table VC 5 can be seen to have important structural functions, as well as effecting the deviations in length from the original passacaglia theme. The first of these occurs in variation 2, which presents the original theme in canon at the distance of one bar. The link here effects a change in the pitch — and the accompanying harmony — of the theme. The theme begins on A rather than the original C in the following variation 3. The following link (at the end of variation 3) is succeeded by a change of time signature — from 3/4 to 4/4 — for the next variation. Thus the changes in the length of each of these variations are complemented by alterations to harmony and time signature respectively. These two examples early in the movement show the composer taking pains to create as smooth a progression as possible from one variation to the next, in contrast to his more frequent juxtaposition of disparate blocks of material. This is paradoxically eschewed within a formal layout that can often result in separate blocks — or variations — which elaborate on the theme in a different manner.

The link following variation 8 introduces a gesture which is to be an integral part of the ensuing variation 9. The fact that a characteristic feature of this variation is anticipated in the bars before the variation proper begins can clearly be seen in the following example. In the example the first two notes of the theme (G and F sharp) can be seen in the upper part of the bottom stave. A comparison of the first and third bars of the following example shows how Brian presents material crucial to the variation before the first notes of the theme — on which the variation is founded — are actually heard. Link and succeeding variation are thus fused, making a smooth transition which contrasts with the more abrupt juxtapositions characteristic of much of the composer's music.

Violin Concerto 11. 46:3-5



This is one way in which the composer binds together the thematic and the rhapsodic. The two later link passages are united by the use of a common harmonic area. The link into variation 12 takes the music from E major back to the original key of C, whereas the link to variation 13 moves in the opposite direction, ending on a unison E. The line played by the first violins at this point bears a close resemblance to the opening theme of the movement, transposed to begin on F. The top part of the following example shows this connection clearly.

EXAMPLE VC 26

Violin Concerto 11. 57:1-4



The final extension of the length of the theme encompasses the coda, which is of four bars' duration, like the link before the final variation. It traces a simple harmonic path using four major triads in succession: A, G, F and C major present the listener with a beautiful final cadence which also unites in a straightforward manner the most prominent harmonic areas of the entire movement. This final cadence, in typical Brian fashion, is not a perfect cadence, but a plagal one. Brian includes in the full score a request for ' a long wait before No. 3 please'. Clearly the sense of repose and calm in this final cadence should not be immediately juxtaposed with the extrovert beginning of the final movement. The following example shows how the coda appears in the short score. The barest outline is provided of the harmonies found in the full score. These are reduced by the author in example VC 27(b), which also features a change of time signature from Brian's short score. The rhythmic proportions are slightly altered in the second bar of the example to fit the new time signature.

EXAMPLE VC 27(a)

Violin Concerto 11. 58: 7-10



EXAMPLE VC 27(b)

Violin Concerto 11, 58: 7-10



The freer passages

The sections referred to above as 'Development' and 'Interlude and Link' can be construed as the climax of the movement and its aftermath. Neither is based on the passacaglia theme which has dominated the movement thus far. However, there is, in each case, a rather tangential relationship to some of the salient characteristics of the theme, in an allusive manner which is typical of the composer. In the case of the 'Development', there is a change of time signature from 3/2 to 2/2 at the beginning of the passage. This leads to a climactic figure on tubas and bassoons which corresponds to the shape of a step downwards followed by a leap found in the theme, but with intervening descending quavers. The fact that this partial resemblance occurs in the

bass emphasises the connection with the original appearance of the passacaglia theme. The parts that resemble the theme are bracketed.

EXAMPLE VC 28

Violin Concerto 11, 52:5-7



EXAMPLE VC 29

Violin Concerto 11, 53:1-3 (bass)



The quavers in the above example are a continuation of the quaver motion found in the preceding bars, and lend the gesture a sense of momentum which is climactic. In typical Brian fashion, however, the ensuing bars break off expectantly, only to be followed by a change of direction. The 'Interlude' contrasts strongly with the passage just discussed. Strings and solo violin begin a 3/4 Lento passage that lasts the same length as the original theme, namely eight bars. There is then a five bar link to variation 12, which, as discussed above, takes the music from E back to C. The bass line of the 'Interlude' is phrased initially as two two-bar units, and the rhythm in the second and fourth bars corresponds in emphasis to that of the opening theme. This presents an allusion to the phrasing of the theme in what is ostensibly a departure from the strict passacaglia/variation structure of the bulk of the movement. This is further strengthened by the similar rhythm in the second and fourth bars. The allusive link forged in this manner unifies the material of the movement in a manner typical of the composer. The beginning of the passage is illustrated below.

Violin Concerto 11. 54:1-4 (bass)



Balance between soloist and orchestra

The clarity of outline found in the second movement is further enhanced in the way in which Brian distributes the material between passages which are led by the solo instrument, and those of a purely orchestral nature. As can be seen in table VC 7 below, the solo violin does not dominate throughout. The opening and closing bars of the movement are given to the orchestra alone, thus effectively framing the alternation between solo-led sections and purely orchestral stretches in the body of the movement.

Section	Instrumentation
Theme	Orchestra
Variation 1	Violin and Orchestra
Variation 2	Violin and Orchestra
Variation 3	Violin and Orchestra
Variation 4	Orchestra
Variation 5	Violin and Orchestra
Variation 6	Violin and Orchestra
Variation 7	Violin and Orchestra
Variation 8	Orchestra
Link + Variation 9	Violin and Orchestra
Variation 10	Violin and Orchestra
Variation 11	Violin and Orchestra
Development	Orchestra
Interlude	Violin and Orchestra
Link	Orchestra
Variation 12	Violin and Orchestra
Link	Orchestra
Variation 13	Violin and Orchestra
Coda	Orchestra

Table VC 7: Second movement scoring

It is noteworthy, however, that the orchestral sections are mostly concerned with disrupting the periodicity of much of the music. Variation 4 and the 'Development' provide the clearest examples of this idea. Variation 8 provides the exception to this, but it is followed by the more rhapsodic variation 9, where the soloist features prominently. Variation 8 can thus be seen as a preparatory contrast in textural terms to that variation. The two link passages found in the latter stages of the movement — as well as the four bar coda quoted as example VC 27(b) — are placed as connecting tissues between the simpler, more periodic structures of the last two variations. The absence of the solo instrument in each instance makes this separation of function very clear. In the context of the entire work it makes sense to end the movement without the

soloist, since the third and final movement begins with the opening theme on solo violin.

Delius's Brigg Fair: some points of comparison

The journalistic writings of Havergal Brian reveal a particular admiration for the music of Frederick Delius, as referred to above. The influence of Delius on Brian's music is reflected less in the actual sound world of the music than that of such figures as Elgar and Strauss, for example, partly because of the unique voice heard in the music of the former. The distinctive harmonic idiom found in Delius's mature music is instantly recognisable, and it is true to say that Brian's music never sounds like that of his compatriot (again in contrast to the clearly audible echoes of Elgar and Strauss, particularly in the early orchestral works, as discussed above). Brian's essentially contrapuntal mode of thought contrasts with the more harmonic minded manner of Delius. However, a formal model for the slow movement of the Brian Violin Concerto can be discerned in Brigg Fair (1907), which Delius describes as 'an English Rhapsody'. The latter is in variation form, and like the slow movement of the Brian, it incorporates freer material within the confines of what is often a closely bound form. The use of the word 'Rhapsody' in the composer's description points towards his aim of reconciling the improvisatory nature of his mature style with a structure which lends itself to clear sectional divisions and periodicity.

The following table shows the formal layout of the Delius work, and a comparison with table VC 5 above serves to illustrate how it can be compared with the slow movement of the Brian:

Section	Number of bars
Introduction	19
Theme	16
Variation 1	16
Variation 2	16
Variation 3 + Link	21
Variation 4	20
Variation 5	16
Variation 6 + Link	23
Interlude	46
Variation 7	9
Variation 8 + Link	12
Variation 9	16
Variation 10/Development	24
Variation 11	11
Variation 12	9
Transition	13
Variation 13	8
Variation 14	16
Variation 15	21
Variation 16 + Link	46
Variation 17 + Coda	24

Table VC 8: "Brigg Fair": sections

The independent material in the Delius work is introduced in a different way from Brian in his slow movement. As we have seen. Brian departs gradually from the parameters of the original theme as the movement unfolds. Delius, in contrast, begins his work with material he later recalls in the 'Interlude' section (and elsewhere), so that the piece is clearly based on the two strands. These are represented by the introduction to the eponymous folk-song, and the folk-song itself. In both the Brian and the Delius, the main theme is restated in a simpler form as the work winds down to a peaceful close, completing a satisfactory formal arch which moves from simplicity to complexity and back again.

The table above also details how Delius places variations carefully throughout the work which remind the listener of the periodicity of the original theme (as in variations 5,6,9 and 14). Brian achieves a similar effect with his variation 12. This provides relief from the increasing complexity of the surrounding variations. Both composers can be seen to use changes in time signature to give the variation process a fresh impetus. Variation 7 of the Delius presents the theme in 3/4, rhythmically altered, while variation 11 is a funereal march in which the theme is heard in a 4/4 variant. The use of tolling bells in this distinctive variation is referred to tellingly at the climax of the work Theme and variant are given as examples VC 31(a) and (b).

EXAMPLE VC 31(a)

Delius: Brigg Fair: Theme (bars 20-35: oboe)



EXAMPLE VC 31(b)

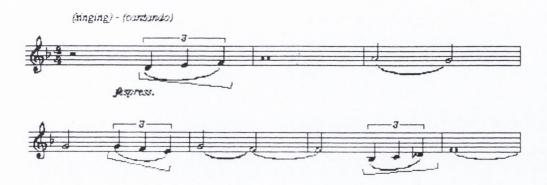
Delius: Brigg Fair: Variation 11 (bars254-7: trumpet)



The use of links between variations is also common to both works, whether that link is a motivic or textural continuation. Periodic variants are extended in this way, Brian in variations 2 and 3. Delius in his variations 3. 6 and 8. This creates a fluidity in both works which leans towards the rhapsodic. The central 'Interlude' of *Brigg Fair* is linked to the folk song which gives the work its name by the use of the same three opening notes in the violin line of the former (and its subsequent repetition — once in inversion — as that line unfolds). The opening bars of the violin line of the 'Interlude' are given below, with the reference to the eponymous folk song bracketed.

EXAMPLE VC 32

Delius: Brigg Fair: Interlude (bars 150-6: violins I)



This bears comparison with the connections discussed in examples VC 29 and 30 above from the Brian. The material is different, and yet related in a way which once again suggest a meeting place between the rhapsodic and the symphonic, or the freely allusive and the more closely developmental.

One can speculate as to a possible further point of contact between the two pieces. The Delius is based on a folk song introduced to him by Percy Grainger. The Brian, of course, does not feature folk song, but it, too, could have had its basis in pre-existing material, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Could one of the themes which Brian was able to recall from the lost concerto have been the passacaglia bass of the slow movement? Had Brian written a passacaglia-based slow movement for what is referred to above as Violin Concerto No.1, he would have been very likely to remember the bass line which was the springboard for the movement. It is possible, therefore, and intriguing to speculate that the Brian, too, but in a very different sense, was composed using pre-existing material as a starting-point.

Conclusion

Both passacaglia and variation forms are based on the periodic repetition of a thematic unit. The unfolding of a work in either form often leads to the abandonment of that regularity as the variations or repetitions proceed, to a point where the surface of the music seems to bear little relation to the initial idea. Part of the challenge posed by the form lies in the successful creation of music very different from, but related to, the main theme. The skill of the composer lies in guiding the listener through that process of transformation, so that the binding logic and sense of unity of the work is not lost. Brian succeeds admirably in unifying this movement through the subtle motivic links discussed above. He also succeeds in adapting his style — but not compromising it to the demands of a form that would appear to be at odds with the rhapsodic tendencies in the two symphonies discussed in this thesis.

The choice of C major as the central key for this movement may seem an odd one, in view of the fact that both outer movements are also centred around C. The use of the same tonal centre for all three movements could lead to a certain monotony in the harmonic colouring. Brian avoids this by the variety of his harmonic language — incorporation of both the triadic and the more chromatic — and also by different formal approaches in each movement. In the immediate context, the first movement, after a stormy beginning in an unstable C minor, proposes C major as a calm centre at the end. It is this mood which is taken up at the beginning of the second movement. Brian's placing of the 'new' melody of the opening movement in E flat major, and his holding back from C major until the last bars of the movement, seems, as a consequence, acutely judged.

The peaceful coexistence of solo instrument and orchestra at the end of that movement also paves the way effectively for the relationship between the two in the slow movement, where they appear in alternation, rather than in opposition or conflict. The simplicity of the concluding pages of the movement thus round out a beautifully balanced design in which flexibility is blended with a stricter periodicity in a manner analogous to the blend of the rhapsodic and symphonic. The movement is a fine illustration of the tenet that the more restrictions placed on invention, the greater the freedom that can allow the natural voice of the composer to emerge. On this level, the slow movement — both closely argued and freely inventive — reveals Havergal Brian as a master of variation form.

Allegro Fuoco

Overview

The finale shares some characteristics with the opening movement, in particular in relation to the periodicity of some of its melodic ideas, and their diatonic contrast with the freely developing passages which follow them. There is a comparable relation to a sonata design, with both main themes stated in the tonic in the concluding pages. The finale, however, does not seek to transform the character of the themes as greatly at that juncture as was the case in the concluding section of the first movement. This is attributable to the overall trajectory of the finale, which ends in much the same bright manner as that in which it began, and so concludes the overall trajectory of the concerto. from a dark, highly chromatic opening to a brightly coloured diatonic conclusion.

The table below charts the main subdivisions of the final movement. One can discern a relationship to a sonata design, with two contrasting subjects which are restated as the movement reaches its latter stages. The exceptional section — in every sense — is the 'Interlude', the character of which will be discussed in due course. The cadenza is also presented as a separate event from the main concerns of the finale, but one with closer ties to the virtuoso writing for solo violin elsewhere in the work. The distinctive nature of both these sections, as well as their placement, enhances the clarity of the structure of the movement as a whole, further contributed to by the nature and manner of presentation of the two main themes on which the finale is based.

Place in score	Description
59:1 to 65:5	Theme 1 (example 33) + Development (1)
65:6 to 71:6	Theme 1 + Development (2)
72:1 to 77:3	Theme 2 (example 34) + Development
77:4 to 80:8	Interlude
81:1 to 86:1	Development
86:2 to 93:5	Cadenza
94:1 to 95:3	Link
96:1 to 101:6	Restatement of Theme 1 + Development
101:7 to 104:6	Restatement of Theme 2 + Coda

Table VC 9: Final movement sections

The two main themes

The contrast between two subjects characteristic of sonata style is treated in a distinctive, personal manner by Brian in this finale. As the movement progresses, he alters the relationship between the two significantly. Initially, although they share a similarity of scoring, they are presented as separate blocks. The second subject makes its initial appearance after a typically expectant hiatus to the second 'development' following the first theme.¹⁶² When both return in the latter stages of the movement, they form a continuous strain that propels the music toward the ebullient conclusion of the piece. In this manner, Brian has effectively brought his two themes closer together through the movement. This is in strong contrast to his practise in the opening movement of the Symphony No.2, discussed in detail above. In that movement, the effect is diametrically opposed to that found here. The themes are pushed further apart as the music progresses. The culmination of their reappearance in that movement is a massive climactic outburst followed by a rapid disintegration of textures, as compared with the bright concluding pages of the concerto.

The opening theme of this movement is given a double statement by the composer, as shown in table VC 9, the second statement being scored for orchestra without the participation of the soloist. The idea of a double statement of themes has been

¹⁶² See appendix 3, however, for a discussion of two extra bars in the short score at this point crossed out by Brian.

discussed in relation to the first movement of Symphony No.3, in the context of the likely origins of that movement as a concerto for piano(s) and orchestra. Theme 1 opens the present movement without preamble, and, unusually for Brian, the first eight bars are restated exactly at fig.96, after the link which follows the cadenza. This clear reference back to the opening of the finale marks a significant structural point. The opening of the first theme is seen below as it appears in the short score:

EXAMPLE VC 33

Violin Concerto III, 59:1-5



As can be seen from table VC 9, the theme is followed in each instance by a strenuous developmental passage. These passages are written in Brian's fluid motivically allusive manner, as was the case with the opening paragraph of the entire concerto. After the similar opening bars, however, the two passages diverge considerably. The blocks are comparable in terms of musical nature and function, but within them Brian is characteristically wide ranging in his invention. These developmental passages will be discussed in due course.

When Brian restates his opening theme at 96:1 he does not opt for a double statement of the theme as he had done at the outset. Instead, the single statement leads to the

ebullient final appearance of the second subject. The striking orchestration of this theme, with the broken chords of the short score given to pizzicato strings and harp, is maintained when the theme returns at 96:1. It is instructive to compare this type of writing — and its visual appearance in the short score as reproduced above — with the first four bars of the second theme. The common features of their initial bars are quite striking.

EXAMPLE VC 34

Violin Concerto III. 72:1-4



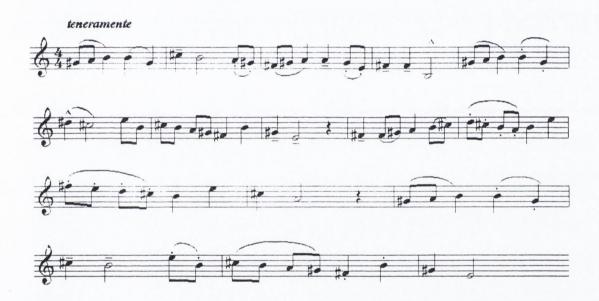
The scoring of the beginning of both themes — with pizzicato strings and harp accompanying the solo instrument — emphasises the fact that the themes complement, rather than oppose, each other. This is further confirmed by the return of both themes in C major in the concluding stages of the movement, where the continuity of tone and mood between the two — linked by the final developmental passage in the movement — propels the concerto to its bright, diatonic conclusion. At that stage of the finale, the two themes are heard as part of a single musical span which ends the work. in strong contrast to the first entry of the second subject, as outlined above.

The two themes do, however, offer a contrast as far as rhythm and key are concerned, so that there is never a question of one being indistinguishable from the other. This is, rather, a further case of Brian presenting, on the outside, a contrast between first and second themes, which is undercut by the shared features of scoring and general tone. The themes are contrasted in terms of the evolving, freely developing nature of the first — which changes to 6/4 at fig.60: 4, after much use of triplet crotchets in the 4/4 of the preceding bars — and the more regular phrasing of the second.

The nature of the second theme suggests a parallel with the theme from the first movement quoted above as example VC 15. as well as being comparable to that theme in terms of the placing of each in their respective movements. The latter corresponds — in a manner similar to example VC 34 — with a lyrical second subject as part of a sonata layout in the first movement. There is a further similarity discernible in the clearly presented periodicity of the two ideas, and how this contrasts with the evolving nature of the first subject spans in each case. To illustrate this, the second subject of the finale is quoted below in full, as it appears on the solo violin:

EXAMPLE VC 35

Violin Concerto III, 72:1-74:2 (solo violin)



After the complexity of much of the opening paragraph of the finale following the entry of example VC 33, the simplicity of the theme quoted above is indicative of a wide stylistic palette in the concerto which was also found in the first movement. It is also a potent indicator of the move towards less complex textures and a more diatonic language as the work progresses. Brian's purposeful use of textural and harmonic contrast throughout his output of the 1930s has borne distinctive fruit in the present context. His skill in handling these stylistic elements allows the extremes of complexity and simplicity to coexist in this work without one being an implicit criticism — or disruption — of the other.

The development of the second theme

This second theme is also heard in full. played by the soloist, in the section referred to in table VC 9 as the 'Development'. In this instance, while the melodic outline is unchanged (the tune is transposed to E major), the accompaniment is altered. Instead of supporting the melody harmonically — as it had done on the occasion of the first appearance of the idea — the diatonic harmony is undermined. Such a manner of treating a melodic idea was also found in relation to the second subject of the first movement of Symphony No.3, as discussed in detail above. Here Brian uses three distinctive rhythmic shapes in his accompaniment. For the first eight bars, the rhythm of example VC 36(a) is heard. This switches to regular crotchets for the next four bars, before the final four bars of the tune are underpinned by the rhythmic figure shown in example VC 36(b). The fact that the rhythm of VC 36(b) is closely related to a retrograde of VC 36(a) — apart from the quaver rest in the former — is worthy of note, and both rhythms share the characteristic absence of first beat accentuation that urges the music onward.

EXAMPLE VC 36(a)

Violin Concerto III, 81:1-2



EXAMPLE VC 36(b)

Violin Concerto III, 82:6-7



These changes in the accompaniment are close to the allusive manner of motivic development found elsewhere in the finale. In fact the passage following this presentation of the second theme is concerned with a terse motivic argument in typical Brian style which does not use ideas related to either main theme, leading to the hiatus on a chord of G — characteristically without a third — immediately preceding the cadenza.

The final appearance of the second subject and the short score

The second subject, quoted above as example VC 35, provides the finale with its concluding thematic statement, but without the participation of the soloist. This unorthodox concept, which in a visual as well as aural sense robs the work of a dramatic final flourish featuring solo instrument and orchestra, presents the theme in a new manner, but rendering it none the less recognisable for that. The initial scoring, with the soloist playing over pizzicato strings and harp, is transformed into an orchestral peroration which owes something to the style of the developmental passages from earlier in the movement. In this final span of the work both main themes have assumed a celebratory tone, which further emphasises their complementary function in the music.

The evidence of the short score at this point raises some salient points of interest. As can be seen in example VC 37 below, the top stave — on which the solo violin part can be found for much of the short score of the concerto — has the first bar of the

second theme written in, but no more. There is also a bar's rest in the same place, which begs the question of whether the solo instrument was intended to play or not. The location of the rest on the stave — on the same line as the rests in succeeding bars — would support the contention that Brian's initial idea was for the final presentation of the second theme to be given solely to the orchestra. The placing of the melodic fragment could be taken to infer that Brian subsequently thought that the soloist should join the orchestra for this final melodic statement of the concerto, but preferred his initial thought on the matter. Perhaps he thought the solo instrument would be overpowered by the full orchestral sound. This may explain the lack of a continuation in the following bars. Conversely, the single bar of music written in the top stave may have been done for the purpose of clarification. The lower two staves have crossings out — not reproduced below for clarity — and are not as clearly written out as the composer might have wished for the quick transference to a full score.

EXAMPLE VC 37

Violin Concerto III. 101:7-102:2



Motivic development

As noted above, there is a double statement of the opening theme of the movement, the second without soloist (to make the re-entry of the solo instrument for the second subject more effective). The two blocks of material that follow example VC 33 are quite closely related, but there is not an exact correspondence. Indeed, Brian modifies the opening of the violin melody to create a fanfare -like gesture for brass and percussion which effectively launches the orchestral counter-statement of the opening material, and uses this striking gesture as a punctuation mark on two further occasions in the orchestral passage under discussion. Its initial appearance is shown below, and a

comparison with the beginning of example VC 33 will show Brian's powers of transformation.

EXAMPLE VC 38

Violin Concerto III, 65:6-67:1



Certain motives are used in different contexts in the ensuing orchestral passage, with the nature of the accompanying textures variying considerably. As an illustration of this, the following example is taken from the opening passage for violin and orchestra:

EXAMPLE VC 39

Violin Concerto III, 63:2-3



In the orchestral passage which follows example VC 38, this appears in the first violins, transposed up a minor third, but the surrounding textures are completely different. This type of development maintains a strong element of resemblance to the earlier passage, but also takes the music in quite a new direction. There is thus a fine balance between the composer's predilection for an allusive — and often elusive —

mode of thought, and the need to provide the listener with some clear aural landmarks. The orchestral passage is therefore not as much a counter-statement — although it is a balancing block of similar material to the opening span — as a re-interpretation of some of the salient motives of that opening. There are other motivic re-interpretations in the passage, but example VC 40 below, when compared with the previous example, provides a characteristic sample of the type of changes made by Brian between the two spans.

EXAMPLE VC 40

Violin Concerto III, 68:5-6



The next two instances indicate a further state of transformation. The first is taken from the opening section for solo instrument and orchestra, and is but briefly used, before the freely developing passage which features example VC 39 above ensues. In the orchestral restatement, this idea is used at a later stage, and pushes the music towards the expectant pause which precedes the entry of the second subject. The different contexts offer contrasting uses of the same material, although both are treated in a sequential manner. The impact of each passage is not dependent on an immediate recognition of the similarity of the two ideas. Indeed the changes made by the composer make this less likely. However, the unity of the score is enhanced by such a subtle use of material, however unusual the connection between two passages may be. This type of process contrasts strongly with the more straightforward manner of thematic presentation found in this movement on the whole, and the second subject in particular, as discussed above. It also provides a link to some of the more allusive methods of transformation found in the opening movement.

EXAMPLE VC 41(a)

Violin Concerto III, 62:3-4



EXAMPLE VC 41(b)

Violin Concerto III, 71:3-4



As mentioned earlier, when the opening theme returns after the extended cadenza at 96:1, the opening eight bars appear exactly as before, but thereafter the restatement is very different from the corresponding passage earlier in the movement. The fanfare - like example VC 38 reappears before a more extended sequence based on its characteristic rhythm. This in turn leads straight into the energetic return of the second subject in the orchestra to conclude the work. Apart from these connections to the earlier passages, this third continuation from example VC 33 is new, and does not refer back to the motivic shapes just discussed. Indeed, the recapitulation is a very concentrated affair. It is designed to provide a climactic conclusion to the movement. There is no substantial coda before the final cadence leaves a reverberating cymbal clash as the last sound of the piece. The restatement can thus be seen as the externalised climax of the finale, with the central 'Interlude' — the character of which

will be detailed below — providing an internalised highpoint. This relocation of climactic moments is crucial in the onward momentum toward the ebullient ending to the work. The central 'Interlude' can be related in character and mood to the concluding stages of the opening movement, from the introduction of the 'new' melody onwards. The subdued ending of the first movement is, as has been argued, the goal of that part of the concerto. In the finale, the subdued music is placed centrally, and is heard as a consequence at a remove from the more extrovert music with which the movement opens and closes.

The Interlude

The 'Interlude' is particularly notable for the notation adopted by Brian, which consists of the use of perforated bar lines along with written directions as to the desired style of performance. It constitutes a further development of the suggestion of distance encountered in previous works, notably in the final movement of Symphony No.3, and like the use of distant fanfares in that instance, evokes a feeling of separateness from the concerns of the main body of the music. The separation in this instance is emphasised by the lack of thematic links to the main body of the finale. The perforated bar lines divide the material into regular, four beat units, as well as providing useful cue points for performance. The effect is of an unaccented 4/4, but the visual appearance of the finale. The short score, however, uses conventional bar-lines, suggesting that the notation adopted in the full score was a late idea, designed to create a visual parallel for the distanced sound world of the section.

The 'Interlude' is prefaced by four crotchet beats on four stopped horns, which quietly repeat the same chord, having the effect of setting the new tempo (marked Lento) and ushering in the hushed atmosphere for the section. At the end of the 'Interlude'. Brian leads the listener back to the main body of the movement by means of three crotchet B's, heard in octaves on trumpets, with a crescendo. This emphasises the move from background to foreground. Brian thus can be seen to effectively separate the 'Interlude' from the surrounding music with gestures that, in each case, mark time. The contrast in notation between the short and full scores may seem contradictory. The unusual look of the full score perhaps prompted the composer to include some

comments in an attempt to clarify his intentions. The result, however, is rather ambiguous. It is almost as if Brian wants to have his notational cake and eat it. He includes a note in the full score, which reads:

There must be no bar accent within the perforated bar-lines. These are put in for convenience. Accent the notes marked.

There is an implied contradiction here between the desire for 'no bar accent' and the last sentence. Brian wanted certain notes accented, but without the customary weighting of strong and weak beats that the conventional use of the time signature would imply. Further to this is an instruction to the soloist:

changes of bow so imperceptible that this barless passage sounds like an endless legato.

The specific nature of both these notes testifies to the clarity of the composer's aural imagination with regard to this passage, and his awareness of its contrast with the rest of the music in the finale.

The delicate tracery of sound at this point has several parallels in other works of Brian, such as the use of distant fanfares in many of his symphonies (No.3 and No.6, for example). The effect, of opening a window on a distant sound world, removed from the immediate concerns of the movement in question, is also comparable. While the narrative element implied by this spatial use of the orchestra relates to the influx of programmatic elements into symphonic writing, it is less common in the genre of the concerto — although it is Berlioz again, this time with *Harold in Italy* (1834), who provides a striking precedent. The musical nature in the present work, however, is not related to an extra-musical source of inspiration.

Though there are no thematic links to the rest of the movement, the tone of both the 'new' melody in the first movement, and much of the calmer music of the Lento finds a parallel in the atmosphere of the present passage. Brian sustains that atmosphere by the use of continuous quavers in the solo part, set against two types of accompaniment. The first is seen in example VC 42(a) below, and the second in VC 42(b).

EXAMPLE VC 42(a)

Violin Concerto III, 77:4-5



EXAMPLE VC 42(b)

Violin Concerto III, 79:3-4



The regularity of this rhythm is counteracted by the harmonic fluidity, which avoids strong articulation of any key-centre throughout the passage — apart from the presence of a minor in the passage illustrated as example VC 42(b). It is this, along with the 'endless legato' of the soloist, which conveys a sense of calm flow to the 'Interlude', with the lack of accents lending a floating feel to the music. Brian divides it up, according to the type of accompaniment used, into units of twelve, eight and four bars respectively (each 'bar' being divided by a perforated line). The first and third units use the type of accompaniment found in example VC 42(a), the second that of VC 42(b). This suggestion of an internal ternary structure adds to the self-contained feel of the 'Interlude', while the foreshortening of the third section, in relation to the first, and in combination with the lack of any harmonic closure, ensures that the 'Interlude' is ultimately open-ended in effect.

In the context of the entire movement, this central passage is acutely placed, so that it acts as a foil to the more extrovert music found at the beginning and end, as noted above. If one thinks in terms of a sonata structure, the 'Interlude' occupies the space normally allotted to a substantial development section. Brian has already followed each of his two main themes by a freely developing passage, so his choice of a central contrast to that type of writing is well judged. The 'Interlude' is followed, in addition, by a passage which develops the second theme, before leading to the cadenza. Thus Brian has developed both main themes, in different contexts, while also allowing his flair for imaginative suggestion of distance by the inclusion of the 'Interlude'. He also succeeds — with the 'Interlude' — in widening the expressive range of the finale without disrupting the overall sense of unity.

The cadenza

The insertion of a cadenza represents a nod in the direction of the tradition of concerto writing, which in typical Brian manner is then undercut by having the orchestra conclude the work without the soloist. with the restatement of the second theme. This time, in contrast to the first movement, the cadenza follows convention in being unaccompanied. In fact, the description 'inserted' in relation to the placing of the cadenza is appropriate, given the evidence of the short score, which lacks both the cadenza, and the linking bars (from fig. 94 in the full score) which lead to the restatement of the first theme. The clear harmonic link between the two bars of short score which were to be separated by the cadenza — and the subsequent link — is apparent from the layout found at this point, which is illustrated below.

EXAMPLE VC 43

Violin Concerto III. 85:5-96:2



There is an anomaly in Brian's numbering here which adds to the mystery of the whereabouts of the sketch for the cadenza (presuming that the composer did actually sketch it out before inserting it into the full score). The first subject returns at fig.96 in both short and full scores, but Brian's written note on the cadenza indicates fig.95 as the end of the latter. The bars which link the cadenza to the return of subject one could be implied in this note, if by 95 Brian means all the bars that follow that rehearsal number. This may be an instance of Brian deciding — at a different (presumably later) time than his work on the short score of the rest of the movement — on the exact detail of how the end of the cadenza would lead to the first subject. Otherwise these bars would surely appear in the present short score. It may also be a simple mistake on Brian's part. It does tend to support the contention, however, that Brian thought of the cadenza as separate to the main body of the movement. The harmonic continuity of the above passage effectively places the cadenza within parentheses, as does the instrumentation. This is further emphasised by the self-contained musical substance of the soloist's soliloquy.

The cadenza follows the traditional nature of this part of a concerto by being primarily concerned with technical display on the part of the solo instrument. The most virtuoso passages for the violinist are found in this part of the work, and here Brian's experience as a violin player himself results in writing that is both taxing and idiomatic. As such, the cadenza is highly effective. However, within the broader context of the movement, there lingers the feeling that the cadenza is akin to an insert

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into the body of the music, rather than being an integral, or crucial element in the unfolding musical discourse. There is a lack of any clear thematic links to the rest of the movement, beyond a resemblance between certain rhythmic figures, and parts of the main themes. The first two bars of the soloist's part in the cadenza illustrate this clearly. The first bar is related to the second subject, not of the finale, but of the first movement. The rhythm is close to an augmented version of the opening of that theme, as can be seen by a comparison of example VC 44 with example VC 45. The second bar uses a version of the figure of two semiquavers which was prominent in the opening theme of the finale, but with a different pitch contour.

EXAMPLE VC 44

Violin Concerto III, 86:2-3 (solo violin)



EXAMPLE VC 45 Violin Concerto I, 5: 1-2 (solo violin)

Meno Allegro



The type of figuration found in the following example, however, is more typical of the cadenza as a whole, and the excerpt illustrates a further problem with this part of the work. It consists of a rhythmic sequence of decreasing note values, in highly effective two-part writing, which edges the music towards the culmination point of fig. 90, with its four part chords. The focus of the passage is therefore on this suggested expansion from two to four parts, and the rise in pitch preceding this point accentuates the sense of arrival felt with this gesture.

EXAMPLE VC 46

Violin Concerto III, 89:1-90:1



This is an impressive piece of writing in its immediate context, but the lack of any reference or similarity to the thematic ideas of the main part of the movement deprives it of any greater resonance. It stands out for textural rather than thematic reasons, which is also true for the cadenza as a whole. Part of the problem lies in the length of the latter. The soloist plays for forty-six bars before the orchestra re-enters with a figure which uses the rhythm of the opening bar of the first theme of the movement. It is likely that Brian wished to make his cadenza a substantial one, and he certainly succeeded. The difficulty arises, however, with a consideration of context. The harmonic continuity evident in example VC 38 is greatly separated in time by the length of the cadenza, which as a solo passage between two spans with orchestra, can be categorised as a link in terms of function. The musical substance of a link is, by definition. a conduit between passages which have more thematic resonance. By these criteria, the material of the cadenza is apposite. The goal of the music at this point is the restatement of the opening theme of the movement at fig.96. Brian was anxious not to compromise this moment of thematic arrival by anything in the cadenza, so he wrote the latter as a largely technical and textural, rather than thematic culmination point for the soloist. The length, however, results in the cadenza becoming too episodic for too long, and without any climactic point of great resonance. The continual use of sequential patterns is a further symptom of this dilemma. At root, therefore, is an irreconcilable difference between the substance of the cadenza, and its function in context.

Brian has effectively created a double link to the restatement of the first theme, one for the orchestra, and one with the soloist. Example VC 43 shows the first of these, and the next example shows the second. It is interesting to observe that Brian simply omits the bare fifth on G from the second lead-in to C major, to neatly avoid duplication, and give the progression a fresh edge.

EXAMPLE VC 47

Violin Concerto III, 95:3-96:1 (reduced by the author)



Conclusion and context

The decade in which Brian wrote his concerto was a fruitful one for the genre, both in England and farther afield. The following table chronicles the works to be discussed in relation to Brian's concerto below.

Composer	Date of composition	Number of movements
Igor Stravinsky	1931	4
Serge Prokofiev (No.2)	1935	3
Alban Berg	1935	2
Arnold Schönberg	1935-36	3
Béla Bartók (No.2)	1937-38	3
William Walton	1938-39	3
Benjamin Britten	1939	3

Table VC 10: Violin Concertos of the 1930s

A brief comparison of some aspects of these very diverse works puts Brian's contribution to the genre into context. The Brian concerto emerges as a distinctive essay which — like the other Brian works discussed in this thesis — shares aspects

with the work of his contemporaries, but also stands apart from them. One can extrapolate from this that, given adequate exposure, the Brian concerto could find its way with the musical public and — even more pertinently for a neglected composer like Brian — become popular.

The matter of influence in these works can be quickly dealt with. All of the concertos under consideration — with the exception of that by Stravinsky, written in 1931 — post-date the Brian work. The Brian was not performed for the first time until 1969, so that any possible influence on the other works — particularly given Brian's isolation at the time of its composition — can be discounted. The Concerto in D by Stravinsky is one of that composer's masterful essays in neo-classicism, and is decidedly anti-romantic in its outlook. The titles of the four movements — Toccata, Aria I, Aria II and Capriccio — also reflect a non-symphonic approach. There is no cadenza, and its lightness of tone — reflecting the mercurial composer at his most playful — is at odds with the seriousness of tone evident from the very opening of the Brian work.

The symphonic aspect of Brian's concerto finds its closest parallels in the works by Schönberg and Bartók. Both these composers choose to concentrate on the lyrical character of the solo instrument in their respective slow movements. This offers a contrast to the more combative textures in the outer movements, although in each case the music of the finale is more extrovert in character than that of the first movement. The overall trajectory and sense of structural balance, then is roughly comparable with that found in the Brian work. The similar time scale of the three works is a further reflection of this comparably large-scale approach — essentially a symphonic one —to the concerto genre.

The combination of lyricism with bravura writing for the solo instrument is a characteristic common to the concertos by Berg and Prokofiev as well as Brian. Beyond this it is interesting to note the successful blend of the serial and tonal in the Berg work. Perhaps one reason for its enduring popularity is the mix of tough, serial writing with the quotation of a Bach chorale — *Es ist genug* — and a Carinthian folk song. Brian too successfully mixes the challenging — particularly in the opening movement — with the immediacy of some of his most appealing melodic writing. As discussed above, it is possible that these melodies were remembered from the first, lost

concerto. Whatever their origins, their presence in the C major concerto results in an eclectic mix of idioms just as striking as that found in the Berg masterpiece.

The two English concertos roughly contemporary with Brian's work present few points of convergence with the latter's concerto, reflecting instead influences from further afield — such as the shadow that is cast over the Walton work by the First Concerto of Prokofiev, completed in 1917. The Britten concerto shares with the Brian the use of the passacaglia form, but this is used in his final movement, and in a manner very different to that found in the Brian slow movement. The Violin Concerto is the first instance of his personal use of passacaglia, and is as such a highly significant work within Britten's output. Later works such as the 'Cello Symphony, op 68 (1963), the Nocturnal after John Dowland for Guitar, op. 70 (1964), and the String Quartet No. 3, op. 94 (1975) testify to its enduring appeal for the composer, right up to the end of his life. A typically idiosyncratic incorporation of the idea of a passacaglia is found in Brian's Symphony No. 8 of 1949, a work that contains two contrasting examples of the form.

The Violin Concerto (1909–1910) by Edward Elgar casts a strong shadow over Brian's surviving essay in the genre. The accompanied cadenza in the final movement of the Elgar work inspired Brian on two levels. The use of an orchestral accompaniment is reflected in the nature of the cadenza in Brian's opening movement, as noted above. The tone of the Elgar cadenza, however, finds a clear echo in the dreamily rhapsodic atmosphere of the 'Interlude' in the final movement of Brian's concerto. This aspect of the Elgar cadenza was noted in the following comments by Ernest Newman:

The symphonic form of the future must surely be more free. improvisatory, as it were. In the extraordinarily beautiful and impressive cadenza in the present concerto Elgar has shown us the lines on which the new music could safely run...¹⁶³

It can be inferred from the above comments — and the detailed study of Brian's Violin Concerto above — that Elgar's music found a true heir in the work of Brian.

¹⁶³ Quoted in Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life* (Oxford University Press, 1984), 593.

The Brian concerto is a crucial work within his output. It represents a decisive move away from the sort of massive textural complexes found in the second and third symphonies. These were a clear remnant of the scale and scope of the *Gothic*. However, the concerto reveals a new Brian. There is a succinctness and directness about aspects of this score that look forward to the later works. After the Symphony No. 7 (1949), no symphony would last longer then thirty minutes. But it is not simply a matter of scale. The melodic appeal of much of the thematic material in the concerto finds a clear echo in the Symphony No. 6. the *Sinfonia Tragica* of 1948, wherein a long lyrical melody forms the expressive and structural centre of the piece.

The Violin Concerto also pointed the way — in its retreat from the massive scale of the previous three symphonies — toward the very different approach to symphonic composition initiated by the aforementioned eighth symphony. This path would culminate in the nine-minute duration of the Symphony No. 22, the *Symphonia Brevis* of 1963. The time-scale and compression of that work is a long way from the huge expanse of the *Gothic*, and is symptomatic of the huge distance travelled by Brian between the two works. The Violin Concerto is a distinctive milestone along that path, and the story of the loss of the original concerto and its recomposition in the form just discussed reveals another trait of this remarkable composer. In addition to being a prolific composer right into his tenth decade Brian had an astonishing (and perhaps necessary) capacity — in the face of misfortune and decades of neglect — for creative self-renewal.

CHAPTER SEVEN CONCLUSION

Havergal Brian died on 28 November 1972, at the age of ninety-six. He left behind a huge corpus of largely unknown and unperformed work. Since the completion of the Violin Concerto discussed in chapter 6, he had written a further twenty-eight symphonies, the last of them in 1968 at the age of ninety-two. He had also written four operas, a setting of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, a Cello Concerto, a Concerto for Orchestra, and several smaller orchestral works. This huge output presents a daunting challenge to those intent on assessing his overall achievement and status. As Harold Truscott has commented: 'the Brian of the 1960s is a very different Brian from the composer of before the First World War'.¹⁶⁴

This thesis has focused — in greater detail than any previous study — on one crucial decade in the composer's long creative life, and on his output of purely orchestral work during that decade. The study of all relevant compositional material, in combination with a comprehensive analysis of each of the three works, allows the most authoritative assessment to date of the creative achievement of the composer at any one stage of his creative career. This work has been put into a broader context by tracing his development through the earliest surviving orchestral music, written in the early years of the twentieth century, as well as a comparison with the symphonic output of his English contemporaries. The clear picture emerges of a composer with a distinctive personal voice and approach, who stands apart from his contemporaries through that individuality. As Malcolm MacDonald has written about Brian, he 'knew very well what he was about'.¹⁶⁵ This aspect of his creativity has been fully explored in the detailed commentaries of chapters 4 to 6.

Stylistic development

The detailed exploration of the three scores central to this thesis reveals several recurring creative ideas central to the nature of Brian's art. These can be summarised as follows:

¹⁶⁴ Harold Truscott, 'Havergal Brian' in *The Symphony 2: Elgar to the present day*, Robert Simpson (ed.), Pelican Books, 1967, 141.

¹⁶⁵ MacDonald,, The Symphonies, vol. 3, 289.

1) Discontinuity

His use of discontinuity stretches back as far as the earliest work discussed in this thesis, the Concert Overture For Valour (1904–06). In that work, the music halts expectantly at climactic moments before resuming, after a pause, with contrasting material. This feature is also found in the strikingly different sound worlds of In Memoriam (1910) and Doctor Merryheart (1911–12). in that it can serve en expressive purpose in dramatic or comic contexts. The Gothic (1919-27) incorporates this device into its extensive discourse, in a manner which — as discussed in the chapter on that work — adds to the distinctive symphonic argument. The balance between this discontinuity and symphonic continuity of thought is reflected in the selective manner Brian uses the device in the next two symphonies. In the second and third movements of the Symphony No. 2 (1930–31) important structural divisions are marked by a break in continuity, whereas in the finale the opening idea (example 2:50) frequently interrupts the progress of the music in the central 'development' section. A comparison of the short and full scores of the first movement of the Symphony No. 3 (1931–32) reveals a striking instance of Brian breaking the continuity of the material by the manner of its orchestration (see example 3:10). The outer movements of the Violin Concerto (1934–5) include parallel instances of a break in the music. In each case the break immediately precedes the first appearance of the second subject. Both these are lyrical, and contrast with the strenuous motivic argument heard before them. It is clear from these instances that Brian used discontinuity in a productive manner — in John Pickard's apt description — to enhance the clarity of his musical discourse. The initially disconcerting effect of the break in continuity is balanced by an underlying concern with formal clarity that enhances, rather than detracts from the coherence of the work in question.

2) Texture as form

Orchestration was never a purely mechanical task for Brian, but was an important part of the process of getting his ideas across as clearly as possible through the elaborate medium of the late romantic orchestra. The early *Festal Dance* (1908) falls into a ternary pattern given added emphasis by the contrast in scoring between the opening and central sections. *In Memorium* (1910) also falls into three distinct sections. Within the central section Brian uses textural contrast as a means of enlarging the expressive scope of the music, as well as adding perspective by alternating between the hushed sound of muted strings and — as if coming from a different direction —brass and harp interpolations. In the *Gothic* the composer selectively uses the massive forces at his disposal to generate climaxes of great power. This is particularly noticeable in the second movement — where the main theme is more heavily scored each time it returns — and in the third, as textures assume a greater importance than thematic ideas as the music progresses.

This aspect of Brian's symphonic manner reaches its apogee in the Symphony No. 2. The slow introduction to the first movement underlines the textural additions to its opening idea — illustrated as example 2:1(b) — by parallel increases in tempo, which impel the music into the ensuing Allegro. Tables 2:7 and 2:8 detail how the orchestral forces for the two main themes of this Allegro are augmented in the recapitulation, as the climax of the movement approaches. In fact, Brian simplifies his thematic and harmonic arguments to further highlight the importance of texture as a formal element. The coda of the movement powerfully reflects this formal aspect, as the music disintegrates once the textural and dramatic highpoint (example 2:16) is reached. The rhapsodic second movement reaches its culmination through three increasingly elaborate presentations of the main idea of the third part of the movement. These are illustrated as examples 2:30(a). (b) and (c) respectively. The 'Battle ' Scherzo is structured as two exciting accumulations of ostinato driven textures, from which there is no central 'Trio' for relief. The culmination of the finale is approached using a process of textural enrichment which begins with the expressive lower string melody of example 2:57, and the disintegration in the dark final pages parallels in a telling manner the end of the first movement.

The first movement of the next symphony features double statements of thematic ideas as a reflection of its origins as a concerto. For each theme the second statement is much more richly scored than the first. almost — in the case of example 3:3 when it is restated beginning as at example 3:18(a) — to the point where texture drowns out theme. The balance between a thematic and a textural argument is treated in a new manner in the second movement, wherein the textural extravagance of the main idea (example 3:24) is given an effective foil in several lightly scored episodes with prominent instrumental solos. The heavily orchestrated return of the opening music in

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the latter stages of the third movement undermines the straightforward ternary outline, pushing onwards to the finale. This sense of orchestral accumulation is also found in the final movement, as richly scored restatements of the two main themes culminate in the explosive coda. With the Violin Concerto, Brian retreats somewhat from the massive textures of parts of the second and third symphonies, but still utilises textural contrast to highlight structural parallels between the outer movements. In each case, the lyrical, lightly scored second theme is immediately preceded by more weighty, contrapuntal passages. In short, texture is an important structural landmark in these works, and not merely the outcome of an overactive — if highly inventive — orchestral imagination.

3) Fusion of genres

As detailed in chapter 5 above, the first movement of the Symphony No. 3 shows a remarkable fusion of ideas from the concerto genre with those of Brian's symphonic manner. Though this resulted from the work being originally conceived as a concerto for piano(s) and orchestra, the discussion of that movement reveals the care with which Brian sought to integrate the two 'solo' piano parts into a compelling symphonic discourse. This movement is an extreme case, but not an isolated one. Even in early programmatic works such as the Fantastic Variations on an Old Rhyme (1907) and Doctor Merryheart (1911-12). Brain --- no doubt taking his cue from Strauss' Don Ouixote (1896–7) --- uses variation form as the vehicle for his comic flights of fancy. It is possible to view the *Gothic* symphony as a fusion of symphony and oratorio, or even to view its two parts as separate - but related - essays in those two genres. The Symphony No. 2 demands considerable virtuosity from the sixteen French horns required for the third movement, and their inclusion bears a distant — if unlikely — relation to the idea of a concertino group within a Concerto Grosso. After the extravagant piano parts of No. 3, the Violin Concerto looks in the opposite direction for a fruitful interaction between genres. The inclusion of elements of discourse familiar from Brian's earlier symphonies contributes significantly to the character of the finished concerto. It is noteworthy that in later years Brian would write both a Cello Concerto and a Concerto for Orchestra in 1964 between Symphonies 21 (1963) and 22 (1964–65) as part of the astonishing output of his eighth and ninth decades. It is also significant that most of Brian's symphonies include a solo for violin at some point, an indication that the solo line — often florid and solistic —

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was as important an element in his symphonic discourse as his more heavily textured passages.

4) Rhapsodic and symphonic elements

Malcolm MacDonald has written of the two contrasting cross-currents in Brian's symphonic output - namely the 'classical' and 'radical' - and included a 'genealogical tree' in the third volume of his commentary on the symphonies.¹⁶⁶ This mingling of characteristics has been detailed in the extensive commentaries on the three central works of this thesis. It is also a central feature of the Gothic, as noted by commentators on that massive work, and discussed in chapter three. One of the most significant shadows cast by that huge symphony over its immediate successors is precisely that blend of 'classical' or 'symphonic' elements (see Samuel Langford's comments in chapter two) with 'radical' or 'rhapsodic' features. With regard to the Symphony No. 2, MacDonald sees a split between the first two movements — 'among the most "modern" music Brian ever composed — and the concluding pair, which, he argues 'revert to a much more Late-Romantic' symphonic conception.¹⁶⁷ The above commentary makes clear that this division does not guite fit. The 'Battle' Scherzo is an astonishing and audacious study in the twin areas of orchestral texture and ostinato which far exceeds the conventions of a Brucknerian scherzo. Despite the Wagnerian overtones of much of the finale, there is a return to textural concerns in the latter stages which qualifies the Late Romantic surface gestures of much of the music. In fact. the textural accumulation makes possible — as well as creating a sense of conclusion of the symphony. This consistency across the four movements of the work argues against MacDonald's feeling that the work as a whole is not an 'organic unity'.168

The Symphony No. 3 is equally wide-ranging in its concerns, and adds the element of concerto genre considerations into the mix. Yet it is a better-balanced work than No. 2. As MacDonald puts it:

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 283. ¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 276-7. ¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 276

Extreme textural and chromatic proliferation in the outer movements is expertly balanced with homophonic/diatonic simplicity both within these movements and, on the larger scale, with the overall character of the scherzo.¹⁶⁹

This blend can be seen as a further manifestation of the twin concerns of the rhapsodic and symphonic noted by Langford in Elgar, and traced through the earliest Brian works discussed in this thesis. In this regard, the following assessment of the Symphony No. 3 by Martyn Becker is of relevance:

There is invention in it to rival the best that Elgar could offer in his two symphonies, and worthy to stand alongside those of Vaughan Williams.¹⁷⁰

He further asserts that the work contains 'the best of Thirties' British symphonism'¹⁷¹ — a view which provocatively emphasises the range of inventiveness that characterises the symphony in comparison to contemporary essays in the genre. The second chapter of this thesis draws out these comparisons at length, in order to put Brian's personal symphonic manner in context.

The Violin Concerto incorporates much of Brian's 'symphonic' or 'classical' manner within the conventions of the concerto genre, but also significantly includes — in the centre of the final movement — an extended 'rhapsodic' passage (the 'Interlude'). Although the character of this music could not readily be described as 'radical', the sense of it taking place outside the concerns of the rest of the movement is a further instance of Brian's compositional skill. He expands the horizons of this music in an imaginative manner by means of his personal sense of 'rhapsody'.

Extra-musical and programmatic elements

Brian's engagement with external stimuli and programmes for the works discussed in this thesis fall into three categories. The first strand consists of those works which are programmatic in nature, and follow a narrative dictated by extra-musical considerations. The fascinating thing is that both these early works — the *Fantastic*

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 276.

¹⁷⁰ Martyn Becker, 'Brian's Third Symphony' in *HB: Aspects of Havergal Brian*, ed. Jurgen Schaarwächter, Ashgate, 1997, 193–98.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 197.

Variations on an Old Rhyme (1907) and Doctor Merryheart (1911–12) — combine their programmes with the parameters of variation form. The idea of character variations stems from Strauss' Don Quixote (1897), as mentioned above — a work which masterfully blends the illustrative with the purely musical idea of thematic variation — as well as from Elgar's Enigma Variations (1898–99). These considerations show that Brian's thinking was very much in tune with that of some of his most celebrated contemporaries.

The next category of work is less clear-cut by nature. The first three symphonies — in their different ways — as well as the earlier *For Valour* (1904-06). *Festal Dance* (1908) and *In Memoriam* (1910) — all refer on some level to extra-musical matters, but to varying degrees. The general character of the three early works can be inferred from their titles, but no more specific details apply. Despite the origins of *Festal Dance* in the dismantled *Fantastic Symphony* (1907–08) — see chapter one — it can be appreciated purely as an exuberant exploration of dance rhythms and orchestral textures. The division of *In Memoriam* into three 'scenes' can be readily heard, despite the lack of any further information regarding what those scenes are, or how they relate one to another.

Brian wrote rather laconically for Nicholas Slominsky's *Music since 1900*, that he regarded his symphonies as 'abstract; free of programme'. On the topic of his most famous work, the *Gothic*, he merely remarked that the title 'is sufficient indication of the character of that Symphony'.¹⁷² Despite this rather absurd compression of the most extended symphonic canon of the twentieth century into one observation, the comment can be said to reflect his ultimate viewpoint. that the music should stand independent of any external considerations. Thus the subtitle 'Altarus' — though it was partly erased from the autograph score and its meaning remains unclear — should not distract one from the musical mastery evident in the Third Symphony. A similar approach to the Symphony No. 2 is also possible, but the fact that Brian never denied the links with Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen* allows for an approach like that of Graham Saxby. He equates the opening idea of the finale (example 2:50) with 'betrayal', and the movement as a whole as concerned with the opposing ideas of

¹⁷² Brian quoted in MacDonald, The Symphonies, vol. 3, 81.

'nobility and betrayal'.¹⁷³ He further argues that knowledge of the Goethe play 'helps towards a full appreciation of this final movement, and helps to justify its waywardness when considered in purely musical terms'.¹⁷⁴ This final point contradicts Brian's view that the music should be assessed independent of extra-musical factors. Knowledge of the play may broaden appreciation of what Brian has done --- or what inspired him to do it — but it does not excuse purely musical miscalculations, as discussed in my commentary.

The Violin Concerto presents no such difficulties. As the above discussion makes clear, it sacrifices nothing when compared to the far better known works in that genre composed in the 1930s. Brian's later symphonies are not entirely free of occasional external associations - as MacDonald has documented - but Brian's statement to Slominsky that 'The Symphonies compose themselves' can perhaps be interpreted as a final avowal that the musical argument is of more importance than any extraneous influences or references.¹⁷⁵ These find their final resting place in the purely musical discourse and — though they may have inspired aspects of it — do not ultimately detract from its self-sufficiency.

Brian and 20th century developments

Malcolm MacDonald has dispelled the notion that Brian was an isolated figure forgotten by his peers and out of touch with contemporary musical events — in the third volume of his study of the symphonic output. The publication of some of Brian's very extensive journalistic writings - one volume to date out of a projected six reveals that Brian was well abreast of the contemporary scene. The importance of this lies in the fact that Brian's mature compositional style — with all its idiosyncrasies and controversial aspects — was not the result of his isolation, but a spirited and sustained engagement with the musical world around him.

The detailed study of the three main works of this thesis considers several of these aspects of his musical style. His use of both triadic and more dissonant harmonies can

¹⁷³ Graham Saxby, Havergal Brian's Second Symphony in HB: Aspects of Havergal Brian, ed. Jurgen Schaarwächter, Ashgate, 1997, 170–193. 174 Ibid., 193.

¹⁷⁵ Brian guoted in MacDonald, The Symphonies, vol. 3, 81.

be traced through the mature works, from the 'Gothic' onwards. Tonal points of stability are placed against more unstable passages throughout this work. The conclusion of the 'Gothic', where dissonant orchestral passages are followed by the quiet, unaccompanied final cadence in E major, represents an extreme example of these two harmonic styles being used to powerful effect. The Symphony No. 2 — in its opening two movements in particular — further develops this engagement with contrasting harmonic styles. As MacDonald has commented:

Its first two movements are among the most 'modern' music Brian ever composed in the sense that they are clearly written with an awareness of such contemporaries as Berg, Schönberg, and Szymanowski, and with a desire to explore some of their territory — the structural handling of chromaticism in melody and harmony, and new instrumental textures — in Brian's own terms.¹⁷⁶

The juxtaposition of tonal and non-tonal elements is one of the key facets of the opening movement of the Third Symphony, as discussed in detail in chapter five. With the Violin Concerto there is a clear path from the tense, harmonically dense orchestral exposition in the opening movement to the focal point of the 'new' melody in its latter stages. The triadic nature of this melody — which, as I argue, is the goal of the first movement — emphasises a move towards tonal clarification as the music moves towards the final bars. This relaxing of the more extreme chromatic aspects of the music is continued in the second and third movements.

Brian was always, at the most fundamental level, a tonal composer. The cadences that conclude many of his movements — even when the final chord uses the bare fifth without qualifying major or minor third, as it often does in his work — confirm this. His incorporation of an extremely chromatic language into this framework results in the distinctive sound world of his mature work. He was fully aware of the scope offered by the inclusion of all twelve pitches into his material — as discussed above in relation to the opening movements of both the Second and Third Symphonies — but did not carry this so far as to experiment with serialism. The idea that the row dominates a serial work — in the absence of tonality — is not central to his incorporation of all twelve pitches. As the thesis has shown, Brian concern was with

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 275.

the co-existence of tonal and non-tonal elements within the expansive harmonic framework and time-scale of the three orchestral works under discussion.

Coda

The neglect of Brian's music has led to the mistaken assumption that he did not care about whether his music was performed or not, and the corollary view that he was amateurish in his approach to the craft of composition. The former point is revealed as inaccurate when one considers the trouble he had — and the care he took — with beginnings and endings (see appendices 1 and 2 in particular). This care was taken due to the fact that he wished to frame his musical arguments as clearly as possible as much for a listener as for his own satisfaction. The latter point is strongly — and conclusively — contradicted by the extended studies of the three works at the heart of this thesis.

Writing in 1945, Reginald Nettel offered the following opinion with regard to the future reception of Brian's music:

There is little hope that public taste in this country will veer round in favour of Brian's music in the near future.¹⁷⁷

He cannot be blamed for not anticipating the change in Brian's fortunes with the advent of Robert Simpson in the 1950s, and the steady accumulation of recordings of recent years. But he is very prescient in the following observation:

And yet he [Brian] has carried out his work sincerely, and borne his disappointment with a stoicism that cannot but bring admiration to those who have seen it.¹⁷⁸

This fortitude was to sustain Brian — then nearing seventy — for another two decades, through one of the most remarkable 'late periods' of any composer.

The brief consideration of Brian offered in the second volume of the Oxford History of English Music, published in 1999, tends to support the view that Brian is still — almost sixty years after Nettel's pioneering book — regarded as more of a curiosity

¹⁷⁷ Reginald Nettel, Ordeal by Music (Oxford University Press, 1945), 139.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 139.

than an important figure. The comments therein are an odd mixture of oversimplification, damning with faint praise, and unfocussed insight, all of which are equally unhelpful. It is noted — accurately — that Brian 'never relinquished his quest for originality' after 1945. The commentary then proceeds to discuss the Symphony No. 8 (1949) as typical of his later style.¹⁷⁹ This work is lumped together with Sibelius' Seventh Symphony (1924) and *Tapiola* (1926) 'with which it shares a brooding intensity; yet it lacks their variety and at times is even more clotted in texture'.¹⁸⁰ This affront — to Sibelius as much as to Brian — is followed by the following comment:

Yet that is not quite the whole story, for the work is formally ingenious, embracing two passacaglias of which the first at least is an imaginatively austere invention, the whole conception having the cohesion as well as the solidity of a marmoreal tragedy.¹⁸¹

The entire symphonic output from 1948 — from No. 6 to No. 32 inclusive — is characterised as a 'dour soundscape in which strong tonal references are articulated by seemingly casual progressions'.¹⁸² This is accompanied by an acknowledgement — in a footnote — of the central importance in the Brian literature of the three volumes on the symphonies by Malcolm MacDonald. (The manner of the earlier music is equally inaccurately summarised as a 'Straussian approach to harmony and tonality'). The most regrettable aspect of this extremely cursory attempt at placing Brian's later output in some sort of context is that it does not draw on the conclusions found in the third volume of MacDonald's study.

MacDonald has offered the most eloquent and provocative assessment of Brian's overall achievement. He states that Brian's best music is written with 'supreme mastery of both technique and inspiration, as much as has been displayed by any composer this century'.¹⁸³ He considers him a symphonic composer on a par with Mahler and Sibelius, the two towering giants of early twentieth-century symphonic writing. The craftsmanship in Brian's music has never been treated as fully as is the

¹⁷⁹ John Caldwell, 'Other Genres: The Older Composers' in *The Oxford History of English Music:* vol. 11, *From c.1715 to the Present Day* (Oxford University Press, 1999), 420-22.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 421.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 421.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 420.

¹⁸³MacDonald, *The Symphonies*, vol. 3, 288.

case in the present thesis. A similar study of his work in other decades is needed to account for the creative workings of his extraordinarily fertile mind in his later years.

The mix of classical and radical elements in Brian's symphonic music — as discussed in detail in relation to the Second and Third Symphonies and the Violin Concerto shows that Brian was of his time, and beyond it. In fact much of the creative tension in Brian's output springs from this provocative juxtaposition, a contrast of opposites not found to the same degree in the music of his contemporaries in England. The following comments, made by Gilbert Murray in relation to Vaughan Williams, can be said to apply equally aptly — if not more so — to Brian:

Every man who possesses real vitality can be seen as the resultant of two forces. He is first the child of a particular age, society, convention; of what we may call in one word a tradition. He is secondly, in one degree or another, a rebel against that tradition. And the best traditions make the best rebels.¹⁸⁴

The issue of greatness — its presence or absence, and its quantity — is less tangible than that of technical competence. It is, however, possible to prove — as this thesis has done — that Brian was technically a very competent and inventive composer. Brian himself noted, in an article on Vaughan Williams:

No composer of genius writes 'form': he composes music, showing his mastery of 'form' by his own inborn instinct for balance of design and original invention.¹⁸⁵

The craft detailed in the central chapters of this thesis is a considerable one. Brian's music is as it is because he worked at it to make it so. His creative control has never been as fully documented as in the present account, based on the surviving compositional materials.

Ultimately the music must make its own way with listeners, independent of sensational facts or sympathetic attitudes based on those facts. The Canadian pianist

¹⁸⁴ Quoted in Michael Trend. *The Music Makers: Heirs and Rebels of the English Musical Renaissance, Edward Elgar to Benjamin Britten* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1985), 3.

¹⁸⁵ Havergal Brian, 'The music of Ralph Vaughan Williams' in *Havergal Brian on Music, vol. 1: British Music* (ed. Malcolm MacDonald), Toccata Press, 1986, 316.

Glenn Gould (1932–82) has eloquently encapsulated what makes a listener want to experience a piece of music:

We need to feel assured that what is being said *has* to be said and that our time in attending it is gainfully employed.¹⁸⁶

My conviction is that what the music of Havergal Brian has to say is strongly personal and worth listening to, as well as repaying detailed study. His music speaks of its time in an individual way, and also addresses issues of universal significance (see his own comments on Symphony No. 2). It takes a considerable amount of time to listen to all his music — and a proportionally large time to assimilate it — in its variety and complexity. But time invested in the music of Havergal Brian is time well spent. The music has had to wait a very long time to be heard at all, but the signs are that it is beginning to make its way. One cannot predict how far the journey will take the composer and his music, but it seems likely that the music will finally be heard. One must hope that the standard of performance will allow the quality of invention and skill in matters of form and orchestral texture to shine out as clearly as possible. Mahler once observed famously that 'my time will come'.¹⁸⁷ The author of this thesis asserts — with a resolve similar to that displayed by the composer — that the time for Havergal Brian and his music is imminent.

¹⁸⁶ Glenn Gould, 'The psychology of improvisation' in *the Glenn Gould Reader*' (ed. Tim Page, Faber and Faber, 1984), 316.

¹⁸⁷ Quoted in Norman Lebrecht, Mahler Remembered (Faber and Faber, 1987), 307.

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SYMPHONY No. 3: The autograph full score is in the Library of the Royal College of Music, London. Sketches and short score pages are also found there. Their exact nature and placing is fully discussed in Appendix 2. The full score is published by United Music Publishers in a facsimile of the composer's autograph.

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APPENDIX 1: The manuscript materials for the Second Symphony

Manuscript Paper	Pages
First Movement	
26-stave	1-4
28-stave	5-12
26-stave	13
Second Movement	
28-stave	14-21
Third Movement	
28-stave	22-30
Fourth Movement	
26-stave	31
28-stave	32
26-stave	33-37

Table A1:1: Size of manuscript paper

Table A1: 2: The layout of the short score: movements 1 and 2

Place in Score	Staves per system
First Movement	
Bar 1 to 27:9	3
Second Movement	
27:10 to 29:5	2
29:6 to 29:8	3
29:9 to 32:5	2
32:6 to 34:4	3
34:5 to 34:7	4
34:8 to 42:6	3

Place in Score	Staves per system
Third Movement	
42:7 to 43:2	2
43:3 to 44:6	4
44:7 to 49:10	2
50:1 to 50:7	3
50:8 to 51:9	4
51:10 to 52:4	3
52:5 to 54:6	4
54:7 to 55:2	10
55:3 to 55:8	5
55:9 to 58:8	6
58:9 to 61:1	6
61;2 to 67:4	6
67:5 to 67:8	4

Table A1:3: The layout of the short score: the third movement

Note

The changing number of staves in each portion of this movement clearly reflects the deployment of the four groups of four horns that form such an important part of the sound world of the finished score. Brian uses numberings to identify the role of each individual group of horns. The use of terms such as 'echo' and 'in the distance' clearly reveal the concern with exploration of the acoustic space in this part of the symphony. This type of numbering is used at one significant point in the short score for his next symphony, in the first movement. The reference there is to the use of the two pianos (discussed in detail in chapter 5)

Place in Score	Staves per System
Fourth Movement	
67:9 to 82:1	2
82:2 to 83:2	3
83:3	2
83:4 to 84:8	3
84:9 to 85:2	2
85:3 to 85:8	3
85:9 to 87:7	2

Table A1:4: The layout of the short score: the fourth movement

Commentary

The short score reveals many changes — and corrections — of detail when compared with the full score. These details, while significant in revealing the care Brian took to

make sure his final score was as correct and clear as possible, do not affect the overall compositional arch of the work. There are, however, three changes with regard to the addition or deletion of material that are of significance in showing how Brian's thoughts on the bar to bar structure of his work evolved, as well as — significantly — its likely impact in performance.

1. The opening two bars

The first two bars of the full score are not present in the short score. The work begins in this form with the immediate introduction of the pizzicato bass idea - see examples 2:1(a) and (b) in chapter 4 This offers clear evidence of Brian's trouble with beginnings (for endings, see point 3 below). The two additional bars offer no new thematic material. They do, however, set the harmonic and textural context for the bass idea which follows. The additional two bars have a further significance in relation to Brian's thinking, however. They provide a context for a listener at the start of the work, to initiate him/her into the sound world of the symphony. They were inserted at the final necessary stage before the work could — hopefully — be performed. The inclusion of these bars at this late stage can arguably be justified on purely musical grounds, but the timing of their addition indicates that it is very likely — at the very least --- that Brian was thinking about how to lead a listener into the particular world of this piece at this late point in the creative process. In short, these introductory bars were added to enhance the musical argument, but also to cater for others. This is representative not of an indifference to performance, but of a consideration of its likely impact on listeners — and a desire to make that impact as clear and distinctive as possible.

2. Fig. 23: 10

At this point in the full score, there is a one-bar transition to the restatement of the second subject group (see chapter 4). At the parallel point earlier in the movement (at 6:10), there was a two-bar transition. The short score reveals that Brian originally wrote a transition of two bars at the present point, only to scribble across the music — but more heavily in the second bar. The decision to shorten the transition to one bar results in an intensification of the musical discourse as it moves toward the climax of the movement (see example 2:16 for these climactic bars). This change reveals that Brian was thinking of the overall momentum of his opening movement —even at this

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late stage — as he copied it, rather than mechanically transferring his short score into full score format.

3. The last two bars

The changes made by Brian to the final sounds of his symphony have already been discussed — and illustrated — in chapter 4 (see examples 2:66 and 67). The change made indicates that Brian was mindful of the alteration already made to the start of the symphony (see point 1 above). The final moments — in the version found in the full score — effectively complete the sonic arch of the work by referring back quite clearly to the sounds which opened the symphony. In conclusion, while the short score clearly reveals the clarity with which Brian conceived the broad span of a work, the changes made at either end of the piece reveal another aspect of his compositional thought. He knew that how a work began and ended was crucial — not just in relation to the work itself, but also for its impact on listeners. Brian wanted his work performed —and understood.

The Sketch pages

There are 10 pages of sketch material for the Symphony No.2, all of which are found on the reverse side of the ink short score of Symphony No. 3. This is also the case with the surviving sketch material for the Third Symphony. Their survival — and the loss of other sketch pages — seem rather haphazard as a result. The present pages comprise seven successive pages of what one can assume to have been a complete pencil sketch of the opening movement, one page from the scherzo, and the first two of the finale. The location column in the table which follows refers to the reverse pages of the ink short score of Symphony No. 3, with roman numerals for movement numbers.

Page	Location	Numbering by Brian
1	Between III and IV	2
2	III: 8 -9	3
3	III: 7-8	4
4	III: 6-7	5
5	III: 5-6	6
6	III: 9-10	7
7	III: 4-5	8
8	III: 2-3	6
9	Between II and III	1
10	III: 3-4	2

Table A1:5: Sketch pages

Commentary

Sketch pages 1 to 7

The first seven sketch pages above form part of what one can safely assume to have been a complete pencil sketch of the opening movement. This formed the basis for the ink short score discussed above. The pages (numbered 2 to 8 by Brian) correspond to the span of music from 3:6 to 22:7 inclusive. The changes form pencil sketch to the short score are concerned with the clarification of detail. The use — or absence — of accidentals is indicated in a clearer manner, and some lines in single notes on the sketch pages occur in octaves in the short score. The evidence of these pages strongly supports the contention that Brian composed in fluid, continuous spans of music. The dimensions are fully worked out, suggesting that Brian composed with a clear sense of overall structure even at this early point in the creative process.

Sketch page 8

This single page (numbered 6 by Brian) strongly suggests the existence — as was customary for Brian — of a complete pencil sketch of the third movement. It corresponds with the span of music from 61:2 to 65:4, which includes the climax of the 'Battle' scherzo. The notation is quite bare at times, in particular at the climax point itself, where the music is written in two parts — top and bottom — without any inner parts. There are indications of the intended harmony under two bars ('Dmi, G min, B' and 'E') which are written in full in the corresponding bars of the short score.

The climactic bar (63:5) is stated four times in succession in the short and full scores. On the present page the bar is written out once, with the instruction 'Repeat 'across it followed by what appears to be 'of line'. 'Tutti brass' is also written at this point. Bars 64: 5 and 6 are not present in the sketch. They consist — in the short score — of a sustained chord of C major before the harp begins its quaver pattern. This pattern begins after a single bar of the C major chord in the sketch, with another written comment, which appears to be 'Repeat of line' once again. There is also a perforated bar-line at this point, which may relate to the instruction to 'repeat'.

The sketch page is not nearly as fully realised as the corresponding passage in the ink short score. The lack of detail and scribbled comments point to a certain urgency to get the substance — as distinct from the detail — of the 'Battle' scherzo onto paper. This would be consistent with the contention — noted above in relation to the surviving pencil sketch pages for the first movement — that Brian had a strong sense of continuity and structure in the early stages of his compositional work on a piece.

Sketch pages 9 and 10

The first two pages of what was probably a complete pencil sketch of this final movement correspond to the music from 67:9 to 75:4 of the ink short score. There are numerous changes in detail, most of them related to the 'Götterdämmerung' related idea with which the movement starts. This is quoted in chapter 4 as example 2:50. The changes indicate that the exact shape of this idea — pivotal as the finale unfolds, as chapter 4 documents — caused Brian quite a bit of trouble. The rhythm, pitch and duration all underwent transformation from this early sketch. The most significant of these alterations relates to duration. In the short score, the idea occupies a full bar, and is clearly used to punctuate — and interrupt — the funereal tread of the music. In the sketch pages, however, it is seen as a flourish at the end of a bar, functioning as a florid upbeat figure. Its function at this stage is to link the various musical paragraphs that constitute this part of the movement. Brian changes the profile of the motive, and effectively alters its role in the musical discourse, form that of a link to a punctuation point. Instead of joining the musical paragraphs together, it separates them.

It is of also significant that the motive — as present in the two sketch pages — does not contain the urgent two note figure with which all its appearances begin in the short and full scores. The absence of this figure — a short note followed by a much longer one — means that the shape of the idea is very close to that used famously by Wagner in *Siegfried's Funeral Music*. The allusion of the short and full scores is thus rendered an almost exact quotation in the sketch pages. Further to this, the motive as used by Wagner is essentially a florid upbeat, functioning in a similar manner to the near quotation of it on the sketch pages of the Brian work. Whether Brian changed the shape in order to move away from too close a resemblance to a famous work by a composer he greatly admired, or merely sought to add clarity in the short score — as a necessary step toward full and final realisation the full score — is not known. The pages do reveal, however, that Brian's structural sense was present at this early stage, even if the exact shape — and function — of some of the ideas was not quite there.

The Short Score

Manuscript paper	Pages
First Movement	
26-stave	1-2
27-stave (11+16)	3
24-stave	4-13
28-stave	14-16
24-stave	17
26-stave	18

Table A2: 1: Size of manuscript paper (movement 1)

Table A2: 2: Size of manuscript paper (movement 2)

Manuscript Paper	Pages
Second Movement	
26-stave	1-2
See note below	2(a)
28-stave	2-7
29-stave (19+5+5)	8
28-stave	9-10

Table A2: 3: Size of manuscript paper (movements 3 and 4)

Manuscript Paper	Pages
Third Movement	
28-stave	1-10
Fourth Movement	
26-stave	1-10

Notes

- The 27-stave page in the first movement consists of staves of two different sizes. The top 11 are slightly smaller than the bottom 16, which contain the bars from 5:1 to 5:6 inclusive. The number of staves per system changes at this point from 4 to 6 (see table A2:4 below). It is possible that Brian changed the layout of these bars after his decision not to write a Concerto.
- 2. Page 2(a) of the slow movement is numbered as '2' by Brian, which is the same number allotted to the previous page. This is probably because it contains only 7

bars of music (from 36:5 to 37:1 inclusive). The last three of these have been pasted in, and the rest of the page is pasted over with two vertical strips of 10 staves each. All of this suggests a quite substantial revision of the present passage by Brian. The bars come between a violin solo (as part of the 'Interlude' in table 3:8) and the beginning of 'development 1'. It seems likely that Brian sketched a substantially longer 'Interlude' originally, and changed his mind at this stage, perhaps to tighten the structure of the movement.

3. The 29-stave page 8 of the second movement is pasted over, giving units of 19, 5 and 5 staves respectively. The alignment of the end of staves between the top 19 and bottom 5 suggests the middle 5 staves were pasted on top of what was probably 4 staves on the original 28-stave page (the surrounding pages are written on 28stave paper). The 4 bars in question (48:2 to 48:5 inclusive) lead to the final statement of the main theme of the movement. The most likely explanation is that Brian wished to clarify his notation in these bars before embarking on the writing of a full score.

Place in Score	Staves per System
First Movement	
Bar 1 to 4:1	2
4:2 to 4:10	4
5:1 to 5:6	6
5:7 to 5:10	4
6:1 to 7:5	2
7:6 to 11:10	4
12:1 to 15:5	2
15:6 to 19:7	4
19:8 to 21:2	5
21:3 to 21:6	4
21:7 to 23:2	6
23:3 to 25:2	4
25:3 to 31:3	3

Table A2: 4: The layout of the short score (movement 1)

Notes

1. The single instance of Brian using 5 staves per system (from 19:8 to 21:2) largely consists of a layout of 2+2 bracketed together, with a stave in between which is sometimes written on, at others empty.

- 2. For the final bars, a similar situation prevails, except that the middle of the three staves is always empty.
- 3. After 16:1, Brian added two bars in the full score (see example 3:20). There is nothing to hint at this change in the short score, in contrast to the two additions to the finale noted below.

Table A2: 5: The layout of the short score (movements 2 and 3)

Place in Score	Staves per System
Second Movement	
31:4 to 32:7	2
32:8 to 35:7	3
35:8 to 36:4	2
36:5 to 53:3	3
Third Movement	
53:4 to 83:8	3

Table A2: 6: The layout of the short score (movement 4)

Place in Score	Staves per System
Fourth Movement	
83:9 to 85:4	2
85:5 to 93:4	3
93:5 to 93:10	4
94:1 to 91:4	2
94:5 to 95:5	3
95:6 to 96:1	4
96:2 to 96:4	3
96:5 to 98:6	4
98:7 to 100:5	3

Notes

- After 96:1 Brian added an extra bar in the full score, indicated here by the inscription '+ I bar' at the left-hand margin, and the circling of a four semiquaver figure used in that additional bar (see example 3:51).
- 2. The ink short score ends one bar earlier than the full score. The additional bar is added in pencil in the bottom right hand corner. This is illustrated and discussed in chapter 5. The late change made to the final bars of the symphony testifies further to the difficulty Brian often experienced with the start and end of his works (see appendix 1 on the Symphony No. 2).

The Sketch pages

There are eight pages of sketch material in relation to the Third Symphony, and these are located, with one exception, on the reverse side of pages of the ink short score for the work, as shown in the table below. The four pages numbered by Brian are clearly part of a complete short score in pencil which, as argued above, formed the basis for the ink short score, as was his compositional practice. The contents of each page, and their importance in relation to Brian's work on the Third Symphony, are discussed in the following commentary.

Page	Short score page (reverse)	Numbering by Brian
1	1:1	
2	1:4	
3	1:11	
4	1:17	14
5	1:18	15
5	2:2(a)	
7	2:2	6
8	2:1	7

TableA2:7: Sketch pages

Note

Sketch page number six above consists of two pasted strips across page 2(a) of the ink short score (see note 2 above on table A2:3).

Commentary

Sketch page 1

This is a 17-bar sketch, starting in A major, but with a different ending, of the 'second subject' of the first movement. It is written on a single line, without accompanying harmony or any dynamic indications. That subject begins at this pitch at 23:3 in the score.

Sketch page 2

This fragment consists of six crotchets of music, written on two staves, which are a sketch of the melody (this time with harmony) found in sketch page 1. It, too, begins in A major. The type of accompaniment sketched was not used in the score.

Sketch page 3

This contains 2 elements: (a) a fragmentary sketch, of two bars length, of the same melody as the above sketches, on two staves, once again in A major, but written in double the note values found in the other sketches for this melody, as well as in the final score: (b) a 15-bar sketch, written on one stave, of a version of the first subject closely related to the version heard at 19:7, where this idea is treated in canon. It begins at the same pitch (C sharp) as the canonic treatment.

Sketch page 4

This page has been discussed in chapter 5, in the section 'The layout of the short score'. In summary, it may well be the point at which Brian 'resolved the Concerto into a Symphony'. The instrumental indications, and the clarification represented by the corresponding section of the ink short score show that this was a passage of pivotal importance to the composer, and also of crucial importance in deciding to write for two pianos rather than one.

Sketch page 5

Following on form the previous page in a pencil sketch of the movement, as indicated by Brian's numbering, this page corresponds quite closely to the parallel passage in the ink short score, with only slight changes in pitch and rhythmic profile. The ink score can thus be seen as a clarification of this sketch (and, by implication, the entire pencil sketch of the piece) before work begins on the full score. The basic shape is maintained, but some details are modified.

Sketch page 6

As indicated above, the location of this material is different to that of the other sketch pages under discussion, and it would appear that its survival is even more haphazard. It contains 11 bars written on two staves in chorale style, and bearing no relation to anything in the Third Symphony.

Sketch page 7

The material on this page corresponds to material found on pages 8 and 9 of the ink short score of the finale of the Symphony, but written on systems of two staves rather than four. As for page 5 above, there are changes in detail of pitch and rhythm, but not in the overall shape. The difference in page numbers between the present page and the ink short score suggest that a similar process of textural expansion, implied by the greater number of staves per system, also took place in the earlier stages of this movement, with the change from pencil to ink.

Sketch page 8

This page has been discussed above, in relation to two details. Firstly, the date at the end of the page is the same as the date at the end of the ink short score (see the discussion above in chapter 5, under 'Introduction'). Secondly, the final bar of the full score, added in pencil to the ink short score (see 'The short score and the coda' from chapter 5) is not present in this sketch, providing further evidence that the striking final leap to F major and back was a late creative thought on Brian's part.

APPENDIX 3: The manuscript material for the Violin Concerto

Manuscript Paper	Pages	
First Movement		
26-stave	1-13	
Second Movement		
26-stave	1-7 (14-20)	
Third Movement		
26-stave	1-10 (21-30)	
28-stave	11 (31)	

Table A3: 1: Size of manuscript paper

Table A3: 2: The layout of the short score

Place in Score	Staves per System	
First Movement		
Bar 1 to 3:7	3	
3:8 to 4:4	2	
4:5 to 26:5	3	
27:1 to 27:12	2	
28:1 to 33:5	3	
Second Movement		
33:6 to 33:12	2	
34:1 to 58:10	3	
Third Movement		
59:1 to 104:6	3	

Commentary

The short score is written out with greater consistency of layout than either short score of the two symphonies. The layout on three staves is mostly divided into two parts, the top stave corresponding to the solo violin line, and the bottom two to the orchestral part of the score. The parts of the short score written on two staves are as follows:

1. 3:8 to 4:4

This single system has the solo violin line on the top stave, and the orchestral part on the bottom.

2. 27:1 to 27:12

This stretch of music contains the first, purely orchestral appearance of the 'new' melody, and as such there is no need for a stave for the solo violin, which is silent. The layout confirms that Brian envisioned this important moment as a purely orchestral one.

3. 33:6 to 33:12

This passage consists of the first statement of the passacaglia them of the second movement, before the entry of the soloist for the first variation.

Commentary

The music of the short score is continuous but for one omission. The cadenza in the finale is not included. However, the numbering of the short score at this point is curious. This is fully discussed in the section in chapter 6 on the cadenza. It would appear that Brian had worked on the cadenza on a separate piece of paper. The music must have been worked out quite fully, since the short score allows for the score numbers between the last bar before the cadenza begins, and the return of the opening theme of the movement at 96. It does not include the bars immediately before that return, however. The short score reveals clearly the harmonic continuity broken by the placing of the cadenza. To a certain extent, this can be seen as a development from the idea of many classical examples of the form — such as the first movement of many of Mozart's piano concertos — where the cadenza is prefaced by a 6/4 chord on the tonic. After the extemporisation of the soloist, a signal trill is followed by the return of the

It is curious that Brian adheres more closely to this idea than to a model like the final movement of Elgar's Violin Concerto in B minor, op. 61 (1910), where the solo instrument has an extended reverie. Perhaps Brian's 'Interlude' — with its perforated bar lines and sense of separation from the main body of the movement — fulfilled that role of an 'internal' solo meditation. The bar lines for this section are not perforated in the short score, but are fully present. This does not affect the character of the 'Interlude', as opposed to how it looks on the page. In the full score, the perforated bar lines make visually explicit that which is aurally implicit, namely the separate, 'inner' quality of the music at this point. The more 'external' character of the cadenza then offers a contrasting view of the solo instrument. The result, as argued in chapter 6, is a formal layout that is somewhat unbalanced by the presence of two quite discursive passages featuring the soloist.

In the final movement, there are two extra bars before the first appearance of the second subject (at fig.72) that were crossed out by the composer, and excluded when

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he came to write out the full score. They provide significant evidence that the expectant hiatus immediately before the entry of the second subject (illustrated in chapter 6 as example VC 34) was a conscious creative decision on Brian's part. The idea of an expectant pause before a strong change of texture is a prominent feature of his musical language — and its use of discontinuity in particular — from his earliest mature works right up to his last compositions in the late 1960s. The evidence of the short score in the present context offers strong proof that this compositional device was a deliberate tactic, rather than a lapse in continuity arrived at out of technical incompetence. The second and third bars in the following example are not scribbled over — unlike in the short score — to make the original path of the music clear. The two extra bars clearly pave the way for the E major tonality of the second subject, but in a rather bland manner, in particular with regard to harmony. Their omission has the twin effect of making the entry of that subject more surprising — after the expectant pause — and more effective. Their exclusion colours the musical argument in a manner typical of Brian.

EXAMPLE A3: 1

Violin Concerto: three bars before 72 to 72:1



Sketch pages

There are four pages with sketch material on the reverse sides of pages of the ink short score In contrast to the bulk of the sketch pages discussed in relation to the second and third symphonies, these do not form part of a preliminary pencil sketch of the work. The latter — presuming it existed — does not appear to have survived.

Page	Location	Numbering by Brian
1	I: 3-4	None
2	I: 8-9	None
3	III: 4-5	None
4	III: 9-10	None

Table A3: 3: Sketch pages

Commentary

Sketch page 1

This contains a version of the second subject of the opening movement, written out on a single line, with a blank stave underneath it that has a bass clef at the start. The key is G major, corresponding to the key in which this melody is first heard. The slight changes made to the melody, plus the fact that the sketch is scribbled over in pencil, may indicate that it was a preliminary sketch for the idea. It may also have been an attempt on Brian's part to write down a theme remembered from the lost First Concerto, before including it in the short score of the surviving work.

Sketch page 2

There are two separate sketches on this page, one written on two staves at the top, and one on three staves about two thirds of the way down. The top sketch uses two treble clefs, and appears to be in 4/4. It does not resemble any material form the concerto. The lower sketch uses the opening of the second subject in E major, which suggests a relation to fig. 13 in the first movement. However the correspondence is not very close. The top part — perhaps for the solo instrument — has a hint of a counter melody, but this does not resemble anything in the short score. Perhaps the two sketches on this page represent a path not taken. Their fragmentary nature supports this view.

Sketch page 3

This sketch, crossed over in pencil, consists of the solo violin part from 62:2 to 65:6 of the final movement, with an increasingly tentative (orchestral) accompaniment. The latter is sketched for roughly four bars before stopping. However, for the first four bars or so, the line found in the solo violin part of the short score is on the second stave, rather than the top one. The fact that the sketch is crossed over suggests it may have served as a preparatory attempt at the material found on page 4 of the short score — which it most closely resembles.

Sketch page 4

This page contains a bar — written on two staves and in 6/4 — of material which does not appear to be related to anything in the concerto. Its survival is as arbitrary as the other sketch pages discussed. It may be no more than an inconsequential doodle, of no importance in relation to the short score on the back of which it is written.

APPENDIX 4: LIST OF PERFORMANCES

The source for the following tables is a supplement to the Havergal Brian Society Newsletters 144 (July-August 1999) and 145 (September October 1999) entitled 'Havergal Brian's symphonies and concertos'. This was compiled by Jeremy Marchant, and also includes approximate timings for each movement of each work, details of recordings, and orchestral forces.

1. SYMPHONY NO. 2 IN E MINOR

Date	Orchestra	Conductor
19 May 1973	Kensington Symphony Orchestra	Leslie Head
21 May 1973		
24 May 1973		
9 March 1979	BBC Symphony Orchestra	Sir Charles Mackerras
6 September 1998	The Purely for Pleasure	Mark Fitz-Gerald
	Orchestra	

Notes:

1. 9 March 1979 was the first fully professional performance.

2. The 6 September 1998 performance took place in a workshop.

2. SYMPHONY NO. 3 IN C SHARP MINOR

Date	Orchestra	Conductor
12 January 1974	New Philharmonia	Stanley Pope
17 May 1987	Orchestra Composers' Platform West	Paul Venn
	Midlands Symphony	
	Orchestra	
26 October 1988	BBC Symphony Orchestra	Lionel Friend

Notes:

1. 17 May 1987 was the first public performance.

3. VIOLIN CONCERTO IN C MAJOR

Date	Orchestra	Conductor	Violinist
1 June 1969	New Philharmonia Orchestra	Stanley Pope	Ralph Holmes
19 May 1979	Young Musicians' Symphony Orchestra	James Blair	
3 January 1981	BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra		
27 May 1995	Millennium Sinfonia	James Kelleher	Marat Bisengaliev

Notes:

- 1. 19 May 1979 was the first public performance.
- 2. Marat Bisengaliev was the first to play Brian's solo violin part without alteration.