

FLUTE SUITE

Analysis

While a suite is traditionally a collection of dances, the term 'dance' is open to interpretation. I have shied away from more conventional types, such as waltz, disco[?] and gigue, in order to create something more individualistic and enjoyable for me to compose. I had initially, however, started with these popular dances, but I found the compositional aspect tedious and uninspiring. I decided to look open-mindedly at the definition of dance and be less restrictive. The structure of the piece includes five movements: a chant/hymn, butterfly dance, oriental dance (using pentatonic scale), curlew dance and corroboree. Dance can be defined as a ritual or movement that follows a rhythm, and in this way is inclusive of many things and actions, such as the rituals of chant and corroboree. Corroboree presented some difficulties for composition in that the solo flute can't be as percussive or suggestive of this traditional aboriginal act as I would have liked. However, I worked around this problem using techniques such as multiphonics, and having only certain parts of the flute played and combined with extended techniques.

Each movement is related in melodic material through the linkage of the separate scale systems. While each dance uses a different scale or mode, they are connected. That is, the most important pitch of each movement is also the second most important in the previous one. Therefore, movement 2 is in C Dorian mode, whose second most important pitch is A, so the third movement is in A pentatonic (where A has become the most important).

The length of each movement is based on the Fibonacci principle, where every number in the series is equal to the sum of the two numbers preceding it (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144, 233, 377, 610). In order to have the whole piece approximately 610 seconds (10 minutes) in duration, I first took the two numbers preceding 610 in the pattern, i.e. 377 and 233. I then obtained the two preceding numbers for each of these; 233, 144, 144 and 89. Because there are five dances in this suite, I took the two numbers before 144 (89 and 55) and substituted them in place of one 144 second section. Thus I end up with the following times: 233 seconds, 144 seconds, 89 seconds, 55 seconds and 89 seconds. These were then rearranged into the order: movement 1= 89 seconds, movement 2=55 seconds, movement 3=89 seconds, movement 4=233 seconds and movement 5=144. The order of dances is as follows: Butterfly dance, chant/ hymn, oriental dance, coroborree, curlew dance. This sequence was chosen because the opening and closing movements are both animal dances, while the middle three are human rites particular to certain locations or beliefs.

Movement 1: Butterfly dance.

The inspiration for this was gained through watching the frequent courting dances of butterflies in my garden. The male flies above the female and sprays her with scent, following her every curve and spiral. These performances remind me of synchronized swimming, and there are often two, or even three, males chasing one female. The butterflies twist, turn, dive and circle, eventually making their way to a suitable landing place.

These aspects are conveyed through the flexible rhythm used in this piece, such as acceleration. The melodic material is based on the C whole tone scale because the atmosphere produced by this scale is mysterious, as is the butterfly dance. I chose the time signature three four for its rocking and soothing quality (reminiscent of the butterflies' delicate fluttering). The use of authentic, dry-gargle and tongue-rolling fluttersong are representative of the 'fluttering' wings, as are the edge tones and accelerating vibrato.

Movement 2: Chant/hymn

In C Dorian mode, this movement has a slower tempo than the first, which is reminiscent of Gregorian chant, in combination with the limited melodic range that moves predominantly by step and small leaps.

Movement 3: Oriental dance

This dance uses A pentatonic scale system, and in it I have tried to epitomize the stereotypical sound of oriental music (if not the most correct).

Movement 4: Coroborree

A drone on F# is used frequently during this movement as an imitation of the drone present in traditional coroborrees. The aboriginal singing during these occasions is of a nasal quality and is made up of falling melodic lines. Therefore I have included techniques such as playing and singing simultaneously, where the sung lines follow this basic idea. There are obvious references to the event present in the music, such as playing

the flute "like a didgeridoo". I have tried to recreate the percussive sounds present through the use of key clicks, foot tapping and hitting the end of the headjoint with the palm of a hand. The vibratissimo (nanny goat vibrato) is similar to the shaking voices of old men singing, as are the pitch bends.

Movement 5: Curlew dance

Inspiration for this movement was gained through listening to curlews calling and uttering their haunting cries for a number of years. They tend to slide between notes, which I have imitated through the use of pitch bends. This dance is in G minor, since minor has come to represent mystery, and the curlew cry is based on a minor interval (minor 3rd). Curlews repeat this call a number of times before moving on to a short passage of falling accented notes that I liken to the sound of laughing. The end of this movement, being the end of the piece, brings back material from the first movement to unite the piece as a whole.

Notes for the performer:

Fl.g – dry-gargle fluttertongue (using the throat).

Fl.a – authentic fluttertongue (using the tongue while totally covering the embouchure hole with mouth)

/// on stem/s or Fl. – fluttertongue by rolling the tongue.

Edge tones (e.t.) – using a loose embouchure and blowing softly to achieve a windy sound with a slight pitch.

Nanny goat vibrato – extremely fast vibrato using the throat

^^^ - vibrato, speed is indicated by the size (i.e. smaller equals faster and visa versa).

Alap – as loud as possible

+ - if this is under/above a notehead then do not play the note but slap fingers down to produce a percussive pitch.

↘ - Gradually lower pitch.

↗ - Gradually raise pitch.

Fingering for multiphonic: 

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I Butterfly Dance

Fiona Pennisi

Flute

Delicately $\text{♩} \approx 60$

p *mf*

p *f* *p* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mf*

p *mf* *f* *mf* *p* *pp*

mf *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

slow vibrato accel. nanmy goat vibrato

mf *mp*

mf *mp* *mp*

p *f* *mf* *pp*

Flz2 $\text{♩} \approx 60$

mf

p *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*

$\text{♩} \approx 60$ III Oriental Dance

Do not play into piano

p *pp* *pppp* *f*

mf

mp *mf*

mp *mf* *f*

mf *mp* *p* *pppp* *mf*

tr. (accel.)

tr. *mp* *mf*

IV Corroboree

$\text{♩} = 80$

tapping foot while taking head joint off flute

blow into body of flute like a didgeridoo while tapping foot on every crotchet

continue tapping foot get flute head piece tapping end with palm of hand still foot tapping

f *mf* *mp* *f* *ff*

alap

stop foot tapping

change to whole flute

sing

play

mp *mf* *mp* *mf*



Key clicks while playing.



(i.e. only key clicks audible)



Authentic fluttertongue while quickly fingering (and key clicking) chromatic scale

Singing whilst covering embouchure hole with mouth and key clicking chromatic scale quickly



Same as previous bar except the key clicks are trilling between Eb and

Normal - pitch bends simile

Change to flute body without headjoint.

V Curlew Dance

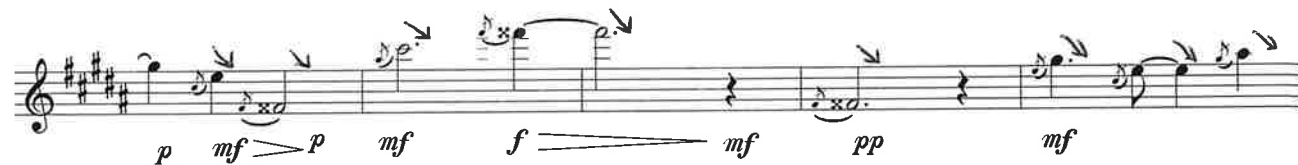
♩60

Play into open piano.



Blow into body like a didgeridoo.

simile.



The musical score consists of six staves of music in treble clef, with a key signature of four sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#). The music is characterized by various dynamics, articulations, and technical markings.

Staff 1: Dynamics include *mp*, *mf*, *f*, *ff*, *p*, and *mp*. It features a triplet of eighth notes and a slur over a series of eighth notes.

Staff 2: Dynamics include *>p*, *mp*, *mf*, and *p*. It features a slur over a series of eighth notes and a crescendo leading to a *p* dynamic.

Staff 3: Dynamics include *mf*, *f*, *mp*, *p*, and *mf*. It features a series of slurs over eighth notes and a crescendo leading to a *mf* dynamic.

Staff 4: Dynamics include *f*, *mf*, *p*, and *mp*. It features a series of slurs over eighth notes and a crescendo leading to a *mp* dynamic.

Staff 5: Dynamics include *mf*, *mp*, and *p*. It features a series of slurs over eighth notes and a crescendo leading to a *p* dynamic.

Staff 6: Dynamics include *mf*, *p*, *f*, *mp*, and *p*. It features a series of slurs over eighth notes and a crescendo leading to a *p* dynamic.