The Logic of Nonsense:
Personal Process towards Oppositionality and Reorganisation as
Music Composition

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Abstract

This thesis explores the convergence of oppositions in my composition folio, and the idea of nonsense as the disorganisation and reorganisation of sense. It examines how, inspired by Lewis Carroll’s nonsense literature and portmanteau words, my folio experiments with stylistic juxtapositions and creates my own musical portmanteaus from the collision of art and vernacular sound-worlds, stretching both musical and literary forms. Together, the viscerality and groove of rock and post-minimalism, and the humour and structural games of Carroll, are fused with the architectural design of Modernism, and twentieth and twenty-first century art music. Textural, timbral, and sonority ideas are borrowed freely from both art and vernacular realms. My thesis investigates how the continual reorganisation of oppositions as and within sound-blocks, both horizontally and vertically, leads to a breakdown of linearity and produces its own type of juxtapositional logic.

My thesis outlines and provides context for key components of my portmanteau aesthetic; the engagement between music and literature, the use of voice, the primacy of rhythm, sonority juxtapositions and harmonic portmanteaus, controlled aleatoricism and expanded timbres, whimsical humour, and non-linear structures. It illuminates aspects of my creative process, from a practice-based research perspective, and explores how my performance practice as a percussionist and wind-player is embedded in my compositional techniques. Two chapters are dedicated to an analysis of the folio works, before concluding with reflection on the growth of my musical voice and its future.

Ultimately, this thesis shows, via the seemingly oxymoronic idea of the logic of nonsense, how the coexistence of oppositions strengthens, rather than subverts, the other, and how the friction created simultaneously challenges and demonstrates their compatibility, giving way to a double energy.
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Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.
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Introduction
Chapter One: Introduction: The Logic of Nonsense

‘Begin at the beginning and go on until the end, then stop!’

Lewis Carroll

My music harnesses a series of oppositions to create my own type of musical nonsense which, via the breakdown of linearity and continual reorganisation of oppositional relationships, produces a juxtapositional logic. This concept is inspired by the nonsense literature of Lewis Carroll where, throughout my folio, I reimagine Carroll’s literary devices in a musical context, in particular; portmanteau words as musical portmanteaus. My compositions appear as designed mosaics, energised by the collision of art and vernacular paradigms, and music and literature. My thesis argument is oxymoronic; nonsense is inherently logical. I generate nonsense through the dissolution of linearity, and manipulate oppositions towards juxtapositional order, so that what at first appears to be nonsense, is no longer deemed nonsense at all, but types of non-linear forms. As a result, the juxtaposition of oppositions challenges the perceived incompatibility of conflicting ideas, and aims to flatten the hierarchy between art and vernacular musics by demonstrating their compatibility.

Exegesis Structure

In chapter two, I begin by outlining my credo and the main features of my portmanteau aesthetic in relation to my composition portfolio works, utilising various instrumental media, culminating in a work featuring voice. I explain and unpack the key concepts which drive my music: stylistic juxtapositions, the intersection of rock and art worlds, primacy of rhythm, harmonic portmanteaus, controlled aleatoricism and expanded timbres, engagement between music and text, and whimsical humour, tied together by a non-linear structure. I explore the influence of Lewis Carroll’s literature in creating my folio, looking at the key features of nonsense and discussing musical equivalents. I investigate
musical precedents, inspired by Carroll, and precedents for the synthesis of vernacular and art worlds in generating nonsense, focussing primarily on twentieth and twenty-first century experimenters, Charles Ives and Louis Andriessen, and rock innovators, John Zorn and Frank Zappa. My compositional models engage with both modernist and postmodernist framed practices. From the art music world, Ives and Igor Stravinsky embrace a modernist and eclectic practice, while Andriessen and Michael Torke, along with Zappa and Zorn from the vernacular world, a postmodern practice. Drawing inspiration from models across both worlds, and in working towards the flattening of hierarchies, my own aesthetic is framed by neither modern nor postmodern paradigms, but rather a literary based portmanteau.

In chapter three, I illuminate my creative process and strategies, exploring how the collision of vernacular and art music techniques unfolds into a nonsense design. Using Donald Schön's notion of “reflection-in-action” (1983: 68), I look at my personal creative history and discuss my eclectic experiences as a performer, playing trumpet, drum kit and flute in concert and brass bands, and later, improvised experimental rock bands. I explore how a performance background in both notated and improvised contexts is reimagined as an amalgam of the two in my own compositions via Lutoslawski-inspired mobiles, and how different ways of thinking about rhythm and pitch have shaped my compositional voice. I explore the importance of an improvisational spark, demonstrate compositional techniques in creating harmonic portmanteaus and mosaic structures, and discuss the collaborative aspect of my process through mentor relationships, rehearsals and performances. Inspired by post-minimalist Michael Torke, I investigate my strategy of ‘percussion as process’ in the orchestral works Boojum (2012) and Frumious (2012), in harnessing a rhythmic visceralility, where rhythm drives pitch.

The first of the analysis chapters, chapter four, investigates two of my earlier folio works during the emergent stage of my compositional voice. The chapter focusses on textual
and textural engagement; I explore macro and micro literary ideas, and the notion of play in the solo piano work ‘A’ is for Alice (2010), and the dialogue between music and voice in two movements from the chamber ensemble work Take Care of the Sense, and the Sounds Will Take Care of Themselves (2011). Chapter five concentrates on the rhythmic, sonority and textural juxtapositions of the later, larger texture works, Frumious (2012) for orchestra, Bandersnatch (2013) for wind ensemble and rock duo, and the mezzo-soprano and large ensemble work Cabbages and Kings (2014), and how they are integrated into a tightly designed mosaic to realise a portmanteau aesthetic. I look at the primacy of rhythm to drive pitch in the reworking of an earlier work in Red Queen, White Queen, Alice and All (2013), and the return of voice to create a quasi ‘rock-opera’ portmanteau design in my capstone piece, Cabbages and Kings. Finally, my thesis culminates with the meeting of one of my compositional models, Louis Andriessen, and other like-minded mentors, at the 20th Young Composers Meeting, Apeldoorn, The Netherlands, in February 2014.

Exegesis Aims

This thesis seeks to elucidate what I see as the key concepts of my music; the exploration and analysis of my work does not intend to be exhaustive. It aims to show my unfolding journey towards a portmanteau aesthetic, from the initial, comparatively literal, embryonic collisions of my earlier pieces, to the increasingly harder-edged and wilder juxtapositions of the later works. It hopes to demonstrate some of my creative processes and strategies, which may be of particular interest to composers who play wind instruments and drum kit. I would like to emphasise that my personal voice is enriched by a diverse set of influences which I posit as an eclectic, juxtapositional aesthetic.

Although juxtaposition is considered a hallmark of postmodernism, and paradoxically of modernism, my aesthetic does not stem from postmodernist theoretical paradigms. Instead,
it emerges from a practice-based research model, as discussed by Schön (1987), Barbara Bolt (2006), Estelle Barrett (2007), and Roger Dean (2009), and is sparked by the nonsense theory of Susan Stewart (1989) and Jacques Lecercle (1994), and the nonsense literature of Carroll (2007; 2009)

Embarking on this project, I aimed to bring together my passion for music and literature, and rock and art musics. Although my work is inspired by Carroll's books, it is not in any way programmatic; it does not intend to depict the text, but rather use it as an imaginative springboard for musical ideas. My folio investigates a series of ways in which text can be an impetus for music, and music, a generator of the selection and arrangement of text. I aimed to extend both forms, where music and text would take on qualities more like the other. Composers David Del Tredici, Martin Wesley-Smith, and Unsuk Chin, have each written multiple works based on Carroll’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (1865) and Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There (1872), yet my music is inspired by the books in a distinctly different way. Del Tredici’s catalogue embraces the poems of the Alices via a blend of neo-romanticism and tonality; Wesley-Smith explores the life and works of Carroll through electronic media, theatre productions and nursery rhyme quotations; and Chin’s works primarily feature voice and the construction of new text, sparked by the original text. In comparison, I use Carroll’s structural games as the basis for my own musical portmanteaus, reimagining portmanteau words as an organisational principal for the juxtaposition rock and art music elements. Harnessing an oxymoronic argument, the logic of nonsense, my music also aims to be humorous, fun, joyous and sonically theatrical. The humour is both raucous and whimsical, where the music revels in both expected and unexpected surprises; it is serious and playful all at once, partaking in a game of continual reorganisation.
My thesis acknowledges that whilst there is a perceived dichotomy between art and vernacular musics, and other pairs mentioned in this document, there is also a continuum between the two; each is present in the other, in which they are constantly involved in an exchange. Andreas Huyssen refers to this dichotomy as the “Great Divide” (1986), where there is an imaginary divide between mass culture and modernism. Despite the resilient opposition between the two, Huyssen observes that the, “boundaries between high art and mass culture have become increasingly blurred, and we should begin to see that process as one of opportunity” (1986: vii-ix). Embracing this blurring, Robert Walser draws comparisons between classical music and heavy metal, explaining how heavy metal musicians have mined the classical canon for musical techniques and devices, and teamed them with a “blues-based rock sensibility” (1992: 264). Walser writes that such musicians have “erupted across the Great Divide between ‘serious’ and ‘popular’ music….and have found that the gap was not as wide as we have been led to believe” (1992: 303-304). In this way, my aim is not to reinforce dichotomies, but rather break them down by showing, like Carroll’s portmanteau words, how easily seeming oppositions can coexist. My thesis experiments with how the convergence of oppositions generates what I refer to as a ‘double energy’, where my music is ‘energised’ by the collision of rock and post-minimalist/‘Ivesian’ juxtapositions and produces a blend of both; a musical portmanteau. This concept of duality is further inspired by the peculiar, yet highly functional, relationship between Lewis Carroll’s two distinct personas: his real self, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, the Oxford mathematics don, and Lewis Carroll, his pen name as the elusive children's writer. With this in mind, my music is interested in the turbulent relationship between oppositions and parallels.

Ultimately, my music aims to capture the spirit of nonsense by celebrating paradoxes and contradictions, juxtapositions, and the integration of seemingly disparate music worlds. By exploring Carrollian literature, improvised and architectural musics, my aim is to achieve
a revitalisation of my compositional style through an organised oppositionality. This thesis is concerned with discovering how the dialogue between music and text stretches both literary and musical paradigms, via the works of nonsense theorists Susan Stewart and Jean-Jacques Lecercle, and Carroll experts Morton Cohen and William Madden; how the intersection of rock and art musics pushes towards a style that is consciously visceral and architectural, looking at the writings of Susan McClary, James Borders, Chou Wen-chung, Larry Starr and Andriessen himself; and how, through an examination of compositional models, sonority, rhythmic and textural juxtapositions are combined to achieve a non-linear design. Together, these dualities work to invigorate my personal journey towards a portmanteau aesthetic, where the merging of a series of oppositions, including dual creative processes, excites a double energy. Nonsense is no longer perceived as the antithesis of sense, but emerges as a new, reorganised system of sense.
Part One: Credo and Context
Chapter Two: Credo: Portmanteau Aesthetic

In order to understand my musical portmanteau aesthetic, it is necessary to first examine in detail the credo of ideas underpinning it; the literary inspiration, musical parallels and surrounding context. Driven by the literature of Lewis Carroll, my music embraces nonsense as a metaphor for the coexistence of musical oppositions through the reorganisation of structure. Inspired by Victorian classics, largely the Alices, my compositions explore a parallel and expanded sonic dimension for Carroll's texts, where nonsense literature provides an underlying conceptual framework for musical nonsense. Music and text share a symbiotic relationship as their engagement seeks to stretch the possibilities of both forms: music endeavours to become more referential, suggestive and associative, while text begins to place an emphasis on the sound quality of words, rather than their meanings. My compositions reimagine portmanteau words as musical portmanteaus, acting as an imaginative catalyst for the convergence of disparate sound-worlds and extending Carroll’s non-linear structures.

At the core of my music is the literary idea that nonsense functions as the “disorganisation and reorganisation of sense” (Stewart, 1989: vi), and how this has informed my approach in setting up musical oppositions in my folio. This idea is prevalent throughout Carroll’s literature: Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (1865) and Through the Looking-Glass (1871), The Hunting of The Snark (1874), Sylvie and Bruno (1889) and Sylvie and Bruno Concluded (1893). Through the concept of nonsense as oppositional reorganisation, I develop musical portmanteaus, where two seemingly conflicting ideas work together to create a new cohesive, yet fractured whole. This is reflected in the invention of portmanteau words, coined by nonsense. A portmanteau word is a fusion of two distinct words, where two meanings are packed up as one; it maintains the original meanings, whilst creating a new meaning evoked by the sound of the word. The oxymoronic argument here is that nonsense is very logical; rather than being the antithesis of sense, nonsense is instead the reorganisation of sense.
Musically, my portmanteau aesthetic harnesses the collision of art and vernacular worlds. My aesthetic is primarily energised by the stylistic collisions of rock innovators, John Zorn and Frank Zappa, and twentieth and twenty-first century experimenters, Charles Ives and Louis Andriessen, but also extends to Torke and Stravinsky. From across both modernist and postmodernist paradigms, each of these composers challenges the dichotomous dynamic between art and popular domains, producing music which I consider to be musical equivalents of Carroll’s literature. With these eclectic composers in mind, my music aspires to blend the rhythmic viscerality and vernacular language of rock and post-minimalism with the architectural design of late Modernism and early American Experimentalism. The intersection of these worlds is an integral component in generating my own portmanteau language.

My music positions oppositional ideas against each other as stylistic juxtapositions, borrowing structural techniques from musique-concrète, Ives, Torke, and Zorn, to experiment with a mosaic, non-linear design. These juxtapositions collide horizontally and vertically, appearing as either successive or superimposed sound-blocks. Their relationship is both hostile and harmonious, embracing a dual energy that musical oppositions thrive on. They are caught in a circular bind, where they simultaneously evolve to provoke an oppositional effect and exist as a result of it. Within these juxtapositional blocks, my compositions are driven by a series of dichotomies that focus on rhythm, sonority and texture, using different types of motion to drive the music. Another pair of oppositions, my work explores a synthesis of improvisation and traditional notation to create a controlled aleatoricism, and uses timbral ideas from rock music as the catalyst for expanded timbres.

In working towards a portmanteau aesthetic, my compositional process involves a series of dual processes. These include: rhythm versus pitch, sonic versus visual, improvisational versus architectural, instinct versus reflection, non-linear versus linear, and
music versus text. My experience as a rock drummer drives my practice rhythmically, while
my experience as a wind player, playing trumpet and flute, drives it melodically. Locally,
improvisation generates initial, visceral gestures, which are shaped and expanded globally via
electronic notation, audio-playback and ‘cut’ and ‘paste’ sound-block reorganisation
techniques.

The convergence of musical oppositions enriches my emerging portmanteau aesthetic,
embracing a combative, energised sound-world of rhythmic vitality, visceral sonorities, and
architectural design. Through a breakdown of linearity, my music generates its own nonsense,
whilst simultaneously positing juxtapositional reorganisation as a new form of ‘sense’; the
logic of nonsense.

What is Nonsense?: Antithesis of Sense and Humour

Literary Nonsense

Integral to my compositions is an understanding of what constitutes nonsense, and
how literary techniques and devices may transfer to a musical realm. Difficulty arises when
attempting to define “nonsense”; it is frequently interpreted as that which is senseless, makes
no sense or carries no meaning. Yet, nonsense is not the antithesis of sense at all. Stewart
suggests that what is most important in defining nonsense is its relationship with common
sense. If common sense is perceived as a way of organising the world, a “model of order”,
then “nonsense” becomes the disorganisation and reorganisation of sense (1989: vi). In this
way, it is almost impossible to attribute a single definition to nonsense because what is
perceived as common sense is continually changing and dependent upon social norms; the
content of nonsense will always be different, because what is nonsense in one context will not
be in another. According to Stewart, rather than talking about what nonsense is, we can talk
about nonsense by focussing on the qualities it perpetuates and the effects that these have on
the text. Nonsense is complementary to music, as it emphasises the abstract properties of sound and throughout my folio, celebrates the idea of sonic-text. It is not surprising that defining nonsense is problematic, for it is this opacity and slipperiness of language that nonsense plays with and exploits. As Jean-Jacques Lecercle writes, nonsense “is a kind of textual double-bind, or paradox. It is both free and constrained. It tells the reader to abide, and not to abide, by the rules of language” (1994: 25). Nonsense has unspoken rules of its own, but these are contingent upon the rules of common sense. It simultaneously supports and subverts the function of language whilst revelling in its intentional ambiguity.

One of the main features of nonsense is the intersection of disparate domains. Stewart examines how humour emerges from the real and imagined friction between the collision of similar and dissimilar worlds: “humour can arise when difference is perceived between universes thought to be compatible. On the other hand, humour can result from similarity perceived between universes thought to be disparate” (1989: 35). Carroll's use of portmanteau words demonstrate this idea by joining two, often unlikely, existing words together to create a new word that evokes new meaning via its sound. The most famous examples of portmanteaus come from Carroll's *Jabberwocky* poem (1872); “frumious”, “galumphing”, “slithy”, “chortle” and “mimsy” (2007: 180-182). “Slithy” is a combination of lithe and slimy; “mimsy”, miserable and flimsy; “galumph”, gallop and triumph, and “frumious”, a blending of the words “furious” and “fuming”. At first the words appear to make little sense, to be gibberish, but this is part of the concealed sense that nonsense enjoys. These root words are suggested by Carroll, but any other possible combinations that the reader may imagine would also work. The concept behind portmanteau words is simple and best described by Lewis Carroll in his preface to *The Hunting of The Snark*:

> For instance, take the two words “fuming” and “furious.” Make up your mind that you will say both words, but leave it unsettled which you will say first. Now open your mouth and speak. If your thoughts incline ever so little towards “fuming,” you will say “fuming-furious;” if they turn,
by even a hair's breadth, towards “furious,” you will say “furious-fuming;” but if you have that rarest of gifts, a perfectly balanced mind, you will say “frumious” (1967: 1).

What is most striking about portmanteau words is how easily they demonstrate the joining together of two ideas, whether perceived as compatible or incompatible, to express a new meaning that preserves the essence of the originals’ parts. Portmanteau words construct a new type of sense, at first thought to make no sense at all, by reshaping our perception of common sense.

Nonsense is also polyphonic, making use of a plethora of materials that borrow from different worlds to flatten and manipulate hierarchies and question the idea of hierarchy itself. As Jean-Jacques Lecercle writes: “nonsense as a genre is the weaving together into a tradition of two different, even opposed threads, one literary, the other folkloric, one poetic, the other childish, one ‘high’, the other ‘low’” (1994:179). As a result, nonsense is often structured like a patchwork, assembled from separate, eclectic parts of variegated colour. Nonsense texts frequently encourage multiple interpretations and associations as a result of their polyphonic, intertextual, pastiche and collage-like qualities. Carroll’s ability to parody Victorian songs, poems and nursery rhymes is virtuosic in the Alice books. Carroll takes this even further by self-referencing throughout all his texts, where similar phrases, concepts and themes reappear in different stories and bring a greater sense of unity to his literature. This interlacing quality almost gives the impression that the stories and poems are part of one collective work.

My compositions draw conceptual and structural ideas from nonsense to develop my own aesthetic, using a polyphony of materials to create a mosaic design, developing a “conceptual continuity”\(^1\), and embracing humour as a key juxtapositional tool. Here, my

\(^1\) A term also used by Frank Zappa to describe the “embedding of cross-references to other records throughout his oeuvre” (Watson, 1996, 118).
engagement with nonsense is two-fold; it both inspires the structural concepts in my folio, and provides a means of understanding the oppositional ideas at work. Inspired by Carroll’s portmanteau words, the invention of the musical portmanteau aims to flatten the hierarchy between vernacular and art music worlds, and challenge the perceived incompatibility of disparate ideas.

**Carroll Precedents and Consequents**

Lewis Carroll's literature holds a special place in Western culture. His *Alice* books are among the most well-known, retold and quoted stories of all time; they have never gone out of print and have been translated into almost every language around the globe. Carroll's work has been explored by film, philosophy, theatre, opera, literature and music, continually being rejuvenated, reinterpreted and reinvented. He has influenced artists and writers as diverse as James Joyce, T.S Eliot, Bertrand Russell, Virginia Woolf, Salvador Dali, David Del Tredici and Unsuk Chin. What is it about Carroll's nonsense style that is still relevant and captivating nearly a hundred and fifty years later? How did a shy Oxford mathematics don create the most popular children’s books of all time? Leading Carroll expert, Morton Cohen, questions the mysterious success surrounding the *Alice* books:

> What is the key to their enchantment, why are they so entertaining and yet so enigmatic? What charm enables them to transcend language as well as national and temporal difference and win their way into the hearts of young and old everywhere and always? (1996: 135)

Embarking on this project, it seems reasonable to ask, why I have chosen Carroll when there already appears to be such a large body of work dedicated to his literature? Surprisingly, there is not nearly as much art music as I expected to find, but it explores themes of interest: Carroll as stimulus, life versus fiction, old versus new, and musical oppositions through ensemble choice. The first notable work is Deems Taylor's *Through the Looking-glass* suite for orchestra, written in 1918. David Del Tredici is the most prolific

The majority of Del Tredici’s works are based on the *Alices*, with some of his earlier serialist pieces informed by the writings of James Joyce. Since 1968, Del Tredici’s fascination with Alice has seen him shift from atonality to usages of neo-romanticism and tonality, considered by some as a “retreat from contemporary expression” (Brunner, 1984: 159), and by his colleagues as “more than eccentric. It was somehow wrong” (Page, 1983: 22). Susan McClary discusses how Del Tredici unashamedly “sutures late Romantic past and Postmodern present seamlessly together” by embracing tonality; the return of a “proliferation of triadic sonorities” in recent music has been viewed as “backsliding” from atonality (2001: 141). Although stylistically my music is unlike Del Tredici’s, his tonal sonorities resonate with me. I am interested in the works of Del Tredici, not only because they explore Carroll, but because they display some of the key eclectic features which I believe contribute to nonsense as musical structure. *Final Alice* (1975) and *Vintage Alice* (1972) are scored for amplified soprano/narrator, a solo concertante group of folk instruments (mandolin, banjo, accordion, two soprano saxophones) and orchestra. As Del Tredici describes, the use of a folk group and orchestra conjures up a “metaphor for whimsical incongruity” (2008, *Vintage Alice* CD liner notes). This unconventional ensemble makes for an exciting context for inter and
intra ensemble conversation in the attempt to merge two seemingly disparate worlds. *Vintage Alice*, a portrayal of the Mad Tea-Party scene, employs an almost Ives-like treatment of “God Save the Queen” and “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star”, which form the core melodic material of the piece. The parody of these tunes resonates with the intertextual qualities of nonsense, where knowledge of their original context helps in establishing humour through comparative difference. Like Carroll and nonsense literature, Del Tredici’s works also take an interest in palindromes, experimenting with palindromic intervals, rhythms and structural shapes.

Australian composer Martin Wesley-Smith has also written many works which are Carroll themed. Wesley-Smith's pieces differ from other composers' by bringing together separate texts and creating a new world in which Carroll's characters interact simultaneously. *White Knight and Beaver* (1984) for flexible instrumentation and tape functions as a dialogue between the White Knight (believed to represent Carroll) from *Through the Looking Glass* and the Beaver (Alice) from the nonsense poem, *The Hunting of the Snark*. The piece begins with the White Knight showing the Beaver the many ways in which nursery rhymes can be played on a music box, featuring retrograde and inverted versions of “Polly Put the Kettle On” and “Ride a Cock Horse”. Wesley-Smith explains in a program note how the White Knight then decides to show, “a musical representation of a thousand or so nucleotides of plasmid pBR322 of Escherichia coli, a bacterium found in the stomach” (1985: score); a truly Carrollian idea! Wesley-Smith actively engages with Carroll’s nonsense, paying homage to his prolific use of parody and quotation, as well as imagining the unlikely relationship between the Knight and Beaver. Interestingly, Wesley-Smith achieves this without the use of text during performance. It is this type of interpretive and non-linear engagement with Carroll that I am most interested in; pieces that attempt to interact with the qualities inherent to nonsense, rather than literal depictions or recitations of the text. He has also written a musical

There are a myriad of popular artists and songs which borrow references from or allude to Carroll's texts, yet the majority of these only seem to do so superficially. Exceptions include *Jabberwocky* (1999), a progressive-rock concept album by Oliver Wakeman and Clive Nolan based on Carroll's poem “Jabberwocky” (1872), and Mike Batt’s concept album *The Hunting of the Snark* (1984), which features Art Garfunkel and Cliff Richards, and was later turned into a stage production.

Despite many musical works drawing influence from the *Alice* books, and a handful from *The Hunting of the Snark*, there appears to be no well-known pieces which are influenced by or take inspiration from the *Sylvie and Bruno* novels (1889 and 1893). Carroll himself considered them his magnum opus. My folio uses structural ideas from the *Sylvie* books, as well as the *Alices*, and celebrates their frame-within-a-frame circularity and non-linearity to form mosaic structures distinct from interpretations of other composers. Verbal duels and a sense of circularity reflect structures found in the books, while portmanteau words act as a personal metaphor for the coexistence of vernacular and art music elements. Here, the influence of Carroll’s literature in organising my music is both literal and metaphorical.

**Musical Nonsense: Juxtaposition of Art and Vernacular Elements Across Postmodern and Modernist Influences**

**Dichotomies, Oppositions and Sound-Blocks**

In his 1979 book *The Postmodern Condition*, French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard declares postmodernism as the rejection of modernism. He describes postmodernism as the “incredulity towards metanarratives” (1984: xxiv), thought to be the essence of
modernity, and instead proposes an alternative narrative: the “little narrative” (1984: 60). As David Beard and Kenneth Gloag write:

> In other words, we can no longer believe in the grand metanarratives of modernism and therefore the focus shifts to the micronarratives (‘the little narratives’) of postmodernism: from the large to the small, from the singular to the plural (2005: 141).

It is the linear quality of music, the way in which events “follow one another in succession”, that encourages a comparison of music to narrative (Beard and Gloag, 2005: 115). The breaking down of metanarratives disrupts this linearity, giving way to a plurality and non-linearity that postmodernism seemingly revels in. Theorist Jonathan Kramer lists fourteen musical characteristics of postmodernism which can be grouped into three main principles: the re-reading of materials and genres of the past, the eclectic use of style, and juxtaposition (1996: 21-22). Kramer goes on to suggest that postmodern musical time is “fragmented, discontinuous, nonlinear, and multiple” (1996: 22).

Andriessen, Zappa, Ives and Zorn each embrace the collision of vernacular and art music worlds, make use of successive and superimposed juxtapositions, and reinvent music and text from the past. Toggling rapidly between sound-blocks, Susan McClary suggests that John Zorn’s “Snagglepuss” from *Naked City* (1990) is anti-narrative (2001: 151), while Kramer argues that Ives’ “Putnam’s Camp” from *Three Places in New England* (1911-14), with its extensive quotations, anticipates a “postmodern temporal multiplicity” (1996: 48). Yet, as a modernist, this comment about Ives highlights the contradictory nature of postmodernism: juxtaposition and plurality are also characteristic of modernism, as evident in the works of Stravinsky, Ives and Varèse. As Gary Kendall writes:

> It is the early twentieth-century modernism that witnesses the birth of juxtaposition as an original organising principle. This is most often discussed in relation to the music of Igor Stravinsky. Edward Cone (1972) describes Stravinsky’s compositional process as involving the stratification, interlock and synthesis of juxtaposed elements (2006: 160).
Beard and Gloag further write that it is possible to challenge the claims made for postmodernism, as musical modernism “did contain its own plurality, as reflected by the very different musical practices of Schoenberg and Stravinsky, and was often a culture of fragmentation” (2005: 142). Tellingly, the innovative sound textures of Stravinsky and Varèse highly influenced the musique-concrete and sound-block techniques of Zappa and Zorn and, in turn, me. Characteristic of both postmodernism and modernism, juxtaposition and eclecticism are essential elements of my literary based portmanteau aesthetic.

To create a juxtapositional effect, and a new kind of structural logic, my compositions explore the relationship between a series of dichotomies that focus on rhythm, sonority and texture. Integral to my aesthetic of designed double energy is an emphasis on rhythmic motion and drive. Working with sound-masses, Edgard Varèse considered rhythm inextricably linked with energy and structure: “rhythm is the element in music that gives life to the work and holds it together. It is the element of stability, the generator of form” (1966: 15). The juxtaposition of rhythmic dichotomies in my compositions creates a dual-energy and friction which propels the sound-blocks forward; it is both relentless and interruptive, creating a combative motion which pulls in opposing directions with an elastic sense of time. These dichotomies include: pulsed and pulseless, manic bursts and stillness, wild syncopation and rigid rhythms, continual motion and rhythmic hiccups, rapid-fire and extreme slowness, and vertical stabs and horizontal lines. This emphasis on rhythm seeks to capture the viscerality of vernacular music and its repetitive use of syncopated rhythm as groove$^2$, whilst resonating with the rhythmic techniques of post-minimalist composers Michael Torke and Louis Andriessen. My experience as a drummer also contributes to an exploration of hocketing effects, paradiddle rudiments, linear rhythms and idiomatic rock patterns, which I explore in chapter three.

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$^2$ The notion of groove is further discussed on page 139-141.
Vernacular at a gestural level, sound-blocks are organised with the design and process of contemporary art music. Sound-blocks collide and converge in response to fluctuations in tempo, metre, pulse, accent, rhythmic character and mood. Inciting another dual energy, shifts in rhythmic motion are used as tools to both connect and disrupt sound-blocks, intensifying and dispersing energy: accelerandos and rallentandos link blocks of disparate material, while blocks of continual momentum are interrupted by spurts of spiky rhythms. In these non-linear structures, sound-blocks recur at different rates of change and for different lengths of time, rather than at regular intervals, which creates a dynamic stop-start rhythm. Upon recurrence, time ratios are manipulated as blocks are truncated and expanded, duelling against opposing blocks and negotiating new relationships. In the spirit of nonsense, structural patterns are set up only to be distorted and challenged. In chapter five, I examine the design of *Frumious* and *Bandersnatch* in detail to show dense structural distortions.

In addition, my music harnesses not only structural collisions but sonority juxtapositions, where the functional chords and triads of rock music are pitted against the atonality, chromaticism of contemporary art music as post-tonal densities. I discuss my strategy of atonal stacking in chapter three, and explain how harmonic portmanteaus function in my later compositions in chapter five. Together, these opposing harmonic energies drive the sound-blocks and timbre slabs forward. Other sonority dichotomies include consonance and dissonance, extremes of register, sustained and moving resonances and opposing modes or keys. My compositions also explore clean and distorted timbres and timbral techniques associated with both art and vernacular worlds. Orchestral instruments reimagine timbres synonymous with rock music, and experiment with extended techniques commonly found in contemporary art music vocabulary. In movement three of *Take Care of the Sense*, a large metal ruler is placed over the strings of the piano to imitate a distorted guitar sound, while in other works, more traditional techniques of flutter-tongues and harmonic glissando alter
woodwind colours. Expanded timbres are explored via traditional notation, as well as an amalgam of improvisation and notation to produce a controlled aleatoricism, negotiated through Lutoslawski-inspired mobiles. This sets-up another dichotomy of strict and free. Text also functions as a form of referential notation, where word instructions in the score describe the mood of sound-blocks, as well as sonically through the use of voice in *Take Care of the Sense*, offering spontaneous direction through semi-improvised blocks (see Example 2.1).

**Example 2.1 Take Care of the Sense, Mvt. II (bar 49) - Semi-improvised block**

The interaction between successive and superimposed sound-blocks creates a continually changing texture, which positions instrument groups against each other as well as together in massed unison. Here, dense, unison textures appear in opposition with pointillistic-sounding splatters and tangled polyphony. Unison textures draw influence from rock and post-minimalism, while pointillistic ideas are borrowed from the harmonic language of Modernism. Although my compositions take on non-linear forms, as sound-blocks are continually rearranged, my work also experiments with linear textures. The dialogue between vertical and horizontal textures results in hocket-inspired, interlocking rhythmic figures, which form melodies by rapidly alternating between melodic fragments from distinct colour.

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3 Please note that all score examples in this thesis are in C, except when indicated as transposing.
groups. A focus on individual melodic lines also informs a contrapuntal linear style, weaving independent lines together in a layered Ivesian way. Against this, vertical stabs and massed chord sforzandos are superimposed, often with a disregard for harmonic relationships, setting up another opposition of horizontal and vertical. The following table (see Table 2.1) illustrates how the oppositional relationships are split into musical and conceptual dichotomies.

**Table 2.1 Dichotomies as an oppositional music aesthetic**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Musical Dichotomies</th>
<th>Conceptual Dichotomies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rhythm</strong></td>
<td><strong>Texture</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulsed</td>
<td>Chunky unison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs.</td>
<td>vs. Tangled</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pulse-less</td>
<td>polychoral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manic bursts</td>
<td>Horizontal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs.</td>
<td>textures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stillness</td>
<td>vs. Vertical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>textures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild syncopations</td>
<td>Visceral Slabs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs.</td>
<td>vs. Splattering, ‘</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rigid rhythms</td>
<td>‘Pointillistic’ Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continual motion</td>
<td>Successive Sound-block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs.</td>
<td>vs. Superimposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythmic hiccups</td>
<td>Sound-block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>vs. Superimposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sound-block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid-fire</td>
<td>Ensemble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs.</td>
<td>vs. Small Ensemble/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme slowness</td>
<td>Solo voices</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Integral to my compositions is the relationship between these dichotomies and how they interact on a micro and macro level to create a series of juxtapositions. The positioning of opposites against and across each other, like the portmanteau word, openly challenges their incompatibility, as they become part of a juxtapositional musical language.

**Musical Nonsense Precedents**

As precedents for musical nonsense, I have looked to rock innovators John Zorn and Frank Zappa, and Twentieth and Twenty-first Century experimenters Louis Andriessen and Charles Ives. Drawing equally from art and vernacular realms, these composers use stylistic juxtapositions to achieve imaginative structural arrangements, experimenting with qualities unique to nonsense, paralleled in the texts of Carroll. Jacqueline Flescher discusses how in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*:

> Nonsense bears the stamp of paradox. The two terms of the paradox are order and disorder. Order is generally created by language, disorder by reference. But the essential factor is the peculiar interplay (1969: 1).

Their music participates in a dialogue between order and disorder, continually erring on the brink of chaos and celebrating the friction produced by the positioning of oppositional ideas. The result is sometimes harmonious and sometimes conflicting, but always unstable. Together, the juxtaposition and superimposition of oppositional sound-blocks results in a musical portmanteau effect which informs my folio.

Zorn's music epitomises the turbulent interaction between order and disorder through rapid genre shifts, split into sound-blocks, which suggest a channel-surfing effect akin to musique-concrete. As Susan McClary writes, Zorn’s music, “announces his refusal to abide by what Andreas Huyssen has called the Great Divide between so-called high and popular culture, for he is heir to both” (2001: 148). Despite their chaotic exterior, Zorn’s works are meticulously structured and toggle between fierce oppositions of “the improvisational and the
imitative, the creative and the derivative, the chaotic and the parodic” (McNeilly, 1995: para. 8). His work is linear and transient, imbued with snippets of popular culture and the seemingly ‘low’ brow. Of particular interest are Zorn’s projects Electric Masada and Naked City, his file-card compositions Spillane (1986), Big Gundown (1985), and “Liber Novus” from Dictée/Novus (2010), and his game pieces Cobra (1984), Fencing (1978) and Archery (1979). Performed by Naked City, Nicholas Cook writes about the psychological effect of juxtaposition in “Snagglepuss” (1988):

the music is loud and all-encompassing, and yet it takes on an unreal, even surreal, quality of
metaphorical transcendence through the juxtaposition of incompatible sound worlds, of elements
so diverse in nature that the absurdity of bringing them together has a disorienting effect on the ear
and mind. (2006: 120)

In reference to Spillane Eric Dries talks about how Zorn, “breaks linear narrative into kaleidoscopic shards through sharp contrast, stylistic pastiche and quotation, and fragmentation and acceleration of musical time” (1994: 28). Spillane uses the text of novelist Mickey Spillane as a thread to link seemingly disparate sound blocks together (see Table 2.2). Although stylistically distinct, each block is connected to the next through the common theme of noir detective imagery. As a file-card composition, each card represents to the performers a distinct sound block; each contains either musical or extra-musical information. Some of the blocks use conventional notation, while others contain written instructions, sound descriptions or personal word metaphors. The end result creates a “linear-temporal collage”, arranged from disparate sound-blocks in a clearly structured but seemingly illogical order (Dries, 1993: 23). Tom Service (2004) stresses that the file-cards’ role is as a starting point for the rehearsal process leading up to the performance of the piece as a fixed recording. He writes that file cards, “are a catalyst and inspiration for action rather than a prescriptive- or, still less, descriptive- map of the piece” (2004: 61). Zorn’s file card shown in Figure 2.1 corresponds to the second, third and fourth segments of Service’s Spillane
descriptive chart (see Table 2.2). Here, the combination of typed and handwritten text suggests the flexible nature of the cards, as information is continually added and altered during rehearsal in Zorn’s almost indecipherable hand. In keeping with Zorn’s referential material, many of his file-card compositions are tributes to his favourite figures; *Big Gundown* pays homage to film composer Ennio Morricone, while more recently, “Liber Novus” is inspired by Carl Jung’s dream explorations from the *Red Book*, compiled between 1914-1930, and published in 2009.

**Table 2.2 Descriptive chart of Zorn’s *Spillane*, segments 1-7 (Service, 2004: 86-87)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 0’00”-</td>
<td>3”</td>
<td>Scream</td>
<td>Noise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0’03”</td>
<td>49”</td>
<td>High-tempo lick for ensemble: piano and guitar over sizzling cymbal and bass; keyboard with Route 66 tune.</td>
<td>Genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0’52”-</td>
<td>12”</td>
<td>Scene with dog and sirens; trumpet mute (quasivocal, ‘barking’ sound), sampled dog barks; sirens, cars, and people as real-world underscore.</td>
<td>Scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1’04”-</td>
<td>16”</td>
<td>Continuation of high-tempo lick from second section (Route 66), but with prominent sax solo; builds in textural energy (piano crashes) and dissonance, and breaks down.</td>
<td>Genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1’20”-</td>
<td>48”</td>
<td>Narration section: drips, feedback, guitar harmonics, first narration sequence for <em>The Voice of Mike Hammer</em>; ‘You kill ten guys. . . . You better wake up’. Strings underscore, vibes and piano and windscape noises, which all continue after the speech finishes, followed by a piano blues line that segues into next section over vibraphone resonance.</td>
<td>Narration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2’08”-</td>
<td>39”</td>
<td>Strip-joint scene: piano, sleazy sax line, drums; continuous clapping and hollering, testosterone fuelled vocals. Achieves ‘closure’ of melody and harmony; vocals give appreciative claps and screams. Elision, via guitar harmonics, into next section.</td>
<td>Scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2’47”-</td>
<td>12”</td>
<td>Noise: whines, modified windscreen washer squeak sample, and guitar plunks, far back in the mix</td>
<td>Noise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While there is some freedom in the file-card compositions, Zorn’s game pieces are entirely improvised, yet are structured using sets of rules. According to Zorn, the game pieces “deal with form, not with content, with relationships, not with sound” (Brackett, 2010: 62). Rather than reading a score, the performers follow a set of strict rules. The sequence of contrasting sound-blocks is achieved by choices made by each improviser in accordance with the rules. Fencing involves superimposing different genres of music upon each other in an ‘Ivesian’ way, while Archery, written for twelve performers, is about achieving all possible combinations of soloists, duets and trios within the group. The most famous of the game pieces, Cobra, takes its name and concept from the popular World War II–simulation game released in 1977. Cobra is of particular interest to me; its combative and antagonistic nature resonates with the verbal battles of the Alices. Via hand signals, players can initiate “guerrilla tactics” and “operations” in an attempt to overthrow the conductor and gain control of the ensemble (McNeilly, 1995: para. 18). Another of Zorn’s projects, Electric Masada fuses
unusual combinations to create a musical portmanteau. *At the Mountains of Madness* (2005) navigates a manic mix of Klezmer and noise-rock, metal and free-jazz, lyricism and wildness, and free-sounding and structured sections. A barrage of percussion coexists with laptop electronics, where the juxtaposition of clean and abrasive timbres, and digital and acoustic sounds, becomes another expression of nonsense.

Zappa’s prolific body of work explores the collision of popular and art music worlds, frequently juxtaposing styles with an aim towards pluralistic synthesis. Of particular interest to me are albums *Lumpy Gravy* (1968), *Hot Rats* (1969), and *Orchestral Favorites* (1979). *Lumpy Gravy* is assembled from short, fragmented sections and woven together by snippets of dialogue⁴. Its end result is also reminiscent of musique-concrete, its schizophrenic structure navigating a soundscape of seemingly unconnected parts. Studio tape editing played a key role in achieving the juxtapositional structure of *Lumpy Gravy*, and James Borders suggests that this “editorial creativity” stemmed from Zappa’s experience with visual media, especially collage (2001: 135). Zappa paraphrases diverse contemporary styles and arranges the sound-blocks via structural concepts borrowed from Stravinsky’s works. Considered a serious composer of modernist art music in some circles⁵, with chamber works performed by Pierre Boulez⁶ and Ensemble Modern (Midgette, 2007), Zappa was highly influenced by

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⁴ Luciano Berio’s *Laborintus II* (1965) acts as a precedent to Zappa’s *Lumpy Gravy*, with a “wide range of literary allusions” and a “fondness for the use of musical references” (Donat, 1972: 57). The work uses the mosaic text of Marxist writer Edoardo Sanguinti’s poem *Laborintus* (1956), which, along with original material, resets fragments of text by T.S Eliot, Dante, Ezra Pound, and the Bible. Like *Lumpy Gravy*, spoken word is used to connect seemingly unrelated sections together: *Laborintus II* presents as, “a sequence of situations and dramatic attitudes that are established by spoken words, and then extended and elaborated upon by music, action and setting” (Flynn, 1973: 488).

⁵ The suggestion of Zappa as a serious modernist is contentious. There was a lack of universal acceptance of Zappa as an art music composer, inflamed by events like the 1985 ‘While You Were Art’ incident, which caused “quite a scandal in ‘modern music circles’” (Occhiogrosso, 1989: 176), and his difficult relationships with and unrealistic expectations of orchestras, starting with the Los Angeles Philharmonic’s performance of *200 Motels* excerpts in 1970. Yet, later, the 1992 Ensemble Modern concerts in Frankfurt of *Yellow Shark* were considered a huge success (Bernard, 2009: 74, 93).

⁶ Boulez conducted Zappa’s 1984 album *The Perfect Stranger*, performed by Ensemble InterContemporain, and commissioned the title track. As a modernist, Boulez, along with the postmodernist John Cage, resisted “institutions designed to realize the music of the past. Romanticism’s ideology of ‘personal expression’ is experienced as a shackle; hence their interest in processes that go beyond the ‘control’ of the expressive intentions of the composer” (Watson: 1996: 127). Boulez’s high modernist aesthetic was not in
Varèse, Webern and in particular, Stravinsky. As a result, *Lumpy Gravy Part One* features recurring sound-blocks in tribute to each of these composers; he labels them in the score as “Stravinskiana”, “Varèsiana”, and “Weberniana”. Zappa also reinvents material from *The Rite of Spring* and *Petrushka*. Music and dialogue share a symbiotic relationship; each block is preceded by a monologue or conversation. Sometimes the dialogue comments on the music to follow, and at other times it appears entirely unrelated to the music itself. Yet, as one of the few recurring elements, speech functions as a structural anchor where continuity is created only through constant change (see Table 2.3). The following table shows *Lumpy Gravy Part One* unfolding from A through to E, establishing its own structural ‘norm’. Within the collage, the recurrence of the B section functions as a structural signpost; although the “Oh No” material is heard three times throughout, each time it uses contrasting instrumentation. The “Stravinskiana” and “Varèsiana” blocks also each appear three times, but never with the same instrumentation or material, acting more as a conceptual recurrence, while the “Weberniana” appears once as a type of capstone block. The structure of the piece sets up a dialogue between the traditional structural device of recurrence and the less traditional concept of constant change as unifier. In response to the rapid instrumentation changes, the recurrence of speech further serves as a timbral anchor.

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alignment with Zappa’s postmodernist collage; however, he supported his music as a conductor and in a broad sense their philosophical ‘rebel aesthetic’ aligns, for as Ben Watson suggests, both sought to, “disrupt packaging clichés that threaten to box them in a corner” (1996: 127), and as Charles McCardell writes, “both men invite, in fact revel in, controversy” (1985: 9).
### Table 2.3 Variation rondo form of Zappa’s *Lumpy Gravy Part One* (Borders, 2001: 130-133)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Index Title or Description</th>
<th>Prominent Instruments; Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0:00-0:04)</td>
<td>Instrumental Theme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1:47-2:07)</td>
<td>4/4 Swing vamp</td>
<td>Piano, vibraphone, bass, drum kit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>2:07-3:41</td>
<td>[3. “Oh No”] Rondo theme</td>
<td>Piano vibrphone, guitar, bass, drum kit, and added brass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3:41-3:44)</td>
<td>Surf Music</td>
<td>Guitar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3:45-3:47)</td>
<td>Collage</td>
<td>Manipulated voices, flute, bass clarinet, and piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3:47-3:58)</td>
<td>Women’s conversation</td>
<td>Spoken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3:58-4:46)</td>
<td>Men’s conversation</td>
<td>Spoken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4:47-5:17)</td>
<td>Traditional jazz parody</td>
<td>Accelerated, with scratch and skipping effects of a 78 r.p.m. recording</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5:45-6:17)</td>
<td>Collage</td>
<td>Motorhead’s manipulated voice plus other taped and percussion sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6:17-6:18)</td>
<td>Short pentatonic melody with surf beat</td>
<td>Guitar, bass, drum kit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6:19-6:20)</td>
<td>[7. “Almost Chinese”] Conversation about the preceding snippet of music</td>
<td>Spoken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6:20-6:27)</td>
<td>Collage</td>
<td>Motorhead’s manipulated voice plus other taped and percussion sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6:27-6:35)</td>
<td>Reprise of pentatonic melody</td>
<td>Guitar, bass, drum kit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6:35-6:41)</td>
<td>Collage</td>
<td>Percussion ensemble with celesta, plus manipulated sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6:42-6:52)</td>
<td>[8. “Switching Girls”]</td>
<td>Spoken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6:53-6:56)</td>
<td><em>Varèsianna</em></td>
<td>Flute, piano, percussion ensemble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6:56-7:11)</td>
<td>Instrumental introduction to “Oh No”</td>
<td>Orchestral instruments with timbres manipulated; closes in 5/8 meter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>7:11-9:16</td>
<td>[9. “Oh No Again”] with short transition</td>
<td>Light jazz combo with strings, woodwinds, marimba and snare drum, with added orchestral instruments</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8:23-9:16</td>
<td><em>Stravinskiana</em> (cf. <em>Petrushka</em>, First Tableau) with the last four measures of the rondo theme plus extension</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>9:17-13:46</td>
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7 Timings correspond to the 1986 CD reissue
Orchestral Favourites and Lumpy Gravy both feature the thirty-seven piece “Abnuceals Emuukha Electric Symphony Orchestra” which, as the name suggests, consists of a combination of orchestral and rock instruments that invites an unusual interplay between art, jazz and popular music realms. Lyrically too, Zappa's narrations suggest a Carrollian sense of humour. The narration throughout songs like “Billy The Mountain”, from the Mothers of Invention's *Just Another Band from L.A* (1972), features absurd lyrics with extensive references to other works, including “Somewhere Over The Rainbow”, “Star-Spangled Banner”, “Pomp and Circumstance”, and “Suite: Judy Blue Eyes” (Lowe, 2007:99).

Although my folio experiments with the blending of art and rock realms in a style comparable to Zappa, via the recurrence of text and the notion of continual change, I also see the connection between Zappa's music and my own as being more abstract, mood and gestural based, rather than being primarily genre referential. The toggling between

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Interval</th>
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<tr>
<td>(9:17-11:04)</td>
<td>Voice (Motorhead), interrupted briefly by “Louie, Louise” (9:24-9:25); added percussion in different meters</td>
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<tr>
<td>(11:05-11:27)</td>
<td>[11. “Another Pickup”] Blues rock parody</td>
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<tr>
<td>(11:27-11:39)</td>
<td>Collage</td>
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<tr>
<td>(11:40-11:57)</td>
<td>Tape effect with piano sounds</td>
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<tr>
<td>(13:05-13:07)</td>
<td>Conversations among studio musicians, ends with [12. “I Don’t Know if I Can Go through This Again”]</td>
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<tr>
<td>(13:08-13:46)</td>
<td>Orchestral excerpt</td>
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<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>13:46-14:06</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>14:06-15:51</td>
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<tr>
<td>(14:06-14:18)</td>
<td>Tape effects</td>
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<td>(14:19-14:45)</td>
<td><em>Varèsianna</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>(14:46-14:48)</td>
<td><em>Stravinskiana</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>(14:48-15:51)</td>
<td><em>Weberniana</em></td>
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seriousness and playfulness, or light and dark moods, is a significant element in facilitating an oppositional reorganisation throughout my work. Each piece frequently changes mood. My scores highlight changes in mood or style by using phrases to describe the “feeling” to be evoked in each section. For example: “joyous, with a touch of humour” in *Cabbages and Kings*, “clamorous” in *Boojum*, “in a warped march style” and “enthusiastically, with an air of pomposity” in movement two of *Take Care of the Sense*, and “like a winding music-box” in movement four of the same suite. The use of mood related words aims to strengthen the scored music details, whilst bringing music closer to the associative and suggestive qualities of text. In a different way, Zappa's music achieves mood inspired oppositions by openly juxtaposing vernacular sounds with ‘serious’ music to a humorous and satirical effect. His juxtaposition of moods takes place over both a short time period, within songs, and over a large time scale, throughout his whole body of work. For the most part, Zappa's catalogue precariously balances between the serious and the tongue-in-cheek, bordering on parody and constantly masking which is which. In contrast, my compositions embrace a cheeky and whimsical sense of humour; a portmanteau of lightness and heaviness that revels in disparate sound worlds.

Zappa and Zorn were highly influenced by Edgard Varèse, a pioneer of tape and electronic music, and his treatment of sound as “blocks” or “masses” which are arranged simultaneously or successively. Varèse has shaped some of the structural concepts found in my folio, particularly the idea of the sound-block. In a 1959 lecture, Varèse explains that his music is “based on the motion of un-related sound masses” (Strawn. 1978: 140). Gary Kendall describes Varèse’s *Poem Electronique* as being “rich in juxtapositions, especially sequential juxtapositions”, while Robert Cogan highlights the work’s “oppositional poetics” (Kendall. 2006: 164). As a child, Varèse often watched stonemasons at work and draws analogy between organising blocks of granite and blocks of sound, where every stone must fit
with the next. In thinking about how Varèse arranged sound masses, reproductions of his manuscripts suggest that he organised scores by grouping snippets of material together, rather like the process of solving a jigsaw puzzle (Strawn, 1978: 155). In contrast, Zappa explores collage techniques through studio editing, and Zorn through the use of file-cards.

I am drawn to Varèse’s *Ionisation* (1930) and its exploration of percussion timbres via successive juxtapositions and timbre modulation. Chou Wen-Chung’s analysis of *Ionisation* reveals Varèse’s use of timbre as a way of organising sound-blocks. Using only material of indefinite pitch, Varèse groups together instruments of the same family or similar characteristics; each of the seven groups is “capable of changes in register and timbre and yet remains identifiable as a single part or ‘line’” (Wen-Chung, C, 1978: 7). Varèse’s timbre categories are shown in the following table (see Table 2.4).

**Table 2.4 *Ionisation* timbre categories (Wen-Chung, C, 1978)**

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| 1. | Metal  
   | Triangle, anvil, cowbells, hand cymbals, crash cymbal, suspended cymbal, gong, tam-tams, and rim shot (on tarole, snare drum, parade drum, and tenor drum). |
| 2. | Membrane  
   | Bongos, snare drum without snare (Player 8), tenor drums, and bass drums. |
| 3. | Snare  
   | Tarole, snare drum with snare (Player 9), and parade drum. |
| 4. | Wood  
   | Claves, wood blocks, and slapstick |
| 5. | Rattle-Scratcher (Multiple Bounce)  
   | Sleigh bells, castanets, tambourine, maracas, and guiros. |
| 6. | Air-Friction (Varying Intensity)  
   | Sirens and string drum. |
| 7. | Keyboard-Mallet (Tone Cluster)  
   | Glockenspiel with resonators, chimes, and piano. |

Here, the distinction between each timbre group is crucial in achieving textural and timbral juxtapositions, where ‘like’ timbres are set against ‘unlike’ timbres for maximum impact. Yet, at the same time, an underlying process of timbral modulation also links the
‘unlike’ timbres, finding similar sound qualities between the groups. My own music also uses timbre as a way to organise sound-blocks; in Bandersnatch and Cabbages and Kings I set up instrument juxtapositions, where rock colours are pitted against orchestral colours. In another way, the contrasting textures of Frumious each function as distinct timbre blocks.

The divergent worlds of Zappa and Zorn link with my oppositional aesthetic by navigating sets of dichotomies which, although different to my own, resonate with my folio by exploring abrupt genre changes, combative interplay, and the intersection of rock and classic influences. Yet, unlike these composers, I am not interested in musical quotations, references, or borrowings, but rather the abstract variegated patchwork effect these devices achieve. I am interested in their use of structure, how they set up patterns and play with duality, rather than their content. While Zappa and Zorn are more concerned with successive or sequential juxtapositions, Andriessen and Ives investigate simultaneous juxtapositions via techniques of superimposition.

Louis Andriessen’s four-part De Materie (1984-89) explores an antiphonal approach that pits clusters of unconventional ensembles against each other in stylistic duel-like contexts. He calls this the “terrifying 21st-Century orchestra”. Andriessen works with a series of extremes, “warmth and distance, formalism and vulgarity, or simply fast and slow”; he enjoys positioning opposites next to each other as juxtapositions, or on top of each other as superimpositions (Andriessen, 2002: 13). The third instalment of De Materie, “De Stijl” (1984-85), presents as a collage of seemingly incompatible styles of boogie woogie, chorale, funk and rap, yet is surprisingly smooth in its transitions. Andriessen discusses how De Materie is strictly organised, yet sounds as though it has been “hurled onto the canvas in a joyous, Karel Appel-ish sort of way” (Andriessen, 2002: 188). Tellingly, he describes chaos as the “friend” of organisation; here, it is the unusual interplay between order and disorder that nonsense so readily embraces that I find most appealing. Andriessen’s works draw from
texts as diverse as Plato’s *The Republic*, a handbook on shipbuilding, the diary of Marie Curie and her Nobel Prize speech, and even *The Principles of Plastic Mathematics* (1916). *De Staat* (1976) uses texts which work against and are contradictory to the musical material, reveling in the irony that is produced. David Wright notes that in *De Staat*, it is ironic that Plato’s *The Republic* discusses male education, yet it is performed by a chorus of only female voices (1993: 9). Andriessen also makes use of musical puns where, despite *The Republic* rejecting repetitive music and forms of imitation, he highlights these elements in the work (Wright, 1993: 9).

Andriessen’s visceral language is characterised by qualities synonymous with rock music: extreme volumes within art music contexts, dense, unison textures and an unrelenting rhythmic drive (see Example 2.2). Andriessen talks about the loudness and use of amplification for balance in *De Staat* as stemming from rock’n roll, and how American orchestras were unable to play *De Snelheid* (The Velocity, 1984) without the use of earplugs (2002: 148, 178). Also citing influence from hard rock, *Hoketus* (1976) is written for two identical quintets and relentlessly explores a hocket effect. The piece embraces ruthless rhythms which are “thrown about in antiphonal exchanges” between the two identical groups (Wright, 1993: 7). Originating from the medieval practice, a hocket is defined as the “rapid alternation of two voices to form a composite melody” (Everett, 2007: 73). The quintets do not play simultaneously until the very end of the piece; instead, their parts continually interlock in a linear way to create a hocket. Spatially separated, each group’s exchange is juxtaposed with the next, yet both groups must work together to achieve a clear and cohesive hocket effect. Excitingly, the perceived friction in this violent duel-like context ultimately gives way to unity, and in turn, resonates with the paradoxical characteristics of nonsense. Andriessen’s hocket techniques have influenced my rhythmic language, in experimenting
with visceral, unison rhythms, and in thinking about how rhythmic cells expand and contract over time.

Example 2.2 Andriessen, *De Staat* (bars 733-740) - Loud, dense textures and relentless rhythm
An earlier precedent for post-minimalist collisions is Charles Ives’s use of simultaneous and successive stylistic juxtapositions, where the use of ‘style as structure’ was previously unparalleled (Starr: 1992). Ives’s music navigates a plethora of opposing styles, blending the vernacular and art music worlds, and the serious with the playful:

Its diversity is unrivalled, ranging from band marches to avant-garde experiments and from Victorian church anthems to some of the most complex orchestral music ever written. Within a single work, Ives may mix banal chord progressions with tone clusters and quarter tones, high comedy with spiritual profundity, and the old and the familiar with sounds never heard before. (Burkholder, 1985: ix)

Larry Starr discusses how Ives’s diverse stylistic palette creates a clear and coherent compositional voice via the idea of unity through constant change. He suggests that this constant musical change stems from and is mirrored by the experience of life itself, where unlikely stylistic combinations evoke life’s “irresolutions and incongruities” (1992: 116). Starr’s suggestion resonates strongly with my emerging juxtapositional voice, where the eclectic range of influences heard in my work reflects my own musical experiences as both a performer and spectator.

Ives’s orchestral pair of works The Two Contemplations (1908), “The Unanswered Question” (1906, rev. 1932), and “Central Park in the Dark” (1906), navigates a montage of juxtaposed elements which capture the qualities of nonsense. “The Unanswered Question” is scored for an unusual combination of strings, four flutes/woodwinds and solo trumpet; each group explores a different tempo, key, dynamic, register, and rate of change, and together create a new sound-world by blending disparate components. Sustained strings are pitted against rapid flute interjections and a haunting trumpet call, yet the piece maintains a sense of unity by repeating each section in sequence (McDonald, 2004: 267). Contributing to the separation of the groups, the strings perform off-stage. Larry Starr discusses how Ives’s stylistic superimpositions are most effective when using groups of distinct timbres in which
contrasting layers can, “project the maximum individual identity and independence” (1992: 116). Ives’s juxtapositional techniques are heightened by colour choices and, by doing so, he sets up a distinction between similar components (instrument type) and dissimilar components (musical material). “The Unanswered Question” plays with the relationships between like and unlike where, by recurring disparate material by the same instrument groups, just enough ‘like’ is sustained to make ‘sense’.
Example 2.3 Ives, “The Unanswered Question” (bars 30-42), *The Two Contemplations* - Opposing groups
“Central Park in the Dark” also utilises techniques of juxtaposition, using simultaneous and successive sound-blocks. There are three layers. One is a group of strings, another piano and clarinet and the third, percussion and brass. The piece simulates the sounds of Manhattan nightclubs as they spill into Central Park; popular piano ragtimes slowly emerge from a veil of eerie strings to collide with a fury of marching drums and brass playing a distorted version of “Washington Post March”.

Ives's use of musical quotations and borrowings is an identifying feature of his style, perhaps best demonstrated in *Three Places in New England* (1911-14), and is a key element in establishing a mosaic nonsense structure. Ives’s music celebrates a type of “messiness” which intentionally tries to emulate the spirit of amateur music-making (Starr: 1992: 15). The second movement of *Three Places in New England*, “Putnam’s Camp”, is famous for its depiction of two amateur marching bands, playing in different tempos, marching towards each other, passing and separating. As a result, the piece features collage techniques, outrageous dissonances, raucous timbres and multiple quotations which pay homage to nineteenth-century America. Tunes recognisably quoted include “British Grenadiers”, “Yankee Doodle”, “The Battle Cry of Freedom”, “Oh Suzanna”, Sousa’s “Semper Fidelis”, and “The Star-Spangled Banner”. Elements of “Putnam’s Camp” are a reinvention of an earlier piece *Country Band March* (1903) which was an “an affectionate parody of the mistakes, missteps and enthusiasms of an amateur band” (Burkholder: 1985, 53). The vernacular elements of “Putnam’s Camp” are juxtaposed with its orchestral setting; the conspicuous presence of strings, an unconventional addition to any marching band, reminds us of its symphonic context and the combative interplay between the duelling bands. The heavy use of brass creates a striking contrast with the predominately slow string and woodwind textures of the outer movements. Ives’s portrayal of band music resonates with my
own experiences growing up playing trumpet in amateur concert bands and cornet in brass bands\textsuperscript{8}; enthusiasm was not always matched by ability.

**Controlled Aleatoricism and Expanded Timbres**

Contributing to my organised oppositionality is an exploration of controlled aleatoricism and traditional and expanded timbres, as well as a synthesis of traditional notation and improvisation. These oppositions challenge the definition of strict and free, where composed passages can sound just as free as improvised sections, while dirty timbres can require just as much control to articulate, if not more, as clean timbres. My timbral palette borrows ideas and techniques from rock and jazz musics, whose timbres have encouraged me to reimage traditional instrument colours. As the epitome of rock, many of the sounds explored emulate the electric guitar or drum kit in some way, some more literally than others. The use of slap pizzicato by double bass imitates the ‘pop’ and ‘slap’ articulations of funk electric bass. Together, the blending of improvisation and notation, strict and free structures, rock and orchestral instrumentation, and clean and visceral timbres, sets up another double energy which contributes to a musical portmanteau aesthetic.

In distinguishing between the indeterminate and the aleatoric, David Cope describes the aleatoric as, “primarily a European concept which employs chance techniques with a controlled framework, therefore more related to improvisation than true indeterminacy” (1971: 90). Yet, George Lewis points out that Cope, by attributing aleatoricism as having a European origin, has largely ignored the Afrological origins of aleatoricism in the improvisatory forms of jazz, by the likes of Charlie Parker and John Coltrane, and their

continued influence on European improvisation (1996: 102-103). To facilitate a controlled aleatoricism, I have used my own adaptation of Witold Lutoslawski’s mobiles, together with expanded timbres and gestures inspired by rock and jazz sound-worlds, resonating with Afrological-rooted improvising ideas. Lutoslawski originally developed the mobile to notate simultaneous parts, in which it was not important if they synchronised vertically, expressing a rhythmic looseness that captured an element of spontaneity upon each performance: the parts share a ‘mobile’ relationship. Inspired by John Cage, Lutoslawski first experimented with the idea of “limited aleatorism” or “aleatory counterpoint” in *Jeux Venitiens* (1961). In an interview with Bogdan Gieraczynski, Lutoslawski discusses his motivation behind the technique:

> I'm thinking about both the possibility of enriching the rhythmic aspect of the composition without increasing the difficulties for the performers, and about allowing free, individualized play on the instruments in the orchestra. These were the elements of the aleatoric technique that interested me most of all, because they permit me a wide vision of sound that would otherwise exist only in my imagination. (1989: 8)
Example 2.4 Lutoslawski, *Venetian Games*, Movement II (bars 46-54)
This is an important concept in my own compositions, where players’ parts occur concurrently over an approximate time scale, with no bar lines, and with an elastic sense of pulse. My use of mobiles provides directions for the players to improvise and expand upon the material inside the boxes, and to continue for as long as suggested. These sections of controlled aleatoricism exist in opposition to the strict rhythmic timeline enforced in other sections by traditional notation. Throughout Take Care of the Sense each movement features at least one section which focuses on a controlled aleatoricism. The majority of the work is scored using traditional notation and, in some segments, mobiles cut across the strict notation, deliberately disrupting the flow and sense of motion. In contrast, mobiles in Bandersnatch are used in the slower, lyrical sections, where brass and winds are pitted against each other with distinct notated and controlled aleatory roles. The bass clarinettist and baritone saxophonist also improvise with percussive slap-tonguing by means of mobiles. Frumious features a single segment of controlled aleatoricism as a piccolo solo, which affords a generous amount of timbral and rhythmic freedom with instructions of “molto ridiculoso, weird”.

Avant-rock group Henry Cow blurs the boundaries between art and popular musics by blending composed and improvised structures, and rock and orchestral instrumentation. Albums, Legend (1973), Unrest (1974) and Western Culture (1979) integrate orchestral instruments of bassoon, oboe and violin into a rock setting, exploring a palette of expanded timbres and extended techniques that contribute to a sense of musical madness. The rock instrumentation consists of electric guitar, bass, organ/keyboard and drum kit. Henry Cow navigates a sound world that experiments with strict and free sounding sections. As drummer Chris Cutler explains, the first half of Unrest “moves between close composition and loose improvisation”, while the second half “consists of studio compositions” built from layered improvisations (1984: 298). Throughout the albums, clean, resonant colours are juxtaposed with squeals, growls, warbled and strangled tones, exaggerated vibrato, ‘out-of-tuneness’,
frantic flurries and sporadic interjections. Oboe and bassoon are often joined by a mix of flute, soprano and alto saxophone. Together, the wind instruments shift between interweaving polyphonic lines and dense chordal arrangements which investigate the relationship between consonance and dissonance. Within unison passages, Henry Cow experiment with a smudging of tone colour, smearing wind instrument timbres into an indistinct wall-of-sound that appears in contrast to the rich and distinct individual colours. I am primarily interested in how, via improvisation and timbral techniques, orchestral instruments work both with and against the rock instrumentation to explore musical oppositions.

The mobile also acts as a gateway to the exploration of expanded timbres and extended techniques, offering an element of rhythmic and timbral freedom to the performer which would otherwise be difficult to capture using traditional notation. Throughout my folio, expanded techniques resonate with a rock-based sonority which works to ‘dirty’ the texture. These types of sounds include: percussive handling of pitched instruments, amplification, air-tones, air-stutters, slap tongues, flutter-tongues, over-blowing effects, lip bends, trills, key slaps, scraping, violent outbursts, squawks and growls, stopped horn, harmonic glissandi, use of mutes and prepared piano.

In my large ensemble works, harmon mutes pay homage to the cool sounds of Miles Davis and brass band repertoire, whist drawing parallels to the guitar’s wah-wah pedal. With an adjustable stem, the harmon mute is capable of producing several different timbres, from the stem-out approach, made popular by Davis, to stem-in, stem trills, and the opening/closing of the hand to generate a wah-wah effect. Inspired by guitarist Jimi Hendrix, Davis’ album *Bitches Brew* (1969) investigates the integration of trumpet and electronics, including the use of a wah-wah effect, an Echoplex unit for delay and ring modulation. Davis reinvented plunger and harmon mute techniques in an electric, high-volume setting by using a wah-wah pedal through an amplifier. Barry Bergstein talks about how wah effects, “gave
Davis’s frequent use of flutter-tongues, bent notes and ‘fall offs’ also resonated with the techniques of Hendrix. He further encouraged guitarist John McLaughlin to incorporate power chords into his playing to suggest a rock sound, not commonly used by jazz guitarists at the time (Bergstein; 1992: 518). In this way, Davis’s integration of rock techniques into jazz, has inspired me to experiment with an expanded timbral palette and look at parallels between unlikely instruments, where the use of harmon mutes mimic electric guitar wah-wah and open and closed hi-hat, and slap tongues imitate slap bass.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, the use of air-tones in my folio draws ideas from the opening passage of Jonathan Harvey's Be(com)jing (1979) for clarinet and piano, which calls for half-tone, half-air notes. The air-tones experiment with the graduation of timbre, from predominately air sounds to full bodied-tone, exploring the relationship between pitch and ‘noise’.

Example 2.5 Harvey, Be(com)jing (bars 1-3) - Air tones

Phil Slater’s album The Thousands (2007) frequently uses air tones and breath attacks which, on trumpet, suggest a whispering effect. The attack of each note is almost imperceptible. In contrast, Take Care of the Sense and Bandersnatch use percussive air-stutters with aggressive, decisive attacks. Without tone, the stutters use accelerating staccato bursts of air to achieve a percussive effect, the legacy of a drummer reimagining wind sounds. With this in mind, brass is also used percussively throughout my folio, placing emphasis on rapid fire articulation and stabs of sound.
Non-linear Structures

The continual juxtaposition of sound-blocks and oppositions in my compositions contributes to a breakdown of linearity in favour of a mosaic, non-linear design. At a local level, non-linearity is excited by the combative interplay of duelling instrument groups and textures, and on a global level, by circular, frame-within-a-frame structures.

Dual Duels

Essential to understanding the *Alices* is the way in which Carroll uses language as a weapon, an important tool in sustaining the conflict required in generating nonsense. At the core of the books is a series of dialogues in which characters are continually involved in verbal duels that shift between order and disorder, navigating rudeness, wit, misunderstandings and madness. Nonsense expert Jean-Jacques Lecercle writes that the conversations are:

not a cooperative undertaking for mutually rewarding ends but a verbal battle, where the speaker's linguistic survival is always at stake...speech is always threatening to give way to brute force, for, being reduced to the function of a weapon, it may always be discarded if or when a more powerful weapon is available – this is the essence of the Queen of Hearts’ philosophy, when she exclaims, as she is apt to do, 'Off with his head!' (1994: 72).

The oppositional characters of *Sylvie and Bruno's* Elfland are equally difficult to engage in conversation, deliberately rude and uncivil, and constantly insist on reciting endless verses and songs. Here, Carroll’s verbal duels give way to non-linear conversation structures, in which the characters repeatedly try to subvert linearity.

The idea of duels is most prominent in *Bandersnatch*. The piece presents as a violent duel between wind ensemble and rock duo, and brass and wind, creating different tiers of duelling to form a non-linear structure. The relationship between the instrument groups is simultaneously hostile and harmonious; they form alliances, guerrilla groups, take on
disguises, alternate roles, imitate each other and engage in call-and-response inspired gestures which are tossed about the ensemble. Duels between instrument groups both enable and reinforce the piece’s non-linear structure. At different stages, the ‘opponents’ change; the expectation with seemingly disparate ensembles of wind band and rock duo is that they are each other’s opponents, yet Bandersnatch inverts this idea and positions the air produced sounds of brass and wind against each other. By exploring the antagonistic relationship between the universally accepted pairing of brass and wind, Bandersnatch posits difference as ‘normal’, and thus wind band and rock duo become an equally compatible combination. The rock duo forms alliances with groups, functioning as a mediator and encouraging them to work together. Whilst there is an emphasis on the distinction between instrument groups, there is also a focus on massed unison sections, where ultimately the two ensembles coexist with a shared goal of creating a musical portmanteau. In this way, repeated non-linearity creates its own kind of linear sense.

This concept of opposition via combative interplay further resonates with Zorn's game piece Cobra (1984) as well as the unconventionally antiphonal instrumentation of Andriessen's “De Staat” (1972-76). Kevin McNeilly discusses how Cobra employs a set of hand signals specifically designed for “guerrilla tactics”, where players, individually or in groups, can attempt to hijack the efforts of the conductor and change the direction of the ensemble (1995: para.18). By doing so, Cobra challenges the composer/conductor and conductor/performer hierarchies of traditional music. As Susan McClary explores, much of Zorn’s music “relies on signs of violence for narrative coherence” (2001:148). In another way, Andriessen positions unusual clusters of instruments against each other, sometimes categorised by style, sometimes not. In De Staat there are two matching instrument groups consisting of two oboes, trumpets, horns, trombones and violas, plus an electric guitar, piano
and harp. Between these groups is a bass guitar and a chorus of four female voices (see Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2 De Staat’s antiphonal stage layout (Andriessen, 1992)

Here, the physical set-up of the stage aids in highlighting the combative nature of the music. Similarly, Ives’s “Central Park in the Dark” splits the orchestra into different positions on and off stage to represent the separate sounds of Central Park, the street and club sounds. Andriessen’s decision to physically separate the clusters openly acknowledges the conflicting influences at work, but simultaneously demonstrates how each of these smaller groups can be equally compatible, despite their instrumentation, by working together. Andriessen highlights how easily the tables can turn between order and disorder, sense and nonsense, when we challenge our perception of ‘sense’.
Frame-within-a-Frame Circularity

On a larger scale, the juxtaposition of sound-blocks throughout my folio works together to explore a frame-within-a-frame structure that is enveloped by a circularity. For example, in *Take Care of the Sense and the Sounds Will Take Care of Themselves*, each movement behaves as a microcosm of the overarching suite, functioning as large oppositional blocks built from multiple smaller blocks. In the large ensemble pieces, the continual toggling between disparate sound-blocks reinforces a frame-within-a-frame structure; each block disappears into the next like a set of Russian nesting dolls, only to appear again later. This gives way to the sense that once we reach the end, there is also a return to the beginning; the boundaries of the frame are flexible. Many of the compositions in the folio have endings which appear final, only to be interrupted at the last moment by a unison stab that recalls a previous sound-block. This is most noticeable in *Frumious*, in which the opening unison fortissimo chord of the piece is re-played as the final chord, this time at a dynamic of piano, with only piccolo, cymbal bell and strings (see Examples 2.6 and 2.7). This ambiguous finality plays with a circularity which could continue ad infinitum, and reflects the circularity of Carroll’s literature, where games like the caucus race, the tea-party and the lobster quadrille in the *Alices*, take on circular forms (Pattern, 2009: 146-147). It is also reminiscent of James Joyce’s *Finnegan’s Wake* (1939), where the last sentence of the novel is finished by the first. Together, micro and macro examples of oppositionality seek to demonstrate how nonsense acts as a reorganisation of sense and reinvigorates my approach to structure.
Example 2.6 *Frumious* (bar 1) - Opening stab

Example 2.7 *Frumious* (bar 184) - Closing stab
Who Dreamed Who?

The non-linear design of my compositions is inspired by the structure of both the Alice and Sylvie books. Susan Sherer discusses how Carroll’s use of stream-of-consciousness sees frequent changes in location and conversation topics which contribute to a disorienting, non-linear effect:

…there is a kind of fragmentation – an abrupt skittishness that terminates the scenes- that compromises this linearity and that becomes more prominent in Looking-Glass. Although, as we have noted, Alice continually asks, “What will happen next?”, she is answered with only the most evasive responses or more commonly, with sudden changes of scene and location, making the narrative more like a series of dashes than an unbroken linear path. (1996: 5)

This fragmentation is facilitated by the presence of dream-worlds. The persistent “who dreamed who?” and dream-within-a-dream themes of the Alice and Sylvie books set up opportunities for unusual structural interplay and abrupt scene changes, as though slipping in and out of dreaming and waking states. In both sets of books the line between realities and dreams is blurred. It is apparent in the final scenes of Alice that her adventures were just a dream, yet in Sylvie and Bruno, it is difficult to separate the two realities from dream-world and real world. It is Alice who falls into a dream, while in the Sylvie books it is the narrator who glides effortlessly between divergent, yet connected realms. The closing poem of Through the Looking Glass concludes with, “Life, what is it but a dream?” (327), while the opening poem of Sylvie and Bruno begins with, “Is all our Life, then, but a dream” (4), suggesting that Carroll was very much fixated on the relationship between dreams and waking life. The clear similarity between these lines also points us towards the structural and conceptual parallels between the Alice and Sylvie books. Here, Carroll’s portrayal of dual realities gives way to non-linear structures, where the reader’s understanding of each world is constantly framed by the opposing reality.
The process that Carroll used to create the *Sylvie* books emerged from a type of musique-concrete technique, further contributing to a fragmented effect. The novels originated from the intersection of two short stories, “Fairy Sylvie” (1867) and “Bruno’s Revenge” (1867), with the remainder of the novels being, “inspired by thoughts and ideas he jotted down over the years. The accumulation of ‘all sorts of ideas, and fragments of dialogue’ and ‘random flashes of thought’ which arose out of his daily life and dreams” (Carroll, 2007: 9). When considering the structure of the *Alices*, William Madden discusses how the poems which preface each of the books, and another which ends *Looking-Glass*, are often omitted in critics’ interpretation of the novels (1986: 362). Yet, the way they affect the reception of Carroll’s work is crucial to my understanding of its structure and, has in turn, inspired the way I have approached the structure of my compositions. It is suggested that critics have overlooked the poems because they present a stylistic problem, using a language that reflects a “Tennysonian” idiom and conforms to Victorian convention, rather than the prose seen throughout the books (1986: 362). Madden proposes that the poems act as frames to both novels, setting up a story- within-a-story and a dream-within-a-dream effect. The following table demonstrates the structure of the books and the framing effect achieved by changes in writing style.

### Table 2.5 Palindromic structure of the *Alice* books (Madden, 1986: 365-366)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wonderland</th>
<th>Looking-Glass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outer Frame</strong></td>
<td><strong>Inner Frame</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyric Verse</td>
<td>Realistic Prose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergence of Dream child</td>
<td>Alice Awake</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table demonstrates the structure of the books and the framing effect achieved by changes in writing style.
Originally thought an anomaly, Wonderland ends with prose, rather than poetry, however it alters our perception of the books to see them as a single work when we consider the prefatory poem of Looking-Glass as acting as an ending to Wonderland and a bridge between the two. The stylistic incongruence between the sections helps establish the boundaries for reality, where the inclusion of ‘serious’ Victorian poetry appears in contrast to the prose of Alice’s dream-world. Yet, the poems only form an outer frame, with an inner frame being created by the realistic fiction that Carroll organises as Alice’s waking world:

The structure of each book encompasses shifts in the narrative mode, allowing the narrative voice to move into and back out of the central dream tales by modulating from lyric, to realistic fiction, to dream vision, back through realistic fiction, to a final lyric statement. (1986: 365)

In the final pages of Looking-Glass, Alice directly addresses the reader by asking us who we thought dreamed who. She invites us into her strange world, into a dream where the poet and reader are suddenly revealed as equally engaged as Alice and all the other characters. In this regard, the circularity of my frame-within-a-frame structures aims to generate an immersive and visceral experience for the listener; one in which they feel subject to the continual tug-of-war between nonsense and sense, and their flexible boundaries, which forms an aesthetic basis for my compositions.

**Interaction between Music and Text**

The concepts of musical oppositions and the logic of nonsense stem from a Carrollian nonsense framework that emerges from and is reinforced by the interaction between music and literature. My compositions experiment with the stretching of both paradigms, where music begins to focus on the associative qualities of language, and literature, on the abstract and sonic qualities of words. Morton Cohen suggests that Carroll was more concerned with the sounds of the words he chose, rather than their meaning: “words make sounds, and perhaps the sound of a word...has a role to play, perhaps an even more important role than
meaning” (1996: 143). Again, I would like to stress that although my work is inspired by Carroll’s books, it is not programmatic; it does not seek to express the text, but rather use it as an imaginative springboard for musical ideas. In this way, my folio is primarily interested in the exchange of structural concepts between literature and music, resulting in a portmanteau aesthetic of oppositional reorganisation.

The relationship between music and text is an essential aspect of my folio, yet voice is only featured in the suite *Take Care of the Sense, and the Sounds Will Take Care of Themselves, Red Queen, White Queen, Alice, and all*, and the final folio piece, *Cabbages and Kings*. Just as concepts born from Carroll’s text shape the structure of my pieces, in turn, these musical ideas feed back into the way in which voice is used. With this in mind, my selection of text focuses on the rhythmic qualities of phrases, onomatopoeic-like properties of words, alliteration, rhyme, word association and combative dialogue. In working towards a more abstract treatment of text, I have taken a cue from Carroll. His nonsense literature constantly encourages us to question whether the meaning of a word is the most important aspect of it; and, as Humpty Dumpty tells us in *Through the Looking Glass*, words have the ability to mean whatever we choose them to mean. In this way, I am interested in the abstract, almost music-like quality of Carroll phrases, and have reorganised the text in a non-linear way to form a mosaic effect across my work. My compositions focus on the rhythmic qualities of phrases and syllables, found in examples that rely on patterns, such as, “mouse-traps and the moon, and memory and muchness”. The onomatopoeic-like properties of words, where words sound like what they mean, is explored through the phrase, “there's no sort of use in knocking”, as a recurring percussive figure. At times, text is matched with seemingly incongruous musical passages, where “the moment she opened her lips, there was dead silence”, is met with clamorous squeals. In contrast, the literal meaning of phrases is also embraced, as though the text were describing the musical qualities: “down, down, down.
Would the fall never come to an end!” is depicted as a giant downward spiral of glissandi. In
*Cabbages and Kings* I have rearranged Carroll’s text to form a new narrative (see Example
2.8). I discuss the treatment of voice in detail in chapter four.

**Example 2.8 Harrison, *Cabbages and Kings* - Carroll’s text reorganised as lyric mosaic**

Shut up like a telescope, just like a telescope, put in an envelope, just like a telescope,
Do bats eat cats, do cats eat bats?
Twinkle, twinkle little bat, how I wonder what you’re at!
Do cats eat bats?
Up above the world so high, like a tea-tray in the sky!
Do bats eat cats, do cats chase rats?

Bats! Cats!

Four young oysters hurried up, all eager for the treat, shoes were clean and neat!

Cats! Cabbage, cabbages, cabbages!
Do bats eat cats?

“How has come” the walrus said, “to talk of many things,
Shoes and ships and sealing wax, cabbages and kings,
Why the sea is boiling hot, and whether pigs have wings!”

You might as well say that, “I see what I eat”, is the same as, “I eat what I see!”

There are no mice in the air, I’m afraid, but you might catch a bat, they’re very like a mouse, you know!
London is the capital of Paris, and Paris is the capital of Rome- No! That’s all wrong!

Twinkle, twinkle little bat, how I wonder what you’re at!
Up above the world so high, like a tea-tray in the sky!
Twinkle, Twinkle little bat!

Twinkle, twinkle shoes and ships and telescope wax!
Twinkle, twinkle, twinkle, twinkle, twinkle little bat! Little bat!

Cabbages and kings, do pigs have wings?

Do bats eat cats?
Shut up like a telescope, just like a telescope! Telescope!

As models for how text can reinvent musical structure, I have looked primarily to
works which capture the spirit of nonsense and oppositional reorganisation; John Cage’s
*Roaratorio* (1979), Andriessen’s *De Materie*, Unsuk Chin’s *Akrostichon-Wortspiel* (Acrostic
Wordplay) (1991-1993), and Zorn’s *Spillane*. *Roaratorio* features the transformation of James
Joyce’s text *Finnegan's Wake* (1939) and a collection of sounds and music recorded in every
geographic location mentioned in the book, set in Ireland. The field recordings are arranged
by chance operations onto sixteen-track tape machines which are described as both
“cacophonous and euphonious” (Kostelanetz, 1990: 294). In this setting, nonsense as
musical structure is achieved from chance operations. *Finnegans Wake* is regarded as one of the most difficult works of nonsense literature ever written, and also includes many references to Carroll. Cage generates his own text for *Roaratorio*, titled *Writing for the Second Time Through Finnegans Wake* (1979), by extracting certain words from *Finnegans Wake* and setting them on a mesostic axis using the name “James Joyce”. Whereas an acrostic poem uses the far left vertical axis to set a word, a mesostic poem uses an axis straight down the middle.

**Example 2.9 Cage, *Writing for the Second Time through Finnegans Wake* - Mesostic poem opening**

(Kostelanetz, 1990: 294)

```
wroth with twone nathandJoe
    A
    Malt
    jhEm
    Shen
    pftJschute
    sOlid man
    that the humptYhillhead of humself
    is at the knoCk out
    in thE park
```

This type of technique interacts with and expands the structural design of Joyce's work, playing with structure.

Andriessen’s *De Materie* positions opposing texts against each other which, in turn, are reflected and manifested musically. “Part 1” of *De Materie* uses text from *Idea Physicae*, a book by seventeenth century Dutch modern atom scientist, Gorlaeus, and text from the *Shipbuilding and Management* handbook by Nicolaas Witsen (1641-1717). Andriessen sets the philosophical thoughts of Gorlaeus in a lyrical, almost operatic style, which appears in stark contrast to Witsen’s step-by-step explanation of how to build a ship, depicted quite literally and violently in the opening as 144 repeated unison hammer strikes. Yayoi Uno Everett writes that the chorus’s “rapid-fire articulation makes [the texts] virtually
incomprehensible” (2007, p). Yet, although the text is difficult to hear, its role is primarily conceptual, as its construction directions are translated musically. This obscuring of text has encouraged me to think about how voice can function as more of a textural element.

Before writing an opera based on the Alices, Unsuk Chin’s Akrostichon-Wortspiel (1991-1993) for soprano and ensemble and snagS & Snarls (2003-04) for soprano and orchestra also used Carroll’s texts. Akrostichon-Wortspiel features seven scenes from the fairy-tales The Endless Story by Michael Ende and Through the Looking Glass by Lewis Carroll. Translating as “Acrostic-Wordplay” Chin treats the texts in different ways to create various unintelligible sounds; “sometimes the consonants and vowels have been randomly joined together, other times the words have been read backwards so that the symbolic meaning alone remains” (1991: 4). Like Cage, Chin reimagines the original text in a Carrollian way, and like Andriessen, her treatment of the text renders it incomprehensible at times. By doing so, this places more of an emphasis on the sounds of words and their associations, rather than their meaning.

As I mentioned earlier, Zorn’s Spillane draws on detective noir imagery from Mickey Spillane’s novels to craft a series of file-cards which parody stereotypical musical styles associated with the detective genre of the ‘40s and ‘50s. The piece uses text and voice as a structural theme to link seemingly disparate sound-blocks; here, text is both the inspiration for musical ideas as well as the means of notation. Some of these file-cards include: “#14 Hip Jazz; #23 Blues B-flat; #48 My Gun Is Quick, Texas Blues…#16 Nocturne; #18 Pounding the Streets, Running Down Addresses; and #38 The City” (Dries, 1994: 26). These descriptions rely on the performers’ knowledge of Spillane’s works and the noir detective genre in order for the file-cards to make sense. Despite the fragmented, channel-surfing structure of the piece, together, the file-cards produce a narrative which can be followed by any listener.
familiar with “urban pulp fiction and the Hollywood movies that translated that genre [detective] to the screen” (McClary, 2001: 146).

The interaction between music and literature in these works has influenced the treatment of voice in my folio, as well as offering precedents for how text can function as an implied and integrated element of a composition’s architecture.

**Summary: Double Energy**

Reimagining Carroll’s portmanteau words as musical portmanteaus, my aesthetic harnesses a series of dualities which, via oppositional reorganisation, posit juxtopositional nonsense as a new kind of structural logic. The convergence of elements from disparate domains breaks down linearity and generates a designed double energy of rhythmic vitality and visceral sonority, tempered by a whimsical humour. Just as Madden suggests the shifting writing styles of the *Alices* creates a “double rhythm”, the toggling between styles in my compositions produces a double energy. The dualities contributing to this effect include the interaction between music and literature, art and vernacular worlds, traditional notation and controlled aleatoricism, traditional and expanded timbres, non-linear and linear structures, and the interplay been nonsense and sense, order and disorder, continually rearranged by a carefully designed juxtopositional architecture. As I will explore in the following chapter, many of these oppositions stem from a series of dual compositional processes that originate from my performance practice.

This combined double energy results in the flattening of hierarchies between art and vernacular worlds, where stylistic oppositions coexist within a mosaic design. The antagonistc interaction between sound-blocks aspires to challenge the perceived incompatibility of conflicting ideas, whilst also demonstrating their compatibility through the reorganisation of oppositional relationships. My portmanteau aesthetic captures the spirit of
nonsense, subverts it and turns it on its head, inciting a double energy and revealing its inherent sense; design.
Part Two: Process
Chapter Three: Creative Process

Practice-Based Research

My compositions follow a practice based research method in which the conceptual components of my work have grown out of the empirical aspects; the materials and process. At the same time, my folio is inspired by the conceptual features of Carroll’s nonsense and principles of collage which, along with my understanding of Donald Schön’s notion of “reflection-in-action” (1983: 68), reinforce and expand the qualities intrinsic to my compositional approach. This chapter will look at how my folio has evolved within a practice based research approach, and how key compositional techniques and strategies have emerged from my performance practice as an ongoing holistic process.

Schön’s reflection-in-action is based on the premise that when practitioners reflect during creation, they become more aware of the intuitive processes involved in their work and find new ways to evolve their practice. As Schön explains, the knowledge is found in the creation process unique to the individual:

When someone reflects-in-action, he becomes a researcher in the practice context. He is not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case. (1983: 68)

Barbara Bolt (2006) and Estelle Barrett (2007) also argue how, through practice-based research, theory becomes an outcome of practice, not the other way around. Bolt discusses how David Hockney experimented with his own portrait drawings using a camera lucida⁹ to understand the techniques of French artist Ingres, demonstrating how practice-led research

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⁹ Invented in 1806, the camera lucida is a device used by artists; a tiny prism suspended on a metal rod which, when looked through, projects the captured image onto paper and allows artists to trace it quickly with accuracy (Lawrence Weschler, 2000: 66).
functions as, “the double articulation between theory and practice, whereby theory emerges from a reflexive practice at the same time that practice is informed by theory” (2006: 4).

Yet, because every case is unique, practice-based research is also ‘messy’, the beginning and end is often difficult to define as the creative process does not unfold in a seemingly logical way. The relationship between concepts, techniques and precedents are complex. As Schön writes:

…the problems of real-world practice do not present themselves to practitioners as well-formed structures. Indeed, they tend not to present themselves as problems at all but as messy, indeterminate situations. (1987:4)

Schön suggests that to deal with individual creative cases practitioners must generate their own theory by devising and experimenting with different strategies (1983: 5). In doing so, practitioners tend to “dive-in” to creative research and see what emerges (Haseman, 2006: 4). They often begin in the middle, unsure of where they are going; the destination is only revealed through the process of doing. This approach is essential in developing solutions for creative situations, where improvisation leads to invention. Practice-based researchers are led by an “enthusiasm of practice” (Haseman, 2006: 3), which stems from the challenge and excitement of wrestling with the unknown. This dive-in method makes use of the kind of tacit knowledge that is difficult to define, and is only acquired through the habitual manipulation of creative materials which Martin Heidegger calls “handling” (as cited in Bolt, 2006). As Sharon Bell writes, she is increasingly interested in aspects of the creative process which are “ill-defined, less tangible, often intuitive but oh so important dimensions of the creative process that don’t lend themselves to analysis” (2009: 260).

Embracing this messiness, Figure 3.1 shows Hazel Smith’s and Roger Dean’s (2009) model of creative and academic research processes. Importantly, the model demonstrates how the creative process does not follow a particular order, but is cyclical and iterative; the
practitioner can dive-in at any stage and move about the cycle in a “spider-like” way (2009: 19). This model resonates with the mind-map I made to chart my process in 2011, shown in Figure 3.2, exploring the interconnectedness of my project’s themes. The relationships between these conceptual and musical ideas are complex and messy; each is inextricably linked, growing more complex over the course of the folio.
Figure 3.1 Iterative cyclic web of practice-led research/research-led practice (Dean and Smith, 2009)
Figure 3.2 shows my themes as separate branches of the mind map, with linked themes shown in red arrows, moving in both directions as part of an accumulative feedback cycle. The result is a map that is not entirely circular, and not linear either, but rather ‘dives-in’ wherever my portmanteau aesthetic sees connections.

**Figure 3.2 Interrelationship of my folio themes, 2011**
The interaction between music and literature brings an interdisciplinary element to my project which seeks to extend the possibilities of both forms. Practice-based research tends to draw freely from different areas, where a breadth of knowledge across the arts enriches and influences practice. Barrett (2007) celebrates the intersection of different disciplines, which gives way to new creative possibilities and elucidates new ways of understanding the creative work:

The juxtaposing of disparate objects and ideas has, after all, often been viewed as an intrinsic aspect of creativity. The interplay of ideas from disparate areas of knowledge in creative arts research creates conditions for the emergence of new analogies, metaphors and models for understanding objects of enquiry. (2007: 7)

Just as John Zorn’s works draw from detective novelist Mickey Spillane, film composers Ennio Morricone and Carl Stalling, and the writings of psychiatrist Carl Jung, my own practice is led by Carroll’s literature and wordplay. Carroll’s books are closely linked with his work as a mathematician, logician, photographer and prolific letter writer. Throughout his career, he published a number of books on mathematics and logic10, under his real name Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, specialising in probability, geometry and symbolic logic. His early books, along with his prolific output of letters11 and magazine articles12, functioned as the testing ground for the nonsense logic and creative language skills he would later explore

10 A Syllabus of Plane Geometry (1860), The Formulae of Plane Trigonometry (1861), An Elementary Treatise on Determinants (1867), Euclid and His Modern Rivals (1879), Doublets (1879), Guide to the Mathematical Student (1884), Game of Logic (1886), A Tangled Tale (1880-1884), Curiosa Mathematic, Part I, A New Theory of Parallels (1888), Curiosa Mathematica Part II: Pillow Problems (1893), Symbolic Logic (1896)

11 There are 98,721 letters recorded in total, over a thirty-seven year period. Some of these can be found in Morton Cohen’s The Selected Letters of Lewis Carroll (1996) and Evelyn Hatch’s A Selection From the Letters of Lewis Carroll to His Child-Friends (1933)

12 The Rectory Umbrella (c1850-53), Mischmasch (1855-62)
as Lewis Carroll in the *Alices* (Susina, 2001; 15). Bringing together these disparate influences, the *Alice* books include many examples of number play based on and around the number 42. After falling down the rabbit hole, Alice recites a series of seemingly incorrect times tables:

> “Four times five is twelve”, says Alice “and four times six is thirteen and four times seven is- oh dear! I shall never get to twenty at this rate!” It sounds like nonsense, but in fact Carroll was counting each calculation on a different base. Therefore, $4 \times 5 = 12$ on base 18; $4 \times 6 = 13$ on base 21; and so on. It goes all the way up to $4 \times 12 = 19$ (on base 39). And sure enough, Alice never does get to 20 by continuing this way, because $4 \times 13 = 20$ does not work on base 42.

(Woolf, 2010: 57)

Combining logic and wordplay, Carroll also invented a series of nonsense parlour games. One of the most famous is *Doublets*, where one word is gradually transformed into another of the same length by changing one letter at a time. For example:

Turn MICE into RATS:

- MICE
- Mite
- Mate
- Mats
- RATS

(as cited in Cohen, 1996: 487)

As an extension of *Doublets*, Carroll invented *Syzygies*, which plays with the vertical and horizontal spacing of words to transform the original word into an entirely different word, whilst solving a ‘problem’ with a very literal sense of humour. One of the simplest examples is:

Send MAN on ICE.

- MAN
- per m a nent
- enti c e
- ICE
These types of number, word and logic games are further expanded in the *Alice* and *Sylvie* books as entire conversations and scenes, and feed back into his logic work decades after each series was published. Drawing from the teachings of Confucius, art scholar Edmund Capon suggests that horizontal knowledge across a wide range of subjects proves more valuable than a detailed, vertical knowledge of just one subject (2009: 13). Breadth, rather than depth, is valued as a sign of wisdom, and this is certainly an approach also apparent in the works of Carroll. With this in mind, harnessing concepts and materials from both music and literature, and a patchwork of art and vernacular influences, invigorates my own compositional practice and shapes a portmanteau aesthetic from a portmanteau process.

**Personal Creative History**

Over the past few years I have been involved in a number of semi-improvised rock bands and collaborative performance projects. Each of these experiences has acted as a testing-ground and incubating period for compositional strategies, gradually shaping my current practice. Each project has traversed both vernacular and art worlds to varying degrees, giving way to processes led by improvisation, juxtapositional and collage structures, and experimentation with expanded timbres, grooves and whimsical humour.

**Improvisational Spark**

The most important aspect for me of playing in a band is the initial improvisational spark; the ‘eureka’ moment of suddenly discovering an attractive idea, but not quite knowing where it is going. My first experience playing in a semi-improvised rock band was with
Space Project\textsuperscript{13} in 2008. An instrumental band, the group consisted of guitar, bass guitar, drum kit, and occasional vocals, while I played trumpet and flute with live electronic audio processing. The group’s aesthetic was influenced by experimental jazz trio The Necks\textsuperscript{14}, particularly their sense of spaciousness, timbral exploration, repetitive gestures and hypnotic grooves. The multi-layered, intertwining textures and genre bending of post-rock band Tortoise\textsuperscript{15}, and the architectural build, odd time signatures and Middle Eastern modes of rock group Tool\textsuperscript{16} also made their way into our sound, as well as drawing rhythmic and drone ideas from Eastern European and African musics. Space Project experimented with sound-blocks which had a flexible structure, allowing room for improvisation and extending or shortening blocks according to how the performance felt in the moment. Over time, rehearsed improvisations became more detailed. This flexible structure placed an emphasis on the viscerality of sound, the improvisational spark, where repeated grooves underscored each distinct block and, at times, worked towards a sense of transcendentalism and stasis. The group was led by guitarist and vocalist, Adrian Barr, who is particularly interested in transcendental musical experiences, as documented in his research\textsuperscript{17}. Barr writes about the superimposition of two rhythmic cycles:

\begin{quote}
During my time with the band, Space Project released a self-titled EP in 2009, and regularly performed at premier Sydney venues, including the Annandale Hotel, the Excelsior Hotel, the Sandringham Hotel, and the Manning Bar. Video clip of ‘Wanderer’ available at
\url{http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RFFESUF4vzs}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{13} Especially The Neck’s album \textit{Drive-by} (2003).

\textsuperscript{14} Of particular interest are Tortoise albums \textit{Standards} (2001), \textit{It’s All Around You} (2004) and \textit{Beacons of Ancestorship} (2009).

\textsuperscript{15} Of particular interest are Tool albums \textit{Lateralus} (2001) and \textit{10,000 Days} (2006).

My own experience of polymetrics is a consistent vehicle for transcendent experience. A *Space Project* piece, ‘Translation’, contains two juxtaposing rhythmic cycles. My experience while playing gives a sense of chaos and elasticity, despite how precise the patterns need to be to fit together. The whole piece is based around a drone in ‘D’. When my 12/8 chord progression (of Bb, C, Dm) is juxtaposed with the rhythm section droning (D) in 5/8 that then coalesces into each player moving into 6/4. (2012: 209)

Although I did not realise it at the time, *Space Project* was perhaps my first real experience of playing with sound-blocks, both vertically or horizontally, which were born from improvisation and placed an emphasis on groove. Later these elements would become an important part of my compositions.

**Applied Improvisational Madness**

Whilst playing with *Space Project*, I was also working on my honours composition folio in 2009. Some of the sound-making strategies I had experimented with in *Space Project* made their way into my compositions as an applied improvisational madness, merging improvisation with notation in the pair of solo pieces *Of Cabbages and Kings* (2009) (not to be confused with the 2014 work *Cabbages and Kings*), for trumpet and electronics, and *A Mad Tea-Party* (2009), for clarinet and electronics. The theme of my folio explored Miles Davis’s concept of ‘controlled freedom’, a seeming contradiction, where freedom via restraint ultimately gives way to increased creativity. As Frank Barrett (1998), David Borgo (2002) and Simon Katan (2007) argue, self-imposed limitations free the composer and performer from the paralysing prospect of infinite possibility. I was especially interested in the modal improvisation of Davis’s *Kind of Blue* (1959), and melting pot styles of *Bitches Brew* (1969). In the late 1950s Davis illuminated the new possibilities the controlled freedom of modal jazz invoked:
You don’t have to worry about changes and you can do more with one line. It becomes a challenge to see how melodically inventive you are… I think a movement in jazz is beginning away from conventional strings of chords, and [there is] a return to an emphasis on melodic rather than harmonic invention. There will be fewer chords but infinite possibilities as to what to do with them. (Davis quoted in Tingen, 2001:36)

*Of Cabbages and Kings* and *A Mad Tea-Party* (see Example 3.1) reimagine controlled freedom in a scored context, exploring an amalgam of traditional notation and controlled aleatoricism via Lutoslawski mobiles and live audio processing, using Ableton Live and MIDI pedals. This synthesis of notation grew out of my increasing interest in improvisation, since playing with Space Project, and a desire to both capture the improvisational spark in the score and facilitate it. The use of electronic effects was also influenced by Space Project, using the same laptop set-up I was exploring with the band at the time. Live processing in Ableton via delays, crystal reverberation, tremolo, wah-wah and ring modulation extends the harmonic, timbral and rhythmic capabilities of the solo instruments, allowing the performer to play in an almost polyphonic or chordal way, with and against decaying rhythms.

Timbrally, these two pieces were influenced Miles Davis’s amplified trumpet and effects on *Bitches Brew*, Phil Slater’s air tones on *In the Thousands* (2006) and Jonathan Harvey’s clarinet and piano piece, *Be(com)ing* (1979). Below is an excerpt of improvised mobiles from *A Mad Tea-Party*; the top stave is the clarinet, and the bottom is electronics triggered by a foot controller. There is the beginning of a double energy here, derived from the fusion of different approaches: improvisation versus score architecture, spontaneity versus motivic development, and acoustic versus electronic timbres.
As their titles suggest, *Of Cabbages and Kings* and *A Mad Tea-Party* draw inspiration from the *Alices*, specifically the “Walrus and the Carpenter” poem and the tea-party scene. Embracing Carroll, I was beginning to develop my own sense of whimsical humour, sparked by the collision of disparate influences and the beginning of a juxtapositional sound-world. The whimsical humour of *A Mad Tea-Party* (see Example 3.1) is characterised by lyrical lines juxtaposed with frenetic bursts, inspired by the warped sense of time in the tea-party scene. The excerpt is playful, with various phrases being chased by the “parallel bands” delay and timbral distortion at the performer’s discretion. The piece teases the listener by reveling in an unpredictability; the listener never quite knows what type of gesture will follow or be revisited. Importantly, these were the first pieces that negotiated a compositional process led equally by text, score and improvisation.
Madness meets Juxtaposition

These earlier compositional processes and ideas have gradually become more refined in performance projects over the past couple of years. The initial improvisational seed has slowly been shaped into a type of organised madness and segmented juxtapostional block approach, which is expanded into more elaborate juxtapositions, evolving block stretches, and multi-tiered textures in my folio. I currently play trumpet and flute with semi-improvised rock band Snip Snap Dragon, which also has instrumentation of guitar, bass guitar and drum kit. Like Space Project, the group is improvisation driven and makes use of flexible structures and live audio processing, but celebrates a collage of styles in a joyous, and sometimes humorous way. Yet, unlike Space Project, which was largely led by Barr, Snip Snap Dragon is more of a collaborative project and resonates more closely with my compositional voice. The sound-world is energised by each member’s influences of metal, funk and post-rock, including Mahavishnu Orchestra, Zappa, Pantera, The Dirty Three, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, and Zorn’s Electric Masada, leading to an equal four-way contribution and juxtapositional character. An integral part of the song-writing process involves discussing the design of a piece after extended jams, listening back to rehearsal recordings and revising, which is similar to the conversational approach I take with one of my mentors, composer Bruce Crossman, when discussing structure. Here, contrasting stylistic

18 Snip Snap Dragon has played at Sydney venues including, the Annandale Hotel, The Square, the Roxbury Hotel, the Sandringham Hotel, the Lansdowne Hotel, the Union Hotel and Hotel Gearin. Live videos can be found at: https://www.facebook.com/SnipSnapDragon

19 I studied with Bruce Crossman at the University of Western Sydney from 2006-2014. Crossman’s music combines Asia-Pacific influences and blues/jazz improvisations with European art music sonorities. His work is concerned with Pacific identity, and performed throughout the Asia-Pacific, including at the 29th Asian Composers League Conference and Festival in Taiwan, 2011. Crossman is also an improvising blues pianist: see Resophonica (2009), http://www.australiancomposers.com.au/print-music/works/resophonica-cd
sound-blocks are used to organise structures, often with rapid changes from one to the next, toggling suddenly from pummelling metal to light dreamy moods with an almost Carrollian drama and whimsy.

Whilst playing with Snip Snap Dragon, I have further developed a long line trumpet style, especially in the piece “Luminous”\textsuperscript{20}, influenced by Miles Davis and previously explored in Space Project, which seeps into my folio as the lyrical lines in *Frumious* (2012) and *Bandersnatch* (2013). In contrast, my flute playing in the group has more in common with my drumming style, with percussive-like phrases, bursts of air, and rapid flurries. This translates into my folio as a more percussive treatment of wind instruments.

As well as being a wind player, I also have experience playing drum kit in Sydney-based instrumental and experimental rock bands, including Scarlet Pulse, Simply Particle, Palamino, and more recently experimental duo Tabua Harrison\textsuperscript{21}. Each of these experiences has drawn heavily on improvisation, through which I have developed a love of odd time signature grooves, odd phrase lengths, linear rhythms\textsuperscript{22}, expanded kit timbres, free-time sections, and segmented structures, which all find their way into my compositions. Along with Space Project, each of these bands have been influenced by another one of my mentors, John Encarnacao\textsuperscript{23}; rock performer, composer and musicologist. Encarnacao’s insightful suggestions, comments, performances, and quirky CD recommendations, have been an

\textsuperscript{20} See early rehearsal recording of ‘Luminous’ at http://www.reverbnation.com/snipsnapdragon


\textsuperscript{22} Linear rhythms are when there is no over-lapping between the drum kit voices; each limb strikes at a different time.

\textsuperscript{23} I studied with John Encarnacao at the University of Western Sydney from 2006-2014. As a composer/performer, Encarnacao’s recent projects include free improvisation trio Espadrille, folk-rock project Warmer, and power-pop group The Nature Strip; and as a composer, music for theatre productions *Tinderbox* (2012) and *Tarantula* (2012). See http://sugarcrashing.bandcamp.com/ and http://chinapig.bandcamp.com/
invaluable part of my growth as a musician, and have shaped the way in which I collaborate with other rock musicians and how I play trumpet and drums in improvised contexts. In particular, the influence of Encarnacao’s free improvisation trio Espadrille has encouraged me to experiment further with free rhythms and expanded timbres on drum kit, and this feeds back into my folio in the form of semi-improvised mobiles.

My performance practice is part of a growth process which, along with the juxtapositional sound-slabs of Zorn, Zappa, Andriessen, Ives and Torke, has shaped the stylistic emergence of my portmanteau aesthetic, developing dual processes which are simultaneously visceral and reflective, improvisational and architectural, driven by the visual and sonic reorganisation of sound-blocks. My initial playing with Space Project has evolved into the more subtle textural layerings and sense of organic structure in my most recent project, the Tabua Harrison duo, as a result of the growing maturity in my compositional voice. The initial spark of improvisation not only shapes my scored compositions, but the inverse is also true, too, where the growing maturity in my performance practice is enriched by my scored work, encouraging an increased planning of textures and sound-blocks (see Figure 3.3). Figure 3.3 Tabua Harrison structural diagram for rehearsed improvisation
Compositional Strategies and Techniques

Dive-in and Reiterate

Many of the core rhythmic ideas of my folio originated from playing and auditioning phrases at the drum kit. As a compositional tool, kit allows me to dive-in and see what rhythms emerge from improvisation, experimenting with how rhythms behave together and how smaller rhythmic units divide into or work across other rhythms. After the initial spark, these rhythms are re-thought and reshaped upon reflection, sometimes instantly whilst I’m playing, continually engaging in a reiterative cycle between theory and practice. For example; when improvising with Joseph Tabua in our Tabua Harrison duo, I might hear a rhythm ‘jump out’, often from a kind of automatic, natural playing, which I then hone in on and try and expand. First, via repetition, so that I remember how the rhythm feels, and then by playing only parts of the phrase, perhaps just the beginning or end, before chopping it up to find other phrases it works with. Often these ‘jump out’ ideas are more audible to me when there is a kit colour change between the dialogue of hands and feet, in which a two handed rhythm is suddenly heard as two independent sounding rhythms. The process is much the same when I’m improvising alone, but involves another stage; rhythmic ideas are further reflected on once I’ve stopped playing and expanded via electronic notation, using ‘cut’ and ‘paste’ tools to reorganise the rhythm and find new combinations before being tested at the drum kit again. Being aware of this ‘dive-in and reiterate’ process allows me to recreate a context to generate a creative spark and produce ideas more quickly.
Another dive-in approach is more visceral, where I consciously try to take risks and play something seemingly incongruous with Tabua Harrison, perhaps by dropping into a soft, subtly-layered section, with repeated, jarring cymbal chokes or sporadic bursts of sound, which I refer to as a ‘soft versus choke’ strategy. When this happens, I feel a physical sense of being committed to an idea and of teetering on the edge, which then forces me to find new gestures as a solution, often to link two sections together. I find I can recreate this situation at home by a call and response style of playing, where I take on two distinct musical personas and set up a dialogue to generate juxtapositional rhythmic and textural ideas. Often this involves playing only half the kit voices as one persona, perhaps wood versus metal, and the other half for the other persona. In some ways, I feel most comfortable playing when I am on the edge creatively and slightly uncomfortable with the sonic material, when it could all come apart at any moment. As a result, this is a sound quality I have strived to capture in my folio as a type of nervy madness.
The frequent use of rapid time signature changes in my folio grows out of my experimental rock band experiences, where experimenting with alternating groupings of twos and threes opens up new, exciting rhythmic possibilities and become part of my percussive voice. This is extended and pushed much further in my folio, through score notation design from American experimentalism, Dutch post-minimalism and avant-rock, continually disrupting and generating energy to produce a non-linear structure. Whilst the overall structure of my compositions takes on a non-linear form, drum kit generated gestures experiment with a linearity, particularly in regard to how these patterns transfer to melodic instruments and how rhythmic cells are distributed between them and interlock in a hocket-like way. Locally, improvisation generates initial, visceral gestures, which are shaped and expanded via electronic notation and audio-playback.

**Stacked Contrasts: Harmonic Portmanteaus**

Sonority-wise, my composition folio blends the atonal, chromatic sound-world of contemporary art music with the tonal world of rock to create harmonic portmanteaus. Growing up playing in concert, brass and rock bands, I feel my experience as a wind player places emphasis on the independence of horizontal and linear lines, rather than the vertical relationships between pitches. Thus, my harmonic language often eschews traditional chord hierarchies in favour of a vertical stacking technique. Intervals, particularly major and minor seconds, are repeatedly stacked and reorganised into different octaves. These clusters quite literally act as chordal portmanteaus, fusing multiple chords or triads together to create a new chord; I expand on how these work in *Frumious* in chapter five. Yet, within these stacked chords, there is also a ‘hidden’ functional chord and triadic element at work, where seconds and sevenths disguise and colour thirds, fourths, fifths and sixths (see Example 5.7 and 5.8 in chapter five). Once I have found a melodic fragment I am happy with, my chordal
portmanteau process involves auditioning pitches on flute against the fragment and then stacking notes, above and below and one by one, into notation software. I continually listen back to the stacks, via audio-playback, and audition additional notes on flute, before making adjustments. I then repeat the process, moving across the screen until a whole melodic fragment has been filled-in. Upon play-back, what is most important is whether the horizontal lines work well together, as well as in isolation, forming a series of melodic fragment layers where no one line is perceived as the melody. This single note approach is a slow process, yet facilitates a linearity in my writing. I also find it ‘tricks’ me into coming up with new note combinations.

In contrast, inspiration for the long, lyrical lines in my folio often came to me when I was improvising on trumpet, after my morning warm-up. These long lines were mostly played with a strong vibrato, imbued by playing cornet in brass bands during my teenage years. There are a few moments in my folio which call for ‘exaggerated vibrato’ and offer a humorous effect. Thinking back, perhaps subconsciously this is a reference to the thick and over-used vibrato in my brass band experiences, and a way of expressing my rebellion against that world in a new context.

At the same time, my large ensemble pieces experiment with and are inspired by the power-chord, synonymous with metal, bringing a viscerality and theatricality to my work inspired by my rock band experiences. Musicologist Robert Walser discusses the dual character of the power chord:

The power chord can be percussive and rhythmic or indefinitely sustained; it is used both to articulate and to suspend time. It is a complex sound, made up of resultant tones and overtones, constantly renewed and energized by feedback. It is at once the musical basis of heavy metal and an apt metaphor for it, for musical articulation of power is the most important single factor in the experience of heavy metal. The power chord seems simple and crude, but it is dependent upon
sophisticated technology, precise tuning, and skilful control. Its overdriven sound evokes excess and transgression but also stability, permanence, and harmony (1993: 2).

**Structural Portmanteau: Mosaic**

On a gestural level, my composition folio is rhythmically, timbrally and texturally visceral, capturing a spontaneous energy, yet on a macro level it is architecturally designed. This process of improvisation and design is twofold; my improvisational experiments generate key notated ideas, whilst the negotiation between traditional notation and controlled aleatoric elements facilitates performers’ improvisation. Via electronic notation, rhythmic and pitch gestures begin to take on more design elements, becoming more detailed, with multiple variations and cell development. Globally, these ideas are reflected upon via hard-copy print-outs of the score, encouraging visual rearrangements, and sometimes quite a literally a ‘cut’ and ‘paste’ non-linear organisation of sound-blocks to create a mosaic effect (see Figure 3.5 and 3.6, pgs. 78-79). This process allows me to distance myself from the piece and come up with new structural possibilities. The ‘cut’ and ‘paste’ technique does not translate literally, note for note, but conceptually. A similar process also takes place in Sibelius notation software, where I can quickly move blocks from one place to another, extend and truncate block lengths, and insert empty bars, ready to fill. This idea also extends to sketches of works, during different compositional stages, to consolidate my structural concepts. In embracing this reorganisation process, I have looked to Andriessen, Ives, Zappa, Zorn, and Torke as contemporary architectural models, using compact discs and scores to vitalise my process both sonically and visually. This process also includes the relationship between non-linear and linear elements. My compositions experiment with non-linear, patchwork-like structures, while my works’ content explores linear textures of dense unisons, pointillistic scatterings, and contrapuntal lines. This example shows experimentation with three intersecting character blocks in *Bandersnatch*. 
Figure 3.5 Bandersnatch - ‘Cut’ and ‘paste’ experiment, large texture

[Image of a musical score or sheet music]
Figure 3.6 ‘A’ is for Alice - ‘Cut’ and ‘paste’ experiment, small texture

Figure 3.6 shows the reorganisation of a section in ‘A’ is for Alice. Here a melodic phrase in the third system is positioned briefly in the bass hand, and as a result is turned upside-down to become a retrograde inversion. Later this was the inspiration for a series of retrograde inverted phrases in the piece.

Conversational Approach

One of the most important elements of my creative process is my mentorial relationships, primarily with musicians Bruce Crossman and John Encarnacao, in regards to
both composition and performance from 2006-2014. Other composition mentors have included Matthew Hindson (Sydney), Brenton Broadstock (Melbourne) and Kevin Puts (USA), as part of the 2012-2013 Cybec 21\textsuperscript{st} Century Australian Composers Program and the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music Composers Workshop. Donald Schön explains how in order to develop problem solving skills and confidence, students “learn by undertaking projects that simulate and simplify practice; or they take on real-world projects under close supervision” (1987:37). Via supervised real-world projects, my compositional voice has been shaped by interaction with mentors; together, each mentor has offered different strategies, advice and perspectives, contributing to my portmanteau creative process. As I have grown more confident, and as Schön observes in relation to the student-mentor relationship, I have asserted myself with increasing authority in more robust sonic portmanteaus (1987: 37).

Conversations and collaboration are an important part of this student-mentor relationship; talking with my mentors Bruce Crossman and John Encarnacao about musical and conceptual ideas has sparked additional ideas and refined existing ones. Similarly, conversation has also played an integral role in my band collaborations. Figure 3.7 shows an early sketch of Bandersnatch, where each block’s sonic character is defined by a description. I vividly remember this meeting with my mentor, Crossman (personal communication, March 22, 2013)
24. As I showed my first draft to him, we joked about names for each of the distinct blocks, whilst he drew up a map so we could see it as a visual representation and examine the ratios. There are three main blocks; the high energy block known as ‘punky energy’, the straight and heavy rock block referred to as ‘elephant stomp’ (with variations called ‘baby elephant stomp’ and ‘herd of elephant stomp’), and the lyrical block as ‘curvaceous contrast’.

\footnote{24 Supervisory session, University of Western Sydney Kingswood Campus, March 22, 2013, 11am-1pm}
'Curvaceous contrast’ describes the melodic contour of long, smooth lines heard in the slower blocks, in opposition to the previous groove orientated sections of ‘punky energy’. As the name suggests, ‘elephant stomp’ refers to heavy, lilting crotchet figures, coloured by power-chords and played by low brass. The sketch highlights how the blocks alternate and recur, and how block lengths are extended or truncated via ratio relationships. Here, humorous word descriptions and imagery feed back into my process, where the sound and meaning of words inspire musical characteristics and vice versa.
Figure 3.7 Crossman’s sketch of *Bandersnatch* sound-blocks during discussion
This idea of words as sonic catalyst is comparable to the way in John Zorn offers metaphors and descriptions to band members on file-cards when rehearsing *Spillane*. As Zorn writes in the *Godard/Spillane* (1999) liner notes:

Telling [guitarist] Bill Frisell to sound like a train crash, [pianist] Anthony Coleman to play a soundtrack to the first scene of Edgar G. Ulmer's Detour, or [percussionist] Bobby Previte to hit his drums like a sixteen-year old on acid are intensely private communications that would be misunderstood by anyone else and only work because of our unique personal relationships.

Resonating with Carroll’s whimsy, my meetings with Crossman were often riddled with humour which, in turn, helped solidify my juxtapositional ideas. As Zorn suggests, I consider our unique personal relationship as an important platform for generating word metaphors which trigger new sound ideas. At one meeting, Crossman described the juxtapositions in my later folio works as the sonic equivalent of a destroyer warship versus a sparrow, which encouraged me to explore this metaphor further in the reworking of *Red Queen, White Queen, Alice and All* and *Cabbages and Kings* (Harrison creative diary, September 6, 2013).

During the ‘curvaceous contrast’ blocks of *Bandersnatch* there is an interrupted character at play which, after seeing the first draft, Crossman originally described as ‘spiky’ (personal communication, March 22, 2013). Here, ‘spiky’ refers to asymmetrical and syncopated sudden bursts of rhythm in contrast to long, curvaceous phrases. There was something about the word ‘spiky’ which resonated with me and inspired me to develop this material further as percussive mobiles, ‘spiky’ phrase shapes and accelerating and decelerating feathered beams. The next sketch shows my visual conceptualisation of textural layers in the first ‘curvaceous’ block, with the interruptive ‘spiky’ character in mind, where woodwinds and horns play lyrically, with jagged saxophones, trumpet stabs and percussion.

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25 Supervisory session, University of Western Sydney Kingswood Campus, March 22, 2013, 11am-1pm
stutters superimposed over the top. Here, textural sketches help me imagine how sound-blocks are organised vertically, whereas structural maps place more emphasis on horizontal relationships. Textural combinations are inspired by a blend of visual, text and sonic strategies, where not only the words of Carroll are a catalyst, but the words from others too, acting as personal word metaphors.

**Figure 3.8 Harrison sketch of Bandersnatch, ‘Curvaceous contrast’ block at F**

The following flute line (see Example 3.2) forms the first part of the topmost curved line in figure 3.8.

**Example 3.2 Bandersnatch (bars 59-62) - Curvaceous flute line**

This strategy of flow versus disruption further resonates with my ‘soft versus choke’ strategy from Tabua Harrison, where cymbal chokes or sporadic accents cut across soft, dreamy guitar material. The juxtaposition of flow and disruption is also an integral part of Crossman’s aesthetic and feeds into my own work via word metaphors, visual sketches and
listening. In *Gentleness-Suddenness*\(^{26}\) Crossman contrasts lyrical lines with East-Asian spacious stab gestures, reminiscent of calligraphy strokes. Whereas Crossman’s work unfolds as a climactic arc structure, my own sound is more about establishing and manipulating groove patterns as a type of playful game. I consider the intersection of my mentors’ influence, with Crossman’s structural considerations and calligraphic gestures, and Encarnacao’s amalgam of free improvisation, rock, punk, and power-pop practices, an important element in creating a double energy through my folio via the concept of groove and interruption.

In opposition to the more intuitive and visceral aspects of my practice, reflection via conversation has helped me identify key features of my music and creative process. This includes reflection during the compositional process, workshops and performances, and afterwards by discussing recordings with my mentors. Receiving feedback from mentors, composers, conductors, musicians, and peers has proved invaluable, allowing further opportunity for reflection with the goal of sharpening my practice and strengthening my conceptual framework.

**Rehearsals and Performances**

Hearing *Frumious* performed by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, as part of the 2012-2013 Cybec 21\(^{st}\) Century Australian Composers Program\(^{27}\), was an enlightening experience. Listening back to the recording led to some changes in the score to improve clarity and performability, as well as altering the way in which I would later approach

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\(^{26}\) Premiere of Crossman’s *Gentleness-Suddenness* (2010-2012) for mezzo-soprano, violin, piano and percussion, June 29, 2013, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney.

\(^{27}\) During the writing process, I was mentored by composer Matthew Hindson. *Frumious* was performed at the Iwaki Auditorium, ABC Southbank Centre, Melbourne, on February 5, 2013.
instrument groups and colours in *Bandersnatch* and *Cabbages and Kings*. After the performance, head mentor Brenton Broadstock made the comment that I could expand my sound-world by having greater contrasts in harmonic colour from one stylistic block to the next (personal communication, February 7, 2013). As I began working on *Bandersnatch*, I tried to take this on-board by breaking up the blocks and instrument sections into distinct harmonic worlds and chord types to strengthen the juxtapositional changes. Encapsulating the viscerality of the work, Clive O’Connell of *The Age* described the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra’s performance of *Frumious* as a “battering of the listener’s head through splattering block chords” (2013). Although potentially intended as a criticism, I was pleased that the energy of the piece had come across in this way. O’Connell’s use of the word “splattering” made me more aware of this textural effect in the piece, and the almost onomatopoeic quality of the word inspired me to explore it further in later works. The idea of a critic’s words sparking creative ideas also resonates with a review of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra’s performance of Matthew Hindson’s *SPEED* (1997). Appearing in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Friday August 27, 1999, the review described *SPEED* as having “moments of plastic jubilation”, which then inspired Hindson to write a new piano work, titled *Moments of Plastic Jubilation* (1999) (*Matthew Hindson*, 2005).

*Frumious* was also selected for the 2013 Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music Composer Workshop in Santa Cruz, where it was performed three times with three young conductors, Scott Seaton, Kah Chun Wong, and Chaowen Ting, as part of the ‘In the Works’ concert. The workshop was a unique opportunity to work closely with the conductors; each

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28 Email from Brenton Broadstock, February 7, 2013

29 During the festival, I was mentored by Pulitzer Prize Winner, Kevin Puts. 2013 Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music Composer Workshop Website: [http://www.cabrillomusic.org/2013-season/performances/in-the-works.html](http://www.cabrillomusic.org/2013-season/performances/in-the-works.html)
approached the piece differently, with varying levels of flamboyance and whimsy, bringing out different characteristics of the work. After discussions with the conductors that the scored tempo indications might not be as pronounced as I would like, we decided to exaggerate the slower tempos, which led to greater stylistic contrast between the straight march-like and effervescent jazz-infused sections (S. Seaton, C. Ting, K. Wong, personal communication, July 28, 2013). Juxtaposed with the visceral energy of the piece, the conductors brought out the exaggerated vibrato and sentimental gestures of the strings and brass at E and L in an almost ‘hyper-lyrical’ way, expressing a sense of femininity and grace which I had not previously associated with my music. I do not consider these sections as being literally feminine, but use the description more as a personal metaphor for sonically shaped melodic line contrast, in the way that I associate ‘punky energy’ and ‘elephant stomp’ with a particular type of musical gesture.

During rehearsals, conductor Kah Chun Wong suggested the strings play the ‘exaggerated vibrato’ lines at E in a way that was “spooky, like a Theremin”. Wong, a composer himself, seemed to innately understand the playful humour of the piece. During his introduction, he addressed the audience with great enthusiasm:

I would like to share something with you about the piece. We hear a clarinet wail throughout three times. After the second time, I feel we are driving into it and we are getting hysteric! And then very quickly, poof, it is gone with a puff of smoke! (Wong, *Frumious* Cabrillo Festival Recording July 31, 2013).

This process of collaboration and reflection has been incredibly insightful, exposing new qualities of my music, and encouraging me to see works from a conductor’s

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30 Harrison creative diary, July 28, 2013
31 As described by Cabrillo Composer in Residence, Mason Bates, personal communication, July 31 2013, Santa Cruz, USA
perspective and focus on the performance details. During my time in Santa Cruz, I also formed a strong rapport with conductor Scott Seaton who programmed *Frumious* for performance by the Minot Symphony Orchestra in November, 2013, with the opportunity for further collaborations in the future.

**Music and Words Mosaic**

Reading and writing has also played an important role in the creative process, from the initial spark of Carroll’s literature to conducting research, presenting papers, and even now in the writing of this exegesis. A survey of the field helped me forge connections between the key concepts of my project and recognise how these ideas affect the development of my musical language in working towards a reorganised oppositionality. At the same time, my relationship with Carroll’s text has changed. In the earlier work *Take Care of the Sense* the use of voice was originally intended to be clearly audible, but since having two movements workshoped and performed in Taiwan, as part of the 29th Asian Composers’ League Young Composer Competition in 2011, I have realised that even when the text is almost indecipherable it still plays an important conceptual role and offers an unusual textural effect. What is most important is how the text shapes musical ideas throughout the composing process, rather than whether it is clearly decipherable in performance. The following example (see Example 3.3) shows duelling voices and instruments within semi-improvised and notated blocks.

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The middle works of my folio abandon the use of voice, only to return in my final piece, *Cabbages and Kings*. Carroll’s text has become increasingly inherent in my musical gestures, inciting duelling instrument groups and the pursuit of a non-linear, juxtapositional structure. Text is integrated as the humour in my music, continually teasing the listener.

At the same time, there are elements of my work which I have only become aware of towards the end of the creative process, including a feminine grace and sentimentality, just as there must be aspects which remain unknown to me too. In an interview with Andrew Ford,
composer Liza Lim talks about how certain realisations and discoveries are only made after the compositional process, rather than during:

Oh, right, OK. I wasn't aware at the time of these connections; how can I build on that? I think that's one of the weird things about creating work, is that actually you don't know everything about it, and maybe only later you are able to recognise certain things. And that's fine; I actually don't need to know everything about my work, yes. It teaches me, actually, I think. (Ford, 2009)

Even Lewis Carroll confessed to not knowing what his epic poem “The Hunting of the Snark” was entirely about, mixing themes of existentialism, allegory and political satire. In chapters four and five, I talk about my folio works in more detail, discussing the key ideas involved, and analysing their musical development.

**Percussion as Process**

An increased clarity of nonsense logic emerged in the writing of the larger ensemble pieces of my folio, resulting in harder-edged juxtapositions, and whimsical and raucous humour which revels in joyous stylistic collisions. As I have already mentioned, the focus on rhythmic elements in my folio stems from my experience as a drummer. Here, drum kit brings to life the non-linear logic versus groove character of my music, in which the sense of groove is continually disrupted, broken up into fragments, rearranged and repeated as part of an oppositional reorganisation. I consider kit generated ideas an important part of my process, as the development of rhythmic figures reflects the way in which larger sound-blocks are organised and shaped. As I became more aware of my approach to the kit as a compositional tool, I began to highlight this process in my compositions, particularly the large ensemble works, and over time it became an integrated part of my practice.
Interlocking Rhythms and Hockets

Using the kit as a starting point inspired rhythmic, timbral, textural and registral ideas. During the initial writing stages, kit improvisations sparked rhythmic figures which became central to the character and energy of Boojum, Frumious, and Bandersnatch. This process involved developing rhythms for instruments and instrument sections, where the dialogue between hands and feet determined how the material might interact together to form different textures. The separate voice colours of the kit help me work out how a rhythmic idea might be divided amongst an ensemble to form interlocking or hocket inspired parts. For example, playing in a linear way and alternating between only the bass drum and the snare drum, allows me to hear two distinct voices forming one composite rhythm (see Example 3.3). These two voices become independent rhythms or groups of accents which I assign to an instrument or group; the bass drum might translate to low brass or bassoon, whereas the snare might become a piccolo or string section. Adding a third and fourth voice, like a hi-hat or jam-block, creates more possibilities, where smaller subdivisions lock into the larger rhythm to form faster rhythms. In this way, higher pitched voices usually divide into lower pitched voices.

Pitch wise, kit also inspires registral ideas. These choices in register are key in allowing interlocking rhythms and accents to be heard, especially when played by the same instrument. For example, two alternating pitches in a high and low register help establish two distinct rhythms through the use of pitch leaps and colour change, creating a hocket-like effect. The main rhythmic theme of Frumious emerged as I was experimenting with different left and right hand semi-quaver combinations using snare and hi-hat. The linear rhythm embraces a relentless momentum, punctuated by semi-quaver bursts.
Example 3.4 Frumious - Percussion sketch, relentless momentum

Example 3.5 Single paradiddle rudiment

The interplay between the snare and hi-hat voicings, which form two distinct rhythms, is also inspired by the hocketing techniques of Andriessen’s *Hoketus* (1976). Written for two identical quintets, the groups do not play simultaneously until the very end of the piece; instead, their parts interlock in a linear way, relentlessly creating hockets. Originating from the medieval practice, Yayoi Everett describes the hocket as “characterized by a rapid alternation of two voices to form a composite melody” (2007: 73). An important aspect of Andriessen’s hocket technique is the way in which voices interlock to produce a homogenous timbre line, made possible here by the two identical groups. In Example 3.6 each stave represents material played by one of the quintets.

Example 3.6 Andriessen, *Hoketus* (rehearsal figure E) – Alternating homogenous voices

In *Frumious*, when transferred melodically, my rhythmic theme creates a hocket-like effect through choice of register. Here, my practice differs from Andriessen; rather than creating homogenous timbre lines, I am more interested in distinct colours lines which highlight individual parts of the composite rhythm, stemming from my drum kit practice. In this example, the theme is played by the violins and violas:
Example 3.7 *Frumious* (bars 22-23) – Strings’ register hockets

Here, each of the higher notes in the first violins was originally played by the left hand on snare and the lower notes by the right on hi-hat. The colour distinction is made melodically by registral choices which allow distinct rhythms to be heard; each of the first set of higher notes is also accented. Although rhythmically identical, the first two beats of the second bar alternate with those of the first, displacing the accent and changing the pitch direction to create an angular motion. Underneath this, the cellos and basses omit semi-quavers to play only the key accents, adding weight and highlighting the hocket-like effect. My use of hocket ideas is distinct from Andriessen. Unlike *Hoketus*, the hocket techniques of *Frumious* do not set up long-scale patterning that unfold over large periods of time, nor do they strictly alternate between two voice groups. Instead, my hocketing is more subtle, creating a hocket effect through athletic leaps in register, often by the same instrument, and placing an emphasis on repeated hocket groove patterns.

Also drawing from kit-inspired hand interplay, my piano piece *A’ is for Alice* makes use of linear interlocking rhythms and call and response-like dialogue. The “sprightly” theme, introduced at bar 21, uses register leaps as a playful way to explore the relationship between
the left and right hands. Here, each of the hands occupies a distinct register, and together, the alternating octaves create a naïve-sounding melody.

Example 3.8 ‘A’ is for Alice (bars 21-25) - Hand interplay

![Example 3.8 ‘A’ is for Alice (bars 21-25) - Hand interplay](image)

**Primacy of Rhythm to Drive Pitch**

I began writing *Boojum* after seeing a friend’s grunge rock band, The Dead Love, perform at the Annandale Hotel in Sydney, late in 2011. Inspired by the raw energy of the group, especially my drummer friend Gene Clark, and along with ideas drawn from my own experiences drumming in rock bands, I decided to use drum kit as a starting point for the piece. This prompted me to look into contemporary art music which featured percussion, and a few days later I discovered Michael Torke’s percussion concerto *Rapture* (2001).

Accustomed to using melody as a starting point, Torke discusses how writing a piece for unpitched percussion posed a new challenge and how his solution was to have the orchestra ‘shadow’ the rhythms of percussionist, Colin Currie:

For example, in the first movement, which features drums and woods, when Colin plays a pattern on three high tom-toms, clarinets and trumpets play three and only three assigned pitches. At exactly the same rhythm. Every percussion instrument of Colin's at the front of the stage is mirrored by specific instruments in the orchestra. In the third movement, which features metallic instruments (a kind of “industrial rig”, as Colin would say), tins are matched with flutes
and piccolo, pipes with clarinets, cow bells with oboes and bassoons, gongs laid flat with horns, cymbals with trumpets, and brake drums with trombones. (Torke, 2012).

*Rapture* plays with the roles of soloist and accompanist, challenging the perceived romantic hierarchy of soloist as “hero” and the orchestra as the “conquered”, or *only* accompanist. In an interview with musicologist Vera Lukomsky, composer Sofia Gubaidulina describes how the concerto has changed since the nineteenth century:

> the concept of a hero (personified by the soloist) is now completely different. The soloist is no longer a hero in the same sense as in the classical and romantic concertos. At that time, the hero was victorious: an outstanding individual, a winner in an unequal competition…the typical musical concept was the opposition of the soloist and orchestra…In the 20th century these concepts have become irrelevant and anachronistic, as has the concept of the victor (1998: 1).

Torke goes on to discuss how in *Rapture*, although the orchestral players shadow the percussion, they are not subordinate, for they contribute essential colour and perspective to the piece (Torke, 2012). Here, the idea of pitched instruments following percussion sets up a striking interplay between rhythm, colour and texture. Biddick Smith (2009) explains how in the following score example (see Example 3.9), from the first movement of *Rapture*, specific pitches are assigned to the orchestral instruments which correspond to each of the six tom-tom pitches (see Table 3.1).
Table 3.1 Relationship between tom-tom register and orchestra pitch in *Rapture*, Movement 1

(Biddick Smith 2009: 47)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High toms</th>
<th>Pitch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Bb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Toms</th>
<th>Pitch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Eb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 3.9 Torke, *Rapture*, Movement 1 (bars 6-11) - Wind instruments follow percussion rhythm and pitch (Biddick-Smith, 2009:47)

Inspired by the viscerality of Clark and the design of Torke, I began generating rhythmic ideas on drum kit, where the melodic instruments would be slave to the percussion and explore a reversal of traditional roles. In the initial groove of *Boojum* (see Example 3.10), the bass instruments lock in with each of the bass drum and hi-hat accents, working against the ghost notes of the snare to form a hocket-like effect. In 7/16 the placement of the accents inverts after every two bars. Kit has also inspired timbral choices and technique: the
trombones’ use of harmon mutes, with the opening and closing of the hand over the stem, reflects the opening and closing of the hi-hat.

**Example 3.10 Boojum reduction (bars 30-36) - Drum kit and bass rhythmic groove unison**

Andriessen talks about similar compositional concepts in relation to “De Snelheid” (The Velocity), where in the pursuit of the “perception of speed”, percussion is the most important voice (2002: 180). As I mentioned earlier, Andriessen splits the orchestra into three groups; two small identical wind orchestras and a third group of strings and other instruments. Each of these groups follows one of three percussion instruments; two wood blocks, and a bass drum with low toms, setting up a three-way duel. The two wind orchestras follow the accelerandos of the wood-block, while the bass drum and toms are followed by the strings, harp and Hammond organ and constantly try to depress the tempo (2002: 180-181). This approach of beginning with percussion greatly appeals to me, as it gives way to exciting textural possibilities and interaction between instrument groups. Andriessen discusses how tempo is not always defined by speed, but instead by harmonic rhythm. Once the wood-blocks have reached terminal velocity (a quaver equals 720) they begin to be heard as
tremolos, where they cannot physically play any faster, leaving only the slow, unaltering pulse of the bass drum.

**Rhythm as Textural Portmanteau Blocks**

Later in *Boojum*, at rehearsal marks K and L, the kit takes on a soloistic role, where instrument groups are organised into rhythmic blocks which work against or divide into the kit parts. In Example 3.11 below, the oboes and clarinet one play in unison with the kit’s left and right hand accents from 111-113, before playing the last accent of each triplet group in bars 114-115. The trumpets pick out some of the kit’s accents, supported by percussion two’s cymbal chokes, omitting notes to form a hocket effect with the winds. In bars 114-115, the trumpets and trombones work with the kit to create interlocking triplet rhythms, highlighted by the jam-blocks. Against this are sustained horn notes and double-kick bass drum semi-quavers, which pay homage to idiomatic metal drumming techniques. Here, the alternating colours of the kit accents, from tom-tom to ride cymbal bell, and the wind and brass interjections create a composite sound-block in which melody fragments are formed from alternating pitches passed back and forth between instrument groups.

**Example 3.11 Boojum reduction (bars 111-116) - Interlocking rhythms**
While at times instrument groups are slaves to the drum kit in *Boojum*, at other times they rebel against it. In the following example (see Example 3.12), each instrument group has a distinct rhythmic and harmonic character, forming blocks of sound which are superimposed over the kit’s triplet-led rhythms to produce an Ivesian, layered collage. Here, the groove character of the piece is disrupted by a sound-block reorganisation which has its own inherent logic; each of the rhythmic blocks has a partner block with which they form an interlocking rhythm which does not quite fit with the other blocks, inciting a raucous humour. The kit (percussion 1) works with the xylophone to create a four against three and a four against five effect, while the winds and horns work together with alternating semi-quaver rhythms. The brass acts as a mediator between the winds, horns and percussion, placing an emphasis on alternating crotchet beats of the bar. The strings’ lyrical melody is superimposed across the top which, when juxtaposed with the high energy rhythms, only increases the humour of the collage.

**Example 3.12 Boojum reduction (bars 157-160) - Rhythmic collage**
With a knowing wink to Ives’s *Putnam’s Camp* (see Example 3.13), this block also resonates with my concert and brass band marching experiences, which I mentioned earlier. The rigidity of traditional march music is reimagined as lumpy rhythmic collisions, in which the straight triplet rhythms of marching percussion are rescored as driving kit rhythms, and the idiomatic off-beat oom-pahs\(^{34}\) reimagined as further syncopated brass and wind rhythms.

I never particularly enjoyed marching in bands; it was always difficult to hear, with a thunderous bass drum in my ear, and wobbly cornet tones from all directions as mouthpieces slip when walking. When I played with Hawkesbury District Concert Band\(^{35}\), they rehearsed very early on Saturday mornings up and down a long university drive-way with multiple speed-humps! Later, as I competed in several Australian National Band Championships with St Mary’s Brass Band\(^{36}\), marching involved more complex figurations, including marching backwards, and in single file and double file to form shapes. Marching through the band created unusual balance and phasing effects; as certain instruments passed, their part gradually came into the foreground, before fading away again. Example 3.12 is a reimagining of the rhythmic elements I associate with march music, with the superimposition of lyrical strings.

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\(^{34}\) Oom-pah parts, usually played by second and third cornets, tenor horns and baritone, were always, in my experience, especially despised by brass musicians.

\(^{35}\) 1996-2003

\(^{36}\) 2005-2009
Example 3.13 Ives, ‘Putnam Camp’ (2 bars after rehearsal mark Q to rehearsal mark R), *Three Places in New England* - Rhythmic collage
Although my rhythmic collages draw on textures inspired by Ives, my music does not make use of his traditional hymns, band tunes and ragtime pop borrowings, although it does occasionally play with a march-like element for humorous effect, born from my own personal experiences, not Ives’s. Instead, my music is more interested in successive juxtapositions, in the vein of Zappa and Zorn, where grooves are continually set up, only to be disrupted. Here, rhythmic collages provide an opportunity for interruption and blurring of the beat.

Summary

Over the course of my folio, my portmanteau aesthetic has gradually become richer and more integrated, led by a series of portmanteau processes which culminate in sound-blocks of joyous explosion. My own blend of score, improvisation, visual and literary driven processes generate blocks of opposing character and, via a breakdown of linearity, forge composite blocks which integrate these approaches in a multi-tiered way. Rhythmic strategies and kit-inspired ideas have evolved from my vernacular and art-fused performance practice, whilst concepts of architectural design have grown out of compositional models, Andriessen, Zappa, Ives, Torke and Zorn, who each embrace both worlds. Conversations, rehearsals and performances, along with a ‘dive in and reiterate’ approach, stacked harmonic portmanteaus, long line improvisations, ‘cut’ and ‘paste’ structures, sketches, word mosaics, interlocking rhythms and hockets, and rhythm driving pitch, have all been an important part of my creative process. Just as my process has been fed by my improvisational performance practice, my scored compositions have shaped my maturing as a performer, too.

From the early tentative juxtapositions of ‘A’ is for Alice, to the growth process of Take Care of the Sense and Boojum, and the further stylistic emergence of Frumious, Bandersnatch and Cabbages and Kings, my experimentation with non-linear collage gives way to a nonsense design and an ever-increasing double-edged humour which is
simultaneously whimsical and raucous. Whilst juxtapositions become increasingly hard-edged and violent over time, the inverse is also true, where sentimental gestures and a feminine grace have also gradually emerged, tempered by a wilder sense of humour. Together, my improvisational and architectural, visceral and reflective, and visual and sonic processes work towards a double energy of oppositional reorganisation.
Part Three: Analysis
Chapter Four: Emergence

The following analysis chapters split my work into two distinct growth periods. The first looks at the emergence of my earlier folio works, ‘A’ is for Alice and the Take Care of the Sense, and the Sounds Will Take Care of Themselves suite. The second looks at the increasing integration of my juxtapositional techniques in my later works, Frumious, Bandersnatch, Cabbages and Kings, and Red Queen, White Queen, Alice and All. This chapter focusses on the interaction between music and text, and how an exchange of literary and musical ideas have informed key features of ‘A’ is for Alice and Take Care of the Sense: frame-within-a-frame structures, juxtapositional sound-blocks, controlled aleatoricism and improvisation, the role of voice, humour, and the notion of play. In particular, Carroll’s literature is the catalyst for different types of textures and, in this way, this chapter is primarily concerned with textual-textural engagement.

Textual-Textural Engagement

Soloistic Games: ‘A’ is for Alice Literary Ideas and Micro-Structure

The first piece written for my folio, ‘A’ is for Alice37 is a small texture experiment for piano which reimagines Carroll’s literary ideas and structural devices as a series of stylistic juxtapositions and oppositional mood blocks. The work navigates the different faces of Alice as she falls into a dream-world, slips in and out of dreaming and waking states and becomes increasingly disorientated, unable to identify what is real and what is fantasy. The piece plays with a frame-within-a-frame structure, circularity, palindromes and musical equivalents of malapropisms and puns. Musically, these devices are investigated as sound-block

37 Written for Antonietta Loffredo’s Childhood in Music project. Harrison, H. (2010). ‘A’ is for Alice on Childhood in Music [recorded by A. Loffredo] [CD], Wirripang.
reorganisations, register play, consecutive key changes and transpositions, quotation, semitone clashes and crushes, an abundance of augmented fourths, and retrograde and linear rhythms. As the first piece, ‘A’ is for Alice was a testing ground for how Carroll’s literary ideas might translate musically and invigorate my compositional voice. Some of these ideas are investigated quite literally to begin with, and throughout the folio have become more abstract as I take more liberties in discovering what constitutes my nonsense driven portmanteau aesthetic.

Frame-within-a Frame Structure

The idea of a frame-within-a-frame structure is an integral design element on both a macro and micro level of ‘A’ is for Alice and throughout my folio. As I discussed in chapter two, this concept is inspired by the structure of the Alice books which, in evoking dual waking and dreaming worlds, slips between different writing styles to form both outer and inner frames. As William Madden writes:

The apparent anomaly of Wonderland ending with a prose narrative and Looking-Glass with a lyric poem disappears when we recognize that the Wonderland prose ending forms part of the outer-frame structure of which the three frame poems are complementary components. The schema also calls attention to the fact that both books contain inner as well as outer frames, each of which presents a waking Alice in prose narrative of a kind we might find in a realistic novel.

(1986: 365)

The changes in writing style from narrative prose to lyrical poetry form the outer frames, while the inner frame is the dream tale, comprised of a collection of nonsense poetry, songs, distorted nursery rhymes, and conversations. Madden suggests that the shifting back and forth between different writing modes creates a “double rhythm” effect, as the reader, like Alice, experiences a “dream within a dream” (1986: 365). This frame-within-a-frame structure also promotes the idea of circularity, which Stewart attributes as the “shape of play” (1989: 133). Recalling
Madden’s structural interpretation of the Alices (see Table 2.3, pg. 50), I see the structure of the books as inherently circular and game-like.

A strong theme in both books is games; Wonderland is concerned with cards, while Looking-Glass with chess. Importantly, there is an emphasis on games which are never quite played out as there are no rules at all or the rules keep changing, creating their own internal logic and circularity. In Wonderland these games include the never-ending caucus race, the unwinnable game of croquet, the tea-party game frozen in time, and the lobster quadrille dance, culminating with the chaotic trial of the Knave of Hearts. Yet, the largest game of all is played out with the reader, creating yet another frame. Carroll asks us at the end of Looking-Glass to consider whether the story was a dream or reality: “which do you think it was?” (2007: 327). And, if so, who dreamed who?

Carroll’s frame-within-a-frame structure and circular games, along with compositional models Andriessen, Ives, Zappa and Zorn, have informed my own non-linear structure and games of oppositional reorganisation. The changes and recurrence of different writing modes in the Alices are reimagined musically as stylistic juxtapositions in ‘A’ is for Alice. The piece navigates a series of juxtapositional blocks by toggling back and forth between three main opposing moods, marked in the score as “dreamy”, “sprightly” and “dark”, with additional moods of “freely” and “joyous”. This structure is shown in Figure 4.1. Each oppositional block joins with adjacent blocks to create a musical portmanteau effect. The juxtapositional blocks explore deliberate interruptions and disruptions; the abrupt changes in rhythmic motion, harmonic language and texture act as obstacles that disturb the expected trajectory of each mood. After each juxtaposition, the blocks continue unfazed as though the disruptions were a mere segue. This patchwork-like structure ties the three opposing moods together through a pattern of continual change. The recurrence of each stylistic juxtaposition sets up a series of frames-within-a-frame, as each disappears into the
next, encouraging us to question; which framed which, as a parallel to who dreamed who? The oppositions contribute to a mosaic effect which reorganises the structural logic of the piece in a way that at first appears disordered, yet is inherently logical. When continual change is expected, it becomes part of the piece's system of order, constructing a new type of sense from the logic of nonsense.

The outer “dreamy” blocks frame the piece like a pair of book-ends and suggest a return to the beginning at the end, a hallmark of my compositions. The piece both begins and ends with a finger-stopped string harmonic, further suggesting a circularity which could continue ad infinitum. This idea reflects Carroll’s palindromic structure, in which each of his outer frames feature dream-child lyric verse. Expanding this idea further, the first and last chord heard in ‘A’ is for Alice is a C13, which I will refer to as the dream-child chord. Used in both “dreamy” blocks at beginning and end, this sustained chord is also found in bars 18, 53 and bar 58 to precipitate mood changes, transposed up a minor third as an E♭13. The dream-child chord acts as a micro-block, lasting for only a beat or two to quickly recall the original block, before shooting off in another direction.
Figure 4.1 ‘A’ is for Alice - Oppositional block structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stylistic Blocks</th>
<th>Joyous/Playful</th>
<th>Sprightly</th>
<th>Freely</th>
<th>Dark</th>
<th>Dreamy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21-34</td>
<td>46-58</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-102</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bars 1-11</td>
<td>12-17</td>
<td>35-45</td>
<td>59-84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103-108</td>
<td>18-19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: All numbers refer to bar numbers
In a similar way, the finger-stopped string harmonic on A introduced in the initial “dreamy” block is extended in the “freely” block at bar 20, and recurs as micro-blocks at bars 50, 58 and 99. The pitch choice of A is significant conceptually, where it is quite literally the ‘A’ in the piece’s title, ‘A’ is for Alice. On each of these occasions there is a pause; the stopped-string gesture is interrupted, and again intends to recall the beginning, teasing the listener into thinking the return of the block is near.

Example 4.1 ‘A’ is for Alice (bar 2) - Original dream-child chord

Example 4.2 ‘A’ is for Alice (bars 53-43) - Transposed dream-child chord acts as mood trigger

Example 4.3 ‘A’ is for Alice (bars 58-59) - Finger-stopped string and dream-child chord trigger mood change
Another important aspect of the frame-within-a-frame structure is the changing ratios, rate of recurrence and lengths of each of the oppositional blocks. The macro structure of the piece follows a ABACDBDCDBCBDEA structure (see Figure 4.2). Each block appears three times, with the exception of E, which appears only once, resonating with Susan Stewart’s ‘mistake-on-purpose’ idea, which I explain in more detail on page 87. Structurally, a game is being played; once a pattern of expectation has been set up, toggling back and forth between blocks A, B, C and D, E is suddenly introduced and disrupts this pattern. The “joyful” and “playful” blocks of E bring a new emphasis on octaves and a blues twist. Another element of this game is expanding and truncating ratios. The following diagram (Figure 4.2) shows the “dark” blocks growing in length as the piece continues, and the “sprightly” blocks contracting. The first “dark” blocks lasts six bars, the second, eleven, and the third, twenty-six. Whereas, the first “sprightly” block lasts fourteen bars, the second, thirteen, and the third, five. Here, the toggling between the mood blocks also experiments with a change in harmonic language; the “sprightly” sections are tonally based, in A, while the “dark” blocks are predominately atonal and chromatic, with fleeting tonal centres. The juxtaposition of harmonic language appears in an embryonic form in ‘A’ is for Alice, and is developed further in the later works Frumious, Bandersnatch and Cabbages and Kings, which I explore in more detail in chapter five.
Figure 4.2 ‘A’ is for Alice - Oppositional block expanding and contracting ratios

Table 4.1 Dark and sprightly block lengths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Number of Bars</th>
<th>Number of Crotchet beats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B- Dark (12-17)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B- Dark and urgent (35-45)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B- Dark and aggressive (59-84)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D- Sprightly (21-34)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D- Sprightly (46-58)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D- Sprightly (85-89)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Modulation Games

‘A’ is for Alice also explores the notion of play through consecutive key changes and repeated ascending transpositions. There is mischievous humour at work here which sets up a pattern before changing the rules at the last moment. The material takes pleasure in teasing the listener by obscuring the piece’s trajectory, before darting off in another direction entirely with a whimsical humour that says ‘just kidding’. The clearest example of this occurs from bars 85 to 90, where the original “sprightly” theme undergoes four consecutive transpositions. Bar 85 begins in A major, modulates up to B♭ major in 86, back to A major again in bar 87, up to B major in bar 88, and then lands in C major at bar 90. These transpositions are intensified by the shortening and lengthening of phrases, via changes in time signatures, as well as changing dynamic levels. “Joyous” at 90 introduces new material, and just as we think we’ve seen the end of the transpositions, briefly modulates up to a C# major area in bar 95, before coming back again to C, and offering brief glimpses of C# up until the last “dreamy” block at 103.

Example 4.4 ‘A’ is for Alice (bars 83-88) - Modulation games

\[\text{Example 4.4 ‘A’ is for Alice (bars 83-88) - Modulation games}\]
Semi-tone Clashes, Crushes and Malapropisms

The use of semi-tone clashes throughout ‘A’ is for Alice evokes a playfulness and resonates with Carroll’s use of malapropisms in the Alices. A malapropism is the accidental misuse of a word caused by a similarity in sound, yet Carroll intentionally plays with malapropisms to incite humour. The first example of a malapropism is when Alice falls down the rabbit-hole and mistakenly misuses the word “antipathies” when she instead means “antipodes”; people who live on the opposite side of the globe.

‘I wonder if I shall fall right through the earth! How funny it'll seem to come out among the people that walk with their heads downward! The Antipathies, I think--'(she was rather glad there was no one listening, this time, as it didn't sound at all the right word)' - but I shall have to ask them what the name of the country is, you know. Please, Ma'am, is this New Zealand or Australia?' (2007: 14)

Susan Stewart talks about how nonsense enjoys the paradox of the “mistake-on-purpose” and uses it as a gesture of play (1989: 206). This idea was previously touched on in the structural diagram of Figure 4.2, where structure also functions as play. I have taken Carroll’s use of malapropism and reimagined it harmonically as semi-tone clashes and crushes. At first, the semi-tone clashes appear as “mistakes”, but are a deliberate part of the design. As the piece continues the clashes become more frequent, occurring in bars 39, 61, 68, 73, 75, 84 and multiple times in bars 96 and 97. This idea also extends to the use of acciaccaturas or crushed notes, which reposition semi-tone clashes horizontally, rather than vertically. The increasing recurrence of clashes and crushes throughout reinforces the design at work and the mischievous notion of play. This idea of the seeming “mistake-on-purpose” also presents itself as sudden awkward pauses, particularly as a return of the dream-child chord and finger-stopped strings.
Parallels: Augmented Fourths as Puns

Although ‘A’ is for Alice is concerned with oppositionality, it is also interested in parallels. Each of the three main blocks (dreamy, sprightly and dark) is harmonically distinct, yet there are harmonic elements from each present in the other. The frequent use of augmented fourths and semi-tone clashes, both vertically and horizontally, act as parallel sonic gateways into which the blocks can suddenly toggle between playfulness and seriousness, and naivety and darkness, continually blurring the two with humour. I see this effect as being comparable to Carroll’s extensive use of puns. As the equivalent opposite of a portmanteau word, a pun is defined as the “simultaneity of two or more meanings within one word” (Stewart, 1989: 163). Stewart discusses how a pun maintains sameness aurally but splits into separate meanings in the works of Carroll: “conversations are continually halted by puns, by a splitting of the discourse into two simultaneous and disparate paths, each followed by a respective member of the conversation” (1989: 161). An excerpt from the conversation
between Alice and the Mouse shows how easily puns lead to miscommunication and allow characters in the books to talk at cross-purposes due to double meanings:

‘Mine is a long and sad tale!’ said the Mouse, turning to Alice, and sighing.

‘It is a long tail, certainly,’ said Alice, looking down with wonder at the Mouse’s tail; ‘but why do you call it sad?’ (2007: 37)

With this in mind, I see the ambiguous tonal quality of the augmented fourth as a useful tool in linking opposing blocks and inciting a dual sense of mischief and drama.

Considered sinister in the Middle Ages, the augmented fourth, also known as a tritone, was prohibited. According to the Oxford Concise Dictionary of Music, the interval was associated with the devil and, in medieval times, there was a saying using the Hexachord names for notes: “Mi contra fa diabolus est in musica, ‘Mi against fa is the devil in music’” (2004: 747). As a result, the tritone is frequently used in music to suggest evil. At the same time, the augmented fourth also evokes a blues and jazz sound, allowing the interval to act as a type of pivot point in ‘A’ is for Alice, in which the blocks can flick back and forth between darker and more frivolous moods, constantly obscuring which is which. These sudden mood changes play with the frame-within-a-frame structure on a micro-scale; which is being framed? The augmented fourth is first introduced in bar 17 as a menacing semi-quaver figure, before being explored in a more playful, elastic way in the “free” section (bar 20). The final interval of this section is an augmented fourth, which pre-empts the change into the lighter “sprightly” mood. Bars 27 and 29 of “sprightly” use the interval in a cheeky way, where they appear as unexpected sforzandos, foreshadowing the more ominous mood to follow. Bars 32 to 35 use a series of ascending augmented fourths to lead into the “dark and urgent” block, linking the two opposing moods with a common sonority which is simultaneously cheeky and foreboding. In bars 66, 73 and 74, the repeated augmented fourths are again menacing, leading to a climax point of the piece. Throughout the work, the
augmented fourth, like Carroll’s puns, split the piece in two and act as a sonic gateway for sudden mood shifts and unexpected humour.

**Register Play**

Register play is another important concept of the piece and helps define the character of each mood block. The piece begins in the highest register of the piano with a finger-stopped string (dreamy) and within twelve bars plunges to the lowest octave (dark). In the most literal sense, the descent from the highest register to the lowest represents Alice's change of consciousness as she delves into the deepest depths of her subconscious. As I mentioned in chapter three, having never composed for solo piano before, I found it useful to draw on my experience as a rock drummer in thinking about the interplay between the hands. As a result, the piece is highly rhythmic, featuring linear inter-locking rhythms and call and response-like dialogues which are heightened by the use of alternating register. The “sprightly” theme, introduced at bar 21, uses register leaps as a playful way to explore the relationship between the hands and interlocking rhythms. Here, each of the hands occupies a distinct register, and together, the alternating octaves create a melody.

**Example 4.7 ‘A’ is for Alice (bars 21-25) - Linear interlocking rhythms and register leaps**
From bar 59 to 85, the “dark” block uses changes in register to reinforce the call and response-like dialogue between the hands, where the left hand’s lowest octave is frequently intercepted by right hand stabs and melodic fragments in the higher octaves. This focus on the rhythmic interplay between the hands is an untraditional approach to piano writing, yet further resonates with Torke’s *Rapture* model of reinventing melodic instruments percussively, although here I apply the technique to a solo piano texture, rather than orchestra.

**Retrograde Rhythms as Inspiration**

Nonsense literature revels in word games and the arrangement and rearrangement of words. Carroll was fascinated by acrostic poems, palindromes and mirror images; in *Through the Looking Glass*, the “Jabberwocky” poem is written in reverse, requiring a mirror to decipher it (2007: 180-182). *Through the Looking Glass* takes place in a world on the other side of a mirror, and this is the premise for many of Carroll's ideas in the book being based on backwards or upside-down themes. With this in mind, I experimented with generating material in the “dark” blocks using this idea. The bass line in bar 67 and 69 is a rhythmic retrograde of the right hand’s rhythm in bars 35 to 37. The pitch contour is also reversed, but introduces new pitch material and right hand interjections.

Example 4.8 ‘A’ is for Alice (bars 35-37) - Original right hand melody
Example 4.9 ‘A’ is for Alice (bars 67-69) - Rhythmic retrograde reinvention in left hand

The idea of play is also explored using quotation. Bar 40 is a brief, one bar quotation of Bach’s Minuet in G Major, but appears here (see Example 4.10) in C sharp major:

Example 4.10 ‘A’ is for Alice (bar 40) - Bach’s transposed Minuet in G Major quotation

Aleatoric, Wider Textural and Vocalistic Game: Take Care of the Sense, and the Sounds Will Take Care of Themselves Suite

The other work which forms part of this embryonic growth period is the five movement suite, Take Care of the Sense, and the Sounds Will Take Care of Themselves. I will focus on movements two and three, looking at the growth of my playful portmanteau aesthetic in regard to aleatoric elements, expanded timbres and the use of voice. Both movements have received performances in Taiwan as part of the 29th Asian Composers' League Festival and Conference Young Composers' Competition\textsuperscript{38}, allowing an opportunity to explore the visceral sound quality and notion of play through performative interaction. Growing out of the combative nature of Carroll’s characters interactions, the movements

\textsuperscript{38} Performed by members of the National Taiwan Normal University Orchestra, 28 November, 2011, 29th Asian Composers League Conference and Festival, Soochow University Performing Arts Centre, Taiwan.
explore a dialogue between text and texture, where the exchange of literary and musical ideas inform key features of the piece. Throughout the movements, text and voice play crucial roles in triggering musical events, whilst creating a continually changing texture with simultaneous and successive juxtapositions. Bringing a theatrical element to the piece, snippets of text from the *Alices* are performed by the six performers throughout, highlighting the interplay between music and text, both in its creation and realisation.

**Verbal Battles and Stylistic Collisions**

Structural concepts found in Carroll's text have shaped the structure of my piece, where oppositional ideas are positioned against each other as stylistic juxtapositions. As I discussed in chapter two, Carroll uses language as a weapon to sustain conflict and incite nonsense. Ultimately, the *Alice* books consist of a series of dialogues, in which characters continually engage in verbal duels. Carroll’s verbal battles are reinvented musically as oppositional sound-blocks, and intensified by the presence of multiple speaking voices which give ‘voice’ to the musical ‘conversation’. Just as concepts born from Carroll's text shape the structure of my piece, in turn, these musical ideas feed back into the way in which voice is used. With this in mind, my selection of text focuses on the rhythmic qualities of phrases, onomatopoeic-like properties of words, alliteration, rhyme, word association and combative dialogue. Thematical, these two movements are concerned with dream references and the didactic, moralistic advice that is continually offered by uncivil, contrary characters in positions of authority; the Duchess, the Queen of Hearts, and the Red Queen. These themes both stem from and inform the musical characteristics found in the main juxtapositional blocks, as dreamy, resonant sounds exist in opposition with tongue-in-cheek marches and rhythmically driving passages. Mirroring the sound-blocks, the text is arranged in a non-
linear style in which snippets of dialogue and verse are taken from different scenes of the
*Alices* and reorganised to interact with the surrounding musical material.

**Controlled Aleatoricism and Voice**

Throughout the suite, voice is most prominent through sections which feature elements of controlled aleatoricism. Although my engagement with Carroll is mostly conceptual, throughout these sections it is more literal. The following example (see Example 4.11) is a free-time section from the second movement which uses Lutoslawski-inspired mobiles as a catalyst for improvisation. With no bar-lines, the free-time sections allow for flexible phrasing and timing, where the vocalists have an opportunity to interact with and influence the semi-improvisatory gestures of the instrumentalists. The text used here is:

Alice did not much like keeping so close to her: first, because the Duchess was VERY ugly; and secondly, because she was exactly the right height to rest her chin upon Alice's shoulder. And it was an uncomfortably sharp chin. However, she did NOT like to be rude so she bore it as well as she could. And the moral of THAT is – ‘take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves’. (Take Care of the Sense, Movement two, bars 49-50)

The musical textures in this example are designed to engage with voice through rhythmic and timbral ideas; the Duchess's ugliness and sharp chin are personified by the violin's abrupt and aggressive accents, the clarinet's fidgety movement and intervallic leaps, and the piano's insistent, accelerating rhythmic pattern. The violin and clarinet are given instruction in the score to “duel” with each other; their short, sporadic exchanges simulating the combative nature of Alice's dialogue with the Duchess. Here, text is also an important element in the score; directions and instructions aim to appeal to the imagination of the performer, encouraging them to conjure up the drama associated with a duel. In the final system of the sound-block, the convergence of multiple rhythmic figures sees a series of duels, as the snare drum battles with the overlapping percussive effects of clarinet, violin and piano. The
violinist knocks on the body of her instrument with her right fist and flicks the open strings with her left, punctuated by a snap pizzicato. These percussive sounds and angular rhythms aim to imitate the Duchess's unusually sharp chin, in which the physical action of knocking, flicking and snapping represent the discomfort felt by Alice. These rhythmic and timbral ideas, sparked from the text, appear in opposition to the sonorous, resonant tones of the vibraphone and tam-tam.
Example 4.11 Take Care of the Sense, Mvt. II (bars 49-50) - Instrument duels and voice

Alice did not much like keeping too close to her. First, because she was VBN right, and secondly, because she was nearly the right height to reach her okay upon Alice's shoulder.

---

In the next few bars, the duels and voice continue, with various instruments interacting and developing the musical narrative.
In the recording, the humour of the text is further expressed through the bassoonist’s emphasis of the phrase “VERY ugly”, in which she accentuates the separate syllables of “VERY” in a way that mirrors the downward moving pitch material of the violinist's double-stopped glissando, heard only moments before. This spontaneous reaction to the violin captures the bassoonist's innate understanding of how text responds to and triggers musical gestures in the movement. The next time the glissando is heard, it appears as an exaggerated feature of the violinist's improvisation and acts as a sonic reminder of the word, “very”.

During the competition the bassoonist performed with surprising animation, greatly improved from rehearsal. Her commitment to the vocal delivery was also embraced physically, where she spoke with lively facial expressions and turned to address the audience with a “stern look”, and with a “quizzical look” (bar 106), as indicated in the score. These expressive instructions, found in various places throughout the suite, are an important element in performing the text theatrically and in helping performers understand the juxtapositional humour of the piece.
Mobiles in Metered Sections

As well as using mobiles in free-time sections, mobiles also appear in metered sections, particularly in the percussion parts as textural effect. In bars 68-72 of movement two, open hi-hat and crash cymbals patterns are improvised over a series of bars to create a clamorous effect against the dream-themed words:

so I wasn’t dreaming afterall...unless we’re all part of the same dream, only I do hope it’s MY dream and not the Red King’s. I don’t like belonging to another person’s dream.

Here, improvised rhythms allow the percussionist to punctuate the vocalist’s delivery in real-time, according to the moment. Cymbal patterns can be as clamorous or as gentle as the percussionist likes against the sustained ensemble chords, producing a surreal and disjunct dream-like mood.

Example 4.12 Take Care of the Sense, Mvt. II (bars 68-72) - Percussion mobile
Interacting with Text via Gesture and Mood

In contrast to verbal duels, at times the setting of text and voice is illustrated musically in a more literal way. From bars 94 to 97, wobbling trills imitate Alice’s sobs, and piano runs, falling tears in response to the line, “and at the thought of her loneliness, two large tears came rolling down her cheeks”.

Example 4.13 Take Care of the Sense, Mvt. II (bars 94-97) - Gestural interactions with text

From bar 114 to 124, Humpty Dumpty, the wordsmith of the Alice books, adopts a superior tone when addressing Alice about the use of words. This section is marked in the score as “enthusiastically, with an air of pomposity”, and juxtaposes a warped march style, via syncopated triplets, off-beat half-opened hi-hats and rolls, which imitate marching percussion, with a blues-infused bass line and melody, and violin slides. Across the top, Humpty Dumpty speaks with an air of pomposity. The collision of these unlikely styles, and the reintroduction of semi-improvisatory figures, denotes Alice’s rebellion against authority figures, as she subverts the strange rules imposed on her by them.
Example 4.14 Take Care of the Sense, Mvt. II (bars 113-126) – Unlikely style collisions inspired by text
Selecting Text in Response to Rhythmic Character

In keeping with the didactic and moralistic theme set up in movement two, the third movement also features unwanted advice continually recited to Alice by the Red Queen, Queen of Hearts and the Duchess. Bars 52 to 65 feature text and music engaging in both literal and conceptual ways, rhythmically and timbrally, with an additional humorous effect. The text used is:

“There's no sort of use in knocking!”
“You...you...you couldn't have it if you DID want it”, the Queen said, “The rule is, jam tomorrow and jam yesterday, but never jam today! Jam tomorrow and jam yesterday, but never jam today!”

The phrase “there's no sort of use in knocking!” is a recurring line throughout the suite, and in this context, is in response to the second percussionist's jam block accents. Made from plastic, jam blocks create pitched ‘knocking’ sounds, comparable to temple blocks and wood blocks, and in this example are used to simulate the knocking of a door, literally mimicking the text. This knocking figure is both derived from and influences the visceral, driving rhythms of the surrounding bars. From bars 46 to 60 (see Example 4.15), the ensemble experiments with different permutations of semi-quaver figures, extending and shortening phrase lengths, and collapsing and expanding the texture. Highlighted with jam block accents, these rhythmic figures create a unison ‘knocking’ effect, which build in intensity towards the climax of bars 57 and 58. In setting the text, I chose to repeat the “you” of “you couldn’t have it if you DID want it” multiple times to create a percussive stuttering effect to mirror the short, fast instrument articulations and produce a syncopated rhythm against the semi-quaver gestures.
Example 4.15 *Take Care of the Sense*, Mvt. III (bars 46-60) - Semi-quaver ‘knocking’ rhythms
Humour: Juxtaposition of Music with Text

The next textual phrase of this section, “the rule is, jam tomorrow and jam yesterday, but never jam today!” was selected as a humorous response to the rock influence heard in the movement. The humour works in three ways here; the first is the paradox posed by the Queen's outlandish statement, and the second is the double meaning of the word “jam” to create a pun. In the book the Queen refers to a fruit jam, but in this new context, I'm suggesting another meaning, a musical “jam”. Taking this wordplay further, in a way comparable to the humour of Unsuk Chin’s *Acrostic-wordplay*, the ‘knocking’ motif of the movement is performed on jam blocks, the rock drummer’s answer to the wood block! This new meaning is emphasised by the conductor delivering the line, a change made during rehearsal, his stern words chastising the ensemble and warning against improvisatory gestures. Yet, despite ordering to “never jam today”, the end of the movement unravels into a raucous and wild improvisatory jam, notated via mobiles, and concludes with dramatic sustained piano chords. This disjunction between music and text is highlighted by the combative nature of the ending as the instruments engage in an unrestrained, violent argument with score markings of “Madly” and “as manically as possible”. While at times music and text work together, at other times they exist in opposition to mirror the juxtaposition of sound blocks.

Performance of Voice

Just as concepts born from the text have shaped the musical features of my piece, in turn, the ensemble's intuitive understanding of the music's juxtapositional humour played a vital role in interpreting the meaning of the text and how to perform it. Since having movements two and three performed, I have a new appreciation of the importance of Carroll’s text not just in the creation of my work, but also in its realisation, where an understanding of
the connection between music and text helps produce a convincing performance. I am now more interested in how, from a performer's perspective, text can help unlock musical ideas and musical elements can help access the meaning of text. Working with the musicians, I was also surprised by the extent of the interplay between text, rhythm and timbre in the piece. Part of this was an intentional positioning of ideas, and another was the new connections forged by the performers themselves in response to the musical juxtapositional humour.

Since the performance, I started thinking differently about the role of voice in my work. It changed the way in which I aimed to use voice in the future. Originally, I had intended for the voices to be a clearly heard, prominent feature of the piece, but without amplification the voices became one of many textures embedded within the ensemble; more like an instrument. Surprisingly, I thought this created an interesting obscured effect, stretching the idea of words as sound and producing an eerie dream-like feel. Even though the voices are not always clearly audible in the recording, the text’s meaning is inherent and embedded in the music. It is not until the final piece of my folio, *Cabbages and Kings* that voice features again in my work. The palette of voice techniques used by the mezzo-soprano soloist is greatly expanded from the *Take Care of the Sense* suite, along with a more abstract arrangement of voice that reflects the musical stylistic collisions. With the introduction of pitch, voice becomes an additional stylistic block.

**Summary**

Throughout the growth period of ‘*A*’ *is for Alice* and the *Take Care of the Sense* suite, I was primarily interested in how literary ideas might translate musically via frame-within-a-frame structures, the notion of play and a dialogue between text and texture. Carroll’s text is reimagined in both pieces in a variety of ways: the arrangement of spoken word, the illustration of text through musical gestures and mood, the juxtaposition of music and text to
produce humour, verbal battles as the catalyst for combative interplay, and text as metaphor for musical malapropisms, puns, and most importantly, musical portmanteaus. Looking back, I see ‘A’ is for Alice and the Take Care of the Sense suite as comparatively polite and tentative experimentations with my developing compositional language. Yet, the pieces also set up a series of oppositions which, together, begin to create a double energy: music versus text, parallels versus juxtapositions, semi-improvisation versus notation, harsh timbres versus clean timbres, macro structure versus micro structure, and mood block versus mood block.

The growth from my earlier to later compositions can be clearly seen from the reworking of the initial fifth movement of Take Care of the Sense to the stand-alone piece Red Queen, White Queen, Alice and All, some eighteen months later, which I look at in the next chapter. In the following compositions, I take more risks and extend my sonority, rhythmic and textural language.
Chapter Five: Integration

This chapter investigates the further integration of my compositional techniques into a portmanteau aesthetic primarily in relation to my orchestral work *Frumious*, as well as looking at *Bandersnatch*, *Red Queen, White Queen, Alice and All*, and *Cabbages and Kings*. Sparked by drum kit improvisations, I talked about *Boojum* as being the catalyst for a new way of approaching rhythm and pitch in chapter three, where in the initial compositional stages pitch was slave to rhythm and texture. Following on from ‘A’ is for Alice, the *Take Care of the Sense* suite, and *Boojum*, this next series of works explores more violent, humorous, and wilder oppositions, whilst simultaneously becoming more whimsical, with increasingly sentimental gestures and more elegant transitions between sound-blocks. I discuss the non-linear design of these later works, the collision of art and vernacular worlds, rhythmic, sonority and textural juxtapositions, duels as antiphonal block organisation, the primacy of rhythm to drive pitch, and the expansion of vocal palette, in creating musical portmanteaus.

*Frumious, Bandersnatch, and Cabbages and Kings* position oppositional ideas against each other as stylistic juxtapositions, borrowing structural techniques from musique-concrète, Ives and Zorn, to experiment with a mosaic, non-linear design. The antiphonal arrangement and positioning of instrument groups in Andriessen’s *De Staat* (1976) and *Hoketus* (1976)39, and Ives *The Two Contemplations* (1906) has played a pivotal role in conceptualising instrument duels and sound block collisions. Throughout these three works of mine, juxtapositions collide horizontally and vertically, appearing as either successive or superimposed sound-blocks, organised as portmanteaus. Within these blocks, the pieces are

39 David Wright discusses how in *De Staat*, “Two matching instrumental groups are antiphonally arranged on stage” (1993: 9), and how in *Hoketus* “the material is thrown about in antiphonal exchanges between two matching instrument groups” (1993: 7).
driven by a series of dichotomies that focus on rhythm and sonority, using different types of
motion to drive the music. They blend the rhythmic viscerality and vernacular language of
rock and post-minimalism (Andriessen and Torke) with the architectural design of late
Modernism and early American Experimentalism (Ives); each invigorates the other. They
each experiment with sonority juxtapositions, where functional chords and triads from rock
are pitted against the atonality and chromaticism of contemporary art music. I first
experimented with this idea of sonority juxtaposition in ‘A’ is for Alice, where the tonality of
the “sprightly” blocks were set against the atonality of the “dark” blocks. As an extension of
sonority, textural density gives way to visceral sound-slabs which are contrasted with an
almost pointillistic, scattering effect, and sections of controlled aleatoricism. Throughout the
works, my compositional voice works towards a combative, energised sound-world of
rhythmic vitality, visceral sonorities, and architectural design.

**Musical Portmanteaus**

**Rhythm**

I see the combative nature of *Frumious* as being intrinsically linked with rhythmic
energy, where stylistic juxtapositions are driven and defined by a series of rhythmic
dichotomies which contribute to the portmanteau effect. The following table (see Table 5.1)
shows the musical dichotomies found in *Frumious*, highlighting rhythmic dichotomies.
### Table 5.1 Frumious - Musical dichotomies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Musical Dichotomies</th>
<th>Rhythmic</th>
<th>Textural</th>
<th>Sonority</th>
<th>Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rapid Fire</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Textural</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sonority</strong></td>
<td><strong>Design</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. <strong>Slow</strong></td>
<td>vs. <strong>Chunky Unison</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interval Stacking</strong></td>
<td>‘Hidden’ Tonal Chords</td>
<td>vs. <strong>Successive Juxtaposition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. <strong>Free-time</strong></td>
<td>vs. <strong>Tangled Polyphony</strong></td>
<td>vs. Superimposed Juxtaposition</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Continual Motion</strong></td>
<td><strong>Visceral Slabs</strong></td>
<td><strong>Atonality, Chromaticism</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sudden</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rhythmic Hiccups</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. <strong>Rhythmic Hiccups</strong></td>
<td>vs. <strong>Splattering, ‘Pointillistic’ Effect</strong></td>
<td>vs. <strong>Functional Chords and Triads</strong></td>
<td>vs. <strong>Gradual</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wild Syncopation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sound-block</strong></td>
<td><strong>Consonant</strong></td>
<td><strong>Accumulative</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rigid Rhythms</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs. <strong>Rigid Rhythms</strong></td>
<td>vs. <strong>Sound-block</strong></td>
<td>vs. <strong>Dissonant</strong></td>
<td>vs. <strong>Dissipative</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Vertical Stabs</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ensemble</strong></td>
<td><strong>Chord Splatters</strong></td>
<td><strong>Static</strong></td>
<td><strong>Horizontal Line</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>vs. <strong>Horizontal Line</strong></td>
<td>vs. <strong>Small Ensemble/Solo voices</strong></td>
<td>vs. <strong>Post-tonal Densities</strong></td>
<td>vs. <strong>Changing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Visceral (Improvised Gesture)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Clean Timbre</strong></td>
<td><strong>Playful</strong></td>
<td><strong>Disruptive</strong></td>
<td><strong>Architectural Design</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>vs. <strong>Architectural Design</strong></td>
<td>vs. <strong>Dirty Timbre</strong></td>
<td>vs. <strong>Dark Moods</strong></td>
<td>vs. <strong>Connective</strong></td>
<td>(Notation)</td>
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The juxtaposition of rhythmic dichotomies generates a dual-energy and friction which propels the blocks forward; it is both relentless and interruptive, creating a combative motion which pulls in opposing directions. The piece uses visceral rock gestures and drum kit techniques of hockets and paradiddle rudiments, inspired by my own experience as a rock drummer, as discussed in chapter three, and structured via an architectural design. Having already talked about hockets and paradiddle ideas used in *Frumious* previously, the rhythmic elements I would like to focus on in this chapter are rapidly changing time signatures, syncopation, groove, and later, the primacy of rhythm to drive pitch.
Shifting time signatures play an essential role in dislocating rhythmic energy throughout and creating a non-linear sense of time; repeated patterns and vernacular grooves are continually disturbed by changing tempo, metre, accents and pulse. Wild syncopation is set against rigid rhythms, while vertical stabs and splatters interrupt continuous lines. Rapid alternation between odd and even time signatures establishes various combinations of syncopated and straight sounding rhythms, as the downbeat is continually displaced; jolting, spiky shapes are contrasted with insistent rhythms and fluid motion. Odd time signatures (5/8, 7/8, 3/16) suggest an almost hiccupping effect when appearing before or after even time signatures (4/4), as the bar seems truncated or extended by comparison. The following example (see Example 5.1) is from the end of Frumious and shows an intensification of energy, facilitated by a series of rapid time signature changes and rhythmic character collisions.
5.1 *Frumious* (bars 173-182, transposing score) - Shifting time signatures
In Example 5.1, time signatures, along with tempo, help define the rhythmic character of each section. Here, three character blocks from throughout *Frumious* have been condensed into ten bars. The 7/8 bars feel like truncated 4/4 bars, suggesting a sense of urgency as the brass sforzando swells appear to be cut short each time. The single 3/4 bar at 175 plays with this idea further, removing another quaver beat to produce an almost hiccup-like effect. The change to 4/4 at T, and drop in tempo, produces a sudden half-time feel, as the previous urgency of the 7/8 bars is now replaced by a deliberately laboured and dramatic march rigidity. This then snaps back into the 5/8 theme of the piece, at the original tempo, where the semi-quaver bursts and unison texture conjure up a stop-start, frenetic energy. The recurrence of each of these character blocks throughout, with opposing tempos, sets up different types of grooves that explore the relationship between syncopated and straight rhythms; another portmanteau.

**Groove**

The idea of groove, although an implicit part of music, is difficult to define and an important element in my music. Music theorist Richard Middleton discusses how groove is produced by rhythmic patterns that shape the rhythmic character of the piece; “different configurations of note placing, articulation and accent from the various components of the percussion kit, at specific tempi, play a large part in defining styles” (1993: 180-181). He examines how groove is created according to how rhythmic gestures respond to and behave with other gestures, resulting in movement from the listener which is either real or imagined. In thinking about how groove is created by the interlocking of different, but related, rhythmic layers, I have looked to Michael Torke’s chamber, pop and jazz amalgam, *Adjustable Wrench*. The piece is driven by a repeated syncopated vamp that is continually displaced and transformed throughout. There are frequent shifts and reversals in syncopation where accents
that once sounded strong or “on” the beat suddenly sound “off-beat” (Roeder, 2003:135).
Roeder notes that during the first twenty-four bars there is no regularity of accents, and that metre is suggested, rather than being fixed (2003:127). The following analysis (see Example 5.2) by Roeder shows the opening twenty-four bars and how, as each of the four syncopated layers is added, they lock in together at various stages and phase in and out on odd and even stresses to create a groove.

Example 5.2 John Roeder, analysis of Torke’s Adjustible Wrench layers (bars 1-24) (2003: 128)
The ‘funky’ blocks of *Frumious* (rehearsal marks D, F, I and M) generate groove in a similar way by using repeated syncopated rhythmic patterns that lock together, sharing the same pulse division (see Example 5.3). In opposition to the rapid time signature changes of other blocks, this rhythmic simplicity amplifies the groove, harnessing the continual motion, clearly defined pulse and cyclic repetition reminiscent of pop music.
Example 5.3 *Fruminous* reduction (bars 123-134) - Groove
In Example 5.3 there are three syncopated layers at play, each with a distinct rhythmic and timbral character; the insistent bass line, the melodic pattern with wide leaps, and the sforzando quaver ‘splatters’ played by the ensemble. I use the word ‘splatter’ to refer to the fleeting dissonance of these accents, their variegated timbres and irregular timings. Each of the three layers divide into each other and lock together on shared accents and stresses, toggling between emphasis on strong beats, one and three, and weak beats, two and four. The blue notes show beats when all three layers lock together on a quaver accent, and the red notes show stresses that appear on two and four, occurring just enough times to produce the sense of a ‘back-beat’. The insistent bass line alternates between quaver and crotchet values to create a syncopated effect which, although at first glance appears to be a repeated two bar pattern, never repeats exactly. The quaver register leaps of the vibraphone and trumpet melody create two distinct rhythms; one from the higher notes and the other, from the lower; the high and low notes alternate between being on and off the beat.

In Example 5.3, the rectangular boxes show the number of quaver rests between each woodwind, brass and string splatter accent. Each group plays a ratio game, as each accent occurs irregularly, toggling back and forth between expanding and truncating ratios of odd and even length. No two ratios are repeated in a row, except at the end of the section with the woodwinds in bars 128-129, but even here the last accent of bar 128 is off the beat, and the first of bar 129 on the beat. This ratio game propels the section forward, in tandem with the accelerating tempo, whilst simultaneously thwarting it as ratios are suddenly elongated. The changes in colour of the sforzando splatters also intensify this syncopated interjectory effect, where in bars 124-129 different instrument groupings interlock and alternate timbrally as well as rhythmically. There is another ratio game at play here, too, where, when all instruments are grouped together, the number of quaver rests before each accent is also irregular. The vibraphone is the only instrument heard on each of these splatter accents, and the bass drum,
which is present on all but six of these fourteen accents, produces a constant drone-like effect.

Table 5.2 *Frumious* - Groove variegated timbre accents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bar</th>
<th>Beat</th>
<th>Instrument Groupings</th>
<th>Number of Quaver Rests Before Accent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>124</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Trumpets, trombone, bassoon, bass drum, and double bass</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Oboe, clarinets, horns, bassoon, bass drum and double bass</td>
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<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Horns, trumpets, trombone, bassoon, bass drum and double bass</td>
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<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Oboe, clarinets, bassoon, bass drum and double bass</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Oboe, clarinets, horns, bassoon, bass drum and double bass</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Oboe, clarinets, and trumpet</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Oboe, clarinets, horn and trumpet</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Oboe, clarinets, trumpet, bassoon, bass drum and double bass</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Piccolo, trumpets, trombone, bassoon, bass drum and double bass</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Strings</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Piccolo, trumpets, trombone and strings</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Oboe, clarinets and trumpet</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Piccolo, oboe, clarinets, horns, trumpets, and trombone</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Oboe, clarinets, trumpet, bassoon, bass drum and double bass</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Trumpet, strings, bassoon, bass drum and double bass</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Oboe, clarinet, trumpet, strings, bassoon, bass drum and double bass</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pitch also plays an important role in accentuating syncopation; the most dissonant splatters occur on off-beats, giving additional weight to the accent with minor second clashes. The interplay between seemingly regular and irregular syncopated figures, with variegated timbres, dissonant accents, and a clearly defined pulse and sense of ‘back-beat’, generates a pointillistic type of groove.

In contrast to these intermittent back-beats, a sense of groove is created in the heavy blocks of *Bandersnatch* by exaggerated, chordal back-beats (shown in red, Example 5.4). At rehearsal mark H (bar 75) there are five different triplet rhythms at play, with varying levels of syncopation created by omitting the first of each triplet group and tying across the beat. These triplets interlock with massed sforzando back-beats on two and four, and are grounded by straight crotchets played by the tubas.
Like the *Frumious* example (5.3), pitch direction is integral in creating distinct sounding material from rhythmic variations. The relatively static pitch material of the flutes and clarinets produces an insistent momentum and is set against the lilting pitch leaps of the piccolo and trumpet melody, and the electric bass and low wind bass line. In the melody, ascending pitch leaps occur mostly on weak beats, accentuating the line’s syncopated quality. Together, the combination of straight and syncopated rhythms work to produce a heavy, lilting groove, in which each of these rhythmic characters, derived from the same material, seems to continually pull against the other.
Example 5.5 Bandersnatch full score (bars 74-79) - Heavy groove
Sonority Juxtapositions: Pitch and Rock-Inspired Textures and Timbres

Sonority-wise, *Frumious* blends the atonal sound-world of modernist contemporary art music with the tonal world of rock to create a harmonic portmanteau, juxtaposing playful and dark moods, dissonance and consonance. As I discussed in chapter three, this duality comes out of my experience as a wind player in both concert and rock band settings, giving way to atonal vertical stacks which eschew traditional chord hierarchies, reimagined power-chords, fleeting chord progressions, and lyrical sections of four-part chordal sustain.

**Vertical Stacks**

From the very first chord, there is a vertical emphasis on major and minor 2nds. Throughout the piece, 2nds are repeatedly stacked and reorganised into different octaves creating a kind of layered cluster effect which give way to visceral sound slabs. These clusters quite literally act as chordal portmanteaus, fusing multiple chords or triads together to create a new chord. The first chord of the piece uses tones from the whole-tone series stacked from E through to C (E, F#, G#, A#, C), with two semi-tone clashes of F natural and B. The chord plays with space by assigning each of these notes into different octaves and alternating instrument colours.

*Example 5.6 Frumious (bar 1) - Chord reduction*
Yet, within these stacked chords, there is also a ‘hidden’ functional chord and triadic
element at work, where 2nds and 7ths ‘disguise’ and colour 3rds, 4ths and 5ths. Below are a
series of chords from rehearsal mark A which also use this atonal stacking technique:

**Example 5.7 Frumious (bars 22-23) - Atonal stacks**

![Example 5.7 Frumious (bars 22-23) - Atonal stacks]

Within these interval stacks are ‘hidden’ chords which can be seen through the
arrangement of space. The fast moving pace of the visceral slabs make it difficult to
distinguish these chords unless they are played in isolation. For example, the first chord here
is a B flat major chord, coloured by atonal stackings, and the second a ‘disguised’ C
Dominant 7.

**Example 5.8 Frumious (bar 22) - Hidden chords**

![Example 5.8 Frumious (bar 22) - Hidden chords]

*Bandersnatch* also experiments with this stacking technique, mostly notably at the
‘punk’ section at N from bars 117-124. I refer to this section as ‘punk’ due to its fast double
time feel of \( \frac{\text{d}}{\text{=}} = 160 \), and simple, driving quaver rhythms. During these bars, a series of
atonal stacks are superimposed over a popular I, IV, V blues bass line progression. This
collision of tonality and atonality results in a visceral sound-slab which becomes denser as
the section continues.
Example 5.9 *Bandersnatch* reduction (bars 117-119, 121-122 and 124) - ‘Punk’ atonal stacks

In bars 117-119 there are between eight and nine discrete pitches in each chord stack, at any one time, not including the bass line and the trombone glissandi (not shown in Example 5.9). In bars 121-122 there are between eleven and fourteen pitches in each stack, and in bar 124 there are between fourteen and sixteen pitches (see Table 5.3). As well as favouring major seconds, these chords also make increasing use of minor seconds. As the chord density increases, so too does the amount of dissonance, with an increasing frequency of semi-tone stacks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bar</th>
<th>Number of Bars</th>
<th>Number of Pitches in Stack</th>
<th>Number of Discrete Minor Seconds in Stacks</th>
<th>Frequency of Minor Seconds</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>117-119</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8-9</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>121-122</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11-14</td>
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<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>124</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14-16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37</td>
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</table>

While the number of pitches and minor seconds in each stack increase through the ‘punk’ section, the number of bars decrease, resulting in further intensity as the moment of greatest dissonance and density is condensed into a single bar; bar 124.
Like this fleeting chord progression (I, IV, V) in *Bandersnatch*, other sound-blocks in *Frumious* also have tonal centres, or implied tonal centres, and make use of (almost) functional chord progressions at rehearsal figures B, E, F, J, M, and T.

**The Power-chord**

The use of fifths and octaves in the horns and lower brass and strings throughout *Frumious* sees a reimagining of the ubiquitous rock power-chord, which is coloured by different atonal stackings. As I mentioned earlier, musicologist Robert Walser describes the dual character of the power-chord as being both complex and “simple and crude”, whilst evoking stability (1993: 2). Embracing this sense of simplicity and crudeness in contrast to the ambiguity and chromaticism of atonal stacks, *Bandersnatch* and *Cabbages and Kings* further expand my experimentation with the power-chord. There are a few different types of power-chords I play with; the simple power-chord, the ‘double’ power-chord, the atonal stack power-chord, and the power-chord clash.

Drawing from a power-chord idea, *Bandersnatch* places emphasis on repeatedly stacked fifths and octaves, which appear in contrast to the diminished seventh and minor sixth chords of the lyrical chordal sections. The clearest example of the power-chord is at rehearsal marks G (bars 67-72) and T (158-161), where the trombones, euphonium and tuba play perfect fifths and octaves in mostly rhythmic unison. As shown in the first chord of Example 5.10, this forms a simple power-chord, commonly used in rock music. When two simple power-chords are stacked together, with independent pitches each a fifth apart, this creates what I call a ‘double power-chord’. This occurs on the fourth beat of the first bar in Example 5.10, where the basses play a B power-chord, with a fifth of F#, and the flutes trill on a C power-chord, with a fifth of G.
Example 5.10 \textit{Bandersnatch} reduction (bars 67-71) - Simple and double power-chord sonorities

In the following bar (see Example 5.11), on beats two and four of bar 72, there is another variation of the double power-chord, the atonal stack power-chord, this time played by the entire ensemble. Here, my atonal stack and power-chord language are combined. The chord is built from two power-chords, B flat and E, and together, along with colour notes which lie outside each of these chords, provides another way of approaching the atonal stack technique. Thinking of chords built from smaller chord portions allows me to imagine new chord possibilities and extend my harmonic language. Although both the power-chords are resonant on their own, superimposed over the other, with multiple minor seconds, they provide bite and produce a sound which is simultaneously tonal and atonal, blending together the divergent sound-worlds of \textit{Bandersnatch}. 
Example 5.11 *Bandersnatch* (bar 72, beats 2 and 4) - Double power-chord

![Chord example](image)

*Cabbages and Kings* cheekily distorts and subverts the power-chord by colouring each chord in the piano with a semi-tone stack and clash in the right hand, which I refer to as the power-chord clash.

Example 5.12 *Cabbages and Kings* (bars 8-9) - Piano power-chords with clash

![Piano chord example](image)

This sonority then goes on to be used horizontally as semi-tone crushes in the woodwind and brass at bars 16-17, 39-40, 60-63, 68 and 70, as well as in multiple semi-tone trills in the woodwinds.

While being inspired by rock sonorities, my vertical stacking and hidden chord techniques also resonate with Stravinsky’s harmonic concepts. The well-known opening passage of “Augurs of Spring: Dances of the Young Girls”, from *The Rite of Spring* (1913), superimposes an E flat 7 chord in the violins and violas with an F flat major chord in the lower strings to create a menacing dissonance. The French horn stabs highlight the displaced accents in the percussive string line, also voicing the pair of chords. Sounding together, these two chords produce a polychord.
This sense of bitonality also appears in Stravinsky’s *Pétrouchka* (1911). Malcolm McDonald’s 1997 preface to the revised 1947 Boosey & Hawkes score describes *Pétrouchka* as demonstrating, “remarkable harmonic inventions- notably the superimposition of the triads of C and F sharp now often known as the ‘Pétrouchka chord’”. In this way, my vertical stack techniques draw influence from the timbre of rock music as well as the juxtapositional harmonic design of Stravinsky.

**Four-part Harmony and Chordal Sustain**

In *Bandersnatch*, fast moving atonal stacks and power-chord variations are contrasted with blocks of chordal sustain, with particular attention to seventh chords, diminished and half-diminished chords, and minor sixths. Each of my later pieces feature a slow moving chordal section which embrace long, lyrical lines, inspired by my own trumpet improvisations and experience playing cornet in brass bands. The following *Bandersnatch* example (Example 5.14) shows sentimental flute and oboe solos with lavish ornamentation, a stretched triplet quality, and chromatic movement as a result of voice-led horn harmonies.
Beneath this graceful exterior, there is a touch of whimsy, as the ‘light’ and lilting tuba line is also highly ornamented.

Example 5.14 Bandersnatch reduction (bars 59-66) - Underpinning harmony and curvaceous phrases

Here, the chromaticism previously heard in the atonal and power-chord stacks, is transferred horizontally, where there is a sudden shift to chromatically moving, voice-led harmonies.

Rock-inspired Timbres and Textures

This rock-based sonority is also embraced in Frumious by frequent flutter-tongues, glissandi, trills, slides, lip bends, stopped horn, harmon mute wahs and trills, which dirty the texture. At bar 145 (see Example 5.15) the repeated rhythmic figure played by unison strings resonates with the ‘breakdown’ section synonymous with progressive rock and metal, where the staccato strings aim to imitate the palm-muted accents of guitar and double-kick bass drum. With this in mind, the double bass plays the key accents with a percussive slap
pizzicato articulation. The tonal centre hovers around D, which pays homage to the de-tuned
guitars of heavier rock genres. An extension of a Bartok or snap pizzicato, slap pizzicato also
derives from the slap bass style of jazz, funk and rock sound-worlds, popularised on electric
bass by Larry Graham of Sly and the Family Stone through the 1960s, and more recently by
Les Claypool of rock-funk group Primus. Whereas a snap pizzicato produces a single
‘snaping’ effect, slap pizzicato can occur over a series of notes with alternate articulations of
‘pops’ and ‘slaps’. Originally, Graham developed the technique to imitate a bass drum and
snare drum, by slapping the low strings with his thumb and plucking the high strings with his
index finger (Roberts, 2001). The percussion also emulates rock techniques and conventions
throughout with the frequent use of cymbal chokes, rimshots and clicks, flams, hi-hat
doubling sticking, use of a back-beat, repeated figures and clamorous half-opened hi-hats.
Here, *Frumious* takes on a timbral portmanteau, as rock techniques coexist with controlled
rhythmic design, where the rhythmic figure is continually expanded, truncated and
interrupted.
Example 5.15 *Frumious* (bars 145-156) - Rock-inspired textures and slap pizzicato

From bar 145 to 156, this unison string block experiments with changing bar lengths and rhythmic figure expansion. Initially, a sense of groove is established by the pattern of four semi-quavers followed by a semi quaver rest in the 5/8 and 7/8 bars. The 7/8 bar simply extends the 5/8 bar with an extra group of four. The first 3/4 bar disrupts this groove, interrupting the syncopated groups of four by moving the accents to each of the crotchet beats, with a group of two, followed by groups of threes. Bars 148 to 151 see a toggling back and forth between the 5/8 and 7/8 bar groove, before disrupting it again by repeating the 3/4 bar. Bars 153 to 156 introduce greater variety in rhythmic grouping, where over the course of these four bars, which truncate the 7/8 to 3/4 and expand the 3/4 to 7/8, each groups the semi-quavers in a different way, shifting the accents and stresses. This leads to an increased rhythmic intensity, mirrored by the steady ascension in pitch, as the initially controlled
rhythmic figure with limited pitch movement, becomes more varied over time. Here, the unison textures and slap bass techniques of rock are combined with a modernist sense of rhythmic design.

Table 5.4 Frumious - Expanding and truncating ratio groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bar</th>
<th>Metre</th>
<th>Semi-quaver Ratio Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>145</td>
<td>5/8</td>
<td>4+(1)+4+(1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>146</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>4+(1)+4+(1)+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>2+(1)+3+(1)+3+(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148</td>
<td>5/8</td>
<td>4+(1)+4+(1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>149</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>4+(1)+4+(1)+4</td>
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<td>150</td>
<td>5/8</td>
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<td>7/8</td>
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<td>3/4</td>
<td>2+(1)+2+1+(1)+2+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>2+(1)+5+(1)+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>4+(2)+5+(1)+1+(1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Rests shown in (brackets)*

In Cabbages and Kings rock techniques are explored by the rhythm section via guitar effect pedas (distortion and delay), whammy bar dives and returns, bar scoops, palm-muting, slap bass articulations, artificial harmonics, finger-stopped piano strings, and idiomatic kit rhythms. Yet, while the rock-inspired textures of Frumious focus on dense unison figures (see Example 5.15), the rhythm section of Cabbages and Kings experiment with a blend of interlocking hocket-like rhythms, reminiscent of call and response. In the following example
(see Example 5.16), the electric guitar and bass work together to create one complete moving phrase, alternating voices while the other rests or sustains notes. The pair divide into the kit rhythms, using the hi-hat accents as the beginning of each voice alternation, while the piano stabs add another layer.

Example 5.16 Cabbages and Kings (bars 31-35) - Rhythm section hocket-inspired texture

This hocket-like effect is strengthened by the use of the guitars’ upper registers, where the sustained artificial bass harmonics merge the two guitar colours together, and the guitar’s delay dovetails the palm-muted rhythms into the moving bass parts. Here, the rhythm section blends rock timbres and a call and response blues element with hocket ideas inspired by Andriessen’s post-minimalist textures and medieval origins.

In Bandersnatch, open slap tongues are used to produce unpitched percussive sounds to mimic drum kit and slap bass articulations, whilst rapid staccato articulations imitate palm-muted guitar. Yet, Bandersnatch also borrows from avant-garde and jazz sound-worlds. At different stages in Bandersnatch, the brass are asked to tap their fingernails and mouthpieces
(see Example 5.17) percussively on their bells, exploring the different metallic and dampened sounds produced.

**Example 5.17 Bandersnatch (bars 9-12) - Brass expanded timbres: Bell flick**

This creates various flam-like effects, inspired and echoed by the dampened splash cymbal during the chordal blocks. The traditional drum kit sound in both *Bandersnatch* and *Cabbages and Kings* is also expanded, encompassing jazz-inspired timbres. In *Bandersnatch*, this is achieved by a sizzle ride attachment, the improvised striking of a dampened splash cymbal on the floor tom’s drumhead, bowed cymbals and wire-brush swirls. Both pieces also make use of jam block and cowbell colours, and *Bandersnatch*, bongos, chimes, and tambourine to create a more complex, composite kit sound.

**Macro Musical Design and Textures**

Bringing rhythmic and sonority juxtapositions together are a series of carefully designed structural juxtapositions. At first, the rapid shifts from sound-block to sound-block appear disorienting and make little sense, but as the piece continues, the recurrence and manipulation of each of these opposing blocks constructs a new type of sense via reorganisation to create a musical portmanteau. Each block of *Frumious* and *Bandersnatch* has its own rhythmic character and, like the polyphony of nonsense, follow a different ‘thread’ of the patchwork structure. Like Carroll’s portmanteau words that maintain their original meanings, throughout the sound-blocks there is often an element of opposing blocks.
lurking under the surface or overtly hijacking its direction. The following figures are stylistic block maps of *Frumious* (see Figure 5.1) and *Bandersnatch* (see Figure 5.2), and show how stylistic blocks recur. When the coloured blocks overlap vertically, this indicates the superimposition of two stylistic blocks, either for stark contrast, or as a technique for dovetailing one into the next. For example, the Funky block from bars 98-112 and the March-like block from bars 109-115 illustrate how one character block can suddenly hijack another, while elements of the previous block still remain. Here, the Funky woodwind block is interrupted by the March block, with the introduction of a slower tempo, pompous bass line, held chords, and full ensemble texture, yet a funky element still remains in the string lines, as they play syncopated semi-quavers, in octave unisons, reminiscent of the rhythmic shapes played by the unison woodwinds only bars earlier.
Figure 5.1 *Frumious* - Global stylistic block map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stylistic Blocks</th>
<th>Free-time</th>
<th>Funky</th>
<th>Dreamy</th>
<th>March-Like</th>
<th>Energetic</th>
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<td>158-164</td>
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<td>- 179</td>
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</table>

NB: All numbers refer to bar numbers, letters refer to rehearsal marks
Figure 5.2 Bandersnatch - Global stylistic block map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stylistic Blocks</th>
<th>Fanfare-esque</th>
<th>Cheeky</th>
<th>Punk</th>
<th>Heavy</th>
<th>Sweet and Lyrical</th>
<th>Massive (Unison)</th>
<th>Bright/Lively Prog-Rock</th>
<th>Mysterious Rock</th>
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NB: All letters refer to rehearsal marks, numbers refer to bar numbers
Frumious’s rapidly changing textures see dense timbral slabs pitted against small
group interjections, frequently toggling between colour combinations in an almost
pointillistic way. The following example (see Example 5.18) is built from two wedge-like
shapes on either side of a two bar sound-slab, quickly accumulating in density, and then
dissipating via colour group fragments.
Example 5.18 *Frumious* (bars 134-144, transposing score) - Dense slabs vs. pointillistic scattering
Throughout *Frumious*, instrument groups and sound-blocks cut in and out of the texture as material is tossed about the orchestra in a combative call and response way creating a spattering of different timbral layerings. This call and response behaviour generates a textural portmanteau, where different textural characters collide vertically and horizontally (see Example 5.19); slabs of density coexist with nervy note splatters, passed back and forth from one instrument section to another, and sustained lines are superimposed with vertical stabs. At the same time, there are also comparatively sparse textures, like the piccolo solo found at K. *Frumious’s* visceral energy, captured by dense unison rhythms and post-tonal stacks, draws influence from rock band textures and is set against interruptive and fragmented textures which resonate with Zorn and Ives.
Example 5.19 *Frumious* (bars 42-53, transposing score) - Rapidly changing horizontal and vertical textures
Duel Design and Controlled Aleatoricism

The use of Lutoslawski-inspired mobiles in *Bandersnatch* explores the integration of controlled aleatoricism into metered sections and facilitates antiphonal duels. The notion of duels is furthered inspired by Ives’s “The Unanswered Question” and Zorn’s game pieces. Each recurrence of the slow block in *Bandersnatch* explores the combative dialogue between wind, brass and percussion in a different way; this antiphonal distinction is further facilitated by the dual use of traditional notation and mobiles which promote controlled aleatoricism.

There is a rhythmic dichotomy at play, which juxtaposes fluidity with interruptive elements. Brass and wind take turns in playing aleatoric air stutters, percussive figures on bells, and ascending and descending chromatic flurries which are superimposed across held chords and melodic lines. These gestures also feature a registral dichotomy, in which the highest or lowest register of the interrupting instrument is used to cut across the lyrical lines. The saxophones and horns are often an exception to the wind/brass distinction and form fleeting alliances with either, acting as the middle-ground and colour glue between both groups.

**Table 5.5 Bandersnatch - Controlled aleatoricism and antiphonal duels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bars</th>
<th>Strict Notation Instruments vs. Semi-improvised Instruments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-12</td>
<td>Drum kit, percussion, bass, horns, bass clarinet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trumpet 1 harmon trills; trombone 2, bass trombone, euphonium bell flicks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59-66 (F)</td>
<td>Piccolo, flutes, oboes, horns, trumpets, tuba, bass, perc. 2 and 3.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clarinet 1 air stutters, tenor sax angular shapes, trombone 1 and bass trombone bell flicks, drum kit dampened splash</td>
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<tr>
<td>85-86</td>
<td>Trumpets, perc. 2 and 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bass trombone and euphonium bell flames</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92-107 (L)</td>
<td>Part of bass clarinet, bassoons, alto saxes, trumpets, trombones, horns 1 and 2, part of horns 3 and 4, timpani, perc. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Piccolo runs, clarinet air stutters, bass clarinet runs, horns 3 and 4 bell flicks, euphonium flicks and air stutters, perc. 1 and 3.</td>
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<tr>
<td>127-139 (O)</td>
<td>Flutes, oboes, clarinet 1, bass clarinet, bassoons, trumpet 1 and 2,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tuba runs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140-146 (P)</td>
<td>Flutes, oboes, clarinet 1, bass clarinet, bassoons, bass and percussion.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baritone sax slap tongues</td>
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<tr>
<td>185-187 (X)</td>
<td>Clarinet 1 solo, bass clarinet, bassoons, horns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>191-192 (Z)</td>
<td>Flute solo, horns</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Block Organisation of Time**

Rapidly changing time signatures, frequent tempo fluctuations, pauses, rallentandos and accelerandos, contribute to a playful rhythmic elasticity which teases the listener. These changes act as tools to both connect and disrupt sound-blocks, working to intensify or disperse energy. Some of these changes are gradual, but for the most part they are sudden, harnessing the abrupt juxtapositional channel-surfing techniques of Zorn. *Frumious* continually changes tempo, alternating blocks of speed with funky and dreamy blocks, from the fastest tempo of $q = 115$ to the slowest of $q = 60$, to the free-time piccolo solo. In contrast to hard-edged juxtapositions, accels and ralls occurring over a series of bars help connect disparate sound-blocks by providing a common denominator of tempo or pulse, and psychologically prepare the listener for change. Tempo changes also help define the mood and rhythmic character of each block.
### Figure 5.3 *Frumious* - Tempo map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bar/Event</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>21</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>58–60</th>
<th>61</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>75</th>
<th>76</th>
<th>97</th>
<th>I</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tempo</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( \text{\textdagger} = 110 )</td>
<td>G.P</td>
<td>( \text{\textdagger} = 115 )</td>
<td>( \text{\textdagger} = 105 )</td>
<td>( \text{\textdagger} = 115 )</td>
<td>Rit.</td>
<td>( \text{\textdagger} = 88 )</td>
<td>Accel.</td>
<td>( \text{\textdagger} = 115 )</td>
<td>( \text{\textdagger} = 110 )</td>
<td>( \text{\textdagger} = 115 )</td>
<td>Poco Rall.</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mood Indication</strong></td>
<td>Energetic</td>
<td>Energetic</td>
<td>Suddenly Slower</td>
<td>Energetic</td>
<td>Funky</td>
<td>Dreamy</td>
<td>Funky</td>
<td>Energetic</td>
<td>A Tempo</td>
<td>Funky</td>
<td></td>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( \text{\textdagger} = 100 )</td>
<td>Molto Rall.</td>
<td>Free-time</td>
<td>( \text{\textdagger} = 80 )</td>
<td>Rall.</td>
<td>( \text{\textdagger} = 60 )</td>
<td>( \text{\textdagger} = 80 )</td>
<td>Molto Accel.</td>
<td>( \text{\textdagger} = 115 )</td>
<td>Molto Rall.</td>
<td>( \text{\textdagger} = 80 )</td>
<td>( \text{\textdagger} = 115 )</td>
<td>( \text{\textdagger} = 110 )</td>
<td>( \text{\textdagger} = 75 )</td>
<td>( \text{\textdagger} = 115 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Molto Mosso Subito</td>
<td>Solo Piccolo</td>
<td>Dreamy</td>
<td>Molto Mosso</td>
<td>Energetic</td>
<td>Driving</td>
<td>Slightly Slower</td>
<td>Heavy and Suddenly Slower</td>
<td>Energetic</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
*Bandernatch* extends these tempo contrasts further than *Frumious*, with the slowest block of $\frac{4}{4} = 50$, to the fastest block of $\frac{4}{4} = 175$. The piece also plays with sudden tempo changes, with the clearest example from bars 117 to 126. Within ten bars, the tempo toggles back and forth between increasingly faster speeds and increasingly slower speeds, generating a dual energy that pulls in opposing directions. These continual changes in tempo are accentuated by the rhythmic material associated with each; the “punk” inspired double-time feel uses predominately straight quavers, while the “suddenly slower” blocks pull against this with a combination of triplets, tied triplets and straight crotchets creating the illusion of stretched time.

**Figure 5.4 Bandersnatch (bars 108-126) - Tempo map bars**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bar</th>
<th>108</th>
<th>116</th>
<th>117</th>
<th>120</th>
<th>121</th>
<th>123</th>
<th>124</th>
<th>126</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tempo</td>
<td>$\frac{4}{4}=100$</td>
<td>poco accel.</td>
<td>$\frac{4}{4}=160$</td>
<td>$\frac{4}{4}=90$</td>
<td>$\frac{4}{4}=170$</td>
<td>$\frac{4}{4}=80$</td>
<td>$\frac{4}{4}=175$</td>
<td>$\frac{4}{4}=60$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood Indication</td>
<td>Heavy</td>
<td>Punk</td>
<td>Suddenly Slower</td>
<td>Punk</td>
<td>Suddenly Slower</td>
<td>Punk</td>
<td>Very Slow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reinventing the *Red Queen* Rhythmically

After writing *Frumious* and *Bandersnatch*, I returned to the fifth movement of the *Take Care of the Sense* suite to rework it into the stand-alone piece, *Red Queen, White Queen, Alice and All* (2013). To be eligible for a chamber music competition in Korea\(^\text{40}\), I reinvented the original two percussion parts for viola and double bass. Having been distanced from the piece for a good eighteen months, I experimented with the rhythmic techniques I had been developing with the larger texture works to create string parts which focussed on the primacy of rhythm to drive pitch, making use of highly percussive figures, syncopated bass lines, interlocking rhythms, drones, and expanded string techniques. In doing so, the piece embraces more of a rock viscerality than its original form and is juxtaposed more wildly with the surrounding lyrical blocks and semi-improvised unmetered sections.

In thinking about reinventing fast unpitched percussion gestures, I decided to make a feature of the percussive qualities of the strings, using double bass snap, slap, tremolo and standard pizzicato, as well as the frequent use of spiccato, al tallone, sul ponticello and jeté figures to produce crisp articulation and speed. In the following example (see Example 5.20), the violin and viola work together to reimagine the original percussion line as a rapid spiccato rhythm, punctuated a bar later by double bass snap pizzicatos. The minimal pitch movement in the first two bars works to establish the rhythmic character.

\(^{40}\) The inaugural 2013 Pyeongchon Arts Hall International Chamber Music Composition Competition, Anyang, South Korea. *Red Queen, White Queen, Alice and All* was performed by members of the Hwaum Chamber Orchestra at the finalist concert on November 2, 2013, and was awarded first place.
In other sections, I developed funky syncopated pizzicato bass lines to bring a rock sonority to the piece and create a sense of driving movement, often just vamping on a single pitch for percussive effect. In the next example the repeated syncopated E is almost drone-like, which resonates with my experiences of playing with drones in experimental rock group Space Project. The bass pattern is also doubled rhythmically by the bassoon. The spiccato figure makes a reappearance in the viola part, this time with quick moving melodic material and an unwavering pulse.

Example 5.21 Red Queen, White Queen (bars 126-133) - Bass groove
In Example 5.22, viola and double bass work together to create an interlocking rhythm with the rest of the ensemble, alternating between the two rhythmic groups to produce a highly syncopated effect and sense of momentum, as the two rhythms work against each other.

Example 5.22 *Red Queen, White Queen* (bars 210-215) - Interlocking rhythms

Again, the repeated E creates a syncopated drone-effect. In contrast to these percussive sections, on two occasions the double bass plays long bowed tones as a type of harmonic stasis idea. Vamping on repeated tones, while limiting pitch movement, further highlights the primacy of rhythm throughout the piece. This technique appears on eight occasions, for irregular lengths of time and articulated in a number of ways. As shown in the table below (see Table 5.6), E is the dominant pitch of these drones and, as the lowest open string, makes for a highly resonant percussive drone and fleeting tonal centre.
Table 5.6 *Red Queen, White Queen*, Bass Drones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bar</th>
<th>Drone Note</th>
<th>Length of Drone</th>
<th>Articulation Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>5 + 1 beat</td>
<td>Snap Pizz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>5 beat</td>
<td>Pizz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44-50</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>23 + 1 beat</td>
<td>Arco (held)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117-121</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>18 beat</td>
<td>Arco (staccatissimo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130-134</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>16 + 1 beat</td>
<td>Pizz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>166-169</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>17 beat</td>
<td>Pizz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>189-192</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>13 beat</td>
<td>Arco (held)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212-215</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>19 beat</td>
<td>Pizz.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of jeté and ricochet figures has also increased from the original version, where jeté gestures are now used to create rapid changes in pitch, subtle colour variation, and relentless movement at L, the distorted music-box section. Initially written as fast, repeated scales for vibraphone, played with plastic brushes, in reworking the strings percussively the runs were reinvented as semi-improvised jeté figures.

**Example 5.23 Red Queen, White Queen (bar 153) - Double jeté gesture**

The string slides used throughout the ‘furious’ sections reimagine the ascent and descent of rapid, semi-improvised vibraphone flurries. Originally written with sustain pedal, the harmonic blurring effect is now created by the frequent slides, which produce a brief sense of tonal ambiguity and recall the strings’ slide and vibrato gesture found in *Frumious* at E. The
slides further embrace a whimsical humour, as fast moving rhythmic passages are interrupted by, and engage in a call and response with, repeated long slides which unexpectedly alternate in pitch direction.

Example 5.24 Red Queen, White Queen (bars 11-14) - String slides

Cabbages and Capstones

In Cabbages and Kings (2014)\textsuperscript{41}, rhythmic and sonority juxtapositions are explored through the expansion of the voice’s colour palette. As the final piece in my folio, and the literal voice of Alice, the amplified mezzo soprano’s palette is greatly expanded from the use of voice in the Take Care of the Sense suite, the only other work to use voice. As my aesthetic has developed, the role of voice has shifted from embedded voice to featured voice. As the capstone piece, the expansion of vocal colours gives ‘voice’ to the musical stylistic

\textsuperscript{41} Written for and performed by Enikő Gősi and Orkest de Ereprijs, and conducted by Rob Vermeulen, as part of the 20\textsuperscript{th} Young Composers Meeting, Apeldoorn, the Netherlands, February 23- March 1, 2014. Workshopped with mentor composers Richard Ayres and Ed Bennett. Awarded first prize and the 2015 Orkest De Ereprijs Commission.
collisions which have come before, and is now integrated vocally as a combination of full voice singing, sprechstimme, rap, growls, glissandi, slides, shouts, spoken word, and whimsical lyric content. The overall effect is an integration of rock vocalisations and operatic style, an almost ‘rock-opera’ portmanteau, as if Queen’s ‘Bohemian Rhapsody’ (1975) and The Who’s Tommy (1969) meet the sprechstimme style of Schoenberg’s Pierrot Lunaire (1912) and Unsuk Chin’s Akrostichon-wortspiel (1991-93), and Torke’s percussive treatment of melodic instruments. My treatment of voice in Cabbages and Kings engages with and reflects the stylistic juxtapositions of the piece in a more abstract way than the use of text in Take Care of the Sense. Carroll’s text is rearranged to form a new non-linear narrative, grouping phrases according to rhythm and theme. Voice becomes another textural layer, superimposed across and juxtaposed with other stylistic blocks.

As a further exploration of rhythm driving pitch, there are three main vocal techniques used; rap, sprechstimme and pitched singing. Sprechstimme is used frequently throughout and defines the rhythmic character of the recurring “funky” block in Cabbages and Kings. The use of sprechstimme draws inspiration from Unsuk Chin’s Akrostichon-wortspiel, also based on the Alices, and features frequent glissandi, exaggerated whispers and rapid fire, percussive vocal gestures. Chin’s sprechstimme figures appear as rhythmic hiccups, whereas my own sprechstimme is more concerned with repeated, groove-oriented patterns.

Example 5.25 Chin, Akrostichon-wortspiel (bars 41-47) - Solo soprano excerpt (1991: 8)

The first few bars of Cabbages and Kings set up the vocal style of the piece, beginning with fast moving sprechstimme and moving into full voice triplets, before graduating to a growl. There is some whimsical humour here, as the growl on “cats” could be heard as either a purr or growl, whilst also borrowing a rock/metal vocal technique.
Example 5.26 Cabbages and Kings (bars 4-7) - Sprechstimme

Like the interplay between the hands in establishing rhythms on drum kit, particularly in regards to single, double and triple stickings, the use of one, two, and three syllable lyrics plays an integral role in developing the rhythmic character and metre of each block. In the above example “telescope” was the catalyst word, leading to the development of bars of three and triplets, and in Example 5.27, “twinkle, twinkle”, inciting an emphasis on short, repeated semi-quaver figures. The initial sprechstimme rhythms turn into percussive rap-like figures, intercepted by moments of dramatic, operatic singing:

Example 5.27 Cabbages and Kings (bars 16-18) - Rap and dramatic voice

Each time full-pitched singing appears triplet rhythms are used. In conjuring up a sense of the theatrical, I feel there is something innately dramatic about the stretched quality of crotchet triplets. In a slower, more lyrical block, the triplets are sung in the lower register, ending in a slide as a humorous lament in response to Alice’s repeated questions which remain unanswered.

Example 5.28 Cabbages and Kings (bars 20-22) - Dramatic triplets and glissandi

In other lyrical blocks, strong vibrato is marked, reinforcing the dramatic character and role of the voice. Later, these slides are extended into glissandi which occur multiple times throughout to evoke a humorous operatic effect. These glissandi often occur as full
ensemble textures dissipate, where the glissando’s pitch direction suggests either an unravelling (descending) or ratcheting up (ascending) of tension.

**Example 5.29 Cabbages and Kings (bars 28-29) - Operatic-like glissandi**

![Example Music Notation](image)

The mezzo-soprano also works in unison with the ensemble, where shouts are used to punctuate full textured sforzandos.

**Example 5.30 Cabbages and Kings (bars 5052) - Sforzando shouts**

![Example Music Notation](image)

Whereas in *Take Care of the Sense* changes in imagery, character and mood generate juxtapositions of text and music, now changes in vocal style facilitate both successive and superimposed juxtapositions. In the next example (see Example 5.31), the mezzo-soprano alternates between rhythmic spoken word and sung phrases. The percussive quality of the spoken word is juxtaposed with the lyrical lines of the woodwinds, and pre-empts the pointillistic brass spatters. Moments later, the sung phrases are in rhythmic and melodic unison with the woodwind lines and juxtaposed with the brass spatters. The successive alternation of vocal styles, between spoken word and singing, gives way to the juxtaposition of woodwind and brass styles.
Example 5.31 *Cabbages and Kings* (bars 59-62, transposing score) - Voice as sound-block catalyst
In bars 53-56 (see Example 5.32) the mezzo-soprano’s sprechstimme figure, mirrored by staccato woodwind and guitar, is superimposed over the lyrical, sustained brass lines. The brass take up the original vocal line’s dramatic triplet figure, extending it into a joyous, hymn-like block with fingered glissandi, horn rip, and strong vibrato, recalling the voice’s theatrical glissandi heard earlier and highlight the increasing lyricism in my work. Here, the collision of sprechstimme and lyrical styles sees the integration of voice as an important juxtapositional element, not only in achieving juxtapositions, but in designing them too.
Example 5.32 *Cabbages and Kings* (bars 53-56, transposing score) - Rapid sprechstimme superimposed over lyrical brass

Joyous, with a touch of humour

\[ \text{Joyous, with a touch of humour} \]

\[ \text{Joyous, with a touch of humour} \]
Summary

Throughout this chapter I have shown how techniques born from both vernacular and contemporary art music worlds are integrated into my own musical portmanteau aesthetic. Via increasingly distinct rhythmic, sonority, and textural juxtapositions, my interaction with Carroll’s text has become more abstract, moving away from the comparatively literal explorations of ‘A’ is for Alice and the Take Care of the Sense suite, and embracing Carroll’s portmanteau words and verbal duels as a metaphor for the coexistence of stylistic oppositions.

The intersection of rock and art music domains in Frumious and Bandersnatch, via hocket techniques, grooves and disruptions, rapid tempo and time signature changes, textural density, pointillism and call and response, interval stacking, power-chords, and post-tonal densities, are continually rearranged by a carefully designed juxtapositional architecture. Through analysing these two works, I have become more aware of my strategy of rhythm driving pitch which, when revisiting Red Queen, White Queen, Alice and All, helped me transform two percussion parts into highly percussive string parts via syncopated bass lines, interlocking rhythms and an abundance of pizzicato and spiccato articulations.

In stark contrast to this emphasis on rhythm, I have discovered that these later works also display a lyricism and grace unmatched by my earlier works. As I became more confident with my oppositional language, each end of the spectrum has become more extreme, resulting in more humorous oppositions. For example, Frumious toggles easily between full-throttle textures and molto vibrato sentimental string gestures, Bandersnatch, chordal hymns and punk rhythms, and Cabbages and Kings, rap and operatic lines. The transitions between sound-blocks have become smoother, too, where the more frequent and nuanced use of rallentandos and accelerandos have played a vital role in joining disparate blocks, as well as playing with the listener’s expectations. Towards the end of the folio, I
have noticed an increase in tempo extremes, where the slower blocks are now considerably slower than the earlier works, pushing $\frac{1}{4} = 50$, as well as bursts of rapid speeds of $\frac{1}{4} = 175$, as seen in *Bandersnatch*. Whereas slower blocks were brief in the earlier works, these later works now take longer to revel in the contrasts produced, exploring richer and more resonant harmonies. At the same time, I consider these later pieces to be unashamedly funkier, where the expansion of my pitch processes give rhythm power; dissonance occurs more frequently on syncopated beats and create additional weight.

This has been realised by a more thorough understanding of what rhythmic properties make my music groove, discovered through the writing of conference papers in preparation for this exegesis. Experimentation with texture has also seen a smoother integration of Lutoslawski-inspired mobiles into metered blocks, co-existing with traditional notation, rather than as the successive sound-blocks seen in *Take Care of the Sense*. Finally, *Cabbages and Kings* extends my oppositional techniques to the use of voice, where the use of disparate vocal styles, including spoken word, rap, glissandi, sprechstimme and pitched singing, draw equally from rock and opera to produce a ‘rock-opera’ portmanteau; the true voice of Alice.
Chapter Six: Conclusion: Double Energy

Via juxtapositions, my music breaks down and subverts linearity to create my own seeming musical nonsense, reorganising oppositions into tightly designed mosaics. My thesis argument is oxymoronic; nonsense is inherently logical. By pitting musical oppositions against each other to form musical portmanteaus, my music flattens the hierarchy between vernacular and art musics which, like nonsense, questions the idea of hierarchy itself. My sound-blocks antagonistic interactions aspire to challenge the perceived incompatibility of conflicting ideas, whilst also demonstrating their compatibility. As Susan Stewart discusses, nonsense emerges from the real and imagined friction between the collision of similar and dissimilar worlds (1989: 35). In reorganising oppositions, my music produces a double energy, tempered by a whimsical humour and sentimental grace. This grace begins as an undercurrent and emerges fully-fledged in the later pieces, producing smoother block transitions, more extreme stylistic contrasts, and further textural and harmonic variety. Almost paradoxically, I consider that the greater the juxtaposition between sound-blocks, the smoother the transitions can be.

Throughout my folio, my compositional language has become increasingly oppositional, with more violent and humorous collisions, beginning with the comparatively tentative juxtapositions of ‘A’ is for Alice, to the emerging stylistic montage of the Take Care of the Sense suite, to the confident groove of Boojum, and the integration of my portmanteau techniques into a portmanteau aesthetic in Frumious, Bandersnatch and Cabbages and Kings. The instrumentation of my works has also become progressively oppositional, pitting groups against each other; from solo piano to chamber ensemble, orchestra and drum kit, wind ensemble and rock duo, and lastly, mezzo-soprano, wind ensemble and rock band. Born from a series of dual processes and inspired by the intersection of disparate sound-worlds, my aesthetic embraces a designed double energy of rhythmic vitality and visceral sonority.
Dual Processes

Through the writing of this exegesis and analysis of my work, I have become more aware of the dualities, dichotomies, and oppositions at play, and the elements of my compositional process which have come to define my aesthetic. In turn, this reflection and newfound self-awareness has shaped the way in which I approached the final piece of my folio, *Cabbages and Kings*, the reworking of *Red Queen, White Queen*, and how I will continue to approach future compositions. Upon reflection, I have discovered techniques that I was not completely aware of at the time of composing particular pieces. Beginning with my musical background, in chapter three I discovered the importance of my creative history in setting up a stylistic duality. My early experiences of playing trumpet in concert and brass bands, and later, trumpet, flute and drum kit in improvised, experimental rock bands, have influenced the way in which I think about rhythm and pitch, and how I strive to capture the visceral energy of improvisation in a notated context. As a wind player, I have found I place an emphasis on the horizontal relationships between notes; my compositions often eschew traditional chord hierarchies in favour of an atonal stack technique, created by the intersection of multiple linear lines. As a drummer, I have uncovered how the relationship between limbs and kit voices has encouraged new ways of creating grooves, hockets, linear and paradiddle inspired rhythms, and auditioning and refining rhythmic material. My strategy of percussion as process and rhythm driving pitch is an unorthodox approach to composition. In addition, improvisational sparks, electronic score notation, audio play-back, ‘cut’ and ‘paste’ organisation techniques, structural sketches, conversations with supervisors, collaboration with band members, rehearsals and performances, reading articles and writing papers, and a ‘dive-in and reiterate’ approach, have each played an integral role in my creative process.
Just as my process has been fed by my improvisational performance practice, I have also begun to see how my scored compositions have helped shaped my maturing as a performer, too. My mentorship with a number of different composers from Australia, the USA, and the Netherlands, has encouraged my unique blend of improvisational and architectural, visceral and reflective, visual and sonic, and literary and musical processes which, together, work towards a double energy of oppositional reorganisation.

**Architectural Groove and Disruption**

Bringing my rhythmic, sonority, and textural juxtapositions together, I have discussed how concepts of architectural design have grown out of compositional models Andriessen, Zappa, Ives, Torke and Zorn. In embracing non-linear designs, these five composers inspire me to experiment with a blend of vernacular and art music worlds, stylistic juxtapositions, sound-blocks and antiphonal duels. I have explored successive and superimposed juxtapositions as linear and multi-tiered textures, where relentless, massed unison textures are set against pointillistic textures, chordal sustains, interweaving polyphony, and an amalgam of traditional notation and Lutosławski-inspired mobiles. These stylistic juxtapositions appear as sound-blocks which explore a double energy of groove and disruption. The blocks simultaneously work to establish a groove, borrowing techniques from vernacular music, as well as being continually disrupted by tempo changes, rapidly changing time signatures, an abundance of rallentandos and accelerandos, toggling rhythmic and harmonic character, and sudden texture changes. On a macro level, each of the pieces experiment with a frame-within-a-frame structure, circularity and the notion of play, extending and truncating block ratios to shape an architectural design. As a result, two types of humour are produced: raucous and whimsical. Raucous humour is generated by the positioning of disparate blocks side by side, relentless block recurrence, and the sudden interjection of harsh timbres, while whimsical
humour by dramatic vibrato and glissandi, unexpected trajectories and endings, and the juxtaposition of music and text. Via a portmanteau game, the juxtapositions of art and vernacular elements have enjoyed a series of role reversals where, ultimately, each is present in the other.

**Stretching of Forms: Music and Literature**

The concept of double energy also includes the interaction between music and literature. While Carroll’s books have provided an imaginative springboard for the convergence of musical oppositions, the engagement between music and text also sees a simultaneous stretching of both forms. Inspired by the works of Cage, Chin, and Zorn, text strives to become more like music, placing an emphasis on the sonic and abstract qualities of words and experimenting with voice as a textural layer and block. Snippets of text are arranged into their own mosaic structures, forging new thematic connections and narratives in Carroll’s work, while also triggering and responding to musical events. At times, voice is descriptive, acting as the omniscient narrator and commenting on the music itself, and at other times, music endeavours to become more referential and associative, like text, harnessing metaphors, literary devices and nonsense structures, while also illustrating imagery and mood via musical gestures.

The influence of text also extends to the use of word directions in the score, which signal to the performer the juxtapositional nature of my music, as well as my own word choices which act as personal metaphors for musical gestures and blocks, in the way of ‘curvaceous contrasts’, ‘elephant stop’ and ‘feminine grace’ descriptions. Here, text is an important component not only in the creation of my work, but also in its realisation. My earlier works experiment with more literal portrayals of Carroll’s literature, using spoken word, duels, games of puns, palindromes, and malapropisms, while in my later works, text
acts as more of a metaphor for stylistic collisions. In my capstone piece, *Cabbages and Kings*, the use of text finally mirrors the development of music oppositions; ultimately, text and music are united through the mezzo-soprano’s synthesis of operatic pitched-singing and rhythmic rap.

**Conclusion: Portmanteau Aesthetic**

In developing my portmanteau aesthetic, my folio investigates a series of oppositions to craft my own juxtapositional logic and demonstrate the compatibility of seemingly conflicting ideas. The intersection of rock and art music domains, non-linear structures, dual creative processes, groove and disruption, raucous and whimsical humour, post-tonal densities and rhythm to drive pitch, music and literature, and viscerality and grace, are continually rearranged by a carefully designed juxtapositional architecture. My aesthetic further extends the metaphor of Carroll’s portmanteau words by reimagining them in a three-dimensional setting, where musical portmanteaus function horizontally and vertically with continually changing densities and textures. The maturing of my compositional voice, over the course of the folio, demonstrates a stretching of my oppositional language, becoming increasingly wilder, but also increasingly subtle and graceful.

As a result, I consider the two sides of each opposition inextricably linked, where rather than being the antithesis of each other, they instead offer balance, intensity and clarity. Oppositions are caught in a double-bind; their relationship is simultaneously antagonistic and harmonious, each is present in the other and part of a musical continuum in which together they form a fractured whole. Paradoxically, the more each opposition is broken down, the stronger each becomes, creating a cogency between the pair via a simultaneous reversal of roles and increased contrast; a concept I would like to experiment with further in my future works. The friction created by musical oppositions and their turbulent relationship enriches
my portmanteau aesthetic, continually energised by the collision of dual paradigms. As Larry Starr suggests of Ives’s music, I too see my aesthetic as a result of life’s “irresolutions and incongruities” (1992: 116). Via the breakdown of linearity, my folio posits nonsense as the disorganisation and reorganisation of sense, and brings together polyphonic threads to produce a designed and visceral double energy.
References


Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.


Henry Cow. (2007). *Western Culture* [CD]. Rer Megacorp/Rer USA.


On *Ives: Three places in New England; Symphony no. 4; Central Park in the dark* [CD]. Hamburg: Deutsche Grammophon.


On *Universe symphony/Orchestra set 2/ The unanswered question* [CD]. Centaur.


Wesley-Smith, M. (1985). *White knight and beaver for one or two soloists and tape*


Appendix 1: Composition Folio List

‘A’ is for Alice (2010) for piano, ca. 6 mins

Take Care of the Sense, and the Sounds Will Take Care of Themselves (2011) suite for chamber ensemble, ca. 40 mins

Boojum (2012) for orchestra, ca. 6.5 mins

Frumious (2012) for orchestra, ca. 8 mins

Bandersnatch (2013) for wind ensemble and rock duo, ca. 9 mins

Red Queen, White Queen, Alice and All (2013) for chamber ensemble, ca. 13 mins

Cabbages and Kings (2014) for mezzo-soprano and large ensemble, ca. 4 mins
Appendix 2: CD Track Listing

1. ‘A’ is for Alice  
   Antonietta Loffredo  

2. Take Care of the Sense, and the Sounds Will Take Care of Themselves  
   Movement II  
   Members of the National Taiwan Normal University Orchestra  
   November 28, 2011, Soochow University Performing Arts Centre, Taiwan.

3. Take Care of the Sense, and the Sounds Will Take Care of Themselves  
   Movement III  
   Members of the National Taiwan Normal University Orchestra  
   November 28, 2011, Soochow University Performing Arts Centre, Taiwan.

4. Frumious  
   Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Brett Kelly  
   February 5, 2013, Iwaki Auditorium, ABC Southbank, Melbourne.

5. Frumious  
   Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, conducted by Kah Chun Wong  
   July 31, 2013, Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium, Santa Cruz, USA.

6. Frumious  
   Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, conducted by Scott Seaton  
   July 31, 2013, Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium, Santa Cruz, USA.

7. Frumious  
   Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, conducted by Chaowen Ting  
   July 31, 2013, Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium, Santa Cruz, USA.

8. Red Queen, White Queen, Alice and All  
   Hwaum Chamber Orchestra  
   November 2, 2013, Pyeongchon Arts Hall, Anyang, South Korea.

9. Cabbages and Kings  
   Enikő Gösi and Orkest de Ereprijs, conducted by Rob Vermeulen  
   March 1, 2014, Podium Gigant, Apeldoorn, the Netherlands.