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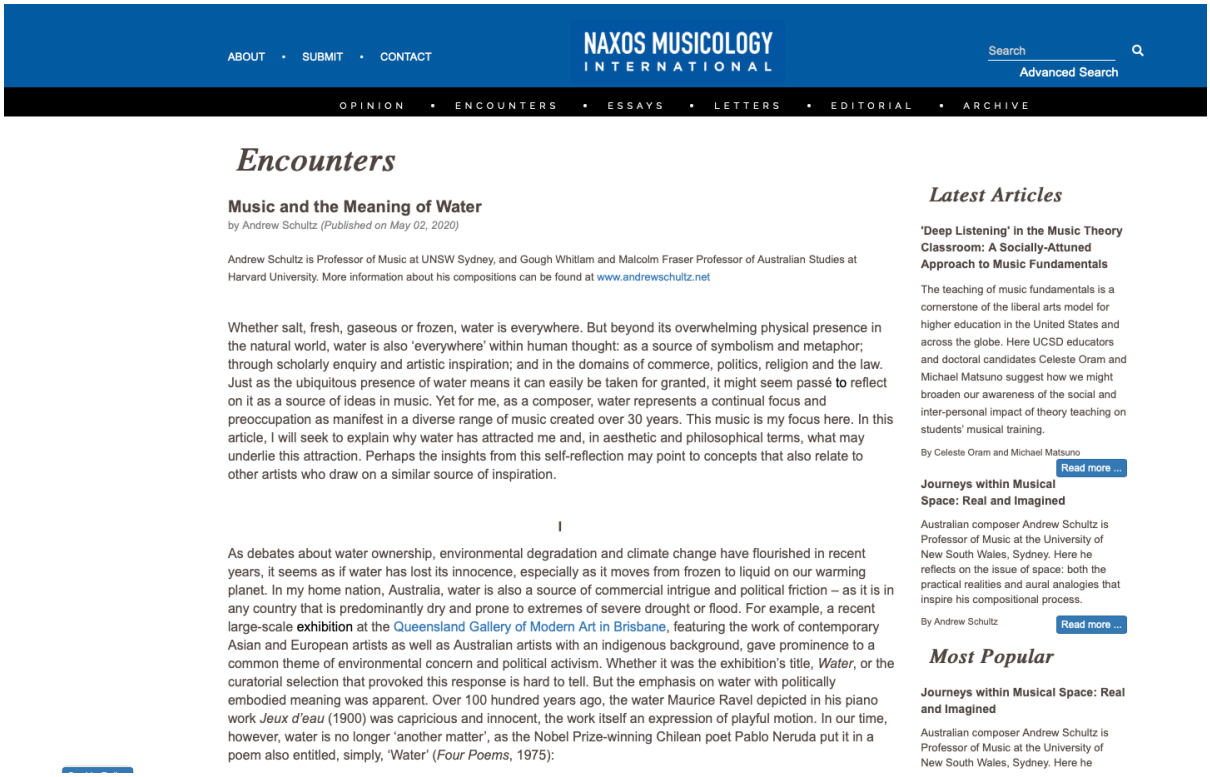

Music and the Meaning of Water

by Andrew Schultz *(Published on May 02, 2020)*
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Whether salt, fresh, gaseous or frozen, water is everywhere. But beyond its overwhelming physical presence in the natural world, water is also 'everywhere' within human thought: as a source of symbolism and metaphor; through scholarly enquiry and artistic inspiration; and in the domains of commerce, politics, religion and the law. Just as the ubiquitous presence of water means it can easily be taken for granted, it might seem passé to reflect on it as a source of ideas in music. Yet for me, as a composer, water represents a continual focus and preoccupation as manifest in a diverse range of music created over 30 years. This music is my focus here. In this article, I will seek to explain why water has attracted me and, in aesthetic and philosophical terms, what may underlie this attraction. Perhaps the insights from this self-reflection may point to concepts that also relate to other artists who draw on a similar source of inspiration.

I

As debates about water ownership, environmental degradation and climate change have flourished in recent years, it seems as if water has lost its innocence, especially as it moves from frozen to liquid on our warming planet. In my home nation, Australia, water is also a source of commercial intrigue and political friction – as it is in any country that is predominantly dry and prone to extremes of severe drought or flood. For example, a recent large-scale exhibition at the Queensland Gallery of Modern Art in Brisbane, featuring the work of contemporary Asian and European artists as well as Australian artists with an indigenous background, gave prominence to a common theme of environmental concern and political activism. Whether it was the exhibition's title, *Water*, or the curatorial selection that provoked this response is hard to tell. But the emphasis on water with politically embodied meaning was apparent. Over 100 hundred years ago, the water Maurice Ravel depicted in his piano work *Jeux d'eau* (1900) was capricious and innocent, the work itself an expression of playful motion. In our time, however, water is no longer 'another matter', as the Nobel Prize-winning Chilean poet Pablo Neruda put it in a poem also entitled, simply, 'Water' (*Four Poems*, 1975):

Everything on the earth bristled, the bramble
pricked and the green thread
nibbled away, the petal fell, falling
until the only flower was the falling itself.
Water is another matter,
has no direction but its own bright grace,
runs through all imaginable colours,
takes limpid lessons
from stone,
and in those functionings plays out
the unrealized ambitions of the foam.

Neruda's focus here is the idea of water 'functioning' as separate from and free of nature's cycles; water is eternal, independent, without purpose and exists outside ephemeral constraints of birth and death. Water is unlike a flower that must fall and die. The earth's brambles seem almost malevolent in their capacity to prick and hurt, whereas water bears no malice in spite of its potential for violent and destructive force. Neruda, like many artists before him and after, loved to study and to describe the fascinating patterns of water in motion, especially those of the sea. While his emphasis here is the substance of water, in and of itself, he presents it in his poetry as still capable of being loaded with a poet's personal metaphoric insight. No more so than in the last line of 'Water' when he talks of the foam's 'unrealized ambitions'. Because, for an artist, creative aspirations are never truly achieved. To paraphrase Ralph Waldo Emerson, beauty is always slightly out of reach. Water, likewise, can never be grasped but slips through the fingers and moves on endlessly.

Social anthropologist Veronica Strang has made a powerful contribution to our collective understanding of water and its conceptual significance in a series of books including *Water: Nature and Culture* (London: Reaktion, 2015) and *The Meaning of Water* (London: Bloomsbury, 2004). Her work explores a broad social context that positions water as a 'universal': something that humans, regardless of time or place, try to find ways to express as an extension of individual and social consciousness. To quote from *The Meaning of Water* (79):

Cast as the 'source of life' and as a metaphor for 'life time', water imagery is used in thinking about cycles of life and death, and microcosmic and macrocosmic circulation of various kinds.... It provides a way of conceptualizing the 'substance' of the self, emotional states of being, and social relationships.

Her statement here reveals a contrasting perspective to that of Neruda. In Strang's description, water takes on a potent symbolic role that can be both social and personal; water is not apart but within – within the body, within the mind, within culture and within society. She discusses aspects of water's ownership and its densely encoded spiritual, environmental and symbolic meanings. But just as Neruda uses descriptions of water to feed metaphors, so the symbolic representation of water that Strang refers to is apparent in much art, especially that of non-Western cultures and contemporary artists. That a tendency to some kind of symbolic interpretation of water is a universal may well be disputed by some. If it is a universal then it may be because of the ubiquitous commonalities of the body's experience of water. For example, Freud's dream interpretation relates images of immersion and water to birth and the complete immersion of a foetus in the womb. Some distance from Freud but equally profound and relevant is the way in which the indigenous people of North East Arnhem Land in Australia, the Yolnu, relate many of their experiences of life, personally and socially, to symbolism around water.

II

My opera *Black River* is a one-act work of about fifty-five minutes duration and is scored for a cast of five singers and an instrumental ensemble of 13 players. *Black River*'s first performance took place in November 1998, a co-production of the Sydney Metropolitan Opera, the Seymour Group and the Australian content

department of the Elizabethan Theatre Trust. The opera has been recorded on compact disc MADCD 0001; it has also been made into an award-winning film directed by Kevin Lukas. The libretto is by my sister, the journalist and author Julianne Schultz and is a fictional story based on events in a small outback Australian country town during a flood. The five characters (a visiting judge heading a commission of enquiry into race relations in the town, a scared city journalist, a care-worn local policeman, an Aboriginal woman in mourning and the town's cynical drunk) are unwillingly thrown together as they are forced to seek refuge from the rising river in the town's claustrophobic and primitive police lock-up – the highest point in town and the scene of undisclosed sinister events. The intensity of the relationships that develop is compounded by an overwhelming fear of the flooding river and the oppressive sound of rain. The story is dramatic, political and intense, yet not didactic, and the music conjures a natural world of unrelenting force and an inner world of emotions scraped to the bone.

Water, in the form of torrential rain and a flooding river, is critical to the thinking behind *Black River*. The rain and the rising river take on a cleansing force of retribution in the context of Australia's highly vexed treatment of its indigenous population and especially the continual cases of Aboriginal deaths in police custody which were so rife in the 1980s in Australia that they eventually led to a Royal Commission to investigate their causes and incidence. The Jamaican poet Edward Baugh captured a similar sense of water and a river as a higher force for justice in his poem 'Nigger Sweat' (*A Tale from the Rainforest*, 1988).

… and sometimes I dream a nightmare dream
that the river rising, rising
and swelling the sea and I see
you choking and drowning
in a sea of black man sweat
and I wake up shaking
with shame and remorse
for my mother did teach me,
Child, don't study revenge.

The sound world of *Black River* often draws on the patterns of rain and hail sounds as heard on a corrugated iron roof; this is a sound world that was certainly part of the aural environment of the houses where I lived as a child. Especially during a tropical storm, this percussive and, at times, deafening sound is hard to describe as anything other than a true display of the natural world's force and power. As a teenager in Brisbane, I lived near the city's large river and was able to watch from close at hand the devastation and strength of a massive flood in early 1974. It was, as they say, of biblical proportions. The river broke its banks and spread itself across a large area of the city, stripping the landscape of vegetation and destroying some 8000 homes, dislodging boats from their moorings and dumping them unceremoniously in suburban streets. In one memorable incident a large ship broke free and was jammed up against a riverside apartment building. After the water receded, the 'big flood' (as it came to be colloquially known) left a dense carpet of sticky and smelly tropical mud behind.

Maroochy Barambah, in the role of Miriam, on the set of the film version of *Black River* (Sydney: Lukas Productions, 1991).

In a sense, the damage caused by the flooding Brisbane River in 1974 was inevitable: it is a fantastically serpentine river, curling back on itself frequently over quite flat ground. Presumably its original natural flow was continually changing and not contained within the sort of enforced structures that nineteenth- and twentieth-century municipal engineers would have seen as necessary for a large river in an expanding city. But they might have done well to note what Leonardo da Vinci had said in the sixteenth century: 'A river which has to be diverted from one place to another should be coaxed not coerced with violence.' (Leonardo da Vinci, *Codex Leicester*, f. 13r as in *Water as Microscope of Nature*: https://mostre.museogalileo.it/codiceleicester/en/water/46-repairing-water-damage).

III

Just as the climax of *Black River* depicts a flooded river fully submerging the town and enveloping the opera's characters as they attempt rescue by helicopter, so too at the climax of my orchestral cantata *Journey to Horseshoe Bend* (2003) the moment of greatest drama is signalled by a flooded river. In this case the river is the normally bone-dry Finke River in Central Australia – so dry that it is usually a river of sand, not water. But when the wet season arrives a sudden wave of water sweeps down the river bringing new life to the desert. And that is exactly what happens in the last scene of *Journey to Horseshoe Bend*, at the moment of dramatic catharsis: a wall of water arrives; rain pounds down; and a child is reconciled to the sudden death of his father, seeing the potential for his own future in the same harsh environment that he and his family were trying to flee. To quote from the libretto by Gordon Kalton Williams (after the Australian anthropologist T. G. H. Strehlow): 'As the rain fell the more I became reconciled to the events of the past few days. My father had wanted to go back Germany. But how much more appropriate that his grave should lie here under the Painted Cliffs of Inggodna amongst the people he loved and served.' The music for this scene is a hybrid: joyous hymn-like music in the choir; rapid running orchestral accompaniment figures; and dramatic outbursts from percussion playing on suspended sheets of corrugated roofing iron with heavy beaters.

There are other rivers in my music. Often they are both 'inner world' and 'outer world' rivers: that is, both psychological and physical. *Falling Man/Dancing Man* (2005) is a three-movement work for solo organ and orchestra. The title of the second movement, 'Deep Crossing', is a reference to the road weirs that occasionally cross Australian outback rivers. Fording a flooded river weir in a car is a nerve-wracking experience, and so the title also stands for any kind of significant personal challenge. The music moves between calm and more forceful ideas, gradually subsiding into a still world with ominous distant sirens. The music in my piano quartet *She Dances by the River* (2018) is like a slow and gradually-forming dance with hints of Grieg's piano miniature, *She Dances,* and the American spiritual, *Down to the River to Pray*. The river is again a place of personal challenge, determination and celebration, as implied by the work's title. And in my recent short work *River of Silence* (2020), for mezzo-soprano and cello, the river is presented as a metaphor for meditation and transformation. The work is a setting of a passage titled 'On Death' from poet Kahlil Gilbran's *The Prophet* (a collection of 26 prose poems dating from 1923), a passage that presents a series of paradoxes:

Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing.
And when you have reached the mountain top, then you shall begin to climb.
And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly dance.

IV

Leonardo da Vinci's observations and drawings of water are justly famous. Studying water, for him, was a lifetime preoccupation. Take the following description from da Vinci's *Codex Leicester* (c. 1510) of the movement of waves: 'The first wave then splits into two parts: one is projected upward and then folds back on itself, while the other falls to the bottom, dragging out to sea the lower part of the wave with which it collided.' Observation of the sea and its wave patterns seems to be an endlessly rewarding activity for composers, too: consider Claude Debussy's *La Mer* (1905) or Jean Sibelius's *Oceanides* (1914). In my own case, it has led to a number of compositions for which the sequence of waves in surf, and their varying sizes, contributed to the design of the musical material. My 15-minute piano work *Sea-Change* (1987), for example, has a simple shape comprising two peaks and a calm, but unsettled end. An initial impetus is provided by three slowly rotating harmonic sequences of different duration – one in the left hand, one in the right hand (both played in bell-like chords), and the third sequence moving through the piano's mid-range as arpeggios. These isorhythmic harmonic sequences revolve around each other, eventually synchronously enmeshing and evolving at key points in the work.

Sea-Change was commissioned by pianist-professor Bernard Lanskey in 1987 with financial assistance from the Music Board of the Australia Council. In my observation of the waves of a surf beach south of Sydney, near where I lived at the time, I had noticed the consistent but very slow pattern of 7th and 11th large waves and the ways in which these patterns coalesced and then dissipated at some moments. The constant regeneration, power, myriad shapes and occasional dramatic changes of colour pointed to a means for a transformation into musical form. The temporal element of the sea's motion was the key source for musical inspiration and the apparent endlessness of that motion suggested a shape for the music that was intended to be left hanging and without closure. The title of the work, of course, comes from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, in a famous passage from Act I,

scene 2, that also presents a metaphor for the sea as the agent of continual change and restless transformation:

Full Fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are corals made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell: Ding-dong,
Hark! Now I hear them – Ding-dong, bell.

V

Dead Songs is a cycle of songs for soprano with clarinet, cello and piano accompaniment. It was composed in June 1991 and consists of settings of texts adapted from epitaphs collected from the New South Wales seaside cemeteries at Wombarra, Bulli, South Head and Waverley. In what must be a continual cause for envious salivation for present-day property developers, several of the oldest cemeteries in the Sydney region are perched on magnificent coastal spots in residential areas. The large Waverley cemetery and the pocket-size South Head graveyard have panoramic Pacific outlooks and are in some of the most expensive suburbs in eastern Sydney. The views, of course, are wasted on the dead; so perhaps their original positioning reflects something about the nautical passage of convicts and settler migrants to Australia in the nineteenth century. The sea, while a barrier, was also the only passage for transit to an island continent. To return home to Great Britain or Europe (or to be ‘homeward bound’ in the phrase of the early convicts and settlers), literally or in spirit, also necessitated crossing the vast obstacle of the ocean. A cemetery positioned by the sea seemed unconsciously designed to address that challenge, even for the dead: hence ‘Spirits meet across the bridge’, the last line of the first song in *Dead Songs*, ‘Buried at Sea’.

The position of Waverley Cemetery associates and connects ephemeral mortality with the landscape of the dramatic cliffs on which it perches and the vista of the wide open, blue ocean beyond. The nautical imagery of the eighth song, ‘Peace Perfect Peace’, illustrates this:

Father and mother safe in the vale
Watch for the boatman, wait for the sail,
Bearing the loved ones over the tide
Into the harbour, near to their side.
‘Master Mariner – Dead At Sea.’

In this song, as in the unaccompanied first song, the text is a combination of several different epitaphs from Waverley and other cemeteries. The cello-accompanied vocal lines are a lullaby with, at the end of each phrase, gong-like prepared bass notes from the piano and slow, distant, siren-like glissandi from the off-stage clarinet. The deep and mysterious gong sounds in the piano are almost like the dull but resonant echo of something hitting the underside of a boat, hence conjuring the perils of travel by sea.

In other songs from *Dead Songs*, graffiti or other found texts that make a useful connection are also employed. In the last song, ‘Unreconstructed Sentiment (Crumbled Deploration)’, the text is taken from several decrepit headstones from the tiny and remote community cemetery at Wombarra. Apart from the occasional visitor or funeral, the cemetery is mostly used by surfers as a short-cut to the beach below.

Sadly . . .

A sudden change at God's . . .
He had not time to . . .
A little longer . . .
. . . we too shall leave,
Oh loved one
A little while longer . . .
. . . we too shall leave,
For that beautiful shore.

The text appears without the endings of most lines and, in my setting, is left that way – a kind of floundering expression in the face of bigger obstacles. The music of the song is drawn in part from Josquin's chanson of absence, *Mille regretz,* but with phrases left hanging and incomplete. The analogy here relates to the physical position of the cemeteries as best exemplified by Wombarra with its neat denominational arrangement of the dead seeming somehow insignificant against the slow-motion oblivion of sea and wind tearing away at the crumbling cliff edges and gradually obliterating the engraved words on the headstones.

Texts and a painting provide a link to the sea in several of my orchestral and choral-orchestral works: *Diver's Lament* (1996), *Southern Ocean* (1999), *Beach Burial* (2009) and *Peace* (2013). *Diver's Lament* is an orchestral work written for the Sydney Symphony and conductor Edo de Waart. In this case the text is not heard at all but provides a reference, the starting point for a purely instrumental composition. Paul Bowia's 'Diver's Lament' is a traditional song from the Torres Strait in northern Queensland and was recorded by anthropologist Jeremy Beckett in Badu in the Torres Strait in 1960. About pearl divers forcibly taken from their South Seas home and put to work in northern Australia, 'Diver's Lament' is based on a text that Beckett published in a translation from the original Mabuiag language:

Mother, was it for this that you cut my umbilical cord, that
I should spend my life out here on the sea?
I am a castaway, the seabirds my only companions.
Alas, this is a bad life out here on the sea.
We have been sad like this a long time, floating on the water like gulls.
Our homes, where our fathers, mothers and sisters stay,
are far away on the horizon, while we set our feet in a place that is alien to us.

The song is accompanied in its original version by gentle tapping on tobacco tins – found instruments of the region that complement the homophonic style of the song. I drew on mnemonic rhythmic patterns from the text of the song and some of the tobacco tin patterns to create musical phrases played on Peking Opera Gongs. These small gongs, when laid flat and dampened to remove resonance, recreate the dry, crisp sound of the original tobacco tins. My work opens with an exultant and ebullient fanfare for brass – itself an invocation of the sea – before the tapping creates a backdrop to the lamenting hymn-like music that follows in the strings.

Southern Ocean (2018, available on compact disc AIVCFCD00200) set a new text by Australian poet and novelist Margaret Scott in a work for choir and orchestra commissioned by Symphony Australia for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Intervarsity Choir Festival and the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra conducted by David Porcelijn. The text and the music celebrate the drama and force of the Southern Ocean – an at times ferocious body of water that was something of a conveyor belt for delivering ship-bound migrants from Europe to Australia:

The ocean is all about us, ever changing.
Lair of life, nurturer of the earth,
leisure's dream and cold grey widowmaker,
it rises in savage tempest and tidal wave.

The Southern Ocean was of interest because of the immensity of its natural force as well as its imaginative and mythical position in the Australian consciousness – a vast ocean of unbroken waves, great icebergs and terrible peril for sailors (past and present), yet also the route for much migration to Australia in the nineteenth century. Hence, the embodiment of both hope and fear. Musically, the idea of the unbroken wave that rises, propels and swamps within an ocean of continual momentum was firmly in my mind.

In *Beach Burial*, another work for choir and orchestra, the text by Australian poet Kenneth Slessor (1942) is an evocation of a North African beach in the Levantine Sea after a World War Two naval battle:

Softly and humbly to the Gulf of Arabs
The convoys of dead sailors come;
At night they sway and wander in the waters far under,
But morning rolls them in the foam.

Slessor had been appointed to an official war correspondent role at the start of the war and, throughout World War Two, spent time with Australian troops in various parts of the world including the Middle East where this poem is set, during the battle of El Alamein. The sea in Slessor's poem is tranquil and undisturbed by the presence of dead bodies washed ashore at first light after a sea battle. For Slessor, like Neruda, water has 'no direction but its own'. It is impervious to the human world. But Slessor's poem is awake to the sound world of the wartime beach, referring to the heavy tread of feet on sand, the sounds of burial on the beach as crosses of driftwood are driven into the ground, and the 'distant sob' of explosions and gunfire. He creates an ominous, almost bitter, impression of the beach in the aftermath of violence:

The breath of the wet season has washed their inscriptions
As blue as drowned men's lips,
Dead seamen, gone in search of the same landfall,
Whether as enemies they fought,
Or fought with us, or neither; the sand joins them together.

In the passage above, Slessor creates an image of makeshift epitaphs to the unknown being washed away as the rain of the wet season and the action of the waves overwhelm the residue of human conflict. The calm stillness of Slessor's observation seems to be at odds with the implicit horror of the scene and so I tried to create a musical impression of extreme stasis and repose, but with a distant sense of threat. To do this I drew on a fragment from a work for piano, four hands, by Franz Schubert. The third movement of Schubert's *Hungarian March* D813 opens with a slow and steady off-beat march rhythm. Just a recurrent fragment, played pizzicato in the strings, seemed to me enough to conjure the military world of wartime Europe. The calm atmosphere in Slessor's seascape is heavy with salt and humidity; it is almost as if this were a familiar and comfortable Australian beach rather than the distant and brutal strand at El Alamein in 'The Gulf of Arabs'. The piece, about ten

minutes in duration, was written over the summer of 2008–09 following a commission by the Sydney Philharmonia Choir and Orchestra. The premiere was given in 2009 at the Sydney Opera House, conducted by Brett Weymark.

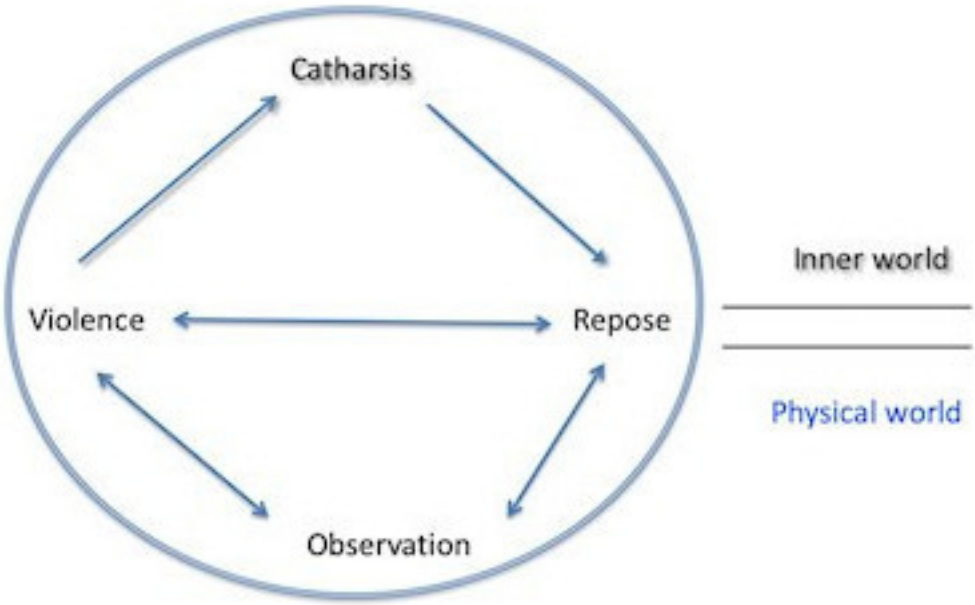
My orchestral work *Peace* bears some similarities to *Beach Burial*, not least the depiction of events off the North African coast of the Mediterranean. Both works are also concerned with the aftermath of tragedy, with the sea in repose as a kind of neutral observer. *Peace* takes its title from one of J. M. W. Turner's most well-known paintings, *Peace – Burial at Sea* (1842). Turner, like Leonardo, was fascinated by the sea and often depicted it in stormy conditions. In this painting, he invokes a calm scene but with an inherent metaphor of transcendence. (For more, see Sarah Monks, '"Suffer a Sea-Change": Turner, Painting, Drowning'; https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/14/suffer-a-sea-change-turner-painting-drowning.) *Peace – Burial at Sea* commemorates the funeral of a friend of Turner and shows a dark ship with black sails surrounded by the glassy sea off the coast of Gibraltar, under a luminous sky and with a distant tower or lighthouse of angelic brilliance. In the centre of the painting is an eye-catching eruption of mysterious light through the bow of the ship.

J. M. W. Turner, *Peace - Burial at Sea* (1842).

The ‘peace’ of Turner’s title is not akin to the modern sense of personal peace or deep tranquillity. It is more the kind of unsettled, peaceful aftermath that exists in contrast to violence and brutality and, as with *Beach Burial*, it is the image of a still sea that creates that uneasy mood: indeed, Turner’s painting was paired with another painting, entitled *War*, which depicts Napoleon in exile. Like Turner’s painting, my composition plays on effects of closeness and distance, darkness and light, and is a study in aqueous unease. The piece is mostly very subdued in its outer sections with a central passage of greater force and brilliance. Like *Beach Burial*, *Peace* quietly references the funeral marches of the period but often adds an additional beat to each second bar. The normal duple time of a march is replaced by a continual pattern of 4/4 + 5/4, as though the march hesitates at the end of each second bar. I also use nautical and naval sounds transformed into orchestral form. The sound of sails luffing as their flaccid ropes hit the mast; the sound of a bell; the high calling of a ship’s whistle; the sudden dramatic sound of cannon shots; and the effect of distant sounds carried over water: these all find their transformation in my score. The work was written in 2013 for the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and their new chief conductor, Marko Letonja, for concerts in Hobart and Burnie. Part of the brief for the commission was to reference the work of Benjamin Britten whose centenary was celebrated in 2013. On the one hand, Britten’s love of the sea and its frequent references in his work were on my mind but, on the other hand, so too was the composer’s troubling personal legacy. Depicting an uneasy peace thus seemed doubly apt.

VI

Finally, *The Meaning of Water* (2006) is an eight-minute piece for seven harps commissioned by Alice Giles for her harp ensemble, SHE. The title, *The Meaning of Water*, is one I had in mind for four or five years since first considering it as possibly appropriate for the work that eventually became *Southern Ocean*. But Margaret Scott, the poet who wrote the text for *Southern Ocean*, was keen to name the work after the ocean she lived near in southern Tasmania. The symbolic and literal aspects of the title, *The Meaning of Water*, were behind my attraction to it although I was unaware at that point of Veronica Strang’s fascinating book of the same name. The potentially unusual sonorities of seven harps in ensemble seemed fitting for a piece with this title. The stage positioning and interaction of the seven harps in a large U-shape allowed for the flow of ideas from one instrument to another in a quite seamless and fluid way – as if the music was physical in its motion. And the range of conventional and unconventional sounds possible on the harp well suited the depiction of water. Tapping on the body of the harp; harmonics; rapid glissandi; tremolando notes or chords: they all seemed to evoke water in its playful and innocent mode.



Aesthetic meanings of water

In conclusion, throughout this discussion of water in relation to my music some consistent aesthetic concepts and distinctions have been used. The main distinction presented is the observation of water as a physical object as opposed to water as a symbol. For example, Leonardo observes the motion of the ocean's waves and the course of rivers in a way that an astute engineer might do. Water is seen to be in repose when it is still, and violent when its effects are destructive. These simple descriptions, in repose or violent, place water aesthetically in the observed physical world, whereas the complex and numerous symbolic and metaphoric interpretations of water place it in the inner world of an individual and within a social context of groups. The movement from clinical observation to symbolic interpretation is the movement from objective description to the subjective world of psychology and the imagination. One psychological and artistic concept that I have found useful when considering water is that of catharsis or release. Across the creative arts, 'catharsis' captures a number of related pairs of ideas: death—transcendence, immersion—relief, beauty—sublimation, fear—relaxation. In the diagram above these ideas are expressed graphically in terms that also correspond to traditional concepts in musical form and dramatic narrative structure. One can observe water, like a musical composition, to be violent or in repose. As water, like much music, is rarely completely static it may be observed to alternate between these contrasting states of motion and stillness. The experience of violence can trigger a state of catharsis for the observer or listener which can in turn lead to an experience of release and repose. The inner world and the physical world overlap in self-perpetuating cycles of experience and creativity.