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The Mood of the Fifth:

Exploring Interbeing with(in) the Refrain

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Abstract

In this study, I present five pieces I composed which explore Rudolf Steiner's indications on music for young children. I assess the potential of Steiner's comments on the suitability of the interval of the fifth to guide the composition of music for young children. The five short pieces are representative of stages on the compositional journey I have undertaken during the doctoral process and show an emergent and evolving response to the interval of the fifth. The doctorate comprises a live performance of the pieces using harp and voice, plus an exegesis. A corpus of additional pieces composed during the doctoral period is included as an appendix.

The compositional approach I adopt is meditative involving first-person research. Using the metaphor of the rhizome, I investigate Deleuze and Guattari's notion of interbeing and, as a composer, I explore interbeing with(in) the refrain, what Deleuze and Guattari call the cosmic content of music. In doing this I explore points of intersectionality between Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy and Steiner's worldview. I use the composition of pieces for young children to examine Steiner's comments on the fifth in relation to his other writing on the nature of music and on childhood development, and consider the degree to which they are reflected in contemporary practice in Steiner early childhood settings in Aotearoa New Zealand. I reflect on Steiner's work in the light of music education practice in non-Steiner settings and the diverse aims of music education.

Using Hamilton and Jaaniste's (2010) model of the "dual orientation" of arts-based research, simultaneously looking within and without, I adopt multiple positions from which to speak and write. These include as an academic, a performer, a composer, an educator, a diarist, a practising meditator and as an inquiring esotericist. I document stages on a personal and compositional journey of transformation, indicating what reaching out to work with aspects of the cosmic in music can involve for a composer and meditator.

Following the commentary on the five pieces in the mood of the fifth, I offer an end contemplation of the overall compositional journey. In this I explore lines of flight which were suggested during the course of the doctoral process, indicating possible points of contact with other ontologies with a spiritual foundation.

In addition to the pieces comprising the creative work, the development of the compositional process has generated insights into ways in which composition can be extended through meditation. These include using imaginative visioning, expanding a single musical component, such as a note or an interval, into a whole piece, and the development of a compositional method comprising dialogue with forces of energy perceived meditatively.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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Introduction

This study contemplates the young child, the composer, the interval of a fifth, and the notion of interbeing. Its impetus comes from a lecture given by Rudolf Steiner in Stuttgart, Germany on 7 March, 1923, in which he said:

Up to the age of nine, the child does not possess a proper grasp of major and minor moods. ... Though it is not readily admitted, the child essentially dwells in moods of fifths [Quintenstimmungen]. ... if one really wishes to reach the child, musical appreciation must be based on the appreciation of fifths. (1906 & 1923/1983, pp. 57–58)

Regarding the fifth, Steiner made a further comment:

... as we grow into the [interval] of the fifth, we reach the boundary of the human and the cosmic, where the cosmic resounds into the sphere of the human and the human, consumed with longing, yearns to rush forth into the Cosmos. (1906/1986, p. 220)

These statements form the stimulus for the composition of the creative work. I show how my understanding of “the mood of the fifth” developed, and how, as a composer, I sought to explore the boundary zone Steiner mentions between the human and the cosmic, using Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of interbeing as a framework, and how this exploration is expressed in the pieces presented as the creative work.

The study asks what the potential is of the indications which Rudolf Steiner gave to guide the composition of music for young children. It is theorised in terms of current research, my own compositional practice and existing examples of music in the mood of the fifth. I investigate what lies behind these statements by Steiner and offer an answer which is in two parts: a creative work and an accompanying exegesis. The first answer is musical, the second locates this music within theory and research literature. The creative work consists of five pieces for young children selected from around a hundred written during the doctoral process. Each piece has been chosen to illustrate a step on a transformative and emergent compositional journey as a response to these two statements.

The pieces in the creative work are small and short. I have wondered at times during the doctoral journey if it would not have been more straightforward to write something on a larger scale and so avoid issues of miniaturisation. The listener may like to bear in mind the Māori whakataukī or proverb, *Ahakoā he iti he pounamu*¹ (Massey University, 2018).

A possibly apocryphal story told of Picasso refers to the importance of small works of art.

Pablo Picasso was having dinner in a restaurant one evening when a woman approached him. She introduced herself, told the master how much she cherished his work and asked shyly if he would sketch a little something on her napkin. Picasso took a pen from his pocket and in a few seconds had produced a small drawing. Handing the napkin to the woman, he said, “That will be a thousand dollars.”

The woman was stunned. “But that only took you a few seconds,” she said.

“No, madam,” Picasso replied, “that took me a lifetime.” (cited in Roach, 2010, p. 191)

Though the body of research literature on Steiner education is growing, Randoll and Peters (2015) indicate a general scarcity of research, that most studies are in German and do not investigate aspects of early childhood education. Furthermore, there are fewer studies still which seek to theorise Steiner education in terms of non-anthroposophical theorists; often investigations into the work of Steiner are supported by references to Steiner’s output. Ullrich (1992) identified the beginnings of an emergent field of Steiner educational studies in his article *Kleiner Grenzverkehr: Über eine neue Phase in den Beziehungen zwischen Erziehungswissenschaft und Waldorfpädagogik*.² Since then,

¹ *Although it is small, it is greenstone*. Greenstone here refers to something precious or a treasure from the heart.

² German: *Local border traffic: On a new phase in the relations between the educational sciences and Waldorf education*.

NOTE: The terms Steiner education and Waldorf education are synonymous and are both in frequent usage. Steiner education refers to the founder of the movement, Rudolf Steiner. Waldorf education refers to the name of the first school, *Die Waldorfschule* in Stuttgart, Germany, which was named after the Waldorf Astoria Cigarette factory. The first pupils of the school were children of the factory workers.

several authors have made worthwhile contributions to the field (among others Dahlin, 2009; Eftestøl, 2008; Frielingsdorf, 2012a; Frielingsdorf, 2012b; Hougham, 2012; Kiersch, 2015; Schieren, 2016), although these remain mostly in German and often do not focus on either early childhood education or music.

Within Steiner early childhood practice, the place given to music and music making is central (Ellersiek, 2001). In the New Zealand context, the 2017 edition of *Te Whāriki. He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa* (Ministry of Education) emphasises the enjoyment aspect of music making and music listening more strongly than developmental impacts these practices may have on the child. Children “enjoy being creative” (p.17), kaiako (teachers) need to “extend infants’ pleasure” (p. 40) through listening to music which later “can amuse, delight, comfort, illuminate, inform and excite” (p. 44).

Steiner education positions itself as a pedagogical approach which offers developmentally appropriate experiences “to help the child to develop into a morally responsible, free individual, able to fulfil his or her unique destiny” (Nicol & Taplin, 2017, p. ix). Rather than emphasising the importance of self-expression or “pleasure,” as suggested in the *Te Whāriki* document, the approach taken by Steiner early childhood music education is more in line with that of Aristotle, who emphasised the importance of the effect of music on character development. “Enough has been said to show that music has a power of forming the character, and should therefore be introduced into the education of the young” (340BCE/2008, p. 310). This study focusses on creating pieces of music, taking as its starting point quotations by Steiner on music for young children.

Collins acknowledges that “little attention has been paid to ‘the real-time act of making a musical product’” and that accounts which exist do “not [attempt] to deal with the vast domain of human creativity” (2012, p. xix). Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari’s notion

of the refrain, the cosmic content of music (1987/2013), I use a rhizomic metaphor to expand into this “domain of human creativity” by exploring what Deleuze and Guattari call the state of “interbeing” (1987/2013, p. 26) between the subject and the refrain. I adopt this notion because of its resonance with Steiner’s description of the fifth existing in a zone on the “boundary of the human and the cosmic” (1906/1986, p. 220). Using a meditative, first-person methodology, I investigate how the subject can engage or “interbe” with “forces of a different order” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/2013, p. 398) in this boundary area and, through this engagement, compose pieces of music for young children. Copeland acknowledges that each composer composes differently, and that the process is highly individual and often intuitive. He notes that it can be “a form of superconsciousness, or perhaps subconsciousness—I wouldn’t know; but I am sure that it is the antithesis of self-consciousness” (1998, p. 149). The conscious yet intuitive approach taken in this study is one of ‘interbeing’ with the refrain.

Hamilton and Jaaniste (2010) identify a “dual orientation” of practice-led research exegeses, which “allows the researcher to both situate their creative practice within a trajectory of research and do justice to its personally invested poetics” (p. 32). This they call a “connected” model of exegesis. Rather than oscillating from outer to inner, they recognise a fusion of the two, “underpinned by academic objectivity and personal reflection upon the creative practice” (p. 39). This study draws heavily on personal practice and experience and cannot take up an objective, third-person stance throughout. Like Hamilton’s connective model (2011), it is multiperspectival and multivocal. In it, I act in many roles including those of practitioner, theorist, academic, performer, critic, creative artist, self-observer and *parrhesiastes* (see p. 102). I speak with multiple voices, as academic, diarist, self-analyst and reflective practitioner, and use a range of writing genres. This multifaceted approach allows the work to be seen from different directions in a range of perspectives. It can be thought of as offering a triangulation or, better said,

multi-angulation leading to a “simultaneous experience of intimacy and distance” (Boland, 2017b, p. 56).

The outcomes of this study are various. Firstly, I offer a body of music for young children, exploring Steiner’s indications of the mood of the fifth written via an emergent compositional practice which engages with the refrain in a zone of interbeing. I theorise Steiner’s work through a Deleuzian lens, identifying significant points of resonance and commonality, I believe beyond what has so far been explored (Dahlin, 2013). I use a first-person methodology to investigate and document Deleuze’s concept of “interbeing” with the refrain, using this as an emergent compositional method and tool. In order to situate and contextualise the creative work and the artistic process used to create it, I offer first-hand accounts of synaesthetic experiences of music as well as an account of engagement with what is commonly called the harmony of the spheres.

In addition to the pieces within the creative work, a collection of additional pieces is included in Appendix C as .WAV sound files and in musical notation in Appendix D. These additional pieces were written during the doctoral period; they support and supplement those within the creative work but are not included within it as, in themselves, they do not illustrate individual developmental steps on the compositional journey.

The exegesis and the creative work should be seen and treated as a whole. Neither seeks to “support” the other; they form a unity. I agree with Papastergiadis when he says, “The relationship between the modes of communication needs to be seen as an affinity. Art and writing are two different ways of reaching for truth” (2006, pp. 33–34).

Following this Introduction, Chapter 1 positions the researcher in fields involved in the study. These include my musical background, training and experience as well as my engagement with the work and philosophy of Steiner, as a teacher, a musician and meditator. I enlarge on my work over the course of several decades with music in the mood

of the fifth and how that forms a foundation of knowledge and experience on which this study builds.

Chapter 2 is a Review of Contextual Knowledge. This has broader focus than a traditional literature review as some of the knowledge takes the form of printed music. I look at Steiner's worldview, views on anthroposophy and Steiner's approach to child development. I review Steiner's comments on music and the interval of the fifth in particular and compare them to the writing of others on the same topic. Lastly in this chapter, I look at speculative musicology, "looking at the cosmos musically, and at music cosmically" (Godwin, 1982, p. 373), specifically the cosmic origins of music and of the harmony of the spheres, identifying ways in which they inform the creative work.

Research Design is covered in Chapter 3. I review models of artistic inquiry, at practice-based and practice-led research, to inform my integration of the two components of the doctorate, the creative work and the exegesis. Deleuze and Guattari's notion of a creative work (and so journey) as rhizome is investigated as metaphor for the study as well as their notion of the refrain as the cosmic content of music. I outline my reasons for choosing meditation as the main compositional approach and how this links to "abyssal knowledges" (de Sousa Santos, 2007) and the work of Steiner, among others. Lastly, I look at methods I adopted which led to the creation of the pieces in the creative work and how I recorded the journey.

Chapter 4 forms the core of the exegesis, the Critical Commentary on the Work. In this I look critically at the pieces of the creative work, their means of composition, challenges, opportunities, setbacks and successes. Among the commentary on the five pieces, I locate a Prelude, two Interludes and a Contemplation. These are aside from the creative work, but are included because they inform the compositional process to a significant degree. I

document the evolution of the compositional method as I worked with the concept of interbeing with the refrain.

The Conclusion completes this exegesis. It reviews the creation of the five pieces and the transformational journey, and indicates ways in which the compositional process may be extended by meditative practice. Lastly, I identify areas for further research, some external—researching early childhood practice and attitudes regarding music in the mood of the fifth—and some internal—avenues for further contemplation and inner inquiry.

There are five appendices. They comprise audio files then music notation of the creative work, audio files then music notation of additional pieces written during the doctoral process but not included in the creative work, and a one-page reproduction of the work of Emile Chizat using the relative distances of planets and asteroids from the sun to construct a chord (Godwin, 1993, pp. 400–401).

Chapter 1: Positioning the researcher

There are three principal reasons why I have chosen music in the mood of the fifth as the creative theme of my doctorate. The first is that, despite being referred to widely within the Steiner early childhood community, the area has not yet been explored theoretically to a significant degree; the second is the opportunity it gives to me to extend and deepen my own engagement with and understanding of this music; and the third is the opportunity to combine creatively two important aspects of my life: my meditative practice and my musical training.

The study is cross-disciplinary, occupying ground between the fields of pedagogy, esotericism and musicology. It calls on diverse qualities, abilities and skills, drawing on a knowledge of pedagogy and child development, music and musicology, both traditional and speculative, anthroposophical theory and the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner, as well as the results of an inner meditative life. I have worked at building some of these knowledges for the last 50 years. This combined background encouraged me to ask important questions regarding music practice in Steiner early childhood settings and to inquire ever more deeply into the nature of and possibilities offered by Steiner's indications on the mood of the fifth. Through this developing inquiry, it became increasingly evident that my own experiences were central to questions I was asking and that theorising the importance of positioning would be a key factor to understanding the research journey. A critical commentary on this process can be found in Chapter 4 (p. 127).

1.1 Musical background

From the age of six to my early twenties, I had a single-minded wish to be a classical musician. It was a vocation I became aware of the first time I heard someone playing a musical instrument (an eight-year-old girl playing the flute), and before I ever touched an

instrument myself. I played the flute and then piano throughout my adolescence until I decided when I was 18 that I was primarily a pianist. I studied music at university at Manchester and King's College, London in the UK, gaining first class Bachelor's and Master's degrees (1981, 1984).

Since then, I have worked as a professional musician in different contexts, accompanying postgraduates at university,³ giving concert tours as part of a violin–piano duo,⁴ and teaching advanced piano students to fellowship level.⁵ I have given numerous professional performances as well as professional development courses in different countries on music education. This was in addition to, and sometimes simultaneous with, being a full-time teacher. Twenty years ago I fulfilled a decades-long wish and learned to play the harp (with Maria Todtenhaupt from Bremen). Although I have chosen to follow other paths professionally, I wonder at the regularity with which I re-engage with music and the world of the musician, every re-engagement giving me opportunity to take my understanding of music to a deeper level, reminiscent of Eisner's notion of "connoisseurship" in arts-based research (1985) which in turn echoes Boethius's (c. 510/1989) notion of the threefold nature of the musician as performer, composer and critic (see p. 110). In Chapter 4, I explore deeper aspects of my musical background and experience (see p. 130 seqq.).

1.2 Pedagogical experience and background

I first started teaching as an inexperienced and unqualified kindergarten assistant in rural Japan at the age of 24.⁶ After three years, I came to New Zealand, trained as a teacher, then taught in the Titirangi Rudolf Steiner School in Auckland for seven years. Following

³ University of Limerick, Ireland.

⁴ In Germany, 1995-1999.

⁵ The performance equivalent of a doctorate, level 10.

⁶ In Sozonomori Hoikuen, Kuroiso and Mifuji Yoichien, Nasu, both in Tochigi Prefecture, north of Tokyo.

that I worked in the Freie Rudolf Steiner School Ottersberg, a *Gesamtschule* in Germany (K–13) teaching all age groups.

In addition to experience in the classroom, I have been active in the area of teacher education since the 1990s, both in permanent positions as well as offering professional development in many countries.⁷ Working with teachers in different locations, contexts and sectors has encouraged me to theorise and to broaden and deepen my conception of education in multiple and significant ways. Most recently I have been programme leader of the Bachelor of Education and the Bachelor of Arts (Education) degrees at Auckland University of Technology and Coordinator of Undergraduate and Graduate Programmes in the School of Education.

1.3 Anthroposophical knowledge

I first came across anthroposophy⁸ when I was 21 and living in Germany. I got a job as a pianist in Stuttgart, not knowing that the institution in which I was working had been founded by Steiner in 1923.⁹ While I was there, I was ‘loaned out’ to the school next-door as an able pianist. It happened that this school was the original *Waldorfschule* and this was my introduction to Steiner education. I got in through the back door—by memory, literally through a door in the wall separating the two institutions.

A year after this introduction, I tried to read my first book by Steiner—on music. This proved new territory for me, foreign and deeply unfamiliar. I found it like looking at the negative of a photo—you could make out what it was of, but nothing was how you expected it. I read a few lectures, becoming more and more agitated as I went along.

⁷ This includes relevant work in Ireland, Germany, Austria, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, New Zealand, Australia, Kenya, Taiwan, China, and the United States.

⁸ Anthroposophy is the name given to Steiner’s cosmology and philosophical approach. It is expressed in the 35 books Steiner wrote and the 6000 lectures he gave during his life.

⁹ Eurythmeum. (2015). *Geschichte* [History]. Retrieved October 14, 2015, from <http://eurythmeumstuttgart.de/seiten/gesch.php>

Eventually, I threw the book against the opposite wall in frustration and rage. This initially negative reaction I now see as characteristic of my engagement with the work of Steiner. I am rarely willing to take anything on trust and need to experience a position myself before I can consider accepting it. Jung said of Steiner, “What matters to me is what can be verified by experience. ... I am not interested at all in what can be speculated about experience without any proof” (2015, p. 203, letter to Fr. Patzelt, written November 29, 1935). I too was not willing to accept Steiner’s word regarding music without it being supported by my own experience, which at the time it was not. A similar attitude is reflected in this study; I explore indications by Steiner on music to see the degree to which they can be experienced first-hand and to guide the creative process through that direct experience. Essentially, a concept by itself is not sufficient; I have found that I need to unite it with a percept before I can accept it (see, for example, page 164).

Later, in Japan, I lived for a year above the rooms of the Japanese Anthroposophical Society. I had the complete works of Steiner to hand plus some English translations and the leisure to read whatever I wanted. I slowly became more engaged with Steiner’s philosophy and began to piece together what it was I thought he wanted to say. This was a solitary activity and it took years for an overview to begin to form in my mind.¹⁰ I trained then worked in Steiner education for 15 years, which allowed me to talk to people about anthroposophy and fill in some of the holes in my understanding and experience of Steiner’s cosmology. As this understanding broadened and deepened, I became involved in teacher education, most recently as a lecturer, giving keynote speeches at international

¹⁰ Steiner’s work spans diverse areas such as the mission of the arts, societal renewal, economics, architecture, the care of the handicapped and the experience of the soul after death.

conferences around the world on aspects of Steiner education.¹¹ In doing this, I attempt to (re)connect the inner world of the anthroposophist to the practical needs of the teacher in the twenty-first century, and to disrupt and challenge accepted norms in a pedagogical movement a century old.

1.4 Inner meditative life

Steiner education is sometimes regarded as a teaching method and there are outer traditions which can be observed in any Steiner school (Boland & Demirbeg, 2017). At the same time, any earnest study of the work of Steiner or of Steiner education leads quickly to the realisation that the most fundamental and possibly the least talked about task of the teacher is the development of their inner life (Boland, 2017b; 2018). Anthroposophy is in essence a personal, inner path, one “leading the spiritual in the human being to the spiritual in the universe” (Steiner, 1924/2007, p. 14). It is a path which I have striven to follow for the last 30 years; it plays a significant role in the evolution of the methodology and method adopted in this study (see p. 81). It is voluntary, exploratory, experiential and taxing.

I mention in the research design chapter (p. 81) that I do not associate myself with or affiliate myself to any religion or religious practice, possibly due to upbringing and

¹¹ Among others:

Boland, N., & Williams, L. (2018, June). Four keynote presentations at the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America. *Social justice: Place, race, gender and class in Waldorf education*, Washington, DC.

Boland, N. (2016, February). Three keynote presentations at the *2016 Pacific Rim conference: A sense of place within the Waldorf curriculum*, Honolulu, HI.

Boland, N. (2015, September). Three keynote presentations at the *Dansk lærerstævne 2015*. Aarhus, Denmark.

Boland, N. (2014, August). Five keynote presentations at the *Scandinavian Steiner Teachers' Conference*. Oslo, Norway.

Boland, N. (2014, July). Keynote presentation at the conference *Meeting the Challenges of our Time*, Noosa, Australia.

Boland, N. (2014, July). Steiner education for 21st century Aotearoa New Zealand. Keynote presentation at the conference *Meeting diversity*, Auckland, New Zealand.

inclination. My exploration of spiritual traditions is modest. I have chosen to repeat familiar steps many times over rather than range far and wide. Some fruits of this are found in the critical commentary. Steiner wrote that, “[meditative] work undertaken for the sake of results is the least likely to produce them” (1904/1994, p. 104). I write on page 161 how this sentence is reflected in the creation of the final piece of the creative work. Rather than traverse great spiritual distances or work “for the sake of results,” I have attempted to travel a few steps as consciously and carefully as I can. The results are found in the creative work and its contextualisation in Chapter 4 (from p. 127).

1.5 Engagement with music in the mood of the fifth

My engagement with the theme of music in the mood of the fifth stretches back over 30 years to when I was working in Japan. While teaching in a kindergarten there, I was shown music, with texts in German, which I was told was the most appropriate for the children of the age I was working with. To me, the music appeared “strange,” lacking in musical merit and, to my mind, ineffective. I later began to engage more deeply with Steiner’s pedagogical ideas, including those dealing with music education. I read and re-read what he and others had written on music for young children, as well as investigating examples of such music. Although the concepts became clearer, I chose to write my own material to ensure it was both musically satisfying and was in line with what I understood at the time as what Steiner intended. This had the advantage of allowing me to write and teach music as an iterative process. I gauged what I thought might benefit the class musically, wrote it, used it every day in the classroom, assessed the degree to which it was successful, saw what could be done next, wrote that and so on. I repeated this process for the seven years I was a teacher in Auckland.

As a result of this creative experimentation, I was asked to write music for early childhood educators in New Zealand and elsewhere, and in 1990 I began working with other teachers

on how they might work with material in the mood of the fifth. As this activity has continued in countries around the world, my understanding of the possibilities of this music has deepened and ripened, as have my questions.

The present study takes and combines my experiences to date to form a foundation from which I focus on the creative process of composition. I explore questions I have, seek correspondences to and resonances with the work of others, and investigate avenues of possibility as they appear.

Over the time in which I have been engaged with the work of Steiner and music in the mood of the fifth, I have interacted with a substantial range of literature across disciplines. In the following chapter, I review some of the literature and knowledge in areas which intersect with this study.

Chapter 2: Review of contextual knowledge

This chapter draws on a wide range of literature and traditions which engage with the topic of study in diverse ways. My use of the word literature here includes composed music as well as written texts. The study spans a number of disciplines and I review literature on aspects of anthroposophy, transpersonal psychology, speculative musicology, first-person research, Western esotericism, compositional practices, as well as theories of childhood development. I group literature from similar disciplines, attempting to draw the threads together while indicating links between them.

I divide the chapter into six overarching areas of unequal length: Steiner and anthroposophy; Steiner and music; the mood of the fifth; education and early childhood pedagogy; speculative musicology; and compositional practice.

In the sections on Steiner, anthroposophy and music I give an overview of Steiner's work and outlook and engage with his indications and writing on music, the cosmic source of music and on the interval of the fifth in particular. I compare this with what other authors and researchers have written on the fifth and include a critique of printed music available in the mood of the fifth.

The following section looks at traditions within Steiner early childhood settings around the use and performance of music and identify what is common practice and what differs depending on the setting.

Speculative musicology "look[s] at the cosmos musically, and at music cosmically" (Godwin, 1982, p. 373). This area has clear affinities to Steiner's views on music and on the interpenetration of the spiritual and physical worlds. The section on the harmony of the spheres looks forward to the Critical Commentary on the Work (p. 127) and links to and prefaces the discussion of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the refrain in Chapter 3.

Finally, in my consideration of compositional practice, two compositional approaches are contrasted, one of conscious inspiration, the other of channelling inspiration directly. These are characterised by Rouget (1985) as the polarities of ecstasy and trance.

I begin with a section contextualising Steiner and his output for those unfamiliar with his work and philosophy.

2.1 Rudolf Steiner

2.1.1 Essential aspects of Steiner's worldview

Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) was born in present-day Croatia into modest circumstances. Educated locally in village schools, he studied maths, chemistry and physics at the Technical University in Vienna, followed by several years' work as live-in tutor to well-off families (Dahlin, 2017; Steiner, 1924/1951). At 22, he was asked to edit a new edition of Goethe's scientific writings and from the age of 29 worked at the Goethe Archive in Weimar, where he developed his Goetheanistic epistemology, and where he co-edited the works of Schopenhauer and Jean Paul among others (Easton, 1980). His earliest books are all on philosophy.¹² His best-known philosophical work, *Intuitive thinking as a spiritual path*, was based on his doctorate from the University of Rostock (1894). He revised the text several times during his life and referred to it throughout his career.

This appearance of a conventional academic was shattered in 1900 when he moved to Berlin and started frequenting and speaking at meetings of the Theosophical Society on esotericism, giving first-hand accounts of spiritual knowledge¹³ to which he claimed he

¹² These include *Goethean science: Introductions to Goethe's natural-scientific writings* (1883-1897/2018), *Goethe's theory of knowledge: An outline of the epistemology of his worldview* (1886/2008), *Truth and knowledge* (1892/1981), *Intuitive thinking as a spiritual path* (1894/1995), *Friedrich Nietzsche, fighter for freedom* (1895/1985), and *Goethe's world view* (1897/1985).

¹³ By spiritual, I here mean super-sensible or what is not gathered by means of the five senses. In different ages and in different cultures this has had many names: spiritual, occult, initiatory,

had had access since he was young. Answering a question from a colleague on why he waited till he was 40 years old before starting to speak on the esoteric, Steiner replied:

I had to make a certain position for myself in the world first. People may say nowadays that my writings are mad, but my earlier work is there also, and they cannot wholly ignore it. And moreover, I had to bring things to a certain clarity in myself, to a point where I could give them form, before it was possible to talk about them. That was not so easy. And then—I admit it frankly—it needs courage to speak openly about such things. I had first to acquire this courage. (Rittelmeyer, 1929/2013, p. 68)

The sum of Steiner's work, his philosophy or cosmology, is known as anthroposophy, or the wisdom of the human being. It is also known as spiritual science [*Geisteswissenschaft*]. Defining anthroposophy concisely is difficult, however towards the end of his life Steiner provided a succinct characterisation: "Anthroposophy is a path of knowledge which seeks to lead what is spiritual in the human being to what is spiritual in the universe" (1924/1989, p. 14). This "knowledge" is found in the complete works of Steiner, comprising some 35 books as well as around 6000 lectures which he gave in the years 1900–1925. In print, they occupy some 300 volumes (Rudolf Steiner Verlag, 2018). In addition, he designed 18 buildings (Hasler, 2010) and was active as a painter and sculptor as well as in other artistic fields (Steiner, 2010a). Steiner described anthroposophy as something experienced as a longing, as a need to question the human being's relationship to the cosmos; he likened it to hunger and thirst (Steiner, 1924/1989). It presupposes the simultaneous existence and complete interpenetration of material and nonmaterial "worlds." As a scientist and academic, he could operate in the material world and acknowledged it fully; as a "spiritual scientist" he acknowledged and operated in the nonmaterial world as well.

mystery knowledge, numinous, imaginal, holy, real. It is a 'seeing-behind-things,' in the sense of the Māori concept of *Matakite* (Ngata, 2014; Victoria University of Wellington, 2018).

Steiner felt an obligation to document and make public his understanding of the true nature of the physical world being interpenetrated by spiritual forces (1924/1928) (the relevance of this to the creative work and this exegesis is discussed on page 102). As an academic, Steiner was well aware that outlook was counter to accepted opinion and that he would be attacked for it. Steiner admits that he was “resigned from the outset to every kind of criticism” (1910/1979, p. 20), but sought to counter it by a defined investigative method.

My knowledge of things of the spirit is a direct result of my own perception, and I am fully conscious of this fact. In all the details and in the larger survey I had always to examine myself carefully as to whether every step I took in the progress of my perception was accompanied by a fully awake consciousness. Just as the mathematician advances from thought to thought without the unconscious or auto-suggestion playing a role, so—I told myself—spiritual perception must advance from objective imagination to objective imagination without anything living in the soul but the spiritual content of clear discerning consciousness. (1910/1979, p. 11)

For Steiner:

The capacities by which we can gain insights into higher worlds lie dormant within each one of us ... All we need to know is how to begin to develop these faculties for ourselves.

In actuality, esoteric or inner knowledge is no different from other kinds of human knowledge and ability. It is a mystery for the average person only to the extent that writing is a mystery for those who have not yet learned to write. Just as, given the right teaching methods, anyone can learn to write, so too anyone can become a student of esoteric knowledge, and, yes, even a teacher of it, if he or she follows the appropriate path. (1904/1994, pp. 13–15)

In his book, *How to know higher worlds* (1904/1994), Steiner outlines an “appropriate path” which interested individuals can tread towards such knowledge. It is essentially meditative (though *how* one is to meditate is left open) and forms the bedrock of anthroposophical research. I have used aspects of meditative practice from the book in the composition of the creative work (see p. 106).

2.1.2 Status of anthroposophical knowledge

Steiner died in 1925 and lived and worked in a different historical context to the present. The concept of criticality has changed in the intervening 100 years as have expectations of what constitutes methodological transparency, effectively collected and analysed data, the need for peer review and so on.

Within the anthroposophical movement, there exist numerous accounts of Steiner's life and work which more or less amount to hagiography (among others, Rittelmeyer, 1929/2013; Rudolf Steiner Press, 1993; Schubert, 1985; Schuré, 1908/1910). This approach is problematic and leads to opinion on Steiner's work being heavily polarised between "enthusiastic support and destructive criticism" (Ullrich, 1997, p. 568) with few commentators occupying the middle ground and with each "side" citing Steiner's work to bolster their position. Exceptions to this, in which authors seek to critique Steiner's philosophy, while remaining open to it, include Welburn (2004), Schickler (2005), Eftestøl (2008), Dahlin (2009, 2013, 2017), Traub (2011), Skagen (2015) and Sparby (2016) among others.

da Veiga (2014) declares that, "The radical step Steiner took was in questioning the exclusion of the super-sensible from the realm of factual knowledge" (p. 145). Although it is clear that Steiner himself saw little tension between the academic and spiritual aspects of his life (Steiner, 1925/2005), the apparent contradiction has perplexed some commentators and distressed others, leading to what da Veiga has termed "anthropophobia" (2014, p. 147). Ullrich (2008) likens anthroposophy to a neo-mythology, "a doctrine of dubious scientific credibility" while acknowledging the paradox that this same neo-mythology "has been unusually effective and successful" (2008, p. 165) in the field of education. Prange (2000) regards the purpose of Waldorf schools to be to create future generations of anthroposophists, whereas Helsper et al. (2007) see it having a tendency to demodernisation, seeking to wind the educational clock

back to less challenging times. da Veiga talks of the “discursive vacuum” (2014, p. 147) which exists to a degree around epistemological research into/using Steiner’s ideas and the lack of “elite” voices (by which it appears he means experienced academics with a deep understanding of anthroposophy) to lead debate and encourage a culture of critique. He continues saying that this apparent lack has led to external criticism becoming at times more prominent than “internal” voices, citing Zander (2011) as an example, although this has contributed to and opened up the debate in interesting ways.

It can, however, be argued that “Authentic critical discourse comes less from outside than from within a particular discipline, and should be a part of any well-founded field of knowledge” (da Veiga, 2014, p. 148). Experience of Steiner’s supporters uncritically passing on the results of Steiner’s own inquiries is unacceptable to many and Steiner’s writings can be complex, dense and difficult to access (Dahlin, 2017). Uncritical engagement with Steiner’s ideas fails to realise Steiner’s own hopes that the validity of his statements would be tested rather than just transmitted, and results in the inner work he advocated remaining undernourished.

Many who study the work of Steiner are doubtlessly working earnestly with his ideas, yet these individual efforts usually remain private and are rarely published. Steiner warns against speaking too soon about one’s own spiritual experiences (see p. 104) which may lead to some students of anthroposophy staying quiet who might otherwise consider speaking out.

However, the “proof” of any of Steiner’s ideas is up to the reader of his work to establish. da Veiga (2014) calls for “courage,” and for those interested in Steiner’s work and ideas to:

... try, however modestly, to render spiritual reality accessible, and to offer the fruits of these attempts for discussion. This is as straightforward as it is exacting. We must find a new way of working with anthroposophy. One that takes Steiner

more seriously in a methodological sense and is, at the same time, more authentic (p. 148)

Trying, however modestly, to work with Steiner's ideas, testing them through my own experience and recording the results is the path I have chosen to follow in this exegesis. I outline on page 98 how I strive to speak with an authentic voice and out of first-person experience.

2.1.3 Steiner and child development

As the study focusses on Steiner's indications for music for young children, it is important to assess how Steiner's view on human development differs from that of other theorists. For Steiner, the developmental stages of a growing person are discontinuous, that is, that the human being develops in particular stages, that each stage has a beginning and an end with certain kinds of behaviour present in each stage. This he has in common with a range of developmental psychologists including Piaget (1977), Erikson (1950/1993), Montessori (Lawrence, 2015), Kohlberg (1973) and Maslow (Pichère, 2015).

A critique levelled at discontinuous models of development is that human development is a gradual accumulation of abilities and skills which moves smoothly rather than at a predetermined speed and does not take place in a given order. Largo, a Swiss children's doctor and researcher on longitudinal studies into child development, explores possible middle ground between these positions (2012). He charts a range of aspects of child development: physical, intellectual, and socio-emotional, as well as in development in writing, reading, mathematics, drawing, singing and gymnastics. He identifies the manifold ways in which children express their uniqueness, suggestive of continuous models of development. At the same time, he points out how each individual contains within itself great diversity; few children show equal facility at maths, singing and drawing, as well as a single level in their physical, intellectual and socio-emotional development. When all these diverse aspects of the growing child are considered together,

he suggests, it is possible to see aspects of discontinuous stages being illustrated. This more nuanced notion of child development which is neither continuous nor discontinuous is explored by Loebell (2016) with regards to Waldorf education.

For Steiner, the human being is threefold and comprises a body or physical aspect, a soul aspect and a spiritual aspect (Steiner, 1910/1997). His picture of a human life spans an existence before birth to after death when the human soul sojourns in the spiritual world before reincarnating. The first 30 or so years of life are a gradual incarnation process (literally, coming into the body) and the end of life is then a gradual exarnation process leading up to death. In Steiner education, the essential feature of childhood is this incarnation process and the task of the educator is to regulate and facilitate the incarnation process for the general well-being of the growing child (1919/1996, 1923/1988, 1923/2004).

Like Classical philosophers (among others Aristotle, 340BCE/2008; Philo of Alexandria, c.30CE/1981), Steiner divides the human lifespan into seven-year periods. The period of childhood in focus in this study is the first heptomad, from birth to the seventh year. For Steiner, it is the task of the newly born child to find the way to accustom itself to life on earth after a period in the spiritual world prior to birth, to slowly become more comfortable in its body and more able to control it. In doing this, it gradually becomes increasingly aware of its surroundings and the people in those surroundings.

Steiner talks frequently about the importance of a child's surroundings, physical and emotional, as well as spiritual. He describes the young child as "all sense organ" (1922/2004, p. 8), completely open to all sense experiences and unable to defend itself against them.

Children need a great deal of sleep because they are like a whole sense organ; they would otherwise be unable to endure the dazzle and noise of the outer world. Just as the eye must close to the dazzling sunlight, likewise this sense organ—the child—must shut itself off against the world. (Steiner, 1922/2004, p. 7)

In turn, the young child imitates all it encounters as instinctive reaction. It has no filter but accepts everything with the same openness. Providing sense impressions which are healthy and activities which are worthy of being imitated is then the primary pedagogy for young children based on Steiner's work. Steiner states, "In children, spirit is closer to the body than in adults" (1922/2004, p. 4) and that the early childhood educator is "called on to work with the unconscious spirit, to link [themselves] not only with the natural, but with the divine order of the world" (1922/2004, p. 5). This study seeks to explore working with what Steiner here calls the 'unconscious spirit' of the young child. It investigates the writing of music for young children whose connection to the spirit is just as strong as to the physical world by investigating how music itself exists in this between-world state between its physical manifestation and cosmic source (see p. 110 below).

Although it is necessary, especially today, for people to be completely awake in later life, it is equally necessary to let children live in their gentle dreamy experiences as long as possible, so that they move slowly into life. They need to remain as long as possible in their imaginations and pictorial capacities without intellectuality. (Steiner, 1923/2004, pp. 103–104)

Regarding the young child and music, Steiner talks about the importance of musical experiences in early childhood and of young children's innate musicality:

Human nature, we will find, is such that we are, in a way, born musicians. ... We are born into the world in a way that makes us want to join the world with our own bodily nature in a musical rhythm and relationship; this inner musical capacity is strongest in children during their third and fourth years. (Steiner, 1919/2000, p. 12)

In Steiner education, it is only when the first seven-year period is coming to a close, after the sixth birthday, that the child is considered ready for school and for formal education (Rawson & Rose, 2002). While this is considered "late" to begin school in New Zealand, it is in common in the large majority of countries.¹⁴

¹⁴ According to data from the World Bank, 5% of countries by population start formal schooling at 5, 81% at 6 and 13% at 7 (World Bank, 2018).

2.2 Steiner and music

For Steiner, music is a reflection of its source in the spiritual world. How this relates to the interval of the fifth, a core concept of this study, is covered from page 37 below. The notion of music being of the cosmos has been referred to for millennia as “the harmony of the spheres” or *musica mundana* (Godwin, 1982, 1986). Steiner refers to the harmony of the spheres on numerous occasions, citing it as an end point on the journey towards esoteric knowledge, “a path leading to a narrow gate” (1904/1970, p. 22).

When a person develops within himself [sic] the qualities of equanimity, inner calm and peace, as well as the other virtues mentioned above, he nourishes this flame with the right sustenance. If a person is able to keep silent and utter only significant, lofty thoughts, if he lives in love-filled existence and his life becomes one of divine worship, all the world around him will begin to “sound.” This is what Pythagoras called, “music of the spheres.” This is by no means meant symbolically, it is a reality. (pp. 21–22)

Writing on the harmony of the spheres is explored in further detail (see p. 68). Steiner names the spiritual realm in which the harmony of the spheres sounds as Upper Devachan,¹⁵ using traditional Indian terminology. For Steiner, the physical world and the spiritual world interpenetrate; they exist simultaneously (see p. 27). The challenge of terminology and the questions of the “location” of the spiritual world is covered in greater detail in Chapter 3, page 115.

Whenever anyone falls asleep, his astral body¹⁶ goes out from his physical body; his soul then lives in the Devachanic world. Its harmonies make an impression on his soul; they vibrate through it in waves of living sound, so that every morning he wakes from the music of the spheres, and out of this realm of harmony he passes into the everyday world. Just as the human soul has a sojourn in Devachan between incarnations, so we can say that during the night the soul rejoices in flowing tones of

¹⁵ Steiner took this term from theosophical tradition. It is a Hindi-Tibetan compound (Hindi: *deva*=spirit; Tibetan: *chan*=home) meaning the dwelling place of the gods.

¹⁶ Steiner describes the nature of the human being as being fourfold, comprising a physical body, and ‘body’ of life forces or etheric body (maintaining health, regulating growth), an ‘astral’ body (emotions, instincts) and ego or self (Steiner, 1910/1997). In waking life, these four are intimately bound together. In sleep, the astral body and ego loosen their connection with the physical and etheric bodies, though the human being is unconscious of this.

music: they are the very element out of which it is itself woven and they are its true home.

The composer translates into physical sounds the rhythms and harmonies which at night imprint themselves on his astral body. Unconsciously he takes his model from the spiritual world. He has in himself the harmonies which he translates into physical terms. That is the secret connection between the music which resounds in the physical world and the hearing of spiritual music during the night. But the relation of physical music to this spiritual music is like that of a shadow to the object which casts it. (Steiner, 1906 & 1923/1983, p. 5)

This is reminiscent of Plato's allegory of the Cave in Book Seven of *The Republic* (Plato, 380 BCE/2007). In his influential source book of accounts recorded over millennia of the harmony of the spheres, Godwin finds that Steiner's explanation of the source and effect of music is authoritative, commenting:

In plain language Steiner provides here a key to certain mysteries of music which other authors have only fumbled or hinted at. He shows where it comes from, and how [we perceive it] (a modern version of *musica mundana*), and how it affects us (*musica humana*). With his lectures esoteric music theory finally becomes exoteric, for they provide a context in which many of the older ideas at last become comprehensible. (1986, p. 252)

These quotations illustrate the centrality of spiritual existence to Steiner's cosmology. His hope to "[lead] the spiritual in the human being to the spiritual in the universe" (1924/2007, p. 14) is expressed in his detailed description of "where [music] comes from," and how it is connected to us as human beings. This is something I explore in my own work (see p. 148 seqq.).

2.2.1 From interval to single tone

In most of Steiner's references to music in his lectures, he mentions the importance of the interval, of the space between two notes being where the music itself lies. In this way, the essential aspect of music becomes, paradoxically, what is inaudible, not what is audible.

What is the musical element? It is what you do not hear! That which you hear is never musical. If you take the experience which exists in time, which lies between two notes of a melody, then you hear nothing or it is only the notes themselves which are audible. What you inaudibly experience between the notes, that is music

in reality, for that is the spiritual element of the matter, whereas the other is the sensory manifestation of it. (Steiner, 1924/2013, p. 64)

However, in 1915 (Kurtz & Steiner, 2012/2016), Steiner had already begun speaking about the possibility of “an expansion of our capacity to experience tone itself”¹⁷ (1906 & 1920–23/1989, p. 48). In 1920, he asked an audience, “Does it make any sense to say that ... the single tone can already be experienced as a melody if one plumbs its depths?” (1906 & 1920–23/1989, p. 49). “I believe that there is a clearly discernible tendency today ... to enter more deeply into the tone itself” (pp. 61–62). “We will experience the tone as an opening that the gods have made from the world of the spirit which lies beyond us into this physical, sensory world” (p. 94). “We shall climb through the note of the physical-material world into the spiritual world” (Steiner, 1914–5/1996, p. 104). When asked how this was to be done, Steiner answered simply, “Go deeper into the note!”¹⁸ (p. 51).

This parallels aspects of Hindu music practice and theory regarding the depth to which one can engage with a single note.

With the opening of the *Swara*, the single note, which looked so closed and narrow, becomes spacious. We find that in each note there are directions such as up and down, sides and depths, curves and textures of every kind, from grainy rough surfaces to velveteen and to those that shine like shot silk. There are various facets to each note and even moods. It now becomes a fit vehicle to express the musician’s inner reaches. (Menon, 2000, p. 36)

Further, the concentration on a single object—here a note—resembles the traditional meditative technique for achieving higher meditative states or *Samādhi* (Biswas, 2011; Clarke & Kini, 2011). The first music conference held in the Goetheanum, Switzerland in the year after Steiner’s death, was noticeably European in content with a single exception; one of the evening lectures was given by Maheboob Khan, who concluded the evening with a performance of Indian music (Kurtz, 2015). It is not recorded why Indian

¹⁷ The question and answer session these quotations come from is not included in English translation of the lecture cycle (Steiner, 1906 & 1923/1983).

¹⁸ “*Tiefer in den Ton hineingehen!*”

music in particular was chosen for this occasion and if connections were being drawn between it and Steiner's approach to music. Though it has to remain conjecture, I put forward that it could have been because similarities were being drawn between Steiner's music in a single tone and the Hindu notion of the opening of the *swara*.

The notion of the creative capacity of individual tones, speaks to and supports the brevity of the pieces within the creative work (see p. 11). How it has influenced the composition of the creative work and the methods adopted is mentioned from page 145. Aspects of Hindu musicology are worked with further in the end contemplation of the creative work (p. 164).

The notion of music within a single tone appears to have met with little immediate resonance or understanding on the part of Steiner's audience: "none of these things are what I meant" (cited in Kurtz & Steiner, 2012/2016, p. 212). However, in the intervening years, the field of study has expanded beyond the bounds of Hindu thought. When approaching a tone meditatively, Hartmann (2010) isolates 12 different stages in listening to a single note, from preparation [*Höranfang*] to aftereffect, "I sense that I am different after this tone has been in me"¹⁹ (p. 18). Schriefer also concentrates on the dying away and aftereffect of the tone, arguing that the element of the diminuendo, becoming ever quieter, allows one to listen more to the qualitative nature of the note and become more sensitive to it (2015), whereas Mögelin talks about connecting oneself with a note more strongly in order to experience its nature by "creeping inside [it]" (n.d./2015), reminiscent of Menon when he talks of a tone having "up and down, sides and depths, curves and textures of every kind" (2000, p. 36).

¹⁹ German: *Ich spüre, ich bin ein anderer geworden, nachdem dieser Ton in mir war.* (Trans. author)

2.2.2 The interval of the fifth

Smith and Williams note (1999),

Musicians often claim that even small sound units such as musical intervals, which consist of only two notes and are thus the smallest musical phrases possible, differ from each other not only in pitch relationship, but also in “feel,” that each has an emotional quality, or meaning of its own and that these emotional qualities are commonly, rather than idiosyncratically, perceived. (p. 385).

There is a body of research into the emotional quality of intervals, often referencing Husmann’s Theory of Consonance²⁰ (1953), discussed further on page 42. However, this research has not been extended to any extent into how isolated intervals or intervals within a melody might affect the human being (Smith & Williams, 1999).

This section looks at the interval of the fifth first as perceived by Steiner and then in other contexts.

2.2.3 Steiner’s interpretation of the fifth

Steiner wrote and spoke about music in unfailingly cosmic terms. In *Eurythmy as visible singing* (1924/2013),²¹ he characterised the inner qualities of different intervals from the prime/tonic to the octave and beyond. He locates the experience of some intervals as “within” the human being and others “outside”: the larger intervals are more “cosmic” (outside the human being) and smaller ones more “earthly” (within the human being). The significance of the fifth is that it lies between the two.

To Steiner, the experience of the third (major and minor) “is one of consolidation of the inner being, of man’s becoming aware of the human being within himself”; one “experiences the interval of the third inwardly” (Steiner, 1906 & 1923/1983, p. 61). In the fourth, “[t]he human being ... senses not the outer [physical] world but the spiritual

²⁰ That the ear hears as ‘consonant’ those intervals which occur earlier in the natural series of overtones (i.e. octave, perfect fifth, major third).

²¹ Eurythmy is a form of movement initiated by Steiner. It is performed to both the spoken word as well as music. It is a curriculum subject in Steiner schools, is practised as a stage art and has therapeutic applications.

world,” “he beholds himself from outside” (Steiner, 1906 & 1923/1983, p. 61), “precisely at the border of his humanness, retaining it, yet viewing it from the other side” (p. 62).

Coming to the fifth, Steiner states “We can experience the scales as [if] we live in two worlds, the inwardly physical and the spiritual. In the *fifth*, we experience a kind of midpoint, the ability to breathe in and out” (1906 & 1923/1983, p. 55), where “we reach the boundary of the human and the cosmic, where the cosmic resounds into the sphere of the human and the human, consumed with longing, yearns to rush forth into the Cosmos” (Steiner, 1906/1986, p. 220).

Descriptions of the experience of the fifth being at the boundary of the physical and spiritual worlds are found many times in Steiner’s work, sometimes alone, sometimes in reference to other intervals. As the essence of the fifth is central to this work, I quote Steiner here at some length. In his description of the major triad²² Steiner places the fifth as expansive and the third as contractive.

The experience of the fifth brings awareness of man within the divine world order. The experience of the fifth is, as it were, an expansion into the vast universe, while the experience of the third is a return of the human being into the structure of his own organization. (1906 & 1923/1983, p. 61)

Just as for Steiner, a true portrayal of the human being would have to express both its spiritual and a physical nature, so he saw the interval of the fifth as a reflection of this this spiritual–earthly nature.

Naturally such things can only be expressed in the language of feeling—nevertheless, [we can say] the fifth is the human being. It is exactly as if the human being inwardly extended as far as his skin, as if he laid hold of his own skin and enclosed himself off within it. The fifth is the skin as it encloses the human being. And never, in the realm of musical sounds, can the human being feel his humanity so strongly as he does when he is experiencing the fifth in relation to the keynote. (1924/1977, pp. 32–33)

²² Comprising the tonic, major third and perfect fifth.

He goes so far as to state that, in this regard, “the fifth *is* the human being,” that, in its nature, it represents the cosmic–earthly nature of the human condition.

The remarkable thing about the fifth is that when the human being holds the keynote and the interval of the fifth from it, he feels he is a completed human being. The fifth *is* the human being ... The fifth [is a] form-giving, completing element. One is held back, just as the human form is held together and enclosed by the skin. (Steiner, 1924/1977, pp. 32, 34)

Steiner is clear that, to him, the fifth occupies border territory between the spiritual and the earthly; “it is like a magic wand that conjures up the secrets of the music world over there, out of unfathomable depths” (Steiner, 1914–5/1996, p. 107). Furthermore, that it is the task of artistic creativity to “harmonise the spiritual-divine with the physical-earthly” in the human being (1923/1986, p. 46). He allies experiencing musical intervals to breathing (see below). Breathing itself can be seen as mediating between what lies outside the human being and what is inside. In the act of breathing, the breath is inhaled into the body then exhaled into the cosmos. For Steiner, smaller intervals can be experienced on the inbreath, while larger ones are allied to the outbreath. The interval of the fifth has elements of both and mediates between the two.

The musical element, however, does not live in me at all; it lives in inhalation and exhalation. Man felt always as if he were leaving and returning to himself in the musical experience. The fifth comprised both inhalation and exhalation; the seventh comprised only exhalation. The third enabled man to experience the continuation of the breathing process within. (Steiner, 1906 & 1923/1983, pp. 55–56)

Just as what is harmonically acceptable in different periods has changed over time, Steiner states that the experience of intervals has changed also. In particular, he mentions the experience of the fifth in the period before diatonic harmony became established.

Modern man does not have the experience of the fifth that still existed, let us say, four to five hundred years before our era. At that time the human being truly felt in the experience of the fifth, “I stand within the spiritual world.” (1906 & 1923/1983, p. 62)

In a much weakened form this musical experience was still present in the post-Atlantean age,²³ when mainly the interval of the fifth was experienced. This must not be compared with our present experience of the fifth. Today the fifth gives us the impression of an empty shell. In the best sense of the word we feel the fifth to be empty. It has become empty because the Gods have withdrawn from mankind. (Steiner, 1923/1983, p. 34)

Steiner speaks in numerous places about the human body itself being musically formed (see p. 70). In a discussion with eurythmists, Steiner points out the structure of the lungs, that the left lung has two lobes whereas the right lung has three (various/2002).

[The human being] is built up on the ratio of 2:3. Within himself, the human being is related from left to right in the ratio 2:3. The lung on the right side is constructed according to the number three, and on the left according to the number two. This is inwardly musical. Here you have the fifth in the relationship of the lungs to each other. ... The whole human being up to the surface of his skin is the fifth [see above] but is also inwardly built in this way. This, that he is a fifth, penetrates the whole human being. (pp. 140–141)

Just as the fifth, to Steiner, has the ability to “breathe in and out” (see p. 38), so the ratio of lobes in the lungs in the ratio 2:3 is itself a bodily incorporation of the fifth.²⁴ Steiner comments that, as the fifth lives on the boundary world of the skin, so the lungs can be thought of as forming a “skin” for the blood (Husemann, 2002), the organ which is constantly mediating between within and without, itself in a state of interbeing.

In the lecture series, *Art in the light of mystery wisdom* (Steiner, 1914–5/1996), Steiner talks about how different arts relate to different aspects of the human being. He accords intervals to different capacities of the human being. It is beyond the scope of this study to go into this in detail, however he states that “the fifth is experienced in the part of the astral body that corresponds to the consciousness or spiritual soul” (p. 43). Elsewhere,

²³ In Steiner’s cosmology, we are living in the fifth “post-Atlantean age” or epoch, each epoch being 2160 years long (1910/1997). 2160 years is the length of time taken for the vernal equinox to move through one sign of the sidereal zodiac (30°). The length of time for the vernal equinox to move through the whole zodiac is then called a Platonic year (2160 x 12 or 25,920 years) (Oxford University Press, 2018).

²⁴ This references the mathematical relationship between the notes of the fifth.

Steiner mentions the consciousness soul as the element of the human soul which is being developed in the current period.²⁵

These understandings are compared below to what others have written on experiences of the fifth.

2.2.4 Others' interpretations of the fifth

Just over a hundred years ago, Werner published the results of a Swiss study into the development of children's singing (1917). His findings indicated that when children were asked to create their own melodies, they "chose a small number of tones, small vocal range, small intervals, falling directions and continuous repetitions" (Stadler Elmer, 2011, p. 14). He developed Interval Recognition Theory which states that human beings possess innate structures which lead them to recognise and process intervals in a particular developmental order, and that singing development follows this order.²⁶ According to the theory, "singing emerges around the scale's fifth note, followed by a descending minor third, then one tone above the dominant is added" (Stadler Elmer, 2011, p. 14). Interval acquisition theory proved influential in research into children's singing for several decades (among others, see Kube, 1958; Metzler, 1961; Roederer, 1973).

Later researchers, including Klusen (1970), McKernon (1979), and Dowling (1984) found that no invariable sequence of intervals can be observed in the development of children's singing while Nattiez (1977) and Netti (2000) note further that intervals themselves cannot be seen as universal, as pitches are neither stable nor fixed. However, aspects of interval recognition theory have continued to appear in research into young

²⁵ Steiner isolates three soul qualities: the sentient soul, the intellectual soul and the consciousness soul (Steiner, 1910/1997). Elan Leibner (2017) effectively characterises these three soul capacities as the *Desiring soul*, the *Explaining or planning soul*, and the *Empathetic soul*.

²⁶ Interval acquisition theory has similarities to aspects of aural tests in traditional music exams in which candidates are required to sing back and then name intervals, beginning in the lower grades with the 'consonant' ones before moving to those which are classed as dissonant.

children's song, for instance in Davies' study of songs created by children aged 5–7 (1992) and Moog's on how young children react to and appear to experience music (1976). Ongoing research at the University of Gent (Ho et al., 2018) indicates that, of all intervals occurring in global musics, the most common, after the octave, is the fifth.

In contrast, in her study, *The child-song genre: A comparison of songs by and for children* (1991), Campbell compares songs which young children create for themselves in their play to songs they are otherwise taught or encouraged to sing. She reports in the study that “it became immediately apparent that the majority of songs [taught to children] were unsuitable for children. ... When the text was fitting for children, the music often was not, due to extensive ranges of at least one-and-a-half octaves, modulating and/or chromatic melodies that made extensive use of half-steps, and complex changing rhythm” (p. 16). Campbell found that songs by children (preschool to age eight, recorded in playgrounds) were predominantly simple, repetitive, and with a small intervallic range, fundamentally based around the interval of a descending minor third. Ten of the fourteen songs recorded were within the range of a fifth. Campbell is in concordance with Moog (1976) when he says that:

As far as awareness of harmony is concerned, the tests give an absolutely unequivocal result: children of pre-school age cannot yet experience any sort of harmony at all. The pre-school child still lacks the ability to analyse notes of different pitch when he [sic] hears them simultaneously, and to relate the individual sounds to one another. (p. 44)

How this approach has fed into my creative work is detailed on page 119.

Husmann devised a theory of physiological responses to intervals. His *Theory of Consonance* (1953) states that, in the act of hearing, notes are created within the human ear in addition to those being heard. There are two kinds of such notes: the “subjective overtones” of the sounded note and “combination tones” (Smith & Williams, 1999, p. 384). These combination tones arise when more than one tone is sounded at the same time

(e.g. in an interval). When an interval is sounded, the partials (or overtones) combine to form combination tones. If the combination tones coincide with overtones of one of the fundamentals, that fundamental is amplified. If they do not coincide, it is “distorted.” Husmann states that it is for this reason that some intervals are more easily recognised by the ear than others. Fully acknowledging that cultural acclimatisation plays a part, Husmann nonetheless states that some “consonances” occur as “points of light” (1953, p. 7) in the melodic-harmonic texture; these consonant intervals amplify the fundamental strongly. Although Husmann never says what these intervals actually are, he attests that young children process consonances more easily than dissonances for this reason. A similar position is taken by Helmholtz (1863/1913). If the intervals which in Western musicology are called “perfect” are taken as “consonant,” we would have the perfect octave, perfect fifth and perfect fourth. These are also the intervals which are expressed by the simplest harmonic ratios 2:1 (octave), 3:2 (fifth) and 4:3 (fourth).

Taking Husmann’s Theory of Consonance, Smith and Williams (1999) derive a parallel theory as to why some intervals are perceived as peaceful or relaxed while others are tense and jarring. Intervals which are consonant are perceived as more peaceful (for Husmann, amplifying the fundamental) and dissonances are perceived as more tense (disrupting the fundamental). This they then tested in their study and found that, despite the “simple” nature of intervals, they are able to generate consistent and definite emotions and responses in children of different ages across cultures. This supports the earlier work of Shetler (1987) and Trainor and Trehub (1993) who identified a commonality of intervallic responses across cultures and that melodies from disparate cultures not infrequently share intervallic patterns (see also Bjorkvold, 1990; Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957; Unyk, Trehub, Trainor, & Schellenberg, 1992).

As mentioned on page 37, the characteristics of different intervals have long been discussed among musicians, including assertions that responses to them have “a

universal, not a personal, concept” (Nordoff & Robbins, 2007, p. 42). At the end of the European Renaissance, the German polymath Athanasius Kirchner (1602–1680) wrote his vast *Musurgia universalis*, in which he gives concordances between intervals (from unison to the tenth) sounded by the *Enneachord*,²⁷ the nine-stringed instrument of the cosmos, the strings of which comprise the fixed stars, seven planets and earth. The concordances for the perfect fifth are given below (Table 1).

Table 1 *Concordances for the fifth*

Kircher (1650), as given in Godwin (1986, pp. 158–159)

	Ennea- chord 1	Enn. II	Enn. III	Enn. IV	Enn. V	Enn. VI	Enn. VII	Enn. VIII	Enn. IX	Enn. X
	<i>Spiritual hierarchy</i>	<i>Heavenly body</i>	<i>Mineral</i>	<i>Stones</i>	<i>Plant</i>	<i>Tree</i>	<i>Aquatic</i>	<i>Bird</i>	<i>Quadruped</i>	<i>Colour</i>
Perfect fifth	Virtues	Sun	Gold	Garnet	Sunflower	Lotus, laurel	Dolphin	Cock	Lion	Gold

Cooke (1959) investigates the “expressive functions” of intervals, giving numerous examples from a range of pieces of music to illustrate their emotional content, investigating to what extent these characteristics are constant over a wide range of occurrences. Costa, Bitti and Bonfiglioli (2000) take Cooke’s characteristics and supplement them with a range of others gathered across centuries (including Castiglione,

²⁷ Greek: nine strings.

1959; Galilei, 1638; Gervasoni, 1800; Rousseau, 1782; Steiner, 1906 & 1923/1983; Tartini, 1754) to create a table. The entry for the fifth reads (Table 2):

Table 2 *Information about musical intervals and their expressiveness*

(taken from Cooke, 1959, pp. 89–90)

Interval name	Sample notes	Theoretical status	Expressive function according to Cooke	Expressive function according to other authors
Perfect fifth	C–G	Perfect consonance	Emotionally neutral: context of flux, intermediacy	Consonant, pleasurable, stimulating, gentle, acrimonious, healthy, agreeable

Costa, Bitti and Bonfiglioli consider there to be little literature on the psychological effect of intervals as “most researchers in the area—having taken this for granted—have concentrated on other areas of research” (2000, p. 6). One of the exceptions to this is the early study by Kameoka and Kuriyagawa (1969) which looks at dyads²⁸ to assess their qualities in respect to opposites—for instance, ugly-beautiful, empty-full, wide-narrow.

The Belgian music pedagogue Willems (1977) wrote about intervals within the octave, ascribing to each a “sensorial,” an “affective” and an “intellective” quality. The entries for the perfect fifth are shown in Table 3.

²⁸ Two (different) tones sounding together, a two-note chord.

Table 3 *Expressive values of intervals*

(taken from Costa et al, 2000, p. 9)

Interval	Sensorial	Affective	Intellective
Perfect fifth	Balance, emptiness	Love, calm	Certainty, mastery

Husemann (2013) reports of a flautist investigated at the University of Zürich’s Institute of Neurophysiology who reported synaesthetic correlations between intervals and taste. The interval of the fifth he reported as having the quality of “pure water” (p. 28).

For a recent pedagogical discussion on working with intervals in the context of music education in a Steiner school (as opposed to an early childhood setting) see Eftestøl (2018).

There is a number of articles of empirical research by academics with no links to Steiner education whose findings have some concordance with Steiner’s indications on early childhood music education. These include Stadler Elmer (2011) on the development of listening in childhood, Campbell (1991, 1998) on songs created by young children, Feierabend, Saunders, Holahan, and Getnick (1998) on musical memory, Goddard-Blythe (2008) on the importance of music for brain maturation, Moog (1976) and Guilbault (2004) on the affect of musical accompaniments on the singing of young children, Hargreaves (1986) on children's thinking and musical development, and Veldhuis (1992) on singing with young children. To my knowledge, no one within or without the Steiner education movement has assessed how these two literatures interact or run a comparative study which includes children in Steiner early childhood settings.

2.3 The mood of the fifth

I consider first what authors and practitioners have written about music in the mood of the fifth. Following this, I review music which has been written for young children for use in Steiner early childhood settings.

2.3.1 Textual writing about the mood of the fifth

There is a growing body of academic study and research into Steiner early childhood practice and theory from beyond the Steiner community (see, among others, Boyd, 2017; Chou, 2014; Follari, 2015; Nicol & Taplin, 2017; O'Connor & Angus, 2012; Pavlovic, Petrovic & Miljkovic, 2017; Suggate, Schaughency, & Reese, 2011) and aspects of Steiner practice are found in non-Steiner settings with greater frequency (Goral, 2009; Waldorf without walls, 2018). However, there is a significant lack of independent research or study into Steiner early childhood music practice or music in the mood of the fifth. There appears to have been little intensive engagement with Steiner's indications on music for young children outside of Steiner settings; exceptions include Nicol and Taplin (2012) and Ledbetter Eterman (1990). Within the available literature on music in the mood of the fifth, there is a lack of critical reflection as mentioned below (p. 49), a widespread tendency within Steiner education highlighted by da Veiga (2014) which leads to what he calls a "reflection vacuum" (p. 147).

There are no clear answers as to why non-Steiner early childhood practitioners and theorists have not engaged strongly with Steiner's ideas on music in early childhood, when other practical aspects of the education have found more widespread appreciation (Nicol, 2016). One reason could be that the uncritical passing on of anecdotes and sayings by Steiner practitioners without them having been strongly penetrated by critical understanding has not drawn the interest of others (which would show the importance of uniting percept with concept mentioned on page 19).

Rediscovery of listening

Weidenfeld (2001) states that the tonality of the mood of the fifth is “foreign, difficult to hear and still harder to sing” (p. 8) and that it seeks to “provide a child-friendly point of opposition to [what is otherwise] the very head-focused music education” (p. 8) offered to young children. In this she agrees with Gembris (1987) for whom “the musical world of children is different again from that of the adult” (p. 140).

Long-Breipohl also comments that “it is not easy for educators to embrace the kind of refined, objective musical quality in which Steiner wanted young children to be immersed,” that it is “contrary to what would satisfy the musical taste of most contemporaries” and “requires educators to forego their own musical preferences” (2013, pp. 17–18). For Harshmann this music is often “not very pleasing to the adult ear,” it is “empty and uninteresting [and] can be quite boring” (2013, p. 49). In Chapter 4, (p. 127), I outline how my appreciation of music in the mood of the fifth has altered over time, and what I see as some of the challenges of composing in this medium.

Beilharz (2003) explores the idea that a reacclimatisation of aural expectations is needed in order to work with music in the mood of the fifth effectively.

If you want to adequately meet younger children musically, you must abandon the point of view of "normal" adult musical experience (inwardness, musical "gravity" [*Schwerkraft*] and spatial directionality, i.e. thirds, referencing the tonic, octave tension [*Oktavspannung*], etc.) and adapt a more fluid, light, flexible [*agogisch bewegt*²⁹], non-spatial and experiential style which is not inwardly directed [*nicht von Innerlichkeit geprägtem Erlebnisduktus*]. (Beilharz, 2003, p. 2)

Gromicko notes that through working with music in the mood of the fifth, she has “gradually develop[ed] objectivity and openness to the world of sense perception” (2013, p. 58), while Knierim (1970/2009) hopes that such music will counter the “musica ex

²⁹ *Agogik* (German) is a word which is not covered by a single English equivalent and is not in common use. It contains elements of “rallentando, accelerando, rubato, pause, [and] accentuation” (The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music, 2013). I have here translated it as “flexible.”

machina” which is otherwise offered in the present day. He asks how adults are able to rediscover a childlike response to music by learning from children whose hearing is “undeformed” [*unverbildet*] (p. 9). Beilharz states that if a person wants to gain an understanding and “feel” of the mood of the fifth and “practices in the aforementioned tonal space,³⁰ [they] will—with some patience—be able to discover [their own] “vehicle” [*Fahrzeug*] with which they can approach the world of experience of the younger children musically with success” (2003, p. 1).

Many authors (including Aulie, 2013; Beilharz, 1997, 2003; Long-Breipohl, 2013; Taplin, 2013; Winship, 2013) reference the work of Knierim, a pioneer in the field of Waldorf music pedagogy and who was active for much of the twentieth century. The rediscovery of listening is the aim of Knierim’s book, *Quintenlieder* (songs of fifths), as its subtitle shows—*Practice book for adults who want to sing, play and dance with children under the age of nine*. Knierim himself did not intend the pieces of music in it to be anything other than a set of aural readjustment exercises for adults, and he was reportedly unhappy that they have since been adopted as prime examples of music for young children (E. Winship, personal communication, October 15, 2011). As mentioned above (p. 47), one possible reason this might be is the apparent scarcity of critical voices extending the literature and understanding of this kind of music to a significant degree.

The “discursive vacuum”

This quotation by da Veiga (2014, p. 147) can be used to refer to the scarcity of questioning voices within the sphere of Steiner early childhood music. For Thompson, “Steiner is an amazing visionary, but if one becomes a fundamentalist follower of his, an Anthroposophist constantly intoning “*Der Doktor hat gesagt*”³¹ then one destroys the

³⁰ i.e. goes through the series of aural exercises suggested by Knierim (1970/2009), or similar.

³¹ German: literally ‘The doctor [Steiner] said’. In German-speaking anthroposophical circles it is sometimes abbreviated to DDHG.

spirit with the letter of literalism . . . , [l]iteralism [being] often the affliction that followers inflict on their more imaginative leaders” (1998, p. 79). Dahlin extends this, identifying the “imminent hermeneutic” (2017, p. 5) of much writing on Waldorf education, in that “that addresses itself to those who are already in tune with the underlying ways of thinking” (p. 6). Rawson comments further on this view, stating that “critique can be seen as disloyalty to a good cause that already has to deal with lack of acceptance,” and that supporters of Steiner’s work “want to *affirm* rather than *question* their core values, principles and practice” (2018, p. 17. Emphasis in original.).

These statements can be applied to some of the works mentioned in the previous section. When introducing their work on the mood of the fifth, a number of authors use phrases such as “Rudolf Steiner tells us that” (Foster, 2013b, p. xi; Gromicko, 2013, p. 56), “Rudolf Steiner reminds us that” (Foster, 2013b, p. xii), and similar accepting comments. Winship, a trained musician and composer herself, writes that “Steiner’s ‘moods of fifths’ are still a mystery inviting much further work, discussion and exploration” (2013, p. 9). “Mystery” is a word used also by Ellersiek (2013) and Lyman (2013) in this context. The absence of inquiring practitioners extending the field leads Harshmann to be “not sure if anyone really knows for certain” what the mood of the fifth is (2013, p. 48).

Winship stresses that it is important to remain flexible regarding music in the mood of the fifth, not remaining too fixed to one interpretation (2013, p. 9), as does Beilharz (2003): “Anyone who thinks that Steiner’s mood of the fifth is enshrined [in certain tones] is mistaken” (p. 1). At the same time, Aulie speaks of the “letter of the law” (2013, p. 5) which suggests a degree of compulsion and a lack of flexibility around the concept.

Numerous instances can be found in the work of Steiner where he strongly advocates taking what he says and writes as a hypothesis which needs then to be proven in action or by applying common sense. “People really take spiritual science far too much as merely

a theory or as simply something to be enjoyed. However, it must be studied in a living way” (Steiner, 1916/1990, p. 159).

In this study, I engage with concepts and suggestions by Steiner and seek to investigate them to discover their potential to inform the writing of music. “This is as straightforward as it is exacting” (da Veiga, 2014, p. 148) and is, I believe, in line with Steiner’s intentions, to take his suggestions as hypothesis and test them in practice.

Musical elements

Opinions of what constitutes appropriate content of music in the mood of the fifth are contested. Here I briefly outline positions taken regarding rhythm, range and tonal centre. I have chosen these to discuss as my understanding of and positioning in relation to these elements changed greatly over the course of this doctoral work (see Critical Commentary on the Work from page 127).

Regarding rhythm, Long-Breipohl uses a comment by Steiner to support her conviction that music in the mood of the fifth needs to have a “lively rhythm, [so] the child will not get tired of them” (2013, pp. 20–21) and that one should “look more at the liveliness of rhythm rather than the content of the music” in order to lay a solid foundation for the development of the will (p. 20).

We are born into the world in a way that makes us want to join the world with our own bodily nature in a musical rhythm and relationship; this inner musical capacity is strongest in children during their third and fourth years. (Steiner, 1919/2000, p. 12)

A counterview is given by Ellersiek (2013) who emphasises the importance of a rocking quality, which reminds the child of the pulse which it heard in the womb. With “beat,” on which lively rhythm would depend:

... all living streaming and breathing is destroyed. It has a deadly effect on all music execution ... One should spare children ... the rule of measure, beat and fixed note value, for these are a harmful, disturbing, even destructive interference for the child. (p. 14)

Gembris notes that it is easier for a child “to clap the rhythm of speech than a regular beat” (1987, p. 142). Knierim cautions against a strong sense of beat; “... the young child does not yet have a fixed metric sense, i.e. a feeling for the whole bar or the beat. One should be very conscientious in de-emphasising the beat” (Knierim, 1970/2009, p. 11).

Opinions regarding the range of pieces and where their tonal centre should be is also disputed. For Long-Breipohl “simple melodies based on two, three or five tones are most appropriate” (Long-Breipohl, 2013, p. 20), whereas for Ellersiek, “The entire space comprises not an octave but a ninth interval in which everything is in balance” (2010, p. 14). This view is advocated by Lyman (2013), Knierim (1970/2009), Foster (2013a) and Taplin (2013). I outline on page 159 how my own understanding of this developed, especially in the writing of the fifth piece in the creative work.

Ellersiek writes that, “The mood of the fifth tonal space, with the central tone A, in its play about this central tone, approximates the sound-gesture of rocking and brings about a dawning, floating state of consciousness in the child” (2013, p. 15). In the first edition of his book, Knierim goes so far as to say, “... the songs are essentially only expansions of the tone “A”, where the fifth interval is the maximum limit of expansion (Knierim, 1970) (see p. 145). This echoes the use of the reported use of the *mese*³² in music in ancient Greece.³³

³² Greek: middle. The *mese* of an ancient Greek scale was the upper note of the lower tetrachord. Academic opinion is divided as to its function with some authors claiming that it acted as a form of “tonic” (Winnington-Ingram, 2015). It remains unclear the degree to which the Greeks experienced the centripetal nature of a tonic note.

³³ Jacobs (2013) quotes Aristotle without giving the source; in fact, the extract comes from his *Problems* (Aristotle, n.d.)

. . . for in all good music mese occurs frequently, and all good composers have frequent recourse to mese, and, if they leave it, they soon return to it, as they do to no other note. So mese is as it were a conjunction among sounds, and more so than the other two notes, because its sound occurs more often (91.20.919a).

This is in accord with Palisca (1990) who notes that “the mese . . . may have had a gravitational function” (p. 129).

The notion that the “A” is the central tone appears not to come from Steiner (Ledbetter Eterman, 1990). She notes that the first music teacher at the original Waldorf School, Paul Baumann, wrote four books of music for young children, the first of these being for the youngest (1970). The songs do not centre around the tone “A”, are not all pentatonic and one is in Eb major, indicating that shortly after the establishment of the education, what comprised mood of the fifth had yet to be defined.

I next discuss the corpus of music which has been written in the mood of the fifth for use in Steiner early childhood settings. This is characterised by a similar diversity of approach and opinion to the written work of authors describing the characteristics of such music. I take the range, rhythm and texts of pieces as well as whether or not they meet (or attempt to meet) Steiner’s indications.

2.3.2 Written music in the mood of the fifth

On surveying this corpus of literature, it is clear that Steiner’s indications have been interpreted in diverse ways and carried in different and sometimes conflicting directions; it is equally clear that there is no single understanding at any level of the concept of the mood of the fifth or what Steiner meant by “*Quintenstimmungen*” and that there is no agreed practice. There have been few reviews of this widely divergent body of music to date (Beilharz, 1997, is an exception, although he only reviews or references material written in German). In this review, I group the corpus by musical characteristics.

Tonal range

Regarding tonality, the simplest expositions of music in the mood of the fifth comprise pentatonic melodies which are limited to an overall range of a fifth. Examples of this include the initial exercises by Knierim (1970/2009, pp. 12–13) and *Bells are ringing* by Winship (2011, p. 3). The repetition of the basic interval A–D or D–A, emphasises the fifth and its well-delineated bounds enclose the tonal range of the song. Additional notes can be used, either when moving by step up or down the pentatonic scale or as auxiliary

notes (usually auxiliary to the A). Further examples of this material can be found in Hargreaves (1986) and Deason-Barrow (2013).

One of the most frequent occurrences within mood of the fifth literature is of melodies which comprise double fifths, *Doppelquinte* (Beilharz, 2003, p. 1)—two open fifths (D–A–E' ascending), the same as the three upper open strings of a violin. It is frequently mentioned by writers (e.g. Foster, 2013b) that for adults this form of melody can be difficult to appreciate aurally. This is likely because of the overall melodic outline of a ninth D–E', which is uncommon in Western music. Knierim's song, *Rose, Rose meine* (1970/2009, p. 23) ends with an ascending leap of a ninth—a highly unusual and, for most people, uncomfortable jump. Ledbetter Eterman quotes one of the foremost proponents of the anthroposophical approach to music, Christoph-Andreas Lindenberg, as saying that music for children in their first year of school should be contained within the interval of a fifth (Ledbetter Eterman, 1990, p. 61) and in the second year of school can be extended to include notes within the range of an octave. It is therefore all the more surprising that music suggested for younger children is over a wider range.

Most of the examples given by Knierim (1970/2009) fall into this category of double fifths. Whether or not music consisting of open fifths is desirable or appropriate, there are numerous instances of it in the literature. For instance by Lonsky (2009, pp. 15, 18, inter alia), Winship herself (2011, p. 2), Ellersiek (2001, p. 39) among others. See page 159 for my response to this within the creative work.

As mentioned above (p. 52), much of the music in the mood of the fifth is based around the note A above middle C, Lindenberg, a prominent musician within the Steiner education movement, has stated that music for younger children (up to seven years old) should consist *only* of the note A (personal communication, cited in Ledbetter Eterman, 1990). There appears to be no music printed which represents this view although it has particular relevance to the last of the pieces in the creative work (p. 159). There is music

written which claims to be in the mood of the fifth due to it being centred around an A, although it does not contain any fifths as such. Examples include Lonsky (2009, p. 51) and Knierim (1970/2009, pp. 11–13).

The majority of books of music surveyed (Adams, 2002; Aulie, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c, 1999d, 1999e, 1999f; Baumann, 1970; Beilharz, 2003; Braß, 1991; Choroi, 2018; Deason-Barrow, 2010; Ellersiek, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010; Hanak, n.d.; Knierim, 1970/2009; Lebret, 1975; Lonsky, 2009; Mulder et al., 1985; Nicol & Taplin, 2012; Oberländer, 1990, 2001, 2009a, 2009b; Pracht, 1939; Winship, 2011) contain children's songs which have a range between a perfect fifth and a ninth (or double fifth, see above). Within this category, there are numerous examples of songs which have a fifth as their most prominent interval, although they include additional notes as auxiliary notes,³⁴ without disrupting the overall effect of being based around a fifth (examples can be found in Ellersiek, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010; Winship, 2011). This approach has several virtues: a range of a sixth is physically easier for adults to sing than a ninth; it allows a “mood” to be built consisting of the fifth, while offering flexibility with auxiliary and passing notes and emphasises a “lower” and “middle” note or *mese* (usually D and A respectively). At the same time as allowing flexibility, using a smaller range of notes than the double fifth approach gives tighter boundaries to the notes available, often with musically successful results.

Music which is pentatonic but not mood of the fifth

Mood of the fifth music forms a subset within the greater set of pentatonic music.³⁵ All music in the mood of the fifth is pentatonic but not vice versa. Just as mood of the fifth

³⁴ In music, an auxiliary note is a neighbouring tone which is a step higher or lower than the tones on either side of it. An example of an upper auxiliary note would be A-B-A, and a lower auxiliary note, A-G-A.

³⁵ Pentatonic music is music written using a pentatonic scale, that is, a scale which has five notes to the octave. There are many different pentatonic scales. The scale most often used by mood of the fifth composers comprises the notes D, E, G, A, B.

music is highlighted as more for younger children (in early childhood settings rather than at the beginning of primary school), there are instances in which non-mood-of-the-fifth pentatonic music has been put forward as suitable for this younger age group (or where the division is unclear) (see below). Pentatonic music often has a less defined tonal centre than standard diatonic music, although this is also not a hard and fast distinction. For instance, all the notes used in the traditional children's song, *Old MacDonald had a farm*, come from the same pentatonic scale indicated by Steiner, but this popular song does not illustrate the "floating" (Deason-Barrow, 2010, p. 72), "emotion-free" (Ellersiek, 2013, p. 13) "dream-consciousness" (Gromicko, 2013) which Steiner intended for music for young children.

There are numerous examples which fall into this category. They include many of the songs in David Adams collection *One, Two, Three* (2002), for instance *I'd like to be a worm* (p. 60), as well as a significant number of songs in Elizabeth Lebet's *Shepherd's songbook* (1975) including the ending of *Shepherd's breakfast* (p. 11) which establishes a diatonic centre most effectively. Both these songbooks are for children of primary school age (up to the age of nine) but are included here as they are described by their authors as in the mood of the fifth. Lebet speaks at length about the importance of pentatonic music and music in the mood of the fifth in the introduction to her book, but acknowledges that "one will find other material [in the book] as well" (1975, p. 8).

Also to be included is a number of pieces which use the notes of the pentatonic scale, appear not to be based around a fifth or fifths and which do not have a defined centring note. The small book published by the Telleby Workshops in Sweden (Mulder et al., 1985) contains many of these, possibly more as exercises for teachers to practise at home than for use with classes of children. Also in this category comes work by Braß (1991), for instance *Icelandic prayer* and *There was a star* (pp. 24, 29).

Non-pentatonic examples of children's music

Lastly, there is music which is written for Steiner early childhood practitioners which does not comply with Steiner's indications for music for young children. In my experience, this reflects common kindergarten practice where many different and contrasting kinds of music can be heard (multiple personal communications and observations in Europe, Australasia, Asia and Africa, 1985–2018); there is no body of literature or research which has investigated this to my knowledge.³⁶ A representative instance of music being suggested which does not follow Steiner's suggestions is the first edition of Nicol and Taplin's book *Understanding the Steiner Waldorf approach: Early years education in practice* (2012, p. 164). As an example of music to be used in a group activity, five pieces are reproduced. Tonally, they range in style from open fifths (*Mew, mew*), through traditional diatonic (*Oats and beans and barley grow*) to a (seemingly) translated *Ländler*³⁷ (*On a Monday morning*), with misplaced textual stresses (*fath-er*). The pieces fail to form a coherent sequence and indeed contradict each other musically although they are intended to be an example of what can be used in practice and sung with young children as an uninterrupted activity. This is the more surprising as it occurs in a book which otherwise gives an authoritative, academic and well-researched introduction to Steiner early childhood education. The chapter is omitted from the second edition.

Rhythm

As mentioned on page 51, there are two main approaches to rhythm in mood of the fifth music. The first has a clear rhythmic structure (i.e. regular two-, three- or four-beat bars, able to be written using standard Western musical notation); the second adopts a more free approach with note lengths unspecified and the interpretation of which is left to the

³⁶ See p. 181.

³⁷ A lilting Austrian folk dance in $\frac{3}{4}$ time.

sensitivity of the singer. This music is often written in a more innovative style with no bar lines and sometimes no note stems. At least one melody has self-created time signatures (Knierim, 1970/2009, p. 23). There is a third style which, while written without bar lines, has a clear and regular pulse throughout (e.g. Aulie, 1999c). I use all three approaches within the creative work and discuss what they offer the composer in Chapter 4.

The music in Ellersiek's books (2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010) offers the least rhythmical approach to this topic. It is written without bar divisions, without note stems and in a notation which is, to an extent, self-created. Ellersiek had a formal musical training and spent most of her life teaching in a music conservatoire in Germany so was well able to modify standard notation to suit her own needs. One of the things which characterises her work is that, at the end of each line, there is a breath or pause. When being sung, these pauses can be lengthy, at least several seconds. This is also found in Michael Winship's, *Shepherds, shepherds* (Winship, 2011, p. 3). Suspending the musical line encourages listening and allows time for the processing of the music and the development of inner listening (German: *Nachklang*, the after-sound of a piece of music once it has ended, see p. 142) (cf Boland, 2013b, p. 128).

A similar instance of the suspension of musical momentum is found by Lindenberg (Aulie, 1999c, p. 87). It is a resetting of the traditional children's song *Lavender's blue, dilly-dilly*. The traditional rhythm this text is sung to is strongly rhythmical with defined, forward-moving, lilting momentum. In Lindenberg's setting, the words "dilly-dilly" at the end of each line are without rhythm, an open statement dissolving into the air. Moreover, he states that each time dilly-dilly occurs, the words can be sung to any note of the pentatonic scale, high or low, depending on the wish of the performer. This is the only instance of freedom to choose notes in the mood of the fifth literature that I have discovered.

Deason-Barrow (2010, pp. 78–79) talks about pentamorous³⁸ rhythms as being especially suited to mood of the fifth music.³⁹ A pentamorous rhythm he defines as ♩ ♩ ♩. or ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ although he does not explain why he regards seven quavers as representing something grouped in five and in the ratio 3:2. He quotes a song by Braß, *Rein wie dass feinste Gold* (1991), as a good example of the rhythm and intervals being in harmony with one another in this way.

Steiner mentions the great importance of skipping rhythms, especially for children aged three and four (1919/2000, p. 12). Given how strongly Steiner words this, it is surprising how few instances of lively skipping rhythms exist in the musical literature. Two of the few include Winship's *All the bells are ringing* (2011, p. 3) and *Rocky, rocky, roo* by Patterson (Aulie, 1999c, p. 90) which, although in a lively skipping rhythm, is neither pentatonic nor in the mood of the fifth.

As mentioned on page 51, a number of practitioners advise strongly against having an over-strong rhythmic component to music for young children (Ellersiek, 2013; Foster, 2013b). This they usually termed “beat.” Of the music written specifically calling itself “in the mood of a fifth,” Lonsky (2009) offers material which falls most clearly into the category of having a strong beat. Her book of working songs contains numerous examples which emphasise the beat (usually crotchets) to a significant degree. These include *Grind, grind, grind the corn* (p. 9), *Hammer straight* (p. 32) and *Pound, pound, pound* (p. 34). The music to introduce storytime is surprisingly undifferentiated rhythmically. It could be said that the working nature of these songs (to accompany activity, strengthen the will activity of children) leads them to emphasise the beat and be written substantially in strings of crotchets. As counterposition, in traditional musical literature, there are countless examples from diverse cultures of rhythmically vibrant working songs

³⁸ Something arranged in groups of five.

³⁹ A pentamorous rhythm is in the ratio 3:2, 3:2 being the intervallic ratio of a fifth (see above).

(Kharitonov, 1965/2011; Long John, n.d.; Sgioba Luaidh, 2008) which enliven through their rhythmical momentum rather than maintaining a uniform beat.

Text

The majority of music composed in the mood of the fifth is vocal—a reason for which Knierim (1970/2009) gives as offering children the possibility of moving and playing while singing—choice of text is an important consideration. As with all other elements so far discussed, the use of and selection of text varies widely in the material available as teacher resources.

One approach involves no text (Knierim, 1970/2009, p. 26), using melodic sections only as introduction and conclusion. These could be sung, but also have the possibility of being played.

The choice of text varies considerably, possibly reflecting differing philosophic approaches to music as such and music for children in particular. Braß (1991) in particular draws from a wide range of textual sources. From her selection, it is clear that she wishes to expose children to texts which are not commonly used for preschool children. These include settings of poems by the seventeenth-century German mystic Angelus Silisius (Braß, p. 9) and extracts from Goethe⁴⁰ (pp. 12–13). In contrast are texts selected by David Adams in his book *One, two, three* (2002). *I'd rather be a worm* (p. 60) is a much more ebullient, joy-filled song considering life from a worm's point of view.

In the creative work, I have used texts in English and *te reo Māori* (the Māori language) as well as writing without text. There have been no collections of songs in the mood of the fifth published either professionally or privately in New Zealand, and so there is little widely available material in *te reo Māori*. Steiner settings have up to 30% of children who are Māori (Educational Review Office, 2018) and remediating this lack of musical

⁴⁰ For example, "*Um Mitternacht wenn die Menschen erst schlafen*" (Goethe, various/2009, p. 51).

material in Māori is a significant priority. Research I undertook into the lived experience of Māori teachers and parents in Steiner schools in New Zealand (2015) indicated that, at the time, *te reo Māori*, *tikanga Māori* (Māori customs) and *te ao Māori* (Māori worldview) were seen as not strongly embedded in Steiner schools. As a modest step towards remedying the lack of kindergarten musical material in *te reo Māori*, two of the four pieces with text in the creative work are in the language.

What is it that makes music in the mood of the fifth?

In conclusion, it is clear that there is no agreement on any of the musical components of music in the mood of the fifth, whether it be intervallic structure, choice of text, use of rhythm, range or pitch. Many contrasting (as well as conflicting and sometimes confused) statements have been made regarding it and pieces of music have been published as teacher resource material which illustrate these strongly divergent interpretations.

Lyman puts it perhaps most simply when she says that “[o]verall, the mood of the fifth is just that: a mood, one that carries a quality of being that is gentle, reverent, and respectful of the children at their stage of development, bringing them to what is soul-nurturing” (2013, p. 64). Beilharz of the Free Music School in Bad Boll, Germany, identifies features which need to be considered in assessing the suitability of music for young children: These include, “sound quality (timbre), tone, tempo, flexibility of beat [*Agogik*], form, rhythm, speed of beat, relationship between content and musical "picture," the relationship between inwardness and external expression, completeness, correspondence of outer and inner movement” (2003, p. 1).

To these qualities need to be added among other things the choice of text, pitch and intervallic relationships. An exhaustive list would be difficult to compile. Music which appears so simple on first hearing becomes much more complex when engaged with. In an education context, the mood of the fifth directly challenges the notion that knowledge can be commodified.

Isolating what makes a piece successful from indications given in the literature is difficult, given the diversity of opinion. Beginning with what works against pieces being successful examples of mood of the fifth, examples of what I would call negative characteristics include:

- Stressing syllables in the text counter to usual practice in English (Lonsky, 2009, p. 18)
- Melismas which do not maintain a defined musical direction and “wander” (Lonsky, 2009, p. 18)
- Intervals which are hard to sing (especially a rising ninth) (Braß, 1991, p. 19; Knierim, 1970/2009, p. 26; Winship, 2011, p. 5)
- No recognisable pitch structure or tonal focus (inter alia Adams, 2002; Aulie, 1999d, p. 58; Hanak, n.d., p. 1, but found throughout)
- Strong diatonic focus although using notes of the pentatonic scale (Adams, 2002, p. 60)
- No sense of tonal centring with an overall mood of the fifth (Lebret, 1975, p. 53).

Moving to pieces which are successful and embody mood of the fifth characteristics well, these include Michael Winship’s melody *Shepherds, shepherds* (Winship, 2011, p. 2). This is finely balanced and “floating” between the two main notes, D and A. The use of open pauses at the ends of lines is especially successful suspending the musical momentum and allowing for reflection and active listening. Eleanor Winship’s, *Look at the snow falling down* (Winship, 2011, p. 3) has a not-dissimilar mood—the hovering, slowly descending lines emphasise the intervallic steps between notes, while the upwardly inflected ending suggests snow piling up as in the words. It is a highly successful small piece of music. Working with and encountering a range of pieces written by others in the mood of the fifth has been instructive, especially those which “work” as

music. Ultimately however, it is necessary to develop one's own understandings and engage with the nature of the interval of the fifth oneself.

Ellersiek states in her books that the songs she writes are for children up to the age of nine. My own teaching experience leads me to question this. In working with this music with groups of children from age two to nine, I have found that simple mood-of-a-fifth music is highly effective with younger children up to and including the age of five. Over this age, pentatonic music continues to be effective so long as it moves beyond the extreme simplicity of some of Ellersiek's work (2003, 2005, 2007, 2010). I have found children six and above to need an added degree of complexity no matter how finely crafted the music is or whether it meets Beilharz's criteria for mood of the fifth.

These views bring into question what Steiner stated that "Up to the age of nine ... the child essentially dwells in moods of fifths" (1906 & 1923/1983, p. 57), suggesting that the dreamy nature of the younger child, balanced between the cosmos and the earth, ends some time before the age of nine requiring different musical approaches.

2.4 Education and pedagogy

In this section I characterise briefly musical traditions in New Zealand early childhood settings, Steiner and non-Steiner

2.4.1 Musical traditions in Steiner early childhood education in New Zealand

The pieces of music I have written in the creative work are samples of what might be sung in Steiner early childhood settings, whether in New Zealand or elsewhere. I outline on page 119 the process I went through when deciding how to perform and present them.

Although Aulie indicates that there may be a "letter of the law" (2013, p. 5) regarding the music in the mood of the fifth, in practice, music is introduced to children in Steiner early childhood settings in New Zealand in myriad ways. These depend on the individual centre, its resources and the teachers working with the children. In my experience, it is a

practice which is continually evolving as new approaches are trialled and personnel change.

One identifiable and consistent characteristic of Steiner early childhood settings however is that music, when used, is always live (Schweizer, 2013). There is no use of recorded sound. This is taken so much for granted within the early childhood Steiner community, that there are few references to it in literature beyond saying that it is the approach adopted. Nicols and Taplin write baldly, “There will be no sounds of electronic toys or music” (2012, p. 41).

Reasons given by early childhood practitioners for this are qualitative and centre around the care and development of the senses and the cultivation of active listening. Aepli states that the young child listens “less with the ear than with his/her whole body which vibrates and lives in this musical element” (2013, p. 40), existing in a state which Steiner describes as “all sense organ” (1922/2004, p. 8). If the child is especially open to sense experiences, the quality of those experiences becomes paramount. Madaule (1994) writes that “nursery school and kindergarten are the time when the child’s listening is most flexible” (p. 104). It is also a time in which “most children in the West suffer a daily bombardment of the senses” (Shams-Zandjani, 2002, p. 30). To encourage active listening, teachers in Steiner early childhood settings aim to reduce this “bombardment of the senses” and replace it with measured, high-quality sensory experiences which the children can focus on (Long-Breipohl, 2012).

To emphasise the importance of this approach, I wrote in a chapter on early childhood practice:

We need to create an environment which does not destroy natural listening capacities. The first tenet of any education must surely be, 'do no harm.' An initial task would be to become aware of sound in the children's environment. Is it all necessary? Does it have a purpose? Does it divide the children's attention or are they focused on it? After this, think about the quality of the sound and music that children hear. (Boland, 2013b, p. 125)

This awareness of the aural environment and its effect on sense development and perception is an important aspect of Steiner early childhood practice. A number of approaches are commonly taken.

Singing is usually unaccompanied, which puts responsibility on the teacher to carry the sound (and the melody). Winship (2013) says that the songs "need to be sung in an objectively quiet and peaceful way" (p. 8). To do this "the melodies need ... to be sung with a pure and gentle tone, the less vibrato the better," so the sound "gently surrounds the child" (p. 8).

The singing ranges of a child and an adult are different. Deason-Barrow points out that that is because "In each phase of childhood the child's voice has a distinctive and underlying anatomy which produces specific modes of singing" (2013, p. 156). Deason-Barrow asks "just as we typically provide child-sized equipment for children and adjust tasks to their physical capacities ... should this also apply to singing?" Taking children's natural "higher pitches and bright open timbres" (p. 152) into account, he suggests that teachers of young children work on developing "forward, light and bright resonance" to their voices, use "clear, resonant vowels," and be aware of their movements (minimising unnecessary movements while singing) (p. 153).

Although most singing in New Zealand Steiner early childhood settings is unaccompanied, it is common for centres to have access to a lyre, an instrument specifically designed for these contexts (see Choroi, 2018). The seven metal strings of the lyre are tuned D-E-G-A-B-D'-E'. It has no closed soundbox and is held near-vertically in the lap (Schweizer, 2013). The sound is quiet, thin and decays quickly.

Though Weber recommends that the tone of all instruments chosen for a kindergarten setting “should be clear, warm and open” and should “fill the room” (2013, p. 147), it is arguable if this is the case with the children’s lyre.

The lyre is not the only instrument to be found in Steiner settings. Simple “interval pipes” are sometimes offered, similar to a recorder but with only one hole for the player to cover, giving the option of the lower or higher tone of an interval. The most commonly used interval pipe is that tuned to a fifth, to D and the A above. Pentatonic glockenspiels are sometimes used, as are triangles and other simple percussion instruments, but providing these is at the discretion of the centre.

Because the creation of high-quality sound experiences is an aim of the Steiner early childhood settings, children do not always have access to instruments during free play times. Various reasons are given for this; one is noise—sound which one child finds stimulating, another can find too loud and distressing, working against the development of active listening; another is that it is important to treat musical instruments with respect (Schweizer, 2013) and can be best done under supervision. Which approach to follow depends upon the centre.

2.4.2 Musical traditions in New Zealand early childhood settings

As the nationwide early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 2017), provides guidance for communities around early childhood centres in terms of understanding the purpose and value of music practice as well as indications of what is pedagogically and holistically desirable. References to music in the *Te Whāriki* document centre primarily on self-expression and enjoyment through music. As a representative selection of statements on music:

- “[Children] enjoy being creative, expressing themselves through art, music and dance.” (p. 17)
- “*Kaiako* [teachers] help to extend infants’ pleasure in particular experiences, such as hearing specific music;” (p. 40)
- Programmes aim to allow children to “[express] their feelings and ideas;” (p. 44)
- Children gain the “[a]bility to be creative and expressive through a variety of activities, such as ... making music;” (p. 44), and
- Children gain “[u]nderstanding and familiarity with music ... [which] can amuse, delight, comfort, illuminate, inform and excite” (p. 44).

If one takes these extracts and compares them to a representative selection taken from Steiner-centric literature, the results illustrate the divergent emphases and aims of the two approaches.

- “[Children] want to join the world with [their] own bodily nature in a musical rhythm and relationship.” (Steiner, 1919/2000, p. 12)
- [An aim of music in early childhood is to] “harmonise the spiritual-divine with the physical-earthly.” (Steiner, 1923/1986, p. 46)
- “The musical element, however, does not live in [the child] at all; it lives in inhalation and exhalation.” (Steiner, 1906 & 1923/1983, p. 55)
- Music in early childhood aims to build “the relationship between inwardness and external expression, completeness, correspondence of outer and inner movement.” (Beilharz, 2003, p. 1)

The emphasis on self-expression and enjoyment which music offers in *Te Whāriki* contrasts with the harmonising relationship between the outer and the inner world, connection to the world through music, and ways in which the musical experience exists within the growing human being in the Steiner literature. These are significant differences

with few immediate points of correspondence. It is the exploration of inner–outer relationships which informs the compositional process I have followed.

New Zealand early childhood settings are acknowledged as noisy places (Grebennikov & Wiggins, 2006; McLaren & Dickinson, 2003, 2005; Rickson, McLaren, & Jones, 2007), with more than a quarter of children being exposed to decibel levels above the level of industrial safety (McLaren & Dickinson, 2005). This can be contrasted to Steiner’s description of the young child as “all sense organ” (1922/2004, p. 8), completely open to all sense experiences and unable to defend itself against them, therefore requiring a learning environment which provides this.

Unlike Steiner settings, many early childhood settings use amplified music either as background (Rickson, McLaren, & Jones, 2007) or as music activity (McLaren & Dickinson, 2005). McLaren and Dickinson comment that the use of multiple percussion instruments simultaneously contributes to the volume of the environment. While music (usually unaccompanied singing) is always performed live in Steiner settings (Nicol & Taplin, 2017), there is no body of literature which indicates how pervasive live music performance is in other New Zealand early childhood settings and how this affects children’s perception of music and sound (see p. 181).

2.5 Speculative musicology

The next section of this review of contextual knowledge considers the area of speculative musicology, “looking at the cosmos musically, and at music cosmically” (Godwin, 1982, p. 373). An important aspect of this study is this wider, speculative approach, investigating the possibility of connecting with what Deleuze and Guattari (1987/2013) call the refrain or the cosmic content of music.

For centuries it was a speculative approach to understanding music which was dominant in musicological thought (Jeserich, 2008/2013) to the degree that Jeserich speaks of “the

hegemony of the speculative concept of music” (p. 194). This lasted until well into the seventeenth century and beyond. In more recent times, two further streams of musicology have developed and replaced speculative thought as the most accepted ways of understanding music; these are analytical musicology and regulative (or practical) musicology (Mikkonen, 2004). Currently, it is regulative musicology which holds the dominant position.

The term “speculative” musicology has been in use for hundreds of years (it being found in the work of Jacob of Liège, c. 1330). It comes from the Latin word for mirror, *speculum*. There are at least two possible reasons for the image of a mirror being used to describe this understanding of music. The first is that a mirror can help you see something which can otherwise not be seen—using the mirror to see around a corner or using a mirror to see something which is forbidden or see something in a different light. Godwin gives the example of Perseus using his shield as a mirror to view (and defeat) Medusa (1982) whose glance would otherwise turn him to stone. Another possibility is that it refers to the practice of stilling the human emotions to the degree that the soul becomes a mirror which can be used to reflect what is otherwise concealed (see p. 106 in the following chapter). According to Simplicius, such a person is:

... purified, either through a good allotment (destiny), or through probity (purity) of life, or through a perfection arising from spiritual practices qualities which may allow such an individual to perceive things invisible to others, and ... hear things inaudible to others. (Taylor, 2016, p. 168)

My approach to the writing of the pieces in the creative work strongly involves “looking at music cosmically” (Godwin, 1982, p. 373), including a consideration of the harmony of the spheres. The harmony of the spheres has a long and distinguished literary tradition which I review in brief.

2.5.1 The harmony of the spheres

Steiner mentions the harmony of the spheres in well over a hundred of his lectures (see page 33). In its simplest telling, it is the sound the heavenly bodies make as they move through the cosmos. There exists an unbroken thread of writings on the harmony of the spheres in European philosophy which can be traced from Pythagoras in the sixth century BCE (Taylor, 2016) up to the present day, including Stockhausen (Popean, 2015; Stockhausen, 1989), Taverner (Moody, 2018) and Pärt (Heaney, 2014). It is found similarly in other cultures and traditions (Godwin, 1986). In popular culture, the harmony of the spheres has proven inspirational to artists as varied as The Moody Blues (1968), Mike Oldfield (2008) and Björk (2011). It is the subject of a mini-episode of *Doctor Who* (2008).

From the literature, two branches or two aspects of the harmony of the spheres emerge: one mystical, the other mathematical. Both can be traced back to the work of Pythagoras, one of few individuals credited with hearing the harmony of the spheres (Godwin, 1986).

Concentrating his hearing and mind, [Pythagoras] immersed himself in the drifting harmonies of the cosmos. According to him, he alone could hear them, and understand the harmonies and concords of the spheres and the heavenly bodies which moved along them. (Iamblichus of Chalcis, c. 410/1986, p. 155)

The first, mathematical, branch is founded on the close relationship between interval ratios (2:1 the octave; 3:2 the fifth; 4:3 the fourth; 5:4 major third; 6:5 minor third, etc.) and the ratios of planetary distances and speeds. It can be traced through the work of Fludd (1618), Kepler (1619/1997) and Kircher (1650) through to Newton and Hindemith (James, 1993). A clear, though complex, table illustrating how the mathematical ratios of planetary orbits can be recreated in musical notation as a chord with a range of eight and a quarter octaves is given in Godwin's book, *The harmony of the spheres* (Godwin, 1993, pp. 400–401), after Chizat (1903); this diagram is reproduced in Appendix E (p. 237).

However, it is the other, mystical, stream which resonates most strongly with the creative work (see p. 133), and is the one I outline here briefly.

What characterises this second branch of *musica universalis* are accounts, sometimes fragmentary and hard to understand, of authors who appear to attempt to describe their lived experience of the harmony of the spheres. These can be descriptions of purely auditory events, or also visual.

Aside from the vast panorama outlined at the end of *The republic* (Plato, 380 BCE/2007), other Classical descriptions of the harmony of the spheres can be found in Aristotle (340BCE/2008), Cicero (1st century BCE/1952), and Iamblichus of Chalcis (c. 410/1986). Firmly in the mystical stream is Plutarch (c.100CE/1878).

As soon as [Timarchus] entered [the cave], a thick darkness surrounded him; then, after he had prayed, he lay a long while upon the ground, but was not certain whether awake or in a dream, only he imagined that a smart stroke fell upon his head, and that through the parted sutures of his skull his soul fled out; which being now loose, and mixed with a purer and more lightsome air, was very jocund and well pleased; ... then he heard a small noise whirling round his head, very sweet and ravishing, and looking up he saw no earth, but certain islands shining with a gentle fire, which interchanged colors according to the different variation of the light, innumerable and very large, unequal, but all round. These whirling, it is likely, agitated the ether, and made that sound; for the ravishing softness [408] of it was very agreeable to their even motions. (pp. 407-408)

In this section, Plutarch gives an account which has clear signs of an initiatory experience. Timarchus entering a cave,⁴¹ uncertain if he is awake or asleep, his soul leaving his body and entering “more lightsome air,” all speak of experiences gained during a heightened state of consciousness (see p. 99) such as one which would have been mediated in Classical mystery centres.

From the Sufi tradition Aḥmad Ġazālī (1061–1123 or 1126CE) and Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardī (1154–1191CE), speak pictorially of an initiatory experience as an ascent⁴²

⁴¹ The Crypt of Trophonius (Edinger, 2001).

⁴² See p. 115 for discussion of terminological difficulties locating the spiritual world.

through the spheres or levels of spiritual understanding, what Suhrawardī's earliest European translator and promoter, Henry Corbin, calls *mundus imaginalis* (1964/1972), the imaginal world. In speaking of apparent first-hand experience of the imaginal world, Suhrawardī states:

So we have to understand that the first of these universes is that of the separated intelligible Lights which have no attachment of any kind to bodies; they are the cohorts of the divine Majesty, Angels of the highest rank (*Angeli intellectuales*).⁴³

[...] The celestial spheres give out sounds which are not caused by anything existing in our sublunar world. ... all the Spirituals [sic] of the different peoples have affirmed the existence of these sonorities, ... on the plane of *Hurqalya*, the third city, with its many marvels, the world of the celestial spheres of the universe of archetypal Forms. To him who reaches this universe are revealed the spiritual entities of these Spheres with their beautiful forms and exquisite sonorities.⁴⁴ (Corbin, 1964/1972, pp. 130–134)

Suhrawardī's description of how the sensation of light is followed by one of sound is echoed centuries later by Steiner. The correlations offer an instance of what Godwin refers to (see p. 34) that Steiner represents a point where esoteric music theory becomes exoteric, "provid[ing] a context in which many of the older ideas at last become comprehensible" (1986, p. 252).

Man can arrive at perception of the second world, the astral world, only if he undergoes the discipline of so-called "great stillness." He must become still, utterly still, within himself. The great peace must precede the awakening in the astral world. ... The colors of the astral world become increasingly transparent, and the light becomes ever clearer and at the same time spiritualized. Man has the sensation that he himself lives in this color and this light, and if they do not surround him but rather he himself is color and light. He feels himself astrally within this astral world, and he feels afloat in a great, deep peace. Gradually, this deep stillness begins to resound spiritually, softly at first, then louder and louder. The world of colors and light is permeated with resounding tones. In this third state of consciousness that man now approaches, the colorful world of the astral realm in which he dwelt up to now becomes suffused with sound. (Steiner, 1906 & 1923/1983, p. 15)

⁴³ See p. 133.

⁴⁴ Ditto.

Steiner's writing on the harmony of the spheres has an immediacy, vividness and level of detail which is not found elsewhere to my knowledge. He uses the theosophic terms Upper and Lower Devachan for these worlds of sound and light, and suggests that they are the source of inspiration of musicians and composers (Upper Devachan–sound) and painters (Lower Devachan–colour, light) (1906 & 1923/1983).

In the European Renaissance, Luis de León of Spain writes of his experiences when hearing a friend play the organ, “There the soul sails/On an ocean of bliss/Drowns in it, so that it neither hears nor feels/Any strange or passing accident” (1971, p. 78). Two centuries later, von Dahlberg writes in detail of similar quasi-ecstatic revelations on hearing music.

The earthly veil fell from my eyes, I left the Earth behind, and was suddenly floating in the measureless spaces of the universe. Suns, planets and stars innumerable all around me, in indescribable beauty: and what magic filled my ears! (1787, p. 6)

Von Dahlberg identifies the means of gaining such experiences as being “through inner purification, i.e. through lessening the earthly weight that causes excessive vibrations in us (the storm of passions)” (1787, p. 10) (cf Simplicius above, p. 69, writing about Pythagoras).

One of the few women to write about the harmony of the spheres was Rahal Varnhagen (1771–1833). In a similarly ecstatic passage, she writes of a dream:

... I heard such a beautiful prelude coming from on high ... which developed into such grand harmony that I had to sink to my knees The music became ever more beautiful; I prayed, wept and cried out more and more. ... My heart broke in two from my ecstatic weeping and I awoke. (1815/1968, pp. 91–92, translation from Godwin, 1986, pp. 205–206)

Such music has not always been experienced rapturously. Towards the end of his life, the composer Schumann was troubled by mental instability, especially around the activity of hearing. His wife, Klara, wrote, “My poor Robert suffers terribly! Every noise, he says, sounds to him like music, a music more wonderful and played by more exquisite

instruments than was ever heard on earth! But naturally he is frightfully upset by it” (Litzmann, 1906/2008, p. 55). For Schumann, this heavenly music was troublesome as it did not stop. “He said frequently that if [it] did not cease, he would lose his mind.”⁴⁵ The “angels hover[ing] round him” could turn into demons which, “in hideous music, told him he was a sinner” (p. 55). Not long after this, Schumann ended his life. Godwin (1986) postulates that Schumann may have unwittingly “loosened the doors of perception [to the spiritual world] which keep most people safely shut up in the world of the senses” (p. 233) with severe consequences. If this is correct, he appears to have entered the spiritual world without the preparation, or “through inner purification” van Dahlberg mentions above. Writing centuries before, Philo of Alexandria says of heavenly harmony, “it rouses to madness those who hear it” (30CE/1953, p. 181) while Leviton comments that Steiner “likened the unauthorised entry into the spiritual worlds beyond the physical to putting your head into a swarming anthill” (1994, p. 251).

This mystical branch of the tradition of the harmony of the spheres became of importance during the composition of the creative work on a number of occasions; these are mentioned on pages 133, 145, and 159 among others.

2.6 Compositional approaches

Donin (2012) comments on the documented reluctance on the part of composers to engage subjectively with their compositional process, preferring to analyse it at a remove in case they provoke “centipede syndrome” (see p. 107) whereby, by concentrating on their compositional activity, they become unable to continue. He acknowledges that “if the production of knowledge about composition implies its disruption or even failure, ... one might understand the reticence” of composers to engage with it (p. 5). Harvey (Deliège

⁴⁵ See Stockhausen, “There’s a music of the spheres all the time, but these sounds would make the worst pollution you can imagine, it would be too loud.” (Cott, 1974)

& Harvey, 2006) offers a counterview, that the creative act in itself is the raising of what was at first semi-conscious to conscious development.

What is certain is that composers approach composition in individual and diverse ways. For this study, I look at two approaches: those composers (and other creative artists) who stay aware of the compositional process throughout, and those who create music through a process of artistic transcendence.

2.6.1 Composition as conscious inspiration

Plotinus, the Classical author, describes the act of attending to inspiration as one of inner attention.

We must turn the perceptive faculty inward and hold it to attention there.⁴⁶ Hoping to hear a longed-for Voice, we let all others pass, and are alert for the coming at last of that most welcome of Sounds: so here, we must let the hearings of sense go by, save for sheer necessity, and keep the soul's perception bright and quick to the Sounds from above. (c. 250 CE, p. 214)

The movement in the twentieth century to transcend established musical forms and instead create “sound events” which are hovering, use tonal clusters and nondirectional and nonmelodic textures aimed at aural saturation, has led Paul Griffiths to state in relation to the work of Olivier Messiaen, that “the possibility of eternity becomes actually present in the music” (1985, p. 15). One of the most original and idiosyncratic composers of the last hundred years, Messiaen (1908–1992) wrote extensively about his music, his inspiration and his compositional techniques. One of his greatest influences was strong Catholic faith. For Messiaen, the purpose of his music is to give glory to God and to spread the revelations of Catholicism. In speaking of God and of the divine as the essential part of the musical experience, Messiaen reconnects music with a tradition it had to a

⁴⁶ Compare Steiner when he says, “We can prepare ourselves, but encountering the spiritual world is an act of grace on its part and must be understood as such ... [W]ait, wait, wait! That is the golden word; be able to wait in quietness of soul” (1914/2008, p. 9).

significant degree abandoned. For Messiaen, expression of the divine is beyond time, it is without time, just as plainsong is beyond time (Griffiths, 1985).

Messiaen's use of "timelessness" can be found throughout his musical oeuvre. It can involve the extremes of the tonal space. In the opening *Regard du Père* from *Vingt regards sur l'enfant-Jésus* (1944) the repeated treble octaves are sounded like bells above a low, slowly moving and repetitive chordal progression which never rises above *piano*. The final chord is held for half a minute above which ever-quieter high octaves (marked *ppp decrescendo*) disappear into the aural distance. At the other end of the spectrum are passages which Messiaen marks *éblouissement* (French: dazzlement), a "breakthrough towards the beyond" (Hill, 1995; Samuel, 1986/1994; Sherlaw Johnson, 1975; van Maas, 2009). These passages, often for huge orchestral reserves, are played as loudly as possible and come after passages which increase the aural texture to almost white-hot intensity. They can be found especially in Messiaen's later work. He indicates in the score the precise point at which he considers there to be a breakthrough beyond everyday experience, of timelessness, of ecstasy.

Another composer whose work contains a similar if not greater degree of timelessness is Arvo Pärt (born 1935). Pärt's early work is twelve-tone, swiftly changing to a Soviet, quasi-Prokofiev harmonic style. As Hillier describes in his biography of Pärt, by the 1970s Pärt "had reached a position of complete despair in which the composition of music appeared to be the most futile of gestures, and he lacked the musical faith and willpower to write even a single note" (Hillier, 1997, p. 64). At this time Pärt converted to the Orthodox Church and studied mediaeval music and plainsong, not writing any music for seven years.

His works following this period of introspection are based on the triad: the tonic, third plus fifth. He notes, "I could compare my music to white light, which contains all colours.

Only a prism can separate these colours and make them visible; this prism could well be the mind of the listener” (Pärt, 1999, Trans. author).

Whereas Pärt perceived the triad as pure white light, Ferneyhough experiences the inspiration of his music with various senses:

The first sensation, the experience which begins to persuade me that I am actually going to write a piece, is very often a cross between a tactile, a visual and an aural one. That is, I tend to perceive a mass, almost a tangible sculptural or sculpted mass, in some sort of imagined space, which is made up of these various elements. (Harvey, 1999, p. 30)

Tavener gives lists many sources of his inspiration (2018a) from poems, religious texts, significant meetings and other composers (“Messian [sic] and, strangely, Bruckner” (2018b)) without detailing how these inspirational events or objects help shape the composition of his pieces. In addition, he comments that doing “everyday things” can be inspirational.

Retaining awareness of sources of inspiration during the creative process resonates with Csikszentmihalyi’s notion of “flow” (2014). Csikszentmihalyi documents numerous instances of practitioners from different walks of life (composers, mountain climbers, dancers, chess players) speaking of their level of consciousness when they are at their most creative, which he calls “optimal experience” (2014, p. 203). Brown and Dillon (2012) report that this is a “present and desirable state for composers (p. 81). Csikszentmihalyi talks of this process being “the merging of action and awareness ... made possible by a centering of attention on a limited stimulus field” (2014, p. 139), that “one item that disappears from awareness deserves special mention, because in normal life we spend so much time thinking about it: our own self” (1991, p. 62).

For this “flow” to be able to happen, Csikszentmihalyi states that:

It has become a kind of a truism in the study of creativity that you can’t be creating anything with less than ten years of technical knowledge immersion in a particular

field whether it's mathematics or music. It takes that long to be able to begin to change something ... when that happens ... the music just flows out. (2004)

He reports of an “outstanding composer” saying:

You yourself are in an ecstatic state to such a point that you feel as though you almost don't exist. I've experienced this time and time again. My hand seems devoid of myself, and I have nothing to do with what is happening. I just sit there watching it in a state of awe and wonderment. And it just flows out by itself. (p. 142)

The intensity of these experiences is shown by a report from another composer.

I am really quite oblivious to my surroundings after I really get going. I think that the phone could ring, and the doorbell could ring, or the house burn down, or something like that. .. when I start working I really do shut out the world. Once I stop I can let it back in again. (p. 140)

These reports from composers speak strongly to the “centering of attention on a limited stimulus field” (2014, p. 139), while also illustrating elements of ecstatic experience listed by Rouget (1985)—see Table 4 below (p. 79).

2.6.2 Channelling the sublime

Another approach to composition can be described as one of artistic transcendence or trance-like state. This state of artistic transcendence appears to be more common (or is more frequently documented) in arts other than music, whether it be Coleridge's opium-inspired poem *Kubla Khan; or, A Vision in a Dream: A Fragment* (Taylor Coleridge, 1816) or the painter Bloch whose output consists mainly of horizons, one colour below the horizon, one above.

[Bloch]'s aware that by freeing himself from the world outside, the more purely he channels emotion and colour through his painting, the more intensely he has been able to connect with the trance-like state in which he paints, the more captivating his work has become. (King, 2016)

In the realm of music, Stockhausen reports how he prepares himself before he begins to play in a concert:

I meditate before I start to play, I pray. When I start playing I have learned to forget about myself. It hardly ever happens nowadays that while I'm working I'm thinking of something else for even a fraction of time. The moment I start playing

I'm gone, and I am the sounds and I am the process and you can't ask me ... what has happened. When it's over, then I fall back, like from a session of laughing gas, into thinking and becoming aware of my environment. (Cott, 1974, p. 39)

Stockhausen gives the goal of his compositional method:

... to transform [his] whole existence as a person into a medium that's more timeless, more spiritual ... I'm commissioned, so to speak, by a supernatural power to do what I do ... [the music] begins to have its own life, and sometimes when I meet it again, I hardly recognise it." (Cott, 1974, p. 53)

In this, his approach is clearly aligned with trance-like experiences rather than ecstatic as defined by Rouget (1985) who gives a table to differentiate the attributes and forms of the two states. This differentiation is shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4 *The characteristics of ecstasy and trance*

(after Rouget, 1985, p. 11)

Ecstasy	Trance
Immobility	Movement
Silence	Noise
Solitude	In company
No crisis	Crisis
Sensory deprivation	Sensory overstimulation
Recollection	Amnesia
Conscious non-physical perception ⁴⁷	No perception of the non-physical

⁴⁷ Rouget's term here is "hallucinations." I have taken the liberty to change it in this table to "conscious non-physical perception." I have done this to avoid the connotations the word hallucination has in common usage as being something unreal and illusionary.

Whereas Stockhausen follows a trance-like approach to composition, I take the opposite path in this study and adopt what is here called ecstatic experience. I explain in the next chapter how this influenced choices made in the design and conceptualisation of the research project. It is in Chapter 4 that I consider how stillness, silence, solitude, lack of crisis, sensory deprivation, recollection and what Rouget calls hallucination played significant roles in the composition of the creative work.

Chapter 3: Research design

In this chapter I discuss the theoretical underpinning of the creative work. It looks at differences between practice-based and practice-led exegeses and the field of research into or by means of artistic practice. I explain what led me to choose Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the rhizome (1987/2013) as the metaphor which locates the sequence of artefacts which comprise the creative work and what it offers the researcher. For Deleuze and Guattari, the rhizome "has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo" (1987/2013, p. 26). Taking this metaphor, I theorise how the rhizome has then to be connected to the refrain (the cosmic content of music, which I believe holds strong similarities to what others call the harmony of the spheres) in a zone of "interbeing."

In working with Steiner's comments on the nature of the interval of the fifth (see p. 37), it was clear that I needed to embrace a compositional methodology which was able to investigate first-person experiences. Dusapin (2007) and Donin (2012) highlight the difficulty composers can face in and through the act of making a previously intuitive process of composition conscious. I take Thayer-Bacon's (2017a) image of epistemology and ontology being like the warp and weft of a net thrown over the side of a boat in which we catch life's experience. Working with Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the refrain and interbeing, this net needs to be able to catch "forces of a different order" (1987/2013, p. 398), to harness and work with nonphysical perception towards intuitive or spiritual knowledge and understanding. To do this, I adopted a meditative methodology, building on many years of personal meditation practice. To support my work, I draw from an "ecology of knowledges" (de Sousa Santos, 2007) taken from diverse ages, continents and traditions. Meditants have been exploring and charting levels of consciousness for hundreds of years. Various techniques and practices have been established, but with a common foundation: that through meditation it is possible to experience other states of

consciousness (Banerjee & Chatterjee, 2018) and that these have been extensively explored and mapped (Sikh & Spence, 2016). I use Frazier's term "choral hermeneutics" (2017) to refer to this sounding together of diverse voices.

Using meditation as a methodology brings with it the question of what is to remain personal and what is to be shared publically. I found support in this area in the work of Foucault (Flynn, 1994; Foucault, 1980/2016, 1983) and the notion of the academic as *parrhesiastes*. Parrhesia is a central component of the methodology, though it remains in the background.

The chapter ends with a discussion of method. This includes aspects of my meditative and compositional practices, the challenges and possibilities offered by writing in the mood of the fifth, choices made around the performance medium, journaling as method, and the difficulty choosing accurate language when describing experiences which first appear "indescribable" (Cassol et al., 2018, p. 8).

3.1 Inquiry into artistic practice

Higher degrees involving a level of artistic practice supported by an exegesis have been offered since the 1970s (Rowe & Carter, 2011), although their status and content continues to be debated (Paltridge, Starfield, Ravelli, & Nicholson, 2012). Such degrees have been likened to "gatecrashers at the university's dinner party" (Paltridge et al., 2012, p. 246), while Brady graphically describes how, by introducing creative doctorates, the "intolerant academy" has "opened its doors to the Trojan horse" (2000, p. 5).

Hetherington states that, "the academy generally doesn't recognise [creative research degrees] as delivering new knowledge" (2010, p. 2). Their position is "vexed" and needing review despite years of publications on the subject. Fletcher and Mann (2004) comprehensively survey the ways in which exegesises are being approached and, with

Paltridge, Starfield, Ravelli and Nicholson (2012), investigate debates and issues around doctoral degrees in visual and performing arts.

Dawson (1997; 2004) has argued that producing a creative work is in itself sufficient for a higher degree, saying that the creative work (in his case, creative writing) is "... already a dialogic engagement with theory, with language, with a range of social and cultural discursive formations" (1997, p. 72). It therefore does not need to be accompanied by an exegesis. Scrivener (2002) and Schippers (2007) put forward an alternative viewpoint that the worth of a creative work lies in its being a creative work, and not to the degree that it creates new knowledge. For Scrivener, the concept that a creative work communicates (or somehow is "expected" to communicate) knowledge is "typically ... superficial" and does not account for the "deep insights ... into emotions, human nature and relationships" which are commonly ascribed to artistic endeavour (p. 1). Further, it "relegates the art object to that of a by-product of the knowledge acquisition process" (p. 1). Instead, Scrivener asks if arts research is being driven by its own needs or those of external forces. He suggests that the purpose of arts research is to "generate novel apprehensions" which "offer ways of seeing the past, present and future" rather than transmitting knowledge and understanding (p. 16).

Taking a different position again, Cunningham indicates the economic benefit of higher degrees in artistic research. "We can no longer afford to understand the social and creative disciplines as commercially irrelevant, merely civilising activities. They must be recognised as one of the vanguards of the new economy" (2002, p. 33). Laing and Brabazon argue that an arts-research doctoral degree "slots into an individual's career" and is undertaken for "career progression" (2007, p. 257). This neo-liberal spin on the arts-research ball forms a sharp contrast to Scrivener's outlook of art for art's sake (2002).

My doctoral journey takes place within an academic career and I acknowledge that I have received encouragement to undertake and complete the process. Career security and the possibility of career progression are attractive but they are not the driving force. As stated on page 17, I have undertaken this study to extend and deepen my engagement with and understanding of Steiner's ideas on music for young children by writing music. In doing this I have undoubtedly gained "novel apprehensions" which "offer ways of seeing the past, present and future" (Scrivener, 2002, p. 16) which I had not previously experienced. I firmly agree with Scrivener that the creative process in the arts is essentially not to create new knowledge.

For me, composing music is not a career move; neither is it principally a question of the creation of knowledge, the communication of knowledge or the acquisition of knowledge. The music exists as, for and by itself. The aim of writing music is to create music. (Boland, 2013a, p. 39)

3.1.1 Practice-based, practice-led...?

Terminology in these fields is emergent and being developed. The "creative work plus exegesis" model can be one which is practice-based (Candy, 2006), studio-based (Fletcher & Mann, 2004), "creative- or production-based" (Milech & Schilo, 2004) performance as research (Phillips, Stock, & Vines, 2009) or practice-led (Hamilton & Jaaniste, 2010; Paltridge et al., 2012).

Candy (2006) describes practice-based research as being,

... an original investigation carried out partly through practice and the outcomes of that practice, with the doctoral thesis being demonstrated through creative outcomes including 'images, music, designs, models, digital media or other outcomes such as performances and exhibitions.' Whilst the thesis context and climate may be stated in words, it can only be understood in direct reference to the creative outcomes. (p. 1)

In the practice-based approach then, the "practice [is] at the centre of the research, but may not be part of the examinable component" (Phillips, Stock, & Vines, 2009, p. 12).

As Candy puts it, “If a creative artefact is the basis of the contribution to knowledge, the research is practice-based” (2006, p. 1).

In contrast, practice-led inquiry “not only situates practice within the research process, but also leads the process through practice” (Paltridge et al., 2012, p. 246). Practice becomes the central and foundational aspect of the study; the methodology adopted becomes both pragmatic and personal and is “attentive to its own emergence” (Sheller, 2014, p. 16). Phillips, Stock and Vines argue that “research outputs and claims for knowledge are made through the material forms of practice, which can be research findings in their own right” (2009, p. 12). A practice-led approach is the methodology I adopt in this study.

In creating music and putting the creative process under critical gaze in an exegesis, I undertake an act which Kroll calls “both daring and dangerous” (2004). The danger consists of the possibility that statements in the exegesis are not supported by the creative work (the student does not do what they have set out to do) and that the creative work does not align well with the exegesis.

In a practice-led model:

... the two components of the research thesis are neither ambiguously related, nor does one undermine the language—the autonomy—of the other. The creative or production piece does not form an illustration of the written document; the exegesis does not form a commentary on the creative work or production piece. In this way the two components of the creative or production-based thesis are substantively integrated, form a whole. (Milech & Schilo, 2004)

When talking about the relationship between the exegesis and the creative work, Papastergiadis (2006) states:

The ... meaning in writing can never be the same as the meaning in art. [...] The relationship between the modes of communication needs to be seen as an affinity rather than [...] the text "illuminat[ing]" the image or vice versa. Art and writing are two different ways of reaching for truth. (pp. 33–34)

Alternatively, as Milech and Schilo put it, “It frees [exegetes] to research a single question in two languages” (2004). This is the relationship I hope to create between the exegesis and the creative work.

3.2 Metaphor for the study: From nomad to rhizome

In the work of Deleuze and Guattari, the metaphor which first attracted me for this study is that of the academic as nomad. Drafting a different project, I wrote:

As a nomad, I have wandered for decades with no accurate map to guide my way. Theorists and fellow travellers have indicated paths of possible exploration and offered many maps to me, sometimes detailed, but I found that their ways were not my ways and my solitary journey has continued. (Boland, 2017a, p. 6)

This notion of the nomad attracted me because of its unsettledness, its need to move on, to not be static, to perpetually seek new ground, travelling by starlight to discover and experience new locations, to inhabit a/the wilderness (Proust, 1919/2010), which may or may not be fertile. The image speaks most to my initial compositional work. Nomads, however, stay on the surface; they undertake what may be a profound and transformative journey but remain above ground; nomads rarely venture below the surface. During the doctoral process, I found myself wanting to go beyond this (see p. 145 seqq.) and to venture as far as I could below the surface of my compositional practice. I found that the metaphor of the nomad did not meet my needs.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987/2013) discuss forms a book can take and state: “[t]here is no difference between what a book talks about and how it is made” (p. 2). This sentence has had significance in the forming of my methodological approach and the relationship between this exegesis and the creative work. The more I engaged with the topic and with music, the less difference there became between what this exegesis talks about (the music) and how the music was composed (the process); the process of composition became the music and music became the process of composition. They meshed together; it became impossible to say what was journey and what was destination, or what was process and

what was product. The evolving methodology and its methods have become inseparable from the results of the inquiry; ultimately the methodology has become one significant outcome of the doctoral process. *How* can no longer be distinguished from *what*.

Deleuze and Guattari set out the notion of the rhizome as a possible format for a book, in comparison to the usual arborescent form or “root-book” (1987/2013, p. 3). The root-book is independent, of itself, closed and uni-directional. It is where what is book is separate from what is not book. A rhizome “can be connected to anything other, and must be” (1987/2013, p. 5). It “has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo” (p. 26); “it operates by variation, expansion, conquest, capture, offshoots” (p. 22). A rhizome grows in the dark, underground. It is instinctive, unconscious, complex, exploratory, hidden. All these qualities speak to the compositional process. I take the underground development of the rhizome as metaphor for the hidden, exploratory inner path which I have followed. “The path I have sought to tread is more solitary in that it is an inner journey, not an actual one. It takes place in the soul and in the mind” (Boland, 2017b, p. 59). If I were to write this sentence now, I would change the word “actual” to “outer.” An inner journey is undoubtedly a journey, the longest journey; as Hammarskjöld (1963/1964, p. 48) attests:

The longest journey
Is the journey inwards.
Of him who has chosen his destiny,
Who has started upon his quest
For the source of his being.

In this way, in addition to the rhizome representing both the music composed and the process, it is extended further. In tracking the process, it became increasingly difficult to draw any line between what was compositional process and what was subject. The rhizome became a metaphor for the doctoral journey as well and for me as traveller on that journey.

Barnett (2016) critiques the metaphor of the rhizome as too rigid and static, favouring a comparison to something liquid or fluid, or airy metaphors of clouds, of haze, of wind. Despite this wish for a non-chthonic metaphor, he still talks about interconnectedness and networks in his paper on the establishment of the ecological university, and networks of relationships are difficult to establish within a liquid or airy environment. While I considered other metaphors (the doctoral journey as braided river, as sea current, as spiralling mist formation), I have stayed with the rhizome as metaphor due to the multiplicity of viewpoints and all-connectedness it offers.

As a rhizome spreads, it encounters many things. These it senses, touches, explores, absorbs, avoids, conquers. It can experience “asignifying rupture,” be “broken, shattered at a given spot” only to “start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/2013, p. 8). In the following chapter, I discuss in detail how my own rhizomic compositional process has grown, been disrupted, suffered retreat, achieved breakthroughs into new landscapes, how new lines of flight have been established, only to be disrupted again in the course of composition.

3.2.1 Maps and tracings

Deleuze and Guattari describe the rhizome as a map, “an experimentation in contact with the real” (p. 12). This “contact with the real” is how I experience writing music. A map “is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification” (p. 13), able to be used, reworked, transformed by contact with different groups, individuals or situations. I was drawn to the “livingness” of this as an image and the flexibility it offers. It is contrasted to a tracing. A tracing is a copy; it is fixed, unchangeable, non-organic and at the same time seems to me to be inauthentic.

The tracing has already translated the map into an image; it has already transformed the rhizome into roots and radicles. It has organised, stabilised, neutralised the multiplicities according to the axes of significance and subjectification belonging to it. It has generated, structuralised the rhizome, and

when it thinks it is reproducing something else it is in fact only reproducing itself. That is why the tracing is so dangerous. (Deleuze & Guattari , 1987/2013, p. 13)

I have indicated in the previous chapter (p. 47) how the researcher can find instances in Steiner early childhood educational practice in the area of music which resemble nothing so much as tracings, copies of an original, which do not show movement towards creative and authentic exploration and, in this way, remain replications.

Using Deleuze and Guattari's notion of maps and tracings, I see this exegesis as a map of the rhizomic journey I have undertaken. It has been, is and will always be "susceptible to constant modification" (Deleuze & Guattari , 1987/2013, p. 13). The creative work comprises a sequence of artefacts which witness the movement of the rhizome; they populate the map. The individual pieces which are part of my rhizomic map are, for other people, tracings, examples of *décalcomanie*,⁴⁸ stencils, which can be used to reproduce someone else's (my) work. Although the pieces in the creative work are possible examples of classroom resources for others to use, I advocate here a particular way of mapping—or rhizoming—in the hope that others will generate their own rhizomes, create their own maps, undertake their own journeys of discovery so they can "[p]lug the tracings back into the map, connect the roots of trees back up with the rhizome" (p. 14).

3.2.2 Deterritorialisation | Reinhabitation | Interbeing

In *A thousand plateaus* (1987/2013), Deleuze and Guattari speak frequently of "deterritorialising the refrain" (Bogue, 2003). Refrain is here a translation of *ritournelle* and already has multiple meanings in music—the most common meaning is taken from poetry and is used to "describe ... recurring passages in musical forms, whether or not they involve the repetition of text" (Clark, 2001). In its Italian form (*ritornel*), it can reference either an Italian folksong, the return of the instrumental introduction to a song, or, in a concerto, the re-entry of the orchestra after an extended solo passage (same as

⁴⁸ French: The technique for transferring a pattern to pottery, metal or another material.

tutti). Deleuze and Guattari's use of the word is different again. The refrain, to them, is the cosmic content of music, *natura musicans*. It is the content rather than source of music as they state also that "no one really knows when music begins" (1987/2013, p. 349), though this difference is not explored in their writings to my knowledge. In this the refrain resembles the notion of the harmony of the spheres (*musica mundana*) discussed in the previous chapter (p. 70). In reviewing Deleuze's contribution to the arts, Bogue comments, "[The refrain] is not contained in the composition, in the forces it harnesses, or in the developmental theme of the composer as unfolding biological entity and coenactive world, although it passes through them. Music, finally, is the refrain composing itself" (2003, p. 76). Music is deterritorialized when it leaves its original (cosmic) home and enters new territory, when it is shaped into compositions: "... music exists because the refrain exists also, because music takes up the refrain" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/2013, p. 349).

Just as the refrain/music is deterritorialized when it is written down and played as a composition, "render[ing] sonorous forces which are not themselves sonorous" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1981/2003, p. 40), so the refrain is reinhabited when music is reunited with its cosmic content, when it is returned to the cosmos. Exploring what this notion of reinhabitation might be and how a composer might go about it is a significant component of this study.

The rhizome "has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/2013, p. 26). In the following chapter, I take up this notion of interbeing to interrogate Steiner's comments on the interval of the fifth, in which "we reach the boundary of the human and the cosmic, where the cosmic resounds into the sphere of the human and the human, consumed with longing, yearns to rush forth into the Cosmos" (1906/1986, p. 220). I take these comments by Steiner on the

fifth to be a description using different words of a state of interbeing, neither wholly earthly nor wholly cosmic. I explore composition within this state of interbeing.

On page 30, I wrote about Steiner's understanding of the nature of the young child. For Steiner, the young child stands between cosmic forces (prebirth) and earthly ones. The act of growing up is a gradual transition from the unaware, dreamy newborn to the awake, involved older child. The young child stands between these two states, embodying them both. I argue that, in describing the nature of the young child in this way, Steiner is characterising a state of interbeing, although his terminology differs from that of Deleuze and Guattari.

The concept of the young child interbeing with the cosmos is found in literature, for instance in Wordsworth (1807/1919, p. 611):

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!

And Traherne (1717/1917, pp. 63–64),

How like an Angel came I down!
How bright are all things here!
When first among His works did appear
O how their glory did me crown!

The world resembled His eternity,
In which my soul did walk;
And every thing that I did see
Did with me talk. [...]
Harsh ragged objects were concealed,
Oppressions, tears and cries,
Sins, griefs, complaints, dissensions, weeping eyes
Were hid ...

This state of interbeing in an artistic context is presaged by a quotation from Buber⁴⁹ which is here paraphrased to reference music instead of speech (for the original text, see footnote):

One should make music as if within it the heavens were opened; not as if you were taking music into you, but rather as if you were entering into [the] music. For if someone has really entered into music, it is as if they would create heaven and earth, and all the worlds anew.

Buber's "entering into [the music]" is I believe comparable to Deleuze's notion of interbeing; it involves reinhabiting music in a reterritorialised space, one which is neither purely of the heavens (the refrain) nor of the earth (deterritorialised, audible tone). Considerations of the potential for exploration of the interbeing of subject and music were central when choosing the methodology used for composition. (How) can the composer seek to "interbe" with the refrain and how might that affect the methodological approach taken?

3.3 Establishing a methodology

Using Thayer-Bacon's (2017a) image of epistemology and ontology forming the warp and weft of a net in which we can catch and understand life's experiences (see p. 81), what we catch depends on the net we choose. This study is to do with music, what Deleuze and Guattari call the refrain. In dealing with notions of the refrain, the net needs to be such that it can catch what is "cosmic," what is "nonvisible."

If there is a modern age, it is of course the age of the cosmic. Paul Klee declared himself anti-Faustian. "As for animals and all the other creatures I do not like

⁴⁹ *Man soll die Worte sprechen, als seien die Himmel geöffnet in ihnen, und als wäre es nicht so, dass du das Wort in deinen Mund nimmst, sondern als gingest du in das Wort ein. Denn wenn einer in das Wort wirklich eingegangen ist, so ist es, als schüfe er Himmel und Erde und alle Welten von neuem.* (1916, p. 238)

One should speak words as if in them the heavens were opened; not as if you were taking words into your mouth, but rather as if you were entering into the word [or Word]. If someone has really entered into the Word, it is as if they would create heaven and earth and all the worlds anew. (Trans. author)

them with a terrestrial cordiality; earthly things interest me less than cosmic things.” ... It is now a question of elaborating a material charged with harnessing forces of a different order: the visual material must capture nonvisible forces. *Render visible*, Klee said; not render or reproduce the visible. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/2013, p. 398)

I sought a methodology which could facilitate the navigation of and dwelling in a space of interbeing between the subject and the refrain, engaging with “forces of a different order.” The interbeing of subject and refrain, subject and music, subject and cosmos, is precisely where Steiner places the interval of the fifth which forms the foundation of this study.

... as we grow into the configuration of the fifth, we reach the boundary of the human and the cosmic, where the cosmic resounds into the sphere of the human and the human, consumed with longing, yearns to rush forth into the Cosmos. (Steiner, 1906/1986, p. 220)

Steiner’s description of the cosmos resounding into the sphere of the human and the human being yearning to rush into the cosmos has strong resonance with Deleuze and Guattari’s boundary-world of interbeing. Regarding methodology:

We should seek a theory of knowledge that is not only capacious enough to include scientific knowing of material existence, but is also adequate to the immaterial experiences associated with contemplative inquiry. Only such a philosophy can act as a foundation and guide for us as we seek to extend our knowledge to include the soul-spiritual dimensions of the world. (Zajonc, 2009, p. 209)

There is a limited number of methodologies which offer the possibility of boundary work charting this in-between world.

3.3.1 Over the abyss

An author whose work guided me in this process was de Sousa-Santos. He writes about dualistic, “abyssal thinking” (2014; de Sousa Santos, Nunes, & Menses, 2007) prevalent in Western society and Western scholarship. For de Sousa-Santos, on one side of the “abyss” lies thinking which is grounded in materialism, which deals (solely) with what can be counted, measured and weighed, and which is provable by “concrete fact”

(essentially based on Western scientific methods). It claims for itself “the monopoly of the universal distinction between true and false” (de Sousa Santos, 2014, p. 119), “setting the criteria to which other cultures are expected to conform” (Frazier, 2017, p. 9). This thinking states that “[o]n the other side of the line there is no real knowledge; there are beliefs, opinions, intuitions and subjective understandings, which, at the most, may become objects or raw materials for scientific inquiry” (de Sousa Santos, 2014, p. 120). These, then, are “abyssal knowledges,” and include Indigenous, traditional, intuitive, local, folk, spiritual, religious and so on.

The invisible distinctions are established through radical lines that divide social reality into two realms, the realm of “this side of the line” and the realm of “the other side of the line.” The division is such that “the other side of the line” vanishes as reality becomes nonexistent, and is indeed produced as nonexistent. (de Sousa Santos, 2007)

The status of knowledges on either side of the abyss is unequal. Their power relationships are imbalanced, influenced strongly by centuries of colonisation and conquest (Connell, 2013). Furthermore, there is little traffic between the two. The abyss is seldom bridged.

What most fundamentally characterizes abyssal thinking is thus the impossibility of the co-presence of the two sides of the line. To the extent that it prevails, this side of the line only prevails by exhausting the field of relevant reality. Beyond it, there is only nonexistence, invisibility, non-dialectical absence. (de Sousa Santos, 2007)

The notion of the abyss is found repeatedly in the work of Steiner. For Steiner, the abyss [*Abgrund*] separates the world of sense-experience from the supersensible world, or spiritual world (1910/1997, 1924/2017). In essence, Steiner’s life’s work can be summed up as an attempt to bridge the abyss, and to show ways in which others can learn to bridge the abyss. In doing this he sought to bring back knowledge gained on the far side and couch it in terms which are understandable on this side, so creating what he termed a “unitary worldview, or *monism*” (1894/1995, p. 20).⁵⁰ “It is due ... to our organisation

⁵⁰ In retaining the notion of “bridging the abyss,” there is a paradox as even when the abyss is bridged, there remains an abyss.

that the full, complete reality, including our own selves as subjects, appears at first as a duality. Where a dualist will see these two realms as standing apart and opposed,” a monist would regard them as “two sides of a single reality which are kept apart merely by our organisation” (Steiner, 1894/1995, p. 88). He differentiates among three forms of monism: one only considering the material (materialism), a second considering only the spirit (spiritualism) and a third, which he promoted, uniting what is spiritual with what is material, advocating “descend[ing] into the depths of our own being” (1894/1995, p. 26) to do this.

Having outlined his epistemology in detail in *Intuitive thinking as a spiritual path* (1894/1995), revising it throughout his life, Steiner’s books such as *How to know higher worlds* (1904/1994) act as possible guides to anyone who wishes to undertake such a journey; Steiner also gave personal advice and lectures to those wanting to tread this path (see 1904–1924/2014, 1912–13/1999, 2004 among others). In *How to know higher worlds*, Steiner guides the reader through a succession of small, practical exercises, indicating a path which can lead across the abyss towards intuitive or spiritual knowledge and understanding. This is the essence of Steiner’s life’s work. It is frequently forgotten or ignored behind the myriad external manifestations enabled by his spanning of the abyss. Steiner is known as the founder of Steiner schools, Camphill communities, the anthroposophical medicine movement, eurythmy, ethical banking, and as an innovator in the realms of agriculture, architecture, religion, drama and more, but in essence all these outer manifestations can be traced back to a single point: the ability of Steiner to bridge the abyss. In this way, Steiner’s own rhizomic map is vast, engaging on different levels in multiple fields and in many directions.

It is clear that the notion of the abyss is not a new phenomenon. It has long been acknowledged as dividing knowledge groups. In *The republic*, Plato speaks about the “faculty in the mind” by which we “perceive the truth.” He is speaking of knowledge on

the far side of the abyss, which he would have known as initiation knowledge (Casadesús, 2016).

But it is in fact no easy matter, but very difficult for people to believe that there is a faculty in the mind of each of us which these studies purify and rekindle after it has been ruined and blinded by other pursuits, though it is more worth preserving than any eye, since it is the only organ by which we perceive the truth. (Plato, 380 BCE/2007, pp. 274–275, Book VII, 527d–e)

De Sousa challenges the apparent hegemonic status of “scientific” knowledges which relegates “all non-scientific knowledges [to being] considered local, traditional, alternative, or peripheral” (2014, p. 200), and promotes in its stead a “constellation of knowledges,” an “expanded conception of realism that includes suppressed, silenced, or marginalised realities, as well as emergent and imagined realities” (2014, p. 157). “[A]n ecology of knowledges confronts the logic of the monoculture of scientific knowledge and rigor by identifying other knowledges and criteria of rigor and validity that operate credibly in social practices pronounced non-existent by metonymic reason” (p. 188).

In exploring the composition of the creative work using “an ecology of knowledges,” I adopt a hermeneutic approach, specifically what Frazier calls “choral hermeneutics” (2017), hermeneutic voices sounding in chorus.

Hermeneutics, the science of interpretation, is named after the divine messenger in Greek mythology, Hermes. It is Hermes who carries messages between the gods and humans, moving freely between the two worlds and interpreting the world of one to the other. He also guides souls into the afterlife, from the earthly to the non-earthly; he is, simultaneously, the “transgressor and ... preserver of boundaries” (von Heyking, 2016, p. 226). In this way Hermes is a Classical representation of interbeing between the divine and the terrestrial.

In dealing with epistemologies, cosmologies and ontologies located on the far side of the abyss, abyssal knowledges, I have come across many hermeneutic positions which have

evolved over millennia which resonate in diverse ways with the creative process (see pp. 164, 182, 183 among others). These positions represent understandings of different cultural and epistemological worlds using different theoretic models. They have often been in existence for far longer than Western scientific thinking has been dominant. The process of European colonisation has colonised more than overseas territories; it has marginalised, denied, threatened and even extinguished these other knowledges (Connell, 2013).

Approaches to “other” knowledge range from *exoticist* (revelling in the difference of other ways of being), through *magisterial* (seeking to subsume “useful” aspects of the knowledges into Western thought), to *curatorial* (explaining other knowledges authentically, but not trying to work with them to any significant degree). My aim in this exegesis is to draw on a range of different outlooks and to interact and engage with them regarding the creative work and creative process, to produce a multivoiced chorus of abyssal knowledges, a choral hermeneutic. It is essentially an approach of triangulation or, perhaps more accurately put, multi-angulation, as many approaches are coming together.

Among the knowledges, philosophies and religious traditions I draw on are pre-Socratic and neo-Platonic philosophy (p. 145), Illuminationism (p. 147), Hinduism (p. 150), Buddhism (p. 164), anthroposophy (throughout), alchemical imagery (p. 177) and speculative musicology (p. 173). I draw upon these singly and chorally to support my meditative and compositional work, viewing it through different lenses and from multiple angles and perspectives in order to better locate, challenge and understand my own position.

A methodology which is to explore the state of interbeing between the subject and the refrain has to be able to work on both sides of the abyss, crossing repeatedly from one

side to the other, attempting to weave a net of mutual understanding which connects the two. A state of interbeing implies the possibility of interpenetration or “constellation” of different knowledges, trying to find a language to navigate this in-between zone in coexistence. The rhizome is a powerful metaphor for these processes.

To explore this, I have adopted a methodology which is essentially meditative. In order to work with what is “cosmic,” with “non-visible forces” “of a different order” and in a way which is experiential and nontheoretical, meditation provides a workable approach.

3.3.2 First-person methodology | the place of meditation

It is acknowledged that the use of meditation as a methodology is, to a degree, problematic. Davidson and Kaszniak (2016) comment on the inability to truly conduct double-blind tests in the field of meditation and on the lack of consensus of how to best study the role of first-person inquiry. This approach has as its central premise that, for any approach to be accepted, it needs to be able to comply with Western scientific norms. In suggesting this, Davidson and Kaszniak view meditation strictly from the material side of the abyss. They indicate a presumption that an intuitive (abyssal) approach has to fit into a Procrustean, “scientific” model, which is given status as sole arbiter of what can form “knowledge.” Thomas and Cohen (2014) contend that some of the “methodological shortcomings” (p. 2) can be mitigated by expanding the methodological paradigm to include domains such as the meditation practice used, the place the research is undertaken (e.g. at home, in a laboratory), the cultural setting, as well as the state of consciousness of the meditator, with the aim of gaining a fuller understanding of the meditative situation. They observe that “years of meditation practice” (2014, p. 4) are frequently taken as a sign of skill and expertise in meditation, although this can only be a most basic indication. Assessments of attainment by the teachers of meditants are a more reliable indication but hard to obtain (Kasamatsu & Hirai, 1966).

Thomas and Cohen (2014) argue that through the:

inclusion of phenomenological data ... research will be advanced by a comprehensive program of mapping of phenomenological states to meditation practices and then to psycho-physiological variables. Given this foundation, the questions of uniqueness of meditation states and the specificity of meditation effects may begin to be addressed. (p. 10)

Phenomenological approaches expand the research paradigm into first-person accounts and move it beyond what can be counted, measured or weighed (which is the difficulty Davidson and Kaszniak outline). As Zajonc puts it: “We are unconcerned with facts about the brain. Instead we steadily attend to our first-person, lived experiences” (2009, p. 147).

In 2014, Shear wrote,

... while over the last 14 years there has been a great deal of research on meditation in terms of the effects of different practices on such things as physiological correlates, psychological development and behavioral effects and social implications, not much progress appears to have been made in the use of meditation as a *methodology to explore* consciousness. (p. 58. Italics in original)

Meditants have been exploring and mapping levels of consciousness for hundreds of years. Various techniques and practices have been established, but with a common premise: that through meditation it is possible to experience other states of consciousness (Banerjee & Chatterjee, 2018) and that these have been extensively explored and mapped (Sikh & Spence, 2016). Researching these allowed me to form important rhizomic links with other spiritual practices and traditions. Six levels of consciousness (three everyday, three “higher” levels achievable through meditation alone) are held to be common in all Indian systems (yoga, Vedantic, etc.). Shear (2014) recalls how Shear and Varela (1999)

... indicated that particular types of meditation practices could train people to maintain unfluctuating awareness of diverse contents of consciousness for extended periods of time, as would be necessary for careful inner exploration. All of this suggested the possibility of using meditation to explore the internal domain in scientifically productive ways. (p. 58)

In order to begin to formulate a meditative methodology, Shear (2014) takes these six levels of consciousness and uses them as lenses through which to view and critique the

work of three Western philosophers—Descartes, Hume and Kant—stating where on this six-level ladder of consciousness their work may best be placed. A similar comparison of concepts, mapping Western philosophers and ideas onto an Eastern spiritual framework has been done by Rama, Ballentine and Ajaya (2007). This useful work helps locate meditation within a Western paradigm; it provides an additional lens through which to gain new insight and understanding of established knowledge.

McDermott argues that “Steiner’s most significant insight in philosophy ... would seem to be the epistemological method, which stands at the base of all of his extraordinary research.” In essence, it “issues from, calls for, and confirms a new capacity, namely the ability to establish a cognitive link between the spiritual dimension of the moral self and the spiritual dimension of the universe” (2012, p. 57). Zajonc (2009) acknowledges the importance of this and states that, “The potential value of contemplative experience—not only for the meditator, but also for society—requires that we take meditative experiences seriously” (p. 43). da Veiga emphasises the same point, advocating an approach to anthroposophical work which takes “Steiner more seriously in a methodological sense and is, at the same time, more authentic” (2014, p. 148). This study aims to explore this “cognitive link,” using a personal and “authentic” methodology “remain[ing] close to the phenomena of meditative life, allowing them their own time in our field of attention” (Zajonc, 2009, p. 147).

3.3.3 A methodology of composition

The trans-abyssal character of this study is reflected in the methodology employed for the writing of the music in the creative work. It is, again, an emergent methodology, one that involved the weaving together of existing practices and foci into a unified approach; the emergence and development of this methodology is observable through the pieces written over the course of the project and is covered in depth in Chapter 4 (p. 127).

Over centuries, composers have written music for religious purposes and for religious occasions. The proportion of sacred music to secular music written in any one century has gradually declined, possibly through the weakening power of the Christian church in European society. Notable and recent exceptions to this include Messiaen and Tavener. At the same time, there has been an increase in the number of composers looking towards Eastern traditions and using these as a vehicle through which to write. This has happened alongside a societal change from what could be called religious observance or identification with a particular religious stream to one of general “spirituality.”

Thayer-Bacon (2017b) “caution[s] against equating spirituality with religion, for religion is connected to particular religious expressions such as Judeo-Christian, Muslim, Hindu, or Buddhist traditions” (p. 2). I have maintained this viewpoint throughout my study (see p. 107) and I support Lingley (2016) when she states that,

The defining elements of spirituality ... are an engagement in a search for purpose and meaning; an orientation of faith in regards to something larger than oneself ...; a capacity for self-aware consciousness; experiences of awe, love, and transcendence; an interest in ethical or moral commitments; and a disposition of wonder and inquiry. (p. 2)

The Dalai Lama acknowledges this separation of religion and spirituality, saying “[I] do not think that religion is indispensable to the spiritual life” (2012, p. 16), using the analogy of water and tea. In order to make tea (religion) you must have water (spirituality). Tea cannot exist without it. Thinking through this image further, tea is not essential to life, whereas water is.

Deleuze and Guattari’s statement that “the modern age, it is ... the age of the cosmic” (1987/2013, p. 398) is another expression of a similar thought. Spirituality contains within it connectedness with the environment, with other human beings and with the heavens; it is inclusive and has within it aspects of interdependence, self-reflection and empathy towards others. The Vietnamese Zen Buddhist master, Nhat Hanh, set out 14 precepts or

codes of action which work towards these ends, put forward in his book, *Interbeing* (2003).

In composition, Wagar (2015–2016) acknowledges that taking a spiritual approach provides a new frame. This approach has been used successfully by Cage (1978; Kostelanetz, 2003) and Stockhausen (Cott, 1974; Popean, 2015; Stockhausen, 1978, 1989) among others. Stockhausen goes further, moving from spirituality to meditation. “I think identifying with a sound *is* meditation. A musical meditation is when you completely become the sound” (Cott, 1974, p. 36). However in his meditational practice, Stockhausen moves away from the remaining-conscious approach of meditation and moves more towards what can be called trance, unconscious, ecstatic connection with the spirit (Rouget, 1985).

I meditate before I start to play, I pray. When I start playing I have learned to forget about myself. It hardly ever happens nowadays that while I’m working I’m thinking of something else for even a fraction of a time. The moment I start playing I’m gone, and I am the sounds and I am the process, and you can’t ask me—I can’t give you any answer—what has happened. When it’s over, then I fall back, like from a session of laughing gas, into thinking and become aware of my environment. (Cott, 1974, p. 40)

The emergent methodology I adopt is one which increasingly combines the exploration of meditative levels with the act of writing music. It is one which remains conscious of itself at all times, not moving towards trance or “possession” (characterised by loss of or dulling of consciousness) (Becker, 1994) and is intuitive, guided by the experiences gained during meditation. Referencing the table in Rouget (see p. 79), my practice takes place in solitude and silence, in which I am still, calm and focussed (“no crisis”) and of which I have full recollection afterwards.

3.3.4 Parrhesia and askesis

In working with meditation as a first-person methodology, there is an implicit presumption that the researcher is going to need to speak about their inner perceptions

and that they will be frank when investigating and reporting on themselves. It is a complex expectation but vital to first-person research.

In his later works, Foucault talks at length about subjectivity and truth in Graeco-Roman philosophy. He gives three different forms of the Greek word *parrhesia*.⁵¹ There is *parrhesia* or “truth telling,” *parrhesiazomai*, the act of *parrhesia*, and *parrhesiastes* as the person who expresses *parrhesia*. Foucault saw the academic as a *parrhesiastes*—a “speaker of truth” (Flynn, 1994; Foucault, 1980/2016, 1983; Hunt, 2013). This requires a degree of risk on the part of the truth teller (Pickup, 2016).

I use “truth” here in the same sense as Kuntz when he notes that “scholars and theoreticians remain strikingly silent when it comes to their own beliefs or assertions of truth” (2015, p. 22)—it is a small-t truth, what is true to me, essentially, academic honesty, emphasising the fact that I am “both the subject of the enunciation and the subject of the enunciandum” (Foucault, 1983, p. 3).

There are several ways in which this can work; speaking truth to power is a familiar concept, as is the academic as a conscience and critic of society. The aspect of *parrhesia* which forms an important component of my methodology is the requirement for the academic (me) to be open and frank when speaking about experiences, outcomes and processes within me regarding music which occurred during the doctoral process. As Foucault says, “No one forces him to speak; but he feels that it is his duty to do so” (1983, p. 6).

“In *parrhesia*, the speaker is supposed to give a complete and exact account of what he has in mind so that the audience is able to comprehend exactly what the speaker thinks” (Foucault, 1983, p. 2). This speaks to the intimate relationship of the *parrhesiastes* to

⁵¹ Liddell and Scott give the meaning of *parrhesia* (ἡ παρρησία) to be “outspokenness, frankness, freedom of speech.” (1940)

what it is they have to say; it makes the subject a locus through whom “the truth can appear and act as a real force” (Foucault, 1980/2016, p. 37). I understand it as a requirement to speak this truth to myself as well as to others.

The decision to be outspoken, to reveal aspects of my inner experience about which I had long been silent, was not straightforward (for example, page 131) or one which I took lightly.

I had for many years been aware of and followed Steiner’s advice on inner experience, “When we begin to have a first inkling of the supersensible, we are tempted to talk about it. But this only impedes our development.... [It] would be healthiest for us if we said nothing at all about our experiences” (1904/1994, p. 117). Sharing what were intensely personal experiences with anyone was to enter uncomfortable territory (Boland, 2012) and was not something I did.

When I read Foucault’s later work on parrhesia (1983), I experienced it as encouragement and even permission to be open about experiences and processes as well as a spur or inner standard to ensure that I was open and frank in what I wrote in this exegesis. This quality of parrhesia underlies the *Critical Commentary on the Work* (p. 127), although it remains most of the time in the background. In this I follow Zajonc (2009) when he states that the potential value of such experiences means that they are to be taken seriously and shared for discussion. I explain on page 161 how the decision to speak out about experiences of music otherwise held privately was not without consequence during the creative process.

A second Classical value highlighted by Foucault which is central to this study is that of askesis (Gk. ἡ ἀσκησις), best translated by the word “exercise” or “practice” (Pape, 1914). The practice in this instance is not askesis as in asceticism (self-denial or withdrawal from the world), but rather askesis as inner exercise, a working on oneself. It is what Foucault describes as the “practice of self-examination” (1980/2016, p. 29) and links it specifically

to the practices of the Stoics in ancient Rome. He gives, as an example, a passage from Seneca's *De ira* in which Seneca describes Sextius, his protagonist's, practice of reviewing the day before sleep.

I reason with myself and take the measure of my acts and my words. I hide nothing from myself; I spare myself nothing. Why, in effect, should I fear anything at all amongst my errors whilst I can say: "Be vigilant in not beginning it again; today I will forgive you. In a certain discussion, you spoke too aggressively or you did not correct the person you were reproaching, you offended him ..." (Seneca, c. 40 CE/1958, pp. 340–341)

Foucault here emphasises that this form of self-examination is not performed in order to judge oneself or find oneself lacking, the "judge" and "accused" are after all the same person. The language Seneca uses is that of an administrator—"totum diem meum scrutator"⁵² (Foucault, 1980/2016)—looking at something carefully in order that it may function better next time. Foucault contrasts this with the practices of confession and penance common in the Christian church, noting that mysticism is the "parrhesiastic pole of Christianity" in this respect (1979–1980/2011, p. 337).

The emphasis which Seneca here places on what might nowadays be called self-development or the awareness of oneself and actions taken to work on one's inner development is central to the approach I have taken in this doctoral study and are discussed in depth on page 106. For a detailed discussion showing how the Classical notion of askesis relates to what Foucault calls the care of self, see McGushin (2007).

3.3.5 The plurivocal researcher

Hamilton and Jaaniste (2010) acknowledge the "dual orientation" (p. 39) of the exegetic process—a simultaneous looking inward and looking outward. The exegete has to embrace and unite these counter-positions into a multifaceted yet unified point of view. This they call the "hybrid" or "connective" model of exegesis.

⁵² Latin: I examine my whole day.

In a connective exegesis, the researcher adopts multiple positions from which to speak. These can include “the disinterested perspective and academic objectivity of an observer–ethnographer–analyst–theorist at times and the invested perspective of the practitioner–producer at others” (Hamilton, 2011, p. 1). In this exegesis, the first-person methodology calls upon me to speak as an academic and theorist, as a performer, composer and critic, as a diarist, teacher, practising meditator and inquiring esotericist. It requires me to write in multiple genres or styles. These include journaling, adopting formal academic language, searching for language to best represent nontangible experiences during meditation and composition, as well as reflective first-person passages.

This style of exegesis comes with challenges or risks as well as opportunities. Speaking with multiple voices and from multiple points of view may lead to a lack of coherence in the overall work and lend it a fragmented or fractured linguistic texture. It requires a synthesising of positions into a one plurivocal or choral whole (Hamilton, 2011). What this plurivocality allows the exegete is to allow what Novalis calls a “qualitative involution” (Beiser, 1996, p. 85), the researcher’s points of view coming together to create depth within depth. Observing something from one position gives, by necessity, a limited perspective. Viewing it from two positions (the inner and outer viewpoints of the connective exegesis) gives the possibility of greater depth. Observing and reporting on the doctoral process from multiple viewpoints, multi-angulation, allows the researcher to express complex and multifaceted ideas and increase the detail offered the reader. This is the approach taken here.

3.4 Some words on method

In this section I address matters of method as they apply to the formation of the creative work. These include: details of my meditative approach; issues which can arise when making the compositional process cognitive; my relationship to composing music;

something of my decision-making processes when composing and working on pieces; the on-going journaling of the compositional process; and, difficulties I faced when writing the journal. Regarding the act of composition, I discuss the challenges and opportunities of writing music in the mood of the fifth, the choice of the performance medium, and different ways I “hear” music.

3.4.1 Meditative approach

I have used meditation as my primary methodology. This immediately highlights the question regarding method, what *kind* of meditation, what kind of practice should be used? Which guidelines or traditions do I follow? My meditational approach has developed over a number of years and found its own form. I have a strong inner life, but it remains unconnected to religion, in the sense Thayer-Bacon gives above (p. 100).

Chapter 2 (p. 17) outlines my connection to the works and thought of Steiner who gave numerous indications of meditative material to individual students (see Steiner, 1904–1924/2014, among others). However, there are comparatively few indications of *how* that material should be used and even fewer of specifically *what* should be used (Jüngel, 2017). In following Steiner’s indications, meditation becomes an individual path; every meditator finds their own relationship to it and develops a practice to suit their own needs.

There are three verses or exercises which I have used during the project on a daily basis. The first is a review of the day—looking backwards through the day’s events, examining them, assessing my reactions to them, where appropriate resolving to act differently the following day. This is to all intents and purposes the same exercise as Seneca outlines (see p. 105). The second is what Steiner called the *Six Basic Exercises* (2010b). These simple exercises are, in essence, hygienic; they form a path towards the balancing and “mastery of [the soul’s] thoughts, of its will and its feelings” (Steiner, 1910/1997, p. 329).

Steiner laid great emphasis on them, stating that they are the foundation of all healthy inner development.

I will characterize the conditions that must underpin esoteric development. No one should think that he can make progress by any outward or inward means without fulfilling these conditions. All meditation and concentration exercises and suchlike are worthless and may even be harmful in a certain sense if we do not regulate our lives in accordance with these conditions. We cannot receive powers: we can only unfold those that already lie within us. Due to outer and inner hindrances, they do not develop by themselves. The outer hindrances are removed by following the rules given below, while the inner hindrances are addressed through specific instructions relating to meditation and concentration, etc. (Steiner, 2010b, p. 4)

1. Control of thoughts/regulating the course of thinking/concentration.
2. Control of the will/power of initiative.
3. Composure/practice of equanimity.
4. Positivity/lack of prejudice/tolerance.
5. Open-mindedness/continual openness to every phenomenon.
6. The sixth exercise is to practise the above five in combinations and all together.

These I supplement with what Steiner calls “the seven requirements for esoteric training” (Steiner, 1904/1994). The third practice involves a verse which I have meditated on for more than 20 years. It was given by Steiner both for:

... people who want to participate in portrayals of the spiritual world that progress upwards from the form of ideas to manners of expression that are borrowed from the spiritual world itself ... [and] also be people who want to get to know the paths to the spiritual world in order to tread them with their own souls. (1924–5/1987, p. 108)

The verse is based around the Delphic command “Know thyself” (see Steiner, 1924/2017). It asks the human being who it is who utters these words—the response being that it is the self, that the wish for self-knowledge is the most fundamental aspect of being human. Foucault speaks at length on self-examination and on the gradual transformation

from the Classical “know thyself” (*γνῶθι σεαυτόν*) to “tell me all your thoughts” (*omnes cogitationes*), the idea which lies behind the Christian practice of confession (1980/2016).

The long-term practice of these exercises forms the foundation of the meditative method I have employed. Chapter 4 contains details of how these meditative practices were progressively extended during the doctoral process to form compositional approaches, in particular, the writing of pieces three (p. 140), four (p. 152), and five (p. 159).

3.4.2 Cognising the creative process of composition

Collins acknowledges that “little attention has been paid to ‘the real-time act of making a musical product’” and that accounts which exist do “not [attempt] to deal with the vast domain of human creativity” (2012, p. xix). Composing is more commonly something which composers do, techniques they follow, rather than being a creative process they analyse; the theoreticisation of composition is a “still young field” (Collins, 2012, p. xx). Messiaen, whose book *The technique of my musical language* is one of the best known guides to compositional processes, states clearly that it is “not a treatise on composition” but a manual on rhythmic, harmonic and melodic technique (1944/1956, p. 7).

In her study of the creative processes, Franklin (2001) sought to identify common signs of creativity across artistic domains.

First, artists have a large repertoire of tacit knowledge concerning their creative activity, including the genesis of skills, modes of working, and artistic objectives. Second, the view from “inside”—that is, the artist’s account—must be privileged as a source. Third, under appropriate conditions artists can render explicit considerable portions of their tacit knowledge; although they may not spontaneously engage in the kind of differentiated description requisite for advancing understanding in to creative work, they can be guided to do so through informed, focused, and sympathetic questioning. Fourth, [...] other methods do not provide material for the kind of fine-grained experiential analysis that is the prime path to genuine understanding of creative processes. (Franklin, 2001, p. 448)

Acknowledging tacit knowledges, unpacking them and rendering them explicit forms part of the following chapter. In doing this I show how they inform the creation of the artefact and help influence the aims I seek to meet.

Doing this is, however, not without risk. Centipede syndrome is a recognised condition whereby a previously automatic process is disrupted by becoming conscious of it.⁵³ Dusapin (2007) highlights this as a danger which can be encountered when putting the compositional process under scrutiny, exposing it to analytical cognition. The free-flow of inspiration is at risk of being disrupted or stopped. I outline on page 159 how this is of relevance to my own work. Donin acknowledges that:

Similar statements exist in both empirical literature and other composers' writings, and their concerns seem legitimate. If the production of knowledge about composition implies its disruption or even its failure, then one might understand a reticence to develop such knowledge. (2012, p. 16).

As mentioned above in the context of parrhesia (p. 102), Steiner writes in a similar vein about investigating the meditative path cognitively and bringing it into the harsh light of day by discussing it before sufficient progress has been made. "When we begin to have a first inkling of the supersensible, we are tempted to talk about it. But this only impedes our development. Until we have gained a certain degree of clarity in these matters, the less we say about them, the better" (1904/1994, p. 117). See page 161 for how this affected my own creative process.

3.4.3 The role of personal influences in the compositional method

Copeland identifies two forms of musical "mind": "the creative mind" and "the interpretive mind" (1998)—essentially the composer and the performer. Boethius includes a third category, that of critic (c. 510/1989). The roles of the composer and

⁵³ "The spider says to the centipede, 'Look here, I have only eight legs. I can manage eight, but you have a hundred. I cannot imagine how it is that you know at each moment which of your hundred legs to move.' So the centipede said, 'It is very simple.' And he has been paralysed since." (Popper, 1994, p. 116)

performer are indissolubly linked and intersect in multiple ways, yet are fundamentally unlike. To Copeland, the answer to the question, why compose, “is always self-expression” (p. 147). That a composer needs to do it again and again is to witness “a unique formulation of experience which would be utterly lost if not captured and set down by the artist” (p. 147). The performer or artist-interpreter’s task is to “be humble before the composer; he [must] never interpose himself between the music and the audience; all his efforts, however strenuous or glamorous, [must] be made in the service of the composer’s meaning” (Bernstein, 1959, p. 60). The performer strives to relive and transmit the composer’s “unique formulation of experience” which would otherwise be lost.

Throughout my life, I have been more active as performer than composer. I wrote my first piece at the age of nine; since then I have written usually only when asked and for specific occasions or for specific needs. I do not regard my inner drive to compose as being strong, unlike, for instance, Rodney Bennett.⁵⁴ What is stronger is a practice of meditation, built up over decades. This doctoral study represents the first time that I have combined my compositional practice with my meditative practice.

3.4.4 Decision-making processes and critical tools

Before I began writing pieces to include in the creative work, I wrote music in what I would call a pragmatic style; the important consideration was the end product and the way to it was of secondary interest. At all stages of the piece’s composition, I relied on intuitive understandings built up over decades of musical education and practice as to what “worked” or was effective; these were, to a large extent, both unconscious and non-cognitive and were a result of tens of thousands of hours of music making. Acknowledging this tacit knowledge and, so far as possible, identifying implicit

⁵⁴ “I didn’t ever decide I was going to be a composer. It was like being tall. It’s what I was. It’s what I did” (Wise Publications, 2014, p. 2).

understandings which lie behind them is important when cognising the compositional process (Zembylas & Niederauer, 2018). These tacit understandings form a dense rhizomic mat of intersecting and inter-related connections built up over time which are a foundational structure for this study.

Regarding ways in which my tacit musical knowledge informed my compositional decisions, I would use the image of a carpenter making a table. A carpenter would put the table on its legs to see if it was stable; as a musician I ran the piece through my head to see if it had any “wobbles,” small defects which upset its balance. If there were, I would revise these sections and check the whole once again until that part of the process was complete. Once the table was wobble-free, a carpenter might look at other details by running their hand over the grain of the wood to “see” if it was smooth. In a similar way, I would run my ear over every note in the piece to “see” if all the notes transitioned smoothly from one to the other. If there were notes which appeared to be out of line or disturbing the flow of the line, I would revise them and keep checking until no more notes protruded from the texture and the piece was finished. Once a piece had reached this stage, I rarely returned to it to revise it further. What would pass my ear a first time, would also pass my ear on further hearings. It was a pragmatic process and outcomes driven.

During the course of this study, the rhizomic spread of the compositional process–subject has developed substantially in various stages. For the third, fourth and fifth pieces in the creative work (pp. 140, 152 and 159 respectively), I describe the increasing extent to which I used first imagination and then meditation as a compositional method or tool. I strongly experienced that writing using aspects of imagination, inspiration or intuition heightened the chances of artistic discovery and extended what that discovery might be, in the end beyond anything I could have foreseen (see for instance pages 145 and 152). Writing in this way involved composing while meditating which was a new departure for me. I used this method as an interpretation of Steiner’s comments on the in-between-

worlds nature of the fifth—I acknowledge that other compositions could also be transactional. In working in this way, I faced the need to suspend my accustomed musical sense and open myself to whatever happened (see among others, the fourth piece I wrote, page 152). Over time, entering the compositional space with an open mind and open ear became increasingly fruitful as I attempted to explore the state of interbeing, “reach[ing] the boundary of the human and the cosmic, where the cosmic resounds into the sphere of the human and the human, consumed with longing, yearns to rush forth into the Cosmos” (Steiner, 1906/1986, p. 220). In the next chapter I write in detail from within the meditation sessions about how I wrote the final three pieces. Because of the small size of each piece, it can be easier to write another than revise one. I regard each piece as a creative moment which cannot be repeated or, in that sense, improved, as the moment in which I wrote them cannot be recreated. I can seek to live tomorrow morning more fully than I did this morning, but I cannot go back and live this morning again to improve it; I can only learn from it. I learned greatly from writing each piece and document in the following chapter what occurred during this process.

3.4.5 Recording the journey

Throughout the doctoral period, I maintained a personal journal in the form of an extended computer document, ultimately hundreds of pages long. I used this journal like a diary to record actions, experiences, ideas, hunches, thoughts and questions as I went along. It contains entries I wrote during the act of composing and responding to music and sound, as well as considerations and uncertainties which arose. I draw extensively from this journal in the following chapter.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Cited throughout as (Boland, Unpublished diary, month dd, yyyy).

Over time, it became more than a memory aid; it became increasingly a conversation partner to whom I could freely talk about things I had not mentioned to anyone else (see Gray & Malins, 2004).

I feel the need for a “confessor” with whom I can talk these things over, though I think it may be a one-way conversation. That confessor is the typed page at the moment but it is inadequate in the long run. (Boland, Unpublished diary, August 26, 2016)

It was through the act of journaling that I gained the confidence and ultimately the wish to incorporate private diary entries into this exegesis. Reading Foucault on the notion of parrhesia (see p. 102) encouraged me to share inner processes and experiences around music and the act of composition.

3.4.6 Use of imagery

During the writing of the next chapter, the Critical Commentary on the Work, I repeatedly faced the challenge of having to find words for experiences or impressions which were, essentially, unsuited to everyday vocabulary (Platvoet & Molendijk, 1999). In doing this, I increasingly sought to write (and think) in pictorial images (see, for example, pages 133 and 145 below).

The difficulty of finding terminology for supersensible events is also discussed by Steiner. “To describe these experiences is not easy. Our languages were designed for the material world and contain words that only approximate things not belonging to this world. Nevertheless ... we must use words to describe the higher worlds” (Steiner, 1904/1994, p. 164). “You really have to invent new words to express what the soul experiences” (Steiner, 1922/2003, p. 57). Dahlin asserts that Steiner was “acutely aware of the hazards involved in translating his spiritual insights into ordinary language” (2017, p. 7), what he terms *Sprachskepsis*.⁵⁶ The same issue is acknowledged by authors researching the phenomenology of near-death experiences, including Fox (2003) and

⁵⁶ A scepticism regarding language.

Melo (2016). Cassol et al. (2018) comment that respondents, in trying to relay their experiences, “highlighted the indescribable aspect of the place (i.e., they showed difficulties in finding words)” (p. 8).

Steiner talks in greater detail about the issue, saying:

This has to do with the fact that it is only on the physical plane that we can use concepts. ... Yet, what can be clearly and necessarily linked together through concepts on the physical plane immediately changes as soon as we enter the neighboring supersensible world. Thus we see that two worlds interpenetrate; one of them can be grasped with concepts and the other one cannot, but can only be perceived. (1916/1988, p. 21)

As a way to respond to this dilemma, he suggests, “we can gradually allow ordinary thinking, applicable only on the physical plane, to turn into thinking about the spiritual world, and then into pictorial thinking, which develops under the influence of the spiritual world” (1916/1990, p. 146). “[T]he things in the spiritual world are so different from those of the physical world ... you must really identify yourself with all the images there. You must dive into them, must become one with them” (Steiner, 1914/2008, p. 22). In the following chapter I use pictorial thinking or thinking in images several times to try to convey my experiences.

The location of the spiritual world or spiritual forces

As well as being difficult to find appropriate terminology for experiences, it is also difficult to find accurate terminology when describing the spiritual world or spiritual forces, including how to speak or write of the location of the spiritual world.

Steiner writes in many contexts about the interpenetration of the spiritual and physical worlds (for example, 1904/1994, 1910/1997, 1914/1927), the two existing simultaneously in the same place. Despite this, he also talks about “higher worlds,” which can lead the reader to think in terms of the spiritual world being “up” and the “physical” world being somehow “down.” This is not only a question of translation. Steiner’s core text on inner

development, *Wie erlangt man Erkenntnisse der höheren Welten?* has “higher worlds” [*höhere Welten*] in its title (1904/1994). Steiner speaks elsewhere that “While we sleep, the life of our soul is a little cosmic solar system in miniature,” “connected to a representation of the solar system and its movements” (1922/2003, pp. 62–63), making the matter of location of the spiritual world more complex.

Diary entries in Chapter 4 (from page 127) show the difficulty of locating experiences and concepts. The refrain or the harmony of the spheres are frequently alluded to as being “up” and for me the gesture of interbeing with the refrain was essentially one of looking upward. I acknowledge the potential contradiction between the idea of exploring interbeing (which may be thought of as located in “higher worlds”) at the same time as following an increasingly inward path of composition, contradictory in the sense of striving “outwards” at the same time as striving inwards (see p. 87). It is in the commentary to the fourth piece that I describe how I came to realise my lack of accuracy in this regard and how these seemingly contradictory impulses were (for me) resolved (p. 155).

3.4.7 Challenges and restraints

Anyone seeking to write material in the mood of the fifth faces a number of constraints within which they need to work. These are principally related to size and issues arising when working with musical miniatures.

Scheuregger (2015) highlights the difference between a musical fragment and a miniature. He states that a fragment will often belong to some larger body of work, a miniature has a “rounded completeness that can be understood without extrinsic reference” (p. 23); put poetically, “The fragment is the torn part of a life-size portrait; the

miniature, a painting in a tiny locket” (p. 23). Taking a broadly Schenkerian approach,⁵⁷ a miniature can thus be expected to contain elements which achieve a degree of completion, that it has a beginning and an end point. Its internal structure leads it to be a self-reliant entity. As examples of this, Scheuregger references the music of Webern as instances of larger forms (song cycle, symphony) being reduced in scale, expressing “the notion that miniaturisation is distinct from fragmentation or mere brevity” (2015, p. 89). Whereas Webern retained traditional forms within his miniatures, Levinson rejects the concept of musical cohesion through form, by proposing the notion of “concatenation” (1997). Concatenation proposes that the effect of music arises from the immediate connections from one note to the next, not the relationships of a broader span. “[P]leasure in the whole has no meaning except as expressing the sum of our enjoyments from moment to moment” (1997, p. 10). The notion that a surface-depth paradigm exists within music is challenged by Fink, who talks of “the fear of the surface” (1999, p. 103) inherent in Schenkerism in its tendency to dismiss surface-level events as of lesser importance in the tonal hierarchy. Fink’s is a call to revalue the connections and tensions created moment to moment during a piece. In writing the pieces in the creative work, concatenation plays a role, though the role is, I would suggest, minor. The way I listen to music and hear/perceive music is over longer time periods, responding more to structural outlines than note-to-note relationships. To take an image, I see concatenation as perhaps similar to the view of an ant walking over the surface of a painting—lots of detail but

⁵⁷ Schenkerian analysis is named after the Austrian music theorist, Heinrich Schenker (1868–1935). It is widely taught in universities and conservatoires as a standard analytical tool. Schenkerian theory provides a means of analysing music to reveal its underlying melodic and harmonic structure. It is a cognitive expression of musical intuition and is used by musicologists to analyse existing works (chiefly classical), by performers to understand the structure of the pieces they perform by identifying structurally significant notes, and by composers who wish to work cognitively with larger-scale profiles and patterns. This can happen at a foreground (detail), middleground and/or background level (the background being the melodic and harmonic essence of the piece). (See Jonas, 1934/1982; Narmour, 1977; Schenker, 1935/1979.)

little overview. In my relationship to music, I perceive that I stand back and try to gain an understanding of the whole.

Writing as a composer, Anne Boyd states:

I found myself drawn to miniatures. I thought, well, I definitely want to articulate a beautiful sound world ... that was gentle, that invited a listener still to listen, rather than imposed a great act of will on the listener like Beethoven does. ... I found that the length of time that was needed to do that could be quite short, it didn't have to be a wide spread of time. (Tokita, 1996, p. 193)

Miniaturisation does not allow material which is extraneous. Every note and every rest bears meaning, and more intensely than in larger-scale pieces. In writing the pieces in the creative work, I found myself concentrating more and more on the individual “building blocks” of music, on individual intervals, on individual notes, on tonal qualities, on rests and the spaces between the notes. Rather than increasing in size as I worked in the medium, the pieces became smaller as I proceeded and I became progressively more affected by what was *not* audible, by the mood which surrounded the piece or the effects of the individual notes.

Composing these pieces involves working within a limited range, at the most within an octave and note and more frequently within the interval of a fifth—narrowing the available notes to four. Working with four notes limits the emotional range which the music can offer. This is a characteristic and also desired quality of these pieces (p. 52) but, to any composer used to working on a larger scale, it is a significant reduction in musical scope.

Another challenge encountered in the writing of the creative work centres around the indications given by Steiner and material (text and music) written by others (see Chapter 2). Steiner's descriptions of music are in purely cosmic terms making it necessary for the composer to engage in complex and challenging ways with Steiner's work. His writing is frequently hard to penetrate and his use of language in the original German, as well as the

language used in translations, is dense. In my experience, it can take many years before deep meaning begins to emerge from what he writes. Beyond this, other writers on and composers of music in the mood of the fifth interpret it in diverse, and sometimes contradictory, ways (see Chapter 3). There are numerous authors who make unsupported statements and quote or paraphrase Steiner without engaging critically with the content. While at the beginning of the study I found this unhelpful, ultimately it became liberating as it demanded that I discover my own voice and own approach to the medium.

Although Beilharz has drawn up a useful list of possible “success criteria” (1997) for music in the mood of the fifth, what constitutes a “successful” piece is no easier to distinguish than in any other genre (cf Budwey, 2011 on what makes a “good” piece of music). Predictably, composing in the mood of the fifth comes down to “mood” (cf Beilharz, 2003). Working with and towards something so intangible is a challenge. The creative work is the result of me engaging in a process with few resources, few notes and contradictory opinions to achieve this aim.

3.4.8 Deciding the performance medium

In Steiner early childhood settings, music is always performed live (see p. 63). For this reason, a live performance of the creative work is an essential component of this doctorate. .WAV sound files are provided as a means of listening to the pieces multiple times. Playing these recordings over and over may lead to the discovery of a doorway into the next piece or to new and important relationships between and within notes being created. Live performance is essential while at the same time being insufficient so long as each piece is only played once.

Considerations around the performance, specifically around instrumentation and performance style, took longer to arrive at. Traditionally, songs in Waldorf kindergarten settings are unaccompanied and, where an instrument is used, they are accompanied by a

wire-strung pentatonic lyre (for an example, see Choroi, 2018). As the audience for the performance of the creative work comprises adults, I sought a different instrument which would maintain the “mood” of the pieces while having a more robust sound. I decided on the concert harp.

I believe this is an unusual performance decision, not least because few people have access to a harp. I have never experienced or heard of mood of the fifth pieces played on the harp in any other context and would not expect or recommend an early childhood setting to use one with the children, both from a health and safety perspective (they can be knocked over and are very heavy) and expense.

The more I have played mood of the fifth pieces on the harp, both those included in this collection and others, the more the instrument has appealed to me to perform these works on. As an instrument which is significantly resonant, overtones are audible to the listener as are sympathetic tones. When you play an A, for example, the vibrations activate all the other strings tuned to an A. If you play a fifth, D–A, as well as the fifth played, “sympathetic” fifths will sound all through the instrument, enriching the tonal palate significantly.

Initially, I played the melodies as single notes at the pitch written (i.e. the same pitch as the singer). I experimented with notes in the bass—single pedal notes,⁵⁸ double pedal notes (an open fifth) and accompanying the melody in the style of a traditional Irish *aisling*⁵⁹ (Dr Janet Harbison,⁶⁰ personal communication, 2008), playing isolated notes from the melody in the bass.

⁵⁸ In music a pedal note, or pedal point, is a sustained tone, usually in the bass, over which the rest of the musical texture moves.

⁵⁹ Irish: dream or vision. The word is used to refer to poetry and, by transfer, to poems set to music. These settings can also be called *airs*.

⁶⁰ Founder and director of the Irish Harp Centre, Limerick, Ireland.

Ultimately, through experimentation, I lit on the performance approach of playing the melody with both hands, an octave apart. I have not heard this done in an early childhood setting⁶¹ and it came after an extended period of experimentation. What playing in octaves offers, for me as a performer, is that it sympathetically activates the lower strings of the instrument which increases the tonal resonance of the piece. The “sound” becomes richer and carries much more. I adopt a quasi-Irish style (taking isolated notes from the melody into the bass) towards the end of some of the pieces offered to reduce playing all the time in octaves while still giving this increased resonance.

In choosing the harp, I acknowledge that the sound is far different from that of the metal-strung pentatonic lyre used in Steiner early childhood settings. However, I have chosen it not for an audience of children, for whom smaller, quieter sounds are commonly used in Steiner settings. Should these pieces be used with young children, I suggest that they be sung (with the exception of the fifth piece), using the lyre if accompaniment is wanted. Deason-Barrow gives extensive and authoritative guidelines for the style of singing best suited to working with young children (2010, 2013).

Working with a small range and only with melody, not harmony, throws light on all performance decisions including tempo and pulse. As mentioned, opinions differ as to whether mood of the fifth pieces “should” have a strong pulse or not (see p. 57). During the course of the compositional journey, the strength of the beat or pulse became less noticeable. This was not a conscious decision, and arose intuitively as the compositional method evolved (see p. 152 seqq.). Those pieces which do have a pulse have quite a slow tempo. This has been chosen to allow each note to be sounded and experienced before the next is played or sung. Pauses or extended breaths in the melodic line are more prominent in the later pieces offered than the earlier ones. This too allows the line of music to

⁶¹ Not least because it is not possible on the instruments usually used in a Waldorf kindergarten (lyre, chime bars, etc.).

“breathe” and establish itself in the listener’s ear before the next one begins. This approach is mentioned in literature (p. 156). That I have adopted it in my later pieces was an intuitive rather than a thought-through decision; I explain in the following chapter how this progressed through the course of the pieces of the creative work.

3.4.9 Relationship to the performance instrument

I have played the harp for 20 years. During this time I have become increasingly familiar with it, and learned to gauge instinctively the distances between strings and where, out of sight, the seven pedals lie. I have come to experience it as an extension of myself. When I sit down to play, I feel that my fingers extend into the strings and that it is through the action of my fingers that I draw out the sounds which already exist in the instrument *in potentia*. I do not perceive a barrier between me thinking music and that thought moving through my fingers and into or onto the strings. It is of significance to me that the act of playing the harp involves quasi-embracing it, folding your arms around it with the body resting against you, aware of the resonance and vibration of the whole instrument. I contrast this to sitting at the piano, an instrument on which I have far greater technical proficiency. The piano remains outside me; I am the performer engaging with it, but at arm’s, or finger’s, length. It does not become a part of me, or I part of it.

3.4.10 Potentials and opportunities

On page 116, I outlined restraints and challenges I perceive when composing music in the mood of the fifth. I experience these as limitations which can have a centripetal, contracting effect on the writer, especially when compared to the freedom of writing music without these restrictions. On the other hand, there are potentials and opportunities which writing in the mood of the fifth offers which have the opposite effect; I experience these as expansive and centrifugal. As a composer writing the pieces in the creative work, I have lived with and between the two, sometimes feeling more restricted, and sometimes more free.

As the compositional method became increasingly meditative and I sought to write within a state of interbeing, I felt the limitations mentioned above less and less. In the end, they vanished. Through working meditatively, an internal space opened up within which I could write. In this internal space, there are no limitations. When I wrote the first pieces of the creative work, I was thinking, largely unconsciously, of what I could *not* do, specifically of melodic and range limits I had to keep myself within. Being musical miniatures, the process I was following was one of reduction, of miniaturisation (see p. 116). The later three pieces are the result of me releasing myself from that restrictive mindset. Through meditating on an individual note or interval, I discovered that I could use it as a generative source or seed from which the piece could grow. The process changed from being one of miniaturisation to one of growth, expanding from a note or interval into a whole piece. The gesture changed from one of constriction to one of freedom, from contraction to expansion.

An aspect of the potential of this music genre which has increased in significance for me, is the requirement for the composer to engage intensely with individual “building blocks” of music and to take the results of this into the activity of composing. These building blocks include individual notes, intervals, pauses, and moments of silence. I compare Whittall’s analysis of Webern’s *Four Pieces for Violin and Piano* that “single intervals, even single notes, may be held to possess motivic significance” (1983, p. 734). I strive to identify and direct potentials within these building blocks and use them to generate small pieces of music. This allows me to draw and build on decades of tacit knowledge and accumulated experience which I have gathered from many sources and combine to explore what is possible in this field of music, creating the examples which form the creative artefact.

3.4.11 Ways of hearing

As the doctorate progressed, diverse ways of hearing and listening took on an increasingly central role in the creative journey. I outline below four ways in which I perceived music at the beginning of the process.

All the music presented in the creative work was written in (outer) silence. It was generated, worked on, amended and finalised as part of a completely mental process.⁶² The music was written down in apparent silence. This has echoes of Schumann: “When you begin to compose, do it all with your brain. Do not try the piece at the instrument until it is finished” (cited in Agnew, 1922, p. 282).

As a musician, I experience music in several ways. Firstly, there is music which I hear other people play, either in live performance or as a recording. Then there is music which I myself play, in which I am simultaneously performer, audience and critic. There is music which I hear in my head, which is internally generated and to which I respond in diverse ways (see p. 130), and, finally, there is music which I read from the page. I read printed music as readily as I read printed words and hear it mentally in much the same way. If I glance at a sheet of music, I “hear” the notes my eyes skim over just as when I glance at a newspaper headline I “hear” what the headline is saying.

What separates these different kinds of hearing is intensity of experience. The least intense and least powerful form of hearing is reading which engages me to a slight degree. Just as I often skim words when I read, I skim music. I frequently read music much faster than I would ever play it and use the process as information gathering rather than meaningful musical experience. I seldom react emotionally to music I read. The next most intense is music which I hear (imagine) in my head. This I commonly think of at the “right” speed and it can be greatly affecting, dependant on the degree of concentration I

⁶² The final piece forms a slight exception to this; see p. 159.

give it. This is the work platform I used for the creative work. Music which I hear others play, for which I am audience, can be a powerful kind of hearing, but it is affected by the piece played and the skill of the performer/s. However, I cannot help but react strongly to it, even when it is not skilfully done or is music I do not find attractive.

There are significant differences for me between a live performance and a digital recording. Live performance is a much richer experience sensorially, to which I respond on multiple levels. At the same time, the richness of non-aural stimuli can distract me from the music being played. This does not happen if I am for instance in someone's house listening to them play. However, because of my distractibility in large venues, I encounter the (for me) paradoxical situation that I can respond more strongly to recorded music than live music I listen to in a quiet space (e.g. at home). I acknowledge that in listening to recordings my ear is being "fooled" into thinking that it is hearing particular instruments (see Boland, 2013b) whereas it is only responding to the loudspeaker vibrating. Nonetheless, I can find listening to digital recordings a powerful way to encounter music. The most powerful of all for me is music which I play myself. This taps into levels of engagement which others' music does not reach and which I can only seldom access through thought alone.

In writing and performing the creative work, I employ most of these ways of hearing. I write the music using only mentally created sound and then write it down on manuscript paper. Reading the written notes is a similar process to thinking of them, but the process starts with my eyes which gives it a different character. As performer it is different again. I create the music inwardly then allow it to well up sufficiently that it flows through me through my fingers and into the instrument.

3.5 Summary

This chapter is preparation for the next. It introduced the rhizome as a metaphor for the doctoral journey, the compositional journey, as well as for the subject. The pieces of the creative work are located along this rhizome. The chapter also highlighted the concept of abyssal knowledges, knowledges which lie “beyond” accepted scientific approaches, and showed ways in which Steiner sought to bridge this abyss, providing encouragement to move from a dualist approach to a monist one which united understanding of the material with understanding of the spiritual. I used the term “ecology of knowledges” and “choral hermeneutic” to express ways in which understandings drawn from these diverse knowledges can support each other to strengthen their validity.

The following chapter contains the results of first-person research and of meditational practice. It is as if, having woven my epistemological–ontological net (Thayer-Bacon, 2017a) (see p. 81), I now get ready to cast it and see what experiences I can retrieve. Rather than casting it from a boat, I perhaps stand by the abyss, and cast the net in the direction of the other side to see what I can catch.

Chapter 4: Critical commentary on the work

4.1 Introduction

My study of the mood of the fifth led me on a journey which became a “line of flight” (“*ligne de fuite*”) (Deleuze & Guattari , 1987/2013, p. 3) in the sense that the translator, Massumi, gives: “*Fuite* covers not only the act of fleeing or eluding but also flowing, leaking, and disappearing into the distance” (2003, p. xv). On this journey, notions of interbeing became critical to understanding both composition processes and the nature of the child’s engagement with music in relation to the task of composing for children.

This chapter forms the core of the exegesis. It offers a critical account of a process and some of the outcomes of that process. It is broadly chronological with one significant look back at past experiences which inform the present.

Throughout I draw on a range of authors, philosophies and approaches from different times, cultures and worldviews. These voices together comprise the choral hermeneutic mentioned in the previous chapter and are rich in rhizomic connections. They are heard increasingly towards the end of the chapter as the compositional approach expands and lines of flight are suggested which point towards diverse authors and traditions, often widely separated by time. The ways in which the chorus of these voices resonates with my study reminds me of the way a harp resonates when a sound causes one of its strings to resonate in sympathy. As if of itself, the instrument comes to life. In cases of strong resonance, multiple strings sound, sending a shimmer through the air. As rhizome, I have experienced the sympathetic vibration of these diverse worldviews and outlooks as I encountered them.

The creative artefact of this doctorate comprises five pieces for young children, four songs and a nonvocal piece. These are followed by a sixth which I offer as an end contemplation of the artistic journey. They have been chosen from almost 100 composed during the

doctoral period. The five pieces represent stages of a compositional journey as I engaged with the research question. Each illustrates a step along a compositional pathway from pragmatic and outcome-focussed to one which is inward and meditative.

As my compositional approach evolved, I suspended my trained notions of what is aesthetic and instead tried to “creep inside the note” (Mögelin, n.d./2015, p. 427). I sought to explore how, as a composer, I could creatively enter a zone of “interbeing” to “reach the boundary of the human and the cosmic, where the cosmic resounds into the sphere of the human and the human, consumed with longing, yearns to rush forth into the Cosmos” (Steiner, 1906/1986, p. 220). These qualities became the aesthetic or lens through which I view the pieces in the creative work.

Boulez is sceptical about musicians analysing their own work. “Any musician proposing to embark on an introspective analysis is always suspect” (1971/1975, p. 11). He writes this as a musician who analyses his work introspectively. As an attempt to explore this suspicion, I articulate aspects of my musical experience and my inner life which are otherwise private and unspoken. In documenting the stages of this increasingly inward journey, I adopt an approach of openness and honesty, first to myself, following Seneca’s statement “I hide nothing from myself; I spare myself nothing,” and then to a wider, shared openness (Foucault, 1983). This decision to act as *parrhesiastes* (see p. 102) was and is not one I took lightly. To paraphrase Godwin writing about Steiner (see p. 135 below), in writing this chapter, I “embark ... on the difficult task of submitting [my own] visions to the thinking process” in order to situate the creative work and to better understand, describe and theorise the compositional journey I have undertaken. I believe this is what da Veiga calls following “Steiner’s example ... [of] simply try[ing], however modestly, to render spiritual reality accessible, and to offer the fruits of these attempts for discussion” (2014, p. 148).

Marini (2016) identifies two complementary groupings of “aims” of art: “art as fulfilment,” and “art that is other” (p. 92). Art that is other is art which does not address us using commonly accepted forms.

I speak specifically of those works of art that address us from, as it were, another shore. [T]hey are works that are called “difficult,” “strange,” or “unfamiliar,” works that we can ingest but not digest, that we roll around uncomfortably in our perception, like a hot potato in our mouth. (Ruitenbergh, 2002, p. 452)

Despite their small size and nonconfrontational nature, I believe the pieces in the creative work exemplify Ruitenbergh’s notion of art that is other coming from “another shore.”

4.1.1 The organisation of this chapter

The form which this chapter takes emerged organically from the process. The chapter contains two types of entry. The first are subsections which I have entitled Preamble and Interludes. These are drawn from the personal diary I kept during the doctoral process (see p. 113). They explore musical experiences which have had an influence on me as a composer writing the music in the creative work. One is situated 40 years ago, the other two occurred during the doctoral journey. In Chapter 3, I discussed the role of personal influences in the composition and research method (p. 110). The attention to and analysis of the Prelude and Interludes provides an additional level of theorisation to the work presented.

The other entries are critical commentaries on the pieces which comprise the creative work. Each one follows the same format: discussion of the work; method; and, reflection on the work. They offer insight into compositional decisions and artistic processes, interfacing interior or inner review with an awareness of theoretical context. The commentaries identify changes and developments within the compositional process, both to method and outcome. Some of these changes are gradual and are best observed by looking across all the pieces in the creative work; other changes are more sudden and are

linked to the musical experiences outlined in the Interludes. Finally, I offer a Contemplation which explores ideas generated by the compositional process.

4.2 Preamble—setting the scene

The pieces themselves are as if snapshots in time which illuminate stages during the research process. My compositional practice began before I enrolled in this doctorate and will continue after it. I engage here with what happened while enrolled in the doctoral programme with one exception. This is the Preamble which I situate several decades ago. It is included as it contains fundamental components which affect my everyday musical perception.

4.2.1 Personal relationship to and experience of music

Absolute pitch

For as long as I can remember, I have “known” what notes I am listening to whether those sounded in the air or in my head. This facility is known as perfect or absolute pitch⁶³ and is estimated to affect around 1:10,000 of the population; the incidence of it is concentrated much more strongly in trained musicians (Deutsch, 2006). Research indicates that it likely develops in infancy and, although countless people have tried to acquire absolute pitch later in life, there are no scientific studies indicating that this is possible (Dingfelder, 2005). You have it or you don’t. The identification of tones heard is as fast and as automatic for me as identifying the colours of sweets at first glance in a packet of Smarties.

The relevance of this ability to this study is that it allows the possessor of perfect pitch to develop deep and particular relationships to individual notes. A note D, for example, is

⁶³ “Absolute pitch refers to the rare ability to identify the chroma of a tone or to produce a specific pitch without reference to keyality (e.g., G or C)” (Elmer, Rogenmoser, Kühnis, & Jäncke, 2015, p. 366).

impossible to confuse with an E. They have different characters and tendencies and affect me in different ways. Just as we talk about “feeling blue” being different to “seeing red” or being in a “black” mood, for me a composer, audience and performer, the qualities of individual notes and keys affect me in different, although possibly comparable, ways (see p. 145 below).

Experience of music as movement

Though I have had perfect pitch for as long as I can remember, it is only since I was in my 40s that I have experienced music as constantly moving shapes, visible in my mind’s eye. During the course of this doctorate I tried to isolate what this might be, thinking (initially) that it may be “late-onset” synaesthesia.⁶⁴

At its simplest level, synesthesia [sic] means that when a certain sense or part of a sense is activated, another unrelated sense or part of a sense is activated concurrently. For example, when someone hears a sound, he or she immediately sees a color or shape in his or her “mind’s eye.” (Gross, 2018)

Music has height, breadth and depth as well as size and, increasingly, movement. I sometimes experience these constantly shifting shapes in colour, though usually not. They are merely light against dark. Usually for me these shapes hover as it were in mental space before me. (Boland, Unpublished diary, July 12, 2016)

Simner’s research supports the notion that “synaesthetic sensations supplement, but do not replace, the usual modality-specific perceptions” (2012, p. 2). I experience music as a second level of seeing, which exists in a space between me and what I observe of the everyday world. I can focus on either or, more usually, let both run parallel and undisturbed. They exist separately but simultaneously (Deutsch, 2002).

... in some parts of some pieces, the ‘shape’ I experience opens up to envelop me completely and I become one with the piece I am hearing. At these times my

⁶⁴ My term. Ward states, “The developmental form of synaesthesia ... is believed to emerge early in life and persist throughout the lifespan” (2017, p. 308). I have encountered little which indicates that synaesthesia can begin later in life, similar to perfect pitch. An exception is an account in *Nature* from 1890 of the development of what appears to be music-shape-movement synaesthesia in a woman (“an accomplished musician”) which began in her 40s (Newton, 1890). Hers appears to be a reaction to musical timbre rather than pitch.

awareness of my immediate surroundings dims and sometimes goes far into the background. I become as if blind or near blind to the world around me. This has happened occasionally when performing [the longest occurrence being for around 30 minutes], more frequently when listening to music and sometimes when thinking of it.⁶⁵ It once happened riding a motorbike on the motorway. Since 2015, it has happened with increasingly frequency when I hear (or think of) music, though to differing degrees of intensity. (Boland, Unpublished diary, July 12, 2016)

[As this reaction to music intensified during the doctoral process,] listening to music has become something I lie on the couch to do, just to be on the safe side. (Boland, Unpublished diary, February 6, 2018)

The compositional journey I have undertaken is prompted and informed by these experiences. I experience them as spontaneous “inner” reactions. During the course of the doctoral study I have observed, documented and analysed my responses to specific pieces, listening to them and jotting down, second by second, what I was experiencing. On multiple hearings, the responses are consistent down to small details yet vary greatly in intensity. As the methodology of this study was emerging, I interrogated what the possibilities and consequences of using synaesthetic responses to music could be as a compositional approach. As I began to realise that the nature of my responses to music was possibly unusual, I took synaesthesia into my compositional work and used it to interrogate music and sound, focussing on the fifth and on individual notes (see p. 152).

The incidence of synaesthesia is disputed and there are up to 61 different sense-combinations or variants of the condition reported (Simner, 2012). A recent study at the University of Boston puts the incidence of synaesthesia as between 1:5,000 and 1:100,000 people (Gross, 2018). Others suggest that it affects up to one person in 100 (Tsakanikos & Ward, 2006), a huge difference, although the parameters of what is regarded as synaesthesia in the two studies differ strongly. Gross only counts strong, clearly perceivable synaesthetic responses, Tsakanikos includes instances where in tests, for

⁶⁵ My experience here is contrary to the findings of Ward, “[Synaesthetic experiences] are automatic and elicited insofar as they are driven by a stimulus (rather than ‘willed’ like a mental image)” (2017, p. 306). My experiences are activated by audible sound and thought sound alike.

example, a colour is associated more frequently with a particular note, even when the subject is unaware of this and experiences no such link.

Experiencing links between colour and music is the most common form of synaesthesia. Experiencing music as shape in movement seems much less common; Day (2017) indicates that 0.09% of synaesthetes report this combination (just over 1:1,000). There is no developed body of research or literature around this, unlike colour-music synaesthesia which is well documented (Ward, 2017). Taking the isolated reports together, it is clear that there is not a common experience among synaesthetes and that all accounts show strongly individual responses. Responses can take the form of interweaving lines, isolated lines of notes, textures as well as bands of colour moving through space. I document on page 152 how my multi-sensory experiences inform pieces I have written.

Musica mundana | the refrain

The greatest influence on my perception and understanding of music stems from experiences which I self-censored for over 40 years. Breaking this self-imposed “spiral of silence” (Noelle-Neumann, 1974) has been a difficult although ultimately cathartic and liberating process.

These experiences form the starting point of an inner musical journey, of which this doctorate is a part-documentation. I quote at length because of the foundational nature of these experiences to me as musician.

I entered puberty overnight when I was twelve. My inner equilibrium was badly disturbed and my experience of the world changed from one day to the next, particularly around the activity of hearing. Among other things, I had strong experiences when transitioning from being asleep to being awake. I will attempt to describe what I experienced as clearly as I can, the experience having been repeated hundreds of times and always the same. It happened more or less daily until the age of 16–17 or so and seldom since then, though [still occasionally]. ...

I am writing in the present tense, as if experiencing it anew, though I am relying on memory.

I find myself conscious (though still nominally asleep), aware that I am lying in bed, aware of my body, but disinterested in it. I am able to direct my awareness or consciousness outside my body, focus it on my body from above, move it around my body, through my organs and limbs, around the room I am in and into nearby rooms. It is a tranquil, pleasant experience; a feeling of great warmth and comfort. It begins in silence.

Suddenly I am aware of streaming light coming from above, from below, from all around me. This light is bright though not dazzling, a white-yellow and made up of an infinite number of smaller lights which move gently in three dimensions through the greater ocean of light. It is so beautiful I would want it to go on for ever. Shortly after I am aware of this light, a huge wave of sound bursts in as if a dam has been opened. The first impression is of volume, of overwhelming loudness. It is to some degree like being in the middle of a large orchestra, surrounded by sound, but infinitely greater. It takes hold of me. The sound is both static and moving. The effect is of moving stasis, just as the waves in the ocean constantly move and pulse but the ocean stays in the same place and retains a similar form. I experience music spatially and the dimensions taken up by this sound cover the universe. It is without end in all directions though, as I remember it, I am aware of its infinite breadth and depth rather than height. I ‘look’ from side to side and into the sound, rather than ‘up’ or behind.

Each of the smaller ‘lights’ is contributing to the overall sound. The feeling is of communication and interaction—perhaps of call and response. They can pulsate in waves, travelling across the ‘space’ I see. There can be huge surges, waves of other colours which ‘sound’ different but merge into the same sea of sound. The sound is both eternal, never changing, and at the same time rolling in immense waves which both penetrate me and carry me upon them.

There is always an overall form to this sound—it is always the same and has never changed through the hundreds of times I have heard it. I hear an immense D major chord.⁶⁶ It covers a huge range from the deepest of deep notes to the highest of high. It all sounds together in a cataclysmic concord of affirmation. It contains rhythms, surging crescendos, solo passages, all within a texture which is simultaneously differentiated and unified. I cannot explain it better. There are other notes in there, but the effect is of a deafening, all-embracing D major chord. Like someone playing an organ as large as the world itself.

⁶⁶ When discussing Steiner’s musical knowledge and experience, Kurtz (2015) cites reminiscences of Steiner by Kux and Kux (1976). They report a conversation with Steiner in which Steiner mentioned that the tonality of the harmony of the spheres “could” change depending on the archangel associated with the historical period. For that for the current archangel, Micha-el, it is “in the region of D major” [*Ich könne für Michael die Region der D-Dur-Tonart wählen.*] (M. Kurtz, 2015, p. 30). Kurtz also mentions in passing that Steiner appeared to have perfect pitch.

I cannot say how long these periods lasted—some were short, others seemed much longer. I could sometimes hear everyday noises (buses, cars, central heating), surface as if from far away, take stock of the day, then dip under again, diving once more into an enveloping and welcoming ocean of sound and light. To experience it was to know all is well. (Boland, Unpublished diary, June 15, 2016)

4.2.2 Relevance to this study

In documenting this, I step over lines I drew long ago between what was private and what was public. Writing the above section represents the first, and biggest, step for me in the direction of parrhesia. They are experiences I had never spoken of or anticipated would be put in an openly available document. However, they are central to every aspect of my musical experience and need to be included if a full account of the creative journey is to be given. What I write about music, as well as the music I write, needs to be viewed through the lens of these repeated experiences; they affect and inform everything. The echo of these experiences has resonated within me every day for over 40 years.

As mentioned on page 127, Godwin writes that Steiner “embarked on the difficult task of submitting his visions to the thinking process: this becoming a purely conscious and intelligent medium for what he called ‘knowledge of the higher worlds’” (1986, pp. 251–252). In a small way, I am trying to do the same in order to situate the creative work and to better understand, critique and theorise the compositional journey I have undertaken.

4.3 Piece 1—*Oak tree*

Discussion of the work

The first piece in the creative work was written early in the study and typifies an approach I had adopted before I began the doctoral process; it illustrates my compositional starting point. The method I took led to quick results; it was pragmatic, efficient and noncomplex.

I was asked by a teacher if I could set a simple text she had written herself so it could be used in a eurythmy lesson with young children. I began composing this imagining a fifth,

D–A, the dyad⁶⁷ most commonly used two notes in mood of the fifth pieces (see p. 53). This is an uncontroversial, or even conventional, decision; however, I chose it because of the nature of that particular combination of notes. Firstly, and for me most importantly, it is the root of the key of the experiences I remember from my youth (see p. 133).⁶⁸ That gives it a unique value to me which no other note has. Pieces in D major affect me differently to all others. For me Ds are important; I find them creative. I experience that they spread themselves through the air, they defuse into the atmosphere in a way other notes do not.⁶⁹ They are generative, they create movement and form other notes out of themselves. von Kries writes about this, saying “D produces movement and pulsates [*in sich selber schwingt*]” (2004, p. 140).

The note A, I experience differently. An A is to me distant and removed. The dyad of these two notes contains both these gestures, one generative and in movement, the other distant and reserved, one showing Apollonian qualities, the other Dionysian ones.

Method

I kept a perfect fifth (D–A) sounding in my head while I read and thought the text multiple times. Deciding on a pulse (here 4/4) and rhythm was straightforward, although unadventurous.

⁶⁷ Two notes sounding simultaneously.

⁶⁸ I am aware of, and agree with, Zajonc’s caution not to analyse or interpret supersensory experiences too quickly (2009). Writing at a distance of 40 years from the initial experience and having done 40 years’ reading around the subject, I wonder if what I experienced repeatedly as a youth, and intermittently since, has similarities to what others term the harmony of the spheres. I cannot know if this is the case, but I see many similarities.

⁶⁹ Within classical western music, C is acknowledged as the referential note and C major as the referential key to which others are compared. C is the only major key which is not coloured by sharps and flats. For me, however, Cs are static, largely uncoloured and do not encourage movement as Ds do.

I wrote this piece trying to achieve a feeling of a fifth (the “mood of the fifth”), so the listener would be left with the feeling of the fifth long after the piece had ended (see mention of *Nachklang*, on page 142). The melodic outline of a fifth was going to be important in this. I chose to start the piece by repeating the ascending fifth. An ascending fifth was chosen rather than descending (A–D) as this has an unfolding, opening quality to it rather than a closing, coming-to-earth feel. The same goes for the overall outline of the phrase. If the melodic line is descending, it has the effect of “grounding” the piece. An overall ascending line allows it to “float,” to “hover.” Steiner describes the experience of the young child as one of “dreamy” or floating consciousness (see p. 52), so I chose an ascending outline, ending on the A, although this decision goes against suggestions by Beilharz (2003) who recommends an overall falling line for music in the mood of the fifth.

Reflection on the work

Oak tree is unusual in that it dips down to middle C, a note outside the commonly used pentatonic scale of D–E–G–A–B. This was not a planned move. Listening to the piece and replaying it in my head, the momentary dip down below the D and back again, gives a richness, a solidity which it would otherwise not have. It gives the piece “roots” while allowing the ascending outline to float away. It becomes a kind of a tether, a modal anchor for the piece while the other notes hang freely in space.

Other features of this compositional starting point are that the metre, 4/4, is clear and the pulse of the piece unavoidable, although the beat, I believe, is not overly emphasised. The piece represents a point at which I had not begun to engage with the concept of the refrain and the notion of interbeing. If I were to place this piece on the continuum of earthly or heavenly, which Steiner describes as “where the cosmic resounds into the sphere of the human and the human ... yearns to rush forth into the Cosmos, where the cosmos reaches

down towards the earthly and the earthly yearns for the cosmos,” (1906/1986, p. 220) I would place it firmly towards the earthly end.

4.4 Piece 2— *Waitī, Waitā*

Discussion of the work

The impulse for this piece came when I was asked to write something for a eurythmy lesson on the theme of Matariki. Matariki is the Māori mid-winter festival and celebrates the appearance in the Southern night sky of Matariki or, for Europeans, the Pleiades. It plays an important part of the cycle of seasonal festivals in many early childhood centres and schools. As a New Zealander who enjoys looking at the night sky, the idea of composing a piece for Matariki, for the festival as well as for the constellation, was inspiring.

The text is traditional.⁷⁰

*Waitī, Waitā, Waipuna-ā-rangi,
Tupu-ā-nuku, Tupu-ā-rangi, Ururangi e.
Koinei ngā tamariki o Matariki,
Ngā whetū e pīataata i te rangi e.*

Waitī, Waitā, Waipuna-ā-rangi,
Tupu-ā-nuku, Tupu-ā-rangi, Ururangi.
These are the children of Matariki,
The bright stars that shine in the sky.

Method

As there is already a waiata of this text (see Rae, 2013), I was faced immediately with the question of ownership and cultural appropriation (Bishop & Glynn, 2003). I was hesitant to take on the task of setting existing text in a language and from a culture which is not my own to a different melody and in a different style. I sought guidance from teachers and colleagues who are Māori, including in the school wanting to use the piece. They encouraged me to go ahead and use the words to write a piece of music for young children

⁷⁰ Waitī, Waitā, Waipuna-ā-rangi, Tupu-ā-nuku, Tupu-ā-rangi and Ururangi are stars in the Matariki constellation (Pleiades). In Māori tradition, the seventh star in the constellation is Matariki herself, the mother surrounded by her six daughters (Meredith, 2018).

specifically following Steiner's indications on the mood of the fifth. As a non-Māori speaker, I retained the rhythm of the existing melody which is straightforward aside from the syncopation at the end. The existing waiata has a strong pulse. I retained this although I find there is a tension between this strong pulse and the visual delicacy and fineness of how the small Matariki constellation appears in the night sky.

I followed a similar, pragmatic process to create this piece. Like with *Oak tree* above, I began by playing a fifth, D–A, in my head and imagining phrases and melodic outlines around it.

Reflection on the work

The piece falls into two sections, melodically the same, although rhythmically different. The outline of each section is ascending D to A, as in *Oak tree*. The pulse is stronger in this piece with a clear emphasis twice a bar. This generates an amount of momentum, and a firm pulse is needed to ground the dotted quaver-semiquaver rhythm in the first section and especially the syncopation towards the end. They cannot work unless the beat is clear.

Like the first piece, reviewing this at a distance in time, it clearly works, is small scale, and has an expansive quality which lends itself to repetition. It is a little as if in beginning it one steps on to a slowly circling wheel which takes an act of will to get off again. There are few songs in the mood of the fifth in *te reo Māori* available to Steiner early childhood practitioners. This piece represents one of my first attempts to supplement these with material which more strongly acknowledges the bicultural nature of education in Aotearoa. On the continuum of interbeing, *Waiti*, *Waitā* is still earthly, despite its starry text.

I acknowledge the inescapable tensions generated by me, as *Pākehā*,⁷¹ deciding to set a Māori text and accompany it on a European instrument with the intention that it be performed in a non-Indigenous setting, while noting that waiata are commonly accompanied by nontraditional instruments (guitars, etc.) and using Western classical harmonies. McLean & Orbell (2004) note that, pre-contact, Māori music used microtones and micro-intervals (smaller than a semitone) although the overall range of notes used “was only a few notes in the modern scale” (Flintoff, 2014). The pieces I have written also use few notes which lie within a limited range but employ intervals which are found within standard classical music tradition.

4.5 Piece 3—*Sleep in your little bed*

Discussion of the work

This piece marks a movement away from my initial pragmatic compositional method to one more exploratory and intuitive, using inner visualisation as a compositional impulse. The motivation for the change was two-fold. The first impetus was encouragement to dive as deeply as possible into the act and process of composition. I heard this encouragement as “permission” to step past the silence I had imposed on myself for decades regarding my experiences of music (see p. 102 on parrhesia). The second impetus was rereading conversations between Stockhausen and Cott (Cott, 1974) in which Stockhausen repeatedly emphasises the spiritual qualities of music and the importance of meditation for him as a performer and composer, not beginning a performance until he is where he wants to be with his meditation (see p. 102).

Method

The first step I took on this inward journey was to use on myself a technique I had long

⁷¹ Māori: New Zealander of European decent, and, more recently, any non-Māori New Zealander (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2018).

practised with students and workshop participants, and to take imagination more deeply into the creative process.

My journal notes, “I begin by imagining aurally an open fifth, D–A ... I think of these [notes] to the exclusion of all else until they are established in my mind and self-perpetuating” (Unpublished diary, July 12, 2016).

“Establishing” the interval till it is “self-perpetuating” refers to an experimental-experiential practice I have undertaken with workshop participants over years. In order to explain music in the “mood of the fifth,” I need people to experience for themselves what the mood an interval of a fifth has. Without that experience, what I say remains academic. One way I have found effective is to divide a group of people into two equal parts, one singing a lower note, the other a note a fifth higher. They sing the two notes for an extended period—often up to five minutes, taking breaths as and when necessary. I ask them to put their hands up if they notice anything happening but above all to keep on singing. After a few minutes, most people are wondering what I am making them do, then someone’s eyes will open wide and their hand goes up. Each time I have tried this, it takes a different length of time for any results to occur. Gradually hand after hand gets raised. I have commonly found that there will be a couple of people whose hands do not go up, but I possibly stop the exercise too soon.

When asked why they put their hands up and what they experienced, participants have reported wonder mixed with confusion and a lack of adequate words to express what has just happened to them. Responses have included:

- From one second to another, the fifth becomes “present” in the room
- It occupies space, that the room is filled by it
- People feel themselves “within” the fifth

Participants have reported that the “mood” they perceived was: one of great calm, peaceful, hollow, vast, empty, or suspended (see p. 41 seqq.).

Doing this with a new group always puts me into an exposed place. I never know if it will work, but at the same time, it has never not worked for a group as a whole.

After mentally singing the dyad D–A until the fifth is “present”:

... the next stage is to take hold of the suspended, hovering fifth⁷² mentally and imagine that it is like a calm sea or open expanse of water. A dark, still lake surrounded by tree-clad hills I find productive. Over this still, calm water, or rather, to/through/into this water, I introduce a pulse. This pulse will have been dictated by the pulse behind with words I wish to set. I choose a larger (slower) pulse (for instance, whole bars or similar) rather than that of say beats. The impulse for this comes from behind and above me. It comes from the far distance and travels through me into or onto the interval–water I have created mentally. I do this until the pulse begins to disturb the surface of the interval, as if creating small waves or ripples.

As I continue in this, other notes begin to suggest themselves within or in addition to the bare fifth I have been directing the pulse into. These additional notes can be descending, they can be ascending or just non-directional notes around one of the other tones. I try mentally to keep what I think within the bounds of a fifth but sometimes notes cascade upwards or loop around what I am thinking–hearing–feeling–seeing.

I do this for a while, still singing the fifth to myself and generating the steady pulse into the interval. Once a certain degree of generative and productive turbulence has been created, I add some of the words of the text to see what happens. As these words have an inherent rhythm (usually), they quickly latch themselves onto the pulse and then the notes in my head. I add some more words and so on until all the text is set.

All this can take a little while or sometimes just seconds. (Boland, Unpublished diary, May 13, 2016)

Reflection on the work

This small piece (to be sung as part of a fairy tale) was the first to lead me towards a new way of writing music. In this piece I work actively with *Nachklang*. In German it is a single word used to describe the sound left in the ear after the audible tone has ended, the effect the sound has on the ear, as well as the decay of the tone itself (Duden, 2018). It is this *Nachklang* that produces some of the strongest effects of music. It has aspects which

⁷² “Take hold of” is used here as I “see” the interval suspended before me, having a shape and a size, as well as being able to hear it.

are similar to the process of nutrition. You eat (or listen to music). That is, as an activity, often pleasurable. The value of the eating is however not in the act itself, but in the process which happens afterwards, when the food is digested, becoming part of the body itself. With music, this digestive process is similar but takes place on a soul level and not physically. Music which can nourish the soul is then the music which is taken up so strongly by the individual that it remains in their ears long after what is audible has ended. That, to me, is the value of working with the *Nachklang* of a piece.

To encourage this process, I attempt in this piece to manage or regulate a gradual transition from sounded music to silence (Boland, 2013b). Usually when a piece stops, there is silence (or rather, a lack of played music; it is rarely silent). As a practising teacher, I used to find this sudden transition from sound to silence disquieting; it was an abrupt change which I wanted to make more gradual. Navigating this transition is something I have experimented with, to different degrees, over the last 20–30 years.

I extend the period between sounding the full piece and silence, gradually moving from one to the other. I do this here in several stages:

1. Singing the “song,” repeated as many times as wanted
2. Humming the same tune, repeated
3. Humming a simplified outline of the tune, some notes omitted, keeping the same pulse
4. Humming the bare fifth, again with the same pulse
5. Continuing with the harp only, gradually playing fewer and fewer notes⁷³

My repeated experience is that this gradual transition into silence is quietening and that by the end of the process, one’s listening will be heightened and one’s ears will be especially attentive. After this, the *Nachklang* of the piece can then begin its work, having been strongly established. The longer the period of active silence before moving on to

⁷³ If I was working with a group of children and the singing was unaccompanied, I would end with humming ‘silently’ (see Boland, 2013b).

some other activity, the stronger the effect of the piece will be. It reinforces the hovering, dream-like, not-fully-grounded quality of this lullaby.⁷⁴

Derrida and Owens speak of a bounded work (be it a text, an art work or a statue) devoid of additional elements as *ergon*,⁷⁵ and what is around it as *parergon* (Derrida & Owens, 1979); the *parergon* may seem to be inessential but it is inseparably tied to the work itself. This can be the frame of a picture, the plinth of a statue, the proscenium of a stage or the plate a meal is placed on.

Littlefield (1996) explores this further, specifically the notion of silence in music as a frame. I find this highlighting of the silent “frame” of music a deeply artistic notion, acknowledging and giving value to aspects of performance which are often unconsidered. In shaping the transition from sounded music to silence, I draw attention to this frame, using increasingly spaced notes as transition. In the performance (and audio files in Appendix A, page 230) I work with this frame then draw it into the performance, so that it becomes an integral part of the work itself. Further attention is given to the frame in the final section of this chapter (p. 164).

⁷⁴ Music is here being used to help regulate the incarnation of the child—to encourage a calmed, ‘dreamy’ state (see p. 17 seqq.) which will help the music to work on the child over time. There are some similarities here to what stood behind the practice of what was called “infirmarium music” in the abbey at Cluny in France in the eleventh and twelfth centuries which has in turn inspired the work of the contemporary American harpist, Therese Schroeder-Sheker. The monks in the infirmary at Cluny were well known for facilitating *transitus*, the passage from life to death, through music and melismatic song (Hammon, 2016). This stimulated Schroeder-Sheker (Freeman et al, 2006; Schroeder-Sheker, 1994, 2005) to explore using music, and harp music in particular, to soothe patients nearing death, and ease their transition from one state of consciousness to another, what she calls music thanatology. What is here of note is one of Schroeder-Sheker’s techniques. The “clinicians” (the harpists) quietly play a piece to the patient, then repeat it, each time playing fewer and fewer notes. The melody and harmonies become pruned, cut back to their essentials, as imagination and listening to the inaudible take over. Finally, after what can be an hour-long session, outer silence remains, while inwardly the patient is actively engaged with the *Nachklang* of what has happened in the room.

⁷⁵ Greek: work (Liddell & Scott, 1940). Par-ergon=beside, related to the main work.

4.6 Interlude 1—An encounter with a note

This first interlude describes an experiment concentrating on a single note in meditation. I will demonstrate how this experience, combined with others with different notes, has affected and informed my understanding and perception of music and composition since.

After introducing a pulse to a mentally produced fifth as described above (p. 141), I investigated combining meditation and composition further. Up to this point, these were separate strands of my everyday existence, they had not been woven closely together. I had had an active meditative life for 30 years but not taken the step to use meditative states as stimuli for composition. Over years I have developed my own meditational “routine” (see p. 107) to help “turn the perceptive faculty inward and hold it to attention there” (Plotinus, c. 250 CE, p. 214) in order to establish what Steiner calls “quietness of soul” (1914/2008, p. 9) or “the great stillness” (1906 & 1923/1983, p. 15). The *Tao Te Ching* talks similarly about “great stillness” (Lao-tzu & Mitchell, 2009, p. 15):

Do you have the patience to wait
till your mud settles and the water is clear?
Can you remain unmoving
till the right action arises by itself?

The master doesn't seek fulfilment.
Not seeking, not expecting
she is present, and can welcome all things.

As part of an inner inquiry which I thought could feed into composition, I decided to think of a single note and work with that in meditation. I typed directly into my journal at the time with my eyes shut, and expanded what I had written later⁷⁶. The first step was to

⁷⁶ This is, I believe, an uncommon practice. I did it 4-5 times during the doctoral period to see if I could document in detail what I experienced during meditation at the time I experienced it. Usually I would write down what I recalled from a session afterwards, but was aware that in doing this I was missing much of the detail.

calm my thoughts “And then wait, wait, wait! That is the golden word: be able to wait in quietness of soul. ... We must acquire absolute peacefulness of soul, the only thing that makes it possible for the spiritual world to approach us” (Steiner, 1914/2008, p. 9). I waited until I was in a deep meditative state, which I perceived as being on the threshold of a vast empty space, darkened and expectant. Although I cannot make accurate comparisons, it had similarities to what Shear describes as, “Contain[ing] no specific objects such as sensations, thoughts or images of levels 1–3 [ordinary consciousness]. ... It is likened to being *a disembodied observer in the midst of vast emptiness*” (2014, p. 61). To this darkened emptiness, I introduced a fifth, D–A, and concentrated till it took on a life of its own and “established” itself (see p. 141). I then narrowed it to just the A.

On thinking hard around the A for five or more minutes, it became clear that the only movement I could perceive from this single A towards another note was to notes above it, mainly the B but also the E above. To think my way down to the D a fifth below was unwelcome and did not hold. Principally, I wanted to move very slowly (very slowly indeed) from A to B and back to A. In doing this, there was something of a mirror tone formed A–B/G–A which was a new experience. The A did not appear to be strongly generative of other tones⁷⁷ but was open, looking upwards, independent and contained. (Boland, Unpublished diary, July 12, 2016)

At this point I began to write how the A “looked” in my mind’s eye (I was as if deaf to any other sounds around me).

I experienced it as a sphere or near-sphere, slowly circling, hovering, rotating so slowly it was almost imperceptible (anti-clockwise), suspended, with no impetus to either move, develop or alter itself. It was whole as it was. I experimented with this multiple times for five or more minutes a time, but the results only became stronger rather than more differentiated. The A was self-contained and content.

It is not a practice which I would recommend to others and remained the exception rather than the rule. It was part of the inquiry process and allowed the reporting of detail which would otherwise likely not have been recorded. It also allowed me to experiment in practice with the notion of interbeing and with ways in which it may (or may not) be achievable.

⁷⁷ See comments on the note D, p. 136.

I then wrote of how its inner appearance “felt.”⁷⁸

It was solid (i.e. not hollow), static, whole in itself, rounded, light coloured—off-white maybe, I was aware of colour against dark but it was not a strong feature (which is normal for me). Of this rounded form, I was only aware of part of the surface facing me, specifically the upper part and of that only of the upper part of the front curve. I could sense that it had a lower section but could not get a grasp of it. I tried rotating the figure mentally to see if I could get a better idea of what it was like but without success. I also could not move around it myself, and had to be satisfied with this single, partial and incomplete aspect.

I spent two hours working like this on the A. I got the strong impression that the A does not generate the notes around it, but that these come from a lower note (Boland, Unpublished diary, July 12, 2016)

These observations were expanded in a later, reflective journal entry.

[For me, the A] is still self-contained and not especially open to contact; however the feeling I get is of something which I could describe as Apollonian. Calm, reserved, restrained. Beyond this, it has a great openness to it (though that openness is not directed towards me). The A seems to sit in the space behind my head where the spine meets the skull and from where it rays out and upwards connecting to vast distances, connecting me to the cosmos and the influences of the cosmos.⁷⁹ (Boland, Unpublished diary, February 8, 2018)

These experiences led me to consider aspects of music and then of philosophy I had not previously spent significant time on. Namely, through inner work, through meditation, is it possible to experience or to gain knowledge about archetypes within music? Indeed, do archetypes exist? When experiencing the A in this way, I had the strong impression that I was looking at the nature of an A, the being, the archetype of an A, experiencing, for the first time, what an A actually was. It resonates with the work of Suhrawardī in the twelfth century. His commentator, Corbin, writes of accessing “a world of archetypal celestial Figures which the active Imagination alone is able to apprehend. This Imagination does not construct something unreal, but unveils the hidden reality”

⁷⁸ This illustrates the difficulty I had (and have) in finding the right words to describe what I was experiencing (see p. 113). I write how something “felt,” but then describe how it looked and what shape it was.

⁷⁹ See the commentary on the writing of piece five, page 159, below.

(1953/1977, pp. 11–12). It is beyond the scope of this study to explore the theme of archetypes. For a discussion of the realist–nominalist debate in music, see Kania (2013).

Stockhausen said, in conversation, “I think identifying with a sound *is* meditation. A musical meditation is when you completely become the sound” (Cott, 1974, p. 36), and further, “... I think that every sound has an inner life.” (p. 32). After these experiences, I read this sentence differently. This exploration of whether or how it is possible to experience “becoming the sound,” to discover its “inner life,” to experience the nature of a tone is the first clear step I took towards the notion of interbeing, in a Deleuzian sense.

Exploring interbeing

Chapter 3 discusses aspects of working with the “cosmic,” with “non-visible forces” “of a different order” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/2013, p. 398). Many artists have articulated the idea of working actively with the nonvisible, what I would call exploring the interbeing of the spiritual and the earthly. Ugolino of Oriveti (1380–c. 1457) speaks of music being “first the condition in the mind of the musician that directs him to explore what is knowable in music [*ad speculandum scibilia musicae*], and this concerns speculative music [*musicam speculativam*]” (Seay, 1959, Vol. 1, p. 19).

The painter Klee wrote about the task of the artist to reveal the “reality ... behind visible things.” He also introduces here the concept of latency. “Today we reveal the reality that is behind visible things, thus expressing the belief that the visible world is merely an isolated case in relation to the universe and that there are other, more latent realities” (1920/2013, p. 185). For a composer, one would need to change that to revealing the reality which is behind audible things.

For Kandinsky, visual art has to move from the “how” to a soul experience of the “what,” this “what” means refinding spiritual nourishment which alone is what will lead to a full and healthy life.

Furthermore, if this "how" also creates resolve in the soul life of the artist and is able to stream its finer experiences [into their soul], then art already approaches the threshold of the path on which it will undoubtedly later find the lost "what," the "what" which will form the spiritual sustenance [bread] of the spiritual awakening which is now beginning. This "what" will no longer be the material, representational "what" of periods gone by [lit. which have remained behind], but an artistic content, the soul of art, without which the body of art (the "How"), just as with an individual person or a nation, can never lead a full and healthy life. (Kandinsky, 1952/2004, p. 38)

There are also accounts of experiences regarding working with a single note which have some consonance with my experiences. Stockhausen again:

As early as 1954–55, I spoke of a single sound which might last several minutes with an inner life, and it would have the same function in the composition as an individual note once had. The dimensions of the music, the expansions of musical duration, have changed considerably. (Cott, 1974, p. 85)

It was Stockhausen's idea that composition could become individual notes, widely spaced in time, which led me to reconsider the pieces I was writing. Prior to this, I had little relationship to the idea of the music being able to consist of a single note. For me, music rested primarily in the intervals, in the spaces *between* the notes—i.e. there had to be at least two. I revisited statements by Steiner on what he called the "melody of a single tone" (Kurtz, 2015, p. 427); I had not been attracted to (or understood) these when I first read them and I had not paid further attention to them. Steiner's comments were given over 30 years before Stockhausen spoke above.

For several reasons, it is my opinion that music will progress if what I call "intensive melody" [*intensive Melodie*] gradually plays a more significant role. Intensive melody means getting used to the sound of even one note as a kind of melody. One becomes accustomed to a greater tone complexity within each sound. (Steiner, 1921–22/2003, pp. 320–321, Trans. author)

In *Art as seen in the light of mystery wisdom*, Steiner puts it like this:

In the future, people will be able to experience what is behind the note. ... We shall experience the note as an opening made by the gods from the spiritual world to this physical-material world, and we shall climb through the note of the physical-material world into the spiritual world. (Steiner, 1914–5/1996, p. 104)

What Steiner called “the *experience* of the single tone or that within the one tone more tones are hidden” (cited in Mögelin, n.d./2015, p. 427) has been mentioned on page in Chapter 3 (p. 34). Mögelin states that “that means that you must *connect* yourself more strongly with the single tone, as if to creep inside it” (n.d./2015, p. 427). This experience with an A was the first time that I fully experienced what consciously being “in” a tone might mean and what experiencing interbeing could mean in a musical context. Despite decades of musical training, performing and experience, working meditatively with a single note transformed my understanding and experience of music. Stockhausen said, “You cannot separate the music from me any longer” (Cott, 1974, p. 48). Although I would have said that of myself from the time I was at school, now I felt it had true validity. Zajonc says, “New experience must be joined with new thinking if new knowledge is going to result. New insight requires new concepts as well as new percepts” (2009, p. 179). After these new experiences and percepts, I have had to work and am still working towards new thinking and understandings of what it is/was I have experienced.

Speaking out of the Indian classical music tradition, Menon validates this experience of the single note.

With the opening of the *Swara*,⁸⁰ the single note, which looked so closed and narrow, becomes spacious. We find that in each note there are directions such as up and down, sides and depths, curves and textures of every kind, from grainy rough surfaces to velveteen and to those that shine like shot silk. There are various facets to each note and even moods. It now becomes a fit vehicle to express the musician’s inner reaches. (2000, p. 36)

The experience of interbeing echoes Buber in Chapter 3. In this quotation he appears to describe what Steiner mentions “where the cosmic resounds into the sphere of the human and the human ... yearns to rush forth into the Cosmos” (Steiner, 1906/1986, p. 220),

⁸⁰ This has been covered in detail from page 34.

finding a place between the two. Buber describes it as the heavens being opened and the human “entering into” the art.

You should make music as if within it the heavens were opened; not as if you were taking music into you, but rather as if you were entering into [the] music. For if someone has really entered into music, it is as if they would create heaven and earth, and all the worlds anew. (1916, p. 238, Trans. and contextualised by author)⁸¹

In more elegant and uplifting language, this appears to have similarities to what Mögelin means by “creeping into” the tone. In my journal I wrote, “This gesture [of Buber’s] is active. It involves working with the essence of music as potential co-creator, as partner in the creative act. This aspect is also expressed in the phrase, ‘one creates all worlds anew’” (Boland, Unpublished diary, October 2, 2016).

Reading or becoming familiar again with what others had written on the nature of individual tones, redirected my thoughts regarding composition. As mentioned above (p. 116), from being concerned with miniaturising music ideas to fit into a mood of the fifth format, I realised that I could approach composition from the opposite direction; taking a single feature and expanding it into a piece.

Using meditation as compositional tool encouraged me to actively seek the boundary land of interbeing, and to see if it offered unexplored possibilities for composition. This was pursued in the fourth piece of the creative work.

⁸¹ See footnote 48.

4.7 Piece 4—*Whakapai*, exploring the land between

Discussion of the work

When I was preparing to write a new piece, I read a chapter by Bogue on the refrain in which he speaks of where the impulse of music comes from, from the perspective of Deleuze and Guattari. Bogue writes,

We speak of composers and their compositions, but at a certain level of analysis, it is difficult to tell who or what is composing. Where is the refrain? It is not contained in the composition, in the forces it harnesses, or in the developmental theme of the composer as unfolding biological entity and co-enactive world, though it passes through them. Music, finally, is the refrain composing itself. (2003, p. 76)

This passage made me think again about pieces I had previously written and the approaches I had taken. The earlier ones definitely involved me doing the composing. I steered the process. Some of the decisions I took were intuitive, but mine was the guiding hand. In the previous piece, *Sleep in your little bed*, the line between who or what was doing the composing became less clear. I was becoming part of the process; I was becoming what the music passed through on its journey to the page. The pulse I initiated gained life of its own, and by adding tones to the pulsating “water” I was imagining, shapes began to take form of their own accord. I now tried to take this further.

Method

Using the exercise outlined on page 108, I first achieved what Steiner calls “deep silence,” a feeling of calm expectation, sitting in the “vast emptiness” described by Shear (see p. 145). Within this space I (mentally) added a sounding fifth. I avoided all previous imagery (e.g. still waters). I let the fifth sound into this empty space, opening myself up to the experience.

My journal of the session records how I perceived and then interacted with the fifth I was imagining. It quickly becomes clear that I am reacting multi-sensorially to what I “hear,” writing from a place where sound, shape and motion intersect:

Activation of D–A came very quickly. Concentrated on the A while keeping both notes in my mind. I experienced the fifth as flat, similar to a plane, with some depth below but mainly upper surface. I could look down on it from an angle. It did not move but, the more I regarded it, it slightly pulsated over a period of several seconds. After watching it at a small distance for a while, I tried and was able to descend towards it; when I did this, it dipped down to receive me like a sheet of rubber, but I did not make contact as such. I could be near but not in. There was some resistance/reluctance; as I moved towards it, it moved away. (Boland, Unpublished diary, July 29, 2016)

This was a new experience with the fifth for me. I had the impression, as with the single note A, that I was interacting with an instance of “fifthness,” looking at the essence of what a fifth is.⁸²

After being on the rubber-like sheet of the interval, I tested it a few times to see if I could actually make contact with it (rather than get near and feel it move away from me).

... [A]ll of a sudden I found myself within the flatness of the fifth. ... The D I experience as somewhere ‘below’ me and the A is somewhere over my head. Most unusually, I am slowly being rotated head over heels, as if doing a slow-motion forward roll. The A wants me to move till I am horizontal, head slightly lower

⁸² These experiences have made me question again the possibility of investigating archetypes, similar to Plato’s Forms or Ideas (*εἶδος*).

All metaphysics including its opponent positivism speaks the language of Plato. The basic word of its thinking, that is, of his presentation of the Being of beings, is *eidōs*, idea: the outward appearance in which beings as such show themselves. Outward appearance, however, is a manner of presence. No outward appearance without light—Plato already knew this. But there is no light and no brightness without the opening. Even darkness needs it. How else could we happen into darkness and wander through it? (Heidegger, various/1976, p. 386)

Steiner indicated archetypal musical experiences for the perception and expression of intervals in eurythmy (Steiner, 1924/2013; van der Pals, 1981/1992), and gave arm gestures for individual notes. He also supported Schopenhauer’s notion that the artist does not mimic the outer world but reproduces spiritual archetypes: “Out of an instinctive knowledge, Schopenhauer attributed to music the role of directly portraying the very essence of the cosmos” (Steiner, 1906 & 1923/1983, p. 3).

than the rest of me—it is a little disorientating. I don't do a full somersault, just head below the horizontal a bit.

After a while being “in” this experience of the fifth, I mentally added the text I wanted to set to music. It is a Māori blessing, *Whakapai*.

<i>Whakapai a tātou whānau.</i>	Bless our whānau.
<i>Whakapai a tātou mahi.</i>	Bless our work.
<i>Whakapai i tēnei rōpū.</i>	Bless our group.
<i>Whakapai a tātou katoa.</i>	Bless us all.

Adding the text caused a change of experience.

When I think *whakapai* on an A and continue through the rest of the words, the downward, head-over-heels movement is quite strong. I move from vertical to past the horizontal in a second. I cannot resist it. When I stop thinking the word, I right myself again. The next *whakapai* does the same thing. And the others. The note A of *whakapai* starts me off upright then tilts me forwards till I lose my uprightness. It is a strange sensation. It feels like something inside me, in my core, is moving rather than I am being moved from outside.

Still in a meditative place, I experiment with multiple options of how the lines could sound till I decide on the one which fits best.

I finalised the song mentally then opened my eyes and wrote it down. After that, I began to meditate again and work with the notion of moving gradually from sounded music to silence, through a gradual simplification (and lessening) of the music sung or played.

When I work with the repetitions of the idea—gradually fading to nothing—I find I want four repetitions of the word *whakapai*, and nothing else. When I only think *whakapai* (without the rest of the line), I am tilted strongly backwards, not as far as the horizontal plane, before being righted when I stop thinking the word/note. This happens every time I think the line.

Reflection on the work

Whakapai provides the first example of a piece written in what I would call a state of interbeing. It was composed in a boundary state which I would describe as neither completely earthly nor completely cosmic. In this way it stands out from material discussed previously. The writing of the pieces was an active–interactive situation with elements of music. I experienced myself as actively entering into the music (consciously

dipping into the fifth which (eventually) opened to receive me) as well as musical elements living inside me (the music being the active component causing me to feel that I was being moved physically). I was reminded of the Buber quotation already mentioned, “not as if you were taking music into you, but rather as if you were entering into [the] music” (1916, p. 238).⁸³ This is something I had never done in composition before.

Prior to this experience, interbeing was a thought, an attractive idea which I could strongly relate to as a theory or image and which was as such productive. I thought of it as a zone into which I might (some time, in the abstract) be able to enter. My idea of it was that it would be a “place” (see p. 115), a state of consciousness which I could inhabit and so interact with the refrain on neutral territory as it were. It was “elsewhere.”

The experiences I underwent in composing *Whakapai* caused me to amend this notion. Interbeing ceased to be some external (though nonphysical) location which I could potentially reach and enter. Instead I realised that interbeing was something which I became. I could become the platform on or in which it could happen. It was not an external “place” but rather a completely internal one. This was a transformational experience and as well as a transformational understanding. I regard it as the first time the rhizome (subject) and the refrain (the cosmic content of music) actively and consciously met in discourse (as opposed to waking–sleep state described on page 133) and it was the more powerful that it happened within me rather than in some “externalised” territory.

If I look at *Whakapai* as a piece of music, there are several notable differences to those that go before it. The first and possibly most striking difference is that the sense of beat, of pulse is to a degree suspended. It proceeds at any speed which suits the words, what

⁸³ See footnote 48.

Riemann calls *Agogik* (Riemann, 1884/2016).⁸⁴ The pause at the end of each line is unrestricted. The singer can let the line leave the breath, wait for as long as they want, take a new breath and move onto the next phrase. This sense of suspension of directed time is found in some existing pieces writing in the mood of the fifth (see p. 57) and spoken of strongly by Ellersiek (2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010), but is here new for me.

The suspension of time, or a different relationship to time, is something which many composers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have experimented with, writing music which is nondirectional, hovering. In addition to the quotations by Stockhausen about “a single sound which might last several minutes with an inner life,” I am reminded of Pärt’s work such as *Für Alina*, *In Memoriam Benjamin Britten* and *Die Gesundung der Aranuschka*,⁸⁵ or that of Phillip Glass and Steve Reich which combine surface, often triadic, activity with lengthy, unchanging textures. This is commonly called “minimalist” (The Oxford Dictionary of Music, 2013). In a more popular vein, Brian Eno (e.g. *Music for airports 1* from 1978) has established a whole genre of “ambient” music which has similar characteristics.

As it slowly progresses towards silence, *Whakapai* simplifies itself to become an intermittent statement of a single note (an A above middle C), perhaps an echo of Steiner’s *Urmusik*, Stockhausen’s notion of music on single notes or Scelsi’s *Quattro pezzi chiascuno su una nota sola*⁸⁶ for large orchestra, written in 1959.

4.8 Interlude 2—Music as energy

This interlude concerns abrupt changes to my perception of music which occurred in late 2016. As with the experiences mentioned above (p. 145), it is a narrative account of an

⁸⁴ German: There is no comparable word in English. It refers to small changes in the beat or tempo and contains elements of rubato, smorzando, poco accellerando, ritardando, più mosso, etc.

⁸⁵ German: Aranushka’s recuperation.

⁸⁶ Italian: Four pieces, each one on a single note.

event which altered both my appreciation of music as well as my compositional approach. It occurred on a long-haul flight while listening to the soundtrack of the fifth Bourne movie, *Jason Bourne* (Greengrass, 2016). The music can be found on YouTube⁸⁷ (Moby, 2016).

As soon as the credits began, I started to feel abrupt fields of energy moving, principally behind me. Extracts from my journal (December 27, 2016), written shortly after the event while listening to the same piece, include the following comments (timings are in the left-hand column):

0:01 The octave Bs pull me out of the top of my head (as usual).

0:05 The entry of the electronic percussion has a different effect from other versions of this song. I am aware of the area around my coccyx in a way which is not wholly pleasant. It feels as if a quiet stream of energy is exiting my body low down.

0:23–27 Percussion only. At this point the feeling intensifies to a great degree and I experience it as if a flow of energy is leaving the base of my coccyx at high speed, forming a rounded fan shape, going upwards then re-entering my body some inches further up as a four-sided point. What is going on at the lower point is highly disconcerting.

This feeling continued all the way through the song and it became clear that it was tied to the repetitive percussion part.

3:00 My experiences with the bass line here confirmed something else I have been wondering about for a few weeks, and had experimented with listening to and playing Bach chorales. Namely, that I experience the tonic to be *frontal/straight ahead*, dominant harmonies are to my right and up, and subdominant/everything else is to my left and down. The bass line at 3:00 I experience very strongly indeed. The piece is in B minor. The bass here moves from a held B down to G, this is a huge move down to the left. This is repeated. Then it goes from B to E and stays there. This is an enormous experience. It is hard for me not to throw my entire body physically down to the left with the dynamic of the sound.

⁸⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ftm1hiXgYsA&list=RDftm1hiXgYsA>

It was a long journey and I had to change planes. As I waited, I overheard more music which continued the process begun in the air.

This time something was entering me first from behind, at the level of my stomach or so, and turning me inside out. It felt like a fountain but operating horizontally from behind, creating a feeling that my innards were steadily being pushed into the space before me. A continuous stream, rather than a short action. (Boland, Unpublished diary, December 27, 2016)

These strong experiences continued and developed for several days both when I heard or thought of music and also when I did not. Overall, it felt like the space behind my back from the bottom of my spine to the top of my head was in constant movement; the areas of focus changed but the movement was constant.

Over several days, I isolated where these areas of focus were which were responding to music most strongly and experimented widely with different styles and genres of music. I realised that, starting with my first reaction to Moby, the point by my coccyx where this “energy” streamed out was also the place where Indian traditions place the lowest chakra. Where it went in, was the second chakra point. Where I felt turned inside out, was the third (where I described it as my stomach/intestines, ancient traditions have it as the navel/solar plexus region), moving up to the top of my head where the crown chakra is placed (see Figure 1).

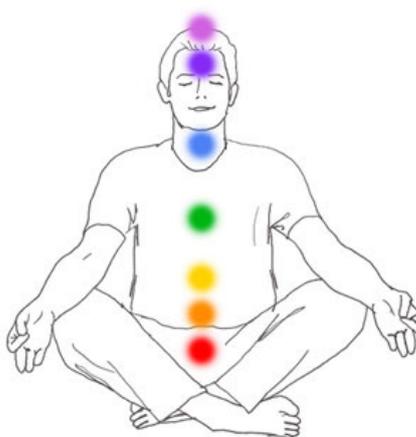


Figure 1. Seven main chakras

Dekel, 2010. Reproduced under Creative Commons licence.

As I experimented with different genres of music, from thrash metal to Tibetan throat singing, I was able to clarify that certain genres of music were experienced strongly in a particular area; other genres would stimulate another area. These areas could also be activated by or respond to individual notes, both thought and heard; in effect, my spinal column had become something of a vertically arranged scale. These experiences have continued through to the time of writing, varying in intensity but remaining constant.

I have tried to take the advice of Zajonc at this point. “One should refrain from ... interpreting [experiences] prematurely. The healthiest attitude is one of simple acceptance, treating such experiences as unexpected phenomena, whose significance will be given in time but that need not be understood immediately” (2009, pp. 43-44). I monitor the experiences, remaining open the possibility that at some time I will understand them.

These unexpected experiences have opened up new possibilities for composition, namely, composing by directing and responding to streams of energy experienced in the space behind one’s spine. The fifth piece in the creative work is an example of such a process.

4.9 *Piece number 5*—Working with perceived energies generated by music

Discussion of the work

The process of getting the fifth piece in the creative work onto paper was the most difficult. After the experiences outlined in Interlude 2 (p. 156), I wanted to experiment to see if they could be used as a compositional method. This was a new approach for me and I could not find an indication in literature of how one might go about this or an account of or by anyone who had done something similar.

In the months after the events outlined above, my overall experience stabilised and became constant. As far as it related to music, “Experiencing music (self-produced, in my head) has become a question of being aware of energies/flows/experiences in the space behind me and feeling these move as I think” (Boland, Unpublished diary, October 20, 2017). There was a clear awareness of this space behind throughout the day and during all activities from having a shower to riding a motorbike. It was usually stable and formed of “constantly circulating currents or forces which have a focal point or focal points but are never still. They are tethered to me, so to speak, while expanding out, only to then return and expand/explore again” (Boland, Unpublished diary, October 27, 2017).

When these currents were in a quietly stable state, the centre of the experience was behind my head, where the spine meets the skull, and from there it rayed out connecting to all around me and beyond me. Musically, it gave me a constant experience of an A. I wondered if I was experiencing, to a small extent, what could be called a permanent sense of interbeing, a constant awareness of both physical and nonphysical being. I can have no firm idea if that is or was the case, but it was something I pondered.

I tried repeatedly to use these experiences as a compositional method to create a piece of music, experiencing time and again a reluctance for the piece to come in a way I hoped for. I wrote many small pieces, but some part of the process always became unintuitive and involved me “just” writing notes to finish it off rather than feeling my way into and through the notes (see Mögelin, p. 36 and the classical Indian notion of *swara*, p. 150) as I had in pieces three and four. It was as if I began in a state of interbeing, but, by perhaps forcing the process, it ended by being firmly terrestrial. This did not represent an extension of the compositional process with which I wanted to conclude the creative work.

In these times, I recalled how fundamentally I was going against the advice of Steiner regarding inner work, namely:

[W]hen we begin to have a first inkling of the supersensible, we are tempted to talk about it. But this only impedes our development. Until we have gained a certain degree of clarity in these matters, the less we say about them, the better. ... [T]alking about our experiences always somewhat hardens the [faculties] we are developing. (Steiner, 1904/1994, p. 117)

Taking on the notion of parrhesia and opening up about aspects of my inner life goes strongly against this advice. St John of the Cross similarly recommended that the meditator avoid “storing up or treasuring the forms of these visions impressed within him” lest we “desire to cling to them” (1581/1991, p. 243). Zajonc (2009) comments that inner experiences or *siddhi*⁸⁸ can be seen in Buddhist tradition as “mostly a distraction” (p. 145) to the meditator on their further path and a possible source of attachment.

In undertaking the often-difficult process of putting supersensible experiences into words, first in my journal, then in this exegesis, I wondered if I was experiencing the hardening process Steiner describes above. This was a humbling and chastening thought, and for several months I put the task of writing a final piece to one side.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Sanskrit: Accomplishments or attainments.

⁸⁹ Wachsmuth, one of Steiner's original collaborators, talks about discussing his own spiritual experiences with Steiner. I believe it has direct relevance to my own experiences, so I quote it here at length.

After some additional question and answers, he [Steiner] gave me ... the surprising advice: “But do not think about this.” I soon saw how important this advice was; for it is altogether natural that one's thinking would constantly be occupied with this thing, but the intellect is a disturber of calm, it brings its concepts to bear upon things and thus affects the pure viewing of the phenomena. If one excludes the intellect and gives oneself over to pure observation, the processes are then present in their actual nature, their changes uninfluenced in the presence of the observation, and one will soon observe that they cannot be altered either by thinking or by the will, but must simply be taken as they are; that one must wait, observe, and wait. (1941/1955, p. 453)

After this pause, I tried again and realised that I was finding the (self-given) presumption that the piece would have a text restrictive—having words appeared now to be a superfluous element. I had not experienced setting a text to music as a restriction before, indeed, being given a text to set had often been the initial impulse which resulted in a piece. As soon as I thought about notes without words, it was as if an obstacle had been removed from the path, and writing came easily again.

Method

I wrote the fifth piece by concentrating on the A behind my head, experiencing it quietly resting then mentally moving it to another note, another pitch.⁹⁰ This altered the area of focus behind me, depending on the note concerned. When I came back to an A, I experienced it behind my head once again, as if “coming home.” Once the first movement from an A to another note had been initiated by me, the process became easier; a counter-movement came by itself, and another note was written or chain of notes. I had the experience of co-directing the movement; it was as if I could start something and each time the impulse coming from me was answered by another impulse to which I could then reply, until the piece seemed to have reached its conclusion. It was like a dialogue or conversation. The whole played out as a feeling of tones moving in the space behind me. The most common direction was up and down, but the notes also looped or curved around the vertical axis and expanded far into space. I strongly wanted to begin on and finish on an A.

⁹⁰ Throughout this section I attempt to describe as clearly as I can how I experienced the writing of the fifth piece. I have chosen terminology which reflects my experience rather than following, for example, traditional Steinerian language or imagery. This I see as being consistent with the overall parrhesiastic approach of this exegesis. Terminological convention can be a restriction as well as a guide. I agree with van Houten when he says that, were Steiner writing and lecturing now, “[his] insights would be presented in quite new ways” (2011, p. 7).

This final piece is unusual in that it is the only piece in the creative work which I played on the harp straight after writing it, as if to check or confirm what I had done. I have not done this with any other piece I have written over the last 30 years, so far as I recall. I had previously been satisfied with what I heard in my head, and did not experience a need to have it checked on an instrument. Although I have thought long about it, I am uncertain why it seemed necessary this time. I have an indistinct impression that I was less involved with this piece somehow, and so wanted to check it out by playing it. I made some small alterations after playing it a number of times. As I first wrote it, all the internal phrases both started and ended on an A. After playing it a couple of times, I removed some of these repeated As which allowed the whole to flow more freely.

Reflection on the work

The piece illustrates a number of points of departure compared to earlier ones. It is textless and not a song like the other four pieces are. If it were to be used in an early childhood setting, I see it as a possible frame to a story, a musical transition from the everyday world of the classroom into the pictorial, imaginative world of story and from the imaginative world of story into the everyday. Compositionally, it represents the forming of connections between percept and concept regarding music in the mood of the fifth in, for me, significant ways. It has caused me to re-evaluate and reassess some of the literature discussed in Chapter 3.

The music *Knierim suggests for children* (1970/2009) is based around a double fifth—D–A–E’—which had never featured in any of my writing due to what I perceived as an awkward vocal outline (see p. 53). As soon as I decided to write not for voice but for an instrument, these double fifths appeared as if of their own volition. It was not in my mind to write them into the piece. As a new departure, this was a surprise. In the same book, *Knierim* also talks about the centrality of the note A for music in the mood of the fifth without explaining why this is so. *Lindenberg* goes further, suggesting that music for

young children *only* consist of the note A (see p. 52), also without explanation. These were comments which I had not previously had a connection to. Since my experiences with the note A (p. 145) and with areas of energy around me (p. 156), these unsupported statements have become of more interest and increased relevance to my work. It is possible that this is in line with my general need to experience a concept in some form before I can accept it (see, for example, pages 19 and 47). Since I began to experience an A silently sounding behind me at all times, I have begun to reconsider Knierim's and Lindenberg's comments on the significance of the note.

My overall relationship to the note A has developed too. I wrote on page 147:

[For me, the A] is still self-contained and not especially open to contact; however the feeling I get is of something which I could describe as Apollonian. Calm, reserved, restrained. Beyond this, it has a great openness to it (though that openness is not directed towards me). (Boland, Unpublished diary, February 8, 2018)

Writing six months later, that openness now includes me. The note A has become a channel through which I connect to things greater than I am. To my surprise, it has become a significant feature of and companion in my life.

4.10 The road onward: A contemplation

To follow the five pieces of the creative work, I offer an end contemplation of the overall compositional journey. It represents a look into the distance, the extension of a line of flight extrapolated from current ideas and questions.

In musical notation, this contemplation consists of an empty staff, fading away (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Empty staff fading to nothing

In working intensely with the concept and experience of music in the mood of the fifth, I have found myself increasingly navigating the area in which Steiner described the fifth as an interval to exist, the borderland between the earthly and the cosmic which is what I understand Deleuze and Guattari to mean as interbeing (p. 89). The borderland is not external. It has become me; I have become it.

In composing, I have tried to reach that point where human perception becomes cosmic perception (see p. 90), and where cosmic perception can become human perception. It involves navigating two worlds at once, maintaining one's bodily awareness at the same time as "letting go" of sense perception and entering into the meditative experience. This took practice to achieve. Maintaining a balance between keeping a physical awareness to allow me to take notes or to write music while at the same time being free enough to enter meditative realms was not straightforward. I have chosen to represent this borderland as the place into which the fading stave moves.

After working through the other pieces, and considering what a next step might be in this process, I kept returning to the idea and experience of silence. It was not where I expected to end up when I began, but over a period of months as I thought about where and what I could put as an end point of this compositional journey, documenting silence gradually became something inevitable. Ultimately I decided to stop pushing the idea aside and instead explore it.

Mindful of Littlefield's (1996) work on silence as the parergon framing a piece of music (p. 144), I found that my interest was going to this frame and expanding into or through or beyond it. It was of additional interest as it echoed questions I had had about music much earlier in my life, but had lacked any theoretical means to understand them.

I wrote in December 2017:

All music emerges out of silence and dissolves back into silence. Silence is the end point and the goal of all music. It is not a silence as in lack of external sound, but silence as presence of inner activity, inwardly generated sound. An active, or activated silence. This is something which has attracted and interested me since I was in primary school. Questions I found myself thinking repeatedly about then were along the lines of: Before I begin, where is the music I am about to play? It exists in my head, but where am I bringing it from? How do I call it into being, how do I make it present? When I have finished, (how) is the world different for that piece of music being played? By playing it, have I altered the world in any way, if so, what have I altered and how? (How) is the performer or the listener different? As the sound dies away on the air, where does it go?

These naïve questions still sit with me. Through working with the image of the rhizome interbeing with the cosmic refrain, I believe I have some possible answers, or at least partial answers.

Silence in music has a significant history which is not possible to go into here (see Clifton, 1976; Kania, 2010 among others). One piece however must be mentioned because of its seminal importance in the twentieth century regarding the place of silence in music. This piece is John Cage's *4' 33"*.⁹¹ Although it was written in 1952, the piece is still controversial. It was inspired by paintings by Robert Rauschenberg—sets of canvas panels painted all over with white household paint (see Figure 3).

⁹¹ Though it is the most famous example, Cage's *4' 33"* is not the first example of silent music. Kania (2010) has written on the seminal effect Cage's work has had on the notion of silent music. This, arguably, goes back to Allais, for his *Funeral March for the Obsequies of a Deaf Man* (1897). Other notable silent pieces predating Cage include by Klein (1949), Schulhoff (Betz, 1999) and suggestions by Hindemith for a piece made up only of rests and pauses (da Fonseca-Wollheim, 2013).

4' 33" involves the performer or performers sitting on stage for four minutes and 33 seconds—the length of the first performance. It is scored for any instrument or group of instruments, though is usually thought of as a piano work. That the piece has a strong spiritual resonance is shown by its working title, *Silent Prayer*.



Figure 3. White painting (four panel)

Rauschenberg, 1951. Retrieved from <https://www.rauschenbergfoundation.org/art/artwork/white-painting-four-panel>. Copyright Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, reproduced under fair use licence.

In conversation with Kostelanetz (2003, p. 71), Cage said, "Actually what pushed me into it was not guts but the example of Robert Rauschenberg. His white paintings [...] when I saw those, I said, 'Oh yes, I must. Otherwise I'm lagging, otherwise music is lagging.'" Cage writes further in the introduction to his article *On Robert Rauschenberg, Artist, and His Works*, "To Whom It May Concern: /The white paintings came /first; my silent piece /came later" (1978, p. 98). Ten years before his death (1982), he regarded *4' 33"* as his most significant composition (Kostelanetz, 2003). For a detailed discussion of *4' 33"* and its musico-historical context, see Kania (2010).

4' 33" aims to open the audience's ears to the ambient sounds around them, to make them listen in new ways. Cage is not alone in wanting to do this.

I felt my primary task ... was to open ears. I have tried always to induce students to notice sounds they have never really listened to before, listen like mad to the sounds of their own environment and the sounds they inject into their environment (Schafer, 1967)

Gaining a musical education, to whatever level, is usually thought of as practical: a gaining of skills through involvement, repetition and application. I would argue that a musical education is the training of the ears, a training in active listening. (Boland, 2013b, p. 125)

“A wise musician is, first and foremost, one who has learned to listen” (Biswas, 2011, p. 103). It is what Volk (2017) calls “other-oriented listening,” and what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as engaging with “forces of a different order” (1987/2013, p. 398).

Most pieces incorporating silence written after 1952 (the year *4'33"* was first performed) are heavily derivative of Cage (Kania, 2010). The New Zealand “silent musician,” Brent Black, has produced two albums of silent music to some acclaim (*Silent Tracks of Various Useful Lengths* and *Silent Songs for Yoga, Meditation and Relaxation*). These albums, along with silent ringtones, have been downloaded thousands of times. They have proven popular, reaching number 21 in the UK pop charts and number 2 in the Irish New Age music charts (Black, 2018).⁹²

Documentation of great aural attention to one’s surroundings can also be found in literature, including that for children. For instance, Selma Lagerlöf wrote, “Gudmund stood still a moment and listened for footsteps. He thought that never before had he sensed such stillness. It was as though the whole forest held its breath and stood waiting for something extraordinary to happen” (1908/2016, p. 15).

This is one experience of silence. However, I believe that there is another level of listening, another level of silence beyond what Cage calls for in *4' 33"* and Lagerlöf evocatively describes. It is one which I strove towards in the pieces I wrote.

⁹² With likely different intent, Stiff Records issued an LP entitled *The wit and wisdom of Ronald Reagan* on which every track is blank (Magic Records, 1980).

By silencing both his audience and the performer, Cage imposes an “outer silence” (Waks, 2008, p. 66) throughout the performance space. Through this, Cage hopes to establish an “inner silence” within listeners, an open awareness of their surroundings and an openness to all ambient aural events which occur in the performance space during the period of the performance (and arguably beyond). This Waks describes as openness, a “silent mind.” Peter calls it a state of being “wholly ear,” of being in a “state of expectation” (1986/1992, p. 48). Waks further asserts that this silent mind has the potential to usher in something which he calls “preconscious readiness” (p. 68). (Peter uses the term “readiness” also.) A question is, readiness for what? “The listener [initially] remains self-conscious, aware of self” (Waks, p. 68)—but this self-awareness needs to drop away (cf. Copeland, 1998). For instance, to concentrate on one’s breathing till one is only aware of breathing happening, rather than it being you who is doing the breathing. Similarly with music, to lose the conscious awareness that it is you listening to the music, achieving a state in which the music is happening, is as if being and self-awareness has dropped away. The use of a chime bar or sounding bowl in meditation can have this effect. One is aware of the tone but then it fades away, potentially taking one’s self-awareness with it. Waks calls this “apophatic” listening: a listening unconstrained by predetermined social, cultural or other expectations or categories, a listening which is open and direct. For Margulis (2007), this type of “silence encourages [a] kind of meta-listening—in which the listening itself, rather than actual sound, has become the focus of attention” (p. 26).

But this is itself an intermediary stage on the path towards what I wish to indicate by putting forward a dissolving stave as this end contemplation. In the visual dissolution of the stave, I hope to move the level of listening beyond inner silence; it is the level which I have documented as part of the composition process in *Whakapai* (p. 152) and *Piece number 5* (p. 159). Waks calls this level beyond inner silence “inmost silence” (Waks,

2008, p. 72) and it is for me as a composer, as well as as an individual, a state to be striven for.

There are many ways in which this “inmost silence” can be described.

The early twentieth-century Russian actor, Konstantin Stanislavski, was noted for emphasising the importance of the inner work of the actor, not just physical and vocal attributes. He developed a technique or method (Stanislavski, 1938/2008) which used “circles of attention,” gradually expanding circles of awareness from the personal to the surroundings. The first is personal, inner attention; the second circle concentrates on fellow actors on the stage; the third expands as far as the back of the theatre to include the audience. It is possible to expand this into and then beyond the realm of inner listening. Extending Stanislavski’s three circles to include a fourth circle includes listening to all that is happening outside the theatre, listening to the wind, to the trees, to the hills, to the distant sea, to the earth, to the sky, to the stars. Actors can then take this deepest of listening experiences—essentially meditative—into their performance. This is reminiscent of Vipassanā⁹³ meditational practices—constant attentiveness to, of and in every moment. For me it is essentially what Steiner says, “where the cosmic resounds into the sphere of the human and the human, consumed with longing, yearns to rush forth into the cosmos” (1906/1986, p. 220).

In a lecture which he gave in 1967 on the musical sense of Persian mysticism (1990/1998), Corbin mentions the work of the twelfth-century Iranian master, Ruzbehan Baqli Shirazi in relationship to silence. Corbin says, “at the end of his life, Ruzbehan began to abstain from the practice of listening to music. He had no more need of the intermediary of audible sounds, for the inaudible was heard by him as pure inner music”

⁹³ Pali: insight, clear seeing.

(pp. 234-235), that at that moment “the opaque barrier between worlds [became] transparent” (p. 235).

For classical Indian musicians, the focal point of a performance is *swara*, most commonly translated as “note” (Ruckert & Widdess, 2008). Biswas (2011) comments that the meaning however is far from what is called a note in the West. In European musical tradition, a note is verifiable, it has abstract identity—we know for example that a concert A vibrates at 440Hz (currently). *Swara* exists only when sounded; it is “the vibration of an embodied moment” (Biswas, 2011, p. 100), music on the wing, vibrating through the air. Through meditation, by paying constant attention to the *swara* and its creation, a point can be reached where “even vocalization is abandoned completely” (Biswas, 2011, p. 102). This is what I aim for in the fading away of the stave. At this point making music and meditation merge. The musician-meditant is in the realm of the nonmanifest, the unsounded, what in Indian traditions is called *anāhata*.

The *anāhata* (inner music or unstruck sound) is the uniquely personal, sacred sound that opens the chakras and unites the individual with the cosmos. The Rig Veda urges the spiritual seeker to listen, and the sound will become clear. Of course, the *anāhata* is also the name of the heart chakra, and it is through this vortex of energy that such internal music can be found. (Hanser, 2016, p. 58)

Mukherjee similarly talks of:

... the source for this divine energy [being] “*ahāhata* chakra” situated in the central region of the heart. The Primeval sound “Aum” is known to be the creator of the universe and the chakra of the spiritual centre is known to be its seat in the heart region. (Mukherjee, 2016, p. 70)

The original form of this sense-perceived universe is primal energy ... This vibration is called *nada* or *nadam*, cosmic music. Plato called it the music of the spheres, the music of nature. It is known as ... *ahāhata nada* and OM. It is the voice of silence. (Saraswati, 2007, p. 7)

These references to the *ahāhata*, unsounded source of music, to *nāda* and to the harmony of the spheres all tie the concept of silence to Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of the refrain.

Looking onwards from a place of interbeing, the ultimate destination is silence, outer silence, nonsounded music. Music changes from being something created for outward expression to something both created and experienced inwardly.

I conclude my journey into the mood of the fifth as emergent composer in anticipatory silence.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The journey I have undertaken can be followed as an expectant, multiplicitous exploration through the darkneses of a part conscious and part dream-like compositional process. It has been accompanied throughout by “forces of a different order,” by the refrain, by anāhata or, in different terminology, the harmony of the spheres. A fundamental task has been to move as a composer from a pragmatic outlook towards this “cosmic” source of music, to investigate the notion of interbeing and use it as a compositional method.

Steiner describes the consciousness of a young child, of the age for whom these pieces would be intended, as connected equally to the cosmos and to the earth, neither purely cosmic (unconscious, asleep) nor earthly (fully conscious, self-aware) (see p. 30). It is a dreamlike state. I have mapped out my experiences in this state between two worlds, a state of interbeing, navigating the territory between different levels of consciousness, ultimately finding that this between-worlds space is within me; it is something I have become.

In the words of Godwin, I have attempted the “difficult task of submitting [my] visions to the thinking process” (1986, pp. 251–252). Through an exploratory, experiential process, I have attempted to submit delicate soul experiences to the thinking process, and to use the results as compositional moments. Attempting to do this has been a profound learning journey for me.

During this time, numerous lines of flight have been created, some explored, some left unexplored. A number of these are mentioned below. Multiple connections and areas of possible commonality have been suggested. The rhizome encounters many things as it travels. It notices traces made by others who travel in a similar direction for a while; some things it encounters it rejects, avoids or skirts around, perhaps out of a sense of self-

preservation or fear; some it consumes, transforms and makes its own, others it only dimly senses as possibilities at the edge of or beyond perception.

As this path has gone further, pieces of music have been created, each one representing an advance in my understanding, perception and thinking of music. The pieces are separated in time yet share the same rhizomic source. Each represents a snapshot in time; it records where the exploratory tip of the rhizome was at that particular moment. The pieces are like small shoots rising above the surface (Figure 5). Their small scale belies the dense network of roots sustaining and nourishing them below ground.



Figure 4. Shoots above ground, North Island, New Zealand
Hückelheim, 2007. Reproduced under Creative Commons licence.

No two shoots are the same. They came into being at different times as the rhizome was growing and extending itself below the surface. Each shoot is unique and can never be created again. As such, these shoots are records of rhizomic progress rather than being

the progress in themselves. They show where the rhizome has been at a certain point of time but not where it now is. They represent time past. They are visible (or audible) evidence of a process which is otherwise hidden from view. They are like footsteps in the sand—they show that someone has passed this way and made the footprint at a single, fleeting moment, but that person has since moved on.

I have been heartened and supported on this journey by numerous reports across millennia and from different cultures of individuals on their own paths. A quotation sums up the place of the songs within the creative work.

The purpose of serious music, then is to bring oneself in tune with the highest planes, and the practice of music is like a prayer. The musician is on a lifelong path which has spiritual overtones ... Although these ideas are part of the Hindu tradition, one does not hear them contradicted by musicians of other faiths. (Ruckert & Widdess, 2008, pp. 18–19, cited in Clarke & Kini, 2001, pp. 148–9)

For me, these simple pieces for young children certainly come under the heading of serious music. They are small, but they have serious purpose. Palmer states that “spirituality is the eternal human yearning to be connected with something larger than our own egos” (2003, p. 377). This being connected intimately to their whole environment is an essential feature of the young child.

It is my hope that these small pieces are examples which stem from the:

... faculty in the mind of each of us which [inner] studies purify and rekindle after it has been ruined and blinded by other pursuits, though it is more worth preserving than any eye, since it is the only organ by which we perceive the truth. (Plato, 380 BCE/2007, pp. 274–275, Book VII, 527d–e)

I believe that they represent a progressive understanding of what Steiner meant when he talked of “music in the mood of the fifth” viewed through the lens of Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of interbeing. “A wise musician is first and foremost one who has learned to listen. For this kind of musician, practice is about not the construction or achievement of something ... but the reception of something” (Biswas, 2011, p. 103).

In writing pieces of music which seek to interrogate and explore Steiner's indications, my compositional approach developed from being essentially pragmatic to increasingly involving meditation. In this, I used Steiner's indications on inner development and meditative work as well as my own long-established meditative practice. Adopting a meditational approach led to a fundamental transformation of compositional method. Instead of reducing musical material to suit the restricted style of the mood of the fifth, I went from a musical element (an interval, a note) and built up the piece from there. In the process of doing this, I re-encountered elements of music which I had previously experienced decades earlier.

Godwin comments that:

Speculative music [...] is the part of music theory that has nothing to do with practice, but is concerned with identifying the principles of music. It is the esoteric part of music theory, and as such readily absorbs ideas from theosophy, Hermeticism, and the occult sciences. (1995, p. 4)

While I readily agree that speculative music is concerned with the principles of music, is esoteric and readily absorbs ideas from a wide range of different sources, I contest that it has nothing to do with practice. What I have striven to do in this exegesis is to show how one can work practically with the esoteric, moving from the realm of ideas into practice.

Doing this involves traversing the abyss:

... the boundary of the human and the cosmic, where the cosmic resounds into the sphere of the human and the human, consumed with longing, yearns to rush forth into the Cosmos. (Steiner, 1906/1986, p. 220)

In Indian musicological thought, music is first unsounded, *anāhata*. It is then the task of the musician to give this potential a voice, to create *ahata* from *anāhata*, sounded music from unsounded. This process can be thought of as a sublimation of the ether, a drawing down of the music of the heavens into audible form so it can be heard with earthly ears, whether it is called *musica mundana*, the refrain, or the harmony of the spheres. Once the piece has reached its conclusion, the sound passes away onto the air and is given back to

the ether. No record of it remains except etched into the souls of the performer/s and (if there be any) the listener/s.

Thus the sound of music and the experience of music are steps towards Self-realisation. Music is considered as a spiritual discipline which elevates the inner self towards divine peace and bliss. ... The greatest aim of music is to reveal the essence of the universe, and ... through music it is possible to encounter God. (Clinquart, 2001, translation cited in Wakhévitch, 2006)

The interval of the fifth lies on the edge of this territory, in the region where the earthly strives towards the spirit and where the spiritual reaches down towards the earthly. The pieces in the creative work are an endeavour to unite with the refrain and compose within this zone of interbeing.

Deleuze and Guattari wrote that “any point of the rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be” (1987/2013, p. 5). Reflecting on the journey, I realise that the “end” point I have reached is the one I started from over 40 years ago. The 40-year journey, documented here and evidenced by pieces for young children, began as encounters with cosmic music and has ended in the same place. I am reminded of the *ouroboros*, the alchemical symbol of infinity (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Ouroboros

Pelecanos, 1478. In the public domain.

The snake eats its own tail and thereby begins another cycle; the human being reaches the end of one cycle and is transformed, thereby beginning another.⁹⁴

Or as Eliot put it in *Little Gidding* (1942/2014, p. 240):

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

Over the doctoral period, I became ever-more involved in the *process* of composition. This process was not limited to those moments when I sat down to write something. It became boundless and all-encompassing. Just as the rhizome gains nutrients from the ground around it, I have been constantly nourished by people and by activities around me, by my inner life, by my meditative practice and all that I have encountered. As in the natural world, there are periods of drought, of cold and of inclement weather, my inner root structure can be and has been damaged by unexpected events which have affected me personally, but, being rhizomic, its growth is not stopped by these setbacks. Where one avenue is blocked, another opens.

The shoots above the ground or the footsteps in the sand are useful to evidence a process but they are just outer signs of a deeper encounter with the research question. The course of the compositional journey outlined has travelled from a more outcomes-directed, pragmatic approach to one much more open-ended and undefined. Over the doctoral period, the method by which this happened has become ever-more concentrated on meditation, building on decades of prior work.

⁹⁴ Steiner used the ouroboros symbol to create the seal for his fourth Mystery Play, *Die Seele Erwachen* (The Soul's Awakening) (see 1913/1978, pp. 3-6). Inside the snake he wrote the words, *ICH ERKENNET'S*—perhaps best translated as, *The self knows itself*, an echo of the Delphic oracle's proclamation, γνῶθι σεαυτόν, in German *Erkenne Dich selbst*—know thyself. “Know thyself” is at the core of the verse I have used in my meditation practice for the last 20 or more years.

My experience of the journey as a whole is that it went through what I would call the eye of a needle, a narrowing and then a vast opening out. After a lengthy period of scholarly and musical paralysis when I did not write anything and did not know how to progress, as soon as I began to use meditation as a compositional tool my thoughts became freed, and the path before me opened up. My reading put me in touch repeatedly with accounts from different spiritual and religious perspectives. I have avoided following any one of these traditions to the exclusion of others and adopted what Frazier has called a “choral hermeneutic,” valuing, investigating, comparing multiple accounts of musical experience.

The purpose of serious music, then, is to bring oneself in tune with the highest planes, and the practice of music is like a prayer. The musician is on a lifelong path which has spiritual overtones, mixed with the *yoga* (‘yoke’) of refinement, knowledge, and purification ... Although these ideas are part of the Hindu tradition, one does not hear them contradicted by musicians of other faiths. (Ruckert, 2004, pp. 18–19)

This journey, to “bring oneself in tune with the highest planes” is one I will always be on. Before I began this doctorate, I could not have guessed where this path would lead; similarly, I cannot know where it will next take me.

I am reminded again of Eliot (1942/2014, p. 17):

... the end precedes the beginning,
And the end and the beginning were always there
Before the beginning and after the end.

5.1 Insights gained during the study

The compositional process has elicited deep insights into aspects of music and the compositional process. What I term “insights” comprises discoveries made during the doctoral period which inform the creative work; they appear chiefly in the Interludes in this exegesis. They are not listed under Areas of further research below, though they easily could be, and I believe they merit being drawn out a little. Each “insight” represents

a largely unexplored line of flight, and each has the potential to become an area of significant research.

They include the progressive expansion of the compositional methods adopted. In using meditation as a compositional tool, I have established that it is possible to compose using imaginative visioning (*Sleep in your little bed*, p. 140), by engaging meditatively with a single musical component, whether it be a note or an interval (*Whakapai*, p. 152), and to utilise the experience of tonal centres associated with individual notes as a means of compositional dialogue (*Piece number 5*, p. 159). I have similarly gained insights into how synaesthetic/multisensorial experience can enrich and extend the compositional process (*Whakapai*, p. 152).

I write about an encounter with the note A (p. 145), and of how it looked, moved, and reacted. Within this study I did the same with other notes but these accounts remain unpublished and I have not gone back and repeated the exercise following changes to my own experiences of music (p. 156) to see if and how my relationship to these notes is developing or changing. There are many possibilities to work with other traditions or bodies of knowledge in this area.

The same is true of the experience of the interval of the fifth mentioned on page 152 (while writing *Whakapai*). While I have worked with all intervals from a minor second up to a tenth in a similar way, these experiments have not been repeated and could be carried in a number of potentially profitable directions. These could include working with others to present the findings sculpturally or visually. An obvious correlation is to explore this with regard to the interval gestures and forms given by Steiner for eurythmy (1924/2013), however, other connections could profitably be forged.

In the Prelude, I write of repeated experiences I had when young when transitioning between sleeping and waking. This represented the beginning of the journey outlined here

and represents the (current) end point. It signifies the full iteration of a process, an ouroboric cycle. Speaking plurivocally (p. 105), it is these personal experiences of interbeing which have informed and allowed this transformative iteration to take place and which form the pivotal insights gained in this study.

5.2 Areas of further research

Having travelled this far, there are five further lines of flight I can identify which open themselves up as possibilities for future research and which attract me.

5.2.1 The use and effects of music in the mood of the fifth

I have written small pieces for use in early childhood settings for the best part of 30 years, often for specific occasions and for specific groups. Once I have written a song and handed it over, I relinquish control over what happens to it. I know songs I have written are sung every day in different countries around the world, sometimes as I intended them, sometimes with altered melodies,⁹⁵ text and so on. I sometimes hear them when I visit early childhood settings.

To my knowledge, there is little rigorous research on the effect of music in the mood of the fifth on young children. There is also little research regarding teachers' perceptions of music in the mood of the fifth, the degree to which they use it in Steiner settings, how they use it and why. There is no research that I know of into children's perceptions of such music. These are significant areas of research in early childhood education which I would like to investigate or to work with or mentor others to investigate.

5.2.2 Promoting listening

Allied to this is research on the aural environments of young children. Early childhood settings can be noisy places where active listening appears not to be promoted (see p. 68).

⁹⁵ I believe altering the melodies is largely unintentional and the result of music-reading errors.

There is a body of research into this (Erickson & Newman, 2017; Ising & Kruppa, 2004; Manlove, Frank, & Vernon-Feagans, 2001; McLaren & Dickinson, 2005; Rickson, McLaren, & Jones, 2007), but these studies do not involve Steiner early childhood settings, which, in my experience, tend to be significantly quieter environments. A comparative research project on the effects of different aural ecologies on child and staff well-being could be worthwhile. The work of child psychologist Goddard-Blythe (2004, 2008) into the value of active listening for academic success may provide a focus for such a study, investigating whether quiet environments assist the establishment “inner voice” and so support speech acquisition and later literacy.

5.2.3 Extending the rhizome

As the rhizome has travelled through unexplored ground, I have gained additional insights into music and into the act and process of composition. In this process, I have maintained a focus on the fifth.

A potential expansion of the current study would be to extend compositional methods used for the creative work to compose material not in the mood of the fifth, to enter a deep meditative state and “add” to it musical building blocks which do not relate to the fifth, or to work dialogically as in *Piece number 5*. This is for me new ground; investigating and then portraying the sound worlds which I “hear” during meditation is a challenge and could possibly offer a fruitful development of the methodological approach.

5.2.4 Illuminationism as lived spirituality

During the course of this doctoral process I have repeatedly come across literature which relates to defined religious streams or which refers to particular meditative practices. While investigating what comes from these different streams, I have consciously avoided associating with any religious approach; to the same extent, I have sidestepped working

in depth with the meditative indications of any one approach, including that of Steiner. I have tried to keep my mind as open as possible to what comes and have built up an individual meditative method which is effective for me. After this doctoral process is completed, there are two particular areas I would like to investigate.

Illuminationism (see p. 72) is not well known outside the area of Arabic philosophy. Its founder, Shahab al-Din Suhrawardī (1155–1191), identified two paths towards “illumination,” the first discursive and second experiential or intuitive (Walbridge, 2005).

I am interested in exploring the interface between what Corbin, the main translator of Suhrawardī into European languages, calls the imaginal world (Corbin, 1964/1972; Salari, 2011; Voss, 2007). The imaginal world Corbin describes resonates strongly with aspects of what Steiner calls the spiritual world. I wish to explore and identify areas of commonality and points of difference, both regarding the method of approach and of experiences. To my knowledge, there is no literature which investigates these two spiritual streams.

Corbin acknowledges the musico-poetic nature of Iranian mysticism, “finding its complete expression only in music” (1990/1998, p. 231), which could lead to profitable avenues of inquiry to follow on from this current study.

5.2.5 *Anāhata*—unsounded sound

The other area of lived spirituality which I would like to explore is that of musicians working out of Hindu and Buddhist traditions who write and speak of their intuitive experiences of music, as meditants, as performers and as composers (Clarke & Kini, 2011; Frazier, 2017; Menon, 2000). This study has confirmed for me that I have not come across another group of musicians which reports experiences of and in this depth or to this extent. If the opportunity arises, this is an area I would like to explore, whether

through study, performance or discussion as a potential means of extending my understanding and experiences of unsounded sound.

5.3 Close

The variety of the methods described, and the considerable differences in the results obtained by applying them, highlights one of the main characteristics of speculative music throughout its history: namely, its non-sectarian attitude towards knowledge, which results in a very free and almost individualistic approach to its problems. (Hasler, 2011, p. 208)

Through a choral hermeneutic, taking inspiration from many sources separated widely by time and culture, I have experienced the doctoral process as one of slow growth. The rhizome has pushed through the dark earth of my own semi-conscious and unconscious experiences, adapting itself to conditions, experiencing both setbacks and successes, periods of withering and rupture, of nongrowth as well as breakthroughs and rapid advances, moving tentatively towards a distant, dimly sensed destination, “heard, half-heard in the stillness” (Eliot, 1942/2014, p. 59). The rhizome has taken sustenance from every landscape it has moved through as well as being nourished by the constantly sustaining starlight of the spiritual world. It has encountered pathways in the earth created by other root systems, some recent, some long ago, but ultimately the journey has continued alone. At least this part of it.

It would be easy not to notice the passage of the rhizome under the ground and to forget or to ignore its existence. It is undetectable and cannot be seen with the eye. However, periodically it develops small shoots which record its progress. A representative selection of these form the creative work. I hope that the listener, in co-experiencing these, can gain something of what Biswas describes:

Whatever qualities of mind have been developed radiate outwards. The practitioner’s conscious state does not remain isolated but is promulgated through sound, the vibrations permeating the environment and potentially moving other sentient beings to resonate in sympathy. (2011, p. 108)

I have tried in this exegesis to give an account of the rhizome, so far as I am able, from something of its origins, its progress as it moves intuitively through the dark, its sources of nourishment, and significant moments of discovery, to the delicate shoots which rise above the surface.

Ultimately, the process of engagement with Steiner's comments on the fifth has been one of an intensifying and ever-deeper listening, like Stanislawski, first to myself, then to those around me, to the surroundings and ultimately to the cosmos. In a meditation session I wrote the following about this process of opening myself up to inner engagement with the refrain, that it is an experience of: "Listening, contacting, communicating, fructifying, gathering, uniting, exploring, floating, intuiting, sounding, giving, receiving, accepting, offering, through-ing, for-ing, with-ing, humbling" (Boland, Unpublished diary, October 20, 2017).

This expanded sense of listening, innermost listening (Waks, 2008) or inner hearing (Steiner, 1914/2008) is what will guide the rhizome further on its way. As Cage states (1978, p. xii):

Nothing is accomplished by writing a piece of music	}	our ears are now in excellent condition.
Nothing is accomplished by hearing a piece of music		
Nothing is accomplished by playing a piece of music		

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Appendix A

Sound files for the creative work

Appendix A comprises .WAV files of the five pieces in the creative work. They are performed by voice and harp and were recorded at Studio 38 in September, 2018.

1. *Oak Tree*
2. *Waitī, Waitā*
3. *Sleep in your little bed*
4. *Whakapai*
5. *Piece number 5*

The audio files may be accessed through the following Dropbox link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/rn36pduasbrvmjg/AABZmqDIIWAtlMizxxVKhTWya?dl=0>

Appendix B

Pieces from the creative work in music notation

Appendix B comprises the pieces of the creative work in musical notation.

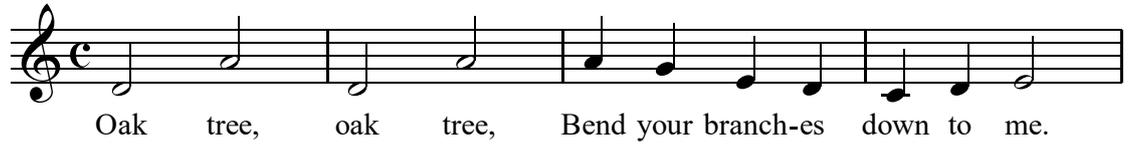
The audio files in Appendix A are indicative of the pieces as they were performed before the doctoral examiners; this includes performing the songs more than once, alternating between the harp and the voice, and experimenting with the transition from music to silence (see p. 144).

The files in this appendix contain no repeats, transitions or indications regarding performance. They give the melodies and text (for pieces 1–4).

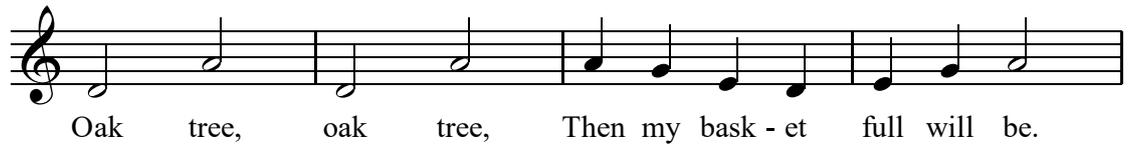
1. *Oak Tree*
2. *Waitī, Waitā*
3. *Sleep in your little bed*
4. *Whakapai*
5. *Piece number 5*

1. Oak Tree

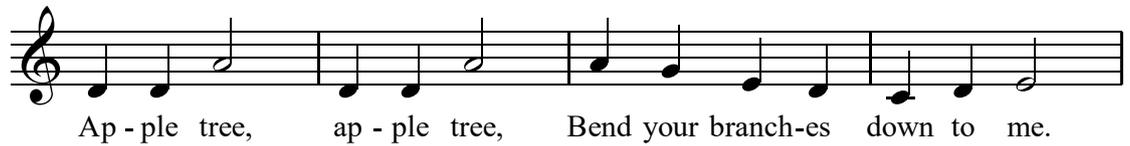
© Neil Boland



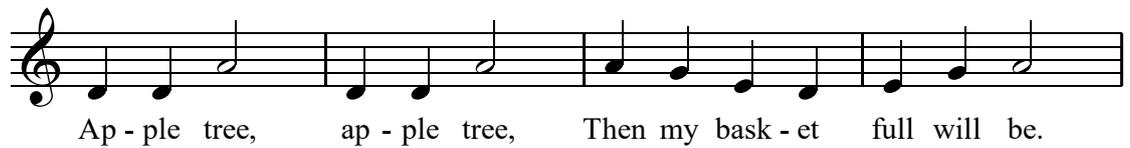
Oak tree, oak tree, Bend your branch-es down to me.



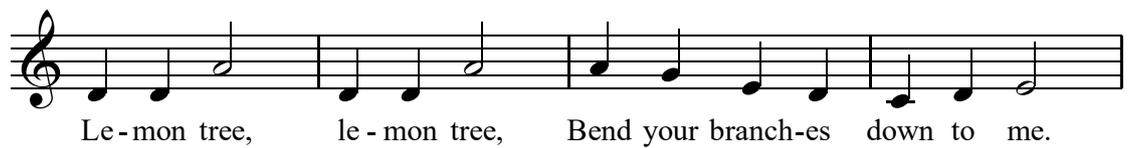
Oak tree, oak tree, Then my bask - et full will be.



Ap - ple tree, ap - ple tree, Bend your branch-es down to me.



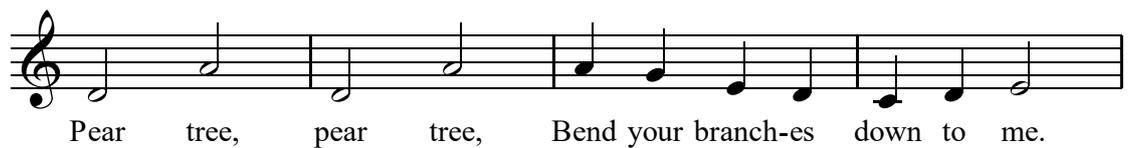
Ap - ple tree, ap - ple tree, Then my bask - et full will be.



Le - mon tree, le - mon tree, Bend your branch-es down to me.



Le - mon tree, le - mon tree, Then my bask - et full will be.



Pear tree, pear tree, Bend your branch-es down to me.



Pear tree, pear tree, Then my bask - et full will be.

2. Waitī, Waitā

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Wai - tī, Wai - tā, Wai - pu - naā - ra - ngi,



Tu - pu - ā - nu - ku, Tu - pu - ā - ra - ngi, U - ru - ra - ngi e.



Ko - i - nei ngā ta - ma - ri - ki o Ma - ta - ri ki,



Ngā whe - tū e pī - a - ta - a - ta i te ra - ngi e.

3. Sleep in your little bed

© Neil Boland



Musical staff 1: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. The lyrics are: Sleep in your lit - tle bed, Sleep soft and warm.



Musical staff 2: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. The lyrics are: Sleep in your lit - tle bed, Safe___ from harm.



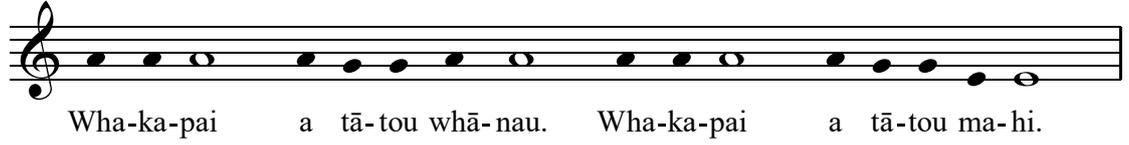
Musical staff 3: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. The lyrics are: Sleep in your lit - tle bed, Sleep soft and warm.



Musical staff 4: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. The lyrics are: Sleep in your lit - tle bed, Safe___ from harm.

4. Whakapai

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Wha-ka-pai a tā-tou whā-nau. Wha-ka-pai a tā-tou ma-hi.



Wha-ka-pai a tē-nei rō-pū. Wha-ka-pai a tā-tou ka-to - a.

5. Piece number 5

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Appendix C

Sound files of additional pieces

Appendix C contains .WAV files of pieces not included in the creative work. They were written during the doctoral period although do not illustrate distinct, additional stages of compositional approach. They are for voice and harp and were recorded in The Sound Studio, Takapuna in April 2018.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Autumn is here</i> | 8. <i>My head is warm</i> |
| 2. <i>Cluck, cluck, cluck</i> | 9. <i>My little donkey</i> |
| 3. <i>Glimmer, lantern, glimmer</i> | 10. <i>Quiet are the fields</i> |
| 4. <i>Granny Haniata</i> | 11. <i>Rain on the rooftops</i> |
| 5. <i>In the spring</i> | 12. <i>Roll the dough</i> |
| 6. <i>Lambs at play</i> | 13. <i>Snowdrops</i> |
| 7. <i>Lift the basket</i> | 14. <i>The golden bird</i> |

The audio files may be accessed through the following Dropbox link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/rn36pduasbrvmjg/AABZmqDIIWAtlMizxxVKhTWya?dl=0>

Appendix D

Additional pieces in music notation

Appendix D comprises the additional pieces in musical notation.

In some audio files in Appendix C, songs are performed more than once, alternate between the harp and the voice, and experiment with the transition from music to silence (see p. 144). The files in this appendix contain no repeats, transitions or indications regarding performance. They give the melodies and text.

1. Autumn is here

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The musical score is written on four staves in 6/8 time. The melody is simple and uses a mix of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are: 'Aut - umn is here, sum - mer is gone. You'll need a home for the win - ter long. So look for a home so warm and bright, Where gol - den light shines day and night.' The word 'golden' is misspelled as 'gol' in the original image. There are slurs over the words 'win - ter' and 'warm'.

Aut - umn is here, sum - mer is gone.

You'll need a home for the win - ter long. So

look for a home so warm and bright, Where

gol - den light shines day and night.

2. Cluck, cluck, cluck

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Cluck, cluck, cluck, good red hen. Here's your house; please go in.

The first line of music is written on a single staff in 2/4 time. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The melody consists of four measures: the first measure has a quarter note on G4, a quarter note on A4, and a quarter note on B4; the second measure has a quarter note on C5, a quarter note on B4, and a quarter note on A4; the third measure has a quarter note on G4, a quarter note on A4, and a quarter note on B4, with a slur over the last two notes; the fourth measure has a quarter note on C5, a quarter note on B4, and a quarter note on A4, with a slur over the last two notes.

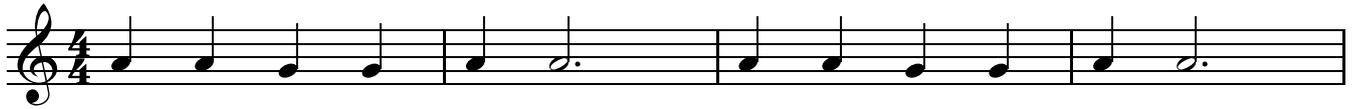


Cluck, cluck, cluck, good red hen. Com-ing to vi - sit me__ a - gain.

The second line of music is written on a single staff in 2/4 time. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The melody consists of four measures: the first measure has a quarter note on G4, a quarter note on A4, and a quarter note on B4; the second measure has a quarter note on C5, a quarter note on B4, and a quarter note on A4; the third measure has a quarter note on G4, a quarter note on A4, and a quarter note on B4, with a slur over the last two notes; the fourth measure has a quarter note on C5, a quarter note on B4, and a quarter note on A4, with a slur over the last two notes. The line ends with a double bar line.

3. Glimmer, lantern, glimmer

© Neil Boland



Glim - mer, lant - ern, glim - mer. Lit - tle stars a - shim - mer.



Stars are twink - ling bright - ly, Twink - ling in the night.



Glim - mer, lant - ern, glim - mer. Lit - tle stars a - shim - mer.



Through the streets our lant - erns qui - et Light - en up the night.



Glim - mer, lant - ern, glim - mer. Lit - tle stars a - shim - mer.



With your col - ours shin - ing, Guide for me my way.



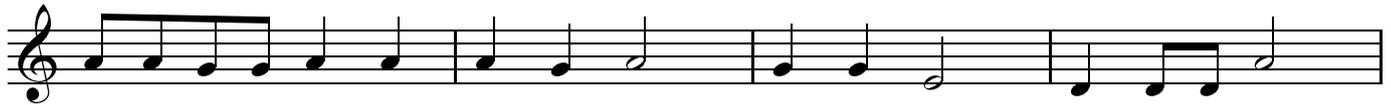
Glim - mer, lant - ern, glim - mer. Lit - tle stars a - shim - mer.

4. Granny Haniata

© Neil Boland



Gran-ny Ha - ni - a - ta sat and sat in her hat un - der the sun.



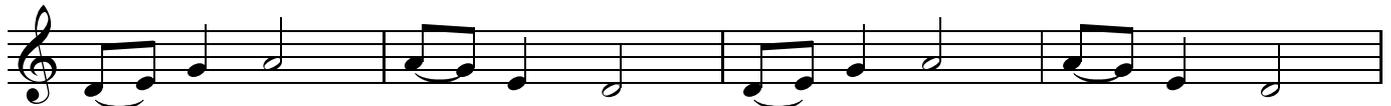
Gran-ny Ha - ni - a - ta sat and sat in her hat un - der the sun.



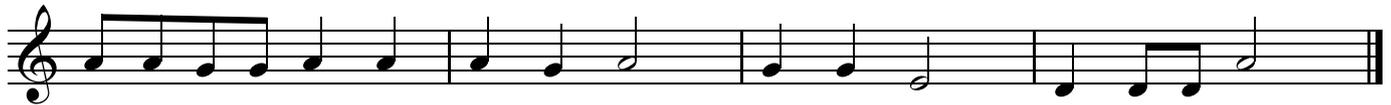
Where the tu - i flew, flew, flew, land - ing on the flow'r - ing flax.



Where the tu - i flew, flew, flew, land - ing on the flow'r - ing flax.



Flax_swayed up, flax_swayed down. Flax_swayed up, flax_swayed down.



Gran-ny Ha - ni - a - ta sat and sat in her hat un - der the sun.

5. In the spring

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In the spring, on the trees, Green leaves flut - ter in the breeze.



Flut - ter, flut - ter in the breeze.



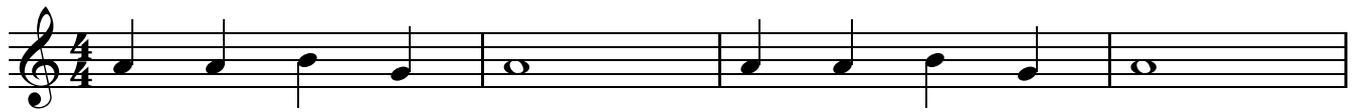
La - ter on, when they're brown, Au - tumn leaves come flut - t'ring down.



Flut - ter, flut - t'ring down.

6. Lambs at play

© Neil Boland



On the grass - y banks, Lamb - kins at their pranks.



Wool - ly sis - ters, wool - ly bro - thers, Jump - ing off their feet.



While their wool - ly mo - thers Watch by them and bleat.

7. Lift the basket

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Lift the bas - ket full of logs and carry it to the house.



Set it down be - side the stove and curl up like a mouse.



Lift the bas - ket full of logs and carry it to the house.



Set it down be - side the stove and curl up like a mouse.

8. My head is warm

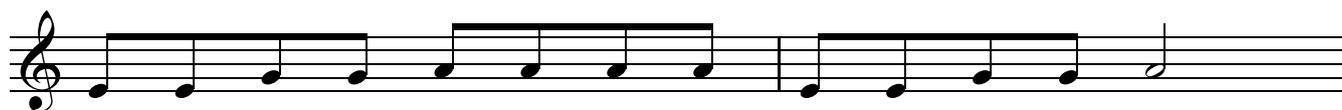
© Neil Boland



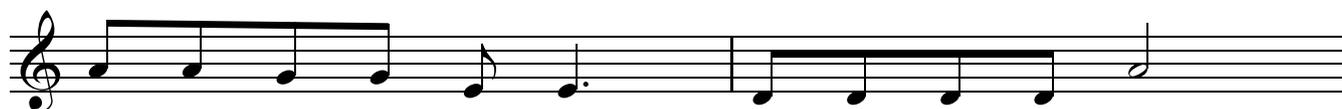
My head is warm, my shoul - ders too. This arm, this arm. My



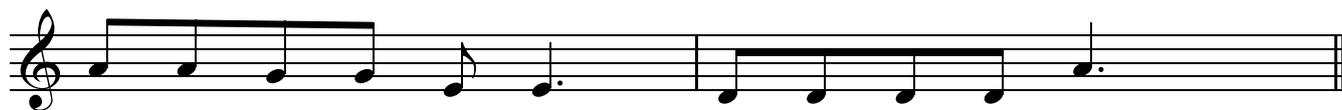
tum - my is warm, my back is too. Legs and feet. I



stretch my hands and, pull them back and roll them round and round.



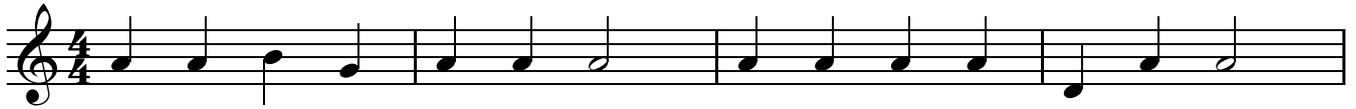
Co - sy, co - sy, co - sy. Co - sy as can be.



Co - sy, co - sy, co - sy. Co - sy as can be.

9. My little donkey

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Pull, my lit - tle don - key, pull. Care - ful for the cart is full.



To the mil - ler take your road, Slow - ly with this heav - y load.



Pull, my lit - tle don - key, pull. Care - ful for the cart is full.



To the ba - ker take your road, Slow - ly with this heav - y load.

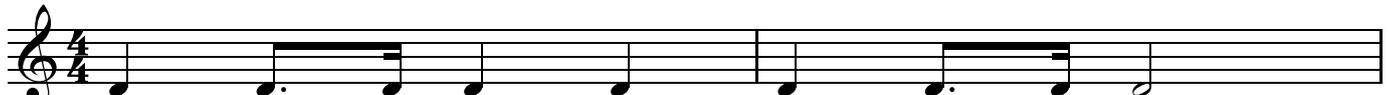
10. Quiet are the fields

© Neil Boland

Qui - et are the fields, qui - et is the mill. The
bread is on the ta - ble and we are sit - ting still. It's
time to say good - bye, it's time to say good - bye.

11. Rain on the rooftops

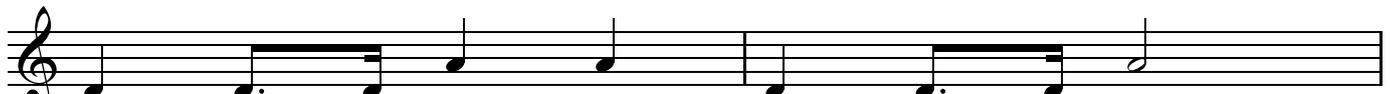
© Neil Boland



Rain on the roof - tops, Rain on the trees,



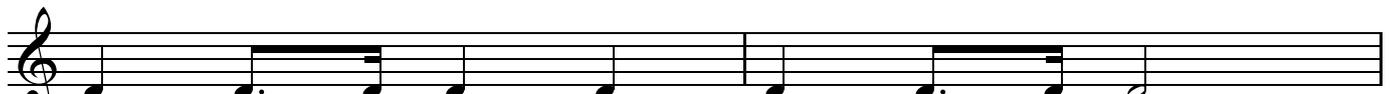
Rain on the green grass But not on me.



Rain on the roof - tops, Rain on the trees,



Rain on the green grass But not on me.



Rain on the roof - tops, Rain on the trees,



Rain on the green grass But not on me.

12. Roll the dough

© Neil Boland



Roll the dough, roll the dough, Nice and smooth-ly to and fro.



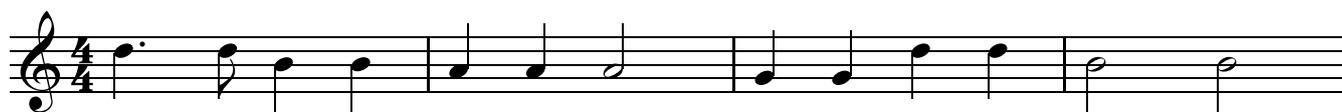
Piz - za dough is soft and white, Roll it gent - ly, that's just right.



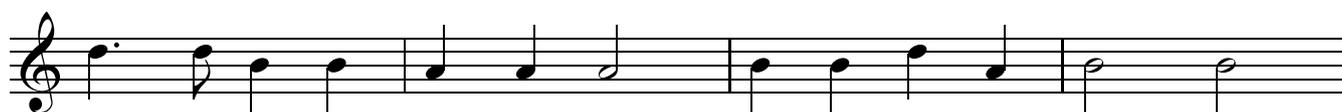
Roll the dough, roll the dough, Nice and smooth-ly to and fro.

13. Snowdrops

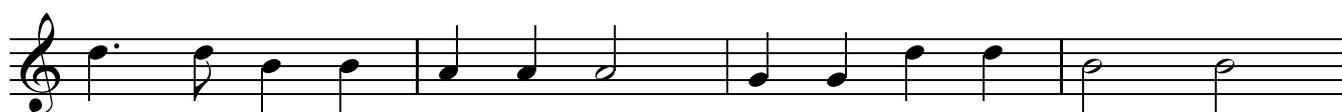
© Neil Boland



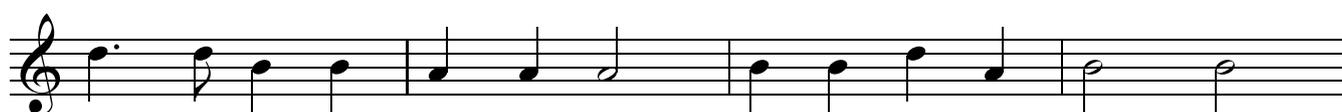
Lit - tle lad - ies, white and green with your spears a - bout you,



Will you tell us where you've been since we've lived with - out you?



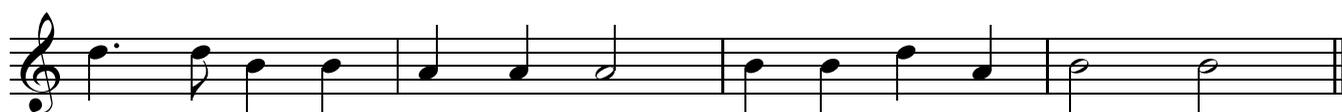
You are bright and fresh and clean, with your pearl - y fa - ces.



In the dark earth where you've been, there are wond'-rous pla - ces.



Lit - tle lad - ies, white and green, are you glad to see us?



Hung - er not for where you've been, stay till spring be near us.

14. The golden bird

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The gol - den bird flies up and then flies down,



Up in - to the air and down to the ground.



High in - to the sky and sweet - ly sings,



Flies to her nest and folds her wings;



Two - gold - en eggs be - neath her wings.



[Humming]

