

### Jessie's Well – Journal No.4

<b>Day 3 of scoring – April 7<sup>th</sup> 2005</b>	<b>First entry – 8.36 am</b>	<b>About to take the kids to school</b>
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#### **Location and context:**

I find myself in the same state of mind as yesterday. I just want to get on with this but 'life' gets in the way. The last journal talks of me having to move off this machine to allow Emma to do an assignment and then I had to move again because she needed my laptop to be reset in its cradle so she could do her printing and.....

And now, off to school!!

Who could one possibly idealise the life of a composer! 8.38

<b>Day 3 of scoring – April 7<sup>th</sup> 2005</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> entry – 9.36 am</b>	<b>Back from school and a hair cut</b>
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I must ruminate on the above thoughts for a little longer. I will be interrupted a couple of times this morning as I pick up Julie fro a meeting she is at (and have coffee of course!) and then pick up a couple of computer bits and pieces after that so to ramble on a little longer on this is not to take me away from the score.

There is a tendency to glorify the act of composition and some even say of all the musical pursuits it's the most intense or most important etc. I know it is the act that I find the most rewarding in making music though the act of teaching music ranks very highly for me. I think that they are different things though. Each composer I have interviewed so far and those I have read about, the majority state there is something beyond description in the act of composition but I also think we still imbue it with something mystical and in some way then deny it a rightful place in the every day. Yes, it is a spiritual act for me and part of my spiritual journey but the spiritual is in my every day not separated from it.

Maybe Francis McBeth says it better for the composer and the non composer.

“...if to experience this gift of art is so grand, to create the experience is a state that is even more beyond description. If the passive recipient of art if so affected, just triple, quadruple, quintuple it for the active participant in its creation. In music, the performer is exalted to a higher plane, the conductor to an even higher plane, and the composer to the highest. The creation of art may be the highest level of personal satisfaction that is achievable. I have never found any other endeavour that supersedes it.”

The process of autobiography is potent for me, given his comments. The chance to tell a story, mine or about those around me and my relationships (like Jessie's Well) allows me to understand and to help others become more aware and to be able to understand too. The listener, the player, the conductor and even the conducting and composition students can be more informed in a palpable way by this autobiographical pursuit that is my composition work.

Just wondering!

I will write some music - 9.52

<b>Day 3 of scoring – April 7<sup>th</sup> 2005</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> entry – 10.00 am</b>	<b>Reviewing the sketch before proceeding</b>
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Yesterday I got to bar 54 and made the following observation:

*I find here that the section I am moving into is different. Yes, it's obviously tonally different but there is a reason why it is. Is this the migration from incomplete presentation of the theme or something else? It is too easy and passé to say that what is happening is development. It is transition but not in a musical sense. I always thought of transition happening musically when "he couldn't think of anything else to say" but demonstrably he can here! The music is growing outwards. It is organic and it is ruminating over past observations and musings. I will come back to this because there is another pause for my eldest daughter's arrival – a cup of tea!!*

Well, I didn't come back because a cup of tea moved into chats about the new grandbaby growing inside my eldest and then more chats about 'life' and then dinner. A composers' life is so stretched!!!

Now I am reviewing that same spot and I know the phone will go any minute and I will have to pick up Julie but this needs to have time taken over it.

Over the last few days and before hand as I have journaled this whole work the narrative idea in the piece has ben discussed and various positions presented (I assume, I would have to look aver what I have written to be sure). The most compelling position is that the melody is Jessie herself and her story telling is the basis of the piece. I have looked at the simplicity of the melodic construction and reflected on the inability to complete that occurs in the first two presentation of the tune; the melody appears in a fractured state.

Her, at 54 the music is more chromatic and the hints and sniffs of what has gone before are vibrant. This is not development in a conscious compositional sense. It may well be development in a theoretical sense but there is no memory here about an attempt to manipulate materials, to manoeuvre or play with tonality or

such. What is here, between 54 and 60, is a working out that may be leading us to the musical dénouement.

Look at it!

The image shows a handwritten musical score sketch for measures 54 to 60. The score is written on five staves. The first staff is labeled 'Brass' and contains a few notes. The second staff has a dynamic marking 'mf' and a 'basso' instruction. The third staff has a circled measure number '60' and the instruction 'with resonance and conviction'. The fourth staff is labeled 'mp subito, choir' and 'Brass'. The fifth staff has a dynamic marking 'f'. The sketch is heavily scribbled over with various annotations, including circled numbers 54, 55, and 60, and various musical symbols and lines.

There are other sections of the sketch that display a rough form of “working out” but this is the most scribbled on portion. It is also the most chromatic, which is significant for a folk type song. The instructions are also more abrupt – *mp subito, with resonance and conviction* and the pencil marks are darker and more firmly placed in the ‘working out’. Here the composer has made an attempt to define clearly, like I acted swiftly to expunge accents from the melody the other day.

There is more here than just writing a transition; here is the movement from wondering to surety. 10.33

Day 3 of scoring – April 7 <sup>th</sup> 2005	4 <sup>th</sup> entry – 10.38 am	Reviewing the scoring again
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It may be valuable to unpack this process again in a different environment and also before zi complete it and then rely too much on memory – current memory but memory still.

I am working on the section from 54 – 60, which has formed the basis for some solid discussion about compositional process. What I am doing now in scoring it is leaping around the page as noted above but here it an incomplete ‘leaping’. I am not finishing any part completely in the line that is the second stage in the first system from the above sketch excerpt.

Note the ascending and descending lines. I wrote the 1<sup>st</sup> line complete in the 1<sup>st</sup> horn up to the tie across 55/56 then added the 1<sup>st</sup> trumpet as the last two beats of 56 in quavers. The line from the horn that descends was given to second trombone from the dotted b flat at 55

Julie called 10. 46

<b>Day 3 of scoring – April 7<sup>th</sup> 2005</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> entry – 1.28 pm</b>	<b>I am back!</b>
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I will move on from the above notes.

Third trombone came next and then tuba. You can follow the principal line idea but this is very much to do with the horizontal nature of the compositional process here BECAUSE, I will go back and add to those parts where they fill out or compliment other parts or instruments. I will do so now – 1.32

<b>Day 3 of scoring – April 7<sup>th</sup> 2005</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> entry – 1.36 pm</b>	<b>I will attempt to note this process stpe by step</b>
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I wont bother to write separate headings like the one just above but will add time annotations as I go.

Next phase:

- Add 1<sup>st</sup> trombone to the horn and have it move independently in bar 55.
- The second and third trumpets take up the line with the horns and then divide in 56
- Add weight to the woodwind line at 55 ff
- Enhance 3<sup>rd</sup> tbn with bass clar
- Add bsn and bar sax to tuba – this could be a problem with range because some school groups will not have a bar sax with a low A
- Considering the leap to the next register for first and possibly second clarinets between 56 and 57

(I've got the keyboard on my knees now!!) – 1.43

OK – now I have more doublings going on. This is a strengthening process and it has also shown me something about the sound I want here.

Firstly the strengthening (and I wont go on about this too much any more because it's now 'more of the same")

- The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> horns move with 1 and 2 at 55 and then with trombone. They need to support 1<sup>st</sup> trombone because trumpets have moved into help horns
- Saxes come in to work with trumpets. I have kept them out because there is too much 'wailing' sax in the amateur band – too much!!!

Second point was what I found here. Look at how much space there is between the horns and the trombone! It's mad really BUT that is part of what is happening here. There is no a narrative about this voicing but it just serve to display that this is not just a transition but something more significant. The sound I will get here from this will be of clear depth and resonance in the upper parts. It's the timbre thing I eluded too earlier. The sounds of the 'voice' in its different registers. Some are calling out and some are sounding heroic and some are providing strength.

1.50

Yes – next register for the clarinets – 1.51

Bar 56 now

Fill the low brass sounds here euphonium and 3<sup>rd</sup> trombone and then tuba and then horns and trumpets BUT – clarinet in the next register went in first because I followed my instinct then this ascending suspension pattern will be best scored in the horns/trombones and saxes, the double an octave up in the woodwinds. Have I mentioned the foolproof – works 99% of the time way to score a tutti sound and how I vary it I situations like this? 2.01

<b>Day 3 of scoring – April 7<sup>th</sup> 2005</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> entry – 2.05 pm</b>	<b>Another change I orchestration</b>
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This section coming up at 60 – and one needs be mindful of this as one travels through the bars leading to it because the scoring of 60 has to work also and large leaps at this ability level may cause some trouble – should be fully scored in a traditional and substantial tutti effect. It's like I was alluding to above but it's going to be brass and some saxes and lower woodwinds and then the full tutti at 68.

It means that the sound has to be a sound that the listener and the payers will be used to and associate, subconsciously, with expected and accepted. How that scoring is done I will discuss as I get to there completely but it is important to

note that I am on the way there and mindful of the impact that has on voice leading and the fullness of the timbre of the ensemble 2.10

<b>Day 3 of scoring – April 7<sup>th</sup> 2005</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> entry – 2.24 pm</b>	<b>Scoring the tradition tutti</b>
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You know, this must be so unsatisfying to read all of this!

Here we are at 60 and the first matter to deal with is the compromise of voice leading. I suggested above that I needed to be mindful of the consequences of not ‘watching where I was going’ and what I have done is to write the voices fully from 54 onwards and place almost a dovetailing into the first bar of the full presentation of the melody, at 60.

What I have done here is to make the first minim scored as for the line that has come from 54 and then I will revert to my more traditional mode of scoring the tutti sound here. I will come back and discuss that as I move into it. I would feel more comfortable doing that than attempting to do some now because I may well do some thing different to what I think I do!

I am going to take a little break now before launching into this next fully scored section. 2.29