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TOWARDS THE EVOLUTION OF STYLE:
EINSTEIN'S GARDEN AND SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE SKY AND THE SEA

ANALYTICAL NOTES

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of
requirements for the degree of
Master of Music (Composition)

Conservatorium of Music
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2013

I declare that the research presented here is my own original work and has not been submitted to any other institution for the award of a degree.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to explore composition for dance and opera within a collaborative framework. The compositional works were developed after researching modern Australian ballet and opera. Along the journey, I discovered examples of works that were personally inspiring on a number of levels: in the music, text, staging, direction, choreography, scenery, and use of imagery. The elements that resounded with me were then adapted into my own compositions and those elements are responsible for steering my works in a particular direction when it came to performance.

I conducted a musical analysis of my contemporary dance work *Einstein's Garden* and my chamber opera *Somewhere Between the Sky and the Sea*, outlining the background and evolution of each work, including compositional stylistic evolution; musical aims; materials and instrumentation; structural plans; choice of tonality; compositional processes and collaboration with the performers; to discussion of the particular staging requirements, and a review of the overall collaboration and production process.

In the *Einstein's Garden* analysis, I explored the relationship between Albert Einstein, science and music. In the *Somewhere between the Sky and the Sea* analysis, I studied Portuguese and Spanish music influences on the chamber opera as well as different forms of text setting. I then examined the context of the works and the influence that undertaking musical research had upon my own compositions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my supervisor Dr. Trevor Pearce and associate supervisor Dr. Matthew Hindson for their ongoing support, guidance, editing, and suggestions throughout the duration of this research project.

I would like to thank the playwright Alex Broun for granting full rights to use his play as the basis for the opera, and the interviewed composers Brett Dean and Elena Kats-Chernin, for agreeing to take part in the project. I would also like to thank the performers and collaborators: the dancer Imogen Cranna; conductor George Ellis; lighting designer Jarrad Salmon; *Einstein's Garden* video editor Guy Harding; recording technician Jonathan Palmer for *Somewhere between the Sky and the Sea*; and recording editor David Kim-Boyle.

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Chapter One

Evolution of Compositional Style

The purpose of this chapter is to survey the range of compositional devices and attributes in the works prior to undertaking *Masters*. These original works I have previously composed demonstrate the evolving nature of my musical language, many devices have been further refined in the two major works examined in this study: *Einstein's Garden* and *Somewhere between the Sky and the Sea*. I'm drawn towards expressive music and have experimented with many different compositional facets: scales; pitch sets; baroque, romantic, classical; tonal harmony; atonal; whole-tone, pentatonic, diatonic, major, minor, and modal scales. Tonal music with a twist - mixed interval chords and unrelated harmonies are some examples - can provide beautiful and unexpected sonorities, and provide a harmonic framework that may be slightly less familiar to the listener's ear. This chapter will focus on the following defining features of my compositions:

- Motivic development
- Rhythm
- Metrical structures
- Pitch organisation and harmony
- Metaphor
- Lyricism

1.1 Motivic Development.

Using motivic material in an economic and functional way can be a creative challenge, providing the resultant music with a sense of unity. Motifs tend to recur in many different guises, sometimes almost unrecognisable from their initial incarnation. The means of developing motifs are highly varied in the following works and musical examples, including:

- Variation of small motivic fragments, rather than large sections of recognisable material, to provide unity and a sense of the familiar
- Melodic extension/truncation
- Altering and developing intervallic relationships
- Continual development of one motivic idea for a whole piece

In the polytonal small ensemble work *The Road Less Travelled* (2010), the main theme is a syncopated rhythmic motif that continually develops through the piece (Fig. 1.1.1).

Figure 1.1.1. *The Road Less Travelled*. Bars 1-4. Syncopated rhythmic motif.

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Flute, Baritone, and Piano. At the top, the tempo is marked as quarter note = 70, and the mood is 'Adventurous, triumphant'. The Flute part begins with a melodic line marked 'mf' and '3', followed by a phrase marked 'f'. The Baritone part is silent. The Piano part features a syncopated rhythmic motif marked 'detached' and 'mf'.

In bars 11-15, the syncopated rhythmic idea is restated and extended, now with varied harmony which is reinforced by the following accented quavers (Fig. 1.1.2).

Figure 1.1.2. *The Road Less Travelled*. Bars 11-15. Rhythmic and harmonic development of the piano theme.

The musical score for Figure 1.1.2 consists of three staves: Flute (Fl.), Baritone (Bar.), and Piano (Pno.). The Flute part has dynamics *f* and *mf*. The Baritone part has lyrics: "Long I stood And looked down one as far as I could To". The Piano part features a complex rhythmic pattern in the left hand with accents and a right hand melody with accented quavers. The piano part includes dynamic markings *f*, *mf*, and *ff*.

In bars 20-25, the motif develops through the introduction of a right hand counter melody, whilst the left hand uses a metrically displaced extension and variation of the original syncopated motif, again with varied harmony (Fig. 1.1.3).

Figure 1.1.3. *The Road Less Travelled*. Bars 23-26. Addition of right hand melody, rhythmic displacement in the left hand.

The musical score for Figure 1.1.3 consists of three staves: Flute (Fl.), Baritone (Bar.), and Piano (Pno.). The Flute part has dynamics *p* and *mf*. The Baritone part has lyrics: "Then took the other As just as fair Be -". The Piano part features a right hand counter melody and a left hand with metrically displaced extension and variation of the original syncopated motif. The piano part includes dynamic markings *p*, *mf*, and *mp*.

The rhythmic and harmonic development reaches its peak at bar 75, where the flute and piano play sextuplets and triplets in a layered manner, and in bar 77 the syncopated left hand motif

returns: the rhythms from the variation in bars 11-15 are reordered, which results in the rhythmic patterning forming two separate rhythmic palindromes in bars 77-78, which continue until bar 81 (Fig. 1.1.4).

Figure 1.1.4. *The Road Less Travelled*. Bars 75-81. Layered sextuplets and triplets, with palindrome rhythmic fragments.

The image displays a musical score for three staves: Violin I (labeled 'l.1.'), Bassoon (labeled 'Bar.'), and Piano (labeled 'Pno.'). The score covers bars 75 through 81. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns, including sextuplets and triplets, and features several dynamic markings such as *f*, *mf*, and *a tempo*. The lyrics are: 'A - ges and a - ges hence' (bars 75-76), 'I shall be te - lling this' (bars 77-78), and 'With a' (bar 81). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

In *Nosferatu* for two pianos, the chromatic main theme is introduced by player 2's left hand. When it recurs in bar 29, the developing variation is created through use of intervallic relationships and musical fragments. The left hand intervals had been truncated (A-F# instead of an octave), and a melodic fragment of a semitone is reiterated. Staccato, slurs, and accents are used to give a sense of metrical displacement.

Figure 1.1.5. *Nosferatu*. Bars 21-22. Chromatic main theme.

Figure 1.1.6. *Nosferatu*. Bars 29-31. Development of a melodic fragment and reiteration of articulation.

1.2 Rhythmic Processes.

Many of my compositions use basic rhythms overlaid with complex or syncopated rhythms, as the basic rhythms give the music a sense of stability and motion and the more complex rhythms inspire the music with a sense of rhythmic interest. The main rhythmic processes used are:

- Rhythmic acceleration
- Layering of rhythms
- Displaced rhythmic groupings and syncopation
- Additive rhythmic processes
- Rhythmic freedom

In my percussion ensemble piece *The Tap-Dancing Puppet*, the players begin with simple rhythms that continually build in their complexity and syncopation (Figure. 1.2.1).

Figure 1.2.1. *The Tap-Dancing Puppet*. Bars 1-4. Developing rhythms.

The Tap-Dancing Puppet

Player 1 Timpani
Player 2 Woodblocks
Player 3 Xylophone
Player 4 Marimba

For Percussion Ensemble

By Sophie Spargo

$\text{♩} = 110$ *Playfully*

The musical score consists of four staves, each representing a different percussion instrument. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked as 110 beats per minute and the mood is 'Playfully'.
 - **Player 1 (Timpani):** Starts with a half note (B-flat), followed by eighth notes (G, F, E, D, C, B-flat) in the first bar. The dynamic is *mf*.
 - **Player 2 (Woodblocks):** Plays a steady eighth-note pattern starting on D4. The dynamic is *mp*.
 - **Player 3 (Xylophone):** Starts with a half note (B-flat) in the first bar. In the second bar, it plays a quarter note (G), eighth notes (F, E), and a quarter note (D). In the third bar, it plays a quarter note (C), eighth notes (B-flat, A), and a quarter note (G). In the fourth bar, it plays a quarter note (F), eighth notes (E, D), and a quarter note (C). Dynamic markings are *mp*, *mf*, and *mp* respectively.
 - **Player 4 (Marimba):** Plays a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and eighth notes. The dynamic is *mp*.

5

mf

f

f

Bar 10 is where the players' rhythms diverge and become rhythmically interesting in their own right, the rhythmic layering producing a sound of complexity, and from this point onwards offbeat rhythms and metrical shifts begin to emerge.

Figure 1.2.3. *The Tap-Dancing Puppet*. Bars 9-15. Layered rhythmic texture.

9

mf

mf

mp

Unusual rhythmic groupings create rhythmic interest. *The Walkers* for oboe and piano uses accents and reordering of pitches to create a sense of rhythmic displacement. The first bar of piano plays the notes ECBE, which then become CBEC.

Figure 1.2.4. *The Walkers*. Bars 1-4. Reordering pitches into new groupings.

Additive rhythm is used from bar 62, with the meter changing between 6/8 and 7/8, the piano grouping in bar 63 is 4+3, whilst the oboe plays 6+1, switching to 3+4 in bar 35 against the piano's 4+3. The piano grouping remains stable, leaving the oboe free to create rhythmic interest by playing against the natural rhythmic ordering in bar 63.

Next page: Figure 1.2.5. *The Walkers*. Bars 62-65. Bar 63 6+1 grouping, and additive rhythms bars 62-65.

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Oboe (Ob.) and Piano (Pno.). The Oboe part is written in a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It features a melodic line with a slur that spans across four measures, indicating a lack of strict adherence to the bar lines. The Piano part is written in two staves (treble and bass clefs) and also spans four measures. The time signature changes from 6/8 to 7/8, then back to 6/8, and finally to 7/8. The piano part has a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) and a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes.

Another rhythmic device is not adhering to bar lines: the music occasionally breaks free of the meter and is regrouped. In *Chameleon* for piano and string orchestra, after a section based in strict meter, the violin suddenly leaves the constraints of the meter, as its melody becomes syncopated and crosses bar lines. The change is welcome as a break from the monotony of common time grouping and provides a lyrical expressive quality to the violin melody.

Figure 1.2.6. *Chameleon*. Bars 31-33. Rhythmic freedom.

The image shows a musical score for the first Violin (Vln. I). It is written in a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The score starts at bar 31 and shows a melodic line with a slur that spans across bar lines, indicating rhythmic freedom. The dynamic marking is *p* (piano).

Motoristic rhythm is used as a driving force, creating a sense of anticipation and excitement.

The motoristic rhythms are employed as follows:

- Ostinato – the ostinato passages are generally motoristic in nature
- Stasis against motion: for example, a motoristic piano motif layered over a static string part
- As a device for building momentum

In *Einstein's Garden*, motoristic piano motives were used to propel the music in the fourth movement (Fig.'s 1.2.7 and 1.2.8). As the music becomes 'stuck' in repetitive rhythmic

motions, the piano ostinato gradually transforms until it is discarded and replaced with a new motoring rhythm when it comes to the end of its rhythmic development. The piano later introduces a new motoristic motif, this time an extended melody in the bass which constantly develops through changing meter and melodic extension, bringing excitement towards the end of the movement.

Figure 1.2.7. *Einstein's Garden*. Bars 244-251. Motoristic rhythm with static quality.

The image shows a musical score for Piano, bars 244-251. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 60. The piano part is marked *ff* and *con ped.*. The music features a steady, repetitive rhythmic pattern in the bass line, characteristic of a motoristic rhythm with a static quality.

Figure 1.2.8. *Einstein's Garden*. Bars 327-332. Motoristic ostinato motif.

The image shows a musical score for Clarinet in B \flat , Piano, Violin, Viola, and Violoncello, bars 327-332. The piano part is marked *ff* and *detached*. The violin part is marked *f*. The music features a steady, repetitive rhythmic pattern in the piano part, characteristic of a motoristic ostinato motif.

In *Lies*, a song cycle, the left hand piano used a similar driving motion with a slow rate of change. The motoristic left hand patterns are a paradox – providing a slow piece with a sense of gathering momentum.

Figure 1.2.9. *Lies: I Make Promises Too*. Bars 4-11. Left hand piano motif as a slow driving force

The musical score for "I Make Promises Too" consists of two systems. The first system includes parts for Horn (Hn.), Baritone Saxophone (Bar.), and Piano (Pno.). The piano part features a driving left-hand motif of eighth notes. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 50. The lyrics "I make pro-mi-ses too" are written below the piano part. The second system includes parts for Horn (Hn.), Baritone Saxophone (Bar.), and Piano (Pno.). The piano part continues the driving left-hand motif. The lyrics "To work har-der" are written below the piano part.

The motoristic device appears in *Enigmas* for small ensemble, in the guise of a clarinet and baritone saxophone rapidly descending and ascending in chromatic lines (Fig. 1.2.10). The line features enough variation to keep it interesting, but it is the repetitive chromatic motions that give it its sense of drive, with the accompanying instruments slowing to a state of stasis

Figure 1.2.10. *Enigmas*. Bars 54-60. Chromatic motoristic quality.

The musical score for Figure 1.2.10, titled 'Enigmas', covers bars 54 to 60. It is written in 3/8 time and features a chromatic, motoristic quality. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Alto Saxophone (Al. Sax.), Bassoon (Bar.), and Piano (Pno.). The music is characterized by rapid, chromatic passages in the woodwinds and piano. The lyrics are: 'You en - quire a - bout the king fi - sher's feath - ers which trem - ble in the pure springs'.

1.3 Pitch Organisation and Harmony.

Intervallic patterns in the harmony complement the intervallic relationships of the melodies using a wide tonal palette: tonal harmony punctuated with cluster, mixed interval, suspended and pentatonic chords along with a variety of scales: major, minor, modes, and pitch sets.

Chameleon for piano and string orchestra is based on a Gregorian chant inspired opening theme, from which the quartal and quintal harmony is constructed. In bar 13 there is a repetitive fifth to fourth intervallic pattern in the piano's bass line, as the violins and viola/cello play a fifth apart (Fig. 1.3.1).

Figure 1.3.1. *Chameleon*. Bars 15-18. Quartal and quintal harmonies.

The musical score for Figure 1.3.1 shows bars 15-18 of the piece 'Chameleon'. It features five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello, and Piano. The Violin I part has a few notes with slurs. The Violin II and Viola parts have more active lines with slurs and accents. The Cello part has a steady line with slurs. The Piano part is the most complex, featuring a dense texture of triplets and slurs in both the right and left hands, creating a rich harmonic texture.

At bar 36, the piano develops into a supporting harmonic melody comprised of alternating quintal and quartal chords, the top notes of the right hand chords forming a melody: the harmony has now transformed to become the melody.

Figure 1.3.2. *Chameleon*. Bars 35-38. Harmony functioning as melody.

The musical score for Figure 1.3.2 shows bars 35-38 of the piece 'Chameleon'. It is a piano score for the right and left hands. The right hand features a sequence of chords, with the top notes forming a melodic line. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment with triplets. The score is marked with a forte (f) dynamic.

Suspended chords are generally used in expressive passages. *Still There's a Stone Dreaming* from *Lies* uses broken suspended chords in a melodic style layered over the traditional triadic harmony of the strings (Fig. 1.3.3).

Figure 1.3.3. *Lies: Still There's a Stone Dreaming*. Bars 46-48. Triadic harmony supports suspended piano chords.

The musical score for bars 46-48 of *Lies: Still There's a Stone Dreaming* features a complex texture. The Baritone part (Bar.) has the lyrics: "ster - num be-fore he re - plies. He does not know is". The Piano part (Pao.) is characterized by intricate sixteenth-note patterns and sustained chords, with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The Violin I (Vln. I) and Violin II (Vln. II) parts play sustained harmonic lines, while the Viola (Vla.) part provides a rhythmic and harmonic foundation with sustained chords. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *s* (sustained).

The layering of harmonies from different keys and tonalities – sometimes unrelated to each other – is used to produce an unfamiliar sound. The harmony in *Rapt Rhapsody* (from *Lies*) is created from an array of harmony in this fashion:

- In bar 6 the piano uses a suspended chord, implied 7th, mixed interval chord, and implied dominant 7th.
- In bars 6-7 the baritone's melody is comprised of a whole tone scale.
- The viola plays quintal and quartal harmonies.

Figure 1.3.4. *Lies: Rapt Rhapsody*. Bars 6-8. Layered harmony and mixed interval chords.

The musical score for Figure 1.3.4 consists of six staves. The top staff is for Clarinet (Cl.), which is mostly silent. The second staff is for Baritone (Bar.), featuring a vocal line with lyrics: "Then the eyes... take up the sing-ing and the coun-try sings... und-er them". The third staff is for Piano (Pno.), showing a complex texture with triplets and octaves. The fourth staff is for Violin I (Vln. I), which is mostly silent. The fifth staff is for Violin II (Vln. II), which is mostly silent. The sixth staff is for Viola (Vla.), featuring a melodic line with triplets. Dynamics include *mf* and *8^{va}*.

1.4 Metrical Structures.

A high rate of metrical change is a defining compositional feature. In *Hoping to Remember* from *Lies*, the opening bars progress through 7/8 to 9/8 to 6/8 (Figure 1.4.1). In this particular case the meters change in line with the rhythmic groupings of the melody. The introductory 7/8 bar has an unresolved sound as it leads to the opening vocal line, the rhythm and meter developed from the speech pattern of “hoping to remember.”

Figure 1.4.1. *Lies: Hoping to Remember*. Bars 1-5. High rate of metrical change.

♩=90 Flowing and lyrical ♩.=30

Clarinet in B \flat

Bassoon

Horn in F

Baritone

Sing - ing... sing - ing... and hop - ing to re - mem - ber. The

Piano

con ped.

In the orchestral work *Changing Shades*, alternating meters are used frequently. In bars 28-36, alternating meter, tuplets, syncopation and contrasting groupings combine to provide an unstable sense of meter. With the interjecting tuplets in the oboe and flute, the listener's sense of time becomes obscured, and flute melodies dominate (Fig. 1.4.2).

Figure 1.4.2. *Changing Shades*. Bars 28-36. A sense of instability through metrical changes.

Fl.

Fl.

Fl.

Ob.

Ob.

Ob.

Cl.

Cl.

Cl.

1.5 Lyricism.

The lyrical side of the music is highly influenced by intuition and improvisation. In the small ensemble work *A Line Storm Song* based on the Robert Frost poem, delicate high piano chords are used to mimic rain drops, the beginning of the musical raindrops punctuating the endings of the singer's lines.

Figure 1.5.1. *A Line Storm Song*. Bars 65-69. Raindrop motif.

Figure 1.5.1 shows the musical score for bars 65-69 of *A Line Storm Song*. The vocal line (S.) has the lyrics: "Where the boughs rain, when it blows." The piano accompaniment (Pno.) features delicate high piano chords (pp) and a "harsh pluck" (fff) at the end. A "sc" (scordatura) marking is present at the end of the piano part.

The 'storm' of the title is suggested by strumming the strings inside the lid of a grand piano, with a crescendo and tremolo in the strings, giving the piece an ethereal yet dark and menacing feel.

Figure 1.5.2. *A Line Storm Song*. Bars 69-76. Storm motif.

Figure 1.5.2 shows the musical score for bars 69-76 of *A Line Storm Song*. The vocal line (S.) is silent. The piano accompaniment (Pno.) features a "harsh pluck" (fff) and a "sc" (scordatura) marking. The string parts (Vln., Vla., Db.) include a "stun with nails - bottom third of piano back and forth on each beat" and a "harsh strum" (ff).

In Bar 92, the song begins to move towards its peak. The chromaticism of the line “aflutter with wind” provides an intriguing colour to the end of the line. Bars 97-98 are an extended variation of bars 93-94, increasing in momentum. In bar 99 the line “what matter if we go clear to the West?” repeats the chromatic notes of bar 95, the peak occurs as a rising melody with the line “and come not through dry shod?” that fittingly falls a semitone to complete the sentence in bar 102 with a touch of chromaticism (Fig. 1.5.3).

Figure 1.5.3. *A Line Storm Song*. Bars 91-102. Increase in emotional intensity.

91
down. And the shall-ow wa - ters a - flutt - er with wind,

96
from which to gath - er your gown. What...

99
matt - er if we go clear to the West, and come not through dry shod?...

91-102: Musical score for "A Line Storm Song". The score is in 3/4 time and features a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of a right-hand melody and a left-hand accompaniment. The score shows an increase in emotional intensity through dynamic markings (mf, f) and articulation (accents, slurs).

1.6 Metaphor.

Metaphor and symbolism are useful compositional devices, imbuing music with multiple layers of meaning. In 2011 I composed *Lies*, a song cycle based on six of the poems of the same name by Sydney author Chris Mansell. *Lies* dealt with the themes of Aboriginal displacement, Australia's lack of artistic culture, and a longing for a time when humans lived in tribes and had a strong sense of community and belonging. There were two main themes that recurred: an eagle, a metaphor for freedom, and a stone, which represented a longing for community and stability. Musically, the ways in which they recurred were quite different. The first mention of the stone is in bar 29, over a spritely and lively accompaniment, it is a celebration of community (Fig. 1.6.1).

Figure 1.6.1. *Lies: Hoping to Remember*. Bars 27-32. The first occurrence of the stone.

The musical score for 'Hoping to Remember' is presented in a five-staff format. The top staff is for Clarinet (Cl.), followed by Bassoon (Bsn.), Flute (Fl.), Baritone (Bar.), and Piano (Pnn.). The music is in 3/4 time and marked 'spritely' with a forte 'f' dynamic. The lyrics are: 'Like a stone in the palm sweat - y: And can - plete.' The score shows the first occurrence of the stone metaphor in bar 29.

The next mention of the stone is in bar 43 of *I Make Promises Too*, the singer exclaiming “I have the stone still. Perhaps it will remember to tell the truth in its fine misery?” The harmony at bar 47 of C#FG has a diminished top note and an augmented middle note, giving

the music a foreboding tone as the everlasting stone observes the events of Aboriginal history.

Figure 1.6.2. *Lies: I Make Promises Too*. Bars 45-52. Diminished and augmented harmony.

8
Cl. 45

Bsn. *mf*

Hn. *mf* *mf*

Bar. Per - haps it will re - mem - ber to

Pno. *mf*

49

Cl. *p*

Bsn. *p*

Hn. *p*

Bar. tell the truth in its fine mis - er - y? *p*

The Nightingale for string quartet is a programmatic work, telling the story of an emperor who grows tired of his beautiful nightingale and spurns her, yet she forgives him and aids him in regaining his health when he becomes ill. Musically, the piece represents a scene of

fishermen finding the bird; the nightingale's acceptance into the palace; her solitude; and the reunited emperor and nightingale. The melancholy clarinet cadenza is to be played freely as it expressively represents the mourning and conflicting emotions of the nightingale over her lost friendship (Fig. 1.6.3).

Figure 1.6.3. *The Nightingale*. Bars 97- 101. Expressive clarinet cadenza representing the nightingale.

The musical score for the clarinet (Cl.) in *The Nightingale*, bars 97-101, is presented in two staves. The tempo is marked '♩=90 Freely'. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The first staff (bars 97-99) begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic, followed by a piano (*p*) section with a trill, and then returns to forte (*f*). The second staff (bars 100-101) starts with piano (*p*), moves to mezzo-forte (*mf*), then forte (*f*), and ends with piano (*p*). The music consists of eighth-note patterns with various articulations, including slurs and trills.

It is the synthesis of the defining compositional features in the foregoing discussion which underlies the evolution of my compositional style. These attributes will form the basis of the inquiry into the two major works of my Master's portfolio, *Einstein's Garden* and *Somewhere between the Sky and the Sea*. This inquiry will also set these works within a context which includes considerations such as collaboration, production, and aesthetic outcomes.

Chapter Two

Towards the Synthesis of Music and Dance:

Einstein's Garden

2.1 *Einstein's Garden*

The initial idea for the solo dance work *Einstein's Garden* was generated by finding six quotes by Albert Einstein which related to insanity. The quotes formed the structural basis of the work and their ordering was chosen to provide a narrative for the dancer and is as follows:

- Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result
- Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new
- In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity
- We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking that created them
- Reality is merely an illusion
- Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow

The music was composed for the following ensemble: clarinet in Bb, marimba, piano, violin, viola, cello, and double bass. The clarinet was chosen for its agility and tone. Piano and marimba were chosen for their harmonic abilities and the ability to interplay and blend with each other. The four strings provided the opportunity for expressive sounds across the entire string range. Einstein was an amateur pianist and violinist, so those instruments had a special role to play in the work.

As part of the research for this project, a survey of contemporary dance was undertaken, together with two specific case studies: Brett Dean's *Fire Music* and Elena Kats-Chernin's *The Wild Swans*. This discussion is presented prior to the analysis of *Einstein's Garden*.

2.2 Background Considerations: Approaches to the Collaborative Process in Dance.

When it came to composing my own dance work, I felt collaboration was an important part of the process, and asked the following questions:

- How much of the collaborative process should be left up to the choreographer, the dancer/s, and the composer?
- Who should have the most control, input, or the final say in the project? Is one artist more important than the other?

It would make sense to approach collaboration and the importance of artistic roles on a case by case basis. The nature of collaboration is highly changeable as its success depends on the personalities and team work skills of the collaborators. The composer and choreographer are the main creators of the work but the dancers are responsible for bringing the combined vision of the two to life and therefore dancers are likely to have some level of creative input. Stanton Welch – an Australian choreographer and the current artistic director of the Houston Ballet – thinks it depends on individual circumstances, as he stated in a *San Francisco Chronicle* interview:

Each (ballet) is made for a different situation, for different dancers...dancers all interpret in their own way.¹

¹ Octavio Roca, "Stanton Welch Finds His Dream in S.F./Australian Choreographer Creates a Ballet for Helgi Tomasson: [Sunday Edition]," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Feb 18 1996, 30, accessed April 18, 2012, <http://www.sfgate.com/entertainment/article/Stanton-Welch-Finds-His-Dream-in-S-F-2993882.php>.

The nature of collaboration is highly changeable as its success depends on the personalities and team work skills of the collaborators. The composer and choreographer are the main creators of the work but the dancers are responsible for bringing the combined vision of the two to life and are likely to have creative input. Smith-Autard states that the composer's intention is an important element in the creation of a dance work;² Sawyer defines collaboration as importance not being attributed to just one person;³ Van Stiefel likens collaboration to marriage and warns collaborators to be wary of misunderstandings of each other's art;⁴ Kim identifies a mutual understanding of collaborators' artistic expertise as crucial to creative success;⁵ Mason states that the creativity and innovation of the dance work will be affected by the choreographer's ability to lead, and the dancers' ability to interact;⁶ Hayden and Windsor discuss composer reluctance to relinquish creative control and define the temperaments of the collaborators as key to a successful partnership;⁷ Henderson suggests humans are all motivated by self-interest, but in the process of collaboration interest in one's

² Jacqueline M. Smith-Autard, *A Practical Guide to Creative Success in Dance Making*, Sixth ed. (London: Methuen Drama, 2010), 6.

³ Keith Sawyer, "Group Creativity: Musical Performance and Collaboration," *Society for Education, Music, and Psychology Research* 34, no. 2 (2006).

⁴ Van Stiefel, "A Study of the Choreographer/Composer Collaboration," (Princeton University), accessed April 20, 2012, <http://www.princeton.edu/~artspol/workpap/WP22%20-%20Van%20Stiefel.pdf>.

⁵ Chan Ji Kim, "Composer and Choreographer: A Study of Collaborative Compositional Process" (University of Florida, 2006), accessed April 23, 2012, http://etd.fcla.edu/UF/UFE0013897/kim_c.pdf.

⁶ Paul Howard Mason, "Brain, Dance and Culture: The Choreographer, the Dancing Scientist, and Interdisciplinary Collaboration, Broad Hypotheses of an Intuitive Science of Dance," *Brolga: An Australian Journal about Dance* no. 30 (2009).

⁷ Sam Hayden and Luke Windsor, "Collaboration and the Composer: Case Studies from the End of the 20th Century," *Tempo* 61, no. 240 (2007), accessed April 20, 2012, <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=991132>.

personal success may contribute to the success of collaboration;⁸ David Parsons (choreographer and founder of Parsons Dance) believes an important aspect of collaborating is having the desire to collaborate;⁹ reviewer Houdek speaks of the joy of watching a successful collaboration and the heightened experience of an audience member.¹⁰ All of these factors need to be taken into consideration when creating a new work in conjunction with other artists.

The nature of collaboration is a shared desire for group success, and composers, choreographers, and dancers need to develop a balanced and healthy relationship with good communication to create a cohesive work. Whilst the composer, choreographer and dancers will all have a different function in the process, each role relies upon the other and is equally crucial to the project.

On a compositional note, Siobhan Davies warns against allowing the dance to become secondary to the music;¹¹ whilst Merce Cunningham has stated that each element needs to retain a separate function in a creative work.¹² Cunningham collaborated with composer John Cage – who had inspired him with the musical exploration of chance - on *Theatre Piece No.1* (1952), a project where collaboration only happened at the last rehearsal, where all the

⁸ Tia Henderson, "The Foundation to Collaborate: Understanding the Role of Participant Interests" (Portland State University, 2010), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, accessed April 20, 2012, http://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=open_access_etds.

⁹ Steven Uhles, "Creative Collaboration, Evolution Drive Dance Company's Founder," *The Augusta Chronicle*, Oct 22, 2009, accessed April 18 2012, http://chronicle.augusta.com/stories/2009/10/22/ent_552738.shtml.

¹⁰ Richard Houdek, "Tanglewood Music Center/Mark Morris Dance: A Collaboration Proves Valuable," *The Berkshire Eagle*, June 30, 2010, accessed April 24, 2012, http://www.berkshireeagle.com/ci_15409134.

¹¹ Sophia Preston, "'Giving Dance Room to Breathe": Dance-Music Relationships in Siobhan Davies Choreography, 1972-1979," *Dance Chronicle* 22, no. 3 (1999).

¹² Erin Dorean Empey, "A Collaboration: Dance and Theatre" (University of Utah, 2011), accessed April 20, 2012, <http://content.lib.utah.edu/utis/getfile/collection/etd3/id/118/filename/436.pdf>.

individual elements came together, creating a work with musical and artistic freedom that aligned at particular points.¹³ Cunningham and Cage created a work that was cohesive despite each element's individuality, and the importance of each element was apparent.

Poppy, a 1978 ballet by Carl Vine, is an interesting case and an example of a successful collaboration: composed by Vine while he was resident composer with the Sydney Dance Company,¹⁴ *Poppy* was the first full-scale production that Graeme Murphy choreographed for the Sydney Dance Company (where he was artistic director for thirty one years),¹⁵ and it is based on the life of Jean Cocteau, an eccentric French writer who had a hand in developing many productions in his time: he wrote text for French compositional group Les Six's music; and wrote various opera libretti, plays, and ballets.¹⁶ For the American premiere of *Poppy* in 1981 (the original version premiered in Australia in 1978), Vine and Murphy decided to revise particular sections, with Vine composing new electronic music for the second act.¹⁷ In this production, Murphy was both choreographer and dancer, so the collaborative process was reduced to himself and Vine, which in turn reduced the chance for personality or team work issues to arise.

¹³ Michelle Potter, "'A License to Do Anything': Robert Rauschenberg and the Merce Cunningham Dance Company," *Dance Chronicle* 16, no. 1 (1993).

¹⁴ Carl Vine, "Carl Vine Biography" www.carlvine.com, accessed April 15, 2012.

¹⁵ Susanna Dunkerley, "Fed: Graeme Murphy Presents Farewell Tribute to Canberra," *AAP General News Wire*, 21 Sep 2007.

¹⁶ Alan Riding, "Jean Cocteau, before His Own Fabulousness Consumed Him," *New York Times*, 5 Oct 2003, accessed April 20, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/05/arts/art-jean-cocteau-before-his-own-fabulousness-consumed-him.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>.

¹⁷ Anna Kisselgoff, "Ballet: Sydney Troupe's 'Poppy': [Review]," *New York Times*, 31 May 1981, accessed April 18, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/1981/05/31/arts/ballet-sydney-troupe-s-poppy.html>.

Smith-Autard wrote a guide to successful dance creation, and looked at dance composition as being a separate art form to dance (although the two may be combined),¹⁸ where dance composition should be labelled a work of art yet dance should be called an expression of feeling.¹⁹ This opens up interesting possibilities for collaboration, as the collaborative process would then arise after the creation of the music, which occurred in my case with *Einstein's Garden*.

Smith-Autard hails inspirational stimuli as critical to producing a meaningful dance composition, through the use of poems, art, specific instruments, anything that will serve to inspire the composer and give a higher level of artistic meaning to the work.²⁰ Smith-Autard states that the composer's intention is the most important element in the creation of a dance work,²¹ yet Keith Sawyer offers a different view in his study on group creativity and collaboration, stating that the collaboration should be a culmination of group creativity and importance should not be attributed to a single person.²²

Sawyer continues on to state that it is human nature to expect a leader in any kind of group, but in collaboration there should be an equal artistic contribution.²³ Great works can be created just as easily by a collective of people – which may be attributed to the artists' ability to inspire each other and suggest new ideas - as by a solo artist, especially when those involved in the collaboration have an extremely high combined level of talent.

¹⁸ Smith-Autard, 3.

¹⁹ Smith-Autard, 7.

²⁰ Smith-Autard, 30-31.

²¹ Smith-Autard, 7.

²² Keith Sawyer, "Group Creativity: Musical Performance and Collaboration." *Society for Education, Music, and Psychology Research*, 34, no. 2 (2006): 7.

²³ Sawyer, 154.

Paul Mason, a dancer and dance researcher, collaborated with Elizabeth Cameron Dalman, a choreographer, on a research project for *Brolga*, an Australian dance journal. Mason believes that the ability of the collaborators to interact will influence the creativity and innovation of the dance work.²⁴ The level of creativity in the dance tends to be controlled and inspired by the choreographer.²⁵ The chance for dancers to suggest their ideas would only open up new choreographic ideas and would therefore be a benefit to creativity, and so it may be beneficial to include them in the collaborative process of choreography and possibly in regards to musical suggestions.

It would be hard to determine which role is the most important in the collaboration: composer or dancer/choreographer. And it may depend upon the individual circumstances of the collaboration. For my dance composition project, the dancer, Imogen Cranna, and myself worked independently and then came together to offer creative suggestions on each others' work. The score was composed before the first meeting with the dancer, but the score was also highly elastic and changeable.

2.3 Case Study 1: *Fire Music* by Brett Dean

Fire Music by Brett Dean premiered as part of the Australian Ballet's *Infinity* in February 2012. The music was completely composed before being given to the choreographer and dancers. *Fire Music* was commissioned by the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the Australian Ballet. Originally, *Fire Music* was intended as an orchestral commission, and Dean had the idea of combining the commission with a

²⁴ Paul Howard Mason, "Brain, Dance and Culture: The Choreographer, the Dancing Scientist, and Interdisciplinary Collaboration, Broad Hypotheses of an Intuitive Science of Dance," *Brolga: An Australian Journal About Dance* 30 (2009): 30.

²⁵ Mason, 29.

request for a new score from the Australian Ballet and Graeme Murphy. *Fire Music* was composed in response to the Victorian Black Saturday fires of 2009.²⁶ Dean has stated after beginning work with the Australian Ballet, he approached the rhythmic flow and sense of drama in a different manner than otherwise may have occurred.

Before commencing the project, Dean met with a fire research scientist from the CSIRO to discuss the characteristics of fire. He had little contact with the dancers in the process, and the extent of the collaboration between composer and choreographer consisted of meetings with Graeme Murphy, where Dean explained his ideas and inspiration as he composed *Fire Music*. It was Murphy's intent for the piece to be a non-narrative abstract work, and Dean was given full creative license when writing the ballet. Murphy had previously worked on Dean's *Water Music* with the Shanghai Ballet, and was familiar with Dean's compositional style.

Fire Music is an intense and passionate ballet work, beginning by creating a sense of musical space (Fig. 2.3.1), with a sparse instrumental beginning. Much of the passion of the work derives from fluctuations in texture, density, and rhythmic drive. Dean's layering techniques create an intriguing sound world, that is conducive to dancing freedom, as much of the time the music obscures melodies through layering, or provides multiple melodies that obscure each other when layered.

²⁶ David Allenby, "Brett Dean Interview About New Orchestral Work Fire Music," *Boosey*, accessed July 22, 2012, <http://www.boosey.com/cr/news/Brett-Dean-interview-about-new-orchestral-work-Fire-Music/12335>.

Figure 2.3.1. *Fire Music*. Bars 1-5. A sense of musical space as the ballet begins.²⁷

Slow, spacious, tense ($\text{♩} = 54$)

Percussion 1: Tamtam arco, *pppp*

Percussion 2: Large Bass Drum (standard beaters), *ppp*, take super ball

MIDI Keyboard

Dean uses his characteristic layered semiquavers to increase the density and provide a sense of agitation in bar 51, where the music becomes highly driven.

Figure 2.3.2. *Fire Music*. Bars 51-53. A change in density, texture, and rhythm.²⁸

Stark, arresting, agitated ($\text{♩} = 75$)

Ob. 1: *f sempre energico*

Ob. 2: *f sempre energico*

Ob. 3: *f sempre energico*

Bsn. 1: *f sempre energico*

Bsn. 2: *f sempre energico*

²⁷ By Brett Dean © Copyright Boosey And Hawkes Publishers Ltd/Bote & Bock GmbH. Permission granted via Hal Leonard Australia Pty Ltd ABN 13 085 333 713 www.halleonard.com.au Used by Permission. All Rights Reserved. Unauthorised Reproduction is Illegal.

²⁸ Ibid.

Two interesting aspects of the work were the role of the electric guitar as a soloist, which briefly soars over the orchestra, entering by way of crotchet triplets against the brass, and playing an intense melody that shines through the texture with a new sonority. The other intriguing aspect is the antiphonal setting of the instrumental placement around the auditorium at one point – which gives the listener the feeling of being fully surrounded.

Dean is of the opinion that collaboration can improve a compositional work, claiming that even though the process of *Fire Music* wasn't a close collaboration, "two heads really can be better than one!" Murphy did not request any changes to the score, believing Dean should compose the music as he saw fit and not be restricted by following a narrative.²⁹ The initial choreography was rehearsed with MIDI files, before a recording was made at the first performance of the orchestral work at the Tonsättarfestival, Stockholm, in November 2011.³⁰ The challenge for Dean was the sheer scale of the orchestra, both in financial terms, and the venue size (Sydney Opera House). Dean reduced the orchestral size, used electronic sounds, and placed instruments in an antiphonal setting. Dean believes it is highly important that the choreography should suit the style of the music. He also notes that the coming together of many elements - music, dance, stage design, lighting, and costumes, is a large factor in determining the success of a project.

If someone had come in with a design of pink day-glo 70's disco gear then of course they would have been knocking at the wrong door with my score!³¹

²⁹ Melissa Lesnie, "Australian Ballet Fires Up Brett Dean's Imagination," *Limelight Magazine*, accessed July 22, 2012, <http://www.limelightmagazine.com.au/Article/289722,the-australian-ballet-fires-up-brett-deans-imagination.aspx>.

³⁰ "Boosey & Hawkes.com, Brett Dean in Scandinavia: Fire Music Premiere in Stockholm," accessed July 22, 2012, <http://www.boosey.com/cr/news/Brett-Dean-in-Scandinavia-Fire-Music-premiere-in-Stockholm/12283&LangID=1>.

³¹ Brett Dean, interview by author, Sydney, July 22, 2012.

I followed Dean's process very closely with my own dance work: composing the music before meeting with the dancer; choosing an ensemble that would maximise the impact of my music whilst being financially viable; and rehearsing with MIDI files and/or piano until the ensemble was ready to rehearse with the dancer. Imogen Cranna was given freedom in her choreography, and interpreted it in an ingenious way that I could never have imagined myself.

2.4 Case Study 2: *The Wild Swans* by Elena Kats-Chernin

Opera-ballet *The Wild Swans* was a collaborative effort between composer Elena Kats-Chernin and Australian Ballet choreographer Meryl Tankard. Their first collaboration occurred on *Deep Sea Dreaming* for the Opening Ceremony at the Sydney Olympics in 2000. Kats-Chernin and Tankard discovered their mutual love for the *Wild Swans* fairytale by Hans Christian Andersen and decided to create a ballet version in December 2000. The Australian Ballet and the Sydney Opera House soon joined the project.

The first workshop was in May 2002, and Kats-Chernin and Tankard improvised almost the entire project, together with the dancers, over a three week period. Kats-Chernin spent the next few months working on transforming the piano score into an orchestral score. She had a series of meetings with Tankard after the score was complete and Tankard would offer suggestions on the music that would enhance the dance. Sometimes the duration of a piece would be two minutes and Tankard would require three, or Tankard needed the music to be "less busy or more busy" to suit the dance.

Tankard was still involved in the rehearsal process at that stage and Kats-Chernin was happy to accommodate changes to the music upon request. Kats-Chernin enjoyed watching the dancers bring the ballet to life, but her ideas were inspired by Tankard, and she was also inspired by the costumes, set, and lighting design. The orchestra did their first read through in December 2002. Tankard used the orchestral recording to rehearse with the dancers, but still required small changes. Kats-Chernin did find this a challenge, but it never detracted from the enjoyment of the collaboration.

Kats-Chernin believes it is sometimes important in dance composition to keep things simple: she aimed to never musically detract from the dance, or have her music overpower the action on stage. Compositional tools she used to achieve this effect were: ostinato, stasis, and repetition instead of development. She aimed for functional composition, yet iterates that it's important to not be completely focused on rhythm as the most important element in dance, and she sees the use of musical colour as important to enhancing the richness of sound.

Some of the features of *Wild Swans* are similar to my own compositional style:

- Use of common meters, with accents or cross rhythms to alter the feeling of meter (Fig. 2.4.1).
- Ostinato-style repetitive accompaniment, with repetitive instrumental accompaniment and cross rhythms accompanying a meter change to 12/8. Stasis is created by the instrumental accompaniment: whilst it changes notes frequently, it maintains the same rhythmic momentum.

Figure 2.4.1. *Wild Swans*. Bars 25-30. Accents give an altered sense of meter.³²

Whilst the music at times can be regarded as polyphonic, most of the time many instruments are working in harmonic, rhythmic, and textural unison. Kats-Chernin develops the wind section in bars 36-38 by way of rhythmic development, with oboe 1 and 2 switching their rhythmic unison with the clarinet to the flutes in bar 37, whilst the clarinets introduce a new independent rhythm.

Figure 2.4.2. *Wild Swans*. Bars 36-38. Rhythmic unison of the oboes and clarinets in bar 36 and oboes and flutes, bar 37.³³

Another strong feature of *Wild Swans* is Kats-Chernin's lyrical writing and beautiful melodies. In bars 40-43, the flutes harmonise over an expressive semiquaver line, whilst the

³² By Elena Kats-Chernin © Copyright Boosey And Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd. Permission granted via Hal Leonard Australia Pty Ltd ABN 13 085 333 713 www.halleonard.com.au Used by Permission. All Rights Reserved. Unauthorised Reproduction is Illegal.

³³ Ibid.

piccolo and clarinets maintain the feeling of stasis with their rhythmically repetitive lines which harmonically develop.

Figure 2.4.3. *Wild Swans*. Bars 40-43. Lyrical flute melodies.³⁴

The image shows a musical score for four instruments: Piccolo, Flute 1 & 2, Oboe 1 & 2, and Clarinet 1 & 2. The score is for bars 40-43 of the piece 'Wild Swans'. The flute part is the central focus, featuring a lyrical melody that begins with a 'cresc.' (crescendo) marking and a 'p' (piano) dynamic. The piccolo and clarinet parts provide harmonic support with repetitive rhythmic patterns. The oboe part is mostly silent, with a few notes appearing in the later bars. The score is written in a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature.

The only negative aspect of the Kats-Chernin/Tankard collaboration was the logistical side of the production: deadlines and small musical changes meant changing the choreography or the score in close proximity to the rehearsals and performances. Kats-Chernin believes the success of collaboration lies with how well the collaborators work as a team, and a successful collaboration enhances a project. She states the exchange, interaction, and enrichment of ideas are benefits of collaboration, but defines inspiration as the most crucial aspect – many composers spend the compositional process alone, but with collaboration there are more creators who can inspire each other with ideas.³⁵

The process of composition employed in *Einstein's Garden* shared similarities with the work of Kats-Chernin. I began with a piano score which sketched out the work in its entirety, with indications of the time frames and the successive sequences which formed the basis of the work's structure.

³⁴ Elena Kats-Chernin, *Wild Swans*, (Australian Music Centre (under licence from Boosey & Hawkes) 2002).

³⁵ Elena Kats-Chernin, interview by author, Sydney, July 26, 2012.

I met with the dancer/choreographer, Imogen Cranna, and explained my vision for the work: strong themes of insanity, exploration, and experimentation. We discussed the musical translation of each of the six Einstein quotes. The choreography was completed after a series of discussions and rehearsals on October 26th, 2012. The scene of the dance work was a Japanese garden, as Einstein was fascinated by all things oriental. The title of the work and the setting were both suggested by Cranna, who chose the costume of a flowing green silk gown – which resembled a silk laboratory coat representing a mad scientist. Music and dance are both equally important in *Einstein's Garden* and complement each other: they are representative of both the dancer and composer's interpretation.

2.5. Einstein's Relationship with Music.

Einstein's relationship with music is central to the composition. Einstein was fascinated with the beauty and unification of music and the ways in which physics were similar to musical form and structures. He found playing music for a break would aid his thinking when trying to solve scientific problems.³⁶ Einstein was not a fan of the more contemporary musical styles of his time, detesting Wagner, as he perceived the composer as lacking structure. He counted Mozart and Bach as two of his favourite composers, and both composers shared a great ability to create structure and shape, writing music that adhered to mathematical principles.³⁷ Einstein believed the laws of nature were waiting to be discovered similarly to how Mozart composed music – it seemed to him as if Mozart's simplistic and pure music was already in existence but was waiting to be discovered by Mozart.³⁸

Einstein's love of musical structure is the reason the dance work has a coherent structure with unifying elements between the movements. Einstein's esteem for beauty and simplicity led naturally towards the use of tonal harmony.

Einstein believed that intuition was one of the most important ingredients in his own creative thought processes.³⁹ I'm also a highly intuitive creator. The main themes in *Einstein's Garden* were composed intuitively, and I used a mix of compositional logic and intuition to

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷ Brian Foster, "Einstein and His Love of Music," *Physics World* January 2005: 1, accessed April 22, 2013, <http://www.pha.jhu.edu/einstein/stuff/einstein&music.pdf>.

³⁸ Arthur I. Miller, "A Genius Finds Inspiration in the Music of Another," *NY Times*, Jan 31, 2006, accessed April 22, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/31/science/31essa.html>.

³⁹ Michele and Robert Root-Bernstein, "Annals of Ordinary and Extraordinary Genius," *Imagine That!* March 31, 2012, accessed April 23, 2013, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/imagine/201003/einstein-creative-thinking-music-and-the-intuitive-art-scientific-imagination>.

complete each movement, always adhering to the structure I had developed. The connection between mathematics and music is strong in my composition: in meter, rhythm, and intervallic relationships.

2.6. *Einstein's Garden* Analysis: Structure.

At the core of the work is a clear structure, giving a sense of stability amongst musical diversity. The metaphor of insanity in the piece can be heard in repetitions, variations, and unexpected rhythmic/harmonic/melodic progressions. Each movement presents a musical problem – suggested by its title - to be solved, which is done through a variety of compositional techniques or ‘musical experiments,’ a parallel with Einstein striving to answer scientific problems. The following table is a diagram of the structure of *Einstein's Garden*:

Table 2.6.1. Overall structure of *Einstein's Garden*.

| | | | | | | |
|------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Section: | A | B | C | D | A2 | A3 |
| | Bars 1-79 | Bars 80-143 | Bars 144-243 | Bars 244-373 | Bars 374-422 | Bars 423-501 |
| Duration: | 3 mins | 3 mins | 4 mins | 4.41 mins | 2.22 mins | 3.19 mins |

The following table (2.6.2.) elaborates on the internal structure of sections in the work.

Table 2.6.2. Structure of each movement in *Einstein's Garden*.

| A | B | C | D | A2 | A3 |
|----------------|--------------------------------|---|------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| Theme 1 | Theme 1 & Var. 2 develop | Fugue/sonata | Ostinato 1 develops | Hope theme | Hope theme |
| Var. 1 | Var. 1 & 3 develop | Passacaglia/ developing variations | Ostinato 2 | Theme 2 | Fugue/passacaglia/ sonata |
| Var. 2 | Var. 3 & 4 develop | Fugue/sonata/ passacaglia/ developing variations | Coda | Theme 3 | Momentum theme |
| Var. 3 | | | | Theme 4 | Hope theme develops and concludes |
| Var. 4 | | | | Theme 5 | |
| Var. 5 | | | | Theme 6 | |

2.7. Motivic Relationships within Movements.

The following tables outline motivic recurrences throughout *Einstein's Garden*. The return of motivic material signifies change/progression in the music. All of the motivic recurrences stem from material in **A**:

- The recurrence of Theme 1 in **A** drives the music forward with its ever developing nature.
- This theme is combined with Variation 1 from **A**, and then developed in **B** to create a 'new' motif.
- Variation 3 from **A** recurs in a new guise in **C**: transformed from imitative patterns into a fugal incarnation.

Table 2.7.1. Motivic recurrences.

| A: Theme 1 Recurrences | Var. 1 | Var. 2 | Var. 3 | Var. 4 | Var. 5 |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------|--------|
| B: Theme | Var. 2 | A2: Theme & variations | A3: Theme | | |
| A: Var. 1 recurrence | B: Var. 1 | | | | |
| A: Var. 3 recurrence | C: Fugal theme | | | | |
| A: Var. 1 recurrence | A2: 5 Variations | | | | |
| A2: Var. 1-5 | A3 | | | | |

Figure 2.7.1. Theme 1, Section A. Bars 1-5. Antecedent/consequent motif.

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Clarinet in F, Violin, and Violoncello. The Clarinet part is in the top staff, starting with a tempo marking of quarter note = 100. The Violin part is in the middle staff, and the Violoncello part is in the bottom staff. The score shows several measures of music, with various dynamics and articulations. The Clarinet part has a dynamic marking of *mf*. The Violin part has a dynamic marking of *mf*. The Violoncello part has a dynamic marking of *p*.

Figure 2.7.2. Pitch orderings and groupings of Theme 1 and its variations in A.

The image shows a musical score for a single instrument, likely a violin or flute, in a 2/4 time signature. The score is divided into five sections: Theme 1, Var. 1, Var. 2, Var. 3, and Var. 4. Blue arrows indicate the transitions between the variations. The Theme 1 section starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The variations show different pitch orderings and groupings of the theme.

Theme 1's first variation comprises shared intervallic relationships (especially seconds and sixths) and the diminished harmony of bar 4, to create a new and extended melody (Fig. 2.7.2, 2.7.3).

Figure 2.7.3. Theme 1 variation 1, Section A. Bars 5-15. Double bass elaboration on diminished harmony of bar 4.

The image shows a musical score for the double bass part, in a 2/4 time signature. The score starts with a dynamic marking of *p*. The melody is a retrograde semiquaver melody starting with the notes C# and E. The score shows several measures of music, with various dynamics and articulations.

The second variation begins by using the first three notes of Theme 1: C# E (with addition of G#) A in a retrograde semiquaver melody (Fig 2.7.2). The reordering of notes and addition of G# masks the familiarity of the theme. The melody is extended in bars 30-32, varied by way of rhythmic displacement and pitch re-ordering during another melodic extension in bars 33-

37. In bar 38, the original statement of Variation 2 is repeated with commonalities (rising melodic line in bar 36, left hand harmony, melodic extension) from bars 28-37 which have been reworked, finally resolving through the stasis of the piano's left hand accompaniment.

Figure 2.7.3. Theme 1 variation 2, Section A. Bars 29-46. Pitch reordering and metrical displacement/irregularity.

Variation 3 reuses the pitches C#EG#A from Variation 2, which are melodically extended and embellished. This variation is in an imitative style with a subject in bars 47-49, and answer in bar 49, although the answer occurs on the submediant instead of the dominant as is common in fugues. Countermelodies occur in bars 33 and 37, layered over the subject and answer motivic material.

Figure 2.7.4. Theme 1 variation 3, Section A. Bars 47-62. Imitative variation.

The image shows a musical score for Theme 1 variation 4, Section A, bars 63-71. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (bars 27-35) features Violin, Viola, and Violoncello. The second system (bars 35-43) features Piano, Violin, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The music is in 4/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns with many beamed notes. Dynamics include *mf* and *p*.

The final variation uses the harmony of its preceding imitative variation in a homophonic style, with marimba, clarinet, and piano melodies which develop by way of intervallic extension and truncation: from bars 63-72, each of the solo instruments has an additive melody with a one note extension in each statement. Fourths and sixths, which were strong features of the main theme, are used in the soloists' melodies.

Figure 2.7.5. Theme 1 variation 4, Section A. Bars 63-71. Intervallic extension/truncation, additive melodies.

The image displays a musical score for measures 63 through 68. The score is organized into two systems of staves. The first system (measures 63-68) includes staves for Marimba, Piano, Violin, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The second system (measures 63-68) includes staves for Clarinet in Bb, Marimba, Violin, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The Marimba part in measure 63 features a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *f*. The Piano part in measure 63 has a dynamic marking of *mf*. The string parts (Violin, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass) are characterized by long, sustained notes with phrasing slurs. The Clarinet in Bb part in measure 63 also features a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The overall texture is a blend of woodwind and string instruments, with the Marimba providing a rhythmic and melodic element.

2.8. Harmony.

It was critical for the harmony to adhere to the structural guidelines of the work. For this reason, the harmonies were created at the same time as the melodies. The scales, modes, and keys used in the melodies influenced the instrumental harmonies. The harmony features many different facets: major, minor, altered major/minor chords, altered augmented, diminished, tritone, pentatonic, whole tone, suspended and cluster chords, modes, and a blend of the above scales and chords.

Harmonic ambiguity is the main feature of **A**, created by a quick rate of harmonic change in the opening theme: from A major, to a tritone, A minor, and a M2M2M3 chord in the first four bars alone. The harmony changes with each melodic variation. The ambiguity is continued with altered augmented and diminished triads until the introduction of C# Aeolian mode in the third variation, where the harmony repeats itself ‘over and over’ until the end of the movement (Table 2.8.1.).

Table 2.8.1. Section A harmonic structure: harmonic ambiguity.

| | | | | |
|-----------|--------|--------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Bars 1-3: | Bar 4: | Bars 14-16: | Bars 19-28: Aug. | Bars 29-79: |
| A maj. | A min. | F min./maj. | chord + tritone, | C# Aeolian mode |
| Tritone + | M2M2M3 | with foreign | cluster chord, dim. | |
| Maj. 3 | | accidentals | triad + aug. 7th | |

B introduces new tonalities: whole tone and pentatonic mixed interval chords, with a mix of familiar chords from A (diminished, augmented, A major + tritone Table 2.4.2). The music arrives in its ‘new’ harmonic state using A, C and E major, ending with C major, a new tonal area.

Table 2.8.2. B harmonic structure: establishing new tonalities.

| | | | | |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Bars 80-99: Alternating aug./dim. chords | Bars 100-102: Alternating A maj./Ab maj. chords | Bars 103-104: Implied pent. | Bars 105- 114: A maj. | Bars 115-122: E maj. |
| Bars 123- 126: C maj. | Bars 128-131: E maj. | Bars 132-133: tonicising to C maj. | Bars 135- 143: C maj. | |

In **C** the harmonic ‘difficulty’ of this movement is the need to stay within C# Aeolian mode, due to imitation. This movement displays a series of modulations: C# Aeolian to E minor (functioning as the relative minor of C#); C# Aeolian to C major (reached by way of a diminished pivot chord); the modulations move by semitone until the recurrence of C# Aeolian which concludes the movement.

Table 2.8.3. Section C harmonic structure: seamless modulations.

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Bars 144- 163: C# Aeolian | Bars 162- 168: E minor | Bars 169- 172: C# Aeolian | Bars 173- 193: C maj./ B maj. alternating | Bars 194- 198: Chrom. + F maj. | 199-220: Bb lydian | Bars 221- 242: C# Aeolian |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|-----------------------|---------------------------------|

D – This movement is so far the most harmonically varied. The first harmonic ‘problem’ is that the movement begins with a lone D, the problem being ‘solved’ by the addition of lone chromatic notes over the rhythmic D bass notes in the piano. The overriding driving force of the ostinato pattern is constantly at odds with the harmony which progresses through a series of modulations and tonicisations, as it tries to escape the ostinato.

The musical ‘problems’ are solved by using new harmonies. With the goal of the movement achieved, it progresses through a series of chromatic, C major, Ab major dominant 7th, and chromatic cluster chords, creating a new harmonic order.

Table 2.8.4. Section D harmonic structure: ostinato driving harmonic changes.

| | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------|--|
| 244-258: Lone D, punctuated with chromatic notes and chords | 259-274: Cm7th Eb maj., Fsus.5, G min. | 275-280: Lone D | 281-293: A min./alternating with chromaticism over D |
| 294-296: G maj. | 297-298: Pent. | 299-302: C maj./B maj./C maj. | 303-304: E min. |
| 305-310: D Aeolian | 311-318: D Aeolian with chrom. accidentals | 319-326: Chromatic harmony | 327- 349: A/Ab min. alternating |
| 350-373: Chromatic | | | |

A2 uses similar harmonies while producing an aural illusion of different melodic variations.

The movement begins with the Db Major pentatonic scale, which concludes with the ambiguous C augmented 5th with an added Major 2nd. The first variation remains in Db Major pentatonic, moving to Db Major, then Db Major pentatonic/tritone blend, back to Db Major, and ending with perfect 5ths.

Next page: Table 2.8.5. Section A2 harmonic structure: similar harmonies, masked by varied melodies.

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Bars 374-379: Db maj. pent. | Bar 378: C aug. 5 th +M2 | Bars 370-396: Db maj. pent. | 397-398: Db maj. pent with tritone in clarinet | 399-421: Db maj. pent. with perfect 5ths |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--|--|

A3 is the most harmonically diverse movement. It is an exploration and development of all the harmonic material in the work to date, divided into three sections: 'live for today,' 'learn from yesterday,' 'hope for tomorrow.'

Table 2.8.6. Section A3 harmonic structure.

| | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| Bars 423-441: C maj., incl. perfect 4ths | Bars 442- 452: C maj. cluster chords with accidentals, esp. Bb | Bars 453- 456: Cluster chords | Bars 457- 473: A min./ C maj. harmony | Bars 474-479: C sus.4ths and cluster chords | |
| Bars 480-501: Suspended cluster chords: | Bar 481: C IV 7 th | Bar 483: C dom. 7 th | Bar 485: C IV 7th | Bar 487: C I | Bar 488- 489: C IV 7 th |
| Bar 490: C I | Bar 492: Sus. 4 th | Bar 444: C I | Bar 446: C IV 7th | Bar 498: C IV | Bar 500: C IV 7 th |

2.9. Rhythmic Organisation and Meter.

The metrical structure of the movements tends to be highly varied, with simple and compound time signatures used interchangeably, additive rhythm a strong feature of the music. In **A** (Table 2.9.1.), the quadruple time signatures blend seamlessly as they establish the main theme. The theme uses an antecedent/consequent structure, and multiple meters, whilst retaining a sense of rhythmic and metric regularity. The second variation experiences wild meter changes in bars 29-46, whilst maintaining a sense of stability through strong rhythmic patterns. The fourth fugal variation uses layered rhythms in viola and cello (Fig. 2.9.1).

Table 2.9.1. Section A metrical organisation.

| Section A | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------|-----|-----|------|-------|--------|
| Meter: | 5/4 | 4/4 | 5/4 | 6/4 | 4/4 | 11/16 | 12/16 | 5/8 | 4/4 | 9/16 | 11/16 | 4/4 |
| Bar/s: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 29 | 30 | 32 | 34 | 39 | 40 | 46-142 |

Figure 2.9.1. Section A. Bars 51-54. Rhythmic layering of subject, answer, and countermelody.



In **B**, the meters stay in common time signatures, and the musical challenge is to keep the music creating ‘new’ ideas. The only deviance is 7/8, and it creates a diminishing metric bridge from 4/4 (or 8/8) to 7/8 to 6/8. The rhythmic focus shifts to reconfigured internal accentuations and pulse groupings, within the following metrical structure (Table 2.9.2.) and (Fig. 2.9.1).

Table 2.9.2. Section B metrical organisation, and Figure 2.9.1. Section B. Bars 108-111. 2+2+3 (1st bar)

2+2+1+2 (4th bar), pulse accentuations and groupings.

| | | | |
|------------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| Section B | | | |
| Meter: | 4/4 | 7/8 | 6/8 |
| Bar/s: | 80 | 108 | 128-143 |



Section C uses only common time signatures as it begins in a fugal imitation form, followed by a passacaglia inspired section, then fused fugue and passacaglia towards the end. The Subject melody is syncopated and the cello's Answer to the Subject is metrically displaced, beginning on beat two of the bar. Countermelody 1 in the marimba is displaced in the same way. By Bar 139, there are four independent musical lines, each with syncopated layered melodies providing a rich rhythmic texture.

Table 2.9.3. Section C metrical organisation.

| | | | | |
|------------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| Section C | | | | |
| Meter: | 3/4 | 9/8 | 6/8 | 3/4 |
| Bar/s: | 144 | 163 | 168 | 197-242 |

Figure 2.9.2. Bars 144-163. Layered syncopated fugal rhythms.

Clarinet in B \flat

Marimba

Piano

Violoncello

Double Bass

Measures 132-135. Annotations: 'S' at the start of the Clarinet part in measure 132; 'S' and 'A' in the Marimba part in measure 134; 'S' in the Piano part in measure 135; 'A' in the Violoncello part in measure 134.

Clarinet in B \flat

Marimba

Piano

Violoncello

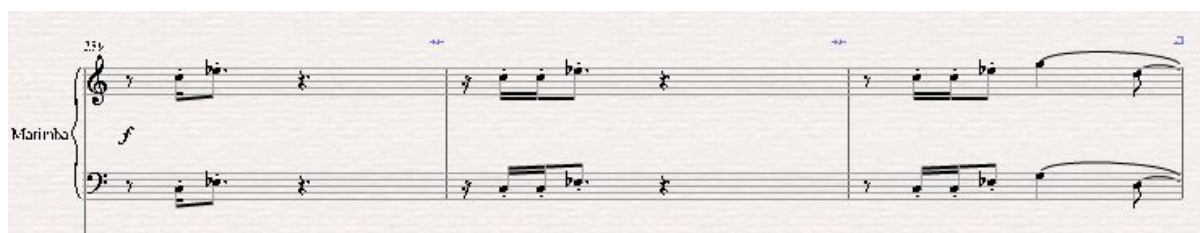
Measures 136-139. Annotations: 'A' in the Clarinet part in measure 136; 'C1' in the Clarinet part in measure 138; 'C2' in the Marimba part in measure 138; 'A' in the Piano part in measure 138; 'S' in the Violoncello part in measure 139.

In **D**, there is a quicker rate of metrical change. The metrical form begins with palindrome time signatures: 6/8 9/8 6/8, a change to 4/4, before moving to another metric palindrome: 6/8 7/8 6/8 (Table 2.9.4). The palindrome meter changes are expanded to include alternating time signatures from bar 335, where the meter switches between 7/8 and 6/8 – creating a 2 bar piano ostinato motif that settles over two meters. A defining feature of the movement is the use of rhythmic displacement layered over static bass cross rhythms (Fig. 2.9.3).

Table 2.9.4. Section D metrical organisation.

| Section D | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| Meter: | 6/8 | 9/8 | 6/8 | 4/4 | 6/8 | 7/8 | 6/8 | |
| Bar/s: | 243 | 303 | 304 | 318 | 326 | 329 | 330 | |
| Meter: | 7/8 | 6/8 | 7/8 | 6/8 | 7/8 | 6/8 | 7/8 | 4/4 |
| Bar/s: | 335 | 336 | 339 | 340 | 341 | 342 | 343 | 354-372 |

Figure 2.9.3. Bars 259-261. Rhythmic displacement of the marimba.



As previously mentioned, the aim of **A2** was to musically represent an illusion: a motif varied so highly that it becomes unrecognisable yet still retaining a sense of the familiar. The meters help to disguise the repetition of familiar harmonic and melodic material, primarily through shifts of meter, groupings, and accents.

Table 2.9.5. Section A2 metrical organisation.

| Section A2 | | | | | |
|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| Meter: | 5/4 | 7/8 | 5/4 | 6/8 | 2/4 |
| Bar/s: | 373 | 377 | 378 | 379 | 414-421 |

The final movement features the highest rate of metrical change as all the metrical ideas of the preceding movements are restated and/or developed. The first theme is in 7/8, with alternating 7/8 and 6/8 meters from bars 427-454 (Table 2.9.5). The juxtaposition of metrical units with a constant motif originated in the fourth movement and is further developed by moving into different meters: 6/8 alternating with 5/8 from bars 454-468, then 4/4 alternating with 3/4 from bars 471-484. Each of the predominant meters from all movements are present: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8, 7/8, with the recurrence of 5/8 (unheard since the first movement).

Table 2.9.6. Section A3 metrical organisation.

| Section A3 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|
| Meter: | 7/8 | 3/8 | 7/8 | 6/8 | 7/8 | 6/8 | 5/8 | 6/8 | 5/8 | 6/8 | 5/8 | 6/8 |
| Bar/s: | 422 | 426 | 427 | 428 | 452 | 454 | 457 | 459 | 460 | 462 | 463 | 468 |
| Meter: | 4/4 | 3/4 | 4/4 | 3/4 | 4/4 | 3/4 | 4/4 | 3/4 | 4/4 | 2/4 | 4/4 | |
| Bar/s: | 471 | 472 | 473 | 479 | 480 | 481 | 482 | 483 | 484 | 485 | 486-500 | |

In bars 445-473, a new order of rhythmic grouping occurs with three layered counter melodies over the piano main melody. For score clarity, bars 446-447 were notated in 5/8, but they have the feeling of 10/8, followed by 11/8 in bar 448-449, providing a sense of continually developing additive meter and rhythms.

Following is a list of the rhythmic layering of beat groupings from 445-446:

- Clarinet: 4+2, 2+1+2
- Marimba: 2 + 1 + 2 + 1, 3+ 2
- Piano: 3+ 3, 3+ 2
- Violin: 3+1+2, 1+4

Figure 2.9.4. Additive meters in A3.

2.10. Timbre and Instrumental Colour.

Timbrally, the instrumentation was approached from the perspective of mood and colour.

Each variation in **A** illustrates a different mood, and different instrumental combinations were used to achieve mood changes. Some of the instrumental combinations are reused to create a sense of mood:

- Clarinet/cello – dark and menacing
- Clarinet/marimba – light and sprightly
- Marimba/piano – bright and happy
- Strings – expressive and soaring, or dark and menacing

B: Marimba and clarinet bring a sense of previously unheard lightness, using the idea of antecedent and consequent from the main theme in A. The clarinet is a symbol of hope in bar 132, the violin echoes the clarinet melody, the movement subsiding with pp clarinet and piano, deflated after the momentum of the previous section.

C is less focused on mood, as it is in a fugal style. The overall mood of the movement is melancholy with a sense of hope, the marimba and piano bringing a sense of lightness in their imitation from bar 200-226.

D begins with the musical problem of only consisting of one note. This movement has the most variation in moods: a sense of despair ensues as gradual chromaticism is introduced, with the violin, viola, and clarinet providing a harsh and clashing supporting ensemble. In bar 259, the piano has an expressive yet momentous theme, with the double bass reintroducing the 'lone note' idea, with repeated C's, Eb's, F's and G's throughout the eight bar melody, whilst the marimba brings lightness to the dark and low melody with staccato punctuations. The first time the movement shows real darkness is in the piano ostinato at bar 327, and low clarinet is used to echo this mood interplaying with the piano rhythms, and at one point contrasting starkly with crunchy high chromatic violin. The movement concludes with a jazz inspired piano solo ending in 342.

A2: The instruments in this movement are used to provide a sense of instrumental and timbral variation that masks the familiarity of economic motivic material:

- First theme: marimba, piano clarinet – hopeful.
- Second theme: piano and strings – defeated.
- Third theme: piano, cello, marimba, clarinet – bright.

- Fourth theme: clarinet, piano, violin – expressive.
- Fifth theme: marimba, piano – questioning.

A3: The final movement makes use of a variety of instrumental combinations. The clarinet represents hope, marimba is used to bring a sense of lightness and rhythmic drive, the strings are used for their rich expression, and the piano has strong harmonies and rhythm.

The first section of **A3** is comprised of a small range of instruments at any one time:

- Clarinet, marimba, piano, violin
- Piano, violin, clarinet, cello
- Piano, marimba, clarinet, viola, cello, double bass

The second section of the work ‘live for today,’ (bars 457-474) layers countermelodies in the clarinet, piano, marimba, and violin. The piano has constant quavers which bring a sense of stability, as the countermelodies harmonise with one another.

In bar 475, the marimba plays a short melody which introduces piano and string chords. Then the violin and cello take over to melodically introduce the new section ‘hope for tomorrow,’ and the piano plays rising cluster chords over the string harmony. The strings alternate in their melodic chord introductions, and in bar 488, the piano introduces the string chords, alternating between small fragments of melody and large punchy chords.

2.11. Textural Processes.

The main textural processes used in *Einstein's Garden* are:

- Polyphony.
- Homophony.
- Monophony.
- Imitation – fugal subjects and answers, contrapuntal music.
- Antecedent and consequent – used in a textural manner at times.

A introduces all of these textural concepts, which are to become the textural framework of the piece. Following is a table that shows the basic textural principles that are used in each section of the work (note that there may be more than one textural process occurring, but only the most important of each section has been listed to give a comprehensive overview).

Table 2.11.1. Main textural processes of the movements.

| | | | | | |
|-----------|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|
| A | Antecedent/consequent | Polyphony | Homophony | Imitation | |
| B | Antecedent/consequent | Polyphony | Monophony | Homophony | |
| C | Imitation | Monophony | Homophony | Monophony | Imitation |
| D | Monophony | Polyphony | Monophony | Homophony | |
| A2 | Antecedent/consequent | Polyphony | | | |
| A3 | Polyphony | Homophony | | | |

Interesting textural processes are the layering of different textures at once, or expanding textures. For example, in bar 64 of **A**, the strings are functioning in an accompaniment style, yet they are playing an imitative and polyphonic melody that echoes the consequent piano

melody in bar 68, with a sustained pedal chord in 71-73 that acts as accompaniment to the clarinet and piano polyphonic lines.

Figure 2.11.1. A. Bars 63- 73. Layered texture.

The image displays a musical score for seven instruments: Clarinet in F#, Marimba, Piano, Violin, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (bars 63-70) features a Clarinet in F# with a melodic line starting in bar 68, marked *mf*. The Marimba has a melodic line starting in bar 68, marked *f*. The Piano has a melodic line starting in bar 68, marked *mf*. The second system (bars 71-73) features a sustained pedal chord in the Piano, marked *f*, which acts as accompaniment for the Clarinet and Piano polyphonic lines. The Violin, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass play homophonic accompaniment chords.

In **C**, the piano and strings play homophonic accompaniment chords, whilst the clarinet and marimba display antecedent and consequent melodic behaviour.

Figure 2.11.2. C. Bars 173- 184. Homophonic piano/string chords with antecedent/consequent melodies.

The musical score for Figure 2.11.2, bars 173-184, is arranged in six staves. The top staff is for Clarinet in F#, showing a melodic line with antecedent and consequent phrases. The second staff is for Marimba, also featuring a melodic line with similar antecedent and consequent phrases. The third staff is for Piano, showing homophonic piano/string chords. The bottom three staves are for Violin, Viola, and Violoncello, providing melodic accompaniment. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf* and *p*.

In **D**, the marimba and piano have imitative yet polyphonic melodic lines, with a bass string melody accompaniment that functions as if homophonic, yet aurally produces the effect of a polyphonic textural setting.

Figure 2.11.3. D. Bars 294-299. Polyphonic piano and marimba lines, with melodic accompaniment in cello and double bass.

The musical score for Figure 2.11.3, bars 294-299, is arranged in six staves. The top staff is for Marimba, showing a polyphonic melodic line. The second staff is for Piano, also showing a polyphonic melodic line. The bottom three staves are for Violin, Viola, and Violoncello, providing melodic accompaniment. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* and *mf*.

In **A3**, from bar 475, the marimba has a monophonic melody which precedes the piano and string homophonic chords in a chorale style. The strings from bar 480 are functioning in a monophonic manner, preceding the piano/string chords in bar 481.

Figure 2.11.4. A3. Bars 474-485. Monophonic marimba, violin, and cello preceding homophonic chords.

The image shows a musical score for seven instruments: Clarinet in F#, Marimba, Piano, Violin, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The score is for measures 474 to 485. The tempo is marked as ♩=82. The marimba part starts in measure 475 with a monophonic melody. The piano and string parts (Violin, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass) play homophonic chords starting in measure 480. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf* and *ff*.

Composing *Einstein's Garden* consolidated my approach to rhythm and meter, with irregular meter, beat and pulse groupings, and rhythmic layering used to achieve a motoristic quality. I extended my harmonic language, whilst retaining a sense of defining lyricism. The collaboration resulted in a work with multiple layers of meaning. Key aspects of my musical language were harnessed to the demands of the dance context. The primary goal was the synthesis of music and dance.

Chapter Three:

The Genesis of Somewhere between the Sky and the Sea

3.1 Background Considerations

The main aim of composing *Somewhere between the Sky and the Sea* was to explore the musical and dramatic possibilities within the play of the same name by Sydney playwright Alex Broun. The play presented dramatic potential; a variety of scenes; a strong narrative; and the cast and production requirements were logistically possible with a small budget.

The issue of production requirements and costs was a pertinent one, given the background of recent Australian operatic productions. The intention was to have the opera performed, so it was important to take into account scope and budget issues if the opera was to be viable.

Only five works by Australian composers were performed from 2012-2013 with professional Sydney or Melbourne companies. Refer to Appendix 1 for an overview of the current Australian opera landscape in Sydney and Melbourne.

Once again, the process of collaboration proved vital, particularly in relation to stage direction. In this case, a smooth partnership with the director proved invaluable as we developed the staging together with the singers.

Another of Brett Dean's collaborative experiences was composing the opera *Bliss*, with librettist Amanda Holden and director Neil Armfield. Dean also collaborated with singers Peter Coleman-Wright, Wolfgang Koch, Merlyn Quaipe, Lorina Gore and Hayoung Lee. Dean found the collaborative process highly useful for developing his own instinct for text setting.

“(Collaboration) can stifle as well as it can enhance, sure, if the balance isn’t right. How many promising operas have been hamstrung by the wrong libretto, either too wordy or a mismatch of aesthetic?”

Richard Mills’ *For the Love of the Nightingale* premiered in 2007 at the Perth Festival. It was a collaborative effort between Mills and the playwright/librettist, Timberlake Wertenbaker, Mills, and director Lindy Hume. Mills created the role of Philomel for Opera Australia principal artist Emma Matthews.⁴⁰ I attended the Opera Australia production at the Sydney Opera House in 2011. I was struck by the elaborate sets, costumes, lighting, and the chance to hear a full orchestra playing a new opera. The drama, words, and music were heavily intertwined with each other, and Mills provided many contrasting dramatic moments: the powerful and dangerous music on Tereus’ ship; to the beautiful ethereal bird song Philomel sings as the Nightingale, to the hopeful ending. I used a wide variety of different emotions and moods in my own opera, from the reminiscent and longing opening scene; to a hopeful meeting; wistful love and tenderness; a tumultuous relationship; to a dramatic marriage proposal and concluding with a confession.

⁴⁰ Allerta! Opera Australia.org.au, “Nightingale a Feast of Compelling Theatre,” accessed July 22, 2013. http://www.opera-australia.org.au/discover/features/Richard_Mills_Interview.

3.2 Somewhere between the Sky and the Sea: Analysis

Somewhere between the Sky and the Sea centres on Ramon de Guardo, a Portuguese composer; his girlfriend Madeleine the cellist; and Stephanie Lythe, a famous New York violinist/Ramon's mistress (see Appendix 2: Synopsis).

The moods of different scenes were used to determine a structural plan. Writing the opera from this perspective meant that I could approach structuring it from its dramatic tension, and create contrasting mood changes in each song. I planned the order of pieces and spoken text, then the structure of each piece and how it would function as a whole in the complete work. The characters' music and themes relate to their personalities: Ramon has Portuguese music, Stephanie has playful music, and Madeleine has sweet music.

I created the libretto from the play. The first step was editing the text, by analysing which scenes were essential to the story. This resulted in a variety of scenes and moods, with various combinations of characters and solos.

The structural layout of the opera is through composed: it was felt that this style would aid in keeping a sense of flow and drama. Table 3.2.1 summarises the structural layout of the opera and Table 3.2.2 shows the internal formal organisation of these structural units.

Table 3.2.1. Structural layout of the opera.

Structural Layout of the Opera

1. It Starts with a Composition (Ramon).
2. I am Sounding like a Stalker (Ramon), recitative.
3. So I Go to a Bar (Ramon), spoken text.

Dialogue. (Ramon).

4. To Attain the Unattainable (Ramon).

Dialogue (Ramon/Stephanie).

5. A Portuguese Composer (Stephanie and Ramon).
6. Ramon's Violin Concerto (instrumental).
7. I'm Madeleine with Three E's (Madeleine).
8. Now I See a Different Blue (Ramon).
9. Two Weeks Later (Ramon & Madeleine).
10. I Left Your Concerto on the Plane (Stephanie), recitative.
11. Schmooze, Schmooze, Schmooze (Stephanie).

Dialogue (Ramon/Stephanie).

12. Once You Have Walked with Gods (Ramon).

Dialogue (Ramon/Madeleine).

13. She Was My Fantasy.
14. Somewhere between the Sky and the Sea (Ramon/Stephanie/Madeleine).

Table 3.2.2. Internal structures of the music within the opera.

Internal Structures of the Music within the Opera:

It Starts with a Composition: bars 1-61. Violin concerto introduction, A B A.

I am Sounding like a Stalker: bars 62-69. Through composed.

So I Go to a Bar: bars 70-91. A A1 A2.

Attain the Unattainable: bars 92-143. Jazz bar introduction, through composed.

A Portuguese Composer: bars 144-212. A B A.

Ramon's Violin Concerto: bars 213-263. A B C D.

I'm Madeleine with Three E's: bars 264-314. Through composed.

Now I See a Different Blue: bars 315-365. A1 A2.

Two Weeks Later: bars 366-437. Through composed.

I Left Your Concerto on the Plane: bars 438-476. A B A.

Schmooze, Schmooze, Schmooze: bars 477-524. Through composed.

Once you Have Walked with Gods: bars 525-594. A B.

She Was My Fantasy: bars 595-692. A, B, A.

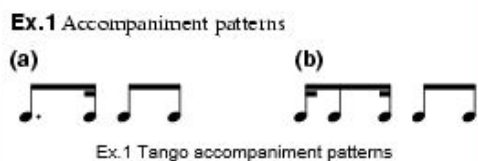
Somewhere between the Sky and the Sea: bars 693-776. Through composed.

3.3 Traits of Spanish and Portuguese Music in the Opera.

As Ramon is a Portuguese composer, Spanish and Portuguese musical elements were useful in the characterisation process. Listed below are some of the Portuguese and Spanish elements that were used throughout the opera:

Zarzuela - From the late 1650s, zarzuela was recognised as a musical theatre form, a play combining spoken text and song. Although recitative was not typically used, when it was included it was used sparingly.⁴¹ *Somewhere between the Sky and the Sea* uses a combination of spoken text and sparse use of recitative interspersed with song.

Figure 3.3.1. Tango rhythms.⁴²



Tango: According to Grove Music Online, tango music shares common features: 2/4 time, syncopated accompaniment patterns, and the form of a European polka, (Fig. 3.3.1).⁴³ Using the idea of repetitive syncopated patterns, *So I Go to a Bar* was composed in a tango-inspired style.

⁴¹ “Zarzuela,” *Oxford Music Online*, accessed November 30, 2012, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy2.library.usyd.edu.au/subscriber/article/grove/music/40742?q=zarzuela&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit.

⁴² “Tango,” *Oxford Music Online*, accessed November 30, 2012, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy2.library.usyd.edu.au/subscriber/article/grove/music/27473?q=tango&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit.

⁴³ “Tango,” *Oxford Music Online*, accessed November 30, 2012, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy2.library.usyd.edu.au/subscriber/article/grove/music/27473?q=tango&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit.

Figure 3.3.2. Tango inspired rhythms in *So I Go to a Bar*.



Pavaniglia – This instrumental Spanish dance uses alternating major-minor harmonic progressions, an idea which was used at the harmonic basis for the Portuguese music in the creation of the opera.⁴⁴

Ornamentation - Ornamentation has traditionally been the domain of the Spanish vocalist.⁴⁵ The opera features ornamentation as a motivic feature linking Stephanie and Ramon. Ornamentation and embellishment are used in the ensemble to reinforce the sense of Portuguese music.

Polyphony - Polyphony was a popular device of medieval choral sacred music.⁴⁶ Much of the opera has been composed with polyphonic instrumental styles.

Modes - Modes are a strong feature in the Spanish piano works I've played by Enrique Granados, Isaac Albeniz, and Manuel de Falla.

⁴⁴“Pavaniglia,” *Oxford Music Online*, accessed November 30, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy2.library.usyd.edu.au/subscriber/article/grove/music/21121>.

⁴⁵ “Spain, 1500-1800,” *Oxford Music Online*, accessed November 30, 2012, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy2.library.usyd.edu.au/subscriber/article/grove/music/49928pg2?q=search&search=quick&pos=9&_start=1#firsthit.

⁴⁶ “Spain: Art Music,” *Oxford Music Online*, accessed December 10, 2012, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy2.library.usyd.edu.au/subscriber/article/grove/music/40115pg1?q=search&search=quick&pos=6&_start=1#firsthit.

The Portuguese musical references occur in Ramon and Stephanie's music, representing their unity. Madeleine's music makes no use of Portuguese stylistic traits, representing her distance from Ramon. Ramon's Portuguese music tends to surface when he is feeling emotional.

The opening melody of the opera is an 11 bar fragment of *Ramon's Violin Concerto*. It uses alternating F7 and Bb minor chords in Portuguese fashion (quick harmonic changes between major/minor).

So I Go to a Bar uses syncopated tango rhythms under spoken text in C Aeolian Mode, to produce a Portuguese sound (Fig. 3.3.3).

Figure 3.3.3. 3. Bars 70-73. Syncopated tango rhythms.



The opening of *A Portuguese Composer* consists of syncopated counter rhythms based on alternating harmony between G minor and IV7. The strings play pizzicato style, to mimic the sound of Portuguese guitars.

Figure 3.3.4. 5. Bars 144-151. Pizzicato strings representing Portuguese guitars.

When Ramon becomes angered by Stephanie, an agitated Portuguese piano part occurs with cluster chords based on alternating F# minor and E minor harmony (Figure 3.3.5).

Figure 3.3.5. 5. Bars 152-159. Angry Portuguese piano part.

The musical score for Figure 3.3.5 shows bars 152-159. The Oboe part has a melodic line with accents. The Soprano part is silent. The Baritone part has lyrics: "We have beau-ti-ful com-pos-ers. Lis-co-bar's reu-ti-em. Gas-par Fer-nan-do!". The Piano part features a rhythmic accompaniment with cluster chords. The Violin, Viola, and Cello parts provide harmonic support with rhythmic patterns.

The crunchy piano chords return in clusters in *Two Weeks Later* when Ramon becomes angry again, using G minor and B major alternating chords.

Figure 3.3.6. 9. Bars 419-421. Crunchy Portuguese chords in *Two Weeks Later*.

The musical score for Figure 3.3.6 shows bars 419-421. The Piano part features a rhythmic accompaniment with cluster chords based on alternating G minor and B major harmony.

In Stephanie's first solo *I Left Your Concerto on the Plane* she concludes the piece by singing "I'm looking forward to seeing you" in C Aeolian mode to indicate that she wishes to see Ramon.

Figure 3.2.7. 10. Bars 471-476. C Aeolian mode in a farewell.

The image shows a musical score for bars 471-476. The top staff is a vocal line in C Aeolian mode, with lyrics: "And Ra - ram, I'm look-ing for-ward to see-ing you." The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment consisting of two staves (treble and bass clef) with chords and some melodic lines.

Schmooze Schmooze Schmooze, Stephanie's first solo with the ensemble, alternates between Cflat7 and Cdim.7, using semiquaver triplets in bars 497-499.

Once You Have Walked with Gods features many different Portuguese musical traits:

- Opening syncopated piano melody alternating between 7/8 and 4/4.
- Bars 550-551: Portuguese semiquaver piano melody.
- Bar 552 – the music was inspired by the style of Portuguese fado: a slow, sad lament.

In *She Was My Fantasy*, the opening four bars contain a Cflat7 alternating with Ramon's violin concerto chord F7, an expressive and emotive reiteration of the chord as Ramon prepares to ask Madeleine to marry him.

The harmony in the final trio *Somewhere between the Sky and the Sea* is based on the F7 and Ab dom. 7th harmonies which underlie the violin concerto.

3.4 Main Features of the Songs.

The solo violin opening theme gradually develops into the dreamlike *It Starts with a Composition*. The chords used to portray a sense of ominous dreaming were Ab9 (Ab C Eb G Bb) revoiced, to give a sense of suspended cluster chords, alternating with a D7 chord using a lowered 5th (D F# Ab C) to create uncertainty – which it does by its intrinsically odd nature (Fig 3.4.2).

Figure 3.4.1. 1. Bars 1-8. Violin concerto excerpt using alternating major and minor chords and triplets.



Figure 3.4.2. Bars 21-23. Dreamlike harmony.



I am Sounding like a Stalker is in a recitative style with piano and voice, using mixed interval harmonies reminiscent of the preceding piece, creating a link into the forthcoming spoken tango-inspired spoken song *So I Go to a Bar*.

In *Attain the Unattainable*, Ramon meets Stephanie for the first time in a jazz bar. The piece features an eight bar improvised jazz piano introduction, and continues to use jazz harmonies (particularly 7th and 9th chords), chromaticism, and occasional discordance, to portray Ramon's emotional unease.

Next page: Figure 3.4.3. 4. Bars 92-95. The jazz bar theme, creating a naturalistic setting.

In bar 31, the cello mimics a Portuguese guitar with pizzicato, and the violin reintroduces consecutive triplets and syncopated rhythms. The piece continues in this fashion until the final major chord which brings a sense of hopefulness and resolution.

In *A Portuguese Composer*, the first line Stephanie sings is reminiscent of the opening line of the opera (the violin melody in Figure 3.4.1). The A of the violin melody has become a Bb in the vocal line.

Figure 3.4.4. 5. Bars 147-149. Stephanie's reiteration of Portuguese themes.

The second line Stephanie sings is a major variation of *So I Go to a Bar* which has earlier been spoken by Ramon. Stephanie is bright, cheerful, fun, loud and outspoken, and her variations on Ramon's themes are bright and happy – hence the change to major. After the initial relationship with Ramon is established musically, Stephanie's musical personality is allowed to shine through and her music is further developed.

Figure 3.4.5. 5. Bars 163- 167. Stephanie's variation on *So I Go to a Bar*.

A Portuguese Composer seamlessly blends recitative and song together – Stephanie and Ramon ‘talk’ in recitative as they have a lot to say and are eager to know each other quickly, and as the music becomes more emotional, they return to singing.

Ramon’s Violin Concerto is created from the opening melody of the opera, using dramatic quickly developing violin melodies and virtuosic fast chromatic lines.

Figure 3.4.6. 6. Bars 234-240. Fast chromatic lines and the virtuosic development of the concerto.

The image displays two staves of musical notation for Violin 1. The first staff, labeled 'Vln. 1', covers bars 234 to 240. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. Bars 234 and 235 contain triplet eighth notes. Bars 236 and 237 feature a fast chromatic line with slurs. Bar 240 ends with a dynamic marking of *f*. The second staff, also labeled 'Vln. 1', covers bars 238 to 240. It starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. Bars 238 and 239 continue the chromatic line with slurs. Bar 240 concludes with a dynamic marking of *ff*.

Madeleine’s first character flaw becomes apparent in her solo *Madeleine with Three E’s*: she is extremely talkative. I chose to cut Ramon’s original text from this piece to help portray Madeleine as annoying. Madeleine is a lower soprano part, and whilst much of her music beautiful, she has none of the exciting high notes of Stephanie, which musically paints Stephanie as the more attractive woman. Included is the text of Madeleine’s solo:

“I’m Madeleine with three E’s...I like your music. You don’t have to thank me, you are a beautiful composer, I wouldn’t say it if I didn’t think it. I’ll come over and look at the scores. So this is your cue to ask me around to dinner to look at your scores.”

Figure 3.4.7. 7. Bars 264-271. Madeleine's opening line.

♩=88 *mp*

4

I'm Mad-e-leine with three E's I like your mus ic.____

Madeleine's opening line illustrates her sweetness and hopefulness, introducing the new key of E Lydian. The last syllable of 'Madeleine' ends on the 4th of the mode, portraying Madeleine as tentative, as the sentence is unresolved. 'With three E's' rises in a hopeful manner to the 6th of E Lydian, and the music moves to D major as the word 'music' falls in a swooning manner in bar 270. At the end of the piece, when Madeleine asks Ramon to ask her to dinner, diminished chords reinforce a sense of Madeleine's insecurity.

In *Now I See a Different Blue*, Ramon pours out his newfound love for Madeleine – settling upon the pure tonal centre of G major, a melodically swooning effect achieved with the use of repetitive thirds.

Figure 3.4.8. 8. Bars 321-327. A change to tonal harmony with repetitive thirds.

Ob. *p*

Ramon

look in - to her eyes and now I see a diff - 'rent blue.

Pno. *p*

con ped.

The following piece *Two Weeks Later* gives a strong contrast, as Ramon uses the metaphor of a rocky boat to describe the deterioration of his feelings for Madeleine. The piece begins with

alternating dominant 7th and diminished 7th chords, with portamento cello and an erratically leaping piano melody creating a sense of a helplessly tossing boat.

Figure 3.4.9. 9. Bars 366-371. Musical portrayal of the tumultuous sea.

Musical score for bars 366-371. The score includes parts for Oboe, Madeleine, Ramon, Piano, Viola, and Violoncello. The tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 66$. The key signature has one flat. The score shows a tumultuous sea scene with a leaping piano melody and a portamento cello line. The lyrics for Ramon are: "Two weeks la - ter she moves in and my litt - le boat_ toss-es on the glor - i - ous sea".

Figure 3.4.10. 9. Bars 376-379. Circus inspired music.

Musical score for bars 376-379. The score includes parts for Ramon and Piano. The tempo is marked mf . The key signature has one flat. The score shows circus-inspired music with a constant sixteenth-note accompaniment and a vocal line. The lyrics for Ramon are: "Some - times the wind is gent - le_ and cool, and the sail - ing smooth and joy - ful,".

In bars 11-13, Ramon sings “Sometimes the wind is gentle and cool, and the sailing smooth and joyful.” (Figure 3.4.10). The harmonies change in bar 13 to C major followed by the dominant 7th of Db Major (Ab C Eb Gb), and these harmonies combined with the constant sixteenth notes and oom-pa-pa rhythms create a humorous effect by imitating circus music.

I Left Your Concerto on the Plane is the recitative sung by Stephanie when she phones Ramon to come to New York. The recitative style reinforces Stephanie's comfortable, relaxed relationship with Ramon.

Schmooze, Schmooze, Schmooze shows a new side of Stephanie as she discusses the monotony of attending endless parties. The music is still perky, but is given a lazy, unresolving sound through the combination of a slow tempo and alternating major 7ths and diminished 7ths.

Figure 3.4.11. 11. Bars 490-496. A sense of laziness is created from 7th and whole tone harmony.

The image shows a musical score for five instruments: Stephanie (voice), Piano (Pno.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Cello/Vibraphone (Vc.). The score covers bars 490 to 496. Stephanie's part is a recitative-style melody with the lyrics "Schmooze schmooze schmooze". The Piano accompaniment features a slow, perky melody with a sense of laziness, characterized by alternating major 7ths and diminished 7ths. The Violin, Viola, and Cello/Vibraphone parts provide harmonic support, with the Cello/Vibraphone part marked *arco* and *mf*. The overall mood is relaxed and unresolving.

Once You Have Walked with Gods begins with a fast and exciting syncopated rhythm and melody that alternate seamlessly between 7/8 and 4/4 - depicting Ramon's bubbling excitement about his career and his affair with Stephanie. The opening of the piece uses a C# Myxolydian scale, which modulates to C major, Ab Major, briefly into D minor, before arriving at the key of the fado inspired section: G minor. The scales and modulations are as erratic as Ramon.

Figure 3.4.12. 12. Bars 325-328. A sense of bubbling excitement.

She Was My Fantasy returns to Ramon’s earnest tonal state, in C major. It is one of the most expressive points in the opera - with long melodic lines and a soaring vocal line – and the most dramatically important scene, as Ramon proposes to Madeleine.

Figure 3.4.13. 13. Bars 615-617. A rising epic melody.

“Stephanie wasn’t a dream, she was my fantasy,” Ramon sings, with just the violin and cello accompanying him. Texturally, the sparse instrumentation shows Ramon’s emotion is raw and pure. The music climbs towards the word “fantasy” using an implied 7th chord of CEB (minus the 5th of G). It then resolves to F major, then V-I. The chord patterns of this particular line are as follows: I, V, vi, I, IV, V, I. The minor chord vi imbues the sentence with a tinge of sadness on the word “dream.”

Figure 3.4.14. 13. Bars 668-692. Ramon's proposal.

The image shows a musical score for Ramon's proposal, bars 668-692. The score is arranged in four systems. The first system is the vocal line for Ramon, with lyrics: "ded", "li", "ask", "her", "li", "ma", "ny", "me". The second system is the piano accompaniment, featuring suspended chords in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand. The third system is the violin part, and the fourth system is the viola part. The music is in a romantic style, with a focus on harmony and melody.

When Ramon stumbles upon the idea of proposing to Madeleine a few minutes later, the texture thickens to match the epic occasion. Suspended chords in the piano and high soaring violin give a romantic and beautiful feeling to the heartfelt moment. Beauty is found in the simplicity of the parts and the harmony and melody shine through.

Somewhere between the Sky and the Sea concludes the opera and it is the only piece that features the trio of singers and the only time they sing in harmony with each other.

Figure 3.4.15. 14. Bars 710-715. Clarity and harmony of vocal lines.

The image shows a musical score for bars 710-715. The score is arranged in five staves. The top staff is for the Oboe (Ob.), followed by Stephanie (Soprano), Madeleine (Soprano), Ramon (Bass), and Piano (Pno.). Stephanie's line includes the lyrics "miss you." Ramon's line includes the lyrics "The sky." The Piano part features a broken chord bass line and counter-melodies. The score is marked with a dynamic of *mf* and includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and accidentals.

The setting of the song is rather dramatic, as Ramon is trying to explain to both women that he loves them, while they are both trying to say the same thing! I decided in the interest of textural clarity to have the singers splitting the syllables of the words so that there were no layered syllable clashes between them. For example (Fig. 3.4.15), Stephanie sings “I miss you,” and Ramon interjects with “the” between “miss and you,” and sings “sky” directly after Stephanie completes her short sentence. In this way, the words are clearly audible, yet the singers can still harmonise. The violin concerto is functioning as the harmony of the piece, with a broken chord piano bass line and countermelodies in the oboe, violin, and cello.

Figure 3.4.16. 14. Bars 776-782. An unresolved ending.

The image displays a musical score for bars 776-782. The score is arranged in a system with the following parts from top to bottom: Oboe (Ob.), Stephanie, Madeleine, Ramon (with lyrics "tell you"), Piano (Pno.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The Ramon part includes the lyrics "tell" and "you" under the notes. The Piano part features a complex texture with many chords and some melodic lines. The Violin part has a prominent, soaring line that ends on a high note. The Viola and Violoncello parts provide harmonic support. The score concludes with a double bar line, indicating the end of the piece.

The finale is reached when Ramon tells the two women “I have something to tell you,” finishing on a ninth chord constructed from the melody of his violin concerto (FACEG), with a final soaring violin note of E, which leaves the piece unresolved. It is never revealed what happens after Ramon confesses to Stephanie and Madeleine. The musical aim is to capture the unresolved nature of the narrative.

3.5 Shared Motivic Relationships.

The opening solo violin melody of the opera is the most important theme in the work: it represents the driving force of the plot; a dream of Ramon's to write a violin concerto; and highlights his Portuguese heritage, all in the first twelve bars. Variations and fragments of Portuguese Melody A recur in various ways throughout the work, usually at particularly dramatic peaks. The first time Portuguese Melody A recurs, Ramon sings about Stephanie "maybe she is attainable, maybe I can soar with her." The harmony of the violin concerto is restated in *She Was My Fantasy* as Ramon prepares to propose to Madeleine, but lingering thoughts of Stephanie are suggested by the F7 harmony. In the final trio the harmony of the violin concerto and fragments of the melody have become interlinked. Ramon is unable to separate himself from the motif as he desperately struggles to separate himself from Stephanie.

Table 3.5.1. Motivic relationships with Portuguese Melody A.

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <i>It Starts with a Composition</i> Bars 1-12 Portuguese melody A. | <i>Attain the Unattainable</i> Bar 119 – 120: harmonic variation/interval augmentation. | <i>Ramon's Violin Concerto</i> Bars 213-236, 246-263: melodic extension/variation. |
| | <i>She Was My Fantasy</i> Bars 595-598 C7 and F7 chords. Bars 644-651: F7 chords. | <i>Somewhere between the Sky and the Sea</i> Bars 707-724, 746-750, 768-776: F7 harmony. 763-764 oboe fragment of melody. |

Portuguese Melody B is Ramon and Stephanie's shared motif that links their music together, and it is restated in all of Stephanie's music. Ramon is the first to use the motif as he sings "she is with other musicians, her backing band," establishing that the motif relates to

Stephanie. Portuguese Melody B recurs in *A Portuguese Composer* as Stephanie subtly weaves it into her own music, as she strives to forge a bond with Ramon.

Another point of interest when the motif recurs is in *Once You Have Walked with Gods* as Ramon sings about his relationship with Stephanie drawing towards its end. The melody is truncated to three notes and then repeated, reiterating Ramon's dissatisfied feelings.

Table 3.5.2. Motivic relationships with Portuguese Melody B.

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <i>Attain the unattainable</i> Bars 122-125 Portuguese melody B. | <i>A Portuguese Composer</i> Bars 163-167, Stephanie melodic variation. Bars 205-201, Stephanie melodic variation. | <i>I left your concerto on the plane</i> Bars 453-462, melodic inversion. Bars 473-476, first half of melody B used, then embellished with semiquavers. |
| | <i>Schmooze, Schmooze, Schmooze</i> Bars 487-489, melodic extension. | <i>Once you have walked with gods</i> Bars 551-576, melodic truncation. |
| | <i>She was my fantasy</i> Bar 599, melodic inversion of first half of melody. | <i>Somewhere between the sky & the sea</i> Bars 731-733, widened intervals and melodic variation. |

In the opening of *She Was My Fantasy* Ramon is speaking to Madeleine, but musically he is reminiscing about Stephanie by way of reiterating her motif in his music. In the final trio, bars 731-733 feature a brief variant of Portuguese Melody B, with widened intervals alluding to the widening space that has come between Ramon and Stephanie. It is as if Ramon begins to think about Stephanie, and realising the space between them, dispenses with her motif, never to be heard again.

Table 3.5.3. Motivic relationships with Madeleine's theme.

| <i>I'm Madeleine with Three E's</i> | <i>Two Weeks Later</i> |
|---|---|
| Bars 264-271, Madeleine's theme. | Bars 366-375 syncopated fragment of motif in oboe, vocal line, and piano. |
| Bars 287-294, varied theme played by strings. | Bars 393-401, and 406-418 melodic contour of motif |
| Bars 304-315, melodic variation. | in vocal lines. |

Madeleine's theme is heard in the opening line of her solo (bars 268-271), immediately establishing her musical identity. Madeleine's theme repeats throughout her song in various guises to portray her as a talkative yet sweet character. Her theme is only repeated in *Two Weeks Later*, a duet she shares with Ramon. As Ramon bemoans his tumultuous relationship with Madeleine, the oboe and piano echo his dissatisfaction with a syncopated fragment of Madeleine's theme. The contour of her theme is re-used when she questions Ramon about paying the rent, and he responds with a sweet sounding variant in bars 406-418, as he comes to the realisation that she is giving up her dream of playing the cello. As Ramon is discussing Madeleine, it seemed fitting to have a remnant of her theme as the driving undercurrent.

3.6 Text Setting.

The opera is divided into two main styles of song: vocal/ensemble and recitative (piano/vocal), as well as using spoken word and instrumental music in *So I Go to a Bar* and *Ramon's Violin Concerto*. The majority of the text setting is syllabic, as this gave the drama a sense of realism, and flowed with the music. However, neumatic and melismatic writing does feature in each of the songs at specific points, in order to word paint or highlight a particular

action or emotion. The examples of text setting have been divided into two categories: humorous and expressive text setting.

3.7 Humorous Text Setting.

In *A Portuguese Composer*, the text setting is at times used for a humorous effect: Ramon tells Stephanie he is a Portuguese composer, and she jokingly retorts “A Portuguese composer? Ha, ha, ha!” and musically laughs at him, harmonising with the strings.

Figure 3.7.1. 5. Bars 147-150. Humorous text setting.

The musical score for Figure 3.7.1 shows a single line of music in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The dynamic marking is *mf*. The lyrics are: "A Port - u-gese com - pos - er?_ Ha ha ha!_"

Madeleine’s character is talkative, which is why her music is completely syllabic until the final trio. In *Two Weeks Later* she teasingly asks Ramon to contribute to the rent, in a hurried recitative fashion – the first musical portrayal of nagging in the opera!

Figure 3.7.2. 9. Bars 366-400. Musical portrayal of nagging.

The musical score for Figure 3.7.2 is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 6/8. It features a dynamic marking of *f*. The lyrics are: "I know_ you're the ar - tis - tic one__ in this re-lat - ion - ship but do you think__ at some point you could ac - tua - lly con - trib - ute to the rent?"

Ramon responds by defending himself to the audience “She is lying when she says that, I pay my share...most weeks.” The metrical displacement and delay of “most weeks” produced a comical effect, almost as if it was Ramon’s afterthought.

Figure 3.7.3. 9. Bars 402-405. Metrical displacement of “most weeks.”



I Left Your Concerto on the Plane is the opera’s most comical point, as Stephanie explains why she hasn’t contacted Ramon in six months, with a dramatic explanation of everything that has happened to his concerto. The piece is in recitative style as the drama is progressing, and the speech-like nature of recitative served to best portray the mood of the text. The metrically displaced chords in 441, 443, 463, and 465 add to the comical effect with a chromatic clash between the Bb-B natural and Bb-A natural.

Figure 3.7.4. 10. Bars 438-476. *I Left Your Concerto on the Plane.*

438 $\text{♩} = 66$ *mf*

S. I left your con-cert-o on the plane, and then when I fin-ly got it back the front page was miss ing so I

Pno. *mf*

446

S. did-n't have your e- mail. And then I thought you were in Port-u gal. Then I re-mem-bered you were from Port-u-gal not in Port-u gal.

Pno.

453

S. So then I rang the Con and Marg-ret gave me your num-ber. I hope you don't mind a-bout your con

Pno. *mf*

460 *mf*

S. cert-o I love it. I want to play it. Can you come to New York to-morr-ow? the orch-es-tra will book your tick-ets.

Pno. *mf*

467

S. Bus-ness class o-kay? So don't get i-deas and ask for first And Ra-mon, I'm look-ing for-ward to see-ing you.

Pno.

Once You Have Walked with Gods features the humorous line “I’m the next big thing, I’m her next big thing!” The end of Ramon’s sentences rise to give the music a sense of self importance. The piano chords interjecting with the voice provide an extra element of hilarity to the line.

Figure 3.7.5. 12. Bars 547-549. “I’m the next big thing.”

The musical score for Figure 3.7.5. 12. consists of two staves. The top staff is labeled 'Bar.' and is in bass clef. It contains the vocal line with the lyrics: "I'm the next big thing I'm her next big thing!". The bottom staff is labeled 'Pno.' and is in treble and bass clefs. It contains the piano accompaniment, which includes chords and rests.

3.8 Expressive Text Setting.

The first point of truly expressive music in the opera occurs in *Attain the Unattainable*, when Ramon notices Stephanie for the first time in a jazz bar. The vocal line features a hint of the romantic, through its use of chromaticism, and becomes neumatic as it becomes more expressive.

Figure 3.8.1. 4. Bars 108-113. Expressive text setting through use of chromatic intervals.

108

as on her pos-ter, not per-fect, in a way that makes her more-beaut-i-ful.

mf *f* *f* *f* *f*

arco *f* *f*

Ramon continues with his chromatically ascending then descending lines. Metrical displacement is used to give Ramon time to gather his thoughts as he sings “Maybe she is...attainable,” as if he is pausing to convince himself that Stephanie is attainable. The line rises by leaping a sixth on the last syllable to symbolise Ramon’s hopefulness.

Figure 3.8.2. 4. Bars 114-118. Ramon musically convinces himself Stephanie is attainable.

114

May-be she is not like the sky aft-er all, may-be she is a-tain-a-ble.

mf *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf*

mf *f* *f* *f* *f*



Figure 3.8.3. 4. Bars 119-121. Soaring vocal line. Ramon then sings “maybe I can soar with her,” as the vocal line soars over polytonal chords: C dom7th and A major arpeggio to an unexpected high D#, before resolving to an ambiguous C#. The polytonality represents the mix of Ramon’s conflicting emotions: hopefulness and insecurity.

Ramon continues “She clutches her violin case, like it is a needy child,” in an overtly dramatic and expressive way, indicating that Ramon cares deeply for Stephanie, attributing love to the simplest of actions – clutching a violin case. The familiar ascending melodic contour repeats in bars 126 and 128. Ramon appears to be fantasising about having children with Stephanie when he notices how she holds her violin case like it’s a child.

Figure 3.8.4. 4. Bars 125-129. Fantasising.



A Portuguese Composer has its first serious moment when Stephanie slyly asks Ramon if he has a girlfriend: Ramon's typical response is to become neumatic when emotional. He replies with a climbing scale, finishing his question by rising a tone. The words "sky" and "sun" are word painted by neumatic and melodic extensions (Fig 3.8.5).

Figure 3.8.5. 5. Bars 196-204. Emotional and neumatic text setting.

196 *mf*
Is she flirting with me? Does the sky
201
bend to kiss the sun?

Now I See a Different Blue is the simplest piece of the whole opera, representative of Ramon's uncomplicated love for Madeleine. The piece uses G major harmony, and Ramon's music uses small intervals of 3rds and 2nds, to demonstrate his earnestness. The text is punctuated by neumatic points, lyrically soaring on high notes.

Figure 3.8.6. 8. Bars 337-357. Small, repetitive intervals.

ur. *mf*
she is not like the sky af-ter all. She is with me in my kit-chen
Bar. *f*
on my lev-el, I can touch her, swim with her, be with her I can hold her

Next is the tumultuous *Two Weeks Later*, an angry conversation between Ramon and Madeleine. The music takes an emotional turn when Ramon simply asks "how can you give up your music?" the music climbing and questioning, before falling sadly on "music," the

oboe echoing the sadness Ramon is feeling. He continues “it is part of you, part of your soul, your heart,” sadly falling on the word “heart,” showing Ramon is crestfallen at Madeleine’s decision to pursue a nursing career instead of her music.

Figure 3.8.7. 9. Bars 431-437. Melancholy represented by falling notes.

Ramon’s next instance of emotional vulnerability comes when he realises he must tell Madeleine of his affair with Stephanie. He does this with a lamenting and falling 3 note tone pattern in G minor, representing the deep sadness he feels realising that his affair with Stephanie must come to an end. The repeatedly falling note pattern gives a depressed and defeated feel to the music. The music is simple and earnest as it always is when Ramon is being truthful.

Figure 3.8.8. 12. Bars 552-560. Depressing descending tone pattern and syllabic/neumatic text setting.

Ramon finishes *Once You Have Walked with Gods* determined to rescue his relationship with Madeleine. However, he cannot forget Stephanie, and in *She Was My Fantasy* Ramon lovingly sings her name, the neumatic setting lingering over two bars. The first melisma in the opera occurs when Ramon continues “Stephanie, wasn’t a dream,” elaborating the ‘Stephanie’ melody on the word “dream;” “she was my fantasy,” begins with a climbing C7 chord, and features a high variation of the ‘Stephanie melody,’ spread over four notes. The three most important words of Ramon’s two sentences are “Stephanie” “dream” and “fantasy,” and it is no coincidence they share variations of the same melody or that Ramon lingers on these words to imbue them with meaning.

Figure 3.8.9. 13. Bars 608-619. Melismatic text setting.

The musical score for bars 608-619 is presented in two systems. The first system (bars 608-614) features a Baritone line with lyrics "Steph - anie was - n't a dream" and a melismatic line. The piano accompaniment is in 3/4 time. The second system (bars 615-619) features a Baritone line with lyrics "she was my fan - tasy" and a melismatic line. The piano accompaniment continues in 3/4 time. The score includes parts for Baritone (Bar.), Piano (Pno.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.).

Figure 3.8.10. 13. Bars 651-655. Ramon's emotional vulnerability.

The musical score for bars 651-655 is presented in two systems. The first system (bars 651-655) features a Baritone line with lyrics "I would float in her soft cool embrace" and a melismatic line. The piano accompaniment is in 3/4 time. The second system (bars 656-659) features a Baritone line with lyrics "I would float in her soft cool embrace" and a melismatic line. The piano accompaniment continues in 3/4 time. The score includes parts for Baritone (Bar.), Violin (Vln.), and Violoncello (Vc.).

Ramon sings “I would float in her soft cool embrace,” rising to soar on “float,” and his voice rises to hit a high D on the word “embrace.”

In the last verse of the song, Ramon sings “right there and then I decided to ask her to marry me.” “I” climbs over two notes to reinforce Ramon’s sense of self-importance (as it does at other points in the opera), and the melismatic ‘Stephanie’ melody is repeated as Ramon sings

“decided.” “To ask her to” climbs on the familiar C7 chord, and “marry me” is an extension of the melody in bars 616-617, climbing hopefully as it ascends towards the peak of the melody in bar 674.

Figure 3.8.11. 13. Bars 666-674. Melismatic/expressive text setting.

The image shows a musical score for bars 666-674. It consists of three staves: Baritone (Bar.), Piano (Pno.), and Violin/Viola (Vln./Vla.). The Baritone staff has the lyrics: "I de - cid - ed to ask her to mar - ry - me". The Piano staff provides accompaniment with chords and arpeggiated figures. The Violin and Viola staves have melodic lines with slurs and phrasing marks. The score is numbered 666 at the beginning and 43 at the end.

The final trio which concludes the opera is a highly emotional affair, as Ramon prepares to explain the truth to Stephanie and Madeleine. Stephanie sings “I miss you,” in a three note descending note pattern reminiscent of *Once You Have Walked with Gods*.

Figure 3.8.12. 14. Bars 710-721. Falling note melody.

Ob. 710

Stephanie

Madeleine

Bariton

Pno.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

riss gata

Pia

Ob. 724

Madeleine

Bariton

Pno.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

rissed gata ad rict

Pia

Madeleine enters in bar 715, singing “I missed you so much,” in an extended falling melody, intimating that Madeleine loves and misses Ramon more than Stephanie does. Madeleine’s love is pure and genuine. As Ramon briefly sings “the sky” – referring to Stephanie – and lovingly lingers on “the sea” – referring to Madeleine – there is a sense that Ramon has made his decision between the two women.

Figure 3.8.13. 14. Bars 746-750. Metrical displacement on “I love you.”

The image displays a musical score for bars 746-750. The score includes parts for Oboe (Ob.), two vocal parts (S.), Baritone (Bar.), Piano (Pno.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Cello (Vc.). The vocal parts are the primary focus, with lyrics "I love you" written below the notes. The piano part features a complex, rhythmic accompaniment. The string parts (Vln., Vla., Vc.) provide harmonic support with sustained notes and moving lines. The score is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and rests.

In bar 746, Stephanie and Madeleine both sing in harmony “I love you,” to Ramon, in a rising/falling/rising melody (the rising on the last note suggestive of hopefulness).

Ramon responds with a melodic restatement/extension and reciprocation of his feelings, “I love.....” With a brief metrical displacement before revealing whom he loves...“you.”

Figure 3.8.14. 14. Bars 754-761. Neumatic/static text setting of the title line of the opera.

The image displays a musical score for bars 754-761. The score is arranged in a system with six staves. From top to bottom, the staves are: Oboe (Ob.), Soprano (S.), Bass (Bar.), Piano (Pnn.), Violin (Vln.), and Viola/Vocals (Vla./Vc.). The Oboe part begins with a melodic line marked *mf*. The Soprano part is silent. The Bass part begins with a melodic line marked *f* and includes the lyrics: "am, some-where be-tween the_ sky and the sea". The Piano part provides harmonic support. The Violin and Viola parts feature melodic lines with various dynamics, including *f*. The Viola/Vocals part includes a vocal line marked *f*.

Ramon’s familiar neumatic text setting returns when he sings the title line of the opera “somewhere between the sky and the sea.” The line uses seconds and thirds to create a sense of stasis, falling hopelessly to a fourth on the word “sea,” but then rising hopefully by a tone.

Figure 3.8.15. 14. Bars 765-776. An ambiguous ending.

The image displays a musical score for bars 765-776. The score is arranged in a system with eight staves. From top to bottom, the staves are: Oboe (Oboe), Stephanie (Soprano), Madeline (Soprano), Ramon (Bass), Piano (Piano), Violin (Violin), Viola (Viola), and Cello (Cello). The music is written in 4/4 time. The Oboe part features a melodic line with dynamic markings of *mf* and *f*. The vocal parts (Stephanie, Madeline, Ramon) have lyrics written below them. The Piano part is highly complex, with dense chords and chromatic movement. The string parts (Violin, Viola, Cello) provide a harmonic foundation with various textures and dynamics. The score concludes with a double bar line and a fermata, indicating an ambiguous ending.

The process of composing *Somewhere between the Sky and the Sea* further developed my compositional skills. Adapting a ten minute play to become a thirty six minute opera required the ability to be objective when editing the libretto and choosing which scenes to include. My harmonic language was extended beyond its development in *Einstein's Garden* – arising from a larger variety of contrasting moods and scenes. The opera allowed for many contrasting compositional styles - jazz; atonality; circus music; romantic; and virtuosic violin music – forming a unified work through their shared harmonic, rhythmic, and motivic relationships. Similarly to the synthesis of music and dance in *Einstein's Garden*, *Somewhere between the Sky and the Sea* was a coherent synthesis of text and music.

Chapter Four

Concluding Remarks

The ambiguous ending of the opera contrasts with that of *Einstein's Garden*. There were myriad differences between composing a dance work and a fully sung/spoken work: where *Einstein's Garden* focused heavily on rhythmic and harmonic processes as a driving force, *Somewhere between the Sky and the Sea* aimed to create a sense of lyricism and emotional expression, with beautiful harmonic progressions. The differing natures of dance and opera provided the opportunity to consolidate my compositional voice in two different mediums.

The process of composing, creating, and producing a dance work and a chamber opera was a highly enriching and rewarding experience. I developed and strengthened my compositional skills, in particular my ensemble writing, text setting, and musical characterisation.

I discovered that collaborating with performers who have a shared goal strengthens the possibilities for musical excellence and can create opportunities for creativity, rather than detracting or impinging on the process. Imogen Cranna suggested the title of *Einstein's Garden* and was responsible for the Japanese garden concept – both of which were great ideas that would otherwise not have occurred to me. The director of *Somewhere between the Sky and the Sea* was solely responsible for the stage setting: Ramon and his two loves are seated in a row under spotlights, and their personal spotlights come on as Ramon reminisces about each woman. Logistically, this was a very effective and low cost way of staging the production.

The cost of producing an opera is one of the most prohibitive factors in the performance of new opera. The budget for the recording and production of *Somewhere between the Sky and the Sea* was \$2400, which was spent on the performers' wages, advertising and recording. The singers supplied their own costumes (a suit for Ramon and formal gowns for Madeleine and Stephanie), and the set consisted of three chairs and various lighting states. One of the factors which drew me to the idea of writing this opera was that it had a small amount of characters and required no actual scenery or props. It is possible to stage new Australian operas for a very low price, but the size of the cast and ensemble and staging requirements need to be carefully considered beforehand.

In terms of compositional refinement, I explored and consolidated the recurring musical features of my work: rhythmic stasis layered over rhythmic motion; ostinato; lyricism. I extended the range of my motivic development, and reinforced a mix of harmonies functioning coherently in a unified work. Through colour, dissonance, register, coalescence of rhythmic and harmonic processes that define my compositional language I developed structural models that enabled me to sustain underlying musical ideas in larger durational spans. Each piece had its own internal structure, yet formed a larger overall structure. By having clear formal plans for smaller structural units and combining these into a coherent concept spanning a larger scale duration, I consolidated the process of creating a framework for larger productions in future.

This idea of compositional refinement also reinforced the significance of the process of conceptualisation; finding an inspiring topic, play, story, or theme that could be musically represented, in relation to the works examined in this portfolio. *Einstein's Garden* was not programmatic, and the musical story that was expressed was a journey between sanity and

insanity – the dance story was that of a scientist in a beautiful garden, experimenting with different styles of dance to the musical experimentations. On the one hand, *Somewhere between the Sky and the Sea* provided a narrative/structural point of reference, and on the other hand, *Einstein's Garden* provided an opportunity for musical creativity due to its non-programmatic nature. I developed a wider and more consolidated musical perspective from composing larger scale works, with the pieces becoming a model for how I wish to compose in future. The true significance of this process is the development of a wider synthesis: between attributes of a musical language and the metaphorical dimensions possible through the medium of dance and the medium of opera.

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Appendix 1

The Contemporary Australian Opera Landscape in Sydney and Melbourne 2012-2013.

Below are tables detailing performances of pre-existing and new Australian works by the major Sydney and Melbourne Australian companies in 2012 and 2013, not inclusive of premieres or new works by foreign composers.

Table 1.1. Australian opera performances by major companies in 2012.

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| Opera Australia | 0 |
| Victorian Opera | 1 |
| Chamber Made Opera | 1 |
| Melbourne Opera | 0 |
| Sydney Chamber Opera | 0 |
| Pacific Opera | 0 |

***The only new work premiere was the VO commissioned production**

of Gordon Kerry's *Midnight Son*.

Table 1.2. Australian opera performances by major companies in 2013.

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| Opera Australia | 0 |
| Victorian Opera | 1 |
| Chamber Made Opera | 2 |
| Melbourne Opera | 0 |
| Sydney Chamber Opera | 0 |
| Pacific Opera | 0 |

The Victorian Opera, whilst only performing three operas a year, still manages to commission at least one new work on a yearly basis. In 2013, it was *The Magic Pudding the Opera* by Calvin Bowman and Anna Goldsworthy. Opera Australia last performed a major Australian work with Richard Mills' *The Love of the Nightingale* in 2011. Melbourne Opera has never performed a new work in its ten year history: it seems they may feel it is safer to perform operas that have enjoyed previous success, subsisting from the donations of sponsors and private donors.

Sydney Chamber Opera appears fond of producing new works or Australian premieres (Peter Maxwell Davies' *The Lighthouse*, Benjamin Britten's *Owen Wingrave*), but – like Pacific Opera - never has produced any works by Australian composers. The only two Australian works performed in 2013 by Chamber Made Opera are both by Chamber Made's Resident Director, Margaret Cameron.

Appendix 2

Synopsis – *Somewhere between the Sky & the Sea*

As the opera begins, all that can be heard is the beginning of a violin concerto. It is Ramon de Guardo's concerto, and he has composed it for Stephanie Lythe, the famous New York violinist. He stands by the stage door at the Sydney Opera House to try and speak with her after her concert, but is turned away by her security guards. By chance, Ramon meets Stephanie at a jazz bar as he is drowning his sorrows and she agrees to perform his concerto. The pair kiss, and Stephanie leaves with Ramon's piece.

A few months later, Ramon's friends workshop his concerto at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, and a cellist, Madeleine, overhears and compliments Ramon on his music. Soon enough, Ramon and Madeleine move in together, but their relationship is quite tumultuous. Two weeks later, Ramon receives a phone call from Stephanie asking him to fly to New York for the premiere of his concerto – Stephanie had accidentally lost Ramon's contact details and worked hard to track him down. Ramon flies to New York for the premiere of his concerto and reignites his affair with Stephanie after the concert. He decides he will leave Madeleine and move in with Stephanie, and resolves to tell Madeleine as soon as he arrives home.

Upon his return to Madeleine in Sydney, Ramon's feelings for her come rushing back and he proposes to her on the spot. But then Ramon decides that he can't live with the guilt of cheating on either his girlfriend or his mistress so he telephones Stephanie whilst Madeleine is in the room, resolved to tell both women the truth and let them decide how to progress – and give Madeleine the chance to choose whether or not to marry him.