

**Selected vocal and chamber works of Thomas Adès:
stylistic and contextual issues**

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Abstract

This thesis explores the stylistic traits of Thomas Adès' (b. 1971) early vocal and chamber works from 1989–95 through a series of case studies and places this work into context both in terms of his historical position and his approach to composition in relation to prevalent trends and theories. The first chapter details the aims and objectives of the thesis and reviews relevant literature. Adès is placed in context by looking at his musical career and the composers who influenced him. Compositional traits are identified and analysed and theories relating to postmodernism, references to the past and extra-musical influences are explored in relation to his music.

The remaining Chapters 3–7 present close readings and analysis of a selected number of compositions that explore how musical techniques, and Adès' willingness to absorb influences, past and present are brought together to achieve different poetic intentions. In Chapter 3 four early vocal works, two for solo voice and piano, *The Lover in Winter* (1989) and *Five Eliot Landscapes* Op. 1 (1990), and two anthems, *O thou who didst't with pitfall and gin* Op. 3a (1990) and *Gefriolsae Me* Op. 3b (1990), reveal the compositional techniques that form the basis of his early compositional style and the influence of a range of composers.

In Chapter 4 the analysis of three arrangements *Les Baricades Mistérieuses* (1994), *Darknesse Visible* (1992) and *Cardiac Arrest* (1995) reveals Adès' approach to timbre, register and texture. An original work, the *Sonata da Caccia* Op. 11 (1993), explores a forceful confrontation between baroque and contemporary techniques that serves not only to highlight the compositional traits of Adès but also his relationship with the music of Couperin. Chapter 5 focuses on Adès' use of historical genre and formal structures and addresses his engagement with symphonism and sonata form in

the Chamber Symphony Op. 2 (1990). Links with surrealism and the metaphorical impact of Adès' realisation of the programme in *Living Toys* Op. 9 (1993) is considered in Chapter 5. The extent to which music is able to, in terms of musical ekphrasis, represent works of art is considered in two movements from *Arcadiana* Op. 12 (1994) and *The Origin of the Harp* Op. 13 (1994).

One persistent thread that runs through Adès' work is his use of music as a metaphor, the idea that music can express more than itself. Adès engages the use of titles, programmes, literature and the visual arts in order to reinforce this concept. His music reveals a highly systemized approach to pitch organization and an imaginative approach to timbre that reveals an extraordinary sensitivity to tone-colour and register. Rhythmic complexity and temporal layering are also central to his compositional process. In order to expose the way in which individual melodic strands within a texture relate to each other I have developed a way of presenting these layers in graphic form. I use a system of colour-coding that identifies the intervallic character of individual threads within a texture as they either co-operate to create harmony or co-exist to pursue different agendas in terms of intervallic identity and momentum.

Note: The following table indicates the key to colour coding used in the graphic representations of Adès' music

Note-heads depict starting and finishing points of intervallically defined melodic threads and connecting lines are colour-coded as follows:	
Chromatic movement	Red
Whole-tone movement	Yellow
Minor third movement	Green
Major third movement	Green broken lines
Perfect fourth and fifth movement	Blue
Tritone movement	Blue broken lines
Lines that trace chromatic expansion	Pink
Lines that trace chromatic contraction	Purple

Contents	Page
Note on colour-coding	iv
List of Figures	ix
List of Tables	ix
List of Musical Examples	x
Acknowledgments	xvii
Chapter 1: Literature Review	
Introduction	1
Aims and objectives: the scope of this thesis	2
Literature Review	8
Chapters or articles presenting a broad overview of Adès' work	8
Surrealist, postmodernist or postmodernist?	11
Critical studies focusing on musical and extra-musical meaning in Adès' works	16
Interval cycles and multiple temporalities	21
Articles by Adès	25
The reception of Adès' work	27
Conclusion	29
Chapter 2: Influences and Musical Techniques	
Biography	31
Compositional trends in the UK and their relation to Adès' music	33
Musical Techniques	40
Tonality and harmony	40
Triads, dyads and linear voice-leading	41
Melody	47
i) Scales, interval cycles and systems	47
ii) Motivic and cellular construction	49
iii) Octave displacement	52

iv) Summary	53
Temporal layering and texture	54
i) Structure: pedal points and reference pitches or chords	57
ii) Colour: timbre, articulation and dynamics	59
iii) Summary	61
References to the past	62
i) Arrangements	63
ii) Homage	64
iii) Dance rhythms	67
iv) Summary	68
Extramusical influences: literature and art	69
i) Literature (texts and titles): Vocal works	69
ii) Descriptive titles and programmes	71
Visual Art	72
Conclusion	75
Chapter 3: Word Setting and Musical Techniques	78
<i>The Lover in Winter</i>	79
<i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i>	98
i) 'New Hampshire'	101
ii) 'Virginia'	113
iii) 'Usk'	123
iv) 'Rannoch, by Glencoe'	136
v) 'Cape Ann'	145
vi) Conclusion	161
Choral works	163
<i>Thou who dids't with pitfall and with gin</i>	164
<i>Gefriolsae Me</i>	174
Conclusion	181

Chapter 4:	Engagements with the past: three arrangements and <i>Sonata da Caccia</i>	185
	<i>Les Baricades Mistérieuses</i>	186
	Song arrangements	188
	<i>Darknesse Visible</i>	188
	<i>Cardiac Arrest</i>	193
	Conclusion	196
	<i>Sonata da Caccia</i>	196
	i) ‘Gravement’	200
	ii) ‘Gayement’	206
	iii) ‘Naïvement’	215
	iv) ‘Galament’	220
	Conclusion	225
Chapter 5:	Form and Genre in the Chamber Symphony	227
	Symphony	228
	i) First movement	240
	ii) Second movement	255
	iii) Third movement	261
	iv) Fourth movement	270
	Conclusion	274
Chapter 6:	Adès and Surrealism	277
	<i>Living Toys</i>	283
	i) I: ‘Angels’	287
	ii) II: ‘Aurochs’	296
	iii) III: ‘Militiamen’	303
	iv) IV: ‘H.A.L.’s Death’	309
	v) V: ‘Playing funerals’	317
	Unnumbered movements	323
	i) ‘BALETT’	324

ii) 'BATTLE'	326
iii) 'TABLET'	332
Conclusion	336
Chapter 7: Visual Art and Musical Ekphrasis	340
<i>Arcadiana</i>	344
i) IV: 'Et...(tango mortale)'	348
ii) V: 'L'Embarquement'	360
Conclusion	374
<i>The Origin of the Harp</i>	376
i) First movement: 'Dolcissimo ed espress'	382
ii) Second movement: 'Largo con moto'	386
iii) Third movement: 'Spettrale'	390
iv) Fourth movement: '♩ = 60'	395
Conclusion	401
Conclusion	403
Appendix A: Chronology of Works	414
Appendix B: Bibliography	417

List of Figures

	Page
Fig. 7.1: Nicolas Poussin, <i>Arcadian Shepherds (Et in Arcadia ego)</i> , (1627 version), (1637–8), oil on canvas, Chatsworth House	348
Fig. 7.2: Nicolas Poussin, <i>Arcadian Shepherds (Et in Arcadia ego)</i> , c. 1638–40, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris	349
Fig. 7.3: Antoine Watteau, <i>The Embarkation for Cythera</i> 1717, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris	361
Fig. 7.4: Daniel Maclise, <i>The Origin of the Harp</i> , (1842), oil on canvas, Manchester City Galleries	377

List of Tables

	Page
Table 2.1: <i>The Origin of the Harp</i> , movement III, overview of triad relationships	58
Table 3:1 <i>O thou who didst with pitfall and with gin</i> , overview of structure	164
Table 4.1: Madness and Adès, overview of <i>Cardiac Arrest</i>	194
Table 4.2: <i>Sonata da Caccia</i> , movement I, ‘Gravement’, overview of structure	201
Table 4.3: <i>Sonata da Caccia</i> , movement II, overview of structure	206
Table 4.4: <i>Sonata da Caccia</i> , movement III, ‘Naïvement’, overview of structure	216
Table 4.5: <i>Sonata da Caccia</i> , movement IV, overview of structure	220
Table 5.1: Chamber Symphony, movement I, sonata form overview	238
Table 6.1: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘Angels’, overview of the movement highlighting theme and angel figurations in relation to pedal / reference points	291
Table 6.2: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘Aurochs’, overview of the movement highlighting themes, use of percussion and the main aspects of harmony and reference points	298
Table 6.3: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘H.A.L.’s Death’, overview of structure	311
Table 6.4: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘Playing Funerals’, overview of structure	318
Table 7.1: <i>Arcadiana</i> , movement IV, ‘Et... (tango mortale)’, overview of the movement illustrating the distribution of musical material	356
Table 7.2: <i>Arcadiana</i> , movement V, overview of rondo structure	364
Table 7.3: <i>The Origin of the Harp</i> , overview of the structure of the second movement	386

Table 7.4: <i>The Origin of the Harp</i> , overview of the structure of the fourth movement	396
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List of Musical Examples

	Page
Ex. 2.1: <i>The Lover in Winter</i> , piano and voice, bars 4–8	43
Ex. 2.2: ‘New Hampshire’, from <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , bars 22–7, piano and voice	44
Ex. 2.3: <i>The Lover in Winter</i> , second song, bar 5, piano and voice	44
Ex. 2.4: <i>The Origin of the Harp</i> , bar 24, violas, ‘cellos and marimba	46
Ex. 2.5: <i>Fool’s Rhymes</i> , bars 15–16, movement II, soprano, alto and harp	48
Ex. 2.6: ‘Auf dem Wasser zu singen’, movement III from <i>Arcadiana</i> , showing interval expansion, bars 1–2, viola and ‘cello	49
Ex. 2.7; ‘Virginia’, bars 2–3, piano	50
Ex. 2.8: Piano Quintet, bars 11–17, violin	51
Ex. 2.9: <i>The Origin of the Harp</i> , movement I, bars 3–6, clarinet I	52
Ex. 3.1: Adès, <i>The Lover in Winter</i> , first song, bars 1–2	81
Ex. 3.2: Debussy, ‘...Des pas sur la neige’ from the first book of <i>Préludes</i> , bars 1–2	82
Ex. 3.3: Adès, <i>The Lover in Winter</i> , second song, bar 5	82
Ex. 3.4: Debussy, ‘...Des pas sur la neige’, bars 30–2	82
Ex. 3.5: <i>The Lover in Winter</i> , graphic representation of the first song	84
Ex. 3.6: Adès, <i>The Lover in Winter</i> , first song, bars 4–8	85
Ex. 3.7: Debussy, ‘...Des pas sur la neige’, bars 5–6	85
Ex. 3.8: <i>The Lover in Winter</i> , first song, bars 15–18	86
Ex. 3.9: <i>The Lover in Winter</i> , second song, bars 1–2	87
Ex. 3.10: Adès, <i>The Lover in Winter</i> , graphic representation of the second song	89
Ex. 3.11: Adès, <i>The Lover in Winter</i> , graphic representation of the third song	91
Ex. 3.12: Adès, <i>The Lover in Winter</i> , third song, bar 1, piano	92
Ex. 3.13: Adès, <i>The Lover in Winter</i> , third song, bar 9, piano	92

Ex. 3.14: Adès, <i>The Lover in Winter</i> , third song, bar 16, piano	93
Ex. 3.15: Adès, <i>The Lover in Winter</i> , graphic representation of the fourth song	95
Ex. 3.16: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , graphic representation of ‘New Hampshire’	104–5
Ex. 3.17: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘New Hampshire’, Cycle 1a – start of 1b, bars 1–6, piano	106
Ex. 3.18: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘New Hampshire’, Cycle 2, bars 1–8, piano	106
Ex. 3.19: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘New Hampshire’, bars 22–8	109
Ex. 3.20: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘New Hampshire’, bars 41–7	110
Ex. 3.21: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘New Hampshire’, bars 112–16, piano	111
Ex. 3.22: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘Virginia’, bar 1, voice and piano	115
Ex. 3.23: Kurtág, <i>The Sayings of Péter Bornemisza</i> , ‘Sin’, movement 1, bars 4–5, soprano	116
Ex. 3.24: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , graphic representation of ‘Virginia’ threads, piano	118
Ex. 3.25: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘Virginia’, bars 2–3, treble stave of piano	120
Ex. 3.26: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘Virginia’, bars 3–5, soprano	121
Ex. 3.27: Richard Strauss, <i>Vier letzte Lieder</i> , ‘Im Abendrot’, 1 bar before Figure E, p. 51, soprano	121
Ex. 3.28: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘Virginia’, bar 14, soprano	122
Ex. 3.29: Richard Strauss, <i>Vier letzte Lieder</i> , ‘Im Abendrot’, Figure D, soprano	122
Ex. 3.30: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , graphic representation of ‘Usk’	126
Ex. 3.31: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘Usk’, bars 5–6, voice	128
Ex. 3.32: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘Usk’, bars 2–3, piano	130
Ex. 3.33: Kurtág, <i>The Sayings of Péter Bornemisza</i> , movement four of ‘Death’, p. 36	130
Ex. 3.34: Kurtág, <i>Eight Piano Pieces</i> , first movement	131
Ex. 3.35: Kurtág, String Quartet, first movement, bars 1–2	132
Ex. 3.36: Kurtág, <i>The Sayings of Péter Bornemisza</i> , ‘Death’, third movement, p. 36	132
Ex. 3.37: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘Usk’: piano overview of superimposed minor seconds	133

Ex. 3.38: Kurtág, ... <i>quasi una fantasia</i> ..., bars 2–4	134
Ex. 3.39: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘Usk’, piano threads, bars 27–9	134
Ex. 3.40: Kurtág, <i>The Sayings of Péter Bornemisza</i> , ‘Death’, movement 8, p. 51	134
Ex. 3.41: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , graphic representation of ‘Rannoch’	139
Ex. 3.42: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘Rannoch’, bars 5–6	141
Ex. 3.43: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘Rannoch’, bar 1, piano	142
Ex. 3.44: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘Rannoch’, bars 15–16	142
Ex. 3.45: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘Rannoch’, bar 7, piano and voice	143
Ex. 3.46: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘Rannoch’, bars 22–4	145
Ex. 3.47: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘Cape Ann’, bars 1–4, soprano	150
Ex. 3.48: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘Cape Ann’, bars 1–3, piano	151
Ex. 3.49: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , graphic representation of ‘Cape Ann’	153–4
Ex. 3.50: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘Cape Ann’, bar 1, piano	155
Ex. 3.51: Adès, <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘Cape Ann’, bars 27–34, soprano	157
Ex. 3.52: Messiaen, <i>Harawi, chant d’amour et de mort</i> , ‘Adieu’, pp. 52–3	157
Ex. 3.53: <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> , ‘Cape Ann’, bars 35–8, piano	159
Ex. 3.54: <i>O Thou who didst ’t with pitfall and gin</i> , bars 1–5, altos and tenors	166
Ex. 3.55: <i>O thou who didst with pitfall and with gin</i> , graphic representation of bars 1–19	167
Ex. 3.56: <i>O thou who didst with pitfall and with gin</i> , bars 24–7	169
Ex. 3.57: <i>O thou who didst with pitfall and with gin</i> , introduction of “sin”, bars 34–7, both choirs	170
Ex. 3.58: <i>O thou who didst with pitfall and with gin</i> , bars 70–6, pitch heads used to show vocal entry points	172
Ex. 3.59: <i>Gefriolsae Me</i> , graphic representation	176
Ex. 3.60: <i>Gefriolsae Me</i> , bars 1–5	177
Ex. 3.61: <i>Gefriolsae Me</i> , rising, layered ascents, bars 18–25, altos	178
Ex. 3.62: <i>Gefriolsae Me</i> , bars 3–17, altos	179
Ex. 4.1: <i>Darknesse Visible</i> , graphic representation of bars 1–18 showing the relocation of pitches from Dowland’s lute song ‘In Darknesse Let Me Dwell’	191

Ex. 4.2: <i>Sonata da Caccia</i> , movement I, 'Gravement', bars 1–6, oboe, horn and harpsichord	202
Ex. 4.3: <i>Sonata da Caccia</i> , movement I, 'Gravement', bars 30–4, oboe, horn and harpsichord	205
Ex. 4.4: <i>Sonata da Caccia</i> , movement II, 'Gayement', bars 1–3, horn	207
Ex. 4.5: <i>Sonata da Caccia</i> , movement II, 'Gayement', bars 3–14, oboe and horn	208
Ex. 4.6: <i>Sonata da Caccia</i> , movement II, 'Gayement', bars 19–21, oboe and horn	210
Ex. 4.7: <i>Sonata da Caccia</i> , movement II, 'Gayement', bars 57–68, oboe, horn and harpsichord, showing rhythm and pitch cycles	212
Ex. 4.8: <i>Sonata da Caccia</i> , movement II, 'Gayement', bars 98–101, oboe, horn and harpsichord	214
Ex. 4.9: Stravinsky, <i>Rite of Spring</i> , 'Sacrificial Dance', bars 151–2, trombones	214
Ex. 4.10: <i>Sonata da Caccia</i> , movement III, Naïvement, bars 1–4, oboe, horn and harpsichord	216
Ex. 4.11: <i>Sonata da Caccia</i> , movement III, 'Naïvement', bars 7–10, harpsichord	217
Ex. 4.12: <i>Sonata da Caccia</i> , movement III, 'Naïvement', graphic representation of bars 33–6	220
Ex. 4.13: <i>Sonata da Caccia</i> , movement IV, 'Galament', bars 1–4, oboe, horn and harpsichord	221
Ex. 4.14: <i>Sonata da Caccia</i> , movement IV, 'Galament', bars 28 ³ –32, oboe, horn and harpsichord	224
Ex. 5.1: Chamber Symphony, front cover of the score	233
Ex. 5.2: Chamber Symphony, movement I, bars 6–14, cyclic theme	241
Ex. 5.3: Chamber Symphony, movement I, bars 15–20, bass riff, viola, cello and double bass	243
Ex. 5.4: Chamber Symphony, movement I, bars 25–32, double bass riff	243
Ex. 5.5: Chamber Symphony, movement I	244
Ex. 5.6: Chamber Symphony, movement I, bars 41–3	247
Ex. 5.7: Comparisons between tonic-dominant formula in Schubert, Beethoven and Adès	248
Ex. 5.8: Ligeti, Horn Trio, bars 1–2, violin	248

Ex. 5.9: Piano Quintet, bars 1–3, first violin solo	249
Ex. 5.10: Chamber Symphony, movement I, bars 70–2, alto flute, oboe, basset clarinet, horn and strings	252
Ex. 5.11: Chamber Symphony, movement II, graphic score illustrating pedal points, the cyclic melody, and chord aggregates in relation to the rhythmic cycles	256
Ex. 5.12: Chamber Symphony, movement II, percussion cycles	258
Ex. 5.13: Chamber Symphony, movement II, bars 131–5, theme and chord aggregates	259
Ex. 5.14: Chamber Symphony, movement III, graphic score showing references to the first movement	262
Ex. 5.15: Chamber Symphony, movement III, bars 176–9, melodic thread distributed between the flute, oboe, basset clarinet and marimba	263
Ex. 5.16: Chamber Symphony, movement III, bars 202–5, basset clarinet, tam-tam 3, marimba, and piano	265
Ex. 5.17: Chamber Symphony, movement III, brass progressions from bars 252–66	268
Ex. 5.18: Chamber Symphony, movement IV, graphic score showing final references to previous material and the Schenker diagram	272
Ex. 5.19: Chamber Symphony, movement IV, bars 292–3, basset clarinet and bass clarinet	274
Ex. 6.1: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘Angels’, bars 1–4, woodwind, brass and piano	288
Ex. 6.2: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘Angels’, ‘cello, bar 33	289
Ex. 6.3: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘Angels’, bars 87–101, horn solo	289
Ex. 6.4: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘Angels’, bars 26–30, piccolo and piano	293
Ex. 6.5: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘Angels’, bars 16–50, horn solo	294
Ex. 6.6: Typical rhythmic patterns of the Habanera	296
Ex. 6.7: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘Aurochs’, bars 111–16, showing rhythmic patterns that allude to the Habanera	297
Ex. 6.8: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘Aurochs’, bars 127–9, child-matador motive, piccolo trumpet	299
Ex. 6.9: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘Aurochs’, bars 116–23, bull motive	299
Ex. 6.10: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘Aurochs’, bars 200–3, faltering bull, brass section	300
Ex. 6.11: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘Aurochs’, bars 224–52	301

Ex. 6.12: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘Aurochs’, bars 224–31	302
Ex. 6.13: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘Militiamen’, bars 300–3, percussion ostinato	303
Ex. 6.14: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘Militiamen’, bars 301–5, piccolo trumpet	304
Ex. 6.15: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘Militiamen’, bass militiamen motive, bars 305–7, bass clarinet, contra bassoon, ‘cello and double bass	305
Ex. 6.16: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘Militiamen’, overview of piccolo trumpet and octave interjections	307
Ex. 6.17: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘Militiamen’, bars 339–42, Ligeti-like texture	312
Ex. 6.18: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘H.A.L.’s Death’ bars 353–61, double bass, contrabassoon and piano	314
Ex. 6.19: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘H.A.L.’s Death’, bars 382–3, the last bar of H.A.L. and the first bar of ‘BATTLE’, grief motive, soprano recorder	316
Ex. 6.20: Wagner, ‘Prelude’ to <i>Tristan und Isolde</i> , bar 1, ‘cello	316
Ex. 6.21: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘Playing Funerals’, bars 513–19 ‘Hero’ theme	320
Ex. 6.22: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘Playing Funerals’, bars 529–33, graphic score representing descending threads	321
Ex. 6.23: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘BALETT’, graphic score showing descending strands, pedal points and main references to ‘Angels’ and ‘Aurochs	325
Ex. 6.24: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘BATTLE’, graphic score showing descending strands, pedal points and main references to ‘Angels’, ‘Aurochs’, and ‘Militiamen’	328–9
Ex. 6.25: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘BATTLE’, bars 491–504, trumpet solo	331
Ex. 6.26: <i>Living Toys</i> , ‘TABLET’, graphic overview	334
Ex. 7.1: <i>Arcadiana</i> , movement IV, ‘Et... (tango mortale)’, reduction of harmonic progression, bars 1–9	351
Ex. 7.2: <i>Arcadiana</i> , movement IV, ‘Et... (tango mortale)’, bars 1–9, bass line	352
Ex. 7.3: <i>Arcadiana</i> , movement IV, ‘Et... (tango mortale)’, bars 1–4	353
Ex. 7.4: <i>Arcadiana</i> , movement IV, ‘Et... (tango mortale)’, bars 6–7, violins I and II	354
Ex. 7.5: <i>Arcadiana</i> , movement IV, ‘Et... (tango mortale)’, first variation bars 10–11, chromatic expansion, violins I and II	357
Ex. 7.6: <i>Arcadiana</i> , movement IV, ‘Et... (tango mortale)’, bars 35–7, tracing the opening bars of the chromatic descent in violins I and II	359
Ex. 7.7: <i>Arcadiana</i> ; movement V, ‘L’Embarquement’, short score of phrases A and A1, bars 1–10	366

Ex. 7.8: <i>Arcadiana</i> ; movement V, 'L'Embarquement', short score of phrase B, bars 11–15	367
Ex. 7.9: Fauré, 'Ketty-Valse', fourth movement from the <i>Dolly Suite</i> , bars 1–4	367
Ex. 7.10: <i>Arcadiana</i> : movement V, 'L'Embarquement', phrase C, bars 20–3	368
Ex. 7.11: <i>Arcadiana</i> : movement V, 'L'Embarquement', short score of phase A ⁴ , bars 32–5	369
Ex. 7.12: <i>Arcadiana</i> : movement V, 'L'Embarquement', short score, phase B ⁴ , bars 40–3	369
Ex. 7.13: <i>Arcadiana</i> : movement V, 'L'Embarquement', phrase D, bars 49–53	370
Ex. 7.14: <i>Arcadiana</i> : movement I, 'Venezia notturna', undulating patterns to depict water, bars 1–3, violins	370
Ex. 7.15: <i>Arcadiana</i> ; movement V, 'L'Embarquement', return of the B phrase, bars 72–4	371
Ex. 7.16: <i>Arcadiana</i> : movement V, 'L'Embarquement', showing the return of the opening phrase of the movement, bars 81–3	372
Ex. 7.17: <i>Arcadiana</i> ; movement V, 'L'Embarquement', showing the elaboration of phrase B, bars 88–90	373
Ex. 7.18: <i>Arcadiana</i> : movement V, 'L'Embarquement', graphic score of the coda, bars 92–109	373
Ex. 7.19: <i>The Origin of the Harp</i> , movement I, bars 29–38, clarinet	379
Ex. 7.20: <i>The Origin of the Harp</i> , movement I, bars 3–6, clarinet	379
Ex. 7.21: <i>The Origin of the Harp</i> , graphic representation of the first movement	383
Ex. 7.22: <i>The Origin of the Harp</i> , graphic score of the third movement showing melody, rising whole-tone and chromatic movement, and perfect fourth combinations	388
Ex. 7.23: <i>The Origin of the Harp</i> , movement II, opening melody, clarinet 1, violas 1–3	289
Ex. 7.24: <i>The Origin of the Harp</i> , movement III, bars 70–6, first clarinet and violas tracing semiquaver melodic thread	391
Ex. 7.25: <i>The Origin of the Harp</i> , graphic representation of ascending strands in the third movement	393
Ex. 7.26: <i>The Origin of the Harp</i> , movement IV, bars 166–74, clarinet I	397
Ex. 7.27: <i>The Origin of the Harp</i> , movement IV, bars 181–90, graphic score representing 'cello solo, clarinet I and background harmonies	398

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I am grateful to Faber Music for the loan of scores, access to programme notes and articles on Thomas Adès, and permission to reproduce musical examples. Musical examples by Kurtág are reproduced by kind permission of Boosey and Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd. The Manchester City Galleries have been very helpful with my research into the painting *The Origin of the Harp* and have given permission to reproduce the image in my thesis. I was allowed access to files by the British Music Information Centre. Finally I would like thank Gill Nelson for her unwavering support and encouragement.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

Introduction

Thomas Adès' compositional career has featured a rapid and sustained rise to international acclaim. He came to public notice whilst still at King's College, Cambridge, with the promotion of his works through Faber Music and the securing of a recording contract with EMI in 1992, and he soon began to attract commissions. Early important commissions included *Living Toys* for the London Sinfonietta and *Powder Her Face* Op. 14 (1995), commissioned by Almeida Opera for the Cheltenham Festival. The next big commission, for Sir Simon Rattle and the CBSO, resulted in his large-scale orchestral work *Asyla* Op. 17 (1997), a work for which Adès was awarded the Grawemeyer Prize in 2000. The commissions have continued, and prestigious awards have followed, as Adès continues to enjoy international success not only as a composer, but as pianist and conductor too.

Adès' success has variously been attributed to a compositional style that incorporates music from the past, spanning the boundaries of time from Renaissance to present day, accommodates a range of styles from popular to classical, incorporates tonal material within a highly chromatic framework, and includes rhythmic intricacies and inventive scoring designed to enhance temporal layering. This fusion of opposites produces a personal style that is challenging and yet does not alienate the listener. His work can be distant and allusive, or dramatic and aggressive, but always ingeniously inventive. Critics and scholars, in their attempt to categorize Adès, have variously labelled him a late modernist,¹ postmodernist,² stylistic pluralist³ or surrealist⁴ but he

¹ Taruskin, Richard (2009) 'A Surrealist Composer Comes to the Rescue of Modernism', in *The Danger of Music and Other Anti-Utopian Essays*, London: University of California Press, pp. 144–52. First published in the *New York Times*, December 5, 1999.

² Roeder, John (2006) 'Co-operating Continuities in the Music of Thomas Adès', *Music Analysis*, Vol. 25 (1–2), pp. 121–54.

resists one all-encompassing label. Adès' eclecticism provides the means whereby a title or topic, work or movement, or the accommodation of techniques, or a style, may only temporarily situate him closer to one or more of the above labels.

Aims and objectives: the scope of this thesis

The aim of this thesis is to identify Adès' emerging compositional traits, and then consider how these features interact to form the basis of his compositional style through a series of case studies. Works have been selected from Adès' vocal and chamber repertoire and have been restricted to those composed in the early stage of his career (from 1989–1995).

Chapter 2 will begin with a brief biography and consider possible influences on Adès at the early stage of his compositional career. This is followed by a review of his compositional techniques and approach to composition. These observations will constitute a classification and description of his compositional traits. According to Leonard Meyer, 'classification is essentially a descriptive discipline. It tells us what traits go together and with what frequency they occur, but not why they do so.'⁵ Leonard Meyer suggests that in stylistic analysis we want to discover how these traits 'imply, complement, reinforce, and are otherwise connected with one another. In short, why do the traits described "go together"?'⁶ The following chapters will explore the relationships between these compositional traits as they are put to different poetic purpose in a series of case studies to reveal Adès' style. I take an empirical approach towards the music inasmuch that my work has developed as a result of direct

³ Wells, Dominic (2012) 'Plural Styles, Personal Style: The Music of Thomas Adès, *Tempo*, Vol. 66, No. 260, pp. 2–14.

⁴ Taruskin, 'A Surrealist Composer.'

⁵ Meyer, Leonard B. (1989) *Style and Music: Theory, History and Ideology*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, p. 43.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

observation and aural experience, without conforming to an established set of analytical concepts or theories. My main aim has been to study the musical processes at work within each piece in order to identify predominant musical traits, and to study the way in which these traits work together to constitute a style. I employ a hermeneutic approach as a method of interpretation and understanding of the meaning in Adès' music.

Lawrence Kramer provides a theory and framework for understanding and using musical hermeneutics, and suggests the use of three 'hermeneutic windows'⁷ through which meaning can be derived. The first falls under the heading 'textual inclusions' and 'includes texts set to music, titles, epigrams, programs, notes to the score, and sometimes even expression markings.' The second group 'citational inclusions' includes the

use of titles that link a work of music with a literary work, visual image, place or historical moment; musical allusions to other compositions; allusions to texts through the quotation of associated music; allusions to the styles of other composers or of earlier periods; and the inclusion (or parody) of other characteristic styles.

Kramer describes the third group, 'structural tropes', as 'the most powerful' and defines a structural trope as 'a structural procedure, capable of various practical realizations, that also functions as a typical expressive act within a certain cultural/historical framework.'⁸ It would seem that 'structural tropes' are much more difficult to detect and difficult to define. He notes that 'structural tropes tend to appear [...] when we widen the scope of reflection [...] when we begin to play with analogies and recategorizations, seeking to throw light on one object by seeking out its multiple affiliations with others.'⁹ When considering the goal of this process Kramer likens it to

⁷ Kramer, Lawrence (1990) *Music as Cultural Practice, 1800–1900*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, p. 9.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.13.

‘what the anthropologist Clifford Geertz calls a “thick description”:¹⁰ an account of ‘a multiplicity of complex conceptual [read: expressive] structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which [we] must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render.’¹¹

Kramer presents a strategy for musical hermeneutics summarized as follows: firstly, locate the hermeneutic windows; secondly, identify the expressive acts and interpret their communicative effect; thirdly, consider the interplay between these expressive acts and the formal processes and stylistic feature of the music; and finally look for cultural connections and allow ‘the activity of musical and non musical materials to comment on, criticize, or reinterpret each other.’¹² He warns that these windows ‘do not establish (authorize, fix) meaning [...] but only invite the interpreter to find meaning.’¹³

This strategy will prove a useful starting point and my aim will be to identify various ‘hermeneutic windows’ and consider their interrelation in order to propose meaning in the works under consideration. Many of Adès’ works present obvious ‘hermeneutic windows’, for example in the texts of his songs, choral works and opera, and his use of titles associated with purely instrumental works (for example *Asyla*). He also makes use of poems, or descriptive passages in the preface to scores (for example, *Living Toys* and *Arcadiana*), and uses titles that reference paintings (*The Origin of the Harp*), and references the past, through subtle allusion, homage, and more obvious references through his arrangements and the occasional use of quotation. More allusive connections and relationships will be revealed by close analytical readings of the scores as I investigate the technical details of the music, explore relationships between the

¹⁰ Geertz takes this term from Gilbert Ryle, ‘Thinking and Reflection’ and ‘The Thinking of Thoughts’, in *Collected Papers* (New York, 1971), 2:465–79 and 480–96, respectively.

¹¹ Kramer, L., *Music as Cultural Practice*, p. 13.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 13–14.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

various elements at work, and consider the ways in which they contribute to the historical and structural aspects of each work, in order to fulfil the expressive intentions of the composer.

Chapter 3 will focus on Adès' approach to texture and tessitura, homage, quotation and allusion, with reference to four vocal works composed at the start of his career. His use of register, range, shape, structure and proportion will be explored through reference to a series of graphic scores in which various strands or layers have been isolated and displayed as colour-coded strands. I have selected *The Lover in Winter* because this is his first published work and in it we find the first examples of compositional techniques that will seed his future compositional style. The *Five Eliot Landscapes* has been chosen because it provides a clear example of Adès' approach to texture through his use of superimposed layers of melodic chains of intervals. This work is also important in that composers that have influenced him at this early stage in his career are acknowledged through homage. Two choral works have been selected in order to illustrate Adès' use of interval to direct and identify textures: *O thou who didst 't with pitfall and gin* displays obvious connections to the music of György Ligeti (1923–2006) and Witold Lutosławski (1913–94), and *Gefriolsae Me* confirms Adès' interest in interval, proportion and shape.

Two main themes will be tracked through the following chapters and these themes determine the choice of pieces under consideration. Adès' obsession with the past through allusion, quotation, homage, use of historical genre and traditional formal structures will be explored in Chapters 4 and 5. The impact of surrealism on his work and the use of paintings as source of inspiration will be investigated in Chapters 6 and 7. I will discuss the prevailing points of view on these issues and place Adès into the wider context.

Meyer comments that ‘the fundamental stylistic proclivities of a composer may be revealed when he or she seeks to employ alien stylistic means or orchestrate a work by another composer.’¹⁴ With this comment in mind, the three arrangements have been chosen in order to expose Adès’ approach to timbre, register and texture. The first is work to be considered is arrangement of a harpsichord work by François Couperin (1668–1733) *Les Baricades Mistérieuses* and this is followed by a piano recomposition of the lute song *Darknesse Visible* (1610) by John Dowland and an arrangement of Madness’s *Cardiac Arrest*. This chapter concludes with an examination of an original work, the *Sonata da Caccia*, in which aspects of Adès’ style are thrown into sharp relief as baroque meets contemporary in a lively confrontation.

Chapter 5 will focus on Adès’ approach to classical genre and form and will focus on the Chamber Symphony. I will discuss prevailing ideas on symphonism and explore the way Adès engages with this historical traditional structure. Adès’ approach to sonata form is of particular interest, and the various musicological approaches to sonata form will be considered.

The final chapters are dedicated to Adès’ links with the visual arts. Chapter 6 will discuss surrealism and consider to what extent his music can be considered surreal. *Living Toys* has a surreal programme and I will consider the extent to which this has influenced Adès’ approach to texture, orchestration and the development of ideas.

Adès’ use of paintings as a source of inspiration has influenced the choice of pieces in the final chapter. In the string quartet *Arcadiana* movements IV and V are linked to paintings through their titles, and *The Origin of the Harp* takes its title from a painting by Daniel Maclise (1806–70). When considering the connections between visual art and music, and the extent to which music is able to, in terms of musical

¹⁴ Meyer, *Style and Music*, p. 55.

ekphrasis, re-present the work of art, Siglind Bruhn's work on this area will prove invaluable.¹⁵ Bruhn defines ekphrasis as being

originally understood as a rhetorical device capable of rendering something clearly and evocatively. Only in late antiquity was the term expanded to refer to the literary practice of verbally representing sculptures and paintings.¹⁶

Musical ekphrasis is the musical equivalent. Bruhn claims that composers 'may transpose aspects of both structure and content; they may supplement, interpret, respond with associations, problematize, or play with some of the suggestive elements of the original image.'¹⁷ She uses the term 'transmedialization' to describe the process of responding to a painting through music, and she attempts to draw a distinction between programme music, that 'narrates or paints, suggests or represents scenes or stories that enter the music from the composer's mind',¹⁸ and musical ekphrasis that 'narrates or paints stories or scenes created by an artist other than the composer of the music.'¹⁹ I will consider why Adès has linked paintings to the two movements in *Arcadiana* and *The Origin of the Harp* and discuss how these works of art may have influenced the compositional process, and the extent to which they enhance the listening experience.

I will conclude by reviewing my main findings and look ahead to propose other possible lines of enquiry. This study provides a detailed examination of the musical processes and style of Adès, and proposes possible interpretations of meaning as he responds to a variety of stimuli through his engagement with literature, the past, and art as sources of inspiration. This thesis focuses on early chamber and vocal music, and it is in these early forms that Adès crystallizes his ideas, consolidates aspects of

¹⁵ Bruhn, Siglind (2001) 'A Concert of Paintings: 'Musical Ekphrasis' in the Twentieth Century', *Poetics Today*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Fall), pp. 551–605. Also available on her website as a long essay <http://www.personal.umich.edu/siglind/books.htm> (accessed September 4, 2013).

¹⁶ Bruhn, Siglind (2000) *Musical Ekphrasis: Composers Responding to Poetry and Painting*, Hillside, N.Y: Pendragon Press, p. xix.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 551.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 552.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 552–3.

compositional technique, and reveals his approach to composition. The basic components of his technique and style once established reappear, in some form or other, as his career unfolds.

Literature Review

Literature relating to Adès can be divided into six categories. Firstly, there are chapters or articles that present overviews of his work. The second category focuses on articles that consider Adès' position as a composer and/or his compositional style. A third category consists of critical studies that focus on a particular work or works or a method of analysis. Studies that focus on temporality in Adès' music form the fourth category. The fifth category includes articles by Adès that reveal his interest in the music of a range of composers and the final category reviews sources relating to the reception of Adès' works.

Chapters or articles presenting a broad overview of Adès' work

The first category includes material relating biographical information, general observations about works, and the identification of compositional traits or approach and propose possible influences. Michael Hall was the first to publish an account of Adès' music in the conclusion to his *Leaving Home: a Conducted Tour of Twentieth-Century Music with Simon Rattle*.²⁰ Hall's comments regarding Chamber Symphony, *Still Sorrowing* Op. 7 (1992) *Arcadiana* and *Powder Her Face* are largely descriptive but he identifies three important compositional traits: Adès' attraction to falling fifths; his use of a cyclic theme in the Chamber Symphony; and his use of allusion.

²⁰ Hall, Michael (1996) 'Music Now', in *Leaving Home: a Conducted Tour of Twentieth-Century Music with Simon Rattle*, London: Faber and Faber, pp. 233–66.

Arnold Whittall provides an introduction to Thomas Adès, in terms of biographical details and an overview of his compositional output, in the 2001 edition of the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. In this brief summary Whittall highlights Adès' attraction to classical genre and his use of allusion, and draws attention to Adès' use of titles to suggest extra-musical connections. He also observes that Adès' music reveals an affinity to composers such as Charles Ives (1874–1954), Conlon Nancarrow (1912–97), Leoš Janáček (1854–1928), Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937), and Ligeti.²¹

A much more comprehensive introduction to the music of Thomas Adès is provided by Héléne Cao who interviewed Adès for her monograph.²² This book reveals a range of interesting comments from Adès, some of which are provocative and misleading as well as informative. He comments that he learnt nothing from his teachers at Cambridge but stresses the importance of Kurtág as a formative influence.²³ He claims that he does not use interval cycles systematically because they are 'too rigid',²⁴ but of course there is much evidence of their use as a means of pitch generation, as will be seen in Chapters 2 and 3. Cao does not question this type of statement. However, Adès' comment on his use of 'the vocabulary of tonality but not its grammar'²⁵ is an important acknowledgement of the way in which he uses 'tonal' materials. Cao considers Adès' melodic and harmonic language, focusing on the contrapuntal layering of interval cycles, in Chapter 3, and approaches operas and vocal works in the following chapter. She makes interesting connections between Adès, Shakespeare and Dowland in terms of the wide and contrasting ranges of emotion expressed in their works, 'a

²¹ Whittall, Arnold (2001) 'Adès, Thomas.' *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/46023> (accessed August 26, 2013).

²² Cao, Héléne (2007) *Thomas Adès Le Voyageur: Devenir compositeur. Être musicien*, Paris: Ed. MF. I am grateful to Caroline Potter for her translation of passages from this book.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 39: 'le compositeur utilise le vocabulaire de la tonalité et non sa grammaire.'

mixture of comedy and tragedy, joking and worrying, lightness and seriousness'²⁶ and she also notes the frequent use of the 'theme of 'paradise lost', in works such as *Arcadiana*, *Asyla*, *The Tempest* Op. 22 (2003–4) and *America: A Prophecy* Op. 19 (1999).²⁷ Cao makes some valuable analytical insights, though the scope of the book does not allow her to go into much detail. This book provides an important provisional assessment of his musical style going up to *Tevot*.

A more light-hearted and what might be considered a slightly surreal approach to Adès' music is taken by an article by Elaine Barkin.²⁸ She provides a series of poetic, quirky and personal responses to works included on the first three EMI CD sets: *Life Story*,²⁹ *Living Toys*,³⁰ and *Asyla*,³¹ and links brief paragraphs, detailing her observations and comments on individual works, with short quotations from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* by Lewis Carroll. For example the article begins with 'What is it about the music of Thomas Adès that attracts and repels simultaneously? That bores and draws me in?' She refers to his music as 'tangled and untangled; sweet and nasty; sleazy and genteel: a surfeit of bipolarities.'³² This article is superficial but Barkin includes brief glimpses of useful information within the playful remarks. For example, in the section on the Chamber Symphony she notes that it is 'motivically driven – F#–G–F#.'³³

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 109: 'tous trois mêlent la comédie et la tragédie, la plaisanterie et l'inquiétude, la légèreté et la gravité.'

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

²⁸ Barkin, Elaine R. (2009) 'About some music of Thomas Adès', *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 47 (1), pp. 165–73.

²⁹ (1997) *Life Story*, EMI Classics, 7243 569699 2 6.

³⁰ (1998) *Living Toys*, EMI Classics Debut 7243 5 72271 2 4.

³¹ (1999) *Adès Asyla*, EMI Classics, 7243 5 56818 2 9.

³² Barkin, 'About some music of Thomas Adès', p. 165.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

Surrealist, modernist or postmodernist?

Christopher Fox introduces us to four works: *America: A Prophecy*, the Piano Quintet Op. 20 (2000), *Brahms* Op. 21 (2001) and *The Tempest* in ‘Tempestuous times: the recent music of Thomas Adès.’³⁴ He identifies and discusses compositional traits, highlighting Adès’ use of motivic transformation and the exploration of intervallic relationships, and discussing the source of inspiration for each work. But, when considering *America: A Prophecy*, Fox begins to develop earlier observations by Whittall³⁵ regarding Adès’ links with surrealism. He proposes a connection between ‘the evenness of painting texture, the preservation of the integrity of the picture plane and the marriage of clear pictorial design with bizarre details’³⁶ in the surreal paintings of Magritte and Dalí and the music of Adès. Fox notes Adès’ manipulation ‘of structural proportions and of motivic content’³⁷ and compares this with the ‘logic within the depiction [of] fantastic nonsense’ in the painting of the surrealist artists ‘reminiscent of codes of visual representation familiar from earlier schools of narrative painting.’³⁸

Fox draws on Whittall’s comments³⁹ regarding the pleasure of allusion when discussing *Brahms* and the Piano Quintet. He describes both works as ‘affectionately shaking Brahms’s hand’,⁴⁰ more substantially so in the Piano Quintet, and focuses on the connection with Johannes Brahms (1833–97). Fox provides the first detailed consideration of Adès’ use of sonata form in the Piano Quintet, observing Adès’ use of

³⁴ Fox, Christopher (Autumn 2004) ‘Tempestuous times: the recent music of Thomas Adès’, *The Musical Times*, Vol. 145, pp. 41–56.

³⁵ Whittall, ‘Thomas Adès.’

³⁶ Fox, ‘Tempestuous times’, p. 43.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

³⁹ Whittall, Arnold (2003) ‘James Dillon, Thomas Adès, and the Pleasure of Allusion’, in *Aspects of British Music of the 1990s*, ed. by Peter O’Hagan, Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 5–6.

⁴⁰ Fox, ‘Tempestuous times’, p. 46.

a 'polymorphous intervallic cell [as] the source of all pitch material'⁴¹ and his manipulation of time, suggesting the influence of Ligeti and Nancarrow.

Andy Hamilton draws on various lines of enquiry when trying to position Adès in his 'Introduction to the Music of Thomas Adès.'⁴² He begins by delivering an account of Adès' rise to international recognition, reviews his works and draws our attention to a complexity of style balanced with the inclusion of more traditional melodic and rhythmic elements. Hamilton goes on to discuss the difficulty of positioning Adès with regard to trends such as late modernism or postmodernism. He classifies high modernism as 'a rigorously progressive and deeply serious development of the classical tradition.' Hamilton describes Adès as more traditional in terms of his avoidance of extended musical techniques, lack of attraction to the use of technology, or the combination of composition and improvisation, and he notes that this serious approach is opposed to the 'pluralist, and more playful and accessible'⁴³ aspects of postmodernism. To further confirm Adès as a modernist composer he proposes that when referencing the past Adès takes a modernist stance through his seriousness of purpose, a point I take up in Chapter 2. Hamilton places Adès' interest in referencing past composers and styles (both classical and popular) in terms of homage, quotation or formal procedures as a way of 'celebrating the traditions he loves' rather than suffering from Harold Bloom's 'anxiety of influence', an opinion shared by Whittall.⁴⁴

Hamilton also recognizes what he describes as 'surrealist tendency' in Adès' 'painterly' approach to composition 'with registral extremes used to achieve spatial effects.'⁴⁵ In this respect he accords with observations made by Fox;⁴⁶ opinions that are

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 48.

⁴² Hamilton, Andy (2005) 'Introduction to the Music of Thomas Adès', *Faber Music Composer Brochure*, <http://www.fabermusic.com> (accessed August 28, 2013).

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Whittall, 'James Dillon, Thomas Adès, and the Pleasure of Allusion.'

⁴⁵ Hamilton, 'Introduction to the Music of Thomas Adès.'

later taken up and developed in more depth by Richard Taruskin and developed in my own work in Chapter 6. In this article Hamilton presents us with a range of ideas relating to Adès' music that present useful starting points for more detailed investigation.

In his article on surrealism and modernism Taruskin describes Adès' music as 'a satisfying end-of-century culmination the far side or other face of serious modern music, the alternative current that has always shadowed the severely abstract variety of modernism.'⁴⁷ He notes that Adès' work 'has been unusual in its air of sincerity. For all its precocious technical sophistication and its omnivorous range of reference [...] in that it does not put everything in "quotes".'⁴⁸ Here he is noting Adès' integration of materials from the past 'into' his work rather than the more postmodernist approach noted by Jonathan Kramer which lets 'the music they refer to or quote simply be what it is.'⁴⁹ In this respect Taruskin argues that Adès' eclecticism is 'a validation of his modernist credentials.'⁵⁰

Taruskin draws attention to Daniel Albright's account of musical surrealism⁵¹ before going on to explain how he considers Adès' music to be surreal. The most significant point he makes, and one that I take up in Chapter 6, relates to the way in which Adès' music 'achieves its special atmosphere and projects its special meanings, through improbable sonic collages and mobiles; [and] outlandish juxtapositions of evocative sound-objects.'⁵² Taruskin notes the family connection with surrealism (Adès' mother, Dawn Adès, is an expert on surrealism and Dada) and observes Adès'

⁴⁶ Fox, 'Tempestuous times.'

⁴⁷ Taruskin, 'A Surrealist Composer', p. 144.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁴⁹ Kramer, Jonathan D. (2002) 'The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism', in *Postmodern Music/Postmodern Thought*, ed. by Judy Lochhead and Joseph Auner, New York and London: Routledge, p. 15.

⁵⁰ Taruskin, 'A Surrealist Composer', p. 146.

⁵¹ Albright, Daniel (2000) *Untwisting the Serpent: Modernism in Music, Literature, and the Other Arts*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

⁵² Taruskin, 'A Surrealist Composer', p. 147.

child-like capacity for fun. He attributes Adès' success partly due to the fact that his music remains grounded in that it 'never loses touch with its base in the common listening experience of real audiences' and yet at the same time 'is quirkily inventive.'⁵³

Dominic Wells lists various labels that have been applied to Adès such as 'pluralist, postmodernist; neoromantic; postminimalist; polystylist' in his article⁵⁴ but he does not explain who has used these terms and how they relate to Adès' music. He goes on to add yet another label, that of 'stylistic pluralist.' Wells explains that the term polystylist is not really appropriate because Schnittke, who he claims invented the term, used it to imply the 'often-harsh juxtaposition of disparate musical styles' and he notes that 'Adès' music generally avoids this extreme conflict.'⁵⁵ It would seem that although these labels may serve the purpose of identifying various tendencies or approaches in Adès' music, they also reveal a resistance to a broad classification; Adès' music presents us with a mixture and an overlapping of styles.

But, in terms of Adès' approach to the past, Wells suggests convincing connections with the 'spherical' concept of time presented by Bernd Alois Zimmermann (1918–70) and the 'radial' concept proposed by George Rochberg. Wells describes Zimmermann's 'sphericity of time' as 'a space in which the past, present and future were all equidistant from the centre' and Rochberg's 'radial' approach to time as 'exposing the delusion behind the modernist renunciation of the past and offering a vision of time in which all three periods are interconnected.'⁵⁶ He suggests that Adès 'interprets disparate musical styles from the past not in historical terms but as part of his contemporary musical landscape.'⁵⁷ I think Wells makes a valid point here. Adès

⁵³ Ibid., p. 149.

⁵⁴ Wells, 'Plural Styles, Personal Style', p. 2.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 5.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 6.

alludes to styles or stylistic features of composers spanning centuries of music and integrates them to create a complex contemporary interweaving of past and present.

Wells examines extramusical connections between Adès and Benjamin Britten (1913–76) and alludes to the possibility of traces of ‘the tempestuous seascape of *Peter Grimes*’ in *Tevot* (2007) and ‘echoes of Britten’s cabaret songs’ in *Powder Her Face*.⁵⁸ Adès’ interest in Janáček, Ligeti, Olivier Messiaen (1908–92), and Nancarrow is mentioned but not developed. Wells notes Adès’ use of self-reference with regard to a recurring pattern, a perfect fifth (or its inversion) or a triad followed by a minor second that occurs ‘in the opening bars of more than ten of Adès’ 40 works.’⁵⁹ He considers the use of this musical ‘signature’ as he compares what he describes as the ‘almost identical’ opening bars of *Arcadiana* and Ligeti’s Violin Concerto (1989–93), and suggests this work may well have influenced Adès.

Whittall’s article written in response to performances of string quartets by James Dillon and Thomas Adès at the Roehampton Institute, London in 1999⁶⁰ presents the first critical discussion of Adès’ approach to the past through *Arcadiana*. Whittall considers the position of Adès and Dillon in relation to the British scene leading up to the 1990s but does not attempt to pigeon-hole them in terms of what he sees as three main trends the avant-garde, headed by Harrison Birtwistle (born 1934), minimalists such as John Tavener (1944–2013) and more mainstream composers, he suggests Mark-Anthony Turnage (born 1960).⁶¹ Whittall’s main thrust in terms of *Arcadiana* is to consider approaches and current arguments relating to the use of the past. He discusses generic links with the ‘lyric’ suite and explores connections between elements such as the idyll and lament that permeate the work. Whittall suggests that Adès references the

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 4.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 7.

⁶⁰ Whittall, ‘James Dillon, Thomas Adès, and the Pleasure of Allusion.’

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 3.

past 'without any hang-ups, because he finds it pleasurable to do so' and that 'anxiety, fear, guilt or even reverence, have nothing to do with it.'⁶² Here he accords with Hamilton's view that Adès' does not suffer from 'the anxiety of influence' and that he 'wants to celebrate the traditions he loves.'⁶³ Whittall develops his argument through a closer look at Adès' homage to Elgar in the sixth movement ('O Albion') of *Arcadiana*. He identifies and extracts the motivic content of the movement and uses this material to produce a hypothetical Elgarian model; he uses this example to explain how far removed 'O Albion' is from Elgar.

Various lines of enquiry have emerged in this section of the literature review regarding Adès' position as a modernist or postmodernist, Adès' surrealist tendencies, and his approach to the past. I will revisit these enquiries again in Chapter 2 and relate them to case studies in the remaining chapters of my thesis.

Critical studies focusing on musical and extra-musical meaning in Adès' works

Adès' first large orchestral work *Asyla* is the focus of two articles by Edward Venn. In his first article Venn reveals a range of strategies employed by commentators on this work most of which focus on the extramusical significance of the implications of the title of *Asyla* and issues of genre and form.⁶⁴ But the aim of this article is to present two readings: 'one moving from the extramusical discourse to the music "itself", and one proceeding in the opposite direction.'⁶⁵ Venn considers and evaluates all sources relating to the reception of *Asyla* with the purpose of revealing that these sources move from meaning to music. In the first close reading he discusses the extramusical factors implied through the title and explores allusions to Béla Bartók (1891–1945) (looking at

⁶² Ibid., pp. 5–6.

⁶³ Hamilton, 'Introduction to the Music of Thomas Adès.'

⁶⁴ Venn, Edward (2006) 'Asylum Gained? Aspects of Meaning in Thomas Adès' *Asyla*', *Music Analysis*, 25/i–ii, pp. 89–120.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

Adès' use of texture and harmony to suggest the original idea of *Bluebeard's Castle*) and Gustav Mahler (1860–1911) (through the comparison of a 'massive *tutti* [...] chord' with 'the same chord in the Scherzo of Mahler's Third Symphony').⁶⁶ In the second reading he focuses on the 'purely' musical aspects of the movement as he explores 'linear structures' and 'directed movement through recognisable pitch-collections – primarily whole-tone or chromatic subsets'⁶⁷ and aspects of texture, timbre and melody in his analysis of the sectional nature of the movement. In conclusion, Venn suggests that the title did act as a stimulus in terms of 'the musical character' but 'inspired the musical processes only in the most abstract manner, if at all.'⁶⁸ He concludes that both extramusical and analytical readings are useful in terms of determining meaning but that the first approach might be more attractive and obvious. What Venn has done is provide what he sees as a 'complementary' meaning, and he has shown that other meanings, not driven by title or programme, are waiting to be discovered.

In his next article, Venn observes that reviews of *Asyla* tend to focus on the third movement ('*Ecstasio*') and its links with club and rave music. He argues that the dance gestures have 'been considered transparent and self evident'⁶⁹ but that no one has searched beyond this basic observation to consider the way these gestures are used in '*Ecstasio*.' Venn begins by exploring links with minimalism and the way in which dance music is used to dominate the crowd. He observes that two processes are at work in this movement, dance music and symphonic 'form and process.'⁷⁰ The aim of this very detailed article is to show how dance music and 'the presence of the 'symphonic' voice is a necessary condition for making narrative in the structural sense possible at all

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁶⁹ Venn, Edward (2010) 'Narrativity in Thomas Adès' *Ecstasio*', *Res Facta Nova*, No. 11(20), p. 69.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

in this movement.’⁷¹ He draws on the work of Eero Tarasti⁷² and explores the way dance music (the ‘object’ belonging to the category of ‘being’ and essentially static) and classically derived material (the ‘subject’ belonging to the category of ‘doing’ and linear in quality) emerge in ‘Ecstasio.’ He traces the ensuing relationship between the two in terms of conjunction (merging to become indistinguishable) or disjunction (to become separate). Venn explores ‘disruptions’ created by symphonic processes and argues that a narrative structure emerges when ‘processes alien to dance music’⁷³ in the form of a classically derived musical subject (theme-actor) emerges. Venn points out that he has only made a tentative start on revealing the complex processes at play in this movement. Once again Venn has not been distracted by just one obvious route to understanding meaning but has searched for, and explored, underlying musical processes and relationships in order to unlock meaning in this movement.

Kenneth Gloag explores narrative agendas in Adès’ Piano Quintet and *Asyla* and focuses on questions of gender and sexuality, and ‘musical meaning within a contemporary cultural and critical context.’⁷⁴ He notes Adès’ tendency to use a text or title in association with instrumental and orchestral works and suggests that ‘meaning’ can be derived from these titles. However, when referring to Venn’s discussion of meaning and structure in *Asyla*,⁷⁵ Gloag observes that Adès’ comments made it very clear that the music came before the images in this work, and he suggests that the images ‘implant meaning.’⁷⁶ Gloag suggests that ‘the questions of meaning that come from its title are situated within a generic framework, symphony, that, from certain historical and critical perspectives, is already free of meaning before or beyond musical

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Notably Tarasti, Eero (1994) *A Theory of Musical Semiotics*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

⁷³ Venn ‘Narrativity in Thomas Adès’ *Ecstasio*’, p. 74.

⁷⁴ Gloag, Kenneth (2009) ‘Thomas Adès and the Narrative Agendas of Absolute Music’, in Beate Neumeier (ed.), *Gender and Music*, Heidelberg: Winter, p. 97. I am grateful to Kenneth Gloag for providing me with a copy of this article.

⁷⁵ Venn, ‘Asylum Gained?’

⁷⁶ Gloag, ‘Thomas Adès and the Narrative Agendas of Absolute Music’, p. 98.

form and content.’⁷⁷ Gloag discusses the implications of ecstasy, as in sex or drugs, through the title of the third movement (‘Ecstasio’), and suggests ‘the acknowledgment of the presence of the body, of the sexual’ with the insertion of the ‘other’ (gestures of contemporary club dance music of 1990s) into the ‘purity of musical form and content’⁷⁸ has obvious sexual implications.

Gloag does not expand further on this explicit gendered scenario in *Asyla*, but instead he goes on to explore questions of sexuality and gender in the Piano Quintet, the instrumentation of which suggests a work more concerned with classical structure and musical procedure. Gloag suggests a narrative in terms of context and history, a retrospective connection with the chamber music of the nineteenth century and the displacement of the concept of absolute music that surrounded these earlier works. Adès’ deliberate association with the formal process of sonata form becomes the focus of attention. Gloag explores narrative agendas associated with this form in terms of contrast (of texture and in terms of masculine and feminine, ‘self’ and ‘other’) and cites the importance of work by Susan McClary,⁷⁹ James Hepokoski⁸⁰ and Scott Burnham⁸¹ in relation to gender and sexuality in musical narrative.

In his synoptic description of Adès’ Piano Quintet he notes that while changes of texture define the first and second subject areas, there is no thematic or harmonic contrast between them. He cites Fox with regard to Adès’ use of a ‘polymorphous intervallic cell [...] the source of all pitch material’⁸² and notes that the metaphor of cell,

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.99.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ McClary, Susan (1991) *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press and McClary, Susan (1993) ‘Narrative agendas in “Absolute” Music’: Identity and difference in Brahms’s Third Symphony’, in *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. by Ruth A. Solie. Berkley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, pp. 326–44.

⁸⁰ Hepokoski, James (1994) ‘Masculine-Feminine’, *Musical Times*, 135, August, pp. 494–9.

⁸¹ Burnham, Scott (1996) ‘A.B. Marx and the Gendering of Sonata Form’, in *Music Theory in the Age of Romanticism*, ed. by Ian Bent, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 163–86.

⁸² Fox, ‘Tempestuous times’, p. 48.

and its position as source, is loaded with images of gender and sexuality. This monothematicism suggests more of an affinity with Schoenberg and the idea of developing variation. He notes that Adès is perhaps closer to ‘Schoenberg’s Brahms the progressive and not to Schenker’s Brahms the last master.’⁸³ In terms of gender, Gloag proposes that the textural contrasts represent or replace contrasts of tonality, and these contrasts generate opposition and tension, of ‘self’ and ‘other.’ Secondly, if we negate the textural contrasts, and pursue the concept of ongoing development, there is no ‘other’ and ‘an asexual or desexualised musical form’ emerges free from ‘any trace of gendered narrative.’⁸⁴ Gloag admits that these alternatives present stark opposites and there is still much left to explore in this area. This article presents a skilful application of narrative theory with regard to gender, but Gloag has only made a start on deciphering meaning in a purely instrumental work bound by the conventions of the genre, and he suggests the possibility of further lines of enquiry regarding context, history and intertextuality.

In Stella Ioanna Markou’s thesis ‘A poetic synthesis and theoretical analysis of Thomas Adès’ *Five Eliot Landscapes*’⁸⁵ she compares the technical approach of T.S. Eliot (1888–1965) and Adès, and considers both works as a set of études that reveal early compositional styles of both author and composer. She places Eliot’s *Five Eliot Landscapes* into context in relation to other works, and discusses the stylistic features and intentions specific to this cycle of poems. A detailed exploration of the poetic intentions of each poem prefaces the theoretical analysis of each song. When exploring Adès’ realization of the text, Markou focuses on Adès’ use of interval cycles (referencing the work of John Roeder and Aaron Travers) and Nancarrow-like tempo

⁸³ Gloag, ‘Thomas Adès and the Narrative Agendas of Absolute Music’, p. 108.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 108–9.

⁸⁵ Markou, Stella Ioanna (2010) ‘A Poetic Synthesis and Theoretical Analysis of Thomas Adès’ *Five Eliot Landscapes*’, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Arizona.

canons. She also focuses on what she describes as a compositional scale specific to Adès (a melodic line tracing a chromatic expansion or contraction) noting that the identification of this ‘scale’ is attributable to Cao.⁸⁶ Markou only touches briefly on the function of homage and quotation in this work, an area which I will explore in detail.

Interval cycles and multiple temporalities

In his thesis on ‘Interval cycles, their permutations and generative properties in Thomas Adès’ *Asyla*’ Travers discusses Adès’ relationship with the past and notes the use of ‘polystylism’ in *Asyla*.⁸⁷ He gives a brief description of the styles alluded to in the work, discusses the implications of the title and then goes on to present an analysis of the first two movements. Travers acknowledges Roeder’s previous work on interval cycles⁸⁸ and goes on to identify and explore the various ways in which they are used in the first and second movements of *Asyla*. He explains how interval cycles play a major role in creating motivic unity and structuring large expanses of music. He concludes that each movement is composed of one or two main themes supported by harmonies and motives derived from interval cycles. Travers also presents connections between a chord succession in opening bars of *The Fayrfax Carol* (1997) and the second movement of *Asyla*; he suggests that *The Fayrfax Carol* may provide a commentary on the passage from *Asyla* but he does not develop this further. Travers’ work presents us with detailed information relating to interval cycles, but he does not always manage to explain clearly how and why they are used.

In his article ‘Co-operating Continuities in the Music of Thomas Adès’, Roeder begins by introducing Jonathan Kramer’s theories of postmodern music. He draws

⁸⁶ Cao, *Thomas Adès Le Voyageur*.

⁸⁷ Travers, Aaron James (2005) ‘Interval cycles, their permutations and generative properties in Thomas Adès’ *Asyla*’, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Rochester, Eastman School of Music.

⁸⁸ An interval cycle is a series of pitches generated through the process of repeating an interval.

particular attention to Kramer's concept 'of the multiplicity of musical time – that music can enable listeners to experience different senses of directionality, different temporal narratives, and/or rates of motion, all *simultaneously*.'⁸⁹ Roeder aims to understand the ways in which these temporalities operate in the music of Adès through a theoretical examination of excerpts from *Traced Overhead* Op. 15 (1996), *Arcadiana* and *Asyla*. He explains how note durations are used to create metric continuity and how interval cycles or interval processes are set in motion to create continuity, noting that 'pitch changes impart a special quality of continuity to a stream.'⁹⁰ Roeder also investigates Adès' technique of superimposing monophonic strands (individual strands tracing linear chromatic or whole-tone movement) to create chord progressions, and looks at ways in which pitch and duration are sometimes co-ordinated through a chromatically expanding cycle and a system of decreasing note values. This is a comprehensive article in which Roeder stresses the importance of the role of rhythm, pitch and timbre with regard to a postmodernist approach to temporal layering. My work will continue this investigation by considering how the technical processes involved in temporal layering can also reflect and enhance expressive meaning in his music.

Roeder continues his work on multiple temporalities in his next article.⁹¹ Here, he explores how a transformational approach can be used to explain how superimposed streams of melody, evolving as a result of a variety of pitch processes, can be represented and their functions understood. This is a complex theoretical and investigation into the mechanics of the temporal and spatial experience of intervallically and rhythmically orientated streams. Roeder uses 'Auf dem Wasser zu singen' as an

⁸⁹ Roeder, 'Co-operating Continuities', p. 121, see Kramer, Jonathan D. (1995) 'Beyond Unity: Towards an understanding of Musical Postmodernism', in *Concert Music, Rock and Jazz Since 1945: Essays and Analytical Studies*, ed. by Elizabeth West Marvin and Richard Hermann, Rochester: University of Rochester Press, p. 22.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.125.

⁹¹ Roeder, John (2009) 'A Transformational Space Structuring the Counterpoint in Adès' 'Auf dem Wasser zu singen', *Music Theory Online*, Vol. 15 (1), March, http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.09.15.1.roeder_space.html (accessed August 28, 2013).

example of post-tonal counterpoint to demonstrate an application of transformational theory that involves a series of ‘animations’ (diagrams that interact in real-time with recorded extracts). In this article the focus is on process and representation in graphic imagery rather than on providing a deeper understanding of how these compositional structures provide meaning in this work.

In her thesis Emma Gallon investigates the way in which multiple narratives unfold and co-exist in Adès’ music.⁹² She notes that previous studies of Adès work fall into two categories, those that focus on the suggestive quality of his work that are mainly descriptive, and those that engage in a more analytical approach, such as the work of Roeder.⁹³ Her ambition in this work is to employ a narrative approach to Adès’ music in order to investigate both the structural and expressive impact of musical and extramusical narratives. The scope of the work is very ambitious in that she has not only attempted to enhance understanding and effectiveness of the application of narrative theory but has applied it to all of Adès’ works composed over a period of ten years, from 1995–2004, in what she describes as his second stylistic period. The majority of works are discussed in relation to discursive strategies but five works, *America: A Prophecy*, the Piano Quintet, *Brahms*, *Asyla*, *Powder Her Face* and *The Tempest* are discussed in depth as case studies. Due to the length and detail of this thesis I cannot do it justice within the scope of this literature review. But, Gallon attempts to achieve a balance between analysis and meaning as she identifies and analyses the way in which structure and signifying elements interact in order to understand the signifying potential of his music and explores the way in which his music evolves within multiple levels of structure and meaning. She admits that the broad scope of the work and the focus on narrativity has prevented the sort of rigorous analysis that would reveal the technical

⁹² Gallon, Emma (2011) ‘Narrativities in the Music of Thomas Adès’, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lancaster.

⁹³ Roeder, ‘Co-operating Continuities’ and ‘A Transformational Space.’

details of Adès' compositional vocabulary and a detailed scrutiny of his compositional traits.

Gallon's article focuses on close readings of the Piano Quintet and *Brahms*.⁹⁴ She argues that multiple narratives unfold in different ways in Adès' music and she sets out to investigate the ways in which multiple layers 'co-operate' in *Brahms* but, considers how temporal layers conflict to provide 'tangled structural narratives' in the Piano Quintet. In the Piano Quintet she considers how the encompassing structural function of sonata form in the work as a whole conflicts with smaller scale musical temporalities; past and present collide as a historical structure associated with key structure is subjected to 'postmodern temporalities.' In *Brahms* she considers the extra dimension offered by the use of text as the music reflects issues of the macabre (Gothic) and comedy offered by the lyrics. She also explores how Adès' allusions to Brahms through the allusion to compositional traits on a cellular scale (for example, Brahms' harmonic 'tics' in the form of sequential chains of thirds) and the use of quotation, function within the work. In both works Gallon's emphasis is on the expressive impact of Adès' interaction between past and present, and the narrativities that evolve as a result of this interaction. She acknowledges that a more detailed analysis of these works, not possible within the scope of her article, would allow more subtle levels of meaning to emerge in these works.

⁹⁴ Gallon, Emma (2013) 'Narrativities in the Music of Thomas Adès: The Piano Quintet and *Brahms*', in *Music and Narrative since 1900*, ed. by Michael L. Kleine and Nicholas Reyland, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 216–33. This is an adapted version of Chapter 4.2 ('Piano Quintet and *Brahms*') from her thesis.

Articles by Adès

The fifth category of this literature review focuses on performances, recordings and writings by Adès. Firstly, a brief look at a selection of works included in piano recitals and recordings gives some idea of the composers that Adès admires. For example, in a solo piano recital on 17 June 2012, at the Festival de Saint-Denis, France, alongside his own works Adès performed pieces by Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971), Janáček and Couperin. In Adès' CD of solo piano music recorded in 2000 Janáček, Stravinsky, Nancarrow and Kurtág are represented.⁹⁵

Adès' connections with Kurtág developed when he studied piano and chamber music in 1988–9 (with Kurtág in Szombathely, Hungary), and were reinforced later when he studied piano in the International Musicians Seminar, Prussia Cove, Cornwall with Kurtág.⁹⁶ His decision to focus his BA dissertation on Kurtág confirms his admiration for this composer.⁹⁷

Adès' interest in Janáček is confirmed through his many recordings of piano music and song cycles⁹⁸ and a chapter, 'Nothing but pranks and puns; Janáček's solo piano music.'⁹⁹ Hugh Wood, in his review of Adès' chapter, notes that 'Adès deals in curiously precise detail with the piano music, in a way which tells you a certain amount about himself as a composer (always the most interesting aspect of analytical articles, which should always be written by composers.)'¹⁰⁰ Adès' article reveals his fastidious attention to detail when exploring Janáček's harmonic functions and tonal strategies,

⁹⁵ *Thomas Adès: Piano* (EMI 5 57051 2). [Performances of works for piano solo by Janáček, Stravinsky, Busoni, Kurtág, Castiglioni, Stanchinsky, Grieg and Nancarrow.]

⁹⁶ Adès, Thomas, website, <http://www.thomasades.com> (accessed August 28, 2013).

⁹⁷ Adès, Thomas (1992) 'Gesture and Meaning in selected works of György Kurtág', unpublished BA dissertation, University of Cambridge. This dissertation is not available.

⁹⁸ EMI Classics CD (2002) featuring works by Janáček (EMI 5 57219 2): *The Diary of One Who Disappeared* (song cycle for mezzo-soprano, tenor, female chorus & piano, JW 5/12 with Ruby Philogene, Ian Bostridge and Thomas Adès) and a series of pieces for solo piano (Adès).

⁹⁹ Adès, Thomas (1999) 'Nothing but pranks and puns; Janáček's solo piano music', in *Janáček Studies*, ed. by Paul Wingfield, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 18–35.

¹⁰⁰ Wood, Hugh (1999) 'Intimate letters, Overgrown Paths', in a review of *Janáček Studies*; Paul Wingfield, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Nov. 19, Issue 5042, p. 4 (2).

and particularly the use of enharmonic tonal procedures within the binary, ternary or sonata form structures of his piano music.

Adès observes that ‘in Janáček, not a note, not a gesture is rhetorical, is inertly for its own sake; every detail is to play for; for every slightest instrumental or harmonic colour fires its particular charge into the structure.’¹⁰¹ Adès also notes the importance of Janáček’s ‘orchestration’ of the piano in establishing or defining events through ‘the exact spacing of a chord, the weighting of its individual elements, the dynamic context, the precise register at which the pitch occurs.’¹⁰² Comments such as this provide an insight into the way in which Adès himself operates.

Adès has always admired Nancarrow and this is revealed through his review of *The Music of Conlon Nancarrow*.¹⁰³ Adès describes Nancarrow’s career and traces his rise from ‘reclusive pioneer’ to ‘an inspiring symbol for revolutionary musicians everywhere.’¹⁰⁴ The impact of Henry Cowell’s (1897–1965) work on Nancarrow is evaluated and he focuses on Nancarrow’s studies for player-piano. Adès’ admiration for Nancarrow is evident in the enthusiasm and detail with which he reviews the complex rhythmic and temporal processes involved in these studies. In an interview with David Papp, regarding Adès’ posthumous completion of Nancarrow’s *Study for Orchestra*, Adès is very complimentary about Nancarrow’s achievements.¹⁰⁵ The inclusion of Nancarrow’s *Three Canons for Ursula* on the EMI disc of solo piano music performed by Adès confirms both his continued admiration for Nancarrow and Adès’ extraordinary ability as a pianist.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ Adès, ‘Nothing but pranks and puns’, p. 34.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁰³ Adès, Thomas (1996) ‘Like nothing on earth’, *Times Literary Supplement*, 26 April, pp. 1–2. Review of Gann, Kyle (1995) *The Music of Conlon Nancarrow*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹⁰⁵ Papp, David (1999) ‘Pianola to the Proms’, *The Daily Telegraph*, Interview with Thomas Adès, August 5.

¹⁰⁶ (2000) *Thomas Adès: Piano* (EMI 5 57051 2).

The reception of Adès' work

This final category features a variety of sources relating to Adès' reception, including concert programme notes, CD liner notes (provided by Paul Griffiths,¹⁰⁷ Andrew Porter,¹⁰⁸ and Tom Service¹⁰⁹) and reviews of performances or recordings (Venn¹¹⁰). The Faber Music website provides a comprehensive range of information including biographical details, programme notes, sample scores, recordings of interviews, news and reviews and performance information.¹¹¹ Alex Ross's *New Yorker* article 'Roll Over Beethoven: Thomas Adès'¹¹² provides a good general background to the composer and to British trends before Adès joined the British contemporary music scene. Adès' family background and education are considered here, followed by descriptions of a range of early pieces including *Five Eliot Landscapes*, the Chamber Symphony, *Living Toys*, *Powder Her Face* and *Asyla*.

A number of interviews with Adès provide some insight into his career and a range of works. Service, in his 2001 published interview with Adès¹¹³ begins by detailing Adès' successes and international recognition and goes on to propose the significance of his music 'is its distinct negotiation with the past and present.'¹¹⁴ During the interview Adès provides detailed responses to a series of questions on compositional

¹⁰⁷ Griffiths, Paul (2004) liner notes for Thomas Adès' *America: A Prophecy*, EMI Classics 7243 5 57610 2 6, pp. 5–7.

¹⁰⁸ Porter, Andrew CD liner notes for (1997) *Life Story*, EMI Classics, 7243 569699 2 6, pp. 3–4; (1998) *Living Toys*, EMI Classics Debut 7243 5 72271 2 4, pp. 3–5; (1998) *Powder Her Face*, EMI Classics, 7243 556649 2 1, pp.10–17; and (1999) *Adès Asyla*, EMI Classics, 7243 5 56818 2 9, pp. 2–5.

¹⁰⁹ Service, Tom (2004) liner notes for: *Adès: Piano Quintet Schubert: 'Trout' Quintet*, EMI Classics, 5 57664 2, pp. 2–3 and, (2010) *Tevot, Violin Concerto, Three Studies from Couperin, and Dances from Powder Her Face*, EMI Classics, 4 57813 2, pp. 3–5.

¹¹⁰ Venn, Edward (2004) review of the first performance of *The Tempest*, 'London, Royal Opera House: 'The Tempest'', *Tempo*, Vol. 58, No. 229 (July 2004), pp. 72–3, and Venn (2005) review of *Adès: Piano Quintet, Schubert: 'Trout' Quintet*, EMI 7243 5 57664 2 7, *Tempo*, Vol. 59, No. 234 (Oct., 2005), pp. 73–4.

¹¹¹ Faber Music, <http://www.fabermusic.com>

¹¹² Ross, Alex (1998) 'Roll Over Beethoven: Thomas Adès', *The New Yorker*, Nov. 2, <http://www.gregorysroom.blogspot.co.uk/2007/05/roll-over-beethoventhomas-ads.html> (accessed August 28, 2013).

¹¹³ Service, Tom (2001) 'Breaking the Silence', *BBC Music Magazine*, July 2001, pp. 26–9.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

issues concerning the *Concerto Conciso* Op. 18 (1997), the Piano Quintet and *Brahms*. Adès discusses his approach to temporal pacing and rhythmic complexity in the concerto and the use of sonata form to structure the Piano Quintet.¹¹⁵ He reveals that Beethoven's *Pastoral* Sonata (Op. 28) is a model for the piece and when discussing *Brahms* reveals his use of specific allusions to include the use of 'Brahms's descending thirds.'

The recently published book *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*¹¹⁶ presents a series of interviews conducted by Service that took place at Adès' home in London in 2011. In these conversations, Adès reveals his approach to performing, conducting and composing. Adès talks about the composers he admires and presents reasons for disliking others. We gain important insights into his approach to composition, and his approach to orchestration, structure and texture is also discussed. What comes through very strongly is that the musical impulse always comes first and that titles, programmes and links with art evolve naturally and instinctively, during the musical process, to express the metaphorical implications inherent in the music. Adès views music (both past and present) and works of visual art as living organisms, not inert objects, but potentially vivid and vital. He refers to borrowed music as 'keepings'¹¹⁷ and this pre-existing music becomes essentially integrated within his own music. References are made to a large range of Adès works as appropriate to the topic of conversation. This book incorporates sensitive and personal observations about his musical processes but also includes the occasional more outrageous observations. He describes Schenkerian

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 28.

¹¹⁶ Adès, Thomas and Tom Service (2012) *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 26.

analysis as ‘dangerous nonsense’¹¹⁸ and Wagner’s music as ‘fungal [...] a sort of unnatural growth.’¹¹⁹

Less substantial information is provided in radio interviews with Andrew McGregor in 2007¹²⁰ and Service in 2010.¹²¹ Press interviews (with Peter Culshaw in 2008¹²² and Service in 2007¹²³) focus on more detailed information regarding individual works as well as general biographical and compositional observations.

Conclusion

As this literature review has revealed, there is a considerable amount of information on Adès’ biographical details, the reception of his works, his compositional style, and statements or proposals relating to his position in contemporary music. A number of works, notably *Five Eliot Landscapes*, *Asyla*, *Arcadiana* and the Piano Quintet, have been the focus of several critical studies but I intend to broaden the scope of works under scrutiny by including pieces from his early vocal and chamber repertoire that have received little or no attention to date.

My intention is to study aspects of his style that were established and consolidated in the early part of his career. Adès’ approach to interval has received much attention through the work of Markou, Roeder, Travers and Wells but I will focus on the way interval plays its part in his use of shape and register and the creation of

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 66.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 15.

¹²⁰ McGregor, Andrew interview with Thomas Adès, *Proms Composer Portrait Concert*, Royal Albert Hall, August 20, 2007. [Adès discusses *Les barricades mystérieuses*, *Cardiac Arrest* and *Court Studies* from *The Tempest*.]

¹²¹ Service, Tom (2010) interview with Thomas Adès, *Music Matters*, BBC Radio 3, Podcast 15 May, 2010. [This interview focuses on Adès’ connection with T. S. Eliot, aspects of British music, *Sonata da Caccia* Op. 11 (1993), *Tevot*, *Asyla*, and *America*.]

¹²² Culshaw, Peter (2007) ‘Don’t call me a Messiah’, interview with Adès, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/music/classicalmusic/3663485/Dont-call-me-a-messiah.html> (accessed August 2013) and (2008) ‘In Seven Days’: Disney’s ‘Fantasia’ – the sequel’, *Telegraph*, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk>. (accessed August 28, 2013).

¹²³ Service, Tom (2007) ‘Writing music? It’s like flying a plane’, *The Guardian*, Monday 26 February, 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk> (accessed August 28, 2013). [Adès discusses *Tevot*]

texture in his earliest vocal works. Adès' obsession with the past is central to his compositional process; observations by Whittall and Wells provide an excellent starting point for further development. Adès' fusion of contemporary and traditional musical processes will be explored in the chapters dealing with his arrangements and on works whose titles indicate an obvious focus on historical genre and formal structures (for example, the *Sonata da Caccia* and the Chamber Symphony). Fox, Hamilton, Taruskin and Whittall draw parallels with Adès' musical techniques and those of surrealist artists. Just as Venn, in his search for meaning in *Asyla*, balances a programmatic approach with one focusing on 'purely' musical processes, I will look at the logic and skill with which Adès constructs and develops his ideas in *Living Toys* with the intention of drawing parallels between the techniques used by surrealist artists. I will also consider Adès' response to the surreal programme through his use of texture, register and colour. Adès' connection with the visual arts will be developed by exploring his use of paintings as a creative stimulus in *Arcadiana* and *The Origin of the Harp*.

Chapter 2: Influences and Musical Techniques

I begin by exploring Adès' education, career and success to date and discuss the compositional climate in the UK in Adès' formative years. I will aim to position Adès in relation to musical developments towards the end of the twentieth-century as I consider influences, identify his main compositional techniques and traits, and discuss his approach to the past.

Biography

Thomas Adès was born in London in 1971, son of a mother who is an expert in Dada and surrealism (Dawn Adès, now semi-retired, University of Essex), and a father (Timothy Adès) who is a translator. At the Guildhall School of Music Adès studied piano with Michael Blackmore and Paul Berkowitz, winning the Lutine Prize for instrumentalists in 1986, and composition with Erika Fox and Robert Saxton. Adès then went on to read music at King's College, Cambridge and graduated with a double-starred first in 1992. It seemed initially that he might be destined to be a performer after winning second prize (piano class) in the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition in 1989. He gave his first public recital in 1993 in London, at the Purcell Room for the Park Lane Group Young Concert Artists Platform, in a programme that included the premiere of his piano piece *Still Sorrowing*. However, a shift in emphasis towards composition resulted in Adès' completion of his first major work, the song-cycle for soprano and piano *Five Eliot Landscapes*, composed in his first year at Cambridge. In 1992 he signed an exclusive contract as a composer with Faber Music and a recording

contract (as composer, pianist and conductor) with EMI that resulted in a series of discs starting with *Life Story*.¹

Adès' music has attracted international recognition and he has gained many awards and prizes. These include the 1994 Paris Rostrum for best piece by a composer under thirty with *Living Toys*, and the 1998 Elise L. Stoeger Prize for *Arcadiana*, in recognition of his achievement in the field of chamber composition. The large-scale orchestral work *Asyla* earned Adès the 1997 Royal Philharmonic Society Prize and the 2000 Grawemeyer Award (the largest international prize for composition). In 2001 he was awarded the Hindemith Prize, and the 2005 Royal Philharmonic Society Prize was awarded to Adès for his opera *The Tempest*. In March 1999 the Helsinki Musica Nova Festival presented the majority of his compositions and in 2007 three retrospectives featured his works: the Présences Festival in Paris; the Ultima Festival in Oslo; and Traced Overhead at the Barbican. Adès featured in the 2012 Melbourne Festival as composer, conductor and pianist, and was named Musical America 'Composer of the Year' Award in 2011.

Adès' reputation is now firmly established and he continues to attract attention on an international scale. He has received, and continues to receive, commissions from prestigious organizations: for example, the Royal Opera House (*The Tempest*); the Southbank Centre and the Los Angeles Philharmonic (*In Seven Days: Concerto for piano with Moving Image* (2008)); and the Aldeburgh Festival, Wigmore Hall and Carnegie Hall (*Lieux Retrouvés* (2009)). Performances of his works are regularly featured around the world and EMI have produced CDs of all but his most recent works. Adès' music is now attracting more academic attention: the earlier lack of 'critical

¹ *Life Story*, EMI Classics.

scrutiny'² of his works, noted by Fox, has now been reversed with the more recent publication of a series of valuable studies.³

Compositional trends in the UK and their relation to Adès' music

Trends in contemporary music in the UK towards the end of the twentieth-century, at the point when Adès began his career as a composer, follow three broad directions. Hall notes that 'there may no longer be any musical "schools", but the last few decades have produced composers who represent on the one hand a "new complexity" and on the other a "new simplicity".'⁴ Hall nominates Brian Ferneyhough (born 1943) as an example of the 'new complexity' and places John Tavener (1944–2013) at the other extreme. In terms of a third pathway Hall suggests that

although there are still those who wish to explore the extremes of complexity or simplicity, most composers since the early seventies have sought a less polarized position. Even those who have remained loyal to the advanced style they established in the fifties have softened their approach – not necessarily to conform to fashion, but simply because there is no longer any need to be so uncompromising.⁵

He refers to the more accessible scores of the later music of Pierre Boulez (born 1925) and Elliott Carter (1909–2012) but other names also come to mind including Alexander Goehr (born 1932) and Robin Holloway (born 1943), both of whom were teaching composition in Adès' time at King's College, Cambridge. Hall observes that British composers born in the 1930s did not 'feel any necessity to reject the past. They wanted their music to sound *avant garde*, yet they were not prepared to jettison tradition [but] what they did reject was the goal-orientated music associated with the tonal

² Fox, 'Tempestuous times', pp. 41–56.

³ Roeder, 'Co-operating Continuities' and 'A Transformational Space'; Venn, 'Asylum Gained?' and 'Narrativity in Thomas Adès' *Ecstasio*'; Gloag, 'Thomas Adès and the Narrative Agendas of Absolute Music'; Taruskin, 'A Surrealist Composer'; Markou, 'A Poetic Synthesis'; Travers, 'Interval Cycles', Wells, 'Plural Styles, Personal Style'; and Gallon 'Narrativities in the Music of Thomas Adès' and 'Narrativities in the Music of Thomas Adès: The Piano Quintet and Brahms.'

⁴ Hall, 'Music Now', p. 240.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

system.⁶ The early works of both Goehr⁷ and Holloway⁸ draw on Schoenbergian principles and techniques influenced by the modernist ideals of the Darmstadt composers.⁹ Bayan Northcott observes that although Goehr was one of ‘the earliest of British composers “born” into serialism as a natural technique, even his first compositions arose from specific modifications, rather than mechanical extensions, of serial procedure.’ He describes how ‘in 1962’ Goehr began to combine ‘aspects of Schoenbergian serialism, the modality of Messiaen and Boulez’s concept of the bloc sonore [...] as a way of generating large-scale harmonic relationships’ and notes that the Little Symphony Op. 15 (1963) as the first work to use this technique.¹⁰ But as the careers of Goehr and Holloway have progressed they have adopted a less radical approach.¹¹ Goehr comments that ‘although often mistaken for a “Darmstadt composer”, I never was one’ and he explains that

even then I seem to have wanted to combine really differing modes of musical expression and utilise connections between musics of varied provenances and times. I have continued to do this all my life and it implies a belief that over and above all the styles, periods and genres of musical history there exists a unity transcending all the variations and details. The unity is of music made and heard here and now.¹²

Goehr reinforces these ideas during a series of discussions entitled *Modern Music and Society*, which were broadcast on BBC Radio 3 in 1978, when he calls for

a return to a humbler attitude by the composer both to his public and to his musical materials, for the reinvestigation of “common material” – modes and

⁶ Ibid., pp. 214–15.

⁷ For example, the Piano Sonata Op. 2 (1951–2).

⁸ The Concertino No.1 (1964, rev. 1968–9) and the Concerto for organ and wind (1965–6) are described by Julian Anderson as examples of taut, strictly composed serial compositions. See Anderson, Julian ‘Holloway, Robin.’ *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/13232> (accessed August 26, 2013).

⁹ The “Darmstadt School” is associated with the serial music written in the 1950s by Pierre Boulez, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Bruno Maderna and Luigi Nono.

¹⁰ Northcott, Bayan (no date available) ‘Alexander Goehr – a profile’, typed notes in BMIC file on Alexander Goehr, p. 4.

¹¹ Goehr, Alexander (1998) ed. Derrick Puffett, *Finding the Key: Selected writings of Alexander Goehr*, London: Faber and Faber. Goehr discusses this change of approach in ‘A letter to Pierre Boulez’, pp. 1–26.

¹² Ibid., p. 281.

basic shapes – rather than indulgence in ramified theoretical constructs, and for the revival of certain traditional techniques, not in the spirit of stylistic imitation but to see whether they might not offer unexpected new possibilities in a 20th century context.¹³

This change of emphasis, from the restrictions and limitations of the modernist approach towards an acceptance of past musical techniques and materials in composition, is a common factor in the works of Goehr and Holloway. Goehr has always revealed an attraction to historical genre, such as the symphony, the string quartet and piano quintet; formal structures such as variation form and sonata form; and the employment of contrapuntal techniques derived from fugal and canonic forms. But Goehr goes much further in terms of his interaction with the past models. He explains that ‘when modelling I was on my own terms and with my own means imitating the gestures of a musical idea, the nature of its continuation, the manner of its development and above all its exact proportions.’¹⁴ Goehr notes that

following a model introduced an element of meditation on a previous work of art, and an interaction with it, into the act of composition [...] it would have had no purpose if it had not also provided an inspiration, setting off the invention of new material and new ways of doing things that I could not have conceived of in another way. As often as not the aim to re-create a model acted as no more than a point of departure, and after a while the model was discarded.¹⁵

Adès also reveals an interest in historical genre in, for example, the Chamber Symphony, and formal structures such as variation form in the fourth movement of *Arcadiana* (‘Et...(tango mortale’’). Adès has acknowledged the use of a model in, for example, *Still Sorrowing* and the Piano Quintet. In each instance Adès uses the model to inspire new material following a similar approach to that described by Goehr. Adès describes how John Dowland’s ‘Semper Dowland semper dolens’ ‘occasionally informs

¹³ Northcott, ‘Alexander Goehr’, p. 5.

¹⁴ Goehr, *Finding the Key*, p. 295.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 295–6.

the harmonic and timbral world of [*Still Sorrowing*]¹⁶ but he comes much closer to Goehr's description of modelling when he uses Beethoven's *Pastoral Sonata* as a model for the Piano Quintet.¹⁷

Holloway shares Goehr's interest in the past but focuses on the use of allusion and quotation from a broad spectrum of past and more recent models and styles. In the first of Holloway's Schumann compositions, *Scenes from Schumann* (1970, revised 1986) Julian Anderson notes that 'each song is subjected to a variety of distortions, reharmonizations and reshaping, with quotations from other German Romantic music incorporated by way of free association.'¹⁸ This work represented a turning point in Holloway's compositional development. Anderson notes that it 'seemed to represent a complete rupture with the diktats of modernism.'¹⁹ Anderson sums up Holloway's relationship with earlier music by outlining four basic approaches as follows:

- 1) Direct quotation of fragments of pre-existent music, which play an integral part in the musical structure;
- 2) Allusions which 'pop up' in stream-of-consciousness fashion but which do not play any part in the overall structure;
- 3) Paraphrases or glosses upon a pre-existent piece of music which is re-composed "from inside" bar by bar;
- 4) Genre-pieces; direct hommages to earlier composers, alluding to a style but not necessarily involving any quotes at all.²⁰

In his treatment of the past Adès perhaps comes closest to Holloway. Direct quotations are rarely used, but allusions do 'pop up' to reinforce an aspect of a programme, and Adès has experimented with the recomposition of John Dowland's lute song *In Darknesse Let Mee Dwell* in his piano work *Darknesse Visible*. Adès frequently

¹⁶ Adès, Thomas programme notes for *Still Sorrowing*, London: Faber Music.

¹⁷ In the following interviews, 'Breaking the Silence', p. 28, and Adès and Service, *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*, p. 50.

¹⁸ Anderson, Julian 'Holloway, Robin.' *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/13232> (accessed August 26, 2013).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Anderson, Julian (1993) 'Robin Holloway: in medias res', *Tempo*, New Series, No. 187 (Dec.), pp. 2–3.

alludes to stylistic traits of other composers and uses these allusions as musical signifiers, intertexts that add an extra dimension and reinforce meaning in his work.

Adès began his career against this background of changing attitudes to the past and to composition. When considering Goehr's role as a teacher, Andrew Clark notes that he wished to give his students the

tools which can create expressive freedom – “to make them more like themselves, because what they often believe to be frighteningly original is generally an assortment of received ideas. All ideas, if they are any good, have been thought of before. What is original is what you do with them.”²¹

Adès' compositional approach reveals a creative combination of 'received ideas', with the past as ever present but moulded into something personal and original. When trying to position Adès in relation to the development of music at the end of the twentieth-century, critics and musicologists have applied various labels. Taruskin claims that Adès is a modernist composer²² and Hamilton seems to agree.²³ Roeder, on the other hand, identifies Adès' approach to temporal layering as a postmodern approach to musical time.²⁴ In terms of surrealism, Adès certainly reveals an obvious interest in the potential of surreal programmes in *Living Toys* (a work based on the fantastic dreams of a child) and he has indicated he may base a third opera on Luis Buñuel's surreal film *The Exterminating Angel* (1962).²⁵ Fox,²⁶ Hamilton²⁷ and Taruskin²⁸ have suggested connections with the techniques of the surrealist painters in terms of the level of detail and the sheer craftsmanship involved in Adès' musical processes. But, more convincingly, Taruskin goes further by suggesting that the

²¹ Clark, Andrew (1997) 'In search of the key to composing', *Financial Times, Arts Section*, Friday, December 12 (page unknown, excerpt in BMIC file on Alexander Goehr).

²² Taruskin, 'A Surrealist Composer', p. 144.

²³ Hamilton, 'Introduction to the Music of Thomas Adès', p. 3.

²⁴ Roeder, 'Co-operating Continuities.'

²⁵ Adès and Service, *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*, p. 54 and p. 176.

²⁶ Fox, 'Tempestuous times.'

²⁷ Hamilton, 'Introduction to the Music of Thomas Adès.'

²⁸ Taruskin, 'A Surrealist Composer.'

strongly differentiated ideas that evolve in superimposed temporal layers in Adès' scores compete for our attention in the same way as the unexpected juxtaposition of images in surreal paintings.²⁹ Hall describes Alfred Schnittke's (1934–98) use of the term 'polystylism' to 'describe his very idiosyncratic use of pastiche'³⁰ and his tendency towards the development of conflict between the various musical styles in his works. But, with the exception of the *Sonata da Caccia* in which baroque and contemporary styles battle for supremacy, Adès takes a subtle rather than antagonistic approach to the past as he absorbs, blends and disguises allusions, and makes the occasional quotation, within the fabric of his compositions.

It would seem that when attempting to put Adès into context in terms of compositional trends and approaches as the twentieth-century draws to a close, certain works may gravitate to one or other of the tendencies outlined above, but a 'one category fits all' approach simply does not apply to Adès. In line with prevalent trends in the UK towards the end of the twentieth-century, Adès' early compositions reveal hints of constructivist procedures. His very first two works, the four songs for countertenor and piano *The Lover in Winter* and *Five Eliot Landscapes*, make extensive use of interval cycles which, once set in motion, trace predetermined routes. Dissonant and consonant harmonies are produced as a by-product of the superimposition of these cycles. He reveals a modernist approach to composition in terms of musical logic and structural unity, observed in cellular, organic growth and his use of pitch systems and cycles.

But, on the other hand, Adès exhibits a postmodern tendency in terms of his approach to the distant and more recent past. Kramer views 'postmodernism more as an attitude than as a historical period' and goes on to explain that 'this anti-historical stance

²⁹ Ibid., p. 147.

³⁰ Hall, 'Music Now', p. 253.

results in a blurring of rigid distinctions among modernism, postmodernism, and antimodernism, resulting in the term “postmodernism” resisting rigorous definition.’³¹ Kramer does, however, go on to list characteristics³² that may be applied to postmodern music. His first point, when he describes postmodernism as ‘not simply a repudiation of modernism or its continuation, but [having aspects] of both a break and an extension’³³ seems particularly appropriate to Adès. Kramer also notes a lack of respect for ‘boundaries between sonorities and procedures of the past and present’ and the use of ‘quotations of or references to music of many traditions and cultures’ in his list of postmodern compositional traits. Intertexts in Adès’ music can take the form of references or allusions to periods of musical history, historical genre and formal structures, composers, or specific works; or accommodates tonal harmonic and melodic material within a dissonant harmonic vocabulary. This diversity is also reflected in his choice of extra-musical material, literature or the visual arts from across the centuries, which reveal a broad range of subject content.

Adès’ keen interest in the music of the past is evident from the very start. He uses *Five Eliot Landscapes* as an opportunity to pay homage to composers who have influenced him. Temporal layering techniques referencing the work of Carter and Nancarrow are found in the first song, and he alludes to Richard Strauss (1864–1949) in the second. The third song explores and integrates the techniques of György Kurtág (born 1926) and the fifth song makes extensive use of stylized birdsong patterns and is dedicated to Messiaen. In this work Adès reveals glimpses of his musical heritage in a work he acknowledges as his Opus 1.

³¹ Kramer, J. D., ‘The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism’, p. 16.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 16–17.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

Musical Techniques

The remainder of this chapter will focus on the identification of Adès' main compositional technique; later chapters will, through a series of case studies, explore how he puts these techniques to a variety of expressive purposes in his early chamber and vocal music. Adès' approach to composition will be placed into context with regard to current theories on referencing the past and the visual arts.

Tonality and harmony

Adès' compositional approach to the use of tonal material in his work displays nothing revolutionary but a creative amalgam, extension and combination of previously used ideas moulded into something new and original. Adès states that he does not 'believe at all in the official distinction between tonal and atonal music.'³⁴ But, he explains that 'the only way to understand these things is that they are the result of magnetic forces within the notes, which create a magnetic tension, an attraction or repulsion'³⁵ and by thinking in this way anything is possible and acceptable depending on where he feels the notes will take him.³⁶ Hall observes the use of 'diatonic triads or specific notes as points of reference [...] particularly in music that is otherwise dissonant or in a constant state of flux'³⁷ in the work of several composers in the 1980s and 1990s. He notes that Wolfgang Rihm's (born 1952) 'harmony is basically atonal, pungent and hard-edged, yet when the situation demands repose he is prepared to go beyond simple points of reference and revert to tonality.'³⁸ Adès too incorporates and amalgamates tonal material within a predominantly dissonant style; what is significant, however, is not

³⁴ Adès and Service, *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*, p. 3.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Hall, 'Music Now', p. 257.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 257. Hall clarifies the concept of tonality in this context when he notes that 'diatonic elements rarely function in the way they do in tonal music.'

what he uses but how he uses it. Adès uses tonal materials both as a source of colour and as a means of exploiting the signifying potential of triads, dyads and diatonic scales. Adès will often use tonal material to signify childhood as in *Fool's Rhymes* where streams of superimposed where three major scales are traced in superimposed, cascading streams to enhance the concept of childhood in connection with the setting of a nursery rhyme (see Ex. 2.5), and in the *Five Eliot Landscapes*, when in the early stages of childhood, the vocal line is harmonized with a series of concordant triads (see Ex. 2.2). At other times consonant material is used to signify a particular topic or topos. Take the use of triadic material in close position in bass registers to enhance to metaphorical representation of the power and weight of the bull in 'Aurochs' (see Ex. 6.9), and the use of a tonic-dominant gesture to reference not only a popular harmonic cliché in classical music, but more specifically to reference the concept of tonic-dominant polarity in classical sonata form structures (as discussed in Chapter 5).

Triads, dyads and linear voice leading

Adès integrates consonant material within a basically dissonant harmonic language in several ways. He describes how it is possible to 'just throw a few chords down' or alternatively, really scrutinize chords 'under a microscope and trace a thread that holds them together, and that leads you in all sorts of new directions.'³⁹ In this instance he is indicating the way in which he uses voice-leading no longer directed by tonality. Roeder suggests a connection with neo-Riemannian harmonic theory when he considers the way in which Adès creates chord progressions 'involving several monophonic streams',⁴⁰ each pursuing a particular interval cycle, in *Living Toys*, *Arcadiana*, *Powder Her Face* and *Traced Overhead*. Richard Cohn explains that 'Neo-Riemannian theory

³⁹ Adès and Service, *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*, p. 30.

⁴⁰ Roeder, 'Co-operating Continuities', p. 129.

arose in response to analytical problems posed by chromatic music that is triadic but not altogether tonally unified.’⁴¹ He identifies six theoretical concepts (‘triadic transformations, common-tone maximization, voice-leading parsimony, “mirror” or “dual” inversion, enharmonic equivalence, and the “Table of Tonal Relations”’) ⁴² originally developed ‘by individual nineteenth-century harmonic theorists’ and explains that ‘Neo-Riemannian theory strips these concepts of their tonally centric and dualist residues, integrates them, and binds them within a framework already erected for the study of the atonal repertoires of our own century.’⁴³

Roeder suggests that ‘chord successions of this kind often manifest “parsimonious” voice-leading under Jack Douthett and Peter Steinbach’s definition: that is, every pitch class within a given chord moves by interval class 1 or 2 to a distinct pitch class within the next chord.’⁴⁴ Douthett and Steinbach refer to Cohn’s more restrictive definition of parsimony being ‘two triads are parsimonious if they have precisely two pitch classes in common’ and that ‘this results in the displacement of the remaining pitch class by interval class 1 or 2 (a half step or a whole step).’⁴⁵ They also consider Adrian Child’s concept of parsimonious seventh chords where two pitches remain fixed and the remaining two resolve by interval class 1 or 2.⁴⁶ Douthett and Steinbach note that ‘the definition of parsimony is still evolving and, at present, not completely consistent.’⁴⁷ It is in the spirit of a more flexible and creative approach to

⁴¹ Cohn, Richard (1998) ‘Introduction to Neo-Riemannian Theory: A Survey and a Historical Perspective’, *Journal of Music Theory*, Vol. 42, No. 2, Neo-Riemannian Theory, (Autumn), p. 167.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Roeder, ‘Co-operating Continuities’, p. 129 and Douthett, Jack and Steinbach, Peter (1998) ‘A Study in Parsimony, Contextual Transformations, and Modes of Limited Transposition’, *Journal of Music Theory*, Vol. 42, No. 2, Neo-Riemannian Theory, (Autumn), pp. 241–63.

⁴⁵ Douthett and Steinbach, ‘A Study in Parsimony’, p. 243.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

parsimony that Roeder considers Adès ‘presents parsimonious voice-leading that is of a more abstract kind.’⁴⁸

Adès uses linear voice leading to produce harmonies constructed from the superimposition of melodic strands, each identified by a particular interval. These strands often (but not always) move in rhythmic unison to produce a mixture of dissonant and consonant chords. Once set in motion, these individual strands within the texture determine chord progressions, not by tonal logic, but by the linear progression of individual strands within the harmonic framework. In the following example taken from the opening bars of his first composition, *The Lover in Winter*, this process has been colour-coded. In this instance the outcome reveals a series of dissonant chord structures culminating in an enharmonic consonant enharmonic D flat minor chord.

Ex. 2.1: *The Lover in Winter*, piano and voice, bars 4–8

Piano & voice
(The voice doubles the inner line)

However, in ‘New Hampshire’, the first song of *Five Eliot Landscapes*, Adès begins to explore the possibility of incorporating more concordant harmonies (as indicated in Ex. 2.2) using this method of harmonic construction to create a sequence of triads.

⁴⁸ Roeder, ‘Co-operating Continuities’, p. 130.

Ex. 2.2: 'New Hampshire', from *Five Eliot Landscapes*, bars 22–7, piano and voice

22

Voice (upper line)
Piano (lower lines)

A maj. B maj. B maj. A maj.

In the above examples triads (consonant or dissonant) are produced as a result of calculated, linear melodic processes that have been set in motion. But elsewhere, Adès modifies this type of intervallic process to create systems that connect harmonic progressions featuring only consonant triads or dyads. A sequence of triads is directed by whole-tone and perfect fourth or fifth voice leading in the final bar of the second song of *The Lover in Winter*. In Ex. 2.3 the alternate pitches in the vocal line (moving by perfect fifth or fourth, with the introduction of just one semitone link) synchronize with pitches of a descending whole-tone scale to produce a series of major thirds. Each dyad is followed by a pitch from the vocal line that supplies the final pitch of each triad to produce a sequence of triads as illustrated in the following example.

Ex. 2.3: *The Lover in Winter*, second song, bar 5, piano and voice

Voice
(perfect fourth & fifth
movement with
semitone link)

Piano
(whole-tone strand)

C#min.

D maj. B min. A min.

This sequence of unadulterated consonant triads is used to suggest a point of repose after a strident and vigorous start (reflecting the foaming river), and, as the sun takes flight, snow begins to fall.

The previous examples have revealed Adès' interest in major and minor third dyads and triads, but perfect fourth and fifth dyads, used either melodically or

harmonically, play an equally important role in Adès' harmonic vocabulary. Adès will often use specific intervals to reflect the title or programme of a work. The perfect fifths that dominate the fabric of the first and last movements of the string quartet *Arcadiana* enhance the atmosphere of distance, remoteness of time and place, and an element of purity referencing traditional harmony such as organum. Adès creates a vibrant mix of harmonic colour to suggest the exciting and colourful imagery of a bullfight in 'Aurochs' (the second movement of *Living Toys*) when, major and minor triads alternate freely with perfect fourth dyads and triads created from superimposed perfect fifths in bars 157–73. In 'Rannoch' (the fourth song in *Five Eliot Landscapes*) Adès uses a system of chromatic expansion to create a succession of dyads that expand chromatically from a single pitch to culminate in a tritone. These violent, explosive, wedge-shaped interjections, that occur in bars 1, 4, 8 and 22, suggest gun-shots in a song that reflects on the aftermath of battle and death.

But Adès will also occasionally combine tonal chords (triads and added seventh chords) in Stravinsky-like superimpositions⁴⁹ to create dissonant chord structures. In the Chamber Symphony, at Figure C, the pianist performs a series of second inversion minor triads in treble registers superimposed on a series of seventh chords (without fifths) to create dissonant, six-pitch aggregates as illustrated in Ex. 5.6. Adès also makes use of false relation clashes to distort concordant triads and dyads; one such example from *The Origin of the Harp* is shown in Ex. 2.4. Here Adès emphasizes the arrival of *fortissimo* climax reference pitches, dyads or triads, with false relation clashes to reinforce the conflict between the mortal and immortal aspects of the nymph. At bar 17 a *fortissimo* climax on a perfect fourth dyad, on B flat and E flat, clashes with an E

⁴⁹ See for example, bars 64–8 in 'Danse Russe' from *Petrushka* (1947), and the superimposed chords of F flat major (enharmonic version of E major) and E flat7 major in the opening bars of 'Les Augurs Printaniers Danse des Adolescentes' ('The Augurs of Spring, Dances of the young girls') from *Le sacre du printemps* (1911–13).

natural to reinforce a moment of increased tension. A few bars later (bar 24) the superimposition of two triads (D minor on violas and B minor on ‘cellos and marimba) creates a B7 chord, containing an F natural/F sharp false relation clash, as a more emphatic, *fortissimo* climax point is reached.

Ex. 2.4: *The Origin of the Harp*, bar 24, violas, ‘cellos and marimba

Concordant material is also used as a source of colour, or to signify an aspect of a programme or text. For example, triadic material is used to establish the fanfare topic in ‘Aurochs’, the second movement of *Living Toys*. At the start of the movement a first inversion, G major pedal chord is established as treble register *fortissimo* triplet patterns (on G and D) unfold over a sustained bass pedal point on B. This is followed by a passage introducing bass patterns based on alternating first inversion C minor and G minor chords (still underpinned by a B natural pedal point). The tonal nature of the material is distorted through the false relation clash of the G major/minor harmonies.

In ‘Cape Ann’ (the fifth song of *Five Eliot Landscapes*) the vocalist opens the song with an acciaccatura inflected second inversion E major triad to initiate a series of monotone pitches on E; the vocal line then continues with brilliant and vivacious triadic patterns outlining E major to represent stylized birdsong patterns. Adès also uses this tonal centre as a means of establishing a connection with Messiaen (E major for

Messiaen is associated with birds and religion, as discussed in Chapter 3), to whom this song is dedicated. As the vocalist establishes the stable E major reference chord, the pianist competes with equally vigorous stylized birdsong patterns presented in contrapuntal lines, whose complex and intricate patterns reveal a full chromatic palette.

Within Adès' music we can observe a postmodern harmonic vocabulary that includes a colourful and varied harmonic palette in which concordant and dissonant structures exist side by side. But the way in which he manipulates or creates harmony or harmonic progressions through the use of intervallic systems to replace tonal processes owes more to a modernist approach to tonality and harmony.

Melody

i) Scales, interval cycles and systems

Adès' early work in particular reveals a fascination with interval cycles as a method of pitch generation. This will often involve the obsessive repetition of a single interval to construct a melody line and he has a particular affinity for interval cycles tracing whole-tone and chromatic movement. Whole-tone interval cycles are used in the opening bars of the first song of *The Lover in Winter*, and superimposed phrases tracing whole-tone and chromatic interval cycles dominate 'Rannoch.'

Adès will often use scales, modes or cycles to enhance or suggest the programmatic content of a work. In the first movement of *Living Toys* ('Angels') Adès alludes to these ancient spirits through the use of rising melodic fragments based on the pentatonic scale, at Figure F. In the second song of *Fool's Rhymes* Op. 5 (1992) the playful nature of the nursery rhyme lyrics⁵⁰ is matched by Adès' decision to

⁵⁰ Taken from *The Faber Book of Nonsense Verse* (1979), ed. by Geoffrey Grigson.

superimpose descending major scale patterns in D flat, E and F major to create a six-part canonic texture at Figure A , as shown in Ex. 2.5.

Ex. 2.5: *Fool's Rhymes*, bars 15–16, movement II, soprano, alto and harp

The image shows a musical score for three parts: Soprano (doubled by piano), Alto, and Harp. The score is in 3/4 time and begins at bar 15. The Soprano part starts with a descending scale marked *ppp mos., lontan* and includes the lyrics "The... kit-tens are gone to St. Paul's". The Alto parts start with a descending scale marked *p dolce, legg.* and include the lyrics "The Kit-tens are gone to St. Paul's... The kit-tens". The Harp part starts with a descending scale marked *pp* and includes the lyrics "The kit-tens are gone to St. Paul's... The kit-tens are gone to". The score shows staggered entries and different rhythmic patterns for each part, creating a six-part canonic texture.

Notice too that individual entries are not only staggered but they observe different rhythmic patterns so that each descending scale travels at a different speed. Once each scale has completed its descent, each thread continues moves on to pursue a different cyclic pitch-pattern, one that traces alternating minor and major thirds.

Adès also constructs melodic lines that pursue a series of intervals that methodically expand or contract chromatically. This is often paralleled by systematized rhythmic processes. The first example of this is found in the superimposed, arc-shaped phrases in the piano introduction of ‘New Hampshire’, the first of *Five Eliot Landscapes*. This process will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3. Adès makes use of drooping phrases whose intervals expand as they descend, thus enhancing forward and downward momentum. Phrases constructed in this manner dominate ‘Auf dem Wasser zu singen’ (the third movement of *Arcadiana*) where the slurred paired pitches trace intervallic expansion as shown in Ex. 2.6.

Ex. 2.6: 'Auf dem Wasser zu singen', movement III from *Arcadiana*, showing interval expansion, bars 1–2, viola and 'cello

ii) Motivic and cellular construction

Adès has stated that 'he has become more serial – certainly not in that kind of Schoenbergian sense, but when you're dealing with twelve notes and how they balance magnetically, serial thinking is at the end of that somewhere.'⁵¹ He describes his use of a series in the third movement of *In Seven Days: Concerto for Piano with Moving Image* as 'an image for organic growth.'⁵² Adès discusses how he feels the volatility of single notes and intervals and describes how even with a single pitch he 'feels all the directions it wants to move in' and regards the note as 'alive and therefore unstable.'⁵³ He talks of putting 'a note under the microscope' and of 'understanding the magnetic pull of the notes put in a given disposition.'⁵⁴ This attraction to the cellular potential of pitches leads Adès to exploit the possibilities inherent in particular interval combinations. Fox discusses the importance of this type of 'intervallic source'⁵⁵ in

⁵¹ Adès and Service, *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*, p. 151.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁵⁵ Fox, 'Tempestuous times', p. 45.

relation to the Piano Quintet, *America: A Prophecy* and *Brahms*, and Gloag emphasises the cell-like potential of the opening ‘melodic, thematic “cell”’ in the Piano Quintet.⁵⁶

Wells has noted Adès’ combination of the intervals of a perfect fifth (or perfect fourth) and minor second in many opening motives⁵⁷ but the intervals of a whole-tone and minor third also have a special significance for Adès. The anthem for male voices and organ *Gefriolsae Me* is dominated by this combination of intervals. The alto melody line evolves from a two-note cell (a semitone apart) into which other notes are gradually incorporated; each of these notes relates to the opening cell by a distance of a semitone, tone or minor third. This work will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Adès also uses this combination of intervals to produce extended melodic threads, in ‘Virginia’, from *Five Eliot Landscapes*. This song is dominated by gently undulating, superimposed, delicate melodic ribbons of sound in the piano part. These threads are constructed from constantly changing permutations of a minor second, major second and minor third and matched by rhythmic values that trace constantly changing, subtly varied semiquaver permutations observing complex ratio groupings (see Ex. 2.7).

Ex. 2.7; ‘Virginia’, bars 2–3, piano

Here, Adès has made a conscious attempt to unravel every possible combination of these three intervals. In the last song of the *Lover in Winter*, Adès adopts a similar approach but, here he uses note-heads to indicate approximate note values. This subtle,

⁵⁶ Gloag, ‘Thomas Adès and the Narrative Agendas of Absolute Music’, pp. 102–3.

⁵⁷ Wells, ‘Plural Styles, Personal Style’, p. 7.

flexible rhythmic approach allows the vocalist to respond to the natural inflections of the text through a gently undulating, descending phrase that traces a mixture of chromatic and whole-tone movement. A slightly different approach is used in the construction of the countersubject from bar 11 (violin) in the Piano Quintet when Adès begins to extend the melody line in a series of rising phrases observing the same combination of intervals (chromatic, whole-tone and minor third movement) as shown in Ex. 2.8.

Ex. 2.8: Piano Quintet, bars 11–17, violin

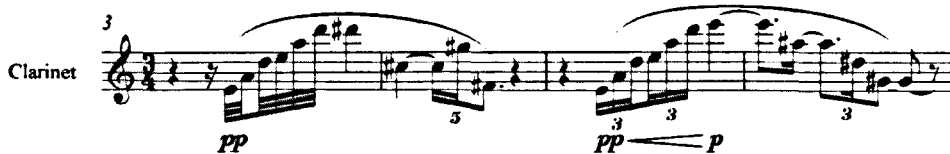
The image shows a musical score for Violin I, bars 11-17. The music is written on a single staff in treble clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody begins in bar 11 with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. Bar 12 starts with a quarter note D5, followed by quarter notes E5, F#5, and G5. Bar 13 begins with a quarter note A5, followed by quarter notes B5, C6, and D6. Bar 14 starts with a quarter note E6, followed by quarter notes F#6, G6, and A6. Bar 15 begins with a quarter note B6, followed by quarter notes C7, D7, and E7. Bar 16 starts with a quarter note F#7, followed by quarter notes G7, A7, and B7. Bar 17 begins with a quarter note C8, followed by quarter notes D8, E8, and F#8. The dynamics are marked as *fp* (fortissimo piano) at the start of bar 11 and *pp* (pianissimo) at the start of bar 17. A box with the number '1' is placed above the staff at the beginning of bar 17. The score is annotated with 'II' at the start of bar 11, 'I ^ II' above the first two notes of bar 12, and 'II' above the first two notes of bar 13.

Here the regularity of the rhythmic values (even quaver movement) is matched by a more systematized use of intervals; Adès ensures that all minor third and whole-tone movement ascends, and semitone movement descends. It would seem that Adès will often deliberately match intervals that undergo constant manipulation with rhythmic flexibility, and when adopting a more systematic use of interval cycles, or portions of cycles, he matches them with predictable rhythmic permutations.

Adès also constructs extended melody lines that are not dominated by any interval in particular, though they may include sections involving the use of the systems described above (intervallic chains of the same interval, linking intervals within these chains, alternating intervals, or systems of chromatic expansion or contraction). In *The Origin of the Harp* the shape of the main theme (introduced on the first clarinet) has

been constructed to match the shape of a harp (in response to the programme; see Ex. 2.9).

Ex. 2.9: *The Origin of the Harp*, movement I, bars 3–6, clarinet I



Even here, we see that certain intervals dominate as rapid ascents of semiquavers or demisemiquaver include chains of rising perfect fourths (plus whole-tone links), and the freer, slightly more prolonged descents, focus on perfect fifths.

iii) Octave displacement

Adès' use of octave displacement is an intervallic technique that has become an established compositional device for him. This procedure is used to distort or disguise melodic movement, and enhance the intensity of a chromatic line, as successive pitches are displaced to create an angular slippage between registers. Adès' first extended use of this technique is encountered in 'Rannoch', as chromatically descending phrases are distorted through octave displacement (from bar 9 onwards) to emphasize the emotional anguish of the text. Octave displacement is also used to exaggerate the intensity of the mood as portions of exclamations, or wails, are traced through a series of melismatic sighs by the vocalist (to the word 'oh') during bars 36–40 and 61–6 of *Life Story* (Op. 8 (1993).

A more extreme instance of Adès' use of octave displacement can be found in his first arrangement, *Darknesse Visible*. Individual threads are extracted from the

texture of the original Dowland lute song and these threads are either transposed intact into different octave locations, or subjected to octave displacement, pitch by pitch, in what Adès describes as an ‘explosion’⁵⁸ of Dowland’s work. Peter Maxwell Davies (born 1934) also uses octave displacement to distort a thirteenth-century motet in *Antechrist* (1967).

Summary

Adès reveals a very methodical approach to melody writing using interval and rhythmic processes and systems. In terms of extended melodic lines Adès will match the repetition of an interval movement with a particular note value to create a mechanical systemized unfolding of a melodic thread. The association of a particular note value with an interval cycle not only reinforces the individuality of the line, but also helps to generate a sense of propulsion through the expectation of the realization of the initiated patterns. These cycles may move independently to produce an aural tapestry of melodic lines evolving in temporal layers, or they may be superimposed, in rhythmic unison, to produce wedge-shaped harmonic progressions that progressively contract or expand. Interval cycles that ascend or descend in diagonal lines, once set in motion, take predictable and anticipated pathways to create a sense of progression. The use of octave displacement in chromatic lines encourages swift movement through registers by giving dynamic energy to a melodic strand (this may or may not be matched to a particular rhythm or rhythmic pattern).

But, at the other extreme, Adès will diffuse the energy of an individual line, so it appears to meander through time and register. He achieves this through the fastidious manipulation of a restricted number of intervals, matched by complex rhythmic

⁵⁸ Note in the preface to the score of *Darknesse Visible*: London: Faber Music.

figurations. Here, Adès creates a lack of forward momentum and it becomes difficult to anticipate how the line will move. Adès also reveals an attraction to the cellular development of motives, which once established at the start of a work, will continue to inform musical processes as the work unfolds organically.

Temporal layering and texture

Adès' use of temporal layers, each identified by tempo, rhythmic pattern, timbre, dynamic level and intervallic content, continues the work developed by composers such as Ives, Cowell, Messiaen, Carter, Nancarrow and Ligeti. Huw Belling notes Adès' interest in Ives and Nancarrow and suggests that Cowell's rhythmic ideas (in *New Musical Resources*)⁵⁹ anticipate 'Adès' eventual notational requirements' in terms of 'irrational' bars, and the division of tuplets 'such that a triplet could be distributed throughout a bar.'⁶⁰ He notes the 'multiplicity of concurrent trajectories of ascent and descent' in *Traced Overhead*: a rhythmic polyphony he describes as behaving like 'a kind of gentle ornamentation.'⁶¹ Belling describes the Piano Quintet as 'the apotheosis of Adès' exploration of irrational bars, subtle inflections of tempi, and concurrent metric trajectories'⁶² noting the meticulous scoring required to achieve 'temporal independence'⁶³ and a natural aural effect.

Adès has made no secret of the fact that he is highly impressed with the work of Nancarrow who, in his quest for perfect performances of his rhythmically and texturally complex piano studies, bought a mechanical player-piano and a punching machine in

⁵⁹ Cowell, Henry (first pub. 1930, 1996) *New Musical Resources*, ed. by David Nicholls, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁶⁰ Belling, Huw (2010) 'Thinking Irrational', unpublished M.Mus. critical project for a degree in Advanced Composition, Royal College of Music, London. He qualifies an irrational bar as one in which the lower number in a time signature is not base two, for example, 4/6, p. 5.

⁶¹ Belling, 'Thinking Irrational', pp. 21–2.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 33–4.

order to make the piano rolls. James Tenney observes that Nancarrow's studies are an 'investigation and creative realization of countless new possibilities in the area of rhythm, tempo, texture, polyphonic texture, and form.'⁶⁴ The rhythmic procedures explored in Nancarrow's studies include changing metres, simultaneous different metres, changing tempi, simultaneous different tempi, and metric or duration series. The *Studies* are exercises in counterpoint (making extensive use of canon) and temporal layering. Within these textures, each line establishes an independent tempo within which it may accelerate or slow down independently of other lines within the texture. Ligeti was also impressed by Nancarrow's work and notes that his influence is not just evident 'in the mad machine sound world but in the liveliness and awkwardness of the polymetre and in the engineered acceleration.'⁶⁵ Ligeti first encountered the music of Nancarrow in 1980 and Richard Steinitz comments that Nancarrow's 'extremely intricate polyrhythmic studies, composed for player piano [...] became for Ligeti a major inspiration.'⁶⁶ Ligeti, when explaining his approach in his *Études* (Book I (1985), Book II (1988–93) and Book III (1995)), notes that what is new 'is the possibility of a single performer being able to produce the illusion of several simultaneous layers of different tempi.'⁶⁷ It is not unreasonable to suggest that Ligeti's Piano *Études* may have influenced Adès. Both composers were developing a similar interest in interval and exploring the technique of temporal layering. Ligeti's interest in the chromatic scale is evident in 'Automne à Varsovie' (from the first book of *Études*) in which descending chromatic scales are superimposed in up to four layers, each moving at a different speed. Adès' interest in the chromatic scale has already been noted but it is the

⁶⁴ Tenney, James (1998) liner notes for *Studies for Piano player Vol. V*, Wergo Wer 6169–2 & 6168–2, p. 1.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁶⁶ Steinitz, Richard (1996) 'The Dynamics of Disorder', *The Musical Times*, Vol. 137, No. 1839 (May), p. 7.

⁶⁷ Griffiths, Paul (1997) *György Ligeti*, London: Robson, p. 117.

superimposition of scales travelling at different speeds that reveals a more convincing connection between Adès and Ligeti, and of course Nancarrow.

Adès' early interest in temporal layering can be observed in his second vocal work, *Five Eliot Landscapes*. These songs establish Adès' affinity with temporal layering and reveal a focus on the use of space, register and shape as he manipulates interval cycles in response to the text. Roeder has already noted this connection and he refers to the combination of 'elemental durational and pitch continuities within a single stream so that their realised projections are made to reinforce one another.'⁶⁸ He defines continuity 'as an association between two precepts, formed when the second realises a mental projection that was made of the first.'⁶⁹ In other words, once a pattern is established, both rhythmically and intervallically, the anticipation of the subsequent fulfilment of our expectation as the cycle is pursued creates a strong sense of continuity. These interval cycles are identified primarily by interval and rhythm, as discussed earlier, but they can be characterized further through dynamic levels, articulation, attack, timbre and tessitura.

Adès occasionally presents an almost static experience of time. Roeder notes that in 'Lethe', the last movement of *Arcadiana*, the tempo slows to the extent that 'notational metrical continuity is tenuous at best, and [...] is soon permitted to evaporate.' He explains that continuity 'arises only sporadically in the form of short slurred groups which, since they proceed to change from short to indeterminably long durations, exert no form sense of direction.'⁷⁰ At this point the journey traced throughout *Arcadiana* is coming to an end and the music gradually fades to match the concept of vanishing explored in the work. A similar effect of timelessness is achieved

⁶⁸ Roeder, 'Co-operating Continuities', p. 126.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

through the adoption of a pointillist texture at the start of the final movement of *The Origin of the Harp*. Isolated pitches and short fragments, presented so as to avoid any sense of connection or forward momentum in terms of metre or pitch patterns, give the impression of the disorientation experienced in the moments immediately after the transformation of the nymph into a harp.

i) Structure: pedal points and reference pitches or chords

The unfolding temporal layers within a texture are often supported by sustained or repeated pitches (pedal points or reference pitches). These long-range, slow-moving supporting layers may support an entire section of work or song and their slow pace seems to accentuate the faster movement in the remaining layers. Adès uses pedal points, reference pitches, or reference chords to provide a source of stability, points of reference, or to supply an underlying framework during extended passages of music. He occasionally uses pedal points that imply tonic or dominant roles. Take for example, the long-range implied perfect cadence using sustained bass pedal points on G (bars 1–24) and C (bars 25–40) underpinning the anthem *Gefriolsae Me* (see Ex. 3.59). In this instance, the placement of the pedal points in bass registers using very restrained dynamic levels renders them almost inaudible. These pedal points do, however, provide an important supporting framework, a foundation over which two independently unfolding upper layers of material layers unfold, but the tonal force of these pedal points is diminished.

In several works, reiterated or sustained pitches, pedal points and chords support shorter sections to provide points of reference as the music unfolds. Reiterated monotone pitches in the third song of *The Lover in Winter* provide anchor points for complex piano figurations. In the first song, ‘New Hampshire’, from *Five Eliot*

Landscapes, reiterated drone pitches on A and D in the bass register of the piano, support upper harmonic progression created through the superimposing of interval cycles in bars 86–97.

On occasions Adès uses triads as reference points. In the third movement of *The Origin of the Harp* a series of three minor triads occur at strategic points, all preceded by ascending streams of superimposed whole-tone and chromatic scales, in a series of increasingly climatic surges. Here we can trace a long-range harmonic structure guided by an underlying chromatic process as indicated in Table 2.1. The first B minor chord occurs at Figure L and the root of each subsequent chord descends a semitone (indicated by the arrow) to become the fifth of the following chord to produce a systematically constructed sequence created by an intervallic system.

Table 2.1: *The Origin of the Harp*, movement III, overview of triad relationships

Fig. L (bar 90)	Fig. N (103)	Fig. O (bar 115)
F# D B		
	Bb Gb Eb	
		D Bb G
B minor	Eb minor	G minor

This movement is discussed in Chapter 7.

ii) Colour: timbre, articulation and dynamics

Adès describes how he feels ‘no distinction between colour and timbre and pitches’ and that he approaches ‘notes and colour as inseparable, two sides of the same coin.’⁷¹ Adès does not consider orchestration as an afterthought; it is part of the compositional process. Colour, in the form of timbre, articulation, attack and dynamics, becomes an integral factor in the identification of the individuality of the various layers at work within his music. He still considers that ‘the orchestra, as a basic palette, still has the most variety.’⁷² Adès is often drawn towards the use of restrained *pianissimo* tone qualities, requiring the use of a range of mutes on brass instruments and *sul tasto*, *sul ponticello* and string harmonics. He makes extensive use of these subtle tones to create delicate pointillistic textures, for example in the final movement of *The Origin of the Harp*. Adès also reveals a preference for subtle shades in the bass register through the use of instruments in their lowest registers. These dark colours are often contrasted with brilliant passages on high treble instruments, or instruments performing in their highest registers. In the third movement of *Living Toys*, ‘Militiamen’, Adès contrasts the bright voice of the piccolo trumpet with guttural grunts from low woodwind and strings.

Every musical aspect of an idea, with its particular combination of rhythmic and pitch patterning, is matched with timbre, articulation and dynamic colour to exaggerate and highlight its individuality. In Adès’ early songs we can see how the shape, direction, rhythmic and intervallic identity of a melodic strand is enhanced and identified through tessitura, attack, articulation and dynamic levels. This will be explored in Chapter 3. In his instrumental ensemble works the various layers or ideas are characterized not only through the allocation of individual instruments, instrumental groups or instrumental combinations, but also through tessitura and instrumental

⁷¹ Adès and Service, *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*, p. 156.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 71.

technique. Adès uses the technique of *Klangfarbenmelodie*, a technique associated with Webern, to distribute small portions or fragments of phrases between different instruments. This technique is exploited in *Les baricades mystérieuses* and in the third movement of *The Origin of the Harp*.

Adès is an accomplished pianist and he reveals a particular fascination with the exploitation of subtle tones from this instrument. A prepared piano, in the manner of John Cage (1912–92), is used in the Chamber Symphony; some bass strings are stopped with the insertion of an eraser, and two treble strings are prepared by placing a screw between the middle and right-hand strings of each note. Adès experiments with the placement of a strip of Blu-tac over a range of strings in *Still Sorrowing*. Adès indicates that 'the sustaining pedal be securely weighted down throughout with the lid open' on the grand piano used in *The Origin of the Harp* to gently release overtones as this work progresses. The first entry for the pianist occurs at the end of the third movement when the sounding board is struck with a wooden stick and the string scraped with a ruler. Finally as the work draws to a close, the lowest E flat string is plucked to provide *fortissimo* interjections that resonate to support a texture of strummed and tremolo patterns on strings.

Adès has a particular attraction to the percussion section and his orchestral works require a wide range of tuned and untuned instruments. The percussion section is exploited not only for its range of tone-colour, often engaging with a title or programme, but also for its ability to fulfil a structural role in identifying or reinforcing reference points in the music. *The Origin of the Harp* is a good case in point: it makes use of shells and wind chimes to provide a link with the sea and a range of drums to provide a primitive association to the unfolding events. Adès occasionally includes more unusual resources inspired by the title or programme of a work: in *Powder Her*

Face the percussionist uses a popgun, fishing reel and an assortment of ‘scrap metal.’ The more structural role of the percussion section can also be seen, as it marks out important events within the sonata form structure during the first movement of the Chamber Symphony. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

iii) Summary

Adès’ use of temporal layering, each layer strongly identified in terms of tone colour, harmonic colour, articulation, register, and dynamic level has been identified by Taruskin as providing a link with the techniques of the surrealist movement in art. He claims that Adès’ music, through its superimposed ‘sonic collages and mobiles’ and ‘outlandish juxtapositions of evocative sound objects [...] makes it evident that he is a masterly surrealist within minutes, no matter which piece of his you choose to listen to.’⁷³ Anne LeBaron notes how ‘two principal components - automatism and collage [are] fundamental to the link between surrealism and collage [...] especially some music for which the adjective “postmodern” is appropriate.’⁷⁴ Her observations of relationship between collage and ‘musical simultaneities, pluralities, borrowing, and sudden juxtapositions of unrelated materials’⁷⁵ have some resonance in the works of Adès, particularly in relation to evolving layers of strongly differentiated materials. These ideas will be explored in Chapter 6.

⁷³ Taruskin, ‘A Surrealist Composer’, p. 147.

⁷⁴ LeBaron, Anne (2002) ‘Reflections of Surrealism in Postmodern Musics’, in *Postmodern Music/Postmodern Thought*, ed. by Judy Lochhead and Joseph Auner, New York and London: Routledge, p. 27.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

References to the past

Adès' relationship with the past is central to his approach to composition. Jonathan Kramer notes a 'difference in perspective between a modernist and a postmodernist quotation - modernist composers often want to take over, to own, to demonstrate their mastery of that which they are quoting, either by placing it in modernist contexts or by distorting it' whereas 'postmodernists are more content to let the music they refer to or quote simply be what it is, offered with neither distortion nor musical commentary.'⁷⁶ Kramer also notes that 'some of today's postmodern music offers its listeners extraordinary discontinuities that go beyond contrast, variety, consistency, and unity.' He cites John Zorn's *Forbidden Fruit*, where 'musical styles of any era or of any culture can intrude, possibly unexpectedly.'⁷⁷ But Adès does not fit neatly into either of these extremes. He refers to his references to past music 'as "found" things, more as "keepings" [...] things that are already in one's cupboard [...] which you don't bother to throw out, because there's still some use in them.'⁷⁸ He regards these 'keepings' as 'doorways into [his] own music' and describes how an arrival into a definite key would feel 'like a lift door opening on an unexpected floor, and I would then use that door into a piece by somebody else.'⁷⁹ Adès also describes how he 'would push that borrowing into [his] own language.'⁸⁰ He notes that 'the deeper, subcutaneous influences that really make those "keepings" sound the way they do are quite concealed [...] the real influences are more out of sight, at the level of what is happening in the music.'⁸¹

Adès' approach to previously existing material falls into three main categories. He makes direct and explicit use of material from a work by another composer in his

⁷⁶ Kramer, J. D., 'The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism', p. 15.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Adès and Service, *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*, p. 26.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 27.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 26.

arrangements; he alludes to the stylistic features of other composers; and he uses historical genres (symphony, concerto, string quartet and sonata), musical structures (fugue, sonata form, toccata), and dance topics.

i) Arrangements

Adès regards *Les baricades mystérieuses* and *Cardiac Arrest* as studies which were created for specific events, completed in a matter of hours and from memory. In these works Adès reveals a preference for dark colours (both scored for clarinet and bass clarinet, viola, cello and double bass (a piano duet is added to *Cardiac Arrest*)) and, in the case of *Les baricades mystérieuses*, the confirmation of an enduring fascination with the work of Couperin. The scoring of *Les baricades mystérieuses* alternates between the straightforward wholesale allocation of phrases to instruments, and the division of fragments between instruments to create a more pointillist effect. The arrangement of *Cardiac Arrest* is designed, through an imaginative approach to orchestration, to enhance the intensity of the lyrics and create an exaggerated and almost surreal version of the song.

The piano piece *Darknesse Visible* would seem to come close to Holloway's idea of recomposing a piece from the 'inside.'⁸² Adès describes how he adds no notes to Dowland's lute song *In Darknesse Let Mee Dwell* and explains how 'patterns latent in the original have been isolated and regrouped, with the aim of illuminating the song from within, as if during the course of a performance.'⁸³ Adès has once again decided to rely on timbre and dynamic colouring to make his mark on a work. He also reveals the additional imaginative use of octave displacement to explore extreme registers and transform conjunct phrases into delicate arc-shaped phrases that traverse the keyboard.

⁸² Holloway, Robin (1977) composer's note to the score of *Scenes from Schumann*.

⁸³ Adès, Thomas (1992) introductory notes in the preface to the score of *Darknesse Visible*.

In all these arrangements Adès has remained, in the main, faithful to the model in terms of pitch and rhythm, and because of this it exposes his approach to orchestration. These works will be explored in more detail with this in mind in Chapter 4.

ii) **Homage**

Adès pays homage to a broad range of composers, some of which are directly acknowledged but others more subtly suggested by a title or programme; stylistic techniques are referenced but it is rare to come across a direct quotation. The techniques of baroque composers such as Couperin, Corelli and Lully are explored in *Sonata da Caccia*; Mozart is quoted, and Schubert and Elgar alluded to in *Arcadiana*. A veiled allusion to Schumann appears in 'Aetheria', the second movement of *Traced Overhead*, and *Still Sorrowing* alludes to Dowland's lute song *Semper Dowland Semper Dolens*. The *Mazurkas Op. 27* (2009) pay tribute to Chopin. Composers from the more recent past are also represented and include references to Debussy (a brief allusion to 'Des pas sur la neige' from the first book of *Preludes* occurs during the opening bars of the first song *The Lover in Winter*), and as we have seen, Adès pays homage to Carter, Nancarrow, Strauss, Kurtág and Messiaen in *Five Eliot Landscapes*. Inference by title can be found in the fourth movement of *Living Toys*, 'H.A.L.'s Death', referencing Stanley Kubrick's film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) and providing an indirect connection to Ligeti.⁸⁴

Various theories have emerged as to why and how composers reference the past. Joseph Straus lists three models of influence: the 'influence of immaturity', the

⁸⁴ Extracts from Ligeti's *Requiem*, *Atmosphères* and *Aventures* were used in the film by the director Stanley Kubrick, without the composer's permission.

‘influence of generosity’, and the ‘influence of anxiety.’⁸⁵ Initially an immature composer may, for example, imitate music by a teacher. His ‘generosity theory’ reflects Eliot’s view of influence ‘as enriching an artist’ but he notes that ‘in Eliot’s view, true artistic creativity involves self-denial, a willingness to open and subordinate oneself to the influence of the past.’⁸⁶ Straus explains that Meyer and Charles Rosen are influenced by this concept of the beneficial process through which tradition evolves, one which involves the concept ‘of surrender [...] to something which is more valuable.’⁸⁷ But, Straus explains that ‘by incorporating traditional elements, twentieth-century composers enter into dialogue with their predecessors; by radically reinterpreting those elements, they inject a spirit of anxious revisionism into the dialogue.’⁸⁸ In his earliest works Adès acknowledges the influence of earlier composers, occasionally through a specified homage (for example, in *Five Eliot Landscapes*), though there is no evidence of submission or anxiety, as previously noted by Hamilton⁸⁹ and Whittall.⁹⁰ Compositional techniques are subtly acknowledged and integrated into Adès’ style and used for his own ends.

A more useful approach to Adès’ use of the past may be considered in the light of Martha Hyde’s work on neoclassicism and anachronism. She explains that ‘a neoclassical aesthetic reaches across a cultural gap and tries anachronistically to recover or revive a past model.’⁹¹ Hyde suggests that ‘to perceive musical anachronism necessarily requires you to recognize that history affects period style and that period

⁸⁵ Straus, Joseph N. (1990) *Remaking the past: musical modernism and the influence of the tonal tradition*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 9.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁸⁹ Hamilton, ‘Introduction to the Music of Thomas Adès.’

⁹⁰ Whittall, ‘James Dillon, Thomas Adès, and the Pleasure of Allusion.’

⁹¹ Hyde, Martha (1996) ‘Neoclassic and Anachronistic Impulses in Twentieth-Century Music’, *Music Theory Spectrum*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Autumn), p. 204.

style affects comparison.⁹² Metamorphic anachronism ‘involves deliberate dramatization of historical passage, bringing the present into relation with a specific past and making the distance between them meaningful.’⁹³ Hyde notes that metamorphic anachronism provides a ‘less direct but more important access to the past [and] involves various kinds of imitation.’⁹⁴ She identifies four types of imitation: ‘reverential, eclectic, heuristic and dialectical.’ Of the four categories the final two, those that consider a deeper relationship with a source or model, seem more appropriate to Adès. Hyde observes that heuristic imitation ‘accentuates rather than conceals the links it forges with the past. It advertises its dependence on an earlier model, but in a way that forces us to recognize the disparity, the anachronism, of the connection being made [...] it relies on the datedness of musical styles for its aesthetic effect.’⁹⁵ Hyde describes dialectical imitation as a more competitive process involving ‘a more aggressive dialogue between a piece and its model’⁹⁶ and suggests that this process ‘invites and risks reciprocal treatment – a two-way dialogue, a mutual exchange of criticism.’⁹⁷

Adès explores these deeper types of relationship in works that display an obvious connection to the past through their use of historical genre and formal structures. Goehr’s love of academic forms may well have influenced Adès in this respect. Adès pays his respects to the past through his engagement with traditional genres such as the symphony (Chamber Symphony and large-scale symphony *Asyla*); the concerto (*Concerto Conciso* and *Violin Concerto: Concentric Paths* (2005)); chamber ensembles (the string quartets *Arcadiana* and *The Four Quarters* (2010), and

⁹² Ibid., p. 205.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 214.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 222.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

the Piano Quintet; lute song (*The Lover in Winter*); the baroque trio sonata (*Sonata da Caccia*); the Mazurka (*Mazurkas* for piano); and opera (chamber opera *Powder her Face* and *The Tempest*).

iii) Dance rhythms

Adès' use of dance rhythms, often prompted by the title or text of a work, draws on dance styles from across the centuries. Dance rhythms, each with their associated metre, rhythmic patterns and stresses, provide an isotope, a motif or device with strong, familiar association. In *Sonata da Caccia* he makes specific reference to a past style of by employing dance forms of the baroque period. In this work, Adès models the first movement on a stately sarabande and, later in the movement, hints at the minuet. The third movement of this work employs the rhythm of the sicilienne and the fourth movement, the gavotte.

Adès is especially fond of the tango because of its association with death and sex. He uses the rhythms of the tango in the fourth movement of *Arcadiana*: 'Et... (tango mortale)' and uses string techniques and harmonic and melodic gestures to suggest the bandoneon and the dance movement. A tango overture sets the scene for *Powder Her Face*, a cabaret opera that focuses on tragedy and sex. An attraction to contemporary club culture is revealed, in the form of rave dance music, in 'Ecstasio', the third movement of *Asyla*, a work in which, according to Venn, Adès explores the power of 'the kinetic energy of gesture.'⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Venn, 'Narrativity in Thomas Adès' *Ecstasio*', p. 76.

iv) Summary

In works that pay homage to the past Adès engages with the model as an equal partner. The balance can shift in favour of past or present, and yet at other times the two become inextricably bonded. Adès may focus on a particular genre or formal structure but he will often include reference to a particular composer, or composers, and possibly a specific work. The *Sonata da Caccia* engages with the baroque trio sonata, its dance form rhythms and structures, textures and ornamentation, and Lully's concept of an *apothéose* in that the work pays homage to Couperin and Debussy. Variation form also has a strong appeal for Adès with the passacaglia or chaconne providing an underlying structure in the fourth movement of *Arcadiana*, 'Et...(tango mortale).'

In his arrangements Adès retains a respect for the model to the extent that he limits his influence to that of instrumental colour. In other works we may experience a fleeting glimpse or allusion to a composer or style to enhance the programme or title. Quotations are rare and used for programmatic effect. For example, the song 'Daisy Daisy'⁹⁹ is used in 'H.A.L.'s Death' in *Living Toys*, though it is well hidden. On a deeper level, in pieces that pay a direct homage to a composer, there is an assimilation and integration of the techniques of that composer with his own. The clearest example of this technique is to be found in *Five Eliot Landscapes*. A much more critical acknowledgement of the past can be found in works that engage with and confront past and present conceptions of the function of genre and formal structures, with reference to composers that have strong connections to these historical forms.

⁹⁹ 'Daisy Daisy' is the chorus of the music hall song *Daisy Bell* composed by Harry Dacre in 1892.

Extramusical influences: literature and art

Adès' eclecticism in his choice of compositional elements and techniques, and his referencing of works by a wide range of past composers, is matched by a broad appetite for literature; the use of evocative titles (of works and/or movements) and cover images on scores; references to works of art; and the use of texts and programme notes in the preface notes of his scores.

i) Literature (texts and titles): vocal works

Adès' interest in literature, especially early literature, is likely to have been partly inspired by his father; for example, his first published work, *The Lover in Winter*, uses a translation of an anonymous Latin text (dated before 1200) provided by him.¹⁰⁰ *Totentanz* (2013) uses an anonymous fifteenth-century German text. Adès' taste in literature reveals an eclecticism that spans the centuries with a fascination for more obscure literary works, such as *The Lover in Winter*, as well as those by mainstream poets. Subject matter can range from humorous or sexual, or religious and spiritual at the other extreme. Adès sets Eliot in *Five Eliot Landscapes* and uses a controversial paraphrased version of William Shakespeare's (1564–1616) *The Tempest* (by Meredith Oakes) for the libretto of *The Tempest*. Ivan Hewett describes Oakes's simplification of the plot as giving it 'a witty, 18th-century feel.'¹⁰¹ Venn comments that this simplified version makes 'it more suitable for the opera house' noting how 'the idiom has similarly been updated, with pervasive use of short rhyming couplets replacing Shakespearean

¹⁰⁰ Adès, Timothy (2004) translation of 'The Lover in Winter', liner notes for Thomas Adès' *America: A Prophecy*, EMI Classics, p. 28.

¹⁰¹ Hewett, Ivan (2004) 'He's brilliant – but can he deliver?' *The Daily Telegraph*, Monday February 2, p. 17.

iambic pentameter.’¹⁰² But, on the other hand, he also notes ‘the occasional lapse into triteness.’¹⁰³

Life Story and *Powder Her Face* deal with explicitly sexual texts. The text for *Life Story*, taken from *In the Winter of Cities* (1956) by Tennessee Williams (1911–83), deals with post-coital pillow talk with a stranger, and *Powder Her Face*, based on a libretto by Philip Hensher, explores the scandalous sexual exploits of the Duchess of Argyll. Adès explores humour in his chamber work *Brahms*, based on a poem by Alfred Brendel (‘Brahms II’ from *One Finger Too Many* (1998)), which pokes fun at Brahms in the form of an anti-homage. The choral work *Fool’s Rhymes* features a combination of religious material and nonsense poems using texts from sermons of John Donne and anonymous Elizabethan and fourteenth-century nonsense poems.

Adès’ output includes a series of religious works. The anthem *Gefriolsae Me* takes its text from Psalm 51 in Anglo-Saxon and the text for his second anthem *O thou who didst’t with pitfall and with gin* is taken from the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, translated into English. Two further choral works are in English: *The Fayrfax Carol* uses a fifteenth-century anonymous text and *January Writ* (1999) is based on Ecclesiastes 6.6.

Adès is also drawn to grand themes and *America: A Prophecy* addresses the Spanish conquest of the Maya. The text for the soprano soloist is adapted by Adès from the books of Chilam Balam (Mayan) and the text for the chorus, according to Griffiths is ‘based on an “ensalada” (a musical salad of popular melodies) entitled *La guerra*, written by the Spanish composer Matteo Flecha quite possibly at the very time, the 1530s–40 s, when the Maya were being subdued-released.’¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Venn, review of *The Tempest*, p. 72.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Griffiths, liner notes for *America: A Prophecy*, EMI Classics, p. 5.

ii) Descriptive titles and programmes

Adès uses descriptive titles and programmes in his bid to use music as a metaphor, to suggest a sense of location, to reinforce specific topoi, or to imply additional layers of meaning beyond the music itself. Adès occasionally links a specific text to a work or implies a text through a title. The title for the orchestral work *...but all shall be well* Op. 10 (1993) is taken from *Little Gidding*, the last of Eliot's *Four Quartets*, and the portion of the poem containing this fragment is included in the front cover of the score. The lyrics of the Dowland song are used to influence decisions regarding changes of texture and register in the arrangement of *Darknesse Visible* for piano (discussed in Chapter 4), and what he claims to be an anonymous Spanish text, which Adès now admits he made up,¹⁰⁵ outlining the aspirations and dreams of a child, acts as a programme for *Living Toys*.

A predilection for the use of descriptive titles can be noted in many of Adès' instrumental works, though a less obvious implication or undertone is often present. Adès describes the title of his string quartet *Arcadiana* as evoking 'an image associated with the ideas of the idyll, vanishing, vanished or imaginary.'¹⁰⁶ Behind this journey through imaginary idylls lies a philosophical journey. A spiritual journey can also be traced through *Five Eliot Landscapes* and *Living Toys*.

Adès explains that 'all pieces have a subject, whether stated in the title or not' and claims that he does not 'see the distinction between abstract music and programme music.'¹⁰⁷ He describes how 'music is metaphorical' and how he

can now access more immediately the metaphorical implications of a note or two notes, without the need for an image or picture, whereas in the past, the

¹⁰⁵ Adès and Service, *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*, p. 72.

¹⁰⁶ Adès, Thomas (1994) programme and performance notes in the preface to the score of *Arcadiana*, London: Faber Music.

¹⁰⁷ Adès and Service, *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*, p. 5.

metaphorical freight was expressed in a title or idea. It doesn't bother me much either way; it's a natural, musical process.¹⁰⁸

The connections between texts, images or pictures, and music, are developed as part of the compositional process and this extramusical stimulus helps the composer to clarify the nature of the work as well as enhance the listeners' connection with the music.

Visual Art

Adès makes use of visual images or paintings to achieve the same amplification of the listening experience. Many composers have referred to the visual arts as a source of inspiration and his teachers Goehr and Holloway are no exception. Williams explains how, in the 1990s, Goehr

combines the embrace of inspiration from painting or literature with the solving of musical problems. Goehr's orchestral *Colossus or Panic* (1991–2), after Goya, concerns the dramatic relationship between movements of strongly contrasting durations.¹⁰⁹

Rodney Lister comments that the programme notes reveal Mussorgsky's *Night on a Bare Mountain* as a model.¹¹⁰ Andrew Burn explains that 'extra-musical sources have frequently provided inspiration for Holloway's music; in *Seascape and Harvest* it is the visual arts, with paintings by Caspar David Friedrich and Breughel providing the starting points.'¹¹¹ Adès' interest in the visual arts is acknowledged in various ways. Firstly, visual material is used on the front covers of his scores. *La promenade en barque* by Jacques de Lajoue is presented on the cover of *Arcadiana* to make us aware that not only are we about to experience and explore, according to Adès, 'ideas of the

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁰⁹ Jacobs, Arthur et al. 'Goehr.' *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/53781pg.2> (accessed August 26, 2013).

¹¹⁰ Lister, Rodney (1993) 'A New Goehr Work in Boston', *Tempo*, No. 185 (June), p. 27.

¹¹¹ Burn, Andrew (1986) 'Seascape and Harvest', *Tempo*, No. 158 (September), p. 45.

idyll',¹¹² that we are to be drawn into the distant past and are about to embark on a journey. The cover photograph on the front cover of *Life Story* features 'Mirrored wardrobe in a brothel' (1932 by Gilberte Brassai). In this instance we are left in little doubt of the nature of what is to follow. The cover drawing of *The Rape of Ganymede* after Michelangelo, illustrated on the front cover of *Traced Overhead*, in the first instance parallels the obvious idea of ascent, suggested by the title of *Traced Overhead*. This is confirmed by Adès' explanation of the way in which upward movement is traced through all three movements.¹¹³ But deeper resonances may be suggested in terms of sexuality. Kramer explains that 'Ganymede's rape by the eagle was a fairly widespread icon of homosexual love, both in poetry and (especially) the visual arts'¹¹⁴ and his analysis of a setting of Goethe's 'Ganymed' by Wolf provides an excellent starting point for further investigation in this direction.¹¹⁵

Secondly, in three works Adès acknowledges links between named visual works of art. Adès confirms specific links with paintings through titles and programme notes in *Arcadiana* and *The Origin of the Harp*. In *Arcadiana* the fourth movement uses the first word of the Latin inscription of *Et in Arcadia ego* by Nicolas Poussin (1593/4–1665) and the fifth movement relates to *The Embarkation from the Island of Cythera* by Jean Antoine Watteau (1684–1721). These paintings would appear to have a similar function as titles, though through the choice of artist and painting, we are able to deduce not only an activity or subject, but also a time and place. Tarasti's semiotic analysis of *Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition* considers the way in which 'a composer

¹¹² Adès, programme and performance notes in the preface to the score of *Arcadiana*.

¹¹³ Adès, Thomas (1997) notes in the front cover of the score of *Traced Overhead*.

¹¹⁴ Kramer, L., *Music as Cultural Practice*, p. 166. See Chapter 5, 'Musical Form and Fin-De-Siècle Sexuality', section III, pp. 165–75.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

transforms external icons, indexes, and symbols into internal ones.’¹¹⁶ When considering each picture in Mussorgsky’s work he looks at the way in which ‘realistic and representational elements borrowed from the natural world are internalized into the musical discourse, into the kinetic-energetic network of the musical text.’¹¹⁷ The two paintings connected to *Arcadiana* suggest signs, tokens, or conventions, implied by time, place and image and I will explore how these elements are realized in musical form in the fourth and fifth movements in Chapter 7.

Adès’ programme notes (at the front of the score) for *The Origin of the Harp* focus on the concepts he intends to develop in the work. He describes how the water nymph ‘struggles to leave her element’ but, with the help of the Gods, she is turned into a harp. He talks of ‘metamorphosis’ and observes the shape of the harp revealed through her stance. He notes that ‘the harp itself is not featured but suggested.’¹¹⁸

Structural procedures, textures and timbre are closely connected to all three works of art and seem to go further, and deeper, than a programme of events suggested by each painting. We could consider these works as examples of what Bruhn describes as musical ekphrasis in terms of the way a painting can be ‘re-presented’ by taking into consideration not only the visual scene presented but also taking into account ‘its style, its form, its mood, or conspicuous arrangement of details.’¹¹⁹ The extent to which we might consider Adès’ compositional approach to these paintings as examples of musical ekphrasis will be considered in Chapter 7.

¹¹⁶ Tarasti, *A Theory of Musical Semiotics*, p. 209.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Adès, programme note in the cover of the score of *The Origin of the Harp*.

¹¹⁹ Bruhn, ‘A Concert of Paintings’, p. 553.

Conclusion

When talking to Culshaw, Adès comments that 'it's a very English thing to be a lone figure on the mountain top. Britten was a pretty solitary, strange figure, too.'¹²⁰ From this comment it is clear that Adès does not consider himself to be part of a trend: he has found his own pathway, one in which British, American and Hungarian influences all play their part, and one in which modernist and postmodernist ideals are significant. When discussing the process of composition Adès comments 'I can use anything I want in my music – the sound of a tram, Mahler, I don't care. It all comes through me.'¹²¹ Adès takes a typically postmodern approach to the past, in that the past is ever present to provide a resource that is always available for intellectual and emotional scrutiny. But Adès takes a modernist stance in that as he exploits the anachronistic possibilities of a model and pursues areas of compatibility and conflict, this process involves a dialogue between the model and Adès' music. This involves the close observation of elements of the previous style, work or composer and the 'integration' of these aspects within his own style.

Adès' approach to tonality and harmony displays a similar approach in that anything and everything is available. This ranges from obvious tonal references, provided by pedal points, chords, and diatonic scales, to modality, pentatonic and whole-tone scales, interval cycles, and chromaticism. Major or minor triads, dyads, quartal harmony, perfect fifth towers, dissonant aggregates, and cluster chords all form part of his broad harmonic palette. Harmonies are used for colouristic effect, as points of reference, or function within progressions created through linear voice leading. Adès' fascination with interval can be seen in an almost obsessive use of cycles and systems, and cellular manipulation in the creation of melody, dyads and chords. Phillip Lambert

¹²⁰ Culshaw, 'Don't call me a Messiah.'

¹²¹ Ibid.

notes a similar interest in pitch cycles and patterns to ‘provide nontonal methods of organization’¹²² in the work of Ives.

Rhythmic complexity prevails for the most part through the use of fastidiously notated rhythmic patterns that create a free and flexible passage through time. But Adès also makes use of passages employing simpler rhythmic systems, such as the repetition of a single rhythmic value (or a repeated rhythmic pattern) to match melody lines tracing equally insistent interval cycles. Adès also makes use of more consistent metrical frameworks, with rhythms suggested by dance forms, past and present, or the use of ostinati as a point of reference and stability. In some works Adès deliberately avoids metrical continuity in a fragmented texture that creates a sense of timelessness. The use of rhythmic ostinati and cyclic processes brings to mind the work of Birtwistle.

Adès reveals a predilection for fluid, contrapuntal textures in which layers move independently of one another. Although the metre remains the same, various layers within a texture can be identified through rhythm, interval, colour (timbre, dynamics and attack), and tessitura using procedures favoured by Ives, Carter, Nancarrow and Ligeti. As an extension of this process he explores the possibilities of temporal layering in the *Concerto Conciso* and the Piano Quintet. Adès’ fascination with temporal layering is matched by his exploitation of shape and space. Visual and aural dimensions join forces as carefully crafted shapes emerge in his music. Adès also reveals his sensitivity to space, noting spatial arrangements of instruments both on the concert platform and off-stage (*Polaris* (2010) features an offstage brass ensemble).

Adès creates his works through the development and evolution of the smallest musical ‘cells’, for example a single pitch or an interval. Adès’ musical material develops at a microscopic level as he considers each pitch or interval and its countless

¹²² Lambert, L. Philip (1990) ‘Cycles as Compositional Resources in the Music of Charles Ives’, *Music Theory Spectrum*, Vol. 12 (1), p. 81.

possibilities. He describes how he considers notes as ‘a collection of physical entities, of elements with distinct chemical properties. You’re like a chemist, dealing with atoms and molecules; or the intervals might be particular kinds of drug, each with a different pharmaceutical property, used to various effect.’¹²³ He is interested in seeing these ‘different elements in a clear glass jar [...] as separate entities.’¹²⁴ As these fragments develop they are inextricably bound to timbre and colour and, in terms of formal structures, he describes how the ‘impulse comes first, the method second.’¹²⁵ As his ideas develop, subjects or associations arise instinctively out of the material, and musical connections to literature, art, and past composers, specific works or styles, are made through the use of titles or texts. Adès’ significance as a composer can be seen not in the specific material he employs but the way that he uses and develops it. He adds an extramusical dimension to his works, through the use of titles, programme notes and visual images, to enhance the imaginative, intellectual and emotional content of his music, but the musical integrity of a work, through its process and structure, always comes first.

¹²³ Adès and Service, *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*, p. 56.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 56–7.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Chapter 3: Word Setting and Musical Techniques

The aim of this chapter is to examine Adès' emerging compositional style during his time at Cambridge University. The four vocal works that will be investigated, two for solo voice and piano, and two anthems for male voices, reveal Adès' attraction to a range of literary sources. Anonymous Latin love lyrics are used in *The Lover in Winter*; a less well known set of poems by Eliot is set in the *Five Eliot Landscapes*; a text is taken from the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam for *O thou who didst't with pitfall and gin*; and a biblical text in Anglo Saxon is selected for *Gefriolsae Me*. Adès' response to literature in terms of his use of interval, shape, texture, rhythm, and reference to past composers through homage, allusion, and quotation, will be examined in these case studies.

The importance of shape and register, and Adès' almost obsessive fascination with intervallic relationships, is seen through the extensive use of interval cycles; melodic strands that are characterized through the exclusive use of one interval. In order to appreciate Adès' use of intervals cycles, and to reveal his use of shape and tessitura, I have represented his music in graphic form using a system of colour coding explained on page iv. Adès' first vocal work for counter tenor and piano *The Lover in Winter*, provides the earliest published evidence of Adès' use of interval cycles and his approach to tonality, texture and shape. In the *Five Eliot Landscapes*, for soprano and piano, Adès consolidates these compositional strategies with a particular focus on the manipulation of interval, to include a more extensive use of interval cycles and melodic lines that successively expand or contract chromatically. His fascination with temporal layering and the influence of a range of composers is also revealed in this work. In his first two choral works, *O thou who didst't with pitfall and gin* and *Gefriolsae Me* Adès

extends his interest in the possibilities generated through the manipulation of a restricted number of intervals, as he explores the potential of chromatic, whole-tone and minor third movement. All four works reveal Adès' interest in the past through allusion and homage to styles, genre, and composers, and provide an insight into possible influences at this early stage of his career.

In these case studies, I intend to focus on musical techniques and the way they are put to different poetic purposes. In all four works Adès establishes a close bond between music and text, and various levels of understanding are revealed. He employs word-painting by reflecting key words that are represented musically, for example the stylized representation of birdsong in the first song of *The Lover in Winter* and the final song of *Five Eliot Landscapes*. He suggests the bleakness and harshness of the 'cold' landscape by making use of hollow-sounding progression of parallel perfect fifths and dissonant harmonies in *The Lover in Winter*. Adès introduces an additional dimension in his response to the texts in the form of anachronism, as he explores connections suggested by the texts to engage in a meaningful relationship with the past, a fusion of old and new, to acknowledge composers who have influenced him. He uses these references to enhance, expand or confirm meaning in the literary texts by suggesting intertextual links with specific works or the stylistic features of other composers.

The Lover in Winter

The anonymous Latin words of this song date from before 1200 and are taken from Ernst Peter Michael Dronke's *Medieval Latin and the Rise of the European Love-Lyric* (1965–6). The following translation is supplied by Adès' father Timothy Adès.¹

¹ Translation in the liner notes of: *Thomas Adès: America: A prophecy*, p. 28. The original text is taken from Ernst Peter Michael Dronke, *Medieval Latin and the Rise of the European Love-Lyric*, Vol. I, (1965–6), p. 288.

I
Now the cold harms what is tender
and winter hurts the bird;
Nightingale laments to the rest
that the ether's fire is taken from them.

II
The river-bed is not without foam,
the grassy meadows are not green;
the golden sun flees from our borders;
and then the day is snowy, the night is cold.

III
Soon all that exists grows cold,
but I alone am warm,
indeed heartily glad that I am burning –
and yet this fire is the pure girl, the one I go
Weak for

IV
The fire is fed by her kisses and her gentle touch;
in her eyes shines the brightness of the light;
there is not in all our age more of the holy power.

The early sections of the poem, songs I and II, focus on the concept of a bleak winter landscape. As the poem progresses the warmth of desire for the girl begins to grow and develops into a fiery passion as the lyrics draw to a close. Concepts associated with a cold landscape of snow, lament, and death, are contrasted with warmth and heat in the form of desire and passion. The four divisions of the text are presented as songs I–IV, and they unfold without a break.

Adès enhances this concept of contradiction through the anachronistic use of conflicting intertextual links which span the centuries. Adès' use of the countertenor and the layering of melodic strands within the fabric of the first song, seem to allude to the lute song; Adès is using this allusion to provide a sense of distance, and possibly suggest a sense of detachment. On the other hand Adès' use of the piano with voice seems to contradict this assumption, and the monotone declamations of the voice set against a florid piano figurations, in the third more emotionally charged section of the song, seem to suggest a connection with later works for piano and voice, such as

‘Doundou tchil’ from Messiaen’s *Harawi* (1948). A further incongruity is provided through a possible intertext with Debussy’s piano prelude ‘...Des pas sur la neige’ (‘Footprints in the snow’) from the first book of *Preludes* (1910). An initial link is provided through the title and subject matter as both composers focus on the concept of a cold, stark, icy landscape and assume a topos of sadness and melancholy; both pieces observe a slow tempo and include lament-like descending lines. In Debussy’s prelude, the performance instructions at the start of the score indicate that the ostinato rhythm that dominates the prelude should be performed with an air of melancholy in an icy landscape (*d’un fond de paysage triste et glacé*). Adès, in the first section of *The Lover in Winter*, also focuses on the concept of melancholy suggested by the lament of the nightingale in a cruel winter landscape.² But a closer inspection of these works suggests that the Debussy prelude may have been used as a model. Adès does not acknowledge a connection but similarities are suggested from the very start of *The Lover in Winter*. The stuttering rhythmic patterns, that seems to represent shivering, or the chattering of teeth, that introduce each new dyad in the series of descending parallel fifths in the opening bars of the first section of *The Lover in Winter* (Ex. 3.1), are very similar to the opening bars of ‘...Des pas sur la neige’ (Ex. 3.2).

Ex. 3.1: Adès, *The Lover in Winter*, first song, bars 1–2

♩=136
1 *pp poco sonore*

Piano

(non ruidoso)

pp ff poco martello risonante

² The song of the male nightingale during breeding season is associated with ‘the anguish and ecstasy of love and longing.’ It is also used to symbolize melancholy, loss and death. See Tresidder, Jack (1997) *Dictionary of Symbols*, Oxford: Helicon. p. 144–5.

Ex. 3.2: Debussy, ‘...Des pas sur la neige’ from the first book of *Préludes*, bars 1–2

1 Triste et lent (♩=44)

pp

p expressif et douloureux

piss pp

Ce rythme doit avoir la valeur sonore d'un fond de paysage triste et glacé

Both composers make use of the parallel movement of triads in, the sequence of parallel first inversion triads in bar 5 of the second song of *The Lover in Winter* (Ex. 3.3), and in bars 29–31 of the Debussy prelude (Ex. 3.4).

Ex. 3.3: Adès, *The Lover in Winter*, second song, bar 5

5

Voice

Piano

3:2

Ex. 3.4: Debussy, ‘...Des pas sur la neige’, bars 30–2

30

Piano

p

Another connection can be seen in the pitches of the pedal points or reference pitches (B, D and E), presented as monotone reiterations by the voice that anchor ostinato patterns in the third song of *The Lover in Winter* (in bars 3–21, indicated as extended lines on the upper staff of Ex. 3.11). These pitches correspond to the pitches of the first half of the opening ostinato pattern (on D and E), and the first pitch (B) of the melody in the Debussy Prelude (Ex. 3.2 above).

One striking compositional technique revealed in this early work is Adès' use of interval cycles: melodic lines that persistently trace an individual interval. In the following graphic score of the first song, we can observe the linear nature of the material, the extent of his use of interval cycles (colour coded according to the interval in use), and his preference for descending lines in response to the suggestion of lament in the lyrics.

Ex. 3.5: *The Lover in Winter*, graphic representation of the first song

Cycle of fourths: B/Cb - E - A - D - G - C - F - Bb - Eb - Ab/G# - Db/C# - Gb/F#											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

The musical score is divided into two systems, each with a Voice staff and a Piano staff. The piano part is annotated with interval cycles:

- System 1 (Measures 1-19):**
 - Measures 1-3: 1-2 (Piano), 2-3 (Piano)
 - Measures 4-6: 5-6 (Piano)
 - Measures 7-9: 2-3 (Piano)
 - Measures 10-12: 4-5 (Piano)
 - Measures 13-15: 6-7 (Piano)
 - Measures 16-18: 8-9 (Piano)
 - Measures 19-21: 10-11 (Piano)
- System 2 (Measures 20-37):**
 - Measures 20-22: Perfect fourth interval cycles (Piano)
 - Measures 23-25: Perfect fifth interval cycles (Piano)

The voice part features a melodic line with various intervals and accidentals, including a prominent perfect fourth interval cycle in measures 34-36.

In *The Lover in Winter* interval cycles are rhythmically synchronized to produce dyads or triads, and Adès experiments with parallel, similar and contrary motion. During the opening bars two whole-tone strands are superimposed to create a succession of parallel perfect fifths, possibly a reference to the church-like connections commonly associated with settings of Latin texts. But the introduction of a third strand of ascending perfect fourths, at the word ‘frigus’ (cold, bar 4), transforms this progression into a series of dissonant triads, enhanced with accents, to emphasize the harshness of the winter scene. If we compare this section (see Ex. 3.6) with bars 4–5 of the Debussy prelude (Ex. 3.7), we see that both composers use exposed parallel fifth movement to allude to a cold and desolate landscape, and that dissonance is created through the addition of linear material moving in contrary motion.

Ex. 3.6: Adès, *The Lover in Winter*, first song, bars 4–8

The musical score for Ex. 3.6 consists of two staves. The top staff is for Counter tenor, with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. It contains the lyrics 'fri - gus te - ne - ris' under the notes. The bottom staff is for Piano, with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a 4/4 time signature. It features a 'forte' dynamic marking and a series of parallel fifths with accents, marked with 'pp ff' dynamics.

Ex. 3.7: Debussy, ‘...Des pas sur la neige’, bars 5–6

The musical score for Ex. 3.7 is for Piano, with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a 4/4 time signature. It features a 'm.d.' dynamic marking and a series of parallel fifths with accents, marked with 'm.d.' dynamics.

Adès is already experimenting with the concept of creating harmonic progressions that are produced as a direct result of linear movement, harmony created through the

superimposition of interval cycles; a technique which is used extensively in *Five Eliot Landscapes*.

One essential feature of these cycles is the rate at which these patterns trace aural shapes across the range of the piano. Superimposed whole-tone chains are used to guide the parallel perfect fifths in a gently graded descent, to suggest the stuttering, weary, lament-like descent in the first song of *The Lover in Winter*. But intervals of a perfect fourth or perfect fifth trace a much steeper trajectory and the angular nature of the superimposed chains of perfect fourths (right hand) and perfect fifths (left hand) are used to represent a stylized version of the song of the nightingale, in bars 15–22 of the first song, as shown in Ex. 3.8:

Ex. 3.8: *The Lover in Winter*, first song, bars 15–18

quasi senza misurs, fluente, senza accenti

Piano

pp (in tempo)

(legato molto)

5:8

The image shows a musical score for piano, consisting of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a grand staff bracket. The music is in 3/4 time and begins at bar 15. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The right hand (treble clef) plays a melodic line with a descending contour, featuring intervals of perfect fourths and perfect fifths. The left hand (bass clef) plays a more rhythmic accompaniment, also featuring intervals of perfect fourths and perfect fifths. The score includes performance instructions: 'quasi senza misurs, fluente, senza accenti' at the top, 'Piano' on the left, '*pp* (in tempo)' below the right hand, and '(legato molto)' below the left hand. A tempo marking '5:8' is also present.

In the second song the angular nature of perfect fourth and fifth interval cycles are used to allude to the surging movement of the river, illustrated in Ex. 3.9:

Ex. 3.9: *The Lover in Winter*, second song, bars 1–2

1 *mf-poco f stridente* 70
Counter tenor
Nec lim - pha ca - su - ret
Piano
freddo, poco brillante
p
f poco con effetto

2
C.T.
al - ve - us
Pno.
p
f

In both instances Adès matches the systematic use of an interval cycle with a single rhythmic value. The superimposed perfect fifth and perfect fourth cycles in bars 15–22 trace rhythmically synchronized quaver movement to create a constantly changing sequence of dyads. At this stage in his compositional development the superimposed cycles are rhythmically synchronized but in later works, such as *Five Eliot Landscapes*, Adès begins to experiment with temporal layering, matching different notes values to individual interval cycles; the various layers within the texture are characterized not only by interval but by momentum.

When Adès works on a cellular level to exploit the possibilities generated through the interaction of semitone, whole-tone and minor third movement he creates melody lines that move in a less predictable way. Gently undulating melodic lines trace gentle meandering descending or ascending shapes matched with fluctuating rhythmic patterns that enhance the flexible, constantly changing intervals patterns. This technique is used extensively in the fourth song of *The Lover in Winter*, where note-heads act as a guide to suggest the subtle rhythmic inflections that are required to guide the gently

meandering vocal phrases. In later works this type of cellular manipulation is often guided by fastidiously notated rhythmic patterns. Maximum variety is achieved both intervallically and rhythmically as flexible and unpredictable rhythmic presentation matches the constantly changing interval permutations (see the second song in *Five Eliot Landscapes*).

In *The Lover in Winter* Adès begins to explore the potential of these cycles to provide structure both on a small and on a more global scale. Adès is no longer using the structural force of tonality, and he needs something to replace this. He uses a full chromatic cycle constructed of perfect fourths (B–E–A–D–G–C–F–B flat–E flat–A flat–D flat–G flat), to provide a framework for passages of the first song, as seen in Ex. 3.5. In the graphic score (Ex. 3.5) the introduction of the cycle has been numbered for the first 8 bars. Portions of the cycle are either presented harmonically, as parallel perfect fifths, or melodically, see the rising perfect fourths tracing pitches 10–2 in bars 4–8. Although pitches 1–6 are presented intact the sequence is disturbed and sections are repeated. The full range of extent of this cycle is revealed again in bars 15–22 as the upper strand, tracing perfect fourths using pitches 7–12, finally come to rest on C flat/B, and the lower cycle traces a series of perfect fifths using pitches 2–9 of the cycle. The second movement also reveals an obvious connection with this cycle. The voice introduces all twelve pitches of the cycle in the first three bars, as indicated in Ex. 3.10; once again the introduction of the pitches is disturbed as pitches are repeated (bar 2) or appear out of order (bar 3). The piano demisemiquaver surges trace the entire cycle in bar 1; but only a portion of the retrograde version of the cycle is presented in bar 2.

Ex. 3.10: Adès, *The Lover in Winter*, graphic representation of the second song

Cycle of fourths: B C \flat - E - A - D - G - C - F - B \flat - E \flat - A \flat G \sharp - D \flat C \sharp - G \flat F \sharp

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

cycle: 10 11 12 1 2 3 4 11 12 1

1 2 3 4 5 4 6 7 10 8 9 11 12

11

Perfect 4ths interval cycle: 8 - 12, 1 - 3

Perfect 5ths interval cycle: 1, 12 - 6 (retrograde)

whole-tone chains with minor third links

Perfect 5th structure

D C \sharp m Bm Am

Connections to the cycle are less obvious during the third song. Emotions are now in conflict and rapid treble figurations on the piano match the emotional turbulence suggested in the text. But Adès balances this frantic movement with a series of reference points that provide a source of stability to suggest the persistent coldness of the landscape, or perhaps an emotional coldness that is less responsive to this emotional excess. Three pitches, B/D/E (pitches 1, 4 and 2 of the cycle of fourths) are introduced by the voice, as indicated in the following diagram, and the insistent repetitions of these pitches are reinforced by accented pitches in the piano part. The obsessive use of these pitches may possibly refer to be the initials of a name, a lover perhaps, but Adès has not confirmed this.

Ex. 3.11: Adès, *The Lover in Winter*, graphic representation of the third song

First chromatic row (C missing)				Second chromatic row					Third chromatic row						
Bar 1 (ostinato 1)				Bar 4		Bar 5			Bar 9 (ostinato 2)					Bar 16 (ostinato 3)	
B E A G# A# D G				F C#		F# D#			D C# B# D# B E E# A G#					E Bb D A G# C# B G C F# D# F	
1 2 3 4 5 6 7				8 9		10 11			1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9					10 11 12	

B
D E
B D E B
E D B E D B
E D B
E D B
F D B

Each of these pedal points is connected to an ostinato pattern, a rapid piano figuration, and the pitches contained in each of these patterns are indicated in Ex. 3.11. Each ostinato is repeated three or four times, before this stability is undermined through a freer use of each chromatic row. Adès introduces all the pitches of the third chromatic row at the same time (in bar 16) but the first two chromatic rows are incomplete when first introduced (in bars 1–8 and 9–15). The remaining pitches are introduced as the section progresses and are either incorporated within the figurations or introduced as single pitches in the left hand. This method of gradually accumulating pitches is a technique we will see later in *Gefriolsae me* and *The Origin of the Harp*. The underlying cycle of fifths is only hinted at very briefly within the ostinato patterns through the inclusion of the occasional perfect fourth or fifth pattern as indicated in Exx.3.12, 3.13 and 3.14; the second ostinato reveals very little connection to the cycle of fifths through its pursuit of chromatic movement.

Ex. 3.12: Adès, *The Lover in Winter*, third song, bar 1, piano

Pitches from the cycle of fifths:
1 2 3 4 5

Ex. 3.13: Adès, *The Lover in Winter*, third song, bar 9, piano

Pitches from the cycle of fifths:
4 1 2

Ex. 3.14: Adès, *The Lover in Winter*, third song, bar 16, piano

Pitches from cycle of 5ths:
2 4 3 10 11 5 6

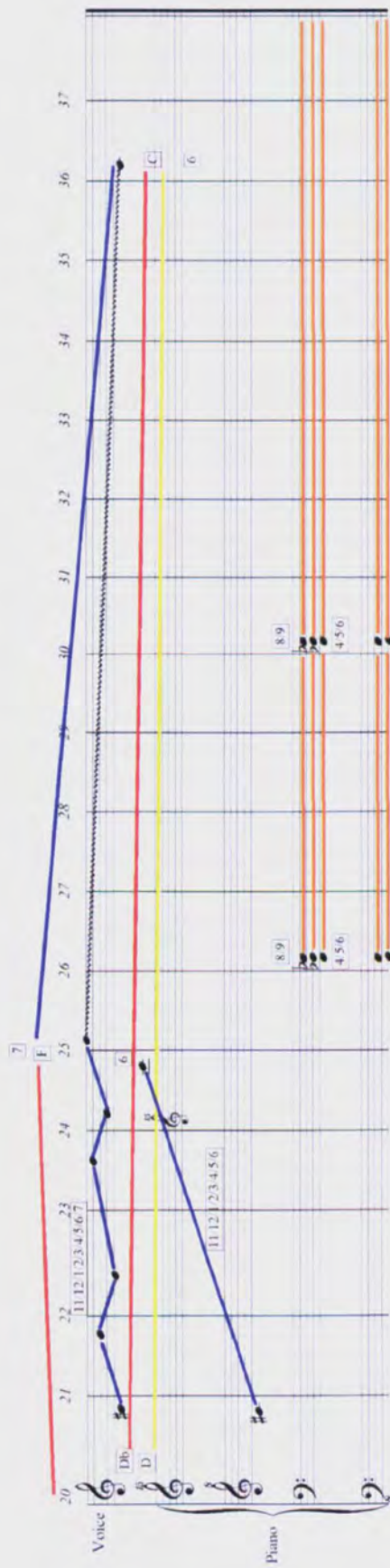
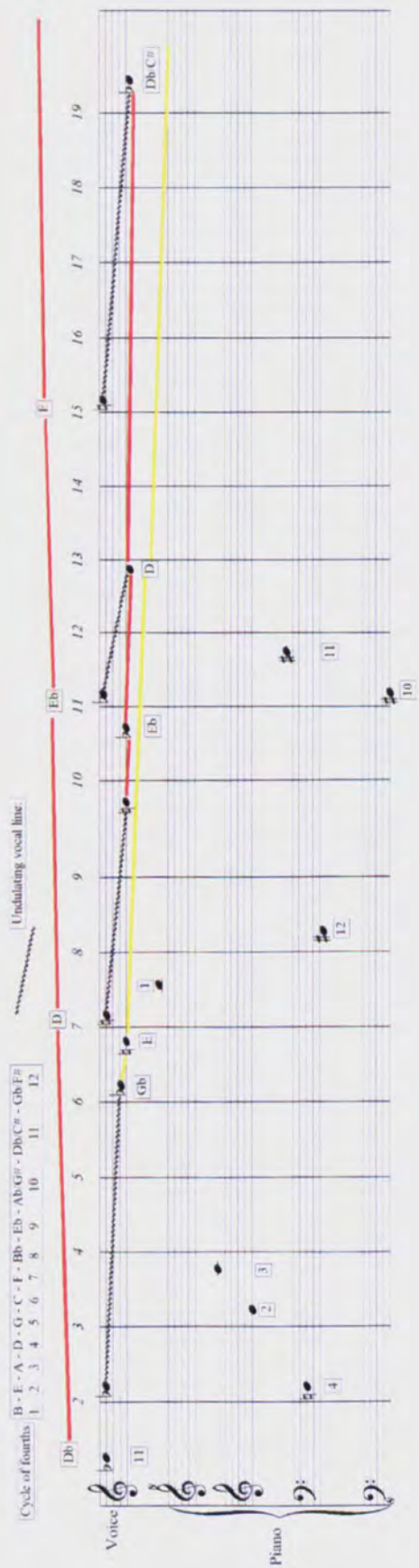
In this song there is a constant conflict between stability, in the form of the reference pitches B, D and E, and turmoil as rapid figurations trace patterns no longer directed by a particular interval or group of intervals. This is very different from the more calculated processes involving the use of interval cycles and the underlying cycle of fifths that parallel the more restrained emotional state of the first two songs.

In the postlude of this third song Adès superimposes the three ostinato patterns to produce a fabric of interweaving strands, the entries of, and repetitions of, which have been indicated in Ex. 3.11. The ostinati patterns interlock to present a rapid succession of dyads and triads, and accented pitches reinforce the three reference points associated with their original entries. At first these reference pitches occur in the original order (B, D and E), as indicated in Ex. 3.11, but when the postlude moves into its final stages Adès begins to strip away complexity and pitches are gradually removed from each ostinato patterns to eventually expose the reference points. During bars 30–2 the reference pitches are heard in retrograde form (E, D and B), and finally drawn together to form a chord in bar 34. Two points of interest are revealed in this postlude: firstly, his interest in ostinati, also used, in the first two movements of the Chamber Symphony, and the shift from complexity to simplicity, also a feature of *Living Toys*.

Although he exploits a full chromatic palette he does not use serial techniques; he uses reference points, pedal points, and voice leading driven by interval cycles. The

final song of *The Lover in Winter* reveals Adès' interest in voice leading to create shape and structure. This process is revealed in the following graphic score.

Ex. 3.15: Adès, *The Lover in Winter*, graphic representation of the fourth song



Adès focuses on the concept of gradual expansion in bars 1–24 and contraction in bars 25–37 as chromatic and whole-tone voice leading direct the starting and closing points of a series of undulating, descending vocal phrases that gradually expand in range.³ The starting pitch of each phrase traces a chromatic ascent from D flat to F, and two descending threads, one chromatic and the other whole-tone, guide the end of each phrase to sink successively lower and lower. As the final vocal descent is approached, voice and piano join forces to trace a rising interval cycle of perfect fourths, to be performed quietly, ecstatically and tenderly, to reach the climax of the song; the culmination of the sexual union between lovers. When the voice reaches its highest point (F in bar 25) it begins its final undulating descent (touching on every note of the chromatic scale) as it traces a mixture of whole-tone and semi-tone permutations. The introduction of a major third (bars 32–3) signals a shift to close the phrase with the first four pitches of the C major scale descending (F–C); chromatic and whole-tone voice leading (from D flat (bar 20) and D (bar 12) also leads us to C. But tonal implications in Adès' music are frequently disguised or diffused, and in this instance the tonal implication of this final vocal phrase are clouded with the introduction of a quartal aggregate in the bass registers of the piano using pitches 4–6 and 8–9 of the original.

One final observation relates to Adès use of individual pinpricks of sound taken from across the range of the piano to create a pointillist background to the vocal phrases. These individual pitches create delicate flecks of colour (all performed very quietly) that trace pitches of the chromatic scale. In Ex. 3.15 the first instance of the introduction of each pitch of the cycle has been indicated and numbered; these pitches

³ This overall expanding and contracting shape is used again in *Gefriolsae me*.

are reused as the song progresses. Adès revisits this type of texture frequently in his later works, for instance, *The Origin of the Harp*.

This case study has revealed many techniques that Adès pursues and develops in his later works. Up to this point, we can see that Adès is experimenting with interval cycles that, once set in motion, generate a sense of predictability through the use of melodic lines generated through the fastidious manipulation of a limited number of intervals. Adès matches the interval cycles with insistently repeated rhythmic patterns and freely unfolding melody lines with rhythmic flexibility. He embraces a harmonic palette that is broadly dissonant, but also reveals an appetite for a varied and colourful harmonic palette of dissonant or consonant combinations that include major or minor triads, and perfect fourth or fifth structures.

This early work presents us with an emerging style in its raw form, a style that teams intervallic identity with rhythmic identity to generate aural shapes. Adès is experimenting with techniques to replace tonality, as harmonic progressions are produced as a side product of superimposed interval cycles or ostinati, and structure is generated through voice leading, in which interval cycles play an important role. Adès generates forward movement through the use of interval and rhythmic cycles, a predictable route is traced and a destination can be anticipated. In this work this steadfast movement matches the poetic implications of the effect of coldness, trudging wearily and slavishly treading a familiar pattern (see Ex. 3 6). On the other hand, frantic activity supplied through the use of energetic ostinati generates energy and heat, and warmth and gentleness is suggested through the flowing, meandering melody lines of the final song. Stability and points of reference are presented in the form of pedal points and reference pitches.

In this work we are also introduced to Adès use of anachronism through a fascination with the combining of past and present and in his next vocal work he begins to extend these compositional strategies; we are also presented with a more refined and sophisticated use of interval cycles and shape.

Five Eliot Landscapes

Text: 'Landscapes' from *Collected Poems 1909–1962* by T. S. Eliot (1888–1965)

Nancy Hargrove observes that the poems in this cycle were originally separate but when read as a cycle 'on a literal level, they follow a seasonal sequence, beginning and ending with spring.' But she notes that when they are considered 'on a symbolic level, they trace the movement of human life from innocence through experience to the moments when life must be relinquished, the seasonal pattern suggesting the passage from childhood purity to the spiritual rebirth in the adult.'⁴ She summarizes Eliot's symbolism as follows:

(1) it conveys a complex moral or emotional state; (2) it originates in the poet's personal experiences in literature and /or in life; (3) it is grounded in the real, the actual, but it expresses universal feelings, emotions, experiences, and (4) it has a multiplicity of meaning, both singly and as the sum of all its appearances.⁵

These poems reflect Eliot's acknowledgement of faith and represent the concept of a spiritual journey. The landscapes in this cycle come from Eliot's personal experience and reflect his English roots and his connections with New England; his ancestors moved from Somerset to New England. The family holiday home was in Gloucester, Cape Ann, a coastal region which is well known for its wide variety of bird life. Hargrove observes that the poems alternate between those that are positive (songs

⁴ Hargrove, Nancy Duvall (1978) *Landscape as Symbol in the Poetry of T.S.Eliot*, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, p. 114.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

one, three and five) and those that are negative (songs two and four).⁶ The poems are as follows:

I: 'New Hampshire' deals with US rural New England and begins the cycle of time with childhood.

II: 'Virginia' traces the next stage of the spiritual journey as maturity is approached.

III: 'Usk' (US to UK) hints at the age of chivalry and acknowledgment of faith and draws us into a religious quest; it also hints at Eliot's move from the US to the UK.

IV: 'Rannoch, by Glencoe' deals with mortality and death referencing the defeat of the Jacobites in Scotland.

V: 'Cape Ann' lists many of the birds found in Cape Ann, and references the spiritual association of birds with immortality and joy.

Although Eliot is a modernist poet, Hargrove observes that through his use of landscape he is accessing 'one of the oldest and most traditional of poetic devices.' She goes on to explain 'that Eliot's genius revitalizes this conventional element by using many new kinds of settings [...] and by enlarging its functions as a symbol. Thus landscape provides both the sense of the traditional and familiar in his work and the excitement of the original and innovative.'⁷ It is this very mixture of traditional and new, past and present, that parallels Adès' approach to composition. Hargrove notes that 'Eliot's view of the function of the symbol is in part traditional: its purpose is to stand for something larger than itself.'⁸ Adès views music as a metaphor:⁹ that music can represent more than itself, and this is paralleled with poems that reveal much more than a literal description of a landscape. Adès looks for opportunities to reflect the

⁶ Ibid., p. 144.

⁷ Ibid., p. 212.

⁸ Ibid., p. 8.

⁹ Adès and Service (2012) pp. 5–6.

symbolism inherent in the poems, and this will be explored as each song is considered individually.

Adès uses this song cycle as an opportunity to pay homage to composers who have influenced him and to reveal a glimpse of his musical heritage. The songs are dedicated to five individuals, with initials placed at the end of each song, to form a series of homages, four public and one private; Adès explains that these names were suggested to him 'by aspects of the music, or the poems themselves.'¹⁰ Three of the homages are obvious. In 'Virginia' Adès pays homage to Strauss, possibly to suggest a parallel with the final death throes of romanticism. The techniques of Kurtág are explored in 'Usk' and the use of stylized birdsong patterns confirms the dedication to Messiaen in the fifth song. There are no obvious candidates for the first and fourth songs with the initials G.R.B. and S.B. respectively; these are known only to Adès. Temporal layering techniques hinting at two American composers, Carter and Nancarrow, dominate 'New Hampshire' but these techniques serve to parallel the concept of the cycle of time in the poem rather than confirm a potential candidate for the homage.

The concept of transition, time and memory is explored through these poems and Adès matches these concepts with systems to promote a sense of progression and applies rhythmic procedures to enhance these qualities. A sense of progression is achieved as interval cycles are propelled through registers, sometimes energized through octave displacement, or through the use of intervallically expanding or contracting melodic threads. He achieves stability and a sense of structure without tonality through the use of pedal points and reference pitches. Melodic movement driven by interval cycles trace independent pathways across the musical score; these

¹⁰ Adès, Thomas (1990) introductory notes to the score of *Five Eliot Landscapes*, London: Faber Music.

patterns are very visual as well as aural, and tangible as the pianist feels the shapes across the keyboard. It is the exploration of these techniques that will provide the focus of the following analysis.

i) 'New Hampshire'

This poem involves the transition from one state to another; from blossom to fruit; golden head (flower) to crimson head (fruit); and from green tip to root. It also deals with the transition from childhood to adulthood – 'twenty years and the spring is over.'

The poem is as follows:

Children's voices in the orchard

Between the blossom-and the fruit time:

Golden head, crimson head,

Between the green tip and the root.

Black wing, brown wing, hover over;

Twenty years and the spring is over;

To-day grieves, to-morrow grieves,

Cover me over, light-in-leaves;

Golden head, black wing,

Cling, swing,

Spring, sing,

Swing up into the apple-tree.

In this poem Eliot uses the symbolism of childhood to represent innocence and purity, reinforcing this concept with the colour association of gold which according to Symbolic objects also appear in the poem: the apple is often linked with the loss of

innocence in the Garden of Eden and as Tresidder observes, leaves ‘often symbolize countless human lives – and their brevity. The falling leaves of autumn, an ancient metaphor for mortality.’¹¹

Adès establishes the concept of childhood in several ways. He suggests the motion of the swing through sweeping arc-shaped melodic lines, and the light laughter of children’s voices drifting through the orchard, through the use of the very highest pitches on the piano. He also quotes from the closing section of a lullaby by George H. Clutsam (1866–1951) made famous by Paul Robeson, ‘Ma Curley Headed Baby’ to match the point in the poem when Eliot uses the ‘short lilting rhythms of nursery rhyme’, noted by Hargrove.¹²

The cycle of time is paralleled through the use of rhythmic and interval cycles, which, once set in motion trace a predictable route. The entire song is influenced by melodic movement which is used to create two opposing textures, one chordal and the other canonic, and it is the interplay between these two textures that forms the basis of the song. All the intervallically defined melodic threads, once initiated, follow a predestined path. Momentum is generated through the use of canonic textures of superimposed, swooping phrases shaped by interval expansion and contraction. Adès suggests that time is ticking away, as these phrases swing like pendulums, moving at different speeds across the keyboard to avoid synchronization; Adès implies the possibility of overlapping cycles through the use of canonic layering. The swift movement of these ‘swing’ cycles contrasts with homophonic sections (associated with vocal entries) that move at a much slower rate and are created through the superimposition of interval cycles. As the song progresses, the clear-cut sectional nature of the beginning is eroded as the canonic cycles begin to intrude on the homophonic

¹¹ Tresidder, *Dictionary of Symbols*, (leaves) p. 120.

¹² Hargrove, *Landscape as Symbol*, p. 116.

sections. In the following example (Ex. 3.16) the graphic score reveals the extent to which interval cycles are used in this song. Note-heads indicate the start and finish of each particular melodic thread, or cycle, and the pitches of the lullaby are indicated with blue note-heads. Melodic threads that evolve through a system of chromatically expanding or contracting intervals are indicated in pink (expansion) or purple (contraction). It is the interaction of these textures that I will investigate in the following analysis.

Ex. 3.16: Five Eliot Landscapes, graphic representation of 'New Hampshire'

The image displays a musical score for the piece 'New Hampshire' by Five Eliot Landscapes. The score is presented in three systems, each featuring a Soprano part (top staff) and a Piano part (bottom staff). The Soprano part is written in treble clef, and the Piano part is written in bass clef. The score includes lyrics and is annotated with colored lines (pink, purple, green, red, yellow) connecting notes across measures. The first system (measures 1-21) shows two cycles of a melodic motif. The second system (measures 22-42) continues the motif with lyrics: 'I had / a / van / in / the / car / - / chard / - / I / never / the / day / - / com / - / for / - /'. The third system (measures 43-63) includes lyrics: 'and / the / train / - / time / - / took / - / the / road / - / term / - / and / had / - / falling / the / and / the / root / - / black / wing / brown / wing /'. Annotations include 'Cycle 1' and 'Cycle 2' in the first system, and 'alternating with 1st and 2nd cycle motif' and 'alternating with 1st and 2nd cycle motif' in the third system.

Ex. 3.16 (continued)

The musical score consists of three systems, each with a Soprano (Sop.) and Piano (Piano) part. The Soprano part includes lyrics, and the Piano part includes colored lines connecting notes across staves.

System 1 (Measures 67-76):

- Soprano:** 67. ho - - - - - 68. - - - - - 69. - - - - - 70. - - - - - 71. - - - - - 72. - - - - - 73. - - - - - 74. - - - - - 75. - - - - - 76. - - - - -
- Lyrics:** ho - - - - - 68. - - - - - 69. - - - - - 70. - - - - - 71. - - - - - 72. - - - - - 73. - - - - - 74. - - - - - 75. - - - - - 76. - - - - -
- Piano:** Pink line connects notes across staves.

System 2 (Measures 77-108):

- Soprano:** 77. - - - - - 78. - - - - - 79. - - - - - 80. - - - - - 81. - - - - - 82. - - - - - 83. - - - - - 84. - - - - - 85. - - - - - 86. - - - - - 87. - - - - -
- Lyrics:** 77. - - - - - 78. - - - - - 79. - - - - - 80. - - - - - 81. - - - - - 82. - - - - - 83. - - - - - 84. - - - - - 85. - - - - - 86. - - - - - 87. - - - - -
- Piano:** Pink, yellow, green, and orange lines connect notes across staves.

System 3 (Measures 109-115):

- Soprano:** 109. - - - - - 110. - - - - - 111. - - - - - 112. - - - - - 113. - - - - - 114. - - - - - 115. - - - - -
- Lyrics:** 109. - - - - - 110. - - - - - 111. - - - - - 112. - - - - - 113. - - - - - 114. - - - - - 115. - - - - -
- Piano:** Pink, yellow, green, and orange lines connect notes across staves.

Adès develops the concepts presented in the poem on various levels. On a more literal level, the motion of the swing is suggested through the use of two superimposed melodic lines tracing graceful melodic arch-shapes that sweep through registers spanning five and a half octaves. In the following examples (Exx. 3.17 and 3.18) each strand has been isolated from the score.

Ex. 3.17: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, 'New Hampshire', Cycle 1a – start of 1b, bars 1–6, piano

$\text{♩} = 88-96$ Suspended: *sempre quasi in sogno*

Piano

ppp *sempre e lontanissimo*

Cycle 1a: | Cycle 1b:

Ex. 3.18: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, 'New Hampshire', Cycle 2, bars 1–8, piano

$\text{♩} = 88-96$ Suspended: *sempre quasi in sogno*

Piano

ppp *legato possibile, ma leggero*

Although we can see and hear the visual and aural effect of these overlapping cycles, other symbolic processes are at work. Adès has put systems in place and they unfold according to a strict set of rules, just as life must trace a cycle of birth and growth

through to death and decay, and then through rebirth or regeneration, the cycle will begin again. He reflects the symbolic transition from one state to next, and the organic connections involved in growth, alluded to in the text. Adès' response is logical and systematic, almost mechanical at times.

In terms of rhythm he uses a limited number of 'swung' two-note pitch-cells each related at a proportion of 2:1 to ensure that all rhythmic relationships are related; these swung rhythms, are also a pun on the word 'swing', to suggest a playful nature of childhood. Adès chooses note values that ensure that ascents are paced more slowly than the descents, which travel three times as fast. Relationships also exist between cycles in that cycle 1 moves at a faster rate than cycle 2 at a proportion of 3:4.¹³

Cycle 1: ascent	♩. ♪	Cycle 1: descent	♪ ♩
Cycle 2: ascent	♩ ♩	Cycle 2: descent	♪ ♩ 3:2

[16 semiquavers per bar – but notated and performed as 12/16 for cycle 1 and 3/4 for cycle 2]

Cycle 1 completes three and a half cycles during the 22 bar introduction, compared with only two and a half cycles by Cycle 2. The delayed entry of the second cycle in combination with the different pacing ensures that the contrapuntal lines are heard in a constantly changing relationship with one another; a process of change where Adès focuses on the importance of linear processes and the interplay of lines.

Repeated rhythmic cells dominate each cycle but these repetitions are matched with a system of expanding or contracting intervals to determine the melodic line of each cycle. Once again Adès is conscious of balance and control. Cycle 1 begins in the

¹³Calculated in semiquavers: ascent - cycle 1 = 9 and cycle 2 =12; descents - cycle 1=3 semiquavers and cycle 2= 4 semiquavers.

treble register and expands chromatically from a minor second to a major seventh, taking it into bass registers to G flat. On the much slower ascent, the second half of the cycle traces the same pattern of chromatic expansion to complete the first cycle. The second cycle begins on F sharp (enharmonic equivalent of G flat) in the bass register reverses this process, following a pattern of chromatic contraction. Both cycles cover the entire range of the chromatic scale with just a few repetitions of occasional pitches. The pianist is directed to keep the sustaining pedal down but asked to not allow the sounds to accumulate excessively, to achieve a blurred distant effect, a faint overlapping of cycles of childhood memories.

These cycles are in a constant state of change in terms of pitch and momentum as they ascend or descend, but constancy is provided through the use of the repeated rhythmic values. Points of stability are also provided through reference pitches on C–G flat /F sharp, outer pitches, indicated on the graphic score (Ex. 3.16), which keep the cycles within a prescribed range. Adès has set limits to the extent of expansion and contraction. Rules are established, limits are set and yet when these differently paced cycles are superimposed, constant change is achieved through their interaction. These cycles are used throughout the song, illustrated in the graphic score (Ex. 3.16), though they appear in more fragmentary and/ or transposed form as the song progresses.

The cycles are interrupted at bar 22, when the voice first enters, and we are introduced to a different texture. This homophonic texture uses simple note values (dotted minims, minims and crotchets) to suggest a child-like simplicity, in contrast with the rhythmic complexity and energy of the two-part contrapuntal threads which frame, punctuate or accompany the presentation of the stanzas. Adès has also provided this level of simplicity to contrast with the complexity created by the contrapuntal threads. This is reflected in the performance instructions; the pianist is now asked to

perform distinctly and clearly, and the voice must sing without colour and with simplicity of manner. This clarity and purity is enhanced by the wide spacing of the melodic strands. At this point we are introduced to a different set of rules. Each melodic thread within the homophonic texture not only has a different intervallic identity, either whole-tone, chromatic or minor third movement, but has different dynamic indication to match. Once again linear processes are at work and the chord progressions are created as a result of the superimposition of chromatic, whole-tone and minor third interval cycles. This superimposition produces a mixture of consonant and dissonant harmonies created as an arbitrary product of the process, as illustrated in the following example:

Ex. 3.19: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, 'New Hampshire', bars 22–8

mp semplice, quasi senza colore, ma sempre poco espress. (senza cresc.)

Female Voice

Chil - dren's voi - ces in the or - chard

(ppp sempre)
Piano
piu chiaro (legato sempre)

p
A maj. B maj. 2nd inv. * B maj. 2nd inv. A maj. F7 * F7 A maj.

First palindrome

* = Dissonant combination

Second palindrome

The gently undulating arc-shapes reflect the shape of the swing cycles and two palindromic patterns emerge, each framed by a chord of A major. This movement is inspired by a text that shifts backwards and forwards dealing with the start of a cycle and its culmination, between the beginning ('blossom', 'golden head' (flowering) , 'green tip') and the end ('fruit', 'crimson head' (fruit), and 'root'). This interest in symmetry and the movement between tonal and non-tonal chords is used to suggest the sense of balance in the poem between life and death. When the vocalist sings,

homophonic textures provide the security of synchronized rhythmic movement and balanced phrases, but Adès suggests the many layers of distant memories of childhood as echoed canonic cycles. As the work progresses, the superimposed interval cycles are reallocated and as these relationships change the resultant harmonies begin to have a much more dissonant outcome. During the second stanza (bars 41–7) the chromatic, whole-tone, and minor third threads are allocated to different positions within the texture as shown in Ex. 3.20. Once again Adès adopts a palindromic model, though this time dissonant chord combinations work towards a central diatonic dyad on G and B.

Ex. 3.20: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, ‘New Hampshire’, bars 41–7

41 *p* *semplice e leggiero*

Female voice

Be - tween the blos - som - and the fruit - time: -

Piano

(ppp sempre) legatissimo e lontano

Dissonant combinations maj. 3rd Dissonant combinations min. 6th

Palindrome Palindrome

Palindrome

Throughout this song systems are established but subtle changes are put in place to suggest growth and change. From bar 53 the relationship between the two textures begins to change as the contrapuntal threads begin to intrude on the homophonic sections as childhood gradually becomes a distant memory, and the cycle of time draws us to the end of childhood. By bar 62 the homophonic texture has been withdrawn to reveal a solo vocal line observing a sequence of sighing, falling thirds (signifiers of loss and grief). At bar 69 insistent treble repetitions of G sharp on the piano prepare for the

announcement that youth is over, ‘Twenty years and the spring is over’ and this triggers the vocal line to add descending expanding fragments of its own to join those of the piano which are now geared to a prolonged general descent to initiate a sense of mourning and loss.

Adès’ interpretation of the text now becomes more literal as the cycles disappear and the topos of grief is addressed. As the homophonic textures unfold, the vocal part traces a gently meandering lament-like descending chromatic line in central registers over a persistent bass drone on D and A from bar 86. Movement has slowed and Adès indicates that the bass drone fades away, like a distant drum, and the vocal line is performed simply and sadly.

The sense of grief is interrupted by the reintroduction of the piano swing cycles which intimately lead us in to the final section of the song. Here Adès brings together literal and symbolic elements. On a literal level he introduces the lullaby (Ex. 3.21) to parallel the suggestion of singing suggested in the text and the nursery rhyme lilt of the words. The words are not sung but they confirm the source of the lullaby.

Ex. 3.21: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, ‘New Hampshire’, bars 112–16, piano

112
OH MY LIT-TLE A-LA-BA-MADAR LING, DO YOU WANT THE STARS TO
ppp. poco marc., lontanissimo

118
PLAY WITH, THE MOON TO RUN A-WAY WITH,

124
OH MY LIT - TLE A - LA - BA - MA DOLL?

On a symbolic level the lullaby symbolizes the end of childhood, but on a more literal level it confirms American links. The quotation of the American lullaby could

also be seen as alluding to Charles Ives' technique of quoting popular songs and hymns in works such as *Three Places in New England* (1903–11). Further American links have been seen in the rhythmic procedures used to achieve temporal layering in the 'swing' cycles, that not only match the concept of time approached in the text, but also hint at the rhythmic innovations of temporal layering in American composers such as Ives, Carter and especially Nancarrow's experiments with counterpoint and canon.

Shape has proved an important factor in determining musical ideas and concepts in this song. Adès has focused on undulating patterns in the wide-ranging sweeps of the 'swing' cycles and the gentle palindromic undulations in the homophonic sections, and he uses layered descending lines to suggest the topos of lament as we lead into the section concerned with grief. In the final section of the song a long range expanding and contracting shape, traced by voice (a whole-tone ascent from C–C) and piano (a series of chromatic, whole-tone and minor third descending strands) provides a framing structure for the lullaby (see graphic score, Ex. 3.16). A change of direction is initiated by the voice in bar 121, to instigate a gentle contraction. The voice takes up a more extended portion of the descent of Cycle 1, to present the final stanza recalling childhood memories, and the piano enters (bar 124), to present an ascending version of Cycle 2. Both parts cross over and come to rest on a concordant dyad (C and E flat). The piano and vocal line almost seem to trace a final sigh, as they expand and contract, as fragmentary memories of youth and the final lullaby mark the end of childhood.

The overall mood of the song is one of restraint; it is as if we are experiencing the images at a distance, as a faint memory. Adès is experimenting with systems to provide structure not governed by tonality and extending techniques already explored in *The Lover in Winter* through the use of interval cycles and the importance of shape in his compositional process.

ii) 'Virginia'

Hargrove notes that Eliot uses the symbolism of a 'sluggish river in a barren landscape [...] to convey the deathlike immobility of the soul'¹⁴ in this next poem.

Red river, red river,
Slow flow heat is silence
No will is still as a river
Still. Will heat move
Only through the mocking-bird
Heard once? Still hills
Wait. Gates wait. Purple trees,
White trees, wait, wait,
Delay, decay. Living, Living,
Never moving. Ever moving
Iron thoughts came with me
And go with me:
Red river, river, river.

Hargrove explains that the 'red river' is 'a complex symbol containing various layers of meaning.'¹⁵ We have moved from spring to the heat of summer, and the experience to stagnation of a river 'clogged with red mud.' She explains that 'red connotes blood as well as heat and mud' and that it represents 'sin generally and violence specifically.'¹⁶ She observes that Eliot is using words such as 'still' to suggest 'not only lack of movement but also absence of sound [...] to symbolize sterility,

¹⁴ Hargrove, *Landscape as Symbol*, p. 117.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

emptiness, and isolation of the hollow soul.’¹⁷ She notes that the images of decaying trees ‘in this static landscape are ‘like the paralyzed soul, simply existing rather than acting.’¹⁸

Adès reacts on several levels to this poem. On one level he represents the sluggish movement of the river or the trickle of blood, with delicate threads of sound on the piano, and interrupts its flow, in bar 14, with stylized, vocal birdsong-like patterns to represent the call of the mocking bird. On a more subtle level he focuses on the concept of decay, sin, and decadence and establishes a topos of lethargy with a slow tempo, through the use of the lower range of the voice that traces a vocal line that moves within a very restricted range focusing on monotone repetitions. Adès uses contrast to highlight and enhance these concepts. He contrasts the idea of stillness, silence and inertia with violent, strident *fortissimo* interjections; he uses the *fortissimo* E major triadic patterns of the mocking bird in bar 14, not only to break the silence but to present a stark contrast with the dissonant harmonic palette that dominates the song. The overriding concept of evil, sin and death is confirmed through the presence of an underlying descending chromatic interval cycle. This cycle provides a series of reference points that underpins the song and provides a possible allusion to another work for soprano and piano, *The Sayings of Péter Bornemisza* Op. 7 (1963–8) by Kurtág. These fundamental reference pitches initiate secondary interval cycles that punctuate the fluid, seamless melodic lines of the voice and river threads with a pointillist fabric of intermittent staccato or tremolo pitches. Adès pays homage to Strauss through the allusion to ‘Im Abendrot’ (‘At sunset’,¹⁹ a song that deals with the preparation for death) the final song from the song cycle for soprano and orchestra *Vier letzte Lieder* (1948) (*Four Last*

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 119.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Text by Joseph von Eichendorff (1788–1857).

Songs). Adès uses this intertextual link with ‘Im Abendrot’ to provide an association with death.

Links with Kurtág are apparent in the opening bars. ‘Virginia’ begins with a *fortissimo* E in the bass, which releases the harmonic overtones of a depressed chromatic cluster in treble registers; a cluster which contains motivic material that provides the starting point for the development of the remainder of the melodic material for the voice and the piano ‘river’ threads in ‘Virginia.’ It is the release of harmonic overtones in this way that provides a first link with Kurtág’s work. Kurtág uses a similar procedure in the first movement of ‘Spring’, from *The Sayings of Péter Bornemizsa*. The vocal line in ‘Virginia’ makes a dramatic *fortissimo* entry with a phrase that gradually expands to incorporate every pitch within the piano cluster in Ex. 3.22:

Ex. 3.22: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, ‘Virginia’, bar 1, voice and piano

♩ = 40-44

ff *appass. pesante e poco stridente* *piti f* *3:2*

Red ni - ver, red ni - ver.

Depressa silently

ff *risonando*
senza ped.

A closer look at this first motive reveals an expanding shape. The first interval expands a whole-tone and falls back a semitone (F sharp–G sharp–G natural) then the second motive chromatically expands the fan to a major third and falls back a semitone (F–A–G sharp). Cell-like motives that observe spiral or funnel shapes that expand or contract like this are often favoured by Kurtág: a similar process can be observed in the next extract, ‘Sin’ from *The Sayings of Péter Bornemizsa*.

Ex. 3.23: Kurtág, *The Sayings of Péter Bornemizsa*, 'Sin', movement 1, bars 4–5, soprano



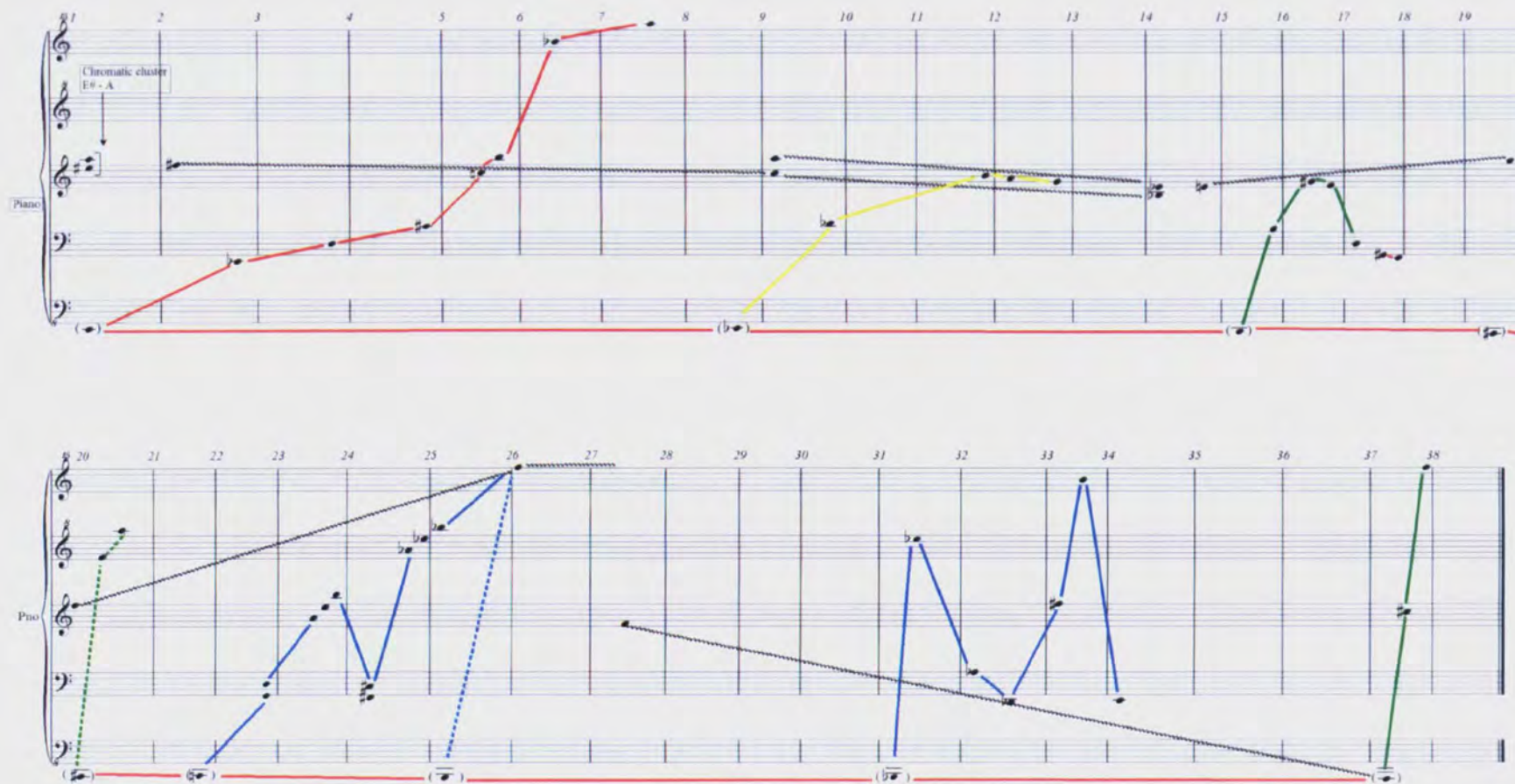
Here Kurtág begins with the interval of a major third and the melody line contracts semitone by semitone to end the contracting spiral on F sharp. Adès in the first moments of this song has already suggested connections with a work by Kurtág to provide an association with death and 'sin.'

The vocal line immediately changes in character, from bar 3, to present a vocal line that is sluggish and static through the observation of tenuto marking, to relate a sense of heaviness, and prolonged notes values. The use of the lower register of the voice imparts a sense of drabness that is dull and lifeless. Monotone utterances link short melodic motives that seem to curl around each other and turn on themselves, suggesting a lack of momentum and direction, and a sense of immobility or paralysis. The occasional anguished and volatile utterance in high treble registers shatters the restrained mood of the song when the river is mentioned and when the mocking bird utters its call.

The piano part develops on two levels; an underlying series of interval cycles provide a strong structural framework for the song and thread-like melodic strands trace a much more gentle and fluid pathway across the keyboard. The rigid structural framework is supplied by a series of *fortissimo* bass pitches, which underpin the song, indicated by brackets in the following graphic representation of the song (Ex. 3.24) in which all the intervallic cycles have been colour-coded. These insistent pitches outline a descending chromatic scale from E–A as this slowly moving signifier of lament traces a

mechanical and systematic descent. These reference points are used to initiate a number of secondary intervallic cycles, a series of spurs that trace an angular succession of pitches that rise across the keyboard, presented within much more restrained dynamic levels to present a pointillist background.

Ex. 3.24: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, graphic representation of 'Virginia' threads, piano



Here Adès is dealing with the opposites in the poem: there is stillness and rigidity and yet also movement and change. Each of these secondary cycles has its own character and energy differentiated by interval, dynamic markings, and articulation. In the first secondary cycle, pitches are introduced as a series of stuttering repetitions, whereas the cycle triggered by the *fortissimo* D in bar 15, introduces pitches following a sequence of major sixths and minor thirds (B–G sharp–F–D). This cycle is differentiated through extended delicate, staccato repetitions which overlap and combine to produce a series of mostly concordant harmonic dyads.

Although these cycles are presented as rising patterns (as indicated on the graphic score), they are really a series of descending cycles that have been distorted and disguised through octave displacement. The first secondary cycle traces a chromatic descent (E–A), and the second cycle a whole-tone descent (E flat–G); and the third a minor third descent. We are presented with a rigid, lament-like series of descending pitches but these are energized by propelling them through treble registers. As in the first song, once these cycles are set in motion they trace a predetermined path, which parallel the text in its description of the inevitable and predictable aspects of the cycle of life.

It is as if the initial vocal outburst releases the river, and as it is called into existence it repeats the opening pitches of the initial vocal motive. Adès presents us with a representation of the river tracing a meandering course, barely moving, almost trickling, through the use of delicate meandering threads observing gentle *pianissimo* semiquaver and demisemiquaver permutations. Once again Adès is referencing Kurtág and reinforcing an association with death; this technique of superimposing fluctuating threads of sound is reminiscent of passages in movement 8 of ‘Death’ from *The Sayings of Péter Bornemizsa*, and this will be discussed in more detail in ‘Usk.’ The movement

of the river begins as semiquaver patterns, shown in the following example, observing unusual fluctuating divisions of the crotchet beat indicated by ratios such as: 6:4, 7:8, 5:4 and 5/6:4 to give an improvisatory unravelling of pitches.

Ex. 3.25: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, 'Virginia', bars 2–3, treble stave of piano

These rhythmic patterns are absorbed into a melodic thread containing pitches which are constantly reordered to ensure full chromatic coverage, using intervals of a semitone, tone and minor third. They trace a general wave-like shape with a gradual descent over the first 14 bars; an ascent in bars 14–26; and a final descent into the lowest register of the piano in the last third of the song. This flexible, unpredictable, and fluid patterning differs from the inflexible cycles. This suggests a more symbolic use of this river to denote a certain amount of freedom, to trace one’s own pathway in life, and yet we are still governed by the underlying and inevitable cycle of nature.

At various points the progress of the ‘river’ is interrupted, as Adès responds to key words in the text to draw our attention away for a moment from the hypnotic movement of the river. At bar 14, the progress of the ‘river’ is interrupted by the short, ecstatic *fortissimo* call of the ‘mocking-bird.’ The gradual ascent, in bars 14–26, is eventually halted at the firm statements of ‘delay’ and ‘decay’, with insistent *fortissimo* Fs on the piano. The final portion of its journey is halted (at bar 37) with a final passionate vocal outburst recalling the opening bar of the song.

Adès' allusion to impending death is also confirmed through his homage to Strauss. Through this homage Adès acknowledges the influence of a late romantic composer to parallel the twilight of life described in 'Virginia' with the dying embers of the romantic era. But this homage is in fact much more specific because he alludes to Strauss' *Four Last Songs*, in particular 'Im Abendrot.' The first obvious connection between the two song cycles is that they deal with the imminence of, and preparation for, death: both texts refer to the seasons, landscapes, trees, birds, and past memories. Similarities can be observed in the emotional intensity of vocal lines that explore a wide vocal range; observe low dynamic levels; and include *fortissimo* high tessitura outbursts. A more specific connection is apparent when comparing the vocal lines at Figure E, from 'Im Abendrot', and bars 3–5 of 'Virginia.' Adès uses exactly the same pitches, presenting fragments b and c in retrograde, in this condensed reference to the Strauss song. Both vocal lines, shown in the following examples, also focus on semitone, whole-tone and minor and major third movement.

Ex. 3.26: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, 'Virginia', bars 3–5, soprano

Ex. 3.27: Richard Strauss, *Vier letzte Lieder*, 'Im Abendrot', 1 bar before Figure E, p. 51, soprano

At this point in 'Im Abendrot' Strauss sets the words 'we must not stray in this solitude', a close parallel to 'Virginia' where the soul becomes lost in the heat, silence and lethargy of the landscape. Another connection is revealed through both composers' use of triadic material to illustrate a stylized form of birdsong. Adès uses patterns framing an E major triad when the 'mocking-bird' breaks the flow of the river; Strauss uses an A major framework when referencing two larks ('two larks only still rise'). The two extracts are illustrated below:

Ex. 3.28: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, 'Virginia', bar 14, soprano

14

Soprano

subito **ff** gubilate

> **f** **mf** < poco **f**

Mo_____cking- bird - Heard once?

Ex. 3.29: Richard Strauss, *Vier letzte Lieder*, 'Im Abendrot', Figure D, soprano

Soprano

D

zwei Ler - chen nur noch stei - gen nach -

It is perhaps significant that Adès has selected a work composed about preparation for death which is the final work Strauss composed. Adès on the other hand is at the beginning of his career, at the age of eighteen, and is developing an obsession with death that will continue in later works such as *Powder her Face*, *Arcadiana*, *Living Toys*, *Totentanz* and the proposed surreal opera *The Exterminating Angel*. Water is another theme that Adès revisits in later works such as *Arcadiana* (the odd movements of which deal with water) and *The Origin of the Harp* (which deals with a water nymph's journey of transformation).

Organic growth and transformation of cellular elements is evident through this song but this is contrasted with an interval cycle that provides a fundamental, underlying long range strategy. In the conclusion to the song the pitch E is presented as an extended pedal point (bars 34–6³) and this becomes a dominant pedal preparing for the arrival of the *fortissimo* A sustained in the last two bars of the song (bars 37–8). This dominant-tonic relationship though, has been evident from the very start of the song; the pitch E has always been moving chromatically towards A.

iii) 'Usk'

'Usk' marks the transition from America to the UK in *Five Eliot Landscapes* reflecting Eliot's move from New England to Oxford in 1914. The poem draws us from the US to the UK (USK), via Celtic Arthurian implications within the text, as we embark on a religious quest. The poem is as follows:

Do not suddenly break that branch, or
Hope to find
The white hart behind the white well.
Glance aside, not for lance, do not spell
Old enchantments. Let them sleep.
'Gently dip, but not too deep',
Lift your eyes
Where the roads dip and where the roads rise
Seek only there
Where the grey light meets the green air
The hermit's chapel, the pilgrim's prayer.

Usk is a town in Wales and the river Usk runs through it as it traces a meandering journey from a reservoir high in the Black Mountains, down to the mouth of the River Severn. Perhaps here we can draw a parallel with the meandering lines that chart both the course of the river in 'Virginia' and the pathway to redemption in 'Usk.' This poem is divided into two parts, the first part of which promotes a lack of direction and suggests that magic spells and enchantments cannot help the soul find redemption. In the second half of the poem, the soul is given direction, in that it must seek prayer. The poem is littered with words that have strong symbolic meanings, both in terms of the Celtic tradition and Christianity. Tresidder notes that in the Celtic world 'mistletoe branches were widespread symbols of resurrection.'²⁰ He notes that the 'hart' or stag is associated with 'dawn, light, purity and regeneration' and he goes on to mention that the 'Bible makes an influential analogy between the hart panting for water and the soul yearning for God.'²¹ The soul is directed on its journey to fulfilment and salvation with the words 'Lift your eyes.' Adès introduces gently meandering melodic threads as the soul begins to move in the right direction in its search for 'The hermit's chapel, the pilgrim's prayer.'

Adès once again uses shape, texture and intervallic systems to enhance the meaning of the text. Intervallic systems are already at work in the first 20 bars of 'Usk' as a series of alternating ostinato minor seconds, underpinned with a series of silently depressed bass notes. Adès uses a system of chromatically diminishing intervals as he gradually adds silent pitches to create a five-pitch chord in bars 1–20; these 'silent' pedal points are indicated by note-heads (in brackets) on the lowest stave of the following graphic score (Ex. 3.30). Quarter-peddalling is indicated at the outset to ensure

²⁰ Tresidder, *Dictionary of Symbols*, (branch, bough) p. 29.

²¹ *Ibid.*, (deer) pp. 62–3.

that the harmonic overtones of this gradually accumulating pedal chord do not overwhelm the activity of the minor seconds and, to some extent, the voice.

The tessitura covered by these accumulating piano pedal points and the ostinato seconds gradually expand in range. On the graphic score we can see that from a starting point of an isolated E flat in the bass register of the piano, the range increases to cover a distance of a compound minor sixth (three and a half octaves apart) as E natural is reached in the silent bass register chord by bar 15. From a textural point of view these static ostinato repetitions gently accumulate and, together with the release of harmonic overtones from the underlying chord, parallel the text in that they serve to cloud our sense of direction. No time signature is given at the beginning of this song and the ostinato seconds alternate so as to prevent the establishment of an identifiable pulse, enhancing this feeling of uncertainty. This static, almost hypnotic background is occasionally punctuated with an occasional *staccatissimo* minor second, for example in bar 3, and these interjections draw our attention, keep us alert, and prevent us being drawn too deeply into the enchantment.

Ex. 3.30: Five Eliot Landscapes, graphic representation of 'Usk'

The image displays a musical score for the piece 'Usk' from 'Five Eliot Landscapes'. It is divided into two systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The score is annotated with various musical and graphic elements:

- System 1 (Measures 2-24):**
 - Measures 2-5:** Labeled 'P5th' with notes Eb, Bb, Eb.
 - Measures 6-9:** Labeled 'Introit' with notes A, A.
 - Measures 10-13:** Labeled 'A' with notes A, A.
 - Measures 14-16:** Labeled 'P4th' with notes E, Bb.
 - Measures 17-20:** Labeled 'Maj 3rd' with notes E, Bb, D.
 - Measures 21-24:** Labeled 'D' with notes D.
- System 2 (Measures 25-46):**
 - Measures 25-28:** Labeled 'P5th' with notes Eb, Bb, Eb.
 - Measures 29-32:** Labeled 'A' with notes A, A.
 - Measures 33-36:** Labeled 'A' with notes A, A.
 - Measures 37-40:** Labeled 'P4th' with notes E, Bb.
 - Measures 41-44:** Labeled 'Maj 3rd' with notes E, Bb, D.
 - Measures 45-46:** Labeled 'D' with notes D.

Graphic annotations include:

- Red lines and dots on the vocal staff, often connected by dotted lines, indicating specific melodic paths or intervals.
- Vertical bars and brackets on the piano staff, marking specific chords or textures.
- Textual labels such as 'are phrase' and 'are 2 fragments' pointing to specific musical phrases.
- A double bar line (==) between the two systems.

In bars 24–5 the soul is instructed to ‘Lift your eyes’: a change of texture initiates a sense of movement and the spiritual journey begins to get under way. This takes the form of two meandering threads (similar to river threads in ‘Virginia’) that start at opposite ends of the piano and begin to gradually converge towards the central register of the piano. On the graphic score the distance covered by these converging strands is traced by a wavy line connecting starting and finishing points. A brief interruption to this contraction occurs at bar 34, to coincide with instructions to ‘Seek only there’ in the text, after which the meandering threads continue to contract. We can now see that the overall design of the song is designed to create a shape tracing expansion in the first section of the song, to present the accumulation of distractions that prevent the soul from finding its way, and contraction in the second half as we move towards a place of prayer, the chapel.

Performance instructions serve to enhance the character and function of the various layers in this song. The pianist is instructed to perform the ostinato seconds *chiaro, misterioso, ben marcato* to provide a dark, tense character; the persistent repetitions provide a sense of immobility to obstruct the progress of the soul. The river-like threads are to be performed *misterioso* and *legatissimo sempre* as they edge their way out of the fog created by this misdirection in their effort to draw the soul to truth and salvation. The instructions given to the vocalist indicate a simple, clear and sweet approach evoking a more hypnotic, and dream-like quality hinting at mystery and enchantment.

The overall expanding and contracting shape of this song is reflected on a smaller scale within the undulating and arc-shaped phrases of the vocal line. The vocal line has a gentle undulating quality and evolves in a series of gentle arc-shaped phrases suggested by lines such as ‘Gently dip, but not too deep’, and ‘Where the roads dip and

where the roads rise.’ The use of pentatonic pattern not only acts as a signifier of enchantment, but of folk music. This could also suggest a possible fusion of two traditions (Celtic and Hungarian) as the compositional techniques of Adès and Kurtág come together in this work. This melody line also suggests the lack of progress as it constantly retraces its basic shape with subtle rhythmic modifications to match the nuances of the text. But the strident high tessitura statements, ‘Lift your eyes’ (bars 24–6) and ‘Seek only there’ (bars 34–5) are more forceful and give direction within this timeless landscape.

The first indication that Adès is paying homage to Kurtág is obvious. Adès acknowledges that the notation he uses for the first two bars (bars 5–6) of the vocal line uses a rhythmic notation that Kurtág has ‘developed for ‘parlando’ passages’²² as shown in the following example.

Ex. 3.31: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, ‘Usk’, bars 5–6, voice

parlando
p semplice e chiaro, dolce (quasi senza cresc.)

Soprano

Do not sud den ly break the branch, or Hope to find The

Some of these symbols are used to indicate short and long stresses in poetry; the line indicates a stressed syllable, and the U shape an unstressed syllable. Out of these initial opening wave-like patterns grows the first complete arc-shaped phrase set to the words ‘or Hope to find The white hart behind the white well.’

This opening vocal material serves as a strong indicator to acknowledge Kurtág, but several of his compositional traits are more deeply embedded in the music and it this aspect of the homage that I will now pursue. By paying homage to Kurtág in this song

²² Adès, notes in the preface to the score.

Adès is confirming a Hungarian connection, in much the same way as Eliot is confirming his English roots. In this homage Adès' detailed references to Kurtág's compositional techniques also reflect the way in which Kurtág's homages and dedications, according to Beckles Willson, would 'frequently display an analysis of a composer's style.'²³ In the remainder of this analysis I will note connections with several works by Kurtág but the work with which 'Usk' displays the closest connection is *The Sayings of Péter Bornemisza*. The first obvious connection is that the underlying themes of both works are very similar. *Five Eliot Landscapes* traces a spiritual journey that is divided into five sections: youth; old age; spiritual searching; death; and finally enlightenment. In *The Sayings of Péter Bornemisza*, Beckles Willson has observed a four part division of a similar journey, which is also for soprano and piano, entitled 'Confession'; 'Sin' (ten movements); 'Death' (nine movements); and 'Spring' (four movements). Beckles Willson notes that *The Sayings of Péter Bornemisza* is based on 'extracts from the sermons of the sixteenth century reform preacher Bornemisza' which are arranged in such a way as to evoke a 'journey through life and death to rebirth.'²⁴ The connection, however, runs much deeper in that Adès alludes to a number of compositional techniques found in this work. When I first described the compositional techniques Adès uses in 'Usk' to Beckles Willson she immediately recognized connections with *The Sayings of Péter Bornemisza*²⁵ in the release of harmonic overtones from silently depressed keys; 'sighing' slurred quavers; ostinato patterns; and the meandering melodic threads.

²³ Beckles Willson, Rachel (2010) *Central Europe Review* online 'Contemporary Music: Kurtág in Edinburgh', http://www.ce-review.org/00/12/willson12_2.html (accessed August 28, 2013), p. 3.

²⁴ Beckles Willson, Rachel. 'Kurtág, György.' *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/15695> (accessed August 26, 2013).

²⁵ Beckles Willson, Rachel. Email conversation December 9, 2005.

During the first nine bars of ‘Death’ (movement 7) of *The Sayings of Péter Bornemisza* the left hand silently depresses a whole-tone cluster whilst the right hand is sounded to release resonances; in this instance without the use of the sustaining pedal. Adès explores a similar release of harmonic overtones in the first twenty bars of ‘Usk’, though he does make use of the sustaining pedal. The ostinato seconds that encourage the release of overtones also reveal a strong connection to Kurtág. If we compare the opening bars of ‘Usk’ with the fourth movement of ‘Death’, shown in the following examples, a similar layering of ostinato minor seconds reveals a striking resemblance:

Ex. 3.32: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, ‘Usk’, bars 2–3, piano

$\text{♩} = 142-150$ Poco vivace e dolce

1 2 3 (ten.) (ten.) (ten.) (ten.) (ten.)

mp chiara, misterioso, ben marcato

(ten.) (ten.) (ten.) (ten.) (ten.) sim. sempre

$\frac{1}{4}$ ♩ sempre

Depress silently

Ex. 3.33: Kurtág, *The Sayings of Péter Bornemisza*, movement four of ‘Death’, p. 36

m.d. m.d. m.d. m.s. m.s. m.s.

m.s. m.s. m.s. m.s. m.d. m.d.

m.d. m.s. m.d. m.s. m.d. m.s. m.d. m.s. m.s. m.d. m.s. m.d. m.s.

m.d. m.s. m.d. m.d. m.s. m.d. m.s. m.d. m.s. m.d.

The two passages are not identical as Adès uses up to two layers of superimposed seconds initially and later builds up to three layers in bars 17–20, whereas Kurtág uses a four-layer superimposition of ostinato minor seconds. Kurtág’s harmonic minor seconds oscillate chromatically as slurred pairs on the upper staves, but Adès’ resolve on to a single pitch. In both examples rests are inserted to break up the patterns but *staccatissimo* minor seconds are used less frequently in ‘Usk.’ The technique of octave displacement used on the lower stave, although not used by Adès in ‘Usk’, has been used to displace the secondary cycles in ‘Virginia’ and is featured in the next song, ‘Rannock.’ A comparison can also be made with the ostinato seconds in ‘Usk’ and the opening bass ostinato motive from the first movement of Kurtág’s *Eight Piano Pieces* Op. 3 (1960). In Ex. 3.24 the ostinato pattern, established during the first bar of this piece, features the repetition of a two-note quaver motive consisting of a minor ninth on to a quaver repeat of the upper note. If the lower B were to be raised an octave a pattern very similar to the ostinato minor seconds in ‘Usk’ is produced with the upper note sounded rather than tied.

Ex. 3.34: Kurtág, *Eight Piano Pieces*, first movement

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Kurtág's *Eight Piano Pieces*, first movement. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The first system shows a continuous eighth-note ostinato pattern in the bass clef, with a dynamic marking of *ppp* and the instruction "sempre *ppp* e lo stesso tempo al Fine". The upper staff contains slurred pairs of notes, with dynamic markings of *ff* and *ff*. The second system continues the ostinato pattern in the bass clef, with a dynamic marking of *mf* and a crescendo leading to *f*. The upper staff features a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *mf* and a crescendo leading to *f*. Both systems include a dotted line at the bottom of the bass staff, likely indicating an octave displacement.

If we consider the layers of superimposed minor seconds in ‘Usk’ from another perspective a further connection can be made. If we extract the pitches from the superimposed minor seconds and reorder them as superimposed major thirds a semitone apart (see Ex. 3.37); Kurtág’s chord of ‘perfection.’ In the following examples of this can chord can be seen in the opening bars of Kurtág’s String Quartet, Op. 1 (1959) (Ex. 3.35), and the third movement of ‘Death’ (Ex. 3.36), when the vocalist traces E and G sharp followed by E flat and G set to the words ‘virág, virág’ (flower, flower). Beckles Willson explains that ‘Virág’ ‘is idealized nature. It is also an image of the sacred.’²⁶

Ex. 3.35: Kurtág, String Quartet, first movement, bars 1–2

Ex. 3.36: Kurtág, *The Sayings of Péter Bornemisza*, ‘Death’, third movement, p. 36

Adès takes this connection a step further and applies the concept of superimposed intervals a semitone apart to other intervals as the ostinato seconds progress. In Ex. 3.37 the superimposed minor seconds are indicated at the start of each

²⁶Beckles Willson, Rachel (2004) *The Sayings of Péter Bornemisza*, Op. 7. Aldershot: Ashgate, p. 111.

section and the pitches onto which each of the minor seconds resolves placed next, indicated by arrows. The pitches in brackets show the intervallic relationships when the minor seconds are reorganized to reveal a series of chromatically superimposed major thirds, perfect fourths, and triads. Asterisks mark the enharmonic realization of pitches.

Ex. 3.37: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, 'Usk': piano overview of superimposed minor seconds

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system consists of four measures: bb. 2-4, bb. 5-6, bb. 7-9, and bb. 9-14. Each measure shows a pair of notes with an arrow labeled 'P4th' pointing to a bracketed pair of notes. The second system consists of four measures: bb. 16-20, bb. 21-26, bb. 34-35, and bb. 39-44. The first measure (bb. 16-20) is annotated with 'Eb triad' and an arrow. The second measure (bb. 21-26) is annotated with 'comp. min. 6th' and an arrow. The third measure (bb. 34-35) is annotated with 'comp. min. 6th' and an arrow. The fourth measure (bb. 39-44) is annotated with 'octave' and an arrow. Asterisks are placed above certain notes in the second system to indicate enharmonic realizations.

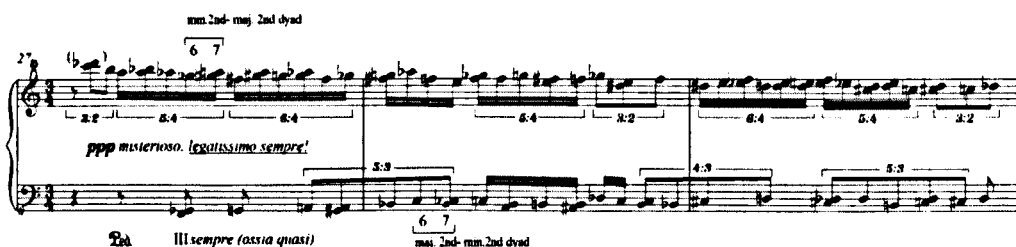
These ostinato seconds reveal yet another link with Kurtág: the chromatic movement within each paired fragment is also significant. Many examples of the slurring of chromatic two-note fragments are also to be found in Kurtág's work, though chromatic relationships are often disguised through octave displacement to produce minor sevenths or major sevenths. The marimba part in bars 2–4 at the beginning of the third movement, from *...quasi una fantasia...* Op. 27 No. 1 (1982–7), illustrated in the next example, features major sevenths and minor sevenths which resolve chromatically in slurred pairings.

Ex. 3.38: Kurtág, ...*quasi una fantasia*..., bars 2–4



A further link with Kurtág can be seen in meandering piano strands. The next example shows the opening bars of these threads in more detail.

Ex. 3.39: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, 'Usk', piano threads, bars 27–9



Here two strands unravel in canon, by inversion at a distance of a compound perfect fifth (five and a half octaves apart) with just the occasional pitch(es) not imitated exactly, and observe intervallic movement restricted to that of semitone, whole-tone and minor third. A similar use of melodic threads can be found in *The Sayings of Péter Bornemisza* as illustrated in the following example:

Ex. 3.40: Kurtág, *The Sayings of Péter Bornemisza*, 'Death', movement 8, p. 51



Kurtág's example is different in that the same rhythmic patterns are adopted for each thread and rhythmic complexity is created as a result of the superimposition of these two threads, while Adès uses temporal layering.

In 'Usk' the upper strand travels at a faster rate both in terms of the range covered by the thread and the speed at which it travels, using a range of shorter note values. The bass line moves at a much more leisurely pace and covers a more limited range. When the strands recommence their journey in bar 36 they adopt a reversal of momentum and range. Fluidity is achieved through the use of irregular groupings of quaver and semiquaver patterns and complexity through the superimposition of the two strands. The soul is moving in the correct direction but there is still a sense of uncertainty and confusion.

One final connection with Kurtág can be observed in the vocal line. The turning fragment, which employs cell contraction, at the summit of the first, third, and fourth arc-shaped phrases (D–E–E flat), is reminiscent of what Beckles Willson describes as Kurtág's spiral, or funnel shaped motives, which expand or contract chromatically. In the first movement of Kurtág's *Eight Piano Pieces*, illustrated in Ex. 3.34, a short version of the 'funnel' shape, with G sharp rising to B flat and resolving onto A natural, matches the contracting pattern used by Adès. In this instance, Kurtág has disguised the funnel shape through octave displacement. Adès uses this turning cell to create semitone shift (indicated in red on the graphic score, Ex. 3.30) from E to E flat, at the summit of vocal phrases to create a transposed, descending version of each rising portion of the phrase. This is followed faithfully until a second semitone shift breaks the pentatonic shape to end each phrase on G. What would have been a symmetrical phrase has been distorted through chromatic slippage; Adès has provided yet another way of creating uncertainty in a shifting dream-like landscape of enchantment.

From bar 41 to the end of the song the vocalist and pianist are drawn together to centre on minor seconds outlining Kurtág's chord of 'perfection.' Faint memories of the journey are remembered through delicately traced rapid figurations, in the bass register of the piano (bars 41–42), outlining a rising portion of the arc-shaped vocal phrase balanced by a brief descent reminiscent of the meandering threads and an aggregate of superimposed minor seconds occurs in bar 44 taken from various points in the song: D/E flat (bar 2); B flat/C flat (bar 2); A/B flat (bar 9); and E flat/F flat (bar 16). The work concludes with a silently depressed bass cluster chord (the chord of 'perfection') from which overtones are released with a sudden *fortissimo* and staccato treble version of the same chord. Gently fading overtones close the song. The soul has reached its destination. At this point we have reached the end of this stage of the spiritual journey, Kurtág's chord of perfection. We are now ready for the next stage of the journey with its emphasis on death.

It is striking that Adès has decided to pay homage to Kurtág in a song dealing with spiritual guidance. Perhaps Adès is acknowledging the inspiration of Kurtág's teaching; indeed he told Cao that he learned the 'essentials' from Kurtág: a metaphysical vision of music, dealing with life and death.²⁷

iv) 'Rannoch, by Glencoe'

The subject of death in this fourth poem is confirmed with the symbolic reference to the 'crow.' The first part of the poem presents a bleak landscape where the stag and the soul wait patiently for death. The second part of the poem focuses on the violence suggested through an association with the massacre of the Macdonald Clan of Glencoe. Hargrove

²⁷ Cao, *Thomas Adès Le Voyageur*, p. 10. 'Le compositeur hongrois lui transmet sa vision métaphysique d'une musique où se jouent des questions essentielles, touchant à la vie et à la mort.'

notes that here 'the poet meditates on the destructive, violent quality of the soul devoid of spiritual significance.'²⁸ The poem is as follows:

Here the crow starves, here the patient stag
Breeds for the rifle. Between the soft moor
And the soft sky, scarcely room
To leap or soar. Substance crumbles, in the thin air
Moon cold or moon hot. The road winds in
Listlessness of ancient war,
Langour of broken steel,
Clamour of confused wrong, apt
In silence. Memory is strong
Beyond the bone. Pride snapped,
Shadow of pride is long, in the long pass
No concurrence of bone.

Adès displays an obsessive use of interval and rhythm in this song. Interval cycles influence every melodic and harmonic structure as the soul trudges wearily with dogged footsteps towards inevitable death. In the following graphic score (Ex. 3.41) I have illustrated Adès' use of interval to reveal their generation of shape in this song. Chains of superimposed threads trace relentless descents that, when superimposed, produce long-range shapes that expand or contract. Points of reference and stability are offered through the use of pedal points, indicated by extended orange lines. Bar

²⁸ Hargrove, *Landscape as Symbol*, p. 123.

indications on the graphic score have been adapted to match those on the original score, in which bar 20 is missing.²⁹

²⁹ It looks as though bar 17 should contain another bar line before the explosive interjection. All other interjections of this nature (for example, bars 1, 4, 8, and 22) are contained within a single bar.

Ex. 3.41: Five Eliot Landscapes, graphic representation of 'Rannoch'

The musical score for 'Rannoch' is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 1 through 11, and the second system covers measures 12 through 24. The score is written for Soprano and Piano. The Soprano part is in the upper staves, and the Piano part is in the lower staves. The score is annotated with various graphic elements:

- Colored Lines:** Red, yellow, blue, and green lines connect notes across staves, highlighting specific melodic or harmonic relationships.
- Dashed Lines:** Dashed lines indicate series of chromatically expanding dyads.
- Brackets:** Brackets are used to denote repeated dyads.
- Parentheses:** Parentheses indicate 8va displacement.

Legend:

- repeated dyads []
- series of chromatically expanding dyads - - - - -
- () 8va displacement

The concept of death and the lament-like quality of this song is signified through an emphasis on descending melodic lines. The overwhelming sense of lament is also suggested through the slow tempo, steady minim and crotchet movement and restrained dynamic levels. The time signature constantly changes so that a sense of pulse is avoided and the *legatissimo*, stepwise movement is traced within an almost timeless landscape. Ligeti's preoccupation with the descending chromatic scale, and his use of lament-like motifs, provides an obvious parallel here. The layering of descending chromatic threads in 'Automne à Varsovie', the sixth study from Ligeti's *Etudes*, is noted by Steinitz when he comments that 'the eighty-or-so chromatic phrases treading their weary descent through this study – like tired labourers returning home, united in resignation and only distinguishable by the speed of their gait – impart an enduring bleakness to the music.'³⁰ Adès achieves the same bleakness through the superimposition of strands adopting whole-tone, chromatic and occasionally minor third movement. These superimposed strands are sometimes very exposed as thin two-part layers (see bars 2 and 5–6) but at other times up to seven different layers (bars 11–12) are evident to create a more oppressive and stifling atmosphere. The harmonic outcome is almost entirely dissonant as indicated in the following example:

³⁰Steinitz, 'The Dynamics of Disorder', p. 13.

Ex. 3.42: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, 'Rannoch', bars 5–6

Here, as the superimposition of whole-tone and chromatic strands produces a series of gently expanding and contracting dyads, from the distance of semitone through to tritone and back again to conclude on a single pitch, major and minor third dyads are exposed very briefly. This restricted expansion and contraction implies the suffocating, limited space between 'moor' and 'sky.'

Adès contrasts the topoi of lament with sections that signify the violent aspects of the poem. This is suggested through intermittent one-bar *fortissimo* interjections, illustrated in Ex. 3.43, that trace steeply angled shapes that appear to explode, like gunshots, as they thrust upwards through a series of chromatically expanding, accented, staccato dyads.

Ex. 3.43: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, 'Rannoch', bar 1, piano

♩ = 70-82 (♩ = 35-41) **Largo Desolato**

Violente, con bravura

Piano

ff 6:4 *ffz*

$\frac{1}{4}$ Ped.

This powerful interjection interrupts the voice on four occasions initiated by the words 'rifle' and 'soar' (bars 4 and 8), to symbolize the death of the deer and the bird; and to add energy and power to the dramatic and passionate vocal outbursts to the words 'silence' (bar 17) and 'pride snapped' (bar 22).

Further violence is suggested when the voice sings of the 'Languor of broken steel, Clamour of confused wrong' in bars 15–17. Here Adès introduces rapid reiterating staccato dyads, presenting the full range from semitone through to tritone, which build layer upon layer to represent the memory of the clamour and confusion of battle indicated in the text. The first two bars of this are shown in Ex. 3.44.

Ex. 3.44: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, 'Rannoch', bars 15–16

15

mf doloroso *f molto espress.*

Languor of bro - ken steel. Cla - mour of con - fused...

p agitato poco rinf *mp* *mf* *f*

mesorabile *tutti legato poss.*

crescendo poco a poco

Adès applies a systematic approach to the allocation of rhythmic values as semiquaver patterns are applied to the tritone (6:4 ratio); perfect fourths (even semiquaver values); major thirds (5:4 ratio); major seconds (3:2 and later, in bar 17, 6:4 ratios), whereas minor thirds are presented as intermittent offbeat quavers. These dyads stick rigidly to their prescribed rhythmic patterns and as they begin to interact suggest the confusion indicated in the text. There is rigidity implied through the insistency of these patterns, possibly to suggest the rigidity of the sword, but they also provide a brief sense of energy through the rapidity of these repetitions to stimulate impetus in a listless environment. These reiterations are framed by the relentless march of the descending strands, which, as we move into this dark reminder of Scotland's bloody past, sink into the bass registers of the piano.

Adès introduces a sense of movement and disruption to reflect the text in bar 7. Here Adès emphasizes the word 'soar' with a series of rising strands that adopt different rhythmic and intervallic identities as illustrated in Ex. 3.45.

Ex. 3.45: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, 'Rannoch', bar 7, piano and voice

The musical score for Ex. 3.45, 'Five Eliot Landscapes', 'Rannoch', bar 7, piano and voice, is presented in five staves. The top staff is the vocal line, starting with the word 'soar' and marked 'pp VERTIGINOUS' and 'crescendo'. The second staff is the piano's right hand, featuring a series of rising strands with intervallic identities of 7:4 and 5:4, marked 'pp' and 'mf'. The third staff is the piano's left hand, featuring a descending strand marked 'p (sub.)' and 'poco f'. The bottom two staves are the piano's bass line, marked 'ppp legato' and 'molto', ending with a 'ff' dynamic.

A sense of agitation is achieved through the temporal layering of strands that observe perfect fourth, major third and minor third movement, and a sense of upward movement to suggested flight of game birds fluttering upwards, at different speeds and different directions as they try to escape their fate. But even as these lines ascend the gravitational pull of the relentless descending semitone and whole-tone movement does not bode well and the ‘gunshot’ in bar 8 temporarily puts a stop to all movement.

Adès uses octave displacement to intensify the emotion of the text. In bars 8–12 and bar 18, tortured leaps enhance the topos of grief and lament presented through descending chromatic lines. Displaced chromatic pitches are indicated in brackets on the graphic score (Ex. 3.41). Adès uses this technique again when an anguished compound leap emphasizes the tritone relationship of E–B flat as ‘Pride’ is ‘snapped’ and again to suggest the lengthening ‘Shadow of pride’ in bar 23.

Adès’ pedal points are used to provide moments of stability, but they also provide an element of restriction. Melodic interval cycles become trapped as they form expanding or contracting shapes that are restricted to the confines dictated by pedal points on the pitches A (bars 9–10) and E flat (bars 18–19) as shown in the graphic score Ex. 3.41. Reference points are provided through the persistent As, which form the starting points of each explosive ‘gunshot’ that expands towards a *fortissimo* tritone dyad on B flat and E, an interval associated with evil and the devil, the *Diabolus in musica*, used as a signifier of death in this song.

As the song draws to a conclusion Adès pursues the system of chromatic expansion governing the ‘gunshot’ motive to a logical and predestined end. After the final passionate statement of this motive Adès allows the system of expansion to continue during the last two bars of the piano part as illustrated in Ex. 3.46.

Ex. 3.46: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, 'Rannoch', bars 22–4

22 *ff appass.* Pride snapped. Sha - dow of pride is long. *pp quasi eco, quasi senza espress.* in the long pass No con - cur - rence of bone *ppp desolato* quasi senza rit.

loco *sfz* *PPPP quasi eco* *legatissimo!*

loco *sub.* *spettrale!*

$\frac{3}{4}$ *con Rda*

The word 'snapped' initiates a sudden change of mood to reflect a change of tone in the poem. In the final moments of this song the soul relinquishes all thoughts of violence, as a long drawn out final chromatic descent on the vocal line, is matched with a series of dyads which gently expand as they are drawn into the dark bass register of the piano. Rhythmic augmentation parallels interval expansion and a sudden shift to quietest possible dynamic levels signifies the long shadow suggested in the text. The piano provides a ghostly, almost echo-like series of dyads as death finally takes its toll. Adès asks the voice to present the vocal line devoid of expression, almost like an echo. The violence has been defused and the soul, in hushed tones, passively accepts its fate.

v) 'Cape Ann'

The subject of this final poem concerns the wide variety of birdlife found in Cape Ann where Eliot spent his childhood summers. Hargrove notes that Eliot focuses on the birds rather than the landscape as he explores the 'sound, colours and movement' of birds which are used to signify 'the sweetness of human existence as lived by the purified

soul.’³¹ Adès adapts the structure of the poem by extending the first stanza, to include more repetitions of the word ‘quick’, and by introducing each bird, or collection of birds, by recalling the first portion of this first stanza. The segment of the first stanza used in this way is indicated in bold in the poem above, and asterisks have been added at points where this material is referred to again. In the score Adès has inserted brackets to indicate the additional material.

The poem is as follows:

O quick quick quick, hear the song-sparrow,
Swamp-sparrow, fox-sparrow, vesper-sparrow
At dawn and dusk.* Follow the dance
Of the goldfinch at noon.* Leave to chance
The Blackburnian warbler, the shy one.* Hail
With shrill whistle the note of the quail, the bob-white
Dodging by bay-bush.* Follow the feet
Of the walker, the water-thrush.* Follow the flight
Of the dancing arrow, the purple martin. Greet
In silence the bullbat. All are delectable. Sweet sweet sweet
But resign this land at the end, resign it
To its true owner, the tough one, the sea-gull.
The palaver is finished.

According to Tresidder, birds are considered to be ‘embodiments of both the human and cosmic spirit – a symbolism suggested by their lightness and rapidity, the soaring freedom of their flight, and their mediation between earth and sky.’ Four of the birds mentioned in the poem are of particular significance. Tresidder notes that the

³¹ Hargrove, *Landscape as Symbol*, p. 128

goldfinch represents 'the Christian soul or spirit – the bird most often seen in the hand of the Christ Child'; the quail's 'association with light seems confirmed by the Hindu myth of the twin Ashvin deities who released a quail (symbolising spring) from the mouth of a wolf (winter)'; and the bat is 'often associated with death.' Eliot finally ends with the seagull; according to Tresidder the sea 'in many traditions' is considered 'the primeval source of life – formless, limitless, inexhaustible and full of possibility.'³² This poem celebrates nature in relation to the symbolic spiritual connotations associated with birds.

The fundamental concept of the cycle of time is reflected in this song through the significance of the times of day; yet another cycle to add to the cycle of life reflected through the seasonal landscapes presented in these poems. The times of day noted in the poem are also symbolic as dawn signifies 'hope and youth – extensions of the self-evident symbolic associations surrounding dawn, illumination and new beginnings. In Buddhism the particular clarity of dawn light symbolizes ultimate enlightenment.' Noon is an 'hour of revelation in Jewish and Islamic tradition and, more generally the moment of naked confrontation.' Dusk (or twilight) indicates 'the half-light of decline and shadowy border of death. In northern Europe, myths of the twilight of the gods – the German *Götterdämmerung* and the Nordic Ragnarok – symbolize the melancholy ebbing of solar warmth and light in a powerful image of the end of the world and a prelude to a fresh cycle of manifestation.'³³

The religious symbolism of this poem is also emphasized through references to colour. Eliot uses white as in 'bob-white', 'the absolute colour of light, and therefore a symbol of purity, truth, innocence and the sacred or divine'; and gold, in 'goldfinch', 'a metal of perfection, symbolically divine through its universal association with the

³² Tresidder, *Dictionary of Symbols*, (birds) p. 25, (quail) p. 165, (bat) p. 20, (seagull) p. 178.

³³ *Ibid.*, (dance) p. 60, (dawn) p. 61, (noon) p. 145, (twilight) p. 213.

sun.’³⁴ Although Adès does not react to the specific colours of the birds in the poem he exploits a variety of harmonic and timbral colours to reflect the variety of colours in the poem. He contrasts E major triadic vocal material with patterns derived from a predominantly chromatic palette on the piano in the first half of the song, and provides rapidly changing colours through successions of chromatically expanding or contracting dyads (bar 8) and layers of independently moving interval cycles (in bar 5). He also exploits high, bright, vivid, brilliant registers of the voice and piano and contrasts them with darker colours provided by the lower register.

It seems an obvious choice for Adès to pay homage to Messiaen in this final song; a composer whose music reveals strong connections with birdsong and the Catholic faith. Griffiths notes that Messiaen ‘journeyed throughout France – and later throughout much of the world – collecting birdsongs by ear.’ He goes on to explain that ‘it is not just the songs of the birds that are projected through his music but also the intense colours of avian plumage, and the awe Messiaen felt for birds as being, like angels or resurrected souls, free in flight and at one with God.’³⁵ According to Griffiths, Messiaen’s ‘declared purpose of his music was the same, and remained the same until his death: it was to manifest the doctrines of the Christian faith.’ ‘Most of all’ Griffiths explains ‘he [Messiaen] fixed his imagination on the life to come, as described in the last book of the New Testament: on the nature of resurrected existence, on the pronouncements of angels and on the heavenly city.’³⁶ Adès provides the E major triadic material as a musical signifier of religious symbolism when birds are mentioned by name; he achieves this through association with the music of Messiaen. Robert Sherlaw Johnson notes that ‘a series of slow movements in [Messiaen’s] works up to

³⁴ Ibid., (white) p. 225, (gold) p. 92.

³⁵ Griffiths, Paul. ‘Messiaen, Olivier.’ *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/18497> (accessed August 26, 2013).

³⁶ Ibid.

1944 are in E major. These are less mystical in character and usually imply an element of praise.³⁷ E major is a key centre that can be found in the fourth piece 'Le Traquet stapazin' (set on the South coast of France), from Messiaen's *Catalogue d'Oiseaux* (1956–8). Johnson, when discussing the classification of birds in Messiaen's music notes the use of melodic material with tonal implications alongside dissonant and atonal material. In 'Cape Ann' 'the sea' and a number of birds are represented using this tonal centre. Two birds mentioned in Eliot's poem are also referenced in 'Le Traquet stapazin'; the 'goldfinch', which he describes as observing a 'less clearly defined, or ambiguous tonality'; and the herring gull, which uses 'non-tonal or atonal material.'³⁸ Adès does not represent birds individually, but as a whole using E major triadic patterns set against a background of contrapuntal lines that observe a full and free use of a chromatic palette, with very occasional fleeting references to triadic patterns.

Adès divides the song into two halves, the first half of which is dominated by brilliant and energetic stylized birdsong patterns (in bars 1–25). Towards the central portion of the song, from the end of bar 23, the mood changes as both the voice and piano sink rapidly into low registers and restrained dynamic levels to signify the dark, silent world of the bullbat. After the silent bar (bar 26) the mood becomes more tranquil and legato lines observe *pianissimo* dynamic indications. At bar 35, two-thirds of the way through the song, a sudden strident *fortissimo* F natural vocal entry, emphasized by cascades of clamorous glissandi, celebrates the arrival of the soul, as the 'true owner' of this landscape, the seagull, is presented. At bar 40 dynamic levels are once again reduced to prepare for the final moments of the song and the tempo slows. The voice presents the final stanza on a monotone high register D flat; this is accompanied by a series of

³⁷ Johnson, Robert Sherlaw (1975) *Messiaen*, London: Dent, p. 144.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

gradually accumulating pedal points on the piano. Dynamic levels gradually fade to nothing and ‘The palaver is finished.’

Adès approaches this song on various levels and first I will explore how Adès reflects these changing moods metaphorically through the medium of music. For example, Adès signifies the topos of exuberance and joy in the sections related specifically to birds. He parallels the repetition and the urgency suggested by the words ‘quick, quick quick’ with loud, vivacious staccato semiquaver repetitions on E, as illustrated in the next example.

Ex. 3.47: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, ‘Cape Ann’, bars 1–4, soprano

fe brillante sempre. Molto leggero, danzante.

O quick quick quick quick quick quick quick quick quick quick quick quick quick, quick,

f giubilante

quick hear the song - spar - row, swamp-spar - row, fox - spar - row, ves - per - spar - row

Both piano and voice suggest the sound of birdsong and the flight of birds through the use of high tessitura angular melodic lines and energetic rhythmic patterns that observe constantly changing permutations. The vocal line focuses on the pitches of an E major triad as illustrated above, but the piano explores full chromatic coverage, as two superimposed fast moving contrapuntal threads, that produce the effect of a transformed inverse canon, enhanced with occasional acciaccaturas and trills, suggest agitation, excitement, and energy through brilliant, staccato, rhythmic permutations that are in a constant state of flux. Perhaps Adès is hinting at stability and purity of the soul though the use of the E major pedal chord on voice in contrast to the distractions provided by the constantly changing rhythmic and melodic permutations provided by the piano (Ex. 3.48).

Ex. 3.48: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, 'Cape Ann', bars 1–3, piano

By contrast, moments of repose are suggested in the poem when the time of day is mentioned. These moments are announced in monotone Fs, using the lower range of the voice and slower quaver repetitions, at 'dawn and dusk' (bar 5), and 'noon' (bars 9–10) whilst the background cacophony continues. The silent bar (bar 26) brings the birdsong to a sudden halt, initiated by the suggestion of death through reference to 'silence' and the 'bat.' Now the mood suddenly changes dramatically as the music begins trace a series of rising superimposed intervallic cycles that lift the soul upwards into a delectably sweet state of ecstasy. The gentle lilt of the words is matched by swaying rhythms to the words 'sweet, sweet,' and a floating and peaceful state is attained within hushed dynamic levels. Adès responds to the significance of the seagull through cascading glissandi as the voice maintains a series of strident repetitions of monotone Fs. This full relevance of this section will be discussed in more detail later.

In the following graphic representation of the score (Ex. 3.49), the main melodic lines have been indicated to show the extent to which interval chains interact (contrapuntal lines featuring rapidly changing pitch permutations have not been included). Rapid grace notes mark the start of each new vocal phrase, monotone

repetitions are indicated with a sustained orange line, and brackets enclose sections using constantly changing patterns outlining the chord of E major.

Ex. 3.49: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, graphic representation of 'Cape Ann'

Measures 1-13 of the score. The Soprano part includes the following annotations: [repetition of quick] (measures 1-3), dawn & dusk (measure 5), [repetition of quick] (measures 6-8), noon (measure 10), and [repetition of quick] (measures 11-13). The Piano part features several dyadic annotations: a yellow line connecting notes in measures 4-5, a red line in measure 6, a green line labeled 'min 3rd' in measure 9, and another green line labeled 'maj 3rd' in measure 10.

Measures 14-29 of the score. The Soprano part includes the following annotations: [repetition of quick] (measures 17-19), greet in si lence (measures 24-25), and All are de - lee ta - ble. (measures 27-29). The Piano part features several dyadic annotations: a yellow line in measure 17, a green line in measure 18, a blue line labeled 'P4th' in measure 24, a blue line labeled 'P5th' in measure 25, and a cluster of lines labeled 'P4th' in measures 27-29. A note above measures 24-25 is annotated with 'Interval expansion from a minor 2nd - major 3rd'.

-----> chromatically expanding or contracting dyads

Ex. 3.49: (cont.)

2

Interval expansion from a minor 3rd - perfect 5th

31 Sweet Sweet Sweet Sweet Sweet
P5th P5th

32 Sweet Sweet Sweet Sweet Sweet
P5th P5th

33 Sweet Sweet Sweet Sweet Sweet
P5th P5th

34 Sweet Sweet Sweet Sweet Sweet
P5th P5th

35 But resign this land at the end, resign it To its true owner the-tough one,

36 37 38 39

40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51

The pa-la-ver is fi-nished.

Adès signifies the underlying concept of a spiritual journey for this song by referencing compositional techniques used in previous movements to suggest the accumulated memories and experiences of the soul at the end of the journey; this also provides the means to unify the whole cycle.

The opening E major triadic material is an extension of material first introduced in bar 14 of 'Virginia', when the 'Mocking bird' is introduced with the same E major figurations in the vocal part. If we look at the first entries of the contrapuntal piano part (Ex. 3.50) we are reminded of the canonic textures in 'Usk' (bar 27) but Adès has ensured that only short fragments are imitated by inversion in this instance.

Ex. 3.50: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, 'Cape Ann', bar 1, piano

The musical score for piano, bar 1, consists of two staves. The treble staff is marked *f leggiero e brillante, con effetto* and the bass staff is marked *f (poco grottesco, ma leggiero)*. The score shows a sequence of dyads in both registers. Brackets above the treble staff indicate intervals of 5:4 and 5:4. Brackets below the bass staff indicate intervals of 3:2 and 5:4. Two instances of inversion are labeled with arrows pointing to the bass staff.

The threads are interrupted in bar 4 with the arrival of the first set of superimposed reiterated dyads recalling similar patterns in 'Rannoch' in bars 15–17. The chromatic contraction of dyads in the bass register of bar 4, from a major third to a minor second, also references the opening piano motive from 'Rannoch' though in this instance contracting instead of expanding; these are shown on the graphic score above (Ex. 3.49). Three instances of this type of contraction occur in the first half of the song (bar 4); bar 9 (treble register); and bars 14–15 (bass register) major sixth to a major second); the final set of dyads trace an expansion in bar 18 (bass register).

Adès also reintroduces the technique of superimposing interval cycles to create lines that retain their intervallic identity through differentiated rhythmic patterns, as in bars 5, 10 and 23–25, a technique explored extensively in ‘Virginia’; or, through rhythmic synchronization, produces streams of rapidly expanding or contracting dyads during bars 4, 9, 14–15 and 18, as in the opening bar of ‘Rannoch.’ The technique of chromatically expanding or contracting a melody line, interval by interval pursued in ‘New Hampshire’ is also incorporated within the texture in ‘Cape Ann.’ A clear example of this procedure occurs in the vocal line in bars 24–25; this and subsequent examples, in piano or voice, have been indicated on the graphic score.

The silence of bar 26 marks the centre of the song and confirms the change of mood. Voice and piano move in rhythmic unison, dynamic levels are reduced, and the contrapuntal threads have disappeared. The pianist is instructed to perform *caloroso*, *dolce e con amore* as the voice presents ‘All are delectable’ and both parts observe *dolcissimo* indications at ‘Sweet sweet sweet.’ In bars 27–28 a homophonic texture is created though the superimposition of six rising strands, each tracing an individual intervallic identity, ranging from a semitone to a perfect fifth, to the words ‘All are delectable’ (birds and interval strands it would seem). Chordal textures are constructed in the same way as in ‘New Hampshire’ and ‘Rannoch.’ With the utterance of ‘Sweet, Sweet Sweet’ Adès amalgamates two techniques as he continues with the superimposition of interval cycles, all of which ascend with the exception of the descending chromatic bass line, and the voice descends from its highest register through a series of sighing phrases, to trace intervallic expansion from a minor third to a perfect fifth. The harmonies created as a result of this superimposition are predominantly dissonant, and include a brief glimpse of Kurtág’s chord of perfection (superimposition of perfect fourths a semitone apart) in second chord of bar 27 to

reference 'USK.' A perfect fifth structure at the beginning of bar 28 is a vertical realisation of a perfect fifth interval cycle.

I have already acknowledged Adès' homage to Messiaen in connection with birdsong to confirm the religious significance of the symbolism in text. At this point in the song, as in 'New Hampshire', 'Virginia' and 'Usk' where Adès makes specific references to songs by other composers, Adès takes the opportunity to allude to a song by Messiaen to signify a sense of farewell. The lyrical section (bars 27–34, illustrated in Ex. 3.51) shows a similarity to some arc-shaped phrases found in the seventh song, 'Adieu', from Messiaen's song cycle *Harawi, chant d'amour et de mort* (1945) for piano and soprano (Ex.3.52):

Ex. 3.51: Adès, *Five Eliot Landscapes*, 'Cape Ann', bars 27–34, soprano

Poco tranquillo
mf dolce

Soprano

All are delectable.

p dolcissimo e molto tranquillo (floating)

Sop.

Sweet - sweet - sweet -

Ex. 3.52: Messiaen, *Harawi, chant d'amour et de mort*, 'Adieu', pp. 52–3

piu f *ff* *dim.* *f*

Soprano

A-dieu toi, de-sert qui pleure, mi-roir sans souf-fle d'a-mour,

S.

De fleur, de nuit, de fruit, de ciel, de jour,---

In 'Adieu' a series of gentle arc-shaped vocal phrases, and descents are presented in the slower sections of the song. These culminate in a prolonged *fortissimo* phrase reaching high B natural; its descent is reflected in a second arch-shaped descent

traced from a high A natural to middle C. The lyrical nature of the very slow sections in 'Adieu' is enhanced through their alternation with very fast sections (for piano only). Adès captures the same effect with the placement of his central still section amidst all the clamour and commotion of the vivacious material connected with the presentation of birds. Adès' use of insistent semiquaver repetitions of pitches in the vocal line, when presenting the birds, is also reminiscent of a number of songs in *Harawi*: in 'Syllabes', the eighth song, extended passages of insistent *fortissimo* semiquaver repetitions of B dominate.

The poem signifies a return to the 'source' of everything, the sea of consciousness indicated by the mention of the seagull, and Adès parallels this through the presentation of a number of techniques that are significant in the formation of Adès' compositional style. F natural pedal points have previously signified brief points of stability to signify the arrival of different times of day but now a series of strident repetition of the pitch F indicate the final state of being. To celebrate this arrival a *clamorous* texture is introduced on the piano as a series of simultaneous descending black and white key glissandi emerge from a series of chromatically expanding and ascending dyads in treble registers to connect with a series of descending and chromatically expanding dyads in bass registers as illustrated in Ex. 3.53.

Ex. 3.53: *Five Eliot Landscapes*, 'Cape Ann', bars 35–8, piano

ff stridente e grandioso

35

But re - sign this land at the end, re-sign it _____

A tempo ♩ = 120

sim.

ff clamorous

(gliss. on black + white sempre)
(all glissandi with crescendo)

37

— to its true ow - ner — the tough one, —

On the graphic score (Ex. 3.49) the full extent of this passage and the techniques utilized in its construction can be appreciated. The two sets of expanding dyads, achieved through the superimposition of whole-tone and chromatic movement, move in contrary motion to create an expanding shape that is filled with glissandi represented with wavy lines. The black and white key glissandi may well hint at the vocal line of 'Usk' favouring white keys on the ascent and black keys on the descent of the melodic arc-shaped phrases. Both sets of dyads expand over a total distance of an octave but their momentum is different: it takes the treble dyads just over four bars to achieve their ascent moving with the crotchet pulse, while the bass dyads are introduced every quaver to reach their destination in just over two bars. The glissandi sweep across the full range of the piano to land on bass octave Bs until the treble dyads too eventually arrive at their final octave B. Here a further possible intertext with Messiaen is suggested in connection with 'Katchikatchi les étoiles', the penultimate song in *Harawi*, which references the fundamental elements of life. The text, by Messiaen, refers to dancing

stars and atoms, and its frenzied mood culminates in the death of the protagonist: 'Cut off my head, its figure rolls in blood!'³⁹ At this point rising glissandi sweep upwards, from the lowest E natural to the highest E natural to match the exclamation 'Tou ah!' and mark the climax at the point of death, the point at which life returns to its original source.

In 'Cape Ann' the arrival of the pedal point on B is used as a point of stability to indicate a sense of arrival, and in this instance it is also an instigator of change. Adès makes use of interval cycles, shape and temporal layering to produce this expanding shape to signify a sense of increasing joy and elation; a shape that has proved a fundamental trait in this work. At the beginning of bar 39 in 'Cape Ann', the treble and bass octave Bs are sounded *sfffz*, five octaves apart, to provide a dominant function that leads to a brief return of the E major triadic patterns of 'The seagull.' We also return to the, 'swing cycles' from 'New Hampshire' with brief references to melody lines that trace chromatic contraction (bar 40–1) and expansion (bars 42–3) to 'swung rhythms.' Adès is referring us to the starting point of the work, the beginning of the cycle of life.

In the final bars of 'Cape Ann' (from the end of bar 44 to the end) there is a gradual build-up of pedal points, shimmering *pianissimo* reiterations of pitches or oscillating patterns, that begin with E flat in bar 44. In these closing moments, Adès pays his final homage to Messiaen in very subtle ways. According to Johnson, Messiaen 'attaches symbolic importance to certain numbers. The numbers three and five are numbers of the divinity. Three is the number of the Trinity and five is the number of the Indian god Shiva who represents the death of death and is therefore a type of Christ.'⁴⁰ In this final section we have three layers of delicate ostinati, observing mainly triplet and quintuplet divisions of semiquaver and quaver patterns. These are framed by seven

³⁹ 'Coupez ma tête, son chiffre roule dans le sang!' Translation provided by C. Potter.

⁴⁰ Johnson, *Messiaen*, p. 41.

repetitions of an upper pedal point D flat on the voice (Messiaen explains the significance of the number seven 'the perfect number' in the preface to the *Quatuor pour la fin du Temps* (1940–1)); five D natural bass acciaccaturas; and three treble clusters (F, G sharp and B). These pedal points, whose starting points have been indicated on the graphic score (Ex. 3.49), accumulate gradually to cover every note of the chromatic scale except C; orange lines indicate their continued use. Messiaen uses a similar technique in his second song, 'Paysage', from *Poèmes pour Mi* (1936). In the first three bars of the song, the voice and piano use eleven notes of the chromatic scale; the first five pitches are introduced in the opening piano chord (C, D, E, G sharp and B) and the next pitches are gradually incorporated into the piano part as the first stanza unfolds in the following order: A sharp; F sharp (piano and voice introduce this pitch); G; E flat; C sharp; and F. The final pitch, presented as a *forte* octave A, is reserved to initiate the start of the second stanza; this A is then taken up by the voice and reiterated for five bars. So as Adès closes *Five Eliot Landscapes* it would seem that he is holding back the C in preparation for the cycle to start all over again as we wait for C, the first pitch of 'New Hampshire.'

vi) Conclusion

Compositional strategies are guided by Adès' reaction to the literary stimulus and geared to reflect a close union of music and literature. Adès displays sensitivity to literature that is reflected on various levels: he uses intervallic and rhythmic relationships to create textures that not only establish and reflect the changing moods of each poem, but also reflect individual words or concepts as each song progresses. He looks for opportunities to signify the symbolic intentions of the poet through word-painting and uses musical signifiers to set up connections and associations. Adès has

used this opportunity to pay homage to composers in order to reference their compositional techniques, or imply a more specify reference to works, to act as musical signifiers, intertextual links that he uses to reflect the symbolic associations in the poems.

In the first instance, Adès parallels the cycle of the seasons explored through the various landscapes in the poems, and the underlying symbolic spiritual journey, through the extensive use of interval cycles and interval systems. These mechanically derived pitch processes develop according to a scheme that is established at the outset and whose outcome traces a systematic and predestined unfolding of pitches. Adès' interest in pitch systems and cycles is matched with a fascination for rhythmic processes that enhance these pitch processes. The insistent use of a particular interval cycle or intervallic process is often matched with an equally insistent rhythmic cycle or pattern. When a freer approach to the selection of pitches is applied this is matched with complex patterning that enhances the flexibility of the pitch relationships. The real skill is revealed in the imaginative way in which these interval and rhythmic processes are combined, and the way they are enhanced through the exploration of tessitura, instrumental timbre, dynamics and articulation. An extra musical/compositional parameter is revealed through his understanding of how melodic shapes interact and how their visual placement on the score affect the aural experience in relation to the metaphor. Adès makes use of obvious representational techniques to create musical imagery - for example, to suggest the movement of a river or a bird-call - but more often, less obvious connections are forged between text and music that require a deeper musical understanding of the musical processes involved. Listeners may respond to a more superficial level to the more obvious, and sometimes literal musical representation of the concepts or symbolism of the words, but on a more sophisticated level they may

recognize connections that are implied through the use of compositional strategies, associations with specific works, or the musical techniques of other composers, coming to a deeper understanding of the metaphorical meaning of the text.

Choral works

Adès' first two choral works are anthems for male voices and both were composed for specific events. The unaccompanied anthem *O thou who didst with pitfall and with gin* was first performed by the Britten Singers at the Chester Festival on the 25 July 1994, and *Gefriolsae Me* was composed for the King's College Choir and first performed at King's College Chapel, Cambridge on 24 October 1990. Both works explore an underlying theme of overcoming evil through redemption and forgiveness, and both works explore very similar compositional procedures; Adès implies a connection by numbering them Op. 3a and 3b. On closer inspection we can see that this is because both works feature the obsessive use of chromatic, whole-tone and minor third movement to create melody and generate harmonic structures; he focuses on the cell-like potential of a limited number of pitches, for example the repeated oscillation of two pitches using either whole-tone or chromatic movement. He explores the potential for organic growth in these pitch cells by gradually introducing new pitches to create new intervallic possibilities as melody lines develop and chords undergo change. The seeds of this approach can be seen in gently meandering melodic lines that develop as a result of the interaction of chromatic, whole-tone and minor third movement in the second and fourth songs of *The Lover in Winter*, and the 'river threads', in 'Virginia.' But in these choral works Adès extends his obsession with these intervals, without resorting to the use of interval cycles, to produce a range of homophonic and contrapuntal textures. I will focus on the strategies he uses to create these vocal textures as he responds to the

poetic intentions of texts. Adès uses clearly defined structures, influenced by the content of the texts to produce a work that observes a very sectionalized structure in *O thou who didst with pitfall and with gin*, revealing an overall binary framework, and he creates a work that traces an overall shape matching Golden section proportions in *Gefriolsae Me*.

O thou who didst with pitfall and with gin

The text is taken from Edward Fitzgerald's translation of the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam. Adès uses general pauses to divide the anthem into four main sections, as indicated in Table 3.1, and he subdivides the last section into three portions subdivided with pauses to match hyphens. A broad binary structure emerges with the redevelopment and extension of the second A and B sections. This clear division into sections allows Adès to focus on the key aspects of the text within each section.

Table 3.1 *O thou who didst with pitfall and with gin*, overview of structure

Section	Bars	Text
A	0–17 bar 18 G.P.	Oh Thou, who didst with pitfall and with gin Beset the Road I was to wander in,
B	19–40 bar 41 G.P.	Thou shalt not with Predestined Evil round Enmesh, and then impute my Fall to Sin!
A ¹	42–76 bar 77 G.P.	Oh thou, who man of baser Earth didst make, And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake:
B ¹	78–89 Pause end of bar 89 (silence)	For all the Sin wherewith the Face of this old Man is blacken'd -
	90–8 Pause end of bar 98	Man's forgiveness give -
	99–106 Pause in final bar	and take!

Adès uses two choirs of men's voices in order to facilitate antiphonal effects, and the voices within each choir are divided to enable textures of up to fourteen parts. In this analysis I will focus on Adès' creation of textures that suggest the influence of choral works by Ligeti and Lutosławski. Adès creates these textures through the superimposition of melodic lines that are dominated by chromatic or whole-tone movement to create a dissonant harmonic language that reflects a text relating to evil and sin.

The first stanza deals with the dangers or difficulties presented by God during the journey of a lifetime ('gin' refers to a small trap for catching game), and Adès concentrates on the concept of entrapment and wandering. This section displays connections with the early choral style of Ligeti, such as his use of micropolyphony in *Lux Aeterna* (1966), through its creation of dissonant chord combinations produced through the multi-layering of voices. This section evolves in independent layers that overlap and interact as they move within a restricted range. The eight meandering melodic lines seem restricted and trapped within the compressed range and lose their individual identities through rhythmic complexity. The implied confusion is further enhanced as lines are echoed and harmonic dissonance is designed to signify the dangers and difficulties implied in the text.

Adès confines the vocal lines to restricted parameters with regard to interval, rhythm and range as he focuses on the organic possibilities of a limited number of pitches. Melodic movement is initially restricted to oscillations between two pitches per part as illustrated in Ex. 3.54:

Ex. 3.54: *O Thou who didst't with pitfall and gin*, bars 1–5, altos and tenors

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the vocal parts of 'O Thou who didst't with pitfall and gin', bars 1–5. Each system consists of four staves: two for Alto and two for Tenor. The tempo and dynamics are marked as *Molto sostenuto e forte* with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 50$. The lyrics are: 'Thou who didst with' for the Alto parts and 'O Thou who didst with' for the Tenor parts. The notation includes various note values, rests, and phrasing slurs. In the second system, there are additional annotations: square brackets around note heads in the Alto and Tenor parts, and round brackets around note heads in the Tenor parts, indicating pitch introductions and their continued use. The Tenor parts in both systems feature a prominent melodic line with a series of eighth notes in bars 4 and 5.

But in bars 4 and 5 altos and tenors ‘borrow’ a pitch from each other, to provide the possibility of incorporating a number of new intervals into their melodic lines. Adès parallels this increase in intervallic activity with the introduction of faster note values as he begins to generate a sense of confusion, loss of direction, and agitation as the way forward is beset by difficulties. Ex. 3.55 outlines the first 19 bars of the work. Note-heads are used to identify pitches as they are introduced with square brackets indicating their continued use; note-heads in round brackets appear only once in each section. The superimposition and interaction of these pitches creates a range of dissonant chord aggregates as indicated on the lower staff.

Ex. 3.55: *O thou who didst with pitfall and with gin*, graphic representation of bars 1–19

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system (bars 1-9) features five staves: Alto 1, Tenors 1, Alto 2, Tenors 2, and Chord aggregates. The lyrics are: "O Thou who didst with pit-fall and with gin". A box labeled "A" is positioned above the final measure of this system. The chord aggregates are labeled as "min. 2nd (F-E)" and "maj. 2nd (E-D)". The second system (bars 10-19) features five staves: A.1, T.2, A.2, T.2, and Chord aggregates. The lyrics are: "be-set the road I was to wan-der in (G.P.)". The chord aggregates are labeled as "min. 3rd (D-B)" and "maj. 3rd (B-G)".

As the first stanza progresses the eight voices begin to incorporate more and more independent movement, using the same pitches but reordered or rhythmically modified, to produce an increasingly dense and busy texture culminating on a six note chord at Figure A, indicated above, as the voices become ensnared for a moment on the word 'gin.' As the section progresses, new pitches are gradually introduced until all eight parts culminate on a sustained, dense seven pitch chord in bar 17 and the 'wandering' is drawn to a sudden halt with a general pause.

Section B is subdivided into four main sections, each distinguished by changes of tempo and texture, to parallel the text. The text has now become more emphatic in its resistance to evil and Adès reinforces this through the additional weight of baritones and divided basses, the introduction of homophonic hymn-like choral textures and a slowing of pace. The spiritual implications of this passage are signified through an association

with textures commonly encountered in religious choral music. Adès reinforces religious implications with antiphonal echo effects, emphasized through use of opposing dynamic levels between the two choirs, and the open fifths (on B and F sharp) with which this section begins at bar 19, hint at the parallel fifth polyphonic textures of organum. The purity of intention, to resist evil, is possibly implied through reference to this fundamental consonant interval.

In bars 24–7 Adès uses techniques reminiscent of Lutosławski to present a vivid portrayal of the word ‘Enmesh’; the *ad libitum* sections in Lutosławski’s *Paroles tissées* for tenor and chamber orchestra (1965), in sections 50–4 use a similar notational technique. When Adès presents ‘Enmesh’, the tenors, baritones and basses are given a certain amount of freedom with regard to tempo as they repeat precisely notated fragments as illustrated in the next example:

Ex. 3.56: *O thou who didst with pitfall and with gin*, bars 24–7

23 *ff* (quasi meno mosso)
(Alti with conductor) $\frac{2}{4}$

Alto *ff* en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh

Alto *ff* en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh

Tenor *p* en - mesh, en

Tenor *p* en - mesh, en

Baritone *p* en - mesh, en

Bass *p* en - mesh, en

Bass *p* en - mesh, en

Alto *ff* en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh

Alto *ff* en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh

Tenor *ff* en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh

Tenor *ff* en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh

Baritone *ff* en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh

Bass *ff* en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh

Bass *ff* en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh, en - mesh

$\frac{2}{4}$

The resulting superimposition produces a complex enmeshing of parts, through layers of oscillating semitone or whole-tone patterns, or repeated pitches, with a very dissonant outcome. Adès uses antiphony and crescendo markings on 'mesh' to emphasized the effect and the section culminates in a shouted approximate pitch on the 'sh' of 'enmesh' over a sustained *pianissimo* echo of 'mesh.'

The next section illustrates the ‘Fall to Sin!’ through a Ligeti-like canonic presentation of superimposed cascading descending melodic phrases incorporating minor thirds linked by chromatic movement. This literal projection of falling signifies an element of lament as the phrases descend into bass registers ready for the representation of ‘Sin.’ At Figure D (see Ex. 3.57) Adès begins a process of gradually accumulating layers of sustained sounds and uses the staggered entries of the word ‘sin’ to produce a snake-like hissing effect as a signifier of evil; each pitch sustained through the rapid reiteration of ‘nnnnn.’

Ex. 3.57: *O thou who didst with pitfall and with gin*, introduction of “sin”, bars 34–7, both choirs

The musical score for Ex. 3.57 is presented in two systems, each for a different choir. The first system includes parts for Alto, Tenor, Baritone, and Bass. The second system includes parts for Alto, Tenor, Baritone, and Bass. The score is written in 4/4 time and features a canonic presentation of descending melodic phrases. The word 'sin' is introduced in the Tenor parts of both choirs, with a snake-like hissing effect produced by the staggered entries of the word. The score includes dynamic markings such as *poco più agitato sempre ppp* and *poco*. The word 'sin' is written in the Tenor parts of both choirs, with a snake-like hissing effect produced by the staggered entries of the word. The score includes dynamic markings such as *poco più agitato sempre ppp* and *poco*. The word 'sin' is written in the Tenor parts of both choirs, with a snake-like hissing effect produced by the staggered entries of the word.

Adès signifies the accumulation of layer upon layer of sin as entries, starting in the bass register, gradually build until all fourteen parts have entered. During this process every note of the chromatic scale except D sharp/E flat is used. The rapid expansion of range traced in this layering of entries is matched by suppressed dynamic levels reflect a more sinister concept of sin. The section ends as an eight pitch *pianissimo* chord (C, D flat, E, F, F sharp, G, A flat, and B flat) slides down, depicting a dramatic literal fall, into an almost silent approximately pitched 'n.'

The third and fourth sections (A¹ and B¹) are modified as further opportunities for word-painting are presented. As A¹ gets underway the full resources of both choirs as fourteen independent layers are superimposed, each offering a slightly different permutation of oscillating whole-tone or chromatic movement, to produce a dense texture suggesting an increasingly emphatic and sustained strength of accusation against God. The mention of baser earth is emphasized through lower tessitura and when paradise is suggested upward movement suggests the elevated quality of paradise. An increase in tempo at bar 58 marks the start of an extended section to portray 'snake' at the close of section A¹. Scotch snap rhythms, chromatic and whole-tone patterns setting the word 'enmesh', and the gradual accumulation of sustained pitches used to portray 'sin', are now combined with a series of rising semiquaver fragments to present a chain of rising pitches covering the full range of the chromatic scale. In Ex. 3.58 the sequence of rising pitches are shown on bass and treble staves inserted in the middle of the score; semitone, whole-tone and major and minor movement is observed initially but from E onwards chromatic movement dominates:

Ex. 3.58: *O thou who didst with pitfall and with gin, bars 70-6, pitch heads used to show vocal entry points*

The image displays a musical score for the piece "O thou who didst with pitfall and with gin," specifically focusing on bars 70-6. The score is arranged in two systems of staves. The first system includes staves for Alto I and II, two Tenors, Baritone, and two Basses. The second system includes staves for Alto I and II, two Tenors, Baritone, and two Basses. A central staff, labeled "Rising sequence of pitches," shows a series of notes that rise in pitch, with dashed lines connecting these notes to the corresponding vocal parts in the systems above and below. The notation includes various musical symbols such as clefs, notes, rests, and accidentals, illustrating the vocal entry points for each part.

The numerous intertwining layers and *pianissimo* dynamic layers suggests the movement of the snake, but as dynamic levels and phrases begin to work their way into higher registers, an increase in speed suggests the imminent threat and potential danger of this creature. A tutti *fortissimo* shout, on the second syllable of 'snake' closes this section and Adès enhances the emotional intensity and shock with a general pause.

The final section of this piece (B¹) sees the return of religious associations through the return of the hymn-like chordal textures found at the beginning of section B. Antiphony is no longer present but the addition of an extended alto melismatic line, meticulously notated so as to paradoxically suggest a freely unfolding line, hints at melismatic organum. At the mention of 'Man' and 'blackened' Adès recalls signifiers of 'sin' through the descending fragments from 'And then impute my fall' and background tremolos on 'mmm' associated with the earlier treatment of 'sin.'

The middle section of B¹ (bars 90–8) deals with forgiveness and develops the descending phrases first introduced at 'and then impute my fall.' Both choirs work independently as canonic entries occur in rapid succession. The resulting texture offers layers of gently cascading lament-like phrases asking for forgiveness. The conclusion to section B1 begins with the introduction of a sudden *fortissimo* dense eight note chord (D flat, D, E flat, F, F sharp, G, A, B), stretched across the full range of both choirs, insistently repeated to the words 'and take.'

This work is very sectionalized, to enable vibrant word painting, and is subdivided using silences to enhance the emotional impact of the music; a technique he uses to similar effect in 'Cape Ann' (bar 26). Adès takes the opportunity to look back at the past as he pays homage to traditional choral techniques through the use of antiphony; reference to organum; and the use of canon. Adès also alludes to the more recent past when he suggests intertextual links through the use of compositional

techniques, influenced by Ligeti and Lutosławski, to produce a dissonant harmonic fabric where diatonic references are a rarity, and he makes discreet use of vocal techniques involving approximate pitch notation and glissandi. These techniques are guided by Adès' all pervading interest in intervals, as whole-tone, chromatic and minor third movement predominates throughout the work, and linear processes are engaged to produce both chordal and contrapuntal textures.

Gefriolsae Me

The significance of this short work lies in its use of interval (the persistent use of chromatic, whole-tone, and minor third movement) and its texture. In the following analysis I will examine Adès' poetic response to the text and explore the musical strategies involved. The text is taken from Psalm 51, verse 14 using the Anglo-Saxon text 'Gefriolsae me, of blodum, God haelu mine', a translation of which Adès notes at the head of the score as 'Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, my Saviour.'⁴¹ The anthem is written for divided altos, tenors, baritones and organ and it unfolds on three levels; a melody line, on altos, unfolds over a chordal texture supplied by tenors and basses, and these upper levels are supported by sustained extended pedal points provided by the organ. Each layer within the texture evolves according to its own agenda in terms of pitch and momentum.

The following graphic score, Ex. 3.59, provides a colour-coded version of the anthem in order to highlight Adès' use of interval. The melody line has been portrayed with note-heads indicating the order in which pitches are introduced. Repetitions of these pitches have not been indicated, but if a bracket encases a particular sequence of notes (for example bars 3–20, and 21–4) this indicates that all the notes continue to

⁴¹Adès, Thomas (1990) preface to the score of *Gefriolsae Me*, Op. 3b, London: Faber Music.

accumulate in the indicated span of time. For instance, when the altos begin in bar 3, pitches oscillate between E flat and D and when new pitches are introduced (F in bar 8, C sharp in bar 14, and B in bar 18), they are incorporated into the melody line alongside the pitches introduced in previous bars. The introduction of a new pitch occasionally corresponds to changes of chords in the tenor and baritone parts (e.g. in bars 8, 21 and 25) but on the whole changes seem to be quite independent of the lower parts. From bar 25 onwards pitches are no longer subjected to repetition and are therefore indicated on the graphic score as they unfold. Key words have been indicated at the point they are introduced.

Ex. 3.59: *Gefriolsae Me*, graphic representation

The score is divided into two systems, measures 2-20 and 21-40. It features five staves: Alto, Tenor, Tenor, Baritone, and Organ. The vocal parts (Alto, Tenor, Baritone) are accompanied by a piano (Tenor) and organ. The graphic notation uses colored lines (red, yellow, green, blue) to represent pitch and dynamics. The lyrics are: 'Gefriolsae me', 'blodum', 'God', 'hachu', 'mine', and 'niente'. Dynamics include *pp*, *p*, *ppp*, *f*, *ff*, *mp*, and *p*. A note at the bottom indicates: '* sing on final chord only (div tenor 1)'.

As the work begins Adès establishes a sense a reluctance and stubbornness; a brooding mood asking for deliverance ('Gefriolsae me') is brought about through the hypnotic swaying movement of gently shifting chords, as shown in Ex. 3.60:

Ex. 3.60: *Gefriolsae Me*, bars 1–5

The musical score for Ex. 3.60 consists of four staves. The top staff is for the Alto voice, marked with a first ending bracket and a tempo of 42-56 Sostemuto. It begins with a 'Brooding' instruction and a dynamic of *p(p) espress.* The lyrics are 'Ge - friol - see - me - , Ge-'. The second staff is for Tenors, marked with a dynamic of *pp(p)* and lyrics 'Ge - friol - sae me, Ge - friol - sae me,'. The third staff is for Basses, also marked with *pp(p)* and the same lyrics. The bottom staff is for the Organ pedal, marked with *ppp* and a tempo of 42-56. It features a '16' only' marking and a series of G7 chords indicated by boxes below the staff.

There is a sense of restriction and restraint, to parallel the brooding mood, as every voice traces the insistent oscillation of two pitches, using the same technique used at the beginning of *O thou who didst with pitfall and with gin*, or reiterates a pedal point (tenors on F) in the first eight bars. These repetitive pitch and rhythmic patterns create a sense of stability and predictability, and are used in this context to provide a lack of momentum or harmonic direction. A hushed and timeless atmosphere is evoked.

Adès reacts to key words to initiate change in terms of harmony, texture or direction. In bar 8 'blodum' (blood) triggers the introduction of G flat in the tenor part to create the first harmonic change, and the addition of the pitch F in the alto part is the first of a series of pitch additions which begin to gently expand the range covered by the alto line. But the arrival of 'God' in the alto part, at bar 18, prompts a change of texture as the second altos begin to shadow the first alto part in a series of layered ascents that climax at bar 25, shown in Ex. 3.61.

Ex. 3.61: *Gefriolsae Me*, rising, layered ascents, bars 18–25, altos

18 *pp inesorabile* *mp* *pocch.* *PP* *poco* *p*

Alto *God* *God* *God* *God*

Alto *God* *God* *God*

22 *mf* *f* *ff appass.*

A. *God* *God*

A. *God* *God*

The first introduction of 'haelu' (saviour) in tenor, baritone and bass voices, at bar 25, emphasizes the climax of the anthem. A change of direction is initiated as the alto melody line begins to trace a gentle long-drawn out lament-like descent. The alto part has used every note of the chromatic scale except pitch C in the anthem, Adès reserves this pitch to coincide with the arrival of the final word of the text, 'mine.' This descent is paralleled by an increase in harmonic pace from bar 28. Agitation and a sense of momentum is provided as chord oscillations constantly change and all vocal parts observe more melodic movement; a general downward trend is featured in all parts to resolve on sustained pitches that fade as the piece comes to a close.

Chords are created through the synchronized superimposition of these intervals and cellular growth is generated through the manipulation of these intervals to create a freely unfolding alto melody line, enhanced with a freer approach in terms of rhythmic notation, as shown in Ex. 3.62:

Ex. 3.62: *Gefriolsae Me*, bars 3–17, altos

A sense of growth is achieved as these alto phrases almost imperceptibly expand in range, as new pitches are added over the first twenty bars. But from bar 18 pitches are added at a faster rate as the climax of the work approaches. When the climax point is reached, if we had any sense that it should be C (due to the implication of an underlying implied cadence in C by pedal points sustained by the organ) then our expectation is certainly defeated with the emphatic arrival of C sharp.

The organ provides the most static part in this work and it provides the foundation of the anthem by supplying two *pianissimo* bass register pedal points. A pedal G is sustained in bars 1–24 and, at the climax, at bar 25, two-thirds of the way through, it shifts to C for the remainder of the piece; the entire anthem is supported on a long-range implied perfect cadence in C. Although these pedal points provide a sense of stability, through the use of sustained pitches as points of reference, they are very much in the background through their placement in bass registers at *pianissimo* levels. An underlying tonal structure is present but disguised. The dominant function of the pedal G is reinforced in bars 1–8 as tenors and first baritones present the remaining pitches of a G^7 chord, but this chord is distorted by sounding the tonic (C) in the second baritone part. Towards the end of the piece he uses a similar technique. In this instance as a G^7

chord re-emerges on sustained pitches in bars 38–40 in vocal parts, it is tainted by an underlying pedal C sustained by the organ.

Other structural devices are at work in this piece as Adès' interest in proportion is revealed in *Gefriolsae Me*. The proportion of 3:2 (A bars 1–24; B bars 25–40) is confirmed not only by implied perfect cadence pedal points, but by a rise in dynamic levels and tessitura to emphasize the climax of the work. Alternating dotted minims and minims that predominate in the tenor and bass parts also illustrate this 3:2 relationship. These same proportions are also reflected in the subdivision of the A section (1–17, 18–24) and are emphasized by the change of text to the word 'God' at bar 18 (altos). We have lost the structural function of tonality and Adès is using other parameters such as tessitura, shape, and dynamics to replace it. Stable pedal points are provided through sustained pitched on the organ but its more usual functional role is extremely diluted. Chord sequences are created and guided by intervallic processes, dominated by chromatic, wholetone and minor third movement, to produce a succession of dissonant chord combinations. In this work Adès uses repeated patterns (in terms of pitch and rhythm) to create stability. But to create a sense of momentum he uses various tactics to mirror the way in which this is achieved in tonal music. To generate a sense of moving towards a climax he uses shorter note values, increases dynamic levels, and uses rising melodic shapes. To suggest impending closure he increases forward momentum by speeding up the rate of harmonic change, uses melodic descent, gradually reduces dynamic levels and draws all parts to rest on prolonged sustained pitches.

When combining pitch and rhythmic patterns Adès combines the rigid repetition of interval patterns with stubbornly repeating rhythmic values but also matches freely unfolding pitch patterns with flexibility in terms of rhythm. Adès uses compositional parameters such as phrase shape, dynamics and rhythm to arouse a sense of expectation

due to their similar use in tonally directed music. In terms of structure, although a long-range tonal signifier is present, he uses the text to initiate and guide the structure of the work. Adès' response to individual words trigger changes of direction that create an expanding wedge-like shape, as the altos move upwards towards the climax over oscillating chords, and a contracting wedge as the altos' melodic descent leads us towards closure. Adès' interest in proportionality in this work can be seen as an extension of his use of proportional techniques in 'New Hampshire'; his fascination with shape has been observed throughout this chapter.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have deliberately restricted my investigation to focus on a small sample of solo vocal and choral works composed in the crucial early stage in Adès' compositional career. I have examined the ways in which compositional processes and strategies have evolved in these early works and have focused primarily on the way in which Adès uses his music metaphorically to express and amplify the poetic intentions of the text. Two main compositional strategies have emerged: his use of intervallic systems and the influence of other composers on his music through the reference to musical techniques and the allusion to other works.

Adès uses intervallic procedures as a way of producing a broadly dissonant musical language. He uses intervallic cycles or intervallic systems to create melody and harmony, and exploits these systems to produce a range of homophonic, contrapuntal, and pointillist textures. These intervallic systems are used as a means of structuring passages of music over short or more extended periods of time. Adès' creativity is revealed in the way in which he matches these mechanically derived intervallic systems with rhythmic strategies, instrumental and vocal colour, dynamic colouring and

articulation, to provide a musically sensitive realisation of the poetic intentions of the text.

The creation of melodic lines using intervallic systems is approached in several ways. The implementation of interval cycles is usually combined with an equally rigid approach to the application of rhythmic patterns. Adès will allocate a single note value or rhythmic pattern with an interval cycle so that it observes its own momentum; dynamics, articulation and the direction traced by the thread also confirm this individualization of strands. The creation of harmony is often a linear process where superimposed threads trace one interval, most commonly observing either chromatic, whole-tone or minor third movement, which are rhythmically synchronized; concordant or discordant triads or dyads result from this mechanically contrived process. Adès' creativity is revealed through the spacing of these threads and the use of register to explore tessitura and tone colour to enhance the emotional impact of the harmonic combinations.

But Adès also explores pitch choice through a process involving a limited number of intervals, where the intention is to explore cellular intervallic relationships between pitches. This involves the cellular development of melodic motives, but also this procedure can be extended to produce long melody lines, such as the 'river threads' in 'Virginia' that meander and are matched by complex rhythmic patterning. Adès also experiments with harmonic structures that accumulate or evolve through the gradual addition of pitches, building into dense clusters in *O thou who didst't with pitfall and gin*.

The second compositional strategy revealed in Adès' early vocal works is his reference to the compositional techniques of composers selected on the strength of connections with the text or the musical techniques he is using to reflect the text. He

uses these connections to provide symbolic associations with the composer: he forges links with Kurtág and Messiaen because of the religious and spiritual affiliations with their works, and Messiaen's fascination with birdsong. Or he identifies with a specific compositional process associated with the composer: links with Nancarrow are suggested through the temporal layering and canonic procedures in 'New Hampshire' to relate to the cycles of the seasons. At other times he may allude to a particular work by another composer that connects with the underlying concepts in the poem, as in his allusion to Strauss' *Four Last Songs* when the imminence of death is suggested in 'Virginia.' He references choral techniques influenced by Ligeti and Lutosławski to inform the vocal textures of his first choral work with *O thou who didst't with pitfall and gin.*

The four works under investigation reveals Adès' fascination with a choice of literature that spans the centuries. He takes his inspiration from a range of literary sources, but his choice of subject matter frequently reflects an interest in cycles or journeys; in love, in life in terms of a spiritual journey, or in connection with the seasons, to parallel his obsession with interval cycles or systems. Death holds a particular fascination for Adès and this is paralleled with his persistent attraction to lament-like descending melody lines, a feature that persists throughout his career. His response to literature reveals a very close emotional and intellectual connection between text and music, the emotional impact of his music and its ability to be used metaphorically to represent the various moods represented in the text, or to respond to specific concepts through word-painting, is a priority to Adès.

Many of the compositional strategies used in these early works are absorbed, extended and modified as his compositional style develops. All these elements combine to produce a compositional style that reveals a visual and aural sensitivity to shape and

space, revealed through my graphic representation of his score. His works reflect an aural sensitivity in which colour and register and an awareness of spatial and temporal dimensions are used to create linear threads that trace shapes that interact to create coherent harmony and counterpoint, or else trace independent trajectories to produce temporal layering.

Chapter 4: Engagements with the past:

three arrangements and *Sonata da Caccia*

Straus notes that 'the desire to recompose the works of one's predecessors seems to be almost as old as Western music itself' but he observes that 'twentieth-century compositions project a particularly striking stylistic clash; the two layers of such works - the original material and the recomposed elements - remain distinct.'¹ When discussing Arnold Schoenberg's (1874–1951) orchestration of Bach's choral Prelude 'Schmucke dich', Straus notes that 'through instrumentation, register transfer, articulation, and an occasional added melodic fragment' Schoenberg reveals a 'motivic coherence that typifies his own compositions.'² He observes that in Stravinsky's recomposition of Bach's *Canonic Variations* (1956), although Stravinsky makes 'only subtle alterations and modifications', through the use of 'subtle rhythmic, textural and articulative ways [he] begins to leave his mark on the piece.'³ Through the process of comparing the borrowed material in an arrangement, or model, with the composer's modification of the originals, we should be able to reveal the compositional traits of both the original composer and the arranger.⁴ In Adès' arrangements, pitch and rhythm remain, for the most part, faithful to the originals; he does, however, influence the original model through changes to parameters of music such as instrumental and dynamic colour, articulation, tessitura and texture. By looking at Adès' arrangements of works by past composers one can throw aspects of his own compositional strategies into sharp relief; what he adds or changes should shed light onto his own approach to

¹ Straus, *Remaking the past*, p. 44.

² *Ibid.*, p. 47.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁴ Meyer makes comments to this effect in *Style and Music: Theory, History and Ideology*, p. 55.

composition. In this chapter I intend to investigate the extent to which this statement may hold true.

As each piece is approached we need to consider why Adès has selected a particular model and what has attracted his attention, but we also need to assess the manner in which he responds and discover what his intentions are in relation to the model. In the previous chapter I focused on Adès' use of homage to enhance and confirm associations with the texts of solo and choral works. In his arrangements Adès selects models with a title or a text, and his priority is to use music metaphorically to enhance the extra-musical associations suggested by the title or text. When considering Adès' relationship with a model I will consider some of the imitative strategies suggested by Hyde⁵ in order to clarify Adès' approach.

Les Baricades Mistérieuses

When arranging the harpsichord works of Couperin in *Les Baricades Mistérieuses* Adès observes an element of restraint, a gentleness that provides a sense of reverence as he pays homage to one of his favourite composers. Adès possibly sees Couperin as a kindred spirit in that both composers use music as a metaphor not only to represent obvious moods but also hidden concepts suggested by titles. Adès' approach to Couperin's harpsichord pieces comes closest to Hyde's first category of 'reverential imitation' whereby the model is followed 'with a nearly religious fidelity or fastidiousness.'⁶ In *Les Baricades Mistérieuses* we see Adès working on a very subtle level to enhance the sense of mystery hinted at in the title. He uses the harmonies and rhythms of the original but experiments with various ways of combining the dark colours at his disposal (clarinet, bass clarinet; viola, 'cello and double bass), to explore

⁵ Hyde, 'Neoclassic and Anachronistic Impulses in Twentieth-Century Music', p. 200.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

the textures offered by the piece. There is a lot of repetition in this work by the very nature of its rondo structure; the eight bar rondeau theme itself consists of the repetition of a four-bar phrase and it is a monothematic work. Adès reflects this homogeneity by respecting it: changes in orchestration and dynamic levels are always subtle. To maintain extreme lightness in the strings Adès indicates that they should perform *alla punta dell'arco* (at the point of the bow); this technique, together with the frequent use of harmonics, ensures that the mellow voices of the clarinets are not overwhelmed.

Adès uses two main techniques when orchestrating this work. He scores the rondo theme sections by distributing short fragments or phrases more or less in their entirety to instruments. But he adopts a more pointillist approach in the first couplet by allocating very short fragments or individual pitches between the various instruments to present the listeners with something more akin to an accompaniment. Perhaps this is what Adès is suggesting when he notes that 'the melody does not exist in itself [...] it happens in the air above the performance.'⁷ When Adès was asked if he had any sense of what the mysterious barriers were in *Les Baricades Mistérieuses* he explained that the piece does not 'have any horizontal lines, rather unusually for Couperin,' and that it is 'the interplay of the four voices that create the melody.'⁸ Adès is referring to the 'broken-style' of this piece.

Various stylistic hallmarks are revealed in this piece: we note Adès' skill at blending tone colours and his fascination for the dark timbres of bass instruments or instruments in their lower registers. This subdued response in terms of tone-colour seems to reflect the boundaries or 'barricades' of the original, limitations of variety and of register. But even in this relatively straightforward arrangement/transcription, Adès matches changes in texture with an imaginative response from a limited number of

⁷ McGregor and Adès, *Proms Composer Portrait Concert*, 2007.

⁸ *Ibid.*

instruments. In this piece the groundwork has been set for the next arrangement of three of Couperin's harpsichord pieces undertaken twelve years later.

Song arrangements

In his arrangements of songs Adès reveals an intimate connection with the lyrics. Although he takes a different approach to each song, he has the same aim in mind, to add a musical response that will intensify the concepts provided by the lyrics. Both works reveal an obsession with death.

Darknesse Visible

Once again Adès is drawn towards the darker side of the emotional spectrum as he responds to the music of the Elizabethan lutenist John Dowland (1563–1626).

Darknesse Visible is a recomposition of Dowland's lute song *In Darknesse Let me Dwell*.

The intensity and sensitivity of Dowland's musical representation of extreme melancholy in this song would have proved irresistible to Adès and his response to this work is powerful and dramatic. Adès' approach to the past in this instance reveals a connection to Hyde's description of 'heuristic' imitation. She explains that 'heuristic imitation accentuates rather than conceals the link it forges with the past. It advertises its dependence on an earlier model, but in a way that forces us to recognize the disparity, the anachronism, of the connection being made.'⁹ She explains that because 'heuristic imitation defines itself through its relationship to one source or model, it sketches [...] its own etiology, its own historical passage and artistic emergence.'¹⁰ Two points are raised here: firstly, there is the impact of anachronism, exploited through the

⁹ Hyde, 'Neoclassic and Anachronistic Impulses in Twentieth-Century Music', p. 214.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

contrast of contemporary response to a renaissance model: and secondly, the extent to which this arrangement reveals the compositional traits of the arranger, in this instance Adès' emphasis on parameters other than pitch and rhythm to transform the original work. Adès exhibits an aggressive approach to this model through the employment of brutal *sforzandi* and clipped acciaccaturas to represent anguish and extreme pain, but this is contrasted by a more sensitive, reflective response, through *pianissimo* dynamic levels, and murmuring tremolos, to enhance the underlying sense of melancholy. He has transformed the song into a work that exploits contrast and opposition, a conflict between not only past and present, but between tortured anguish and sadness, light and dark, high and low, loud and soft, textures that are close or open, and between homophony and counterpoint; Adès enables us to experience a new way of hearing *Darknesse Visible*.

Adès transposes the work into C flat major, to reflect the original sounding pitch of an authentic performance. I have represented the first page of the score in graphic form in Ex. 4.1, to illustrate the way in which Adès displaces the original material. The pitches extracted from the original are shown as note-heads, in their original location, on the lower staves, and Adès' redistribution of pitches is shown on the staves above. I have colour-coded¹¹ pitches so that the transferred material is easily identified. This work reveals Adès' fascination with register and space and his exploitation of instrumental colour. Pitches still interact at the same time, according to the rhythmic patterns of the original, but their registral relationship with each other has changed; Adès alters the distances between threads, changes the relative position of these threads, and changes the trajectory of threads in order to serve the text. Melodic threads are distorted through octave displacement to create a contrapuntal texture in bars 38–54 as

¹¹ This colour-coding is specific to this song and not related to the colour-coding in the other graphic scores.

the 'hellish, jarring sounds [of music] banish friendly sleep', and when all melody lines are transferred to the highest treble register of the piano, to produce a close homophonic textures in bars 26–35, they represent the solidity of the 'walls of marble blacke.'

Ex. 4.1: *Darknesse Visible*, graphic representation of bars 1–18 showing the relocation of pitches from Dowland’s lute song ‘In Darknesse Let Me Dwell’

The image displays a musical score for the piece 'Darknesse Visible'. It consists of several staves:

- Piano:** The upper two staves of the piano part. The right hand features a series of notes with dynamic markings such as *sffz* and *f*. The left hand has notes with *ppp* and *f sonore, poco espr.* markings. A red line traces a path from the first bass note to the first treble note, and another red line traces a path from the first treble note to the final treble note.
- Voice:** The middle staff, containing the vocal line with lyrics: "In dark ness let - me dwell, the ground, the ground shall sorrow, sorrow - be,".
- Strands extracted from the original lute song:** The bottom staff, showing two strands of music. The upper strand is in treble clef with notes in green and purple. The lower strand is in bass clef with notes in red and purple.

Bar numbers 5, 10, and 15 are indicated above the piano staff. The score includes various dynamic markings and articulation symbols like accents (^) and slurs.

Adès individualizes the tone quality of each thread through the exploitation of both the percussive and singing tone-qualities of the piano, as he varies methods of attack (tenuto, accent, heavy accents and sforzando), modes of articulation to include legato, *legatissimo*, and staccato, and a wide range of dynamic levels and shading.

Adès' interest in interval is also manifest in this work as the pitches of the original songs are occasionally presented in such a way as to highlight or identify a particular interval and to enhance the connection between music and lyrics. Parallel perfect fifth dyads are exposed during bars 78–9 through octave displacement and identified by staccato indications, to coincide with the word 'death' in the song, and melodic fragments are fused to create minor second dyads in bars 61 and 62 to suggest being 'wedded to my woes' and 'bedded to my tomb.' Occasionally Adès makes a rhythmic adjustment for dramatic effect as in the agitated demisemiquaver patterns that suggest terror in 'let me living, die' and the addition of aggressive clipped acciaccaturas accentuating the concept of 'hellish jarring sounds.'

All pitches are derived from Dowland's song but Adès' skill as both pianist and composer are revealed as he responds with an acute sensitivity to register and tone-colour in this 'recomposition.' The application of these techniques is driven by Adès' overriding desire to change the way in which we hear and understand Dowland's song; Adès' version presents us with a surreal exaggeration of emotions. Albright reminds us 'of the classical surrealist theory of the 1920s' when he notes that 'surrealism is the movement that most explicitly prized dissonance among competing planes of attention within the art work.'¹² In this work Adès creates an intensified image of the song that unfolds on two levels; we have a terrifying image of grief through the percussive use of the piano and tortured lines displaced through octave displacement, as opposed to

¹² Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent*, p. 244.

blurred tones that suggest tearful eyes, and sobbing, trembling tremolos that promote a sense of melancholy. There is an immediacy of emotion of the present that is raw and violent, and this contrasts, on another level, with a delicacy and sensitivity to the song that possibly suggests a sense of distance and of belonging to the distant past.

Cardiac Arrest

Cardiac Arrest was originally composed by Christopher Foreman and Carl Smyth (Chas Smash) for the British pop/ska band Madness. Adès more or less transcribes the original song for a chamber ensemble of seven instruments (clarinet and bass clarinet, viola, 'cello, double bass, and two pianos) but the additions he makes are striking. *Cardiac Arrest* describes a daily commute to work, but as the song progresses, thoughts of work and the prospect of arriving late prey on the mind of one particular commuter, and as his anxiety increases he has a fatal heart attack. Adès parallels the various stages of the story using a variety of instrumental and rhythmic techniques as signifiers to represent in musical terms the emotional and physical process of having a heart attack. Table 4.1 outlines the basic structure of the song and notes Adès' additions in response to the lyrics:

Table 4.1: Madness and Adès, overview of *Cardiac Arrest*

Lyrics and instrumental breaks of the original song	Verse 1									
	Intro.		Verse 2				Chorus			
	Heartbeat	Instrumental	Ten more minutes till he gets there the crossword's nearly done. It's been so hard these days not nearly so much fun.	His mind wanders to the office his telephone, desk and chair. He's fairly happy with the company they've treated him real fair.	Think of seven letters begin and end in 'C'. Like a big American car but misspelt with a 'D'.	I wish this bus'd get a move on, Driver's taking his time I just don't know, I'll be late. Oh dear what will the boss say?	Pull yourself together now don't get in a state	Don't you worry there's no hurry It's a lovely day could all be going your way	Take the doc's advice let up enjoy your life Listen to what they say it's not a game they play.	
Phrase Structure		A	A	A	B	C	C	D	D	link
Bars per section	6	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	1
Arrangement details of the Adès version		Piano bass line broken 8va Stgs.sul pont	Disjunct bass line		Glissandi: vla. 'cello	Extended gliss. all insts.	Strings: approx. pitch & intonation. Slap: Pn. & bass	Constant quaver movement Pno.II; maj. 9ths and 7ths.		Poco rit

Lyrics and instrumental breaks of the original song	Inst. break		Verse 3					Chorus		Coda
	Xylophone solo	Plus saxophone	Never get there at this rate he's caught up in a jam. There's a meeting this morning It's just his luck oh damn!	His hand dives in his pocket for his handkerchief. Pearls of sweat on his collar his pulse-beat seems so brief.	Eyes fall on his wristwatch the seconds pass so slow. Gasping for the hot air but the chest pain it won't go.	But can't seem to speak a word, words are whispered frantically but don't seem to be heard.	What about the wife and kids? They all depend on me!	We're so sorry we told you not to hurry. Now it's just too late you've got a certain date	We thought we made it clear we all voiced our inner fears we left it up to you there's nothing we can do.	Single version: Chorus repeats and fades Album version: Repeat of heartbeat from intro then stops.
Phrase Structure	E	E	A & E comb.	A & E comb.	B	C	C	D	D	D or intro
Bars per section	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	3	5
Arrangement details of the Adès version		Gliss. Lack of synch.	Gliss. /trem Cross rhythms:	Omits	Glissandi, col leg. & sul tasto.	Trem //gliss. Cross rhythms:	Trem . Slap bass and pno.	Exact repeat of D		Heartbeat Bass/pizz. detune string

The heartbeat is established at the outset but the onset of agitation is suggested through a technique Adès often uses to intensify the emotional impact of a melody line, the use of octave displacement. Adès uses a number of instrumental techniques to contribute to the feeling of anxiety, and the bizarre nature of the event, through the use of glissandi in verse one, and a tapestry of extended glissandi, on all instruments, to add a surreal edge to the song towards the end of verse two. A particularly disturbing section highlights the level of stress as the commuter is urged to 'pull yourself together.' Here Adès emphasizes this breaking point through the use of approximate pitch and intonation indications on strings and uses percussive slaps on double bass and piano to suggest the initial disruption of the heartbeat. In the instrumental break Adès begins to use cross rhythms to create a lack of synchronization and a range of tremolo techniques on strings and woodwind to suggest a sense of panic. Rapid piano figurations created through the superimposition of rhythmic patterns act as signifiers to represent the physical chaotic rhythm of atrial-fibrillation during a heart attack. Then suddenly with a return of the chorus we are back to our journey; everyone is sorry but the commute goes on. Adès closes the piece with the less optimistic ending of the album as the heartbeat from the introduction gradually fades, to disappear through a final pizzicato detuned bass string glissando.

Adès would no doubt have considered the underlying social/political message regarding our relationship with work, unreasonable expectations from ourselves and our bosses, and the exceptional burden and pressure we encounter in our workaholic culture. It is ironic that the music of the original song is upbeat and cheerful in nature and is at odds with gravity of the situation expressed in the lyrics, but Adès unlocks the macabre and sinister element of the song in a surreal juxtaposition of the cheerful and

complacent tone of the original with an exaggerated and super-charged musical commentary of the emotional and physical reality expressed in the lyrics.

Conclusion

Adès retains the pitches and rhythms of the original works in these arrangements/transcriptions and because of this we are able to focus on the way Adès works with the other elements of music to unlock the expressive potential of each work. We could simply look at these works as exercises that reveal Adès' expertise at manipulating instrumental and dynamic colour, a fondness for darker instrumental tones, and an imaginative use of register. But these pieces reveal more than this. In his heightened emotional response to the lyrics or title, Adès engages each work on a deeper level and uses musical techniques to express moods, or concepts, using his arrangements as a metaphor to enhance or exaggerate ideas expressed in the originals or to add extra layers of meaning. Death is encountered in all but one piece and his approach to death and the macabre reveals a surreal tendency manifested through the exploitation of heightened, super-real emotions. Death is a topic that Adès returns to time after time.

Sonata da Caccia

The final work in this chapter explores how, through an original work, Adès extends his interest in the work of Couperin. We have already encountered Couperin in *Les Baricades Mistérieuses* but a less direct reference to this composer also appears in 'L'Embarquement', the fifth movement of the string quartet *Arcadiana*, which will be discussed in Chapter 7. Hyde defines 'metamorphic anachronism' in music as involving a 'deliberate dramatization of historical passage, bringing the present into relation with

a specific past and making the distance between them meaningful.’¹³ I intend to pursue the analysis of this *Sonata da Caccia* in the spirit of what Hyde describes as her fourth mode of metamorphic anachronism, the ‘dialectical’ form of imitation, which she describes as invoking ‘a process of critically examining the truth of an opinion through discussion or debate or dialogue [...] of at least two voices or positions and involving indirect or oblique comparison.’ She explains that ‘dialectical’ imitation initiates a ‘more aggressive dialogue between a piece and its model [...] and invites and risks reciprocal treatment – a two-way dialogue, a mutual exchange of criticism, a contest between specific composers and specific pieces.’ She goes on to explain that ‘this kind of critical exchange as a rule does not lead to a clear-cut final synthesis, for dialectical imitations create a contest that is neither free of ambiguity nor easily resolved.’¹⁴ In *Sonata da Caccia* Adès explores the anachronistic impact of fusing, contrasting, and juxtaposing his own musical techniques with those of Couperin. Adès creates a lively dialogue between past and present that ranges from a reverential and sometimes playful interaction, to one that can be aggressive and intense. He embarks on this journey with a sense of seriousness but also with a sense of fun.

The *Sonata da Caccia* was commissioned by the BBC and first performed by the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group on 19 April 1994. Adès selects two instruments which would have been available to Couperin, the harpsichord and baroque oboe, but adds the French horn. The programme note, at the beginning of the score of *Sonata da Caccia*, makes it clear that this work also pays homage to Debussy; Adès states that ‘the combination of oboe, horn and harpsichord was devised by Debussy for the fourth of his instrumental sonatas, which death prevented him from composing.’ Adès also notes that ‘this piece could be imagined as ‘homage’ to Debussy and

¹³ Hyde, ‘Neoclassic and Anachronistic Impulses in Twentieth-Century Music’, p. 205.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 221–2

Couperin, in the manner of the latter's *L'Apothéose de Corelli* or *L'Apothéose de Lully*.¹⁵ An *apothéose* is defined by Davitt Moroney and Julie Anne Sadie as 'an instrumental musical form whose programmatic element honoured a dead musician, usually Lully.'¹⁶ Adès pays homage to Debussy through the choice of instrumentation and to Couperin through reference to specific compositional and performance features characteristic of his music. The descriptive mood indications provide direct references to Couperin; Adès notes that 'all indications in French are taken from works of Couperin.'¹⁷ *Sonata da Caccia* follows the overall structure of a dance suite with each movement identifying with a dance favoured by Couperin, but in more typical Adès manner they are to be performed continuously with no break between movements as follows:

I: Gravement (a sarabande in binary form)

II: Gayement (a gigue in rondo form)

III: Naïvement (a sicilienne in variation form)

IV: Galament (a gavotte in binary form)

Each movement uses a formal structure frequently featured in Couperin's works such as binary form, variation form and rondo form. Tonal relationships are evident between movements as the first movement settles briefly into the key of E minor in bars 3–4; traces of A minor (subdominant minor) are found at the start of the rondo theme and the second couplet features the use of melodic material in G major (relative major of E minor) in the second movement; B major (dominant major) is established at the start of the third movement; and the final movement begins in E major (tonic major).

¹⁵ Adès, Thomas (1994) programme notes in the preface to the score, *Sonata da Caccia*.

¹⁶ Moroney, Davitt and Julie Anne Sadie. 'Apothéose.' *Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/02203> (accessed August 26, 2013).

¹⁷ Adès, Thomas (1994) programme notes in the preface to the score, *Sonata da Caccia*.

Couperin however, would normally set each movement in the same key. Adès weakens the tonal implications of the more Couperin-like material through the addition of false relations, the insertion of 'wrong notes' in the manner of Stravinsky, and the addition of chord aggregates built from towers of thirds, possibly alluding to chord constructions used by Debussy. Adès also integrates material that is created using systems of pitch generation no longer directed by tonal considerations, through the use of melody lines that trace systematic chromatic expansion or contraction, and harmony created through the superimposition of chromatic and whole-tone movement.

In terms of rhythm Adès makes use of single figures for time signatures in the manner of Couperin, he observes the French custom of performing equal quaver and semiquaver movement as *notes inégales*, and he alludes to rhythmic conventions associated with each dance type. But a more contemporary approach to rhythm is always present and this is evident through rhythmic complexity, created through irregular groupings of the beat and the superimposition of patterns to create cross-rhythm. There is evidence too, of temporal layering as individually identified layers, in terms of pitch, interval and rhythm, evolve according to their own momentum.

Adès also alludes to Couperin's use of descriptive titles and suggests a programmatic element to the work through the use of the word *caccia* in the title; Fischer notes that 'textually, Italian *cacce* are often descriptive pieces in dialogue, sometimes involving hunting scenes.' He goes on to define the word from a musical point of view as 'a texted canon for upper voices to which is added an untexted tenor.'¹⁸ The concept of the hunt is reinforced through the choice of the horn, and a sense of a

¹⁸ Fischer, Kurt von and Gianluca D'Agostino. 'Caccia.' *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University Press. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/04517> (accessed August 26, 2013). Fischer discusses examples of *caccia* by the medieval Italian composer Gherardello de Firenze (born 1320–5, died 1362 or 1363).

hunt, involving contest and interaction, is featured through the concept of a musical dialogue between past and present.

Just as Couperin in his *apothéose* endeavours to bring two styles together, to combine the characteristics of dance rhythms and ornamentation of the French style with the more contrapuntal and rhythmically energized characteristic features of the Italian style, Adès amalgamates and integrates and at times starkly contrasts his own musical techniques with those of Couperin. This work attempts to be a baroque trio sonata, with a French horn but without the 'cello, and uses the harpsichord in a supporting role, in line with the expectations of this type of ensemble, though it is also allowed to take on a virtuosic and soloistic role. Adès focuses on the expressive, highly ornamented melodic lines typical of French Rococo music and uses Couperin's code of ornamentation referred to as 'les agréments', through use of the *pincé*, *double*, *tremblement* and *tremblement lié*; ornamentation described in *L'Art de toucher le clavecin* (1716 revised 1717).¹⁹ The following analysis will take a more specific look at each movement in order to explore the factors mentioned above in more detail; I will concentrate on the extent to which Adès both integrates and contrasts features of his compositional approach with the compositional and performance techniques of Couperin.

i) 'Gravement' (seriously)

Adès adopts the dotted rhythms of a Sarabande for this first movement of *Sonata da Caccia*. The movement follows a binary structure illustrated in Table 4.2:

¹⁹ Adès outlines the manner of performance of these ornaments in the preface to the score.

Table 4.2: *Sonata da Caccia*, movement I, 'Gravement', overview of structure

Introduction	Section A	Section B
Bars: 1 – 2	ll: 3 – 13 :ll	14 – 34

Three melodic phrases dominate this movement and I will look at each idea to gauge the extent to which contemporary and baroque features have been fused within each idea and secondly, to explore how these ideas interact in the movement. In terms of fusion, the first idea (a), illustrated in Ex. 4.2, is typical of Adès in that pitches are generated by a system of interval expansion, indicated in the following example, to produce a series of paired fragments that successively expand from a pedal point on F. The angular nature of the phrase could be taken to confirm the contemporary nature of this idea, but rhythmic and articulation indications suggest the French manner of performance of notes inégales through the rhythmic pairing of notes, from strong to weak. This leads straight in to a very different second idea (b) which is more typical of the French style in that it is conjunct and highly embellished with ornaments, appoggiaturas and suspensions.

Ex. 4.2: *Sonata da Caccia*, movement I, 'Gravement', bars 1–6, oboe, horn and harpsichord

Gravement

Oboe

Horn

Harpichord

doux

doux (nat.)

pp

fort

(a) (b1) (b) repeated at a distance of a tritone (d)

(a) repeated at a distance of a tritone (c)

d (transp. R.I of c)

F-Gb-----Ab-----B
Min. Major Aug.
2nd 2nd 2nd

Em Am7 Bm Bbm Ebm7 E7-F7 Ebm7

I IV V I IV V I

To emphasize the sense of arrival, in terms of the past, the harpsichord enters as this phrase begins. Adès scrupulously notates this phrase to suggest the rhythmic flexibility of notes inégales, and he stresses the second beat of the bar, through the use of expressive appoggiaturas, to suggest the rhythmic characteristics of the sarabande. In terms of tonality this phrase suggests a tonal centre of E minor and is supported by a series of primary triads that cadence on chord V in bar 4. Adès begins with an idea more weighted towards a contemporary outlook but seamlessly makes a transition into a phrase typical of Couperin.

When the horn first enters in bar 3 it begins with a transposed version of (a) but instead of continuing with (b) closes with a third idea (c); a descending phrase that uses another system of pitch generation favoured by Adès, one in which a melodic line is created through a series of chromatically contracting intervals. Just as in (a) it contains no ornamentation but is rhythmically notated to suggest notes inégales. At this stage both melodic lines pursue their own rhythmic agendas to produce a rhythmically intricate interaction. Adès balances relative rhythmic simplicity with tonal ambiguity in (a) and (c) and rhythmic complexity with the more tonally orientated material (b). But a link between ideas is suggested through phrase shape; the baroque-like material of (b) gently undulates to produce an arc-shaped phrase and the Adès-like material (a) and (b) when combined, reflects this with a much steeper and longer, drawn-out arc-shaped phrase.

All three ideas amalgamate elements of both baroque and contemporary musical styles, but the way in which the ideas are developed, and the manner in which they interact, reveals examples of both the fusion and contrast of past and present. Ideas are extended through the use of sequence, a typical Italian baroque approach to the development of material, but this technique is not regulated by a baroque approach to

tonality. For example, when (b) is repeated sequentially (b¹) in bars 4–5 it is a distance of a tritone (shifting the melody into B flat minor); the first idea (a) follows a similar pattern as it too is repeated in sequence at a distance of a tritone, an interval that would not have been tolerated in Couperin's time due to its reputation as the *diabolus in musica* ('The Devil in Music').²⁰ However, the sequential treatment of phrase (d) in bars 7–8 suggested a shift back to a more baroque-like perspective; here the one-bar phrase is imitated a tone higher.

These melodic ideas unfold in counterpoint in the opening bars, and the gentle interaction of these melodic phrases is supported by a light two- and three-part texture of superimposed paired melodic fragments on the harpsichord. Adès manipulates cellular fragments, favouring major third, whole-tone and semitone movement, to create sequences of major and minor chords, and major or minor third dyads, to support the oboe and horn parts. Dissonance is created through the use of appoggiaturas, suspensions, and added sevenths to reflect its expressive use in the music of Couperin.

In section B Adès introduces signals to suggest that relationships are changing as phrases appear in transposition, inversion and in simplified form. The section begins with an almost polite exchange between past and present as the horn and oboe take alternate phrases; horn with an inverted form of (a) and oboe with a conjunct phrase more typical of Couperin, but in this instance lacking ornamentation or embellishment. But from the very start of section B, the harpsichord contrasts the simplicity of the horn and oboe phrases with figurations that become more elaborate and florid to the extent that it suggests a twentieth-century parody or distortion of baroque embellishment. The introduction of wild scalic passages begins to upset the equilibrium established between horn and oboe to the extent that they begin to slip out of synchronization from bar 19.

²⁰ Scholes, Percy A. (1970) *The Oxford Companion to Music*, 10th edition, ed. John Owen Ward, London: Oxford University Press, p. 291.

As the movement begins to drive to a climax, oboe and horn recall the original material introduced in section A. Couperin-like phrases (d) are presented *fortissimo*, as a combined effort (in bars 25–7 and 29–30); and past (b) and present (a) co-operate in a more restrained manner (in bars 27–9 and 30–2). As this interaction between oboe and horn unfolds, the harpsichord offers support in the form of chords that offer both tonal and dissonant combinations; these rapidly arpeggiated chord patterns suggest pianistic figurations more typical of Debussy (see bars 25–30).

In the final moments, all three instruments join forces to pay a final wistful and reverential homage to Couperin as they recall the opening bars, shown in Ex. 4.3. Rapid reiterations on harpsichord settle into the chord progression (Em⁷/Am/ B), a progression directed by voice leading tracing chromatic expansion, as horn and oboe phrases (a) and (b¹) interlock *doux*. Both oboe and horn close the movement *très doux* as they join forces to focus on aspects of (b) and gradually fade into the distance. A final chromatic shift from C–B on the harpsichord anticipates the final pitch of the movement; this is taken up by the horn to provide a link, a typical ‘connecting’ function, through to the next movement.

Ex. 4.3: *Sonata da Caccia*, movement I, ‘Gravement’, bars 30–4, oboe, horn and harpsichord

The musical score consists of three staves: Oboe, Horn, and Harpsichord. The Oboe part starts at bar 30 with a 'doux' dynamic and includes markings 'A', 'b1', and 'très doux (-)'. The Horn part includes markings 'a', 'très doux', and 'très doux bouche'. The Harpsichord part includes markings 'A' and 'cf. bars 2-3'. Below the staves, a chord progression is shown: Db...D...E...G...B and E...D...C. Annotations include 'chromatic expansion minor 2nd - major third' and 'whole-tone descent'.

This movement features a subtle and intricate fusion of past and present. The ideas evolve in linear fashion and only reveal occasional glimpses of rhythmic synchronization; the complex rhythmic interaction of these superimposed layers of material within a contrapuntal framework is typical of Adès but also alludes to the layering of voices in Couperin's harpsichord music. The harpsichord takes on a supporting role at first, but it becomes more virtuosic with rapid flourishes that exaggerate the technique of performing spread chords on the harpsichord. In this movement much of the musical material is designed to allude to Couperin, but Adès also includes the use of material generated on a cellular level. The interaction between instruments reveals a spirit of co-operation, especially in the first section, but offers glimpses of unease and suggests the possibility of a more volatile relationship between instruments, as well as past and present, as the movement progresses.

ii) 'Gayement' (gaily)

This movement is in rondo form and draws on dance elements of the gigue. The overall structure of the movement is as follows:

Table 4.3: *Sonata da Caccia*, movement II, overview of structure

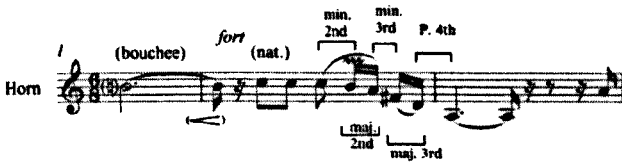
	Intro.	A	B	A	C (Majeur)	A	Coda
Bars:	1	2 – 19	19 – 47	47 – 56	57 – 89	90 – 8	98 – 101

The mood indication *gayement* is translated as merry and cheerful and Adès gives this a more contemporary perspective. The rondo theme and the B couplet both gravitate towards the engagement of contemporary techniques in which baroque features are submerged, but the second couplet C introduces material that is more obviously French baroque in character, but overlaid with contemporary mannerisms. In

this movement Adès establishes an uneasy alliance, and one which, at times, presents us with a much more aggressive encounter between past and present.

A dramatic crescendo on the note B sustained through from the previous movement leads into a assertive one-bar phrase on the horn tracing a series of chromatically expanding intervals; and a transposed and extended retrograde inversion of (a) from the first movement. This opening fragment, illustrated in Ex. 4.4, marks the start of each repetition of the rondo theme and introduces phrases within the rondo theme.

Ex. 4.4: *Sonata da Caccia*, movement II, 'Gayement', bars 1–3, horn



Adès uses this opening phrase as a reference fragment that performs a structural function; it is used to introduce phrases by the horn and oboe within the rondo theme, and to signify a return of the rondo theme later in the movement. A closer look at the rondo theme reveals that in terms of instrumentation and texture, the oboe and horn now move as partners in rhythmic unison, in common with baroque practice, as shown in Ex. 4.5:

Ex. 4.5: *Sonata da Caccia*, movement II, 'Gayement', bars 3–14, oboe and horn

The image displays three systems of musical notation for Oboe and Horn parts, with various intervallic and dynamic annotations. The first system (bars 3-6) features an Oboe part starting with a *fort* dynamic and a Horn part. Annotations include 'Dyads: chromatic expansion', 'Expan.', 'Contraction', and intervallic brackets labeled 'ST', 'WT', and 'Min. 3rd'. The second system (bars 7-10) shows the Oboe part with a *houchee* marking and the Horn part with a *(pp)* marking. Annotations include 'Dyads: chromatic contraction', 'Expan.', 'Contraction', and intervallic brackets labeled 'WT', 'Maj. 3rd', and 'Maj. 3rd'. The third system (bars 11-14) includes an *(accomp.)* marking and a *fort* dynamic. Annotations include 'Dyads: chromatic contraction', 'Expan.', and intervallic brackets labeled 'WT' and 'Expan.'.

However, the manner in which harmony is generated is typical of Adès. The construction and development of melodic material suggests a cellular intervallic approach in that the material is fragmentary in nature, and grows out of melodic cells often restricted to semitone, whole-tone and minor third movement. Adès thickens the melody line with thirds and sixths at the start of each phrase, but the systematic superimposition of whole-tone, semitone, and major and minor third movement generates processes of chromatic expansion or contraction. This leads to the inclusion of intervals that distort what would be a typical harmonization of the melody-line in baroque terms. This contemporary approach to harmony and melody is matched by rhythmic complexity. Each half of a bar is allocated either a three quaver division or a four dotted semiquaver division of the dotted crotchet beat to create a hemiola effect

(1,2,3 – 1,2,3,4). Adès enhances this unsettling and unpredictable manipulation of rhythmic patterns by exaggerating the dotted rhythms of the French gigue through the addition of rests, syncopation, and the performance practice of performing the even dotted semiquavers as notes inégales. This produces a series of stuttering cellular fragments that on the one hand suggests the baroque, through the thickening of the melody line in thirds and sixths, with traits associated with Adès that include the manipulation of rhythmic patterns, a contemporary approach to pitch generation, and the use of three-phrases.

This bonding of elements from past and present is quite subtle in these upper parts, but the harpsichord offers a complete contrast in that it is wildly flamboyant and makes extensive use of bass registers. What it does share, however, is the use of superimposed chromatic and whole-tone movement to create harmonic and melodic fragments. It is extremely elaborate and rhythmically intricate but the wild melodic flourishes occasionally reveal major and minor third dyads. These two layers of material, one defined by oboe and horn and the other by the harpsichord, evolve independently of each other. Each layer is carefully characterized and observes its own momentum, and each jostles for our attention. But the insertion of the one-bar reference fragment (a) at regular intervals gives the listener recurring points of focus.

This more contemporary trend continues in the first couplet (section B) and a change of texture (see Ex. 4.6) alludes to the 'broken-style' (a fragmentary texture out of which the melody emerges, as opposed to melody and accompaniment) observed in Couperin's harpsichord music (for instance, in *Les Baricades*).

Ex. 4.6: *Sonata da Caccia*, movement II, 'Gayement', bars 19–21, oboe and horn

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Oboe, Horn, and Harpsichord, covering bars 19 to 21. The Oboe and Horn parts are in the upper staves, both marked *fort*. The Harpsichord part is in the lower staff. The music is in 12/16 time and features complex rhythmic patterns and melodic fragments. A measure rest of four measures is indicated in the Harpsichord part at the end of bar 21, marked with a circled '+4'.

This section explores fragmentation through exchanges between oboe and horn; the superimposition and alternation of melodic fragments and dyads or chords in the harpsichord part; and from bar 26, exchanges between the paired melody instruments and solo harpsichord interjections. From bar 37 Adès begins to exaggerate this fragmentation to the extent that it seems to parody Couperin's 'broken style' as whole-tone and chromatic cells interact to create a pointillist texture in which echo effects are reinforced dynamically. The relationship between all three instruments becomes competitive to the extent that as the section draws to a close it culminates in a series of extended trills, a caricature of ornamentation. But order is abruptly restored with the return of the one-bar fragment in bar 46 that signals the return of the rondo theme.

We experience a very different approach in the second couplet (section C) entitled 'majeur' as Adès begins to use material that suggests a shift in emphasis back to the past. In this instance it is the way that he uses this material, two melodies superimposed in Ives-like fashion, which confirms a contemporary outlook. On this occasion both melodies are tonal in character but they are characterized differently and designed to unfold independently of each other. The oboe presents a melody that begins in G major and features conjunct movement; it is rhythmically notated to suggest the gentle swaying rhythms of a sicilienne in 12/16. The harpsichord supplies a light chordal accompaniment of dyads and dissonance is present in the form of suspensions

and appoggiaturas; Adès includes the occasional false relation (B flat and B natural in bar 63, and F sharp and F natural in bar 68) to remind us that this is a contemporary version of the past. The second melody has a pentatonic flavour, and is allocated to the horn and presented in the form of a lively syncopated gigue that is angular in character.

Adès ensures the independent momentum of each melody in various ways as the horn starts before the oboe; each melody observes a different meter; and phrase lengths differ (as indicated in Ex. 4.7) to create cross-phrasing. Adès seems to be alluding to the counterpoint of the Italian baroque composers in a contemporary way. Both instruments are indicated as soloists but the horn solo has more rhythmic drive, enhanced through the use of syncopation, and observes raised dynamic levels that enable it to undermine and to some extent overwhelm the French baroque-style oboe melody with its harpsichord accompaniment. The horn melody is more contemporary in various ways: it follows a cycle of pitches, established at the start of the first two phrases, and it evolves in small cells of three or four pitches that are linked through octave displacement (on tonic and dominant pitches of G major). This melodic process is matched with a simple rhythmic scheme of alternating a single crotchet with groups of five or four quavers; he repeats the pattern once and then presents variants. The phrase lengths of the horn part are also unusual, measured in quavers in Ex. 4.7 (13, 13, 13, 17 and 9), and designed to begin on different beats of the bar. Although in the first instance this passage seems more inclined towards baroque elements it features the use of cyclic techniques and temporal layering, both of which are very typical of Adès.

Ex. 4.7: *Sonata da Caccia*, movement II, 'Gayement', bars 57–68, oboe, horn and harpsichord, showing rhythm and pitch cycles

The image displays a musical score for three instruments: Oboe, Horn, and Harpsichord, covering bars 57 to 68. The score is divided into two systems.

System 1 (Bars 57-68):

- Oboe:** Features a melodic line with notes G, A, B, D, E. Above the staff, boxes indicate pitch cycles: $\times 5$, $\times 4$, $\times 5$, $\times 4$, and $\times 10$. The first measure is marked *fort* and the second *(solo: mf legg.)*. The key signature has one sharp (F#).
- Horn:** Features a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. It is marked *fort* and *(solo)*. Brackets below the staff indicate three segments, each with a duration of "13 quaver beats duration".
- Harpsichord:** Features a harmonic accompaniment. Chords are labeled below the staff: G, A7, D7, A, G7, A, D, A, D. Brackets indicate "G major" (under G, A7, D7) and "D major" (under A, G7, A, D). The right hand has a melodic line with a trill in the final measure.

System 2 (Bars 63-68):

- Oboe:** Features a melodic line with notes G, A, B, C, E, D. Above the staff, boxes indicate pitch cycles: $\times 5$, $\times 5$, $\times 4$, and $\times 4$. The first measure is marked *doux*. The key signature changes to one flat (Bb).
- Horn:** Features a rhythmic accompaniment. It is marked *(solo)*. Brackets below the staff indicate two segments with durations of "17 quaver beats duration" and "9 quaver beats duration".
- Harpsichord:** Features a harmonic accompaniment with triplets in the right hand. The key signature has one flat (Bb).

During a repeat of this material (from bar 68) we change 'costumes' as the horn not only takes up an exact repeat of the oboe melody, complete with the same light, chordal accompaniment on harpsichord, but also maintains its role as soloist. The oboe now supplies a modified version of the disjunct horn melody, *doux*, in which rhythmic patterns are recognizable but the pitches have now been selected to provide dissonant clashes with the horn and harpsichord, in a deliberate attempt to disrupt the new partnership. In a final swapping of material (from bar 82), raised dynamic levels and emphatic spread chords on harpsichord, and a series of pulsing chords tracing perfect fifth cycles (G-D-A7-D-Gm-D-A7-D-G-C) in a possible allusion to the cycle of fifths associated with tonal harmony, serve to focus our attention on the oboe melody which is now drawn into a strong triple time. This forceful partnership between oboe and harpsichord now overwhelms the stoic efforts of the horn to compete for our attention.

After a return of the rondo theme, this more antagonistic and competitive relationship between past and present comes to a head in the coda, as indicated in Ex. 4.8:

Ex. 4.8: *Sonata da Caccia*, movement II, 'Gayément', bars 98–101, oboe, horn and harpsichord

The image displays a musical score for six instruments: Oboe, Horn, Harpsichord, Clarinet (Cl.), Horn (Hn.), and Harpsichord (Hpsd.). The score covers bars 98 to 101. The Oboe and Horn parts feature descending semiquaver patterns marked 'très fort' and 'fff'. The Harpsichord part is highly strident with complex chordal structures. The Clarinet and Horn parts have dynamic markings like 'sim.' and 'pp'. A legend at the bottom right indicates that a symbol stands for 'at ♩=100 ATTACCA'.

Horn and oboe provide a *fortissimo* series of descending accented semiquaver pitches, reminiscent of similar patterns in the 'Sacrificial Dance' (see Ex. 4.9) from Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*.

Ex. 4.9: Stravinsky, *Rite of Spring*, 'Sacrificial Dance', bars 151–2, trombones

The image shows a musical score for Trombone (Tbns.) parts, bars 151–152. The notation includes dynamic markings 'f marc.' and 'con sord. a3'. The music is in 3/8 time and features a series of descending accented semiquaver notes.

The harpsichord is equally strident in its presentation of *fortissimo* aggregates of superimposed seventh chords as contemporary music meets baroque in a bruising encounter. This intertext suggests the confirmation of the act of sacrifice, the chosen victim in this instance being Couperin. Added seventh chords are superimposed to create dissonant aggregates in a Stravinsky-like fashion, superimposed semitone and

whole-tone trills parody the ornamentation of Couperin, and superimposed whole-tone and chromatic melodic lines on the horn and oboe synchronize to present a series of contracting dyads, a typical method of pitch generation favoured by Adès.

iii) 'Naïvement'

At the start of the third movement Adès draws us back to the past with a very gentle sicilienne. A perfect fifth drone, sustained in the first nine bars, possibly suggests a Musette; Adès uses the French term *bourdon* (drone).²¹ The drone enhances the pastoral, folk-like feel of the movement, possibly alluding to harpsichord pieces by Couperin such as 'La Pastorelle' ('The Shepherdess') from the *Premier Ordre (First Ordre)*, which is also entitled *Naïvement* (naively). Adès presents us with a theme, illustrated in Ex. 4.10, which alludes to Couperin in various ways. It adopts simple swaying rhythms, the melody is harmonized in tenths (a common feature in Couperin's harpsichord music), and the delicately ornamented melody evolves in four bar phrases. Adès gently distorts the diatonic equilibrium with A naturals and G double sharp in bar 3 to suggest a Mixolydian modal flavour (B–C sharp–D sharp–E–F sharp–G sharp–[G double-sharp/A]–B) and supported by a drone on B and F sharp to confirm this association. Modality, drone and swaying rhythms also suggest a pastoral scene from antiquity.

²¹ This tonal device is used by Couperin in 'Muséte de Choisi' and 'Muséte de Tavarni' from the *Quinzième Ordre (Fifteenth Ordre)*.

Ex. 4.10: *Sonata da Caccia*, movement III, Naïvement, bars 1–4, oboe, horn and harpsichord

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with the Oboe (labeled 'très doux (Bourdon)'), Horn (labeled '(Bourdon)'), and Harpsichord (labeled '4 Lute only'). The second system continues the piece with the Oboe (labeled '3 lère'), Horn, and Harpsichord. The third system shows the end of the piece with the Oboe, Horn, and Harpsichord. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

This movement is a theme and variations, with sections defined by pedal points or absence of pedal points as shown in Table 4.4:

Table 4.4: *Sonata da Caccia*, movement III, ‘Naïvement’, overview of structure

Theme	Var. I	Var. II	Var. III	Coda
1 – 6	7– 16	16 – 22	23 – 32	33 – 6
Pedal B/F#	Pedal A/B	No pedal	Pedal B	No pedal

Couperin would have favoured the chaconne or ground bass, but Adès provides a drone pedal point and proceeds with a series of melodic variations. Here Adès uses contemporary techniques to distort, and to some extent invade, the thematic and harmonic material which alludes to the music of Couperin.

As in the first variation, the harpsichord maintains its solo role, but as horn and oboe shift to maintain pedal points on B and A this signals the start of the contemporary commentary upon the Couperin-like material. In this variation Adès begins to draw the harpsichord towards a more contemporary and unfamiliar landscape, but aspects of Couperin are still audible in the form of movement in thirds and the sicilienne rhythm. Adès engages three processes to undermine the Couperin-like material through the exploration of range and tessitura, the cellular manipulation of portions of the theme, and the insertion of new material. For example, as illustrated in Ex. 4.11, in bars 7–8 Adès maintains the harmonization of the melody at a distance of a tenth, but he doubles it in bass registers; and two bars later (in bars 9 and 12) he compresses portions of the harmonized theme into the middle range of the harpsichord. Adès continues this exploration of range as he opens up the texture to cover upper and lower registers, from bars 13–16, through use of octave displacement.

Ex. 4.11: *Sonata da Caccia*, movement III, 'Naïvement', bars 7–10, harpsichord

The musical score consists of three systems of two staves each. The first system, labeled 'Harpischord', covers bars 7 and 8. The second system, labeled 'Hpsd.', covers bars 8 and 9. The third system, also labeled 'Hpsd.', covers bars 9 and 10. In the third system, the right-hand melody is divided into segments labeled 'a', 'b', and 'c' with brackets. Segment 'a' is in the middle range, 'b' is in a lower register, and 'c' is in a higher register, illustrating octave displacement.

Although Adès begins with variants of the opening two bars of the theme he manipulates the cellular fragments of this theme. Bars 9–10 are constructed from fragments as indicated in Ex. 4.11 above (a, b, and c). Adès then further varies of these two bars (9–10), first in close position, and then manipulates the material through octave displacement during bars 13–16. The third process involves the invasion of the fabric of the theme with the insertion of descending sighing appoggiatura-like fragments; these fragments not only introduce pitches foreign to the harmonic fabric of the theme, but also introduce triplet patterns that destabilize the rhythmic patterns of the sicilienne. This process serves to make the theme sound unsynchronized, a process that is enhanced through the use of spread chords. The significance of these intervallically-generated motives, with semitone and whole-tone movement (colour-coded in Ex. 4.11), becomes more obvious in the third variation.

The second variation has a very tender, flowing quality that is enhanced by its simplicity and heralds a brief return to the baroque in terms of tonality, texture, the sequential treatment of the theme, and the allusion to the broken textures of Couperin, as oboe and horn exchange fragments. But this tender reminiscence is short-lived and disruptions are soon introduced to suggest a slipping of tonal stability, through the introduction of ‘wrong notes’ reinforced through a lack of synchronization.

In the final variation the balance between past and present is tipped in favour of Adès as elements of Couperin and Adès compete for our attention from the start. The music not only unfolds on various levels but Couperin-like aspects are tainted with contemporary techniques. One constant element survives this confrontation: the rhythms of the sicilienne are maintained throughout. The Couperin theme appears in recognisable form as it traces a series of descending sequences that lead into a final statement of theme. But contemporary aspects intrude from the start as Adès introduces

a series of intervallically expanding or contracting spread dyads (major second–major third), dissonant spread cluster chords, and a countermelody of phrases tracing chromatic expansion; extensions of the earlier sighing triplet motives. This competition between past and present comes to a head in bar 30 when the theme contracts on to the note B. At this point Adès' pitch generated melodic material takes on the rhythmic attributes of the main theme. The harpsichord makes a final bid to recover the situation with the introduction of a delicately embellished version of the theme using semiquaver patterns found in Couperin's 'Le tic-Toc Choc, ou les Maillotins' (The Tapping, or the Hammers) from the *Dix-huitième Ordre* (Eighteenth Ordre); however, grumbling spread chords in bass registers hint at a the final demise of the Couperin material.

The coda begins with a moment of reflection and a final sentimental glimpse of the sicilienne. But although we are still in the domain of the baroque in terms of rhythm, we are most definitely in Adès' territory in terms of pitch generation. In Ex. 4.12 Adès' main techniques of pitch generation, the superimposition of interval cycles and melodies constructed through chromatic expansion or contraction, have been represented graphically. But we can also see that Adès has underpinned these processes with a perfect cadence on E major; what we experience is a highly embellished perfect cadence.

33–6

33 Hpsch. Ob. Hrn. Hpsd.

V (B) Perfect cadence I (E)

Chromatic expansion: — Chromatic interval cycle: —
 Chromatic contraction: — Whole-tone interval cycle: —

In this cadence Adès gradually slows the tempo and decreases dynamic levels as everything gradually contracts in slow motion, in a surreal slide towards a conclusion on a major third dyad.

iv) 'Galament'

The final movement follows a similar trend to the previous movement in that we begin with material that reflects the compositional techniques of Couperin, but contemporary techniques are gradually superimposed in an effort to undermine, disrupt or absorb the past. This movement is modelled on the Gavotte and the overall structure observes binary form, to include the customary repetition of the A section, as illustrated in the following diagram.

Table 4.5: *Sonata da Caccia*, movement IV, overview of structure

	: Section A : (bars 1 – 8)		Section B (bars 8 – 28)					Coda (28–32)
Phrases	A	A ¹	B	B ¹	C	A ²	A ³	A1
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2 2

The conjunct oboe melody observes many characteristics of Couperin; it is heavily embellished with ornaments and appoggiaturas, evolves in four-bar phrases, and is supported with a light chordal accompaniment, using tonic and dominant harmonies on the harpsichord. It has an E major tonal centre and observes the performance of quavers as notes inégales. But there is a subtle reminder of a contemporary presence through a gentle ‘spicing-up’ of harmony with the addition of spread major and minor second dyads, which also reference the sighing semitone and whole-tone fragments from the previous movement. On the repeat, however, Adès invades this picture of elegance and delicacy with the superimposition of a muted horn countermelody. This new layer still uses E major as its tonal base but its rhythmic identity and articulation is very different, as shown in the following example. Adès uses paired slurs to emphasize groups of four across the triplet division of the minim beat to ensure that this melody adopts an individual momentum; further rhythmic disruption occurs in bar 3 and 7 to provide a quintuplet division of the bars to push the pace on towards the close of each phrase.

Ex. 4.13: *Sonata da Caccia*, movement IV, ‘Galament’, bars 1–4, oboe, horn and harpsichord

The musical score for 'Galament' consists of three staves. The top staff is for Oboe, the middle for Horn, and the bottom for Harpsichord. The key signature is E major (two sharps) and the time signature is 2/4. The Oboe part is marked *(p)* and includes ornaments and appoggiaturas. The Horn part is marked *(pp)* and features triplet and quintuplet divisions. The Harpsichord part is marked *(p)* and includes a natural sign for the 8th note. The score is titled 'Galament' and includes the instruction '2ème fois; légèrement; bouchées;' for the Horn part.

Adès begins to add more disruptive factors as he begins to manipulate the three characters/instruments in this scenario. From bar 12, the harpsichord also begins to disrupt the allusion to the past as figurations become faster and rhythmic patterns evolve within quintuplet divisions of the minim beat; now both horn and harpsichord attempt to destabilize the Couperin-style melody as three independent layers compete. In response to this lack of synchrony the horn part is simplified, from bar 16, in an attempt to engage the oboe through rhythmic synchrony, but the oboe, for the first time in this movement, begins its own form of disruption through the introduction of 'wrong notes.'

Throughout the movement the Couperin-like melody has remained unaffected by all distractions and, with an emphatic pedal E from bar 21, emphasising the return of the melody from first six bars of the movement, it continues oblivious to all attempts to dislodge it. Even as the harpsichord figurations continue to generate increasing excitement and agitation, driving the movement towards a conclusion through the use of increasingly shorter note values, calm restraint is maintained in the oboe and horn parts.

For a brief moment Adès pays a final nostalgic homage to Couperin; a sudden drop in dynamic levels, in bars 28–30, lends a distant, almost reminiscent atmosphere as we take a fleeting glimpse of the past, as shown in Ex. 4.14. Perhaps the valiant efforts of the past will in the end have the final say. But this reminiscence is short lived, cut short by an almost farcical ending as all three instruments launch into a *fortissimo* outburst that seems to finally obliterate the past. Dissonant aggregates, on the harpsichord, punctuate melody lines (on horn and oboe) which trace chromatically expanding or contracting lines as the three characters, now all in contemporary 'costume', bring the work to a clamorous conclusion. Traces of the past though are still present in the form of heavily disguised tonal material. All three instruments conclude on E and the horn implies a perfect cadence with its final pitches B and E. The bass line

of the harpsichord traces IV–V–I, but this cadential progression, although embedded within the aggregates of stacked thirds, is not audible. However, contrary motion scale fragments that converge on E provide a very convincing perfect cadence to close the work. Even now, when it seems that contemporary techniques have had the final say, the past still plays its part; in these final bars we are presented with a clear confirmation of Adès' fascination with the concept of integrating intervallically devised systems of pitch generation with tonality.

Ex. 4.14: *Sonata da Caccia*, movement IV, 'Galament', bars 28³–32, oboe, horn and harpsichord

28 *doux*

Oboe *très fort* *5* *3* contraction *6* contraction *6* expansion

Horn *doux [bouchees]* *ff* [nat. *rubato*] *très fort* *3* *5* expansion

Harpsichord *doux* *très fort* *4* only *8* + *4* *5* *3* *5* *3*

Tonic drone: E/B

Stacked thirds: A/C#/E/G#/B/D#[D]

Stacked thirds: A/C#/E/G#/B/D#[D]

Stacked thirds: E/G/B/D#/F# [F]/A/C#

Bass line: IV (A) V (B) I: E

Venn, when discussing the Piano Quintet and *Sonata da Caccia*, notes that the general consensus 'in certain sections of the musical community [...] is that this is music about music, an exercise in stylistic commentary.'²² This work certainly presents a clever amalgamation of baroque and contemporary techniques but it is far from a superficial or purely technical bonding of styles. Adès' intuitive grasp as an accomplished pianist and his sensitivity to baroque conventions in general, and Couperin's keyboard style in particular, ensures that this is no superficial marriage. Baroque compositional techniques and performance conventions are amalgamated into a compositional world of rhythmic complexity and contemporary methods of pitch generation to provide a fascinating insight into the compositional worlds of both Adès and Couperin. In this homage to Couperin, Adès reveals a close observation of compositional techniques of Couperin, through the use of typically ornamented French baroque melody lines, appoggiaturas, and binary and rondo structures, but we also recognize Adès' use of systems of pitch generation: rhythmic and pitch cycles; temporal layering; cell manipulation; and use of register and shape as integral factors in the compositional process.

Conclusion

In this chapter Adès is shown to have a varied relationship with the past. At times it has been reverential; on other occasions more confrontational and aggressive, but in *Sonata da Caccia* the response has been a two-way process, a dialogue between Couperin and Adès. These encounters have been on the one hand, sensitive and reminiscent, at other times more co-operative, but occasionally more competitive. Occasionally a sense of parody emerges that is almost surreal in its portrayal of extremes in terms of the past

²² Venn, review of *Adès: Piano Quintet, Schubert: 'Trout' Quintet*, p. 73.

and present and the exaggeration of the topos. Certainly the *Sonata da caccia* provides examples of confrontation, contrast, differentiation, and fusion. At all times we are aware of his acute emotional response to extra-musical factors, the metaphorical implications of which lie at the heart of his music. He has selected models for his arrangements in terms of their metaphoric potential, and uses music as a vehicle to suggest emotions, moods or concepts connected to real-life experiences suggested through titles, or lyrics, or homages. These emotions can be so intense as to provide almost surreal emotional extremes for the listener.

When paying homage to a composer, Adès pays close scrutiny to their compositional strategies, which becomes a balancing act between his own approach to composition and that of the composer to whom he is making homage. In his homage to Couperin in the *Sonata da caccia* there is a suggestion of the hunt, a quest to understand, compete and interact with the techniques of another composer; to enjoy and explore the past from a contemporary perspective. As past and present have been dissected in this chapter the differences between the model and the arrangements/transcriptions, re-compositions, or in the case of *Sonata da Caccia* an original work, provide a useful way forward in terms of identifying the aspects of Adès' style. In pieces where pitch and rhythm remain true to the original we are able to focus on Adès' response to the remaining elements of the compositional process. He exploits instrumental colour, often favouring muted tones or exploring bass colours; an approach to texture that reveals his predilection to characterize threads within a texture in order to focus on a linear trajectory; the manipulation of melody to emphasize a pointillist approach to orchestration; and an imaginative approach to registral displacement as he reveals his expressive response to each work.

Chapter 5: Form and Genre in the Chamber Symphony

In his references to the past, Adès acknowledges a range of traditional/historical instrumental genres in his chamber works to include a Chamber Symphony; a baroque suite, *Sonata da caccia*; two string quartets, *Arcadiana* and *The Four Quarters*; a chamber concerto (*Concerto Conciso*); and a Piano Quintet. Adès has used sonata form on two occasions, in the Chamber Symphony and the Piano Quintet. But although his use of a sonata form format in the Piano Quintet has received much attention by Fox,¹ Gloag,² and Gallon,³ to date no one has explored his first use of this form in the Chamber Symphony.

For the purpose of this study I will confine my investigation to the Chamber Symphony. Firstly, I will explore to what extent this work may be identified as symphonic, considering its limited resources and brevity, by taking into account opinions on symphonism expressed by Robert Simpson⁴ and Hans Keller.⁵ Secondly, I will refer to theories on sonata form⁶ and explore the ways in which this structure/process is used in the first movement of this work.

¹ Fox, 'Tempestuous times', pp. 41–56.

² Gloag, 'Thomas Adès and the Narrative Agendas of Absolute Music', pp. 97–110.

³ Gallon, 'Narrativities in the Music of Thomas Adès: The Piano Quintet and *Brahms*', pp. 216–33.

⁴ Simpson, *The Symphony, ii: Elgar to the Present Day*, Trowbridge and London: David and Charles.

⁵ Keller, Hans (1994) 'The State of the Symphony: not only Maxwell Davies's', in *Hans Keller: Essays on Music* ed. by Christopher Wintle et al., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 107–10. This essay originally appeared in *Tempo*, 125 (1978), 8.

⁶ An extensive survey of sonata form can be found in *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata*, by James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, New York: Oxford University Press (2006).

Symphony

The title symphony immediately sets up a number of expectations with regard to historical conventions associated with symphonic works, and initially we need to consider to what extent a contemporary version of the symphony might be expected to fulfil these requirements. A romanticized view of what constitutes a symphony is provided by Simpson, from his perspective of the late 1960s, when justifying the symphonic works that he excluded in his second volume focusing on the symphony from Elgar to 1967.⁷ Simpson notes that if 'the term 'symphony' is to be the supreme challenge [...] we must in composing symphonies ignore no basic response of the human mind, so far as elemental musical phenomena are concerned.'⁸ He insists that a symphony must be inclusive, that 'no single element is ever abandoned, or deliberately excluded,'⁹ and notes that if a work is to qualify as a 'great symphony' there should be 'a sense that the music has grown by the interpenetrative activity of *all* its constituent factors [tonality, rhythm, melody, harmony and full orchestral resources].'¹⁰ But Simpson also notes that 'in a symphony the internal activity is fluid, organic; action is the dominant factor through and through.'¹¹ In this context, it could be argued that Adès' Chamber Symphony could be considered symphonic, as will be described later.

In Hans Keller's¹² review of 'The State of the Symphony', stimulated by the first performance of Maxwell Davies's First Symphony (1973–6) he reflects on how we might qualify a more contemporary approach to the nature of symphonic thought. Keller suggests that 'one essential characteristic of symphonic thought, orchestral or chamber,

⁷ Simpson, *The Symphony, ii: Elgar to the Present Day*, p. 10.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.

¹² Keller, 'The State of the Symphony: not only Maxwell Davies's', pp. 106–10.

[is the] large-scale integration of contrast.’¹³ He explains this by suggesting ‘that the elementary and elemental contrast in the sonata’s modes of thought is independent of the contrasts between themes and between keys: *it is the contrast between statements* (whether monothematic or polythematic) *and developments* (whether they concern themselves with the statements or not).’¹⁴ Tonal music, he notes, features ‘contrast between harmonic stability and harmonic liability (modulation)’ whereas in ‘atonal symphonism [...] the differentiation is achieved by a variety of means, from which harmony is not excluded, and which encompasses both melodic and textural juxtapositions, as well as contrasts in rhythmic articulation.’¹⁵ Taken from this perspective it would seem that Keller has a much more open and modern attitude towards the symphony. The concept of symphonic thought is perhaps more to do with form and development. We do not need to have large orchestral resources; Keller includes references to the string quartet and its ability to pursue symphonic thought, but we do require development and contrast, and an element of growth to which all available resources and compositional parameters must contribute.

Adès reveals his own thoughts on musical logic in relation to symphonism when he makes some of his more critical comments on works by Wagner and Britten. He suggests a reluctance on Wagner’s part to ‘release the inherent, organic power – what I would mean by genuinely ‘symphonic’ power – of his (often magnificent) cells’¹⁶ and claims to identify a ‘one-dimensional’ approach in Britten’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream* ‘in which material does not develop – it is simply repeated, expanded, contracted [and

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Adès and Service, *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*, p. 16.

does not] connect to itself.’¹⁷ Although these comments may seem unfair and far-fetched what is interesting is that Adès is emphasising the requirement of musical logic, the concept that ideas should grow and develop through connections. When discussing finales Adès observes that ‘the argument is not all over in the first movement.’¹⁸ Here, he is referring to the fact that the intellectual weight of a work often appears to be in first movements. He continues by stating that ‘there is more to say and these further moments heighten and enrich things.’¹⁹ He proposes that musical development should be a process that continues throughout the work. This concept of connections, ongoing development and contrast is certainly apparent in the Chamber Symphony and these aspects will be discussed at length.

Adès, when discussing his fascination with ‘location and topography – setting a piece in a location even if [it is] an abstract piece’²⁰ suggests that ‘the greatest symphonists’, and here he refers to Haydn, Beethoven and Sibelius, have a sense of location or topos. Adès observes that ‘often the symphonic dialogue is a struggle between that topos, or genre, and some logic in the material.’²¹ He believes that with Sibelius ‘the function of symphonic completeness passed from the “abstract” into the “metaphorical”, and I think it has stayed there.’ He thinks that Sibelius ‘was the first to break, painfully, the mistaken idea that a symphonic argument had to have a sort of structural order to it, [that] it should be something with a certain inevitable kind of structure of decorum to it.’²² Whether we agree with this statement or not, this idea of breaking the mould in terms of approaching the symphony in a more ‘metaphorical’

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, p. 173.

way is confirmed when Adès discusses his use of titles in *Arcadiana*. Adès explains that in this work he wanted to ‘marshal the idea of a symphony as a sequence of narratives, to delineate topoi.’²³ Adès seems to be suggesting that musical logic, with its reliance on recurrence, connections, growth, conflict and resolution is also connected with the cultivation of extra-musical concepts, to suggest characters, moods or programme. Each movement in *Arcadiana* has a title that not only confirms a programme, but also suggests a network of associations that relate to paintings, locations, topoi and composers. Venn, in his article on *Asyla*, probes the extent to which the pursuit of meaning through a hermeneutic approach, that takes into account the title of the work and the film documentary,²⁴ is any more or less valid than constructing ‘a coherent plot from the interaction of the work’s stable and unstable [musical] elements.’²⁵ He concludes that a higher emotional impact is achieved through a hermeneutic approach but states that ‘one should not feel bound to let the title constrain the music, nor the music the title.’²⁶

The title ‘symphony’ conjures up a number of established expectations such as a number of contrasting movements, and formal structures with powerful associations such as sonata form. Our personal experience of a work with this title provides a network of associations and interconnections that we will bring to the work. Here we can bring into the discussion recent developments in music research in the form of intertextuality. Klein explains that literary theories of intertextuality ‘claim that a reader always brings other texts to an understanding of the single text so that all writing is

²³ Ibid., p. 74

²⁴ *Thomas Adès: Music for the 21st Century*, produced and directed by Gerald Fox (LWT 1999). Premiered 29 December 1999 on Channel Four. Available on DVD *Powder her Face* (Digital Classics DC 10002).

²⁵ Venn, “‘Asylum Gained’?”, p.116.

²⁶ Ibid.

filled with allusions, quotations, and references to other writings.²⁷ He further notes that 'we may make efforts to deafen ourselves to the multiple references of a text to others across styles and histories, or we may remain attentive to an *aleatoric* intertextuality that roams freely across time.'²⁸ In the Chamber Symphony, Adès' use of a cyclic theme suggests associations with the use of cyclic themes in large-scale romantic orchestral works by Liszt and Berlioz. With Adès' acknowledgement that this theme establishes a distinct topos of the tango, a second intertext emerges. Through the association of conflict each partner in the tango – one dominant and masculine, the other feminine and submissive – Adès could be hinting at masculine and feminine aspects of sonata form. Could this implied conflict within the tango reflect the various conflicting impulses at work within the composition as a whole as the present confronts the past?

Adès' interest in referencing the past in this work is also extended to the acknowledgement of past composers, revealed not only in his use of an instrumental combination akin to similar works by Berg and Schoenberg,²⁹ but also his use of superimposed chords suggests the influence of Stravinsky. Adès confirms a connection with Schubert when discussing his approach to first and second subjects in the first movement of the Chamber Symphony³⁰ and he references the concept of tonic-dominant polarity in sonata form through the brief glimpse of a chord progression, a tonic-dominant horn-call gesture (in bar 46), outlined on the front cover of the Chamber

²⁷ Klein, Michael L. (2005) *Intertextuality in Western Music*, Bloomington: Indian University Press, p.1.

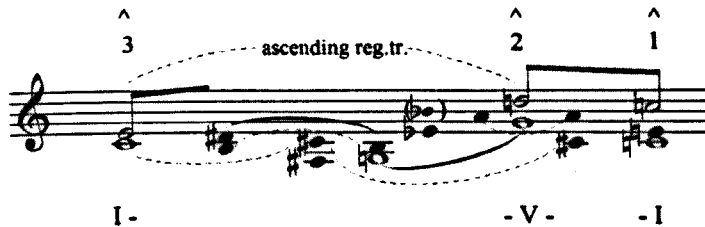
²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.12.

²⁹ Adès' choice of fifteen players matches the number of players featured in Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony (1906), though a different combination has been selected. Berg's Chamber Concerto (1915) is also scored for 15 instruments (piano, violin and 13 wind).

³⁰ Adès, Thomas, programme notes for the Chamber Symphony, *Faber Music* website, <http://www.fabermusic.com> (accessed May 22, 2013).

Symphony. This Schenkerian voice-leading diagram, outlining an embellished I–V–I progression in C major, as indicated in Ex. 5.1, present us with a musical cliché representative of the classical period.

Ex. 5.1: Chamber Symphony, front cover of the score



Adès does not indicate a connection between the Schenkerian diagram and a specific work, but what it seems to suggest is an allusion to the past in terms of the core features of the classical sonata by referencing the structural framework of a tonic and dominant formula. Integrated within this embracing framework are definite references to tonal points that are actually used in the Chamber Symphony. The three tonal references of B, F sharp and E flat appear in the exposition of the first movement (bars 15, 27 and 41 respectively). When the embracing tonic-dominant formula is referenced briefly in the second subject area, in bar 46, Adès seems to be offering us a brief glimpse of the past in terms of tonic and dominant functions; something familiar within a very unfamiliar context. It appears as a faint memory, through the use of restrained dynamic levels, and is surrounded by a halo of string harmonics, a shimmering bell tree glissando, and shell chimes, to present an association that acts as an acknowledgement of the heritage and history of sonata form. Other points of reference in connection with this diagram will be mentioned in due course.

It is perhaps significant that, in his very first encounter with the symphony, Adès deliberately avoids the use of a title, or indications other than metronome markings, for each movement. The movements are labelled as follows:

I: ♩ = 120–132

II: ♩ = 72–88 (♩ = 36–44)

III: 9/8 ♩ / 3/4 ♩ = 132–150

IV: *Quieto* ♩ = 72

In every other work, with the exception of the Piano Quintet, Adès is always tempted to add a title, or at least confirm a topos through the addition of a title to at least one movement. In this work Adès meets our symphonic expectations in terms of a four-movement structure consisting of a sonata form first movement; a slow movement tracing an overall ternary structure; and a fast scherzo, and collage-like third movement. But, rather than the more usual fast sonata-rondo form finale, the final movement is distant, retrospective, and compressed; the work is also performed without a break between movements.

Although Adès avoids extra-musical associations on a surface level, his programme notes offer an imaginative overview of each movement. He describes the use of a 'queasy but strict tango-rhythm' in the first movement, the cavernous tread of the second movement, and 'a serene overview of the preceding music, as if from a great height' in the final movement.³¹ He provides a colourful explanation of how, for instance, the basset-clarinet infects the chamber ensemble with its personality; a

³¹Ibid.

melodic line 'accumulates an entourage' in the second movement; and how the fragile texture of the scherzo 'accumulates flotsam from the first movement' as a 'rolling stone gathers moss.'³² Adès provides a stream of vivid associations in his programme notes to enhance our appreciation and understanding of the music as it unfolds; in this work we not only have a specific topos to draw upon (the tango and its various associations) but also images of movement and interaction.

Adès notes, when discussing the sonata form design of the Piano Quintet, that 'any structure [...] isn't an empty form that you just pour material into. It should have been developed with the material in an organic way.'³³ When considering the analysis of a sonata form movement Hepokoski and Darcy have identified four established trends, two of which follow a more musicological approach³⁴ and two following more theoretical lines of enquiry.³⁵ But Hepokoski and Darcy challenge these established views of sonata form as providing 'a too rigid understanding of sonata form'³⁶ by claiming that 'the essence of Sonata Theory lies in uncovering and interpreting the dialogue of an individual piece within the background set of norms.'³⁷ They argue that this backdrop

comprises complex sets (or constellations) of flexible action-operations, devised to facilitate the dialogue. Understanding form as dialogue also helps us to realise that in some cases standard procedures may be locally overridden for certain expressive effects.

³² Ibid.

³³ Adès and Service, *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*, p. 47.

³⁴ Scholars such as Tovey, Kerman and Rosen are grouped in the 'eclectic analytical' category and Newman, and Ratner in the 'historical-evidentiary-empirical' category. Hepokoski and Darcy *Elements of Sonata Theory*, pp. 3-5.

³⁵ Two approaches are identified as those pursuing a Schenkerian approach and analysis that emphasizes the cellular growth of motives to include work by Schoenberg, Keller and Caplin. Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, pp. 3-6.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 7.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 11.

They go on to suggest 'background norms and standard options are classifiable into common and less common selections at different times and different places.'³⁸ An 'exceptional' departure from these normal expectations is described as a 'deformation' of sonata form 'to mean the stretching of a normative procedure to its maximally expected limits or even beyond them—or the overriding of that norm altogether in order to produce a calculated expressive effect.'³⁹ These deformations are described as 'unusual or strongly characterized, *ad hoc* moments' or a 'surprising or innovative departure from the constellation of habitual practice', are described as 'rampant' in the works of Haydn.⁴⁰ In short, any sonata form movement places itself in a dialogue to with the expectations of listeners and composers at a particular point in time, and as Hepokoski and Darcey note, 'the expressive or narrative point lies in the tension between the limits of the listener's field of generic expectations and what is made to occur - or not occur - in actual sound at that moment.' He goes on to explain that when 'operating under the shaping influence of a community-shared genre system, any exceptional occurrence along these lines call attention to itself as a strong expressive effect.'⁴¹

The first movement of the Chamber Symphony challenges our expectations of sonata form in several ways. Adès confirms that he is using the sonata form structure for the first movement in his programme notes,⁴² but the tonal relationships which lie at the core of the traditional formal structure of sonata form, though evident, are disguised or ambiguous. Furthermore, in a movement with only one clear theme, we have to rely

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 614.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 11.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Adès, programme notes, <http://www.fabermusic.com>

on changes of texture and instrumentation, dynamic levels and reference pitches or chords to establish the structure of the movement, shown in the following Table.

Table 5.1: Chamber Symphony, movement I, sonata form overview

	Exposition:				Development	Recapitulation	Coda	
	Introduction							
	Cymbal solo	Cyclic theme	First subject		Second subject			
Bars	1-5	6-14	15-26	27-40	41-53	54-81 ²	81 ³ -111	112-125
Reference points		(B)	(B)	(F/F#)	(Eb) Quote : tonic/ dom. cliché (b.46)			Cyclic theme
Significant woodblock strikes *	*(1)			*(40) marks end of first subject	* (46) initiates tonic-dom. quote	(76) marks change of tempo	<i>fff</i> *(81) marks start of recap	
Percussion	Cymbal solo: rhythmic cycles (1-14)		Cym. solo (15 - 35 ²)	S.D. solo (35 ³ -9)	Pointillist effect: Tri./S.D./Guiro/ C.bell/ chimes/	S.D solo (54-60) Pointillist effect: (60- 81) S.D/Cym./C.bell W.bl.	Cym. solo (81 ³ -8) Pointillist effect: (88-93) SD/W.bl/W.ch/Guiro/Tri. C.bell/mar. (94-111) – continuous driving patterns	Winding down: reduce to: S.D. & Cym. with intermittent W. blk and guiro

Adès indicates his use of an introduction before starting the sonata-form process. Tonic (B) and dominant (F sharp) centres are suggested through the use of riffs in the first subject area, and a second subject centres on E flat as a reference point (the enharmonic equivalent of D sharp) to provide a mediant key relationship, favoured by Schubert. Adès notes his use of 'clearly defined first and second subject groups in the manner of Schubert' and it was this comment that led me to believe that the shift to the dominant in the first subject area is not a second subject, involving a harmonic shift to the dominant without a thematic contrast, but that we should be looking for a clearly defined textural change to represent the second subject group; this happens at bar 41. When Adès mentions 'in the manner of Schubert' I have taken this to mean his use of key relationships in the exposition and this will be discussed later in more detail.

Without the structural force of tonality or the use of thematic contrast we have to look for other compositional devices or processes to confirm the various stages of the sonata-form process. A key factor in revealing structure in this movement is the role played by the percussion section. In this movement sections are characterized through the use of percussion solos (on cymbal or snare drum) or the use of a mixed percussion ensemble to create a more pointillist effect. Individual instruments are also used to define the structure of the movement and highlight other important events. Woodblock entries confirm the three main sections of the sonata-form framework and a *fortissimo* guiro strike is used to confirm the start of the coda. A woodblock strike, within the second subject, signals the announcement of a tonic-dominant 'horn call' and subsequent woodblock entries indicate the return of the cyclic theme (bar 114) and riff patterns (bar 117).

i) First movement

Exposition

Our expectations are challenged from the start of this sonata form movement with a woodblock strike that leads us into a cymbal solo; the cymbal establishes an intricate, *pianissimo* 26 quaver beat ostinato pattern suggestive of tango rhythms. As the cycle unfolds, rhythmic values become shorter, and the solo gradually gains momentum as it comes to the end of each cycle (the cycle in its second exact repetition is shown in Ex. 5.2); this cycle, which is performed four times in all, seems to be part of the 'winding-up of the mechanism' that Adès mentions in the programme notes. In the second rhythmic cycle the motto or cyclic theme is introduced accompanied with lightly sketched harmonies (suggesting major triads of B and D). The theme, scored for alto flute and viola, sounds almost saxophone-like and *sul tasto* glissandi on strings contribute to the sleazy, sultry tango-like atmosphere. By introducing this theme in such an exposed and unusual manner, Adès is highlighting the importance of this material. The theme confirms the tango topos of the first movement, presents intervallic and rhythmic elements crucial to the work as a whole, and recurs in recognizable form in every movement. The tango topos thus binds the whole symphony together.

Ex. 5.2: Chamber Symphony, movement I, bars 6–14, cyclic theme

Alto Flute and Viola
 Bass Clarinet
 Violins I and II
 Cello & Double Bass (actual pitch)
 Cymbals

Rhythmic cycle: second repetition (exact)
 pp sempre

A. Fl. & Vln.
 Bass Cl.
 Vln. I & II
 Vc. Db.
 Cym.

Second repetition (modified)
 First repetition (modified)

Every cell of this theme and supporting fragmentary texture becomes a potential source of development and organic growth and this process is evident even within the theme; as it unfolds the opening chromatic motive is presented in an expanded format to trace a perfect fourth. Sliding, rising minor thirds, and whole-tone fragments on the remaining instruments lead into or interlock these fragments, to form a theme divided between several instruments, like a *Klangfarbenmelodie*. Adès also differentiates the melodic fragments through subtle rhythmic modifications to produce a very fluid and sinuous unravelling of the melody.

After this introduction the first subject enters at Figure A and the cyclic theme and its implied harmonies now supply the basic materials for the exposition. Adès defines the first subject group in several ways, through the continued use of the cymbal solo, the use of bass riffs that establish a harmonic structure based on the added seventh chords implied in the first presentation of the theme, and an underlying chromatic cycle. When Adès mentions his 'clearly defined first and second subject groups in the manner of Schubert'⁴³ he may possibly be suggesting a link with Schubert in terms of his approach to harmony. Suzannah Clark notes that 'Schubert makes use of common-practice harmonic vocabulary but presents it differently, and makes it sound elusive' and she discusses his manner of repeating 'pitch material [but] repositioning it within different triads or chords.'⁴⁴ One of the examples she cites is the persistent G in the second subject melody of the String Quintet in C major (D.956) (1828) which 'resonates within all the possible major triads, E flat major, C major and G major.' Rather than describing this theme as in the key of E flat major she describes 'the passage as 'around the \hat{G} ' observing that 'there are multiple layers through which a

⁴³ Adès, programme notes.

⁴⁴ Clark, Suzannah (2011) *Analyzing Schubert*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 181.

pitch may be analyzed.⁴⁵ In Adès' riffs we shift between major and minor versions of B⁷ (see Ex. 5.3) and then a shift of focus takes us to D major/minor before shifting back again to B major/minor:

Ex. 5.3: Chamber Symphony, movement I, bars 15–20, bass riff, viola, cello and double bass

Ex. 5.3 shows a musical score for three instruments: Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass, covering bars 15 to 20. The score is marked with a box 'A' at the beginning. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor). The time signature is 3/4. The Viola part starts with a rest in bar 15, then plays a triplet of eighth notes in bar 16, followed by a triplet of eighth notes in bar 17, and a triplet of eighth notes in bar 18. The Violoncello part starts with a rest in bar 15, then plays a triplet of eighth notes in bar 16, followed by a triplet of eighth notes in bar 17, and a triplet of eighth notes in bar 18. The Double Bass part starts with a triplet of eighth notes in bar 15, followed by a triplet of eighth notes in bar 16, a triplet of eighth notes in bar 17, and a triplet of eighth notes in bar 18. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *pp*, *mp*, *mf*, *p poco*, *f*, and *mp*. There are also articulation markings like *pizz.* and *arco sul tasto*. Chord boxes at the bottom indicate B major/minor 7 and D major/minor 7.

At bar 25 Adès the riff changes to focus on the chords Fm⁷–F⁷ (flattened dominant) but in bars 25–6 shifts to a diminished chord, on F sharp (the dominant), as illustrated in Ex. 5.4.

Ex. 5.4: Chamber Symphony, movement I, bars 25–32, double bass riff

Ex. 5.4 shows a musical score for two instruments: Double Bass and Db, covering bars 25 to 32. The score is marked with a box 'B' at the beginning. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor). The time signature is 3/4. The Double Bass part starts with a triplet of eighth notes in bar 25, followed by a triplet of eighth notes in bar 26, a triplet of eighth notes in bar 27, and a triplet of eighth notes in bar 28. The Db part starts with a triplet of eighth notes in bar 25, followed by a triplet of eighth notes in bar 26, a triplet of eighth notes in bar 27, and a triplet of eighth notes in bar 28. The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp*, *mp*, *mf*, *p*, and *pp*. Chord boxes at the bottom indicate Fm⁷, F⁷, and F^{#dim.7}.

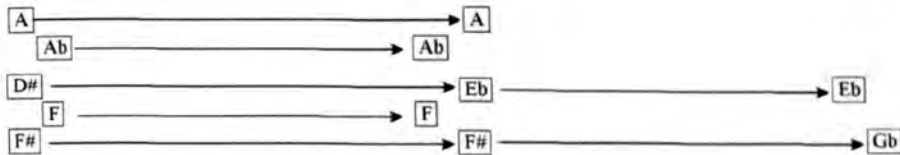
⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 185.

The progression of these riffs in the exposition is achieved through the repetition of pitches that provide links between chords. This process is shown below:

Ex. 5.5: Chamber Symphony, movement I

Introduction of 12 pitches of chromatic scale: the final pitch marks start of second subject

B	D#	D	A	F#	F	Ab	E	C	Bb	Db	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12



[] = chromatic oscillations

Two pitches remain as anchor points that connect all three chords: D sharp and F sharp (the third and fifth of the original B⁷ chord) which appear in enharmonic form as E flat and G flat at the start of the second subject. We experience a constant reordering and reassembling of a constellation of pitches to produce chord progressions that revolve through a limited set of pitches, rather than a more conventional manner of modulation. Within each riff we can see that one pitch remains constant while the other pitches are subject to chromatic alteration, indicated within brackets in the example above (Ex. 5.5). The eventual arrival at the mediant (E flat enharmonic realisation of D

sharp) at the start of the second subject area may well allude to Schubert's fondness for this tonal relationship, as seen in the String Quintet in C major mentioned above. One further confirmation of the scope of the first subject area is also apparent through this series of riffs; the gradual introduction of all twelve pitches of the chromatic cycle, as indicated in the diagram above (Ex. 5.5), culminating in a change of direction and a sense of arrival as the last pitch is introduced. In this instance the final pitch coincides with the arrival of the second subject material.

As these riffs evolve in the exposition, with the ever-present cymbal solo, improvisatory material that evolves from the riff patterns or is reminiscent of the cyclic theme, is exchanged between the bass clarinet and basset clarinet. They present angular, frenzied, and sometimes playful figurations, matched by rapidly fluctuating and wide ranging dynamic levels. Adès enhances the tango topos by introducing elements of jazz, through the use of riffs; pizzicato and glissandi on double bass; seventh chords; and highly embellished improvisatory melody lines.

Adès signals the prospect of change through the percussion section with a switch from cymbal to snare drum, at the end of bar 35. Rhythmic patterns on percussion instruments are drawn into continuous rolls from bar 37 (snare drum, marimba and cymbal) and this propulsion is paralleled with a surge in dynamic levels and rising melodic flourishes. Single strokes on the woodblock and cowbell in bar 40 reinforce the prospect of change, and a sudden drop in dynamic level at Figure C confirms the arrival of the second subject.

Second subject

A textbook version of sonata form would require the second subject material to show contrast at this point; in the classical period this would involve tonal contrast, with or without thematic change, and in the romantic period emphasis would shift to thematic and textural contrast. But in the first movement of the Chamber Symphony, tonality does not operate in the traditional sense, and the movement is monothematic. Adès does, however, present contrast in terms of texture, instrumentation, articulation, and dynamics, but he also continues the development and organic growth of material. One of most noticeable differences from the first subject is a more fragmentary approach to texture and the percussion section plays a leading role in the confirmation of a change of topos. Rhythmic patterns become more intermittent to produce a pointillist fabric of fluctuating tone colours (provided by cow bell, triangle, snare drum (snares off), guiro, and crotale). But although we experience change, familiar material is also evident but put to a very different expressive use. The seventh chord structures found in the riffs are now presented as detached chords in the bass registers of the piano, but these chords are superimposed with second inversion minor triads in treble register to produce six-pitch dissonant aggregates, in the manner of Stravinsky, shown in Ex. 5.6. Adès is referencing the terse, clipped characteristics of the dance-movement of the tango through the use of dotted rhythmic patterns.

Ex. 5.6: Chamber Symphony, movement I, bars 41–3

41

Piano

una corda sempre

Chord symbols above staff: C, Fm/C, Bbm/F, Fm/C, Bbm/F, Fm/C, Bbm/F, Gm/D

Chord symbols below staff: Eb7, Am7, Eb7, Am7, Eb7, Am7, C#7

A woodblock signal, in bar 46, signals the introduction of new material in the form of a two-part harmonic progression on horn and trombone that outlines tonic and dominant harmonies. Here Adès acknowledges the past in a statement that references the tonic-dominant polarity of the classical sonata-form framework and imitates a harmonic cliché, a ‘horn call’ gesture; an almost identical version of this progression can be found in Schubert’s Sixth Symphony in C major (D.589) (1817–18) as illustrated in Ex. 5.7. In this reference to the past, Adès puts a protective framework around this historical association with its classical heritage, and implies a sense of distance and remoteness through light scoring; he indicates that this progression should be performed *maestoso* and this seems to confirm this concept of reminiscence. The impact of this progression, strengthened through its appearance in an unfamiliar harmonic territory, triggers an intertextual connection with the opening three chord progression from the beginning of Beethoven’s ‘Les Adieux’ piano sonata. Those who recognize this connection will be reminded of its former functions and associate it with a sense of loss, a farewell to a preserved musical image.

Ex. 5.7: Comparisons between tonic-dominant formula in Schubert, Beethoven and Adès

22 Schubert, Symphony No.6 in C major D589, bars 22-23, horns.

Hns.

1 Beethoven, Les Adieux, Piano Sonata Op. 81a, bars 1-2.

Piano

p *espressivo*

46

Hn.
Tbn.

p *maestoso*

whole-tone movement

perfect 4th

minor 3rd

Adès is not alone in using this harmonic gesture to indicate and reinforce connections with the past; Ligeti uses a distorted version of the same 'horn call' in the opening bars of the Horn Trio (1982), shown in the following example, in a work that pays homage to Brahms and romantic music in general.

Ex. 5.8: Ligeti, Horn Trio, bars 1-2, violin

1

Violin

p

What is significant at this point in the Chamber Symphony, is the superimposition of the opening motive of the cyclic theme (F sharp, G, F sharp) on the horn gesture. Adès provides an eerie quality through the presentation of this cyclic chromatic cell on string harmonics against a background of arpeggio patterns and trills.

Here Adès is exaggerating the vast distance between this confrontation of past and present; the thin tone colours of the contemporary material contrast with the warmth of the classical gesture on unmuted brass with its colourful, almost magical framing on percussion instruments.

But what is even more significant is the way in which Adès puts this tonic dominant statement in musical ‘inverted commas’; it remains untainted. This is unlike his later use of this progression in the Piano Quintet, shown in the following example.

Ex. 5.9: Piano Quintet, bars 1–3, first violin solo



Gallon describes the opening chord sequence, shown in the previous example, as ‘a play on traditional horn fifths’ but notes the ‘logicality in terms of pitch continuity.’⁴⁶ This tonic dominant formula is now used to lead into unfamiliar harmonic territory as part of a progression determined through the superimposition of interval cycles. Adès pursues the logical outcome of the superimposed interval cycles (whole-tone, minor third and major third) set in motion in the first two chords (Ic–Vb) to converge on a dissonant harmonic combination. This tonic-dominant formula now becomes integrated into Adès’ music. Gallon notes that ‘this introductory gesture demonstrates in microcosm both the tension between setting up and thwarting customary expectations, and the hidden (less readily audible) continuity that belies much of the musical material in the Piano Quintet.’⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Gallon, ‘Narrativities in the Music of Thomas Adès’, p. 148.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

From an intertextual perspective, several associations have been combined in this exposition: the historical expectations of sonata form and the horn-call associated with the classical tradition pointing to connections with Schubert and Beethoven in particular, are interwoven in a web of intertexts that extends beyond the classical period to the Stravinsky-like superimposed chords of the second subject and the tango and jazz attributes of Adès' cyclic theme. Adès adds one new element in the second subject section in the form of an extension of the chromatic movement in the first interval of the cyclic theme. This chromatic fragment is extended through the addition of a whole-tone, and as the movement progresses, this rising shape and intervallic formula becomes an increasingly important feature. This exposition forms the basis from which this movement and the remainder of the work will emerge. Connections have been forged, and these connections that will prove crucial as the symphony develops.

Development

As we move into the development section we need to consider to what extent Adès explores both organic growth and contrast. Ideas appear in transposed form and in new combinations and in terms of organic growth, intervallic connections and shape influence the nature of the material. In terms of contrast, Adès exploits the different attributes of first and second group material as vividly characterized layers are superimposed to explore new relationships that evolve within individualized temporal zones. Sudden shifts to explore new textures and combinations, highlighted by changes in percussion instrumentation and patterning, give a sectional feel to the early stages of the development section. As the development gets underway, at bar 54, four different layers can be identified within the texture as Adès revisits material announced in the

exposition. Instrumentation is changed as first subject material, in the form of the cymbal solo, is transferred to snare drum; the double bass riffs, now outlining C⁷ maj/minor/E flat major, are now heard on bass clarinet; a phrase reminiscent of the cyclic theme is presented as a solo on basset clarinet; and superimposed chord aggregates reminiscent of the second subject, are shared between strings and piano. But at Figure E we switch to the pointillist percussion patterns of the second subject, fragments hinting at the original first subject riff (original key of B minor) on the double bass; the bass clarinet and basset clarinet reinforce their original duet relationship with material reminiscent of the cyclic theme; and new superimposed, synchronized melodic threads trace contracting or expanding shapes (from a major third dyad to a semitone, or vice versa), that invert the contracting shape of the horn gesture, grumble in the bass registers of the piano. Adès explores the concept of contrast as we experience the difference between the various layers and different sections within the fabric of the development.

Adès also begins to explore the developmental potential of whole-tone and chromatic movement through the superimposition of whole-tone and chromatic threads. This happens when parts are rhythmically synchronized to present a three-part harmonisation of fragments of the cyclic theme from bar 70, as shown in Ex. 5.10:

Ex. 5.10: Chamber Symphony, movement I, bars 70–2, alto flute, oboe, basset clarinet, horn and strings

The musical score for Ex. 5.10 shows the following details:

- Alto Flute (A.Fl.):** Starts with *mf*, then *f*. Features a triplet in bar 71.
- Oboe (Ob.):** Starts with *p*, then *poco f*. Features a triplet in bar 71.
- Bass Clarinet (Basst. Cl.):** Starts with *pp*, then *poco f*. Features a triplet in bar 71.
- Horn (Hn.):** Starts with *pp*, then *mf > p*. Includes the instruction "without mute". Features a triplet in bar 71.
- Violin I (Vln. I):** Starts with *f*. Features a triplet in bar 71.
- Violin II (Vln. II):** Starts with *f*. Features a triplet in bar 71.
- Viola (Vla.):** Starts with *mf*, then *f*. Features a triplet in bar 71.
- Violoncello (Vc.):** Starts with *p*, then *f*. Includes the instruction "quasi con sord.". Features a triplet in bar 71.

As the development progresses rising melodic chains tracing whole-tone or chromatic movement increasingly infiltrate the texture.

A woodblock strike in bar 76 coincides with an increase in tempo that begins to generate a sense of anticipation, the beginning of a gravitational pull towards the recapitulation. Persistent rhythmic patterns on percussion simmer in the background; rising melodic movement (generated from whole-tone chains, or alternating whole-tone and semitone chains) begin to gain momentum; and a series of rapidly rising scale patterns emerge from the bass register of the piano. These accumulating layers are reinforced with rapidly rising dynamic levels that enhance the energy of this drive

towards a climax and with a single *fortissimo* strike (in bar 81) the woodblock confirms the arrival of the recapitulation.

Recapitulation

In a work that evolves organically and features the constant re-use of material, the listener needs a strong confirmation of the arrival of the recapitulation and Adès provides this with the return of the solo rhythmic cycle on cymbal, the bass riff (back in B major/minor) on double bass, and fleeting glimpses of quasi-improvised material on bass clarinet from Figure A. The material has reverted to its original instrumentation and pitch centres to confirm this return, but there is only the briefest hint of the cyclic theme and this occurs when percussion section references the pointillist textures of the second subject. It is only when, at bar 94, new rhythmic patterns begin on the cymbal that we begin to sense the beginning of a final thrust towards the climax. Adès generates a tremendous build-up of energy as continuous rhythmic patterns on percussion, now disrupted with accents to initiate cross phrasing, coincide with a highly embellished and harmonized version of the cyclic theme presented on woodwind. This material is punctuated by references to the second subject chords, hints of the B major/minor riff, and rising whole-tone and chromatic strands. This emphatic arrival of the cyclic theme provides the climax of the inner sonata form core of this movement. But in fact this climax, in its turn, leads us to the ultimate climax of the movement as a whole, the coda.

Hepokoski and Darcey note that

whenever we find an introduction-coda frame the interior sonata seems subordinated to the outward container. The introduction and coda represent the higher reality, under whose more immediate mode of existence – or under whose embracing auspices – the sonata form proper is laid out as a contingent process,

a demonstration of an artifice that unfolds only under the authority of the prior existence of the frame.⁴⁸

Adès highlighted the importance of this cyclic theme through its isolation in the introduction and now, as he leads into the closing stages of the first movement we experience the second full statement of this theme in the coda; alongside very brief references to other significant ideas heard during the inner sonata-core of the movement. But the *fortissimo* levels at the start of the coda soon begin to dwindle as Adès initiates what he describes as a winding down process; dynamic levels drop and patterns fragment. The woodblock has the final say, in a movement in which the percussion section has played a vital role in determining structure, with a single hushed strike marking the end of the movement and the cyclic theme goes on to play a vital role in the following movements of the Chamber Symphony.

It has proved difficult to identify the various sections within this sonata-form movement; in the first subject group the implication of a move to the dominant (when the riffs move to focus on F/F sharp harmonies) could indicate a second subject in terms of harmony. But in terms of textural differentiation, starting the second subject at bar 41 seems more convincing. Only one clear melody appears in this movement, the cyclic theme, and its purpose is to not only frame the inner sonata form process, but to provide the material upon which the entire movement is based. Once material has been announced, chords, fragments of melody, or rhythmically identifiable material, the cyclic theme is constantly referenced. It is therefore difficult to identify the sections in the sonata-form process. We can look for harmonic clues, for pitch centres or chords that suggest reference points, but they do not of course operate in a tonal sense. What

⁴⁸ Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, p. 305.

has proved useful in clarifying structure, however, is Adès' use of the percussion section.

ii) Second movement

In the second movement we move from the tango topos of the first movement to a slow, grim procession that is sinister and measured: we experience a heavy tread of dull, persistent, embellished *fortissimo* B flats (on a prepared piano) in the bass register of the piano. Adès creates the impression of a time-lapse effect as the cyclic theme from the first movement returns shadowed by echoes and halos, a macabre dragging, sliding and slipping of melodic material in this grotesque dream-like location. In this movement Adès continues to develop material from the first movement; nothing is new, but what he does with the material is different and put to a very different expressive purpose. The movement evolves in three layers as the cyclic melody, whose presentation observes a broad ternary structure, evolves against a background of underlying rhythmic cycles, and a series of sustained, dissonant chord aggregates, as shown in Ex. 5.11:

Ex. 5.11: Chamber Symphony, movement II, graphic score illustrating pedal points, the cyclic melody, and chord aggregates in relation to the rhythmic cycles

The score is divided into three systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system (Measures 126-140) is labeled 'Section A, cyclic Theme heard in full: transposed up a semitone'. It features a melodic line with notes connected by colored lines (red, green, blue) and vertical red bars representing rhythmic cycles. Pedal points are indicated by blue lines in the bass staff. The second system (Measures 145-155) is labeled 'Section B: fragments of cyclic theme' and 'Section A1: Cyclic theme, original pitch, two octaves higher (onsets repetition of first cell)'. It includes parts for Bass Clarinet, Horns, and Woodwinds. The third system (Measures 160-175) is labeled 'Cyclic theme, original pitch (cont.)' and includes parts for Horns and Woodwinds. The score includes various annotations such as 'Tin solo bucket drum', 'Pno. & Mic', 'AFL', 'Hrn', 'Bass. Cl. solo', and 'W.W.'. Rhythmic cycles are numbered 1 through 13. Chord aggregates are labeled with Roman numerals: I-T-3, I-T-2, and IV-I. Measure numbers 126, 130, 135, 140, 145, 150, 155, 160, 163, 170, and 175 are marked throughout the score.

In this movement Adès continues to focus on the organic growth of the basic material introduced in the opening bars of the work. The percussion section once again introduces the movement with continuous percussion patterns, but in this instance they are a pointillist texture of percussive timbres, a delicate mixture of constantly changing timbres (presented on two tam-tams, cymbal, snare drum and cowbell) reminiscent of second subject material. But Adès also develops the concept of rhythmic cycles, established in the first subject cymbal solo in the first movement, with a series of rhythmic cycles that dominate the second movement. These cycles have already been indicated in Ex. 5.11 above to show them in relation to the cyclic melody, but in the following example (Ex. 5.12) the thirteen cycles have been isolated to facilitate comparison. Each cycle is initiated with bass a B flat on the piano followed by two rhythmic cells 'x' and 'y' that provide the basic material for the remaining cycles. Cell 'x' identified by its pulsing on the beat, and 'y' is characterized by an upbeat. The opening cell 'x' of each cycle establishes a recognizable pattern that remains for the most part stable (subtle modification only with the addition of tam-tam 2 in cycles 8 and 13, a rhythmic delay in cycle 7, and change of timbre in cycle 12). But the 'y' cell is subject to constant variation and only returns in its original form on three occasions (cycles 5, 6, 9, and 10); the remaining cells are augmented through the addition of extra upbeats/off-beats, extra minim beats, the insertion of rest, and changes of timbre; the shortest cycle lasts six minim beats and the longest, sixteen minim beats. These rhythmic cycles provide a source of stability and reference, through the reiterated pedal point and the rhythmic and timbral stability established at the start of each cycle. But the upbeat cells provide a sense of forward momentum, of anticipation and instability, and the constantly changing permutations suggest organic growth.

Ex. 5.12: Chamber Symphony, movement II, percussion cycles

Piano Bb at the start of every cycle

Tam-tam 3 Cym (plates touching, wire brush) Tam-tam 2 SD Tam-tam 1 C bell (soft stick)

Cycles

1 126 (6)

2 130 (11)

3 134 (7)

4 136 (16)

5 141 (16)

6 146 (13)

7 150 (7)

8 152 (11)

9 155 (13)

10 159 (6)

11 161 (6)

12 163 (7)

13 165 (6)

The cyclic melody remains easily identifiable in this movement as it appears in transposed form (section A) and at its original pitch (section A1); Adès does, however, make changes to texture, orchestration and register. The theme is heard first as a *pianissimo* trombone solo, with portamento slides and vibrato to maintain the sleazy character of the cyclic theme established in the first movement, but now it is shadowed and embellished to produce a heterophonic texture that adds a surreal quality to its

appearance as echoed fragments are virtually dragged along in its wake, as shown in Ex.

5.13.

Ex. 5.13: Chamber Symphony, movement II, bars 131–5, theme and chord aggregates

131

Alto Fl.

Tbn. Bucket mute
pp espr. molto vibrato

Vln I
ppp

Vln II
ppp

Vla.
ppp

Chord aggregates
Bass Cl. Bassoon Bass Cl. & Trpt.
Tbn. Vc. Db.
p ppp ppp

134

A. Fl.

Tbn.
ppp

Vln I
ppp

Vln II
ppp

Vla.
ppp

Chord aggregates
Tbn. Bass Cl. Bassoon Bass Cl. & Trpt.
Vc. Db.
ppp

The first section of the movement evokes a sinister atmosphere, but as we move into the central portion the atmosphere becomes much more intense and emotionally heightened. This change of mood, signified by rising dynamic levels and an increase in the number of upbeats in the percussion cycle, instigates a section that focuses on the development of melodic cells in a very much condensed version of the cyclic theme.

The opening fragment is an abridged version of the opening cell which is then presented in sequence, and, from bar 150, the solo basset clarinet presents repetitions of a transposed perfect fourth fragment that is distorted through octave displacement. The final return of the cyclic theme (two octaves higher) sees only very slight adjustments (indicated on diagram), but the texture has changed as we hear a heavily embellished and harmonized version on woodwind (two- and three-part). Even here Adès is referencing the first movement by alluding to the harmonized version of portions of the melody in the second subject. In a frenzied build up to climax more frequent repetitions of pedal B flat are heard in addition to accumulating string grumblings in lower registers.

One more element alludes to the first movement, as dense dissonant chords, in aggregates of between eight and nine pitches, recall similar aggregates in the second subject of the first movement; in both instances chords are created through the superimposition of triads and seventh chords and the E flat recalls the first chord of bar 41. In the second subject only two chords are involved; here two chords are used but with the addition of extra chromatic pitches. Adès establishes the fundamental function of E flat and B flat as the movement gets underway as these pitches alternate, but in the central section two important events occur; firstly, these bass pitches occur simultaneously (bar 146), and secondly, the E natural is introduced in bar 148. Adès is anticipating the chromatic shift, from B flat and E flat, to B and E, the pitches on which the movement will close. A more substantial anticipation is introduced with a sustained B natural during bars 161–6.

This movement meets our expectations in terms of contrasting mood and character and Adès achieves this without the introduction of new material. Contrast is

focused on changes of tempo, dynamic and harmonic colouring, and texture but the concept of organic growth and the forging of connections using material from the first movement continue. In the closing moments of this movement, Adès reinforces the association with the tango with the introduction of the piano accordion (a bandoneon substitute). He uses this striking reminder to reinforce the importance of a modified plagal cadence that marks a turning point that confirms a final shift from the B flat and E flat pedal points, which have provided structural stability in this movement, to pedal points on B and E. From the final chord of this cadence a perfect fifth pedal point, on B and E, is reiterated and provides a link directly into the third movement.

iii) Third movement

The third movement meets our expectations in terms of its lively scherzo quality and it provides contrast in texture with the first two movements. Adès introduces a new scurrying thread of continuous quaver movement in compound time that interweaves through fleeting glimpses of what Adès describes as 'flotsam' from the first movement, to create a collage-like structure that presents us with a complex tapestry of differentiated layers of material. Adès continues to develop material from the first movement as he references superimposed white- and black-key scale patterns, the cyclic melody, allusions to the tonic-dominant quotation, dissonant chord aggregates, and references to percussion patterns identified with first and second subject material. In the following graphic representation of the third movement I have isolated these events/occurrences to reveal the extent of Adès' re-use of this material:

Ex. 5.14: Chamber Symphony, movement III, graphic score showing references to the first movement

Cycle of 5ths
 4 Bb - F - C - G - D - A - E - B - F# - C# - Ab - Eb
 2
 1
 5
 7
 6
 3

superimposed pentatonic & white-key patterns

cadential sequence: P5/maj-3rd/min-6th

Perfect fifth alternaions within the melodic thread.

S 176
 T.T.3
 180
 1st subject percuss. [5]
 185
 8^{va} rot. Vln. I
 190
 8^{va} Mar. Vln. I
 2nd subject percuss. [6]
 195
 8^{va} [7]
 2nd subject perc. [5]
 2nd subject perc. [6]

T

U 200
 T.T.3
 205
V 210
 215
 8^{va} [6]
W 220
 T.T.3
 2nd subject perc. [5]
 ppp
 Pno. alternating dyads: A/C# - G/C

X 225
 T.T.3
 230
 2nd subject perc. [5]
 235
 240
Y 245
 1st subject percuss. [5]

Z 250
 Flexitone & w.w.
 1st subject percuss. [5]
 2nd subject perc. [5]
 2nd subject perc. [5]
 255
 260
 265
 1st subject percuss. [5]
 270
 275
 280
 285
 290
 295
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 490
 495
 500

Brass chord progressions: A major - G7 - P5th structure - min. 3rd dyad (BbF) - (A)

Every aspect of this movement reveals intervallic, harmonic, rhythmic, timbral, melodic and textural links to what has gone before, as Adès continues to explore the full potential of the ideas introduced in the first movement. Even what we may consider as new does in fact reveal connections with previous material. The alternating perfect fifth patterns (isolated and indicated within brackets on the graphic score) within the ‘new’ melodic thread shown in Ex. 5.15 suggest links with the piano triplet, perfect fifth patterns, from bar 157 onwards in the second movement. Triplet rhythmic patterns are also used in the first statement of the cyclic melody and the superimposed white- and black-key scalic patterns (from bar 61) in the first movement.

Ex. 5.15: Chamber Symphony, movement III, bars 176–9, melodic thread distributed between the flute, oboe, basset clarinet and marimba

S

176

Fl. Bbm chromatic

Ob. G7 whole-tone

Bsst. Cl. white-tone

Mar. Em G7 alternating Em7 and perfect fifth structure

Another feature of this thread is that it undergoes constant change, it flexes as it travels to produce an expanding and contracting ribbon of sound that slides from monophonic presentations to harmonized versions in two or three parts. Similar treatment of melodic material can be seen in the first movement; see the two-part harmonization of material on clarinet in bars 61–4, and the three-part harmonization of

the cyclic theme in bars 70–3. A further connection between this harmonization of the cyclic theme and bar 179 above is the use of superimposed whole-tone and chromatic threads to create harmony. This concept of textural and harmonic change is paralleled by constantly changing instrumental colours; this *Klangfarbenmelodie*-like approach to scoring is employed during the first statement of the cyclic theme, and in the second movement (during bars 138–144).

Of all the references to material from the first movement, the cyclic melody remains one of the most ubiquitous. The now familiar chromatic, perfect fourth and whole-tone intervallic cells appear in various transpositions, heard in fragmentary form, occasionally subject to octave displacement (for example, in bars 190–3) and are heard, for the most part, in high treble registers. As the movement climaxes with an abridged *fortissimo* statement (original transposition) of the cyclic theme, the intensity of this moment is enhanced through the introduction of a new timbre; namely the eerie tremolo effect of the flexatone embellished with a halo of shrill trills and flourishes on high woodwind. But as the movement comes to a close Adès begins to extend the first chromatic motive of the cyclic theme with the addition of whole-tone and chromatic links. This is a procedure that reveals connections with similar extensions of the opening motive in the first and second movements as climaxes are approached in the first movement from bar 106, in the lead up to the climactic coda, and the climax of the second movement from bar 163.

Other material also appears in easily identified form. The return of percussion patterns from the first movement acts as signifiers of first and second subject material: the pointillistic pattern on triangle, woodblock, snare drum and cow bell references its association with the second subject, and the cymbal solo is related to the first subject

(indicated as first percussion and second percussion on the graphic score, Ex. 5.14). The superimposed white- and black-key surging scalic patterns (indicated on the graphic score as wavy lines) leading into the recapitulation section of the first movement are used to generate excitement and enhance forward momentum into the third movement. Adès develops these patterns through more frequent use in both ascending and descending forms, extensions that encompass a wider range, and the adoption of new rhythmic patterns. Although these scalic patterns are performed as surging gestures, calculated to start and finish at the same time, Adès differentiates the two superimposed strands through articulation and rhythm, as black-note, triplet patterns observe the same rhythmic patterning as the linear thread (see Ex. 5.15), and white-note semiquaver grouping are performed in simple triple time as shown below:

Ex. 5.16: Chamber Symphony, movement III, bars 202–5, basset clarinet, tam-tam 3, marimba, and piano

The musical score for Ex. 5.16 consists of four staves. The top staff is for Basset Clarinet (Bsst. Cl.), starting at bar 202 with a melodic line marked *pp sempre* and *ppp*. The second staff is for Tam-tam 3 (T.T. 3), showing a single note with a *pp* dynamic. The third staff is for Marimba (Mar.), featuring a rhythmic pattern with dynamics *pp* and *mf ppp*. The bottom staff is for Piano (Pno.), showing a rhythmic pattern with a *ppp* dynamic. A box with the letter 'U' is positioned above the first staff at the beginning of the excerpt.

These energetic patterns generate a sense of excitement as they dart through the texture, within *pianissimo* dynamic levels, to embellish the continuous thread or provide links to ensure that that the thread is not broken.

Adès' fascination with the incorporation of added seventh chords and major and minor triads within a predominantly dissonant harmonic framework, takes place in both melody and harmony. On a melodic level, fragments outlining a series of chords (Gm, Cm, Am7 and Bb7) are exchanged between basset clarinet and bass clarinet in the first movement (bar 37) and provide only the very briefest of glimpses of chords that will prove significant in the forthcoming second subject area. This material emerges within layers of other material to display a more colouristic use of triadic and seventh chord structures. We can see this approach to the use of triadic material in the third movement as the melodic gets underway at the beginning of the third movement, illustrated in Ex. 5.15; at this point brief traces of Em, Bbm and G7 are embedded within the thread.

In terms of harmony we have already observed how, in the first presentation of the cyclic melody in the first movement, harmonies are lightly sketched in bass registers and that patterns are developed into bass riffs that provide strong reference points as the first subject group gets underway. At the start of the second subject group, Adès employs a second way of employing seventh and triadic chords, through their superimposition to create dissonant harmonic aggregates. This procedure is used in the second movement when, in bar 132, E flat7 is superimposed with A7. A bass E flat plays a prominent role in supporting these structures in the first and second movements and it retains its significance as a bass reference point in the third movement. Now E flat supports aggregates created through the superimposition of E7 and D7 to create towers of thirds (E flat/G/B flat/D/F sharp/A/C sharp) in bars 202 and 216; tam-tam strikes coincide with the presentation of these aggregates in both the second and third movements to confirm their connection. If we return to the Schenkerian diagram we can

see that the E flat, with or without the B flat, plays a pivotal role in the overall scheme outlined by black note-heads.

Another significant harmonic aspect to be developed in the third movement occurs in the harmonic progressions suggested by paired chords linking with the intervals outlined by the white note-heads in the Schenker diagram (major third, perfect fifth, and minor sixth). Examples of portions of the tonic-dominant formula appear in a range of transpositions and registers indicated with horizontal brackets in the graphic score (Ex. 5.14); see bars 180–2 and bars 192–4. Only on two occasions, in bars 240 (basset and bass clarinets) and 246 (violins), do they occur in the original key of C major. But the importance of the intervallic potential of this formula is developed through the structural significance afforded to cycles of perfect fifths. In the first movement, a full chromatic coverage of a cycle of fifths underpinned the exposition, and the second movement reveals an underlying shift from alternating pedal points on E flat and B flat to pitches on E and B. In the third movement perfect fifth pitches are either reiterated within the linking melodic thread (in brackets on the graphic score) or are sounded harmonically and sustained (indicated by extended orange lines); just as in the first movement, a full chromatic cycle of perfect fifths is traced in the opening section of the movement, as indicated on the graphic score. Perfect fifth combinations supply a series of sustained reference points that underpin the movement, and the chromatic shift from E flat and B flat to E and B that took place in the second movement is now reversed as E flat and B flat is reasserted.

Chords and dyads referenced in the third movement work begin to clarify connections with the Schenkerian diagram. The significance of A and C sharp, as a major third dyad, was first revealed at the end of the second movement as it resolved

onto an Em7 chord in bars 171–2; in the third movement references to this progression appear on several occasions, for instance the resolution onto a perfect dyad on B and E in bars 190–4. But as the movement progresses, reiterated alternations embedded in piano bass registers reveal a new relationship as A and C sharp (now presented as a minor sixth) alternate with perfect fourth dyads on C and G in bars 220–5; a combination that alludes to the ultimate resolution indicated on the Schenkerian diagram. In the final section of the third movement (from Figure Z) repeated strident brass progressions, illustrated in Ex. 5.17, suggest further connections with the Schenkerian diagram, as it references chord progressions used up to this point.

Ex. 5.17: Chamber Symphony, movement III, brass progressions from bars 252–66

Brass chord progression repeated during bars 252 - 264

Pno. accord. bar 266

Tutti

A G7 P4ths Major 3rd dyad

A-----
 C#-----
 E-----
 G-----
 D-----
 F-----
 D#/Eb-----
 Bb-----

The progression from a perfect fifth to a minor sixth (G/D to C sharp/A) on the Schenkerian diagram is now heard in reverse and fleshed-out with additional pitches to form chords (A–G7). The progression from a seventh chord to a perfect fourth/fifth structure has appeared during the first movement in bars 70–3 (alternations between A7

and a chord using the pitches of G, D and A) and similar harmonizations of the cyclic theme in the second movement in bars 158–61, and the third movement in bar 180, when Em7 alternates with a perfect fifth structure on D, A and E. The introduction of D sharp, as a chromatic appoggiatura to distort the third quartal chord in Ex. 5.17, introduces the enharmonic version of the E flat noted in the Schenkerian diagram; B flat occurs in the following major third dyad and this resolves onto the A. The second half of the Schenkerian diagram, from the perfect fifth on E flat and B flat, to the minor sixth dyad on C sharp and A has now been traced and this is reinforced as G7, A, and perfect fourths on B flat and E flat occur simultaneously during bar 266, encapsulated within a final tutti chord. The final clarification of the Schenkerian diagram in its full form is, however, held back to be revealed in the closing moments of this work.

In this movement Adès has employed temporal layering to present ideas from the first movement, each individually differentiated through timbre, rhythm, register, interval, harmony or melody. Adès explores aspects of differentiated momentum as the cyclic theme and tonic-dominant reference material is written in simple time (3/4 plus the occasional 2/4 bar) and the linking thread always unfolds as continuous quaver movement in compound time (9/8 with the occasional 6/8 bar). Ideas evolve in layers that revolve around the continuous thread; a melodic thread which leads us through a colourful landscape of ideas in a fast and breathless journey that ends with a final dissonant, dense *fortissimo* tutti chord, highlighted by a rimshot on snare drum. This aggregate brings everything to a sudden halt and the arrival of *pianissimo* pitches structured on perfect fifths (D, A and E), on piano accordion, an instrumental association that not only suggests a link with the tango but now suggests a connection with closure, due to its use towards the end of the second movement.

iv) Fourth movement

Adès likens this final movement to presenting an 'aerial view', to pulling 'the camera out at the end'⁴⁹ of the symphony. This very short, condensed movement presents a calm, distant and contemplative observation of the theme; it divides into three main sections as an extended introduction (bars 267–81) leads to a full presentation of the cyclic theme (bars 282–9) that is followed by a brief coda (bars 290–3). This topos of reminiscence and reflection, achieved through the adoption of restrained dynamic levels and an emphasis on chamber-like combinations, creates a dramatic contrast with the thrilling sense of impetus provided by the fast, loud, and complex collage-like texture of the previous movement. In this final movement Adès provides a crystallized overview of the work as we experience final references to previous material and the Schenkerian diagram is brought into full focus. Adès achieves a distant, timeless quality as overlapping or reiterated pitches disguise any sense of pulse. Textures are sparse and transparent, and are sensitively scored through the use of the pale timbres: string techniques (harmonics, and *sul tasto*) and using mutes on strings and brass. A limited number of percussion instruments are used (two small drums, wind chimes, crotales and marimba) not only for their delicate timbres, but to continue their role, established in earlier movements, in signifying and highlighting important events. Fingered small drum patterns not only mark the arrival (in bar 274) of an intense, Ligeti-like, *pianissimo* chromatic cluster that leads into the first, and now familiar harmonic formula of a major third followed by a perfect fifth (A/C sharp–G/D), but they also announce the start of a final complete statement of the theme at bar 281.

⁴⁹ Adès and Service, *Thomas Adès; Full of Noises*, p. 44.

The accordion leads us into this movement and performs the opening sustained pitches in such a way as to suggest that the gaps are caused by irregular flow of air; a breathless quality is achieved as the chord fades in and out of perspective and strings, observing the quietest of dynamic levels, tentatively pinpoint individual pitches of the chord. In this opening section we experience the tentative emergence of faltering melodic fragments associated with the cyclic theme; these fragments have been identified through colour-coding on the following graphic score (Ex. 5.18) as they emerge from a the background of sustained or reiterated pitches. When the cyclic theme eventually emerges, it is presented in the bass registers as a basset clarinet solo, but a strange instance of bottle blowing (bottle tuned to D), combined with wind chimes in bar 287, initiates the distribution of the theme through different instruments as it gradually fizzles out.

As we look at this movement in more depth, we can see that Adès encapsulates elements from previous movements. A cycle of fourths is gradually introduced, as indicated in the following Ex. 5.18 to reference the perfect fifth of fourths employed in every movement:

Ex. 5.18: Chamber Symphony, movement IV, graphic score showing final references to previous material and the Schenker diagram

267 **AA** 270 **BB** 275 **CC**

280 **B-E-A** **DD** 285 290

White key pitches: B, E, A, D, G, C, F
Black key pitches: Bb, Eb, Ab, Db/C#, F#

Chrom. cluster maj 3rd P 5th

G-D

Strings

Accord

Crot. b

V I C# F Bb F#

Cyclic theme transposed down a compound major over pedal B flat
Basset clarinet solo

Rapid flourish

C-F

Schenker diagram: Ades' progression within the tonic-dominant cliché

Transposed and distorted tonic - dominant gesture

Cycle of fourths:

b.276 b.280 b.281

E A D G C F Bb Eb Ab Db/C# F# B (E) (A)

b.267 bb.284-5 b.291 b.291

As Adès completes this perfect fourth cycle, in bars 290–1 all twelve pitches sound together in a final dissonant aggregate. But Adès differentiates black and white-key pitches through instrumentation as black-key pitches are performed on accordion and crotales, and white-key pitches on strings, to reflect the superimpositions of black- and white-key scale patterns in previous movements. Adès also uses the chord progression indicated in the Schenkerian diagram in these final bars, as indicated in the example above, as intervals and pitches that have proved significant in previous movements are now succinctly summed up in this final harmonic progression. Adès does not, however, complete the classical C major progression that framed the Schenkerian diagram. The progression that began as a statement of tonic-dominant polarity has now transformed into an intervallic pattern of major third, perfect fifth and minor sixth. Several instances of this formula are heard in this movement; the first as a chromatic cluster moving to a major third and perfect fifth (bars 275–6); and an implied perfect cadence in B flat major reversing the process with a perfect fifth to a major third. The final version of this formula that concludes the work exploits the same pattern but with a very different outcome; this progression is not tonally orientated and we have arrived somewhere new and different with a distorted reference to this well-worn harmonic cliché. At this point in the work the connection with Beethoven's use of this cadential formula in his 'Les Adieux' piano sonata confirms a final intertextual link with the past; and those that recognize this connection will understand this final farewell. If we compare the first and final references to this formula, shown in Exx.5.7 and 5.18, we can see that the original harmonic intervals have been preserved as a major third moves to a perfect fifth, and the progression concludes with a minor sixth

(presented in enharmonic form as an augmented fifth) but, the intervallic linear movement has changed.

Ex. 5.19: Chamber Symphony, movement IV, bars 292–3, basset clarinet and bass clarinet

The image shows two staves of music. The top staff is labeled 'Basset Cl.' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Bass Cl.'. Both are in 4/4 time. The Basset Cl. staff has a whole note G2, a half note F2, a quarter note E2, and a quarter note D2. The Bass Cl. staff has a whole note G2, a half note F2, a quarter note E2, and a quarter note D2. A bracket above the Basset Cl. staff spans the first two notes and is labeled 'chromatic movement'. A bracket below the Bass Cl. staff spans the first two notes and is labeled 'major 3rd'. Another bracket below the Bass Cl. staff spans the last two notes and is labeled 'major 2nd'.

The whole-tone descent of the upper line has been replaced by chromatic movement, and the intervals directing the lower line are a semitone smaller than those of the original line. Adès however has not totally forgotten the original tonic-dominant reference in C major. Earlier in the movement, in bars 284 and 285, a perfect cadence in C major is heard, but it is tainted with dissonance in the form of added sevenths.

Conclusion

Adès identifies the 'struggle' between three elements, topos, genre, and logic in the musical material as being essential to 'symphonic dialogue'⁵⁰ and in this work we have experienced this struggle as the tango topos, symphonism, sonata-form, and the concept of logical organic development of material interact. This is essentially a monothematic work and to create contrast, Adès sets this theme and its derivative material in sharply differentiated locations. Each movement adopts specific topoi, that with the exception

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 78.

of the slow, reflective last movement, meets our expectations in terms of mood and character of a symphonic format. But contrast is also achieved within each movement as chordal, monophonic, heterophonic, two- and three-part textures evolve in layers meticulously differentiated through momentum, rhythmic patterning, articulation, register, dynamic levels and instrumental colour.

Although Simpson may well have not considered Adès' Chamber Symphony a true symphony because of its lack of reliance on traditional tonal functions, it does however fulfil Simpson's requirements that the internal processes within a symphony should be 'fluid' and 'organic.'⁵¹ The cyclic theme in the Chamber Symphony provides a unifying role, firstly, to supply the basic cells from which the music will unfold organically, and secondly to create a recognizable cyclic theme that links all four movements. Adès, when commenting on his approach to *Brahms*, comments on how he has been 'struck by [Jan] Swafford's assertion that "the middle classes loved the beauty and warmth of Brahms's music, not the logic"' and he goes on to consider the prospect of wondering 'what would happen if I wrote a piece just about the logic and not about the beauty and warmth.'⁵² Both the Chamber Symphony and the Piano Quintet could be held up as examples of this focus on the concept of logical organic growth. Both works feature the systematic working out of material introduced in the opening bars, with an emphasis on the development and exploitation of intervallic relationships; in these works melodic phrases are shaped by a restricted range of intervals rather than creating beautiful and memorable melodic lines. Adès maintains unity as this basic material derived from the cyclic theme of the Chamber Symphony grows and develops through

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 9-10.

⁵² Service, 'Breaking the Silence', p. 29.

connections, but he provides the second essential element; contrast noted by Keller⁵³ through the use of timbre, texture, harmony, rhythm, dynamics and articulation.

Simpson notes that all the 'constituent factors'⁵⁴ of a symphony should be involved, and he emphasizes that tonal processes are a vital component in the symphonic process. Tonal references and processes are present in this work, but they are now informed and manipulated by a different set of rules as major and minor triads (with or without sevenths) are superimposed to create dissonant aggregates, and the cyclic theme is harmonized with superimposed whole-tone and chromatic movement to create harmonic progressions that oscillate between seventh chords (with the third usually missing) and perfect fifth structures. The anachronistic impact of the inclusion of the classical harmonic tonic-dominant formula, a well-worn harmonic/tonal cliché placed in an alien harmonic territory, pays homage the tonic-dominant polarities inherent in the classical tradition. But although intervallic aspects of this formula are revisited regularly, the pattern no longer fulfils a structural or functional purpose in tonal terms; it does however become an integral component in the organic development of the work.

⁵³ Keller, 'The State of the Symphony: not only Maxwell Davies's', p. 109.

⁵⁴ Simpson, *The Symphony, ii: Elgar to the Present Day*, p. 10.

Chapter 6: Adès and Surrealism

The links between Adès' music and surrealism have been suggested by Fox¹ and Taruskin;² the fact that Adès' mother, Professor Dawn Adès, is a leading expert of Dada and surrealism adds some weight to this proposition.³ Mention of Adès' surrealist tendencies to date have focused on comparing his work with the skill, logic and draughtsmanship of the surreal artist. Whittall's comment regarding the way in which Adès' music 'blends vividness of detail with a clear sense of compelling overall design'⁴ is compared by Fox to 'the compelling strangeness' of paintings by Magritte and Dali and the way that the success of their work depends 'on the evenness of painted texture, the preservation of the integrity of the picture plane and marriage of clear pictorial design with bizarre detail.'⁵ Taruskin follows this line of thought when he notes the highly detailed nature of Adès' music observing that, just as in the work of the surrealist painter, it is 'subtly fashioned and highly detailed [...] and invites rehearsals that often yield new and intriguing finds.'⁶ But although the skill, complexity and detail of Adès' work match the techniques of the surreal artist these observations alone do not provide enough evidence to classify Adès as a surrealist composer; other factors need to be explored.

Taruskin goes a step further when he observes the way in which Adès 'contradicts what is thought to be the essential nature of the medium [of music], to

¹ Fox, 'Tempestuous times', pp. 41–56.

² Taruskin, 'A Surrealist Composer', pp. 144–152.

³ University of Essex biography on Dawn Adès, <http://www.essex.ac.uk/arthistory/staff/profile> (accessed August 28, 2013). According to the University of Essex website Dawn Adès 'was awarded the OBE in 2002 for her services to art history and [...] has been responsible for some of the most important exhibitions in London and overseas over the past thirty years.

⁴ Whittall, 'Adès, Thomas.' *Grove Music Online*.

⁵ Fox, 'Tempestuous times', p. 43.

⁶ Taruskin, 'A Surrealist Composer', p. 149.

inhabit not time but space.’⁷ He goes on to describe the ‘sonic collages and mobiles: outlandish juxtapositions of evocative sound objects that hover, shimmering, or dreamily revolve, in a seemingly motionless sonic emulsion.’⁸ Here Taruskin is drawing attention to Adès’ linear textures in which strongly differentiated, distinct ideas evolve in temporal layers, each identified in terms of register, timbral, harmonic and dynamic colouring and rhythm, in a spatially defined landscape. As Albright notes, ‘Guillaume Apollinaire coined the term ‘surrealism’ in a programme note for Erik Satie’s ballet *Parade* (1916–17) to describe ‘a kind of super-realism [*sur-réalisme*],’⁹ that emerged as a result of a new relationship or bond between painting (Picasso) and dance (Massine) in *Parade*. Albright explains that what Apollinaire had recognized in this work was

a new kind of theatre, in which the arts were *coextensive* but *multiplanar* [...] each medium should pursue its own way of seizing the world, its private apprehension of reality; then the combination of these media will reveal a complete multidimensional grasp of the truth [...] a counterpoint of hard-edged, distinct, impermeable media.¹⁰

Taruskin has recognized this concept of differentiated layers of reality in Adès’ music in his comments above and these observations suggest how Adès’ music may be considered surreal in terms of the way in which layers of vividly differentiated ideas, each tracing their own momentum and trajectory, unfold in his scores.

Albright describes how Apollinaire’s predecessor, Alfred Jarry ‘invented the term *pataphysics*, that is, the science of exceptions to rules; surrealism is an extremely pataphysical movement, in that it denies every sort of rule, scheme, or generalization, in favour of the arresting instant of felt life.’¹¹ Albright notes that André Breton became the ‘chief instigator of the surrealism of the 1920s and 1930s’ and describes how Breton ‘advocates a deliberately unnatural art, an art of delirious juxtapositions, liberated from

⁷ Taruskin, ‘A Surrealist Composer’, p. 147.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent*, p. 245.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

mimesis or any other form of reliance on the sensible world.’¹² It would seem then that surrealism presents a heightened version of reality, or super-realism, in which normal rules or expectations are deliberately avoided. In terms of music this ‘super-realism’ might be experienced as an increased intensity in terms of the vividness of instrumental colour and the heightened emotional impact of the music. Extremes of intensity and unusual or unexpected juxtapositions could be explored in terms of the superimposition of differentiated layers of material. This super-reality could also be realized through technical precision and a fastidious attention to detail, shape, and colour, both instrumentally and harmonically.

Taruskin explains that ‘surrealism achieves many of its effects by juxtaposing items of ordinary experience in extraordinary ways. A similar effect is achieved when ‘ordinary’ C major and ‘ordinary’ D major are combined into an extraordinary, unheard of texture.’¹³ When discussing the music of 1920s that might be considered surreal (such as Poulenc, Martinu and Ravel) Albright notes that they ‘seem strikingly conservative in certain ways’ observing that ‘melodies tend to move in a conjunct, singable manner; harmonies rarely grate; structures are often easily assimilated and full of predictable recurrences.’¹⁴ He explains that ‘the surrealism of Poulenc and his fellows didn’t try to create a new language of music – it simply tilted the semantic planes of the old language of music.’¹⁵ He compares this approach to that of surrealist artists, noting that

just as surrealist paintings often have a horizon line and a highly developed sense of perspective, in order that the falseness of the space and errors of scale among the painted entities can register their various outrages to normal decorum, so surrealist music provides and intelligible context of familiar sounds in order

¹² Ibid., p. 267.

¹³ Taruskin, ‘A Surrealist Composer’, p. 152.

¹⁴ Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent*, p. 288.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 289.

to develop a system of meanings that can assault or discredit other systems of meanings.¹⁶

But as Albright explains, 'it is impossible to disorient unless some principle of orientation has been established in the first place [...] you can't provide music that means wrong unless you provide music that means something.'¹⁷ We need to consider what we might term as 'normal' in music in order to discover what is unusual or unexpected. For example, in terms of instrumentation, we could consider the 'more usual' or conventional manner of performing an instrument and look for instances where instruments perform in extreme registers, use unusual techniques or appear in unusual combinations. Unusual or unexpected items may be included: Adès makes use of paint tins, a washboard, a large ratchet, sandpaper blocks and a bag full of metal knives and forks in *Asyla*, and a popgun and fishing reel in *Powder Her Face*.

Albright observes that 'surrealism is the movement that most explicitly prized dissonance among competing planes of attention within the art work.'¹⁸ In *Living Toys* we experience the superimposition of various layers, or planes, within the overall texture of each movement. Each layer is vividly differentiated and characterized, in terms of timbre, register, texture, rhythm or momentum, or dynamic range, and is intended to exaggerate, and on occasions distort, the extreme 'realness' or intensity of the various characters, moods or situations in the programme. Within these competing layers of sound contradictions can be found in that although Adès' adopts a very dissonant harmonic vocabulary, tonal materials are also present.

The use of a title or programme brings an extra dimension, or layer of experience, to the music and supplies the potential for exploring unusual or surreal topics. Karl Ruhrberg explains that 'the Surrealists proclaimed the significance of the

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 289–90.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 289.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 244.

unconscious mind, of hallucination and dream and states of intoxication and ecstasy' and sought 'to visualize the whole of human existence, including its absurd contradictions, its terrors and underlying humor, regardless of social taboos.'¹⁹ Adès' scores explore a range of facets of human existence such as death, sex, faith, dreams and hallucination. Taboo subjects are not out of bounds; *Life Story* is based on a poem by Tennessee Williams on the subject of a quiet chat and a smoke after sex with a casual acquaintance, with a wry twist at the end regarding lighted cigarettes and burning to death in hotel rooms. Comedy, sex and sleaze are the subject of *Powder her Face*. Adès' keen sense of wit and humour is displayed through absurd or unusual choice of title and subject matter, and occasionally through performance directions added to the score. For example, in *Brahms* is described by Andy Hamilton as an 'anti-homage to Brahms'²⁰ and sets a poem by Alfred Brendel ('Brahms II' published in his collection of poetry, *One Finger Too Many* (1998)). The text deals with the ghost of Brahms 'prowling around the piano' and includes derogatory comments regarding his piano-playing and the smell of his cigars. The unusual text combination of a sermon and nonsense rhyme is a particular feature of *Fool's Rhymes*. The dream world of *Living Toys* qualifies as a surreal work in terms of the program. Albright notes that 'surrealism is a style for recovering the delights of early childhood, when even the most familiar things are strange.'²¹ *Living Toys* presents a range of emotional extremes where a child's playful dreams change into nightmares (Angels and Militiamen), moods range from exhilaration to terror and ultimately sadness (the bull-fight and death), and a range of unrelated locations are visited such as heaven, earth (Spain), and outer space. Adès has already acknowledged his intention to base his next opera on Luis Buñuel's surreal

¹⁹ Ruhrberg, Karl (2000) *Art of the 20th Century*, Madrid: Taschen, p. 138.

²⁰ Hamilton, 'Introduction to the Music of Thomas Adès', p. 3.

²¹ Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent*, p. 310.

film *The Exterminating Angel* (1962).²² This disturbing film covers the events that unfold when guests find that they are unable to leave the room after the dinner party. The film explores the different reactions of the guests as they confront death. The subject of death, particularly in relation to its role within a spiritual journey, has attracted Adès' attention in several works, including 'Rannoch' from *Five Eliot Landscapes*, 'Et...(Tango mortale)' in *Arcadiana* and *Living Toys*. It will be fascinating to see how Adès deals with this topic within the surreal context of *The Exterminating Angel*.

Albright observes that surrealist music 'tends to pay attention to false, or misleading or irrelevant aspects of the text.'²³ We need to consider that the programme of the text may not always be interpreted in an obvious way. For example, perhaps at first glance we might expect a piece based on the dreams of a child to stay within safe parameters, but as the story unfolds the child hero is involved in extreme brutality, to the extent that he witnesses his own death. Adès distorts and exaggerates the characters and moods implied by the programme in *Living Toys* and we experience a series of musically heightened emotional situations as the work progresses.

Adès states that 'all pieces have subjects, whether stated in the title or not' and he describes how he cannot 'see the distinction between abstract music and programme music.'²⁴ He notes that 'all music is metaphorical always.'²⁵ If we look at the dictionary definition of a metaphor it is described as 'something regarded as representative or suggestive of something else' or 'a figure of speech in which a name or descriptive words is transferred to an object or action different from, but analogous to, that to which

²² Adès discusses this briefly in an interview with Tom Service. Adès and Service (2012) *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*, p. 176–7. The film is directed and written by Luis Buñuel.

²³ Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent*, p. 302.

²⁴ Adès and Service, *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*, p. 5.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

it is applicable,' the term metaphor in Greek means to 'carry' or 'transfer.'²⁶ For Adès music can represent something more than itself. Its meaning can be transferred to suggest a vivid visual or verbal image, and when image and music join forces they enhance each other. For Adès, the programme or title is inextricably bound to the music, and the programme often develops as a result of the music. In order to explore the extent to which *Living Toys* may be considered surreal, I will observe the way the music interacts with, or becomes, an exaggerated expression of the bizarre story. I will look for ways in which musical ideas represent objects, characters, situations or moods to suggest the programme, and consider Adès' use of texture, colour, shape, space and temporal layering to present the 'sonic collages and mobiles'²⁷ suggested by Taruskin. I will also investigate ways in which 'the semantic plane of the old language of music'²⁸ may have been tilted and look for examples of extremes, the unusual, the unexpected, or the contradictory. Above all I will focus on the intensity and super-reality of the aural experience and the technical detail and the sheer craftsmanship involved in its presentation.

Living Toys

The front cover of *Living Toys* features an etching by Francisco Goya: *The agility and daring of Juanito Apinani in the bullring at Madrid* (1815–16). This reference to Spain is emphasized through what Adès claims to be an anonymous Spanish text in the preface to the score.

When the men asked him what he wanted to be, Juanito did not name any of their own occupations, as they had all hoped he would, but replied: "I am going to be a hero, and dance with angels and bulls, and fight with bulls and soldiers, and die a hero in outer space, and be buried a hero". Hearing the child's words,

²⁶ *Oxford English Dictionary* online, <http://www.oed.com> (accessed July 1, 2013).

²⁷ Taruskin, 'A Surrealist Composer', p. 147.

²⁸ Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent*, p. 289.

the men felt small, understanding that they were not heroes, and that their lives were less substantial than the dreams which surrounded him like toys.²⁹

Living Toys is a five-movement work based on the fantastic dreams of a child and is played through continuously, listed as follows, with no break between movements.

I: 'Angels'

II: 'Aurochs'

'BALETT'

III: 'Militiamen'

IV: 'H.A.L.'s Death'

'BATTLE'

V: 'Playing funerals'

'TABLET'

In the three unnumbered movements, 'BALETT', 'BATTLE' and 'TABLET', Adès notes 'a reordering of shared material (hence the anagrammatical titles): three-voice descending chords, each voice restricted to a single interval.'³⁰ These chord progressions are constructed from superimposed strands of whole-tone or chromatic interval cycles. In these movements, ideas from the previous numbered movements are revisited. Tarnopolsky describes the piece as 'a path from free and complex music to structured and simple music. The themes begin at their most distorted, in the realm of total fantasy; and gradually reorder themselves until, in the final two sections, the raw materials (simple descending chords) are presented in their basic form.'³¹ Andy Hamilton comments that the 'dream world' of the piece 'reflects a surrealist tendency that often informs Adès' music, though it is put to less savage ends than that great 20th

²⁹ Adès, Thomas (1996) preface to the score of *Living Toys*.

³⁰ Adès, Thomas (1994) programme notes for *Living Toys*, *Faber Music* website, <http://www.fabermusic.com> (accessed August 28, 2013).

³¹ Tarnopolsky, Matías (1997) programme notes for *Living Toys*, BBC Proms, 11 May 1997, p. 16.

century surrealist, György Ligeti.³² Adès alludes to Ligeti's use of polyphony in the fourth movement, whose title makes reference to H.A.L., the child-like computer featured in the film *2001–A Space Odyssey* (1968). It is perhaps ironic though that Adès should choose to pay homage to Ligeti by referencing a film that featured Ligeti's music without his permission.³³

Adès now admits that he invented the 'anonymous Spanish' text.³⁴ When he began the work he had the titles of the first two movements, 'Aurochs and Angels.' Adès informs us that these names were taken from the last paragraph of *Lolita* (1955) by Vladimir Nabokov (1899–1977):³⁵

I am thinking of aurochs and angels, the secret of durable pigments, prophetic sonnets, the refuge of art. And this is the only immortality you and I may share, my Lolita. [p. 309].

This information triggers a series of underlying connections starting with the violence experienced by the child in Adès' story and the theme of the abused child in *Lolita*; Stanley Kubrick produced a dark comedy film adaptation of *Lolita* in 1962. Adès extends this connection between *Lolita* and Kubrick a step further by referencing *2001-A Space Odyssey*. We can now understand how Adès' initial inspiration for the titles of the first two movements initiated a chain reaction that not only provided a programme, but also suggested the title of the fourth movement (H.A.L.) and connections with Ligeti. Although Adès says he works from music to programme it would seem that in this instance the seeds of the plot were evident from the start.

The meaning behind the last paragraph from *Lolita* reveals other connections. It is clear that Adès connects with the allusion to art (ancient cave paintings of bison and

³² Hamilton, 'Introduction to the Music of Thomas Adès', p. 3.

³³ According to Steinitz, extracts from Ligeti's *Requiem*, *Atmosphères* and *Aventures* accompany Doug Trumbell's 'star-gate sequence, in which light patterns hurtle out of infinity and rush past the viewer on all sides.' Ligeti took legal action which led to a modest out-of-court settlement. Steinitz, Richard (2003) *György Ligeti Music of the Imagination*, London: Faber and Faber, pp. 161–3.

³⁴ Adès and Service, *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*, pp. 72–3.

³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 73.

the depiction of angels in works of art that span the centuries) in the paragraph from *Lolita* (see above). In his programme note, he explains that 'the child/hero's dream adventures form the five figurative sections' and that these are 'offset by three more volatile, dynamic paragraphs; painting versus film, perhaps.'³⁶ In order to reveal the roles of these numbered and unnumbered movements I will investigate the way in which 'pictures' suggested in the programme are narrated in the numbered movements, and explore how existing ideas, introduced in the earlier numbered movements, are manipulated to create new relationships, according to the titles of the unnumbered movements. The title BALETT suggests a playful interaction of ideas, of dancing; BATTLE initiates a competitive or combative relationship between ideas; and TABLET presents stability, a source stripped to its essence, to reveal a series of harmonic progressions. The title of TABLET could imply a monument erected in memory of the child, but it could also allude to the shiny, black rectangular monument featured in *2001—A Space Odyssey*, which could be taken to represent the consolidation of all that has gone before in order to reach this point, and to provide the impetus for the next leap forward in man's evolution.³⁷ I will look at the way in which the unnumbered movements extend, develop and intensify the concepts initiated in the numbered movements, as they interact with the descending chord sequences in common with all three movements.

Adès' approach to texture and orchestration are central to the presentation of the unfolding ideas in *Living Toys*. He creates differentiated layers, usually three or four per movement, that are independently characterized in terms of orchestral colour, dynamics

³⁶ Adès, programme notes.

³⁷ In *2001—A Space Odyssey* a shiny black monolith appears at strategic points in man's evolution. Its discovery initiates the use of tools as weapons in primitive man; instigates a journey to Jupiter when a similar slab is found on the moon; 'a floating version of the monolith' guides Bowman on the final part of his journey to an 18th century room; and, at the moments of death, 'a glowing orb now appears above the bed, inside it a newly forming humanlike fetus The egg containing the "Star-Child" takes its place amid the confluence of planetary bodies against the eternity of space.' Cumbow, Robert C (1996) *2001: A Space Odyssey* (CD liner notes), EMI 7243 8 55322 2 1, pp. 6–7.

and articulation, rhythm and momentum, and melody and harmony, to suggest various characters and locations. Adès uses instruments to provide striking colours, and he especially favours the brittle and bright timbres of the piccolo trumpet, soprano recorder and E flat clarinet. These bright timbres are often pitted against bass instruments that are used to signify danger and menace. In 'Militiamen' the piccolo trumpet is set against growling bass fragments on bass clarinet, contra bassoon, 'cello and double bass. Adès also exploits a range of more unusual tone-colours in the brass section; he uses natural harmonics³⁸ on the horn, a technique perhaps influenced by Ligeti's *Horn Trio* (1982) and Benjamin Britten's *Serenade* Op. 31 (1943).³⁹ In the performance notes Adès lists the symbols, from the International Phonetic Alphabet, that are to be pronounced as pitches are sounded on the piccolo trumpet. This 'talking trumpet' is bizarre and disturbing in its effect with its nightmarish, distorted version of the trumpet sound.

In the following analysis I will discuss the numbered movements first. I will then move on to explore ways in which the unnumbered movements relate to these movements, and to each other. I will focus on how Adès suggests, and enhances aspects of the programme and look for ways in which ideas evolve in 'sonic planes' that interact, or are contrasted, to present an intense 'super-real' musical version of the story.

i) I: 'Angels'

The work begins with 'Angels', a bright, glittering, and colourful movement. Fragmentary, fluttering figurations soar in high registers against which 'a long horn solo haloed with gongs and little trumpets'⁴⁰ unfolds. In this movement the first part of the

³⁸ Arrow indications that appear on note-heads in horn soli are described, in the performance notes at the front of the score, as meaning 'certain partials flatter or sharper than the equivalent pitches on the keyboard. In these instances the score indicates the fundamental pitch (by letter name) from which these notes are to be obtained.'

³⁹ Britten uses the natural harmonics in the 'Epilogue.'

⁴⁰ Adès, programme notes.

programme is played out, 'I am going to be a hero and dance with angels', and we enter the dream world of the child. Three main elements are introduced in this movement as Adès suggests the flight of angels with rapid, treble figurations primarily in high woodwind, piccolo trumpet and piano; introduces the 'child' through an extended horn solo; and provides a sense of stability, and possibly suggests religious connotations, through delicately sounded hypnotic perfect fourth dyads, on double bass harmonics, gongs and piano. The opening of the work begins an exuberant and colourful outburst of rising patterns, shown in Ex. 6.1, which contains intervallic material that will play a large part in the work.

Ex. 6.1: *Living Toys*, 'Angels', bars 1–4, woodwind, brass and piano

This brief flourish contains triadic patterns (B major in the opening moments, followed by C sharp7 on oboe and piano), together with glimpses of pentatonic black key shapes (in the second half of the third bar), rising perfect fourth intervals (opening F sharp–B fragments, and F sharp–C sharp in bar 4), perfect fifth intervals (piccolo trumpet part), and whole-tone movement A–C sharp bar 4. In this opening gesture Adès

also hints at the pure, untainted, primary force of angels through reference to the harmonic series; some of the rising melodic fragments are based on intervallic patterns that seem to grow from the basic shape of the harmonic series (though the fundamental notes are not present). The influence of the harmonic series becomes more obvious in bar 33 when the 'cello plays a portion of the upper part of the A harmonic series as shown in Ex. 6.2.


Ex. 6.2: *Living Toys*, 'Angels', 'cello, bar 33

Much later in the movement the shape of the harmonic series is absorbed into the horn solo (see Ex. 6.3) when, from bar 87, the horn theme takes on some of the characteristics of the angel figurations.

Ex. 6.3: *Living Toys*, 'Angels', bars 87–101, horn solo

As the movement gets underway these three layers are each differentiated in terms of function and momentum. On a structural or referential level we hear a series of static pedal points; then, swooping above these points of reference, fast fragmentary patterns to suggest agility and the free flight of 'angels'; and finally the horn solo which observes a slower momentum, as it traces a series of steeply angled, arc-shaped phrases. These layers are outlined in the following diagram (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: *Living Toys*, 'Angels', overview of the movement highlighting theme and angel figurations in relation to pedal / reference points

Intro. 1 – 15	Fig. B 16 – 49	Fig. F 50 – 59	Fig. G 60 – 86	87 – 100	101 – 105	106 – 110
'Angel' figurations incorporate fleeting references to triadic material		Rising white pentatonic patterns E G 	'Angel' figurations continue the trend of rising patterns that now incorporate black key pitches.			
Horn solo		b. 63 Horn solo				
Series of perfect fourth reference points						
Gongs/piano/ double bass(harmonics)		Pno. & Gongs plus w.w & trem.stgs.		Intermittent interjections on: C. Bell, T.blk guiro & vibraslap	Gongs/piano/ double bass(harmonics)	
b.7 C----- b. 5.G----- b. 43. C#/Db----- sustained pedal point		b. 61 G#----- b. 64 C----- G----- C# P4ths P5ths		b. 88 C#----- b. 89 D----- b. 96 G#----- A----- Bb----- on Picc. Tpt & w.w	Rising gliss. on double bass C----- G----- D----- Bb----- sustained pedal point Eb----- (G min.) (Eb ⁷)	
Chromatic voice leading						
C.....C/C#.....C#.....C.....C#.....D.....C.....D.....D/Eb						
G.....G#.....G.....G#.....A.....Bb.....G/Bb.....						

Adès mentions the 'halo effect'⁴¹ of the delicately sounded gongs that draw us gently into this dreamscape; these reference points are dominated by the interval of a perfect 4th, an interval that suggests the perfection and purity of angels. The first set of perfect 4ths (C and G on gongs, piano and double bass) emerge, very softly, and at first these Cs and Gs establish and maintain a regular pulse of three quaver's duration. However, from bar 22 onwards subtle rhythmic irregularities are introduced to loosen the metronomic grip of these hypnotic repetitions. Roeder describes how the subsequent inexact repetitions are still able to suggest that an 'established durational motive is in the process of being repeated,'⁴² but our relationship with time, in terms of a reference to a sense of pulse, becomes fluid as we are drawn into the dream. However, the pitches of these pedal points provide stability in an environment where a sense of pulse becomes a less reliable source of reference. These underlying pedal points are governed by a process of chromatic voice leading, and changes are confirmed through instrumentation, as indicated in Table 6.1. The percussion section takes on the role of confirming these points of stability for example, the gongs always reinforce C and G. Moments of instability are also confirmed for example, when a variety of percussion instruments are involved in bars 88–100.

The angel figurations resemble the twittering and fluttering of birds, their colours are bright, remaining in high woodwind and the treble registers of the piano, and fragments, or single pitches, are pinpointed on upper strings, using harmonics and/or observing *sul tasto* indications, to add a brittle, almost unearthly quality. Adès has exaggerated the movement of flight into wild, frantic patterns that trace rapid, fragmentary, rising and falling figurations that are coloured with fleeting references to triadic material, as shown in the following example.

⁴¹ Adès, programme notes.

⁴² Roeder, 'Co-operating Continuities', p. 124.

Ex. 6.4: *Living Toys*, 'Angels', bars 26–30, piccolo and piano

The rhythmic patterns of these initial figurations are fast and fleeting, but as layers of rising, white-note pentatonic fragments are established on high woodwind and piccolo trumpet (from Figure F (bar 50)), they begin to settle into dotted demisemiquaver movement; the establishment of a recognized pentatonic scale pattern is paralleled by the adoption of regularized rhythmic patterns. Adès exploits the timeless quality, and magical colour, of this ancient mode but the purity of this section is tinged with dissonance with the introduction of an extra pedal note D flat, which is sustained alongside the continuing pedal notes on C and G. This pitch anticipates a brief chromatic shift, from C and G (perfect fourths) to C sharp and G sharp (perfect fifths) in bar 61 and initiates the gradual integration of black key pitches into the pentatonic angel figurations.

The horn solo, shown in Ex. 6.5, is introduced in bar 16, and contrasts with the angel patterns in terms of colour, expressive nature and slower momentum. Subtle tonal inflections, resulting from playing certain pitches slightly flatter or sharper than concert pitch, and the use of harmonics, exploiting partials over indicated pitches, produces a melody line that sounds pale and distant, suggesting the disorientation of the child as it enters the dream. But if we compare the angel figurations in the previous example, we can see a connection in terms of phrase shapes and the use of seventh chords.

Ex. 6.5: *Living Toys*, 'Angels', bars 16–50, horn solo

The musical score for the horn solo in Ex. 6.5 is divided into four phrases, each marked with a letter in a box (B, C, D, E) and a measure number. The key signature is one flat (Bb).

- Phrase B (measures 16-25):** Starts at measure 16 with a 'solo' marking. The dynamic is *mf* *cantabile*. A chord change to Ebm is indicated at measure 25. The phrase ends with a *mf* dynamic.
- Phrase C (measures 26-33):** Starts at measure 26 with a *(cantabile)* marking. The dynamic is *f*. A chord change to Ebm7 is indicated at measure 33. The phrase ends with a *mf* dynamic.
- Phrase D (measures 34-43):** Starts at measure 34 with a *poco f* marking. A chord change to Eb7 is indicated at measure 43. The phrase ends with a *mf* dynamic.
- Phrase E (measures 44-50):** Starts at measure 44 with a *mf* dynamic. A chord change to G7 is indicated at measure 50. The phrase ends with a *dim al PPP* marking.

The importance of shape in this solo is revealed in the three, broad arc-shaped phrases starting at Figures B, C and D respectively. Each phrase begins in treble registers and gently rises before sinking into lower registers, to suggest the shape of an angel's wing, as illustrated in Ex. 6.5. Each successive phrase undergoes gradual expansion as the second portion of each phrase gradually sinks lower into bass registers, until by the end of the third phrase the melodic range has expanded to cover a range of just over two octaves. Each phrase is also extended in duration with the addition of an extra phrase tracing a similar shape, an echoed image of the earlier portion of the phrase. The third phrase is extended even further with an echo of its descending phrase followed by a further undulation, or echo. The dream-like quality of these echoed shapes is enhanced with rhythmic values designed to present a flexible presentation as it moves against the 'twittering' angel patterns.

When the horn solo resumes, in bar 63, the range of the melody expands to cover a much steeper ascent with the starting point of each subsequent phrase beginning lower and

lower. It is as though the theme is moving out of the position of being surrounded, by static pedal points and fluttering angel figurations, to a point where it encompasses the other material within its range; through the use of shape Adès is able to suggest that child is beginning to become a significant participant in this dream. This concept is reinforced as, from bar 87, shorter rising patterns, on the horn, begin to resemble the opening rising angel figurations (bars 1–4) in terms of melodic shape and faster rhythmic values (see Exx. 6.1 and 6.3). The theme is beginning to take on the characteristics of the angel fragments as it becomes drawn into the excitement of the dream.

Adès has exaggerated the difference between the two main ‘characters’ through use of colour, rhythm, articulation (the angel patterns incorporate staccato indications while the horn solo remains legato throughout), and tessitura. Differentiation is emphasized through temporal layering as both subjects pursue their own momentum seemingly oblivious of each other. We are witnessing the sonic mobile effect suggested by Taruskin⁴³ and the tilting of the semantic plane, in terms of time, referred to by Albright.⁴⁴ But as the movement progresses Adès seems to suggest a closer connection as the ‘child’ in its excitement takes on some of the characteristics of the ‘angel’ patterns.

Adès’ ‘painterly’ approach to music can be observed in his use of melodic shape. The movement is dominated by arc-shaped patterns as the perfect fourth gong patterns trace a miniature arc-shapes; the angels expand and elaborate this basic shape through fast swooping flourishes; and the horn augments the shape through the use of longer durations and an expansion of range. Beneath these widely undulating patterns, pedal points provide periods of stability, and when they shift they trace gently undulating shapes guided by chromatic voice leading. Therefore shape is an important factor that provides a close link between all three elements in this movement. From this bright and colourful dream-like

⁴³ Taruskin, ‘A Surrealist Composer’, p. 147.

⁴⁴ Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent*, p. 289.

landscape of twittering flecks, fragments, and echoed shapes, the child carves his way into the dream through a series of elegant, wing-shaped phrases. As the movement draws to a close, a rapidly reiterated G minor triad draws all movement to a halt and leads the child into the dangerous territory of second stage of this journey.

ii) II: 'Aurochs'

Adès describes how, 'with a change in tempo and the first bass note (a B) into the ring charges an Auroch.' The bull 'is whipped and goaded by the brutal, elegant matador-kid until his bellows of defeat [...] metamorphose into the first appearance of a "hero's theme".'⁴⁵ In this movement Adès establishes a sense of location and occasion, as he conjures up the spirit of this exciting event with fanfare patterns, and typical Spanish signifiers in the form of dance rhythms, castanets and clapping. Adès incorporates rhythmic features from the Habanera (see Exx. 6.6 and 6.7), exaggerating the upbeat semiquaver pattern, adopts the swift triple time of the jota, and uses instruments (handclaps and castanets) representative of Spanish dances.

Ex. 6.6: Typical rhythmic patterns of the Habanera

The diagram illustrates typical rhythmic patterns of the Habanera in 2/4 time. It is divided into two main sections: 'typical rhythmic accompaniment patterns' and 'typical triplet melody patterns'.
 The first section, 'typical rhythmic accompaniment patterns', shows two alternative patterns separated by 'or'. The first pattern consists of a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, then a quarter note, and finally a quarter note. The second pattern consists of a quarter note, an eighth note, a quarter note, and a quarter note.
 The second section, 'typical triplet melody patterns', shows two alternative patterns separated by 'or'. Both patterns consist of three eighth notes beamed together, with a '3' above them indicating a triplet. The first pattern has a quarter note following the triplet, and the second pattern has a quarter note following the triplet.

⁴⁵ Adès, programme notes.

Ex. 6.7: *Living Toys*, 'Aurochs', bars 111–16, showing rhythmic patterns that allude to the Habanera

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system includes Piccolo Trumpet, Violins I & II, and Gongs. The Piccolo Trumpet part starts with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a half note, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The Violins I & II part features a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a half note, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The Gongs part has a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a half note, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The second system continues the Piccolo Trumpet and Violins I & II parts, with the Piccolo Trumpet part featuring a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a half note, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The Violins I & II part features a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a half note, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The Gongs part has a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a half note, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The third system continues the Piccolo Trumpet and Violins I & II parts, with the Piccolo Trumpet part featuring a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a half note, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The Violins I & II part features a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a half note, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The Gongs part has a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a half note, and then a triplet of eighth notes.

The penetrating sound of piccolo trumpet and the colourful array of percussion instruments are particularly effective in depicting this brilliant and vivid event. The music is geared to generate a super-real, brightly coloured, and frenetic experience.

The movement falls into three main sections, each of which is subdivided, as indicated in the following diagram (Table 6.2), and the various sections of the programme are defined through the use of the percussion. For example, gongs and cymbals mark the start and end of the movement, and extended castanet solos indicate the start and end of the bullfight. A central section, illustrating the chaos of the fight, is instigated and ended through the use of clapping patterns and a talking drum accompanies the 'hero's theme.'

Table 6.2: *Living Toys*, 'Aurochs', overview of the movement highlighting themes, use of percussion and the main aspects of harmony and reference points

Introduction		Hero and bull interact	Fight	
Bars: 111 – 116	117 – 125	126 – 153	154 – 195	196 – 199
Perfect 5th dyads: fanfare triplet patterns	Alternating triads (bull motive); dotted rhythmic patterns	Start of piccolo trumpet melody (child matador); triplet patterns	Sustained or repeated E's and E-D-C fragments (Bull) Picc tpt. solo	
Percussion				
Gongs	Brief castanets/whip	Castanets-----	Clapping Changing timbres: C. bells; triangle.; bass drum & high temple blk.	Guero/Whip/ clapping
Harmony/pedal points				
			E -----	
G----- D----- B-----		Perfect fourth dyads (high w.w., strings and pno.) Bass register; triads alternate with perfect fifth structures (Bull motive)	Triads/cluster chords/ & perfect fifth structures.	G minor Major/minor triads

Defeat of bull	Death	First appearance of the 'hero theme'	
Bars: 200 – 216	217 – 224	224 – 244	245 – 252
Horn solo based on motive: E-D-C	Death throes of E-D-C motive Return of semiquaver triplet patterns	'Hero theme': E major	Hero theme continues Rising semiquaver triplet patterns (Matador) Rising harmonic series fragments (Angels)
Percussion			
Castanets	No percussion	Talking drum	Susp. cymbals. Gongs in last bar confirm the end of this movement
Harmony/pedal points			
E-----			
Triads	Perfect fifth patterns	Perfect fifth and perfect fourth dyad patterns	

This movement is flamboyant and super-charged with energy to present a situation contrasting menace, and danger, with the playful nature of the child; but what starts as a game ends in a fearsome combat to the death. The stature and energetic nature of the child is represented by a rapidly unravelling bright, treble melody on piccolo trumpet in Ex. 6.8.

Ex. 6.8: *Living Toys*, 'Aurochs', bars 127–9, child-matador motive, piccolo trumpet



The weight and power of the Auroch (an extinct European wild ox or bison) is portrayed through alternating root position minor triads, in bass registers, using aggressive dotted rhythmic patterns, shown in the following example:

Ex. 6.9: *Living Toys*, 'Aurochs', bars 116–23, bull motive



The first crack of the whip is heard in bar 124 and, after a castanet interjection at bar 126, the two ideas interact accompanied by an extended castanet solo. After the initial establishment of the location of this dream and the introduction of the main characters Adès proceeds to takes us through the process of the bull fight. Both characters undergo a change in the process of the movement as the bull is transformed into a bellowing and faltering beast and, through its demise, the child takes on the role of a dignified 'hero.' The first sign of change occurs when a *fortissimo* horn solo opens with an anguished portamento slide (bar 200) to represent a desperate wail from the bull and what Adès

describes as the ‘bellows of defeat’⁴⁶ is represented by a series of strident *fortissimo* descending fragments on E, D, C that become staggered between instruments as shown in Ex. 6.10.

Ex. 6.10: *Living Toys*, ‘Aurochs’, bars 200–3, faltering bull, brass section

An extended *fortissimo* pedal E, at Figure Y (bar 217) which gradually fades through a series of gentle crescendo and decrescendo surges marks the final moments of the bull. The tempo slows and dynamic levels diminish to prepare for the first appearance of the ‘hero theme’ in E major, whose first three pitches (E, F sharp and G sharp) emerge from the pedal E to present the bull motive in inversion. Adès continues the association of the child with the brass section of the orchestra (horn in ‘Angels’ and piccolo trumpet as the matador in ‘Aurochs’) as the ‘hero’ theme begins on trombone and upper strings, as shown in Ex. 6.11.

⁴⁶ Adès, programme notes.

Ex. 6.11: *Living Toys*, 'Aurochs', bars 224–52

A complete change of mood is established as this dignified 'hero' theme begins to weave its way through different instrumental combinations as fragments are allocated with a degree of overlapping and doubling like a *Klangfarbenmelodie*, and it evolves through a series of phrases that can be seen as series of transformations of the opening basic shape in bars 224–31.

The arrival of this theme is marked with a bass drum strike and the introduction of a talking drum. At this point three differentiated levels evolve independently of each other in a surreal combination as shown in Ex. 6.12. The *molto cantabile* multi-coloured 'hero's' theme, moves through the triple metre in duplets and evolves against the talking drum (showing a preference for triplet patterns in an independent temporal zone); against a background of eerie intermittent pinpricks of perfect fourth and fifth dyads in bass registers.

Ex. 6.12: *Living Toys*, 'Aurochs', bars 224–31

The musical score for Ex. 6.12, 'Aurochs', bars 224–31, is presented in 2/4 time. It features four staves: Percussion, Tbn, Vlns & Vla, and Piano. The Percussion staff includes a talking drum with a 'p sempre' dynamic. The Tbn, Vlns & Vla staff has a melodic line with a 'p' dynamic and a 'Z' symbol indicating a 'Poch. allarg.' section. The Piano staff includes various techniques like 'Pno solo', 'mf marc.', 'pizz', and 'arco'. The score is annotated with various performance instructions such as 'Poch. allarg.', 'p sempre', 'arco senza vib', 'arco', 'pizz', and 'arco sul pont'.

In the final phrase, the talking drum is replaced by small cymbals and this triggers fleeting references to the first movement in the form of a fragment of the harmonic series (bars 245–9). In the final moments a return of the gong Gs and Cs, from the opening of the work, signal the close of the movement.

Adès exaggerates the Spanish topos of this movement, through an excess of rhythmic and timbral signifiers. The two main characters are vividly differentiated to extremes, the child on piccolo trumpet, triplets, melodic, conjunct, presented at a dazzling speed; and the slower bull uses bass motives, thickened with root position triads, that feature disjunct movement. The hero's theme is very similar in mood and shape to the theme of the child in the first movement (centred in E flat minor), however, the child has now been elevated to the status of a hero through a melody that now hints at E major in the opening phrase. Adès' exploitation of orchestral colour to identify strongly contrasted ideas, is matched by an equally varied and colourful tonal language that makes use of harmonic combinations of triads, superimposed perfect fifth and more dissonant chords. Adès achieves a super-charged, brilliantly coloured sonic collage effect as the work evolves in layers of pedal points and pedal chords, extended percussion solos, on castanets and talking drum, and a pointillist background of timbral and harmonic colour supplied in the form of triads, single pitches, perfect fourth or fifth

dyads. Above these structural layers the motives representing the two main characters seem to dance around each other, tracing their own trajectory, as the story is played out in this chaotic dream.

iii) III: 'Militiamen'

Adès notes that at this point in the score 'the hero has a bad dream – a grotesque army, led by a pair of virtuosi (one a maniacal drummer, the other has a nightmarish talking bugle), advances on him.'⁴⁷ This brutal movement unfolds on various levels as four independent ideas are strongly characterized by timbral signifiers: the piccolo trumpet solo; military percussion patterns; ominous bass fragments representing the militiamen; and vivid intermittent octave interjections possibly suggesting gun shots. The piccolo trumpet works within its own metre (3/4) and the remainder of the ensemble is in 9/8. The movement opens with complex rhythmic patterns on field drum, bass drum, piccolo snare drum and *sforzando* paper, to establish a military sound world from the very start of 'Militiamen.' The only consistent pattern is an underlying ostinato on field drum and bass drum; the remaining patterns, on piccolo snare drum, undergo constant variation as illustrated in Ex. 6.13.

Ex. 6.13: *Living Toys*, 'Militiamen', bars 300–3, percussion ostinato

The image shows a musical score for percussion instruments. The instruments listed are Paper, Picc. S.D. (snare on), and Field Drum (snare off). The score is in 9/8 time and starts at bar 300. It features complex rhythmic patterns with triplets and accents. Dynamics include *sffz* and *pp*. There are markings for 'ostinato' on the Field Drum and 'F.D. & B.D. ostinato' for the Field Drum and Bass Drum. The score includes various rhythmic notations such as eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and triplet markings.

Interjections on *sforzando* paper are intermittent and unpredictable. In the second bar of the movement, the percussionist is joined by the piccolo trumpet sounding

⁴⁷ Adès, programme notes.

persistent Es, previously established as significant reference points in 'Aurochs', before going on to pursue a virtuosic solo that dominates the movement. Adès gives very detailed information regarding the performance of the piccolo trumpet, to include an almost excessive amount of information to indicate the mood and manner of performance, as indicated in Ex. 6.14:

Ex. 6.14: *Living Toys*, 'Militiamen', bars 301–5, piccolo trumpet

($\frac{3}{4}$) own metre: *molto rubato sempre solo, parlato, quasi espress., quasi dolce, con molto fantasia, in modo popolare*

senza sord.; plunger

4 4 sempre

300 Picc. Tpt. *sim.*

i jΛ i Λ i lΛ ju i

pp *f* *pp* <

302 < *f* jΛ i Λ i Λ i i ju jΛ Λ

p *f*

But the real stroke of inspiration for this movement comes in the form of the use of a mixture of vowels, diphthongs and consonants indicated above the notated pitches for the piccolo trumpet; this results in a nightmarish timbral distortion of the melodic line. In the opening bars of the movement 'i' should be pronounced as 'ee' in seed; 'Λ' as U in mud; and 'j' as 'y' in you. The solo develops within a restricted range at first but at the halfway point (bar 319) we sense a change: now the child has become aware of the danger, and the piccolo trumpet part now becomes much more agitated and angular in its pursuit of the child. The Es become more prominent from bar 322 and, as the two-thirds position in the movement is approached (bar 325), the first of three rising F sharp⁷ patterns are incorporated into the melodic line. In the last of these patterns, the piccolo trumpet once more flat-lines on high E. Vocal sounds are now abandoned as the trumpet

presents a last desperate improvised flourish culminating on three final utterances on C sharp, B and F sharp (with descending slides).

Adès selects the high-pitched piccolo trumpet and piccolo snare drum to suggest the innocence of a child playing at soldiers with toy instruments, but the menacing fragmentary bass grunts and growls on bass clarinet, contrabassoon, 'cello and double bass that begin in the sixth bar of the movement (Figure F1), present a grim contrast. These new patterns, presented in Ex. 6.15, are dominated by chromatic movement, microtonal slides and rapid grace notes; the fragments expand from a semitone/microtonal cluster to cover a range of a tritone before contracting again.

Ex. 6.15: *Living Toys*, 'Militiamen', bass militiamen motive, bars 305–7, bass clarinet, contra bassoon, 'cello and double bass

F1
305

The musical score for Figure F1 shows four staves. The top staff is for Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.), the second for Contrabassoon (C. Bsn.), the third for Cello (Vc.), and the fourth for Double Bass (Cb.). The music is in 3/8 time. The B. Cl. and C. Bsn. parts feature chromatic movement and triplets, with dynamics ranging from *pp* to *mp*. The Vc. and Cb. parts use *pizz.* (pizzicato) and triplets, with dynamics ranging from *mf* to *f*. The Cb. part also includes a *slap* effect. The score is marked with a box containing 'F1' and the number '305'.

A range of string effects including *pizzicato*, *sul ponticello* and *slap*, exaggerate the terrifying nature of these ominous utterances. As the movement progresses, these rising fragments are enhanced with growling sounds added by the trombone.

The introduction of these patterns coincides with the first octave interjection at Figure F1; these gun-shots become more frequent in the central part of the movement, and more forceful and emphatic from bar 326. The following diagram traces these

interjections in relation to the trumpet part (indicated with note-heads and wavy lines to represent the general direction of rapid figurations and fragments) and reveals an underlying chromatic cycle that unfolds as the movement progresses. Pitches are numbered to indicate the first entry of each pitch and pitches continue to be used in random fashion once they have been introduced. But certain relationships are reinforced and with pitches B and F (pitches 1 and 2) occurring several times in bars 305–19 only to be gradually replaced by perfect fourths on F sharp and C sharp (3 and 6).

Ex. 6.16: *Living Toys*, 'Militiamen', overview of piccolo trumpet and octave interjections

Chromatic cycle in order of presentation in tutti interjections:
 B F F# C A C# D G Bb Ab E Eb
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

F1 **G1**

300
 Tpt.
 Octave interjections

313
 Tpt.
 Octave interjections

J1

326
 Tpt.
 Octave interjections

16va 8va 16va 8va 16va 8va 16va 8va 16va 8va 16va 8va

rimshot paper rimshot paper

All 12 chromatic pitches

TUTTI TUTTI TUTTI TUTTI

The first tutti interjection C sharp rising to F sharp (implying V-I in bar 326) seems to reinforce the final removal of all traces of the tritone on B and F. Once this underlying battle has been resolved the remaining pitches of the cycle continue to be introduced, as indicated on the diagram. The movement culminates in an extended tutti section (in bars 336-7) where every pitch of the cycle is sounded and intervallic relationships are revisited; a strident upward rising F sharp⁷ sharp major arpeggio (first sounded in the piccolo trumpet in bar 325) fleshes out the F sharp and C sharp (now in a perfect fifth relationship), and a series of descending perfect fourths (G-D-A) and a tritone on A-E flat brings us full circle to an inversion of the first tritone pattern (F-B). A battle seems to have been fought in metaphorical terms through the conflict between the tritone (B-F) and the perfect fourth (F sharp and C sharp). Rimshots and *sforzando* paper provide the final shots that finish the hero off (indicated on the diagram). The final *fffz* on paper (in the final bar) initiates a desperate rising oboe flourish that leads to the final F from which the piccolo trumpet falls in a brief glissando-like slide accompanied by a drum-roll and field drum; a lingering plaintive *pianissimo* F on piccolo leads us seamlessly into the next movement.

Adès establishes a military feel through a range of timbral signifiers, for example the snare drum, field drum and bass drum. Other signifiers include the use of single pitch tutti interjections to represent gun shots, and extended upward striding patterns to suggest the overwhelming power and force of the Militia. Adès adds the element of fear and menace, provided by grumbling bass motives, and contrasts it with the innocence of a child at play, through the use of as piccolo trumpet and piccolo snare-drum. The surreal 'talking trumpet' provides supplies a further distortion of reality to complement the nightmare quality of this movement. The super-reality of each element within this movement provides a collage of strongly contrasted ideas with

points of reference, or stability, ironically achieved through the gun shots and the strident tutti motives of the encroaching militia.

iv) IV: 'H.A.L.'s Death'

Adès notes that at this point 'it being forbidden to dream one's own death' the child now 'switches dreams. He is in a film, in deepest space, dismantling a great computer, whose vast intelligence dwindles to a wilting Vicwardian music-hall waltz.'⁴⁸ In this movement Adès evokes the illusion of distant space, by alluding to techniques typical of Ligeti's cluster music. Just as Kubrick uses music by Ligeti in *2001–A Space Odyssey*; (for example, *Lux Aeterna* is used during the flight on the moon, *Atmosphères* during Bowman's flight to Jupiter, and phrases from his *Requiem* are heard when the black monolith first appears.)⁴⁹, Adès alludes to some of the compositional techniques used by Ligeti in these early works. Adès uses the song 'Daisy Daisy', the song H.A.L. sings as Bowman switches off his higher systems (it was one of the first elements that H.A.L. was programmed with), to signify the child dismantling a computer in outer space. Both *Living Toys* and *2001–A Space Odyssey* result in the death of a child; *Living Toys* traces dreams that result in the death of the child, and in *2001–A Space Odyssey* the higher functions of the child-like computer H.A.L. are switched off.

According to Robert Cumbow, in the film *2001–A Space Odyssey* Stanley Kubrick explores

two of the great themes of science fiction: the mechanization of the human and the humanization of the machine [...] the human characters in the film are dull and mechanical, devoid of humor and spontaneity, while Hal, for all his mechanistic implacability, is likeable and sympathetic.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Adès, programme notes.

⁴⁹ Cumbow, *2001: A Space Odyssey* (CD liner notes), EMI 7243 8 55322 2 1. pp. 18–19.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 13.

In the end, humanity, in the form of David Bowman, defeats the computer that has killed the other members of the crew and attempted to kill Bowman. This film is unusual in that images tell the story and dialogue is kept to a minimum, and one which Kubrick takes what was an unusual step at the time in science fiction film music the use of pre-existing classical music by composers such as Johann Strauss (*The Blue Danube*), Richard Strauss (*Also sprach Zarathustra*), Khachaturian (*Gayaneh*) and Ligeti.⁵¹ Kubrick, in the sequence during which Bowman lives out the remainder of his life in an 18th century room, even makes use of an altered version of an extract from a Ligeti composition to create, in the words of Cumbow 'surreal, laughter-like sounds to represent the extra-terrestrial zookeepers.'⁵²

Adès' allusion to Ligeti acts as a musical signifier for outer space but it also provides a link with surrealism. Steinitz notes how, in his opera *Le Grand Macabre* (1974–7), Ligeti was influenced by

two artists whose macabre and disturbing paintings would affect him deeply. ...*The Triumph of Death* by Pieter Breughel the Elder (c.1525–69), a merciless and horrific canvas, and the *Garden of Earthly Delights*, the exotic and grotesque fantasy by Hieronymus Bosch (1462–1516) – whom Jung called "master of the monstrous...discoverer of the unconscious." These surreal and satirical allegories would seed not only the Requiem but also Ligeti's opera *Le Grand Macabre*.⁵³

When Paul Griffiths notes Ligeti's connection with Klee and Miró he comments that

it is not difficult to see why he should feel an association with these artists. Like theirs, his is an imaginary world where the rules are all utterly changed but still consistent, a world of fine draftsmanship within a strange context.⁵⁴

Griffith's comments regarding Ligeti's 'imaginary world', the changing of 'rules' and the use of 'fine draftsmanship' in 'strange contexts' could equally apply to Adès. Adès'

⁵¹ Ibid. pp. 17–19.

⁵² Ibid. p. 19.

⁵³ Steinitz, *György Ligeti Music of the Imagination*, London: Faber and Faber, p. 142.

⁵⁴ Griffiths, *György Ligeti*, p. 81.

decision to pay homage to Ligeti in a surreal work seems a logical choice in more than one sense, but his decision to reference a film that uses Ligeti's music without his permission is ironic. The structure of 'H.A.L.'s Death' falls into three sections as outlined in the following table.

Table 6.3: *Living Toys*, 'H.A.L.'s Death', overview of structure

Section A Bars 339–52	Section B Bars 353–68	Section C 369–82
Tempo: ♩ = 50	Slowing to ♩ = 40	<i>Lugubre</i> : ♩ = 80 accelerando in last five bars
Ligeti-like textures forming clusters	Bass register presentation of 'Daisy Daisy' on piano, double bass and contrabassoon	High register presentation of the 'Hero' theme shared between sopranino recorder and piccolo
Pedal/reference points		
Pedal F throughout	'Daisy Daisy': F sharp major tonal centre	'Hero' theme: F sharp major tonal centre

In the opening section we are drawn into a Ligeti-type tapestry of sustained slow gestures merging to form clusters in a timeless landscape to suggest outer space. In the following section Adès alludes to the film sequence featuring H.A.L.'s demise using 'Daisy Daisy' to parallel the dismantling of the computer by the hero in *Living Toys*. To celebrate the 'death' of the computer the movement closes with a section featuring a transposed version of the 'hero theme' into F sharp major, the same key associated with the militiamen, and a key that will, later in the work, be connected with the death of the child.

The movement begins with a hushed sustained F on piccolo, held through from the previous movement, and this initiates a series of descending two-note fragments superimposed in Ligeti-like micropolyphonic layers shown in Ex. 6.17; each fragment

consists of a longer sounding pitch that resolves onto a shorter pitch a semitone or tone lower.

Ex. 6.17: *Living Toys*, 'Militiamen', bars 339–42, Ligeti-like texture

♩ = 50 **Tutti molto sempre (tutte le note): sostenutissimo**

339

Picc. *cantabile* *cant.* *ppp* *cant.*

Ob. *pp cant.* *ppp*

B.Cl. *ppp*

Bsn. *ppp*

Hn. *ppp*

Tpt. bucket mute ad lib. *ppp*

Tbn. bucket mute ad lib. *ppp*

Perc. F.D. (snare off) *pppp* Crot. (colla bacchetta)

Vln. I *ppp* *ppp molto espr., cant.* *ppp* *ord.*

Vln. II *ppp* *pp* *ppp*

Vla. *ppp* *pp*

Vc. *ppp* *ppp* *pp*

Mike Searby notes that 'the main characteristic of Ligeti's music is his use of polyphony, [of] overlaid multi-cans'; he also points out that 'the disruption of the pulse is also characteristic of Ligeti's music, as is the emphasis on pure texture and timbre.'⁵⁵ It is these characteristics that Adès imitates in this opening section. The pulse is obscured, by means of tied notes or irregular duration, and dynamic levels remain

⁵⁵ Searby, Mike email correspondence regarding *Living Toys* and Ligeti, July 13, 2007.

subdued until the tempo speeds up in the final bars of the movement. The sustained pitches in the upper registers of the woodwind section gently shift downwards, alluding to the lamento-ostinato patterns of Ligeti,⁵⁶ to form clusters that overlap and merge within subtle dynamic shading; the atmosphere is enhanced with the use of string harmonics, slides, and a *pianissimo* roll on field drum. A pedal F underpins this section with instruments taking it in turn to maintain the pitch.

The next section begins at bar 353 with the introduction of the melody associated with the doomed computer H.A.L.. Adès presents 'Daisy Daisy' in the key of F sharp major, a tonal centre that has become associated with ominous undertones in this work. The main bulk of the melody is allocated to the double bass, with some fragments taken by the contrabassoon and piano, it provides a well hidden allusion, not readily audible to the listener, submerged against a background of gently shifting harmonies on the remaining strings, brass and woodwind instruments. Ex. 6.18 below shows how the melody is shared between the instruments with some doubling as entries overlap; dynamics have been omitted in the example so as to focus on the orchestration of the melody line. The words of the song (not present in the score) have been added.

⁵⁶Steinitz, Richard (1996) 'Weeping and Wailing', *The Musical Times*, Vol.137, No.1842 (Aug.), pp. 18.

Ex. 6.18: *Living Toys*, 'H.A.L.'s Death' bars 353–61, double bass, contrabassoon and piano

253

C Bsn *molto expr*

Piano *solo, sul tasto*

Cb *solo, sul tasto* *poco sul pont.*

Dai sy Dai sy gave

me your an swer do I'm half cra zy all for

(E-F-D-F-C) ending slips down a semitone to C major

As the computer's 'dies' in the film, H.A.L.'s singing gets progressively slower and the pitch slips lower and lower. By placing the melody in dark registers, using rhythmic values that veil the beat, and by gradually chromatically shifting the melody downwards, Adès achieves a similar effect. In bars 357–8, the melody makes a semitone shift to distort the close of the phrase. These chromatic shifts continue to displace the melody until, from 'a stylish marriage I can't afford a car...[carriage is not completed]', the melody has dropped by a perfect fourth from its starting point to end on B flat at Figure P1. The tune is hardly recognisable, against a background of gently shifting harmonies on the remaining strings, brass and woodwind instruments.

As the third section gets underway the tempo begins to slow down for a plaintive presentation of the 'hero theme' from 'Aurochs.' The first section of this movement presents material within a high tessitura and the middle section draws us into bass registers. The final section pits grumbling bass figures against a delicate melodic

line presented on the sopranino recorder, with tritone fragments of the theme inserted by the piccolo. The presentation of the melody on the sopranino recorder conjures up an image of childhood, and the purity of the tone colour of this instrument contrasts starkly with a background of dark bass murmurings on lower strings, woodwind and brass. Adès notes that 'the little astronaut whistles his tune like the sweet fifeing of a tiny recorder.'⁵⁷ Ominous tapping from double bass, tremolos and slides from the remaining strings using a range of techniques adds to the disconcerting nature of this passage, and the bass drum and field drum are reintroduced to signal that the militiamen have returned.

Stephen Taylor notes that the second lament movement of Ligeti's Piano Concerto (1985–8) makes use of an array of unusual timbres with instruments asked to 'play in a precariously low [especially the piccolo] or high register, or with odd-sounding mutes' and that the dynamic level 'is always *pp possible*.' He goes on to comment that 'Ligeti was inspired partly by "Eskimo" music in this movement, which may account for these unusual timbres, as well as the lonely isolation ("deserto") the music suggests.'⁵⁸ Adès too uses very restrained dynamic levels in this mournful (*lugubre*) section of the movement with instruments playing in very low registers and strings applying a variety of techniques (*sul ponticello*, *sul tasto*, *pizzicato* and tremolos) to create a disturbed background against which the child-like sopranino recorder and piccolo are contrasted.

In the final moments of this movement the atmosphere begins to change as the tempo increases and dynamic levels begin to rise. The movement ends with a final *fortissimo* anguished utterance on the sopranino recorder resembling the 'Grief Motif' from *Tristan und Isolde*.

⁵⁷ Adès, programme notes.

⁵⁸ Taylor, Stephen Andrew (1994) 'The Lamento motif: Metamorphosis in Ligeti's Late Style', unpublished PhD dissertation, Cornell University pp. 103–4.

Ex. 6.19: *Living Toys*, 'H.A.L.'s Death', bars 382–3, the last bar of H.A.L. and the first bar of 'BATTLE', grief motive, sopranino recorder



Ex. 6.20: Wagner, 'Prelude' to *Tristan und Isolde*, bar 1, 'cello



Just as Kubrick thought Ligeti's music suitable for some of the scenes in his revolutionary film, it seems appropriate that Adès should take the opportunity to pay homage to Ligeti at this point in the surreal plot. Features of Ligeti's style exploited by Adès in this particular movement include not only an emphasis on orchestral colour and texture, but also the use of quotation and homage. Taylor notes that '*Le Grand Macabre* is filled with references to Beethoven, Rossini, Verdi, Monteverdi, et al.'⁵⁹ In H.A.L. Adès incorporates quotations appropriate to the programme to include a piccolo whole-tone descent which reflects the beginning of the Passion Chorale (bars 348–52); the sluggish rendition of 'Daisy Daisy' (bars 353–67); bass fragments on double bass and contrabassoon reminiscent of the 'Witches' Sabbath' from Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique* (bars 372 and 374); and finally, in the last bar of the movement, a brief reference to Wagner. A surreal concoction of references all associated with death.

As this movement gets underway disorientation is achieved through a lack of forward momentum. There is no recognizable pulse and sustained pitches merge to create harmonic clusters; our musical sense of perspective in terms of time and tonality has been obscured. Only through our association with H.A.L., and Kubrick's use of

⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 18.

Ligeti's music in other sections of the *2001–A Space Odyssey*, do we grasp the significance of the Ligeti-like clusters and therefore the analogy with outer-space. The disorientation continues as the barely audible 'Daisy Daisy' melody begins to unravel. The placement of the tune on bass instruments and the slow pace, that is enhanced through the augmentation of note values to varying degrees, does not permit the perspective of a regular pulse. Further distortion, in terms of the chromatic 'slippage' of tonality as sections of the tune successively drop by a semitone, brings to mind Dali's distorted, melting watches in *Persistence of Memory (Soft Watches)* 1931.

The key of F sharp major provides a signifier of 'death' in this work and in this movement it is used in conjunction with the computer (Daisy Daisy) and the little astronaut (transposed 'hero' theme). The vulnerability of the child is signified through the use of this key and its isolation is projected through the extreme contrast of sopranino recorder and piccolo with grumbling bass fragments. The dream-like, almost timeless quality of this movement is enhanced through the use of restrained dynamic levels, but as the dream comes to a close we are jolted out of our inertia as activity, in the form of semiquaver movement, is matched by rising dynamic levels.

v) V: 'Playing Funerals'

Adès describes how in this movement the 'hero dreams himself a full military funeral, with muffled drums and tear-blurred mass humming of his tune.'⁶⁰ In this movement the child is acting out what it perceives to be expected at a funeral and everything about this movement presents an exaggerated vision of how he would expect everyone to react in this situation. He is almost mimicking the event with the tortured, agonized scream that opens the movement, the distortion of themes associated with the child in past

⁶⁰ Adès programme notes.

dreams, and the seemingly endless Ligeti-like lament-like descents that follow. When tonal material is present minor harmonies prevail, the movement observes a slow tempo and subdued dynamic levels, orchestration is focused on bass registers, and the timpani marks out a series of intermittent, pitchless and lifeless thuds. This movement unfolds in three main sections as outlined in the following diagram.

Table 6.4: *Living Toys*, 'Playing Funerals', overview of structure

bb. 508 – 11	512 – 23	524 – 40
Rapid four octave melodic descent on high woodwind and violins. (E–F)	Final statement of 'Hero' theme from 'Aurochs' and the horn solo from 'Angels.'	Descending superimposed whole-tone and chromatic threads.
Pedal/ ref points		
E minor pedal chord -----	Grumbling bass figures and dyads based on perfect 4 th /5 th combinations.	Background of constantly shifting perfect 4 th /5 th dyads.
Percussion		
Timpani roll: pedal E Clapping patterns: Picc. Tpt. & Vla.	Timpani: i) semitone and whole-tone slides ii) pitchless strikes iii) perfect 4 th /5 th dyads	

An anguished cacophony of sound, resembling an almighty grotesque wail or scream, marks the start of this movement, as a tremendous *fortissimo* E minor tutti chord, spanning over six octaves, serves as a starting point from which melodic strands plummet into bass registers through a gradual diminuendo and slowing of pace. This statement is made more disturbing and surreal with the addition of clapping patterns reminiscent of 'Aurochs.' As this opening statement quietens, malicious chromatic

fragments, embellished with chromatic slides, and a lip trill on horn, entwine with rapid demisemiquaver flourishes work their way into the darker register of the 'cello. As the tempo slows and dynamic levels are reduced Adès begins to establish a funereal topos with restrained dynamic levels, low tessitura and a slow tempo. At the start of bar 511 the E minor triad is reduced to a sustained drone (E and B) overlaid with, chromatic pairs of pitches (G and G sharp), tortuously distorted by octave displacement to increase the emotional intensity of this passage; a thin, strained G sharp in the highest register of the contrabassoon that plunges three octaves to G natural in bass registers. Unusual performance directions – the clarinet is asked to perform inside the trombone, the piccolo trumpet (with bucket mutes) inside the clarinet, and the horn inside the trumpet – enhance the strained and distorted effect of this passage. Solemn pitchless strikes on the timpani (performed dead centre), and instructions for the pianist to strike the underside of the keyboard with the sustaining pedal on to release overtones, mark the start of the funeral procession.

The funeral gets underway with a final long drawn-out bass presentation of the 'Hero' theme from 'Aurochs' (bar 63, transposed down a minor sixth) that is distorted by queasy slides (on strings and trombone) and chromatic clashes. Portions of the melodic line are subjected to a subtle lack of synchronization, to suggest a Ligeti-like micropolyphonic texture, as shown in Ex. 6.21.

Ex. 6.21: *Living Toys*, 'Playing Funerals', bars 513–19 'Hero' theme

This first unfolding of the hero theme unfolds over subdued bass fragments, using *sul tasto*, *sul ponticello* and *pizzicato* techniques together and *tremolando* patterns, which enhance the feeling of dread and fear. A final, shorter reference to the horn theme from 'Angels' (in the original key of E major) follows in bars 520–4 but it is short-lived and soon begins to fall away in a series of descending superimposed whole-tone and semitone fragments.

The final section of this movement sees instruments working in pairs to pursue a series of anguished leaps that subside in cascading superimposed whole-tone and chromatic threads in lament-like descents as shown in Ex. 6.22.

Ex. 6.22: *Living Toys*, 'Playing Funerals', bars 529–33, graphic score representing descending threads

The musical score consists of four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The score is divided into measures 524, 525, 530, and 531. Red and yellow lines connect notes across measures, representing descending threads. Four 'x' marks are placed below the staves, corresponding to pitchless timpani strokes. A box labeled 'G2' is positioned above the first staff in measure 530, and a box labeled 'Fm' is positioned below the last staff in measure 531.

X = pitchless timpani strokes

Once again, the characteristics of Ligeti's 'lament' motives noted by Steinitz⁶¹ in pieces such as 'Automne à Varsovie' are present in these layered descents. These expressive fragments continue until the movement draws to a momentary halt on an F minor chord. A chromatic shift to an F sharp major chord (at bar 536) restarts what has now become a final long-drawn-out, weary descent of whole-tone and chromatic strands accompanied by ominous tremolos, observing subtle dynamic surges, on timpani. Sustained pitches trace similar dynamic fluctuations before dying away to nothing to reveal a faint, sustained major third, on F and A, on trumpet and violin.

This movement presents a parody of a funeral as the event, and the emotions connected it, are exaggerated and distorted. The grotesque orchestral shriek that marks the start of this movement brings to mind the expressionist painting *The Scream* (1893) by Edvard Munch (1863–1944). The distorted face in the painting parallels the intensity of the emotional impact of Adès' anguished musical scream. Adès makes use of a number of signifiers to suggest the funeral and lament topoi to include the slow tempo; thudding pitchless timpani strokes; the appearance of long, drawn-out versions of material associated with the child, (from 'Angels' and the 'hero' theme from 'Aurochs'); yearning sighs (bars 524–32) that resolve in lament-like descents; sobbing effects (as phrases associated with the child trace a staggered descent as they come to a close, for example, bars 516–17); slides; tremolos; and extremely subdued dynamic levels. The movement provides a 'super-real' experience of grief imagined and intensified by a child at play.

⁶¹ Steinitz, 'Weeping and Wailing', pp. 18–19.

Unnumbered movements

Although Adès indicates that there is a significant difference between the numbered and unnumbered movements, noting the more volatile nature of the unnumbered movements,⁶² there are links too, and we need to consider their purpose in relation to the numbered movements. The numbered movements deal with specific characters and locations, and follow a plot to relate a series of events, but the unnumbered movements focus on the concept of movement. 'BALETT' focuses on the concept of dance as ideas influence and interact with each other; 'BATTLE' focuses on competition and conflict and seeks to represent the chaos of battle; and 'TABLET' presents the concept of amalgamation, a summing-up through a dignified reflection of what has gone before. These movements provide a commentary in terms of the plot; it is as though we are reliving these dreams, by reworking them, as we try to make sense of what has gone before.

But these movements have a musical structural purpose too as ideas introduced in the numbered movements are reintroduced and thrown into new relationships as the progress of the programme is halted; the material is reconsidered and intensified in these movements. Structural links also exist between 'BALETT', 'BATTLE' and 'TABLET', hinted at through the anagrammatic nature of their titles, through the use of shared material in the form of descending superimposed whole-tone and semitone strands. This material has already made very brief appearances in the first two numbered movements: in pairs of chords in the piano part of 'Angels' (in bars 38, 41–2, and 44), and chord sequences in upper string and woodwind in bars 190–3 in 'Aurochs.' I will consider each movement in turn to determine the extent to which these shared

⁶² Adès, programme notes.

descending strands are used in each movement, and explore how they interact with material from the numbered movements, through the medium of graphic scores.

i) 'BALETT' (follows 'Angels' and 'Aurochs' and leads into 'Militiamen')

'BALETT' brings together fragments of material from the first two movements in a complex, dream-like tapestry; a grotesque ballet of ideas integrated with short, sequences of chords created by the superimposition of whole-tone or semitone threads, as shown in Ex. 6.23 below. After the initial introduction of two whole-tone threads, a third stream is added, and the threads synchronize to create chord progressions (dominated by perfect fourth/-fifth combinations and a mixture of triads). These descending streams continue until, at bar 272, two-thirds of the way through the movement, the strands begin to ascend and ultimately lead into the 'Militiamen.' The movement falls into three main sections, the first and last of which are dominated by the 'child' phrases from 'Angels.' Brief references to 'Angels' are also apparent in the form of gong patterns (C and G) and 'angel' figurations. References to 'Aurochs' appear in the form of triads referencing the bull motive (Gm, Cm and Fm) and semiquaver triplet patterns reminiscent of the matador melody.

Ex. 6.23: *Living Toys*, 'BALETT', graphic score showing descending strands, pedal points and main references to 'Angels' and 'Aurochs'

The score is divided into three systems, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system (measures 253-270) features a 'Gongs' part in the treble and a 'Horn solo from b.16 'Angels'' in the bass. It includes a 'Wail motive from 'Aurochs'' (bb. 163-164) and a 'Fragment from hero theme 'Aurochs'' (bb. 246-248). Chords are marked with Gm, Cm, Fm, P4, and Eb. Labels B1 and C1 are placed above the staff. The second system (measures 275-285) continues the 'Horn solo from b.102 'Angels'' in the bass. It features a 'Wail motive' in the treble and a 'Horn solo' in the bass. Chords include A, P5, Bm, F7, G#m, P4, and P4 + tritone. Label D1 is placed above the staff. The third system (measures 290-295) continues the 'Horn solo from b.29 'Angels'' in the bass. It features a 'Wail motive' in the treble and a 'Horn solo' in the bass. Chords include P5, F#, Gm, and Ebm child. Label E1 is placed above the staff.

This movement features an amalgamation of the characteristics of pairs of ideas or motives like partners in a dance. The descending whole-tone fragments that emerge from a C minor chord in bars 257–60 are created from a fragment of the ‘hero’ theme (C–B flat–A flat (see Ex. 6.6, bars 246–7) and the ‘bull’ motive (E–D–C motive first heard in bars 163–4) noted in the diagram above. From B1 these threads are drawn together as they move in rhythmic unison to produce a mixture of major and minor chords and perfect fifth combinations. In these chord sequences Adès has created triads and perfect fourth and fifth combinations, which in previous movements have appeared only fleetingly. The same drawing together of ideas is presented when patterns derived from ‘Angels’ such as, the harmonic series, whole-tone scales, and Cs and Gs on gongs, adopt triplet rhythmic patterns from the piccolo trumpet solo in ‘Aurochs.’ But despite this pairing or ‘teaming up’ of ideas the material still unfolds in independent streams or layers. The only percussion instruments used in this movement are the gongs from ‘Angels’; the Spanish timbral signifiers such as castanets or clapping are not used. This suggests that we have moved on from the location of Spain and that, through the movement of the dance, we are taken on to the next stage of the story to encounter the Militiamen.

ii) ‘BATTLE’ (follows ‘Militiamen’ and ‘H.A.L.’s Death’)

This energetic and vibrant movement, during which the battle is fought again, provides an exciting climax to this work. Adès describes it as ‘an unstoppable, suffocating BATTLE in which the militiamen reappear and (E minor climax) finish their fell work.’⁶³ This movement resembles the re-running of events that we often experience in dreams in the hope of a different outcome. In this movement we are assailed with a wild

⁶³ Adès, programme notes.

cacophony of sounds as brief glimpses of material from previous movements compete for our attention. During the first section we are reintroduced to the ‘talking’ piccolo trumpet, triplet figurations from ‘Aurochs’ and rising figurations from ‘Angels.’ Ominous bass fragments from ‘Militiamen’ make their first appearance in bars 433–4 and a brief appearance of the horn solo from ‘Angels’, surrounded by a halo of perfect fourths on Cs and Gs, makes its entrance in bars 404–6.

The descending whole-tone and chromatic strands, although clearly exposed at their first appearance in bars 383–9, as shown in the following diagram, are in later appearances, distorted, disguised or subjected to embellishment or elaboration. Dotted rhythmic values and angular intervals distort the descending whole-tone and chromatic threads in bars 392–4. As the movement progresses, the number of superimposed strands is increased and the strands lose synchronization. The resultant harmonies are dissonant and the strands are heavily embellished with elaborate figurations.

Ex. 6.24: *Living Toys*, 'BATTLE', graphic score showing descending strands, pedal points and main references to 'Angels', 'Aurochs', and 'Militiamen'

The graphic score is divided into three systems, each with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. The notation uses color-coded lines (red, yellow, orange) to represent different musical strands and includes various annotations for references and techniques.

System 1 (Measures 383-400):

- Measures 383-385: Initial descending strands.
- Measure 390: Section marker **RI**. Annotations: C#m, B, P4. Instrumentation: Piccolo trumpet 'Militiamen'.
- Measure 395: Section marker **SI**.
- Measure 400: Section marker **SI**. Instrumentation: 'Angels' horn solo Eb.

System 2 (Measures 405-420):

- Measure 405: Section marker **TI**. Instrumentation: 'Angels' horn solo bb. 16-18 Eb-Gb-Ab.
- Measure 410: Section marker **UI**. Annotations: Bull motive E-D-C. Instrumentation: Piccolo trumpet 'Militiamen', 'Militiamen' pedal B.
- Measure 415: Section marker **UI**. Instrumentation: Piccolo trumpet 'Militiamen', 'Militiamen' pedal B.
- Measure 420: Section marker **UI**.

System 3 (Measures 425-440):

- Measure 425: Section marker **VI**. Instrumentation: Dm: high w.w., C7: brass.
- Measure 430: Section marker **WI**. Annotations: Cm, D maj. strings. Instrumentation: Piccolo trumpet Militiamen.
- Measure 435: Section marker **WI**. Annotations: 'Militiamen' bb.312-313 E-F-F#-G-Bb-B. Instrumentation: Piccolo trumpet solo.
- Measure 440: Section marker **XI**. Instrumentation: Talking Drum from 'Aurochs' bb.226.

Ex.6.24 (cont.): *Living Toys*, 'BATTLE', graphic score showing descending strands, pedal points and main references to 'Angels', 'Aurochs', and 'Militiamen'

The score is divided into three systems, each with a graphic label in a box:

- System 1 (Measures 443-460):** Labeled **Y1** (445) and **Z1** (455). It features a Piccolo trumpet solo and a Talking drum. A box at the bottom right lists: "'Angels' horn solo bb. 16-19 (Eb-Gb-Ab) bb. 21-24 (Bb-Eb-Ab) bb. 28-33 (Bb-Db-Eb- F-A F#) Militiamen F#7".
- System 2 (Measures 465-475):** Labeled **A2** (470) and **B2** (475). It features a Piccolo trumpet solo.
- System 3 (Measures 480-505):** Labeled **C2** (502). It features a Piccolo trumpet solo. A box at the bottom right notes: "Piccolo trumpet chromatic descent" and "senza gliss Piccolo trumpet flanked by high W.W. Pno. & Vc. flourishes".

Graphic notation includes red and yellow lines connecting notes across staves to show descending strands and pedal points.

This movement presents the topos of battle and continues to narrate the programme. The piccolo trumpet plays a central part in this process and through it Adès depicts the downfall of the 'hero.' Initially the trumpet focuses on a series of sustained or repeated Es (from which it traces a series of whole-tone descents that blend or interact with the process of battle. From bar 436 however, it presents a triumphant improvisatory solo but it rapidly runs out of steam and, at bar 445, it begins to decrescendo through a chromatic descent. Descending whole-tone and chromatic movement has proved a significant factor up to this point, but the beginning of the inevitable end is signified by an impressive prolonged chromatic descent lasting 31 bars (starting on B flat in bar 450 and ending on F sharp in bar 480). Adès uses this chromatic descent as a pattern which is designed to systematically and doggedly draw the music to its final conclusion, the death of the child, but he is also using it for its association with the lament to anticipate death. E minor harmonies prevail as the trumpet stutters out a final stream of vowel burdened, monotone Es, as the orchestra surges through an exciting crescendo to the moment when the hero receives the fatal blow. This comes in the form of a *fortissimo*, staccato tutti, quartal chord (F sharp/B and E in bar 480, combining three significant pitch references of the work, the F sharp associated with the Militiamen, B the first gunshot in 'Militiamen' and E has always been associated with the child) that provides the starting point for the final manic piccolo trumpet solo. The extra burden of the vowel sounds are now ditched as the piccolo trumpet seems to play-out the last desperate moments of a dying hero in a frantic solo accompanied by the piccolo snare drum. From bar 491 Adès depicts the concept of becoming trapped as the piccolo trumpet becomes ensnared within a pattern of six pitches first presented during bar 491, indicated with the first bracket (a) in Ex. 6.25.

Ex. 6.25: *Living Toys*, 'BATTLE', bars 491–504, trumpet solo

As the soloist tries to break free of the pattern, one or more pitches are omitted from subsequent phrases. For example, portions indicated in the example above with fragment b omit the A and fragments c and f use only three pitches from the original pattern. This obsessive use of pitch can also be found in the music of Birtwistle.

The movement draws to a final climax as a final tutti F sharp major 9th rising arpeggio overwhelms the piccolo trumpet, and provokes a fall into a rapid *delirando* descent in bars 502–4, that ends on B. This is immediately followed by a *fortissimo* tutti B on woodwind and brass. Adès has used the F sharp harmonies and B pedal points associated with the 'Militiamen' to finally eclipse the hero.

The final moments of this movement are very descriptive and are initiated with a rim shot. A glissando on 'cello in bar 504 initiates a final upward flourish as the piccolo trumpet screeches from G sharp to an F in its highest register (reminiscent of the final moments of the puppet in Stravinsky's *Petrushka* (1947 version)). The death of Adès' hero is followed with a final *fffz* on paper (as opposed to the tambourine when *Petrushka* is killed). Perhaps it is symbolic, as well as surreal, that the hero is extinguished on paper. The fact that *Petrushka* deals with puppets (toys) that are

brought to life together with the fantastic dreams of a child hero 'that surround him like toys'⁶⁴ also suggests a connection between the two works.

This colourful, vibrant, and exciting battle re-enacts the defeat of the hero. It is surreal through its hyperactivity, and the sheer intricacy that ensures that parts evolve independently of each other to suggest the confusion and brutality of battle. Fleeting glimpses of all the characters are recognisable through the association of motives, instrumentation, and rhythmic patterns, and pedal chords or pedal points that have been established in previous movements. The integrity of the descending whole-tone and chromatic lines is almost lost in the confusion due to lack of synchronization and embellishment. The brief silence that follows the *sforzando* on paper is shattered by a scream of anguish that marks the start of 'Playing Funerals.'

iii) 'TABLET' (follows 'Playing Funerals')

In the final movement the descending whole-tone and chromatic lines have regained their composure to present a slow procession of chords that move smoothly within restrained dynamic levels, and trace a lament-like descent as a TABLET is erected to the memory of the hero. Adès could be connecting this to the black rectangular monoliths in *2001–A Space Odyssey* that seems to instigate the next step in human evolution. Perhaps we have, after all, been on yet another of Adès' spiritual journeys played out through the dreams of a child? The work deals with childhood innocence when dancing with angels and the initial exuberance of life followed by its trials and battles. The finality of death is followed by a funeral and then a transition to more spiritual realms. The title of this movement is an anagram of the previous unnumbered movements, and the work has reached a point of summing up. Most of the dissonance

⁶⁴ Adès, programme notes.

has now been removed in a movement that has been stripped of complexity, both texturally and harmonically, to parallel the spiritual purity required for the next stage of the journey, and to provide a sense of resolution through greater consonance.

The movement unfolds in three broad sections outlined in the following graphic score (Ex. 6.26). Some chords have been indicated to recognize enharmonic equivalents (e.g. in bar 543, Adès has written F/G sharp/C–F minor has been indicated as G sharp is heard as A flat).

Ex. 6.26: *Living Toys*, 'TABLET', graphic overview

The score is divided into three sections:

- SECTION 1:** Measures 541-545. Instruments include Gong, All instruments except C. Bsn., C. Bsn., Vc. & Cb., and Timp. Chords: Fm7, Dim. B, Dm, Dim. Am, Fm, Em, A7, Fm.
- SECTION 2:** Measures 546-550. Instruments include Gong, All instruments except C. Bsn., Brass, Clt., Vla, Vc. & Cb., and Timp. Chords: Gm, B7, D7, C#/m, Am7, Bm.
- SECTION 3:** Measures 551-555. Instruments include Horn solo, high ww & tpt., Abm, Dbm, Strings, Chrom. clust. pno., Timp., Perc., Paper, B.D., Vibraslap, and S.D.rimshot. Chords: Fm, Fm, Bm, Fm, Db.

Performance instructions include **I2** and **J2** in boxes, and a legend for *** glissandi**.

In the previous unnumbered movements the child represented through phrases of the child theme from 'Angels' or the trumpet solo from 'Militiamen' has provided a focus for each movement. In this movement the chord progressions, which have gradually taken on a more significant role as we move through the unnumbered movements, now take a prominent role and references to previous movements are very brief and subtle.

Adès exaggerates the solemnity of the occasion through a solemn procession of descending chords that trace a measured pace in the first two sections. Tremolo patterns on the piano enhance the subtle dynamic fluctuations on brass and strings (fastidiously notated) to create a gentle shimmering, or trembling effect. Brief ominous bass utterances, enhanced by the timpani, played dead centre and completely slackened, simultaneously hint at the militiamen and the funeral at the end of the first phrase. But a sudden *sforzando* paper at the end of the second phrase, which alludes to 'Militiamen' and 'BATTLE', serves to mark a turning point in this movement. It would seem that the child is unable to contain himself and cannot maintain the sombre façade any longer. Suddenly the tempo increases dramatically and this marks the beginning of three *ffff* final outbursts. Adès describes these outbursts as possibly 'a three-gun salute, or three cheers, or three rockets, or three big puffs of dust as the story-book is slammed shut.'⁶⁵ Each outburst is introduced by a *sforzando* stroke on paper and begins with a tutti F minor chord from which various sections of the orchestra follow different routes. The F minor chord is sustained as upper strings shift up a semitone to a chord of A flat minor before falling away to end on C and G (the gong notes from 'Angels'). Upper woodwind, trumpet and trombone, however, use the F minor chord as a platform from which they descend to end on a chord of A major (to create a false relation clash with

⁶⁵ Adès, programme notes.

the A flat minor chord on strings). The second outburst follows a very similar pattern. But in section 3, the horn pays final homage to the hero with a rather feeble rendition of the first three notes of the horn theme (from bars 16–19 of 'Angels'). As the final outburst dies away, all that remains is a sustained chord of D flat minor (on horn, piano and violin I) which, as it too subsides, gives way to a final dull, pitchless utterance on the timpani.

In these final bars, as the story comes to a conclusion, Adès has drawn together ideas that have been prominent throughout the work. The coexistence of triadic and chromatic relationships has now shifted in favour of an emphasis on triadic combinations in this final movement and references to characters and movement are, for the most part, only suggested.

Conclusion

Adès faithfully enhances the bizarre antics related in the programme of *Living Toys* and intensifies the story with imaginative orchestration and a colourful harmonic and intervallic vocabulary. In this programme Adès focuses on the two areas often prized in surrealism, childhood and dreams. Children are natural mimics in that they act out events they do not fully understand and often provide unusual and perhaps an unexpected perspective on situations. Social niceties are not always present. Adès fulfils the child's ambitions or dreams in musical terms and it is as though we are experiencing the story through the eyes of a child.

The programme provides ample scope for the exploitation of the exaggerated and uninhibited emotions and moods of a child at play to include playfulness and excitement; fear and terror; and grief and solemnity. These emotions are connected to situations involving specific activities and particular locations. Adès uses codes of

musical representation, through the use of musical and timbral signifiers, to suggest or represent the various characters, moods or locations in the story. For example, the brass section is associated with the child through the arc-shaped phrases on horn in 'Angels' and the trumpet solos associated with more aggressive roles in 'Aurochs' and 'Militiamen.' Piccolo instruments (drum and trumpet) and recorder are also associated with the child. Bass timbres are reserved for the more malicious and threatening militiamen, and he establishes F sharp major as a key associated with danger through the presentation of *fortissimo* tutti motives tracing an F sharp seventh chord in 'Militiamen.' Treble registers, the harmonic series, perfect intervals, signify the territory of heaven and angels with gongs confirming a religious association. Timbral signifiers and dance patterns transport us to the location of the Spanish bull fight, military percussion instruments to the battlefield, and the allusion to the textures of some of Ligeti's early works used in the film *2001-A Space Odyssey*, into outer space. We trace a programme that takes us through an adventure of emotional extremes to experience a sense of playfulness, aggression, fear and grief.

Christopher Masters explains that by the time of the Second Surrealist Manifesto in 1930, when the influence of automatism was in decline, artists were now 'attempting to explore the unconscious in highly contrived dreamlike paintings, executed with the skill of a 19th century academic painter.'⁶⁶ Adès more than matches the bold use of colour and the degree of technical skill evident in the work of the surrealist artists. For example, he employs a vivid harmonic palette just as much as a source of colour as orchestral colours and effects. This colourful harmonic language incorporates major and minor triads alongside perfect fifth structures and more dissonant combinations, and includes material based on whole-tone, chromatic and pentatonic patterns. Adès pays

⁶⁶ Masters, Christopher. 'Surrealism.' *The Oxford Companion to Western Art*. ed. by Hugh Brigstocke. *Oxford Art Online*. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oxfordonline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t118/e2545> (accessed August 26, 2013).

fastidious attention to detail in terms of the colours in which sounds are to be produced (for example, in relation to the performance of the piccolo trumpet solo in 'Militiaman'), the use of mutes, a range of string techniques, and the use of *Klangfarbenmelodie* using pinpricks or melodic fragments to highlight or add subtle colour adjustments to a melody line. Adès goes to great lengths to enhance tone colour through scrupulously notated dynamic indications that include the most subtle shading and will often observe the lowest levels available.

Adès ideas evolve in sonic layers identified through colour and momentum. This layering involves adjustments to the rate at which ideas are propelled through time and we can relate this to the use of perspective in visual art. The surreal artist will use changes in perspective to distort the relationship between visual objects. Adès presents his material through the 'sonic collages and mobiles' mentioned by Taruskin⁶⁷ to tilt the perspective of musical time just as the surreal artist manipulates our visual concept of perspective. These colourful mobiles develop within a tightly balanced structure involving the use of pedal points and reference notes. The structural importance of these pitches as well as their role as musical signifiers is revealed in the graphic scores and overviews of movements. Gong pitches on C and G have a religious connotation in 'Angels', but they also provide important pitch reference points throughout the movement and are recalled at various points during the work. The pitch E that provides persistent reference points in 'Aurochs' and 'BATTLE' also acts as a musical signifier for the bull, the hero and the manic trumpeter. Percussion instruments play a crucial role in confirming sections within movements, in 'Aurochs' in particular, as well as providing an important source of timbral signifiers. Adès uses motives that recur in line with the plot in the numbered movements as important points of reference. He uses the

⁶⁷ Taruskin, 'A Surrealist Composer', p. 147.

unnumbered movements to consolidate and reinforce these musical signifiers, to explore new relationships between ideas, and to function as a commentary on what has gone before. Adès add a new dimension, one focused on the concept of movement and engagement in terms of dance, the conflict of battle, and amalgamation, which runs alongside and extends the story.

It is perhaps appropriate that Adès should allude to a connection with a Ligeti, a composer attracted to the grotesque and surreal (for example, in his opera *Le Grand Macabre*), in *Living Toys*. Adès makes an obvious allusion to Ligeti's music in 'H.A.L.'s Death', but aspects of Ligeti's style are also apparent within *Living Toys* in general. The horn tuning in 'Angels' matches similar experiments by Ligeti and chord aggregates of superimposed perfect fifths matches Ligeti's use of, according to Taylor, "open-fifth fields" or chords and melodies made by piling up perfect fifths.⁶⁸ Adès' preoccupation with descending lament-like lines (especially noticeable in 'BATTLE') parallels Ligeti's persistent use of the *lamento* motif noted by Steinitz.⁶⁹

Adès presents us with a 'super-real', surreal, aural experience through this work. He achieves this through the use of extremes, as contrasting sonic-layers, identified and intensified through rhythmic signifiers, tessitura and harmonic and timbral colours compete for our attention. Through the technical detail and the sheer craftsmanship involved in the manipulation of musical ideas, and his use of aural space to suggest temporal layering, Adès provides a convincing surreal representation of the dream-world of a child.

⁶⁸ Taylor (1994) p. 11.

⁶⁹ Steinitz (1996) pp. 17–22.

Chapter 7: Visual Art and Musical Ekphrasis

In 1994 Adès produced two chamber works, *Arcadiana* and *The Origin of the Harp*, which are both connected to specific paintings. The titles of two movements in *Arcadiana* allude to paintings: the fourth movement 'Et...(tango mortale)' begins with 'Et', the first word from an inscription on a tomb, '*Et in Arcadia ego*', depicted in Poussin's *Arcadian Shepherds* (two versions exist, the Chatsworth version (1630–2) and the Louvre version (1638–40)). The fifth movement, 'L'Embarquement', takes its title from Watteau's *The Embarkation from the Island of Cythera* (1717). *The Origin of the Harp* takes the name of a painting, with the same title, by Maclise.

In this chapter I intend to explore the relationship between these paintings and the music. A number of questions need to be considered. Why did Adès select these particular paintings and how does our understanding of the paintings affect the listening experience? Does Adès use the paintings as a platform from which to explore and develop musical associations related to the paintings, or does he use the paintings to strengthen a programme running through a work (as with movements four and five in *Arcadiana*) or does he recreate the programme suggested in the paintings, as in *The Origin of the Harp*? I also intend to consider the possibility that Adès, in his response to these paintings, reveals a much deeper connection and therefore could be considered examples of musical ekphrasis.

Despite Bruhn's extensive research¹ in musical ekphrasis, it would seem that we still encounter difficulties in differentiating it from programme music. Although she has not provided a clear-cut methodology with which we can recognize this aspect of inter-

¹ Bruhn, *Musical Ekphrasis* and 'A Concert of Paintings.'

artistic interaction, Bruhn provides some very useful observations and I intend to explore the potential of these comments. She explains that

musical ekphrasis typically relates not only to the content of the poetically or pictorially conveyed source text, but usually also to one of the aspects distinguishing the mode of primary representation - its style, its form, its mood, a conspicuous arrangements of details, etc.²

Bruhn explains that 'program music represents, while musical ekphrasis represents'³ and transforms the picture 'into music.'⁴ She terms this process 'transmedialization.' It would seem then, that a much deeper response is required, not just a representation of a programme suggested by the painting. We need to consider the composer's reaction to the visual stimulus, how images and aspects of style, form, mood and structure have been interpreted, look for the ways in which musical ideas may be suggested by the visual representation, and explore how these concepts have been re-presented, developed and transformed into music.

Bruhn argues that music 'like visual art and literature, is capable of depicting and referring to objects in a world outside its own sonic realm'⁵ and she promotes the importance of the role of musical signifiers (musical conventions that refer to non-musical objects and concepts) in programme music and musical ekphrasis. I agree that music has the ability to suggest characters, moods and narrative but we need more than this if we are to consider the possibility of inter-artistic transfer from painting to music in the form of musical ekphrasis.

Bruhn takes her lead from literary ekphrasis and, in the section titled 'Variations of Ekphrastic Stance', focuses on five categories taken from the first group (those

² Bruhn, 'A Concert of Paintings', p. 553.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 562.

⁵ Ibid., p. 558.

dealing with visual depiction) of Gisbert Kranz's⁶ classification of ekphrastic poems.⁷ She lists these as 'ekphrastic transposition, supplementation, association, interpretation, and playfulness.' Bruhn explains that ekphrastic transposition involves the recreation 'not only of the content of the primary work of art but also, and significantly, pertinent aspects of its form or its arrangements of details.'⁸ I take this to mean that as well as representing the location, events or characters in the painting, aspects of structure and shape, the formal arrangement of the painting, or primary details such as the use of colour, and the contrast between light and dark, can be represented in music.

Bruhn notes that a poet using ekphrastic supplementation 'adds to the visual representation [...] dimensions that a painter may imply but cannot realize directly.' Music is not only able to add the dimension of sound but also the concept of 'before' and 'after' in response to the 'captured moment' in time represented by the artist. She notes that in this category 'words can attribute chains of thoughts and nuances of feelings to the depicted characters'⁹ again, going beyond visual representation. Bruhn has observed that whereas a painting is a static, two-dimensional snapshot of a moment in time, music and poetry exist in time and can harness this ability to move through time when responding to a painting. The poet and composer can present a sequence of events placing the painting at any point within this sequence. But music and poetry can also add much more than this to generate or enhance an emotional response to the visual stimulus. This could serve to intensify an emotion readily apparent in the painting or add an emotional response that is not visually obvious.

⁶ Kranz, Gisbert (1981–7) *Das Bildgedicht: Theori, Lexikon, Bibliographie*, 3 vols., Cologne: Bohlau.

⁷ Bruhn, 'A Concert of Paintings', p. 569.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

Bruhn observes that the poet in ekphrasis association ‘does not render exactly what the eye sees [...] but, inspired by the primary work of art, spins off new thoughts or familiar mental or emotional connections.’¹⁰ The implication here is that the work of art acts a musical stimulus, a starting point or inspiration, from which a poem or musical work can develop. The visual details of the painting are not depicted; instead the poet or composer will develop associations connected with the painting.

Ekphrastic ‘interpretation’, she explains, involves the use of ‘implications known and shared by all three parties: the creator of the original work, the responding artist, and the community of appreciators.’¹¹ The signifying qualities of music are important in this category. Music has the potential to suggest musical topics such as a dance (tango or a minuet) through the use of rhythm, a style of music such as a lament or fanfare, or forge connections with a composer or historical style through quotation or allusion.

The final category is ‘the playful stance’ and this involves a degree of ‘wit and (musical) humour.’¹² The first four categories are of particular relevance to Adès in his response to the paintings in *Arcadiana* and *The Origin of the Harp*. These ideas will provide the main focus of my enquiry in establishing the possibility that Adès has moved beyond using music to depict or narrate events evident in the paintings to transform the paintings *into* music.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 570.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., p. 571.

Arcadiana

Before focusing on the movements linked to paintings in *Arcadiana*, they need to be placed into context by considering the work as a whole. The commission of *Arcadiana* for the Endellion Quartet was funded by the Holst Foundation, and the first performance took place in 1994 at the Cambridge Elgar Festival. Adès notes that

each of the seven titles which comprise *Arcadiana* evokes an image associated with ideas of the idyll, vanishing, vanished or imaginary. The odd-numbered movements are all aquatic, and would be musically continuous if played consecutively.¹³

The titles of the movements are as follows:

- I: 'Venezia notturna' (Venetian nocturne)
- II: 'Das klinget so herrlich, das klinget so schön'
(It rings so wonderfully, it rings so beautifully)
- III: 'Auf dem Wasser zu singen' (To be sung on the water)
- IV: 'Et...(tango mortale)'
- V: 'L'Embarquement' (Embarkation)
- VI: 'O Albion'
- VII: 'Lethe'

At first glimpse, *Arcadiana* presents us with a journey through a series of idyllic landscapes, but the concept of a spiritual journey, of human destiny, is also apparent. Adès presents an idyllic pastoral surface with philosophical undertones as he is, once again, attracted to the concept of a journey through life, death and redemption; *Living Toys* and *Five Eliot Landscapes* deal with the same issues.

Water is often used as a symbol for the passing of time, and the aquatic movements lead the way through pastoral idylls. This final journey begins at night in a Venetian gondola. The second movement hints at Mozart's 'Kingdom of the Night'

¹³ Adès, programme notes in the preface to the score.

with its adoption of the title of the slaves' chorus 'Das klinget so herrlich, das klinget so schön' from the finale of Act 1 of *The Magic Flute* (1791). The third movement alludes to the Schubert lied 'Auf dem Wasser zu singen' (1823). According to Maurice Brown and Kenneth Hamilton, this song is a perfect example of Schubert's use of 'the barcarolle lilt': they describe the barcarolle as a 'title given to pieces that imitate or suggest the songs (*barcarole*) sung by Venetian gondoliers as they propel their boats through the water.'¹⁴ Then we encounter two movements which, through their titles, reference paintings. The fourth movement, 'Et...(tango mortale)' deals with the issue of death in an overtly aggressive manner. Here we tango with death in an idyllic pastoral setting depicted by Poussin in *The Arcadian Shepherds*. Adès describes this movement as 'the joker in this pack [...] the literal dead centre.'¹⁵ possibly considered the joker in the pack due to the anachronistic relationship between the baroque painting and the tango. The fifth movement takes the title of Watteau's painting of *The Embarkation from the Island of Cythera* where lovers embark to return home after their journey to the Isle of Joy; in spiritual terms, a journey to heaven. The title of the sixth movement makes use of the ancient poetic name for Great Britain: 'Albion.' Porter comments that Adès pays a 'tender, nostalgic homage to Elgar and his England' in 'O Albion.'¹⁶ Adès suggests this connection when he refers to pastoral Arcadia of the sixth movement inhabiting 'more local fields.'¹⁷ The final movement takes the name of the mythical river of oblivion: the river Lethe is a river of the underworld whose waters, when drunk, will induce the souls of the dead to forget their past existence on earth.

¹⁴ Browne, Maurice J.E. and Hamilton, Kenneth L. 'Barcarolle.' *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/02021> (accessed August 26, 2013).

¹⁵ Adès, programme notes in the preface to the score.

¹⁶ Porter, liner notes for Thomas Adès' *Living Toys*, p. 4.

¹⁷ Adès, programme notes in the preface to the score.

Poussin's painting of *The Arcadian Shepherds* has been selected by Adès because of its philosophical association with death in an idyllic landscape. Adès responds to the 'interpretative' ekphrastic stance in this movement through the use of a lament-like chromatically descending ostinato bass line, and the tango, a dance that is often associated with death. Ekphrasis by 'association' inspires Adès to connect us to the emotional shock and strangeness of finding death in this idyllic scene through the use of anachronisms. Adès presents us with the baroque structure of the passacaglia to parallel the time of the painting but he matches the idyllic pastoral scene in antiquity depicted in the painting with a dance that originated in the slums of Buenos Aires in the 1880s. These anachronisms are presented through the medium of an ensemble that evolved during the classical period, but using a range of instrumental techniques that evolved over the twentieth century. Adès' use of these stylistic and chronological inconsistencies adds an almost surreal dimension to this encounter with death.

In the next movement Adès' choice of *The Embarkation from the Island of Cythera* by Watteau continues the theme of moving through time in *Arcadiana*. This painting is placed in chronological order in relation to the Poussin, from baroque to rococo. The painting displays an air of melancholy as couples reluctantly leave the fabled isle of love. In the overall theme of *Arcadiana*, this movement moves us on to reflect on the past pleasures of life. Adès evokes an atmosphere of intimacy through delicate timbres and restrained dynamic levels to evoke the wistful mood represented in the painting, this reflection of 'nuances of feeling' suggested by the characters in the painting matches the category of ekphrastic 'supplementation.' This restraint conveys the idea of watching the scene from a distance.

In the painting we get a snap shot of a moment when the participants are preparing for a journey. But Adès adds the dimension of taking us through a journey in

musical terms obvious; he employs an ekphrasis technique by adding a temporal perspective to the static image. 'Before' is represented in terms of music of the past as Adès references musical techniques reminiscent of the rococo period, like clear-cut, balanced phrases and textures featuring melody and accompaniment. As the movement progresses, contemporary features start to hold more sway as we move on in terms of a spiritual journey. The triple meter established at the start of the movement is disrupted by subtle metrical inconsistencies (the insertion of 5/8 or more irregular time signatures such as 1/16 + 2/4) which are designed to accommodate foreshortened phrases during the return of the rondo theme in bars 32–48. Although *pizzicato* and *con sordino* indications are featured in the early stages of this movement, to add an air of playfulness and delicacy, more unusual string techniques (such as *sul tasto*, *sul pont* and *flautando*) complement the introduction of a more dissonant harmonic palette as we move into the Trio (49–71). This journey is experienced through the allusion to a musical time-line. Time is blurred though, just as in the picture, as these elements are integrated from the very start; more dissonant harmonies are introduced as the section progresses. These integrations are very subtle at first and more explicit as the movement progresses.

We could also think of this in terms of a developing partnership, through the 'association' between rococo and Adès' music. In terms of ekphrastic 'interpretation' Adès uses musical signifiers to imply music from the past, but he also alludes to the concept of a journey by 'representing' water in a more descriptive manner through the use of undulating triplet patterns which permeate the movement from bar 47 to the end of the movement. I will now focus on a closer appreciation of these paintings and, through a more detailed analysis of each movement, consider Adès' interpretation and use of these works of art, and their function in *Arcadiana*.

i) IV: ‘Et...(tango mortale)’

It is perhaps significant that Poussin created two versions of *The Arcadian Shepherds*, each of which depicts a different response from the shepherds when they encounter the tomb. Adès does not indicate in his programme note which version he is alluding to. In both paintings a group of shepherds and a shepherdess contemplate the meaning of the inscription they have discovered on a tomb. Richard Verdi describes the earlier Chatsworth picture as portraying ‘the figures in a sudden and dramatic confrontation with death’ whereas ‘the Louvre painting shows them solemnly meditating upon it’ as they consider the transcription on the tomb *Et in arcadia ego* - ‘Even in Arcady am I.’¹⁸ The two paintings are illustrated below.

Fig. 7.1: Nicolas Poussin, *Arcadian Shepherds (Et in Arcadia ego)*, (1627 version), (1637–8), oil on canvas, Chatsworth House



¹⁸ Verdi, Richard (1995) *Nicolas Poussin 1594–1665*. London: Royal Academy of Arts, p. 218.

Fig. 7.2: Nicolas Poussin, *Arcadian Shepherds (Et in Arcadia ego)*, c. 1638–40, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris



Richard Verdi translates the inscription ‘Even in Arcadia [there] am I’ as ‘words ‘spoken’ either by Death itself or by the inhabitant of the tomb as a reminder of the omnipresence of death, even in the midst of ineffable happiness.’¹⁹

The Chatsworth version treats the discovery as more disturbing whereas the Louvre version, according to Verdi, takes a more ‘philosophical approach.’ He describes the scene as ‘one from which virtually all movement has been eliminated. Three shepherds and a shepherdess appear welded into a single group which follows the contours of the tomb, as though already confined by its controlling law.’²⁰ The four classically clothed figures in the paintings react to the find in different ways, ranging from curiosity and contemplation to sadness and resignation. The Chatsworth version differs in the tense attitude of the figures; the deadly message is confirmed with a skull on the tomb.

In ‘Et...(tango mortale)’ Adès represents his ideas in a forceful and brutal manner, possibly matching the more frightening approach of the Chatsworth version.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 27.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 218.

Adès combines this tense and agonising response to death with the tango. The addition of 'tango mortale' to the title unlocks Adès' line of thought; the tango is frequently associated with death in terms of dancing 'with' death, the dominant partner in the dance. The tango, according to Judith Hannah, reflects the 'immigrant experiences of a transient, isolated, and frustrated existence, life of migrants from the pampas, and the gaucho traditions, in addition to men's fears of social, economic, and sexual failure, constitute the lore of the tango'²¹ in the slums of Buenos Aires in the 1880s. She goes on to explain that the dance also 'reflects the pimp's repertory of carefully studied postures and gestures. His nearly straight, unmoving upper body and smooth steps mirror patterns in the underworld's duels.' Hannah describes the sexual relationship played out within the dance:

male-female relations is the central theme of what was a daringly suggestive dance. The man (active, powerful and, dominant) advances, slightly inclined over the woman (passive, docile and submissive) who never escapes his embrace and overpowering control.²²

Adès adopts syncopated and dotted rhythmic patterns, reflecting those used in the tango, to produce a tense, brusque atmosphere in this movement. The aggressive nature of the dance is reflected through bold dynamic markings and surging crescendos create a menacing, threatening atmosphere. In the latter half of the movement we move into a more restrained phase, possibly relating more to Poussin's calm, philosophical depiction of our relationship with death; and yet the tango continues to exert an ever-present underlying tension.

In the first nine bars of the movement a harmonic progression upon which the following six variations are based is introduced. The use of the chaconne or passacaglia

²¹ Hannah, Judith Lynne (1988) *Dance, Sex and Gender*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, p. 164.

²² *Ibid.*

form places us at the time when Poussin painted the *Arcadian Shepherds*. The opening chord progression, illustrated in Ex. 7.1, features a lament-like, descending, chromatic bass line (in keeping with the chromatic *chaconne* bass). Conflict and opposition is present in the choice of harmonies as concordant structures (major and minor triads, and major and minor thirds) alternate with dissonant combinations (a diminished chord, and harmonies structured on tritones, major seconds or minor sevenths); although the progression begins in C minor it reaches a very dissonant conclusion.

Ex. 7.1: *Arcadiana*, movement IV, 'Et... (tango mortale)', reduction of harmonic progression, bars 1-9

The musical score for Ex. 7.1 shows a harmonic progression over nine bars. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The progression is as follows:

- Bar 1: Cm
- Bar 2: Tritone (B/F, maj. 2nd, B/Db)
- Bar 3: Bb
- Bar 4: A°
- Bar 5: Bb7 (no 5th)
- Bar 6: F#m
- Bar 7: min. 7th (C#m/B)
- Bar 8: superimposed tritones (B/F & Db/G)
- Bar 9: near pitch: B/C#F/G

Two broad responses to the painting have been revealed at this point; Adès has employed the baroque structure of a *chaconne* and established the tango *topos* through the use of signifiers such as typical dotted rhythmic patterns, sleazy portamenti, and clipped note values. But Adès has also added an intensely emotional response to the concept of death by suggesting an underlying element of lament and grief, through the use of the chromatically descending ostinato bass, shown in Ex. 7.2; he has overlaid this with a sense of overwhelming fear and tension through his explicit reference to dancing with death, through the association with the tango.

Ex. 7.2: *Arcadiana*, movement IV, 'Et... (tango mortale)', bars 1–9, bass line



In his amplification of the emotional reaction to the anguish of realising that death is inevitable, even in Arcadia, Adès fulfils the category of 'association' in that he has added emotional responses not visualized directly by the artist. Adès is not narrating or describing, he is presenting us with an emotionally charged musical response to the concept of death suggested in the painting. But Adès also use the images and location in the painting to situate this musical experience in Arcadia, in line with the programme running through the work.

On a more subtle level of ekphrasis by 'association', Adès parallels the tension between the partners in this tango, between life and death, in musical terms. Contrast between tension and resolution is present within the chord progression (see Ex. 7.1 above). A closer look at the opening bars, illustrated in Ex. 7.3, reveals the musical realisation of the characteristics and concepts described so far.

Ex. 7.3: *Arcadiana*, movement IV, 'Et... (tango mortale)', bars 1–4

♩ = 60 *Strascicato ma molto ritmico*

Vln. 1 *pizz.* *fff* *f < fff*

Vln. 2 *pizz.* *fff* *f < fff*

Vla. *ritmico* *(arco) sul ord -> sul pont.* *pizz.* *(arco) sul ord -> sul pont.* *pizz.* *(arco) sul ord -> sul pont.* *pizz.*
p *sf* *fff* *p* *sf* *fff* *p* *sf* *fff*

Vc. *pizz.* *fff*

Adès enhances the authority of 'death', the dominant partner of this tango, through the brutality of his presentation of the chord scheme. He does this through the use of violent contraction and expansion, in terms of tessitura, and through *fortissimo* pizzicato indications, as each chord is initially presented over an extended range and reduced to a major or minor third performed by snapping the strings against the fingerboard. The viola, by contrast, begins quietly, to remain hidden within each of the *fortissimo* chords but a rapid crescendo, through each major or minor third dyad, explodes in a *sforzando*, *staccatissimo* release. Adès may well be hinting at the velvety, sensual tone colour of the bandoneón (a diatonic accordion associated with performances of tangos) in this opening series of viola crescendos (coloured with *sul tasto* and *sul ponticello* indications) that culminate with these abrupt, clipped endings. The first hint of a melody line, illustrated in Ex. 7.4, arrives in bar 6:

Ex. 7.4: *Arcadiana*, movement IV, 'Et... (tango mortale)', bars 6–7, violins I and II

Violins I & II

6 arco, molto sul tasto gran vib. sul pont.

p chromatic expansion and contraction *fff*

This melodic fragment is performed in a heavily slurred manner, as first and second violins move in unison, shifting through a range of instrumental techniques; glissandi add a seedy, malicious element to this fragment. An extended descending portamento, tracing contracting and expanding dynamic shading, imitates a gruesome, mocking or snarling jeer (in bars 8–9), and draws the presentation of the theme to a tortured close. Adès presents a forceful and terrifying image of our relationship with death.

The concept of partners in a dance can be explored through the way in which the instruments interact and change in this movement. The structure of the movement and the distribution of material between instruments are outlined in the following diagram. Arrows indicate the general direction of melodic movement.

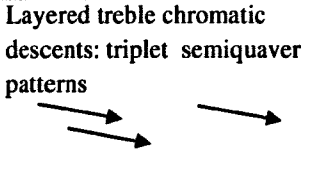
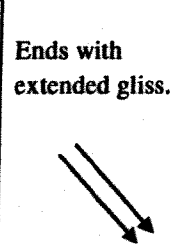
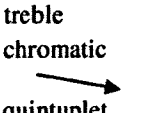
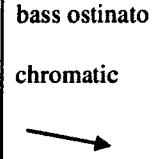
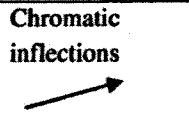
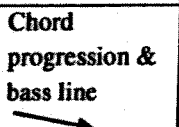

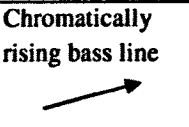
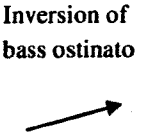


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Table 7.1: *Arcadiana*, movement IV, 'Et... (tango mortale)', overview of the movement illustrating the distribution of musical material

Theme Bars 1–9		Var.I 10 – 17	Var.II 18 – 24 25–27		Var.3 28 – 32 33 – 34		Var.4 35 – 40	Var.5 41 – 47	Var.6 48 – 59	
Violins I	Chord progression Brief melodic fragment in unison	Melodic line mostly in rhythmic unison: pitches diverge at times	Staggered presentation of theme	C H O R D A L T U T T I	Paired presentation of chord progression	V I O L A S O L O	Layered treble chromatic descents: triplet semiquaver patterns 		Chord progression: stuttering staccato	
Violin II	Ends with extended gliss. 							treble chromatic  quintuplet semiquaver patterns		bass ostinato chromatic 
Viola	Chord progression	Chromatic inflections 	bass ostinato inverted : <i>C/C#/D/Eb/F/F#</i>				Solo: embellishment of theme	Elaborate presentation of chord progression	Chord progression; ghostly harmonics	melody
'Cello	Chord progression & bass line 	Chord progression embellished with rising chromatic inflections					Chromatically rising bass line  Rising chromatic inflections	Melody		Inversion of bass ostinato 

The first and second violins work as a team for most of the time but subtle changes in their relationship emerge as we move through the variations. The close union between life and death, or the dancers, is suggested through the unison presentation of the first melodic fragment. But signs of change emerge in first variation. The first and second violins move, for the most part, in rhythmic unison, paralleling the close embrace of the partners in the tango, to supply a passionate and violent melody line embellished with portamenti. But although the violins are mostly in rhythmic unison, they only occasionally adopt the same pitches; usually they diverge to produce a pungent harmonisation of the melody line. In Ex. 7.5, both parts grow from a chromatic cluster (G/F sharp/ F) and trace a chromatically expanding melody line as they descend. The second violin edges down, in terms of pitch, slightly ahead of the first violin so that the intervals produced between the two parts expand as shown below:

Ex. 7.5: *Arcadiana*, movement IV, 'Et... (tango mortale)', first variation bars 10–11, chromatic expansion, violins I and II

The musical score for Violin I and Violin II is shown. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo/mood is marked *appass. violente*. The dynamic is *quasi f*. The score shows two staves with musical notation, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Annotations describe the chromatic expansion of intervals between the two parts.

Violin I: *appass. violente*, *quasi f*, *min. 2nds*, *appass. violente*, *maj. 2nd*, *min. 3rd*, *maj. 3rd*

Violin II: *quasi f*, *min. 2nds*, *maj. 2nd*, *min. 3rd*, *maj. 3rd*

Annotations: *dyads expand chromatically from: minor 2nd - major 3rd* (pointing to the intervals between the two staves); *melody line expands chromatically from minor 2nds to minor 3rd* (pointing to the descending line in Violin II).

The violins begin the third variation with a series of loud, aggressive stuttering, *Ds* followed by an exchange of chromatic fragments (G flat–F) as the two instruments begin to lose synchronization. This staggered or shared treatment of the theme marks

the start of a change in relationship. Up to this point the relationship between the instruments remains the same; the accompaniment (based on the chord progression and ostinato bass) is supplied by the 'cello and viola and the violins present the melodic material. Just as the final cadence approaches, the variation ends with an emphatic tutti section featuring a series of stuttering dissonant chords. This extended passage initiates a change in the relationship between the instruments. In the third variation, the viola takes up an aggressive and frenzied *fortissimo* solo, against a background of clipped chords embellished with inverted mordents and grace notes, and coloured by rapidly fluctuating dynamics and string techniques (*sul ponticello*, *sul tasto* and *pizzicato*).

A two-bar viola solo provides a link between variation three and four and leads to further change. In fourth variation the balance begins to shift in favour of a more restrained phase. The movement has been dominated by aggression up to this point but delicate descending chromatic lines begin to gradually infiltrate the tango topos. Although the viola and 'cello continue to present the chord scheme and melody in a forceful manner, layers of chromatically descending threads begin to trickle quietly through the high treble registers of the first and second violins, a gradual descent that continues throughout the variation. The two chromatic threads travel at different speeds, as shown in Ex. 7.6, as they trace the surface of triplet or quintuplet rhythmic patterns that integrate pitches of the chaconne chord scheme.

Ex. 7.6: *Arcadiana*, movement IV, 'Et... (tango mortale)', bars 35–7, tracing the opening bars of the chromatic descent in violins I and II

The image shows a musical score for two violins. The top staff is Violin I, starting at bar 35. It features a chromatic descent from C to E-flat, indicated by a bracket above the staff. The notes are grouped in triplets and slurs. The bottom staff is Violin II, also starting at bar 35. It features a chromatic descent from C to D, indicated by a bracket above the staff. The notes are slurred and include a '5' marking. Both staves are marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and the instruction *molto espr. sempre*.

A sudden change of mood, indicated by *pianissimo* dynamic levels and sustained pedal points on D and E (on violin II and viola in bar 40), mark another turning point and leads into the next variation. In the fifth variation restrained dynamic levels and ghostly harmonics, on 'cello and viola, establish a much more subdued mood. The chromatic line of the ground bass is presented an octave higher, on the second violin, and the first violin continues with the more intricate, chromatic descent that began in the fourth variation.

In the final variation the violins join forces once more to supply rapidly reiterated *staccato* pairs of chords to create a shuddering effect. Chromatic melodic movement dominates the viola and 'cello parts and the 'cello takes the melodic material deeper into bass registers to end the movement on G sharp. This pitch is immediately transformed enharmonically to end with a *sforzando pizzicato* chord of A flat⁷ on violins and viola, a chord that marks the starting point of the following movement. Adès uses this technique of enharmonic transformation in *The Origin of the Harp*; in both pieces he uses this technique to suggest transformation from one state to the next. In *Arcadiana* we move from death to the next stage of the journey.

In this movement we experience the anger and anguish associated with death. But this reaction to death changes as we move through the movement to experience a calmer contemplation of the significance of death. Here Adès is signifying change, developing the concept of 'before' and 'after', a concept not explicit in the painting. The theme and the first four variations are brutal and violent but, as the fourth variation draws to a close, dynamic levels suddenly drop and the tango becomes subdued. The partnership between life and death has changed; the element of dance (tango) is overlaid by chromatic threads that infiltrate the texture to signify the concept of lament. The dissonances that provided a vicious edge to the tango now reveal a more subtle role in terms of the expression of grief and mourning. This may reflect the different approaches displayed by the artist, or the different responses of the characters in the painting. Adès has grounded this experience in an idyllic landscape imagined and represented by Poussin and captured the startling shock of experiencing death in this location through the use of anachronisms: the stark contrast of associating a brutal version of the tango with a baroque painting representing a scene in antiquity.

V: 'L'Embarquement'

In the preface to the score Adès indicates that the fifth movement takes its title 'from Watteau's painting *The Embarkation for Cythera*, in the Louvre'²³ illustrated in Fig. 7.3.

²³ Adès, introductory notes to the score of *Arcadiana*.

Fig. 7.3: Antoine Watteau, *The Embarkation for Cythera* 1717, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris



There seems to be debate about whether this painting shows lovers about to embark and set sail for Cythera, or if they are leaving the fabled isle of love. Adès, in his programme notes, takes the view that the scene represents the lovers embarking ‘from’ Cythera.²⁴ This matches the concept of spiritual journey in *Arcadiana*, in that the soul, having experienced the pleasures that life can offer, now has to leave this and move on. The painting presents an idyllic pastoral view of a bay with couples about to leave by boat. Humphrey Wine and Annie Scottez-de Wambrechies note that Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684–1721)

is best known for his invention of a new genre, the *fête galante*, a small easel painting in which elegant people are depicted in conversation or music-making in a secluded parkland setting. His particular originality lies in the generally restrained nature of the amorous exchanges of his characters, which are conveyed as much by glance as by gesture, as in his mingling of figures in contemporary dress with others in theatrical costume, thus blurring references to both time and place.²⁵

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Wine, Humphrey and Scottez-De Wambrechies, Annie, ‘Watteau.’ *Grove Art* 361

This painting suggests sensuality, seduction and sex in a restrained and sensitive manner. Wine and Scottez-de Wambrechies explain that theme of the painting ‘remains unmistakable: from the rose-garlanded form of Venus on the right to the flight of putti on the left, Watteau traces the stages of amorous discourse, from proposal to harmonious fulfilment.’²⁶ Watteau is not explicit; the degree of amorous involvement between the couples is implied through simple gestures, the angle of a body or the tilt of a head to suggest a glance. He does seem to increase the level of passion as the couples move into the distance, almost as if we were tracing a process of courtship. The couples in the foreground are in the initial stages of courtship whereas couples in the distance can be seen in passionate embrace. A blurring of time is also evident through the use of contemporary baroque attire in a scene set on the island of Aphrodite, the goddess of love. The subtlety of Watteau’s approach to this scene is reflected in the rococo style of the painting defined by Harold Osborne and Marc Jordan as a ‘style of art and decoration characterized by lightness, grace, playfulness, and intimacy that emerged in France around 1700.’²⁷

In *Arcadiana* we experience a musical and artistic journey as we move, in chronological order, from the serious subject matter revealed in Poussin’s painting, to the intimate and playful nature of a painting by Watteau. It is the intimate atmosphere of the music of composers such as Pergolesi, Sammartini and Couperin that Adès seeks to achieve in this movement. Here it is worth noting the connection between composers, artists and poets at the time. Fuller notes that ‘they all fell under the tenets of ‘imitative

Online. *Oxford Art Online*, Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T090852pg1> (accessed August 26, 2013).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Osborne, Harold and Marc Jordan, ‘Rococo.’ *The Oxford Companion to Western Art*. ed. by Hugh Brigstocke. *Oxford Art Online*. Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t118/e2251> (accessed August 26, 2013).

art', seeking to illuminate and deepen experience by reference to nature - natural phenomena and the human condition.²⁸ He explains that Couperin's use of descriptive titles in his harpsichord pieces reflects 'a tradition which saw the role of music as that of arousing specific feelings and thoughts in the hearts and minds of listeners.' Fuller goes on to say that 'things are not always what they seem. *Moulins à vent* may refer to chatterboxes, *Les papillons* (no.2) to a fashionable ladies' hairstyle (rather than butterflies), and *Le rossignol-en-amour* (no.14), along with the other birds in this *ordre*, may have more to do with anthropology than ornithology.'²⁹ Adès explains that his admiration for the rococo stems from the fact that he 'is aware of the in-joke, that it's about much more than swirls and putti.'³⁰

Adès, when discussing his response to rococo paintings, notes how he recognizes the impulses in the work and describes how the centuries between him and the work 'are dissolved.'³¹ Adès too explores both natural phenomena and the human condition side by side and things are not always what they might seem at first. In the fourth movement of *Arcadiana* Adès uses the tango, with its sexual implications and the aggressive relationship between pimp and prostitute, to present our fearful relationship with death. In the fifth movement he reflects the sensitivity of the treatment of the relationship between the couples in the painting to parallel the change of relationship with death. On the one hand, this movement could be seen as a flight of fancy following the process of courtship in an idyllic landscape as illustrated in the painting. On the other hand, the movement also plays its part within the larger framework of *Arcadiana* as it considers the human condition from a philosophical perspective. The movement

²⁸ Fuller, David, et al. 'Couperin.' *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40182pg4>. (accessed August 26, 2013).

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Adès and Service, *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*, pp. 80–1.

³¹ *Ibid.*

can be seen as wistful reflection, or memory of life, as we move beyond the torment of death to what lies ahead.

In order to explore the extent to which this movement transformation of the picture 'into' music in terms of ekphrastic 'transposition', we need to examine how Adès alludes to or transposes aspects of the form and detail of the painting, and the visual snapshot of the story, through the use of musical techniques. Adès does this by matching the playfulness, elegance and delicacy of the painting by drawing on musical techniques typical of the rococo, such as clearly defined short balanced melodic phrases; simple melody and accompaniment or light chordal textures. He connects us to the time of the painting by making use of rondo form, outlined in Table 7.2. The Trio and Scherzo designations are Adès' own; the scherzo, which emerged in the very late 18th-early 19th century, is an anachronism.

Table 7.2: *Arcadiana*, movement V, overview of rondo structure

Sections						
A	B	A ¹	C Trio	B ¹ Scherzo	A ³	Coda
Bars						
1 – 19 ll: 4 – 18:ll	20 – 31	32 – 48	49 – 71	72 – 80	81 – 94	94 – 109
Phrases						
A A ¹ B B ¹ (A ²)	C Viola solo C ¹ Violin solo (A ³)	A ⁴ A ⁵ B ⁴ B ⁵ (A ⁶)	D D ¹ D ² D ³ Viola solo	C ² Vla. solo C ³ Vln. solo	A ⁷ A ⁸ B ⁶ B ⁷ (A ⁹)	Fragment A ¹⁰
			Rhythmic and melodic patterns derived from section C continue through to the end of the movement.			

In terms of 'ekphrastic supplementation', the extent to which the painting is supplemented to add dimensions that can only be implied by Watteau, Adès provides an

emotional response to the painting to suggest wistful reminiscence and a sense of loss through delicate timbres and restrained dynamic levels. Adès exploits the concept of courtship indicated in the painting through the interaction of rococo and Adès' musical techniques; he creates a sense of before and after as musical elements, from the past and the present, interact and develop during the course of the movement. Adès implies a journey by starting the movement as if coming from a distance, using high registers and the quietest of dynamic markings, to climax two-thirds of the way through, at the beginning of the Scherzo, and fade into the distance as the movement draws to a close. It is possible to imagine the scene in the painting as it gradually comes into focus and, from the perspective of the present and we witness the arrival and departure of the lovers. Adès also alludes to the concept of an aquatic journey, implied in the painting, through the use of continuous undulating triplet patterns that begin in the Trio. In the following analysis I will look at these concepts in more detail.

As we begin our journey in this movement Adès establishes an intimate mood by presenting the opening material *pianissimo* in high registers, and through the uses of mutes to provide a thin and distant tone quality. The movement begins with delicately presented chordal textures that support the first violin as it traces a series of short fragments separated by rests, shown in Ex. 7.7.

Ex. 7.7: *Arcadiana*; movement V, 'L'Embarquement', short score of phrases A and A¹, bars 1–10

$\text{♩} = 52 (\text{♩} = 156)$ *Lontanissimo e leggero, quasi tranquillo*
con sord. arco

ppp pass. sempre

	Ab7	Fm	Ab7	Ab7	Fm	Ab7	Bbm	Db7	Gb7	---	Eb	Ab (susp. Db)	Implied Db7
Db major	V7	iii	V7	V7	iii	V7	vi	I7	IV7	(susp. F)	V7		I7

	Ebm	Gb7	Bbm	P 5ths	Gb7	Ab (susp. Db)	Bbm
	(plus Ab)						
	ii	IV7	vi		IV7	V	vi

The introductory one-bar fragment (bar 1), is repeated and then extended through repetition and sequence to create a four bar phrase (phrase A bars 3–6). The lightness of texture is enhanced as the slurred fragments, within each phrase, are released staccato, and phrase endings are coloured with playful slides. Harmonies at this stage reveal a mixture of major and minor chords within a D flat major key centre, and gentle dissonance, added in the form of added sevenths and suspensions that resolve through slides, add a touch of poignancy to the passage. Adès makes subtle changes to the harmonies, through the addition of extra dissonance when this phrase is repeated (A flat taints the first chord of bar 7), and the inclusion of a chord of perfect fifths in bar 8 to introduce a chord structure favoured by Adès.

The first section of the movement continues with an upward surge of playful quaver and triplet figurations lead into an angular, syncopated melodic line (phrase B), using minim and crotchet values, as shown in Ex. 7.8.

Ex. 7.8: *Arcadiana*; movement V, 'L'Embarquement', short score of phrase B, bars 11–

15

The musical score for Ex. 7.8 consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with various ornaments and dynamics, including 'grazioso' and 'quasi poch. rubato'. The lower staff is in bass clef and features a 'pizz' (pizzicato) section followed by a section labeled 'phrase A cello'. Chords *Em7d* and *Em7b* are indicated below the bass line.

The B phrases, shown in the previous example, feel waltz-like and are reminiscent of Fauré's 'Ketty-Valse' from the *Dolly Suite* Op.56 with its crotchet-minim syncopated lilt.³²

Ex. 7.9: Fauré, 'Ketty-Valse', fourth movement from the *Dolly Suite*, bars 1–4

The musical score for Ex. 7.9 is in 3/4 time and features a piano accompaniment. It includes a tempo marking 'Tempo di valse' and a quarter note equal to 66 (♩ = 66). The dynamics are marked 'mf'.

Grazioso and *rubato* indications enhance this change of character; this section also provides a contrast through the use of cluster chords created from white and black key patterns that provide a glimpse of chord structures favoured by Adès. In section A, Adès is beginning to draw us gently out of the past in harmonic terms through the use of more dissonant chord combinations.

Adès continues this approach in Section B. This section presents a contrast through a change of texture as the viola takes on the role of soloist with a cantabile melody (phrase C). At first this is accompanied by a playful *pizzicato* quaver accompaniment, shown in Ex. 7.10, based on chords that can be related to the opening

³² Both Fauré and Debussy were inspired by the *fête galante*.

key of D flat major. Adès has presented a change of texture to create contrast but has retained elements of the rondo theme in terms of key, and the rhythmic patterns of the melody in phrase B, Ex. 7.8.

Ex. 7.10: *Arcadiana*: movement V, 'L'Embarquement', phrase C, bars 20–3

The musical score for Ex. 7.10 consists of three staves: Viola, Violins I & II, and Violoncello. The key signature is D-flat major (three flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The score begins at bar 20 with the instruction 'solo; dolciss. cantab.' and 'pizz.' (pizzicato). The Viola part features a melodic line with accents and slurs. The Violins I & II and Violoncello parts provide harmonic support with rhythmic patterns. At the bottom of the score, a chord progression is indicated: Db, Bbm, Gb, D9.

Accents on the last quaver of each bar and the introduction of a final 5/8 bar at the end of phrase C, (two 5/8 bars at the end of the second C phrase, bars 27–8), adds a more contemporary rhythmic slant to this section.

As the journey continues, the relationship between past and present continues to evolve. With the return of section A, at the end of bar 32, the A and B phrases are now transposed up a semitone (virtually note for note), but Adès uses time signatures to accommodate the omission of the dotted quaver rests (present in the original A phrases) as the phrase is compressed into three bars duration, shown in Ex. 7.11.

Ex. 7.11: *Arcadiana*: movement V, 'L'Embarquement', short score of phase A⁴, bars 32–5



The B phrases are also reduced to three bars due to the diminution of note values as shown in Ex. 7.12.

Ex. 7.12: *Arcadiana*: movement V, 'L'Embarquement', short score, phrase B⁴, bars 40–

3



Adès is moving the music into more contemporary territory through the compression of material in this manner, and a twentieth-century obsession with the constant variation of material, as opposed to the exact repetition of material in rondo form works by Couperin.³³

The movement up to this point is written in the restrained mood and spirit of Maurice Ravel's piano work *Valses nobles et sentimentales* (1911). But the Trio presents a much more significant contrast as Adès begins to confirm the aquatic part of the journey suggested in the painting. The viola takes up a melody line constructed of repetitive triplet figurations, shown in Ex. 7.13, to imply the gentle rippling of water; this journey by water signifies the passing of time on this spiritual journey.

³³ For example in Couperin's *Les Baricades Mistérieuses*.

Ex. 7.13: *Arcadiana*: movement V, 'L'Embarquement', phrase D, bars 49–53

TRIO viola solo, ombroso

The score for Ex. 7.13 consists of three staves: Violins I & II (top), Viola (middle), and Violoncello (bottom). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The piece is marked 'TRIO viola solo, ombroso'.
 - **Violins I & II:** Starts at bar 49 with a rest, then plays a melodic line with a 'poco sul tasto' instruction. Dynamics range from *ppp* to *p*.
 - **Viola:** Plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with triplets, marked *mf espr. sempre*. It includes instructions for *sul pont.* and *ord.*
 - **Violoncello:** Plays a similar rhythmic pattern with triplets, marked *p > ppp*. It includes instructions for *sul pont.*, *ord.*, and *sul tasto*.

In the previous aquatic movements of *Arcadiana* Adès had used a similar technique; see the opening bars of the first movement in Ex. 7.14.

Ex. 7.14: *Arcadiana*: movement I, 'Venezia notturna', undulating patterns to depict water, bars 1–3, violins

The score for Ex. 7.14 consists of two staves: Violin I (top) and Violin II (bottom). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/8. The tempo is marked '♩ = 76'.
 - **Violin I:** Plays a rapid, undulating pattern of eighth notes, marked *ppp*.
 - **Violin II:** Starts with a *pizz* (pizzicato) section marked *p espr.*, then moves to *arco* (arco) playing a sustained note with *sul tasto* instruction. It then plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with triplets, marked *p* and *ppp*.

But we have now moved into stranger territory. Up to this point in the movement Adès has gradually introduced a more dissonant harmonic palette and metric fluctuations to suggest a shift forward in time. But, in the Trio Adès introduces pairs of perfect fifths that connect through prolonged glissandi to suggest the motion of the boat, and introduces a range of string techniques (*sul tasto*, *sul ponticello*, harmonics, and later, the use of *flautando* and *spettrale* indications) to enhance the strangeness of this section. Cross-rhythms are evident from the start with 'cello semiquaver patterns pitted

against the triplet quavers. When the viola phrases shift into alternating quaver and semiquaver patterns, a dotted quaver division of the beat (implying 12/16) is set against the prevailing 3/4 metre. Everything in this section is geared towards representing the movement of the journey, only an inverted pedal point on G (first and second violins from bar 53–9) gives a stable reference point; a hint of G major is provided when a B natural pedal is added from bar 57.

The climax of the work is reached at the start of the Scherzo as dynamic levels increase, the mood becomes much more agitated, and Adès begins to combine material introduced in previous sections. This section begins with a passionate version of the viola melody from the B section, transposed up a perfect fifth, with an accompaniment which traces wildly undulating movement created from a combination of rhythmic patterns and perfect fifth intervals derived from the Trio, shown in the following example:

Ex. 7.15: *Arcadiana*; movement V, 'L'Embarquement', return of the B phrase, bars 72–

4

The musical score for Ex. 7.15 consists of four staves: Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The score begins at bar 72. Vln. I starts with a *pppp* dynamic and features a melodic line with triplets and a *pp sempre* section. Vln. II starts with a *mf sempre* dynamic and features a melodic line with triplets and a *f* section. The Viola part is marked *solo, appassionato* and *ff dolce, canab.*. The Vc. part starts with a *poco f* dynamic and features a rhythmic accompaniment with triplets and a *molto* section. The score concludes with a *pp* dynamic.

Perhaps here Adès is alluding to the culmination of the amorous endeavours of the couples in the painting, as musical ideas are drawn together in this section. When the first violin begins to repeat the phrase it is interrupted by the arrival of the first phrase from Section A, illustrated in Ex. 7.16, now tentatively picked out above the surface of the treble layers of water figurations that sketch the original harmonic progressions.

Ex. 7.16: *Arcadiana*: movement V, 'L'Embarquement', showing the return of the opening phrase of the movement, bars 81–3

The musical score for Ex. 7.16 consists of four staves: Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The music is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The score is marked "bisbigliato al fine" and "Phrase A". The dynamics are "ppp" and the tempo is "molto ritmico". The score features complex rhythmic patterns with many triplets and slurs.

When the B phrase is referenced, from the end of bar 88, it too becomes absorbed within the 'water' figurations, as illustrated in Ex. 7.17.

Ex. 7.17: *Arcadiana*; movement V, 'L'Embarquement', showing the elaboration of phrase B, bars 88–90

Original harmonies from bars 12-13

In the coda we take a final wistful look back at the past as Adès brings together several aspects of the movement, illustrated in Ex. 7.18.

Ex. 7.18: *Arcadiana*: movement V, 'L'Embarquement', graphic score of the coda, bars 92–109

pentatonic triplet figurations: Db, Eb, Gb, Ab and Bb

pentatonic triplet figurations: flats

pentatonic triplet figurations now indicated as sharps

92 Coda 95 100 105

transposed phrase A

harmonised fragment of phrase A

final prolonged presentation of phrase A

Underlying perfect cadence: V7 (no 3rd) - Tonic (G)

The coda unfolds in three layers as black-key triplet pentatonic fragments (indicated as flats) are shared between instruments to lighten the gradually thinning texture; Adès introduces fleeting glimpses of transposed fragments of phrase A; and the coda is supported with a perfect cadence in the key of G (the introduction of B, as the first pitch of the last fragment of phrase A, suggests G major, but the final cadence is

only implied with single pitches from D to G). As this movement draws to a close, strings move to harmonics to enhance the prolonged decrescendo to a barely audible levels and the tempo gradually slows. Adès hints at some sort of transformation by changing presentation of the black-key pitches of the pentatonic patterns from flats to sharps; a procedure he uses in *The Origin of the Harp* to suggest transformation. In the coda of the fifth movement the concept of reminiscence is vividly portrayed. Gentle dissonance emphasizes the pain of loss, possibly the sweetness and pain of love, or of life and decaying dynamic levels suggest as sense of disappearing, or vanishing into the distance.

Conclusion

Nicholas Cook, when explaining his 'model for analyzing musical multimedia', states that two basic elements must be present: 'there must be common attributes presented by the various media in question [...] and there must be "blended space", in which the attributes unique to each medium are combined, resulting in the emergence of new meaning.'³⁴ He describes the subsequent interpretation as 'transforming potential meaning into actualized meaning.'³⁵ Adès has realized potential meanings from the two paintings and uses music to express his intellectual and emotional reaction to the visual representations in these works of art. In 'Et... (tango mortale)' Adès uses the painting to connect us to a pastoral idyll and he pursues the concept of death inherent in the painting. We dance with death, with death dominating the partnership in the tango, and the ever present lament-like, chromatically descending lines serve as a constant reminder of grief and distress. We grasp a sense of time and place through the use of the

³⁴ Cook, Nicholas (2001) 'Theorizing Musical Meaning', *Music Theory Spectrum*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Fall), p. 181.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

structure of variations over a ground bass, but at the same time we are disorientated through the intrusion of the tango into this pastoral scene. In the fifth movement the relationship changes from one of resistance and fear to one of courtship as we find ourselves in death's embrace. Adès expresses this relationship in musical terms as features alluding to music of the rococo period move us from old to new, from death to a different and much stranger existence, as we contemplate the next stage of the spiritual journey traced through *Arcadiana*.

In terms of the overall programme of *Arcadiana*, the fourth movement takes place in a pastoral idyll, just as the second movement takes place in Mozart's *Kingdom of the Night*, and the sixth movement takes place in Albion (an ancient name for Great Britain). The remaining movements are aquatic; Adès suggests that the first movement might be 'a ballad of some lugubrious gondolier'³⁶ and the Schubert song alluded to in the third movement describes a final journey by boat. Adès imagines that 'a ship is seen swirling away to *L'Isle Joyeuse*'³⁷ and Lethe is the name of the river of oblivion. Adès provides a musical analogue to the concept of a journey in 'L'Embarquement' as he moves from a diatonic landscape, homophonic textures and balanced phrases representative of the rococo, into musical territory that is coloured by a range of string techniques, a dissonant harmonic palette and metrical disruption.

Adès only uses a single word taken from the title of each painting to suggest a connection between with these paintings by Poussin and Watteau. It is as though he only wants only to hint at a connection, but it is obvious that the connection is significant. In the first instance these paintings serve to connect us to shepherds and lovers in pastoral scenes in an imaginary and vanishing idyllic world. Both movements

³⁶ Adès, Thomas (1999) programme notes for the performance of *Arcadiana* at the 'British Music of the 1990s' conference, Roehampton Institute, London, February 1, 1999.

³⁷ Ibid.

provide examples of ekphrastic association in that Adès uses the paintings as a starting point to explore deeper emotional connections. The paintings also have the reverse effect in that they supplement the music adding dimensions that Adès cannot confirm through music alone, in these instances places of antiquity. Both movements exhibit the use of ekphrasia through 'supplementation' in that they explore 'before' and 'after' as the relationship between, life and death, prostitute and pimp, and lovers changes in each movement. Adès also uses recognized topoi to 'interpret' his response to each painting.

In the final work to be considered in this chapter the three categories of 'supplementation', 'association' and 'interpretation' are supplemented with ekphrastic 'transformation.' In this respect *The Origin of the Harp* provides an even more convincing example of musical ekphrasis.

The Origin of the Harp

Links between visual art, poetry and music are drawn together in *The Origin of the Harp*, a chamber work for an ensemble of ten players. Adès was commissioned by the Hallé Orchestra to compose a piece for the opening of the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, and *The Origin of the Harp* takes its title from a painting which is owned by the Manchester Art Gallery. The work is scored for three clarinets, three violas, three 'cellos ('cello 3 doubling rain stick) and a wide range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments, to be performed by one percussionist. In a programme note inserted at the beginning of the score Adès describes how the painting illustrates

the mock Celtic Legend of a water nymph who falls for a mortal and struggles hopelessly to leave her element and join him on land. The Gods, taking pity on her failure, intervene and turn her into a harp, transforming her weeping into a gentle music of wind through strings. The painting shows her in the moment preceding the metamorphosis, the strands of her hair framed by a triangle of her body, a rock and her arm. In this piece, too, the harp itself is not featured but

suggested, at the start of the fourth and final section, after a flash of divine intervention.³⁸

The painting is illustrated below.

Fig. 7.4: Daniel Maclise, *The Origin of the Harp*, (1842), oil on canvas, Manchester City Galleries



When the painting was first exhibited at the Royal Academy, in 1842, it appeared alongside the following verse written by fellow Irishman Thomas Moore (1779–1852).

Still her bosom rose fair – still her cheek smiled the same,
While her sea beauties curl'd round the frame;
And her hair, shedding tear drops from all its bright rings,
Fell over her white arms to make the gold strings.³⁹

³⁸ Adès, programme note in the preface to the score.

³⁹ Manchester City Galleries, details on *The Origin of the Harp*, <http://www.manchestergalleries.org> (accessed August 26, 2013).

According to Richard Ormond, we can trace the original inspiration for this poem to 'a drawing made on the wall of Kilmainham Jail by an Irish political prisoner, Edward Hudson, awaiting execution.'⁴⁰ Ormond explains that 'the personification of Ireland in this form of imagery goes back to an 18th century convention' and he describes Maclise's painting as presenting 'a strangely melancholy and sensual vision of the origin of Ireland's native music, an idealistic interpretation of traditional folklore.'⁴¹ Adès transforms this visual and literary imagery into music, in a work described as a tone poem by Andrew Porter.⁴²

It is easy to see why Adès would be attracted by the musical concept inherent in this painting, the transformation of a nymph into a harp. Through the process of 'supplementation' Adès explores the concept of transition and change inspired by the snap-shot at the moment the process of metamorphosis begins in the painting. He does this in two ways. On a more obvious level, the theme of transition is explored through changing relationships, between the clarinet and the rest of the ensemble. The first clarinet presents the bulk of the melodic material in the first movement, possibly representing the nymph. This relationship changes as the work progresses. But on a much deeper structural level the theme of transition is pursued through a cycle of perfect fifths, tracing a full chromatic cycle, announced at the start of the work. This cycle is initiated by the first four pitches of the work (D sharp, G sharp, C sharp and F sharp). The next five pitches of the cycle B, E, A, D, G are introduced in the second bar and, in bars 9–11, the twelve-pitch cycle is completed as C, F, and B flat are introduced. These pitches have been numbered 1–12 in Ex. 7.21. As *The Origin of the Harp*

⁴⁰ Ormond, Richard (1972) taken from the catalogue *Daniel Maclise* that accompanied an exhibition held at the National Portrait Gallery (March–April 1972) and the National Gallery of Ireland (May–June 1972), published by the Arts Council, p. 74.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Porter, liner notes for Thomas Adès' *Living Toys*, p. 4.

progresses the first six notes of the cycle in their enharmonic form (E flat, A flat, D flat, G flat, C flat and F flat) are constantly revisited. Adès alludes to the concept of transformation in enharmonic terms.

Adès also explores an emotional intensity not readily apparent in the painting, or the poem, and takes advantage of the medium of music, through ‘association’, to go beyond sadness, to capture the anguish of the nymph in her loneliness, tormented by the futility of her wish to join her lover in the mortal world. This is achieved as solo clarinet lines pursue anguished *fortissimo* utterances paralleled with tortuous leaps and coloured with aggressive acciaccaturas (see Ex. 7.19 below):

Ex. 7.19: *The Origin of the Harp*, movement I, bars 29–38, clarinet

The musical score for Clarinet I, bars 29–38, is written in 3/4 time. It begins with a box labeled 'D' above the first few notes. The melody consists of several phrases, each starting with an acciaccatura (a short grace note). The dynamics are marked as *ff*, *f*, *f*, *f*, *f*, *mf*, *f*, and *p*. There are also markings for triplets (3) and quintuplets (5) throughout the passage.

In terms of the ‘transformation’ of the visual aspects of the painting, Adès traces the outline of the harp, implied by the upward shape of the rock, on the right of the nymph, and the series of falling curves traced by the form of the nymph, are reflected in melodic shapes that permeate the work (see Ex. 7.20).

Ex. 7.20: *The Origin of the Harp*, movement I, bars 3–6, clarinet

The musical score for Clarinet, bars 3–6, is written in 3/4 time. It features a melodic line with several triplets (3) and a quintuplet (5). The dynamics are marked as *pp* and *p*.

These angular phrases imitate the shape formed by the steep rise of the rock, matched with a fast ascent, and the more gentle aspect of the shape outlined by the nymph, characterized by a slower descent; Adès is also suggesting the shape of a harp by tracing the outline of the harp suggested in the picture.

Ringlets of hair cascade over her arm reaching down towards the water to form the strings of the harp and Adès uses sweeping ascending melodic lines, consisting of superimposed whole-tone and chromatic scales, in the third movement, to suggest the formation of the strings of the harp. Visual opposites indicated in the painting exploit light and darkness, movement and stillness, and the softness of the form of the curvaceous nymph against the cold, inhospitable environment of the cave. But these visual contrasts reflect the deeper theme of opposites that resonates in this painting; the difference between mortality and immortality. Through ekphrastic 'transposition' Adès parallels this concept of contrast through the insertion of occasional tonal references within a highly chromatic framework and the setting of soloist against the ensemble. Adès selects instruments capable of supplying rich, dark tones (violas, 'cellos, bass clarinet, timpani and marimba) to match the dark, subdued colours in the painting. He contrasts these tones with instruments capable of producing bright, clear timbres (a broad range of gongs and cymbals, shell chimes and marimbula (thumb piano). Adès also explores a wide range of string techniques, often making extensive use of *sul tasto*, *tremolo*, *sul ponticello*, *pizzicato*, *flautando*, harmonics, and the occasional slide or glissando. This provides a pointillist texture in the first movement against which the melody lines unfold on the first clarinet to create a stark contrast between the warmth of the nymph and the cold, bleak background of the cave.

Adès captures the fundamental and elemental nature of the metamorphosis taking place, to allude to the 'origins' of music. He achieves this through the use of fundamental components of music as he reveals a preference for perfect fourth and fifths, the whole-tone and chromatic scale. He also creates a D major/minor melody on the solo violin, that emerges (during bars 181–6) in the last movement when the transformation has taken place. Adès' choice of fundamental musical elements is revealed in his preference for perfect intervals, to match the purity of the subject. His music is also descriptive through association in its use of timbral signifiers to evoke water imagery (rain stick, water gongs) and the sea (shell chimes). Drums, rattles and wood chimes are used as signifiers of primitive sounds to locate this event in the distant past and to enhance the elemental and sinister aspect of the event. More unusual timbres are also brought into play, as the moment of transition is initiated by the scraping of a ruler along the lowest octave of the piano strings (with the sustaining pedal depressed), at the end of the third movement. Adès asks that the sustaining pedal of the grand piano be weighed down, which allows the strings to vibrate and release overtones as the work progresses; Adès does not use a harp but uses techniques to suggest the harp.

The above aspects will now be discussed in detail as I trace the way in which Adès develops and exploits the concepts implied in the painting. The four movements, played through without a break, are numbered and described as follows:

- I: *Dolcissimo ed espress*
- II: *Largo con moto*
- III: *Spettrale*
- IV: tempo marking only: ♩ = 60

i) First movement: 'Dolcissimo ed espress'

The first clarinet presents the bulk of the melodic material in the first movement. Clarinets 2 and 3, strings, and percussion present a pointillist backcloth, dominated by perfect fourth dyads, which often highlight small fragments, or individual pitches, of the clarinet melody line. The clarinet begins the work, in isolation, to introduce the series of *pianissimo* perfect fifths. Then, after a bar of silence, it introduces the first of a series of arc-shaped, which are shown in Ex. 7.20 above. In the following graphic score (Ex. 7.21) the outline of each of these phrases has been sketched with note-heads. Where note-heads have been connected with a black line, this indicates that a number of pitches occur in rapid succession (between the pitches indicated). Colour coding has been added to highlight interval cycles or patterns.

These sweeping gestures are agile and gentle at first but, as the movement progresses, the melodic line is gradually transformed as it becomes angular and distorted through the use of compound intervals and rapid rhythmic figurations. The angularity and range of these phrases are represented on the graphic score. This change is matched with dynamic levels that fluctuate wildly. The use of clipped acciaccaturas, and rapid grace notes, enhance the agitated mood. Phrases become less clearly defined, as the melodic line becomes one long frantic outburst that culminates, at bar 34, on *fortissimo*, A flat and E flat alternations. In the closing moments of this movement the melody line begins to fragment and finally sinks to its lowest point, on D flat below middle C, in preparation for the next stage of transformation. This downward movement mirrors the descent of the nymph's ringlets which, as they are drawn downwards, begin to form the strings of the harp.

Ex. 7.21: *The Origin of the Harp*, graphic representation of the first movement

D# / G# / C# / F# / B / E / A / D / G / C / F / Bb
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

The score is divided into two systems for Cello 1 (Clt. 1) and Marimba.

System 1 (Measures 1-19):

- Clt. 1:** Treble clef. Notes are numbered 1-19. Measure 10 contains red numbers 10 and 11. Measure 11 contains red numbers 11 and 10. Measure 12 contains a red number 12.
- Marimba and gongs:** Bass clef. Notes are numbered 1-19. Measure 12 contains a red number 12.
- Performance instructions:**
 - Measures 1-11: Marimba and gongs
 - Measures 12-17: Marimba
 - Measures 18-19: sus. cym.

System 2 (Measures 20-38):

- Clt. 1:** Treble clef. Notes are numbered 20-38.
- Marimba:** Bass clef. Notes are numbered 20-38. Includes chordal figures for A, Bm7/Dm6, and Bm.
- Performance instructions:**
 - Measures 20-23: Marimba plus sticks with rattles (wood chimes, shell chimes)
 - Measures 24-28: Rototom (sus. & siz. cym.)
 - Measures 29-33: Marimba plus sticks with rattles
 - Measures 34-38: Marimba only (sus. cym, sizzle cym.)

pitches of Bb/Eb/Ab & Db only on all instruments

On a more structural level, a subtle transformation takes place through a cycle of a cycle of fifths that underpins the work. The remaining pitches of the cycle of fifths, initiated in the first bar of the movement, are introduced during the next ten bars. Pitches 1–12 are indicated in red and, once introduced, continue to be in use as new pitches are introduced into the texture. The majority of the remaining pitches of the cycle (5–12) are introduced in perfect fourths combinations, as illustrated on the graphic score above (Ex. 7.21). The eventual arrival of B flat, as part of a *fortissimo* chord, at Figure A is highlighted by the first significant rise in dynamic levels. This chord, indicated in the graphic score, contain the first enharmonically transformed pitch of the cycle (E flat). B flat and E flat ('cellos 2 and 3) are also presented in enharmonic form as A sharp and D sharp (Violas 1 and 2) at this point. Adès also introduces conflict, in the form of a false relation clash, with E natural on clarinet 1 and 'cello 1.

As the movement continues, the cycle is freely reworked and a series of *fortissimo* climaxes confirm points at which pitches of the enharmonic version of the cycle return (bar 17 and bar 21 (E flat), bar 29 (E flat and A flat)) as indicated on the graphic score. At bar 34, as the movement reaches a final *fortissimo* climax, the flat side of the cycle ((B flat–E flat–A flat–D flat) is established. These four pitches now continue to be used exclusively, on all instruments, until the end of the movement. Two other tutti, *fortissimo* climax points in the movement confirm brief diatonic moments of contrast. Two first inversion chords (A major and B minor) are highlighted in bars 23–4, and a B minor chord (second inversion) at the start of bar 29. As the transformation (through the enharmonic realization of pitches) takes place, Adès is reinforcing conflict (between immortal and mortal) with diatonic glimpses within the overall chromatic framework and the use of false relation clashes.

Adès uses the percussion section, not only to supply instrumental colour but also to define important stages in his scores, and this has been noted in previous works, such as the Chamber Symphony. On the graphic score (Ex. 7.21) the use of percussion is indicated in boxed text, below the score. In the opening bars of the movement, the marimba, and the metallic sounds of gongs and suspended cymbal are used to enhance the bleak background of string harmonic fragments, against which the more emotionally volatile nymph is set. At bar 21, to mark the point at which the clarinet starts to become more agitated, a sense of change is initiated through the addition of more percussion instruments. The marimba begins to use sticks with rattles attached; wood chimes and shell chimes (bar 22) are sounded (blown); and, at bar 24, the rototoms are introduced. Here Adès is making use of percussion instruments as timbral signifiers to suggest a primitive element at work in this transformation. Trills, shakes and rolls, moving through rapidly rising and falling dynamic indications, also build excitement to match the frenzied movement of the increasingly volatile clarinet part. In the last three bars of the movement (bars 36–8), to celebrate the dominance of enharmonic form of the cycle of fifths (B flat, E flat, A flat, to now include D flat), the marimba adds a virtuosic part, consisting of perfect fourth and fifth combinations to match the wild, rapid, patterns of the clarinet.

A number of basic elements are explored in this movement as intervals are introduced, through the solo clarinet line and fragmentary background fabric, which will remain the focus of the work. A cycle of fifths introduced at the start of the work is revisited in enharmonic form to suggest a process of transformation. As the movement progresses there is a build up of emotional intensity to reflect the torment of the nymph; a dimension that is not revealed in the painting.

ii) Second Movement: ‘Largo con moto’

In this movement a different phase of the transformation is encountered as darker tone colours are explored in order to create a mysterious and sinister backcloth, against which Adès sets a grandiose and passionate melody. This melody focuses on the flat, enharmonic realization of the perfect fifth cycle and employs the use of a series of disjunct, compound perfect fourth and fifth intervals. Adès employs a range of string techniques (*sul tasto*, slurred *pizzicato*, microtonal/*portamento* slides, *tremolando*, and harmonics) and ominous bass drum patterns to add to the unsettling nature of this movement. The movement falls into five main sections of the second, identified by rehearsal letters F–I, as outlined in the following diagram:

Table 7.3: *The Origin of the Harp*, overview of the structure of the second movement

bb. 39–41	Fig. F bb. 42–7	Fig. G bb. 48–54	Fig. H bb. 55–61	Fig. I bb. 62–9
Introduction	Clarinet & viola <i>ff</i> phrases	Linking passage	Clarinet & viola <i>ff</i> phrases	Coda providing link to next movement

From a textural point of view, the second movement develops on three levels. A very angular, fragmentary melody, performed mostly in unison by the first clarinet and the viola section, is accompanied by bass clarinets, moving in two-part counterpoint. A fragmentary fabric of single pitches and brief melodic units, provided by ‘cellos and percussion (marimba, water gong, rototoms, timpani and bass drum), double pitches from the bass clarinet counterpoint, or the melody line.

The heightened emotional intensity of this movement is enhanced through Adès suggestion of the anguished cries of the nymph (which Adès seems to imply), as the melodic line is constantly drawn down in plunging leaps towards the bass register when

she begins the process of transformation. The contrapuntal, intertwining bass lines suggest the gradual encroachment of the seaweed as it twists and rises from the murky pool, to envelope the nymph as part of her transformation into a harp.

This texture persists until the climax at bar 60 when the clarinet and violas begin their final phrase. From bar 63, the tempo begins to accelerate as the contrapuntal texture begins to take over. Independent melodic strands are allocated to all three clarinets, and the viola section, and this is paralleled by a move upwards into treble registers. From a programmatic point of view, it is as though the nymph has now been drawn into an interweaving web of sounds (in terms of the painting, a tangle of hair and seaweed) from which she will soon metamorphose.

The melody, played by violas and first clarinet, is introduced in two stages, with both sections concentrating on the flat side of the pitch cycle. The melodic material of the first movement focuses on the intervals of a perfect fourth and fifth but now; these intervals are transformed into tortured, compound interval leaps, which resolve through whole-tone movement as illustrated in the following graphic score (Ex. 7.22). Note-heads indicate pitches used within each phrase (phrase marks indicate the beginning and end of each phrase).

Ex. 7.22: *The Origin of the Harp*, graphic score of the third movement showing melody, rising whole-tone and chromatic movement, and perfect fourth combinations

Il Largo con moto
 ♩ = 45

39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53

F **G**

Clt. I
 Vlas.

Whole-tone and semitone movt. drawn from the rest of ensemble

Sections during which percussion insts. are in use

Marimba & Timp. Bass drum Water Gong Gb - Fb Bass drum Rototoms Timp. Mar.

54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69

H **I**

Clt. I
 Vlas.

Whole-tone and semitone movt. drawn from the rest of ensemble

Sections during which percussion insts. are in use

Water Gong Bass drum Timp. Mar. Mar. Vln. 3 Vc. 1-3 Vln. 1 Mar. Rototoms

poco accel. ♩ = 67.5 ♩ = 90 (poco accel.)

The violas trace the melody line and embellish the ending of each short phrase in a series of echoed fragments that might relate to the acoustics of the cave, as shown in Ex. 7.23.

Ex. 7.23: *The Origin of the Harp*, movement II, opening melody, clarinet 1, violas 1–3

F

(. = .)
42

*ff molto cantab. la melodia
poco grandioso sempre*

The whole-tone resolution of this first phrase is echoed throughout the movement. The water gong copies it exactly in bars 47–8, and strings trace a series of whole-tone descents in bars 58–63 (see Ex. 7.22 above).

In this movement the enharmonic realization of the cycle of fifths moves on one more step to G flat (bar 44). All four pitches of the original cycle, announced in the opening bar of the work (D sharp–G sharp–C sharp–F sharp), have now been presented in enharmonic form. Throughout the second movement, ‘cellos, marimba and percussion combine to produce a background fabric, pinpointing individual pitches, or highlighting fragments of material presented by the bass clarinets to produce *Klangfarbenmelodie*. As these pitches unfold, rising whole-tone, and occasionally semitone, fragments are revealed. These have been added and colour-coded on the

graphic score, Ex. 7.22. These fragments are significant because later, in the third movement, Adès uses superimposed layers of rising whole-tone and semitone strands that overwhelm the texture to suggest the formation of the strings of the harp. In the second movement the process of transformation has begun. These threads are beginning to form in dark bass registers, into which the nymph's hair is being constantly drawn.

In the opening bars of this movement, Adès exploits bass registers to establish a menacing mood. Bass clarinets form the mainstay of a contrapuntal texture that encompasses D flat, E flat, A flat and B flat pitches. Black-key pitches (indicated by flats) predominate, alongside the white-key pitches of C, G and D, and, one by one, the remaining white-note pitches of the cycle of fifths are reintroduced. As the movement heads towards the climax (bar 60), the last white pitch (B) is introduced. Now the bass clarinets refocus on the flat side of the cycle, covering not only B flat, E flat, A flat, D flat and G flat, but also C flat and F flat.

In this movement Adès presents us with emotional anguish through tortured lines, menace and fear through interweaving bass lines, and conflict in the form of false relation clashes, especially between E and E flat. He portrays transformation through the disintegration of the solo status of the clarinet and its absorption into the rest of the ensemble, and transition as the cycle of fifths pushes further into the harmonic realisation of the cycle.

iii) Third Movement: 'Spettrale'

As the third movement begins Adès introduces a ghostly, *pianissimo* melodic thread of continuous semiquavers, weaving its way rapidly through the first clarinet and the violas. The music seems to suggest that the nymph is now entwined with seaweed and the ringlets of her hair begin to take the form of a harp. The bulk of the melodic material

is still allocated to the clarinet but small portions are inserted by violas, as shown in Ex. 7.24. Perfect fourths and fifths still appear within the melody line of this third movement, but they are now interspersed with other intervals.

Ex.7.24: *The Origin of the Harp*, movement III, bars 70–6, first clarinet and violas tracing semiquaver melodic thread

III Spettrale
♩ = 108

70

Cl. I

Vla.

Vla.

Vla.

73

Cl.

Vla.

Vla.

Vla.

Another feature of this interweaving melodic thread is that when E arrives within the melody line, it alternates between E flat and E natural. Adès supplies a pointillist background on the remaining instruments as some of these pitches highlight fragments of the melody whilst others are at odds with the melody; the element of conflict in some form or other is always present. The addition of drum patterns (on bass drum) and rattling sticks enhance the atmosphere of urgency and add to the sense of excitement and anticipation.

The rising whole-tone movement initiated in the second movement is now superimposed with ascending chromatic strands; the first set of superimposed whole-tone and chromatic strands interrupts the melody line in bar 77. At this point in the work we get the first hint that transformation is imminent with the suggestion of the upward sweep of the strings on a harp. The following graphic overview of the movement (Ex. 7.25) indicates the progress of these strands, with note-heads representing the starting and finishing points of each ascent. Bar numbers are indicated from the point at which each ascent begins. Semitone movement and whole-tone movement has been colour coded and sections of two or more bars duration, where no superimposed strands occur, are indicated in blocked text. Four staves have been used to allow the full extent of the ascents to be viewed more clearly; wavy lines, at Figure T, indicate rapid oscillations between the pitches indicated. The percussion section marks out the various sections within the movement (indicated in blocked text) and bass drum patterns accompany the superimposed ascents. Marimba, suspended cymbals and rototoms are used in the intervening sections.

Ex. 7.25: *The Origin of the Harp*, graphic representation of ascending strands in the third movement

The musical score is presented in four systems, each with a treble and bass clef staff. Ascending strands are highlighted in yellow and red. Percussion parts are indicated by brackets below the staves.

- System 1 (Measures 77-101):**
 - Measures 77-80: (bars 70-76)
 - Measure 81: (bars 79-81)
 - Measures 82-86: (bars 84-88)
 - Measures 87-90: (bars 91-95)
 - Measures 91-95: (bars 91-95)
 - Measures 96-101: (bars 96-101)
- System 2 (Measures 102-121):**
 - Measures 102-111: (bars 104-111)
 - Measures 112-120: (bars 115-119)
 - Measures 121-121: (bars 121-121)
- System 3 (Measures 122-141):**
 - Measures 122-131: (bars 128-136)
 - Measures 132-133: (bars 132-133)
 - Measures 134-139: (bars 135-139)
 - Measures 140-141: (bars 141-141)
 - Measures 142-146: (bars 144-145)
 - Measures 147-141: (bars 147-141)
- System 4 (Measures 142-159):**
 - Measures 142-151: (bars 142-151)
 - Measures 152-155: (bars 152-155)
 - Measures 156-157: (bars 156-157)
 - Measures 158-159: (bars 158-159)
 - Measures 160-159: (bars 160-159)

Percussion parts include: Rototoms, Bass drum patterns, Marimba, Susp. Cym., Snare Cym., and Piano.

In the early stages of the movement the superimposed ascents of three strands are mostly short-lived and rhythmically synchronized; bass clarinets take the majority of the threads. These interjections are intermittent and interrupt the semiquaver melody line for brief moments only and each ascent is accompanied with finger patterns on the bass drum (first encountered in the second movement) and dynamic levels remain *pianissimo*.

Adès does not simply use the strands to imply the sweeping movements on harp: they are also used to mark important stages during the process of transformation. This includes glimpses of previous material: the third block grows towards a chord of B minor at Figure L to provide a backward glance at the B minor harmonies bars 24 and 29 of the first movement, the point at which the first clarinet part begins to change. The block of rising strands (bars 140–1) leads to a *fortissimo* E flat, reinforced with glissandi on cello (*sul ponticello*), sizzle cymbal and a sharp slap on the shell of the bass drum, triggers a final, *pianissimo* glimpse of the opening moments of the work as the solo clarinet, restates the pitches of bar one.

At the start of the final section of this movement, from Figure T, oscillating whole-tone (D–E) and semitone (A sharp–B) patterns on ‘cellos and bass clarinets initiate the final transformation. This takes place over a series of upward surges, involving all instruments except the first clarinet. The anticipation of the moment of transformation is enhanced through the introduction of continuous *pianissimo* rolls on bass drum and sizzle cymbal. As the clarinet shifts through three, two and a half octave tortured utterances, from C sharp to F sharp, streams of ascending strands begin to rise from bass registers to engulf the ‘nymph.’ As dynamic levels begin to increase and the rising strands gain momentum a return of the bass drum pattern from the second

movement, in bar 162, marks the point at which the clarinet solo finally climaxes on A flat.

The anguished cries of the clarinet are finally extinguished as the moment of transformation is reached. To mark this moment the sounding board of the piano is struck *fortissimo* with a wooden stick, and the lower octave of the piano strings is scraped with the edge of a ruler; Adès describes this moment as ‘a flash of divine intervention.’⁴³ A *pianissimo* chord on strings, presenting the flat side of the cycle (B flat, E flat, A flat and D flat), closes the movement, and is sustained to lead into the final movement.

In this movement Adès transforms images in the painting into music as he uses series upon series of superimposed rising whole-tone and chromatic strands to represent the harp strings reaching upwards through the hair of the nymph to penetrate her form. Adès has added an emotional dimension through association to represent her pain and anguish through tortured cries from the clarinet. But he continues at a structural, fundamental level, to pursue the transformation in enharmonic terms and suggests that elements of her original form are still present through the use of the interval patterns of perfect fourths and fifths, from the opening solo at the start of the work.

iv) Fourth movement: ‘♩ = 60’

The metamorphosis is complete but this is not quite the end of the story. In the final movement, disguised references are made to material heard earlier in the work. It is as though the nymph, in her transformed form, still incorporates traces of her former self. The tempo slows as the last movement moves into the first of three sections, each characterized by a change of tempo as illustrated in the following diagram:

⁴³ Adès, programme note in the preface to the score.

Table 7.4: *The Origin of the Harp*, overview of the structure of the fourth movement

♩ = 60	Tempo fluctuations ending with: ♩ = 40	Return to a slightly faster tempo ♩ = 58 <i>ma molto largamente</i>
bb. 166–174	bb. 175–180	bb. 181–190
Pointillist fabric: all instruments	Angular melody, clarinet and violas: referencing the second movement	'Cello solo with strummed and tremolo chords on remaining strings

In the first section (bars 166–74) a pointillist fabric of isolated sounds, using full chromatic coverage, creates an eerie atmosphere. The bass clarinets are now omitted, and the remaining instruments move within a high tessitura to provide a complex tapestry of sounds. The strings make extensive use of harmonics (recalling the opening of the first movement) and make use of *pizzicato* to suggest the plucked strings of the harp. These individual pitches, provided by the strings, vary in rhythmic duration and dynamic intensity (levels ranging from *pianissimo* to *forte*), and the strangeness of the pointillist fabric is enhanced by the addition of a series of metallic, plucked tones provided by the marimbula. The section is also underpinned by the gentle, continuous sound of a rain stick to suggest water imagery. The first clarinet contributes to the pointillist texture by highlighting a selection of pitches. These pitches emerge hesitantly, tracing contraction or expansion, as shown in Ex. 7.26.

Ex. 7.26: *The Origin of the Harp*, movement IV, bars 166–74, clarinet I

Clarinet I

166

semitone movement

pppp > pppp > < ppp >

169

whole-tone movement contracting on to D

pppp > pppp > pppp > pppp >

172

pppp pppp pppp pppp

perfect 4th contracting to a minor 3rd whole-tone expanding to a minor 3rd

It is as though the clarinet (the nymph now transformed into a harp) is making its first tentative sounds after waking up in a daze, and feeling disorientated in a new and unfamiliar landscape, of flecks and glimmers from the strings and marimbula.

The rain stick is withdrawn as the second section begins. This section (bars 175–81) features fluctuations in tempo, and hints at material from the second movement, as the clarinets pursue a contrapuntal two-part texture. The first clarinet and violas move in unison to present a disjunct melody line, recalling the angular theme of the second movement. It is now performed *pianissimo*, instead of *fortissimo*, and the intervals now centre on whole-tone and chromatic movement (distorted through octave displacement). As the section draws to a close a sustained D leads us into the final section.

This is signalled with *sforzando*, plucked bass E flat string on the piano, an emphatic establishment of the enharmonic transformation of the first opening pitch of the work (D sharp) to E flat. The final section evolves in four layers with a 'cello solo, an accompaniment of strummed and *pizzicato tremolo* chords on strings (with fragments doubled on bass clarinets), a series of *fortissimo* anguished utterances, pairs of

descending compound perfect fourths extending over three octaves, on the first clarinet, all supported with the bass E flat plucked string on the piano. In the following graphic representation of the score (Ex. 7.27) the harmonies provided by the string and bass clarinets have been represented by note-heads on the lower two staves of the score, pedal points have been colour coded, and the first clarinet and solo 'cello parts have been notated in full.

Ex. 7.27: *The Origin of the Harp*, movement IV, bars 181–90, graphic score representing 'cello solo, clarinet I and background harmonies

The image shows a musical score for 'The Origin of the Harp', movement IV, bars 181-90. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (bars 181-186) features a first clarinet (Clt.1) and a solo cello (Cello 1) with a tempo of 58 and the instruction 'ma molto largamente'. The cello part is marked 'solo' and 'molto espress. e forte'. The piano accompaniment (Pno.) provides background harmonies, with pedal points in D minor, D major, and F minor. The second system (bars 186-190) shows the first clarinet playing a melodic line with dynamics from pppp to ppp, and the cello playing a simple conjunct melody. The piano accompaniment continues with background harmonies, including a section for bass clarinets 2 & 3 in A major.

The first 'cello presents a simple conjunct melody line with a first arc-shaped phrase beginning with the first three pitches of a D minor scale. A semitone shift to G flat marks the summit of the phrase. This is followed by a second arc tracing the first four pitches of D major. Adès is possibly suggesting the birth of music by introducing the diatonic system in this very simple way. Note values, alternating minim and crotchet movement, match this simplicity. But moments of tension and resolution are played out

in these final bars as the accompanying pitches, strummed or tremolo chords that imitate the sounds of a harp, present harmonies that both clash (see the chromatic clusters formed in bars 182 and 184) or form triads or seventh chords (indicated on the graphic score). Adès hints at the presence of the cycle of fifths through the presentation of a sequence of parallel perfect fourth dyads and the occasional perfect fifth dyad in bars 185–7. But from the final concordant triad (A major) the movement begins to almost dissolve as strands of chromatic and whole-tone movement, that played such an important function leading up to the point of transformation in the third movement, have now lost their upward impetus and slide downwards into bass register through fading dynamic levels. Eventually all that remains are gradually fading sustained pitches on first clarinet and violas (on A flat), and the piano (plucked E flat bass string). Adès indicates that the piano string sound should be prolonged by touching the side of the string ‘extremely lightly with the fingernail (near dampers).’⁴⁴ Adès seems to imitate a final tremolo on a single harp string and, as violas and clarinet fade to nothing, Adès asks that the fingernail of the pianist should move closer and closer to the dampers. A final, subtle crescendo on this E flat bass string is followed by a fade to nothing. The work has finally resolved onto an enharmonic equivalent of the opening *pianissimo* pitch of the work (D sharp) and the transformation is complete.

The Origin of the Harp could be considered programmatic or descriptive in the employment of timbral signifiers to suggest water (shell chimes, water gong and rain stick) and percussion instruments that reflect the fundamental or primeval nature of the event. The writhing contrapuntal lines featured in the second movement suggest the entwinement of the nymph with seaweed and the rising streams of superimposed whole-

⁴⁴ Adès, instructions on the score, p. 57.

tone and chromatic strands that dominate the third movement suggest the emergence of the strings of a harp.

But Adès' response to this work runs much deeper than these more superficial, representational observations. Adès exploits aspects of contrast in the painting, between the rock and the nymph's soft, sensuous body; between the light and dark tones in the painting, and between the ice and the warmth of her body. He does this through the selection of a range of bright and dark tones, in terms of instrumental colour, tessitura, instrumental technique, extremes of register, and rapidly fluctuating dynamic colour. Adès suggests the nymph's torment as she undergoes the transformation through a heightened emotional response to the painting. Towards the end of the first movement the melody line is subjected to extreme distortion through the use of angular leaps, embellished with ornamentation and enhanced through wildly varying dynamic extremes.

The conflict between her present form and her new form is suggested through the numerous false relation E natural and E flat clashes. Her transformation is suggested through the changing relationship between the first clarinet and the remainder of the ensemble. On a more subtle and fundamental level, the process of transformation takes place musically through the enharmonic transformation of a cycle of fifths. Shapes within the painting influence melodic shape and, on a larger scale, influence changes in tessitura. The first movement sees a gradual ascent into higher registers but pitches plunging into bass registers in the final bars of the movement anticipate the low tessitura on the second movement. Towards the end of the second movement we move back into high registers in preparation for the third movement. Patterns repeatedly surging through low to high registers, in the third movement, reflect the emergence of strings of the harp and also suggest the sharp, rising angle of the rock. The fourth movement

moves from high to low registers to end on the lowest E flat of the piano, the enharmonic equivalent of the D sharp.

Adès has applied the process of 'transposition' by suggesting shapes in the painting and has, through the sensory use of sound, the inference of 'before' and 'after', referenced the process of 'supplementation.' Through 'association' he has reflected a highly charged emotional response to the painting through his engagement with the imagined suffering of the nymph during the process of transformation. He has also used recognized timbral signifiers to connect listeners to water and the primitive nature of an event suggesting the birth of Irish music.

Conclusion

Musical ekphrasis has provided a very valuable tool for investigating music inspired by visual stimuli, and terms used in poetry to describe the transformation from art to poetry, have provided a very useful framework within which to explore Adès' response to the paintings discussed in this chapter. In these case studies I have focused on the way in which Adès has added new dimensions to the visual experience provided by each painting in terms of 'transposition', 'supplementation', 'association' and 'interpretation.'

For example, 'transposition' has taken place as aspects of content and form, and the chronology of each painting, has influenced the choice of formal structures or shapes in the music. Adès has, through 'supplementation', traced musical processes and changing relations between characters, through each work to suggest 'before' and 'after', in relation to each work of art. He has exploited and enhanced musical anachronisms, between the time when the artist created each painting and the present, as musical techniques from the past and present are explored, and the time and location

represented in each painting is considered in term of 'association.' Adès also presents us with an emotional reaction that penetrates beneath the surface of the visual representations of each painting. Musical ekphrasis by 'interpretation' has been employed, for example, in the form of timbral signifiers such as the bandoneon to confirm the tango topos in 'Et... (tango mortale)', and a rain stick to evoke the water imagery in *The Origin of the Harp*.

In these case studies Adès has formed an integral musical bond with each painting and musical ekphrasis has provided a powerful interpretive tool. The paintings are able to communicate visually what cannot always be expressed in musical terms, but Adès has re-presented these paintings using musical techniques and sonic qualities that add extra layers of understanding to each painting, to suggest new directions or lines of thought not immediately apparent in the visual representations.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have analysed the early music of Thomas Adès and explored issues of context in order to pursue matters of style and meaning. I have discovered that in these early works Adès often uses systemized and logical ways of generating musical material, using pitch cycles and patterns that are often combined with equally systemized rhythmic processes. This more rational approach to the production of pitch and rhythm is balanced with an inventive and creative use of instrumental and dynamic colour, often involving subtle nuances, and the creation of textures through multiple layers of independently characterized melodic lines or textural layers. I have also identified that a vital aspect of his compositional approach involves the use of music as a metaphor, to express meaning beyond the purely aesthetic value of sound and musical processes. Adès forges and enhances connections between music and extramusical ideas or emotions through the use of titles, programmes, literature, musical quotation and homage, allusions that refer to the stylistic traits of composers, reference a specific work, historical genre or formal structure, and visual art. These connections, some of which are suggested to him during the course of composition or stimulated by extra-musical inspiration, are often multi-layered. A number of these connections are quite obvious, such as the use of stylized birdsong in, for example, 'Cape Ann', from *Five Eliot Landscapes*, whilst the metaphorical impact of subtle or well-hidden concepts can only be revealed through a detailed analysis or a well-informed listening experience.

During this thesis I have identified compositional traits that emerge during Adès' formative years as a composer. Meyer explains that 'style must, of course, begin

with description and classification, that is, with an account of the features replicated in some work or repertory of works.’¹ But, Meyer explains, these

traits (characteristics of some work or set of works) that can be described and counted are essentially symptoms of the presence of a set of interrelated set of constraints. What the theorist and analyst want to know about are the constraints of the style in terms of which the replicated patterns observed can be related to one another and to the experience of works of art.²

With this in mind, I have used the close reading of the case studies explored in this thesis to reveal not only how fundamental compositional processes emerged during this early stage in Adès’ compositional career, but I have also explored the ways in which these traits have been used to achieve the intended musical and metaphorical outcome in each work.

Meyer notes that ‘within any dialect, individual composers tend to employ some constraints rather than others; indeed, they may themselves have devised new constraints. Those that a composer repeatedly selects from the larger repertory of the dialect define his or her individual idiom.’³ He goes on to define style as ‘a replication of patterning, whether in human behaviour or in the artefacts produced by human behaviour, that results from a series of choices made within some set of constraints.’⁴ Therefore, in order to identify the early style of Adès, the constraints that define the compositional techniques that he uses need to be established and his behaviour should be considered in terms of how he approaches, or acknowledges, the function of musical composition. Firstly, I will review the ‘replicated patternings’ that appear in some form or other in these early works, and secondly, I will discuss factors that influence his approach to composition.

¹ Meyer, *Style and Music: Theory, History and Ideology*, p. 10.

² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

One of the basic constraints that identifies Adès' idiom is that of pitch generation and two main methods can be identified. The first involves the use of interval cycles (melodic lines that focus on a single interval) or intervallic systems for example, a melody line that pursues a series of intervals that systematically expand or contract chromatically.⁵ The second method explores the concept of organic cellular growth from a motivic cell introduced at the start of a composition: this involves the systematic manipulation of a limited number of intervals.⁶ Both methods are used to generate melodic or harmonic pitch patterns that make full use of all twelve tones of the chromatic scale. Adès does not always reveal all pitches at once: fragments of interval cycles are often gradually introduced, with a final pitch held back to mark the closure of a particular section or a change of direction, or a point of arrival. What also distinguishes Adès' approach to pitch generation is the way in which he constructs or uses these systems within a musical environment which can also include tonal materials. He uses systems, cycles and interval manipulation to inform structural processes and to create harmony in which dissonance is a dominant factor, but he also includes the use of tonal material such as major and minor triads. Adès also makes use of enharmonic relationships as part of the unfolding compositional process, for example when he repeatedly re-visits the first portion of an underlying cycle of fifths in enharmonic form in *The Origin of the Harp*.

Meyer notes that 'a change in the rules of one parameter of a style [...] requires some adjustment in the strategic constraints governing the other parameters of style.'⁷ So when the method of pitch generation changes and tonality is no longer the dominant factor in a work, all other parameters have to be adjusted to some degree. In terms of rhythm, I have observed a definite pattern emerging in relation to pitch generation as

⁵ Identified by Roeder in 'Co-operating Continuities' and 'A Transformational Space.'

⁶ Noted by Fox in 'Tempestuous Times.'

⁷ Meyer, *Style and Music*, p. 20.

Adès matches systemized rhythmic patterning (repeated note values, rhythmic patterns, or the systematic augmentation or diminution of note values) with mechanical processes of pitch generation. In contrast to this, Adès parallels organic growth from cellular motives, with a more flexible approach to rhythmic patterning. Chord progressions are often created through the mechanical application of pitch and rhythmic processes, as superimposed melodic threads, each tracing just one interval, move in rhythmic unison to create chord progressions that incorporate both tonal and dissonant chords. In this thesis I have developed a method of representing systemized pitch patterning, such as interval cycles, using note-heads and a system of colour-coding to produce graphic realizations of his music. By presenting interval systems in this way, Adès' use of register, range and momentum, and the way intervallically defined linear threads coordinate or co-exist, can be observed and understood in visual and aural terms.

When the structural properties of tonality are lost, other means of structuring the music must be found. Adès talks of the way in which 'a particular pitch on a particular instrument [...] has a crucial function across whole structures.'⁸ He describes how 'certain specific pitches become fetish objects, which are returned to and rubbed by the composer all the time [...] an obsession, around which the whole piece hinges.'⁹ Adès uses reference or pedal points, sustained or reiterated pitches, as points of connection either within individual layers or between layers. The percussion section is also used to articulate structure. In such instances, Adès forges an association through percussive timbres and textures within sections of the music; this could include a regular insistent rhythmic patterning ostinato on an individual instrument or group of instruments, or irregular patterns involving a particular group of instruments creating a pointillist texture. He also uses a percussion instrument, or instruments, to define strategic points:

⁸ Adès and Service, *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*, p. 48.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

a 'fetish' timbre often reinforced dynamically to emphasize structural or climax points or to reinforce points of arrival as in the Chamber Symphony.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, during the formative stage of Adès' compositional career, a climate of change was evident in contemporary culture and technology. Kramer discusses how our working and leisure time is now often dedicated to multi-tasking and operating on different levels simultaneously¹⁰ and links this multiplicity with the way in which 'multiple meaning and multiple temporalities'¹¹ in postmodern music enable 'listeners to experience different senses of directionality, different temporal narratives, and/or different rates of motion, all *simultaneously*.'¹² In Adès' music this multi-tasking takes the form of shifting layers of textures, often two or three, which evolve independently in terms of character and momentum. His music is defined through the inspirational application of timbre, register, mode of attack, dynamic contrast and shading that is used to accentuate his approach to texture; one that involves vividly differentiated melodic threads that evolve independently, not only in terms of pitch, but in terms of momentum (rhythmic values), timbre, register, mode of attack and dynamic colour. On a more complex level, textures may unfold and evolve in sonic layers: very often in three independent layers of material, each characterized in terms of timbre, register, rhythm, and harmonic and dynamic colouring. These shifting layers of material produce a horizontal collage-like effect described by Taruskin as 'sonic collages and mobiles.'¹³ In visual art a collage would consist of images frozen in time but, when dealing with a time-orientated art such as music, strongly differentiated levels or layers can vie for our attention as shifting planes of sound can suggest different meanings, moods or characters within a musical narrative. Links with surrealism are

¹⁰ Kramer, 'The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism', pp. 20–1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹² Kramer, 'Postmodern Concepts of Musical Time', p. 22.

¹³ Taruskin, 'A Surrealist Composer Comes to the Rescue of Modernism', p. 147.

evident as these competing layers of differentiated material provide a sense of disorientation and of multiplicity, and an environment in which perspectives constantly change.

Adès reveals an exceptional sensitivity to tone colour, exploiting both vivid and sombre colour combinations; he often shows a predilection for dark colours, using bass instruments and bass registers. He is attracted to subtle shades and nuances obtained through the use of a range of mutes on brass instruments, and the frequent application of a range of string techniques (for example, harmonics, *sul ponticello*, *sul tasto*, mutes) which he modifies through the use of fastidiously notated dynamic levels and shading, and forms of attack. In sections that explore pointillist textures, Adès works at a cellular level; on these occasions every pitch or motivic cell is scrupulously balanced in terms of timbre, register, rhythmic value, dynamic level and attack, in an approach reminiscent of Webern: Adès' frequent use of *Klangfarbenmelodie* reveals yet a further connection to Webern. Adès does not resort to an excess of experimental instrumental techniques and reserves the use of more unusual techniques such as, the 'talking trumpet' in *Living Toys*, or the prepared piano in *Still Sorrowing* for powerful dramatic effect. Adès explains that he sees 'no distinction between colour and timbre and pitches [...] notes and colour are inseparable',¹⁴ and these parameters evolve as an integral part of the compositional process.

At the very core of Adès' approach to composition is his view that 'all music is metaphorical always'¹⁵ and his use of music to express various layers of meaning permeates every musical process. He uses these references as indicators to suggest topoi, locations and narratives, in order to enhance meaning or to act as musical signifiers. These layers of meaning form an integral part of the compositional and

¹⁴ Service and Adès, *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*, p. 156.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

listening process; this multiplicity of meaning is evident in every work. The concept of multiplicity is also evident in the broad spectrum of absorbed influences that are revealed to various degrees in his music. Andrew Ford quotes Adès as describing himself as a composer 'not seeing the past as the past, or the future as anything, it's all part of where we are now.'¹⁶ In this respect Adès' view of the past seems to match that of the postmodernist composer George Rochberg (1918–2005), who explains that he 'stand[s] in a circle of time, not a line. 360 degrees of past, present, future. All around me. I can look in any direction.'¹⁷ But, although Adès shares this postmodern attitude to the availability of past music, he deals with it differently.

Kramer considers that postmodernist composers tend to present 'references or quotation [...] with neither distortion nor musical commentary'¹⁸ but Adès integrates 'borrowings'¹⁹ into his music. In Adès' music the influence of composers from the distant past and more recent past are acknowledged directly through homage or modelling, or indirectly through allusion or the occasional veiled quotation. But I have discovered that these references not only become part of the fabric of Adès' music, they are also used to imply deeper layers of meaning and to aid in the metaphorical impact of his music. Such interactions bring to mind theories of musical intertextuality discussed in the work of Klein. He refers to 'the cultural net of musical texts that we bring to music as we struggle to make sense of it. That constellation of texts speaking both with us and among themselves in what literary critics call *intertextuality*.'²⁰ In Adès' music we see a two-way process as the music of the past and music of the present co-exist to reinforce metaphorical and musical meaning in his work. This process of interaction

¹⁶ Ford, Andrew (2010) radio interview between Thomas Adès (in Los Angeles) and Andrew Ford (in Melbourne) for Australia's radio station ABC, <http://fabermusic.com> (accessed August 28, 2013).

¹⁷ Rochberg, George (1969) [1984] 'No Centre', in *Aesthetics of Survival*, ed. by William Bolcom, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, p. 158.

¹⁸ Kramer, 'The Nature and Origins of Musical postmodernism', p. 15.

¹⁹ Adès and Service, *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*, p. 27.

²⁰ Klein, *Intertextuality in Western Art Music*, p. ix.

also occurs in his dealings with literature and art. Adès responds to subtle nuances, and delves into deeper levels of significance as he responds to literary and visual stimuli, but on the other hand, literature and art help the listener and the musicologist to unlock the expressive meaning of the music. His response to visual imagery inspires a musical response that takes into account not only the programme suggested by events depicted in a painting, but also presents an emotional reaction and connects with aspects of form. Through music Adès is able to suggest a sense of before and after, he has the potential to explore relationships between characters, and he internalizes the images into music in what can be described as musical ekphrasis. Adès uses visual and literary stimuli to enhance the metaphorical impact of his music.

Further research into Adès' music beyond the scope of this present thesis could explore the extent to which stylistic traits remain constant or change in future works. For example, I have found that in the more recent *Mazurkas* for piano, this homage to pianistic techniques of Chopin combines the distinctive rhythmic patterns, accentuation, ornamentation, drones and tempo rubato of the mazurka with compositional techniques first revealed in *Five Eliot Landscapes*. He uses melody lines that systematically chromatically expand or contract and subjects chromatic movement to octave displacement in the first *Mazurka*. His interest in the superimposition of differently paced, descending delicate threads, constructed from intervals of a semitone, whole-tone and minor third, are featured during the second *Mazurka*. Cycles constructed from perfect fourths, covering all twelve notes of the chromatic scale, interweave with melodic phrases constructed from a series of minor triads in the third *Mazurka*. This third piece also features a middle section consisting of three layers of differently paced descending whole-tone phrases.

A second area of further study could focus on the concept of modelling. This would follow on from my observations in relation to *The Lover in Winter* and Debussy's '...Des pas sur la neige.'²¹ Adès states that he used Beethoven's *Pastoral Sonata* Op.28, as a model for the Piano Quintet.²² The melodic material of the first, second and fourth movements of the Beethoven sonata make extensive use of the same restricted range of intervals of a semitone, whole-tone and minor third and chromatic voice leading, pursued extensively by Adès in the Quintet, is featured in the third movement of Beethoven's *Pastoral Sonata*. The use of pedal points in the sonata is reflected in the Quintet in the form of reference pitches or chords. The addition of a fast coda to the final movement of the Beethoven sonata may have influenced the acceleration of the section leading to the codetta of the exposition (Fig. 9–10) and the accelerated pace of the recapitulation in the Quintet. Shifts from tonic major to tonic minor (D minor–D major) in the second movement of the sonata are also played out in the C major/C minor duality underlying the Quintet and diminished sevenths and added seventh chords, used extensively in the first movement of the sonata, also play a significant part in the Quintet. It may prove useful to compare Goehr's approach to modelling; Goehr used Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E minor as a model for his Third String Quartet, Op. 37.²³

In terms of the visual arts my investigation has focused on Adès' response to paintings, but I can see that there is scope to extend Venn's research on connections between the television documentary and the music of *Asyla* (1997). Two later works, both the product of collaboration between Adès and Tal Rosner,²⁴ feature a close interaction between music and visual images. *In Seven Days, a multi-media piano*

²¹ From the First Book of *Preludes* (1910).

²² Service, 'Breaking the Silence', p. 29.

²³ Goehr, *Finding the Key*, p. 257.

²⁴ Tal Rosner (b. 1978) is a filmmaker and graphic designer whose films have been screened in various moving image festivals.

concerto is Adès' first work with video; the visual images, created by Rosner, combine footage and photographs from the newly renovated London Royal Festival Hall and the newly completed Walt Disney Hall in Los Angeles. In their second collaboration *Polaris*, commissioned for the opening of the Frank Gehry Arts Centre in Miami, Adès takes full advantage offered by this 'revolutionary new venue with its opportunity for antiphonal and spatial effects'²⁵ and Rosner uses images that 'combine directed scenes with live-action and graphic elements, fully utilizing the matrix of possibilities of the five-screen canvas.'²⁶ In both works I would explore how the underlying programme, suggested through the title, programme notes and visual images, is integrated with and enhanced by the music.

Death and morbidity are regularly featured in early works such as, *Five Eliot Landscapes*, *Still Sorrowing*, *Darkness Visible*, *Living Toys*, *Arcadiana*, *Powder Her Face* and *Cardiac Arrest*. Adès explains that he is 'rather morbid, and the only way to make that creative is to relish it.'²⁷ This aspect of Adès' work could instigate an investigation to consider his approach to the issue of death. This would involve looking for links in the way he presents this concept, for example through his use of material that suggests the topos of lament. In Adès' latest work, *Totentanz*,²⁸ death invites individuals selected from all levels of human society, starting with the most elevated (the pope) and then proceeding in descending order of status to end with a baby. This work's music is linked with visual images and an underlying text, matched by a journey from musical complexity, associated with social status, to musical simplicity in the form of a lullaby for the baby. There is the potential for exploring how signifiers of death,

²⁵ Review of *Polaris*, 'Faber Music Composer Notes.'

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Adès and Service, *Thomas Adès: Full of Noises*, p. 64.

²⁸ Commissioned by Robin Boyle in memory of Witold Lutosławski (1913–94) and his wife, UK premiere at the Albert Hall Proms on Wednesday 17 July, 2013.

and allusions to works connected with death, are developed as visual art, text and music are drawn together in this work.

My thesis provides a substantial introduction to the early works of Thomas Adès, the majority of which have received little or no academic attention to date. Previous critical studies have either focused on isolated works, of which *Five Eliot Landscapes*,²⁹ *Asyla*,³⁰ *Arcadiana*³¹ and the Piano Quintet³² have proved the most popular, or they have pursued one line of enquiry, for instance, Roeder in his theoretical exploration of issues of temporality,³³ or Emma Gallon in her investigation into narrativity.³⁴ What my work has addressed is the identification of the technical processes adopted by Adès during the formative stage of his compositional career and the way in which these processes have been put to expressive effect. Replicated patterns of behaviour, which identify his compositional style during this time, have emerged as Adès has developed a personal way of working within a post-tonal language. I have identified an approach to music that is stimulating and imaginative, as multiple layers of meaning involving the use of past and present materials are presented to the listener.

²⁹ Markou, 'A Poetic Synthesis and Theoretical Analysis of Thomas Adès' Five Eliot Landscapes.'

³⁰ Venn, 'Asylum Gained' and 'Narrativity in Thomas Adès' 'Ecstasio', and Travers, 'Interval cycles, their permutations and generative properties in Thomas Adès' *Asyla*.'

³¹ Whittall, 'James Dillon, Thomas Adès, and the Pleasure of Allusion.'

³² Fox, 'Tempestuous times.'

³³ Roeder, 'Co-operating Continuities' and 'A Transformational Space.'

³⁴ Gallon, 'Narrativities in the Music of Thomas Adès', and 'Narrativities in the Music of Thomas Adès: The Piano Quintet and Brahms.'

Appendix A: Chronology of Works

1989	<p><i>The Lover in Winter</i>: four songs for countertenor and piano. (Text: Anonymous, Latin)</p>
1990	<p><i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> Op. 1: for soprano and piano. (Text: T S Eliot, English)</p> <p>Chamber Symphony Op. 2: for chamber ensemble of 15 players.</p> <p><i>O thou who didst with pitfall and with gin</i> Op. 3a: anthem for male voices. (Text: translated by Edward Fitzgerald, from the <i>Rubaiyat</i> of Omar Khayyam, English)</p> <p><i>Gefriolsae Me</i> Op. 3b: anthem for male voices. (Text: Psalm 51, Anglo Saxon)</p>
1991	<p><i>Catch</i> Op. 4: for clarinet, violin, cello and piano.</p>
1992	<p><i>Fool's Rhymes</i> Op. 5: for SATB chorus harp, prepared piano and percussion. (Text: from Sermons of John Donne & anonymous Elizabethan and 14th century nonsense poems, English)</p> <p><i>Under Hamelin Hill</i> Op. 6: for chamber organ. (1–3 players)</p> <p><i>Still Sorrowing</i> Op. 7: for solo piano.</p> <p><i>Darknesse Visible</i>: for solo piano.</p>
1993	<p><i>Life Story</i> Op.8: for soprano, 2 bass clarinets and double bass or soprano and piano. (Text: Tennessee Williams, English)</p> <p><i>Living Toys</i> Op. 9: for chamber ensemble of 14 players.</p> <p><i>...but all shall be well</i> Op. 10: for orchestra.</p> <p><i>...but all shall be well</i> Op. 10: for reduced orchestra.</p> <p><i>Sonata da Caccia</i> Op. 11: for baroque oboe or oboe, horn and harpsichord.</p>
1994	<p><i>Arcadiana</i> Op. 12: for string quartet.</p> <p><i>Life Story</i> Op.8a: for soprano and piano. (Text: Tennessee Williams, English)</p> <p><i>The Origin of the Harp</i> Op. 13: for chamber ensemble of 10 players.</p> <p><i>Les baricades mystérieuses</i>: for chamber ensemble of 5 players. (François Couperin, arranged by Thomas Adès)</p>

1995	<p><i>Powder Her Face</i> Op. 14: chamber opera in two acts and 8 scenes for 4 singers and 15 players. (Text: Philip Hensher, English)</p> <p><i>Cardiac Arrest</i>: chamber ensemble of 7 players. (Based on a song by Madness)</p>
1996	<p><i>Traced Overhead</i> Op. 15: for solo piano.</p> <p><i>These Premises are Alarmed</i> Op. 16: for large orchestra.</p>
1997	<p><i>Asyla</i>, Op. 17: for orchestra.</p> <p><i>Concerto Conciso</i> Op. 18: for piano and chamber ensemble of 10 players.</p> <p><i>The Fayrfax Carol</i>: for unaccompanied SATB with optional organ. (Text: fifteenth-century Anonymous, English)</p>
1999	<p><i>America: A Prophecy</i> Op. 19: for mezzo soprano and large orchestra with optional large chorus. (Text: Soprano, adapted by Adès from the books of <i>Chilam Balam</i> (Mayan), and chorus, <i>La Guerra</i> by Matteo Flexa, English)</p> <p><i>January Writ</i>: for SATB div. chorus with optional organ. (Text: Ecclesiastes 6.6, English)</p>
2000	Piano Quintet Op. 20.
2001	<i>Brahms</i> Op. 21: for baritone and orchestra. (Text: Alfred Brendel, German)
2003–4	<i>The Tempest</i> Op. 22: opera in 3 acts. (Text: Meredith Oakes, after Shakespeare, English)
2004	<i>Scenes from The Tempest</i> Op. 22a: for vocal soloists and orchestra.
2005	<p><i>Violin Concerto 'Concentric Paths'</i>: for violin and chamber orchestra.</p> <p><i>Court Studies from The Tempest</i>: for clarinet, violin, cello and piano.</p>
2006	<i>Three Studies from Couperin</i> : for chamber orchestra.
2007	<p><i>Dances from Powder Her Face</i>: for orchestra.</p> <p><i>Tevot</i>: for orchestra.</p>
2008	<i>In Seven Days</i> : Concerto for piano with Moving Image.

2009	<p><i>Concert Paraphrase on Powder Her Face</i>: for solo piano.</p> <p><i>Lieux retrouvés</i>: for cello and piano.</p> <p><i>Mazurkas Op. 27</i>: for solo piano.</p>
2010	<p><i>The Four Quarters</i>: for string quartet.</p> <p><i>Polaris: Voyage</i> for orchestra.</p>
2013	<p><i>Totentanz</i>: for mezzo-soprano, baritone and orchestra. (Text: anonymous, German)</p>

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