

Seggasem Neddih

This piece is composed for three performers who swap between various instruments. The principal instruments are flute and piano, with added props including a metal bowl, coins, chimes and leaves (see appendix 1). The title of this piece is the retrograde of “Hidden Messages”. I chose this because I based the composition on six separate nursery rhymes, which I believe are filled with veiled assertions, and the act of positioning the title backwards accentuates the idea of ‘hidden’ messages.

The nursery rhymes in order are as follows: Hickory Dickory Dock, Sing a Song of Sixpence, Three Blind Mice, Ring a Rosie, Rock-a-bye Baby and Rain Rain Go Away. I don’t believe there are any sinister undertones in this song (Rain Rain) and have included it solely to represent my sadness over the desensitisation of our society, especially our younger generations. With the increased awareness of violence that is present at this time, no one seems to realise what we are telling our children. Why sing your child to sleep with the story of a baby falling out of a tree, the Black Death, or a woman having her nose pecked off? Even more distressing is the fact that many people don’t even realise what the lyrics are about.

Nursery Rhymes:

In order to achieve a full understanding of the music I have relied on the assumption that the listener is familiar with these nursery rhymes. For the purpose of the minority of people who haven’t, I have provided the lyrics:

Hickory Dickory Dock:

Hickory dickory dock the mouse ran up the clock. The clock struck one the mouse ran down, hickory dickory dock.

Sing a Song of Sixpence:

Sing a song of sixpence a pocket full of rye.

Four and twenty black birds baked in a pie.

When the pie was opened the birds began to sing.

Wasn't that a dainty dish to set before the king?

The king was in his counting house counting out his money.

The queen was in the parlour eating bread and honey.

The maid was in the garden hanging out the clothes, when down came a blackbird and pecked off her nose.

Three Blind Mice:

Three blind mice, see how they run.

They all run after the farmer's wife who chops off their tails with a calving knife. Have you ever seen such a thing in your life as three blind mice?

Ring a Rosie:

Ring a ring a rosie a pocket full of posie. Atishoo atishoo, we all fall down.

Rock a bye Baby:

Rock-a-bye baby on the treetop when the wind blows the cradle will rock. When the bough breaks the cradle will fall and down will come baby, cradle and all.

Rain rain go away:

Rain rain go away come again another day.

Analysis:

After deciding on the percentage of the whole song that I want each movement to be, I end up with the following times for each separate movement:

Mvt 1 = 48 seconds (10%); Mvt 2 = 240 seconds (50%); Mvt 3 = 48 seconds (10%); Mvt 4 = 20 seconds (about 5%); Mvt 5 = 48 seconds (10%); Mvt 6 = 48 seconds (10%).

I left 5% spare for changeovers between movements, pauses and discrepancies in speed (most performers playing slightly slower than marked).

To add variation, and give meaning to each section, the time signature changes periodically. When the chosen time signatures were substituted into the movements I then calculated the number of bars required to obtain the desired length.

Movement 1: Hickory Dickory Dock

The opening of the piece is in A major and is reminiscent of the traditional style of singing nursery rhymes. There are four main cells used in this movement (see example 1):

Cell A: A major Cell B: intervallic inversion of cell A (i.e. A G F E D C A#).

Cell C: Notes common to both A and B (A E D).

Cell D: Notes uncommon to both (C C# F F# G G# A# B).

Example 1: Four main cells in movement 1, *Segassem Neddih*.

I don't follow the convention put forth by Schoenberg that each note must be played in order and can't be repeated until the row is finished. In that respect the cells are more similar to scale systems than to tone rows. A bar by bar analysis is as follows:

Bar 1 uses cell A and introduces the piece.

Bars 2-3 uses cell B and cell B transposed up one semitone and represents the mouse running up the clock. The piano corresponds to the ticking of the clock in the right hand and the swinging of the pendulum in the left hand.

Bar 4: cell A

Bar 5-6: cell B

Bar 7: Cell A transposed up one tone. Bars 4-7 symbolise the mouse exploring up to the top of the clock with wonder and awe. Flute two has permutations of cell C.

Bar 8: The first half is a continuation of the previous bar, while the Eb and Ab in the piano part are totally unexpected and unrelated, as is the clock striking (which the should symbolises). The silence after this (while the sound dies away) is representative of the initial shock of the mouse.

Bar 10-12: Cell B and cell B transposed up one semitone – once over its fright “The mouse ran down..”. The clock continues irrespective...

Movement two – Sing a song of sixpence.

The beginning of this movement is in D major and changes to A D# B Gb E# C Ab at bar 20. I obtained this row by taking the interval of a 6th (sing...sixpence) and alternating between putting a sharp, flat and natural.

Bar 21-25: 'Full of rye'. I endeavoured to create a full texture in this section, by having a lot of echo and rhythmic mobility.

Bar 32-35: 'Blackbirds baked in a pie'. This section uses the original row of A D# B Gb E# C Ab (see example 2).

Bar 36-42: 'When the pie was opened...'. The gradual increase in dynamics represents the birds singing, which becomes louder as the pie is opened. Bar 36 uses the notes B C# G A#, which is every second note from original row 2 (see example 2).

Bar 43-47: Original row 3, C F# D A G# D# B (see example 2), is used here. The left hand of the piano represents royalty, while the right hand symbolizes the marching of a royal procession. The principle flute is imitative of brass exclamations.

Bar 48-61: 'The king was in his counting house...'. The money dropping, bike wheel flipping and flute singing are all representative of counting money.

Bar 62-72: 'queen was in the parlour eating bread and honey'. The tone clusters sound similar to the droning of bees (from which honey is made), and this section uses original row 4.

Original							
0	A	D#	B	Gb	E#	C	Ab
1	A#	E	C	G	F#	C#	A
2	B	F	C#	G#	G	D	A#
3	C	F#	D	A	G#	D#	B
4	C#	G	D#	A#	A	E	C
5	D	G#	E	B	A#	F	C#
6	D#	A	F	C	B	F#	D

Example 2: pitch matrix, *Segassem Neddih*.

Bar 73–86: The descending line (O4 at different speeds) represents the bowing maid.

Bar 87–102: ‘garden’. The flute edge tones sound like wind, the piano symbolises a bubbling brook, and the flutes represent birds with their call and response section. The brook is shallow, evident by the lack of bass in the piano, and the second flute is further away from the first (shown by its softer dynamic) and uses the same rhythm, but begins on C# of the pattern. Original row 5 is used in this section (see example 2), but through an error C is used in place of the A#. At bar 82 RO5 is used (creating a mirror image), while bars 84-89 are a retrograde of bars 78-82.

Bar 103 –109 uses O6 (D# A F C C# F# D – see example 2, again through error C# is used instead of B), and the flutes sound like crickets while the piano is symbolic of grasshoppers.

Bar 110-124: ‘hanging out the clothes’. In use here is the pitch row D# A# D# B A D G, which I obtained by adding one and taking three alternatively to the pitch intervals of O6 (e.g. D# to A is ip5 in O6, and D# to A# is ip6 in the O6 (+1, -1) row, see example 3). The cassette cover squeaking represents the turning of the clothesline and the clothes trolley being pushed. Clothes being pegged up are symbolized by the flute key clicks, while the tray full of pebbles sounds like the maid walking to the line.

Bars 125-130: The intervallic inversion of the row previously in use (D# A# D# B A D G), D# G# D# G A E B, is used. The descending line is hypotyposis for ‘down came a blackbird’. The piano is deliberately low and dark in similarity to the ‘dark’ colour of a blackbird.

O6 D# ip6 A ip8 F ip7 C ip1 C# ip4 F# ip8 D

O6(+1 -3) D# ip7 A# ip5 D# ip8 B ip10 A ip5 D ip5 G

Example 3: Pitch row O6(+1 -3), *Segassem Neddih*.

131-133: The piano is using the 'nursery rhyme sound' from the beginning that has been subjected to a minor key and distorted. The multiphonics in the second flute can be likened to the sound of the maid screaming as the blackbird (symbolized by the rubber band on a hard cover book being plucked) pecks off her nose. The ending is abrupt, as the maid is most probably going to bleed to death.

Movement 3: Three Blind Mice

This movement is appropriately the third movement, and the instrumentation involves three flutes. There are five sections, each of which is founded on a part of the corresponding text.

Each section is based on three notes (this equates to three elements of three). These are only *based* on these notes, deviating slightly through the loss or addition of sharps to these notes. The overall structure is symmetrical in length, with the duration of each section being as follows: section a = 3 bars, section b, c and d = 2 bars and section e = 3 bars.

Bars 1-3 (section a): 'Three Blind Mice'. Because they are blind they would rely on following each other, hence the echoing (using C D and E).

Bars 4-5 (section b): 'See how they run'. This part is based on the three notes C D# F#, which are all ip3 apart (beginning on C because it is the third letter of the alphabet). The rhythm is faster overall in order to create the feeling of running.

Bar 6-7 (section c): '...run after the farmers wife'. This section breaks the rule, in that it uses six notes, but these are simply the combination of the two previous sets of three; E D C D# F#.

Bar 8-9 (section d): 'cut off their tails'. This section is more disturbing and 'dissonant', for the obvious programmatic reason. The first three beats of bar 9 represent the chopping off of the mice's tails.

Bars 10-12 (section e): 'three blind mice'. The same notes as the beginning are used, as well as the echo (out of phase effect).

Movement 4: Ring a Rosie

This piece is canonic, relating to a 'ring' in the cycling type technique.

Bar 1-4: These bars are in A Major and follow the rhythm and pitch direction of the original nursery rhyme.

Bar 5: The noises of 'warming up' are the sneezing of sick people who have the plague.

Bar 6 and 7: The descending line represents the 'falling' people, and the chime at the conclusion of the movement is indicative of the bells tolling for the dead. 'We all fall down' is four syllables, so the four pitches used are A C# G B, which are all ip 4 apart.

Movement 5: Rock-a-bye Baby

Bars 1-4: 'Rock-a-bye Baby'. This is a smooth, soothing rhythm and melody in F Major. During the movement the tonality gradually moves away from this into something more dissonant.

Bar 5: 'On the tree-top'. Flute 1 has high pitches to symbolize the height of the tree.

Bar 6-7: The bamboo chimes represent the tree (as does the rustling leaves) blowing in the wind, the wind itself being performed by the third flute as edge tones (lazy embouchure). The cassette cover squeaking is similar to the squeaking of a rocking cradle.

Bar 8: The snapping of twigs is the sound of branches breaking before the cradle falls.

Bars 11-12: The descending line played by flute one is the falling of the baby, which is followed by all ('...cradle and all').

Movement 6: Rain Rain

The rainstick used in this movement is an obvious reference to the theme. This instrument 'goes away' in bars 9-10, before 'coming again' at bar 11. The scale used at the end of this section is the F pentatonic scale. This is related to the A Major section at the beginning of the entire piece because F# is the sixth note of A Major, and this is the sixth and last movement. I changed it to F natural for ease of reading on behalf of the performers. It's a pentatonic scale because there are five additional movements other than this one. This link between the beginning and the end serves to add unification to the piece. Integration is also provided through the recurring theme of 'falling' and the accompanying descending melodic line.

Notes for performers:

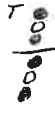
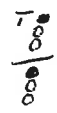
Alap – As loud as possible.

+ - Key clicks

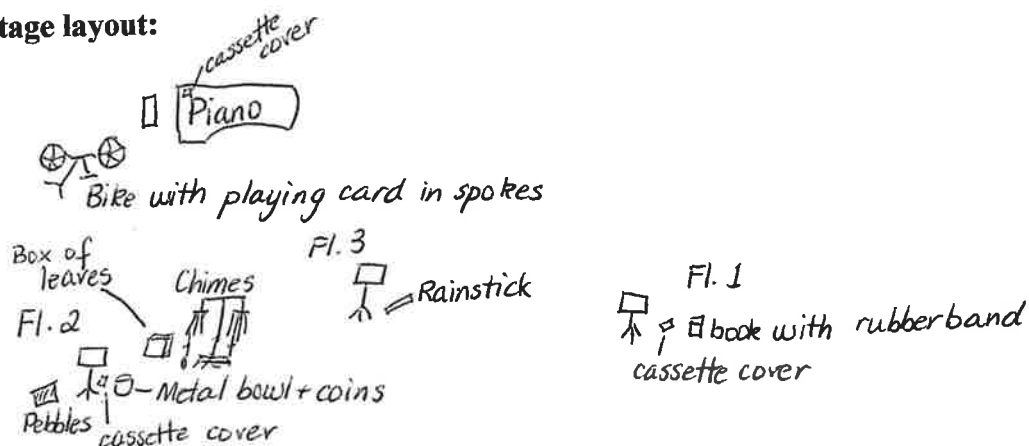
Edge tones – Blowing softly with a loose embouchure.

/// - fluttertongue

C.C.S – cassette cover squeaking

Fingering for multiphonics : flute 1: 
flute 2: 

Stage layout:



Appendix 1: Requirements, *Segassem Neddih*.

Three flutes, piano, metal bowl, coins, bike (with a playing card in the spokes of the wheel), pebbles in a tray, three cassette covers, rubber band on a hard covered book, metal chimes, bamboo chimes, leaves, sticks and a rainstick.

Segassem Neddi

Fiona Pennisi

$\text{♩} = 80$

With movement, playfully

The musical score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 1-4) features Flute 1 and Flute 2 with triplets and dynamic markings of *ff*, *pp*, *f*, and *pp*. The Piano part includes a bass line with an *8^{va}* marking and a right-hand part with a *2* marking. The second system (measures 5-8) shows Flute 1 and Flute 2 with dynamic markings of *mp*, *mf*, and *ff*. The Piano part includes a *simile* marking, a *3* marking, and dynamic markings of *mp*, *mf*, *fff*, and *ff*, with a *Forcefully* instruction and an *8^{va}* marking. The third system (measures 9-12) features Flute 1 and Flute 2 with dynamic markings of *ff* and *pp*. The Piano part includes dynamic markings of *ff*, *p*, and *pp*, with a *mf* marking and a *Jovial and harmonious* instruction. The score is written in C major, 4/4 time, and includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings.

Ominously

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Pno.

Measures 17-23. Flute 1 and 2, and Piano. Dynamics range from *mf* to *f*. The tempo is marked "Ominously".

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Pno.

Measures 24-30. Flute 1 and 2, and Piano. Dynamics range from *mf* to *f*. The tempo is marked "Ominously".

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Pno.

Measures 31-37. Flute 1 and 2, and Piano. Dynamics range from *ff* to *p*. The tempo is marked "Ominously".

38 *tr* (*tr*) *tr* (*tr*) *tr* (*tr*) *tr* (*tr*) *tr* (*tr*) *tr* (*tr*)

Fl. 1 *mp* *mf* *f* *ff* *fff* *mf*

Fl. 2 *mp* *mf* *f* *ff* *fff* *mf*

Pno. *mp* *mf* *f* *ff* *fff* *mf*

44 *Play* *Sing* *Change to metal bowl and coins* *Dropping coins into bowl*

Fl. 1 *mf* *f* *mf*

Fl. 2 *mp*

Pno. *mp* *pp* *mp* *p* *mp*

53 *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *p* *Normal* *alap* *3* *3* *3*

Fl. 1 *Change to flute* *alap* *Strictly in time*

Fl. 2 *alap* *Strictly in time*

Pno. *p* *Flip bike wheel* *ff* *mp*

[illegible]

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Pno.

71

pp *mf*

pp *mf* *p* *mf* *p* simile

p *mf*

(8^{va})

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Pno.

78 (8va)

lopo

f *ff* *f* *mf*

f *ff* *f* *mf*

f *ff* *f* *mf*

Fl. 1

85

edge tones

Normal

mp

p

mp

p

mp

p

mf

f

mf

Fl. 2

mp

p

mf

mp

mp

p

pp

Pno.

85

mp

dolce

p

3

Fl. 1

94

mf

f

mf

f

mf

mf

Fl. 2

mp

p

mf

f

pp

mp

p

mf

Pno.

94

Fl. 1

102

f

mf

mp

ff

p

f

mf

mp

Fl. 2

f

mf

mp

ff

p

mp

f

mp

Pno.

102

mp

mf

mp

f

p

mp

f

mf

mp

110

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Pno.

Cassette cover squeaking

Change to flute

alap

mf

stop walking

mf

Get pebble tray and stand on them

Stamp on pebbles

mf

f

3

118

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Pno.

alap

mf

step out of tray

mf

alap

mp

mf

mp

alap

mp

mf

C.C.S.

126

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Pno.

Plucking rubber band (on book).

Till fl. 1 is ready

mp

mf

f

mf

f

ff

Till fl. 1 is ready

Segassem Neddih - mvt 3-5

Fiona Pennisi

$\text{♩} = 60$

Flute 1
Flute 2
Flute 3

mf *mp*

3 3 3 3

5

mf *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *ff*

3

mf *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *ff*

Stamp floor simultaneously

p *pp*

Stamp floor simultaneously

p *pp*

Stamp floor simultaneously

p *pp*

13

mf *mf* *mf*

19 $\text{♩} = 60$ Smoothly

Fl. 1 *mp*

Fl. 2 hitting chime *p*

Fl. 3 *p*

22

Fl. 1 *mf*

Fl. 2 Rustling leaves *mp* *ppp*

Fl. 3 *mp*

26 Till fl. 2 is ready.

Fl. 1 Rustling leaves and knocking bamboo chimes *p* *mp* *mf* *f*

Fl. 2 Walking back to flute

Fl. 3 using lazy embouchure. *alap* *alap* *alap*

Cassette cover squeaking snapping twigs and branches bamboo chimes and C.C.S. at the same time

30 ca. 2" Till fl. 2 + 3 are ready.

Fl. 1 *ff*

Fl. 2 bamboo chimes and C.C.S. *ff*

Fl. 3 Walk back to flute *ff*

Segassem Neddih - mvt 6

Fiona Pennisi

$\text{♩} = 60$ Hauntingly

Flute 1

Flute 2

Piano

Rainstick.....

p *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *pp* *mp*

3

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Fl. 2

6 Rainstick.....

mf *dr (b)* *mp* *mp*

Till pianist is ready

Bring rainstick to flute 2

Change to piano

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Fl. 2

11 Rainstick

11

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

rit.

3