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THE MUSIC OF PETER SCULTHORPE

An analytical study with particular
reference to those social and other
cultural forces which have shaped
the development of an
Australian vision.

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PREFACE

It may seem presumptuous to undertake the study of a composer in the prime of his career: the passage of time could prove that one's instincts about his subsequent music and one's assessment of his place in the cultural history of his country were unfounded. In the twentieth century, studies of living composers have understandably favoured the revolutionary and cult figures, since there is always a pressing need to come to terms with new ideas before they fall into disuse. The need for a study of Peter Sculthorpe is a different one, in spite of his unique contributions to the formulation of an Australian musical aesthetic.

My reasons for undertaking this thesis are both personal and pragmatic. From 1969 to 1971 I was employed by Sculthorpe as an assistant, my principal duties being the copying of scores, the editing of music for publication (this involved research into the establishment of a consistent notational system) and the cataloguing of letters, press cuttings and other documents. My situation could have been likened to that of a fieldworker, using the term in a similar sense to that understood by musical anthropologists. As I had some compositional responsibilities, I was forced to acquire a thorough knowledge of Sculthorpe's craft. The complexity of the creative mechanisms involved impressed me as being a subject worthy of analysis and explanation, and led me to write my bachelor's thesis on Sculthorpe's piano music (University of Sydney, 1971), most of which had been composed during my period of service. I was fortunate in this project to have had the rigorous supervision of Willem Adriaansz, whose enthusiasm for the topic convinced me that post-graduate research in this area would be very rewarding.

The pragmatic reasons are almost self-evident since this is the first

full-length study of a post-war Australian composer. Apart from any other consideration, the need for comprehensive studies of major Australian composers has existed for some time. The dearth of serious research has hampered the study of Australian composition at tertiary and even secondary levels of education; in many tertiary institutions it may also have prevented the introduction of courses. This situation is not likely to improve until greater interest is demonstrated in the form of books, theses and learned articles.¹

Despite the advantage of having complete access to all manuscripts and personal papers,² as well as the luxury of verbal communication with the composer, I have faced often-imposing problems in my research. The lack of critical writing on the subject has meant that there have been few theories or ideas to which I could respond, and hence, few opportunities to create the density of documentation which one associates with doctoral theses. The extent of my reliance on discussion with, and interrogation of, the composer cannot be overstressed: my method, for example, of constructing a biography was to assemble a chronological list of events from newspaper articles, concert programmes and other ephemera, but I found that, although I had uncovered items which the composer had forgotten, bad initial reportage and my own often-erroneous interpretation of the sources meant that questioning of Sculthorpe was essential before an accurate account could be rendered.

¹ Sculthorpe's personal files, alone, contain many hundreds of letters requesting detailed information concerning the music. For a considerable period of time, for example, *Sun Music III* was a set work on the N.S.W. School Syllabus, but no analytical study of this work was in existence.

² The bibliography gives some impression of the considerable extent of the manuscript sources available to the writer. As far as can be ascertained Sculthorpe has not attempted to withhold any personal papers. In addition to unpublished scores, compositional sketches, lecture notes, unpublished writings, letters written to the composer and collections of aesthetic and musicological quotations which have influenced him, there are also files containing many thousands of press clippings of concert reviews and other reportage relevant to his career.

Other information gathered in conversation sometimes underwent several drafts of writing before the composer was satisfied with its accuracy. This situation occasionally arose when verbally-transmitted information was not recorded or utilised immediately: many ideas collected in this way needed to be mentally re-organised before a use for them suggested itself. A case in point involves a body of theories relating the nature of the Australian experience to the vision of the Australian artist. Sculthorpe and I initiated an informal dialogue on this issue as early as 1969. Its burgeoning during the ensuing eight years has resulted, ironically, in one of the most problematic areas of this thesis. It is almost impossible to remember the stages of evolution of these theories and often difficult to ascribe ownership to the various ideas and key-phrases. When a particular idea is Sculthorpe's opinion it is identified as such in the text. All other opinions, excluding those that are acknowledged, can be assumed to be mine. It has been particularly difficult to make clear the distinction between what is observable from the scores and what is observable from being in the same room as the composer while he is working. It is possible, for example, to receive the impression that this study was largely the product of interviewing the composer, whereas, in fact, very little assistance was offered in the areas of analysis and music theory: Sculthorpe is reluctant to discuss his compositional technique and seldom analyses his own music. When pressed, however, he is willing to answer questions of a specific nature; but the fact that he has been available to confirm or dismiss ideas I have had, has meant that there have been fewer opportunities for speculative deduction than if the study had proceeded without his guidance.

The analytical procedure of this study differs from that of my earlier research because of the volume of music involved. The earlier research dealt with only two hundred and twenty-two measures of notated music and one improvisatory piece. This music was able to be examined in great

detail in the space of a hundred pages. My procedure in the present study has been to trace the development of Sculthorpe's compositional craft, preferring intensive analysis of crucial stylistic phenomena to detailed examination of whole pieces. Only a few works are analysed in full, but this is invariably for the purpose of viewing the larger structural aspects of Sculthorpe's craft. Since the standard analytical tools of tonal music are rarely applicable to twentieth century music, I have attempted to base my analyses on the way Sculthorpe goes about the writing of music, on the development of his personal rules of composition, and on the way his philosophy seems to have affected his notion of musical style. This does not mean that I have dispensed with literature relating to the description of twentieth century music; the bibliography includes a number of theoretical works which have had a decisive influence on my analytical method.

It should be mentioned that Sculthorpe's "compositional sketches" are of little use in determining his method of refining the material of a work. Having decided upon the length and sectionalisation of a piece, the composer rules up the pages and proceeds to write in the notes in pencil. Any changes he might deem to be necessary are prepared for by erasure. As a result the sketches contain plans for the ruling of pages, largely indecipherable collections of numerals which relate to the numbers of measures, durations and tempi of sections of a work, and already-completed pages of score which have been discarded because of changes in the plans for ruling the pages.

On the question of readability, I have endeavoured as far as possible to espouse Wilfrid Mellers' policy in *François Couperin and the French Classical Tradition* of "inserting a proportion of general information and theory into the chapters on the music" so that one "palliates the monotony of many continuous pages of technical comment and analysis."³ In the Biographical Introduction (Chapter 1) there is an attempt to reduce the

³London, 1950, p.13.

material to essentials: in describing the musical life of post-war Melbourne, for example, accounts of the various musical societies with which Sculthorpe came in contact, are presented in cameo, in terms of the way he saw them; more penetrating analyses would have been disproportionately lengthy, and quite unnecessary.

Although this study is mainly concerned with musical analysis, those parts of it which deal with social and philosophical issues are indispensable to this analysis. My thesis is that the social and other environmental forces and conditions of Australia have shaped the development of Sculthorpe's musical language. This kind of approach to the study of non-European composers is being demanded by the composers themselves.⁴

Lou Harrison, speaking at the 1975 Manila Conference of the League of Asian Composers, of which Australia is a member, commented:

. . . it is my belief that all of us living in the aftermath of the European explosion round the globe, increasingly find our inner tempo dictated more by locality, and less by international atomic style. Contrary to what we thought before, Europe, now we all know, is ethnic like the rest of us.⁵

In spite of a growing awareness of the fact that some non-European composers do hold this view there is a residual reluctance in the professional musical community to accept the view as anything other than eccentric.⁶ For this reason I have emphasised in this study the importance of Sculthorpe's Australia-oriented aesthetic, and in doing so, have touched upon what Manning Clark has called "a subject on which every historian of this country should have something to say, namely the influence of the spirit of place

⁴The term "non-European Composers" is used to indicate composers working in the European tradition in their own non-European countries. Thus, it includes Australian composers and Japanese composers, but would exclude, for example, an English composer living in Australia or an American composer living in Germany.

⁵Somtow Suchamtkul, "Crisis in Asian Music", *Tempo*, 117 (June 1976), 22.

⁶Sculthorpe, for example, has found that even those colleagues who have championed him as a composer have tended to remain suspicious of his aesthetic.

in the fashioning of Australians."⁷

I wish to thank Peter Sculthorpe for his many years of help in providing information and research materials and for his supervision during the greater part of my candidature. I would also like to thank Michael Kassler and Graham Hardie for their comments on several chapters.

⁷ *A Discovery of Australia* (Sydney, 1976), p.17.

CHAPTER 1

BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

Among the various writings of sociologists and other commentators on the Australian character, several interrelated themes emerge which are particularly relevant to an understanding of Australian writers, composers, painters and other artists. The first of these is the idea that the transplanted culture of Europe was, from the beginning, unsuited in essence to the Australian natural and social environment; and the second, that those Australians who espouse European thinking and manners invariably fail to make an impression on the quality of Australian life.

The country's most important artists seem to be those who have persisted with Australian themes even at the expense of appearing chauvinistic. Donald Horne has observed that "it is only by *being themselves* that Australians can be universal",¹ and he cites Patrick White as an obvious example. Even though White's novels have undisputed international appeal, "no-one could have written them except an Australian".

Much has been written about Australia's anti-intellectual attitudes. These have been presumably nurtured by a mistrust of ideas which would have seemed irrelevant to the Australian way of life in earlier times. The country has, for example, produced no philosophers, or at least no style of philosophy which could be said to be uniquely Australian. This is in contrast, for example, with America whose transcendental writers at an early date moulded European philosophy into something that made sense in terms of their own experience, and thereby created a tradition into which artists of all kinds could comfortably settle. The lack of any convincing

¹*The Next Australia* (Sydney, 1970), p.81. The italics are Horne's.

Australian school of philosophical thought is also not surprising if one accepts a view of history which links the formation of ideals and philosophies with suffering shared by the people of a country. As a nation, Australia has never suffered a war within its boundaries, and has only been burdened by catastrophes of a regional kind. There are, however, ethos surrounding the hardships of various social types in colonial times: the battle of the bushman against an hostile environment, and the loneliness and physical toil of the drover's wife. The theme of the individual represented by these two and other stereotypes is also responsible for the theme of loneliness which, not coincidentally, is a common factor in the works of White, Drysdale and Sculthorpe.

Perhaps ironically, the Australian artist is, in professional terms, also a victim of the problem of loneliness, for having no tradition in which to work isolates him not only from the non-artist, who in this particular society is naturally sceptical, but also from his fellow artist. A Charles Ives is able to respond to the vital philosophical traditions of transcendentalism and pragmatism, the socio-religious phenomena of Revivalism and the Social Gospel and, equally importantly, he is able to treat all the functional music of his milieu as legitimate influences on his own music. An Australian composer, however, is, for historical and social reasons, forced to synthesise his own aesthetic motivation, and often feels somewhat alienated by the music which he normally encounters in the course of his general experience and even his specialised education.

This pattern is probably true for all artists who seek to establish an Australian identity. In music one aspect of the pattern is that the aesthetic trappings which individual composers attach to their work are of a widely diverse nature even when there seems to be a great sympathy in their aims. It would be safe to assume that an inventory of Richard Meale's literary influences, for example, would not bear much resemblance to Sculthorpe's but one is surprised to find a considerable disparity between

the latter's and that of Anne Boyd (b. 1946), a composer who not only seems to have followed a direction hinted at by Sculthorpe, but who will probably emerge as the most original voice of her own generation. Whereas it is possible to analyse the French sensibility, for example, with reference to a particular period of composition, poetry or painting, every Australian artist, unless he or she is overtly committed to a non-Australian tradition, has to be considered almost as an eccentric. There is little sense of continuity between teacher and pupil; and even the most original and gifted artists seem to have minimal influence over the generation which follows them. As a consequence of these tendencies, a thorough biographical treatment is an indispensable aid to an understanding of the work of an Australian artist. The isolation of the social reasons for the artist's alienation represents a key to how the artist compensates for his loneliness, how he creates for himself a unique artistic world which he alone inhabits.

Peter Joshua Sculthorpe was born on April 29, 1929, in Launceston, Tasmania. As his family lived some distance from the town he was forced from an early age to find amusements which did not depend on the company of other children. Sculthorpe's brother, Roger (b. 1932), was too much younger for there to have been any effective communication between them at a very early age. His mother, Edna (née Moorhouse), who was born in Yorkshire and who, before marrying, was an infant-school head mistress, directed his attention towards painting and writing. His father, Joshua, was a sportsman and encouraged his sons to enjoy outdoor life. The family owned a general store and found during the depression years that better business could be made dealing in fishing tackle and firearms than in food. Consequently the outdoor life included knowledge of the techniques involved in fly-fishing and stalking game. Such involvements are usually responsible for the development of great independence and patience and a concern

for technique and craftsmanship. It is interesting in this connection that Ernest Hemingway, who later became one of Sculthorpe's heroes, was obsessed with the relationship between the craft of writing and the attainment of finesse in various sports.

The establishment of Sculthorpe's independence and solitude thus predates his school-days and his first contact with music. It resulted, much to his father's disappointment in a disdain for field sports. Joshua Sculthorpe could never really understand his son's attraction to music or, in fact, to anything intellectual or artistic which could not be put to some practical use; and in order to appease his father, Sculthorpe devoted time to sports concerned with individual excellence such as sculling, diving and athletics, and became later, a state champion swimmer.

Sculthorpe's musical education began at the age of eight when he received his first piano lesson from Clara Doodie. The mysteries of the notation of music being partially unlocked, together with a background of precocious creativity, enabled him to compose music which he took to his second lesson. The teacher's response was to punish him corporally without explanation. This display convinced him that writing music was morally wrong, but he continued to compose in secret. The situation resolved itself finally when his mother accidentally discovered some of his pieces. Sculthorpe studied with Doodie for two years and then became a pupil of Christine Myer, who had entirely different but, nonetheless, eccentric methods. She encouraged composition at the expense of piano technique and permitted her student to play any music he liked despite its technical difficulty. In this situation he was exposed to a great deal of the standard repertoire; he attempted, for example, to play all Chopin's Mazurkas and Polonaises. The freedom from the discipline of learning to play accurately was in fact beneficial to the composer's musical education for it was a situation which avoided the common practice in Australia of instruction solely in terms of achieving the best possible results in the examination system. The temptation is to teach nothing which is not crucially

relevant to the annual examination. The haphazard procedures of Christine Myer were, however, obviously not ideal, and this was communicated to the composer's parents by J. A. Steele, a prominent Melbourne musician who periodically visited Launceston as an examiner, and who had become aware of Sculthorpe's compositional talent. The new teacher suggested by Steele for the fourteen-year-old composer was Marjorie Allen, who concentrated on teaching keyboard technique, and who was a more experienced musician, with urbane tastes in literature and the visual arts. She was able to offer more informed criticism of Sculthorpe's music and was pleased to do so; and though it was her intention to give a thorough grounding in piano technique she did, from the beginning, always consider Sculthorpe as firstly a composer. Also, significantly, she stimulated a fiercely competitive rivalry between him and her two nieces, Roslyn and Helen Roxburgh, both of whom were gifted performers. Sculthorpe studied with Marjorie Allen for a little more than a year before enrolling for the Degree of Mus. Bac. at the University of Melbourne Conservatorium of Music in 1946. He continued his piano studies there with Raymond Lambert, a distinguished performer whose own teacher had been a pupil of Liszt; but a great enthusiasm for writing music resulted in a gradual loss of interest in the rigours of instrumental training.

The composer received his general education at the Launceston Church Grammar School where, in 1942, he was awarded the Magistrate's Scholarship. As a student he undoubtedly was most outstanding in language studies as he had, in his isolated childhood days, been reading, albeit in translation, works of the symbolist poets and of Nietzsche. In addition, while on holidays in Devonport with his family he had befriended a German professor who was understandably impressed by his precocious literary interests; and thereafter Leo Halpersohn and he regularly corresponded. Later a similar literary liaison was established with Wilfred Tenniswood, one of his senior-school teachers. Tenniswood was also quite surprised by Sculthorpe's

pianistic abilities and, as he had connections in the A.B.C., was able to arrange for his student to broadcast on "Young Australia" and specially organised local programmes. It is ironic that at this stage of his career the composer was, through the medium of radio, reaching a much larger audience for his own music than he was to do for many years to come.

The music of the pre-university days is arguably of little consequence though often surprisingly accomplished in a post-Chopin idiom. Ignorance of more contemporary music was a result of the extreme conservatism of teachers and radio broadcasters. It was not, for example, until a cousin, Dorothea Gough, remarked that Sculthorpe was "the Tasmanian Debussy" that he was even remotely aware of that composer's music; and after his mother had purchased copies of the *Préludes* for him in Hobart, he was disappointed to discover the use of the whole-tone scale, a musical phenomenon he thought he himself had devised. Dorothea's familiarity with the music of Debussy was probably more a result of her overseas war service period than of any locally acquired musical experience. Another friend, Alec Headlam, had acquired recordings of Mahler's symphonies. Sculthorpe occasionally heard the music of Mahler on Neville Cardus's radio programmes but the style had been too advanced for him to absorb in single hearings. Having recordings which could be played repeatedly meant that complexities of harmony and texture were able to be slowly absorbed and better appreciated.

As a school student the composer remembers a variety of musical experiences which he found difficult to relate to one another. Most of the music he heard he disliked, or simply did not find stimulating. This included music performed in A.B.C. subscription concerts and especially in A.B.C. school concerts. It also applied to Beethoven's late string quartets of which Christine Myer had 78 r.p.m. recordings, and most works presented on Neville Cardus's *Enjoyment of Music* programme and on the N.B.C. *Symphony Hour*, a weekly recorded broadcast programme on A.B.C. radio. He did, however, occasionally hear music which he considered revelatory. One

of the first orchestral concerts that Sculthorpe attended included the C Minor Piano Concerto (K.491) of Mozart and the *Adagietto* from Mahler's *Symphony No. 5*, both of which had a profound effect on him. Isolated pieces which had a similar impact were sometimes played by Cardus: works of Bloch and Delius and, in particular, Schoenberg's *Transfigured Night* and Berg's *Violin Concerto*. The composer concedes that, except for these rare experiences, he was more interested in literature and philosophy than in music. The fundamental problem in his appreciation of music was that he was unable to conceptualise the historical and stylistic relationships amongst the works he heard. In contrast with his experience with literature there was no-one with whom he could discuss these matters. Thus, in one sense, Sculthorpe's listening experience seems to have been divorced from his compositional activity. There is, for example, no hint of Berg or Schoenberg in his music of this period, although Ernest Bloch's *Schelomo* (1916), of which Alec Headlam had a recording, became a crucial influence on Sculthorpe's music at a later time, as did the works of Mahler.

Against this background, the decision to make music a career may have seemed an unlikely one. Sculthorpe was under pressure from his school teachers to pursue writing as a career, and his father, oddly enough, thought he should become an artist, by which, however, he meant commercial artist. On the other hand, the young school-leaver reasoned that his literary activities had been merely a response to poets like Verlaine, T. S. Eliot and Lorca, that his attempts at painting had been imitations of the works of the impressionists and of Picasso, but that music was something that had involved him constantly, more often than not without external stimulation. It thus seemed to him to be a logical decision that he should study music at university as a first step towards commitment to the vocation of composition.

Melbourne possessed an extremely vigorous musical life in the post-war

period and much of the activity was either directly or indirectly connected with the University of Melbourne Conservatorium of Music.² Bernard Heinze, who was Ormond Professor of Music, was also the most distinguished Australian conductor. His influence and popularity in this sphere were no doubt partly responsible for an impressive nine thousand concert subscribers in Melbourne in 1946, a number which was more than double that of Sydney.³ Heinze's wife Valerie, whose brother-in-law was Lord Mayor of Melbourne, became for a while, Lady Mayoress, owing to the death of her sister. Her position enhanced Heinze's popularity, and attracted more public support for the concert hall and the Conservatorium.

The first-year music enrolment for 1946 included amongst students of school-leaving age, a large proportion of repatriation students who, being older and more experienced were for the most part more committed and sure of their vocations than the average freshman.⁴ Included in this group were Rex Hobcroft, who distinguished himself as a pianist, and James Pemberthy, who, in 1947, became musical director of the National Ballet; but there were also many others whose enthusiasm created a unique atmosphere for younger students like Sculthorpe, George Dreyfus and Wilfred Lehmann. Apart from the activities of the Conservatorium itself and of the very vital Union Theatre there were several organisations whose existence depended in part upon the support of student musicians. The British Music Society which concentrated entirely on chamber music, employed the best student performers on a very small budget, and in so doing, was able to maintain a fairly continuous series of concerts. The Society was also able to give students some impression of European urbanity since it functioned like an

² The enthusiasm for music and the other arts was perhaps a reflection of the very vital dialectic of socio-political ideologies in Melbourne at this time.

³ Roger Covell, *Australia's Music: Themes for a New Society* (Melbourne, 1967), p.125

⁴ Sculthorpe was too young for candidature for the degree and so spent a year involved in interim studies.

aristocratic club, with, for instance, rooms which were finely furnished and panelled. The music presented, however, was not entirely from the old-world repertoire. Sculthorpe, for example, received a performance of *String Quartet No. 3* on October 26, 1949 and of *String Quartet No. 4* on June 14, 1950. As late as 1955 the Society also organised a farewell concert for Wilfred Lehmann in which the first performance of the composer's *Irkanda I* was given.

Another organisation, the Guild of Australian Composers (Victorian Division) was the first to sponsor concerts of Sculthorpe's music in Melbourne; Sculthorpe was its librarian for about two years. The Guild, unlike the present group of the same name, consisted mostly of composers of salon music under the presidency of Louis Lavater, a successful Melbourne composer of the time. In addition, Bernard O'Dowd's Australian Literary Society created opportunities for the performance of contemporary music but also, perhaps more significantly for Sculthorpe, it provided the chance to converse with distinguished literary people. Perhaps the most vital organisation of all was, however, the New Theatre, a company with extreme left-wing views. Professor Heinze, who recommended it to Sculthorpe, suggested that he need not be concerned with its politics, that the company would be happy to help a composer in return for help with its own productions. Nonetheless Sculthorpe did write music for political songs used in the May Day rallies at Studley Park but, although he was excited by the idea of thousands of people singing his music, he refrained from talking about it for fear of condemnation.

Although the performance of contemporary European music was rare in Melbourne, Heinze had promoted French orchestral music to a degree which Sydney had not experienced, and there was considerable interest in modern English music including Walton, Britten and minor composers like Constant Lambert. The New Music Society of which Sculthorpe was a member, actually corresponded with John Cage, inviting him to visit Melbourne; but neither Cage nor the society could raise money for the fare. Perhaps the most

interesting group concerned with the performance of contemporary music was one organised by Felix Werder. Consisting mostly of Jewish performers, the group met in private, and played music by Melbourne composers as well as works by Bartok and Schoenberg. Sculthorpe, who was introduced to this circle by George Dreyfus, has commented on its importance:

I do think that Felix's greatest contribution to the Australian scene was, and is, in creating a kind of Bohemian focal point in his apartment(s) through which all younger composers with Melbourne connections have passed. And this is no mean achievement.

Of all musicians in Melbourne at this time Werder was unquestionably performing the most advanced music, but for Sculthorpe, contact with him had its limitations in that the older man seemed to have set himself up as an aloof master who was impervious to anything outside his own world-view. He was, for example, unwilling to discuss the music of Edgard Varèse, a composer who had greatly impressed his young associate.

The importance of Varèse for Sculthorpe was more a matter of principle than of musical technique or aesthetic. In the course of his studies he had become aware that his teachers had a fixed notion of how a composer should be trained and of the kind of music he should write; he was comforted by the fact that Varèse, with his unconventional ensembles like that of *Ionisation* (1931), had probably asserted his independence under similar pressure. It was not that the Australian identified with Varèse's music, only that he, like Varèse, did not want to be inveigled into espousing anybody else's view of creative development. One composer who might have helped solidify this position was Percy Grainger, but Sculthorpe at this time was unaware of any of his music apart from "Country Gardens" and the like, and quite oblivious to his extraordinary ideas except for an inscription on a wall in the Grainger museum exhorting young composers to look

⁵ Letters to the writer, August 18, 1967.

to the islands north of Australia for inspiration.⁶ Ironically, he treasured this as a purely Romantic notion, and not as a practical possibility, for it seemed to coincide with a spirit of exotic adventure such as that of Joseph Conrad's fiction.⁷

If the real significance of Grainger's message was not felt, the composer at least was becoming aware of some of the qualities of Australians which were to influence his philosophy. He found, for example, that his intellectual interests were not shared by other musicians, except for A. E. H. Nickson who was his counterpoint lecturer. His peers, though mostly committed to music, were quite uninterested in literature and philosophy. Sculthorpe began to realise that the intellectual life which had enveloped him from childhood was not particularly important to intelligent Australians. The paradox of this situation precipitated his own estrangement from European styles of thinking as appropriate models for an Australian aesthetic.

Sculthorpe entered the competitive profession of composition in quite an impressive way. As a freshman he was awarded, through the University of Melbourne, the first J. A. Steele Composition Prize (1946), and this achievement most likely was responsible for his receiving an exhibition giving free tuition for his degree. In more public terms, his first prize in the 1948 Victorian School Music Association's Song Writing Competition helped establish him as a composer since the award had previously been won by well-known older composers such as Margaret Sutherland (b. 1899), Robert Hughes (b. 1912) and Clive Douglas (b. 1903). Late in 1950, Bernard Heinze also acknowledged his support for the twenty-one year old composer by organising

⁶ For a short time Sculthorpe had helped Percy Grainger construct the Museum (situated next to the Conservatorium of Music) during its second stage of construction in 1938. As a nine-year-old boy he had been so impressed by a performance given by Grainger in Melbourne that he had persuaded his mother to arrange a meeting.

⁷ Sculthorpe's response to Conrad is more fully documented in Chapter 7, pp. 151-152.

a concert in which only works by Sculthorpe and Le Gallienne (b. 1915) were performed.

Sculthorpe's best compositions of this period appear to be very terse songs rather than longer pieces like the string quartets. *Elegy for a Clown*, one such song which is short enough to quote in full, is an example of the composer's considerable skill with the lyric as well as with melody.

Ex. 1 *Slowly* ($\text{♩} = c. 94$)

p *Mai-dans wee-ping, Laugh-ter*

p. *ped.*

slee-ping, Come a-way — ; Pun-chi-ner llo, To lly fe-llow, Dred to-

mp *poco accel.* *rall.*

day — . There he po-ses, Scar-let To- ses To-sid a-

mp *Sva.*

----- a tempo

round; all that ma- ther'd, life has sca- ter'd on the ground.

8va.

The sadness of the situation is delicately poised against the metaphysical wit of the poetic treatment; the phrase "laughter sleeping" is, for instance, a clever conceit, while the underlying idea that even in death the clown has created, through a concentration of imagery associated with both his profession and with death, a theatrical display, is well portrayed. Apart from the charm of the melody and the austerity of the accompaniment, the song foreshadows the composer's gift for miniature forms, not fully crystallised until *Night Pieces* (1970-71), composed more than twenty years later. Sculthorpe's experimental music of his student years is briefly described in Chapter 2 of this thesis as it relates to his early attempts to formulate an individual musical style. It should be emphasised, however, that he received little sympathy for compositions outside the realm of well-established styles.

From the energetic musical life of Melbourne Sculthorpe returned in 1951 to the provincial society of Launceston, a circumstance which he must have found disheartening as far as his compositional career was concerned. In fact the only real opportunity for composition in a public sense was the writing of incidental music for locally-produced plays.⁸ Sculthorpe pursued this activity simultaneously with his experiments with serialism and

⁸ Sculthorpe's involvement with the theatre is fully documented at the beginning of Chapter 7.

other styles or manners of composition. He earned his living during this period initially as a music teacher at Hagley School and then as a lecturer for the Adult Education Board. In 1952 he went into business with his brother, Roger. Managing a sporting goods shop removed him even more from a public musical life. Perhaps by way of compensation for this he initiated some research into the music of the extinct Tasmanian aboriginals but unfortunately only a few wax-cylinder recordings of their music were in existence. Consequently the project became more of a diversion than constructive research. The composer collected anthropological data from various sources, and also artifacts, mostly weapons and implements. His new-found ethnological interest also extended to the Australian Aboriginal and resulted in, for instance, the acquisition of photographs of various sacred grounds.

Although these investigations did not result in any published reports they were certainly responsible for making Sculthorpe aware of the intimate relationship of the Australian landscape to its ancient inhabitants, and for convincing him that the modern Australian artist should seek a similar affinity. This realisation was strengthened by the fact that he could not justify his experiments with serialism. Initially his reason for experimenting with twelve-tone music was that he wished to be working as much as possible with what he imagined were the most modern musical idioms but, owing to his ignorance of the socio/historical *raison d'être* of serialism, it soon became apparent to him that there was little to be gained from continuing. His reaction was to destroy many of his manuscripts and to spend time considering the country, and how it might inspire a new kind of music. Compared with the kinds of styles he had hitherto worked with, this is precisely what happened with the composition of the *Sonatina* for piano (1954). The musical influences and the compositional decisions which helped form the *Sonatina* are dealt with in detail in Chapter 2.

Sculthorpe wrote the *Sonatina* for an A.B.C. composition competition but

it was not given recognition. He then submitted it to the Australian section of the I.S.C.M. which sent it, along with works by Margaret Sutherland, Robert Hughes, Harold Badger and Dorian le Gallienne as Australia's submission for the Baden-Baden Festival of 1955.⁹ The work was chosen by the international jury and was subsequently performed at the Festival by Maria Bergmann, with considerable success, by her own account.¹⁰ It was the first piece to represent Australia at an I.S.C.M. festival, although an Australian-born composer, Peggy Glanville-Hicks, had previously represented the U.S.A. As a measure of the backwardness of music in Australia, the piece was, despite this distinction, rejected by an Australian Broadcasting Commission programme committee in 1956.

Immediately after composing the *Sonatina*, Sculthorpe wrote a string trio, *The Loneliness of Bunjil*, which employed a very different musical idiom, one involving quarter-tones, but he returned to the principles established in the *Sonatina* for two works for solo violin, *Sonata* (1954) and *Irkanda I* (1955), both written for Wilfred Lehmann.¹¹ All of these works are inspired by ideas taken from Aboriginal myth or by the Australian landscape itself. Curiously though, the composer's first substantial contact with the Australian continental landscape was on a journey by road from Canberra to Melbourne in 1956; but by this time he had almost totally abandoned the composition of what he regarded as serious music in favour of music of a more popular nature. After working in theatre in Launceston, Hobart, Canberra and Melbourne, Sculthorpe finally joined the Phillip Street

⁹ The works were *Discussion for String Quartet* and *Concerto for Strings* by Sutherland, *Essay for Orchestra* by Hughes, *Sonata for piano* by Badger and *Overture* by le Gallienne.

¹⁰ Letter to Sculthorpe from Maria Bergmann, 27th June, 1955.

¹¹ The composer translates the aboriginal word "Irkanda" as "a remote and lonely place." Throughout this thesis the writer uses the phrase "Irkanda period" to refer to the period from 1954 to 1965. Similarly, the phrase "Sun Music period" refers to the period from 1965 to 1971.

Theatre in Sydney in 1957. For a period of more than a year he was engaged in such activities as composing revue songs, coaching and rehearsing singers, and writing other music ranging from a *Musique Concrète* film score to an arrangement of revue material for Louis Armstrong's touring jazz band. His motivation for involvement in these kinds of music was undoubtedly influenced by the problem of making a living as a musician but, though it is certain that he enjoyed the experience of the theatre, the dissatisfaction of not being free to compose music he believed in soon caused him to seek an alternative means of support.

In 1958 Sculthorpe applied for and was awarded the first Lizette Bentwich Scholarship which was open to graduates of the University of Melbourne. He decided that, rather than a programme of study at various musical centres of Europe, which he would have preferred, he would undertake post-graduate research at Oxford. His reasons for this choice were partly that Oxford possessed a reputation of great respectability of which his father, Joshua, might approve, despite his characteristic misgivings about the practicality of musical studies. Because of the conservatism of the Faculty of Music at Oxford, Sculthorpe was reluctantly given a special concession to undertake research in twentieth century music. His proposed study of rhythm in twentieth century music was, however, rejected on the grounds that it was not a substantial enough subject for a doctoral thesis. Instead, his research was to be concerned with musical form. At first he was supervised by Edmund Rubbra but was later persuaded to study with Egon Wellesz, a change which was unpropitious because it was insisted upon that the topic be considered with particular reference to the latter's music.

Sculthorpe was more interested in his discovery of the music and theoretical writings of Olivier Messiaen, the early published works of Stockhausen, the English translations of the first issues of *Die Reihe* and innumerable other works and writings which were little-known, possibly unknown, in Australia. The immensity of the composer's research project meant that he had licence to explore the gamut of contemporary music and

related musicological papers for a considerable time before actually proceeding with any writing of his own. This situation allowed him to begin composing serious music again, after three years of virtual silence. Significantly, he had been freed from the time-consuming burden of earning a living, but he was also attracting considerable interest for his music.

When first in England, Sculthorpe stayed with Wilfred and Frances Lehmann in Birmingham and commuted to Oxford several days each week. In this period, late in 1958, he composed two works, the first of which was *Prophecy*, for unison voices and piano based on a text from Isaiah 34. Not all the manuscript of this rather jaunty setting survives but one section was later employed in Movement III of *String Quartet No. 6*.¹² The second piece, *Sun*, for voice and piano which was composed for Wilfrid and Peggy Mellers was, in terms of its subject matter, immensely more important. The meeting of Sculthorpe and Mellers, who also lived in Birmingham, was suggested by Egon Wellesz, who at one time had been a teacher of Mellers. It was the beginning of a long friendship which, from the start, proved extremely helpful to the Australian. Mellers forced him to define his position as an artist in relation to his own country. He discovered, for example, as Sculthorpe was describing the Australian experience, the importance to him of the sun, and was able to parallel this with D. H. Lawrence's sun obsession. This led Sculthorpe to set three short poems by Lawrence which were concerned with the sun.¹³ More significantly Mellers helped Sculthorpe gain confidence in his own individual vision so that he was able to continue the pattern of composition which had been disrupted several years before, after *Irkanda I*, rather than to attempt to imitate the fashionable European styles of the time.

Another important friendship was that of Robert Henderson who was the

¹² *Prophecy*, m.59-66; *String Quartet No. 6*, Movement II, m.53-64.

¹³ "Sun in Me" (p.513), "Tropic" (p.301) and "Desire Goes Down to the Sea" (p.454), *The Complete Poems of D. H. Lawrence* (London, 1967).

only other candidate for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in Music in 1959. Both students felt slightly out of place since they were much older than the undergraduates, but neither could they easily relate socially to the dons. Because Henderson was actually living in Oxford, the music undergraduates consumed so much time from a social point of view that he welcomed Sculthorpe's suggestion that they share a house in the country. They found a place in Thame approximately twenty kilometres east of Oxford, and this initiated a gradually increasing degree of alienation from university life for both of them. Thame became a meeting place for composers and musicians; amongst others, Peter Maxwell Davies, Gordon Crosse and Katerina Wolpe often stayed, and on one occasion so did John Cage and David Tudor. Henderson rejuvenated Sculthorpe's interest in the Manchester composers who had been taught by Richard Hall, and this led the Australian to spend some time at Dartington School, South Devon, where he took some lessons from Hall and became acquainted with William Glock, founder of the school, and editor of *The Score* and *I.M.A. Magazine*.

Robert Henderson also carried on a role begun by Wilfrid Mellers in persuading Sculthorpe to articulate his aesthetic in more detail, particularly by comparing European cultural patterns with Australian ones. It is, for example, from this period that the composer's theories about Australia being a "visual" country derive. He believes that Australians function more in terms of what they see than what they hear. He notes that in England a person's class can be fairly accurately determined by his speech; in Australia usually a person's speech has no relation to his rank in society.¹⁴ This pattern is further strengthened by the tendency of Australians, observed by the composer, to remark that they "see" a concert and an equally noticeable one of English people that they "listen" to television. The significance of these observations is that Sculthorpe is

¹⁴This idea is supported in G. W. Turner's *The English Language in Australia and New Zealand* (London, 1966), p.110.

justifying his own practice of allying his music with some visual aspect of nature, a pattern which is contrary to the European practice of giving music titles of an abstract or humanistic origin.

The visual differences between Australia and Europe are, at the most fundamental level, quite obvious. Australia, as a vast flat land, has inspired many people to speak of an horizontal magnificence which is as impressive as the vertical grandeur of the European Alps. The horizontality is, however, only one aspect: there is also a sameness and a lack of definition of detail, in the sense that there is little contrast. This phenomenon has been well-defined by John Douglas Pringle, a Scotsman who has had a very distinguished journalistic career in Australia:

. . . it is difficult for Englishmen to appreciate the bush. . . . I think that at first the bush will not fit into their preconceived notions of what a landscape should be.

There is no broad middle-distance to give the scene solidarity - no fields, no little hill with a wood or a church spire. The middle distance often looks monotonous and featureless. The beauty of the bush lies more in the sense of space and distance, combined with the strange and vivid detail - the shapes of tree and shrub, strangely lit by sun and etched by shade, bizarre, weird but endlessly fascinating.¹⁵

Quite apart from its varied geological structures, the detail of the European landscape is, by contrast, the product of many centuries of man's own shaping of the environment. D. H. Lawrence was, for example, disturbed by the fact that the bush extended to the shores of Sydney Harbour;¹⁶ fifty-five years later, when the city has more than three-million inhabitants, this is still so, in places. The Australian landscape is not compartmentalised like the European. To take an extreme example, Holland, which is, more than Australia, totally flat, possesses complex and dense grids of fences and man-made canals.

¹⁵ *Australian Accent* (London, 1960), p.31

¹⁶ *Kangaroo* (Harmondsworth, 1950), p.25.

Sculthorpe considers that the diversity of detail in the European landscape and culture is mirrored by the complexity of the art, or more appropriately its inordinate activity, for it is possible to achieve a great complexity without much diversity or activity. A Hemingway who has consciously pared the English language to its fundamentals in order to express an honest view of the world is no less subtle than a Joyce who has encompassed the gamut of Indo-European languages to express his particular view. One of the reasons that Sculthorpe has in more recent years, allied himself with Asian music is that he sees below its surface a complexity which belies the superficial simplicity or seeming monotony. For example, within the scope of five tones, the modal concept of *patet* in Javanese music possesses subtleties which are inaccessible to Europeans including, if Javanese commentators can be trusted, ethnomusicologists.¹⁷ Similarly, the highly developed concepts of timbral variation and heterophony in traditional Japanese music are likely to be unappreciated by the Western listener in much the same way that Pringle suggests that the Australian landscape is featureless to Englishmen.

Whether or not these theories and explanations represent a coherent philosophy is immaterial, just as Sculthorpe's success or failure in realising them in his music does not affect the quality of his work. The important consideration is that this way of thinking has helped the composer to find an individual voice and also made him reasonably immune to criticism that there can be no such thing as an Australian music. Sculthorpe's friend, Robert Henderson has recognised the link between the composer's originality and his independence from Europe:

To a committed European, to one who is both unable and unwilling to free himself from all the cumulative associations of a tired and perhaps decaying civilisation, Sculthorpe's imaginative independence may seem slightly

¹⁷ Verbal communication with Suryabrata (Dean of the Faculty of Arts, University of Jakarta) at Musicultura '75 (Breukelen, The Netherlands). A report of this conference may be found in the *Bulletin of the International Music Council*, 1 (1976), 4.

alarming and just a little disappointing, for we like to console ourselves that it is still Europe which holds the key to creative truth.¹⁸

In 1959 Sculthorpe composed two works which were later withdrawn after being incorporated into new pieces. *String Quartet No. 5*, written for the Wilfred Lehmann Quartet and awarded first prize in the Royal Australian Concert Trust Fund Composers' Competition (1959) was eventually used in *Irkanda IV* and *String Quartet No. 6*. *Sonata for Cello* became, in July of the following year, *Sonata for Viola and Percussion*, first performed at the Attingham Park Summer School in Shropshire where Sculthorpe and Michael Tippett were composers in residence. At the same summer school Wilfrid and Peggy Mellers gave the first performance of the *Sun* song cycle and Sculthorpe also lectured on his theories concerning an Australian music. He stressed in his talk the fact that, unlike Europe, Australia has no heritage of art and that the Australian artist is therefore forced "to create his own culture, to find his own roots."¹⁹ This was in fact the beginning of Sculthorpe's career as a self-styled polemicist, a role which has become for him inseparable from that of composer.

Earlier in 1960 Sculthorpe had moved to Oxford because Robert Henderson was discontinuing his studies in favour of a journalistic career in London, and the house at Thame was too expensive for the former to maintain alone. In this period an important friendship was that of Jessie Munro, a distinguished Scottish pianist who was a benefactor of the Department of Music at Oxford. Apart from providing him with social *entr ee* that enabled him to meet composers such as Kod aly and Stravinsky, she also put a room and piano at his disposal for the purpose of composition.

Quite suddenly in December of that year the composer was called home because his father was dying of cancer. He did, nonetheless, intend to

¹⁸ Robert Henderson, "Peter Sculthorpe," *The Musical Times*, July, 1966, p. 595.

¹⁹ Transcript of lecture, in the composer's possession.

continue with his thesis in Tasmania, but after Joshua Sculthorpe's death, his reasons for undertaking the degree in the first place were in some ways no longer relevant. He decided to stay in Tasmania in order to be with his mother for a time, and it is in this period that he wrote *Irkanda IV* for solo violin, strings and percussion in memory of his father. Although it is claimed above that this work employs musical material from *String Quartet No. 5*, the extent of the borrowing is very small indeed, appearing only as the first six measures and as the Canon (m.29-38). The significance of this is that the composer was consciously writing in a slightly more conventional style than his previous works for he wanted to produce something that his father might have liked. Consequently the piece has an harmonic richness and a melodic expansiveness that works since the *Sonatina* lacked, but, in spite of this, those qualities of his music which have been allied to the themes of loneliness and desolation seem, oddly enough, greatly intensified. The combination of two factors, accessibility and emotional range, was responsible for the considerable success of *Irkanda IV*. Sculthorpe acknowledges that the premiere represented the first occasion in Australia that his music had been acclaimed by critics and wholeheartedly accepted by an audience.²⁰

This kind of success however, was not likely to make the task of earning a living any easier, so Sculthorpe returned to writing light music, most notably a score for the internationally distributed children's feature film, *They Found a Cave*.²¹ He seems to have been pleased that he had become financially self-supporting,²² but he began, once more, to feel the musical isolation of Tasmania. At the end of 1962 he initiated a correspondence with Curt Prerauer, a Sydney music critic, in response to an

²⁰The first performance of *Irkana IV* took place in Melbourne on August 7, 1961, with George Logie Smith conducting the Astra Chamber Orchestra and with Wilfred Lehmann as soloist.

²¹A Visatone Island Pictures Production.

²²Inferred from a letter written to Sculthorpe by Curt Prerauer, November 12, 1962.

article dealing with Australian composers in which he was not mentioned.²³ Some time later the composer sent Prerauer scores and tapes of his works and the critic made reparation by printing an article entirely devoted to him. In it Prerauer made a distinction between Sculthorpe's music and other Australian music inspired by aboriginal themes:

The titles of his works evoke aboriginal lore, but his path differs from that of any other composer, even from Antill's. In sections of *Corroboree* Antill succeeds in translating the Australian landscape into music; but being meant in the first place for ballet, this remains programme music. With Sculthorpe, the work is not programme, but absolute music, and this makes it something new to this country.²⁴

Prerauer was convinced that the key to a national identity in music lies in the physical nature of Australia itself:

. . . for the main principle now is the impact of the stone-age continent upon the European who began to arrive 175 years ago. If that European had digested the landscape, there might not have been any music. Every factor, every element worked against the development of music. Instead, fortunately, the European was digested by the landscape. That is why we have music, despite all the forces that are hell-bent on defeating it. Because the landscape proved stronger, that is how Antill wrote "*Corroboree*".²⁵

Curt Prerauer's letters to Sculthorpe during 1963 also contain extremely sensitive and astute commentaries on the latter's music as well as giving a valuable impression of the vitality of musical life in Sydney.

While he was in Tasmania during this period Sculthorpe was composing a work for an A.B.C. Italia Prize entry. In *The Fifth Continent* for speaker and orchestra Sculthorpe returned to D. H. Lawrence for his text. His interest in Lawrence's *Kangaroo* had come about through John Douglas Pringle's assessment of the novel's profundity in what is itself a profound study, *Australian Accent*.²⁶ Apart from this, the composer was expanding his

²³"At the Local," *Nation*, October 20, 1962, pp.17-18. Prerauer was, at the time, unaware of Sculthorpe's existence.

²⁴"Praise for Sculthorpe," *Nation*, March 23, 1963, pp.19-20.

²⁵*Ibid*, p.20.

²⁶London, 1960.

alliances with Australian culture in other areas. He had for example established a friendship with Russell Drysdale who had visited Tasmania in 1962. The themes of loneliness and desolation in the painter's work were very akin to the themes Sculthorpe had already explored in his own medium, so naturally their dialogue resulted in a reinforcement and expansion of their individual visions. Sculthorpe was also greatly attracted by Sidney Nolan's surrealistic approach to the Australian experience, particularly in the Ned Kelly and Mrs. Fraser series of paintings.

One of the most important events in Australian music in 1963 was a conference of composers held in Hobart. Donald Peart has commented on the significance of this to Sculthorpe:

A representative number of Sculthorpe's works was made public for the first time at the Composers' Seminar, held in Hobart during Easter 1963, an event which needs to be mentioned in any future history of Australian composition. It was a brilliant inspiration of Kenneth Brooks, Director of Adult Education, Tasmania, to invite as many composers as possible to come to display their wares, so to speak, to a forum of interested people by playing tape recordings and talking briefly about their work. It was this event which first revealed the extent of the total achievement of young Australian composers. Incidentally, from the discussion of this seminar there emerged a valuable definition of the aims of these young composers and there appeared a marked cleavage between their ideas and those of the older generation.²⁷

Of great value to Sculthorpe's career is the fact that later in that year he joined Professor Peart's staff at the University of Sydney as Lecturer in Music.

Sculthorpe's arrival in Sydney was just one event of many which made that city and that time especially important in the history of Australian music. Other arrivals included Dean Dixon as resident conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and John Hopkins as Federal Director of Music

²⁷ Donald Peart, "The Australian Avant-Garde," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, XCIII. (1966/67), 5-6.

at the A.B.C. The latter championed the music of young composers and continues to do so. For a concert on May 31, 1963, Donald Peart, president of the I.S.C.M., programmed Richard Meale's *Las Alboradas*, a work whose idiom suddenly closed the stylistic gap between Australian composition and that of the European avant-garde. This, together with the fact that Meale's *Sonata* for flute and piano (1960) was chosen for the 1963 I.S.C.M. Festival in Amsterdam, together with the timeliness of Sculthorpe's arrival, inspired the music critics Curt and Maria Prerauer, writing for *Nation*, and Roger Covell, writing for the *Sydney Morning Herald* to increase their support for Australian music. The vitality of the activities in contemporary music was not, however, the only aspect of Sydney's newly-vigorous musical life: in 1963 the Musicological Society of Australia was formed, and one of its energetic founders, Dene Barnett, also mounted the first authentic performance in Australia of the *St. Matthew Passion*.

One aspect of the musical life of this period which must be stressed is that almost all the contemporary music was performed on an amateur basis often by distinguished players who were greatly interested in new music but whose professional livelihood depended on playing the traditional repertoire and on teaching. The enthusiasm for new music was, however, not limited to musicians or persons with specialised knowledge. The I.S.C.M. had a very active membership; various musical ideologies precipitated spirited partisanship which often resulted in public arguments over the value of the works presented. Against this background it was probably inevitable that a polarisation of commitment would occur with respect to Sculthorpe's and Meale's music. Both composers did, however, develop a valuable friendship for, although their philosophies were often at variance, each one's knowledge of music was sometimes indispensable to the other. Meale, for instance, had studied at the Institute of Ethnomusicology, U.C.L.A., and was able to explain various principles of Asian music to Sculthorpe.

In 1964 Sculthorpe received a commission in the form of the first

Alfred Hill Memorial Award, administered by the Musica Viva Society. This resulted in the composition of *String Quartet No. 6* which was given its premiere on April 1, 1965 by the Austral String Quartet. Although this was Sculthorpe's third commission it was of crucial importance to him;²⁸ it is sociologically significant that he was thirty-one years of age before receiving the professional recognition implied by a commission, when in recent times commissions and government grants have been given to very inexperienced composers in their early twenties, and sometimes younger. Despite the frustrations of not being accepted earlier, Sculthorpe considers that the situation allowed him to develop his craft gradually and systematically to refine a small amount of characteristic material. In contrast the generation of composers following Sculthorpe has the problem of continually creating new pieces with the result that finely-crafted and unmistakably original styles rarely, if ever, appear. Even with *String Quartet No. 6* Sculthorpe did not wish to use untried musical material as he felt that his career depended largely on the acceptance of the work.

The confidence gained from the success of the string quartet enabled the composer to be more adventurous in the creation of *Sun Music I* (1965), written at the invitation of Sir Bernard Heinze for performance by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra at the Commonwealth Arts Festival, London. This work and companion works written between 1965 and 1969 represent attempts by Sculthorpe to minimise references to the expressionistic gestures of European music by limiting the motivic, melodic and harmonic content of the music. The composer himself has justified this procedure:

Structurally and aesthetically these works are a re-affirmation of the principles underlying all my work since the early 1950's. The only difference is the actual sound material.²⁹

The acclaim given *Sun Music I* by London music critics in some ways signified the coming-of-age of Australian music for the musical idiom was

²⁸ The first was *Irkanda III* (1960), the second *The Fifth Continent* (1962).

²⁹ *The Composers and their Work*, Australian Government (Canberra, 1969) p.18.

immediately identified as a specifically Australian one,³⁰ despite its obvious debt to Penderecki's *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* (1961). In addition to being a reference to Australia, Sculthorpe's choice of the "sun" theme was effected by his attraction to two other countries, Japan and Mexico, in whose world-views the sun is of crucial ritual significance. Although the title of the song cycle, *Sun* (1958) was originally partly inspired by poems of D. H. Lawrence, Sculthorpe's interpretation of the symbolism of the sun is, in some ways, at odds with Lawrence's:

. . . to a point, I have been very much influenced by Lawrence's short story, *Sun*. I say "to a point" because of the descriptions, the visual images, the feelings; but I don't altogether care for the psychological overtones. For me, the Freud symbol is dark and centrally [sic] European and anti-sun.³¹

For Sculthorpe the sun represents, in fairly universal terms, "the symbol of the giving of life, destroying of life, good and god".³²

In practical terms, however, the title "Sun Music" helped make the work more accessible to those concert-goers who would normally have been bewildered by modern idioms; for it became possible for them, through their own intuition and through the promptings of the composer and various publicists, to associate certain orchestral textures with particular conditions and effects of the sun. In actually composing the *Sun Music* series, Sculthorpe was not necessarily himself tied to this procedure of association.

By advocating a kind of impressionism, Sculthorpe alienated some of his staunch supporters, notably Curt Prerauer who, it must be remembered, had previously claimed that the composer's most exceptional achievement was that of creating "absolute" music within a purely Australian context.³³ If,

³⁰ Meiron Bowen, *The Observer* (3.x.65); David Cairns, *Financial Times* (1.x.65); Neville Cardus, *The Guardian* (1.x.65); Noel Goodwin, *Daily Express* (1.x.65); Colin Mason, *Daily Telegraph* (1.x.65); Eric Mason, *Daily Mail* (1.x.65).

³¹ Letter to the writer, June 16, 1967.

³² Peter Sculthorpe, "I Don't Like Overtures", *Masque*, December, 1968, p.33.

³³ *Nation*, March 23, 1963, p.20.

however, he lost some of his devotees at this time he was, nonetheless, particularly fortunate in 1965 with regard to professional advancement. He became contracted to Faber Music Limited, a new publishing company whose only other composer at that time was Britten; he was awarded a Harkness Fellowship; he was made life fellow of the International Institute of Arts and Letters; he was promoted to the position of Senior Lecturer in Music at the University of Sydney; and he was given a substantial commission by the Australian Opera Company.³⁴

The Harkness Fellowship, which Sculthorpe originally welcomed as a means to free him from his teaching duties so that he might fulfil the opera commission, enabled him instead to continue with the *Sun Music* series. In 1966 while he was composer in residence at Yale University and later, from September to February 1967, a guest at Yaddo, an artist's colony in Saratoga Springs, he composed, among other works, *Sun Music for Voices and Percussion*, *String Quartet No. 7* and much of both *Sun Music III* and *Sun Music IV*. America seems to have puzzled him somewhat; especially baffling was the tendency of the Americans that he knew to venerate European culture, and often to neglect their own. The Faculty of Music at Yale was, for example, exceedingly proud of its large harpsichord collection but, at that time, had done little towards properly housing a collection of Charles Ives manuscripts. The extent of this worship of the Old World was well demonstrated at Yaddo which had imported ancient Grecian ruins to decorate its gardens. The impression left on Sculthorpe by these attitudes seems little modified by his considerable contact with American arts and letters: at Yaddo, for example, other guests at the time included John Cheever, Malcolm Cowley, Norman Mailer, Norman Podhoretz, Mario Puzo, Philip Roth and Eudora Welty.

After returning to Australia early in 1967, Sculthorpe completed *Sun Music IV*, a work commissioned by the Australasian Performing Rights

³⁴ Chapter 7 deals in detail with this commission in a chronological account of Sculthorpe's various attempts to compose an opera.

Association for performance at Expo. '67 in Montreal. In that year he also completed *Sun Music III*,³⁵ the first of his pieces to be overtly influenced by Asian music. Part of the inspiration for this was Colin McPhee's *Music in Bali* published in New Haven in 1966. *Sun Music III*, originally entitled *Anniversary Music* was commissioned by the A.B.C. to mark the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of A.B.C. Youth Concerts in Australia; perhaps to reflect the mood of the event, it has, through its inclusion of South East Asian elements, a less dissonant character than either *Sun Music I* or *Sun Music IV*. The same might be said for *Tabuh Tabuhan* for wind quintet and percussion (1968), commissioned as the first John Bishop Memorial Award for performance at the 1968 Adelaide Festival. This piece incorporates ideas from both Japanese and Balinese traditional music.

Between the composition of *Tabuh Tabuhan*³⁶ early in 1968 and that of *String Quartet No. 8* in the middle of 1969, Sculthorpe composed only one concert piece, *Sun Music II* for orchestra (1969), a rather extrovert work well-suited to the Sydney Promenade Concert series (February, 1969) for which it was commissioned. There were, however, two other projects of some magnitude. The first, in the middle of 1968, was the creation with Robert Helpmann as choreographer and Kenneth Rowell as designer of a ballet based on the *Sun Music* series for the Australian Ballet Company. Although this only involved writing a little extra music, recording several vocal sections and organising the orchestral material for a smaller number of stringed instruments, it considerably widened the composer's audience,

³⁵The seeming confusion in the sequence of titles of compositions is explained fully in footnote 3, p.109.

³⁶"*Tabuh Tabuhan*" is a Balinese phrase meaning "all kinds of gamelan compositions" (McPhee, p.376). Colin McPhee used the term as the title of one of his own compositions but, as Sculthorpe was told that he later disowned his piece, there seemed to be some justification for borrowing the title. Sculthorpe has commented that he may have used it even if McPhee had not come to this decision.

and enhanced his reputation and financial security. A second and more or less simultaneous project was a score for the feature film, *Age of Consent*, based on Norman Lindsay's novel of the same title, in which the composer's gentle Balinese-influenced textures complemented the story's predominating theme of innocence.

In August, 1968, Sculthorpe was given a Radcliffe Music Award consisting of an allowance with which to write a string quartet which was to compete for prizes against three other similarly commissioned string quartets. As indicated above he did not write this for some time. In September he took part in the "International Round Table on the Relations between Japanese and Western Art" in Kyoto and Tokyo, and was deeply impressed, if not a little bewildered, by certain contradictions in Japanese behaviour. He was surprised, for instance, that, for all their graciousness and politeness, the Japanese produced films of extreme brutality to which family audiences reacted in an unaffected way. The Japanese propensity for violence is well reflected in a later orchestral work, *Music for Japan* (1970). The composer was also surprised by the tendency of the Japanese, whose traditional culture is based on the veneration of nature, to distort nature in order that it be more aesthetically pleasing. This observation has perhaps influenced Sculthorpe's attitude to the relationship between art and nature; certainly it is useful to consider it in any appraisal of works like *Snow Moon and Flowers* for piano (1970). His interest in traditional Japanese music which had developed through his teaching of "World Music" courses at the University of Sydney now became extended to contemporary Japanese music, notably through the acquaintance of Toru Takemitsu. Sculthorpe felt that some of those Japanese composers who had developed a high level of craftsmanship in European idioms had been able effectively to apply certain principles of their traditional music, for example those concerned with rhythmic and melodic patterning and timbral and pitch gradation, to their own compositions. He imagined that these principles might be particularly useful to Australian composers if treated

with a sufficient degree of subtlety. In fact, Richard Meale had already achieved a quality in his work which could be directly traceable to traditional Japanese music: the structure of *Images* (1966), for instance, is based on *Nagauta*.

String Quartet No. 8, which eventually shared first prize in the Radcliffe Music Award (1969) is the first work which seems stylistically to assimilate various Asian elements into the idiom developed in Sculthorpe's "Irkanda" period. It also marks the beginning of a quite prolific two years of composition. Encouraged, perhaps, by receiving the generous Encyclopaedia Britannica Award for the Arts (1969), Sculthorpe from 1970 to 1971, composed no less than five works involving orchestra, four pieces for piano and several chamber pieces. These may be grouped into four stylistic categories. The first, a continuation of the *Sun Music* genre, includes *Music for Japan* (1970), *Rain* (1970), both for orchestra, and *How the Stars Were Made* for percussion ensemble (1971). The second group consists of three piano works, *Snow, Moon and Flowers* (1970), *Night* (1965-70), and *Stars* (1971). Although these pieces are brief, they perhaps represent the pinnacle of refinement and craftsmanship in Sculthorpe's output of compositions. The last two categories are somewhat experimental in character. One includes *Love 200* for rock band and orchestra (1970) and *Love 201* for rock band and chamber orchestra, both of which attempt to integrate rock music styles with contemporary and baroque orchestral styles. Essentially a kind of theatrical compositional diversion, *Love 200*, more so than *Love 201*, is nonetheless considerably more effective, if only for structural reasons, than any similar project by a rock music composer in recent times. From the music of *Love 200* Sculthorpe extracted a song with a folk-like melody and quasi-Mahlerian accompaniment entitled *The Stars Turn* (1970), and a short orchestral piece, *Overture for a Happy Occasion* (1970).³⁷ The

³⁷ *The Stars Turn* became a song for voice and piano, and much later, in 1976, was transformed into a piece for string orchestra.

fourth group of compositions consists of two improvisatory works, *Dream* for any instruments and any number of performers (1970), and *Landscape* for piano with tape echo and pre-recorded tape (1971). Both these pieces are concerned with solving certain structural problems posed by improvisatory music, while *Landscape*, in particular, helped the composer to formulate some of the principles of his opera, *Rites of Passage* (1972-73).

In 1969 Sculthorpe was appointed Reader in Music at the University of Sydney, and in 1970 he was awarded an M.B.E. for services to Australian music.³⁸ Towards the end of 1971 he was appointed Visiting Professor of Music at the University of Sussex. In the village of Glynde, near Glyndebourne, he began preliminary work on what was ultimately to become *Rites of Passage*. A detailed documentation of this period as well as a description of the composer's involvement in previous theatrical activities may be found in Chapter 7 of this thesis. The composition of this opera involved Sculthorpe for almost two years in which time he wrote nothing else except a vocal piece for the King's Singers entitled *Ketjak* (1972). This may be considered as a trial piece for some of the techniques initially used in the score of the opera; but these techniques were eventually rejected owing to the problems involved in their memorisation.

Rites of Passage was staged in the Sydney Opera House in September and October of 1974. Predictably, since its conception bears no relation to the Grand Opera tradition, it caused vastly divergent reactions from both critics and audience. The partisan critics endowed it with visionary status, believing that they were witnessing a theatrical phenomenon which would be crucial to the future of opera composition in Australia. Indeed it is arguable that *Rites of Passage* offers a workable solution to many of the problems confronting the contemporary opera composer, but it will be some time before any influence the work might have on music theatre in

³⁸ Sculthorpe was awarded an O.B.E. in 1977.

Australia could be accurately assessed.

Considering the magnitude of *Rites of Passage*, especially in relation to the fact that most of Sculthorpe's orchestral and chamber pieces fall between ten and twenty minutes in duration, it is difficult to predict the direction the composer will pursue during the last part of the decade. certainly, for practical reasons, smaller compositions seem inevitable but the expansive qualities of the individual sections of the opera would be impossible to achieve in shorter forms. In other words, many of the innovatory elements of *Rites of Passage* are not adaptable to structures of more modest conception and may, therefore, be considered unlikely to be developed further, unless Sculthorpe composed larger pieces than has been customary. There seems little doubt that *Rites of Passage*, despite its importance, represents a kind of compositional impasse from which no direction of escape is immediately evident. It thus appears to be an appropriate work with which to conclude this basically chronological study.

CHAPTER 2

THE MAKING OF A PERSONAL STYLE

The maturation of Australian composition, unlike that of the other arts, has been a very slow one, most probably for a simple geographical reason. The writer and the painter were able to respond much earlier to an environment and a life style which were distinctly different from that with which European artists were concerned, but Australia offered little to the composer except the music of the Aboriginal and a diversity of environmental sounds. For a number of reasons which will be mentioned below Aboriginal music appeared, to the ear trained in European traditions, to be either impoverished or merely unsuitable as a source of musical inspiration; and few composers would have considered the sounds of the environment as legitimate source materials. As late as 1962, the critic, Curt Prerauer, deplored the lack of originality in the music of modern Australian composers

Most Australian composers still compose "from memory". Busoni invented this phrase to describe the process when a composer writes a piece of music which he may honestly believe to be original but it is merely an echo of some other composer's idioms. Unable to produce an idiom of his own he subconsciously reproduces someone else's ideas which have lingered in his mind.¹

Later, in *Australia's Music: Themes for a New Society*, Roger Covell describes some of the social mechanisms which helped perpetuate this situation:

This lack of free circulation for regenerative ideas went hand in hand with the feeling of cultural inferiority incapable in a neo-colonial or provincial society. It became one of the first tasks of able musicians to demonstrate that they could write fluent and grammatically acceptable music in established idioms. It was necessary that the idioms should be established in order that the demonstration should be convincing to their fellow-countrymen. A radical style would have been interpreted in Australia in the earlier years of this century merely as a confession of incompetence.

¹"At the Local", *Nation*, October 20, 1962, p. 17.

Like artists challenged to prove that they can "draw", it was their task to achieve a likeness in music; and, since the music familiar in Australia at that time was itself anything but up-to-date for the most part, the ideals towards which composers had to strive in self-defence were bound to be at best a kind of superior reminiscence. If Percy Grainger had been born in Paris instead of Melbourne, he would almost certainly have realised the radical tendencies of his nature much more satisfactorily, and at an earlier date. But Grainger sensed, correctly in my view, that, however strongly he felt himself, to be an Australian writing Australian music, it would never be possible for him to pursue his unorthodox visions of what music might be like in a society where the customary reaction to the practice of musical composition was a kind of embarrassed scepticism. Other composers who stayed in Australia or returned there after brief periods of study abroad were not in the position of being able to flout a tradition: their first task was to persuade their doubting fellow-countrymen that they had the technical means to belong to one.²

It is clear from these observations that the problem was centred on the conservatism of the musical establishments rather than the unavoidable isolation of Australia from Europe and America. In the light of Covell's assessment of Grainger's strategy it is interesting that the two composers who finally defied the conservative stronghold also became the leading Australian composers of the post-war period. Richard Meale's radicalism was a very extreme one: a refusal to sit for examinations as a student, and an extraordinary independence by which he overcame the inadequate means of acquiring knowledge of new music of other parts of the world. Peter Sculthorpe's was a quieter radicalism, nurtured by his isolation in Tasmania after the completion of his undergraduate studies, and producing a work *Sonatina* for piano, that bypassed the quiescence of the Australian compositional hierarchy to become the first Australian work to be recognised by the International Society for Contemporary Music.

Despite the impressiveness of Richard Meale's early mastery of modern European musical craft within the context of his own very original style, it is arguable that Sculthorpe has created a more impressive compositional stance through his attempts to devise an Australian quality in his music and

²Covell, pp.146-147

through a calculated resistance to "composing from memory". The motivation for both these aims was a personal realisation that the music with which he was confronted in his formal and private studies was inappropriate to Australia. This may not have been an uncommon feeling amongst Australian composers, but it is certain that the course of remedy was, and still remains, hard to find. The reason for this is that, unlike the nationalistic movements of small European countries, and countries like Russia which had borrowed from various art music traditions, Australia possessed no particularly distinctive folk culture on which to base an art music of her own. Andrew D. McCredie has suggested that "the establishment and settlement of the Australian colonies actually occurred too late to permit the upsurge of a vigorous national tradition capable of withstanding the impact of modern communications in the later nineteenth century".³ As an alternative source of influence many composers, including Alfred Hill and John Antill, had attempted to incorporate ideas from Aboriginal rituals into their music, but this procedure functioned on a very superficial level. Sculthorpe quite early dismissed the possibility that tribal music could be of much use to the composer.⁴ The simple nature of the vocal styles which rarely vary from a few kinds of tumbling strains was evidence enough, but even more significant was the lack of instrumental variety. Although the didjeridu is unquestionably a remarkable instrument, in that playing techniques are employed which are not used for European wind instruments, it does not have any melodic function, and the way it combines with the voice is of limited interest. The rhythmic patterns of didjeridu playing do, however, display considerable complexity, but their dynamic inflexions arising from the technique of circular breathing and production of secondary

³ Andrew D. McCredie, *Musical Composition in Australia* (Canberra, 1969), p.1.

⁴ Since the composition of *Rites of Passage* Sculthorpe has changed his position on this subject, having, in his view, successfully integrated Aboriginal melodies into *The Song of Tailitnama* (1974) (See Chapter 8 p.216), *Port Essington* (1977) and *Desert Places* (1978).

tones through vocalising into the tube, are difficult to reproduce on conventional instruments. Since it is these techniques which give the rhythm its subtleties, it was thought that the idea could not be effectively utilised by a modern composer.

If Sculthorpe has, in any general way, been influenced by Aboriginal music it is firstly by the monotonous repetition of the fundamental measure, defined by the didjeridu rhythm, music stick rhythmic groupings, and the distinct vocal phrases, and secondly by the feeling of a constant tonal centre. For Sculthorpe these aspects of the music reflect the flatness and the sameness of the Australian landscape, the essence of which became very important to him in his formulation of abstract notions relating to musical style. The composer also finds an interesting parallel between the flatness of Aboriginal music and speech and the flat quality of the English language as spoken by Australians, believing each to be a product of the flatness of the country.⁵

Sculthorpe's radical approach had not been entirely concerned with the rejection of European music. In 1948, at a time when twelve-tone music was practically unknown in Australia, he procured a copy of Ernst Krenek's *Studies in Counterpoint*⁶ and he and George Dreyfus, as undergraduate students, began to write twelve-tone pieces. Serialism seemed at the time to be the answer to their problems with musical style. The reaction of their teachers, peers and those members of the listening public who happened to

⁵The "flatness" of Australian English, manifested by the limited range of intonation, the deliberateness of delivery and the lack of excitability, is well-documented in G. W. Turner's *The English Language in Australia and New Zealand* (London, 1966), pp. 89-111. Although it is generally not possible to establish definite connections between pronunciation and the physical environment, Sculthorpe is not the only Australian to attempt to explain the curious phenomenon of the Australian accent. Manning Clark, for example, has an alternative theory, but one, like Sculthorpe's, based upon the physical characteristics of the country. He postulates that "sun and wind . . . probably contributed towards that habit of speaking through an almost closed mouth." (*A Discovery of Australia*, p.20).

⁶New York, 1940, p.viii.

hear their pieces was, however, adverse, and, while they were happy with their reputations as *enfants terribles*, it was clear that there was little future by way of performances. Thus, while he was still a student, Sculthorpe wrote music in traditional idioms concurrently with his experiments in serialism. Returning to Tasmania in 1950 he continued to take seriously the idea of twelve-tone music but was hindered by the lack of study material. Not only had he not seen any scores of the twelve-tone music of Schoenberg, Berg or Webern, but also he had a somewhat limited view of the technique through Krenek's book. As Krenek's purpose was a pedagogical one, he chose to set out only the "elementary principles" and to elaborate these by deducing stylistic rules from his own particular use of dodecaphony.⁷ There was no attempt to examine the styles or individual procedures of any of the major exponents of twelve-tone music, and this lack gives the reader an incomplete view and often a false one. For example, while Krenek advocates a free approach to rhythm, it is true that Schoenberg, Berg and Webern, were all at one time or another obsessed with the notion of adapting the strict rhythms and textures of established forms, to their new principle of tonal organisation. Although Krenek's method was probably better-suited to the abstract idea of twelve-tone music, both approaches, without the supervision of a teacher, were too rudimentary to be of much help to a young composer. While the free approach had probably led Sculthorpe to a structural complexity which had little meaning for him in relation to any musical training he had received, he was also aware from the recordings of Schoenberg that he had heard that the music based on the rhythmic structures of dance forms "sounded like eighteenth century music gone wrong".⁸

Working without any knowledge of Boulez or even Webern, Sculthorpe began to compose pieces in which the principle of pitch-serialism was carried out in conjunction with the serialisation of other parameters of

⁷ Ibid., viii.

⁸ Verbal communication with the composer.

music:

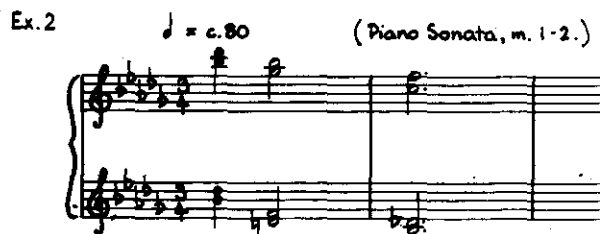
At one stage I was experimenting on my own with serial composition. I was serialising notes, then rhythms, volume, timbre and everything else, but I came to the conclusion that if I drove this to its logical end, the result would be silence. Besides I had a feeling that all this had little to do with myself and that I was handling something quite alien. At that time, after reaching some sort of climactic stage, I began to clutch at the idea of being an Australian most aggressively.⁹

Until this time the composer had never faced the prospect of coming to a stylistic impasse. His conventional music had developed naturally enough as he absorbed the different facets of possible idioms, and the serial music, once begun, followed a logical and easy path. He was faced, therefore, with an identity crisis as well as a compositional one.

Apart from creating for himself a working environment which consisted of artifacts and images which were intrinsically Australian, Sculthorpe was also forced to look elsewhere for musical inspiration, and to begin to formulate concepts about the music he wished to create. As this situation had arisen as a reaction to serialism, it was natural that the principles of his new music would, if nothing else, negate the fundamental precepts of serial practice. Thus he reasoned that its essential qualities should be simplicity, a lack of any arbitrarily imposed order such as the order of the row, and an absence of any cerebral processes such as intervallic inversion and retrogression. Because of the emphasis, in Krenek's approach, on counterpoint, Sculthorpe further decided to reinstate chordal textures and to reject techniques of contrapuntal imitation. His knowledge of modern harmonic styles was, however, severely limited. He had had no contact with Messiaen's harmonic language, for example. In fact, the only composer who had impressed him in this area was Aaron Copland.

⁹ Quoted, without source, by Robert Henderson in "Peter Sculthorpe," *Musical Times*, July, 1966, p.595. The composer denies having written this on the basis of its style and usage, so presumably the quotation was a paraphrase of part of an interview between Sculthorpe and Henderson.

Copland's *Piano Sonata* (1941) demonstrated for Sculthorpe a rethinking of the fundamentals of harmonic idiom. The harmony was not triadic, diatonic or chromatic in the conventional senses of these terms; there were no immediately discernible functional relationships between chords; and, through their unique construction, the chords sounded fresh and essentially different. Copland created many of his characteristic sonorities by experimenting with voicing. For example, a triad with an added major seventh could sound transformed by employing it in an inversion, and then placing two of the tones close together in the treble register, and the other two close together in the bass register, with at least an octave between the high and low pairs. The relationships between Copland's chords are also quite different from those of conventional harmony. Although the principle of common tones is used, one quality of the progressions which has influenced Sculthorpe derives from the false relation of tones in successive chords and the tendency for these chords to move in similar motion:¹⁰



Sculthorpe was impressed, then, by Copland's harmonic principles and the *Sonatina* for piano clearly shows the use of some of Copland's techniques; but what attracted Sculthorpe initially was the emotional effect of Copland's style. Its leanness, sparseness and exposed dissonance seemed to the Australian to be antithetical to the fulsomeness of the Romantic composers and those twelve-tone composers he had heard. Furthermore,

¹⁰ It should be stressed that this is only one aspect of Copland's harmonic language. The *Piano Sonata* shows, for example, an equally contrived exploration of the technique of harmonic progression where the tones played by each hand move in contrary motion.

although Copland's style undoubtedly had the precision of the French tradition, it directed this away from the languidness which Sculthorpe associated with French music. It seemed to be un-European, a music which expressed the emotions of an American about America. Sculthorpe identified with it not only because it was easy to relate Australia to America. Both were new countries with similar histories; both were vast land masses with immense largely-unpopulated areas. It was therefore easy to conclude that the stylistic characteristics of Copland's *Piano Sonata* were not inappropriate to an Australian music, that, in fact, these qualities might be developed, and in the process become more Australian.

Sonatina

Sculthorpe seems to have applied the principles of developing these qualities in his *Sonatina* (1954). The opening chord of the piece was to become especially important in later works. Although similar in construction to some of the chords of Copland's *Piano Sonata* (see Example 2), it was not borrowed from Copland, or, in fact from any work known to Sculthorpe at the time:



It is not unlike a major seventh chord with an added minor tenth (actually an augmented ninth), but it has no fifth. The effect of the major third against the minor tenth can be related to the effect of those chords which Copland may have derived from the blues, but this chord has a harsher quality. Apart, then, from this chord and a few other chords and relationships, all of which will be discussed later, the harmony of the *Sonatina* is not particularly typical of what Sculthorpe subsequently established in his personal style. The pattern is set much more clearly by the characteristics of form and related rhythmic implications.

Sculthorpe's first important work is called a "Sonatina" not because of a desire on his part to write music in any specific tradition or form but because it was written for a competition which called for "a Sonatina". Thus it has qualities which only on the surface tie it to any historical or formal notion of a sonatina. The most obvious of these is the contrast of tempi in its three movements. Movement I has a slow introduction and conclusion, but is predominantly quick; Movement II is slow; and Movement III is quick and rondo-like. This pattern was probably observed in order to appease the judges of the competition, but the internal structures of the movements, including the last, have little relation to the traditional requirements of the form. It is remarkable, however, that out of the necessity to conform slightly came the creation of Sculthorpe's two characteristic kinds of music, each with its special conceptual basis.

The fundamental difference is tempo: the first kind of music is very slow, the second, quite fast. In the slow music Sculthorpe places an emphasis on sustained melody and harmony, and in the quick, on percussively articulated melody (and often, it may be argued, no melody at all) and little functional harmony. The slow music is sometimes associated in the composer's mind with a feeling of tension, the quick with a feeling of release; and on another plane, the slow music is thought of as introspective and emotionally intense whereas the quick has the character of ritualistic celebration.

Sculthorpe strengthened the musical meaning of these distinctions by relating them to extra-musical ideas he had while writing the piece. He did this in basing the piece on an Aboriginal legend,¹¹ similar to the Ulysses myth, in which Yoonecara, the head man of a tribe, journeys to a land far beyond the setting sun in order to visit his ancestor Byama. The myth describes his adventure, together with the dangers he faces and his

¹¹W. E. Thomas, *Some Myths and Legends of the Australian Aboriginal* (Melbourne, 1923), pp.39-42

ways of dealing with them. Perhaps thinking that the telling was somewhat mundane, Sculthorpe transposed the story to a different level. In his version, Yoonecara stands on a cliff, looking out over a vast plain, contemplating the extent of his journey. This corresponds to the slow introduction. The quick section which follows corresponds to his movement across the plain, and the return to the opening slow music represents his realisation that Byama cannot be reached through physical means. Thus, in the introspective second movement Yoonecara this time makes the journey into his mind, into his race consciousness, and is joined spiritually with Byama. The ritualistic last movement represents the rejoicing and celebration of the tribe when Yoonecara returns. As this study progresses it will be shown that by thinking in these non-musical terms the composer has, to a large extent, determined the character of his musical style and created a direct association between musical style and the nature of the Australian experience.

The Quick Style

Of the two kinds of music outlined above, it is the quick which is closest to Sculthorpe's development of both in subsequent works. The reason for this is the establishment of a pattern to govern rhythmic style. The composer maintains a consistent rhythmic "feel"¹² in both his quick music and slow music, but it is particularly evident in the former. Within the $\frac{4}{8}$ metre of the *Sonatina* there is an almost exclusive use of patterns constructed from quavers and quaver rests.¹³ When this pattern is broken by

¹²The term "feel" is borrowed from jazz and rock music. On its simplest level it refers to the tempo and specific rhythmic counterpoint which define a style. The interaction of rhythmic patterns within a defined chordal framework remains basically the same in each successive measure of each style. The term happens to be appropriate to Sculthorpe's music mainly because of his fondness of rhythmic repetition within static harmonic frameworks.

¹³Although it is conceivable that Sculthorpe's quick style was influenced by works such as the piano sonatas of Bartók and Copland, the rhythmic textures of the *Sonatina* are distinctive enough to limit the significance of any comparison.

unit, assuring the continuity of the music. It is in this context that Sculthorpe's unique use of measures of contrasting value is significant. Even before the *Sonatina* he had occasionally used patterns like $\frac{4}{4} \frac{4}{4} \frac{4}{4} \frac{2}{4} \frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4} \frac{4}{4} \frac{2}{4}$ and less highly structured ones like $\frac{4}{8} \frac{3}{8} \frac{4}{8} \frac{4}{8}$, in which the rhythm of the first half of the pattern is repeated or approximated in the second.¹⁶ The function of the short measure is simple: it either acts as an added up-beat in order to enliven the metrical continuity or, if it includes no attacks, as a means to allow the music momentarily to pause. When a composer has the habit of using rhythmic repetition of musical phrases it seems logical when a short measure is used in the first phrase to use it again in the second. Sculthorpe made it a rule to do this, and so strengthened the open-ended feeling of his structural units. Once he established the use of patterns such as $\frac{4}{8} \frac{4}{8} \frac{2}{8} \frac{4}{8} \frac{4}{8} \frac{2}{8}$, $\frac{4}{8} \frac{2}{8} \frac{4}{8} \frac{2}{8}$, $\frac{4}{8} \frac{3}{8} \frac{4}{8} \frac{3}{8}$ and so on, he cultivated them so that they became cornerstones of his personal style.

Because these small formal units are made open-ended by the use of $\frac{2}{8}$ anacrusis measures or by the rhythmic arrangement within the last $\frac{4}{8}$ measure of a unit, any one unit is linked to the next; and the process is usually continuous until a different kind of unit is introduced. This often disturbs the motion of the music and either brings it to a close or articulates the beginning of a new unit. The connecting and closing passages are invariably as short as two measures and are different from the main structural units in that they do not usually involve rhythmic repetition. In fact, it is because their rhythmic design is irregular that they highlight the significance of the latter. Quite often, however, the connecting passages are also open-ended and thus do not appreciably interfere with the regular motion of the music.

Melody

Although Sculthorpe's quick music would not normally be associated with

¹⁶ *Overture* (1949), m.1-8, and *Nocturne* for piano (1948), m.1-4: MSS in the composer's possession.

melody, it is in the fast sections of the *Sonatina* that he establishes the characteristics of melodic structure and intervallic construction that are important aspects of his style. The melodic structure follows the special rhythmic structure of the units, but, unlike the rhythmic pattern which is the same for both halves of the unit, the melodic pattern of the first half is varied slightly in the second in a manner which preserves the shape of the first half in some way. Half the melodic pattern of the first half is repeated to give the structure $X_1 Y_1 X_1 Y_2$, and it is usual that Y_1 and Y_2 have very similar shapes, as in the following examples:

Ex. 6 ($\text{♩} = \text{c. } 162$) (I, m. 25-30)

Ex. 7 ($\text{♩} = \text{c. } 162$) (III, m. 67-72)

Ex. 8 ($\text{♩} = \text{c. } 162$) (III, m. 1-8)

In Ex. 6, Y_2 is transposed a third below Y_1 ; in Ex. 7, part of Y_2 is transposed a fourth above Y_1 ; and in Ex. 8, Y_2 begins in much the same way as Y_1 but ends with a downward motion instead of an upward one. The variants of Y in Ex. 7 and Ex. 8 are nonetheless marked by a strengthening of the underlying tonicality¹⁷ of the whole melody. In Ex. 7, Y_2 begins on the tonal centre of the melody and in Ex. 8, Y_2 ends on the tonal centre.

¹⁷ The term, "tonicality", was adopted by Lloyd Hibberd ("Tonality and Related Problems of Terminology," *Music Review*, 22 (1961), 13) as a useful term for musical contexts with strong indications of tonal centering (the feeling of a "tonic") but with no indication of the concept of "key" and its associated harmonic vocabulary. "Tonicality" was suggested by Reti as a possible source of the term "tonality" (*Tonality Atonality Pantonality* [London, 1958]); thus Hibberd sees tonicality as an authentic term for a concept which later (through the term, "tonality") took on a more specialised meaning.

All the melodies based on the special unit have a very strong tonal centre although it is true that their accompanying material is usually tonally contrary to this. The bitonality stems from a French influence although it may have been transmitted through Copland; it is certainly not a practice with which Sculthorpe persisted after this piece. Tonicity in the *Sonatina* changes for almost every unit, but quite unsystematically; this is surprising especially considering the careful ordering of the rhythmic style, as outlined above, and the conscious effort to evolve a limited intervallic language.¹⁸ The pattern of tonal centres is, in fact, quite uncharacteristic of Sculthorpe's mature work which, as will be shown, achieves a simple but strong set of relationships.

The Slow Style

Although Sculthorpe established some important aspects of his compositional style with the slow music of the *Sonatina*, these are not at all representative of the slow music of later works. The slow central movement, for example, employs quite uncharacteristic modal material. The movement is, nonetheless, broken up into two and four measure sections which show some resemblance to the units based on rhythmic repetition of the quick style; but no consistent patterns emerge.

The slow music of the *Sonatina* contains few of the important elements of the mature slow style. For instance, the stylised format of chordal ostinato as accompaniment to decorative melody of comparative rhythmic complexity was not established until a later date. In spite of this, the opening slow section of Movement I has several characteristics of tonal organisation which are crucial to Sculthorpe's compositional processes, even if they are used there in a rather unsophisticated manner. The first of these is the opening chord, already described, which is fundamental to any

¹⁸The intervallic language is discussed in some detail on pp.48-49.

discussion concerning the composer's harmonic idiom. The second is Sculthorpe's technique of introducing a new bass note when repeating a section of music. Here the E₂ which follows the opening chord is replaced by a C¹⁹ when the section returns in m.7.²⁰ The third characteristic, and perhaps the most striking, is the predominance of the melodic intervals of a minor second and minor third in the highest voice of the chordal opening. These are the fundamental melodic intervals in all of Sculthorpe's music, although several other intervals are important. Even though the *Sonatina* contains in its melodies many kinds of intervallic sequences that are not representative of the mature style, several patterns are, nevertheless, established. The first consists of the use of the minor second and the minor third in conjunction with the major third, forming a gradually ascending or, as in the following example, descending melodic line:

Ex. 9 (♩ = c. 80) (II, m. 15-16)

(p) molto cresc.

The second, a more common pattern, is the use of the minor second in conjunction with the augmented fourth or perfect fifth so that the outline of a consonant fifth is emphasised:

Ex. 10 (♩ = c. 152) (III, m. 67-68)

mf

Ex. 10a (♩ = c. 80) (II, m. 10)

Ex. 11 (♩ = c. 69) (I, m. 3-4)

Ex. 11a (♩ = c. 80) (II, m. 33-34)

p

Ex. 12 (♩ = c. 152) (I, m. 51-54)

p cresc. poco a poco

¹⁹ Throughout this study, pitch in different octaves, is indicated by the following plan suggested by the *Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Second Edition, Revised, p.679) as "the simplest and most logical":

C₂ C₁ C c c¹ c² c³, where c represents middle c.

²⁰ This principle may be found in Sculthorpe's music as early as *Elegy for a Clown* (1946) (See Chapter 1, p.12).

In Sculthorpe's music, even as early as the *Sonatina*, there is by the composer's admission a conscious avoidance in melody of major and minor sixths and the minor seventh. This compositional limitation contributes to the formation of the distinctive character of the musical style. Although prominent in harmony the major seventh does not appear melodically in the *Sonatina*, but in later works it is used in a very distinctive way in melody.

Harmony

The rudiments of Sculthorpe's harmonic style are found in this work especially in the first and second movements. The opening chord, for example, is crucial to the development of the musical language, not only in the form in which it is first heard but also as an harmonic idea from which a whole family of chords may be derived. Notwithstanding that this chord may be heard as relating to a decorated triad, the key to its construction is its two superimposed major seventh intervals, since Sculthorpe later employs other chords involving a number of major sevenths. In general, the major seventh is the crux of the harmony of this work: in almost every place where three or four tones are sounded together there is either a major seventh or alternately, a minor second or minor ninth, intervals related by inversion and by degree of dissonance. Despite the persistence of chords involving these intervals in Sculthorpe's oeuvre, little order in their progression had been established at the time of the *Sonatina*. Later a simple but highly logical pattern was to emerge.

In many respects the *Sonatina* is a naive, unsophisticated piece. Donald Peart once called it "a charming and unpretentious piece much in the manner of the lighter productions of Les Six", but although this judgment may contain some truth, it points to what is unoriginal and derivative rather than what is fresh and even unique.²¹ Probably the work may have

²¹ Peart, p.5

caused some amusement among the urbane audiences of the I.S.C.M. Festival at Baden Baden in 1955, the same year that Boulez's *Le Marteau Sans Maître* received its first performance, but it cannot in fairness be evaluated in that context. Sculthorpe composed it in the isolation of Tasmania; it represented a rejection of both his uninformed serial experiments and his outdated romantic and impressionistic styles. Many of its qualities and techniques were solely the product of his own imagination and intuition. As such it is an achievement worth recognising.

The Loneliness of Bunjil

In a lecture given at the Attingham Park Summer School in 1960, Sculthorpe described the *Sonatina* as "probably the work in which I first found my own personal style".²² Although this would appear to be true, it is curious that when the composer completed the piece, in 1954, he immediately began work on a string trio, *The Loneliness of Bunjil*, which in many ways represented a contradiction to the compositional procedures he had newly developed. On the other hand, being in a situation where he was unsure of the effectiveness of his new approach, it is not surprising that he was willing to experiment in other ways, to use, for instance, the quarter-tone scale. Unlike the works of Alois Hába, *The Loneliness of Bunjil* seems to be an attempt to find a means to use the quarter-tone scale while avoiding certain pitfalls. The first of these relates to harmony. Since the scale of twelve equal semitones evolved as a means to increase the potential of the key system, there are some bases for harmonically significant vertical configurations in twelve-tone music or atonalism. Even if vertical relationships were not a prime concern for the contemporary composer, there exists a history and a theory of harmony with or against which he can work. The field of quarter-tones has no such basis: vertical

²²MS of lecture, in the composer's possession.

combinations are heard in relation to the semitonal system and therefore chords constructed from the quarter-tonal system sound out of tune; more significantly, there is no theory that could be adapted as a basis for vertical relationships. There is not, for example, the delicate balance of dissonant and consonant intervals or a system of resolutions.

To solve this problem Sculthorpe first of all seems to have made the texture thoroughly contrapuntal and tried, in as conspicuous a way as possible, to reduce the counterpoint to two parts. There is a tendency for the music in each part, particularly those parts which are not carrying the main theme, to be constructed of phrases of approximately one or two measures length, separated by a number of rests. Sculthorpe has organised the texture so that often there are only two parts sounding at any given point. The following clearly illustrates this:²³

Ex. 13 ($\text{♩} = \text{c. } 60$) (m. 23-26)

The musical score consists of three staves: Violin (Vn.), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked as quarter note = approximately 60. The score covers measures 23 to 26. The Violin part begins with a rest in measure 23, then plays a melodic line with dynamics *p* and *mp*. The Viola part begins with a rest in measure 23, then plays a melodic line with dynamics *mp* and *p*. The Violoncello part begins with a rest in measure 23, then plays a melodic line with dynamics *p* and *mp*. Performance instructions include *pizz.* and *arco* for the Violin and Violoncello parts, and a '2' with a slur for the Viola part.

This procedure serves to direct the listener's attention as much as possible to an interval rather than a chord, to melody rather than harmony.

In addition to this technique Sculthorpe avoided any similarity with the modern scale by creating melodies and motives almost entirely from intervals unique to the quarter-tonal system: the intervals, that is, of 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27 quarter tones.

²³ > signifies a quarter-tone sharp, and < signifies a quarter tone flat.

The effect this has is so distinctive that when intervals based on multiples of the semitone are employed, as they are in an increasingly liberal way as the work progresses, they are not easily identifiable. The vertical relationship between the parts also avoids intervals based on multiples of semitones especially in the crucial relationship between tones of parts which are already sounding and the corresponding tones of imminent contrapuntal entries. In contrast to horizontal intervals, when vertical intervals are based on multiples of semitones, they are quite exposed.

The otherworldly quality brought about by the tonal language is reinforced by the particular approach to rhythm. Throughout *The Loneliness of Bunjil*, with the exception of twenty measures (m.53-72) occupied by a canon and a connecting passage, the metre is a very slow $\frac{6}{4}$. As in the *Sonatina* an attempt is made to simplify the rhythm as much as possible. Thus the basic motion is in crotchets; there is little use of quavers and, apart from a discreet use of duplets, no other rhythmic entity which could interfere with the succession of crotchet units. It is arguable that the one weak section of the work is the canon where, in order to articulate the entries, a dotted rhythm is introduced. The trance-like quality of the music is destroyed and replaced by rhythmic gestures that are reminiscent of both Schoenberg and Hába. This is ironic because, without realising it, the composer was following the programme of the work even more closely than intended. *The Loneliness of Bunjil* is inscribed "In the beginning, the Great Spirit Bunjil created the earth and all things in it except man. He became lonely" Sculthorpe intended that the canon correspond with the creation by Bunjil of man and woman after his own image. Bunjil is represented by the cello voice, man by the viola, and woman by the violin. The canon, therefore, in its extramusical as well as its musical meaning is concerned with the act of creation, whereas the rest of the work is concerned

only with the state of being.²⁴

Despite the uniqueness of *The Loneliness of Bunjil* there are some surprising similarities with serialism in its manipulative techniques. Firstly there is little recurrence of tones in melody although there is no attempt to serialise pitches. Rather, this is simply a means to avoid a sense of tonal centering. As with twelve-tone music, however, quite often a tone is repeated once or several times immediately after its initial use. Secondly, the techniques involved in organising the contrapuntal texture and manipulating the thematic and motivic materials are those traditionally associated with serialism; intervallic inversion, transposition, augmentation, diminution and inversion of voices are used exhaustively to create a tightly-meshed structure which is not sectionalised to the same extent as the *Sonatina*.

As a piece of music *The Loneliness of Bunjil* is certainly more finely wrought than any of Sculthorpe's works until *Irkanda IV* (1961). It could be said, moreover, that it is less European in spirit than works like *Irkanda IV* which are noticeably influenced by Bloch and Mahler

Sonata for Violin Alone and Irkanda I

Sculthorpe did not continue to write music like *The Loneliness of Bunjil* for a number of interrelated reasons. Firstly it was not written for any group of players, and it is clear that if it, or indeed anything like it, were to be performed it would be necessary for the musicians to acquire new techniques. Only the most experienced and amenable players would be willing to co-operate. The main reason, however, was that the *Sonatina*, in the meantime, had been accepted by the jury of the I.S.C.M Festival.

²⁴When the writer suggested this correlation to the composer, Sculthorpe admitted that, although it had not occurred to him, it was, nonetheless, quite valid. He added that he had for some time been considering re-writing the canon in order to make it rhythmically homogenous with the rest of the piece, but that the discovery of the correlation, perhaps rendered this unnecessary.

Thus, a piece that Sculthorpe had written had received recognition at an international level; in addition it had been chosen from among works by experienced and well-known Australian composers, notably Dorian le Gallienne and Margaret Sutherland.

It was not surprising, therefore, that Sculthorpe returned to the procedures of the *Sonatina* for his next two works, *Sonata* (1954) and *Irkanda I* (1955), both for violin alone. These pieces, composed especially for Wilfred Lehmann, exploit the gamut of string technique, including complicated double, triple and quadruple stopping, natural and artificial harmonics, the rapid alternation of *arco* and *pizzicato*, *arco* phrases with *pizzicato* accompaniment, and tapping on the body of the instrument. One could almost regard the pieces as mere exercises in instrumental complexity were it not for the fact that they show a consolidation of some of the distinctive characteristics of the *Sonatina*, together with developments in tonal and structural organisation.

Once again the music is divided into open-ended units constructed of rhythmic patterns and their repetitions, the repetitions involving slight melodic variation. Even some of the connecting passages assume this pattern. Instead of a series of rhythmically compatible units, as in the quick sections of the *Sonatina*, there is a tendency for units containing the principal musical material to be immediately followed by a variation of this material, and for such units to return during the course of the piece in other varied forms. This kind of variation usually involves only the addition of accompanying tones but it can be, more rarely, quite radical. The main theme of *Irkanda I*, for example, occurs in the following guises:

Ex. 14 ($\text{♩} = 96$) (m. 7-10)

Ex. 15 ($\text{♩} = 92$) (m. 53-56)

Ex. 16 ($\text{♩} = 96$) (m. 65-66)

Ex. 17 ($\text{♩} = 96$) (m. 119-120)

Ex. 18 ($\text{♩} = 96$) (m. 129-131)

Ex. 19 ($\text{♩} = 96$) (m. 237-240)

Similarly, one of the main themes of the "Prelude" of the Sonata reappears in the "Postlude" in a varied form:

Ex. 20 With great virility and emotion (Prelude, m. 77-79)

Ex. 21 Broadly and with great emotion (Postlude, m. 43-44)

Tonicity

In the act of composition it sometimes happens that, while searching for the solution to one particular problem, other phenomena of style accidentally appear. In looking for ways to ~~add detail to~~ add detail to his writing for solo violin Sculthorpe was placing limitations on some aspects of his tonal organisation. He introduced, for example, the technique of bowing a *legato* melody while simultaneously plucking unstopped low strings. Thus many sections of music occur where the tonal centres are those of open-strings, particularly G and D. Sculthorpe was aware that the pattern had arisen because of the properties of the instrument, and he strengthened the pattern by placing other sections where only the bow is used in open-string tonalities. The tonalities of open-strings are of great significance in Sculthorpe's work, particularly E, the lowest tone of the double bass, A, the lowest tone of the next string, and C, the lowest tone of the 'cello. It can be observed from the scores that in making a piece, Sculthorpe tends to compose each section in one of these

open-string tonalities, and then to join them together. Because of the strong harmonic relationships between the tonalities defined by open strings the overall tonal structure of a hypothetical work is usually satisfactory. Once the work is initially assembled, however, the composer may transpose a section if it will enhance the scheme of tonal relationships.

Complete transposition never occurs within a single work. If a melody is transposed, as for example in *Irkanda IV*,²⁵ the accompaniment remains constant; and quite often Sculthorpe changes the tonal centre of his accompaniment without changing the pitch of the melody.²⁶ In later pieces other subtle relationships between tonal centre occur which are based upon the intervallic structure of particular kinds of chords; but open-string tonality is indeed a basis of Sculthorpe's tonally-oriented music.²⁷ It has been discussed here in some detail so that it can be referred to in the examination of later works without the necessity of expounding its origin or theory.

Melody and Harmony

Although the technique of melody accompanied by a texture of open-string *pizzicato* is found in *Irkanda I*, in some cases the juxtaposition of open-string tones is as crude as the bitonal techniques explored in the *Sonatina*. In the *Sonata*, however, there is an example of the way in which Sculthorpe began to consider the tonal interrelationship of melody and accompaniment:

²⁵The melody of m.1-6 returns at m.53-58 transposed a perfect fourth higher

²⁶An example, already mentioned, of this is the opening material of the *Sonatina* which is repeated at the conclusion of the quick section of Movement I with a bass tone a minor third lower than the original.

²⁷Sculthorpe's practice of adding thirds below already existing triadic-based chords has, for example, resulted in the regular occurrence of A^b as a tonal centre. A^b completes a cyclic series of tonal centres, following on from E and C (both open strings). The augmented triad as a basis for relationships among tonal centres is similar in concept to the symmetrical relationships of tonal centres based on the diminished seventh chord in Messiaen's second mode of limited transposition.

Ex. 22 *Broadly*
arco
 Vn. *pizz.* (III, m. 43-50)

Above the tonal centre G, certain tones, notably G, D, B^b and B[#], act as consonant points about which is woven an elaborate web of appoggiatura. It will be shown more clearly as this study progresses that Sculthorpe has evolved a musical style in which little importance is placed on harmonic progression. If progression occurs, usually only one tone of a vertical arrangement of tones changes at a time, as, for example, through the addition of a tone a third below the lowest tone in a chord. The essence of Sculthorpe's harmonic style can be seen in Example 21 where the accompanying tones remain constant while the melodic tones define the harmonic quality. The style is most influenced by Gustav Mahler's extensive use of appoggiatura, but unlike Mahler, who uses the gamut of chromatic triadic harmony as the framework for his melodic appoggiatura, Sculthorpe limits his framework to one chord. An excerpt from Mahler's music illustrates the difference between the two approaches:

Ex. 23 *Schwer*

(Das Lied von der Erde, VI; m. 329-329)

Here the melody is dissonant with the accompanying chords on the strong beats, and resolves on the weak beats; this use of appoggiatura is unique because the same procedure is used in each successive measure. Consequently harmonic tension is always present, and satisfactory resolution continually frustrated.

In the example from the *Sonata* semitonal appoggiatura are employed but, as well, temporary resolution often occurs by large leaps. Sometimes a consonant tone occurs on a strong beat but its note-value is always short and the melody progresses immediately to a dissonant tone. Thus, like Mahler's style, there is a constantly recurring harmonic tension; but, unlike Mahler, there is a flatness and a feeling of non-progression resulting from the static accompanying tones.

Sculthorpe's mature personal idiom is represented by this passage of eight measures more than by any other passage of music from this early period. Not only does the passage demonstrate the strict formal proportions of Sculthorpe's rhythmic/melodic structural unit, but it is also the first example of the delicate relationship of slow melody to static harmonic accompaniment. Sparse harmonic accompaniments such as this do not come into prominence in the composer's music until the latter half of the following decade. The chords of the accompaniments of earlier mature works such as *Irkanda IV* (1961) and *String Quartet No. 6* (1965) are more richly constructed and are often chords of the same genus as the opening chord of the *Sonatina*.²⁸

²⁸The first example of Sculthorpe's revival of sparse harmonic accompaniments does, however, occur in the opening pages of Movement III of *String Quartet No. 6*.

If there is any influence of the music of another composer in these violin pieces it is that of Ernest Bloch, though Roger Covell has suggested Bartok's *Sonata* for solo violin.²⁹ Sculthorpe was deeply affected by Bloch's *Concerto* for violin and orchestra (1937-38) but in spite of his familiarity with this work and others, the influence does not manifest itself in many direct ways. The most obvious aspects are Bloch's concern for the complexities of string technique and his fondness of hemitonic scale constructions. Perhaps more significant is the way in which Bloch sometimes avoids a sense of harmonic progression in favour of a texture based on the prolongation of one chord. Certainly there is little of the rhapsodic quality of Bloch in this early music though the cadenza-like sections of the later *Irkanda IV* are reminiscent of this.

Sonata for Viola and Percussion

The procedure for the adaptation of the first and third movements of the *Sonata* for violin alone into a piece for viola and percussion was a curious one. The first stage was the composition of a *Sonata* for cello (1959). This was effected simply by organising the various sections into a shape like that of *Irkanda I*, and transposing them down either an octave, two octaves, or sometimes a twelfth, where the stopping and combinations of *arco* and *pizzicato* involved all four strings. There was also a standardisation of tempi into the characteristic slow and quick distinctions. It transpired that when the composer gave the *Sonata* to the cellist for whom it was written it was not well received. Later at the Attingham Park Summer School (1960) he rewrote it for viola and percussion because of the putative availability of both an excellent violist and percussionist. This was done with little formal reorganisation. In a few places the percussion is given several measures functioning as connecting passages and there is

²⁹ *Australia's Music*, p.203. Although this work is an obvious model for a contemporary work for solo violin, Sculthorpe was unacquainted with it at that time.

also a percussion solo of sixteen measures based on the rhythm of one of the main themes. It is this theme, though, that is the principal object of percussive intrusion; here the percussion has equal status with the viola in the construction of the music:

Ex. 24 Briskly, with vigour. (m. 141-143)

(tap on fingerboard)

Ex. 25 ($\text{♩} = 104$) (m. 89-92)

side drum

The fingerboard knocking of the cello version (Ex. 24) has been replaced by a rhythmic figure which gives the passage a martial feeling. The music thereby lapses into a gesture which is quite out of keeping with the composer's need to purge his art of clichés of association. Sculthorpe compounds his indiscretion by introducing this drum pattern into other parts of the work probably to increase the rhythm's structural viability; but, in doing so, he unfortunately destroys the character of the original melody.

Ex. 26 ($\text{♩} = 104$) (m. 105-108)

Tom Tom

For the most part, however, the percussion plays a supportive role. It is discreetly used to emphasise the rhythmic design of the structural units, and it is particularly useful in relation to the composer's procedure of repeating sections throughout a piece, with textural variation. The choice of the percussion instruments makes quite a versatile kit of untuned idiophones and membranophones of wide ranging pitch. Several patterns exist for their use: for emphasis of the rhythmic qualities of the viola part, usually a single membranophone is used, but for a more

subtle interplay, combinations of instruments are used in an alternating pattern:

Ex.27 $\text{♩} = 96$ *poco cresc. e accel.* *rall.* (m. 67-70)

Vla

Claves Bongo/Tri. Claves Bongo/Tri.

Tam-Tam (on rim) (Tam-Tam)

There is also a considerable use of drum and cymbal rolls for cohesive and textural purposes and often they are marked "crescendo poco a poco". Drum rolls of this kind are important in much of Sculthorpe's music especially the orchestral works. In these contexts they are more subtly effective since they are not so exposed.

Sculthorpe had been interested in the potential of percussion since his undergraduate student days when he discovered a recording of Edgard Varèse's *Ionisation*. At that time this work impressed him as being a different approach to composition, and he responded to the influence by writing several pieces entirely for percussion instruments. Thus, it is odd that he could conceive of writing music where percussion is enslaved to an already composed and self-sufficient work. In many ways, however, the disciplines and limitations of such a task enabled him to develop an efficient technique for orchestral percussion and they also laid the foundations for later music where percussion has special structural significance. It is unfortunate, though, that an impressive work for cello has been discarded in favour of a less effective work for the unusual combination of viola and percussion.

It has been suggested in this chapter that Peter Sculthorpe's need to

³⁰ For example, *Sun Music II* (1969), *Music for Japan* (1970) and *Rites of Passage* (1972-73).

create an Australian style for his music resulted in a conflict with his European-influenced attitudes which, though unresolved, produced a personal style of considerable uniqueness and consistency. Chapter 3 is concerned with the consolidation of the composer's musical style but it deals with a period following his exposure to Europe. It is to be expected, therefore, that his first real contact with contemporary musical resources would cause noticeable changes in his approach to composition; but, rather than respond enthusiastically to European music, Sculthorpe became even more committed to the notion of an Australian style and, although he was quick to absorb and to learn about European contemporary music, he began to work obsessively in terms of those aspects of style and structure he had, himself, developed. The results of his renewed vigour demonstrate a greater finesse than his earlier works.

CHAPTER 3

IRKANDA IV AND STRING QUARTET NO. 6:

SCULTHORPE'S MATURE STYLE

The procedure of reworking the material of existing pieces, has been a common one in Peter Sculthorpe's career especially during the ten years following the *Sonatina* (1954). The composer has remarked that there was, in this period, no kind of problem associated with this since there was never any expectancy that a particular work would receive more than a few performances, and none whatever that it would be recorded or published. It has already been shown that *Sonata for Viola and Percussion* was adapted from earlier works, but this is, in a sense, an unrepresentative example of the process since the piece, with the exception of the percussion additions, remained more or less intact in its compositional detail. The years between Sculthorpe's arrival in England in 1958 and the completion of his *String Quartet No. 6* in 1965 represented a period of reworking, perfecting and re-arranging a small amount of musical material rather than one of burgeoning creativity, as the number of titles might suggest. Most of the material appears in the first two important works composed by Sculthorpe in England: the song cycle, *Sun* (1958) and *Irkanda II* for string quartet (1959). Some of the material of *Irkanda II* was reworked and developed in *Irkanda III*, for piano trio (1960). A part of *Irkanda III* was then further revised and used with a passage from *Irkanda II* in two of the principal sections of *Irkanda IV* for solo violin, strings and percussion (1961). This last work was not changed in any way after its completion.¹ The music

¹For publication by the Australian Music Fund in 1964 Sculthorpe did, however, arrange *Irkanda IV* for string orchestra and percussion since Robert Hughes, advisor to the publishers, felt that the work would be more in demand in this form.

of *Sun* and some of those sections of *Irkanda II* which were not included in *Irkanda IV* have a similar history, appearing in the first and second versions of *Irkanda III* for piano trio (1960 and 1961), parts of *The Fifth Continent*, for speaker and orchestra (1962), and the *Piano Sonata* (1963), until finally being consolidated in *String Quartet No.6*. Thus, apart from the *Sonata for Viola and Percussion* which was derived from the *Sonata* for violin, composed as early as 1955, the six years from the end of 1958 to the beginning of 1965 were spent in perfecting the musical material for only two works.

In retrospect Sculthorpe sees a great advantage in this situation as it allowed him to refine many aspects of his craft in a gradual way and to establish a distinctive harmonic language by working on the same passages over a period of years. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to examine the development of the material in question, an example of the process can effectively illustrate this principle:²

Ex. 28 (Irkanda II, m. 1-6)

Tempo I. (Very slowly)

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Vla.

Vc.

²In orchestral scoring Sculthorpe uses the customary octave transpositions for double bass and piccolo, and adheres to the common twentieth century practice of writing for all instruments in C.

Ex.29 Lento (Irkanda IV, m. 1-6)

Solo Vn. con sord. pizz. arco mp

Vn. 1 con sord. p

Vn. 2 con sord. p

Vla. con sord. p

Vc. pizz. arco mp

DB. pizz. arco mp

Perc. Base Drum p

Essentially the difference is one of rhythmic and textural articulation: In Ex.29 the detail of the interplay between melody and accompaniment gives the passage a subtlety which one would not expect from a basically static harmonic framework.

The Influence of Mahler and Bloch

On the whole, *Irkanda IV* is perhaps not a good example of this re-working procedure since a large proportion of it was freshly composed in 1961. Apart from the section discussed above only the canon (m.28-38) is systematically derived from an earlier composition.³ Another main section beginning at measure 79 could be interpreted as a derivative of the martial section of *Sonata for Viola and Percussion*⁴ while the violin solo near the end of the work was originally an attempt by the composer, when he returned to Australia in 1960, to reset D. H. Lawrence's poem, "Sun in Me", originally used in *Sun*. Sculthorpe did not use more of his already-composed

³ *Irkanda II*, m.67-88.

⁴ m.89-96.

material because *Irkanda IV* was, as discussed in Chapter 1, written in memory of his father and was a definite attempt to produce music which his father might have liked. Although Joshua Sculthorpe understood little of his son's music and disliked most of the early twentieth century music he had heard, the music of Gustav Mahler had impressed him to some extent. Consequently the composer has imbued *Irkanda IV* with recognisably Mahlerian qualities. The work is probably one of Sculthorpe's most expansive, romantic and free-flowing pieces since it lacks the sense of deliberately rigid sectionalisation displayed in *String Quartet No. 6* and other later pieces. It also loosely follows the pattern which Sculthorpe associates with Mahler's *Symphony No. 9*: after the exuberance of Mahler's first three movements there is a final resignation to fate in the dirge-like *Adagio*.⁵ Thus, in *Irkanda IV*, after the dramatic and the martial music has died away, Sculthorpe introduces the expression mark *preso da rassegnazione* at the moment when the falling semitone motive, which is crucial to the work, is deprived of its agitated bass-line accompaniment and given instead a single repeated note.⁶ Following this section there is a calm melody for solo violin which Sculthorpe believes expresses an optimism and a detachment from the emotional level upon which the piece has functioned to that point; this section is marked *con desiderio di solitudine*.

Apart from these broad musical parallels and extramusical associations there is surprisingly little detail which could be attributed to the influence of Mahler. There is a characteristic use of appoggiatura, but otherwise the references are isolated. They include the effect of the diminuendo in the last four measures, the particular character of the martial rhythm which first appears in measure 89 and some of the detail of orchestration, for example, the violin trill first appearing in measure 114

⁵ Deryck Cooke, *Mahler 1860-1911* (London, 1960), pp.44-45.

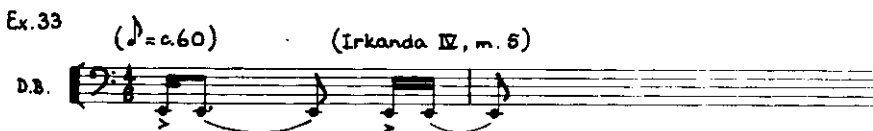
⁶ m.167.

and the *sul tasto* string tremolo in measure 181.

In spite of these references, it is not Mahler's influence which is dominant in *Irkanda IV*. The rhapsodic quality of much of the solo violin writing can be more easily attributed to the influence of Ernest Bloch. The work, in fact, seems to be permeated with musical ideas which correspond to passages found in Bloch's *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* (1937-38). The main theme of *Irkanda IV*⁷ is, for example, quite obviously related to one of the principal melodic ideas of Bloch's work:



Links such as this are, however, not necessarily the most significant between the two works. A typical influence is the technique of inverted dotting which Bloch employs characteristically in an ascending pentatonic context whereas Sculthorpe mostly employs it with minor second and minor third intervallic cells, and often on the same tone:



Although it is possible to draw attention to many parallels in the detail of these two works, Sculthorpe's response to Bloch is ultimately more an emotional one than a stylistic one. Just as he had identified

⁷ See Ex. 29

with what he interpreted as un-European qualities in Aaron Copland's *Piano Sonata*, he found in Bloch's theme of the Biblical wilderness, a reminder of the terrifying, unpopulated landscape of Australia.⁸ *Irkanda IV* cannot, in any fair sense, be considered a derivative work: distinguished critics including Curt Prerauer⁹ and Roger Covell¹⁰ have praised its originality and recognised in it Sculthorpe's success in convincingly articulating his personal vision for the first time. *Irkanda IV* demonstrates many of the stylistic qualities of earlier pieces, but its emotional range is far more expansive than any of these pieces. It is not, however, only the extended musical vocabulary which separates it from its predecessors: the significant technical advancement is the systematic integration of a number of structural devices already in practice as isolated techniques in Sculthorpe's music.

The Structure of *Irkanda IV*

The principal musical material of *Irkanda IV* appears, predictably, in the characteristic structural units but, instead of connecting passages being used to bridge the gap between sections, these now seem to represent logical extensions of the units they follow so that, in effect, a new kind of unit is created. Consisting of two parts, the first part is structured by internal rhythmic repetition while the second part is freer. The second part, though growing naturally from the first, still has the important function of either bringing the unit to a satisfactory close before a new section begins, or leading to the next section in such a way as to ensure the fluidity of the piece as a whole and to lessen the feeling of segmentation that is characteristic of the early pieces. This is

⁸ Sculthorpe was equally attached to works such as *The Voice in the Wilderness* (1934-36) and *Schelomo* (1915-16).

⁹ C. M. Prerauer, "Praise for Sculthorpe", *Nation*, March 23, 1963, pp.19-20. More detailed commentary can be found in Curt Prerauer's letters to Sculthorpe, in particular those of 27.ii.1963 and 11.iii.1963, in the composer's possession.

¹⁰ Covell, p.205

especially important when the music changes from being quick to slow or slow to quick, so that the idea of a single-movement piece is preserved.

By far the most obvious structural device in the work is the use of the falling minor second as a principal interval of melodic construction. This is found in almost every section of the work including the connecting passages. The same could be said to a lesser extent of the minor and major thirds which are more often than not used in conjunction with the minor second:

Ex. 34 $(\text{♩} = 60)$ *rall.* (m. 16-17)

Solo Vn. 

Ex. 35 $(\text{♩} = 84)$ (m. 39-42)

Solo Vn. 

Ex. 36 $(\text{♩} = 60)$ (m. 74-76)

Vc. 

In spite of the prominence of these intervals in the work there is, as one can see from the examples, rarely any real sense of motivic development since the intervals are used in rhythmically varied ways. The structure of *Irkanda IV* is undoubtedly strengthened by the predominance of these melodic intervals but, although they are largely responsible for establishing the threnodic mood, they are never tantamount to a major force which holds the piece together.

Irkanda IV appears to be based on an elaborate form of variation technique. There are six significant divisions in the material used, and four of these are used in varied forms throughout the work in the pattern shown in Diagram 1. Variation is sometimes as slight as a dynamic change (A_1 , m. 9-14) or as pronounced as a manipulation of melody as well as accompaniment (B_2 , m. 103-108); but generally the main concept is of textural variation of accompaniment while the melodic substance remains constant. Each of the four varying sections, A, B, C and E has, however, its

Diagram 1The Structure of Irkanda IV

	A	p ¹	A ₁	p ²	B	p ³	C
measure no:	1-6	7-8	9-14	15-18	19-24	25-28	29-38
	p ⁴	A ₂	p ^{2A}	D	p ⁵	E	p ^{E1}
	39-52	53-58	59-62	63-76	77-78	79-88	89-90
	p ^{4A}	B ₁	p ⁶	B ₂	p ⁷	E ₁	p ^{E2}
	91-94	95-100	101-102	103-108	109-112	113-120	121-124
	p ^{4B}	p ^{E3}	p ^{4C}	A ₃	p ^{1A}	C ₁	B ₃
	125-128	129-132	132-136	137-142	143-146	147-156	157-162
	p ⁸	B₄	p ^{E4}	F	B₄	F ₁	B ₅
	163-166	167-172	172-174	175-184	185-186	187-190	191-194

KEY

A is the first main section, B is the second main section, and so on.

A₁, A₂ are variations of the first main section, and so on.

p¹, p², p³ are connecting passages, or passages which contain a diversification of material so as not to warrant classification as principal sections.

p^{2A}, p^{2B}, p^{4A}, p^{4B} are variations of the second and fourth connecting passages respectively.

p^{E1}, p^{E2} are connecting passages based on material from section E.



indicates that the section is broken into two parts and separated by another passage.

own variational procedure and, thus, its own role in the structure of the piece. For A there is little variation: on its third appearance (m.53-58) the melody is transposed a perfect fourth higher while the accompaniment remains the same; and on its last, the melody is transposed an octave higher. Oddly enough, the first transposition does not transform the harmonic or tonal feeling; the casual listener may not even notice the change. As a result of this, and since section A occurs four times, fairly evenly spaced throughout, the passage acts as a kind of refrain.

Section B appears in six different guises, also evenly spaced, but, unlike section A, it undergoes a kind of transformation on each successive appearance. This occurs firstly through the extension of the melodic idea by the addition of several tones to each of the basic two-tone motives, secondly by a significant change in the accompanying texture, thirdly in an enriched version of the first variation, fourthly through the reduction of the accompaniment to a single tone, and lastly by a return to the simple motive of the original. As the variation and change in the constitution of B is gradual there is never any problem in recognising it. Thus, it too acts in the piece as another kind of refrain.

The other two sections which recur, C and E, are either by position or number of appearances not heard as refrains. Both these sections are quick, thus contrasting with A and B. Section E occupies only the central part of the work and uses a freer mode of variation than either A or B. This feeling is accented by the rhapsodic sound of the parallel minor sixth double-stopping and by the fact that the units tend to merge into the connecting passages which contain material derived from the units but which are structurally much freer. The effect of the E sections is, therefore, to contrast with the stylised A and B refrains. The two statements of the canon (section C) are placed in roughly symmetrical positions about the centre of the piece. The only variational change is from *staccato* to *sul ponticello tremolo*, the strict rules of canon not allowing for changes of the kind found in the other sections. Perhaps because the canon is

taken from the earlier *Irkanda II*, where it can be seen to grow from the section preceding it, its intervallic structure cannot easily be related to the strong minor second and minor third pattern which is a characteristic of every other section of the work. Nonetheless, it is not out of place since its forward moving feeling of growth, which derives as much from its gradual *accelerando* as from its canonic shape, contrasts with the predictable symmetry of the special structural units.¹¹ Sculthorpe often employs contrapuntal passages in an attempt to interrupt the fairly consistent harmonic textures of his music. Since he prefers his small structures to be tightly organised, these passages are invariably canons, usually in three parts either at the fifth and the ninth, or the unison and octave.¹²

Of the two remaining main sections, D is more in keeping with the structural patterns discussed above than F which is effectively a non-virtuosic cadenza. Although section D is not repeated its motivic material is closely related to that of section E. It is used as a means to bridge the stylistic gap between the tranquillity of section A₂ and the agitated rhapsodic quality of section E. Section D has the same tempo as section A₂ but it gradually becomes more animated by the use of *tremolo* textures which accompany a motive possessing a strong rhythmic impulse. Lacking the static harmonic quality of section A₂, its emphasis on a different chord for each successive statement of the motive is related to the idea of the

¹¹The composer acknowledges that the idea of *crescendo* and *accelerando* in a contrapuntal passage which is rising in pitch is taken consciously from Bela Bartók's music, especially works like *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* and *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*.

¹²Some examples of the use of canon in Sculthorpe's music are located as follows: *The Loneliness of Bunjil*, m.58-68; *String Quartet No. 6*, II, m.88-95; III, m.24-38; III m.104-110; *Sun Music I*, m.25-39; m.87-93; m.93-102; *Morning-song for the Christ Child* (1966), m.15-22; *Sun Music IV*, m.46-63; *Rites of Passage*, "Second Chorale", m.5-30; "Fourth Chorale", m.1-16; "Rebirth" (double canon), Ⓧ to Ⓞ.

the development section of the classical sonata form, though the system of chord progression is the composer's own. Nonetheless, it does have a strong affinity with the modulatory development of a short motive and, as such it is quite atypical of Sculthorpe's music.

This completes the description of the basic scheme of structural integration in *Irkanda IV* except for the violin cadenza. Apart from the low tone, E₂ of the double bass and some sparse orchestration there is no harmonic or distinctively rhythmic accompaniment in this section. To the ear the melody seems rhythmically free though it does have a progressive tonal and rhythmic logic and a strong overall shape. It is in two definite sections separated by the short second-half of section B₄. Both parts rise to a high point by a gradual process, the guiding principle of which is that the upward leaps are slightly larger than the corresponding falls. Characteristically, most of the intervals are either minor seconds, minor thirds or major thirds, and invariably the ends of phrases are based on the falling minor second.

Harmony

The essence of Sculthorpe's harmonic language can be seen again in this passage for solo violin. With relation to the tonal centre defined by the low E₂ pedal point the melody consists of a series of dissonant tones on the strong parts of the measures which resolve to consonant tones on weaker beats. Once the resolution is effected, the melody moves to another dissonant tone. This process can be perpetuated until the composer chooses to effect a final resolution.

Although, by contrast, melodies in the other main sections of *Irkanda IV* follow the structure of the special unit, their harmonic accompaniments, with the exception of section D, are also static, and the relationship of the melodic lines to the tonal centres of their accompaniments follows the above procedure. This is not an innovation since a typical example

of it from the *Sonata* for violin has already been discussed.¹³ The earlier work did not, however, pursue the principle as a prime structural determinant. Furthermore, the later work employs new kinds of chords as static harmonic accompaniments for melody. The opening chord,¹⁴ for example, is based on a minor triad and has several major seventh intervals added to the tones of this triad so that its construction, in one sense, follows the principle of that of the opening chord of the *Sonatina*. The chord possesses the property of being able to be enriched by the addition of major sevenths above or below its already existing tones without significantly changing its particular quality.¹⁵ It is from this process that the technique of changing the tonality by adding a lower tone is derived. Thus, changes in tonality can occur without overt chordal change.

The chords of superimposed sevenths, though they may be strongly related to the triad, or actually contain triads, are, nonetheless, somewhat dissonant since each of their constituent major seventh intervals is dissonant. In seeking a resolution for these kinds of chords, Sculthorpe maintains the higher tones of one or more of the seventh intervals, and makes the lower ones fall a semitone. Thus, even this aspect of the harmonic idiom is closely related to the technique of falling semitonal appoggiatura. In a chord like that discussed above from the opening of *Irkanda IV*, the major sevenths are not obviously resolved in this way but the framework of the resolution is clear:

Ex. 37 (m. 5-7)

Solo Vn.
&
Strings

(con sord.)

¹³ See Ex. 22, p. 57.

¹⁴ See Ex. 29, p. 65.

¹⁵ The opening chord of the *Sonatina* is added to, in the same way, when it is employed in the first movement of *String Quartet No. 6*.

By rearranging the tones in an hypothetical outline it can be seen that the E^b and B^b of the first chord remain constant in the second while the E^b falls to E^b and the C^b falls to B . Theoretically the chord could be resolved in a different way by the choice of an alternative major seventh or set of sevenths as the operative framework. The delayed resolution of this chord to a tonal centre of G (m.14-18) is a representative example of this phenomenon since the A^b/G becomes the new operative seventh interval.

Although these aspects of harmony are fundamental to a study of Sculthorpe's style, *Irkanda IV*, by the composer's own volition, does not, on the whole, have particularly dissonant chords, so that the procedure of resolution is often unnecessary; the chords, strongly based on triads although they may involve dissonant intervals, are, nonetheless, able to be heard as stable harmonic entities. There are also, in places where the accompaniment to melody has rhythmic rather than prolonged harmonic significance, some quite dissonant chords which are purposely left unresolved:

Ex.38 *accel e molto, cresc poco a poco* (m.115-116)

Ex.39 (m.39-40)

In both examples, it is easy to calculate, using the principles described above, which tonal centres resolutions of these chords would imply; the

chords are simply substitutions for the implied tonal centres. In this way Sculthorpe is able to avoid the bareness of a single bass tone and the mannerism of triad-based harmony, while simultaneously preserving a strong feeling of tonal centering.

As in the *Sonatina* and to a limited extent, the violin pieces, there is a tendency for harmonic style to be unsystematic; the composer is sometimes unaware of the principles behind some of the patterns which gradually emerge in his music. In *Irkanda IV*, Sculthorpe's attempt to make a music which is somewhat conventional in sound, without embracing anything which is stylistically foreign to his ear, or contrary to his compositional rules, greatly expands the scope of his harmonic idiom.

String Quartet No. 6

Sculthorpe's next significant work, *String Quartet No. 6*, is harmonically much more complex than *Irkanda IV*, but is not structurally as finely wrought. The composer wished to write an impressive piece for this important commission but was unable to spend as much time in its composition as he would have liked because of teaching commitments. Thus the work is like a compendium of all the best musical material which had appeared in the works written since 1959, apart from that employed in *Irkanda IV*. Because most of the material had been refined and developed, and had slowly been integrated into a consistent stylistic mould, it is not surprising that the work, in one sense, represents a greater compositional maturity than the newer material of *Irkanda IV*. It could not, however, be easily adaptable to the single-movement variational form of the earlier piece since there was a considerable degree of contrasting material involved. Sculthorpe found an obvious solution to the problem by making it a piece in three movements, each of which has quite a simple structure. The first is a slow movement with a ternary structure, the second a fast movement with a slow middle section, and the third, a movement which has a slow

section, a *moderato* section and a brief return to the character of its beginning. The variation technique is used in each movement but does not assume so complex a structural role as in *Irkanda IV*. Although the form of the earlier piece serves as a prototype for the structural basis of the *Sun Music* series and many other later pieces, *String Quartet No. 6* is quite important in this regard since it reintroduces, in a very positive way, the idea of the two fundamental kinds of music in Sculthorpe's style. These are slow harmonically-static melodies and quick ritualistic non-melodic and non-harmonic textures. The distinction between the two is not as well drawn in *Irkanda IV* where the few quick passages do not possess the same kind of rhythmic impulse as the quick sections of the second movement of the string quartet; this particular movement is itself a model for later forms which use a symmetrical structure based on the alternation of slow and quick music. *String Quartet No. 8*, for example, has an $A_1 B_1 C_1 B_2 A_2$ structure where B_1 and B_2 are quick and A_1 , C_1 and A_2 are slow. Between them, *Irkanda IV* and *String Quartet No. 6* establish the fundamental principles for the structural organisation of Sculthorpe's music.

In spite of the relative formal simplicity of *String Quartet No. 6*, it is a far more stylistically complex work than its predecessor, perhaps because of the motivation behind it. Like *Irkanda IV* it was written in memory of a person close to the composer, but the circumstances of the death were vastly different. Sculthorpe began work on *String Quartet No. 6* some months after Bonnie Drysdale¹⁶ had taken her own life, at a time when, quite coincidentally, he was composing a film-score for a Commonwealth Film Unit documentary entitled *The Troubled Mind* which was concerned with mental illness. Having selected his material for the film from the most anguished passages of his earlier music it seemed appropriate that the same passages be used for the quartet. In the score Sculthorpe has employed terms like

¹⁶Bonnie Drysdale was Russell Drysdale's first wife.

angoscioso, piangendo, con desiderio pieno di malinconia, molto sconsolato and *con dolore*, but one does not need these to sense the intentions of the music. The concentration of chordal dissonance and the jaggedness of the harmonic progressions in much of the piece are quite unlike anything else Sculthorpe had written. Even the quick sections, which were usually employed as a kind of release from the introspection of the slow passages, often verge on the point of losing their rhythmic impulse.

Like *Irkanda IV*, the work culminates in an instrumental setting of a D. H. Lawrence poem.¹⁷ Whereas the poem used as the basis of the cadenza of the earlier work is concerned with life-affirming ideas,¹⁸ that of the quartet expresses despair and a denial of life:

I have no desire any more
towards woman or man, bird or creature or thing.

All day long I feel the tide rocking, rocking
in me.

Only mid-ocean.———¹⁹

The setting of the first two lines of this poem represents the most important single stylistic entity in the quartet in view of Sculthorpe's later works. Although these works move increasingly away from melodic/harmonic formulae in the exploration of new kinds of musical material, passages texturally like this occur frequently, sometimes as the only reminder in a piece of the intensely personal style of the early works:

Ex. 40

¹⁷ Movement III, m.11-20 and m.39-47.

¹⁸ D. H. Lawrence, 513.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 454.

Like the cadenza at the end of *Irkanda IV*, the melody here is free of the structural shackles of the ABAB' mould, but not to such a great extent. The structure of the six measures may be divided into two main parts: the first consists of two measures of $\frac{4}{8}$, and the second of the familiar $\frac{4}{8} \frac{2}{8} \frac{4}{8} \frac{2}{8}$ pattern. Each of these two divisions has rhythmic repetition in its accompaniment so that some formal restrictions are acting on the melody. As well, in the $\frac{4}{8} \frac{2}{8} \frac{4}{8} \frac{2}{8}$ section, the melody shows an approximation of rhythmic repetition. The six-measure melody is further strengthened by its reliance on only a few intervals and by its strong adherence to a tonal centre, that of D. The structure of the melody is freed, however, by the fact that its second part grows out of the first part intervallically, but is rhythmically quite different from it. Thus the melody is allowed to develop, but is still contained within a fairly rigid rhythmic accompaniment.

The chord shared between viola and 'cello is of special importance in accompanying textures. It can be regarded as a perfect fifth interval with an added second, but Sculthorpe invariably uses it in its second inversion, that is, with the fifth as the lowest tone.²⁰ Although the chord is consonant and quite austere, it has a degree of harmonic resonance which makes it less bare than a single tone, as in the case of the violin cadenza of *Irkanda IV*, or a fifth interval, as in the case of the *Sonata*.²¹ Chords of this kind are extremely functional in Sculthorpe's harmonic idiom as they provide a consonant alternative to triad-based chords. Consequently they may be used as static accompaniments, or act as resolutions to dissonant chords.

Having completed *String Quartet No. 6* Sculthorpe experienced

²⁰The naming of inversions is based on the tone of the chord representing the tonal centre of the passage.

²¹See Ex.22.

difficulty in continuing to write music with the same expressive character.²² He found in trying to "recapture the formula" of the *Irkanda* period that he was repeating himself, ironically falling back on gestures produced by the stylistic limitations he himself had placed on his own work. This problem is not an uncommon one for twentieth century composers. Stravinsky, for example, went through several radical stylistic changes in his career, but it is perhaps Messiaen who provides us with a comparable situation to Sculthorpe's. His melodic and harmonic style until 1950 relied, to a large extent, on a highly systematic use of the modes of limited transposition. In order to break away from the restriction of this tonal language, Messiaen first experimented briefly with serial principles, but afterwards found that there were better possibilities of developing a very flexible language from both birdsong transcriptions and a freer approach to his largely formulaic system. Messiaen's characteristic use of his modes is comparable to Sculthorpe's personal style in that ultimately both can only be employed in a limited number of distinctive ways; and Sculthorpe's solution is not unlike Messiaen's in that both began to place less emphasis on those detail-determining aspects of composition such as the intervallic qualities in melody and harmony, but both clung to their rhythmic and structural procedures.

For *Sun Music I* (1965), the first piece to be a radical departure from the personal style, Sculthorpe chose musical material which in no obvious way can be related to anything he had written before; but his rhythmic organisation of it on a small scale, and its properties on an overall structural level are very much in keeping with the principles underlying the construction of *Irkanda IV*. The composer's decision to move away from a style which had taken so long to bring to maturity was not at all as surprising as it seems. The *Sun Music* series and related works

²² Peter Sculthorpe, "Sculthorpe on Sculthorpe," *Music Now*, I, 1, 11.

which follow in the period from 1965 to 1970 all contain stylistic elements which are unmistakably derived from the pre-1965 period. These elements, although never given great prominence in any work, do, nonetheless, demonstrate a continuity of stylistic development.

The following two chapters which discuss the *Sun Music* series and related works are, as a result of great similarities among the pieces involved, of a broader analytical survey than the previous two chapters. The first is concerned with a description of Sculthorpe's new musical material and how this may be related to his already established personal style, while the second shows how this material is organised in the various works of the period.

CHAPTER 4

NEW MATERIAL AND INFLUENCES

The source of the inspiration behind the title, *Sun Music*, was discussed in some detail in the introductory chapter of this thesis. Fundamentally the idea of the power of the Australian sun became symbolic for Sculthorpe of the distinction between the respective intrinsic qualities of Australia and Europe. The new musical language of *Sun Music* was devised, therefore, not only as an attempt by the composer to extricate himself from what he imagined to be a stylistic *cul de sac* but also as an attempt to remove his music still further from such European notions as "motive", "development of the motive", and to a large extent, from harmonic progression. As Sculthorpe's musical language had been influenced by the sound and emotional associations of composers like Mahler and Bloch he now attempted to sever any such connections by the use of musical material which had no relation to these composers. The choice of this material was designed to purge the music of melody and tonal relationships as much as possible, to eliminate the fulsomeness of its harmonic textures and to create a more impersonal language, but at the same time a language which was capable of evoking emotional associations which were different from those recognisable as being especially European.

Sun Music I seems to represent a search for a more objective response to Australia, an impressionistic response to the unpeopled, timeless landscape. Although Sculthorpe borrowed some ideas literally but quite superficially from Krzysztof Penderecki, a comparison of *Sun Music I* with the latter's *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* (1961) serves to delineate the special Australian quality of the music. Penderecki's

work, for all its emphasis on new orchestral sonorities and the fact that the expressive language of harmony is forsaken, is an anguished cry for the victims of one of mankind's most frightening atrocities. By contrast, *Sun Music I* has a spaciousness and calmness perhaps brought about by the composer's efforts to evoke the loneliness and the desolation of the Australian landscape. Unlike the *Threnody* it does not seem in any way to be associated with people and the wretchedness of people. If it is a personal statement, and not merely an attempt to translate the visual into sound, then it is probably concerned more with the composer establishing a personal cosmology based on the life-giving power of the sun.

Sculthorpe's employment of new musical materials seems, from a compositional point of view, to be less significant than his actual organisation of these materials. On a basic level the organisation follows the pattern of the pre-*Sun Music* works in its preoccupation with simplicity and its reliance upon repetition. The musical material Sculthorpe now came to use was mostly of the simplest nature: perhaps a tone-cluster or an unconventional instrumental sound, each of which, in essence, has no developmental tendency. By contrast, an harmonic progression or a motive derive their significance from their linear relationships. The composer's organisation of his unadorned materials consists merely of repeating them in simple but varied rhythmic textures. Thus each section of a work is basically constructed from one musical idea. This is not to suggest that Sculthorpe's music of this period is simple-minded. The composer manages to achieve an undercurrent of structural subtlety while maintaining on the surface a direct and straight-forward musical statement. The structural procedures of *Sun Music I* and other works of the period will accordingly be discussed in Chapter 5.

The *Sun Music* period is dominated by works for full orchestra.¹ Sun

¹This period also coincides with a period when the Australian Broadcasting Commission, on the recommendation of the then Director of Federal Music, John Hopkins, pursued a policy of commissioning short orchestral pieces rather than works of any other kind.

Music I (1965), *Sun Music II* (1969), *Sun Music III* (1967), *Sun Music IV* (1967), *Music for Japan* (1970) and *Rain* (1970), all for orchestra, form the bulk of the music not only in terms of their combined duration but also in compositional merit. *Tabuh Tabuhan*, for wind quintet and percussion (1968) perhaps relies too heavily upon melodies and textures borrowed from Balinese music, while *String Quartet No. 7* (1966) is, because of its apparent lack of meticulousness, a decidedly inferior earlier version of *Sun Music IV*. *Dream* (1970) and *Landscape* (1971) though potentially quite effective, are improvisatory pieces based only on the broad structural principles of the other works of the period. The *Sun Music Ballet* is an amalgam of *Sun Music I*, *Sun Music II*, *Sun Music III*, *Sun Music IV* and a vocal work, *Sun Music for Voices and Percussion* (1966), which itself was composed in a hurried fashion. The only outstanding non-orchestral works of the period are *String Quartet No. 8* (1969) and *Night Pieces* for piano (1970-71).

Like the pre-*Sun Music* works in which there is a tendency towards a contrast of slow, introspective, harmonic passages and quick, ritualistic, rhythmic passages, there is shared between all the works listed above² a number of contrasting kinds of music. Although no two works contain exactly the same kinds of musical material, each work may have a number of kinds in common. There are, for example, clusters of tones in most of the works although each work has its own distinctive rhythmic realisations of the cluster. In order to make a study of the individual pieces less problematic it is useful to discuss firstly the various kinds of musical material so that, in the structural analyses, the fundamental terms will need little explanation.

Rhythm

Without doubt Sculthorpe's main preoccupation in these works is not

²*Night Pieces* does not fit into this category.

with the orchestral textures themselves but with rhythm and rhythmic organisation. The effect of each new texture is largely dependent on the way in which it is rhythmically presented. The composer's most distinctive use of rhythm may be seen as a renewed interest in the quick ritualistic music of works like the *Sonatina* and *String Quartet No. 6*. Despite certain passages of a slower kind in *Sun Music I* (m.87-92), *Sun Music for Voices and Percussion* (m.47-70) and *Sun Music IV* (m.47-66) the composer was not fully awakened to the potential of this ritual approach to music until 1968 when he developed an interest in the Balinese *ketjak*, a trance-like ritual in which a large group of men imitate the dances and sounds of monkeys in acting out a story from the *Ramayana*. Sculthorpe grafted a vocal version of the most rhythmically exciting aspects of the *ketjak* on to a succession of his repeated rhythmic structural units and included it in the *Sun Music Ballet*, but this version was transformed and developed into quite original music for amplified percussion in *Sun Music II* (1969):

Ex.41 (m.27-30)

Timp. *f*

Perc. 1 *f* Bongos (low)

Perc. 2 *f* Bongos (low)

Perc. 3 *f* Timbales

Those parts of *Sun Music II* which were not derived from the *ketjak* continue in the spirit of the ritual and are, in fact, much more aggressive than anything suggested by the *ketjak*. In *Sun Music II* Sculthorpe thus initiated a kind of music which he then proceeded to develop in perhaps his best chamber piece, *String Quartet No. 8* (1969) and his most assured orchestral work *Music for Japan* (1970); but undoubtedly it finds its fullest musical, and indeed theatrical, expression in *Rites of Passage* (1972-73).

The significance of this ritual music in Sculthorpe's work is that it is one of his few stylistic entities which can be extended over large periods of time without a necessity for a strong generating force. The essence of the style is that a particular rhythmic counterpoint is established and repeated at length. The basic feel remains unchanged although it may be added to or subtracted from, these procedures being the only developmental techniques that can be employed without destroying the feel and thus the trance-like quality of the music. Sculthorpe's techniques for varying the texture, while maintaining the basic feel, fall into two categories. The first is simply a matter of adding new contrapuntal voices to a fundamental rhythmic idea. Thus, in *Music for Japan*, a simple rhythmic idea undergoes the following variations:

Ex. 42 Feroce $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 60$

(11, m. 1-4)

Perc. 1 Claves
Perc. 2 Bongos
cresc. - - - - - mp

Ex. 43

(12, m. 1-4)

Perc. 1 Claves
Perc. 2 Bongos
Perc. 3 Timbales
B.D. (pedal)

Ex. 44

(13, m. 1-4)

Timp.
Perc. 1 Cymbal
Perc. 2
Perc. 3

Further variation occurs with the addition to the texture of rhythmic patterns scored for other instruments of the orchestra. This same technique is employed in Movement II of *String Quartet No. 8* and to a lesser extent in *Sun Music II*.

The second method has its first appearance in Movement IV of the same quartet but becomes extremely important in *Death*, the ninth movement of *Rites of Passage*. This is the technique of creating a feel through the counterpoint of several rhythmic patterns each of a different number of measures, the longest of which is the most stabilising factor of the feel, while the rhythmic character of the shorter patterns varies slightly as the music progresses. The numbers of measures of each pattern have a low common multiple so that if each pattern is given the prescribed number of repetitions, the first measures of all the patterns coincide again. Thus, although the resulting texture is fairly consistent from measure to measure, it is in a state of continual flux. The process is an extremely engaging one as the listener is ~~continually~~ ^{continually} focusing on sections of each voice in relation to different sections of the other voices. The following excerpts from *String Quartet No. 8* illustrate this principle:

Ex. 45 (m. 21-25)

Violin 1 (Vn. 1): *col legno*, *p*, *f*, *pizz.*, *mp*

Violin 2 (Vn. 2): *col legno*, *mp*, *arco*, *liberamente*, *mp*

Viola (Vla.): *col legno*, *mp*, *pizz.*, *col legno*, *mp*

Violoncello (Vc.): *col legno*, *mp*, *pizz.*, *col legno*, *mp*

Ex.46

(m. 33-37)

Ex. 46 shows a five-measure section of the violin 1 part (Vn.1) repeated. The violin 2 part (Vn.2) and the combined viola (Vla.) and cello (Vc.) parts provide accompaniment. The Vn.2 part includes markings for *col legno* and *pizz.*. The Vla. part includes markings for *col legno* and *pizz.*. The Vc. part includes markings for *col legno* and *pizz.*. Dynamics include *ff*, *f*, *mf*, and *mp*.

Ex.47

(m. 45-49)

Ex. 47 shows a five-measure section of the violin 1 part (Vn.1) repeated. The violin 2 part (Vn.2) and the combined viola (Vla.) and cello (Vc.) parts provide accompaniment. The Vn.2 part includes markings for *arco* and *liberamente*. The Vla. part includes markings for *pizz.*. The Vc. part includes markings for *pizz.*. Dynamics include *mp*, *pp*, and *mf*.

The five-measure section of the violin 1 part, which is twelve measures in total length before it is repeated, is accompanied in the three examples by different sections of the violin 2 and of the combined viola and 'cello parts, which are respectively twenty and thirty measures in length. The passage, beginning at measure 5, consists of sixty measures, sixty (60) being the lowest common multiple of twelve (12), twenty (20) and thirty (30).

The Asian Influence

The appearance of rhythmic ideas from the *Ketjak* and of rice-pounding was natural since both Balinese genres have the ritual quality which the composer was cultivating, and neither clashed with the intervallic and harmonic qualities of his earlier music. This is not the case with the Balinese melodies and accompanying figurations which Sculthorpe introduced into his music beginning with *Sun Music III*. These, with their simple

anhemitonic pentatonic scales stand in direct contrast to the strongly hemitonic nature of his use of intervals in melody.

Sculthorpe had been interested in Asian music from the time of his formulation of a non-European aesthetic for his music. It seemed to him that, if the Australian composer were to draw his inspiration from any source outside his country, that it should be from Asia and the Pacific rather than Europe. Since much of the music of Asia is concerned with nature, Sculthorpe thought it more appropriate to what an Australian music should be. As a listener Sculthorpe had, from about 1960, been excited by Japanese *gagaku* and the music of the Tibetan Buddhist monks, but he could not incorporate these into his music in any way because of their tonal and structural properties.

The discovery of Colin McPhee's lengthy study of Balinese music³ soon after its publication was a revelation to Sculthorpe, for here was a music which fitted exactly into his four and eight-measure structural units, and which was based upon exact repetition in both its micro- and macro- structures. There are, it can be seen, numerous other similarities. Sculthorpe's distinctive use of percussion for accompanying punctuation is similar in concept to the so-called "colotomic" structure of genres like *gamelan gong* in which the group of instruments with melodic and decorating function are accompanied by a punctuating pattern of a few large and small gongs.⁴ In Sculthorpe's music, as in Balinese music, the lowest pitched punctuating instruments sound less frequently than the higher ones. Many genres of Balinese music have the same interest in the division of 4-time measures into eight notes which are grouped in different combinations of twos and threes. There is also a common preoccupation with ostinato techniques.

It was obvious to Sculthorpe that if he were to use Asian elements in

³ *Music in Bali* (Yale, 1966).

⁴ *Ibid*, pp.84-88.

his music then they had to be drawn from Bali. It is arguable that the problem of the disparity between the intervallic design of the two kinds of melody is not really a serious one since, in a style like Sculthorpe's where contrast is an important factor there seems to be no reason why a music which has many similarities could not be incorporated. Whereas Sculthorpe's melodic style is founded on the minor second and minor third it can be shown that he limits his use of Balinese melody to a basic motion of major seconds and minor thirds.

The composer's initial inclination on reading *Music in Bali* was to write a series of educational pieces for small groups of wind instruments based on the music of the *gender wayang* ensemble, a quartet of ten-keyed *gender*. The choice of this particular Balinese genre may have been influenced by the fact that its forces are limited and homogeneous, but another probable reason was that McPhee had provided comprehensive musical excerpts from the long opening music, *Pemungkah*, as well as several other musical interludes.⁵ Also, the style of phrasing in the piece was considered by Sculthorpe to be ideally suited to wind instrument technique. The educational project was not realised, but Sculthorpe thought that since he had not included ~~string~~^{woodwind} in the orchestra for *Sun Music I*, he would take the opportunity to include *gamelan*-like passages in *Sun Music III* which he scored for full orchestra.

At first glance it appears as if the composer has merely selected musical examples from McPhee's *gender wayang* chapter, orchestrated them, and pieced them together to create a satisfactory shape for a section of the composition; but he reworks them in unnoticeable ways to suit his own compositional ends. He also quite often composes new but comparable material and sometimes uses what he calls a "ransacking approach", taking a phrase from here, a phrase from there, to build up one of his structural units:

⁵ Ibid, pp.205-232.

Ex. 48

(McPhee, Ex. 221)



Ex. 49

(McPhee, Ex. 181)



Ex. 50

(m. 11-14)



The above passage from *Sun Music III* is constructed from a phrase from Ex. 221, an adaptation of an idea from Ex. 181 and a composed phrase.⁶ All these are woven into an A B A₁ C melodic pattern.

The *gamelan*-influenced passages are not, however, merely constructed of borrowings from, and composition in the style of Balinese music. As well, the orchestration always involves percussive punctuation and other punctuating or variational additions such as upward *glissandi* from high string clusters, low-string *pizzicati* and percussion rolls (*Sun Music III*⁷); free *glissandi* on the upper keys of the vibraphone (*Tabuh Tabuhan*⁸); and long-held string chords (*Rain*⁹). In this way the *gamelan* sections are more thoroughly integrated into Sculthorpe's style.

As far as the musics of other Asian cultures are concerned, Sculthorpe is resigned ^{to the likelihood} that he may not ever be able to use them in as direct a way. Rather, to borrow Schoenberg's valuable distinction, the ideas of these musics may perhaps be used, if not the styles. At the beginning of *Music for Japan*, for example, the orchestral texture which the composer wanted as a sound-equivalent of the mysterious currents of the ocean depths, is based on the idea of Tibetan Buddhist chant. Tibetan chant is sung simultaneously

⁶ McPhee, p. 230 and p. 205.

⁷ m. 23-60.

⁸ m. 53-60.

⁹ Section III, m. 3-8.

by the priests but each takes it in his own time and at his own favoured pitch. Thus there is no vertical synchronisation, and the effect is of a wavering, low vocal tone-cluster. In *Music for Japan* each performer has a series of tones to play which he does in his own time, repeating the series until the conductor gives a signal for the section to end. Even though this music is based upon the same idea as the chant one would hardly connect the two from an aural point of view.

In many ways this indirect method produces more reliable and significant results for, although the direct use of Asian materials in *Sun Music III* and *Tabuh Tabuhan* can be defended, the history of such borrowings reveals a trend towards superficiality which is reinforced by its association with some aspects of the *chinoiserie* of the West. Sculthorpe has said that Asian music has been important for his morale in his resistance of Western traditional influences; certainly it seems to have supplied an effective antidote to the encroaching influence of twentieth century European music. More significantly perhaps, it has helped create an equilibrium in his approach which does not prevent the music from being a legitimate Western statement. Sculthorpe's approach can be seen, for instance, as following part of Karl Jaspers' view of world history:

What we lack and what vitally concerns us is to be found in Asia! Questions come to us from over there that lie deep in our own minds. For what we have produced, accomplished and become we have paid a price. We are by no means on the road to the self-perfection of man. Asia is an indispensable need for our completion. Even though we understand things from our own vantage point, by recognising what we ourselves are, we may still be able to recognise that which is so deeply buried and concealed within us that it would never have risen into consciousness if we did not see it reflected in this world which is at first so strange to us. We should understand by expanding ourselves within it, while that which lies dormant within us blossoms out.¹⁰

It may be that the conflict of the West and the East in Peter Sculthorpe's music springs just as much from these subconscious forces as from his rationalised feelings about Australia, the Pacific and Asia.

¹⁰ *The Origin and Goal of History* (London, 1953), p.69

Orchestral Coloration, New Instrumental and Vocal Techniques

Paralleling the Polish impressionist school and to some extent drawing from its vocabulary and notation, Sculthorpe's use of orchestral coloration of a simple but evocative kind represents a more striking departure from his earlier musical language. Material of this kind, whether it be a texture created by a number of instruments or voices, or an effect created by a single instrument or voice, takes its shape and function from one of three organisational notions. The first is the act of sustaining: the sound of the music is continuous and unchanging. The second is the technique of allowing each performer to repeat a given pattern rhythmically independently from the other performers: the sound is continuous but subject to much activity and flux. The third is a short independent sound whether it is used to punctuate or is incorporated into a passage where it is part of a rhythmic counterpoint of instruments or voices.

Most of the sounds employed in this music fit, by their nature, into only one or two of the three methods of organisation. Wide continuous *glissandi* for example can only be used in the second category, while short quick *glissandi* in one direction fit the third as well as the second categories. One musical idea which fits all three categories is the cluster, hence one of the reasons it has an important place in the music of this period. A cluster is simply a number of adjacent tones sounding simultaneously. Sculthorpe employs semitonal clusters of three, four, five, or more tones in various parts of instrumental registers and with different instrumental combinations. The theoretical implication of clusters is that, although they are chords in the sense that they consist of three or more tones sounding together they do not exhibit the traditional properties of chords, nor do they sound like chords. The consistent proximity of their constituent tones precludes the relevance of harmonic relationships. To the listener a cluster appears to be a singular sound event, not a complex interrelationship of tones. The significance, then,

of the cluster in Sculthorpe's musical aesthetic is that, although it can provide him with an acoustically rich continuous sound, it exists without a need for resolution. Whereas widely-spaced complex chords tend to sound dissonant, the effect of a cluster is mostly quite neutral. Thus, like the ritualistic rhythmic music and the harmonically-static *gamelan* passages, the cluster has an existence which is self-sufficient and non-developmental. This is not to say that Sculthorpe does not ever resolve his clusters. It will be shown that in *Music for Japan*, in an obvious way, and in *Sun Music III*, in a very subtle way, clusters are resolved. The essential point is that there is no need to resolve them.

More than any other phenomenon in Sculthorpe's music, the cluster is imbued with a wide range of evocative potential. It, above all appears to be responsible for the many and different critical responses to the works of the period, of associations with charred desert, desolation and the power and the light of the sun. Despite the arbitrariness of these responses, it was the composer's intention, in writing impressionistic music, that visual associations, no matter how personal and varied, should occur to the listener.

As with all the different materials of this music, the various kinds of clusters will be discussed in relation to their organisation in particular works, but one form may be mentioned here. This is obtained by using symbols \uparrow or \downarrow meaning, respectively, any very high tone or any very low tone. When a group of instrumentalists performs either of these, the resulting sound is either a very high or a very low cluster.

Most of the new orchestral sonorities result from instrumental techniques which are additions to the traditional catalogue of playing styles. Some techniques of long-standing like *tremolo*, *sul tasto*, *sul ponticello* and flutter-tonguing are certainly given a renewed prominence, but most are a product of the contemporary awareness of the wide range of sounds of which instruments are capable. Appendix I is included to provide a list of such

techniques as well as their notational representation, where appropriate.

Melody and Harmony

Melody and harmony of the kind Sculthorpe developed in his earlier work have an importance in the music of this period but their use is limited to very few forms and ideas. By far the most interesting appearance is also the most stylistically predictable. Clearly derived from the main musical material of Movement III of *String Quartet No. 6* this kind of passage first re-appears in *Sun Music III* and is heavily relied upon in *Tabuh Tabuhan* and *String Quartet No. 8*:

Ex. 51 (Sun Music III, m. 76-80)

$\text{♩} = c.40$

Vn. 1&2 *pp*

Oboe *mp espress.* *con sord.*

Viola *p*

Horns *p* *Cello, pizz.* *D.B. pizz. div.*

Ex. 52 (String Quartet No. 8, m. 83-87)

$\text{♩} = 46$

Vn. 2 *p dolce* *con sord.* *cresc.* *mp* *dim.*

Vla. *pp*

Vc. *p* *con sord.* *p* *mp*

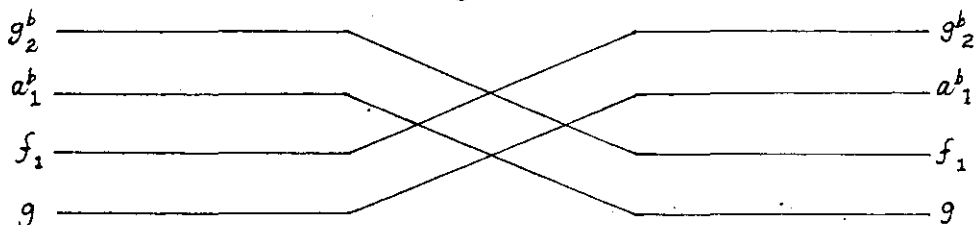
Although these examples are clearly derived from *String Quartet No. 6*¹¹ Sculthorpe also parallels them with *arja*, a Balinese popular song form, because of the consistent rhythmic basis of the accompaniments and the

¹¹See Ex. 40.

rhythmic freedom of melody.¹² The melodies of these sections may be free, in that they do not demonstrate the strict A B A B₁ form found in much of the earlier music, but they certainly adhere strongly to the stylistic principles of melody and accompaniment which were described in Chapter 2 in relation to the *Sonata* for violin.

The static aspect of the harmony in this music is not uncommon in certain other passages in the *Sun Music* series and related works. Scattered throughout these pieces are passages which contain one characteristic chord that is repeated or varied in some way, as a means of prolongation. Sometimes a particular chord is added to, or changed slightly, but there is never any real sense of harmonic progression within a section. Two techniques for the variation of a single chord deserve special mention. The first, which involves a variational procedure based on *glissando*, is best represented in *Sun Music IV*:¹³

Diagram 2



Although the idea of this is simply a set of four tones which individually move to other tones of the same chord (g^b_2 to f_1 , a^b_1 to g , f_1 to g^b_2 and g to a^b_1), the effect is a strikingly original orchestral sonority.¹⁴

The composer conceptualised this musical idea from a period of involvement in Mexican Pre-Columban culture. Much Toltec architecture is based upon

¹² McPhee, pp.294-303, especially Ex.290, pp.301-302. The parallel does not go much further than this for the *arja* accompaniment is non-chordal and the melody lacks a strong tonal connection with the accompaniment. The tempo of *arja* is also more than twice that of these passages.

¹³ The section first appears in *String Quartet No. 7*.

¹⁴ A diagram is used in preference to a musical example since it represents the technique more clearly.

the platform-slope-platform shape which is used in this passage, so that a visual phenomenon is translated into sound. As early as *Sun Music I* glissandi were used between fixed tones and the idea also appears as part of an harmonic accompaniment in *Sun Music III*.¹⁵

The second notable example of the creation of a texture from the treatment of a single harmonic idea also appears in its simplest and most impressive form in *Sun Music IV*:

Ex. 53
 Con precisione (♩ = c. 168) (m. 47-50)

The musical score for Ex. 53 shows four staves: Flute 1 & 2, Oboe 1 & 2, Clarinet 1 & 2, and Bassoon 1 & 2. The tempo is 'Con precisione' with a quarter note equal to approximately 168 beats per minute. The music is in 2/4 time and features a complex texture of horizontal lines. The flute part has a glissando in measures 48-50. The woodwind parts are in canon. Dynamics include ppp and pppp.

Here the constituent tones of a chordal idea are dissected, and distributed horizontally, making a texture, the rhythmic counterpoint of which is particularly engaging. The clarinet parts, for example, are in canon with the bassoon parts.

Most of the unpredictable uses of melody and harmony in this period occur in *Sun Music I*, but this is not surprising since the composer was trying to make a strong break with his previous musical style. Thus, the very opening of *Sun Music I* involves a melody principally based upon the minor seventh, an interval which hitherto had been studiously avoided. An unexpected element of *Sun Music I* is the section at measure 63 which is an adaptation of a serial piece entitled *Haiku* for piano which Sculthorpe had written for pedagogical reasons.¹⁶ His intentions in including this

¹⁵ *Sun Music I*, m.53-62; *Sun Music III*, m.89-92. The glissandi of *Sun Music I* were suggested by Penderecki's *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima*.

¹⁶ This will be fully discussed in Chapter 6 because *Haiku* was further adapted and extended for the composition of *Night*, a piano piece which in many ways motivated the writing of *Snow, Moon and Flowers* and *Stars*.

passage were probably related to his need for contrast. Since the piece is concerned with the harsh but life-giving power of the sun, the composer thought it natural that a section be included which represents night, the absence of the sun.

Other Serial Uses

Although this is the only example of conventional twelve-tone usage, the composer quite often employs a row to organise the whole or a part of an orchestral sonority for which he does not want any feeling of tonality emerging. Sometimes, for example in *Rain*, a series is split between two groups of instruments which repeat their six-tone pattern in a rhythmically free manner:

Ex. 54 (section 11b)

In *Music for Japan*, the opening section, discussed earlier in this chapter, is organised entirely from a twelve-tone row. In a broader way the idea of this row {G, A^b, F[#], A^b, F[#], B^b, E, B^b, E^b, C, D, C[#]} seems to be employed as a determinant for the expanding cluster section in the same work:¹⁷

Ex. 55

lento (♩ = c. 48)

¹⁷This row is taken from Luigi Nono's *Canto Sospeso*.

Thus the row may be considered as a structurally binding force in the work, even though it is used to shape radically different musical styles.

Birdsong

Imitations of birdsong in Sculthorpe's music are only used occasionally and could be quite easily accounted for under the sub-headings of "Melody" or "New Instrumental Techniques". Birdsong is mentioned here more for its aesthetic implications than for its prominence in the music. Apart from the Australian accent, the languages and musics of the aboriginals and the cries of birds and insects, Australia has few sounds which she can claim as her very own. Certainly Sculthorpe has not made so grand a gesture to the ornithological world as Messiaen, but birdsong is a significant element in his music. He introduced birdsong in *Irkanda I* (1955) before he had heard any of Messiaen's music.¹⁸ At the time it was probably a justification for including free elements in a style, the smaller structural units of which were strictly organised. The idea was abandoned until the works of the *Sun Music* period in which the different patterns of high clusters represent bird-calls: attempts, by Sculthorpe's account, to populate the lonely landscape. Birdsong finds a fuller expression in the unmetred movements of *Tabuh Tabuhan* and *String Quartet No. 8*, where it is an amalgam of the *Irkanda I* and *Sun Music* examples:

Ex. 56 $\text{♩} = 96$ (Irkanda I, m. 25-26)

† = 1/4 tone flat

¹⁸ Sculthorpe was also unaware of Henry Tate's *Australian Musical Possibilities* (Melbourne, 1924) which had advocated the use of bird-calls.

Ex. 57

(Tabuh Tabuhan, IV; p. 3, div. 3-6)

Fl.

Ob.

mf

quasi 3-

Ex. 58

Dolcissimo

(String Quartet No. 8; p. 2)

Vn. I

Vn. 2

Vla.

Vc.

pp

pp

pp

pp

mf

mp

p

f

mp

p

pp

pp

cresc.

mf

dim.

ppp

dim.

pp

cresc.

mf

dim.

ppp

liberamente

liberamente

molto rapidamente

arco

The new musical language, outlined above in five categories, is indeed in strong contrast to the highly personal style of the works which culminated in *Irkanda IV* and *String Quartet No. 6*. Each ingredient of the new style is organized according to rhythmic principles which, if they were not established in the *Irkanda* period, are certainly derived from it. Like the progression of earlier works, the music of the *Sun Music* period gradually begins to show a refinement of structural design and a consolidation of those aspects of the composer's style which he chose to retain. The following chapter discusses each work in relation to these two processes.

CHAPTER 5

STRUCTURAL PROCEDURES OF THE *SUN MUSIC* PERIOD

Many of the materials discussed in the previous chapter are hardly the stylistic property of a composer who uses them. In order to make their use personal Sculthorpe adapted them to his special rhythmic units involving repetition. Of greater compositional significance is his use of an overall structural scheme, developed from the variational techniques of *Irkanda IV*, as described in Chapter 3. The nature of the materials in the post-1965 works, however, necessitate a different approach to structural organisation since no longer is there a prominence of passages consisting of a melody with harmonic accompaniment. Thus, where it was possible to vary the accompaniment while keeping the melody constant, or make the melody more complex using the same accompaniment, it came to be no longer so. Similarly, it became no longer possible to change the timbral qualities of a section by using techniques such as *tremolando* and *sul ponticello*, since much of the new material for these works is distinctive only because of its particular textural or timbral character.

Despite these differing circumstances Sculthorpe still re-introduces sections with some variation from their initial appearances; but it is variation by the addition of other material rather than rewriting or rearranging the existing material. He quite often does this with two major sections of a work. After the separate statements of two distinctively different sections there will be a further section in which both are heard simultaneously, perhaps with some kind of variation in one of them. In *Sun Music I*, for example, the string cluster (m.19) returns (m.109) and is accompanied by free continuous *glissandi* of brass harmonics. Although it is the only instance of this kind of brass *glissandi* in the work, there is

a single earlier passage involving *glissandi* of high string harmonics (m. 79-86).

Sun Music I

In the *Sun Music* series there is a much subtler structural process than variation or the combination of two previously-used passages into one single section. In *Sun Music I*, for example, the melody and the chord found in the first six measures can be shown to infiltrate the remainder of the work, often in rather unnoticeable ways. The motive of two falling minor sevenths which was by Sculthorpe's admission a conscious attempt to change the intervallic patterns of his style also outlines two tritone intervals separated by a major third:

Ex. 59 $\text{♩} = 60$ (m. 3-5)

Tpt. 1

Tmb. 1, 2, 3

The chord of measure 5 introduces the minor ninth interval as well as reinforcing the importance of the tritone. Except for the reappearance of the melody in a serialised section (m. 63-78) the passage most closely derived from the opening is nonetheless not easily associated with the sound of the opening because of the evocative web of *glissandi*:

Ex. 60 $\text{♩} = 60$

Vn. 2

Vla.

Vc.

(m. 27-36)

The musical score consists of three staves: Vn. 2 (Violin 2), Vla. (Viola), and Vc. (Cello). The Vn. 2 staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The Vla. and Vc. staves have a bass clef and the same key signature. The Vn. 2 staff begins with a melodic line in measure 27, marked with a dynamic of *mp*. The Vla. and Vc. staves provide harmonic support, with the Vc. staff showing a descending line. The score is for measures 27-36.

Here the melodic and harmonic intervals outlined by the opening six measures are formed between the stationary points of the texture. In almost all other parts of the work where intervals or chords are used there is a similar relationship. Even the serial section has a marked use of tritones and minor ninths in chords or for melodic intervals; and, as well, there is a four-measure restatement of the falling minor sevenths of the opening melody. The section of the work which most resembles the ritualistic rhythmic style (m.87-92) represents another instance. Taking the form of a quadruple rhythmic canon, it consists mainly of unconventional string techniques such as knocking on the resonant part of the instrument, tapping the strings between the bridge and the tailpiece, quick upward *glissandi*, and high tone-clusters. Those conventional techniques which are employed involve only the intervals of the tritone and the minor ninth (as well as the related minor second).

Thus one structural element in the work is almost exclusively based upon the kernel of the opening six measures, although there is hardly any suggestion for the listener of a germinating process. Another structural element, that of the cluster, may be traced through the piece as a progression of textural variations, the differences among them being fundamentally one of size, position in the tonal range and rhythmic treatment. There are nine sections in *Sun Music I* based on the cluster.¹ Two sections involve a cluster of five semitones performed by brass (m.7-16 and m.103-108)

¹

These are m.7-16, m.19-25, m.45-48, m.79-87, m.103-108, m.109-120, m.121-132 and m.147-152. The writer has, in the case of *Sun Music I*

while the remainder, with the exception of the passage where the high tone-cluster is one of the components, have clusters of more than an octave span. Both of the two principal clusters (m.45-48 and m.103-108) are introduced, by being divided into groups of smaller clusters which are then combined through a series of successive independent entries:

Ex. 61 $\text{♩} = 60$ *molto accel.* (m. 19-22)

Vn. 1 $n(vn)$ $a8, \text{ord. } ff$ $n(vn)$

Vn. 2 $n(vn)$ $a7, \text{ord. } ff$ $n(vn)$

Vla. $n(vn)$ $a5$ $n(vn)$

Vc. $a5$ $n(vn)$ $n(vn)$

Db. $a4 ff$ $n(vn)$

chosen to consider the technique of free continuous *glissandi* of harmonics by a group of players as a fluctuating cluster since, of the two cases, one (m.125-132) is an integral part of another cluster and the other (m.79-87), though basically appearing by itself, does not have much structural viability if it is not interpreted as a cluster. The measure numbers given in this note and in the text refer to the revised score of 1977.

Ex. 62 (♩ = 60) m. 109-112

Vn. 1
Vn. 2
Vla.
Vc.
D.B.

The second of these textures is derived from the rhythmic idea of the first although the effect of each is quite unique. When the first cluster returns twice near the end of the work the progressive entries are completely dispensed with; the rhythmic definition is now unnecessary for instant recognition of the coloration.

Sun Music for Voices and Percussion

Sun Music for Voices and Percussion (1966) is an attempt principally to explore new musical resources of the voice and, to a very limited extent, of the piano. Although it is strongly based on the composer's rhythmic structural unit, the very nature of the musical material, and the concept of the relationship between the choir, the percussion and the piano limits its capacity to be a direct successor to *Sun Music I*.

The essence of the difference is that *Sun Music for Voices and Percussion* is concerned with sound of no specified pitch, although a distinction between higher and lower pitch areas is made in each of the three constituent groups. A sound performed by voices of different tessitura at their comfortable mean pitch will be correspondingly differentiated. With percussion, the distinction between high and low pitch areas is brought about by the nature of the instruments employed, and with the piano strings, Sculthorpe makes the distinction clear by dividing the compass into four broad areas of pitch: high, medium-high, medium-low and low. In spite of the occurrence of broad distinctions of pitch-difference *Sun Music for Voices and Percussion* is Sculthorpe's only through-written work which does not involve specific pitches; and, thus melody, harmony and tonal centering are totally precluded. In so composing a piece Sculthorpe deprived himself of an important aspect of stylistic identification and, indeed, of a strong device for contrast between sections. The composer further complicates this last problem by limiting the musical vocabulary in each group. The material for the piano, for instance, consists only of continuous *glissandi* on strings, wire-brush clusters and short *glissandi* from various parts of the compass.

Sun Music for Voices and Percussion is also a unique piece for this period because the three forces, the choir, the percussion and the piano, have, almost at all times, an equal importance in defining the musical substance of any section. Whereas, with the orchestral pieces, there is a tendency for some sections of the orchestra to be subservient to what is happening in a particular section, there is, here, a reliance on a combination of the three sections for the creation of distinctive textures.

Considering these characteristics, the structural concept underlying the work is different from that of *Sun Music I*. The limited range of the musical material means that the music can be organised in disparate rhythmic and textural ways without losing the sense of unification that

repetition and variation give in the context of music where pitch relationships junction. Even though it does not have the subtle logic of *Sun Music I* it, nonetheless, has no feeling of structural uncertainty. It sounds like Sculthorpe's music principally because its structural units, in their rhythmic organisation, represent the lowest common denominator of his personal style, and there are no elements of the piece which could be necessarily attributed to any other composer's style.

Finally it must be mentioned that *Sun Music for Voices and Percussion* was composed in little more than a day, a period which for Sculthorpe, whose compositional routine usually manifests itself as a painstaking struggle, is remarkably short for a piece of its duration. This is not to say that he conceived the musical material in this space of time. A few days earlier he had in fact written *Night Piece*,² a much shorter and simpler work which employs similar vocal and piano techniques as accompaniment to a setting for soprano voices of a poem by Chris Wallace-Crabbe. The circumstances, then, of its being composed in a short period of time, point to another reason that the structure of *Sun Music for Voices and Percussion* is not as effective as that of *Sun Music I*, which involved months of planning and composing.

Sun Music III

Sculthorpe's first work to include *gamelan*-like textures, *Sun Music III*, was, like *Sun Music I*, conceived and realised over quite a long period of time. Begun in 1966 at Yaddo, an artist's colony in Saratoga Springs, it was not completed until a few months after the composer's return to Australia in 1967. Despite its *gamelan*-like sections which do not relate intervallically to most other sections of the work *Sun Music III* is structured according to the same principle as *Sun Music I*. Five basic

²Published as a *Musical Times* supplement, *MT*, 1481 (1966).

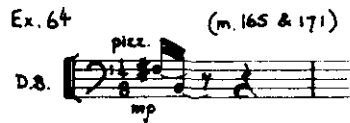
structural elements may be found in the work. The first is a cluster initially appearing at measure 1; the second, a tritone motive, played by timpani (m.5); the third, a semitone interval which appears as an extension of the second, but has its own structural significance; the fourth, the technique of *glissandi*, applied to parts of almost all of the musical material; and the fifth, the *gamelan*-like figurations with their strong reliance upon the minor third and the major second intervals. Unlike *Sun Music I* each of the threads may be followed through a kind of development, and there is a greater degree of intermingling and correlation amongst them. The cluster, for example, initially covers a range of a minor tenth (m.1) and then reappears spread out over an additional octave (m.63) so that there are gaps in the adjacency of the semitones. Next it is compressed into a microtonal high cluster (m.79-88 and m.119-130). Following this, a chord appears which may be interpreted as a very thinned-out cluster since it consists of semitonal intervals separated by larger intervals (m.139). Thus, here it is related to the thread of the semitonal interval. Finally the idea of this chord is transformed into a chord involving the tones used in the *gamelan*-like sections by means of large octave displacements of one tone in each semitonal interval:



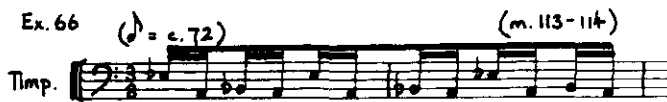
Thus, for the B and F \sharp there is a B \flat and an F, and for the F \sharp and C \sharp , a G and D; but the displacement is so great that the effect is that of a richly-decorated major chord. The progression of clusters, therefore, moves through the piece towards a kind of resolution at the end.

Similarly the other elements form distinctive patterns. The tritone

motive is transposed several times so that a progression of tonal areas is created for it. At the end it is combined with a double bass figure from the last section of the work in order to achieve a resolution:



The tritone motive is also combined with the semitonal interval to form the basis of a quite long passage based on a gamelan-like figuration:



The analysis of *Sun Music III* according to these principles could develop into a study in its own right since there are many important correlations between the various structural elements employed. Extensive analysis of this kind is not within the scope of the present study. The above treatment of *Sun Music III*, then, merely serves as a guideline to Sculthorpe's methods of structural co-ordination.

Sun Music IV

Composed in a relatively short time during the long gestation period of *Sun Music III*, *Sun Music IV* is, in fact, one of those works which is principally based on the material of previously composed works.³ Because

³The material for *Sun Music IV* originally appeared in *Teotichuan (Red Landscape)* which is now entitled *String Quartet No. 7*. Later it was transformed into a work for string orchestra, then called *Sun Music III*. As Sculthorpe did not care for this work he withdrew it and reworked it for *Sun Music IV*. The work which is now known as *Sun Music III* was originally called *Anniversary Music*. Sculthorpe renamed it because it fitted into the idea of "Sun Music" and the title was, as a result of the earlier withdrawal, available. *Sun Music for Voices and Percussion* (1966)

of this it does not display the stylistic and structural simplicity of *Sun Music for Voices and Percussion* but neither is its structural detail as well ordered as that of *Sun Music I* or *Sun Music III*. Nonetheless it has been admired by Roger Covell,⁴ who sees it as a union of the "Sun Music and "Irkanda" styles, and by John Hopkins, the conductor of the first performance, who believes it to be Sculthorpe's most effectively-shaped orchestral work. The composer himself considers it to be the most striking of the series.

Although this work follows the structural procedures of *Sun Music I* and *Sun Music III*, there are a number of elements which are difficult to justify. The opening chord for horns and winds (m.2-3), for example, only appears once. Part of this chord, the three-note horn cluster (m.1-3) does, however, reappear, transposed, for trumpets with flutter-tonguing (m.123-125), but it is arguable that this brief transformed re-statement is not obvious enough to be structurally effective. The importance of the clusters in *Sun Music IV* is, in itself, contentious: unlike *Sun Music I* and *Sun Music III* where clusters and related chordal phenomena have considerable importance, there appear to be tenuous connections among the few clusters which appear in this piece. Indeed the composer draws attention to this lack by the unexpected use of chimes with his two principal cluster sections (m.67-78 and m.99-112): the use of these four semitonal chimes strokes, representing the only use of tuned percussion (excluding timpani) in the work, may be considered structurally eccentric and somewhat contrived.

The appearance of structurally unintegrated material contrasts strongly

was originally called *Sun Music II* and the orchestral work which is now called *Sun Music II* was composed under the title of *Ketjak*. *Ketjak* (1972) is a work for six male voices. In so rearranging the titles Sculthorpe's intention was to make the *Sun Musics I* to *IV* all orchestral works, to relate *Sun Music for Voices and Percussion* to the *Sun Music* style and to restore the *Ketjak* to being a work which imitates the vocal sounds of its Balinese model.

⁴Covell, p.210.

with the more obvious structural elements in the piece. In *Sun Music IV* there is a series of six related chords which occur intermittently, and which have their two lowest tones in common:

Ex. 67

Like the corresponding progression of clusters in *Sun Music III*, but in a more obvious way, these chords form a progression which moves towards a final resolution. Since these chords as well as the rhythmic textures of m.47-66 and m.125-133 are so firmly tied to a "C" tonality, the existence of isolated chords outside this field (for example m.1-3 and m.113-114) seems structurally difficult to justify.

On a broader level, the shape of the work is determined by the occurrence of two relatively long passages, both of which have been discussed in some detail in the previous chapter. These are the chordal *glissandi* section (m.9-18) and the primarily-rhythmic texture (m.47-66). Although their harmonic content is quite similar they are intended as contrasting sections. Both occur at the beginning, and in reverse order near the end so that structurally they are the most important sections of the work.

Tabuh Tabuhan

Tabuh Tabuhan, for wind quintet and percussion (1968) represents significant departures from the single movement structure and the idea of metred music. It is in five movements, the first, third and fifth of which are constructed of *gamelan*-like passages, harmonically accompanied melodies similar to *Sun Music III* (m.77-90), and short chordal sections similar to those of *Sun Music IV*. The second and fourth movements, by contrast, are unmetred and involve new instrumental techniques such as those presented in

Bruno Bartolozzi's *New Sounds for Woodwinds*⁵ as well as fragmented sequences of tones, and birdsong imitations. Structurally, therefore, the work is reminiscent of *String Quartet No. 6* whose slow outer movements contrast with a quick central movement; and it is also a precedent for works such as *String Quartet No. 8* (1969), *Rain* (1970), *Love 200* (1970), *Landscape* (1971), *How the Stars Were Made* (1971) and *Rites of Passage* (1972-73) which all have broadly symmetrical arrangements of contrasting movements, or large sections.⁶ The unmetred, or "spatio-temporal" organisation also plays an important role in later compositions particularly *String Quartet No. 8*, *Music for Japan* and *Rites of Passage*.

Apart from *Rain*, *Tabuh Tabuhan* is Sculthorpe's only work with a great emphasis on the use of borrowed *gamelan* passages. Its success lies in the extent of the stylistic integration of these sections with elements which are an intrinsic part of the composer's personal style.⁷ The integration is founded on the limited textural possibilities of the wind quintet, vibraphone, timpani and untuned percussion combination, but mainly on the extensive use of *ostinato* techniques. That is, both the borrowed *gender wayang* material and the composed melodic material are accompanied by static harmonic figurations which are organised as *ostinati*. The chordal sections,⁸ which rarely display a sense of harmonic progression, naturally tend to relate more closely to the tonality of the composed melodic passages than to the borrowed material, but their principal function

⁵ London, 1967.

⁶ The writer defines the phrase "broadly symmetrical structure" as being a pattern of the form $A_1 B_1 C_1 \dots N_1 N_2 \dots C_2 B_2 A_2$ or $A_1 B_1 C_1 \dots (N-1)_1 N_1 (N-1)_2 \dots C_2 B_2 A_2$ where the repeated letters sometimes involve material which is actually the same or a close variant of that of the first letters, and at other times, material of the same style or structural concept as that of the first letters.

⁷ In *Rain* three of the *gamelan* sections occupy whole movements so that stylistic integration is not so great a problem.

⁸ The short chordal sections are similar to those mentioned under the sub-heading *Sun Music IV*.

is either to articulate the beginnings or ends of longer sections or to act as connecting devices for sections which may be too stylistically dissimilar.

The second and fourth movements of *Tabuh Tabuhan*, though an attempt by Sculthorpe to free himself from the tyranny of the barline are so uncharacteristic of his later spatio-temporal movements and sections, especially in their rhythmic asymmetry, that one could easily argue that they were written by a different composer. Later, in his use of this mode of presentation, Sculthorpe always preserves a strong feeling of balance through his characteristic techniques of repetition, but in *Tabuh Tabuhan* this procedure seems to have been neglected. In the spatio-temporal scheme which is fundamentally a division of the total duration of a movement into three-second units, the attacks tend to be arbitrarily positioned within the units, and no systematic attempt is made to balance the statements of musical phrases even though there is considerable repetition through the use of *ostinati*. This shortcoming is probably caused by the rhythmic acceleration towards a climax of irregular horn *glissandi* but, with other climactic passages in Sculthorpe's music, a feeling for phrasal balance is always maintained.

Although *Tabuh Tabuhan* does not display the structural subtlety possessed by many of the works of this period, it undoubtedly finds a very successful formula in its symmetrical arrangement of movements. This formula, though it governs the structure of peripheral works such as the improvisatory *Landscape* and the stylistic collage of *Love 200* and less effective pieces like *Rain* and *How the Stars Were Made*, is nonetheless responsible for supporting the stylistic integration of *String Quartet No. 8* and for providing Sculthorpe with a satisfactory vehicle for a work of the length of *Rites of Passage*.

Sun Music II

If the manipulation of previously written material was a habit of Sculthorpe's in his "Irkanda" period as a means of finally discarding inferior passages and of moulding the remaining material into effective pieces, then the composition of *Sun Music II* (1969) represents another return to this procedure in order to be able to produce an orchestral piece in a short period of time. The origins of *Sun Music II* lie in two passages of music which were especially composed to give the *Sun Music Ballet* (1968) a rhythmically active contrast to the slow-moving textures of *Sun Music I*, *Sun Music III* and *Sun Music IV*. The first is a vocal piece called *Monkey Dance* which is based on the Balinese ritual dance drama, the *ketjak*. Apart from its function of rhythmic contrast, it was included in the ballet as a vocal companion-piece to *Sun Music for Voices and Percussion*. For *Sun Music II*, where it appears from measure 11 to measure 150, the sounds which were originally intended to imitate the monkey calls of the *ketjak* are scored, according to the pattern of the vocal inflexions, for drums of various pitches, namely high bongos, low bongos, timbales and timpani. Later, when the orchestra enters, the composer introduces indefinitely pitched very low and very high clusters. Thus, no structural level of pitch relationships occurs in this part of the work.

The second passage was originally used as an alternative ending for *Sun Music IV*, Robert Helpmann, the choreographer, feeling that the ballet should end in an explosive way, and not just fade into silence. Its first major section (m.151-162, excluding strings) was, in fact, composed to punctuate the fourteen-measure chordal string *glissandi* section of *Sun Music IV* (m.137-150). The other appearance of this section in the new ending (m.177-190) also included the *Sun Music IV* string passage. For *Sun Music II* Sculthorpe simply took this ballet ending and wrote new string parts to replace the *Sun Music IV* material.

Sun Music II consists, then, of an orchestration of *Monkey Dance* followed by an adaptation of the alternative ending of *Sun Music IV*. The union succeeds because, like the first part, the second is in the ritualistic rhythmic style outlined in Chapter 4. The second part also involves material of no definite pitch. Moreover, the second part seems to continue in the spirit of the first part as the piece moves towards its climactic conclusion. There are, however, other structural levels functioning in *Sun Music II*. The most obvious is the inclusion of a new section as an introduction (m.1-10) so that the work has some sense of return. Furthermore the introduction contains the timpani tritone motive of the second part; and this is also, however momentarily, included in the first part (m.79-86 and m.97-102).⁹ In doing this Sculthorpe was consciously creating a structural element in the piece so that the stylistic gap between the first and second parts might be narrowed.

String Quartet No. 8

If Sculthorpe's work is considered in relation to his objective of creating a style which, as much as possible, is purged of European musical and aesthetic influences, then *String Quartet No. 8* (1969) emerges as one of his most successful pieces. Despite his numerous compositional techniques designed to achieve a non-European music, until *String Quartet No. 8*, a pattern of unresolved conflict between European and non-European aspects of style is evident in all his works. Although the tension of one against the other is ultimately responsible for the individualistic style, this quartet has a delicately poised balance which hitherto had not been achieved. Oddly enough, more than any other work of this period, it reinstates the tonal language of the "Irkanda" period but it treats melody and harmony with stylistic restraint while rhythm loses its rigid proportionality in the unmetred movements and its sense of urgency in the metred

⁹This motive was included in the ballet so that *Sun Music IV* would relate more closely to *Sun Music III*.

movements. *String Quartet No. 8* is also remarkable for its fusion of many of the elements of Sculthorpe's style: the early solo string writing, birdsong imitations, the ritualistic rhythmic style, melody with static harmonic accompaniment, material derived from Balinese music, and new instrumental sounds are all integrated into the work in such a way that contrasts are almost limited to tempo and rhythmic style.

On a broad scale the structure is similar to the symmetrical arrangement of contrasting movements of *Tabuh Tabuhan*. Movement I consists of a relaxed, rhythmically-free 'cello solo with a short birdsong interlude employing the other instruments. This is balanced by Movement V which differs from Movement I through the employment of a change of tonal centre (at ca.30", "A" instead of "G") and the addition of a final chord. Movement II is based on rhythms heard during the Balinese practice of pounding rice.¹⁰ Like Movement II of *String Quartet No. 6*, this movement has a slow central section, a stylised melody with static harmonic accompaniment similar to the related sections of *Sun Music III* and *Tabuh Tabuhan*. Movement II is balanced stylistically by the fourth movement, although this is unrelated to the Balinese idea. The central movement, like the outer movements, is given the rhythmic freedom of spatio-temporal organisation and consists of a fusion of the style of the slow section of Movement II with the melodic characteristics of the solo 'cello movements.

The broad structural design of the work thus outlined, some aspects of the individual movements should be discussed in some detail, particularly Movements I, III and V since in Chapter 4 the two styles of Movement II have been amply treated and Movement IV is specifically discussed. Unlike *Tabuh Tabuhan* where the spatio-temporal organisation is utilised to effect a rhythmic acceleration of freely moving parts resulting in an impression of sexual climax, in *String Quartet No. 8* it is employed as a means to free the music of the proportional characteristics of barred music so that a totally relaxed rhythmic style may be achieved. The

¹⁰ McPhee, pp.359-362

quality of the style is analogous to that of the music of the Japanese *shakuhachi*, though it is doubtful that the composer was thinking of this when composing the piece. *Shakuhachi* music is constructed of melodic phrases of two to perhaps as many as ten tones which are performed with one breath according to rhythms which, though they may exhibit a broad concept of proportion, are not based on an exact proportion of whole number relationships. Between each phrase there is a short break in which a breath is taken, but what is significant is that there is rarely a sense of urgency to move to the next phrase. The overall rhythmic style is, then, as natural and as relaxed as breathing.¹¹

Much of the austere quality of the outer movements derives from the long-held tones, the slow-moving phrases and the reliance on a limited number of chordal and melodic intervals. Chordal intervals are restricted to the harsh minor ninth and the ambivalent tritone, while melody moves mainly by the minor second, diminished fifth, major third and occasional minor third.

As mentioned above, Movement III combines the stylistic characteristics of the outer movements with an adaptation of the stylised melodic/harmonic music of the slow section of Movement II. The principal melodic fragment of Movement III is borrowed from a section of "Five Aspects of a Slow Theme", the central movement of the early *Sonata* for solo violin (1955).¹² This melody has especially close affinities with Sculthorpe's post-*Irkanda* style of melody and accompaniment. The spatio-temporal scheme is used in this movement not only to free melody from the restrictions of metre and note proportions but also to free the relationship of harmonic rhythm and

¹¹ Other similarities with *shakuhachi* music include the use of long-held tones and grace notes at the beginnings of phrases.

¹² Although the outer movements of *Sonata* for solo violin were used to create *Sonata for Viola and Percussion*, this movement had not been reworked in any way until *String Quartet No. 8*.

melody. Nonetheless, the principle of frustrated resolution still applies, but Sculthorpe introduces a third element into what had been until this time a two-part relationship:

Ex. 68

Vn. 1 (pp) mp *senza vibr.* *semplice* dim. pp (p. 10)

Vn. 2

Vla. (dim) ppp p

Vc. p c. 3''

The dissonance or consonance of the tones of the melody need to be considered with respect to the tonal centre, B, but as well to the dissonant chord of $F\sharp^1, B^1, c, e$. That is, although certain tones of the melody may be consonant with the tonal centre they will be almost always unresolved because of the chord.

Movement III of *String Quartet No. 8* is probably Sculthorpe's only single movement involving a song-like continuity of melody. Although the texture is full-bodied it also has the restraint of the austere first and last movements and something of the detachment of the ritualistic rhythmic movements. Sculthorpe's achievement in this work lies, therefore, in the effective containment of his leaning towards an idiom involving musical gestures identifiable as being specifically European in character.

Music for Japan

Coming at the end of a period of much experimentation and stylistic consolidation *Music for Japan* (1970) represents Sculthorpe's most mature example of a short orchestral work. It may be considered as an additional *Sun Music* as it exploits the possibilities of orchestral sonorities rather

than pitch relationships but, unlike the *Sun Music* series and other works of this period with the exception of *Sun Music II* and *Sun Music for Voices and Percussion*, it contains nothing which might easily be recognisable as melody. It does, however, involve a strong harmonic structural element.

The title of the work was chosen not because of any Japanese musical influence but because it was especially composed for the Australian Youth Orchestra who performed it in Japan at Expo. '70. In spite of this, a few superficial elements of style and mood appear to be Japanese in flavour. The very opening chord is punctuated by an accelerating drum figure which is similar to the *kakko* rhythms of *gagaku* while the quality of the *sul ponticello* string clusters evokes the thin timbre of many Japanese instruments. The work has a simplicity of design and a clarity of articulation which make its title seem quite appropriate.

Music for Japan embodies a fusion of most of the structural and stylistic characteristics either developed or isolated in the "*Sun Music*" period. The same principles of structure apply and there is an adaptation of the symmetrical arrangement of sections. Like *Sun Music IV* and *Tabuh Tabuhan* there are, spaced throughout the work, related chords and tones. There is, moreover, a balance between sections with free rhythm and sections with strict metrical organisation and, although there is no melody, there are sections where the motion is quite static and sections of considerable rhythmic activity.

The work is in five principal sections, the musical material of which has mostly been commented upon in Chapter 4. The first section consists of two main elements: a long-held chord and a sonority created by the free and independent motion of many instrumental lines. The second section, for strings and orchestral punctuation, is concerned with the growth of a cluster by addition of tones above and below. The third is a ritualistic rhythmic section for drums with orchestral punctuation, while the fourth is also primarily of rhythmic interest but is more decisive. The fourth

moves towards the climax of a dense low cluster which resolves to a simple major triad. This is followed by the fifth section, a variation of the first section.

The structure may, in a way, be considered symmetrical since the idea of the changing clusters in section 2 is utilised as a large part of the musical material of section 4. Because the progression from section 3 to section 4 has the same feeling of continuity as the progression from the first to the second parts of *Sun Music II, Music for Japan* has a stronger sense of forward motion than it would with a more obvious symmetrical shape.

The structural principle underlying the work is manifest in two ways. The first of these is the serial organisation of some of the musical material. Although the use of the twelve-tone row has been treated in Chapter 4 it is useful to summarise its significance in *Music for Japan*. The tones of Nono's all-interval row are used to organise the texture of section 1 (Sections ① to ⑤). The characteristics of expansion and contraction implied by this row are then applied to the clusters in section 2 (⑧ to ⑩) and to a lesser extent to the clusters in section 4.¹³ In the connecting passage at ⑩ and in section 3 between ⑯ and ⑰ the free *pizzicato* patterns are based directly on the row; and the composer thinks of the whole of section 3 as being rhythmically related to the expansion/contraction idea since the fundamental rhythmic pattern is firstly 3 + 3 + 2, then 3 + 2 + 3 and finally 2 + 3 + 3. The double bass part undergoes a similar process of contraction and expansion. At the opening of the piece the basses play a low octave E. As the work progresses there is a liberal use of the technique of playing two adjacent strings between the bridge and tailpiece, which narrows the interval. There is a further narrowing to

¹³The composer has also remarked upon the parallel between his use of this row and the opening and closing of a Japanese fan.

the single attack of footstamping in sections 2 and 3. In the cluster at the climax the interval expands to a minor second, and, finally, the octave returns.

The harmonic structural element is more obvious for, like that of *Sun Music IV*, it is based on chords with a common lowest tone, in this case, E. These are illustrated below:

Ex. 69

The musical notation for Example 69 consists of a grand staff with two systems of staves. The top system has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The bottom system has a bass clef. The notation shows a sequence of chords marked with circled numbers: 1, 5, 20, 22, 25, and 26. Chords 1 and 5 are in the bass clef, while chords 20, 22, 25, and 26 are in the treble clef. The chords are connected by a line, indicating a sequence. The notation includes various notes, accidentals, and chord symbols.

The chords at ① and ⑤ which correspond structurally to those at ②① and ②⑤ are not resolved in the first instance but finally resolve to the chord at ②⑥ which is similar to those at the conclusions of *Irkanda IV*, *Sun Music III*, *Sun Music IV* and *String Quartet No. 8*. Similarly the cluster between E¹ and B resolves to the major triad of E. Throughout the work, whenever there is a feeling of tonicality, it is that of E except for section 2 which gravitates around G; but even there, the lowest tone, at the point where the cluster is largest, is E, since E is the lowest tone of the expansion. Similarly, the lowest tone of most of the free *pizzicato* sections is also E.

Despite these compositional details, *Music for Japan* seems to be at the same time a much simpler and much more direct statement than any work of the *Sun Music* series. Although it does not involve textures with the harshness of some of those of *Sun Music I* or *Sun Music IV* it displays qualities of austerity and restraint, particularly in section 2, and, later of unrestrained forcefulness. Both these characteristics may be interpreted as essentially Japanese in spirit. It thus seems that the composer was attempting to translate his view of the Australian experience into terms which the Japanese might comprehend more readily, and also to indicate clearly his cultural alliances with the East.

CHAPTER 6

NIGHT PIECES: A CONSOLIDATION OF MUSICAL STYLE

Since the Nineteen Fifties composers have experienced difficulties in writing for solo instruments. As far as stringed, woodwind and brass instruments are concerned, each has its own intrinsic limitations: one does not expect solo pieces to be much more than explorations of new techniques which, no matter how impressive, generally defy the mechanical principles by which these instruments have gradually evolved. For example, the experiments of Bruno Bartolozzi and others, showing that conventional wind instruments can produce microtonal scales and chords, if of imperfect tone quality, probably will not have far-reaching application if only because it would seem to be impossible to relate microtonal passages and these kinds of tonally-arbitrary chords to any structured tonal system.

The reason for the development of these techniques is, however, symptomatic in twentieth century music of the growing importance of instrumental sonority as a structural determinant. A fugue or a sonata may be scored in any number of ways without affecting the significance of their structures; but to rescore the *Sun Music* series or indeed most post-serial music would be to totally destroy its original structural meaning.

The piano is one of the only solo instruments which possesses the capability of a full expression of the tonal language of modern music but its range of sonorities has, with the exception of sonorities obtained by manipulating the interior of the instrument, developed little since the time of Debussy. Consequently, in writing for the piano a composer like Sculthorpe has had to think in completely different ways from the composition of chamber and orchestral music. In creating *Night Pieces*,

Sculthorpe was forced to return to a pre-*Sun Music* concept, to a language in which pitch and rhythmic relationships are the prime structural determinants. To a certain extent this was also true for *String Quartet No. 8* which falls between the *Sun Music* series and the later orchestral works, *Music for Japan* and *Rain*, but this also contains elements which are the result of the exploration of string sonorities and ritualistic passages which involve a complex rhythmic interrelationship of the four parts. Nonetheless, Sculthorpe approaches composition for string quartet in much the same way as for solo piano because he considers that both are what he terms exposed idioms. He admits that in composing for the orchestra one tends to rely on its great expressive range, and that the refinement process is not difficult. With the string quartet and more especially the piano, the composer is forced to reassess the whole basis of his craft. Instead of the search for new ideas and interesting modes of expression the emphasis shifts to deciding what is inadmissible or admissible in one's personal style. Perhaps that is why the *Sonatina* (1954) could establish so early as much of Sculthorpe's musical language as it did, and why *Night Pieces*, though modest in concept, crystallises many aspects of his musical style and aesthetic and is even prophetic of later developments.

In undertaking to compose several short piano works for inclusion in the piano syllabus of the Australian Music Examinations Board, Sculthorpe decided firstly to return to an earlier attempt to write short serial pieces. *Haiku* had originally been composed in the university classroom as an example of the technique of using serialised pitches and, to a limited extent, that of using serialised rhythms. Of greater significance, however, was the aesthetic behind Sculthorpe's teaching method. Given that the tone-row is an impersonal musical entity capable of being manipulated in countless stylistic ways, Sculthorpe's approach was to achieve a kind of uniformity by having his students attempt to represent a specific mood in their pieces. This was conveniently supplied by the Japanese

poetic form, *haiku*, which is based on the power of suggestion, and is brief and terse. Thus, in many ways, it parallels Webern's approach to serialism in making the most pregnant and aphoristic use of limited resources. The use of the *haiku* was, however, not intended to promote Webernesque pieces but rather to be contrary to the European practice of which Webern is representative, of writing abstract music. Sculthorpe considers what he describes as "writing music about music" to be a perverse idea since almost all pre-renaissance and all non-Western music either has a definite social or religious function, or is directly related in subject matter to mankind or nature.

Although the serial process had been useful to Sculthorpe in the teaching of composition, he had rejected it from his own vocabulary as early as the *Sonatina*. He did, however, make some concession in the early Nineteen Sixties. Ian Cugley has noted that "after he wrote *Irkanda IV* he said that he felt that he would return before too long to serial technique - where before he had been trapped in the system he now had the ability to use serialism for his own musical ends."¹ Even though *Haiku* was composed as a teaching exercise in 1964, Sculthorpe did try to make it part of a more substantial piece, *Three Haiku*, but abandoned the project probably more because of pressure of work in fulfilling the commissions of *String Quartet No. 6* and *Sun Music I* than because of any temperamental or aesthetic reaction to the serial process. *Haiku* did find its way into *Sun Music I*, with changes and additions which were related to the musical material of the orchestral piece.²

With the piano music commission in 1970 Sculthorpe began with the idea

¹ Ian Cugley, "Peter J. Sculthorpe," *Arna*, 1967, pp.52-53.

² Sculthorpe's practice of using previously written material in new pieces has already been documented. For him the act of composition is usually so laborious that almost every musical sketch that he might make in the course of composing or teaching is preserved for possible inclusion in some future piece.

Ex. 70

HAIKU

slowly

with intensity

mp

p

mp

cresc.

mf

dim.

mp

Ex. 71

of returning to the original concept of *Three Haiku* but found that he could not easily become involved with serial techniques. He decided, therefore, to adapt the section of *Sun Music I*, making it into a self-sufficient piece. A piano reduction of the sixteenth-measure section was used as the basis of *Night*, with octave-displacements and alterations to rhythm and dynamics. The most significant changes were determined by the inadequacy of the sixteen measures as a self-sufficient musical structure. In the context of *Sun Music I* the last tone of measure 78 fades into a *pianississimo* string texture; the section, therefore, appears to be inconclusive if viewed outside this context. In order to make the structure of *Night* complete in itself, a more emphatic ending was added; also, as the climax came too early, a four-measure introduction was composed so that the climax was positioned in measure 11 of a twenty-measure structure.

Despite this reworking procedure the piece is still somewhat flawed by the hybrid nature of its materials. The section derived from *Haiku* is stylistically comprehensible only in terms of its serialisation of pitches based on the row of Webern's *Variations for Piano* Op. 27 (1936);³ the uncharacteristic intervals of m.13-14 may be considered stylistically inadmissible if one is not aware that the descending minor seventh is the principal motive of *Sun Music I*;⁴ and, as both the introduction and m.15-16 use techniques of the earlier "Irkanda" style, they are unrelated to the remainder of the piece in some ways.

A thorough analysis of *Night*⁵ would do little to advance one's understanding of Sculthorpe's musical style for it is more closely related

³ Anton Webern, *Variations for Piano*, Vienna, 1937. The order of the row is included on the score of *Haiku*, quoted above.

⁴ Sculthorpe used this interval in *Sun Music I* in an attempt to break with his "Irkanda" intervallic language, but in the context of *Night* where it only appears in two measures, it has no structural *raison d'être*; it does not even relate to an interval in the tone-row.

⁵ Exhaustive analyses of all the piano pieces may be found in the author's *The Piano Music of Peter Sculthorpe*, unpublished B.A. (honours) thesis, The University of Sydney, 1971.

to the "Irkanda" period than to the post-*Sun Music* period. Admittedly the way the composer has achieved some kind of compatibility with the "Irkanda" style in his manipulation of Webern's tone-row is interesting but its significance is limited, and its substance hard to define except by pointing out vertical combinations of successive members of the row which form chords characteristic of Sculthorpe's harmonic idiom. Although he has seen fit to include *Night in Night Pieces*, its ultimate significance from the point of view of this study is that, for several reasons, it acted as a kind of catalyst for the more original *Snow, Moon and Flowers* and *Stars*.

In order to mould *Night* from the existing sixteen measures in *Sun Music I*, even though the compositional aspect of it involved writing only five new measures, Sculthorpe was forced to reassess the principles of his craft. In this case it meant going back to a different period and to material which posed unusual stylistic problems. The four measures of the introduction are based on combinations of successive members of the last six tones of the row: the chord of measure 1 is derived from {9, 10, 11, 12}; the melodic fragment following, from {9, 8, 7}; the chord defined by the A^b and the first left-hand chord in measure 3, from {8, 9, 10, 11}; the chord defined by the last two notes of the third measure and the first two of the fourth measure, also from {9, 10, 11, 12}; and the last melodic fragment, from {9, 10, 11}. This observation has little significance in a strict serial context: the composer, whether consciously or not, has simply extracted from the row certain harmonic and melodic entities but certainly with no respect for serial procedure. As well as following parts of the sequence of the row these four or five fragments are, considered separately, very familiar entities in Sculthorpe's own tonal language; considered together they inhabit a tonal field which could not conceivably have been created by anyone else.

The most impressive aspect of the four-measure introduction is that it

completely transforms the structural concept of the piece. The serial section now seems to grow out of the first four measures almost like a variation. The opening chord is repeated and the melodic fragment following is heard as a kind of inversion of the characteristic three-note fragment of m.2-3: that is, a step in one direction followed by a leap in the other. The concept of the serial section proceeding as a variation of the first four measures is further strengthened by the appearance of the repeated characteristic chords of measure 7 and by yet another variant of the three-note fragment between measures 10 and 11. Now, too, the harmonic calm of measures 13 and 14 is more acceptable in relation to the tonal character of the introduction than it was before, following from the serial section alone.

In the process of transforming a passage from an orchestral work into a piece for piano the composer has thus consciously recreated an earlier stage of his style in a refined as well as an obvious way. This project occupied considerably more time than was expected but merely presaged the long period of composition devoted to *Snow, Moon and Flowers* and *Stars* which, unlike *Night* represented serious attempts by the composer to create perfect paradigms of his own musical language.

Although the compositional thought-processes followed directly from the work on *Night*, the inspiration for *Snow, Moon and Flowers* is taken from Japanese sources. In Japanese literature *setsugekka* is one of several combinations of poetic topics, and refers specifically to "snow", "moon" and "flowers", a traditional trinity of beauty. There is, for example a *haiku* which illustrates the link between the three words:

Setsugekka ichi-do-ni miyura utsugi kana
(Teitoku, d.1653)

This may be translated:

It lets one see
Snow, moon,⁶ and flowers - all at once
Oh, Utsugi.

⁶Harold G. Henderson, *An Introduction to Haiku* (New York, 1958), p.12.

The significance of this poem is that the small white flowers on the *utsugi* shrub (*Deutzia scabra*) have the appearance of snow when viewed in the moonlight.

Immediately one recognises two connections with Sculthorpe's aesthetic: firstly that music should be related in some way to nature and secondly, that the power of suggestion, of the association of ideas, is an important factor in an impressionistic music. *Night Pieces* is in fact inscribed with another impressionistic *haiku*:

The moon one circle
Stars numberless
Sky dark green.⁷

The correlation between *Night Pieces* and Japanese culture is also found on technical and aesthetic levels. In all traditional Japanese arts, the pursuit of technical perfection is of prime concern. There is a concept, *miyabi*, which indicates elegance, taste and the avoidance of the ugly and inappropriate. Similarly, in painting the law of form (*keisho*) forbids all exaggerations, peculiarities and grimaces. With *haiku*, perfection is sought on a heightened plane because the form is aphoristic; there is even less room for any kind of exaggeration.

The miniature forms of "Snow", "Moon", "Flowers" and *Stars* are, then, a direct response to the principles of traditional Japanese art. As with Japanese painting which has dozens of specific laws governing such attitudes to the way, for example, that bamboo is painted in different seasons, Sculthorpe has attempted to codify the laws of his own style within a very brief, terse framework. The four pieces constitute a set of variations, four different ways of using a number of common musical ideas. This, in itself, may be considered a Japanese concept rather than a European one for the pieces are not strictly thematic variations, nor are they textural variations on a given harmonic structure. The concept of

⁷ Masaoka Shiki (1867-1962); Composer's translation.

the variations is more akin to Hokusai's "Hundred Views of Fuji", a series of woodblock prints which depict Mt. Fuji from many different angles, in different seasons and different moods. There is the shape of the mountain and the personal equation of the artist's sense of proportion and line to unify the series, but each painting has its own meaning, its own mysterious depth and beauty (*yugen*). Each is complete in itself but has added weight viewed alongside its counterparts.

This parallel with Japanese painting may appear to be somewhat fanciful, despite the fact that the composer has granted credence to it. It does, however, seem necessary to the author that the special quality possessed by these pieces needs to be given some verbal expression. This can only be done on an extremely abstract level. Indeed on the surface the four pieces have very tenuous programmatic bases. There may be a suggestion of lightly falling snowflakes in the slow *misterioso ostinato* of "Snow", and the way that it ends, without cadence, perhaps parallels the cessation of falling snow. With "Moon" there is only the high distant calm of some of the sonorities and with "Flowers" the suggestion of blossoming or unfolding. The texture of *Stars* has a closer relation to the aboriginal legend that the stars were made when one of the ancestors threw a burning log into the sea, and the sparks flew up into the sky.⁸ These observations, although significant, are nonetheless banal in relation to the oriental spirit which pervades the four pieces.

Considering the importance the composer places on this aesthetic, and his practice of working Asian styles into his music, it is surprising that neither *Snow*, *Moon and Flowers* nor *Stars* has any obvious relationship to Japanese traditional music or, for that matter, to Indonesian music. This is principally because the pieces are strongly based on a harmonic

⁸ Thomas, pp.31-35. Sculthorpe employs this story as the programmatic basis for *How the Stars Were Made*, for percussion ensemble (1971).

concept which though simple, is an uncharacteristically dominating force. That is, there are no other works except for juvenilia and theatre music which are conceived wholly as harmonic structures; but it is also true that these pieces are shorter than anything else, and that some larger pieces do contain longer harmonic sections.⁹ Thus it is possible to examine the architectonic structures of the piano pieces solely on an harmonic basis, as well as to consider harmony as one of the fundamental variational factors.

Like the harmonic sections of earlier works, these pieces do employ prolongation devices so that one harmonic unit may extend from one to eight measures. Nonetheless the pieces are unique in that the harmonic changes that occur form progressions which have the strength of simple progressions in diatonic harmony but are, naturally enough, fashioned according to Sculthorpe's own principles. Below (Example 72) there is an outline of the harmonic structure of each piece. It shows that each piece, with the exception of "Snow" has a five-part structure. These are tabled below with commentary:

Section A: Initial Chordal Prolongation

In "Flowers" there are in fact two substantially different chords, the second being a resolution of the first.

In *Stars* the section is repeated with some tones added below at the octave, and there is also an introduction (m.1-2) and a bridge passage between the two statements.

Section B: Second Chordal Prolongation

In "Flowers" there are three chords, the progression from the first two resolving to the third, but this section may be considered as a variation of Section A. There is also a bridge passage between Section B and Section C.

⁹ *String Quartet No. 6* and *Irkanda IV* are obvious examples.

Ex. 72

A B C D E

Snow

m.1-6 m.7-10 m.11-12 m.13-16

Moon

m.1-4 m.5-8 m.9-10 m.11-14 m.15-16

Flowers

m.1-6 m.7-16 m.17-18 m.19-26 m.27-28

Stars

m.3-8 m.11-16 m.19-24 m.25-28 m.29-34 37-40 m.41-44

Section C: Cadence or Resolution

In "Snow" and *Stars* the chord of Section B resolves to that of Section C.

In "Moon" a chord is introduced which provides a plagal-like cadence to a reappearance of the tonal centre of Section B.

In "Flowers" there is a strong cadence but of the four pieces it is the only one which is not fully closed.

Section D: Return to Section A with Slight Variation

In *Stars* there are two varied sections.

Section E: Final Cadence

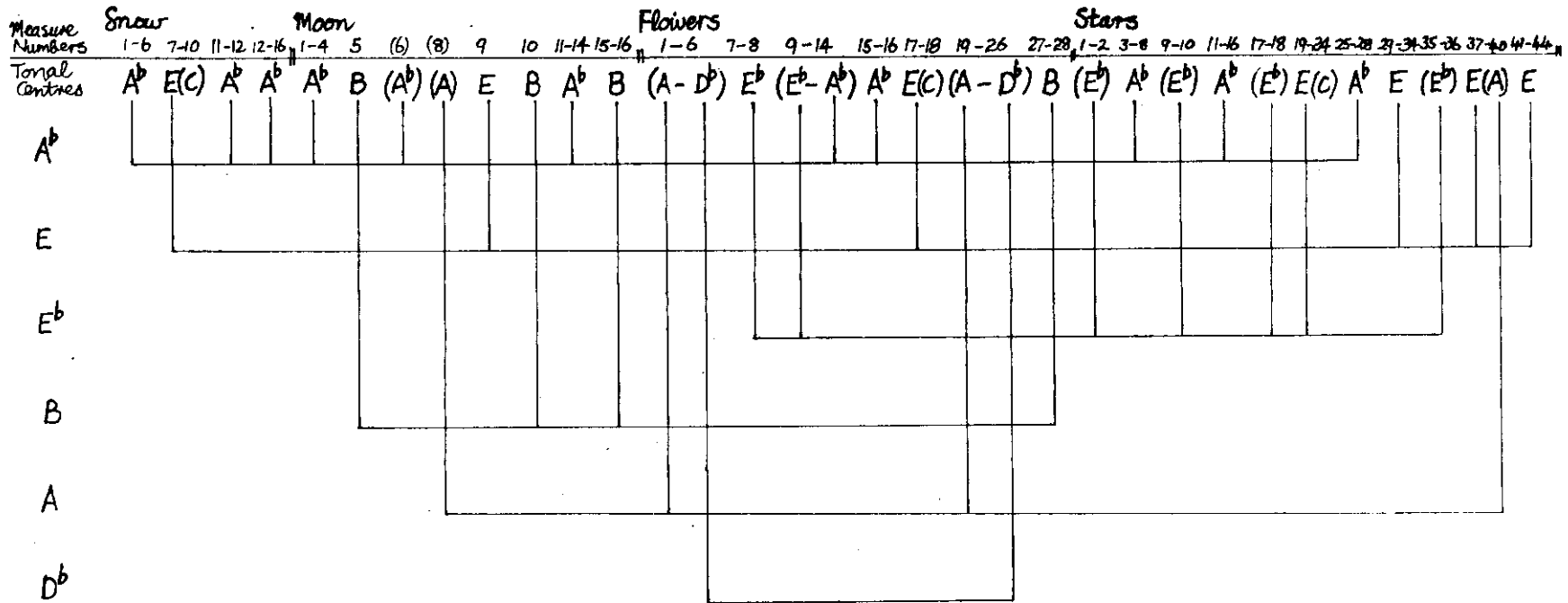
"Snow" has no final cadence.

It is clear from the outline that the harmonic structures of "Snow" and *Stars* are quite closely related, but there is also a complex system of tonal interrelationships among all of the pieces. This is not so much between specific chordal formations as between chords of different constitution which are based on common root-tones. Diagram 3 is intended to show these relationships and their degree of occurrence. In some ways the results are misleading, and so the diagram should be studied in close conjunction with the score. Undoubtedly the tonal centre of A^b is the dominating force, but this is represented by the greatest number of chordal formations. The tonal centre of E, though it is the concluding tonality of *Stars*, occurs most often as an unresolved chord, invariably with the tone, C, added below, in the course of the relevant sections, while that of B, occurring much less, is the concluding tonal centre of both "Moon" and "Flowers".¹⁰ The tonal centre of E^b does not really occur in chordal form but is almost always found as a bridge figuration which functions as a kind of dominant to the A^b sections.

¹⁰ It is curious that Sculthorpe should also choose the tonal centre of B to end *Night*.

Diagram 3

The Structure of Tonal Areas



The triadic relationship of E, A^b, B is the strongest tonal force in operation, and this is in keeping with Sculthorpe's tendency to create harmonic change by either adding a major third below an existing chord, or a minor third above. Indeed this procedure can be seen in "Snow" and especially *Stars*, both of which rely on the A^b to E to C to A^b progression, but even in "Flowers" in the return to Section A from the E(C) tonal centre, there is this effect, because the A^b of the relatively untriadic principal chord (m.19) has great melodic prominence. It is also noteworthy that there are upward resolutions of A^b to B in "Moon" and A to D^b in "Flowers". Although these relationships are of a different character, they are, nonetheless, based on the interval of the third.

The significance of all these observations is, however, limited without an examination of the actual chordal relationships. Again, as with the self-imposed restrictions of tonicality, the composer has standardised both the kinds of chords used and the rules of progression. It is not that these principles do not exist in earlier periods; but in works like *Irkanda IV* and *String Quartet No. 6* the harmony is much less systematic and perhaps more complex, and in pieces of the *Sun Music* period harmony has a comparatively minor status. Another essential difference is the absence in the piano pieces of a harmony which is tied to melody; the melodic fragments are intrinsically part of the chordal language, and do not relate to chords in successions of appoggiatura as they had done until this time.

In Chapter 2 it was established that there are two categories of chords in Sculthorpe's music. There are those which involve at least one major seventh interval and which can usually be described as decorated triads, or be related to the triadic concept in some way; and there are those which do not contain major sevenths and are based upon a combination of tones from the anhemitonic pentatonic scale. The former may be quite harmonically stable, not necessarily seeking a resolution, but they are always

resolvable to a chord of the latter category. The simple principle underlying this operation is the fact that the major seventh seeks a resolution to the octave. In these resolutions, as has been discussed in Chapter 2, the higher tone is common to both chords. However, it may not always be necessary for the lower tone to fall a semitone: the very fact that the dissonant lower tone disappears in the second chord is enough to secure the resolution. This procedure is totally systematised in the piano pieces. There is only ever one common tone between the chord and the chord of resolution: the fifth of the tonic of the resolution. This parallels the perfect cadence in diatonic harmony, except that the fifth in Sculthorpe's system can never be the bass tone, as a major seventh interval has to occur below it. With a progression of two chords ~~of the first category~~ of the first category there is, again paralleling tonal harmony, usually more than one common tone, and this is precisely why the addition of thirds above and below chords is a prominent characteristic of progression.

There is mention above of the theory that in these pieces Sculthorpe has crystallised his rules of composition. This is certainly true for rhythmic organisation and some aspects of melodic design, but the harmonic principles discussed above cannot be called rules since they were not consciously applied. The composer has indeed refined his harmonic language but he has achieved this state by months of experimentation with all the possible variables of his musical materials.¹¹ In this respect it is illuminating to examine the order of composition because it reflects the degree of crystallisation. "Moon" was composed first in quite a short time; and it contains harmonic procedures not found in its companion pieces (for example, the left-hand fragment of m.8 and the plagal-like cadence of m.9). "Moon" was followed by "Flowers" which achieves a

¹¹The composer was not aware of the consistent rules of resolution described above. The refinement of harmony was principally an aural rather than a theoretical process.

greater perfection within a more ambitious harmonic structure but also contains some ideas that are seemingly inappropriate (for example m.15-16) to the composer's system. "Snow" which was composed in a surprisingly long period of six weeks is the most simple and the most perfect while *Stars*, inheriting this harmonic perfection, is thus able to be more complex and more flamboyant.

Melodic and Rhythmic Variation

To this point only the harmonic variable has been discussed and it has been shown that the composer chooses to view a number of tonal and chordal concepts from four contrasting angles. The rhythmic and melodic constants and variables are much more accessible and are, in fact, formalised in a conscious way by the composer. The rhythmic treatment given to each of the harmonic structures is the most variable factor, as it supplies the individual character of each piece. Again, if one follows the compositional order, a definite pattern emerges. Firstly it is clear that from the outset the composer has decided to derive all motivic material from the tones of the chords, rather than introduce a separate melodic level, but, although "Moon" begins in this way, its central section is reminiscent of the harmonic units of earlier pieces. In "Flowers" the tones of the motive are confined to those of the chords, and there is also the introduction of a broken figuration in a constant semiquaver motion. In "Snow" this becomes a five-tone *ostinato*, and the opening section may even be considered unchordal; certainly the introduction of the tone, c, makes the sequence depart slightly from the usual triadic-based formation (the c adds a major third to the already existent minor third of B above A^b). There is an argument, moreover, that the five tones of the opening of "Snow" link together the formations of the opening chords of "Moon" and "Flowers". Finally *Stars* becomes a combination of the *ostinato* idea of "Snow" and the semiquaver figuration of "Flowers". The only information which need be added to this brief description is that the cadence-points

are necessarily of greater rhythmic freedom in order both to be effectively articulated or to produce momentary calm.

If there is one absolute self-imposed rule in Sculthorpe's music it is that everything repeated must be varied in at least some slight way. Thus one finds that even the immediate repetitions of the two- and three-measure motives and figurations are varied. In "Moon" and "Flowers" there is a falling minor third of some melodic significance which is transposed a minor third higher on its second statement. In *Stars* where the motive is replaced by a figuration, one of the tones is changed to a tone a minor third higher, and the short fifth and eight measures of the unit differ slightly. With "Snow" the minor third transposition does not occur, since the sequence of the *ostinato* has to be maintained. The sequence is actually broken on the last note of the section, but more for reasons of facilitating the change to a new section than being faithful to an abstract compositional principle.¹² Because of the metrical organisation of the first section, the five-note *ostinato* is, however, being constantly varied, and one finds that a different tone falls on the strong beats of measures 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 (one tone is tied over the fourth measure, and then repeated, in order to make this rhythmic organisation possible). It is significant that the order of accentuation is also the order of tones in the sequence.

The absoluteness of this rule governing repetition comes into question in "Snow" where the Section B figuration is repeated exactly (m.7-8 and m.9-10), but it could be argued that the dynamic change constitutes a variation and that the slight melodic accentuation of {b^b, f[#], e^b} (m.8-9) varies rhythmically from measures 10-11.¹³ In any case, the rule has

¹² It should be realised that, by altering the sequence, the intervallic shape of the first four tones of the new section follows that of the last four tones of the first section, and that the tones of the last five notes are common with tones of the new chord. The re-appearance of the A^b would have disturbed this relationship.

¹³ This situation occurs again in *Stars* where m.37-38 is the same as m.39-40, again except for the dynamic.

greater import in relation to the repetition of larger sections in different parts of a piece. This is to be expected in a music which is based upon variation rather than organic development, but one finds that in the piano pieces there is, again, a systematisation of this process. With "Snow" the return of the first section is contracted by the omission of the $\frac{1}{4}$ measures and the reduction of the *ostinato* to two separated sections of eight notes, the first tone of each section being lengthened by a quaver. In "Moon" the return is truncated to a metrical pattern of $\frac{3}{4} \frac{1}{4} \frac{3}{4} \frac{1}{4}$ from four measures of $\frac{3}{4}$ and is changed by the omission of the last four notes of the motive and, like "Snow", the lengthening of the first note by a quaver. In "Flowers" the basic three-measure motivic-complex is elongated by a $\frac{2}{4}$ measure so that two extra high-tones may be added, giving a suggestion, perhaps, of a late blossoming. With *Stars*, instead of one new variation of the opening, there are three sections, each of which may be regarded as a variation, although the last also functions as a rhythmic device, equivalent to the final cadences of "Moon" and "Flowers"; it may even be considered as the final chord of a cadence following from the section with the low A^3 . The first of these variations (m.29-34), though it has the original metrical structure, has the unexpected additions to the m.11-16 section of E tonicality bass-tones, and demisemi-quaver treble-tones. In pianistic terms it is analogous to the sudden "flaring up" of the Balinese *kebyar* style, a form of *gamelan* music which attracts Sculthorpe greatly. The second variation of the return is quite different. It begins as a variant of the section discussed above but then curiously, three tones which hitherto had not appeared (A, D and F) are introduced, and the section is also contracted to a characteristic $\frac{4}{8} \frac{2}{8} \frac{4}{8} \frac{2}{8}$ metrical pattern. Finally the closing section is reduced to three of the tones of the preceding section (E, B^b , and D), reminiscent of the thinning-out process at the end of "Snow", and thus completing the variational connections of the four pieces.

To conclude, it is useful to look forward to the possible effect the writing of *Night Pieces* has had on Sculthorpe's direction as a composer. Since these pieces were, for Sculthorpe, primarily concerned with the solving of compositional problems related to miniature forms, he had a plan, on their completion to compose a large and quite grandiose work for the piano. This project now seems unlikely to materialise for quite some time, but the monumentality which the composer was seeking duly manifested itself in *Rites of Passage* (1972-73). Although this long work was, like *Sun Music I*, largely concerned with breaking new stylistic ground, it is, like *Night Pieces*, also concerned with a summing-up of both musical procedures and personal philosophy. Above all it demonstrates the meticulousness which Sculthorpe exercised in writing for the piano and, in some respects, as with harmonic language, the crystallisation found in *Night Pieces* seems indispensable to its new developments. Indeed *Rites of Passage* and *Night Pieces* appear to fall at opposite ends of a spectrum which marks the end of the period begun with *Sun Music I* in 1965. Just as *Irkanda IV* and *String Quartet No. 6* may be regarded as the culmination of the previous period, so too are *Night Pieces* and *Rites of Passage* representative of a new maturation.

CHAPTER 7

TOWARDS A NEW CONCEPT OF OPERA

Rites of Passage (1972-74) is perhaps the only composition in Sculthorpe's oeuvre which allows a detailed examination of certain extra-musical aspects of the philosophy of his work. This is simply because it is a composition for the theatre and is thus, in contrast to music for the concert hall, fundamentally concerned with the communication of very tangible ideas and emotions. The evolution of the work, beginning as early as 1965, provides a legitimate academic context in which to examine the composer's interdisciplinary interests and his approaches to the solving of various kinds of intellectual and aesthetic problems.

The theatre has, from early in Sculthorpe's career, attracted him greatly for, not only is it a collaborative art by virtue of the different media it involves, but it also demonstrates, in the synthesis of its components, a more highly developed manifestation of the notion of "performance" than the playing of music. Sculthorpe often speaks of "great moments of theatre" by which he primarily means a seemingly magical transformation of visual forms. There is no real equivalent of this phenomenon in abstract music, either structurally or by the association of ideas, feelings or images. When one considers that the visual orientation of Australians is a central idea in Sculthorpe's aesthetic it does not seem surprising that the composer has been preoccupied for a considerable time with involving his music in the theatre.

Sculthorpe's first regular involvement with the theatre began when he returned to Launceston in 1951. Amateur theatre in provincial areas of Australia provided one of the only public opportunities for musical

creativity at this time. Until 1956, the composer wrote incidental music for plays produced by the Launceston Players. A production in 1951 of *Much Ado About Nothing* seems to have been one of the most ambitious of these undertakings since the music was scored for piano, violin, 'cello and recorders, and the settings of the songs were approached as serious compositions.¹ The other plays, including Molière's *The Miser*, Leo Marks' *The Girl Who Couldn't Quite*, *Life with Father* by Lindsay and Gouse, and *Junius on Horseback*, a comedy by a local playwright, Walter Sutherland, included only incidental music for piano.

Through his association with Anne Godfrey-Smith who had directed *Much Ado About Nothing*, Sculthorpe wrote songs and incidental music for a production at the Repertory Theatre, Canberra, of *Twelfth Night*, which ran for the month of July, 1956. After this Godfrey-Smith and Sculthorpe travelled from Canberra to Melbourne at the time of the Olympic Games. Here they produced a play by Ric Throssel which was a social protest against the atomic bomb. A further collaboration between writer, director and composer resulted in a musical farce which lampooned the political life of Canberra. *Ulterior Motifs* ran in this city for a month and attracted the attention of William Orr, then director of the Phillip Street Theatre in Sydney. Orr was at first considering staging this work himself but decided that the obscurity of much of the political satire would not be appreciated by a Sydney audience. He did, however, persuade Sculthorpe to write some material for *Cross Section*, an extremely successful revue which eventually ran for more than a year from September, 1957.

With Sculthorpe's continued involvement in theatre he wrote increasingly less concert music; in fact, as his commitment to theatre became more professional, he stopped writing concert music altogether. This is

¹This is inferred from the existence of several drafts and arrangements indicating progressive degrees of compositional finesse. The same could be said of the settings from the later production of *Twelfth Night*.

indeed puzzling since in the period of 1954 to 1955 which had produced the *Sonatina*, *The Loneliness of Bunjil* and the solo violin pieces he had effectively ceased imitating other musical styles and had become personally convinced that his work had a substantial originality. Sculthorpe has said that the problem was one of not receiving public acceptance for his concert music. Admittedly, both the *Sonatina* and *Irkanda I* had had performances at international festivals, but most artists need to receive encouragement from their immediate professional environments in order to flourish. It is clear that Sculthorpe was acquiring a reputation for his theatre music, so undoubtedly this was the reason for his persisting with it. His only alternative for employment would have been teaching or work in no way associated with music. As it was, in Sydney he coached singers involved in the revue in his capacity as an understudy pianist, but supplemented his income by composing music for films, radio plays and television.

Eventually Sculthorpe arranged some of his revue material into instrumental pieces for concert performance. These he modelled on the concept of Gershwin's *An American in Paris*. There was a piece called *Kings Cross Suite* and, later, another called *Three Movements for Jazz Band*. When Louis Armstrong's band performed the latter at the now legendary Sydney Stadium late in 1958, it was the first music of Sculthorpe's to be played outside the theatre in Sydney; but having become disillusioned with the routine of the theatre, the composer had already left for England to undertake post-graduate research at Oxford.

Although Sculthorpe resumed the composition of concert music in England, he also involved himself, to a limited extent, in theatre. He constructed a *musique concrète* tape as incidental music for a production of *King Lear* by the Lincoln College Players at the Oxford Playhouse, and later at Stratford-upon-Avon; but it seems clear that he had eschewed the theatre as an outlet for his compositional identity. Again this was

largely a function of being in an environment where there was considerable interest shown in his music. With his reasonable success as a concert music composer in England and especially after the great encouragement of the acclaimed first performance in Melbourne of *Irkanda IV* after his return to Australia, he simply lost interest in the theatre.

Eliza Fraser

Unknown to Sculthorpe, however, events were taking place in the early Nineteen Sixties which would initiate for him a frustrating eight-year period in which he vainly searched for a workable collaboration with a librettist in an attempt to devise a concept for an opera. The Australian painter, Sidney Nolan, exhibited his Mrs. Fraser series in London, and it was suggested that the historical episode on which the paintings were based could serve as a framework for a theatre piece. Patrick White, who was in London at the time, worked on the idea and produced a draft for an opera. This he presented to Benjamin Britten whose attitude to the project was not favourable. White, understandably angered by Britten's rejection of the script, committed himself to finding a suitable Australian composer: On returning to Australia he listened to as much recorded music as he could and decided that Sculthorpe's music would be the most effective. Thus, in 1964, a collaboration was set in motion and a commission arranged by the Elizabethan Theatre Trust. Sculthorpe's initial impulse to collaborate with White was motivated to a large degree by the honour of being asked by such a distinguished writer, but it soon became clear that each man had his own conception of what the work should be. In the story,² Mrs. Fraser, one of the survivors of nineteenth century shipwreck off the coast of Queensland, is captured by aborigines, stripped of her clothes and treated as an aboriginal woman. Bracefell

²It should be understood that this version of the story is that held by Nolan and White.

is a convict who has escaped from civilisation and learnt the ways of the aborigines to the extent that he can move freely among them. He discovers Fraser and tries to coerce her into a romanticised sexual attachment, but she resists. She eventually persuades him, in return for promising to intercede for him for a pardon, to lead her back to civilisation. At the first sight of a settlement, however, she betrays him and he is forced to flee back into the bush.

Sculthorpe considered that the story was dramatically strong but he was less interested in the conflict between the two people than in the romantic, idyllic and often bizarre images that Nolan projects in his paintings. White, on the other hand, developed the drama in almost novelistic proportions. This posed a problem of length, for White was seemingly unaware of the pace of sung dialogue. White also admitted to being confused by the restrictions placed on the use of syllables in word setting,³ and proceeded to produce his libretto with little regard for the composer's requirements; but, despite his failure to recognise the essentials of a libretto, neither writer nor composer had developed a theatrical concept for the opera.

Sculthorpe's confrontation with the problem of the theatrical credibility of singers in contemporary opera led him to begin to compile sets of techniques that either are or are not effective in a theatre which relies heavily upon music.

A summary of Sculthorpe's ideas concerning some of the basic problems involved in contemporary opera is give below:

Although traditional opera is non-realistic, since people do not usually sing dialogue or songs to each other, singing is accepted as a convention. In opera, the ostensible absurdity of the singing does not necessarily interfere with the underlying seriousness of the dramatic situation. In twentieth century opera, where the musical language is usually very

³ Letter to Peter Sculthorpe, January 12, 1964.

different from that of the nineteenth and earlier centuries, this theatrical absurdity is exposed. It is difficult, for example, to imagine Mrs. Fraser and Bracefell singing to each other in rhythmically-jagged atonal phrases, and this is not only because they are nineteenth century characters. Music in the theatre has always manifested itself in heightened forms of poetic utterance, fundamentally ritualised derivatives of natural speech. In general the music of the twentieth century is characterised by un-song-like, and therefore more than usually artificial qualities. If characters in an opera are to sing with credibility they must sing a kind of melody which does not obliterate the rhythms and inflections of poetic language.

In addition, Sculthorpe believes that in twentieth century drama, a clear distinction has come to exist between realism and fantasy, because film and television have made it possible for drama to appear totally real. This has brought drama in the theatre to a degree of realism that was not expected in earlier times. By extension, it also suggests that a serious dramatic opera is no longer possible. In *Dialogues and a Diary* Stravinsky rejects the medium of the proscenium-arch theatre:

If I were to write another opera, I suspect that it will be for the electronic glass tube . . . rather than for the early Baroque stages of the world's present-day opera houses.⁴

Further, Sculthorpe has observed that in the twentieth century, man has become accustomed to dramatic involvement either by being enveloped by the large cinema screen or by focusing inward to the intimate medium of television. Successful identification with characters in dramatic productions now demands a close-up medium like television. The theatre, a long-view medium, is more suited to pageant and ritual; and the secret of effective theatre lies in presenting these in spectacular ways.

⁴London, 1968, p.80.

Collaborations with Moorehead, Covell and Wallace-Crabbe

After the collaboration with Patrick White was terminated it was some time before Sculthorpe admitted to himself that the subject of Mrs. Fraser was not suitable, at least if treated in a conventional way. The composer continued to be fascinated by the Nolan paintings, and when the opportunity for a collaboration with Alan Moorehead and Roger Covell arose he greeted it with enthusiasm. The inclusion of Covell as a second writer was obviously meant to solve those kinds of problems that had arisen because of White's unfamiliarity with musical techniques. Moorehead would write the libretto; Covell would rewrite it so that there would be no problems in setting it. Since Moorehead had a practice of visiting any place about which he was writing, he, Sculthorpe and Covell travelled to Fraser Island. The visit probably strengthened Sculthorpe's appreciation of the paintings which the island and the adjacent coastal area had inspired eighteen years earlier, but it became clear to *him* and Covell from the moment that Moorehead began to approach the writing in much the same conventional way as White that further collaboration would prove to be unsatisfactory.⁵

By 1965 Sculthorpe felt that, in order to make progress on the opera, he needed to be relieved of his teaching duties in order to have time to think deeply about a suitable subject and about a workable formula for theatrical credibility. He was given a Harkness Fellowship and became Composer in Residence at Yale University. His first inclination was to re-establish a collaboration with Roger Covell because of Covell's knowledge of music and theatre and also because of his considerable talent for the lyric which had shown itself in a children's choral work, *South by Five* (1965) which Sculthorpe had set before leaving Australia. The new subject

⁵ Early in 1978 Sculthorpe composed a short music theatre work entitled *Eliza Fraser Sings*, the text of which was written by Barbara Blackman.

suggested was the story of the notorious British actor, Gustavus Vaughan Brooke, who had considerable success on Australian tour arranged by George Coppin in 1855. Sculthorpe felt that the subject would be appropriate for an opera if not treated as serious realistic drama. He believed that it would be easier to accept as singers, people associated with the theatre, that in fact there would be more occasions in a work like *Brooke* where singing could be a part of the realistic action.

On the basis of a conventional scenario, discussion between Sculthorpe and Covell began but, because the composer was in the United States, the collaboration, by correspondence, proved to be most unsatisfactory to both, and the project was eventually abandoned. In the meantime, however, Sculthorpe had become absorbed in Aztec culture. This suggested to him the idea of a ritual theatre as an alternative to the unworkable dramatic opera (*Mrs. Fraser*) and the kind of musical which *Brooke* would have had to have been. At about this time the composer began a collaboration with the Australian poet, Chris Wallace-Crabbe, also a Harkness Fellow, staying at Yale. Besides a Mexican ritual piece, Wallace-Crabbe and Sculthorpe worked on a comic operetta entitled *The Firing Squad*, but it was in the former that they advanced notions as to how a serious music theatre piece might be successfully staged. Although influences from Antonin Artaud's *The Theatre of Cruelty* manifestos⁶ may be detected, their piece is not derivative of Artaud's *mise en scène* for *The Conquest of Mexico*⁷ for, rather than being a statement of the horror of two civilisations clashing, it is simply a presentation of the events of a sacrificial ritual. That is, it is not concerned with human chaos, but rather with harmony and world order, even though the Western sensibility finds the notion of this kind of human sacrifice intolerable.

⁶ Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York, 1958), pp.89-104 and pp.126-132.

⁷ *Ibid*, pp.126-132.

With a ritual piece such as this, the problems of incorporating music without losing theatrical credibility are minimal. Music, both vocal and instrumental, is integral to ritual. The progression of events and its meaning does not depend upon an interplay of speech but rather is solely represented by visual and aural symbols. "Speech in the Occidental theatre", says Artaud, "is used only to express psychological conflicts particular to man and the daily reality of his life", but "words . . . have metaphysical powers".⁸ The words of this theatre piece became, therefore, the sacred, magical words of Mexican ritual. These could be sung, shouted, spoken or whispered, according to the particular ritual or to the compositional plan. The music, apart from that which was part of the ritual, could also be used from the pit to enhance or comment upon the visual spectacle. One difficulty which Sculthorpe and Wallace-Crabbe faced was the absence of collaboration with a stage director, for the diverse symbolic elements of the spectacle had to be drawn together as a coherent theatrical structure. Nonetheless, between them, they seem to have been able to conceptualise the theatricality of the piece to a certain point.⁹ Unfortunately, Wallace-Crabbe left Yale and, with increasing commitments to orchestral commissions, Sculthorpe was forced to abandon the writing of music for the project. At the back of his mind there was also the thought that the work was too short and too unconventional for the Australian Opera Company's purposes.¹⁰ Although the composer had been impressed by Artaud's writing before this, the Aztec piece was his first attempt to realise an opera within Artaud's concept of theatre. Artaud was to remain a significant influence from that time, but Sculthorpe returned to a theatre with dialogue for his next attempt to

⁸ Ibid, p.70.

⁹ Leonard French, another Harkness Fellow, also helped with problems related to design.

¹⁰ Sculthorpe's contract with the Elizabethan Theatre Trust specified a "full-length" opera.

devise an opera.

Collaboration with Tony Morphett

Of all Sculthorpe's librettists, Tony Morphett gave the longest and, in some ways, the most effective, service. He was gifted at moulding a given set of ideas into a viable dramatic structure, and also willing to repress his own ideas in an attempt to create a piece which in no way was foreign to Sculthorpe's particular vision. The disposition to make this concession was probably connected with his employment as a journalist and as a television series writer. Morphett's work with the composer was, nonetheless, very much an equal partnership.

Following the concept of *Brooke* that people in any way connected with entertainment have some credibility as singers, Morphett and Sculthorpe assembled a list of characters who sing naturally in everyday life. These included sailors, the clergy, natives, mad people, and people who undergo a role change such as dressing up for a celebration. It was decided that any character who did not fit one of these categories would have a speaking part. Apart from the list of types who are credible as singers, Sculthorpe gave Morphett a list of themes, events and objects which have a profound effect on him in the theatre. These are grouped below in the kinds of word-association sequences with which the composer originally wrote them:¹¹

blood, death, burial, ship, shipwreck,
oars, spears, crucifix.

This sequence is cyclic since both "spears" and "crucifix" lead back to "blood". For Sculthorpe, a hero dying at the end of a piece is always disturbing; and he associates "burial" with the Requiem Mass. A second sequence begins with the word, "ship":

ship, maps, old engravings of Pacific,
island, noble savage.

¹¹ Notes for opera, MS in composer's possession.

From "island" springs his concept of "the loner" and the "solitary figure in the vast landscape".¹² Allied to the loner is the *Lord Jim* theme, the adventurer who, in a boyish, romantic way sets out to atone for previous guilt, whose every action, however good or noble, brings him closer to his terrible destiny.¹³ Related to the *Lord Jim* character, and also important to Sculthorpe is the dual appearance of extreme qualities of courage and cowardice in one person. A third list contains related theatrical phenomena:

masks, disguises, dressing up, transformations,
processions.

By "transformation" the composer refers to the kind of experience that Cinderella, for example, underwent, but it can also mean any simple change from one state to another. Lastly, primitive drums¹⁴ and all kinds of bells are important symbolic objects in Sculthorpe's hypothetical theatre. Bells are of universal significance since they can symbolise almost any life event: birth, marriage, death, feast days, warnings and calls to action.

The piece which began to evolve from these ideas could be described as an ecological allegory. Although it was never moulded into a libretto, the story-line, the characterisation and the details of the theatricality were elaborately planned. Briefly, a missionary-based settlement on a Pacific island undertakes, on the death of the last surviving native, a celebration which is a re-enactment of the discovery of the island by James Cook. The abbot, Father James, who plans the ritual, is suffering

¹² This phrase is undoubtedly prompted by an appreciation of Russell Drysdale's paintings. The artist himself discusses his concept of "a lone man in a landscape" in Geoffrey Dutton's *Russell Drysdale* (London, 1964), pp.101-102.

¹³ Sculthorpe has been profoundly influenced by Conrad's *Lord Jim* and also Richard Brooke's screen adaptation of the novel. The composer also identifies with what he interprets as the inevitable schizophrenia of a European living in the East.

¹⁴ Apart from skin drums he especially refers to slit and pole drums because of the sexual symbolism and, considering their usually enormous sizes, because of their theatrical effect.

from severe guilt, the sources of which are the inevitable extinction of the native race, and his secret plan to allow the island to be destroyed for its mineral wealth. As the re-enactment progresses it becomes clear that he is seeking his own death: he is under the delusion that he is Captain Cook, and wishes to be killed in the same way as Cook. Father James meets opposition to his eventually-exposed mining plans from Brother John, a self-styled ecologist and humanitarian. The celebrations which are quite elaborate in scale, lead to unplanned personal conflicts and alliances. John, for example, falls in love with Madge, one of the secular inhabitants of the island, and the ensuing conflicts with James, some of the townspeople and a visiting geologist result unexpectedly in his death. The ritual is, however, treated throughout on a rather comic level since most of the island's inhabitants approach the celebrations in this frame of mind.

For Sculthorpe James and John represent two sides of the *Lord Jim* character. Like Lord Jim, James' need for atonement forces him into a fantasy world; but his dream is finally shattered when John, for whom he cares like a son, is killed instead. John's fatal flaw is the idealism and naïveté which prompts him to be outraged by the ecological disaster of white-man's intrusion on the island, and draws him blindly to his love affair and its associated complications. Every action he takes brings him closer to his death.

Of the other characters, all could be called stereotypes with the exception of the storekeeper, Hobbe, who is an eccentric master of ceremonies both of everyday life on the island and of these particular celebrations. The source of Hobbe's humour is his ability to conjure up lines from well-known songs, lines which are appropriate to any particular conversational situation. He often sings with McDonald who is a former musical comedy star. Unlike Hobbe who always sings to make fun of the other characters or simply to be clever, McDonald is credible as a singer

because his reasons are vain ones: he likes the sound of his own voice, and imagines everyone who hears him will be impressed. The other individuals who sing are Lisa, a madwoman, who because of her mental condition is perhaps credible as a singer of very atonal music, and Darren, a cynical and rather ruthless young man who leads a rock band. Another side of youth is represented by Madge, an adherent of free love until her relationship with John. She is thus thought by Sculthorpe and Morphett to be credible as a folk singer. The missionaries sing their own liturgical music and, with the townspeople, any music appropriate to the re-enactment pageants.

Although there is an underlying seriousness in the ecological theme and in the conflicts between some of the characters, the theatrical and musical treatment of the piece, and the variety of the action suggest a more entertaining or satiric quality than a profoundly serious one. The essential fact is that the outline seems to represent a workable concept for a contemporary opera, no matter how unconventional; but without its comic levels it could not succeed. Sculthorpe's reasons for not proceeding with it, but continuing instead with a search for a more serious concept were twofold. Firstly he believed that, for his first full-length piece, he should express himself through his own musical language; but with the existing plan of the *Island* piece, most of the music would need to be adapted from traditional styles. Secondly, although the concept and story-line of the work were agreed to be satisfactory, Morphett lost interest in completing the libretto because there were no definite plans for production and therefore no deadlines towards which to work. Despite abandoning the project the composer planned to return to it in the future and has especially felt this since composing *Rites of Passage* because, having fulfilled the need to create a serious work he would not experience the personal identity problems associated with working with a kind of musical collage.

Love 200

Sculthorpe's collaboration with Morphett was not, however, entirely fruitless. The composer chose three sets of lyrics from the first draft of the work and used them as a basis for *Love 200* (1970), a concert piece for rock band, female singer and orchestra.¹⁵ This work is a collage of very different musical styles: *Sun Music* textures, romantic harmonic textures, rock music styles and quasi-Venetian multi-spatial antiphony.

In spite of the diversity of idiom, Sculthorpe managed to invest the work with his own compositional characteristics. Throughout his career, whenever he has employed established idioms, they are always subjected to rhythmic procedures and orchestration techniques that are uniquely his own. In this case the disparate idioms were necessary because of the stylistic incompatibility of rock music and modern concert music. In searching for a traditional musical style which would blend well with rock music, Sculthorpe settled upon the baroque period; while in trying to find an orchestral style to accompany a folk-like pentatonic vocal line the choice was somewhat Mahlerian.

The first song, "It'll Rise Again", which is based on a chord progression similar in concept to that of Bach's *Prelude in C minor* (Bk.1), employs a quasi-baroque accompanying figuration, but it is rhythmically manipulated in a way which is very characteristic of Sculthorpe's procedures and certainly not in contradiction to rock performance practice. In the third song, "Love", the Gabrieli-like brass arrangement in the verse, and the Vivaldi-like organisation of a diatonic circle of fifths in the chorus achieve an adequate fusion with one kind of rock keyboard playing style. The "Prelude" and the interludes between the songs are unmistakably derived from the *Sun Music* style, and function to supply a

¹⁵The title of this piece is derived from the fact that 1970 was the bi-centenary of Cook's discovery of Australia and that the purpose of his voyage was to observe the transit of the planet Venus, named after the goddess of love.

richness and variety of orchestral texture. The band takes only a minimal part in these instrumental sections and no part at all in the central song, "The Stars Turn" which is a self-contained composition for female singer and orchestra. The great disparity between the contemporary orchestral idiom and the various harmony-based styles no longer represents a problem to the listener since one stream of rock music in the last decade has successfully incorporated very advanced contemporary styles aided by the complex technology of the modern recording studio.¹⁶ The kind of audience that is most likely to be interested in *Love 200*, that which has a sympathy for and knowledge of rock music is thus able to accept the non-tonal elements of Sculthorpe's style.

Although it is a concert piece, *Love 200* has a theatricality which testifies to the potential of the opera project from which it sprang. This is partly because of the natural stage awareness of rock performers and the additional spectacle of special lighting effects, but it is fundamentally determined by the unique relationship of the orchestra to the band. In most attempts to combine these two kinds of forces, the orchestra is usually greatly subservient to the band. In *Love 200* the orchestra not only has its own special passages it also most often combines with the band in ways which emphasise unique textural or spatial qualities, taking much of the spectator's attention away from the band, but without upsetting the dominant role of the band in determining the style.¹⁷ For example, in "It'll Rise Again" Sculthorpe scores an almost parodic fusion of baroque and rock figuration for Hammond organ, but later in the song the figuration reappears in an ecstatic wind orchestration; the figuration,

¹⁶This movement has been primarily based in England. For example, Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* (Harvest, 1973) uses sophisticated electronic media and is, in parts, unmistakably influenced by Terry Riley and John Cage.

¹⁷In this respect it is worth mentioning that some exponents of experiment between rock band and orchestra, and notably Rick Wakeman, have allowed the orchestra to dominate and thereby lost the rhythmic energy which gives rock music its unique status in contemporary music.

though in some senses banal in its first appearance, is rejuvenated by the limpidity of this subsequent arrangement. A second and more obvious example is the employment of three antiphonal brass quartets. Here in many of the relevant sections, the listener's attention is drawn away from the dominating rock ensemble by the peripatetic interplay of the brass groups positioned at the two sides as well as the back of the concert hall.

In drawing attention to the scoring Sculthorpe was perhaps intentionally compensating for his somewhat limited appreciation of rock music idioms; the result accordingly represents a surprising balance between the basic rhythmic impetus of the rock music ensemble and the ingenuity and finesse of the orchestration. This balance which hitherto had not been achieved in works which have attempted to combine rock music and orchestral music made *Love 200* an impressive addition in 1970 to what has since shown itself to be a rather limited genre.

Collaboration with Gabriel Josipovici

The period in which *Rites of Passage* evolved began in Sussex, England in October, 1971 with a collaboration between Sculthorpe and Gabriel Josipovici, a lecturer at the University of Sussex and a friend of the composer since they met in Oxford around 1960. Josipovici seemed ideal as a prospective librettist since he was a practised playwright with a substantial knowledge of avant-garde theatrical techniques and a great enthusiasm and awareness of contemporary European music. From the outset of the collaboration Sculthorpe encountered a highly critical mind: Josipovici's reaction to his description of the concept of the Captain Cook piece was, for example, one of uncompromising skepticism. The writer branded it as "a typical national monument - the kind of thing an audience expects and the kind of thing always a disaster, falling between every stool".¹⁸ He seems acutely aware of the problem of creating a true

¹⁸ Josipovici supplied typewritten notes to Sculthorpe during the course of their collaboration. These contain summaries of ideas, and were presumably

national identity which is not superficial or false:

Capt. Cook wrong because it is anthropocentric, i.e. ultimately a sell-out to Western values, especially nineteenth century ones of which this type of opera is apotheosis. So it would remain colonial, back-waterish, peripheral. To find true soul of Australia we must stand back and outside Western man - outside man himself. But how to do this in Opera, since opera drives one forward into doing precisely this kind of Capt. Cook thing.¹⁹

One of Josipovici's approaches was like a species of theatre of the absurd, a plan which was designed to fit his conception of contemporary theatre while incorporating some of Sculthorpe's themes:

But what if one starts in this conventional way - this is the opera - and then slowly break it down as the sun breaks down Western man - revealing impossibility of doing this. Start again. Try another theme, the joke opera, with three beginnings etc. - after some fooling, getting wilder and wilder, whole scheme breaking up under weight of its own impossibility, other themes, truer ones, begin to emerge - fragments of the past - Mrs. Fraser - Kelly - Gallipoli - the heat of the sun destroying everything including man and his art, including the Sydney Opera House A work to be played at the start of every season, to remind us of the thinness of the veneer of civilisation and human life Inexorable sun/landscape (loneliness, weather, death, there you are Peter).²⁰

It is obvious from the writer's tone that he was struggling to satisfy Sculthorpe's conditions, but it is also evident that he had forced the composer to initiate a reassessment of his aesthetic and of the cultural context in which the piece was to appear. This is reinforced in Sculthorpe's correspondence of the time:

. . . Since I've been here, I've done more reading and thinking than I've done since I was invented as a composer, i.e. since *Irkanda IV*. I can't tell you, but in any case you would know, how exciting this has been. And further, in five weeks I've discovered more about myself and theatre

meant to serve as the basis for much verbal expansion and dialogue. Quite often they contain arguments which are presented in a kind of stream of consciousness style. Although the notes have proved to be useful in determining some of the steps towards the formulation of *Rites of Passage*, they should not be construed as coherent literary documents but rather as personal memoranda or agenda. The original copies of these notes are in the possession of the composer.

¹⁹ Josipovici, Notes, 16.xii.71, p.1.

²⁰ Notes, 16.xii.71, pp.2-3.

and opera and music than in five years at home. When work begins, I'll be well prepared.

Gabriel and I have produced drafts for two different music theatre pieces, both of them establishing new forms, and both exciting, very exciting. One takes the Oresteian Trilogy as its jumping-off point, and the other, Mrs. Fraser. But it's been my feeling that neither are quite fitting for the opening of a new opera house, and for Australia at this particular time Anyway, both are there for the future.

At present, we're working on *Sun*. The Jacquetta Hawkes' book *Man and the Sun* contains the source material, and this theme is, I suspect, what I'm really about. The work will be for want of a better name, a scenic oratorio; perhaps one could call it a celebration, with all senses of the word's meaning.²¹

Josipovici's notes for "The Sun" are really a rewriting or reworking of the "Captain Cook" notes partially quoted above, only they contain more detail of visual images and theatrical techniques; but in a second section headed "Sun Opera" he characteristically demonstrates that he is committed to the Western expectation of drama and conflict, finally admitting that the composer's concept is not only alien to what he imagines is necessary in theatre, but also that the kind of theatre Sculthorpe envisages has no need of a dramatist:

Sun Opera

Ape - Devil as Prometheus - Icarus and Sun Alone - eagle eating liver - a small man in a vast landscape. Trouble with this: where is the drama? Singing? Does he call for a song etc? But why? Why? Too expressionist? Not enough cool? Where is the Eastern quality?

(I'd like to play Eastern detached quality against expressionist).

Ape - Devil - very clear and sharp orders - Fragments of his past - bits and pieces come back as he struggles forward - they drop into place, grown contorted, distorted, etc.

He starts them off - No - can't adapt *Comedy*²² in this direct way. He wants to hear the sun - yet it burns into him. He calls out "the Sun". He can't move (Nothing dramatic here. It could get so boring once audience get the idea - In *Comedy* there was double source of tension - him, and what the others were actually *doing* - tension because he was making them do things. But here? No reason for them to mime all this etc. I can select texts for Peter - but otherwise no need for me.²³

²¹ Letter to the writer, undated.

²² Here Josipovici is referring to one of his own theatre pieces.

²³ Notes for "The Sun".

Thus the end of the collaboration was prophesied. Sculthorpe wrote on January 5, 1972:

I've just disposed of my seventh librettist! No. 8 will be a little hard to dispose of. I'm No. 8. Everything was amicable with Gabriel; but as he forced me to examine myself, to really probe, in order to make our collaboration work, it became very clear to both of us that I must be my own writer or ideas person. What is exciting is that I'm now working on a fantastic idea that combines the Requiem that I want to write with all kinds of electronic manipulation of sound and, above all, uses a kind of Pacific Mythology that I'm inventing. This sounds crazy and complicated, but it is, in fact, very simple (perhaps crazy), and I'll tell you more as it takes a little more shape I'm ecstatic about the whole venture, for the first time, and although the burden of work ahead is greater than I'd hoped for, I do feel as though a burden has been taken from me, the burden of seven librettists in eight years.²⁴

The Use of Requiem Texts

Sculthorpe's attraction to the Requiem is a many-faceted phenomenon. It stems principally from a belief that the Mass is the only religious ritual common to all Western cultures and that, by extension, Latin is the only common ritual language. Sculthorpe argues that the Mass is the only ritual and symbolic structure possessed by Western man and that the Mass setting is therefore the only symbolic musical structure. The Requiem Mass is of special significance since the parts of the liturgy which can be set to music are additional to those of the Common Mass. European composers have favoured the Requiem more than any other special Mass or day of the Liturgical Calendar because it has been consistently commissioned on the deaths of prominent clergy and citizens and because, unlike most complete settings, it may be celebrated on almost all days of the Liturgical Calendar. Thus there is a rich tradition of Requiem settings which culminates in the nineteenth century with Verdi, Brahms and Fauré and in the twentieth century with Britten, Stravinsky and Ligeti. In the West,

²⁴ Letter to the writer. The sixth librettist was the poet, Rodney Hall, who produced an elaborate script and scenario for a work on William Bligh; little collaboration ensued.

moreover, the rituals associated with death are probably preserved more than rituals connected with any other event. The reason they have remained relatively intact is undoubtedly connected with Western man's fear of death which has resulted from his virtual rejection of God (world order) and espousal of humanism (knowledge, progress). Sculthorpe explores this idea in a letter dated February, 1972:

Some people have been disturbed about the idea of underpinning the work with *Requiem*; if the idea disturbs then it's working. Sitting at my desk here in Glynde, looking across to the Downs, it has become very clear that modern man's (Western man's) sickness and anxiety is caused by his flight from death, and his subsequent invention of Time, and of History. Death is a part of life, or as Freud has written "The goal of all life is death",²⁵ and I believe that until Western man comes to grips with this fact, then he is doomed. But can one imagine any Post-Renaissance state affirming a stability of economics and population and an end to progress?²⁶

Les Rites de Passage

The turning point in the evolution of the opera was the discovery of Arnold van Gennep's *Les Rites de Passage* and a subsequent immersion in the study of anthropology and comparative religion. Sculthorpe's initial attraction to van Gennep's work was to the title but the connection between the *Requiem* and the notion of "rites of passage" is very obvious. He has written of the relationship between his opera and anthropology:

. . . the work is a return to the idea of drama as ritual. It is important to any understanding of it to realise that it grew not from myth or folk tale, legend or romance, but from an anthropological work. . . . The life of an individual in any society, past or present, is made up of a series of transitions from, for instance, one age to another, one occupation to another, one social situation to another. Van Gennep discusses the fact that when an individual moves from one stable form of social structure to another, he passes through a period in which he is a member of neither of the two stable groups. It is with this period that certain ceremonies are associated, ceremonies whose function it is to ease the transition of the individual and also to safeguard the stable groups from disturbance. These

²⁵ Much of Sculthorpe's thinking at this time was influenced by Norman O. Brown's *Life Against Death: a Psychoanalytical View of History* (London, 1959).

²⁶ Letter to the writer, February, 1972.

ceremonies van Gennep calls "rites of passage", a term now commonly used by anthropologist. . . . Van Gennep argues that all ceremonies dealing with movement into a new status, such as pregnancy and childbirth, during adolescence, at betrothals and marriages, and at funerals, as well as at ordinations and installations, and also at changes of season, display a common order. First there is a separation from the previous condition, then a marginal period and then an aggregation to the new condition. These are known as rites of separation, rites of transition and rites of incorporation. . . . A great part of my opera, then, is concerned with the essence of these rites. It is a ceremony in which performers and audience share in the formal unfurling of what I believe to be a deeply significant pattern.²⁷

The decision to make a ritual theatre piece out of this material meant that the Requiem movements would alternate with what would be called "rites" movements; but Sculthorpe gradually dismissed the idea of the Requiem in favour of something more life-affirming, and perhaps more theatrically exciting. In any case the Requiem is a specific example of a rite of passage and its inclusion would have unbalanced the structure of meaning in the work.²⁸

The shift of attention was, from a theological point of view, quite dramatic: from the liturgy of the Requiem to texts taken from Oration IV of Julian the Apostate, the last pagan emperor of Rome (from 361-363 A.D.), a man who interrupted the short line of Christian emperors from Constantine and who immediately preceded the period of the beginning of Christian political supremacy. Julian is a refreshing figure against the background of politics of the time. His predecessors had embraced Christianity for reasons of expediency but this had created considerable tension within the clerical hierarchy of the Church who now had access to State wealth. His apostacy momentarily neutralised this situation since he favoured none of

²⁷ Peter Sculthorpe, "Rites of Passage," *Opera Australia*, 3 (July 1974), 31-32.

²⁸ In Sculthorpe's plan for the work the order of movements was: Requiem, Birth, Requiem, Puberty, Requiem, Marriage, Requiem, Rebirth, Requiem. The stage of "Death" is conspicuously missing from the Birth, Puberty, Marriage, Rebirth sequence presumably because the Requiem movements were felt to have been compensation, or else that the inclusion of "Death" would have seemed redundant.

the factions.

Undoubtedly Sculthorpe was attracted to Julian's *Oration IV* because it is a hymn to the "sovereign sun" (Julian's paganism was tantamount to sun worship), but the poetic quality of the text is remarkably similar to that of D. H. Lawrence's *Sun in Me*, a poem set by the composer in *Sun* (1958) and used as a basis for the violin solo at the end of *Irkanda IV*. His enthusiasm for the text is evident from a letter dated February 6, 1972:

. . . the words in the pit are from the Emperor Julian 's . . . 'Upon the Sovereign Sun', the sun being a kind of combination of Mithras and Helios. You must agree that this for instance, is quite splendid:

Within himself he comprehends the ungenerated
cause of things generated, and the unchanging,
unfading source of things eternal . . .

I've paraphrased and ellided many of the ideas, and the writings are now being translated into Latin, a more resonant language for singing, I find, than the original Greek.²⁹

Boethius' *The Consolation of Philosophy*

The reference to the orchestral pit indicates that the composer had already decided upon his concept of "two separate planes, or areas, of activity": the stage, for the rites, which represent change (rites of passage) and the pit for the sun canticles, representing "the permanence of love, of goodness and God-ness." These phrases have been extracted from writing by Sculthorpe on the final form of *Rites of Passage*³⁰ but they are equally as pertinent here. In a letter written at the end of May Sculthorpe announced that he had "changed loyalties", from the Emperor Julian to Boethius.³¹ The change of loyalty does not seem to significantly change the tenor of the philosophy. The text chosen by Sculthorpe from Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae* (524 A.D.) is, as cited above,

²⁹ Letter to the writer, February 6, 1972.

³⁰ *Opera Australia*, p.31.

³¹ Letter to the writer, May 29, 1972.

concerned with "the permanence of love, of goodness and Godness". Despite the similarities, however, the density of Boethius' philosophy and the quality of his writing far overshadows the bombast of Julian's ritual hymn. Boethius encompassed more of the totality of Western thought than any of his predecessors for, although he was a Christian, his viewpoint was largely Platonic; but his Platonism differed from say that of St. Augustine in that the latter used it primarily as a model for arguments against heresy. Boethius' world view is a purely philosophical one, free from prejudice or political connivance. Bertrand Russell sums up his qualities in an extremely eulogistic manner:

It may be that his freedom from superstition was not so exceptional in Roman aristocratic families as elsewhere; but its combination with great learning and zeal for the public good was unique in that age. During the two centuries before his time and the ten centuries after it, I cannot think of any European man of learning so free from superstition and fanaticism. Nor are his merits merely negative; his survey is lofty, disinterested and sublime. He would have been remarkable in any age; in the age in which he lived, he is utterly amazing.³²

Boethius, a Roman senator, wrote his *Consolation of Philosophy* in prison under sentence of death for suspected treason against his friend, Theodoric, King of Italy and the Goths. Considering the circumstances it is remarkable, as Russell notes, that there is "no trace of the superstition or morbidity of the age, no obsession with sin, no excessive straining after the unattainable." He adds that there is "perfect philosophic calm - so much so that, if the book had been written in prosperity, it might almost have been called smug".³³ Boethius divides the work into prose sections in which he himself speaks, and alternates these with verse sections in which Philosophy answers. It is one of the latter which Sculthorpe has chosen as his text. Below, a word-for-word translation of the Latin is given in addition to a more poetic translation which is usually attributed to the architect John Thorpe (1570-1610):

³²Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* (London, 1961), pp.369-370.

³³*Ibid*, p.368

Quod mundus stabili fide
 Concordes variat vices,
 Quod pugnantia semina
 Foedus perpetuum tenent,
 Quod Phoebus roseum diem
 Curru provehit aureo
 Ut quas duxerit Hesperos
 Phoebe noctibus imperet,
 Ut fluctus avidium mare
 Certo fine coerceat,
 Ne terris liceat vagis

Latos tendere terminos,
 Hanc rerum seriem ligat
 Terras ac pelagus regens
 Et caelo imperitans amor.

Hic si frena remiserit,
 Quidquid nunc amat invicem
 Bellum continuo geret
 Et quam nunc socia fide
 Pulchris motibus incitant,
 Certent solvere machinam

Hic sancto populos quoque
 Iunctos foedere continet,
 Hic et coniugii sacrum
 Castis nectit amoribus,
 Hic fidis etiam sua
 Dictat iura sodalibus.
 O felix hominum genus,
 Si vestros animos amor
 Quo caelum regitur regat.

That the world with stable faith
 Harmonious changes its turns,
 That the warring principles
 A treaty perpetual hold,
 That the sun the rosy day
 In chariot carry on golden,
 So that which leads the evening star
 The moon the nights should rule,
 So that its waves the greedy sea
 With a fixed boundary may compel
 So that not to the lands it may be
 allowed wandering.

Broad to extend its boundaries,
 This of things succession binds
 Lands and oceans ruling
 And heaven ruling love.

It if the reins should relax,
 Whatsoever now love mutually
 War continually would wage,
 And which now with friendly faith
 With lovely motions they move,
 They would contend to destroy the
 structure.

It in sacred the peoples also
 Joined in treaty keeps together,
 Hand of marriage the rite
 With chaste weaves loves
 It its faithful to its
 Gives laws companions.
 O happy of men race
 If your hearts love
 By which the heaven is ruled shall
 rule.

That this fair world in settled course
 her several forms should vary,
 That a perpetual law should tame the
 fighting seeds of things,
 That Phoebus should the rosy day in
 his bright chariot carry,
 That Phoebe should govern the nights
 which Hesperus forth brings,
 That to the floods of greedy seas are
 certain bounds assigned,
 Which to them, lest they usurp too
 much upon the earth, debar,
 Love ruling heaven, and earth, and
 seas, them in this course doth bind.

And if at once let loose their reins
 their friendship turn to war,
 Tearing the world whose ordered form
 their quiet motions bear.
 By it all holy laws are made and
 marriage rites are tied,
 By it is faithful friendship joined
 How happy mortals were
 If that pure love did guide their minds,
 which heavenly spheres doth guide.³⁴

³⁴ Ed. William Anderson (Arundel, 1963), p.59.

Love, then, is equated with God and with universal order; and conjugal love and friendship are seen as earthly reflections of this divine structure. Human happiness is also equated with love, not with pleasure or with its reverse, abstention from sin.

Rites of Passage is a religious statement of a very personal nature: the juxtaposition of Boethius with primitive ritual was a way, arrived at with considerable difficulty, in which Sculthorpe's own philosophy could achieve a legitimate expression. To compose a Requiem Mass or even to use its text in some way in a wider context would perhaps misrepresent him because, although he recognises the Latin liturgy as the foundation-stone of Christian ritual, and, although he admits being spiritually attached to it as a European man, he is not sympathetic with the moral, psychological and political character of Catholicism. To compose a Requiem would be to divorce Christianity from its grave historical implications, to ignore the effect the Church has had upon the Western consciousness. Furthermore, despite the symbolic importance of the sun in Sculthorpe's world view, it would be equally misleading for him to set texts from the Emperor Julian for they are, in a sense, only peripheral to Western philosophy. Undoubtedly Julian is an interesting figure of his time but he could legitimately be discussed as a fourth century eccentric. Put simply, Boethius embodies an extraordinary degree of Western thought, from antiquity to the times in which he lived, but is unpolluted by guilt. In this sense his outlook is also Eastern, and thus in accord with Sculthorpe's conception of his own artistic position. Perhaps more important is Boethius' complete view of nature, his Pantheism, which correlates with Sculthorpe's belief in the landscape of Australia, in the elements, and in the sun. Boethius' very personality, his calm in the face of torture and imminent execution, is akin to the Australian theme of the solitary figure in the landscape, a man who is in complete harmony with his environment.

The Significance of Primitive Ritual

It is at this point that the anthropological aspect of *Rites of Passage* meets the philosophical substance suggested by the Boethius text. Primitive societies have the most complete religious union with nature because it alone sustains their existence. This phenomenon is explained by Maurice Bowra:

Primitive man lives for the most part in the open air and knows the untamed, uncultivated realm of primaeval nature with an intimacy beyond the reach of even the most ardent naturalist, who stands securely apart as a dispassionate observer of plants and animals. Primitive man knows nature because he lives with it and in it and by it. This means that he has a detailed, precise, and practical knowledge of it in all its forms at every season, that at no time can he put the thought of it out of his mind. As a hunter or fisher or gatherer of fruits or roots or insects or grubs, he has a factual realistic experience, which is more intimate and more expertly first-hand than that of any zoologist or botanist. Yet though he knows when animals breed and when fruits ripen, he does not breed or grow them; though he knows what fungi, tubers, and berries are edible, and what plants will provide poison for his arrows, he knows nothing of the reasons for it. His indispensable asset is precise information on all natural matters which concern him in the search for food, and this is based on the accumulated experiments, the trials and errors, of his forbears, and on his own skilled observation and inference. He is himself an actor on the natural scene, and he knows it from inside as one born and bred to it. But just because nature is so important to him, he is not content to confine himself merely to the possession of useful information. He is also a thinking being, who forms theories on why things happen and creatures behave as they do. So, while nature is both his home and his hunting-ground, it is also the seat of supernatural powers whom he attempts to understand, to assuage, and to control. He knows enough of animals and plants to conclude that they are governed by spirits, and though he may have no clear notion of their character, he is sure of their existence.³⁵

The above has been quoted at length for reasons which will become clearer below. Sculthorpe originally intended, as has been shown, to portray the rites of passage by picking out crucial events like birth, puberty, marriage and rebirth, omitting death presumably because the Requiem is concerned with this. Later, when Julian's *Upon the Sovereign Sun* was to be

³⁵ C. M. Bowra, *Primitive Song* (London, 1962), pp.147-148.

employed, the rites became birth, initiation, marriage and death (incorporating rebirth). An even later version included a rite of circumcision (usually one part of the initiation rites). Sculthorpe claims that his decision in the end to employ only the initiation rite was based on the enormity of the concept of rites of passage: it was, he decided, impossible to include all of man's life in one work. The initiation rite is more central to Sculthorpe's philosophy than any other single rite, for in it is contained the total substance of primitive man's world order, and, by extension, it represents, in microcosm, the gamut of all rites of passage. Sculthorpe's understanding of the initiation rite comes not so much from van Gennep who tends to be factual rather than conceptual but from Mircea Eliade's *Birth and Rebirth*:

Every primitive society possesses a consistent body of mythical traditions, a "conception of the world," and it is this conception that is gradually revealed to the novice in the course of his initiation. What is involved is not simply instruction in the modern sense of the word. In order to become worthy of the sacred teaching the novice must first be prepared spiritually. For what he learns concerning the world and human life does not constitute knowledge in the modern sense of the term, objective and compartmentalised information, subject to indefinite correction and addition. The world is the work of Supernatural Beings - a divine work and hence sacred in its very structure. Man lives in a universe that is not only supernatural in origin, but no less sacred in its form, sometimes even in its substance. The world has a "history": first, its creation by Supernatural Beings; then, everything that took place after that - the coming of the civilizing Hero or the mythical Ancestor, their cultural activities, their demiurgic adventures, and at last their disappearance.³⁶

This, then, is the purpose of initiation, and Maurice Bowra's account, given previously, of the functional but essentially spiritual understanding of nature is a fine example of the kind of knowledge that is acquired in the initiation rite. The structure of the initiation rite is rich in symbolic meaning. Sculthorpe has taken the four principal concepts of this rite for his four "rites" movements. These are "Preparing the Ground",

³⁶ New York, 1958, p.x.

"Ordeal", "Death" and "Rebirth". Superimposed on this form is also the pattern of all rites of passage: separation, transition and incorporation. The preparation of the sacred ground is a creation of an image of the world of the time of the Supernatural Beings and, in fact, reactualises this time. For the Australian aboriginal the sacred ground is sited in specially chosen natural environments and is surrounded by objects and images of great symbolic significance in the tribal mythology. Separation in the initiation rite is a dramatic one of child from mother and, by inference, a separation from his previous irresponsibility, ignorance and asexuality. This is performed in such a way as to create a fearful impression on both the child and the mother, for the novice is told that he will be captured and killed by divine beings. This is in itself an ordeal but the actual ceremony of the separation often involves a separate ordeal, an ordeal by fire, for example. The rites of circumcision, subincision and other mutilatory acts are not only ordeals, they also represent ritual death since the novice emerges from the experience physically different; he is reborn a new person. Even more symbolically explicit is the practice of complete enclosure with deprivation of any form of light. This is at once symbolic of death (the grave) and of imminent birth (the womb). In all these ceremonies the novice is unaware of what is going to happen, and is in fact convinced he is going to die. The essential point of this is that the initiation prepares the novice not only for life but also for death.

This concept has an important ramification in Sculthorpe's philosophy in that the Western neurosis or "flight from death" which he speaks of can be attributed to the absence of any legitimate initiation ritual in contemporary Western society. When initiation does occur, as in the cases of the novice entering the ranks of groups like the Hell's Angels, or even a University College, society's characteristic reaction is one of horror, presumably motivated by its own fear of death. In any

case such rituals are invariably only outward appearances of initiations as they do not have a structured religious significance to the participants.

Because the "conception of the world" understandably involves a complex and detailed body of knowledge the initiation rite often lasts for many months, and includes instruction, although this is hardly as dramatic as those events described above. Nonetheless most knowledge is imparted through ritualistic means such as mime, dance or song.

It may be significant, considering Sculthorpe's obsession with Australia, that the structure of a rite of passage parallels the making of his country. There is firstly a separation from the mother, England, followed by a period of transition, in which the national character is moulded, and finally an incorporation into the world community. This process is observable at all levels of the Australian experience. With painting, for example, the break with Europe forced the artist to respond to vastly different visual stimuli. Although members of the Heidelberg School were deeply inspired by impressionism, and Heysen by Turner and Constable, their work established a definite Australian character. With modern painters like Nolan and Drysdale the break with Europe appears to be complete.

Texts of the Rites Movements

The texts for the rites movements of *Rites of Passage* are taken from certain songs of the Australian Aranda tribes. The composer has isolated these from T. G. H. Strehlow's *Songs of Central Australia*.³⁷ Sculthorpe has written that he "chose Aranda because it sounds very like English as spoken by Australians; certainly it is as much a part of our country as the rocks of the desert".³⁸ Although this consideration undoubtedly

³⁷ Sydney, 1971.

³⁸ *Music Now*, II, 2, 13.

influenced his choice the discovery, itself, of Strehlow's book was equally as influential, for the book constitutes a treasury of songs related to all kinds of ritual, and the author's translations are most accomplished. Even though it is the Aranda language which is set, to a large extent Strehlow's poetic translations determined Sculthorpe's choice of texts; the association of the chosen songs to the initiation ritual is more often implied than actual. This is largely because Strehlow devotes little space to the category of initiation songs (26 pages) compared to other categories like "songs of human beauty and love charms" (80 pages); his criterion for much of his selection is aesthetic rather than anthropological: he delights in the comparison of the techniques and topics of Aboriginal songs with those of European literature. Despite the dearth of initiation songs the composer has found songs which are no less relevant to his subject matter. In any case, Sculthorpe has written that "although the words were very important in arriving at the music, *Rites of Passage* is not especially concerned with its text"³⁹. This statement relates closely to Artaud's distinction between European theatre and his own theatre which is based on Eastern concepts:

For the Occidental theatre, the word is everything, and there is no possibility of expression without it; the theatre is a branch of literature, a kind of sonorous species of language.⁴⁰

Artaud advocates a theatre that has a language which is independent of the word, a language which uses only "shapes, or noise, or gesture".⁴¹ Since the essence of the initiation rite is defined by the science of anthropology and since we can understand its significance through its physical gestures and its visual symbolism, it seems reasonable that the text of *Rites of Passage* need not be crucial to its theatricality.

"But words", says Artaud "have metaphysical powers",⁴² meaning that a

³⁹ Ibid, p.13.

⁴⁰ Antonin Artaud, p.68

⁴¹ Ibid, p.68.

⁴² Ibid, p.70

symbol which is potent to man can have no validity unless it can be linguistically identified. Theatrically Artaud distinguishes between the use of words as symbols and the conventional use of words:

. . . this metaphysical way of considering speech is not that of the Occidental theatre which employs speech not as an active force springing out of the destruction of appearances in order to reach the mind itself, but, on the contrary, as a completed stage of thought which is lost at the moment of its own exteriorization.⁴³

The texts for the rites movements have been assembled with two main considerations. The first is the metaphysical implication of the words with respect to the Australian experience and the framework of the initiation rituals, while the second signifies the manner in which these ideas may be theatricalized.

For "Preparing the Ground" and part of "Ordeal" the text is taken from Part B of *The Bandicoot Song of Ilbalintja* which is titled "The Sacred Soak of Ilbalintja".⁴⁴ Although this contains no specific reference to initiation, the idea of a sacred site is crucial to the preparation of this ritual. For "Preparing the Ground" the text and translation are as follows:

wana'tantjila'na
wiəbmi'tiribmi'tei

waka'wawila'na
wiəbmi'tiribmītei

tnimawu'rupiŋ'a walitni'bei
tnimaka'wa walitni'bei

tnimaru'buru'ba walitni'bei
tnimaka'wa walitni'bei

⁴³ Ibid, p.70.

⁴⁴ Strehlow, pp.129-146.

Lo the tnatanja pole,
Covered with rings and stripes!

Lo, the Kauaua pole,
Covered with rings and stripes!

Like a pillar of sand it is towering upwards;
The tall ceremonial pole is towering upwards.

Like a whirlwind it is towering upwards;
The tall ceremonial pole is towering upwards.⁴⁵

The ceremonial pole is an example of a symbolic artifact such as might be found on a site prepared for initiation. "The rings and stripes" of the pole almost certainly have further religious significance but the potency of the symbol for Sculthorpe is its inherent theatricality. In Artaud's concept of theatre "effigies yards high" are an important ingredient of spectacle,⁴⁶ not only because enormous objects are always theatrically effective but also because large totem poles produce a feeling of primeval awe in the Western mind:

A totem, a cry from the womb: these can crack through walls of prejudice in any man: a howl can certainly reach through to the guts.⁴⁷

Thus the text is a source of inspiration for the design of the work; and certain other aspects of this ceremonial pole which are not mentioned in the text of the poem but are nonetheless known by Strehlow, are also helpful in this regard:

. . . a great tnatanja pole was once swaying above the sacred soak. It had originally sprung from the soak itself. It soared up towards the sky, its trunk covered with charcoal bands separated by rings of white eagle's down. A crest of feathers adorned its tip.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Strehlow, pp.138-139

⁴⁶ Artaud, p.95

⁴⁷ Peter Brooke, *The Empty Space* (London, 1968), p.54. Although Brooke has doubts about the artistic value of Artaud's theatricality he does concede that it is effective.

⁴⁸ Strehlow, p.138. In *Birth and Rebirth*, Mircea Eliade mentions a pole, three yards high, with emu feathers tied to the top. This was used specifically for the initiation rites of the Yuin Wiradjuri and Kanularai tribes (p.5).

Strehlow also mentions that Ilbalintja is a sun totemic site⁴⁹ so that, apart from the object itself, the design might be motivated by symbols of birds, flying, sky and sun.

"Ordeal" begins with a description of the sacred soak itself:

wAlilɛ'ritja
 man'tomanto man'toman'to
 wA'latiri'ka
 man'toman'to man'toman'to

White creek sand, impenetrable hollow,
 Yellow earth, impenetrable hollow.⁵⁰

Here again, Strehlow gives a fuller description:

The first layer is said to consist of white creek sand, the next of lime, and the third of a soft yellow rock. The fourth is a mixture of soft orange and red rocks. Once the water has receded to this level in a long dry season the water turns a reddish colour. After these soft layers comes an impenetrable stratum of hard rock.⁵¹

The colours mentioned could be useful to a designer as could the symbolism of rocks, sand and earth. The idea of stratification also follows on from the banding of the totem pole. The next part of the text for "Ordeal" is from a poem which is a description, using similes, of the ceremonial regalia of the Ankota ancestor:

'nomAbau'eI
 'nomAja'tin 'tjeilano'pai
 'nomAbau'eI 'reilano'pai
 'nomAal'bei 'tinjano'pai
 'nomAbau'eI reilano'pai
 'nomAtnjen'ja le'beilano'pai
 'nomAa'kwei 'rkalano'pai
 nomAtnjen'ja 'lebeilano'pai

⁴⁹ Strehlow, p.137.

⁵⁰ Ibid, pp.131-132.

⁵¹ Ibid, p.131.

I am red like a burning fire:
I am covered with glowing red down.

I am red like a burning fire:
I am covered with shining red ochre.

I am red like a burning fire:
Red is the hollow in which I am lying.

I am red like the heart of a fire:
Red is the hollow in which I am lying.⁵²

This is more specifically related to the action of ritual. The ancestor's face and the upper part of his body are in fact completely covered with red-ochred eagle feathers. Thus there is a link with the first two texts, and the added symbolism of fire, which is important in some initiations. The final text used in ordeal is, however, explicitly connected to the initiation ritual:

'ləbətjɑ'pɑu hujɑ'rintwɑ'nɑ
'lətnwɑ'pɑu hujɑ'rintwɑ'nɑ

junɑlkɑrɑ'kɑ mə'bultɑ'rɑi
junirei'jɑltɑ 'jutɑ'rɑi

Ringneck parrot's tail! Sever it!
The skin covered penis! Sever it!

Up in the sky! Sever it completely!
At the very neck! Cut it through!⁵³

The hawk-men of the Lakabara Song were the instigators of circumcision by a knife made from the bone of a parrot's tail. The mood of the poem is one of extreme violence and frenzy, as the tradition ascribes blood-thirsty intentions to the performers of the ritual, while an anaesthetic to the pain felt by the novices is supplied by a vigorous trance-inducing chant.

For "Death" the text is of an even more violent character and quite unrelated to the initiation ritual. It is taken from the Northern Aranda *Arintja Song of Ulamba*, a tale of brutal and murderous revenge:⁵⁴

⁵² Strehlow, p.110

⁵³ Strehlow, p.401

⁵⁴ Strehlow, p.577.

janbo'nei janag'ei karil'ja rakwa'nei lanx'mei

janbo'nei janag'ei karil'ja rakwa'nei lanx'mei

meitjit'jei rkyawa'rei leilen'kei beilen'kei

mangwa'nei pawa'rei leilen'kei beilen'kei

Into putrid soil he thrusts his victim,
 he thrusts him deep;
 Into soil foully decayed he thrusts him,
 he thrusts him deep.

The Bird of Death rises to the sky,
 and will not be held.
 From dead bones he rises to the sky,
 and will not be held.⁵⁵

The choice of this passage was obviously meant to exacerbate the ferocity of the last "Ordeal" selection, emphasising the terror of ritual death through a scatological description of a real death; but the two verses also contain the familiar earth, bird and flight symbols. The Bird of Death, it might be added is reminiscent of the fabled Arabian phoenix which is reborn and flies up from its own ashes. Here one interpretation is that the victim's spirit is reborn into the bird which "will not be held" because of its renewed vigour.

Sculthorpe chose to repeat the text used for "Preparing the Ground" in "Rebirth" presumably because the idea of return, of completing a cycle, is implied by the concept of rebirth. Certainly when the novice is incorporated back into the society, it is he that is significantly changed, not the society; but he also has for the first time a complete comprehension of the meaning of the sacred space, and hence of the universe. To strengthen this idea, the composer, in the "Sixth Chorale", uses just one more fragment from the Aranda language, this time a single word, "altjira". Strehlow explains the word in the following way:

⁵⁵ Ibid, p.580.

It is a rare word, whose root meaning appears to be "eternal, uncreated, sprung out of itself"; and it occurs in certain traditional phrases and collocations. . . . Thus according to the Aranda, the earth and the sky have existed *altjirana* - or, as we might say, they have existed "in the beginning", meaning thereby that nothing preceded them.⁵⁶

Number Symbolism and Music of the Spheres

In composing *Rites of Passage*, Sculthorpe was also dependent upon several other ideas which are fundamental to his creative procedures. The first of these is number symbolism, which has always helped him, as it did Alban Berg, in the conceptual stages of composition.⁵⁷ For Sculthorpe the use of numbers mostly has little relation to the titles or extra-musical ideas associated with pieces but in *Rites of Passage* there is a close correspondence. This work is, therefore, an ideal one in which to explore Sculthorpe's interest in particular numbers. To begin, he has always been obsessed with the number, three, which he considers the most magical of numbers",⁵⁸ and so it is not surprising that, at its fundamental level, his music is concerned with returning structures. The structure of all rites of passage is also a three-part one of separation, transition and incorporation. In addition, according to J. E. Cirlot, whose *A Dictionary of Symbols*⁵⁹ is perhaps the most frequently consulted book in Sculthorpe's library,

Three symbolises spiritual synthesis and is the formula for the creation of each of the worlds. It represents the solution of the conflict posed by dualism. It forms a half circle comprising: birth, zenith and descent Finally, it is associated with the concepts of heaven and the Trinity.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Strehlow, p.614.

⁵⁷ Berg, for example, based the whole of the *Lyric Suite* on the number, 23. The numbers of notes in phrases, the numbers of bars in sections, and even metronome markings were determined accordingly. Berg also based compositions on names of people, using the number of letters and the rhythm of the syllables. His fanaticism in fact allowed Sculthorpe, in early years, not to feel inhibited in his own use of numbers.

⁵⁸ *Rites of Passage* programme annotation, Sydney Opera House, 27.ix.74.

⁵⁹ London, 1962.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p.232.

In Sculthorpe's numerical hierarchy the number, two, standing for dualism in its aspects of "echo, reflection, conflict and counterpoise",⁶¹ is of secondary but still crucial significance; and the multiples of both three and two follow next.

Rites of Passage falls into two parts and it includes three kinds of movements: Rites Chorales, and another kind for the "Prelude", "Interlude" and "Postlude". There are, then, three of these movements, as well as four rites (2 x 2) and six chorales (3 x 2). Every movement with the exception of "Rebirth", which is in five sections, can be broadly sub-divided into either two, three or four (2 x 2) large sections, and these, in turn, may be further sub-divided into two, three or four parts. The composer admits that he was not aware of all of these relationships except, of course, the ones on high architectonic levels, but concedes that they probably exist as a natural consequence of his compositional rules. Despite the disruption of the pattern in "Rebirth" it is fitting that this movement is of broader scope since it represents the emotional climax of the work, and the number, five, has symbolism which is particularly relevant to it. Five is symbolic of "man, health and love",⁶² while the rebirth stage of the rite corresponds with the attainment of completeness in man, emergence from the physical dangers of ordeal and ritual death, and readiness for sexual love. As well, the re-establishment of the world-order implied by rebirth corresponds to *hieros gamos* (the union of heaven and earth) and this is connected to the number five since three symbolises heaven and two is associated with the *Magna Mater* (symbolising earth).⁶³ One other number worth commenting upon is thirteen, corresponding to the total number of movements. This is symbolic of "death and birth, of beginning afresh",⁶⁴ and is therefore closely related to the meaning of

⁶¹ Ibid, p.232.

⁶² Ibid, p.233.

⁶³ Ibid, p.233.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p.234.

the rite.

A second theme which is relevant to the conceptualisation of *Rites of Passage* is "music of the spheres". Although Boethius is not especially concerned with this in "Quod mundus" his world order is expressed in terms of the motion of the spheres:

How happy mortals were
If that pure love did guide their minds
Which heavenly spheres doth guide.⁶⁵

Boethius was, however, very much preoccupied by the motion of music of the spheres. In *De institutione musica* he treats music under the categories of vocal, instrumental and celestial. He doubts that the "swift mechanism of the sky could move silently in its course", that the "rapid motion of great bodies", all revolving with "just impulse", could be without sound.⁶⁶ Later, the astronomer, Kepler, even tried to compute a music of the spheres, basing his calculations for each planet on its mass and velocity. Kepler's music for Earth is the palindrome, G, A^b, G,⁶⁷ this exact sequence being quite common in Sculthorpe's music. It is also curious that Plato who was the earliest known exponent of the theory, based his calculations on the number sequence {1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 27} which breaks down into two geometric progressions of {2, 4, 8} and {3, 9, 27}, all numbers of great significance to the composer. The implication of Sculthorpe's interest in music of the spheres seems to be that he considers *Rites of Passage* to be a contemporary celebration of the concept. Indeed there is a case that the essence of ritual is also involved:

The slow-moving ritual, characteristic of all ceremonies,
is closely bound up with the rhythm of the astral movements.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ See p.164 of the present work.

⁶⁶ Oliver Strunck, *Source Readings in Musical History* (London, 1952), p.84.

⁶⁷ R. Murray Schafer, *The New Soundscape* (Ontario, 1969), p.40.

⁶⁸ Cirlot, p.274.

The Concept of the Hero

Sculthorpe has said that he is not interested in psychological drama because it has appeared only in a small part of the world (Europe) for a short period of history, say five hundred years. He agrees with Artaud that this kind of drama is tied to the written word to the detriment of other ingredients of the theatre. His ^{lack of} interest is further justified by his reading of the Australian sensibility itself:

The Australian has no tragic hero. Ned Kelly, for instance, is anti-hero and, sadly, an embarrassment to the national consciousness. But the Australian has solitude, a solitude that exists today just as it did for D. H. Lawrence in 1921.

My music is about the weather, loneliness and death. Is it coincidence that the paintings of Drysdale and the novels of Patrick White are about the weather, loneliness and death? The Australian has no heroes, no tragic heroes.⁶⁹

Sculthorpe wrote this in response to an idea of Kierkegaard's that "the tragic hero does not know the terrible responsibility of solitude" because "he has comfort that he can weep and lament with Clytemnestra and Iphigenia".⁷⁰ *Rites of Passage* in fact celebrates a different kind of hero, outside the context of the anxiety of European man:

Until recent times, no man could, with impunity, step outside a tradition. In order to understand and be attuned to the world, he needed only to know the myths, take part in ritual and decipher its symbols; through them he was linked to both the inner and outer worlds. The heroic man was not the one who tried to reform the existing order, but he who had the courage to affirm it, and who did so repeatedly on every occasion of his encounter with the sacred.⁷¹

The Theatrical Conception of the Work

The hero of *Rites of Passage* is the initiand, for initiation involves the greatest test of courage that a human being faces. The fact that

⁶⁹Composer's notes, April 1972 (Glynde, Sussex); MS in composer's possession.

⁷⁰*Fear and Trembling*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton, 1941), p.177.

⁷¹Maria-Gabriele Wosien, *Sacred Dance* (London, 1974), p.14.

this is a very different concept from that of the hero⁷² in Grand Opera has led to a degree of criticism and comment concerning Sculthorpe's insistence on the term "opera" for the work. He considers, however, that *Rites of Passage* has a grandeur and a monumentality which is not implied by terms like "music theatre" or "experimental theatre", and that, in fact, these terms misrepresent the concept. In any case, rather than having its origins in the notion of Grand Opera, the roots of this work seem closer to the French conception of opera at the time of Lully which relied heavily on the chorus, the ballet and "*les merveilleux*", or grand scenic effects. One of the beginnings of this kind of opera took place in Antoine de Baïf's Academie de Poésie et Musique (founded 1570) which had as an objective the "creation of a unified spectacle in which music, poetry, dancing and scenic display all played an equal part".⁷³ This description seems to match Sculthorpe's own conception of his opera. The essential difference between *Rites of Passage* and any other kind of opera is that there is no communication between members of the cast by means of words. The dancers present the action by means of movement and mime of a symbolic and often realistic kind; and the singers deliver the text directly to the audience, as if on a different plane from the dancers.

Another major difference is that the orchestra is positioned on the

⁷²In *Literature and the Irrational* (New Jersey, 1960) W. Schumaker establishes a connection between mature Greek tragedy and the Greek initiation rite. This has been paraphrased in J. S. R. Goodlad's *A Sociology of Popular Drama* (London, 1971): The Greek form of initiation . . . consisted, in order, of an escorted procession, a contest or trial, a rending, or tearing as in the Dionysian celebrations, an unveiling of the reborn god, a teaching by means of dark sayings or riddles, an examining or catechizing and finally a festal procession back to the village. All these parts of the total ritual have left an impression, it is claimed, upon mature Greek tragedy. The tragic equivalent of the procession is the entrance of the chorus. The protagonist's trial or contest is initiated by the "pexepeteia", or reversal of fortune, which in turn is followed by a ritual lament, comparable to that which accompanied the rending of the sacrificial victim at the Dionysian ceremonies. The tragic recognition is co-ordinate with the unveiling of the reborn god. (page 21).

⁷³Alex Harman and Wilfrid Mellers, *Man and his Music* (London, 1962), p.275.

stage although the composer does not insist upon this. He would prefer that the work be not produced in a proscenium-arch theatre, preferring ideally a kind of theatre-in-the-round. This is not because he has any aesthetic objection to the proscenium-arch, only that the tradition of Western theatre has evolved certain conventions, like the creation of an illusion of reality, which are outside the objectives of this work. Seeing this work produced in a conventional theatre, one cannot avoid the psychological need for illusion, but a more open staging would restore to it the quality of a procession or religious ceremony, and allow its unique kind of theatricality to function without reference to conventional stage mechanics. Since it will rarely be possible to produce *Rites of Passage* in anything other than a proscenium-arch theatre, having the orchestra on stage reinforces the fact that illusion is not being attempted.

The Influence of Artaud

Not only in terms of staging is Sculthorpe's concept of theatre closely related to Artaud's; there have been several indications in this chapter of his espousal of many of the principles of Artaud's *Theatre of Cruelty*

*Manifestos:*⁷⁴

Imbued with the idea that the public thinks first of all with its senses and that to address oneself first to its understanding, as the ordinary psychological theatre does, is absurd, the Theatre of Cruelty proposes to resort to a mass spectacle.⁷⁵

The attack on the senses, at least as the composer sees it, is intended to cut through the barriers of consciousness to reveal the essential nature of mankind. By presenting the vivid processes of the initiation rite in combination with a text in Latin, Western man's ritual language, he is attempting to re-awaken the unconscious symbolic meaning of human existence. We need, writes Artaud, a theatre that "inspires us with the fiery magnetism

⁷⁴ Artaud, pp.89-132.

⁷⁵ Ibid, p.85.

of its images";⁷⁶ we have lost, according to Carl Jung, the ability to fantasise:

. . . in our daily experiences we need to state things as accurately as possible, and we have learned to discard the trimmings of fantasy both in our language and in our thoughts - thus losing a quality that is still characteristic of the primitive mind. Most of us have consigned to the unconscious all the fantastic psychic associations that every object or idea possesses. The primitive on the other hand is still aware of these psychic properties; he endows animals, plants or stones with powers that we find strange and unacceptable.⁷⁷

Artaud's prescription for the shock-treatment necessary to allow man to "re-assume his place between dream and event"⁷⁸ is one which is largely embraced by Sculthorpe. Although Artaud's themes are, unlike the initiation rite, concerned with man's base instincts such as crime, erotic obsession, savagery and cannibalism, the violence and danger inherent in initiation makes it suited to the same theatrical alchemy.

The notion of the set is replaced by the all-embracing concept of the spectacle. Since there is no longer a proscenium stage, mechanisms such as flying apparatus are inapplicable, and most objects become portable. Artaud prescribes "objects of strange proportions", "new and surprising objects", "enormous masks", "effigies yards high", "costumes taken from certain ritual models", "hieroglyphic characters", "ancient and forgotten musical instruments" and "new musical instruments as tall as men". The essential criterion for properties is "that all objects requiring a stereotyped physical representation will be discarded or disguised".⁷⁹ This accords with Jung's observation that strange symbolic non-representational objects are often instrumental in unlocking the subconscious,⁸⁰ but, as well, it circumvents the possibility of theatrical cliché.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p.84.

⁷⁷ Carl G. Jung, *Man and his Symbols*, (New York, 1964), pp.43-45.

⁷⁸ Artaud, p.93.

⁷⁹ Artaud, pp.93-99.

⁸⁰ Jung, pp.27-28.

Artaud calls for the reform of conventional lighting procedures, claiming that the equipment in use in theatres of his time was no longer adequate. Although he advocates effects which are couched in fanciful terms his formulae are clairvoyant of modern developments like the laser. Among his requirements are "light in waves, in sheets, in fusillades of fiery arrows", "the action of light which arouses sensations of heat, cold anger, fear etc.", "sudden changes of light", "the full gamut of coloured light" and "apparitions". Again there is a definite attempt to avoid clichés of lighting. Artaud demands also, the gamut of vocal possibilities ranging from primal "cries" and "groans" to "incantational beauty". As far as music is concerned the unexpected and unusual are described as "rare notes of music" and "charms of harmony" and the ritual element is accounted for as "excited pounding out of rhythms and sounds". The most essential ingredient of action is that of cruelty or danger, but the guiding principle is the "physical rhythm of movement whose crescendo and decrescendo accords exactly with the pulsation of movements familiar to everyone". Artaud's conception of action ranges from "paroxysms" and "tremors" to "evocative gestures" and "emotive or arbitrary attitudes".⁸¹

Peter Brooke has written that "Artaud applied is Artaud betrayed: betrayed because it is always just a portion of his thought that is exploited".⁸² It is also conceivable, if not inevitable, that the European mind cannot, for cultural reasons, detach itself from the theatre of dialogue. *Rites of Passage* because it is a pure ritual theatre, seems more suited to Artaud's approach than the productions of plays by his disciples like Brooke and Garcia, and even his own projected *mise en scènes*. Brooke admits that another danger of Artaud's approach is that it leads to discontinuity:

⁸¹ Artaud, pp.93-98.

⁸² *The Empty Space*, p.54.

There is a joy in violent shocks. The only trouble with violent shocks is that they wear off. What follows a shock? I fire a pistol at the spectator - I did so once - and for a second I have a possibility to reach him in a different way. I must relate this possibility to a purpose, otherwise a moment later he is back where he was: inertia is the greatest force we know The trouble is that one can easily find oneself firing the first shots without any sense of where the battle could lead.⁸³

Rites of Passage has no propensity to degenerate to this state since each of its events which may be given a violent theatricalisation has a specific symbolic meaning and each is related to the total structure of the initiation rite.

The Staging of the Work

The first season of *Rites of Passage* opened at the Sydney Opera House on September 27, 1974. The conductor was John Hopkins, the producer and choreographer, Jaap Flier, and the designer, Kenneth Rowell. The scenario in its present form post-dates this production but most of the ideas and action contained in it were suggested to the producer by the composer. Flier, however, was not very much in sympathy with Sculthorpe's production concept, preferring a quite abstract approach to dance. Most of the time his choreography had no obvious connection to the initiation rite and sometimes seemed to go directly contrary to the ritual structure, and with little sensitivity to the musical structure. After this experience Sculthorpe felt that a scenario with specific stages of the action following specific sections of the score was necessary. Although the composer has his own preferences as to how the work may be realised, the scenario tries to avoid dogmatism as much as possible. The director is asked to follow the structure, but he can quite easily impose his own personality upon it as far as properties, other aspects of design, and all details of movement are concerned.

⁸³ Brooke, 54-55.

The reason for the degree of non-specificity is not only respect for a director's or designer's creative freedom but also in consideration of the differing financial resources of opera and other theatre companies, and the possibility of production in theatres of various sizes and designs. It is always tempting to demand the most sophisticated theatrical resources, but this, in a way, demonstrates a lack of social responsibility. Jerome Savary, the director of Le Grand Magic Circus, a company famous for its fantastic theatrical spectacles has written:

The Magic Circus was tired of big shows - only rich people could buy us and only rich people could see us - so I have only ten in the company which makes it easier to travel and to play in any kind of theatre.⁸⁴

Despite a huge reduction in resources, Savary's company has not sacrificed any of its original breath-taking immediacy, proving that it is possible effectively to apply the principles of Artaud on a small scale.

Because Sculthorpe's scenario is basically a skeletal version of a summation of the literary, anthropological, philosophical and histrionic substance of this chapter, it seems unnecessary to analyse it. Primarily it is a functional document, a starting point for a director who could quite easily be bewildered by the plethora of available detail. As it may be useful in clarifying certain concepts it has been included as Appendix II of this study. The fact that the various steps in the action are allied to specific cues in the score may be somewhat misleading. The structure of the scenario illuminates the musical structure in no particularly useful way since the scenario was not a contributing factor in the composition of the piece. To a large extent Sculthorpe's alignment of the action to the score is pragmatic rather than conceptual: quite often the rubrics have been located so as to reduce commotion on stage;

⁸⁴ Programme annotation for *Les Grands Sentiments*, The Round House, London, 16 December, 1975.

at other times the distribution is calculated by dividing the number of measures of a section by the number of rubrics. Lastly it should be recorded that, although Sculthorpe devoted considerable time to the devising and perfecting of the scenario, he would consider it foolish always to insist on a verbatim interpretation: the scope for the possible theatricalisation of *Rites of Passage* should be evident from the foregoing analyses of its subject matter, and of Sculthorpe's conception of the theatre. His scenario was conceived firstly as an obligatory aid to any theatre director who was not in sympathy with his aims; but, apart from the advantage of supplying the score with scant details of the staging, the interpretation of *Rites of Passage* still seems best left to a collaboration between composer and director.

Although primarily concerned with a structural analysis of *Rites of Passage* the following chapter deals, where appropriate, with the symbolic significance of certain musical idioms and special musical relationships. The analysis may appear to be disproportionately long considering the analyses of other works in Chapters 2, 3, 5 and 6, but it should be remembered that the opera is more than four times the length of any other single piece which Sculthorpe has composed⁸⁵ and that the degree of structural complexity based on the principles discussed in Chapter 5 increases exponentially the necessary length of minimal structural analysis.

⁸⁵*Tabuh Tabuhan* (24 minutes) is the longest single piece apart from *Rites of Passage* (105 minutes). Two other pieces, *Sun Music* ballet (44 minutes) and *The Fifth Continent* (45 minutes) are actually pieced together from a number of shorter self-contained works or movements.

CHAPTER 8

THE MUSIC OF RITES OF PASSAGE

Rites of Passage is made up of two basically different kinds of music: "rites" and "chorales".¹ Each has its own orchestra and group of singers, and its own special position on the stage. The chorales singers, who also play small percussion instruments are stationed on a tiered platform at the back of the stage area, and the chorales orchestra, consisting of two tubas, six 'celli, four double basses, percussion (three players) and conductor, is arranged in front of these singers. The rites singers and the three drummers of the rites orchestra are positioned at stage-left. The piano and the piano-player are located at stage-right, isolated from the two main groups because the piano is an integral part of both orchestras.² The piano is used, for the most part, as a linking factor between the rites and the chorales. In four of the movements, specifically the Third Chorale, Rebirth, the Sixth Chorale and the Postlude, there is an interaction of all forces, and at the end of the Second Chorale, the female rites singers are involved. The area of the stage, bordered by these performers and the front of the stage, is employed by the dancers; and one part at the centre of this area represents the sacred space. Throughout the performance the instrumentalists remain in fixed positions; the singers, however, occasionally move from their positions. The chorales singers process to their positions during the Prelude, the rites singers to theirs near

¹There are three other sections: a "Prelude", an "Interlude" positioned between the Third and Fourth Chorales, and a "Postlude".

²If *Rites of Passage* is performed in a proscenium-arch theatre, the composer sees no reason why the chorales orchestra as well as the piano should not be in the pit. It is, however, an essential part of the presentation that the drummers are staged.

the end of the First Chorale. The rites singers leave the stage towards the end of the Third Chorale and return immediately before the beginning of the vocal section at the end of Death. All the singers move in "harmonious motion" with the dancers during the final improvisatory section of Rebirth, but regain their positions by the end of this section.

Vocal Styles

Because *Rites of Passage* is only the second substantial work by Sculthorpe involving singers³ it is not surprising that many of the new techniques he introduces into his music are vocal ones; and since the chorales orchestra is used, for the most part, to support and enrich the singing, vocal styles tend to dominate the work. Just as the composer's range of instrumental techniques was treated in the discussion of the *Sun Music* period, it seems appropriate to give vocal styles similar treatment in this chapter.

The First Chorale contains three musical ideas of considerable importance. The first is a setting in which the tenors and basses declaim the syllables of two lines in a strict rhythmic arrangement:

Ex. 73 (♩ = 60) (First Chorale, ©; m. 1-4)

Tenors & Basses

Quod mundus stabi-li fi-de Con-cor-des variat vi-ces

This idea occurs three times in the First Chorale, varied slightly each time to accommodate the number of syllables and the poetic rhythm of the respective lines. It is also found in the Second Chorale and the Fifth Chorale as well as in Rebirth, where it appears in six-measure settings of

³ *Sun Music for Voices and Percussion* (1966) was the first piece with a predominating vocal conception. *Ketjak* (1972) for six male voices with tape echo should be considered as an experimental piece for techniques intended for use in *Rites of Passage*.

the two three-line groupings⁴ organised in rhythmic canon. The most important musical material of the First Chorale is an homophonic setting of the first of these three-line groupings. This, like the declaimed style, appears three times, but with one line per section. The third section is extended so that the word, "amor", may be set thrice:

Ex. 74 ($\text{♩} = 60$) (First Chorale, ⑩, m. 5-18)

The musical score consists of two systems of three staves each, labeled S (Soprano), A (Alto), and T&B (Tenor & Bass). The first system shows the vocal parts for measures 5-18. The lyrics are: Et caelo imperitans amor. The second system shows the vocal parts for measures 19-22. The lyrics are: amor. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 60. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

It is from this style that Sculthorpe derives the term "chorale" because it is based on the hymnic principles of one note per syllable and of rhythmic simplicity. It may be likened to Bach's harmonisations of Lutheran hymns, some of which are of exceptional harmonic complexity. The harmony of Sculthorpe's chorale style is indeed considerably complex if studied in relation to his musical language before this time. Like the Chorales of Bach's *Passions*, Sculthorpe's chorales have a monumental quality: they function like pillars which support and balance the remainder of the music

⁴All the groupings of the poem are in two lines except "Hanc rerum seriem ligat/Terras ac pelagus regens/Et caelo imperitans amor/" and "O felix hominum genus/Si vestros animos amor/Quo caelum regitur regat". See page 164 for full text.

of *Rites of Passage*. The strict verticality and periodicity of the constituent chords also produce an effect of serenity that could not have existed if the texture were contrapuntal, or the rhythms, irregular. With the exception of an addition of a dominating soprano melodic line, the Fifth Chorale is almost identical to the First Chorale; but the Third Chorale and the Sixth Chorale completely dispense with the spoken text in favour of the chorale style accompanied by rhythmic textures supplied by the rites singers and drummers.⁵

Settings of the Word "amor"

The third significant vocal idea in the First Chorale is the first occurrence of the varied settings in the work of the word "amor". In the section quoted above the tenors and basses sing two protracted four-note melodies. These carry only the syllable "a". Finally the men sing the syllable "mor" to coincide with the setting of the word in the women's parts. This is best represented in the Fifth Chorale where all the singers intone the syllable "a" through all three statements of the chord progression while the syllable "mor" is reserved for the coda of the third statement. The chord used for the setting of "mor" is one of the genre of chords made up from superimposed major seventh intervals. Elsewhere in the work there are other kinds of settings for the word "amor". At the end of the first large section of the three-section Second Chorale, "amor" is set with two different chords. The first is dissonant and similar to the setting described immediately above while the second is based on a chord constructed from the anhemitonic pentatonic scale:

⁵These textures will be discussed later in this chapter.

Ex. 75 ($\text{♩} = 72$)

(Second Chorale, ⑤, m. 3-6)

The musical score consists of three staves labeled S, A, and T. The Soprano (S) and Alto (A) parts are written in treble clef with a tempo marking of quarter note = 72. Both parts feature a melodic line with a 'mor' (more) marking above it. The Soprano part has a 'crotale' (bell) marking above it, and the Alto part has a 'bells' marking above it. The Tenor (T) part is written in bass clef with an 8va marking below it. It features a 'div. a6' marking above it and a 'mor' marking above it. Dynamics include 'pp' (pianissimo) and 'mp' (mezzo-piano).

At the end of the third large section of the Second Chorale the dissonant chord is replaced by an augmented second interval $\{a^b, b\}$. The corresponding section of *Rebirth* (p.112) also follows the pattern in Ex.75 but at the end of the second part of this movement (p.103) the harmony of the setting is similar to that of the First Chorale. The end of the Fifth Chorale has a unison setting on c, while the end of the Fourth Chorale has the only other consonant setting of the word (tones A, D, and E in the chord). The climaxes of the third and sixth chorales have, for example an added dissonant bass tone, while the rhythmically independent singing of the unison E of the Postlude represents a different concept of setting.

Despite the appearance of the word, "amor", in only the fifteenth and twenty-ninth lines of the text, it is set in each of the chorales and in *Rebirth*. Indeed Sculthorpe has written that the Chorales and *Rebirth*, if performed without a break, would, "in a sense, form an oratorio in praise of 'imperitans amor' the love that orders and unites the universe".⁶ The multiple settings do, in fact, represent a force which is significant in ordering and uniting the music of *Rites of Passage*:⁷ almost all the

⁶ Programme annotation, 1974. Since the composer wrote this annotation the Chorales and *Rebirth* have been performed and recorded in this way. (W.R.C. - R.03074).

⁷ It is worth noting again that the last three lines of each stanza of the text, that is, the ones containing the word "amor", are set a number of times throughout the work.

settings of "amor" function as cadence points, articulating the endings of important sections and of whole movements.⁸

The Fourth Chorale

Without this linking factor a movement like the Fourth Chorale would seem to lack a strong structural relationship with the other movements since most of its unique musical ideas do not appear in any obvious way elsewhere in the work. The section of the text assigned to the Fourth Chorale is concerned with the destruction which results if the "ruling power of love" is relaxed. All that "move with lovely motion" are thrown into chaos. Sculthorpe's text for Death, the following movement, reflects this idea, just as his stage direction for the singers and the dancers to move in "harmonious motion", in the last section of Rebirth, reflects the re-affirmation of order.

The celestial order is paralleled in the principal musical material of the Fourth Chorale, a vocal texture in six parts for female singers. Each part, sung to the syllable, "a", has a three-tone or four-tone *ostinato*, perhaps corresponding to the motion of a celestial body. In combination the resulting sound is a shimmering texture which has subtle rhythmic and contrapuntal interest, but which flows in quite an undisturbed manner:

⁸In the Second Chorale beginning at m.7 and in the corresponding positions in Rebirth - a non-cadential setting of "amor" appears. This consists of the syllable "a" set to a fixed tone prolonged for approximately two measures followed by the syllable "mor", whispered in a sighing manner. See Ex.79, p.197.

Ex. 76 ($\text{♩} = 90$) (Fourth Chorale, ©, m. 1-4)

The musical score consists of five staves. The top staff is the Soprano (S.) part, followed by the Alto (A.) part, and then three staves of piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 90. The score includes dynamics such as *pp* and *cresc.*, and markings for accents (a:) and breath marks (a:). The piano accompaniment features complex rhythmic patterns and harmonic textures.

The serenity of this texture is disturbed by the intrusion of the male singers who begin to murmur the text and then to increase their dynamic to a farrago of shouting. This overpowers the women's quite dissonant setting of the word "amor"; and, as if defeated by the chaos, the women whisper extremely softly, and rhythmically independently "*et caelo imperitans amor*". The whole of the first section of the Fourth Chorale is then repeated exactly, except that the men complete their section of the text. This time the whispering is omitted and a new section begins which is entirely instrumental, reminiscent of the *Sun Music* idiom, but intended to symbolise the pandemonium of war. The male singers create a battery of harsh guiro and gourd textures in combination with orchestral percussion, strings and tubas but, predictably the women do not participate in this as percussionists. The tubas' harmonic *glissandi* refer back to the strings' harmonic *glissandi* of the First Chorale, which anticipates the statement of that part of the text concerned with Phoebus, god of the sun. The reference in the Fourth Chorale relates to the idea of nuclear war, of man's tapping the

powers of the sun's energy.⁹ Finally the women return with a freer version of their initial figuration but the consonant setting of "amor" which concludes the movement represents a total return to order.

The Fourth Chorale is, then, a self-contained dialectic brought about by the superimposition of two textual fragments from the poem, and realised musically by the use of contrasted material. Apart from the relevance of the settings of "amor" to one side of this dramatic conflict, these settings are essentially the most powerful structural link between this chorale and the other movements.

Indonesian Borrowings and Pentatonic Modality

Although the principal vocal texture of the Fourth Chorale is not repeated in any other movement of *Rites of Passage* it is, in feeling, and in conception, very similar both to the *gamelan*-like figuration which appears in *Preparing the Ground* and *Rebirth*, and to the melody which this figuration accompanies:

Ex. 77 *molto calmo* ($\text{♩} = 72$) *(Preparing the Ground, ①, m. 9-10)*

The musical score for Ex. 77 consists of three staves. The top staff is for Male singers, the middle for Vibr. (Vibrato), and the bottom for another instrument. The tempo is marked 'molto calmo' with a quarter note equal to 72 beats per minute. The music is in 4/4 time and features a pentatonic melody with triplets and a 'a:' marking. The vibrato part consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

⁹ Sculthorpe adapts this idea from Jacquetta Hawkes' observation that the myth of Prometheus, who steals fire from the gods to give to man, is realised in the twentieth century by the scientist's discovery of the secret formula of the sun: the formula of nuclear power (*Man and the Sun*, p.239).



Of all Sculthorpe's *gamelan*-like textures this is the one that is the most unmistakably derivative of Indonesian music: the melody and its fragmentary counter melody (the countermelody is not included in the excerpt) are almost literally transcribed from a Javanese song entitled "Puspawarna", or "Kinds of Flowers".¹⁰ The accompanying pentatonic vibraphone figuration is of Sculthorpe's own invention, although it is not out of character with the instrumental textures of *ketawang*, the genre from which the song is taken. The style of the figuration is, in fact, a development from the composer's earlier use of Colin McPhee's transcriptions of *gender wayang* music; but in contrast to the counterpoint of different *gender* parts, Sculthorpe's texture, in this example, is rigidly stylised. The highest and lowest of the three parts are doubled at the octave and consist of three-tone (and sometimes two-tone) *ostinati* arranged in rhythmic groupings of four notes. After every eight quavers (two measures) the tones of each *ostinato* change; but the tonal centre remains constant. After twelve measures the tonal centre changes to a fourth above the initial tonal centre. The middle line of the three parts is, through both sections, centred a fourth above the fundamental tonal centre. It, too, consists of two-tone and three-tone *ostinati* and, in any of the two-measure sections, involves at least one tone not in the other part. Thus the vibraphone texture fluctuates between having four notes and five notes of the pentatonic scale {E, G, A, C, D}. Although it is possible to prescribe

¹⁰ Nonesuch Explorer Series, H-72044, Side 1, Cut 1.

a tonal centre for the texture it has, as a result of its carefully wrought rules of construction, a certain tonal ambiguity. This is compounded by the complex modal character of the Javanese melody and the fact that the countermelody has a conspicuous addition of the tone, B.

The melody, itself, is based on *patet Manyura* which evokes the mood of ripeness and fulfilment.¹¹ It is, in Sculthorpe's opinion, of a most sublime nature, defying analysis. It seems to be a good example of the subtle complexity of the concept of *patet*, where the mood is not only determined by the tonal centre of the scale but also by the particular melodic shapes and rhythmic definition.¹² A large part of the melody is given below:

Ex. 78 *molto calmo* ($\text{♩} = 72$)

The modal quality of this melody seems to change constantly; it is not until the final cadence that one is sure that the tonal centre is "A", although, in retrospect, what seemed to be "E" or "C" tonal centres could also have been interpreted as "A" tonal centres. As mentioned above the modal complexity is further increased by the addition of the vibraphone figuration which in the first section is centred on "E" and, in the second, on "A".

In constructing textures like this Sculthorpe is thinking of his music in a characteristically Asian way, delicately manipulating only five

¹¹ Robert E. Brown, *Javanese Court Gamelan*, H-72044 (Liner annotations for L.P. recording).

¹² Verbal communication with Suryabrata: see fn. 17, p.20.

basic tones, and balancing related modal qualities against each other. These passages of his music are often claimed to be monotonous, but the composer believes that his critics are "listening with ears jaded by chromatic harmony" so that the modal subtleties are often undetected.¹³

After Preparing the Ground, the Javanese melody is employed next in the last section of the Second Chorale where it is accompanied by a pentatonic texture employing a different series of tones. The texture is firstly used, without the melody, in the opening section of the Second Chorale. It initially consists of a pentatonic chord {F, G, A, C, D} for strings, which is prolonged for twenty measures, and a vocal prolongation which changes slightly every two and a half measures with the introduction of a new syllable of the text:

Ex. 79 (♩ = 72) (Second Chorale, m. 7-12)

The musical score for Ex. 79 consists of six staves. The top two staves are for vocal parts, with lyrics 'Vi quas dux (x)er' written below the notes. The third staff is labeled 'Tenore' and contains a vocal line with lyrics 'quas dux (x)er'. The fourth staff is for a vocal part with lyrics 'a: mor'. The fifth staff is for a vocal part with lyrics 'a: mor'. The bottom staff is for 'Strings' and shows a pentatonic chord texture with notes F, G, A, C, D.

This represents another attempt to create delicate modal changes: the string chord has a root of F but a definite predominance of the tone, c;

¹³ Verbal communication with Sculthorpe.

and the changing two-tone and three-tone chords of the voices cause the emphasis to shift constantly. When the section is repeated (from m.19), a B^b replaces the A, affirming the importance of the F in the original chord. After the central section of the Second Chorale the Javanese melody appears, accompanied by the initial texture, so that F becomes its tonal centre. Consequently, the tonal character of the melody is transformed. In the second half of this section, however, the tonal centre becomes B^b ; this conflicts strongly with the melody whose modality is centred on A. In both cases, the clash of melody and accompaniment conforms reasonably well with Sculthorpe's harmonic principles: there tend to be dissonant intervallic clashes with one or other tonal centre; and these are momentarily resolved before further clashes occur. The prominence of E in the melody means, however, that dissonance prevails; and the particular case of the B^b tonal centre recalls the occurrence of the major seventh chord with a melodic flattened fifth in the composer's more conventionally harmonic music:

Ex. 80 *Con espressione* ($\text{♩} = \text{c.108}$) (The Stars Turn, m. 7-8)

Pfte. *mf* *dim.*

Ex. 80a (The Fifth Continent, m. 28)

Strings *mf* (plex.)

With the exception of a few examples based on D^b and C almost all instances of this harmonic phenomenon in Sculthorpe's music have a root of B^b .¹⁴

The Javanese melody is employed with both accompaniments in *Rebirth*, a movement which represents a synthesis of the special musical elements of

¹⁴ There are other instances of this kind of tonal predictability in Sculthorpe's music. There is, for example, a predominance of the melodic note, C, in passages with a tonal centre of E (See *Irkanda I V*, *Sun Music III*, *The Song of Tallitnama* and *Lament for Strings*).

the "chorales" and the "rites". There are further additions to this passage in *Rebirth* which deserve comment. Whereas, in the Second Chorale, the changing texture was scored for tenors, with an "F" tonal centre, and later for basses, with a "B^b" tonal centre, in *Rebirth*, the two versions appear together in canon, the entries of which are separated by four measures. The double-basses, which originally held a tone in the prolonged twenty-measure string chord of the Second Chorale, have, in *Rebirth*, a three-note, cross-rhythmic *ostinato* which reflects the *gamelan*-like figuration of the vibraphone. Thus, in *Rebirth*, the result of these combinations is a wash of sound, perhaps the most complex non-chromatic texture in Sculthorpe's oeuvre, and certainly one of his most serene Asian-influenced passages.

Some Melodic Relationships Between Movements

Rebirth also includes one of Sculthorpe's most intense expressionistic sections of music, thus bringing his East-West conflict into full perspective for the first time in one movement. The texture involves a chromatic, falling vocal melody set against harmonically oscillating chords for voices and instruments:

Ex. 81 (♩ = 60)

The musical score for Ex. 81 consists of three staves: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), and Double Bass (A.B.). The tempo is marked as ♩ = 60. The Soprano part begins with a melodic line in G major, marked *mp*, with a dynamic of *a:*. The Alto and Double Bass parts provide harmonic support with oscillating chords. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of 12 measures.

This passage, together with the chorale style and the "Lament" from the end of *Death* will be examined in detail in a section concerning harmony later in this chapter. "Lament" was, in fact, the first music written for *Rites of Passage*, and originally carried the text used for the First Chorale. Its distinctively funereal mood probably derived from the former plan to incorporate the liturgy of the Requiem. Although it exists almost

as an independent piece in the work, since it is never repeated, the predominance of the falling semitone in the melody means that it is intimately related to the many sections of the work which rely on this motive. The most prominent of these forms the introduction to Ordeal and, in a variation, the introduction to Rebirth:

Ex. 82 ($\text{♩} = c. 52$)

(Death, Lament, (H), m. 2-5)



Ex. 83

 $(\text{♩} = 56)$

(Ordeal, (A), 2-4)



The slow static melody from Ordeal has a quality similar to the music of Zen Buddhist chant (particularly *shomyo*) and early *Shakuhachi* music. Although it is certainly a subconscious influence, there are, in fact, many similarities between the idea of this section and *Koku*, a twelfth century piece for two *shakuhachis* (in unison) and temple bell.¹⁵ The elongated two-note fragments of adjacent tones is common to both but even the intermittent bell-stroke is replaced in Ordeal by delicate conga-head *glissandi* and sounds produced on the piano strings. In Rebirth the melody is shared between two tubas in low registers.

Elsewhere there are other significant uses of the falling semitone in melody. The cadence between the seventh and eight measures of the chorale progression has a falling semitone in the upper part; the expressionistic section of Rebirth, most of the vibraphone pitch cues and a large part of the vibraphone figuration of the Fourth Chorale are all characterised by falling semitones. One of the most important examples is found in the vocal textures of the body of Ordeal. Apart from the

¹⁵ *Japanese Masterpieces for the Shakuhachi*, LLST 7176. Although Sculthorpe is familiar with this recording he was not aware of the similarity until it was suggested to him by the writer.

introduction briefly mentioned above, the music of Ordeal consists of a constantly varying texture constructed around two basic patterns for three skin drums. At various points in the movement vocal textures and piano improvisations are added to the drum patterns. The organisation of this music will be dealt with later since here the only concern is with inter-vallic relationships. There are two kinds of vocal music in Ordeal: the first, for male voices, follows the rhythmic style of the drumming, while the second, for female voices, consists of long-held notes in the manner of those of the introductions to Ordeal and Rebirth. The relevant fragments of these vocal lines and textures are as follows:

Ex. 84 (♩ = 120) (Ordeal, p. 50, ①)

Male Singers (H.)

no ma a kye ka ia no pai

Ex. 85 (♩ = 120) (Ordeal, p. 50, ②)

Male Singers (H.)

da da da da (sim.)

Ex. 86 (♩ = 120) (Ordeal, p. 50, ③)

Male Singers (L.)

no ma je ja be la no pai

da da da da u:

Ex. 87 (♩ = 120) (Ordeal, p. 51, ④)

Female Singers

a:

It should be added that the piano improvisation also includes references to the semitonal motive.

Vocal Textures Involving Improvisation

Several less frequently used vocal textures also deserve mention. The first is based on the idea that each performer sing the syllables of a text with durations and pitches chosen at will, the object being to create as much variety as possible. With a large number of singers the resulting

sound is a constantly varying polyphonic texture which would be difficult to perform or even to achieve if it had been notated in a conventional manner. These aleatoric sections occur, appropriately, at the beginning of *Preparing the Ground*, symbolising the chaos at the beginning of time, and after the *Lament* at the end of *Death*, symbolising the temporary destruction of order. Allied to this technique is another idea which Sculthorpe has used instrumentally in works related to the *Sun Music* series. Again involving a freedom of rhythm, the singers employ the pitches of a tone-row, each beginning on a different member of the row. This yields a more restless sound than the previous technique. It is used in the middle section of the *Second Chorale* to accompany the men's rhythmic declamatory style where the text is concerned appropriately with "the floods of greedy seas", as well as later, after the soaring melody of *Rebirth*, where there is further reference to the sea (letter \textcircled{D}). Apart from the settings of "*amor*" in the *Postlude* there are two occasions where this free and independent rhythmic technique is employed on one single tone: at the beginning of *Ordeal*, where it is a drone on A^1 , accompanying a long static melody, and after the tuba duet at the beginning of *Rebirth*, where it is a drone on e .

All the techniques listed in the above paragraph contain an improvisatory element as an effective means of achieving certain textures without complicated scoring. Extensive improvisational licence is given only to the pianist except for an improvisation between *Rebirth* and the beginning of the *Sixth Chorale* involving almost every performer. In this section the dancers as well as the chorales singers and the rites singers "move in harmonious patterns both within and outside the sacred space". If this obviously represents the triumph of order it also signifies the dissolving of the boundaries of the sacred ground, a return to a pre-ritual state or, in simple terms, everyday life. The completion of the initiation ritual is, in fact, a cue for triumphant gestures of human approval. Thus, the

improvisation, in contrast to the staging, is a chaotic crescendo from whispering to a tumult of shouting. The complete Boethius text is used so that, for the first time in the work many different parts of the text sound simultaneously. The vocal improvisation is underlined by a sustained chord for double basses and tubas as well as an improvisation for skin drums which begins as a heart-beat rhythm for a single drum and gradually gains momentum until its violent syncopations compete with the clamour of the shouting. In addition, each of the orchestral percussionists improvise on the range of timbres available from the three tom toms, while the 'cellists improvise, in an impassioned style, upon the series of tones, {E^b, E⁴, F, G, A^b, C}. The section ends at a climax where all sound ceases except for a wash of piano-string and vibraphone chromatic *glissandi*, bridging a gap before the beginning of the Sixth Chorale.

The Chorales Orchestra

The vocal textures which remain undiscussed are those which are additions to the skin drum patterns of Ordeal, the Third Chorale and the Sixth Chorale. These will be dealt with after the following examination of the function of the Chorales Orchestra. Apart from the tuba duet, the *gamelan*-like figurations for vibraphone in Preparing the Ground, Rebirth and the Fourth Chorale, the 'cello and tam tam improvisations at the end of Rebirth and the piano improvisations, the role of the Chorales Orchestra falls into three well defined categories. There are textures in the *Sun Music* style¹⁶ but the central section of the Fourth Chorale (already briefly discussed) is the only substantial one written entirely for instruments. Nonetheless, the middle section of the Second Chorale which involves voices and instruments is one of the most stylistically innovative of the whole work, for it demonstrates the immense compositional

¹⁶Space does not permit a detailed analysis of these sections. The omission can be justified on the grounds that their principles of organisation and the musical vocabulary itself are adequately dealt with in the chapters concerned with the *Sun Music* series and other related works.

possibilities, in Sculthorpe's idiom, of giving voices and instruments equal status. One of the reasons for there being a small orchestral force of six 'celli, four double-basses, two tubas, piano and percussion is that the composer wished to avoid the problems of the orchestra overshadowing the singers.¹⁷ It may be a valid criticism that Sculthorpe has been too cautious in this regard, but it is also evident that these self-imposed limitations have forced him to use the instruments, especially the percussion, in an inventive manner.

The second role is one of structural punctuation. Throughout *Rites of Passage*, percussive sounds are used to articulate the shape of the work. This is not unpredictable in Sculthorpe's music, but the fact that percussion forms the largest instrumental force in the work means that it can legitimately dominate the orchestral textures. On the simplest level, a percussive stroke falls on the first beat of almost every distinct section of the work, even those parts which are unmetrical or noticeably static in character. In metred sections there is often internal articulation to strengthen the symmetry of Sculthorpe's highly ordered structural units, or to signify by way of extended anacrusis the impending completion of a section and the beginning of another. A curious example of this function occurs throughout the Javanese melodic section of *Preparing the Ground*:

¹⁷ Other reasons were the impossibility of staging a large group of players, the avoidance of the gestures of full-orchestral writing, and the intention, through the use of bass instruments, of creating a sombre sound.

Ex 88 ($\text{♩} = 72$) (p.22, m.1-6)

Male Singers: *mp* u: a: a: a: (with triplets and slurs)

Vibr.: *sempre mp*

Piano: *mp*

Skin Drums: 3, 4, 5, 6 (with triplets and slurs)

The composer has employed this pattern¹⁸ to mark the first beat of each eight-measure vibraphone section but, because the vocal melody is slightly asymmetrical he has organised it so that the strong beat falls on the final tone of each melodic phrase, as in Javanese *gamelan* music, and not as one might expect, on the first tone.

The technique of punctuation within sections as short as eight measures finds its most complete expression in conjunction with the chorale style:

Ex 89 ($\text{♩} = 60$) (First Chorale, ①, m.1-8)

S: *pp* nanc re rum se ri en li got

A: *pp*

Perc. 2: Glock *pp*

Perc. 3: Chimes *pp*

¹⁸ Known, for the purposes of this analysis, as Pattern 4.

Because the harmonic progression has no rhythmic or melodic characteristics which necessarily divide it in the way that most of Sculthorpe's metred phrases are organised, the glockenspiel has here been employed to underline the customary division. The chimes, however, delicately offset the serene periodicity of the chord progression. As each of the four chorales involving this progression has three statements of these eight measures, the composer has been able to vary the percussion punctuation as a growth function within each movement, and as a variation function between movements. For example, on the third statement in the First Choral, the vibraphone adds colour and weight to the basic progression, the glockenspiel creates a further division and the Chinese cymbal assumes the original role of the chimes:

Ex. 90

Chinese cymbal (p) (First Choral, m. 1-8)

Perc. 1

Glock

p b b

Perc. 2

Vibr.

Perc. 3

The image shows a musical score for three percussion parts over eight measures. Perc. 1 (Chinese cymbal) has a sparse pattern of notes with a dynamic marking of (p). Perc. 2 (Glockenspiel) has a rhythmic pattern of notes with dynamic markings of p and b. Perc. 3 (Vibraphone) has a rhythmic pattern of notes with dynamic markings of b and b. The score is written on three staves with a common time signature.

The compositional principle illustrated here is clearly related to the punctuating structures of Balinese music; but it is, in fact, a new approach for Sculthorpe since it represents his first punctuating framework without florid melody or instrumental figuration.

One level of variational procedure in the work may be illustrated by the different scorings of percussion in these eight measures as they appear in various places:

Thus the first statement of the First Chorale and the first statement of the Third Chorale combine rhythmically to form the first statement of the Sixth Chorale. The third statement of the First Chorale is rhythmically identical to the third statement of the Sixth Chorale but the latter has the same instrumentation as the third statement of the Third Chorale. If one were to examine the pitch relationships one would find that, similarly, there are variational subtleties on that level.

The third important role of the chorales orchestra involves the strings and tubas. Although these instruments appear principally to be merely doubling the vocal parts, the basses and tubas are, in fact, supplying the crucial root tones of Sculthorpe's harmonic system. Their importance cannot be overstressed: they endow the harmonic writing with a strength and depth which the low voices are not capable of providing; and it is indeed inconceivable that Sculthorpe could compose such a work without them. For the most part, however, the strings, particularly the 'celli, are employed to help the singers perform accurately; the harmonic language is difficult and, for an average opera chorus, even unfamiliar. This is not to say that in these cases the strings have no structural or textural function: the long-held chords of the Second Chorale and Fourth Chorale are, for example, crucial to the conception of these movements. Similarly, the vibraphone and chimes chords, which provide pitch cues throughout the work, assume a vital structural significance.

The Role of the Piano

Although the piano is listed as an instrument of the chorales orchestra it takes part in all of the rites except Rebirth and, curiously, is excluded from the Second Chorale and the Fourth Chorale. In the other chorales, and in the central section of Preparing the Ground, its function is identical to that of the punctuating percussion; but it is also given two short solos in both the First Chorale and the Fifth Chorale, while, in the outside

sections of *Preparing the Ground*, it is stylistically linked to the ritual drum textures. The most impressive sections for the piano are the improvisations in *Ordeal and Death*.

The musical material for the piano is almost entirely produced by direct contact with the strings and other interior parts of the instrument. The keys are used only to raise various combinations of dampers in order that *glissandi* with particular scalic qualities may be achieved; and they are also used occasionally for traditional prepared-piano techniques. Piano improvisation dates in Sculthorpe's music from *Landscape* (1971), for piano with tape echo and pre-recorded tape. In this work the composer was not so much interested in the playing style as in providing, through the pre-recorded tape, a structure which freed the performer from the considerable responsibility of the durational proportions and, to a large extent the actual musical ideas of the various sections of the piece. The specifications for the creation of the pre-recorded tape consist of seven durations which are attached to a typical structure of A B C D C B A where A, B, C, and D are contrasted textures of the performer's choosing.¹⁹ In performance, the pre-recorded tape thus provides the basic shape of the work, and the player is left free to add material which will either reinforce this shape or offset it in some way. Although it is possible to argue that *Landscape* is not so much a composition as a structural idea, various recordings and performances of it have enjoyed considerable success, and it seems certain that this is attributable simply to a structural solidarity unusual in this kind of improvisation.

The piano improvisations in *Rites of Passage* are related to the concept of *Landscape* since they are additions to the highly structured texture of skin drums and voices in *Ordeal*, and skin drums alone in *Death*. In

¹⁹ Originally a pre-recorded tape was prepared by the composer and the writer but it was decided that performers may rather devise their own in order to be consistent with their own style of improvisation.

Ordeal the piano and voices alternate according to the following scheme:

Diagram 4

Name of Section	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
Pattern Number	1		3		1		3	
Forces Additional To Drums	Piano	Male Voices	Piano	Male Voices	Piano	Male Voices	Piano	Piano Male Voices Female Voices
Number of Measures	24	24	24	48	24	24	24	48

In sections c and g the pianist is advised to use material which is based on the melody of the female singers of section h. The structure is also strengthened by the use of similar textures in sections a and c and in sections a, e and h. The improvisation of Death, however, involves a different approach. Rather than an attempt to create a structure by various repetitions of material, the technique is one of continuous growth from soft and delicate textures to loud, harsh textures. The choice of material, however, is largely determined by the performer's own style of improvisation.

Sculthorpe includes the piano improvisations because of certain special advantages of an improvisatory approach. In the compositional concept of these sections, for example, the piano is completely independent of the strong metrical foundations of the drum textures. If the composer were to score the piano part, the notational and performance difficulties would be almost insurmountable. A second consideration is that of spontaneity, a quality which has virtually disappeared from the European orchestral and choral traditions. Sculthorpe has occasionally remarked upon the impulsive energy of some kinds of rock music, deploring the fact that this quality seems impossible to achieve because of the particular evolution in the twentieth century of the performer of his kind of music. Although he is firmly entrenched in the tradition of notational precision, often, for example using various gradations of accents and tenuti for many

successive notes, he places, as a matter of principle or of aesthetic, great value upon spontaneous modes of performance.

The Skin Drums

Apart from three improvisations and a punctuating function in various sections of the rites,²⁰ the skin drums are primarily used in rhythmic textures which are organised according to only a few different principles. One principle that applies universally is the repetition of basic patterns. All of Sculthorpe's music relies upon repetition but with these textures the patterns are repeated many times. The texture, for example, which accompanies the static vocal clusters of Preparing the Ground consists of three four-measure patterns,²¹ each repeated ten times:

Ex. 97 ($\text{♩} = 120$)

(Pattern A)

²⁰ Improvisations occur at the beginning of Ordeal and at the ends of Death and Rebirth. Punctuation occurs in the opening 2'40" and in the middle section (see p.194 of this chapter) of Preparing the Ground, in the second and fourth sections of Rebirth, and in the Lament. The punctuation for the Lament takes the form of an insistent, periodic, single-drum stroke ($\text{♩} = 52$), to be known, for the purpose of this analysis as Pattern 6. This rhythm also introduces Death.

²¹ The different combinations of Patterns A, B and C appearing in the work (e.g. from letters Ⓝ to Ⓞ of Preparing the Ground, $\{\frac{1}{2}(A) + \frac{1}{2}(B)\} \times 6 + C \times 6$) are to be known collectively as Pattern 3.

Ex. 98 ($\text{♩} = 120$) (Pattern B)

Ex. 99. *doppio movimento* ($\text{♩} = 120$) (Pattern C)

There are three levels of repetition, the first being the factor of ten. Secondly there is a close correspondence between Pattern A and Pattern B, the principal difference being the internal accentuation of the measure. Pattern A has an additive framework of $3 + 3 + 2$ ($\text{♩} \text{ ♩} \text{ ♩}$) while pattern B is divisive ($4 + 4$); but three of the note patterns are the same, since the rhythms of drums 2 and 3 are exchanged and that of drum 4 remains the same. In the third kind of repetition there is a tendency for each drum part to consist of a one-measure rhythm which is repeated in the following three measures of the unit. This is so for drums 1, 2 and 3 in Patterns A and B, and for drum 1 in Pattern C. In all three patterns, drum 4 is conceived as a four-measure rhythm with no internal repetition, and, in all three patterns, drums 5 and 6 have a punctuating function in order to articulate the length of the four-measure units. The procedure can be likened to a tendency in African tribal music for each instrument of a rhythmic texture to have a pattern of an independent length which is repeated until a new section of a piece is begun. Undoubtedly, then, the drum music can be interpreted as a symbolic entity in Sculthorpe's concept of a rites movement.

The drum music in *Preparing the Ground* was initially conceived as a rhythmic accompaniment to the vocal music in the Sixth Chorale, and then included in the earlier movement, thus adding another element to the complex structural network of the piece. For the Sixth Chorale a slight variation of Pattern A is used instead of Pattern C, and Patterns A and B are played five times, not ten. Pattern C of *Preparing the Ground* was especially composed to create a rhythmic acceleration to climaxes at the ends of the first and third sections of the movement.

The Third Chorale employs a simpler rhythmic texture based on a similar organisational principle; the six-layered pattern is as follows:

Ex. 100 (♩ = 120) *pp* (p. 55)

(H.) Male Singers
de de (sim.)

(L.) Singers
de de de de (sim.)

1 & 2 Skin Drums

3 & 4 Skin Drums

5 Skin Drums

6 Skin Drums

The corresponding Pattern B is the same as this while the corresponding Pattern C differs only in drums 5 and 6 which form a pattern less like a punctuating rhythm:²²

²²The composite pattern of skin drum rhythms in the Third Chorale is to be known as Pattern 5.

Ex. 101 (p 57)

$(\text{♩} = 120)$

The musical score consists of two staves, labeled 5 and 6. Both staves are in 3/2 time. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 120. The dynamic is marked as piano (p). The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests. The first measure of staff 5 has a piano (p) marking. The first measure of staff 6 also has a piano (p) marking. The score ends with a double bar line.

In the Third Chorale, which is in $\frac{3}{2}$ metre, there is a conflict between the harmonic rhythm and the drum patterns because each measure of the chorale style is equivalent to three measures of the rites four-measure unit ($1 \times \frac{3}{2} = 3 \times \frac{4}{8}$). Sculthorpe deals with this anomaly by adding three measures rest ($\frac{3}{2}, \frac{3}{2}, \frac{2}{2}$) in the vocal parts between the first and second, and second and third statements of the eight-measure unit. The resulting eleven-measure unit (32 minims) is equivalent to eight statements of the rites unit. The Third Chorale statement which is extended so that there can be five settings of the word, "amor" is tailored in a similar way so that the four-measure rites unit is used twenty times. The progression from these asymmetrical qualities of the Third Chorale to the strictly divisive relationship of the rites drumming and chorale style in the Sixth Chorale is undoubtedly an important structural factor, and arguably of symbolic significance, since the slight uneasiness in the earlier movement presages the warlike sections of the Fourth Chorale.

Ordeal

The drum patterns of Ordeal and Death are partly based upon different organisational principles but the men's vocal textures of Ordeal, though more detailed than those of the Third Chorale, are also four-measure patterns which are repeated many times. There are three of these together with two elongated melodic lines for the female singers. They vary in complexity, and differ from the patterns in the Third Chorale in that pitch is more often than not specified. This supplies a textural contrast to the flatness of the drum music and the piano improvisation, which is little

concerned with pitch relationships:

Ex. 102 (♩ = 120) (p. 50)

no ma bau e re la no pai

Male Singers (H.)
da da (sim.)

t k t k (sim.)

Male Singers (L.)
pe pe (sim.)

b d b d b d b d

pa la pa la u:

In this example the texture is influenced by non-European musical concepts. The second line employs part of a pentatonic scale found in Japanese traditional music but its rhythmic and melodic shapes are reminiscent of the slow nuclear themes of Indonesian music, except, of course, for tempo and actual intervals. As a further comparison with *gamelan* music, the first line and the third line are based on rhythmic units which are respectively half and double that of the second line. The third line is made up of a rhythmic idea which Sculthorpe originally derived from the Balinese *ketjak* for use in *Sun Music II*. The syncopated rhythm in the last two measures of the fourth line is a common device of *gender wayang* music, while the fifth and sixth lines have a characteristic punctuating function.

In the search for musical inspiration for *Rites of Passage*, the anthropological basis of the work naturally directed the composer's attention to Australian Aboriginal music, but he found little to interest him.²³ One

²³As the availability of literature was somewhat limited in England,

of Trevor Jones' transcriptions of Groote Eylandt Songs²⁴ later, however, became the basis for a long section of *The Song of Tailitnama* (1974), a work which, for reasons of restricting the length of this thesis, is not discussed in detail. The transformation of the original melody into Sculthorpe's musical idiom is indeed revealing:

Ex. 103 ($\text{♩} = 92$)

(m. 11-20)



Ex. 104 ($\text{♩} = \text{c. } 112$)

(③, m. 9-14)



Although there are only slight changes of rhythm, the tonal characteristics of the tumbling strain are significantly altered, but without interfering with the fundamental simplicity. The B in the transcription is eradicated, and the A, flattened. The tones, c, d^b , f and g of the transformed melody correspond intervallically with the second line of the *Rites of Passage* texture (Ex. 102) quoted above. It thus seems likely that this vocal texture also resulted from the reworking of the aboriginal melody.

The drum texture of the body of *Ordeal* consists of Pattern 1, as yet undescribed, as well as a version of Pattern 3 (Pattern A x 6 + Pattern B x 6 + Pattern C x 6). Pattern 1, which is also employed to open the work, is a texture for three drums, all of which carry a periodic series of semiquaver strokes. Variation is obtained solely by a system of changing accentuation and dynamic gradation. The texture is divided into four-measure sections, in each of which one drum is given a particular accentuation and dynamic pattern while the other two are given unaccented patterns at a flat dynamic level. The first two four-measure units are as follows:

Sculthorpe studied transcriptions from only two sources: *Songs of Central Australia* (Sydney, 1971) and Trevor Jones' chapter in *Aboriginal Man in Australia*, ed. R. M. Berndt and C. H. Berndt (Sydney, 1965).

²⁴ Berndt, p.333.

Ex. 105 ($\text{♩} = 120$)

Ex. 106 ($\text{♩} = 120$)

In the third four-measure unit, drum 3 is given accents on the third and seventh semiquavers of each measure, and so on, according to the following plan:

- 1st 4-measure unit: accents on the 1st and 5th semiquavers of drum 1
- 2nd 4-measure unit: accents on the 2nd and 6th semiquavers of drum 2
- 3rd 4-measure unit: accents on the 3rd and 7th semiquavers of drum 3
- 4th 4-measure unit: accents on the 4th and 8th semiquavers of drum 1
- 5th 4-measure unit: accents on the 1st and 5th semiquavers of drum 2
- 6th 4-measure unit: accents on the 2nd and 6th semiquavers of drum 3
- 7th 4-measure unit: accents on the 3rd and 7th semiquavers of drum 1
- 8th 4-measure unit: accents on the 4th and 8th semiquavers of drum 2
- 9th 4-measure unit: accents on the 1st and 5th semiquavers of drum 3
- 10th 4-measure unit: accents on the 2nd and 6th semiquavers of drum 1
- 11th 4-measure unit: accents on the 3rd and 7th semiquavers of drum 2
- 12th 4-measure unit: accents on the 4th and 8th semiquavers of drum 3

If this pattern were continued any further it would return to where it began; in this respect it is similar in its principle of organisation to the *ostinato* technique of Movement IV of *String Quartet No. 8*. After a repetition of Pattern 1 and Pattern 3, Ordeal ends with a syncopated homorhythmic pattern (Pattern 2) which is also employed to close the Prelude (where the factor of repetition is 4 instead of 8):

Ex. 107 (♩ = 120)

Musical score for Ex. 107, featuring three staves labeled 1, Skin Drums, and 6. The score includes rhythmic notation with accents and repeat signs.

Death

Like Ordeal, the main body of Death (from \textcircled{B} to \textcircled{F}) is constructed from two different rhythmic ideas. The first of these, Pattern 7, is based on the same principle as the fourth movement of *String Quartet No. 8*. Consisting of twelve-measure, eight-measure and six-measure two-drum patterns in $\frac{6}{16}$, the texture continues for 144 measures, thus completing two cycles (The lowest common multiple of 12, 8 and 6 is 72):

Ex. 108 ♩ = 120

Musical score for Ex. 108, featuring three staves labeled I, II, and III. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *cresc.*, *sub.p*, and *mp*, along with repeat signs and multi-measure rests.

The second rhythmic idea (Pattern 8) is an adaptation of Pattern 1 to $\frac{6}{16}$ metre. As only three drums are employed, and since the accents move across three instead of four semiquavers, the cycle is completed in three four-measure units. To these twelve measures Sculthorpe has added a four-measure homorhythmic ending, serving a similar terminating function to Pattern 2.

The structure of skin drum patterns in *Rites of Passage* thus assumes the following form:

Diagram 5

Prelude: Ⓐ to end
 P.1 + P.2

Preparing the Ground: Ⓒ After Ⓔ Ⓝ to end
 P.3 P.4 P.3
 (P.A)x10+(P.B)x10+(P.C)x10 (½P.A+½P.B x6+P.Cx6)

Ordeal: Ⓐ to Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ Ⓔ Ⓝ Ⓖ
 Improvisation P.1 + P.3 + P.1 + P.3 + P.2

Third Chorale: Ⓒ to end
 P.5

Death: Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ Ⓔ Ⓝ Ⓖ
 P.6 + P.7 + P.8 + P.7 + P.8 + Improvisation + P.6

Rebirth: Ⓝ to end
 Improvisation

Sixth Chorale: Ⓒ to end
 P.3
 (P.A) x 5 + (P.B) x 5 + (P.C) x 10

The Structure of *Rites of Passage*

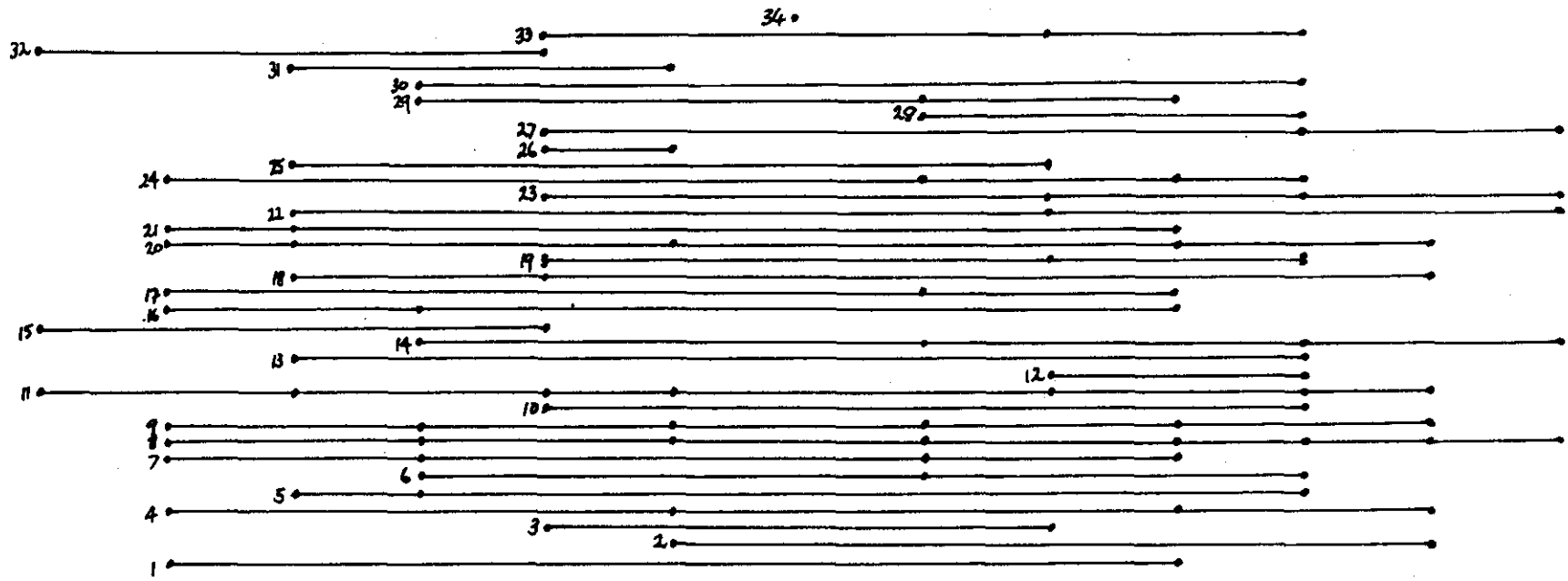
Having discussed, in some detail, the various stylistic components of *Rites of Passage*, the next step is to show how the work is synthesised. The duration of the work as well as Sculthorpe's predilection for short structural units means that the larger structural qualities may be demonstrated by recourse to diagrammatic methods rather than through verbal terms.

A modified structural score²⁵ is included, with a key of thirty-four stylistic components. On the diagram, the relevant numbers from the key for any section of the work are placed beside the cue letter of that section. In addition there is a grid above the structural score to allow easy cross-reference between movements for each member of the key. In addition there is a separate diagram showing the number of members of the key which any two movements have in common.

The members of the key correspond roughly to the stylistic components dealt with thus far in this chapter. It would obviously be possible to break down *Rites of Passage* into many more distinguishable components but, the more complex a structural score becomes, the less effective it is in demonstrating the shape of a work. Each of the members of the key is not necessarily unique. For example "chorale style with declaimed text" (1) refers to the First Chorale and the Fifth Chorale but since the spoken text also appears in the Second Chorale, the Fourth Chorale and Rebirth, it has its own number (24) in the key. Similar duplication appears, for example between (2) and (11).

Since the structural score makes no distinction between repetition and variation of a stylistic component, it is analytically more crude than the treatment of the structures of other pieces in this thesis. Nonetheless it demonstrates the same kind of structural density, on a grander scale, as the *Sun Music* series. The additional diagram showing the extent of structural relationships between individual movements is a further indication of the elaborate structural network.

²⁵The writer takes the term 'structural score' from Willem Adriaansz' research in Japanese *koto* music. A structural score involves a system of replacing composite units by single nomenclature so that the structure of a piece is more readily seen. Ideally a structural score accounts for every detail of the original notation: hence the inclusion of the word 'modified' ("A Japanese Procrustean Bed: A Study in the Development of Danmono," *JAMS*, XXIII, 1 (1970), 26-60).



PRELUDE	1 st CHORALE	PREP GROUND	2 nd CHORALE	ORDEAL	3 rd CHORALE	INTERLUDE	4 th CHORALE	DEATH	5 th CHORALE	REBIRTH	6 th CHORALE	POSTLUDE
A 15 B 15 C 32	A ₁ 21 A ₂ 21, 16, 9 B 7 C 24 D 4 E 21, 16, 9 F 7 G 24 H 4 I 21, 17 J 9 K 24 L 24 M 24 N 24 O 24 P 24 Q 24 R 24 S 24 T 24	A 25 B 25 C 25, 8 D 25, 18 E 18, 22 F 21 G 13, 5 H 13, 5 I 13, 5 J 13, 5 K 13, 5 L 13, 5 M 13, 5 N 13, 5 O 13, 5 P 13, 5 Q 13, 5 R 13, 5 S 13, 5 T 13, 5	A 14, 6 B 16 C 8, 9 D 16, 8, 9 E 16, 8, 9 F 8, 9 G 7 H 7 I 30, 17, 24 J 7 K 7 L 30, 17, 24 M 7 N 29, 9, 14, 6, 5 O 9, 14, 6, 5, 8 P 9, 14, 6, 5, 8 Q 9, 14, 6, 5, 8 R 9, 14, 6, 5, 8 S 9, 14, 6, 5, 8 T 9, 14, 6, 5, 8	A 27, 10, 33 B 27, 10, 33 C 15, 26, 22 D 15, 26, 22 E 15, 26, 22 F 15, 26, 22 G 32 H 32 I 32 J 32 K 32 L 32 M 32 N 32 O 32 P 32 Q 32 R 32 S 32 T 32	A 7 B 7 C 2, 9, 20 D 2, 9, 20 E 2, 9, 20 F 2, 9, 20 G 2, 9, 20 H 2, 9, 20 I 21 J 21 K 21 L 21 M 21 N 21 O 21 P 21 Q 21 R 21 S 21 T 21	A 7 B 13, 14, 9, 6 C 29, 6, 8, 9 D 28a E 13, 14, 9, 6 F 28a G 28a H 28a, 8, 9 I 7, 9 J 7, 9 K 7, 9 L 7, 9 M 7, 9 N 7 O 8, (14)	A 3 B 3 C 3 D 3 E 3 F 3 G 3 H 3 I 3 J 3 K 3 L 3 M 3 N 3 O 3 P 3 Q 3 R 3 S 3 T 3	A ₁ 25, 22 A ₂ 25, 16, 9 B 7 C 24 D 4, 29 E 21, 16, 9 F 7 G 24 H 4, 29 I 21, 17 J 9, 17 K 24 L 4 M 4 N 9, 8, 20 O 7	A 10, 14 B 27 C 12, 27 D 30, 24 E 30, 9 F 12, 27 G 30, 24 H 30, 9 I 8 J 8, 9, 13, 6, 5 K (4, 13, 6, 5) 4-8 L 4, 13, 9, 6, 5 M 4, 13, 9, 6, 5 + (8, 9) N 9, 8, 6 O 27 P 27, 12 Q 27, 12 R 15, 23, 28a, 29 S 15, 23, 28b	A (20) 7 B 7 C 20(8), 20, 9 D 20(8), 20, 9 E 20(8) F 20(8) G 8, 20 H 8, 20, 12 I 8, 20, 12 J 8, 20, 12 K 8, 20, 12 L 8, 20, 12 M 8, 20, 12 N 8, 20, 12 O 8, 20, 12 P 8, 20, 12 Q 8, 20, 12 R 8, 20, 12 S 8, 20, 12		

DIAGRAM 6
STRUCTURAL SCORE AND
CROSS-REFERENCE GRID

DIAGRAM 7

Rate of Coincidence of Structural Links Between Movements

Prel.											
1st Ch.	0	1st Ch.									
P.T.G.	1	2	P.T.G.								
2nd Ch.	0	5	1	2nd Ch.							
Ord.	3	0	3	0	Ord.						
3rd Ch.	1	4	2	2	2	3rd Ch.					
4th Ch.	0	5	1	7	0	2	4th Ch.				
Death	1	0	3	0	7	1	0	Death			
5th Ch.	0	10	2	6	0	4	6	0	5th Ch.		
Reb.	1	3	3	6	7	2	6	5	2	Reb.	
6th Ch.	0	4	3	2	1	6	2	1	4	2	6th Ch.
Post.	0	1	1	2	3	1	2	2	1	4	1

Key to Structural Score (Diagram 6)

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Chorale Style with Declaimed Text | 18. Drumming Pattern 3 |
| 2. Chorale Style with Rites Performers | 19. Melodies Based on Semitones |
| 3. Rites Drums with Piano Improvisation | 20. Piano Punctuation |
| 4. Chorale Style | 21. Non-Improvisatory Piano Solo |
| 5. Javanese Melody | 22. Piano Improvisation |
| 6. Quasi-Canonic Vocal Texture | 23. Restricted Improvisations |
| 7. Sun Music Textures | 24. Declaimed Text |
| 8. Settings of the Word "Amor" | 25. Vocal Clusters |
| 9. Chorales Singers' Percussion | 26. Vocal Rhythmic Patterns |
| 10. Slow Bass-register Melody | 27. Singing on Single Tone |
| 11. Rites Drumming | 28. (a) Whispering; (b) Shouting |
| 12. <i>Irkanda</i> Style | 29. Murmuring |
| 13. <i>Gamelan</i> -like Figurations | 30. Rhythmically Free Vocal Tone Rows |
| 14. Long-held Notes or Chords | 31. Settings of "Ha" |
| 15. Drumming Pattern 1 | 32. Drumming Pattern 2 |
| 16. Tam Tam Solo | 33. Drum Improvisations |
| 17. <i>Glissandi</i> on Harmonics | 34. Aleatoric section |

Harmony

Three sections of *Rites of Passage* represent significant changes in Sculthorpe's usual harmonic practices and, one of them, forming the basis of the chorale style, is quite a substantial development. The 'Lament' from the end of *Death* and the four-measure section at letter © of *Rebirth* are more noteworthy for the structural ideas of their harmony than for their harmonic idiom, which is characteristic for Sculthorpe. The principle involves a sequence of two or three chords with a simple rhythmic motion; the sequence is repeated a number of times, and acts as the harmonic foundation for a melody of a complex rhythmic character. It can be considered as an extension of the well-established harmonic structural unit in Sculthorpe's music consisting of a melody accompanied by a prolongation of a single harmonic idea. Indeed there are signs of the use of a more elaborate harmonic accompaniment as early as *String Quartet No. 8* (1969):

Ex. 109 ($\text{♩} = c. 46$) (II, m. 83-87)

The musical score for Ex. 109 consists of four staves: Vn. 1, Vn. 2, Vla., and Vc. The key signature has one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and the time signature is 3/8. The tempo is marked 'c. 46'. The score shows a sequence of chords in the lower strings and a melodic line in the upper strings. Performance markings include 'con sord.', 'p dolce', 'cresc.', 'mp', and 'dim'. A triplet of eighth notes is indicated in the second measure of Vn. 2.

Ex. 110 (p. 10)

The musical score for Ex. 110 consists of four staves: Vn. 1, Vn. 2, Vla., and Vc. The Vn. 1 staff begins with a melody in treble clef, marked *mf*, then *mp*, and ending with *dim.*. The Vn. 2 staff provides harmonic support, marked *mf*. The Vla. staff plays chords, marked *sp*, *mp*, and *p*. The Vc. staff also plays chords, marked *sp* and *pp*. The score is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature.

In the first example of the familiar harmonic unit the one differing accompanying chord is used to emphasise the ends of the two-measure divisions of the four-measure phrase. The second example, in unmetred style, is perhaps designed to create the effect of a similar sense of division. The alternation of chords certainly supplies a rhythmic definition that the single chord lacks when it appears elsewhere in that movement. The second chord also acts as a pivot for the tonic, *b*, in the melody. It creates a considerable harmonic polarity without disturbing the strong sense of tonicality; the resolution back to the prime chord is inevitable.

It is pertinent to this argument, if, however, somewhat predictable in this composer's music, that the new chord is repeated immediately after its resolution back to the first chord. What the composer has created here is a phenomenon similar to the technique in earlier European music of alternating contrasting but related chords. The harmonic principle in the examples from *Death and Rebirth* is the same: there is an alternation of two chords in *Rebirth* and a rotation of three in *Death*:

Ex. III ($\text{♩} = 60$) (Rebirth, ©, m. 1-2)

Ex. 112 ($\text{♩} = 52$)

In rebirth the tonal centre is E despite the initial A^b bass tone. The first chord, typically constructed from superimposed major seventh intervals, is further enriched by the addition of two lower tones (C^\sharp , E) before significantly changing. The change may be interpreted as principally a semitonal step downwards (A^b , B, G) \rightarrow (G, B^b , F^\sharp) although there are various other changes, and the continuously chanted E remains the same.

Although composed earlier, the passage from Death represents a further development or sophistication of the principle. There is a clear division of the accompaniment into three distinct chords, each exactly one measure in length. The melody germinates from the semitonal *appoggiatura*; but some trace of this motive is found in almost all of the parts. In spite of the chordal nature of the accompaniment it does involve contrapuntal techniques. If one considers, for example, the F in the first chord, its resolution to E is frustrated, but finally occurs on the change of chord. In m.3 the b^b , rising to b^b functions similarly, and also anticipates the last two tones of the first four measures of the melody.

The idea is continued in the sixth voice (beginning in m.4).

The chord in m.3 is slightly uncharacteristic if considered in relation to Sculthorpe's post-Sun Music harmony. It can, however, be traced back to a fragment from the Prologue of *The Fifth Continent* (1962):

Ex. 113 (♩ = 72) (m. 21)

Strings

mp y
(arco)
pp
mp (pizz.)

The new example appears at the same pitch as its precedent. It has already been established that Sculthorpe employs certain chordal or melodic ideas at particular pitches; this example seems to be another case since the appearance of B^b and E with an A bass also occurs in measure 37 of *Stars*, and vestiges are found, for example, in a passage from *String Quartet No. 8*, quoted in Chapter 4 (Ex.52). While considering this notion of fidelity to pitch, the relevant section from *Rebirth* recalls the harmonic language and tonality of the final movement of Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*, a movement for which Sculthorpe has a high regard. Since Sculthorpe has said that he was not consciously influenced by *Quatuor* this suggests that, for him, pitch adherence is not simply induced by familiarity with certain keyboard procedures or habits, but also depends on the intrinsic quality of specific keys and other tonal relationships.

String Quarter No. 9 which was written after *Rites of Passage* and thus, for detailed consideration, falls outside the scope of this thesis, includes a further development of the rotating chordal accompaniment principle:²⁶

²⁶ The relevant section of this work was sketched during the early stages of the composition of *Rites of Passage*.

Ex. 114 ($\text{♩} = 56$)

The third chord is extended by one measure to create a well-proportioned four-measure unit but, unlike most of Sculthorpe's progressions, there are no common tones between chords. The reason for this is simply that the pitches are based on a tone row: $\{B^b, G^b, A^b, E^b, B^b, F^\#, F^b, D, A^b, D^b, E^b, C^b\}$. The row generates the melody from the third note to the third last note in addition to the three four-tone chords of the accompaniment. It is, however, more likely that the row was actually derived from the composition of the three chords. While teaching composition at the University of Sussex, Sculthorpe wrote the progression as one example of the variety of ways in which one can use a tone row. Several years later, having been almost certain that he had used the row from Webern's *Three Songs* (Op.23), he discovered, in checking, that this was not so. Nonetheless there are

similarities between the two tone-rows, principally the large number of thirds involved in both and the dearth of semitones.²⁷ It is rare in Webern to find a tone row involving only one semitone and, even though it would seem unlikely that Sculthorpe, in choosing a row, should opt for this particular one (considering his predilection for major seventh intervals), the coincidence of his conviction about the Webern row seems too great to discount. Probably he began to use the Webern row to construct a progression but, finding that he could not produce an harmonically satisfactory one, he changed the row in various ways until he established the present form.

The progression of three chords bears an even more remarkable resemblance to conventional harmony than the other examples cited above. Each chord can be interpreted as a decorated triad²⁸ and the motion of the various voices is also tonally strong. The lowest voice, for example, forms a triad $\{A, F^\sharp, D^b(C^\sharp)\}$, while the highest has an outline of considerable tonal solidity $\{B^b, F, C\}$. Moreover, in the melody, those tones with the longest value and arguably the most secure metrical placement $\{B^b, E^b, F^\sharp, D^b \text{ and } E^b\}$ are in sympathy with the triadic character of the chords to which they respectively relate. The remaining tones of the melody, especially G^b, A^b, F^b and A^b function as brief moments of dissonance, a phenomenon not unlike Messiasen's tonally complex birdsong imitations which are often accompanied by harmonic textures which possess a strong tonic-dominant foundation.²⁹ This style of melody is unusual in Sculthorpe's music since dissonance between the tones of a melody and a tonal centre is usually associated with the standard harmonic procedure of

²⁷The intervallic constitution of the two rows are as follows: Webern - 3 minor 3rds, 4 major 3rds, one fourth, one tritone, one tone and one semitone; Sculthorpe - 3 minor 3rds, 2 major 3rds, 2 fourths, 2 tritones, one tone and one semitone.

²⁸The first chord, for argument's sake, is like a decorated dominant seventh chord.

²⁹Movement VI of the *Turangalila Symphony* is a characteristic example of the

appoggiatura. The uncharacteristic qualities of the melody are perhaps less noticeable in reality than in theory; certainly the strong tonality of the chord progression is well established prior to the entry of the melody, the four measures being stated four times; and the manner in which the melody grows out of the simple two-note motives preceding it has the effect of a sudden flowering.

The technique, then, of using a repeated sequence of two or three chords became an important structural device in Sculthorpe's music from the time of *String Quartet No. 8*. This last example, however, has evolved considerably from what was originally a static harmonic accompaniment with slight interpolations. It is apparent, in fact, that the idea is adaptable to quite varied styles, and it is for this reason that it will probably continue to be of use to the composer.

One procedure which may fall into disuse because it would seem to lack this quality of adaptability is Sculthorpe's "chorale style". This may be distinguished from almost all his other uses of harmony in that it does not involve melody as separate from accompaniment; the melody is simply the highest voice in a strictly homorhythmic texture:

Ex. 116 (First Chorale, D , m. 1-8)

Soprano (S): *Sostenuto* ($\text{♩} = 60$) *pp* *cresc. p* *dim* *pp* *dim* *ppp* *p* *dim* *ppp*

Alto (A): *pp* *cresc. p* *dim* *pp* *dim* *ppp* *p* *dim* *ppp*

Lyrics: Hanc re rum se ri em li gat

It should be remarked that each chord has the same note value. This is in keeping with most of the examples discussed but it is of special interest here because of the number of chords involved and the lack of any significantly contrasting rhythm such as a melody might supply. The simplicity of the texture and the strict periodicity of the chordal motion give impressions of both serenity and strength. On the one hand, the total absence of Sculthorpe's characteristic suspended tension between melody and

tonal centre deprives the music of the possibility of any expressionistic tendencies, while, on the other, the regular, vertical organisation is reminiscent of the masculinity of a Bach chorale, or even, in more modern terms of, say, Messiaen's "statue theme":³⁰

Ex. 116 *Lourd, presque lent* (♩ = 69)

Unlike the harmonic progression of some pieces of the *Irkanda* period or of *Snow, Moon and Flowers* and *Stars* there seems to be no definite pattern of tension/resolution. The first chord of the First Chorale, for example, could be interpreted as one which needs resolving, but it is followed by a series of chords of comparable instability until the appearance of the last chord which is almost identical to the first. It is illuminating to examine the harmony in relation to the melodic outline of the highest voice. The melody is constructed from only three tones {E^b, C⁷, E⁷}, representing a paraphrase of the principal melodic material of *Irkanda IV*. Each chord, with the exception of the penultimate, involves either E^b or C⁷, and as many as three chords have both. It may be argued that a kind of tonal stability is established by these common occurrences.

The eight chords are related to each other in three main ways. Firstly every chord has at least one major seventh or minor ninth between one of the two upper parts and one of the two lower parts, and thus the chordal quality sounds homogeneous even though it is not as systematic as those passages involving chords with superimposed dissonant intervals. Secondly, with

³⁰Turangalfla Symphony, I, m.19-20.

the exception of the fourth chord, which has no tones in common with the chords preceding and following it, and of the seventh chord, which has none in common with the last, each chord has at least one tone in common with the chords adjacent to it. The predominance of E^b and C^{\sharp} in the melody further strengthens the progression. The fourth chord, for instance, might be unconvincing if the melodic line were not $\{E^b, E^b, C^{\sharp}, E^b, C^{\sharp}\}$ as the chords of the second E^b to C^{\sharp} seem like an alternate harmonisation of the first E^b to C^{\sharp} , where the harmony is firmly based on common tones. It should also be observed that the third and fifth chords are almost identical, additional compensation for the anomalous fourth chord. By establishing reiterative melodic patterns, however fragmentary, the expectation of different harmonic treatments is aroused. When Bach, for example, harmonised a chorale melody which had repeated phrases, he sometimes changed the progression for the repetitions. He also took advantage of the fact that, having established the melodic fragment with a fairly standard harmonisation, the chordal language of the repetition could afford to be much more complex: ³¹

Ex. 117 (m. 1-2)

Ex. 117a (m. 6-7)

Ex. 118 (♩ = 60) (D, m. 2-5)

³¹ J. S. Bach, "Schwing' dich auf zu deinem Gott", *371 Harmonised Chorales*, ed. A. Riemenschneider (New York, 1941), p. 33.

It has already been shown that Sculthorpe tends to favour considerable intervallic restrictions in part-writing. His rationale for this is that, even in the most simple of harmonic textures, each performer should be given material which can be thought on in horizontal (melodic) terms, and that the performer should not feel that an arbitrary succession of tones is being supplied which, in combination with other tones, makes up a succession of chords. In example 112 (from *Death*), for example, the diminished seventh interval (E^1 to D^b) between the two principal tones is avoided by the addition of E on the last crotchet beat of m.3:³²

Ex. 119 ($\text{♩} = 52$) (♩ , m. 1-2.)



The inner parts of this same accompanying texture all consist of melodic fragments involving small intervals. This situation may be regarded as characteristic of part-motion in Sculthorpe's music. It is, for example, not only the melody of the chorale style which is concentrated in this way, but also the other parts; each voice involves at least three semi-tonal intervals while the largest interval, the perfect fourth, occurs only once. In addition there is a high rate of repetition of tones: within each part there is at least one tone which occurs thrice, and another occurring twice.

The eight-measure chorale progression is varied in two ways in each of the four movements in which it appears. Firstly there is a slight melodic variation which is intended to give the effect of a more complete resolution; certainly it is heard as a continuation of the first melody. If both melodies are considered as agglomerations of two-measure fragments, although this way of dividing is somewhat artificial, then the resultant pattern is a version of the familiar A B A B₁ melodic structure:

³²It should be remembered that Sculthorpe avoids the use of both major 6ths or minor 6ths as melodic intervals although either may sometimes occur in broken chords.

Ex. 120 (♩ = 60)

The second variation involves the addition of tenor and bass lines as well as a number of different extensions to the eight measures, including a chord, interpolated between the original m.4 and m.5:

Ex. 121 (♩ = 60)

The continuation of the progression allows the repeated settings of the word, "amor".³³ "Amor" is set either with two chords or with three, again emphasising the importance of these numbers in Sculthorpe's aesthetic. In the Third Chorale the setting of three chords is used three times, and is thus a further example of the principle of chordal ostinato discussed above.³⁴ This progression is also similar in effect to the basic progression of *Stars*. The melodic outline of the first two chords and the identical bass tones of the third may be the only immediately obvious similarities, but their harmonic functions are fundamentally the

³³The word "regat" is similarly set in the Sixth Chorale.

³⁴See page 223.

same :

Ex. 122

(Stars)



The chordal *ostinati* discussed above have been devised so that the last chord resolves back to the first, but in this setting of "amor" the final chord represents a completed resolution. Because of this, the progression is closely related to the harmonic procedures of *Stars*, and indeed of *Snow, Moon and Flowers*; it should be pointed out that this kind of systematic progression dates only from the time of the piano pieces (1970-1971).

The addition of tenor and bass lines to the existing four parts seems to be reasonably predictable. With few exceptions the new tones are a third, a fifth or a seventh below the original lowest tones, and, as such, they tend to reinforce the already existing triadic framework of the passage. They do not seem to change significantly the harmonic character of the progression but rather, in the parlance of Messiaen, function as "tones of resonance".³⁵ This is undoubtedly possible since the women's voices carry an already self-sufficient four-part texture, and because the differentiation, which is normally effected by extremes of register, is here aided by the timbral distinction between women's and men's voices.

The chorale style was an unexpected innovation in Sculthorpe's music since there are no real stylistic precedents; it will be interesting to observe its future. Since it represents the most innovative compositional element in *Rites of Passage*, it would seem disappointing if the composer could not develop it in other ways. Sculthorpe, in fact, began *String Quartet No. 9* with the intention of basing it on the chorale style, but

³⁵ Oliver Messiaen, *The Technique of my Musical Language*, trans. John Satterfield, Leduc, Paris, 1944. (I, 51; II, 38).

abandoned the idea in favour of the twelve-tone style discussed earlier. He now has plans for its use in a tenth string quartet, where the vocal serenity of *Rites of Passage* is to be replaced by the savage intensity of *fortissimo* quadruple-stops on all four instruments. The quality of the harmony itself will undoubtedly be different because of limitations involved in the multiple-stopping of stringed instruments.

Rites of Passage is Peter Sculthorpe's largest and most impressive composition. It represents the culmination of many years of research and conceptualisation, and it is also the first comprehensive synthesis of the many musical procedures that are hallmarks of the composer's style. It is, moreover, one of the most controversial works in the history of Australian music and theatre; rarely do critical appraisals polarise to such a great extent and rarely does the average theatre-goer experience either such excitement or such boredom from a new work.³⁶ Although Sculthorpe couches it in characteristically flippant terms, his reaction to the boredom felt by some of his friends has quite illuminating implications:

Yes ... but I can understand this in a way. They'd also find driving to Broken Hill boring.³⁷

The principal inference of this comment is that there is a certain kind of mental attitude which is closed to the infinitely subtle variations in an Australian desert landscape. The complexity of structural detail underlying what the composer terms "a sense of spaciousness and distance"³⁸ in *Rites of Passage* seems to parallel this situation. It appears, then,

³⁶Wenzel de Neergaard (ed.) "Rites or Wrongs? A cross-section of reactions to Peter Sculthorpe's *Rites of Passage*", *Opera Australia*, 5 (Dec. 1974), 6-12. A large selection is available in the Australian Opera's file on *Rites of Passage*.

³⁷Michael Hannan and Peter Sculthorpe, "Rites of Passage", *Music Now*, II, 2, 14.

³⁸*Rites of Passage · The Chorales* (Liner notes for recording), W.R.C. - R.03074.

that the ultimate importance of this work to Australian and other composers could be in offering an alternative solution to the perennial problem of successfully organising large musical structures.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

Peter Sculthorpe's development as a composer, from the *Sonatina* (1954) to *Rites of Passage* (1972-73) has been marked by the need to create an identifiably Australian idiom conflicting with his particular musical temperament, which led him to be influenced by composers like Mahler and Bartók whose own musics demonstrate an intensity which runs counter to his aims. It is arguable that this conflict is never resolved, but it is also clear that certain works such as *String Quartet No. 8* (1969) and *Rites of Passage* display a delicately poised balance between the two tendencies, and that the essence of Sculthorpe's originality is represented by this achievement.

The conditions under which it was possible for Sculthorpe's music to evolve in this way were primarily those of geographical isolation. Sculthorpe was not only isolated from the nourishment of European musical practice but also, living in Tasmania in his formative early twenties, he was separated from other Australian composers. In this situation he saw the futility of trying to stay abreast of his European and American contemporaries, and set about searching for other ways of thinking about and writing music. After rejecting what he knew of serialism and atonality, he turned his attention to a few somewhat conventional composers who seemed to him to have captured a feeling which was not inappropriate to what he felt about Australia. He was attracted to the music of Aaron Copland, for example, because he could see a strong parallel between Australia and America and because Copland seemed to express a very personal, even deliberately un-European view of his own country. Similarly, a love for the

music of Ernest Bloch was sparked off by that composer's depiction of the Biblical wilderness, reminding Sculthorpe of the terrifying unpopulated landscapes of Australia. From these two seemingly-unlikely influences sprang a music which quickly took on a life of its own, developing in strongly individual directions, both stylistically and structurally.

Sculthorpe's initial attempt to create an Australian music contains, surprisingly, the bases of his compositional craft; the *Sonatina* for piano shows his attraction to quick ritualistic non-melodic and non-harmonic textures and slow harmonically-static melodies. Structurally there is a deliberate denial of the European propensity for musical development; instead there is a reliance on repetitive variational patterns and taut miniature forms.

Rather than exciting his imagination by exposing him to new influences, Sculthorpe's stay in Europe in the late Nineteen Fifties strengthened his feelings about the inappropriateness of European influences to an Australian music. It was clear to Sculthorpe who was at the time able to conceptualise the distinctions, that serialism and other related idioms were the natural products of both the European mind and environment. He felt that a country like Australia with its vast, largely uninhabited and monotonous landscape, required musical expression by means of an uncomplicated, highly repetitious music, free from those philosophical and personal qualities which were the products of European history.

Although Sculthorpe's music had acquired a spaciousness and a simplicity in accordance with his theories about Australian music, a strong element of the European gesture still remained. It became obvious to him after the composition of *Irkanda IV* (1961) and *String Quartet No. 6* (1964-65), both anguished works occasioned by the deaths of people close to him, that, if he were to purge his music successfully of all remaining elements of European expressionism, he would need to rethink his own musical style. So it was that in the *Sun Music* series (1965-69), Sculthorpe minimised

references to European notions by reducing the motivic, melodic and harmonic content of his music. To compensate for these self-imposed limitations, he developed individual rhythmic techniques for the organisation of new musical materials. Although the pieces of this genre, like *Music for Japan* (1970), have very subtle properties of structural cohesion, their beauty and power lies simply in the exploration of orchestral sonorities and the use of ritualistic rhythmic textures. Through these means Sculthorpe was finally able to create a non-expressionistic music which satisfied his need for simplicity and directness.

At the same time Sculthorpe began to employ Balinese melodies and their accompanying figurations; these were used to contrast with his orchestral sonorities. In borrowing from Asian music as an antidote to any European influences, he discovered a music with many of the same rhythmic and structural qualities as his own. Thus, beginning with *Sun Music III* (1967), there is a series of pieces, including *Tabuh Tabuhan* (1968), which display an increasing integration of his own style with that of Balinese music. *String Quartet No. 8*, perhaps the most representative of these works, is also strongly reminiscent of the earlier "*Irkanda*" style, but it achieves its mood of sadness and loneliness through its austerity, rather than by expressive gestures.

In the period dealt with by this thesis, Sculthorpe's most mature works have been *Night Pieces for piano* (1970-71) and *Rites of Passage*. In the piano pieces, particularly *Snow, Moon and Flowers* and *Stars*, the composer was concerned with creating miniature forms which are exemplary of his gradually formulated, but highly systematic, rules of composition. The rules of rhythmic organisation, developed early in his career, are clearly demonstrated; but those of harmony, never as well-defined, are adequately codified for the first time. The oriental spirit which pervades these pieces is not the result of the use of Asian musical ideas, but symptomatic of the restraint with which Sculthorpe has approached their

composition.

Whereas Sculthorpe's theories concerning Australian music were largely developed as a defence against criticism of the impressionistic tendencies of the *Sun Music* series, the composition of *Rites of Passage* allowed him to present aspects of his personal philosophy in a legitimate artistic context. The composer's notion of opera is as un-European in origin as his theories of musical style. Springing from the ideas of ritual and celebration, they are further elaborated by principles adapted from the work of Antonin Artaud who was himself influenced by oriental drama and primitive ritual. The music of *Rites of Passage* represents a summation of all Sculthorpe's previous musical development, but it also established new stylistic phenomena, and structural techniques befitting its considerable length. More than any of Sculthorpe's compositions it demonstrates a sense of spaciousness and horizontal grandeur appropriate, in the composer's view, to the spirit of the Australian landscape.

APPENDIX I

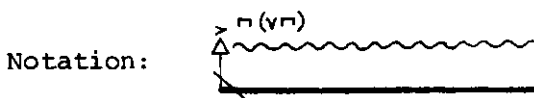
INSTRUMENTAL TECHNIQUES OF THE *SUN MUSIC* PERIOD

Strings

1. Continuous *glissandi* of natural harmonics on a particular string, invariably involving a group of instruments with each player independent.



2. Rapid quarter-tone vibrato.



3. The slapping of the most resonant part of the instrument.

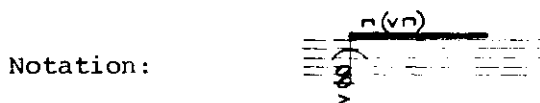


4. The striking of the strings, *col legno*, between the bridge and tailpiece.

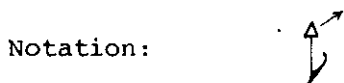


5. Continuous *pizzicato* chords (*quasi gitara*).

6. The pressing of the bow hard on strings between bridge and tailpiece while drawing slowly across.



7. Upward *glissandi* from any very high tone.



8. The rubbing of the bow lightly up and down on open strings.



9. Rapid repetition of tones, *arco* or *pizzicato*, with each player independent.
10. Normal *glissandi* between specified tones.
11. The rubbing of the body of the instrument with fingers.

Notation:



12. Footstamping (double basses only).

Notation:



Wind

1. Pitchless flutter tonguing.

Notation:



2. The use of the mouthpiece only.

Notation:



3. Upward *glissandi* from any very high tone.
4. *Glissandi* upwards and downwards from any very high tone.

Notation:



5. Aspirant blowing.

Notation:



6. Rapid repetition of tones, with each player independent.
7. Multiphonics.

Brass

1. Continuous *glissandi* of harmonics, with each player independent.
2. Short upward *glissandi* from specified tones.
3. *Glissando* between two specified tones (Trombone only).
4. Rapid repetition of tones with each player independent.

Voices

1. Short consonant sounds (t, k, f, b, d, g, p, t, d).
2. Rapid alternation of two consonant sounds (e.g. tktktkk).
3. Prolonged vowel sound of \bar{a} and consonant sound of \int :
4. Continuous *glissandi* on \int and \bar{a} , produced by constantly changing shape of lips.
5. Short rapid *glissandi* downwards on \bar{a} .

Piano

1. Continuous *glissandi* on strings.
2. Clusters produced by palm of hand and wire brushes.
3. The playing of rapid rhythms on any part of the instrument.
4. *Glissandi* upwards from a low tone or downwards from a high tone.

APPENDIX II

STAGE DIRECTIONS FOR RITES OF PASSAGE

- Pre-performance: (a) Enter members of orchestra in the following order:
double basses, 'cellos, percussion, tubas.
- (b) Enter drummers.
- (c) Enter piano player.
- (d) Enter conductor.
- Prelude: B Enter chorale singers in procession.¹
- C Chorale singers assemble on tiered platform.
- First Chorale: N Enter rites singers.
- O Rites singers assemble near drummers.
- Preparing the Ground:
- A Enter all dancers; young men bear totem poles which under guidance of leader, are placed in position to form sacred space.
- B Women move to back of sacred space.
- C Older men, seeking young man as initiand, give young men tests of strength.
- F Young man is chosen; older men, apart from leader move to sides of sacred space; young women exeunt.
- G Young man undergoes process of separation from mother and other women.
- N Older men expel women from sacred space.
- O Exeunt women.
- P Exeunt men.
- Second Chorale: N Enter women; older women re-enact separation of young man from mother and other women.

¹The letters refer to rehearsal cues in the score.

- Ordeal:
- A Exeunt women; enter young men as ancestral figures.
 - B Enter older men; ancestral figures assemble at back of sacred space.
 - C Enter young man; ancestral figures remain in fixed positions; older men move towards young man.
 - D Young man undergoes painful ordeals at hands of older men.
 - E Young man undergoes more painful ordeals at hands of ancestral figures.
 - F Young man undergoes even more painful ordeals at hands of both older men and ancestral figures.
 - G All move to centre of sacred space and young man is lifted high on shoulders of older men.
- Third Chorale:
- A Older men move to side of sacred space.
 - B Young man joins older men.
 - C Ancestral figures slowly advance upon leader in order to enact ritual killing.
 - H Ancestral figures kill leader and bring him back to life.
 - I Exeunt ancestral figures; exeunt rites singers.
- Interlude:
- A Suspended totem poles appear; leader of older men prepares young man for journey.
 - B Exeunt older men; poles begin to clash together.
 - C Young man makes journey through clashing poles.
- Fourth Chorale
- A Suspended totem poles disappear; exit young man.
- Death:
- A Enter young man.
 - B Enter young men and young women as ancestral figures each supporting large ghost-figures on poles.
 - C Young man struggles against ghost figures.
 - D Enter older men, wearing masks.
 - E Older men and ghost figures slowly advance upon young man in order to re-enact ritual killing.
 - F Older men kill young man and cover body.

- G Enter women; enter rites singers.
- H Rites singers assemble near drummers.
- I Women lament death of young man; older men and ancestral figures remain in fixed positions.
- L Exeunt ancestral figures.

Fifth Chorale:

- A Exeunt women; older men lift young man and encircle sacred space.
- B Exeunt older men, bearing young man.

Rebirth:

- A Enter young men as ancestral figures, carrying young man.
- B Ancestral figures place young man in centre of sacred space; enter young woman.
- C Young man is brought back to life; exeunt ancestral figures; young man and young woman dance together.
- J Young man and young woman embrace.
- P Young man and young woman dance as before.
- R Enter all dancers, young men and women no longer as ancestral figures, older men no longer masked. Chorales singers, rites singers and dancers all move in harmonious patterns both within and outside the sacred space; young man and young woman remain in fixed positions.
- S Chorales singers re-assemble on tiered platforms, rites singers near drummers.

Sixth Chorale:

- A Dancers assemble within sacred space.
- B Young man and young woman move to centre of sacred space.
- C Dancers remain in fixed positions.

Postlude:

- A Dancers assume more relaxed positions.

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DISCOGRAPHY

ORCHESTRAL

- Irkanda IV* (1961) Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, John Hopkins (Conductor), Leonard Dommett (Solo Violin).
World Record Club disc R00028 Stereo
Odyssey disc 32 16 0150 Stereo
- The Fifth Continent* (1963) Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Thomas Matthews (Conductor), Frederick Parslow (Speaker).
A.B.C. recording O/N 40493 Mono
- Sun Music I* (1965) Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, John Hopkins (Conductor).
World Record Club disc R00028 Stereo
Odyssey disc 32 16 0150 Stereo
- Sun Music III* (1967) Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Sir Bernard Heinze (Conductor).
E.M.I. disc OASD 7547 Stereo
- Sun Music III* (1967) Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Sir Bernard Heinze (Conductor).
World Record Club disc R03242/3 Stereo
- Sun Music III* (1967) Louisville Orchestra, Jorge Mester (Conductor).
Louisville First Edition disc LS735 Stereo
- Sun Music IV* (1967) Australian Youth Orchestra, John Hopkins (Conductor).
A.B.C. recording RRC 401 Mono
- From Tabuh Tabuhan* (1968) Tasmanian Orchestra, Patrick Thomas (Conductor).
A.B.C. recording RRC 72 Mono
- Sun Music II* (1969) (Known as *Ketjak* when recorded) Sydney Symphony Orchestra, John Hopkins (Conductor).
A.B.C. recording RRCS 134 Stereo
- Love 200* (1970) Sydney Symphony Orchestra, John Hopkins (Conductor), with Tully (rock band) and Jeannie Lewis (singer).
A.B.C. recording RRCS 1466 Stereo
- Music for Japan* (1970) Australian Youth Orchestra, John Hopkins (Conductor).
E.M.I. disc SOELP 9271 Stereo

INSTRUMENTAL AND CHAMBER MUSIC

- Sonata for Viola and Percussion* (1960) John Glickman (Viola), Glen Davies (Percussion).
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- String Quartet No. 6* (1964-65) Austral String Quartet.
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- String Quartet No. 6* (1964-65) Mari Iwamoto String Quartet.
Victor disc VX 79 Stereo
- String Quartet No. 7* (1966)
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E.M.I. disc OASD 7563 Stereo
- Tabuh Tabuhan* (1968) University of Adelaide Wind Quintet with Richard Smith and Bevan Bird (Percussion).
A.B.C. recording RRCS 378 Stereo
- Tabuh Tabuhan* (1968) The New Sydney Wind Quintet with Barry Heywood and Albert Setty (Percussion).
Philips disc 6508001 Stereo
- String Quartet No. 8* (1969)
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E.M.I. disc OASD 7563 Stereo
- String Quartet No. 8* (1969)
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- String Quartet No. 8* (1969)
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Argo disc ZRG 672 Stereo
- String Quartet No. 9* (1975) Sydney String Quartet.
Cherry Pie disc CPF 1031 Stereo

PIANOFORTE

- Sonatina* (1954) Roger Woodward (Piano).
E.M.I. disc OASD 7567 Stereo
- Sonatina* (1954) Trevor Barnard (Piano).
Electric Records disc ELEC 4334 Stereo
- Night* (1970) Roger Woodward (Piano Strings).
E.M.I. disc OASD 7567 Stereo
- Snow, Moon and Flowers* (1971) Roger Woodward (Piano Strings).
E.M.I. disc OASD 7567 Stereo
- Landscape* (1971) David Bollard (Piano).
Festival disc SFC 800 22 Stereo
- Landscape* (1971) Roger Woodward (Piano).
E.M.I. disc OASD 7567 Stereo
- Koto Music I* (1973)
(Known as *Koto Music*
when recorded.) Roger Woodward (Piano).
R.C.A. VRLI 0083 Stereo

CHORAL

- Sun Music for Voices and Percussion* (1966) (Known as *Sun Music II* when recorded.) Lyric Singers, Verdon Williams (Conductor).
A.B.C. recording RRCS 134 Stereo
- Morning Song for the Christ Child* (1966) Adelaide Singers, Patrick Thomas (Conductor).
A.B.C. recording RRC 65 Mono
- Rites of Passage: The Chorales* (1972-73) The Victorian College of the Arts Orchestra with the Melbourne Choral Continuing Choir, John Hopkins (Conductor).
World Record Club disc R 03074 Stereo

ARRANGEMENTS

- Theme from "They Found a Cave"* (1961) Instrumental Ensemble with Larry Adler
(Harmonica).
Columbia disc 7MA 997 Mono
- Morning Song* (1966) Austral String Quartet.
(arr. Sculthorpe) E.M.I. disc OASD 7563 Stereo
- Morning Song* (1966) King's Singers
(arr. Nore) E.M.I. disc HQS 1308 Quadrophonic
- It'll Rise Again* (1970) Instrumental Ensemble, Jeannie Lewis
(From *Love 200*) (Singer).
(arr. Michael Carlos on *Free Fall through Featherless Flight*) E.M.I. disc EMC 2505 Quadrophonic