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Delirium : Constructing a Narrative
An investigation into compositional technique

Skriftlig reflektion inom självständigt arbete
Till dokumentationen hör även följande bilagor:
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Chapter 1 – Introduction

This thesis will explore the topic of narrative in the context of musical composition. In the following discussion, narrative based music will be presented in relation to three ethical questions of Criticism, Commonality and Metaphor, communicated to the listener through the medium of narrative. I will demonstrate how I have used these three questions in relation to my own compositional methodology and propose a world-building approach to musical composition, specifically in relation to Delirium; the magic, imagined world in which all my music is connected through a central narrative.

In Chapter 2, I will set out how I conceptualize narrative in music with some examples taken from existing works. I will discuss how the three aforementioned questions relate to the larger narrative that connects my compositional output as a whole and offer some examples of visual and conceptual inspirations for the aesthetic principles of this narrative-based approach to musical composition.

In Chapter 3 I will offer a detailed overview of Tableaux, a work for 14 solo strings in 13 movements, specifically how this music relates to the larger musical narrative of Delirium. The 10th movement of Tableaux will be discussed during Chapter 4 in relation to the compositional methodology I have employed in the construction of this movement. How these methods relate to the three ethical questions delineated in Chapter 2 and to Delirium itself will also be discussed in this chapter.

As we will see, this research relates directly to the work presented at the exam concert. For the examination, I have written a new work entitled Wildflowers [Vln/Clar/Vla/Vc/Pno]. Once the score had been completed, it was harmonically reduced by equalizing all duration material to a base unit. This process means that only the harmony of Wildflowers remains. This reduction has been re-worked for the 14 solo string ensemble and included as the 12th movement of Tableaux. How this process relates to the narrative of Tableaux will be discussed in Chapter 3. ¹

The concept of narrative-based music has been my source of inspiration and the focus of my artistic research during my studies at the KMH. Both my works Blackstar for ensemble and Magic City for orchestra, which were written during my studies and performed at the KMH, are examples of narrative-based music.² Although it is only the 10th movement which we will consider in our discussion in Chapter 4, the principles of construction used are applicable to Tableaux as a whole. For this reason, I have also included the full score of Tableaux in this thesis.

For me, the transmission of ideas, and so communication between individual lived experiences, is fundamentally the most important aspect of music making – whatever form that might take. The source of inspiration for this research into narrative-based music was twofold. Firstly, it is with the direct intent of demonstrating the value of empathy in musical practices. It is only through an empathetic understanding of the artist as a human being that narrative can be

¹ Originally, Tableaux was set to be performed in full as my examination concert at the end of my studies at the KMH. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, this performance was cancelled. Wildflowers, the quintet version of the 12th movement of Tableaux was set to be performed in May 2020; however, this performance has been postponed for the foreseeable future.

² Blackstar: Composed: November-January 2018/2019
   Performed: March & April 2019. [Two Performances].
   Performers: NorrbottenNEO, New European Ensemble. [KMH, Stockholm]

   Performed: August 2019 [Two performances].
   Performers: SinfoNua [Cork, Dublin], KMH Symphony Orchestra [Stockholm].
understood in music. It is only by relating the proposed narrative in a given music to our own lived experience that we truly begin to relate with one another and to the art in question.

Secondly, it is to propose a shared commonality between creator (composer), interpreter (performer) and audience (listener). It is to ask the question, what do you hear? Do you hear the narrative the creator proposes or do you hear something else? How does your audiozation differ from the object-image or poetic-metaphor suggested by the creator? This is essentially the core argument to be made in favor of narrative as a compositional tool in music making; it has the profound and unique ability to truly allow individuals to empathize with one another through a common, shared lived experience of a given story. Both people communicating with each other through an agreed narrative will of course have an infinitely different set of associative memories attached to that narrative, but both will understand each other because of the narrative.

This approach to musical composition is directly intended to challenge the endless problematization of conceptual thinking in serious art music. Admittedly, this approach has been helpful in the past for the purposes of pushing the artform of music forward under the close scrutiny of academic thought. It has allowed us to conceptualize music as a vast spectrum of possibility rather than an art form bound to a certain time, place or person. The process of problematization has selected for memeic materiality (Dawkins, 2006) in that an idea or concept in a given artistic practice can be copied and expanded upon by those that take up the initial idea. The idea, or meme as Dawkins puts it, is then developed, expanded upon and effectively evolves as the idea is communicated between individuals in a manner similar to that found the evolution of a given species. In many ways, the perspective offered in this thesis is similar but differs from what is found in the evolutionary processes of natural selection. It suggests a type of narrative-based, world-building approach to musical composition that allows the personal subjectivities of the creator, interpreter and audience to be included in the expansion of its principles and not as a means through which concepts and/or ideas in art can be dismissed because of a given societal bias on the part of the composer, performer or listener.

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3 In the context of this discussion, I intend the term ‘audiozation’ to refer to the physiological phenomenon of visual object-images or concepts being ‘brought to mind’ when a certain given music is heard or experienced.
Chapter 2 - Delirium : Constructing a Narrative

The focus of this chapter will be on the inspiration and conceptualization of Delirium. I will discuss how this narrative relates to my compositional process and how the narrative of Delirium connects one piece of music to the next, through the use of harmonic or poetic narration. Narrative will be discussed in relation to three questions; those of Criticism, Commonality and Metaphor and how I have implemented these aspects of narrative into my compositional methodology and compositional process. The aesthetic goals and visual inspirations for this world-building approach to musical composition will be discussed to elucidate for the reader a clearer image of what Delirium is and how I imagine the music contained within.

The Story so Far

Beginning in 2012 with my work for piano Snow, I knew that narrative would play a key role in my musical language. It was then that I began to construct Delirium. Delirium is, in many ways, a ‘mind palace’ in which all the music contained within is connected through either a poetic or harmonic narrative. At the beginning of the writing process, conceptualization of any new work is the key to constructing another piece of music that will, in my mind, become part of Delirium.

Say, for example, I wish to write a piece of some ancient forest. There are immediately a thousand visual and sensual associations in connection to this object-image of a large collection of trees. I am only interested in including a new piece of Delirium if the idea, whatever form that might be in, can ask, if not answer, three questions:

1. Does the idea offer some form of Criticism? This could be Criticism of our shared lived experience as humans, art itself or indeed any other form of critical, analytical thought.
2. Does the idea offer some form of Commonality? As commonality between creator, interpreter and audience is our chief concern in this discussion, the idea must be transposable and transparent between these groups. It must not only serve the creative vision of the creator (composer), the learnt behaviors of the interpreter (performer) or the expectations of the audience (listener).
3. Does the idea offer enough layered Metaphor in the construction of the music to be trusted with personal emotional logics of these three aforementioned groups? If a metaphoric narrative is presented through the music by the composer, the methodology involved in the compositional process must be sufficiently layered and complex to allow for individual interpretation of the given metaphor by the interpreter (performer) and the audience (listener).

It is because of the differences from person to person in imaging some old, gnarled wood, for example, that I place these ethical questions before the piece of music during the conceptualization phase. In order for the music to say anything at all, we must, to a larger or lesser degree, test it from this meta-physical standpoint. From the outset, Romantic notions of programmatic music troubled me. I am not interested in, nor do I wish to replicate, the great hero trope of the 19th Century such as in Strauss’ Don Quixote nor Berlioz’ Symphonie Fantastique. Instead, I intend to construct Delirium

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4 For example, Blackstar for ensemble is based on a poem I wrote chronicling the creation myth of Delirium. The final chord of the piece is heard as an A minor chord, which I imagine to be a harmonically metaphorical ‘V’ or dominant chord to the final section of Magic City for orchestra which resolves to D major, the imagined ‘I’ or tonic. The two pieces are occupying separate narratives in and of themselves but share this harmonically symbolic commonality.

5 It is important that I state clearly at the outset of this discussion that I only apply these three criteria to my own compositional process. Music can of course communicate effectively without this arbitrary system of evaluation, or indeed any narrative at all. These questions simply offer me a sustainable system of compositional conceptualization.
in such a way so that each piece stands in complement or contrast with the next and offers the listener, perhaps, some new insight into what art – and so music – could be.

As Ursula Le Guin points out in *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, there is the problem of linear logic when a protagonist is involved in any narrative:

> So, the Hero has decreed through his mouthpieces the Lawgivers, first, that the proper shape of the narrative is that of the arrow or spear, starting here and going straight there and THOK! hitting its mark (which drops dead); second, that the central concern of narrative, including the novel, is conflict; and third, that the story isn't any good if he isn’t in it. (Le Guin, 1996)

Le Guin illustrates an important point at the outset of any hero-centered narrative. It is those stories that include a hero, by their nature, are exclusionary to all but the hero’s point of view. As I have mentioned, it is my intention here to offer some form of shared commonality in my musical practice. This hero-led form of narrative is contrary to the ideals of *Delirium*, in the same way that no two people will share the same object-image of that little copse on the hill. With this Criticism in mind, according to Le Guin, there is another path forward:

> I differ with all of this. I would go so far as to say that the natural, proper, fitting shape of the novel might be that of a sack, a bag. A book holds words. Words hold things. They bear meanings. A novel is a medicine bundle, holding things in a particular, powerful relation to one another and to us. (Le Guin, 1996)

It is in this manner in which I wish to construct *Delirium*. The music that it contains is of the imagined world, holding meaning for all that engage with the art in good faith. It is not a means, as it has been used in the past and so now distrusted by some, by which we exclude or diminish other lived narratives but a mechanism by which we can hold up all lived experience and learn from these stories and from one another. To aspire to any less would be to build Sade’s castle and lock ourselves behind those great, grey, gruesome stone walls. This way leads to nothing but annihilation of all art.

*Iridescence* (2017) ⁶, a work for 21 solo string instruments, was my first large scale attempt at placing my music into the larger musical narrative within *Delirium*. I intend the piece to be imagined as a great orb of iridescent colours. As oil floats across the surface of water, so too does the material in this work begin and end; short visions of possible musics. In terms of the narrative of *Delirium*, I imagine *Iridescence* to be the great bubble that encapsulates *Delirium* within. With this piece, I ask the interpreter and listener to enter *Delirium* through its oily surface and pass into this dreamworld of *mystmusic*. ⁷ As with the previous example of the forest, no two conscious audioizations of this piece of music will be the same. It is not my intent to say that the listener must see it as I see it. I can only offer my own point of view – one in which I hope to find common ground with the interpreter and listener by offering some imagined, visual clues.

*Blackstar* (2019) ⁸ is then our next piece of the puzzle. With this work, it was my intent to describe the creation myth of *Delirium*. Inspired by a poem I had written in 2017, the music is a reflection of the confusing and often times surreal perspective of the narrator. The structure, harmony and musical material at play in this piece follows the intent of this disorientating narration rather than simply painting a musical landscape of the vision offered to us in the poem. As a lengthy poem is offered to the listening audience, there are many, many associations between the text and the poetry – most of

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⁶ *Iridescence*: Composed: January- March 2017
Performed: August 2017 [Two Performances].
Performers: Esker Festival Orchestra [Galway & Dublin, Ireland]

⁷ *Mystmusic*: a portmanteau used to describe the music that results from the endless associations of an object, idea or concept.

⁸ See footnote 2.
which are unintentionally intentional. It was my meaning here to make another point about narrative in music: metaphor, in both mediums, is only as real or as objective as you, the listener, perceive it to be. The poetry itself is, and was, a personal offering to the audience. It is my belief that in order to create art that is at all times critical and common among us as humans that we must insert some personally historical perspective on our inner most thoughts and emotions. It is only through complete emotional honesty with those we are trying to communicate that we can, in fact, say anything at all.\(^9\)

**Narrative as Criticism**

“[...]These Blinding Lights of Magic City are our final catharsis; that self-same delirious destruction, an endless pulsating of marble and glass, those greedy, grinning, upturned faces with arms outstretched and voices raised toward that ceaseless music.”

The above quotation is taken from the concert programme note of *Magic City*, intended to be presented to a listening audience. *Magic City* was performed twice as part of SinfoNua’s annual concert tour in August 2019 and performed at the KMH by the college’s symphony orchestra. Simply put, I think of this work as an allegory for the turbulent political times in which we live. Written between April and June of 2019, the ongoing negotiations between the European Union and the United Kingdom were foremost in my mind. The conceptualization of *Magic City* began in early 2016. That year I had finished my undergraduate studies in Dublin and travelled to Thailand to live there for 3 months with my partner. During my time in Bangkok I was struck by the staggering religious and cultural beauty of the city which stood in direct juxtaposition to the extreme poverty and infrastructural chaos. It was a mad and beautiful time. Later in the Summer I travelled to Cambodia to visit the ancient jungle city of Angkor Wat. Once the centre of commerce and civil authority in the Khmer Empire, Angkor Wat now stands as testament to the power of human collectively. In modern times, the temple complex is a UNESCO world heritage site and the responsibility of its maintenance and restoration is spearheaded by an international team of archaeologists, historians and scholars. The conceptualization of *Magic City* came directly from this lived experience. It was my intent to create a piece of music that dealt with the awesome power of human collectivity, symbolized by the object-image of a city. It is also a warning and a criticism, through its layered metaphoric narrative, of the erosion of our shared democratic values and institutions.

The opening of *Magic City*, entitled *The Wilds*, represents this move from the chaotic world of nature to that of the perceived safety of *The Great Golden Gates of Iridescent Marble*. It is in a way a hike through the marshlands to the great city; a traveler’s recollection of some of the strange and beautiful things seen outside of the walls. From *The Wilds* we emerge into the ‘divine’ presence of *The Great Golden Gates of Iridescent Marble*, a symbol of our conquest over the horror of the natural world. These skyward reaching walls are our last sanctuary against the dark that lurks beneath the dappling canopies of the dense forests, submerged in the traitorous marshlands or roaming the barren steppes of *Delerium*. There is danger in the dark.

\(^9\) It is my opinion that an art created by an artist must, in one way or another, be representative of the human that brought that object, concept or idea into our shared lived experience. Even music written by, say, an artificial intelligence or by some strict algorithmic principles tell us something about the person who initiated these processes. Why did that person feel it important for their lived experience to be associated with this autonomous creation? It is the ever regressing *why*, when turned on our own work, that reveals our own self-evident truths and in turn, under the lens of true empathy, catharsis in the understanding of others.
Now that we have entered the city, we are lulled into a false sense of security. In the construction of this section, the harmonic region of each of the string chords is ever diminishing until finally our falsely constructed narrative collapses and the citizens, both past and present, dance the Dance of Coronal Ecstasy. I think of this section largely as a metaphor and parody of our defective, modern-day democratic society. In its frantic counterpoint (and at times cartoonish harmony) every voice struggles to be heard over the cacophony of this place. The mystmemory\textsuperscript{10} of the buildings and streets of Magic City tells us of past horrors but we resist them and ignore them - knowing much better ourselves.

The mystmusic\textsuperscript{11} swirls in populist fashion until we are swept to the base of the Glass Tower. A truly gigantic building, the Glass Tower is a symbol for the rule of law. Its power, and so authority, comes from the great Tangled Rainbows that scatter from its summit far out beyond the walls. At the end of each, stands the 7 ancient temples of stone.\textsuperscript{12} Each temple, carved by the ancient peoples of Delirium from fallen meteorites, were built to house the spirits (or Magïma\textsuperscript{13}) captured from the wild places beyond the wall. After the prismatic harmony of the Glass Tower, the mystmusic coalesces around a single idea, The Blinding Lights of Magic City. The material that makes up this section is taken from the 2018 album The Now Now by Gorillaz. The title ‘Magic City’ comes from the 8th track on the album while the chording for the ‘chorale’ is taken directly from the last track on the album ‘Souk Eye’.\textsuperscript{14} The Blinding Lights of Magic City are all at once a hopeful celebration of democratic values but also a warning and criticism of a singular and conditioned system of thought, that can so easily be manipulated by those who seek to shatter The Glass Tower.\textsuperscript{15}

In an interview with New Musical Express from 2017, Damon Albarn described the album:

“…[the] album was called “The Now Now” because it reflected how people need to live in "the now" as it happens "now" rather than dwelling on the future or the past because the present (the now) can become the past (then) in the blink of an eye; stating that it was for this reason that the album was called “The Now Now” and not "The Now Then".” (Stubbs, 2018)

In many ways, Magic City is a reaction to the endless ‘now’ in which we, as a global society, find ourselves. Between 24-hour news cycles, social media and the ever-encroaching reach of the internet into our personal lives, the immediate now, ‘the now now’, is seemingly ever more difficult to occupy for fear of being left behind. Our collective consciousness, our mystmemory, is demolished daily by the continuous ‘now then’. It is the narrative of Magic City which, with its fantastically named sections, conveys a Criticism of our shared lived experience. It is my opinion that this element of music making will continue to become more and more important in the field of art creation as our global society lurches forward into the future.

\textsuperscript{10} Mystmemory is a portmanteau which combines the idea of myst, the magical mist of inspiration that permeates the natural world of Delirium and memory, the endless possible associations of an object between the individual and/or society.

\textsuperscript{11} Mystmusic: see footnote 2.

\textsuperscript{12} Around the outside of the walled city, stands 7 ancient temples each carved from fallen meteorites. These temples will be represented in Delirium by a set of 7 saxophone quartets.

\textsuperscript{13} Magïma are the natural spirits of Delirium. They are the physical manifestations of a broken standard model in which magic can exist. The word is one of my own invention.

\textsuperscript{14} I cannot claim that this section of the piece is a musical quotation, as I have used nothing but a, largely, similar chord progression: no set of chords can belong to one piece of art, they are the vessels through which the meaning is conveyed, not the reverse. It is under the standard of shared commonality that I chose to proceed in this way. I personally relate to the subject material that is being ’discussed’ in this section of Magic City and so by including it in the piece, I am offering some of my own lived experience in an effort to communicate meaning to the listener.

\textsuperscript{15} The tower stands as a symbol of natural, and so moral, authority in Delirium.
In his essay *The Critic as Artist*, Wilde raises an important point in relation to art criticism, and by extension, art as criticism:

“…what is the use of art-criticism? Why cannot the artist be left alone, to create a new world if he wishes it, or, if not, to shadow forth the world which we already know and of which , I fancy, we would each one of us be wearied if Art, with her fine spirit of choice and delicate instinct of selection, did not, as it were, purify it for us, and give to it a momentary perfection. It seems to me that the imagination spreads, or should spread, a solitude around it, and works best in silence and in isolation. Why should the artist be troubled by the shrill clamour of criticism? If a man’s work is easy to understand, an explanation is unnecessary…” (Wilde, 1891)

In the essay, Wilde’s surrogate Ernest proposes this question to his interlocutor Gilbert during their conversation on the topic of art criticism. In relation to our discussion here, Wilde effectively sums up the argument in favour of art criticism and art as criticism. It is only through criticism that we can place art in the *real world* by relating it to our shared, lived experience of the art and the criticism in question.

**Narrative as Commonality**

Above all things, the goal of my artistic practice is the pursuit of commonality between human beings through the medium of music. *Delirium* is a call for unity and empathy between people through a shared, lived experience. As is our nature, we long to be understood during our days on this Earth. As artists, it is our moral and societal duty to attend this question, think hard and offer some new route forward. It is my belief that this route must be one of inclusion; one that does not endlessly problematize a singular issue that pertains to one form of art, or indeed lifetime, but offers a solution through which we can grow as artists, individuals and ultimately citizens of a global civilization. Today, we live with the ever-present phyco-social phenomenon of the internet. Having lived through two decades of the entity’s growth, we are now struggling with the consequences of a new, all powerful, omnipresent, adolescent ’nation’, of which we are all a citizen – be it to a greater or lesser extent. Make no mistake with my intent here, the internet’s strength of persuasion comes from a primal need for our species: the need to be heard, to be counted and for our own narrative of existence to be witnessed. It is, in many ways, the natural progression in the history of art. We are connected, we are counted and we bear witness to the lives of those we will never meet.

Despite its innumerable failings, this connectivity is, in my view, one of humanities greatest inventions. It is the sum total of human knowledge and so the sum total of lived human experience. It is available to us at a moment’s notice. There is most certainly a case to be made for the psychological impact on the individual’s ego when saturated in ‘knowledge’ like this, however, in relation to art making, this new medium has, in my view, rendered the search for original thought obsolete. With this expansion on the franchise of information, those who have carved a life for themselves based on specific, specialist knowledge are now threatened. You can now learn to do anything on the internet. I can hold my own experience up to this; it was *because* of the internet that I have been *allowed* to pursue a life in art, a lifetime that otherwise would have been deigned to me due to a lack of access to information. For many artists, this is our new reality. The bald truth of the internet is to hold a mirror to ourselves. If anyone can learn what you, dear artist, have spent years toiling over, then how are you special? How are our lives unique? The truth is, we are not.

This hangover-egoism is from a time before ultimate connectivity, where one opinion or one perspective must, by virtue of the limited franchise of information, take the lead. This is tied up in the now crumbling capitalist work structures: there is a boss, and he knows best. What happens then if everyone in the work force has the equivalent knowledge of a postgraduate degree in their field? They are, by rights, just as ‘qualified’ as the decision maker. What we are living through in the
history of art as a result of the internet is the diminishment of value placed on specialist knowledge caused by the increase of supply. The mind rebels against the idea that it is not unique, nor, with our now endless evidence, has ever had a truly original thought. This affects art in the most literal sense; there will be no more genres of modern art or great, swash-buckling hero-artists. If everything is up for grabs, then ‘meaning’ and ‘value’ in their traditional sense no longer applies. All modes of thought have been expanded to infinity and so reduced to zero by the convergence of all information, and so all human histories, to a single source.

What now? How do we continue if information is freely available and any artistic craft can be learnt by a given individual? How can we claim intellectual supremacy of an idea or set of ideas if we are just as ‘qualified’ as those in positions of power? The solution lies in our un-uniqueness and so, our commonality.

In order for the individual, the artist, and so the global citizen, to proceed from here we must leave our sense of personal uniqueness at the door. This first step is impossible to some. It requires that the artist recognize their own path of privilege. I can think of no better example of this then the art music industry. If your claim to uniqueness, is based on the total number of hours you have had the opportunity to spend on your craft, then you are now threatened by the expansion of the franchise of information. There is no uniqueness of value to your skill if there are any number of examples online of others doing it ‘better’ than you. This brings into sharp relief those who have had the economic advantage early in life, and so could pursue a life of art making, and those who have not. It is through the acknowledgement of the un-unique individual self that leads to the empathetic understanding of another lived experience. We are made equal in our un-uniqueness. Only from here can we move forward in art. 16

We must begin again. The conceptual counterpoint of all histories, information and perspectives merging into one entity is that we can now move backwards and forwards through history, selecting for identities and concepts which resonate with our own lived experience. In essence, that is what we have always done. The difference is now we have an infinite source of inspiration for our art making. This point comes with some caution. In order that we do no replicate the hero-artist concept that still persists in art music practices, we must understand the historical characters, concepts or ideas we choose to borrow from as lived experiences. The historical artist must be understood as a human with all the failings that make up human life. There are no gods of art, only the record of the historically privileged. With historical scrutiny in mind, we can now stop short of becoming completely artistically enamored with any given idea, concept or person. Only if we understand the historical artist as human can we peel back the veneer of reverence and find common ground with their thought processes. Commonality comes from understanding the artist for what they are; all too human and all too flawed.

It is in this line of thinking that I believe that the abandonment of linear logic (the musical ‘canon’) is imperative to the survival of our medium of art. How can we relate to the music of Bach, for example, if we have canonized him to the status of ‘the father of music’? In reality, he was a professional musician working a weekly job for the church or one of his private patrons. He systematized his approach to musical composition in a way that would allow him to process musical material in a time-effective manner. He refined this methodology over time and became fluent in the musical language in which he was working. He also spent some time in a private jail and had twenty-seven children. (Boyd, 2000)

16 A point about the individual. Of course, there are innumerable difference between any given two people. My point here is that the thought processes which lead the individual toward a self-satisfied conclusion are inevitably unoriginal.
The provision for Bach sitting in some imagined, gilded ‘heaven’ is made by those who react emotionally to his music. His art moves us, so we say it is special. We say “I am special for engaging and so understanding it”. This line of thinking makes us worship art rather then engage with it critically. It stops us from finding commonality with the artist, and so their art, by placing their specialist information out of reach. Bach is simply a historical figure who followed the path of his own privilege. It wasn’t until the 19th century that he was ‘canonized’ after the resurrection of his music by Mendelssohn. (Marissen, 1993) For me, what I can admire in the music of Bach is his commitment to his craft. It is the sheer volume of musical material, and the creative ways in which he uses it, which is a source of inspiration for me. It is the ability of his music to communicate in abstracts while working within the limitations placed on art music by the society in which he lived. That for me is the triumph of his art, not the fact the he was ‘Bach’. The capitalization of this last name somehow makes him intellectually superior in our collective consciousness to modern day music makers. This is self-evidently false: music students everywhere learn his formulas as rudimentary musical exercises. The difference is that Bach had time, money and social status to pursue his avenues of artistic research where as modern day music makers may not have that societal privilege.

This point of commonality came in stark relief to me while reading Roger Nichols biography of Maurice Ravel. (Nichols, 2011) Nichols reveals the truth of Ravel’s life: he was initially dismissed and considered irrelevant by the established musical classes during his time in Paris, failed numerous exams and was expelled from the Paris Conservatoire for presenting the 2nd movement of his, now famous, String Quartet. Biographical accounts of a historical-artists life and work are, in many ways, more revealing of the artworks true intent then stringent, methodical analysis of given set of sounds created by the artist. For instance, Paul Griffiths biographical accounts of Messiaen’s early childhood in Olivier Messiaen and the Music of Time (Griffiths, 2008) reveals childhood summers spent in the mountains reading his father’s French translations of Shakespeare’s plays. Though these two accounts offer courage and inspiration for the contemporary artist (and indeed the lives of historical-artists should be studied), I can not help but consider that both of these men were in, their own right, part of a privileged few and so their art is remembered and recognized.

My point here is that we should be actively conscious of what we choose to take from our musical history and view it in a speculative way, rather than some mesmerizing abstract. In order for art music to pursue commonality with those that it wishes to communicate, we must systematically dismantle the hierarchical structures of the past and revoke the ‘god’ status of these historical figures. Only then can we unselfconsciously communicate our personal lived experiences with one another, in the spirit of good faith.

**Narrative as Metaphor**

Unlike other mediums of art, music is limited by the X/Y axis of reality: a piece of music can do nothing else but exist in a specific spacetime of our perception. The piece begins and then it ends. This is my main frustration with the artform; it is impossible for a piece of music to say anything about the objective reality of our three dimensions nor it is possible for a piece of music to tell us anything about the spacetime before the piece begins or indeed after it ends. It is because of this natural boundary to our artform that I have created Delirium, and by extrapolation, the mechanisms by which similar imagined spaces can be created.

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17 See Chapter 3 for explanation of terminology used in the discussion of methodological processes.
At all times, the music of Delirium is running backwards and forwards in time: if one piece is being listened to by one person and another by the next, both are pieces within a continuum. They are separate and interpreted by the listener as distinct works of art but, through the central narrative, are connected to one another by a shared, understood metaphor. This metaphoric continuum is to ask the question, how can we conceptualize a ceaseless music? One which considers the act of listening, the audioization and exploration of an imagined world to take place every time an individual listens to the music contained within, be that in real time at a staged concert or alone deep in the night with headphones silencing the reality around us. These individuals are participating in the continuum of sound that is not bound to one time, one place, or one lived experience. There have been attempts in this direction in the past, however, they have been bound to the limitations of the traditional considerations of music being of a time, of a place or of one lived experience.

Of course, composers can create theoretically infinite cycles of sound, for example, George Crumb’s Makrokosmos I Twelve Fantasy Pieces after the Zodiac (Crumb, 1971). In this work, the 8th movement is entitled The Magic Circle of Infinity as the notated score can, theoretically, be repeated an infinite amount of times. For me, although Crumb’s emotive imagery is effective in conjuring up a concrete object-image for the listener, and indeed interpreter, his use of overly complicated, symbolic metaphor based on pre-existing concepts falls short of our aforementioned criteria of criticism and commonality. Although extremely interesting for the academic artist, the inclusion of these pre-existing metaphors excludes those that have no cultural or contextual reference for the ideas present in the music. In this way, Crumb offers only his version of events in the densely complex narrative at play across his works.

Olivier Messiaen has also approached this question of the infinite through his use of large-scale structures and catholic mythology in works such as the Quartet for the End of Time (Messiaen, 1940). In the same way that Crumb assumes his interpreters and audience understand the concept of the zodiac, Messiaen assumes these two groups are well versed in the biblical story of the apocalypse. Both assumptions fly in the face of true communicative commonality in that the subject material discussed by both composers is external to the lived experience of the composer. In this way, the inspiration for the music making did not come from lived experience but rather as a means of professing faith in one narrative or another, be it mystical or mythical.

Morton Feldman’s large-scale durational compositions such as Piano and String Quartet (Feldman, 1985) or John Cage’s As Slow as Possible. These are examples of musical structures expanding outward to the point of sounding for large portions of a single lived experience or indeed many lifetimes. These attempts also have their limitations however, as the music then becomes something separate from the listeners’ reality; a work of art approached and not lived by experience.

Ligeti, in his article States, Events, Transformations discusses a childhood dream and how it affected his compositional methodology in later years:

The memory of this dream from long ago had a definite influence upon the music that I wrote at the end of the 1950s. The events in that cobwebbed room were transformed into sonic fantasies, which formed the initial material for compositions. The involuntary conversion of optical and tactile into acoustic sensations is habitual with me: I almost always associate sounds with color, form, and texture; and form, color, and material quality with every acoustic sensation. Even abstract concepts, such as quantities, relationships, connections, and processes, seem tangible to me and have their place in an imaginary space (Ligeti, 1993)

18 I should note here that I am not dismissing Crumb’s work as irrelevant, or in some way, a failing. I give this as an example of a similar way of thinking but one that will not fit the criteria I have established for my own music.

19 Cage’s As Slow as Possible lasts for 639 years. (As Slow as Possible, 5 September 1912, 12 August 1992)
How I think of metaphoric narrative is strikingly similar to how Ligeti describes his ‘cobwebbed room’ of ‘sonic fantasies’. In this way, the personal lived experience of the composer must be present in the narrative in order for it to convey meaning and so offer some common ground between creator, interpreter and audience.

In relation to the larger narrative of Delirium, it is helpful to think in a similar way to what Ligeti describes here. All works within the imagined world are connected through this interconnecting web of possibilities. The difference in my compositional practice is that in order to narrow down the seemingly infinite connections possible within an imagined space such as this, I must test the idea/concept/object-image of the slowly forming music against the three questions of Criticism, Commonality or Metaphor. Without this rigorous introspection and careful consideration of the narrative in question, there is a danger that the music, in it’s metaphoric meaning, will become muddied and too personal for the individual creator. This returns to the problem of a hero-lead narrative. It is, as we have discussed, exclusionary to all perspectives but that of the protagonist. This is not to say that some ideas or concepts or object-images are somehow unworthy of being included in Delirium or any other narrative-based music. This line of thinking would only lead to the hero-worship of the historic artist that we have already discussed; every idea, and so every piece, is seen as a perfect reflection of the ‘godly’ face of the benign, historical artist. This line of thinking leads us only to a cult of personality and so criticism is impossible. Every narrative that is included in the writing of a world must be as accessible as possible to all who engage the art in good faith. For this reason, aspects of a work’s meta-physical and imaginary implications must be considered.

The creation of Delirium is, in essence, an attempt to square this circle. For me, much of modern life is disorienting and confusing. We live in a time of unprecedented developments in technology; from quantum computing, the ever-advancing development of artificial intelligence and daily updates on our civilization quest for Mars. It is my belief that art must move with the times or be left behind and in order to do that, we must bring all of our collected experiences with us. Narrative in music forces us to focus, inherently, on ourselves. Even here is a shared human experience; to make sense of the world, we weave stories of our own lives and lived experiences in order to make sense of the constant barrage of information our brains are consuming minute by minute during our waking lives. This seems a likely starting point for commonality through metaphor. How do I, the artist, communicate to you, the audience, that I have lived some similar experience that may have weighed heavily on your lifeline? Through Metaphor. Through sounds and symbols, we can convey private, personal portions of our lives to others in the hope of genuine connection.

Metaphor here means also that, I, the hero of my own story, will not diminish your lived experience by claiming some greater calamity but, in good faith, set the bottle afloat and hope that the message is received.
**Aesthetics of Delirium**

Surrealist and psychedelic art have served as means of inspiration for the aesthetic principles of *Delirium*. The works of the German surrealist painter Eckart Hahn and the psychedelic illustrations of English artist Matt Miller are two examples of these.

The commonality between psychedelic art and the *mystmusic* of *Delirium* is in my mind a concrete connection. In the work of these two artists, images of nature and animals are used to convey meaning and communicate a subjective truth to the viewer which differs from person to person. In this way, for me, surrealism, and more broadly psychedelic art, has proven an effective tool in the conceptualization of *Delirium*.

As we will see in Chapter 4, colour for me is at both times an audization tool and a way in which I construct and structure the music of *Delirium*. In a way, this is with the direct intention to critique much of what I find in new music practices; there is simply not enough communicated complexity of meaning and metaphor, and so colour, within the grey processes of intellectually 'difficult' music.

For me, in surrealism I find a process of addition. Colours and corporeal beings of nature are used in strategic ways to convey meaning to the viewer. In this way, surrealism and so psychedelic art, are in opposition to the linear logic of new music practices over the greater part of the last century. Music, in order for it to be seen as ‘new’, has up until now moved toward greater and greater problematization and further from offering a working solution.
As Herbert Brün puts it in his article Against Plausibility:

1. A composer is asked to explain his composition, then attacked for having tried to explain music.
2. A composer is asked to explain what his music is to say, to express, to describe, etc. a) He refuses, and is accused of inhabiting a vacuum tower; b) He complies, and is accused of composing music verbal explanation.
3. A composer is asked to describe how he composed and what this work means to him. He comes forth with a manifesto proclaiming how music should be composed and understood.
4. A composer is asked to state his views regarding the general problems of contemporary music. He comes forth with an analysis of his own works.
5. A composer is asked to contribute program notes on a work of his that is to be performed at a concert of a festival. 
   a) He complies by asserting what, in his opinion, distinguishes his work from other music. These program notes are rejected in such a way as to make it obvious that what is (deliberately or unconsciously) desired is a demonstration that nothing actually does distinguish his work from other music.
   b) The composer complies by asserting his respect for what, in his opinion, is common to all music in any case, and is therefore of course, also inherent in his own. These program notes are accepted and published (Brün, 1963)

In many ways, Brün’s point highlights the logics of problematization that confronts all explorers in art. I have found in my attempt at proposing a new direction in music very similar logics leveled in opposition. This is to be expected and, in the spirit of Criticism, is entirely justified and welcome. In this same spirit of good faith criticism, surrealist art asks us to turn this critical thinking inwards. Not only must we endeavor, perhaps for a whole human lifetime, to explain our perspective to others in an effort to achieve commonality, we, as the individual artist, must explain ourselves to ourselves.

In this regard, surrealist art is helpful. Its narrative of colour, corporealism and symbolic metaphor are useful tools in gently guiding us toward our own self-evident truths. Its principles allow us, as individuals, to shed the self-conscious ego and engage with the art internally true to the self. If a narrative is included in a music without the awareness of self, or at least an acknowledgement of the personal, then narrative is wielded as a weapon once more. It is used to claim some greater truth because of its own self-enlightenment – the cycle of artist-as-god continues.

In order to break this chain, we must, without fear, explain ourselves to ourselves and include our findings as open questions in our art making. We must ask, do you feel the same? Have you also felt this way? If our goal in creating and curating a narrative of music is to show a greater number of people what art music could be and how everyone, even those who have no experience of the traditional concert hall or art music in general, can engage with it in a personal and emotional way, then we must look to a relevant and altogether ‘new’ medium in which the transmission of ideas, and so the communication of commonality, can be effectively done.

The medium relevant to our discussion here is the digital game. It was with the advent of the video game towards the end of the 20th Century that civilization truly began to dream in the infinite. It was impossible for art makers earlier in the century to predict the rise of this medium and so could not imagine a truly infinite music. This format has provided a medium through which many of my generation relate to one another: a favourite game is no different from a favourite novel. As with many great inventions, it was for a long time dismissed by the ‘serious’, by which I mean self-conscious, artworld as a plaything, something of no consequence. Technology took time to advance, but when it did, it brought full colour, flawed and fearful characters into our collective consciousness.
We now find ourselves in a technological wonder land of possibilities and the same time that the age of the traditional concert music setting is on the decline. How could we as artists refuse to engage with this ‘new’ medium and not be criticized for occupying that *ivory tower* of art? It is my firm belief that our current model of the dissemination of art music will only lead to fewer and fewer people engaging with our art and so fewer and fewer people will engage with one another in a shared lived experience.\(^{20}\) As artists, I believe it is our moral duty to address this issue and propose solutions, not endlessly arguing amongst ourselves as to which ’idea’ of art is the next path forward in our vain attempt to embody, within our own work, the spirit of revolution. The problem here is twofold.

Firstly, the medium of digital gaming was brought into the public imagination through capitalistic means: a product was produced and sold to the consumer of that product. This model, until very recently with the development of such platforms as *Dreams (M.Healey/J.Beech, 2020)* was based on the *profitability* of an idea. Secondly, creative artists in the field of music making have been left out of this discussion. ‘Serious’ art has no say in this equation of profit. If we are *serious* about the continuation of European culture, and its spirit of investigation, replication and metaphor, then we must address this issue and move with the times or be relegated to the footnotes of history. To put it simply, our audience will no longer be where we once found them.

With this in mind, it is my proposal that we engage with the platform of digital thought and work to improve transmission of ideas, in good faith, under the auspices of Criticism, Commonality and Metaphor. In this way, we as artists can, and must, act a counterweight to the dissemination of an idea or concept based solely on its profitability for a business or individual. If we do not actively occupy these spaces then the concept-as-product will become the new historic-artist and the cycle will continue. This brings us directly back to the idea of *Delirium*. This magical, imagined world is simply an abstraction of personal, emotional logics on my part, however, with this idea I am proposing a new model of music, not necessarily the new path forward sought by the arguing academics.

Such games as *No Man’s Sky* (Bourn, 2016) is an example of a procedurally generated universe. In the game, you play as a lone explorer in a small corner of the vast, generated universe. During your adventure, you explore completely unique worlds that even the developers of the game do not know exist.\(^{21}\) In this way self-same way, *Delirium* is only one interpretation of this possibility, only one world in a vast cosmos. The possibility of infinite continuums of art are now possible. Today’s technology is on the cusp of what we once thought was science fiction. In a few years, it is more than likely that we will have in the public imagination a technology capable of immersing our whole consciousness into a simulated experience. It will be then that *Delirium*, and its outward branching possibilities, will be heard in their intended form. The music will be *experienced*, not only heard.

*Delirium* will be one of countless explorable planets in a vast, infinite universe of art – one in which all possible stories of existence, all personal trials and triumphs are built upon by those that come after. Each world invented and constructed by individual artists, or collectives of artists, then follow the self-same principle of addition found in surrealism; a solution is found through personal growth, not reductive reasoning. It is my direct intention that someday, *Delirium* will be experienced in its fullest form. Observers, and so story tellers in their own right, will be able to visit *Magic City*, place their hands on the *Glass Tower* and experience the music of *Tableaux*.

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\(^{20}\) On this point, the novelty of live music performance will diminish as capitalistic considerations of profit and funding encroach further into the art industry. This will however come full circle again as we, as a global civilization, become bored of the digital just as we have become bored of the real.

\(^{21}\) The developers estimate the number of possible planets to be 18,446,744,073,709,551,616 within the game.
Chapter 3 – Carvings on the Glass Tower

In this chapter, I will discuss my ongoing multi-movement work Tableaux in relation to the piece’s conceptualization, staging and how the narrative at play in the music connects to the larger world of Delirium. This will offer a clearer picture of my intentions with this piece as a whole, and how these ideas relate the methodological practices used in the construction of Tableaux’s 10th movement discussed in Chapter 4.

Tableaux: Conceptualization

Tableaux (2018-2020) began life as a single movement of music for eight ‘celli, written for a composition competition in the first half of 2018. Later that year, I began my studies at the KMH. At the time I was interested in expanding upon the music I had already written for the competition and began to work the material into a multi-movement work for 8 ‘celli.

The original title of the work was Folk Suite. With this rather prosaic title, I had intended to construct a piece that would act as a sort of ‘transcription’ of the ‘folk music’ of Delirium. 22 As work continued on the piece, I realized that this would not be an unsustainable idea for my intended purposes of this piece. The title itself and the conception of the work as a sort of naturemusico led to too many considerations of what ‘folk music’, in the context of Delirium, ought to be. The implication is that it would have had to be composed/written by characters in this narrative. As Delirium is, so far, a characterless narrative, this idea did not fit into the criteria set out in Chapter 2.

With this in mind, I re-positioned the work into a larger form; adding 6 violas and 1 gong to the 8 ‘celli and expanding the form to 13 movements. This larger work then took the title Tableaux. In the construction of this piece, each movement acted as a separate experiment in composition. Whether it was, for example, an exploration of density in musical form, micro & macro structuring techniques involving prime numbers and matrix logic or investigations into melodic functionality and construction, Tableaux served as a means through which I have consolidated the methodology in my compositional practice. 23

In relation to the narrative of Delirium, Tableaux is, in my thinking, quite literally that: at the centre of Magic City, the capital city of Delirium, stands the Glass Tower. Encircling the base of the tower are 13 glyphs or tableaux; magical inscriptions carved into the base of the tower. At the centre of each glyph is a glass parison 24, inside which is contained a Magima; the magical spirits of nature that inhabit Delirium. The idea then is that the lessons I have learnt from my explorations in music have been captured and carved into a single work of art, adorning the great Glass Tower at the centre of Magic City.

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22 For further discussion on the aesthetics of Delirium, see Chapter 2.
23 These processes will be discussed in detail during the discussion in Chapter 4.
24 Parison: “a rounded mass of glass formed by rolling the substance immediately after removal from the furnace” (Oxford, 2010). For our purposes, I am referring to a cooled, hollow bauble of glass.
3.1 – Staging

The context in which a piece of music such as *Tableaux* is presented to a listening audience is central to how the narrative and intent of the piece is perceived. If, for example, the piece was presented in a traditional concert hall setting, with all the regular trimmings of an orchestral concert, it is my opinion that the music would be heard as *absolute music*; completely devoid of narrative and simply a music for the sake of itself. 25

I imagine that the stage will be set in a specific way. The 8 ‘celli will be seated downstage, 4 to the right and 4 to the left of the gong. The 6 viola players will then stand on risers behind the ‘celli, 3 on either side of the gong.

This illustration will also be included in the foreword to the full score of *Tableaux*.

The idea of adding 6 violas to the piece was twofold. Firstly, it was to allow for an expanded instrumental range while keeping the timbral field of the piece homogenous. This allowed me to consider the ensemble as a whole sounding unit or meta-instrument of 14 solo voices, meaning I could focus on structure and harmony as my primary concerns in the construction of this work. The second is a practical consideration; 6 violas and 8 ‘celli are the standard number of performers in larger orchestral context. This approach is a matter of reality; in today’s new music climate the rule of thumb for a new composition is a 10-minute cap, be it a new commission or an arts organization intermittent ‘call for scores. *Tableaux* is approximately 1.5 hours in duration, so performance opportunities will be limited. A practical way of getting a multi-movement work performed would be to divide up each new movement with a separate performance opportunity over the course of several years.

Elements of stage design and lighting are then open to interpretation; the artistic vision of the light and sound designers must be taken into consideration. It is my intention here that the music takes on an extra-musical quality. It is not only the musicians who will tell the story of *Tableaux* but also the visual artists involved in any production of this work. Projection or graphic installations on stage,

25 This is perhaps an interesting perspective on any future performance of *Tableaux*. The presentation of this piece as absolute music without narrative could be justified if it was the structure and construction of the piece that the interpreters sought to demonstrate to the listener. This approach is still justified because, as we will discuss in Chapter 4, the questions of criticism, commonality and metaphor have been imbedded in the constructional logics of the music, therefore, the narrative is still present, even if the audience has not been made aware of it.
reflecting aspects of the music I may have missed or overlooked but perceived by others, are a welcome addition to any telling of this story.

I make this point to highlight the issue of perceived meaning from a piece of music. Someone trained in other aspects of stage performance would have a different experience of the music than that of the trained musician who is performing the music. These differing perspectives on the music must be represented in any future performance of Tableaux, or indeed any work of mine. In this way, critical thinking is used on the part of the artists involved when thinking about the underlying metaphor and so commonality is found between artists when a democratic solution to staging is found. Essentially, this returns to my previous point about the democratization of art music. I believe that new music should not only be the preserve of educated, musical natives or written for the pleasure of sophisticated ears but a possible new horizon of imaginative and novel collaboration between diverse artists of all stripes. There can be no ‘cliché’ or ‘distracting novelty’ in the extra-musical presentation of this or any other work in Delirium, given that the additions are done in good faith.

3.2 – Narrative : Branching Paths

As the idea of Delirium grew in my mind, I knew that the next step would be to build some sort of a ‘map’ of this imagined space. Originally, I envisioned this ‘map’ and Tableaux to be two completely different works, however, with the re-positioning of the work’s narrative to be a collection of carvings around an object I had already ‘built’, my world map was right in front of me. Each of the captured Magima have been collected from all over the world of Delirium. They are the music of the world; the physical manifestations of Delirium’s natural resonance. Together, they form a 13-point map of new and unexplored lands.

With this narrative established, the piece takes on a new life within Delirium. As a real-world learning tool to consolidate my compositional technique and as a metaphorical ‘world map’ of this imagined place. In my mind, multi-movement music is the most effective way of delivering my ideas of narrative to an audience, just as a novelist writes in chapters, not necessarily only in verse. In this way, each point on this ‘world map’, i.e. each of the 13 movements, are new branching paths that lead me outwards into the world of Delirium.

With Tableaux, it is my intention that each movement of the work will be revisited and re-worked into a completely new piece of music. In this way, the music that is heard in the context of a performance of Tableaux is a set of ‘still images’ while this new music that is derived from the individual movements of Tableaux will be the music of the far-flung lands of Delirium.26

A clear example of this aspect of Tableaux is the 12th movement of the piece.27 This movement acts as a proof of concept for the whole work. The music in the 12th movement is a harmonic reduction of Wildflowers for Vln/Clar/Vla/Vc/Pno. The quintet was written first for this instrumental ensemble and then reduced to its bare harmonic progressions and structural logics.

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26 In reality, the division and re-imagining of each movement will allow the music I have written and collected together in one work to be gradually performed over the course of a number of years. Due to the scope of Tableaux, this is more than likely the only way for a multi-movement work such as this to be performed in the near future.

27 See Chapter 4 – Tableaux: Full Score
In this way, both pieces of music, *Wildflowers* and the 12th movement of *Tableaux* are of the same music but cannot be claimed to be the same music, because of the instrumental context and the differences of timbral considerations between the two ensembles. 28

In this way, the *Magîma* captured in the 12th movement of *Tableaux* is the natural music of *Wildflowers*. If this thinking is applied to all 13 movements of the work, then we have at least 13 new stories to tell: 13 new lands on the ‘world-map’ to explore. This re-imagining of each movement to form a new and separate work will keep me occupied for some time to come. In this way, narrative is an effective tool in my compositional process.

The 12th movement is unique in the context of the piece as a whole. It is the only movement to have been composed as a separate piece and then re-worked into *Tableaux*. Although the quintet version of this music will have its own programme note, and so narrative, the individual movements of *Tableaux* will be presented to the audience without title or individual programme note. Admittedly, this also allows me to keep each movement free for further future interpretation and investigation. I do not yet know in which direction each of the 13 paths of *Tableaux* lead. If I were to apply a direct narrative to each movement, then the way would be blocked. I cannot claim that one music is at both times the sea and the sky.

My point here is that if I were to give a label to each movement, it would pin down that music to a certain idea of what the music is. When presenting this piece to a listener, I want to leave the interpretation of each movement to them. I will only present them with a glyph and the movement number. 29 These glyphs are the same that are imagined to be carved at the base of the *Glass Tower*, which collectively form *Tableaux*. This means that when I go to ‘re-write’ one of the movements into a new music, there are no lingering associations. It leaves me free to re-invent and explore the logics of each movement further.

28 It is imperative that I make clear that this is only one approach to the question of future music written from the individual movements. The other 12 movements of the piece are not simply a harmonic reduction of a future composition but rather an open question for myself moving forward in my compositional practice.

29 *Glyph:* in architecture, a glyph is understood to be “a symbolic figure or a character ... usually incised or carved. …” (Oxford, 2010). In a similar way, the symbolic glyph represents the music that will come from the individual movements of *Tableaux*.
Chapter 4 - Compositional Methods

In this chapter, I will discuss in detail the compositional methodology employed in the construction of the 10th movement of Tableaux. The discussion of this movement will offer some insight into my method of composition. It will also give the reader analytical contextualization for the other movements of Tableaux and for the music of Delirium more generally. During this discussion, I will focus on how the compositional methods employed in the construction of this movement relate to the larger narrative of Tableaux. As mentioned in Chapter 3, it is my intention that the 10th movement of Tableaux will eventually be re-worked as the first movement of a multi-movement orchestral cycle entitled Deliria – the great tree of life. For this reason, the construction and investigation of this movement of Tableaux has served as a critical reflection on my compositional practice. The version of the music that stands as the 10th movement is then the still image or glyph of this future work.

4.1 - Terminology and Overview

This section will focus on the theoretical tools and compositional methods I have employed in the compositional process of Tableaux more generally, specifically giving examples from the 10th movement.

4.1.1 – Terminology

For the sake of our discussion, I will use the following list of terminology in my discussion of the 10th movement of Tableaux:

- **Construction:** During the following discussion, I will use the word ‘construct’ in place of ‘compose’. This distinction is deliberate. As I have already discussed in Chapter 3, Tableaux is an object within the world of Delirium. In general, I use the word ‘construct’ when ‘making’ an object and ‘compose’ when ‘writing’ about an event, place or when the narrative in use is less object-based and more abstract.

- **Durational/Harmonic Region:** This is used to refer to a durational or harmonic region with the notated score. In this context, I use ‘region’ to refer to a specific allotment of the notated score given to a specific compositional process/mechanism.

- **Graphic Shape:** The first point of inspiration for this movement. As we will see in the following discussion, the Graphic Shape is a completely subjective interpretation of what I imagine an electrical pylon would look like, if it were ‘drawn’ using traditional musical notation.

- **Macrostructure:** Referring to the large-scale harmonic and durational structure that has been built up as a result of preceding methodological steps.

- **Modality:** In the case of this movement, the term is used to label a specific row of pitches. This pitch row is thought of as the ‘modality’ of the movement, as it defines the pitch material used in constructing the macrostructure.

- **Polarization:** In the context of this movement, Polarization is used to refer to the two alternate versions of the original Graphic Shape in two separate and distinct voicings.

- **Resonance Chord:** The chord taken from Magic City and used in the construction of the 10th movement of Tableaux. The label ‘resonance’ refers to its construction from prime numbered overtones above a given bass.
- **Tonal Root**: As a very general rule of thumb, the Tonal Root can be thought of as the point of resolution for the whole movement. It is less accurate to say that the Tonal Root is simply our lowest pitch in the movement, however, all musical material heard in this movement has been constructed under the premise that the pitch A, is our Tonal Root. As we will see, it is the first pitch of our Modality, giving us a point of resolution.

- **Spacetime**: For the sake of this discussion, the Spacetime of the notated score can be thought of in a similar way to the durational or harmonic regions within the movement. The difference between the two terms is that Spacetime refers to the perceived periodicity, or lack thereof, in the music more generally. It is used in relation to the perception of the music rather than its construction.

### 4.1.2 - Overview

During the gradual evolution of *Tableaux*, I have employed many different approaches to the question of construction. For example, the 2nd movement of *Tableaux* is a based on the Irish traditional melody “She Moved Through the Fair”, while the 6th movement is intuitively composed.

Both methods, in my view, are limited in that one is defined and limited by the material which is being quoted and the other is simply music of a mood, or state of mind. While this mood music is of course relevant in the output of any music maker, it cannot, by virtue of its emotional state, give us an objective, and so deeper, understanding of processes or structural logics at play within the music. To achieve this, the following discussion will centre around the toolbox of methods I have employed in constructing the 10th movement and more generally in *Tableaux*. This toolbox has been built up from methods used in previous works of mine and developed during the writing process of *Tableaux*. In this way, the methodology discussed here is a summation of my compositional process during my time at KMH.

*Tableaux* is a work in 13 movements for 14 solo strings (8 ’celli, 6 violas) and 1 large gong. The gong is used only once in the piece (9th movement) and will not enter into our discussion here. Each of the 13 movements of *Tableaux* have a tonal root on each degree of the traditional chromatic scale. As mentioned in the previous chapter, *Tableaux* began as a smaller work of 6 movements for 8 ’celli. The tonal roots of these movements were C, D, E, F#, G#, A#. Later it was expanded to include 6 violas in the ensemble and a further 6 movements with the tonal roots C#, D#, F, G, A, B. The final 13th movement of the work has been added to allow the chromatically arranged tonal roots of each movement to return to the starting pitch of C.

30 Based on: I mean exactly that. The original melody was transposed to D, the tonal root of the 2nd movement and then used as the bass harmony upon which all the musical material rests. The melody is in a pitch D modality, therefore the tonal root of the 2nd movement is heard to be D.

31 By this I mean that the material in the movement was not planned out in a strict and defined way such as the 10th movement. With only the pitch F# as the tonal root, I followed my intuition on form, phrasing etc. and composed freely.

32 Offering a detailed discussion on music of a mood would require speaking more in abstract narration in an attempt to elucidate for the reader an emotive link to a certain spacetime. This would be unhelpful here as I wish to set out rules and procedures which I have followed in the construction of *Tableaux* and use more generally in the music of *Delirium*.

33 In any staged performance, the gong will act a visual, and so symbolic, object of the narrative unpinning the whole of *Tableaux*. It is heard only once in the piece, at the beginning of the 9th movement. This movement is an exploration of density in musical composition and so, in my mind, the gong acts as a spacetime divider: spraying out harmonic resonance, which is commented on by the material in the strings. See 3.2 for stage set-up.

34 For our purposes, ‘chromatic’ here is synonymous with equal-temperament. Just intonation will not form part of our discussion here.

35 On a point of aesthetics, as you will see, prime numbers are a large consideration in my methodology. To have 13 movements instead of 12, feels more numerologically in-tune with the *Aesthetics of Delirium* in Chapter 1.
Overview of Tonal Roots in each movement of Tableaux:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>VI</th>
<th>VII</th>
<th>VIII</th>
<th>IX</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>XI</th>
<th>XII</th>
<th>XIII</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>C#</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Eb</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F#</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>G#</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Bb</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example, the tonal root of the 1st and 13th movement is C. The exact definition of tonal root varies between movements and shouldn’t be taken to mean that each movement have a modality of traditional harmony based on C, or even a specific pitch set, but rather the named pitch above is a point of departure and/or resolution for the music of each movement. How this departure/resolution is used varies between movements as each movement is an exploration of a different musical idea or concept.

The ensemble of 14 solo strings are divided into smaller groups of players between each movement. Within the context of an hour’s music, the division of labour between performers allows each musician to experience their role in the music as an independent voice in the meta-instrument that is the ensemble. The intention here, as with my previous work Iridescence for 21 solo strings 36, is to disrupt the traditional hierarchical structures in orchestral or large ensemble playing; according to which, the further your desk is away from the stage, the less you will be heard and so the less your music making ‘matters’. This is an example of how Narrative as Criticism comes into my thinking around traditional concert music. The hierarchical structures in orchestral or large ensemble playing are, in my view, a relic of the past patriarchal limitations placed on the music, besides from being a merely practical consideration for the composer. In this way, narrative is used as criticism for an accepted tradition in art music culture, while simultaneously offering a more democratic solution.

Division of labour across the 13 movements of Tableaux:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
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<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>VI</th>
<th>VII</th>
<th>VIII</th>
<th>IX</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>XI</th>
<th>XII</th>
<th>XIII</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 Vc</td>
<td>1 Vla +acc.</td>
<td>8 Vc</td>
<td>2 Vla</td>
<td>8 Vc</td>
<td>3 Vl</td>
<td>8 Vc</td>
<td>4 Vla</td>
<td>8 Vc</td>
<td>14 Tutti</td>
<td>1 Vc +acc.</td>
<td>14 Tutti</td>
<td>14 Tutti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this work, there are only 4 movements in which the entire ensemble is heard and considered. The leapfrogging of ‘viola movements’ i.e. II, IV, VI, VIII are designed so that the listener is guided through the piece and offered some textural reprise from the lengthier, larger movements. 37

The thematic material used in each movement is deliberately distinct from one another. In this way, it is the combination of the chromatically arranged tonal roots and the variance of the instrumental texture between movements glues the work together in the mind of the listener, performer and indeed for myself. This is an example of how I use Narrative as Commonality when structuring any given new work.

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36 See Chapter 1
37 It should be mentioned here that, in the 5th movement, due to the physical limitation of what a ‘cello player could be reasonably expected to perform (unless the performer has unusually large hands), there are a few instances in this movement where the viola players are included. The method of composition in this movement requires physical impossibilities on the part of the performer and so a compromise must be made. See Tableaux-Full Score.
The variants and quantity of material heard in the work overall also highlights the narrative nature of this work. As I have described in Chapter 2, each movement of *Tableaux* is an engraving in glass at the base of the *Glass Tower* in the central square of *Magic City*. Each Tableau is unique, housing a *Magïma*, the natural spirits of *Delirium*. In order that *Tableaux* satisfies this requirement of narrative, the material used in each Tableau must be distinct and separate, but connect in a perceptible way.

To demonstrate the compositional toolbox of methods I have assembled during the writing process of *Tableaux*, I will discuss in detail the 10th movement of the work as this most clearly delineates processes that are used more generally in the works of *Delirium*.

### 4.2 - Tableaux: 10th Movement - Conceptualization

At the beginning of a new piece, I first consider the over-arching narrative at play. As discussed, *Tableaux* is a set of carvings around the base of the *Glass Tower* at the centre of *Magic City*, which is the capital city of *Delirium*. From this perspective, it followed in my thinking that I should use something from *Magic City* as the starting point. In this way, and throughout this movement, *Tableaux* is inextricably linked to its surroundings in *Magic City*.

For this movement, I chose the following chord:\(^{38}\)

![Resonance Chord](image)

*Fig. 4 - Resonance Chord*

The label I have used here is the Resonance Chord as it is formed by selecting the prime numbered partials above a given base. In this case, the given pitch is E', counted as the first partial. It follows then that E" is the 2\(^{nd}\) partial, B" is the 3\(^{rd}\), G### is the 5\(^{th}\), D### is the 7\(^{th}\) etc. In this way, prime numbers have been used to form the resonance chord up to and including the 23\(^{rd}\) partial.\(^ {39}\)

In terms of functionality, I selected this chord as its voicing and the intervallic values within the chord would allow for a greater degree of compositional manipulation in the construction of this movement. In this way, the two pieces *Magic City* and *Tableaux* are connected in a very real sense; not only through the central narrative of *Delirium* but also their shared commonality of harmonic material. Previous movements of *Tableaux*, as we have already discussed, deal with largely musical concerns. By this, I mean that the objective of the 9\(^{th}\) movement, for example, is to explore density within a musical system.

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\(^{38}\) Taken from the *Great Golden Gates of Iridescent Marble* section of *Magic City*.

\(^{39}\) Again, for the purposes of our discussion we are omitting considerations of just intonation. This means that the upper partials, i.e. 11\(^{th}\), 13\(^{th}\) etc above the given pitch, i.e. E’, have been altered to fit into equal temperament. This approach was originally used in *Magic City* for practical considerations of instrumentation and ease of performance. In a similar manner, the upper partials above E’, have been altered for the same reasons.
For the movement in question here, I sought to expand my horizon and began with an extra-musical starting point. Namely, a Graphic Shape in two polarizations:

Here, I am using Graphic Shape in an entirely subjective way. The ‘shape’ is how I imagine you might ‘draw’ the shape of an electrical pylon using tradition musical notation and the harmony of the resonance chord. I decided on this approach to graphic notation as it allowed to more easily implement my ideas of musical composition directly onto the graphic shape. The visual image of an electrical or telephone pylon is, in my mind, an almost ubiquitous object-image across the planet. Almost anyone can recognize this object-image and so there are almost an infinite amount of unique associative memories linked to it. For example, one may think of the electrical pylons that stand solitarily on the vast open planes of North America or of frozen wooden beams supporting fiberoptic cables through some dense, snowy, forest or indeed the jumbled webs found along the streets of so many of our cities.

My point here is that the conceptual use of, say, an electrical pylon, is one that offers commonality amongst people as the individual associations, and so implied subjective metaphor, can have almost limitless meaning. I am not asking the listener to imagine my image of what an electrical pylon is but rather asking them to think about the visual-object-image I have proposed. I am asking how do their personal associations of this given object-image relate to what they are experiencing in the music. Some will be guided by the music, others will not. I can only ask that the listener meets my art in good faith and strives to hear what I am trying to communicate through the music. There are no correct answers to this question of narrative.

The electrical pylon, for me, is an interesting concept that has, evidently, a lot to offer in terms of constructional thought in musical composition. The object is functional; it transfers energy from one position to the next. This functionality is what I have striven to re-create in the layered, methodical approach in the construction of this movement. The transferal of energy, be that textural, harmonic, durational etc., is evenly dispersed across the whole musical system, in this case, the entire 10th movement. This idea of energy transferal became the guiding principle when constructing the 10th movement. The selection of which processes to use, and which to leave out, depended on whether they would add to or negate this central idea.

The inspiration for this idea came from a discussion I had with a friend. At the time, he mentioned to me his fascination with ‘telephone poles’ and how, when you stand below them and look up, the cables divide the sky into intersecting cross-sections and fascinating patterns. In this way, the use of the given graphic shape is as example of Narrative as Metaphor and Commonality; I understood another perspective of a given object-image and found commonality with him because of an appreciation of a subjective, symbolic metaphor which we shared.
4.3 - Development I – Construction of the Structural Matrix

With the graphic shape conceptualized and constructed in terms of traditional musical notation, the next step was to use the graphic shape to generate the material that will be in use during the construction of this movement.

Returning to the concept of the graphic shape representing an electrical pylon, the functionality of this real-world object is that of energy transferal. In my mind, the most straightforward musical equivalence of this would be the glissando. The pitch and timbral considerations can be exactly controlled within the spacetime of the notated score. It then can be taken that the main point of musical exploration within this movement is the phenomenon of the glissando in the context of the string instruments.

With two polarizations of the graphic shape in mind, the next step was to decide on their lowest common denominator, i.e., the pitch row, or modality. This was decided by simply counting up the pitch names. As the pitch A is our Tonal Root for this movement of Tableaux, we begin on A.

When collated, the following modality is found from the musical material:

![Fig. 7 - Modality of 10th Movement](image)

In effect, the pitch row above comes directly from the Resonance Chord and the subsequent re-voicing of the chord into the two polarizations. As the pitch A must be our Tonal Root of this movement, the pitch row is set to 'begin' on A. This satisfies the overall tonal root structure of Tableaux discussed in the previous chapter. From here, the 2nd pitch in the row has been raised by a semitone. This alteration has been made as, within the context of an A tonal root, I have aimed to keep the traditional major/minor audiozation of the harmony of C[B#/]C# above the given A as blurred as possible. As we move through the various layers of systematic construction of this movement, this will prevent a clearly 'traditional' modality from emerging.

Our other consideration when planning to avoid traditional harmonic audiozation of the finished piece, is the pitch F#. In the view of traditional harmony, this pitch is considered the related minor of A. In order that A is firmly our Tonal root of the movement, we will exclude F# from the following process. This will stop the piece from unexpectedly 'modulating' away from the Tonal Root of A.

From here, we now simply take our graphic shape and transpose both polarizations of the shape so that the **lowest note** of each shape sits on each step of the above pitch row. In total, we will now have

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41 Again, A is not considered the tonic in a traditional sense but rather a point of resolution. In this case, A has a hierarchical dominance in the harmonic audiozation of the piece, in that it is heard as the 'resolved' pitch at the end of this movement.

42 To mention briefly that this approach has been developed over many attempts in this direction in my compositional method. I have found that using pitch material which contains both the major and minor 3rd above a given root will allow the music to sound more fluid in the final iteration.

43 This relates back to the narrative of what Tableaux is in Delirium. As each tableau is a still life of future musics, the compositional tool of modulation is largely left out of the construction of many of the work’s different movements. There are isolated instances, for instance the 6th movement, which modulates between different transpositions of a single musical cell.
12 useable extrapolations of the original graphic shape; 2 polarizations of the graphic shape on the 6 pitches of A, B#, C#, D, E#, G#.

Generally, in my compositional process, once a logic has been set up, I immediately aim to contradict it. This is for two reasons: if there is one exception to whatever rule has been set up, the system then allows for another avenue of departure from the initial logic. This allows the music to conceptually branch out, leading to more and more interconnected possibilities based on the original concept. Secondly, it allows for imperfection within the large-scale constructional logics of the piece. In the works of *Delirium*, as narrative is my main concern, the music must in one way or another be ‘imperfect’. This is allows the music to be guided by intuition in part, rather than demanding that the music strictly follow prescribed logics.44

The next step is to decide how these 12 shapes are arranged in the spacetime of the notated score. As we are working with an increasingly ridged structure built up from the graphic shape, an issue of predictable repetition will arise. As a precaution, each Graphic Shape on A, for example, will oscillate between Polarization 1 and Polarization 2 on each successive presentation of the Graphic Shape based on A. This process of oscillation between the two polarizations of the graphic shape is continued for the 5 remaining transpositions on the pitches of the pitch row. Now that we have our material, we must decide how it is laid down in the spacetime of the notated score. Taking inspiration from Messiaen’s palindromic rhythmic durations discussed in *The Technique of my Musical Language* (Messiaen, 1956), the following rule has been used:

![Fig. 8 - Graphic Shape in both polarizations transposed onto the pitch row modality](image)

![Fig. 9 – Durational Spacing Rule](image)

There are two considerations when placing these generated Polarizations of the Graphic Shape in the spacetime of the notated score. The first is returning to the idea of energy, and so information,

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44 After the piece has been *constructed* along structural lines, the *composition* of the music must, in one form or another, include intuitive decisions on the part of the composer. If these are missing, we lack a narrative in the music and so it becomes *absolute music* in its own right.
transferred between shapes. Secondly, if I was to simply attach each shape to a barline, the shape will become a matter of fatigue for the listener rather then continued interest.

To resolve these issues, I have applied the above palindromic durations to the spacetime regions that share two consecutive shapes. For example, the first Graphic Shape (A in polarization 1) is placed at the beginning of bar 1, while the following shape, in this case B# in polarization 2, has been layered over the spacetime region in which the first shape is sounding by a dotted 8th note.

![Fig. 10 - Spacing Rule used between Polarizations of the Graphic Shape](image.png)

This process is continued throughout the movement, following the above palindromic durational rule. Now we already have a lot decided: The Graphic Shape has been used to produce material with which we can work with in two polarizations. How we place these shapes in the spacetime of the score has been decided using the spacing rule. The next step is to decide in what order the shapes appear. As I have mentioned, due to the repetitive nature of the material in use, listening fatigue is our main concern.

So that the audiozation of the final piece does not lend itself to predictable harmony, the following has been employed when deciding in what order the shapes will appear in the score.

Given: A=1, B#=2, C#=3, D=4, E#=5, G#=7
And: Polarization 1 = A, Polarization 2 = B

With these two designations, we can now assemble the overall harmonic structure of the movement through the simple addition of these two vectors. ⁴⁵

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⁴⁵ You will notice that each row of the matrix has been assigned 7 points, but we only have 6 pitch based Graphic Shapes, each with two polarizations. The rationale for this will become clear as we move through the discussion.
Rather than the traditional method of reading a matrix left to right and in descending order, I have in this movement opted to assemble M I in clockwise motion and M II in anticlockwise motion. M I has been constructed by simply taking the points 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 1 and assembling them backwards and forwards in clockwise motion. As M II has only 2 terms, A and B polarizations, it is constructed by simply alternating between the two. From experience in using matrix-based thinking when constructing large scale harmonic structures, this will allow for a more unpredictable result from the built up logical system, and in my estimation, make for more interesting music.

These two matrices, the first governing the pitch based shaped and the second the polarization of each shape are then combined to give us the Structural Matrix:

```
1A|2B|3A|4B|5A|7B
2A|1B|2A|3B|4A|5B
3A|2B|3A|4B|5A|4B
4A|1B|7A|5B|7A|3B
5A|2B|3A|4B|5A|2B
7A|5B|4A|3B|2A|1B
```

What emerges from the addition of these two matrices is the Structural Matrix (Fig.13) of the entire movement. In total, there are then 36 points within the matrix. Therefore, the Graphic Shape, based

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46 Obviously, as there are only 2 polarizations of the shape, the logic is redundant in M II. However, if M II had $3 \leq$ terms, this anticlockwise motion would be perceptible. For our purposes, is it to offer a methodological counterpoint the reading of M I.

47 There is no objective reason as to why I have chosen this approach, however, this process is fitting in terms of the Aesthetics of Delirium discussed in Chapter 1. The clockwise and anti-clockwise motion found in the construction of these matrices relates directly the idea of time neither moving forward nor backward in the ceaseless music of Delirium.
on 6 pitches each with 2 polarizations, is heard 36 times. With the information, and so energy, described in a matrix, we can now see clearly some further issues that might arise. The most obvious of these is the fact the A polarizations are always followed by the B polarizations.

In order to alleviate aural fatigue brought about by so many repetitions of A/B polarizations, another pattern must be found within the given Structural Matrix. In this case, I have chosen to use the prime integers between 0 and 36.

![Structural Matrix with Prime Points](image1)

The above matrix (Fig.14) is read from left to right and in descending order. In this movement, I have decided that the melodic material, which we will discuss later, will be heard at these prime points within the spacetime of the music. For example, the first instance of melodic material will be heard at the 2nd prime point within the matrix (2B, Row 1, Column 2) and the second instance of the melodic material will be heard at the 3rd prime point (3A, Row 1, Column 3) etc.

In my compositional process, colour is especially useful. Generally, I use the colour coding of systems to separate out different ideas and logics that tend to get tangled up during the construction of any new piece. To this end, I use colour in two ways: to assign specific tasks to certain material and to find commonality and contrast between different materials in use.

The final part in planning the overall harmonic structure of the movement was to incorporate this colour-coding system into the matrix.

![“Tangled Rainbow” Structural Matrix](image2)

In this final iteration of the Structural Matrix (Fig.15), almost all information about the movement is contained. For example, reading left to right in descending order, the graphic shape on A in polarization 1 will be heard, then the graphic shape on B# in polarization 2 will be heard etc. At this point, as it is a prime point in the overall Structural Matrix, the first instance of melodic material will be heard within the harmonic region occupied by the graphic shape on B# in polarization 2 and so on.

As the prime number we are using here are relatively small, i.e. 2,3,5,7 etc the pattern that emerges from their usage is useful in that each prime point within the Structural Matrix is sufficiently spaced. The listener will be able to connect the regions in which this logic applies, but will not be able to predict when the next instance occurs.
In this case, I have chosen 7 colours to include in the building of the Structural matrix. The reason for these specific colours will become clear in our discussion, however, functionally, they serve to connect disparate parts of the matrix in a discernable pattern.

Each position in the Structural Matrix, connected by a shared colour, will include, in its spacetime of the notated score, a similar but differing textural development. At the prime points within the Structural Matrix, we have already decided that the melodic material will be heard. At the composite points within the Structural Matrix, this rule is cancelled out and textural variance is included. Again, this allows all the yellow regions, for instance, to sound similar enough that they are recognizable by the textural variance but ’interrupted’ where the melodic material has been assigned.

4.4 - Development II – Melodic Material and Textural Variance

From here, we now have the macrostructural matrix of the movement complete. There are now two elements of the music that must be considered; the melodic material and the textural variance within the harmonic region of each color-coded point within the Structural Matrix. In the following section, the methodology used in the construction of these two musical elements and how these methods are implemented into this movement will be discussed.

4.4.1 - Melodic Material

Our over-arching concern in the construction of this movement is to link the material used, and how it is used, back to the idea of a larger scale narrative at play in both Tableaux and Delirium itself. With this consideration in mind, I have decided to use the melodic material of this movement to serve two purposes.

Firstly, with the inclusion of ‘melody’ in this movement, the listener is aware of time moving forward. Unlike, say the 5th movement of Tableaux in which the structure does not allow a discernable periodicity to evolve from its logics, the movement in discussion here must because of the nature of repetition implicit in the use of a single Graphic Shape. Secondly, the inclusion of melody in this movement allows me to connect disparate regions within the aforementioned structural matrix together in a discernable way.

As the subject of narrative, and how it is implemented into my compositional practice, is our primary concern here, it follows that melody, the most subjective aspect of musical compositional, be addressed. I consider ‘melody’ to be the most subjective aspect of music making as a single melody can be interpreted by a given performer or listener in any number of ways. This returns to the subjective nature of musical narrative, be it intended, or not, by the creator.

There are two mains issues when considering the melodic element; the functionality of the melody’s various parts and how each instance of melodic material relates to the next, wherever it might appear in the structural matrix. As we are constructing a single Tableau or movement within Tableaux the functionality of elements within a melody is a helpful starting point. In this regard, emotional or intuitive decisions on how the melody should be shaped have been removed from the discussion for now.

In exploring different modes of thought in regards to functionality within melodic material, Messiaen’s approach in The Technique of my Musical Language (Messiaen, 1956, p. 17) offers a

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49 With this in mind, if there were 2≤ Graphic Shapes included in this discussion, the melody may not have been necessary as enough variance would already be implied in the spacetime of the notated score.
helpful guide upon which to build. In Chapter 3, during his discussion of *Rhythmic Preparations and Descents*, Messiaen suggests a three-part approach labelled A, B and C in the construction of hierarchical harmonic accents. [A] functions as an elongation, [B] as an accent and [C] as a descent or resolution.

From this line of thinking, I have used a similar systematization of melodic functionality

\[
\begin{align*}
[A] & - \text{Impulse/Initiation} \\
[B] & - \text{Prolongation/Modulation} \\
[C] & - \text{Resolution/Continuation}
\end{align*}
\]

In essence, this is a truism of most melodic procedures employed by music makers for several centuries. This approach does however offer us a systematic approach for labelling different functionalities within a given melody, and for our purposes, shows the way forward in constructing this movement.

In this movement, I have assigned each of these functions to a durational value.\(^{50}\) This is useful to us here as the limitations of all previous steps have also been in terms of duration within a given durational region. Setting aside considerations of timbre or dynamic within this approach, the next step was to assign durational material to this ABC system of melodic production.

As with the structural matrix in 4.2, the following matrix has been constructed to assign duration to each function of the melody.

\[\text{Fig. 16 - Melodic Durations Matrix}\]

In the above matrix, each row contains 9 points. This row is shown to be divided into 3 ‘phrases’ of 3 durations each, serving the function of [A], [B], [C] respectively. The durations here have been chosen with two considerations in mind; they correspond proportionally to the spacing rule in 4.2 between each Graphic Shape \(^{51}\) and also each ‘phrase’ of the melodic durational matrix follow the logics of [A] initiation: the values are shortest, [B] prolongation: the values are proportionally longer than [A] and [C] resolution: the durations are proportionally longer than [B] so the melody is heard in effect to slow down to a perceived ‘cadence’.

\(^{50}\) In this example, functionality has been assigned to durations as we are constructing a melody that will eventually offer the listener a discernible periodicity within the movement. A, B, C Functionality can of course be assigned to different musical devices such as gestural impulses as a means of initiation or dynamic fluctuation as a means of prolongation etc. \(^{51}\) By rights, it did not have to be proportional to the spacing rule already established as these two factors are unrelated, however, in my compositional method I like to keep things as tied together as possible.
The next step was to assign pitch to the durations organized by the above matrix. This was done by returning to the structural matrix and reading it in terms of written musical pitch. For example, the first line of the 1A 2B 3A 4B 5A 7B translates into the following pitch row, given that each number corresponds to the tonal root of that specific harmonic region:

![Fig. 17 - Row 1 from the Structural Matrix.](image)

As in the construction of the Structural Matrix delineated in 4.2, I considered how these newly generated pitch rows should be read and stitched together. The solution was to read each row from right to left, as they were generated with left to right logic, just as the Structural Matrix was constructed in both clockwise and anticlockwise motion. This process is continued and a further 6 pitch rows were generated by reading the pitch material from the Structural Matrix.

When we lay all 6 pitch rows generated in this way side by side, we have the following result:

![Fig. 18 - Infinitely repeating pitch row derived from the Structural Matrix](image)

It is, by nature of its design, an infinitely repeating pitch row. For our purposes in this discussion, it is necessary for us to use only a small portion of this infinite row, however, as this mode of thinking returns to the larger point of the work being part of a much larger narrative. The idea is that only a small portion of the 'story' is heard here but we know that the logic on which it is built scales up to a much greater whole, just as the narrative of Tableaux is only one part of the larger world of Delirium.

When we combine the 6-unit pitch row and the 9 unit per row Durational Matrix (Fig.16), there is necessarily an overlap. In my previous attempts in this direction, I have found that using a 1:1 ratio of pitch to duration leads only to a closed system with little room for compositional maneuvering. For this reason, like the colouration of the Structural Matrix in 4.2, the two logics, that of the infinite pitch row and the finite durational matrix, can be superimposed upon one another.

Once the durational matrix is laid on top of this generated pitch row, the melodic material is now complete:

![Fig. 19 - Row 1 of the infinite pitch row with durations superimposed](image)
The same approach has been used for all rows of the durational matrix until all of melodic material has been generated. With the construction of the melodic material now complete, each row of the durational matrix is now simply plugged into the corresponding prime points within the structural matrix.

You will notice there is again a contradiction in logics: in total we need 11 unique instances of the melodic material in order to satisfy the 11 prime points within the structural matrix. In the durational matrix, there are only 7 rows. This is solved by simply returning to the first row the durational matrix for the 8th prime point and continuing until we have satisfied the 11 prime points within the structural matrix. In this way, both the pitch material and the durational material are travelling at different speeds within the same conceptual spacetime but are linked through the structural matrix of the movement. The two systems will only meet in mathematical reality long after this movement has finished, just as the music of Delirium is part of a continuous whole rather, than an isolated portion of spacetime.

4.4.2 - Textural Variance

Our discussion so far has dealt many with structural concerns in the compositional process of this movement. Now that we have all the background textural and melodic information represented in the structural matrix, the systematic approach of construction has now reached the end of its usefulness. As a result of using 1 Graphic Shape in the manner in which I have chosen, the ear will learn and recognize that shape after the third repetition. The listener will then be able to predict, and so become fatigued by, the underlying structure which we have so meticulously constructed.

As the central compositional tool in question throughout this movement is the glissando, all 7 edits (as there are 7 different colours) need to reflect this in a suitable way. As red is the first colour in the 7 colour sequence, I have opted to keep the original graphic shape unchanged at these points within the matrix. 52 This allows for the repeating pattern of 7 colours to be evident to the ear as the ‘red’ spacetime material acts as an aural anchor.

52 Except, of course for the 29th point with in the matrix, represented about as 5A (Row 5, Column 5). As this is a prime point within the matrix, the melodic material assigned to this spacetime region will be take the functionality of variance within the system.
The above example is an instance of the melodic material within a prime point in the Structural Matrix. As you can see, the melodic material is represented at the bottom of the figure. In the middle of the given example, the graphic shape is evident; until it meets the downbeat of bar 6, then it simply doubles the melodic material within the spacetime of the orange region. In order to preserve the original Graphic Shape and our examination of the glissando intact, the melody is only doubled at the centre of the orange region.

In this instance, the original graphic shape has been maintained at the beginning of the orange region, however, as the melodic material is not present in this instance, a new textural variant has been included at the centre of this region. As you can see, stepwise motion in 8th notes has been included in this section. The harmony of the included textural variant in the section follows the pitch row, or modality, established in 4.2. The groups of prime numbers in 8th note durations are ordered 2,3,5,7,5,3,2 so that they form a palindromic structure around the number 7 within the orange region.
Each orange region, that does not fall on a prime point within the structural matrix, has a similar edit, grouping 8th notes in palindromic groups of prime numbers, the harmony of which is based on the given modality.

To return to the idea of a larger narrative at play in the music, each colour-coded section will be edited in a similar but differing manner so that the lower level logics of the Structural Matrix are still distinct but the surface material is developed the appropriate amount. Just as each Tableau, or each movement in Tableaux, is a glyph carved in glass of some future music still to be written, the 10th movement is a microcosm of this idea: each point within the structural matrix reveals a still life of what is to come.

For example, the green regions within the structural matrix maintain the opening harmony of the given graphic shape but at the centre of the region move to noise-based music as the performers play pitchless material on the bridge of the instrument.

In the same way, this is a glyph or still-life of the music that will eventually occupy this region of the music’s spacetime. It will not look like this, of course, but the music that will be formed from this region will be guided by the sound of string instruments playing on the bridge. In this way, the music is a craving of the music to come, not an exact replication.

4.5 Development III – Musical Considerations

At this point, in a musical sense, there are many logics to keep in mind that have been built upon to construct the different elements of the score. Until now, we have not been dealing with the actual sound of the music but rather tools used in its construction. In this section, we will discuss the musical results of our constructional logics and offer an approach to resolving musically specific issues.

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53 As you will notice, the last grouping of 2 8th notes has been extended. This was to include the spacetime region that would have otherwise been occupied by the descending part of the graphic shape. As before, when a dealing with these textural concerns and the rules established to govern them, alterations and practical considerations must be included. The last grouping has been expanded to 3 8th notes so that the chord is heard at the very beginning of the next yellow harmonic region. This is to allow the of transference of energy between regions to happen, even if we have not used a glissando in this textural variance.
4.5.1 – Voice Leading

As I began to lay down the graphic shape as dictated by the structural matrix and all the previous logics we have discussed, the issue of voice leading came to the fore. As our original concept was that of the electrical pylon, and so the concept of energy being transferred within a given system, I needed to find a way to more effectively connect the tonal root of each harmonic region to the next. As the music stood, the tonal roots were too far away from one another to be discernably connected.

To solve this, the following solution was used.

As shown, the Tonal Root (i.e. the lower system of the graphic shape, shown here with the label T.R) has been extended backward in the spacetime of the notated score. For example, the first A in the orange region begins just as the top G in the red region terminates. This process is continued in iterations of primes numbers as shown in the example given. This process may seem to contradict the spacing rule discussed previously, however, as the tonal root of the next shape is saved until the beginning of the shared harmonic region, we can justify this extrapolation.

As the graphic shape’s gestural movement is always in upwards motion, the slow descent of the bass harmony as its energy is transferred between regions in downwards motion, providing the music some conceptual counterpoint within the constructed spacetime of the notated score.

4.5.2 – Closed Score

The closed score form of this movement has now been constructed. In this way, the 10th movement is representative of how Tableaux has been composed as a whole. This process of constructing a closed score version of the individual movements and then orchestrating them out for the given ensemble of 14 solo string instruments has been a useful tool in the compositional process of this piece. It has allowed me to focus on the harmony and durational aspects of the music as well as leaving space for symbolic narrative within the music. An example of this is the Tangled Rainbow of the structural matrix (Fig.21):

Fig. 24 - Voice leading of the Tonal Root of each consecutive shape

As shown, the Tonal Root (i.e. the lower system of the graphic shape, shown here with the label T.R) has been extended backward in the spacetime of the notated score. For example, the first A in the orange region begins just as the top G in the red region terminates. This process is continued in iterations of primes numbers as shown in the example given. This process may seem to contradict the spacing rule discussed previously, however, as the tonal root of the next shape is saved until the beginning of the shared harmonic region, we can justify this extrapolation.

As the graphic shape’s gestural movement is always in upwards motion, the slow descent of the bass harmony as its energy is transferred between regions in downwards motion, providing the music some conceptual counterpoint within the constructed spacetime of the notated score.

Fig. 25 - Closed Score [Excerpt], Tableaux 10th mvt.
In this way, colour, and so narrative, is used as both a compositional tool in the construction of a given piece of music, as we have discussed, and also as a means through which the score itself becomes part of the larger narrative of Tableaux. I have chosen the seven colours of the rainbow as it represents the refraction of the light emitting from the glass parison; the music is then a representation of the Magîma contained within, symbolized as the 10th glyph (or movement) of Tableaux.

4.5.3 – Dynamics

The issue of dynamic range and colour has been left out of this discussion so far as I have not used dynamic volume as a constructional tool in this movement. This is not generally the case in Tableaux as dynamics have been taken into consideration elsewhere. For example, in the 12th movement dynamics are used to highlight the harmonic tension and development throughout the movement.

After the 10th movement had been constructed and orchestrated for the whole ensemble, dynamics have been placed within the score in a manner counter to the underlying logics upon which we have built this movement, i.e. harmonic and durational regions, the inclusion of melodic material and textural variance. The dynamics in this movement are used at both times to highlight and blur the underlying structure of the 10th movement, allowing for a smoother, amorphic final result.54

4.5.4 – Instrumentation

The last step in the composition of this movement was to orchestrate the closed piano score into the 14-instrument version. Some obvious considerations were dealt with here, such as the range and register of a given voice and how it would be performed on a given instrument. In many cases, a single line was simply divided amongst a number of instruments in order to keep the performers engaged in a meaningful way throughout the performance. As the ensemble I have chosen for this piece of music is one of a largely homogenous instrumental timbre, this approach to instrumentation is justified in that balance, the clarity of individual voices, is easily achieved.

As we have discussed in 4.1.2, the entire ensemble performs in the 1st, 10th, 12th and 13th movements of Tableaux. In this way, these movements will be experienced by the listener as linked or connected. Not only do all three movements employ the entire ensemble, they are also connected through their collective Tonal Roots; C[1], A[X], B[XII], C[XIII]. As Tableaux begins and ends of a Tonal Root of C, the 10th and 12th movements actively highlight this aspect of the music; the Tonal Root of A in the 10th movement and the Tonal Root B in the 12th movement are perceived by the listener as the relative minor and leading note respectively.55 In this way, the instrumentation of these movements marks these movements as distinct from the other movements and connected in their final resolution of C in the 13th movement.

54 See Tableaux – Full Score
55 It is not my intention that the listener or performer understand these movement as the relative minor or the leading note of C, however, because I have composed Tableaux in this manner the traditional audiozation of harmonic progressions are inescapable.
Chapter 5 – Conclusion

At the outset of this artistic research, it was my goal to show the usefulness of narrative as an artistic tool in music making practices. The purpose of this research, and so this thesis, was to demonstrate how musical narrative can in fact act as a means of criticism in art, how it can offer commonality between composer, performer and listener and how narrative is an effective tool in offering the listener metaphoric symbolism.

For me, the single most important element of music making is the communication of an idea or concept. It was purpose in this thesis to show that narrative based art, and so music, can be inclusive to all possible interpretations of a single idea relative to an individual’s lived experiences. The different aspects of how narrative is present in the compositional methodology I employ in this approach to musical composition were delineated for the reader by offering a constructionist analysis of the 10th movement of Tableaux for 14 solo strings. The three aspects of narrative, namely those of Criticism, Commonality and Metaphor were set out in the beginning of the thesis. These questions were linked to the compositional methodology discussed in Chapter 4.

This artistic research has allowed me to formalize my ideas of narrative in musical composition and problematize the concept. Solutions were found in the form of the aforementioned ethical questions that are placed before every idea or concept that will eventually form a new piece in Delirium. As this artistic research is demonstrated through my own compositional methodology and artistic practice, the research has brought into focus the future possibilities that spring from narrative-based music and what that means for the continuing construction of Delirium.

It was because of this research that I discovered the music of Ben Johnston, for instance. Although the concept of just intonation has been omitted from this discussion, it will inform how the re-imagined music of Tableaux will sound. If Tableaux deals largely with the equal tempered chromatic scale in its large-scale multi-movement form, the future music that comes from these glass glyphs will incorporate Johnston’s tuning theories in one manner or another. In this way, a whole new world of harmonic relations will come into view from this solid, tempered system.

The largest challenge of this artistic research was the revision of what Delirium ought to be in terms of my compositional output. At the beginning of this research, there was in my mind no problematic issues of including a hero into a said narrative. During the course this research, and from discussions with others about narrative as a compositional tool, it became apparent that I would need to rethink how I framed narrative in my compositional practice. It was because of this problematization of Delirium as a conceptual tool that I began to view narrative as not merely a story but more of a larger ethical question: is narrative ethical? Does it exclude and diminish? Does it simply prop up the status quo of the hero-artist, defiantly self-righteous? Whose story is told?

It was because of these considerations that I reframed narrative as a vehicle through which the artist can pose critical questions using metaphor and so achieve commonality with others.

Ultimately, what I argue for in this thesis is the openness of heart that is required for an artist to relate to others through their art making. In order to cultivate true communication between people - the goal of all art - the artist themselves must be willing to offer something personal from their own lived experience in the hope that the listener will in some way understand.
Bibliography


Tableaux
for 14 solo strings

Christopher Moriarty
Composed: June 2018-May 2020
pp possibile e poco a poco cresc.
pizz.

R.H Slap.

R.H Slap.
Highest Pitch possible.
V. \( \approx 40 \) or \( \approx 40^* \)

* Remove trills from this movement when \( \approx 40 \)
VI. \( j=96 \)
II. On the bridge, Without pitch.
On the bridge, without pitch.

On the bridge, without pitch.

On the bridge, without pitch.

On the bridge, without pitch.

On the bridge, without pitch.

On the bridge, without pitch.
On the bridge,
Without pitch.
Flag Trill: Slow-Fast-Slow

On the bridge,
Without pitch.

On the bridge,
Without pitch.

On the bridge,
Without pitch.

On the bridge,
Without pitch.

On the bridge,
Without pitch.

On the bridge,
Without pitch.

On the bridge,
Without pitch.

On the bridge,
Without pitch.
XII. $\frac{3}{4}=160$

Viola 1

senza sord.

Viola 2

senza sord.

Viola

senza sord.

Viola

senza sord.

Violoncello 1

ff

Violoncello 2

ff

Violoncello 3

ff

Violoncello 4

ff

Violoncello 5

ff

Violoncello 6

ff

Violoncello 7

ff