Portfolio of compositions, with commentary

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Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Composition

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2020

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Music Department
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Abstract

This commentary, together with the portfolio of compositions it accompanies, proposes a particular attitude towards the composition of sacred choral music for liturgical use.

Most church music published for use in the English parish church-collegiate-cathedral tradition in recent years tends not to display the influence of art-music of the twentieth century in terms of its approach to pitch and rhythmic material, and in its use of structural devices and schemata. There are notable and prolific exceptions, including Pärt, MacMillan, Birtwistle, and Weir, all of whom have written significant works for the liturgy, but the balance of repertoire is in favour of the strongly diatonic, added-note style associated in recent decades with Rutter, Whitacre, and Lauridsen.

By contrast, the works presented in this portfolio show the influence of a range of composers from various twentieth century mainstreams, and build on the inheritance of these traditions; equally, they inhabit a specifically choral tradition traceable as far back as Machaut. Each work uses a relatively complex style in a relatively limited way: each has a particular difficulty, or set of difficulties, which, once surmounted, allow for the straightforward rehearsal of the entire work.

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Choir

Soprano	Zoë Brookshaw, Felicity Hayward*, Eloise Irving*, Rebecca Lea, Helen Neeves
Mezzo-soprano	Lucy Goddard, Jessica Gillingwater, Clara Kanter*, Rosie Parker*
Counter-tenor	Karl Gietzmann*, Ben Williamson
Tenor	Christopher Bowen, Jack Granby*, Graham Neal*, Alistair Putt, James Robinson, Edward Saklatvala*
Bass	Gavin Cranmer-Moralee*, Malachy Frame, Christian Goursaud*, Ben McKee, Reuben Thomas*

* *Terribilis est* only

Organ	Geoffrey Webber
Trumpet	Simon Desbruslais, Ellie Lovegrove
Conductor	Peter Foggitt
Engineer	Jan Capinski

Location: Hampstead Parish Church, London NW3

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Acknowledgements

to my patient and insightful supervisors, Richard Rijnvos and Eric Egan, without whom none of this portfolio would have happened;

to Venetia Bridges;

to the Choir of St John's College, Durham and the Choir of Emmanuel College, Cambridge;

to Jess Gillingwater, Geoffrey Webber, Jan Capinski, Amber Evans, Sophie Gledhill, Sophie Westbrooke, and the choir who recorded the majority of this portfolio;

to the Radcliffe Trust, whose support has made this course of study possible for me.

Introduction

> Liturgical worship is given a more noble form when the divine offices are celebrated solemnly in song... Composers... should feel that their vocation is to cultivate sacred music and increase its store of treasures.[1]
>
> *Sacrosanctum Concilium,* 113 & 121

The aim of this project is to determine a set of parameters within which sacred choral music, designed for performance in liturgical settings, might be written with the use of compositional methods derived from *ernst* concert-hall music, normally without recourse to traditional diatonicism.

Within this set of parameters, I look to use new texts or centos, or to offer an unusual perspective on well-known words: the task of selecting or writing the text is, for me, as important as the task of writing the music. A significant proportion of this commentary is given over to the discussion of texts, particularly with regard to the context in which they were written, and (where relevant) the importance of this context in terms of their use in liturgy.

In setting out to address this task, I assert that there is a choral 'mainstream' using traditional diatonic or modal methods, of which style the output of Gjello, Lauridsen, Rutter, and Whitacre (to name four composers among many notable exponents) is typical. I acknowledge also that there exists a significant corpus of music that does not fall comfortably either into this style or into one of the other mainstreams of concert-hall or operatic music; this commentary does not attempt to offer a comprehensive review of all choral music sacred and secular, but rather sets out quite specifically to adapt certain traits of certain other mainstreams to the use of liturgical music.

[1] various (promulgated by HH Pope Paul VI), *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Rome, 1963. Various editions available, including Catholic Truth Society, London, 2013.

In Chapter One, I discuss the context for and corpus of sacred choral music in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as separate from music written for the concert hall or the opera stage, and briefly consider why—even within the context of the broad range of styles present in both concert and opera—choral music of this sort tends towards extreme conservatism in tonality, structure, and generative methods. Reference is made to past attempts to innovate within choral music; mention is made of stylistic decisions and verbal statements from composers of the last seven hundred years, noting the apparent need for a style that is 'appropriate' for performance in liturgical contexts.

In Chapter Two, I present six works for choir, each of which is intended to be rehearsed within a limited period of time—such as a pre-service practice—and each of which uses a limited number of techniques for generation of material, or for structural processes.

In Chapter Three, two settings of the Ordinary of the Mass are presented, written for quite different groups of singers, but both intended for everyday use.

In Chapter Four, *Pasch*, for choir, soloists, and organ, is discussed. This substantial (over half an hour) work, whose text concerns the Passion, is discussed largely in terms of its monotheme and its development. Musical elements are linked to textual and theological issues, and a case is made for the interconnectedness of music, text, and theology.

1 Sacred choral music in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries: inheritance, tradition, innovation, and retrospection

> "Musical material... is all that faces the composer in the present as inherited from the past: formal schemes, instrumental forces, harmonic and melodic formulae and expectations, and so on."[2]
>
> *Theodor Adorno*

i) Introduction: *The Gleam,* and the problem it posed

On Christmas Eve 2003, the Choir of King's College Cambridge gave the first performance of Harrison Birtwistle's *The Gleam,* a carol setting a macaronic text in English and Hebrew by Stephen Plaice. Some of the reactions sent by mail to the Director of Music (who passed them, delightedly, to the choir, of which I was a member at the time) were not reserved in their commentary: a typical message described the choir as being 'like screaming banshees'.

The Gleam is difficult to sing, and challenging to hear. Its angular vocal lines are typical of Birtwistle's output; its musical suggestion of the light of the star above Bethlehem on Christmas Eve uses multiple divisi to create a chord whose luminosity is truly piercing. Of the thirty-seven pieces commissioned for Christmas Eve during Stephen Cleobury's tenure, it is unquestionably the most complicated.

My feelings about *The Gleam* (which were positive) were rather different from those of my colleagues in the choir (which were, largely, negative): I, unusually for a member of that group, had not been a chorister, and had spent most of my musical education up to that point playing the piano and composing. The conservative harmonic and structural outlook espoused by most church musicians was, to my mind, reactionary, unadventurous, and inappropriate: how could one possibly read the admonition of the ninety-sixth and ninety-eighth Psalms—'O sing unto the Lord a new song'—and understand it to preclude genuinely new music?

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[2] quoted in *Music and Letters,* Volume 99, Issue 2, May 2018, Pages 260–275 https://doi.org/10.1093/ml/gcy002. Accessed 2 November 2020.

The problem posed by *The Gleam* was, to me, quite clear: it is appropriate that church music should reflect developments in other fields of music, yet it is difficult to rehearse complex works—even with a choir of the standard of King's, or many professional groups—within the rehearsal time allocated before choral services. This issue is not a new one: it has troubled musicians and clergy for centuries (of which further mention is made later in this commentary); attempts to introduce 'dramatic changes in repertoire and approach' often are followed by 'periods of atavism.'[3]

This portfolio and commentary, therefore, seek to address the idea of two contrasting inheritances, and the problem of how they might be reconciled: firstly, it considers traditions and compositional practices of concert and stage music of various mainstreams over the last hundred or so years, and, secondly, the sacred choral music traditions of the United Kingdom during the same period. According to Adorno's conception of 'material', then, the composer of liturgical choral music in the twenty-first century may inherit two quite separate strands (which themselves separate repeatedly into further strands) of tradition.

ii) The two strands

The first strand, of concert and stage music written within, or as a non-naïve departure from, a particular art-music tradition, I characterise as being generally erudite and often highly structured, frequently relying on its audience's in-depth knowledge of the tradition itself—it is only really possible to be shocked in the intended way by the finale of Beethoven's ninth symphony if one already knows that a symphony isn't meant to have singers in it[4]; a more recent example of shared knowledge (in fact, in-jokes between the composer, performers, and audience) is Berio's knowing survey of symphonic clichés in *Sinfonia* (1968–9)—and often (and particularly from Debussy onwards) using harmonic systems[5], rhythmic systems[6], sonorities, and structural

[3] Thomas, M, *English Cathedral Music and Liturgy in the Twentieth Century*, Routledge, 2015
[4] A report of the first audience's and critics' reactions to the finale is contained in the *Leipziger Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 26, no. 27 (July 1, 1824), cols. 437-442
[5] e.g. Debussy's use of octatonic scales
[6] e.g. Messiaen's use of Indian classical rhythmic modes

devices[7], that have been developed or significantly re-worked by the composer. I discuss my use of some of these devices in the tenth section of this chapter.

The second strand—music written for performance by choirs, normally in the context of divine service—I characterise as being generally[8] less explorative of new harmonic or rhythmic concepts, and often restricted in its use of structural devices: in short, a more conservative approach. There are many exceptions, but very few such pieces are in the standard repertoire of cathedral or collegiate choirs, let alone the choirs of parish churches or of schools. A notable outlier of recent decades is John Tavener's *The Lamb* (1982)[9], which uses a seven-note row in inversion and retrograde before, as a refrain, harmonising in E dorian a melody constructed from the first four notes; by contrast, the majority of Tavener's other works in the choral repertoire owe rather more to Greek Orthodox chant than to the Second Viennese School.[10]

iii) Current trends in sacred choral music: 'good music in C major'

At the time of writing, the majority of new music published in the United Kingdom for use in cathedrals, collegiate chapels, or parish churches, is largely tonal, diatonic, and structurally straightforward: by way of two examples, the sacred section of Oxford University Press's *New Choral Music for 2020* features nine works, all in major keys, all but one in English, using familiar

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[7] e.g. Cage's use of 'square root form'

[8] Many composers whose work is largely for ensembles other than choirs will have some sympathy with Messiaen's point of view when asked in 1964 to compose for choir (he had up to this point done so only once, in 1937: the resulting motet, *O sacrum convivium!,* was hugely popular, with 138,000 copies printed during its composer's lifetime): "...I believe my music to be much too complex to be of any use to you: it can only be played on the piano, on the organ, and above all by an orchestra, and is intended only for an initiated élite... I think it would be unsingable... by young children." (Messiaen, O, letter of 11 May 1964, trans. in Hill, P & Simeone, N, in *Messiaen,* Yale (2005))

[9] Tavener, J, *The Lamb,* Chester Music, 1982

[10] Tavener was of the unambigious opinion that some musics, by merit of their heritage, are more suited to liturgical use than others: "I'm not a hardline traditionalist, but Greek Orthodox chant is in the apostolic tradition." Pysh, Gregory M., and Tavener, J. *Icon in Sound: An Interview with Sir John Tavener* in *The Choral Journal,* vol. 54, no. 10, 2014, pp. 18–23. *JSTOR,* www.jstor.org/stable/43051951. Accessed 2 November 2020.

texts[11]; Edition Peters' new publications for the second half of 2020 includes works by Alec Roth (D dorian)[12], Alex Campkin (E dorian)[13], Aleksander Levine (D major)[14], Ben Parry (B flat major)[15], and Judith Bingham (D melodic minor)[16]. Schoenberg's assertion that there "is still plenty of good music to be written in C major"[17] may still be true, but it is—in my view—perhaps unnecessary for all new works for liturgical use to be quite so similar in their tonality.

There are numerous other works of sacred choral music written by composers most of whose output is not for church use: from Schoenberg's *Friede auf Erde* of 1911 to Wolfgang Rihm's *Sieben Passions-Texte* of just under a century later, a common thread in this type of output is a complexity that puts it beyond the reach of most liturgical choirs. Numerous attempts were made in the twentieth century, by composers including Kenneth Gaburo in the United States and Sebastian Forbes in the United Kingdom, to create a corpus of more easily performable liturgical music that more closely reflected contemporary trends in style and substance; the majority of these works do not now (or, perhaps, yet) form a significant part of the liturgical choral canon.

iv) Some (partial) solutions to the problem: good music not in C major

The list of composers commissioned for Christmas Eve at King's College contains names of those best known for their church music, but also those of composers who have composed significant works in other genres. The latter group may be said to contain Peter Maxwell Davies (commissioned 1984), Judith Weir (1985), Peter Sculthorpe (1988), Alexander Goehr (1989), John

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[11] Cecilia McDowall *O sing unto the Lord;* Bob Chilcott *Angel voices ever singing,* David Bednall *Come, my Way,* James Whitbourn *Solitude,* Will Todd *Locus iste,* Mack Wilberg *O splendor of God's glory bright; This little light of mine,* Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov arr. Terry Price *Glory*

[12] Edition Peters, London (2020)

[13] Campkin, A, *Awake! Awake!,* Edition Peters, London (2020)

[14] Levine, A, *Christ's Nativity,* Edition Peters, London (2020)

[15] Parry, B, *Psalm 122,* Edition Peters, London (2020)

[16] Bingham, J, *I lift up mine eyes unto the hills,* Edition Peters, London (2020)

[17] Schoenberg, Arnold, quoted in Newlin, Dika. *Secret Tonality in Schoenberg's Piano Concerto* in *Perspectives of New Music,* vol. 13, no. 1, 1974, pp. 137–139. *JSTOR,* www.jstor.org/stable/832371. Accessed 2 November 2020.

Casken (1992), Nicholas Maw (1992), Thomas Adès (1997), John Woolrich (2001), Mark-Anthony Turnage (2006), Brett Dean (2007), and Dominic Muldowney (2008); other composers include James MacMillan (1995), whose vernacular Catholic liturgical music is well-known, Jonathan Harvey (1994), of whom further mention is made later in this commentary, and Arvo Pärt (1990), whose fifty-nine-second setting of the Church Slavonic Hymn to the Virgin has become a staple of the repertoire.

The composers listed above, though diverse in their styles, by and large all attempt in their works for King's to address the same problem as I do in this portfolio: to create music that does not simply exist in a tranquil diatonic vacuum, but takes its stylistic cues both from the past and present, and from the concert hall and stage as well as from the choir stalls. The length of this commentary precludes a full-length literature review, but a few traits of these commissions may be highlighted, and understood as typical responses to the problem already outlined.

v) Three examples from the King's College Christmas Eve commissions

a. Peter Maxwell Davies *One star, at last*[18]

Maxwell Davies' work, *One star, at last,* uses meandering chromatic vocal lines to create a dense counterpoint suggestive of 'the circling star-blizzard'. There are suggestions of traditional modality, and few intervals are large and awkward. As with much of Maxwell Davies' music, medieval influences are never far away, and much of the music of *One star, at last* is sufficiently familiar in its style to provide a counterbalance to the more complex chromaticism present in it.

b. Judith Weir *Illuminare, Jerusalem*[19]

This work, together with *Ascending into heaven*[20] (written two years earlier), is characteristic of Weir's style at the time: the use of octatonic harmony creates a sound-world that is unusual in

[18] Maxwell Davies, P, *One star, at last,* Chester, London, 1984
[19] Weir, J, *Illuminare, Jerusalem,* Novello, London, 1985
[20] Weir, J, *Ascending into heaven,* Novello, London, 1983

church music, but whose limited range of pitches makes for a relatively straightforward learning process for choirs. (Some years ago, I taught a choir of children entirely unexperienced in this sort of music to sing *Ascending into heaven,* first by learning how to sing octatonic scales: this, contrary to assumptions one occasionally hears about children's choirs, posed no great challenge for them.) This is not to say that *Illuminare, Jerusalem* is easy: the divisi require multiple strong singers in each section, and the added complication of a text in late medieval Scots makes an unusual demand of the choir (and the conductor, who must adjudicate the correct pronunciation of the word *digne*).

c. Thomas Adès *The Fayrfax Carol*[21]

Adès, who was an undergraduate student at King's in the early 1990s, knew the choir's abilities well; however, the presence of three solo soprano parts and four solo tenor parts precludes this work's performance even by many professional groups (and the majority of amateur ensembles, too). The music is, as the text, strophic, though each strophe's treatment of the material is quite different, and though most of the material repeats at least once, the vocal lines are full of disjunct leaps and rapid enharmonic shifts. Typically for Adès, the music relies on small fluctuations of tempo and frequent changes of metre: in the last eight bars, there are three tempo markings, six changes of time signature, a 'breath comma,' a tie into a rest, and a full-choir enharmonic shift: this is not music for sight-reading. (It is still significantly 'easier' music than Adès' orchestral works of the same period: compare *Asyla* (1997)[22], with its famous scherzo partially in two simultaneous tempi, one given by the conductor and the other by the bass drum.)

In all three of these works, the composers limit the amount of musical material used—which should make the learning process more straightforward than it otherwise might be—and often draw upon musical and verbal sources of centuries before—which plays into the sense of tradition (and participation in tradition) with which sacred choral music is often associated. The Maxwell Davies is consciously rather simple both in terms of pitch and rhythm; the Weir uses

[21] Adès, T, *The Fayrfax Carol*, Faber Music, London, 1997
[22] Adès, T, *Asyla*, Faber Music, London, 1997

approximately the rhythm that might be deployed in a reading aloud of the poem, though it is more extrovert than the Maxwell Davies in its melodic and harmonic expression; the Adès is, though not of the same order as *The Gleam*, significantly more challenging than the other two works discussed here in terms of its pitching requirements, and contains numerous complexities in its rhythm and metre. Most of the King's commissions from established concert composers can be said to fall approximately into one of these three categories: relatively straightforward (Maxwell Davies etc.), more challenging, yet circumscribed in its difficulties (Weir etc.), and rather more complex (Adès etc.).

vi) Three further examples

Outwith the particular series of commissions for King's, notable works for the liturgy have come in recent years from composers including Howard Skempton, Michael Finnissy, and Julian Anderson. Skempton's rather ascetic style lends itself well to choral music: no significant alteration to his normal compositional habits needs to be made in order to accommodate choral singers, and his work is commissioned by professional and amateur groups. Finnissy frequently draws (in common with others, as already noted) on medieval influences (see, for instance, *John the Baptist*[23] (2016)), though the influence of Messiaen is also unmistakable. In the following example, from *Comfortable Words* (2008)[24], the unison, monotonal choral part strongly resembles a non-retrogradable rhythm (though it is not one), while the organ is both harmonically and rhythmically complex: this allocation of the most challenging music to the organist (who in any amateur or professional choral situation is the most likely of the performers to be highly trained), while the singers are given something rather more simple, is an effective way round the problem of limited rehearsal time.

Among his significant (and ever-increasing) corpus of liturgical works, Anderson's *Bell Mass*[25], written for Westminster Abbey in 2010, makes ingenious use both of the virtuosity of the

[23] Finnissy, M, *John the Baptist*, OUP, 2016
[24] Finnissy, M, *Comfortable Words,* OUP, 2008
[25] Anderson, J, *Bell Mass*, Faber Music, London, 2013

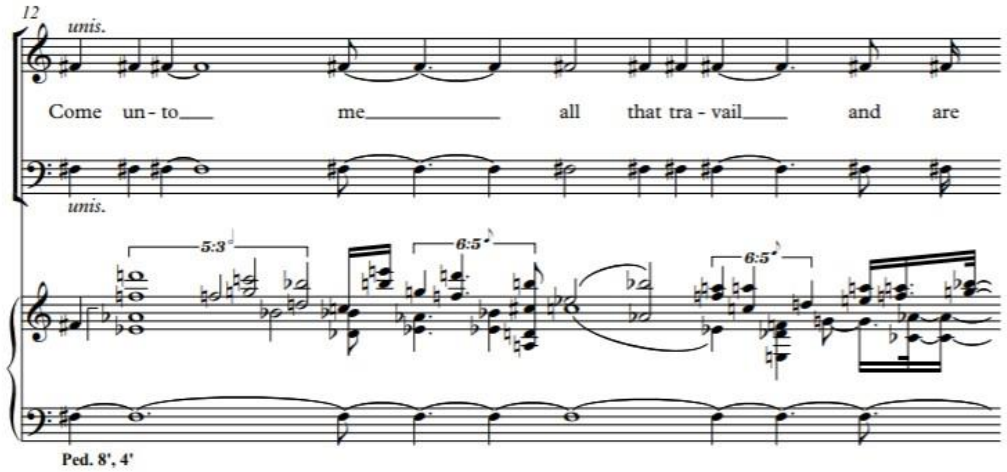

Fig. 1.1 Finnissy *Comfortable Words*

organist (who at the time was Robert Quinney) and of the use of the organ to give notes to the choir during movements. Much of the most complicated choral music is with organ accompaniment: where the organ is not playing, the pitch material tends to be more limited. Like Harvey (see Chapter 2.i), Anderson makes use of semi-aleatoric passages and microtones—though the most challenging microtonal passage (at the start of the *Benedictus*) is given to a baritone soloist—which part at Westminster Abbey would be taken by a professional singer—while the tutti treble line is not given any microtones.

There is a significant corpus of music for choirs or vocal ensembles that I do not discuss in the course of this commentary: this includes the experimental works of Ferneyhough and Xenakis, the madrigals of Sciarrino and Ligeti, or, among many of the principal mid-twentieth-century composers of concert music, Berio's works for the Swingle Singers and the King's Singers (*A-Ronne*; *Cries of London*). My experience of rehearsing this music with professional and amateur groups has led me to believe that the level of virtuosity required for performance of these works' most characteristic passages is, normally, not feasible in the short rehearsal time normally allowed before choral services, and though—as with the small number of works discussed above—there are undoubtedly exceptions, it is beyond the scope of this commentary fully to explore this repertoire.

vii) The reasons for simplicity in sacred choral music

The absence, in much sacred choral music, of evidence of those harmonic or rhythmic developments evident in other [long] twentieth-century art music, may be partially ascribed to a need for expedience in rehearsal, and a particular problem inherent in the vocal apparatus itself: one cannot simply put one's finger on a note and play it with certainty; so, when the voice is asked to produce a note as part of a non-diatonic sonority, there often has to follow some assurance (normally from the conductor) that the note produced was in fact correct. This adds significantly to rehearsal time, which in sacred settings is often limited—at the time of writing, the men of St Paul's Cathedral Choir rehearse for an hour before weekend Evensong, and for only half an hour before the weekday services.

There are practical reasons for choral music to be 'easier' than instrumental music: there are around twenty full-time (or at least 75% of full-time) professional orchestras in the UK, but only one salaried choir (the BBC Singers); the majority of other professional non-liturgical choral singing takes place in the context of historically-informed performance; very few groups have built their reputation on the performance of complex contemporary music—the British ensemble Exaudi enjoys an international reputation for precisely this, and under its co-founder and Artistic Director, James Weeks, has commissioned an enormous amount of new music for voices, particularly from composers 'of independent, non-conformist outlook, generally working well outside the mainstream'[26]—while the commissioning of *ernste Musik* that was a feature of the early decades of The Swingle Singers and The King's Singers has, in recent years, given way to a greater emphasis on *Unterhaltungsmusik*. Meanwhile, groups such as Tenebrae and Ex Cathedra perform new music, but infrequently perform non-tonal works[27].

[26] 'Repertoire', www.exaudi.co.uk. Accessed 2 November 2020.
[27] To take but one example, from two commissions by the ensemble Tenebrae, Joby Talbot's *Path of Miracles* has been performed in almost every season since 2005, when it was commissioned; Julian Phillips' *Sorrowful Songes* has been performed once by the group, at its 2012 Proms premiere.

viii) Structural issues in non-strophic texted works; responses to these issues in this portfolio

The latter issue of the frequent absence, in mainstream sacred music, of innovation—or, often, any sense of large-scale rhetoric—in structural matters can be partially put down to the need to 'set the text': if the text does not itself use metrical form, or repetition, or refrain, or some other feature that suggests thematic cross-referencing, a composer may consider themselves excused from any obligation to impose a structure or form not inherent in the text upon the music to which they are setting it.[28]

The problems inherent in this issue have affected composers for centuries: the much-discussed poor reception of Beethoven's C major Mass of 1807 was caused in no small part by the unsatisfactory manner in which many of the various contrapuntal sections are suddenly cut off in mid-flow, and a new line of text, with its accompanying musical idea, introduced[29]. By the time of the *Missa solemnis,* completed sixteen years later, Beethoven had resolved these issues—not least simply by creating a significantly longer work, in which larger-scale structures could be fully worked out while still setting the whole text. On a smaller scale, one of the most popular settings of the BCP Magnificat at Evening Prayer—Stanford's setting in B flat (pub. 1902)—imposes a ternary form on its text, beginning the second section a full verse earlier than expected (before the central section of the text, which lists God's various deeds), and setting the Gloria Patri to a developed version of the music that begins the Magnificat.

One possible answer to the problem of a text that contains no obvious structural divisions, therefore, is to impose structural divisions or thematic similarities upon it. In *Terribilis est* (Chapter 1.v), I take this idea to a logical extreme by dividing the text and its music into a

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[28] There are exceptions, of course: to name but one, Howells' setting of the complete liturgical texts for Sunday (Matins, Communion, and Evensong) for King's College, Cambridge, is a fine example of a large-scale work (albeit in multiple smaller movements) whose structural rhetoric on both micro and macro levels is (in my opinion) clear and persuasive.

[29] A discussion of this, featuring excerpts from some of the more scathing contemporary reviews, appears in McGrann, Jeremiah W. *Haydn, A Prince, and Beethoven's Mass in C* in *The Choral Journal,* vol. 50, no. 2, 2009, pp. 8–23. *JSTOR,* www.jstor.org/stable/23560192. Accessed 2 November 2020.

pyramidical structure of syllables and durations. In *Pasch,* I use different versions of a single theme to connect seemingly disparate texts, and in *Rise, rise thou, Deborah,* I take a short piece of text and use it as a refrain.

ix) *Gebrauchsmusik* and [the] 'church style'

Music for the church and music for other purposes have frequently diverged in their styles: as early as the fourteenth century, Machaut composed in both the *ars antiqua* and *ars nova* styles, for church and for entertainment respectively; at the end of the sixteenth century, composers of madrigal-motets consciously blurred the distinction between sacred and secular music[30]; in 1834, Liszt expresses his dissatisfaction with (amongst others) Mendelssohn's conservative church style, and calls—no doubt inspired in part by Beethoven's *Missa solemnis,* premiered a decade previously—for a merging of the concert and church music styles:

> For want of a better term we may call the new music Humanitarian. It must be devotional, strong, and drastic, uniting on a colossal scale the theatre and the church, at once dramatic and sacred, fiery and free, stormy and calm, translucent and emotional.[31]

Liszt's intention is not entirely to eliminate the notion of *Gebrauchsmusik* from the church—anything written for sacred use is *gebräuchlich* by definition—but he is strongly opposed to the composition of music that is facile: music that is to be used in divine worship must attempt to put its listeners in mind of the splendour (and complexity) of the Omnipotent.

In this commentary, and in the works it accompanies, I attempt to reconcile—as others have also attempted, but with, as will be discussed, my own particular criteria in mind—the two

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[30] This came at the end of a period in which the most frequently set text in sacred music, barring the Ordinary of the Mass itself, was the Song of Songs, an erotic poem whose allegorical interpretation (as a representation of Christ's love for his Church, or for his Mother) is frequently stretched to the limits of plausibility; the question may be asked, regardless of the composer's intentions, if any setting of the Song of Songs is entirely sacred.

[31] Liszt, F, *Gesammelte Schriften II,* Leipzig, 1881, pp.55–57, trans. in Shearer, C. M. "A Look at Choral Music in The Nineteenth Century." *The Choral Journal,* vol. 8, no. 3, 1968, pp. 27–29. *JSTOR,* www.jstor.org/stable/23542878. Accessed 2 November 2020.

contrasting inheritances: my aim is to write choral music that can be rehearsed successfully and performed effectively in a limited timescale, but whose techniques, and musical language[32] are those of the concert hall.

Within this general purpose, I aim to meet certain other criteria: firstly, the text must be comprehensible; secondly, the individual vocal lines should be as straightforward as possible to sing, without any unnecessary large intervals (particularly large chromatic intervals); thirdly, the elements from which the piece is composed—pitch, rhythm, harmony—should be limited in number (not least because this enables performers more easily to understand the music); fourthly, the structure of the piece should either be derived from the structure of the text, or have something in common with the other elements of the musical material.

Certain works in this portfolio do not meet all of the above tests: one (*Terribilis est*) deliberately obscures the individual syllables of the text in favour of an overall effect; one (*The Burning Bush*) uses no other structural device than the narrative structure of the text itself; one (*Whosoever will be saved*) is a musical version of painting by numbers: each appearance of each syllable is set to the same pitch or set of pitches, which creates a kind of structure-without-form.

x) An indicative list of some influences on the music in this portfolio, and the resulting approaches to how musical material is dealt with

In the second section of this chapter, I refer to identifiable strands of art-music 'written within, or as a non-naïve departure from' a particular tradition. Of the rapidly multiplying traditions and schools of composition that have characterised the last hundred years of art-music, the music in this portfolio is influenced most by those compositional styles that have not returned to diatonicism, even via some route other than retrospection or reactionariness: I draw a distinction between the tradition of church music written by church musicians (of which, among any number of possible genealogies, one might plot a line connecting Herbert Brewer, James Healey Willan, David Willcocks, and John Rutter, all of whose music might be said to exist more

[32] I mean this in the sense in which Messiaen uses it: the totality of a constructive/expressive system, rather than the contentious sense of something that invites subjective interpretation.

or less unaffected by developments in the concert hall) and church music written by composers participating in contemporary musical trends that are deliberately diatonic (for example, the minimalism of Jonathan Dove, the pop-inflected works of Alexander L'Estrange and Bob Chilcott, or the 'easy-listening' added-sixth style of Eric Whitacre, Morton Lauridsen, and Ola Gjello). By contrast, the principal influences on my music include many of the composers mentioned in section v above, as well as—naturally—those composers who were in turn formative influences on their music.

a. Harmonic systems and systems of pre-determined sonorities

Magic squares, so frequently used by Maxwell Davies, Maderna, and Stockhausen (among many others), were an early influence during this project. Although no work in this portfolio uses a magic square *per se,* the idea of allocation of pitch or rhythm to a particular thing continues to hold appeal for me. In *Go, hart,* and *Whosoever would be saved,* I use a limited number of pitches arranged into a limited number of chords: in the former, a system of inversions generates much of the material from a restricted starting-point; in the latter, a sonority assigned to each word dictates the construction of the entire work.

The use of modality, particularly modality outwith the standard twelve church modes, has been a key influence on my music since childhood. My experiences of performing Messiaen's piano music, and the choral music of Judith Weir—including *Illuminare, Jerusalem* and *Ascending into heaven,* as discussed above—are important in this area. In *Rise, rise, thou, Deborah,* I draw upon a traditional klezmer mode for much of the pitch material; in *Glossolalia,* almost the entire work is within one mode.

A slightly different approach is taken in *The Burning Bush,* where each voice part has only three pitches each: in a sense, this is related partially to Ligeti's *Musica ricercata,* in which each successive movement introduces one new pitch, and maximum effect is derived from a minimum of pitch material.

b. Rhythmic and metrical systems

In *Whosoever will be saved,* each word has its own duration (or set of durations) assigned, which—in combination to the sonorities described above—dictates the construction of the entire work. In *Terribilis est,* the durations of each note (other than in the central section) are not predetermined, but the period of time during which each syllable is sung *is* predetermined: this is shown in Fig. 2.30.

Key influences in this area include Messiaen's use of rhythmic modes, both of his own devising and from Indian classical music, and Harvey, Stockhausen, and Penderecki's (again, among many others) use of periods of time as measurements, rather than bars of a set number of beats. This issue is discussed further in Chapter 2, particularly in relation to Darryl Runswick's *Flute Sonata.*

c. Large- and small-scale structural devices

In *Rise, rise thou, Deborah,* and in *Glossolalia,* I make use of predetermined durations for each section; in the former a sense of periodicity is established by the interspersal of a refrain between each of these sections, and in the latter the rapid textural change between the narrative sections and the canons of the glossolalia itself acts as a musical signpost for the audience: the end of one section and the start of the next is always extremely clear.

In *Pasch,* I construct the whole work using both a structural scheme to interleave sections, and a system of pitch and motif generation that relies on a single small germ-cell. *Pasch* also features, as do *Glossolalia, Rise, rise, thou, Deborah,* and the *Missa super Domine probasti me,* a number of canons: my work as a performer of medieval and renaissance polyphony is reflected in these sections, which use canons at the unison (*Glossolalia, Pasch*), at disjunct intervals (*Missa super Domine probasti me*), prolation canons (*Pasch, Missa super Domine probasti me*), and canons involving aleatoric elements (*Rise, rise thou, Deborah*).

Influences on my music here include predetermined timescales, particularly as used by Bartók (one example is the *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta,* in which the golden ratio is

deployed) and Debussy (*Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune,* in which the piece's second section begins exactly at the half-way point, and the climax is, as with the Bartók work mentioned previously, at the golden section). Aldo Clementi's use of prolation canons—in virtually all his work from the 1970s onwards—and that of composers including Nono and Reich (particularly the latter's 'phasing,' in which the distance between voices is frequently adjusted[33], creating a canonic effect without strict adherence to the rules: I use a similar technique in *Pasch*).

xi) The intended performers of this music

Some of this music is only performable by highly skilled singers: *Terribilis est* requires both vocal agility and excellent rhythmic acuity, for example. Other works, such as *The Burning Bush* or *Go, hart,* can quite feasibly be performed by amateur groups, or in educational settings. *Pasch* and *Whosoever will be saved* were both written for mid-level collegiate choirs (St John's College, Durham, and Emmanuel College, Cambridge) with limited rehearsal time; *Glossolalia* was written for performance by a professional liturgical choir. The *Missa super Domine probasti me* was first performed by a good amateur group containing some semi-professional singers; the *Missa brevis* was written for Emmanuel College, Cambridge: the whole work was easily rehearsed from scratch in under fifteen minutes.

For millenia, emphasis has been placed by religious organisations on the need for highly-skilled performers to bring the best music to worship: the thirty-third Psalm states that it is necessary both to 'sing a new song' and to 'play skilfully'; St Augustine (as I mention in Chapter Six) claims that *qui bene cantat, bis orat*: who sings well, prays twice; and the extensive network of choir schools and evidence of choral teaching across Europe for the last thousand years is proof of the Church's commitment to excellence. Not all music requires professional performers, of course, and not all of the music in this portfolio requires professional performers: none of this music, however, is designed to be learned by rote, or offered as a pleasant, unchallenging anthem for a rainy weekday Evensong. This is quite deliberately intended to be music that makes demands both of the performer and the audience.

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[33] Mann, A, Wilson, J.K., and Urquhart, P, *"Canon"*, *Grove Music Online*

2 Rise, rise thou, Deborah | Glossolalia | The Burning Bush | Whosover will be saved | Terribilis est | Go, hart

i) Rise, rise thou, Deborah

a. Text

> Hear, ye kingis, perceive, ye princes, with earis: I am the which to the Lord shall sing, and say psalm unto the God of Israel. Rise, rise thou, Deborah, and speak the song. Rise thou, Barack, and, son of Abinoam, take captives. Lord, when thou wentest out from Seyr, and passidist by the region of Edom, the earth is movid, and heavens and clouds droppenden with waters. Hills floweden fro the face of the Lord, and Sinai fro the face of the Lord God of Israel... When the charris ben hurtlid, and the host of the enemy is quaint[34], there the righteousness of the Lord ben shown, and mercy into the strong men of Israel... Blessid among women Jahel, the wife of Aber the Keenite; be she blessid in her tabernacle. The left hand she put to the nail, and the right to the hammers of smithis, and she smote Sisseram, seeking in his head the place of the wound, and the temple mightily thrilling. Betwixt the feet of her he fell, fallid, and died, and he was wrappid before the feet of her, and he lay out of life and wretchidful... So perishen all thine enemies, thou Lord; forsooth those that loven thee, as the sun in his rising shineth, so glitteren they.
>
> verses from Judges 5, Wycliffe translation, partially modernised

b. Introduction

There are certain passages of Scripture that feature either infrequently or not at all in the standard Christian lectionaries. The narrative (Judges 4) of Barack's rout of Sisera's army, and

[34] i.e. strangled

the latter's subsequent violent murder at the hands (and tent-peg) of Jael, is one such passage: its immediate application as either a model of godly living or a source of sound doctrine has, by many, been held in some doubt.[35] A colleague of mine had long wanted to preach on this passage—largely for the sake of the challenge involved in teasing out some positive moral message—and it was for this event, a service of choral Evensong, that I wrote *Rise, rise thou, Deborah,* a setting of selections from the subsequent panegyric (Judges 5). Amidst the normal Old Testament post-battle language of triumph and divinely-ordained slaughter[36], a few words stand out, particularly in the idiosyncractic and vivid Wycliffe translation: "Hills floweden at the face of the Lord".

c. The Deborah number in rheology and in music

> Deborah knew two things. First, that the mountains flow, as everything flows. But, secondly, that they flowed before the Lord, and not before man, for the simple reason that man in his short lifetime cannot see them flowing, while the time of observation of God is infinite. We may therefore well define a nondimensional number the Deborah number D = time of relaxation/time of observation.[37]

In these words Markus Reiner introduced, in an after-dinner speech to the Fourth International Congress on Rheology (1962), the concept of the Deborah number, which provides a scale on which the time for any unconstrained substance to behave as a fluid can be registered.

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[35] A discussion of this issue can be found in Fewell, D.N., and Gunn, D.M. *Controlling Perspectives: Women, Men, and the Authority of Violence in Judges 4 & 5.* in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. 58, no. 3, 1990, pp. 389–411. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1464620. Accessed 2 November 2020.

[36] The problems of applying a purely theological interpretation to political violence are summarised nicely in Chesnut, J.S. *Problems in Teaching the Old Testament* in *Journal of Bible and Religion*, vol. 30, no. 4, 1962, pp. 284–290. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1459681. Accessed 2 November 2020.

[37] M Reiner (1964) *The Deborah number* in *Physics Today* 17, p.62.

This work, *Rise, rise thou, Deborah,* attempts to relate in an audible form the idea of plasticity—or even liquidity, to appropriate a term. At various points during the piece, some voice-parts adhere rigidly either to tempo, or metre, or both, while other voice-parts are allowed to flow, to a greater or lesser extent, unconstrained.

d. Metrical and non-metrical notations

I first observed, in vocal music, the technique of proportional notation within strict time in Penderecki's *The Devils of Loudon* (1969, rev. 2012), where versions of this notation are used throughout the entire opera[38]; in rehearsal, however (I was chorus master for the premiere of the revised version), the conductor thought best to notate all these passages in strict time—and through doing so, generate an effect more aleatoric-sounding than that which was created when the singers were relying on each other for cues. (The problem of aleatorism and the natural tendency to seek out homogeneity is discussed further beneath.) In *Rise, rise thou, Deborah,* I make use both of partial aleatorism and of fully-notated passages that create an 'aleatoric' effect.

In Fig. 2.1, the sopranos, divided into four parts, have the same material, but *rubato* and in a metrically unrestricted canon; the tenors then imitate this material, but in tempo. In Fig. 2.2, the sopranos and tenors are kept in time, and sing the same pitch-set as the altos and basses, while the altos and basses are each divided into three parts, and sing at potentially as many tempi as there are singers.

[38] A typical example of Penderecki's use of this technique occurs at rehearsal mark 2 in Act II.

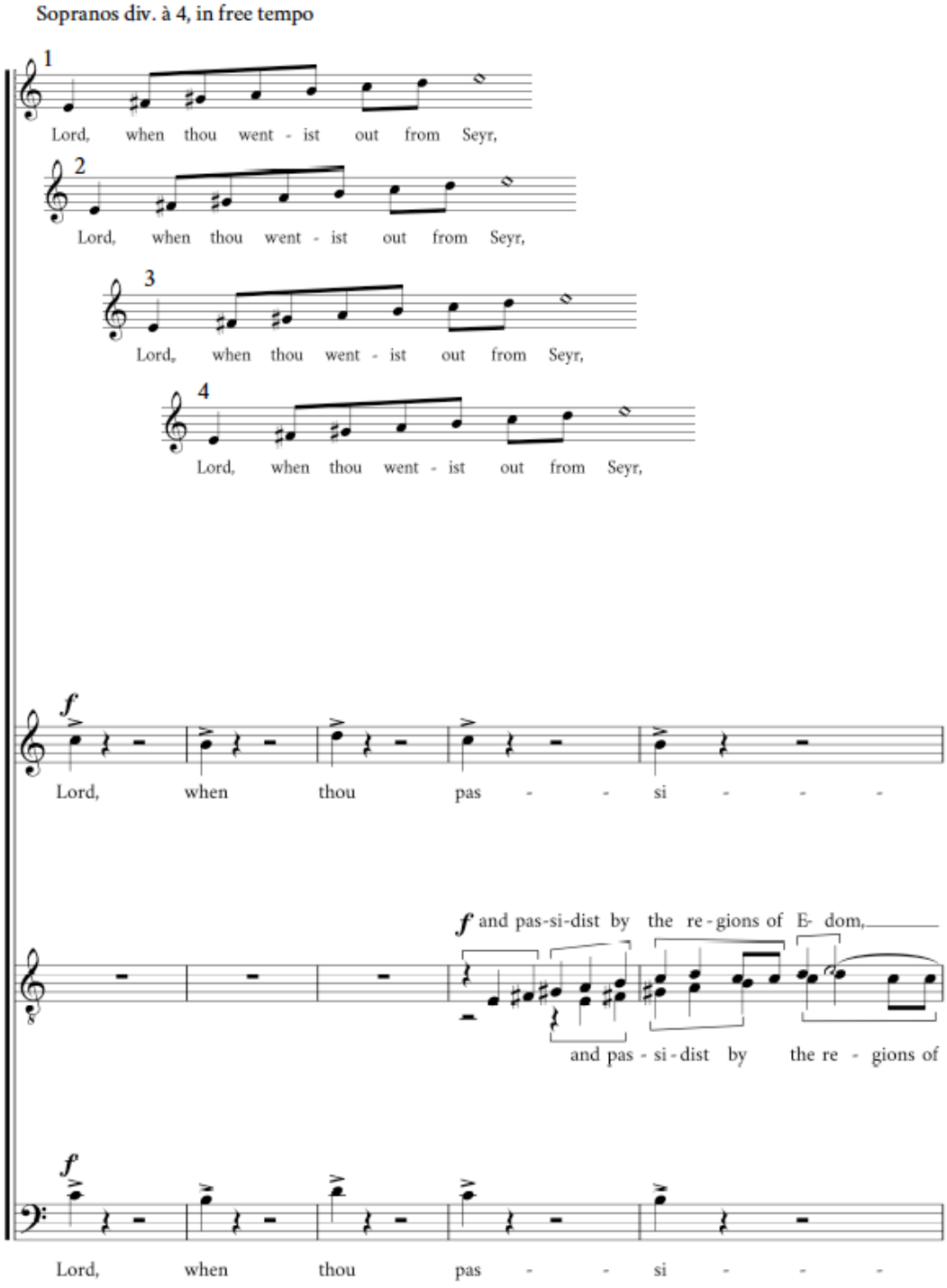

Fig. 2.1 *Rise, rise thou, Deborah* p.2

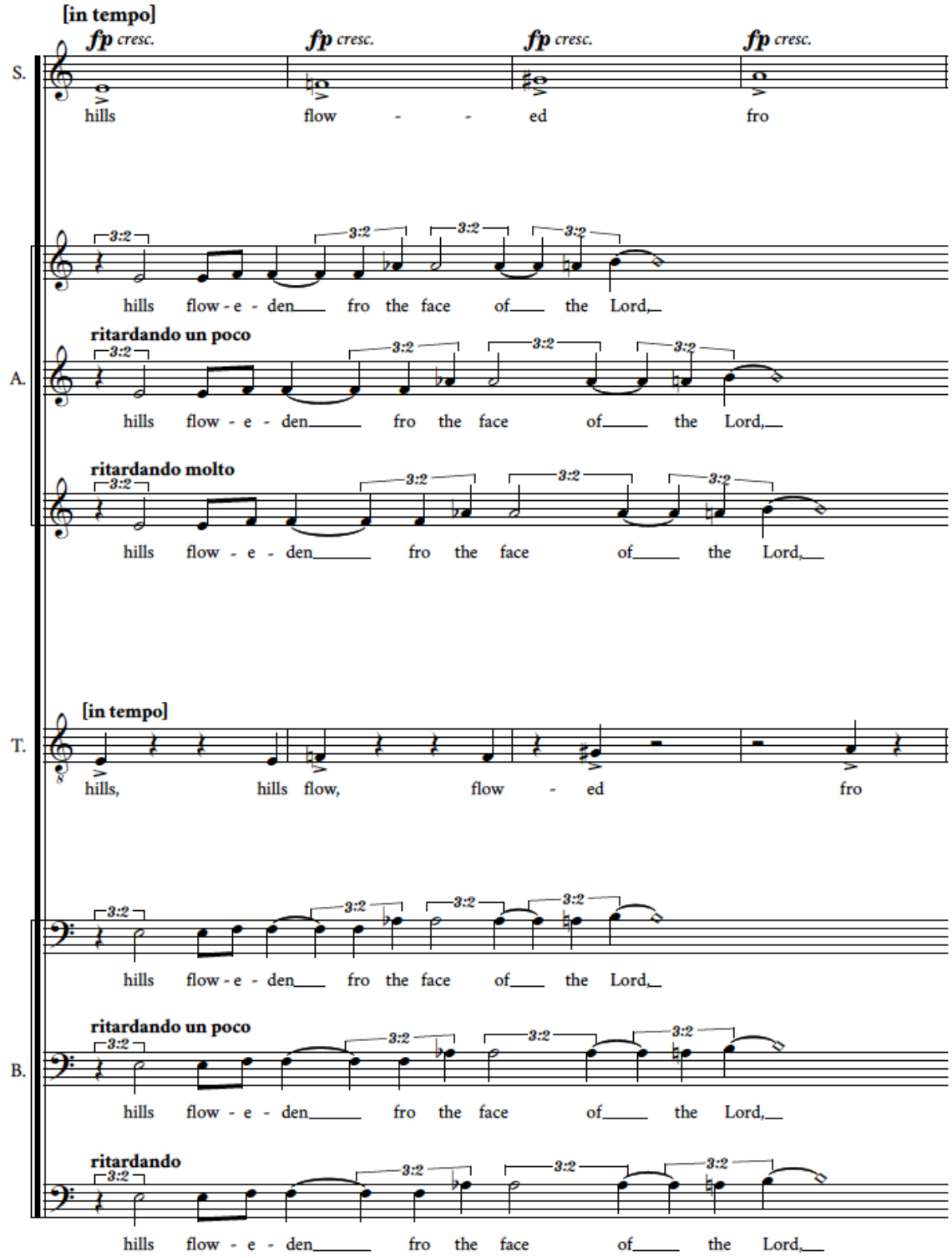

Fig. 2.2 *Rise, rise thou, Deborah* p.6

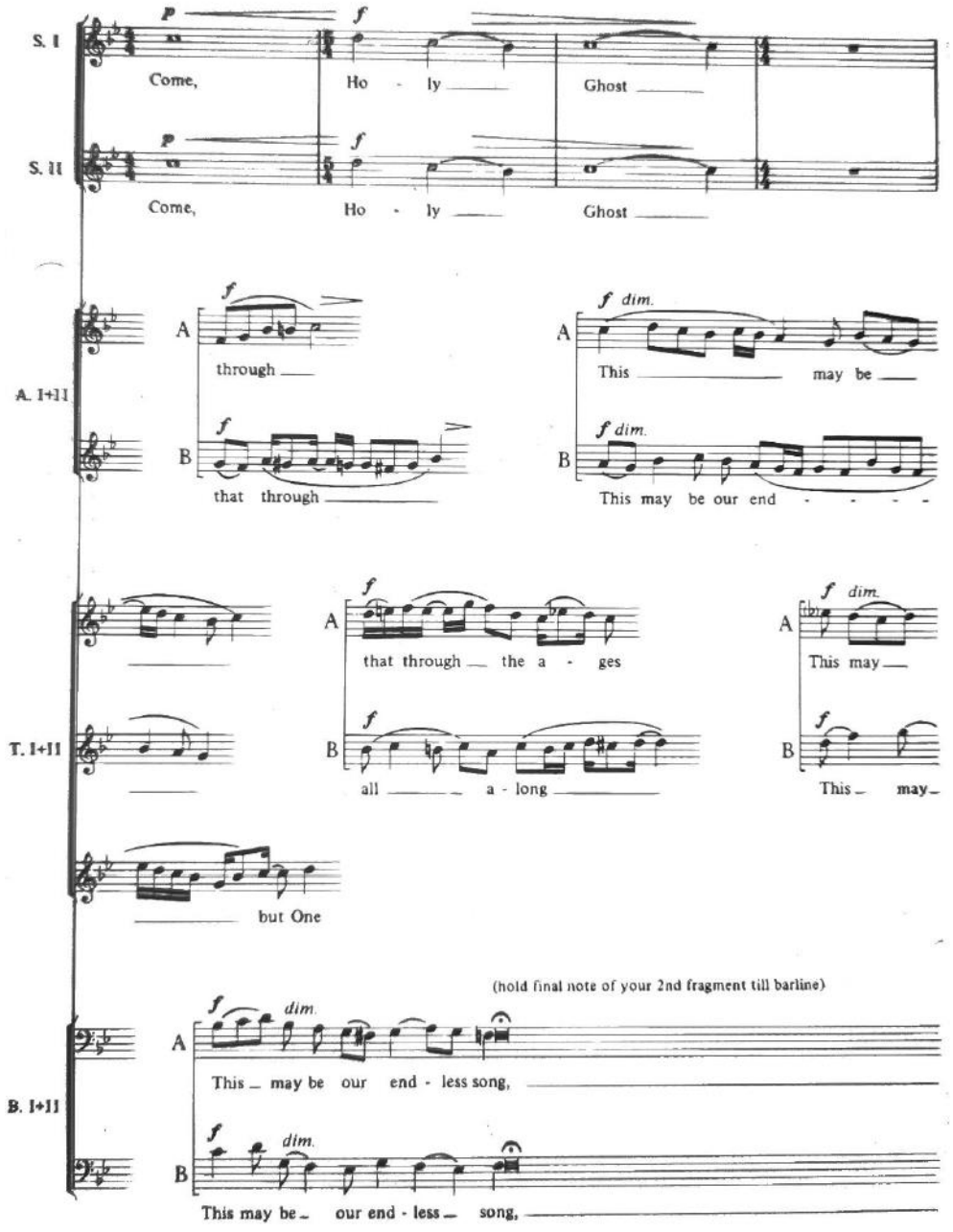

Fig. 2.3 Jonathan Harvey *Come, Holy Ghost* p.16

Jonathan Harvey uses a similar measured/unmeasured technique in *Come, Holy Ghost* (1984)[39] (Fig 2.3), but the effect generated is markedly different: in Harvey's work, written for the enormous space of Winchester Cathedral, the listener is surrounded by a slow-moving wash of fragments of plainsong and plainsong-like chant (an effect that has been imitated extensively in

[39] Harvey, J, *Come, Holy Ghost* (Faber Music, 1986)

the thirty-six years since, and which has acquired an almost memetic value as a signifier of numinousness: typical examples include the opening of Gabriel Jackson's *To the Field of Stars VI* (Faber, 2011), and the second half of Eric Whitacre's *Deep Field* (Boosey, 2015), for orchestra, choir, and an infinite number of users of a smartphone app). In *Rise, rise thou, Deborah,* written for a small college chapel, the effect is quite different: the listener hears individual voices diverging and converging at high speed; there is articulation and clarity in the chaos.

The divergent technique is used in its most specifically notated form on p.9, where the sopranos and altos are divided into a total of eight parts, with each part slightly slower than the one above it. This method is derived, albeit at some distance, from much earlier sources of mensural canons, principally the *Missa L'homme armé super voces musicales* (c.1492) of Josquin des Prez; more recent models include Arvo Pärt's *Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten* (1976) and a significant proportion of the post-serial works of Aldo Clementi, whose use of "gradual decelerando"[40] at various speeds in various parts became his compositional hallmark: in a not atypically polemical remark, Clementi describes the role of individual parts in these works as "inaudible, cadaverous micro-organisms"—that is to say, the ear is intended to perceive the effect, rather than the specificity of the counterpoint.[41] In my version of this technique, the intention is that by turns both the counterpoint and the effect are perceived: one comes into focus by dint of the other beginning to blur. In recently-composed sacred choral music, my model for this technique was Adès' *January Writ*[42], in which mensural canons are used throughout.

A less specifically-notated version of this divergent/convergent technique is used on p.13, where approximate positions in each bar are given for sopranos and tenors, each section *divisi in 2.* Though I have since become aware of many other, earlier, examples (Kenneth Gaburo's *Two* (1962), for example, opens with a passage of this type), I first encountered this kind of writing in the music of Daryl Runswick (b.1946): his *Flute Sonata* (2003) uses only approximate temporal

[40] Fanning, D., *Recent Italian Music* in *Music and Letters*, Volume 64, Issue 3-4, July 1983, Page 320, https://doi.org/10.1093/ml/64.3-4.320. Accessed 2 November 2020.
[41] Griffiths, P. *Italian* in *The Musical Times*, vol. 129, no. 1742, 1988, pp. 193–193. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/965322. Accessed 2 November 2020.
[42] Adès, T, *January Writ*, Faber Music, London, 1999.

locations for each note within set periods of time (see Fig. 2.4). For Runswick, this is intended to provide opportunities for improvisatory elements beyond timing to come into play: he instructs the performer that "[a]part from the pitches and approximate rhythms, everything is to be improvised: note lengths, dynamics, phrasing, timbre: every other aspect of the piece's realisation;"[43] in other words, "less notational precision, and greater interpretative freedom."[44] In *Rise, rise thou, Deborah,* the instructions are less liberal, not least because my experiments in improvisation and aleatoric singing with groups of singers (as mentioned above in relation to Penderecki's *The Devils of Loudun*) showed that, given anything but highly specific instructions, singers will tend to adhere to each other's lead, and a less divergent effect than hoped for is generally attained.

On p.15 (Fig. 2.5), both these techniques are used at the same time: the sopranos sing in tempo, but in canon (the entries of which are dictated by the conductor); the basses are strictly in time; the altos—whose notation alternates between strict and partially aleatoric—converge with and diverge from the basses; the tenors have a set duration in which to sing the notes given, but are not obliged to do so in rhythmic unison.

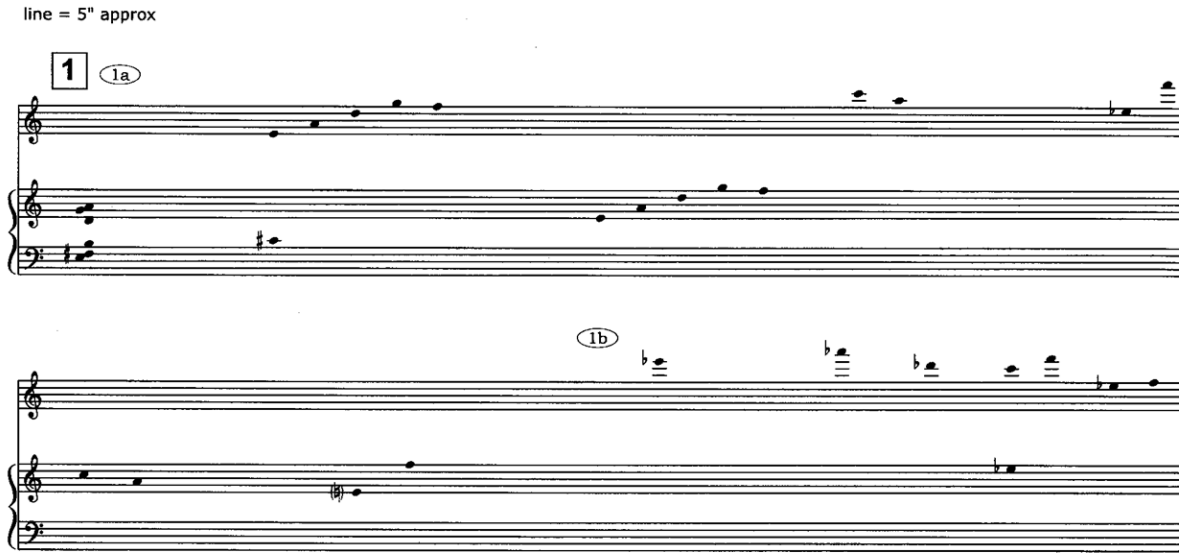

Fig. 2.4 Daryl Runswick *Flute Sonata* p.2

[43] http://www.darylrunswick.net/flutesonata.html; accessed 2 November 2020
[44] Mabry, S, *Exploring Twentieth-Century Vocal Music: A Practical Guide to Innovations in Performance and Repertoire,* Oxford University Press, 2005, p.63

Through these various methods and techniques, the idea of plasticity or liquidity is suggested by the music: both the chaos of the battle and the idea of the very landscape fluctuating to suit the whim of an angry deity ("...hills floweden at the face of the Lord...") are reflected, in some sense, by the diverging and converging vocal lines.

e. Structure, mode, duration, and audience perception

The structure of the piece is essentially that of a rondo, or of a song with a refrain: this refrain ("Rise, rise thou, Deborah") is rather simpler than the rest of the music, and is intended to be redolent of a folk song: certainly, the F natural–G sharp/natural second–sharp third that characterises this melody is one that is used in the folk musics of several countries, and is probably most recognisable as the distinctive interval of the klezmer *freygish* or *shteyger* scale (also called, in Ashkenazi sacred music, the mode *ahavah rabbah*)[45]. This mode is used frequently throughout the piece, often in transposition (for example, p.7 b.3).

The episodic structure of this work is clarified and reinforced by the durations of each section: each appearance of the refrain is of the same duration (c.15 seconds), and though the tempo changes frequently, each of the rondo episodes is also of the same duration (c.35 seconds): each episode and its subsequent refrain form a pair of sections lasting around fifty seconds. The final two sections, which comprise a simultaneous statement of the refrain (T&B) with an episode (S&A) (p.18), followed by a developed version of the refrain leading into the coda (p.20), are of twenty-five seconds each, and they too form a pair of sections lasting fifty seconds (Fig. 2.6).

[45] I spent several years as a deputy professional singer at the Reform synagogue in Central London, where the Song of Deborah does, at least once a year, appear in the lectionary, and where I became familiar with Ashkenazi traditional liturgical music. A brief discussion of the *freygish* scale in klezmer can be found in Walden, J. (2014). *The 'Yidishe Paganini': Sholem Aleichem's "Stempenyu", the Music of Yiddish Theatre and the Character of the "Shtetl" Fiddler,* Journal of the Royal Musical Association,139(1), 89-136. www.jstor.org/stable/43303359. Accessed 2 November 2020.

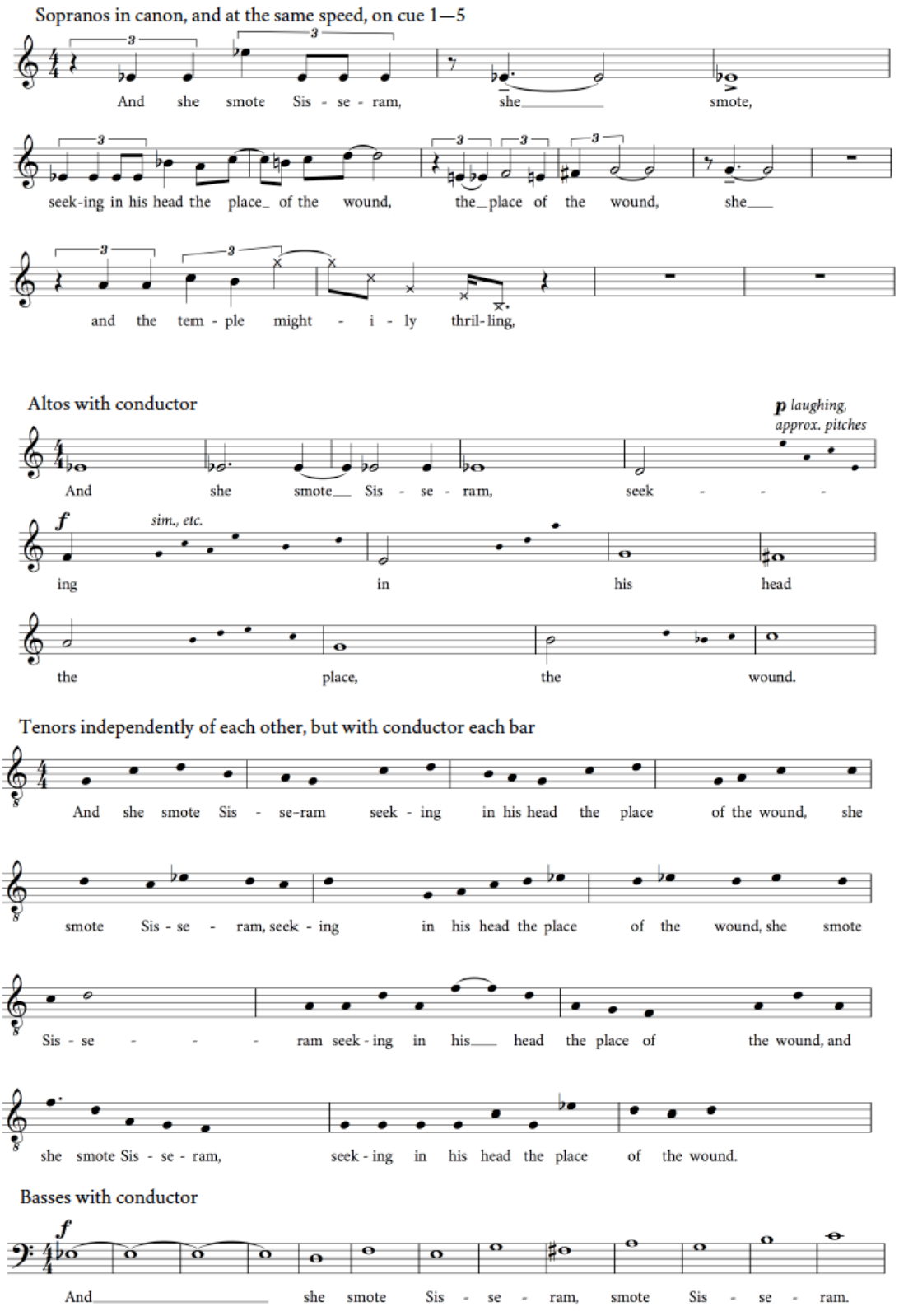

Fig. 2.5 *Rise, rise thou, Deborah* p.15

Section title	Material	Duration sec c.	Page no.
Hear, ye princes	A	35	2
Rise, rise	B	15	2
Lord, when	C	35	3
Rise, rise	B	15	7
When the charris	D	35	8
Rise, rise	B	15	11
Blessid	E (derived from D)	35	11
Rise, rise	B (solo)	15	14
And she smote	F	35	15
Rise, rise	B	15	17
So perishen/Rise	G/B	25	18
Rise, rise	B (developed)	25	20

Fig 2.6 Chart of episode durations, *Rise, rise thou, Deborah*

The purpose of this piece at its first performance was—as the role of the anthem at Evensong often is—to provide a musical counterpart to the first lesson (which was of verses from Judges 4 & 5) and its accompanying sermon. Much of the content of the service, as noted above, was unfamiliar, and based on a passage of Scripture that is seldom, if ever, heard in the context of Anglican liturgical worship. To counterbalance this (since Evensong congregations tend to have conservative musical tastes) I felt it necessary to create a piece that—although using certain compositional techniques I believe had not been used in sacred music up to that point, and the style of whose text is nothing if not vigorously frank—contained certain familiar elements: the use of the *freygish* scale for the frequently-returning refrain puts the listener in mind of klezmer—the traditional celebratory music of the Jewish diaspora—and the evenly-spaced episodes and refrains owe more to folk song or hymnody than they do to through-composed choral music.

This work is experimental, particularly when considered in the field of liturgical music. In the context of this project, it contains many of the elements I have sought to incorporate into my music: a range of traditional and new influences, an easily-comprehended structure, and a sufficient amount of familiar gestures as to render it, at least partially, within the understanding and 'comfort zone' of a liturgical choir.

ii) Glossolalia

a. Introduction

I grew up attending a Pentecostal church in Edinburgh, where there was significant emphasis on certain of the spiritual gifts: prophecy, speaking in tongues, and so on. It has always been disappointing to me that in the established Church, the feast of Pentecost—the very beginning of the Church's life—is celebrated with such comparitively meagre enthusiasm. An event whose first iteration involved fire indoors, glossolalia, and accusations of drunkenness is reduced in most modern liturgical churches to a rather staid service, occasionally with cut-out fabric doves representing the Holy Spirit. (Until the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church observed eight days of this feast, and the 1662 Book of Common Prayer allows for three days' celebration; both the Roman and English churches now reduce it to one day: Pentecost has become markedly less important. This is reflected in the music written for it, and also in the choices of texts for that music: at one church at which I have worked, the substantial liturgical music library of around two thousand pieces contains only three twentieth-century works for Pentecost, two of which are settings of Latin office hymns, and one of which is Grayston Ives' charming but unchallenging *Listen sweet dove.*)

One of the things I most enjoy about the Acts 2 narrative is the uncertainty and wildness of the event: the disciples are gathered, a strange sound fills the whole house, they acquire what appear to be flames on their heads, can speak in multiple languages, and consequently go out and evangelise. It is unclear how much of what the Apostles are doing is of their own agency, and how much is by the direction of the Holy Ghost. In *Glossolalia*, I wanted to suggest something of the chaos and other-worldliness of these things.

b. Text

> When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. *O Yesseus Mazareus Yessedekeus!* And there appeared

unto them cloven tongues like as of fire. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

And there were dwelling at Jerusalem devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. *O Yesseus Mazareus Yessedekeus!* And all were amazed and marvelled, saying to one another: Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. *O Yesseus Mazareus Yessedekeus! O living water, O glorious Name!*

Acts 2 (KJV), and the Coptic Gospel of the Egyptians

c. Mode, counterpoint, and contrast

The mode used for most of *Glossolalia* is octatonic (Fig. 2.7)[46]:

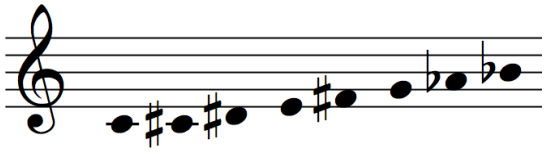

Fig. 2.7 *Glossolalia* mode

though occasionally the pitch A natural is used as part of the mode. The motion of the vocal lines is normally by small intervals: this, despite the unusual scale, makes the music relatively

[46] This is similar to, but differs from in the choice of A flat rather than A natural, Messiaen's second mode of limited transposition.

straightforward to sing. There are occasionally larger leaps used, but these tend to be for a specific effect, such as at bb.50–51 (Fig 2.9), where the repeated use of major sevenths and perfect octaves in double canon and inversion is contrasted with the previous dense counterpoint, moving largely by step (Fig 2.8).

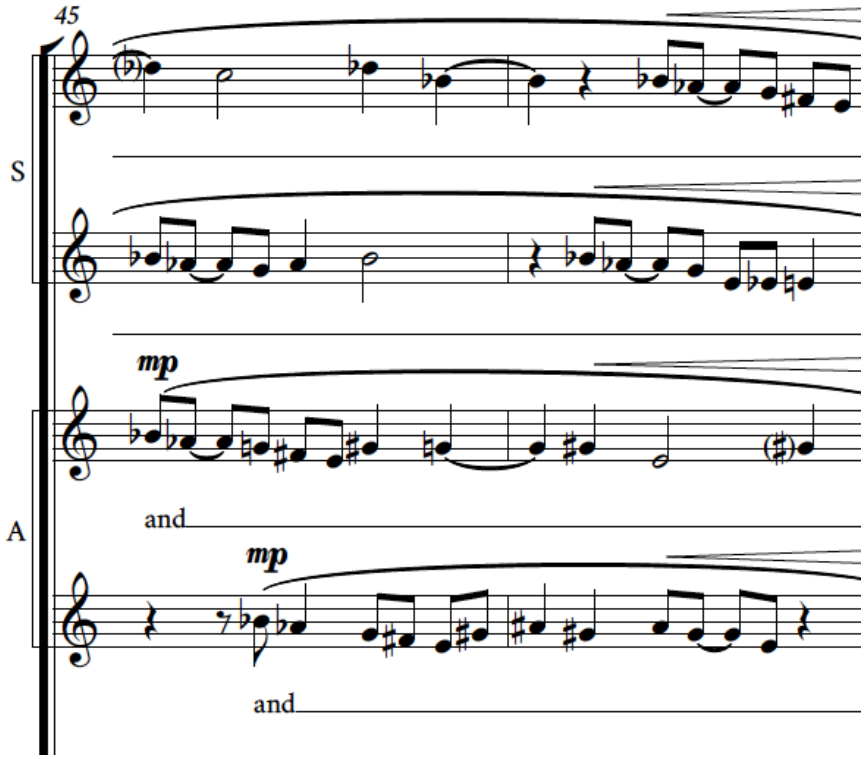

Fig. 2.8 *Glossolalia* bb.45–46

Inversion effects are often used: these are usually modal inversions—rather than being calculated, as a strict inversion is, by chromatic interval—and often are only approximate. In Fig. 2.10, the soprano melody (which has previously appeared on its own) appears with the homophonic counterpoint of the alto part. The relative motion is always contrary, but the intervals, as calculated as degrees within the octatonic scale, are not consistent.

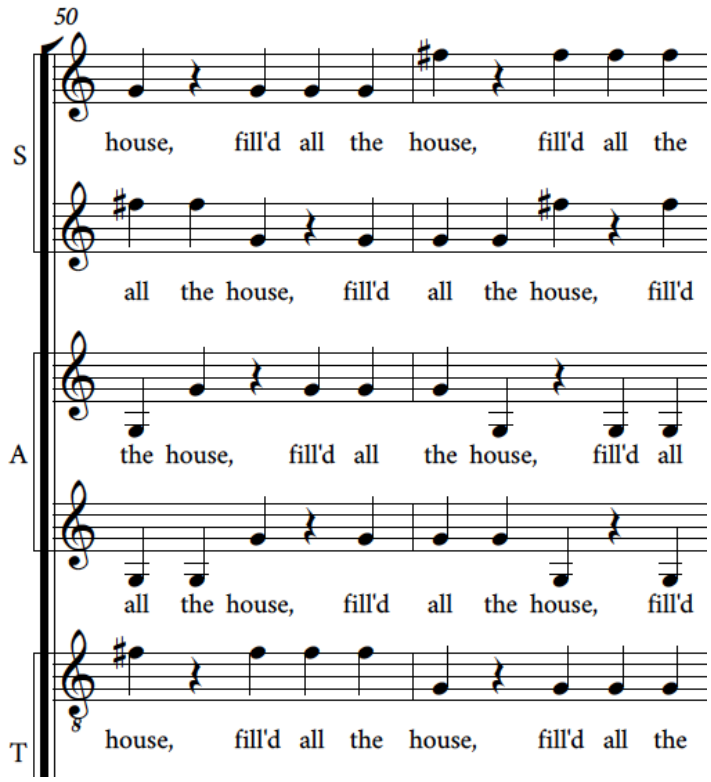

Fig 2.9 *Glossolalia* bb.50–51

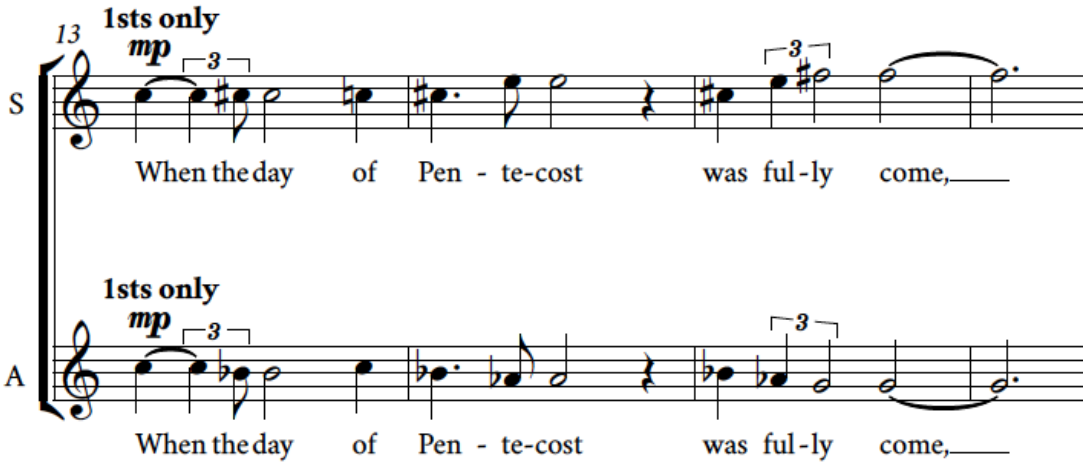

Fig. 2.10 *Glossolalia* bb.13–16

Text	*When*	*the*	*day*	*of*	*Pen-*	*te-*	*cost*	*was*	*ful-*	*ly*	*come*
Soprano (degrees of scale in original form)	1	2	2	1	2	4	4	2	4	5	5
Alto (degrees of scale in inversion)	1	2	2	1	2	3	3	2	3	4	4

Fig. 2.11 Comparison of degree scales in *Glossolalia* bb.13–16

(see also Fig. 2.7)

Throughout the work, there are instances of imitation (bb.78–83, all voice parts), partial imitation (bb.37–38, soprano and alto), strict canons, and two implied canons.

The first three strict canons begins at b.61. The text at this point is a transcription of xenoglossia from the Coptic Gospel of the Egyptians, the vowels of which then coalesce into the tripartite name *Yesseus Mazareus Yessedekeus,* which appears to be the Name of Jesus into which Coptic Christians were, in early centuries, baptized. The effect is meant to be of many voices uttering the same Name, but the relative rhythmic complexity of this section (in comparison to the more straightforward music that has preceded it) is intended to add a degree of chaos—my memories of the sections of services in Pentecostal churches where people are encouraged to speak in tongues or to prophesy is of a sense of uncertainty and unpredictablity, so although generally only one person speaks at a time, it is unclear who will speak next, or for how long, or on what subject—to the certainty of who is being worshipped.

The second canonic episode consists in two simultaneous three-voice canons: the first is in both soprano parts and the first tenors, and the second in both alto parts and the first basses. The first of these begins as a quasi-inversion of the b.61 episode; the second uses the pitch material from the first two beats of b.61 and the first beat of b.62 to create a motif of a quite different character.

At b.129, the third canonic episode contains three conventional canons, the first of which is in the sopranos and first tenor; the second is in the second alto, second tenor, and first bass; the third is in the second alto and second bass. There is a fourth canon in play, with two 'voices': it is a hocket between four voices (sopranos and altos; tenors and basses) in which a descending scale is passed through the voices, and then a different version of the scale (still within the mode) rises again.

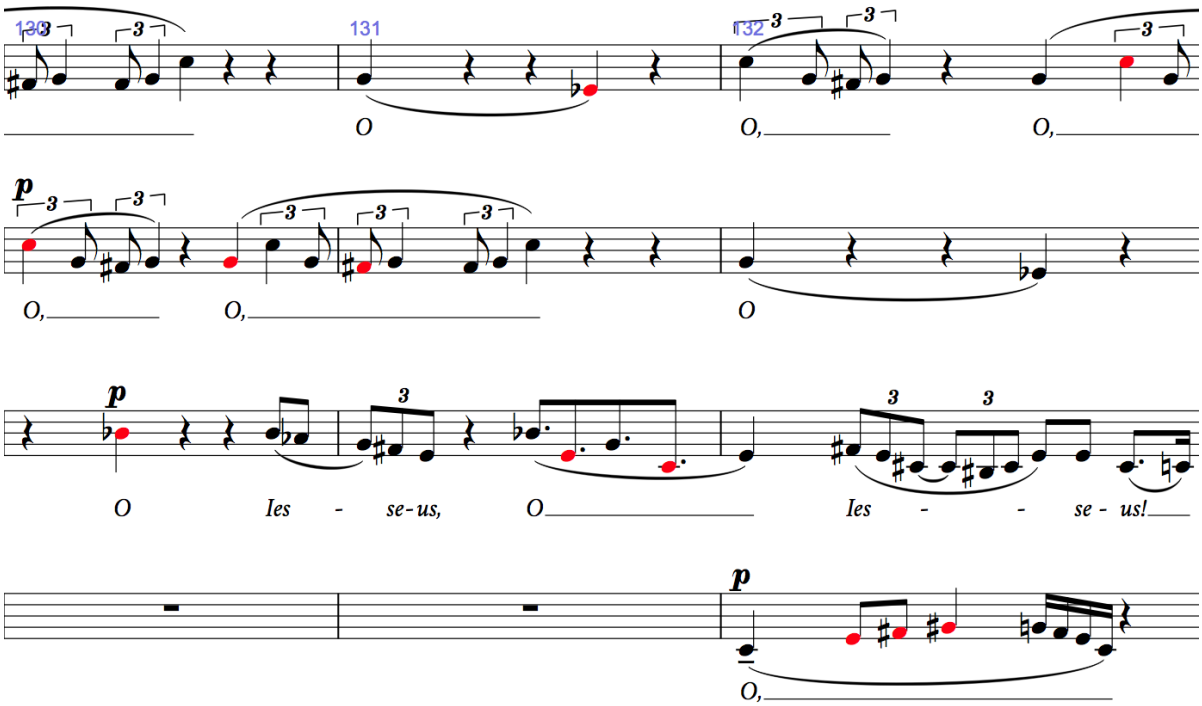

Fig. 2.12 *Glossolalia* bb.128–130, soprano and alto with canon notes highlighted

d. Modal harmony: consonance and dissonance

It is possible to argue that where a piece is written in a certain mode, it should be possible to create chords from the pitch-set of that mode and understand the chords to be consonant—within the context of the mode, at least. However, as Phil Johnson-Laird, Olivia Kang, and Yuan-Chang Leung summarise:

> Experimenters have asked musicians and nonmusicians to listen to and then rate the "harmoniousness" of individual chords (e.g., Cook, 2001; Cook & Fujisawa, 2006; Roberts, 1986), and the results concur with the following rank order of increasing dissonance: major triads < minor triads < diminished triads < augmented triads. This trend is robust regardless of music training, and occurs in both Western and East Asian listeners.[47]

[47] Johnson-Laird, P.N. et al. *On Musical Dissonance* in *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, vol. 30, no. 1, 2012, pp. 19–35. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/mp.2012.30.1.19. Accessed 2 November 2020.

In other words, it is probably impossible truly to escape traditional notions of consonance and dissonance, since a sense of consonance appears to be innate. (This is the case not only for humans: certain primates also display the same gradation of responses to increasing levels of dissonance.[48])

Many composers working in non-diatonic styles have explored the possibilities offered by traditional consonances emerging from devised, non-traditional modes (or from combinations of modes). Among them, Messiaen's use of major chords as points of resolution is well-documented; among many examples, the *Theme de Dieu* recurs throughout the cycle *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus* (Durand, 1947) (Fig. 2.11b):

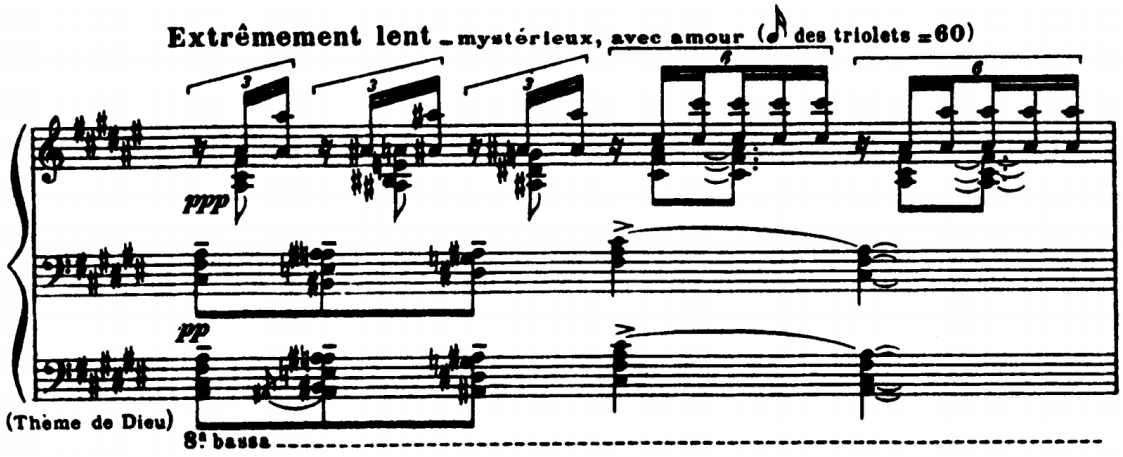

Fig. 2.13 Messiaen *Vingt regards sur l'enfant-Jésus*: *Regard du Père*, b.1

In this example, the shifting internal voices of the harmony create dissonance (though, for an audience previously experienced in Messiaen's music, these chords are themselves familiar), and then resolve back onto F sharp major. The transitory function of the third chord in this example is particularly clear: it is not intended to be perceived as a chord of D sharp major, else the G natural would be spelled as F double sharp.[49]

---

[48] see Fishman, Y. I., Volkov, I. O., Noh, M. D., Garell, P. C., Bakken, H., Arezzo, J. C., et al. (2001). *Consonance and dissonance of musical chords: Neural correlates in auditory cortex of monkeys and humans* in *Journal of Neurophysiology*, 86, 2761–2788. Accessed 2 November 2020.

[49] A disccusion of the implications of Messiaen's spelling habits, and various other of the harmonic traits present in his music, can be found in Lee, John M. "Harmony in the Solo Piano Works of Olivier Messiaen: The First Twenty Years." *College Music Symposium*, vol. 23, no. 1, 1983, pp. 65–80. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/40374163. Accessed 2 November 2020.

e. Modes-within-modes in *Glossolalia*

In a similar way, within the mode I use in *Glossolalia*, various traditionally consonant harmonies can be found, and I use them in this piece quite liberally, contrasting them with more dissonant passages. At b.36, the Lydian mode, starting on C, is suggested. Here, the D flat in the second alto part is intended to be perceived as a chromatic inflection (Fig. 2.13), rather than as a function of the scale,

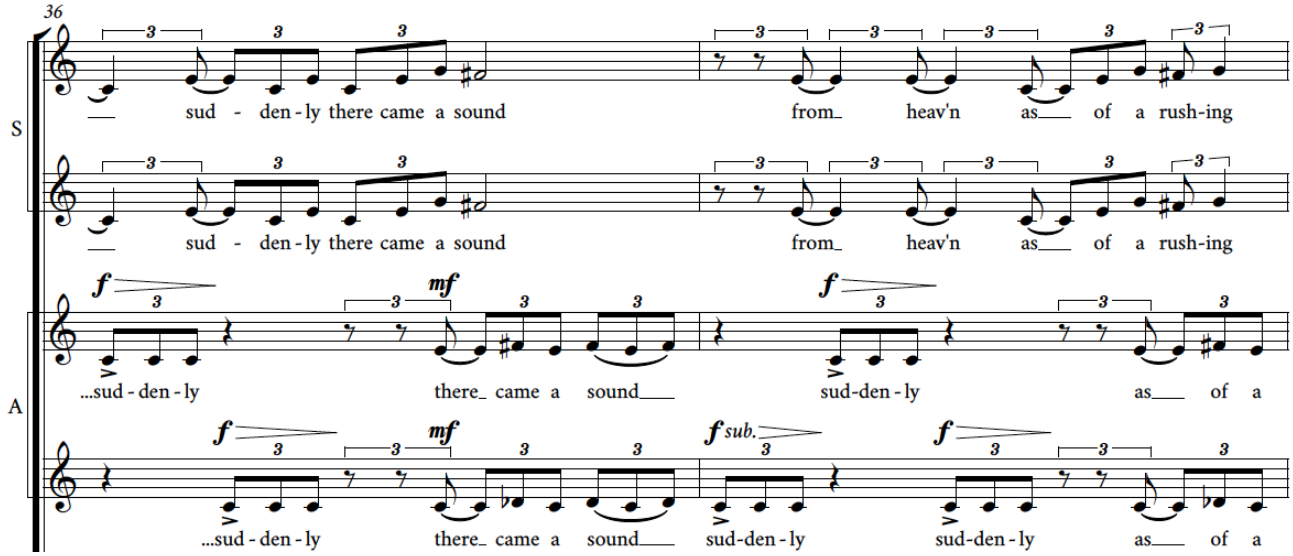

Fig. 2.14 *Glossolalia* bb.36–37, S & A only

though beneath this harmony, the tenor line rises through the sixth, seventh, eighth, and first degrees of the octatonic mode (see also Fig. 2.14). In b.38, the Lydian effect is cancelled by the introduction of the upper half of the octatonic mode in the soprano and alto parts, and in bb.39–40, the E flat Dorian mode provides the pervasive harmony (Fig. 2.14).

The Dorian mode with finalis E flat appears elsewhere in this work, often used as a means of harmonic 'repose', or as a familiar, consonant sound following a period of relative dissonance. In bb.70–72, the dissonance of the bass and alto parts leads to the more familiar-sounding Dorian music of bb.74–77. At the very end of the piece, the previous Lydian harmony pervades (bb.147–end), though with frequent chromatic inflections.

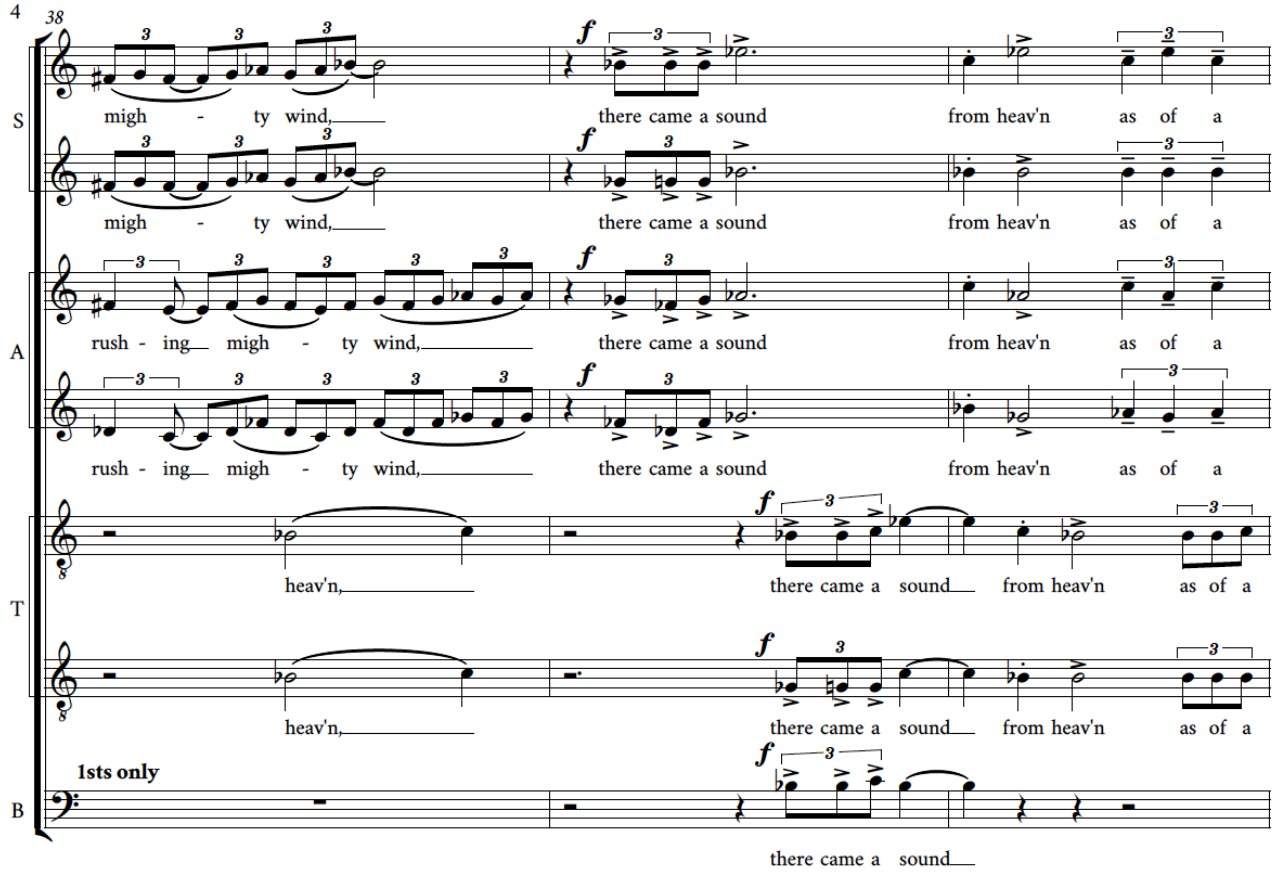

Fig. 2.15 *Glossolalia* bb.38–40

f. Numerology

Here, as elsewhere (*The Burning Bush; Whosoever will be saved; Terribilis est*) I use certain symbolic numbers to determine elements of the structure. This practice stems from several earlier precedents—notably Augustine's *De civitate Dei*[50]—for the ascription of concrete meaning, and in some cases mystical potency, to certain numbers.

The numbers I use in *Glossolalia* all have well-established symbolic meaning:

> 3 represents the persons of the Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;
>
> 6 is the number of the days of Creation, as Augustine says, "quia per senarium numerum

[50] Book XI, chapter 30, in which Augustine expounds the merits of the number 6 as being the first number 'comprised of its aliquot parts' (trans. Dods, M., Christian Literature Publishing Co., Buffalo, NY, 1887)

est operum significata perfectio";[51]

7 is the number of the spiritual gifts[52], the number of the golden lampstands[53], and the number of the Sabbath[54];

9 is the square of 3, and the sum of 3 and 6.

There are 7 sections in total. The numbers 3, 6, and 9 are used as the basis for all sectional durations: each section of *Glossolalia* is either thirty, sixty, or ninety seconds long (Fig. 2.15); the first canonic section is three-voice[55], and the second is a canon six in two (i.e. two simultaneous three-voice canons); the third canonic section has three real canons, which conceal a fourth canon in hocket.

Tempo (crotchets)	**116**	**126**	**80**	**80**	**80**	**80/126**	**126**
Number of bars	35	25	8	25	9	8+12	>25
Duration (seconds)	90	60	30	90	30	30+60	>60

Fig. 2.16 Tempo and duration in *Glossolalia*

g. Audience perception

For an audience to perceive a structural concept in real time, that concept must be made clear to the audience either beforehand or by signifiers in performance. Numerous examples of this are present in the works of, to name but three among many, Haydn—the false recapitulation in the late E flat keyboard sonata (Hob. XVII.52) is the most famous example, which relies for its comic effect on the audience having understood the large-scale harmonic progression of the work up to that point—Shostakovich—the impact of the slow fugue that opens the Eighth Quartet is far greater when one is accustomed to the idea of a fugue being a final movement, rather than an

[51] "...for by the number six was the perfection of His works signified", *op. cit.*

[52] Isaiah 11.1–3

[53] Revelation 1.12

[54] Genesis 2.2

[55] Symbolic canons three-in-one abound in the Renaissance; as Elway Bevin notes in his *Briefe and Short Introduction* (1631), "A Canon of three in one hath resemblance to the Holy Trinity, for they are three distinct persons and but one God, so are the other three distinct parts, comprehended in one. The leading part hath reference to the Father, the following part to the Sonne, the third to the holy Ghost."

opening gesture—and Adès—the slow repeated sliding, one of many devices "suggesting eternity"[56] that concludes the first act of *The Exterminating Angel* relies on the audience having perceived, as the act is performed, the concept of the whole action of the piece being stuck outwith linear time.[57]

Some elements of *Glossolalia's* compositional devices and structure are apparent at first hearing: the canonic sections are quite clearly delineated, and the use of inversion and small-scale imitation is not obscured by other layers of material (e.g. bb.78–83); the use of strictly-managed durations for each section, even if one is not immediately aware of the precise duration, is made clear to the audience by the extension of certain sections (e.g. the 'stretching-out' of the opening material at bb.31–35), the abrupt termination of others (e.g. the sudden appearance of the unison at b. 69), and sudden changes in texture (i.a. b.129). To perceive these changes, one does not have to have a profound understanding of the whole piece, but rather one has only to perceive what Aristotle would call the *accidents*—the surface effect, not necessarily the sophistry that creates it—and, through, understanding these things in the context of the piece, to perceive something of the piece's *substance*.

This effect of rapid shifting between textures and ideas comes partially from what Howard Skempton refers to as Stravinsky's "patchwork form"[58], and what Edward Cone, in his 1968 appreciation of Stravinsky's compositional development up to that point, describes as "stratification, interlock, and synthesis"[59]. Unlike Stravinsky's use of this technique in, for instance, the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (1920), in which the stratification is always clear and the synthesis reliant on a large-scale perception of the work as a whole, I occasionally link

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[56] Burkhardt, O.P., *Angst liegt in der Luft: Thomas Adès' Oper <<The Exterminating Angel>> bei den Salzburger Festspielen,* Neue Zeitschrift Für Musik (1991-), vol. 177, no. 5, 2016, pp. 62–62. *JSTOR,* www.jstor.org/stable/44757658. Accessed 2 November 2020..

[57] Alexander Brent Smith discusses, with no small degree of whimsy, some of the best-known (at the time) musical surprises in Smith, A.B., *The Unexpected in Music* in *The Musical Times,* vol. 64, no. 966, 1923, pp. 537–538. *JSTOR,* www.jstor.org/stable/911353. Accessed 2 November 2020.

[58] Potter, C., *Erik Satie: Music, Art, and Literature,* Routledge, 2016.

[59] Cone, E.T., *Stravinsky: The progress of a method* in *Perspectives on Schoenberg and Stravinsky,* ed. Cone & Boretz, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1968, pp. 156–164. *JSTOR,* www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt183q2r9.13. Accessed 2 November 2020.

elements of one section to the next, whilst maintaining a clear sense of the end of one section and the beginning of the following (Fig. 2.16).

My intention in structuring *Glossolalia* in this way was to allow an audience easily to perceive the various sections and their relationships to each other: the three canonic sections appear in relief against the homophony that precedes each of them; the reappearance of the b.36 material at b.111 is immediately recognisable;[60] for some listeners, the rising canonic pedal beginning at b.112 will be identifiable in diminution at b.123/125.

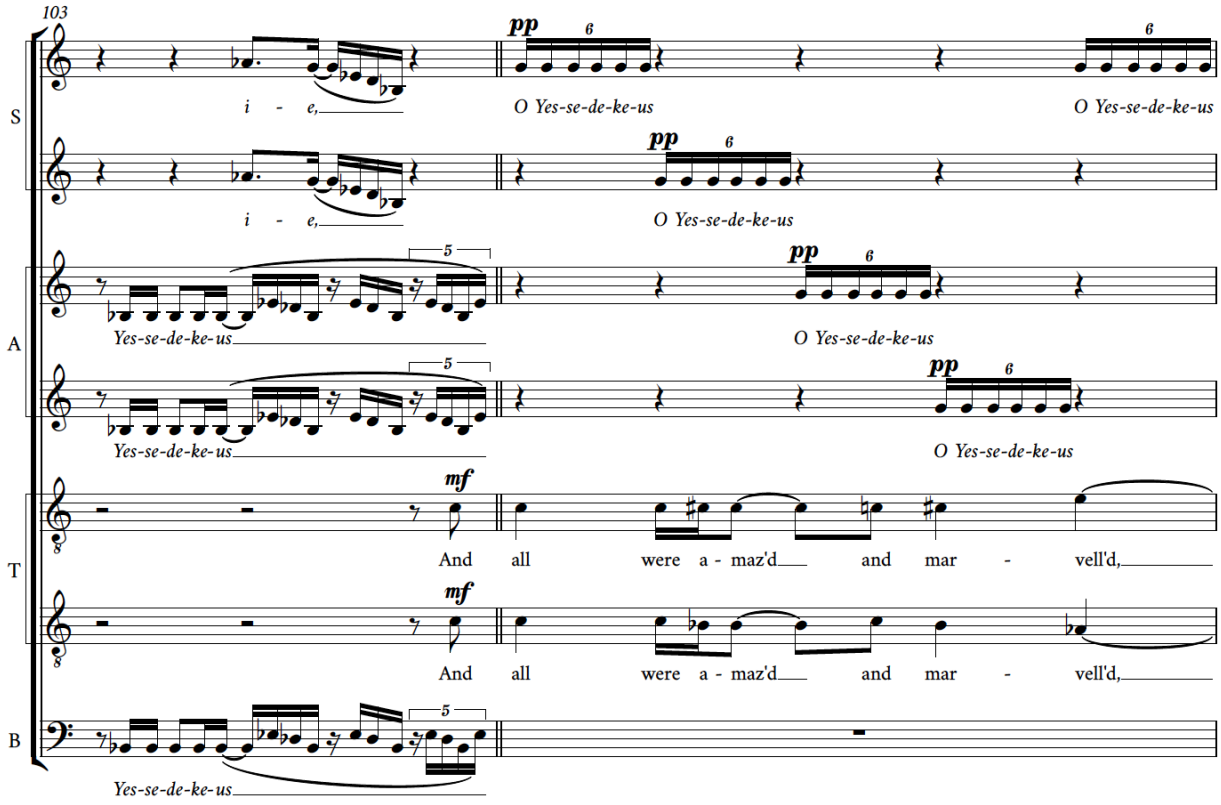

Fig 2.17 *Glossolalia*, bb.103–104

[60] Rosner and Meyer discuss the different types of *prima udienza* melodic recognition in Rosner, B.S., and Meyer, L.B., *The Perceptual Roles of Melodic Process, Contour, and Form* in *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, vol. 4, no. 1, 1986, pp. 1–39. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/40285350. Accessed 2 November 2020..

h. Conclusions

I hold that certain types of compositional virtue are their own reward: the methodical approach I take to structure in *Glossolalia* allows an audience at first hearing to perceive the various sections and some of the techniques involved; the limited pitch-set, and extremely limited use of awkward intervals, allows singers with limited rehearsal time to come quickly to grips with the music. The numerological elements of the piece are perhaps less immediately obvious to the audience, and the canon in hocket is virtually inaudible, yet I maintain that there are two principal justifications for the use of imperceptible numerologically-informed devices. The first of these is that, as per Rosner and Meyer (op. cit., footnote 44), form can have an effect upon listeners without the listeners noticing the form *per se*; the second is that music is not simply heard: it can exist on the page as well as in the ear. (My limited use in *Glossolalia* of a few symbolic numbers pales in comparison with, according to Randolph Currie,[61] Bach's extraordinarily involved matrix of meanings in the *Patrem omnipotentem* of the B minor Mass's *Symbolum Nicaenum*, in which, using gematria, Bach the creator of the music and God the creator of *visibilium omnium et invisibilium* are woven together. Even for the most astute of audients, to understand this complex system of symbolic meaning is a perceptual leap so giant as to be impossible—and yet, insists Currie, the gematria all add up, quite literally.) For a piece whose text is concerned with the audible manifestation of the Invisible (the gift of tongues given by the Holy Ghost), it seems appropriate that there should be an inaudible yet visible manifestation of the composer's intentions.

[61] Currie, R.N., *A Neglected Guide to Bach's Use of Number Symbolism — Part I* in *Bach*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1974, pp. 23–32. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/41639913. Accessed 2 November 2020.

iii) *The Burning Bush*

a. Text

> Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led his flock to the back side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.
>
> Exodus 3.1–5 (KJV)

b. Theophany, and the number 3

This passage records the first postlapsarian event during which God speaks directly to a human, and the image of the unconsumed Burning Bush has endured as a figure of the incomprehensible majesty of God.[62] Nick Wyatt describes the image, viewed from the perspective of the reader of the whole Torah, as suggesting simultaneously the tree of life in Eden[63] and the menorahs in the Tent of Meeting and its successor, the First Temple[64]:

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[62] There was (at least until the late nineteenth century) a tradition in Presbyterian churches involving the presentation of tokens to members upon their admission to the church: one side of the token was struck with a representation of the Eucharist, and the other with the image of the Burning Bush, together with the Latin motto of several Presbyterian churches, *NEC TAMEN CONSUMEBATUR*. A brief description of this tradition can be found in J. H. T. *Church Token,* in *American Journal of Numismatics, and Bulletin of the American Numismatic and Archaeological Society*, vol. 6, no. 4, 1872, pp. 84–85. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/43587349. Accessed 2 November 2020.

[63] Genesis 2.9

[64] Exodus 25.37

> [S]ince the very notion of a theophany implies cultic ideas and the associations of the sanctuary, such a double image almost inescapably evokes the cultic lampstands—the *menorot*—of the temple.[65]

The number three, even without the much later development of thought concerning God as triune[66] (which is discussed in more detail in section iv of this chapter), has associations with perfection[67], and in biblical Hebrew threefold repetition is frequently used to create the rhetorical effect Barrick (2008) calls an "emphatic Semitic triplet"[68] . Moses, accepting God's instructions, will eventually find himself—in his role as messenger of the Law—ascending and descending Mount Sinai three times. Later, the cry of the living creatures in Revelation 4.8—"Holy, holy, holy"—is brought, by subsequent theological development, into the service of broadly accepted Trinitrian doctrine some two centuries later[69]. The final word on this matter might be said to belong to Christopher Smart, who in his esoteric *Jubilate Agno* (1759–1763) announces in a typically unambiguous manner:

> For everything infinitely perfect is Three...
> For Three is the simplest and best of all numbers.[70]
>
> [Fragment C 22b, 26b]

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[65] Wyatt, N. *The Significance of the Burning Bush* in *Vetus Testamentum*, vol. 36, no. 3, 1986, pp. 361–365. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1518419. Accessed 2 November 2020..

[66] Among thousands of possible references, theological clarity and relative concision of thought on this controversial subject can be found in O'Leary, Joseph S., *Demystifying the Trinity* in *Archivio Di Filosofia*, vol. 82, no. 1/2, 2014, pp. 229–242. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/24488858. Accessed 2 November 2020.

[67] Lease, E.B. *The Number Three, Mysterious, Mystic, Magic* in *Classical Philology*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1919, pp. 56–73. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/263620. Accessed 2 November 2020..

[68] Barrick, W.D. "Exegetical Fallacies", *The Master's Seminary Journal*, vol. 19, no. 1, Spring 2008, pp. 15–27

[69] c.f. footnote 42

[70] This incomplete work was first published as *Rejoice in the Lamb: A Song from Bedlam*, ed. Stead, W.F., J. Cape, London, 1939.

The number three plays a central role in both pitch and rhythm in *The Burning Bush:* each vocal part is restricted to three pitches only, creating a total number of twenty-seven possible three-part chords (Fig. 2.17); the speech rhythm of the text is limited to nine durations (i.e. 3*3) (Fig. 2.18), which are always used homophonically.

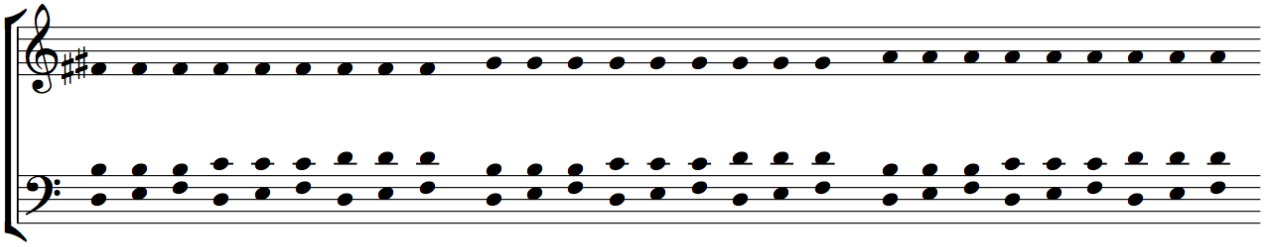

Fig. 2.18 *The Burning Bush:* the twenty-seven chords

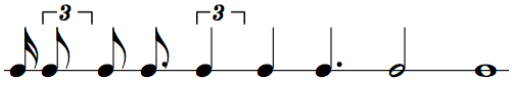

Fig. 2.19 *The Burning Bush:* the nine durations

c. Verbatim-style text-setting

The Burning Bush has no deliberate structure other than the incidental structure of the text itself. Unlike *Glossolalia*—in which the duration of each section, and the number of sections in total, are controlled by a predetermined set of numbers—and in contrast with *Terribilis est*—in which a system of durations unrelated to the rhythm of the text creates a specific quasi-architectural form—the rhythm of the text and durations of the sections are principally derived from speech rhythm.

This idea came partially from an opera by Anna Braithwaite and Michael Betteridge, *In Their Own Words* (2019)[71] in which the tradition of verbatim theatre (as more famously used in *London Road* (2011)[72]) was applied to pitch and rhythm in sung music. The effect of this practice was to reduce the number of pitches to a very few, generally at the bottom of individual vocal registers;

[71] This work is unpublished. I was a member of the music staff for the rehearsal process.
[72] Blythe, A, and Cork, A, *London Road,* 2011.

instrumental parts had therefore to be rather carefully calibrated not to drown out the singers—which would not, with normal music-theatre tessituras, have been a problem.[73]

My response to this problem, in *The Burning Bush,* was to use a mid-register set of pitches for each voice part, and through doing this create an effect of recitation, rather as though the text were being read aloud, without the aid of electronic amplification, in a large church building—essentially, to make the text-setting more stylised. Like Britten's *Canticle II: Abraham and Isaac*[74], in which the part of God is taken by two singers in homophony, the plainness of the speech-like text setting is leavened somewhat by the varying inflections of the harmony.

Each of the twenty-seven possible three-voice chords (Fig. 2.17) and nine possible durations (Fig. 2.18) is used at least once. The nine durations are used to suggest, as introduced above, a heightened, stylised speech rhythm, in which the text is exceptionally clear, and silence is left at the end of lines. The use of silence is intended to be redolent of a Biblical reading in a large church. A typical reading might run as follows[75]:

Total duration of reading, including pauses	165 seconds
Total duration of speech	115 seconds
Total duration of pauses	50 seconds
Pause as percentage of reading	c.30%

The pauses themselves comprise periods in which the speaker is not speaking, but their voice is heard in the reverb, and periods in which the reverb itself has ceased to project the speaker's voice.

[73] A related genre has recently sprung up on the Internet: public speeches are transcribed, harmonised, and in some cases orchestrated. An example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cds7dU7xXSA (accessed 2 November 2020)
[74] Britten, Benjamin. *Canticle II: Abraham and Isaac*, op. 51, Boosey & Hawkes, London, 1952.
[75] These durations are taken from the lesson from Genesis 3 on the BBC Radio 3 recording of *A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, 2015*

Composers of church music have occasionally made allowances for the size of the building when judging durations; T.A. Walmisley's famous setting of the evening canticles features a sympathetic footnote addressed to the musician performing in a small parish church:

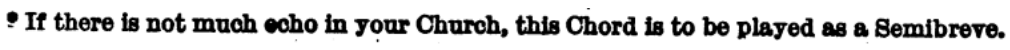

Fig. 2.20 Walmisley *Evening Service in D minor,* footnote to p.4[76]

The Burning Bush, though marked at eighty crotchets per minute, might well be performed at a slower speed in a large building; whatever the speed at which it is performed, its proportion of sung notes to rests remains very close to that of the reading above:

Total number of crotchet beats	152
Total value of sung notes (crotchets)	109
Total value of rests (crotchets)	43
Rests as percentage of piece	c.28%

d. Conclusion

This work can easily be performed by amateur singers, and potentially by three soloists. There are no difficulties of range (indeed, the ranges are so small that each of the parts can be sung by at least two different voice types), nor of pitching; the rhythms used are also relatively straightforward. Its subject matter renders it suitable for use on any occasion on which the text is read as part of the service, but also on feasts of the Trinity or the Virgin Mary (who is understood by some[77] to be foreshadowed by the Burning Bush, since she, like it, holds God within herself, yet is not consumed).

[76] Walmisley, T.A. *Evening Service in D minor,* Novello & Co., London, N.D.
[77] Harris, E. "Mary in the Burning Bush: Nicolas Froment's Triptych at Aix-En-Provence." Journal of the Warburg Institute, vol. 1, no. 4, 1938, pp. 281–286. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/749992. Accessed 3 Aug. 2021.

iv) Whosoever will be saved

a. The dogma of consubstantialism

"All theologians," begins Martinich (1978), in a typically involved explanation of the logical problems posed by Trinitarian doctrine, "understand that the central problem involving the mystery of the Trinity is to explain the possibility that there is one God but three persons in God without falling into contradiction." [78]

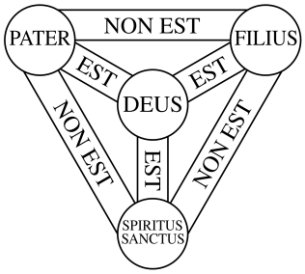

Fig. 2.21 The *Scutum Fidei*

As Fig. 2.20, the traditional 'Shield of Faith', shows, the way in which the Trinity is most commonly discussed is by a series of statements:

The Father is not the Son;	The Son is not the Father;
The Son is not the Holy Spirit;	The Holy Spirit is not the Son;
The Holy Spirit is not the Father;	The Father is not the Holy Spirit;
The Father is God;	God is the Father;
The Son is God;	God is the Son;
The Holy Spirit is God;	God is the Holy Spirit.

[78] Martinich, A. P. *Identity and Trinity* in *The Journal of Religion*, vol. 58, no. 2, 1978, pp. 169–181. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1201874. Accessed 2 November 2020.

The problem, as Martinich makes clear, is that further statements, or attempts to interrogate these twelve statements, often lead to some level of confusion or, worse, heterodoxy. In the Athanasian Creed, the problem of making further statements on the specific haecceity or unique relationships of the persons of the Trinity is circumvented by means of statements that concern common substance or essence (οὐσία). Thus, ὁμοούσιον (homoousion = having the same essence/consubstantial) becomes the concept by which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit can be said all to be the same God:

> *Et tamen non tres dii, sed unus est Deus.*
> And yet they are not three Gods, but one God.
>
> *Quicumque vult,* v.16

In *Whosoever will be saved,* I attempt to find an audible equivalent to the dogmatism of the Athanasian Creed—that is to say, a set of sounds that indicates to the the listener or analyst that every word should be taken at face-value, as part of a cumulative whole, rather like in the legal concept of words of art, in which each word has a clear and unambiguous definition.

b. Text

> Whosover will be saved :
> before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholick Faith.
> Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled :
> without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.
> And the Catholick Faith is this :
> that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity;
> Neither confounding the Persons :
> nor dividing the Substance.
> For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son :
> and another of the Holy Ghost.
> But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one :
> the Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son :

and such is the Holy Ghost.

The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate :

and the Holy Ghost uncreate,

The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible :

and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible,

The Father eternal, the Son eternal :

and the Holy Ghost eternal.

So that in all things, as is aforesaid :

the Unity in Trinity and Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.

He therefore that will be saved :

must think thus of the Trinity.

excerpted from *Quicumque vult,* BPC 1662

c. Serialisation

To achieve the desired dogmatic effect, I assigned each word a pitch-value or set of pitches (which can be subjected to octave displacement) and a duration-value (which is used only at the original duration, and not in augmentation or diminution). The result of this restricted, collage-like system is that the argument of the music emerges in exact synchronicity with the argument of the text, and, as Susan Rankin puts it when discussing the function of singing in church: "[the] music [can] be perceived as a quality of the delivery of language, its melodies as movements of the voice"[79]. Unlike *The Burning Bush,* however, the setting to music of the text in *Whosoever will be saved* is quite deliberately un-speech-like: the effect is far more αυτόματος—and yet the text and the music, despite this disjuncture, operate as one.

[79] Rankin, S. *On the treatment of pitch in early music writing* in *Early Music History,* vol. 30, 2011, pp. 105–175. *JSTOR,* www.jstor.org/stable/41330516. Accessed 2 November 2020.

d. The use of the Dorian mode

In this section, the history of the Dorian mode, its conventional usage, and my usage of it in *Whosoever will be saved* is discussed; in the following section, the implications for this in terms of audience reaction and performers' understanding are taken into account.

d.1. The Dorian mode in antiquity, historically, and in the present

In Cleonides' Εἰσαγωγὴ ἁρμονική (*Harmonic Introduction)* XIII[80], various characteristics are accorded to modes of different tessituras: the hypatoid (low) modes are majestic and manly, suitable for heroic poetry or tragedy; the mesoid (middle) modes are calm, and thus for hymns, eulogies, and so on, while the netoid (upper) modes are painful, feminine, or erotic, and are suitable for lamentations.

This system of categorisation of the modes by tessitura and emotion was revived eleven hundred years later by, amongst others, Guido d'Arezzo (in his *Micrologus* of c.1024) and John of Afflighem (*De musica cum tonario,* c.1100)[81] though the organisation of the various modes' species was by this point quite different from the organisation of the Greek modes: for instance, the medieval Dorian mode was the Greek Phrygian, and vice versa, while the Greek Mixolydian would rather later—not until the eighteenth century[82] become known as the Locrian mode; the only mode to remain identical between the two systems was the Hypodorian. (The Locrian was unthinkable as a practical mode to theorists of the Middle Ages and Renaissance: an unaltered 1,3,5 pitch set on its tonic creates a diminished triad—whose outer notes form the *diabolus in musica*.)

[80] c.50 B.C., trans. in Strunk's *Source Readings,* 45-46.
[81] Further discussion of the emotive effects described by Guido d'Arezzo and John of Afflighem can be found in ed. Broomhall & Lynch, *The Routledge History of Emotions in Europe, 1100–1700* Routledge, London, 2019.
[82] Powers, H.S., *Locrian* in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* second edition, ed. Sadie & Tyrrell, Macmillan, London, 2001.

The flavour of language used by, amongst others, Plato[83] to describe the different characters of the modes is reanimated by Vicentino, in *L'Antica musica,* who describes the Dorian mode as "virtuous... devout"[84]; Gaffurio[85] concurs:

> *Verum laudis et modestiae verba medios quodammodo sonos expetunt primo atque octauo tono quamdecenter inscripta.*
> Truly, words of praise and moderation somehow seek intermediate sounds, which are properly ascribed to the first and eighth modes.[86]

It seemed appropriate, then, that in this new setting of the old Creed—a modern take on an ancient concept—I might use an ancient mode with more modern (and some less modern) inflections. One of these inflections, noted by Tinctoris in 1476, is:

> *...si post ascensum ad b fa naturale mi acutum citius in Fa fa ut gravem descendatur quam ad C sol fa ut ascendature, indistinctive per b molle canetur.* [87]
> ...if after rising to B *fa natural mi* acute there is a quicker drop to F *fa ut* than a rise to C *sol fa ut,* without exception it [the written B natural] is sung to B flat.

By the seventeenth century (by which point other musical developments had rather overtaken this style of modal inflection), Tinctoris' rather involved instructions had given way to the more memorable

> *Una nota supra la*
> *semper est canendum fa.* [88]

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[83] *Republic* 3.10
[84] trans. Palisca, in "Humanist Revival of the Modes and Genera." *Music and Ideas in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,* University of Illinois Press, 2006, pp. 71–98.
[85] Gaffurio, Franchino, *Practica musice,* 1496.
[86] trans. Palisca, op. cit.; (Palisca gives 'modesty' rather than 'moderation'.)
[87] Tinctoris, J., *De natura et proprietate tonorum,* chapter 8
[88] Andrew Hughes, in *Manuscript Accidentals: Ficta in Focus 1360–1450* in *Musicological Studies and Documents No. 27,* American Institue of Musicology, 1972, shows the *terminus post quem* for this

One note above *la*

is always sung as *fa* [i.e. a semitone higher than the preceding note].

This applies also when the modes are transposed, or when the application of this rule causes a modulation into a different hexachord.

Whosoever will be saved is principally in the Dorian mode, transposed to E. Various methods are used to create moments resembling cadences, and there are infrequent chromatic inflections of the mode, both sharp and flat.

d.2. 'Cadential' moments

Resolutions to the finalis E are largely achieved by stepwise downwards melodic motion in at least one voice:

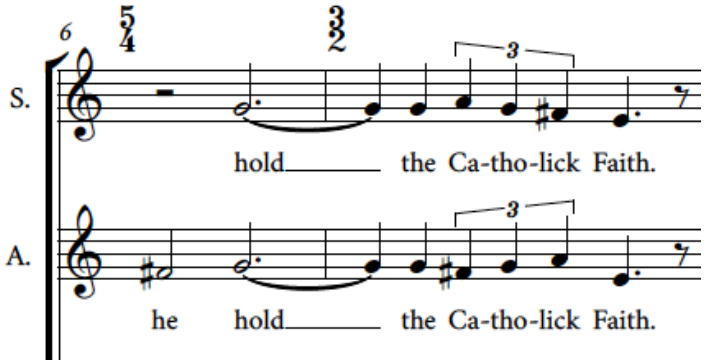

Fig. 2.22 *Whosoever will be saved* bb.6–7, soprano and alto

The dominant, B, is reached often by upwards melodic motion (b.22), and the mediant, G, by downwards melodic motion (b.24):

statement to be far later (i.e. c.1600) than the period during which it would have been most practically useful (i.e. at least fifty years previously).

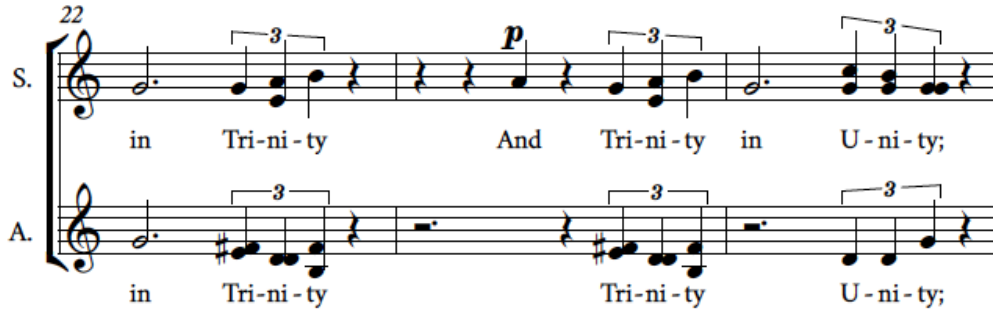

Fig. 2.23 *Whosoever will be saved* bb.22–24

Another kind of repose is achieved by the setting of the word 'Father', in which effectively a 4–3 suspension within a chord of E minor is used:

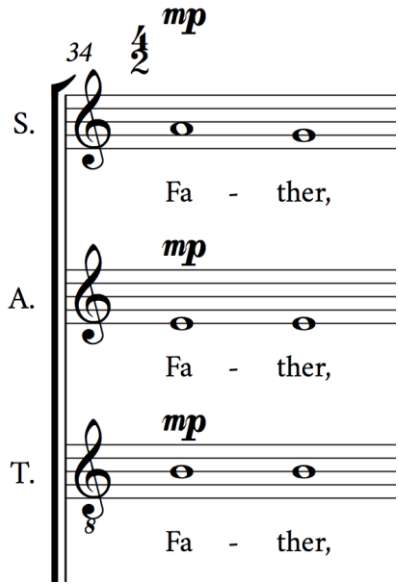

Fig. 2.24 *Whosoever will be saved* b.34

d.3. Chromatic inflections

There are six chromatically-inflected words: 'substance', 'Son', 'Glory', 'majesty', 'eternal', and 'worshipped'. Of these, three involve the flattening of the second degree of the mode (Fig. 2.25, 2.26), creating a Phrygian effect—

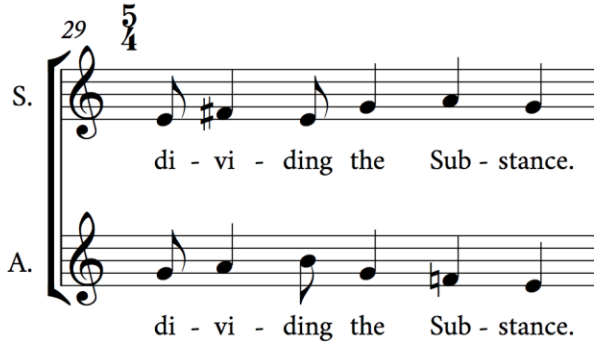

Fig. 2.25 *Whosoever will be saved* b.29

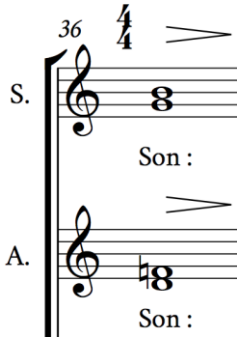

Fig. 2.26 *Whosoever will be saved* b.36

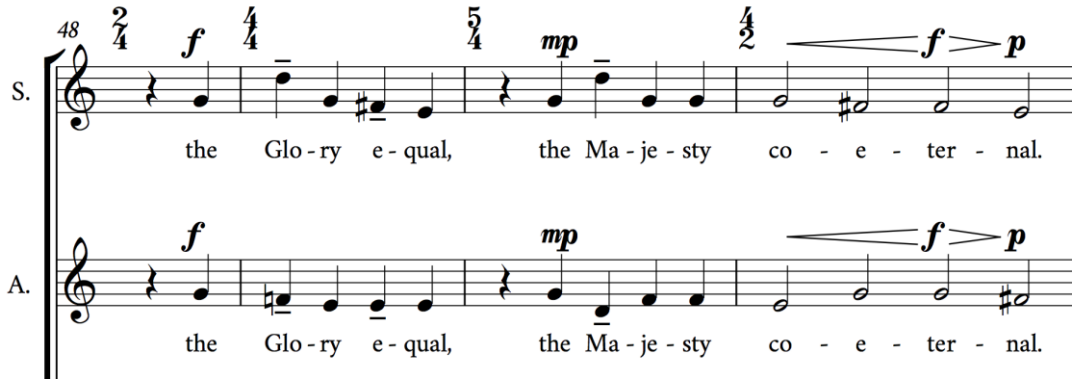

Fig. 2.27 *Whosoever will be saved* bb.48–51

—while the third involves the flattening of the second and fifth degrees of the mode (b.75), which suggests a quite remote modal area (the Ionian mode with finalis F):

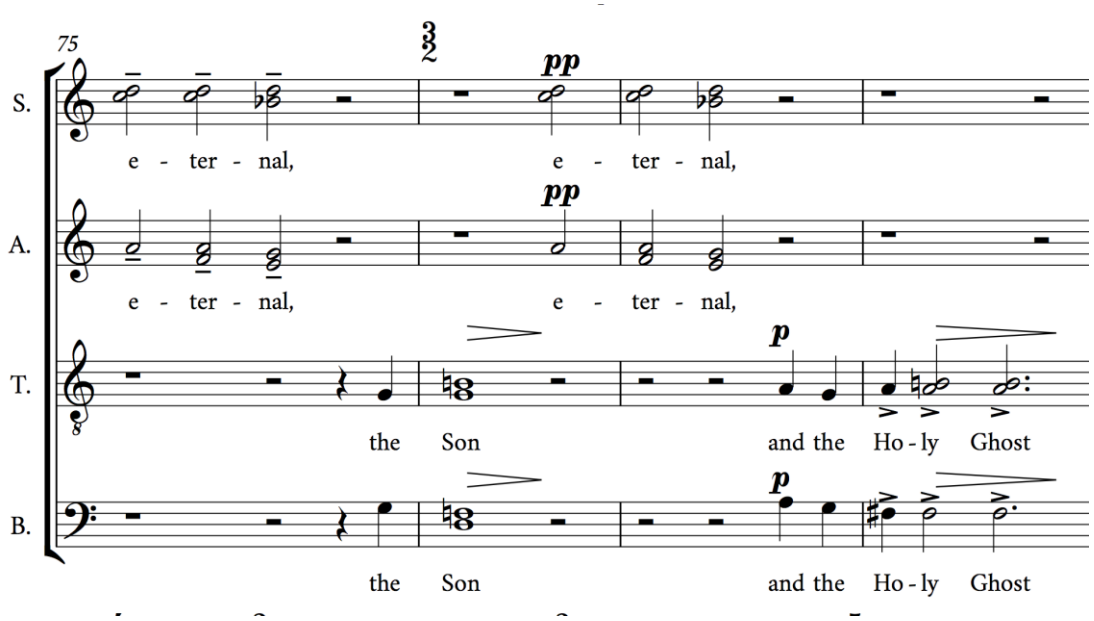

Fig. 2.28 *Whosoever will be saved* bb.75–78

Whenever this kind of inflection occurs, the mode is generally reasserted immediately, or very shortly afterwards: the B flat in b.75 (soprano 2) is countermanded by the B natural in b.76 (tenor 1); the F natural in bb.75, 76 and 77 (alto 2, bass 1, alto 2) is made sharp again in b.78 (bass).

The third sort of inflection involves the sharpening of the sixth degree of the mode. As before, this is rectified two bars later:

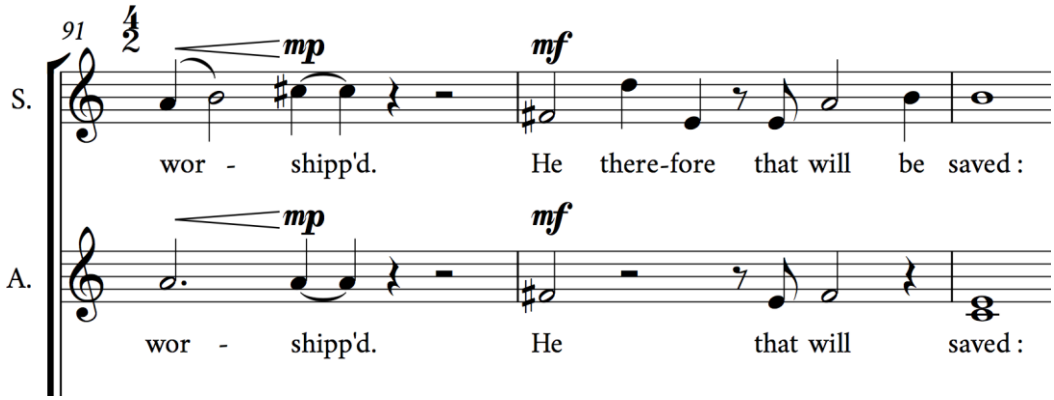

Fig. 2.29 *Whosoever will be saved* bb.91–93

e. Conclusion

Through the use of modal commonplaces, I create a sound-world whose basis is familiar to any regular audient of polyphony. By the use of chromatic inflections of the modes, and by disjunct leaps whose character is distinctly not in the Renaissance polyphonic style, a kind of cognitive dissonance is created: this is music that is at once rooted in one style, but actively participating in a quite different tradition. The 'painting by numbers' approach that I apply to the text has the effect, in conjunction with the deliberately unsettled modality, of causing the listener to pay especial attention to each word—which is, of course, the very aim of this unusually pedantic and prolix creed.

v) Terribilis est

a. *Nuper rosarum flores*; architectural proportion

Few musical works of the Renaissance have generated such intense discussion as Dufay's *Nuper rosarum flores*. Charles Warren's important, and controversial, 1973 essay *Brunelleschi's Dome and Dufay's Motet*[89] began a discussion that has spawned a significant corpus of comment and speculation[90]. The core of Warren's argument is that the proportions — and, indeed, some of the smaller-scale internal structures — of the Florentine Duomo are mirrored quite precisely in Dufay's motet.

In *Terribilis est*, I was inspired by certain of the 'architectural' elements of Dufay's work, whilst not engaging in the same direct proportional mimicry that Warren ascribes to *Nuper rosarum flores*. The text (from Genesis 28) of this work is often found written above the door of churches; my intention in this piece was to imitate in music the way in which, upon entering a church, the eye of the visitor is drawn to the altar and its immediate surroundings.

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[89] *The Musical Quarterly*, vol. 59, 1973, pp. 92—105.

[90] A partial bibliography is listed in the extensive second footnote of Wright, Craig *Dufay's 'Nuper Rosarum Flores', King Solomon's Temple, and the Veneration of the Virgin,* in *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 47, no. 3, 1994, pp. 395–441. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/3128798. Accessed 2 November 2020.

b. The text of *Terribilis est*

The Latin text is forty-nine syllables long:

> *Terribilis est locus iste :*
> How awesome is this place :
> *vere non est hic aliud nisi domus Dei et porta coeli.*
> truly this is none other than the house of God and gate of heaven.
> *Vere etenim Dominus est in loco iste : et ego nesciebam.*
> In all truth God is in this place : and I did not know it.[91]

c. Numerology

By happy chance, the number of syllables, forty-nine, being the square of seven, is an appropriately Biblical number: the Creation takes place over a seven-day period (Genesis 1); the walls of Jericho fall on the seventh day (Judges 6); Peter is to forgive seventy times seven times (Matthew 18); and in St John's vision, there are seven lampstands in the presence of God (Revelation 1). I chose to organise the syllables into three groups (for 'everything infinitely perfect is Three'[92]), with seven syllables in the central group — *Dei et porta coeli* — and the remaining syllables in two groups of twenty-one (or, three times seven).

d. Construction

In the first section, each syllable is allocated an increasing amount of time, rising from three quavers to twenty-three quavers. Other than for the first few syllables, it is not the case that *only* that syllable is sung during that time, but that no *new* syllable is introduced before its time. The treatment of pitch is not dissimilar: during the first section, new pitches at both ends of the gamut are introduced with each syllable. As the periods given to each syllable become longer, so

[91] Genesis 28.17 and 16; Latin Vulgate, translation my own
[92] Christopher Smart, *Jubilate Agno,* OUP, 1980; see footnotes 61 and 42.

the texture of pitches is 'filled in', leading to the pattern in Fig. 2.30. The low and high pitch patterns overlap at the eighteenth syllable, but both patterns continue until the central section.

In the central section, there are no restrictions on pitch — indeed, certain pitches that have not yet been sounded are used extensively, and the character of the music changes from one of chronic instability to one of almost intolerable regularity: there are twenty-four quavers to each syllable, and the harmony is predominantly diatonic.

The final section, though its construction might suggest otherwise, is not intended to be understood as a mirror image of the first: a version of the rhythmic and pitch processes used in the first section is used in reverse during the last twenty-three bars, but the *music* is quite different. Rather, my intention was for it to be an auditory version of the inevitable second part of the experience already described: having had one's attention drawn towards the altar, one's perception of the rest of the church when looking away from the altar again is quite different: the relative sparseness of the sides of the building when viewed after the altar is deliberate[93].

[93] as per, amongst others, Knapp-Fisher, Arthur, *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* Vol. 103, No. 4960 (September 1955), pp. 747-762

pitch low	pitch high	duration	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
A	E		**Ter**																				
As	Ds			**ri**																			
B	D				**bi**																		
C	Cs					**lis**																	
Cs	C						**est**																
D	B							**lo**															
Ds	As								**cus**														
E	A									**is**													
F	Gs										**te**												
Fs	G											**ve**											
G	Fs												**re**										
Gs	F													**non**									
A	E														**est**								
As	Ds															**hic**							
B	D																**a**						
C	Cs																	**li**					
Cs	C																		**ud**				
D	B																			**ni**			
Ds	As																				**si**		
E	A																					**do**	
F	Gs																						**mus**
Fs	G	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	

Fig. 2.30 *Terribilis est* construction (beginning)

e. Difficulty

This piece, unlike the others in this chapter, is quite challenging: the first performance, in concert, required seven minutes of rehearsal per minute of music, which is rather more than would normally be available before a service. The effect achieved, though, is exactly as I had planned, so I include this work here as an example, not designed for normal services, of a more complex style of composition.

vi) Go, hart

The idea for this short work came from a poem by Edwin Morgan, *Opening the Cage,* in which the poet takes fourteen words by John Cage—

> I have nothing to say and I am saying it and that is poetry.

—and arranges them in fourteen different positions:

> *I have to say poetry and is that nothing and I am saying it*
> *I am and I have poetry to say and is that nothing saying it*
> *I am nothing and I have poetry to say and that is saying it*
> *I that am saying poetry have nothing and it is I and to say...*

My method for *Go, hart* is similar: a sequence of chords is presented in one inversion, then in another, then in another. The first sequence is as follows:

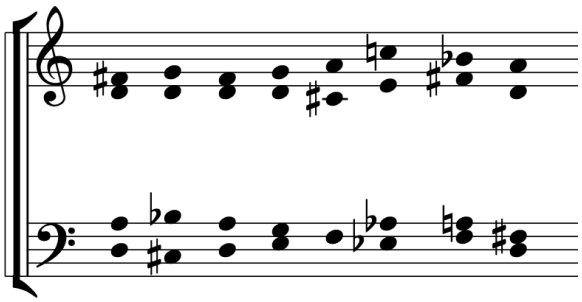

Fig. 2.31 *Go, hart,* first chord sequence

This first inversion of the chords appears at the beginning of the piece (bb.1–3), in its original form—SATB. In bb.4–6, it is presented in a different inversion, TBSA; bars 7–9 return to the original disposition, and in bb.10–12 the material is again inverted: BTAS.

The second verse (bb.13–25), fourth verse (bb.41–57), and fifth verse (bb.58–69) use the same sequence of chords and the same sequence of inversions; the third verse (bb.26–40) introduces a new sequence:

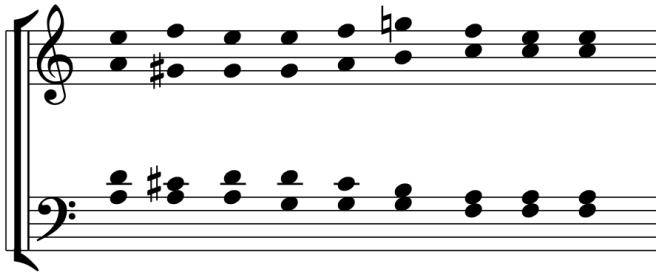

Fig. 2.32 *Go, hart,* second chord sequence

In bb.26–28, this is presented in its first form, SATB; in bb.32–34, an abbreviated version (omitting the first chord) appears as TBSA. Bars 28–31 and 35–40 are freely composed, though closely based on the material of their antecedent phrases (bb. 26–28, 32–34). This material reappears in the sixth verse (bb.70–), but the final phrase is supplanted by an altered restatement of the opening material (bb.80–end).

The effect is intended to be intimate and introspective: the chords, as they are inverted and re-inverted, present different aspects of themselves to the listener. This is in no small measure derived from the text, which is addressed to the writer's inner being—in fact, it may well be have a double meaning, as a pun on the name of the publisher of *The Gude and Godlie Ballatis,* Andro Hart.

This work, though the initial material requires a fine ear for tuning, can be performed by amateur and professional choirs: there is a significant amount of repetition, and the fluctuating metre feels intuitive to the performer, since it is not dissimilar to the rhythm that one might adopt when reading the text aloud.

3 Two settings of the Ordinary of the Mass

i. Missa brevis

ii. Missa super Domine probasti me

i) Missa brevis

a. Introduction

This work was designed for an exceptionally short rehearsal: at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, the Sung Eucharist is a midweek service, and the principal collegiate event is Choral Evensong on Sunday. Consequently (and this is the case with many collegiate choirs) the majority of the rehearsal time during the week tends towards making the most of the Sunday service.

b. Four thematic areas

Both the organ part and the vocal line of this setting are intentionally quite straightforward. The organ part is, admittedly, less straightforward than the vocal line, but it nevertheless contains no difficulty requiring more than a few minutes' practice from a decent undergraduate organist. The majority of the vocal part (and much of the organ part) is based on a six-note row:

A – G sharp – E – G natural – F – D flat

This first appears in b.1 of the organ part, and in transposition at b.17; the beginning of it appears in the vocal part in b.61, and in transposed retrograde at b.69; another transposition appears at b.95. The vocal material at b.235 is also derived from the opening of this row; this material appears frequently throughout the Mass.

A second thematic area emerges at b.32, where a four-note ostinato in the organ R.H. appears against a series of downward-moving chords in the organ L.H. This material reappears at b.78, b.126 (in transposed retrograde), b.138, and b.306.

As in Finnissy's *Comfortable Words* (to which reference is made in Chapter 1), much use is made of monotone vocal lines with more complex organ writing: the vocal line in the Kyrie features only two pitches, and other monotone sections include bb.78, 104, 127, 159, and 307.

The fourth piece of musical material first appears in the *Sanctus*, where a downward motif A – G sharp – F sharp appears first in the organ (b.181) then in the vocal line (b.184), before appearing in transposed inversion (b.195) and inversion at the tonic (b.197). As well as providing much of the thematic material for this movement, this motif appears in b.316 of the *Agnus Dei*.

c. Economy of musical material and economy of rehearsal

I sought in this piece to use as little—and largely as simple—musical material as possible. The effect in rehearsal of this was one of almost instant familiarity on the part of the singers: there is no material that does not appear at least twice, and the first motif appears throughout the work. Once the initial difficulty of pitching the motif is mastered, much of the piece is rendered straightforward As with Anderson's *Bell Mass* (see Chapter 1), the organ part normally supplies the starting pitch for each of the vocal entries: even at b.294, where the pitch appears simultaneously in the organ and vocal parts, the singers will have recognised the motif at the start of the movement, and will instinctively pitch the correct note from their pre-existing knowledge of the row.

ii. Missa super Domine probasti me

It is a well-rehearsed factoid (that is to say, something regularly passed off as a fact that, examined, is revealed to be untrue) that certain delegates to the Council of Trent attempted to ban the parody mass, but that Palestrina's *Missa Papae Marcelli* 'saved'[94] sacred polyphonic music by its skilful setting of the text, dense and polyphonic yet allowing for verbal clarity: its principal theme, ironically, appears to be derived from that best-loved subject of parody masses, the chanson *L'homme armé.* Whatever the cultural changes imposed by the returning members of the Council, there was in reality very little long-term change imposed upon polyphony, with parody masses composed, discussed, and taught well into the seventeenth century.[95] My own interest in this method of composition arose partially from choral singing, and partially from a curiosity about the possibilities of writing in one style using material derived from another—an issue touched on earlier in this commentary (Chapter 2, sections iv & v).

I wrote the *Missa super Domine probasti me* immediately after transcribing, from a facsimile of Lassus' *Magnum opus musicum,* his motet of that name (i.e. a setting of the opening verses of Psalm 139). The counterpoint of my work, although recognisably an imitation *con alcuna licenza* of the Palestrina/Lassus style, uses distinctly un-Renaissance features: entries on unprepared dissonances (b.3), chromatic passages outwith normal modal inflections (A, b.5 onwards), first entries in inversion (B, b.6), and so on. The effect of these features, in which the normal tension and release of polyphony is greatly heightened by the use of complicating factors, leads to an auditory result similar to some of the works of Lennox Berkeley, particularly his important *Mass for five voices*[96], composed for the Choir of Westminster Cathedral. In this work, Berkeley uses similar contrapuntal techniques (though in a more obviously 'modern' way), but intersperses them with music more typical of his normal style. Another instructive comparison may be made with Vaughan Williams' *Mass in G minor*[97], in which the influence of polyphony meets elements

[94] This 'fable' is put convincingly down in Chapter 10 of Bertoglio, C, *Reforming Music,* De Gruyter, Berlin, 2017
[95] ibid.
[96] Berkeley, L, *Mass for five voices,* Chester, 1965
[97] Vaughan Williams, R, *Mass in G minor,* Curwen, 1922

of English pastoralism: polychoral effects (such as at the *Gratias* of the *Gloria*) are used in conjunction with hushed, quasi-operatic chorus effects (at the *Qui tollis*).

In the present work, I deliberately set out to use rhythmic patterns that are typical of sixteenth-century polyphony: in other words, it would be quite possible to write a Mass setting in the true High Renaissance style altering only the pitches of this work, leaving the rhythm undisturbed. There is one exception to this rule, which is the *Osanna:* in this section, the music is inspired by the rather earlier Notre Dame school, and particularly from works such as Pérotin's *Sederunt principes,* in which drones in two voice parts are used to underpin vigorous rhythmic writing in upper voices. Just as in *Sederunt principes,* the upper voices at the start of the *Osanna* are set in the first rhythmic mode[98], after which the lower voices, and then the full choir, use this characteristic rhythm.

Other 'modern' features of this Mass include two double canons at dissonant intervals, the first at the ninth, in the *Sanctus,* and the second at the seventh, in the *Benedictus.* Use is also made of prolation canons (in the *Gloria* and *Agnus Dei*), and of significantly altered contrapuntal motifs: just as with Reich's technique of 'phasing' to create music that sounds canonic but does not always adhere strictly to the canon (as discussed in Chapter 1), in this work the motifs are often altered beyond the normal bounds of what is acceptable in standard polyphony.

This work was written for a good amateur choir, a few of whose members occasionally work as professional singers. The recording is of a professional group sight-reading the piece: as can be heard, there are occasional mistakes, but they are relatively few; this could be quite feasibly programmed by many cathedral choirs, or indeed by an ambitious amateur choir of a parish church.

[98] See, for instance, Weakland, Rembert. "The Rhythmic Modes and Medieval Latin Drama." *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 14, no. 2, 1961, pp. 131–146. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/829752. Accessed 4 Aug. 2021.

4 Pasch

i) Theological orthodoxy, algolagnia, the archetypal Lover, and the Suffering Servant

The word 'Pasch' comes ultimately from the Hebrew פֶּסַח (Pesach), normally rendered in English as 'Passover': this describes both the religious festival and its central meal of lamb: a common figure of speech is 'to eat the Passover'[99]. In Greek Orthodoxy, the feast of Easter is Πάσχα (Pascha). St Paul, in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, uses Πάσχα to describe Christ's sacrifice of himself in place of the lamb mandated by the Mosaic Law[100]. The title 'Pasch,' because of this array of associations and meanings, is intended to suggest simultaneously the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ.

In February of 2020, a friend's mother was given six months to live: I, having never met her, found myself looking through her remarkable online gallery of work[101]—she was a lettercarver in wood and stone—at the end of which was a print of a line from Swinburne's *Atalanta* (Fig. 4.1).

At the time, I was planning a Passiontide service in Cambridge, and further reading of the section of Atalanta from which this line comes led me to think that it might be possible to create an appropriate choral work with the Swinburne as its starting point. I therefore (at some speed) read the complete poetical works of Swinburne, noting down passages I thought might work, which I then arranged in a patchwork formation with passages from the Bible.

[99] St Matthew 26.17, KJV
[100] 1 Corinthians 5.6
[101] https://www.carolinewebblettering.com/gallery.html. Accessed 2 November 2020.

Fig. 4.1 Caroline Webb *Blossom by blossom the spring begins*

The resulting libretto bears a certain similarity to the Bach settings of the Passion, which use the Gospel narratives, established chorale texts, and newly-written aria texts, giving at least three different viewpoints. In my work, I simultaneously use prophetic and poetic texts of the Hebrew scriptures in overlap with the Passion story as told by the Evangelists; Swinburne's poetry is incorporated both in terms of the narrative and as reflections on the action.

There is significant precedent for this practice: composers ranging from John Dowland to John Rutter have created their own texts either *de novo* or from pre-existing sources; the most famous example in the latter category is undoubtedly J.S. Bach, joined by Telemann, Hasse, and other composers of Lutheran cantatas. Tippett's 'patchwork' libretto for *A Child of Our Time* (1941), uses the composer's own words, counterpointed by five 'Negro Spirituals'—an attempt by this most socially-aware of artists to combine the texts and musics of different races and cultures. My libretto for *Pasch* is a more modest effort to combine perspectives: the fevered, algolagniac texts of Swinburne are used as a gloss on the canonical words of the Bible.

The piece begins with a rather brisk survey of the Passion: the Christ is announced ('Behold my servant'), condemned ('Away with him'), and crucified ('They pierced my hands and my feet') within the first five minutes of the work's half-hour span. Following this, the main argument of the text is psychological, rather than narrative: the exchange between Jesus, his Mother, and the

beloved disciple is explored in the language of the forlorn lover; the blood and water that come from Jesus' side are conflated with wine as a metaphor for lust (not to mention its capacity as an enabler of lust), and the rending of the veil of the Temple—symbolically, the way in which God makes Himself directly available to humankind, rather than mediated by the sacrificial priesthood[102]—is reflected upon in words of servitude: "My master that was thrall to love/Is become thrall to death."

None of these ideas, in isolation, represents particularly novel thinking about the Passion or Crucifixion: the Holy Sonnets of Donne, or the even more explicit sacred sonnets of William Alabaster, are famous Modern English precedents, and for centuries before them the image of the suffering Christ was conflated with the forlorn lover[103]. Possibly the most notable of these is the early fifteenth-century *In a valley of this restless mind,* in which the dreaming poet encounters Christ:

> Upon this hil Y fond a tree,
> Undir the tree a man sittynge,
> From heed to foot woundid was he,
> His herte blood Y sigh bledinge:
> A semeli man to ben a king,
> A graciouse face to loken unto;
> I askide whi he had peynynge,
> He seide, "*Quia amore langueo.*
>
> "I am Truelove that fals was nevere.
> My sistyr, mannis soule, Y loved hir thus:
> Bicause we wolde in no wise discevere,
> I lefte my kyngdom glorious.

[102] See Smith, J. M,. *Narrative Atonement Theology in the Gospel of Mark* in *BYU Studies Quarterly,* vol. 54, no. 1, 2015, pp. 29–41., www.jstor.org/stable/43957168. Accessed 2 November 2020.
[103] See Renevey, D., *Name Above Names: The Devotion to the Name of Jesus from Richard Rolle to Walter Hilton's 'Scale of Perfection I'* in *The Medieval Mystical Tradition: Exeter Symposium, VI,* ed. Marion Glasscoe, D. S. Brewer, Cambridge, 1999 (pp.103–21).

I purveide for hir a paleis precious;
Sche fleyth; Y folowe. Y soughte hir so,
I suffride this peyne piteuous,
Quia amore langueo.["][104]

The love of Christ for his Mother, for the disciple, for the Church, and for the world, is re-presented as a heightened form of courtly love: since the world 'knew him not,' and 'received him not,'[105] Christ chooses to suffer 'this peyne piteuous,' because, like the lovers in the *Song of Songs,* his state is one of languishing for love: '*quia amore langueo'.*[106] Swinburne's algolagniac tendencies align neatly with this view of the Passion: the pain of Christ's suffering is ultimately a source of sinners' pleasure, since it offers the possibility of 'remission,' impossible 'without shedding of blood'.[107]

To my knowledge, an explicitly theologically-orthodox work using texts of this kind has not been recently, or perhaps ever, attempted. Conversely, there are plenty of examples, particularly in staged productions of the Bach Passions or Handel *Messiah*[108], of contemporary reflections or re-workings of the Scriptural narrative, but these (I observe) generally achieve their subversive ends (in the Bristol Old Vic *Messiah,* for example, Jesus stays dead, which rather ruins the point of Jennens' libretto, in which Christ '[goes] up on high, [leading] captivity captive') by means of dramaturgy, rather than through re-workings of the text. *Pasch,* by contrast, uses a non-religious text for explicitly religious ends: the reverse effect of 'the devil [citing] Scripture for his purpose'.[109]

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[104] Cambridge, UK, University Library Hh.4.12, ff 44v–47
[105] St John 1.10 & 11, KJV
[106] This refrain is taken from Canticum Canticorum 2.5, Vulgate
[107] Hebrews 9.22, KJV
[108] Two productions in which I was involved as a member of music staff, and to which reference is made in this commentary: Bach *St Matthew Passion,* Voices Foundation/OAE, 2011; Handel *Messiah,* Bristol Old Vic, 2018.
[109] Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice,* London, 1593 (I.iii.93)

ii) Text

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. [1]
Away with him, away with him, crucify him. [2]
And he bearing his cross went forth. [3]

They pierced my hands and my feet; I may tell all my bones :
they stand staring and looking upon me. [4]

Hath he not sent us hunger? who hath cursed
Spirit and flesh with longing? filled with thirst
Their lips who cried unto him? who bade exceed
The fervid will, fall short the feeble deed,
Bade sink the spirit and the flesh aspire,
Pain animate the dust of dead desire,
And life yield up her flower to violent fate? [5]

Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?
behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow...
wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.
From above he hath sent fire into my bones...
he hath made my strength to fall,
the Lord hath delivered me into their hands,
from whom I am not able to rise up. [6]

When Jesus... saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! [7]

O all fair lovers about the world,
There is none of you, none, that shall comfort me.
My thoughts are as dead things, wrecked and whirled

Round and round in a gulf of the sea;
And still, through the sound and the straining stream,
Through the coil and chafe, they gleam in a dream,
The bright fine lips so cruelly curled,
And strange swift eyes where the soul sits free. [8]

And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. [9]

One of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side,
and forthwith came there out blood and water. [10]

All thine the new wine of desire,
The fruit of four lips as they clung
Till the hair and the eyelids took fire,
The foam of a serpentine tongue,
The froth of the serpents of pleasure,
More salt than the foam of the sea,
Now felt as a flame, now at leisure
As wine shed for me. [11]

And the veil of the temple was rent in twain. [13]

The Lord hath done that which he had devised;
he hath fulfilled his word: he hath thrown down, and hath not pitied.
He hath led me, and brought me into darkness,
but not into light. [12]

O Love's lute heard about the lands of death,
Left hanged upon the trees that were therein...
...gather poppies in thine hands
And sheaves of brier and many rusted sheaves

Rain-rotten in rank lands,
Waste marigold and late unhappy leaves
And grass that fades ere any of it be mown;
And when thy bosom is filled full thereof
Seek out Death's face ere the light altereth,
And say "My master that was thrall to Love
Is become thrall to Death." [14]

And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, and also Nicodemus,
brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes.
Then took they the body of Jesus,
and wound it in linen clothes with the spices. [15]
Camphire, with spikenard,
spikenard and saffron;
calamus and cinnamon,
with all trees of frankincense;
myrrh and aloes. [16]

I have given thee garments and balm and myrrh,
    And gold, and beautiful burial things.
But thou, be at peace now, make no stir;
    Is not thy grave as a royal king's? [17]

He made his grave with the wicked, and was with the rich in his death. [18]

But thou, thou art sure, thou art older than earth;
Thou art strong for death and fruitful of birth;
Thy depths conceal and thy gulfs discover;
    From the first thou wert; in the end thou art. [19]

Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.
I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour. [20]

Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. [21]

Thou, O Lord, remainest for ever;
thy throne from generation to generation.
The Lord is my portion, saith my soul;
therefore will I hope in him. [22]

Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke,
perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,
with all powders of the merchant? [23]
My beloved spake, and said unto me,
Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. [24]

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and sins;
The days dividing lover and lover,
The light that loses, the night that wins;
And time remember'd is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
And in green underwood and cover
Blossom by blossom the spring begins. [25]

1. Isaiah 42.1	*2. John 19.15*	*3. John 19.17*
4. Psalm 22.1, 17	*5. Anactoria*[110]	*6. Lamentations 1.12–14*
7. John 19.24	*8. The Triumph of Time*[111]	*9. Mark 15.37*

[110] Swinburne, A., *Poems and Ballads, Volume I,* London, 1866
[111] op. cit.

10. John 19.26–27	*11. Dolores*[112]	*12. Lamentations 2.17, 3.2*
13. Mark 15.38	*14. A Ballad of Death*[113]	*15. John 19.38*
16. Song of Songs, 4.13–15	*17. The Triumph of Time*	*18. Isaiah 53.9*
19. The Triumph of Time	*20. Isaiah 43.1*	*21. Lamentations 5.19, 3.24*
22. Isaiah 43.10	*23. Song of Songs, 3.6*	*24. Song of Songs 2.10*
25. Atalanta in Calydon[114]		

iii) The music: monothematicism; germ-cells and motifs

a. Introduction: Haydn, Beethoven, and Hoffmann

Monothematicism and the use of germ cells is an old idea: Haydn deploys a monotheme in several of his piano sonatas[115], and long before Haydn, the various composers of *L'homme armé* masses were expert in the working out of compositions, often lasting more than half an hour, from that famous six-pitch motif. Wagner's assertion that "all the melodic ideas in Beethoven's Third Symphony [issue] from its very beginning is well-documented[116], and E.T.A. Hoffmann's understanding of the same composer's Fifth Symphony as emerging from the 'Fate' motif similarly so[117]: this latter example is endorsed by Schenker in his early work on harmony (1906), in which he claims that, in the chicken/egg debate concerning which of motif and harmony came first, he argues—in favour of motif predating harmony—that the triad (and by extension its

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[112] op. cit.
[113] op. cit.
[114] Swinburne, A., *Atalanta in Calydon,* London, 1865
[115] See Inman, S.M. *The Inner and Outer Form of Haydn's Monothematic Sonatas* in *Theory and Practice,* vol. 41, 2016, pp. 1–46. *JSTOR,* www.jstor.org/stable/26477755. Accessed 2 November 2020.
[116] quoted by Engelsmann, W., *Beethovens Werkthematik, dargestellt an der "Eroica,"* in *Archiv fiir Musikforschung, V* (1940), 112., trans. and quoted by Ringer, Alexander L., in *Clementi and the 'Eroica'* in *The Musical Quarterly,* vol. 47, no. 4, 1961, pp. 454–468. *JSTOR,* www.jstor.org/stable/740624. Accessed 2 November 2020.
[117] Chantler, A, *Revisiting E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Hermeneutics,* in *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music,* vol. 33, no. 1, 2002, pp. 3–30. *JSTOR,* www.jstor.org/stable/4149784. Accessed 2 November 2020.

component thirds, as used by Beethoven at the start of the Fifth Symphony) is itself a form of motif.[118] As Oliver Lartillot notes[119] in his work on the use of AI for thematic identification, the 'Fate' motif/yellowhammer song[120] that begins the first movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is constantly varied, but there is never a sense that any of the developed forms supplants or obscures the original version. In this analysis, Lartillot demonstrates the various ways in which the motif, and phrases developed from the motif, are heard:

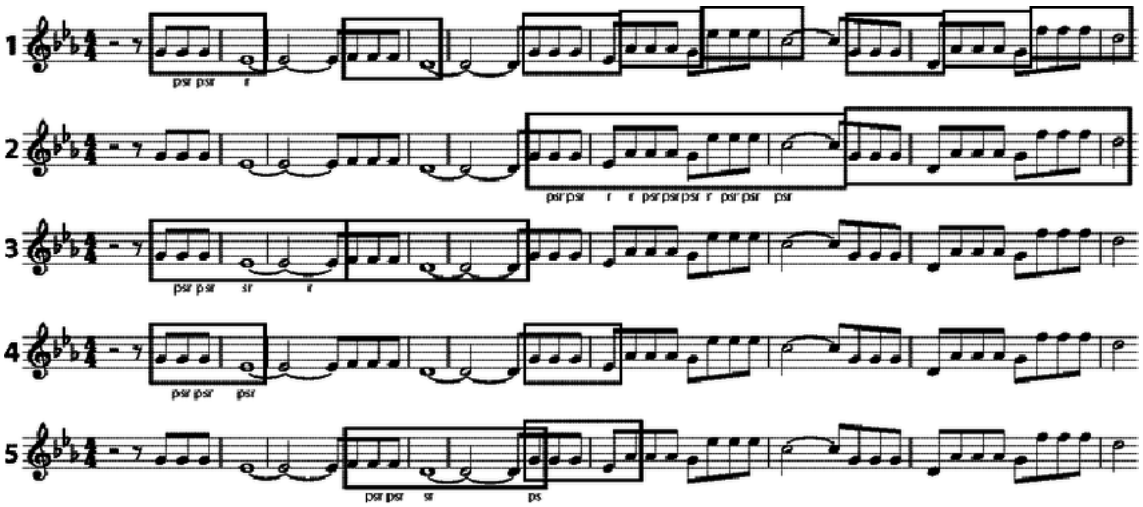

Fig. 4.2 Lartillot, *Analysis of the beginning of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony*[121]

In a sense, in *Pasch*, the motif outlined by B-D-G, a triad of G major (*O* above) is in its simplest form both motif and tonal tonic, though the modal *finalis* of the piece is certainly B, rather than the G that might be expected from the triad.

[118] Hooper, J, *2020 Patricia Carpenter Emerging Scholar Award: Heinrich Schenker's Early Conception of Form, 1895–1914* in *Theory and Practice*, vol. 36, 2011, pp. 35–64. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/41784508. Accessed 2 November 2020.

[119] Lartillot, O., *An adaptive multi-parametric and redundancy-filtering approach for motivic pattern discovery.* http://www.ee.columbia.edu/~dpwe/ismir2004/CRFILES/paper213.pdf Accessed 2 November 2020.

[120] An extended (and delightful) discussion of this can be found in Bowden, S., *The Theming Magpie: The Influence of Birdsong on Beethoven Motifs* in *The Musical Times*, vol. 149, no. 1903, 2008, pp. 17–35. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/25434536. Accessed 2 November 2020.

[121] *op. cit.* p = pitch, s = scale degree distinct from pitch, r = rhythm (The original is in 2/4. It is curious, but probably not salient, that this analysis is presented in 4/4.)

b. Willem Pijper's *kiemcel*; the germ cell in *Pasch*

It is in the work of the Dutch composer Willem Pijper that I find the closest possible precedent for what is achieved motivically in *Pasch.* In his commentary on his *Sonata for Piano* (1930), Pijper uses the term 'germ cell' (*kiemcel* in Dutch) to describe the development of material from a single musical unit. For Pijper, this is a quite distinct endeavour from Beethoven's use of motif as demonstrated above; in fact, as Kooij (2004) understands, the biological implications of the word *kiemcel* are unavoidable, if not necessarily deliberate:

> In essence, germ cells in Pijper's music define particular musical ideas that may be harmonic, melodic or rhythmic, or a combination thereof. These germ cells create cyclic unity within his compositions by undergoing various forms of metamorphosis.[122]

This is equally true of *Pasch,* in which the germ cell—only fully exposed in the final section of the work—is constantly metamorphosised, or chromatically altered, or used in retrograde or inversion. Such a process is intended as a reflection both of the text—"Blossom by blossom the spring begins"—and as an implicit reflection of certain concepts surrounding the festival of Easter, and broader ideas of the Incarnation.

As with the text, the music was composed from a starting point of one line: 'Blossom by blossom the spring begins'. This motif,

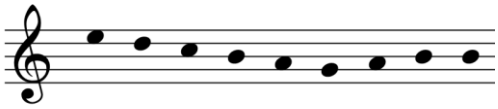

Fig. 5.3 *Pasch* motif

[122] Kooij, H.E., *Composition by Use of Germ Cells: A Botanical-Musical Analogy in the Willem Pijper Sonata for Piano* in *Tijdschrift Van De Koninklijke Vereniging Voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis,* vol. 54, no. 2, 2004, pp. 119–131. *JSTOR,* www.jstor.org/stable/20203905. Accessed 2 November 2020.

is used throughout *Pasch* in various stages of completeness, frequently altered in various ways. Its first appearance is in b.5, in which it is preceded by four notes, B–C–D–B; by in b.69, this melody is counterpointed by a chromatically altered version of a segment of the original motif: B–A–G sharp–A–B. The baritone solo that follows is constructed initially from an inverted form of this motif, which itself is a developed version of the music heard in b.4: B–C–D–C–B.

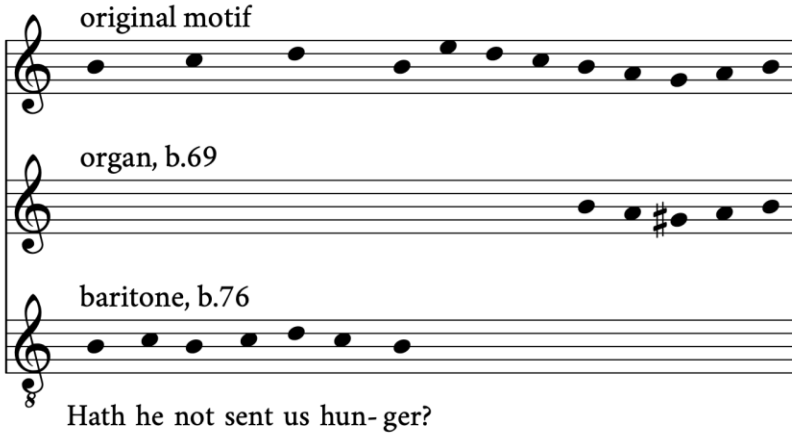

Fig. 5.4 *Pasch* motif developments 1

The melody of each of the solo phrases in this section (bb.76–78, 79–80, 81–82, 83–85—which is an extended alteration of the motif—and 86–88—which is incomplete) is derived from this motif.

The organ part also is derived from the original phrase (hereafter referred to as *O*), but with the last few notes inverted:

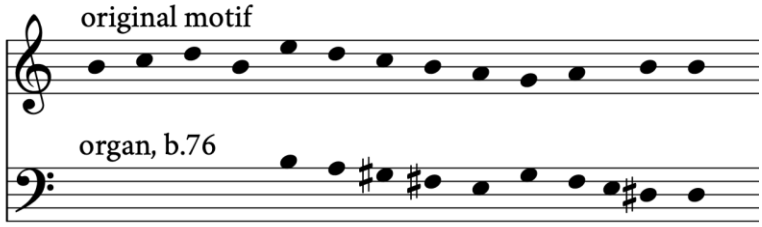

Fig. 5.5 *Pasch* motif developments 2

As with the solo line, the organ R.H. during this section is derived entirely from transpositions of this motif. The L.H. is an altered, transposed retrograde of the motif:

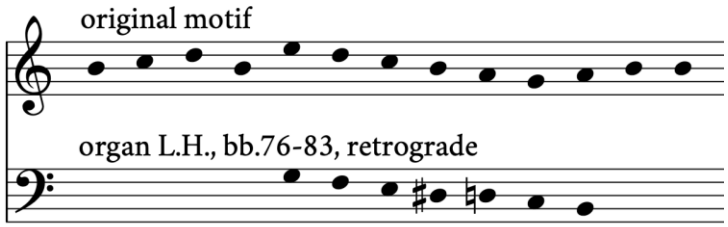

Fig. 5.6 *Pasch* motif developments 3

From b.89, the motifs swap places: the organ material from b.76 appears in the vocal line, and the vocal line's simpler motif from b.76 is transferred to the organ R.H.

The b.76 organ motif (which from here forward is referred to as *P*) next appears in b.129–, where it is developed still further:

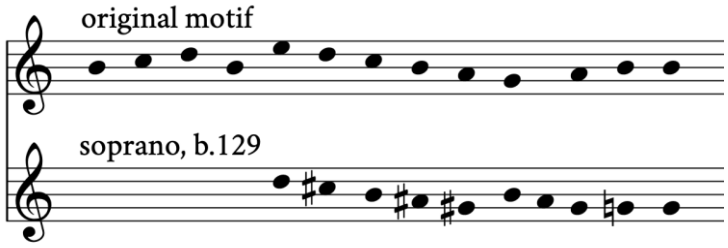

Fig. 5.7 *Pasch* motif developments 4

At b.145–, a differently-developed version of *O* appears:

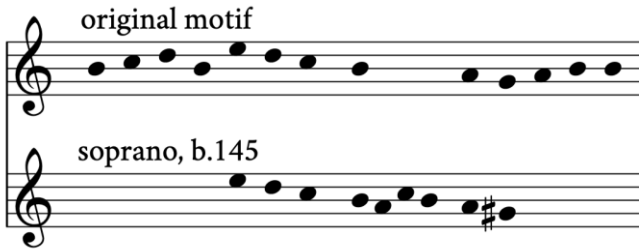

Fig. 5.8 *Pasch* motif developments 5

which also is used in the extended solo at bb.348–. This process of modification and evolution continues throughout the work:

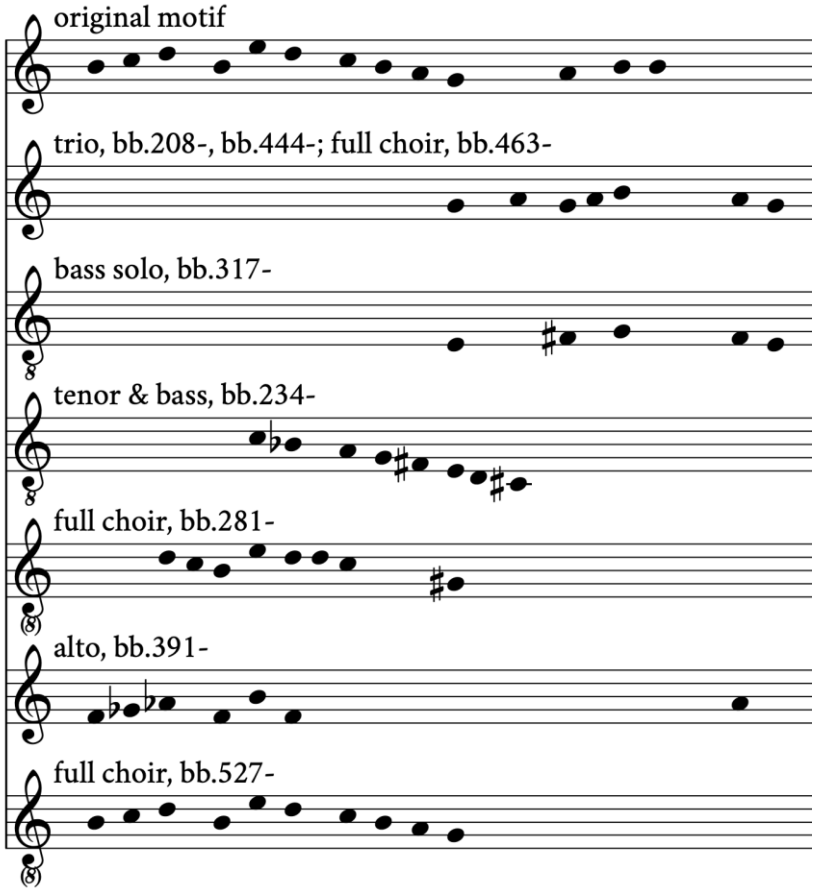

Fig. 5.9 *Pasch* motif developments 6

c. A theological basis for composition from germ cells

One of the central liturgical texts at the beginning of the Church's year is *Rorate caeli*, sung frequently throughout Advent. It appears in various guises: as the Advent Prose, as the versicle and response to the Office Hymn at Vespers, and as the Introit on the Fourth Sunday of Advent. The text of the versicle and response, and the Introit, is:

> *Rorate caeli desuper, et nubes pluant justum :*
> Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness :
> *aperiatur terra, et germinet Salvatorem.*[123]
> let the earth spring open, and bring forth a Saviour.

[123] Isaiah 45.8, Vulgate

The connection between the Incarnation, foretold by Isaiah—in which the Messiah is born by natural means from a human mother—and the Resurrection, in which the earth (much to the surprise of the soldiers guarding the grave[124]) springs open, and the Messiah comes forth from it, is easily made. The Introit for Easter Sunday connects the two in its use of Psalm 139 (138 Vulgate), which mentions both the formation of the child in the womb of its mother, and also the restitution of life at waking again:

> *Resurrexi, et adhuc tecum sum, alleluia.*[125]
> I awake, and am still with thee, alleluia.

In *Pasch*, I connect—by means both of the texts I use and the method by which the musical material is germinated and developed—the idea of the bodily resurrection with the idea of the re-birth of springtime: as the body of Jesus is given up alive by the tomb, 'perfumed with myrrh and frankincense'[126], so also '[b]lossom by blossom the spring begins'.[127]

iv) *Pasch* as a multi-movement work

While *Pasch* is conceived as a single work, there are episodes within it that have a certain degree of independence. These tend to be based either in large-scale structure or by some other means on types of motets or songs. A brief description of some of these, and the methods employed, follows.

1. ***Hath he not sent us hunger?*** bb.69–99

This is based on the idea of a vocal/instrumental duet aria, such as those found in the Bach cantatas or Passions[128]: a single melodic instrumental line is used to counterpoint the vocal part.

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[124] St Matthew 28.4
[125] *Liber usualis*, 1961 (p.777).
[126] c.f. section 23 of the text
[127] c.f. section 25 of the text
[128] See, for instance, the semi-canonic *Ich folge dir gleichfalls* from the *St John Passion* (flauto traverso and soprano), or the most taxing of all of Bach's duets, *Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen*, for trumpet, soprano, and strings with continuo. Bach also occasionally uses the organ as a duet partner, as in BWV 169, *Gott soll allein mein Herze haben*, in which the organ and alto are, at best,

Here, the material of the vocal line in the first section (up to b.88) is used in the organ R.H. from b.89–; the organ R.H. from b.76– is used in the vocal line from b.89–.

2. ***Is it nothing to you?*** bb.100–195

O vos omnes is one of the Responsories at Tenebrae (the sequence of Holy Week night services). Here, though the text is presented in English, the form (ABCB) is the same as the Responsory, though the A and first B sections happen overlappingly. The third section begins at b.145, and the return of the B at b.165.

3. ***The Lord hath done*** bb.317–344

Bach is, again, the model: the voice here is that of Jesus speaking *ex cruce,* and the organ accompaniment is intended to be redolent of the halo of string sound that surrounds the voice of Christ in the *St Matthew Passion*.

4. ***O love's lute*** bb.345–378

This is a play on the idea of a lute-song: the constantly descending, frequently homophonic organ part suggests the chordal strumming of a lute. In turn, the suggestion of a lute-song connotes its origins as a serenade or plaint (which this section of the text certainly is), and the irregular line-lengths, both of Swinburne's poetry and the descending accompanimental lines, are derived from the varying durations of lines that are a characteristic of the Elizabethan lute-song style[129].

5. **Various 'chants':**

i. ***They pierced my hands and my feet*** bb.60–64

ii. ***And Jesus cried*** bb.260–263

iii. ***And the veil of the temple*** bb.312–314

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equal—the organ part is fiendishly complex: the presence of figures in the independent continuo part suggests that Bach played the solo part himself, giving the organ continuo to another player.

[129] See, for instance, the comparison between Herbert's poetical references to lutes and the genre to which he is making reference in Boenig, R, *Listening to Herbert's Lute* in *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance Et Réforme*, vol. 8, no. 4, 1984, pp. 298–311. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/43444502. Accessed 2 November 2020.

iv.	***And after this***	bb.379–385
v.	***Before me there was no God formed***	bb.432–443

These passages are intended to sound like Anglican psalmody, in which the majority of a verse of a psalm or canticle is sung on a reciting chord, followed by a succession of chords on which fewer syllables are sung.

6. Three canons

i.	***When Jesus saw his mother***	bb.208–232
ii.	***Fear not***	bb.444–467
iii.	***Thou, O Lord***	bb.468–482

The first two of these are largely strictly canonic, with some alterations (the third voice at b.218, for instance). *Thou, O Lord* is a mensural canon *con alcuna licenza*: the tenor part is an augmentation 2:1 of the soprano part, while the alto and bass lines vary their durations, ranging from proportions against the soprano of 5:2 (bass, b.476), to 1:1 (alto, b.478). Though there are many ancient models for this, the canons of Aldo Clementi (as discussed on p.23) and particularly Brahms's canon in augementation at the opening of *Schaffe in mir, Gott* op. 29/2 were my principal inspirations.

7. Sets of sections

The following sets of sections were conceived together (in addition to **5** above), in all cases because of their similar musical content:

i.	***Behold my servant***	bb.22–41
	And he, bearing his cross	bb.54–56
	I have given thee garments	bb.390–400
	For winter's rains and ruins are over	bb.527–end
ii.	***Hath he not sent us hunger?***	bb.69–99
	O all fair lovers	bb.234–255
	O love's lute	bb.345–378
iii.	***Is it nothing to you***	bb.100–196
	Who is this that cometh	bb.490–526
iv.	***When Jesus saw his mother***	bb.208–232

	Fear not	bb.444–467
v.	***All thine the new wine***	bb.201–310
	But thou, thou art sure	bb.408–429

The overall structure of *Pasch* is, then, created by a series of related sections: every section is derived ultimately from the monotheme, but in quite different ways. The various pairs of sections, taken in conjunction with the other sections that are closely related (in particular the opening, bb.390–405, and the final chorus from b.527–), give the following scheme:

A Behold my servant	b.22
B Away with him	b.43
A And he bearing his cross	b.54
C They pierced my hands	b.60
D Hath he not sent us hunger	b.76
E Is it nothing to you	b.100
F When Jesus saw his mother	b.209
D O all fair lovers	b.234
C And Jesus cried	b.260
B One of the soldiers	b.277
G All thine the new wine of desire	b.280
C And the veil of the temple	b.312
H The Lord hath done	b.317
D O love's lute	b.349
C And after this	b.379
A I have given thee/He made his grave	b.390
G But thou, thou art sure	b.408
C Before me there was no God formed	b.432
F Fear not	b.444
F Thou, O Lord	b.468
E Who is this	b.490
A For winter's rains and ruins are over	b.527

v) A note on the organ part

The first performance of this piece was given in the chapel of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, using the IIIP/34 Kenneth Jones organ: this instrument is an interesting and useful fusion of styles, blending a standard English Great division with a classical Ruckpositif and a Swell featuring strings and strident reeds. The recording was made on the IIIP/41 Willis/Harrison/

Bower at Hampstead Parish Church, which is entirely English in its composition; the comparison with the organ at Emmanuel is particularly telling in the balance of the Swell division.

It is a challenge, therefore, and often something of a red herring, to offer registration suggestions when instruments differ so greatly from each other. While there are places in *Pasch* where the registration choice on any given organ will be broadly similar—for instance, b.281–, where the full Swell would almost invariably be used coupled to Great foundations—there are other places where a similar *Affekt* (if not actually a similar sound) might be conjured from entirely different stops: at b.289–, the two Choir flute stops at Emmanuel served this passage ideally, coupled to a single quiet stop on the Swell for expressive purposes; whereas at Hampstead, the Choir flutes are rather loud-voiced, and would have been too present at this point.

There are a few points where the use of a solo stop is designated (for example, b.377–), and where a solo stop is expressly designated not to be used (for example, b.562–). Occasionally, Great and Swell are specified, and there is often a separate Pedal line. For the most part, registration choices are left to the interpreter, as being best-equipped at the point of rehearsal or performance to determine the most fitting sound.

vi) Conclusion: a 'liturgical cantata'

This work was originally designed to form the final section of a collegiate Passiontide service: the first section was taken up with a series of readings, hymns, and motets telling the whole story of the Passion, after which the largely reflective, rather than narrative, perspective of *Pasch* was an effective counterbalance to what had gone before. Equally, *Pasch* can function as a concert piece: the music of the choral and solo parts is not so complex as to be out of the range of amateur choirs with adequate rehearsal time, and most professional groups would be able to rehearse this in a half-session (i.e. ninety minutes). In terms of performance in divine service, *Pasch* is, I think, best suited to the sort of meditative event that has become increasingly popular

in recent decades[130]: a service of no particular set liturgical form, in which a work of this size can be a central focus, rather than overbalancing other elements—as in, for instance, if it were to be performed as the anthem at Evensong, in which case the service could quite feasibly double in length.

[130] see Thomas, M, op. cit.

5 Conclusion

i) Ideals, traditions, and objectives

> [S]acred music is to be considered the more holy... as it is more closely connected with the liturgical action, whether it adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds, or confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites.
>
> *Sacrosanctum Concilium, 112*[131]

This statement, which ends the first paragraph of the new guidance on music in worship promulgated after the Second Vatican Council, lays out three ways in which music for the liturgy should (and does) contribute to worship. '[G]reater solemnity' in the context of a service means that the act of worship is enhanced—not necessarily made more literally solemn, but certainly made more grand—while the idea of 'unity of minds' being 'foster[ed]' by music suggests that the music causes the meaning and effect of its words to be more profound in the minds of its listeners; lastly, to '[add] delight to prayer' implies (for me, at least) that it is commendable to find pleasure in sacred music—in fact, that one can simultaneously be an appreciative audience and a prayerful worshipper. *Qui bene cantat, bis orat* is often said of the chorister's art: who sings well, prays twice. More than this, though, the aim of this sentence is to encourage the faithful to *listen* well, and, in doing so, enhance their prayer.

It is equally important to me that music either instrumental or vocal, for the concert hall or for the church, should not exist in a vacuum: throughout this commentary, I have cited wide-ranging precedents, stylistic models, and inspirations, from the last hundred years and from older sources.

As I laid out in the Introduction, my aim in writing the works presented here has been to create music that can be rehearsed and performed adequately in the limited rehearsal times typical of liturgical music-making. My experience of writing and rehearsing the pieces in this portfolio

[131] various (promulgated by HH Pope VI), *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Rome, 1963. Various editions available, including Catholic Truth Society, London 2013.

has convinced me that the technique I use in these works—a small amount of musical material, with one or two rhythmic or pitch-related features that are relatively quickly learned and can be performed confidently—lends itself to the composition of music that is engaging for its audience, rewarding to perform, and does not (for the most part) fall back on cliché.

Lastly, in all of these works, I have sought (and, I believe, succeeded) to impliment the aims of liturgical music as outlined in the quotation from *Sacrosanctum Concilium* above: the texts are set with clarity and fidelity; the music—perhaps with the exception of *Terribilis est*—is not so complex as to make itself intellectually available only to the initiated, nor so straightforward as to be unengaging for the musically sophisticated performer or audient; lastly, it lends itself to the everday 'confer[ring] of greater solemnity upon the sacred rites' precisely because it can be learned, in the normal time available to them, by choirs serving the liturgy, *ad majorem Dei gloriam.*

ii) Performers' reactions to this music

Professional choral singers tend to come from a fairly narrow range of musical backgrounds: many, if not most, have been choristers in major parish churches or cathedral choirs, before proceeding to choral scholarships at one of a handful of universities. In my experience, the circumscribed repertoire of parish churches, cathedral choirs, and most collegiate choirs[132] often leads to professional singers beginning their careers with little, if any, proficiency in the performance of non-tonal music. With these beginnings, it is hardly surprising that the majority of choral singers, though often well-versed in the performance of Bach, or of Renaissance polyphony, will often eschew opportunities to perform challenging new music; clergy and congregations, by the same conservatism generally unexposed to contemporary styles not firmly within the diatonic cathedral tradition, often are not particularly enthused by the prospect of a newly-written mass or anthem.

[132] per Thomas, M, op. cit.

One of the aims of this project, therefore, was to create music whose methods of construction—and, to a lesser extent, some of whose material—was sufficiently familiar-looking and -sounding to appeal to professional choral singers and attendees of choral services, whilst not actually being within the conservative, diatonic cathedral music tradition. In Chapter 1, I discuss some of the ways in which other composers have sought to do this; in later chapters, I describe how I have used certain techniques of construction and development of musical material, and in doing so, participate in a tradition outwith normal church music, whilst simultaneously providing a certain degree of familiarity to the music's performers (and audience). The recording sessions for this project bore out my convictions on this front: the singers were pleasantly surprised by how singable, and often familiar-feeling, this music is, despite its complexities and challenges.

I generally have found amateur singers, and particularly students, to be less reactionary than professional singers: the works in this portfolio that were written for amateur choirs are generally less technically demanding than those written for professional groups, but their attitude to musical material, tonality, and construction is no different. As I discuss in Chapter 1, younger singers, unaware of how 'difficult' a musical element is normally understood to be, will simply attempt it, and generally will be able to surmount it. This has been particularly true of *Pasch*, which was learned very quickly, and the *Missa brevis*, which—though it is by far the simplest of all these works, vocally—was rehearsed in a quarter of an hour.

iii) What this project contributes to the field of sacred choral music

Any composition-as-research project acknowledges the impossibility of truly original work: everything the composer hears becomes in some sense an influence upon them. What I have attempted in this portfolio is not entirely novel, but my own contribution to an ongoing cause: to provide music for the liturgy whose stylistic characteristics are outwith the well-trodden parish church or cathedral style.

There are, nevertheless, areas in which I think I have achieved notable success: the parody technique of the *Missa super Domine probasti me*, despite appearing initially as an intellectual exercise, has a surprising immediacy in performance; the synthesis of music and text in *Pasch*,

and the way in which the monotheme is developed and cross-referenced across the work, is highly unusual, if not entirely new, in the field of church music; the *Missa brevis* is a good example of how a piece of music quite apart from the diatonic tradition can be rehearsed and performed in short order. Of the motets discussed in Chapter 2, the simplicity of *The Burning Bush* and the quasi-romantic emotional frankness of *Go, hart* are particularly effective as service-music: a congregation can, hearing these for the first time, have a good grasp of their expressive devices.

iv) The future

I state at the end of Chapter 1 that this music is not intended to be viewed as straightforward; it is, equally, not intended to be seen as inaccessible and rarified. The purpose of any music written for liturgical use is that it is—as already discussed—*Gebrauchsmusik:* it must be fitted to the purpose it is designed to serve. Some of these works pose technical challenges beyond the capacity of some choirs; at least one of them *(Missa brevis)* is within the reach of virtually any liturgical choir.

I have, since completing this portfolio, been working on more music for amateur groups: much of this uses an even more limited palette of material, and focusses often on only one challenge—one piece is a setting of some of the ninetieth psalm in which the principal point of interest is how the 5/4 time signature is inflected by hypermetre and verbal stress, but whose pitch material is entirely in A major; in another, a short text from the Gospel of St John is used as an exercise in non-functional diatonicism, in which various traditional-sounding dissonances and resolutions are used in unexpected ways—to the end that it will be even more accessible for non-professional ensembles.

There remains, regardless of how enthusiastic performers are about a work or style of music, the issue that—by and large—audiences for liturgically-performed sacred music tend to be quite conservative. This problem has persisted (as I have noted on several occasions above) for centuries: it seems to me that a mixed diet of the standard repertoire and more challenging works is ideal. The idea that church-going should be a comforting or mollifying experience

seems partially to me to be the root of this issue: a choral service, and particularly Evensong, can often turn into a sort of free concert, but it is intended to be a seamless, coherent fusion of spoken and sung text, of silence and music, and of art and faith. This issue requires more than the will of composers and performers, or an audience willing to be led to new experiences: it requires clergy and musicians alike to recognise that the command to 'sing a new song' cannot be ignored.

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Appendix: compositions, October 2016–October 2020
with forces, texts, and durations

i. Choral

Ad cenam Agni providi	twelve voices	anon, C3rd	7'
Alleluia: Deus deorum	forty-nine voices	Psalms	3'
Amoretti (fourth set)	four voices	Spenser	13'
Carissima in deliciis	six voices	James Ryman	7'
Confiteantur tibi, Domine	four voices	Psalms	2'
Draw near	twelve voices	Richard Everett	5'
Glossolalia	eight voices	various	7'
Go, hart	four voices	anon.	4'
Hymn to God, My God, in My Sickness	eight voices	John Donne	4'
Iam dulcis amica, venito	four voices	anon.	3'
Iam nova progenies	eight voices	Virgil, Isaiah	4'
Music for the silent film *Joan of Arc*	six voices	various	20'
Jesu, lord, blyssed thou be	two voices, organ	anon, C15th	3'
Lyke-Wake Dirge	unison, organ	anon Yorkshire	3'
Ond us giefe scealde	eight voices	Cynewulf	8'
Magnificat & Nunc dimittis	four voices, organ	BCP	10'
Magnificat in alternatim	eight voices	Liber usualis	3'
Missa brevis	unison, organ	Liber usualis	7’
Missa super Domine probasti me	four voices	Liber usualis	15'
Pange lingua gloriosi corporis mysterium	six voices	S. Thomas Aquinas	6'
Pasch	four voices, organ	various	33'
People of Zion	four voices, harp	Liber usualis	3'
Rise, rise thou, Deborah	eight voices, cl, org	Judges	6'
Set me as a seal	four voices	Song of Songs	4'
Terribilis est	eight voices	Genesis	2'
The angels rejoice, and praise the Son of God	four voices	Liber usualis	4'
The Burning Bush	three voices	Genesis	2'
The Permanence of the Young Men	eight voices	various	4'

The plant of peace	five voices	Langland	4'
The Windhover	four voices	Manley Hopkins	3'
Three Scots Songs	three voices	anon.	7'
Till Christ, whom I am halden for to love	four voices	anon C16th	5'
To Sleep	four voices	Keats	3'
Veni redemptor gentium	four voices	anon C15th	3'
Whosoever will be saved	eight voices	BCP	3'

ii. Instrumental/mixed

Assembly	chamber orchestra		8'
Canons	three recorders		4'
Cello Quintet	five cellos		10'
Dance suite	solo harpsichord		10'
Et exsultavit	piano quintet		7'
Octet	fl, ob, cl, bsn, hn, tpt, tbn, db		7'
Number-Studies	solo piano		10'
Partita	solo violin		7'
Requiem	voices, ensemble		45'
Studies on Gaudi's Square of Christ's Life	solo piano		7'
Te lucis ante terminum	two violas, cello		9'
The Monk: Act I [opera, incomplete]	voices, orchestra		40'
Villanelle	solo piano		19'

iii. Vocal

Bridgett Applewhaite	voice and piano	anon.	4'
Coeur couronne et miroir	solo voice	Apollinaire	3'
Come away, Death	voice, pno, db	Shakespeare	3'
Three Animal Lyrics	rec, voice, vc	Les Murray	6'
Lark	solo voice	Robert McFarlane	2'