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The Symphonies of John Kinsella

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Séamas de Barra

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[1] No verbal tempo indication is given for the Epilogue in the score of Symphony No. 3: Kinsella provides a metronome mark [crotchet = 66] only. Presumably this is because the Epilogue continues without a break after the end of the second movement and the direction *adagio* is still understood to be operative.

Chapter 5
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Preface

In a creative career spanning five decades, John Kinsella (b. 1932) has produced a distinguished catalogue of works that places him amongst the principal senior figures in contemporary Irish music. Although he has written a number of vocal and choral works, his most characteristic music is to be found in his instrumental compositions especially in the genres of the string quartet, the concerto, and above all, the symphony. Indeed, his reputation largely rests on his symphonic cycle, the ten constituent works of which make him the most prolific Irish symphonist since Charles Villiers Stanford. Yet despite this notable achievement, Kinsella's music has received scant scholarly attention, and the present account of his symphonic output constitutes the first comprehensive and detailed study of any aspect of his work.

Such critical neglect is not by any means confined to Kinsella. With one or two notable exceptions, it is only in comparatively recent years that contemporary musicologists have begun to consider Irish art music as a worthy field for scholarly and analytical enquiry, and that departments of music in Irish third-level institutions (principally in University College Dublin and The National University of Ireland Maynooth) have begun to promote it as affording suitable topics for postgraduate research. When Ita Hogan published her pioneering *Anglo-Irish Music 1780-1830* in 1966 it was virtually an isolated phenomenon and remained so for many years. Since the mid-1980s, however, the whole territory has started to be surveyed. The most conspicuously neglected area, however, remains the life and work of individual composers, and studies of scarcely a dozen individual figures have appeared in print to date. Neither has there been much engagement with the development of the different genres in Irish music history; and while one or two accounts of opera in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries have been published, for example, there exists no study of modern Irish opera and none at all of the symphony in Ireland. Insofar, therefore, as it offers an assessment of a single composer's contribution to the latter genre, on the one

hand, and is a contribution to a history of the symphony in Ireland, on the other, the present study represents a positive response to this double deficiency.

The thesis addresses a number of specific research questions:

1. The fundamental theme underpinning this study is the nature of John Kinsella's approach to symphonic composition. Kinsella's view of the symphony was initially a fairly conservative one, and in the first two works he adhered to a four-movement plan that was strongly indebted to traditional models. From Symphony No. 3 onwards, however, he set about re-imagining the essentials of the form. The thesis examines the composer's evolving concept of the symphony, and analyses his innovative responses to questions of structure in relation both to individual movements (or component episodes) as well as to the problem of integrating these into a balanced whole.

2. Formal and structural issues that arise in the course of the discussion of each symphony are contextualised historically. Not only is Kinsella's work discussed in relation to the broader symphonic literature, but it is also specifically placed in the context of the contribution of other Irish composers to the genre.

3. Another major theme of the thesis is the development of Kinsella's compositional style and in particular the influence of serialism on his musical thinking. Up to the late 1970s, Kinsella's music reflected his engagement with the techniques of the continental avant-garde. As he became increasingly disenchanted with many aspects of contemporary music, however, he evolved a personal idiom that would better enable him to realise his compositional vision. This approach involved an adaptation of serial procedures in which the note-row is organised and manipulated in a manner that readmits the forces of tonal attraction. Kinsella's style is discussed in relation to similar freer applications of serialism by other composers, and the formal implications of employing such modified dodecaphonic techniques in the creation of large-scale symphonic works are considered. But just as his approach to symphonic form became more varied and

subtle so did his compositional idiom, and its ongoing modification and progressive refinement is also traced across the complete series of symphonies.

4. The individual soundworld of Kinsella's music derives not only from his adaptation of serial procedures, but also from his intense engagement with the art of Jean Sibelius. The influence of Sibelius's music is evident in his work on the spiritual level – where it is essentially a matter of mood and atmosphere – as well on the technical level where it can be seen in his manipulation of musical time and in his response to various formal problems.

5. As might be expected, such double indebtedness results in a very individual perspective on tonality. This aspect of Kinsella's work is subjected to detailed analysis throughout the study, as are the related issues of harmonic language and the manner in which Kinsella employs his tonal resources to articulate symphonic forms.

6. As Kinsella's distinctive idiom has clear implications for the invention of musical material, the nature of the thematic and motivic content of his music is also discussed and the manner in which it is handled is examined.

One of the primary objects of the musical analyses undertaken here is to demonstrate how this reclamation from serialism of the structural force of tonality operates in Kinsella's work. No single established analytical method was found to be entirely adequate for the elucidation of his approach. Set-theoretical analysis, for example, which is now widely applied to post-tonal music, seemed unlikely to afford much illumination in so far as it precluded the full appreciation of such a pronounced orientation towards tonal organisation.[2] Similarly, the post-shenkerian approaches to

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[2] Apart from the fact that it was devised for the analysis of atonal music, as the title of Allen Forte's seminal *The Structure of Atonal Music* (New Haven, 1974) implies, and consequently would be of little use in discussing Kinsella's particular style, some writers have expressed reservations about the intrinsic value of set-theoretical analysis. Nicholas Cook, for example, in *A Guide to Musical Analysis* (Oxford, 1987), 145-146, writes: '...the relationships suggested by set theoretical analysis are that much more abstract, that much more removed from the music, so that it is difficult to make a judgement about them in musical terms: it is possible to complete a set-

voice leading analysis as originally developed by writers like Adele T. Katz and Felix Salzer hardly seemed adequate to register what is most distinctive and characteristic about Kinsella's style.[3] There is always a danger that the rigorous application of a particular analytical method may too easily serve to demonstrate and justify the method itself rather than elucidate the music to which it is applied.[4] Consequently, the aim in the present study has been to adopt an analytical approach that is tailored specifically to Kinsella's art, and to avoid any attempt to fit the music to a pre-established system. A judicious eclecticism, composed of elements selected as appropriate from various methods, has accordingly been adopted as the most suitable for this purpose. Given the nature of Kinsella's music as outlined above, it will readily be appreciated that standard descriptions of tonal music are only partially relevant. Nonetheless, many traditional functional concepts – like tonic and dominant, for example – continue to have some application and are used where they help to clarify the composer's procedures. Many of the concepts underpinning the analysis of serial music (as well as much of the analytical terminology) have a similarly limited relevance. Reference to the techniques of serial music cannot be wholly dispensed with, however, and the analytical literature on serial and post-serial developments by standard authorities such as Ernst Křenek, Josef Rufer and George Perle have been drawn upon as necessary.[5] As the forms and structures that Kinsella employs – sonata form, rondo form, and so on – are often traditionally based,

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theoretical analysis and still feel that you have not really got to know the music [...], and I cannot help feeling that this casts a doubt on the practical value of set-theoretical analysis.' See also George Perle, 'Pitch-Class Set Analysis' in *The Journal of Musicology*, 8, 2 (Spring 1990), 151: 'My critique of the Forte system [...] begins with the subjective, intuitive and spontaneous experience, of one who has spent a lifetime listening to music, composing it, playing it and thinking about it, and then finds himself confronted with ways of talking about and analyzing music that have nothing whatever to do with what I would call this "common sense" experience.'

[3] Adele T, Katz, *Challenge to Musical Tradition* (London, 1945); Felix Salzer, *Structural Hearing: Tonal Coherence in Music* (New York, 1952).

[4] Nicholas Cook raises this point, for example, in relation to Benjamin Boretz's anlaysis of the opening of Brahms's Fourth Symphony, remarking that anyone who reads it will do so 'to find out about Boretz rather than Brahms [...]' (*A Guide to Musical Analysis*, 123).

[5] Especially, Ernst Křenek, *Studies in Counterpoint Based on the Twelve-Tone Technique* (New York, 1940); Josef Rufer, *Composition with twelve tones related only to one another*, trans. Humphrey Searle (London, 1970 [1954]); and George Perle, *Serial Composition and Atonality* (Berkeley, 1977 [1962]).

these terms are also freely used in the analytical discussions. Even when the composer abandons conventional structural designs, as he frequently does, such models remain useful as a measure of his departure from the norm. Valuable insights into this formal aspect of Kinsella's work have been afforded by the writings of Charles Rosen and Hans Keller as well as by James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy whose theory of rotational form has proved most useful.[6]

In short, the object of the analyses offered here is to give the clearest possible account both of Kinsella's evolving compositional idiom and his approach to musical structure. And straightforward prose description supplemented by graphic reductions of the tonal organisation and harmonic content seemed to be the best means to this end.

The main body of the thesis, which deals extensively with each of Kinsella's ten symphonies in turn, is preceded by an Introduction which sketches the historical background to the development of the symphony in Ireland and gives a short account of the contribution made to the genre by the composer's immediate predecessors as well as his contemporaries. The Introduction concludes with a brief general survey of Kinsella's career which provides a more personal context for his symphonic output.

The first of the five chapters that follow discusses Symphonies No. 1 and No. 2. These works share a number of important characteristics: as mentioned above, they represent the composer's engagement with the traditional idea of the symphony, both of them being large-scale compositions in four movements. Furthermore, they also exemplify the earliest manifestation of the Kinsella's serial-based compositional technique. The second chapter examines Symphonies No. 3 and No. 4, in which Kinsella not only begins to explore alternative formal approaches, but also commences the refinement of his compositional idiom. These four early symphonies are subjected to a degree of detailed examination which is not always necessary in the discussions of the

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[6] Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms* (New York and London, 1988 [1980]); Hans Keller, various writings but in particular *Essays on Music*, Christopher Wintle ed. (Cambridge, 1994); James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (Oxford, 2006) and James Hepokoski, *Sibelius: Symphony No. 5* (Cambridge, 1993).

later works as much of what is covered here, particularly with regard to the compositional technique and the handling of tonality, remains pertinent throughout.

Symphony No. 5, which represents a new departure, is surveyed in Chapter III. Unlike the previous, purely instrumental works, this is a song-symphony and a somewhat unusual one in that it features an important part for the speaking voice as well for solo baritone. Kinsella's choice of text is discussed and his response to the problem of integrating it into a satisfactory symphonic form is assessed. The ensuing Symphonies No. 6, No. 7 and No. 8, which represent a further departure in that all three works are cast in one movement, are the subject of Chapter IV. Although Kinsella returned to a multi-movement approach in Symphonies No. 9 (for string orchestra) and No. 10, both works continue to show the composer's exploration of new approaches to formal integration. These two recent symphonies are analysed in the final chapter and the thesis concludes with a Conclusion which summarises Kinsella's achievement and looks ahead to his next compositional projects.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank John Kinsella who gave his blessing to this project from the outset and was kind enough to comment on the entire thesis in draft despite the tedious task it must be for any composer to read lengthy analyses of his own work. As I deliberately refrained from questioning him about the music during the course of writing, preferring instead to arrive at independent conclusions, I was pleased not only when he expressed approval of the analyses but also generously acknowledged the overall fairness of the assessments even on the one or two occasions when these turned out to be comparatively muted.

I would like to thank my supervisor at the University of Durham, Professor Jeremy Dibble, whose own pioneering work on British and Irish music has long been an inspiration to other researchers in the field.

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Séamas de Barra, Cork, October 2012

Introduction

T he importance of John Kinsella's ten symphonies lies not only in their intrinsic creative achievement but also in the significance of the series as a whole in the history of Irish art music. As a preliminary to the detailed discussion of each individual work, therefore, which comprises the main part of the thesis, the present introduction offers a brief sketch of the circumstances in which Irish composers have engaged with the symphony since the nineteenth century and a short account of what has been written to date in order to situate Kinsella's work in its historical context. This will be followed by a concise general survey of the composer's career.

The greater part of the Irish symphonic repertoire came into being only after the middle of the twentieth century when improved conditions in musical life in Ireland made it possible for composers to embark, at least occasionally, on more ambitious large-scale works. Before this time, the country's musical development was not sufficiently advanced to support much indigenous compositional activity, let alone encourage the production of works of any great complexity or technical sophistication. Although the beginnings of a vigorous national musical life had been evident in the closing years of the eighteenth century, they quickly petered out after 1800 with the passing of the Act of Union.[7] In effect, current political developments reduced nineteenth-century Dublin to the status of a provincial city within the United Kingdom and like many comparable provincial cities it was largely dependent for its music making on visiting professionals and on the efforts of local amateur organisations. With their smaller populations and more limited resources, other Irish cities generally trailed behind Dublin in the cultivation musical life. As was the case elsewhere in Britain and Europe, art music hardly penetrated as far as the larger country towns and it was virtually unknown in the surrounding countryside, which in any case had its own rich traditions of native folk music to draw on. The chequered history of Ireland in the nineteenth century, its particular social configurations and the poverty of much of the population all ensured

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[7] See Ita Hogan, *Anglo-Irish Music 1780-1830* (Cork, 1966), 191.

that this state of affairs long remained unchanged. Whatever the justification may have been for characterising England as *Das Land ohne Musik*, the phrase was certainly applicable with even greater force to contemporary Ireland. The few native composers of talent who emerged usually sought to establish themselves abroad where greater opportunities afforded at least the possibility of a successful career. The dearth of professional performing groups and the lack of educated audiences meant that those who remained at home and attempted to make a living as musicians in Ireland during this period would certainly not have found writing symphonies a very rewarding proposition either artistically or financially.[8]

The earliest symphonies that can be attributed to an Irish composer appear to be those by Paul Alday (1764-1835), a musician of uncertain nationality (French and Scottish as well as Irish origins have been claimed for him), who enjoyed a career of some thirty years in Dublin at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Alday is known to have published two symphonies in 1819, both of which were long believed to have disappeared without trace until the orchestral parts of one of them recently came to light in the National Library of Ireland.[9] This work has not yet been made available to scholars, however, and consequently still remains unknown. Also unknown, except for the fact of its existence, is a *Sinfonia* composed by the twenty-one-year-old Michael William Balfe (1808-1870) during a visit to Italy in 1829. This work – unique in Balfe's output – was written for the birthday of the Marchese Francesco Giovanni Sampieri, a friend of Rossini's with whom the composer was staying at the time, and it was probably performed privately in Bologna in 1829. It does not appear to have been heard since.[10] These two pieces constitute the meagre total of extant symphonies attributable to Irish composers until the final quarter of the nineteenth century. Only one other such work is

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[8] See Harry White, *The Keeper's Recital: Music and Cultural History in Ireland, 1770-1970* (Cork, 1998), 94 ff for a discussion of the general state of music in Dublin in the nineteenth century.

[9] See Hogan, *Anglo-Irish Music*, 191. See also *International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentations Centres, United Kingdom and Ireland Branch: Newsletter 63* (August 2012), 7, where the discovery of the Alday symphony is reported.

[10] See Basil Walsh, *Michael W. Balfe, A Unique Victorian Composer* (Dublin, 2008), 24, 250-1. The MS of Balfe's *Sinfonia* is in the *Academia di Filharmonica* in Bologna.

on record as having existed and that is a symphony composed by Sir Robert Prescott Stewart (1825-1894), Professor of Music in Trinity College Dublin. Written while he was still a young man, it never seems to have been performed, however, and according to Stewart's own testimony he subsequently destroyed the MS.[11]

At the present time, therefore, the Symphony No. 1 in B flat major (1875) by Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924) is the earliest generally accessible work of its kind by an Irish composer. This was the first in a series of seven symphonies that Stanford wrote over a thirty-five year period – the last in D minor being completed in 1911 – which represented the most substantial contribution to the genre by an Irishman until Kinsella surpassed it. Stanford enjoyed a successful career as one of the leading composers of Victorian Britain. But even under musical circumstances far more favourable than those that obtained in Ireland at the time, his reputation as a symphonist largely rested on just one work, the popular Symphony No. 3 in F minor, the 'Irish' (1887), which earned him an international reputation. By comparison, his other symphonies were indifferently received during his lifetime and fell into virtually complete neglect after his death until the rediscovery and re-evaluation of his music in recent years.[12]

Stanford's Symphony No. 3 undoubtedly made a deep impression on his contemporaries in Ireland, particularly in its demonstration of how Irish folk music might be used to good effect in large-scale symphonic works. The question of how to create a national style of composition was very much to the fore in Ireland at the turn of the twentieth century as musicians responded to the achievements of the Literary Renaissance on the one hand, and to the Gaelic League's successful promotion of Gaelic culture and revival of the Irish language on the other. The establishment in Dublin in 1897 of Feis Ceoil, a national music festival and one of the most important landmarks in

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[11] See Olinthus J. Vignoles, *Memoir of Sir Robert Prescott Stewart, Kt.* (London and Dublin, 1899), 30.
[12] See Thomas F. Dunhill 'Compositions: Choral and Instrumental Music' in Harry Plunket Greene, *Charles Villiers Stanford* (London, 1935), 222-223: 'the early Irish Symphony, No. 3, achieved wide fame. It was not, I think, the best of them, or even the most characteristic of Stanford, although it was Irish, and he was disappointed that some of the later examples were so seldom in demand.'

the development of Irish musical life during the period, was directly inspired by this national literary and cultural awakening. Michele Esposito (1855-1929), an Italian-born composer and pianist who had emerged as one of the most influential musicians in Dublin since his appointment as Professor of Piano at the Royal Irish Academy of Music in 1882, was a founding committee member of the Feis and it was at his instigation that a competition for composers was introduced into the syllabus. In 1901, a prize was offered for a symphony based on Irish folk tunes and Esposito himself submitted a Symphony on Irish Airs, which was announced as the winning entry in February of the following year.[13] The work was performed to acclaim at the Feis in May 1902 by the Dublin Orchestral Society (which Esposito had founded in 1899) under the composer's baton.[14] Two years later in 1904, Esposito's young protégé Hamilton Harty (1879-1941) submitted *An Irish Symphony* for a similar Feis Ceoil competition; it, too, scored a notable success and remains one of Harty's best-known works.[15]

Perhaps the greatest impediment to the development of orchestral music in Ireland in the nineteenth century was the absence, even in the capital city, of a professional symphony orchestra. Esposito's Dublin Orchestral Society, which was established on a quasi-professional basis, was a pioneering attempt to address this unsatisfactory situation, and there seems little doubt that the short-lived flowering of symphonic music in Dublin in the opening years of the twentieth century was made possible by its existence. The Society survived, albeit not without a struggle, for some fifteen years. After the outbreak of war in 1914, however, it became increasingly difficult

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[13] It was a performance in Dublin of Dvorak's 'New World' Symphony, however, rather than Stanford's work that had a decisive influence on the nature of this competition. See Hamilton Harty, *Early Memories*, David Greer ed. (Belfast, 1979), 29.

[14] Entitled Symphony on Irish Airs in the programme on the occasion of its premier, this work is now generally referred to simply as the Irish Symphony. To mark the centenary of the composer's birth which fell the previous year, the full score was published in 1956 by Oifig an tSoláthair [An Gúm] (Irish state publishing agency) under the dual-language title *Árdshonáid Ghaelach bunaithe ar Fhoinn Ghaelacha,* [Irish Symphony based on Irish Melodies]/*Sinfonia irlandese*, Op. 50. See Jeremy Dibble, *Michele Esposito* (Dublin, 2010), 89-90, 190.

[15] Harty revised the score twice, in 1916 and in 1924, before it was eventually published by Boosey & Co. in 1927. See Raymond Warren, 'Orchestral Music', in David Greer ed., *Hamilton Harty, His Life and Music* (Belfast, 1978), 93.

to keep it going and Esposito conducted what turned out to be its last concert in February 1915. Although he attempted to ensure that Dublin would not be left entirely without orchestral music by setting up a small string ensemble to replace it, orchestral concert life both in the capitol and elsewhere in the country was essentially dependent on the activities of amateur groups for the next twenty-five years or so. With the tense political atmosphere and generally unsettled state of the country during the period of the 1916 Rebellion, the War of Independence and the subsequent Civil War, circumstances in Ireland were not propitious for the establishment of professional orchestras.

After the conclusion of the War of Independence and the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, *Saorstát Éireann*, the Irish Free State, officially came into existence in December 1922. One month earlier the BBC had commenced broadcasting in Britain and the Postmaster General of the new State immediately decided to establish a similar national radio service in Ireland. Four years later in 1926, 2RN, as the fledgling station was known (from its call sign), made its first broadcast.[16] In 1937, with the ratification of *Bunreacht na hÉireann*, The Constitution of Ireland, 2RN duly became Radio Éireann.

The broadcasting ensemble at 2RN initially consisted of a quartet and this was not significantly expanded until 1934 when it became a small orchestra with a personnel of twenty-four. Although it was further expanded to twenty-eight in 1937 and to forty in 1942, it was not until 1948 that it acquired a full complement of forty-eight players.[17] This radio orchestra was the sole professional symphony orchestra operating in the twenty-six counties of the Free State. Until 1934, therefore, any symphony concerts the Irish radio station wished to promote required the assembling of an *ad hoc* orchestra for the purpose; for the remainder of the decade and throughout the greater part of the 1940s it entailed the substantial augmentation of its resident forces. From the mid 1930s to the early 1940s, much of the orchestral music broadcast on Irish radio were relays from Cork of concerts given by Aloys Fleischmann's amateur Cork Symphony Orchestra, which was

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[16] See Richard Pine, *2RN and the Origins of Irish Radio* (Dublin, 2002).
[17] See Pat O' Kelly, *The National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland 1948-1998: A Selected History* (Dublin, 1998) and Richard Pine, *Music and Broadcasting in Ireland* (Dublin, 2005).

the only continuously functioning ensemble of its kind in the country for much of this period.

Given these circumstances, it is understandable that composers had little inclination to write large-scale orchestral works that had virtually no prospect of being performed. In fact it was not until 1924 – the year of Stanford's death and thirteen years after the completion of his Symphony No. 7 – that another symphony by an Irish composer made its appearance. This was Symphony No. 1, 'In Glencree', by Ina Boyle (1889-1967), who had studied with Charles Wood, Percy Buck and C. H. Kitson and had been a private pupil of Vaughan Williams since 1922. Vaughan Williams advised Boyle to submit the score to the Royal College of Music's Patron's Fund for performance, and although it was accepted in 1925 it was at the composer's request that Adrian Boult and the London Symphony Orchestra rehearsed and performed the slow movement only. Boyle immediately subjected the work to a thorough overhaul and she showed a revised score to Vaughan Williams three years later but it was not until 1944 that she had an opportunity to hear any of the music again when an extract was featured in a Radio Éireann broadcast. The following year, 1945, the symphony received its only complete performance to date when it was heard in another broadcast concert given by the RÉ Symphony Orchestra. Although Boyle produced two further symphonies (in 1930 and 1952 respectively) neither of them has ever been performed.[18]

From 1943 onwards the Music Department of Radio Éireann had a small budget to finance the commissioning of new music. In an article published in 1952, the composer Frederick May (1911-1985) explained that £500 a year had been originally made available for the purpose and that this had recently been increased to £700.[19] In practice, however, composers seem to have been afforded few opportunities to write substantial works for the station's symphony orchestra and were encouraged instead to produce arrangements

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[18] See Ita Beausang, *Ina Boyle* (forthcoming).

[19] Frederick May, 'The Composer in Ireland', in Aloys Fleischmann ed., *Music in Ireland: A Symposium* (Cork and Oxford, 1952), 168.

of folk music for the RÉ Light Orchestra of a kind that were popular with listening audiences.[20]

This situation persisted throughout the 1950s. Towards the end of the decade, an American acquaintance remarked to A. J. Potter (1918-1980), a younger contemporary of May's, that Irish composers seemed to compose few extended works. Potter acknowledged that 'there is cause for complaint with us Irish composers for not delivering the goods.' 'But,' he added, 'it's only fair to say that we are in a bit of a cleft stick in the matter of large-scale serious works.'

> Granted that they mean a very great deal if they <u>are</u> performed … but the trouble is that it is so hard to get them mounted. The last time I spoke to Fachtna [Ó h-Annracháin][21] on the subject, he just told me in so many words that it was almost impossible to put on more than the usual 8-10 minute job. As a matter of fact, I have myself broken up a complete symphony into separate overtures, elegies and what not simply because I knew that if I <u>did</u> keep it complete, I couldn't get it performed. A depressing thing to have to do, but half a loaf is better than no bread! […] Both [Brian] Boydell and myself won the Carolan Prize some years back with big-scale concertos – his for violin, mine for piano. They were each performed twice in quick succession and that, for the last five years, has been that.[22]

Aloys Fleischmann's *Music in Ireland: A Symposium* (1952) lists all the premiers of works by Irish composers that took place between 1935 and 1951 (170-175) and, apart from a *Sinfonietta* (1950) by Havelock Nelson (1917-1996), the only symphony that is mentioned is a Symphony for Strings (1945) by Brian Boydell (1917-2000) which was

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[20] The Radio Éireann Light Orchestra was established in 1948.

[21] Fachtna Ó h-Annracháin was Director of Music in Radio Éireann from 1947 until 1961 when Tibor Paul, who had already been appointed Principal Conductor of the RÉ Symphony Orchestra, succeeded him and held both posts simultaneously. See Maurice Gorham, *Forty Years of Irish Broadcasting* (Dublin, 1967), 319.

[22] Quoted in Patrick Zuk, *A. J. Potter (1918-1980): The career and creative achievement of an Irish composer in social and cultural context* (unpublished dissertation, Durham, 2007), 48-49

performed by the amateur Dublin Orchestral Players in 1945.[23] After this, no new symphony was composed in Ireland for a further fifteen years until Seóirse Bodley (b.1933) completed his Symphony No. 1 in 1959. Its appearance was duly recognised as an event of major significance and Brian Boydell characterised the first performance of the work as 'a unique experience in Irish musical life, for there are very few symphonies by Irish composers, and none of such proportions, and seriousness of intent as this new work by Seóirse Bodley'.[24] Since then, Bodley has composed four further symphonies, producing two in 1980 and another two in 1991, as well as two chamber symphonies (1964 and 1982).

Although they were still comparatively infrequent, the number of new Irish symphonies gradually increased after 1960. At the most inclusive estimate – and admitting such dubiously eligible works as Arthur Sullivan's 'Irish' Symphony (1866), E. J. Moeran's Symphony in G minor (1937) and Elizabeth Maconchy's Symphony for Double String Orchestra (1953) – the total number of symphonies written by Irish composers in the 140 years between 1819 and 1959 only amounts to about twenty. By 1987, however, this figured had doubled.[25]

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[23] See Gareth Cox et al. eds., Appendix I, *The Life and Music of Brian Boydell* (Dublin, 2004), 99. Fleischmann's *Music in Ireland* does not list broadcast performances, which accounts for the fact that the complete performance of Boyle's Symphony No. 1 in 1945 is not mentioned. Although E. J. Moeran was of Irish extraction, lived in Ireland for much of each year and derived inspiration from the Irish countryside, his 1937 Symphony in G minor (which was performed in Dublin in 1958) properly belongs to the history of the symphony in England and is not considered here. Similarly with the Symphony for Double String Orchestra (1953) by Elizabeth Maconchy who also had family ties with Ireland. Richard Pine's *Music and Broadcasting in Ireland* contains a list of the orchestral works by Irish composers that were performed by the RÉ Symphony Orchestra between 1948 and 1958 (144-145), and the only symphony it mentions – in addition to the Nelson *Sinfonietta* mentioned above and the Moeran Symphony in G minor – is *An Irish Symphony* by Hamilton Harty, which was given once in 1958.

[24] Quoted in Gareth Cox, *Seóirse Bodley* (Dublin, 2010), 27.

[25] Although this brief account of symphonic composition in Ireland is confined to works that are explicitly entitled 'symphony', several composers have written works entitled *sinfonietta* which are not considered here. Apart from Havelock Nelson's *Sinfonietta* of 1950, which is mentioned above, Daniel McNulty wrote three such pieces in 1958, 1959 and 1963. Kinsella produced a *Sinfonietta* in 1983, a year before he completed his Symphony No. 1, and Bodley composed one in 2000.

In 1960, the year Bodley's Symphony No. 1 was first performed, James Wilson (1922-2005) also completed a symphony. Unlike Bodley, however, Wilson – an Englishman who had settled in Ireland in 1949 after serving in the Royal Navy during World War II – found it difficult to establish himself as a composer and it was not until 1967 that the work was eventually accepted for performance by the RTÉ Symphony Orchestra. This was the first time Wilson had heard a professional performance of any of his orchestral music and the experience prompted him to overhaul the score and produce a revised version, which was performed in 1971.[26] Wilson's close contemporary Gerard Victory (1921-1995), one of the most prolific of twentieth-century Irish composers, was more fortunate in having his *Short Symphony* of 1961 immediately programmed by RTÉ for the following year's concert season. Although both men subsequently devoted much of their creative energies to the writing of operas (an even more problematic genre from the point of view of securing performances), they returned periodically to the symphony over the course of their careers, Wilson producing two further examples at well-spaced intervals (1975 and 2000), and Victory three over a somewhat shorter time span (1977, 1984 and 1988).

Perhaps the most important Irish symphony of the 1960s, however, is A. J. Potter's *Sinfonia de Profundis* (1968). Generally regarded as landmark in the history of the genre in Ireland, the work was composed in response to a commission from Radio Telefís Éireann. In 1967, Gerard Victory, who had recently been appointed the station's Director of Music, enquired whether Potter would be interested in writing a substantial orchestral work of up to forty minutes' duration for the RTÉ Symphony Orchestra's 1968-69 season. Potter accepted with alacrity, telling Victory that he had 'for the past couple of years been mulling over a long symphonic-type work in my head, wondering when there would ever be a chance to write — and perform — it'.[27] As far as Potter was concerned, his reluctance to compose orchestral works on an ambitious scale over the previous decade was because the previous Director of Music at RTÉ, Tibor Paul, had been

[26] See Mark Fitzgerald, *James Wilson* (forthcoming).

[27] Quoted in Zuk, *A. J. Potter*, 252.

unwilling to commission or perform them. He confided to Charles Acton, the music critic of the *Irish Times*, that he had the idea of writing the *Sinfonia de Profundis* for 'quite a few years', but 'there didn't seem much point in committing it to paper under the ancient regime.'[28]

Potter had every reason to be gratified by the reception of the *Sinfonia de Profundis* at its premiere. Albert Rosen, the newly appointed Principal Conductor of the RTÉ Symphony Orchestra, was deeply committed to the score and secured a performance of such conviction that the symphony made a deep impression on the audience. Not only were the critics unanimous in their praise of the work but it also elicited warm letters of congratulation from Potter's fellow composers. Later in the same year, 1968, it was announced that Potter had been nominated for a national arts award in recognition of the *Sinfonia de Profundis* 'as an original work which [had] made a significant contribution to serious modern music in Ireland'. This was considered a notable honour and in the context of Irish musical life at this period it was a very unusual occurrence for a 'serious' composer to receive such recognition, especially in respect of a new symphony.

The success of the *Sinfonia de Profundis* clearly demonstrated that a modern Irish symphony was capable of attracting widespread and enthusiastic interest. Unfortunately its successor, Symphony No. 2, subtitled *Ireland*, is a poor work that does little to enhance Potter's reputation. Although it was commissioned by the Irish-American Cultural Institute in 1975 and the score completed the following year, by the time of Potter's death in 1980 it had still not received a performance. The symphony was eventually premiered in 1981 in Springfield, Massachusetts and it received a second performance in Dublin in 1983, but it does not seem to have been revived since.

A number of new names begin appear amongst the composers of symphonies in Ireland in the 1970's, several of whom have shown continued interest in the genre. Proinnsías Ó Duinn (b. 1941), who is better known as a conductor than as a composer, made a single contribution to the repertoire in 1970. As mentioned above, James Wilson

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[28] Quoted in Zuk, *A. J. Potter*, 253.

wrote his Symphony No. 2 in 1975 and the following year saw not only the composition of Potter's Symphony No. 2 but also a Chamber Symphony by Frank Corcoran (b. 1948). In 1977, Aloys Fleischmann (1910-1992) completed his only symphony, *Sinfonia Votiva*, and Eric Sweeney (b.1948) composed his Symphony No. 1.[29] Sweeny went on to write a second symphony in 1987 and Frank Corcoran followed up his Chamber Symphony with Symphony No. 1 in 1980. Although Corcoran produced a second symphony the following year, more than a decade was to elapse before he again turned his attention to the genre and added two further symphonies (1994 and 1996) to his catalogue of works.

There is undoubtedly a direct correlation between number of symphonies written in Ireland since the 1960s and the gradually improving conditions under which composers now worked. Tax exemption for creative artists was introduced in Ireland in 1969. Aosdána, the state academy of creative artists, was founded in 1981 and composers could avail of a *cnuas* [stipend] to supplement their incomes. The following year, The Irish Composers Centre was set up by *An Chomhairle Ealaíon*/The Arts Council of Ireland, and in 1986 the Contemporary Music Centre was established to support Irish composers and to promote their work. The Arts Council also introduced a scheme to assist bodies wishing to commission new pieces, as well as a variety of awards and bursaries for composers. The principal promoter of orchestral music, however, continued to be Radio Telefís Éireann (as the national broadcaster became in 1966). Although the station had no established policy with regard to the commissioning of music, Gerard Victory was very supportive of his fellow composers during his period as Director of Music and most new works that were submitted to the station were programmed. When John Kinsella succeeded Victory as RTÉ's Head of Music in 1983, he replaced this informal arrangement with an official commissioning scheme.

Jerome de Bromhead (b. 1945) entered the lists of Irish symphonists in 1985 and in 1988 John Buckley (b. 1951) composed a Symphony, which he described as 'No. 1' although it has had no successor to date. Two years later in 1990, Walter Beckett (1914-

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[29] See Séamas de Barra, *Aloys Fleischmann* (Dublin, 2006), 115-116 and 142-143, for a discussion of the *Sinfonia Votiva.*

1996) completed his long considered *Dublin Symphony* in a late burst of creative activity after his retirement from the Royal Irish Academy of Music. But apart from the new symphonies by composers already discussed, and with the exception of a second symphony by Jerome de Bromhead (1994) and Kevin O'Connell's (b. 1958) recent work (2010), the dominant contemporary Irish symphonist undoubtedly remains John Kinsella whose symphonic output alone is close to the total number of symphonies composed by all of his contemporaries over the past twenty-eight years.[30]

Born in Dublin on 8 April 1932, Kinsella developed a keen interest in music as a boy. He took violin lessons with a local musician and subsequently enrolled as a pupil at the Dublin College of Music where he also studied viola as well as harmony and counterpoint. After initial attempts to teach himself composition, he had private lessons for a brief period with the composer Éamonn Ó Gallchobhair (1906-1982),[31] the only formal tuition he received. Finding Ó Gallchobhair's opinions on music somewhat inhibiting, however, and learning little from the lessons, he became ambivalent about the value of academic training in composition and determined thenceforward to try to find his own path. In view of his subsequent development it is interesting to note that his most ambitious work of these early years was a symphony, which he entered for the 1952 RTÉ-sponsored Carolan Prize. The work was not placed in the competition and, discouraged and working in isolation, he became uncertain about the direction he should take and composed nothing more for almost a decade. His interest in music at this time was sustained principally by the intensive study of scores, assiduous concert going and amateur music making, of which he continues to be an enthusiastic devotee.

Towards the end of the 1950s, he was encouraged to resume composition when he and a group of friends, including Proinnsías Ó Duinn and Colin Stavely (later leader of the RTÉ Symphony Orchestra), set up a chamber ensemble which regularly performed

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[30] Apart from Kinsella's ten, the number of symphonies produced by other Irish composers since 1984 totals thirteen. A complete list of symphonies by Irish composers written between 1819 and 2010 can be found below in the Appendix (362).

[31] Éamonn Ó Gallchobhair was a Dublin based composer who composed ballets and operas on Irish themes, often setting texts in the Irish language, but is perhaps best remembered today for his many choral arrangements of Irish folk tunes.

works by its members. In this second phase of his creative activity, Kinsella developed an interest in serialism and began to explore many of the techniques evolved by the contemporary European avant-garde. He received much support from both Gerard Victory and the RTÉ staff conductor Hans Waldemar Rosen, and as his works were increasingly accepted for performance by RTÉ ensembles he gradually began to establish himself. String Quartet No. 1 (1960), Chamber Concerto (1964), *Montage* (1965) for soprano and mixed chamber group, Two Pieces for String Orchestra, commissioned by the newly formed Irish Chamber Orchestra for its inaugural concert in March 1965, String Quartet No. 2 (1968) and *Montage II* (1970) for orchestra are amongst the most significant works of a creative period that culminated in *A Selected Life* (1973), a substantial composition for very large forces, based on verses by his brother, the poet Thomas Kinsella, which were written in memory of the recently deceased composer Seán Ó Riada.

In the meantime (1968), he accepted an appointment as a Senior Assistant in the music department of RTÉ. This new position gave him the opportunity to become widely acquainted with the latest developments in contemporary music, particularly through the International Rostrum of Composers organised under the auspices of UNESCO. Much of the music he heard at these events eventually struck him as dispiritingly similar in content, however, and he was increasingly persuaded that for many of his contemporaries conformity with current trends had become more important than a desire to create out of inner conviction. As he found himself growing increasingly disillusioned with the avant-garde, his attitude to his own work began to change: he came to question the artistic validity of much of what he had written and, for the second time in his career, he found himself uncertain of how to proceed. In 1977, his first wife died of cancer and his bereavement coincided with the climax of this stylistic crisis. After completing his String Quartet No. 3 (1977) he stopped composing for eighteen months.

When he took up his pen again it was with a resolve to find his own distinctive creative voice regardless of current fashions. Given the climate of opinion surrounding contemporary music at the end of the 1970s, this was a courageous decision and it marks

an important threshold in his career. The first work he composed in this new spirit of independence was *The Wayfarer: Rhapsody on a Poem of P. H. Pearse*, a short piece commissioned by the Ulster Orchestra in 1979 to mark the centenary of Patrick Pearse's birth. It was followed in 1980 by *Essay for Orchestra*, which subsequently became the first movement of Symphony No. 1 (completed in 1984).

The idiom Kinsella evolved in the works of this period seeks to reclaim from the twelve-tone series the structuring force of tonal attraction. As will be discussed in detail in the following pages, he devised ways of organising and manipulating the row so that fundamental pitches released from it can function as substitutes for traditional tonal centres. The music is generated out of the conflict between the abstract nature of the series, on the one hand, and its tendency to crystallise into moments of transient stability on the other, an approach that not only results in the unmistakably individual sound world of Kinsella's mature music but, crucially given his interest in the symphony, one that also allows the effective projection of large-scale structures. This technique, which he refined and developed over the next two decades, informs all of his later music.

Kinsella received the Marten Toonder Award in 1979 and became a founder member of Aosdána when it was established in 1981. He succeeded Gerard Victory as Head of Music in RTÉ in 1983 but remained in the post barely five years, retiring in 1988 – the year he completed Symphony No. 2 – in order to devote himself fully to composition. As part of an arrangement made with RTÉ on his retirement, the station undertook to commission a series of large-scale orchestral works the first of which, Symphony No. 3, *Joie de Vivre*, appeared in 1990. Three more symphonies – No. 4 in 1991, No. 5 in 1992 and No. 6 in 1993, the final work composed under the terms of the arrangement – followed in close succession. Since then Kinsella has completed a further four symphonies (1997, 1999, 2004 and 2010) as well as several other major works including String Quartet No. 4 (1993), *Festive Overture* (1995), Sonata for Two Violins (1996), a Cello Concerto (2000) and in 2008 a substantial twenty-minute orchestral work entitled *Cuchulainn and Ferdia: Duel at the Ford* based on an episode from the mythological epic *Táin Bó Cualinge* [Cattle Raid of Cooley].

Although he has composed both choral and vocal works, Kinsella's primary interest has always been in abstract instrumental music and his most characteristic work is to be found in the string quartet, the concerto and the symphony. Distinguished though his contribution is to other genres, however, it is undoubtedly as a symphonist that he is best known and his achievement in this field not only represents an outstanding contribution to modern Irish music but it is also an important landmark in the history of the arts in Ireland.

Chapter 1

Engaging with Tradition: Symphony No. 1 and Symphony No. 2

1.1   Symphony No. 1 (1980-1984)

1.1.1   Kinsella's adaptation of twelve-tone technique

Kinsella's first two symphonies are both large-scale four-movement works, and their ambitious emotional range and technical scope place them firmly in the mainstream of the post-romantic symphonic tradition. Each of them has a fully worked first movement, which takes the structural scheme of classic-romantic sonata form as a point of departure. This is followed by a scherzo and trio, a lyrical slow movement, and a substantial finale, which in Symphony No. 1 is also cast in sonata form and in Symphony No. 2 is in rondo form. Kinsella's adherence to established models extends even to such an archaic feature as the reprise of the opening section, or sonata exposition, in the first movement of both works.[32] It is perhaps surprising that a symphonist working at this late stage in the history of the genre, the 1980s, should adopt an overall approach that in some respects is so conventional. But his allegiance to these traditional procedures at the outset of his creative engagement with the symphony can be taken as a measure of his seriousness of purpose in assuming the role of symphonist and accepting its time-honoured responsibilities. His evident determination to rise to the intellectual and spiritual challenge that symphonic composition represents – a challenge that has become particularly acute in the present stylistically uncertain age – suggests that he is keenly aware of his participation in a venerable historical tradition and would therefore surely

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[32] Kinsella himself uses the terms 'exposition', 'development' and 'recapitulation' in discussing the formal organisation of these works (see, for example, the composer's note in the programme booklet for the first performance of Symphony No. 1, 27 September 1985). While these terms apply only in a fairly loose sense to the discussion of non-tonal music, they are useful, nonetheless, in the case of music like Kinsella's where definite parallels with classic-romantic procedures exist. For this reason, therefore, and in deference to Kinsella's own usage, they are employed here without the quotation marks that would properly indicate their status as terms pressed into broader service than that encompassed by their original meanings.

endorse Roberts Layton's view that the 'evolution of the symphony must remain one of the greatest achievements of the Western musical mind'.[33]

Whatever its indebtedness to established formal precedents, however, the sound world of Symphony No. 1 is arrestingly original. The compositional idiom reveals, on the one hand, Kinsella's ongoing engagement with serial procedures and, on the other, his determination to adapt them to reflect a personal vision. Ostensibly derived from the generating principles of the note-row, the musical language evinces a remarkably independent approach to the invention of tone material which is far removed from that normally associated either with Schoenberg and his disciples of the Second Viennese School, or with the music of later composers who espoused his method. The result is a distinctive and flexible compositional technique through which Kinsella's unmistakably individual creative voice emerges. But apart from the question of its expressive value, the crucial importance of this technique from the point of view of symphonic composition lies in the fact that it allows the effective projection of large-scale structures. Symphony No. 1 is of particular significance in Kinsella's output, therefore, partly because the emergence and consolidation of his handling of serial procedures in relation to symphonic form can be traced clearly in it. As the increasingly subtle technique that informs the later symphonies is derived from this approach, the work also provides the best possible background for an evaluation of the composer's subsequent stylistic development.

Despite its controversial status, the prestige and influence of Schoenberg's 'method of composing with twelve tones' increased steadily between the 1920s and the outbreak of World War II in 1939. It was only from 1946, however, with the beginning of the holiday courses at Darmstadt and the acknowledgement of Webern as true father of post-war developments, that the institutionalization in Western music of the avant-garde – and of serialism in particular – began in earnest. By 1950, many composers had come to accept the twelve-tone system in principle. Given that the promotion of the radical

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[33] Robert Layton, 'Introduction' in Robert Layton ed., *A Companion to the Symphony* (London, 1993), 1.

avant-garde was often couched in deliberately intimidating terms during this period and that an intolerant and contemptuous dismissal of other schools of thought had become a regular feature of contemporary musical life, the espousal of dodecaphony in some quarters may well have been bound up with its perception as a necessary guarantee of artistic credibility. It is also true, however, that many composers who may otherwise have had little sympathy with the sound-world of the Second Viennese School, nonetheless came to recognize in the techniques of serialism a potentially fruitful approach to composition. In England, this realisation appears to have seriously gained ground only after 1958 when William Glock was appointed to the BBC and commenced his strenuous advocacy of Boulez and the continental avant-garde. In Ireland, where composers worked under very different and more restricted circumstances, the impact of serialism was felt more slowly. A few isolated works employing simplified versions of serialism date from the late 1950s, but it was only from about 1970 onwards that Irish composition began to reflect the influence of the European avant-garde with any consistency.[34] By the 1980s, however, late-modernism of the kind represented by Darmstadt had peaked and the once unassailable prestige of serialism had evaporated almost completely.[35] It is interesting, therefore, to see Kinsella in 1980 pursuing an independent path largely indifferent to the constantly shifting spectrum of stylistic fashions, and forging from serial principles a personal technique suitable for the realisation of his symphonic ambitions.

'Genuine atonal music', as Gerald Abraham has pointed out, is 'inevitably amorphous, backboneless.'[36] The purpose of serialism was to address this problem and by creating a systematic atonality to provide a firm basis for the achievement of an

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[34] Seán Ó Riada's *Nomos No. 1: Hercules Dux Ferrariae* (1957), if not actually the first, is certainly one of the earliest compositions by an Irish composer to feature the manipulation of a twelve-tone row as part (but only part) of its technical apparatus.

[35] See, for example, David Matthews: 'Today [1989], modernism may be seen in perspective as a historical movement whose apex has passed, and whose most notable achievements … can be objectively judged as attempts to pursue particular areas of experience to their limits.' ('The Rehabilitation of the Vernacular', in Christopher Norris ed., *Music and the Politics of Culture* (London, 1989), 250.)

[36] Gerald Abraham, *A Hundred Years of Music* (London, 1982 [1964]), 286.

organized atonal style. Many composers welcomed as beneficial the strict discipline imposed by the system. The Finnish composer Aulis Sallinen (b. 1935), for example, who espoused serialism in the 1950s, acknowledged that 'dodecaphony was an antidote to a flabby way of writing', because it obliged the composer 'to build up a structure that was thought out to the smallest detail.'[37] In other words, the system could prove 'a stimulant for atrophied thought processes that need not take toll of individuality', as Peter Evans has remarked.[38] For many of these figures, Sallinen included, their engagement with dodecaphony proved temporary. Others, however, continued to have recourse to serialism, at least as a general principal, although often radically adapting it to meet personal expressive requirements: 'Schoenberg's thought' – again in the words of Peter Evans – 'fertilized that of many who were unwilling or incapable of following him all the way…'[39]

These various adaptations involved either the integration of serial or quasi-serial procedures into a predominantly tonal idiom (as, for example, in a number of works by Benjamin Britten)[40] or, more often than not, the re-introduction of tonal elements into a serial style. Interestingly, the strict application of serial technique was subject to such modifications almost from the outset, particularly in this matter of reintroducing tonal or quasi-tonal entities into the musical texture. While he acknowledges that the 'reconstitution of tonal effects by means of serialism has seemed to many an unrewarding and ignoble task', Charles Rosen rightly states that 'it was taken with the deepest seriousness by Schoenberg and Berg'.[41] Referring to Schoenberg's *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte,* Op. 41, for example, Josef Rufer points out that 'there the series first

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[37] Aulis Sallinen, quoted in Jeremy Parsons, 'Aulis Sallinen', *The Musical Times*, 121, 1653, (November 1980), 693.

[38] Peter Evans, 'Compromises with Serialism', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* (1961-62), 3, 4.

[39] Ibid., 4.

[40] Works like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Turn of the Screw* and *Cantata Academica,* for example.

[41] Charles Rosen, *Schoenberg* (London, 1976), 95.

appears in a chord-group made up of tonal triads,'[42] and Rosen cites well-known instances in the Lyric Suite and Violin Concerto of Alban Berg.[43]

This early re-admittance of tonal features into serial music has attracted much comment. Technically, it is not difficult to understand how it came about. 'A simple deliberation tells us that the twelve notes of the chromatic scale can readily be grouped in such a way that the row is formed by a succession of triads or similar chord combinations', as Rudolph Reti has noted.[44] And one likely reason for this development, in the words of Roger Scruton, is that the 'constraints that emerge from the attempt to be systematically atonal are almost as great as those contained in the language of tonality itself.' Considerable skill is in fact required to thwart successfully the expectations of the tonal ear: the attainment of thoroughgoing atonality, Scruton observes, means that chords 'have to contain minor seconds, tritones, or sevenths, while avoiding triads; repetition of the motif must not lead to repetition of a tonally significant note or harmony; the bass-line must be kept in constant motion'.[45] Indeed, in Reti's view,

> the desire to break through the restrictive boundaries imposed by the technique –
> for restrictive they were in spite of all assertions to the contrary – became so
> irresistibly strong among those who practiced the technique, that the boundaries
> were often ignored, even if by so doing the original purpose of twelve-tone
> composition had to be abandoned.[46]

But technical considerations apart, composers had other reasons, too, for extending the application of serialism. If Schoenberg and Berg introduced into their work deliberate points of contact with a tonal idiom in order to establish the relevance of the

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[42] Josef Rufer, *Composition with Twelve Tones*, trans. Humphry Searle (London, 1970 [1954]), 91.

[43] Rosen, *Schoenberg*, 95: 'By his choice of series, and an artful use of transpositions, Berg succeeded in playing the opening of the Prelude to *Tristan und Isolde* in the middle of his Lyric Suite for string quartet, as well as a Bach chorale in the Violin Concerto. Of course, serial technique is a tiresomely ingenious and time-consuming way of composing Bach and Wagner….'

[44] Rudolph Reti, *Tonality in Modern Music* (New York, 1962), 68.

[45] Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music* (Oxford, 1997), 283.

[46] Reti, *Tonality in Modern Music*, 70.

new technique to the great German tradition,[47] many simply felt hindered by the narrow range of expressive possibilities it afforded. It is a truism that every new development in the language of music, every extension of the resources of the art, entails a corresponding loss: with the creation of a new vocabulary, old modes of expression become redundant. Mosco Carner was not alone in thinking that 'the twelve-note system is perhaps the most artificial and arbitrary system ever conceived by Western musicians',[48] and many believed that a wholehearted adoption of serialism entailed the jettisoning of much – perhaps too much – that was valuable.

Despite claims for the 'emancipation of the dissonance', therefore, there was a strong sense in many quarters that far from liberating the creative imagination, atonality in general and serialism in particular were unduly limiting. These styles may have enabled composers to explore aspects of the psyche hitherto inaccessible to musical expression but only, it seemed, at the cost of closing off access to other areas of human feeling.[49] Closely related to this was the fear of simply becoming unintelligible to the general musical public. For many composers, the expressive and communicative sacrifices entailed by the embrace of atonality and serialism were simply more than they were willing to cede. Arnold Bax formulated this view in forthright terms: 'I am pretty sure that atonalism as a means of expressing emotional states must be confined to those deriving from diseases of the soul and body,' he wrote. 'I should think', he added, 'the idiom might cope successfully with sexual inhibitions. But it is improbable that healthy and natural things […] can ever be associated with so turgid a medium.'[50] In this context,

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[47] See Charles Rosen, *Schoenberg* (London, 1976), 95.

[48] Mosco Carner, *A Study of Twentieth-Century Harmony* (London, 1942), 65.

[49] Edmund Rubbra, for example, was strongly critical of serialism for 'contracting music's emotional scope' (quoted in Leo Black, *Edmund Rubbra: Symphonist* (Woodbridge, 2008), 11).

[50] Arnold Bax, *Farewell My Youth* (London, 1943), 63. The view expressed by Bax continues to resonate. In 2005, for example, Richard Taruskin asked *à propos* of Schoenberg: 'Why was it desirable to denature tonality? Why was emancipation of the dissonance a necessary step? Unrelieved dissonance suited certain dreadful or turbulent moods, all right, of a kind then favoured by many artists, especially German ones. But other moods – joy, serenity, contentment, anything "positive" – were seemingly put off limits. Were they no longer suitable for artistic representation?' (*The Oxford History of Western Music, Volume 4: The Early Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 2005), 337.)

it is interesting to note that, notwithstanding his belief that serial technique could be freed from its association with neurotic states of mind and pressed into the service of comedy, Schoenberg's example in his opera *Von Heute auf Morgen* does not appear to have been followed.[51]

Although there undoubtedly existed what might be described as a strongly puritanical opposition to any stylistic compromise with thoroughgoing atonality and serialism, in practice the work of many composers tended to reflect the more open-minded view expressed by Ernst Křenek: 'If a composer revives in a twelve-tone work certain aspects of tonality, he does not prove that the twelve-tone technique is declining, but only that it is a more inclusive principle than those who invented it mainly for the ordering of atonal processes may have assumed.'[52]

How these considerations have a bearing on Kinsella's work becomes immediately apparent when one looks at the note-row or set on which Symphony No. 1 is based [Ex. 1]. Kinsella has organised the twelve pitches of the series so that the initial four notes comprise a major seventh chord of B major (B, D sharp, F sharp and A sharp). The final four notes yield a similar chordal structure at the distance of a tritone (F, A, C and E), although their horizontal arrangement creates a different pattern of melodic intervals. The remaining pitches (G sharp, D, G (natural) and C sharp) provide an important contrast with a strong internal emphasis on the interval of the tritone. That the row is thus envisaged as constituting three four-note segments is confirmed

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[51] Mosco Carner states that in composing *Von Heute auf Morgen* Schoenberg wanted to 'prove that serial technique and a light-hearted vein of expression were not incompatible', but, interestingly, he refrains for saying whether or not he believes Schoenberg succeeded in demonstrating this. Mosco Carner, 'Music in the Mainland of Europe: 1918-1939' in Martin Cooper ed., *The New Oxford History of Music X: The Modern Age, 1890-1960* (London, 1974), 352. In *The Aesthetics of Music*, 305, Roger Scruton expresses a view that is consonant with Bax's opinion quoted above and adds that it 'is certainly hard to imagine atonal music being used to comic effect, comedy requires a background of joy, or at any rate gaiety, emotions with have no home in atonal music' (306).
[52] Ernst Křenek, 'Is Twelve-Tone Technique on the Decline?' *The Musical Quarterly*, 39, 4 (1953), 522. In the 1920s, Theodor Adorno debated the question of musical material with Křenek who took the line that the composer should be free to select what he needed from all available possibilities. Adorno disagreed. See Max Paddison, 'Authenticity and Failure in Adorno's Aesthetics' in Tom Huhn ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Adorno* (Cambridge, 2004), 198-221.

throughout the symphony by the manner in which Kinsella handles his material: the motivic-thematic content, as well as the vertical sonorities of the work are largely derived from these component sub-units.

Ex. 1: Row in its original [O¹] or prime form
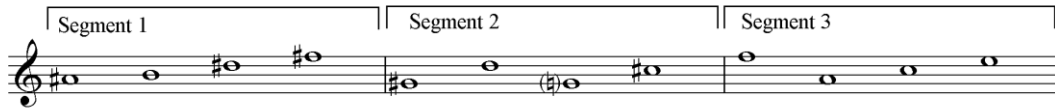
Although Schoenberg's remark, as quoted by Josef Rufer, that 'this method [of composing with twelve tones] may be followed strictly, though handled freely', has been interpreted as implicitly sanctioning an expansion of the possibilities inherent in serial procedures along the lines suggested by Kinsella's tone-row, other commentators have demurred.[53] Peter Evans, for example, acknowledges that compromise (his term) with genuine serial procedures is 'often so contrived, usually through the shaping of the row, that strong tonal attractions emerge.' 'We could multiply examples indefinitely here', he continues, 'for almost every composer who has been drawn to serialism after reaching maturity has initially fought shy of its egalitarian clause.' But while he recognizes this tendency in the music of both Schoenberg and Berg, he claims – with open disapproval – that their lead has been outstripped in those rows which juxtapose the most frank diatonic segments, or even pure triads: 'That a twelve-note row may consist of two major and two minor triads has been seized on by composers like [Rolf] Liebermann for a species of music that profits neither from true serialism's unpredictability of harmonic incident, nor from the large-scale chain of consequences of traditional progression.'[54]

The retention of sonorities characteristic of tonal music in compositional contexts that are no longer strictly tonal has been traced back at least to Impressionism. Rufer cites Debussy's harmonic style as one that 'often preserved the aesthetic effect of tonality, but in practice had already abandoned its constructional function. Here a major or minor

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[53] Rufer, *Composition with Twelve Tones*, 23.
[54] Evans, 'Compromises with Serialism', 12.

chord still represented the aural effect of tonality, but beneath the surface of the sound, so to speak, no constructional purpose remained.'[55] In a similar way, tonal reminiscences could also appear in twelve-tone music. But, again, Rufer points out that 'these, like all chord-structures in twelve-tone music, are of purely local importance and do not produce harmonic progressions which have the effect of creating form, as happens in tonal music, for the relationship to the key-note is missing.'[56] Donald Mitchell proposed the apt term 'triadic atonality' for this kind of compositional approach.[57]

Despite the reservations expressed by Evans, however, it is an approach that has proved fruitful for quite a number of composers. In this respect, the music of the Finnish composer Joonas Kokkonen (1921-1996), who produced four symphonies between 1960 and 1971, offers some fascinating parallels with Kinsella's work. From the time of its premier in 1960, Kokkonen's First Symphony was praised, in the words of Edward Jurkowski, 'as an example of how a symphony may be indebted to tradition and share Sibelius's ideals of organic unity and formal logic, but yet be constructed from dodecaphonic procedures.'[58] Jurkowski notes that 'an important feature of Kokkonen's dodecaphonic music is the inclusion of triads, obtained from contiguous or near contiguous pitch class elements from a row.'[59] This technique is absent from the more dissonant Second Symphony (1961), but reappears in the Third Symphony (1967) which has a greater number of tertian harmonies than either of the two earlier works, combined with a looser application of twelve-note principles in which the row is partitioned into two unequal subsidiary sets. This partitioning yields both triads and scale formations in a manner, which, as we shall see in due course, is very close to the procedure developed by Kinsella after Symphony No. 1.

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[55] Rufer, *Composition with Twelve Tones,* 16.

[56] Ibid., 126; see also 130.

[57] Donald Mitchell, *The Language of Modern Music* (London, 1976), 125.

[58] Edward Jurkowski, 'The Symphonies of Joonas Kokkonen' *Tempo* New Series, 208 (1999), 19.

[59] Ibid., 20.

In the Irish context, the older generation of composers active in the 1960s would probably have shared the reservations expressed by Aloys Fleischmann:

> I think serialism a purely cerebral and mechanical method of composition which fetters the imagination. […] Once the processes of thought which have evolved over the centuries are violently overthrown, an entirely new and much more complex system of sound combination cannot be grasped or its logic followed at first or even after many hearings by the average listener.[60]

Yet younger figures like Seóirse Bodley found themselves intrigued both by the technical intricacies as well as the expressive challenges of the system. While Bodley's Symphony No. 1 (1959) may still reflect the Hindemithian neo-classicism of his teacher Johann Nepomuk David, the influence of Webern is clearly pronounced in his Chamber Symphony No. 1 (1964). This largely twelve-tone composition reflects his visits to Darmstadt between 1962 and 1965, although, interestingly, dodecaphonic techniques are not employed as the basis of the entire work: it is only in the second movement that they are used exclusively while they are not used at all in the third.[61] The most widely acclaimed twentieth-century symphony by an Irish composer, A. J. Potter's *Sinfonia de Profundis* (1969), showed that serialism – albeit in a radically simplified form – was not incompatible with popular appeal. In this work, the basic note-row is used either melodically, in the obvious sense that the complete series constitutes a 'tune', or harmonically, where the three four-note segments into which the row is divided constitute much of the work's harmonic content. If one was to seek a precedent in Irish composition for Kinsella's handling of serial techniques in his Symphony No. 1 the closest would undoubtedly be the *Sinfonia de Profundis*, however different from Potter's broad eclecticism – which accommodates hymn tunes as easily as tone-rows – Kinsella's style may be. [62]

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[60] Quoted in de Barra, *Aloys Fleischmann*, 128.

[61] See Cox, *Seóirse Bodley*, 42.

[62] See Zuk, *A. J. Potter*, 252-280, for a discussion of the *Sinfonia de Profundis*.

This desire to sidestep the full implications of dodecaphony and admit clear – albeit nonfunctional – references to a tonal sound-world, raises an obvious question: why retain a theoretical connection, however attenuated, with serial procedures when so much trouble is taken to evade the expressive consequences of the technique? Why does a composer not simply adopt a stylistic free-for-all and allow himself complete liberty to choose from the boundless possibilities afforded by the unrestricted play of tones? For Kinsella, I suggest that one of the most important functions of the note-row is precisely to bring these boundless possibilities within manageable limits. It is a valuable ordering concept. Not only does it provide him with a place from which to start and afford him a point of entry into the characteristic world he seeks to create in each new work, it also ensures certain stylistic parameters and guarantees a measure of consistency. The structure of the note-row quoted in Ex. 1, for example, is clearly designed around the major seventh chord. This sonority is very characteristic of Kinsella's music. Not only does it seem to possess for him a particularly expressive charge in itself, but to judge by the frequency with which he has recourse to it, it also functions as a valuable, at times seemingly indispensable, springboard for invention. Thus embodied in the basic note-row, the major seventh chord becomes a fundamental shaping presence, an agent of coherence that informs every dimension of the symphony.

1.1.2   The influence of Sibelius

One remarkable feature of Kinsella's music is that serial procedures co-exist comfortably with the subtle and pervasive influence of Sibelius, and in this unlikely double indebtedness there is a further striking parallel to the work of Joonas Kokkonen. Echoes of the great Finnish master's style in Kinsella's work have often been remarked upon.[63]

[63] These echoes are obvious even to newspaper critics, for whom spotting superficial resemblances to other composers' music in any new work is of course stock in trade: 'The influences of Sibelius and Bruckner ... were decidedly obvious', *Evening Press*, 30 October 1985 (of Symphony No. 1); 'The symphony as a whole carries some strong echoes – Sibelius, Bruckner and minimalism among them …', *Irish Times*, 11 November 1991 (of Symphony No. 3); 'Sibelius and Nielsen spring

But while it is undoubtedly true that there are occasional recollections of Sibelian mannerisms – certain turns of phrase, particularly a tendency to announce basic material in fragmentary form as distinct *gruppetti* as well, perhaps, as a vaguely reminiscent approach in writing for woodwind instruments and in organising string textures – these influences are literally superficial in the sense that they amount to little more than intermittent and incidental features of the surface of the music. Occasionally, Kinsella may consciously adopt a specific idea or device from a particular work, but this tends to be more in the nature of *hommage* rather than imitation and the idiom of his music bears little resemblance to that of Sibelius. That this is so will already be evident from what has been noted so far about the compositional procedures used in Symphony No. 1.

Having said this, however, it must be admitted that Kinsella readily acknowledges Sibelius as a potent inspiration on his work.[64] That he is deeply sympathetic to the atmosphere of the Finnish composer's music is evident. Sibelius's music successfully combines profound seriousness with radiant optimism, and there is a bracing forthrightness, a 'plain-speaking' attitude of diatonic directness about it, especially from the third symphony onwards, that Kinsella clearly finds attractive. Sibelius himself was fully conscious of this aspect of his music and acutely aware of how it set his work apart from that of his contemporaries: '"Here abroad you are manufacturing cocktails of all colours", he is once said to have told Breitkopf & Härtel on one of his visits to Germany, "and now I come with pure cold water."'[65] Furthermore, his music also attains a marvelous feeling of forward momentum, and Kinsella frequently appears to be concerned to create a similar sense of energetic propulsion.

particularly to mind', *Irish Times*, 23 November 1992 (of Symphony No. 4); 'Sibelius, Nielsen, strangely Bruckner, and a tiny fragment of *sean nós* [traditional Irish singing] seem to be the inspiring muses', *Evening Press*, 26 November 1992 (of Symphony No. 4); 'Kinsella's idiom carries echoes of earlier composers. Sibelius and Bartók came to mind …', *Irish Times*, 10 January 1998 (of Symphony No. 3); etc., etc.

[64] Kinsella is by no means alone amongst contemporary symphonists in acknowledging this influence. See, for example, David Matthews, 'Living Traditions', *The Musical Times*, 134, 1802 (April 1993), 191: 'But because of what I want to say in my music, and the kinds of pieces I want to write, there is no choice for me but to work within the broad language of tonality, and so it is to a composer like Sibelius, who used such a language with such power, that I feel closest.'

[65] Harold E. Johnson, *Sibelius* (London, 1959), 183.

Bengt de Törne quotes Sibelius as remarking: 'It is curious, you know: the more I see of life the more I feel convinced that classicism is the way of the future.'[66] In the view of the present writer, it is in this general sense of a buoyantly objective classicism – largely a matter of mood and pacing, however it may be achieved – rather than in literal imitation that the impact of Sibelius's work can generally be felt.

It is in his technical realisation of this classicism – his articulation of harmonic space and his handling of musical time – rather than in superficial reminiscences that the profundity and subtlety of Kinsella's response to the music of Sibelius really lies. The radically experimental nature of Sibelius's management of time is an aspect of his art that has come to be widely acknowledged and appreciated only comparatively recently as occluding preconceptions about his work – largely deriving from its essentially conservative late-romantic idiom – have gradually been cleared away.[67] Kinsella always seems to have been particularly alive to this innovative aspect of Sibelius's art. And while its influence becomes increasingly evident in the later symphonies, as early as Symphony No. 1 the technique of the note-row and its rotations[68] gives way almost immediately to a freer treatment that allows for rapid surface activity to be underpinned by slowly moving, at times seemingly static harmonies in a way that owes much to the Finnish master. As the ensuing discussion will show, Kinsella also developed an increasingly keen alertness to Sibelius's individual approach to musical form. But centrally important though this multi-faceted influence on his work may be, Kinsella's

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[66] Jean Sibelius quoted in Bengt de Törne, *Sibelius – A Close-Up* (London, 1937), 86. De Törne amplifies Sibelius's comment with an observation that was still very *à propos* in 1980 when Kinsella completed the first movement of his Symphony No. 1: 'It must be remembered that that this was at a time when atonal music and extravagant experimentation of every description dominated the concert-halls of Europe'.

[67] See Julian Anderson, 'Sibelius and contemporary music', in Daniel Grimley ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Sibelius* (Cambridge, 2004), 196 ff.

[68] 'Rotation' here means simply the regularly recurring succession of statements of the note-row; it does not entail the more specialised meaning of a 'procedure in which the elements of a given series systematically and progressively change their relative positions according to a plan which in itself is serially conceived in that the changes occur in regular places' (Ernst Křenek, 'Extents and Limits of Serial Techniques', *The Musical Quarterly*, 46, 2 (April, 1960), 211), and which is also often described as 'cyclic' or 'circular' permutation.

brilliantly imaginative insight that it could be passed through the prism of serialism allowed him to transmute it into something arrestingly new and deeply personal.

Kinsella's art is far removed both in technique and sensibility from the language of classical dodecaphony and the tortured emotions this is so often employed to express: there is no reflection in his mature work of the neurotic and pathological mental states that Bax, for example, associated with atonalism. In general, his creative outlook – while at times bordering on the austere – can fairly be characterized as optimistic and positive in feeling (as the sub-title of Symphony No. 3, *Joie de Vivre*, makes explicit) rather than dark, pessimistic or gloomily introspective. As long as the springs of his creativity remained bound up with the processes of serialism, therefore, he had little choice but to refashion the technique into a compositional tool that could serve these particular expressive needs. He avoids the high norm of chromatic dissonance, angularity of melodic line, systematic elimination of all tonal references and, despite the conceptual rigour of the system, the apparent disconnectedness or fragmentation of musical events that one might think of as characteristic of true serial composition. What he seeks instead is the direct expressiveness and continuity of a diatonic tonal idiom within the conventions – however loosely and idiosyncratically applied – of serial procedures. If, in other words, the influence of Sibelius was passed through the prism of serialism, then reverse is also true and serialism itself was re-imagined in the light of the Finnish master's art. To this extent, the technical underpinning of Symphony No. 1 might be considered contradictory, even paradoxical: a diatonic serialism! And given that the rationale of dodecaphony was to establish the supremacy of the semitone and the chromatic scale, this is surely a fascinating approach from many points of view.

1.1.3   Movement I: *Allegro* – issues arising out of Kinsella's handling of the note-row

The first movement of Symphony No. 1 began life as an independent work entitled *Essay for Orchestra* which Kinsella completed in 1980. After its first (broadcast) performance in 1982, Albert Rosen, the principal conductor of the RTÉ Symphony Orchestra, remarked

to the composer that the *Essay* seemed to him to be more like the first movement of a symphony and he suggested the addition of further movements in which the expressive potential of the music might be more fully explored. Upon reflection, Kinsella found that he agreed with this analysis and subsequently expanded the work into the present four-movement symphony.[69] Given this background to its composition, it is interesting to note a degree of divergence between the technical means of the opening *Allegro* and that

Ex. 2: Row and basic permutations

of the remaining three movements. The close adherence to the complete note-row in the first movement and its exploitation in a fairly systematic sequence of rotations is replaced by a much freer treatment in the rest of the work. Uniquely, then, Symphony No. 1 gives us a picture of Kinsella's rapidly evolving thought processes as he embarked on his career as a symphonist: across the four movements, we can observe an increasing refinement of procedure and identify decisive stages in the development of the more flexible and subtle technique that informs the later symphonies.

Theoretically, Kinsella employs the traditional permutations of the note-row, and its inversion, retrograde and retrograde inversion can all be identified in the music [Ex. 2]. The thematic material of the movement is to some extent derived from these

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[69] *Essay for Orchestra* was first heard in a broadcast performance by the RTÉ Symphony Orchestra (conducted by Albert Rosen) on 19 August 1982. Symphony No. 1 was first performed on 27 September 1985 by the RTÉ Symphony Orchestra (conducted by Albert Rosen) at the National Concert Hall, Dublin.

permutations, which yield a number of important basic shapes. Thus far, then, Kinsella conforms to the traditional expectations of classical dodecaphony, satisfying the demand that all dimensions of a work – vertical aggregates, main and subsidiary voices, accompanying figures, and so forth – be derived directly from the series: 'in order to ensure the thematic unification of a work and thus the unity of its musical content all the musical events in it are developed, directly or indirectly, out of one basic shape,' as Josef Rufer has put it.[70]

The manner in which he handles the series, however, is distinguished not only by the importance he gives to the individual four-note segments but, crucially, by the absence of any fixed internal order for the constituent pitches of each segment (both in melodic contexts as well as in vertical combinations). This freedom naturally blurs the effect a more rigorous employment of the series would make. If, strictly speaking, a tone-row is, as George Perle defined it, a 'single abstract intervallic structure,'[71] then Kinsella's handling has little in common with strict usage and is far closer to Josef Matthias Hauer's idea of the 'trope' than to Schoenberg's more widely known concept.

George Perle explains how in the twelve-tone system devised by Hauer, the set or 'trope'

> is not a unitary structure but a combination of two six-note segments of mutually exclusive content, within which only the content, not the order, is specified. Thus the order in which the notes are to be stated is a purely compositional matter: the set functioning only as a means of partitioning the tone material into specified groups of notes.[72]

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[70] Rufer, *Composition with Twelve Tones*, 38.

[71] George Perle, *Serial Composition and Atonality* (Berkeley, 1977), 5.

[72] Ibid., 5-6. Hauer's twelve-tone system was formulated in two theoretical works published in Vienna in the mid-1920s: *Vom Melos zur Pauke* (1925) and *Zwölftontechnik* (1926). See John R. Covach, 'The Zwölftonspiel of Josef Matthias Hauer', *Journal of Music Theory*, 36, 1 (Spring 1992), 149-184. Schoenberg did employ this approach, at least once: in the 'Tanzscene', the fifth of the Five Piano Pieces Op. 23, the middle section of which 'employs a bisected twelve-tone set, each segment of which preserves its identity only in terms of its content, as in Hauer's system' (Perle, 52).

In Kinsella's case, of course, we have three four-note, rather than two six-note segments. And because the general pitch *content* of the segments is of greater significance than the pitch order, his series has a further important and far-reaching characteristic in that it possesses obvious symmetrical properties. There is an overlap between the different permutations of the row and the corresponding segments of O^1, I^2, R^7 and RI^8 are, from

Ex. 3

this point of view, exactly the same [Ex. 3][73]. In other words, the fact that the strictly horizontal sequence of pitches (and the resultant series of melodic intervals) is only partially rather than decisively relevant to Kinsella's compositional purpose – that he does not view the row exclusively as 'a single abstract intervallic structure' – has the effect of drastically reducing the number of real variants available to him. Kinsella's set generates a mere twelve usable alternative forms rather than the usual forty-eight. This approach presents him with a number of problems. Perhaps the most acute of these is how to achieve sufficient variety of harmonic content because, as far as the vertical

[73] Kinsella prefers to consider the original of the row as O^1 and the first transposition (i.e. a semitone higher) as O^2 etc., rather than the original as O and the first transposition as O^1. Similarly with the other forms of the row: the inversion, retrograde and retrograde inversion. Rufer employs the abbreviations O, I, R, RI in *Composition with Twelve Tones* (82), indicating, however, the *interval* of transposition (e.g. O -5 = Original transposed by a diminished fifth), rather than transposition calculated with reference to the number of semitones in the chromatic scale. In *Serial Composition and Atonality*, Perle uses P (Prime) rather than O to refer to the basic set (he uses the same abbreviations as Rufer to refer to the three transformations of the row), but uses the numbers 0 - 11 to refer to the original pitch of the set and its eleven transpositions on the chromatic scale. The convention that Kinsella adopts corresponds to that suggested in Ernst Křenek's *Studies in Counterpoint* (New York and London, 1940), 28.

combinations of pitches is concerned, the notes of the outer segments will always result in a single four-note chord formation (the major seventh) and its transposition.

Perle points out that 'a fundamental concept of atonal music is that any group of notes that is stable in horizontal succession is also stable as simultaneity.'[74] Kinsella certainly gives equal significance to all vertical arrangements of the constituent elements of the segments and in this sense he is faithful to the principal of 'emancipation of the dissonance' – Schoenberg's well-known dictum on the comprehensibility of dissonance being 'equivalent to the consonance's comprehensibility'.[75] Apart from dissonances and consonances being treated in the same way, this premise also entails the renunciation of a tonal centre and, a few fleeting moments apart, Kinsella's practice in the first movement of the symphony confirms this understanding. The succession of harmonies is determined solely by the row and the manner in which it is handled. No other properties the chords may possess are allowed to influence their behavior and virtually all vestiges of the functional bass line have been renounced. But however the constituent pitches of the outer segments may be disposed, what is heard nonetheless is a seventh chord in what, in traditional harmonic terminology, would be described as one or other of its inversions. It becomes vital that occasional relief from this pervasive sonority is found. One solution that Kinsella frequently adopts is that of overlapping or combining different transpositions of the row. Otherwise he is heavily reliant on the contents of the central segment to vary the vertical aggregates. But while any dissonant combination of notes might theoretically occur, and occasionally some very dissonant ones do, the way the segmented set is employed means that the harmonic content of the movement is more predictable that is usually the case in twelve-tone music. In general, the chord of the major seventh is rarely in abeyance for long.

Although frequently relatable to traditional tonal idioms, the harmonies do not succeed one another in a manner that creates any conventional sense of key. The suggestion of tonality embodied in the seventh chords of the row's outer segments is

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[74] Perle, *Serial Composition and Atonality*, 45.
[75] Arnold Schoenberg quoted in Rufer, *Composition with Twelve Tones*, 47.

consistently negated by the inexorable rotation of the series – a series that both hints at the possibility of tonal stability and simultaneously prevents its attainment. In other words, any fleeting sense of tonal affirmation is repressed by the row itself, which, however, like a bad conscience, seems subliminally to acknowledge the existence of what it denies. The continuous allusions to and subsequent cancellations of tonality represent a conflict rooted deep in the very structure of the music as the logic of serial procedures pulls against the implications of the row's own internal organisation. This intriguing conflict has far-reaching ramifications for the design of the symphony as a whole, as we shall see in due course.

The structure of Kinsella's note-row also presents a problem with regard to the invention of thematic material. Rufer acknowledges that 'it is easy to see that a series gains in melodic coherence by the repetition of the same interval at different points within it,' adding that it 'will increase the melodic comprehensibility of the music'.[76] He qualifies this, however, by pointing out that if such symmetry allows 'a considerable unification of the melodic element, [it is] not without equally considerable restriction of the possibilities of melodic expansion.'[77]

Kinsella's chief difficulty lies in generating from the series thematic material that is sufficiently varied. Undoubtedly, one of the single most important aspects of symphonic composition lies in the unification of contrasting themes, but the problem with Kinsella's note-row is that it makes thematic identity almost too easy to achieve. If virtually everything is derived from the notes of the major seventh chord, then there is an inevitable connection between all of the thematic shapes. If everything is related, it becomes difficult to distinguish between purposeful, intentional correspondences and merely casual similarities. The overall result can be an amorphous semi-identity across all the melodic lines, which can make it difficult for the listener to perceive the structural outlines of the music. Kinsella is therefore dependent, once again, on the pitches of the

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[76] Rufer, *Composition with Twelve Tones*, 100-1.
[77] Ibid., 102.

central segment to vary the melodic material and provide relief from the pervasive contours of the diatonic seventh. But he is principally reliant on easily identifiable rhythmic characteristics and on textural organisation not only to distinguish between the themes and ensure their immediate recognition, but also to guarantee that his lengthy symphonic movements will have sufficient internal contrast.

As already mentioned, the first movement of the symphony is composed against the background of fairly clear-cut sonata form. That is to say, the material is differentiated in ways that parallel the traditional divisions: thematically, into first subject group, transition section, second subject group, and codetta; and structurally, into exposition, development, recapitulation and coda. In discussing the creation in atonal works of 'elaborate analogues for the tonal structure of sonata form', Charles Rosen comments: 'With non-tonal sonata forms, tonal polarization and resolution disappeared completely; what remains is the thematic structure along with contrasting textures – one contrast between the relative simplicity of the outer section[s] and the more intense centre, and another within the exposition to distinguish first and second themes.'[78] This could serve as a fairly exact summary of Kinsella's general procedure. In Rosen's view, the most masterly of these analogues are by Bartók, in whose music

> a central note takes the place of a central triad (modal would perhaps be a better
> word for this system). The displacement of the central note gives the possibility of
> modulation, and the substitution of an inverted downward motion for an initial
> rising modulation is a fine parallel of classical resolution.[79]

Kinsella's technique here, based as it is on the series and its rotations, excludes the exploitation of such a modal approach. But, interestingly, the transpositions to which the series is subject in the course of the movement tend to correspond to the structural

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[78] Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms* (New York, 1988), 403.
[79] Ibid.

divisions of the music and the residues of traditional tonal organisation are in evidence at various junctures – transpositions of the set by rising perfect fifths at the beginning of

Ex. 4: Symphony No. 1, I, 1-25

the movement, for example, suggest the kind of sharpwards modulations one might expect to find in the exposition of traditional sonata form, and the conclusion on a vertical aggregate of segment 1 of O^1, ending the movement where (or at least, as) it began, suggests a resolution on the tonic.[80]

Despite this traditional classic-romantic formal framework, the row is nonetheless handled with a degree of consistency that is perhaps surprising. The exposition of the first movement presents an unbroken, if flexibly organised sequence of set rotations, which are suspended for the development while other aspects of the material are explored, and subsequently resumed for the greater part of the recapitulation.

At the outset, the listener is presented with two distinct ideas that embody the row at its original pitch. The first of these comprises sustained chords on divided violins, against a variant of which the second idea – rising staccato figures in the woodwind – is then heard [Ex. 4]. The violins alone deliver the first rotation of the row, while the woodwind figures, which are added for the second rotation, clearly articulate as distinct entities each of the constituent four-note segments in turn.

This passage provides a clear illustration not only of the characteristic sound-world of Kinsella's music at this period, but also of important aspects of his technique. The second rotation, for example, is supplied with an extension (bars 17-24) in which segment 3 of the row alternates with segment 1 in anticipation of the third rotation (which commences in bar 25). Kinsella employs this strategy of extending (or, at times, curtailing) the rotations during the course of the movement, presumably in order to vary what might otherwise seem like a succession of overly predictable statements.

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[80] See Carner, *A Study of Twentieth-Century Harmony*, 71: 'The transition from the original row – the prime – or its variants to any of their transpositions constitutes a kind of "modulation". It is particularly true when the choice of the transposition "keys" reveals a certain organised plan and direction that we approach the functional modulation of tonal music. This is the case with Schönberg's latest works (since the Orchestral Variations Op. 31) where the transpositions of the rows and their variants are introduced in such a way as to suggest modulations to the "dominant" and "subdominant", in other words, the original row is transposed upwards seven semitones and five semitones respectively, and remains there for some time.'

In bar 25, the divided violins introduce a descending semiquaver figure consisting of parallel seventh chords the pitches of which (apart from the first chord) are outside the strict process of set rotation that has just been established. (Each of these chords presents a transposition of the inversion of segment 1 if read in descending order.) While this semiquaver figure may at first appear to be incidental – a decorative flourish without further significance – it nonetheless establishes in an unobtrusive manner a principle of organisation that eventually becomes fundamental to the symphony as a whole. Because it is here in this apparently insignificant detail that Kinsella first liberates the major seventh chord (as embodied in segments 1 and 3) both from its fixed place in the series as well as from the ongoing process of set rotation. Kinsella establishes a precedent for abstracting from the row a free selection of pitches (in practice, this usually tends to be the notes of the seventh chord of the outer segments). He thus abandons strict adherence to the doctrine that all twelve pitches must be sounded before any note is repeated, and he presents us instead with an alternative concept of the row as a resource from which the composer can take what he requires – in the form of a horizontal sequence or vertical combination of pitches – without further obligation. As a demonstration of Kinsella's compositional acuity it should be noted that this moment of freedom is introduced as the culmination of the extension to rotation 2, where the unexpected alternation of segments 3 and 1 has already produced a sense of structural openness or unpredictability. The manner in which this moment is introduced, therefore, together with the fact that it occurs early in the movement, means that the strict underlying system of rotational organisation and its free, un-systematic abandonment are both easily accepted as naturally complementary procedures informing the compositional process.

The ideas presented in this opening paragraph constitute the principal material of what, in traditional terms, might be referred to as the first group of a sonata exposition. A varied counterstatement immediately ensues (rotations 3 and 4), which culminates

Ex. 5: Symphony No. 1, I, 41-54

in a new idea in octaves on the strings (doubled by second horn when the exposition is repeated) [Ex. 5].

These bars (41-54), which comprise rotation 5, give rise to an interesting question about the perception of Kinsella's compositional procedures in this work. As far as the strict sequence of pitches is concerned (segment 2 excepted) this passage is derived from the seventh transposition of the inversion of the row – I⁸ in Kinsella's usage. It may be doubted if even the most perceptive listener would recognize this as an inversion, because in so far as the essential character of the passage lies in the composite nature of the segments these bars sound more like segments 1 to 3 of O¹ played in reverse order.

Nonetheless, understood as I⁸ (the seventh transposition of the inversion) the passage connects logically with the following section – the final paragraph of the first group – which is largely based on the seventh transposition of the original (O⁸) [Ex. 6]. Here the four horns present O⁸ in manner similar to that of the violins at the opening, amplified with a pulsing triplet figure on the woodwind and strings. Interestingly, the bass movement here – F sharp, B, F sharp – is strongly tonal in outline, although to

realise this effect the B had to be brought forward from segment 3. There are also clear

Ex. 6: Symphony No. 1, I, 56-68

residues of tonal organisation in the choice of transposition because O^8 constitutes a move up a perfect fifth. While one would not wish to make too much of these correspondences with tonal procedures, they do occur with surprising consistency throughout the movement and undoubtedly make their effect. Rotation 6 gives way to a further transposition (I^{12}) at bar 62 (rotation 7), which is extended by an incomplete reference to I^8 and culminates in a climactic return of O^8 (rotation 8). This entire section

affords an excellent illustration of Kinsella's method of overlapping both segments and rotations to create a greater degree of dissonance, and by thus increasing the tension to move steadily towards a climax. Thematically, the passage consists of a development of

Ex. 7: Symphony No. 1, I, 82-5

Ex. 4 but, like Ex. 5, it also prominently features the melodic contour of the inversion of segment 1, which, as we shall see, ultimately emerges to become a fundamental unifying shape across the four movements of the symphony.

The short passage that commences in bar 82 has much of the character of a traditional transition section [Ex. 7]: a significant change in texture is combined with an

increase in movement as well as an acceleration in the rotations of the set, which now occur at the rate of one per bar. Interestingly, the passage features O^2 and O^3 in succession, which brings major sevenths on F sharp (O^2, segment 3) and on C sharp (O^3, segment 1) into immediate juxtaposition, thereby reinforcing the suggestion of yet a further move sharpwards, which, again, is more or less the kind of tonal move one would expect to find in a traditionally organised sonata-form movement at this point.

Ex. 8: Symphony No. 1, I, 90-5

This transition (which comprises a total of eight rotations, 9-16) leads to the first idea of the 'second group', which commences in bar 91 (rotation 17) [Ex. 8]. In contrast to the principal material of the first group, the central segment of the row is now prominently to the fore and the tritones provide a necessary relief from the intervals of the major seventh which have dominated the music hitherto. There are two statements of this material, the first derived from O^3, and the second from O^{10} (in tonal terms, a perfect fifth higher again). An extension to rotation 21, which features an incomplete set, introduces a new idea that is not heard again in the exposition, but which subsequently assumes considerable importance in the development (marked *x* in Ex. 9 below).

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This extension also acts as a link to the subsidiary material of the second group, which commences in bar 108 of Ex. 9, and which consists of two distinct elements. The first, in dotted rhythm, affords an excellent illustration of how two different forms of the row (in this case I^6 and RI^{12}) can have different interval structures, but – considered as a succession of three four-note segments – have the same pitch content. One notes that I^6 and RI^{12} both take the transposition of the row yet a further perfect fifth higher, and it seems clear from the context that it is this crucial feature that determines the use of these particular transpositions and permutations here. The second element, in fanfare-like triplets, is treated at some length and, returning a perfect fifth lower, brings the exposition as a whole to a point of dissonant culmination. Kinsella here superimposes segments 1 and 2 of I^{11} in the woodwind and brass (into which segment 3 of the foregoing RI^{12} is permitted to intrude), and appends segment 3 in the strings. The rotations (24 to 29) are also allowed to overlap, and the last one is extended to connect with the codetta. Here, O^1 returns. Rotations 30-33 present a triplet figure derived from the previous section, which is based on segments 2 and 3 (segment 3 not always complete) and is strongly underpinned by segment 1 on the horns. In the final rotation of the exposition (34), segment 2 is omitted altogether, and segment 1 is followed immediately by segment 3 (now complete) in preparation for the reprise.

After the reprise of the exposition the development section follows. In some respects, this duly observes the developmental principles that one would expect to find in classical sonata form at this juncture: the dismemberment of previously heard thematic material and the re-formation of the constituent elements into new patterns to reveal fresh expressive potential, combined with an intensification of textural activity. Obviously, the possibility of tonal intensification by means of more remote modulations does not arise, but Kinsella seeks a viable equivalent in the fragmentation of the note-row. It is here that the procedure introduced fleetingly into the exposition – whereby statements of the row are allowed to remain incomplete and the individual segments that are detached from it are employed as discrete independent units – comes into its own.

Ex. 9: Symphony No.1, I, 105-113

This deviation from the complete row creates an interesting substitute for

traditional tonal divergence from the tonic key. In other words, as the central tonalities (the tonic and dominant keys) recede further into the background with the move to more remote regions in the development sections of tonally organised sonata-form movements, so the row as a twelve-tone entity now becomes a background to the free play of its component segments as they are brought into unexpected juxtapositions or are subject to unpredictable elaborations.

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Ex.10: Symphony No. 1, I, 128-133

This central section of the movement can be divided into three broad paragraphs or sub-sections for convenience. The first of these is based on the new idea that was introduced almost casually before the subsidiary material of the second subject group (*x* in Ex. 9 above) [Ex. 10]. Although initially presented as O², the paragraph is largely based on O⁶ and O⁷. Reiterations of the four-semiquaver *gruppetto* lead to a *fortissimo* culmination, which in turn yields suddenly to a *pianissimo* that marks the beginning of the second paragraph

The second paragraph itself is based on the inverted form of the row: it commences in a similar fashion to Ex. 5 above, and is combined with an idea derived from the pulsing triplet figure of Ex. 6. Kinsella builds up a considerable level of dissonance by allowing rows, or fragments of rows, to overlap and this culminates in a

sequence of ascending chords – first heard on strings alone and subsequently on strings and brass – which consist of the first (or possibly third) segment taken from different transpositions of the row or its permutations. This gives way to a free development based on overlapping first segments from I^7 and I^8 over an urgent scurrying accompaniment in the lower strings, which, transferred to the upper strings, leads to the third and final paragraph of this central section of the movement.

That Kinsella's thinking is only marginally influenced by the traditional structural application of tonality – despite certain features of the pitch organisation already commented upon – is evident from his return here to the original pitch of the row. It is unlikely that a more tonally conscious composer would have made such a move, especially before the final climax of the development had been attained. It is arguable that in the course of the symphony Kinsella has established pitch relationships which the listener will apprehend at least in a quasi-tonal sense. In so far as this is the case, the return to O^1 here produces both a strong feeling of resolution and a concomitant expectation of recapitulation. Although there is no reference to the thematic material of the opening, this expectation is undoubtedly reinforced both by the texture, which is very much thinned out in comparison with the previous paragraph, as well as by the import of the horn calls which – with their reiteration of the pitches B and A sharp – seem to presage a return home. While this is certainly an effective moment in itself, its very effectiveness undoubtedly robs the actual recapitulation of much of its impact when it eventually arrives. For the present, however, O^1 is merely a point of departure for the final stage of the development. The texture is initially dominated by the triplet figuration of the codetta, and this yields to a bitingly dissonant passage on woodwind and brass in which two diatonic seventh segments, a major third apart, collide in brief, splenetic contrary-motion outbursts. Underneath these angry interjections, the strings enter with an authoritatively majestic and calming statement of segment 1 of I^{11}, followed, a semitone higher, by segment 1 of I^{12}. The transition to the recapitulation is then very simply effected as the notes of the triad of C sharp minor (the second, third and fourth

pitches of segment 1 of I^{12}) give way to the D sharp and A sharp of the first segment of O^1.

Kinsella recapitulates all of the principal material of the exposition in the order in which it was initially presented. It is, however, subject to various modifications, consisting mostly of thematic condensation and re-orchestration. The fragmentation of the row and the free reassembling of the segments that occurred in the development, give way once again to stricter rotations of (more or less) complete statements of the series such as we had at the beginning of the work. For the most part, the pitch structure of the recapitulation repeats that of the exposition and re-transpositions that might suggest parallels with conventional tonal resolutions are avoided.

In the initial rotation of the recapitulation, the sustained idea on the strings and the staccato woodwind figures of Ex. 4 are now combined. But the principal change here is the introduction of a new counterpoint (on the oboe) to the second rotation [see Ex. 20 (iii) below]. This idea presents a number of motifs that come to have an increasingly significant role as the rest of the symphony unfolds. Indeed, to some extent it acquires the function of a motto theme and for this reason it will be more effectively discussed in the context of the final movement where its significance becomes fully apparent and it is possible to trace retrospectively its evolution throughout the symphony. The texture is intensified for rotation 3, and the new counterpoint is heard again (on horn with woodwind doublings) in the following rotation (4), which moves to a strident climax culminating in an abbreviated version of the final paragraph of the first group, based, as before, on O^8.

There are a few incidental re-transpositions in the transition section, which is otherwise substantially the same. This is true, too, for the principal idea of the second group. The subsidiary second-group material (Ex. 9) is rearranged somewhat, and the two constituent elements are initially mixed: the first element (now comprising I^6 only) is broken by an incomplete statement of the second element. After this, the passage continues more or less as before until a substantial extension leads to the coda, which brings the movement to an impressive conclusion.

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Ex. 11: Symphony No. 1, I, 354-60

In the coda, the individual segments are once again freed from the rotations of the row and there is an overwhelming insistence on the sonority of the major seventh chord to the exclusion of any other element. If the recapitulation avoided any commitment to the idea of tonal resolution, the coda, on the contrary, emphasizes the note B – the 'root' of the major seventh of segment 1 of O^1 – in a manner that now unmistakably establishes it as a centrally orientating pitch. The final twenty-five bars of the movement contain only five different harmonies, all of them major seventh chords and four of them containingthe note B. The progression shown on horns and trumpets in Ex.11 is stated

twice, after which segment 1 of I^1 – A sharp, A, F and D (a major seventh on B flat)[81] – alternates with segment 1 of O^1, on a vertical aggregate of which (the major seventh on B) the movement closes.

1.1.4 Movement II: *Vivace*

The single most striking feature of the remaining three movements of the symphony is that all attempts to derive the music from the strict employment of a twelve-tone series and its rotations are abandoned. The note-row on which the first movement is based continues to be used, but it has become a point of reference in the background rather than a foreground presence. It rarely appears in a complete form, and Kinsella concentrates instead on exploiting its individual segments. The major seventh chord constituted by the pitches of each of the outer two segments pervades all the textures, and is the principal source of the harmonic content as well as of most of the thematic material.

The decision to deploy the series in this manner results in both a gain and a loss. The gain lies in the fact that, as he is no longer tied to the circular recurrence of a pitch set comprising all twelve chromatic notes (however diatonically disguised it may hitherto have been), Kinsella is now free to explore new means of obtaining the harmonic buoyancy and rhythmic propulsion to which he is so attracted. On the negative side, the restrictions he imposes upon himself by adhering so consistently to the melodic and harmonic possibilities afforded by his segmented tone-row undoubtedly result in an over-exploitation of the sonority and constituent intervallic patterns of the major seventh chord. It is not that the remaining three movements lack contrast: Kinsella is careful to ensure that they are sharply individualized in tempo and texture and that they have vividly distinct characters as well as tellingly different types of structure. But considering

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[81] These four pitches – A sharp, A, F and D – could be considered to belong to segment 1 of O^{12} – as A, A sharp (= B flat), D and F. But it seems not inappropriate to view them as deriving from the inverted form of the row, which is now brought into a final juxtaposition with the original form as the initial segments of each alternate in the concluding bars.

the sheer length of the symphony as a whole, there is not perhaps sufficient variety in the intrinsic nature of the basic material to sustain interest throughout with complete success. Too much is generated from a single source, and while this source may guarantee a high degree of unity, it is neither complex nor multi-faceted enough in itself to do so without risking monotony, especially over so extensive a span of music.

It is only as the symphony moves towards its conclusion, however, that these shortcomings begin to make themselves felt, and the immediate impression made by the opening of the second movement, an impetuous *Vivace* in six-eight time, is one of engaging freshness which comes as a welcome relief after the strenuous intensity of the preceding *Allegro*. Although not explicitly described as such, the movement is designed as a scherzo and trio and conforms to a fairly orthodox ground plan. The A section (the scherzo) and the B section (the contrasting trio) are both cast in three-part form. Given Kinsella's decision to explore traditional formal approaches in this work, it is not entirely unexpected to find that the A section as a whole is repeated (*da capo*), after which the movement is brought to brisk conclusion with a brief coda.

$$\text{A} \qquad \text{B} \qquad \text{A (\textit{da capo}) Coda}$$
$$\| \text{: a :} \| \text{ b a}^1 \qquad \text{c d c}^1$$

What is also remarkable about this movement – and indeed about the rest of the symphony from this point onwards – is the individual way in which Kinsella creates a sense of harmonic space. While there is much rapid activity on the surface of the music – in the present instance the dancing and whirling *vivace* semiquavers – the rate of harmonic change is often slow. Not uniformly slow, however: Kinsella is careful to ensure that beneath the surface activity the underlying changes of harmony have a rhythm of their own. But, one or two moments of comparative harmonic complexity apart, the music nevertheless proceeds largely as the articulation of a succession of discrete major seventh chords.

Precedents for the exploitation of harmonic space in this way go back to Beethoven. Of that composer's First Symphony Basil Lam remarks that even 'the seemingly unambitious trio of the minuet […] shows the new concept of harmonic design. The section after the double bar begins with no fewer that eighteen bars in which nothing happens except an airy exchange between the first violins and horns and clarinets playing around the dominant seventh.' And he adds that this is 'perhaps the first appearance of another revolutionary innovation, the use of almost empty spaces in harmonic architecture.' Lam also alludes to the rondo of Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto as employing a daring extension of this device. But one of the most startlingly original instances is surely to be found in the development section of the *Pastoral* Symphony where twelve bars of the chord of B flat major are followed by twenty-four of D major and, after a brief intervening passage, the same process is repeated with the chords of G major and E major – 'perhaps the broadest expanse of harmony in all the classics', Lam suggests.[82] As transformed and expanded by Wagner, this technique had a profound influence on Sibelius and can be seen in operation in, say, the third movement, *Vivacissimo*, of the second symphony, and, in what is surely a *locus classicus*, the conclusion of the first movement of the fifth symphony where the single chord of E flat major is reiterated for some ninety bars.

There seems little reason to doubt that Kinsella's procedure is directly indebted to the Sibelian example. His adaptation of this technique, however, simultaneously takes it to extremes and radically simplifies it. The A section of the *Vivace* opens with a reiterated-note figure in the strings based on segment 1 of the inverted tone-row, now a major sixth higher than the original pitch of the first movement (I^{10}).[83] It is supported and amplified rhythmically and texturally by woodwind, horns and trumpets, while the timpani contribute an assertive quadruplet figure, which pulls against the six-eight of the strings and adumbrates the prominent role they will play later in the movement [Ex. 12].

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[82] Basil Lam, 'Ludwig van Beethoven' in Robert Simpson ed., *The Symphony: Volume 1. Haydn to Dvořák*, (Harmondsworth, 1971 [1966]), 113, 137.

[83] All transpositions of the row in this movement are described in relation to the original form (O^1) given in Ex.1 above.

This initial theme, consisting solely of the articulation of the G major seventh chord, lasts for sixteen bars. Two transitional bars of blurred harmony follow – the strings

Ex. 12: Symphony No. 1, II, 1-5

outlining a major seventh on D against a similar chord on B held on horns and trumpets – which lead to a second strain.   Articulating a seventh chord on B, segment 1 of O¹ (or, alternatively, of I²), this subsidiary idea is replaced at bar 32 by a new motif, which combines segments 2 and 3 in one of the very few moments in the movement when the complete note-row is heard. A fleeting reference to one of the characteristic motifs of the symphony's motto theme (the first of its reappearances outside the first movement) [see Ex. 20 (iv) below] leads to a repeat of the opening idea, which entails a further twelve

bars of the seventh chord on G. The A/a section of the scherzo is finally rounded off with a passage that again recalls the motto theme [see Ex. 20 (v) below]: here, in what may perhaps be described as a codetta, there is a marked increase in the harmonic rhythm, although the harmonies themselves are still derived from major seventh aggregates.

Ex.13, Symphony No. 1, II, 67-71

After the repeat of A/a, a brief linking passage (also based on the motto theme) emerges out of the codetta and leads to the A/b section [see Ex. 20 (vi) below]. This delicately textured and lightly scored section not only presents contrasting thematic material, but, crucially at this point, also effects a change in the pitch of the harmonies. The principal idea centers on segment 1 of O⁵ (or perhaps I⁶), comprising a seventh chord on E flat. (Kinsella's spelling is D sharp, G, A sharp and D natural, but it will be less cumbersome to refer to it here as a chord on E flat) [Ex. 13].

The E flat pitch group yields momentarily to a number of other variously transposed segments and returns only to give way to a seventh chord of B flat (once

again, so described for convenience) for a contrasting second strain.[84]   Although the note-row as a whole makes no appearance, Kinsella occasionally amplifies the various seventh chords with pitches taken from complementary segments of the transpositions in question, a procedure that allows him to vary the contours of his thematic material and alleviate somewhat the persistent sonority of major seventh harmonies. There is a final return to the E flat harmony for five bars before the A/a[1] section commences, which consists of a truncated reprise (eight bars only) of the principal thematic idea and its G major harmony.

Ex. 14: Symphony No. 1, II - harmonic basis of opening

As this A section, the scherzo, can be considered to exemplify *in nuce* Kinsella's technique, it is perhaps worthwhile abstracting the harmonic content and presenting it in a diagrammatic form in order to show its characteristic features with greater clarity [Ex. 14]. This abstract also serves to highlight Kinsella's surprisingly minimal harmonic palette and the relative emptiness of the harmonic spaces he creates. What it also clearly illustrates is the composer's return to a simple, almost primitive form of tonality.

Whatever remains of the concept of the note-row in Kinsella's compositional thinking and however useful he may find it in helping him to generate material, there is in reality scarcely any connection here with serial procedures even of the most tonally compromised kind. The distinctively individual choice of sonorities and the manner in

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[84] Kinsella's spelling is A sharp, D, F and A natural.

which he handles them may indeed largely be due to their ultimate derivation from the row, but this scherzo is nonetheless rooted unambiguously in a clear G major, balanced between symmetrical excursions to contrasting centers a major third above and a major third below, as summarized in Ex. 15.

Kinsella's idiom does not generally encompass the kind of functional relationships between chords that facilitate the straightforward establishment of tonal centres. Consequently, he has to look to alternative means of creating the sense of tonality that will allow him to achieve the forward drive he is seeking. One possibility available to him is to posit a tonal centre by sheer assertion. Classical harmonic practice allowed a key to be established by persuasion, so to speak. It can take as given – or, in the case of a modulation, it can gradually introduce – crucial pitches that have inevitable tonal consequences. A key can usually be deduced from the prevailing harmonic

Ex. 15
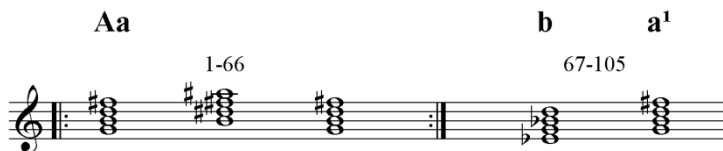
circumstances and an operative tonic chord identified even where in practice it might actually be avoided or sidestepped. As the logic of classical practice was abandoned, composers whose music still required some sense of tonal orientation had perforce to resort to a somewhat cruder method that sought to establish a tonic by force, as it were. Essentially, this involves dwelling on a particular pitch or chord for long enough and with sufficient emphasis for it to impress itself upon the listener as central in relation to the surrounding pitches or chords.

This, in short, is Kinsella's approach. Despite his frequent juxtaposition of segments of the row that are a perfect fifth apart, he chooses by and large to avoid any type of direct tonic-dominant relationship, which many twentieth-century composers retained even when they had otherwise abandoned traditional tonal procedures. In

seeking to create a tonal centre, therefore, he is consequently obliged to forgo the assistance of any recognizable cadential formulae in the harmonies. This is equally true of his melodic invention, because in so far as he confines himself in all dimensions of the music fairly exclusively to the pitches and interval structure of the segments, he has little choice but to resort to broken-chord shapes in devising thematic material. He thus eliminates the possibility of creating melodic lines that, through their scalic patterns, could contribute to the establishment of a tonic or final note as they move towards cadence points. (When, in the finale, he briefly allows himself simple conjunct melodic movement of this kind, it is consequently strikingly effective.) What remains for him, therefore, is to organise his music so that a particular harmony will emerge as central simply because it occupies a sufficiently large space. This is exactly what happens in the present instance: apart from the fact that it begins and ends the scherzo, the G major seventh chord occupies thirty-six of its 105 bars, three times more than either of the next most frequently used chords, those on B and on E flat. It is also worth noting that these three chords, together with that on B flat, account for two thirds of the harmonic content of the entire section.

For the B section, or trio, the time signature changes to *alla breve* with the minim equal to the dotted crotchet of the scherzo. The principal material of the B/c section consists of a brief snatch of melody for flute and clarinet that sounds like a children's taunting song.[85] To this is appended a rapid rustling figure on the strings [Ex. 16, *a* and *b*]. These two elements are then subject to two varied repeats. In the second repeat the intervallic structure of the taunting song is modified although rhythmically it remains the same as before. Considered as a whole, this theme is constructed around the notes of segment 1 of I^8 – F, E, C, A – supplemented by the pitches G, B and D (from the prevailing G major of the scherzo). The second element, the string figuration, consists of

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[85] Kinsella describes it as 'a somewhat grotesque version of the Irish reel *The Four Courts'* (composer's note in the programme booklet for the first performance).

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two superimposed major seventh chords on F sharp and B flat,[86] which are replaced by a G major seventh chord in the first repeat but which return in the second. The G major

Ex. 16: Symphony No. 1, II, 106-09

element is reinforced throughout by timpani, which assert themselves in a solo capacity in the brief B/d section that ensues. Here they assume the principal melodic interest in the shape of a further modification of the taunting song, again rhythmically the same as before, but now adapted to the pitches of the G major seventh chord [Ex. 17].

Ex. 17: Symphony No. 1, II, 124-26

After a single repeat of this variant, a fleeting two-bar reference to the motto theme (see Ex. 20 (vii) below) leads to B/c¹, an abbreviated return of the opening. The trio is rounded off with is a short codetta in which the timpani once more assert the G major seventh chord segment. This is now supplemented by its two complementary segments – E, A sharp, A (natural) and D sharp; and C sharp, F, C (natural) and G sharp – thus stating all twelve pitches of this transposition of the row for the first time in the

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[86] Again, not Kinsella's spelling which is: F sharp, A sharp, C sharp and F natural; and A sharp, D, F natural and A natural.

movement [Ex. 18]. The *da capo* follows, and in the brief coda the G major seventh

Ex. 18: **Symphony No. 1, II, 149-52**

alternates with similar aggregates a semitone above and a semitone below in a quasi-cadential progression until it is eventually and emphatically confirmed as final.

1.1.5 Movement III: *Lento*

Formally, the third movement, *Lento*, is the most elusive of the four. It is here, arguably, that Kinsella's decision to derive most of his thematic material from the outer segments of the note-row produces the least satisfactory result. There is a certain sameness about virtually all of the melodic lines as they move from note to note of the ubiquitous major seventh chords and distinctions between them, such as whether the contours refer to segment 1 or segment 3 of O, I, R or RI, tend to become lost for the listener. Consequently, it can be difficult to identify structural subdivisions as the movement unfolds and one does not always have a clear sense of what is happening. It is somewhat surprising, perhaps, that Kinsella should have confined himself to the exact notes of the outer segments and their various transpositions quite so exclusively. He does not maintain this restriction in literally every bar, of course. But, given the fact that he allows himself to deviate now and again, it raises the question as to why he did not make more consistently widespread use of passing notes, appoggiaturas and other decorative

devices to lend greater interest and variety to the basic pitches of the set or of whatever segment is in operation at any particular time. His determination to adhere faithfully to the principle of deriving virtually everything from the note-row seems to have had a predominantly hampering influence on his inventiveness in this movement.

In its general organisation, however, the *Lento* shows greater sophistication that the preceding movement. The almost primitive procedures of the *Vivace* have been replaced by a somewhat more complex application of the same technique. Firstly, one notes the greater density of harmonic content. While most of the harmonies continue to be derived from the verticalization of one or other of the outer segments of the row, the aggregates succeed one another with greater rapidity, rarely occupying more than a bar or two at a time. Furthermore, although the movement ends on a G major seventh chord, which is also heard at significant structural junctures throughout, no overall point of tonal orientation is established quite as unambiguously as it is in the *Vivace.* The resultant harmonic fluctuation lends the music a curiously disconcerting instability that serves at times to undermine the predominant atmosphere of self-contained emotional reserve.

In this movement, Kinsella wisely chooses to offset his basic chain-like linking of seventh chords by varying the manner in which the resources of the series are deployed. A melodic line consisting of pitches derived from a single segment, for example, can be supported by a succession of harmonies that in themselves constitute complete segments abstracted from different transpositions of the row. The technique of combining vertically segments from two different transpositions of the row has already been remarked upon as has the simultaneous presentation of two horizontally stated segments in two different transpositions, which results in melodic lines moving in parallel intervals. Both of these approaches are more extensively employed here. The manner in which segments succeed one another is also somewhat subtler and there are frequent points of overlap where the final note of one segment becomes the initial note of the next. But while these manipulations undoubtedly result in a somewhat richer musical fabric, it may be doubted whether they are sufficient in themselves to offset the general feeling of

lean austerity and straitened harmonic resources that results from so constant a recourse to the major seventh aggregate.

Despite the difficulty in determining the internal subdivisions of the movement, three broad sections can nonetheless be identified. And because each of these commences with a variant of the same solo clarinet melody [Ex. 19], and continues more or less as a free development of its constituent elements, or at least of closely related thematic shapes, the overall structure might plausibly be schematized as A-A¹-A² Coda.

Ex. 19: Symphony No. 1, III, 1-9

As will be seen from Ex. 19, this clarinet melody is constructed from the notes of seventh chords on B flat (with the note B flat spelt as A sharp), B and G. The order in which the pitches of these chords are presented refer to segments of one of the standard permutations of the row, thus: the initial four notes comprise segment 1 of I¹ (marked *a¹* in the example above) and the four notes of the seventh on B correspond to segment 1 of R⁷ (marked *a²*). This latter can in turn be considered to overlap with segment 1 of I² (marked *a³*), where the intervals between the last three pitches – A sharp, F sharp and D sharp – are filled in with chromatic passing notes. Taken together, these three segments appear to constitute a discrete period, the first having an antecedent-like function and the remaining two jointly having the function of a consequent.[87]

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[87] Again, all transpositions and permutations of the row are described in relation to the original form (O¹) as given in Ex.1 above.

A new period can be considered to commence with the two segments articulating the G major seventh chord. The passage marked b^1 in Ex. 19 clearly outlines segment 3 of RI^{10}. There is an ambiguity about the second segment, however: if it is considered to consist of the remaining four notes of bar 8, then it corresponds to segment 1 of R^3; if, however, it is considered to overlap with the previous segment, then it corresponds to segment 1 of I^9 (marked b^2). In this alternative reading, the transposition up an octave of the note B on the fourth beat would bring it close to one of the characteristic motifs of the motto theme (particularly as it also returns to the note G). It is difficult to doubt that this correspondence is deliberate, particularly as the motif assumes this exact form when the same passage returns at the beginning of A^2 [see Ex. 20 (viii) and (ix) below]. Following the two G major segments, the clarinet solo continues for a further five bars in a free extension, the constituent shapes of which play no subsequent part in the movement.

A brief increase in intensity follows this hushed, withdrawn opening, but it immediately subsides into a contrasting lyrical paragraph on the strings based on segment 1 of O^{10}. This idea is then repeated – transposed up a semitone to O^{11} – on clarinet and bassoon with an undulating semiquaver string accompaniment. Cut off somewhat abruptly, it is succeeded by a short codetta-like paragraph derived from the progression of four seventh chords each containing the pitch B which featured in the coda to the first movement [Ex. 11 above].

We hear a^1 and a^2 again at the beginning of the A^1 section. The music then embarks on a new course, which encompasses modified transpositions of both of these ideas, before moving to the first of the movement's two substantial climaxes. It is only after this climax that the b^1 motif is heard, again based on the G major seventh, but now rescored for strings. (There is no restatement of b^2 at this point.) This is extended for seven bars, over which there is a steady build up to the second and principal climax of the movement. The intensity is quickly diffused in a dramatic *decrescendo* from which emerges a plaintive cello solo that is extended to overlap with the beginning of A^2. The final section commences with a restatement of the three initial ideas (a^1, a^2 and a^3), the third of which is now modified so that the descending chromatic scale reaches the note D

rather than D sharp. For *b¹*, which follows, the solo clarinet line is doubled at pitch by the first horn and at the octave below by the second clarinet and the two ensuing statements of *b²* are now modified to recall the motto theme, as mentioned above. A coda-like paragraph brings the movement to a serene conclusion on a soft widely spaced G major seventh harmony: four solo first violins hold a complete seventh chord in the upper octave with a four-leger-line G on top. This is doubled an octave below by four solo second violins, *con sordini*, and two octaves below that again by divided cellos and violas. A single clarinet in the dark chalumeau register doubles the F sharp of the first violas and gives the chord a hint of rich mellowness which is discretely amplified by the bass trombone and tuba sustaining the notes D and B beneath the cellos. The whole is underpinned by a low D on the double basses, which moves up a fourth to G in the last bar in a final quasi-cadential gesture.

1.1.6   Movement IV: *Allegro con brio*

It is generally acknowledged that ever since Mozart's *Jupiter* Symphony, or at least since the symphonies of Beethoven, the composition of a satisfactory symphonic finale presents a special challenge for composers. This is not merely a question of creating a movement that is sufficiently forceful and inventive to command the attention of the listener at the end of a long work. The idea that the symphony as a whole should move towards the finale as towards a goal, which is at once the climax of the entire work and the logical outcome of a process of thematic and tonal evolution – or, if structurally not quite so rigorous, at any rate demonstrating a clear psychological trajectory – presented composers with formidable technical problems. The ambition to master this teleological design in any music that aspired to symphonic status seemed to become more prevalent as the nineteenth-century drew to a close: 'The concept of a composition as gradually generative towards the revelation of a higher or fuller condition is characteristic of the modern composers', as James Hepokoski puts it, and he cites Strauss's *Tod und Verklärung* and *Also sprach Zarathustra* as paradigmatic along with the finales of several of

the Mahler symphonies.[88] But the phrase 'a higher or fuller condition' can only be allowed to stand unchallenged if it does not necessarily entail a positive or optimistic outcome, because the point of arrival could just as conceivably be a negative one – entailing despair, perhaps, as in Tchaikovsky's *Pathetique* Symphony, or nihilistic desolation as in Vaughan Williams's Symphony No. 6.[89] But it is perhaps true to say, nonetheless, that the positive connotations of such compositional procedures tend to remain uppermost in one's mind, and to Hepokoski's examples one might add the life-enhancing exuberance of Nielsen's Symphony No. 4, *The Inextinguishable*, and the same composer's Symphony No. 5, which have now surely become emblematic of this approach, as have the finales of the symphonies of Sibelius, particularly the searingly intense climax of Symphony No. 5 and the radiant closing pages of Symphony No. 7.

Kinsella is fully aware of the need to create a finale that will be sufficiently weighty to balance the foregoing movements and at sixteen minutes the concluding *Allegro con brio* is virtually the same length as the opening *Allegro*. He ensures comparable structural interest by giving the movement a shape that also approximates to traditional sonata form. But any similarity in overall design is offset by very different musical processes, because, although the note-row as a whole is undoubtedly featured more prominently here than in the two central movements, there is no return to the rotational technique of the first.

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[88] James Hepokoski, *Sibelius: Symphony No. 5* (Cambridge 1993), 26.

[89] In *Vaughan Williams and the Symphony* (London 2003), Lionel Pike draws attention to Vaughan Williams's use of the term 'epilogue' for the last movement of Symphony No. 6. 'The "epilogue" is Vaughan Williams's special contribution to symphonic form' he says, and he goes on to point out that the composer's epilogues have 'a function – or, rather, a character – different from that of a finale. None of his epilogues has any sense of triumph…' (244). 'It is difficult to imagine how any triumphant solution to the problems raised in the symphony [No. 6]', he adds, 'can satisfactorily take place; and Vaughan Williams offers no easy solutions' (244). The composer, it appears, was conscious that the final movement of a goal-directed work that withheld all comfortable reassurance, and especially one that could neither offer consolation nor hold out hope of transcendence, such as Symphony No. 6, needed a distinguishing designation that would forestall conventional expectations. Interestingly, Bax also used this term (borrowed, perhaps, from Vaughan Williams), which - although it does not refer to an entire movement in his case – seems particularly apt for the valedictory conclusion to his Third Symphony or the visionary final pages of the Sixth.

More importantly, however, it is in this movement that the sense of tonality that underpins the symphony and which has hitherto largely been obscured, suppressed or otherwise evaded is finally and unambiguously confirmed. In this respect alone, the symphony as a whole can be considered to exemplify the teleological model. It cannot be claimed that this process is pursued with an inexorable and thoroughgoing logic of the kind that informs every dimension of the musical fabric down to the microscopic motivic level. But in a general way, and allowing for a certain number of rough edges and loose ends, the overall thrust of the symphony from the rotations of the note-row at the opening to the B major triad on which the work ends is unmistakable. To a certain extent, Kinsella also dramatizes this teleology by means of conspicuous thematic metamorphosis. As has already been mentioned, one melodic shape in particular, comprising a group of related motifs, does recur throughout the work – not, however, in a manner that would fully justify the term 'cyclic' as it is applied, for example, to Tchaikovsky's Fourth or Fifth Symphonies. For one thing, the recurring idea, hitherto referred to as the 'motto theme', is not initially announced in a manner that presages its prominent role in what is to come. Indeed, as has already been indicated, far from being portentously introduced, the theme in question is first heard as a new counterpoint to the first subject group in the recapitulation of the opening *Allegro*. It is slipped in to the argument almost an afterthought, as it were. And although it is always immediately recognizable when it does recur, its subsequent fragmented appearances in the *Vivace* and the *Lento* do not at first seem to invest it with any overriding importance. It is not until the finale that its real significance emerges, when it eventually assumes a dignity and grandeur of which there was little previous indication.

Before proceeding to discuss Kinsella's handling of structure in this movement, it will perhaps be appropriate to detail here the successive manifestations of this theme and trace its development during the course of the work. Two of its principal shapes are clearly prefigured in the opening *Allegro* prior to its initial appearance: firstly, by the principal idea of the second subject group and, secondly, by an apparently incidental, although conspicuous motif announced on the trumpets during the course of the

development [Ex. 20 (i) and (ii)]. The salient features of these anticipations are, in the first example, three repeated notes leading to a long note (a crotchet tied to a quaver) followed by a descending semiquaver figure; and, in the second example, three repeated notes followed by a similar semiquaver figure, but which is now completed by rising a sixth rather than continuing in the same downward direction. When the theme itself [Ex. 20 (iii)] first appears, therefore, the listener is already familiar, if only subliminally, with some of its distinguishing characteristics.

It will be noticed that the theme consists of two principal elements, each of which is heard in two variant forms. These variants undoubtedly share certain properties, which become clearer are the work progresses, but they are nevertheless sufficiently contrasting to require separate labeling, hence x^1, x^2, y^1 and y^2 in Ex. 20 (iii) below. In its initial manifestation, this melody is strung out along the complete note-row in its O^1 (or I^2) form. Element x^1 outlines segment 1 and y^2 outlines segment 3. The other two elements straddle different segments: x^2 has the notes B and F sharp of segment 1, as well as the G sharp and the D of segment 2; y^1 has the D, C sharp and G sharp of segment 2 and the F and A of segment 3. (Interestingly, y^1 repeats G sharp to the exclusion of G natural, which results in an eleven-note version of the row.)

Ex. 20

(i)   **Symphony No. 1, I, 93-4, prefiguring of x^1 in the second group.**

(ii)   **Symphony No. 1, I, 182-3, prefiguring of x^2 in the development.**

(iii) Symphony No. 1, I, 250-59, first appearance of complete theme as a counterpoint to recapitulation of the first group, employing eleven out of the twelve pitches of the row.

(iv) Symphony No. 1, II, 35-7, y^2 marking the return to the principal material in A/a.

(v) Symphony No. 1, II, 49-59, y^2 in the codetta to A

(vi) Symphony No. 1, II, 59-67, y^2 in the link from A/a to A/b.

(vii) Symphony No. 1, II, 131-35, *y²* and new variant *y³* marking the return to the principal material in B/c¹.
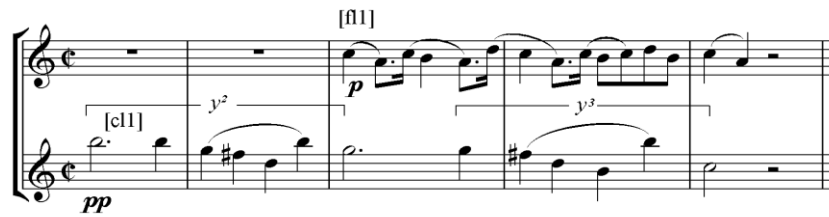
(viii) Symphony No. 1, III, 6-9, variant *y²* at the beginning of A.

(ix) Symphony No. 1, III, 105-8, *y²* and variant *y³* at the beginning of A².

(x) Symphony No. 1, IV, 80-7, complete theme in the codetta to the exposition, now modified to outline the diatonic seventh chord constituted by the pitches of segment 1 (or 3) of the row.

(xi) Symphony No. 1, IV, 113-4, 166-8 and 171-4, variants of *x¹/x²* occurring in the development.
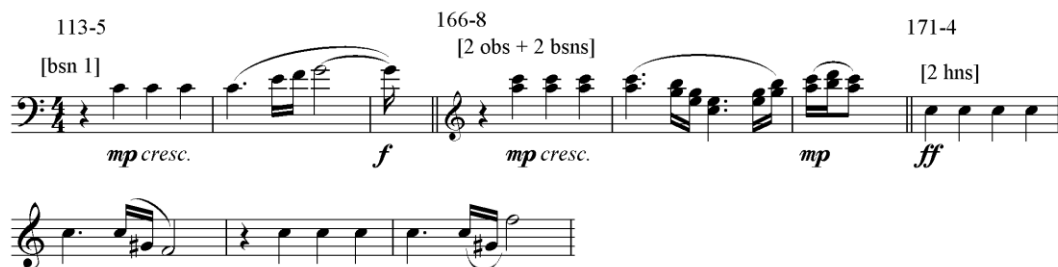
(xii)   Symphony No. 1, IV. 364-72, apotheosis of the complete theme in the coda.

(xiii)   Symphony No. 1, IV, 374-5, final variant of *x¹* in the coda.

Neither x^1 nor x^2 are featured in the two central movements. In the *Vivace*, y^2 makes its first appearance in A/a, at the moment when the contrasting strain returns to the principal idea [Ex. 20 (iv)]. Adapted to the shifting harmonies beneath it, it is also used as the principal material both of the codetta to A/a and of the ensuing link to the A/b section [Ex. 20 (v) and (vi)]. It is subsequently heard in B (the trio), again at a nodal point where the central B/d section returns to the reprise of the opening material, B/c¹ [Ex. 20 (vii)]. Here, it is heard twice: the pattern of intervals in the first occurrence corresponds to y^1; in the second, however, there is a new pattern, y^3, which – with the final note modified – becomes the permanent form of the complementary statement of the motif from now on.

The handling of the theme as it recurs in the *Lento* has already been discussed above: a variant of y^2 is heard in A [Ex. 20 (viii)], and in A², y^1 is succeeded by y^3, which now concludes with the note G [Ex. 20 (ix)].

It is only in the finale that the complete melody, comprising two variant *x* motifs and two variant *y* motifs, returns. The difference, however, is that, whereas in the first movement the tune encompassed the entire row (eleven of the twelve pitches, at any rate), it is adapted here to the pitches of a single segment – the ubiquitous major seventh chord. The theme is first heard in the codetta to the exposition where it outlines segment 1 of I^9, an F sharp major seventh (with the E sharp spelt as F natural) [Ex. 20 (x)]. The two *x* motifs are subject to various modifications during the course of the 'development' section [Ex. 20 (xi)] before the whole melody returns in the coda [Ex. 20 (xii)]. Now outlining segment 1 of I^{10} – the G major seventh chord that has been featured so prominently throughout the symphony – it is declaimed in unison on four horns to the accompaniment of jubilant fanfares on the heavy brass. (G, of course, is the pitch that is missing from the theme's initial appearance in the first movement.) As the symphony moves towards its triumphant conclusion, this is surely a moment of culmination that corresponds to Hepokoski's 'revelation of a higher or fuller condition'. Indeed, one's distinct impression is that this final version of the theme, where each constituent motif outlines segment 1 of the inversion of the row, is to be received as the 'true' version. Hitherto, so to speak, it could only be apprehended in fragments or 'distortions' and it is ultimately realizable in this fundamental form only as the outcome of the complete symphonic process in which the diatonic and tonal dimensions of the music finally transcend the circularity imposed by the note-row. It is a moment of apotheosis on both an emotional and on a technical level. In the technical sense, it hardly seems fanciful to suggest that the history of the theme throughout the work symbolizes the gradual ascendancy of the stable tonality that is implicit in the structure of the row and its gradual liberation from the inevitable circularity of the series. That this ultimately victorious outcome carries a strong emotional charge for the composer seems

Ex. 21: Symphony No. 1, IV, 4-14

indisputable given the sheer exultation of the music by means of which he expresses it.

One last variant of x^1 [Ex. 20 (xiii)] dominates the very end of the score as the progression of four major seventh chords featuring the note B (first heard in the coda of the opening *Allegro*) is reiterated several times before finally giving way to the blazing B major triad on which the symphony ends.

Ex. 22: Symphony No. 1, IV, 20-32

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As already mentioned, the finale of Symphony No. 1, like the opening movement, is conceived as a broad sonata-like structure, although it also evinces a number of interesting departures from the traditional form. It opens with a first subject group containing a number of highly differentiated ideas. The first of these is a distinctive rhythmic motif which is used throughout the movement both as an accompaniment

figure and as a generator of rhythmic tension [Ex. 21, *a*]. This figure initially articulates two alternating seventh chords – one on F sharp and the other on G –

Ex. 23: Symphony No. 1, IV, 46-52

and over these the trumpets announce the second principal idea, which is derived from both harmonies [Ex. 21, *b*] and which culminates in syncopated rhythmic motif [Ex. 21, *c*]. The sinewy semiquaver passage that ensues is based on the complete row and it leads to an emphatic fanfare-like idea on woodwind, horns and timpani [Ex. 22, *a* and *b*]. After a varied return of Ex. 21 *b*, we hear the last important component of the opening group: a majestic idea announced on full brasswind against Ex. 21 *a* on the strings [Ex. 23].

These opening paragraphs have the continuity and coherence of a single group of ideas, varied though the constituent elements may be, and they strike the listener as having the function of a first subject group. What follows is consequently heard as

having the character of a second group. Although the more or less continuous presence of the syncopated semiquaver motif connects the texture with what has gone before, there is a distinct new theme [Ex. 24], which, with its subsidiary material, is stated a number of times in different forms and in varied instrumental garb.   Unusually, however, not only does this section as a whole never recur, but there is no recapitulation of any of the material. The passage, therefore, seems to have the function of an episode – such as one might expect to find in a rondo – and as such to be outside the strict formal process of the unfolding sonata structure.

Ex. 24: Symphony No. 1, IV, 53-6

The exposition is brought to a close with a codetta featuring the motto theme, which has already been discussed above.   It is difficult to determine whether the restatement of Ex. 22 *b* that is heard at this point is intended to round off the exposition or announce the beginning of the central development section. In any case it serves to demarcate the boundary between the two.

The development itself can be divided into three phases. The first is largely devoted to a treatment of Ex. 23 (against the background of Ex. 21 *a*). The second commences with a variant of Ex. 22 *a*, and then proceeds to announce a new theme [Ex. 25], which has an important second element marked *x*. This pendant comprises four

Ex. 25: Symphony No. 1, IV, 137-44

chords, the top notes of the first two of which consist of a clear supertonic-tonic progression onto the note B. Furthermore, this succession of harmonies stands out from anything so far heard in the symphony by virtue of the fact that in the first and fourth chords – B, D sharp, F sharp and C sharp – the major seventh of the fundamental harmonic unit has been replaced by a major ninth. The introduction of this novel

sonority is startlingly effective in the context, and it emphatically draws attention to the significance of the melodic progression C sharp-B. The second phase of the development concludes with a number of further references to Ex. 23.

In the third and final phase, after a working out of the codetta idea, there occurs a mysterious passage in minims in the strings (against the syncopated semiquaver figure of Ex. 21 *a* in the timpani) which progresses through eleven of the twelve notes of the row – interestingly, as in the initial appearance of the 'motto theme' in the first movement, the pitch G is again omitted and G sharp is stated twice. This culminates in a fortissimo statement of Ex. 22 *b*, which is once again ambiguously situated in that it could be understood either to mark the end of the development or signal the beginning of the recapitulation.

The material of the exposition is now restated in a new order. Apart from the syncopated semiquaver figure, we hear Ex. 21 *b* only in its second version, followed by Ex. 23 This is succeeded by a new, although closely related, lyrical strain on the violins, which followed in turn by the sinewy semiquaver idea Ex. 22 *a*. The syncopated motif Ex. 21 *c* is then subjected to fairly extensive treatment in what amounts virtually to a subsidiary development section, and culminates in a brilliant climax on the crest of which Ex. 23 is heard on the woodwind.

Although the episode initially suggestive of second subject material does not return, the new theme introduced into the development [Ex. 25] appears instead and, together with its pendant, forms the basis of a lengthy paragraph. Its distinctive C sharp-B motif has a remarkable issue in a fragment of sonorous diatonic melody in the strings about midway through [Ex. 26]. For the first time in the work, Kinsella now presents a melodic line – derived from the ninth chord supporting it in the woodwind – that unmistakably and unambiguously posits B as a tonic. As can be seen from bar 314 of Ex. 26, there is, however, no immediate cadential affirmation of this implied tonic. But if resolution has been sidestepped, the strong expectation of an ultimate arrival on B has been created, nonetheless. The development of Ex. 25 continues to build to an intense climax leading to the coda, which, as has already been indicated, is invested with greater

significance for the symphony as a whole than simply rounding off the last movement. It should also be pointed out that in the final pages of the symphony the bass line assumes an unambiguously tonal contour and the alternating notes B, F sharp and E

Ex. 26: Symphony No. 1, IV, 309-15

clearly assume the functions of tonic, dominant and subdominant respectively. If the musical thinking informing this symphony is as I have described it, then the conclusion on a triad of B major is completely logical and the final emancipation of the triad itself from the restrictions of the note-row – represented by the shedding of the ubiquitous major seventh – constitutes the true goal of the entire work.

1.2 Symphony No. 2 (1987-88)

1.2.1 Kinsella's handling of the note-row in Symphony No. 2

Kinsella continues to explore the idea of the traditional four-movement symphony in this work.[90] Some forty minutes in duration, it is a substantial score and like its somewhat longer predecessor[91] it is written for a relatively modest full orchestra of double woodwind, brass and strings. The only extravagance Kinsella allows himself in the instrumentation of both of these early symphonies is a fourth trumpet. The harp is not used and in keeping with the restrained and often austere demeanour of the music percussion is restricted to timpani alone. The composer's sole concession to exotic instrumental colour is the celesta, which makes a number of brief but telling appearances in the present score.

In general, Symphony No. 2 evinces greater technical sophistication and expressive assurance than the earlier work: the music is at once more subtle in its means and, in the view of the present writer, more immediate in its import. It undoubtedly represents a notable advance in the development of Kinsella's individual idiom and accordingly merits close attention. In order to avoid unnecessary repetition, however, the ensuing discussion will survey briefly the first three movements and focus on the finale, a comprehensive analysis of which will serve to illustrate fully the characteristic compositional technique.

As Ex. 27 shows, the note-row on which Symphony No. 2 is based shares a number of important characteristics with that of Symphony No. 1. Here, too, the twelve pitches are subdivided into three four-note segments and these are employed in a manner very similar to that of the earlier work. Not surprisingly perhaps, given its significance in the sound-world of Kinsella's music, the sonority of the major seventh

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[90] Symphony No. 2 was first performed on 27 September 1989 by the RTÉ Symphony Orchestra, (conducted by Albert Rosen) in the National Concert Hall, Dublin.

[91] Symphony No. 1 is approximately forty-eight minutes in duration.

chord is once again prominently featured: as before, the first segment comprises the four constituent notes of this seemingly indispensable harmony.

Ex. 27: Symphony No. 2, note row
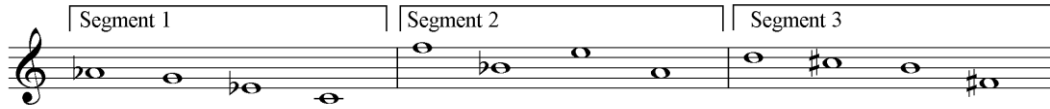
In relation to Symphony No. 1, the difference in the ordering of the remaining eight notes is minimal and amounts to little more than the interchange of two pitches: if the positions of the eighth and eleventh notes of Ex. 27 were switched the tone-rows of the two symphonies would be virtually identical.[92] Small though this difference may be, however, it has far-reaching effects on the compositional potential of the series. Crucially for Kinsella's purposes, the new row is not symmetrical in construction and the third segment constitutes a ninth chord rather than another seventh chord as previously [Ex. 28].[93]

Ex. 28
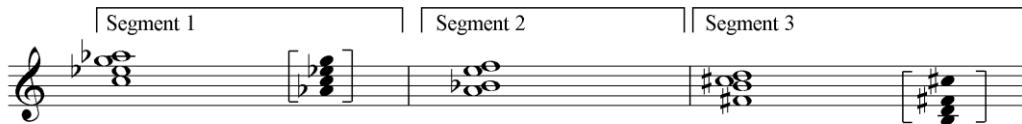
In its general technique, Symphony No. 2 comes closest to that of its predecessor in the importance that is placed on the outer segments of the row. In other respects,

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[92] That is to say, the outer segments would comprise two major seventh chords a tritone apart. The intervallic order would not, of course, be the same – but this is not the principal determining characteristic of the row as Kinsella uses it.

[93] The description of these vertical aggregates as 'ninths' and 'sevenths' is essentially a matter of convenience. Kinsella does not treat them in a traditional manner, and the terminology should not be taken to imply that the ninth and seventh notes themselves are discords that require resolution. As discussed above, Kinsella's handling of all vertical combinations of pitches is in accord with the general principle of the 'emancipation of the dissonance', although, in so far as it is the constitution, colour and layout of the sonorities that are important, the result often seems to owe more to Debussy, say, than to Schoenberg.

Kinsella's exploitation of the series as a generator of harmonic and thematic material shows considerably more ingenuity. As the structure of segment 3 suggests, Kinsella seems to have realised the need for greater variety in the thematic material than was possible in Symphony No. 1 with its over-dependence on the intervals of the major seventh chord. We have already seen how the unexpected introduction towards the end

Ex. 29

(i)

Segment 1

Segment 2

Segment 3

(ii)

Pentachord 1

Pentachord 2

(iii) Pentatonic scales

(iv) Segment formations

Seg. 1   Seg. 3

Seg. 1   Seg. 3

of the earlier work of a ninth chord (albeit built on a major rather than on a minor triad as here) facilitated a significant reshaping of the melodic contour in preparation for the ultimate emergence of B as a tonic. The composer is now careful to provide for such possibilities at the outset. But more importantly, in order to maximize the row's melodic potential Kinsella no longer confines himself to the obvious manipulation of its constituent segments. This departure from the technique of Symphony No. 1 can be considered to comprise two related stages. Firstly, he incorporates into the two outer segments their adjacent notes to form two five-note units: to the first segment of O^1 (pitches 1 to 4) the note F (pitch 5) is added; to the first segment of R^1 (pitches 9 to 12) the note A (pitch 8) is added. This results in two symmetrical pentachords a tritone apart

that not only yield various pentatonic scales but which also encompass both first segment (seventh) and third segment (ninth) formations [Ex. 29]. Secondly, he derives two symmetrical hexachords by applying a similar process to the remaining two pitches of the row [Ex. 30], and the hexatonic scales that result from different horizontal arrangements of these sub-sets provide the basis for much of the melodic content of the work.

The music gains immeasurably by this strategy. While the row continues to function as a point of orientation, this manner of handling it allows for a new suppleness of melodic invention and, accordingly, a much higher degree of effective differentiation between the various themes. By and large, the vertical sonorities continue to be derived from the outer four-note segments. But the possibility of deriving both first and third segment formations from each of the two pentatonic units now means that these aggregate types are available without traversing the entire chromatic spectrum of the complete series: one or other of them can now be precipitated as required from a single group of closely related pitches. The permeation of the music by a wide variety of

hexatonic and pentatonic scales also results in a far more complex rapprochement with tonality than heretofore.

**1.2.2   The first three movements – Movement I: *Allegro deciso*, Movement II: *Vivace*,
        Movement III: *Largo***

Because of the modified repeat of first subject material at the end of the exposition, the opening *Allegro deciso* is perhaps best understood as approximating to sonata-rondo form rather than to the more usual first-movement sonata form.   Its structure may be summarized as follows:

$$\| \colon A\text{-}B\text{-}A^1 \colon \| \quad C \quad A^2\text{-}B^1 \quad Coda$$

This departure from tradition has little impact on the import of the music, however: although it usually implies a somewhat looser structural organisation, the rondo aspect does not here entail any suggestion of the lightweight. On the contrary, the character of the thematic material, the contrasts between the subject groups and in particular the extensive central development section all ensure that the movement has the weight and complexity of a fully articulated sonata form appropriate to the opening *Allegro* of a large-scale symphony.

The principal element of A, the first subject group, embodies the row as it is given in Ex. 27 above. As can be seen in Ex. 31, the forceful opening is based on the pitches of segment 1 (the major seventh on A flat), with particular emphasis on the notes A flat and G. The continuation encompasses the remaining pitches of the series (with the exception of the note A which is omitted): the chattering woodwind element in bars 8 and 9 is based on segment 2 of the row, and the sextuplet at the end of bar 9 comprises the pitches of segment 3. After a return of the A flat and G of segment 1, a related subsidiary

Ex. 31: Symphony No. 2, I, 1-10

idea is heard in bar 12. This is based on a transposition of the row by a major third, the

first segment of which is a major seventh on C.[94] This harmonic juxtaposition adumbrates a set of related aggregates which plays a crucially important role in the symphony as a whole: namely, four major seventh chords each of which is built on one of the constituent pitches of a governing major seventh chord, or segment 1 of the row (in this case, A flat, C, E flat, and G). As will be discussed in due course, the final tonal outcome of the work is subtly determined by the background operation of a set of harmonic relationships of this kind.

After the subsidiary idea culminates in a brief climax, the A flat seventh aggregate is re-established and the passage that follows can be considered in the nature of a transition section. It is bounded at one end by a major seventh on A (immediately succeeding that on A flat) and at the other end by one on E flat.[95] The move from this E flat seventh aggregate to the C minor ninth on which the second subject group, B, is based, is a very good example of Kinsella's juxtaposition of first and third segment formations which are related through the same pentatonic unit. In marked contrast to the energetic opening, the second subject comprises a flowing lyrical idea on woodwind heard over a tremolando string chord that articulates the complete third segment aggregate [Ex. 32]. This theme is picked up and developed by the strings before it gives way to a passage based on a fanfare-like idea announced on four trumpets (marked *meno mosso* and *a tempo* in alternate bars), which functions as a codetta to B. Finally, there is a modified return of the principal theme, A¹, into which new material is interpolated before the movement returns to the beginning with the repeat of the entire exposition.

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[94] Since Kinsella's technique in this work does not involve systematic rotations of the series, there is little point in attempting to identify transpositions of the row by numbering them.

[95] As in the discussion of the harmonic content of Symphony No. 1, these vertical aggregates are so described purely for convenience. Kinsella's spelling is not consistent: sometimes (as in the opening bars of the present work reproduced in Ex. 31) he spells the pitches in accordance with the structure of a major seventh chord (A flat, C, E flat and G); here, on the other hand, the spelling is D sharp, G, A sharp and D natural, not E flat, G, B flat, D. Aggregates like this latter are more easily referred to conventionally as seventh chords in the text, and reproducing them as such in the analytical diagrams clarifies the underlying structural organisation of the music. In all direct quotations from Kinsella's works, however, the spelling is as it occurs in the scores.

Ex. 32: Symphony No. 2, I, 53-60

The structure of this opening section invites comment in a number of respects. One wonders, for example, why Kinsella chose to bring the exposition to a close with a restatement of the principal ideas, A¹ – why, in other words, he decided to cast the

Allegro deciso as a type of sonata rondo. The obvious difficulty with this approach is that the principal elements of the first subject are now heard five times at the same pitch in the course of the movement. While this problem of frequent thematic repetition is one that must be addressed in any rondo or sonata-rondo structure, it has been persuasively argued that a successful solution depends largely on the suitability of the principal material for such treatment.[96] Tovey quotes Hubert Parry's view that 'the frequent and desirable return of a melody of great beauty' is characteristic of the rondo.[97] But the theme must not only be interesting enough to bear extensive repetition, it must also justify repetition in the sense that its recurrences should always seem both natural and inevitable. However decorated or modified they may be, the reappearances of the rondo theme are not generally planned as moments of dramatic intensity, but are rather points of repose or relaxation following an increase of tension generated by the digressive episodes. This is equally true of the sonata rondo as it is of the simple rondo. In the present case, the return of high-tension material reverses the psychological dynamic of what is an essentially lyrical pattern. It is also self-defeating because the repetition of explosive gestures likes those that occur at the beginning of the present movement risks rhetorical overstatement and, with it, dissipation of the very intensity such repetition is presumably intended to achieve. Both the character and the motivic style of Kinsella's highly-charged opening theme, therefore – which is ideal for building a developed sonata structure – renders it less suitable for rondo-like treatment. It is not that Kinsella is unaware of this danger. But while the contrasting ideas introduced into A[1] may forestall to some extent the feeling of repetitiveness when the exposition is heard for the first time, it is doubtful whether it is sufficient to do so the second time round and one is not fully persuaded that a condensed repeat and a quicker move into the development section might not have been more effective. Despite these reservations, however, the

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[96] See, for example, Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, 123, where this aspect of sonata rondo is discussed. In his *Musical Structure and Design* (New York, 1966), 88, Cedric Thorpe Davie sums up the position succinctly: 'It [sonata rondo] differs from the sonata form, anatomically speaking, in that the themes tend to be well-defined melodies rather than organised groups of material.'

[97] Donald Francis Tovey, *Beethoven*, (London, 1944), 122.

sheer force and sweep of the music guarantees the persuasiveness of the movement as a whole.

More interestingly, the exposition affords several noteworthy instances of the application of the composer's new approach to the manipulation of his basic material. The interpolations inserted into A¹ are a good case in point. The first provides an excellent additional example of how the pentatonic units facilitate an easy alternation between first and third segment formations. As can be seen in Ex. 33, the third segment of the original row (bars 107-8) gives way to a closely related first segment in bar 109. The A flat from the first segment (now notated as G sharp) persists throughout the passage, and ultimately seems to pull the third segment up a perfect fifth (bars 119-20 and 121-22).

Ex. 33

The second interpolation, which occurs after the return of A flat in bar 123 and the addition of G in bar 130, consists of three major seventh chords built respectively on C, E flat and G of segment 1 of the original row; an A flat chord duly follows and thus all the elements of the important constellation of harmonies discussed above are heard successively for the first time.

Ex. 34 presents a summary of the harmonic organisation of the complete exposition. As the diagram shows, this is based on the original row supplemented by two principal transpositions, the first a semitone higher (with the order of the second and third segments reversed) and the second a perfect fifth higher. The first segment of the second transposition, a diatonic seventh on E flat, occurs between the first and third segments of the first transposition and this interleaving of different transpositions represents a further new strategy in the handling of the note-row. The tension arising out of the abrupt tonal shift from the first group to the transition (from the seventh on A flat to that a semitone higher) is maintained within the transition itself as the music moves to the E flat seventh aggregate, which, as mentioned above, then seamlessly mutates into the C minor ninth of the second group.

Ex. 34

As in Symphony No. 1, the sense of an operative tonal centre is still very much dependent on the amount of space given to a particular harmony: here, the emphasis falls firmly on the first segments of both the original row and the second transposition (a

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perfect fifth higher), and the intervening row is exploited in such a way that the closely related third segment (the second subject) is prominently highlighted. This disposition of the rows creates a strong underlying tonic-dominant polarity across the first and second groups. Other transpositions of the series as well as various segments derived from the pentatonic units occur freely, but Kinsella takes care that they remain subordinate to the overall tonal plan and the amount of space they are given ensures they are perceived as incidental elaborations and digressions. This extract not only demonstrates Kinsella's unusual exploitation of the note-row but it also clearly illustrates his discovery of how fundamental pitch relationships can be released from the series in such a way as to function as a viable substitute for the organising power of traditional tonality.

The development section of the movement, C, falls into two broad subsections. The first of these begins quietly and is largely based on the motif marked *x* in Ex. 35 below. This motif, first heard in the woodwind after a sustained melody in the lower strings (also partly shown in Ex. 35), is subsequently transferred to the strings where it is forms the basis of the accompaniment to a sustained solo on first horn. After a brief climax, the second section follows in which various melodic fragments recalling both first and second subjects are tossed about above urgent, scurrying tremolando quavers in the strings. A steady increase in tension leads to an emphatic return of A. There is only one, somewhat condensed restatement of the first subject group in the recapitulation, and in keeping with the composer's practice in Symphony No. 1, the second group, B, is heard at the same pitch as in the exposition. The coda is noteworthy for its insistence on a vertical aggregate that has not hitherto been featured conspicuously – a third segment (ninth) on C sharp – which, together with various related aggregates that amplify it, has the force of a subdominant that impels the movement towards its goal. A brief *tutti* A flat, prolonged by a dramatic *decrescendo* roll on the timpani, is followed by a *pianissimo* recollection in the strings of the opening minor ninth (A flat-G) after which a final, barely audible *pizzicato* A flat brings the movement to an end.

Ex. 35: Symphony No. 2, I, 142a-148

The scherzo movement (although, again, not so described) is, like that of Symphony No. 1, placed second of the four. In some respects, this impetuous *Vivace* is perhaps the most remarkably individual movement in the symphony. There is a minimum of thematic material and Kinsella articulates the structure principally by

means of contrasting textures of which staccato woodwind crotchets above bustling, detached quavers in the strings – established right at the beginning, as Ex. 36 shows – is the most important. Given that one of Kinsella's principal compositional problems is how best to embody the succession of diatonic seventh and ninth aggregates which constitute the substance of the music, this approach represents a very satisfactory solution. In its radical reductionism it recalls the corresponding movement in Symphony No. 1, but the increased variety both in melodic contour and harmonic content,
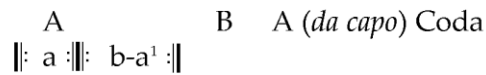
Ex. 36: Symphony No. 2, II, 1-12

made possible by the composer's modified handling of the row, ensures a much more brilliant and persuasive result.

A schematic summary of the form of the movement, such as that given below, suggests a more differentiated thematic content that is actually the case. The pentatonic

<div style="text-align:center">

A   B   A (*da capo*) Coda

‖: a :‖: b-a^1 :‖

</div>

aggregate heard at the outset (Ex. 36) is succeeded by a similar aggregate a semitone higher, articulated by a variant of the opening texture. When identical harmony yet another a semitone higher follows at bar 29, however, it is articulated by the nearest approach to a distinct theme we have heard so far [Ex. 37 (i)]. The two elements (marked *x* and *y*) form the basis of most of the principal melodic material of the movement, the exception being the second contrasting strain of A/a that follows immediately in bar 42 [Ex. 37 (ii)]. The conclusion of this subsection is marked by a return of the initial texture and a varied inversion of Ex. 37 (i) [Ex. 37 (iii)]. The A/b section that ensues is virtually athematic and is perhaps best considered a development of the texture heard at the beginning of the movement. A/a^1 commences at bar 129 with the return of the varied inversion of *x* on two bassoons [Ex. 37 (iv)], which then pick up the staccato crotchet movement to the accompaniment of repeated *pianissimo* quavers on the timpani. Joined by the horns and the rest of the woodwind, and with the addition of the bustling quavers in the strings, the music builds quickly to the principal climax. This is crowned by a new idea, pealed out splendidly on trumpets, which is derived from the germ *y* of Ex. 37 (i) [Ex. 37 (v)] and is based on the same pentatonic aggregate with which the movement began (D-F-A-C-E).

The scherzo is linked to the somewhat slower trio, or B section, by twelve bars of a very soft high tremolando A on the first violins, punctuated by interjections from timpani and celesta and marked *rallentando.* This B section, also derived entirely from *y* of Ex. 37 (i), is in the nature of an extended meditation on the trumpet melody that

brought the scherzo to close [Ex. 37 (vi)]. After the repeat of A (*da capo*) there is brief

Ex. 37: summary of principal thematic content of *Vivace*

(i)

A/a

[ww]

x

y

ff

[30-35]

(ii)   second strain

[ob]

p

cresc.

f decresc.

p

[42-53]

(iii)

[ww, hns]   *x varied inversion*

ff

[70-76]

(iv)

a¹

x varied inversion

[bsns]

pp

[129-131]

(v)   concluding strain derived from *y* above, climax of **a¹**

[153-162]

(vi)

B

[176-185]

coda in which the *x* and *y* motifs (out of which so much of the musical fabric has been wrought) make a final appearance. This time, however, they are heard simultaneously, a delightful touch that seems to conclude the argument by tying the two ideas together into a final knot [Ex.38].

Ex. 38: Symphony No. 2, II, 254-262

If the problem of effective thematic differentiation still remained to be solved satisfactorily in the slow movement of Symphony No. 1, it is addressed with far greater success in the *Largo* of the present work. This movement is cast as a three-part form with an abbreviated return of the opening section:

$$
\begin{array}{lll}
\text{A} & \text{B} & \text{A} \\
\text{a-b-a}^1 \text{ c [codetta]} & \text{d} & \text{b}^1\text{-a}^2 \text{ c}^1 \text{[coda]}
\end{array}
$$

Ex. 39 shows the complete A/a section, which serves to illustrate Kinsella's approach. The substance of the music still consists of the articulation of a succession of basic chord formations. But whereas in the earlier symphony these consisted almost entirely of major seventh aggregates, with all the restrictions this entailed, here the basic formation is the hexachord. Of themselves, the hexachords obviously allow for considerably more variety. But, in addition, Kinsella supplements each of them with pitches from the complementary hexachord of the appropriate transposition of the row.

Ex. 39: Symphony No. 2, III, 1-14

This is a technique he has exploited before, but never so consistently or to such
purpose and the flexibility of the movement's melodic contours is largely due to the
contribution these additional pitches make as passing notes, appoggiaturas and other
embellishments. Bars 1 to 5 of the movement, for example, are founded on the

hexachord D-F-A-C-E-G. To this he adds the pitches G sharp, A sharp and C sharp from the complementary hexachord: A sharp can be heard as an appoggiatura to A in bar 3 (in bassoon and horn); C sharp as a passing note in the same bar (in the strings); G sharp as an appoggiatura in bar 5 (also in the strings). Ex. 40 gives a summary of the harmonic content of the complete A section (the pitches borrowed from the complementary hexachords at each point are represented by the black noteheads).

Ex. 40

It is interesting to note that the hexachord on G sharp, complementary to that on D, eventually emerges from the background to become the basis of, firstly, A/c, the codetta (as shown in Ex. 37 above), and subsequently of the climactic central B section. Although the hexachord on D is re-established with the return of A¹, that on G sharp is ultimately reasserted and the movement ends on an aggregate of three of its pitches: G sharp (in the bass), D sharp and A sharp. The conclusion on G sharp (A flat) undoubtedly connects the *Largo* with the opening movement of the symphony, but the spelling as G sharp, together with the prominence of the pitch A throughout the movement (as well as throughout the previous movement, which ended on A) also establishes a connection with the finale which is based on a transposition a semitone higher of the original row, the first two pitches of which are A and G sharp.

1.2.3   Movement IV: *Allegro marcato* – a detailed examination of the formal and tonal organisation

While complex in detail, the finale is straightforward in its broad outlines. It conforms to the plan of a simple rondo in which the principal thematic group (corresponding to the 'rondo theme') and its modified restatements are separated by contrasting episodes and the movement as a whole is rounded off with a coda. Its basic structure might be schematized as A - B - A^1 - C - A^2 - Coda.

In choosing to bring a large-scale symphony to an end with a relatively lightweight structure like a rondo, Kinsella is faced with the problem that if the finale is markedly less weighty than the preceding three movements it risks being anticlimactic. Achieving the appropriate degree of intensity to circumvent this normally entails recourse to procedures of thematic development. But by its nature, the rondo imposes definite limitations in this regard, and a balance must be struck between the looser organisation of the simple additive form – appropriate to the resolution of the accumulated tensions of the symphony – and the need for complexity of thematic working out.

As symphonic form began to expand in the eighteenth century, composers evolved the sonata-rondo as a solution to this particular finale problem. This ingenious hybrid allowed for the effective combination of simple melodic directness on the one hand, and a sophistication of thematic argument on the other.   The A - B - A - C - A - B - A scheme accommodated the regular return of the rondo theme or refrain, provided for a first episode, B, in the dominant key (corresponding to the second subject of sonata form) which in due course could be recapitulated in the tonic, and a central episode, C, which could function as a development section.[98]

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[98] Hugh Ottaway in Alec Robertson and Denis Stevens eds., *The Pelican History of Music 3: Classical and Romantic*, 66, suggests that this form was largely Haydn's creation, and he adds that by 'fusing the principles of rondo and sonata, Haydn gave the finale a wider range of expression, and in particular a dramatic quality, while preserving much of its *buffo* gaiety.'

Interestingly, Kinsella does not adopt a solution of this kind here, although he retains one feature that recalls the symmetry of the sonata-rondo: the recurrence near the end of the movement – after the final return of the 'rondo theme', A² – of portion of the first episode, B. This partial recapitulation of the first episode is not something one expects to find in a simple rondo, and although the present writer inclines to the view that, in context, the passage in question has an unmistakable coda-like function, it can nonetheless be considered to bring the structure a step closer to the traditional sonata-rondo concept.[99]

In Kinsella's finale, however, the central episode, C, is not a development. Whatever thematic elaboration is required must therefore be accommodated within the individual sections, which are accordingly very much extended. The result is a movement that totals 495 bars in length and is approximately eleven minutes in duration, and while the schematic summary of the form given above reflects the overall general design, it does not adequately convey either the variety of the thematic material within each of the movement's structural subdivisions or the flexibility with which Kinsella manipulates this material.

In the abstract, the nature of the problem that Kinsella has set himself is clear: how to attain a sufficient level of developmental interest without sacrificing either the clarity of outline or the sense of formal relaxation which, after all, is the *raison d'être* of the simple rondo in this kind of context.[100] As the actual movement itself constitutes the solution to the problem, its structure will be discussed here in some detail. But the music also affords a particularly clear example of the development of the composer's personal harmonic language and of his handling of tonality since Symphony No. 1 and in addition consequently provides a suitable opportunity to examine closely these aspects of Kinsella's compositional technique.

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[99] An alternative schematic presentation of the form might accordingly be suggested as follows: A - B (i) (ii) - A¹ - C - A² - B (ii) - Coda.

[100] See, for example, Donald Francis Tovey, *Musical Articles from the Encyclopaedia Britannica* (London, 1944), 229: 'The last part of a work that moves in time will always relieve the strain on the attention. Hence the large number and importance of rondo-finales…'

Ex. 41: Symphony No. 2, IV, 1-15

The finale opens *piano,* with a bustling theme in detached quavers in the violins, supported by a *staccato* crotchet figure in the lower strings. This composite idea establishes a mood of serious good humour at the outset, but one that also conveys a definite sense of latent energy [Ex. 41]. The material undoubtedly possesses the quality of memorable individuality necessary to sustain the degree of repetition to which the principal idea of a rondo is usually subject. But while it also has what Tovey describes as the typically lyrical 'tuneful character' of the rondo theme (unlike the principal subject of the first movement), it is neither foursquare in structure nor closed in form.[101]

Kinsella has conceived it, rather, as an intrinsically self-developing idea, and, as such, it exemplifies his strategy in tackling the compositional problem outlined above: its bluff tunefulness is combined with a structural open-endedness designed to allow the melodic line to evolve either by spinning out variants of existing motifs or, alternatively, by moulding itself into fresh contours. The more or less continuous quaver movement

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[101] Ibid., 193.

gives an overall sense of unity to this developing line, as does the accompaniment figure, which itself quickly acquires a supplementary variant consisting of four repeated crotchets (see bar 11). In fact, these two basic rhythmic patterns (marked *x* and *x¹* in Ex. 41 above), introduced unobtrusively here as background elements, become one of the principal unifying agents of the entire movement. The initial statement of this idea comprises three irregular phases (totalling twenty-eight bars), which together form the first paragraph, a, of the three-part structure into which the opening section (or 'rondo theme') falls: A/a - b (i) (ii) - a¹.

The manner in which Kinsella handles the harmonic content of the passage is, perhaps, the most important factor in achieving a sense of unity, however: it is the principal means by which he gives his irregularly phrased, evolving line the force of a single coherent utterance. The note-row continues to remain the background source from which all harmonic and melodic dimensions of the music are derived, and the principal transposition on which the finale is based is given in Ex. 42 below.[102]

Ex. 42
Row

Of its three constituent four-note segments, it is still the first and third that are most frequently heard a vertical aggregates. Each of these is supplemented – in melodic more often than in harmonic contexts – with two additional pitches from the central segment, which divides the row into the two hexachords of Ex. 43 according to the procedure described above.

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[102] In musical examples that present analytical abstracts of the harmonic/tonal structures of the music, the spelling (the employment of accidentals) is not always in conformity with Kinsella's notation in the score, which has frequently been modified to reveal more clearly the nature of the constituent structural elements and the correspondences between them. See footnote 94 above.

Ex. 43

Hexachords

As previously discussed, the pitches of these hexachords can be arranged to yield a variety of hexatonic scales, which give the texture of the music a consistently modal feel. But the inherent tonal ambiguity of the scales themselves together with the fact that none of them gains ascendancy – different scalic patterns are often fleetingly suggested in close succession or even simultaneously – means that no tonal centre is ever established conclusively. Each of the hexachords constitutes what might be considered a matrix[103] of freely related pitches, which allude to a constant succession of transient tonal regions as they interact. Paradoxically, the source of this continuous ambiguity, the hexachord itself, represents the one stable factor in the texture.

The opening twenty-eight bars of the movement are almost entirely derived from the first of the row's two hexachords. The qualification 'almost' is necessary because two additional pitches are also heard, although they do not disturb the prevailing equilibrium. The first of these is the F in bar 2 (the seventh note of the row), a piquant recurring feature of the principal melody, which is treated in the manner of a chromatic appoggiatura. The second is the D sharp in bar fifteen, which momentarily gives rise to a complete seven-note scale, although the tonal implications are ignored and it remains an incidental occurrence.

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[103] The work 'matrix' is used both here and throughout the present discussion in the general dictionary sense of 'a medium in which something is produced or developed; a setting or environment in which a particular activity or process occurs' (Shorter OED, adapted), rather than in the specific technical sense it has come to acquire in the analysis of serial music of 'a presentation of all of the versions of a particular series in a for whereby Primes and Inversions, with their retrogrades are combined into a single square'(Arnold Whittall, *The Cambridge Introduction to Serialism*, (Cambridge, 2008), 274).

Ex. 44

Hexachord

First segment formation

Third segment formation
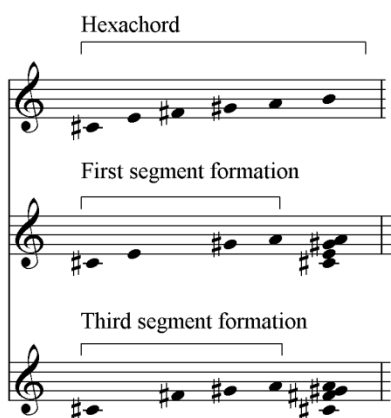
One of the most interesting results of dividing the row into two symmetrical hexachords is that each of them contains within itself the four constituent notes of both first and third segment formations [Ex. 44]. As already mentioned, these two closely related pitch structures are fundamental to the distinctive sonority of the music, and they crystallize out of the various hexachordal matrices and dissolve back into them throughout the movement. For example, the A, G sharp, E and C sharp of the first four-note segment are particularly prominent in the A/a section, with G sharp and A predominating as bass notes. But the F sharp is also conspicuously present, especially in the melodic line (attention is in fact emphatically drawn to it by the F natural which precedes its first appearance) and, substituting it for E yields the third segment formation.

If any overall sense of tonality emerges, however, it seems to be centred more on C sharp than on any other pitch, with the reiterated G sharps in the bass (and elsewhere in the texture) supporting it in a dominant-like relationship. Accordingly, in the summary of the harmonic and tonal organisation presented in Ex. 45 the pitches of the hexachord are arranged as a hexatonic scale commencing on C sharp. But the tonality remains indeterminate, and the centrality of C sharp is never more than a tentative proposition.

Ex. 45

The A/a section culminates in a bar of four repeated crotchets on the notes C sharp and G sharp in the woodwind, underpinned by four crotchet G sharps on the timpani. The thematic significance of this pervasive rhythmic pattern is finally confirmed by the material of the following A/b(i) section, which continues the steady crotchet tread as its basic movement [Ex. 46], a simple device that allows Kinsella to establish the first element of this new section as a natural development of the foregoing material. He now also moves away from the pitches of the opening hexachord for the first time, and together with the temporary cessation of the hitherto continuous quaver movement, the rapidly shifting harmony of A/b(i) constitutes the principal contrasting feature of the section.

As can be seen from both Ex. 45 above and Ex. 46 below, each individual vertical combination of pitches is derived from the four notes of the third segment of the row in various transpositions. Even the *legato* clarinet line in bars 33 to 36 consists of a varied horizontal transposition of the same segment, each note of which is also a constituent note of the crotchet chord sounded against it (shown as *x* in Ex. 45). The transpositions of the third segment that Kinsella employs here include all six pitches of the second hexachord of the row, thus all twelve notes of the chromatic scale are also heard for the first time. It should be clear, however, that by now Kinsella's compositional technique

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has scarcely retained even the most tenuous connection with orthodox serial procedures: not only has the unifying principal of the chromatic scale receded so far into the

Ex. 46: Symphony No. 2, IV, 29-35

background as to be imperceptible, but the row itself is hardly discernable as a complete entity in the textures of the music.

The pitches of the final transposition of segment 3 heard in A/b(i) all belong to the first hexachord, which is thus partially reintroduced at this point together with the reiterated crotchet G sharps (in the timpani). This links the end of A/b(i) with the second element of the middle section, A/b(ii) (bars 41 – 51), where Kinsella employs, not quite the complete hexatonic matrix of the opening but the pentatonic variant, the final note, B, not being sounded.

It is, perhaps, surprising that this harmonic move is not postponed to coincide with the return of the principal thematic idea, but anticipations of this kind are a recurrent feature of Kinsella's style. There is, however, some compensation for this unexpected reversion to the opening pitches in the contrasting nature of the thematic material, which is of a decidedly more urgent and aspiring character. As can be seen in Ex. 47 below, although very simply conceived, the paragraph consists entirely of the development of a single rhythmic figure, underpinned by reiterated crotchet G sharps in the timpani.

Ex. 47: Symphony No. 2, IV, 40-44

Transferred to the strings, these repeated G sharps continue into the a¹ section, where, supplemented by the original syncopated version of the pattern on timpani and woodwind, they accompany an emphatic *fortissimo* return of the principal idea on trumpets (bar 52). A *pianissimo* counterstatement on strings, similar to the opening of the movement, immediately ensues and the texture thins out to high repeated G sharps (bars 68 and 69), which, with the addition of G naturals a semitone below, prepare for the dramatic harmonic shift which marks the beginning of the first episode, B.

The two distinct parts into which this episode falls, B(i) and B(ii), are sharply differentiated. The first is the nearest approximation to a discrete development section

that Kinsella allows himself in that some of the principal ideas are carried forward from A. Both of the basic rhythmic patterns shown in Ex. 41 above (*x* and *x¹*) are extensively employed and the original syncopated version underpins the climactic *fortissimo* in bars 86 and 87. Furthermore, the resumption of continuous quaver movement from bar 86 onwards clearly recalls the character of the 'rondo theme', the open-ended evolving nature of which allows the new melodic contours to be felt as related to it, although it is not actually referred to. In keeping with its quasi-developmental character, this section makes a more fragmentary impression than anything that has been heard so far, an impression that is reinforced by the continually shifting harmonies. Based entirely on first segment formations throughout – commencing with the first four notes of the initial statement of the row heard at the outset of the symphony (A flat, G, E flat and C) – B(i) thus provides welcome harmonic variety at an important juncture in the movement. It is also the longest span of music heard so far (some forty-eight bars) to be continually on the move harmonically.[104] As can be seen from the abstract in Ex. 48 below, the

Ex. 48

B (i)

B (ii)

transpositions employed are organised in ascending thirds (with the central transposition expanded to encompass the pitches of the complete hexachord), until the pattern is broken at the end.

Kinsella also achieves a convincing sense of forward propulsion here by a general acceleration in the rate at which the transpositions succeed one another, again until the

[104] Compared with the eleven bars of A/b(i).

end where there is a brief opening out before the music moves into B(ii). If the fragmentary, restless nature of B(i) is an effective foil to the overall stability of A, it also sets into relief the second section of the episode, B(ii), where for some twenty bars the harmony once again remains completely static. A long, lyrical melodic line unfolds in octaves the strings [Ex. 49]. It is initially based on the pitches F, E, C and A of a transposed first segment but the subsequent addition of the pitches D and G articulates the complete hexachord [see Ex. 48 above].

Consistent with Kinsella's characteristic approach, this melody is also a self-developing idea spun out of these six notes into two expansive paragraphs. It represents a moment of considerable intensity, and the pared-down textures and simple scoring throws the soaring line into relief as it rises to an ardent climax. Immediately after this climax has been attained, there is an abrupt shift to the pitches of the beginning of the movement (bars 137-8). The hexachord of the B(ii) melody is then partially restored, but with the emphasis now on the pitches of the third segment formation (supplemented, as can be seen in Ex. 48 by a second closely related transposition). After a mere four bars, however, this is supplanted once more by the third segment formation of the opening hexachord – A, G sharp, F sharp and C sharp – in preparation for the first return of the 'rondo theme', A^1.

There is only a partial recapitulation of the opening material at this point, although it commences dramatically with a preparatory passage based on a development of the initial bar of the theme (bar 1 in Ex. 1 above) and the repeated crotchet G sharps, two ideas which are now brought into direct melodic relation with each other. Against a complete A major seventh chord in the trombones and tuba (segment 1 of the row), this passage is presented *fortissimo* on the strings while four trumpets simultaneously announce an augmented version of the theme's opening bar. From this preliminary gesture emerges a much-abbreviated version of the principal idea of the 'rondo theme', A/a, first at the original pitch and subsequently transposed down a perfect fifth [see Ex. 50].

Ex. 49: Symphony No. 2, IV, 117-123

After a mere seven bars at the transposed pitch the characteristic detached quaver movement gives way to a more legato line in the first violins which leads to the second episode, C.[105] The contrasting secondary ideas of the 'rondo theme' – A/b(i) and A/b(ii) – are neither recapitulated nor referred to here, but Kinsella does introduce a new textural element– an oscillating semitone (C sharp and D) in semiquavers in the woodwind which accompanies the transposed variant of A/a. This oscillating semiquaver texture also serves as a link with the ensuing episode, throughout the greater part of which it functions as an accompaniment.

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[105] It is interesting to note that this passage (bars 174-181) also includes the pitch G sharp (not shown in Ex.50). This addition, which could be considered a borrowing from the previous hexachord, results in a seven-note scale (A major), although, as before when this occurred, it remains an incidental occurrence and the tonal implications are not followed through.

Ex. 50

A¹

145 - 67   168 - 82

One unusual feature of Kinsella's approach is worth drawing attention to here. It has already been remarked how he shows a preference for anticipating statements of his principal themes by returning to the tonality or pitch matrix on which they are based in advance of their actual appearance. As we have seen, this happens with the lead in to a¹ in the opening section of the movement. It is also the case with the return of 'rondo theme' both in A¹, and, to anticipate, in A². He seems to prefer that the material should emerge out of an already prepared tonal background, rather than have the return of both theme and tonality coincide. While in the present instance one could conceded that this procedure is not inappropriate given the unemphatic character of the 'rondo theme' itself, it has one general disadvantage in that it prevents restatements of material from being articulated as decisive moments of arrival. On the other hand, however, there is a corresponding advantage in that the introduction of new material can, by way of contrast, be all the more effectively exploited. And, interestingly, Kinsella avails himself fully of this possibility. Kinsella is keenly aware that an eventual move away from a single prolonged chord or pitch matrix can be a momentous occurrence in the right context, all the more so if the device is sparingly used, and with the sudden shift in harmony that marks the beginning of each of the two episodes, he creates moments of expansiveness that produce an exhilarating sense of fresh tonal spaces opening out. The effect recalls those moments in the development of the first movement of Beethoven's *Pastoral* Symphony alluded to earlier, where the repeated chord of B flat major eventually yields to D major creating a bright new harmonic vista, and later where the same process is repeated with the chords of G major and E major. Kinsella's handling of harmonic and tonal resources makes this kind of effect readily available to him. Given

Ex. 51: Symphony No. 2, IV, 183-7

that a comparatively slow moving harmonic background is an essential feature of his style, the challenge, in fact, is how to hold in reserve the most telling chordal juxtapositions until they are really needed. This is something that he undoubtedly realises here with a new degree of sophistication and a deeper awareness of its potential for the articulation of the musical architecture.

Just as the mood of the music changed at the beginning of episode B when the A flat major chord was sounded for the first time in the movement, so the C major seventh heard at the outset of episode C also alters the emotional atmosphere [Ex. 51]. The first of the two broad sections into which this second episode can be divided, C(i), commences *pianissimo* in bar 183 with cellos and double basses outlining the notes of the C major seventh chord (incidentally, the pitches of a transposed segment 1 in retrograde order –

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E, G, B and C). It is heard beneath divided violins sustaining the same pitches, reinforced by the first oboe on the note C and amplified by semiquaver oscillations on flutes and clarinets and by arpeggios on the celesta (bar 183).   This C major harmony is twice intensified: firstly, in bar 184 when divided violas (supported by the woodwind semiquavers and the celesta arpeggios) add the pitches G sharp and D sharp which, in effect, results in a combination of C major and E major seventh chords; and then again in bar 186 when the same additional pitches are re-sounded, but now with the further addition of the notes D and F sharp (in effect, turning both seventh chords into major ninths).   The harmony relaxes onto an F major seventh in bar 187 although the cellos and double basses still continue with notes of the C major seventh below it.   By bar 189 the F major seventh harmony is free of foreign elements and two bars later a melodic line emerges on the first oboe – growing out of the sustained C – that counterbalances the earlier rising melody in the bass by falling through the notes of the chord from a three-

Ex. 52

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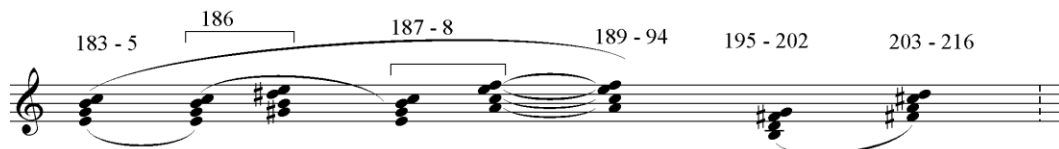
leger-line F. A second paragraph then ensues which is constructed along similar lines, although it modifies the previous tonal relationship of a fourth – C to F – by moving a fifth from G to D. As in the preceding paragraph, the first chord, the G major seventh, is articulated by a rising line on double basses and second bassoon (with the semiquaver oscillations now in the violins); and the second chord, the D major seventh, by a descending phrase on the first clarinet recalling the earlier oboe melody. This section is rounded off with repetitions of the syncopated crotchet pattern, which descend through the pitches of the D major seventh on *pizzicato* violas and cellos prolonging the chord for some fourteen bars [See Ex. 52].

Although the broad analysis of this present movement into 'rondo theme' and episodes is relatively straightforward, the subdivision of the component sections is not always unproblematic. Moments do occur, certainly, which obviously mark the beginning of something new within these sections. The opening of the second part of this episode, C(ii), for example, is a case in point: the harmony moves from the D major seventh chord at the end of C(i) to a seventh on A flat (bar 217), a dramatic shift that also coincides with the introduction of a new thematic idea and a significant change of instrumental colour. But while C(i) can be understood to consist of two fairly distinct counterbalancing paragraphs as described above, C(ii) is far more complex in its asymmetrical organisation. More than double the length of the previous subsection and thematically more prolix, it nonetheless resists analysis in terms of smaller constituent units. The urgent progression of a musical argument in which each event emerges cogently out of the preceding one produces a strong sense of structural seamlessness, and suggests that this substantial section is best considered as a single unbroken span.

The chain of events that comprises C(ii) can, nonetheless, be described and the function of each of its different stages clarified. The articulation by means of semiquaver oscillations of the chain of seventh chords out of which the first paragraph is constructed links it with the preceding material, as do the ongoing references to the syncopated crotchet pattern. But a new mood is established. Beneath the semiquaver movement in the violins, three trombones and a tuba enunciate in unison, *pianissimo,* an ominous

sounding theme, which is later reinforced by a single trumpet and four horns as the dynamic level rises gradually. This prevailing atmosphere of dark foreboding is compounded by the restlessness of the rapidly shifting harmonies (bars 217-232). These sixteen bars culminate in a positive assertion of the syncopated crotchet pattern, however, firstly on strings (bar 233), and, then, after nine bars of continuous *crescendo*, *fortissimo* on four trumpets. This marks the first stage of the principal climax of the movement as a whole. Although the texture thins out immediately it produces no sense of a descent from this climax. The effect is rather of regaining one's breath in preparation for a yet more emphatic assertion. And this is exactly what happens. Over the following sixteen bars the music marshals its resources, as it were, and the energy that has been latent since the very beginning of the movement is mobilized. The accumulation of tension is eventually released in a shattering, almost brutal climax on a transposed third segment of the row – F, E, D and A – with the pitch A predominating (bar 263). With the resumption of quaver movement in the brass (using the same four pitches), the dynamic level quickly drops, the tension ebbs and the music sinks into quietude over repeated As in the strings.

The pitch E is finally isolated from the four-note segment and immediately supplemented by the notes G sharp, B and D sharp, and subsequently by C sharp. This pentatonic matrix, underpinned by repeated crotchet G sharps, marks the beginning of the transition to the return of the 'rondo theme'. It is succeeded by the pitches of the original hexachord at bar 285 and, fascinatingly, as if finally to make explicit the elusive tonal basis of the movement, a hexatonic scale on C sharp is unambiguously stated over two octaves on solo clarinet above repeated G sharps – now possessing an unmistakable dominant function – on the strings (supported by a roll on the timpani) [Ex. 53]. This brief moment of tonal confirmation is prolonged by a repeat of the same passage on flute and bassoon before the principal material, A^2, returns in bar 293. Minor modifications apart, the final restatement of the 'rondo theme' parallels the initial presentation, both in substance – all the material recurs, including the central contrasting ideas b(i) and b(ii) – and in pitch, which throughout is the same as at the beginning of the movement.

Kinsella, however, transforms the end of a¹ and substantially extends it. The extension falls into two parts: the first (until bar 384) remains closely related to a¹, both tonally and thematically. As Ex. 54 shows, with the exception of a brief internal digression, it essentially comprises a prolongation of the basic hexachord.

Ex.53: Symphony No. 2, IV, 267 - 89

In the second part of the extension, the relationship with a¹ becomes thematically more tenuous and there is a decided move away from the pitches of the hexachord. Harmonically, a higher level of dissonance – resulting from the combination of either entire or partial first segment formations a semitone apart – serves to undermine the sense of stability which had been regained with the return of the 'rondo theme' and the restoration of the pitches of the opening hexachord.

What is of particular interest here is that the principal harmonic focus is now on a transposed segment 1, a diatonic seventh on C sharp, that has not been heard in the course of the movement until now, and the introduction of which has far reaching consequences, as we shall see. The extension comes to an end, however, with the gradual emergence from an E major seventh background of the principal pitches of B(ii) – F, E, C and A (together with the pitch D) – in preparation for the coda.

Although, as has already been remarked, the return of the B(ii) material here is undoubtedly an allusion to sonata-rondo, the re-stabilisation of the harmony combined

Ex. 54

with the essentially static nature of the final thirty bars or so of the movement, gives the entire passage from bar 424 to bar 495 the structural effect of a coda [Ex. 55]. The B(ii) material is extended to attain an exuberant new climax, from which point the music launches into its final peroration with a shift (after two bars of harmonic blurring) to the diatonic seventh on A flat. At bar 480, there is a superbly calculated moment when the falling fifth G – C, heard on trumpets and trombones, moves into the foreground against a background of repeated triplet Cs on all the strings. Still against the repeated Cs, the harmony changes briefly to the seventh on C sharp, in which the falling fifth G sharp to

C sharp is now prominent, before the A flat seventh is regained and the symphony comes to an emphatic conclusion on the note C [Ex. 56].

Ex. 55

Coda
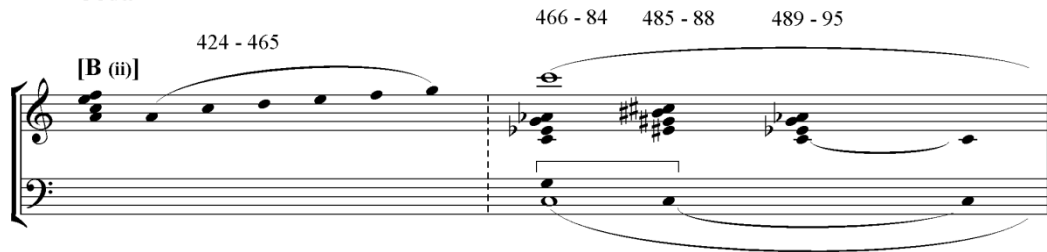
This conclusion on C is as striking as it is completely unexpected. As the foregoing discussion has attempted to demonstrate, for the greater part of the movement C sharp is the pitch that appeared to be invested with a degree of centrality. This is certainly the case with the principal material of A and its recurrences and so, ultimately, one would expect with the movement as a whole. What is striking about the ending is that, despite this, the concluding assertion of C nonetheless seems absolutely right. It is unquestionably and decisively final. Its ultimate emergence may certainly have been unpredictable, but when it arrives it does so with it the uncanny sense of being revelatory, as though something hitherto concealed has at last been brought out into the light of day. This somewhat fanciful metaphor it is not inconsistent with the import of the music which, with brass instruments pealing jubilantly against a shimmering aureole of repeated Cs on the strings, is joyously affirmative and optimistic in tone.

But there is also some justification for this metaphor from the purely technical point of view, perhaps, because as the movement as a whole is recalled and reconsidered in the light of this surprising outcome, it becomes apparent that an eventual resolution on C has in fact been envisaged from the beginning. How Kinsella achieves this may be outlined as follows. Of the four pitches that comprise the first segment of the basic row of the movement, C sharp and G sharp quickly emerge as the most structurally significant with the unfolding of the principal material. The first of

Ex. 56, Symphony No. 2, IV, 490 - 495

Allegro marcato

these pitches, C sharp, acquires a function akin to that of a tonic, and, in relation to it, the G sharp that of a dominant [Ex. 57].

Ex. 57
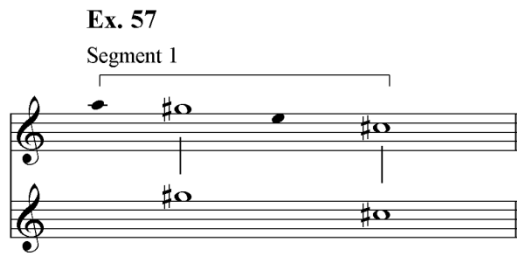
Confirmation of these functions is constantly evaded, however, and for much of the time they remain little more than suggestions, even if occasionally fairly strong ones. At one point in the course of the movement something more definite does appear to crystallize when, in the lead in to A², as discussed above, we finally hear a prominent and unambiguous statement of a hexatonic scale on C sharp underpinned by G repeated sharps.

On the face of it, one might imagine that the most likely outcome from such a tonal situation would be the gradual removal of ambiguities and the eventual establishment of C sharp as a tonic. Kinsella's thought processes, however, are anything but obvious here, and it is only in the extension to A², with the introduction for the first time of the major seventh on C sharp, that one begins to realise what they are. At first, it might seem that this transposed segment 1 could only serve to reinforce the centrality of both C sharp and its dominant, containing as it does both of these pitches [Ex.58]. But it

Ex. 58

Basic hexachord

Segment 1 (transposed) in Extention to A² and Coda
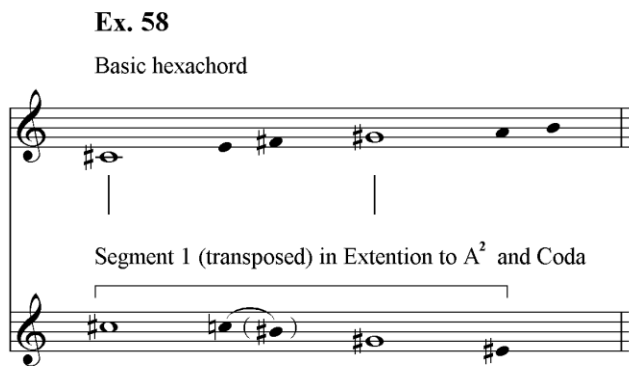
is equally evident that it is only with the introduction of this pitch matrix that the music is finally impelled towards C as a goal. Its long delayed appearance seems to function like a catalyst in this respect. This is particularly true when it is heard in conjunction with the seventh on A flat and that on F (B(ii)) in the coda, which is based solely on these three harmonies.

This transposed first segment on C sharp also contains, of course, the note C natural (which is how Kinsella spells it throughout, not as B sharp). Four transpositions of the first segment aggregate, four diatonic seventh formations, contain the note C. Three of them have already featured prominently in the course of the movement: this one on C sharp is the last to appear. The first section of the initial episode, B(i), commences with a diatonic seventh on A flat and this is the chord that also articulates the beginning of C(ii). The first section of the second episode, C(i), opens with the diatonic seventh on C. And B(ii), both on its initial appearance and when it returns in the coda, is based on the diatonic seventh on F. The harmonies chosen to articulate crucial moments in the course of the movement, therefore, are predicated on the common element of the note C, and the beginnings of both the episodes and their subsections are not merely designed to provide an effective juxtaposition of chords, but are clearly calculated on the basis of a large-scale structural strategy.

Ex. 59

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The appearance of the major seventh on C sharp completes the set of four first segment formations of which the note C is in turn the first, second, third and fourth component and, incidentally, the constituent pitches of which are also the initial notes of the four segments in question [Ex. 59].

The introduction of the C sharp seventh marks the turning point in the movement, because until it is heard the tonal argument has remained incomplete. The earlier status of G sharp and C sharp as the second and fourth components of the first segment of the original row, with their partially asserted, almost casual dominant and tonic relationship, is now reinterpreted. Both pitches remain crucial, but the function of each is refocused. Their status is translated from the foreground, from the active surface of the music where they have operated up to now, to the structuring background. Each of the two pitches, in other words, generates its own diatonic seventh, its own first segment formation, and together these two harmonies exclusively dominate the final pages of the symphony. Their ultimate interaction – and they have not

Ex. 60

hitherto been brought together in the course of the movement – and their joint interaction with the sevenths on C and on F, precipitates as a final the note C, the one element they all have in common, with the logical inevitability of a *quod erat demonstrandum* [Ex. 60].

If this kind of structural thinking existed merely as an abstraction, if it consisted of no more than a planned symmetry on paper, it would hardly merit the kind of detailed discussion which it has received here. But Kinsella's achievement in this movement is to have realised his scheme in living music. Its persuasiveness lies in the

fact that the controlling logic and the expressive import form an indissoluble whole. But impressive as this aspect of the music undoubtedly is, it is only one of a number of remarkable features which demonstrate a subtlety in the composer's handling of his basic materials which places this score on a new level of creative sophistication. Firstly, the structure of the note-row from which the entire musical fabric is derived shows not only his alertness to the shortcomings of similar basic material in Symphony No.1 but also his keen appreciation of how small adjustments can have far-reaching consequences. Secondly, Kinsella has also evolved a viable approach to the manipulation of his thematic material, with its inherent tendency to proliferate from a handful of basic shapes, which allows him to discipline it into the service of purposeful development, while at the same time managing – far more successfully than heretofore – to guard against the dangers of sameness that his particular style of melodic invention can sometimes entail. He achieves equilibrium between thematic differentiation on the one hand and motivic connectedness on the other, and successfully balances memorable melodic invention with a developmental intensity sufficient to give the simple rondo form the weight and complexity necessary to provide an effective conclusion to a substantial symphony.

Chapter 2

Formal Innovation: Symphony No. 3 and Symphony No. 4

2.1   Symphony No. 3, *Joie de Vivre* **(1989-90)**

2.1.1   Establishing the context

From Symphony No. 3 onwards Kinsella began to explore a variety of alternative approaches to symphonic form and he has never returned to the time-honoured classic-romantic four-movement plan of the first two symphonies.[106]   But although he makes full use of the licence available to the contemporary symphonic composer with regard to formal design, his concept of what constitutes symphonic thinking remains unaltered in its essentials. One never receives the impression that innovation is prompted by whim in these works, but rather that it arises inevitably out of his search for structures that will best embody his creative vision. If he is not always completely successful in this – and perhaps few composers are – there is no doubt that these later symphonies contain some of his finest music and, in their technically persuasive projection of a consistent and mature musical personality, they represent what is most characteristic about his later compositional achievement.

In order to appreciate fully the design of Kinsella's Symphony No. 3 and place it in context, a brief preliminary examination of the variety of formal options available to the symphonic composer in the twentieth century and a sketch of the background against which they emerged is necessary. It was only at the end of the eighteenth century that the standard four-movement symphony became widely established as a norm. Despite a degree of formal unpredictability in his early works, this was largely due to Haydn's later essays in the genre all of which follow the same plan with regard to the nature of the constituent movements and the order in which they are arranged. The

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[106] Symphony No. 3, *Joie de Vivre*, was first performed on 10 September 1991 by the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland (conducted by Colman Pearce) at the Royal Hibernian Academy Gallagher Gallery, Dublin.

enormous international prestige of these symphonies resulted in their acceptance as models to the extent that a work like Mozart's *Prague* Symphony K. 504 could be considered remarkable because it lacked a minuet.[107]

For Beethoven, Haydn's mature symphonies represented an ideal which he initially sought to emulate. They were, however, merely a point of departure for his own wide-ranging explorations of the form, and his complex legacy, as Mark Evan Bonds observes, undoubtedly meant that the symphony became a problematic inheritance for the nineteenth-century composers who came after him.[108] Not only was the sheer expressive force of Beethoven's symphonic achievement felt to be intimidating, but it also appeared to encompass definitively the full range of the symphony as an art form, both in its more conservative manifestations (which harked back to Haydn) as well as in its potential for radical innovation. The different approaches to symphonic composition embodied in what was generally acknowledged to be a series of overwhelmingly influential masterpieces established precedents that, even if they appeared to be widely divergent, could not be ignored. Furthermore, Beethoven's work also created strong expectations that the contemporary symphony had to be conceived on an imposing scale and constitute a major public utterance. 'By the 1830s', as Bonds remarks, 'the symphony had come to be not only characterized by mere size and grandeur: it had become a vehicle of moral and ethical ideas as well.'[109]

Although many later composers sought to assimilate Beethoven's symphonic legacy in various ways, by the end of the nineteenth century there also existed a fairly widespread view that the very concept of the symphony was outmoded and that it had become more of an impediment than a stimulus to creativity. Debussy summed up this

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[107] Alfred Einstein in *Mozart: His Character, His Work* (London, 1979 [1946]), 242, remarks that the *Prague* Symphony is 'not a return to the [three-movement] Italian symphony type, but rather a full-scale Viennese symphony, which happens to lack a minuet simply because it says everything it has to say in three movements'. In the present context, what is interesting is that for Einstein the absence of a minuet is actually something that requires an explanation.

[108] Mark Evan Bonds, *After Beethoven: Imperatives of Originality in the Symphony* (Cambridge Mass., 1996), 5 ff.

[109] Ibid., 15.

attitude when he said that the composer of symphonies 'is engaged in listening modestly to the voice of tradition which prevents him, it seems to me, from hearing the voice that speaks within him.'[110] Despite Debussy's antipathy, however, the genre continued to retain its fascination for composers of a certain cast of mind. But as the first decade of the twentieth century drew to a close the understanding of what a symphony entailed had broadened to the point where the term seemed to have lost much of its meaning. One could argue that if the chief problem in symphonic composition for Beethoven's nineteenth-century successors lay in avoiding routine academic conformism, for those who succeeded Mahler it was to determine exactly what kind of work a symphony should be in the first place.

'Once symphonic composers make some radical break with traditional form, the options for new types of structure would seem to be limitless' – as one noted commentator on the symphony in the twentieth century has observed.[111] The most obvious of these new types of structure are the various hybrids, between the symphony and the cantata, song cycle or oratorio on the one hand – such as Vaughan Williams's *A Sea Symphony* [Symphony No. 1] (1903-09), Hilding Rosenberg's *The Revelation of St. John*, Symphony [No. 4] (1940), or Britten's *Spring Symphony* (1949) – and between the symphony and the concerto on the other – such as Szymanowski's Symphony No. 4 (1932), Bernstein's *The Age of Anxiety*, Symphony No. 2 (1949, rev. 1965) or Britten's Symphony for Cello and Orchestra, Op. 68 (1962-63).

The problem of what constituted a symphony was not confined to hybrid works alone, however. In purely instrumental symphonies without either a vocal or a concertante element, there were now many alternative approaches to the balance of movements other than the established pattern of an opening sonata-form *allegro* and a comparably fast finale enclosing a slow movement and a movement of the scherzo-type, the kind of work, in fact, that Kinsella has essayed in his Symphonies No. 1 and No. 2. In

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[110] Claude Debussy, *Monsieur Croche the Dilettante Hater*, trans. B. N. Langdon (1927), reprinted in *Three Classics in the Aesthetics of Music* (New York, 1962), 19.

[111] Christopher Ballantine, *Twentieth Century Symphony* (London, 1983), 123.

the *Symphonie pathetique*, for example, Tchaikovsky demonstrated how convincing the radical redistribution of fast and slow music could be when it is the result of compelling psychological necessity. And the *Adagio* finale of Mahler's Symphony No. 9, which is indebted to the Tchaikovskyian precedent, can be understood to have originated under a comparable impulse. The balance of movements and the distribution of fast and slow music in a purely orchestral symphony increasingly came to be understood as arising out of the internal compositional logic rather than the result of adherence to a conventional ground plan. The symphonies of Sibelius, and in particular Symphony No. 7 (1924), were enormously influential in showing how persuasive a fundamental rethinking of symphonic form could be when allied to powerfully logical structural organisation. But this freedom to experiment was purchased at the cost of forgoing the security of well-established conventions, and while the possibilities may now have seemed endless the concomitant risks were also considerable as composers relinquished the tried and trusted approaches to the organisation of large-scale works.

Bonds refers to 'the eventual decline of the symphony's generic coherence in our own time',[112] and the fact that the external shape was in flux prompted an attempt on the part of musicologists to determine exactly what a symphony was in a way that would reconcile its present diverse condition with its previous history; to demonstrate, in other words, that in spite of changing external appearances the same fundamental criteria had always obtained. In an influential two-volume symposium on the symphony that he edited in the late 1960s, Robert Simpson addressed this issue. He made no attempt to define the symphony in terms of its outward attributes – the number of movements, their formal designs, expressive scope, and so on. Instead, he considered its essential characteristics to be inseparable from the way the musical material is conceived and organised. In order to qualify as properly symphonic, in other words, a work has to possess certain traits and demonstrate a particular kind of compositional approach: 'the internal activity [of the symphony] is fluid, organic; action is the dominant factor,

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[112] Bonds, *After Beethoven*, 200.

through and through,' he wrote.[113] Simpson believed that symphonic music must grow 'by the interpenetrative action of *all* its constituent elements [i.e. rhythm, melody, harmony, tonality]. […] In this sense, a symphony is profoundly *inclusive*'.[114] In Simpson's view, music that diverged from this prescription could not be considered properly symphonic: that is to say, a work does not become a symphony simply by virtue of being entitled 'symphony' by its composer. And it was on these grounds that Britten's *Spring Symphony*, and the symphonies of Hindemith and Stravinsky, for example, were controversially excluded from the symposium. It is interesting to note that Hans Keller also reached for broad generalisations when seeking to determine the essential attributes of the symphony. Alluding to Schoenberg, Keller suggested that 'breath' is 'the deepest symphonic secret'.[115] Elsewhere, he proposed that the symphony consists of the 'large-scale integration of the contrast between statements and developments.' But these definitions are so broad that, however illuminating they may be in some respects, they have a tendency to transcend the genre altogether with the result that for Keller there was no paradox in believing that a particular string quartet might be more truly 'symphonic' than a particular symphony.[116]

Not all composers, however, felt obliged to produce symphonies with either the epic pretensions or the 'philosophical' import that had been associated with the genre since Beethoven and which had been taken to unprecedented lengths by Mahler. For many, the compressed classicism of Sibelius seemed to offer a more attractive alternative. And while this scaling down of the symphony often manifested itself in terms of the brittle neo-classical style fashionable in the 1920s and 1930s, many shorter symphonies were produced which eschewed neo-classicism but in which the focus nonetheless

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[113] Robert Simpson, 'Introduction', in Robert Simpson ed., *The Symphony: Volume 2. Elgar to the Present Day* (Harmondsworth, 1971 [1967]), 10.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Hans Keller, in 'Frankel and the Symphony', *The Musical Times*, 111, 1524 (February, 1970), 144. Schoenberg had remarked: '… in favour of Sibelius and Shostakovitch […] I feel they have the breath of symphonists.' See Arnold Schoenberg, *Style and Idea*, Leonard Stein ed. (London, 1984 [1975]) 136.

[116] Hans Keller, 'The State of the Symphony: not only Maxwell Davies's', in *Essays on Music* ed. Christopher Wintle (Cambridge, 1994), 110.

remained firmly on purely abstract musical considerations. Some symphonists, notably Shostakovitch, successfully embraced both the epic approach as well as the more modestly proportioned alternative.

Many composers, of course, still retain the traditional four-movement division, or something approximating to it, finding it the most appropriate model for what they wish to say. One frequently adopted modification is the reduction of the number of movements to three, often two faster outer movements flanking a central slower movement following, perhaps, the plan adopted by César Franck in his Symphony in D Minor (1889), which is arguably the most famous prototype of this approach. In both Rubbra's Symphony No. 4 (1941) and Martinů's Symphony No. 5 (1946), for example, the central movement has the dual function of both slow movement and scherzo.[117] Although one of the advantages of this kind of three-movement design is that it facilitates an obvious but nonetheless effective balance of fast and slow music, a number of ingenious and sophisticated variants also appeared. One particularly interesting example is Sibelius's Symphony No. 3 (1907) where the traditional scherzo and finale are fused into one continuous concluding movement. Another is Arnold Bax's Sixth Symphony (1935), where the finale is itself subdivided into Introduction, Scherzo and Trio and Epilogue.[118]

Symphonies that are cast in two movements, however, are noticeably rarer, perhaps because of the greater difficulties in obtaining a satisfactory formal balance.[119] In works such as Saint-Saëns' Symphony No. 3, Op.78 (1886), Carl Nielsen's Symphony No.

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[117] This kind of three-movement plan can be traced back at least to Beethoven's piano sonatas Op. 10 No. 2 and Op. 14 No. 1. Interestingly, the finales of the Martinů and Rubbra symphonies mentioned here are both preceded by substantial slow introductions.

[118] Bax was particularly fond of the three-movement plan in which he cast all seven of his symphonies.

[119] It is not the purpose here to present a survey of the two-movement symphony, but rather to discuss a variety different solutions to the formal problems this kind of symphonic structure poses for the composer in order to contextualise Kinsella's approach in Symphony No. 3. Discussion of the one-movement symphony is postponed until Chapter 4.

5 (1920-22),[120] William Alwyn's Symphony No. 2 (1953), or Michael Tippett's Symphony No. 3 (1972),[121] the two sections into which the symphony is divided are not movements in the ordinarily accepted sense of the term but are rather composite units of considerable complexity each comprising a number of substantial, quasi-independent sub-units.[122] Both Alwyn and Tippett, in fact, specifically refer to their respective symphonies as comprising two 'parts', and the internal subdivisions in such an approach can often be managed to allow for an overall design that still refers to the traditional four-movement plan.

The problems inherent in designing a symphony in two straightforward movements (rather than in two composite 'parts') are clearly illustrated by Nicolay Myaskovsky's Symphonies No. 3, Op. 15 (1914), and No. 7, Op. 24 (1922), which are worth considering briefly here.[123] In a two-movement symphony where both movements are conceived as being essentially fast (as these are) the composer confronts the difficulty of how to introduce music in a slower tempo into his scheme and at the same time avoid the pitfall of structural fragmentation. Myaskovsky's solution in his Symphony No. 3 is to cast the first movement as an expansive sonata *allegro* that accommodates internal tempo changes from one theme to the next (in the manner of Tchaikovsky) that are sufficient to allow the movement to end *andante tranquillo*. In the second movement, a rondo marked *Deciso e sdegnoso* [scornful], he introduces a slow central episode and after

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[120] The first movement of Symphony No. 5 falls into two complementary, psychologically related sections, and, as David Fanning points out – in 'Nielsen' in Layton ed., *A Companion to the Symphony*, 360 – the second movement 'can admittedly be thought of as a three-in-one design enclosing Scherzo and slow movement (both fugal) in an interrupted Finale.'

[121] Ian Kemp in *Tippett: the composer and his music* (London, 1984), 438, characterizes Symphony No. 3 as 'one massive antithesis: a structure in two parts, the first abstract and instrumental, the second dramatic and vocal (a solo soprano), reflecting oppositions between music as unremitting intellectual argument and music as human expression, between disinterested logic and passionate response, cause and effect, fact and message.'

[122] Although Mahler's vast Symphony No. 8 obviously comes into this two-movement category it is not really relevant to the present discussion, which is concerned with purely instrumental works.

[123] See George Calvin Foreman, *The Symphonies of Nikolai Yakovlevitch Miaskovsky*, unpublished dissertation, University of Kansas (1981), 76-104, for a discussion of Miaskovsky's Symphony No. 3. (Foreman does not discuss Symphony No. 7, which he mentions only in passing.)

reaching a crisis marked *Con disperazione* [desperation], ends the work sombrely – 'stern and subdued', in Myaskovsky's own words[124] – with a lengthy coda (*sostenuto e luttuoso* [mournful]) in the style of a funeral march.

Symphony No. 7 shows a somewhat different approach. In the first movement, the slow music is an *Andante sostenuto* in a pastoral style which functions as an introduction to a wildly passionate waltz in sonata form marked *Allegro minaccioso* [menacing]. The structure of the second movement, however, is more problematic: it commences with a return of the opening pastoral *Andante* which, again, is introductory in character but which is now succeeded by a reflective section marked *Lento.* This is followed by an *Allegro scherzando e tenebroso* in three-eight time in the form of a truncated rondo (A-B-A¹-C). Instead of a second repeat of A, however, Myaskovsky brings back material from the *Lento* which in turn gives way to a tripartite concluding section: a very brief reference to the three-four *Allegro* of the first movement is succeeded by a second return of the pastoral *Andante* before a vigorous *Allegro precipitato* containing a brief final allusion to the first movement brings the symphony to an end.

Myaskovsky's pupil, Vissarion Shebalin, a prominent figure in the musical life of the Soviet Union, also cast two of his five symphonies in two movements. In both works – No. 2, Op. 11 (1929) and No. 4, Op. 24 (1935, rev. 1961) – Shebalin tackles the problem of integrating fast and slow music by prefacing an *Allegro* first movement with an *Andante* introduction (in Symphony No. 4 this is quite substantial). This introductory material then returns at the end of the movement in the form of a closing peroration. The second movement in both symphonies is also fast, but like Myaskovsky's Symphony No. 7 discussed above, it is here that the composer's solution fails completely to convince. The finale of Op. 11 is perhaps the more successful of the two: an *Allegro assai* is allowed to run its course before the music slows down to accommodate a reference to the introduction of the first movement. The work is then brought to a conclusion with a brief *Presto*. In Op. 24, however, the *Allegro molto* has scarcely commenced when it gives way to a lengthy passage marked *doppio più lento*. The balance of speeds is not adequately

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[124] Quoted in Alexei A. Ikonnikov, *Myaskovsky: His Life and Work* (New York, 1946), 30.

redressed by the return of the *allegro molto*, however, because as soon as the music attains a climax it immediately gives way to a *maestoso* coda, again *doppio più lento*, which brings the symphony to a conclusion. The impression that remains is one of indecisiveness. The music seems unsure of its purpose, and this is one of the real dangers of alternating tempos in this manner. It is something of which Sibelius was well aware and which he triumphantly, and perhaps uniquely, succeeded in avoiding in the way he managed the transition from one speed to another within a single movement.

2.1.2   The two-movement design of Symphony No. 3

One obvious compositional response to these difficulties would appear to lie in having one of the two movements in a fast tempo and the other in a slow tempo. Such asymmetrically planned two-movement symphonies are surprisingly uncommon, however, and as a solution it entails distinct problems of its own. Of the two possible alternatives, a slow movement followed by a fast as a large-scale expansion of the 'introduction and allegro' type of approach would on the face of it seem to be the more feasible option.   Surprisingly however, in the best-known examples of such two-movement symphonies the tempos are in the reverse order despite the fact that the fast-slow arrangement seems particularly difficult to manage successfully. Prokofiev's Symphony No. 2 (1924), for example, perhaps the least performed of that composer's symphonies, consists of a fiercely aggressive fast movement followed by a theme and variations (*Andante*) that is twice as long. The work was not successful at its first performance in Paris and, interestingly, Prokofiev later felt it needed revision although he died before he was able to carry this out. Of Havergal Brian's thirty-two symphonies, four are cast in two movements – Nos. 22, 23, 26 and 30. Of these, only Symphony No. 23 ends with a fully-fledged *adagio.* This is the central work in a trilogy of symphonies – Nos. 22, 23 and 24 (1964-65) – and Malcom MacDonald in his study of Brian's symphonies is of the opinion that the work 'may always be a little bewildering if performed on its own', and suggests that 'we need Symphony No. 22 to tell us where we

are starting from, and Symphony No. 24 to show us where we have reached'.[125] In MacDonald's view, this two-movement work ending with an *adagio* is the only Brian symphony to leave such 'a sense of incompleteness behind it.'[126]

By far the most famous example of this arrangement of tempos is undoubtedly Schubert's *Unfinished* Symphony, which, as is well known, was planned as a work in four movements but left incomplete by the composer. As Alfred Einstein remarks, this is 'probably the best known symphonic-work in the world.'[127] Any composer who chooses to write a two-movement symphony, therefore, in which an initial *allegro* is succeeded by an *andante* (or an *adagio*), will inevitably evoke the Schubertian precedent and with it the general idea of 'unfinishedness'. Kinsella's Symphony No. 3 is constructed on just such a fast-slow ground plan.[128]

At this remove, however, we may reasonably ask just how unfinished the 'Unfinished' Symphony strikes us as being. After innumerable performances as one of the most beloved symphonies ever written, one may doubt if, despite the sobriquet, any serious reservations are still entertained about its completeness as a work of art. And this

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[125] Malcom MacDonald, *The Symphonies of Havergal Brian, Volume Two* (London, 1978), 192,

[126] Ibid., 172. Eduard Tubin's *Sinfonia semplice* [Symphony No. 9] (1969), opens with a fully worked sonata *Allegro,* which is preceded by a short introductory *Adagio.* He follows this with a second movement in which a lightweight central three-four *Presto,* functioning as a scherzo, is flanked by an *Adagio, lento,* the concluding climactic restatement of which constitutes the goal of the work. Although this movement impresses the listener as being essentially an interrupted slow movement, the contrasting tempo of the middle section nonetheless crucially offsets the fast-slow asymmetry.

[127] Alfred Einstein, *Schubert: The Man and his Music* (London, 1983 [1951]), 230.

[128] In the Irish context, the only precedent for a two-part symphony known to the present writer is Symphony [No. 1] (1988) by Kinsella's younger contemporary John Buckley (b. 1951). Although stylistically reminiscent of the music of Lutosławski, this work is structurally closer to the Nielsen-Tippett approach discussed above than to Kinsella's in that the two constituent parts – which Buckley describes as 'movements' – are each subdivided into two contrasting sections, which results in an quaternate structure that conforms fairly closely to the traditional symphonic ground plan. After an atmospheric introduction, *Adagio tranquillo,* the first 'movement' consists of a *Doppio movimento* that occupies the place of the (normally fast) first movement of a classically designed symphony. This is followed by an *Adagio tranquillo,* which is clearly intended to correspond to the usual symphonic slow movement. The formal organisation of the work's second 'movement' is more complex than that of the first. Buckley describes it as consisting of two distinct sections: *Scherzo I-Trio-Scherzo 2* followed by a *Finale,* thus further emphasising the underlying correspondence with classical symphonic form.

is not merely a matter of being inured by familiarity to otherwise obvious shortcomings, because as it stands the work seems to be perfectly satisfactory. Various commentators have suggested reasons for this impression of completeness. In 1928, A. E. F. Dickinson wrote to the *Musical Times* after examining the published sketches for the discarded Scherzo. 'May not Schubert', he speculated,

> on discovering the difficulty of composing any adequate sequel to the two movements already written, have concluded that they were best left to themselves? […] Also the world in general, which has apparently no hesitation in placing this Symphony in the first rank, if not absolutely first, does not seem to be much troubled by the canonical incompleteness of the work. […] At any rate, let us not forget the inverted commas in speaking (or writing) of the 'Unfinished' Symphony.[129]

Again, writing of the work in Robert Simpson's 1966 symposium, Harold Truscott observed:

> The second and only other finished movement does, in fact, complete the symphony as nothing else could, and I believe that this is the real reason why Schubert did not go on with his partly sketched scherzo. […] For all its climaxes the movement never leaves its lyrical confines, but it radiates the spiritual strength necessary to contain the tragedy of its companion.[130]

As Truscott's remarks suggest, the nature of the relationship – not necessarily thematic or technical but, perhaps even more crucially, the psychological relationship – between the constituent movements will determine the persuasiveness of the fast-slow two-movement symphonic structure. This relationship, as in the Schubert B minor Symphony for example, can consist of the resolution in the second movement of tensions

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[129] A. E. F. Dickinson, 'The Completion of the "Unfinished" Symphony' *The Musical Times*, 69, 1207 (September, 1928) 832-33.
[130] Harold Truscott, 'Franz Schubert', in Simpson ed., *The Symphony Vol. 1*, 202-3.

engendered by the first, conveying a sense of the ultimate reconciliation or even the transcendence of conflict. The principal requirement for success, in other words, seems to be that the second movement should constitute a perceived response to issues raised in the first, revealing, perhaps, new aspects – if not of its actual musical material – then at least of its emotional and imaginative import that will explain and justify the slow tempo. While the importance of the reciprocal relationship between movements is true of any multi-movement work, it is acutely the case here and, arguably, a successful two-movement symphony of this kind will be one in which this balanced correspondence is felt to have been adequately achieved. The slow movement must impress the listener not only as the only possible consequence of what has gone before, but also as a natural and inevitable conclusion to the symphony as a whole. Otherwise the work will be in danger of seeming 'unfinished', and not necessarily in the qualified understanding of that term as it is now generally understood to apply to the Schubert B minor Symphony.

In attempting to explicate Kinsella's Symphony No. 3 and account for its unusual structure, perhaps the best place to begin is with the subtitle, *Joie de Vivre.* Interestingly, in the programme note he supplied for the work the composer makes no allusion at all to this subtitle.[131] In fact his account of the symphony is laconic and noncommittal to a degree, even evasive in the way it offers little beyond a bland description of the most obvious surface features of the music. But while one readily grants that it is a composer's job to write music, not to write about music (even his own), the complete absence of any reference to the likely import of the work as suggested by the phrase *Joie de Vivre* is surely remarkable. Clearly, whatever Kinsella's intended to convey by the subtitle he believed to be discoverable in the music itself.

It should scarcely be necessary to point out that as it applies to Kinsella's symphony the phrase has no connection with current popular usage where it is often debased to mean merely convivial effervescence or boisterous high-spirits. It is worth

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[131] See the programme booklet for a revival of Symphony No. 3 by the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland (conducted by Kasper de Roo) at the National Concert Hall, Dublin on 9 January 1998.

recalling that the phrase acquired distinct literary and philosophical connotations in 1884 when Emile Zola published a novel entitled *La joie de vivre,* in which, in the words of his biographer Frederick Brown: 'He set out as much to preach against the poor of spirit as to lay himself bare, as much to deplore the infatuation with the […] philosophical pessimism rampant among young French intellectuals as to exorcise his own nay-saying *Doppelgänger*'.[132] In the novel, against the moral deterioration of the Chanteau family Zola sets the positive figure of their young relation Pauline Quenu, thanks to whom, as Brown puts it, 'light reaches people enveloped in darkness, for Pauline possesses all the virtues they lack.'[133] Hers is a nature that 'brimmed over with love of life;'[134] she is supremely a yea-sayer who represents victory over pessimism and despair and is the living embodiment in the novel of *la joie de vivre*.

The phrase as Zola uses it has interesting resonances for the understanding of Kinsella's symphony, although such a correspondence may well have been far from the composer's mind. Nonetheless, Zola's antagonism to the current fashionable philosophy of pessimism and despair finds a certain parallel in Kinsella's conscious pursuit of a creative path independent to that of the contemporary musical avant-garde with its widespread emphasis on alienation and fragmentation and the concomitant artistic impossibility of sustaining any credibly affirmative view of life.

Perhaps the most persuasive and influential formulation of this negative view of art and of the deep pessimism implicit in it is to be found in the work of the philosopher Theodore Adorno who became one of the principal apologists for what he called 'advanced music'. As Richard Leppert points out: 'Happiness for Adorno was social. Personal happiness in the face of general social unhappiness (injustice) was false by definition.'[135] And about the nature of society Adorno entertained few doubts: not only is it rotten to the core, in his view, but it also revels in self-deceptions which seek to

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[132] Frederick Brown, *Zola: A Life* (London, 1996), 512.

[133] Ibid., 513.

[134] Emile Zola, *La Joie de vivre*, quoted by Brown in *Zola*, 513.

[135] Theodor W. Adorno, *Essays on Music*, trans. Susan H. Gillespie, ed. Richard Leppert (Berkeley, 2002), 514.

reflect this rottenness in a positive light and it surrounds itself with lies which attempt to conceal its inherent absurdity and meaninglessness. The 'new music', or 'advanced music', Adorno believed, 'impotently takes up arms against the way of the world; its posture is aggressive'. It can do nothing – it is 'impotent' – except confront, and its aggression 'stems from a correct perception of the reified alienation and depersonalisation of the destiny imposed on mankind and of the inability of the human sensibility to modify that destiny.'[136] Art with any claim to truth, he insisted, must estrange itself from the here and now because merely to aestheticize present reality is to justify and perpetuate its lies. The choice is clear: music can either be a force for truth (as Adorno conceives it) or it can be an instrument of repression and concealed domination. In other words, an affirmative art in a corrupt world is simply an affirmation of corruption. Truth is to be found only in denial. To compose tonal music with a good conscience is therefore impossible, because, again in the words of Richard Leppert summarising Adorno's view: 'tonality implicitly serves no other social function than to help anchor the status quo of an unjust society, by aestheticizing and naturalising its fundamental ideological principles.'[137]

Clearly, such a conception of art in general and of music in particular has little in common with Kinsella's as it is manifested in his compositions. Kinsella's entire technical project of releasing the forces of tonal attraction from the note-row and re-harnessing them in the service of large-scale symphonic construction stands diametrically opposed to such a negative philosophy, as indeed do its expressive results. In this light, Symphony No. 3 strikes one as a statement of faith, a manifesto – albeit in purely musical terms – of artistic belief. Both technically and expressively, the work contains an implicit rejection of the view that only the negative and despairing, the alienated and the fragmented can constitute a true and honest reflection of modern life. It is in this rejection that the parallel with Zola's novel lies. For Adorno and others of like

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[136] Theodor W. Adorno, *Quasi una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London, 1998), 256.

[137] Adorno, *Essays on Music*, 86.

mind, a phrase like *joie de vivre* could only be used in a heavily ironic sense. There is no irony whatsoever in Kinsella's use of it.

But given that Kinsella intends no irony, it is still not immediately obvious how the subtitle refers to the symphony as a whole. To be sure, its application to the *Presto giocoso* first movement is clear enough. 'Exuberance is Beauty' William Blake announced in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, and this together with another memorable coinage from the same work, 'Energy is Eternal Delight', characterises accurately the import of this buoyantly exuberant music.[138] The movement is remarkably successful in conveying feelings of both physical vitality and the vigorous enjoyment of life on the one hand, and radiant spiritual optimism on the other. It suggests a sense of well-being, heedless of the occasional stridency in its insistently urgent celebration of life. It is also a sustained *tour-de-force* and unquestionably one of Kinsella's finest achievements.

In order to formulate an adequate response to the ensuing *Adagio*, however, a somewhat broader idea of what might be meant by *joie de vivre* is necessary. If there can be joy in energy and sheer physical well-being, as embodied in the *Presto giocoso*, there can also be a profound joy in contemplation: and it is in this dual nature of joy, I believe, that the complementary form of the fast-slow structure of Kinsella's symphony finds its logical and imaginative justification. The greatest poet of joy in the English language is perhaps William Wordsworth, and it is his work that inevitably comes to mind as one attempts to illuminate the informing impulse behind this music.[139] Again and again, Wordsworth contrasts the 'aching joys' and 'dizzy raptures'[140] of youth with what Walter Pater called the 'impassioned contemplation'[141] of maturity:

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[138] William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, reproduction of the original with introduction and commentary by Sir Geoffrey Keynes (London and Paris, 1975), plates 4, 10.

[139] In the words of Matthew Arnold ('Wordsworth' in *Essays in Criticism: Second Series* (London 1938), 91): 'Wordsworth's poetry is great because of the extraordinary power with which Wordsworth feels the joy offered to us in nature, the joy offered to us in the simple primary affections and duties; and because of the extraordinary power with which, in case after case, he shows us this joy, and renders it so as to make us share it.'

[140] 'Lines, Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey*', The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* (London, 1889), 160.

[141] Walter Pater, 'Wordsworth' in *Appreciations with an Essay on Style* (London, 1889), 59.

> While with an eye made quiet with the power
>
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
>
> We see into the life of things. [142]

This evocation of Wordsworth should not be read as an attempt to impose a programme on Kinsella's Symphony No. 3, however, or even to suggest that the composer had anything in mind that might be considered to correspond to the poet's idea of how youthful joy inevitably wanes only to be replaced by the very different joys of maturity. There is no intrinsic reason why one kind of joy should necessarily be conceived of as giving way to the other chronologically, rather than co-existing with it as an alternative aspect or complementary dimension of the same emotion. And it is this complementarity, I suggest, that Kinsella's Symphony No. 3 encompasses. Understood in this way, the import and consequently the very form of the symphony can be seen to have deep roots in psychic reality, which no doubt largely account for its ultimate persuasiveness as a work of art.

Kinsella's envisaging of 'the joy / Of elevated thoughts'[143] – assuming that the present reading of the *Adagio* is indeed correct – has nothing hazy or undefined about it. On the contrary, the import of the second movement ranges from the absorbed intensity of the opening to the strenuous grandeur of its sonorous climaxes, all characterized by that oddly affecting, almost paradoxical combination of deep feeling and detachment, of emotional commitment on the one hand and cool objectivity on the other that is characteristic of Kinsella's best work. If any music might be considered successfully to convey something of the idea of Wordsworth's 'elevated thoughts', it is surely this. *Pace* Adorno, Kinsella's symphony both affirms the spontaneous phenomenon that is personal human happiness and confirms that the need to express it springs from what is

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[142] 'Tintern Abbey*', The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, 160.
[143] Ibid., 161.

deepest in human nature. How Kinsella realises this from the technical point of view will be the subject of the following sections.

2.1.3   Prologue: *Adagio*; Movement I: *Presto giocoso, vivo*

One of the most immediately striking differences between Symphony No. 3 and its two predecessors is the expansion of the composer's orchestral resources. Apart from the use of a fourth trumpet in both of the earlier works and celesta in the second, Kinsella was content to confine himself to a modest full orchestra with double woodwind and no percussion other than timpani. In the present work, however, not only is the cor anglais employed for the first time in the symphonies, but the woodwind section is further enlarged by the inclusion of contrabassoon and, more unusually, of alto saxophone which is used to haunting effect in the second movement. If, unlike the earlier works, the score calls for only two trumpets, the percussion section is now also expanded to feature a large gong, cymbals, side drum and bass drum as well as timpani. These increased resources may still be relatively modest in comparison with many familiar works from the standard repertoire, but they represent a substantial augmentation of Kinsella's range of colour and contribute in no small measure to the characteristically vivid impression this score makes on the listener.

Kinsella's conception of Symphony No. 3 is more subtle than the preliminary remarks offered above might suggest. The overall structure as already outlined is in fact supplemented by a brief Prologue (heard before the *Presto giocoso*), an Intermezzo (heard between the two movements) and an Epilogue (which brings the symphony to a conclusion). These elements – one cannot call them 'movements', nor does the composer think of them as such – are at once crucial components of the symphony as a whole and, although they are linked to the main body of the work, are yet clearly distinguished from it. This distinction is achieved largely by the sonority of the bassoon, which characterises each of the three sections – the instrument is featured solo and unaccompanied in the Prologue, is discreetly supplemented by solo flute and divided violas in the Intermezzo,

and alternates with passages for full orchestra in the Epilogue. By this device Kinsella not only frames the symphony and successfully binds the movements together but also removes any possibility that the unusual two-part structure might be perceived as somehow 'unfinished', that the two movements might seem merely juxtaposed rather than having a vital connection. More than this, however – and to anticipate the technical discussion a little – these framing sections (particularly, of course, the Prologue and the Intermezzo) contain virtually all the material out of which the symphony is fashioned. They represent the latent content, as it were, which subsequently becomes manifest in very different and contrasting ways in the two fully developed movements of the work.

The Prologue comprises twenty-seven bars of *adagio* for solo bassoon. This is cast in a two-part form: a (bars 1-16) and a¹ (bars 17-27), which begins in the same way as the first section but quickly diverges, picking up speed with the introduction of smaller note values. Each beat of semiquaver sextuplets in the final bar of a¹ (marked *giocoso* in anticipation of what is to follow) corresponds to a single bar of the six-four *presto* of the ensuing movement, thus effecting a seamless transition from one to the other [see Ex. 66].

Ex. 61: Symphony No. 3, Prologue, 1-12

The opening twelve bars of the Prologue are given in Ex. 61, and this extract is sufficient to illustrate the salient points. The ruminating, almost brooding melodic line extends over virtually the entire range of the bassoon and although it may feel improvisatory it contains all the germs – melodic, harmonic and rhythmic – from which the first movement is fashioned. The common basis of all of the principal melodic motifs is a contour of three ascending pitches and two fundamental forms can be seen in the opening bar: a step (variants include both tone and semitone) followed by a third (variants include both major and minor thirds) as constituted by the first three notes [see Ex. 62 (i)]; and the reverse of this, a third followed by a step as constituted by notes two, three and four [Ex. 62 (ii)]. Two supplementary forms are also found: two ascending steps [Ex. 62 (iii)]; and two ascending thirds [Ex. 62 (iv)], this latter having a number of variants of its own where one of the thirds is occasionally replaced by a fourth.

Ex. 62

basic motivic shapes

Ex. 63, principal chordal derivations

Secondly, these motivic shapes also combine vertically to yield a number of harmonic formations, as shown in Ex. 63, the central importance of which becomes clear as the work proceeds. The third of these, it will be noted, is the major seventh chord which features so prominently both in Symphony No. 1 and in Symphony No. 2. Here, however, it is employed largely as a contrast to the other sonorities and it gains immeasurably in effectiveness from its more sparing use. Finally, as can be seen in Ex. 64, the rhythm of the three-two opening anticipates in slow motion the syncopated six-four of the fast first movement. This in itself serves to reinforce one's sense that the Prologue embodies a series of hazy adumbrations, as it were, of future events.

Ex. 64

Informing all of this foreground detail is the fundamental pitch matrix on which the symphony is based, which is shown in Ex. 65 below. Unlike the first two symphonies, Symphony No. 3 does not employ a row comprising all twelve chromatic pitches. Instead, Kinsella retains the feeling of modality that arose out of the hexachordal technique of Symphony No. 2, but rather than allowing it to emerge as an incidental by-

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product as he did in the earlier work he builds it in to the very foundations

Ex. 65

of the present symphony by constructing a nine-note matrix that consists of a seven-note aeolian scale supplemented by two additional pitches, the semitone below both the first and fifth degrees respectively, or, in other words, below the final (tonic) and below the dominant. This is an ingenious construction which Kinsella manipulates in a highly imaginative fashion. These two extra pitches not only vitalise the aeolian scale in unexpected ways but, in doing so, they also provide for a limited chromatic extension of the harmonic resources of the diatonic mode, without dissipating its characteristic flavour, and have an important pivotal function in moves to secondary tonal centres. Furthermore, they serve to free the music at a stroke from reminiscences of early twentieth-century modal styles. But apart from this, they provide the fundamental impulse for the symphony's wide-ranging tonal explorations. As the following discussion will demonstrate, they move from their initial subordinate status as adjuncts of the aeolian scale to a central place in the symphonic argument, and while they never entirely replace the centrality of the tonic G, it is to them nonetheless that the symphony owes some of its most impressive moments. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the latter half of the work is – to speak solely in technical terms – to a large extent 'about' the pitches F sharp and C sharp and their relationship to the overall tonality. In so far as they are as agents of tonal disruption they operate as shadow elements (to borrow Jungian terminology), which are first confronted, then acknowledged and, finally, successfully re-integrated into the whole.

The Prologue ends with a chromatic scale in semiquaver sextuplets [Ex. 66] that anticipates the tempo of the ensuing movement into which it moves without a break. Always heard on bassoon (or bassoons), this passage subsequently reappears as a linking

idea at various important junctures. Surprisingly, Kinsella describes the first movement, *Presto giocoso, vivo,* as a scherzo,[144] which may be justified as far as the lively,

Ex. 66: Symphony No. 3, Prologue, 26-27
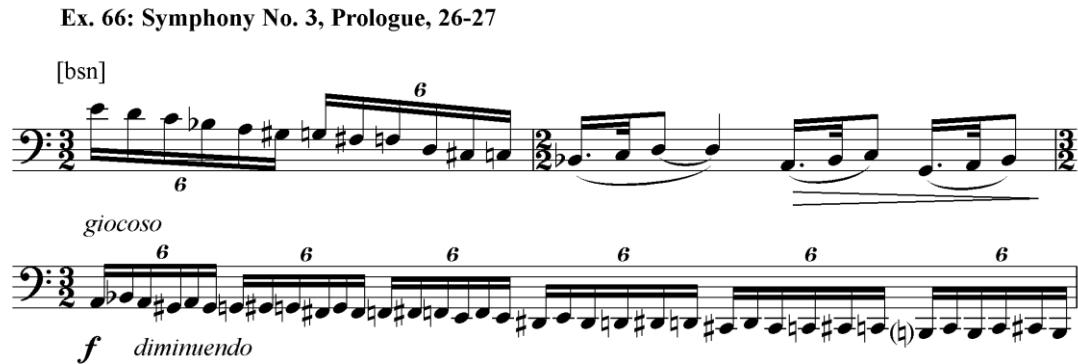
buoyant style of the music is concerned but is misleading with regard to the form, which might best be characterized as a hybrid between simple rondo and sonata-rondo. The overall structure can be schematised as follows:

<center>A-B-A¹-C   D   A²-C/B Coda</center>

The relation with simple rondo form is valid, however, only in so far are there are obvious points of comparison with the general outline or ground plan. The intensely motivic and closely worked textures as well as the presence of a development section, D, give the music all the weight one expects to find in the opening movement of a substantial symphony. Despite the presence of a second episode, C, therefore, the dynamic of the movement is essentially that of the sonata type.

The *pianissimo* opening with its syncopated six-four theme conveys a sense of suppressed excitement while simultaneously suggesting tremendous reserves of energy [Ex. 67]. This first-subject paragraph occupies thirty-three bars, and for the first twenty-four of these the seven-note aeolian scale (without the two supplementary pitches) is the

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[144] See the programme booklet for the 1998 revival of Symphony No. 3.

sole basis of the music. (For an abstract summary of the tonal and harmonic

Ex. 67: Symphony No. 3, I, 1-11

organisation of the complete movement see Ex. 77.) This technique of articulating harmonic space has been commented on before: it is in fact very similar to that used in the finale of Symphony No. 2 which was discussed at some length in the previous chapter. Kinsella handles the procedure here with a new lightness of touch, however. The fundamental harmony of the passage is clearly a seventh chord on G minor. This is generally implied rather than simply stated, and because its elements are dispersed across the melodic lines as well as interspersed with other notes of the scale that function as passing notes and so on, the result is a fresh transparency of texture which is reinforced by the delicate scoring for strings and woodwind. This approach also successfully avoids the danger of the harmony becoming over-determined, and as the lines move freely amongst the pitches of the matrix they constantly hint at other chords – on the second half of each of the first four bars, for example, there is a fleeting suggestion

of D minor as the bass moves to the note F, with the tied notes above it acting in the manner of retardations.

Ex. 68

Thematically, the first subject group is closely based on the motivic shapes discussed above, and Ex. 68 shows how its principal features relate to them. In bars 9-11, an important new melodic shape is introduced [*b* in Ex. 68 (iii)], which, with *ad hoc* variations in the interval pattern, also plays a prominent part in the rest of the movement.

The last nine bars of the first-subject group (25-33) can be considered to function as a transition to the second subject (or first episode), B. This move is initiated by the introduction of the F sharp in bar 25, and together with the pitches C sharp, E, and B, which follow in close succession, they establish a new pitch matrix – a transposition of the aeolian scale up a major third to B (which is supplied with its own pair of supplementary notes, A sharp and F natural). The one anomaly here is the pitch G sharp, which is sounded in bars 32 and 33 but is not heard again in this episode. Interestingly, although G (natural) is the sixth degree of the aeolian scale on B, this pitch is also entirely omitted until just before the return to the first subject, A[1]. It is as though Kinsella desired not only to avoid all references to the central pitch of the movement for the time being, but also wished positively, if only momentarily, to contradict it [again, see Ex. 77].

The initial bars of B are given in Ex. 69, bar 33 being an overlap between the end of the transition and (thematically at least) the beginning of the episode. This extract affords a very good illustration of how Kinsella exploits the two pitches that are supplementary to the seven-note scale to create harmonic fluctuations. Apart from the

Ex. 69: Symphony No. 3, I, 33-40

unsettling presence of the A sharp in the bass line, the fifth degree F sharp is replaced with its adjunct F natural in bars 37 and 40. (Later on, the seventh degree A natural is replaced by the A sharp in a similar way.) Otherwise, the harmonic content of the passage is based almost entirely on the first two principal chord formations (transposed up a major third) of Ex. 63 above. Thematically, as Ex. 70 shows, every significant melodic line in the episode is derived almost exclusively from the basic motivic shapes.

One further new motif, which, again, has an important subsequent role to play, is

Ex. 70
(i) bars 33-36

(ii) bars 37-38

(iii) bar 46

(iv) bars 54-57

(v) bars 73-76

(vi) bars 77-82

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introduced in bars 73-76 [*c* in Ex. 70 (v)]. As the tremolando string textures of Ex. 69 gradually give way to steady crotchet movement the episode gains in intensity until

Ex. 71: Symphony No. 3, 1, 152-162

Bar 104, when the *tremolandi* return in preparation for the repeat of the first subject. The pitch G is reintroduced in bar 106 and the notes of the G minor triad are sounded in the trumpets (bars 107-110), but the immediate link to A¹ is effected by a return of the same chromatic passage (in octaves on two bassoons) that served to connect the Prologue with the first movement.

If the first subject material is somewhat condensed in this first restatement, it compensates for its relative brevity by building to a much bigger climax than before. At the point of greatest intensity, it breaks off abruptly leaving the four-note aggregate D-F-G-A (the first of the principal chord formations) sounding in the woodwind like a reverberation. The dynamic level drops only to increase again immediately with the addition of more dissonant pitches, the first of which is the F sharp (on timpani). Others follow and a new, very dissonant chord gradually emerges, the core of which is a D sharp minor triad (in which the already sounding F natural is retained, however, and to which a C natural is also added). The tension culminates in bar 151 with a single, staccato, triple-*forte* crotchet chord, which consists of all the pitches of this aggregate (minus the F natural and with the principal emphasis on A sharp). This punctuating moment is followed by a brief dramatic silence.

The D sharp minor triad is an anticipation of the pitch matrix on which the second episode (or third subject), C, is based: a further transposition of the seven-note aeolian scale, this time a major third lower than the original pitch to D sharp (with supplementary pitches, D natural and A natural). This is the longest section of the movement so far – 114 bars – and it falls into three clear sub-sections, each of which presents its own distinct thematic material. Or more accurately, each of which develops the basic motifs in characteristic ways, because, as before, all aspects of the thematic material are derived from the original handful of melodic shapes. The opening bars of the episode are given in Ex. 71. Because all the themes are so closely related – in this instance, for example, the melodic line in the woodwind is an obvious variant of that of the previous episode – Kinsella is reliant partly on the change of tonality but principally on the change of texture to provide sufficient contrast between the different sections,

which he manages to accomplish very deftly. As we have seen, the fleet crotchet movement of the opening section, A, was arrested by the sustained tremolando chords of B, and now, despite the distinct recollection of earlier melodic ideas, the texture of the accompaniment immediately identifies C as a new section. The relationship to the basic motivic shapes, not only of the melodic lines but also of the cells from which the accompaniment is fashioned, are shown in Ex. 72.

Ex. 72

The second principal paragraph of C, which is scored for strings only, commences after another rhetorical pause in bar 196. The initial bars of this are given in Ex. 73 and the relationship with the basic motifs shown in Ex. 74. As can be seen from this extract, the section is largely designed as an antiphonal exchange between violins and very high-pitched lower strings, a scoring which gives the passage great intensity. Although differentiated by the addition of accompanying woodwind figuration, the third paragraph is in some respects a continuation of the second: indeed it commences in a very similar manner, as can be seen in Ex. 75. A new element is introduced in bars 226-7 (the figure in duplets in Ex. 75), however, which, much extended and developed, features prominently in the recapitulation. As the episode draws to a close, the notes of the D sharp aeolian pitch matrix are gradually replaced – largely thought the agency of

Ex. 73: Symphony No. 3, 1, 196-203

the two adjunct pitches D (natural) and A (natural) – by those of the G aeolian, until the harmony finally settles on a the aggregate D-F-G-A, the first principal chord derivation. Out of this emerges once more the chromatic passage that featured at the end of the Prologue (again on solo bassoon), which serves now as a link between exposition to the development section, D (bar 273).

Ex. 74

As will be evident from the foregoing discussion, the technique informing this music cannot be said to show any connection with serial approaches even of a modified non-dodecaphonic kind as employed, for example, in the later works of Stravinsky. The nine-note matrix does *not* function as a row. Although they are of course clearly informed by it, neither individual motivic shapes nor individual harmonic aggregates are directly derived from this matrix in the way they might be derived from a row. It is merely a convenient technical abstraction, deduced from the music by the manner in which the composer deploys his material.

Ex. 75: Symphony No. 3, 1, 221-228

Kinsella has travelled a great distance since the *Essay for Orchestra* of 1980 (which became the first movement of Symphony No. 1) in the development of his compositional technique, and the important stages in the journey are readily identifiable. If the handling of the segmented row in Symphony No. 1 was to some extent rough and ready, this aspect of his idiom was considerably refined in the following work particularly in the way the hexachords became the source of the thematic and harmonic material. In

Symphony No. 2, however, the three four-note segments into which the row was partitioned still played a major role in determining the contours of melodies and the nature of the harmonic aggregates, even if not quite so deterministically as in the earlier symphony. In composing the present work, what Kinsella carried forward from Symphony No. 2 was the idea of the hexachord as a pitch matrix that is capable of retaining its essential identity as a harmonic-tonal entity however freely the individual elements combine and interact with one another. Here, the hexachord has been extended into the nine-note matrix and the already attenuated connection with dodecaphony appears finally to have been suspended altogether. The compositional technique itself, however, remains closely related to his earlier practice: essentially, the music progresses by means of a series of clearly defined vertical aggregates, the constituent elements of which are projected horizontally in the thematic material.

The circular tonal relationships of the exposition are shown in Ex. 76: the transpositions of the basic matrix by major thirds form a closed circuit, as it were, each of the three resultant pitch levels being exactly the same distance above and below the other two respectively. The fifth degree (or dominant) of each matrix is also the adjunct pitch to the tonic of the one a major third lower and, as we have seen, can function as a

Ex. 76

pitch matrix of B

pitch matrix of Prologue-A   pitch matrix of A^1

pitch matrix of C

kind of hinge between them. This tonal pattern is ingenious because it serves to bind the three operative tonal centres into a single overall relationship and at the same time provide the maximum contrast between them: in other words, it unifies, while

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simultaneously differentiating between, the various sections of the exposition. It should be noted here that the organization also both justifies and is justified by the unusual rondo structure in which Kinsella has cast the movement: the tripartite tonal design requires two different episodes for its adequate realization. This vital interpenetration of tonality and form represents a new sophistication in Kinsella's symphonic thinking, and, arguably, it is only in a genuine symphony that the crucial question arises, as it does here, as to what kind of response it is possible for the rest of the movement to make to the situation as it stands at the end of the exposition.

As will be clear from Ex. 63 (i) and (ii) above, with three of their four constituent pitches in common, the first two principal chord formations are very closely related: so much so that they are virtually twin variants of one harmony. It is on these two formations that the entire exposition is based, as the abstract of the harmonic content shown in Ex. 77

Ex. 77

makes clear. If in the A section the focus is on the second formation while the first is

makes clear. If in the A section the focus is on the second formation while the first is only alluded to in passing, the harmony of the first episode, B, is clearly derived more or less equally from both. In the longer and more intense second episode, C, these two formations are constructed on different pitches of the prevailing matrix – the first formation on the dominant (A sharp), and the second on the tonic (D sharp) – which, however, does not transgress the pitch limitations of the operative transposition. Together, they encompass all seven notes of the aeolian mode and at the point of greatest intensity (bars 234-256) they are freely combined.

Apart, therefore, from the transitional harmonies that are also shown in Ex. 77, the exposition is essentially founded on the twin variants of a single vertical aggregate in three transpositions. If Kinsella has never before risked such a drastic restriction of the basic harmonic content over so lengthy a span of music, neither has he ever manipulated

Ex. 78: Symphony No. 3, 1, 273-279

so successfully the minute fluctuations of pitch content to suggest a wealth of subordinate harmonic incident. This handling of the relationship between the local events of the foreground and the vast slow motion of the harmonic background is masterly. Paradoxically, it results in music that achieves a powerful sense of sustained momentum. Kinsella clearly understands that it is possible to create a genuine impression of real speed only by establishing surface movement against a background that is either static or progresses at a considerably slower rate: the slower the one, in fact, the faster the other can seem to become. It is not so much Kinsella's abstract grasp of this insight that is impressive, however, but the manner in which he realises it in living music.

The immediate response to the principal issues of the exposition is the development section, which falls into two large paragraphs: the first creates a sense of sustained exertion and builds to a tremendous climax, while the second represents a subsequent collapse. In is here that the brass section of the orchestra, which – with the exception of the horns – has hitherto been silent, comes into its own for the first time in the symphony. The effect is overwhelming, as though the huge reserves of energy suggested at the outset were finally released. This is complemented by the harmonic content because it is here that Kinsella also employs for the first time the third of the three principal chord formations of Ex. 63 above, the major seventh aggregate. As the basic harmonies of the exposition strongly reflect the minor bias of the aeolian scale, the introduction of the major seventh chord here produces an enhanced feeling of freshness and vigour, which is no small feat considering the headlong drive of the music thus far. The thematic material that is developed is taken from the first subject and there is a telling return to the syncopated six-four rhythm of the opening [Ex. 78].

The harmonic content of the development consists exclusively of a series of major seventh chords arranged in a chain very much in the manner of the earlier symphonies [Ex. 79]. The difference here, however, is that there is a clear focus on one particular

Ex. 79
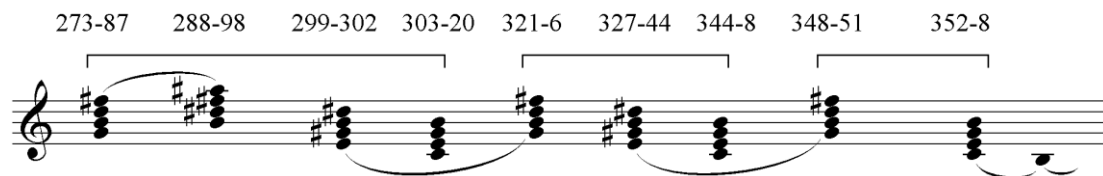
chord – the C major seventh – towards which the others tend to converge, with a strong subsidiary emphasis on the G major seventh. After the quiet beginning, the music gathers momentum until this C major seventh is reached in bar 303, which, articulated by the syncopated six-four idea, rises up out of the depths in a furious, driving *fortissimo*.

Ex. 80: Symphony No. 3, 1, 356-362

The sense of striving is marvellously conveyed by the strings articulating the pitches of the various harmonies in ascending arpeggios through several octaves against increasingly active variants of the syncopated idea in the brass. While the succession of major sevenths produces vivid changes of harmonic colour, it never disturbs the

underlying sense of C major as a central aggregate. It is to this chord that the music is constantly pulled back, in fact the series is so arranged that the C major seventh is approached three times from that on G major: initially, through intervening major sevenths on B and E which separate them; then through that on E alone; until finally they are connected directly. When, eventually, the C major seventh appears to have been decisively attained in bar 352, there is an almost immediate subsidence and all the pent up energy quickly ebbs away as fragments of the principal motif are tossed about in the woodwind like glistening spray after the breaking of a great wave.

This moment is shown in Ex. 80, with the motif of collapse in the bass: C falling a semitone to B, which then drops to the lower octave and dies away. Under a continuous high *tremolando* B in the first violins, this figure pervades the second paragraph of the development and is supplemented by the slowly unfolding bass line shown in Ex. 81.

This second stage of the development is entirely derived from the constituent pitches of the major seventh chords on G and C, and although the principal harmonic reference is still the C major seventh, the notes E-G-B are conspicuously set in relief. One is left with the strong impression that if the ultimate destination of the movement has

Ex. 81: Symphony No. 3, 1, 378-406

not yet been reached it has certainly been sighted. After a number of final references to the motif of collapse, the chromatic passage from the end of the Prologue is once again

pressed into service as a link to the recapitulation and the regaining of the G aeolian tonality.

In its second return, the first subject material, A², is even more abbreviated than before. The principal ideas of both contrasting episodes follow, but they, too, are much condensed, combined into one composite section and presented in reverse order, C/B, which serves to confirm their essential identity. The transposition of the pitch matrix

Ex. 82: Symphony No. 3, 1, 561-571

associated with each episode is retained, and these are consequently also heard in reverse order – that centred on D sharp first, followed by that on B. There is ample compensation for the radical compression of all this material by a splendid expansion of the principal ideas of what, on its initial appearance, was the third subsection of C [see

Ex. 75 above]. In a passage of radiant luminosity, two trumpets in unison evolve a soaring line out of the duplet motif (but now centred on B) against the strings, whose initial free imitation coalesces into an intense, syncopated chordal accompaniment reinforced by sustained harmonies in the woodwind.

This moment of illumination issues in a peroration of great power, and it is only now that we realize how close the development came to achieving this goal. As the bass line swings between the notes E and B (which it does for twenty-three consecutive bars), the pitches of the aeolian mode on E are introduced, not all at once – the sixth degree, C, is delayed until bar 587, and the fourth degree, A, until bar 615 – but still with an overwhelming sense that they bring with them, not so much a resolution, but a transcendence, albeit temporary, of the tonal circularity of both the exposition and the recapitulation [Ex. 82]. At the end of the development, this E aeolian tonality was more or less present within the combined resources of the major sevenths on C and G (again, the fourth degree, A, was missing) and, as we saw, the notes E-G-B were momentarily, if inconclusively, thrown into relief. But E aeolian was occluded by the major seventh sonorities, so to speak, particularly by the pervasive C major seventh which both hinted at and at the same time obscured its true nature. Only after the aeolian scale on E had been independently established, it seems, could the final process begin, an event that ultimately appears to have been precipitated by the soaring trumpet line. While one has no wish to propose fanciful, far-fetched interpretations, the musical events do occur as described here and the order in which they occur is certainly suggestive. Reaching for appropriate terms to convey the import of the bright, clarion brilliance of the passage for two trumpets, one resorts perforce to phrases like illumination or spiritual apprehension. If we grant that by its very nature music manifests a 'virtual causality',[145] that, in other words, it creates (or can create) the impression that a tone (or musical event) is the result of, or is caused by the previous one, we will readily understand what happens next as an outcome. If, emotionally, we can affirm that only after illumination has been granted is transcendence possible, then that is what the sequence of events at the end of the

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[145] See Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, 73-77, for a discussion of this idea.

movement allows us to hear. This majestic paragraph culminates in a quadruple *forte* climax in bar 615 (with the completion of the aeolian scale!), from which there is a rapid falling away until the music fades to *niente* on a low B in cellos and double basses.

The movement is brought to a conclusion with a brief coda, marked *poco meno mosso*, in which faint echoes of E aeolian are heard on solo flute and bassoon before both instruments meander freely – the bassoon moving through a descending chromatic line – as if searching for something they had lost, until, finally, they come to rest on an A sharp four octaves apart. The first of the principal chord derivations is heard *pianissimo* on divided violins; the flute drops out and the bassoon moves to A before falling to a low C sharp, which is doubled by contra bassoon. As Ex. 83 shows, this results in a vertical aggregate consisting of the first five notes of the Prologue. The C sharp in the bass moves to D, and, finally, the A in the first violins moves to A sharp (alias B flat), which brings the movement to a close on the second of the three principal chord formations, a G minor seventh chord. The sense of closure is provisional, however, and there is clearly more to be said.

Ex. 83: Symphony No.3, 1, 671-678

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2.1.4   Intermezzo: *Adagio*; Movement II: *Adagio tranquillo*; Epilogue: [*Adagio*]-*Presto*

As Kinsella directs that the Intermezzo should follow without a break (*attacca*), the final bass notes of the first movement – C sharp-D – are immediately reiterated by solo bassoon, which continues unaccompanied for the next ten bars [Ex. 84]. Although the initial four pitches are the same as those of the Prologue, the fifth note, G sharp, suggests that the matrix has shifted up a perfect fifth to an aeolian scale on D, supplemented in the same manner as before with pitches a semitone below the first and fifth degrees, C sharp and G sharp respectively [Ex. 85 (i)]. The tonality remains uncertain, however,

Ex. 84: Symphony No. 3, Intermezzo, 1-14

first of all because the defining second degree, E, is never sounded, but more importantly because in bar 13, two bars after they enter, the divided violas introduce an F sharp (picked up by the flute in bar 15), which lingers for four bars. This does not suggest that the music is now poised between matrices on D and G, however, largely

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Ex. 85

(i) pitch matrix

(ii) bars 11-13

because the F sharp never rises to the note G but moves back and forth from F natural, and its introduction here is more like a portent of what is to come. As the solo bassoon line reaches its highest point (bar 11), an important new motif is introduced [*d* in Ex. 85 (ii)], which features prominently throughout the second movement. After oscillating between high A sharps and A naturals for a further four bars, the line descends rapidly and finally comes to rest on a low A. In the last bar of the Intermezzo, bar 21, the alto saxophone enters and, almost inaudibly, takes up this note (an octave higher) holding it over into the beginning of the ensuing *Adagio tranquillo*.

In its broad structural outlines, the second movement is fairly straightforward. It is cast in a ternary form with a modified return of the opening section followed by a coda based on the central episode:

A   B   A¹   Coda (B)
a-b   c-c¹   a

The beginning of the movement (including the connecting saxophone note) is shown in Ex. 86. This opening paragraph, A/a, is based entirely on the diatonic aeolian scale on D and, except for the sonority of the saxophone which runs through the texture like a silver thread, it is scored for stings alone. (See Ex. 89 for an abstract summary of the harmonic-tonal organization of the whole movement.) A yearning, supplicatory quality is given to the music through reiterations of the principal idea, the motif *d* first heard in the Intermezzo, and which, taken up by the saxophone, also marks the beginning of the

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transition section (bars 24-36). As in the first movement, the agents of harmonic movement are the two pitches attached to the aeolian scale as supplements, in this case C sharp and G sharp and their introduction here gives rise to a C sharp major seventh chord in bar 24 (although the third and seventh continue to be spelled F and C rather than E sharp and B sharp). This transitional matrix sheds the pitches D and E, replacing them with a D sharp, which, although it remains a presence throughout the section at first plays only an ancillary role. This can be seen in the second paragraph of the

Ex. 86: Symphony No. 3, II, 1-10

opening section, A/b, which commences in bar 37. Here the tonal basis shifts again, and although D sharp is part of the new pentatonic matrix, the principal components are the pitches of an F sharp major seventh chord. The cellos and double basses strain to reach a high F sharp in bar 37, and underneath the striving melodic line two horns sound first the open fifth F sharp and C sharp and subsequently the A sharp and E sharp (F natural)

[Ex. 87]. This is the first intimation we get that the tonal focus of the music is beginning to shift radically and that F sharp and C sharp are beginning to move to the centre of the argument. For the moment, however, the climax on the note B (in violas and cellos) marks a move to an aeolian scale on G sharp (bar 44) and from this the music sinks, via major seventh aggregates on A and E (bars 52-55), to the hushed beginning of the central section of the movement.

Ex. 87: Symphony No. 3, II, 35-47

Against a background of soft, shimmering tremolando crotchets, the principal idea of B/c is announced *pianissimo* on clarinet and saxophone in unison [marked *e* in Ex. 88]. The aeolian mode on A of the passage (coloured by a single C sharp in bar 61) is quickly abandoned, and while the repeat of the C sharp and the introduction of G sharp in bars 65 and 66 at first suggests a restoration of the pitch matrix of the Intermezzo, they presage, rather, the return of the G sharp aeolian tonality to mark the

commencement of the B/c¹ section. Based largely on motif *e* in the woodwind accompanied by tremolando quaver figuration in the strings, this complex section moves steadily to a climax. The G sharp pitch matrix is replaced by that on B (also aeolian) at bar 76, and from then onwards the pitches F sharp and C sharp gain in prominence, not only in thematic-motivic contexts but also at the level of fundamental tonal organisation, as Ex. 89 shows. The climax, when reached, comes in two waves: in

Ex. 88: Symphony No. 3, II, 56-63

the first, we hear unison horns pealing out motif *e* above a C sharp bass as the string figuration outlines the notes B-F sharp-B; in the second, the bass moves to F sharp and the strings now outline C sharp-F sharp-C sharp. The interesting point about this culmination, however, is that although there is no question about which pitches are central, the matrix nonetheless remains B aeolian in which F sharp and C sharp still

occupy subordinate positions. The G sharp, which would confirm an F sharp aeolian matrix, comes too late in bar 111 to make any difference.

Ex. 89

As the music descends from the heights, the saxophone emerges with a meditative solo line above a sequence of ninth chords that prepare for the return of the opening material. What is recapitulated, however, is a modified version (A^1/a^1) of the initial subsection only: there is no restatement of the A/b idea. The transitional harmonies that follow A^1/a^1 are the same as before, except that, while the pitch D sharp also occurs as before, it is now a temporary feature and yields to D natural at the end of the passage as the music enters its final phase.

Although it is difficult to know how else it might be categorised, to refer to the concluding section of the movement simply and without qualification as a coda is potentially misleading. In no sense is it a mere rounding off of the musical argument; quite the opposite in fact, because it is only here that the tonal and psychological processes of the movement, and indeed of the symphony as a whole, are finally brought to a point of culmination. Not only is the tremolando quaver figuration of the B/c^1 section resumed, the music also returns to the B aeolian matrix. There is a rapid increase in the dynamic level from triple *piano* to *fortissimo* and as the music gains in power the pitch G natural is replaced by G sharp. The *crescendo* culminates in a shattering climactic assertion of the complete aeolian mode on F sharp, with all the strings and the upper woodwind oscillating between the final F sharp and the dominant C sharp. For a brief moment, these two pitches, F sharp and C sharp, which appeared at the outset of the symphony as agents of tonal disruption, emerge here as tonally central in their own right. The descent from the climax is rapid and the movement concludes within a few bars on an isolated *pianissimo* bassoon C sharp.

This C sharp is held over to become the first note of the Epilogue, in which the bassoon, assisted initially by cellos and double basses, commences the process of restoring F sharp and C sharp to their original positions as adjuncts of the G aeolian scale and of re-affirming the original pitch matrix of the symphony. This Epilogue is one of the most surprising sections in the entire work, not so much because of what it does technically – its necessary formal function is clear given the logic of the symphonic

argument as it has been outlined up to this point – but rather because of the manner in which it does it. A variant of the ruminative bassoon melody of the Prologue (here

Ex. 90: Symphony no. 3, Epilogue, 1-17

occasionally doubled with second bassoon and clarinets) is punctuated by five brief interjections from the full orchestra. (The extract quoted in Ex. 90 includes the first of these.) Four of them employ six notes of the pitch matrix over a bass G (as in Ex. 90); the remaining one (the fourth in order), which includes the other three pitches consists of the same idea transposed up a perfect fourth. Against the oscillating semiquavers of the accompaniment, the violins present variants in diminution of the opening bar of the Prologue that leave no lingering doubts about the ultimate subordinate status of both C sharp and F sharp in relation to the G aeolian scale.

It is lass the technical aspect, however, and more the prevailing mood of the music that strikes one as remarkable. All the features of the music contribute to this feeling, not merely the material as described, but also the dynamics (each *tutti* interjection is laid out as a *diminuendo*) and the scoring (in particular the use for the first time in the symphony of the cymbals, which are brushed together softly on off-beat quavers). What is conveyed is difficult to characterize. If it is something like acceptance, then it is an acceptance that does not eschew good humour and can even accommodate, perhaps, a quietly contented, self-contained chuckle. However one attempts to pin down the atmosphere of the passage verbally, it is undoubtedly a musically convincing if surprisingly unexpected conclusion to a remarkable work. Not quite the conclusion, because for the last sixteen bars the tempo increases to *presto* and, with one last reference to the much-used passage from the end of the Prologue, the symphony ends on G with a final uninhibited whoop of joy.

2.2. Symphony No. 4, *The Four Provinces* (1990-91)

2.2.1 Rethinking the four-movement design

John Kinsella supplied a programme note for the first performance of Symphony No. 4 in 1992 in which he explained the subtitle of the work in the following terms:

> The general idea was to sketch some characteristics of the four Irish provinces: Munster, with its high peaks and broad fertile grasslands; Connacht, with contrasts of warmth and sharply-etched horizons; Ulster, where human tragedy overshadows all other impressions, and Leinster, where there has been such strong centralisation. The outline of this scheme has been retained to the extent that it has given a certain character to each movement but, inevitably in a symphony, structural and formal considerations predominate and the movements are bound together by inter-related material and motifs.[146]

This suggests that while the idea for the work may have originated in the depiction of what the composer felt he could identify as the character of each of Ireland's four provinces, the initial conception did not influence the actual shaping of the music to any great extent. Once embarked on the work, Kinsella seems to have been primarily concerned with abstract compositional processes. There is certainly nothing in the symphony that corresponds to the pastoral landscape painting or the evocation of regional topography one associates with works like Vaughan Williams's *A London Symphony* or *A Somerset Rhapsody* by Holst, *et hoc genus omne*. Nor is there any discernible influence of Irish folk song on the music that might support such a reading. In fact Kinsella's remarks strongly hint that it would be futile to attempt to pin any kind of programme to the music other than the fairly vague one he describes, if for no other

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[146] Programme booklet for the first performance of Symphony No. 4 by the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland (conducted by Proinnsías Ó Duinn) at the National Concert Hall, Dublin, on 20 November 1992.

reason than the generalised features of the provinces he singles out as characteristic would appear to be intrinsically resistant to realisation in musical terms.

The impulses to musical invention no doubt vary as widely as do the creative personalities of different composers, but in the case of those whose primary interests lie in abstract forms such as the symphony it seems not uncommon for initial extra-musical ideas to be thus discarded along the way. The distinguished Danish symphonist Vagn Holmboe (1909-1996) has commented eloquently on this experience. 'I have undoubtedly also had non-musical ideas before I got down to writing a piece of music', he writes.

> These ideas must in any case have only been to get me going, because whether it was a matter of a particular mood, an image carried over from an event, or a more definite impression, what happened in every single case was that such ideas disappeared at the moment I began to work with notes. Whenever the music flowed forth and took shape, the notes and their particular problems were the only reality for me. […] 'Only' the music itself was left with its tensions, developments, and individual nature.[147]

Given that this is also more or less Kinsella's position, it is curious that he should draw attention in his programme note to the subtitle of the symphony and its background when, essentially, both seem to be red herrings – especially as he chose to refrain altogether from alluding to the subtitle of Symphony No. 3, which arguably points to a profound truth about the import of that work. One can only surmise that if Kinsella understood *Joie de Vivre* to be self-evidently applicable to Symphony No. 3, he must have felt that, on the contrary, the reference to the provinces of Ireland might not be immediately intelligible to the listener in the present instance and needed to be explained. But in truth, the subtitle is of little consequence. It provides no necessary key to the meaning of the music.

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[147] Vagn Holmboe, *Experiencing Music: A Composer's Notes*, trans. Paul Rapport (London, 1991), 102.

The looseness of the connection between the subtitle and the symphony would seem to be further indicated by the curious fact that on the occasion of its first performance in 1992 the work was actually subtitled *The Birmingham Six*.[148] The Birmingham Six were a group of men from Northern Ireland who were convicted of terrorist bombings in Birmingham in 1974 and sentenced to life imprisonment the following year. After three failed appeals against this sentence, increasing evidence of a gross miscarriage of justice led to intense public pressure to have their case reopened. The Court of Appeal finally overturned their conviction in 1991. 'By a coincidence', Kinsella wrote in the programme booklet,

> I completed sketches for the Coda [of the Finale] on 14th. March [1991] and that afternoon the Birmingham Six were released, so I decided to connect the ending of two long journeys by reshaping the Coda to include six chords on full orchestra, with cymbal crashes, to celebrate the overwhelming feelings these men were experiencing.[149]

This soubriquet was subsequently dropped, however. When a commercial recording of the symphony was released in 1997 it was with the subtitle *The Four Provinces* and the Birmingham Six were not referred to at all.[150]

The orchestra for which Symphony No. 4 is scored retains the slightly larger woodwind and percussions sections of the previous work (although without the alto saxophone) while the number of trumpets employed is again four, as in the first two symphonies. The principal innovation in the present score is the inclusion of both a second set of timpani and – *ad libitum* in the coda of the finale – organ. The decision to

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[148] Despite the fact that it was obviously unconnected with the subtitle *The Birmingham Six*, however, the programme note for the first performance, outlining the outlining the symphony's connection with the provinces of Ireland, remained as quoted above.

[149] Programme booklet for the first performance of Symphony No. 4.

[150] *John Kinsella: Symphonies Nos. 3 & 4*, National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, conducted by Proinnsías Ó Duinn, Marco Polo, 8.223766 (1997). The liner notes for the CD do not allude to the Birmingham Six, nor does the full score of the work (a facsimile of the composer's MS) issued by the Contemporary Music Centre Ireland.

include the latter instrument was in all likelihood prompted by the completion in 1991 of the long awaited new organ in the National Concert Hall in Dublin, the venue where Symphony No. 4 was premiered.[151]

Cast in four substantial movements and about forty-five minutes in duration, Symphony No. 4 might at first appear to be conceived along the general lines of the first two symphonies. But this is far from the case, and the process of rethinking symphonic design that began with Symphony No. 3 is continued here, although it now takes place on the level of the individual movements rather than being reflected in the larger dimensions of the overall scheme.

In the first three symphonies, Kinsella tended to develop his thought within the parameters of what might be described as traditional forms. While these are subject to *ad hoc* modifications as occasion demands, by and large the structural patterns of sonata form, rondo form, ternary form and so on, remain readily identifiable in the music. The first movement of Symphony No. 3 is a particularly good example of Kinsella's inventive manipulation of these standard approaches. Here the result is a hybrid in which characteristics of both simple rondo and sonata-rondo types are combined. But although an original conception, the design of the movement as a species of rondo is never in doubt. A similar observation might be made about the manner in which the end of the second movement of the same symphony is handled. As discussed above, the

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[151] The installation of the organ in the National Concert Hall, Dublin marked the final stage in the transformation of the venue into a fully equipped auditorium. The lack of a suitable venue in Dublin for symphony orchestra concerts had been a source of discontent for many decades. The Italian composer Michele Esposito, for example, who was one of the foremost figures in Irish musical life between 1882 and 1928, repeatedly campaigned for the construction of a proper concert hall in the city (see Dibble, *Michele Esposito*, 114 ff), and his example was followed by various pressure groups throughout the ensuing decades. But these efforts were unavailing and the two principal national orchestras continued to perform in largely inadequate venues. After many delays, it was eventually decided to adopt a compromise solution and renovate the former examination hall of University College, Dublin, which was centrally located in Earlsfort Terrace. The new auditorium, with a seating capacity of 1,200, was opened by the President of Ireland on the 9 September 1981. It was to be another decade before the organ was completed and the instrument was officially inaugurated in September 1991. See Patricia Butler and Pat O'Kelly, *The National Concert Hall at Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin: A History* (Dublin, 2000).

culmination of the tonal argument is achieved only in the coda, which consequently acquires a far greater structural significance than is usually the case. Notwithstanding this radical redistribution of weight, however, the form of movement is again fairly straightforward, which in this case is ternary.

It is interesting that Kinsella chose to describe two movements of Symphony No. 4 – the second and fourth – as *quasi una fantasia*. In an age when there are no fixed expectations regarding the form of a symphonic movement, or even about what constitutes a symphony, this is a revealing detail. It suggests that for Kinsella established formal designs represent a norm, not in the sense that they are unalterable, but rather in that they have a valuable function as points of reference, as fundamentally orienting concepts. For Kinsella, a freer approach to form does not arise out of experimentation *in vacuo* but is the result of deliberate and calculated departures from these norms. His employment of the designation *quasi una fantasia* accordingly becomes necessary as an indication that customary expectations are unlikely to be met. Whether contemporary audiences (and critics) continue to entertain such expectations may well be doubted, but that is not really the point. What is significant is that that they are clearly still valid for the composer.

Although best-known use of the designation *quasi una fantasia* occurs in the titles of Beethoven's two Op. 27 piano sonatas, in the symphonic literature it is probably to be found in the last movement of Sibelius's Symphony No. 1 (1899).[152] It is this latter instance that most likely furnished Kinsella with a precedent. Despite Cecil Gray's surprisingly obtuse description of this movement as 'a typical example of the orthodox *finale*',[153] it is clear that the composer considered it to be unconventional. The symphonic finale at this period was usually a fast movement cast either in sonata form, in some variant of rondo form or, occasionally, in variation form. In the concluding movement of Sibelius's Symphony No. 1, however, the tempo veers rhapsodically between *allegro*

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[152] The movement is entitled *Finale (quasi una fantasia)*.

[153] Cecil Gray, *Sibelius* (London, 1945 [1931]), 132: 'and the last [movement] (*quasi una fantasia*), with its long, dominating principal subject winding its way to a triumphant apotheosis, is a typical example of the orthodox *finale*'.

molto and *andante assai* and while the music builds to a great rhetorical climax, it is one of sheer volume and emotional intensity rather than the outcome of any rigorous symphonic argument. The structure of the movement is not in the least obscure, indeed it is transparently simple in outline and the word *fantasia* does not connote anything indefinite or vaguely improvisatory. But Sibelius evidently felt that his formal scheme was unusual enough in the context to merit the descriptive disclaimer. Contrary to Gray, then, Sibelius's symphonic conservatism demanded the use of a phase that would acknowledge the claims of orthodoxy while simultaneously indicating their infringement. For a more radically adventurous composer – Berlioz, say – whose relationship to established symphonic precedents was so very different, such an acknowledgement would have been both unnecessary and meaningless.[154]

Kinsella's symphonic practice to date suggests that such considerations are not irrelevant to his way of thinking. But it is not only in the second and fourth movements of Symphony No. 4 that the unexpected occurs. The form of the first movement is perhaps the most unpredictable of all, and it certainly represents a striking departure from the composer's usual procedures. Although innocuously designated *Allegro energico*, not only does it not correspond in any way to what one might expect from the opening movement of a large-scale symphony, but it would be a curious, not to say a surprising structure in any context. The movement that comes closest to confirming conventional formal expectations is the third, the scherzo, although this too demonstrates a number of atypical characteristics.

Like Symphony No. 3, the present work seems to be designed as an exploration of structural asymmetry. Unlike Symphony No. 3, however, in which the asymmetrical construction involved the work as a whole, the aim here seems to be to contain the

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[154] Although one could argue that Berlioz also felt the need to acknowledge convention in a similar way when he entitled his first symphony *Symphonie Fantastique*. In this context, it is interesting to note that even towards the end of his composing career, Sibelius hesitated before applying the term 'symphony' to his final work in the genre, and felt initially that his unusual conception might better be served by the designation *Fantasia sinfonica*, under which title Symphony No. 7 was first performed. See Erik Tawaststjerna, *Sibelius, Volume III: 1914-1957*, trans. Robert Layton (London, 1997), 240 ff.

irregularity of individual movements within a well-balanced overall design. Kinsella takes a fresh look at the coordination of the different movements in respect of tempo and relative intensity. Unusually, the symphony's centre of gravity is the dark, violent scherzo towards which the first two movements converge, and to which the finale can be understood to constitute a response. This is a novel idea. If it is to work, the relative weights of the movements must be redistributed and the customary significance of the first movement in particular must be reconsidered. Kinsella manages this transference remarkable well and contrives to make the first movement – although fully twelve minutes long – both imposing and yet sufficiently inconclusive to throw all expectations of integrated structural substantiality onto the following movements. As the second movement does nothing to fulfill these expectations, the accent accordingly falls on the scherzo, which, interestingly, is also the most solidly conventional of the four from the formal point of view. The response of the predominantly slow, reflective finale to the frenzied brutality of the scherzo is more in the nature of a compensatory reaction rather than a resolution. The music, which commences in a mood of desolation and gains steadily in confidence, is cast in a kind of telescoped sonata form that represents a further intriguing structural innovation in this very original symphony.

2.2.2   Movement I: *Allegro energico*

The opening 131 bars of the first movement constitute a single unbroken span which commences in an urgent, whispered *piano* (dropping almost immediately to *pianissimo*) that brilliantly conveys suppressed excitement and builds to a tremendous climax before dying away over a long pedal note. The creation of a sense of burgeoning power is something that Kinsella always manages well – as has previously been noted – but it is doubtful if he has ever brought it off as superbly as he does here. The entire section, which for convenience can be labeled A, sweeps forward towards its goal with purposeful inevitability.

The section is constructed out of two principal themes, the first of which (theme 1) consists of a number of discrete motifs woven into a continuously developing texture. The principal ideas are identified as *motif 1a*, *motif 1a¹*, *motif 1b* and *motif 1c* in

Ex. 91: Symphony No. 4, I, 1-23

Ex. 91, which reproduces the opening twenty-three bars of the movement. But the binding agent that knits them into a single composite thought is the triplet accompaniment pattern in the strings and woodwind. The first two motifs (*1a* and its variant form, *1a¹*) pervade the entire symphony and serve to unify much of the thematic material across the four movements.

Ex. 92: Symphony No. 4, I, 64-71

The first twenty-six bars of the movement form a clear sub-paragraph and in bar twenty-seven, with a (varied) return of the opening, the same thematic process recommences. This time, however, there is a more intense development of the constituent ideas and the music steadily gathers force until it culminates in bar 64 with a new eight-bar theme heard *fortissimo* on the brass (theme 2) [Ex. 92, and – showing the

important melodic contour – Ex. 93]. Following this, the A section rises quickly to a climax in which reiterations of *motif 1a* on strings and woodwind are developed into a

Ex. 93

theme 2
bars 64-71

 wild, shrieking accompaniment to powerful interjections on the brass. The music strains to reach a tutti C sharp on which – as soon as it is attained – the crest of the wave finally breaks. All the accumulated tension rapidly ebbs away and the C sharp is sustained as a pedal note against which stray shreds of theme 1 (largely *motif 1c*) are heard on woodwind before finally petering out altogether.

Ex. 94: Symphony No. 4, I, 132-153

What we have heard up to this point possesses all the characteristics of a brilliant

first-subject group of what we imagine – given that this is the first movement of a symphony – will most likely turn out to be a full-blown sonata-type structure. The closely-knit motivic nature of the material, the continuously developing textures and especially the forward-driving movement all serve to reinforce this impression. But what actually ensues is something completely different. This opening section turns out not to be the first-subject group of a dualistically conceived sonata form at all (hence its description above simply as section A): no opposing second subject follows and there is no exploration of the dynamics of conflict and resolution. Instead, what can be labeled section B, we get a long meditation (almost 100 bars) on theme 2 at a slightly slower speed that that of the opening. This eight-bar theme is presented eight times in succession, the only irregularity in the otherwise straightforward reiteration being a new strain of variable length appended to every second statement. (The first two statements and the appendix to the second are shown in Ex. 94.) It is the dynamic contour that governs the very simple structure of the section: the music commences very quietly on the strings, as can be seen in Ex. 94, and gradually builds to a substantial climax from which it subsequently dies away. Although the pitch at which the theme is heard does change, the texture remains dangerously uniform for such a long passage – the homophonic style is relieved only by quasi-canonic imitation at the climactic fifth and sixth statements, and the progression of minim (and slower) harmonies is broken only occasionally by crotchet movement. Internal shifts of tonal centre notwithstanding, the overall effect of the passage is principally one of arrested movement, if not of actual stasis. Consequently, despite the fact the principal material, theme 2, is brought forward from the opening, the character of section B diverges so radically from what has been heard previously that it hardly seems to constitute an integrated continuation. As a large, more or less self-contained block of music, it successfully creates a balanced contrast to section A while simultaneously exploring new aspects of one of its principal ideas, and this, presumably, is its intended function. But it also halts the dynamic impetus rather than develops it.

Ex. 95: Symphony No. 4, I, 232-247

The third section, C (marked *più mosso*), commences with a further new idea (theme 3). In a manner similar to that of the beginning of the movement, this too is

composed of a number of distinguishable motifs (marked *motif 3a, motif 3b* and *motif 3c* in Ex. 95), which are subject to ongoing development. They are supplemented by a number of prominent references to earlier material, principally to theme 2 which serves to connect the section with what has gone before and which, again, together with the appended strain from section B, forms the basis of the central climax. This time the ensuing descent is more gradual, and the section concludes with a lengthy passage for two trombones in dialogue above sustained harmonies on the lower strings, which comes to rest on a pause chord (bar 379) prior to a brief return of the principal opening ideas, A¹. Although it serves to round off the movement by recalling the beginning both tonally and thematically, the final section is not a recapitulation in the usual understanding of the term. A mere twenty-four bars long, it quickly peters out in an inconclusive *diminuendo,* as, at the discretion of the conductor, the final three-bar unit is repeated *al niente.*

The form of this *Allegro energico* defies simple reductive analysis, but, allowing for the ubiquitous presence of theme 2 (in all sections except the last), to summarise it as A-B-C-A¹ is at least to acknowledge its fundamental asymmetry. It makes a very curious double impression: on one level of disunity, because of the juxtaposition of very different textures and rates of movement; and on another level of unity, firstly because of the clear thematic connections between the different sections and, secondly and perhaps more importantly if somewhat less obviously, because of the logic of the underlying tonal organisation.

The tonal/harmonic resources of Symphony No. 4 are fairly closely related to those of the previous work, although with notable differences. In the first place, despite the general centrality of the pitch D, there is no evidence in the present work of an overarching tonal design such as that which binds the various parts of Symphony No. 3 so successfully into a single continuous argument; and, in the second place, while the concept of the pitch matrix is retained, it is applied with some looseness and each of the four movements exhibits a different approach to the way it is handled.

Ex. 96

It is the technique of the *Allegro energico* that comes closest, perhaps, to that of Symphony No. 3. As can be seen in Ex. 96, which presents an abstract of the tonal/harmonic content of the whole movement, a modal matrix on D is supplemented with two adjunct pitches – a semitone below the final, D, and the dominant, A, respectively (bars 1-26) – which function as before both as pivot notes and as the generators of chromatic harmonies. Here, however, the mode is indeterminate: the sixth degree is missing, and much of the movement is concerned with establishing whether it is to be a major or a minor sixth from the tonic; whether, in other words, the mode is ultimately to be aeolian or dorian. But even within the six pitches that are established at the outset, there is a clear hierarchy. The most important are those of the four-note group A-D-E-F, while the remaining two – C and G – are decidedly subordinate. Very

much in evidence in Kinsella's harmonic vocabulary since Symphony No. 2, this characteristic four-note group seems at times to rival the major seventh aggregate as a preferred sonority, and, as Ex. 96 shows, it is fundamental to the present movement.

In is only towards the end of the second paragraph of section A (bar 54) that an additional pitch, A sharp, is introduced. Alias B flat, this is of course the sixth degree of the aeolian mode, and it remains an important presence until the climax on C sharp is reached in bar 91 when the matrix is transposed up a major third in anticipation of the second section, B. The mode of this transposed matrix is also initially indefinite, and it is not until bar 108 that a D (natural) confirms that it too is aeolian.

The eight statements of theme 2 that comprise the B section of the movement are spread across three transpositions of the matrix (although they are mostly employed without the two adjunct pitches): the first pair are on F sharp aeolian; the first statement of the second pair is a fifth lower on B aeolian (without the sixth degree) while the second statement returns to F sharp, which remains the pitch for the third pair; and the final pair moves a fifth higher to C sharp aeolian. As Ex. 96 shows, the adjunct pitches of the opening matrix – C sharp and G sharp – play an important role in the overall tonal organisation and, together with F sharp, they constitute the principal bass notes of the entire section. Here as elsewhere, Kinsella's creation of a sense of harmonic buoyancy is largely due to this tendency to place the dominant of the prevailing mode in the bass.

Section C commences with the aeolian mode on A, but as the music builds to a climax it is replaced firstly by that on F sharp and subsequently by that on B. This latter is also the basis of the subsequent wind-down and of the ensuing dialogue for the two trombones, which marks the point of greatest repose in the movement. At the very end of the section the four principal notes of B aeolian are juxtaposed with the four principal notes of the indeterminate mode on D heard at the very opening of the work. All of the sharpwards transpositions of the matrix heard during the course of the movement converge onto that on B, and it is the significance of this particular transposition – as explicitly confirmed in bars 345 to 379 – that is ultimately responsible for the emergence of the major sixth and the unexpectedly late assertion of the dorian mode on D. This is

suggested in bars 367-71, when the pitch B is sounded in connection with the four-note group A-D-E-F, but it is confirmed only with the return the opening material, A[1], in bars 394-96. In Kinsella's work, the impulse to musical unity is generally inseparable from a coherent tonal/harmonic plan. This is perhaps even more than usually the case here, and the disparate sections of the movement successfully hang together largely because they articulate the successive stages of a simple yet subtly continuous tonal argument.

2.2.3   Movement II: *Moderato, quasi una fantasia*

The tonal organisation of the second movement is considerably looser than that of the first. The technical foundation is also somewhat different. The use of the modally based matrix is temporarily suspended, and there is a return instead to something not unlike the hexachordal technique employed in the second symphony where Kinsella divides the twelve chromatic pitches into two symmetrical groups. The difference between the earlier hexachords and those employed here, however, is that the resultant six-note scale is decidedly of the 'exotic' variety, rather than a gapped variant of one of the ecclesiastical modes.

The pitches C sharp and G sharp – the adjunct notes of the matrix used in the first movement – are conspicuous features of the first hexachord, closely followed in importance by the pitch A. As before, the two hexachords are not treated with equal importance, and the function of the second is to largely provide additional pitches to supplement those of the first. The second hexachord is perhaps best thought of as being a tone higher than the first one (rather than a tritone) as this arrangement of the notes highlights D sharp and A sharp, both of which play a particularly significant role in the second half of the movement [Ex. 97 (i)]. The scale shown in Ex. 97 (ii) – which comprises alternating minor thirds and semitones – is essentially an abstraction that has minimal influence on the shaping of the thematic material, and the hexachord is far more extensively exploited as a source of potential harmonies. As Ex. 97 (iii), (iv) and (v) show, three major triads, three minor triads and three major seventh aggregates can be

Ex. 97

(i) hexachord 1   hexachord 2

(ii)

(iii) major triads

(iv) minor triads

(v) major seventh aggregates

(vi) hexachordal aggregrates

bar 158

bar 14

derived from its six constituent pitches, as well as a vertical aggregate comprising all six notes (vi). These various derivations are not used systematically, however: while they undoubtedly generate a great deal of the harmonic content, they operate more as a general resource from which the composer chooses what he requires from moment to moment.

The form of the movement certainly justifies its description as *quasi una fantasia*. Consisting of two contrasting sections, it carries the principal of structural asymmetry a step further than the preceding *Allegro energico*, although, again, the coda refers briefly to the opening ideas and thus carries the suggestion of a reprise. The overall structure may be summarised as follows:

A   B   Coda
a-b-a^1 c-c^1 [based on a + c]

Ex. 98: Symphony No. 4, II, 1-17

Moderato - quasi una fantasia

As Ex. 98 shows, the textures of the A/a section are spare and the atmosphere of
the music is both bleak and oppressive. The woodwind lines are developed out of *motifs*
1a and *1a¹* – which are heard in close juxtaposition at the outset – and they circle around
the notes C sharp, G sharp and A (three constituent pitches of the first hexachord). There
is a contrasting idea in bar 14 that consists of a *pianissimo* chord in the brass

Ex. 99: Symphony No. 4, II, 50-53

(comprising all six pitches of the first hexachord) and *sul ponticello* tremolos in the violins. These two ideas are then repeated in varied form: the woodwind lines are now focused on the notes E and F (two further pitches of the hexachord) and are followed by three more statements of the complete hexachordal aggregate which, again, underpin *sul ponticello* tremolos.

Although the A/b section ushers in a change of texture, a wintry mood still prevails [Ex. 99]. As before, all the principal pitches are taken from the first hexachord: over a sustained bass E and against contrary motion chromatic scales in the strings, trumpets *con sordini* (and subsequently horns) articulate a figure based on a major seventh chord on F. As this material is developed, new pitches are gradually introduced. The notes B, F sharp, A sharp and D sharp from the second hexachord increasingly make their presence felt and the resulting conflict gives rise to a climax of some force. The accumulated tension does not abate with the return of the opening ideas. This third subsection, A/a¹, is less a recapitulation and much more a development of the initial material of the movement and one of its most interesting features is its introduction of the pitch D into the tonal argument of the movement for the first time.

Ex. 100: Symphony No. 4, II, 111-118
[strings]

Motif 1a (now centered on D) is subject to vigorous, *quasi fugato* treatment that eventually

comes to rest on the open fifth D-A.   Notwithstanding ensuing references

Ex. 101: Symphony No. 4, II, 157-171

to the initial pitch matrix of the preceding *Allegro energico,* however, this attainment of D

proves to be temporary.

The B section, which comprises two varied statements of the same idea (c and c[1]), commences almost exactly halfway through the movement. The mood of the music changes and the stark chilliness of the first part is replaced by rich string writing which conveys a sense of glowing warmth [Ex. 100]. The material is still largely based on the first hexachord (or at least on five of its six notes – the pitch A is not sounded initially), supplemented by the pitches D sharp and A sharp, as Ex. 100 shows. As the B/c subsection gains in intensity, it incorporates other pitches and a climax is reached which is based on the juxtaposition of the incomplete modal matrix on D of the first movement together with its original complement, the principal pitches of the transposition on B. This moment of tonal recollection has no enduring outcome, however, and the ensuing B/c[1] is largely underpinned by a major seventh aggregate on F alternating with an F minor triad.

The coda commences with a condensed return of the opening woodwind idea, followed by an unequivocal assertion, triple *forte,* of the complete hexachordal aggregate. Four of the six notes drop out, leaving C sharp and G sharp sustained in the violins, against which there is heard, firstly, a brief reference to B in the lower strings, followed by a curious new figure on flutes and oboes reminiscent of a bird call and suggesting, perhaps, cockcrow. There is a varied repeat of these four elements and a final assertion of the pitches C sharp and G sharp as the trumpets take up the 'cockcrow' motif [Ex. 101]. Insistent reiterations of motif 1a, centered on the pitch A as the beginning, eventually come to rest on the same note which, quickly dying away, brings the movement to an end.

2.2.4   Movement III: *Scherzo, Allegro molto*

If the second movement of Symphony No. 4 as described above can be considered to reflect to some extent the contrast between the 'sharply etched horizons' and 'warmth of

feelings'[155] the composer identified as dual characteristics of Connacht, then the turbulent *Scherzo, Allegro molto* will readily be understood as relating to the 'human tragedy' he associates with Ulster. As already mentioned, this dark and powerful movement represents the core of the symphony and its frenetic activity suggests a vortex of conflict and violence that irresistibly draws everything into itself. Unsurprisingly, this is also the movement in which both sets of timpani are used for the first time.

The overall form corresponds to that of a scherzo and trio in that a clearly demarcated middle section, B, is flanked by variants of the same principal material, A and A^1, and the whole movement rounded off with a coda. The internal organisation of these component sections, however, is far less predictable. Although the A/a section commences *pianissimo*, an immediate sense of urgency created by frantic reiterations of

Ex. 102

motif 1a in the violas combined with its retrograde form in the cellos over repeated D's in the bass. The entire passage is supported by both sets of timpani, and as the dynamic level rises the inversion and retrograde inversion of the motif are superimposed in the violins so that the complete cluster C-D-D sharp is sounded on each semiquaver of the bar creating a darkly intense and menacing sonority [Ex. 102]. The bass drops to G, and alternating pairs of trumpets add to the existing texture a new motif based on the same three pitches. This new idea is subject to progressive rhythmic contractions until

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[155] In the liner notes for the 1997 CD, the phrase 'warmth of feelings' replaces the somewhat ambiguous 'warmth' of the programme booklet (as quoted above), which – it may have been felt – might be taken to apply (misleadingly) to the climate of the west of Ireland.

eventually it issues in an explosive triple *forte* which is followed by a scurrying semiquaver descent that rapidly sinks once again to a simmering *piano* [Ex. 103].

Ex. 103: Symphony No. 4, III, 25-35

Tonally, the movement is of the greatest interest. As can be seen in Ex. 110, which presents an abstract summary of the tonal/harmonic content, the note D returns as one of the central pitches and, together with G, it underpins a great deal of the music. Unlike the first movement, however, where D also governed the basic matrix as the final of the mode, it has no such authority here. It is beleaguered from the outset and its function as a bass note is constantly at variance with the prevailing matrix of which it is either a subordinate component or even an entirely unrelated element. In the A/a section just

described, for example, the fundamental four-note group of the symphony is transposed to G-C-D-D sharp (or E flat). According to the precedent established in the first movement, this might be taken to imply an incipient modal matrix on C (which, in fact, is what it becomes a little later). Kinsella's tendency to place the dominant of the operative mode in the bass may account for the frequent G's; but the importance of the note D (rather than C) as the other prominent bass note produces less a feeling of harmony 'on the move' and more a sense of acute unease and instability. So, although the overall ground note of the symphony (D) is strongly asserted, the tonal circumstances radically distort its character and ultimately render it powerless to pull the disparate elements together over the course of the movement or to effect a resolution. This conflict between the bass and what is imposed upon it is unusual in Kinsella's work and, in the present context, is highly suggestive. Although the scurrying descent from the explosive outburst mentioned above encompasses the eight remaining pitches of the chromatic scale, the basic four-note group G-C-D-D sharp (E flat), supported briefly by C in the bass, is re-established for the ensuing A/b section of the movement. These four notes are quickly supplemented with F and A sharp (B flat), and the resultant modally indeterminate hexatonic scale is not confirmed as dorian until the appearance of the note A (natural), the sixth degree, in bar 91.

The A/b section contains several distinct thematic ideas. The four-bar woodwind phrase shown in Ex. 104 (bars 52-55), which is related to theme 2 of the opening *Allegro energico*, is perhaps the most important of these as it reappears throughout the rest of the movement with surprising frequency and often in unexpected places. It overlaps with an abbreviated variant of itself (three bars only) on four horns, and is followed by a new rhythmic motif on the timpani, which in turn is also echoed by a variant on strings. These ideas are freely repeated against a return of the opening string texture, and a new element with irregularly changing time signatures – 5/8 for two bars, 3/8 for a bar, 2/4 for a bar, followed by a return to 3/8 for two bars, and so on – is supplied by the two sets of timpani which insist relentlessly on the pitches G and D. The pitch shifts briefly to a modally indeterminate matrix on B (or perhaps aeolian matrix if one takes into account

the G in the timpani) as the brass anticipate the return of the opening ideas

Ex. 104: Symphony no. 4, III, 52-61

of the movement, A/a¹. The return is short – a mere nine bars – and it is quickly replaced
by a new group of ideas, A/c.

 This new paragraph is not in any sense a codetta to the A section. On the
contrary, it contains the most dissonant music heard so far and marks the violent apex of
the movement. The matrix on B, or more accurately its basic four-note group (F sharp-B-
C sharp-D), is re-established and reiterated *fortissimo* as a vertical aggregate by the full
orchestra, except for the heavy brass which articulate a dramatic plunging figure –
employing the five additional pitches of a complete major ninth chord on A flat (G sharp)

– that tears abrasively through the texture [Ex. 105].   After this is repeated, the

Ex. 105: Symphony No. 4, III, 127-132

music comes to a shuddering halt under a sustained *piano* D sharp on a single piccolo, which then takes up and extends the initial four-bar idea from the A/b section. For this passage, the four-note group on B has been replaced by a gapped scale on G sharp, and the thin sound of the piccolo floating incongruously above an unrelated G (natural) in the bass conveys a sense of utter desolation.   The unexpected choice of piccolo here is a distinctly imaginative touch, and the peculiarly drained, 'colourless' quality of its middle register allows Kinsella to suggest with remarkable effectiveness emotions that have become numbed or frozen as a result of extreme shock or trauma. There is a further splenetic recurrence of A/c and the piccolo, still suspended above a bass G (natural), responds with a variant of its previous melody.   One brief final explosion involving a shift of the four-note group on B up a tone (bar 213) marks the end of the scherzo, and the ensuing eight bars of unaccompanied timpani, still resolutely clinging to the notes G and D, link it to B, the trio section of the movement.

Although the trio is based on similar modal matrices to those of the scherzo (dorian and aeolian as well as the incomplete versions without the sixth degree), they are now transposed to new pitches and, crucially, the hitherto predominant bass notes D and G are replaced. As Ex. 110 shows, D sharp and G sharp underpin the greater part of the trio, and the re-emergence of D (natural) is suggested only in the final fifty or so bars.

Ex. 106: Symphony No. 4, III, 226-236

Thematically, the B section consists of three principal ideas, which although distinct are yet quite closely related and can accordingly be labelled d(i), d(ii) and d(iii). The first of them, an irregularly barred theme on cellos and clarinets with a running semiquaver countersubject in the violas [Ex. 106], articulates an incomplete modal matrix on E. It is stated three times in a *quasi fugato* manner, the third time in parallel augmented triads, and it leads directly to d(ii) which picks up the same rhythmic pattern (2/4 for two bars followed by 3/8 for a bar) [Ex. 107]. Initially, d(ii) is based on the same matrix, but as it builds to a climax this shifts to aeolian (complete) on C sharp (bar 280). With the subsequent addition to the texture of a pentatonic group on D (bar 283), eleven of the twelve chromatic notes are employed and the level of dissonance increases sharply. The accumulated tension is released in d(iii) [Ex. 108], a new idea on strings (supported by timpani), which moves through an aeolian matrix on G sharp to a dorian a fifth higher where it incorporates further references (in half the note values) to the opening idea of A/b, again on the piccolo. After a varied return of d(ii) – now, however, underpinned by the pitch D – the bass settles on D sharp and the A/b theme makes a last appearance, this time on solo viola (still in half the note values) to which piccolo and clarinet (two octaves apart) add a wan counterpoint. Three bars before the end, the D sharp finally sinks to a D natural in preparation for the repeat of the scherzo.

Although the A¹ section presents a very condensed version of the opening material, all the material recurs with the exception of the A/b idea that has already received extensive treatment. At the end of A¹/c¹, the pitch D seems for a moment to gain ascendancy. There is even a fleeting hint of D major as the two sets of timpani roll

on D and F sharp with A sounding in the woodwind. This is abruptly cut off, however,

Ex. 108: Symphony No. 4, III, 289-298

by the brass, which pulls the music down to G, a pitch immediately taken up by the coda that follows. The coda is constructed around the original modal matrix on C (but without

Ex. 109: Symphony No. 4, III, 563-577

the sixth degree), supplemented by two transpositions each a major third lower than the previous one.   The bass note pattern also moves by major thirds, as can be seen

Ex. 110

in Ex.110.   These matrices are articulated by successive variants of a consolatory *pianissimo* idea on strings, marked *Largo, delicato*, which is vaguely reminiscent of the A/b idea that has been heard so frequently throughout the movement. Each of them, however, is cut off with peremptory violence by a triple *forte* interjection (*tempo primo*) from the brass. (Ex. 109 shows the initial *Largo* and its subsequent interruption.)   The third statement, which culminates in a serene variant of *motif 1a*, is determinedly suppressed by the most prolonged of the brass passages that also finally reasserts the four-note group G-C-D-D sharp over a bass D on which the movement ends.   A momentary cessation allows one last, barely audible plea on solo strings to be heard (bars 644-646) before it too is brutally crushed (bar 647).

2.2.5   Movement IV: *Finale, quasi una fantasia*

The finale of Symphony No. 4 does not show any new departures in the management of tonal organisation or the handling of harmonic content.   Again, the basis is the indeterminate modal matrix, with the defining sixth degree either missing, or, where it does occur, delayed in appearance.   Occasionally, the complete seven-note mode is supplemented with the remaining five pitches of the chromatic scale, or a selection thereof. The opening of the movement centres on a modal F minor, which turns out to be aeolian with the appearance of C sharp (alias D flat) in bar 6, and the tonality of the principal contrasting section is a matrix on D sharp, the variable sixth of which – B or C (B sharp) – leaves unsettled the question of whether it is dorian or aeolian.   As is Kinsella's usual practice, each of these centres is associated with specific thematic material and returns when that material is restated. Naturally, the music explores other pitch regions but these two remain the cardinal points of tonal orientation for the movement as a whole. Arguably, the single most arresting moment occurs in the coda when the D sharp matrix is finally confirmed as aeolian with the establishment of B as the sixth degree. It is only at this point that the orchestral forces are augmented with the organ and, as the music reaches its highest pitch of intensity with the six cymbal clashes celebrating the release of the Birmingham Six, the tonality slips down a semitone and the (incomplete) modal matrix on D of the opening *Allegro energico* is dramatically regained. This matrix has not yet been sounded in the course of the movement, and its late emergence is both surprising and, in the context, overwhelming. It produces one of those extraordinary moments of emotional expansion that are characteristic of Kinsella's music, and it creates a feeling of jubilant liberation that is sustained until the final triumphant affirmation of the tonic D.

As mentioned above, it is in this movement that Kinsella's manipulation of traditional formal patterns is at its most unobtrusively inventive. The overall form can be summarised as follows:

$$\begin{array}{llll}
\text{A} & \text{B} & \text{A}^1 & \text{B}^1 \quad \text{Coda} \\
\text{a-b-a}^1 & & \text{a}^2\text{(devl)-b}^1 &
\end{array}$$

But such a simple schematic reduction can give little indication of the novel effect the composer creates and, in particular, can convey nothing of his skill in inventing thematic material susceptible of far-reaching transformation on which the success of his approach depends. The movement, which is in a very slow tempo (crotchet = 66), commences with an oboe solo based on *motif 1a*. This is the first idea of the A/a section

Ex. 111: Symphony No. 4, IV, 1-10

and it is followed by a descending passage on the strings (*motif 4a*) to which a triplet figure on the timpani is appended [Ex. 111]. All three ideas are immediately repeated in varied form. In the A/b section that follows, we hear a new, more sustained idea [Ex. 112], which quickly builds to a considerable climax and, dying away, leads directly to a

varied return of the opening section, A/a[1], now augmented by a new idea (*motif 4b*) in the woodwind [Ex. 113]. Finally, there is a brief reference to the opening bar of A/b, which comes to rest on a pause chord and rounds off the section.

Ex. 112: Symphony No. 4, IV, 20-26

So far, nothing unusual has occurred. While this more or less self-contained three-part section could be continued in a number of conceivable ways, it does not immediately suggest any kind of sonata treatment. Nor indeed does the stately melody for strings and timpani (marked *semplice, tranquillo*) of the ensuing B section. Although its legato lines undoubtedly make for an effective contrast with the preceding A section [Ex. 114], its reflective character reinforces the impression that the finale is a lyrical movement cast in what will probably be some kind of episodical or ternary form.

What happens next is both surprising and delightful. The tempo picks up a little (crotchet = 84) and the opening ideas return. But instead of a straightforward reprise, they are subject instead to expansion and extensive development and in the process reveal unsuspected characteristics. Firstly, *motif 1a, motif 4a* and *motif 4b* appear together as they did in A/a[1], supported here, however, by *leggiero* string figuration and interspersed with fleet scalic passages that lighten the subdued atmosphere of the beginning of the movement and create a sense of fresh expectations. This feeling of enhanced well-being is reinforced by the subsequent treatment of *motif 4a* in the strings,

the gentle, unhurried semiquaver movement of which projects a mood of serenely untroubled good humour.

Ex. 113: Symphony No. 4, IV, 39-44

A new pattern in the strings based on *motif 4b* follows and establishes itself as the accompaniment to a broad stately melody on the horns. *Motif 4a* then returns over the same accompaniment, which eventually moves into the foreground as the basis of an exuberant climax.   A modified return of the second strain, A[1]/b[1], follows, and the music again comes to rest on a pause chord in preparation for a varied return of the second section, B[1]. The timpani triplets, which have not been heard since the end of section A [see Ex. 111], reappear at the end of B[1] and serve as a link to the coda, which has already been described.

Ex. 114: Symphony No. 4, IV, 50-64

The question of 'what to do instead of sonata form while retaining sonata form in the background,' is how Hans Keller summarises what he describes as one of Haydn's perennial compositional preoccupations.[156] This is a concern that also seems to have been uppermost in Kinsella's mind as he composed the finale of the present symphony. But although undoubtedly ingenious, the formal procedure that has just been outlined is not without precedents. It essentially derives from an elaboration of the double period, one of the basic structures out of which classical sonata form was developed:

$$\| \text{ A } \| \text{ A}^1 \|$$
$$\text{I - V} \quad \text{I - I}$$

As each section of this simple design was subject to a process of internal differentiation the tonic at the beginning of both sections became articulated by a distinct thematic idea. Similarly, the dominant at the end of A ceased to be merely a cadence chord and became the tonal centre of a second theme, which was then duly recapitulated in the tonic key in

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[156] Hans Keller, *The Great Haydn Quartets: Their Interpretation* (London, 1993), 31

the second section, A¹. The insertion of modulatory transitions between the different themes and keys resulted in a sonata form consisting of an exposition and a recapitulation only. As the absence of any central development section made it particularly suitable for slow music, it accordingly became known as 'slow-movement form', although its application was in fact far wider than this.[157] In conventional first-movement form, there often occurs a shorter, secondary development section after the commencement of the recapitulation the function of which is to reinforce the resolution on the tonic. This is sometimes retained in slow-movement form, and one possible way of elaborating the design was to expand this into a full development section, thus displacing the developmental process, as it were, from its customary central position between exposition and recapitulation. In other words, the recapitulation is interrupted by a developmental digression before resuming its normal course, with the important difference that this is now the sole, and not merely a secondary development section. [158] Although theoretically composers in the eighteenth-century had a large variety of sonata stereotypes to choose form, in practice they were not all found to be equally interesting. This is undoubtedly one of the less common variants, but it can be seen in a relatively uncomplicated form in the first movement, *Allegro,* of Sonatina Op. 20 No. 2 (1819) by the Danish contemporary of Beethoven's, Friedrich Kuhlau;[159] and, arguably, in a more sophisticated manifestation in the opening *Allegro vivace* of Beethoven's own Sonata Op. 31 No. 1 (1802).

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[157] Charles Rosen also calls it 'cavatina' form or 'overture' form (see *Sonata Forms*, 106. 120). There are other terms: Cedric Thorpe Davie refers to it as 'abridged' sonata form (see *Musical Structure and Design*, 87) and Stewart Macpherson as 'modified' sonata form (see *Form in Music* (London, n.d.), 167), although these latter are misleading in so far as they suggest that it is actually first-movement form with the development omitted rather than the 'reworking of an earlier and independent pattern' (Rosen, 121).

[158] This is a different concept to the brief resumption of first subject material (together with the tonic key) immediately after the exposition which occurs in place of the customary repeat of the exposition, as in, for example, the first movement of Beethoven's String Quartet in F major, Op. 59 No. 1, or the first movement of Brahms's Symphony No. 4 in E minor.

[159] A personal acquaintance of Beethoven's by whose work he was much influenced, Friedrich Kuhlau (1796-1832) is probably best remembered today outside Denmark for his pedagogical piano music.

In Kinsella's handling of the concept, however, it is not a question of the recapitulation being interrupted by a development section. It is rather that the expansion and elaboration of the opening material takes the place of a simple recapitulation altogether. One of the reasons this works so well is because Kinsella has devised thematic material that can accommodate the most far-reaching transformation and still retain its essential identity. Furthermore, as the alterations made to the second strain (A^1/b^1) on its return are comparatively minor it operates as an easily identifiable formal marker which serves to re-orient the listener: what has just happened to the A^1/a^1 material in the immediately preceding section is thus retrospectively contextualised and its dual function as development and reprise is accordingly clarified.

Symphony No. 4 is an unusual work, puzzling in some respects, yet strangely compelling. It undoubtedly contains some of Kinsella's finest music, and the relentless scherzo is one of the most impressive single movements in the entire series of symphonies. It is difficult to know if it was the composer's intention, but the music conveys such a sense of unremitting conflict and violence that it remains uppermost in one's mind at the conclusion of the symphony. Perhaps it was not merely a passing impulse, therefore, that prompted Kinsella to give the work the seemingly incongruous temporary title *The Birmingham Six*. It is true that the composer explicitly links the cymbal clashes at the end of the work with the ultimate vindication and liberation of the six men. But the scherzo deals not only with the dark fate of Ulster, but also with its victims amongst whom the Birmingham Six must be numbered. The pitiful plea for mercy and the cold brutal response with which the scherzo ends is a powerful image that transcends merely local relevance, however, and could only have been created by a deeply compassionate imagination.

Chapter 3

Integrating Words and Music: Symphony No. 5

3.1 Establishing the Musical and Literary Context

John Kinsella's Symphony No. 5, *The 1916 Poets* marks a decided break with his earlier approaches to symphonic composition, diverse as these are, and as a fully text-based work it remains unique in his symphonic output. In his programme note for the first performance, the composer credits his friend (and dedicatee of the symphony) Terry de Valera with the idea of composing a work based on the writings of the three poets in question, Patrick Pearse (1879-1916), Thomas MacDonagh (1878-1916) and Joseph Mary Plunkett (1887-1916), all of whom, as leaders of the Irish Volunteers and signatories of the Proclamation of Independence, were executed by the British forces in Ireland after the Easter Rising of 1916.[160]

The idea of a symphony which is not purely instrumental has, of course, distinguished precedents, most famously and influentially in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Op. 125, the 'Choral', a work which, in the words of Mark Evan Bonds, 'effectively redefined the genre.'[161] The prestige of the Ninth Symphony firmly established the synthesis of different genres (the symphony blended with the cantata, oratorio or even opera) as a legitimate symphonic project and it was much imitated in the nineteenth century, albeit in very different ways, by composers like Berlioz (*Roméo et Juliette*, 1839), Mendelssohn (*Lobgesang*, 1840) and, later, by Mahler. But however difficult it may be to achieve a successful symphonic synthesis in a predominantly choral work, the task of satisfactorily importing the solo song into the symphony is generally

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[160] Symphony No. 5, *The 1916 Poets* was first performed on 18 February 1994 by Gerard O'Connor (baritone), Bill Golding (speaker) and the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland (conducted by Colman Pearce) at the National Concert Hall, Dublin. Terry de Valera (1922-2007) was the youngest son of Éamon de Valera (1882-1975), former Taoiseach and President of Ireland who was also sentenced to death in 1916 but reprieved.

[161] Bonds, *After Beethoven*, 20

acknowledged to be even more problematic. Christopher Ballantine points out the 'enormous difficulty of reconciling the specific quality of the song texts (and their need for an appropriate setting)' with the intrinsic demands of symphonic composition.[162] For Robert Simpson, as we have seen, a piece like Britten's *Spring Symphony* was essentially 'an enlarged song-cycle so unequivocal that it cannot be misunderstood' – in other words, that it cannot possibly be mistaken for a genuine symphony – and he thereby justified excluding both it and similar works from his 1967 symposium.[163]

Kinsella, however, has made a difficult task even more difficult in his Symphony No. 5 by choosing to design the work around a prominent part for a speaker as well as a vocal soloist (baritone).[164] However problematic the symphonic treatment of song may be – and obviously this also represents an important dimension of Kinsella's work – the satisfactory treatment of a spoken text in the context of a symphony would appear to be virtually unfeasible. It is certainly very rare, and is not a problem that many composers have chosen to grapple with. Arthur Bliss's (1891-1975) choral symphony *Morning Heroes* (1930) is one of the few notable exceptions. Bliss's decision to include a substantial part for orator (as the speaker is referred to in the score) was certainly regarded as a novelty at the time of the work's first performance, but it was also much criticised and opinions differ about how successful it is. While some contemporary critics maintained that the innovation amply justified itself in performance, the distinguished writer on music Alec Robertson, on the other hand, believed that 'one thing only militates against the complete success of the symphony, and that is the use of the speaking voice to

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[162] Ballantine, *Twentieth Century Symphony*, 138

[163] Simpson, 'Introduction' in *The Symphony: Volume 2*, 12. Frank Howes, writing in *The Times* (22 July 1949), remarked of the *Spring Symphony* that even when 'the poems are chosen with sufficient skill to preserve contiguity of mood within each movement, plainly nothing as musically subtle or coherent can be achieved as in a purely instrumental symphony.' (Quoted in Donald Mitchell et al. eds., *Letters from a Life: Selected Letters of Benjamin Britten 1913-1976, Volume Three 1946-51*, 526.) David Fanning points out that the song-symphony enjoyed a particular vogue in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s as '[a] significant attempt to give the Soviet symphony a relevance at once contemporary and proletarian.' See Fanning, 'The Symphony in the Soviet Union', in Layton ed., *A Companion to the Symphony*, 298

[164] Kinsella specifies a male speaker in the score.

orchestral accompaniment.' Referring to the first movement in particular, he adds that 'the marriage is not altogether a happy one.'[165]

It is not clear if Robertson's reservations have to do with the use of the speaking voice in combination with the orchestra *per se*, or with what he saw as the problematic use of this particular combination of forces in a symphonic context. Because if the former, it must be acknowledged that, despite a surprisingly widespread prejudice against melodrama as a kind of 'doubtful, mongrel form',[166] there exist many highly successful examples of compositions that feature the speaking voice. One thinks of Honegger's *Le roi David* (1921), for example, or Vaughan Williams's evocative *An Oxford Elegy* (1947-49), not to mention the rhythmically notated speech of Walton's *Façade* (1921-22) or even the *Sprechstimme* of *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912) and other works by Arnold Schoenberg. In the Irish context, Aloys Fleischmann's fine *Songs of Colmcille* (1964) has an important and effective part for speaker and, interestingly in view of its subject matter, so does his *Ómós don Phiarsach/Homage to Patrick Pearse*, which was commissioned by Radio Telefís Éireann in 1979 to commemorate the centenary of Pearse's birth.[167]

But the employment of the speaking voice as an essential element in a symphony entails problems that are different to those encountered in other types of work and are specific to the intrinsic nature of symphonic music. A piece of the cantata-type, for example, will be free of the expectation that the accompaniment needs to be anything other than a support for the speaking voice, reflecting the content of the text as appropriate and underlining or amplifying its emotional import. The technique is essentially the same as that of the song accompaniment except that care has to be taken to accommodate the different planes of aural experience, that of speech and that of

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[165]Alec Robertson, 'Sir Arthur Bliss' in A. L. Bacharach ed. *British Music of Our Time* (Harmondsworth, 1946 [1951]), 156.

[166] Einstein, *Mozart*, 471. On this subject see also Hans Keller's interesting essay 'Whose Fault is the Speaking Voice?' in *Essays on Music*, 192-197.

[167] Fleischmann, more than any other contemporary Irish composer perhaps, was particularly attracted to the use of spoken text and it is featured again in his *Time's Offspring* (1985), a cantata based on the writings of George Berkeley, the eighteenth-century philosopher and Bishop of Cloyne in Co. Cork.

music, so that the spoken word is not obscured. The compositional problem, in short, consists in devising a musical background that is interesting, but not so interesting as to deflect the attention of the listener altogether from the verbal dimension. The lasting popular success of Honegger's *Le roi David* is largely due to the skill with which the composer achieves this balance.

In the symphony, however, the essential focus is always on musical processes to which the treatment of any text must be subordinated. Ballantine goes so far as to argue that 'none of the nineteenth-century "vocalised" symphonies written after Beethoven was genuinely symphonic', and he maintains that of later composers 'it is perhaps only Mahler who achieves genuine vocal symphonism'.[168] One does not have to agree fully with this sweeping judgement in order to appreciate Ballantine's point here. A composition that employs a text acquires an extra-musical dimension, and in seeking to give this its proper due the purely musical treatment of the musical material may all too easily be compromised. And when the work in question is a symphony, such a compromise will call into question the very premise on which it purports to be written. Of Britten's *Spring Symphony*, for example, Frank Howes (anticipating Simpson) asked 'how far this purely vocal work is entitled to call itself a symphony?' And he reminds us that unless the word is to be understood in the loosest possible sense and all discussion degenerate into a mere quibble about terminology 'a certain solemnity still clings to the appellation "symphony" and critics and the public must pay serious attention to anything so styled.'[169]

If the employment of a text entails concessions in the case of a vocal or a choral symphony this is even more the case when a speaking voice is used. It is difficult to see how a genuine thoroughgoing symphonic argument can be maintained while the kind of musical background suitable for the projection of the spoken word is simultaneously provided for. These would simply appear to be conflicting requirements.

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[168] Ballantine, *Twentieth-Century Symphony*, 138
[169] Quoted in Mitchell et al. eds., *Letters from a Life: Volume Three,* 526

A composer who desires to write a symphony in which a spoken text is prominently featured, therefore, will presumably have to reconcile himself to the fact that an adjustment between these opposing demands is to some degree inevitable. This will involve a tacit acknowledgment that that while the term 'symphony' in such a case may well imply a work of broad scope and range, encompassing contrasting movements and a wide variety of moods, it is unlikely to entail closely argued symphonic development, at least throughout and certainly not in those portions where the voice is paramount. A pragmatic compromise of this kind is certainly in evidence in Kinsella's Symphony No. 5, a work that takes its place in a distinguished series that presupposes no frivolous or ironic connotations of the word 'symphony' and is clearly intended to fulfil the time-honoured expectations generally held in respect of serious symphonic composition. In four movements and lasting about thirty-eight minutes, this is a bold, vigorously executed score that displays both forceful rhetoric and a fine sense of dramatic gesture. If the music tends to be less densely textured than in the earlier symphonies close musical reasoning is by no means abandoned altogether; and while the composer is careful to ensure that the words are always at the centre of the listener's attention, he nonetheless skilfully contrives to suggest that a genuine symphonic argument also unfolds as the work progresses. The means by which he achieves this are discussed below.

Given that the poets to whom Kinsella turned for his texts were so deeply involved in Irish revolutionary politics, one might imagine that his Symphony No. 5 would carry some kind of political message or at least have a political subtext. But this is far from being the case for the very simple reason that very little of the poetry written by these men is directly concerned with political matters, and certainly none of the poems chosen by Kinsella are. The predominant themes of their work, which is often shot through with a deep sense of religious mysticism, are in fact those of the Romantics – love, loss and the transience of life.[170] But not unnaturally all three poets were also

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[170] The principal collected edition of the work of these three poets is *The 1916 Poets*, Desmond Ryan ed. (Dublin, 1963).

preoccupied with the momentous decisions they had taken that would ultimately lead to their execution in 1916. Although rarely to the fore as explicit subject matter, both the complex web of reasons and emotions that determined their actions as well as their feelings about the personal sacrifices they were making lie just beneath the surface of much of what they wrote.

The most famous of these figures is undoubtedly Patrick H. Pearse, a barrister, educationalist and editor as well as a poet and revolutionary soldier. Pearse's reputation as a creative writer largely rests on a handful of short stories and poems written in Irish, and in Philip O'Leary's opinion it 'has been unfairly overshadowed by his status as a patriotic icon, with his literary works analysed for clues to his ideology or to the psychology that led him to embrace what he believed to be redemptive martyrdom.'[171] This is true to some extent of all three poets – 'These men's writings have martyrs' blood on their text', as Robert Farren succinctly put it[172] – which can make an objective appraisal of their literary outputs difficult to achieve. Pearse is credited with writing the first Irish language poems of the Gaelic Revival that are marked by a personal and recognisably modern voice. In the words of one eminent critic: *'B'eisean an chéad duine a scríobh véarsaíocht, sa chéad phearsa, faoi nithe a bhí inchreidte'* [He was the first to write [Irish] verse in the first person about credible things].[173] The greater part of his small poetic output appeared in a collection entitled *Suantraidhe agus Goltraidhe* [Lullaby and Lament] that was published in 1914. But if these Irish language poems are acknowledged to be his best work, his later poems in English are, in Norman Jeffares's view, 'overweighted with a mixture of sentimentalism […] and politics.' The exception is generally acknowledged to be *The Wayfarer*, his last poem, which was written after his

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[171] Philip O'Leary, 'The Irish Renaissance, 1880-1940: literature in Irish', in *The Cambridge History of Irish Literature, Volume II: 1890-2000*, Margaret Kelleher and Philip O' Leary eds. (Cambridge, 2006), 232

[172] Robert Farren, *The Course of Irish Verse* (London, 1948), 118

[173] Frank O'Brien, *Filíocht Ghaeilge na Linne Seo* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1978 [1968]), 96

court martial while in the death cell at Kilmainham awaiting execution.[174] Jeffares remarks that it 'reverts to his love of beauty, his adoration of Connacht, and has an appealing romantic simplicity about it.'[175] Its theme, the transience of life and the inevitable fading and passing away of beauty from the world, is one that had by then acquired a poignant personal urgency for him and it is, in a way, his farewell to everything in life that meant the most to him. Kinsella uses *The Wayfarer* as the principal text in Movement IV of his symphony, and in order to draw out the theme he supplements it with other shorter poems by Pearse, which although in English are in fact translations of his own Irish language originals.[176] Interestingly, these translations are not considered to be as 'taut and sparely musical' as the Irish versions.[177] Their diction appears somewhat stilted and artificial by comparison, and the '*simplíocht agus macántacht chainte*' [simplicity and honesty of speech][178] that marked his Irish language poetry as exceptional in its time is missing from them.

All three poets were of a religious cast of mind and were immersed in the culture of Catholicism. 'Plunkett and MacDonagh', Farren writes, 'had skimmed the Scholastics, if not read deeply in them; Plunkett, the son of a Papal Count, knew the Spanish mystics; while Pearse […] saw all life under sacrament, and owned spirituality of marked intensity and purity.'[179] In their search for a more complex form for religious poetry, both Plunkett and MacDonagh looked to the rich literature of Spanish mysticism in order to counter the powerful influence of Francis Thompson and other English Catholic poets.[180]

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[174] See Liam Mac Uistín, *An Ród seo Romham: Saol agus Saothar Phádraic Mhic Phiarais* (Baile Átha Cliath, 2006) 150: '*Tá an dán deireanach a scríobh sé,* The Wayfarer, *ar cheann de na dánta is fearr dá chuid.*' [The last poem he wrote, *The Wayfarer*, is amongst the finest poems in his output.]

[175] Norman Jeffares, *Anglo-Irish Literature* (Dublin, 1982), 174

[176] 'The Little Bird', 'To a Beloved Child', O Lovely Head' and 'Why do you Torture Me? are translations of *A Éin Bhig, Do Leanbh Ionmhuin, A Chinn Áluinn* and *Cad Chuige Dhíbh Dom' Chiapadh?* respectively.

[177] Patrick Crotty, 'The Irish Renaissance, 1890-1940: poetry in English' in *The Cambridge History of Irish Literature, Volume II: 1890-2000,* Margaret Kelleher and Philip O' Leary eds. (Cambridge, 2006), 92

[178] O'Brien, *Filíocht Ghaeilge,* 97

[179] Farren, *The Course of Irish Verse*, 119.

[180] See Austin Clarke, *Poetry in Modern Ireland* (Dublin, 1961), 38.

Farren is not the only critic to remark on their 'Catholic cultivation as well as Catholic sensibility and allegiance.'[181] In Patrick Crotty's view, the verse of Joseph Plunkett in particular evinces 'an interest in the mystical dimension of Catholicism and a heightened awareness of the brevity of life,'[182] and much of what he wrote has an intense, quasi-liturgical quality about it. Although it is not an aspect of his work that is represented in the text of Kinsella's symphony, one of MacDonagh's other principal literary objectives was to develop a mode of diction that would allow the character of Irish language poetry to be approximated in English. This project yielded a handful of exceptionally accomplished translations, including translations of some of Pearse's Irish verse that are generally regarded as finer that Pearse's own.[183]

Just as his choice of poets is determined by the contingency of their personal and political association, so Kinsella's actual choice of poems and the order in which they are arranged does not add up to a closely-knit composite text that sets out to explore a single theme from different angles in the way the text of Bliss's *Morning Heroes*, say, explores various responses to war. The different texts represent a loose diversity of ideas rather than conceptual unity that embraces the work as a whole. As far as the literary dimension is concerned, therefore, while there is some degree of overlap with regard to subject matter, the work is held together more by the tone of its constituent elements rather than by any other common factor. But the compilation produces no sense of incongruity and in an oddly intangible way the poems complement one another well. Encompassing even the one or two comparatively relaxed moments, the mood of the texts is predominantly a serious – and often sombre – one in which intense religious feeling is combined with an overwhelming sense of the transience of life and the poignancy of leavetaking. The overall impression of coherence the symphony makes,

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181 Farren, *The Course of Irish Verse*, 119.

182 Crotty, 'The Irish Renaissance', 63.

183 These translations of Pearse (consisting mostly of extracts but including a complete version of *Fornocht do Chonac Thú*) were published in Thomas MacDonagh, *Literature in Ireland: Studies Irish and Anglo-Irish* (Dublin, 1916), 144-147, a book in which the author also discusses his theories of the Irish mode in poetry.

however, is largely due to the fact that this pervasive atmosphere, both in its lighter as well as in its darker aspects, is consistently and successfully reflected in the music.

3.2 Symphony No. 5, *The 1916 Poets* (1992)

3.2.1 Movement I: *Larghetto – Allegro*

Symphony No. 5, *The 1916 Poets* is cast in four movements. Of these Movement II and Movement III are outwardly the most straightforward although internally they are both subtle and unpredictable: in each of them a single poem (by MacDonagh and Plunkett respectively) is set for the baritone voice and a single tempo is maintained throughout. The longest, most fragmented and most complex section of the symphony is Movement IV, the text of which consists of no less than six poems – five by Pearse and one by Plunkett – that are shared between the baritone and the speaker. The organisation of Movement I, which falls into two principal parts, is somewhat simpler: a *Larghetto* introduction for the speaker with a text by Plunkett is followed by an *Allegro* in which a more substantial poem by Mac Donagh is divided between both soloists. The following summary shows the overall layout of the symphony and the exact distribution of the texts.

Movement I: *Larghetto* [Joseph Plunkett, 'The Stars Sang in God's Garden' (speaker)]; *Allegro* [Thomas MacDonagh, 'Wishes for My Son' (baritone, speaker)]

Movement II: *Largo* [Thomas MacDonagh, 'In an Island' (baritone)]

Movement III: *Presto* [Joseph Plunkett, 'See the Crocus' Golden Cup' (baritone)]

Movement IV: *Largo – Allegro* [Patrick Pearse, 'The Wayfarer' (baritone); 'The Little Bird', 'To a Beloved Child', O Lovely Head' and 'Why do ye Torture Me?' (speaker)]; *Largo – Larghetto – Adagio* [Joseph Plunkett, 'I See His Blood Upon The Rose' (speaker)]

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The first movement commences *pianissimo* with a theme for two horns [Ex. 115]. The opening unison writing quickly opens out into a two-part texture that builds in a steady *crescendo* to a *fortissimo* in bar 13 at which point the rest of the orchestra enters.

Ex. 115: Symphony No. 5, I, 1-9

This initial paragraph immediately establishes the principal pitch matrix of the symphony: a hexachordal set, the notes of which constitute a scale of D minor (ascending melodic form) with the fourth degree missing. It is not altogether inappropriate to allude to it in such traditional terms because not only does D minor emerge as a central tonality of the work (although, needless to say, it is not handled in anything like an orthodox manner), but it is also the source of a great deal of both the

Ex. 116

 thematic material and the harmonic content [Ex. 116]. It is interesting to note that there is no attempt to supplement this set of pitches with an additional hexachord (or any other types of formation) derived from the remaining six notes of the chromatic scale. The twelve chromatic pitches have little or no collective function in this work and while the basic six-note matrix acts as a fundamental shaping and directing force throughout, it is treated with considerable freedom. The selection of an operative set from the twelve

available chromatic pitches is not new to this work. A decided tendency in this direction is already in evidence in the way the material of the first two symphonies is handled, and as we have seen it became the explicit technical basis of Symphonies No. 3 and No. 4.

The *Larghetto* introduction falls into three clearly distinguishable sub-sections, the first of which is the twelve-bar theme for two horns already alluded to. The second section commences in bar 13 and the speaker enters two bars later to deliver the first text, Joseph Plunkett's *The Stars Sang in God's Garden*:

> The stars sang in God's garden;
> The stars are the birds of God;
> The night-time is God's harvest,
> Its fruits are the words of God.
>
> God ploughed His field at morning,
> God sowed His seed at noon,
> God reaped and gathered his corn
> With the rising of the moon.
>
> The sun rose up at midnight,
> The sun rose red as blood,
> It showed the Reaper, the dead Christ,
> Upon His cross of wood.
>
> For many live that one may die,
> And one must die that many live –
> The stars are silent in the sky
> Lest my poor songs be fugitive.

The poem is read through without a break while the orchestra maintains an atmospheric background. Although Kinsella temporarily eliminates all thematic content in order to avoid any distraction from what the speaker is saying, he still contrives to impart a

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distinctive character to the passage by textural means alone. Plunkett's feverish, almost apocalyptic vision is matched by a chordal aggregate of F-A-C sharp in trills in the strings underpinned by a bass D and punctuated by short chords on woodwind and timpani that are derived from the same four pitches. The music becomes increasingly disturbed as it reflects the gathering intensity of the poem and after the final line has been spoken it culminates in a searing climax in the strings.

The third sub-section commences in bar 40. The last two lines of the poem are repeated in a more reflective tone and there is a sudden and dramatic drop in the dynamic level as if in reaction to the fervour of the previous section. A solo violin introduces a rapid, scurrying motif against sustained string chords, and there is a further even more hushed repetition of the final line of the poem before a brief development of this new idea leads directly into the ensuing *Allegro* [Ex. 117].

Ex. 117: Symphony No. 5, I, 37-41

All of this introductory material (as well as the D minor pitch matrix) returns transformed at the end of the symphony in the coda to the finale where it functions as the background to another of Plunkett's mystical poems, the well-known and much anthologised *I See His Blood Upon The Rose,* which is also recited by the speaker. The reversion to the overtly religious mood of the opening combined with a return of the thematic material thus creates both a musical and psychological frame for the work as a whole. This simple but effective cross referencing of the opening and the closing of the

symphony is one of several steps Kinsella takes in order to transcend the disparity of the constituent elements and create a strong sense that the work constitutes a single unified, albeit multi-faceted experience.

The manner in which both the pitch content and tonal organisation of the symphony is handled shows something of a departure from Kinsella's previous practice. The technique he adopts here is that of the slowly shifting sound sheet[184], where the constituent elements of a particular harmonic complex (in this case the basic hexachordal matrix) are gradually eliminated and replaced until a new complex is established in place of the old. In the present work, the fundamental tonal shifts are normally to transposed versions of the basic set, but a complex may also acquire either additional or replacement pitches temporarily, which are then relinquished as the original formation is restored. An analytical abstract of the tonal organisation of the complete first movement that shows the operation of this process is given in Ex. 122 below. From this diagram it will be seen how the basic pitch matrix of the opening twenty-two bars is supplemented first by A sharp in bars 23 to 26, and subsequently by G sharp and D sharp in the following two bars. These intrusions into the opening matrix have a destabilising effect on the music and create a feeling of agitation as the poem moves towards its climax, and then they fade out as the original matrix is reconstituted and equilibrium is regained (bars 29 to 52). The pitches of the original hexachordal set are gradually replaced altogether in bars 53 to 57, until a transposition a minor third higher of the complete matrix is fully established in the following bar. This transposition, which marks the end of the introduction, also acts as a connecting link to the next section.

The *Allegro* that follows represents the main body of the movement and it is organised harmonically and tonally around this new transposed version (hexatonic F minor) of the original pitch matrix. It is cast in a three-part form and, as is common in Kinsella's work, it has a composite central section. The form of the movement (including the introduction) can be summarised as follows:

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[184] A term apparently coined by James Hepokoski (see *Sibelius: Symphony No. 5*, 28).

Introduction A   BCD   A^1
                 a-a^1 a^2-a^3

The initial A section as well as the three component paragraphs of the central portion of the movement – B, C and D – are taken up with a setting for baritone of the opening thirty-one lines (five stanzas) of Thomas MacDonagh's *Wishes for My Son*. Both sub-sections of A –

A/a

Now, my son, is life for you,

And I wish you joy if it, –

Joy of power in all you do,

Deeper passion, better wit

Than I had who had enough,

Quicker life and length thereof,

More of every gift but love.

A/a^1

Love I have beyond all men

Love that now you share with me –

What have I to wish you then

But that you be good and free,

And that God to you may give

Grace in stronger days to live?

– are centered on the hexatonic F minor with a brief allusion between them to the original set (D minor) (see Ex. 122). The style of the music seems to take its cue from certain key images in Mac Donagh's verse as though Kinsella has sought to convey the ardent impetuosity that underpins the poem in a general way rather than attempt to reflect each passing nuance. The vigorous forward movement certainly seems to be

Ex. 118: Symphony No. 5, I, 61-68

generated in response to phrases like 'joy of power', 'quicker life' and 'grace in stronger days to live' and the restless nature of the accompaniment combined with the high tessitura of the baritone voice imparts a sense of urgency to the setting of the words. By this strategy the composer successfully avoids becoming submerged in illustrative detail

achieves something of the sweep and momentum he requires in an opening symphonic *Allegro* [Ex. 118].

The pitch matrix shifts again for the central portion of the movement, and a new transposition to a hexatonic C minor replaces F minor (see Ex. 122). While this new

Ex. 119: Symphony No. 5, I, 109-115

transposition underpins both the B and D sections, however, the basis of the C section remains ambiguous in that the music is not derived from any clear hexachordal formation. The texture of B –

B

For I wish you more than I

Ever knew of glorious deed,

Though no rapture passed me by

That an eager heart could heed,

Though I followed heights and sought

Things the sequel never brought.

– is pared down to the essentials and consists largely of an imitative dialogue between the baritone and the cellos with only the lightest of woodwind support [Ex. 119]. Section C, on the other hand, is the most dissonant and the most sustainedly agitated portion of the movement [Ex. 120]. Although the theme of the stanza is couched in general terms

Ex. 120: Symphony No. 5, I, 140-146

that suggest life's struggle, it also seems to contain a clear reference to the fight for Irish independence that MacDonagh understood to be inevitable even as far back as 1912, the year in which the poem was written (and his son, to whom it is addressed, was born).

C

Wild and perilous holy things

Flaming with a martyr's blood,

And the joy that laughs and sings

Where a foe must be withstood,

Joy of headlong happy chance

Leading on the battle dance.

The pitch content of C is derived from the triads of G major and B flat major,

Ex. 121: Symphony No. 5, I, 166-181

supplemented with the note A. The way in which these aggregates are combined and the manner in which particular emphasis is placed on the note G throughout the paragraph creates a fairly definite (although still compromised) feeling of G minor. The section culminates in the principal climax of the movement (bars 158 to 162) after which the

texture thins out and the hexatonic C minor is once again restored as the final portion, D, of the composite central section begins [Ex. 121]. Here the poet acknowledges his refusal to hate the man whom circumstances had made his enemy.

D

But I found no enemy,
No man in a world of wrong,
That Christ's word of charity
Did not render clean and strong –
Who was I to judge my kind,
Blindest groper of the blind?

The remainder of the poem forms the basis of the recapitulatary section, A^1, and it is shared between the baritone, who sings both the sixth stanza and the concluding couplet, and the speaker who recites the seventh stanza.

A^1/a^2

God to you may give the sight
And the clear undoubting strength
Wars to knit for single right,
Freedom's war to knit at length,
And to win, through wrath and strife,
To the sequel of my life.

A^1/a^3

But for you, so small and young,
Born on Saint Cecilia's Day,
I in more harmonious song
Now for nearer joys should pray –
Simpler joys: the natural growth
Of your childhood and your youth,
Courage, innocence, and truth:

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These for you, so small and young,

In your hand and heart and tongue.

As Ex. 122 shows, the hexatonic F minor matrix is regained so that the recapitulation is both tonal as well as thematic. Although modified, all of the characteristic melodic content recurs, the original vocal line being transferred to the orchestra during the

Ex. 122

speaker's stanza. One of the most interesting features of the movement is the concluding cadence, which is also shown in Ex. 122. An implied triad of F minor (F and A flat only) is clearly and unambiguously stated in bar 237, and – with some inner part movement (principally A flat moving through A natural to B flat) – it progresses in a kind of interrupted cadence to an incomplete triad of G minor (G and B flat only). This G minor is then picked up as the opening tonality of the next movement. The same process, slightly varied, is repeated at the end of the Movement II, which accordingly takes the pitch level up another tone to A minor on which Movement III is then centered. It is repeated a second time at the end of movement III, similarly anticipating the B minor of the finale. At the point where Movement IV moves into the coda, however, the now prevailing B minor is deflected from moving yet a further tone higher and it rises instead by a minor third, which brings about a return of the opening pitch matrix of the symphony on which the work comes to a conclusion. Such systematically organised tonal progression from movement to movement has not occurred before in a Kinsella's symphony, and it is clearly employed here as a further means of knitting the disparate elements into a continuous single process.

3.2.2   Movement II: *Largo*

One interesting detail emerges as the second movement commences. Although it has already been noted that the collection of twelve chromatic pitches has little bearing on the organisation of this work, it nonetheless appears to retain some residual influence, however faint this may be. One observes with interest, for example, that in Movement I eleven out of the twelve chromatic notes only have been employed: one pitch, F sharp, has never been sounded at all. This of course is partly the reason why the feeling of G minor at the centre of the movement remains inconclusive in comparison with the relative stability of the other principal tonal regions. But the first note to be sounded in Movement II is this F sharp, the twelfth pitch, which is now of course crucial in establishing the hexatonic G minor of the opening.

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The *Largo* is cast as one of Kinsella's characteristically asymmetrical constructions. It is essentially in tripartite form, the three constituent sections of which – A-B-C – have little or no thematic or motivic connection with one another. This approach works well here for two reasons: firstly because the movement is very short; and secondly because texturally it is cast as a kind of continuous recitative for the baritone. The first section, A, is purely instrumental and is based on the scurrying solo violin idea of Movement I (Ex. 117), except that it is now scored for solo viola and articulates the hexatonic G minor set. This gives way to a very soft and mysterious tremolando passage in octaves for the strings, which begins to shift the tonality away from the G minor of the opening and establish the pitches of the A minor hexachord, the dominant matrix of the latter part of the movement.

The baritone enters at the beginning of the B section, which consists of a setting of the first three lines of MacDonagh's *In an Island* –

> Mid an isle I stand,
> Under its only tree:
> The ocean around –

The accompaniment is sparse; in fact it is hardly accurate to describe it as an accompaniment at all as the role of the orchestra is confined to contributing brief interjections between unaccompanied vocal phrases, which, apart from one undulating figure illustrating the line 'The ocean around', consist of very soft, low-pitched *tremolandi*.

There is some doubt about whether the remainder of the movement should be considered as a separate section or whether these final bars might properly constitute part of B. But although the two sections in question are loosely linked both by the recurring orchestral *tremolandi* and the through-composed nature of the baritone's free *arioso*, there is nonetheless a definite feeling of a caesura before the last three lines of the poem are sung:

> Around life eternity:
> 'Mid my life I stand,
> Under the boughs of thee.

Tonally, the movement as a whole progresses from G minor to A minor, the complete hexatonic matrix of which is unambiguously established well before the end. This means that a momentary step back to G minor (represented by the notes G and B flat only)[185] is necessary in order to accommodate the characteristic cadential progression discussed above. The original formula is modified slightly, however, as the C (natural) of the incomplete A minor chord ultimately rises a semitone to C sharp making the pitch aggregate on which the movement comes to a close a major instead of a minor third.

3.2.3   Movement III: *Presto*

The *Presto* third movement is the scherzo of the symphony and it represents the one moment of relatively carefree exuberance in what is otherwise an almost unrelievedly intense and serious work: it consists of a setting for baritone of Plunkett's *See the Crocus's Golden Cup*, a joyously optimistic poem about spring which has rebirth and renewal as its theme.

> See the crocus' golden cup
> Like a warrior leaping up
> At the summons of the spring,
> "Guard turn out!" for welcoming
> Of the new elected year.
> The blackbird now with psalter clear
> Sings the ritual of the day
> And the lark with bugle gay

---

[185] Notated here as A sharp, however.

Blows reveille to the morn,

Earth and heaven's latest born.

The tempo, mood and position of the movement in the overall design of the symphony are, however, principally what identify it as a scherzo. As far as the structure is concerned, it is both unusual and elusive and the subtlety with which the constituent ideas are handled makes it difficult to analyse in terms of discrete sub-sections. For one thing, there is a complete absence of any symmetrical return of previously stated material. Unlike most scherzo-type movements, there is no vestige of large-scale ternary form, even as a background reference – there is no Trio or central contrasting section – and neither are there any allusions to conventional three-part form on the level of the component sub-sections. The texture is derived from a handful of motivic shapes that are subject to continuous modification as they are arranged and re-arranged in ever-changing patterns. The constantly varied fragments of this ongoing stream nonetheless coalesce into a number of broad paragraphs that are defined by rises to and subsequently fallings away from a series of climactic moments.

The movement opens *mezzo piano* with a *tremolando* chord of A minor in the strings against which is heard an ascending quintuplet arpeggio (also A minor) on the celesta. This is immediately answered by a descending quintuplet figure on the woodwind that supplements the prevailing A minor harmony with the notes F (natural) and G sharp. A flowing quaver idea that gives rise to a few additional motivic derivatives of its own completes the first and most important group of thematic cells [Ex. 123]. These ideas are treated in the manner described above over the course of a seventy-six bar paragraph for orchestra alone (bars 291 to 367).[186] The harmonic content of this section consists of a series of shifts between chordal aggregates that is more reminiscent of the composer's earlier manner than anything else in the symphony. The principal moves in this opening paragraph, which can for convenience be labelled A, occur

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[186] Kinsella's numbering of the bars in the MS score of Symphony No. 5 is continuous from 1 to 938 across the entire work.

between A minor, the central harmony of the movement, and the two closely related aggregates of C sharp major and A sharp minor. The latter also acquires

Ex. 123: Symphony No. 5, III, 291-317

supplementary pitches (G and A (natural)), which suggest that while the hexachordal set

of the previous movements has not yet been stated explicitly it continues to function in the background as an informing presence.

The A minor harmony is decisively regained in bar 368, which can thus be considered the point at which the second paragraph commences. As this section essentially comprises further similar treatment of the same handful of basic motifs it can plausibly be designated A^1. The supplementary F (natural) in the initial woodwind quintuplet has now been replaced by an F sharp, and this together with the prevailing A minor chord and the G sharp now represents five of the six pitches of the basic hexachordal matrix. The opening thirty-four bars of A^1 are again for orchestra. It is only in bar 403 that the baritone enters and the remainder of the section consists of a setting of the first five lines of the poem, which is supported by accompaniment textures that are freely derived from the existing material. The only suggestion of a recapitulation occurs towards the end of the paragraph when the opening two lines of the text are repeated, and even here the suggestion is due more to the repetition of words that have already been sung rather than to the recurrence of previously heard musical ideas. The flowing quaver idea dominates the end of the paragraph (on solo flute) and it increasingly acquires the characteristics of stylised bird song (illustrative of the poem) as the music moves into the final section.

This final paragraph, B, is quite different from what has gone before. High *tremolandi* on the violins punctuated by *pizzicati* on the lower strings and embellished with the bird-like twitterings on solo flute form a background against which the baritone sings the remaining five lines of the poem. There is a decided shift at the outset to contrasting tonal regions and seventh-chord aggregates on D and subsequently on D sharp are predominant. The texture becomes more complex as the complete hexachordal A minor matrix is gradually established and the music begins to move toward its principal climax. The movement culminates in a vigorously syncopated passage, which breaks off abruptly and leaves an isolated A sounding *piano* twelve times in succession on *pizzicato* double basses. This pulsing note, like a throbbing heartbeat after strenuous physical exertion, leads to the final gesture of the movement, the recurring cadential

formula that lifts the music from A minor to B minor in anticipation of the principal tonality of Movement IV

3.2.4   Movement IV: *Largo – Allegro – Largo – Larghetto – Adagio*

At twenty minutes, the length of the finale is greater than that of all three earlier movements of the symphony together.[187] The overall form can be described as three-part with a composite central section, a greatly expanded return of the opening section and an extended coda, the function of which is to round off the symphony as a whole as much as to bring the finale itself to a conclusion.

A   BC   A¹ [expanded] Coda

Again, the movement opens with a substantial passage for orchestra – scored mainly for strings with occasional reinforcement by woodwind and horns – which consists of an exposition of all of the principal material of the *Largo* A section. The two basic motifs from which this paragraph is generated are shown in Ex. 124: an initial lyrical idea featuring a demi-semi-quaver turn to which a chain of falling two-note cells (from bar 637) is attached as a pendant. These two-note motifs are subsequently associated with the word 'beauty' and the sighing, drooping line to which they give rise conveys well the sense of sadness and regret at its inevitable passing. This feeling is enhanced by a small but telling adjustment to the pitch matrix: as Ex. 124 shows, while the opening pitches are those of the hexachordal B minor matrix, the D (natural) is almost immediately replaced by D sharp, which softens the harmony and simply but effectively suggests the tenderness and compassion conveyed by the poet's words. After

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[187] Movement I is approximately ten minutes long; Movements II and III each last about four minutes.

Ex. 124: Symphony No. 5, IV, 633-640

of melancholy reflection has been established in the orchestra the baritone enters in bar
663 with the first two lines of the poem –

> **A**
>
> The beauty of the world hath made me sad
> This beauty that will pass;

– emphasising the word 'beauty' (as the poet does) and immediately establishing its
connection with the two-note falling motif. Finally, the paragraph comes to an end as
both first and second violins climb *stringendo* into their higher registers and the music
dies away.

The *Largo* of the opening gives way to a lively six-eight *Allegro* (the first bars of
which are quoted in Ex. 125) at the beginning of the B section. The mood lightens as the
poet recalls the pleasure he derives from the natural world –

> **B**
>
> Sometimes my heart hath shaken with great joy
> To see a leaping squirrel in a tree,

Or a red lady-bird upon a stalk,

Or little rabbits in a field at evening,

Lit by a slanting sun,

Or some green hill where mountainy men hath sown

And soon would reap; near to the gate of Heaven;

Ex. 125: Symphony No. 5, IV, 680-684

The hexatonic pitch matrix has shifted up a major third to E flat minor, but this proves to be transient and, as the music moves into the ensuing C section, major seventh aggregates on F sharp and B flat come to the fore [Ex. 126]. The thematic material of this second component of the central portion of the *Allegro* is appropriately borrowed from an earlier work of Kinsella's, an attractive short piece for small orchestra entitled *The Wayfarer: Rhapsody on a Poem of P. H. Pearse*, which was written in 1979 in response to a commission from the Ulster Orchestra for a work to mark the Pearse centenary that year. It is the first of Kinsella's compositions to show in a mature form the technical approach and style of writing that formed the basis of his subsequent development, the salient features of which have been discussed in some detail in Chapter 1 in connection with the

Essay for Orchestra, which was completed the following year, 1980, and later became the

Ex. 126: Symphony No. 5, IV, 712-718

first movement of Symphony No. 1. The vivacious six-eight *allegro* is maintained for this C section as the catalogue of happy, cheerful things is continued –

C

Or children with bare feet upon the sands

Of some ebbed sea, or playing on the streets

Of little towns in Connacht,

Things young and happy.

Gradually, however, the brightness dims as the transient nature of what he sees impresses itself upon the poet's sensibility and with the change of mood the tempo *Largo* returns –

A¹

And then my heart hath told me:

These things will pass,

This marks the beginning of the recapitulation, A¹, but Kinsella expands the moment of return by interpolating four additional poems that further illustrate the poet's sense of pain at the inevitable passing of all living things: the first insert is a quatrain that describes the commonplace sight of a dead bird lying on the ground and records the feelings of pity it arouses; the second tells of his foreboding about what the future holds for a favourite child; the third recounts a dream of his beloved and his awakening to the cold realisation that she is dead; and, continuing the nightmare theme, the fourth poem grimly acknowledges that only in death he will find respite from the unappeasable desires that torment him.

Exp. 1

O little bird!

Cold to me thy lying on the flag;

Bird, that never had an evil thought,

Pitiful the coming of death to thee.

Exp. 2

Laughing mouth, what tortures me is

That thou shalt be weeping:

Lovely face, it is my pity

That thy brightness shall grow grey.

Noble head, thou art proud,

But thou shalt bow with sorrow;

And it is a pitiful thing I forbode for thee

Whenever I kiss thee.

Exp. 3

O lovely head of the woman that I loved,

In the middle of the night I remember thee:

But reality returns with the sun's whitening,

Alas, that the slender worm gnaws thee to-night.

Beloved voice, that wast low and beautiful,

Is it true that I heard thee in my slumbers!

Or is the knowledge true that tortures me?

My grief, the tomb hath no sound or voice?

Exp. 4

Why are you torturing me, O desires of my heart?

Torturing me and paining me by day and by night?

Hunting me as a poor deer would be hunted on a hill,

A poor long-wearied deer with the hound-pack after him?

There's no ease to my paining in the loneliness of the hills,

But the cry of the hunters terrifically to be heard,

The cry of my desires haunting me without respite, –

O ravening hounds, long is your run!

No satisfying can come to my desires while I live,

For the satisfaction I desired yesterday is no satisfaction,

And the hound-pack is the greedier of the satisfaction it has got, –

And forever I shall not sleep till I sleep in the grave.

With the initial resumption of the *Largo* both the hexachordal B minor matrix and, briefly, the principal thematic material are also recapitulated. For the delivery of the supplementary verses, however, the speaker replaces the baritone, which is appropriate as it effectively places them on a different plane to that of the main text into which they are inserted. This is also the one point in the symphony where all musical movement ceases: the B minor matrix is simply sustained for the setting of all four interpolated poems. Although it is articulated in a various ways, the music does not move from it. Kinsella's solution to the problem of providing an accompaniment to the spoken texts is to establish short patterns that are reiterated while the poems are recited. The first two poems are introduced by dramatically explosive gestures in the orchestra out of which these then patterns arise. As a prelude to the third insert, however, the baritone makes a brief re-entry with the phrase 'these will pass'. For the final supplementary poem, the initial dramatic gesture in the orchestra does not collapse into a repeating figure as before but is extended into a developing background that effectively projects the poet's more disturbed state of mind. The effect of this entire passage of arrested movement can be likened to that of the cadenza in a classical concerto where the business of completing the musical structure is suspended while the soloist discourses on the principal themes. Here, of course, the themes in question are literary rather than musical, but the underlying idea is not dissimilar and Kinsella not only shows an astute understanding of the structural function of the cadenza but also manages to adapt the principle in a very adroit manner to suit his needs. The insight with which he identifies the supplementary purpose of this group of poems in amplifying the import of *The Wayfarer* with the parenthetic nature of the classical cadenza facilitates an ingenious solution to the problem of integrating a large amount of spoken text, the largest in the symphony, into the musical fabric.

Finally, the initial tempo is regained and the baritone sings the concluding lines of *The Wayfarer*.

Will pass and change, will die and be no more,

Things bright and green, things young and happy:

And I have gone upon my way

Sorrowful.

All of the principal material of the *Largo* is now fully recapitulated and, again, the two-note 'beauty' motif is very much to the fore. The baritone rounds off this part of Movement IV with a valedictory restatement of the last two lines of the poem and finally and lingeringly twice repeats the word 'sorrowful' as though reluctant to take his leave.

As already discussed, the hexachordal D minor matrix of the opening of the symphony is now re-established. All the material of the introduction – the horn theme (Ex. 115), the chordal trills, and the scurrying motif (Ex. 117), which is now heard on solo cello – is also recalled as a background to the recitation of the final text, Joseph Plunkett's *I See His Blood Upon The Rose* –

I see his blood upon the rose

And in the stars the glory of his eyes,

His body gleams amid eternal snows,

His tears fall from the skies.

I see his face in every flower;

The thunder and the singing of the birds

Are but his voice – and carven by his power

Rocks are his written words.

All pathways by his feet are worn,

His strong heart stirs the ever-beating sea,

His crown of thorns is twined with every thorn,

His cross is every tree.

After the recitation of the poem has been completed, the orchestra rises to a final climax that dies away in a descending line constructed out of repetitions of the falling two-note 'beauty' motif. The last pages of the score are based solely on the six pitches of the original D minor matrix and after a final reference to the scurrying idea, now shared between solo violin, solo viola and solo cello, the symphony fades out on a sustained low octave D.

In spite of the problems involved in wedding genuinely symphonic music with a satisfactory response to texts, especially spoken texts, Kinsella has nonetheless created in Symphony No. 5 a work that has the breath of a true symphony. He succeeds in achieving a sense of genuine symphonic weight and substance despite a complete avoidance of sonata and rondo form procedures – on which his larger symphonic movements are usually based – presumably because he recognised that these formal types are really best generated by a purely musical argument and could be made to accommodate texts only with difficulty. Instead he relies in the outer movements on broadly based ternary structures which are flexible enough to allow a variety of constituent sub-sections while still providing satisfactory moments of recapitulation. This means that he must rethink the handling of the two central movements, however, one or other or both of which are normally cast in ternary form in a symphony. To cast all four movements as some variant of the A-B-A principle would be fatally monotonous. Accordingly, in devising contrasting alternative structures for the two inner movements, he side-steps the need for any kind of obvious recapitulation by making them completely asymmetrical. Furthermore, Kinsella manages to achieve a thoroughly convincing sense of ongoing development that is an essential feature of symphonic composition both by the normal processes of thematic manipulation, but also and more subtly by the manner in which virtually everything in the symphony arises out of and is determined by the basic hexachordal set. Not only does this technique create a sense of unity across the work as a whole on the level of harmonic content and tonal organisation – although the manner in which it operates is carefully varied in order to avoid undue predictability – but it also informs most of the principal thematic material which accordingly impresses

the listener as a collection of fundamentally related ideas that exist in a state of continuous purposeful transformation.

Chapter 4

Structural Compression: Symphony No. 6, Symphony No. 7 and

Symphony No. 8

4.1   Establishing the Context: The One-Movement Symphony

4.1.1   Precedents

One development in the modern handling of symphonic form that was not discussed in Chapter 2 above is the compression into one movement of the multi-movement symphony. After Kinsella's experiment in Symphony No. 5 with a text-based work, he not only returned in Symphonies No. 6, No. 7 and No. 8 to the essentially instrumental symphony – although two of them, No. 7 and No. 8, do include small parts for voices – but he also sought to discipline his thought into the more concentrated single-movement form.

While both Schubert's *Wandererfantasie*, D. 760, of 1822 and his *Fantasie* in F minor of 1828 for piano four hands, D. 940, are often cited as important precedents, Franz Liszt's Sonata in B minor (1853) arguably remains the most successful and influential nineteenth-century experiment in formal integration where the various component movements of a multi-movement work are fused into one continuous whole. Generally regarded for this reason as 'a unique landmark in the history of music',[188] it exemplifies an approach in which the traditional sonata-form structure is vastly opened out and the recapitulation of the principal material postponed to become the finale of the entire work; the central portion may then include both free developmental interpolations as well as contrasting sections representing the customary slow moment and scherzo, which are often also developmental in character. The work became the model for a formal type that William S. Newman calls 'double-function form', and it was much

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[188] R. M. Longyear, 'Liszt's B minor Sonata: Precedents for a structural Analysis', *The Music Review*, 34, 3-4 (August-November, 1973), 19

imitated by later composers.[189] While it provided an early and obviously useful template for the symphonic poem, it also eventually influenced abstract symphonic composition and Christopher Ballantine, who refers to it as 'sonata bi-structure', cites Arnold Schoenberg's *Kammersymphonie* Op. 9 (1906) as a particularly successful symphonic realisation of the principle, where, he says, 'the superimposition of the conventional four-movement form onto a first-movement structure [creates] an unbroken and tightly unified multi-movement work'.[190] But it is an approach that allows for considerable latitude in its application and symphonies that employ it vary widely between what seems little more than the loose association of four essentially separate movements, like Franz Schmidt's (1874-1939) Symphony No. 4 (1933), for example, to more subtle and complex interpenetrations of the different elements such as one finds in Robin Orr's (1909-2006) Symphony in One Movement (1963).[191] The common factor in all such works, however, is that they are conceived as a large expansion of sonata form bounded by an exposition and recapitulation (however transformed) of the same material.

Not all one-movement symphonies are based on this plan, however. Traditional multi-movement sectionality is hardly discernible in Sibelius's Symphony No. 7 (1924), for example, undoubtedly one of the most famous realisations of the single-span concept in the repertoire. 'The Seventh Symphony', as Veijo Murtomäki observes, 'is neither a gigantic movement in sonata form nor several movements compressed into one in the manner of Liszt's B minor sonata. It is something new and revolutionary in the history of the symphony.'[192] In this context it is interesting to note how analyses of this well-known work tend to arrive at very different conclusions. In remarking on how little its form has

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[189] William s. Newman, *The Sonata since Beethoven* (Chapel Hill, 1969), 373

[190] Ballantine, *Twentieth Century Symphony*, 116-117

[191] Interestingly, Harold Truscott considers Schmidt's Symphony No. 4 to be in three movements: the first is a sonata-form movement which proceeds up to the end of the development section; at this point the music is 'side-tracked', as he puts it, into an *Adagio* which is followed by a scherzo; the first movement is then resumed and a recapitulation of the principal material leads to a coda that brings the work as a whole to a conclusion (see *The Music of Franz Schmidt, Volume 1: The Orchestral Music* (London, 1984), 143-144).

[192] Veijo Murtomäki, '"Symphonic Fantasy": A synthesis of Symphonic Thinking in Sibelius's Seventh Symphony and *Tapiola*', in Glenda Dawn Goss ed., *The Sibelius Companion* (Westport, Conn., 1996), 152.

in common either with the traditional symphony or with any one of its movements, Harold E. Johnson notes that both Cecil Gray and Gerald Abraham

> go to great lengths to show that it represents an extension of what is known as orthodox sonata form, in which there is an exposition, development and recapitulation. Krohn, however, feels that it is a rondo. It seems to me, at least, that the Seventh Symphony is really a *Fantasia sinfonica*, for that title describes what it really is – a work of symphonic proportions cast in no established form.[193]

Without reopening the discussion about what the essential characteristics of a genuine symphony might be, this wide divergence of opinion certainly reminds us that Sibelius had struck out on a new path that seemed puzzling to many, that he had (in the words of Robert Layton) 'abandoned all the stereotyped formal conventions of keys, "subjects", and so on, to achieve unity on his own terms.'[194] The composer himself was perfectly clear about what these terms were: 'It is often thought that the essence of symphony [*sic*] lies in its form', he told his secretary Santeri Levas (meaning form as it is traditionally understood), 'but this is certainly not the case. The content is always the primary factor, while the form is secondary, the music itself determining its outer form.'[195] When approached on this basis without any preconceptions, the work's musical processes strike the listener as logical and inevitable. Analytical uncertainties seem to arise only when an attempt is made to relate these processes directly to, or derive them from more conventional procedures which hardly seem adequate for an elucidation of Sibelius's approach.

It is not unlikely that it was the enormous prestige that accrued to Sibelius's Symphony No. 7 in the years immediately following its premiere that prompted several

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[193] Johnson, *Sibelius*, 164

[194] Layton, *Sibelius* (London, 1971 [1965]), 57. This opinion is emphatically reiterated by Robert Simpson: 'As a musical structure the Seventh Symphony is at once the grandest and most subtly organised that Sibelius ever conceived, and its form shows no trace of compromise with any vestigial symphony in separable movements'. ('Sibelius, Nielsen and the Symphonic Problem', in *Carl Nielsen: Symphonist*, rev. ed. (London, 1979), 217-218).

[195] Santeri Levas, *Sibelius: A Personal Portrait*, trans. Percy M. Young (London, 1972), 82.

contemporaries to produce works along similar lines. But this tendency towards symphonic compression also seems to have manifested itself independently in the work of the Russian composer Nicolay Myaskovsky. Of Myaskovsky's twenty-seven symphonies, three are cast in one movement; the first of them, Symphony No. 10, Op. 30, was completed as early as 1927 and almost certainly without the composer having had an opportunity to familiarise himself with Sibelius's score.[196] In an autobiographical essay published in 1936, Myaskovsky stated that Symphony No. 10 was inspired by Pushkin's *The Bronze Horseman*, which would seem to suggest a link with the symphonic poem and so place the work in a somewhat different category to that of the Sibelius.[197] But the connection is tenuous: the published score makes no reference to Pushkin's poem and even if, as Ikonnikov suggests, Symphony No. 10 is best understood as being in the nature of a psychological study, its formal organisation is nonetheless entirely abstract and it certainly cannot be considered indebted to a programme in any generally accepted sense.[198] The two subsequent one-movement symphonies – No. 13, Op. 36 (1933) and No. 21, Op. 51 (1940) – are also completely abstract works without subtitles or programmatic associations of any kind.

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[196] Although Sibelius's Symphony No. 7 was first performed (as *Fantasia sinfonica*) in March 1924 in Stockholm a few weeks after its completion and made rapid international progress thereafter, we know from diary entries that Myaskovsky did not see the score (which was published by Wilhelm Hansen in 1925) until 1935, by which date he had composed two of his three one-movement symphonies. The diary entries in question are those for 20 September and 1 December 1935 and are reproduced in Ol'ga Lamm, *Stranitsï tvorcheskoy biografii Myaskovskogo* [Pages of Myaskovsky's Creative Biography] (Moscow, 1989), 244 and 246. The first entry refers to his acquiring scores of Sibelius's Second and Seventh Symphonies from abroad, which he didn't think 'looked very interesting'; and the second entry refers to playing though the Seventh: 'I played through Sibelius's Seventh Symphony - wretched thematic material, adroitly orchestrated'. Myaskovsky makes no reference ever to hearing the work live. (I am grateful to Patrick Zuk of the University of Durham for drawing my attention to these references and for providing me with translations from the Russian of the relevant passages.)

[197] Nicolay Myaskovsky, 'Avtobiograficheskiye zametki o tvorcheskom puti' [Autobiographical notes about my creative path] reprinted in Semyon Shlifshteyn ed., *N. Ya. Myaskovskiy: Sobraniye materialov v dvukh tomakh*, Volume 2 (Moscow, 1964), 18 [originally published in *Sovetskaya muzïka* 6 (1936), 5-12].

[198] Ikonnikov, *Myaskovsky*, 46.

Remarkable though these parallel developments in Russia and Finland may be, these symphonies of Myaskovsky remained largely unknown outside the Soviet Union while Sibelius's work had an increasingly profound impact on his contemporaries as his international reputation burgeoned, especially in Anglophone countries. But although the Finnish master's fame may have been greater and his standing higher in England than in any country outside his own, the two most significant one-movement symphonies of the next decade for which his Symphony No. 7 can be cited as a precedent are in fact by Americans: Samuel Barber's (1910-1981) Symphony in One Movement [No. 1] (1936) and Roy Harris's (1898-1979) Third Symphony (1939).

It is known that Barber not only had deep admiration for the music of Sibelius but that he also carried out a detailed analysis of his Symphony No. 7 while composing his own first symphony: among his sketches for the work there exists a chart that identifies the principal themes in the Sibelius score and traces the course of their development. Howard Pollack goes so far as to suggest that Barber's symphony 'apparently represents a response to that particular piece' and maintains that 'at the very least, [he] borrowed from Sibelius the idea of a one movement symphony, still very much a novelty in those years.' He also draws attention to the fact that 'Barber even subtitled his symphony, as had Sibelius, "in one movement:"'[199]

'At the same time', Pollock concedes, 'Barber's symphony is formally less cryptic than Sibelius's.'[200] In Barbara Heyman's opinion 'there are vast differences between these two works written a little more than a decade apart,' and she points out that 'Barber's symphony has a stronger profile – the divisions between the four sections are more clearly marked'.[201] In fact the composer himself described it as 'a synthetic treatment of the four-movement classical symphony',[202] and while the twenty-minute work undoubtedly creates the impression of a single span across which the full implications of

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[199] Howard Pollack, 'Samuel Barber, Jean Sibelius, and the Making of an American Romantic', *The Musical Quarterly*, 84, 2 (Summer 2000), 195. The title of the Sibelius symphony as it appears on the published score is: 'Symphonie Nr. 7 / In einem Satze'.

[200] Ibid., 196.

[201] Barbara B. Heyman, *Samuel Barber: The Composer and his Music* (New York, 1992), 141.

[202] Quoted in Barbara B. Heyman, *Samuel Barber*, 140.

a concise group of thematic ideas are consistently worked out, the internal divisions nonetheless represent four distinct sections including both a central scherzo and a slow movement.

Although it does not seem to have been explicitly acknowledged by the composer, Roy Harris's debt to Sibelius is more subtle. His Third Symphony, which made such a deep impression when it was first heard in 1939, owes far less to tradition, and indeed far less to convention in almost every respect than Barber's work. Ballantine remarks that from the Sibelius score 'it is only a small step to a one-movement symphony that renounces altogether traditional symphonic form', and he is of the opinion that 'this step has been taken very successfully by Roy Harris', whose third Symphony 'conserves nothing of the old formal schemes'.[203] The five principal subsections of this work as identified by the composer certainly do not retain anything of the standard division by movement and, in Ballantine's view, the structural principal is 'one of perpetual evolution, in which everything springs from the opening, and grows continually through a technique of linear evolution and permutation'.[204]

> Each new 'section' is precipitated by a crisis, by a moment of heightened excitement, great activity, and tension: it is in such moments of enhanced mental and emotional sensibility that sudden abrupt transitions are made. These metamorphoses have a visionary quality in their unexpectedness but seeming 'rightness' and inevitability, and they give to the evolving thematic network a sense of sudden elision or of compression of links in the chain.[205]

With the widespread international success of both the Barber and Harris works, the one-movement symphony ceased to be viewed as something unusual. But if it quickly became an attractive option for many composers, it was also a particularly demanding one. Where the Lisztian expanded sonata-form was felt to be unsuitable,

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[203] Ballantine, *Twentieth Century Symphony*, 121.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Ibid., 122.

composers had of necessity to devise some other means – usually unique to each particular work – of developing a satisfactory structure. There were no formal models to which they could turn and, in Sibelius's phrase, they were forced to allow the music itself to determine its outer form. While this principle may of course apply in a general way to any genre and any type of work, it undoubtedly acquires an urgency in the case of the sub-genre of the one-movement symphony where standard traditional options or norms are in short supply and there are few usable precedents to fall back on. Ten years before Robin Orr's 1961 work, mentioned above, Robert Simpson completed his Symphony No. 1, which for Hugh Ottaway was 'the most impressive first symphony by an Englishman since Edmund Rubbra's (1937)'.[206] Ottaway noted that the work 'is in one continuous movement – *Moderato e giusto* – broadly divisible into three sections, of which the second is distinct from the first but merges into the third.' But these, he says, 'are *not* the sections of sonata form and had best be thought of thus: *(i)* conflict; *(ii)* consideration; *(iii)* resolution.'[207] Instead of a traditional formal template, Ottaway thus identifies as the structuring concept that shapes Simpson's work a general psychological trajectory that is worked out in purely musical terms. A similar idea also apparently informs Michael Tippett's Fourth Symphony (1977). In a report on the first performance in Chicago in 1977, Art Lange noted that the symphony 'is in one continuous movement, though it has seven sections, creating an overall arch like edifice.'[208] He goes on to say that Tippett has acknowledged that some of the inspiration came from Sibelius's Symphony No. 7 and Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben* and that the composer's intention was 'to write an orchestral work encompassing a man's life "from birth to death", and including sections which correspond to the self-doubts and moments of exhilaration which all men experience.'[209]

In this context, one recalls Hans Keller's useful distinction between 'form' and 'structure' in music: 'form', in his view, represents the general background against which

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[206] Hugh Ottaway, 'Robert Simpson's First Symphony', *The Musical Times*, 97, 1363 (September, 1956), 465.

[207] Ibid., 462-463.

[208] Art Lange, 'Tippett's Fourth Symphony', *Tempo* [New Series], 123, (December, 1977), 53.

[209] Ibid.

the individual 'structure' of each particular work (or movement) is realised.[210] In other words, while many works may share the same form (sonata form, say, or rondo form), no two works will have the same structure. More than is the case with other genres, however, the one-movement symphony is composed without the benefit of such a generalised background formal referent, without an 'ordered complex of pre-existing generic expectations and traditional procedures.'[211] But, obviously, a work must have some kind of form, and where there are no established procedures it will need to be invented anew, *ad hoc*, for each new work. Inevitably, there will be some points of contact with traditional schemata. But the nature of the dialogue with 'an intricate system of norms and standard options'[212] will usually be of a very different nature, at once more complex and more tenuous, than that of the multi-movement symphony which – however sophisticated the style of the music – can still engage directly with the individual backgrounds of sonata form, rondo form and so on. There is thus no possibility of an easy appeal to recognisable formal archetypes when attempting to characterise the salient features of a particular one-movement symphony, because, usually, there are none.[213] Hence, presumably, the quasi-metaphorical language to which Ottaway and Lange must perforce resort in their efforts to convey something of how the music they are discussing is organised.

In general, composers of symphonies seem to be drawn to the one-movement form as an occasional alternative. As he approached the end of his career, Edmund

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[210] Hans Keller formulated no definitive exposition of this view, but it is a point he often makes in passing in various contexts, as, for example, in the following observation on first movement of Britten's String Quartet No. 3: 'The reason is that the structure is so original, so precisely and pregnantly composed against the background of sonata form that people who can only think in terms of form (that which musics have in common) as distinct from structure (that which they haven't) are confused …' (*Essays on Music*, 112).

[211] James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late Eighteenth Century Sonata* (Oxford, 2006), 617.

[212] Ibid., 614

[213] This would appear to be confirmed by Tovey's remark about Sibelius's Symphony No. 7 in *Essays in Musical Analysis*, Volume VI (London, 1939), 91: 'An adequate analysis of this noble work', he says, 'would be too subtle to be readable.'

Rubbra, for example, cast both his Symphony No. 10, *Sinfonia da camera* (1974) and Symphony No. 11 (1979) in one movement, although his earlier symphonies are all in either three or four movements. For others, however, it became something of a favourite option. Of Havergal Brian's (1876-1972) thirty-two symphonies no less than twelve are in one movement: the earliest, No. 5, *Wine of Summer* (a cantata-symphony), dates from 1937 and the last, No. 31, from 1968 over thirty years later. The Swedish composer Allan Pettersson (1911-1980) was also particularly attracted to the form and he composed eleven one-movement symphonies between 1953 (No. 2) and 1978 (No. 15). Some of these are very lengthy and stretch the single continuous movement to its limits: Symphony No. 9 and Symphony No. 13, for example, are each about seventy minutes in duration.

4.1.2   Kinsella's approach to the one-movement symphony

By the time Kinsella decided to pursue this line of development in 1992, therefore, there existed many distinguished and successful examples of the one-movement symphony to which he could refer.[214] But because the forms of most of these works are scarcely abstractable from their particular realisations they could ultimately be of only limited use to him as models.   Kinsella commenced his career as a symphonist by adhering fairly closely to traditional procedures and conspicuously avoiding radical departure from conventional formal designs, but by the time he came to write Symphony No. 6 he had re-formulated for himself many important questions about the nature of symphonic structure.   He was accordingly well placed to tackle the problem of the one-movement symphony from a position of assured independence.

For the three symphonies under consideration in the present chapter, Kinsella devised two distinct formal approaches: that of Symphony No. 6, and that of Symphonies No. 7 and No. 8, both of which are constructed along very similar lines. (Ex.

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[214] Perhaps the earliest example of a continuous symphonic structure in Irish symphonic literature is Seóirse Bodley's Symphony No. 1 (1959) in which the opening section is recapitulated at the end and the central portion clearly divided into a slow movement and a scherzo. A more compact one-movement form can be found in Gerard Victory's (1921-1995) Symphony No. 4 (1988).

127 presents a summary of the structures of all three works.) It is interesting to note, however, that what is a highly successful design in the case of Symphony No. 7 is decidedly less convincing in the case of its successor, which in some respects is perhaps the single least persuasive symphony in the entire series. Its relative lack of success may in part be due to the fact that in composing it Kinsella attempted to reapply a formal approach he had already evolved to meet one specific set of creative circumstances. His only essential modification of this basic ground plan, which will be discussed in detail in due course, is in fact to extend it – Symphony No. 8 is almost twenty minutes longer than Symphony No. 7 – and the result is a decided loss of cogency. These two works would seem to support the notion that the form of a one-movement symphony is more or less unique to that particular work and not easily re-usable as an abstract scheme. Each new composition necessarily entails new material and in the case of the one-movement symphony perhaps even more than elsewhere, this material as well as its development will tend to give rise, not merely to a structure but also to a form that is unlike any other.[215] The formal processes of Kinsella's Symphony No. 7 certainly seem to arise naturally and inevitably both out of the thematic ideas themselves and the manner in which they are handled; applied to thematic material of quite a different character in Symphony No. 8, the result seems less convincing.

In seeking a formal precedent, then, for his first essay in one-movement form it is interesting that Kinsella should look to one of his own earlier symphonies for a suitable model. He adopts (and adapts) in Symphony No. 6 the asymmetrical approach of Symphony No. 3, but although both works are of approximately the same duration (thirty minutes), the internal dynamic is strikingly different in each. In Symphony No. 6

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[215] After the composition of Symphony No. 4, the pressing creative problem for Sibelius was how to bring symphonic form 'back to its first principles', as Hepokoski puts it (*Sibelius: Symphony No. 5*, 20). Hepokoski describes how this meant 'striving to create *ad hoc* musical structures that would be supported less by the horizon of expectations provided by the *Formenlehre* tradition than by the idiosyncratic, quasi-intuitive inner logic of the selected musical materials. Each major composition after the Fourth Symphony represents a relatively unmoored structural experiment that seeks its own course in uncharted formal waters.' (21) However fruitful such an approach may be for composers generally, it is one that the composer of the one-movement symphony seems to have little choice but to adopt.

Ex. 127

Symphony No. 6 [30']

Con fuoco e maestoso	---	Allegro	---	Largo	---	(accelerando)	---	Coda Allegro
		A B C A¹		D E				
♩=63		♩=132		♩=50				♩=132
bars: 1-63		64-499		500-692				693-721

Symphony No. 7 [25']

A	---	B	---	A¹	---	B¹	---	A²	---	Coda
Prelude Pesante		Allegro		Pesante		Allegro		Pesante		Allegro impetuoso
♩.=40		♩=80		♩.=40		♩=80		♩.=40		♩=80
bars: 1-135		136-437		438-517		518-782		783-901		902-983

Symphony No. 8 [43']

A	---	B	---	A¹	---	B¹	---	A²	---	B²	---	A³	---	Coda
[Largo]		Energico		Largo		[Energico]		Largo		Energico		Largo		Energico
♩=46		o=63		♩=46		o=63		♩=46		o=63		♩=46		o=63
bars: 1-27		28-202		203-297		298-742		725-799		800-1,561		1,562-1,602		1,603-1,710

the asymmetry is in fact far more thoroughgoing. While the material in the introductory *Con fuoco e maestoso* plays an important role in the ensuing *Allegro*, the second part of the work, the *Largo*, remains entirely unconnected with what went before. The *Largo* itself is also asymmetrical in construction, and consists of two virtually unrelated sections (with only a minimum of thematic cross-referencing), the second of which drives (*accelerando*) towards an apotheosis that ultimately issues in a vigorous coda. Despite the apparent lack of connection between two parts, Kinsella succeeds nonetheless in creating the sense of a single-span work that moves purposefully towards a goal. The technical means by which this is achieved are described in detail below, but the principal unifying factor is undoubtedly the sense that the work encompasses a clear psychological trajectory where – like the Harris symphony as described by Ballantine above – each individual section reaches a point from which the next is naturally precipitated.

For Symphony No. 7 on the other hand, Kinsella chose a completely different kind of formal design. Essentially, the structural concept of the work is a very simple one: two blocks of material, each in a different tempo, are alternated; the cycle is then brought to an end with a final restatement of the opening material and the whole is rounded off with a coda (A-B-A^1-B^1-A^2-Coda). If Symphony No. 6 successfully explores the possibilities of thoroughgoing structural asymmetry, its successor in contrast represents a concise study in formal balance.

The most convenient term for musical organisation of this kind is 'rotational form', a concept originally developed by James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy[216] who in applying it to eighteenth-century music identified it as a basic principal underlying conventional formal archetypes. They define rotational structures as 'those that extend through musical space by recycling one or more times – with appropriate alterations and adjustments – a referential thematic pattern established as an ordered succession at the

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[216] The credit for coining the term seems to belong to Warren Darcy: see his 'Rotational Form, Teleological Genesis, and Fantasy-Projection in the Slow Movement of Mahler's Sixth Symphony', *19th-Century Music*, 25, 1 (Summer, 2001), 52, where he refers to 'a principle that I call "rotational form"'.

piece's outset.'[217] It is not difficult to see how this principle might interact with classical sonata form procedures, for example, and its application to the classical concerto is even more obvious where the opening orchestral *ritornello*, the solo exposition and the recapitulation clearly represent 'a referential model followed by (usually varied) recyclings or restatements'.[218] The concept is also flexible enough to accommodate notions of 'developmental half-rotations, truncated rotations, rotations with episodic substitutes' and so on.[219]

The idea of rotational form as an architectural principal has proved immensely useful in discussing the structural organisation of Sibelius's music in particular, where it serves to clarify procedures that otherwise often seem obscure. Sibelius's late concern with 'recreating form on a more elemental level'[220] essentially involved a descent to the bedrock of the first principles of musical structure, and his own unique development as an artist is due to his clear grasp of the basic underlying processes that inform the standard structural archetypes. Not only did this rethinking allow him to achieve the extraordinary formal concentration of his later music, but the remarkable way in which he combined rotational structure with a cumulative building towards a long-range goal (*telos*) or climax is responsible for many of his most powerful utterances.

Kinsella's Symphony No. 7 affords a superbly clear example of the successful realisation of this principle of rotational form, and given the composer's close affinity with the music of Sibelius it is not unlikely that the idea was suggested by similar procedures in the work of the Finnish master. Like Sibelius, Kinsella also exploits the natural tendency of varied multiple recyclings of material to culminate in a *telos*, which in this case, as will be discussed in due course, is as convincing and deeply moving as it is completely unexpected. There is no question that Kinsella's work is merely an imitation of the Sibelian manner, however: his realisation of these fundamental structural procedures is always very much his own, as is the tone and import of the music.

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[217] Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, 611.

[218] Ibid., 612.

[219] Ibid., 613.

[220] Hepokoski, *Sibelius: Symphony No. 5*, 20-21.

The proportions of Symphony No. 7 are very well-judged. The nature of the material itself is also perfectly tailored to carry the rotational structure: it is sufficiently differentiated to permit the degree of repetition required without the risk of *longueurs*, and the repetitions themselves are always sufficiently varied to ensure the listener's continued interest. New ideas are never introduced for the sake of mere variety but invariably prove to be necessary elements in the gradual unfolding and development of the overall symphonic argument. The number of rotations to which the material is subjected is precisely calculated to establish a clear sense of continuous circularity, on the one hand, and so ensure that the final breakthrough will have maximum effectiveness, but also to avoid any unnecessary repetitiveness, on the other. In short, the materials out of which the work is constructed and the formal processes to which they are subjected are indissolubly wedded. In this sense of the unity of matter and manner, Symphony No. 7 can be considered to constitute a profoundly successful emulation of Sibelian precedent.

Although the same rotational principle informs the structure of Symphony No. 8, it is not as successfully realised. There is a similar division of the constituent ideas into two blocks, one slow and one fast, and they are similarly alternated. But the expansion of the form by an additional rotation of each (A-B-A^1-B^1-A^2-B^2-A^3-Coda) proves fatal to the overall stability of the work. Furthermore, the tendency for each of the fast sections to get longer as the symphony proceeds creates an impression of diffuseness and structural unwieldiness. It is not that there is anything intrinsically deficient in the material on which the symphony is based. But, unlike the previous work, the matter and the manner are too divergent to result in a completely coherent structure.

4.2 Symphony No. 6 (1992-1993)

In all three symphonies discussed in this chapter Kinsella augments the forces of the standard full symphony orchestra with unexpected additions. As we have seen, the first four symphonies tend to be conservative with regard to the composition of the orchestra: the modest supplements of a fourth trumpet and a saxophone can hardly be considered remarkable in a late twentieth-century work. Although Symphony No. 5 as a text-based symphony is of course a separate case, the prominent role for a speaker is somewhat unusual and to that extent it might be seen as prefiguring Kinsella's innovations in the ensuing triad of one-movement works. The most immediately striking external feature of Symphony No. 6 is that for the first time in one of the symphonies Kinsella exploits a spacial disposition of instruments. The basic orchestra consists of double woodwind (with the extra addition of piccolo and contrabassoon); four horns, two trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani, percussion and strings. In addition, however, Kinsella also writes for three off-stage horns that he directs should be placed in different parts of the auditorium. (The full score contains a diagram of the National Concert Hall in Dublin showing the suggested locations of the three players: horns 1 and 2 above and behind the orchestra in the far corners of the choir gallery – horn 1 to the left, horn 2 to the right – and horn 3 on the right-hand side balcony, about two-thirds of its length from the stage.)

The laconic programme note on Symphony No. 6 that Kinsella supplied for the first performance in 1996 confines itself to the briefest general outline of the work's overall form, mentioning only the most obvious structural divisions. [221] But it does hint that the inclusion of the three additional horns has personal associations for the composer:

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[221] Symphony No. 6 was first performed by the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland (conducted by Proinnsías Ó Duinn) in the National Concert Hall, Dublin, on Friday, 2 February 1996. In the programme booklet Kinsella allows for the exact positioning of the three off-stage horns to be 'influenced by the shape of the auditorium'.

The three additional horns together with the four orchestral horns add a distinctive colour to the orchestration and the symphony is dedicated to a group of seven special friends with whom I have shared a common love for music for many years. Echoes of some of the music we have listened to together may be detected form time to time as the symphony progresses [...]. These are echoes and not necessarily quotes from other music – in some instances they are moods or even instrumental groupings with a special flavour.[222]

In a few brief introductory remarks made to the audience immediately before the premier, Kinsella committed himself a little further. The seven friends, he said, were 'all identified in the music with motifs, perhaps combinations of instruments or gestures in the orchestra', but although he drew attention to the apparent coincidence that there were both seven friends and same number of horns, he stopped short at any further explanation.[223]

Apart from noting recollections of various Sibelian mannerisms of a kind we are familiar with in Kinsella's later music and which are if anything even a little more in evidence in the present work, further speculation about the nature of these references would be futile. The style of the symphony is internally completely consistent and, whatever their provenance, they have clearly been fully assimilated into the textural and thematic fabric of the music. If one allowed imagine free rein one might be able to point to a number of moments which remind one of this or that piece or this or that composer. But many moments in many works can be heard (or, more likely, can be seen) as referring, however tenuously, to other works. Although Kinsella has camouflaged his sources well, when such allusions are known to be deliberately incorporated, as they are here, the effort of tracing them might be thought worth making. But it would remain an exercise of doubtful value because while possibilities certainly suggest themselves, once one begins to search consciously for them they seem to proliferate and it becomes

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[222] Programme booklet, 1996. The dedication on the MS full score of Symphony No. 6 reads: 'Dedicated to "The Seven Companions in Music" '.
[223] The recording of the first performance of Symphony No. 6 issued by the Contemporary Music Centre Ireland includes the composer's spoken introductory remarks.

impossible to distinguish what may be genuine and intended from what is merely illusory.

The compositional technique of Symphony No. 6 is based on the manipulation of two complementary hexachordal aggregates derived from the twelve pitches of the chromatic scale in a manner very similar to that discussed in relation to earlier works. Kinsella handles these with far greater freedom than he does in, say, Symphony No. 2, however, and in the present work the actual choice of pitches from moment to moment often seems to be as dependent on traditional principles of thematic extension and development as on the application of a system. Symphony No. 6 affords a particularly good example, therefore, of Kinsella's ability to manoeuvre compositionally between a pre-determined scheme, on the one hand, and free invention, on the other; and the highly individual soundworld of these later works is due in no small measure to his successful exploitation of the tension between these different approaches.

Although one may suspect that the informing background of the work is some kind of note-row or twelve-tone set, it is not possible to be absolutely certain of this. Kinsella's avoidance of thoroughgoing systematic organisation means that nothing definite can be deduced from the music. Nonetheless, a conjectural twelve-note row that seems to account for a great deal of what happens may plausibly be proposed [Ex. 128].

While it may not be possible to confirm the exact order of the pitches as they are presented in Ex. 128, there seems little doubt about its general constitution in that the two hexachordal derivatives – that on E and that on A sharp (B flat) – are readily identifiable in the music. The opening five bars of the symphony are based entirely on hexachord 1, for example, and the first four notes of hexachord 2 are introduced in bar 6. The ensuing passage affords a clear example of Kinsella's free treatment of this material as new thematic ideas draw freely on these ten pitches before the F (natural) is eventually introduced in bar 10 and the C (natural) in bar 19. The deciding factor in arriving at the final arrangement of the twelve notes as it is presented in Ex. 128 is that the pitches of the two hexachords furnished by the inversion of this particular arrangement also play

Ex. 128: Symphony No. 6: conjectural note-row

important roles at crucial structural junctures in the symphony. The flexible tonal/modal implications of the hexachords themselves both as vertical aggregates and as gapped scales continue to be fully exploited by the composer as before, and they appear in various transpositions throughout the work. But the assurance with which Kinsella now handles this idiom allows him considerably greater freedom in the application of his technique. The clear stylistic consistency that is in evidence throughout the entire symphonic series cannot thus be considered in any way due to routine reliance on a single proven approach. The opposite is rather the case. The fundamentals of Kinsella's style are re-interrogated in each new work. They may indeed remain fundamental for him – hence the clear sense of continuity from work to work – but it is also evident that he continues to find them richly stimulating and not in any way an impediment to stylistic development. This new freedom is inseparable from the composer's ever-

Ex. 129: Symphony No. 6, thematic summary

Con fuoco e maestoso [♩ = 88, bars 1-63]

Allegro [♩. = 132, bars 64-499]

A [bars 64-215]

culminating in *fortissimo* statements of 4(i) and 4(ii) followed by 3

leading to return of opening hexachord and theme 1

leading to a modified return of

b[1], theme 6

a[1], theme 5

B [bars 216-269]

new texture; principal thematic content consists of variants of theme 4(i) and theme 4(ii)

further new texture and new theme

Theme 9

[ob]

[strings]

etc.

a^2, theme 5 leading to *fortissimo* statements of theme 4(i) and theme 4(ii) followed by theme 3, as before

b^2, theme 6

c^1, variant of original idea, theme 7, leading to principal climax of *Allegro* based on theme 8

reference to initial *Con fuoco e maestoso* (theme 2 and theme 3), followed by short cadenzas for the three off-stage horns, and leading to:

Largo [♩ =50, bars 500-692]

Theme 10

[vln 1]

3

Theme 11, with brief reference to theme 10

[vcl, db]

gradual *accelerando* to cadenza-like passage for the seven horns (♩ =96) and a final reference to theme 10

Coda, *Allegro* [♩ = 132, bars 693-721]

increasing assurance in the manipulation of his compositional idiom and each successive symphony confirms a double trajectory of greater ease and greater control.

Symphony No. 6 opens *Con fuoco e maestoso* with a sixty-three bar paragraph which functions as an introduction to the work as a whole. The music commences *fortissimo* with a surge of energy as rapidly repeated horn notes, supported by strings and amplified by sustained notes in the woodwind, articulate a chordal aggregate derived from the first hexachord of the row. As mentioned above, this culminates in bar 6 with the introduction of the initial four pitches of the second hexachord – D sharp, C sharp, A sharp and G sharp – which coincides with the announcement of the first principal theme (theme 1) [Ex. 129]. (All of the principal material mentioned in the ensuing discussion is quoted in Ex. 129 above, which presents a thematic summary of the complete symphony.)

Theme 2 follows immediately on strings and, after a further passing allusion to theme 1, theme 3 is introduced by the three off-stage horns in unison. This idea is repeated in the orchestra at different pitches and with its falling contour the dynamic level drops for the first time since the commencement of the work. The pitch content changes subtly as the notes of the first hexachord are gradually relinquished altogether, and a sudden burst of energy based on a derivative of theme 3 leads to theme 4(i) on solo oboe. Theme 3 reasserts itself once again and a second burst of energy gives way to theme 4(ii), also announced by the oboe. The timbre of the solo oboe acquires an almost thematic significance here, and its subsequent recurrences in the work serve to establish a clear connection in the mind of the listener between the salient motifs of theme 4 and their later, more loosely related derivatives. This idea, theme 4 (ii), is extended above quiet crosshatch figuration in the strings that duly becomes a *tremolando* articulating the pitches G, C and F common to both the second hexachord at its original pitch and its inversion. Against this *tremolando* a final *pianissimo* reference to theme 1 is heard on the bassoons and, above it, a brief passage three solo violins that finally comes to rest on octave Cs and a B flat as the music pauses and fades *al niente*.

The long 12/8 *Allegro* that follows is cast in ternary form in which an extended central double episode is followed by a modified return of the opening material. The strings announce the first principal idea (theme 5), which is based on hexachord 2 of the inversion of the row, and the bustling figuration of which conveys a sense of latent energy that is very characteristic of Kinsella's music. A restatement quickly builds to a return of themes 4 (i) and 4 (ii), now heard *fortissimo* on the brass against continued quaver figuration. This is followed by a reference to theme 3, under the calming influence of which once again the dynamic level drops, marking the end of the A/a section and preparing for A/b and the introduction of theme 6, a light skipping idea marked *delicato*, which is shared between woodwind and strings.

The A/c section commences with theme 7 (and its supplement derived from theme 3), which is developed into a strenuous paragraph that leads to the first important climax of the movement. The quaver figuration, which had been suspended

momentarily, returns and with it a variant of the opening bars of the *con fuoco* introduction, based on the same pitches as the beginning of the symphony and also containing references to theme 1. It is at the point where the next new idea (theme 8) is introduced – *pianissimo* on all seven horns against ongoing quaver figuration on the strings – that Kinsella once again shows his willingness to include in the material of work in progress a passing musical reference to a significant contemporary event. He introduced a series of cymbal clashes into the coda of Symphony No. 4, it will be remembered, to mark the release of The Birmingham Six in 1991. While he was working on this particular section of the present symphony he learned of the death of his distinguished older contemporary Aloys Fleischmann and he acknowledged the event by incorporating into the texture three quiet strokes on the gong.[224] Modified versions of the opening themes of the *Allegro* now return in reverse order, A/b^1 (theme 6) followed by A/a^1 (theme 5), and lead directly to B, the first section of the central double episode.

The B section is distinguished less by new thematic content than by a complete change of texture. The bustling quaver movement ceases altogether, and is replaced by sustained harmonies on the strings (intermittently supported by woodwind and brass) over which floats light, high-pitched feathery figuration on divided first violins (see Ex. 129). Heard both against this and in alternation with it are various motifs that recall the general shapes of theme 4 (i) and 4 (ii). Although much altered, they are nonetheless recognisably related both because of the characteristic repeated-note anacrusis and, especially, because of the timbre of the solo oboe which clearly indicates their provenance. Gradually, the music sinks into stasis. This is little alleviated by the ensuing C section, an extended paragraph that broods for much of its length on theme 9, a dark, low-lying idea on the oboe. Suspended over crosshatch figuration on the upper strings that articulates slowly changing harmonies, this theme is developed into a substantial climax, but one that quickly subsides only to leave matters essentially unchanged.

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[224] Kinsella drew attention to this moment in the programme booklet for the first performance: 'The death of Aloys Fleischmann occurred during the composition of this section and it is marked by three quiet strokes on the gong.'

Three bars are sufficient in which to re-establish the initial momentum of the *Allegro* and launch the recapitulation, A^1. All of the principal themes are restated. The A^1/a^2 and A^1/b^2 sections are compressed, but this is more than compensated for by a large expansion of A^1/c^1 in which a variant of theme 7 serves as the basis for a steady build up that culminates in the principal climax of the *Allegro*. Marked *espansiva*, this majestic peroration commences with theme 8 which is stated triple *forte* in the brass against powerful, throbbing syncopations in the strings and quaver interjections in the woodwind. As the strings become more active and the syncopations are transferred to the orchestral horns with swirling semiquavers in the woodwind, the three off-stage horns peal out theme 1 from the introduction. This gives way to a restatement of theme 2, and subsequently of theme 3 which, as before, leads to a fall in the dynamic level and a rapid dispersal of the accumulated tension. A moment of respite follows in which three short cadenzas – one for each of the off-stage horns – are supported by very soft sustained chords on brass and strings. All sense of tempo has effectively been suspended by frequent recourse to the pause, and when regular movement is resumed it is at the much slower pace of *Largo*, the general tempo of the second half of the symphony.

Unlike the preceding *Allegro*, the *Largo*, as has previously been mentioned, is asymmetrical in structure and consists of two complementary sections marked D and E in Ex. 129 above. The harmonic basis of the opening is the first hexachord of the row, which is articulated as a series of sustained chords on the strings that links it texturally with the immediately preceding passage. Against this harmonic background is heard a plaintive melody in first violins marked *molto espressivo e sostenuto* (theme 10). The prominent alternation of F sharps and F naturals is a very distinctive feature of this idea, and it recalls (unusually in Kinsella's work) the contours of Irish folk music, particularly that of the *sean-nós* or old-style song repertoire.[225] A reference to theme 3 from the

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[225] *Sean-nós*, which literally means 'old style' or 'old custom', is the Irish-language term for both a style of Irish folk singing and the repertoire of songs that is associated with it. It is a solo art and the highly ornamented manner of performance requires a great deal of improvisatory skill on the part of the singer. Words and music are equally vital, and in the words of Tomás Ó Canainn: '*sean-nós* is only completely at ease, as it were, in an Irish-speaking situation where the singer and

introduction leads to a brief outburst which is followed by a number of fragmentary allusions to theme 10 that bring the section to an end.

Although there is no actual sense of closure at the end of D, the beginning of E does suggest the commencement of a new process. This strange and complex section undoubtedly represents the very heart of the symphony. The long unison passage in the lower strings based on theme 11 gives way to a brief recollection of theme 10 before being transferred to the horns and lower woodwind. From this point, it is subject to intense development and gradually but steadily increases in tempo until it gives rise to a brilliant cadenza-like passage for all seven horns, which is based on hexachord 1 of the inversion of the row (that built on the note B). This cadenza issues in a moment of radiant intensity for the strings which, joined by brass and amplified with rising figures in the woodwind, is transformed into a descending sequence of mysterious chromatic harmonies that sinks slowly until it comes to rest on a chord of E minor, the first three pitches of hexachord 1. Against this, the first off-stage horn recalls theme 10, and the music appears to be suspended motionless for a moment until the *Allegro* of the coda commences with a *pianissimo* semiquaver figure in the lower strings. The coda itself is brief and firmly based on the two principal hexachords at their original pitches. The three off-stage horns emerge into the foreground for the last time with a figure that recalls (but is not quite) theme 1 and with a final surge of energy the symphony comes to an end on a chordal aggregate that comprises the first four notes of hexachord 1 (E-G-B-D).

4.3 Symphony No. 7 (1997)

Like the previous work, Symphony No. 7 also has an important spacial dimension and it includes prominent off–stage parts for tenor trombone and wordless mixed-

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his listener are in real communication.' (See Tomás Ó Canainn, *Traditional Music in Ireland* (Cork, 1993 [1978]), 49.)

voice choir.[226] Unlike Symphony No. 6, however, the score contains no specific directions about where these should be situated in relation to the orchestra other than that they should be placed 'off-stage', and consequently, one assumes, unseen by the audience. The choice of off-stage trombone, which is assigned the role of echoing, or answering solo passages initially heard on the orchestral first trombone, is undoubtedly connected with the relationship of the symphony as a whole to the Symphony No. 7 of Sibelius, an intriguing aspect of the work that will be explored in more detail in due course. The decision to write for off-stage chorus, on the other hand, appears to be due to the fact that when the Cork School of Music commissioned the work for its student Symphony Orchestra, the commission stipulated that the score should also include a suitable part for the school's amateur Fleischmann Choir.[227] Without writing a choral work *per se*, the successful integration of voices into a predominantly orchestral piece poses considerable compositional problems, and the principal difficulty lies in making the contribution of the choir seem like an essential component of the work. In a piece like 'Sirènes', the third of Debussy's *Nocturnes*, for example, there is an obvious programmatic appropriateness in the use of voices, while in Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* and the *Sinfonia Antartica* by Vaughan Williams the justification of the choral element lies in its capacity to enhance the atmosphere – of exultant hedonism in the former and windswept desolation in the latter. In a purely abstract symphonic work, however, it is much more difficult to ensure that the voices do not seem superfluous and that their inclusion in the score is consistent with the intrinsic logic of the symphonic argument. Kinsella rises exceptionally well to this challenge. It is interesting to note that neither the composer's style nor his manner of writing for the orchestra reflect the circumstances that prompted of the composition of the work. The score makes no concessions to the student and amateur forces for which it was written. Nor is there any compromise in the import of the symphony. On the

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[226] In addition to the off-stage trombone and the mixed-voice choir, the orchestra for which Symphony No. 7 is written comprises: 3(picc)2(ca)22+cbn/4231/timp/perc/cel/strings.

[227] Symphony No. 7 was first performed by the Cork School of Music Symphony Orchestra and the Fleischmann Choir of the Cork School of Music (conducted by Adrian Petcu), at the Cathedral of St. Mary and St. Ann (the North Cathedral), Cork, on Thursday, 25 February 1999.

contrary, Kinsella continues to explore fresh aspects of his technique in Symphony No. 7 and his imaginative response to the requirements of the commission with regard to the forces employed results in one of his most surprising and poetic symphonic endings. He succeeds, in short, in turning a potentially restricting condition into an inspired opportunity.

The relationship of the work to the Symphony No. 7 of Sibelius is a fascinating one and in many ways it serves to clarify the nature of one of the most potent and enduring influences on Kinsella's music. The points of contact between the two symphonies are obvious – indebtedness to the principals of rotational structure, the continual, almost obsessive return to C major as a point of origin and, on a more superficial level, the prominence assigned to the sonority of the solo trombone. In this context one cannot help recalling Brahms's famous retort to the wiseacre who remarked on the regrettable similarity between the main themes in the finales of his C minor Symphony and Beethoven's Ninth: 'Yes, and still more regrettable that any ass can see it at once.'[228] And it is not the similarities, but rather the differences between the two works that are interesting here. If anything, the resemblances to Sibelius's late masterpiece highlight the originality of Kinsella's symphonic thinking: the parallels with that work only draw attention to his radically different understanding of how symphonic music might be organised, and ultimately confirm the authenticity of his personal vision.

It might be considered foolhardy for a composer consciously to invite comparison with what is widely acknowledged to be one of the most concentrated and subtly organised symphonies ever written, and what is regarded by many commentators as its composer's supreme achievement.[229] But if Kinsella's work is to some extent a *hommage* to a composer whose music has meant so much to him, it is not in any sense an imitation. For one thing, Kinsella has an innate tendency to simplify, to reduce a concept to its essentials. We have noted this tendency before in connection with the harmonic and

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[228] Quoted in Richard Specht, *Johannes Brahms*, trans. Eric Blom (London, 1930), 98

[229] This, for example, is the opinion of Robert Simpson – see his *Carl Nielsen: Symphonist* rev. ed., Chapter XIV, 'Sibelius, Nielsen and the Symphonic Problem', 216-217 – and it is a view that is widely endorsed by other commentators.

tonal procedures employed in the last three movements of Symphony No. 1. Here, it applies to the structure of the work. His Symphony No. 7 may owe something in its general overall shape to Sibelius, but in it everything is pared down to the point of austerity. It employs far less material and all digressive episodes have been abandoned. The idea of rotational form – the continually transformed recurrences of what is essentially the same basic material – is employed with relentless single-mindedness. And as nothing is permitted to divert attention from this process, the goal of the work – the breaking of the circularity and the transcendence of perpetual return – is brought into focus with the greatest possible clarity. This is not a new concept in Kinsella's music, of course. As has been discussed above, a not dissimilar approach informs the structure of the first movement of Symphony No. 3. Arguably, therefore, his indebtedness to Sibelius is coincidental and the form of Symphony No. 7 might be considered to have emerged just as inevitably out of his own existing structural preoccupations. For Kinsella, the realisation that his compositional inclinations were tending to converge with certain procedures of Sibelius seems to have been something to embrace and celebrate rather than repress and disown. From this point of view, Symphony No. 7 is also a testimony to his confidence in his aesthetic vision and the strength of his creative identity. The sense of security implicit in this stance is of a piece with the unostentatious independence of a mind that, at the end of the twentieth-century and without any feeling of anachronism, could turn its attention to the composition of a symphony in C major – a very individual understanding of C major, perhaps, but C major nonetheless.

Of all tonalities, C major seems to carry the greatest number of musico-cultural associations, and to compose a work in that key in the twentieth century, whether it is explicitly acknowledged in the title or not, is to make a definite statement about how one views one's place in the recent history of music. First and foremost, one thinks of C major as the classical key *par excellence*. Whatever masterpieces were composed in it during the Baroque period, it is the C major music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven that most immediately comes to mind when we seek to define its characteristics: the *Jupiter* Symphony, the finale of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, and even individual moments

like the first C major chord in Haydn's *Creation* at the word 'light' in the setting of 'and there was light', a stroke of genius, in the words of Rosemary Hughes, at its 'simplest, most inevitable and most elementally moving.'[230] With such music uppermost in our minds, it is not surprising that C major – bright, optimistic and positive – becomes, as it were, the representative tonality of the Enlightenment. Closely related to this is C major's strong association with childhood and innocence, which actually dates from the eighteenth century itself and may partly be due to the fact that most trained musicians become aware of this key before any other.[231] In any case, there seems little doubt that when one thinks of C major today one thinks of classicism, optimism, innocence and purity. And to compose in C major is not only to evoke this constellation of related associations but also to adopt a position in relation to what they represent.

Several twentieth-century composers consciously and explicitly wrote works in C (the qualification 'major' seems to have been deemed unnecessary by then). The most famous of these is, perhaps, Stravinsky's great essay in neo-classicism, the Symphony in C (1940). Here, the designation 'in C' is deliberately anachronistic and serves to define the background against which the work must be heard if its irony is to be properly appreciated. What is interesting is that Stravinsky should have chosen the key of C rather than any other key. And the reason for this is surely lies in the fact that by 1940 C (major) had come to be seen, in David Fanning's apt phrase, as 'a metonym for the hallowed tonal-system itself'.[232] By choosing the key of C, Stravinsky was symbolically evoking the very concept of tonality, however ironised this evocation might have been.[233]

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[230] Rosemary Hughes quoted by H. C. Robbins Landon in *Haydn: The Years of 'The Creation', 1796-1800* (London, 1977), 415.

[231] See David Fanning, 'Shostakovitch: "The Present-Day Master of the C Major Key"', *Acta Musicologica*, 73,2 (2001), 102.

[232] Ibid., 101

[233] Writing of the Symphony in C, Stephen Johnson remarks: 'The result is a piece which, rather than sounding intrinsically symphonic, gives the impression the being about the *idea* of the symphony – an idea which Stravinsky proceeds to deconstruct with characteristic relish. […] And if the word "Symphony" in Stravinsky's title seems to call for quotation marks, so too does the remaining "in C"'. See 'After Mahler: the Central European Symphony in the Twentieth Century' in Layton ed., *A Companion to the Symphony*, 396.

But not all twentieth-century music in C (major) is necessarily ironic in intention. Fanning mentions Ferruccio Busoni in particular, 'many of whose later works', he says, 'are couched in or return to this key, as if in homage to the well-springs of tonality.'[234] And the same might be said of Benjamin Britten for whom C major undoubtedly seemed to have a special significance. Like the Stravinsky symphony, two important works are specifically designated by Britten as being 'in C' – the String Quartet No. 2, Op. 36 (1945) and the Sonata for Cello and Piano, Op. 65 (1961) – while many others, such as the Suite for Harp, Op. 83 (1969), are in C without being so described. For Britten there would most likely have been a straightforward practical reason behind the choice of key for a particular work – the easy exploitability in C major of the open strings of the string quartet, for example, or, even more obviously, of the solo cello – but to state in the 1960s that a work is 'in C' also clearly implies a definite stance in relation to the emphatic and widespread renunciation of tonality in post-war music.[235] In his discussion of the multi-layered symbolism of C major in the context of Shostakovitch's music, David Fanning alludes to the end of the third movement of Symphony No. 10 (1953) and makes a very suggestive remark: 'the symbolic function of C major', he says, 'seems to be as the goal of a longed-for, but not attainable, refuge in oneness and simplicity.'[236] This view of C major as an emblem of the lost paradise of classical tonality, of a sense of innocence, optimism and natural order, now beyond our reach perhaps but for which we yearn nonetheless, is a fascinating one. It entails a complex constellation of ideas where purely technical matters combine with the personal and emotional to articulate highly charged aesthetic aspirations of deep cultural significance. To write in C major nowadays is, perhaps, to

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[234] Fanning, 'Shostakovitch', 101

[235] This is true not just of works in C major, obviously, but of any composition with a key designation, such as Britten's *Missa Brevis in D*, Op. 63 (1959), Hindemith's Symphony in E flat (1940) or the later Vaughan Williams Symphonies, all of which from No. 4 onwards (with the exception of No. 7, *Sinfonia Antartica*) are conceived as being in a specific key which is mentioned as part of the title. Shostakovitch seems to be one of the few major figures who wrote music to which a traditional key designation is applicable right into the 1970s – most famously, String Quartets No. 13 in B flat minor (1970), No. 14 in F sharp major (1973) and No. 15 in E flat minor (1974).

[236] Fanning, 'Shostakovitch', 136

suggest that something of this vanished paradise can be retrieved, or that the attempt to retrieve it both can be made and is worth making. In some quarters such an attitude might be dismissed as mere escapism. But it need not be escapist, surely, and it hardly seems like a flight from reality to believe that if there can be no return, there can at least be revaluation and creative reinterpretation. This undoubtedly powerful dimension of Britten's work is something that has been well documented[237] and David Fanning has made a very interesting case for its presence in the music of Shostakovitch. It is also, I suggest, the background that best elucidates the import of Kinsella's Symphony No. 7.

Interestingly, Sibelius does not specifically describe his Symphony No. 7 as being 'in C major': the score carries no key designation. Neither does the score of Kinsella's work, but there is as little doubt about the tonality of one as there is of the other. In Kinsella's case, however, the recourse to tonality is not to be understood in any ordinary sense. Indeed one of the most fascinating aspects of this music is the very personal and original concept of key it embodies. As has previously been discussed, Kinsella's music largely maintains the 'phonology' of the sound vocabulary of functional harmony. In other words, the chords or vertical aggregates employed are for the most part recognizable as triads or seventh chords, or are built upon, derived from, or otherwise variations of these fundamental entities. The syntactical contexts in which they are placed, however, and relationships in which they participate – determined as these usually are by the operations of a note-row or governing pitch matrix – are rarely directly relatable to traditional tonal practices. Where such relationships occur, as occasionally they do, they tend to remain strictly non-functional. But if traditional tonal and harmonic functionality is largely sidestepped, the diatonic nature of much of the music nonetheless permits the broad articulation of distinct tonal regions.

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[237] Hans Keller, for example, remarks: '[Schoenberg] reminded twelve-tone fanatics that plenty of good music remained to be written in C major. Britten has written in it, quite literally: C major has become something of a pet key to this admirer and master of simplicity. He is the greatest synthesist since Mozart, all the greater since his task is so much more difficult. He is synthesising opposing movements of the past, opposing movements of the present, national with international and present with past tendencies.' See 'The Musical Character' in Donald Mitchell and Hans Keller eds., *Benjamin Britten: a commentary on his work from a group of specialists* (London, 1952), 341.

For Kinsella, then, the traditional key system of tonal music is not an unquestioned given. His point of origin is always the set of twelve constituent pitches of the chromatic scale. These can, of course, be arranged so as to preclude any direct allusion to tonality. But in Kinsella's hands, a potentially static series of pitches is exploited so as to release fundamental tonal forces, which in turn can be harnessed to generate genuine symphonic momentum. Not only does this technique underpin the present work as firmly it does the earlier symphonies, but it is further refined to the extent that Kinsella has here effectively addressed a tendency towards harmonic over-determination that is a consequence of his customary preference for grouping the twelve pitches into four-note and six-note segments. If Symphony No. 6 already shows a definite move in this direction, then the compositional technique of Symphony No. 7 clearly indicates a distinct new phase in the evolution of the composer's style.

The pitch matrix on which Symphony No. 7 is based can be abstracted from the music by arranging in linear order the twelve chromatic notes according to their first appearance in the score [Ex. 130].[238] As before, this arrangement obviously allows for the extraction of sub-groups that correspond to triads, seventh chords and so forth. Unlike the pitch matrices of earlier works, however, it is very strongly dominant oriented and

Ex. 130

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[238] The arrangement of the twelve pitches in Ex. 130 does not take into account earlier decorative appearances of some of the notes when these do not seem to have structural significance.

the order in which the F sharp (pitch 6) and the C sharp (pitch 8) occur give the set[239] a strong feeling of a sharpwards rise in the cycle of fifths, something that is fully exploited by the composer over the course of the symphony. Furthermore, the last note, A sharp/B flat (pitch 12), is the defining pitch of the subdominant region in traditional tonal usage. The internal tonal dynamic implied by this ordering of the pitches, therefore, commences with a pull away from C towards sharper regions and concludes at the point of return with a suggestion of the subdominant. The set also includes two scale fragments – C sharp-D sharp-F (pitches 8, 9 and 10) and G sharp-A sharp-C (pitches 11, 12 and 1) which give rise to clusters and other non-triadic chord formations. A second important source of harmonic material is the inversion of the set, and its strong suggestion of the subdominant – in particular the F minor triad and the triad of D flat major (Neapolitan) which can be abstracted from it – provides a valuable tonal counterforce to the dominant directedness of the original. One interesting point of symmetry, which has important structural implications, is the coincidence of B (natural) and D flat/C sharp as the fourth note of both the original set and its inversion respectively and, in reverse order, also as the eighth note of each. (The F sharp in the original and its enharmonic equivalent (G flat) in the inversion also coincide, being the sixth pitch of both.)

As previously discussed, although one may suspect that Symphony No. 6 is to some degree based on a twelve-note row, the free handling of the material makes it impossible to confirm this let alone determine the exact arrangement of its constituent pitches with any certainly. In the case of the present work, the conjectural arrangement of the twelve pitches given in Ex. 130 cannot really be considered to function as a note-row in any sense at all. While the proposed order certainly appears to explain a number of important features of the symphony – particularly its harmonic constitution and tonal dynamism, as suggested above – no vestige of serial organisation is in evidence. Kinsella

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[239] The use here of the term 'set' to refer to the arrangement of the twelve pitches of Ex. 130 is purely a matter of convenience in order to facilitate ease of reference. As should be evident from the discussion of Kinsella's technique in Symphony No. 7, the term is not intended to imply a note-row in the serial or dodecaphonic sense.

even abandons his customary practice of consistently dividing the twelve notes into distinct sub-groups to generate the principal thematic and harmonic elements. Consequently, the arrangement of the pitches given in Ex. 130 is better understood as a framework that supports and to some extent determines the structure of the symphony but that does not obtrude – or, at any rate, only rarely obtrudes – into the foreground. While it is true, for example, that the aggregate of the first four pitches of Ex. 130 (the C major seventh chord) is clearly a central reference in the symphony, not only as an individual sonority and a source of thematic material but also as the tonal ground of the work, other harmonic entities arise spontaneously out of the free combination of pitches in play at any particular moment and often seem to be determined largely by their function in articulating relevant tonal regions.

The opening twenty-four bars of Symphony No. 7 are distinguished from the rest of the work by being entitled Prelude by the composer. They are based exclusively on the first four notes of Ex. 130 – a major seventh aggregate, one of Kinsella's most characteristic sonorities – which they present as the initial proposition out of which the entire symphony is developed. The most important of these pitches are C and B, which oscillate continuously in the cellos and basses while timpani (amplified by side drums and bass drum) contribute figures based on all four notes [Ex. 131]. These emphatic, almost obsessive alternations in the bass draw attention to the seemingly contradictory double function of the note B in that it both reinforces C by its constant, leading-note-like return to it, while at the same time it seems to pull away from it and deflect the music out of the orbit of the C major triad. Tonally, in other words, the note B is an agent of both stability and instability, and in its role as a disruptive force it is responsible for activating the relentless drive of the music into ever-sharper (dominant) tonal regions. Notwithstanding its nominal status as a Prelude, these opening bars can be considered to comprise the initial component of a larger opening paragraph, the second element of which – a terse, explosive rhythmic idea for full orchestra marked *pesante* – is first stated as the culmination of a powerful *crescendo* which seems to grow out of the edgy, dissonant interaction of the note B with the C major triad [Ex. 132]. With the introduction

here of the next two pitches of the set, D and F sharp, the music is immediately wrenched away from C major and impelled sharpwards. This decided shift to the dominant region

Ex. 131: Symphony No. 7, Prelude, 1-10

notwithstanding, the C-B bass oscillations as well as the timpani figures persist throughout. The paragraph comes to a close as the note B eventually falls to a sustained E in the bass and the dynamic level drops to triple *piano*.

In the second paragraph of this initial A section a new theme, marked *sonoramente*, is introduced on the violas over a pedal E [*a* in Ex. 133]. This idea incorporates the next two pitches of the set, A and C sharp, and in the brief linking passage that follows [*b* in Ex. 133] D sharp and F (natural) are heard. Although it disappeared momentarily, C (pitch 1) now returns as a component of a C minor triad (bar 43) and the most recently introduced pitches – now notated D flat, E flat and F – become the basis of a new syncopated idea [*c* in Ex. 133]. In the present context, this passage has a strong Neapolitan inflection and clearly anticipates the kind of vertical

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aggregates that are derivable from the inversion of the set and that will feature so

Ex. 132: Symphony No. 7, 25-30

significantly later in the work. The *sonoramente* theme returns in the violas, and the process is repeated, until *b* sidesteps the C minor chord for a chord of E minor whereupon the syncopated idea, *c*, follows a major third higher in pitch. This moment is notable as one of the few instances in the symphony where thematic material is transposed upon restatement. With one or two significant exceptions, themes tend to be permanently associated with the pitches at which they are first introduced, and this unusually high degree of hypostasis is one example of how Kinsella's compositional practice tends to diverge from customary approaches to symphonic construction.

Ex. 133: Symphony No. 7, 35-46

After a dramatic recollection in the strings of the opening C-B oscillations, accompanied by the timpani figures (which have been present throughout) and new woodwind harmonies in which the F sharp is prominent, there is a varied restatement of the original *sonoramente* idea but this time in the violins against demi-semi-quaver figuration in the violas. Although the thematic material is confined to the pitches of its initial presentation, the accompanying harmonies now also feature the pitch G sharp, the eleventh note of the twelve. This culminates in a *forte* statement of *c*, which dies away to a low octave B in the bass on which the music comes to rest for a moment.

Ex. 134: Symphony No. 7, 102-108

Continued as a pedal note, this B underpins the entire third paragraph of the A section, which begins with a series of mysterious chords on flutes and second violins *divisi á 3*, picked out with the gently luminous sonorities of glockenspiel and celesta. A melancholy idea derived from the notes of these chords is simultaneously outlined on cor anglais and clarinets, and the first violins decorate the progressions with semiquaver figuration [Ex. 134].

One of the most interesting things about the passage is the notation, which, apart from the initial G sharp (rather than A flat), is that of the inversion of the pitch set – in other words, the accidentals are flats rather than sharps. Ten of the twelve pitches of the chromatic scale are employed here – the A natural only at the very end (bar116) – and, intriguingly, the two notes that are missing are the A sharp/B flat and the D natural, the

final pitches of both the original set and its inversion respectively. (In fact the A sharp/B flat has not yet been sounded at all.) The only employment of flat notation so far in the score was at the first appearance of *c* in the previous paragraph, and it is now clearly associated with the sonorities of the present passage which evoke a shadowy twilight world in contrast to the predominant brightness of the music up to this point. An unearthly yet serene atmosphere thus becomes associated with the inversion of the set, from which the opening F minor chord certainly derives, as does the D flat major chord which is also featured prominently.

This is a remarkable passage in the way the import of the music manages to suggest that the inversion of the set is somehow juxtaposed to, or indeed in opposition to the original, in the sense that night is opposed to day. Of particular interest is the idea that the pitch D flat, a major seventh below C, operates as a counter force to the B, a major seventh above. That both of these pitches seem to have a double function in pulling the music both away from C – one towards the dark and the other towards the light – as well as gravitating back to it, appears to be confirmed by the final bars of the third paragraph. Here, the order of the progression in the immediately preceding passage is roughly reversed and the bass moves restlessly from the note C to the B on one side of it and then to the D flat on the other. As the music accelerates towards the *Allegro* of the B section the opposition between these two pitches seems to be confirmed. D flat and the B now oscillate rapidly in the strings; the pitch C is sounded against them, and, interestingly, also the E a third above and, mirror-like, the G sharp (A flat) a third below, creating not only a balanced selection of pitches from both the original set and its inversion, but a symmetrical one that suggests tonal deadlock.

The immediate outcome, wrenched from this deadlock, is the energetic *Allegro* of the B section and the re-establishing of the bright harmonies of the opening. The vertical aggregates employed here are all derived from the first seven pitches of the original of the set and because the F sharp is featured with particular prominence, there is a very strong sense of being tonally situated on the dominant plane, although there is no feeling of anything as obvious as the key of G major. The vertical aggregates themselves

together with the thematic material and the contour of the bass line all combine rather to

Ex. 135: Symphony No. 7, 136-146

create a sense of fluctuating modality, which seems to hover indeterminately somewhere

between dorian (on A) and aeolian (on E).

The first paragraph of B opens with a lyrical idea on flute and clarinet against a

syncopated accompaniment in the strings [Ex. 135]. This theme is clearly related to the

sonoramente idea of the A section and is pentatonic in outline. After a brief development

of the syncopated accompaniment, the music is peremptorily interrupted by an

aggressive reassertion of the three pitches B, C and D flat, [Ex. 136 (i)] which suggests

that the earlier struggle has momentarily resurfaced to threaten the buoyancy of Ex. 135.

The lyrical idea is resumed, however, and is followed by an urgent variant of *b* in Ex. 133

above [Ex. 136 (ii)]. A further, even more insistent interruption by Ex. 136 (i) to which is

appended a new tag [Ex. 136 (iii)], leads to the introduction of the C sharp (pitch 8) for

the first time in this section. This is of course the same pitch as D flat, but the close

juxtaposition here of the different spellings suggests that its negative (D flat) influence

has now been transformed into a positive agency for the continued movement of the music in a sharpwards direction [Ex. 137]. As D flat, in other words, this pitch has had the effect of darkening the music, of imperiling its forward impetus; as C sharp it is an agent of brightness and it increases the sense of dominant-directed momentum. One

Ex. 136: Symphony No. 7, (i) 153-155; (ii)163-164; (iii)173-175

consequence of this change in the character of the pitch is the immediate extension of the reach up the cycle of fifths by the incorporation of G sharp. But the advance is brief and the music returns to the pitches of a hexatonic C major (i.e. pitches 1 to 7 of the original

Ex. 137: Symphony No. 7, 175-177

set but without, for the moment, pitch 6, F sharp). With the reappearance of Ex. 136 (ii) and the reintroduction of F sharp, however, the music quickly rebuilds to a climax that culminates in the second paragraph.

Ex. 138: Symphony No. 7, 216-221

A new degree of urgency is attained and the opening idea of this paragraph, which prominently features the B-C motif [Ex. 138], leads to an impassioned theme in octaves in the strings supported by woodwind [Ex. 139]. The dynamic level drops rapidly from *fortissimo* to *pianissimo* and a development of Ex. 139 ensues. In a renewed effort to attain a climax at this point, the last pitch of the set, A sharp, is abruptly introduced into the texture together with D sharp, as though there is an attempt forcibly to drive the music up to a new tonal level, higher than that attained with the earlier appearance of G sharp.

While it undeniably increases the tension, the result of this intrusion is rather to disrupt the sense of orderly tonal progression that has just been established. At first, however, a measure of relative stability is regained with a *forte* restatement in the trombones of the *sonoramente* theme of A [*a* in Ex. 133] against a *tremolando* chordal aggregate in the strings comprising the pitches B, D, F sharp and A [Ex. 140]. This marks

the commencement of the third paragraph, which largely consists of an intense

Ex. 139: Symphony No. 7, 226-238

development of this theme. If the seven pitches in play at this point (2-8 of the set)
suggest the region of D major (modally realised) and so the attainment a further overall
sharpwards rise, this is short lived. The abrupt introduction of the A sharp has had a
generally subversive effect, and instead of the music advancing tonally from here, the
theme is now transposed down a major third (another one of the few instances of such
thematic transpositions). The pitches are now those of the scale of B flat major (also
modally realised) but interestingly one in which the spellings of D sharp and A sharp
(rather than E flat and B flat) are retained.

There is a brusque call to order with a further interjection from Ex. 136 (i) and the
fourth and final paragraph of B begins. This consists mostly of an energetic development
of Ex. 137 in one last determined effort to attain a higher (sharper) tonal region. One by

one the defining pitches of the ascending cycle of fifths are introduced. The F sharp and C sharp are taken as givens, and with the appearance in the texture in turn of G sharp, D


Ex. 140: Symphony No. 7, 289-298

sharp, and now for the first time in this context of ascending fifths, A sharp, the music increases in intensity almost to a point of frenzy as the strings climb higher and higher. The logic of set rotation demands that A sharp (pitch 12) must inevitably lead back to C (pitch 1). Here, however, a supreme effort seems to be made to overshoot C altogether, to attain instead C sharp and thus to circumvent the inevitable circularity of the set.

C sharp is in fact reached, but it collapses almost immediately to C as the tenor trombones (imitated at a bar by the bass trombone and tuba) blare out *fortissimo* a figure in which the primary C-B motif is reasserted. There is a further attempt to establish the C sharp as the bass moves from B to C and then up another semitone, and fragments of earlier ideas (featuring the F sharp, C sharp, G sharp, D sharp and A sharp) are recalled

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piano in the woodwind and violas. But the note C returns inexorably to undermine such efforts. The texture is eventually reduced to solo timpani alternating the notes C sharp and B (pitch 8 in both the set and its inversion respectively) again as though in deadlock, each neutralizing the other, until they finally give way to a triple-*forte* restatement of Ex. 132 at its original pitch, which marks the beginning of A¹. (The C-B oscillations that lead up to this moment can be considered to represent those of the opening Prelude.) The material of the original second paragraph of A also returns, although it is in a much abbreviated form and rescored for *chalumeau* clarinets and timpani it has acquired a feeling of resignation and forlorn despondency.

The third paragraph commences with the same chordal idea as previously (Ex. 134), but it is now treated more spaciously and is more richly scored. The harmonic progressions are no longer underpinned by the pedal B as previously but have a free bass line derived from component notes of each successive harmony, which thus facilitates the articulation of clear F minor and D flat major consonances. This new treatment of the material enhances the mysterious atmosphere and greatly emphasizes the visionary, almost mystical import of the music. The most fascinating aspect of the third paragraph, however, is its expansion by the introduction of a completely new idea

Ex. 141: Symphony No. 7, 497-505
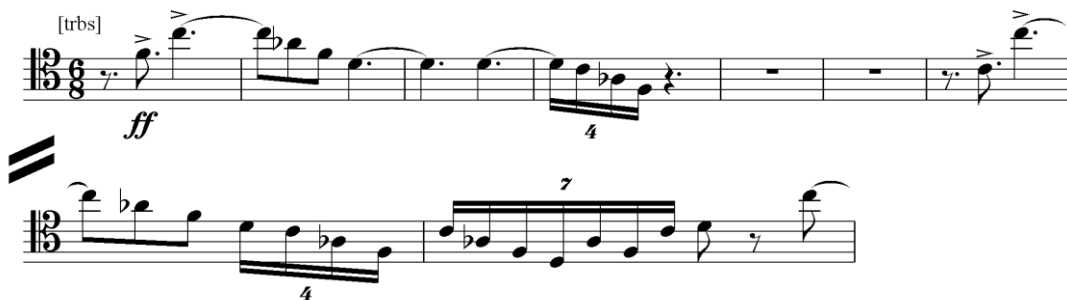
on two tenor trombones in unison [Ex. 141]. This rings out from the luminous darkness of what precedes it like a summons. To the first three pitches of the inversion of the series (C, A flat and F) it adds the note D (pitch 12), not heard before in this context. (The fourth pitch of the inverted series is, of course, D flat.) In thus uniting in one coherent idea the twelfth pitch of the inversion with its first three pitches, what this theme (and

the supporting harmony it gives rise to) encompasses and, consequently, appears to accept, is the inevitable circularity inherent in the basic musical material that the preceding *Allegro* sought to circumvent. But if acceptance of the inevitable – my end is my beginning, in other words – seems possible here, it is as yet only in terms of the inversion of the set, of its shadow side, so to speak. As the music gradually gathers momentum, the final pitch of the original of the set (B flat/A sharp) is now also sounded as a component of two very dissonant chord formations not been heard before. As we have seen, the initial A section moved into the ensuing *Allegro* through a chord symmetrically derived from the set and its inversion. Now a somewhat similar procedure gives rise to the very dissonant harmony that leads from A^1 to B^1. The first, second and fourth pitches (C, E and B) of the original of the set are combined with the third, fifth and sixth of its inversion (F, B flat and G flat, which also invert the interval structure) to create a complex sonority in which the dominant directed F sharp (G flat) and the sub-dominant directed B flat occur simultaneously for the first time. After moving through an intervening aggregate (in which the E and B are displaced by D and A), it emerges onto an E minor seventh chord (pitches 2, 3, 4 and 5) which is quickly transformed into a C major seventh (pitches 1, 2, 3 and 4). Just before the resumption of the tempo *Allegro*, a B flat is briefly added to this aggregate. Fascinatingly, this combines into a single momentary sonority three crucial elements: the C major triad; the B (natural), which is the active agent of all forward and upward movement; and the B flat/A sharp (pitch 12), which both marks the point at which set rotates and circularity occurs and, tonally, represents the cancellation of the B (natural) and a shift flatwards.

After a twenty-one bar link that re-establishes the tempo *Allegro*, B^1 commences. The material of the first paragraph is restated at the same pitch as previously and, apart from minor expansions, is largely unchanged. The second paragraph, too, commences in the same way as before, but it is also subject to expansion. The soaring melody of Ex. 139 is now heard twice: initially, on four horns in unison and subsequently on the strings. The third paragraph of B, which presented variants of *a* from Ex. 133 (the *sonoramente* theme) is not repeated. Instead there is a new section in which three attempts are made

to gather momentum and build to a climax, and all of which fail. In the first attempt, the note B is attained, only to collapse immediately onto B flat [Ex. 142]. This process is repeated in the second, and in the third the music struggles frantically with

Ex. 142: Symphony No. 7, 723-737

increasingly rapid alternations of B and C, only to arrive once again at the explosive Ex. 132, which marks the beginning of A² and the final section of the work.

As before, the preceding oscillations of the notes B and C represent those of the Prelude and serve to dovetail section B¹ into the ensuing A². The order in which the basic material of A was originally presented is now changed. An impassioned *fortissimo* version of *c* in Ex. 133 follows immediately in the strings, but the melodic outline is modified so that the original descending thirds are replaced with an outline derived from the first four notes of the set (C, E, G and B). Against a rising C major scale in the bass and overlapping with *c*, Ex. 141 is pealed out *grandioso* on solo trombone, now, however, transposed up a perfect fifth and modified to conform to the prevailing C

major tonality.[240] The dynamic level falls to *piano* and the passage is repeated with essentially minor changes except, that is, for the completely unexpected replacement of the orchestral trombone by the off-stage trombone. The manner in which the introduction of the off-stage dimension is handled here is remarkably successful, and its effectiveness is inseparable both from the choice of instrument and the nature of the thematic material. Because the theme, which the distinctive timbre of the trombone invests with a grave dignity, has a signal-like character and is sounded as a call, the strong expectation is created that there will be an answering reply. And so, when a response is heard in the distance it seems, for all its unexpectedness, exactly right. Thus, in a simple but strikingly imaginative fashion, does Kinsella juxtapose the here and now of the orchestra with the elsewhere represented by the off-stage instrument, and establish at a stroke both the practical and poetic dimensions of the relationship between them. The two trombones, the near to hand and the distant echo, now develop the second phrase of this idea in canon against the C-B oscillations in the bass. As the violins are added to the cellos and basses, the *sonoramente* theme makes a tentative reappearance on the violas at its original pitch. The once-bright C sharp is now no longer the agent of upward movement, however, but has acquired instead a plaintive, elegiac quality. It is finally renounced altogether in a curiously moving passage in which the violas drop to a double-stop on the open C and G strings, and repeated octave Gs, reinforced by the cellos, basses and horns, finally fall to a C, as if effecting a perfect cadence. This memorable moment in which the syntax of the traditional tonal cadence is evoked – uniquely in the context of the symphony – conveys a powerful sense of peaceful resolution and serene acceptance.

The cadence chord itself, however, is not C major but F minor (in the 6/4 position), which marks the beginning of the third paragraph. As before, this commences with the sequence of harmonies shown in Ex. 134 sounded in the upper strings and again doubled by glockenspiel and celesta. The melody formerly etched out by the cor anglais

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[240] In other words, the pitches are G, E, C and A rather than G, E flat, C and A, which would be an exact transposition of the theme as it original appeared.

and clarinets is now taken by the violas, the elegiac timbre of which is maintained as the distinctive sonority of the closing pages of the symphony.

One of Kinsella's most impressive achievements in this score is the sense of rightness and inevitability with which the off-stage choir is now introduced. Prepared by the earlier appearance of the off-stage trombone, the entry of the wordless chorus reinforces the strong sense of communication from another world. The voices, which initially seem simply to emerge from the repetition of the mystical opening progression of paragraph three, come to rest on an F minor triad above a pedal C. Interrupted by the complex chords that have previously featured in the transition from A^1 to B^1, they then finally settle on an aggregate of E, G, and B flat. Against this the violas enter with a new melody marked *affetuoso, cantabile* that commences on the note C and hovers between it and the pitches B and B flat. If the F minor chord with the added D unites both end and the beginning of the inversion of the series, this chord, C, E, G and B flat, comprises the final note of the original, together with pitches 1, 2 and 3. As the viola melody concludes with one final modified recollection of the *sonoramente* theme, we understand that F sharp and B flat, the portals to the dominant and subdominant regions respectively, must both be accepted.

The symphony concludes with an exuberant Coda, marked *Allegro impetuoso,* in which the F sharp and the B flat are both incorporated into the diatonic C major context. Eventually, only the first four pitches of the set remain – C, E, G, and B – outlined *fortissimo* in the strings and woodwind against bright trumpet fanfares and held chords in the horns and lower brass. As this exhilarating outburst culminates in a triple-*forte* B-C in the full orchestra, the off-stage choir is heard softly singing a C major chord. The note B, no longer a dissonant irritant, now serves only to reinforce C, leading to it instead of away from it. A stable consonance has finally been achieved. The *tutti* B-C is heard once more, and is then transferred to solo viola, with the celesta outlining the notes E, G and

B, a figure that is repeated with decreasing energy, until finally the voices remain

Ex. 143: Symphony No. 7, 942-983

underpinned by nothing but the open C string of the solitary viola. Punctuated by three *pizzicato*, *non-divisi* octaves in the remainder of the viola section, this chord is sustained until it dies away *al niente* [Ex. 143].

In Symphony No. 7, Kinsella has continued to develop his highly individual reclamation of the fundamental organizing forces of tonal procedures without referring to an earlier historical manner or resorting to pastiche. He has, moreover, succeeded in dramatising these tonal operations with a new cogency. Here, the initial struggle against the perpetual gravitational pull of C finally seems to yield to a tranquil acquiescence in its inevitability. But the work also strongly suggests that actual resolution (in the form of a C major triad, without any dissonant element) can only be attained elsewhere – literally 'off-stage' – and not in the here-and-now of the orchestra. In Kinsella's successful reinvention of C major as a credible tonal landscape, the triadic, dissonant-free innocence it represents seems to be achievable only at a remove from present reality. In other words, while he demonstrates beyond doubt that the concept of C major is still viable for a late twentieth-century composer, the manner and import of its realisation simultaneously and paradoxically seems to indicate that it must ultimately remain beyond our reach.

Of all of Kinsella's symphonies, No. 7 is, perhaps, the most intriguing. Without penning a single explanatory word or giving the slightest verbal indication of what it might be intended to convey, he has managed to produce a work that is extraordinarily suggestive in both a musical sense as well as extra-musically simply by his organisation of notes in a highly abstract form. I have attempted here to indicate something of how it impresses one listener at least, but this account is far from being exhaustive. This is music that continues to resonate long after it has been heard and after each successive re-hearing new angles of interpretation suggest themselves. Fascinatingly, the work's originality is underlined and its import clarified rather than obscured by its points of contact with Sibelius's Symphony No. 7. The Sibelius, which also ends with a B-C figure heard against a C major chord, is, as Robert Layton remarks, 'a heroic work, life-enhancing and affirmative in spirit', and to ask to what extent this may also be true of the Kinsella is, I believe, to highlight the difference between the two works.[241] Crucially, the Kinsella symphony concludes not with a bold *crescendo*, but with a fading away. A single

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[241] Layton, *Sibelius*, 60.

viola (interestingly, Kinsella's own instrument), fragile and vulnerable, finally comes to rest on its open C string. This, to borrow the language of the theologians, seems representative of the ground of being, the fundamental pitch from which everything springs and to which in the last analysis everything is reduced. But the perfect harmony it is capable of engendering, the C major chord, is realizable only on another plane, so to speak – off-stage and sung by human voices. If the conclusion of the Sibelius is confident and heroic, this off-stage chord in contrast is deeply touching not only as an image of a desire for peace and a longing for a perfectly consonant resolution, but also of its unattainability except, perhaps, as a distant aspiration. C major in all its innocent purity can be apprehended, it seems, only as an ideal.

4.4   Symphony No. 8, *Into the New Millennium* (1999)

When Radio Telefís Éireann commissioned a new large-scale orchestral work from Kinsella in 1999, on the eve of both the new century and the new millennium, the composer had the idea of writing a piece that would represent the inevitable if painful relinquishing of the past as well as hopeful anticipation of the future. The result is this substantial forty-three minute symphony that is cast as one continuous movement.[242] Although in comparison with some of Allan Pettersson's longer one-movement symphonies this may seem a relatively modest duration, and while obviously no ideal length can be proposed in the abstract for such a piece, the work seems to be too long both for its material and the manner in which this material is handled.[243] Apart from the unwieldy extension of the overall rotational structure, the internal expansion of the individual sections also results in some fairly thin invention that is occasionally

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[242] Symphony No. 8, *Into the New Millennium* was first performed by the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland (conducted by Proinnsías Ó Duinn) in the National Concert Hall, Dublin, on 3 December 1999.

[243] This is not to suggest that Allan Pettersson is always successful in managing such extreme length. As Robert Layton, for example, cryptically observes: 'Most of the symphonies are long though nearly all of them seem longer than they are.' (See 'After Sibelius and Nielsen' in *A Companion to the Symphony*, 373.)

distended beyond its capacity to sustain interest. This creates the impression that the work is not fully in focus and that the long-term goal towards which the music is undoubtedly directed is intermittently lost from sight. These shortcomings notwithstanding, the symphony has many fine and arresting ideas and there are several impressive, highly charged moments where the generation of a genuine momentum results in climaxes of real sweep and grandeur. The pity is that the effect of these high points tends to be lost, and instead of building cumulatively towards the final peroration their force is largely dissipated.[244]

Like its two immediate predecessors, Symphony No. 8 also requires a number of unusual additions to the performing forces: apart from two cors anglais as well as two oboes (four players), the score also calls for three boy sopranos.[245] To some extent this vocal element links the work with Symphony No. 7. But while the singers have a similarly small, albeit significant part, they are neither positioned off stage nor do they vocalise wordlessly. 'The boys' voices', Kinsella has said, 'represent for me the voices of those who died during our century prematurely,'[246] and the words they are given to sing are taken from a Celtic blessing that the composer heard in Marley Priory, the Irish base of the Servite Friars near his home in Dublin.[247] This blessing (in English) is combined with the Latin phrase *Dona nobis pacem* to make a short macaronic text.

Symphony No. 8 opens with a twenty-seven bar paragraph, A, that represents the referential statement of the first thematic block, the tempo of which is given simply as

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[244] With characteristically disarming frankness, Kinsella has acknowledged that Symphony No. 8 is problematic: 'It was an experiment with form', he says and adds that he 'may have pushed the boundaries too far.' On the other hand, he reasonably points out that it has had only one performance and that he would prefer to 'reserve judgement […] until the work could be given enough rehearsal time'. See Michael Dervan, 'A lifetime of obsession with symphonies', *The Irish Times* (9 April, 2012), 12.

[245] The complete orchestra (excluding the voices) for which Symphony No. 8 is written comprises: 2+picc2+2ca22+cbn/4231/timp/perc/hp/strings.

[246] John Kinsella in an undated radio interview included on the CD of the recording of the first performance of Symphony No. 8 as issued by the Contemporary Music Centre, Ireland.

[247] The Order of Friar Servants of Mary (The Servite Friars), which was founded in Italy in the thirteenth century, has had a community based in Marley Parish in Dublin since 1992.

crotchet = 46, although it is designated *Largo* for the subsequent rotations. It essentially

Ex. 144: Symphony No. 8, 1-20

consists of a long cello melody, which is reinforced occasionally by woodwind and supported by a rudimentary bass line on double basses and timpani. The music gradually gains in intensity as the cellos climb into their upper register until a *fortissimo* climax is reached in bar 14, at which point the violas contribute a new idea in the form of a terse descending two-note figure (D sharp-C). A brief but impassioned dialogue between cellos and violas ensues and the music quickly sinks into the depths as the dynamic level falls to *pianissimo.* The paragraph comes to an end on a low sustained E in the lower strings.

In its irregular phrase structure and declamatory style this cello melody may at first suggest a freely unfolding recitative, but it is in fact carefully constructed out of a number of distinct motivic ideas which assume fundamental importance in the course of the symphony. (These elements are clearly identified in Ex. 144, which quotes the initial

Ex. 145: Symphony No. 8, 28-43

twenty bars of the work.) While they are primarily associated with the opening thematic block and its subsequent rotations, and consequently with the darker more meditative side of the music, these motifs are eventually absorbed into the concluding fast section of the work, pealing forth on the brass and transfigured into jubilant acclamations. Kinsella has drawn attention to the fact that the *Largo* sections (excluding the opening A section) become shorter as the symphony progresses, which suggests, perhaps, the gradual letting go of the past; the fast sections on the other hand become longer, which may be intended to convey the welcoming embrace of the future and the many new possibilities it brings with it. It this is so, then the incorporation into the final peroration of the

Ex. 146: Symphony No. 8, 63-74

opening motifs seems symbolic: facing of the future with confidence involves not the wholesale jettisoning of what has been, but rather its transformation and reinterpretation. As one aeon moves into the next, we may have little choice but to

accept the discontinuities this entails but we also cherish the continuities that alone are capable of bestowing meaning on what is to come.[248]

The second thematic block, B, marked *Energico* (semibreve = 63), presents a considerable number of new themes in rapid succession. The sustained E in the lower strings is held across the two sections and, amplified by timpani, it is subject to a sudden *crescendo* that issues in a brief *fortissimo* outburst for the whole string section. Followed by an urgent staccato repeated-note figure in the woodwind reminiscent of Morse code that dominates this entire opening paragraph, these two ideas are developed with mounting excitement for several bars [Ex. 145]. The culmination is a brilliant, pealing

Ex. 147: Symphony No. 8, 84-90

theme on four horns in unison (marked 'forcefully' by the composer), which is immediately taken up by the strings [Ex. 146]. A subsidiary idea in crotchets, transferred

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[248] John Kinsella in an undated radio interview included on the CD of the recording of the first performance of Symphony No. 8 as issued by the Contemporary Music Centre, Ireland.

between woodwind and strings, follows and the paragraph closes with *diminuendo* reiterations of the staccato idea [Ex. 147].

Ex. 148: Symphony No. 8, 105-107

The speed at which these ideas succeed one another gives the music a feeling of relentless forward drive, and Kinsella shows great skill in the way he introduces them as

Ex. 149: Symphony No. 8, 127-134

diverse elements of a single coherent statement. The following paragraph continues to introduce further new material. A little respite from the headlong movement is provided by the next important motif, a simple alternating-note figure in minims [Ex. 148]. Repeated against the ubiquitous staccato idea, this gives way to the last significant new theme of the section, a fleet, scampering idea for two clarinets in alternation accompanied initially by staccato string chords to which a fanfare motif is subsequently added [Ex. 149]. New textures and new melodic contours continue to emerge during the rest of this referential statement of the *Energico,* but these remain incidental in what is essentially an ongoing development of the various principal ideas.

Ex. 150: Symphony No. 8, 217-221

The first rotation of the *Largo* (A¹) is longer and far more complex that the referential statement. It is largely based on a development of *a* in Ex. 144 above, although there are also transitory suggestions of the other motifs heard in the opening cello melody. A new variant of *a* is conspicuously introduced in bar 220 on solo violins and solo violas in which the second interval is now a falling perfect fourth rather than a rising perfect fifth. This is an anticipatory statement of a melodic contour that becomes important later in the setting of *Dona nobis pacem* for the boys' voices [Ex. 150]. The central portion of this rotation is devoted to a new theme, shown in Ex. 151. This is

developed at some length and the music rises to an impressive climax, which is crowned by a majestic statement of *a* on four horns.

The first rotation of the *Energico* material, B¹, this time indicated only by the metronome mark, follows almost immediately. All of the main ideas are repeated and, although they continue to be treated developmentally, it is in these extended fast sections that Kinsella's grip on the structure most noticeably weakens. It is in the second rotation of the *Largo* that follows, A², that the three boy sopranos, supported initially by

Ex. 151: Symphony No. 8, 235-237

simple *pianissimo* string chords and delicate harp figuration, deliver their message of comfort and peace [Ex. 152].[249] The music acquires a delicate tenderness and the gentle unobtrusive accompaniment makes continuous allusions to various motifs from the opening of the symphony. The two-note viola figure, which has not been heard since the beginning of the work, intrudes brusquely on this tranquil mediation and, still on violas, is developed in a rough insistent manner, *feroce*, that takes the music in to the next section.

A number of references to the *Dona nobis pacem* motif are carried forward into the commencement of the second rotation of the *Energico*, B², and this represents the first instance of the incorporation of ideas from the *Largo* into the faster tempo. Much of the rotation proceeds as did the earlier one in a continuous development of the original themes, but now, however, the music is driven to a tremendous climax in which, as

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[249] The complete text reads: 'May the God of gentleness be with you, caressing you with sunlight, rain and wind. May His tenderness shine through you to warm all those who are hurt and lonely. May the blessing of gentleness be upon you. *Dona nobis pacem*.'

mentioned above, the various motifs first heard at the very outset of the symphony are

exuberantly transformed. Most conspicuous amongst these is the two-note viola figure,

Ex. 152: Symphony No. 8, 731-743

the earlier appearances of which in the *Largo* sections have always seemed somewhat at odds with their surroundings. Where this somewhat insistently aggressive motif previously had the character of dissonant dissent from the past, so to speak, it is now transformed here into a bright herald of the future and, pealing out on the horns, becomes a symbol of gladness and hope. The climax is abruptly arrested at its peak leaving a few scattered shreds of the musical fabric in its wake before the third and final rotation of the *Largo*, A³, commences. Initially recalling both the darker mood and spare texture of the opening of the symphony, the atmosphere brightens and the simple prayer for peace, 'Dona nobis pacem', is sung one last time by the three boy sopranos. The tempo *Energico* is then resumed and the symphony is brought to a vigorous conclusion with a brief whirlwind coda.

Chapter 5

Symphony No. 9 and Symphony No. 10

5.1   Kinsella's two most recent symphonies

After the premiere of Kinsella's Symphony No. 1 in 1985, three years elapsed before the composer completed his second symphony. In the meantime, he had negotiated his retirement from Radio Telefís Éireann and from the end of the 1980s he was in a position to devote his time exclusively to composition. He completed his Symphony No. 3 in 1990 and thereafter produced a new symphony each year for the next three years. As mentioned earlier, these four symphonies were commissioned by RTÉ as part of a settlement agreed between the composer and the station when he retired, Symphony No. 6 being the final work to be delivered under the arrangement. With the fulfilment of his obligation to RTÉ, his immediate circumstances were no longer so conducive to the continued production of large-scale orchestral works and Kinsella turned his attention to other projects, principally the composition of chamber music. This explains the gap of four years between the completion of Symphony No. 6 and the composition in 1997 of Symphony No. 7, which was commissioned by the Cork School of Music. When RTÉ commissioned another large-scale orchestral piece for performance in 1999, Kinsella responded with Symphony No. 8, a work that cost him such a great deal of effort that he explicitly relates the onset of a subsequent period of poor health to the onerous demands of finishing the score.[250] It was to be another five years before he turned his attention once again to the genre of the symphony and although he completed a second Cello Concerto (2000) and one or two other pieces, in comparison with the steady stream of large-scale works he had produced up to this point in his career the years immediately following the composition of Symphony No. 8 represented a relatively fallow period for him creatively.

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[250] See Dervan, 'A lifetime of obsession with symphonies', *Irish Times*.

In 2003, the Irish Chamber Orchestra performed a short piece for string orchestra entitled *Hommage à Clarence* that Kinsella had composed two years previously, and they also included it in the programme for their European tour the following year. The enthusiastic responses of audiences to *Hommage à Clarence* led to a commission from the Irish Chamber Orchestra for a major new work and the result was Symphony No. 9 for String Orchestra, which was completed in May 2004.[251] Composing this piece appears to have initiated a period of more intense creativity and several important works – although no symphony – followed over the next few years.

The most recent symphony, Symphony No. 10, which was completed in 2010, owes its existence solely to a personal creative impulse. It was not written in response to a commission and the composer found himself in the unusual but welcome position of not having to work to a deadline.[252] Shortly before he commenced work on the score, he finished a substantial orchestral piece entitled *Cuchulainn and Ferdia* (2008), 'a graphic pictorial work', in his own words, which is based on an episode from the mythological epic the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* [Cattle Raid of Cooley] and employs a very large orchestra.[253] In contrast, Symphony No. 10 is composed for a modest orchestra of classical proportions consisting of double woodwind, a pair each of horns and trumpets together with timpani and strings. The symphony seems to have been conceived from the outset in terms of these smaller forces, a feature of the work, so the composer found, that in itself became a creative stimulus once the process of composition had begun.[254] The employment of a classical-size orchestra also meant that, once again, it was feasible for the Irish Chamber Orchestra to premier the symphony, which it duly did in February 2012 two months before the composer's eightieth birthday.[255]

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[251] Symphony No. 9 was first performed on 25 September 2004 by the Irish Chamber Orchestra (conducted by Nicholas McGegan) in the University Concert Hall, Limerick.

[252] See Dervan, 'A lifetime of obsession with symphonies', *Irish Times*.

[253] Kinsella, note in the programme booklet for the first performance of Symphony No. 10.

[254] Ibid.

[255] Symphony No. 10 was first performed on 9 February, 2012 by the Irish Chamber Orchestra (conducted by Gábor Takács-Nagy) in the University Concert Hall, Limerick; this was followed by

Although very different works in some respects, these two recent symphonies reflect Kinsella's ongoing preoccupation with the nature of viable symphonic form, and as the latest manifestations of his current thinking they show a number of shared characteristics. From the point of view of musical idiom, there is no retrenchment from the freer deployment of the harmonic and tonal resources of the symphonies of the late 1990s. Whatever initial inspiration the composer may still derive from the possibilities suggested by a note-row or set, this is now so well hidden as to be virtually indiscernible in the music (although certain configurations of pitches do continue to hint at some such preliminary compositional procedure). Kinsella's current approach has crystallised into an individual style that can fairly be described as modal in which essential tonal contrasts are obtained by shifts between pitch groups, with one group usually emerging as central in the course of a movement, or, as in the case of Symphony No. 10, of an entire work. Unlike the idiom of the formative works in which this approach was first developed (Symphony No. 2, Symphony No. 3), these pitch groups are no longer treated as mutually exclusive and they admit a great deal of interpenetration with the result that the thematic content tends to be less constricted and the harmonic (vertical) aggregates are more varied than hitherto. There are still strong allusions to the phonology of traditional tonal idioms, but they remain ambiguous and never coalesce into anything resembling straightforward functional tonality. The individuality of this late sound world of Kinsella's, in fact, is largely determined by the interplay between the evocation of traditional tonal expectations, on the one hand, and the constant avoidance of their fulfilment, on the other. The result is a style of composition that at one and the same time seems both novel and intriguingly familiar. As discussed above, this freer approach underpinned Symphonies No. 6 and Symphony No. 7, albeit in slightly different ways. It also informed the idiom of Symphony No. 8 and in the works discussed here it is handled with the kind of unforced spontaneity that betokens an easy and unselfconscious assurance.

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a second performance two days later, 11 February 2012, at the Royal Dublin Society Concert Hall, Dublin.

Another important feature that both Symphony No. 9 and Symphony No. 10 have in common is that each of them is based on one single pervasive theme. In Symphony No. 9, the theme in question is the chorale melody *Jesu meine Freude*, and Kinsella employs both Johannes Crüger's original version as well as a later variant by J. S. Bach. As will be discussed in due course, this melody informs every section of the symphony to some degree. In the case of Symphony No. 10, the basic thematic material is of Kinsella's own devising and it permeates the piece, if not in exactly the same way as *Jesu meine Freude* does the previous symphony, in a manner that is nonetheless comparable to it in some respects. Interestingly, while Symphony No. 10 is cast in three distinct (and individually numbered) movements, the composer refers to them as three 'parts' but regards them more as 'episodes', a term which serves to emphasise the sense of continuity that he has sought to establish across the different sections of the work.[256] Kinsella had not explored the possibilities of such explicit and thorough-going thematic cross-referencing within a multi-movement symphony since 1984 when he completed Symphony No. 1. In the earlier symphonies the more schematic set-derived and hexachord-derived harmonic and thematic material served in large measure to guarantee the internal coherence of the music. With the evolution of his style, this particular approach to the invention of material has gradually receded, opening the way not only for the exploitation of more obviously thematic-based structures, but also for the realisation of symphonic unity in overtly thematic terms. (The successful integration of pre-existing material like the Crüger chorale melody into the fabric of Kinsella's music would scarcely have been possible before this point.) It has already been noted how the different sections of the one-movement symphonies, particularly Symphony No. 7 and Symphony No. 8, are unified by thematic manipulations of this kind. Kinsella now applies the technique across the movements of the multi-movement symphony as he addresses from yet another angle the perennial problem of how to obtain a perfect balance between unity and diversity in symphonic composition.

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[256] Kinsella, note in the programme booklet for the first performance of Symphony No. 10.

5.2   Symphony No. 9, for String Orchestra (2004)

5.2.1 The symphony for string orchestra: a brief historical overview

A lthough the composition of symphonies for string orchestra has a distinguished history extending at least as far back as Giovanni Battista Sammartini (?1700-1775) and including the dozen composed by the youthful Mendelssohn between 1821 and 1823, surprisingly few composers have contributed to the genre. The exalted nineteenth-century concept of what a symphony should be seemed to demand the resources of the full orchestra for its adequate fulfillment. Works for string orchestra tended to be lighter in character and composers styled their works accordingly, 'serenade' being one of the preferred designations. Such works were very popular, the most acclaimed being those by Tchaikovsky and Dvořák, but many other composers had notable successes in the genre including the Austrian Robert Fuchs (1847-1927) whose five serenades (three of them for strings) were once so well-known that he rejoiced in the contemporary nickname of 'Serenaden-Fuchs'.

Even in the twentieth century, however, when notions concerning what would constitute a symphony were less circumscribed, the number of notable symphonies composed for string orchestra remained fairly small. It is interesting, too, that such works often continued to be viewed as lightweight compositions in comparison with symphonies for full orchestra. Britten's *Simple Symphony* (1934) seems almost paradigmatic of this attitude both in its scope and in its title. Few composers indeed who composed a symphony for strings seemed prepared to include it amongst their numbered symphonies. This is true of Vagn Holmboe, for example, who wrote four such works between 1957 and 1962 which he entitled *Sinfonia* (the four together constitute his Op. 72) but which are not amongst his thirteen numbered symphonies. Again, Malcolm Arnold's nine symphonies do not include his Symphony for Strings, Op. 13 (1946), nor do the three composed by John Gardner (1917-2011) include his short, divertimento-like *Sinfonia piccola* (1960). When Jean Françaix composed his *Symphonie en sol majeur* in 1953

he gave it no number; clearly he did not consider his earlier *Symphonie d'archets* (1948) to be 'No. 1'.

Although many serious extended works for strings were written in the twentieth century – as varied as Arthur Bliss's substantial three-movement Music for Strings (1935), Tippett's Concerto for Double String Orchestra (1939) or Lutosławski's *Funeral Music* (1958) – comparably few of them were symphonies. There were some exceptions, however, one of the most remarkable being Arthur Honegger's Symphony No. 2 (1941), a compelling work that demonstrated beyond all possible doubt that a symphony scored for string orchestra need lose nothing in terms of force or expressive power and can take its place in a distinguished symphonic series without any special pleading. Similarly, it is clear that the American composer William Schuman (1910-1992) felt no compunction about the status of his Symphony No. 5 (1943), nor did Gavriil Popov (1904-1972) nor Karl Amadeus Hartman (1905-1963), both of whom composed substantial symphonies for strings – Symphony No. 3 (1946) and Symphony No. 4 (1947) respectively. Nonetheless, the output of a composer like Jean Rivier (1896-1987) still remains decidedly unusual in that four of his eight symphonies – No. 2 (1937), No. 3 (1938), No. 4 (1941) and No. 8 (1978) – were written for string orchestra.[257] Notable additions to this repertoire in more recent years are by the Americans Philip Glass (b.1937), who composed his Symphony No. 3 in 1995, and John Corigliano (b.1938) whose Symphony No. 2 (2000) was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 2001.[258]

The situation in Ireland parallels that elsewhere: many works for string orchestra have been written by Irish composers – a four-movement suite entitled *The Humours of Carolan* (1942) by Aloys Fleischmann, a Suite for Strings (1953) by Joan Trimble,

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[257] Honegger's position with regard to the numbering of his earlier symphonies only becomes clear retrospectively with the designations of Symphony No. 4 (1946) and Symphony No. 5 (1950), which confirm that the *Symphonie pour cordes*, which was published without a number, is in fact No. 2. The Schuman symphony was originally entitled simply Symphony for String Orchestra in Three Movements, and had no number; but as the symphony that preceded it was No. 4 and the symphony that succeeded it No. 6, it seems evident that the composer considered it to be No. 5.

[258] Shostakovitch's two Chamber Symphonies for Strings are something of a special case being arrangements of String Quartets Op. 110 and Op. 118 respectively.

Divertimento (1962) by Seóirse Bodley and Kinsella's own Two Pieces for String Orchestra (1965) being amongst the most distinguished – but the only symphony prior to Kinsella's is that written in 1945 by Brian Boydell.[259] As this neglected work seems to have received only one performance and is currently completely unknown, Kinsella's Symphony No. 9 remains in effect the solitary representative of the genre in contemporary Irish music.

5.2.2   *Jesu meine Freude* – Crüger and Bach

Kinsella has not offered any explanation, either personal or musical, why he chose to base Symphony No. 9 on a chorale melody and specifically on *Jesu meine Freude*. The tune appeared in print for the first time in the 1653 edition of Johannes Crüger's (1598-1662) *Praxis Pietatis Melica.* This important and influential anthology of chorale texts and melodies (many of which – including *Jesu meine Freude* – were composed by Crüger himself) was first published in 1647, and went through numerous increasingly expanded editions well into the eighteenth century. Ex. 153 (i) gives the tune as it appeared in the 1653 edition (according to Charles Sanford Terry the replacement of the fourth note of phrase 2, C (natural), by the more usual C sharp dates from 1674).[260] Crüger's various publications pioneered the arrangement of chorale melodies with simple figured bass, a feature designed to facilitate their performance during private domestic worship, and the complete setting of *Jesu meine Freude* as it appears in the twenty-fifth edition of *Praxis Pietatis Melica*, published in Berlin in 1690, is given in Ex. 154 below.[261]

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[259] Elizabeth Maconchy composed a Symphony for Double String Orchestra in 1953, but although she had strong Irish connections and is included in both editions of Edgar Deal's *A Catalogue of Contemporary Irish Composers* (Dublin, 1973 [1968]) as well as in Bernard Harrison's *Catalogue of Contemporary Irish Music* (Dublin, 1982), she is usually considered to be a British composer.

[260] Ex. 153 (i) gives the melody as quoted by Charles Sanford Terry in his *Bach's Chorales Part II: The Hymns and Hymn Melodies of the Cantatas and Motets* (Cambridge, 1917), 260. Terry, however, notates the Fs in phrase 6 as being sharpened (the accidental is omitted in Ex. 154 above), a decidedly odd feature that is not consistent with the tonality of the melody and appears in no other source known to the writer.

[261] Johannes Crüger, *Praxis Pietatis Melica*, 25th. ed. (Berlin, 1690), 968. Both Cs in phrase 2 are sharpened, it will be noted, and the Fs in phrase 6 remain natural.

Ex. 153

(i) Crüger: *Jesu meine Freude* from *Praxis Pietatis Melica*, 1653

(ii) Bach: *Jesu meine Freude* from Chorale Prelude BWV 610

(iii) Bach: *Jesu meine Freude* from Cantata BWV 64 (Richter, 196; Riemenschneider, 263)

(iv) Bach: *Jesu meine Freude* from Motet BWV 227 (Richter, 200; Riemenschneider, 138)

This melody is now generally associated with J. S. Bach, and the name of Johannes Crüger tends to be relegated to a footnote if it is mentioned at all.[262] Bach employed the chorale tune in several compositions, the most important of which are Cantatas No. 64, No. 81 and No. 87 and a motet, BWV 227, which is actually entitled *Jesu meine Freude* and contains three separate settings. There also exists an isolated setting for choir, BWV 358, which is probably from a lost cantata, and in addition Bach used the melody as the basis for three organ works. In none of these cases does *Jesu meine Freude* correspond exactly to the melody as Crüger published it. The differences in question amount to more than mere decoration or the minor modification of cadences – which also occur – but are rather genuine melodic variants. In Ex. 153 (ii), for example, we see

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[262] This tendency not to give Crüger his proper due seems to be a fairly early phenomenon. According to George J. Buelow in *Grove 6*, 5, 69: 'From edition to edition *Praxis pietatis melica* changed and expanded in size, although by the end of the [seventeenth] century Crüger's name as a composer of chorales had vanished from its pages […].'

the melody as it appears in the chorale prelude for organ BWV 610. Here, Bach's version is very close to Crüger's: the principal difference involves phrase 6, which in Crüger's original is a variant of phrase 4, while Bach makes it a repetition of phrase 1. This return to the opening phrase to round off the melody remains a constant feature of all of Bach's variants. Ex. 153 (iii) shows Bach moving a little further away from the original: here phrase 5 has now also been modified and Crüger's stepwise movement, which echoed phrase 2, has been replaced with a more interesting outline.[263] Bach's final alteration, Ex. 153 (iv), involves the reintroduction of the correspondence between phrases 2 and 5, but now by modifying the former in the light of his new version of the latter.

Ex. 154

Crüger: *Jesu meine Freude*, No. 547, *Praxis Pietatis Melica*, Editio XXV (Berlin, 1690), 968

Together with Crüger's original melody, Ex. 153 (i), it is the third version by Bach given above – from the motet *Jesu meine Freude* – that Kinsella employs in Symphony No. 9. The complete chorale melody occurs four times in the motet: it is heard twice in a straightforward four-part harmonisation that both opens and closes the work, as well as internally in two somewhat more elaborate settings. As we shall see, Kinsella not only uses Bach's version of the tune, but he also integrates into the final movement of the symphony the fully harmonised setting that Bach uses to frame the piece [Ex. 155].

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[263] References are given in Ex. 153 to two standard editions of Bach's chorale harmonisations: B. F. Richter's *Joh. Seb. Bach: 389 Choral-Gesänge für Gemischten Chor* (Leipzig, n.d.) and Albert Riemenschneider's *371 Harmonised Chorales and 69 Chorale Melodies with figured bass by Johann Sebastian Bach* (New York, 1941).

J. S. Bach, *Jesu meine Freude*, from Motet BWV 227

From the chorale melody, Kinsella extracts a number of shapes, or motivic units, which he uses as the basis of much of the music. These units have a very elementary content – they are more like neutral pitch cells rather than characteristic melodic motifs and their abstract quality is further emphasised by the fact that they are not consistently identified with any permanent rhythmic features. Kinsella, however, fully exploits their double capacity either to function on the surface of the music in an obvious thematic way, on the one hand, or to be absorbed almost invisibly into the texture, on the other. The principal cells taken from each phrase in turn of Crüger's original version of the melody are shown in Ex. 156. Phrase 1 yields a number of possibilities. The first of these, *a*, constitutes the three descending notes of the opening bar; the characteristic feature of the repeated initial note is not always present and is occasionally represented

Ex. 156

Crüger: *Jesu meine Freude* (1653)

phrase 1

a

b

c (inverted)
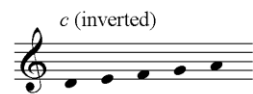
phrase 2

phrase 3

phrase 4 (and phrase 6)

phrase 5

by a single longer note value. The second possibility, *b*, is the complete phrase's scalic descent through the interval of a fifth from the dominant, although in practice this does

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not always extend as far as the tonic but often stops short at the note above; and the third, *c*, is the inversion of this. Alternatively, the ascending scale might be heard as deriving from phrase 2 rather than as an inversion of phrase 1. The outline yielded by phrase 3 is a little more distinctive; again, however, it is the basic cell created by the first three pitches – a rising third followed by a falling step – that most often occurs. Phrases 4 and 6 have a very similar content of which the returning note in bar 1 is the distinguishing feature, an element that is frequently reduced to a minimal three-note unit, although the initial repeated note is also used. Finally, phrase 5 yields a slightly more complex shape in which a series of stepwise ascending pitches is followed by a stepwise descent. As they are used in the symphony, all of these shapes are freed from

Ex. 157

Bach: *Jesu meine Freude*

phrase 2

the immediate context in which they occur in the chorale melody in that they retain only their general pitch outline (shorn of any particular tonal connotations) and are frequently subject to rhythmic alteration.

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The exception to this approach is to be found in the way Kinsella handles Bach's variant of the melody. The principal difference between the two versions of the chorale tune is to be found in phrases 2 and 5 of the Bach, the similar interval structures of which do not resemble anything in the original. It is only in the finale of Symphony No. 9 that Bach's version is specifically quoted and consequently that this characteristic second phrase is heard. The basic shape derived from it tends to retain both its original rhythmic and (often) its tonal identity throughout the movement [Ex. 157]. One cellular derivation – shown as *x* in Ex. 157 – is less obvious, but outlines related to the inversion of *x* and, more frequently, to its retrograde inversion occur throughout the finale. It may seem a little over-ingenious to posit the deliberate employment of such relatively remote derivations, especially as Kinsella acknowledges that not all the material in the work has its origin in the chorale melody.[264] But even if it is unconscious, the conspicuous appearance of motivic shapes such as these would seem to indicate the profound degree to which the composer registered the various possibilities suggested by the tune.

5.2.3   The structure of Symphony No. 9

One feature of the overall structure of Symphony No. 9 recalls that of Symphony No. 3: each movement is preceded by preliminary matter that functions as a kind of introduction to it. In Symphony No. 3, it will be recalled, the sections in question were described as Prologue and Intermezzo, which occurred before each of the two principal movements (with an Epilogue rounding off the symphony as a whole). Here, each of the three principal divisions of the work is preceded by what the composer calls a Recitative resulting in the following disposition of movements:

> Recitative I: *Molto sostenuto pesante* (minim = 44)
>> [Movement I:] *Presto impetuoso* (dotted minim = c. 84)
> Recitative II: (crotchet = 46)

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[264] Kinsella, programme note for Symphony No. 9: 'Throughout the symphony the original material is interwoven with motifs taken from two versions of the hymn tune *Jesu meine Freude*.'

[Movement II:] *Largo* (crotchet = 40)

Recitative III: (crotchet = c. 100)

[Movement III:] *Allegro con moto; con spirito, deciso* (crotchet

= 132) – (crotchet = c. 84) – *Vivace* (crotchet = 144) [265]

Although the texture is not in any way reminiscent of a solo voice with rudimentary harmonic support that is usually associated with the traditional concept of a recitative, Kinsella's use of the term is nonetheless apt as it characterises well the free, improvisatory feel of the three sections in question. It also serves to draw attention to the contrast between their declamatory and irregular phraseology and the more sustainedly developed music of the three principal movements that follow them. In each case, the concentrated working out of the material of each movement is effectively thrown into relief by the seemingly spontaneous and unpremeditated character of what precedes it.

Recitative I is the longest and most complex of the three and the many indications of tempo changes reflect its rapid fluctuations of mood. Apart from a brief recollection of the opening idea at the end, the music suggests no conventional formal pattern or procedure, and interest is sustained primarily by the rate at which the sharply contrasted ideas succeed one another. Despite its apparent freedom, however, Recitative I is no mere random collection of unrelated ideas because in the background, both informing the content and guiding the course of events, is Crüger's *Jesu meine Freude*, the motivic abstract of each phrase of which becomes in turn the focus of attention as the music proceeds. This opening recitative affords perhaps the clearest example in the symphony of how Kinsella manipulates the basic motivic cells with which the chorale melody provides him.

The first fourteen bars of Symphony No. 9 are given in Ex. 158. This shows both the both the forceful initial gesture and the contrasting passage that succeeds it in bar 7,

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[265] In the full score of Symphony No. 9 as issued by the Contemporary Music Centre, Ireland, Movement I is simply designated *Presto impetuoso*; in the composer's programme note, however, it is described as *Scherzo impetuoso*. Only the Recitatives are numbered I to III in the score; the movements are not separately numbered, hence the use of square brackets in this list.

and it illustrates well the kind of abrupt juxtapositions that occur throughout the section.[266] Immediately in bar 3, there is an allusion to one of the principal cells derived from phrase 1 of the chorale tune (see Ex. 156), where a long note (a minim in this case)

Ex. 158: Symphony No. 9, Recitative I, 1-15

replaces the two repeated notes of the original. Further references to phrase 1 occur in bars 12 to 14, the first of them restoring the characteristic repetition of the initial note; and again in bars 24-27 where they are employed to create a moment of sustained intensity. In bar 40 the tempo picks up slightly, *poco più mosso*, and the music is built up out of cells derived from phrases 2 and 3, as well as containing somewhat more remote

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[266] In the score of Symphony No. 9 issued by the Contemporary Music Centre, Ireland, the bar numbers are continuous throughout the work, from 1 to 800, and they are referenced accordingly here.

Ex. 159: Symphony No. 9, Recitative I, 40-45

allusions to phrase 1 [Ex. 159]. A brief burst of semiquaver activity is interrupted by further references to phrase 1, after which the semiquavers are resumed and lead to a

Ex. 160: Symphony No. 9, Recitative I, 68-73

vigorous new idea based on phrase 4 [Ex. 160]. This is not developed beyond a few bars, however, and as the dynamic level drops a final reference to phrase 1 leads to a brief reflective passage that features the stepwise ascending-descending outline of phrase 5 in which the initial repeated note, however, is displaced [Ex. 161].

Movement I, *Presto impetuoso,* follows Recitative I without a break. It is interesting to note that the formal designs of the three movements are very clear-cut in marked contrast to the improvisatory character of the recitatives. The present movement

Ex. 161: Symphony No. 9, Recitative I, 79-83

is designed as a ternary structure in which a central section is framed by composite outer sections comprising two contrasting elements; unusually in a Kinsella work, these are recapitulated in reverse order:

A-B   C   B¹-A¹

The A section comprises two principal sub-sections in itself, the first of which presents a number of contrasting ideas [Ex. 162]. While the neutral nature of the motifs derived from *Jesu meine Freude* is such that one could trace their putative influence on any thematic idea that features simple scalic movement, none of the opening ideas of A seem to be intentionally related to the chorale tune. As Ex. 162 shows, the initial idea gives rise to continuous quaver movement that builds to a climax in bar 107 and immediately gives way to a light, *staccato* second idea (*pianissimo*), which, subjected to continuous development, also rises to a climax that leads to a repeat of the opening forty-seven bars.

Ex. 162: Symphony No. 9, I, 93-111

It is only after the repeat, as the section moves towards a close, that there is a clear reference to *Jesu meine Freude*, when four solo instruments (two violins, a viola and a cello) detach themselves from the *tutti* to announce a motif based on phrase 3. This moment also serves as a connecting link to the second phase of A, the thematic material of which is now largely based on the chorale melody: a running, *staccato* quaver line is set up in bar 163, across which the various motivic derivations are strung as shown in Ex. 163. The quaver movement ceases as the A section moves to a conclusion with a *fortissimo* passage that seems to allude to the characteristic repeated notes with which the chorale melody begins.

The material of the B section has quite a different character to that of the A, the principal idea being a fleet *pianissimo* line in *legato* quavers which is transferred

Ex. 163: Symphony No. 9, I, 171-185

from one section of the orchestra to another as it changes places with a constant C pedal note [Ex. 164]. The texture is punctuated by abrupt stabbing *sforzandi* and after the

Ex. 164: Symphony No. 9, I, 253-258

introduction of *pizzicato* references to phrase 1 of the chorale tune the music fades into the slower C section. This central episode is very much the still point at the heart of the movement: it largely comprises single unaccompanied lines fashioned from distorted references to various phrases from *Jesu meine Freude*, which are juxtaposed with fully scored allusions to phrase 1. A modified reprise of the second section, B¹, leads to a return of all the principal opening material, A¹, which culminates in a climactic assertion of the initial figure of the movement (bar 93 in Ex. 162). The emphatic conclusion on the note E (which, together with C, is one of the central pitches of the symphony) is followed by eight bars rest (marked *in tempo*) after which the E is resumed in the bass in a brief linking passage that adumbrates the slower tempo (crotchet = 46) of Recitative II.

Ex. 165

Movement I, opening
vlns

Recitative II, opening
vcl

As before, the brief second recitative (a mere thirteen bars) follows without a break. It is largely based on the opening figure of Movement I and remains firmly focused on E and its dominant, B, veering between the two pitches [Ex. 165]. It connects directly with Movement II, which is essentially a meditation on a rising scale that suggests less a derivation from phrase 2, perhaps, and more an inversion of phrase 1 (in that it traverses the compass of a fifth, and its initial minim seems like a modification of the opening repeated notes) [Ex. 166]. There are passing references to other motifs the course of the movement, but they remain shadowy in comparison with the prominence of this scalic idea. Like the preceding recitative, Movement II is also firmly centred on the pitch E, the note on which the principal motif commences. The form is elusive in that the movement is essentially monothematic without any contrasting material, but the tonal

organisation – two outer sections based on E with a central section based on E flat – suggests an A-B-A¹ structure.

Ex. 166: Symphony No. 9, II, 482-486

Because of their comparative brevity and relatively straightforward construction, both Recitative II and Movement II together afford a convenient opportunity to examine in some detail the nature of the modal style Kinsella employs in these works. A summary of the tonal organisation of both sections is presented in Ex. 167. From this it will be seen that Recitative II consists of an articulation of the complete aeolian scale on E: largely comprising a single accompanied line, the passage is clearly oriented around the final (tonic) and dominant notes of the mode, as mentioned above, with the supertonic (F sharp) emerging as a point of subsidiary importance. The only chromatic note to be heard is a B flat that obtrudes (and is duly contradicted) just before the end, and which echoes a similar moment in the linking passage at the end of Movement I.

The A section of Movement II has what might be described as two constituent phrases or sub-sections, each commencing with the rising scale idea (E to B) but having different continuations. (The dotted bar line in Ex. 167 indicates the point of division between them.) The pitch content of the first phrase is reduced from the complete aeolian scale to its first five notes, which are not only the pitches of the basic motif but also those from which the supporting harmonies are derived (as can be seen in Ex. 166). At the very end of the phrase, a single foreign pitch, D sharp, is introduced in such a way – over the sustained fifth B-F sharp – as to hint at the dominant chord of E minor. In the

course of the second phrase D natural is restored and subsequently, with the appearance of the note C, the complete aeolian mode is re-established.

Ex. 167

The same modal structure underpins the B section, but it is now transposed a semitone lower to E flat. It, too, can be considered to comprise two phrases, which not only commence in the same way as those of A but are also based on the same motivic material. The pitches used are confined to those of the diatonic mode (with C flat being notated as B natural throughout), and the single exception is, again, the tonal leading note, D natural, which makes a single brief appearance in bar 513. As remarked above, it is a feature of this approach that these two sets of pitches – the aeolian mode on E and that on E flat – are not mutually exclusive but have two notes – F sharp/G flat and C

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flat/B – in common. The return of the mode on E marks the commencement of the A¹ section, which has the same two-phrase structure as A. Apart from some textural reorganisation, the principal difference between this and the opening of the movement is the introduction of a C sharp in the second phrase, which is also expanded by references to the pitch content of B (shown in square brackets in Ex. 167) representing a quiet and serene yet surprisingly intense moment of culmination. The movement ends with a brief coda that states the principal scalic motif (E to B) twice more. As the final chord dies away, an F sharp continues to sound on solo viola linking the end of the movement with the ensuing Recitative III.

This F sharp on solo viola continues throughout the third recitative and ghostly reminiscences (*con sordini* and *senza vibrato*) of the chorale melody are woven around it also by solo instruments. The entire section is directed by the composer to be performed quadruple *piano*, 'as if from a distance'. At the end of the section we hear for the first time in the course of the work the characteristic second phrase of J. S. Bach's variant of the chorale melody together with its accompanying alto line from the harmonisation that opens the motet BWV 227 [Ex. 155 above]. Recitative III dies away *al niente* on the note F sharp (in octaves), and the pitch is then taken up at the beginning of Movement III.

The finale is a vigorous and lively movement and much of its energy is derived from the extensive use of a propulsive rhythmic figure (marked *a* in Ex. 168) that pervades the texture and can function equally well either as a conspicuous feature of the principal material or as an element of the accompaniment. Although, like that of the other movements, the general outline of Movement III is clearly apprehensible it is formally unusual. It consists of an opening section, A, which is immediately repeated in a varied form, A¹; this is then followed by a new section, B, in which existing material is intensively worked out and which impels the music to a forceful climax; as this climax subsides the tempo slows down and a second new section, C, follows which is based on Bach's harmonisation of *Jesu meine Freude*; the symphony is then brought to a conclusion with a brief *Vivace* coda. This is the kind of startlingly asymmetrical form – A-A¹-B-C-Coda – that by now we have come to expect from Kinsella, and which he handles in so

natural and convincing a manner. In the present instance, the extensive employment of the rhythmic figure mentioned above not only serves to knit the different sections of the movement together and so to camouflage the underlying asymmetry, but its relentless development also gives the music a feeling of being in a state of continuous ferment.

Ex. 168: Symphony No. 9, III, 593-599

The opening seventeen bars (545-561) immediately establish the characteristic rhythmic patterns and create the prevailing sense of headlong forward drive. In bar 562, we hear for the first time – in minims against the active background – clear allusions to phrase 2 of Bach's variant of the chorale melody. The frenetic activity ceases momentarily as this initial paragraph comes to a close but it is immediately resumed as the second paragraph commences. This opens with clear references to the first two phrases of Bach's version of *Jesu meine Freude* now, however, at the correct pitch (i.e. Bach's in BWV 227) of E minor [Ex. 168]. As it continues, there is a clear reference to the retrograde inversion of

cell *x* (shown in Ex. 168), which, as discussed above, can be derived from phrase 2. Highlighted by being delivered *pizzicato*, this cell is extensively treated over the remainder of the paragraph. The A¹ section follows immediately in which all of this material recurs in the same order but in slightly modified form.

The beginning of the B section is marked *più mosso*, and one or two new motivic shapes together with a variant of phrase 1 of the chorale melody (which recalls Movement II) are heard against the characteristic recurring rhythmic pattern [Ex. 169].

Ex. 169: Symphony No. 9, III, 683-686
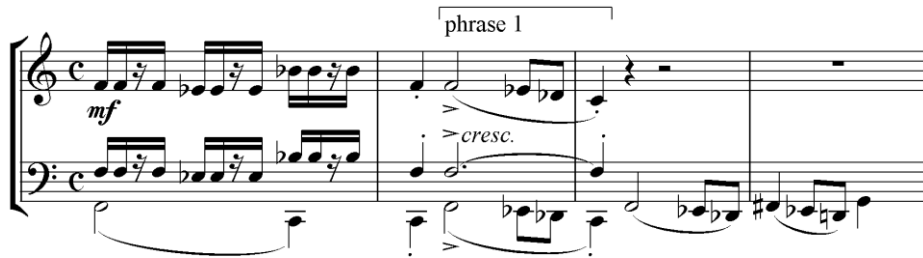
The pattern itself is then subjected to strenuous development in a passage that is crowned with a climactic statement of the second phrase, not of Bach's variant but of Crüger's original version of the chorale tune. After this, the tempo slows down and the music thins out to a single low E on the cellos. This pitch is held across into section C where it is transformed into a rhythmic pedal note that underpins the first phrase of Bach's harmonisation of *Jesu meine Freude* [Ex. 170]. The complete harmonised chorale is quoted (the opening and closing phrases are each stated twice) on three solo violas and one solo cello, which are instructed to play *senza vibrato* 'but not without expression'. The final chord of the first statement of phrase 1, of phrase 2 and of both statements of phrase 6 are prolonged and decorated in ritornello-like fashion as shown in Ex. 170 and the entire passage comes to rest on a serene E major chord for the full orchestra. As described above, the movement concludes with a brief, bracing coda that abruptly

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dispels the atmosphere of serenity and impels the music towards an unexpected chord of C major, on which the symphony surprisingly comes to an end.[267]

Undoubtedly the most remarkable feature of Symphony No. 9 is the quotation of Bach's harmonisation of *Jesu meine Freude,* the integration of which into the symphony

Ex. 170: Symphony No. 9, III, 753-757

is managed simply but imaginatively and, in the context Kinsella creates for it, very movingly. Although the idea of revealing the theme on which a composition is based only at the end may not be entirely original there are few notable precedents, one of the most interesting of which is undoubtedly Arthur Bliss's *Meditations on a Theme by John Blow* (1955) for orchestra. While this work is essentially a set of variations it is an

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[267] Kinsella has since made a small revision to the end of Symphony No. 9: he has not altered the surprise C major ending, but has rather made it a little more emphatic by the addition of one extra bar. (A copy of the MS of this revision was enclosed in a letter from John Kinsella to Séamas de Barra, 20 May 2012.)

unusual one in that Blow's tune is not stated at the beginning but rather at the end of the work following its fragmentation into a series of detachable motifs that supply the material for the preceding series of 'meditations'.[268] Although Kinsella's realisation is different, his procedure in Symphony No. 9 is to some extent comparable. But there is an even more remarkable parallel with two works by Benjamin Britten, *Lachrymae* Op. 48 (1950) for viola and piano and *Nocturnal*, Op. 70 (1963) for guitar, each of which is based on a song by John Dowland. Britten's technique, as described by Eric Roseberry, involves writing '*partial* variations on aspects of the theme, which is brought to the surface in its original form only at the end of the composition'.[269]   While Kinsella's symphony is something other than a set of variations of course, the impact of the final emergence of the fully harmonised chorale melody, of the ultimate coalescence into something tangible, as it were, of all the preceding hints and shadowy adumbrations produces a very similar effect. The comparison with Britten can be extended a little further (although not too much further) because of the manner in which both composers' styles effortlessly admit quotations from the music of earlier periods to produce novel expressive effects. In Kinsella's case – unlike Britten's, perhaps – this has involved a stylistic evolution to the point where the music can evoke the vocabulary and syntax of traditional tonality while nonetheless remaining at a decidedly oblique angle to it. To describe this idiom as a meaningful distortion of tonality would be apt were it not for the pejorative connotations of the word 'distortion'. In Kinsella's later music, it is as though a veil is suspended between what we are actually presented with and the tonal background to which it constantly alludes. And with the quotation from Bach at the end of Symphony No. 9, it seems as if this veil has been pulled back in a brief moment of illumination that reveals the relationship between the foreground and what lies behind it, clarifying the difference and the distance between the two. To a great extent, the expressive power of

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[268] A prototype for this kind of reverse set of variations can be found in *Istar* (1896) by Vincent D'Indy (1851-1931), the novel design of which was probably suggested by the work's literary programme.

[269] Eric Roseberry, 'The Solo Chamber Music' in Christopher Palmer ed., *The Britten Companion* (London, 1984), 378.

this style lies in the successful exploitation of the tension between the dynamic force of an individual creative personality, on the one hand, and the gravitational pull of the common tonal background, on the other. One of the most fundamentally impressive aspects of Kinsella's music is not only his discovery and development of a uniquely personal and highly charged intervening space between these two dimensions, but also his continuous search for ways in which it might most fruitfully be cultivated.

5.3   Symphony No. 10 (2010)

Symphony No. 10 opens with a fifteen-bar *Largo* for solo clarinet that has all the initial appearance of functioning as a prefix to the first movement. (Ex. 171 below quotes this passage in full as well as the beginning of the ensuing *Allegro energico*.) But the theme plays a far more important role in the symphony than that of a mere introduction: it provides the basic material that serves to bind together the three constituent movements (or episodes, as Kinsella prefers to call them). It is an unusual idea in that it does not appear to have a fundamental form of the kind that is normally either stated at the outset and then subject to subsequent transformation, or, like Symphony No. 9, that is ultimately revealed at the end of the work. What the opening fifteen bars present is more like a set of general characteristics that are variously reconstituted at different junctures over the course of the symphony without any particular version having greater significance than the others. Crucially, the easily recognisable melodic outline as well as the clear harmonic underpinning (essentially, an F sharp minor triad that is spelled somewhat unusually)[270] permit many transformations – some of them far reaching – while always ensuring that the basic identity of the material is never in doubt. The timbre of the solo clarinet, the instrument on which the idea is first announced, remains closely identified with it and it returns in this guise a number of times in the course of

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[270] The eccentric spelling of F sharp minor as G flat-A-D flat seems to be a clue (as mentioned earlier) to the likely background existence in Kinsella's thinking of an abstract set or note-row; otherwise the notation seems completely unaccountable.

the work (including the final bars). It is also permanently associated with the pitches of the F sharp minor aggregate, which is eventually confirmed as the tonal centre of the entire symphony.

In seeking to achieve a formal balance between symmetry and asymmetry, Kinsella has devised a subtle and interesting first movement. The opening section of this *Allegro energico*, A, is a cast as a three part structure with a modified return of its first idea. This is then repeated (indicated by repeat marks) like the exposition of an orthodox sonata-form movement, although the close working of a handful of nearly related ideas and the avoidance of any kind of thematic dualism actually belies such a structure. A composite middle section – B-C – follows in which two new ideas are presented in B, and C constitutes a development of existing material. This procedure recalls the first movement of Symphony No. 9, except that in that work the development section comes first. What happens next also differs from Symphony No. 9 in that there is a very condensed return only of the opening section, the restatement being confined to an abbreviated version of the initial idea of A. After this, the movement is quickly impelled towards its principal climax, which takes the form of a majestic peroration that is based on a transformed version of the opening *Largo*. The final pages function as a coda and here the sonority of the solo clarinet once again re-emerges to evoke the mood of the opening. The movement ends *pianissimo* on a low sustained octave F sharp (on clarinet 1 and bassoon 1) punctuated by two *staccato* F sharp minor chords in root position (this time notated in an orthodox fashion). The overall form can be summarised as follows:

$$\textit{Largo} \quad \underset{\text{a-b-a}^1}{\text{A}} \quad \underset{\text{c-d}}{\text{B}} \quad \underset{\text{[devl.]}}{\text{C}} \quad \underset{\text{a}^2\,/\quad \textit{Largo}}{\text{A}^1} \quad \text{Coda}$$

Despite the return of only a minimum of previously heard material, A^1/a^2, a symmetrical recapitulation is nonetheless convincingly suggested. Kinsella is aware that the extensive treatment of the opening ideas earlier in the movement makes any fuller restatement unnecessary here and he confidently relies on a brief reference to do duty for the whole.

This ability to make the most of a mere hint can also be seen at the end of the movement where the timbre of the solo clarinet and the thinning out of the texture produce the effect of a return to the opening, although there is in fact no recapitulation of any thematic material at this point.

Ex. 171: Symphony No. 10, I, 1-23

One of the most immediately striking characteristics of the *Allegro energico* is its constantly changing time signatures, which, especially as they are handled here, have never been a particularly conspicuous feature of Kinsella's music. Initially, the style seems more reminiscent of Stravinsky than of Sibelius, the figure one has come to think of as being a permanent influence in the background of Kinsella's thought. But, despite appearances, it betokens no real change of direction on Kinsella's part and represents an innovation in outward manner only. Not only are stylistic similarities with Stravinsky

confined to the rhythmic organization of some of the thematic material – and even this does not extend beyond the first movement – but the compositional technique of the symphony remains, as we might expect, completely consistent with Kinsella's creative development as hitherto outlined in these pages.

But while in essence it may be merely a superficial characteristic, this irregular rhythmic organisation nonetheless lends the *Allegro energico* a kind of convulsive energy that is new in Kinsella's work. The atmosphere of the music is fresh, bright and vigorous and the forward thrust of the rhythmic irregularities generates climaxes of considerable power. After the opening passage for *pizzicato* strings, A/a, the beginning of which is shown in Ex. 171 above, woodwind and timpani are added for a brief new strain, A/b, which, however, is more like a variant of than a contrast to the initial idea. A modified return of the principal material, A/a^1, follows immediately at the same pitch as before and it is now supplied with an extension that leads to the repeat of the complete

Ex. 172: Symphony No. 10, I, 73-74

opening section. As mentioned above, although this repeat suggests the exposition of a sonata-form movement (or of one of Kinsella's characteristic sonata rondos, perhaps), it presents no genuine thematic contrast and is in effect based on what amounts to little more than different facets and offshoots of a single theme.

Ex. 173: Symphony No. 10, I, 84-88

The first of the contrasting ideas introduced in section B – a brief motif in the woodwind, which is closely imitated in the strings – is shown in Ex. 172. The second idea

functions more like a supplement to this than as a completely independent idea in its own right and, as can be seen in Ex. 173, the two ideas are in fact initially combined. Although the irregular time signatures persist throughout the B section, they are less jerky in effect – they involve changes of crotchet signatures more than of quaver signatures – and the result is a greater degree of rhythmic stability than at the beginning of the movement. This is short lived, however, and both the textures (including the *pizzicato* string writing) and the rhythms of section A are resumed in section C. As this section progresses the F sharp minor modality, which had previously been superseded, is gradually regained until it is finally re-established with the curtailed recapitulation of the principal idea, which now, however, is presented *spiccato* rather than *pizzicato* by the strings. The progress towards the climax commences immediately and, as mentioned above, the culminating point is the re-figuration of the main elements of the opening *Largo*, the beginning of which is shown on the horns in Ex. 174. Marked *stretto*, the final bars of this passage eventually issue in a triple *forte* assertion of the F sharp minor triad by the whole orchestra. A rapid descent to a lower level of tension leads to the conclusion of the movement in the manner described above.

Ex. 174: Symphony No. 10, I, 196-198

The second main division or episode of the symphony, an enigmatic *Largo*, is cast as one of Kinsella's idiosyncratic asymmetrical structures. It is framed by references to

the material of the initial *Largo* (henceforth, for convenience referred to as the 'motto theme' of the work), which function as prefix and suffix to the main body of the movement, which otherwise makes no further allusion to it. As in the preceding *Allegro energico*, there is a brief reference to earlier material before the end, although in the present instance it is merely a passing allusion. The form of the *Largo* can be summarised thus:

<div align="center">

Prefix   A   B   C   Suffix
a-b   c   d-e(a)

</div>

The opening is quoted in Ex. 175. This shows the prefix (again on solo clarinet) and the beginning of the A section, which can be considered to commence in bar sixteen as the clarinet develops a sustained lyrical melody out the prefix material above a *staccato* figure in strings and bassoons. A new syncopated motif (semiquaver-dotted quaver) is introduced in the violins in bar twenty-one (also shown in Ex. 175) and the treatment of this occupies the remainder of the A/a subsection. The ensuing paragraph, A/b, which features a horn solo, is short and functions more in the nature of an appendix or codetta to the opening section. It leads directly to the B section, the rhetorical, declamatory nature of which contrasts sharply with the lyricism of what precedes it. It gives rise to the first substantial climax of the movement after which the music breaks off abruptly – there is a bar's rest for the entire orchestra – before the tempo changes to *Andante* for the measured, chant-like idea that forms the basis of C/d [Ex. 176]. The *tempo primo* is resumed for the second subsection, C/e, and after a fleeting reference to the syncopated figure of A (bar 21) the music builds quickly to a second climax of considerable force with fanfare-like motifs on horns and trumpets pealing out against repeated notes on the strings. The general texture of the chant-like idea of C/d is recalled before the solo clarinet makes its final reference to the motto theme. Once again, the movement comes to an end with an F sharp minor aggregate (in the six-four position), spelled as at the beginning of the symphony however, with double basses, cellos and violas sounding the fourth D flat-G flat (*pizzicato*) beneath a sustained A on solo clarinet.

Ex. 175: Symphony No. 10, II, 1-21

In its free structure, its abrupt juxtapositions and its rapid changes of mood this central *Largo* makes an effect similar to that of the recitative sections of Symphony No. 9. And just as in the previous symphony, Kinsella is careful to follow it with a much more

tightly organised movement that is largely derived from a handful of fundamental

Ex. 176: Symphony No. 10, II, 74-78

motifs and rhythmic shapes. Although the finale is also designated *Allegro energico* there is no return to the Stravinskian manner of the first movement, and while occasional changes of time signature are to be found these are not a characteristic feature of the thematic content and a basic common-time signature is maintained throughout.

Once again, the form of the movement is unusual and, in marked contrast to the preceding *Largo*, it seems to be designed almost as a deliberate study in symmetry. The plan of the movement consists of two more or less equally balanced parts, which also correspond closely to one another in terms of their overall structure. Each part in itself, however, is asymmetrical in construction and consists of a substantial opening section that is immediately repeated in a varied form and then rounded off by a contrasting section that is based on the symphony's motto theme. The movement as a whole is brought to a conclusion with a coda. The following diagram presents a formal summary:

$$A \ A^1 \ B \quad A^2 \ A^3 \ B^1 \quad Coda$$

Kinsella is immensely resourceful in accommodating the degree of thematic repetition this plan involves, and as the above diagram suggests, none of the material is ever presented twice in exactly the same way. All the techniques by which thematic material may be varied and motivic content refigured are pressed into service, and the repeated

sections and subsections are subject to ongoing expansions and curtailments as well as often surprising changes of direction as the movement follows its headlong course.

Ex. 177: Symphony No. 10, III, 1-5

The principal idea from which A is constructed is shown in Ex. 177, which quotes the opening five bars. The forward momentum is largely derived from the repetition of the three note rhythmic cell (two semi-quavers followed by a quaver) that occurs on each beat, but which is subject to constant modification with respect to its constituent interval structure and its direction. The basic thematic material is created from chains of these cells that articulate the shifting harmonic progressions and combine to form distinct melodic outlines. The internal division of section A consists of two principal paragraphs, each beginning as shown in Ex. 177, which are followed by a third paragraph in which

the   momentum   is   broken   and   more   fragmentary   material   is   heard.

Ex. 178: Symphony no. 10, III, 99-103

It is more by its texture – which features *tremolando* strings – than by its thematic content
that the third paragraph is defined, although there are conspicuous allusions to the F

sharp minor outline (spelled as that the very beginning of the symphony, however) of the motto theme.

The A¹ section is constructed in more or less the same way, although the material is re-orchestrated and the three constituent paragraphs are considerably modified. The *tremolando* strings are still used to characterise the third paragraph, which is otherwise very different in content to the corresponding section of A. Further fleeting references to the harmony (and spelling) of the motto theme adumbrate the content of the B section, in which this material is treated in a more expansive and lyrical way [Ex. 178]. Kinsella dovetails this and the ensuing repeat very neatly by anticipating the principal ideas of A². Although in its general shape the second half of the movement follows the same internal organisation of the first half, no brief account of the music could do justice to the continuous variation in detail that reveals fresh aspects the basic material at every turn. As before, it is in the third paragraphs of both A² and A³ that the most surprising divergences from earlier procedure occurs, although the return of the *tremolando* string writing always clarifies their function and each of them also makes a conspicuous allusion to the motto theme.

The B¹ section represents the climax not only of the finale but also of the symphony as a whole. Here the motto theme achieves its apotheosis in an affirmative peroration of considerable splendour. The opening of the section – in which basic three-note cell is used as an accompaniment figure to generate excitement – is shown in Ex. 179. After a rhetorical pause, the coda commences with a brief reassertion of the fundamental three-note rhythmic cell and this is followed by a reminiscence of (rather than a quotation from) the Stravinsky-like *pizzicato* idea from the first movement. Again, this is a little more that a hint at earlier material, but its positioning is perfectly judged, and it strongly suggests a sense of overarching unity across the entire work far more effectively that one might imagine could be achieved in a few bars. This tying together of the various threads is continued with a resumption of the three-note cell and – against a *col legno* background in the strings – by the final references to the F sharp minor of the

motto theme, first on solo clarinet and then on strings as can be seen in Ex. 180, which quotes the closing bars of the symphony.

These two most recent symphonies show Kinsella's ingenuity in reorganising the internal dynamics of symphonic construction at its most persuasive. The overall goal-oriented or teleological form is handled with great inventiveness and while both works move inexorably towards clear points of ultimate revelation, the import of each is very

Ex. 179: Symphony No. 10, III, 255-265

different and their respective imaginative worlds are unique. The balancing of freely improvisational and asymmetrical structures with tightly controlled, motivically organised forms is a distinguishing feature of Kinsella's later music and nowhere is it more tellingly handled hand in these two symphonies. What they also demonstrate is not only the composer's remarkable ability to spin long stretches of music out of a handful of basic shapes, but also the fecundity with which these motifs are continuously

varied and modified on the one hand, and the discipline with which this proliferating invention is controlled on the other.

Ex. 180: Symphony No. 10, III, 317-334

Conclusion

Although John Kinsella turned eighty just two months after the first performance of Symphony No. 10, there are no signs on his part of any relaxation in creative activity or abatement of interest in the symphony. On the contrary, in an interview published in the *Irish Times* on 9 April 2012, the day after his eightieth birthday, the composer spoke of his intention to embark on his next symphonic project as soon as his desk is cleared of current commissions. After mentioning a piece for solo double bass that he had recently been asked to write, he continued:

> And I've just started on a string quartet now, for the West Cork Chamber Music
> Festival in Bantry 2013. I'm very much at the beginning stages there, so it's kind of
> fraught. Slow progress, digging. That'll keep me going for about six months. Then
> I'd love to do a No 11.[271]

In the interview, he alluded to his employment in Symphony No. 10 of a smaller, Classical-sized orchestra and he indicated that No. 11 might well follow along similar lines. The kind of orchestra used in what for him is the greatest symphony ever written, Beethoven's Seventh, is also perfectly adequate, he believes, for contemporary symphonic utterance. As with chamber music, Kinsella found that the reduced forces obliged him to concentrate his thought in a way which the large modern symphony orchestra did not. 'Lean and fit' is how he characterises the Beethoven score, and these are certainly qualities he seeks to emulate in his own work.[272]

 Remarkable thought it may be in the context of Irish contemporary music, Kinsella's ongoing preoccupation with the symphony is best understood in relation to the vital persistence of a genre that for that last 150 years has confounded the gloomy prognostications that have periodically been made about its survival. To a great extent,

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[271] Dervan, 'A Lifetime of Obsession with Symphonies'.
[272] Ibid.

the lasting prestige of the symphony can be traced back to Beethoven, whose own works, while they undoubtedly proved to be an intimidating inheritance for his successors, were also a major stimulus in that they revealed hitherto unimagined possibilities for symphonic composition. In *Schubert and the Symphony*: *A New Perspective* (1992), Brian Newbould, for example, notes that that after Beethoven the symphony 'imposed on its composer the necessity of thinking profoundly, yes; engagingly, yes; but increasingly in terms of a big canvas', and he attributes the persistence of Schubert's interest in the form throughout his life to the fact that it did not 'merely test the composer's technique: as the genre developed, it came more and more to challenge the human spirit.' Newbould points out that in so far as the symphony provided an 'attractive context for the exercise of vision, breath and integration, it appeared to offer limitless potential.'[273]

Despite this, however, by 1850 doubts were already being voiced about the genre's continuing viability. One of the earliest and most influential figures to query its relevance was Richard Wagner: even after Beethoven's Ninth Symphony had, in Wagner's view, redeemed music 'from out of her own peculiar element into the realm of *universal Art*' and pointed the way to the future, composers were still foolhardy enough 'to write symphonies and suchlike pieces by the ream, without a moment happening on the thought that the *last* symphony had *already been written'*.[274] For Wagner, the possibilities suggested by Beethoven's great achievements could no longer be envisioned merely in terms of the orchestral symphony, which he believed had now effectively and decisively been transcended. Half a century later – if for somewhat different reasons – Debussy echoed the same opinion:

> It seems to me that the proof of the futility of the symphony has been established
>
> since Beethoven. [...] The fact that here and there a genius succeeds in this form is

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[273] Brian Newbould, *Schubert and the Symphony: A New Perspective* (London, 1992), 12, 13.

[274] Richard Wagner, *The Artwork of the Future and Other Works*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (Lincon and London, 1993 [*Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* first published in 1849; English trans. first published in 1895]), 126, 127. (Original italics.)

but a poor excuse for the laborious and stilted compositions which we are accustomed to call symphonies.[275]

And yet, more or less at the same time as Debussy penned these words the nineteenth-century symphony was reaching a remarkable climax with the work of Gustav Mahler, Carl Nielson and Jean Sibelius, three composers whose strikingly diverse symphonic outputs alone serve to underline the dubiousness of this casual dismissal of the genre.

Nor do the twentieth-century innovations in the language of music and conceptions of musical form, or even the radical attempts to rethink the fundamental nature of music itself, appear to have seriously diminished the appeal of the symphony.[276] In 1979, for example, when he published the revised edition of his landmark study of Carl Nielsen, Robert Simpson (1921-1997), himself the author of eleven symphonies, took the opportunity to restate his faith in the genre and explain why it continued to attract the attention of some of the finest contemporary creative minds.

Composers who thought (and some still think) that 'the' symphony is 'dead' would have done better to pause and consider that music is capable of living at the highest and most complete human level; that this involves the perception, within a single concentrated artistic vision, of the greatest imaginable range of human experience of feeling and movement. This one can call symphony, for want of any other word; the term has long been associated with the deepest and most strenuous efforts to raise orchestral music to such a level.[277]

In recalling the words of Newbould quoted above, this passage suggests that composers continue to be drawn to the symphony for precisely the same reasons that Schubert was.

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[275] Debussy, *Monsieur Croche*, 17, 18

[276] As Donald Mitchell has noted of the more extreme mid-twentieth-century developments in compositional practice (*The Language of Contemporary Music,* 171): 'But of course it is not only the conception of sound, and the raw material of sound, that has undergone a dramatic sea change. Form too, inevitably, has been drastically revised (and become largely inaudible in the process).'

[277] Simpson, *Carl Nielsen, Symphonist*, 222.

In Britain, many of Simpson's contemporaries – to say nothing of those belonging to an earlier generation – made an important contribution to the contemporary symphonic repertoire, some of them producing a body of work as extensive as his own – one thinks of the nine symphonies of Malcolm Arnold (1921-2006), for example, or the ten of the slightly younger Alun Hoddinott (1929-2008). This is equally true of Simpson's international contemporaries, even if not all of them were as prolific as the Danish composer Niels Viggo Bentzon (1919-2000) whose large output includes twenty-four symphonies, or the recently deceased Hans Werner Henze (1926-2012), whose ten symphonies composed over a period of half a century represents one of the most significant cycles of recent times by a German composer.

This is the context in which Kinsella's abiding interest in the symphony is best understood and in which his achievement is most fruitfully assessed. Amongst his own close living contemporaries, one notices a particular affinity with a number of prominent Scandinavian composers who have also shown an ongoing preoccupation with symphonic composition: the Danish composer Ib Nørholm (b.1931), for example, who studied with Vagn Holmboe and – like Kinsella – was much influenced by the central European avant-garde before subsequently simplifying his approach, composed his Symphony No. 12 in 2009; similarly, Per Nørgård (b.1932), who is also Danish and a former student of Vagn Holmboe's as well as being Kinsella's exact contemporary, completed the most recent of his eight symphonies 2011. In Finland, the genre has long been intensely cultivated and contemporary Finnish composers have made a particularly distinguished contribution, two of the most highly regarded being Einojuhani Rautavaara (b. 1928) and Aulis Sallinen (b.1935), each of whom has completed an eighth symphony (in 1999 and 2001 respectively).

Recalling both Nørholm and Kinsella, the compositional approach of the Polish composer Krzysztof Penderecki (b.1933) also underwent a considerable stylistic change in the mid-1970s when he turned his back on *avant-garde* experimentation and sought a rapprochement with tradition. This change of outlook coincided with his interest in the symphony, and since completing his first in 1973 he has written seven further such

works, the most recent being composed in 2004-5 (rev. 2008). Penderecki is not the only apparently unlikely composer to have felt drawn to the symphony and to have discovered a late appreciation of its seemingly unique suitability for the realisation of a 'single concentrated artistic vision'. If Peter Maxwell Davies's (b. 1934) decision to turn to the form in the mid-1970s seemed surprising given the direction his music had taken up to that point, it proved to be the beginning of a lasting engagement with a genre – culminating in the recently premiered Symphony No. 9 in 2012 – that has inspired what many commentators hold to be some of his most compelling work. Equally surprising, perhaps, was the development in the 1980s of a similar interest on the part of the prolific American composer Philip Glass (b. 1937), an interest which has resulted in the composition of no less than ten symphonies to date, the latest of which was also premiered in 2012.

Writing in 1993, Robert Layton declared that that the 'future of the symphony as we know it is far from certain.' One of the reasons, he suggests, is that 'the sheer volume of musical impulses' to which we are subjected today is both 'intimidating and inhibiting'.

> Moreover folk music can no longer be the source of inspiration it was for the generation of Vaughan Williams, Bartók and Kodály, for the wells have been polluted by the all-pervasive phenomenon of pop, with its impoverished (or indeed absence of) vocabulary – to the justified alarm of ethnomusicologists. In addition, with the phenomenon of musak, a generation has been fostered to regard music as a background, to be disregarded, only its absence noted. This is hardly an environment in which a form as sophisticated as the symphony can be expected to flourish. [...]

'But', he continues, 'history has a habit of confounding prediction, and while there are composers of imagination and ambition, they will surely want to rise to the symphony's

intellectual and spiritual challenge'.[278] The consistent level interest in the genre shown even by the handful of composers mentioned above – however widely different the resultant works may be – would certainly appear to bear out Layton's guardedly optimistic conclusion, the general truth of which is also strongly attested by a compositional career such as John Kinsella's.

Time-honoured as a form though the symphony may be, Kinsella's view of it is not by any means a static one. He avails himself fully of the wide range formal possibilities that are open to the contemporary composer, and his output shows a considerable diversity of approaches. These range from expansive four-movement works conceived along classic-romantic lines at one end to concise one-movement forms at the other, taking in the song-symphony along the way. One of the most interesting and individual aspects of this series of works is the manner in which he tackles the problem of formal balance. He has a pronounced fondness for radically asymmetrical constructions, which can influence the design of a symphony at the most fundamental level – as in the overall fast-slow two-movement plan of Symphony No. 3 – as well as governing the internal structure of individual movements. Although he does not abjure standard formal types such as sonata-form, rondo form and so on, which he adapts to suit his needs, these are offset by looser, freely developing and often quasi-improvisatory structures. The later symphonies in particular demonstrate a fascinating tendency to contrast the two approaches within a single composition – the discipline of the tighter, more balanced structures providing a logical framework which circumscribes a compositional space that is not only able to contain the asymmetrical and improvisatory forms but render them coherent within the overall design.

But it is not only in matters of formal organisation that the sturdy independence of Kinsella's creative development is evident. In the 1970s, he made a dispassionate assessment of the current state of contemporary music and, without reference to trends or stylistic fashions, he proceeded to forge the personal style that he believed would best

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[278] Robert Layton, 'The Symphony in Britain', in Layton ed., *A Companion to the Symphony*, 450, 451.

allow him to realise his creative vision. To a large extent this necessitated the renunciation of certain approaches which he had adopted in much of his earlier work. Despite the change of direction, however, Kinsella has never felt the need either to repudiate his earlier music or to issue artistic manifestos or publish declarations of intent. He has never sought to justify his stance or engaged in polemics of any kind. From about 1979 onwards, he simply produced a steady stream of important compositions with quiet assurance and was content to let others make of them what they would. In some quarters, his perceived abandonment of the aesthetics of the more radical avant-garde may well have been looked on askance. But if so, it does not appear to have troubled him unduly.

The irony of Kinsella's position, however, is that in his uncompromisingly honest pursuit of an independent creative path he has composed music that places him more directly the current mainstream than a faithful adherence to the tenets of 1970s avant-gardism would have done. His work reflects what are now generally acknowledged to be two of the most enduring influences on recent contemporary music – I mean, of course, serialism and Sibelius – and it blends and refracts those influences in a uniquely personal way. It is this surprising and, in the context of Irish contemporary music, unprecedented double indebtedness that turns out to have been instinctively attuned to the changing times.

The persistent influence of serialism or of compositional approaches derived from serialism on twentieth- and twenty-first century music will readily be acknowledged. Serialism 'of one kind or another', as Arnold Whittall has recently pointed out,

> has proved to be a constant presence within the wider dialogue between the progressive and the conservative that has shaped music since 1900 as it extended, exploded and reinstated tonality with a resourcefulness and flexibility paralleled by the resourceful and flexible employment of the serial techniques themselves.'[279]

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[279] Arnold Whittall, *The Cambridge Introduction to Serialism*, 238.

The truth of this observation forcefully applies to Kinsella's work. From about the end of the 1970s, he began to employ the twelve-note row in such a way as to imbue his music with explicit tonal references. This kind of approach to the series was not new, course: many composers, including Schoenberg himself, had devised note-rows that yielded triads and other vertical formations that alluded to the vocabulary of tonal music. But while Kinsella's initial steps in this direction also focused to a large extent on tonal allusions, he quickly began to consider the series less as an abstract unity and more as a general repository from which suitable material could be fashioned. From very early on – certainly from the second movement of Symphony No. 1, a work in which the initial steps of this stylistic evolution can be traced – Kinsella abandons the conception of the note-row as a single entity. Instead, he divides it into a number of segments which, liberated from their fixed position and treated freely, become the primary source of the thematic and harmonic content of his music. This technique makes possible far more than the mere passing evocation of tonality: it permits a full re-engagement of the forces of tonal attraction. From Kinsella's point of view, it is crucial in that it also facilitates the projection of large-scale symphonic structures, while at the same time creating a freshly individual idiom that successfully avoids any suggestion of earlier tonal styles. What has gradually crystallised in Kinsella's music since the 1980s, in short, is a species of modality in which the constitution of both the harmonic aggregates and the thematic-motivic material, as well as the relationships in which they participate, are largely governed by a predetermined configuration of pitches (not necessarily involving twelve notes) that operates in the background. In the most recent music the governing 'series' (if one exists) has moved so far into the background that its precise constitution is not in fact determinable. Although internal evidence seems to suggest that Kinsella continues to use some kind of note-row as a compositional starting point, as a springboard for his imagination, this is now apparently its sole remaining function.

Unlike serialism, however, it is only in more recent years that the full impact Sibelius's art on contemporary music has come to be properly recognised. The importance for Kinsella of the music of Sibelius has been remarked upon many times in

these pages. In the recent *Irish Times* interview, he reiterated his identification with the Finnish master's work: 'He's somebody I associate with very closely. […] Everything he says seems like something I want to say myself, that I can totally appreciate, and I find very strong resonances in his sounds.'[280]

As Glenda Dawn Goss has pointed out, with the passing of time 'the extreme positions of Sibelius's promoters and detractors have gradually eroded' and his extraordinary originality both in the control of musical time scale and of musical form is currently being freshly appraised.[281] Writing in *The Cambridge Companion to Sibelius* in 2004 about Sibelius's influence on contemporary music, Julian Anderson remarked that he is 'a source of inspiration in a musical world whose current plurality and lack of direction is often confusing', a view that one imagines Kinsella might readily share.[282] In Anderson's opinion, the influence of Sibelius on contemporary music 'is now so substantial and lasting that one can speak of him as a key figure in the shaping of current musical thought.'[283] 'There is general agreement amongst contemporary composers', he continues,

> that beneath the obviously traditional elements of his harmonic syntax, Sibelius addressed some of the most essential problems of composition in utterly original ways that are of continuing relevance to the newest music. […] Repeatedly in Sibelius's music, we encounter a bold and experimental attitude towards time, musical texture and form which transcends the late Romanticism of his origins and places him amongst the most innovative composers of the early twentieth century.[284]

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[280] Dervan, 'A Lifetime of Obsession with Symphonies'.

[281] Glenda Dawn Goss, 'Interlude V: A Composer and his Reputation', in Glenda Dawn Goss ed., *The Sibelius Companion*, 278.

[282] Anderson, 'Sibelius and contemporary music', 216.

[283] Ibid., 196.

[284] Ibid., 197. This is not by any means an isolated or eccentric opinion; see also, for example, Tim Howell, '"Sibelius the Progressive"' in Timothy L. Jackson and Veijo Murtomäki, *Sibelius Studies* (Cambridge, 2006 [2001]), 35-57.

In some respects, Kinsella's entire symphonic project over the past thirty-two years (since the composition of the *Essay for Orchestra* in 1980) has hinged on the insight that the deeper implications of Sibelius's innovative compositional techniques were not incompatible with a style of musical thinking that was first shaped by an early enthusiasm for serialism. The evolution of Kinsella's realisation of this basic insight can be traced right through the ten symphonies, an impressive corpus of work that represents not only a rich and valuable contribution to modern Irish music but also a very personal voyage of discovery.

Appendix

List of Symphonies by Irish Composers, 1819-2010[285]

1819?	Paul Alday	Grand Symphony No. 1 in C major[286]
1829	Michael W. Balfe	*Sinfonia*
[1866	Arthur Sullivan	Symphony in E major, *Irish*]
1875	C. V. Stanford	Symphony No. 1 in B Flat Major
1882	C. V. Stanford	Symphony No. 2 in D Minor, *Elegiac*
1887	C. V. Stanford	Symphony No. 3 in F Minor, *Irish*
1889	C. V. Stanford	Symphony No. 4 in F Major
1894	C. V. Stanford	Symphony No. 5 in D Major, *L'Allegro ed il Pensieroso*

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[285] Strictly speaking, the symphonies by Arthur Sullivan, E. J. Moeran and Elizabeth Maconchy do not have a place on this list; nonetheless, each of these works has some connection with Ireland, either by virtue of the composer's personal associations with the country or the acknowledged inspiration of Ireland on the music, and for that reason they are included in square brackets. Also deserving of mention here is Mary Dickenson-Auner (1880-1965), an Irish-born composer who enjoyed an international career as a violinist in the early decades of the twentieth century. Dickenson-Auner, who as a girl had studied briefly in London with Coleridge-Taylor, married an Austrian and eventually settled in Vienna. It was only after the Anschluss in 1938, when she was forbidden to work as a performer, that she turned seriously to composition and produced a substantial body of music that includes operas and oratorios as well as six symphonies. Apart from her first symphony, 'The Irish', Op. 16 (1941), which has been recorded by the Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Manfred Mussauer (Thorofon, CTH2259, 1994), her work remains almost completely unknown. (See Axel Klein, *Irish Classical Recordings: A Discography of Irish Art Music* (Westport, Conn., 2001), 31-32.) Jean Martinon (1910-1976), the French composer and conductor who worked with the Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra between 1948 and 1950, completed his four-movement *Troisième Symphonie (Irish Symphony)*, Op. 45, in 1948. The preface to the published score acknowledges a debt to the legends and landscapes of Ireland as well as to Irish folk music. The composer conducted the work in Dublin on 18 May 1949.

[286] Paul Alday is known to have published two symphonies in 1819, both of which were thought to be lost until the orchestral parts of one of them, Grand Symphony No. 1 in C major, recently came to light in the National Library of Ireland. See the Introduction above (2).

1901	Michele Esposito	Symphony on Irish Airs/*Sinfonia Irlandese*
1904	Hamilton Harty	*An Irish Symphony*
1905	C. V. Stanford	Symphony No. 6 in E Flat Major, *In Memoriam G. F. Watts*
1911	C. V. Stanford	Symphony No. 7 in D minor
1924	Ina Boyle	Symphony No. 1, *In Glencree*
1930	Ina Boyle	Symphony No. 2, *The Dream of the Rood*
[1937	E. J. Moeran	Symphony in G Minor]
1945	Brian Boydell	Symphony for Strings
1952	Ina Boyle	Symphony No.3, *From the Darkness*
[1953	Elizabeth Maconchy	Symphony for Double String Orchestra]
1959	Seóirse Bodley	Symphony No. 1
1960	James Wilson	Symphony No. 1
1961	Gerard Victory	*Short Symphony* [Symphony No. 1]
1964	Seóirse Bodley	Chamber Symphony No. 1
1968	A. J. Potter	*Sinfonia 'De Profundis'* [Symphony No. 1]
1970	Proinnsías Ó Duinn	Symphony [No. 1]
1975	James Wilson	Symphony No. 2, *Monumentum*
1976	Frank Corcoran	Chamber Symphony [No. 1]
	A. J. Potter	Symphony No. 2, *Ireland*
1977	Aloys Fleischmann	*Sinfonia Votiva*
	Eric Sweeney	Symphony No. 1
	Gerard Victory	Symphony No. 2, *Il Ricorso*
1980	Seóirse Bodley	Symphony No. 2, *I have loved the lands of Ireland*

	Seóirse Bodley	Symphony No. 3, *Ceol*
	Frank Corcoran	Symphony No. 1, *Symphonies of Symphonies of Wind Instruments*
1981	Frank Corcoran	Symphony No. 2
1982	Seóirse Bodley	Chamber Symphony No. 2
1984	John Kinsella	Symphony No. 1
	Gerard Victory	Symphony No. 3, *Refrains*
1985	Jerome de Bromhead	Symphony No. 1
1987	Eric Sweeney	Symphony No. 2
1988	John Buckley	Symphony [No. 1]
	John Kinsella	Symphony No. 2
	Gerard Victory	Symphony No. 4
1990	Walter Beckett	*Dublin Symphony*
	John Kinsella	Symphony No. 3, *Joie de Vivre*
1991	Seóirse Bodley	Symphony No. 4
	Seóirse Bodley	Symphony No. 5, *The Limerick Symphony*
	John Kinsella	Symphony No. 4, *The Four Provinces*
1992	John Kinsella	Symphony No. 5, *The 1916 Poets*
1993	John Kinsella	Symphony No. 6
1994	Frank Corcoran	Symphony No. 3
	Jerome de Bromhead	Symphony No. 2
1996	Frank Corcoran	Symphony No. 4
1997	John Kinsella	Symphony No. 7
1999	John Kinsella	Symphony No. 8, *Into the New Millennium*
2001	James Wilson	Symphony No. 3
2004	John Kinsella	Symphony No. 9 for String Orchestra

| 2010 | John Kinsella | Symphony No. 10 |
| | Kevin O'Connell | Symphony |

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