ANALYSIS OF SELECTED CHORAL WORKS BY JOHN TAVENER WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE POST-1977 WORKS.

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with sacred choral music written by John Tavener, a British composer born in 1944. It touches briefly on the background of Tavener and his early works (i.e. from about 1960-1976) - two works from that period have been selected for analysis, *Celtic Requiem* and *Nomine Jesu*. The main body of the thesis is concerned with those works composed after 1977, which show the influence of the Orthodox Church and Byzantine hymnography on Tavener's stylistic development. The selected works from this period to be analysed are: *Ode of St Andrew of Crete*, *Two Hymns to the Mother of God*, *Magnificat*, *Nunc Dimittis*, *The Uncreated Eros*, *Eonia* and *We Shall See Him As He Is*.

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PREFACE

John Tavener turns 54 this year and has, since his early 20s, been well known in England his country of birth. His fame is becoming increasingly widespread globally, even more so now since his *Song for Athene* was sung at the funeral of Princess Diana (it was renamed *Alleluia. May Flights of Angels Sing Thee to Thy Rest* for the occasion). "...it is at once rooted in the depths of time and startlingly contemporary" (Moody,1991:3). This statement concerning the music of John Tavener written after 1977, illustrates succinctly the very nature of these compositions. Most of his music, from the early days to the present, reflects his deeply religious and spiritual beliefs, and in particular within the last fifteen or so years, his deep fascination with the traditional Byzantine music of the Orthodox Church.

Although Tavener has made a careful study of the Byzantine modes (which differ from the Gregorian modes) and Russian *znamenny* chanting, they are by no means the rules by which he abides. As such the theoretical details of Byzantine hymnography will not be dealt with in this thesis, suffice it to say that it is the character and ethos of Byzantine or Middle Eastern music which is of importance to Tavener and that he has successfully managed to combine this ancient art form with his own Western heritage and bring it to an appreciative and ever-increasing audience. This thesis focusses on Tavener's choral compositions as they form the largest genre of his output and as such are his most significant works. Because of his religious stance, many of the texts for his choral works are derived from the Orthodox liturgy or the Bible and are as important as the music:

> Byzantine hymnography is the poetical expression of Orthodox theology, translated through music, to the sphere of religious emotion. It mirrors the evolution of the dogmatic ideas and doctrines of the Orthodox Church... Neither the poetry nor the music, therefore can be judged independently of each other; verse and voice are intimately linked together (Wellesz,1961:157).

Little analytical work has been done with regards to Tavener's music and at the time of this thesis there is only a minimal number of his compositions available on both recording and score and this has severely restricted the selection of works studied here. Unfortunately attempts to contact Tavener during the researching of this thesis have been unsuccessful. However he has fortunately given several interviews for journals and these, together with his biography, published in 1995, have proved invaluable in acquiring the thoughts and aspirations of this remarkable composer.

INTRODUCTION

Despite Tavener's belief that he is descended from the Tudor Taverner of c1490-1545 and the existence of a genealogy written in 1960 to support this, the validity of the claim is dubious for several reasons, including a break in the line around 1760 and the problem of conflicting burial places.[1]

John Kenneth Tavener was born on 28 January 1944 in the North London suburb of Wembley Park where he was to reside for 47 years. Music was an integral part of family life since his father, Kenneth, though working as a surveyor, was both a keen organist playing every Sunday at church, and a cellist in the West Hampstead Orchestra. His son John, the older of two boys, started piano lessons at the age of eight and from the beginning was noted for his ability to improvise in the styles of the great masters.

Tavener's earliest catalogued works date from 1961, his last year at Highgate School to which he had been awarded a scholarship four years previously. Several other pupils at the school who performed with Tavener and would assist in the presentation of his works, also became well known in the world of music. These included the composers Brian Chapple and John Rutter; David Cullen, composer-turned chief orchestrator for Andrew Lloyd Webber; Howard Shelley, the concert pianist; Nicholas Snowman, founder of the London Sinfonietta and now chief Executive of the South Bank Centre; and Francis Steiner, who tours the world as one half of the popular piano duo Rostal and Schaefer (Haydon, 1995:25-26).

Just prior to his entrance to the Royal Academy of Music in 1962, Tavener was appointed organist and choirmaster at St John's Presbyterian Church in Kensington, a post which he was to hold for 14 years. At this stage his parents saw his future as a concert pianist, however while he was at the R.A.M., his focus shifted towards composition.

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[1] The Tudor Taverner is buried in Lincolnshire while Tavener's ancestor (of the same dates) is buried in Norfolk (Haydon, 1995:16).

During his time at the Academy, 1962 to 1967[2], Tavener produced works which were largely eclectic, mostly alluding to the music of Rachmaninov, Ravel, Prokoviev and especially Stravinsky. The music of Sir Lennox Berkeley, his composition teacher, did not have much of an impact on him although the influence of his serial works can be felt in Tavener's *The Cappemakers*, *Cain and Abel*, the Chamber Concerto, the Piano Concerto and *Genesis* (the last two echoing Stravinsky's *Agon*).

Although these years were highly experimental, they also foreshadowed the style that was to become Tavener's own. Several elements peculiar to Tavener's later period were already present at this time, especially in the vocal works.[3] For instance the use of biblical subjects, high-pitched vocal lines, a general lack of woodwind, slow tempi with broad sound fields, and an overall sense of drama.

From 1962 to 1965 Tavener composed a set of biblical works[4] culminating in *The Whale* which launched the newly-formed London Sinfonietta Orchestra and Chorus at its premiere on 24 January 1968. Broadcast by the BBC three months later, its triumphant success set Tavener apart as a composer to be watched, he was then only 22. However, he said of them at the time that they "share extravagance, which I may not be capable of when I grow older" (Tavener, 1986:867).

The influences on Tavener's style stem right back to his twelfth year at which time two works made a deep impression on him, the first was Mozart's *Magic Flute.* At that age he was struck by the mysteriousness and symbolism and it was to prove a source of inspiration years later when he wrote his own opera. He now feels that "Mozart's late masterpiece is the only opera that leaps the bounds of the eighteenth century and 'enters the realm of the primordial'" (Haydon, 1995:21). Throughout Tavener's career as a composer, he has been aware of symbolism and how it can bridge cultures:

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[2] Tavener was awarded a fellowship by the Academy for 1966 which was later extended for a further year.

[3] Namely *Genesis* (1962), *The Cappemakers* (1964), *Cain and Abel* (1965) and *The Whale* (1965-6).

[4] *Genesis*, *The Cappemakers* and *Cain and Abel.*

> The intelligibility of traditional art does not depend on recognition but, like that of script, on legibility. So, symbols are the universal language of art: an international language with merely dialectal variations. [With] symbolism drawn from the West, Byzantium, and the Sufis... I try to make a totally synchronistic whole (Moody, 1994:VIII,IX).

The second work to make an impact on the young Tavener was Stravinsky's *Canticum Sacrum*:

> He talks of it today as 'the piece that woke me up, and made me want to be a composer'. And he still regards this eighteen-minute composition as 'the pinnacle of twentieth-century music, which brings together Webern, organum and Gregorian and Byzantine chant. The nearest Western man can come to creating a sacred work of art' (Haydon, 1995:21).

During Tavener's days at Highgate and the R.A.M., he became almost obsessed with Stravinsky and at one stage set about collecting every possible detail about the man.[5]

Someone who had a great influence on Tavener at this time was Andrew Lumsdaine, a fellow student. Lumsdaine was equally interested in atonality and serialism.

Lady Rhoda Birley[6], whom Tavener had just met and was responsible for introducing him to the opera, later became his patron until her death in 1981, providing exposure for several of Tavener's works including *The Cappemakers* in 1964.

In 1981 Tavener made contact with Mother Thekla, an abbess in Normanby, whose permission he needed to use a translation on which she had collaborated, of *The Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete*. She was to become his spiritual adviser, librettist and close friend. It was only in 1986 that they actually met, by which time they were in daily contact by telephone.

Mother Thekla actually encouraged Tavener to "transcend the doggerel" (Haydon, 1995:191). At times she found working with Tavener to be intrusive on her own life, especially once he started making television interviews and documentaries and even questioned whether she could

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[5] "what kind of whisky he drank, which brand of cigars he smoked, what his wife looked like" (Haydon,1995:44).

[6] Her late husband was Sir Oswald Birley, portrait painter to the nobility.

continue their association but she believed very deeply in the purpose of his music: "It was music which explored the Divine without claiming to fathom it. In her words:

> John has the ultimate humility before the 'Goal', which he knows he cannot reach. I couldn't work with anybody who did not understand human limitation ... But he is totally ruthless where his music is concerned. He doesn't mind whom he turns inside out. I know, and I do it with my eyes open. Only a monk or a nun could cope: we aren't concerned with personal ambition. I take it as my monastic obedience. It's not John: there is something here which I have been told to do, so I do it. (Haydon, 1995:208)

Mother Thekla has provided Tavener with more texts than anyone else, some of which have been her own original words (*Ikon of St Cuthbert, Ikon of St Seraphim, Today the Virgin, Lets begin Again* etc) while others are composite texts from biblical passages, poetry and liturgies (*Let not the Prince be Silent, We Shall See Him As He Is, The Apocalypse, Akhmatova Songs, St Mary of Egypt, Thunder Entered Her*).

The element of the sacred is the strongest driving impulse for Tavener. In his more than 30 years as a composer, he has consistently made use of ritualism and symbolism, enhanced by a deep-seated religious stance which, however, remained directionless until his conversion to the Russian Orthodox faith in 1977. Although biblical subjects abound from the 1960s onwards, he feels only those works written after 1977 can be called sacred music (Ford, 1993).

He believes that the notion of Sacred Tradition, which is central to his compositional ethos, has become altered in the West ever since the introduction of the ego in the Renaissance era. People tend to look upon tradition in terms of Mozart and Beethoven, but Tavener believes in a tradition in which the genius of the individual is a foreign concept. The superficial Western attitude regards works as sacred simply because they make references to God, but Tavener gives as examples of the truly sacred in art the Taj Mahal, St Sophia in Constantinople, the Egyptian wall paintings and Chartres Cathedral, because they stem from a deep-rooted tradition in which art makes no demands on the viewer. He likens composing to an act of prayer, "an act of remembrance, remembrance of a paradise lost" (Crowthers, 1994:14), and illustrates the contrast between Eastern and Western sacred art by comparing a Renaissance painting of the Nativity, which he views simply as a work of art, to an ikon which moves him to veneration.

Tavener has often been equated with church music and indeed several of his works do function within the liturgical framework of the Orthodox Church.[7] His need to compose, however, stems more from "a deep concern for things of a spiritual and transcendental nature and a continuation of a tradition" (Stewart, 1992a:28), though he now reacts against the label 'mystic' "because it's like sniffing around a restaurant without actually going in" (Ford, 1993:94).

Moody (1988:511) suggests that the "intense ritual nature" of Tavener's music might be lost in secular surroundings and that his works are designed to be performed in a church where one is more accustomed to the "spiritual austerity" that, at times, his works convey. But he does admit that "it is a measure of [his] universality that such tension rarely interferes with an audience's appreciation of his music". Tavener has made a decisive move away from the church which he would not have done if the Orthodox Church in England was sufficiently established to develop an English Orthodox musical language. However he feels strongly about the direction art has taken:

> Paintings - ikons - if you like - have moved out of the church and into the art gallery; music has moved into the concert hall. Art's become so disconnected with divine realities, whereas in Plato's day - or in any great civilization - it was the norm that it was connected with divine realities, I think we live in a culture in ruins, at the end of an epoch (Ford, 1993:90).

Tavener and his second wife, Maryanna, now live with their daughter, Theodora, in Sussex.

[7] For instance *The Liturgy of St John Chrysostom* - 1977, and *The Orthodox Vigil Service* - 1984.

1960 - 1976

CHAPTER ONE - ANALYSES

While this thesis is concerned with the post-1977 phase of Tavener's output, he was already a well established composer a decade earlier and it is therefore worthwhile looking at a couple of works from this time in order to appreciate his stylistic development, particularly as so many elements of his more current music can be traced back to the 1960s.

It is unfortunate that only four such works are available on recording[8]: *The Whale* ('65), *Celtic Requiem* ('69), *Nomine Jesu* ('70) and *Coplas* ('70). *The Whale* and *Celtic Requiem* are substantial in length and orchestration and although the former is significant for bringing about Tavener's initial success, the *Celtic Requiem* holds more favour with both composer and critic and is therefore the choice for further discussion here.

1.1 CELTIC REQUIEM

In 1969 the London Sinfonietta commissioned a second work from Tavener following the success of *The Whale*. He had recently visited Ireland and been moved by the "beauty of the rugged landscape [which] seemed tinged with a sense of loss" (Haydon, 1995:75) so decided to write a requiem which would allow for settings of early Irish poetry. During the process of composition he included some theatrical action for children, but kept the title of *Celtic Requiem* because he felt he "owe[d] a debt to Ireland for the genesis of the spirit of the music" (Tavener,1971). *Celtic Requiem* is scored for three instrumental and vocal groups which are marked in the score as orchestras 1, 2 and 3, however this does not include the children and their various rhythmic instruments.

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[8] According to the Chester Music catalogue of 1995.

1	2	3
chorus	**chorus**	**chorus**
solo male voice	**solo male voice**	**solo male voice**
2 tenor solos	2 bass solos	2 alto solos
soprano solo		
strings		
trombone	piccolo trumpet	A♭ clarinet
timpani	trumpet	aeolian bagpipes
grand organ	piano	electric guitar (bass guitar)
		soprano saxophone
percussion:	percussion:	percussion:
hand bells	**hand bells**	**hand bells**
talking drums	**talking drums**	**talking drums**
3 gongs	**3 gongs**	**3 gongs**
wood block (h)	**wood block (m)**	**wood block (l)**
3 tam-tams (pitched)	**3 tam-tams**	**3 tam-tams**
tom toms	**tom toms**	**tom toms**
sosp cym[9]	**sosp cym**	**sosp cym**
xylophone		
marraccas		
whip		

Table 1 showing scoring for *Celtic Requiem*

The libretto, surprisingly, comprises only small extracts from the *Missa pro Defunctis*, the majority of the text is derived from poems of Blathmac, a poem by Henry Vaughan[10], a hymn by Cardinal Newman[11] and various children's singing games and nonsense rhymes which deal with death.

> Key words of the Requiem Mass are sung by the adult choirs, in conjunction with early Irish poetry, which is nearly always allotted to the extremely high soprano soloist; but all these things stand as "adult embellishments" to the children's games about death and courtship. These games are the most important thing in the piece, reflecting or commenting on what the "adults" are singing... If it may seem that I am using the theatrical prop of "child sentiment", then I can only say that the idea of the piece is inseparable from the music. I do believe in a very strong connection between death and children; and that their enacting of the mysterious "rite of death" in street games is very moving. The children's songs are untouched (apart from all being transposed into E flat major), and are given a context within the framework of sections of the mass that I have used. There is a central character, Jenny Jones, a little girl who is picked as a victim at the outset to undergo the rite of death (Tavener,1971).

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[9] Sosp. probably refers to *sospirando* - which means "sighing".

[10] "They are all gone into the World of Light"

[11] "Lead Kindly Light"

Celtic Requiem is in three movements, named after sections of the Latin Mass for the Dead:

I	**Requiem Aeternam**	introduction	1'30
		requiem aeternam	3'00
		kyrie (Lament for Jenny Jones)	3'46
II	**Dies Irae**	dies irae	2'17
		recordare	1'30
		lacrymosa	2'20
		confutatis maledictis	2'20
III	**Requiescat in Pace**		6'15
		Total	22'55

I REQUIEM AETERNAM

Haydon (1995:78) wrote of the successful premiere on 16 July 1969:

> The packed house for the premiere paid little attention to the orchestral players and adult singers, who were disposed in three groups at the back of the stage. From the beginning, all eyes at the Festival Hall were on the children. They entered in twos... whispering to each other as they passed through the audience on their way to the platform, where the orchestra was holding an immensely quiet chord of E flat. They knelt in front of [the swing on the stage], still whispering. Gradually, the whispering changed into a chant which grew louder.

This is how the *Celtic Requiem* begins, introducing the first movement which comprises two sections, *requiem aeternam* and *kyrie*. Tavener (1971) has described the music of the *Celtic Requiem* as:

> a gigantic decoration of the chord of E♭ and the three different canti and three different rhythmic groups embellish this chord...The whole piece may, at any given point, be related to the chord of E♭."

The initial E♭ chord, which will permeate the entire work, is sustained by the strings, marked *pppppp*, and is pitched relatively low, creating a serene, ethereal sound. But this mood is short-lived as the maracas enter shortly afterwards, lending the work an immediate feeling of primitiveness. Added to this is an element of menace created by the gradual build up of children chanting in Gaelic:

Ene, mena, bora mi - Kisca, lara, mora di:

Eggs, butter, cheese, bread: Stick, stock, stone dead.

This is a rhyming game where the children pick a "victim" to act the part of Jenny Jones in the scene that will later unfold. As their shouting reaches fever pitch, the xylophones join in sounding like hideous skeletons, sharing the same rhythm as the chanting but the "melody" is now disjointed and unmelodic creating a sinister effect (fig.1).

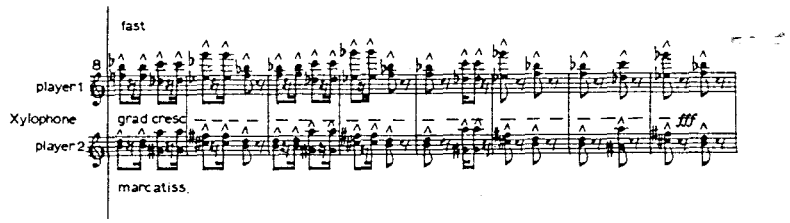

Figure 1 - xylophones

requiem aeternam ('eternal rest')

Although barlines are introduced from the first section onwards, they function merely to assist the performers. Moreover, and owing to the many changes in time signature, the listener is not aware of any particular pulse within the music.[12]

In contrast to the introduction, the *requiem aeternam* has a more static and controlled character and although the texture becomes increasingly complex there are two elements which stand out: (i) the long-sustained E♭ chord and (ii)an extended soprano solo:

(i)The E♭ chord is enlarged here by the addition of three choruses (each one in nine parts!) singing what Tavener marks in the score as a 'hard bell sound - *dong*', each lasting the duration of a bar. These 'dongs' are particularly prominent and strident, like a tolling bell, which is intrusive and persistent creating a frightening effect. This sound continuum remains static in this first section and in fact recurs from time to time throughout the *Requiem* in different guises acting as a stabilising influence in an otherwise atonal style.

[12] Certain parts in the score do not utilise any bar lines but rather specified numbers of seconds.

(ii) The extremely taxing soprano solo (fig 2), marked 'gently, freely with much rubato', is the soloist's most important passage in the whole work, she sings here a three-verse poem by Blathmac:

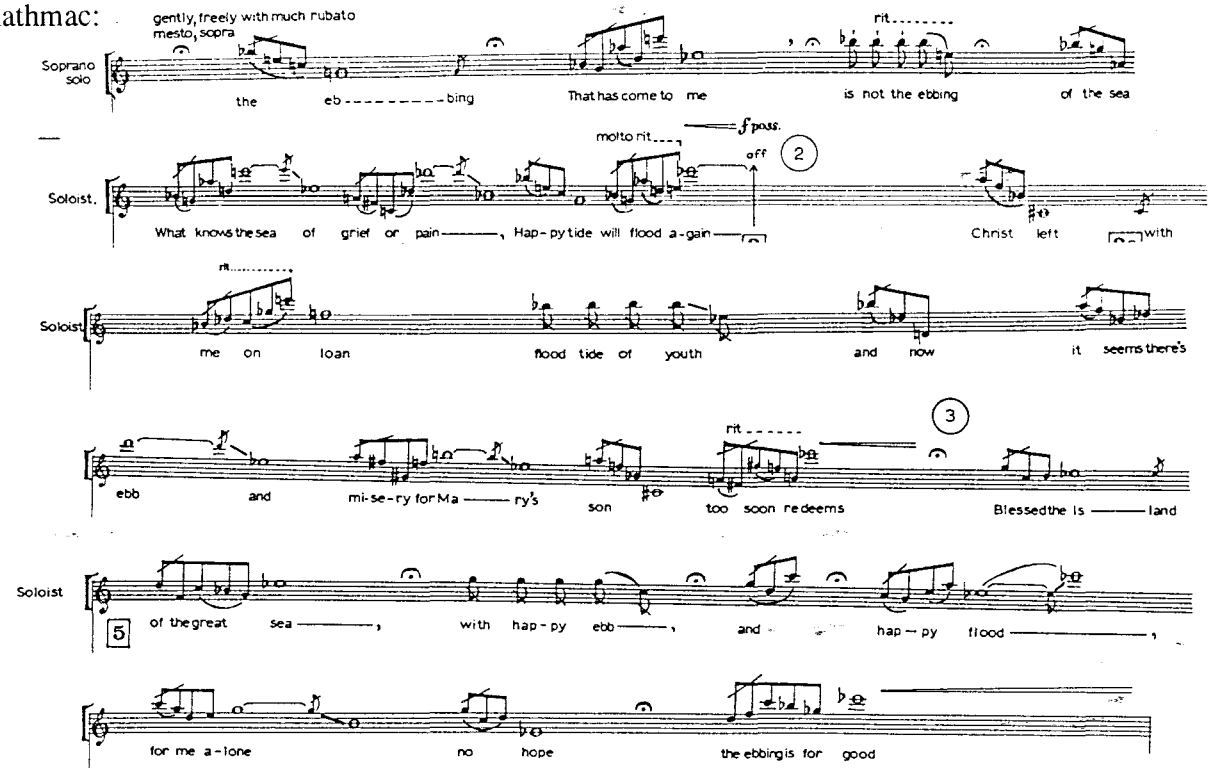

Figure 2 - soprano solo

The three verses share the same rhythmic design, although this is aurally difficult to perceive. The poem is quite morbid, reflecting the grief and anger experienced on the death of a loved one and this, together with the angularity and extreme range of the soprano line (from c - e```), does not convey any serenity or peace of mind. Apart from another long solo part in the third movement (based on the same passage but comprising semibreves), the subsequent appearances are all relatively brief and less striking.

Superimposed on these two elements are the staggered entries of three ensembles, one from each orchestra. Each ensemble comprises three parts: (a) a melodic theme, (b) a line played by gongs and (c) a solo male speaking part.

(a) Melodic lines.

These are in fact the three main themes of the whole work, although they are not stated in full in this section. The first ensemble, sopranos, altos, bells and trombone, provides the first four notes of theme A spread at regular intervals over the section.

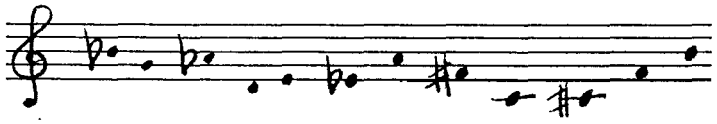

Figure 3 - Theme A

The second ensemble, sopranos, altos, trumpet and bells, enters about one minute into this section with the first six notes of theme B.

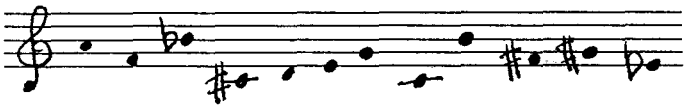

Figure 4 - Theme B

The piano also enters here and plays the whole of theme B followed by its retrograde, using very short notes marked 'slow, unrelated like bells'.[13] Tavener's use of the piano is unconventional: some notes are plucked and, at times, the sound is stopped, not by the damper but by placing a finger on the string. The first four notes of theme C (a seven-note row) are heard about 30 seconds later played by the third ensemble, sopranos, altos, bells and A♭ Clarinet.

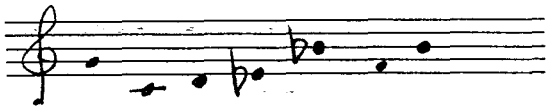

Figure 5 - Theme C

This ensemble also has a drone played by bagpipes and unrelated chords played by electric guitar, resulting in a now very dense texture.

(b) Gongs. Each ensemble has three gongs (low, medium and high) which are used at random creating a primordial resonance and spatial quality for this section.

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[13] This part does not use strict serialism as some of the notes are repeated within the row.

(c) Solo Male Speaking Part

These three parts are all spoken in monotone with irregular rhythms in no way connected to the rhythm of the words:

> *O father you have left us, Ochon! Why did you leave us? Ochon! Oh, what did we do to you? Ochon! That you went away from us? Ochon! 'Tis you that had plenty, Ochon! And why did you leave us? Ochon! Strong was your arm, Ochon! Light was your step. Ochon! Skilled were your hands, Ochon! Poor we are without you. Ochon! And why did you leave us? Ochon!*[14]

This passage is referred to in the score as *"The Keen"*, implying an Irish dirge expressing extreme grief and pain that would normally be wailed. However Tavener departs from conventional practice by using an ametric monotonal voice thus creating a sharp contrast to the tormented soprano part. These lines are rhythmically different in each of the three ensembles, consequently heightening the emotion and lack of cohesion.

For the theatrical side of this section, the victim, once dressed in white by the children, "crouches behind the outstretched skirts of 'mother'. The [other children] face them in a line. They move back and forth as they sing -"

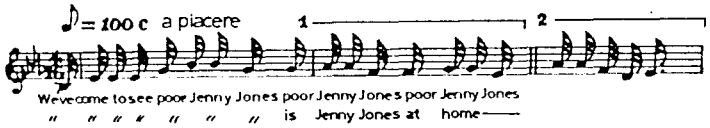


Figure 6 - the children

Most of the children's songs are sung to this melody which recurs about 25 times during the course of the *Requiem.* At the introduction of the third ensemble the words change to:

> *Jenny Jones is dying dying dying dying dying dying*
> *Jenny Jones is dying dying you can't see her now.*

In this first section, Tavener shows several initial reactions to death, from the varied perspectives of children, adults and the church. The children sing with light-hearted playfulness as they are as yet unaware of sorrow; for them Jenny Jones is merely not at home and cannot come out to play, whereas the adult response is one of grief and anger ably displayed through the words of the Keen and the angularity of the solo soprano line.

---

[14] "Ochon" refers to ochone "Alas: a cry of grief" and is of Irish origin. (Webster's Third New International Dictionary, 1995)

The reaction of the Catholic Church is found in the Latin words *Requiem Aeternam* sung by the sopranos and altos in each of the three ensembles (the three themes possibly referring to the Trinity). However, as the words are so drawn out they are not easily discerned and possibly a comment on the way people deal with death: the church is, for many, seldom the primary source of comfort or consolation when dealing with death, an opinion Tavener might well have had at the time. The conclusion of this section, is marked by a pause allowing all sound to die away.

kyrie ('Lord')

The second section has a thinner texture, a slower tempo and is altogether calmer than the *requiem aeternam.* The three-part text, *Kyrie eleison - Christe eleison - Kyrie eleison,* is provided in turn by two tenors, two altos and two basses who sing themes A, C and B respectively - these themes are heard here for the first time in their complete form. In each case the second soloist sings the theme in retrograde and in a different rhythm. There is none of the agitation that was heard in the earlier solo soprano passage, but rather the music here seems to portray the serene, ritualism of the church.

Three double-basses play chords in harmonics marked 'lontano' (distant, remote). These could be viewed as tonic and dominant chords in the key of E♭[15] and provide a simple hymn-like progression which is heard beneath themes A, C and B. Towards the end of the first *Kyrie eleison* the peaceful atmosphere is harshly interrupted by the children singing *We've come to see poor Jenny Jones... is Jenny Jones at Home?* and if anything, the manner in which the children sing appears more brutal and harsh than anything before, although this contrast is probably heightened by comparison to the serenity of the adult passages. The children enter again in the second *Kyrie eleison* with the words *Jenny Jones is dead is dead... you can't see her now. We'll come to the funeral... and how shall we dress?* The contrast between the Latin passage and that of the children is particularly striking, the reality of death still eluding the children.

A short tail-piece, called *Lament for Jenny Jones* (fig. 7) concludes the first movement. Despite the material in this section being randomly shared between different instruments (electric guitar, piano, trumpet, string quartet and marraccas) and the children, the disjointed effect is held

---

[15] I: E♭-G-B♭ and vii (auxiliary of V): D-F-A♭.

together by the recurring notes of the E♭ chord. The children sing *Jenny Jones is dead is dead* and 'stand round weeping into handkerchiefs' as they begin to realise what Jenny Jones' death really means. It is interesting to note that they do not display any anger as the adults do, perhaps revealing more tolerance and acceptance.

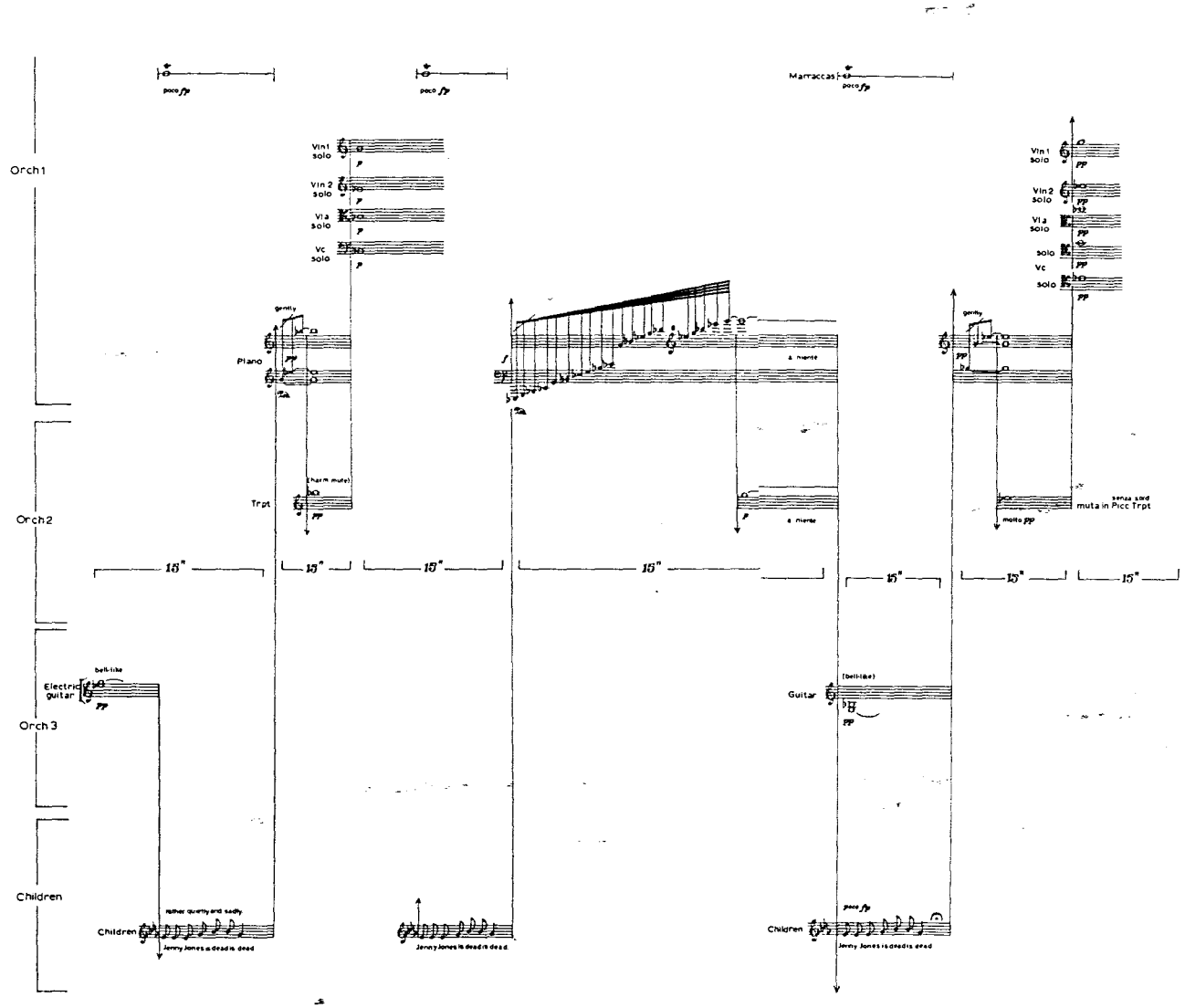


Figure 7 - "Lament for Jenny Jones"

The effect is that of great space, emptiness and loneliness. There is little comfort in the detached parts, and despite there being an air of solemnity it also feels rather eerie.

II DIES IRAE

The *Dies Irae* comprises four sections: *dies irae*, *recordare*, *lacrymosa* and *confutatis maledictis*, and starts with a fanfare reminiscent of Verdi's stunning depiction:

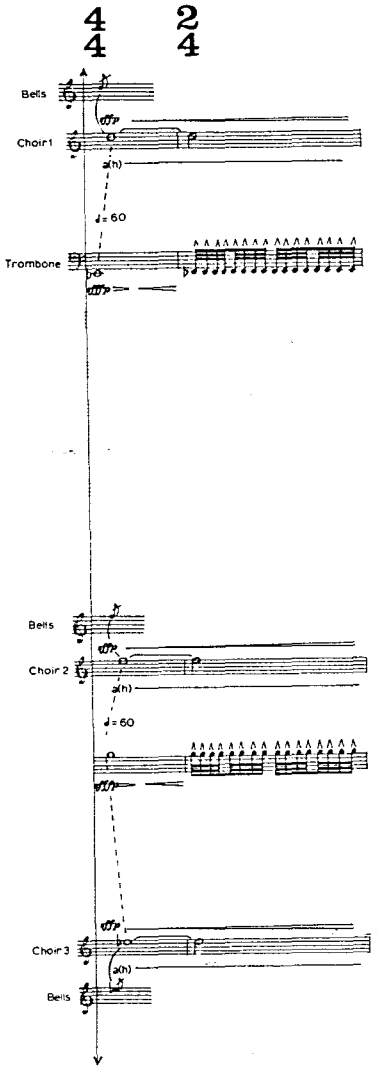
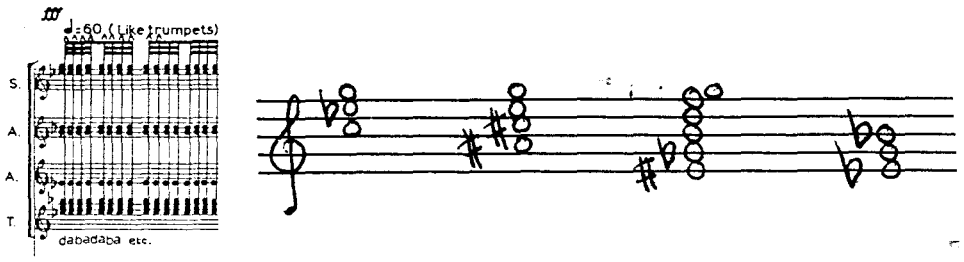


Figure 8 - fanfare

dies irae ('day of wrath')

Following the fanfare, nearly all the forces are employed, thus achieving a dense texture and making this one of the most dramatic and exciting parts of the work. The three main themes appear in various different instruments and are barely discernable within the many-layered weave. This section will therefore be discussed from the perspective of the orchestration which, for convenience, is divided into six elements determined by their rhythmic and/or melodic character:

(i) Choruses and organ manual: these provide the harmonic backbone of the *dies irae* with a progression of five chords evenly spread throughout the section (the first and last chords are the same). They contribute substantially to the extremely thick texture of this section as each of the three choruses sings an eight-part chord (fig.9) together with a five-part chord on the organ.



E♭ major C minor A♯dim 7th Atonal E♭ major

Figure 9 - *dies irae* progression

This section can be compared to the *requiem aeternam* of the first movement in that they both display a progressive increase in intensity. While the *requiem aeternam* does this primarily through the thickening of texture (by adding parts), the *dies irae* uses the chords to increase the tension as they move from the stability of a major triad, through a minor then diminished chord and finally arriving at an atonal chordal arrangement. This is a means of providing forward momentum without relying on thematic development. (Note that the fifth chord is once again the E♭ major triad creating a sense of resolution and stability.)

(ii) Rhythmic instruments: these include a whip, timpani and three wood blocks which play varied rhythms against one another: the whip is the only instrument with a clear regular rhythm, although it does start off a little hesitantly; the timpani interject three times playing theme C quickly, the second appearance being in retrograde; and woodblocks play seemingly erratic and irregular rhythms which tend to dissolve in the general furore.

(iii) Solo instruments: these are the trombone (theme A), clarinet (theme C) and piccolo trumpet which plays a line that does not resemble any of the themes.

(iv) Strings: alternating between the upper (violins and violas) and lower (cellos and double basses) strings, they play chord clusters in an aggressive manner marked 'con tutta forza, hard tone' (fig.10).

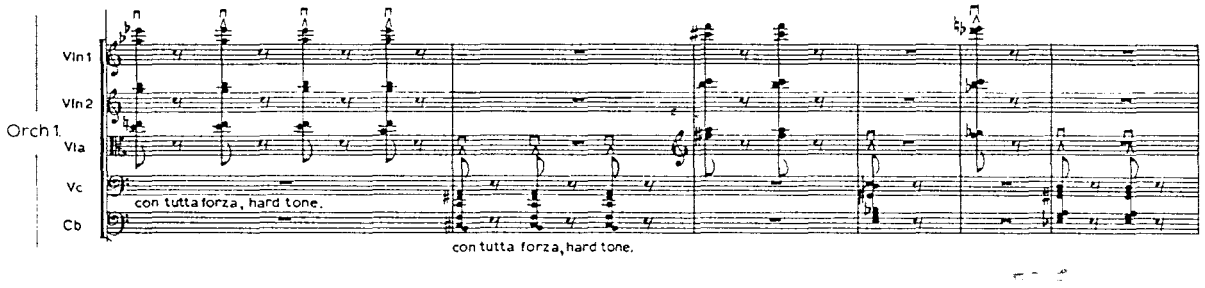
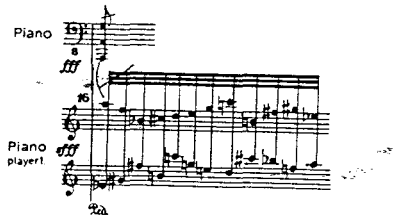


Figure 10 - strings

(v) Xylophone and piano: these two instruments play alternately at or near each chord change, with the xylophone playing theme A and the piano theme B, except with the fifth chord where the two instruments appear together. In all instances the theme and its retrograde appear simultaneously.



Theme A Theme B

Figure 11 - xylophones and piano

(vi) Organ pedal and vocal basses: these two parts provide the first five notes of theme B, the note changes more or less coinciding with the various chord changes thereby contributing to the sense of underlying harmonic progression. Note that the basses are the only part in the *dies irae* with any text - *Tuba mirum.*

Initially the *dies irae* appears somewhat confusing but a feeling of structure does emerge through the presence of recurring elements or patterns within the music. As already mentioned, the whip has a clearly audible, regular rhythm providing a syncopated pulse against the main beat given by the strings. A broader structure is formed by the chords. Their rate of change is regular and strengthened by the interjections of the xylophone/piano and the note changes in the organ pedal/bass part. Despite the lack of time signature or distinct rhythmic pattern, one becomes accustomed after repeated listening not only to the rhythmic and harmonic undertones but also the various sound colours of other instruments.

Up to this point in the *dies irae* the children have been playing a silent game of hopscotch. "In origin, hop-scotch represents the path through life to death, or purgatory to paradise - which perhaps is the same thing" (Tavener, 1993). Haydon (1995:79) describes the premiere performance:

> At the opening of the second movement, the *Dies Irae*, the girl with the chalk marked out a hopscotch court around Jenny's body. While the adult chorus sang a scat vocal ("dabadaba, dabadaba", representing the trumpets of the Last Judgement), and the orchestra shrieked and banged, the children played a slow-motion game of hopping over the corpse, uncannily synchronized to the shifting accents in the music. Then they moved to the swing, placed the smallest girl on board and pushed her in time to a new rhythm.
>
> *One to earth and one to heaven*
> *And THIS to carry my soul to heaven.*

The use of the swing occurs in a 30-second tail-piece which allows the mood of the *dies irae* section to subside and stabilise with only the notes from the E♭ chord being used, (except for the children who sing in the key of E♭ as usual) and a drone on D provided by two double basses. While some of the children are chanting at the swing, others start singing:

You can come yellow,
That's how you can dress.
Yellow is for jealousy!

recordare

In this section there are essentially four lines of melody (marked in fig. 14), all sung to the words *recordare Jesu pie*:

1) tenor solo (with solo cello) sings theme A,

2) bass solo (with piano) sings a serial passage not resembling any themes,

3) contralto solo (with clarinet) sings theme C.

4) This line is sung in minor 3rds and 6ths and although the notes are always from the E♭ chord, it is quite disjointed in that the syllables are passed from one voice part to another amongst the three choruses. As seen in Figure 14 the syllables *Re-cor-da-re* are passed, in "hoquetus" technique, from voice to voice within all three ensembles. The syllabic, detached nature of these lines is further accentuated by the echo in the hand bells following each syllable.

Other instruments involved here are double-bass and organ-pedal which provide a simple bass line that moves slowly and mostly by step; bagpipes which are directed to 'improvise small figures ad lib'; and guitar which plays figures that appear to use all the notes of E♭ major scale as well as the notes B♮ and A♮.

Figure 12 - *recordare*

Although the *recordare* is marked 'espressivo' the effect is quite jarring and distorted. As in so many instances in this work, the texture is thick and being atonal the immediate impression is

fairly disturbing. There is nothing rhythmically defined here, as there was in the *dies irae,* which could provide some sort of foothold. Before the listener has a chance to become accustomed to this, the children enter quite unexpectedly with the same xylophone accompaniment as heard in the introduction - here they are chanting -

Wingy Wongy, days are longy, cuckoo and the sparrow; little dog has lost his tail, and he shall be hung tomorrow. [repeated three times each time quicker than the last.]

As in the introduction this has a macabre effect which is made even more menacing by the increasingly rapid repetitions of the last line, creating a sense of panic. Two further rhymes follow: *Half a pound of two penny rice half a pound of treacle, pennorth of spice to make it nice POP goes the weasel.*

and *Die pussy die, shut your little eye, when you wake find a cake, die pussy die.*

During the latter rhyme, the xylophone plays a twelve-note line in short even notes which slow down as the swing gradually comes to a stop. According to Tavener (1993) these swinging games are meant to release a soul from purgatory by attempting to pluck something from off the front of the swing. Priests in Bolivia used to swing on gigantic swings for 12 hours on All Soul's Day for the same purpose.

lacrymosa

This is in two sections, the first of which provides some relief from the tension of the *recordare.* Again three ensembles are used, each has a chorus (sopranos, altos and basses) and three tam-tams. In addition the first has a trombone, the second a trumpet and the third a soprano saxophone (fig.13).

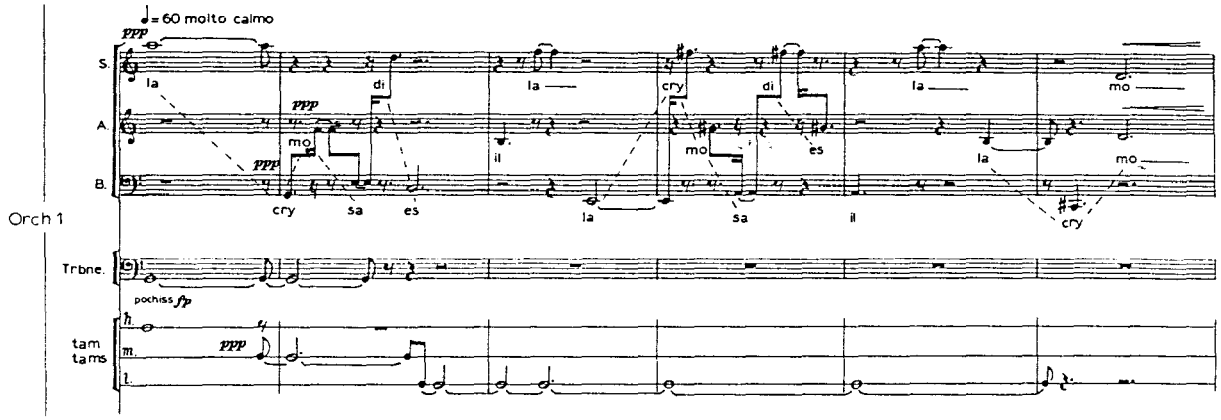


Figure 13 - ensemble 1

The texture of the score appears deceptively thick because all three ensembles are fully orchestrated, however, as the three choruses sing in unison the vocal line is clearly audible. Although the notes leap from one voice to the next the pitches form a scale-like passage: first a descending A natural-minor scale and then a rising pattern from E to D in the key of A major (fig. 14).

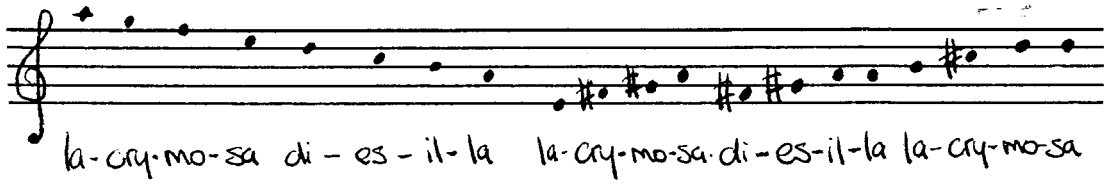


Figure 14 - scale-like passage of *lacrymosa* melody

The tam-tams play unrelated lines which comprise fairly widely-spaced strikes dispelling any outward feeling of rhythm while the notes of the E♭ chord are passed between the trombone, trumpet and saxophone. All this forms a backdrop to the children who sing a new song (still in E♭) which is more gentle than anything heard previously (fig.15).

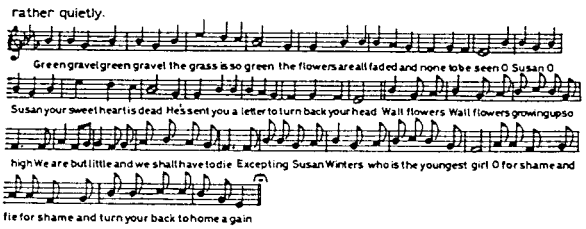


Figure 15 - "Green gravel", the children

There is a bridging passage between the two sections of the *Lacrymosa* where the children are split into three groups: the first group sings *ding dong bell* over and over on the notes B♭, G and E♭[16] while the second group chants -

> *Mother Mother I feel sick send for the Doctor quick quick quick Doctor Doctor shall I die? Yes my dear and so shall I How many carriages shall I have? One two three four..... "the children "caw" the rope as they chant"*

and the third part follows on from this with -

> *Jealousy jealousy yellow is for jealousy and that won't do.*
> *You can come in black in black in black in black in black.*

---

[16] In the recording this is given to the adult sopranos.

As this unfolds, various parts enter in a passage leading to a *dies irae*-like fanfare and subsequently arrive at the second section of the *lacrymosa* which itself also strongly resembles the *dies irae*.

Despite the detached nature of the *lacrymosa*, the gently lyrical lullaby-character of the children's singing softens the atonal disjointed style of the choruses. This mood however, does not last as the bridging passage indicates what the second section holds as it builds up towards the fanfare.

The most apparent similarity between this section and the *dies irae* is found in the blocks of chords sung by the choruses. They are the same chords but appear in reverse order and as the whole section is shorter than that of the *dies irae*, the chord changes are more frequent, also the texts are similar: "Tuba Mirum spargens sonum"[17] and "Tuba Mirum" respectively. Previously, the organ also played these chords while the organ pedal played theme B, but here the organ plays chords comprising the notes of theme A together with the strings. As before, the basses sing the text but here they are amplified and heard in unison with a bass guitar making the line more clearly audible. The non-melodic instruments are replaced by a sosp. cymbal while the xylophone and piano are absent. The clarinet remains and, as before, plays theme C. The trombone and piccolo trumpet sustain long notes not related to any themes.

The children had previously played a silent game of hopscotch in the *dies irae* but here they sing the following:

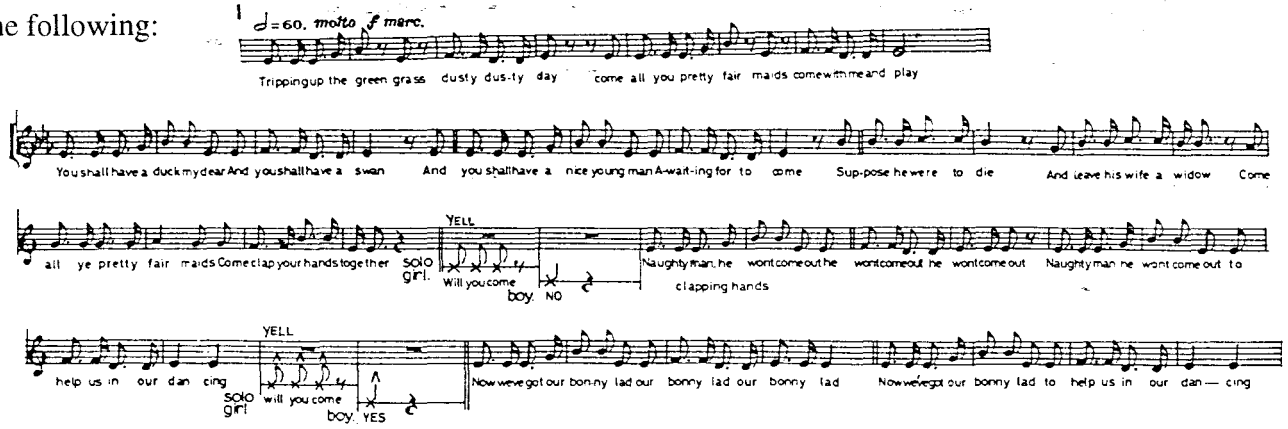


Figure 16 - 'tripping up the green grass'

[17] "Wondrous sound the trumpet flingeth."

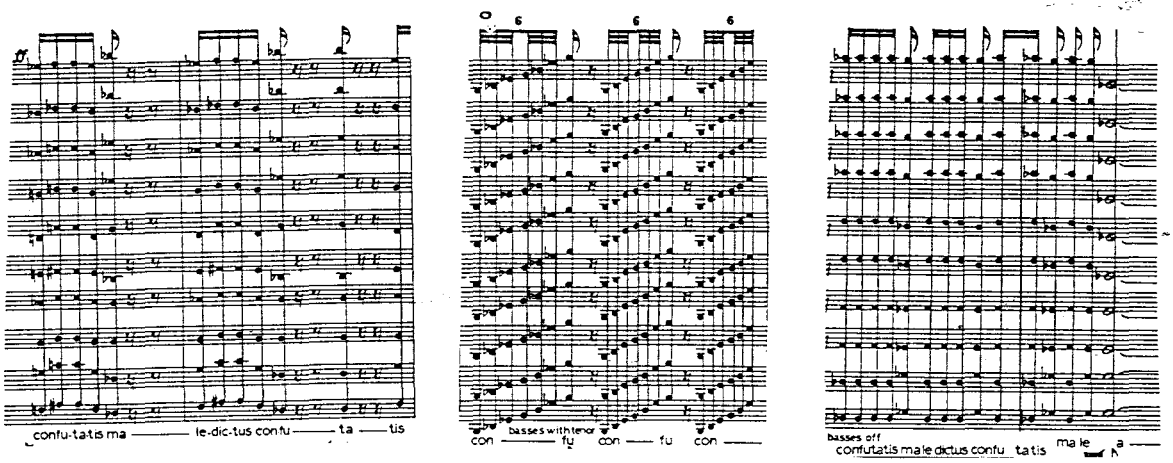
According to Tavener (1971):

> Courtship games also took place at funerals, and children have preserved this rite (in certain parts of Ireland this continues to the present day). In the way that the children enact by pantomime the apparent random nature of gods choosing a victim for the rite of death, so in courtship the girl who has to choose a lover is random.

There is no sense of rhythm in this section of the *lacrymosa* as there was in the *dies irae*, and it also lacks the orientation of a beat that the previous one suggested. The chords, too, are less emphatic and the progression is not easily audible. In this section the choruses make use of the 'dabadaba' as marked in the score but the chords are less distinct and the progression here is in retrograde.

confutatis maledictis

As with the first section of the *lacrymosa*, the score appears more complex than the overall sound effects produced. After their long-held E♭s, each chorus provides two alternating ten-part chords (fig.17A).



A B C

Figure 17 - *confutatis maledictis*

The first chord (marked x) comprises the first six notes of theme A, the second chord (marked y) comprises the last six notes and the fifth chord is E♭ major - this is the pattern for several bars. Once again the rhythm of the text is not adhered to in the music and in fact the words are absurdly broken up mirroring the nonsense rhymes of the children. After about 20 seconds there is a change to arpeggiated chords in E♭ (fig.17B) and a brief climactic point is reached when the chords alternate between B♭7 and E♭ (fig.17C).

Beneath these chord, two tenor soloists sing *Gere curam mei finis*, each with his own, previously unheard melody, both containing various grace notes which are duplicated by the piano. Three sets of tom-toms enter loudly and suddenly playing rhythms against one another.

"The children dance around the 'corpse' of Jenny Jones clapping and whirling 'thunderspells'." Tavener (1993) also describes these as bull-roarers, used to scare away evil spirits: "This, though handed down to children, has its origin in a funeral rite in the lowlands of Scotland." Part of the dance involves chanting: *A dis a dis a dis a green gris,* which becomes "loud and frenzied". At the same time some of the children sing:

You can come in black
That's how you can dress.
Black is for mourning
So black will do.

The words of the children are indistinct because they are simultaneously singing and chanting different texts. After the chords there follows a quieter part where the voices gradually trail off to a murmur and the tom toms, piano and tenors sing and play *sub pp*. The trombone and trumpet sustain an E♭ and E♮ respectively and the maracas start to rattle while two children recite in a truly frightening manner: *Ashes to ashes and dust to dust. If God won't have you the devil must!*

At which point Jenny leaps up and they all cry "THE GHOST!" "The rock resurrection of Jenny Jones...serves as an outlet of escape from the claustrophobic atmosphere of death and mourning" (Tavener, 1993). To conclude the second movement there is a brief echo of the *lacrymosa*, although here the note values are longer causing the passage to move more slowly. The part of the children is more subdued here so the "echo" sounds more gentle.

III REQUIESCAT IN PACE ('rest in peace')

The third movement is continuous and marginally shorter than the other two. As in the first movement the three responses to death (children, adults and church) are once again evident. It begins with "bell-like intoning from the adult choir" (Haydon 80), here all three choruses (without the basses) combine to sing repeated E♭s in unison with the hand bells:

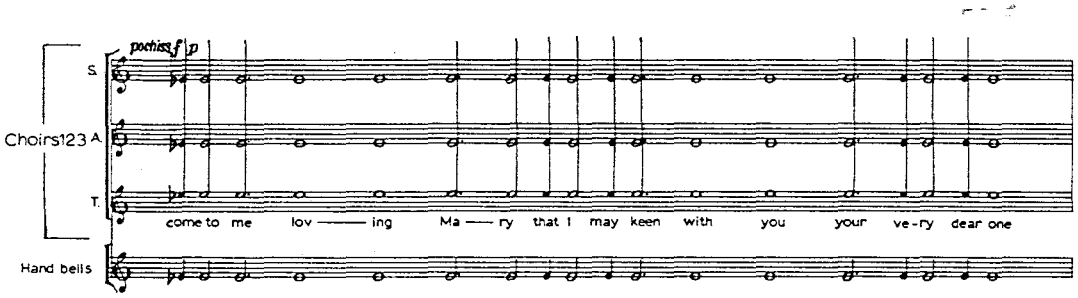


Figure 18 - "bell-like intoning"

When this line is repeated the children enter with the well known verse "Mary had a little Lamb", sung of course in E♭. The words that the choruses sing imply a link with the Keen from the first movement but instead of spoken monotone by three men, are now sung in a monotone by three voice parts. Following this, the three choruses separate and sing the hymn "Lead kindly Light" by Cardinal Newman, the second chorus at half and the third chorus at a quarter of the speed (fig.19). The strings are divided into three groups, each playing in unison with their respective chorus. Each ensemble also has a gong and talking drums[18] which play various rhythms.

> The idea of using this hymn, which I love more than any other, must have had its origin in the memorial service for Mahatma Gandhi. Indian classical music was being played, and magically this music terminated as "Lead, kindly light" started, sung by the choir at the other end of the Cathedral. It was deeply moving, not only because of the juxtaposition, but also because of the innate dignity of the music just heard. (Tavener,1971).

[18] "In general any drum that is beaten in such a way that certain features of an unvocalized text can be recognized by a listener." p540 Groves vol. 18 1980.

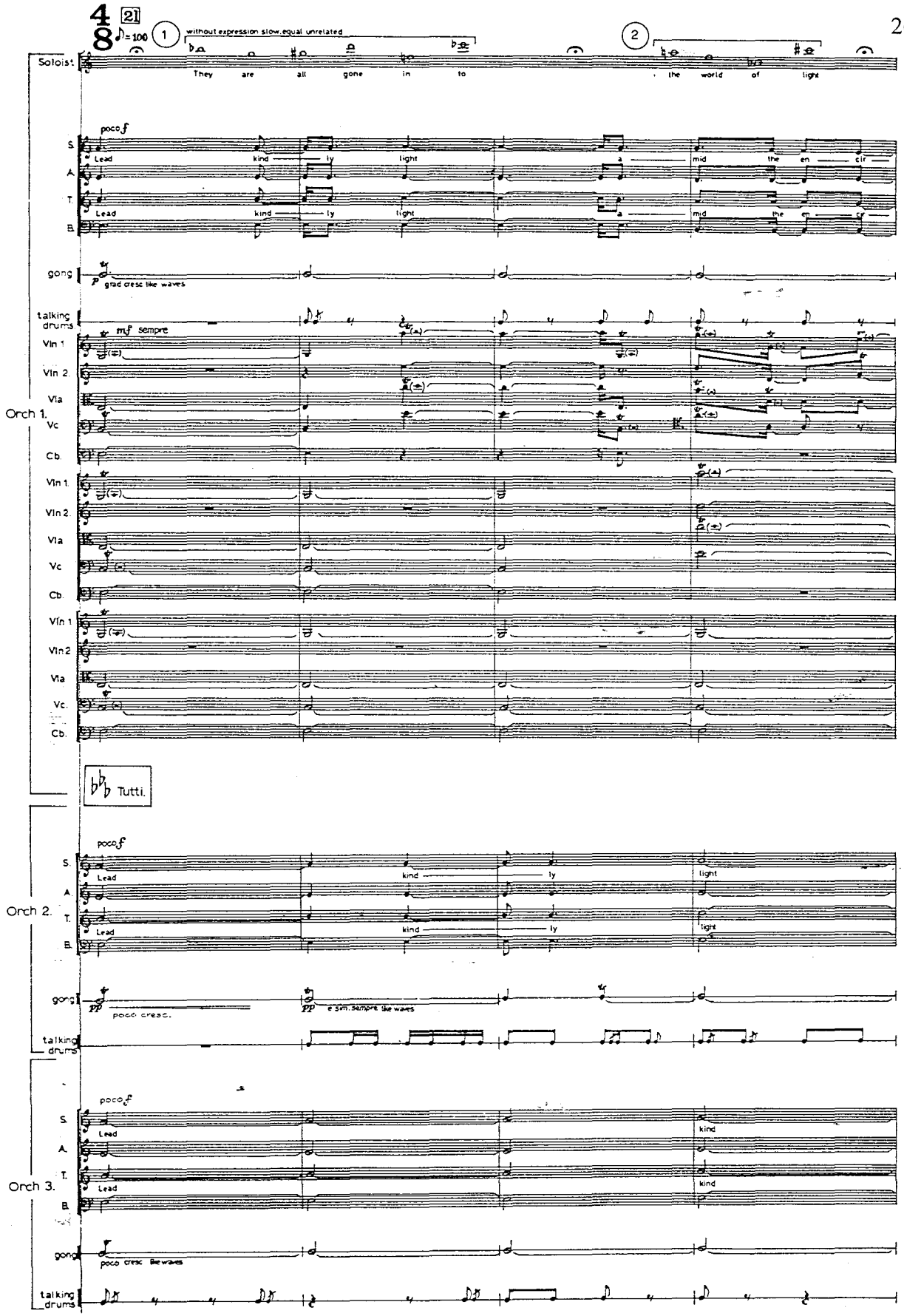


Figure 19 - "Lead Kindly Light"

The three different speeds of the hymn create interesting harmonies and although there are at times some dissonances, the fact that the hymn is tonal, and uses simple diatonic chords, creates a pleasing sense of calm which has been entirely lacking thus far. The solo soprano takes on the same importance as in the first movement, now singing a poem by Henry Vaughan which is set to atonal melodic fragments comprised entirely of semibreves marked 'without expression, slow, equal, unrelated'. The notes are disjointed and her melodic fragments, ranging from two to seven notes, neither relate to one another nor to the phrases of the poem. However, they are connected to the solo passage which the soprano sang in the *dies irae* - the poem by Blathmac. Both poems comprise three verses and the melodic lines from the Blathmac have been broken up and reassembled as if in a collage for the poem by Vaughan.[19] The children sing various rhymes including a distorted version of "Mary had a little lamb" which is in stark contrast to the mood of the hymn.

> ...the children sing their own parody of "Mary had a little lamb...her father shot it dead", and they begin to dismember a toy lamb as "Mary sits a-weeping" in the centre of a ring. The children then put the lamb together again as all the forces gradually converge on the chord of E flat, and giant toy tops in E flat are started (Tavener, 1993).

These converging forces include the organ which enters half way through the third and final verse of the Vaughan poem. It begins by playing *ffff* nine-part E♭ chords - there are four of these, each longer than the previous. In the next four bars, leading up to figure 28, Tavener employs a 'full manual cluster' and 'max pedal cluster' in each bar - again each is longer than the previous one. All sound, except for the three choruses, stops at figure 28 after which the hymn concludes with staggered endings followed by sustained E♭s and Gs.

At this point the sopranos from orchestra 1 and 2 enter as well as bells, drums and gongs, trombone and trumpet. These parts rise and fall in volume several times independently of one another giving a sinister feeling of swelling back and forth. Towards the end the ghost of Jenny Jones sings three malevolent sounding lines, "*I am the ghost of Jenny Jones - Mary I'm in your one step - Mary I'm in your two step*" (fig.20), and at the same time humming tops are

---

[19] It is not always easy to tell where these fragments appear in the poem by Blathmac as they are rather jumbled.

introduced, according to Haydon (1995,80) four giant tops in E♭ were used in the premiere. "Humming tops were used in primitive Christian practice on Easter morning to proclaim the risen Christ" (Tavener, 1993).

The work ends forcefully with all the vocal and instrumental lines becoming both louder and faster so that the work ends *ffff*. At the same time the children conclude by repeating the chant heard at the beginning: *We've come to see poor Jenny Jones - is Jenny Jones at home?*
Jenny Jones is dead is dead - you can't see her now!

and in this way the games can begin over again. Tavener has said that "[T]he final section... contains much symbolism. Briefly it is a prayer to the Blessed Virgin put into the mouth of a mourner".

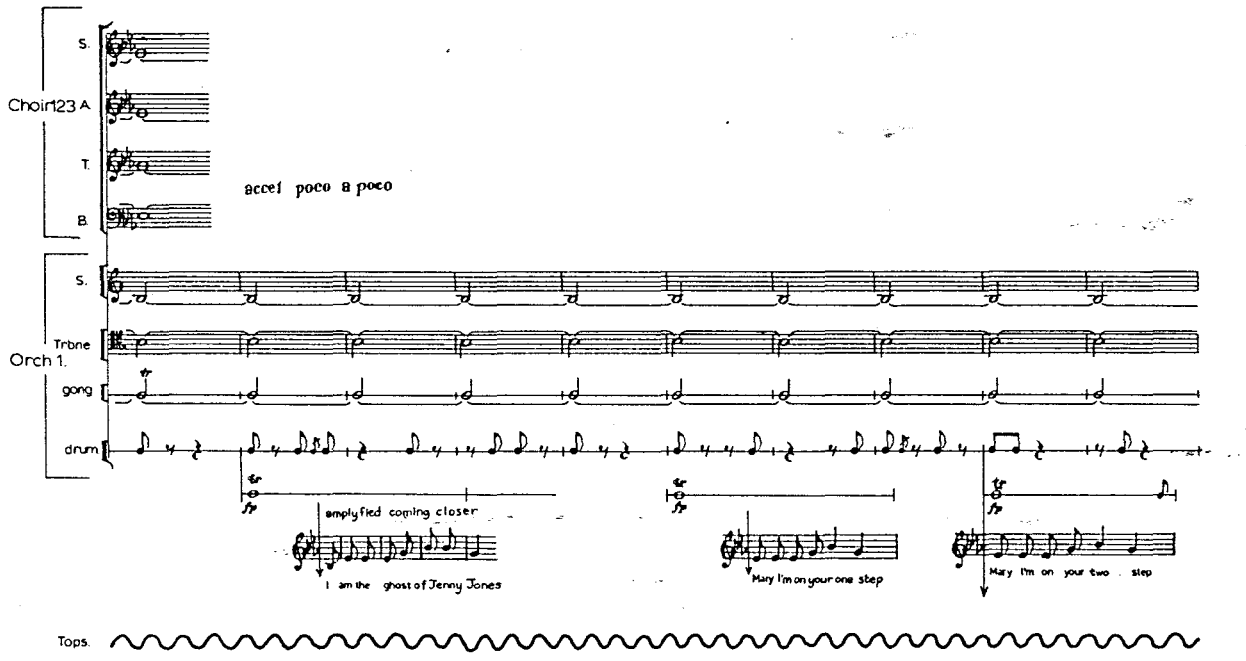


Figure 20 - the ghost of Jenny Jones

It is evident from Haydon's biography in which he recounts the premiere performance of the *Celtic Requiem*, that not being able to see the children act out their games is a distinct disadvantage. Listening to the music alone one is likely to conjure up images that are at times macabre, menacing and even frightening, however it is unlikely that this is Tavener's intention. The children's games are the most important part of the work (see pages two and three) and should be seen in "context within the framework of sections of the mass. For instance during the *confutatis maledictis* (when the wicked are confounded) the children dance around with bull

roarers which are intended to scare away evil spirits[20]; the game of hopscotch - representing the passage through life to death occurs in the *dies irae*; "Poor Mary what are you weeping for on a bright summer's day?" represents a courtship game which occurs in the echo of the *lacrymosa* at the end of the second movement; and the humming tops appearing at the end used to proclaim the risen Christ.

The work is dedicated to Jean Andersson whom Tavener met before she became a nun. She encouraged Tavener's interest in the Catholic Church and introduced him to the poetry of the 16th Century Spanish mystic, San Juan del la Cruz. Resulting works include *Nomine Jesu* (two verses from "Dark Night"); *Coplas* ("Verses written on an ecstasy"); *Ultimos Ritos* (consisting of the works *Coplas* and *Nomine Jesu* and verses from "Lyrics concerning Christ and the soul" and "Song of the soul that rejoices in knowing God through faith"); and Thérèse (inspired by teachings of St John of the Cross). It is typical of Tavener to compile a text from more than one source, as he has done here.

Essential to the ethos of this and subsequent works is the use of texts borrowed from the past and traditional forms such the Requiem Mass here,[21] in order that Tavener can realise his commitment to the "non-romantic continuation of tradition" (Crowthers, 1994:12). Tavener tries to be "objective and traditional" and for him the *Celtic Requiem* is a landmark as it was "the first of his compositions to draw on what he calls primordial material" (Haydon, 1995:81). The sense of ritual and use of symbolism are also characteristic features of much of his music. Many of his works are of a grave nature and the subject of death has inspired some of his greatest compositions.

Characteristic features of the style of writing in the post-1977 works which occur in the *Requiem* are the favouring of high voices and preference for brass over woodwind; the layering of lines - ie writing horizontally rather than vertically; and the use of expansive harmonic blocks or fields rather than rapid progressions.

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[20] Bullroarers: "An instrument made from a spatulate piece of wood tied to a string which is knotted into a hole close to one end. To produce sounds the player whirls the blade through the air, holding it by the free end of the string." Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,1980: vol 3:451.

[21] After 1977 the forms are taken from the Orthodox Liturgical tradition .

The early period was one of experimentation and the *Celtic Requiem* could never have been written at any other time. The greatest contrast between works such as this and those written after 1977, is the degree of complexity. In the former the textures are often very dense while in the latter Tavener uses fewer themes and instruments resulting in the simpler and clearer presentation of ideas. In an interview in 1994, Tavener said:

> The second nearest piece to my work today is probably the *Celtic Requiem* [the first being the *Three Holy Sonnets of John Donne*], although it is much more complicated, complicated in the bad sense that sacred tradition abhors intellectual complexity (Crowthers, 1994:12).

The premiere received a "huge ovation" (Haydon, 1995:81) and the work was performed four times within the next five years including a TV adaptation in July 1973 by Granada Television. (Other performances:-1972: Promenade Concert - Royal Albert Hall; 1973: Winchester Cathedral and 1974: Holland Festival.)

1.2 NOMINE JESU

Nomine Jesu was composed in 1970 as the result of a commission by the Dartington Summer School of Music where it received its first public performance on August 14 1970. Four months previously, on April 2, the work appeared in rehearsal form in a BBC Television series and was recorded early the following year on the Apple label along with *Celtic Requiem* and *Coplas*.[22]

Allthough Tavener was at this time choirmaster at St John's Presbyterian Church, and would continue to be for another five years, he was beginning to express a fascination with the rites of the Roman Catholic Church - bolstered by his friendship with Jean Andersson. Having been introduced to the writings of St Juan de la Cruz by Miss Andersson, Tavener was inspired to set to music two verses of "Dark Nights" (translated below) which is about "the soul that rejoices on reaching the height of perfection, which is in union with God" (Haydon, 1995:91).

Over the ramparts fanned
While the fresh wind was fluttering his tresses,
With his serenest hand
My neck he wounded, and
Suspended every sense with its caresses.

Lost to myself I stayed
My face upon my lover having laid
From all endeavour ceasing:
And all my cares releasing
Threw them amongst the lilies there to fade.

In typical Tavener fashion, the text arises from more than one source and aside from the poetry, *Nomine Jesu* also includes Biblical passages, however the essence of the work lies in the name "Jesus" - hence the title - and the single chord of A^{11}.

The work is scored for mezzo soprano, two alto flutes, organ (with two players on four manuals), five male speaking voices and chorus - which is divided into two, each having seven voice parts.[23] The three sections use neither bar lines nor any tempo indications, but instead segments are either measured in terms of seconds or are determined by the length of spoken parts. The entire work lasts for eleven and a half minutes.

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[22] Digitally remastered in January 1993.

[23] i.e. 2 sopranos, 1 alto, 2 tenors and two basses.

Section One (2'00)

Haydon describes the A^{11} chord on which the work is based (fig.21), as creating "an aching sense of unfulfilment... dying to resolve onto the chord of D". He goes on to say that Tavener "has intensified the chord of A ninth which opens Stephen Foster's romantic ballad 'I dream of Jeannie with the light brown hair'" (1995:91).

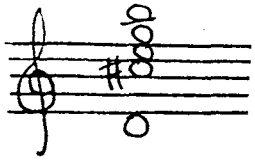


Figure 21 - A^{11}

This is an indirect reference to Jean Andersson but also Tavener had probably heard Stockhausen's "*Stimmung*", a choral work composed two years prior to *Nomine Jesu* which dwells for 75 minutes on the single ninth chord of B♭.[24] The intensified chord of *Nomine Jesu* is sustained throughout the first section by the two overlapping choral parts so that breathing is possible without interrupting the sustained sound (fig.22). The chord is marked in the score "Still and Sacred" and the chorus is directed to sing without vibrato, creating a wonderfully warm, serene effect. It almost seems to give the feeling of looking up to Heaven. The fact that this feeling is sustained throughout this section suggests a state of mind, as if in prayer; indeed for Tavener, composing and performing music are regarded as acts of worship.

The repeated A^{11} chords are sung to the name 'Jesus' in five European languages in a palindromic pattern.[25] Tavener believes that the name 'Jesus' "has a magic power when called out and sung" (1971) and according to Andy Davis (1993) the appearance of the name of Christ being spoken and sung in various languages "ow[es] much to a Hindu Tradition of exalting sacred names".

---

[24] Tavener was certainly thinking of this work several years later in 1984 when he composed "*The Orthodox Vigil Service*" in which he used the actual $B♭^9$ chord found in Stockhausen's work.

[25] English, Spanish, Latin, German, French - French, German, Latin, Spanish, English.

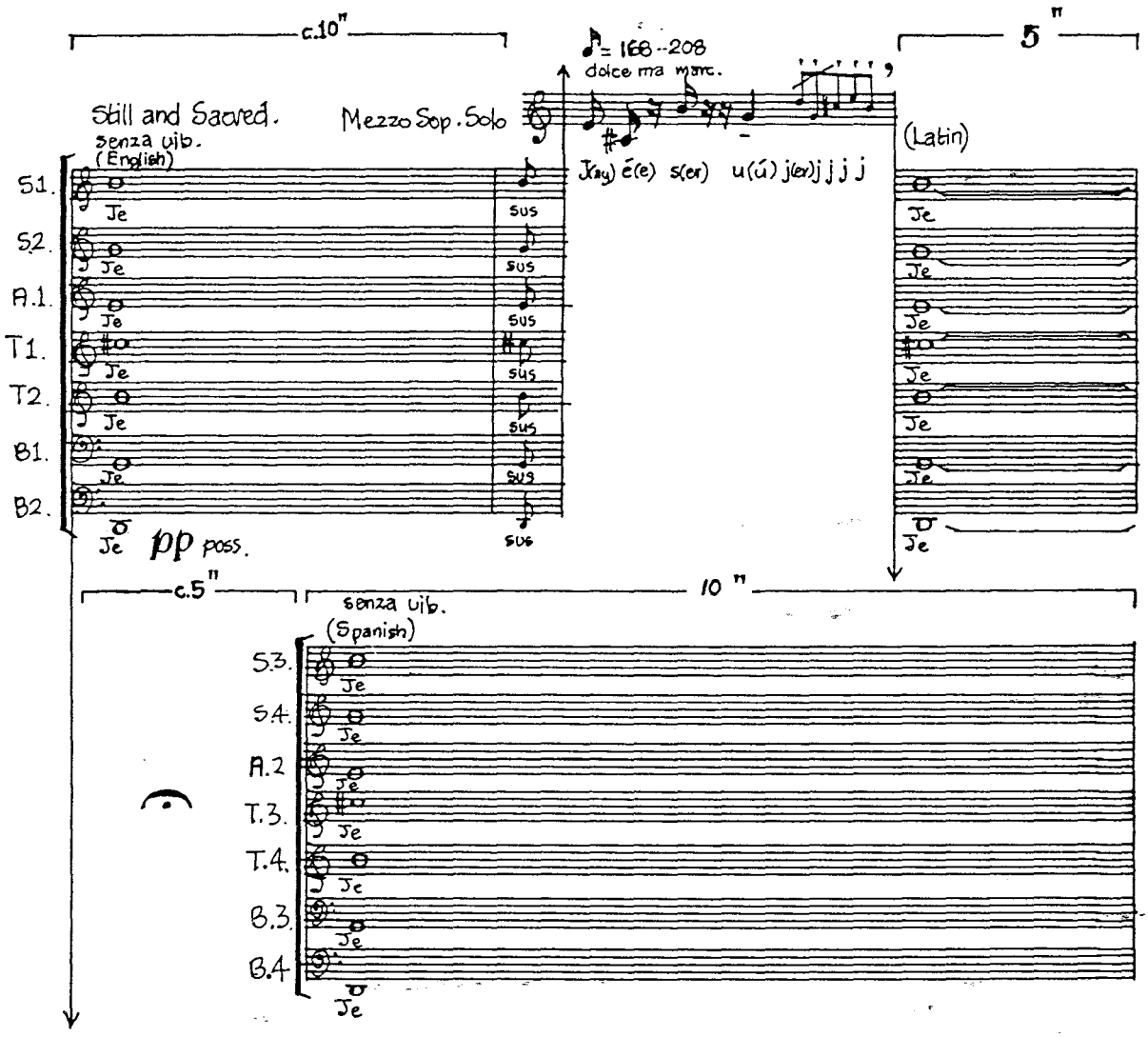


Figure 22 - overlapping choruses

The end of each choral statement is the cue for one of five melodic fragments provided in turn by the soloists (fig.23).

1 mezzo soprano

2 organ

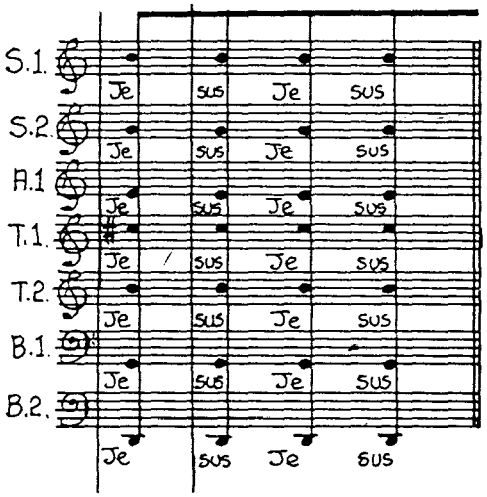
3 flute

4 flute

5 organ

Figure 23 - solo fragments

Again the order of the fragments forms a palindrome (ie 1-5-5-1). There does not appear to be any pattern to these fragments, however they are atonal, equal in length and between them seem to make equal use of all 12 notes.[26]



The second section, which overlaps slightly with the first, comprises 10 cycles during which four elements recur:

i) The first chorus repeats the chord at one-second intervals, continuing to sing the name Jesus in the five European languages (fig.24).

Figure 24 - chorus 1

[26] The mezzo soprano's fragment actually comprises all seven notes of the A^{11} chord.

ii) The five melodic fragments of Section One are now available to each of the soloists and in a single cycle each of the four instrumental parts play through the five phrases each time in a different order[27] (fig.25). This layout of the fragments within each cycle resembles change-ringing of bells where the order is constantly varied. The organists are permitted to interrupt the cycle with the intensified chord varying in registration and dynamics:

> The playing of the chord by one player should provoke a rhythmic response from the other. The chords should become more frequent as the cycles progress, until in the last two cycles each player may play it as many as 15 times (Tavener, 1971:7).

This process reveals an element of spontaneity in a work that is otherwise highly structured

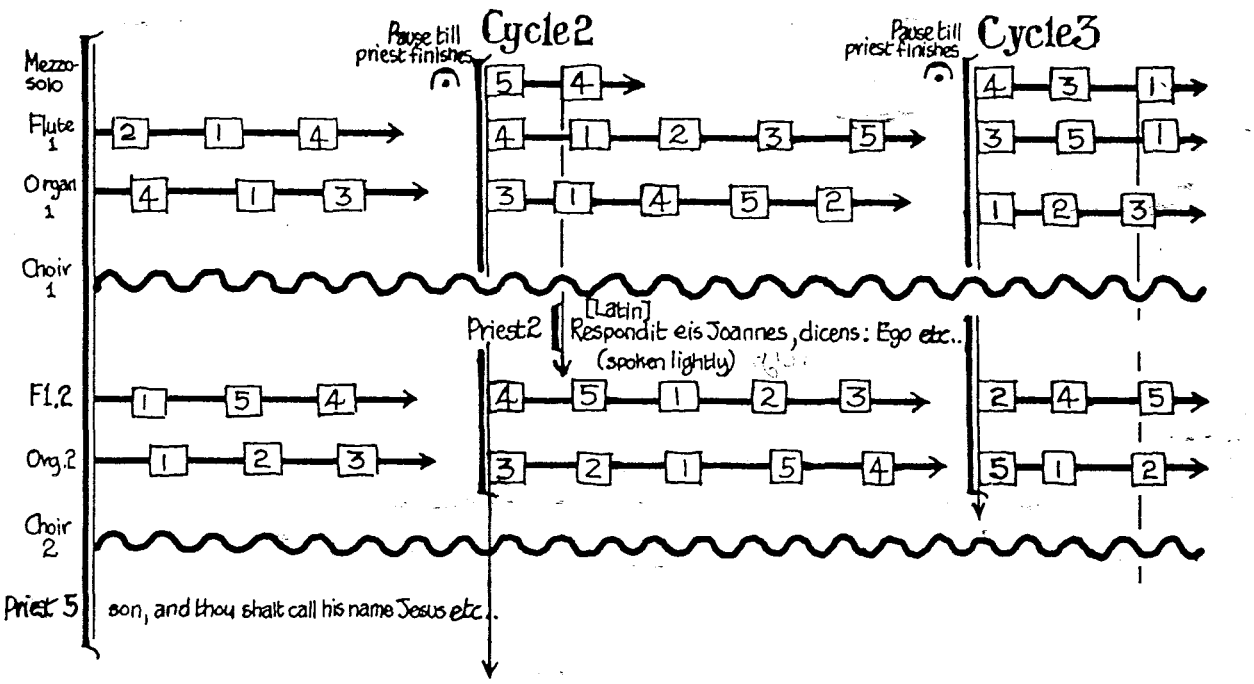


Figure 25 - cycles of section two

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[27] The mezzo soprano sings only one of the fragments in the first cycle, two in the second, three in the third and eventually reaching five in the fifth and then working backwards through the sixth to tenth cycles.

iii) The five male speaking parts, labelled "priests", comprise ten different Gospel readings - one for each of the cycles in palindromic order of the five languages.[28] These readings occur at the end of the mezzo soprano fragments and provide a feeling of progression or forward movement above the rather aimless, repetitive cycles.

iv) The fourth element, presented by chorus two, is heard at the end of each Bible reading. They call out the name Jesus in various African and Asian languages, varying the order each time.[29] After the final cycle there is a period where all the names seem to be spoken at random by anyone which Haydon (1995:91) describes as "a climax with a wild outburst of speaking-in-tongues". This is followed by about ten seconds of silence before the start of the third section in order to allow the frenzy to dissipate.

Section Three (3'06)

Here the two choruses revert back to their roles from the first section singing the A^{11} chord with the languages appearing in the same order. However in this section there is only one solo part, that of the mezzo soprano who sings continuously in new, longer phrases the two verses from "Dark Night" by San Juan (fig.26). This part has an even, flowing rhythm. There is no particular melodic pattern here although there are some phrases of a palindromic nature. Haydon (1995:92) describes this final section as "slow and tender, with a soulful melodic line for the mezzo soprano".

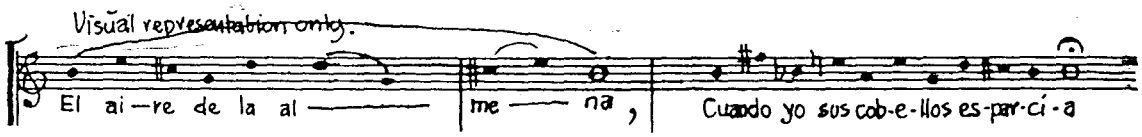

Figure 26 - Mezzo solo

[28] English, Latin, French, German, Spanish - Spanish, German, French, Latin English.

[29] Note in the 1993 recording they start with one name in the first cycle, and add another with each successive one and they do not vary the order as directed in the score.

Towards the end of the work the choral parts diminish or "evaporate" (Tavener 1971) until only three elements remain, namely soprano, tenor and the mezzo soprano, all of whom sing note B. Above this, the five 'priests' conclude *Nomine Jesu* by saying the same line simultaneously in their respective languages: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever". This is an apt conclusion in which the various languages are united by the same belief.

Nomine Jesu was used as the central movement in its companion piece *Coplas*, another work inspired by the poetry of San Juan de la Cruz and composed in the same year. *Coplas* was in turn used as the last of five movements in the monumental work *Ultimos Ritos* (Last Rites) of 1972, which "is based on the mystical concept of St John of the Cross 'the more I live, the more I die'"

It is interesting to note that both *Nomine Jesu* and *Celtic Requiem* are based on single chords.

> [This was] considered unusual enough in 1969. Additionally, the unspoken musical politics of the mainstream contemporary scene at the time hardly recognized major and minor chords as valid compositional elements. So not only did Tavener go out on a limb in basing *Celtic Requiem* on just one chord, but in a major he chose the runt of the litter. Historically it was all extremely daring (Davis, 1971).

But Tavener has never tried to be deliberately daring in order to get a response from the critics. Everything he does is carefully thought out and deeply personal. As he says

> I go for months without composing a note... I cannot reconcile the idea of a profession and that of a composer. I have no sympathy with the puritanical concept of work for its own sake (Haydon,1995: 92).

Although *Nomine Jesu* is only eight minutes in length it is "intensely devotional" (Haydon, 1995:91) and contains several characteristic features of both Tavener's stylistic periods, namely:

i) the use of a high solo voice - although Tavener uses a mezzo soprano here (as opposed to the high soprano in *Celtic Requiem*) the part still has a wide compass (b - f♯``),

ii) the choruses, are subdivided to create fairly dense chords and in this case the sustained chord has seven parts,

iii) compositions are not restricted to the English language and most of his works involve at least one other language. In *Nomine Jesu* he deliberately uses many languages in a most effective manner,

iv) the solo passages (in sections one and two) are rhythmically irregular and do not convey any discernable beat or rhythmic pattern thereby creating a sense of timelessness,

v) instruments and voices are superimposed to create interesting textures and sounds. He tends to compose horizontally rather than vertically thus creating more dissonant harmonies when the effect is required,

vi) the frequent use of palindromes and

vii) long-sustained fields of sound adding to the stylized nature of much of Tavener's music.

Tavener's early works are stylistically far more varied than the later ones and yet his fascination for religion has been evident from the outset. He looks back on those works as mystical (Ford,1993:94), suggesting a spirituality which did not find its feet, so to speak, until his conversion to the Orthodox faith in 1977, and since that time the greatest influence on his music has been ikon painting.

1977 - 1997

CHAPTER TWO - IKON IN SOUND

The past 20 years have seen the emergence of Tavener's second stylistic period resulting from his conversion to the Russian Orthodox faith in 1977. These works continue the sacred tradition with which Tavener has always associated himself but now reflect very clearly the influence of Byzantine music and ikons. Despite there being a great deal of variety from one piece to the next, there are several features which are peculiar to these works and should therefore be mentioned collectively.

2.1 - FORMS

As well as being thematically sparse, Tavener's works are formally severe in design having clearly-defined sections. This is especially true of the shorter works.[30] Even in the longer works, which allow greater scope for thematic density, the thematic sections are merely juxtaposed with no bridging or linking passages, resulting in clear cut, well defined structures. Few of the shorter works have more than three themes which reappear from one movement to the next simplifying the formal structure and creating a strong sense of overall unity. The small-scale works reflect three formal structures which depend on the number of themes present. The simplest comprises one recurring theme; two alternating themes create a strophic form; and where there are three or more themes, they are invariably stated in a palindromic form.

i) Monothematic Design

Works such as *Funeral Ikos*, *Hymn for the Dormition of the Mother of God*, *The Uncreated Eros* and *Lament of the Mother of God* are often referred to as anthems or hymns and as such present just one recurring theme, the simplest of formal structures. The *Hymn for the Dormition of the Mother of God* (fig.27) is especially interesting as it employs three times a line which in itself is divided into three similar melodic phrases (varied only to fit the different texts).

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[30] The majority of Tavener's compositions are 'short' lasting under 15 minutes while others stretch to 1½ and even 3 hours in the case of *The Orthodox Vigil Service*.

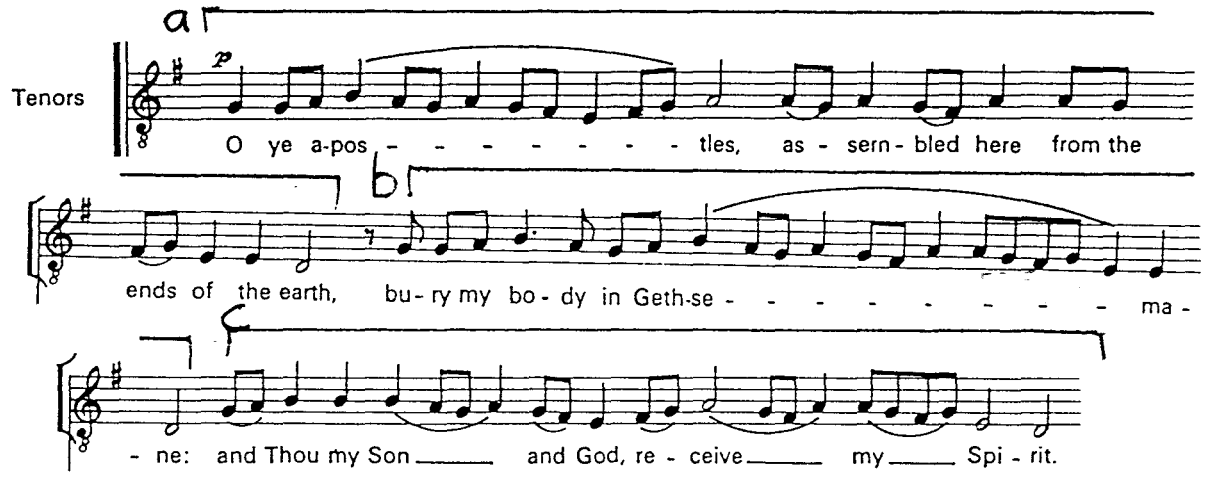

Figure 27 - first of three lines from *Hymn for the Dormition of the Mother of God*

ii) Strophic Form

This is most apparent in works where the second theme always uses the same text (i.e. thereby forming a refrain), for example in *Magnificat*, *Annunciation* (fig.28) and *Today the Virgin*. However there are works with no recurring text such as *Hymns of Paradise* and *Song for Athene*.

How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?	A
Hail! (x5) Thou that art highly favoured.	B
How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?	A
Hail! (x5) The Lord is with thee.	B
How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?	A
Hail! (x5) Blessed art thou among women.	B
How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?	A

Figure 28 - text of *Annunciation*

iii) Palindromic Structure

Tavener discovered the Latin palindrome or 'magic square' in Moldenhauer's chronicle of Webern's life and works:

SATOR AREPO TENET OPERA ROTAS	An English translation might be 'Arepo the sower holds the wheels for his work', but the meaning is not the point. What matters is that the words can be read four ways: both horizontally and vertically, starting either from top left or bottom right" (Haydon, 1995:164).

This had intrigued Webern who sought to construct a tone row that interacted in the same way. In *To a Child Dancing in the Wind*, the first work in which Tavener used a palindrome, he simply

assigned the eight notes of a modal scale to each of the eight letters. However subsequent palindromes (some are original Byzantine melodies) differ in length and are used for formal as well as thematic structures. *Hymn to the Mother of God* and *Nunc Dimittis* are examples of the most basic palindromic form, ABA, more commonly known as ternary form. The extended ABCBA palindrome is evident in *Eonia* (fig.29), *God is with Us* and *Hymn to the Holy Spirit.*[31]

A - Greek	Whether it's dusk or dawn's first light the jasmin stays always white.
B - English	He asked for bread and we gave Him a stone... Do whatsoever He bids you.
C - Slavonic	Lord, have mercy
B - English	Remember me, the thief exclaimed... The house where I was born... This night in Paradise.
A - Greek	Whether it's dusk or dawn's first light the jasmin stays always white.

Figure 29 - text of *Eonia*

What is most striking about Tavener's formal structures is the inherent need to end as he began and naturally the palindrome is best suited to this end, but even in works with two alternating themes he will often end with the first theme rather than the second.[32] This gives much of Tavener's music a static quality. Where there are climaxes, they seldom appear at the end of the work - "Mother Thekla and I are almost incapable of ending on a 'high note'. The text and the music either suggest a question mark, or simply 'I know nothing'" (Tavener, 1994:IX). This resembles very strongly the nature of the ikon, a painting which makes no intellectual demands on the viewer.

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[31] *God is with Us* has a coda-like ending which could be called D but the rest of the work is clearly palindromic.

[32] For example *Annunciation, Hymns of Paradise, Song for Athene, Magnificat* and *Ode of St Andrew of Crete.*

2.2 - THEMATIC DEVELOPMENT

Since formal variety is limited, thematic development is necessary in order to maintain the listener's interest. Aside from the necessary adaptations of a melodic line in order to accomodate different texts, Tavener achieves true thematic variety in several ways:

i) Changing the scoring

This in itself presents several possibilities. In *Funeral Ikos* for instance, there are six statements of the same theme with three different scorings: low voices, high voices and full choir; whereas the scoring may also be varied by the addition of secondary parts at a third, fifth or both as in *The Uncreated Eros* where the third and fourth statements of the theme are arranged in parallel triads.

ii) Using contrary motion

This is a prevalent feature of Tavener's music creating a symmetry and neatness characteristic of the ikon, but also hinting at the underlying need for circularity discussed in 3.1 - "in my beginning is my end" (Crowthers 94). In the second verse of *Hymn for the Dormition of the Mother of God*, the original line is sung by the sopranos, to which Tavener adds two lines, one in contrary motion by the basses and a second line in similar motion by the altos a fourth lower (fig.30).

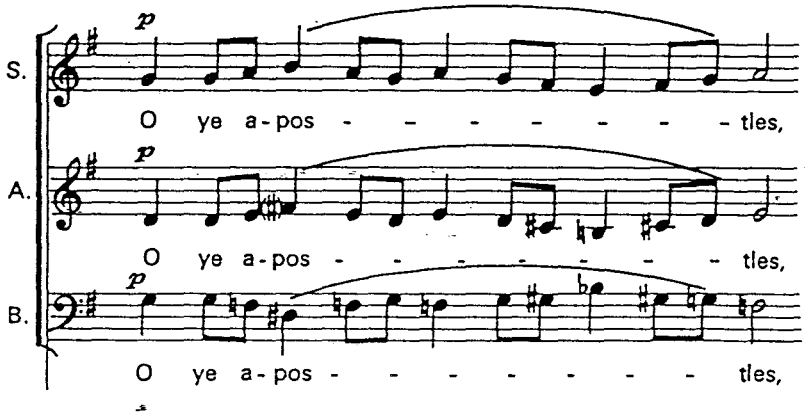

Figure 30 - *Hymn for the Dormition of the Mother of God*

iii) Transposition

Rather than shifting an entire melodic line up or down an interval, Tavener alters just one or two notes in order to effect a modal change, thereby allowing the tonal centre to remain static throughout the work. An example of such a piece is *The Uncreated Eros* which has two

alternating modal variations of the theme (fig.31).

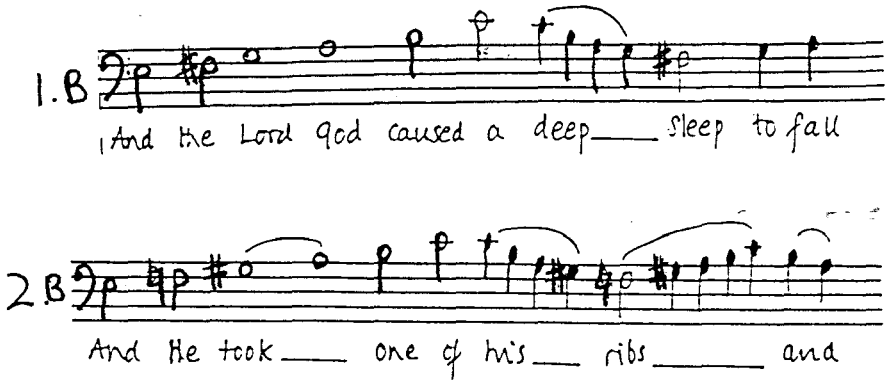

Figure 31 - *The Uncreated Eros*

iv) Staggered entries

Tavener achieves glorious note clusters by overlaying a theme with its echo, as in the third and fourth statements of *The Uncreated Eros* where parallel triads create rich dissonances (fig.32). This is indicative of Tavener's way of writing horizontally rather than vertically and building harmonies from a single line.

Figure 32 - *The Uncreated Eros*

2.3 - ISONS

A fundamental element of Byzantine, and indeed much of Eastern music in general, is the drone - referred to as an ison in Byzantine musicology:

> The Ison occupies a special position. It is considered the most important sign because, in Byzantine Church music as in Gregorian Chant, the repetition of the *tenor*, the tone of recitation, plays an important part in the structure of the melodies. It is the most humble sign, because it is the beginning and the foundation not merely of the notation but of the melody itself. For the Ison is, in fact, the opening of the mouth in order to sing a melody... It is therefore the beginning of all song, but it is also the end, because all songs close with the Ison (Wellesz, 1961:290).

Tavener acknowledges the importance of the ison, which represents timelessness and the eternal, by using it in the majority of his latter-period works.[33] In the following quotation he refers to the role of the ison in *Mary of Egypt* but his words are equally pertinent to his other works:

> It's a kind of eternity note reminding us that whatever's happening in the piece the divine presence is always there. It's a device used in Indian music, it's a device used in Byzantine music and quite dramatically at certain points it sometimes isn't there (Stewart, 1993).

The authentic ison is a low drone sustained beneath the melodic line, but Tavener seldom uses it in its traditional state and because of the sectional nature of his music, one is likely to hear more than one kind of ison in a single work, which creates variety and interest where the lack of harmonic progression might be considered dull.[34] However Tavener presents the ison, it still maintains its significance.

Tavener comes closest to authenticity with the single-note ison, but even here one finds variety. In *Eonia* it is sung by the sopranos beneath a very simple melodic line (fig.33), but in *Magnificat* the ison, which is always A, is scored for different combinations of voices from verse to verse.[35]

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[33] Of the works studied here, only four have no ison: *Funeral Ikos, Ode of St Andrew of Crete, The Lamb* and *Hymn to the Mother of God.*

[34] One work which uses a continuous ison throughout is *Song For Athene.*

[35] 1- AA; 2- SABB; 3- SA; 4- AA; 5- SA.

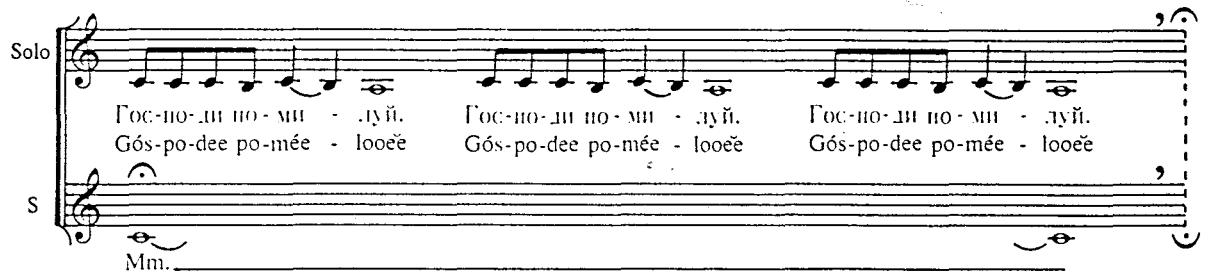

Figure 33 - middle line of *Eonia*

More often, Tavener employs an ison of two or more notes, generally including a fifth as in *The Uncreated Eros* and *Hymn for the Dormition of the Mother of God.* The ison in the former is somewhat unusual in that it is the first sound that one hears, a slowly-rising three part drone (E-B-E) - fig.34. This is one of the few examples of Tavener's works where one ison is used for the duration of the composition and as such it heightens the extreme formality and solemnity of the work, the tonal centre never shifts and there is in fact little variation in the work as a whole, depicting once again the static quality of Tavener's music.

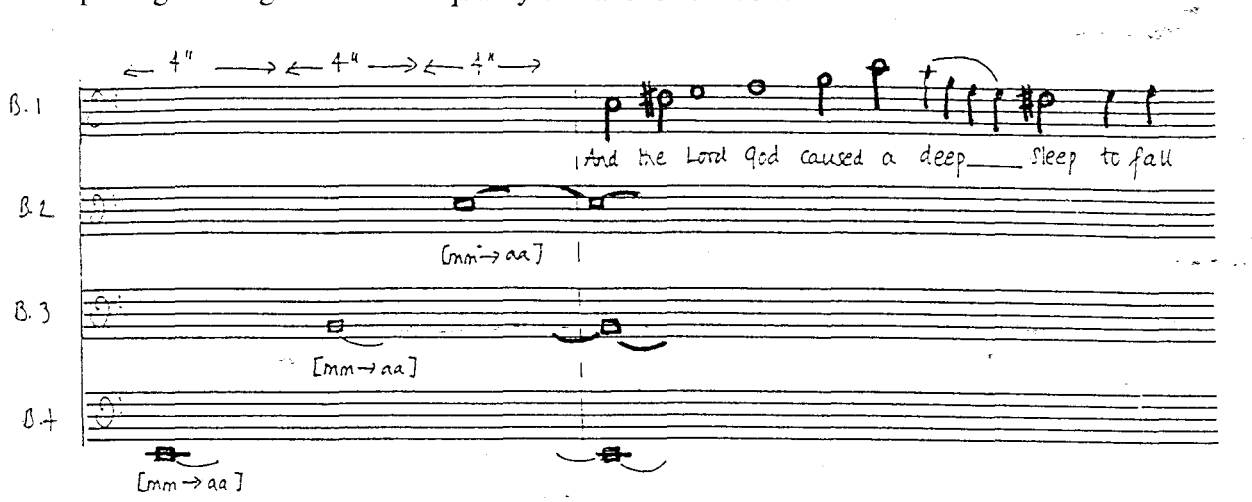

Figure 34 - beginning of *The Uncreated Eros*

Triadic drones focus the tonality more clearly as in the following example from *Hymn for the Dormition of the Mother of God*:

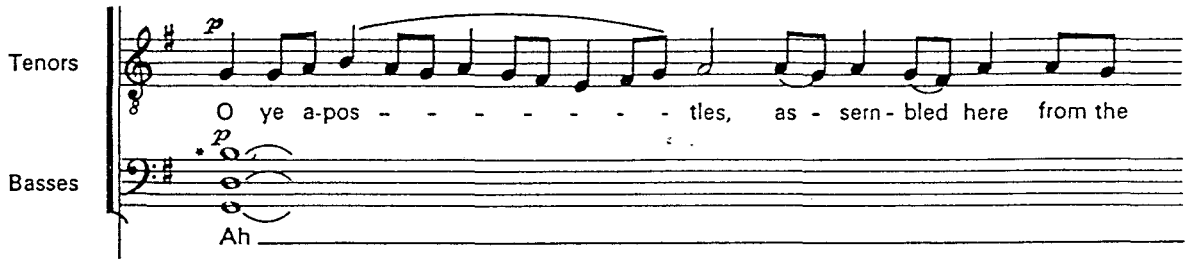

Figure 35 - beginning of *Hymn for the Dormition of the Mother of God*

Isons of more than three notes range from the G^9 chord of *Eonia* (Tavener calls this the joy-sorrow chord which he uses in several works although this is the only instance where it appears as an ison[36]) to the more complex note clusters found in large-scale works such as *We Shall See Him As He Is* seen in the example below:

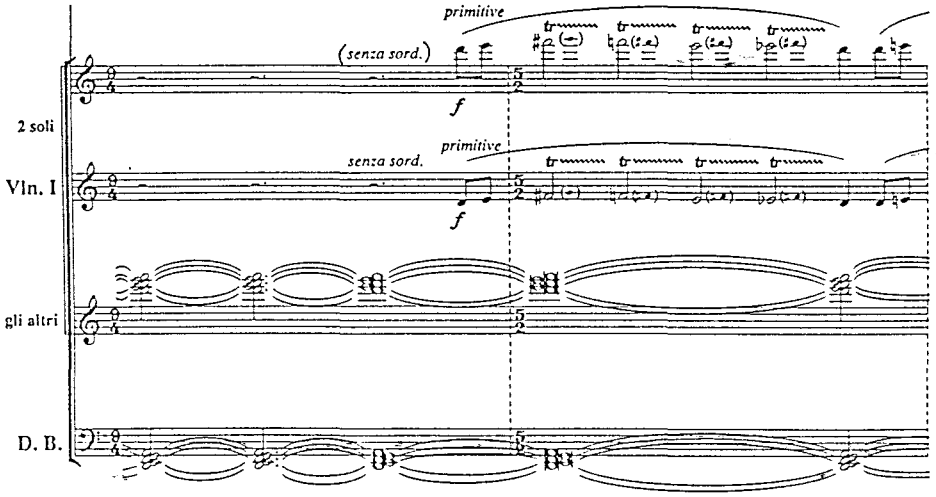

Figure 36 - cluster drone

The more adventurous side of Tavener is revealed in those isons which move, allowing the tonal centre to shift and at times even effect a harmonic progression of sorts. This happens in The *Lament of the Mother of God* where the eight verses rise through the aeolian mode. Similarly in the *Akathist* the isons rise by step through the 11 sections.[37] These are sectional changes in

[36] Other works are *Funeral Ikos*, *The Lamb*, *Ikon of Light*, Resur*rection* and *Village Wedding*.

[37] Except between movements seven and eight where the ison jumps by a fourth.

tonality which is of course possible in long works. However there are numerous instances where the ison shifts within a far smaller time scale. In the fourth line of *Eonia*, which lasts for just 45 seconds, the tonality remains centred around C but the ison shifts from minor to major and back again. This also occurs several times in *We Shall See Him As He Is* but the ison moves further away from the tonal centre, for instance the first time where this occurs, the tonal centre is D but the ison moves from D - C - D - A - G - D - C - D.

A particularly beautiful example of a moving ison is heard in the first and last lines of *Nunc Dimittis*, where there is a subtle progression from D major to the relative minor, B (fig.37). The ison grows out of the melodic line, ie certain notes from the melody are sustained to become part of the drone:

Figure 37 - moving ison

There are several works, and passages within works, where Tavener omits any form of drone. *The Lamb* and *Hymn to the Mother of God* are examples of works with no isons at all. In the *Hymn* there are two choirs, each singing in parallel triads and in canon so the texture is thick and the presence of a drone might detract from the overlapping harmonies.[38] Another occasion in which Tavener is less likely to use an ison, is in passages of inverted or contrary motion lines, such as in the second line of *Hymn for the Dormition of the Mother of God* (see fig.30).

On a more practical level, isons function in focussing the tonality and providing harmonic stability beneath melodies which are at times dramatic and may not be restricted to any one mode. They also create a continuous background of sound in works which seldom have any instrumental accompaniment.

2.4 - TEXTS

> Tavener's music has a strong seriousness of purpose. It rarely lacks a genuine moral commitment. He finds it uninteresting to compose music that does not attempt to deal with the basic experiences of life. For this reason, Tavener feels that purely instrumental music is unsuitable for his purposes. Its range of suggestion is too limited. He needs a text to act as a vessel for the philosophic and religious ideas he wishes to portray (Bray,1975:156/157).

In Tavener's view, the text is without a doubt as important as the music and since his conversion to Orthodoxy, he has devoted much of his time to setting to music complete or partial liturgical texts:

Liturgy of St John Chrysostom - one of three versions of the Orthodox Liturgy
Ode of St Andrew of Crete - a setting of the first of nine odes of the "Great Canon" by St Andrew of Crete, an eighth century liturgical poem translated by Mother Thekla
Prayer for the World - an Orthodox prayer
Funeral Ikos - from the Orthodox Burial Service for Priests
Orthodox Vigil Service - a complete setting of this liturgy
Hymn to the Mother of God - from the Liturgy of St Basil, another version of the Orthodox liturgy
Hymn for the Dormition of the Mother of God - from the Vigil Service of the same name.
Panikhida - first ever setting in English of the memorial service of the Orthodox Church
Akathist of Thanksgiving - a version of the Orthodox hymn of thanksgiving by Archpriest Gregory Petrov (written in 1940 and translated by Mother Thekla)
God is With Us - adapted from the Office of Grand Compline for Christmas Eve

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[38] Other works which contain passages where parallel triads prevent the use of drones are: *Nunc Dimittis* (middle part); the refrain of the *Magnificat*; the outer lines of *Hymn to the Mother of God*; refrain of *Ode of St Andrew of Crete*; and the outer lines of *God is With Us*.

Hymn to the Holy Spirit - from various Orthodox services pertaining to the Holy Spirit
Magnificat and *Nunc Dimittis*.

However Tavener found that writing exclusively for the liturgy meant too little exposure for his works so other sources for texts include the Bible:

The Uncreated Eros - from Genesis
Psalm 121
We Shall See Him As He Is - adapted from the writings of St John by Mother Thekla
The Apocalypse - adapted from the book of revelations by Mother Thekla
Annunciation - from St Luke's Gospel,

writings by various saints:

Towards the Son - from the British Saint Gildas the wise
Thunder Entered Her - Nativity Hymn No 11 by St Ephrem the Syrian
Hymns of Paradise - by St Ephrem

and poetry:

The Lamb - William Blake
Sixteen Haiku of Seferis - George Seferis (died in 1971)
Eis Thanaton - "Ode to Death" - Andreas Kalvos
Love Bade Me Welcome - George Herbert (17th century)
Angels - Canon Keith Walker (1985)
O Do Not Move - Seferis
Akhmatova Songs - 6 poems by Anna Akhmatova (died in 1966, "acclaimed in the West as Russia's greatest modern poet" Haydon,1995:136)

Composite texts are not infrequent and include:

Resurrection - from the four gospels, commentaries and prophetic utterances
Eonia - a haiku by Seferis and Biblical fragments
Song for Athene - Orthodox liturgy and Shakespeare's Hamlet
Let not the Prince Be Silent - some lines from the third century thought to be the earliest-known Christian hymn (Haydon,1995:205) and a text by Clement of Alexandria from the second century.

But it is through the settings of adapted or original texts that one gains insight into what Tavener tries to achieve with his music. When Smith (1992:475) wrote of *We Shall See Him As He Is* as being "vaguely narrative", he could have been speaking about any of a number of Tavener's works written after 1977 as they have become simpler and more transparent, at times almost child-like. His preference for texts to be pared down to their barest minimum is indicative of his desire for the music not to be illustrative or evocative but rather to convey the ethos of the words.

The responsibility of preparing these texts has fallen largely into the capable hands of Mother Thekla who understands implicitly Tavener's need for simplicity and clarity. This simplicity is inspired in part by the writings of the "very early Egyptian Christian father, much-loved by me and by Mother Thekla for their ferocity, their lack of banal religious instruction their piercing simplicity and their infinite compassion, unknown or even imagined by any of us today" (Moody,1994:X). The most extreme example of a work with a simple text is *Doxa* (Greek for 'glory') a five-movement work which uses only the title word as its text.

As well as providing numerous translations and adaptations and composite texts, the Orthodox Abbess has even contributed her own original texts for works such as *Ikon of St Cuthbert of Lindisfarne*, *Ikon of St Seraphim*, *Today the Virgin*, *Let's Begin Again*, *The World is Burning* and, her greatest undertaking, the libretto for *Mary of Egypt* which took three years of rewriting.

While most of Tavener's works are in English, there is an advantage in using languages such as Greek and Church Slavonic as they carry an element of mystery and authenticity for those works which are Byzantine in character. The following table shows works which use Greek and Slavonic as well as English, unless otherwise stated:

Greek	Slavonic
Doxa (entirely)	Akathist of Thanksgiving
Sixteen Haiku of Seferis (entirely)	Ikon of St Seraphim
Eis Thanaton (entirely)	
We Shall See Him As He Is	
Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete	
Orthodox Vigil Service	
Eonia	

Table 2 showing use of English, Greek and Slavonic

Trevor Bray wrote in 1975 of Tavener that "Above all, his meaning must be grasped..." (156/157), however when asked in an interview in 1992 whether he was attempting to make converts, he replied:

> No. I don't want my music to appear didactic at all, or proselytising either... It doesn't matter to me a damn whether people realise what it's about... What matters to me is that, at the moment anyway, people seem to like the music..." (Ford,1993:95).

2.5 - MELODIES

Tavener has incorporated into his works several authentic chants, both Russian and Byzantine:

Canon of St Andrew of Crete - Russian chant at the beginning and end

Mandelion, an organ work - uses Russian chant

Sixteen Haiku of Seferis - uses a fragment of chant from the Orthodox Lenten Services

Ikon of Light - Uses a traditional Byzantine melody in the third movement.

Frequently Russian and Byzantine elements are combined in a single work such as in the *Akathist of Thanksgiving*.[39] To the untrained ear, however, there are a number of 'blanket' features with which Tavener's own melodies are imbued, making their character appear equally realistic and true to the tapestry of sacred music in the Middle East:

i) Modal

The Russian Orthodox Church abides by a system of eight modes, each one being used for a week at a time. Following the unfavourable reception from some quarters of his *Liturgy of St John Chrysostom*, which was a personal interpretation of Byzantine writing, Tavener undertook a closer study of the Russian and Byzantine modal systems before his next liturgical undertaking, *The Orthodox Vigil Service*. The Byzantine system is a complex process of note patterns rather than scales:

> The essence of a melody sung in one of the eight echoi [mode], however, was its musical content... the melodies of each echos were built up of a number of formulae which were a peculiar feature for the mode, or, in other words: it was not the 'scale' which was the basis of composition..., but a group of formulae

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[39] "The intervening texts contain many allusions to the feast days of the Church, and here I have used the appropriate 'tones' from both the Russian and Byzantine systems" (Tavener,1994:5).

> which belonged together and made up the material for each mode. The composer's task consisted in adapting these melodic formulae to the words of a new hymn and in linking them together in accordance with the words (Wellesz,1961:71).

A feature peculiar to the use of modes as opposed to the Western system of keys is that the harmonic structure remains static. One is always aware of the tonal centre as there is little deviation away from it. Traditionally the use of a single mode would last for a week at a time but Tavener often includes two or more modes in a single work, especially the longer pieces. When changes in mode occur, it happens abruptly as there is no means of modulating.

> I realise that I'm treading a very difficult path. It also requires great courage and, perhaps, humility to let go and to say, "no counterpoint, no harmony; is it possible to return to these simple modes?" I believe that all the modes - Byzantine, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu - I think they all have things in common; they go back to the dawn of civilization. So, maybe, to write really theophonic music - music coming from God - one has to go that way (Ford, 1993:92).

ii) Vocal

Since instruments were considered pagan and therefore forbidden in both the Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches, most of Tavener's sacred choral works are unaccompanied and as such the melodic lines maintain the vocal style of Greek and Russian singing.

iii) Predominantly male

Men have traditionally held positions of higher importance over women in the church and Tavener tends to lean more towards the predominance of male voices. One is automatically reminded of the centuries of established Church music - in particular the very masculine singing from Russia.

iv) Rhythmically stilted

Many of Tavener's works are slow-moving which is in keeping with the sense of solemn ritual and splendour of religious music where fast and rhythmically diverse works might convey a feeling of flippancy. Melodies tend to flow evenly and Tavener "love[s] the idea of one long thread of melody existing all the way through like an eternity beat" (Stewart, 1992:28). In order to achieve this breathing is staggered so as not to disturb the continuous sound.

v) Homophonic

According to Wellesz (1961:32) Byzantine music was always homophonic. Tavener tends to avoid counterpoint and instead adds parallel thirds and fifths to the melody line so that the single-melody style of Orthodox music is maintained but given a modern flavour.

vi) Limited range

In keeping with the dignified and restricted nature of Byzantine hymns, melodies use only a few notes. A compass of six notes is fairly common and movement is mostly by step with intervals greater than a third being avoided.

vii) Drawn-out syllables

As already mentioned, Tavener's texts are concise and syllables are often extended over long, arching lines. This is reminiscent of Byzantine melodies which are decorated with additional notes in order to add interest to the underlying structure. Numerous examples occur in *We Shall See Him As He Is* - in the example below the word 'heard' is considerably extended:

Figure 38 - extended syllable

ii) Microtonal Inflections

These are a distinctive feature of Middle Eastern and Eastern music and serve as embellishments to what are usually very carefully structured melodic lines. Early Byzantine hymn writers were restricted to specific formulae (patterns of notes) within each mode and therefore had little scope for musical creativity. In the process of development, the character of Byzantine chant became ever more decorative "until the structure of the original melody [was] made unrecognizable by the exuberance of the ornamentation" (Wellesz,1961:42). Inflections are denoted in the music by ♯, ♭ and ♮ indicating a slight bend in pitch, see figure 58, page 79.

This ornamental style of singing is particularly difficult for Western performers with the result that such works are excluded from the amateur choir's repertoire and restricted to concert material.

> ... I couldn't sing anything to you now that didn't automatically have those microtonal inflections... But I'm told that rather than sounding either say particularly Greek or Arabic or Russian it always undergoes some kind of alchemical change in me, so a work like my Annunciation Ikon, *Thunder entered her* [1990], captures, I hope, the essence of all three (Crowthers,1994:13).

2.6 - INSTRUMENTS

Roughly two thirds of Tavener's sacred choral works written after 1977 are unaccompanied (fig.39) as traditionally, instruments are forbidden in either the Greek or Russian Orthodox Churches. Consequently those works which employ liturgical texts are purely vocal, with the exception of three works:

i) *The Orthodox Vigil Service*

As already mentioned Tavener was especially careful to make his setting of the Vigil Service as authentic as possible with regard to Russian and Byzantine tone systems. However two hours of unaccompanied music was too daunting so the compromise was handbells as "church bells are sometimes rung during Orthodox services; there are little bells attached to the censers, which sound when they are swung; bells and cymbals feature in the Orthodox Churches of Egypt and Ethiopia" (Haydon,1995:177).

ii) *God Is With Us*

Towards the end of *God Is With Us*, the joyful Byzantine melodic line is startlingly interrupted by three powerfully emphatic chords on the organ in order to augment the three statements of the final line "Christ is born!".

iii) *Akathist of Thanksgiving*

Tavener's *Akathist of Thanksgiving* employs tubular bells and there is an optional part for organ but it is with its predominant instrumental forces, strings and timpani, that he bridges the gap between the church and concert hall. The premiere was held in Westminster Abbey - the work clearly not being authentic enough for the Orthodox Church but still benefiting from religious surroundings!

Bells have featured in Tavener's music from the very beginning. They evoke a feeling for Middle Eastern music traditions and are therefore found in several forms from handbells[40] to tubular bells[41] and even bell-like writing for strings in *The Protecting Veil.*

It is interesting to note the distinct lack of woodwind in the works from this period, the oboe and clarinet make a rare appearance in *Lets Begin Again* along with recorders which can also be heard in *The Apocalypse* and *Resurrection.* However the favoured instruments are strings, brass (especially trumpets and trombones) and percussion, and it is here that Tavener's own musical traits surface. Some unusual scorings include 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, 2 bass trombones, tam-tam, solo violin and strings for *Ikon of St Seraphim*; recorders, 3 trumpets, 5 trombones, timpani, percussion, tam-tam, organ and string quartet in *Resurrection*; 2 trumpets, 2 timpani, organ and 10 cellos in *We Shall See Him As He Is*; 5 recorders, saxophone, 10 trumpets (3 piccolo trumpets), 4 trombones, 2 contrabass trombones, 2 timpani, percussion, tam-tam, handbells, tubular bells, organ, string quartet, 16 violins and 8 double basses for *The Apocalypse.* The table below shows the number of purely vocal works compared to those with instrumental accompaniment and what those instruments are.

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[40] *Orthodox Vigil Service, Meditation on the Light, Thunder Entered Her, The Apocalypse, Innocence* and *Lamentation, Last Prayer and Exaltation.*

[41] *Akathist of Thanksgiving* and *The Apocalypse.*

Unaccompanied	Single Instrument	Other
St Andrew of Crete	Handbells:	*Thunder Entered Her*: org, hbl
Prayer for the World	*He Hath Entered the Heven*	*Innocence*: vcl solo, org
Funeral Ikos	*Orthodox Vigil Service*	*Akhmatova Requiem*: orch
Doxa		*Risen*: orch
Lord's Prayer - '82	Strings:	*Ikon of St Seraphim*: orch
The Lamb	*Ikon of Light*	*Lets Begin Again*: orch
Two Hymns	*Hymns of Paradise*	*Eis Thanaton*: b trmb, hrp, perc, str
Panikhida	*Svyaty*	
Ikon of St Cuthbert		*Akathist of Thanksgiving*: perc, org, str
Magnificat, Nunc Dimittis	Organ:	*Resurrection*: rec, br, perc, org, str qt
Wedding Prayer	*Angels*	*Ikon of the Crucifixion*: br, perc, org, str
Let not the Prince be Silent	*God is With Us*	*Mary of Egypt*: orch, tape loop
Many Years		*We Shall See Him As He Is*: trp, perc, org, str
The Acclamation	*The World is Burning* - tam-tam	*Apocalypse*: sx, rec, br, perc, hbl, org, str, str qt
Hymn to the Holy Spirit		
Uncreated Eros		
Apolytikion for St Nicholas	*Towards the Son* - 4 bowed psalteries	
The Call		
A Nativity Carol		
Lament of Mother of God		
Eonia		
Psalm 121		
Today the Virgin		
Ikon of the Trinity		
O Do Not Move		
A Christmas Round		
Ikon of the Nativity		
Annunciation		
The Lord's Prayer - '93		
Song for Athene		
Chronia Poll		
Three Antiphons		

org = organ
hbl = handbell(s)
vcl = cello
orch = orchestra
b trmb = bass trombone
hrp = harp
perc = percussion
str = strings
rec = recorders
br = brass
str qt = string quartet
trp = trumpets

Table 3 showing distribution of instruments

For additional effect, Tavener usually makes use of the space in a cruciform church setting by placing instruments at various points, including the galleries. Examples include *Ikon of Light* and

Akathist of Thanksgiving - where, for the premiere performance,

> the main choir and the soloists were to be on a raised central platform, approached by thirteen steps, one for each hymn in the *Akathist*. The second choir would surround the platform at a distance: boy sopranos to the east, basses to the west, tenors to the north, altos to the south. The orchestra would be in the dome, creating a 'halo' (Haydon,1995:196/197).

The influence of ikon painting is clearly apparent in Tavener's music, and as David Clarke (1994:244) remarks: "[I]t's a typical irony that a genre of painting he finds attractive for its impersonality should have become such a formative feature of his compositional individuality". Many of his works are called ikons[42] as are the movements of larger works such as *We Shall See Him As He Is*. Others, such as his chamber opera *Mary of Egypt*, he prefers to call moving ikons.

> By an icon is meant an image or visual representation of Christ, the Virgin Mary, the angels, or the saints. It might take the form of a painted panel of wood, but could be equally a mosaic or fresco on the church wall, ... Icons play a central part in the worship of all Orthodox churches of the Byzantine tradition... An Orthodox act of liturgical prayer is unthinkable without the presence of icons (The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity 142-143).

In the same way that an ikon has flat areas of primary colours side by side with no shading in between, Tavener juxtaposes contrasting thematic sections without providing bridging passages. He limits his palette by writing predominantly for unaccompanied choir and by remaining within the framework of various modal systems (Byzantine, Russian, Coptic). Ikons present the viewer with two-dimensional images and, in a way, so does Tavener, for with few exceptions, he composes solely in a horizontal manner, being concerned more with long, flowing melodic lines than with vertical harmonic progressions - any harmonies that result from overlaying melodies are purely incidental.

The simple, unemotional nature of the ikon is captured in the librettos which were written by Tavener or Mother Thekla, their sparse lines provide only an essence rather than an elaborate picture. The highly stylized formal structures and limited number of themes are comparable to

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[42] *Ikon of Light, Ikon of St Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, Ikon of the Crucifixion, Ikon of St Seraphim, Ikon of the Trinity.*

the simplicity of design of an ikon. An important facet of ikon painting for Tavener, and indeed a fundamental difference between those works written after 1977 and the earlier works, is the lack of ego present - "part of the Orthodox way of thinking" (Stewart,1992a:28).

CHAPTER THREE - ANALYSES

Despite the similarities mentioned in Chapter Three, the works from Tavener's latter period have their own singularities which makes each one unique.

3.1 - *ODE OF ST ANDREW OF CRETE*

The "Great Canon" by St Andrew of Crete is an eighth-century epic poem of nine odes dealing with the subject of penitence and is read in its entirety in the fifth week of Great Lent. Tavener's interest in the poem came about at a time when he was concerned about his own misspent youth and it is significant too because it resulted in the initial contact with Mother Thekla: the work was to fulfill a commission by the Southern Arts Festival and Tavener had to have permission from the translators, sister Katherine and the then Sister Thekla, two Orthodox nuns. It was only to be five years later that Mother Thekla would meet the composer in person and from then on assume a role of great importance in his life.

Tavener has set only the first of the nine odes, lasting in duration about 20 minutes, which is divided into 23 *troparia* (verses) preceded by an *irmos* (chorus) which is repeated at the end.[43] The character of this work is clearly Eastern because of the use of a traditional Russian chant (fig.39) for the *irmos* and the predominance of male voices which conjure up images of Eastern worship. The *irmos* is chanted by men and the *troparia* by a single male voice, full choir (SSSATBB) appearing only in the "Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me" responses between each verse.

The immediate impression for the listener on hearing the solemn but powerful opening statement of the *irmos* is one of intense ritualism and this is carried through to the end, even in those passages where Tavener leaves his own distinct traits.

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[43] see appendix 1

Figure 39 - traditional Russian chant of the *irmos*

Immediately after the initial statement, the *irmos* is repeated and the listener is suddenly thrust into the 20th century by the accompanying inversion and parallel fifths:

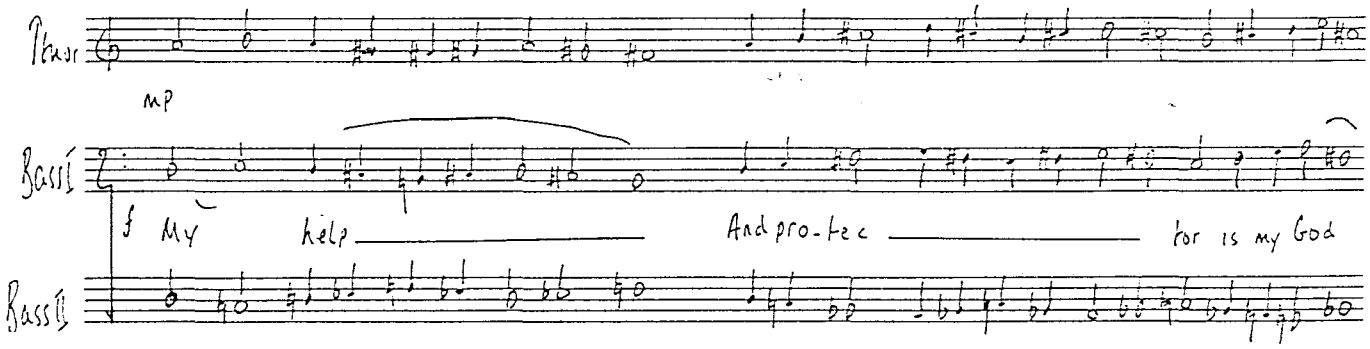

Figure 40 - second statement of the *irmos*

The 23 *troparia*, resemble fragments of the *irmos* and therefore create a feeling of uniformity throughout the work, it is in the responses by the choir that Tavener expresses himself more freely and allows for greater variety. Each of the choral responses uses a different combination of the seven notes in an octave (fig.41) and, alternating between major and minor triads, they descend chromatically creating, as Haydon describes it, "a long slow prostration" "fitting for Lent" (1995:48).

Figure 41 - first-choral response (minor triads)

However the "scales" are not of the Western variety but are modes both known and created by Tavener. Those responses using minor triads are in either the Dorian mode[44] or a mode which comprises a tretrachord followed by its inversion (fig.42A)[45]. The 17th response is an exception, it has the pattern augmented 2nd, semitone-semitone-tone-augmented 2nd-semitone-semitone, see figure 42B. The responses using major triads are mostly in the hypophrygian mode although numbers two and eight are in the lydian mode and, again, there is an exception in number 20, see figure 42C.

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[44] Responses 1,5,9,13,15,19 and 21.

[45] Responses 3,7,11 and 23.

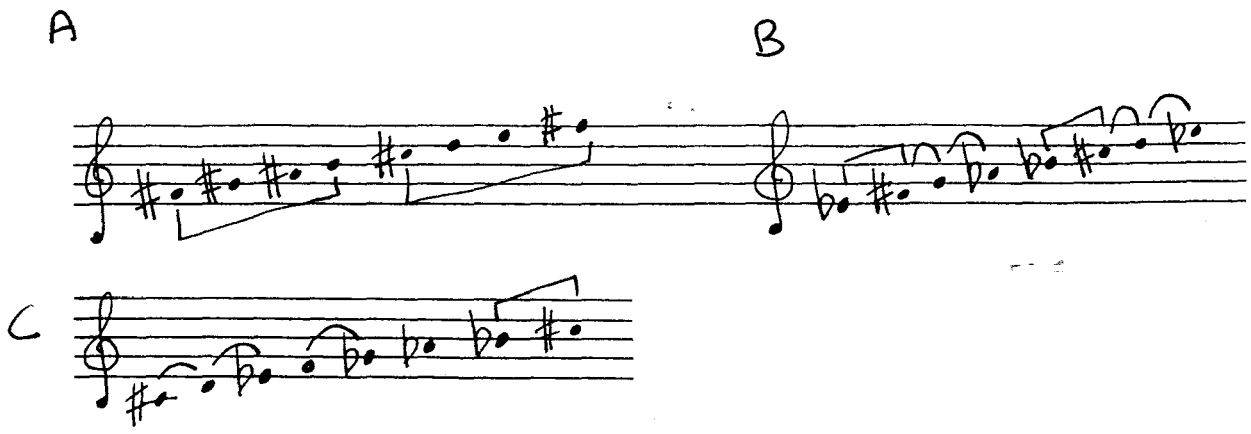

Figure 42- Created modes

As well as the changing mode and note patterns, Tavener adds further interest by alternating the languages of the responses between English, Greek and Church Slavonic. Usually in a service the responses from the congregation are repetitive, unchanging and tend to be rather mechanical while the interest is centred on the priest's lines. Had Tavener not made the responses more musically interesting, this work would sound like nothing more than a regular service, but with the parallel triads, modal shifts and varying permutations of the seven notes in each choral part, he has created a work which reaches beyond the confines of the Orthodox Church.

At the same time it is not a concert piece but rather an act of prayer. At the top of the score Tavener quotes from St Andrew's prologue to his confession: "Where shall I make my beginning to mourn the deeds of my wretched life?" and in his note for the Festival booklet, John quoted some words of Mother Thekla: "We must repent from minute to minute, person by person, because the day of judgment is at hand, and there we can only be alone, face to face, alone with the judge" (Haydon,1995:148).

Following the Festival premiere in July of 1981, *Ode to St Andrew of Crete* was performed later that year on 1 December[46] by the distinguished Tallis Scholars (led by Peter Phillips) and soon afterwards was recorded on LP.

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[46] The *Funeral Ikos* was premiered on this occasion.

3.2 - *TWO HYMNS TO THE MOTHER OF GOD*

Tavener composed these two hymns in quick succession in 1985, a difficult time in his life as his mother's death in January of that year had left him shattered and doubting that he would ever write again.[47]

Like many of Tavener's works written before and after these, the music is a spontaneous reaction to the texts. That of the first hymn, *Hymn to the Mother of God*, comes from the Liturgy of St Basil, one of the three most important liturgies of the Orthodox Church:[48]

In you, O Woman full of Grace, the angelic choirs and the human race, all creation rejoices.
O sanctified Temple, mystical Paradise, and glory of Virgins.
In you, O Woman full of grace, all creation rejoices. All praise be to you.

The words of the *Hymn for the Dormition of the Mother of God* come from the Feast of the same title:

O ye apostles, assembled here from the ends of the earth, bury my body in Gethsemane; and Thou my Son and God, receive my spirit. (Sung three times)

It is not surprising that the Virgin is the subject of several of Tavener's choral and instrumental works[49] as veneration of the Mother of God ("Theotokos") has been a fundamental component of Orthodox worship since the third ecumenical council of 431 AD. The feast celebrating the dormition of the Mother of God dates from the sixth century (Pillay and Hofmeyr, 1991:35).

While the *Two Hymns* were written in memory of his mother, Muriel, the symbolism, for Tavener goes further: "it's a celebration of the Mother: not just my own mother, but the Mother of God,

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[47] One work stands between the tragic event and the writing of the *Two Hymns* and that is *Eis Thanaton* ('Ode to Death') a music drama in Greek.

[48] The others are the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom (which Tavener had set in 1977) and of the Presanctified.

[49] These include *Canticle of the Mother of God* (1976), *Annunciation* (1992), *Lament of the Mother of God* (1989), *Today the Virgin* (1989), *Thunder Entered Her* (1990) and *The Protecting Veil* - for solo cello and strings (1987), *The Last Sleep of the Virgin* - string quartet (1991) respectively.

the Earth Mother, the Feminine" (Haydon, 1995:188). However beyond the similarity of subject and form (both works are in three sections), the two hymns are quite unique in their own way.

The ABA structure of *A Hymn to the Mother of God* is determined by the text (see above) and the harmony - the first and third lines are radiant and centred around the key of F while the middle line is in A♭ and has a more sombre feel. The use of block chords in strict canon between two choirs and the unremitting dense texture achieves an effect of restrained intensity which Haydon (1995:188) describes as "ecstatic" and is reminiscent of the hymn "Lead Kindly Light" from the *Celtic Requiem*:

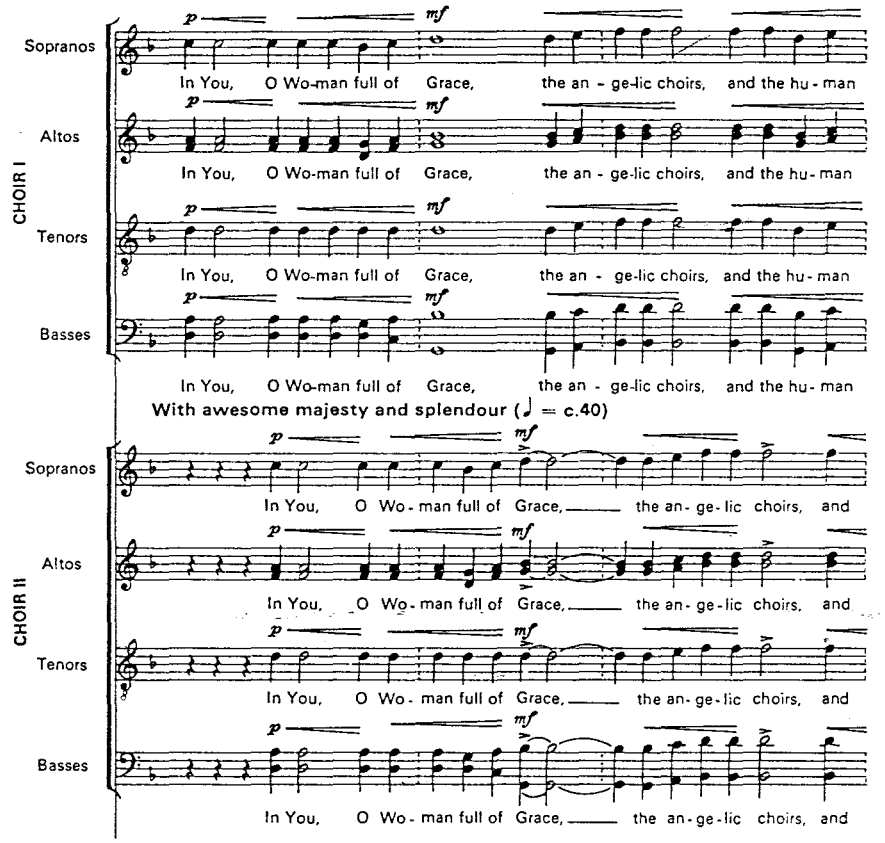

Figure 43 - opening of *Hymn to the Mother of God*

Hymn for the Dormition of the Mother of God, marked in the score "solemn, quiet and tender, with a broad, flowing line", does not share the fervour and radiance of the first hymn, however the progression from burial to assumption of which the text speaks, is felt in the increasing textural density of the music in the three statements of the Russian chant upon which the piece

is based (see fig.27). In the poignant initial statement, the chant is given to the tenors above a triadic ison by the basses; for the second statement the melody is accompanied instead by its inversion and its parallel a fourth lower (see fig.30); and in the *pianissimo* but climactic final appearance of the theme, Tavener employs triads split between seven voice-parts.

The Two Hymns are heard again in *The Protecting Veil* of 1987.[50] It is not unusual for Tavener to reuse works: material from *Nomine Jesu* and *Coplas* appear in *Ultimos Ritos*; *Kyklike Kinesis* starts and ends with the *Canticle of the Mother of God*; *Doxa* appears in *Ikon of Light*; the *Lamb* theme is used in *The Tiger*; the music of *The Uncreated Eros* is used to the chanting of the Greek word *Ameen* in *Resurrection*; *Ikon of the Crucifixion* is adapted from *Resurrection.*

Both hymns are highly stylized and reflect a sort of "less is more" attitude in that he portrays vividly the 'almost cosmic power of the Mother of God' with music that is sung slowly and softly (except for the gradual crescendos after the first and last lines of the *Hymn to the Mother of God*). It is remarkable how the music conveys simultaneously a sense of 'awesome majesty' and calm serenity.

The Two Hymns were first performed by the Winchester Cathedral Choir (led by Martin Neary) on 14 December 1985.

[50] Near the beginning of the work the orchestra plays very slowly the melody of *Hymn for the Mother of God* and the second hymn is transcribed for the solo cello in its highest range in section VII

3.3 - *MAGNIFICAT* AND *NUNC DIMITTIS*

Written in 1986, the *Magnificat* was the result of a commission by the choir of King's College, Cambridge and was therefore intended for the Anglican Rite. However Tavener has included a refrain - "Greater in Honour than the Cherubim" - which appears in the Orthodox service between each verse (see Appendix A). The Dean of Kings College was willing to accept this version, with the result that Tavener's *Magnificat* has two, variously scored, alternating thematic sections.

Theme A, which is stated alone over an ison in the first verse (fig.44) was inspired by a traditional folk tune which Tavener heard while he was in Greece.

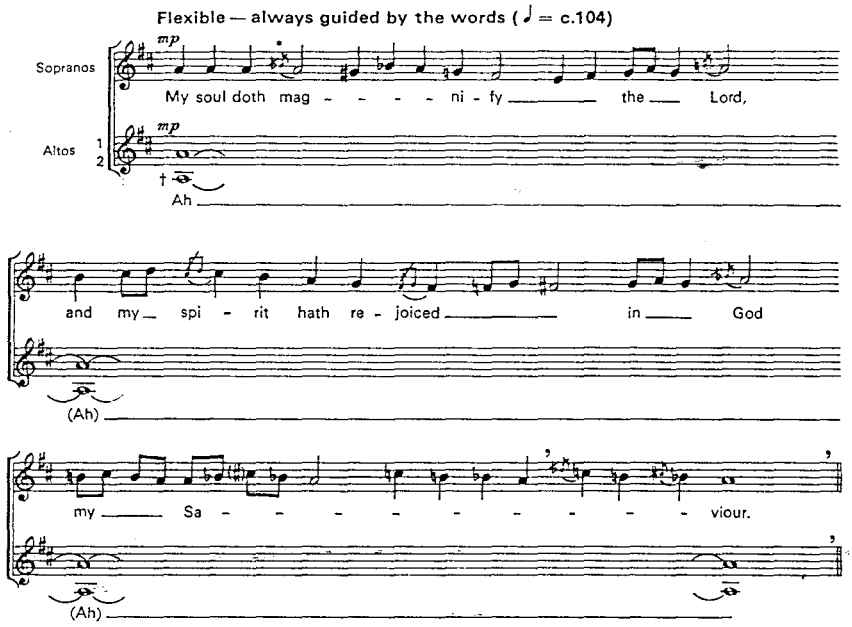

Figure 44 - opening of *Magnificat*

In the second verse, Tavener adds a palindromic counter melody of even crotchets which is sung twice in canon by alto voices. Another part is added in the third verse which is in fact the counter melody sung at half the speed by sopranos and basses in unison:[51]

[51] The fourth and sixth verses are the same as the third and the fifth the same as the first.

Figure 45 - third verse

The refrain is always set to rhythmic parallel thirds and apart from its first and fifth appearances where it is scored for lower and upper voices respectively, it is sung by full choir and provides a wonderfully joyful, celebratory contrast to the more dignified verses:

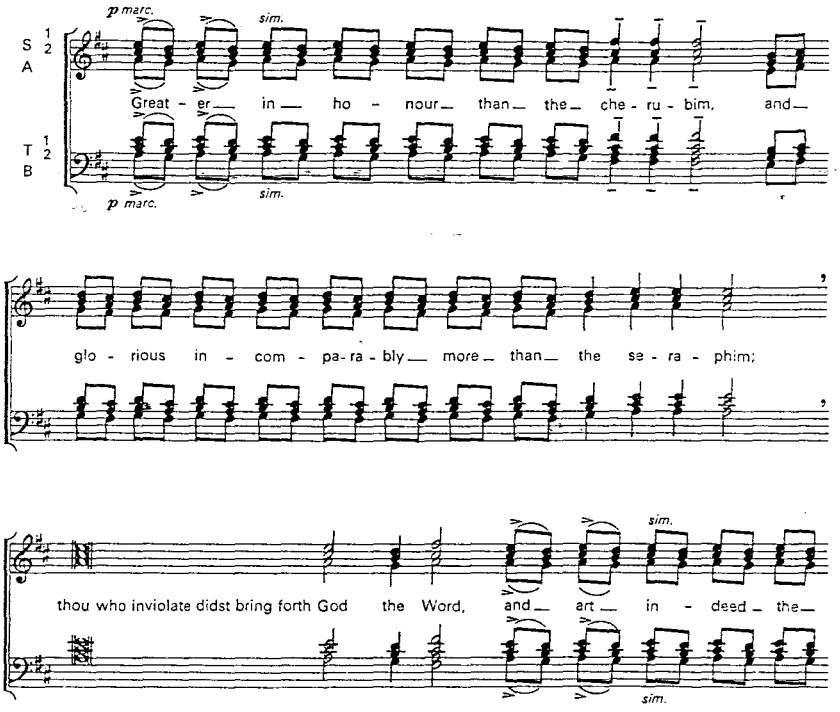

Figure 46 - refrain

The *Magnificat* is distinctly Middle Eastern in character with the microtonal breaks in the voice and the use of a drone in the verses but quite different in character to the *Nunc Dimittis*, also written in 1986 for King's College. Less than half the length of the *Magnificat* and very basic in form, this is one of Tavener's most hauntingly beautiful works.

The outer A section of the ternary structure (sung twice at the end) is extremely simple: it is has small range of six notes and is sung by men alone, starting with a single line which splits into parallel triads halfway. The effective use of the ison which grows out of the melody has been discussed in Chapter Three - see figure 37.

The middle section is scored for full choir and consists entirely of parallel triads. As in the first part, Tavener sustains the F♯ here creating wonderful clashing harmonies but at the end of the line simply melts into the resolution of open fifths:

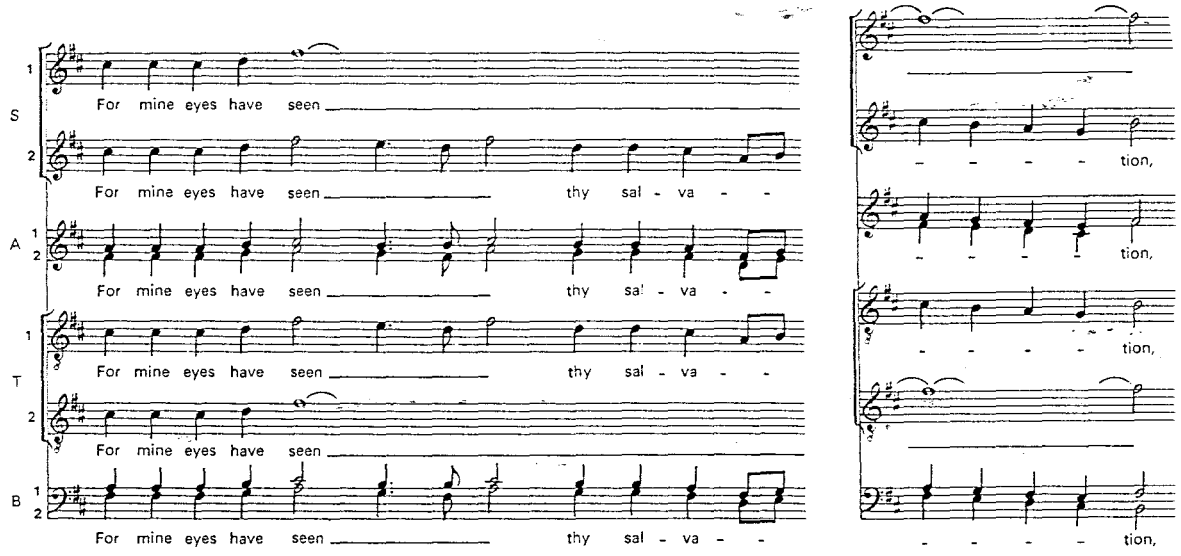

Figure 47 - part of the middle section of *Nunc Dimittis*

3.4 - *THE UNCREATED EROS*

This four-minute work, written in 1988, came about through Tavener's friendship with Philip Sherrard who had attempted unsuccessfully to write a suitable libretto for *Mary of Egypt*, however, being a Byzantine specialist[52] living in Greece, his association with Tavener continued. The fruits of this relationship include *The Tiger* which, as a companion piece to *The Lamb*, had been his suggestion, as had the text for *The Uncreated Eros* which is taken from Genesis; and *Eis Thanaton* and *Village Wedding* - both of which Sherrard had translated.

A three-note drone, which introduces each line, and a single theme, pervade the work. There are five lines in which the theme, slightly palindromic in shape, alternates between Byzantine tone I and II: the first two lines are given to the men (all basses) who sing in unison:

Figure 48 - first line of *The Uncreated Eros*

[52] He had previously taught at London University (Haydon, 1995:179).

The next two lines are given to the women who sing in parallel triads and in canon (fig.49) and the final line is sung in unison by all the voices.

Figure 49 - beginning of the third line

The text deals with the ideal love as it was in the Garden of Eden before the Fall and is dealt with in a particularly solemn manner. The slowly-rising drone at the start of each line gives an especially sombre almost unearthly touch, and perhaps makes the subject all the more sacred. It has the same stillness and purity as the next work, *Eonia*, which was written in the following year - 1989.

3.5 - *EONIA*

Three is a symbolic number in Eonia; there are three themes (in palindromic form ABCBA), three textual origins, three languages, and the middle line "Lord, have mercy" is sung three times. The text of A is *The Jasmin*, a Greek haiku poem and the original inspiration for Eonia,[53] theme B comprises biblical fragments sung in English and C has a liturgical basis, the most fundamental line of the Orthodox liturgy - "Lord have mercy" - sung in Slavonic.

It is interesting to see how Tavener interprets these three texts musically. The secular haiku is set in a distinctly Western manner using the primary chords I and V presented in four-part choral style in the key of C major (fig.12). These are the first two chords of *The Departure of the Guests*

[53] Tavener came across this haiku in the Collected Poems of George Seferis, one of Greece's most distinguished poets who died in 1971. Eonia is one of three works by Tavener which use texts by Seferis: *Sixteen Haiku of Seferis* (1983) and *O Do Not Move* (1990).

from Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite* (Haydon, 1995:227), a work which has several associations for Tavener, one of which is that his mother heard it on television in her hospital room shortly before she died. Tavener was also aware that Stravinky had quoted the same two chords towards the end of *Petrushka*.

Figure 50 - Theme A

Athough these are the most fundamental of chords, Tavener manages to produce quite an unusual sound for several reasons:

i) the chord V is in fact V9 with the missing fifth,

ii) each line of the haiku moves from I to V9 creating unresolved and weak resting points,

iii) as there is no time signature the music seems to just float and

iv) the music is "sempre pp poss." and the lack of dynamic contrasts creates a truly ethereal effect.

These factors combined serve to realize Tavener's direction in the score: "With unearthly stillness and purity, without expression".

While theme A is repeated exactly at the end of the work, the two statements of B differ both musically and textually. Each has a drone, the first resulting from the final V9 chord of theme A sustained beneath a solo soprano or alto line which is conceived harmonically and uses the notes of the same G9 chord (fig.51).[54]

[54] The V^9 drone is the 'joy-sorrow' chord also used in *Funeral Ikos*, *The Lamb*, *Ikon of Light*, *Resurrection*, and *Village Wedding*, but this is the only instance where is functions as an ison.

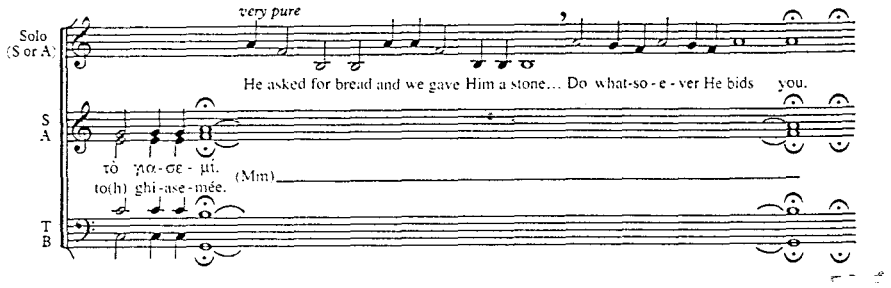

Figure 51 - Theme B

The second statement of theme B is set to three Biblical phrases (as opposed to two previously) and these form a harmonic palindrome with the outer lines in C minor and the middle in C major. The melodic line resembles that of the previous statement but here it is sung in sixths which descend through the four voice parts and the notes are derived from the C major and minor triads:

Figure 52 - second statement of theme B

As the central line and focal point in this work, theme C (fig.53) is an extremely simple and stylized representation of liturgical recitation. It comprises just two vocal parts, a drone on C (which as the listener by now knows is the tonal centre of the work) sung by the sopranos under a solo line. The whole work creates a floating sensation, there is no rise to a climax or excitement of any kind but rather a feeling of buoyancy.

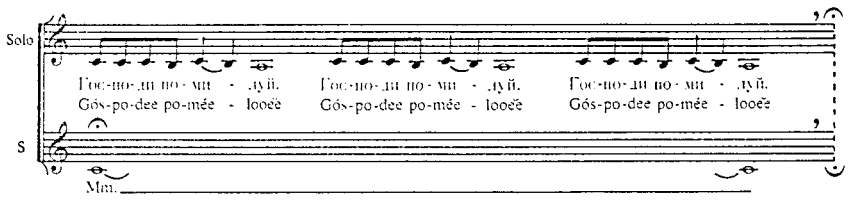

Figure 53 - Theme C

Eonia was written as a tribute to Cecil Collins, an ikon painter and close friend of Tavener's, who had passed away one month earlier: "I was mourning my dear friend Cecil, and *Eonia* is a fragile tribute to the man I love, and to his fragile, beautiful and iconographical art" (Moody,1991). The music has the same stylized character as an ikon painting with its segmented and juxtaposed themes. There is a quiet serenity about it with no areas of excitement to detract from the whole picture. Even rhythmically the work is very calm. There is a sense of progression in the text which begins with the secular haiku then moves on to biblical fragments and finally, at the centre of the work, reaches the intensely spiritual line "Lord, have mercy". It resembles a path which carries the listener into the realm of pure spirituality just as the ikon painting acts as a 'window to heaven' helping the believer to reach beyond himself.... "Eonia" means eternal and the theme of eternity is prevalent throughout Tavener's works. The words of the haiku immediately make the listener aware of this:

whether it's dusk
or dawn's first light
the jasmin stays
always white.

3.6 - *WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS*

We Shall See Him As He Is (hereafter referred to as *As He Is*) is a remarkable work because it conveys both a sense of ancient ritual with its technical simplicity and textural transparency, and also a feeling of drama and excitement more commonly associated with the concert hall. This was a high point in Tavener's life: 1989 had seen the hugely successful Proms performance of *The Protecting Veil* as well as the completion of the opera *Mary of Egypt* and on a more personal level Tavener had after four years met up again with Maryanna Schaefer (his second wife) and by the beginning of 1990 they had become engaged.

As He Is was composed in 1990 as the result of a commission for the 900th anniversary of Chester Cathedral. The music is typical of Tavener's later period in which he adapts and varies elements found in Byzantine music such as isons, melodic inflections and modes. Although he creates a unique and individual style, at the same time one is always aware of the character of this ancient music.

The text has been adapted by Mother Thekla from St John's Gospel. Eight events in the life of Christ mentioned in sequence are the baptism, the marriage feast where water was turned into wine, the cleansing of the Temple, the Samaritan woman at the well, the healing of the crippled man, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. The text is concise and each of the movements comprises short textual fragments or key words from the relevant testimonies.[55]

As He Is could best be described as a collage, where sections of contrasting textures and patterns are juxtaposed but there remains an overall sense of composition and unity, due in part to the fact that this hour-long work is centred around D. There are four different modes which appear in the work: dorian, D phrygian, D hybrid and D ionian - see figure 54. The hybrid mode comprises two tetrachords of semitone - augmented second - semitone. The tetrachords resemble the upper four notes of the melodic minor scale, or they can be compared to those of the phrygian mode with the third note raised a semitone.

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[55] See Appendix A.

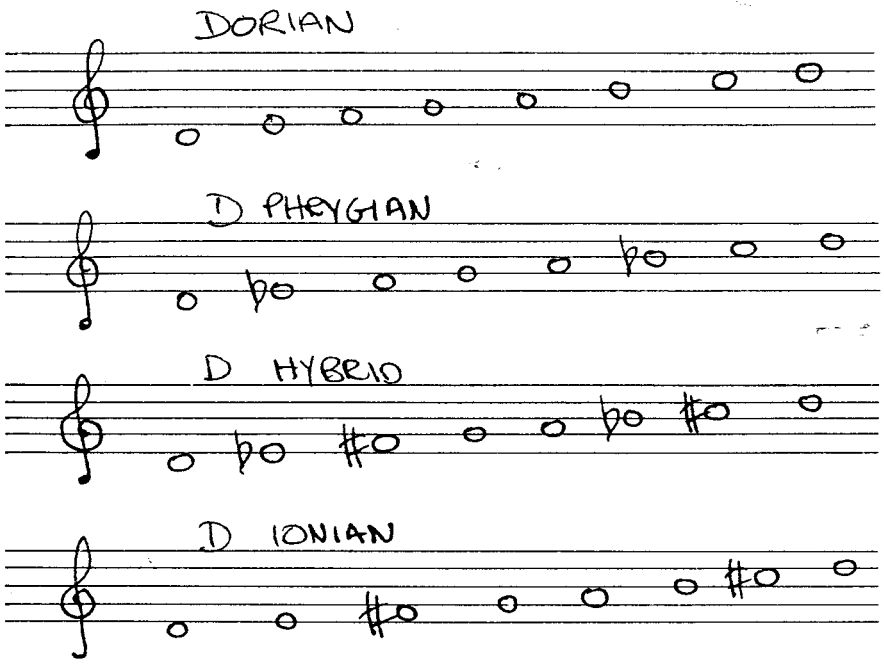

Figure - 54 the four modes

The work is scored for three soloists (two tenors and a soprano), a large chorus, two trumpets, two sets of timpani (two players), organ and strings (with a minimum of ten cellos) and although these instruments do not constitute a full orchestra, it is extraordinary how many different effects Tavener is able to achieve with these forces.

Particularly noticeable is the number of contrasts, ranging from passages written for solo cello or violin playing as softly as possible, to great explosions of sound using every available force in passages for up to 73 parts. Various effects created include a shimmering 'halo' passage played by muted strings, fanfares on the trumpets and timpani, and the atmosphere of the Middle Eastern wedding created by two solo violins. Tavener frequently sub-divides the instruments and voices, and there is a particularly poignant section scored for ten solo cellos. There are difficult moments for the singers especially the basses and sopranos who are often required to sing at the outer limits of their ranges and Tavener notes in the score that

> The tenor who takes the part of St John must make a careful study of Byzantine singing, since the Gregorian 'bel canto' style more familiar to Western ears is not appropriate. ♮, ♯ and ♭ denote microtones, the characteristic 'breaks in the voice' of Byzantine and Eastern chanting.

Outline of the Movements

One:	BC Refrain	(BC - bridal chamber theme)
Two: Ikon I	St John / echo Canon Halo	
Three: Ikon II	St John / echo *The Baptism* Halo	
Four: Ikon III	St John / echo *The Marriage Feast* D Halo BC Refrain	(D - D major chord)
Five: Ikon IV	St John / echo *The Temple* Halo	
Six: Ikon V	St John / echo Bride/Bridegroom - D - BC variation Bride/Bridegroom - D - BC variation Bride/Bridegroom - D - BC variation Halo BC Refrain	
Seven: Ikon VI	St John / echo *The Woman at the Well* Halo	
Eight: Ikon VII	*Healing the Lame* D Halo BC Refrain	
Nine: Ikon VIII	echo / St John *Foretelling the Betrayal* Halo	
Ten: Ikon IX	*The Crucifixion*	
Eleven: The Tomb	*The Resurrection*	
Twelve: Ikon X	Behold...- D - BC variation - Refrain - marriage feast - BC - link Behold...- D - BC variation - Refrain/Refrain - marriage feast - BC - link Behold...- D - BC variation - Refrain/Refrain/Refrain/Refrain	
Thirteen: Ikon XI	Canon Halo Come Lord Jesus...(St John) BC	

Four main thematic sections provide unity for the work as a whole by reappearing in most of the movements although they are usually slightly altered in some way. These are the 'bridal chamber' theme, St John's theme, the 'refrain',and the 'halo' theme, the first two become more and more extended, while the refrain and halo themes, are slightly altered both melodically and harmonically in order to accommodate modal changes. The remaining sections are generally peculiar to the movement in which they occur, standing out against the surrounding material.

1) The Bridal Chamber Theme

> This theme represents iconographically the parable of the guest who had no fitting wedding garment, and was not admitted to the feast. In the Orthodox Church, the Heavenly Bridal Chamber is an especially important theme from Monday to Thursday of Holy Week as we prepare for the Passion and Resurrection of Christ (Tavener,1991).

This is the theme with which the work begins and is an authentic Russian chant (fig.55) "heard during Holy Week when they sing 'I see Thy bridal chamber adorned, O my Saviour, And I have no fitting garment that I may enter therein'" (Haydon,1995:236). It is the most important theme of the whole work and although *As He Is* deals with particular miracles which Jesus performed, the concept of the heavenly bridal chamber is reiterated throughout by the bridal chamber theme[56]. For its initial statement, it is presented very simply by a single cello with no accompaniment, a highly understated beginning.

Figure 55 - Bridal Chamber theme

In Ikon III the theme is extended to five phrases and is scored for four cellos (fig.56). Three new elements are introduced here: a two-part ison on B and a descending B aeolian scale in bars one, three and five alternating with a simple harmonization of the melody in bars two and four:

[56] It occurs in six of the thirteen movements and St John's passage is built on this theme.

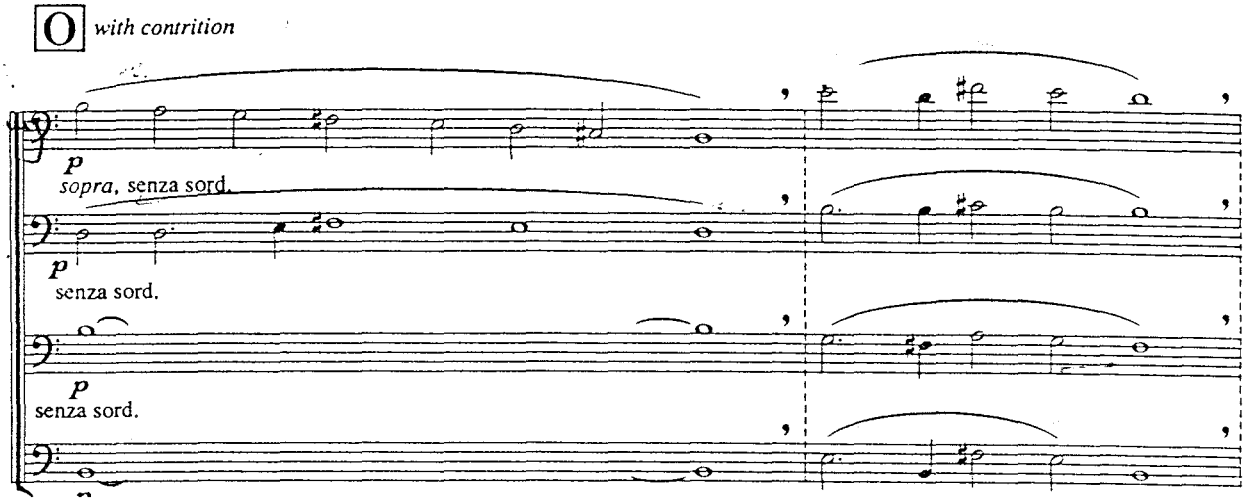

Figure 56 - Bridal Chamber theme in Ikon III

In Ikon V the theme is played by seven cellos and is extended by a further two phrases (the three elements which were introduced in Ikon III are present again here, but now appearing in every bar) and is elaborated most fully in Ikon VII where it is scored for ten cellos.[57] In Ikon X, the climax of the whole work, there are two brief appearances of only the first phrase of the theme, played by ten cellos as in Ikon VII. Tavener comes full circle by concluding *As He Is* with the bridal chamber theme, though this time played by a violin four octaves above middle C and marked "*pp poss. senza vib.*":

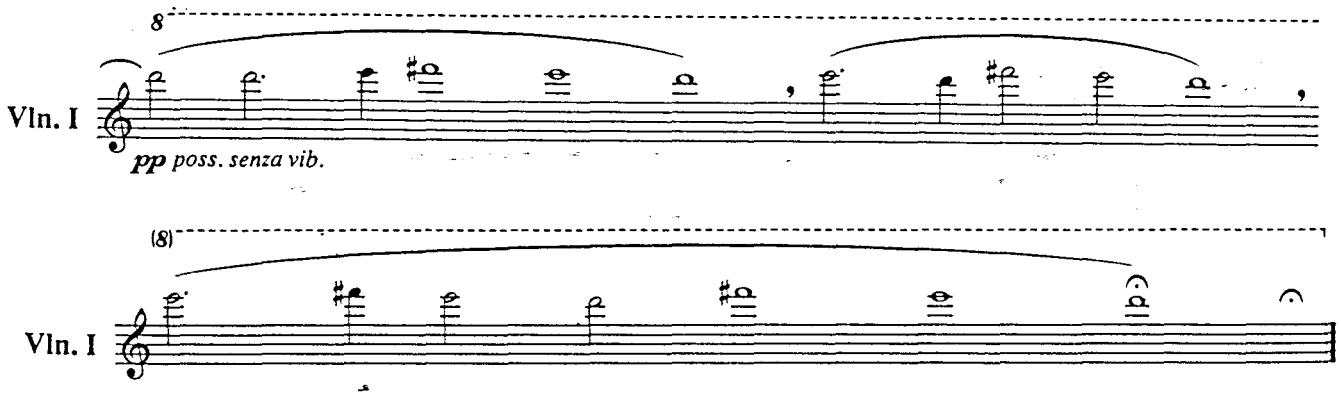

Figure 57 - Bridal chamber theme as concluding the whole work

[57] There is a doubling of the melody an octave lower, and also of two lines of the harmonization (sometimes at a distance of two octaves). Again a further two phrases are added but these phrases are a repetition of those added in Ikon III.

2) St John's Theme

The part of St John is largely restricted to one particular thematic passage which is usually sung solo and at the beginning of each ikon. It is first heard at the start of Ikon I:

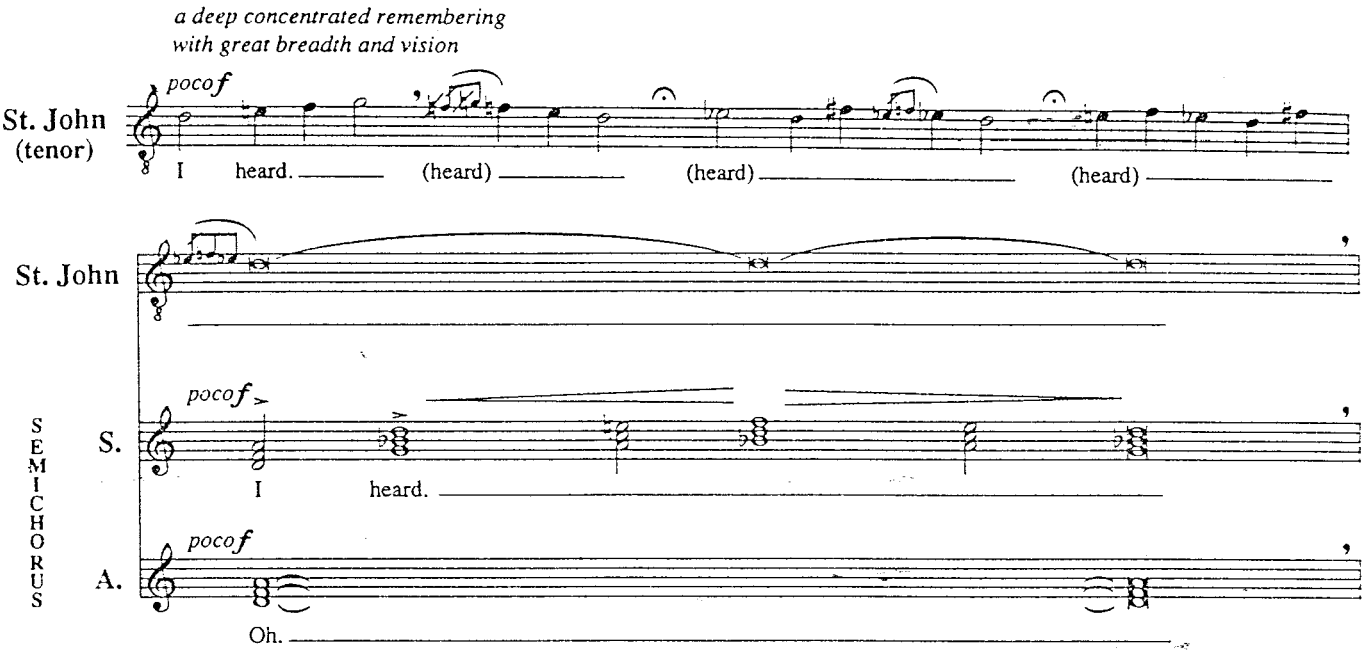

Figure - 58 - St John's theme

It is this passage above all others that is distinctly Byzantine in character with the microtonal breaks in the voice, largely stepwise movement and slow, steady rhythm. The bar immediately following echoes the text but not the melody and shall be referred to hereafter as the "echo". This is always sung by sopranos and altos of the semichorus with the sopranos singing parallel triads and the altos holding the first triad (D minor) as an ison. In the restatements of St John's theme, the echo always undergoes modal changes.

3) The Refrain

This section comprises two parts sung in Greek: *"Oti opsometha kathos estin"* (We shall see Him as He is), and *"Ameen, erkhoo, Keerie Ieesoo"* (Amen, come, Lord Jesus) - figures 59 and 60 respectively:

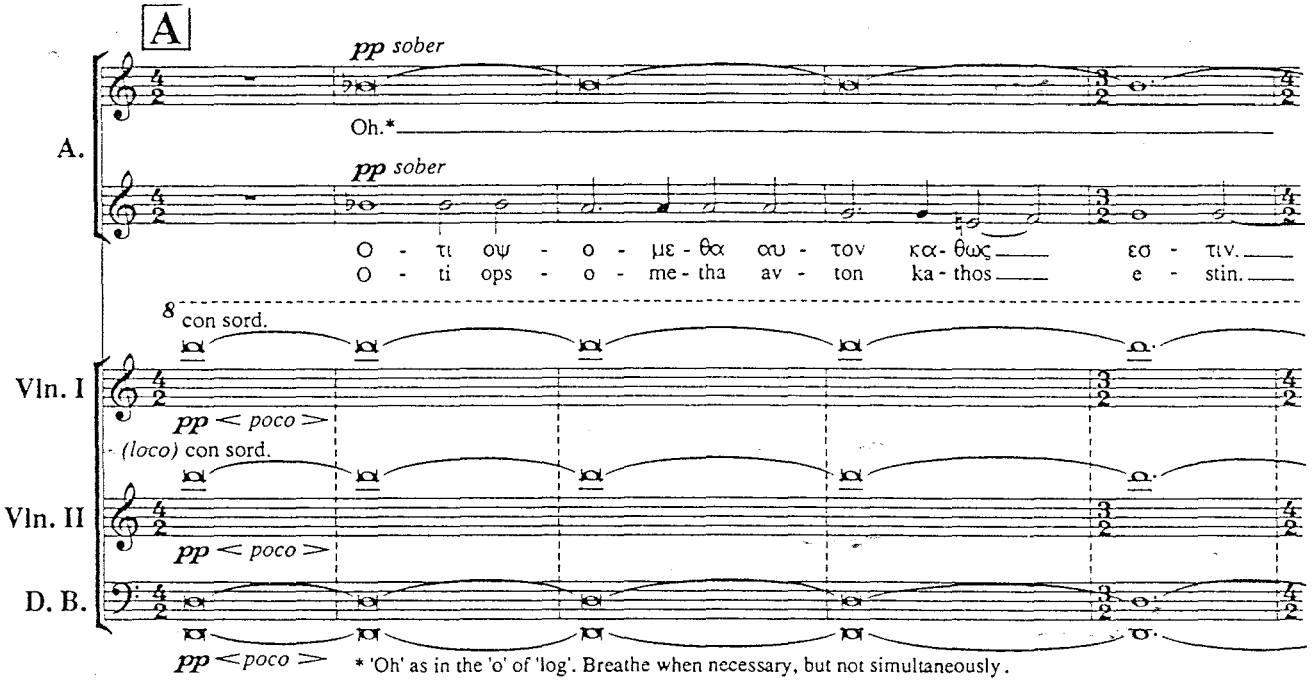

Figure 59 - first 5 bars of Part 1 (bars 2-14)

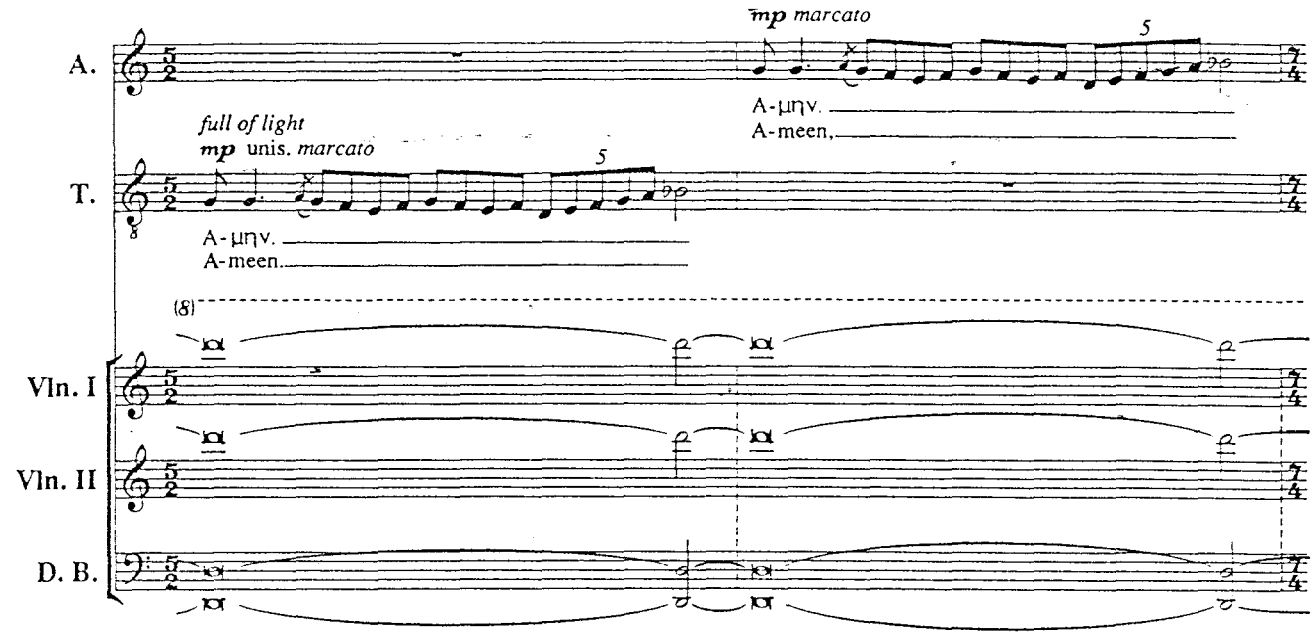

Figure 60 - first 2 bars of Part 2 (bars 19-28)

The refrain is heard eleven times although there are really four versions, one in each of the modes. In the first part, the four voices sing the melody in turn while the others sustain notes G and B ♭. It is in the first part of the refrain that the ison comes closest to its traditional form since it is a single note, it does occur at five octaves. While the melody of the refrain changes mode as the piece progresses, the ison remains on D providing tonal stability. There are two other sections which use single-note isons, a canonic passage (to be discussed later) and the bridal chamber theme. While the canon appears only twice, the refrain and the bridal chamber themes occur more frequently. It is significant that these two sections should have the most traditional use of the ison as they are important thematic sections.

There is a condensing of the refrain in Ikon VII with the voices singing in pairs for each of the parts. This foreshadows an even further shortening of the refrain which appears seven times in Ikon X, and it is in fact due to the positioning of these seven appearnces and the modes in which they occur that Ikon X is perceived as the climax of the whole work. The first of these appearances is alone (aeolian mode), the second and third appear in succession (aeolian/phrygian), as do the last four (aeolian/phrygian/hybrid mode/ionian).

The climactic effect is achieved in several ways, as seen in figure 61:

1) the refrain is severely condensed with all voices singing in unison,

2) the two parts of the refrain are reversed so that the more reflective second part leads into the declamatory first part,

3) the latter is expanded orchestrally with the inclusion of the organ and timpani,

4) the melody of the same part is intensified with a rising third at the beginning,

5) the four successive appearances allow the mode changes to be heard more clearly than at any other time in the work,

6) each statement is slower than the previous one.

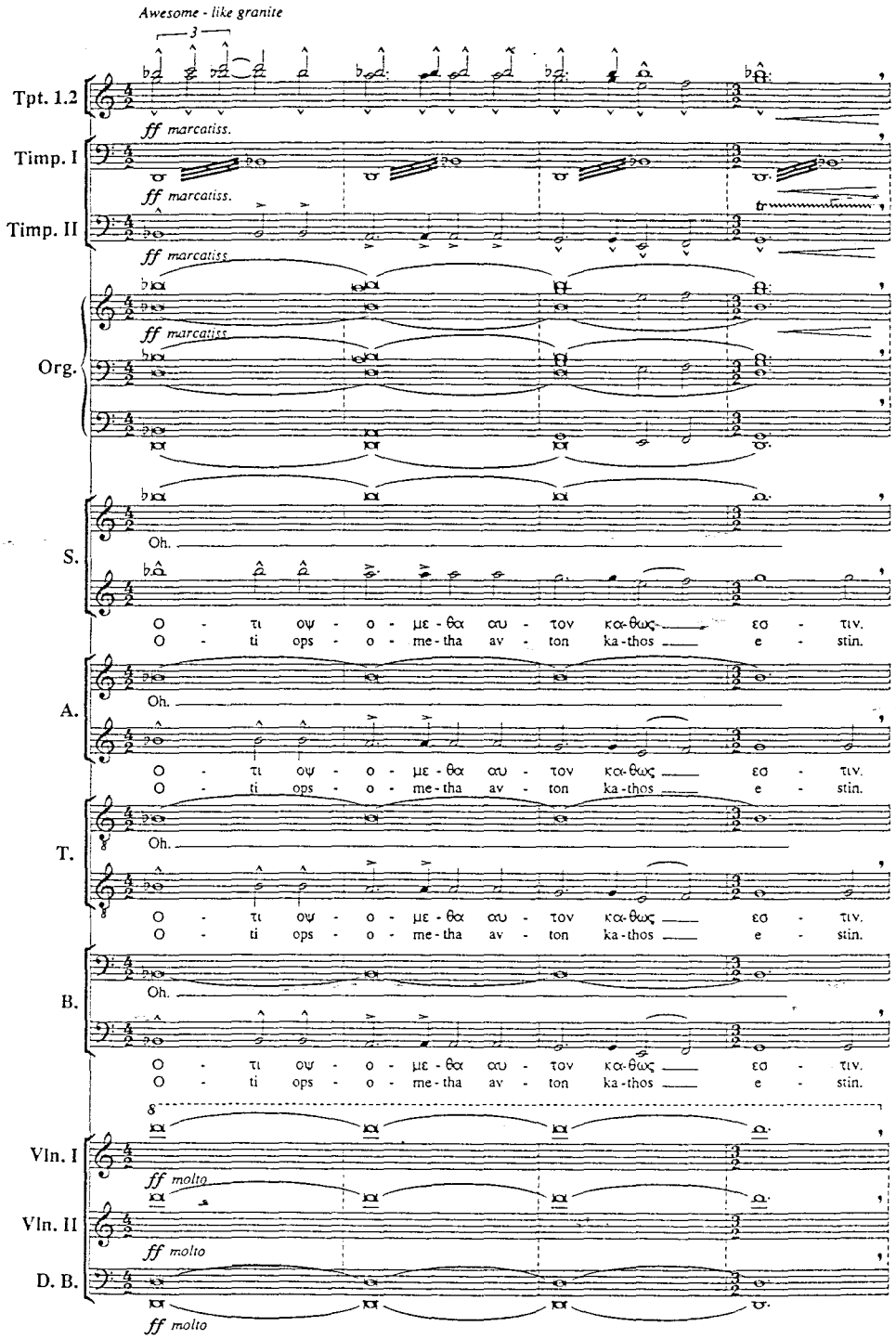

Figure 61 - first of seven statements of the refrain in Ikon X

4) The Halo Theme

The final main thematic section has been described as "halos of sound" (Burn,1992:4). It is purely instrumental, played by the strings with each group divided into five. In the first statement (fig.62 page 84/85), an ascending five-note fragment is played in turn by each of the string sections starting at the top with the violins. Each of the five notes is sustained within a section creating chord clusters and a beautiful shimmering effect:

In Ikon II the same fragment descends through the strings followed by a new fragment which also floats downwards. In Ikon III, three more are tagged on creating a set of five fragments which alter modally depending on the ikon they are in. Note how the five fragments, when placed one after the other, form a palindrome:

Figure 63 - palindromic shape of the 'halo' fragments

Aside from these four main thematic sections, most of the movements contain a section which is peculiar to that movement and it is here that Tavener depicts musically what is portrayed in the text and the music therefore becomes more emotive.

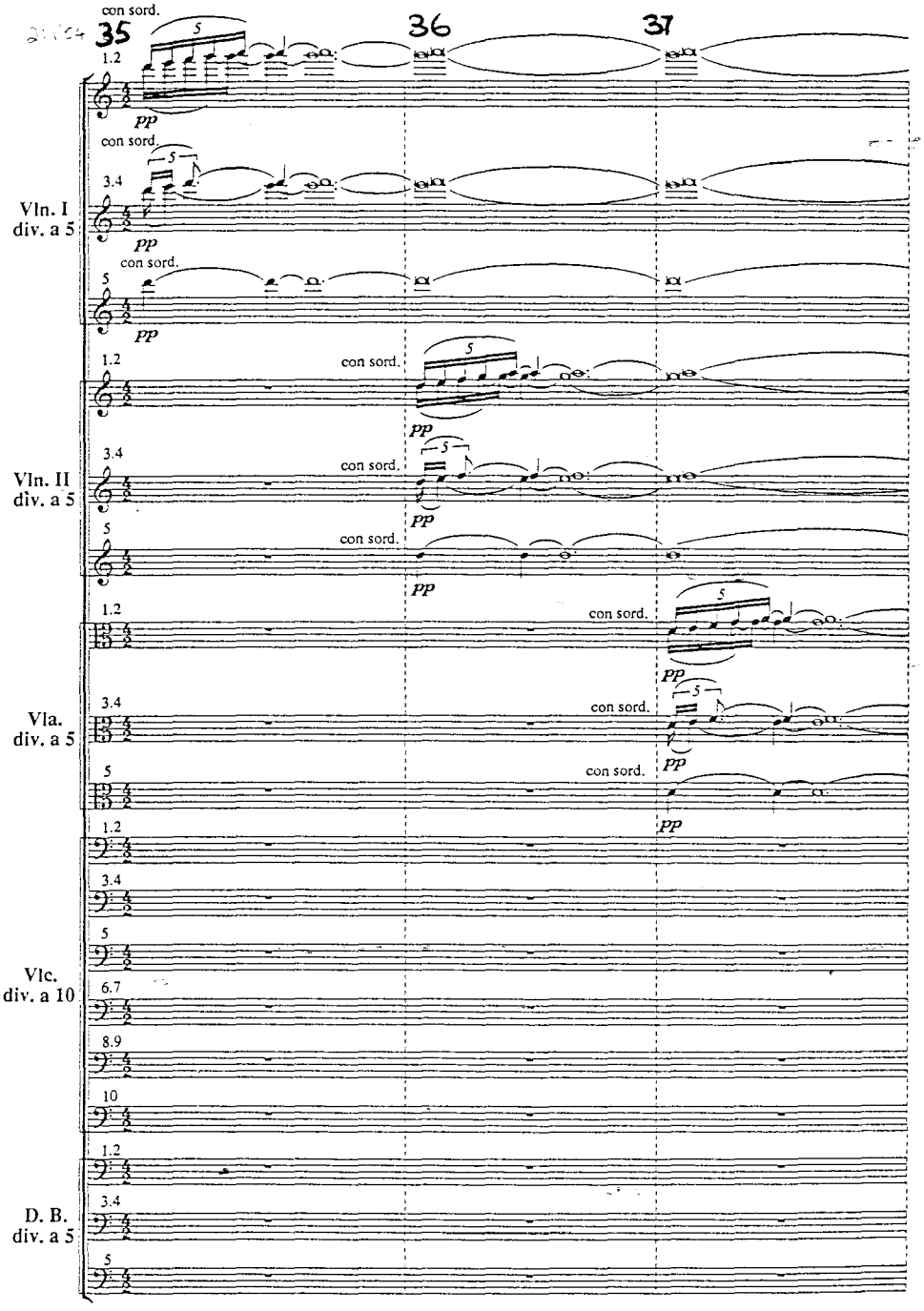

Figure 62 - first halo statement - ascending line

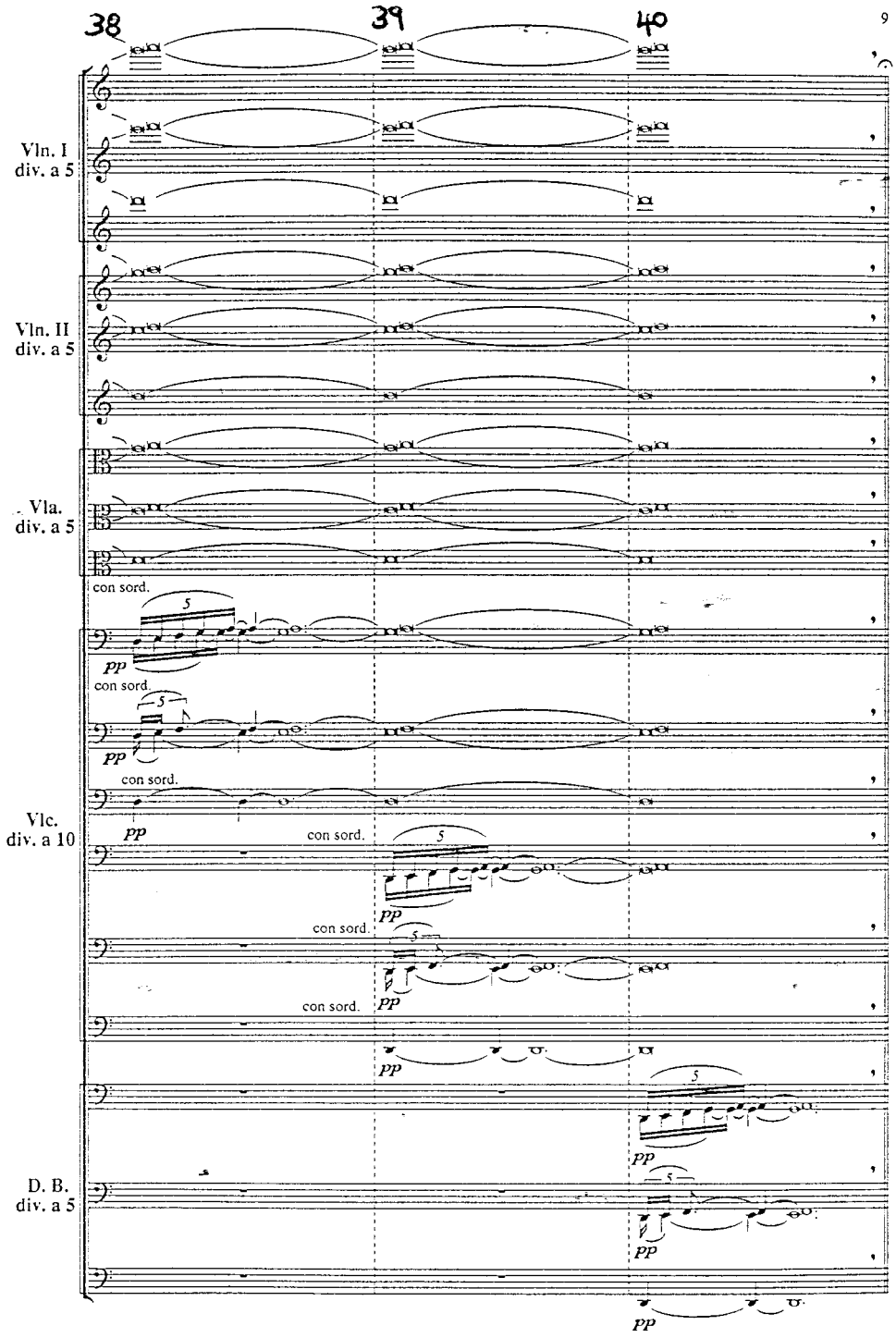

Figure 62 concluded

Second Movement: Ikon I

Following St John's theme, is a canon between three basses (two more provide an ison on D) which is sung in four phrases to the words "*Before time was. Time within, time beyond. Created, uncreated. Bodiless Body*":

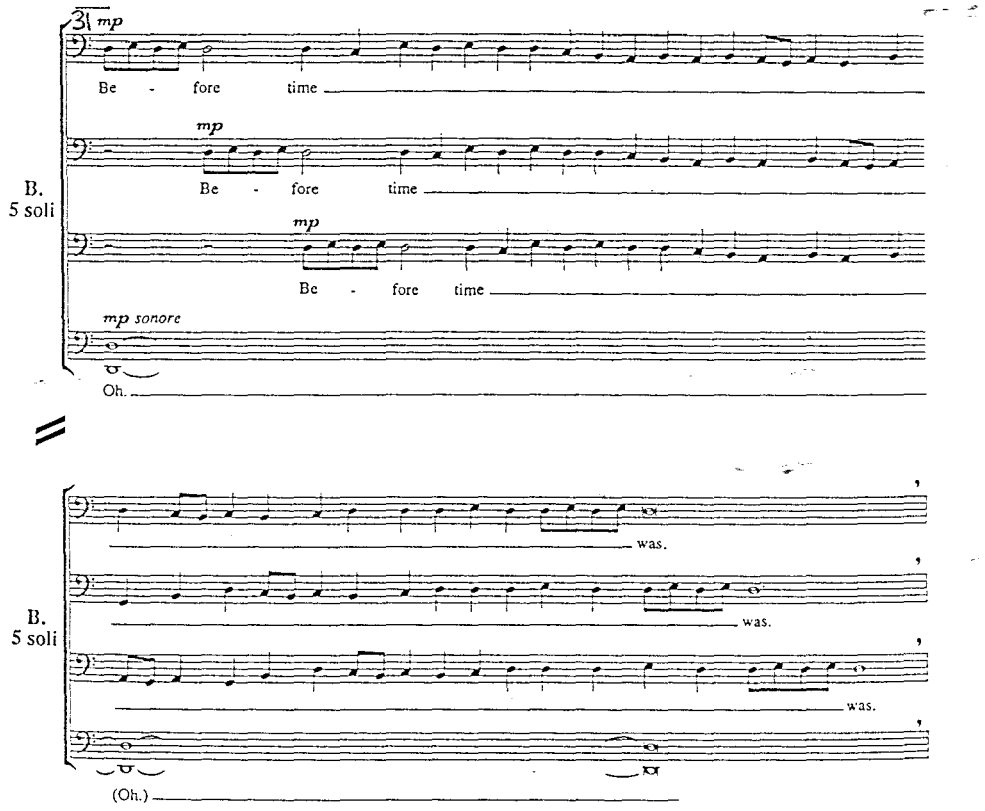

Figure 64 - canon

Although each of the four phrases are similar melodically and comprised mainly of crotchets, this section is distinctly more rhythmic than anything heard thus far. The canon is pitched low and is far removed from the ethereal sounds of both the refrain and echo. It is marked "primordial" and uses long rhythmic phrases made even more interesting by the overlapping of the parts. Perhaps the low range of this section reflects the stark, barren emptiness of "*before time*". The only other time that the canon is heard is in the last movement (although here it is only the first and fourth phrases and a different text: *"If I will that he tarry, what is that to me*?"), this mirrors the bridal chamber theme in which Tavener ends as he begins.

Third Movement: Ikon II

After the opening recitative by St John, the echo is extended into a section where the altos continue to sustain the D minor triad and the basses sing three phrases in thirds, each of which is echoed by the sopranos: "*The spirit, The spirit like a dove. Descends upon Him*":

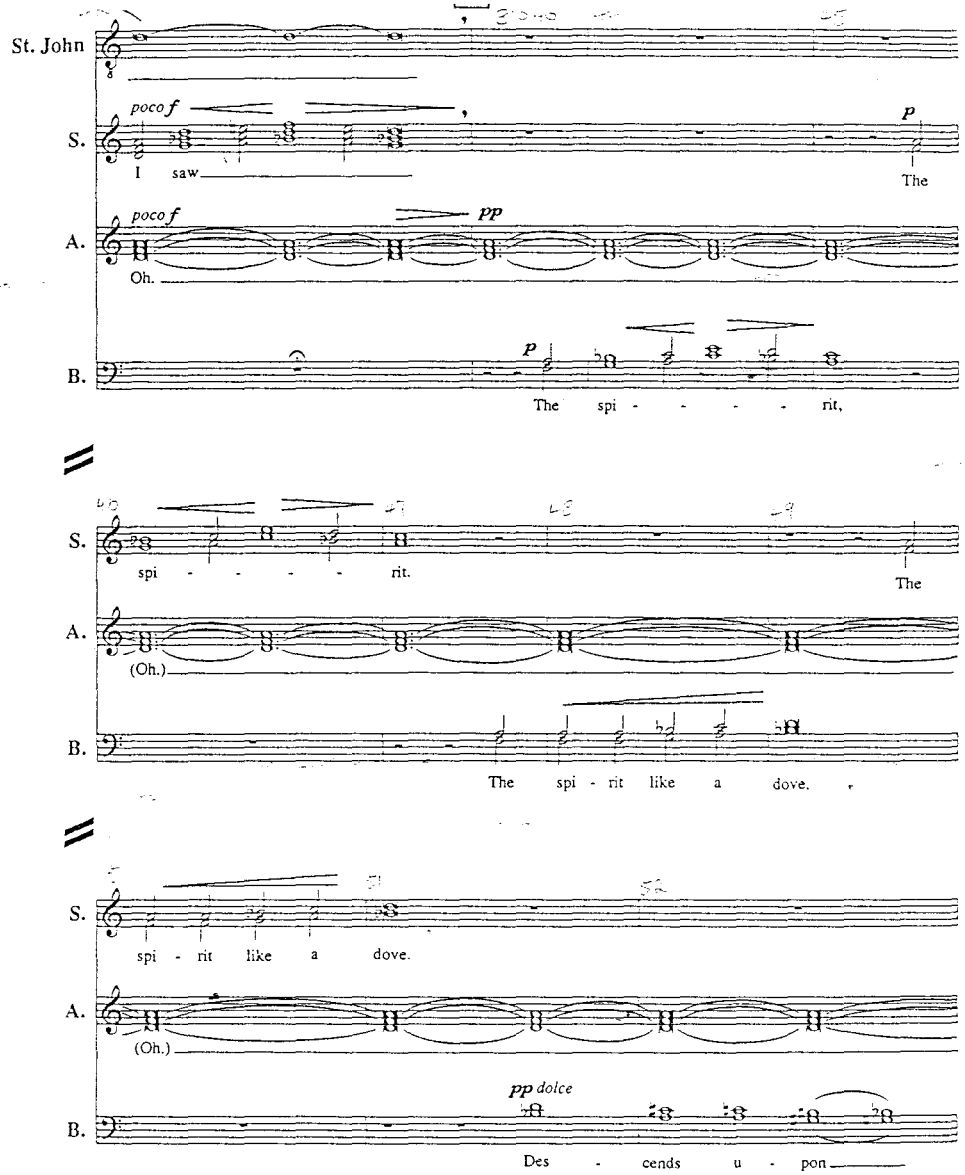

Figure 65 - 'the spirit like a dove'

This section is marked "serene and still" and is rather static. It is a moment of peace and tranquillity, due in part to the absence of any instruments. The melody of the last phrase descends chromatically to depict the Spirit descending upon Christ.

Fourth Movement: Ikon III

Ikon III is more than twice as long as any of the previous movements, and this is mainly due to the length of the new material that is introduced after St John's opening. The subject of this ikon is the wedding feast at Cana where Christ turned water into wine and here Tavener uses trumpets and timpani in a sudden and resounding fanfare to introduce the new section.

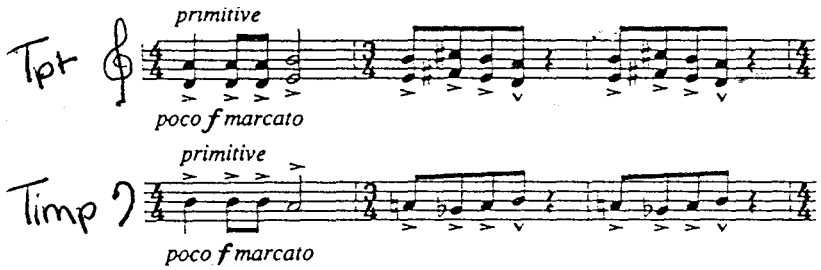

Figure 66 - fanfare

To create the atmosphere of a Middle Eastern celebration, Tavener uses two solo violins, which play descending chromatic trills two octaves apart. This line is imitated by tenor and soprano soloists (marked "primitive, peasant-like") who sing with Eastern melodic inflections - a particularly difficult passage! At the same time the sopranos, altos and tenors sing "*The marriage feast. They wanted wine.*" This section is fairly chromatic and with the 'breaks in the voice' hints at the subdivision of the octave into more than 12 tones as is characteristic of those countries. Although this music is clearly celebratory it also sounds rather frenzied. Elements of this section appear briefly in Ikons VII and X.

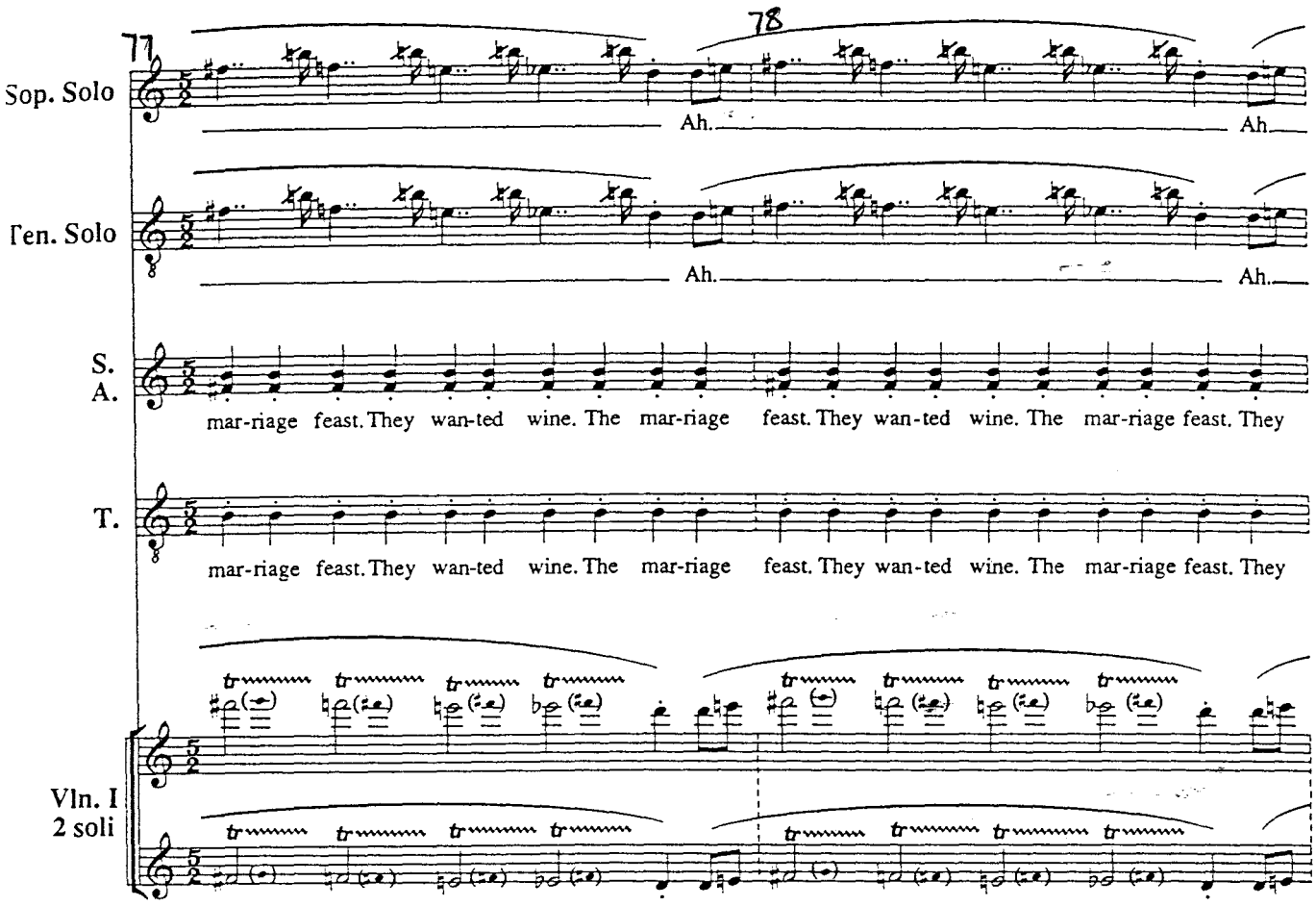

Figure 67 - wedding celebration

The fanfare alternates with the peasant-like passage where the text changes to "six water pots of stone" and "the water to wine". The music slows down at the words 'The good wine at the end' which rises in a crescendo to the first climax of the whole work focussing on the word 'end' (bars 112-113). This is an explosion of sound which combines all forces.

Tavener uses three elements in this "explosion":

1) the drone, which is now a D major chord in twenty-four parts played by the timpani, organ (seven parts), the double basses (three parts) and sung by the basses (ten parts),

2) the rising third motive found at the beginning of the work in the bridal chamber theme (D-E-F♯) is sung by the tenors, the altos (a third higher) and is also shared by two trumpets,

Figure 68 - D major outburst

3) the first fragment of the halo theme, sung in staggered order by the sopranos, altos, tenors and basses, and played by the violins, violas and cellos. In all there are 73 parts but the listener can hardly be aware of the separate elements. What is noticeable is the fact that this explosion is tonal and really stands apart; "... a sound from a completely different world; a blazing, Bach-like chord of D major" (Haydon,1995:236). The explosive D major chord dies away quickly.

Fifth Movement: Ikon IV

The subject of this ikon, the driving out of the sellers and animals from the Temple, is effectively realised though the music which conveys a strong feeling of anger. The strings and timpani burst in after St John's echo with fortissimo tremolos and melismatic figures played in unison by the strings which could suggest the lash of the cords (fig.69). This part vividly portrays the frightened and frenzied panic of the sellers and animals in the Temple.

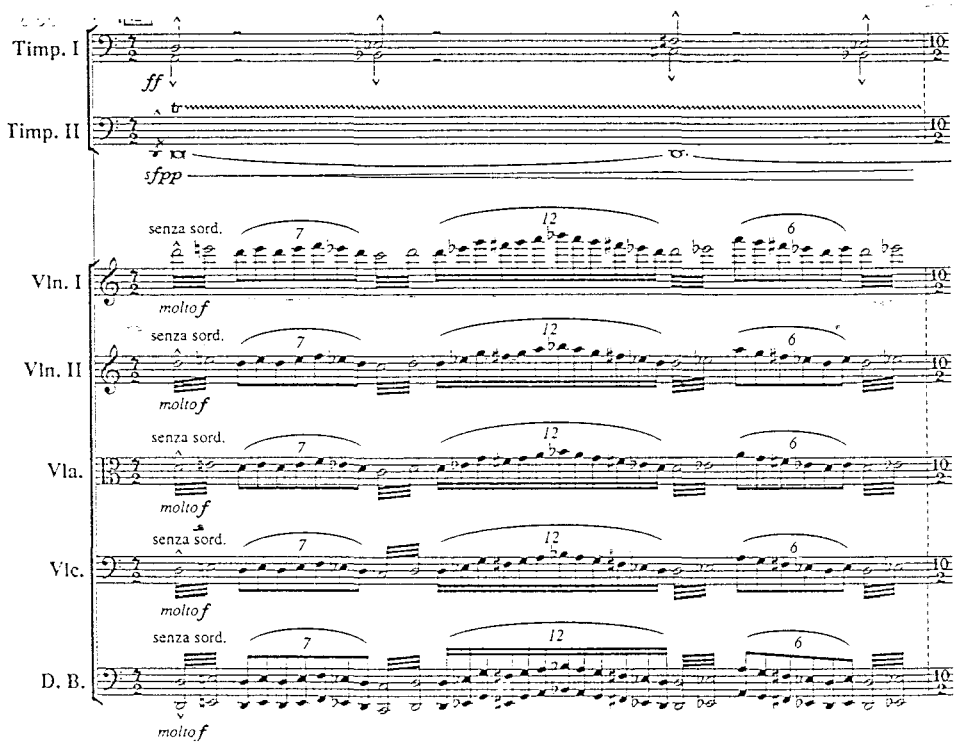

Figure 69 - lashing of cords

The chorus enters singing broad, slow phrases marked "very strong" to the words "The sheep, the oxen, the sellers of doves, zealously driven out". The "tremolo" passage is then heard again in retrograde, marking the end of a palindrome:

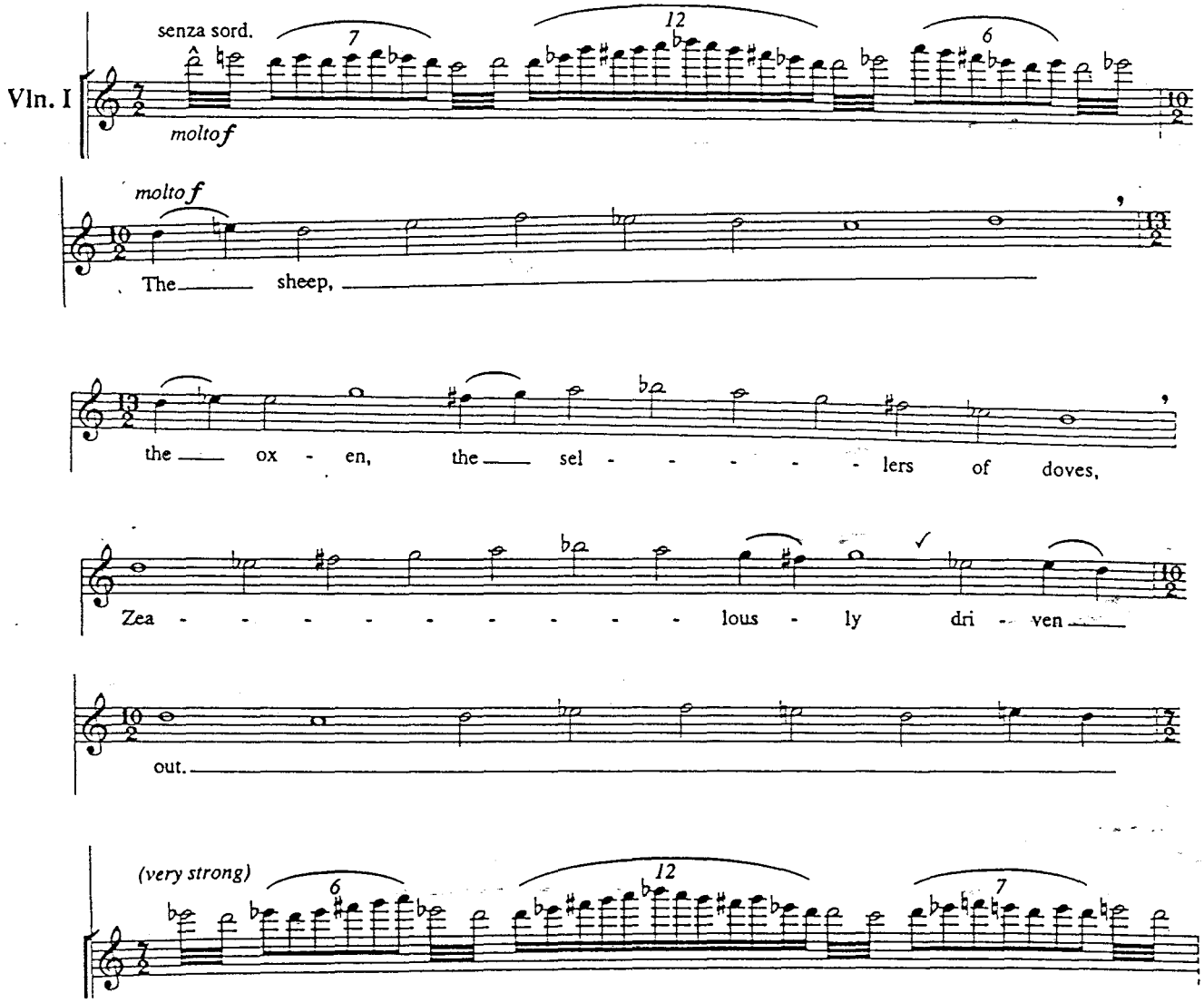

Figure 70 - palindrome for the cleansing of the Temple

There is a sudden change in mood, the eye of the storm, as St John sings the first two phrases of the bridal chamber theme to the words "*In my Father's House*" marked "with dignified pathos". This is significant as it is the only time the bridal chamber theme is sung, clearly revealing a connection between the Temple ("*My Father's House*") and the bridal chamber representing Heaven. This is followed by the first half of the palindrome to the words "*Scourge of small cords*", but this time sung and played pianissimo as if from a distance.

Sixth Movement: Ikon V

Ikon V is the longest movement in the work and deals not with a particular event in the life of Christ but rather with the concept of Christ as the Bridegroom. The new material here is forceful and sonorous but while the mood of the previous ikon was one of anger, here it is celebratory and triumphant, employing nearly all the available forces with the exception of the cellos, soloists and timpani II (fig.71). This passage is marked "Massive" and the phrases are now broad and slow, revealing a strong sense of tonality with the F major chord assuming the role of a temporary tonic and the C major chord as its dominant.

There are two layers here sung to the words "He that has the Bride, He is the Bridegroom":
i) a melody line - trumpet I, organ, sopranos, tenors, violin I and viola, doubled a third lower - trumpet II, organ, altos and violin II, and
ii) a bass line - timpani I, organ, basses and double basses. This passage also leads straight into the explosive D major chord, on the word "*groom*".

This passage occurs three times in this ikon which gives it added emphasis. In the third statement the range of the melody is expanded upwards by a third and the chords are also slightly altered creating a sense of forward progression and intensity.

These "Massive" sections, which make Ikon V the first climactic point in the work, reappear in Ikon X, the ultimate climax of the entire work. There are only two differences between the corresponding sections: on an instrumental level the timpani play rolls instead of single notes, and on a textual plane the words changes from Christ as the Bridegroom of Israel and the Church to Christ as the mediator between both men and women and between man and God: "*Behold thy Mother... Behold thy Son... Behold thy Mother*".

Figure 71 - the bridegroom

Seventh Movement: Ikon VI

This ikon deals with the Samaritan woman at the well and provides emotional respite from the full, declamatory style of the previous three ikons. Following St John's passage (this is now extended to its fullest and is the last time that it appears at the start of a movement), there are five minutes of gentle melody sung by a solo soprano interspersed with a "tender, lilting fragment for solo violin" (Burn,1992:4).

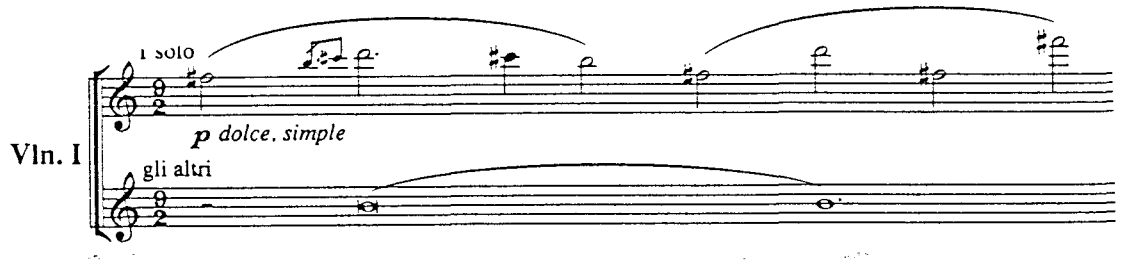

Figure 72 - violin fragment

The manner in which the soprano sings is similar to that of St John, and is marked "very still - remembering" and "freely, in Byzantine style". There are five long lines which the soprano sings to the words "*Give me to drink... Water from the well... Five husbands... None... Pure water*". The first long line is a variation on the bridal chamber theme:

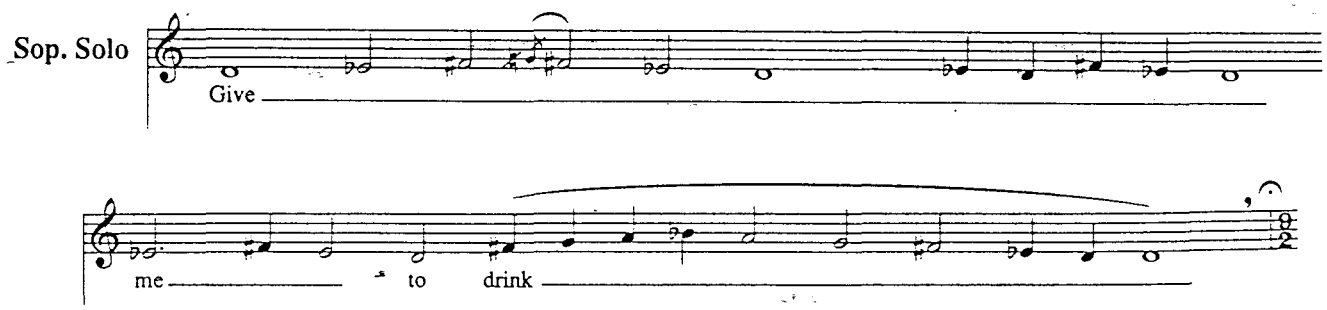

Figure 73 - Samaritan woman

This line together with the third and fifth lines are accompanied by a drone on D by the violins[58]. In the second and fourth lines the violins move away from the drone mainly following the vocal line and sustaining certain pitches from it, ending on a unison. The compass of the soprano part is extremely wide, two and a half octaves:

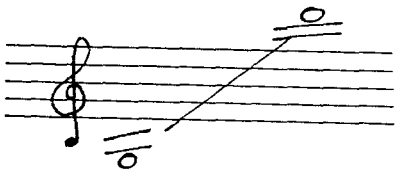

Figure 74 - soprano compass

Most of the melody is within the lower octave which would conventionally have been given to an alto voice, this reflects the woman's low position in life and it is only in the last phrase, *"pure water"*, that the melody (and her spirit) is released from its low range and allowed to float to the higher notes:

Figure 75 - redemption

[58] There is one brief deviation in the first line and in fifth line, which is the longest, the drone moves from D through A to D an octave higher.

Eighth Movement: Ikon VII

There is no break between Ikons VI and VII (the printed score actually omits the label "Ikon VII" at this point). Ikon VII deals with the healing of the lame, and here the chorus, alternating with St John, sings four phrases "a multitude of blind, withered, lame... They waited at the pool... impotent leaping... Take up thy bed". The fanfare from the wedding ikon appears before each choral statement - the first time it is heard by three double bass solos playing harmonics:

St John sings above the chromatic figures from the 'wedding' and 'woman by the well' ikons ;but when he reaches the lines 'take up thy bed and walk', the strings and chorus take on rising thirds to depict the lame rising up and walking.

Figure 76 - the lame

Ninth Movement: Ikon VIII

St John's text changes from the usual 'I heard' or 'I saw' to 'Eat His flesh... Drink His blood... But: one shall betray me' and the change in tone is conveyed by the line being sung quietly and expectantly an octave lower, creating a strong sense of impending doom.

Tenth Movement: Ikon IX

Again the chorus alternates with St John (who reverts back to the usual passage singing 'I saw'). The chorus sing 'The Cross... His body crucified... The Blood... The Water' usually doubled by two of the strings. The text is blunt and the images brief but clear as if being witnessed by someone in shock.

Eleventh Movement: The Tomb

This is the shortest movement in the work, lasting only about one minute. The beginning is extremely quiet, almost inaudible (fig.77). The first violins play a line which resembles the first part of the refrain - 'We Shall See Him As He Is'. The line is only six notes in length and the second violin enters in canon with the third note.

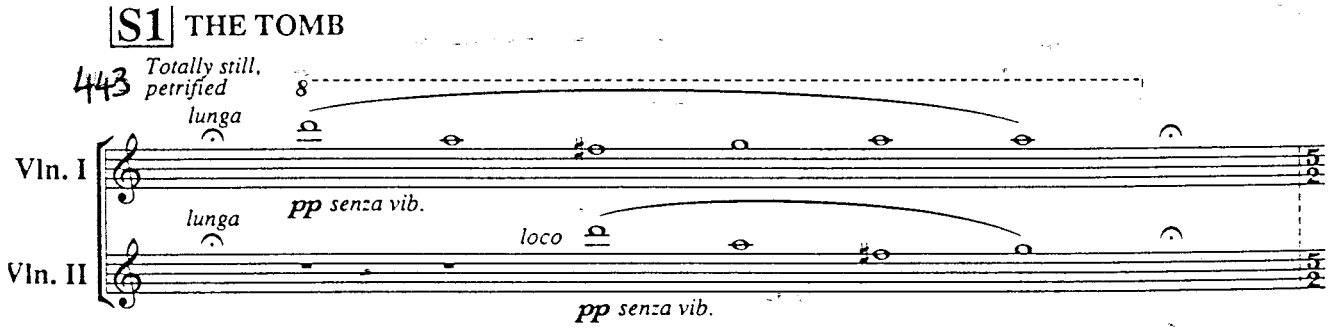

Figure 77 - the tomb

This is marked 'totally still, petrified' and the effect is certainly quite eerie and unearthly. After the pause there is a complete change in mood as the resurrection is discovered:

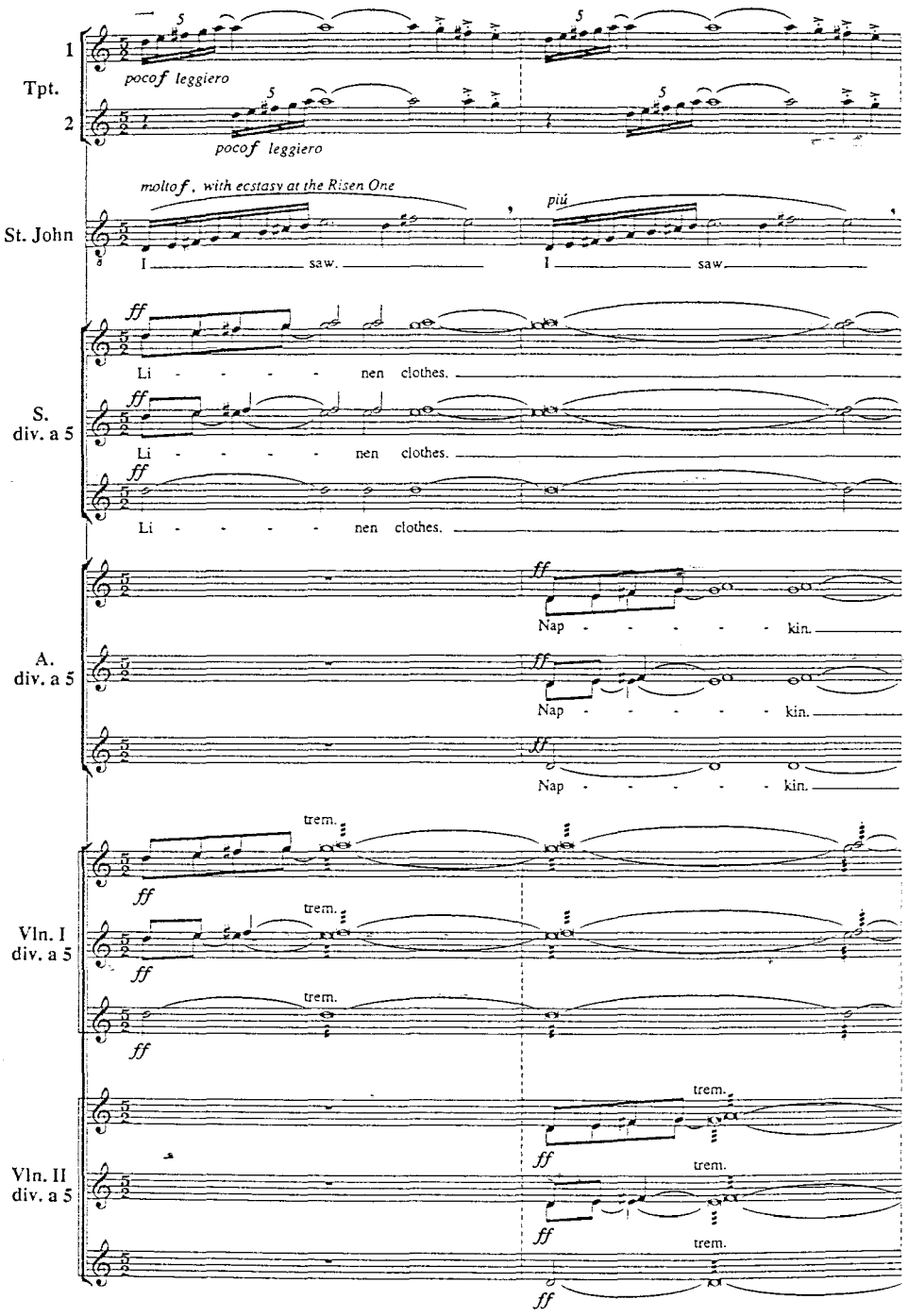

Figure 78 - the resurrection

This section resembles the explosive D major chord but one can hear more clearly the individual elements and the sound does not die away as quickly. Tavener leaves out the timpani and organ here probably so as not to drown the words, particularly St John's part. The resurrection is depicted by the rising lines and the effect is joyful and ecstatic.

Twelfth Movement: Ikon X

This is the climax of the entire work and has been discussed earlier, see page 81.

Thirteenth Movement: Ikon XI

Following the canon and halo sections, St John sings a particularly uplifting passage to choral accompaniment marked 'with the deepest, quietest longing'. His part is a simple rising and falling six-note line but with much micro-tonal decoration reflecting his sheer wonder and joy. This line is sung twice, doubled and a third lower by the voices, to the words "*Come Lord Jesus, come*" and "*Even so*".

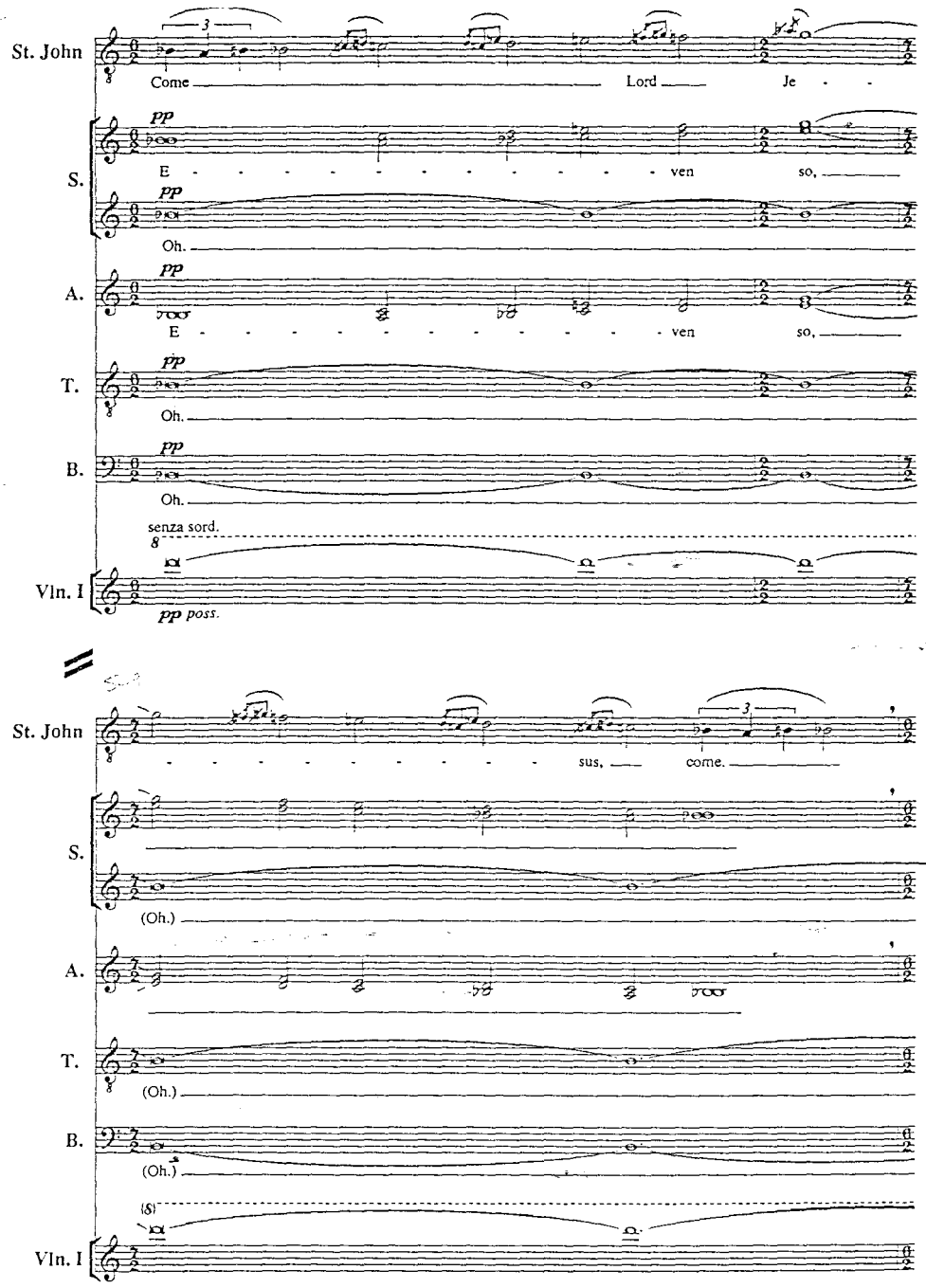

Figure 79 - ecstatic

As a fitting conclusion, just prior to bridal chamber theme, St John sings "*We shall see Him as He is*". This is the first and only time that the title phrase is sung in English, the melody resembles that of the refrain, and is sung in unison with basses and sopranos while the remaining voices provide the drone:

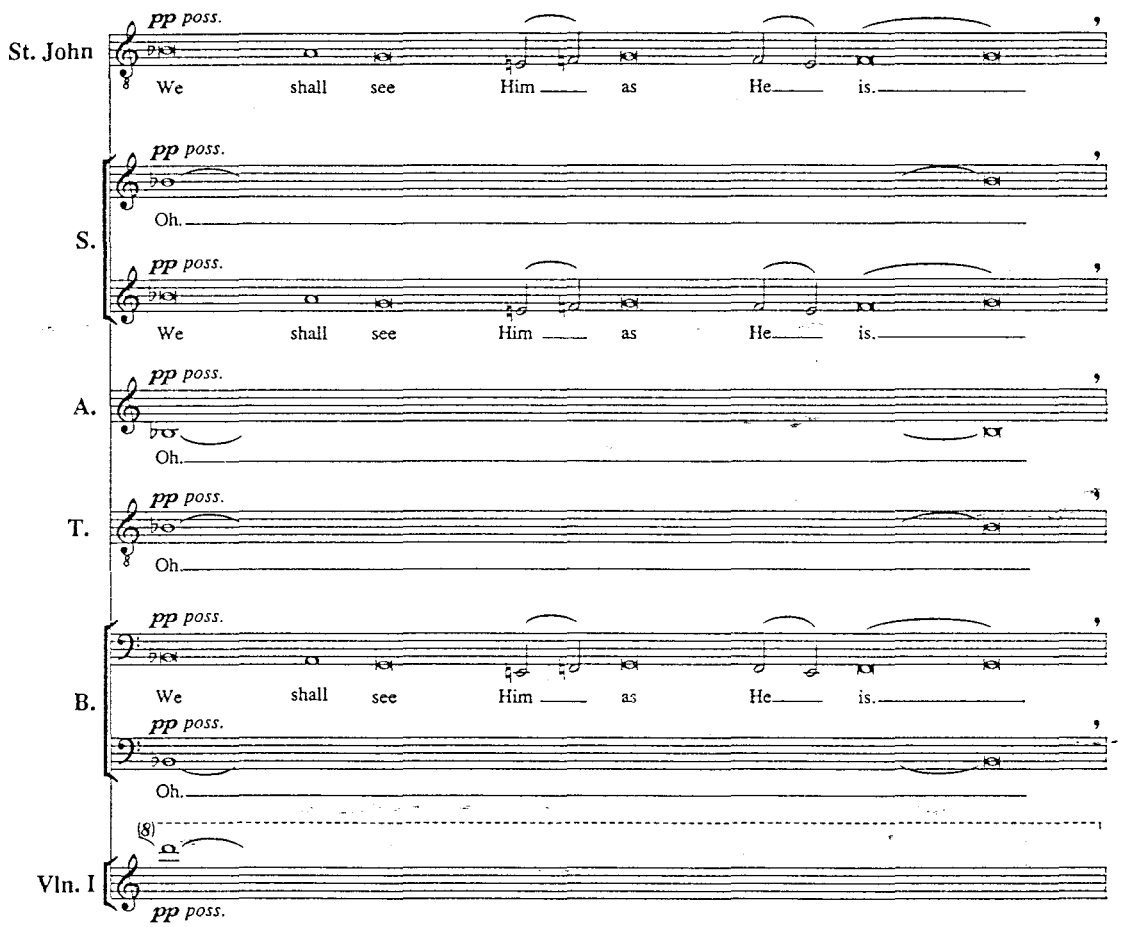

Figure 80 - We shall see Him as He is

In *We Shall See Him As He Is* Tavener shows great freedom in his use of Byzantine music, yet at the same time it remains a tightly controlled work.

Byzantine music tends to sound homogenous to Western listeners, being designed for calm, quiet reverence rather than emotional display. Tavener has managed to bend, ply and twist the style in order to reflect a variety of emotions and moods but without losing its identity. For instance in his use of modes, which were originally used one at a time on a weekly cycle, Tavener not only creates a new mode (the "hybrid" mode), but combines four modes in one work to maintain interest and create a sense of forward progression.

However Tavener never strays from the focal pitch of D thus using the modes in a controlled manner. This is also seen in the use of the ison, believed to be the fundamental basis of Byzantine singing. This is allowed to move with some freedom and is intensified by the formation of chord clusters. Despite these alterations, the ison continues to serve as an element or characteristic feature of the Byzantine style.

A feeling of unity is created by the use of recurring thematic sections which also relfects to a certain extent the "homogenous" feel of the style. Tavener's blending of old and new elements is highly successful, seen most clearly in the orchestration of this work. At times the instrumental aspect would not sound out of place in a traditional Byzantine service, for instance the Bridal Chamber theme, which is scored for varying numbers of cellos, has a distinctly spiritual sound. In contrast to this are those sections which combine all voices and instruments which provide focal points in the work.

CONCLUSION

Tavener is a prolific composer who has, in recent years, assisted considerably in re-establishing the English choral tradition which has been largely dormant since the sixteenth century. His large output serves both the church and concert hall as well as both professional and amateur choirs, and, like Arvo Pärt in Eastern Europe, Tavener has already established himself as a dominant figure in contemporary music.

His belief that music must serve a purpose is a philosophy inspired by the ikon paintings of the Orthodox Church which are designed to evoke a state of veneration in followers of the Orthodox faith. Tavener's music, however, reaches a far wider audience than the idiosyncratic style of his works would suggest and he deliberately makes use of symbolism and ritual which is identifiable to a diverse range of beliefs.

His attempts to create 'ikons in sound' result in contrasting sections which are juxtaposed without any modulatory or bridging passages, and the writing of long, flowing melodies rather than chords. Many of the texts that Tavener sets, reflect the unemotional nature of the ikon in the sparse number of words used, which allows the music to present the listener with the ethos of the subject rather than mere depiction.

Much of his music exemplifies genuine sincerity, purity and inner tranquillity as well as heartfelt consolation to its listeners, two aspects sorely needed in our torn and troubled world. As Tavener says:

> It might be possible to reinstate the Sacred into the world of the imagination. Without this happening, I believe that art will continue to slither into a world of abstraction, into being purely self-referential, a sterile and meaningless activity of interest only to the artist and possibly 'Brother Criticus'. All great civilizations, except the present one, have understood this as a matter of course. We live in abnormal times; as Andre Malraux has said: 'Either the twenty-first century will not exist at all, or it will be a holy century' (Moody, 1994:XI).

APPENDIX A - Texts of post 1977 works discussed in detail in this thesis

ODE OF ST ANDREW OF CRETE (1981)

from the Great Canon by St Andrew of Crete, translated by Mother Thekla

IRMOS:

My help and protector is my God
And I will proclaim His Glory
He is the God of my Father
And I will exalt His majesty
For He hath made His glory to triumph

TROPARIA:

Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me.
Where shall I make my beginning to mourn the deeds of my wretched life? What first-fruits shall I lay down, O Christ, to this my present weeping? But, as thou art merciful, grant me forgiveness of sin.

Eléisón me, O Theós, Eléisón me.
Come, wretched soul, with thy flesh, confess to the Maker of all: and, from now, leave thy past folly and bring tears of repentance to God.

Pomilui mia, Bóge, Pomilui mia.
I rivalled, in transgression, Adam first-created, and I knew myself naked of God, of the everlasting Kingdom, and of the delight, because of my sins.

Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me.
Alas unto me, wretched soul! How like thou art to the first Eve! Evil thou saw, and were grievously wounded, and the tree thou touched, and recklessly tasted the food of folly.

Eléisón me, O Theós, Eléisón me.
Instead of Eve of the flesh, I have Eve of the mind, in thought of sensual passion, seemingly sweet, but ever tasting, of the bitter down-gulping.

Pomilui mia, Bóge, Pomilui mia.
Adam was justly banished from Eden, O Saviour, for not keeping one commandment of thine: What then shall I suffer, ever thrusting aside they words of life?

Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me.
I have walked in the footsteps of blood-thirsty Cain, by deliberate choice, giving life to the flesh, becoming the murderer, of the conscience of my soul, and warring upon it by my evil deeds.

Eléisón me, O Theós, Eléisón me.
I have not resembled Abel, O Jesus, in righteousness: I have never brought three fitting gifts, nor godly deeds, neither offering pure, nor a life unblemished.

Pomilui mia, Bóge, Pomilui mia.
As Cain, so art we, o wretched soul, together we have offered to the Maker of all, deeds defiled and sacrifice polluted, and a worthless life: for this we stand condemned.

Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me.
As the potter the clay, moulding life, thou informed me with flesh and with bones, with breath and with life. But my Creator, my Redeemer, and Judge, accept me repentant.

Eléisón me, O Theós, Eléisón me.
I speak out to thee O Saviour, the sins I have committed, and the wounds of my soul and body, inflicted upon me by murderous thoughts, of foot-pads within.

Pomilui mia, Bóge, Pomilui mia.
Although I have sinned, O Saviour, yet I know that thou art lover of man: thy chastisement is merciful, and fervent thy compassion: thou dost see the tears and hasten, as the Father, calling the Prodigal.

Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me.
As I lie, O Saviour, before thy gate, even in the time of old age, cast me not out empty into Hell: but before the end, as lover of man, grant me forgiveness of sins.

Eléisón me, O Theós, Eléisón me.
I have fallen among thieves, thought of my own: now I am wounded by them all over, battered and bruised. But come to me, thyself, Christ Saviour, to heal me.

Pomilui mia, Bóge, Pomilui mia.
The priest seeing me, passed me by, and the Levite, looking on my distress, disdained my nakedness. But, Jesus, risen of Mary, come thou to have pity upon me.

Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me.
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of all, take from me the burdensome collar of sin, and, as thou art compassionate grant to me forgiveness of trespasses.

Eléisón me, O Theós, Eléisón me.
The time of repentance, and I come to thee my Maker: take from me the burdensome collar of sin, and as thou art compassionate grant to me forgiveness of trespasses.

Pomilui mia, Bóge, Pomilui mia.
Do not abhor me, O Saviour, nor thrust me away from they face, take from me the burdensome collar of sin, and as thou art compassionate grant to me forgiveness of trespasses.

Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me.
As thou art God, forgive all my sins, O Saviour, voluntary and involuntary, manifest and hidden, known and unknown, and save me.

Eléisón me, O Theós, Eléisón me.
From my youth, O Saviour, I have transgressed thy commandments, heedless and in idleness, my whole life passed in passion: So, I cry unto thee, O Saviour, even now, at the end save me.

Pomilui mia, Bóge, Pomilui mia.
I have squandered the substance of my soul, in riotous living, I am empty of godly fruits: and hungry, I cry: O merciful Father, prevent and have pity upon me.

Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me.
I fall down, Jesus, at thy feet: I have sinned against thee, be merciful to me, take from me the burdensome collar of sin, and as thou art compassionate grant to me tears of contrition.

Eléisón me, O Theós, Eléisón me.
Enter not into judgment with me, bringing forward my actions, probing my words, correcting my spurts of self-will: but in thy compassion, looking upon my terrors, save me all-powerful.

IRMOS:
My help and protector is my God
And I will proclaim His Glory
He is the God of my Father
And I will exalt His majesty
For He hath made His glory to triumph

A HYMN TO THE MOTHER OF GOD (1985)
from Liturgy of St Basil

In You, O Woman full of Grace, the angelic choirs, and the human race all creation rejoices. O sanctified Temple, mystical Paradise, and glory of Virgins. In You, O Woman full of Grace, all creation rejoices. All praise be to You.

HYMN FOR THE DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD (1985)
from the Vigil Service of the Dormition of the Mother of God

O ye apostles, assembled here from the ends of the earth, bury my body in Gethsemane: and Thou my Son and God, receive my Spirit.

MAGNIFICAT AND NUNC DIMITTIS (1986)
Biblical canticles

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
Greater in honour than the cherubim, and glorious incomparably more than the seraphim; thou who inviolate didst bring forth God the Word, and art indeed the Mother of God: thee do we magnify.
For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden. For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is his Name. And his mercy is on them that fear him, throughout all generations.

He hath showed strngth with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He rememb'ring his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel, as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

THE UNCREATED EROS (1988)

Taken from Genesis

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept. And He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib, which the Lord God hath taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man: And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man". And they were both naked, the man and his wife and were not ashamed.

EONIA (1989)

haiku by George Seferis, free verse by Mother Thekla

Eéte vradhiázee
eéte féngee
ménee lefkò
*to(h) ghiasemée.**
He asked for bread and we gave Him a stone... Do whatsoever He bids you.
Góspodee poméelooe˘e Góspodee poméelooe˘e Góspodee poméelooe˘e (Lord, have mercy)
Remember me...the thief exclaimed...The house where I was born...This night in Paradise.
Eéte vradhiázee
eéte féngee
ménee lefkò
to(h) ghiasemée.

* "Whether it's dusk
or dawn's first light
the jasmin stays
always white.

WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS

adapted by Mother Thekla from the Gospel of St John

Refrain
Óti opsómetha avtòn kathós éstin (For we shall see Him as He is)
Amen érkhoo kyrie lesó (Amen: come, Lord Jesus)

Ikon I
I heard: Before time was. Time within. Time beyond. Created. Uncreated. Bodiless Body.

Ikon II
I saw: The spirit. The spirit like a dove Descend upon Him.

Ikon III
I saw: The marriage feast. The wanted wine. Six water-pots of stone. Water to wine. The good wine at the end.

Refrain

Ikon IV
I saw: The sheep, the oxen, the sellers of doves. Zealously driven out. In my Father's House. Scourge of small cords.

Ikon V
I heard: He that has the Bride. He is the Bridegroom. Come... come... come... come.

Refrain

Ikon VI
I heard: Give me to drink. Water from the well. Five husbands. Non. Pure water.

Ikon VII
I saw: A multitude of blind, withered, lame. They waited at the pool. I saw. I saw. Impotent leaping! Take up thy bed and walk.

Refrain

Ikon VIII
I heard: Eat His flesh. Drink His blood. But: one shall betray me.

Ikon X
I saw: The Cross. His body crucified. The Blood. The Water. Linen clothes. Napkin.

Ikon X
Behold Thy Mother! Come... come... come... come...
Óti opsómetha avtòn kathós éstin (For we shall see Him as He is)
Behold Thy Son! Come... come... come... come...
Óti opsómetha avtòn kathós éstin (For we shall see Him as He is)
Behold Thy Mother! Come... come... come... come...
Óti opsómetha avtòn kathós éstin (For we shall see Him as He is)

Ikon XI
If I will that he tarry. What is that to me? Even so. Come, Lord Jesus. Even so.
We shall see Him as He is.

Appendix B : Chronological list of compositions *
(sacred choral works in bold)

1961 *Duo Concertant* - trombone and piano
Portrait d'une Jeune Fille et l'Harpe - harp, organ, violin
Credo - tenor solo, chorus, narrator, oboes, brass, organ
1962 *Elegy In Memoriam Frank Salisbury* - violin solo and string quartet
Genesis - tenor solo, chorus, narrator, brass, percussion, organ, piano, string quartet
Piano Concerto (1962-3) - piano solo, horns, percussion, strings
1963 *Three sections from T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets* - high voice and piano
1964 *The Cappemakers* (revised 1965) - narrators, soloists, chorus, orchestra
Three Holy Sonnets of John Donne - baritone solo, brass, percussion, strings
1965 *Cain and Abel* - 4 solo voices and orchestra
Chamber Concerto (revised 1968) - small orchestra
The Whale (1965-6) - mezzo and baritone solloists, chorus, narrator, orchestra, tape, men with loud haliers
1967 *Grandma's Footsteps* - musical boxes and instrumentalists
Three Surrealist Songs - mezzo-soprano, tape, piano, bonbo dru;ms
1968 *Introit for March 27, the Feast of St John Damascene* - soprano and alto solloists, chorus, brass, piano, vibraphone, organ, strings
In Alium - high soprano solo, Hammond organ, grand organ, piano, strings, tape
1969 *Celtic Requiem* (1968-9) - high soprano solo, children's chorus, adult chorus, orchestra
1970 *Nomine Jesu* - mezzo solo, chorus, 2 alto flutes, chamber organ, 5 male speaking voices
Coplas - S.A.T.B. soloists, chorus, tape
1971 *Responsoruim in Memory of Annon Lee Silver* - 2 mezzo soloists, chorus, flutes
In Memoriam Igor Stravinsky - 2 alto flutes, chamber organ, handbells
1972 *Variations on Three Blonid Mice* - orchestra
Ma Fin est Mon Commemcement - chorus, trombones, percussion, cellos
Little Requiem for Father Malachy Lynch - chorus, flutes, trumpet, organ, strings
Canciones Españolas - 2 high voices, flutes, organ, harpsichord, percussion
Ultimos Ritos - mezzo solo, 12 basses, S.A.T.B. soloists, 5 male speaking voices, chorus, orchestra, tape
Antiphon for Christmas Morning - soprano voices
1973 *Requiem for Father Malachy* (revised 1979) - soloists, chorus, orchestra
Thérèse (1973-6) - soprano, bass and 2 tenor soloists, chorus, children's chorus, orchestra
1976 *Canticle of the Mother of God* - soprano solo and chorus
1977 *A Gentle Spirit* - soprano and tenor soloists, orchestra, tape
The Liturgy of St John Chrysostom - priest and chorus
Six Russian Folk Songs - soprano solo, domra, orchestra
Kyklike Kinesis - soprano and cello soloists, chorus, orchestra
Palin - piano solo
Lamentation, Last Prayer and Exaltation - soprano solo and hanbells
1978 *Palintropos* - piano solo and orchestra
The Immurement of Antigone - soprano solo and orchestra
1979 *Greek Interlude* - flute and piano
Six Abbasid Songs - tenor solo, floutes, percussion
Akhmatova: Requiem (1979-80) - soprano and bass soloists, orchestra

1980 *Sappho: Lyrical Fragments* - 2 soprano soloists and string orchestra
My Grandfather's Waltz - piano duet
1981 ***The Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete*** - chorus
Trisagion - brass quintet
Prayer for the World - chorus
Mandelion - organ solo
Risen - chorus and orchestra
Funeral Ikos - chorus
1982 *Towards the Son* - 4 bowed pslateries, 3 trebles, orchestra
Doxa - chorus
The Lord's Prayer - chorus
Mandoodles - young pianist
He Hath Entered the Heven - Trebles with handbells
The Lamb - chorus
1983 *To a Child Dancing in the Wind* - soprano, flute harp, viola
Sixteen Haiku of Seferis - soprano and tenor soloists, percussion, strings
Ikon of light - chorus and string trio
1984 *Little Missenden Calm* - oboe, clarinet bassoon, horn
Chant - guitar
Mini Song Cycle for Gina - soprano and piano
Orthodox Vigil Service - priests, chorus, handbells
1985 *Eis Thanaton* - soprano and bass soloists, bass trombones, harp, percussion, strings
Two Hymns to the Mother of God - chorus
Angels - chorus
1986 ***Panikhida*** - chorus
Akathist of Thanksgiving - soloists, chorus, percussion, organ, strings
Ikon of St Cuthbert of Lindisfarne - chorus
In Memory of Cats - piano
Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis - chorus
1987 *The Protecting Veil* - cello solo and string orchestra
The Tiger - chorus
Let Not the Prince Be Silent - double chorus
Prayer for Szymanowski - bass solo and piano
Wedding Prayer - chorus
Many Years - chorus
The Acclamation - chorus
God Is With Us - chorus and organ
Hymn to the Holy Spirit - chorus
1988 ***Ikon of St Seraphim*** - baritone and couter-tenor soloists, chorus, orchestra
The Uncreated Eros - chorus
Apolytikion for St Nicholas - chorus
The Call - chorus
Song for Ileana - flute
A Nativity Carol - girl's chorus
Resurrection - soloists, chorus, recorders, brass, percussion, organ, string quartet
Ikon of the Crucifixion - soloists, chorus, brass, percussion, organ, strings
1989 *The Hidden Treasure* - string quartet

Lament of the Mother of God - soprano solo and chorus
Wedding Greeting - tenor solo and chorus
Eonia - chorus
Mary of Egypt (finally complete) - soprano, bass and alto soloists, chorus, children's chorus, orchestra, tape loop
Psalm 121 - chorus
Today the Virgin - chorus

1990 *The Repentatn Thief* - clarinet solo, percussion, strings
Thunder Entered Her - chorus, organ, male voices, handbell
Ikon of the Trinity - chorus
We Shall See Him As He Is - tenor and soprano soloists, chorus, trumpets, percussion, organ, strings
O, Do Not Move - chorus
A Christmas Round - chorus
Thrinos - cello

1991 *The Apocalypse* (1991-2) - tenor, bass, soprano, mezzo and saxophone soloists, 7 male-voice choirs, 7 counter-tenors, children's choir, recorders, brass, percussion, handbells, organ, strings, string quartet
The Last Sleep of the Virgin - strings quartet and handbells
Ikon of the Nativity - chorus
Let's Begin Again (1991-4) - bass solo, chorus, orchestra, children miming
Eternal Memory - cello solo and string orchestra
Village Wedding - chorus

1992 ***Annunciation*** - SATB soloists and chorus
The Child Lived - soprano and cello
Akhmatova Songs - soprano and cello
Theophany (1992-3) - orchestra, bandir drum, tape
Hymns of Paradise - bass solo, boys' voices, 6 violins

1993 *The Myrrh Bearer* - viola solo, chorus, percussion
The Lord's Prayer - chorus
Song for Athene - chorus
The World is Burning - bass solo, chorus, tam-tam

1994 *Melina* - soprano solo

Works in progress from 1995
Agraphon - soprano solo, percussion, strings
Chronia Polla - men's voices
Innocence - Soprano and cello soloists,chorus, organ
Lament for Phaedra - soprano and cello
Song of the Angel - for soprano solo and strings
Svyaty - Russian choir and cello
Three Antiphons - chorus
The Toll Houses - a metaphysical pantomime

* taken from Haydon,1995:285-288

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