# PORTFOLIO OF COMPOSITIONS

## Daniel Ian PRICE

Volume I of II

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND MEDIA

Salford Music Research Centre, University of Salford, Salford, United Kingdom

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Published Works,

August 2018

# **Portfolio of Compositions**

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### **Acknowledgments**

My thanks go to Dr. Howard Evans and Jaren Hornmusikkforening for the commissioning of Realms of Asgard, with further thanks to Dr. Evans for his comments on both this work and my concerto in preparation of this portfolio, to Steve Stewart and Joseph Cook, for their friendship and collaborative contributions in Concerto for Soprano Cornet and Mists on the River Wear, and also for providing the definitive recordings of their respective works. For Visions, thanks must go to Christian Jenkins and Briton Ferry Band as the commissioning body, but also to Jeff Jones and Usk Brass Band for their engaging interpretation at the final contest of the 2015 National Brass Band Championships of Great Britain. Thanks also to Philip Harper for asking me to compose *Dreamtime* and here, I would also like to acknowledge the many brass bands who have recorded my work, both for this submission and beyond, particularly Cory Band, who have remained loyal advocates of my work over the years. I would also like to share my admiration to those involved in the thankless task in the organising and running of the Greater Manchester Youth Brass Band, to whom Starburst is dedicated. My thanks goes to Prima Vista Musikk Ltd. and Yewden Music for granting permission to include musical extracts and scores from their publications within this portfolio, and to Samantha Harrison for her comments on Starburst.

Finally special thanks must go to Dr. Robin Dewhurst for providing a continual source of inspiration, as a colleague and in his capacity as my supervisor, and also to my partner Charlotte, for her continued support, patience and understanding in all of my endeavours.

Dan Price - Rochdale, August 2018.

### <u>Abstract</u>

Volume I, is a portfolio of compositions and contains musical scores and recordings which relate to the discussions within the critical commentary, found in volume II.

The six works presented in this portfolio are composed for brass band and percussion, selected as they show artistic and technical advancements when compared with extant literature and methodology. The accompanying commentary discusses the patronage problems that the British brass band appears to be currently experiencing, deliberating whether its insular persona has been created by the movement's proclivity for contesting and upholding heritage. The portfolio explores a fresh approach towards compositional practice for the medium, with a view to re-establish a connection with contemporary audiences. It reconsiders this appeal by questioning the fundamental language band music employs, exploring cross-disciplinary collaboration amongst other new approaches, in pursuit of elevating interest.

### **Portfolio Recordings**

1. Realms of Asgard - Live Recording

Jaren Hornmusikkforening: Grieghallen, Bergen, Norway. 2015

2. Concerto for Soprano Cornet – 'Over the Horizon'

Steve Stewart, Cory Band and Philip Harper. Doyen: DOY CD376, tracks 6-8

3. Visions – 'The Nationals 2015'

Usk Brass Band and Jeff Jones. Doyen: DOY356, track 2

4. Dreamtime – 'Cory in Concert: Volume IV'

Cory Band and Philip Harper. Doyen: DOY328, track 8

5. Mists on the River Wear – 'Black Dyke Gold: Volume I'

Joseph Cook, Black Dyke Band and Dr. Nicholas J. Childs. Doyen: DOY289, track 8

6. Starburst – 'Starburst'

Bolton (Hoover) and Craig A. Mann. KMJ Recordings, track 1

# Realms of Asgard

## Dan Price

A Symphonic Poem for Brass and Percussion

## FULL SCORE



#### **SCORE NOTES**

**Realms of Asgard** is a symphonic poem for brass and percussion which comprises of seven musical scenes, each reflecting my own impressions of the individual worlds found in the Yggdrasill legend.

In Norse mythology, *Yggdrasill* (Ig-dru-cell) is an immense Ash tree that connects the nine home-worlds of the Norse cosmos. Asgard sits at its pinnacle where the High Gods look down and oversee the activities in the other worlds.

#### The Nine Worlds

#### Hel

Ruled by a female also known as *Hel*, it is a realm for the damned with a dark and suffocating atmosphere. A place of eternal unrest.

#### Muspelheim - The Realm of Fire

Ruled by *Surtr*, *Muspelheim* is the land of the *Fire Giants*.

The Sun and Stars originated from this world.

#### Niðavellir - A Dark Dwelling

Niðavellir is the home of the Dwarves or Dökkálfar (Dark Elves). They dwell in the earth, warmed by the fires of Muspelheim and Hel, gluttonously hoarding gold.

#### Vanaheimr - Home of the Vanir

The *Vanir* are a group of Gods who are associated with fertility and wisdom. They also have the ability to look into the future.

#### Jötunheimr - Home of the Giants

*Jötunheimr* is the home of the giants who were banished from living within the Gods worlds. They are volatile and like to be a menace both to humans and the Gods.

#### Niflheim - Mist Home

Niflheim is a realm of ice and cold. The world is dominated by the nine frozen rivers and is populated by Frost Giants and Niflungar (Children of the Mist), spirits who like to hoard treasure.

#### Álfheimr – Elf Home

This is the home of the *Light Elves* and it is located within heaven. The *Light Elves* are described as being "lighter than the sun itself".

#### Midgard - Middle Enclosure (Earth)

*Midgard* is the realm of humans and is located in the centre of *Yggdrasill*. The realm is said to have been created from the flesh and blood of *Ymir*, the ancestor of all giants and is connected directly to the Gods in *Asgard* by *Bifröst*, a burning rainbow bridge.

#### Asgard - Home of Æsir

This is the home Æsir tribe of Gods. It is ruled by Odin and his wife Frigg from his seat in the enormous and majestic *Hall of the Slain; Valhalla*.

There is no specific order in which these worlds appear in the branches of *Yggdrasill* other than Hel always appears in the trees roots and Asgard at its peak.

Starting in the earth, amongst the roots of this colossal tree and gradually working its way around the trunk into the clouds and lofty home of the Gods; there should be a clearly defined journey from the opening bar to the final cadence. The work evolves organically through each impression and builds from darkness into light. As with most of my music, I attempt to conjure images and pictures with the sounds and musical techniques I employ within this score and urge you to seek these out in performance. The mysteriousness of hell, the crackle and spits of fire, the greediness and devilry of the dwarves, the jocular amble of the giants, the ethereal sparseness and great wisdom of the elves or the sound of Odin's steed *Sleipnir*, bearing his master back to Valhalla are all hidden within the music.

The work is based on the following twelve note row, from which all the musical material found in the score is developed.



The row appears in full Prime, Retrograde, Inversion and in Inverted Retrograde statements at different points through-out the work but also appears segmented in several motifs and augmented with additional pitches to disguise the row.

Dan Price September 2014

Approximate duration: 00:16:30

# Realms of Asgard

DAN PRICE

**Lento misterioso** ( = 58) *I: Hel & Muspelheim* 











Realms of Asgard - YM020BB





Realms of Asgard - YM020BB









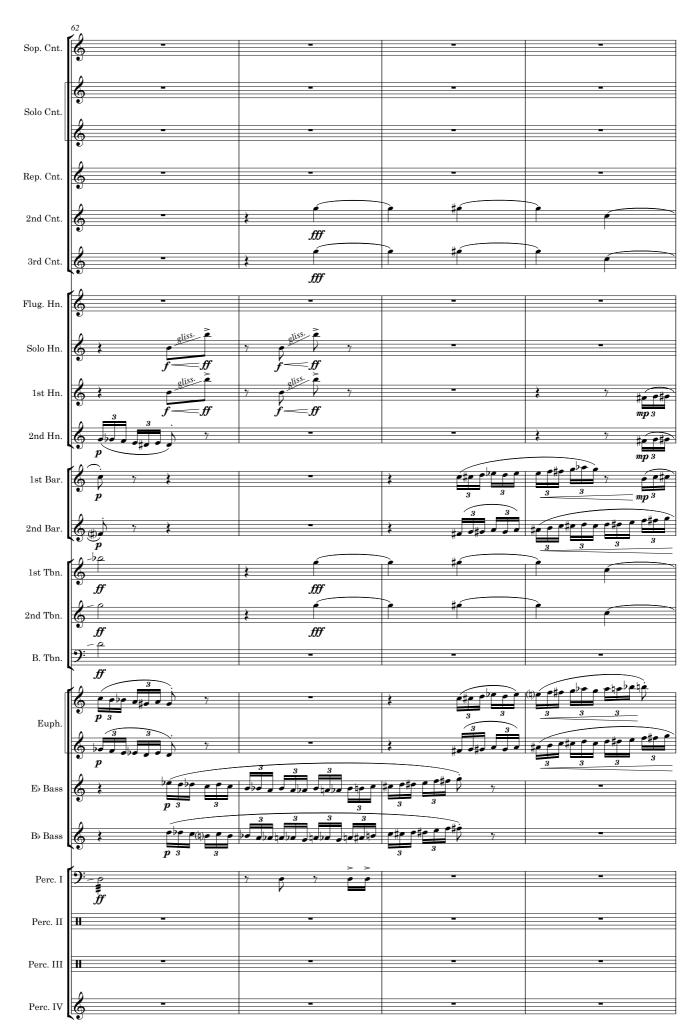


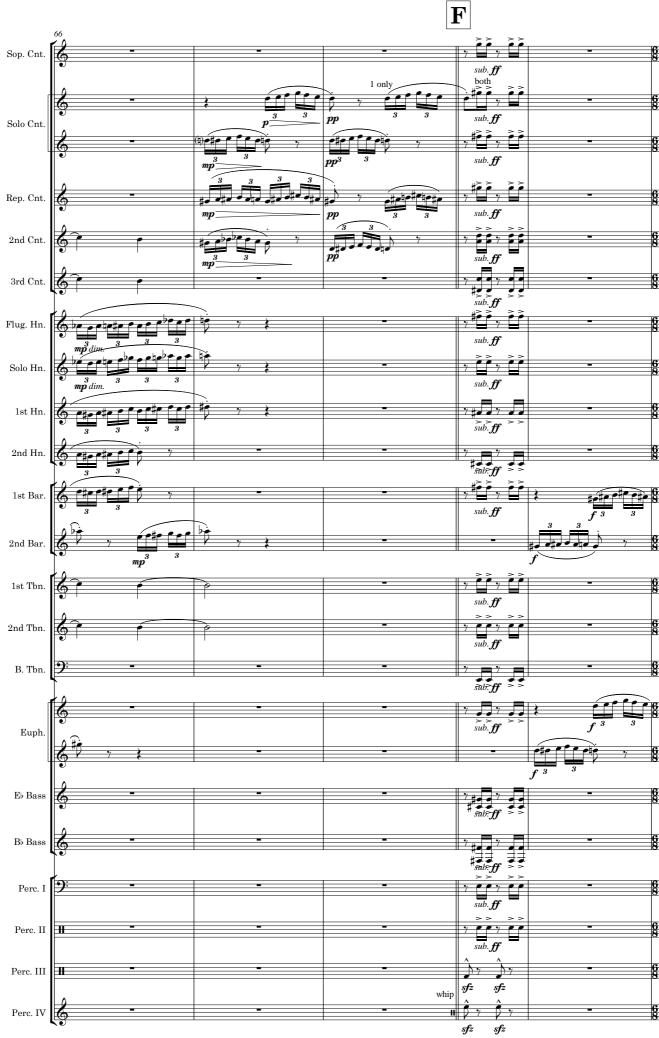






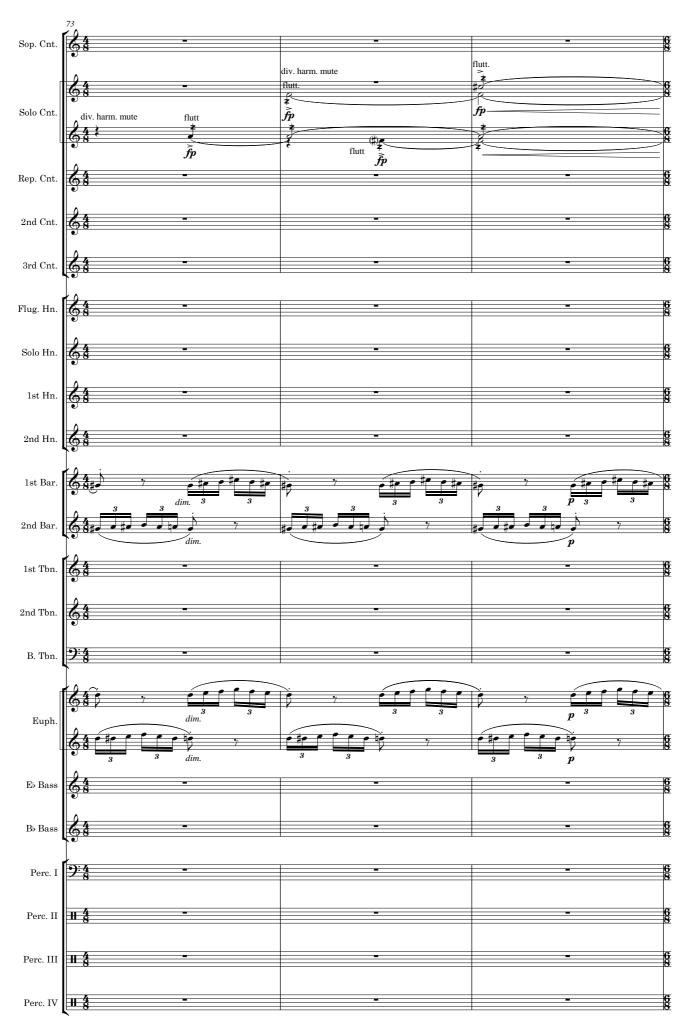








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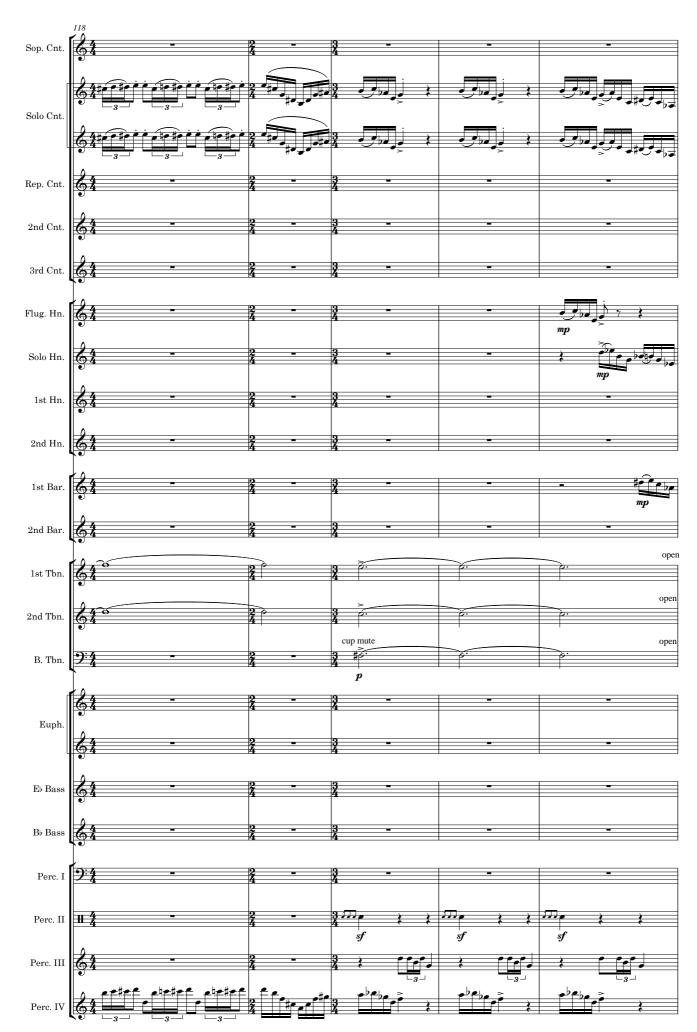














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Realms of Asgard - YM020BB









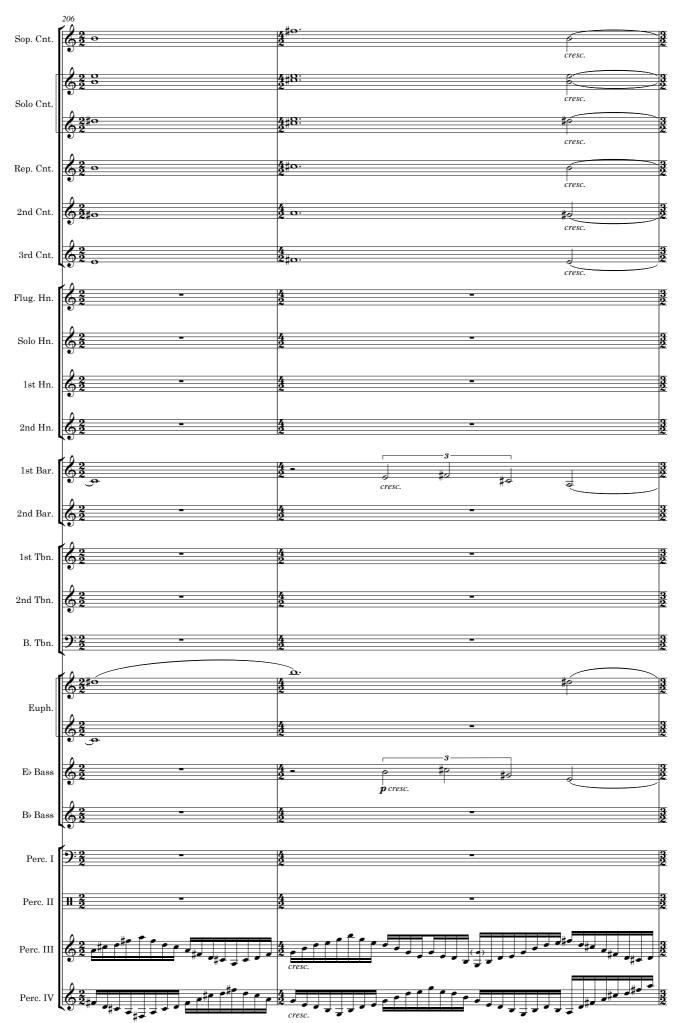
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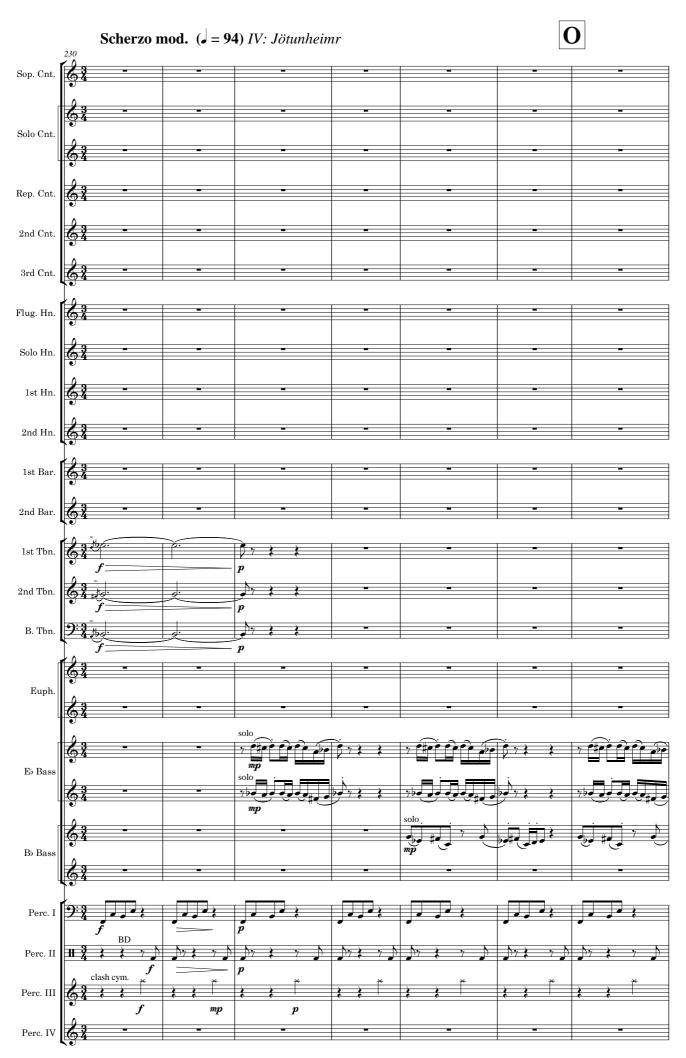




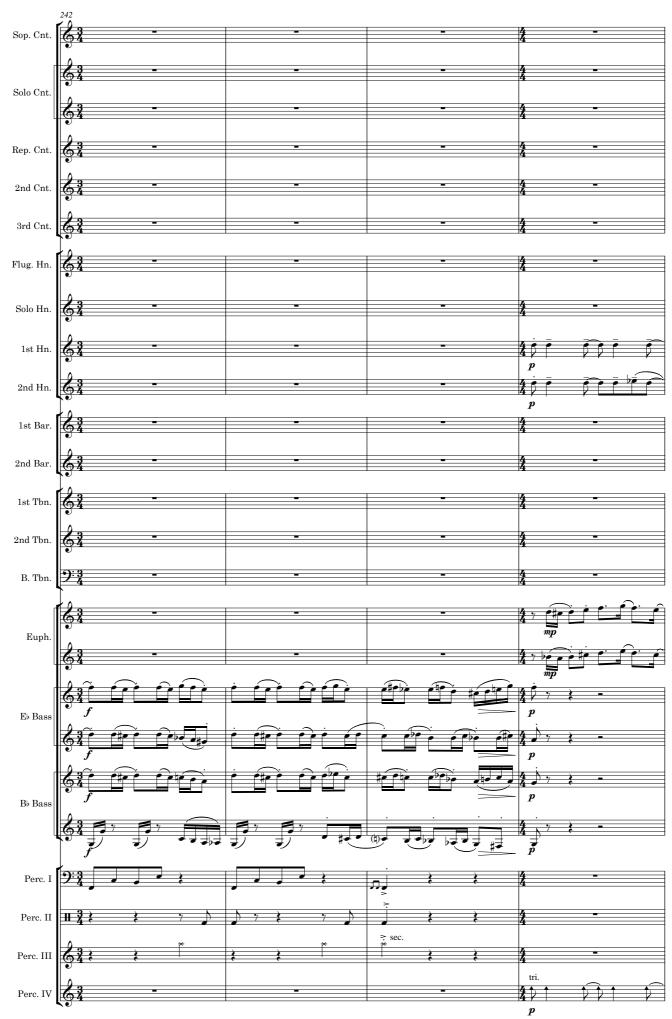


















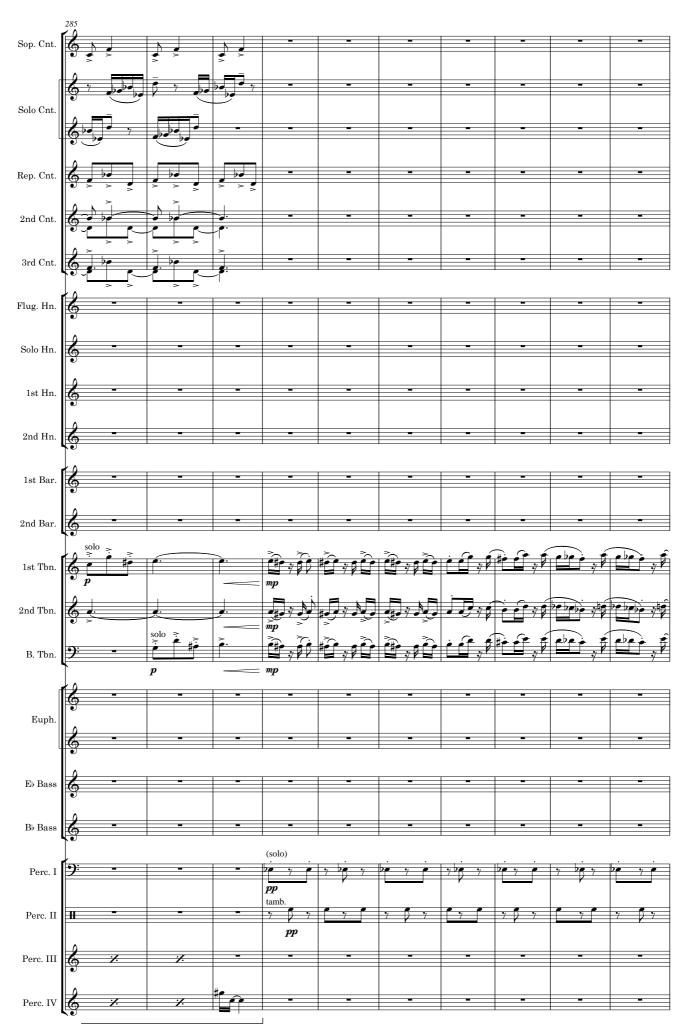


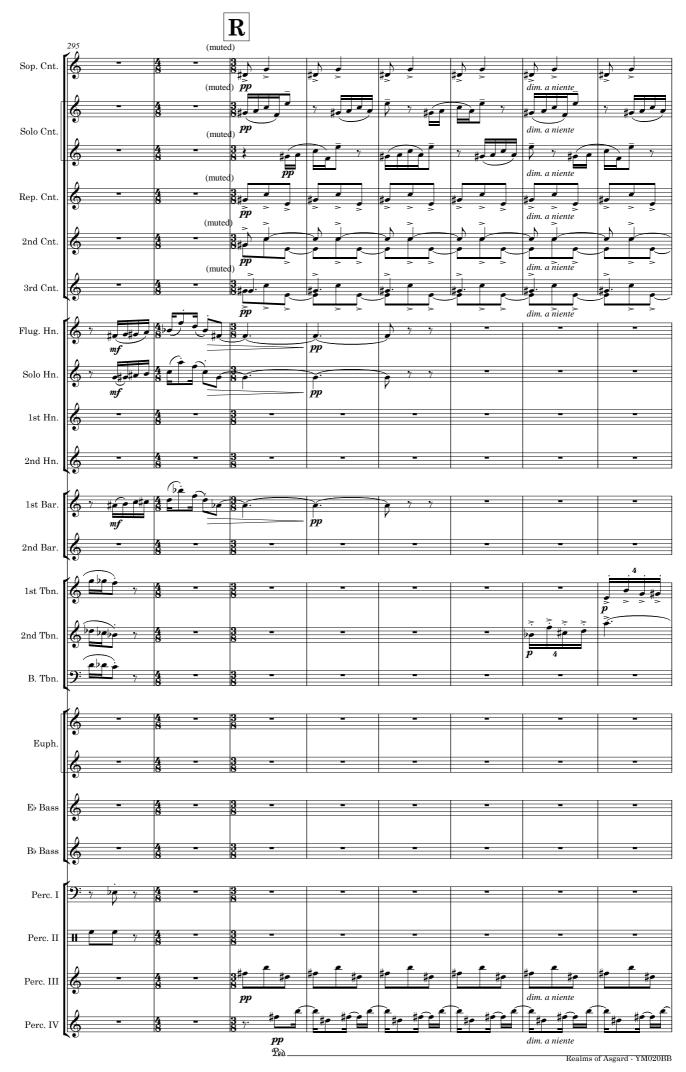


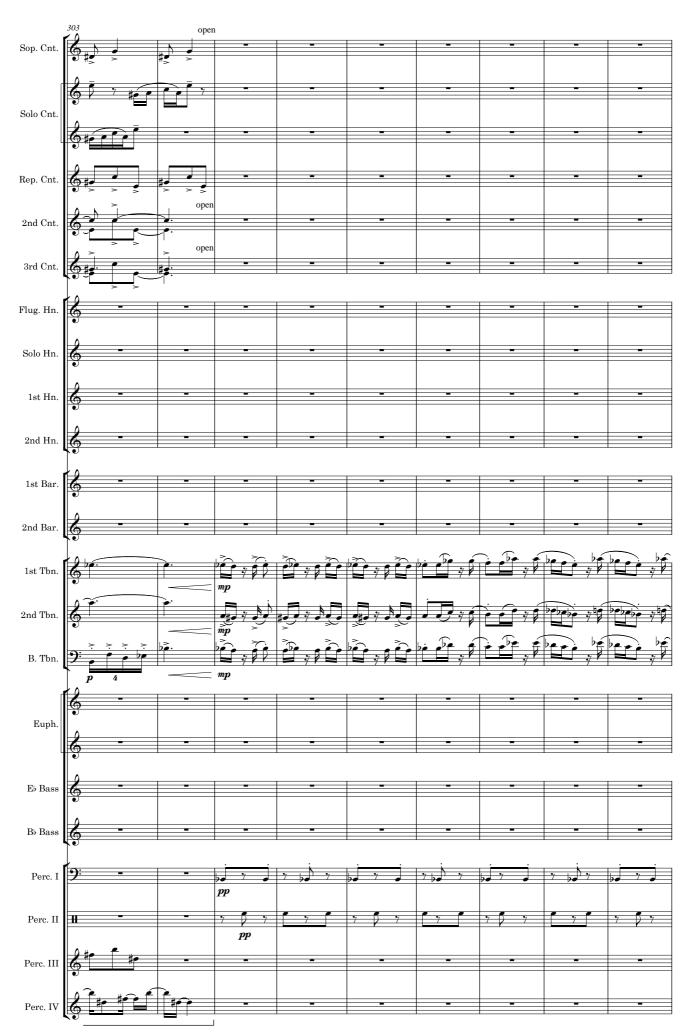














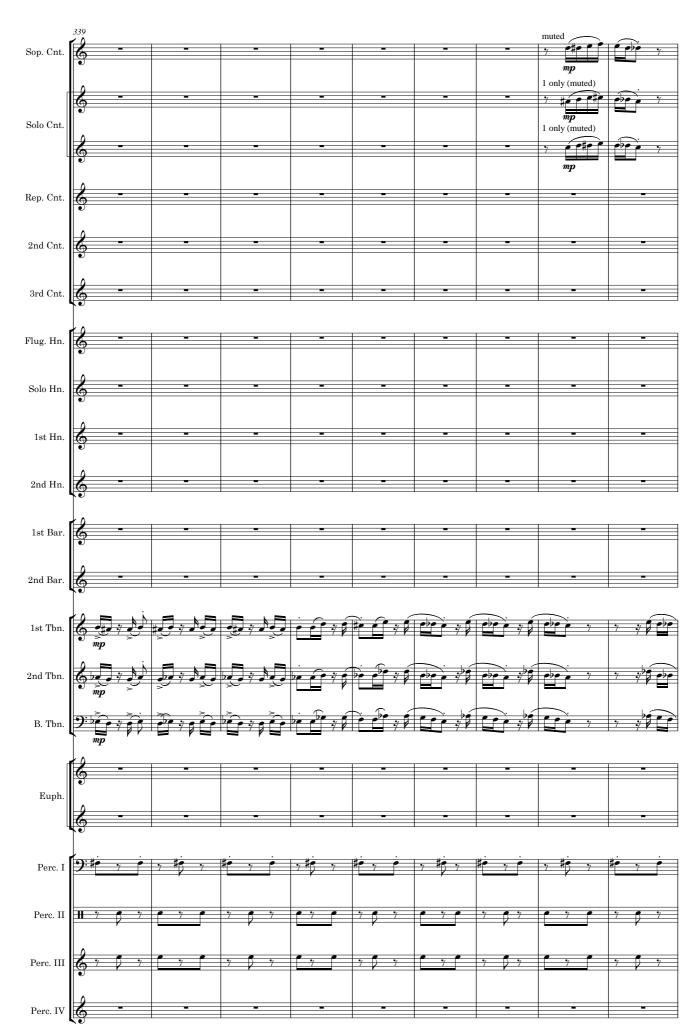
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Realms of Asgard - YM020BB









## molto rall.





poco rit.

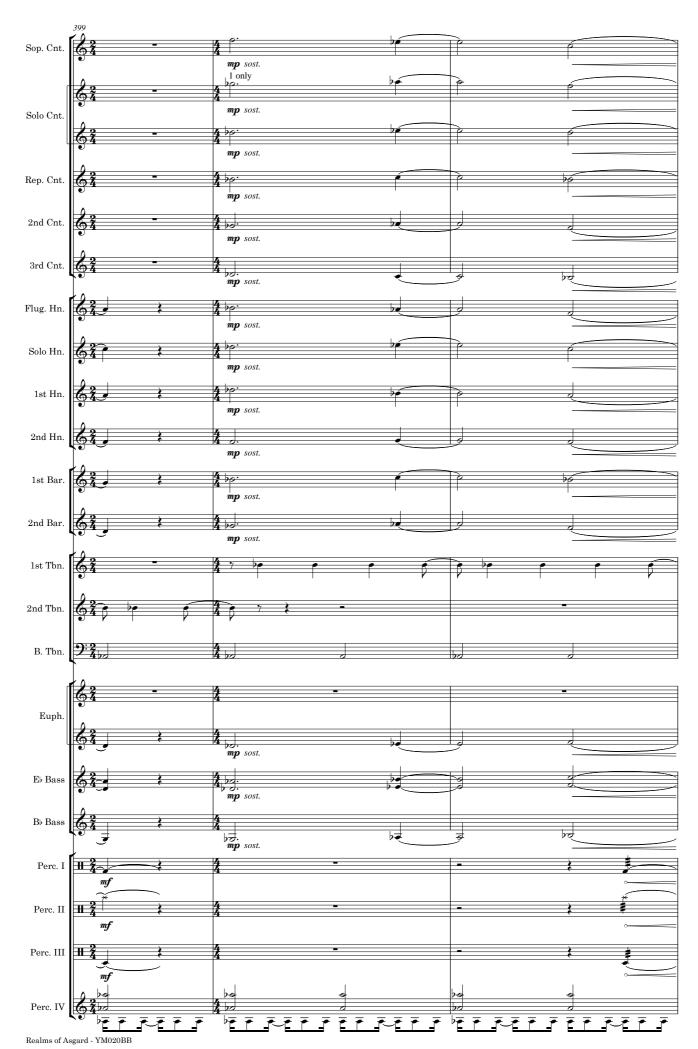














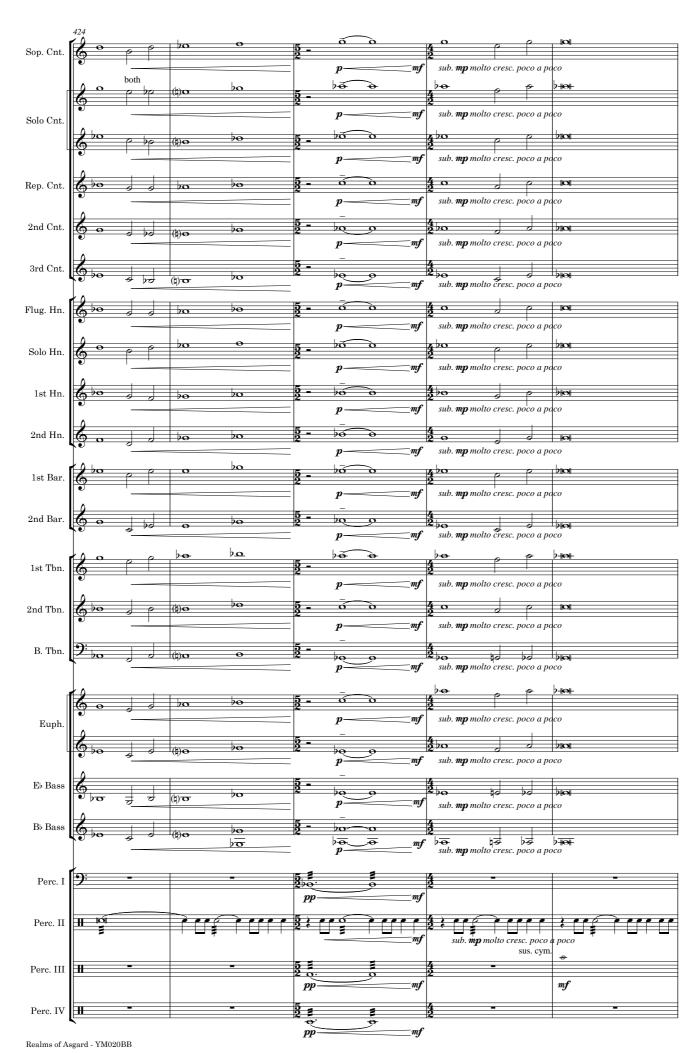








































## Concerto for Soprano Cornet

## I Intrada

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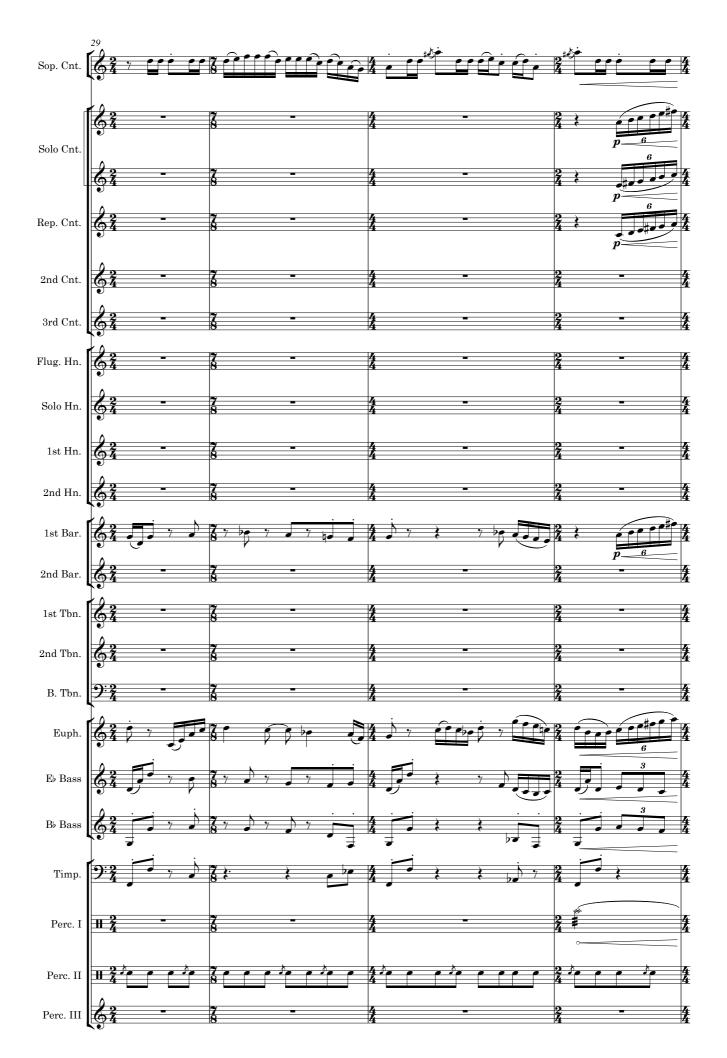














## poco rall.











































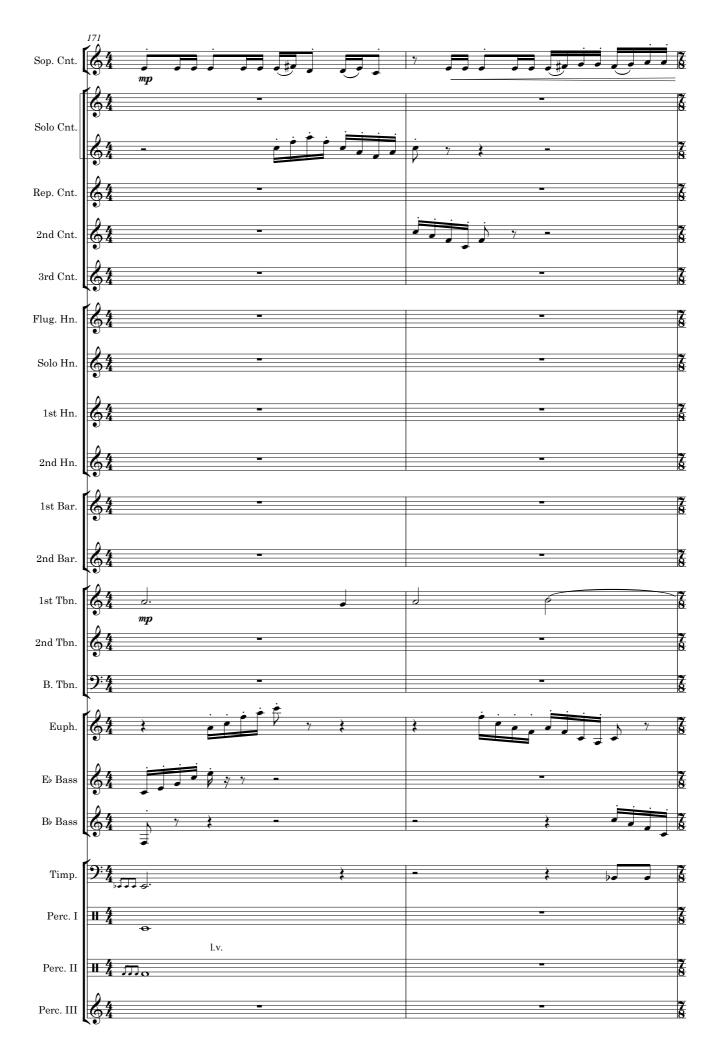


































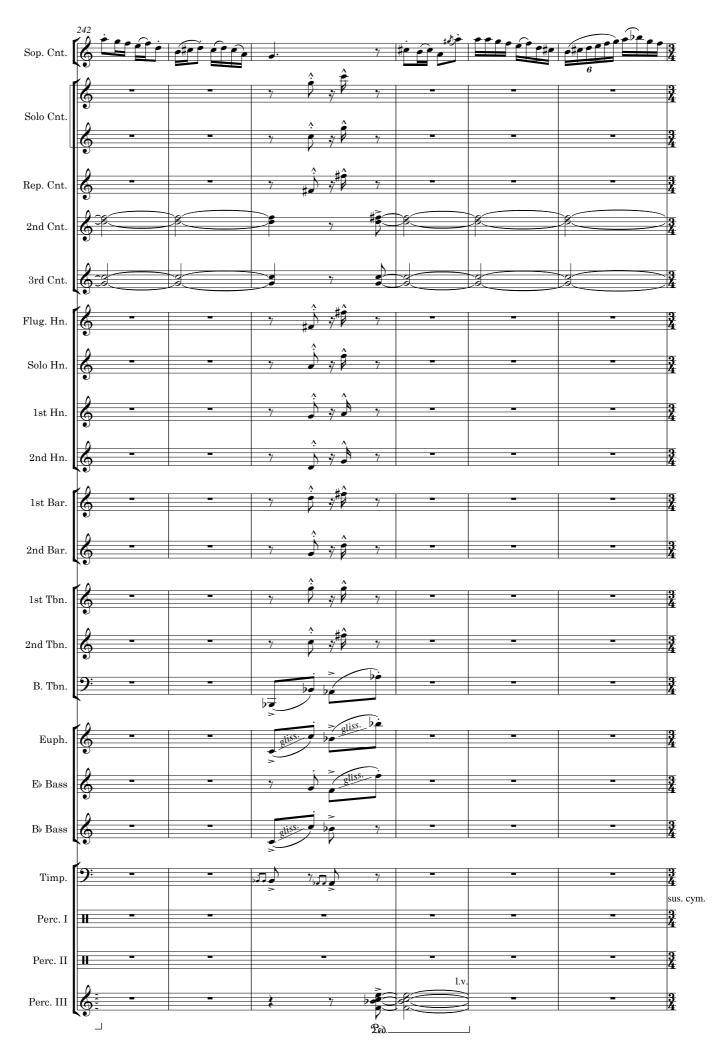


















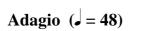


rall.









## II Poem

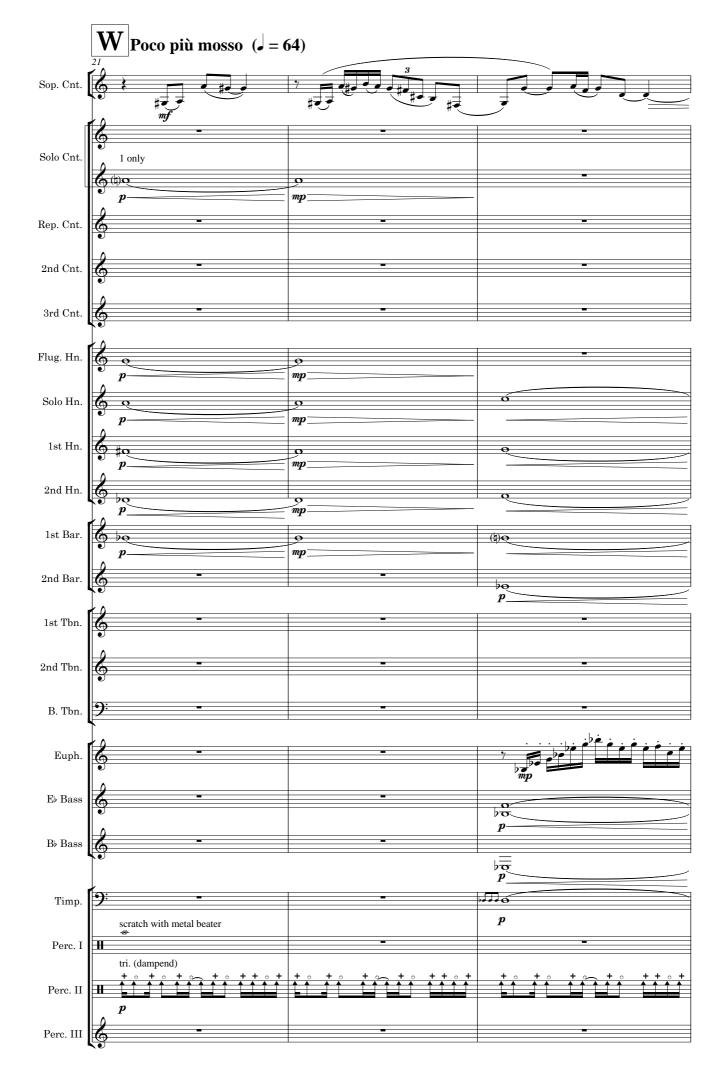






































accel.













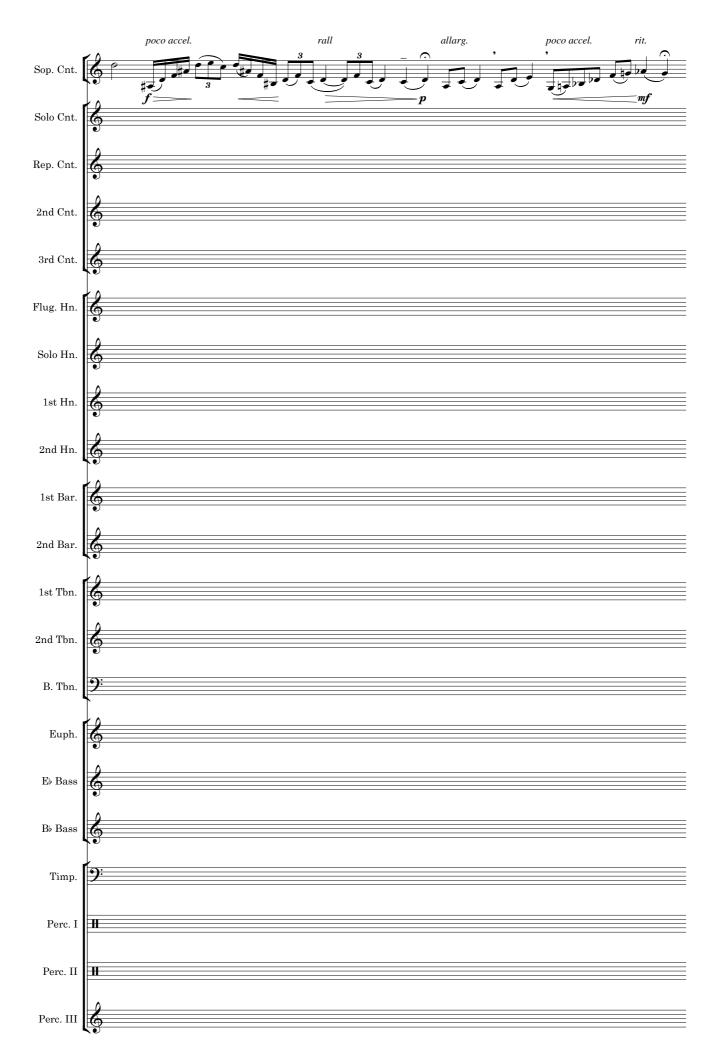












## III Scherzo





























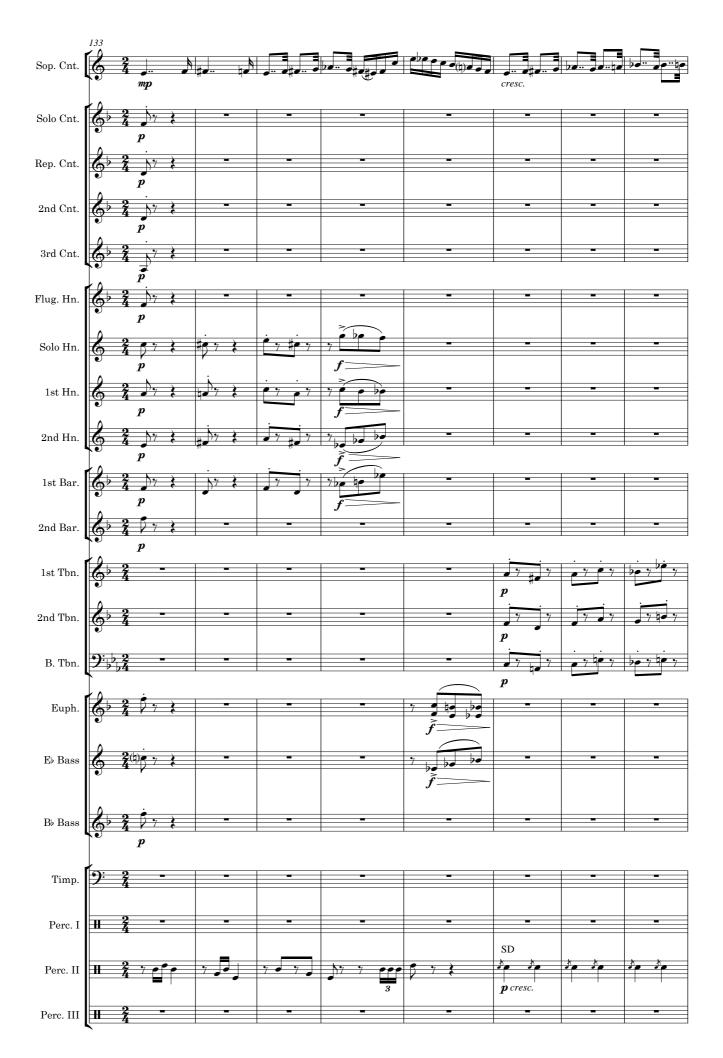












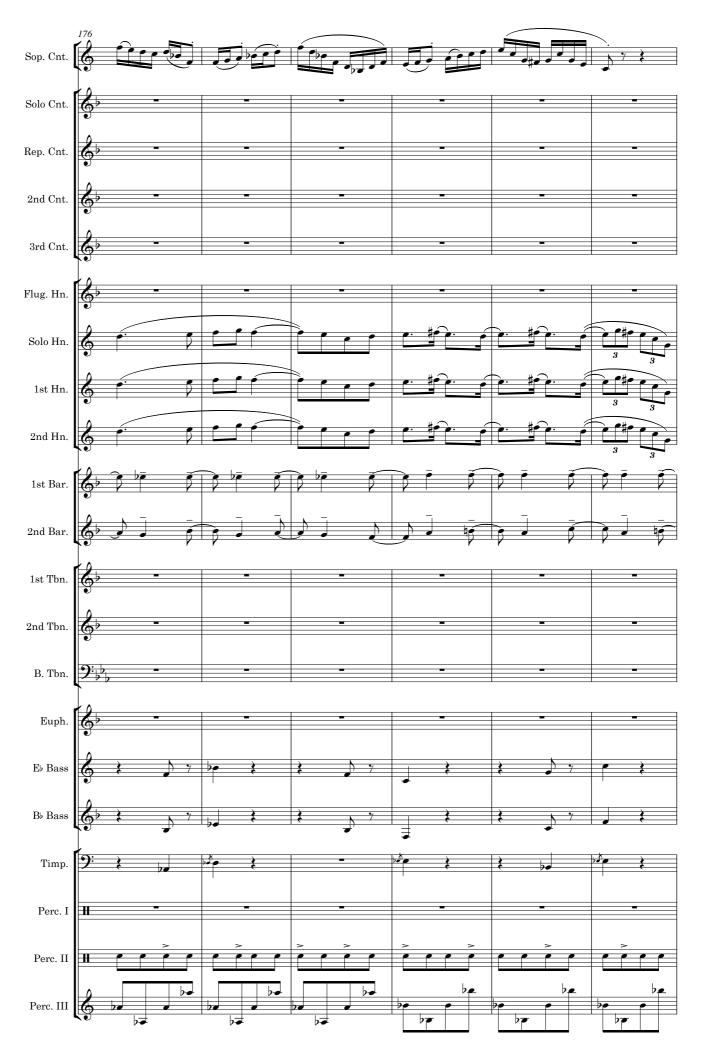
















































**Quality Music For** 

**Brass Band** 

**Visions** 

**Dan Price** 

*Visions* was commissioned by the Briton Ferry Silver Band as part of its centenary year celebrations in 2010. The premier was given by the band during its centenary concert at St David's Church, Neath on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2010 in the presence of the composer, and was conducted by Dr. Christian Jenkins.

Duration: c.10'30"

# **Programme Notes**

Visions paints a historical musical portrait of the small town of Briton Ferry (Llansawel), located at the mouth of the River Neath in south Wales. Once a rural area, it was heavily developed during the industrial revolution, serving as an important centre for the production of steel and tin plate.

Although a continuous piece of music, the work is divided into four sections:

#### **Briton Ferry**

The work opens with a three note 'motif' on solo baritone which becomes the basis material for the majority of the work. After a tentative and reflective opening, the Briton Ferry theme emerges on solo euphonium. This is lush, romantic almost melancholic music depicting a view of Briton Ferry from the mountain side. The mixture of natural 'rugged' beauty in juxtapose with heavy industrialism, all nestled around the snake-like River Neath.

At letter D, the second theme is introduced on flugel horn which is playfully moved around the other solo voices in the band. This is a musical representation of the river which runs through the heart of the town. Its accompaniment swells and falls like the tide as it makes its way slowly out towards Swansea Bay and into the sea.

#### **Brunel's Vision**

Figure F sees a change in mood and direction. A musical change to represent the momentous historical change brought about by engineers Isambard Kingdom Brunel and his father Sir Marc Brunel. The building of the Briton Ferry floating Docks in the 1850's by Marc Brunel and the development of the railway infrastructure by his son enabled Briton Ferry to become a key part of industrial production for iron, steel and tinplate right through until the 1970s.

This industrialism should be brought through the music via percussive rhythmic playing and a depth of sound. Throughout this section, the band should endeavour to evoke images of hammers on metal and mechanical sounds. Brunel's theme derives from the opening motif and is introduced by the baritones and euphoniums. The river shows its importance to the development of the town again at letter H (tenor horns) while the flugel horn tries to hold on to rural roots. Four bars before J there is a glimpse of the South Wales Mineral Railway.

#### Giant's Grave

After the close of World War II, Briton Ferry Docks were used for the breaking up of de-commissioned warships. The area became known, and is still known as 'Giant's Grave.

There is a return to the opening polychordal writing and sparseness of sound. The music has an intentional sense of abandonment that signifies the area as it is today: the docks are no longer there in their full splendour and only the echoes and memories of what has passed are left to mix with the sounds of wildlife. Six bars after figure O the music evokes the memories of the warships slowly passing up the river on their journey to their final destination. The river theme again is quoted at letter Q (this time on trombones) which then flows into a reprise of the Briton Ferry theme at figure R and a reminder of the rural roots of this area.

### Hen Gastell

Prior to the industrial age, Briton Ferry always had an important role as a river crossing point. It was the first river crossing along the Roman road that followed the coastline through south Wales. While the river crossing was

usually made by ferry boat, it is also possible on foot via a ford close to the ferry route using stepping stones at extreme low tide. With this crossing being geographically important, it was thought that it would have been fortified at some point in history and in the 1970s a small steep sided hill on the west of the river near Briton Ferry was identified as being the possible location of Hen Gastell (Old Castle) built by Morgan ap Caradog ab lestyn, the Welsh Lord of Afan in the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. Although the top of the hill had been removed by quarrying in the 1930s and 40s, sufficient evidence was found to confirm the 12<sup>th</sup> Century site and a previous settlement in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century.

The music for this final section is full of military fanfare and gusto and has a distinctly medieval flare about it in an attempt to portray some kind of fortification in the town, (the bass section solo giving a foreboding view of the castle perched high on the hill). As the River Neath has always been present through historical and geographical development of Briton Ferry, so too has it become important in the development of the music and the 'river theme' (rather than it swelling accompaniment motif as it has appearing in sections two and three) now appears at figure W as a chorale, interlocking all four sections together. As the movement ends, the River is heard passing the Old Castle and finally out into Swansea Bay.

## **About the Composer**

Born in the Vale of Evesham, Worcestershire, Dan showed an interest in music from an early age. Starting on trombone, he soon moved onto tuba which became his main instrument. He joined Perscoran Brass, a local youth band, and after gaining a few years' experience he joined Alcester Victoria Silver Band and for a short period, the City of Coventry Band.

At high school Dan also learned double bass and clarinet, and developed a keen interest in composition and arranging.

After leaving school Dan embarked on a career as a hotelier, but continued to take his music seriously. In addition to playing with the many town bands in his area he also started his own 1920s and 30s dance band, using his own transcriptions and arrangements. He developed his jazz musicianship further during the late nineties through playing sousaphone, double bass and bass saxophone in a number of ensembles, including the internationally acclaimed Pasadena Roof Orchestra.

In 2003 Dan decided to return to full time education and began studying for a music degree at the University of Salford, which he completed with first class honours in 2006. In the final year of his degree, Dan gained his first real taste



of recognition as a composer/arranger when he was asked to arrange "That'll Do" from the film Babe for the famous Black Dyke band. He was also runner-up in the Mouthpiece March competition in 2005 with The Traditional and finalist in the Brighouse and Rastrick 125th anniversary composers' competition in 2006 with Celebration Prelude. In 2008 he completed a Masters degree in composition under the direction of Peter Graham, and was awarded a distinction.

Dan's 4th section test piece; An Elgar Portrait, was chosen as the set work for the Swiss National Brass Band Championships in 2007, and the Pontins Championships, at Prestatyn in 2008. In

2009 Dan's latest test-work New World Sketches was used for the 2nd Section Regional Championships.



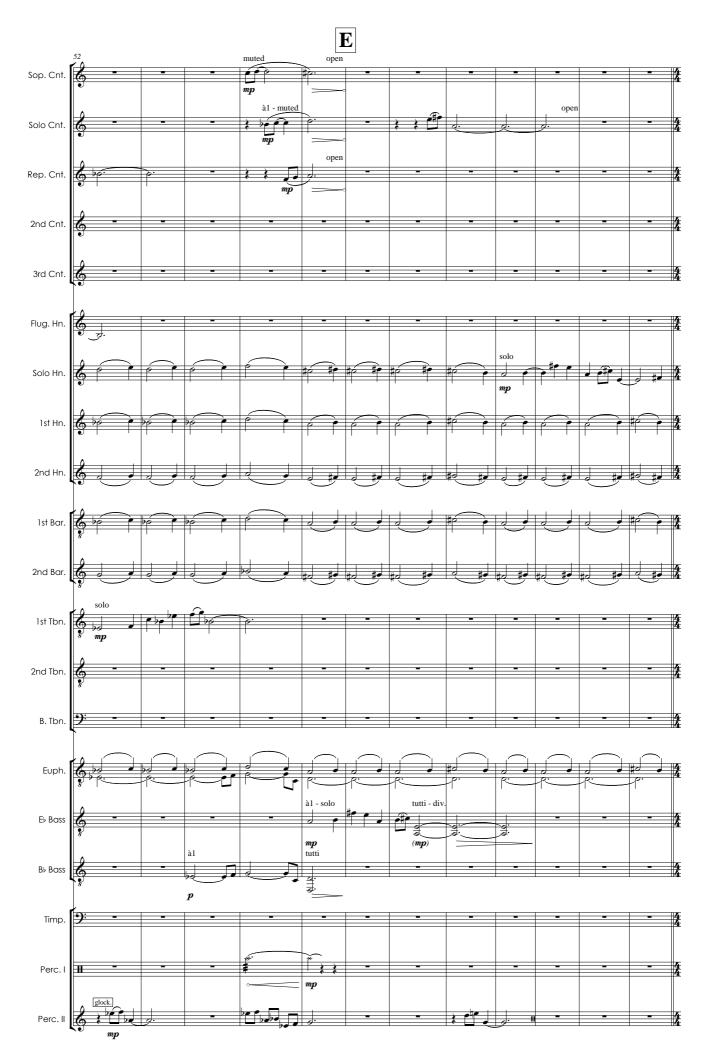


































































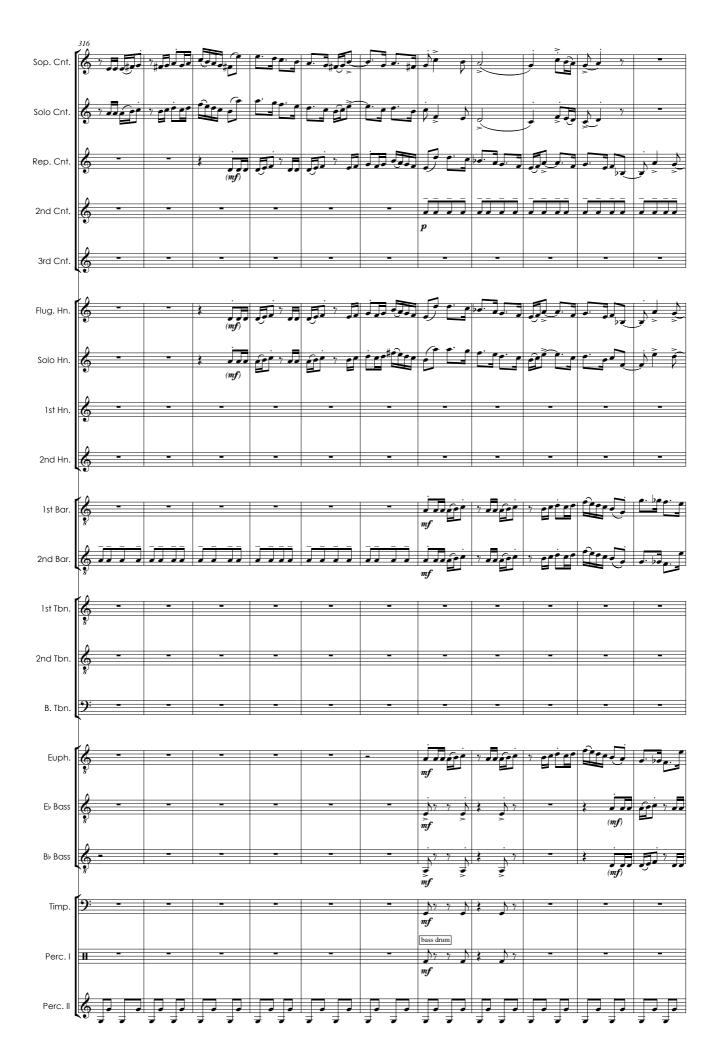






















## **Dreamtime**

Dan Price

## FULL SCORE



## SCORE NOTES

Commissioned by Philip Harper for the Cory Band's 2013 tour to Australia, *Dreamtime* draws inspiration from Australian Aboriginal mythology.

The Dreamtime is a sacred era in which the Aborigines believe ancestral totemic (symbolic) spirits created the world. It was believed that before plants, animals and humans came into being their souls already existed and that they knew that they would become physical but they didn't know when or what they would become. Some souls became the animals and vegetation that enlivened the landscape, whilst others became the rivers, seas, hills, plains and valleys that shape the world's surface. One soul became human, acting as the guardian to the natural world.

The music I have composed conveys my interpretation of the Dreamtime concept. The work begins with the traditional sound of the didgeridoo, created by the use of multi-phonics in the euphoniums and tubas, accompanying a narrator who gives a brief outline of the Aboriginal belief. Traditional Aboriginal music is primarily percussive and so the work relies heavily on percussive effects and complexity. Above the percussive backdrop, you will hear a simple chorale (or hymn) beginning in the tubas and euphoniums which forms the basis of the work. I have chosen this musical form as I feel it this is the most appropriate to reflect the deep rooted spiritual beliefs of Dreamtime.

As the music progresses I reintroduce the narrator who will relay the Dreamtime story; "The Waking of the Sun".

Dan Price 2013

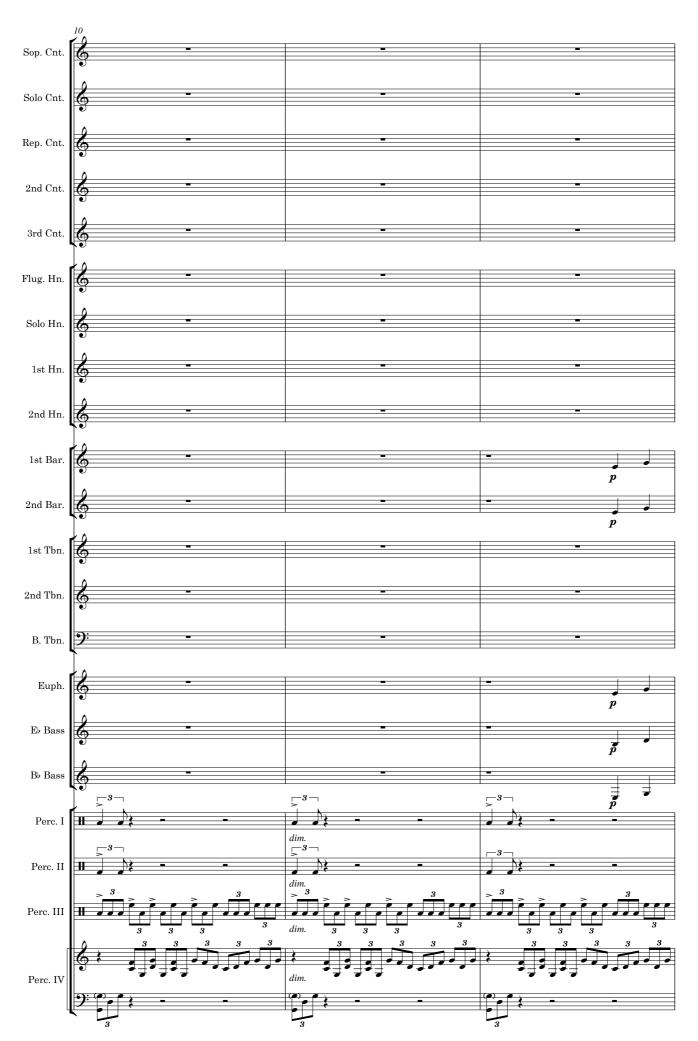
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## Dreamtime

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### Solo Eb Bass and Brass Band

## Mists On The River Wear

#### Dan Price

Mists On The River Wear is a 'song and dance' for solo tuba. It was commissioned in 2010 by the Black Dyke Band's solo Eb Bass player and international tuba star Joseph Cook.

#### The Song

The work opens with unaccompanied tuba announcing a three note motif which is the basis for the entire work. The accompaniment enters in broken cluster chords which emulate the mist gliding on the river at early morning. The mist clears and the river motif appears on tenor horns whilst the tuba melody flows above.

Geographically, the River Wear passes past Durham Cathedral and Durham Castle as it works its way through the city and to reflect this musically there is an element of a renaissance dance in the centre of this movement in an attempt to capture the historic and physically dominating presence of these buildings within the city.

As the movement draws to a close there is a passage of light scoring which enables the soloist to demonstrate their ability at performing multi-phonics, a haunting sound which is eventually engulfed by the sound of the river broadening out as it travels on its journey.

Cont.

#### The Dance

In contrast to the lyrical first movement, this second movement showcases the versatility of the instrument and the agility of the soloist in a lively dance.

The dance begins in compound time and echoes the style of an English jig which represents the energetic life you find in the university city of Durham. There is a deliberate quote written into the theme of the jig which comes from the 1st Movement of Ralph Vaughan-Williams' Concerto for Bass Tuba, which Joe and I share a fondness towards.

A brief return to the riverside opening material of the piece quickly leads us into a pseudo "Jazz" waltz, where cross rhythms between soloist and accompaniment gives the melody a sense of disjointedness and ambiguity. However, the music soon flows back into a reprise of the jig with a closing cadenza section that brings *Mists On The River Wear* to a close.

Joseph Cook was born in County Durham which is where the inspiration for the works setting comes from. The title is loosely derived from a popular song recorded in 1971 by the English group *Lindisfarne* called *Fog on the Tyne*.

Dan Price 2012

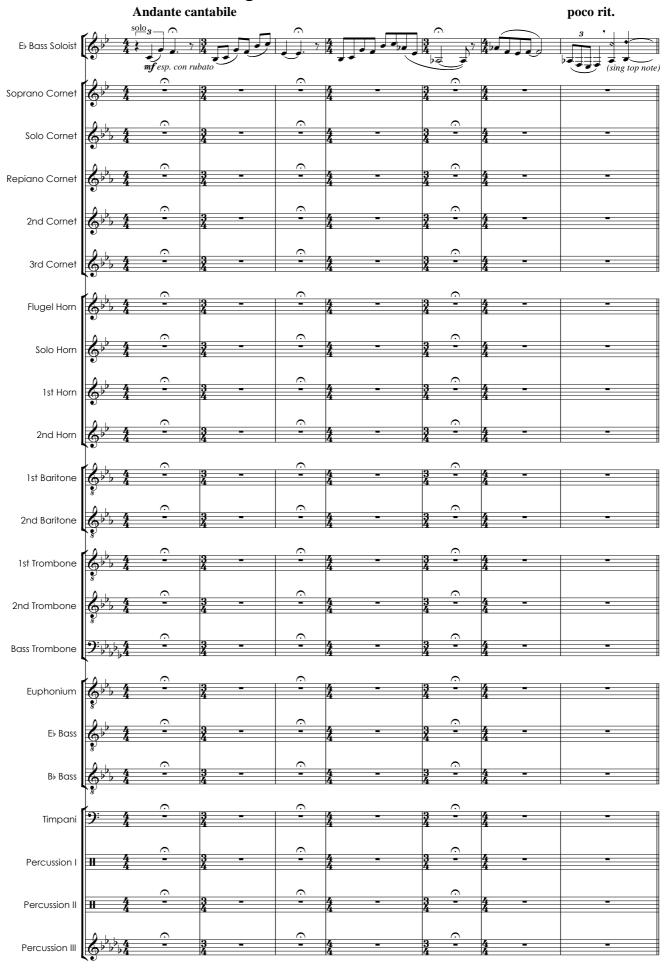
Duration: 06':40"

This work is recorded by Joseph Cook and the Black Dyke Band on Doyen Label: DOY CD289 – Black Dyke Gold Volume I

# Mists On The River Wear

Song and Dance for Tuba

Dan Price







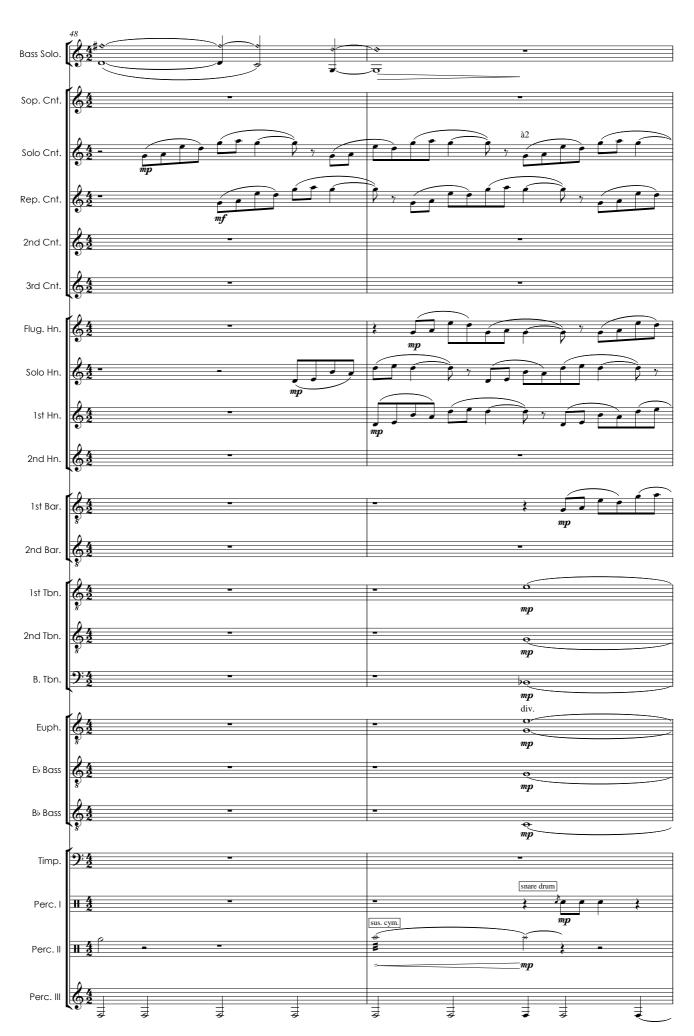


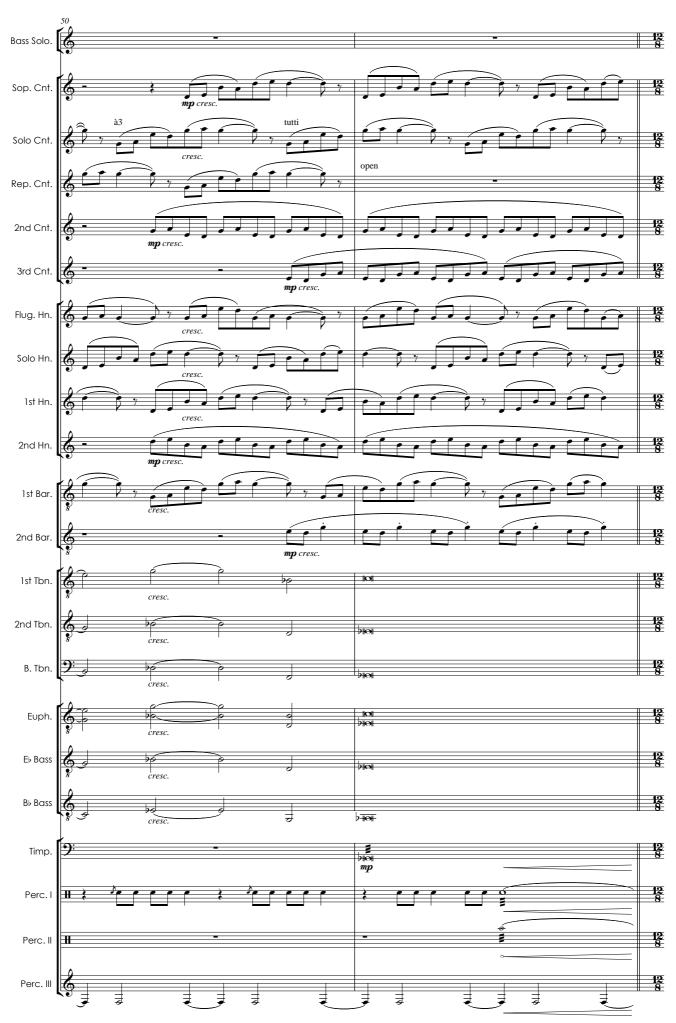


















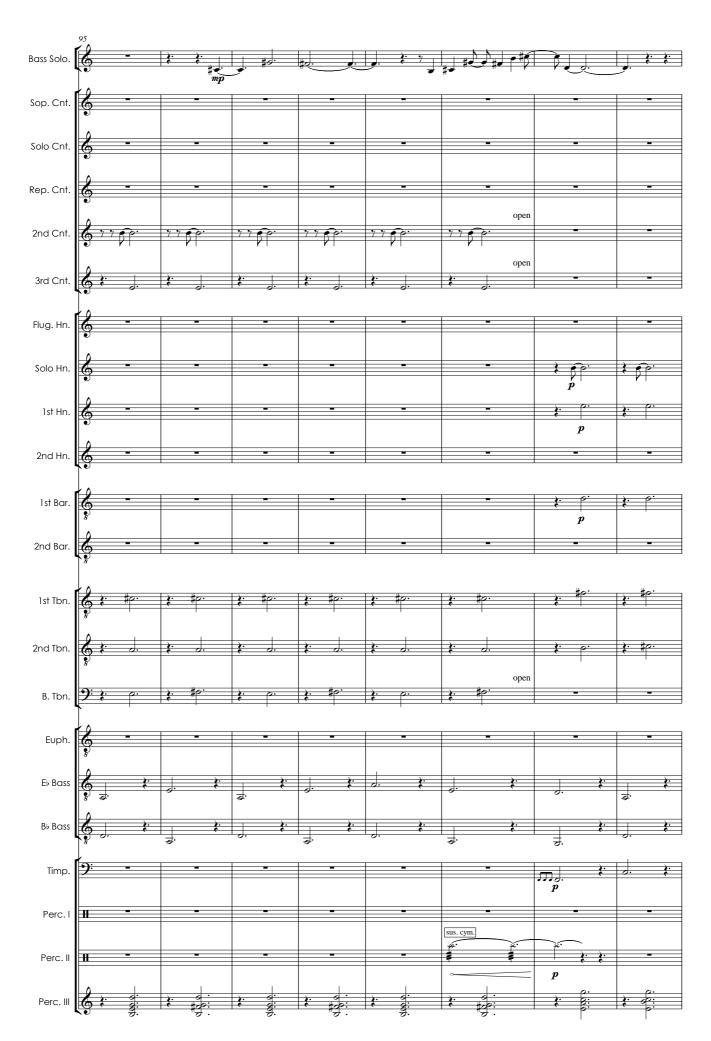


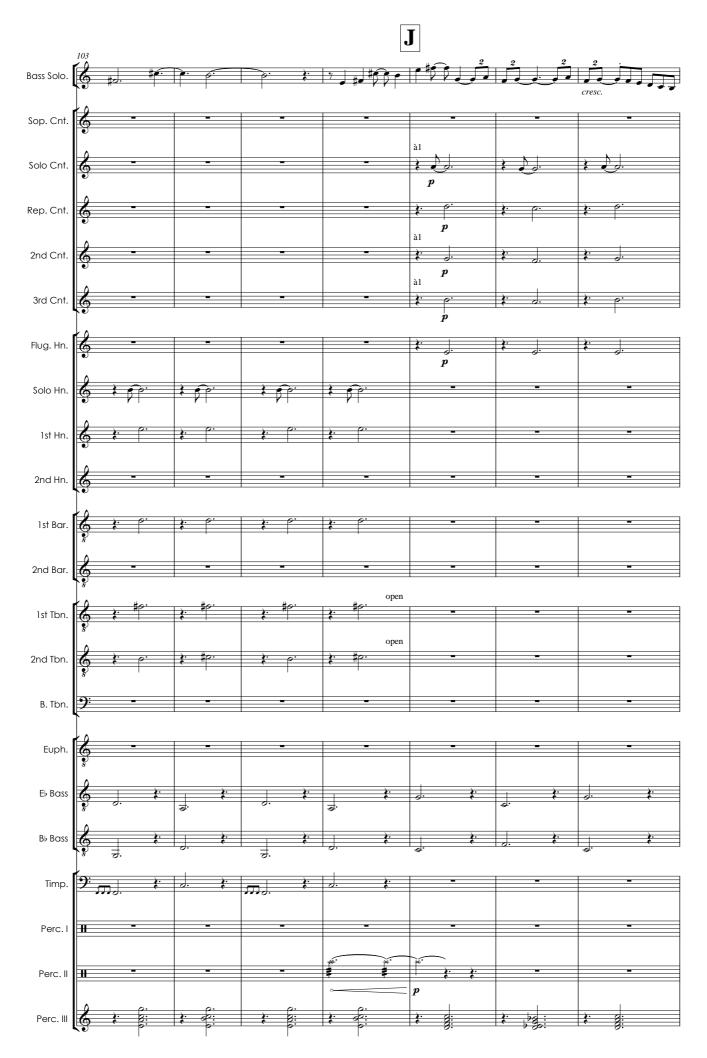
























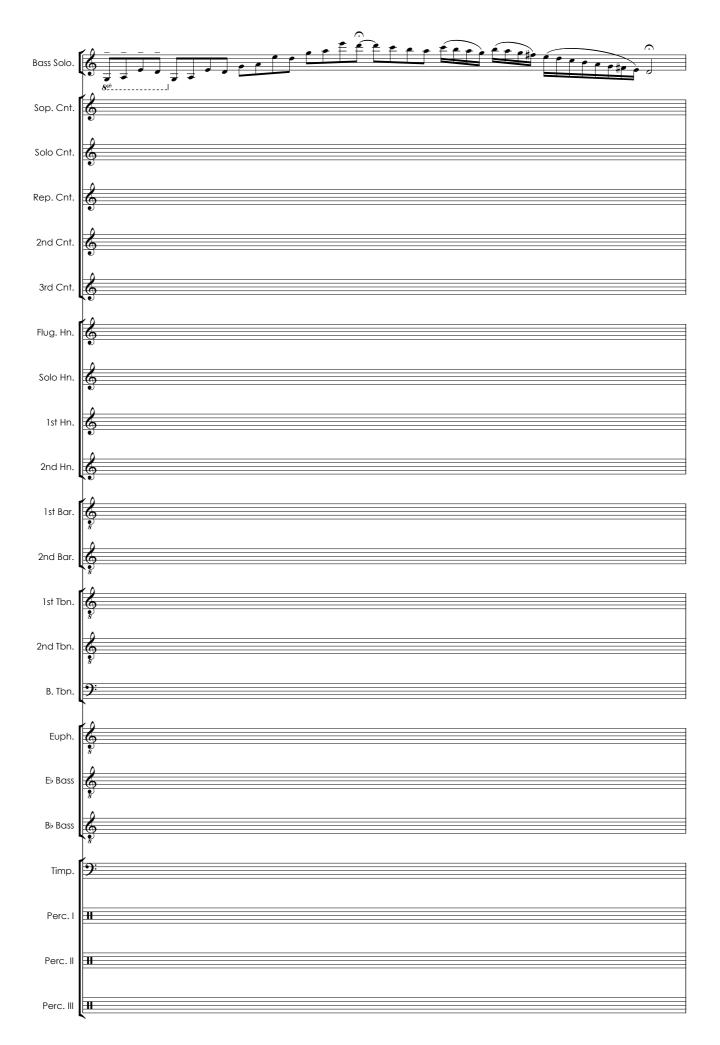


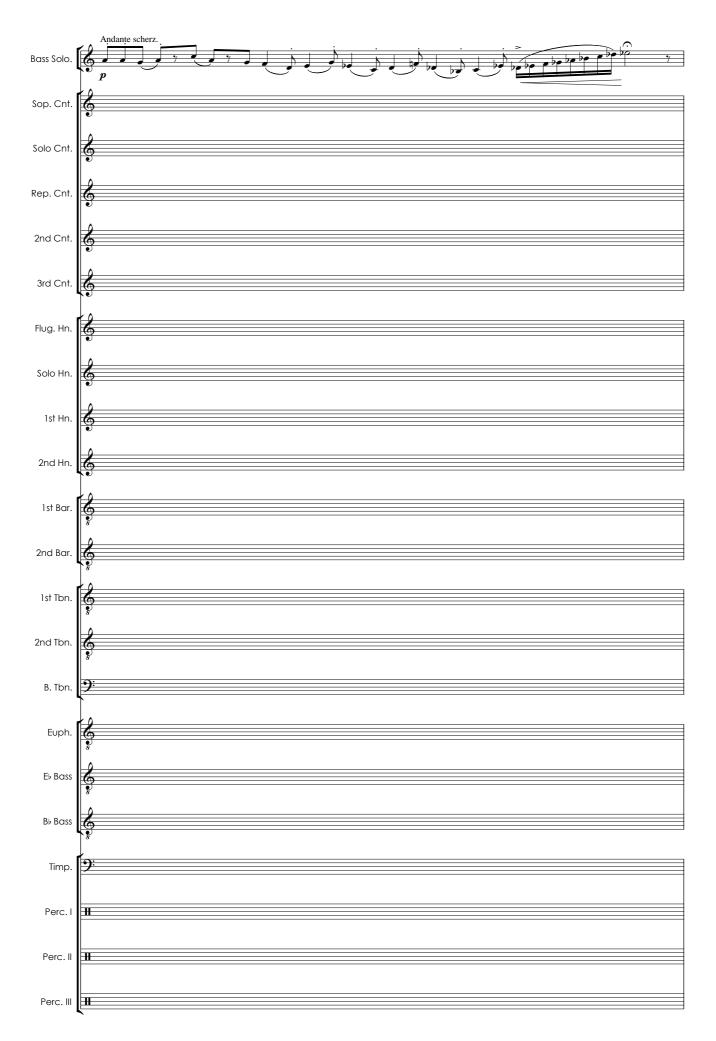
















## Starburst

Dan Price

## FULL SCORE



## SCORE NOTES

In astronomy a Starburst (or Starburst Galaxy) is a term used to describe a region in space which has an abnormally high rate of star formation occurring. A galaxy contains high levels of gas which, over billions of years, stars are created from. The rate of star creation can be accelerated in some galaxies and intense, explosive star formations create iridescent shapes against the back drop of space.

Starburst is an exciting concert opener which takes inspiration from the concept of stars being created.

The work opens explosively with a sforzando strike and a rhythmic ostinato from solo cornets. Broad, heavy chords from the middle and lower end of the ensemble evoke the depth and endlessness of space whilst the dancing ostinato creates ceaseless energy and life.

The main theme at Figure B grasps onto the vitality of the introduction and emphasis should be placed on the accuracy of varied rhythmic elements found within the score, interlocking them with one another.

Figure E offers a moment of tranquillity from solo flugelhorn but the music should gradually increase in intensity and excitement all the way through to the second theme at figure G, which combines the opening ostinato against a glorious chorale, scored in the manner of a carillon. Although the rhythmic intensity must not be lost, don't let the cornet ostinato overpower here, the chorale is the important musical aspect of this section.

Figure H introduces the final theme on solo cornet which offers a contrasting lyrical section to the work. Each of the themes are then reintroduced and it is important that not one melody dominates the mix.

The work closes as it opened, with the rhythmic ostinato and sforzando strike chords bringing the work to an abrupt end.

*Starburst* was composed for and is dedicated to the 'Greater Manchester Youth Brass Band', whom gave the premiere at Bridgewater Hall, Manchester in June 2014

Dan Price 2014

Duration: 00:04:15

## Starburst

DAN PRICE









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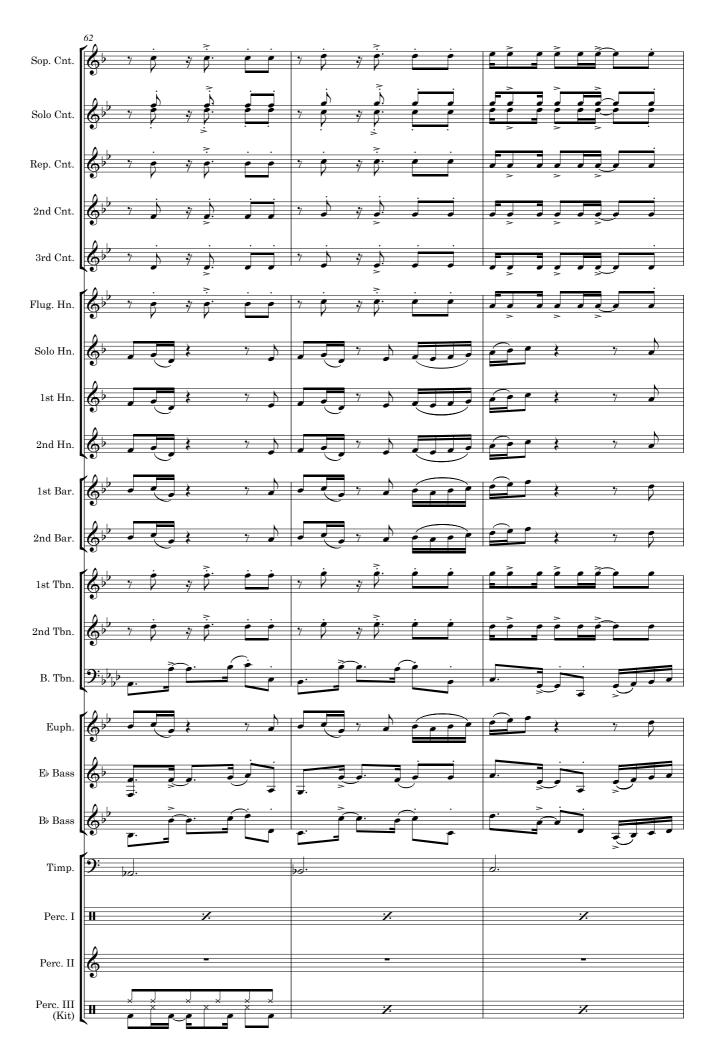


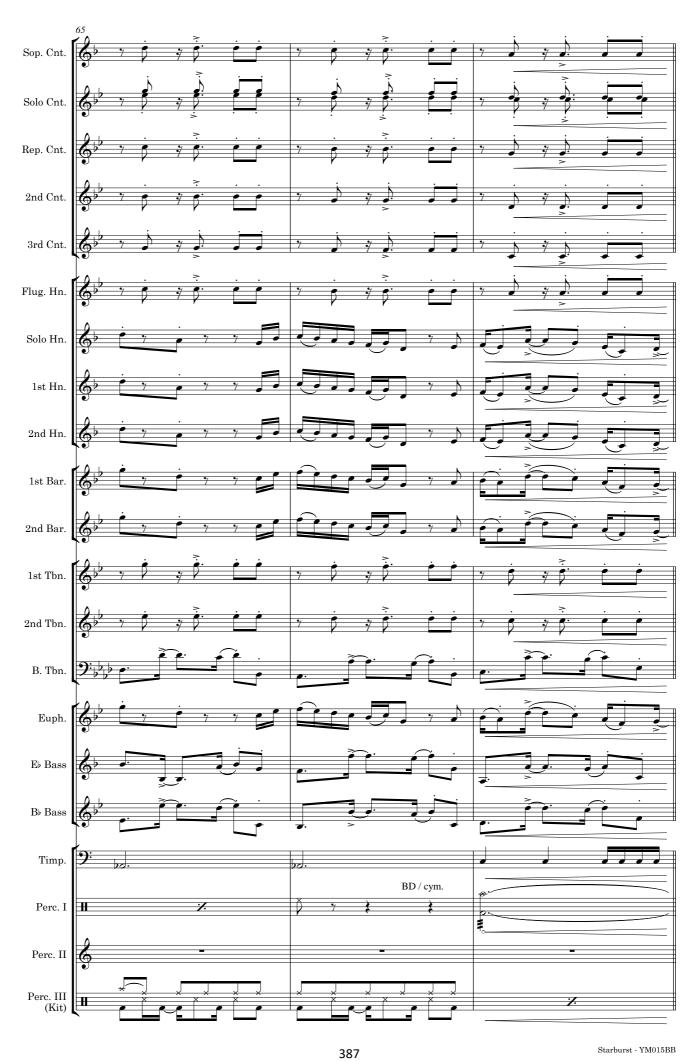


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## PORTFOLIO OF COMPOSITIONS

## Daniel Ian PRICE

Volume II of II

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND MEDIA

Salford Music Research Centre, University of Salford, Salford, United Kingdom

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August 2018

# **Critical Commentary**

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Dan Price - Rochdale, August 2018.

## <u>Abstract</u>

Volume II, consists of a critical commentary to accompany the six original compositions found in volume I.

The six works presented in this portfolio are composed for brass band and percussion, selected as they show artistic and technical advancements when compared with extant literature and methodology. The accompanying commentary discusses the patronage problems that the British brass band appears to be currently experiencing, deliberating whether its insular persona has been created by the movement's proclivity for contesting and upholding heritage. The portfolio explores a fresh approach towards compositional practice for the medium, with a view to re-establish a connection with contemporary audiences. It reconsiders this appeal by questioning the fundamental language band music employs, exploring cross-disciplinary collaboration amongst other new approaches, in pursuit of elevating interest.

## Chapter 1

#### Introduction - Research Context

In 2017 it was announced that the long-standing BBC Radio 2 programme, *Listen to the Band* was to be removed from the broadcasting schedules after seventy two years on-air. This is perhaps the most recent example of brass band activity receding from public interest, with Lewis Carnie, Head of Radio 2 suggesting that the demise of the programme was due to substandard ratings and '…in response to the listening requirements of an evolving audience.' Iwan Fox, editor for 4barsrest.com commented that, 'the killing off of *Listen to the Band* is more a reflection of the insularity of the brass band movement than the attitude to change of the BBC' (Fox. 2018).

Having been involved with brass bands for over thirty years, I have witnessed a dwindling interest that could be attributed to '...persistent institutional insularity' (Hindmarsh. 2009). I have observed the annual pleas for support from the *North West Area Brass Bands Association* go unanswered, resulting in a reduction in performance opportunities and placing the practicality and sustainability of the annual regional contest in jeopardy<sup>1</sup>. In 2004, Dr. Roy Newsome suggested that there was '...a worrying – and growing – shortage of players' (Newsome. 2006), and many bands at grass-roots level lament dedication worries, poor attendance, problems attracting and retaining 'young blood,' all challenges inherent of a demanding twenty-first century culture but arguably, perhaps also a by-product of the movements fixation with tradition over rejuvenation.

Gillian Hibberd's 2006 paper states that '...changing tastes in popular culture have resulted in a decline in the number of bands.' Whilst I would argue against Hibberd's suggestion of decline, indicative by the relative stasis of competing bands at the regional qualifiers of the *National Brass Band Championships* (see Appendix 6.1), an ageing demographic providing a majority of participants and listeners is a prevailing trend in the social context of British brass bands. This is tangible through simple observation, suggesting that it is detrimental to uphold a parochial attitude. Previous peaks and troughs in public interest have occurred throughout band history, however if the movement is to survive within

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Announcement made by Peter Bates, North West Regional Championships Secretary, prior to the First Section contest at the Winter Gardens, Blackpool on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

an ever changing culture and educational system, it perhaps needs to consider its purpose within modern-day society. The Royal Marines Band Service and Corps of Army Music have evolved their practices to maintain audience interest by developing outreach agendas, introducing live-streamed concerts, including non-militaristic pop-groups and, in the case of the Army, brass bands within their ranks. The insular persona brass bands have acquired could be attributed to the movement's preoccupation with upholding tradition and heritage. The approach to uniforms, protocols, concert programming and proclivity for the contest arena, has remained largely unaltered since the movement's inception and perhaps herein lies both problem and solution. However, this portfolio does not look to resolve all the issues the movement faces.

Considering the question of insularity from a compositional perspective, the fundamental role of a band remains unaltered - entertainment. Is the decline in popularity therefore simply because brass bands have neglected to stay in vogue? As part of any rejuvenation process, it is recognised that new and original ideas are required to connect a product with its consumer. In the case of the brass band, re-establishing popularity by reflecting current trend and tastes within repertoire is logical and goes some way to reintroduce the brass band as a contemporary entertainment genre.

Denis Wright, Edrich Siebert and Goff Richards all contributed to the modernisation of band literature during their relevant periods in history, an aspect which could be considered overlooked in current practice. Original music is written much as it always has been, in either a commercial or serious vein, with the majority of composer's writing within the parameters of these extant categories. In the main, commercial music is the domain of the concert hall; light, lyrical and diatonic in nature, often utilising historical templates such as marches, selections or slow-melodies. There is a huge variation in complexity which is a necessity to accommodate the hierarchical structure of the movement.

In contrast, the vast majority of serious music resides in the form of the test-piece, a phenomenon unique to the medium that derives from its contesting heritage. As with commercial music similar disparity exists, with lower section test-pieces largely expanding upon concert music practice, whilst higher section works frequently displaying complex contemporary language that many audiences, and possibly bandsmen, struggle to

comprehend. A trait apparent in both schools is that composers appear to be writing predominantly to the tastes of commissioning bodies and aficionados, seemingly without consideration to the appeal of repertoire on the wider audience.

### Chapter 2

#### 2.1: Research Aim

This portfolio considers the notion of brass band insularity, reconsidering elements of functionality in pursuit of increasing brass bands popularity within British contemporary culture. The six works presented explore the following areas of inquiry:

- 1. An audience development agenda
- 2. Utilising popular contemporary language to promote recruitment
- 3. The development of new and/or neglected approaches

The portfolio discusses how the submission challenges existing methodologies, expands upon current practice and how, through practice based research, it introduces new philosophies as a contribution to knowledge. The repertoire's 'function' is effectively summarised by the following quote from Denis Wright's 1963 book, *The Complete Bandmaster*:

'The composer, arranger of light music is, in the main the servant of the performer and ultimately the audience. With more 'serious' music the roles are reversed, the performer becomes the servant of the composer who seeks through his music to communicate with the listener.'

With regards to light music, Wright states that the composer is, '...servant of the performer and ultimately the audience.' Composers currently write music that reflects the taste of a commissioning body, demonstrated by the regular commissions for events such as *Brass in Concert*. Similarly, these works remain attractive to the taste of existing audiences, as they demonstrate the virtuosity of the bands they support. However, it is questionable whether new additions promote the movement to an audience not already directly associated with it.

Wright's concluding statement describes the performer and audience as, '...servant of the composer who seeks through his music to communicate with the listener.' As Leonard Bernstein once said, 'Music can name the unnameable and communicate the unknowable' (Bernstein. 1976), and for many writers the purpose of composition is to convey a message; whether this is an evocation of a story, expressions of emotion or the presentation of more absolute ideas, unravelled through complex dialectic exploration. The fundamental point

here is that the listener must understand the musical journey to comprehend it and I would argue that this is not always the case with more recent art music additions.

It is not my intention to challenge the observations Wright makes, but simply acknowledge them as doctrine, using the principles he outlines to realign the musical content of my work to reflect twenty-first century taste. Retaining the inherent nuances and expectations of the ensemble, whilst providing a contemporary language intended to arouse the interest of younger performers and raise its appeal to a broader audience. As part of this modernisation process, the portfolio utilises the evocative nature of film and video-game music, combining it with popular music trends that have strong rhythmic tendencies. As a consequence, the works within the portfolio begin to explore the natural void between commercial and art music attitudes, each embracing the physiognomies of the other in pursuit of establishing a middle ground.

Whilst originality and seeking new creative direction are integral to my research, I am not looking to reinvent common practice *per-se*, but to enhance existing methods with a forward outlook, updating British brass band repertoire in support its inclusion in twenty-first century culture. Educational Consultant Dr. Estelle Phillips states that originality can be displayed in fifteen definitions, and the works here demonstrate innovation through three of these:

- 1. Using already known material but with a new interpretation.
- 2. Bringing new evidence to bear on an old issue.
- 3. Being cross-disciplinary and using different methodologies.

(Phillips. 2000)

#### 2.2: List of Works

Three extended works:

- 1. Realms of Asgard an Elite-division test-piece commissioned by Jaren Hornmusikkforening and premiered at the 2015 Norwegian National Brass Band Championships. Aesthetic focus is on entertainment value, reintroducing the core ethos of the brass band to its audience, with test elements occurring as a natural derivative.
- 2. Soprano Cornet Concerto composed in collaboration with the soprano cornet player Steve Stewart. Completed in 2016, the work utilises a bespoke four-valve instrument and begins to explore the plausibility of studio composition.

3. Visions - composed in 2009 and used as the Fourth Section test-piece for the final contests of the 2015 National Brass Band Championships of Great Britain, the Dutch National Championships in 2016 and the Australian National Championships in 2017. Visions looks to challenge the accepted 'best practice' methods for lower section test-piece composition.

#### Three concert works:

- 4. *Dreamtime* commissioned in 2013 for the Cory Band's tour of Australia. The score researches an interdisciplinary approach, combining music, poetry, narration and innovative instrumental techniques.
- 5. *Mists on the River Wear* is a second collaborative project, this time working with internationally acclaimed tuba soloist Joseph Cook. It examines the multifaceted capabilities of instrument, providing alternative repertoire to the stereotypical novelty solo.
- 6. Starburst: composed in 2014 for the Greater Manchester Youth Brass Band, this fast paced concert opener demonstrates my ongoing contribution to provide music specifically intended to attract younger people and audiences.

## Chapter 3

#### 3.1 Literature Review

This literature review provides further context to the portfolio, firstly exploring the nature of decline that has affected brass band numbers over the course of its history. Secondly, it reviews existing literature in the areas of contest, concert and solo repertoire, in which the roots of certain concepts and techniques developed in this portfolio are to be found.

Gavin Holman's 2018 paper 'How Many Bands?,' contradicts many previous estimations for the number of brass bands existing in the United Kingdom. It suggests that at the height of popularity (1895), there were 5,045 bands active and that presently, approximately 1,210 brass bands exist, a figure which has remained relatively static since the 1960's (Holman. 2018).<sup>2</sup> If band numbers have remained comparatively constant for almost sixty years, how has the perception of decline, acknowledged by many historians originated?

Both Prof. Trevor Herbert and Prof. Denise Odello suggest that decline was due to the '...centrality of contesting' (Herbert. 2000), as the activity '...abandoned its morally-edifying origins and became somewhat insular' (Odello. 2016). Holman's data suggests a rapid decline between 1900 - 1910, significant perhaps that it coincides with the establishment of the *National Brass Band Championships* (Bevan. 1991), but between 1910 – 2010 a much more gradual deterioration is evident and it is feasible to suggest that a growing and continuing preoccupation with contest arena, has retracted the movement from public awareness, implying a more rapid decline than is actual.

In 2005 Alan McLaren<sup>3</sup> said that, 'being in a brass band is a bit like being in a secret society...little wonder our audiences are dwindling away and that even our major events are now struggling to fill seats.' McLaren also inferred some negativity towards the contest forum, stating that it is '... fast becoming a self-indulgent pastime, of interest only to those directly involved' (McLaren. 2005). Similar sentiments are echoed by Mike Kilroy,<sup>4</sup> 'it is unfortunate yet true that in recent years, brass bands have become increasingly isolated from

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Holman's statistics do not indicate whether there is a variation in the numbers of performers participating in the hobby, or if an increase in the average age has occurred.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> In 2005 Alan McLaren was the President of the Scottish Brass Band Association.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Mike Kilroy, Chairman of Brass Bands England, formally known as the British Federation of Brass Bands.

communities and each other along with an introspective attitude...[losing] sight of their common purpose' (Kilroy. 2014). Professional trumpeter, John Wallace CBE, makes a suggestion of what this purpose might be; 'in the 21st century it is my contention that those brass bands which have survived the de-industrialisation of Britain have a responsibility to prioritise this identification with their localities over the holy grail of competing, not only to survive, but also to distribute the beneficial effects of music more widely to a greater number of people' (Wallace. 2017). Wallace's response is timely, as many involved within the movement express feelings of pessimism:

'...as with a lot of the British culture it is being eroded. I can't see it lasting...It's all too easy these days to slump in front of the TV, DVD or PlayStation.'5

'It's only good playing if you have someone to play to, and as more and more of the older generation of listeners are dying off, the younger generation are more interested in other areas of popular music.'6

"...we've got to move with the times, we can't be looking back all of the time."

When considering the role of brass bands within current society, I share similar views to Wallace, who says, '...a brass band is not a musical machine that churns out contest results, but a resource for everyone to enjoy...its existence is to irrigate its locale with live music and help give its local community, young and old alike, some sense of rootedness and continuity in the face of...the global digital revolution' (Wallace. 2017).

There is a great deal of discussion about the positive and negative attributes of contesting within available literature. Other than Roy Newsome's outline of popular repertoire in 'The Modern Brass Band,' little is observed about the repertoire's entertainment value or how this connects with its audiences. When considering whether the decline in popularity has manifested because repertoire has neglected to stay in vogue, comparisons can be made with the broader world of Western European Art Music, '...Its creators and devotees...stereotyped as *unhip* and out of touch with popular culture,' says David Cutler, author of 'The Savvy

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Gillian Hibberd's 2006 paper *British Brass Bands: Their History and Role in the Culture of Britain at the Start of the Twenty-First Century.* A response to her questionnaire. - p.64.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Statement made by the Jim Davies, celebrated cornetist, taken from a collection of personal reflections made by notable bandsman and published by Arthur Taylor in his 1983 book *Labour and Love*.

Musician.' Cutler continues to say that '...many view the [orchestral] experience as foreign, disconnected and largely irrelevant' (Cutler. 2010). When considering the music industry collectively, orchestras, like brass bands, have a relatively '...small fan base [that] seems to be limited to two demographics in many communities: other schooled musicians and an increasingly aging audience that is not replenishing itself' (Cutler. 2010).

As far as can be ascertained, there is no evidence to suggest that composers for the medium consciously write with the intention of engaging the wider audience, setting my work aside from my contemporaries. However, there are examples where composers recognise the need to write for the appeal of a younger generation, denotable by the inspiration behind such works, as in the case of Lucy Pankhurst's *Mr Sonnemans' Unusual Solution* (2012), based on the stories of *Making Rain and Other Things Is Our Business* by Tony Smith.

### 3.2: Test-pieces

'The value of a substantial brass band work is determined more or less exclusively by its potential as a test-piece.'

Paul Hindmarsh<sup>8</sup>

Contesting is an integral element of the band movement and to advocate a removal of this popular component would unnecessarily challenge its long-established heritage. However, comments like '...unmusical, technical exercises that lack the substance...[of] older contest repertoire,'9 and '... audiences find it [bespoke music] difficult and unrewarding to listen to,'10 suggest that a change in direction is perhaps warranted, even from within the movement itself. Wallace comments that '...with notable exceptions, [test-pieces] seem to be aimed towards a fearsome technical examination...rather than musical communication of universal truths to a music-loving audience' (Wallace. 2017). It is fair to assume that the comments of Wallace and the others, are directed towards the upper stratum of test-piece writing, but perhaps a little contentious to suggest that all test works conform to this oversimplification. The following discussion revolves around test-pieces in both serious and

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> In an article for 4Barsrest, *The Music Bands Play*, 5<sup>th</sup> January 2009.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> A response to Gillian Hibberd's research questionnaire. - p.61.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> ibid.

commercial vein and the aesthetic observations made of each can be applied to the subsequent musical categories that follow.

The complexity of art music aimed for use by the Championship Section has evolved exponentially since 1913<sup>11</sup>, mainly through the creative input of composers drawn from the broader musical world. Gustav Holst, Harrison Birtwistle, John Pickard, John McCabe and James MacMillan, have all enriched the repertoire with their own contemporary techniques, in-turn influencing the growing body of composers writing almost exclusively for brass band. Embracing a contemporary voice for Championship literature is commonly seen as the doyen in artistic advancement. Rory Boyle's Muckle Flugga (2014), typifies the modern brass soundscape, combining extensive chromaticism, dense, polyphonic and at times, intensely dissonant textures, which can be difficult to understand from the layman's perspective. Many contemporaries use similar approaches, with notable examples being Simon Dobson's Journey of the Lone Wolf (2014), Judith Bingham's Prague (1996) and John McCabe's The Maunsell Forts (2001). Although McCabe's work is undeniably contemporary, his approach is more sympathetic to the idiosyncrasies of the ensemble, an attribute found in his Cloudcatcher Fells (1985) and also the music of Philip Wilby, particularly Vienna Nights (2006) and Red Priest (2010). Wilby's compositional technique, '...mediates between past and present, personal expression and musical function, enabling him [Wilby] to write music which amateur performers and non-specialist audiences can enjoy' (Hindmarsh. 2000). Although Hindmarsh's comments may be true of works like Paganini Variations (1991), I'd argue that Wilby's musical language on the whole provides significant challenges for unscholarly musicians and audiences to comprehend. Similar approaches to Wilby can be seen in the work of Torstein Aagaard-Nilsen, Johan de Meij and Peter Graham, who uses elements of aleatoric writing, advanced chromaticism, rhythmic complexity and recorded 'ambient' sound, in The Triumph of Time (2015), within an otherwise light music palette. This 'softening' approach to modernist practice demonstrated in Graham's work, can also be seen in the music of Derek Bourgeois, Martin Ellerby and Philip Sparke, and is where Realms of Asgard begins its exploration; using the language of Modernism but exploited it in a more commercial manner than the aforementioned writers, creating a concert item as much as a test-piece.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Labour and Love - Percy Fletcher, was the first original brass band test-piece and composed in 1913.

During the 1960's, modern dance orchestras, big bands and music of cinema heavily influenced band repertoire (Hindmarsh. 2000) and throughout the 1970s and 80s Goff Richards and Philip Sparke, amongst others, continued to developed this commercial light music language. Of Sparke, Hindmarsh writes, '... accessible, and direct - embodying the traditional values of popular brass band, enlivened by the polished style of jazz, of the cinema and of the Americans like Leonard Bernstein and Aaron Copland' (Hindmarsh. 2000). Indicative by works such as London Overture (1984), Music of the Spheres (2005) and Year of the Dragon (1984), the popularity of this prolific writer has, arguably, elevated his music as being 'the sound' of the contemporary brass band, with a host of imitators following suit that include Alexander Comitas, Paul Lovatt-Cooper, and Christopher Bond. Elements of Peter Grahams writing, particularly Harrison's Dream (2000) and Journey to the Centre of the Earth (2005), also bear Sparke's impact. Whilst Sparke and Graham continue to influence subsequent composers, few achieve the rigorous musical arguments evident in their work, adopting a 'building block' approach to writing that adheres to the Test-Piece Check List school of composition (Smith. 2015). 12 This method is comparable to some film music, where melodic development and harmonic diversity appear to be of secondary importance to the manipulation of texture. Dr. Howard Evans observes that much new contest and concert music, '... embrace[s] the compositional techniques of film scores...this is in a technical manner, rather than in a developed compositional manner... compositional form does not always appear highly developed, but is often simply a collection of ideas, that sometimes lacks a thematic of identity and process.' Evans believes that much of the so-called cutting edge music in pursuit of innovation has the air of the Emperor's New Clothes, suggesting that a middle-ground must be found whereby musical integrity is retained whilst providing appeal for non-specialised listeners. Evans suggests that Realms of Asgard sits firmly in this middleground, '...whereby the technical elements serve the music along with its programme and development.'14

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> 'The Test Piece Check List school of composition (TPCL)' is a term coined by 4barsrest columnist Sandy Smith, in his article *Soapbox Opinion-Heading into a musical cul-de-sac?* 17<sup>th</sup> August 2015.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Personal correspondence with Dr. Howard Evans. Received 12/07/2018.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> ibid.

In contrast to the frequently complex world of Championship literature, the majority of lower section test works are often extensions of concert repertoire, commonly written in three or four movement suites, as can be seen in Appendix 6.2.

Eric Ball's work *Indian Summer* (1950), epitomises the approach for Fourth Section writing. Written in four clear self-contained movements, the music is simplistic both in design and in language. Melodic ideas are developed minimally, utilising repetition and an exploration of instrumental combinations, creating timbral interest rather than expanding the development of motive. The harmonic language is diatonic in nature, again simplistic, using primary chords and closely related modulations. Orchestration is in a light music style, with beat displacement figures supporting a primary melody, voiced on one of the principal instruments (solo cornet or euphonium). 'Doubling' is heavily utilised as a practical necessity, to accommodate the anticipated limitations synonymous with the amateur ensemble. Although this is a mature work of over sixty years, it displays the foundations of common practice which are still adhered by today, with similarities seen in Peter Graham's *Journal of Phileas Fogg* (2012), Dean Jones' *An English Pastorale* (2013) and Rodney Newton's *World Tour* (2006).

There are few instances where Fourth Section literature is approached from an art music aesthetic but a good example would be Bryan Kelly's Divertimento (1971), the opening Prelude making simplistic yet effective use of sequence, call and response and contrapuntal dialogue. These techniques are comparable to those found in A Malvern Suite (1984) by Philip Sparke and John Golland's Prelude, Song and Dance (1980), both of which display a complexity largely absent from more recent additions to the repertoire. Golland and Sparke reject the popular use of four bar phrasing, opting instead for long, sweeping melodies often shrouded with intricate countermelodies and more adventurous harmony. Golland's finale Dance, is light in tone yet includes brisk changes in metre and heavy characterisation, providing a test element which also has entertainment value. Simon Dobson's Lydian Pictures (2002), delivers a diverse work through its use of modality, the sharpened fourth of the mode challenging amateur musicians to understand its uncommon sound, and providing a contemporary edge that is largely absent in Fourth Section literature. Visions expands upon the techniques introduced by these writers, exploiting thematic material, leitmotif, bi-tonality, and evocative expression, more commonly found in higher grade music. Presented in a single movement, with thematic relationships woven throughout, the work challenges lower section

convention, expanding the genre into more diverse art music territory, yet retaining a level of practicality suitable for developing musicians.

#### 2.2: Solo Repertoire

Although the majority of art music composed for the brass band revolves around the test-piece, there is a small collection of concert items and a growing canon of concerti. *Concerto for Soprano Cornet* could be considered a seminal work, as little original material exists for this colourful, yet seemingly overlooked instrument; with the two existing concertos, Bertrand Moran's *Concerto for Soprano Cornet* (2004) and Stijn Aertgeert's *Sunfield Concerto* (2015), use the *lingua franca* of more commercial methods. Other prominent works are succinct, three to four minute concert items also written in commercial vein, like Kevin Ackford's *Adagio* (1999), Philip Sparke's *Flowerdale* (2002) or Darrol Barry's *Soliloquy* (2017), although Barry's *Concertino in E-flat* (2008) and Edward Gresgson's *Rhapsody for E-flat Cornet* (1970), written under the *nom de plume* Robert Eaves, offer substantially more developed musical language.

Concerto for Soprano Cornet '... fits in the line of a Gregson work...the whole language and idiom is very accessible, but very developed, and very satisfying,'15 suggesting it could easily sit alongside Gregson's Cornet Concerto (2016), Joseph Horovitz Euphonium Concerto (1972) and Nigel Clarke's Mysteries of the Horizon (2012). As with Realms of Asgard, the concerto falls within a middle-ground, combining contemporary technique and commercial language that enables virtuosic prowess without alienation of its listener. Despite the obvious similarities to existing repertoire, influence for the work is actually taken from a wider sphere of music, most notably Igor Stravinsky's Violin Concerto in D (1931) and Alexander Arutiunian's Trumpet Concerto (1950). The impressionistic sounds of Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel are a common influence in my writing, evident here in the central movement Poem. The finale, Scherzo, has similarities to the ballet music of Romeo and Juliet (1935) by Sergei Prokofiev, and also the final movement of his seventh symphony.

The antithesis of the method for *Concerto for Soprano Cornet* can be found in *Mists on the River Wear*, intentionally diversifying the light music attitude with a modern tone and the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Extract from personal correspondence with Dr. Howard Evans. Received 12/07/2018.

inclusion of multiphonics. Despite its capability of achieving a diverse range of emotions, from agile dexterity to profound expression, the tuba has struggled to shake loose its comedic stereotype. Original work for E-flat tuba is limited largely to serious repertoire, with notable concertos from Martin Ellerby, Philip Wilby, and Gareth Wood. Lighter works are on the increase, with prominent additions from Rodney Newton Capriccio (1990), Paul Lovatt-Cooper Song for the Skies (2010) and Darrol Barry Impromptu for Tuba (1991), and it is here that *Mist on the River Wear* best lies. The work expands lyrical tuba repertoire into the realm of cinema, conveying visual representation within its first movement - Song, a familiar technique in ensemble literature but less so in tuba repertoire. The work also explores the use of multiphonics within aesthetic context, a technique developed and commonly used by jazz performers such as Adrian Rollini, John Coltrane, and Wycliffe Gordon. The Norwegian tuba soloist Øystein Baadsvik incorporates multiphonics in his popular composition Fnugg (2004), as does multi-instrumentalist James Morrison, who has developed the method to virtuosic levels, allowing him to perform intricate lines in parallel movement, seen in the YouTube clip, 'James Morrison demonstrates multiphonics' (YouTube. 2007). Mists on the River Wear uses the technique in a lyrical setting, exploring the possibility of producing multiphonics in contrary motion and how they integrate within the artistic vision without producing novelty.

#### 2.3: General Concert Repertoire

When considering how repertoire connects with its audience, David Cutler surmises the problem thus: 'If the tunes are unfamiliar, the presentation seems sterile, and there are no other clues, how can we realistically expect to connect with new listeners?' (Cutler. 2010) Brass bands retain a formal approach towards performance and for a twenty-first century audiences '...more accustomed to watching concerts, the lack of visual stimulus may seem humdrum and uninspired' (Cutler. 2010). Entertainment contests such as Brass in Concert, Wychavon Festival of Brass and Bolsover Festival of Brass, are areas of the movement that continue to flourish, and it is permissible to suggest that this is because they offer a rare occasion when virtuosic musicianship can be combined with an unabashed entertainment. It is this basic concept that influences the creative decisions behind Dreamtime, which incorporates narration, poetry and instrumental effects as part of its appeal, as '...musical or

programmatic themes that connect with the general public increase perceived relevance while providing a point of entry for new listeners' (Cutler. 2010).

The inclusion of narration in *Dreamtime* is comparable to existing works like Elgar Howarth's *Fireworks* (1975), Philip Wilby's *Brass* (2010), Andy Scott's *Battle of Barossa* (2017) as well as my own *An American Tale* (2008). In the case of *An American Tale*, the opening music is used as underscore to the narration, fundamentally informative as much as being a creative component. Both *Fireworks* and Wilby's *Brass* have involved narration and at times, particularly in the case of *Brass*, the narration overbears the musical content and for me, a balance in the collaboration is lost. Similar observations can be made of Scott's *Battle of Barossa*, and whilst the inclusion of speech is innovative, using it as a contrasting timbre often working in counterpoint against the instrumental sounds, its use is overzealous, detracting from its overall effectiveness. In contrast, *Dreamtime* spreads periods of narration evenly across the duration of an otherwise instrumental work. When speech is introduced, the complexity of the music is reduced, so neither component interferes with the other, creating a coherent space for both features to complement one another.

Observing the ensemble's historical mantra, arrangements of popular music remain a large component of concert repertoire. Over time, these have been supplemented with original material assuming a light music mode, Goff Richards *Trailblaze* (1982), Alan Fernie's *Prismatic Light* (2012) and Philip Sparke's *Orient Express* (1986) being good examples. Again, Sparke's influence is noticeable on composers within this genre, particularly in Christopher Bond's *Spirites & Flares* (2015) and Paul Lovatt-Cooper's *Enter the Galaxies* (2009). Lovatt-Cooper's later works *Pound the Streets* (2010), *Wall of Sound* (2010) and *Road to Run* (2014), are all aimed at younger performers, each being commissioned by a national youth brass band. Although on the surface these works appear complex, their fundamental language correlates with the simplicity discussed around *Indian Summer*, and whilst Lovatt-Cooper's music provides undeniable excitement, Lucy Pankhurst's *Storm* (n.d.), *Oliver Waespi's Fanfare and Funk* (2006), and Simon Dobson's *Showstoppa!* (2008) offer more 'gritty' concert repertoire. *Starburst* combines the excitement seen in Lovatt-Cooper's music, by way of

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Pound the Streets was commissioned by the National Youth Brass Band of Scotland, whilst *Wall of Sound* and *Road to Run* were both commissioned by the National Children's Brass Band of Great Britain.

ostinato, angular/ staccato melodies and percussive scoring, with elements of the popular genres that influence Pankhurst and Dobson, namely Funk, House and Dance music. However, Starburst demonstrates this variety within traditional brass band convention, with regards to structure and form, homogony and lyricism, providing innovation within familiarity.

The articles in the *Guardian* - 'Why Brass Bands are back in Vogue' (Muggs, J. 2013), and *Esquire* magazine - 'In Praise Of...Modern Brass Bands' (Merrett, J. 2013), both suggest brass bands are regaining popularity, with groups like Hackney Colliery Band, Bare Brass and Mnozil Brass reintroducing the medium to mainstream audiences. The success of these groups lies with their repertoire, a fusion of funk and jazz renditions of popular music which reflect the taste of their audiences, further complimented by choreography and humour. Whilst this audience reconnection comes close to what my research aims to achieve, these groups derive from small ensemble traditions, the New Orleans band and the Flemish Septet, so it is therefore difficult to emulate the flexibility achieved by seven or nine instrumentalists, in the repertoire of a conventional brass band. Many of these groups acknowledge the influence *Acid Brass*<sup>17</sup> has had on their own approach and similar projects like *Just a Vibration*, <sup>18</sup> have done much to elevate the exposure of brass bands to contemporary audiences. However, in context these projects provide relatively short-term exposure, experiencing limited impact which don't provide a complete solution to the long-term problem that this portfolio begins to explore.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Acid Brass was a 1997 collaboration between Jeremy Deller and the Fairey Band, combining the sound of the brass band with Acid House music.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Just a Vibration was a collaboration between the Hammonds Saltaire Band and London-based Indian composer Shri Sriram, which won the 2016 Wind and Brass category of the *British Composers Awards*.

# Chapter 4

#### 4.1: Realms of Asgard

Realms of Asgard (2015) is the culmination of approximately ten year's research, unravelling the intricacies of composing a major work for Championship Section band. It was commissioned by Dr Howard Evans for Jaren Hornmusikkforening, a Norwegian Elite-division band looking to perform an original work at the 2015 Norwegian National Brass Band Championships. As with the majority of my work, it is tailored to the commissioning body, taking inspiration from the Norwegian Yggdrasill myth, a colossal Ash tree that contains the nine worlds of the Norse cosmos within its boughs. Each realm is home to a mystical or mythical race including dwarves, gods, demi-gods, giants and elves.

The work has a clear audience development agenda, from both the perspective of performer and spectator that is transparent enough that it can be understood on multiple levels. For the amateur, it is an evocative pictorial representation, using familiarity and semiotic reference to provide a comprehensible narrative. For the aficionado the work provides a complex dialectic argument in need of resolution, exploring the full capabilities of the ensemble through a variety of contemporary techniques. For bandsmen, it creates both individual and ensemble-musicianship challenges that remain practical to resolve, integrating the 'test' element within the natural fabric of the music.

Prof. Paul Martin Lester suggests that '...we are becoming a visually mediated society' (Lester. 2006). This is substantiated by considering the array of formats digital media is available in, alongside continual technological advances. The popularity of cinema extends beyond films to their soundtrack, many available on compact disc and receiving frequent live performances globally. When work began on *Realms of Asgard*, composing from a similar viewpoint was therefore logical when considering the appeal of music to contemporary audiences. A substantial proportion of existing repertoire is approached in a similar vein, yet *Realms of Asgard* differs from these as its imagery is not created through personal subjectivity, but instead uses existing metaphors that have established visual connotations, '...music as a meaningful system of sonic representation' (Tagg. 2013). In essence, sonic representations are ideas of association, our subconscious creating mental images when stimulated by a suggestive sound. Associations occur naturally - the tolling of a bell

representing religion, as we experience the sound at church. Others are orchestrated - Gustav Holst's *Mars: the Bringer of War* evoking conflict, not deriving from the astrological connection, but more likely implanted in modern psyche through its frequent use as underscore in televised documentaries on the subject (Tagg. 2013).

This concept of sound recognition is used throughout *Realms of Asgard* to engage the interest of a non-specialised audience. The Gothic undertone of the opening movement, often symbolic of malevolence, as in Alan Silvestri's *All Hallow's Eve Ball* or Danny Elfman's *This is Halloween*, here depicts Hell. The image is reinforced with a tolling tubular bell (bar two), suggesting a death knell. The bitonality of *Venus: the Bringer of Peace* and *Neptune: the Mystic* in Holst's *The Planets*, is commonly associated as the 'sound' of space and otherworldly dimensions, influencing John Williams in *Star Wars* and also Howard Shore's *Rivendell*, from *The Lord of the Rings* scores. Its application in *Realms of Asgard*, is used to evoke the ethereal world of the Elves, *Vanaheimr* (movement three) and *Álfheimr* (movement six). Other images are metaphorical as in *Jötunheimr* – *Home of the Giants* (bar 230), the main theme appearing initially as a tuba quartet or *Nidavellir* (letter I), where quick, angular figures are used to create impressions of foraging dwarves. In the final movement, timpani and snare drum imitate the galloping hooves of *Sleipnir*, *Odin's* horse (bar 448).

Whilst *Realms of Asgard* can be enjoyed purely at this broad level, musical complexity and deeper semiotic reference are included to appeal to more scholarly musicians. The motif for *Gjallarhorn* – a golden horn that can be heard across the nine worlds, appears as a cameo in several movements but most significantly at letter X, written for a quartet to denote the four corners of the world. The lyre, instrument of the gods, is suggested by vibraphone and glockenspiel glissandos (bar 205) and the distinctive timbre of soprano cornet and flugelhorn are chosen to represent the Gods of Purity and of Fertility, bar 191 and 210 respectively.

The majority of the work is based on a twelve-tone row (*figure 4.1*), and other twentieth-century techniques such as quartal and self-replicating harmony, isorhythm and cross-rhythm (*figure 4.2*) feature frequently, having become an integral part of my compositional method.

<sup>20</sup> Cue from Danny Elfman's score to *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, 1993.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Cue form Alan Silvestri's score to *Van Helsing*, 2004.

Figure 4.1: Twelve-tone row used to compose Realms of Asgard.



Figure 4.2: Combining 10/8 and 6/8 cross-rhythms to create a sense of confusion.



The inclusion of contemporary writing techniques is again comparable to existing literature but *Realms of Asgard* does not sound overtly modern. Simon Dobson and Philip Wilby, as well as others, apply similar techniques in an absolute way which give their music a contemporary edge that *Realms of Asgard* intentionally challenges to provide a musical tone with wider appeal, much as John Williams achieves in *Anakin's Theme*.<sup>21</sup>

The appeal to bandsmen is the inclusion of twentieth-century techniques which provide the necessary 'test' aspect. Although the work was commissioned as a test-piece and functions thus, it was composed from a concert work perspective, exploring both commercial and art music attributes. In this way, it assumes the stance of previous methods, as Paul Hindmarsh observes of Holst's *A Moorside Suite* (1928); '...the writing is clear, free of empty rhetoric. His primary concerns were musical... he produced a work whose considerable difficulties...rise naturally out of the compositional process' (Hindmarsh. 1991). In essence,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Cue from John Williams score to *The Phantom Menace*, 1999.

the method utilised for *Realms of Asgard* provides a balance of components suitable for a variety of purpose.

The popularity of film and television adaptations such as *The Lord of the Rings, Game of Thrones, Harry Potter,* and the soundtracks which accompany these films is widespread. Applying a similar language to *Realms of Asgard,* enables listeners to understand and enjoy it, regardless of their knowledge about brass band culture. A balance of musical sophistication is achieved by combining commercial and art music qualities that respects the ensembles primary function: entertainment. *Realms of Asgard* is still in its adolescence, and time is needed to gauge what impact the work will have on the development of repertoire. However, since the works premiere, it has been acknowledged favourably and is currently under consideration for use at the coveted *British Open Championships* and several leading European competitions, giving an indication of the works potential stature. In time, I believe the approaches invested will have a significant impact on how future composers write in a cinematic vein for the medium.

### 4.2: Concerto for Soprano Cornet

Concerto for Soprano Cornet is a collaboration with Steve Stewart, soprano cornet player with the Cory Band. Our initial discussions established that the work would demonstrate technical aptitude and versatility, through an amenable style which had broad appeal. Both Steve and I have a fondness of jazz and Claude Bolling's Toot Suite (1981) was a potential template, as was Nathaniel Shilkret's Concerto for Trombone (1942). Influence finally came from Alexander Arutiunian's Trumpet Concerto (1950), as we both wanted to produce a work that embraced the characteristics of Romanticism.

As the project progressed Steve took possession of a bespoke four-valve instrument which I was keen to utilise. As far as can be ascertained this is the first work of its kind to explore the extended compass attainable by this instrument. This extended range is compared with that of the standard three-valve instrument in (*figure 4.3*).

Figure 4.3: Range comparison between the three- and four-valve soprano cornet.



The primary aim for this work is similar to *Realms of Asgard*, to achieve a wide audience appeal however, unlike the test-piece and the other works within this portfolio, the technique is largely absolute, with the exception of a few references to reflect Steve's Scottish heritage; the reoccurring triangular motive (*figure 4.4*), signifying the Pentland Hills from where Steve originates, and the 'scotch snatch' (*figure 4.5*), a subtle Celtic homage.

Figure 4.4: Footfall on the hillside.



Figure 4.5: 'Scotch snatch.'



Adopting an absolute method provided significant challenges when attempting to increase music's attractiveness and despite its light, lyrical nature, the first movement is perhaps the most difficult to comprehend from an amateur perspective, but subsequent movements achieve the aim more convincingly. *Poem*, which explores the instruments lowest register which is notoriously difficult to voice yet dark and sonorous in character, takes influence from Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* (1894) and *Nuages* from his *Trois Nocturnes* (1899). Debussy's impressionistic style remains popular with audiences through concert performance and also its use in film and television, yet within a band context it is relatively uncommon. The result here is perhaps more akin to Ravel than Debussy in style. *Scherzo*, assumes the traditional stance of a finale, providing a *tour de force* for the soloist. The appeal of this movement lies in its circus-like character, which provides excitement, unpredictability, flamboyance and most importantly humour, engaging with the audience at an entertainment level, rather than perplexing them with mere technical virtuosity.

The level of virtuosity displayed in the work is in itself exploring new ground, pushing beyond the limitations of what has previously been achieved in alternative literature for the instrument, with regards to technical expertise and stamina. This is achieved by way of a

studio composition method, which enabled greater technical freedom from both soloist and ensemble, fulfilling a secondary aim of this portfolio. The inclusion of ambient and electronic elements as part of the creative process had initially been discussed and rejected, feeling it would place the work too far from convention, potentially alienating audiences before any impact had been achieved. Approaching the project from a studio angle has enabled the role of the accompanying ensemble to be redefined, increasing its involvement and expanding its complexity to match that of the soloist, making it an integral component of the overall aesthetic, rather than providing a blank canvas for the soloist to inject colour upon. In solo literature, the soprano cornet is largely overlooked and the concerto provides an opportunity to challenge the instrument's perceived limitations in persona and technical versatility.

Whilst composing the work from a studio perspective has enabled the level of complexity to increase exponentially, the concept has not been fully embraced. Fully integrating electronic and traditional methodologies could have expanded the artistic boundaries of brass band repertoire to new levels, however the approach shown here has still enabled 'live music' to extended beyond current limitations, and is the first step to introducing sound manipulation, ambient and 'new vantage point' recording techniques to the compositional processes of band music.

The premiere recording of *Concerto for Soprano Cornet* was released on Steve Stewart's debut album *Over the Horizon*<sup>22</sup> and has already achieved widespread interest in the international brass band scene.

#### 4.3: Visions

Visions was commissioned to celebrate the centenary of Briton Ferry Band, who requested a multi-functional work for contest and concert use which reflected their geographical location. Unlike my previous works, An Elgar Portrait (2006) and New World Sketches (2007), which assume the prevailing trends of lower section contest music, Visions seeks to challenge this method, achieving a higher creative integrity whilst observing the practical needs of developing performers.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Over The Horizon – Steve Stewart, Cory Band and Philip Harper. DOY CD376

Almost as a precursor to *Realms of Asgard*, albeit on a smaller scale, *Visions* seeks to achieve a comprehensible narrative again through sonic recognition. Movement one, *Briton Ferry* uses modality to evoke its pastoral setting, similar to Vaughan Williams *The Lark Ascending* (1914) and John Powell's *This is Berk*.<sup>23</sup> The percussive texture seen in *Brunel's Vision* creates industrial sounds comparable to the effects heard in James Horner in *Hard to Starboard*<sup>24</sup> and *Coronation Scot* (1938) by Vivian Ellis. *Giant's Grave* takes influence from Igor Stravinsky's *Spring Rounds* from *The Rite of Spring* (1913). It is fair to say that the majority of audiences are largely unfamiliar with Stravinsky's music *per-se*, but his impact on the compositional style of many film and video-game composers, often using his techniques to create drama or mystery is notable, hence its inclusion here. Similarly, the distinct medieval character created in *Hen Gastell* does look to replicate a current musical genre to establish its familiarity, but instead suggests previous historical periods by way of heraldic fanfares, fugato and parallel movement, similar in approach to Ramin Djawadi's theme for *Game of Thrones* or Michel Legrand's 1973 score to *The Three Musketeers*.

The second aim for this work was to introduce compositional techniques that are commonplace in higher section repertoire but appear infrequently in works aimed at the Fourth Section, thus diversifying the musical language in literature of this type.

As previously highlighted, a substantial number of Fourth Section test-pieces are suites and although *Visions* has four clear sections it is through-composed. The reasoning for this was partly obstinate, providing an alternative to customary offerings but also artistic, using the physicality of the River Neath, a single constant throughout the town's development symbolically, by way of a river motive (*figure 4.6*), which links the individual sections of the work together and unifies its musical voice.

Figure 4.6: The river motive.



Motivic development is intrinsic to *Visions*, more so than in comparable repertoire which in the main is constructed with multiple themes often presented in sequence, or contained in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Cue from John Powell's score to *How To Train Your Dragon*, 2010.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Cue from James Horner's score to *Titanic*, 1997.

an underlying structure that doesn't necessarily allow ideas to relate to one another. The above river theme derives from the opening motive of bar one (*figure 4.7*), which is the basis for a number of other thematic ideas that follow (*figure 4.8*).

Figure 4.7: Initial motive



Figure 4.8: Further development in Brunel's Vision, Giant's Grave and Hen Gastell.



The attitude towards textural manipulation in *Visions* also moves away from common Fourth Section practice, introducing periods of sparse orchestration (bar 159), intricate contrapuntal writing (letter Z) and complex harmonic language (bar 242). These methods develop the simplicity of other literature, elevating *Visions* into art music territory. The approach also produces naturally occurring challenges, addressing the work's intended purpose as a test-piece.

The opening baritone solo initially appears simplistic, but its sparse accompaniment, quiet dynamic, and the addition of a contest environment in performance, creates a significant challenges for the amateur musician to overcome. In Fourth Section literature, the baritone along with some of the other featured soloists, soprano cornet, solo horn, tenor trombone and tuba, are usually viewed as accompanying or reinforcing instruments, but here they are used as alternative colours to the predictable cornet or euphonium solo, and a clear move away from existing practice.

As a concert item, *Visions* provides a work with as much substance and technical maturity as some higher section repertoire. The filigree textures found at various points throughout

the score, notably in Hen Gastell, reach a complexity seldom seen in Fourth Section repertoire. Whilst the collective effect sounds difficult, the individual figures used to create the texture are relatively simple and attainable for most musicians of this level. As a contest work, where Visions will most likely have the greatest exposure, it provides the whole ensemble with significant challenges to overcome and despite maintaining an awareness of practicality during the compositional process, '... Visions was an ambitious choice stretching many of the finalists to the limit.'25

This said, the innovative approach to the work is proving popular, to the extent that it is frequently chosen as an own choice test-piece. Visions has also gained international recognition, being used as the Third Division test-piece for the *Dutch National Championships* in 2016 and also the Australian National Championships in 2017.

#### 4.4: Dreamtime

Dreamtime was commissioned by Philip Harper for the Cory Band's tour of Australia in 2013. The only stipulation for the work's content was that it should encourage audience discussion. As with the other works in the portfolio, Dreamtime also promotes audience development, achieving this by introducing new attitudes towards modern concert repertoire.

Initial inspiration for Dreamtime came from the book Gadi Mirrabooka: Australian Aboriginal Tales from the Dreaming (McKay, McLeod, Firebrace-Jones & Barber. 2001), which discusses the spiritual beliefs and vivid mythology of the Aboriginal people, commonly referred to as The Dreaming Stories, Dream Time or Songlines. This concept appealed to me for several reasons as it was relatable to the commission, contained naturally evocative material, and provided scope to include narration. As far as I am aware, this is the first time that Aboriginal stories have been used as inspiration for an original brass band composition.

I have been associated with Cory Band since 2008 and an initial popular work to emerge from this relationship was An American Tale (2009) which was part of an American inspired programme for the entertainment contest Brass in Concert. The success of this piece lies partly in the creative treatment of the folk-tunes within it, but also the work inclusion of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Author Paul Hindmarsh. Sleeve notes - 'The Nationals 2015.' Official CD recording of the National Brass Band Championships of Great Britain.

narration and film as part of its creative concept, as seen in the YouTube clip 'An American Tale: Robert Childs & Cory Band' (YouTube. 2014).

Narration is introduced at three points throughout *Dreamtime*, expanding on its use in *An American Tale*. Initially in the opening bars it is informative, explaining the origins of the *Dream Time* and a brief synopsis. A complete story, *The Waking of the Sun*, is presented at letter G, and finally at letter L, selected lyrics from John Kirkpatrick's song *Dreamtime* are adapted to serve as a poetic précis to the work.<sup>26</sup>

From an artistic outlook, I wanted to integrate narration as a timbral element, contrasting it with the sounds of brass and percussion, yet combining them in such a way that allowed them to complement rather than detracted from one another. This was achieved in the introduction through a sparse orchestration, the voice, solo horn and soprano cornet, working initially in 'call and response,' which develops quickly into a more complex contrapuntal texture. At letter G, the harmonic and rhythmic content of the ensemble becomes static, working in a similar manner to how music-loops are employed in video-game underscore, when on-screen activity is limited or when menu screens are displayed. Here, the instruments provide a colourful backdrop for narration to work against but doesn't inhibit it. At letter L, musical content is more involved than at pervious points narration is introduced. Clarity is maintained as the metre of the poem has been used to influence the rhythmic content of the principal theme, complementing one another although they are not specifically aligned in performance. The addition of narration clearly provides the audience with direct insight into the work's meaning, increasing its effectiveness from an entertainment perspective.

The work also includes suggestive musical gestures to enhance the Aboriginal theme further. The opening drone on tubas and euphoniums is performed with multiphonics, imitating the sound of digeridoos. Using instruments unconventionally like this, not only enriches the overall artistic effect but also provides a distinct uniqueness, making the work more memorable. Aboriginal music is largely percussive in nature and although *Dreamtime* does not look to replicate this authentically, percussion has an essential role at several points throughout, as at letter A. Here, percussion is written in compound measure, providing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> John Kirkpatrick's song *Dreamtime* features on his 1994 album *Earthling*. Kirkpatrick's lyrics are not quoted verbatim but adapted into a short poem of my own construction.

excitement and drive whilst the low brass are written in single time, intentionally highlighting the slow, stoic statement of the chorale which was chosen to reflect the spirituality associated with the *Dreaming* concept. This alternative method to orchestration moves away from common practice, adhering to the specific roles of certain instruments, making full use of the available timbres within a commercial approach.

Dreamtime adds to the growing number of works that include narration and is being used as an effective case-study for student composers looking to include similar concepts in their own creative output. The work also achieved its primary purpose to stimulate discussion, with the work causing some controversy between Anglo-Celtic Australians on Cory Band's tour of the country, indicative that it has engaged audience interest.

#### 4.5: Mist on the River Wear

Mists on the River Wear is the second collaborative project in the portfolio, this time with international tuba soloist and clinician Joseph Cook. The work was completed in 2011 whilst Joseph was principal E-flat tuba with Black Dyke Band, with the aim of demonstrating the multifaceted capabilities of the tuba within a single work. It also looks to introduce alternative compositional techniques not commonly applied in light music repertoire, fully integrating them within its otherwise commercial language.

Few works in existing tuba repertoire make use of the naturally lyrical quality of this surprisingly versatile instrument and in the hands of someone like Joseph, it has a similar 'vocal' quality to the euphonium. Aligning with the running theme of the portfolio, the opening movement *Song*, sets out to evoke discernible images; the uncertainty of mist created by a lack of obvious pulse, the undulating tenor horn figure of *letter B* suggesting the ebb and flow of the river, and the blocked, parallel movements at bar 33, evoking the emerging walls of *Durham Castle*. It is also in this movement where multiphonics are introduced as a subtle but innovative addition to the works creative palette.

Expanding from James Morrison's application of the technique, highlighted in the literature review, the work investigates whether the true and vocalised pitches of multiphonics can achieve a level of independency, allowing the production of both melody and bass line simultaneously. It was established that the vocalised part can change pitch whilst the instrumental tone remains static and *vice-versa*, demonstrated in bars 46 - 48.

Whilst increased flexibility of each voice was possible, the action contradicted the natural cognitive reflex of the performer, which wants to mimic the process of the leading voice. For example, if the leading voice moved in a rapid upward motion, the vocalised voice would naturally copy it, a reflex almost impossible to contradict, hence the simplicity of its use here. Contrary motion was also achievable, when the frequencies of pitch related closely to one another, i.e. between intervals of a third, perfect fifth and octave, but the intervals outside this triadic relationship or chromatic pitches proved difficult to maintain pitch and intonation, again the brain trying to resolve the conflict of sound.

The second movement *Dance*, is more in line with other existing up-tempo repertoire, displaying similar vibrancy and *bravura*. However, the sparse orchestration, mild dissonance, and re-referencing of material, demonstrates a move away from the attitudes of similar light music approaches.

Mists on the River Wear gave my first real insight into the collaborative process, facilitating the realisation of some early conceptual ideas, but in retrospect it perhaps lacks the compositional finesse displayed by other works in this portfolio. The approach of the first movement alone, demonstrates a readiness to deliver general concert repertoire of a higher intellectual content than is otherwise seen, providing amateur audiences with a greater challenge than other writers are perhaps prepared to afford them. Multiphonics are cohesive in their application, working fluently with other compositional aspects but the technique is uncommon in performers and the opportunity to expand on the ideas presented here has yet to materialise. I feel the technique would work most successfully in conjunction with a studio composition approach as discussed earlier within this chapter.

#### 4.6: Starburst

The final work of this portfolio is *Starburst*, which is dedicated to the 'Greater Manchester Youth Brass Band,' who gave the premiere performance at the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester in 2014. The work demonstrates an ongoing contribution to the development of twenty-first century band music with the aim of attracting participants from the youth music movement, as well as delivering music with popular appeal.

Rather than composing a work which intends to recreate or imitate the style of an alternative genre, in the way that the *Acid Brass* or *Tubular Brass*<sup>27</sup> projects do, *Starburst* looks to integrate the prominent characteristics of current popular styles with the common practice of brass band. Herein lies its strength, as the combination preserves brass band heritage yet creates a hybrid genre, appealing and accessible to audiences that remains unique to the medium. The work achieves this appeal primarily through its manipulation of texture.

The use of multiple layered textures, by way of ostinato and riff-based figures, is a common technique found in many popular genres including chart-music, film and video-game music. The work is based on several rhythmically orientated motives (*figure 4.9*). This style extends to the melody-line (*figure 4.10*), which is clipped and *staccato* in its construction, a common approach in the thematic material of chart-music but in this case, influence actually comes from Kenneth J. Alford and his march *Colonel Bogey* (1914). When these ideas are combined, it creates a dense musical sound which relies heavily on pulse and beat to provide navigation and maintains interest, again similar to many other popular music genres. It is this rhythmic identity which, for me defines twenty-first century musical trends and a fundamental aspect absent from a large proportion of current brass band repertoire.

Figure 4.9: Opening ostinato in cornets.



The bass-line motive (letter C).



<sup>27</sup> Tubular Brass is Sandy Smiths 2017 realisation of Mike Oldfield's iconic 1973 Tubular Bells album, for brass band.

The repetitive, multi-layered rhythmic techniques more commonly associated with R&B, funk, dance, house and chill-out anthems are integral components to the approach of *Starburst*, and whilst it provides a contemporary sound on its surface, its underlying structure is highly developed, harmonically and melodically, firmly rooted in the band tradition.

Figure 4.10: Principal theme.



Since its publication, *Starburst* has already firmly established itself as an important addition to modern repertoire, receiving many performances on both concert and contest stages by some of the leading youth ensembles in the United Kingdom including Greater Manchester Youth Brass Band, Elland Silver Youth, National Youth Brass Band of Scotland, University of Salford Brass Band, University of Nottingham Brass Band and Lancaster University Brass Band. The work has also been used internationally, most notably by Victoria Brass and Darebin City Brass of Australia and Jaren Hornmusikkforening from Norway.

Elland Youth Band conductor, Samantha Harrison said of *Starburst* that, '...from the first rehearsal, it was clear that they [the players] enjoyed the sounds they were making, creating a *buzz* in the room.' Of *Starburst's* effect on audiences, she stated, '...[its] been well received by our audiences...who enjoy the beat and the big sounds.' And on a personal note, Samantha concluded by saying, 'It's clear that this kind of music and writing is engaging for the players and audiences and I would encourage bands to perform this music.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> From personal correspondence with Samantha Harrison, via email on - 19/01/2018.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> ibid.

# Chapter 5

#### Conclusion

This portfolio sought to explore various issues arising from the belief that brass bands have become disconnected from the societies they were once created to serve. Their insular approach to contesting and repertoire choice having a detrimental effect on the attractiveness, sustainability and ultimately the existence of the brass bands as a contemporary pastime in the long term future. The works presented in this portfolio explore three research aims, each of which looks to seek possible solutions or instigate a further area of enquiry to the underlying issue. The works and their aims are effectively shown in the following table.

|                             | Audience<br>Development | Contemporary Language to<br>Promote Recruitment | Inclusion of New / Neglected Approaches |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---|---|
| Realms of Asgard            | Χ                       |   |   |
| Concerto for Soprano Cornet | Χ                       |   | Χ                                       |
| Visions                     | Χ                       |   | Χ                                       |
| Dreamtime                   | Χ                       |   | Χ                                       |
| Mists on the River Wear     | Χ                       |   | Χ                                       |
| Starburst                   | Χ                       | Χ   |   |

It is clear to see from this visual representation that the primary focus of each of the works is the reconnection of the medium with twenty-first century audiences. Whilst the works retains their own unique voice, they all address this research aim through an exploration of the natural void that exists between art music and commercial attitudes. Combining attributes from each of these groups to provide music of dual-purpose;

- 1. Appealing to audiences by providing music with entertainment as its core ethos, utilising accessible, familiar language that contemporary audiences can relate to.
- 2. Developing and expanding existing practices, providing bands with the means to preserve tradition and heritage, whilst reconnecting with its audiences.

In addition to audience development, *Starburst* seeks to promote the movement specifically to a younger generation who can relate to the musical language it utilises, whilst *Concerto for Soprano Cornet, Visions, Dreamtime* and *Mists on the River Wear*, each introduce new or neglected approaches that are not commonly utilised in current repertoire, providing alternative methods for this field of composition.

The approaches presented in this research have the potential to revolutionise the attitudes in existing compositional methodology as they highlight a need for a change in pursuit of sustainability and, with similar developments in other areas of the movement, encourage a regrowth of interest in brass bands within their locales. The approach undertaken in *Concerto for Soprano Cornet*, studio composition and the development of this technique as discussed, has the potential for the movement to fully embrace the digital revolution, extending the medium's capabilities beyond current boundaries.

Developing a compositional approach which infuses traditional techniques and advanced studio practices is an area that I feel requires further exploration and is an area I intend to focus on more within my own research, both as a composer and educator. This practice could be expanded beyond composition for performance or record production, developed for educational purposes, to enhance the standard instrumentation of the ensemble or as an alternative medium to printed music. I also want to investigate why brass band music appears to flourish and revered by its audiences in Scandinavia and Japan, and whether adopting approaches from these countries has a positive impact on the popularity of brass bands in the United Kingdom.

The works contained within this portfolio are all still relatively young in relation to the wider brass band repertoire. Their increasing popularity is an early indication that the suggestions to change of existing methodology has aroused interest to suggest it provides a contribution to knowledge. The new attitudes introduced by the six works presented here, requires the support of likeminded additions, before their full potential is realised and can be gauged.

# **Appendices**

Appendix 6.1

# Numbers of the Participating Bands at the North West Area Regional Championships $\underline{2008-2018}.$

| Year | 4 <sup>th</sup> Section | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Section | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Section | 1 <sup>st</sup> Section | Championship | Total |
|------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------|
|      |                         |                         |                         |                         |              |       |
| 2018 | 13                      | 16                      | 21                      | 16                      | 11           | 77    |
| 2017 | 18                      | 18                      | 21                      | 14                      | 12           | 83    |
| 2016 | 15                      | 19                      | 18                      | 14                      | 13           | 79    |
| 2015 | 15                      | 20                      | 16                      | 13                      | 14           | 78    |
| 2014 | 16                      | 18                      | 16                      | 15                      | 12           | 77    |
| 2013 | 16                      | 17                      | 17                      | 15                      | 12           | 77    |
| 2012 | 25                      | 18                      | 14                      | 11                      | 12           | 80    |
| 2011 | 25                      | 13                      | 16                      | 10                      | 11           | 75    |
| 2010 | 23                      | 19                      | 12                      | 11                      | 12           | 77    |
| 2009 | 19                      | 20                      | 12                      | 12                      | 11           | 74    |
| 2008 | 23                      | 20                      | 12                      | 13                      | 11           | 79    |

 $<sup>\</sup>it n.b.$  These figures do not indicate the variances created by promotion/relegation or any withdrawals from contest which may have occurred.

# Appendix 6.2

# Fourth Section Regional Championships Test-piece Selection. 1998 – 2018.

|      | Title                       | Composer               | Movements | Duration |
|------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----------|----------|
| 2018 | World Tour                  | Rodney Newton          | 4         | 10'30    |
| 2017 | St Andrew's Variations      | Alan Fernie            | 1         | 10'30    |
| 2016 | The Journal of Phileas Fogg | Peter Graham           | 4         | 12'00    |
| 2015 | An English Pastorale        | Dean Jones             | 4         | 12'00    |
| 2014 | Three Spanish Impressions   | Alan Fernie            | 3         | 10'00    |
| 2013 | Devon Fantasy               | Eric Ball              | 4         | 11'00    |
| 2012 | English Folksong Suite      | Ralph Vaughan Williams | 3         | 11'00    |
| 2011 | Prelude Song and Dance      | John Golland           | 3         | 09'06    |
| 2010 | Saint Saens Variations      | Philip Sparke          | 1         | 10.30    |
| 2009 | The Talisman                | Frank Hughes           | 3         | 10'00    |
| 2008 | Four Cities Symphony        | Rodney Newton          | 4         | 12'00    |
| 2007 | The Seasons                 | Philip Wilby           | 3         | 13'15    |
| 2006 | Anglican Dances             | Alan Fernie            | 4         | 09'30    |
| 2005 | Divertimento                | Bryan Kelly            | 4         | 12'00    |
| 2004 | Partita                     | Edward Gregson         | 3         | 11'00    |
| 2003 | Lydian Pictures             | Simon Dobson           | 3         | 11'00    |
| 2002 | Suite in Bb                 | Gordon Jacob           | 3         | 11'00    |
| 2001 | Sinfonietta Pastorale       | Henry Geehl            | 3         | 09'30    |
| 2000 | The Haslemere Suite         | Peter Graham           | 4         | 11'00    |
| 1999 | Indian Summer               | Eric Ball              | 4         | 09'00    |
| 1998 | Scenes from a Comedy        | Michael Hopkins        | 4         | 08'30    |
|      | A Solemn Melody             | Walford Davies         | 1         | 03'00    |

#### Appendix 6.3 – Study Scores

Ackford, K. (1995). Adagio. [Score]. United Kingdom: Kevin Ackford.

Aertgeerts, S. (2015). Sunfield Concerto. [Score]. Belgium: BVT Music Gcv.

Arutiunian, A. (n.d.). *Trumpet Concerto*. [Score]. London: Boosey & Hawkes.

Baadsvik, Ø. (2004). Fnugg. [Score]. Norway: Ovation.

Ball, E. (1950). Indian Summer. [Score]. Wellingborough: R. Smith & Co. Ltd.

Barry, D. (2008). Concertino in Eb. [Score]. Brighouse: Kirklees Music.

Barry, D. (1991). Impromptu for Tuba. [Score]. Luton: Studio Music Company.

Barry, D. (2017). Soliloguy. [Score.] Gloucester: Wright & Round.

Bingham, J. (1991). *Prague*. [Score]. Godstone: Maecenas Music.

Bolling, C. (1981). Toot-Suite. [Score]. Milwaukee: Hal Leonard.

Bond, C. (2015). Sprites & Flares. [Score]. United Kingdom: Christopher Bond Music.

Boyle, R. (2014). *Muckle Flugga*. [Score]. Brighouse: Kirklees Music.

Clarke, N. (1970). Mysteries of the Horizon. [Score]. Luton: Studio Music Company.

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Ellis, V. (1948). Coronation Scot. [Score]. London: Chappell Music

Fernie, A. (2012). Prismatic Light. [Score]. Switzerland: Obrasso Verlag.

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Gregson, E. (2016). Cornet Concerto. [Score]. London: Novello.

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Holst, G. (1983). Planets, The,. [Score]. London: Boosey & Hawkes.

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Lovatt-Cooper, P. (2009). *Enter The Galaxies*. [Score]. Wellingborough: Prima Vista Musikk Ltd.

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Lovatt-Cooper, P. (2014). Road to Run. [Score]. United Kingdom: PLC Publishing Ltd.

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Lovatt-Cooper, P. (2010). Wall of Sound. [Score]. United Kingdom: PLC Publishing Ltd.

McCabe, J. (1985). Cloudcatcher Fells. [Score]. Wellingborough: Studio Music.

McCabe, J. (2001). The Maunsell Forts. [Score]. London: Novello

Moran, B. (2004). *Concerto for Soprano Cornet*. [Score]. Le Mouret: Woodbrass Music Company.

Newton, R. (1990). Capriccio. [Score]. Tring: Rosehill Music Publishing Company Ltd.

Newton, R. (2006). World Tour. [Score]. Wellingborough: Prima Vista Musikk Ltd.

Pankhurst, L. (2012). *Mr Sonnemans' Unusual Solution*. [Score]. United Kingdom: Lucy Pankhurst.

Price, D. (2009). An American Tale. [Score]. Wellingborough: Prima Vista Musikk Ltd.

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Richards, G. (1982). Trailblaze. [Score]. Luton: Studio Music Company.

Scott, A. (2017). Battle of Barossa. [Score]. Sandbach: Astute Music.

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Sparke, P. (2002). Flowerdale. [Score]. Luton: Anglo Music Press.

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Sparke, P. (1986). Orient Express. [Score]. Luton: Studio Music Company.

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