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## Jane O'Leary and Her Approach to Contemporary Music for Clarinet and Bass Clarinet

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# **Jane O'Leary and Her Approach to Contemporary Music for Clarinet and Bass Clarinet**

**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Master of Music degree**

**Dublin Institute of Technology  
Conservatory of Music and Drama**

**Supervisor: Dr Philip Graydon**

**September 2016**

**Pablo Manjón-Cabezas Guzmán**

## DECLARATION

*I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of*

**Master's Degree (MMus)**

*is entirely my own work and has not been submitted for assessment for any academic purpose other than in partial fulfilment for that stated above.*



**Signed:** Pablo Manjón-Cabezas Guzmán **(Candidate)**

**Date:** 15 September 2016

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Pablo Manjón-Cabezas Guzmán



## ABSTRACT

American-born Irish composer Jane O’Leary is one of the most accomplished and active participants on the Irish New Music scene. Although trained as a pianist, her career has also been closely linked to the clarinet and bass clarinet through collaborative work she has undertaken with outstanding performers such as Paul Roe and Harry Sparnaay, who have significantly influenced her compositions for these instruments. Thus, this thesis focuses on O’Leary as a seminal figure in contemporary Irish composition and explores this composer’s contributions to the contemporary repertoire for clarinet and bass clarinet.

In order to examine Jane O’Leary’s *oeuvre* for clarinet and bass clarinet, this research project analyses two of the composer’s most remarkable solo pieces for these instruments, *Within/Without* and *a piacere*, by determining not only their musical structure and compositional style, but, also, by investigating their context, creative process and the impact of her collaborative work with performers on the final outcome. Furthermore, a key aspect of this thesis is the fact that it is grounded on interviews with Jane O’Leary and the clarinetist Paul Roe (which were audio recorded and subsequently transcribed)—thus providing first-hand testimony on their careers, musical relationship and the collaborative input of Roe on O’Leary’s compositions.

The findings from this investigation reveal that Jane O’Leary’s repertoire for clarinet and bass clarinet has grown exponentially since 2000, when the collaboration and joint creative process with eminent performers such as Roe and Sparnaay started. Additionally, her pieces share unique characteristics and sonority, since the composer tries to explore the capabilities of these instruments in terms of colour, timbre and expressivity. Finally, the active role of the performer was proven to be essential in the co-creative process, as well as the responsibility of the performer with regard to the evolution of O’Leary’s works over the years.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT**

# CHAPTER ONE

## HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

### 1.1. Irish Contemporary Music: Background

After the Irish Civil War, cultural policies implemented in Ireland were conceived from an insular and static approach, which subsequently brought profoundly negative repercussions for artistic creation and music composition at the time. Due to prevailing nationalism, all cultural and educational efforts were focused on protecting, reinforcing and promoting the Irish language. As a consequence, music was relegated to a position of marginal influence and importance, becoming subordinated to the teaching and dissemination of the language. In her book *Music Education in the Emergent Nation State*, Marie McCarthy points out:

In practice, it was the Irish language that dominated the cultural agenda of national schools and music became a servant to the teaching of the language, its own broad spectrum of traditions playing a peripheral role in the process of strengthening the national fibre.<sup>1</sup>

Nonetheless, music did not only suffer because of nationalism. None of the artistic disciplines were considered relevant for promoting dynamic development of the country. For example, the Ministry of Fine Arts only existed and functioned during nineteen weeks (from 26 August 1921 until 9 January 1922) out of a period of sixty-three years between 1919 and 1982.<sup>2</sup> In fact, this Ministry was created under the presidency of Éamon de Valera with the only intention of providing the country with a false image of progress and prosperity, not being assigned any inherent significance towards Irish society. This explains the slow and uneven infrastructure development for the arts as a whole throughout most of the twentieth century.

In 1973, Ireland became a member of the European Union, which consequently promoted the arrival of new and fresh ideas to the country. One of these examples was the inauguration of the *Dublin Festival of 20th-Century Music*

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<sup>1</sup> McCarthy, Marie: 'Music Education in the Emergent Nation State', in *Music in Ireland 1848-1998*, ed. Richard Pine (Cork: Mercier Press, 1998), 67.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

that drew the attention of prestigious international composers such as Karlheinz Stockhausen, Witold Lutoslawski and Elliott Carter, leading to the foundation and consolidation of the Association of Young Irish Composers, later established as the Association of Irish Composers (AIC), which has since exerted much influence in the nurturing of New Irish Music. In reference to New Music, the Concorde ensemble, founded in 1976 by Jane O'Leary, has significantly contributed to disseminate a wide range of Irish and international contemporary music for the last twenty-five years. Additionally, the Contemporary Music Centre has had a significant impact on the development of music composition in Ireland, holding national status and granting official recognition to New Irish Music since its creation in 1985. It is also very representative that this Irish institution was located in a very emblematic place in Dublin, being the spot where Handel's *Messiah* was first premiered in 1742, aiming to demonstrate the significant relevance of the historical trajectory of music in Ireland.

Modernism in Irish music was always somewhat delayed in relation to international developments, but it finally excelled with a significant transformation. Numerous Irish composers moved abroad to other European countries with the aim to study with some of the most prestigious international composers such as Stockhausen, Gerald Bennet, Alun Hoddinott and Maurizio Kagel. Additionally, some composers arrived to Ireland, such as the American-born Jane O'Leary, who arrived from Princeton University. All these young composers led to a new generation that initiated an important change in Irish musical context.

Previous Irish composers such as A. J. Potter and Éamon Ó Gallchobhair were less interested in the evolution of the twentieth century music, then Brian Boydell and Frederick May, who, along with Alois Flesichmann, were the first to draw from developments in what was then European contemporary music, decrying insular nationalism and espousing early modernism. However, from the late 1960s, a new, younger generation of Irish composers displayed a much more genuine and profound interest on Europe's new ideas. Generally speaking, tonal art music was linked to the Anglo-Irish tradition, whereas modal music was considered more ethnic-orientated. Therefore, it was the first time this binary of Anglo-Irish and ethnic genres was

averted, as this new generation of composers took a different approach to Irish cultural expression through new and European musical languages.

Since 2008, Ireland's economic crisis has dramatically impacted many new-music initiatives, such as Concorde and the Association of Irish Composers (AIC), among others, which became undermined specially after the Arts Council withdrew vital funding in 2009. Nowadays, new Irish music is aiming to recover from the impasse and regain a relevant presence within Irish cultural agenda.

## **1.2. Jane O'Leary: Biography**

Jane O'Leary is a seminar figure in New Music in Ireland and represents a new generation of contemporary Irish composers who are greatly engaged with the generative, collaborative and communicative aspects of the music-making process. Based in Ireland since 1972, O'Leary has deeply influenced the development of new music in this country by contributing to expand its repertoire and promoting performances nationally and internationally. She is also founder and director of the Concorde ensemble, an ensemble that has led to the creation of and experimentation in new Irish music since 1976. Many of Jane O'Leary's pieces have been deeply influenced by her collaborative relationship with outstanding performers such as clarinetists Harry Sparnaay and Paul Roe, resulting in a varied and outstanding collection of pieces for clarinet and bass clarinet that deserve being studied and analysed further.

Born in the small town of Wethersfield, Hartford (Connecticut), in 1946 as Jane Strong, her first connection with music was at the age of four when she suddenly became attracted by the piano as her sister started taking lessons at home. Jane grew up within an artistic and musical environment, as her mother was a talented painter and her father, apart from working as an architect, also sang in a male-voice choir.

She soon started to receive piano lessons and to get deeply engaged with performance, to such an extent that, once her high school education was completed, she decided to study a Bachelor of Arts in piano at Vassar College. This was a liberal

arts college, girls-only, located in the state of New York and had a historic relationship with Yale University. The reason Jane O’Leary chose this institution was the music department, as it was the perfect place to study piano due to the exceptional facilities and the piano teacher, Earl Groves. She had not discovered her passion for composition yet; her career at that time was orientated toward piano performance. However, in third year, she attended a newly-released composition course and, thus, her passion for composition started. Therefore, although she started at Vassar with the idea of becoming an accomplished pianist, she ended up her Bachelor degree with a more open-minded idea of what was next in her career.

Once she graduated from Vassar College in 1968, she then enrolled in the Master of Arts programme at Princeton University. In contrast to the previous college she attended, Princeton was predominantly male in orientation and makeup. This institution had a considerable composition department with some of the most brilliant minds in music in the United States at that time such as Edward Cone, Peter Westergaard, Ernst Oster, Jim Randall and Milton Babbitt. These five teachers totally changed O’Leary’s vision of music composition at the end of her first year, to such an extent that she changed the specialisation from Music Theory to Composition. In her own words:

Your ear was connecting things from different parts of the score. I had never thought of things like that before, and it was one experience that made me want to be a composer.<sup>3</sup>

After completing her Master’s degree in 1971, she continued studying composition on the Ph.D programme at Princeton, finishing it in 1978, and becoming the second woman to complete a doctorate in music at Princeton University.

Jane O’Leary moved to Ireland in 1972, homeland of the Irish engineer Patrick O’Leary, whom she had married a few months before in Princeton. Before meeting her husband, she was oblivious to life in Ireland; thus moving to this country was a big step and a huge change in O’Leary’s life. However, she was positive that music could open any door for her and she could make a living from teaching piano and

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<sup>3</sup> Dwyer, Benjamin: *Different Voices: Irish Music and Music in Ireland* (Hofheim: Wolke Verlag, 2014), 115.

composing. After living in Galway for three years, she moved to Dublin to teach in the College of Music in 1975. It was then when she became the secretary of the Association of Young Irish Composers, which gave her the opportunity to meet other colleagues such as Frank Corcoran, Denise Kelly, John Buckley, Denise Kelly, Brian Beckett and Derek Ball, among others.

Nevertheless, being one of the very few women among Irish composers as well as coming from a completely different music background, subsequently resulted in O'Leary's music being misunderstood, disliked and rejected by the music firmament at that time. The extensive training in serialism she brought from the United States did not match the compositional aesthetic of her new Irish peers and was considered radical. Additionally, the fact that composition schools were non-existent in the island made it extremely difficult for O'Leary to integrate herself in this static community, as twelve-tone music was absolutely absent in Ireland.

However, the isolation she was feeling from the Irish music scene, especially from composers and critics, did not come from performers. This was seen as an opportunity to find her own path and, as a result, she ended up founding the chamber music ensemble, Concorde, in 1976, becoming one of the most recognised ensembles of new Irish contemporary music.

In spite of her efforts, O'Leary did not feel a part of a community of composers until she discovered the International League of Women Composers in 1979. As she declares:

Joining this group, I suddenly found a community that I could be part of. It was only then that I realized that, maybe, because I was a woman I was excluded from the Irish environment.<sup>4</sup>

During those years, she became involved in composing for the *Festival of 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Music* which was held in Dublin and run annually. As there were no other remarkable musical events at the time, O'Leary decided to look for a long term project, and subsequently she created Music for Galway in 1981, the city she moved to three years before and has been living in since. This was a regular platform for

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<sup>4</sup> Dwyer, Benjamin: *Different Voices: Irish Music and Music in Ireland* (Hofheim: Wolke Verlag, 2014), 123.

promoting music, composers and performers of which she has been the Artistic Director until 2013.

It was not until O’Leary joined Aosdána in 1981 that she suddenly started feeling some recognition from a renowned national institution and realised about the relevance of her role within the Irish music scene. Although she was not born Irish, her pride of being acknowledged as an Irish composer has grown exponentially since then.

Jane O’Leary’s music style significantly shifted in 1983 from pure serialism to a more colourful, sensual and spacious sound, that is reflected in the two pieces, which will be analysed in Chapter three of this dissertation. This new conception about sound and music is what still defines her composition style at present. She refers to this evolution in the passage excerpted below:

Webern was the composer I studied most at Princeton. He was the composer I liked most of all. His music is so fine and detailed [...] That he could be serialist and provide this sound also is perhaps what attracted me to it. I worked with those fragmented motives. But from 1983 onwards, I tried to make them stretch. I was critiquing myself and thinking that I was not really making the fragments form as a whole.<sup>5</sup>

Concorde also contributed to her new musical approach by providing O’Leary with the opportunity of meeting numerous outstanding international performers such as Harry Sparnaay, Paul Roe and Garth Knox, who allowed her to explore an unlimited world of instruments possibilities.

In 2007, the National University of Ireland awarded O’Leary an honorary Doctor of Music Degree, recognising this way her intense work to promote the performance and composition of new Irish music throughout the island and abroad.

Her music has been performed at international venues including the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., the Chicago Cultural Center, the Lincoln Center or the Carnegie Hall in New York, as well as the National Concert Hall in Dublin and numerous festivals such as the ISCM World New Music Days. Her music has also been

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<sup>5</sup> Dwyer, Benjamin: *Different Voices: Irish Music and Music in Ireland* (Hofheim: Wolke Verlag, 2014), 126.



recorded multiple times, highlighting the chamber music CD, *In the Stillness of Time*, which was released in 2007 on the Capstone label.

At present, Jane O'Leary teaches composition at DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama, continues to work with Concorde as its founder, director and pianist in widely spreading contemporary music, and develops her relentless commitment to Irish Music as the artistic director of The Galway Music Residency.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

# **ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEMPORARY REPERTOIRE FOR SOLO CLARINET/BASS CLARINET**

## CHAPTER TWO

# ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEMPORARY REPERTOIRE FOR SOLO CLARINET/BASS CLARINET

### 2.1. Introduction

This chapter will analyse five examples of works for clarinet/bass clarinet by eminent contemporary music composers such as Karlheinz Stockhausen or Edison Denisov, with the aim of providing a wider perspective of the repertoire for solo clarinet/bass clarinet of the last fifty years while simultaneously placing Jane O’Leary’s *oeuvre* for these instruments in context.

### 2.2. *Harlekin* and *In Freundschaft* for Solo Clarinet by Karlheinz Stockhausen

Stockhausen’s compositions for melodic instruments evolved quite variously. For example, *Harlekin* (Harlequin), which is a solo work for clarinet that lasts about forty-four minutes, requires the player to perform the piece by heart and to move about in space with very specific movements and gestures that are notated on the score very precisely. In this case and other Stockhausen’s pieces like *In Freundschaft* (In Friendship), the musician becomes a character itself; it is the protagonist. In the composer’s own words:

The spirit of *Harlequin* is manifested in the interpreter, and the interpreter is transformed into the eternal Harlequin.<sup>1</sup>

He constantly experimented with the interpreters regarding his compositions, he would conduct the ensemble or the individual player (in case it was a solo piece) during numerous rehearsals, attending all premieres, with the purpose of learning directly from the musicians how to correctly notate things on the score. He composed

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<sup>1</sup> Pasveer, Kathinka: ‘Karlheinz Stockhausen: Exemplary Winds for the Next Millennium’, *The Clarinet*, 26/1 (1998), 64-68 (p. 64).

more than forty works for the clarinetist, Suzanne Stephens, and for other very remarkable interpreters as well, with a strong intention of collaborating with them.

*In Freundschaft* (In Friendship) was originally composed in 1977 as a birthday present for Stephens and the premiere was given in Paris in 1978, performed by the dedicatee; as mentioned above, Stockhausen often composed works with a particular player in mind. It is a very complex piece and Stockhausen made some indications in order for the audience to better follow the process of the piece by forms of movement and gestures executed by the clarinetist. Thus, the performer draws in the air the intervals and melodic lines by moving the clarinet vertically in proportion to the size of the intervals, and must do the same horizontally to show the temporal placement.

*Harlekin* and *In Freundschaft* represent, among other Stockhausen's compositions, a very important example of a long and close collaborative process between the composer and the clarinetist, Suzanne Stephens, similarly to what Jane O'Leary and Paul Roe have accomplished for more than twenty years, which will be deeply analysed in Chapters Three and Four.

### **2.3. *Sonata for Solo Clarinet by Edison Denisov***

The Russian composer, Edison Denisov, wrote several interesting pieces for clarinet such as *Concerto for Flute and Clarinet with Orchestra*, *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano*, *Clarinet Concerto* and *Sonata for Solo Clarinet*. The latter was composed and dedicated to Lev Mikhailov in 1972, and it has a two-movement form that was later reproduced in several other compositions that he wrote.

The first movement is a prelude, its nature is purely improvisational, but not *ad libitum*; there are no bar lines, not even the smallest element of rhythmic ostinato. The musical texture changes continuously and freely. As these rhythmic structures are very complicated, there is a feeling of free improvisation on the clarinet part. The entire range of the clarinet is actively used in the first movement. There is a gradual development directed upward toward the climax, which is written in the highest

register of the clarinet; after that, everything descends and finishes at the lowest pitch of the clarinet.

The second movement completely contrasts with the first one. The texture of the music is continuously changing as well as the metre shifts. In addition, the rhythmic patterns are very complex. We can find two different structures: the first one works constantly and without any reiteration, represented by spots of maximum freedom, and the second structure is represented by frequent repetition in different rhythms of the pitch A-flat in *staccato*, which in some point is mirrored by G of the lower octave.

The author finds some similarities in Jane O'Leary's *Within Without*, specially the first movement of Denisov's Sonata. The peaceful character of the music, the up and down melodic line starting on the lowest notes and reaching the *altissimo* register of the clarinet, right in the climax of this first movement, is something that one finds in a more expansive manner in Jane O'Leary's solo clarinet piece. It is clear that it was the intention of Edison Denisov to explore the incredible register of the clarinet throughout this Sonata but he is doing it in the first movement in a really melodic, refined and subtle way, using trills and flutter tonguing to look for different colours and personalities, sometimes in *pianissimo* and other parts in *fortissimo*, just like Jane does in *Within/Without* where the use of colour is the essence of the piece itself.

#### **2.4. *Wings for Solo Clarinet by Joan Tower***

*Wings* is a piece for solo clarinet written by Joan Tower in 1981 for her friend and colleague, Laura Flax, as they both were members of the group The Da Capo Chamber Players, founded in 1970. The present author had the opportunity to establish contact with Flax via email and this is what she shared in relation to *Wings*:

After many performances together of Messiaen Quartet for the End of Time, and Joan listening to my interpretation of *Abyss of the Birds*, she wrote *Wings* for me. It was a piece that emerged from our close collaboration and mutual respect. (Email to the author from Laura Flax, 15 May 2016, Appendix A: 60)

*Wings* was composed as an equivalent to Messiaen's third movement of the Quartet for the End of Time, *Abyss of Birds*, a solo clarinet movement. As Flax affirms:

I always think of *Wings* as the uplifting soaring counterpart to *Abyss*, written in the 1980s after that terrible time in our history had been resolved. (Email from Flax, 15 May 2016)

Regarding the technical and performance difficulties of this piece, Flax states:

*Wings* pushes the limits of the instrument [clarinet] in a similar way as *Abyss*: slow, high, soft, and adds some more contemporary challenges: endurance, motor rhythms. [...] I learned how to circular breathe for *Wings*, it allowed me to transcend the fatigue and breathlessness and enjoy the soaring diving of the giant condors. (Email from Flax, 15 May 2016)

She also mentioned to the present author how they worked collaboratively along the process:

Joan [Tower] would send me a page or so at a time, I was living in San Francisco for that year, and I would tape it and snail mail back to her. (Email from Flax, 15 May 2016)

In conversations with Jane O'Leary, the title of *Wings* came out as one of the pieces for solo clarinet that she remembers greatly and might have influenced her approach to the clarinet composition:

I like the kind of fluid line that clarinet makes, because it's a wind instrument, the kind of continuous line and that kind of floating feeling of flying, I liked that about that piece [*Wings*], I remember flutter effects, with tremolos and some things. (Interview with Jane O'Leary, Appendix B: 65)

The present author started a research on *Wings* and found a deep connection between Joan Tower and Jane O'Leary. They both are Americans, specifically from the New York state, they both are almost the same age, female composers and pianists, too; and the most interesting connection: they both run their own ensembles of contemporary music—Tower founded The Da Capo Chamber Players in 1970 and O'Leary did it with Concorde in 1976. Additionally, Joan Tower always writes with a particular player in mind (exactly the same way O'Leary has done and continues doing) and they both tremendously enjoy writing music for people; for *their* people. As O'Leary declares:

I have to actually hear the people am writing for, I need to know what they sound like, and I always hear Paul's sound. When I'm writing for Concorde ensemble, I hear him playing in his particular style and I think that in itself encourages me to be brave and a little more exploratory than I would normally be. (Interview with Jane O'Leary, Appendix B: 67)

Indeed, as Joan Tower echoed in an interview:

I like to work with performers. I was a performer for a long time and I know their problems. A piece of music is a two-way street. It's a performer and a composer, and I think the two have to work together to create this thing. So I accept commissions from people who have that feeling about it, and who are willing to work together on it, rather than me just writing something and handing it to them and saying, 'Okay, now it's your turn'.<sup>2</sup>

This is certainly a very interesting fact that the present author has been researching and on which he had harboured suspicions, but had not found the last piece of the puzzle until he conducted the interview with O'Leary. He told her that he had been in contact with Laura Flax, the clarinet player for whom *Wings* had been composed, and he showed her the email that Flax had sent back. It was at that precise moment when O'Leary told the present author that Joan Tower had been an inspiration for her, and that when she came to Ireland in 1972 she wanted to do what Tower had done in New York a few years before: to run her own ensemble of new music—that was the reason why Jane O'Leary founded Concorde in 1976. In her own words:

When thinking about setting up a contemporary music ensemble in Ireland, I was greatly inspired by a few groups in the USA. I was aware of the work of Da Capo Players, Speculum Musicae, New York Group for Contemporary Music, all of which were founded in the sixties and seventies... and was curious to note that Joan Tower, a pianist and composer like myself, had founded Da Capo Players with a similar mission to Concorde. In a way, they were a model for Concorde. I was also a fan of Joan's music and we played a number of her pieces several times with Concorde (in 1996, 2003, 2007) ... In addition to *Wings* there was a quintet called *Amazon* which I liked very much. I included her orchestral work *Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman* in an orchestral concert with the NSO which I programmed (including my own work) - it was part of the 'Horizons' series. (Email to the author from Jane O'Leary, 8 July 2016, Appendix E: 99)

## 2.5. *Monolog for Solo Bass Clarinet by Isang Yun*

Isang Yun was a successful Korean composer of avant-garde music who introduced traditional Korean elements in his own compositions within a Western musical context.

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<sup>2</sup> Duffie, Bruce: 'Composer Joan Tower, a conversation with Bruce Duffie', *Bruce Duffie*, accessed 25 June 2016, <http://www.bruceDuffie.com/tower.html>

In 1981, Isang Yun composed a Concerto for Bb clarinet and orchestra. In the middle section of this concerto, the clarinet player must switch to bass clarinet and perform passages just as technically challenging as any of the Bb clarinet passages.

World-renowned bass clarinetist Harry Sparnaay was apparently captivated by this middle movement of the *Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra*, as he continuously asked Isang Yun for years to compose a work for bass clarinet. As clarinetist Paul Roe describes:

I think nobody could deny that Harry [Sparnaay] is the most wonderful artist musician, and I think that's been the biggest influence in many ways. (Interview with Paul Roe, Appendix C: 90)

Isang Yun finally did it and wrote a piece in 1983 for bass clarinet titled *Monolog*. In 1997, two years after Isang Yun passed away, K. Tod Kerstetter stated:

In a letter I received from Yun in 1995, Yun said that Sparnaay had been asking him for years for a bass clarinet work. Sparnaay's persistence apparently paid off, as Yun decided to adapt and expand the bass clarinet section of this concerto into a self-contained work.<sup>3</sup>

This work for bass clarinet exploits the full range of the low-C bass clarinet, making constant use of the *altissimo* register, reaching the most extreme notes, including high C. When listening to this piece and other Isang Yun's works, one notices that every single note contains some change in dynamics, accent or some sort of ornament, nothing stays without a constant variation in dynamics. According to clarinetist K. Tod Kerstetter:

I have performed this work in three recitals and have found that, despite its decidedly avant-garde leanings, *Monolog* is always well received by audiences.<sup>4</sup>

The *clarinet concerto* and the *Monolog* for bass clarinet are the only pieces for solo clarinet composed by Isang Yun. However, Yun's chamber music works including clarinet are quite significant; he wrote two quintets for clarinet and string quartet, a reed trio (oboe, clarinet and bassoon), two woodwind quintets and an octet.

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<sup>3</sup> Kerstetter, K. Tod: 'The Clarinet Music of Isang Yun', *The Clarinet*, 24/4 (1997), 36-38 (p. 36).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.



It is clear the influence of Harry Sparnaay in Yun's bass clarinet work, always with the aim of stretching out the repertoire for bass clarinet. Many composers have also received this important influence, including Jane O'Leary. As she stated:

I remember actually Harry [Sparnaay], the first time he played with us [Concorde], saying: 'Why are you all sitting down? You don't sit down when you play, you have to stand up' and Paul [Roe] said: 'I can't stand up with the bass clarinet', and he said: 'Well, you have to get this strap'. We learned how to stand up and play from Harry, and in those days nobody did, of course nowadays everybody does. (Interview with Jane O'Leary, Appendix B: 69)

## 2.6. *Monster* for Solo Bass Clarinet by Ed Bennett

*Monster* is the perfect example of how collaboration between composers and performers can have a deep impact on the music making process and it is a good starting point for what will be analysed below in Chapters Three and Four. It is a piece for solo bass clarinet composed in 2005 by Irish composer Ed Bennett and commissioned by Paul Roe with funds provided by the Arts Council of Ireland. It was premiered by Paul Roe on 16 July 2005 at Galway Arts Festival.

This bass clarinet work was part of Paul Roe's doctorate thesis, entitled '*A Phenomenology of Collaboration in Contemporary Composition and Performance*' (University of York, 2007).

Paul Roe commissioned five Irish composers including Jane O'Leary, Rob Canning, Stephen Gardner, Ronan Guilfoyle and Ed Bennett to write solo bass clarinet pieces with the aim of providing first-hand inputs about the collaborative process between composer and performer in a practical context. Paul Roe stated:

Typically, the composer is seen as 'creator', the performer as 'interpreter', and the audience as the 'recipient' of the music. This inherent hegemony creates division between these musicians, creating expressive barriers in the development and the dissemination of new work. In this research, the creative process of both composition and performance are assessed in the context of collaborative practice, in a continuum where both composers and performers are seen as integrated elements within music making.<sup>5</sup>

One of his findings is that collaborative work makes a profoundly impact on performer's practice, as Paul Roe notes, 'these benefits include increased motivation,

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<sup>5</sup> Roe, Paul: '*A Phenomenology of Collaboration in Contemporary Composition and Performance*' (Ph.D diss., The University of York, 2007), 2.

creative stimulation, multiple communication modes and notational clarification'. (Roe 2007: 2).

Under this mutual, intimate and experimental collaboration *Monster* for bass clarinet was created. Immediately from the first page, one can notice the level of practicality involved in this work, as the composer gives details about how to achieve a good performance of this piece:

The performer should use a stopwatch to synchronise with the tape part. This should be started immediately upon a cue from the tape operator. [...] The bass clarinet should be amplified [...] Dynamics are given for the live part and should be judged in relation to the tape part. In general, the balance between the two parts should be equal and the overall dynamic should be loud.<sup>6</sup>

As described in the performance and technical directions on the score, the dynamic of the piece is generally loud. It combines the loudness of the tape part which includes various sounds and speaking parts with an amplified bass clarinet and its capability of reaching big dynamics. In general, this piece provides the performer with a huge room of flexibility, especially the last section of it when it reaches the climax point and the bass clarinet becomes a 'monster' itself. As Paul Roe states, 'Bennett spoke about not taking the score too literally and taking liberties; he described how towards the end of the piece the music reaches a kind of meltdown, approaching chaos'. (Roe 2007: 165).

The present author has performed this work several times and has to point out that the audience really enjoys and likes it; it has an improvisational feeling that makes it fresh and new, and it is great to look at their faces while doing the performance of it and try to surprise them with all the dynamic and colour changes involved. The overall impression of the audience is that this piece is extremely wild because of the bass clarinet's behaviour throughout the entire piece and the use of speakers and amplification for the bass clarinet.

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<sup>6</sup> Bennett, Ed: *Monster for bass clarinet and tape*, (2005), 1.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

# **COMPOSITIONAL STYLE AND REPERTOIRE FOR CLARINET/BASS CLARINET**

## CHAPTER THREE

### JANE O'LEARY'S COMPOSITIONAL STYLE AND REPERTOIRE FOR CLARINET/BASS CLARINET

#### 3.1. Introduction

Jane O'Leary has been an active composer for almost fifty years, with a catalogue of works that comprises a vast amount of orchestral, chamber music, solo instrumental and vocal pieces.

Being originally trained as a pianist led her to write many compositions for this instrument, exploring it from a more personal, reflective and intimate perspective. However, among her compositions, those featuring clarinet are also certainly remarkable, as they represent a significant input to the repertoire for this instrument and a completely different approach to the compositional process. The foundation of Concorde in 1976 offered O'Leary a completely new scenario for her to investigate and develop a new way of thinking about music composition, as it broadened her knowledge about the capabilities of other instruments as well as offered her the opportunity to work closely with the finest Irish musicians, which subsequently encouraged her to undertake an exploration on how collaboration between performer and composer can benefit and positively impact the compositional process. Among these performers, Harry Sparnaay and, moreover, Paul Roe, have had a strong influence in Jane O'Leary's compositions for clarinet, which stand out for comprising the outcomes of an enriching feedback and collaborative process between both parties.

The result of this is a wide repertoire of nineteen pieces featuring clarinet since 1969 and remarkably fruitful since 2000 (see Appendix I: 110), displaying a strong interest of the composer towards this instrument which continues to date, proven by the fact that one of O'Leary's latest pieces, *murmurs and echoes*, premiered in 2016, was written for clarinet and piano.

### 3.2. Jane O’Leary’s Initial Contact with the Clarinet

Even though the instrument that has dominated Jane O’Leary’s musical career has been the piano, the clarinet also occupies a very special place within O’Leary’s *oeuvre*.

Her relationship with the clarinet starts back in the years when O’Leary was attending high school, as her best friend at the time, Joy, would play the clarinet in the school band. That led to a personal and special first approach to this instrument which implied an awareness of the clarinet from a very early stage in her life. In O’Leary’s own words:

I remember my friend playing in the band, and I remember how much she loved the clarinet and she still does [...] I’ve written a number of pieces for her as an amateur clarinetist. (Interview with Jane O’Leary, Appendix B: 61)

Only a few years later, when Jane O’Leary enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts in piano at Vassar College in New York State, one of her colleagues, Susan, happened to be a clarinetist, so they teamed up as a clarinet and piano duo. This duo project offered her the opportunity to attend masterclasses with remarkable clarinetists who unveiled multiple aspects of the instrument that were unfamiliar to her until then, and consequently increased her interest towards the clarinet.

We actually used to go to New York for lessons with her [Susan’s] teacher who was principal clarinetist in the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra in New York. That to me was a revelation because I had only looked at things from the point of view of the piano [...] He talked about the clarinet as a voice, as a singer, because obviously he played in the Opera Orchestra, so I’ve got a new way of thinking about the clarinet as a voice. (Interview with Jane O’Leary, Appendix B: 62).

When Jane O’Leary came to Ireland in 1972 after completing her Master’s degree in composition in Princeton and her foundation of an ensemble to explore new music, she would not hesitate to include the clarinet as one of the instruments that integrated this ensemble. As Jane O’Leary declares: ‘I started Concorde as an ensemble to play new music in 1976; of course there had to be a clarinet in it.’ (Interview with Jane O’Leary, Appendix B: 62).

O'Leary rapidly thought of Brian O'Rourke, the principal clarinet player of the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland at that time, to cover this role. However, O'Rourke would be later replaced by Paul Roe in 1990, who continues to be the clarinettist of Concorde to date and has deeply influenced Jane O'Leary's compositions for clarinet since then.

### **3.3. The Influence of Performers in Jane O'Leary's Compositions for Clarinet/Bass Clarinet: Paul Roe and Harry Sparnaay**

Jane O'Leary's main compositions for clarinet cannot be understood in isolation from the remarkable clarinettists that have always been connected to the Concorde ensemble and have deeply influenced her approach to this instrument.

Concorde was founded in 1976 and this ensemble included clarinettist O'Rourke since the very beginning. However, after being part of Concorde for more than ten years, he finally decided to end up his collaboration with this contemporary music ensemble due to personal reasons.

O'Rourke had been working with us since the start in '76. Brian wanted to leave, he was happy to be part of the ensemble, but contemporary music wasn't his first love, I'd be honest, it was challenging for him in terms of what he loved. (Interview with Jane O'Leary, Appendix B: 66)

In view of the need of finding a new clarinet player, Jane O'Leary asked Madeleine Staunton, founder member of Concorde and flautist of the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, who proposed her colleague in the orchestra, Paul Roe, for the role. It is important to remark that O'Leary did not personally know Roe before that moment, so their musical relationship started right within the ensemble when Paul Roe joined it in 1990; therefore, it is sensible to state that this enriching and fruitful musical partnership between composer and performer would have never occurred, or at least not at the same level, without the existence of Concorde.

Roe immediately connected with the ensemble; his positive attitude towards musical exploration and openness to new ideas entirely matched Concorde's principles, while the ensemble also offered him the opportunity to try out new

repertoire, expand his creativity and start defining himself not only as a musician, but as an artist. In his own words:

I was invited to come and play with the ensemble [...] It was very important, because I was second clarinet in the orchestra [...] I wasn't getting the amount of opportunities one would like to get as a chamber musician or a soloist or whatever, so then to begin to find that actually this contemporary music thing I really have a connection with it and it gives me an opportunity to define myself as an artist musician [...] I certainly felt at the time it was an important step that gave me a boost in my confidence. (Interview with Paul Roe, Appendix C: 85)

Over the following years, Paul Roe would find himself more and more involved with the ensemble, new music and new ideas, but at the same time more detached from the classical music world and the old-fashioned dynamics he was experiencing within the orchestra at the time. Roe began to feel frustrated due to the fact that playing in the orchestra was somehow curtailing his creativity. As a result, he decided to take a year out of the orchestra in 1999-2000 to complete a Master's Degree in Community Music in the University of Limerick; that year was a total revelation as Roe could explore a whole new world of possibilities at a professional and personal level, and consequently the thought of returning to the orchestra was not considered as an option for him anymore. Thus, in 2000, he finally resigned and started out a completely new chapter in his career, focused now on a more creative approach to music, education and art. In Paul Roe's words:

The skills that you own [as an orchestral player] are ones of focus, concentration, resilience and ability to handle pressure and efficiency; however, the other side of that is you don't get a lot of time to explore creatively other ways of doing things, play your playing, your teaching, your artistry [...] Going back into it [the orchestra] was just a question of repetition for the next whatever number of years, and I thought: 'No, let's jump and see what happens'. (Interview with Paul Roe, Appendix C: 83)

Once out of the bounds of the orchestra, Roe deeply immersed himself into Concorde and started to develop his passion and interest for contemporary and New Music. His new attitude, enthusiasm, energy and motivation positively contributed and gave a boost to the ensemble, to such an extent he became a strong player and a leading member of Concorde over the following years.

The influence and prominence of Roe within Concorde also had a deep impact on Jane O'Leary's compositional process, as Roe became a source of inspiration and

provided new creative ideas that pushed her to consider the clarinet as a fascinating new line of research and an attractive and relevant actor within her upcoming compositions. In this regard, O'Leary describes clarinetist Paul Roe as follows:

Very open, very exploring, pushing the edge, always searching for something new and enjoying the challenge. As a musician, again I have to compliment his beautiful sound, the smoothness of his sound, the colour of it. I like his flexibility, the fact that he's [...] willing to try new things, anything really, to see what works best. (Interview with Jane O'Leary, Appendix B: 66)

Likewise, the important contribution and positive impact that Roe had on O'Leary's compositions from that moment onwards, within the context of Concorde but from the perspective of the clarinet as a potential source of creativity and line of investigation, is also described by the composer as follows:

I would be encouraged in the ensemble pieces to write things for clarinet which maybe I wouldn't have thought of, because Paul would push me in a more exploratory direction with the instrument. (Interview with Jane O'Leary, Appendix B: 67)

All things considered, it seems reasonable to assume that the incorporation of Paul Roe into Concorde was a perfect match since the beginning and has been an enriching and fruitful partnership thus far. It is a perfect symbiosis that comes to draw out the best potential of all parties: O'Leary being encouraged to explore new possibilities and try out new musical concepts, and Roe finding the best scenario to develop his creative, innovative and ambitious ideas.

Apart from Roe, there is another paramount figure related to this instrument that has hugely influenced all members of Concorde and specially both Jane O'Leary and Paul Roe: Dutch virtuoso bass clarinet player Harry Sparnaay.

Harry Sparnaay is considered the world's ever most important bass clarinet performer, having been very active internationally since the 1960s and responsible for commissioning clarinet and bass clarinet works from a vast amount of composers around the world. In fact, there are more than 650 pieces featuring these instruments that have been written specifically for Harry Sparnaay by renowned composers such as Luciano Berio or Iannis Xenakis, among others, and he has also participated in



more than eighty CDs as a soloist and together with different ensembles, including Concorde. American expert in historical clarinets Eric Hoeplich states:

In recent years, much repertoire [for bass clarinet] has been forthcoming, in large part due to players of great ability and compelling personality such as Josef Horák and Harry Sparnaay, to name only two.<sup>1</sup>

Other eminent figures within the clarinet community also confirm Sparnaay's big influence on bass clarinet: 'Sparnaay has had nearly 300 bass clarinet works written for him, one of the most important of which is Berio's *Chemins Ilc* (1972)' (Pamela Weston 1995: 104), and 'amongst other important Dutch artists are George Pietersen and the avant-garde bass clarinetist Harry Sparnaay' (Michael Bryant 1995: 210). Clarinetist Paul Roe states:

He [Harry Sparnaay] is the ideal representative of the bass clarinet, I mean if you wanted to pick one personality who kind of represents the bass clarinet, Harry is it, in so many ways. (Interview with Paul Roe, Appendix C: 89)

In the 1990s, Concorde's international presence was very remarkable, as they were members of The European Conference of Promoters of New Music at the time and had consequently performed numerous concerts throughout Europe. It is probable that some of these contemporary music performances, which also took place in the Netherlands, attracted Sparnaay's attention towards Concorde, as he ended up writing to their director Jane O'Leary in 2000 with the clear intention of collaborating and working along with the Irish ensemble. Therefore, Sparnaay's initiative of contacting Concorde directly responded to his continuous aim of progressing in his career as well as promoting the bass clarinet within the international music scene, in such a way that his significant input laid the foundations of the bass clarinet world as we know it today. In fact, Sparnaay is today considered one of the main ambassadors of this instrument worldwide, to the extent that many of the most important figures among the bass clarinet community nowadays, such as Michael Lowenstern or Lori Freedman, are immediate disciples of Sparnaay.

Harry Sparnaay finally travelled to Ireland several times and performed seven concerts along with the Concorde ensemble, which took place in February and June

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<sup>1</sup> Hoeplich, Eric: *The Clarinet* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 277.

of 2001, December of 2002, July of 2005 as part of the Galway Arts Festival, and also in September of 2008 at the National Gallery in Dublin. Prominent among these performances is the participation in the Festival Bank of Ireland Arts Centre in Dublin in 2002, when they premiered O'Leary's *Reflections II*, a piece specifically written for an ensemble including two bass clarinets, featuring Paul Roe and Harry Sparnaay sharing the action together. Furthermore, Sparnaay did not only get involved into performances throughout the island but also gave some masterclasses to clarinet students as well as composers, in an effort to enhance and disseminate the bass clarinet repertoire in Ireland which Sparnaay would sustain for almost a decade.

Sparnaay's collaboration with Concorde has proven to be an important boost for the ensemble, as he not only pushed them towards new repertoire, ideas and trends, but also led Concorde to finally adopt a fresher and more open approach to new music performance, which also better connected to the audience. In O'Leary's words:

He opened it [the repertoire] up and made us braver and more sensitive to certain things that you need to listen for in an ensemble. He is such a strong player that when you're playing with him, he would clearly lead the ensemble [...] You need somebody to kind of push it forward at certain stages and Harry and Paul did that at important times. (Interview with Jane O'Leary, Appendix B: 69)

Another of Sparnaay's main contributions to the ensemble was unveiling the bass clarinet as a fascinating instrument within the contemporary music scene. This undoubtedly caused a deep impact on Paul Roe, who rediscovered this instrument from a completely different perspective, as an opportunity to innovate and develop his creativity, as well as a new means of expressing and defining himself as a musician. As O'Leary states:

When we got to know Harry, I think it was only then that Paul got interested in the bass clarinet and saw that it could be a solo instrument and all the kind of attractions of it for contemporary music [...] He really taught us everything we know about the bass clarinet. (Interview with Jane O'Leary, Appendix B: 69)

Moreover, meeting and working along with Harry Sparnaay certainly had a great influence on O'Leary's compositions. She would discover in the bass clarinet an instrument with a considerably more rounded, rich and flexible sound, offering

interesting tone colours and creative possibilities. At the same time, she would find in Sparnaay a powerful performer with a distinctive personal sound and an intense playing full of character and nuances, all of which became an important source of inspiration for the composer. As a result, during their collaborative period, O'Leary managed to write two new ensemble pieces for Sparnaay featuring bass clarinet, *Reflections II* (2002) and *For the Moment* (2003). As O'Leary describes:

I suppose what would influence me, as I said, when I'm writing, [is that] I'd like to know who I'm writing for, I'd like to hear their sound, and Harry is such a strong player. (Interview with Jane O'Leary, Appendix B: 70)

### **3.4. Jane O'Leary's Approach to Clarinet/Bass Clarinet Composition**

As previously mentioned, one of the characteristics of the clarinet that struck O'Leary the most since the beginning was its capability of singing, with the same expressivity and breathing requirements as a voice. During her compositional career, O'Leary would deepen into this analogy of the clarinet as a voice and become really attracted by the way this instrument can display different personalities, emotions and characters.

However, it is the sound of the clarinet itself, specifically its colour, timbre and nuances, what really fascinates O'Leary when writing for this instrument. Its versatility allows the composer to use it in every kind of ensemble, even as a solo instrument, as well as it is perfectly adaptable to many different roles. As a result, O'Leary's compositions for clarinet feature this instrument in multiple combinations, such as clarinet with string quartet as in *Soundshapes II* (2007), clarinet within an ensemble as in *Sunshowers* (2007 - alto flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello, piano and percussion), clarinet with piano as in *murmurs and echoes* (2015), or solo clarinet as in *Within/Without* (2000). As O'Leary states:

It's the sound, the actual colour of it, which is kind of mellow, and it kind of blends with almost anything, and it's capable of all kinds of different characters, because it's like a voice and it plays with breath. (Interview with Jane O'Leary, Appendix B: 63)

Nevertheless, following up on this idea of the clarinet as a vehicle to express different personalities, O'Leary would not dissociate the clarinet itself from the

performer who plays it. When it comes to wind instruments, every single performer has distinctive and unique physiological characteristics, performance skills and musical personality that consequently intervene in the production of a genuine and personal tone. In her own words:

It's also very important who is playing it and how they play it, it's kind of a personality behind the instrument. And I'm fascinated by the way different players make different sounds on the instrument. (Interview with Jane O'Leary, Appendix B: 63)

Additionally, the range of the clarinet is also a very important element in O'Leary's compositions for clarinet, but she would always consider it in relation to the actual colour of the instrument. She would not find relevant which specific notes she is using for a particular passage, but how low or how high the pitch of each note is positioned in relation to the overall shape of the piece, as well as the different nuances and timbres they produce depending on how each note sounds or which register across the clarinet range (*chalumeau*, *throat tones*, *clarion* and *altissimo*) is involved in each specific phrase.

On the other hand, when talking about Jane O'Leary's works for clarinet, the bass clarinet also deserves a special mention. At the beginning, the use of this instrument in O'Leary's pieces only responded to a registral necessity; whenever she wanted to write something in a lower register, she might decide to use the bass clarinet instead of the clarinet for that particular purpose. However, as O'Leary's knowledge about the bass clarinet grew (due to her musical relationship with Paul Roe and Harry Sparnaay), her thoughts about this instrument drastically changed. First of all, her new approach to the bass clarinet was not related to pitch anymore, but more indebted to the great variety of tone colours and timbre that this instrument is able to produce. Likewise, another factor that fascinated O'Leary was the fact that this is a more flexible instrument, capable of producing a more rounded and quieter sound, especially in the *altissimo* register, which also offers the performer much more room to explore all these different colours through special effects such as multiphonics, flutter tonguing, vibrato or slap tonguing. O'Leary was so impressed by the possibilities of the bass clarinet that she would choose it for many of her

compositions instead of the B-flat clarinet, as had also occurred, for example, with the alto flute over the flute. Jane O’Leary declares:

I got to know the bass clarinet over the years with Paul [Roe] and with Harry Sparnaay [...] I got to know it more intimately, I became very fond of its characteristics. [...] I tended, once I got to know the bass clarinet, to use it in preference to the clarinet, again that’s that softness of sound. (Interview with Jane O’Leary, Appendix B: 64)

One feature that is very present in Jane O’Leary’s compositional style is the vertical dimension of her music, as she always tries to create a space in which music happens, which is a concept that may have been inherited from her training as a pianist. From this perspective, the nature of the clarinet as a single line instrument, in contrast to the piano, implies a challenge that O’Leary overcomes with the use of special effects such as multiphonics, flutter tonguing or tremolos. As O’Leary explains:

What I like to do is define the vertical dimension in the music, and I love the way you can stretch the single line out into a bigger space either with multiphonics or with tremolos of any size, that kind of creates a space. [...] That challenge of trying to get a vertical shape out of a more of a linear type of instrument is something that appeals to me. (Interview with Jane O’Leary, Appendix B: 63)

### **3.5. Conclusion**

All things considered, it is reasonable to conclude that Jane O’Leary’s compositions for clarinet and bass clarinet cannot be understood without the presence of clarinetists Paul Roe and Harry Sparnaay, who certainly marked a turning point in her approach to these instruments as well as in her overall compositional style, which since then leaned towards a more collaborative process influenced by the performers’ personality and sound.

In fact, it is possible to detect the mentioned turning point throughout the composer’s oeuvre. Although O’Leary’s first piece featuring clarinet and bass clarinet, *Quartet* (1969), was composed in her early years, when she was only a 23-year-old student driven by her friendship with fellow clarinet students, yet during the subsequent three decades only three more pieces were added to the composer’s repertoire for this instrument. In contrast, it is noticeable how O’Leary’s clarinet and bass clarinet repertoire have grown exponentially since 2000, which coincides with

the year during which Paul Roe resigned from the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland and Harry Sparnaay started his collaboration with the Concorde ensemble. Therefore, only four ensemble pieces including clarinet/bass clarinet were written by O'Leary during a period of three decades, but since 2000, fifteen more compositions have been created, not only for ensemble but now for solo instrument as well, the last of which, *murmurs and echoes* (2015), was premiered recently. Among these pieces, *Within/Without* (2000) and *a piacere* (2005), written for solo clarinet and solo bass clarinet, respectively, are the works that better reflect O'Leary's approach and compositional ideas towards these instruments, as will be analysed in Chapter four of this thesis.

Likewise, it is important to underline that this significant evolution in Jane O'Leary's compositions for clarinet would not have occurred outside the Concorde ensemble, which became a breeding ground that has proven paramount for all the mentioned initiatives and innovations that boosted her creativity.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### ***WITHIN/WITHOUT AND A PIACERE:*** **ANALYSIS**

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *WITHIN/WITHOUT AND A PIACERE: ANALYSIS*

#### **4.1. Introduction**

As previously stated in Chapter three of this thesis, Jane O’Leary’s repertoire for clarinet exponentially grew since 2000 due to the remarkable influence that clarinetists Paul Roe and Harry Sparnaay exerted over her from that year onwards, and as a result of a collaborative process that was undertaken between these performers and the composer.

To date, O’Leary has written a total of nineteen compositions featuring clarinet and/or bass clarinet in multiple ensemble combinations, since her first piece in 1969—a full list of works is given below in Appendix I (page 110). Among them, *Within/Without* (2000) and *a piacere* (2005), which are written for solo clarinet and solo bass clarinet, respectively, are thus the clearest exponents that illustrate O’Leary’s approach towards these instruments, which will be described in this chapter on the basis of an analysis of the compositional process, musical ideas and performance challenges involved.

#### **4.2. *Within/Without***

##### **4.2.1. Ideas behind *Within/Without***

*Within/Without* was part of an exhibition entitled *Containers* at the Galway Arts Festival in 2000, curated and organised by Hilary Morley and Sean McCrum. The plan was to commission a number of craftsmen and designers to create objects around the theme of ‘containers’; additionally, five composers (Rob Canning, Michael Alcorn, Katherine Norman, Michael Holohan and Jane O’Leary) were involved in this project to create music that connects with each object. These five works were composed for clarinet/bass clarinet and/or electronic sound, and clarinetist Paul Roe



was the performer who played all these pieces at the exhibition. Additionally, Roe did the world premiere of Jane O’Leary’s *Within/Without* in The Aula Maxima, National University of Ireland, Galway, on 22 July 2000.

Jane O’Leary’s assigned artist was Brian McGee and his idea was to create an amphora. This amphora contained small amphorae, some of them were also placed outside the large amphora on a box of sand; that is why the title *Within/Without* comes together, as little miniatures are inside and outside the big object. The final work was composed for solo B-flat clarinet, written specifically for clarinet performer Paul Roe and lasts around seven minutes.

#### **4.2.2. Compositional Process: Analysis**

*Within/Without* was based on the work of ceramic designer, Brian McGee. McGee’s idea was to create a large amphora and O’Leary wanted to deeply study this very specific type of object before facing the challenge of writing a musical piece that related to Brian McGee’s ‘Amphora Container’. In McGee’s words defining ‘amphora’:

The amphora has come to imply for me almost subconsciously the notions of container. This was the ubiquitous container of the classical world because, as a design, it combined the benefits of beauty, utility, ease of production, portability, stacking in a locking fashion and refrigeration. I was attracted to the beauty of its form, which I have used as a reference point for raku treatment. I like the idea of the public being able to put things in it. I had the idea of putting small amphorae in the base to play with the container-within-a container idea.<sup>1</sup>

Brian McGee’s creation was a large amphora in stoneware with Shino glaze set in circular Perspex holder, containing small amphorae in stoneware, these little miniatures were inside and outside around the large amphora laid on a box of sand. The shape of the big object with two handles and the fact that there were little ones inside and outside it inspired and attracted O’Leary to focus on the relationship between the miniatures and the large amphora and to write a piece for solo clarinet that expressed the form, smoothness, curve lines and shape of McGee’s work.

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<sup>1</sup> McGee, Brian: ‘Amphora container’, *Programme notes* (Galway: Galway Arts Festival, 2000), p. 14.

**Figure 4.1:** McGee 'Amphora container' (2000) Galway Arts Festival programme notes



O'Leary would have worked on this composition for several months and consulted the clarinettist, Paul Roe, along the way. After more than ten years of closely working together within Concorde at that point, O'Leary fully knew Roe's sound and playing-style in the same way that the clarinettist himself would know O'Leary's compositional style and the types of sounds and textures that she favoured. Roe would have made a few changes to the piece and suggested different aspects, most of them related to the multiphonics and the specific fingerings that worked best, and they would have worked together regarding the flutter tonguing for a colouristic effect, and asymmetrical vibrato (a distinct effect that was key to O'Leary); overall, as the piece was very precisely notated and clear from a performer's perspective, Roe would have been more interested in understanding the context behind *Within/Without* and becoming more engaged with the music.

As an introductory observation to what happens in the music, there are little miniature motifs that are echoing the larger overall shape of the piece. In fact, this melodic design is mirroring the form of the large amphora and its small amphorae, as a very precise musical narrative to what Jane O'Leary observes in Brian McGee's work. For instance, the decoration evident in the handles of the amphora is emulated by rich melodic ornamentation. O'Leary's visual inspiration has been a constant throughout her work, as she regularly makes musical connections to visual images—a trait that has become her primary source of inspiration; consequently, *Within/Without* is a work for solo clarinet with a remarkably clear melodic design,

whereas most of other O’Leary’s pieces have been conceived in a more abstract manner. In Jane O’Leary’s words:

I’m very interested in visual images and how they might connect with the music, and it’s a very hard thing I can’t actually explain most of the time how the visual might influence my music. In this piece [*Within/Without*] I can because it’s very clear that the pitch gives a shape and the type of motifs and so on, and I like that it’s almost obvious what’s happening. [...] It’s one of the only pieces I’ve written that had a predetermined shape, in terms of pitch. (Interview with Jane O’Leary, Appendix B: 72)

*Within/Without* is formed by a sequence of short phrases that builds the overall structure of the piece, each of these phrases has its own internal shape and identity. The music starts from the low register of the clarinet and gradually climbs upwards towards the *altissimo* register in the middle section, and then falls back down to the low register again at the end of the piece, with the intention of precisely describing the sinuous and curving lines of this ancient container.

The opening of the composition is written with a very soft dynamic (*ppp*); it starts with a tremolo covering an interval of a fifth in the *chalumeau* register, starting from the lowest note of the clarinet, low E (see Example 4.1); additionally, the exact same tremolo is used for the ending too, creating a perfect sense of unity (see Example 4.2). This tremolo provides a very distinctive colour and movement that fully matches the sinuous shape of the amphora and, furthermore, it allows to broaden the single melodic line into a vertical space, nearly making a chord of two notes, thereby giving the vertical dimension O’Leary always tries to create in her compositions.

**Example 4.1:** O’Leary, 2000: *Within/Without* (opening: bars 1-3).<sup>2</sup>

**Within/Without**

Jane O’Leary

Clarinet in B $\flat$

*ppp*

fluttertongue

<sup>2</sup> O’Leary, Jane: *Within/Without* (Dublin: The Contemporary Music Centre, 2003).

**Example 4.2:** O'Leary, 2000: *Within/Without* (ending: bars 112-115)

Musical score for Clarinet (Cl.) part, bars 112-115. The score is in 4/4 time. It begins at bar 112 with a 'normal' tempo marking and a *pp* dynamic. The music features a series of eighth notes that gradually become more complex. A 'Ritard' marking is placed above the staff, indicating a deceleration. The piece ends at bar 115 with a *ppp* dynamic and a fermata. A rehearsal mark '7.7.00' is located at the end of the staff.

This short phrase consists of two or three bars at the beginning and then it gradually becomes more complex through longer phrases of four, five or six bars. Furthermore, the development of these short phrases are reflected by an increase in the textural density and the melodic pitch activity as well as a constantly modification in the intensity of the music through internal *crescendi* within the phrase, but also in the overall evolution in dynamics, from *ppp* at the beginning of the piece to much bigger dynamics in the middle section (*f* and *ff*). Additionally, the composer provides indications regarding the tempo (*moderato*, *andante*, *presto*, *lento*, etc.) in order to reflect the distinctive character of each of these short phrases, as if they were the little amphorae inside and outside the large amphora.

**Example 4.3:** O'Leary, 2000: *Within/Without* (short phrase: bars 16-17)

Musical score for Clarinet (Cl.) part, bars 16-17. The score is in 2/4 time. It begins at bar 16 with a 'Presto fluttertongue' tempo marking and a *pp* dynamic. The music features a series of eighth notes with a fluttertongue effect. The piece ends at bar 17 with a 'normal' tempo marking and a *mp* dynamic.

**Example 4.4:** O'Leary, 2000: *Within/Without* (short phrase: bars 23-24)

Musical score for Clarinet (Cl.) part, bars 23-24. The score is in 3/4 time. It begins at bar 23 with an 'Andante' tempo marking and a *mf* dynamic. The music features a series of eighth notes. The piece ends at bar 24 with a *p* dynamic and a vibrato ('vib.') marking.

The development of these short phrases has also its equivalent in grace notes, as they become more and more elaborate throughout the whole musical composition. During the first bars, grace note groupings consist of one, two or three

notes, but as it progresses they turn into six or seven grace notes, becoming a proper melody itself, clearly representing the detailed ornaments of the amphora.

**Example 4.5:** O’Leary, 2000: *Within/Without* (grace notes: bar 84)



**Example 4.6:** O’Leary, 2000: *Within/Without* (grace notes: bar 102)



The music reaches its highest point of tension, the climax, in bars 69-72 where the clarinet is into the *altissimo* register, a dynamic of *ff* with *sforzando* and a more agitated melodic design expressed by a trill and grace notes finishing with a fermata prolonging the high C, one of the highest notes the clarinet can produce.

**Example 4.7:** O’Leary, 2000: *Within/Without* (climax: bars 69-72)



After the climax, there is a sense of relaxing of tension through softer dynamics: *mf*, *mp*, *p*, *pp*, *ppp*; gradually switching from the *altissimo* register to the clarion register and ending in the *chalumeau* (low) register; and lastly the melodic design constantly becomes more linear with shorter intervals and considerably much

less activity than the previous middle section represented by a decrease in number of grace notes, making the musical texture more simple.

In bar 106 (see Example 4.9), we find the exact same melodic material from the beginning (see Example 4.8) in *pp* with a *diminuendo* to *ppp*, announcing in a very soft and oneiric way that the piece is about to finish. Additionally, the tempo is gradually slowing down, first with the indication of *Lento* (see Example 4.10), and finally with *Ritard*, leading to a long held note Eb that necessarily resolves into E and the final tremolo (E-B).

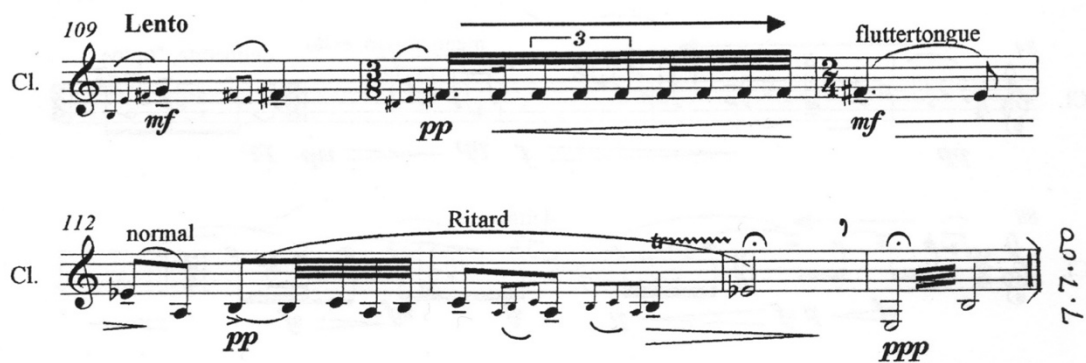
**Example 4.8:** O’Leary, 2000: *Within/Without* (bars 5-6)



**Example 4.9:** O’Leary, 2000: *Within/Without* (bars 106-108)



**Example 4.10:** O’Leary, 2000: *Within/Without* (ending: bars 109-115)



Following O’Leary’s fascination about timbre and colour mentioned in Chapter three, special effects deserve a special mention when analysing *Within/Without*. There are four colouristic effects used in this piece: tremolo, flutter tonguing, vibrato and multiphonics.

The **tremolo** has been previously mentioned above, used to enhance the vertical dimension of the music, as a way to expand the single line into a bigger space vertically.

**Example 4.11:** O’Leary, 2000: *Within/Without* (tremolo: bar 96)



**Flutter tonguing** is a very common effect used in many pieces for clarinet or bass clarinet, it provides a very distinct sound that can change depending on the register of the instrument. According to bass clarinet expert Harry Sparnaay:

The German word “Flatterzunge” (literally trill-tongue) is generally understood by clarinetists to mean making a somewhat raucous sound by using the tongue in a fluttering motion against the reed. This is produced by rolling the tongue as you would when pronouncing the letter R.<sup>3</sup>

Jane O’Leary mostly uses flutter tonguing in the lowest register or also called *chalumeau* register at very soft dynamics (*pp*) (see Example 4.12), but it can also be seen sometimes in the middle register or *clarion* register (see Example 4.13), resulting in a very expressive echo effect.

**Example 4.12:** O’Leary, 2000: *Within/Without* (flutter tonguing: bar 2)



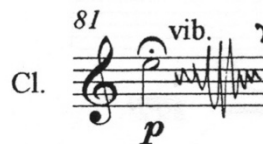
<sup>3</sup> Sparnaay, Harry: *The Bass Clarinet: A Personal History* (Barcelona: Periferia Sheet Music, 2010), 76.

**Example 4.13:** O'Leary, 2000: *Within/Without* (flutter tonguing: bar 45)



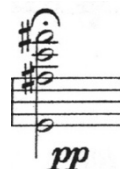
When thinking of **vibrato**, we are used to a perceptible oscillation in pitch at a regular speed, but the vibrato used in *Within/Without* is quite particular, as it should be played very soft (*p*, *pp*) in an asymmetrical manner. It means that the variations in pitch of the sustained tone should be produced with a non-regular pace, with the intention of colouring the long held note.

**Example 4.14:** O'Leary, 2000: *Within/Without* (vibrato: bar 81)



**Multiphonics** are considered an extended technique only produced by single line instruments, as in the case of the clarinet. It consists of playing more than one note at once. We can find three multiphonics in *Within/Without* (bars 74, 76 and 80), all of them are identical in terms of notes, value and dynamics; once more, the intention is to create a vertical dimension in the music (see Example 4.15).

**Example 4.15:** O'Leary, 2000: *Within/Without* (multiphonics: bar 74)





### 4.2.3. An Exploration of Performance Issues and Difficulties

I have had the opportunity of performing *Within/Without* in three different occasions and have always been fortunate to have Jane O'Leary present in every single of them. My feeling about these performances is that each of them was noticeably different, whilst I tried to make sure everything was correct on my first and second performance of it, playing the right notes, making as many contrasts as possible and so on, I decided to continue exploring the piece and other O'Leary's works to better understand what is inside this music and how I can better communicate the idea behind it. Moreover, it was my conversations with the composer after each of these performances what made me unveil new secrets hidden in the piece that were more related to her profound understanding of Paul Roe's playing and sound. The result of this new process made me feel more confident when performing it the third time and realised it is not only about following the instructions of the piece (right dynamics, right notes, good phrasing, etc.) but being able to connect all these ideas with the audience in a much stronger way. In O'Leary's words regarding how clarinet players should approach the performance of *Within/Without*:

You need to be aware of your role in the piece when you're performing it, that you are also a co-creator of the music and that the performance is yours and is unique. (Interview with Jane O'Leary, Appendix B: 75)

The main technical difficulty in *Within/Without* is trying to integrate the flutter tonguing written in very soft dynamics (*ppp*, *pp*) into the overall shape of the piece with a sense of echo. It is easy to produce this effect with bigger dynamics; however, the challenge in this work is to move from a very soft phrase to the flutter tonguing passage without disturbing the character of the music, without modifying the idea of describing the large amphora and the small amphorae. It would be advisable to work on the flutter tonguing first by not doing the effect, focusing only on playing the notes and maintaining the character and the soft dynamic of the passage and, after that, integrating the effect into the phrase without disturbing any aspect of the music.

As previously mentioned, grace notes become more complex throughout the piece and this feature is reflected by an increase in the number of notes and larger

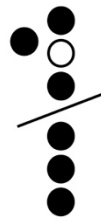
intervals. Some of these intervals require to change between different registers in legato, sometimes from the *chalumeau* register to the *clarion* register (which implies having to use the octave key) and vice versa. Playing these elaborated grace notes is very challenging, as they should be played quickly and with a sinuous shape. It would be advisable to work on these passages very slowly and gradually increase the speed; additionally, it would be helpful to tongue the lower note of a large interval in case of impossibility.

The asymmetrical vibrato is another aspect of *Within/Without* that can be very challenging and would require a very specific work. It would be desirable to practice this effect starting from *mf* or *f*, and progressively make a *diminuendo* to the required dynamic (*p*, *pp*) and doing it at different paces, subsequently proceeding to do it starting from *pp* or *p* and gradually make a *crescendo*. This routine would make us to have a perfect control of the asymmetrical vibrato present in this piece.

In the middle section of *Within/Without*, from bar 67 to bar 77 we find several passages written in the *altissimo* register of the clarinet which implies to work on alternate fingerings as there are no standard fingerings for some of the notes. The technical difficulty lies in keeping a good intonation of all these high notes throughout all the changes in dynamics from *p* to *ff* with *crescendo*, *diminuendo* and *sforzando*. It would be recommendable to find very specific fingerings to each case and use different fingerings even for the same note depending on the dynamics.

Regarding the multiphonics in this piece, the first thing one should try is to find a very reliable fingering than can work at the written dynamic (*pp*). The main challenge is that multiphonics appear in the music right after the climax part where we have been walking around in the upper register of the instrument. Clarinet reeds are under a lot of stress when playing *fortissimo* in the *altissimo* register; therefore, one has to keep in mind that after this very agitated section, the reed may be not as responsive as it should, and that is the reason why it is essential to choose a very reliable manner of fingering (see Figure 4.2 as an example of fingering for this multiphonic).

**Figure 4.2:** Multiphonic fingering for *Within/Without*



Finally, one of the key aspects of *Within/Without* is how to manage all the long held notes and pauses spread throughout the piece, as it can affect the mood and expressiveness of the music. In Jane O’Leary’s words:

I have lots of long notes with a fermata, a pause written and it’s entirely up to the player as to how long those pauses will be, that’s part of the challenge to feel the duration of those. (Interview with Jane O’Leary, Appendix B: 73)

Therefore, the challenge is to keep the sense of fluidity by not doing the same pauses all the time, but changing the duration of those and sometimes directly jumping to the following phrase, without losing O’Leary’s clear intention of describing the amphora and its curved and sinuous lines which is constantly present in the overall shape of *Within/Without*.

### **4.3. *a piacere***

#### **4.3.1. Ideas Behind *a piacere***

The genesis of *a piacere* differs quite substantially from the compositional process behind *Within/Without*, as described previously.

In this particular case, *a piacere* was conceived in an academic context, subject to the research project undertaken by Paul Roe for his doctorate thesis. This research project consisted of a practice-based investigation exploring some key aspects related to contemporary performance and composition, such as improvisation, interpretation, transmission, creation and performance, and specifically focused on the collaborative process between composer and performer. The methodology of this

research was mainly developed through five case studies where Roe engaged with different Irish composers; the five composers involved in this project were Ed Bennett, Rob Canning, Stephen Gardner, Ronan Guilfoyle and Jane O’Leary.

In each of these five case studies, the correspondent composer was commissioned by Paul Roe to write a new piece for solo bass clarinet, and was also required to work closely with the performer during the compositional process; the collaborative relationship to be established between both parties would be subsequently assessed and analysed as the main subject of the study. On the other hand, Roe’s thesis would also be set to contribute to the lack of repertoire for bass clarinet by Irish composers. As Roe describes in his thesis:

I began to think about the nature of the relationship between composer and performer and in particular how this relationship works in contemporary music. With these thoughts in mind, I commissioned five well-known Irish composers to write some new works for me to perform on the bass clarinet [...] I realized that there was a serious deficit in the repertoire by Irish composers for this instrument.<sup>4</sup>

Jane O’Leary’s composition and the collaborative process conducted by her and Paul Roe constituted Case Study Five within his research project. The new piece for solo bass clarinet, entitled *a piacere*, was completed in 2005 and premiered by Roe on 16 July of that same year at the Galway Arts Centre, followed by successive performances that responded to the dissemination strategy of the outcomes of the mentioned thesis.

The resulting five pieces for solo bass clarinet, funded by Arts Council of Ireland, were compiled in a CD recorded and edited by Ed Bennett at Bangor College (Music Studio) on 31 March 2006.

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<sup>4</sup> Roe, Paul: ‘A Phenomenology of Collaboration in Contemporary Composition and Performance’ (Ph.D diss., The University of York, 2007), 59.

### 4.3.2. Compositional Process: Analysis

Whereas Roe's engagement with other composers, such as Bennett or Canning, consisted of three meetings spread over four months, the creative and collaborative process undertaken by O'Leary and Roe stretched over a period of eight months and involved six meetings, which took place between 28 November 2004 and 15 July 2005 at local music colleges in Dublin, Paris and Galway.

At the time, O'Leary and Roe had worked together for fifteen years in Concorde and had developed a strong musical relationship; in fact, the composer had already written a piece for Paul Roe five years before, *Within/Without* (2000). On the other hand, Jane O'Leary had met bass clarinet specialist Harry Sparnaay and worked with him over the last few years, so at that point she was already interested in the instrument and its possibilities. As O'Leary states:

I didn't know a lot about the instrument, I had written for it and I had worked with Harry Sparnaay and heard what he has done with it, and been to some of his masterclasses, and so on. I knew that I was interested in the instrument, and that this would be a chance to explore what I could do and how was different from the clarinet. (Interview with Jane O'Leary, Appendix B: 75)

Each of these sessions was initially conceived as interviews, but they also became the best scenario for a creative interplay where the brainstorming and trying out of musical ideas was essential in the final definition of *a piacere*. Jane O'Leary approached these meetings with a flexible and open-minded attitude, which facilitated the collaboration between both musicians; she would lead and conduct the creative interchange, but encouraged a two-sided communication that both parties would benefit from, and where composer and performer were equally involved. As Paul Roe states:

Working closely together on this project provided O'Leary with the opportunity to explore sonorities and in the process develop a new sound palette on which to base her compositional ideas. O'Leary also encouraged me to experiment with imaginative ideas of sound production, with both of us developing new creative perspectives through joint working.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Roe, Paul: 'A Phenomenology of Collaboration in Contemporary Composition and Performance' (Ph.D diss., The University of York, 2007), 187-188.

The exploratory process jointly undertaken by Jane O’Leary and Paul Roe was mainly focused on analysing and investigating the possibilities of the bass clarinet in terms of sound production and tone colour. Although O’Leary was already aware of the nature of the instrument and its multiple characteristics, this project provided her with the opportunity to discuss and try out her ideas. Roe would test and demonstrate on the bass clarinet all the technical and musical possibilities available, finally developing a wide range of colours, timbres, sonorities and effects that set the foundations of this piece, on which the composer based her creative ideas. In fact, the title ‘*a piacere*’ (Italian for ‘*ad lib*’) expresses the whole nature of the collaborative process behind this piece. As O’Leary explains:

This [*a piacere*] is a musical instruction, but it’s absolutely perfect because I wrote it for Paul knowing it was a collaborative piece, and I wanted him to make it its own, so I said ‘As you please, it’s for you to do it as you wish once I give you the starting point’. (Interview with Jane O’Leary, Appendix B: 79)

Additionally, the creation process of *a piacere* directly responded to O’Leary’s own compositional style: purely instinctive, exploratory and unplanned. There is not a clear initial intention or a predetermined path to follow, but the music emerges out of a generative gesture, somewhat vague, evolving through an improvisational and instinctive process where ideas are constantly assessed and re-worked until the final shape of the piece is reached. In O’Leary’s own words:

I don’t sort of say ‘I’m going to do this’ and then I do it. I have to think about various details and then I start with something on the page, and it all grows out of whatever those first marks I make on the page and it begins to pull out a bit purely from the musical motifs and ideas that I put down. It’s a very instinctive process. (Interview with Jane O’Leary, Appendix B: 76)

On the other hand, this spontaneous and rather ambiguous generative process, as well as the specificity of the sounds, colours and timbres O’Leary wanted to achieve, made it extremely complex to transcribe her musical ideas on the computer; therefore, there is no published score of *a piacere*, but a manuscript copy with handwritten comments and instructions for the performer.

However, it is important to underline that, although the collaboration and understanding between composers and performers is considered by O’Leary to be vital for her compositions, the collaborative process behind *a piacere* was fairly

idealistic: 'It's a luxury, it's something every composer would wish for' (Interview with Jane O'Leary, Appendix B: 70). Reality often imposes different paces and proceedings in musical composition, due to time limitations, unavailability of the parties, lack of funding, etc. Consequently, long-term collaborations are not usual, and are normally reduced in length to a few revisions and a small number of quick discussions between composer and performer.

When O'Leary is asked about *a piacere*, she would describe this piece as a conversation with oneself, where different emotions and inner instincts are involved, and mood constantly switches from a reflective to an agitated state of mind, from calm to anger, from stability to turmoil. In O'Leary's own words:

It's really a conversation with yourself, where you're either pushing something forward or reflecting on something, you're thinking about it, you're having a little outburst... These kinds of human instincts are in there. (Interview with Jane O'Leary, Appendix B: 79)

By way of contrast to *Within/Without* (where the structure is inspired by the visual reference of an amphora and therefore is easily identifiable, as analysed in the previous sub-section of this thesis), in the case of *a piacere* there is no pre-defined musical shape; the structure is random, free and spontaneous. The nature of the creation process undertaken reflects a more exploratory gesture and instinctive drawing of the music throughout the piece.

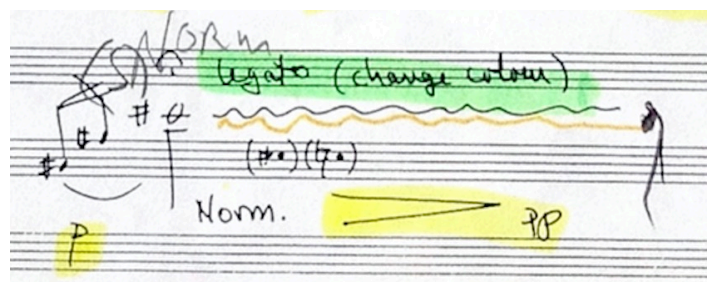
However, in spite of the impossibility of identifying a clear overall structure, it is possible to detect certain patterns that are recurrently displayed throughout the entire piece. Thus, the music is organised by the combination of long notes and contrasting punctuations, which is produced by utilizing different pitches, dynamics and speeds, and expressing multiple characters and emotions.

A distinctive characteristic of the long notes used is that they are not static. Being trained as a pianist, O'Leary always found that she was attracted by the way other instruments can modify a sound once it is produced, as opposed to the piano. This personal obsession is one of the main aims of the exploratory process jointly pursued with Paul Roe, and is clearly noticeable in *a piacere*, where the mentioned long notes constantly evolve, sometimes through different dynamics, with dramatic

*crescendi* or gradually fading *diminuendi*, and other times with the use of effects such as vibrato, air, flutter tonguing or key clickings, among others. O’Leary would describe this intention as follows:

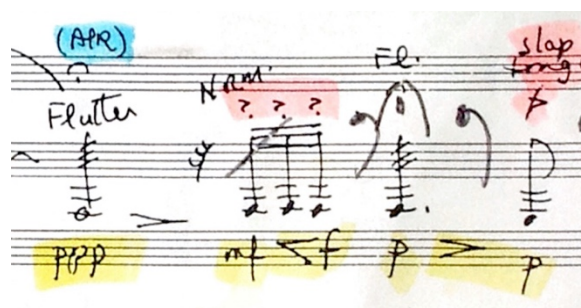
When I think about my style, I think it’s a question of blurring things. So what I like about maybe the violin, the cello, the clarinet, the flute... is that you can change the note after you’ve started playing it. And this really appeals to me, bending the note, even doing a ‘crescendo’ on a note, it’s something you can’t do on the piano. (Interview with Jane O’Leary, Appendix B: 78)

**Example 4.16:** O’Leary, 2005: *a piacere* (long note)<sup>6</sup>



On the other hand, the mentioned punctuations constitute a perfect contrasting point to the long notes, introducing a percussive character contrasting with those sinuous lines. These punctuations are represented by short notes, mostly quavers or semi-quavers, usually accompanied with a *sforzando*, accent or *staccato*, which constantly mark the rhythm throughout the piece, defining the end of the phrases and the pauses.

**Example 4.17:** O’Leary, 2005: *a piacere* (punctuations)

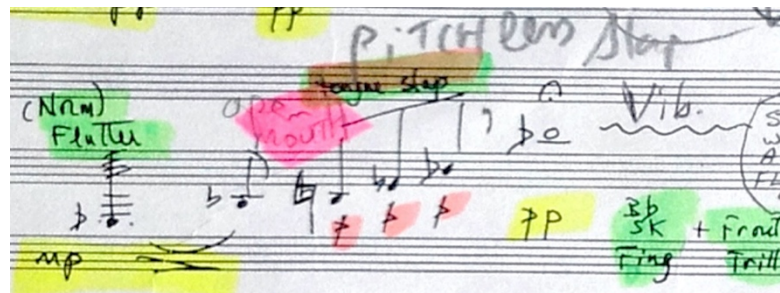


<sup>6</sup> O’Leary, Jane: *a piacere* (unpublished, manuscript).



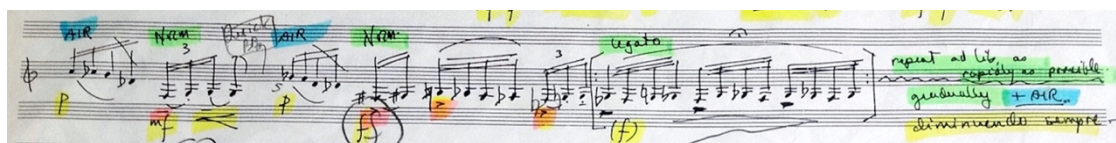
This idea of percussive punctuation is also reflected in the use of slap tonguing in certain moments, which O’Leary deliberately introduced in *a piacere* as a tribute to bass clarinetist Harry Sparnaay: ‘Harry is so brilliant at that [slap tonguing] ... I had to put it in’ (Interview with Jane O’Leary, Appendix B: 78).

**Example 4.18:** O’Leary, 2005: *a piacere* (slap tonguing)



In addition to this feature, the melodic material in this composition is mainly conveyed by winding passages of slurred notes spread throughout the piece. These phrases consist of semiquavers that are distributed in short intervals, mostly chromatic, with a very linear design, which sometimes reminds of the grace notes that were present in *Within/Without*. This melodic material helps the music flow, as the perfect counterpoint to the percussive punctuations.

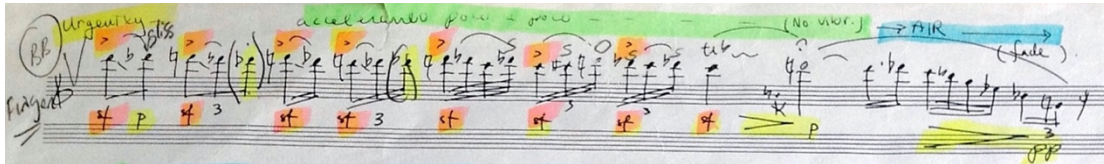
**Example 4.19:** O’Leary, 2005: *a piacere* (melodic material)



The climax of this piece is reached at the beginning of its third page, through a very fast and sharp passage written in the upper register of the bass clarinet. It is introduced by a musical marking that reads ‘Urgently’, followed by an ‘*accelerando poco a poco*’ which, along with the massive use of accents, *glissandi* and *sforzandi*, clearly induces tension and agitation. In contrast to *Within/Without* (where the climax is being prepared many bars in advance), in *a piacere* there is no such preparation, as

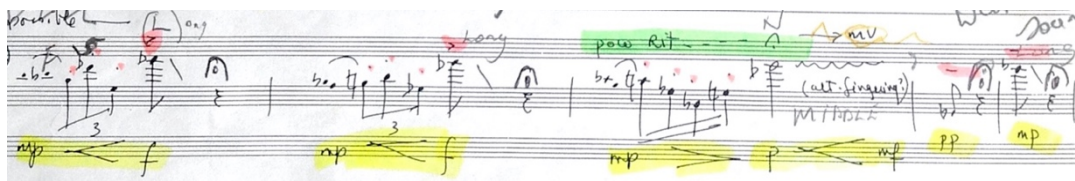
it appears all of a sudden reflecting the contrasting emotions and moods Jane O’Leary described, almost providing a sense of bipolarity.

**Example 4.20:** O’Leary, 2005: *a piacere* (climax)



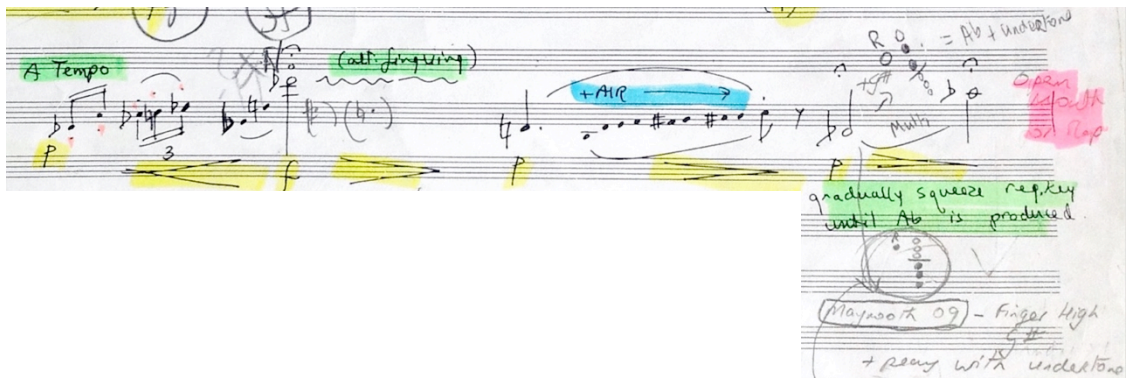
Furthermore, the idea displayed in the climax reappears at the very end of *a piacere*, as the music concludes with two groups of sharp quavers ending in a high note with *glissando*, anticipating the very last note of the piece: a high G-flat again accompanied with a falling *glissando* (see Example 4.21 below).

**Example 4.21:** O’Leary, 2005: *a piacere* (ending)



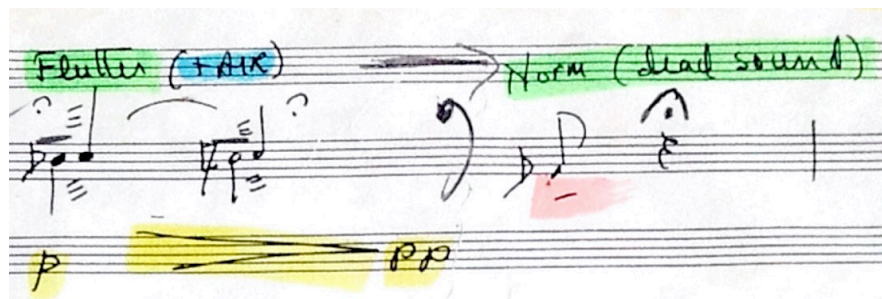
On the other hand, as previously mentioned in this thesis, the idea behind *a piacere* emerges from the complex palette of sonorities developed through the exploratory process that was conducted by Jane O’Leary and Paul Roe, and that constitutes the main source of inspiration for this piece. The wide range of colours and timbres applied in this composition is represented by the massive use of special effects, such as flutter tonguing, vibrato, air, *glissando*, key clickings, slap tonguing or multiphonics, which appear in almost every single phrase.

**Example 4.22:** O’Leary, 2005: *a piacere* (colours and effects)



None of these special effects are executed in a standard way as, on the contrary, every time an effect is produced it evolves and gets modified, either with a change in colour or with the addition of another effect. For instance, flutter tonguing is often combined with air, as occurs at the beginning of the first page (see Example 4.23 below).

**Example 4.23:** O’Leary, 2005: *a piacere* (flutter tonguing and air)



Additionally, most phrases are accompanied by diverse character indications such as ‘warm, relaxed’, ‘playful’ or ‘hurriedly’ that also define different characters, energies and emotions, and that should be subsequently associated to a suitable colouristic response (see Example 4.24 below).

**Example 4.24:** O’Leary, 2005: *a piacere* (character indications)



Moreover, *a piacere* explores the whole pitch range of the bass clarinet, as a result of the learning process followed by O'Leary in relation to this instrument. However, although the concept of pitch had always been very present in O'Leary's compositional style since the beginning due to her initial training in serialism, where the right choice of pitch was crucial, at the time of *a piacere* Jane O'Leary's ideas had evolved to a more organic, free and sensitive style. Thus, although pitch is essential in this piece, it is always considered in relation to the colour that relates to it, and therefore is used to reinforce the type of sonority that is pursued in each different passage. As O'Leary expresses:

Pitch is very important and it has to be there, but the emphasis has shifted. So this piece, *a piacere*, comes at a point where I'm really interested in exploring the colouristic possibilities, doing whatever you need to do with the instrument to make a specific sound, not just the pitch but the whole sound that goes with it. (Interview with Jane O'Leary, Appendix B: 77)

#### **4.3.3. An Exploration of Performance Issues and Difficulties**

The very first thing a performer can notice when approaching *a piacere* is that there is no published score, only a manuscript is available with many markings, comments, indications and suggestions handwritten by the composer herself and the clarinettist, Paul Roe. Any performer that faces this piece should take into account that *a piacere* was the result of a collaborative process with Paul Roe and many aspects of performance they discussed could not be transcribed on the score. This could result very overwhelming at the beginning for any performer who wants to play this piece. Although there is no time signature and the speed indications are somewhat vague, the regular notation regarding pitch and duration is very precisely described and notated on the score, consequently, this aspect should not imply any performance difficulty. However, the notation related to sound, colour, timbre and nuance that O'Leary and Roe explored during the collaborative process undertaken, (which represents the main idea behind *a piacere*), is rather ambiguous for any other performer, as well as it occurs with the indications of character and emotions. In Paul Roe's words, 'these difficulties were overcome in these collaborations through oral processes, where signs were proposed and illuminated by verbal description, singing and physical gesture' (Roe 2007: 175).

Essentially, in order to achieve a realistic performance of *a piacere* and to try to better communicate the whole idea of this work to an audience, it would be very advisable to contact with the composer, Jane O'Leary, and/or clarinettist Paul Roe, as only they have the profound knowledge about the work they put into this composition. The author believes insights gained from the composer and/or *dedicatee* could lead to a more embodied and enjoyable experience, and that the outcomes would be more appreciated and easily understood by an audience. In case of this being an impossibility, it would be highly recommended to listen to Paul Roe's recording of *a piacere* in the CD entitled *In the Stillness of Time* (2007), not as a process of copying and imitating what this particular clarinettist does, but as an active observation that will allow us to take our own decisions regarding the different characters that are generated throughout the piece: how it flows, the idea behind each special effect, which sonorities and colours are pursued, etc. As O'Leary states:

One of the dangers I suppose of collaboration is that, maybe, the way it's written makes sense to Paul but maybe it's not clear enough for somebody who doesn't know me. [...] My advice for the performer is to talk to the composer, meet with the composer, play it for the composer, and if you can't do that, listen to any recording that might exist. (Interview with Jane O'Leary, Appendix B: 77)

In conclusion, it is essential to understand that *a piacere* is not a fixed, definite and immutable work; on the contrary, performers have an enormous responsibility in terms of adapting their own approach towards this piece. Applying their own personality, expressing their inner emotions and becoming fully engaged with the music is essential to convey the ideas and intentions behind it. Actually, a piece such as *a piacere* should not be considered finished once the collaborative creation process has concluded as, at that point, a new process has started, where performers are the new actors that should assume the responsibility of contributing to the progress and evolution of this composition over time. In Jane O'Leary's words:

When I write it I pass it on, it's no longer mine, it has to become the performer's piece. [...] I'm actually particularly thrilled just to see these pieces [*Within/Without* and *a piacere*] growing and changing and developing, that's what I would wish for. (Interview with Jane O'Leary, Appendix B: 71)

# CONCLUSION

## CONCLUSION

This thesis sought to analyse the repertoire for clarinet and bass clarinet by the Irish composer Jane O'Leary, by focusing on the two most representative pieces: *Within/Without* for solo clarinet (2000) and *a piacere* for solo bass clarinet (2005), which illustrate her approach to the compositional process for these instruments.

After investigating on O'Leary's career and milestones, it is undeniable that her repertoire for clarinet and bass clarinet has responded to, and was greatly impacted by, O'Leary's musical interaction with eminent performers. As a consequence, the amount of pieces featuring these instruments has grown exponentially since 2000, when clarinetist Paul Roe became deeply involved with contemporary music after leaving the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, and when bass clarinetist Harry Sparnaay started his collaboration with Concorde. In fact, the presence of Concorde offered the ideal locus for this musical exchange between O'Leary and other performers over the years, which consequently enriched her compositional style. Therefore, it is certain that the most remarkable pieces for clarinet and bass clarinet by Jane O'Leary are the ones that were originated from a collaborative process and a joint exploration between the Composer and the Performer.

As a result of the analysis of *Within/Without* and *a piacere*, it has been demonstrated that O'Leary's works for clarinet and bass clarinet, especially the ones since 2000 onwards, aimed to exploit the possibilities of these instruments in terms of colour, timbre, register and pitch, always focusing on pushing the limits of their expressive capabilities in an attempt to display different emotions, characters and personalities in the music. Consequently, it is possible to state that Jane O'Leary's repertoire for clarinet is defined by a particular and unique sonority, which is sinuous, organic and full of nuances.

On the other hand, the Performer's input has proven to be essential in relation to Jane O'Leary's works, becoming an integral part of the creative process. As

was confirmed by the composer, her pieces offer certain flexibility and room of interpretation that consequently require the performer to undertake an active role in the final outcome. In this way, Jane O'Leary is therefore bringing performers the opportunity to be the leading actors in the evolution of these pieces and responsible for the dissemination of her legacy.

Finally, it is to be noted that the completion of this research project coincides with the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of Concorde and the seventieth birthday of their founder and director, Jane O'Leary, which demonstrates the remarkable history of this music ensemble and their enormous impact on the fields of both Irish and international contemporary music. Therefore, this thesis humbly seeks to pay tribute to the paramount figures of Concorde and O'Leary, and the important contribution to New Music that they have made over the course of the last four decades.



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# **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A

### Email to the Author from Laura Flax, 15 May 2016

Hi Pablo,

Thanks for reaching out to me.

Joan Tower and I were both members of the group The Da Capo Chamber Players. Joan was a founding member in 1970 and I joined in 1975. After many performances together of Messiaen Quartet for the End of Time, and Joan listening to my interpretation of Abyss of the Birds, she wrote Wings for me. It was a piece that emerged from our close collaboration and mutual respect.

I always think of *Wings* as the uplifting soaring counterpart to *Abyss*, written in the 1980s after that terrible time in our history had been resolved. *Wings* pushes the limits of the instrument in a similar way as *Abyss*: slow, high, soft, and adds some more contemporary challenges: endurance, motor rhythms, etc.

Joan would send me a page or so at a time, I was living in San Francisco for that year, and I would tape it and snail mail back to her.

I learned how to circular breathe for *Wings*. It allowed me to transcend the fatigue and breathlessness and enjoy the soaring diving of the giant condors.

Let me know if this is helpful

Laura flax

## APPENDIX B

### Interview with Jane O’Leary, Galway, 30 May 2016

Pablo Manjón: What is your first memory in relation to the clarinet?

*Jane O’Leary: Okay, this is actually a really interesting question that I’ve never thought about before, but now you’ve been jogging my memory with all these questions. So, I am going back to Wethersfield, Connecticut, where I grew up, a small town in New England, America. My best friend, who was called Joy, was studying clarinet, and this must be when we were at primary school, 10-12 starting off. I guess in the American schools there was a good system of teaching Music, not as a kind of a separate thing but within the school, we had music teachers coming in. Actually, now that I think of it, it was probably in high school, which would be from age 12 on, and my friend, who lived up the road, took up the clarinet and played in the school band. In America, the marching bands and wind bands were very important, that was the way a lot of people learned music. Me, I was a pianist, I started it at age four and I have been pretty much attached permanently to the piano all my life since age 4 and that’s it, I’ve played keyboard instruments but never an air instrument. So, I remember my friend playing in the band, and I remember how much she loved the clarinet and she still does, she is still a close friend but she lives in Connecticut, we meet occasionally and I’ve written a number of pieces for her as an amateur clarinettist, and she is very active in the community, amateur performances and with bands and orchestras near where she lives. So I traced my connections to the clarinet back to my school days and it’s been a continuing connection, so if we keep going with my clarinet connections I went from school to what we call college in America, it’s University, third level education. I went to Vassar College in New York State, it was an all-girls college at that stage, but I went there to study music in a liberal arts education; I knew that music would be my profession but I didn’t want to study in a Conservatory, I didn’t want to be specialized only doing music, I wanted a full liberal arts education. I chose to go to Vassar because they had a really wonderful music department and I had a wonderful piano teacher. I played piano all day long, every day, and I played everything, I accompanied the choir and I did chamber music all the*

*time and I am so glad that I was introduced to chamber music as a player at that point. What I have to say is that one of my colleagues, who was a year older than me at school, was a clarinettist, Susan; when I was doing piano she was doing clarinet. We teamed up and we had a duo and we did lots of recitals together, but I remember accompanying her for her graduating recital and playing Brahms clarinet sonatas, I'm not sure which one, or whether was both, just don't remember... It was amazing, it was just so difficult for the piano that's what I remember. It's such an amazing duo in where the two parts are really equal. That's kind of the next stage of my memory working with the clarinet, but we played everything together. We actually used to go to New York for lessons with her teacher who was principal clarinettist in the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra in New York. That to me was a revelation because I had only looked at things from the point of view of the piano, and we went to him, there was a real ensemble masterclass, such as a pretty common now but it wasn't common in the 60s. He talked about the clarinet as a voice, as a singer, because obviously he played in the Opera Orchestra, so I've got a new way of thinking about the clarinet as a voice. We did all the usual duo stuff, I also played with a violinist in my own class and I suppose those were the two ensembles that I worked with most, but I was very close to the clarinet all through those college years, it was very important.*

*Then, when I came to Ireland in 1972, after going to postgraduate studies in Princeton, and I started Concorde as an ensemble to play new music in 1976; of course there had to be a clarinet in it. I asked Brian O'Rourke to play with us, he was the principal in the National Symphony Orchestra for many years, a beautiful player, really wonderful tone and a wonderful musician. I did a lot of things, I did the Weber little pieces with him, I remember that particularly. From then on, Brian was replaced by Paul who has been with Concorde since 1992.*

*So you can see I've had a continuous kind of connection with instrumentalists who were clarinettists and I hadn't really thought about it until today.*

P.M: In relation to clarinet composition, which of its characteristics do you find the most attractive and tend to highlight?

J.O: I suppose if you would say what do I like about the clarinet, I guess it's the sound,

*the actual colour of it, which is kind of mellow, and it kind of blends with almost anything, and it's capable of all kinds of different characters, because it's like a voice and it plays with breath, I think you can give it any kind of personality, and it's also very important who is playing it and how they play it, it's kind of a personality behind the instrument. And I'm fascinated by the way different players make different sounds on the instrument. I sometimes hear players who are very good, very virtuosic and can do anything, but I don't like their sound. I don't know what it is but no, it doesn't sound the way I like to hear it, and somebody like Paul [Roe], I know I like that sound and Brian [O'Rourke] was the same, a beautiful sound, but in terms of writing for the instrument, I think the range is also something that interests me and the different colours from bottom to top, it kind of makes me think about where my pitches are. Positioning of pitches, the actual octaves that there're in is an important thing to me as a composer, it's not just like this is a G or this is an F-sharp. It's the actual how high and how low that note is in relation to everything else and your movement through different pitch areas rather than confine or spread out or high, low, medium... So the clarinet offers you a huge choice because of the extreme wide range, of course the piano is the obvious, the widest, the cello would be also interesting from that point of view. Clarinet or Bass Clarinet offer you a huge pitch range and a huge variety of colours, so that what would interest me.*

*What interests me about the clarinet in terms of composition, to add a few thoughts, is that it's basically a line that the clarinet plays and it's like a voice and singing, just a continuous line. I kind of think in that way but what I like to do is define the vertical dimension in the music, and I love the way you can stretch the single line out into a bigger space either with multiphonics or with tremolos of any size, that kind of creates a space. What I like to do in my music is to create a big space in which things happen and it's difficult with a single-line instrument like the clarinet, you can do it more easily with strings where you can use several strings at once. That challenge of trying to get a vertical shape out of a more of a linear type of instrument is something that appeals to me.*

P.M: Bass clarinet is an instrument that has become more and more popular over the last few decades as it displays a very distinct personality that is leading many



composers to consider it as an independent instrument, separate from the clarinet, with a unique identity. Is your approach to bass clarinet composition different from the clarinet one? Which of its characteristics do you find the most striking and interesting?

*J.O: That's again a very interesting question. I suppose I only discovered the bass clarinet kind of midway or after I had been writing for clarinet, I've never actually come into contact with the bass clarinet until... let me look at my list and we could find when I first wrote for the bass clarinet. I've printed out a chronological list [of all her pieces], it's actually something that I'm going to check because I'm curious [looking at the list], I don't know, I think it's quite recent, bass clarinet, 2005 was this solo bass clarinet piece [a piacere], but I have one before that, 2003 for the moment, 2002 Reflections II, bass clarinet and violin, that was written for my friend Joy, 2001, bass clarinet and violin. 'Joyful Jotting' was originally for clarinet and bassoon, that was the first version because she asked me to write something for her friend and herself who were playing together, and then I revised that to be several different instrumentations, bass clarinet replacing the bassoon in that piece [she continues looking at the list of her pieces]. 2001 may have been the first instance, yes, Joyful Jottings was my first, so I've already been writing for good while before that not aware, and I have to say that in that piece I wouldn't've really been aware of what the bass clarinet could do, it was simply a registeral thing, no pitch, but in terms of the instrument I didn't know much.*

*Okay, so I got to know the bass clarinet over the years with Paul and with Harry Sparnaay but I'll talk about him later. As I got to know it more intimately, I became very fond of its characteristics and I particularly remember Harry pointing out how quiet the high register could be, which is something I think you can't do in the clarinet, am I right? Let's say if you take that highest register and play on each of the instruments, it's going to be quite shrilling in the clarinet, but it can be quite a round sound on the bass clarinet. That was something that fascinated me, so I don't know if you can find that in my writing. I tended, once I got to know the bass clarinet, to use it in preference to the clarinet, again that's that softness of sound. It's interesting that I think of the flute and the alto flute in a similar way, it's actually the sound of the alto*

*flute which I prefer and I've paired with the bass clarinet in a few pieces, quite a few pieces actually. And it's nothing to do with pitch, it's to do with tone colour, so I think you'd find it in my music, again I will come to this later on, but the actual colour, by which I mean the timbre, or the type of sound, is the most important thing to me, how it sounds, so that leads into special effects and so on. But the choice of the instrument, bass clarinet or alto flute, it's really related to the type of sound that the instrument makes.*

P.M: Is there any composer or piece that have attracted your attention and somehow influenced your approach to composition for both clarinet and bass clarinet?

*J.O: I am actually going to pass on that because I can't think of anything [laughing]*

P.M: I remember you mentioned Wings from Joan Tower and also another piece from Claudio Ambrosini once.

*J.O: Yes, Ambrosini, that was an interesting one, alright. Anything that Harry [Sparnaay] played, because Harry played lots of pieces when he was here [in Ireland]. Joan Tower's was clarinet only I think, it wasn't bass clarinet. I like the kind of fluid line that clarinet makes, because it's a wind instrument, the kind of continuous line and that kind of floating feeling of flying, I liked that about that piece, I remember flutter effects, with tremolos and some things. Berio's lied was very beautiful too, I remember Paul [Roe] playing that and I was struck by the simplicity, and at the same time the substantial quality to the music, strong, but not overly decorated, or heavy, you know. Elliott Carter's pieces as well, the flute and clarinet one, Esprit Rute/Esprit Doux, it's something I've enjoyed. The two wind instruments, the higher range of flute and clarinet, quite fascinating, where they converse with each other. Over the years we've played so many pieces and I try to learn from everything I hear and keep moving on.*

P.M: During your professional career, you have met wonderful performers who have deeply influenced your approach to music composition for clarinet, Paul Roe has definitely been one of them. How did you meet him?

*J.O: I think he [Paul Roe] was playing in the orchestra [National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland] at that time, and as I said earlier, Brian O'Rourke had been working with us since the start in '76.*

*Brian wanted to leave, he was happy to be part of the ensemble, but contemporary music wasn't his first love, I'd be honest, it was challenging for him in terms of what he loved. So I asked Madeleine Staunton to suggest another clarinet player, and there were a few choices at that time, I think Fintan Sutton was another one, who has played with us quite a lot, but we started straight away, Madeleine suggested Paul, they both were in the orchestra. Paul was clearly uncomfortable in the orchestra and edging his way towards his solo career which I'm very happy he has moved to, because he has done such wonderful things for music and for clarinet repertoire. So Paul joined us and straight away was a happy joining into Concorde, and it was clear that he really enjoyed discovering new things and trying out new repertoire as well as that he had a beautiful sound, and it was very easy to work with, mainly that he enjoyed doing new music. It was really a Madeleine's recommendation for somebody to replace Brian. And then over the years, I think Paul became more and more interested in the contemporary which suited Concorde fine and it would be through Concorde that I would've known him. It was totally a chamber music ensemble connection; I didn't know him personally or anything before that. We have played hundreds of pieces together over the years.*

**P.M:** How would you define Paul Roe as a performer?

*J.O: Very open, very exploring, pushing the edge, always searching for something new and enjoying the challenge. As a musician, again I have to compliment his beautiful sound, the smoothness of his sound, the colour of it. I like his flexibility, the fact that he's open, and kind of willing to try new things, anything really, to see what works best. He's interested in making the music speak to an audience, he's interested in communicating and that's what is all about, in my opinion. I'm not interested in perfect performances, it has to have passion, and it has to have communication. I guess Paul is really a genius at all of those things, I mean there's no question, he can*

*technically play anything, he's superb. He's grown with the experience with Concorde, he has starting out, we all just did what was on the page in front of us, but over the years, now we have taken ownership of the music that comes to us and make it our own, all of us. Certainly, Paul leading the way of that kind of approach.*

P.M: How has Paul contributed to your pieces for clarinet?

*J.O: That's a good one. He's certainly invited me to write for him several times, the two solo pieces you are working on were both invitations, again we'll come to that. A piacere was definitely a collaborative effort, an invitation. I'm trying to think Within/Without would actually grow up in a different way with another curator, defining the terms of it. Let's see, over the years, I guess, are those two the only solo pieces there are? Yeah? Well, it's been mainly ensemble pieces, big ensembles, up until the piano and clarinet duo of 2015, which again was a request. 'Clara', which is for the two clarinets and speaker, that was a request from Paul as well. He hasn't urged me, let's say in directions that I wouldn't have otherwise gone, and in that regard, I would mention a piacere as an exploration of the bass clarinet, which I wouldn't probably have thought of doing unless he had encouraged me in that direction, I learned a lot through writing that piece. The piece 'Clara' was also kind of a different direction for me to have a speaker on it, and it took me very long time to find a text that would go with solo clarinet, either bass clarinet or B-flat clarinet. When I did find the text I wanted, I was very excited about writing for clarinet and trying to capture a whole lot of different personalities and moods just through the solo instrument. This piece hasn't been performed yet, it's four years down the road, but we're nearly there, we're going to do it shortly, in June actually, in a couple of weeks. I suppose those to be the specific pieces, I would be encouraged in the ensemble pieces to write things for clarinet which maybe I wouldn't've thought of, because Paul would push me in a more exploratory direction with the instrument. When I'm writing for ensemble, I have to actually hear the people am writing for, I need to know what they sound like, and I always hear Paul's sound. When I'm writing for Concorde ensemble, I hear him playing in his particular style and I think that in itself encourages me to be brave and a little more exploratory than I would normally*

be.

P.M: How would you describe the collaborative process you and Paul have undertaken so far?

*J.O: Those two solo pieces would be the main ones. Within/Without was in 2000, we were working with an artist so there was three dimensions towards it, really. But I suppose I would've worked with Paul quite a bit in thinking about the instrument, just in terms of the structure of the piece that I doubt with the low to the high, the various sounds of the different ranges. A piacere was a much more collaborative process, part of his PhD Thesis in York, we had many meetings where we just messed around with making sounds. It's a luxury, it's something every composer would wish for, and maybe every performer, I don't know, hopefully [laughing]. I think Paul started out, to be honest, with different ideas that I would, kind of, I don't know, follow certain path, but I didn't. We pushed each other in different directions. I remember I worked on lots of things that threw away. It was maybe three or four meetings together, trying things out, before I actually got the ideas for the piece that I finished up with. That was fun, it was a luxury, I don't think I've ever had that kind of long term collaborative process. I loved it and I'd love to have it again but it doesn't normally work out that way. Normally you've got to write a piece for an occasion, and you've got to finish it, and you do the best you can, maybe meeting up along the way and saying 'how does it sound?' and making revisions. But the whole process of writing the piece is usually a little bit quicker than the one that I followed with a piacere.*

P.M: Is there any other clarinet player who has influenced your compositions for clarinet?

*J.O: Obviously, we have to mention Harry Sparnaay, I'm sure Paul has introduced you to his book, am I right? [laughing] I recommend it to everyone, composers in particular. Harry was known to me as I was running Concorde, I'd be tuned into what was happening to contemporary music performers, concerts... around the world. I noticed that, in the Netherlands, Harry's name was coming up all the time as bass clarinet, initially I was kind of like: 'what is a bass clarinet?' I don't know, 'who is that*

guy?’ But I saw his name all the time and I said, he is pretty expert [laughing]. I have a feeling that he wrote to me as one does when one’s trying to make their way in the world, and he discovered Concorde. Concorde was quite active internationally and had played in the Netherlands quite a few times, we were members of something called The European Conference of Promoters of New Music, so we would’ve been on many lists for contemporary music performances. I have a feeling he wrote to us and asked could he play with us, that’s how it started. It was an initiative from the performer who is specializing in creating a career of solo bass clarinet, Harry got out there and did it and brought himself around the world, and commissioned work from thousands of composers, and that’s how he created the bass clarinet and all the people who studied with him and everything. He did come over many times and played with Concorde and I know that meeting Paul was a great plus for Harry, he immediately recognised a musician that he could relate to, and I think it was only after that. I think you might actually question Paul about that whole period when we got to know Harry, I think it was only then that Paul got interested in the bass clarinet and saw that it could be a solo instrument and all the kind of attractions of it for contemporary music. I think Harry came and gave some masterclasses, maybe for composers, I’m a little confused about the actual details of it, but I can check back these things for you. Paul and Harry hit it off, big time, so they got in touch. I remember actually Harry, the first time he played with us, saying: why are you all sitting down? You don’t sit down when you play, you have to stand up and Paul said: ‘I can’t stand up with the bass clarinet’, and he said: ‘well, you have to get this strap’. We learned how to stand up and play from Harry, and in those days nobody did, of course nowadays everybody does. It made a huge difference, I mean it just connects with the audience so much better, so much strongly. I guess Harry introduced us to a lot of repertoire, he would come and he would play pieces that were important to him. They did quite a lot of duos together with these collaborative concerts. He really taught us everything we know about the bass clarinet, I have to say, both for Paul and for all of us, not only the wind players. He opened it up and made us braver and more sensitive to certain things that you need to listen for in an ensemble. He is such a strong player that when you’re playing with him, he would clearly lead the ensemble and that was important to understand that you can have somebody within the group who is actually leading it. I think Paul

*kind of did step into that role after that, and often was a very strong player within the group, pushing the whole thing forward, which you need, it kind of stabilized them. Now we are in a very good shape the ensemble, everybody being equal, but you need somebody to kind of push it forward at certain stages and Harry and Paul did that at important times. But my own compositions... I know Reflections was one with the two clarinets, there's a couple of pieces with both Paul and Harry playing. Again, I suppose what would influence me, as I said, when I'm writing, I'd like to know who I am writing for, I'd like to hear their sound, and Harry is such a strong player, I mean he is incredibly strong, his accents and his pop tones are like I don't think anybody can do them as strong as he can, they just make you jump [laughing]. That was one thing I picked up when I was writing for him, I put those in there and I knew they were going to pop up really strong [laughing].*

P.M: What do you expect from a performer when playing one of your pieces for clarinet? What should be taken into account?

*J.O: I think I have to answer this question in a general way, rather than just clarinet point of view, so it's for anybody who is playing any of my pieces. I want them to take ownership of the piece, to make it their own, I like to write in such a way that not everything is given on the page, and there's certain amount of flexibility, openness, and I want the performer to be part of the creative process. Now, it's fairly tightly organised and planned and written, but there will be small things even some as such the pacing and the pauses, how long do you pause, the breathing, to a certain extent it's up to the performer and I want the performer to think about how long that pause should be and decide from self, I don't want to tell them everything. I want them to realise that I've left it open for their creativity and their input. I think that way is my music, a lot of it doesn't become obvious on the first performance, and, if they're willing to stay with the piece and play it again over the years, and I've been really fortunate, especially with Paul, I want to say, he has been really fantastic for sticking with my music and bringing it out over the years, again and again and again in different places, different environments and situations, and that is the only way you can really learn a piece. The first time you play it, you're just scratching the surface. I'd*

*like to think that when I write music is not going to be all clear or obvious to the performer or to the listener on the first meeting, and as you play it again or listen to it again, you are going to discover more. This is what I would wish for, and I think it has worked very well with Paul, in particular, coming back to pieces, just for example Within/Without [2000], he has resurfaced stuff for many years, and several performances, and each one growing and maturing and becoming really part of the performer. When I write it I pass it on, it's no longer mine, it has to become the performer's piece. I think that Paul has done that with my two solo pieces, and Pablo in playing them a few times is now entered into this process, and it comes from Paul to Pablo, I'm actually particularly thrilled just to see these pieces growing and changing and developing, that's what I would wish for.*

P.M: What is the idea behind Within/Without? Who commissioned the piece and when was it premiered?

*J.O: Within/Without was part of a project involving designers, Paul Roe as a musician and several composers. The curators Hilary Morley and Sean McCrum put together this exhibition for Galway Arts Festival in 2000. The idea was to commission some designers to work on the theme of containers and to pair them with composers who would respond to the idea of containers, more specifically respond to the work which the artists were making. Paul was going to perform all of these pieces and there were a number of composers involved, just checking, it was Michael Alcorn, Rob Canning, Michael Holohan, Katherine Norman from England, myself, that's it. My piece was based on Brian McGee's work, and his thought about containers was based on the idea of amphora, which is the ancient classical container. What was interesting to me about this idea of the amphora, as a container, the shape was the main thing that gave me a start, it's very symmetrical, it's very gracefully curved and it comes to a point at the end, so it doesn't rest on its bottom, so to speak, so the various amphorae can fit into each other. Brian had the idea that he would have a large stoneware amphora and then he would also have little miniature ones, which could be placed in a box of sand that they were lying around it at the outside but they would also be inside the large one, invisible, but we would know they were in there. So that's the*



*title, Within/Without, the little ones are inside and outside the big one. Now the shape influenced the use of the pitch in the piece, and I begin with the lowest possible note, a little tremolo, a fifth I think it is, and the bottom note, and I end with that same one, but there is kind of a steady climb upwards and quite a strange part when it reaches the peak of the highest notes. It makes the slow ascend and then, as a more quicker kind of falling back down again, the upward slow pace is harder than the downward. That's the idea, and it's one of the only pieces I've written that had a predetermined shape, in terms of pitch. So, how do I do it? Well, obviously it's not a straight line up top, it's kind of curving and edging forward and falling back as it goes, but within each of the lines there're these tiny little motifs, and curving phrases, which are also miniatures of the bigger phrases. So, you have the idea of small motifs reflecting the bigger motifs as it moves along, and that's kind of the main musical gestures. It's interesting that there was a visual inspiration because I'm very interested in visual images and how they might connect with the music, and it's a very hard thing I can't actually explain most of the time how the visual might influence my music. In this piece I can because it's very clear that the pitch gives a shape and the type of motifs and so on, and I like that it's almost obvious what's happening, but I'm always interested in visual connections and how they pass into music. I suppose in most of my pieces it'd be in a much more abstract way.*

P.M: How did the co-creative and collaborative process take place with clarinettist Paul Roe?

*J.O: It's kind of hard to remember [laughing].*

P.M: That's right, because it was sixteen years ago [laughing].

*J.O: Okay, I think on this one I just wrote it knowing that he was going to play it, and it came out the way it came out. I don't think it was a collaboration in the compositional process, but we did the ultimate performance in the Aula Maxima in NUI Galway, and the hall was very interestingly designed with these objects all around the hall, and I remember that Paul gives the first performance of each piece of music standing in front of the art work that it related to. Everyone was there, the artists and the*

*composers, and they were to witness the coming together of the visual and the sound piece. I suppose the collaboration was really in the process and in the final premiere performance, but I didn't consult him along the way.*

P.M: Which clarinet characteristics did you take into account when facing the composition process of Within/Without?

*J.O: It's pretty much a linear piece, although there're tremolos and there's a very important multiphonic, maybe a couple, I can't remember but they come up structural points. Basically, the characteristics are the pitch range, from low to high, I'm kind of fascinated with the different sounds in the low part of the instrument and the kind of most thrilled area as you reach the top, it's quite piercing, and we don't want to stay there for too long but yes, it's there, and the contrast, and the sound of the instrument in those different ranges, that's probably the main thing. It's basically linear and melodic, in the sense of long lines. I think the breathing part of the instrument too, now that I'm looking at it [the score], I must say I always like the long held notes in the clarinet, because I think there's such a beauty in how you can sustain a note. So I have lots of long notes with a fermata, a pause written and it's entirely up to the player as to how long those pauses will be, that's part of the challenge to feel the duration of those. Some of those long notes have a vibrato coming and going, some of them have a diminuendo, some of them have a little trill. I'm just looking at all these kinds of long notes there are. For me, that's one of the most beautiful things that the clarinet does, it's to sustain a single note.*

P.M: Within/Without displays numerous effects such as flutter tonguing, multiphonics and vibrato, which role do they play in the overall style of this piece?

*J.O: I like to think that my use of these colouristic effects is integral to the music, and maybe enhances a kind of emotion or feeling, it's not something that's stuck in. On the other hand, as I look at the multiphonics, they come just here in the middle, at the point where we reach the highest. We're kind of spreading from low to high and then we're kind of doing this vertical space that it's inclusive of the whole musical space, so it's quite strategically placed in terms of the music. There's no flat of kind of*

*ornamentation, that's not a modern technique, but it's something that's quite typical of my style, I realise, I think is almost the way of softening the movement through pitches, it kind of blurs the edge. I almost always want to do it, just to soften things, and especially on the clarinet, I love the way grace notes and ornamentation can bring you along a line, a little bit decorative. The tremolo is particularly important and that again is a way of broadening the single line into a bigger space vertically, making a kind of a chord of two notes, which is impossible otherwise. Flutter tonguing would be just for colour really, I suppose what I want a kind of an echo or slightly distinct effect. The effect of vibrato could be something Paul had impressed upon me, I'm not quite sure but I can see that I use it a lot in this piece to colour the sustained note with a shape, to give it a shape.*

P.M: How would you describe the structure of Within/Without?

*J.O: Well, I have already spoken about the crucial pitch thing in the middle part. It is not measured, it's more by instinct as to how it goes. Beyond that, I guess you could say it's a series of short phrases, each of these little phrases has some kind of an internal shape, maybe writing, maybe just staying where it is, and that the phrases gradually lift you up these steps to the higher or down to the lower. Various ways of stepping up or stepping down, it does kind of stay for a while at the top when it gets there. So it's very instinctively written, other than a vague plan to go up and to go down. I don't plan how I'm going to do that, I let the music take its course and just follow instincts.*

P.M: What would you advise clarinet players in order to achieve a good performance of Within/Without in terms of interpretation, embodiment, etc.?

*J.O: Well, I would try to make the phrases as smooth as possible, and to feel the flow with any trace in one breath, if you can. I think that the more you play it the better you're going to know it, and I would advise just playing it and being comfortable, so that you can make your own judgments and decisions about how long you're going to hold the held notes, how long the breaths between phrases might be, or the pauses. Questions of pacing and speed are very much up to the performer, and you need to be*

*aware of your role in the piece when you're performing it, that you are also a co-creator of the music and that the performance is yours and is unique. It's your job to make it your own, it's not a piece where you can just follow the instructions and say that's it, I've got it right, because it has to be your own piece.*

P.M: What is the idea behind *a piacere*? Who commissioned the piece and when was it premiered?

*J.O: This one is very clear caught. It was a request from Paul to go with his doctoral thesis at the University of York, and there were several composers he commissioned. You've probably looked at the whole thing, I'm sure you have. The idea was collaboration between performer and composer, it's something I'm very interested in and sensitive to the complimentary roles of the performer and the composer. So I was really happy to have the chance to work with Paul in some detail over fairly long period of time to create a piece for bass clarinet. I think the idea was to begin creating repertoire for bass clarinet, because I don't know, I mean you could look into this, but I'd say there was nothing by Irish composers before this [laughing], that's easily checked in the CMC [Contemporary Music Centre]. We're talking about 2005, interesting, eleven years. Paul was really kind of starting his journey as a soloist and a bass clarinet specialist. I didn't know a lot about the instrument, I had written for it and I had worked with Harry Sparnaay and heard what he has done with it, and been to some of his masterclasses, and so on. I knew that I was interested in the instrument, and that this would be a chance to explore what I could do and how was different from the clarinet. It was premiered in July 2005, in Galway Arts Centre, at a weekend of concerts, I think there were three or four on the Saturday and three or four on the Sunday afternoon as part of Galway Arts Festival, and ConTempo Quartet and Concorde and Harry Sparnaay were all involved in these performances, international and Irish works. So a *piacere* made its debut at that weekend in 2005 in Galway, it was played by Paul, of course, and I'm happy to say he has played it many times since then and every time I hear it, it grows and becomes something new, it's fantastic.*

P.M: How did the co-creative and collaborative process take place with clarinettist Paul Roe?

*J.O: It was over a fairly extensive period of time, maybe six months, I don't remember exactly, probably in his thesis there'd be some mention of when we met and so on. All I remember is that I started from scratch with no ideas at all, investigated some techniques and sound things, I think I had studied Harry's book at this stage, so I was aware of the colouristic things that could be done, but I needed to actually try them out. We had a kind of a different approach at the beginning, I think Paul thought it would be more planned, but my compositional process doesn't work like that. I don't sort of say 'I'm going to do this' and then I do it. I have to think about various details and then I start with something on the page, and it all grows out of whatever those first marks I make on the page and it begins to pull out a bit purely from the musical motifs and ideas that I put down. It's a very instinctive process and, in order to have helped Paul in this, I think I may along the way have said 'okay, I'm going to do this' and then I did it, and then I said 'no, I don't like that'. It seems that the only way I'm happy with myself as a composer is if I let the process come very instinctively, without planning too much. But, as I'm doing it, I'm actually drawing the music out of a kernel that is there, and I'm assessing it as I'm working on it, maybe subconsciously, I'm looking and saying 'what've I got here?', 'where do I go next?', 'ah, this is leading to', you know, a corner beat or a more open beat, or it needs a commentary, and I go, I reflection, or whatever, these kind of questions. Working through the pitch range of the instrument, I can't remember how it goes in terms of shape, but I know I would be trying to cover the range over the piece, so it's spreading through the various pitch areas in the course of the piece and it just evolves. The collaborative process involved several meetings, and then I just have to get out of it and do it. When I had in my head the sounds that I wanted... It might be interesting to note that I didn't transcribe it on the computer because I found it impossible, so it's a manuscript copy with a lot of kind of open ended comments and instructions, maybe saying the kind of sound I wanted rather than knowing exactly how I was going to get it. I suppose that's maybe a short coming when you're working with a person very closely and you know that you can talk to them, and you know that they understand what you are looking for. This is*

*one of the dangers I suppose of collaboration is that, maybe, the way it's written makes sense to Paul but maybe it's not clear enough for somebody who doesn't know me [laughing].*

P.M: Which bass clarinet characteristics did you take into account when facing the composition process of *a piacere*?

*J.O: It was kind of an exploratory process, again I knew that there was a huge range, also colouristic possibilities, I think I was basically exploring all these things.*

P.M: A *piacere* displays numerous effects such as flutter tonguing, multiphonics, vibrato, slapping and specially air, which is very present throughout the piece, which role do they play in the overall style of *a piacere*?

*J.O: Ok, do you have the score there? [having a look at the score]. Just in general, just say that maybe it's interesting to talk, oh no, we talked about my evolving process. I might say at this stage, this comes out to a point where I'm kind of changing how I write music. Let's say when I started in the seventies, all I thought about was pitch, and I was obsessively careful about my choice of pitch, because I went to a very serious twelve-tone training and the total emphasis was on pitch, I know all that serial composition involved and all that sort of thing, but with me, for whatever reason, we focused on pitch, and I felt that I had to know why every note was there, exactly why, in the bigger scheme of things. So, over the course of maybe 15 years after I stopped studying formal education I began to feel I was missing something, and I began to become more aware of the aspects of colour and the subtleties of colour. I'd say over the last twenty years I guess, I've been pushing towards music in which the main emphasis is on colour and the shading and the movements through various colours. Of course, pitch is very important and it has to be there, but the emphasis has shifted. So this piece, a *piacere*, comes at a point where I'm really interested in exploring the colouristic possibilities, doing whatever you need to do with the instrument to make a specific sound, not just the pitch but the whole sound that goes with it. We're talking about these various things [effects], I hear it very specifically when a certain sound, I have to look at the piece to see. I think the use of air is kind of a diminuendo really on*

*the first pitch, it's a way of fading, adding more air gradually and then falling into key clicks, that's like a big long diminuendo ending in a long note with a flutter and air, and flutter. That's kind of a fading line down through becoming less clear. Again, I see on the second page, this 'repeat ad lib as rapidly as possible gradually add air, diminuendo sempre', so again it's a way of doing a diminuendo not only decreasing the dynamic level but changing the colour, so that it's more fuzzy and less exact. Also on the second page, no, that's actually the end of the line, it just ends with more and more air, it's kind of a fading process. [she keeps looking at the score and reading it] 'legato with air, key clicks on the third page'. I like that's kind of dropping out all together and just having nothing, just the key clicks, that kind of appealed to me. I suppose it's kind of the air question, as a question of how much in the foreground is the music and how much in the background and be conscious of the layers of sound and where we are, so the more sharp the sound and clear the sound and it's right in the foreground, but it's almost a visual thing with the air as the question of just letting it disappear into the background. Now, you mentioned the slapping, I have to say Harry is so brilliant at that [laughing] I had to put it in [laughing], I love it, and I'm just trying to see where, oh, it's usually very low notes and I think that just pop out, not a lot of them, no. It's a percussive effect really, isn't it? Slap tongue, it comes again at the end of a phrase, you have a long note and then 'pop', it's a punctuation. Gliss [glissando] is another thing, I kind of like that falling off the note, I still do, I use that quite a lot. When I think about my style, I think it's a question of blurring things. I'm just going to refer to the piano as an instrument I kind of find very hard to write for, because you can't actually change the note, once you've played it, it's done [laughing]. So what I like about maybe the violin, the cello, the clarinet, the flute... is that you can change the note after you've started playing it. And this really appeals to me, bending the note, even doing a crescendo on a note, it's something you can't do on the piano. So needless to say when I get the chance, I like to use those kind of things, but it's also a question of taking the hard edge off the note, softening it, even though I can see where I have done it, I have a sforzando and [she imitates the sound of a clarinet doing sforzandi], that kind of a thing, but at the same time, the note itself is less clear, because is falling off the pitch, that's how I see it. Again, that's something that'd be very different for each performer, everybody would do it in their own way,*

*you can't note it exactly how you want that to sound, it's a falling off the note and that's it. So there is enough lot of freedom in this piece. I'm just noting the end, these high notes [she sings again]. Those things are all very personal in the way you would do them, however, big at least you want to do it, I didn't say why you should stop because I don't want to think about it, I just want to do what feels comfortable.*

P.M: How would you describe the structure of a *piacere*?

*J.O: I have no idea, absolutely no idea [laughing]. It's a little conversation with yourself [laughing], just random motorings [laughing]. Just say that it is kind of a conversation with yourself, and how your mind kind of wanders, you think about some things, and you explore about some things, you get sort of angry or upset or urgent, or sometimes you're calm, it's all those emotions, so it's not one emotion for the piece, it's kind of changing all the time. But it's really a conversation with yourself, where you're either pushing something forward or reflecting on something, you're thinking about it, you're having a little outburst [laughing] these kinds of human instincts are in there. And the title, of course, a *piacere*, I think Paul didn't get that when I first... He didn't know Italian and this is a musical instruction, but it's absolutely perfect because I wrote it for Paul knowing it was a collaborative piece, and I wanted him to make it its own, so I said 'as you please, it's for you to do it as you wish once I give you the starting point', so I like the title.*

P.M: What would you advise bass clarinet players in order to achieve a good performance of a *piacere* in terms of interpretation, embodiment, etc.?

*J.O: The same, play it many times, get to know it, make it part of you, make it your own. Be brave, experiment, go for it. Hopefully, it will feel natural when you get to know it, I know you have to take it into yourself to put it out again, and that's sometimes a slow process and the transfer of information from my brain to yours is difficult. You've only the page to go on, really. If I can be there, that is more important. I guess if you're going to play this, I would love to be there and go through it and hear you play it and say, you know, 'think about like this', or 'stretch that a bit' maybe or, to go through it together would be the ideal thing. But I can't be there, then*



*you should listen to other performances of it, not copy them, but just from listening from the outside get more sense of how the piece flows, and then you can more easily take into your own head. In general, my advice for the performer is to talk to the composer, meet with the composer, play it for the composer, and if you can't do that, listen to any recordings that might exist.*

P.M: How do you define your compositional style today?

*J.O: It's a lot freer than it used to be, I pretty much work by instinct, I find the starting point. I work at the piano and I do want to have a very good sense of pitch, but beyond that, I need to imagine the sounds as they would be on the instrument. So I would say that I'm deeply concerned with colour and timbre, what the instrument can do. I've always written for a specific instrument, I don't want my music to be transferred to another instrument, at least lately it's very specific to trying to use the best qualities of whatever instrument I'm writing for, to make the most of its possibilities. My compositional style is free, open, unplanned, I just write and I throw away a huge amount before I get to what I want it, it doesn't come first go. I kind of work from the abstract to the final detailed version. It's very hard to talk about your own music but, I guess I would like it to be is free, open, inviting, leaving space for the performer and full of colour.*

P.M: Music composition is evolving and we are witnessing all the technology innovations as a very important element to the creation process. For instance, you might have known of SABRe developed at the Zurich University, which is a sensor based system installed in the bass clarinet and soon to other woodwind instruments as well that adds more controls and features to them. What is your view in relation to these new trends? Which are the main challenges for the new music in the near future?

*J.O: That's an interesting one, but you've got to remember that I've been writing music for fifty years [laughing]. It's very hard for me to move on to all these wonderful technological investments. I admire what've been done, I think it's important, that sounds really interesting, I don't know about it using the instrument controlling the*

*type of sound, in a way it does make the performer much more involved, I'd imagine the performer becomes more of a composer, and that's the way it should be, really, to some extent. For myself, I love working with people, and I don't see myself changing that priority. So I have not really been engaged with electronic music. If it was a collaborative thing I would be very interested, but just working with people and instruments is really my priority, I like it too much and I think there's still loads to be done.*

[Similar to what Jane and Paul accomplished with *a piacere* [2005], she also mentioned the compositional process of *Soundshowers* [2007], as an example of an extended collaborative process with performers]

*J.O: I did also mention the piece Soundshowers from 2007, just in case this is of interest, it was for alto flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano and percussion. It was written for an ensemble in Chicago, Palomar Ensemble. I've worked with them a lot, but this was my first engagement with them, and they had a very interesting collaborative process where I started writing and sent them a certain amount of music, they performed it, they recorded it videocamera and they put it up on their website. It was advertised as 'Composer Alive' this project, it's still running. The organization is ACM, Access Contemporary Music, based in Chicago, if you want to check it out; actually, the piece is still there, the video of this piece and they've been doing it every year. But anyway, so over four instalments, there was a process of collaborative composition and, in the interim, there were comments from the performers, there was my assessment of what I heard 'did it match what I was thinking?', and there was a public response, which was very interesting part of the whole process, where people were just listening through the internet, I'm writing comments and observing what was happening, so at the end of the four stages, I went over and we had a public performance of the finished piece. But I liked the first couple of instalments I threw out and just completely did something different [laughing]. It was interesting for everybody to work through a various series kind of collaborative things, and that was my first, maybe, engagement with an extended collaboration with performers.*

## APPENDIX C

### Interview with Paul Roe, Dublin, 8 June 2016

Pablo Manjón: After working thirteen years as an Associate Principal Clarinet of the RTÉ NSO, why did you decide to leave the orchestra in 2000?

*Paul Roe: A big question. Okay. I took a year out to do a Masters from 1999 to 2000 and that year out was very revealing on the impact the previous thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, twenty years had had on me and how I was in how I was going about my life, my music and my education; and what I realised was when I came out of the orchestra and started studying I began to have a much much more expanded view of possibility, as a musician, as an educator, as an artist. And I found this really really exciting and also, somewhat, as I said, revealing because when you are in the midst of doing something over a long period of time, because you don't have the perspective of not doing it, it's all you know. So when I stepped out of the orchestra I realised 'wow' being in an orchestra is really like being in the midst of a machine, very well oiled, very well function machine often, but at the same time, you realise that your part is very specific to the working of that machine, but if you're interested in exploring other possibilities, your thinking is to a greater or lesser extent inhibited because your skill is based on the ability to deliver very effectively music that's chosen for you to play it and prescribed for how you play it by a conductor so, naturally like anything else that you practice, you'll become good at it. So I have practiced as an orchestral musician and became pretty good at delivering under pressure, playing E-flat clarinet, playing second clarinet, playing principal clarinet for three years. And the skills that you own are ones of focus, concentration, resilience, and ability to handle pressure, and efficiency; however, the other side of that is you don't get a lot of time to explore creatively other ways of doing things, play your playing, your teaching, your artistry such as 'what would it be like to play this particular passage in an entirely different way, or do this sort of repertoire?' You simply don't have the time or the energy to a greater or lesser extent. When I had that year out from the orchestra to do the study I found myself having a huge amount of creative space mentally and I found myself feeling extremely energised by this, and I remember distinctively in*

*summer, which is actually now, summer of 2000, sixteen years ago, a gradual accumulating sense of dread, the fact I would be going back into the orchestra was beginning to really dread, because I knew it would be like putting back on this overcoat to, you know, to operate within... for me personally, to operate within that world would mean dumping down all this other marginalised stuff, that would just kind of, not confuse, but as an orchestral player and I really didn't want that, I wanted to continue growing, I thought I just got a flavour of the Masters and I really wanted to just continue this. I asked the orchestra what I'd decided I would do, maybe a could job share, do a fifty percent job, because at that time some of the string players were doing this and it was very common practice in London orchestras to have double principals and double wind players and so on and so forth. So I thought it might be a challenge for the orchestra with that but they wouldn't hear, they wouldn't hear of it. So I was left with the alternative of go back full time or resign altogether. It was a difficult decision, I knew exactly what I wanted to do, I wanted to leave, but at the same time there was a recognition that if I do leave there's no way to going back. And as it happens in life I had bought a house and had three children and set my life up in such a way that there's an expectation of a certain income, so that was a challenge, but with the support and the reassurance of my wife, I decided: 'look you know, I'd rather continue growing and developing as a musician, as an artist, as an educator'. It was either go back to the orchestra, into a situation where that I'd be playing in the orchestra quite a long time and have played so much of the repertoire, some of it many many times, and I've played as principal, I've played as E-flat, I've played as second, played E-flat clarinet, and really going back into it was just a question of repetition for the next whatever number of years, I was thirty-seven years of age at the time and I thought: 'no, let's jump and see what happens'.*

P.M: What was your first approach to contemporary music?

*P.R: I'd just respond that a question, Pablo, like as follows. When I was in the orchestra, twenty-six years of age, Alan Hacker came and conducted the orchestra, the great Alan Hacker: clarinet, maverick, extraordinaire... He came and he conducted the orchestra in a Mozart opera and he was a wheelchair user due to... I think he got a*

*clot in the spine when he was in his early twenties, at which point he was in the London Philharmonic Orchestra, so it was a terrible thing... Anyway, he came over and he got into conducting and he was conducting this Mozart opera. While he was over, I was playing principal clarinet in the opera. But as I said, I was twenty-six and really feeling I wanted to learn more and really feeling, you know, I don't have enough learning or education as a clarinettist, I'd lots and lots of practice done and play but I really wanted to learn some more, I'd say. I had some lessons with Alan Hacker when he was over, and I remember I was playing this piece, which I thought contemporary at the time, and I suppose in fairness it was to certain extent, it was Donald Martino's 'A Set' ['A Set For Clarinet', a solo clarinet piece], and I really enjoyed playing this piece and, when I went to Alan, he just opened up a whole new world to me about contemporary music, and, in particular, I remember, there was one passage I played [he sings], I think it was F sharp – G sharp [he continues singing], and very high, you know and very loud. As I played it Alan had said to me: 'no, no, no, that's not loud at all, that's really not loud', so I tried to get it playing it really loud, and he said: 'no, you've got to imagine this is somebody's roof on the house, and it's just falling in, and you have to replicate that in sound', so he said: 'give me that clarinet', because he was quite a gross??? man but very very great guy, and it took the clarinet off me and he put it up to his mouth and he blew into this and he made the most awful, hideous, screeching sound, and he said: 'that's loud', and I definitely could sense to falling it in my head. And that kind of opened it up to me in a way, but I was twenty-six, sixty-two, eighty-two, eighty-eight maybe, and two years later, I suppose from 1990 onwards that I would be going to play with Concorde Contemporary Music Ensemble. That really started a life, a career long fascination and interest in contemporary and new music. I don't know, has that just answered your question?*

P.M: Yes, yes, absolutely. When did you first know of Jane O'Leary as an Irish composer and when did you finally meet her?

P.R: *How interesting. You know, I don't really know exactly, I can't be exact about this. I started playing with Concorde and I would've met Jane then, in 1990, so I was 28. But then likely I would've thought I knew her for about three... I came across from*

*probably in my twenty-three, twenty-four, I may have met her in Galway in my mid-twenties. But really my relationship with Jane started in, I would say, in 1990.*

P.M: When and how did you start with Concorde?

*P.R: As I said, I started in 1990, I was invited to come and play with the ensemble, you know I can't really remember whether it was to cover the previous player who was Brian O'Rourke, who was the principal clarinet at the National Symphony at the time, and whether or not, Brian had got tired of playing contemporary music, I don't know, but it was to cover one concert, I don't know really, maybe he had decided to give up playing contemporary music, and I did a concert and then I did another concert and then over fairly short period of time I was the clarinet player of Concorde Ensemble. For me, to put this in context, it was very important, because I was second clarinet in the orchestra, sub-principal as it was called at the time, there was the principal clarinet of the time who, along with the other principals, if I might say this and be provocative, who had pretty high profiles in their own minds, but had pretty high profiles in terms of what they did outside of the orchestra; so in other words, it's quite a lot of ego and quite a lot of, how should I say?, their own identification, and somehow I felt a little bit sort of.. wasn't getting the amount of opportunities one would like to get as a chamber musician or a soloist or whatever, so then to begin to find that actually this contemporary music thing I really have a connection with it and it gives me an opportunity to define myself as an artist musician... When I say this, I am really talking in retrospect, like at the time I didn't strategically set out to do so and when I'm reflecting back I know this is what it transpired happened, but I certainly felt at the time it was an important step that gave me a boost in my confidence; okay, I'd have the job in the orchestra, but in my mid-twenties in particular, and the beginning of the thirties, I felt really quite insecure in the orchestra, really quite not confident, and really felt a little bit less good than some of the other players; which I'm reflecting, you know, was a lot about the culture of the orchestra at the time, which it was very much about principals being the preeminent ones and the others being somewhat subordinate to that. I suppose in a way that would shape my own philosophy about playing, teaching and coaching and so forth,*

*you know.*

P.M: This year Concorde celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, how would you describe the contributions that Concorde have made within the Irish music scene and their impact on Irish Contemporary Music?

*P.R: You know, Concorde's contributions to Irish Contemporary Music, of course, I don't have an objective opinion on it, because I'm part of Concorde, but that said, the contribution really has been extraordinary, in so far as the amount of composers that Concorde have commissioned is, I don't know, is it two hundred or beyond two hundred? I think, and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of performances of new music by Irish composers and/or international composers, meaning in the past we used to play a lot more international composers, Iceland, Norway, Sweden... all these places, but then it began more and more Irish composers and many many of today's leading composers got their start with Concorde, and also I think the contribution in terms of gender balance has been really important, contribution towards, I would say, artistic life in Ireland, I don't think is recognised or it's valued enough or appreciated enough, but with the female director, Jane, a wonderful composer artist to herself who really supported strongly the development of women composers, and then of course within the ensemble was Madeleine, who is a founder member as well, so I think the contribution has been very significant. It does disappoint me a little bit that now with the age in which we live where so much attention is given to media representation and fashion and, you know, how things appear, that somehow, Concorde's reception and Concorde's profile has been in so mode of receding, declining, very slowly over long number of years, due to, in a way, I suppose a certain indifference from people within music, not from Concorde members themselves, but indifference from the commentators, and also due to newer groups coming along who offer something different, something that is fresh and dynamic, but at the same time there's been a sense of I would say neglect, I would say that there's been a neglect publicly in the recognition of the achievement of Concorde. But I think the contribution has been very significant, as I said, in terms of how many composers have been commissioned and performed by Concorde on a national scale, but also on*

*an international scale, and being at the forefront of premieres and works that would've never heard in Ireland such as George Crumb's 'Voice of the Whale', and a lot these works, modernist works and so forth that were introduced to Ireland by Concorde. I have significantly broader use on this as well in relation to the Jane O'Leary and contemporary music and how it's received, and the support received from within its own fraternity, but I think that's another subject which I can talk about again.*

P.M: What made you become interested in the bass clarinet and how has your experience been with this instrument so far?

*P.R: The bass clarinet, you know, it's funny... The bass clarinet from this perspective now is... I remember somebody once saying about the key of D major, I bet it was in jazz or perhaps it was folk music or not, 'it's not a key, it's a way of life', you know because it was so important in folk music, maybe I'm misquoting that, so in a way the bass clarinet is quite a fascinating instrument because it seems to me that is much more than an instrument for many people who come to make friends with this instrument, it becomes a love affair, both by those who play it but also I think those who compose for it and perhaps those who listen to it. There's something in the bass clarinet that is immensely attractive to many many people and it's almost something that's primal, you know, maybe not almost, maybe it is just primal, and I definitely find that the students I work with who play bass clarinet and other musicians who play bass clarinet, they are really quite different to other instrumentalists, other clarinetists, for they have such a passion for the instrument itself... that I hasn't really answered your question in relation to me and the bass clarinet directly, so from my own perspective, when I started playing the bass first probably again in my early to mid-twenties, I didn't do a huge amount after I got the job in the orchestra because I wasn't the bass clarinet player, prior to it I was freelancing so I actually did play quite a bit of bass in the orchestra as a freelancer between the age of twenty and twenty-five. But increasingly as a contemporary musician I seemed to be doing more and more bass clarinet playing; before I knew it I was kind of almost seen as a bass specialist... so I've had the good fortune to play such a great instrument for a long*



*long time, twenty-five, thirty years... I guess, yeah... and have played with the best players in the world playing bass clarinet, and I've been amongst them playing with them, including Harry Sparnaay, Henri Bok and so forth. It's a great instrument and I continue to be really attracted to it and curious about it, and see it not really as a deep clarinet, I just see it as a completely its own instrument.*

P.M: Which characteristics of the bass clarinet do you find the most appealing as a performer in opposition to the clarinet, and vice versa?

*P.R: I think the most appealing aspect of the bass clarinet is the fact that has such a wide range of colour, I mean of course the range of the instrument is fantastic from that low C to the high squishing altissimo register, but I think is the fact that the instrument has such a wide range of colour, by what I mean, sound colour, and then also timbral differences between the different types of breath and make the density of the sound, the thinness of the sound, and the personality of it is so distinctive, compared to the clarinet, the bass clarinet is like... ah, I have it now... This is a ridiculous comparison but let me make it anyway. If you've ever seen the movie about twin gynaecologists, that star Jeremy Irons, it's a famous movie that I always happen to forget the name of the movie, David Cronenberg was the director and Jeremy Irons played both parts of these gynaecologists surgeons, one of them was an extremely subdued, not very gregarious personality, and the other one was completely the opposite, really gregarious, really good with women and so on and so forth, and in a way the bass clarinet feels like that very extrovert gynaecologist... what a strange comparison, why not! And the clarinet, the much more conservative, that's not to say the clarinet can't be played in a very extroverted way, especially when comes to folk music like Bulgarian folk music or Klezmer, but the classical clarinet, by comparison to the bass clarinet can feel very very subdued and it is lovely to inhabit both worlds because there's a beautiful quality almost in trying to produce the beautiful tone on the clarinet, and then the whole other crazy personality of the bass clarinet as exemplified by piece like Monster by Ed Bennett, so having the two of them going on at the same time actually balances each quite nicely, that kind of polarities in a way, you know, but very very different... and curiously enough it goes to a personality as*

*well that a clarinet person can't stand playing the bass and you know you kind of know that there're type of players that wouldn't want to play the bass. Should I say they're a little bit boring? Maybe that's not a good thing to say... But, anyway, definitely playing the bass clarinet is not for the faint art, it's for those who are a little bit adventurous and who are willing to put up a bit the constant possibility of squeezes and squeaks, and not let it stressed them out too much [laughing]. What a strange answer...*

P.M: When did you meet Harry Sparnaay and how was the experience of working with him?

*P.R: I met Harry a long time ago 'cause he was a guest of Concorde going back probably to the mid '90, so I probably met Harry about twenty years ago, something like that. He was a wonderful guy, he was and is a wonderful guy to work with... Again, you know, he is the ideal representative of the bass clarinet, I mean if you wanted to pick one personality who kind of represents the bass clarinet, Harry is it, in so many ways and that... he is outspoken, he is provocative, he is quirky, he is funny, he is enigmatic, and his playing has all of those characteristics, and his personality suits the bass clarinet but, even more so, the bass clarinet suits his personality. I played with Harry quite a few times and always enjoyed the experience, I found him to be very self-facing, modest, kind, passionate person to work with, that said, he was very assured in his opinion, I mean there's no doubt about that, but I never really got egotistical sense from Harry at all, and that was very appealing to me, this international artist who didn't really have what I'd experienced with some other musicians, a lot of ego, they weren't a hundred percent passionate about the music, you know. He is a good friend, I helped him and did the English translation of his book, and his influence on the bass clarinet fraternity, as a world, has been dement, and it's been a great pleasure for me to be part of that story. We've done duos together, we're on CD's together and we've sat down and had a beer, as you know, the bass clarinet people they're just a very nice bunch of people to hang out with to, you know.*

P.M: How has Harry Sparnaay influenced you as a performer?

*P.R: The influence that Harry Sparnaay had on me was really quite interesting, I think so far is what Harry taught me, many things, but amongst them, what stands out for me is that personality, and character, and individuality, and having your say is very important, because in the clarinet world sometimes it seems like a narrow range of possibilities in terms of perhaps the velocity that somebody played at, or how quickly could they play this passage or that passage, it's just the whole imaginary world of being a musician and being an artist. What that meant I think has been what I've taken from Harry, amongst other directions, but also I think the personality aspect is very important too, because often in classical music you can be encouraged to be very bland and anodyne, and just to convey the canon of classical works without your own personality intervening too much, you certainly wouldn't do that in contemporary music or with the bass clarinet, and as an artist, I do see it as an important decision in my life to really see things through an artistic view of things as opposed to being a technician. I think nobody could deny that Harry is the most wonderful artist musician, and I think that's been the biggest influence in many ways. Not so much is bass clarinet playing, although that too, but the bigger picture stuff.*

P.M: How would you describe your experience when participating in a collaborative and co-creative process for clarinet/bass clarinet pieces with different composers?

*P.R: This has changed all over the past few years and I'm very happy to say that it's been a very interesting learning process itself. I think it stands from my frustration to basically feeling, first of all, in orchestral context being subservient to a composer that almost long since dead, not subservient but just feeling, you know, just shut up and play it and keep it out of the way. And then, being open to this whole world of new music, contemporary music where, yes, your personality, your imagination was very important in the development and the reception of the music and in the performing of the music. But then I started to learn, or found myself, there were certain composers that I felt that they were very directive, a little bit resistive and a little bit kind of 'this is my music, and this is how I wrote it, and this is what you should do and blah blah blah'. And I didn't find myself enjoying that as much as other people that I worked*

*with, who were much more open to it being something that was up for discussion, and, in a way, I would say creatively pushing out the boundaries of artistic practice, because, (anyway I will get into that in a second), but because I was working closely with living composers and then more and more working with closely living composers that were over mind-set more interested in working with, rather than handing scores down to you, I became really interested in the creative process of composition and how that related to creative processes of performance, and that's been a long interest of mine and I very much see what a performer does is very much a creative act just in the same way as what composer does is an active creation too, both are active creation. I have very strong views on those who would suggest that a performer is somehow less creative than a composer, and that there's this distinction between the two areas of work; I think they both... you can have performers who are extremely creative and you can have composers who are extremely prescriptive and non-creative, and vice versa. I'm very very happy that, now in 2016 in this digital world we're living, which has democratised so many things, especially education, collaboration is really seen as the go-to mode for working in the world, and for being in the world that's about being collaborative. So I did my PhD in Collaboration and started out about twelve years ago, so it's kind of very pleasing for me now to realise that collaboration itself from even twelve years ago has just absolutely exponentially grown that you couldn't believe. At that stage there was not even a huge amount of literature on that area but now it's enormous. It's a truly exciting process for people but it takes skill, and I don't think the training of musicians, implicitly in classical institutions, reflects those skills that are required to be a collaborative musician and I think there're many challenges with it, but I think it is surely the way of today and, without any certainty, into the future. It's going to be very very important, the way of people being together.*

P.M: How did the creation process of *Within/Without* take place with composer Jane O'Leary from your perspective as a performer?

P.R: *Within/Without* was directly related to a project called 'Containers' in 2000. So I was the facilitator on this project, I was in the mid of this project between composers,

*me as the performer, craft workers and people working on different materials. I'd been working with Jane, at this stage as a member of Concorde, for at least ten to fifteen years, so she knew my playing very well and I knew her compositional style very well. That's said, the collaborative process of that piece, my memory is a little bit sketchy, a bit vague about it, but I would say much less so than with a piacere, but she would've worked on it and give me the piece of music and then, there were a few changes within the piece of music that I suggested and various different aspects that I would do now myself and changes I would make, but in large, it was quite precisely notated and the collaborative aspects really were more about the history and understanding we had, she knew my sang, my voice, and I knew her sang and her voice, if you like to put it like that, because I'd played many of her other works. I knew what sort of colours she likes, I knew the type of sound she likes, I knew the textures, so when I came to playing the piece I knew all of this, so I was come to it like somebody who did know her work, and I knew it from the inside, not just that somebody was studying the works for a few months. So I knew it from working with her and I knew her music reflects her personality on that. Knowing all of that stuff becomes an embodied process for a performer, for somebody who performs, whether you're an actor, a conductor, so I think that was an important aspect of the actual collaborative process, but you might say that I was a co-overt aspect, co-overt collaboration to a certain extent, and I haven't thought about it like that before. The word 'overt' seems where things, especially on the third page where it gets the high trill part I made some suggestions might be easier to do with these particular pitches and so forth. We would've consulted a lot about the multiphonics that work, we would've talked lot about flutter tonguing, we did a lot on vibrato, she was very key on it, very asymmetrical vibrato throughout the piece.*

P.M: Which technical difficulties do you find in *Within/Without* and how do you approach them (effects, high notes, etc.)?

*P.R: For me the technical difficulty is really the flutter tongue, to quin out the flutter tongue without disturbing the music a line, and it's always a challenge of experienced as a player to get a nice flutter and I'm still working on it, maybe when I'm 95 I'll be a*

*bit better at doing a better flutter tongue. My flutter tongue is adequate but I don't think it's as good as I wish it to be, I would like it to be better, I continue working on it, there's specific things when I flutter tongue the pitch gets a little bit flat, I don't like that, but then I try to integrate that into the performance where I might prior to moving into a flutter I might flatter the pitch a little bit. Or if it's not flat, then it's a little bit too loud from what it went before. So I find the challenge of going from soft playing to flutter and back to soft playing quite a significant challenge because of the way I do flutter which is with the tongue where some people I know can do it with the throat, and I think that give them a great embouchure control. That's said, like everything else, you find ways and means and, in fact, sometimes, not being good at something is actually good, because you look at things less as a technician and more as an artist of sound or something, and you look for different ways of making the same colour, you know. So I think, flutter for me in that piece is probably the aspect that I find difficult. There're couple of tremolos in it, the high pitches I don't mind and I don't really worry too much if I split them because I don't want to split them particularly the note but I kind of see you're up around that register and it can be prompt to crack it but if anything that adds the intensity of the music, it doesn't really take away from it, and that's a mind-set as well, I'm not really want, at this point of my life in particular, to worry too much about playing it perfectly, you want to embrace the mood of the moment as you want to be immerse in the flow and the energy of the moment as much as you can, that'd be my inspiration as oppose to the external results and much more interested in how I can be in the moment.*

P.M: According to Jane O'Leary, each of her pieces offers performers certain flexibility and room of interpretation in order for them to explore and finally make their own version. How do you manage the different aspects of performance and which ideas do you apply in order to make your own interpretation of *Within/Without* (phrasing, colours, pacing, etc.)?

P.R: *Again, that's something that has changed throughout my life and I would say, at the moment, that's changing very significant, I'm changing too because I think what changes a performer would make are those things which are often in the gaps, they*

*might still play the same notes that are on the page, they might still play the same dynamic, they might still play similar rhythms, but the energy that it's displayed with can vary substantially, depending on the mood of the performer at any given time and how intensively engaged they are with the music. So really in terms of performance artistry or being a creator, a co-creator, I don't really like the word interpreter because it suggests you're just a bit like a language interpreter, interpreting a phrase, somebody says something in Spanish and then I say it back to you in English, I don't see it like that. So I see as an active animation, so you have music in front of you, you have dots on the page and then you make music from those dots on the page, they're something that the composer has had in her head, and they hear it perhaps in their heads or in their bodies, and then they put it on the page, but the performer equally then has to go: right, okay, how does this sound to me and how might I connect with that? And that's where the whole collaborative comes in, so I think where the opportunities come from reality, your expression is too, the intensity, the timbral differences that you bring, the engagement with the performance, just like if we went to see a Shakespeare's play, and the act was to stand on stage and read the words without any expression, nobody would go. So it's to degrade art to people like De Niro or somebody like that, or a great choreographer or a great dancer, these are all performers and creators, so what did they do? They bring an energy, an engagement, a focus, a compassion, a love, an anger, a curiosity, a grieve, a sadness, a depression, all of these emotions they can bring to at any given performance and you just can imagine if you've lived a life in Beverly Hills where you're driven to school every day, the way you might perform would be very different to somebody who has experienced much more an intriguing life, so I think you bring yourself to it and that self is not empty, and the suggestions sometimes within classical music is that the performer is kind of just a receptacle, it's just horse, in my opinion it's just complete bullshit.*

P.M: How has your interpretation of *Within/Without* evolved over the years since you first premiered it in 2000?

*P.R: When I was playing it in 2000 first I was obviously concerned to play the right notes, right rhythm and so on and so forth, and, even during that time, I would've obviously wanted to play it with great engagement and intensity and involvement and connection just as I do now, but my interpretation, my co-creation just has grown in the way I as a person have grown when I meet somebody in an encounter now based on one zone deeply of one's purpose in being in the world, if it's to bring joy as an artist, or as a person to be compassionate to another human being, all of these things are important in terms of how we evolve and develop as artists, musicians, and then not separate, not just little containers that we just put on, they are us, they are what makes us unique as performers, as composers; and as we evolve as individuals and we learn more things and integrate more things into our experiences of our lives, and make sense of these things are not as the case maybe, that finds the way into our performances because our personalities are expanding, so what I find with myself now is being really really curious about the fact that music exists, it doesn't belong to anybody, even you've written these dots down, it does exist it before you wrote it anyway, and as a performer it exists and it's interesting to see can we find those depths? I think many composers try to find that depth within the world that connects to something that connects us all, and I think the performer personally became not trying to find what the composer was looking for and trying to go to the source that all artists go to, some would call it a muse, maybe I would call it zen, I'm not quite sure but there's something fundamental in why we see to be artists as we grow old in our lives, hopefully a practice deepens, whether be as performers or composers and that's reflecting in the work that we do, whether or not that is the case for some people perhaps they did their best work when they were young and, you know, but for me, it's an inspiration to hear people doing marvellous work at 78 in 90, Elliot Carter or the Japanese painter Hokusai or any of these people, they're an inspiration for me, and I don't necessarily see the vehicle of performance as limiting to one's creativity, to what subordinate to something else... No, I think we can't just make a direct connection. So my interpretation of Within/Without I feel is very different to what I did when I was fifteen years ago and that's something for me that is much more embodied than it is intellectualised, it's much more about presence, about listening to what wants to emerge and how I can be accountable for what wants to be emerged*



*and I don't see that is an idealised read of what composers had in mind, I just see that is something that's from the earth, that all great art comes and springs from.*

## APPENDIX D

### Email Interview with Paul Roe, 9 June 2016

Pablo Manjón: How did the creation process of *a piacere* take place with composer Jane O'Leary from your perspective as a performer?

*Paul Roe: As a piacere was part of my Doctoral research specifically into the phenomenology of collaboration between a contemporary performer and various Irish composers the creative process was investigated from the perspective of both Jane and I and written about in my research. The process was much more in depth than Within Without as more years had passed of both Jane and I working together and also the fact that the commission was specifically set up to include an investigation into these processes. For further detailed information on this collaboration do read my thesis [I can give you a DB link if you haven't got it already].*

PM: How do you approach the numerous effects involved in the performance of *a piacere* from a technical and expressive point of view (flutter tongue, slap tongue, air, multiphonics, gliss, vibrato, etc.)?

*PR: As someone who plays a lot of contemporary music I'm less inclined to view the effects as technical challenges and more as artistic/musical challenges to make a coherent whole when performing the music. There are various effects in a piacere but really they are about direct expression through sound. What is key is the sound not the technique to produce it. Importance of exploring and understanding a particular sound world. In terms of approaching this aspect it is about listening carefully to oneself as to how the sound produced relates to atmosphere, colour, texture, ambience in terms of the expression of the whole work. If one focuses on the effects in isolation and zones in on technique, there is the significant chance of getting lost in the details and losing the sweep of the music.*

PM: How do you manage the different aspects of performance and which ideas do you apply in order to make your own interpretation of *a piacere* (phrasing, colours, pacing, etc.)?

*PR: For me increasingly I'm wanting to 'show-up' with insouciance and allow the music to speak from a neutral place where the life-force energy can flow without ego interference [this is a practice/path]- the idea of insouciance comes from a description by poet Seamus Heaney on how he wished to approach writing poetry...so the idea of my own interpretation does not hold much attraction for me...as I wish for each performance to be its own instantiation and not an interpretation which suggests there is an idealised version. For me ideally every performance would exist perfectly imperfect in each instantiation...*

PM: How has your interpretation of *a piacere* evolved over the years since you first premiered it in 2005?

*PR: Completely I hope-not so much just this piece but all pieces-just like any other artist the aspiration it towards creative expression... now I have a deeper sense of what it means to me to be as an artist who performs and this informs my aspirations for the work that I do...it is a continually evolving process and the work internal and manifest artistically in an external exposition.*

PM: What do you think are the main challenges for clarinet/bass clarinet performers in the near future?

*PR: The challenges are to make the work more meaningful artistically and not to be overly influenced by the fetishism of technique.*

## APPENDIX E

### Email to the Author from Jane O'Leary, 8 July 2016

Hi Pablo,

Have a great holiday! I'll answer this one quickly, before it disappears in my emails!

When thinking about setting up a contemporary music ensemble in Ireland, I was greatly inspired by a few groups in the USA. I was aware of the work of Da Capo Players, Speculum Musicae, New York Group for Contemporary Music, all of which were founded in the sixties and seventies... and was curious to note that Joan Tower, a pianist and composer like myself, had founded Da Capo Players with a similar mission to Concorde. In a way, they were a model for Concorde. I was also a fan of Joan's music and we played a number of her pieces several times with Concorde (in 1996, 2003, 2007) ... In addition to *Wings* there was a quintet called *Amazon* which I liked very much. I included her orchestral work *Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman* in an orchestral concert with the NSO which I programmed (including my own work) - it was part of the 'Horizons' series (if you need the date - I will have to search!!!)

Hope that gives you some info - if you need more on anything, just ask! I think they were founded in 1971? I left the USA for Ireland in November 1972....

Best wishes,

Jane

# APPENDIX F

## Score of *Within/Without*

### Within/Without

Jane O'Leary

Clarinet in B $\flat$  *ppp* fluttertongue

Cl. 4 normal fluttertongue normal

Cl. 7 Presto *sf* *sf* Rit. 5

Cl. 9 Lento *pp* *f* *pp*

Cl. 12 vib. *pp* *sf* *sf* *sf* *pp* Andante vib.

Cl. 16 Presto fluttertongue *pp* normal *mp*

Cl. 18 Andante *sf* *f* *sf* *p* *f* vib.

Cl. 21 piu mosso *pp*

Cl. 23 Andante *mf* *mf* *p* vib.

2

25 Cl. *sf* *f* *sf* *sf* *p*

27 Cl. fluttertongue *pp* normal *f*

29 Cl. *p* *sf* *sf* *sf*

32 Cl. *pp* vib.

35 Cl. fluttertongue *pp* normal

37 Cl. **Presto, bright!** *f* *sf* **meno mosso** *pp* **piu mosso** *pp*

41 Cl. *f* *pp* **deliberate** *f* *pp*

44 Cl. **Presto, lightly** *mp* fluttertongue *pp* Ritard normal

47 Cl. *mp* *mf* *f*

51 Cl. *ff* *fp* *sf* *sf* *f* *mf* *pp*

55 *mp* *sf sf* *p* *ff* **Presto**

59 *fp* *sf sf sf* *ff*

62 *p* *ff* *p* *mf*

65 *sf* *p* *ff* *repeat ad lib*

69 *sf sf sf* *mf* *Rit.* *tr* *Lento* *pp* *mp* *pp*

75 *deliberate* *mf* *pp* *mp* *mf* *pp*

81 *p* *pp* *mf* *ff* *vib.*

84 *pp* *f* *pp* *mp* *pp* *meno mosso, echo* *deliberate, "tiptoe"*

88 *sf* *p sf* *p* *sf* *mf* *sf* *deliberate*

4

91 *piu mosso*

Cl. *pp sf p*

93 *mf fp fp pp*

97 *moderato p sf f p*

100 *f sf*

102 *pp mf sf pp*

106 *fluttersong 3 3 normal ppp*

109 *Lento mf pp fluttertongue mf*

112 *normal Ritard ppp ppp*

7.7.00













Handwritten musical score with annotations and performance instructions. The score is written on five staves. The first staff contains a complex rhythmic pattern with notes and rests, annotated with 'pp', 'p', 'mf', 'f', and 'ff'. The second staff continues the pattern with similar dynamics. The third staff features a different rhythmic motif, also annotated with dynamics like 'pp', 'p', 'mf', and 'f'. The fourth and fifth staves show further development of the piece, with notes and rests, and dynamics ranging from 'pp' to 'f'. The score is heavily annotated with handwritten notes in various colors (blue, green, yellow, pink) and includes terms such as 'legato', 'staccato', 'ritardando', 'accelerando', 'pizzicato', 'arco', 'crescendo', and 'decrescendo'. There are also numerical annotations like '1/3', '1/2', and '3/4'. The page is numbered '3' in the top left and bottom right corners.

## APPENDIX I

### List of Jane O’Leary’s Pieces Featuring Clarinet

- 1969** - Quartet  
cl bcl vn vc
- 1976** - Poem from a Three-Year Old  
s-solo, fl cl
- 1977** - Trio II - Homage to Webern  
fl cl pf
- 1998** - Into The Wordless  
fl cl pf vn vc
- 2000** - Within/Without  
cl-solo
- 2001** - Joyful Jottings  
cl bn (vl, bcl) (cl, vn) (cl, bcl)
- 2002** - Reflections II  
fl+picc+afl cl+bcl bcl vn vc pf
- 2003** - For the Moment  
2 cl bcl (2cl, bn)
- 2005** - a piacere  
bcl-solo
- 2006** - Soundshapes  
voice, afl cl vn
- 2006** - something there  
cl acc vn vc
- 2007** - Sunshowers  
afl cl vn vc pf perc
- 2007** - Soundshapes II  
cl-solo, 2 vn, va, vc

**2010** - Winter Reflections

afl cl vn

**2011** - in a flurry of whispering

afl cl vn va vc pf

**2012-2013** - Clara

cl+b.cl, speaker

**2013** - A Way Through

afl bcl acc

**2014** - the echo of all that's happened

afl cl 2 vn va vc

**2015** - murmurs and echoes - 5 miniatures

cl pf



