

Jessie's Well – Journal No. 2

<p>Day 1 of scoring – April 5th 2005</p>	<p>First entry – 12.29 pm</p>	<p>I have dealt with a number of administrative matters and had lunch so I could sit and work solidly on this project. I would assume I will spend a few hours today and then work fully through Wednesday and Thursday. I am very keen to finish this and hear it acoustically and not just in my head!</p>
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Location and context:

I am sitting in the front office of my house. I have my personal computer set up here – not my work laptop but the home computer where personal email arrives and kid's home work is attacked. I have my compositional desk here too. I am very fortunate to have a number of work spaces in my home. Julie has decorated a beautiful study where I sit and write my doctoral notes but this is a much more utilitarian space. The kids have their desks here and there is a Brologa computer and as I can write on the A3 manuscript here it is a perfect place to do the scoring and keep this journal.

My endeavour here is to more fully document this scoring/orchestration process for Jessie's Well. I am sure that the 'flow' will not be as constant given the demand to document as I go and the requirement to make that documentation at a level that makes all things understandable to the musical reader who may not be a composer.

Let's see how I go!

<p>Day 1 of scoring – April 5th 2005</p>	<p>Second entry – 12.36 pm</p>	<p>Seven minutes later!!! I haven't spent much time on the score because it took at least 4 minutes to write what I did above!</p>
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I am second guessing here! I noted in a previous journal I had scored the first 30 odd bars of this onto Finale top make a comparison between soft and hard

copy/process etc. Well, I am trying to remember what I wrote instead of letting the intuitive take its course! It's frustrating and I can see that it may well become more so over the next few hours!

But I do find that the gliding across the page I can do here and the ability to see the whole score and not just segments of it is much more satisfying. I am enjoying this already – page 1!

Day 1 of scoring – April 5th 2005	Third entry – 12.45 pm	Here I find some of the intuitive coming back
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This is a rewarding moment because the mechanical and desire to do as I did in the Finale score has gone. It's like it is all coming back now. The sketch is becoming again an *aide memoir*. The opening is for solo voices but that isn't noted. The tutti's are not noted either but I know them. Also the instrumentation and dynamics fascinate me here. I haven't noted many instrumental names (my standard practice) but I sense that the dynamics here are more for em to ensure that the phrases are shaped by the players/conductor than as an indication of definitive dynamic variation. Am I explaining that well?

Well, if "everything is in the music except that which is essential" why do I need to note dynamic variation (like the first entry of the horn)? I think it is because I want to advise the amateur player. I will think more on this. Recommence writing at 12.50 (I hate this laboratory Stephen!!!)

Day 1 of scoring – April 5th 2005	Fourth entry – 12.56 pm	Considering the on going proofing of the score
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Here I pause to note some simple structural matters I engage in when I write the score. For example, I enter a bars rest before an entry and after a completed statement by an instrument or group of instruments. I do so to make myself consider whether they should have been playing before or at all then! It also makes me consider whether I want them to stop when I write the end of the entry. Often, if I haven't written in a bars rest to begin or conclude it prompts me to consider these matters and most often it is a sign that what I had written was somewhat incomplete. By incomplete I don't mean I hadn't decided what to do with it but more that I had been drawn to write another note, entry, doubling etc. I had been engaged in the colouring of the sketch one might say. Recommence writing at 1.01

Day 1 of scoring – April 5th 2005	Fifth entry – 1.13 pm	Short note
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I also place the rests in at times to stop me writing in something that would be a 'normal' orchestration or a 'given, something that would work 99 times out of a

hundred. It makes me leave out the standard scoring at times so that I will write something different. Not an unexpected difference but one that does not always reflect the 'safety' of amateur scoring. For example, the horns are not doubled by the alto saxes to begin. That just drives me crazy when the Yanks do that all the time!! How are horn players going to develop strength and confidence if every time the 'go out by themselves' the saxes are holding their hands! I know this may not be well explained and time in reflection will help so I will move on. 1.17

Day 1 of scoring – April 5th 2005	Sixth entry – 1.24 pm	Simple note again
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I am starting to use 'col' now (bass clar bar 11). This is a sign that the pace is picking up. I have "enjoyed" the gentle p[acing of the notes on the page and now it has to happen more quickly because the ideas are flowing more quickly, the aide memoir is vibrant in its refreshing of the story for me. 1.26

Day 1 of scoring – April 5th 2005	Seventh entry – 1.42 pm	Lots happening!
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So, the end of the third page and no percussion yet!! I know there may be something but I am sick of all the new age tinkle, tinkle that composers litter their pieces with these days. Yes, I have done my share of littering but I must be careful. So does that mean I am holding back for fear of cliché or because I haven't decided or because I don't want anything yet?

And – a battle about what to do in bar 12! I want it to fade and I want it to linger and then 'breathe" and then large in the next bar (forte) but how do I say that? Make it a four four bar? Make it a rallentando or assume the astute conductor will be aware of what I want given the landscape? Hhhmm!! I am unsure

And Julie has phoned about Stephen Cronin's interview and we have talked about some of his compositional contexts and she is smiling because he could have been describing me! 1.46

Day 1 of scoring – April 5th 2005	Eighth entry – 2.13 pm	Working a longer time this time
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Yes, a longer time taken here, engrossed in the scoring of the bars 13 – 18. The richness here is a combination of the contrast in orchestration (flutes etc against the brasses) and the location of the voices within their own timbres. For example, consider the trombones and the horns. The trombones sit low in the register and enrich the sound and the horns call out at the top of their mid range. If I consider what is happening here and compare it to real voices I am lead toward what I teach in conducting. The sounds here are located in parts of the instrumental timbre that give rise to affective reaction from the listener. The listener hears the depth and therefore the reflective 'accomplished' tine of the trombones

juxtaposed with the 'call' of the horns. That register in the human voice, upper mid range, is where we are making statements. Statements of various kinds are located there. Frenzy is higher; stentorian modes of proclamation are here and a little higher; making a point in teaching is here and a little lower. The equilibrium here tonally can be likened to the emotional equilibrium we might find in hearing a proclamation in a location of assuredness. This is the composer using the instrumental voices to 'speak' as the human voice does. 2.26

I really do have to go to the loo now! Aching back – age or poor posture or both!

Day 1 of scoring – April 5th 2005	Ninth entry – 2.31 pm	The connection with the narrative and autobiography?
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The section from 18 – 26 and onwards is very thinly scored and seems to me to be meandering not so much in not knowing where to go but more not having any where to go mode. The melody is stated completely across trumpet and clarinet soloists at 18 and then after 26 it isn't completed, thought the correct number of bars to make the phrase are there it does get finished. Is this the lack of connection with Russell I noted previously? Is this the simple wandering of his child? Is it Jessie not going anywhere because she is in no need of being somewhere else? She wanders around her home singing and not finishing the song (like Julie and Emma often do here) and the song drifts in and out like around 26 – 30, but comes back like it had never been the intention to leave it dangle.

Gee, I can ramble!

2.37

Another more concrete note before I move on – I have cross cued the 3 and 4 horn part before 26 because a young band might not have any! Now, the purist might say that is the instrument is not there then the music is incomplete but I would not like this piece to sit and not be used for lack of 3rd and 4th horn players. Cross cueing is an integral part of orchestration at this level. The most difficult thing is to have the cued parts not played if you have the full instrumentation. Amateurs love to play and so they will play every note, without question and often without thought!

2.40

Day 1 of scoring – April 5th 2005	Tenth entry – 3.02 pm	The weaving of lines!
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I just love doing this!!!

Why?

The weaving of lines is something that has always intrigued me but it is not the satisfying of some intellectual awareness I am satiating here it is more the dialogue – no that is not enough – not complete – the language isn't enough here. Well, I believe it is the interweaving of ideas that are related. It's like some form of working out, not like mathematics – heaven forbid – but more like the working out of thoughts by an individual or a small group. I suppose that's what chamber music playing is like and this section is very chamber music like.

I enjoy how the lines weave in and out and the music is very horizontal; then. It's that the lines carry the meaning and the consequent harmonies, which I love greatly, are just that, consequent.

Look at 26 – 32. The lines are moving and falling often. When the melody reaches a peak it ebbs away again and that flow to the peak and subsiding is evident in the scoring and the use of the instrumental timbres. Look at the reaching up in the low wood winds. Yes, I know it is reaching up because it is an ascending part but consider the way it sounds not the way it looks! Hear the voice! Just seeing the voice misses what the composer wants. This is linear writing that crosses the registers and therefore gives the affect it does.

Look at bar 30 and see how the ascending line is linked together. This is not clever scoring to facilitate performance in that the less experienced player may not be able to play across registers; this is timbral variation to affect the listener. This is *calling out* and this is *lifting up* and it is all accomplished by the use of the voices. But it is done unconsciously, I am sure of that. This is craft as the servant here, its correct place!

3.15

It's time for a coffee – 3.23

Day 1 of scoring – April 5th 2005	Eleventh entry – 3.47 pm	Back from coffee, refreshed and keen to keep moving
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When I look at some of the comments above it reminds me how our language often lacks the words to describe many things. I think of love and how inadequate our language is in describing all of the various manifestations of love there are. The Greeks have 3 or 4 words for love I believe. So what of the language problems above; most marked is the inability I have in describing the *calling out* and *lifting up*. In rehearsal I would allude to what it feels like to do that. With younger children I may even have them call out in some way to sense the meaning in the music.

Language often lets us down but I also sense here that my command of it may well be problematic. Enough of this – back to the score. 3.53

Day 1 of scoring – April 5th 2005	Twelfth entry – 4.08 pm	Fifteen minutes later!!! I haven't spent any time on the score because of a phone call from work. Why is not important really.
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I feel little dislocated after that call. I feel like people need to get themselves sorted out and not be so self focused. They worry about such unimportant things and they assume so much negative stuff!! Why do they not place the student first and their ego second? Back to the score – 4.11

No – not yet. Trying to find my place and focus I have noticed that this section I have just worked on (18 – 32) is a open and transparent to begin and becomes more intense and then ebbs away very quickly to reflect on the beginning again. It's like it has transited through the wandering thoughts of Jessie and is now going back to consider how her dad and I are getting along. Let's see. 4.14

Day 1 of scoring – April 5th 2005	13th entry – 4.25 pm	A long bow?
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It's at bar 36, it's a brass choir setting here and it starts as trumpet and trombone in dialogue. Is it Dad and the composer – Dad is a trombone player and the composer a trumpet player. No – that's ridiculous! But the dialogue again here is about the intersection of lines. The music is solidly contrapuntal and that says again that though the work is based on a song (a song first or just producing the melody first, given the circumstances I worked in) and these first two presentations of melodic material (18 and 36) are full yet fractured. Here, though the melody is presented fully in the trumpets to begin it is still drawn to a halt. At 46 there is a pause and then a luft pausen. The music here is stopping to reflect as can be seen by the allusions to the opening motif. This is not casual or consciously constructed; this is intuitive and creatively based. It is not some striving after development in some theoretical construct but it is seeking emotional consolidation I sense. 4.32

Day 1 of scoring – April 5th 2005	14th entry – 4.40 pm	Process – the scoring notes that are missing
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As I reflect on where I am with this I notice that I often will work forward in reading the sketch to see what is coming next. It's as if I am noting the road ahead and therefore gleaning information about the orchestrational intent of the present section with what comes next. For example, as I work through this

section at 36 with the brass choir, I consider what comes after the fermata at 46 and see the tutti coming up. In the context here I am seeing the placement of instrumentation. I can see that the brasses must be used sparingly. Obviously from a stamina point of view at this level they need to rest but it is more than that again. Knowing the capacities of the players is one thing but wanting a particular sound is another. I know that here it is a striving for the antiphony between woodwinds and brass where as before there was the interweaving I alluded to previously. This antiphony can only work when it is not over used. I am thinking with a listener's ear now. It's worth noting that there is still no percussion. That is very unusually for me because percussion is very much part of my aural image as I compose. Hhhmm! 4.45

Day 1 of scoring – April 5th 2005	15th entry – 4.53 pm	The melody's character. What am I trying to say here
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I am at 42 and have just written the trumpets up to 44. I placed accents on the melodic notes and reacted swiftly to that.

It's not right!

This melody is never to be accented! It may have accented accompaniment but the melody is the child's melody commented on above. It's Jessie's story and it needs to be told with that love. Maybe it requires loudness and also some dislocation but she is finding a pure motive and love cannot be harsh like an accent. It can be firm and strong but not harsh!

I will bother this some more now. 5.01

Just a question Stephen; from a layman's view as a composer, does this seem all too quick for you? Is it worth commenting on 'quickness'? 5.02

Day 1 of scoring – April 5th 2005	16th entry – 5.03 pm	That wasn't long again
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At 42 there is an accelerando. I have just added poco to it because I can only imagine how fast some conductors will go! 5.04

Day 1 of scoring – April 5th 2005	17th entry – 5.15 pm	Times up!
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I am really enjoying this but the exigencies of family life press in on me. Emma needs to use the computer and even without that the kids around doing their homework will cause some disruption. I think a glass of wine with the woman of my dreams is called for! (I hope you are sharing a glass with Nancy too Stephen!)