electroacoustic compositions
and soundscapes

Christine McCombe
Phd (Music Composition)

Sarabande
Tidal
Dry
21 October, 2002

Regarding Submission of a Portfolio of Musical Compositions submitted in satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of PhD in the University of Edinburgh, October 2002.

Declaration

I, Christine McCombe, declare that the work submitted here for the degree of PhD in Music Composition is original and composed by myself, and that none of the work has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Christine McCombe
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

(Regulation 3.5.10)

Name of Candidate

CHRISTINE ANNE McCOMBE

Address

Degree

Ph.D - MUSIC COMPOSITION

Date

21 October 2002

Title of Thesis

PORTFOLIO OF COMPOSITIONS

No. of words in the main text of Thesis

N/A

List of Compositions

Utterance for large orchestra (2002)

An Opera of Clouds for two singers, speaker, chamber ensemble, electroacoustic soundscape and video projections (1998-2002)

Angels of Mountain and Snow for choir, flute, clarinet and 'cello (2002)

Solstice Stone for soprano and harp (2002)

Gloria for two sopranos, alto, tenor, baritone and bass (2002)

Sarabande electroacoustic composition (2002)

Night Alchemy for chamber ensemble (2001)

Tidal electroacoustic soundscape for installation with video (2001)

Oceanology for violin, clarinet, horn and 'cello (2001)

Orilla for chamber ensemble (2000)

Dry electroacoustic soundscape (2000)

Isobel's Mouth for soprano, counter-tenor, bass and electronics (2000)

Anregung for piano trio (1999)

Ahtem for flute and piano (1999)

Bath Music for percussion ensemble (1999)

Morph 1 for alto flute, bass clarinet and 'cello (1998)

Divergence for piano (1998)
Christine McCombe  
PhD in Music Composition  
University of Edinburgh

**An introduction**

My compositional output covers several different areas and disciplines: concert music, electroacoustic composition and soundscape, music for amateur musicians and music for specific functions/occasions. The works presented here as my PhD submission reflect each of these categories and several of the works cross the boundaries between. I believe an introduction to these various compositional strands will shed light on the contexts and aims of each of the works.

From the outset, my aims and motivations for undertaking a PhD were clear - to create a body of work that offers the listener a ‘way in’, an experience on various levels and that engages and challenges rather than perplexes the listener. Several themes preoccupy me and recur throughout the work in various shapes and forms; imaginary worlds, clouds, angels, ritual, music as dynamic metaphor, and the voice.

As a composer I feel that it is important to be useful. I enjoy the challenge of writing music for specific occasions and contexts, composing music that fits a specific brief and makes the most of available resources. ‘Angels of Mountain and Snow’ (2002) is a clear example of this. I was commissioned to develop a new piece of music with and for the Strathclyde University Chorus. A series of workshops with the choir resulted in a work of which the choir felt a sense of ownership and a piece composed specifically to show off their strengths. ‘Gloria’ and ‘Solstice Stone’ (2002) were commissioned by the Dunedin Consort for a project called ‘The People’s Mass’ - the idea being to build a larger work consisting of mass movements and ‘interludes’ by composers living and working in Scotland and then touring the performance to various towns in the Scottish Highlands and main cities. The brief for this project was to compose something that was “accessible to local audiences ... children and their parents” and something which community choirs could also perform. ‘Oceanology’(2001) was written for an education project with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra which involved working with groups of primary school children and writing a piece of music to reflect a set theme - in my case, the oceans. ‘Oceanology’ was part of a larger composition ‘The Time Machine’ which incorporated music by several other composers as well as music by the children themselves. ‘Isobel’s Mouth’(2000) was the result of a series of workshops organised by ECAT as part of the Young Composers and Writers Forum where the work was devised in collaboration with writer Jan Natanson and VOCEM electric voice theatre. The work that emerged is very much a piece of music theatre, utilising live sound processing and amplification to emphasise the presence of voices within the space.
'Utterance' (2002), my most recent work, is the culmination of many of the things I have been striving for compositionally over the last several years. A desire to make the listener curious, to draw them in, to take them on a journey, to be clear and direct and uncompromising. ‘Utterance’ developed out of several strands of compositional research; my work in the electronic studio and the idea of breaking a sound down into its constituent parts; composition focusing on the presence of sound within a space; and also my writing for voice. The Voice has always been central to my compositional philosophy; I feel strongly that music is essentially the voicing of an idea, an act of communication, an ‘utterance’. This piece begins by focusing on how sound is actually produced, the grain and noise and sound artifacts that occur before and during the production of a musical tone - the physical sounds that are necessary before an instrument will start to ‘sing’. Textures and clouds of sound gradually become more focused and articulate and the ‘voice’ in the form of melody finally emerges.

In some ways ‘Utterance’ is a metaphor for the whole process of undertaking a PhD in composition - the search for a voice and the various steps and detours and hurdles that need to be met along the way.

Christine McCombe
October 2002
Edinburgh
Commissions and Performances
of works submitted for PhD
by Christine McCombe

An Opera of Clouds to be performed in December 2002 in Edinburgh.

Angels of Mountain and Snow commissioned by SPNM, PRS and Making music for the Strathclyde University Chorus as part of the ‘Adopt a Composer Scheme’. Premiered by the choir in April 2002 in Glasgow.

Solstice Stone and Gloria commissioned by the Dunedin Consort, Edinburgh, and to be premiered in December 2002 as part of the ‘People’s Mass’ project and toured around Scotland.

Sarabande premiered at the ‘Sounds Found and Fixed’ weekend of electroacoustic music held at the University of Edinburgh in February 2002.

Night Alchemy commissioned by the Australia Ensemble and premiered in Sydney is September 2001. Recorded and broadcast by ABC FM radio in Australia. Selected for the Australian submission for the 2002 International Rostrum of Composers. The work was presented in Paris in June 2002 and will receive various European broadcasts as a result.

Tidal (installation) presented during the 2001 DIALOGUES Festival in Edinburgh in May 2001.

Oceanology commissioned by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra for an education project - 'The Time Machine' - and performed by SCO soloists in Edinburgh in March 2001.

Orilla premiered by the Composers’ Ensemble at the 2000 Hoxton Festival in London.

Dry (soundscape) performed during DIALOGUES festival in Edinburgh in August 2000.

Isobel's Mouth composed for Vocem Electric Voice Theatre and performed at the ECAT Young Composers' Forum in March 2000 in Edinburgh.

Anregung commissioned by Musica Viva Australia for the Vienna Piano Trio. Performed by the Vienna Trio as part of the 2000 Australian tour. Also performed by the trio at the Vienna Musikverein in January 2001.
**tidal**

2001

installation - video and audio

*video by Michael Wolchover*

**The idea...**

The flotsam and jetsam of life, washed ashore or washed away, glimpses of things half forgotten, fragments of things not yet known, waxing and waning, the pull of the tide, cycles within cycles, history repeating, forces beyond our understanding and a sense that there might be a reason for such randomness.

*Tidal* is a meditation on the cyclical nature of our lives and how time passes. The installation consists of two complimentary elements: a series of video time lapse images of the tide coming in and out (video by Michael Wolchover), and a soundscape combining various 'found sounds' and composed textures. Both of these elements are cyclical in nature, each with their own temporal logic and rhythm.

**The realisation...**

The video and audio tracks are separate for a reason. The video images last for 60 minutes and the soundscape is just over 22 minutes (the CD track contains 2 cycles). The video should be reset once an hour and the CD set on repeat so that it is a continuous sonic presence. When played/projected together there emerges a dynamic interplay between sound and image. The non-synchronous nature of the material creates a kind of flux and flow between the visual and sonic images. This simple device means that *Tidal* never repeats itself exactly; there is a real organic fluidity to the work.

The result is a work that is strangely compelling and mesmeric. Because of the open-ended nature of *Tidal* there is no beginning and no ending and so the audience are free to enter and leave the experience at any time.

**Technical Requirements...**

- Video player
- Video / data projector
- CD play back
- mixing desk
- minimum 4 speaker sound diffusion system
The realisation...

Given the very subtle nature of some of the sounds in *dry*, the environment in which the piece is heard should be as free from external noise as possible. Ideally, the piece should be heard in a gallery space with a good sound diffusion system.

Technical Requirements...

CD Playback

EITHER
Minimum 4 speaker sound diffusion
Mixing desk

OR
through headphones
Christine McCombe

List of Compositions

Scores

*Utterance* for large orchestra (2002) c 23'
*An Opera of Clouds* for two singers, speaker, chamber ensemble, electroacoustic soundscape* and video projections (1998-2002) c 55'
*Angels of Mountain and Snow* for choir, flute, clarinet and 'cello (2002) c 8'
*Solstice Stone* for soprano and harp (2002) c 5'
*Gloria* for two sopranos, alto, tenor, baritone and bass (2002) c 4'
*Night Alchemy* for chamber ensemble (2001) c 16'
*Oceanology* for violin, clarinet, horn and 'cello (2001) c 5'
*Orilla* for chamber ensemble (2000) c 6'
*Isobel’s Mouth* for soprano, counter-tenor, bass and electronics (2000) c 7'
*Anregung* for piano trio (1999) c 5'
*Ahtem* for flute and piano (1999) c 3'
*Bath Music* for percussion ensemble (1999) c 4'
*Morph 1* for alto flute, bass clarinet and 'cello (1998) c 4’30"
*Divergence* for piano (1998) c 8'

CDs (3)

‘Electroacoustic Compositions and Soundscapes’
*Sarabande* electroacoustic composition (2002) 20’
*Tidal* electroacoustic soundscape for installation with video (2001) 22 -60’
*Dry* electroacoustic soundscape (2000) 11’

‘Soundscapes for *An Opera of Clouds*’*

‘Compositions by Christine McCombe’

Submitted in satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of PhD (Music Composition) in the University of Edinburgh, 2002.
Utterance

for orchestra

Christine McCombe

2002

Submitted in part satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of PhD (Music Composition) in the University of Edinburgh, 2002.
Orchestration

1. piccolo (doubling alto flute)
2. Flutes
2. Oboes
1. Cor Anglais
2. Clarinets in B flat
1. Bass Clarinet in B flat
2. Bassoons
1. Contra Bassoon

4. Horns
3. Trumpets
2. Trombones
1. Bass Trombone
1. Tuba

1. Harp
1. Piano

3. Timpani

Percussion (2 players)
- Bass drum
- Crotales
- Marimba
- Vibraphone
- Wooden Agogo
- Large Rain Stick
- Suspended Cymbal (large)
- Tam-tam

Strings
(16:12:10:8:4)

duration approximately 23 minutes

This Score is in C
Performance Notes

Wind

“air to tone” indicate as smooth a transition as possible from unpitched breath tone to producing a pitched tone.

Brass

“air only” - as it implies, no pitch should be produced. Articulation and dynamics markings refer to the method of blowing through the instrument only.

“mouth pop” - or mouthpiece pop, produced by slapping the top of the mouthpiece with the palm of the performer’s hand.

Piano

\( \forall \) inside piano - brush stroke across strings
\( \bigcirc \) press and drag rubber ball across cluster of strings - approximate pitches

Strings

\( \alpha \) drumming lightly on body of instrument with finger tips
\( \beta \) tap lightly on body of instrument with finger tips
\( \chi \) bow in circular movement from behind bridge to on bridge; ad libitum
\( \delta \) bowing with wood on strings, \textit{col legno tratto}, circular movement between ord and \textit{molo sul ponticello}
\( \varepsilon \) flat bow in circular movement between ord and \textit{sul ponticello}; ad libitum
\( \phi \) tapping string with bow; constant, unmeasured repetition
\( \gamma \) flat bow; from string noise (\textit{ppp}) increase pressure to the point of scratch tone
X
bow
in
circular
movement
from behind
bridge;
ad
libitum
An Opera of Clouds

for two sopranos, speaker, chamber ensemble, electroacoustic sound diffusion and video projection.

Text by Alison Croggon
Music by Christine McCombe

2002

Submitted in part satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of PhD (Music Composition) in the University of Edinburgh, 2002
'An Opera of Clouds'

**Instrumentation**

two sopranos:
Voice 1 (high, pure voice, range middle A to high A)
Voice 2 (medium high voice, richer tone, middle G sharp to high G sharp)

speaker

flute

oboé

clarinet

percussion (3 tam tams, susp. cymbals, hand held percussion, vibraphone)

violin 1

violin 2

viola

‘cello

horn

trumpet

trombone

**technical requirements**

CD playback, mixing desk, minimum 4 speaker sound diffusion

Mac G4, video and data projector/s

Sconce and spot lighting as required

Amplification for speaker as required

duration c. 55 minutes

**This score is in C**
The work...

The work consists of six song settings for voice and chamber ensemble (which can also be performed as an independent song cycle) which are framed and contextualised by three spoken texts. These spoken and sung ‘events’ are themselves incorporated into a larger performance setting which consists of a environment of electroacoustic ‘soundscape’ which is diffused around the space with interjections from an off stage brass trio and accompanied by video projections of images associated with the central themes of the work. The projected video material will act as a visual continuum in the work - alternating between clear and abstracted images, possibly incorporating looping material, time lapse and static images.

‘An Opera of Clouds’ takes as its basis a series of poems by Australian writer Alison Croggon. The three central texts (spoken) deal with the idea of Angels - not as stereotypical cherubic figures but Angels as awesome and sometimes vengeful beings. These figures represent a kind of observer of our human existence - a presence that is felt and sensed rather than seen. The six song settings represent moments of human experience, glimpses of being.

The intention of ‘An Opera of Clouds’ is to create an alternative to more traditional narrative-based forms of music theatre. There is a kind of ‘emotional narrative’ at work in the piece which is articulated by recurring themes and images, but the openness of the work invites the audience to make their own associations and interpretations. By combining a variety of different elements, some related, some unrelated, my aim is to draw the audience in to an imaginary landscape which is strange and ambiguous yet also compelling and beautiful.
The ideal performance space for 'An Opera of Clouds' would be a large, high ceilinged venue with several different elevations. One of the key elements in the performance of the work is the spatial differentiation of the various components of the work. The main chamber ensemble should be centred at the lowest elevation of the performance space; the two singers should be positioned on either side of the ensemble and possibly at a slightly higher elevation. The speaker should be separated as far as possible from the main ensemble, at a higher elevation if possible and, if necessary amplified and spot lit for the three spoken texts. The brass trio should also be separated from the main ensemble and can function as 'brass off stage' if necessary; each of their three interludes can also be performed from a different position to further emphasise the spatial properties of the performance space.

The performance space should be quite dark with stand lighting for the chamber ensemble and individual spot lighting for the two singers and speaker. The brass trio may or may not be visible to the audience and their lighting should be the minimum required. The darkness of the performance space is to maximise the impact of the video projections - the projected images providing illumination within the performance space. 1-4 projection areas or white screens are required - either blank light coloured walls or large hanging screens. These should be positioned behind and to the sides of the performance area.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Running Order</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Soundscape</strong> track 1</td>
<td>6:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>'Angels' (spoken)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Soundscape</strong> track 2</td>
<td>2:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>'Muse' (voice 1 and chamber ensemble)</td>
<td>3:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Brass Interlude 1</strong></td>
<td>1:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>'Lunar' (voice 2 and chamber ensemble)</td>
<td>3:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Soundscape</strong> track 3</td>
<td>2:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>'Song' (voice 1 and string quartet)</td>
<td>3:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>Soundscape</strong> track 4</td>
<td>5:55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>'Sky' <em>spoken over track 9</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><strong>Brass Interlude 2</strong></td>
<td>2:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>'Numb' (voice 2 and string quartet)</td>
<td>3:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td><strong>Soundscape</strong> track 5</td>
<td>2:52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>'Madness' (voice 1 and chamber ensemble)</td>
<td>4:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td><strong>Brass Interlude 3</strong></td>
<td>3:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>'Elysium' (voice 2 and vibraphone)</td>
<td>2:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td><strong>Soundscape</strong> track 6</td>
<td>5:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>'Aria' (spoken)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Spoken texts may be spoken over the fade in / fade out of soundscape tracks
'An Opera of Clouds'

texts by Alison Croggon

Angels (spoken)

the night embodies them, they come
with patient animal eyes
asking why it is we have forgotten them:
pushing their childish mouths against our numb
mouths, parching with the loss of them:

the violent clouds announcing them, the bloom
of carnal waters and the cries,
abrupt and wordless, which presented them:
they are yet present, rumoured wings in rooms
where doors and windows shudder shut against them

Muse (sung)

first desert last complexity
all your voices are silence
and the sheer wings of love
tremble in your hands

clear child who sucks
my pillow of blood
forest whose birds fly
straight into my eyes

although these veins
choke with lamentation
I'll crumble my body again
down to the grain of my heart
**Lunar** (sung)

nothing changes
love's
indelible
savage promise

remember
how it came here
like madness
and left
its fragility

a scar
where you were clawed
out of nothing

the smell of loss

---

**Song** (sung)

there is a flower
made of eyelids
there is a moon
which scythes the ripples
of a black river

and then nothing

there is a man
made of feathers
there is a woman
walking on the ripples
of a black river

there is a bowl
of blood and ash
there is a fire
shadowing the ripples
of a black river

and then nothing
Sky (spoken)

I walk beneath the dirt-common sky:
   it is an angel unfolded
before me, its opera of clouds
collapses in silences and water

one strand of its calamitous hair
smashes cities to matchwood
it shuffles oceans and slams down
maces of ice and lightning

it wakes in gardens the shelled
   hunger, the brutal rose
and all our human lamentations
   fade into its vast patience

and breed in our lungs the soft
   urinous tumours tasting of knives
and parting and blackening cellars
   where children vanish in tears

Notes (sung)

numb
anemone heart
clawed into a dumb roundness

flinching
deeper than grief
where even dreams
cannot touch

no place to speak
and now all places have vanished
no voice
but madness or silence
the mouths closed over the dark mouth
closing over them
Angels

the night embodies them, they come
with patient animal eyes
asking why it is we have forgotten them:
pushing their childish mouths against our numb
mouths, parching with the loss of them:

the violent clouds announcing them, the bloom
of carnal waters and the cries,
abrupt and wordless, which presented them:
they are yet present, rumoured wings in rooms
where doors and windows shudder shut against them
Voice

Fl.

Cl.

Cym.

Perc.

Vln

Vla

Vc.

silent

(breathy)

soft

arco

ric.

col legno

mp

ric.

arco

scrape

sul tasto

and the sheer wings of love

and the sheer wings of love

sul tasto

sul tasto

sul tasto
intense, detached
tremble in your hands.

molto vib. breathy

breathymolto vib

breathy

clear child.
Voice

who sucks my pillow of blood

Fl.

p — mp — pp

Cl.

Sul tosto

Cym.

Perc.

Sul tosto

Vln

Sul tosto

Vla

Pizz.

Vc.

Pizz.

Voice

forest whose birds fly straight into my eyes
Voice

Fl.

Cl.

Cym.

Perc.

Vln

Vla

Vc.

Voice

Fl.

Cl.

Cym.

Perc.

Vln

Vla

Vc.

**Voice**

**Fl.**

**Cl.**

**Cym.**

**Perc.**

**Vln**

**Vla**

**Vc.**

**Voice**

**Fl.**

**Cl.**

**Cym.**

**Perc.**

**Vln**

**Vla**

**Vc.**
Voice: down to the grain of my
Fl.: pp — mp — pp
Cl.: pp
Cym.: pp
Perc.: pp
Vln.: pp
Vla.: pp
Vc.: pp

Voice: breathy
Fl.: p — mp — pp
Cl.: p — mp — pp
Cym.: w.b. 3/4
Perc.: pp
Vln.: pp
Vla.: pizz.
Vc.: pp
brass interlude 1

Horn in F

Trumpet in Bb

Trombone

MM \( \frac{3}{4} \) with force
### Page 4

**Measure 45**
- **Hn**: \( \text{C} \)
- **Tpt**: \( \text{mp} \)
- **Tbn.**: \( \text{mp} \)

**Measure 48**
- **Hn**: \( \text{C} \)
- **Tpt**: \( \text{mp} \)
- **Tbn.**: \( \text{mp} \)

**Measure 52**
- **Hn**: \( \text{C} \)
- **Tpt**: \( \text{mp} \)
- **Tbn.**: \( \text{mp} \)

**Measure 56**
- **Hn**: \( \text{D} \)
- **Tpt**: \( \text{p} \)
- **Tbn.**: \( \text{p} \)
Nothing changes

Love's

Indelible savage promise
song

not rushed, floating

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Voice (1)

Voice

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

there is a flo
Voice

4/4

wer_

made of eye lids

Vln I

mp

p

p

Vln II

mp

p

p

Vla

mp

p

mp

Vc.

mp

p

p

Voice

3/4

there is a moon

sul tasto

Vln I

p

sul tasto

sul tasto

sul tasto

Vln II

mp

p

sul tasto

sul tasto

sul tasto

Vla

mp

p

p

Vc.

mp

p

p

Voice

5/4

which scythes the ripples

Vln I

mp

ord.

p

Vln II

mp

ord.

p

Vla

mp

ord.

p

mp

Vc.

mp

3

p

p
Voice

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

Voice

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

Voice

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

Voice

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

Voice

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.
there is a woman walking on the river

places of a black river

there is a bowl of blood and
3

Voice

ash
there is a fire

Vln I

PPP

Vln II

pp
p

Vla

pp

Vc.

ppp

p

pp

6

Voice

shadowing the ripples

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

p

pp

mp

5

Voice

of a black black river and

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

pp

pp

pp

pp
Voice
then

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

68  \( mp \) (breathy)

\( \frac{5}{4} \)

\( pp \)

\( \frac{4}{4} \)

then

nothing

ppp
Sky

I walk beneath the dirt-common sky:
    it is an angel unfolded
before me, its opera of clouds
    collapses in silences and water

one strand of its calamitous hair
    smashes cities to matchwood
it shuffles oceans and slams down
    maces of ice and lightning

it wakes in gardens the shelled
    hunger, the brutal rose
and all our human lamentations
    fade into its vast patience

and breed in our lungs the soft
    urinous tumours tasting of knives
and parting and blackening cellars
    where children vanish in tears
brass interlude 2

MM \( \frac{3}{4} = 48 \) clear and sustained

Horn in F

Trumpet in B♭

Trombone

MM \( \frac{3}{4} = 64 \) (\( \frac{3}{4} = \frac{3}{4} \))

A

Hn

Tpt

Tbn.

B

Hn

Tpt

Tbn.
Voice

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

Voice

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

Voice

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

Voice

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.
Voice

deeper than grief (f) where even dreams

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

molto vibrato

cannot touch (ch)

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

no place to speak (k)

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.
and now all places (s) have vanished.

no voice (i) (ce) but madness (ss)

or silence the mouths closed.
Voice

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.

Voice

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vc.
madness

\( \frac{3}{4} \) steady and controlled

MM \( \frac{j}{2} = 72 \)

Voice (1)
Flute
Oboe
Clarinet in Bb
Vibraphone

\( \frac{4}{4} \) steady and controlled

MM \( \frac{j}{2} = 72 \)

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
self hides

and the
Voice
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Vib.
Vln I
Vln II
Vla

fading away

fading away

pizz.
brass interlude 3

Horn in F
Trumpet in Bb
Trombone

Horn
Trumpet
Trombone

Horn
Trumpet
Trombone
elysium

Voice (2):

|—V

Vibraphone:

Ft=

fall-like

hunger

Voice:

in-to

the

eye

Vib.:

of an ab-so-lute

dawn

Voice:

mid-night

(t)

Vib.:

ppp

Voice:

mm

Vib.:
Voice

Vib.

e- all the

Possibly birds a

rrive and fly

through your skin

like music

(let ring...)
Aria

Because you love me, I fear the angels will be jealous and send down their curses from thin heights to break the bones that have so wounded me and spill the sour honeys of your tongue. Maybe they're jealous of the sea as well because she rolls her colours in so wide a bed and never finds the end of her secrets. From the clouds they cannot see her bitterness. Perhaps they'll merely send us earthly treasures, ships, minerals, spices, libraries of skin, the mercury of fame, dining tables, clocks, to bribe us into solving this connundrum which bathes our bodies in such troubling flame, so much light out of so much anguish.
Angels of Mountain and Snow

for choir (S.A.T.B.)

and ensemble
(flute, clarinet and ‘cello)

text by George Mackay Brown

Christine McCombe
2002

composed for the Strathclyde University Chorus as part of the ‘Adopt a Composer’ scheme supported by SPNM, PRS Foundation and Making Music.
Programme Note

_Angels of Mountain and Snow_ was composed after a series of workshops with members of the Chorus of Strathclyde University.
I felt that the poem by George Mackay Brown was particularly relevant to the current international refugee situation, particularly on a personal level, as my own country, Australia's treatment of refugees has been the focus of much attention. I wished to create a piece of music which had a kind of ritualistic aspect and the theatrical device of having the choir process in and out of the auditorium while singing is intended to reflect the long journey many refugees face before they find a new home.

To the Tibetan Refugees

May the house be firmly founded.
And I hope there's a well,
   Ever springing, near the door.
There should be a fire for cold nights
And a clear window, too,
To see the stars snapping silver fingers!
I imagine a cupboard
With bread and cheese and fruit in it,
So that a lost traveller may eat too.
A good bed, chairs, a table.
A jar with flowers and a book.
And may the angels of mountain and snow
Bend perpetually over that good house.
(So wishes
One with a house beside a cold Northern sea.)

1983

George Mackay Brown

Permission granted by John Murray (Publishers) Ltd
Angels of Mountain and Snow

Choir off stage - start processing slowly in to auditorium

MM J = 50 Steady and even

Soprano
 Alto
 Tenor
 Bass
 Flute
 Clarinet in Bb
 Violoncello

mm

Choir should have reached stage area by this point

S. for cold nights A fire for cold nights A fire for cold nights

A. for cold nights A fire for cold nights A fire for cold nights

T. for cold nights A fire for cold nights A fire for cold nights

B. for cold nights A fire for cold nights A fire for cold nights

Fl. mp

Cl. mp

Ve. mp
Dreamily

S.
clear win-
don, too. To see the stars snapping silver fingers!

A.
clear win-
don, too. To see the stars snapping silver fingers!

T.
clear win-
don, too. To see the stars snapping silver fingers!

B.
clear win-
don, too. To see the stars snapping silver fingers!

Dreamily

S.
p li ma-gine a cup-board With bread and

A.
p li ma-gine a cup-board With bread and

T.
p li ma-gine a cup-board With bread and

B.
p li ma-gine a cup-board With bread and

Dreamily

S.
pp

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dreamily
cheese and fruit in it. So that a lost traveller may eat too.

And may the angels of mountain and snow
Bend per vibrato over that good house.

book.

book.
Strong and clear

May the house be firmly founded. And I hope there’s a

Well, ever-springing near the door. There should be a fire for cold nights. And a clear window, too. To see the

Well, ever-springing near the door. There should be a fire for cold nights. And a clear window, too. To see the

Well, ever-springing near the door. There should be a fire for cold nights. And a clear window, too. To see the
Dreamily, almost a whisper

Imagining a cupboard With bread and cheese and fruit in it. So that a lost traveller...
Choir should be off stage by this point

Choir becoming softer - as though fading into the distance

ISO

A fire for cold nights

B.

Fl.

Cl.

Vc.

Choir start to process off

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choir start to process off</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Solstice Stone
for soprano and harp

Christine McCombe
2002

commissioned by the Dunedin Consort, Edinburgh
for the 'People's Mass' project, 2002
Performance Notes

Harp

All notes should be allowed to resonate except where indicated otherwise (dampen / damp).

The Solstice Stone

'All were locked in me,
  Silence and darkness.
  I was a thing of winter.
  Hollowed, I might lodge a skull.
  I was barrenness.
  I was the block rejected by mason, carver,
       shaper of querns.'

A star unlocked the stone.
  The stone was a white rose.
  It was a dove.
  It was a harp with a hundred carols.
  It was a cornstalk.
  It was the candle at sunset.
  It was a fountain, cluster of arches.

On that stone lie the loaves and the cup.

October 1987
George Mackay Brown
Solstice Stone

Christine McCombe 2002

text by George Mackay Brown

Soprano

Harp

D♭ C♭ B♭ / E♭ F♯ G♯ A♭

All were

lock'd in me,

Silence and
dampen

I was a thing of

darkness.
winter. Hollow'd I might lodge a

Dampen

skull. I was barrenness.

I was the block rejected by

mason, carver, shaper of querns.
lock'd. the stone. 

stone. was a white rose. It was a dove. It was a harp.
with a hundred carols. It was a cornstalk. It was the candle at sunset. It was a fountain, cluster of
On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.

On that arches.
Gloria

for two sopranos, alto, tenor, baritone and bass

Christine McCombe

2002

commissioned by the Dunedin Consort, Edinburgh
for the 'People's Mass' project, 2002
Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.
Glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.

Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe.
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.

Qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus. Tu solus Dominus.
Tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe.
Cum Sancto Spiritu
In gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest. 
And on earth peace to men of good will. 
We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we adore Thee, 
we glorify Thee. 
We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory. 

O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father almighty. 
O Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son. 
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father. 

Who takest away the sins of the world, 
have mercy on us. 
Who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. 
Who sittest at the right hand of the Father, 
have mercy on us. 

For Thou alone art holy. Thou alone art God. 
Thou alone, O Jesus Christ, art most high. 
Together with the Holy Ghost, 
in the glory of God, the Father. Amen
Gloria

Christine McCombe 2002

Soprano I

Soprano II

Alto

Tenor

Baritone

Bass

\[ j = 72 \]

Et in terra pax hominibus bonaevoluntatis.

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Night Alchemy

for Chamber Ensemble

(flute/piccolo, clarinet in b flat/bass clarinet, two violins, viola, 'cello)

Christine McCombe

2001

Commissioned by The Australia Ensemble
resident at the University of New South Wales
Night Alchemy
for Chamber Ensemble
2001

Instrumentation

Flute / Piccolo
Clarinet in B flat / Bass Clarinet in B flat
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
'Cello

Performance Notes

All trills to be played from a semitone above the pitch indicated.

> (accents) in passages where dynamic marking is pp or ppp indicate a relatively forceful attack.
Thus a > ppp marking indicates something similar to p subito ppp.

Piccolo and Bass Clarinet are written in the same staff as Flute and Clarinet respectively, with change of instrument indicated in the score.
Octave transposition is implied:
Piccolo sounding an octave higher than written,
Bass Clarinet sounding an octave lower than written (an octave + major second in transposing performance parts).

This Score is in C

Duration approximately 16 minutes
Programme Note

As the title *Night Alchemy* suggests, I wanted to explore the idea of transformation; the undefinable transition between wakefulness and sleep and the strange blurring of boundaries that occurs within our dreaming, in which things are never really what they seem.

*Night Alchemy* takes as its starting point the different types of brain activity within an average eight hour period of sleep.
I devised a proportional structure based on an average sleep cycle which switches between phases of deep, slow-wave sleep and REM (rapid eye movement) sleep. The resulting proportional structure forms the basis for the overall shape of *Night Alchemy*, as well as providing material for smaller scale details of the work - creating cycles within cycles, recurring rhythmic patterns and even the pitches used.
Night Alchemy

Christine McCombe 2001
becoming less hectic

MM $j = 120$

MM $j = 60$
becoming a little broader

**MM \( \dot{J} = 90 \) (approx. \( \dot{J} = \delta \))**

(change to piccolo)
Fl./ Picc.
CL/ B.C1
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.

"*r
Vc.
Fl./ Picc.
CL/ B.C1
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.

Fl./ Picc.
CL/ B.C1
Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vc.
oceanology

for violin, clarinet in B flat, horn in F and 'cello

Christine McCombe
2001

Composed for the Scottish Chamber Orchestra education project 'The Time Machine'.
First performed at Our Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh, March 2001
Instrumentation

violin
clarinet in B flat
horn in F
’cello

Performance Notes

Dynamic markings are relative to ensure a balanced ensemble.

Trills are always from a semi tone above the note written.

Strings
s.p. sul ponticello
m.s.p. molto sul ponticello
move from one position to the next indicated

Horn
Indication “hand stopped” applies for the following passage until a change in position is indicated.

ad lib. gliss. free oscillating glissando - ie upwards and downwards

Programme Note

Oceanology was composed for an education project involving primary school children in Edinburgh - ‘The Time Machine’ - which developed from ideas inspired by the ‘Our Dynamic Earth’ centre in Edinburgh. This piece is intended to evoke something of mystery of the deep oceans of our planet.

This score is in C
a little more movement  MM $j = 72$
Vln
\[ \text{Vln CI.} \]

Cl.
\[ \text{mm} \]

Hn
\[ \text{all 3 valves down on F side} \]

Vc.
\[ \text{ad lib. gliss.} \]

36
\[ \text{a little faster...} \]

\[ \text{MM} \rightarrow 84 \]

34
\[ \text{Vln CI.} \]

Cl.
\[ \text{pp} \]

Hn
\[ \text{pp} \]

Vc.
\[ \text{pp} \]

54
\[ \text{pizz.} \]

64
\[ \text{all 3 valves down on F side} \]

1/2 valved

Vc.
\[ \text{pp} \]
becoming faster....
orilla
for chamber ensemble
Christine McCombe
2000

composed for the Composer’s Ensemble and premiered at the 2000 Hoxton Festival, UK
Orilla
for Chamber Ensemble
2000

Instrumentation

Piccolo/Alto flute
Clarinet in B flat

Violin
Viola
'Cello

Piano          bass drum and timpani beaters

Percussion     glockenspiel
               vibraphone
               crotales
               3 x suspended cymbals (small, medium & large)

Duration c. 5 minutes

This score is in C
Orilla
for Chamber Ensemble

Christine McCombie 2000

Flute (picc. & alto)

Clarinet in Bb

Glockenspiel

Vibraphone

Crotales

Percussion (susp. cymbals)

Tam-tam

Piano

played inside piano on strings
using 2 bass drum beaters:
pitches indicate approx.
range of clusters

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

mm \( \times 60 \)

\( \text{Soft mallet} \)

\( \text{go to crotales} \)

\( \text{played inside piano on strings using 2 bass drum beaters: pitches indicate approx. range of clusters} \)

pp pp

\( \text{mm} \)

\( \text{mm} \)

pp pp

pp pp

\( \text{soft mallet} \)

\( \text{to crotale} \)
Glock.

Vib.

Crot.

Perc.

T-L.

Pno.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.
Isobel’s Mouth

for Soprano, Countertenor, Bass and live electronics

text by Jan Natanson
Music by Christine McCombe

composed for Vocem Electric Voice Theatre
and premiered at the ECAT Young Composers’ Forum
in March 2000 in Edinburgh.
Isobel's Mouth can be performed either as a live theatre work OR as a Radiophonic work.

Technical Requirements for live performance

3 microphones
effects unit with standard reverb settings
mixer
4 - 6 speakers

Suggested Stage Directions

The Hall is as dark as possible.
Each vocalist stands behind a mic and a music stand with a stand light.
Speakers are positioned centre left and right at rear of stage, extreme left and right at front of stage and centre left and right at the rear of the Hall (ie. behind the audience). The output for the three mics is processed to various degrees as indicated in the score.
Performance Notes

A Begin with breath and then softly whispered text which gradually becomes louder so that by the end of the repeat the words are voiced (softly spoken). Bass begins first, followed shortly after by Counter-tenor and then Soprano to create a staggered effect.

B Text is spoken softly at first, gradually becoming louder until some of the words in the repeat section are sung (any pitch, vary register). Voices to alternate manner of speaking between clear sentences and separated, distinct words.

C Singers commence section in staggered entries and the desired effect is of an increasingly chaotic vocal texture. Gradually becoming louder and more agitated. The vertical alignment of the voices is approximate only and the performers should feel free to diverge from this in order to create a more chaotic effect.

D "My own death/Ma ain daith" to be extremely loud, almost a scream.

E Section to be sung as written - very clearly and measured.

The piece concluded with a gradual fading out of the sound of voices breathing in and out.
Programme Note

Jan Natanson writes: "In seventeenth century Scotland dreadful cruelties were perpetrated in the name of religion. Thousands suffered torture and death in countrywide witch hunts when a society in upheaval turned in on itself and vented its anger on those who could not fight back. Many of the victims were women. One instrument of torture was the Forfar Branks - a kind of harness that pressed a metal plate on the tongue and robbed the victim of her voice. Isobel Shyrie was a victim of the Forfar witch hunt. Isobel's Mouth is a vocal/text piece about breath and voice. The aim of the work is to give Isobel a voice - even if it was only for a few moments before her death."

Taking Natanson's powerful text as a starting point, I aimed to construct a music theatre / radiophonic piece that would develop the ideas of "breath and voice". The use of amplification and reverb processing is intended to both amplify the voice in the quieter sections focussing on breath, and to give the work a presence and strangeness. The simultaneous use of the text in its original Scots as well as English translation was adopted for textural and timbral reasons but also to position the Soprano clearly as the voice of Isobel."
ISOBEL’S MOUTH

ISOBEL:
Aw roon sic a steir o stoor an reek. Faces aw tipsalteerie. Yammers mair like cries o baists than cries o fowk. Ma hert thuddin in ma chest. Ma body racked wi sabs. The sabs aw jinin intae ae great souch o wund. A fierce wund raivelin up sic a stoarm ... coursin richt thou me - birlin an dirlin and hurlin - getting strang-er an strang-er an strang-er.

Then like a wild baist clawin tae get oot - tearin frae ma thrapple cam this muckle great skreich! (scream)

A seen their faces richtly then. Gawpin at whit they’d daen. Neives ticht ower their lugs agin that grat baist o a skreich.

At first I thocht they’d been richt eneuch. An it wis the Deil at cam skreichin up fae deep doon in ma hert. But syne I kent. Whit cam screamin oot ma mooth wis but ma ain daith.

I didnae need tae thole nae mair. For twis aw ower.

(long pause)

A wunner whaur that banshee baist o a skreich has gaen? Aw that bleck bilin rage? Tis no stappit doon inside nae mair. It’s gain free. Aff to stravaig whaur-ivver it want tae ging.

Well Hell mend them! Hell mend them!

(Angry laughter)
ISOBEL’S MOUTH

ISOBEL:
Such a turmoil of dust and smoke. Faces all upside down a mixture of noses and eyes and mouths. Their shouting more like animal sounds than human voices. My heart thudding away in my chest. My body torn with sobs. Thousands of sobs all joining together into one great sigh of wind. A fierce wind stirring up such a storm. It came racing through me - spinning and jumping and throwing itself - getting stronger and stronger and stronger.

Then like a wild animal clawing to get out tearing from my throat came this great huge scream. (scream)

I saw their faces properly then. Gaping at what they’d done. Fists tight over their ears against that great beast of a scream.

At first I thought they’d been right enough and it was the Devil who came screeching up from deep down in my heart. But then I knew. What came screaming out of my mouth was only my own death.

I didn’t need to put up with anything any more. Because it was all over.

(long pause)

I wonder where that wild beast of a scream has gone to? All that black boiling rage. It isn’t hidden deep down inside me any longer. It’s gone free. Off to wander wherever it wants to go.

Well, Hell mend them! Hell mend them!

(Angry laughter)
Isobel's Mouth

* Soprano

\[ \text{slow inhale and exhale, several times} \]
\[ \text{(about 10 seconds) then start text} \]

\[ \text{stoor an reek} \ldots \text{faces aw tipsalteerie} \text{(inhale, exhale)} \]
\[ \text{yammers} \ldots \text{cries} \text{(inhale, exhale)} \]
\[ \text{hert thuddin} \ldots \text{racked wi sabs} \text{(inhale, exhale)} \]

\[ \text{[REPEAT then go straight to next section]} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{whispered, pp} \\
\text{mp softly spoken}
\end{array} \]

* Counter-tenor

\[ \text{slow inhale and exhale, several times} \]
\[ \text{(about 10 seconds) then start text} \]

\[ \text{dust and smoke} \ldots \text{faces} \ldots \text{noses and eyes and mouths} \text{(inhale, exhale)} \]
\[ \text{shouting} \ldots \text{cries} \ldots \text{voices} \text{(inhale, exhale)} \]
\[ \text{heart thudding} \ldots \text{torn with sobs} \text{(inhale, exhale)} \]

\[ \text{[REPEAT then go straight to next section]} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{whispered, pp} \\
\text{mp softly spoken}
\end{array} \]

* Bass

\[ \text{slow inhale and exhale, several times} \]
\[ \text{(about 10 seconds) then start text} \]

\[ \text{dust and smoke} \ldots \text{faces} \ldots \text{noses and eyes and mouths} \text{(inhale, exhale)} \]
\[ \text{shouting} \ldots \text{cries} \ldots \text{voices} \text{(inhale, exhale)} \]
\[ \text{heart thudding} \ldots \text{torn with sobs} \text{(inhale, exhale)} \]

\[ \text{[REPEAT then go straight to next section]} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{whispered, pp} \\
\text{mp softly spoken}
\end{array} \]

Directions

A amplify voices with approx. 2" reverb

B

\[ \text{Aw roon sic a steir o stoor an reek} \text{(quick inhale - <h)} \]
\[ \text{Faces aw tipsalteerie} \ldots \text{Yammers mair like cries o baists than cries o folk} \text{(accented exhale - >h)} \]
\[ \text{Hert thuddin} \text{(accented exhale)} \text{(accented exhale)} \text{(accented exhale)} \]
\[ \text{Ma body racked wi sabs} \text{(accented exhale - <h)} \text{aw jinin intae ae great souch o wund} \text{(accented exhale)} \text{(accented exhale)} \]

\[ \text{[REPEAT then go straight to next section]} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{softly spoken} \\
\text{f partly sung}
\end{array} \]

C-T

\[ \text{Such a turmoil of dust and smoke} \text{(quick inhale - <h)} \]
\[ \text{Faces all upside down} \ldots \text{Their shouting sounds more like animal cries} \ldots \text{than human voices} \text{(accented exhale - >h)} \]
\[ \text{Heart thudding in my chest} \ldots \text{My body torn with sobs} \text{(accented exhale - <h)} \text{thousands of sobs} \text{(accented exhale - <h)} \text{all joining into one great sigh of wind} \text{(accented exhale - >h)} \]

\[ \text{[REPEAT then go straight to next section]} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{softly spoken} \\
\text{f partly sung}
\end{array} \]

B

\[ \text{(<h)} \]
\[ \text{Heart thudding in my chest} \ldots \text{My body torn with sobs} \text{(accented exhale - <h)} \text{thousands of sobs} \text{(accented exhale - <h)} \text{all joining into one great sigh of wind} \text{(accented exhale - >h)} \]

\[ \text{[REPEAT then go straight to next section]} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{softly spoken} \\
\text{f partly sung}
\end{array} \]
1st time: Dynamics - begin \( p \) and crescendo to \( mf \)
Tempo - \( \text{MM} \, \text{J} = 60 \) and gradually getting faster

Singers should not attempt to stay together but rather give a sense of rushing towards the end of the section.

2nd time: Dynamics - begin \( mf \) and crescendo to \( ff \)
Tempo - approximately \( \text{MM} \, \text{J} = 84 \) and becoming more frenzied.

Singers should gradually increase reverb and amplification.
The three voices come together after a slight pause.

D

in my heart, screaming out of my mouth.

My own death.

B.

heart screaming out of my mouth.

My own death.

C-T.

in ma hert, Screamin out mamooth.

ff

Maffain death.

D

reverb approx. 5"

diffuse / pan reverb around between speakers;

allow sound to fade away before starting.

E

Calm and Resigned

MM \( \frac{4}{4} = 66 \)

S.

that ban-shee brist

p

C-T.

I wonder where that wild spirited beast of a scream has gone to.

B.

I wonder where that wild spirited beast of a scream has gone to.

Dir.

no reverb and minimal amplification
S. 38
o a skretch has gaen
aw that bleck blin rage

C-T.
all that black boiling rage

B.
all that black boiling rage

Dir.

S. 47
Tis no stappit doon in side nae

C-T.

it isn't hidden deep down in side me any longer

B.

it isn't hidden deep down in side me any longer

Dir.
ma'ir its gaen. its gaen free aff tae stra'vag.

its gone its gone free off to wan der wher-

its gone its gone free off to wan der wher-

whaur i-ver it wants tae ging its gaen free [ppp]

(breath in and out.... gradually fading away)

increase amplification and add 2" reverb to voices at "breath in and out..." gradually fade sound out
Anregung
for piano trio

Christine McCombe
1999

commissioned by Musica Viva Australia
for Musica Viva Australia's International Series 2000
The aim of *Anregung* is to focus the aural perception of the listener, to engage them in the act of listening. The piece should begin almost imperceptibly, revealing an unfolding sound world which gradually disperses and is no more.

**Performance Notes**

Accidentals apply to the whole bar unless otherwise indicated.

Trills are between the written pitch and the note in brackets. Where there is no note indicated in brackets, the trill is between the written pitch and the semitone above.
Programme note

Anregung for piano trio

In this short piece I had one primary objective - to focus the listener's attention, to heighten their aural awareness so that the act of listening becomes an active rather than a passive activity. The intention is reflected in the title 'Anregung' - a German word meaning to stimulate or excite. The piece intended as a 'concert opener' and rather than compose something that would start with a 'bang' I chose to do the opposite, working on the principal that one tends to listen more intently to something very quiet. The piece opens almost imperceptibly, the dynamic levels being so soft that one is not quite sure whether the piece had started or not, except that one can see the performers 'playing'. From this understated beginning the piece emerges, gradually unfolding and transforming. In the compositional process I chose to focus on three elements of the music dynamics, pitch range and the rate of articulation. Each of these elements follows its own trajectory throughout the piece and it is this approach which gives the overall structure and shape to Anregung. The piece begins and ends very softly, rising to forte at the centre of the work, the dynamics thus outlining an arch form. At the beginning for the piece the range of pitches is very narrow, initially just two notes are used (A and G sharp), but gradually more and more pitches are introduced until the whole chromatic spectrum unfolds. Conversely, the trills and intricate filigree gestures in the opening section of the work represent a maximum rate of articulation which becomes progressively less busy as the piece develops and by the end the texture has become sparse and open, almost like particles dispersing. As with the start of the piece, the end is similarly ambiguous, inviting the listener to remain open to all sonic possibilities.
Anregung

Christine McCombe 1999

Violin

Violoncello

Piano

una corda
ahtem
for flute and piano

Christine McCombe
1999
ahtem
is a short piece about breath and the search for repose

, pause for as long as performer feels necessary.
ahtem

Christine McCombe 1999

MM $\cdot = 60$

breathy tone

Flute

Piano

Fl.

Pno

Fl.

Pno
bath music

for percussion ensemble
(four players)

Christine McCombe
1999
Instrumentation

**Group One** (two players)

Crotales (sounding 15va higher)
Vibraphone
2 tuned Gongs (E3 and F4)
Claves
Suspended Cymbal (Medium)

**Group Two** (two players)

Glockenspiel (sounding 15va higher)
Marimba
2 tuned Gongs (D3 and E4)
Triangle
Woodblock
Suspended Cymbal (Low)
Performance notes

*bath music* should be performed in a highly reverberant space - a turkish bath house, a church, an empty warehouse....

The two groups of 2 percussionists should be separated, preferably facing eachother from either side of the performance space thus maximising the antiphonal effects within the piece. The quiet and subtle nature of the also requires a performance space as free from additional noise as possible. The desired effect is of a contemplative piece in which the surrounding space is articulated by and resonates with the percussive sounds.

' indicates a short pause to allow the sound to disperse, the length of the pause to be determined by the performers depending on the acoustic properties of the space.

All sounds should be allowed to decay naturally, ie not to be damped.

Programme note

I have always been interested in architecture - particularly in old buildings, unusual buildings, huge enclosed spaces.... and the effect these spaces have on the sounds within them. In 1999 I visited an abandoned Victorian Bath House in Edinburgh and was fascinated by the acoustic properties of the space - percussive noises such as the slamming of doors and the banging of pipes seemed to bring the space to life. I wondered what it would be like to perform music in the baths, hence *bath music*. Unfortunately the baths are soon to be redeveloped or demolished so I will never find out. Of course *bath music* can be performed anywhere but ideally in an acoustic that will allow the sounds to inhabit and enliven the space.

*Duration c. 3’ 30”*
bath music

Christine McCombe 1999
a little more movement

Crot.
Vib.
Gong
Claves
Cym.

Glock.
Mar.
Gong
Tri.
Woodblock
Cym.

player 2

player 4
morph 1

for alto flute, bass clarinet and 'cello

Christine McCombe
1998
Performance notes

Alto flute and Clarinet

forced overblowing, producing a distorted sound rich in overtones.

molto vibrato - as wide as possible, increasing the width as the dynamic level increases and vice versa, creating a quite distorted sound.

small note heads indicate pitches to be sung into the instrument while playing, producing multiphonics. NB voice pitches as written relative to flute/clarinet - ie sounding a 4th/2nd lower than written.

Cello
m.s.p. - molto sul ponticello; to be played ON the bridge, producing a rough, scratchy sound, rich in harmonics.

Programme note

morph 1 was written for the Ensemble E-Co (Italy) and was first performed in a workshop held by the ensemble at the University of Edinburgh in November 1998. The main idea behind the piece is the concept of 'self similarity' whereby a structural principle or characteristic is reflected at all levels - in much the same way as in fractal geometry. Taking this idea as a starting point, I aimed to construct a piece based on one gesture - a pulse of sound soft/loud/soft or smooth/rough/smooth. This simple idea is then translated to the different levels of the piece - as a gesture in the individual instruments, as a shape for phrases within the piece and also as an arch structure governing the piece as a whole. morph 1 is a study in tension and release and the transformation (morphing) of sound.

This is a transposing score

Duration c. 4'30"
morph 1

Christine McCombe 1998

Alto Flute

Bass Clarinet in Bb

Violoncello

A. Fl.

B. Cl.

Vc.

\[ \text{MM} \cdot \frac{72}{4} \]

\[ \text{MM} \cdot \frac{84}{4} \]

slap tongue

sul pont

gliss.
divergence

piano solo

Christine McCombe

1998 (revised 2000)
divergence for piano
1998; revised 2000

Performance Note

Pause
These occur throughout divergence and are to allow the sound of the piano to reverberate in space and to create some delineation between the contrasting material in the piece. The length of these pauses should be determined by the performer, taking into account the acoustic properties of the performance space.

The longer pauses are marked with a suggested duration in seconds (ie c 5") but these are only suggestions and depend on the acoustics of the performance space. For instance, in relatively dry acoustic the length of pause will be shorter to maintain the continuity of the piece. A wetter acoustic will allow for longer pauses as the sound continues to resonate in the space.

Programme Note

‘Divergence’ is a piece about extremes and irreconcilable difference. The musical ideas heard in the opening bars of the piece undergo a gradual transformation, becoming increasingly polarised until they quite literally inhabit different musical worlds. Or perhaps these extremes are merely different views of the same reality.
divergence

Christine McCombe 1998
(revised 2000)

\( \text{\textcopyright 1998,\ Revised 2000, Christine McCombe} \)

\( \text{\textcopyright 1998,\ Revised 2000, Christine McCombe} \)

\( \text{\textcopyright 1998,\ Revised 2000, Christine McCombe} \)

\( \text{\textcopyright 1998,\ Revised 2000, Christine McCombe} \)

\( \text{\textcopyright 1998,\ Revised 2000, Christine McCombe} \)
accel. poco a poco

Pno

\[ \begin{array}{c}
20 \\
\text{\(f\)}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
22 \\
\text{\(J = 100\)}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
25 \\
\text{\(ff\)}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
27 \\
\text{\(15\text{th}\)}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
29 \\
\text{\(8\text{th}\)}
\end{array} \]
accel. poco a poco

\( \text{Pno} \)

\( \text{Pno} \)

\( \text{Pno} \)

\( \text{Pno} \)

a little slower, delicately

(no pedal)
becoming slower, lumbering

(pedal each \(\downarrow / \downarrow\) beat)