

#### TAPE 4

It is the morning of the 31<sup>st</sup> March, I believe, and I am about to start the actual scoring of *My Sister's Tears*. Lots of pressure...I'm feeling an incredible amount of pressure and I've emailed the two Stephens and the boss about the pressures that I'm feeling and they've said take as much time as I need, so that is good. There is also the pressure of wanting to get stuck into Thomas Humphrey's piece again and also wanting to write this so that it is on the way ...a fair bit of pressure – there's this piece because I've got to get this done because its part of my confirmation so I'll begin work on this now and comment as the day goes by.

Break to write

Here I am just about to do this and in front of me on the desk I have tapes from things that I've done so far and also given the wedding on Saturday, I just pile up all the stuff in the corner of this desk so I can use the desk for other things and I found some of the drafts of some of the tapes that Julie's typed up for me and I've just started to read the first tape I did on this – the discussions about writing – about the beginning of the scoring out about drawing up the pages and all that and I thought and I'll read that and contextualise this but I won't, what I'll do is as I go through this process, it will be interesting to compare the mechanics of drawing up the page and the reflection that that produced and then the actual physical act of scoring the music itself – so, here we go.

Break to write (he notes that he is stuck with “interesting”)

This is a conundrum – what do I do – I've got so many mallet percussion things and in the standard orchestrational set up there is one line – so the way I approach it is obviously to add extra lines in, so I think I'll take out the timpani line and the drums and auxiliary percussion and save them for later – I can't even remember actually using them – but I've got some other manuscript paper so all I do is cut an paste it.

Break to write

When I'm looking at this - what are we probably 10 minutes into the process – and I've worked out how I will set up the percussion , but I wonder how many people think that composers start at the top left hand corner of the page and work their way through and yet I know that in the early part of reviewing this on tape I talked about the tinkling nature at the beginning and reflecting on the fact that it might be my sister dancing or whatever. But what makes it tinkle is the percussion, the piano sounds, the flutes are the flowing tulle of the dance costume, but the tinkling, the lightness comes from the percussion I believe. So that's actually where I've started, I've haven't started at the top of the page – I've started right at the bottom with vibraphone, glockenspiel, crotales and with piano, and now I'm going to deal with flute lines.

Break to consider the flute lines and other matters

First coffee break arrives. It's only almost the end of the first page but Julie has just arrived with some stuff that I've had to help her with – its just put a punctuation in the morning, .....but its interesting.....what I've been doing as I've been doing things you know, wandering up the back carrying bags of salt for the pool, is thinking about what's happening in the music and when I reach the fourth bar , there is something where all the flute action and the oboe there is something missing – it doesn't tinkle any more. And there is something got to happen - in the piano part probably.... (pause) yeah, I think so. (pause) Anyway I'll have a little look at it.....

Break to write

Its worked out now – I've worked out exactly what it should sound like.....and it's off. Interestingly, I've got no dynamics marked, but I'm instantly writing them in the score.

Break to write

I find it enlightening when I look at the dynamics - it's about 10 to 10 - I'm working through this opening still and I'm looking at the way the piano becomes part of the orchestral texture - you can't help but think, you know, I guess everything coloured by your experience - but piano players that Steven Savage's given to me as a conductor in the wind orchestra have been international students of dubious capacity at times and my thought is - I'm actually upping some of the dynamic levels in here because they never project the sound - I can wave my hand at them in an inviting or a threatening way and they just play like they are sitting in their studio - there is no sense of projecting the sound and the piano is an integral part of this texture and it should be presented.

Break to write

I'm on the second page of the sketch and I've almost navigated my way through this opening that I've been so concerned about and as I'm moving through - I'm at bar 7 now - and I look at the sketch and I can remember from the discussion we had, Stephen and Stephen and I about what's not in the score, and I can see now and look at bar 7 and 8 and there is so little instruction and I can hear voices play - (laughter) of course I can always hear voices - but it is really fascinating because I know what instruments are going to play here - well I'm more aware conceptually than of actual instruments as I go to write the instrument will choose itself.

So I'm writing these bars and I'm jumping around all over the score to drop the dots in. I suggested that the instruments would choose themselves, and that's exactly what's happening - exactly - I find that quite fascinating.....because there is an awareness of what should come next as I write - and I look - it's like not looking at a part of the sketch I'm looking at the sketch and I'm leaping so those predominant lines are being drawn in and then as I move further I'm saying, ok how can I balance that line so it's complimented and not covered and so on.

I find that what I'm doing is that I'm going through adding dynamics because there are very few dynamics - I mean, there is the shape of them so there is cres and dim etc -

further on there are more dynamics – but the opening is less dynamics. I'm not unsure of what they should be and I'm manipulating the suggestion the scoring sometimes, in bar 9 and 10 – there is a suggestion in the sketch that I want to do so and so but what naturally progresses out the writing that I alluded to before the suggestion that is in the score that I can hear, the almost subconscious thing, means that there is a slight variation in the scoring, just slight from what I actually wrote in my descriptions by saying adding horns and trombones, they come in at different times.

I'm on page 3 of the score now - it's taking forever isn't it – its 10.30 – but I love this process – it is just so satisfying. Here I am on page 3 of score and all those multiple percussion things have disappeared now and I don't need the piano because the piano sound has changed. Now what we are getting to is a more pure wind orchestral sound – pure is the wrong word – a more traditional wind orchestral sound – in fact its an orchestral sound, the sound I have here at 11, is the trombone section of an orchestra.

Given balance considerations now as I write, the sketch is so much implication, suggestion and I'm balancing differently now – the trombones are different – if anybody who hasn't got a life wants to look at the sketch and compare it with the score – they are welcome.

Just a little bit of manipulation so the balance - so we don't get blurtey notes when the unisons come there is a sense of blurteyness sometimes.

I wonder, and it would be good to have Steven Cronin's comment on this, I wonder about, I can see, I've elongated the phrases, so they are not a standard....we are at 11 now... and there is not a standard  $\frac{3}{4}$  thing. I've elongated so that the end of phrase holds a quaver into a  $\frac{4}{4}$  bar then it's the three crotchets that follow in the  $\frac{4}{4}$  bar that lead back in – so its almost as if it's a an extended  $\frac{3}{4}$  bar or a pause or a fermata on a  $\frac{3}{4}$  bar, then it's a normal  $\frac{3}{4}$  bar that continues on the phrase. I guess it's the paranoia of hearing so many people just chop phrases in a real mongrel, unsophisticated , unmusical awful way. Some of my early recordings attest to that.

And following on that, .....of the use of the tenuto. I think I'm using the tenuto to make sure the notes aren't chopped short and I wonder whether I over use it sometimes – like I use interesting – oh no not in that unsophisticated way.

I also use a process when I'm scoring and I think this came from having found that I actually left things out of the score at some stage, and what I do is I put a bar's rest in front of the first entry of a part – an instrument, like the bass clarinet – and then when their entry is finishes I put a bar's rest but I don't put rests in every measure, and what it makes me do is look to see if I've actually forgotten something or something should have entered, when I compare. For example, I found out, I've just left out the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> horns in something and it's because I went to check those bars' rests.

As the chorale moves along when I get to bar 20 something I started to get a bit clever and I started wanting to score some more things it, some more voices, because I could and I knew how I'd balance it and all that stuff because I know I'm a reasonable orchestrator but its now supposed to be that – it should be open and pure still. I don't want to thicken the mix just yet.

I note down at 27 it says change voicing and a little slower, so I know I'm going to do something there and I'll wait and see whether its as obvious to me as around measure 7 was.

I've just changed a time sign – just before that changed voicing bit I said that happens at 27 – I had a 5/4 bar and it's just too long, too pretentious and if I want to make the sound build to that point at bar 26, I can't make the brasses hang on that long but the shape of everything can make them intensify the phrase and give the effect of hanging on without hanging across the line too far.

It's been probably....I am going to stop with a tea break with Julie .....about 10 past 11 and we stopped for about 20 minutes – so I've probably not spoken on the tape for about

and hour and a half and its because I am engrossed – I am on page 12 and I've just enjoyed so much this process so far – I'm starting to reflect back on the beginning now because I'm at measure 46 and its got resonances of the beginning again and I'm very pleased I've done what ...those small phrases I've done at the beginning ....I think it fits very well with what is here and the next section is that brass chorale that leads to a triumphal sort of effect – it says becoming animated and proclaiming – so it will be very informative to see if I've made it too melodramatic. Let's see.

So I'm an hour on from where I was – well actually about 50 minutes - and all I've done is worked out the end of that accelerando – worked out that section that I mentioned in my last entry – the section between 43 through to about 50 - isn't that incredible - 7 bars has taken me 50 minutes. Anyway this next section has got a lot of minims and crotchets in it so I should be right – but it's scoring it strongly that is most important.

How much do you say in this – I'm another 10 minutes on – quite interestingly battling to balance this brass chorale and I should never ever battle to balance a brass chorale, I should know exactly what I am doing, cause it is my bread and butter, but it's a different sense – I'd have to be thinking more orchestrally here cause I'm so used to balancing wind band score which is multiple parts and maybe I'm thinking more orchestrally. – Um I don't know.

So I've almost finished this brass chorale – I'm up to 59 I'm getting to that reflective thing that I talked about at one stage – I was just concerned that it was a little melodramatic, so I'm just going to spend a few moments considering whether that's what I really want.

I'm still a little unconvinced about it especially the accompaniment but definately going to get rid of all the cymbal crescendos – I mean that's cheesy muck!

My head is tired. I am going to have to have a coffee and something to eat – it's 1.30.

So I've had a bit of a break ....I've written this big brass chorale thing and this section 59 that is reflective – I'm just playing with it – I'm just trying to keep the brass out of it because the woodwinds haven't had much to do – it's very brass heavy so far – even the chorale-things – Oh the opening is pretty good I suppose but what I'm trying to do is get the beautiful sounds of the saxophones to accompany the oboe which is fraught with danger because if its bad oboes and bad saxophones there is hardly anything worse in the world. Anyway...on we go.

So I've scored this thing that comes into the tutti at 68 and I've put in the trumpets and trombones and I didn't take notice of the notes I've written and I say that I write specific notes and I've written trumpets and trombones and I say oh yeh their specific notes and I know what I'm doing and then I didn't follow the instructions because I put the horns in and they're not meant to come in they're supposed to play the melody – brains and good looks eh.....

For the moment this section at 68 – when I look at how sometimes, especially in less mature bands, the young band you have to overscore because you have to take account of the fact that they don't like to hunt alone – they like to hunt in packs – its that everybody doing everything together mentality – they don't like to be heard by themselves so it's a multiscoring – a thicker scoring, and the higher you get - so if you get to the level of middle school and high school, they can hunt by themselves - they don't have to hunt in packs, but you've got to be careful of what you score so you can't be as transparent as you might like to be, and a lot of times the education imperatives of everybody having to have something to do, I think often composers put too much percussion in. I know I have been very conscious in the last four or five years of diminishing the amount of percussion I use. Just because I can use it doesn't mean I have to and that's what I am trying to deal with. But I've hardly any percussion in this and now I get to this section at 68 where I mention I've taken out the cymbal-things – it's 25 to 3 now – I've taken out the cymbals which I would normally use in a big crescendo like in bar 67, but there is no need and I am wondering about what I might to do spice it up – no, not spice it up - add more colour to the sound at 68 , but I wonder whether I need to – I wonder whether the

plainness of the melody and the plainness of the accompaniment needs a richer texture in the orchestration, so it will need to have the percussion doing something. What do I need to do? Hum – I'm being pulled both ways here.

I think of so many pieces I've heard, especially the Europeans, they over-orchestrate in this situation, and they turn drama into melodrama – I'll probably be told that my scoring is too much like a German wine – too austere – but I don't think we need to over-orchestrate here – plain, melodic material, simple accompaniment, simple counterpoint. O.K. - decision's made.

Decision's made and it's what I wrote in the first place.

I'm pleased about that. My prehistoric technology – there's no cut a paste – this is where I do my culls and I'm writing all these in as I go through into bar 69 so that I can see the things that are common across the score and I know how to fill in around them.

At 79 I've added in the vibes – the same sound as they make at the beginning and I know that it comes up again soon but I just thought that there's got to be something else that unites what happens at 79 which is like the thing that happens after 35 – at bar 40 - there has got to something that unites that – 35 through 40/45, and I think that's a good connection. There needs to be a corresponding sound when we get to 87 that connects with, its like a pedal point and so I'm going to have the low woodwinds hold through the bar before 87 with a diminuendo that comes out of the brass dim and overlaps the anacrusis for the melody.

The commentary is much more sparse than it was at the beginning. I get engrossed with this. I've probably commented 4 times in the last hour and a half whereas at the beginning I probably commented 4 times in the first 10 minutes. These changes that I've talked about – there just timbrale changes – they're just hints – they're almost like memory – a pedal point in this situation would also most be like memory that fades – so that's what that woodwind thing is that happens there. And I finally found a place where

I can have the cymbals and stuff – I really want a great bit fat yummy cymbal that leads up to bar 94 and then very, very gentle bass drum and gong in 95 and 96 – very, very gentle.

I'm on the last stages of the score. It's quite some time since – its 6 .00 now – and I'll have this finished today. All I've got to do is photocopy two pages because the beginning – the first 8 or 9 bars repeats – well, is re-stated, and I'm not going to write it all out again so I'll photocopy that and that will be those pages. The ending needs to have a little more of the beginning and I've played with it a little bit – with the sketch from 112 to 118 will show how I played with it just a little bit – it has to tinkle just that little bit more. Alright, I'll got ahead and finish it now.

It's 7.45 and I've come down and in the last 20-25 minutes I've finished the pieces – I've just that little bit to do. I'll go through and have a look at some things and make sure I know what I am talking about. But I'm quite happy with the way it looks so far – there's a couple of balance things that I'm not sure of and I'm a little concerned about how the piano thing will go – I guess its conductor's role XXX. So there we go – all done.