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THEMES OF LOSS IN THE CELLO MUSIC OF PETER SCULTHORPE

Master of Music

Canberra School of Music

Institute of the Arts

Australian National University

April 1995

Thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music (Performance), at the Canberra School of Music, Institute of the Arts Australian National University.

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institution of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

..Allan Hall..... (signature) ..23/3/95.... (date)

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THEMES OF LOSS IN THE CELLO MUSIC OF PETER SCULTHORPE

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

This is a sub-thesis about the Cello Music of Peter Sculthorpe and this Australian composer's use of certain types of subject matter in his music. Many major works of Peter Sculthorpe relate to the losing of something. The something in question could be of a personal nature to Sculthorpe, or the destruction of part of the Australian continent or its culture. These themes of loss which seem to be prevalent in a wide range of Sculthorpe's music are investigated. This sub-thesis discusses how these ideas of loss have been handled within the compositions. This latter aspect involves information provided by Peter Sculthorpe.

There are several chapters in this sub-thesis, but overall, the text is organised into three main sections - Introduction, Central Discourse, and Conclusion. The Introduction defines the central argument of the sub-thesis. It also introduces the cello pieces, and any related works of Sculthorpe's which are being discussed, and explains the methodology used in treating material in the Central Discourse.

The Central Discourse discusses the main cello pieces im relation to Melody, Harmony and Rhythm and relates these to the theme of loss. The Conclusion recapitulates and summarises the argument and the evidence.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter contains general background to the topic of the sub-thesis, a statement of the central argument of the work and comment on aspects of the methodology used to illustrate the central argument.

1.1 Background

Why choose Peter Sculthorpe? The main reason is that he is an Australian composer with world wide prominence. Another reason, from my point of view, is that he has written a number of works for the cello which may include themes of loss.

A significant part of this sub-thesis is about Sculthorpe's attitude to the cello. As a cellist, I find this important. All of the themes in the cello works by Sculthorpe seem to deal with some form of mourning or lamentation. Efforts are made here to examine whether Sculthorpe finds this instrument one of the more ideal ones suitable for the performing of these themes of loss. Sculthorpe's evident

interest in connecting the idea of loss with the expressive capabilities of the instrument are considered.

A short list of works by Sculthorpe that are discussed and examined in this sub-thesis are *Irkanda 4, Lament for Strings, Requiem for Cello, Threnody for Cello, Song of Tailitnama,* and *Djilile.* These pieces all have in them varying elements of tragedy and sadness. In one case, one theme has been used for two different purposes. Although *Threnody* is based on the opening theme of *Kakadu,* the two pieces describe entirely different types of emotions. *Kakadu* describes Sculthorpe's feelings for the land, its life and death, the change of seasons, whereas *Threnody* is dedicated to the memory of Stuart Challender, to whom Sculthorpe gave praise for his interpretation of *Kakadu.* The fast and menacing theme in *Kakadu* has been modified to be more sombre and lamenting in *Threnody.*

Of the themes used in his music, this paper examines Sculthorpe's use of intervals and rhythm. This is important as it may help uncover common relationships between the musical materials found in a work (including themes), and its emotional or expressive content which is apparent to the performer and/or listener.

1.2 Central Argument

The main argument of this sub-thesis is this: that the theme of loss is the single most important extra-musical factor influencing Sculthorpe's works for solo cello, and is the major reason for the existence of these pieces.

Several definitions are required here. What is meant by "theme of loss"? The phrase "theme of loss" is a set of words with a very broad meaning. Some of the themes which will be discussed in this project will be death, lament, grief, loss, possibly anguish, remoteness, loneliness, tragedy, and sadness. The resultant combination of these themes and the depth to which they are explored by the composer in his music form part of the concerns of this paper.

The word "loss" means many things. There are many words available in the dictionary which describe "loss". The Macquarie Thesaurus has several sections dealing with the concept of loss. Some of these section headings are:-

> "lose - (mislay, lose opportunity, or hope, or oneself);
> losing - loss (absence, failure);
> lost - (past, ruined, unsuccessful, lost friend).
> Other related words are - isolation, grief, and emptiness."

The argument of this sub-thesis focuses on certain types of loss when considering Sculthorpe. Certainly many of the aspects of loss, as noted above, will be discussed, because I believe that these words can describe the extra-musical content of Sculthorpe's cello works, that is, describe the type of loss experienced by Sculthorpe, which made him write or dedicate the cello works in the first place.

The theme of loss is related to Sculthorpe's losing of specific persons important to him, and the grief associated with this loss. Such persons are Sculthorpe's father (*Requiem*) and Stuart Challender, former conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, (*Threnody*). *Into the Dreaming* was dedicated to another of Sculthorpe's friends who had recently died in a car accident.

The theme of loss is also related to the physical and psychological conditions experienced by people when they are isolated from their (what they perceive to be) normal surroundings (eg: *Lament for Strings*, where the early settlers of Australia regarded the country as a hostile place in which to survive). Another aspect of loss, which must also be considered, is the damage that can occur when one culture is decimated by another. The European settlement of Australia damaged (and still continues to damage) the native Aboriginal culture. Many parts of the

culture have become lost in time, and may be considered irretrievable while other parts of the Aboriginal culture are incomplete.

Loss, therefore, may be regarded as being of two forms, Sculthorpe's personal loss, and the anguish extending from this; and Isolation, where humanity is pitted against the elements of a harsh country, or where the culture of a people has been destroyed, forgotten, or made irretrievable. How do these two major forms of loss influence Sculthorpe, both personally and publicly, and his cello works?

From this, another question can be raised: why the cello in the first place? It seems reasonable to assume that Sculthorpe has always liked bass instruments. He enjoyed his double-bass playing days[1] - listening to the harmony revolve around the bass line which he was playing/reinforcing during performance. Perhaps Sculthorpe sees the cello as a more versatile instrument than the double-bass. The cello seems to have a greater variety of tones and textures available to it than a double-bass, and also a greater range, and it can play faster notes. Sculthorpe has also stated that he likes writing "melancholy-styled" music, and that more energy must be put

---

[1] Sculthorpe, Peter. Personal Interview. 5 November 1994.

into a "happy" sounding work than a more brooding, expressive composition.[2] Sculthorpe likes to write the type of music which in many cases eminently suits the cello. He also likes listening to the more serious type of music.

1.3 Methodology used in Central Discourse:

The methodology takes into account four main aspects, which are explained below:

1.3.1 *Background on Sculthorpe*

It is recognised that Sculthorpe's personal history has been documented on many previous occasions. Once source is the book written by Michael Hannan, *Peter Sculthorpe, his music and ideas 1929-1979*.[3] However, a few points should be mentioned. Sculthorpe began composing as soon as he started to learn the piano at the age of eight.[4] From 1947 to 1951, Sculthorpe was enrolled at the University of Melbourne Conservatorium of Music. Apart from composition he studied double bass during this time. String Quartet Nos. 3 and 4 were performed by the British Musical Society in 1949-1950. After graduation, Sculthorpe began research into the music of the Tasmanian Aboriginals. Although a report was not published, Sculthorpe became convinced that the Australian

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2 Sculthorpe, Peter. Personal Interview. 5 November 1994.
3 Hannan, Michael. Peter Sculthorpe, his music and ideas 1929-1979. University of Queensland Press, 1982.
4 Hannan, Michael. Peter Sculthorpe, his music and ideas 1929-1979. pp9.

artist should seek an affinity with the Australian landscape and its indigenous inhabitants.[5]

In 1954, Sculthorpe wrote *Sonatina* for piano, which was performed at the ISCM Festival in Baden-Baden in 1955. Other awards for his compositions followed with his *String Quartet No 5* and *Sonata for Viola and Percussion* winning the Royal Australian Trust Fund Composer's prize in 1959 and 1960 respectively.[6] In 1960 Sculthorpe became contracted to Faber Music Limited and was awarded a Harkness Fellowship in 1967. It was during this time that the *Sun Music* series of orchestral works was written.[7] In 1969 Sculthorpe was appointed Reader in Music at the University of Sydney and received two acclaimed awards: the Encylopedia Brittanica Award for the Arts (1969), and an MBE for services to Australian Music (1970).[8]

In 1974, Sculthorpe's most significant composition was *The Song of Tailitnama* as this piece used an Aboriginal text but also, for the first time, incorporated melodic material adapted from a transcription of Aboriginal music.[9] In 1977 Sculthorpe was awarded an OBE for services to Australian Music. The next twelve years saw many major compositions

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5 Hannan, Michael. Peter Sculthorpe, his music and ideas 1929-1979. pp9.
6 Hannan, pp10.
7 Hannan, pp17.
8 Hannan, pp21.
9 Hannan, pp23.

like *Mangrove, Requiem for Cello alone, Manganinnie* (a film score), *Kakadu, Earth Cry,* and *String Quartet No. 11.*

1.3.2 *First-Hand Information*

First hand information has been a vital ingredient for this sub-thesis. Any information of a musical nature has been clarified with observation of the music scores. Other information has allowed specific areas of interest to be discussed in this paper.

1.3.3 *Context of the six Cello Works*

All of the cello works have something to do with loss. What type of loss must be established. *Requiem, Threnody,* and *Into the Dreaming* are all based on personal losses of the composer. The circumstances in which the cello works were written, however, may be different. *Into the Dreaming* was not going to be a piece in memorium to anyone, but that is what is turned out to be when a friend of Sculthorpe's died. The *Requiem* is based on similar emotional parameters as *Irkanda 4,* but was written 18 years after it. Any other related works (in overall concept and/or motifs used) are mentioned where necessary.

1.3.4 *Analytical Techniques*

A brief description of general form and structure of cello works is given. Included in this are aspects of intervals and scales used, as well as rhythm.

CHAPTER 2

MELODY

This chapter commences with a definition of melody and proceeds to examine the way in which many aspects of melody contribute to the expression of "Loss" in the cello works of the composer.

2.1 Definition of Melody

Some of the texts that I have looked at, talk about the various components of composition, melody being among these. These books do not, however give a definition of melody, even when the word is looked up in their indexes. Here then, is a definition of melody, from Groves' Dictionary:-

> "Pitched sounds arranged in musical time in accordance with given cultural conventions and constraints."[10]

This is the definition which I am using in the context of Sculthorpe's melodic writings. Sculthorpe's melodies are comprised of tones that are arranged in such a way that they are logical to the composer. These tones also happen to be

[10] The New Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians vol 8 pp 118-127.

logical to most peoples' ears, in spite of not necessarily following traditional western compositional format (although the structure of many of his works are related to some western based forms of compositional structure). In a Sculthorpe composition, everything in the composition has its proper place. Even the "random" aleatoric sections within some of his works (*Tailitnama Song* among them) have order about them. The definition of harmony that follows is perhaps that of material which supports the melody.

2.1.1 *Why is Melody Important*

Melody is an important topic for discussion, because it forms a major component of Sculthorpe's cello music. As such, any analysis of Sculthorpe's music must sooner or later examine the melody. It is the chant-like qualities of his melodies that this thesis will be commenting on. Specific focus will be on whether the melody contains any relationship to any particular extra-musical material related to themes of loss. Sculthorpe's works are "traditional" in that they do have elements which can easily be described as "melody" (and other sections which may be defined as "harmony"). This process can even be applied to his cello works which are not supported (accompanied) by another instrument (parts of *Requiem* and *Threnody*).

2.1.2 *Explanation of the terms "Ritual Chant" and "Instrumental Chant"*

What is ritual chant? At a basic level, ritual chant is a melody which is attached to an established or prescribed procedure (a ceremony).[11] In Aboriginal culture, there are many ceremonies for many events in tribal life. Initiation ceremonies, hunting ceremonies, burial ceremonies: all of these ceremonies often have long and complex chanting associated with them. Sculthorpe's *Song of Tailitnama* is based on the Aranda Aboriginal tribal chant of the same name. Unfortunately, the song was never fully recorded when the opportunity arose. It is estimated that approximately two-thirds of the song has been lost. What remains is approximately the first 50 stanzas of chant.[12]

As with Aboriginal culture, Western culture uses music in a similar fashion to accompany various ceremonies, especially religious-based ones like the *Requiem* Mass. In *Requiem*, Sculthorpe combines certain stylistic cues of the Gregorian chant with his own personal compositional style.

Sculthorpe's cello works have melodies comprised of chant. More specifically, Peter Sculthorpe prefers the term "ritual chanting",[13] implying that his melodies have been based on

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11 The Macquarie Dictionary. Second revision, pp 1469.
12 Strehlow, T.G.H. Songs of Central Australia, pp419-427.
13 Sculthorpe, Peter. Personal Interview. 5 Nov 1994.

aboriginal or western ceremonies. Loss is often associated with many ceremonies. In Sculthorpe's cello works, the chant-like melodies represent loss in many different ways. Each piece may have several types of loss, many being expressed at the same time.[14]

All of the cello works use ritual chant to varying degrees. Sculthorpe shows this ritual chanting in two differing styles. The most common of these chant styles is found in *Tailitnama, Djilile, Threnody, Into the Dreaming,* and *Lament for Strings.* These pieces have Sculthorpe's personal melodic style of writing in them. The other style of Sculthorpe's ritual chanting is found in his *Requiem for Cello Alone.* In the ritual chant sections of this work, Sculthorpe has deliberately composed in a Gregorian Chant style because of the nature of the piece.

Some of the cello works may sound more chant-like than others. If a line representing "realistic ritualistic chant sounds" was to be drawn, at one extreme would be *The Song of Tailitnama* (and its arrangement), accurately sounding like an aboriginal chant. At the other extreme, would be *Into the Dreaming.* In the middle, along various lengths of this imaginary line, would be the other cello pieces, with *Requiem* being fairly close to *The Song of Tailitnama* for accuracy of ritual chant.

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[14] Sculthorpe, Peter. Personal Interview. 5 Nov 1994.

Sculthorpe's melodies in his cello works, are related to chant. In fact, Sculthorpe calls this style of writing "instrumental chant."[15] This particular phrase relates to Sculthorpe's focus on an instrument when composing a chant, not a voice, which chant has long been associated with in western and non-western music. In doing this, the length of phrasings and the overall range of the melody are made for the instrument, and, in most cases, would be unsuitable for a voice. *The Song of Tailitnama* is a possible exception, in both cello/piano and soprano/cello arrangements. With the cello works, the melody is the group, or groupings of notes, which could possibly be defined as chant-like, or in chant-style. It is traditional, in western music, for the solo instrument to play the melody, which is exactly what happens in these cello pieces. A common feature of Sculthorpe's instrumental chant writings is the use of particular intervals, about which more will be said later.

Sculthorpe's cello works seem to be fairly well defined as to which instrumental part has the melody, and which other part (if any) has the corresponding accompaniment. In certain sections of certain pieces eg *Djilile*, the piano, acting as an accompanying instrument to the cello, may even be playing a counter-melody. In the solo cello works, a

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15 Sculthorpe, Peter. Personal Interview. 5 Nov 1994.



Example 1

simple accompaniment, in the form of a pedal drone (eg *Requiem*) may be heard below a melody line. (See example 1).

2.2 Melodic Structure

2.2.1 *Intervallic content*

Some particular intervals are used more often when writing an instrumental chant. By far the most common interval is that of the minor second. A melody moving down a semitone, can resolve the tension in the harmony which was originally set up by the clash between the key-centre and the melody playing a semitone higher. In the solo works where there is a single unaccompanied melodic line, harmony may not be readily perceived, but the act of shifting a note up one semitone, still creates tension. This tension may be immediately resolved by reinstating the original note, before the minor second interval happened, or the tension may move to a new note (possibly to the dominant, allowing an eventual shift of tonal centre in the underlying harmony). This is found extensively in all of the cello works, except for *Into the Dreaming* (which is very diatonically based), and to a lesser extent, *Requiem* (which has diatonic constraints because of what it is).

Melody is not necessarily restricted to single note sections. *Requiem* (*Kyrie*), *Threnody* and *Into the Dreaming*

all have double-stoppings in various sections of which both notes share the equally important task of defining the melody. One note is not necessarily of greater importance than the other in the melodic sections. However, when the cello is being accompanied, either by piano or by other cellos, the incidence of any type of double-stoppings becomes quite rare. Only in the solo pieces are there good examples of the melody being comprised of two notes, often separated by the intervals of a third or a sixth.

2.2.2 *Melodic shape/line*

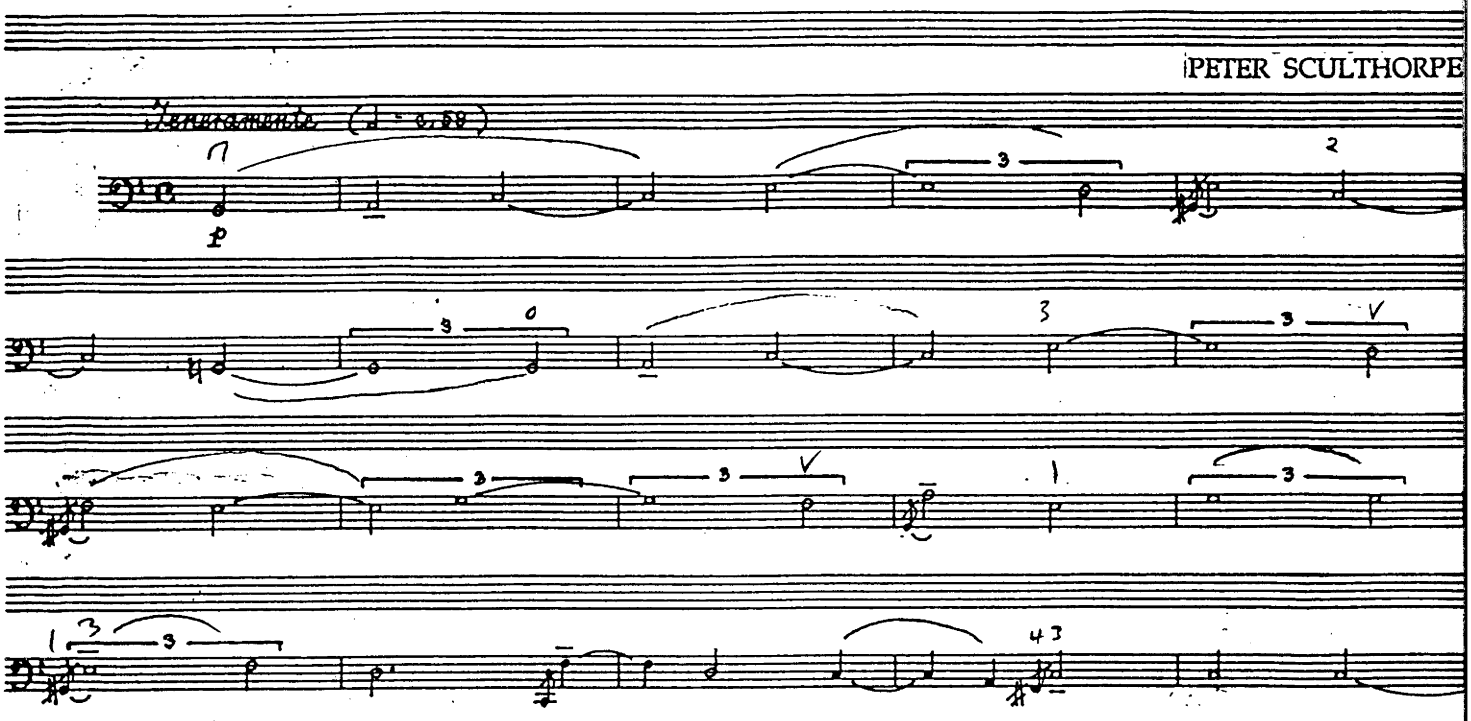
Chant is a particular way of using the human voice to sing. In many of Sculthorpe's compositions (not only the cello works), the instruments "mimic" the voice; there are, however, differences. The major difference is that these instrumental chantings were always written with the instrument in mind, not the voice.[16] Another difference, is that the overall range of the melodic line can span several octaves, even if particular sections of a work (*Threnody* being a good example) may, in themselves, have a limited pitch-range. Sculthorpe also employs liberal amounts of double-stoppings in several of the cello works, most notably within the solo works (*Requiem, Threnody, Into the Dreaming*). The remaining accompanied pieces have limited amounts of double-stopping. Sculthorpe never intended[17] to

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[16] Sculthorpe, Peter. Personal Interview. 5 Nov 1994.
[17] ..Sculthorpe, Peter. Personal Interview. 5 Nov 1994.

Into the Dreaming

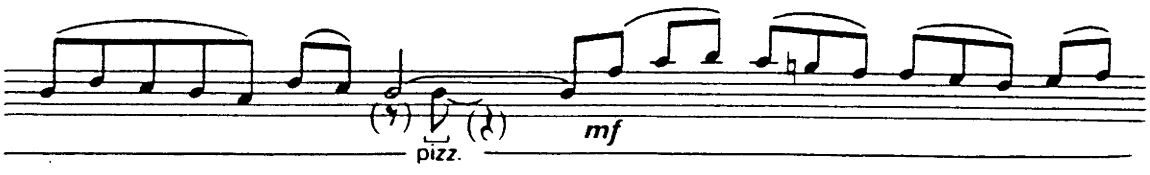
PETER SCULTHORPE



Example 2



Example 3



Example 4

accurately imitate the human voice in any of his cello compositions, but to accurately depict chant. He certainly does not intend the melodic line to be "vocalised" (otherwise he would have written it, as he did with *The Song of Tailitnama*). These ritual chants which form the melodic line in these cello works are instrumental chanting, not vocal. This is borne out by the fact that phrases can be seamlessly joined together, not allowing a vocalist to take a breath without damaging the musicality of a phrase. An example of this is the first section of *Into the Dreaming*, which is four lines long. (See Example 2.) This section has several phrases joined together. The sound coming from the cello during a performance is continuous, something which is not possible from a vocalist who must breathe.

Sculthorpe uses the register of the cello to change the tonal content of the melody. Three main parts of the register are used, which may be labelled high, middle, and low. All of the pieces being discussed here use these registers. The characteristics of each register are relative to the particular work being performed; another piece may use registers relatively higher or lower. Within each piece, the melody will often stay around a particular pitch level before moving to another register. The melody may move an octave to get to the new register, which introduces new tonal characteristics of the instrument to the listener. (See Example 3 and 4) The cello is an ideal



Example 5

instrument for this tonal metamorphosing, arguably better than the other instruments of the string family for this purpose.

Sculthorpe uses the low registers of the cello for one of two things. Either the notes encountered are loud and menacing, or form a smooth non-melodic pedal point. The middle register of the cello which Sculthorpe seems to make somewhere between G-1 and c+1[18] is the pitch range where the cello really sings. This is the most expressive part of the instrument where a variety of tones can be generated, from strident to dull. A tone which is less strident, one that is more woolly and less bright in sound, can be achieved in the same register when using another physically thicker and more heavily wound string (like the "D" string instead of the "A" string). *Threnody* does exactly this, starting on the D string before moving to the A string, giving a brighter tone, which soon sets up a change from the middle to high register. (See Example 5).

The high register, usually comprised of notes higher than c1 (although this is relative), is used when Sculthorpe is building to the climax of a phrase or larger section of music. The high register of the cello can give a highly concentrated tone, if necessary. Sculthorpe uses the high register in a loud fashion, where the tone cuts across any

[18] The "G" below middle C, to the "C" one octave above middle C.



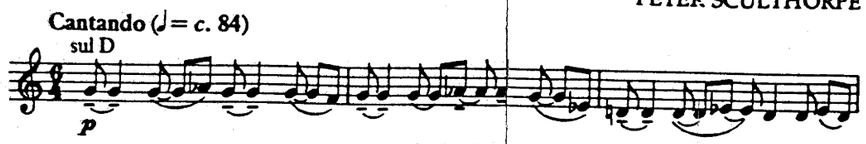
Example 6

In memory of Stuart Challender

THRENODY

for solo cello

PETER SCULTHORPE



Example 7

other harmony which is present (or implied as with the solo works). *The Song of Tailitnama* is an example where cello number one is heard playing a "descant" part, cutting through the rest of the ensemble. (See Example 6.) Another example is in *Threnody*, the climax to the first phrase, where the pitches are both high and loud. (See example 7, page 21.)

The end of a phrase, during a piece, will come after the climax has changed to a lower register, losing energy in the process.

2.2.3 *Phrasing*

Sculthorpe's melodic writings, like most music, are arranged into phrases. These phrases are made up of small motifs. A series of phrases make up a section of the work. In the cello works, the phrasing allows the instrument to play the role of a chanting voice. A new phrase begins when the original melodic motifs seem to be reiterated, or when the instrument moves to a new pitch level.

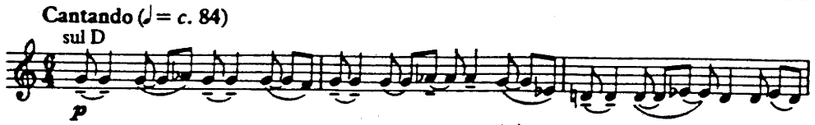
In comparing the general shape and length of the various phrases encountered in the cello works, some similarities are apparent. In spite of a large pitch range being employed throughout these works, making singing impractical, the length of most phrases allows a vocalist to sing each

In memory of Stuart Challender

THRENODY

for solo cello

PETER SCULTHORPE



Example 9(a)



Example 9(b)

LAMENT



Example 9(c)



Example 9(d)

Into the Dreaming

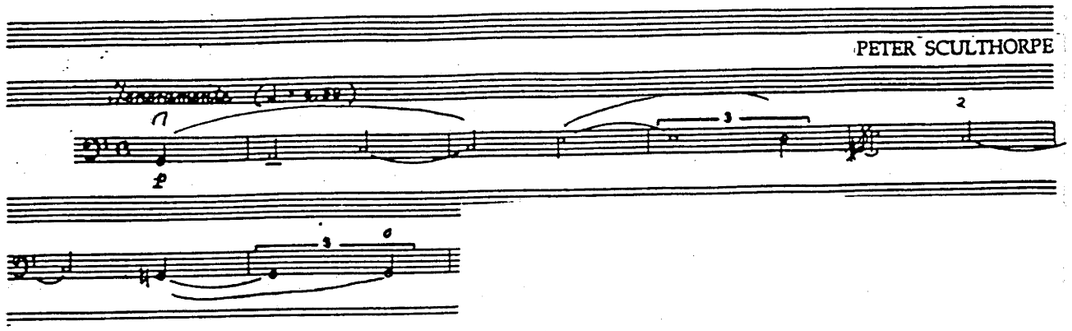
Example 8



phrase in one breath, although as already stated a couple of pages back, the musicality of a phrase may be damaged when a vocalist takes a breath. Within a phrase, most notes will revolve around a central tone. The phrases encountered in the first sections of a work are often reiterated several times during the course of the work. These phrases are often not exact copies of one another, but change slightly as the piece progresses.

However, sometimes, as in *Into The Dreaming*, the entire first section (let alone a phrase), being comprised of a single solo line, is immediately repeated with double-stoppings. (See example 8.) The original notes, which are heard in the top line, have had other notes added to them. The majority of intervals being formed due to this double-stopping are 3rds and 6ths, with the occasional 4th and 7th helping the work move along, by adding direction (in a harmonic sense) to the phrase.

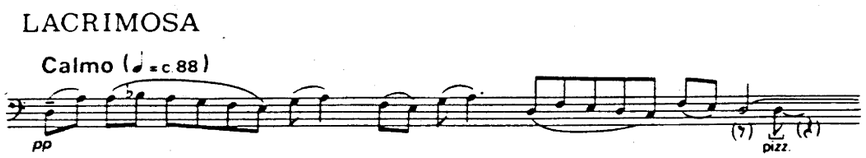
Another similarity which can be applied to most of the cello pieces, is the falling aspect of the phrase. In *Threnody*, *Djilile*, *Lament for Strings*, and *The Song of Tailitnama*, the phrase has a tendency to descend in pitch, before returning to its tonal centre. The examples on the facing page are of the first phrases of these pieces. (See example 9.) This is not so apparent in *Into the Dreaming*, although *Requiem* also has some more subtle examples in the opening phrases of



Example 11



Example 12(a)



Example 12(b)



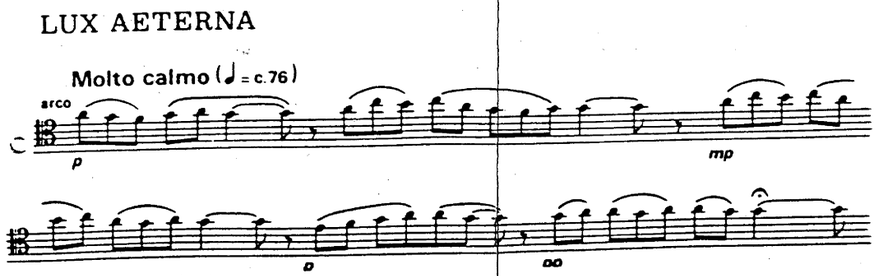
Example 10(a)



Example 10(b)



Example 10(c)



Example 10(d)

the *Kyrie, Qui Mariam, Lacrimosa, and Lux aeterna.* (See example 10.) *Into the Dreaming* seems to be the odd work out in this respect. However, its phrasing looks like more of an arch, initially rising in pitch, the melody peaks (in pitch) at about the half-way point of the phrase, before settling back down to the original note (a "G") at the end of the phrase. *Requiem* also has this arch feature in the *Introit* and *Lacrimosa*, although the pitch range encountered is much more limited than *Into the Dreaming.* Compare the arch shape of *Into the Dreaming* and the selected movements of *Requiem* with the other falling shape examples on the next facing page. (See examples 11 and 12.) Therefore, arguably, in both of these pieces, the phrase does have some descending segment in it, but in a different context to the other works.

As mentioned in the opening paragraph of this section, a phrase is made up of smaller segments, called motifs. These motifs are short musical ideas, and when joined together in a phrase, form the basis of melody for the cello works. They also form the basis for harmony and rhythm in these pieces. In the cello works, the motifs which make up the melody tend to be short, sometimes consisting of only two notes. Each motif will either hover around a particular pitch level (although the pitch can change between such motifs as in *Threnody*), or will occupy a large pitch range between a few notes. The first phrase of *Threnody* shows how

KYRIE

Con larghezza (♩= c 56)



Example 13



Example 13

many short motifs, hovering around a tonal centre, can form a melodic line. In the other examples, *Kyrie* shows one way how short motifs can occupy a large pitch range, through the use of glissandi. The opening introductory bars of *Djilile* show a more conventional practice, through the use of larger than expected intervals, with each new note within the three-note motif being pitched lower than the note before. (See example 13.)

Djilile later shows, in the main body of the piece, motifs that do not occupy a large range, but tend to hover around certain notes within a phrase, with the occasional larger intervallic jump, in this case meaning intervals generally not larger than a 4th. Interspersed between this type of phrase are examples of the original three note motif, sometimes in inverted form. In this way *Djilile* shows both types of motif: those that are based around a central note, and those that are not. Throughout the piece, there are very clear differentiations between these different types of motifs, and consequently the different types of melody being created. The same goes for *Requiem* because of the different writing styles encountered between each movement.

Lament for Strings is similar to *Threnody* in that the motifs are based around a central tone, with the occasional jump of a 4th or 5th to a new note, before returning. Jumps of over a 5th are very rare, but do happen. *The Song of Tailitnama*

also has motifs based around a central note. *Into the Dreaming* is different. With each phrase in arch form, taking note of the intervals within the motifs is made that much easier. It can be observed though, that each phrase has a central chord that could be applied to it. But this is a matter for the chapter on harmony.

2.2.3.1 *The way phrasing creates a sense of loss.*

The way in which phrases relate to loss depends largely on the way they are shaped, and the intervals found within them. Some phrases, like those in the opening of *Djilile* are comprised of descending intervals. This alone does not imply loss.

In the opening phrases of *Djilile*, loss is implied through the use of particular notes. The first three notes, after they are performed, do not imply any key, rather that a falling series of notes have come to rest. Similar events happen in the second phrase. This time, however, the last note of the first phrase (an "F"), and the first two notes of the second phrase ("C" and "A"), form an F major chord. But due to the short silence between the phrases, and the fact that the ear would be listening for something similar to the first phrase, these three notes are not necessarily correlated by the listener as a chord. Any harmonic relationship of this type is destroyed when the last note (a "B") of the second phrase has been played. These two



Example 14

phrases are designed to give uncertainty and instability, and make the listener wonder what is going to happen next. The uncertainty occurs because of the intervals encountered within each phrase. Some instability also occurs because of the interval of an augmented fourth being the interval between each of the end notes of both phrases. A "B" ends the second phrase, when an "F" ended the first phrase. The instability between these two notes helps the silence between these two phrases imply loss. Silence might imply loss. Also, each phrase ends in a longer note than the two notes before it. When nothing is happening to the music during these long notes, loss, however subtle or minute, may be considered to be present.

After the cello states these phrases, the piano starts. However, there is no cello with the piano in this section of *Djilile*. The absence of the instrument which started the work could imply another form of loss. Absence is a form of loss. After the introductory section, both instruments are playing together. The piano has a counter melody in the treble and a running bass in the left hand while the cello has the melody. The melody is comprised of phrases similar to chant. Many of the intervals are minor 2nds which fall (like *Threnody*) down to the implied "tonic" (page 2, line 2, bar 4) or "dominant" as in the case of page 2, line 3, bars 1-2. (See example 14.) This falling motion is a characteristic of Sculthorpe's compositional style. It also

creates much tension due to the dissonance, which is then released when the minor 2nd resolves downwards one semitone.

The coda of *Djilile* is comprised of long notes for the cello with limited counter melody in the piano, and eventually, the running bass stopping. All of this implies the end of a piece. Loss is often related to something coming to an end. In this case, the last bars of *Djilile* seem to be hopeful rather than "sad", because the counter melody has rising intervals in it. Previously, if the counter melody did have rising intervals, they always fell later on within the phrase. Sculthorpe has said that such types of intervals often imply positive meanings, like hope.[19]

The last six bars of the coda of *Threnody*, parts of the *Lux aeterna* in *Requiem*, and the final section of *The Song of Tailitnama*, all have this type of "hopeful" ending. Perhaps after describing loss in these pieces Sculthorpe is looking for something to calm the soul.

Loss is implied in *Threnody* by the use of chant. Due to the rhythm, the chant which Sculthorpe describes as a lament, sounds like (and is meant to sound like) weeping.[20] Tension is created by the way these short motifs interact within the phrase. Sometimes the motifs go to a new pitch level.

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19 Sculthorpe, Peter. Personal Interview. 5 Nov 1994.
20 Sculthorpe, Peter. Composer's note, Threnody. Music Score.

Sometimes the motifs take the phrase, and consequently the melody, on an upwards spiral. This is not "hope" as described in the last paragraph, as the intervals of a minor 2nd are still prevalent. The effect is a further heightening of the tension. The tension is finally released when a series of motifs topple back down to the original starting note of the first phrase. The first segment of the work, having "reset" itself, continues until another similar climax, which ends the first section of *Threnody*. The material that follows in the second section of the piece is complementary to what has gone before, and what is about to come. An abundance of minor 3rds and minor 6ths mean there is also a different type of tension to what has gone before. This section of *Threnody* is marked *Con malinconia* - with melancholy. The final section of *Threnody* is marked *Risoluto*. This section is fast and furious, but of similar construction to the first section. Perhaps this section shows anger, another by-product of grief, which accompanies loss.[21] *Threnody* is dedicated to the memory of Stuart Challender, former conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. The theme of *Threnody* is based on Sculthorpe's orchestral work *Kakadu*, which Challender conducted on many occasions.[22]

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[21] Parkes, Colin Murray. Bereavement: studies of grief in adult life. Chapter 6: Anger and Guilt.

[22] Sculthorpe, Peter. Composer's note, Threnody. Music Score.

Lament for Strings describes the harsh conditions which the early settlers faced in colonising Australia. Long tied chords in the score help describe the isolation which the settlers found themselves in.[23] As with grief, isolation is also a part of loss.

The Song of Tailitnama is based on Aboriginal chant, in this particular case, the small section of the chant used does not describe anything directly about loss. However, the entire chant was part of an elaborate initiation ceremony, where the boys of the tribe were told the religious secrets of the tribe, thereby becoming men. The telling of these secrets to the wrong people, or outside the boundaries of a sacred area was punishable by death. *The Song of Tailitnama* indirectly deals with some serious subjects on loss, like the loss of boyhood innocence, and the responsibility of accepting loss of life in order to preserve the religious secrets of the tribe. The work may be described as fairly repetitive, with similar thematic material presenting itself over and over again.

The *Requiem* for Cello Alone is a complementary piece to *Irkanda-4*.[24] Like *Irkanda-4* it is a piece in remembrance of Sculthorpe's father, although it is dedicated to Nathan Waks.

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[23] Sculthorpe, Peter. Composer's note, Lament. Music Score.
[24] Sculthorpe, Peter. Personal Interview. 5 Nov 1994.

Requiem is different from the other pieces discussed here. In writing the *Requiem,* Sculthorpe has integrated his compositional style with that of the traditional Gregorian Chant. Some parts of *Requiem* are in Sculthorpe's style, some entirely different. The opening of *Requiem* is a good case in point. The *Introit* starts with chant. However, once this phrase has finished, Sculthorpe has a two bar phrase complementing the previous phrase. Whereas the first phrase is moving, the second phrase may be considered static in nature. All of this is repeated almost exactly for the next two phrases. The last two phrases are longer, but the same principle of one phrase moving with the next phrase being static, applies.

2.2.4 *How intervals change each phrase.*

The development of the melody in these cello works often depends on the relationship of intervals between each motif, rather than by introducing new material, or writing a "traditional" 19th century development section. It is the change of interval between various motifs which gives shape to the phrasing, and consequently the melody. Sculthorpe does not write development sections. Rather, he develops a phrase by modifying the intervals between motifs.

In *Threnody,* the end of the first phrase (bar 3) has a tonal centre a 4th below the start of the phrase. When a similar



Example 15



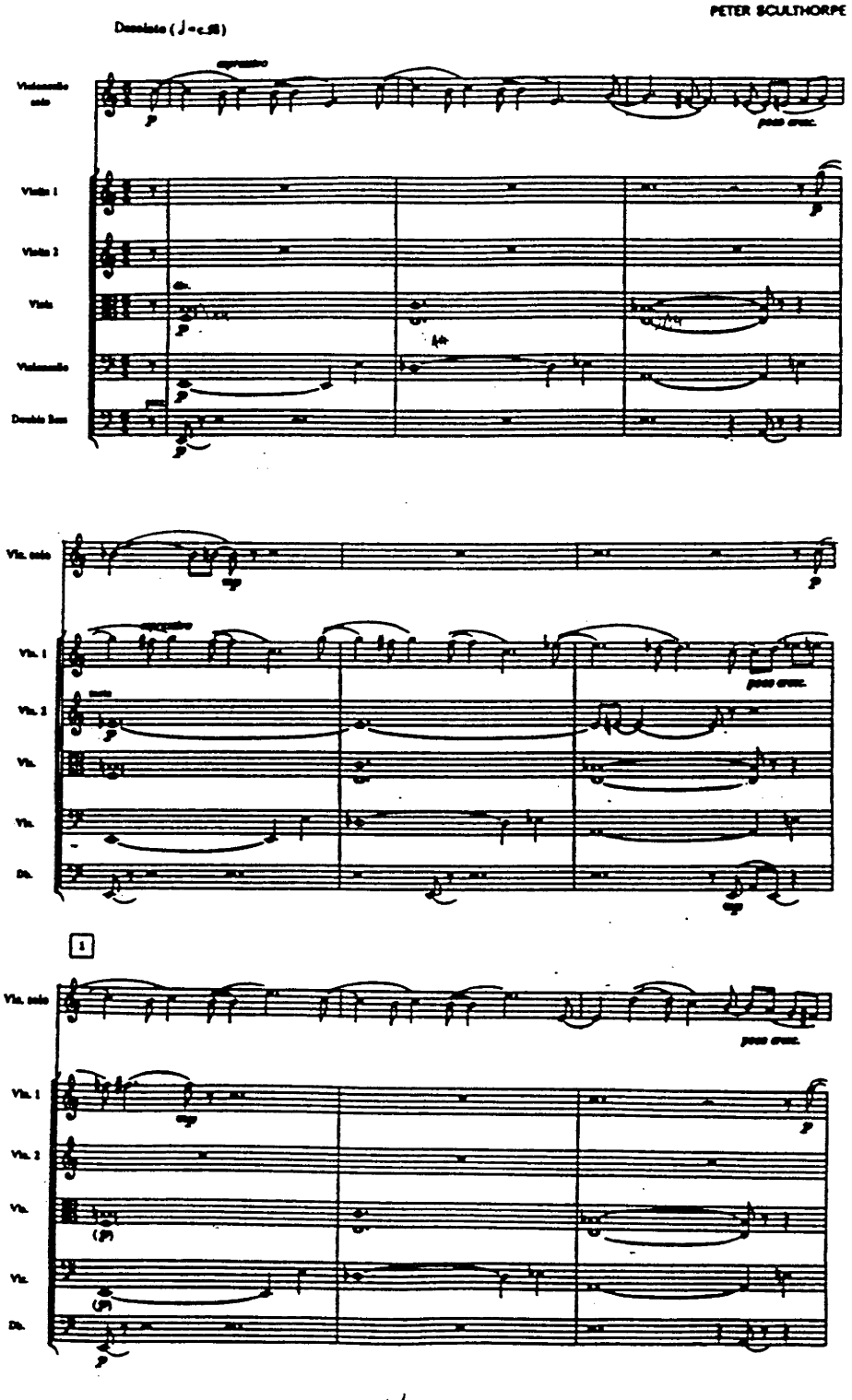
Example 16

part in the second phrase comes around (bar 6), the motifs are pushed up (not down) a 4th. The result is two phrases, which are exact copies of one another in bars 1-2 and 4-5 respectively, but have completely different endings. (See example 15.) The melody is similarly modified in the next two phrases in bars 9 and 12. (See example 16.) This is a characteristic of Sculthorpe's compositional style.

This process is apparent in the rest of the piece, although in the middle *Con malinconia* section, the intervals are not as clear cut. In describing in detail what happens to one section of a Sculthorpe cello work the intention is to show the reader of this document what happens in all of the cello works. This section of *Threnody* revolves around the sequential development of three phrases. Refer to the example supplied of this entire section on pages 31 and 32, the first phrase is three bars long. This includes the 3rd bar, which is only a crotchet rest. The second phrase occurs from bars 4 to 6. The third phrase occurs from bar 7 to 8. These are the original unmodified phrases of the Con malinconia section. It must be noted that phrase one and two start with a two-beat anacrusis. It is this part of these two phrases that are modified when these phrases are repeated. The third phrase rises the interval of a minor 3rd, to a new pitch level.

LAMENT

PETER SCULTHORPE



Example 17

Continuing from the last half of bar 9, the 4th phrase is exactly the same as phrase 1, except for a different anacrusis. The same thing happens with phrase 5, compared to phrase 2. Phrase 6 starts a minor 3rd higher than before, but in its second bar is further modified in that this phrase continues the use of 6ths for the double-stoppings, whereas the original third phrase had 3rds and 4ths. Phrase 6 leads into phrase 7, which is the first climax phrase in this *Con malinconia section*. It is two bars long and consists of new material.

Phrase 8, 9, and 10 are repeats of phrase 4, 5, and 6, but with dynamic markings of piano, not mezzo-piano as before. Phrase 11 is another climax point, initially similar to phrase 7, there are new intervals introduced in the latter part of this phrase, causing development of this phrase. A transition section, or bridge passage, of two bars leads to the Risoluto section.

Lament for Strings is no different in how phrases are modified or developed from *Threnody*. *Lament for Strings* has a melodic line that is flat in shape, and consists of the notes of "C" and "B". The "C" in this case falls to the tonal centre of "B". In the example provided of the first page of *Lament for Strings* (example 17), one note (a dotted-crotchet "E") occasionally sounds lower than the "C" and "B" above it. In the second phrase, which starts a quaver



Example 18 (a)



Example 18 (b)



Example 18 (c)



Example 18 (d)

before figure 1 on the third line, the "E" is written an octave higher than before. The third whole bar of the second phrase (3rd bar from figure 1) is also entirely different from what was written in the first phrase, although both phrases end in an identical fashion. A longer transition section then begins, leading into the second section of the piece. As *Lament for Strings* is in ternary form, all of these small but very effective modifications to various motifs within the phrasings are heard again.

Djilile, *Requiem*, *The Song of Tailitnama*, and *Into the Dreaming* all have a similar process of development, where a motif within a phrase is modified. For example, whenever the primary theme of *Djilile* is played, (starting bar 3 of 2nd line), each subsequent reiteration of this theme brings with it a different modification in the melody line. The piece sounds similar, possibly droning because of the longer notes within the phrase, yet keeps developing, generating new musical ideas in the process. (See example 18.)

Requiem has a few new notes encountered within phrases which are different. It is beyond the scope of this paper to get into all of the compositional intricacies in phrasing of this work. However, a simple example exsists in the *Introit* section. The top line, in the first meno mosso section, found on line 2, is different to the top line in the second meno mosso section, found on line 4. (See example 19.)

To Nathan Waks

Requiem

for 'cello alone

PETER SCULTHORPE
(1979)

INTROIT

Calmo (♩ = c. 88)

sul tasto

p

rall. - - - - - meno mosso

ord.

espress.

mp

a tempo

sul tasto

pp

rall. - - - - - - meno mosso

ord.

espress.

mf

Example 19

1

Into the Dreaming

PETER SCULTHORPE

Example 21

for David Ferrier & David Bollard.

TAILITNAMA SONG

PETER SCULTHORPE

Vc.

pizz.

mp

arco

p

cresc.

mf

(mf)

cresc.

f

mp

Example 20

The Song of Tailitnama also has subtle modifications in its main thematic sections. For example, each phrase starting on bars 15 and 21 of the piano and cello version is different to the original phrase starting on bar 9. Bar 27 is a climax phrase for the first three phrases. After this the section repeats itself. The phrases starting on bars 33, 39 and 45 are exact copies of these first three phrases of the work. The second climax phrase starting on bar 51 is not an exact copy of the first climax phrase. All of these phrases also have subtly differing rhythms as well. This process continues in all three major sections of *Tailitnama Song*. The cello line, which contains the melody in the piano/cello version of *Tailitnama Song*, is used as the example for considerations of space. (See example 20.)

Into the Dreaming shows differences in some notes when comparing phrasing, if not rhythm. The second phrase of the melody, which starts on bar 7 (with a single note anacrusis), changes from bar 10, when compared with bar 4 of the original phrase. (See example 21.) The middle section of the work marked espressivo (bar 23) has four-bar phrases, which also continuously change.

In conclusion, these small modifications to the phrases, as described above, have large effects on the ear. The modified notes encountered within reiterated phrases show

that the motifs of the phrase change to new pitches, often at the end of a phrase. The size of the interval is important as it can hint at where the tonal centre of the work is moving to. Where a phrase undergoes development near its conclusion - this could be because this allows the melody to keep moving. If each successive phrase stayed the same, the piece would soon become boring to listen to. All of these modified notes have a primary function of keeping the listener interested in the music. A secondary function is that these changing phrases are saying that loss results in change. *The Song of Tailitnama*, which does have successive repeated phrases in various sections, gets around this by being rhythmically dynamic, and fast.

2.2.5 *Repetition of Melody.*

Three of these cello pieces, *Threnody, Djilile, Lament for Strings* are in ternary form. That is, there are three main parts to the work, the first and last parts sharing similar thematic material. These parts, or sections, may be labelled A-B-A respectively. There may or may not be an introductory section, but *Lament for Strings* is the only piece without a coda.

The exceptions are: *Into the Dreaming* seems to be comprised of two different sections, with a coda at the end. *The Song of Tailitnama* is also based on this format. *Requiem*, overall, is not ternary form, but when considering

individual movements, the *Kyrie*, and *Qui Mariam* have very well defined ternary form. Of the other pieces *Threnody*, in its recapitulated section shows the greatest rhythmic difference from the first section. Often, the recapitulated section is played in its entirety. The last sections in *Lament for Strings* and *Djilile* are virtually a mirror image of their first sections. *Threnody* has this section shortened. Instead of the original theme being repeated in its slow weeping fashion, the theme is totally the opposite. It is fast and angry, with anger being another way of expressing loss.[25] The anger has two short climaxes before being replaced by calmness in the coda.

Each of the three ternary form piece, shows a different way of writing a middle section. *Threnody* changes the compound time signature to a simple time signature. *Djilile* does the opposite by adding duplets within its compound time signature. *Lament for Strings* adds special aleatoric soundscape effects to new thematic material, which is less rhythmically intricate compared to the other sections.

The middle sections of the *Kyrie* and *Qui Mariam* of the *Requiem* are tonally and rhythmically different compared to what has gone before, and what is about to be played.

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[25] Parkes, Colin Murray. Bereavement: studies of grief in adult life. Chapter 6: Anger and Guilt.

From all of the above, some general characteristics of how Sculthorpe develops a melody in the cello works, can be mentioned. The first is that any phrase is usually different from any other similar phrase. This happens right from the start of the first main thematic section of the work. Secondly, the middle sections (of works that have them) tend to be short, but will incorporate new material. There is evidence of this in selected movements of *Requiem*. Only *Lament for Strings* has what I describe as a full-length middle section. For *The Song of Tailitnama* and *Into the Dreaming* there are short transition sections between the two main thematic areas. Thirdly, other factors, like rhythm, are changed.

2.2.6 *Counter-melodies.*

I define a counter-melody as a melody which runs, or sounds, in some form of counterpoint with the main melodic idea. Out of the six cello works being discussed, the pieces of *Djilile* and Tailitnama have examples of this. For *Djilile* this counter melody is always in the piano part, specifically being played by the right hand (treble line). This melody consists of short motifs of not over four notes. Each motif is separated, in the majority of cases, by quaver length rests. The phrase length is generally 2 or 3 bars long, having 6 to 8 motifs each. This entire counter melody incorporates various aspects of loss. Large intervals of 7ths, octaves and 9ths are consistently encountered. The



Example 22 (a+b)

most common smaller interval is the fifth. Fifths and octaves are open-sounding intervals. They are also neutral as far as the musical concepts of major and minor tonality are concerned. For that matter, 7ths and 9ths may also be considered neutral, although they have more of a dissonant nature, and are not necessarily "open" sounding.

The combinations of these intervals create a sense of spaciousness, which is not overridden by the melodic cello line or by the running bass line found in the left hand of the piano. The added requirement written in by Sculthorpe, of playing these intervals of the counter melody as two-note downwards glissandi (see example 22), has the effect of enhancing the openness of the sound. Coupled with the other melodic and accompaniment lines, *Djilile* is describing something which is not closed or boxed up, but something free. The melody line suggests sad chanting. This feeling is put into a spatial context (of a voice that is alone) by the counter-melody, and the bass line adds to this effect with its extensive use of the interval of a 5th, as well as the large pitch range encountered in this part. The result of a lone voice in a large space, implies isolation, and therefore points to loss.

The Song of Tailitnama, in its second section, adds the counter melody to the solo line, while one of the original accompaniment lines takes over the melody. The rhythm of



Example 23

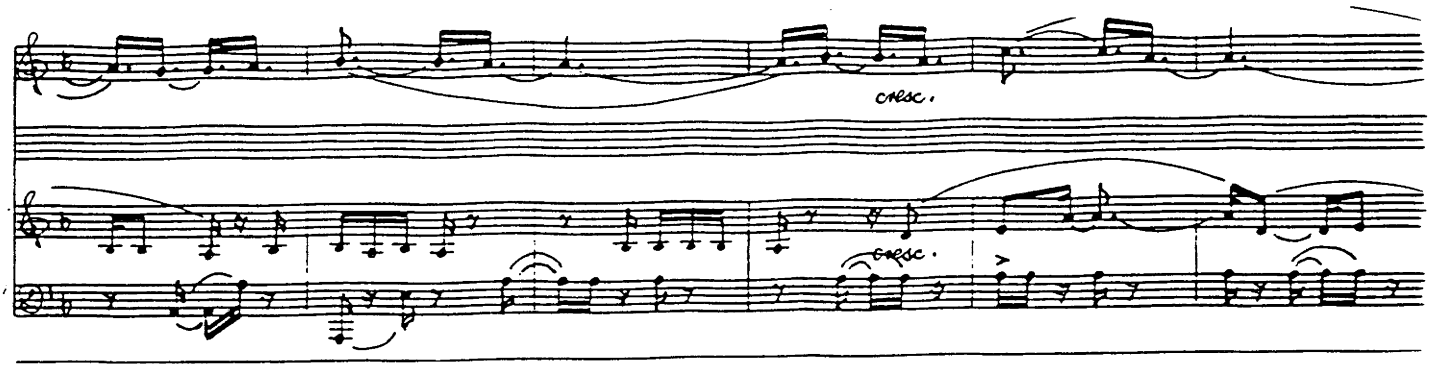
this counter melody is much simpler compared to the intricate melody, while the notes within it sing higher and longer. This leads me to the conclusion that after it starts, the counter melody is meant to be the most important line in *The Song of Tailitnama*.

2.2.7 *The differences and similarities of rhythm in melody.* What are the similarities and differences of rhythm in these melodic lines? Generally the rhythm changes when the melody undergoes a fundamental change. This type of melodic change happens when new thematic material is introduced. The most obvious examples are to be found in the ternary form pieces, and *Requiem*. (See example 23) *The Song of Tailitnama* and *Into the Dreaming* have a similar rhythmic pulse in their main thematic sections.

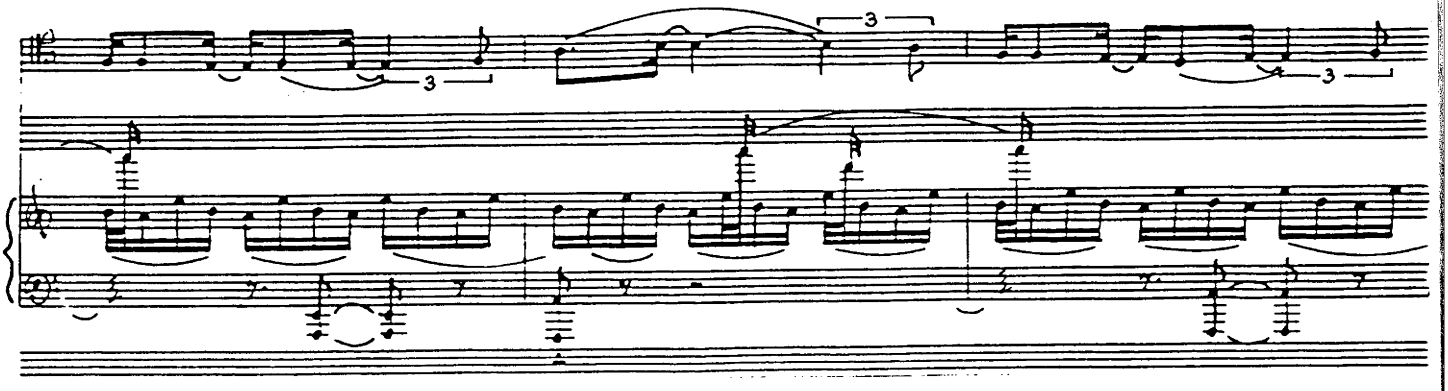
Sculthorpe will change the rhythm from compound to simple, or vice versa, between major sections of the ternary based cello works. This does not mean that the time signature has to change to accommodate the new rhythm. Sculthorpe will write duplets in a compound time signature, as he does in *Djilile*.

The rhythm of the melodies in the cello works always have syncopation. This is a Sculthorpe compositional trait. Similarities can be drawn to other composers who have written several cello pieces, like Martinu (any of his cello

sonatas or concertos), or Hindemith (in his solo cello sonata). Even when the melody changes, the syncopation is still there. However, it will be a different type of syncopation. Sometimes the tempo is slow, and the rhythm relaxed. At other times the rhythm is far from this. Both types of rhythm seem to describe loss. Loss is found in the long wailing phrases and expansive isolation of *Lament for Strings*, the weeping, anger and calmness of *Threnody*, the chanting of *The Song of Tailitnama*, the droning notes coupled to a large pitch range of *Djilile*, the mournful chords of *Into the Dreaming*, and the very nature of *Requiem*.



Example 24(a)



Example 24(b)

CHAPTER THREE

HARMONY

3.1 Intervals found in Harmony.

The intervals found in Sculthorpe's harmony are different from those found in his melodic writings. In the melody, the intervals of 2nds, 3rds, 6ths and 7ths abound. In any accompanying harmony (*The Song of Tailitnama, Lament for Strings, Djilile*), intervals tend to be 4ths, 5ths and unison/octaves. These intervals have a tendency to form static harmony. Intervals NOT of unison, 4th or 5th, tend to form a harmony which has tension and resolution in it, and therefore has movement. Intervals of 3rds, 6ths, 9ths, 2nds and 7ths are found in Sculthorpe's harmony (eg: *Tailitnama*), but only when the composer wishes the harmony to move with the melodic phrasing (generally speaking). These intervals are used less often than 4ths and 5ths. (See example 24)

This is not meant to imply that intervals of 4ths and 5ths (as used by Sculthorpe) have no rhythmic drive, or do not help a melody move from phrase to phrase. (Many European



Example 25(a)



Example 25(b)



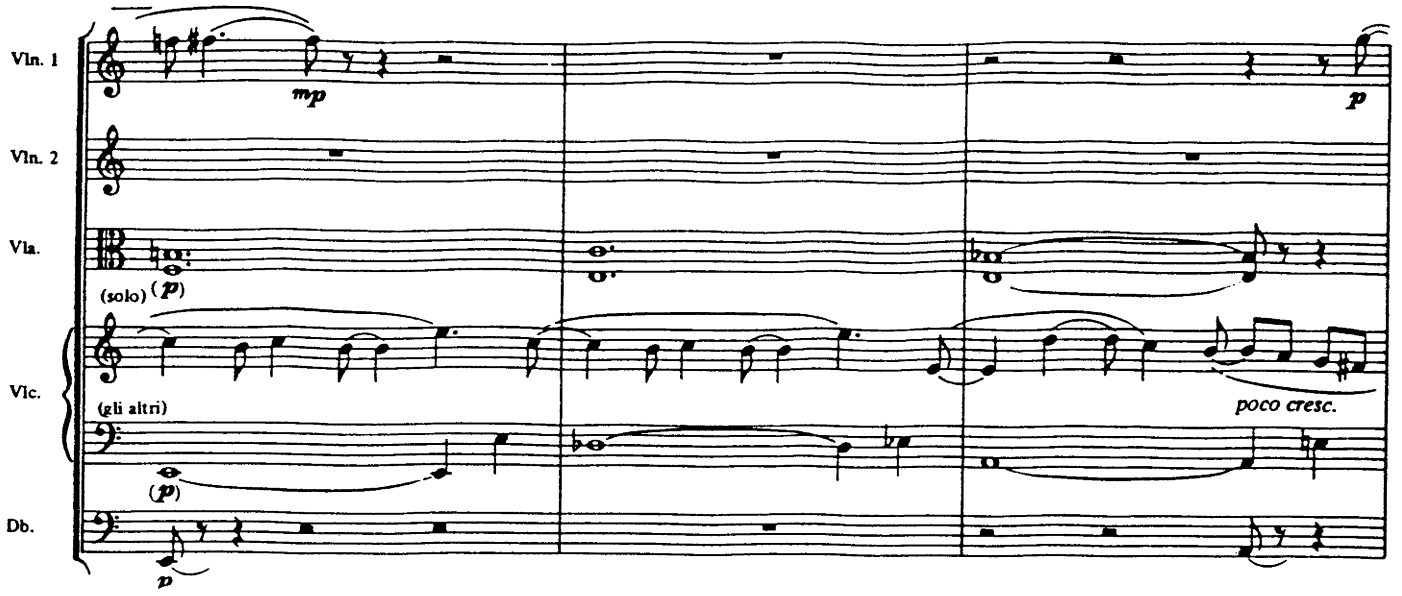
Example 25(c)

robust dances and tunes of the 18th and 19th centuries use 4ths and 5ths to great effect).

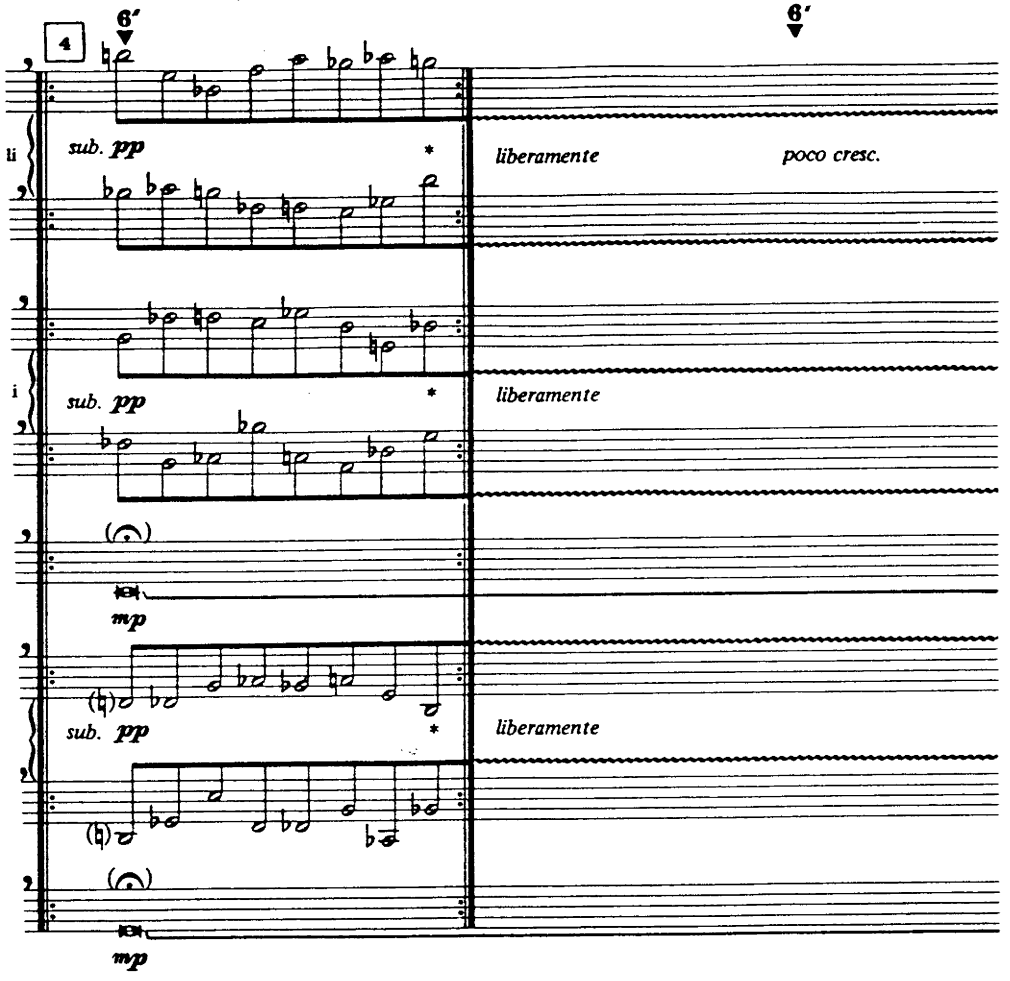
3.2 Tonal Centres.

Sculthorpe's static intervals form a soundscape which is tonally based. What often happens is that the notes used form a tonal centre. It is this tonal centre that can move during a piece, often to a 4th or 5th away, before resolving back to the original note (tone) in the concluding section of a work. This movement of the tonal centre is a common characteristic found within Sculthorpe's cello works, whether or not they are accompanied. However, in the three solo pieces there is less amount of harmony sounded. The rest is implied through the tonal centres of the melody.

How the tonal centre moves from one position to another during a piece depends largely on what the melody is doing, and also on what the general structure of the piece being considered is. Some of Sculthorpe's cello pieces are in ternary form (A1-B-A2), where section "B" is not a "development" in the classical sense of the word, but rather where new contrasting material is heard. Section "A1" and "A2" are sometimes very different to each other, as is the case with *Threnody*. (See example 25.) Hence the labels "A1" and "A2". When the structure of the piece is in ternary form, section "B" will often have a different tonal centre to that of section "A". In *Lament for Strings*,



Example 26 (a)



Example 26(b)

Sculthorpe dissolves the tonal centre by incorporating elements of chaos in the music. (See example 26.) In most cases, the impetus for the change of tonal centre seems to come from the melody, which wants to modulate to a different level of activity. The melody (and therefore the whole piece) either gains energy, when going into section "B", or loses energy, if section "A" has already been "energetic". The amount of movement of the tonal centre is usually no more than a 4th or 5th in either direction from the original note. In other words, the piece is moving from the tonic to the dominant or sub-dominant, something which happens to most pieces. In this sense, Sculthorpe's harmonic movement here is utterly conventional in terms of western tonal music.

The intervals of a 4th and a 5th, when being used as a chord, or as a tonal centre, imply a harmony which is unchanging (static). When the tonal centre moves (up or down a 4th or 5th), a relationship develops between what has been heard, and what is to be heard, even if the new material is of an entirely different nature. In both cases, these two intervals imply a sense of openness to the listener. Australia is an open country in many ways, being physically expansive with little population. Openness can quickly become isolation, especially if most of this openness is arid. Openness can imply desolation. *Lament for Strings* is about the isolation of the early settlers in

a desolate place. *Threnody* opens with the weeping (grief) of an isolated individual.

3.3 How Harmony supports Melody.

The harmony supports the melody by providing a soundscape in which the melody can move around. This soundscape can be static, as in *Lament for Strings*, or it can be tonally static but rhythmically active, as in *The Song of Tailitnama*, and to a more complex extent, *Djilile*. Usually the notes of the harmony will have some movement if the melody is resting on a longer note. However, the tonal centre of the piece may not be changing. The harmony line could be reiterating certain notes of a particular tonal centre, as happens in *Djilile*. The most common feature of the accompanied works is that the harmony is fairly static, in spite of the differences in rhythm. *Lament for Strings* has long notes. Tailitnama has short repeated notes. *Djilile* has short notes grouped into phrases which continuously flow underneath the melody and counter melody lines.



Example 27

3.4 Phrasing of Harmony, and Harmonic Shape.

This part of the chapter deals exclusively with the three accompanied cello works.

The phrasing of the harmony follows the phrasing found in the melody. The one major difference is that the harmony is more liable to have a similar rhythm in it, whereas the melody may have subtle variations of rhythm. Being harmonically static, there is not much apparent harmonic shape when considering *The Song of Tailitnama* and *Lament for Strings*. *Lament for Strings* has some movement in its parts, specifically one accompanying part will move while the other parts don't. A typical example of this is found in part of page 2 of the score. (See Example 27.)

Djilile is another matter. The bass line of *Djilile* moves between several octaves in the course of the piece. The bass line has a tendency to move upwards towards the melody and counter melody lines. The process continues when the bass line starts from another low note. This line rarely has a descending action to it.

There are no real similarities in the harmonic shape between the three accompanied pieces. Although each harmony is unique, there is scope to allow varying descriptions of Loss. In *Lament for Strings*, the harmony creates the feeling of a large open space. The melody is isolated

within this space. In *Djilile*, the harmony keeps moving along with the melodies, in a lilting fashion, while also describing a large space drying up to a more compact space (as the bass line rises). *The Song of Tailitnama* helps define a stable rhythmic base from which the complex rhythmic melody is heard. The continual rhythmic drive of this harmony is more important than the harmony itself, therefore the result is many repeated notes.

3.5 Counter-Melodies. *Djilile* and *The Song of Tailitnama*.

As previously noted, *Djilile* and *The Song of Tailitnama* both have a counter melody in them. The relationship between the counter melody and the harmony is different for these two pieces. The counter melody in *The Song of Tailitnama* functions as a descant, that is, a counterpoint accompanying a simple musical theme and usually written above it.[26]

Djilile has a counter melody which functions differently from *The Song of Tailitnama*. Although this melody does rise above the main thematic material played by the cello, it also has a harmonic function. This counter melody enhances the lilting rhythmic effect of the bass line with its syncopation. In addition to this, it provides harmonic support to the bass line because of the brief chords formed between the counter melody and bass line, when the counter

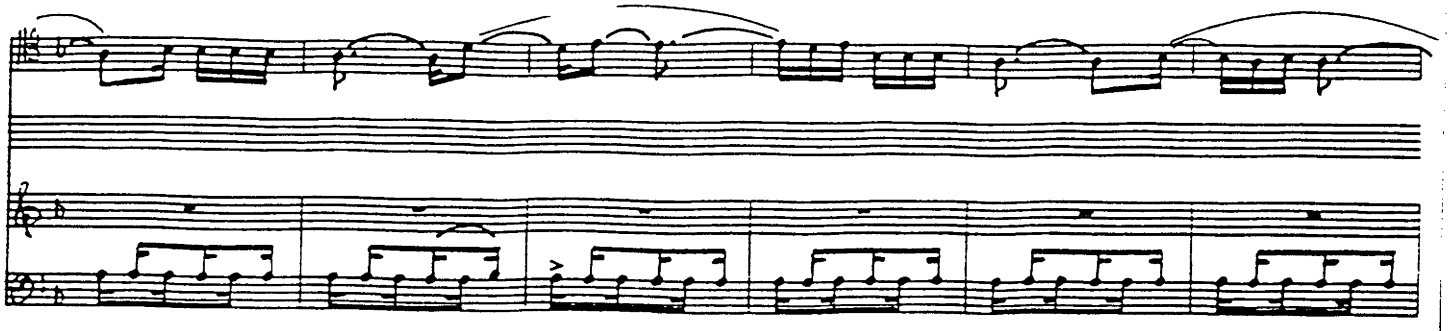
[26] The Macquarie Dictionary. Second revision, pp 490.

melody is sounding. The dissonance of the chords keeps the piece moving. The cello (melody) line loses much of its rhythmic drive without the piano part.

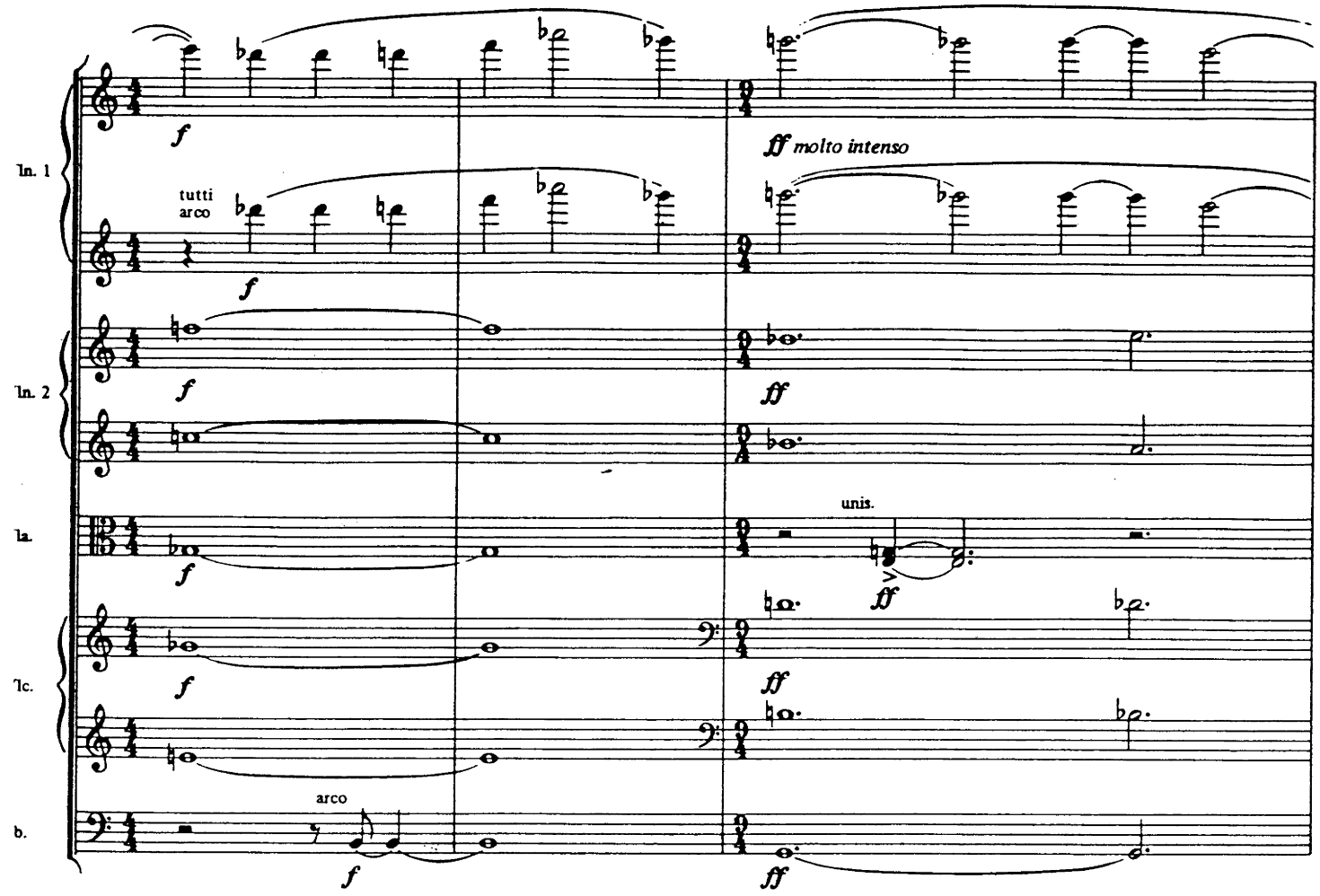
The counter melody also adds to the melody line. The juxtaposition of a "smooth" cello line and a "percussive" piano line helps define what the cello, and therefore the melody, is doing, both rhythmically, and sonically, as the lower part of the counter melody forms its own simple tune. It is this tune which interacts with the cello line. The counter melody of *Djilile*, played by the pianist's right hand, has two clear functions - one of enhancing the bass line, the other of enhancing the melody. This is very clever compositional writing.

3.6 Harmonic Rhythm.

There is not much particular similarity in the harmonic rhythm of the three accompanied pieces. All have syncopation. The syncopation encountered in *Lament for Strings* is probably the simplest of the group. Much of its syncopation is found in the occasional crotchet or minim tied across a barline. At the other end of the tempo scale, the harmony in *The Song of Tailitnama* is fast and intricate. It is much harder to play. Between these two pieces, *Djilile* has a moderate tempo with tied notes in every bar,



Example 28(a)



Example 28(b)



Example 28(c)

both in the left hand part (bass line) and in the counter melody.

Requiem has many double-stops. Some of these two note chords form a low sounding pedal point and higher sounding melody. Usually each part has similar bowing. Bowing is important in that it can define where any syncopation or beat is. Incorrect bowing can destroy any intended rhythmic effects, or lack of effects, very easily. Consequently, the phrasing of the harmonic rhythm in *Requiem* is of similar length to the phrasing of the melodic rhythm. Although *Requiem* obviously has harmony in it, the rhythm between the melody and its harmony (when it exists) is the same due to the physical constrictions encountered when bowing.

3.7 Relationship between metre and harmony.

In all of the cello works, the metre is affected by the syncopation found in the melodic harmonic lines. In the accompanied pieces, the metre can be aggressively defined, as it is in *The Song of Tailitnama*, or it can be diffused as in *Lament for Strings*. None of the cello works are the same. The plain-chant sections in *Requiem* do not have a time signature at all. (See example 28).

Into the Dreaming is the only cello piece which does not change time signature. This piece, and *Requiem* are the only works which do not have some form of compound time signature

in them. The most common of time signatures employed by Sculthorpe in his cello works, are of compound duple origins. Six crotchets or quavers in the bar is what *Threnody, Lament for Strings* and *The Song of Tailitnama* start with. *Djilile* starts with a 12/8 signature. Perhaps Sculthorpe likes the lilting rhythmic effect that can be generated by this sort of time signature. Certainly the four pieces of *Djilile, Threnody, Lament for Strings* and *Tailitnama* have this particular rhythmic effect in varying degrees.

CHAPTER FOUR

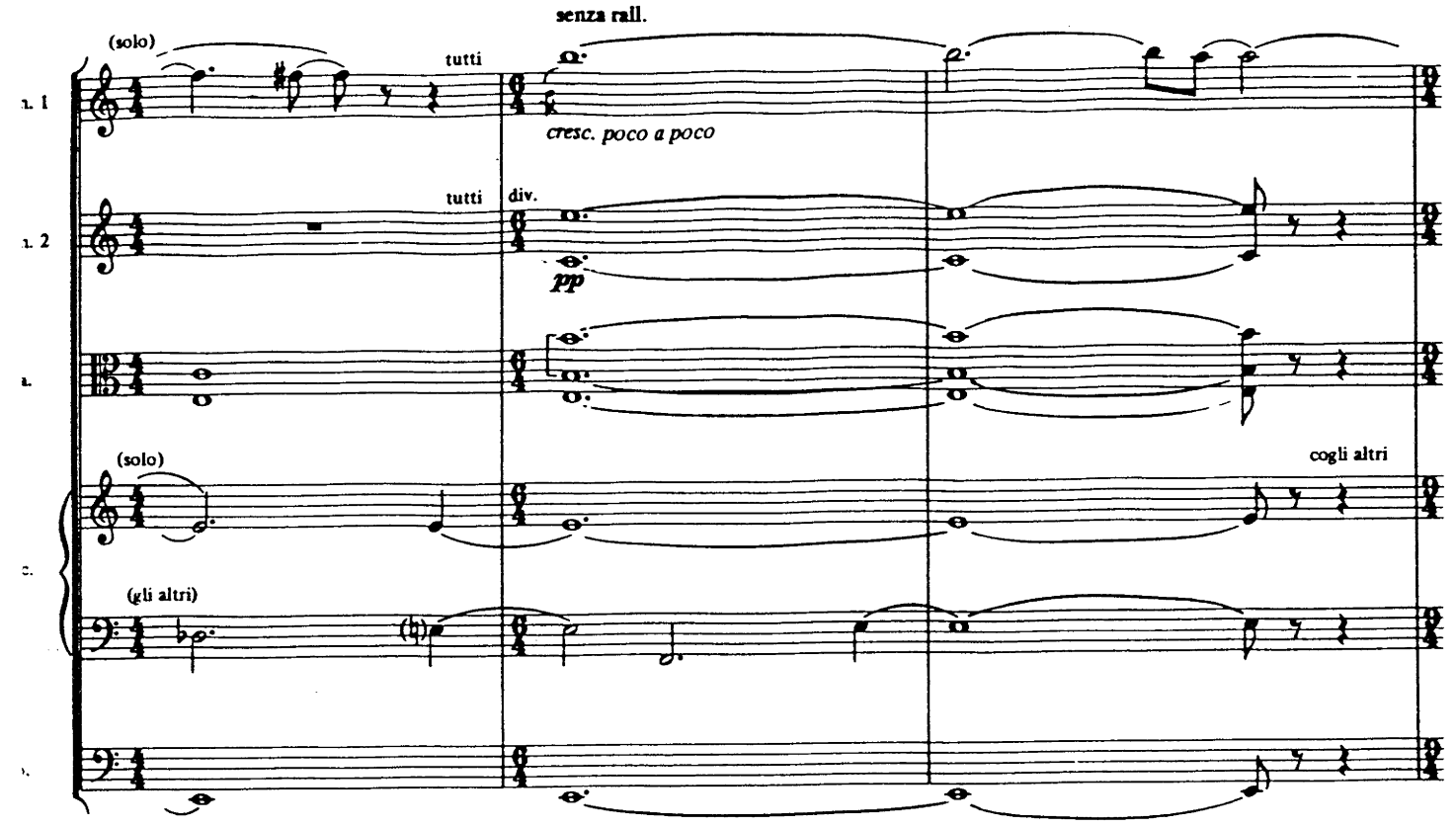
RHYTHM

4.1 Function of rhythm in the cello works.

The rhythm defines to a large extent, the basic nature of Sculthorpe's cello pieces. Some pieces, like *The Song of Tailitnama, have* a predominantly aggressive rhythm, while others are lilting (*Threnody, Djilile*), or flowing (*Djilile,* and some parts of *Requiem*).

The rhythm found in the *The Song of Tailitnama* is a predominantly driving type. Both the melody and harmony have similar forms of this type of rhythm throughout the piece. The rhythm is driving because of the continuous flow of semiquaver notes in the piano part. The melody line adds to this to form a work which is aggressive. Sometimes the melody line has longer notes in it, but the aggressiveness is still there. The addition of the descant in the second half of the work only serves to further highlight this underlying rhythm.

The rhythm found in *Lament for Strings* is of a different nature when compared with *The Song of Tailitnama.* Long


senza rall.
(solo)
tutti
cresc. poco a poco
tutti
div.
pp
(solo)
cogli altri
(gli altri)

Example 29

notes, covering many beats, make up the accompaniment. The melody is also less dynamic than *The Song of Tailitnama*. This lack of tempo, combined with slow changing harmonies, forms a static type of soundscape. The melody is heard through this sound, because of its syncopation. Western ears still tend to perceive strong and weak beats, even in a slow moving piece. The syncopation in the melody tends to break up this sonic perception, further enhancing the effect of harmonic and rhythmic stillness. The intervals used in the harmony create a feeling of expansiveness to the listener. (See example 29).

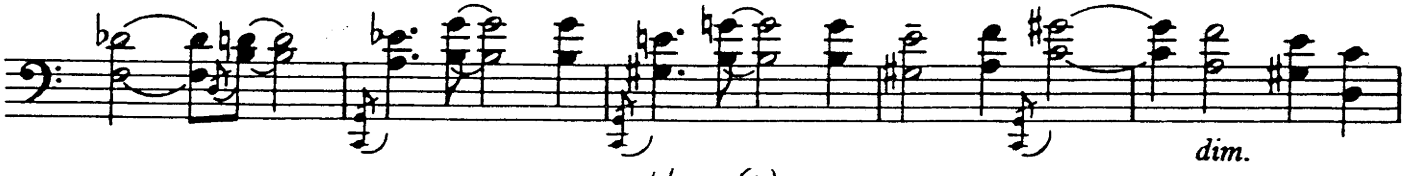
In the middle section, two forms of rhythm are used. The first form is that based on standard time signatures, while the second form is based on no time signatures. Instead, a duration, marked in seconds, is given for the completion of a particular musical segment. During this segment, each instrumental section plays a series of notes. Each individual performer in this section is then expected to ad lib. the tempo of these notes. The result from this expected chaos is actually a soundscape which is harmonically static due to the intense activity of its individual parts. The ear does not (or can not) lock-on to any particular series of notes, and therefore the listener can not determine if there is any harmonic progression happening. Any beats or rhythmic pulses do not exsist in this type of compositional writing therefore a strong case



Example 30



Example 31(a)



Example 31(b)

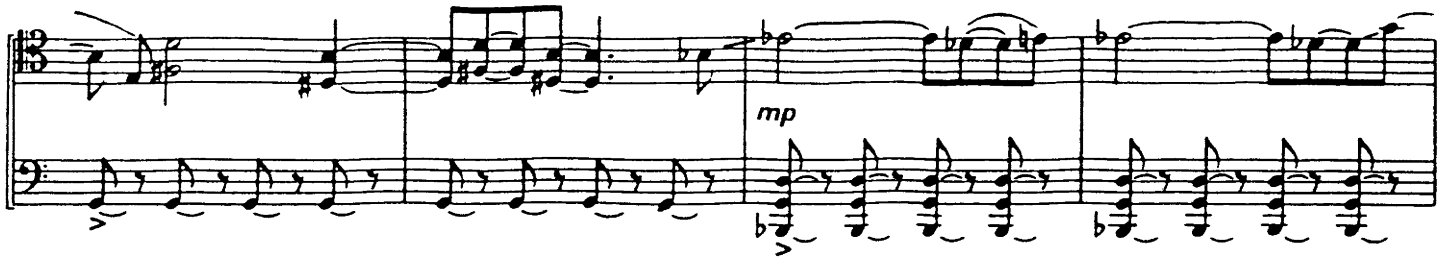


Example 31(c)

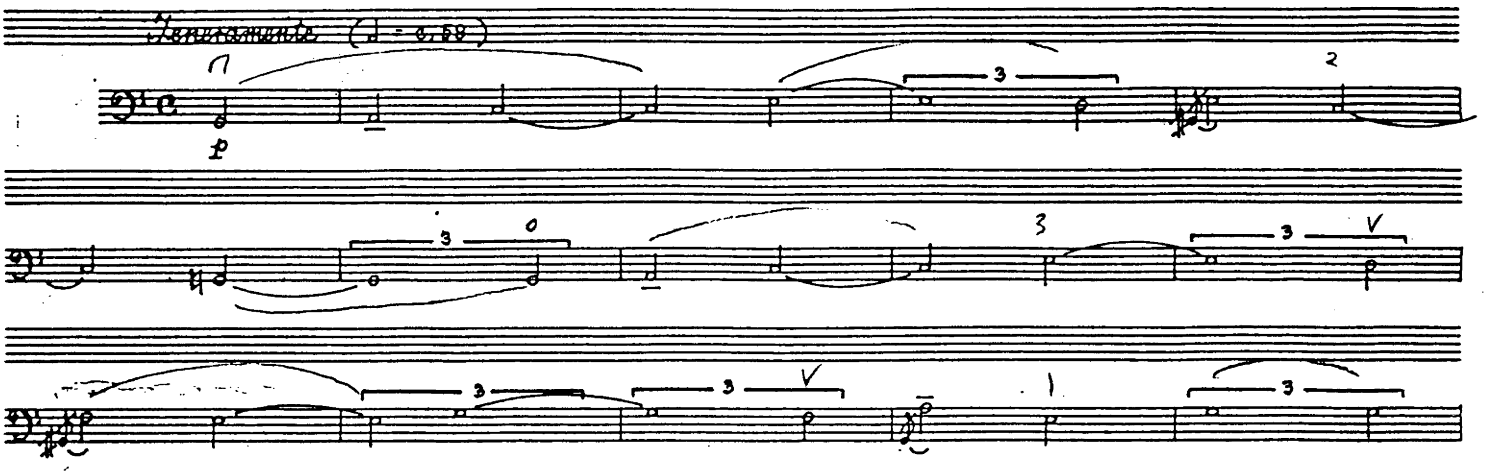
may be put forward that the rhythm has also halted, or stopped, while the sound continues. Perhaps rhythm can not exist without sound, but this type of writing allows sound to exist without rhythm.

Djilile is similar to *Lament for Strings* in that it is meant to be an expansive musical soundscape. The methods used by Sculthorpe to show this, however, are different. *Djilile* uses a running bass line over a large pitch range to create the feeling of expansiveness, over which a melody and counter melody are laid. (See example 30). The overall effect though is thinner when compared with *Lament for Strings*. This is due to the different instrumental forces being used.

Threnody is a work which has several types of rhythm in it. Overall, the piece begins with a slow, lilting rhythm. (See example 31a). The middle section is more straight, the music sounding hopeful. (See example 31b). In the third section, the rhythm becomes driving and seemingly unstoppable. (See example 31c). The anger generated here dissipates quickly in the coda, which is comprised of long notes. The rhythm is directly related to the type of emotion being described at that point in the piece.



Example 32



Example 33

Requiem uses pizzicato in various sections to give a steady rhythmic beat to the slightly syncopated melody. The pizzicato is played on open strings at the same time the melody is being bowed. As a cellist, this is not as difficult as is sounds, although it does require skill. (See example 32). The plain-chant sections in *Requiem* do not have, or need, a time signature. The rhythm flows with the phrasings.

Into the Dreaming has a slow tempo, and long notes. These two factors, combined with syncopation within each phrase, break down any rhythmic beat. The result is a work that flows from phrase to phrase, while at the same time using a conventional time signature. (See example 33).

4.2 Relationship between bar lines and syncopation.

All of Sculthorpe's cello works employ syncopation in the melody and harmony. This syncopation has many forms. Tied notes, both inside and between bars, irregular subdivisions of the beat, and changes of metre happen on a regular basis. The only exception to this is *Into the Dreaming* which does not change metre, but has other forms of syncopation.



Example 34(a)



Example 35



Example 34(b)

Irregular subdivisions of the beat occurs with the existence of duplets in pieces with compound time signatures, or triplets in pieces that have simple time signatures. The occasional five-beat bar is also noticed in a few of the works. There are, however, no examples of extremely unusual time signatures like 11/8 or 7/4. Sculthorpe keeps his time signatures fairly "standard" in this respect, allowing the syncopation of notes within a phrase to enhance or degrade the natural beats within the bar. (See example 34).

There are many examples of tied notes. These notes are used to break up the natural beat of the bar. One more unusual example is found in the bass line of *Djilile*. Often the last two quavers of the last beat in the bar will be tied. Sometimes this phenomenon happens more than once in a bar (see Example 35). The standard way of printing this would be to change the tied quavers to a crotchet, but this never happens. One reason for these notes being tied is that it allows the bass line to consist entirely of quavers, providing a visual cue to the performer of how this line should be played, that is, flowingly.



Example 36 (a)



Example 36(b)

4.3 Relationship between harmony, melody, and the metre.

Sculthorpe is biased towards the use of compound time in the cello works. This type of time signature groups the notes into threes. The time signatures reflect the use of compound-quavers for the faster works (*Djilile, The Song of Tailitnama*), and compound-crotchets for the slower works (*Lament for Strings, Threnody*). In *Requiem* and *Into the Dreaming* the simple time signatures actually have many examples of triplets throughout both pieces. The result of grouping notes into threes, no matter what the time signature, allows the rhythm to obtain a lilting feel to it, although this does not happen with *The Song of Tailitnama*. The tempo, the arrangement of various accents in the harmony line, and because the melody is constructed to accent the beginning of particular beats, all conspire against a lilting rhythm by providing a strong driving pulse in this piece.

In the accompanied pieces of *Lament for Strings* and *Djilile* only the solo line or the accompanying harmony give impetus to the rhythm at any one time, not both at once. The rhythmic roles of the melody and harmony parts in these two pieces are reversed. *Lament for Strings* has the melody, while *Djilile* has the harmony defining the rhythmic content of each piece. (See example 36). Respectfully, the harmony and melody of *Lament for Strings* and *Djilile* do not

necessarily contribute much to the type of lilting rhythm being sustained throughout each work. Long notes do not help define rhythm, or the metre, which is what the harmony and melody of *Lament for Strings* and *Djilile* respectively have.

In the unaccompanied pieces the melody must also define the rhythm. *Threnody* does this with the extensive use of syncopation. *Requiem* uses syncopation and triplets when required. *Into the Dreaming* also uses triplets and tied notes to define rhythmic content.

4.4 Effect of expressive markings.

Expressive musical markings, such as accents, pizzicato, arco, dynamics, tempo, and other directions like sul tasto and espressivo, can dramatically alter the sound of a work. Sculthorpe frequently gives directions on how he wishes part of a work to be performed. The start of *Requiem* is a case in point. Normally the plain-chant would be played in a singing style. However, sul tasto is marked instead. The bow is meant to be played over the fingerboard. This gives a tonally weak sound, with softer dynamics. The start of *Requiem* is not to get the cello singing, which it does very well in this particular pitch register, but to make the cello whisper the plain-chant. Sculthorpe recommends that the cello be amplified for this piece. The whispering effect is made larger, hopefully enough so the sound will echo around an auditorium. Other non-musical sounds made by

the bow-hair scraping across the string are also amplified, giving the impression that the music is soft and intimate, rather than soft and far away.

Tenuto marks are a feature of the first two sections of *Threnody*. These tenuto marks reinforce the tonal centre of the melody. The direction of *sul D* at the start also makes the sound seem thicker and duller in timbre than it would if it was played on the A string. Playing the start of *Threnody* on the A string of the cello is technically much easier than on the D string, but in this case, Sculthorpe is looking for a particular sound from the instrument.

The tenuto markings give way to fewer accent markings in the Risoluto section. The aggressive nature of the last section of *Threnody* is made even greater at the climax points where the accents occur.

Lament for Strings has few extra-musical markings, but the solo performer is constantly reminded whether the melody is espressivo or calmo. The *diminuendo a niente* in the middle *Con Calore* section is an extreme version of diminuendo. In this case, the sound fades away to absolutely nothing. Tempo changes at the end of the first section, and the end of the piece are marked senza rall, and meno mosso respectively. Sculthorpe wants an easing of the tempo just

before the start of the second section, and before the end of the work.

The Song of Tailitnama has few extra musical features. An accent every six bars in the accompaniment indicates the start of a new phrase. This work relies on a driving beat and a syncopated melody to achieve its ends. The coda is marked calmo, giving the listener a clear indication that the piece seems to be approaching a conclusion.

The words "bring out the melody", written at the beginning of the piano part of *Djilile*, give a clear indication that Sculthorpe wants the counter melody in the piano line to interact with the cello melody. The two pizzicato notes that the cello has in the introductory section add to the lilting effect in the piano part. The cello line is labelled *sereno* at the start of the first section. The melody line is meant to be calm, possibly held back. This would allow the counter melody to be much more obvious than it otherwise would be. Later, the melody is marked *ancora sereno*, still calm, even though the dynamic level is forte. The result of this is a certain level of tension between the three parts (melody, counter melody, and bass) throughout the piece.

Into the Dreaming does not have many extra-musical markings in it, but those that are there, have a great effect on the

tonal centres of the phrases. The first phrase has a nominal tonal centre of "C". However, a tenuto mark on the second note of the piece (an "A") clouds the key centre slightly. With the notes that immediately follow, the listener is not entirely convinced that the tonal centre is based on "C". A tonal centre on "A" is almost plausible, until the end of the phrase, where the notes form the C major arpeggio, ending the issue of the key. Without this single tenuto mark, the tonal centre would be very clear cut. The piece would also get very boring as it was played, because the tonal centre of the piece would remain on the same note. Sculthorpe gives the ear of the listener a choice of keys. This in turn, enhances the dream-like qualities of the work. The piece is aptly named. The coda section has meno mosso, slowing an already slow work. Long notes drain away the remaining energy in the end.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary.

The idea of loss is everywhere in these pieces. Each of the melodies in the cello works describe some form of loss. The sadness of the beginning phrases, and final ebbing of energy in *Into the Dreaming*, the held back, yet intense melody line in *Djilile*, the weeping and anger of *Threnody*, the driving aggressiveness of *The Song of Tailitnama*, the single voice in the soundscape of *Lament for Strings*, and the formality of a Requiem; all describe loss.

Long notes, short motifs, chromatically based intervals, falling-pitch phrases, double-stoppings, and the deliberate extraction of particular tones from the cello all suggest some form of loss.

The harmony suggests loss in these cello works. The expansiveness or thinness of the accompanying soundscape suggests the emptiness, harshness, but inherent fragility of the land, and the people who have formed a culture around it (*The Song of Tailitnama*). Others have tried to conquer and

exploit it, but failed (*Lament for Strings*). The implied tonal centres in some pieces also support the melody in its descriptive function.

The rhythm helps the melody and harmony to achieve the descriptions of Loss. When there is no discernible rhythm (*Lament for Strings* and arguably the plain-chant in *Requiem*), a feeling of timelessness pervades the soundscape. Timelessness is eternal and unending, and implies the loss of time itself.[27]

5.2 The relationship between the cello works, Sculthorpe, and loss

Sculthorpe finds it more difficult to write pieces which have a happy disposition, than pieces which seem to be moody and sad.[28] This type of melancholy writing is a major characteristic of Sculthorpe's compositional style. He has used the musical resources inherent in the cello to reflect on this melancholia.

Sculthorpe goes one step further in a few of the cello works by dedicating certain pieces to particular persons. This is what happens in *Threnody*, which was written for, and dedicated to, the memory of Stuart Challender. Other pieces

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27 The Macquarie Dictionary. Second revision, pp 1777.
28 Sculthorpe, Peter. Personal Interview. 5 Nov 1994.

are dedicated to the premiere performers. *Djilile* is dedicated to David Pereira and David Bollard. *Requiem* is also dedicated to cellist Nathan Waks who premiered the work in 1979, but Sculthorpe was also dedicating this work to his father.[29] *Requiem* is meant to be a complimentary piece to *Irkanda-4*, which was written as a memorial work to his father.[30]

Sculthorpe sees the cello as an instrument with a flexible vocabulary of tone colours coupled to large ranges of pitch and dynamics. He found the cello to be an ideal instrument to express sadness, and loss.

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29 Sculthorpe, Peter. Personal Interview. 5 Nov 1994.
30 Sculthorpe, Peter. Personal Interview. 5 Nov 1994.

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