The Last of England: A Work for Solo Piano After the Painting by Ford Madox Brown

Richard Chew

Ford Madox Brown's *The Last of England* (1855) is widely regarded as one of the most poignant and well-known images of emigration.[1] The painting resides in the City of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, as part of the extensive Pre-Raphaelite collection which includes works by the three founder members of the group; Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John Everett Millais and William Holman Hunt. *The Last of England* has only left the UK on one occasion, where it formed the centrepiece of the exhibition *Exiles and Emigrants: Epic Journeys to Australia During the Victorian Era* (2005) at the National Gallery of Victoria, curated by Patricia Tyron Macdonald.

In July 2016, I presented the premiere of my piano work *The Last of England* at the Art Gallery of Ballarat. I played the piece over two consecutive evenings, in conjunction with the Australian History Association conference *From Boom to Bust*, convened by Federation University, and as the opening event for the exhibition *The Last of England: Emigration in Prints*, (also curated by Patricia Macdonald).

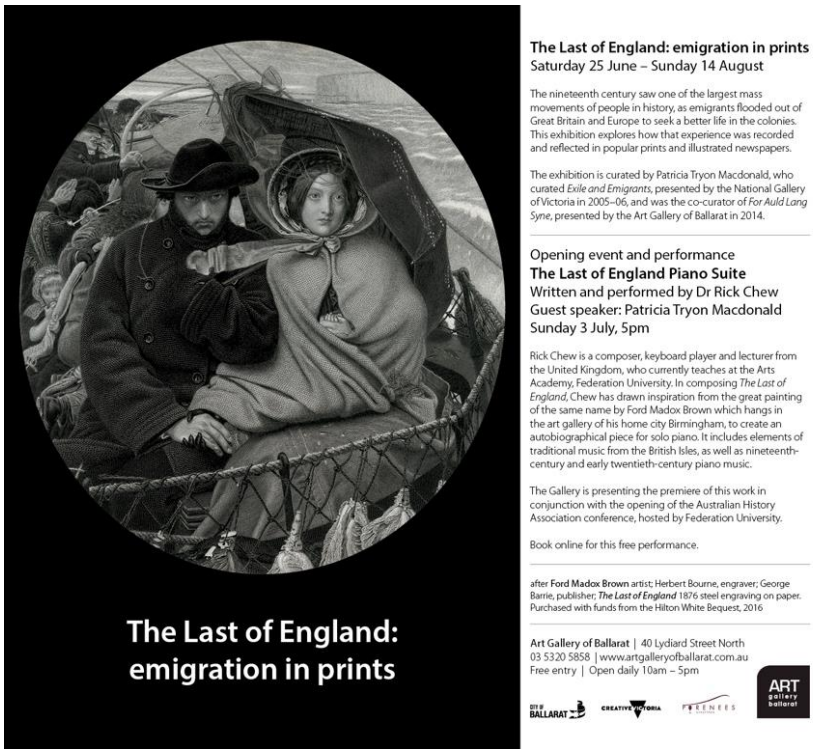

Fig.1 Exhibition Flyer for *The Last of England: Emigration in Prints* (2016)
Courtesy Art Gallery of Ballarat.

[1] In 2005, BBC Radio 4's Today programme in partnership with the National Gallery ran a poll to shortlist the nation's greatest paintings. *The Last of England* was voted amongst the "top ten", at number 8. See https://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/today/vote/greatestpainting/winner.shtml. Viewed 28 April 2019.

The Last of England is a suite for solo piano in 15 movements. It is a substantial work, which takes nearly an hour to perform, and it operates at the confluence between contemporary classical music and the oral, folk music traditions of the British Isles. The piece also deals with the idea of ekphrasis, in that it attempts to translate something of the essence and energy of Madox Brown's painting in a sonic form. It was not written in response to a commission; I wrote it for myself to play, with no particular audience in mind and so, in some respects, the piece is autobiographical. It pays homage both to Madox Brown and to some of the music I love, particularly the piano works of Debussy, Ravel, Satie, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Grieg, Mussorgsky and Chopin. But these are ultimately fleeting references. My intention was to tell a story: the story of a journey in music and life that intersects with this painting.

I was born and grew up in Birmingham and can recall trips to the museum and art gallery as a child, which is where I first encountered *The Last of England*. For some reason, this image captured my imagination even early on. I had no idea at that time that the family depicted in the painting were emigrating to Australia, a journey I was destined myself to make myself many years later. I became a permanent resident in Australia in November 2005, co-incidentally when the painting was on display at the NGV. A decade later, I moved interstate from South Australia to take up a post at Federation University in Ballarat, in the heart of the Victorian goldfields where the Pre-Raphaelite sculptor and poet Thomas Woolner (the inspiration for Madox Brown's painting) had searched in vain for his fortune.[2] The move to Ballarat and reading Woolner's journal of his experiences in the goldfields provided the stimulus I needed to complete the composition.

Ekphrasis

The term ekphrasis typically refers to a species of poem or literary writing that describes or represents a visual art work and it is this work-to-work relationship or interface that concerns us here. A striking example of this can be found in John Ruskin's rendering in prose of JMW Turner's painting *The Slave Ship*, or *Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying – Typhoon Coming On* (1840):

Fig. 2. J.M.W. Turner. *The Slave Ship.* 1840. Oil on canvas, 90.8cm ×122.6cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

> It is a sunset on the Atlantic after prolonged storm; but the storm is partially lulled, and the torn and streaming rain clouds are moving in scarlet lines to lose themselves in the hollow of the night. The whole surface of the sea included in the picture is divided into two ridges of enormous swell, not high, nor local, but a low, broad heaving of the whole ocean, like the lifting of its bosom by deep-drawn breath after the torture of the storm. Between these two ridges, the fire of the sunset falls along the trough of the sea, dyeing it with an

[2] For a detailed account of Woolner's brief sojourn in Australia, see Clemente's work in *AJVS Pre-Raphaelitism in Australasia Part 1* 22.2 (2018).

awful but glorious light, the intense and lurid splendour which burns like gold and bathes like blood. (Ruskin 571-2)

This evocative account transcends description and the sonorous use of language invites reading aloud. It is almost as if Ruskin is "performing" the painting for us and, in this sense, we have an echo perhaps of the classical ekphrasis – where students of rhetoric in ancient Greece would conjure up before the mind's eye artefacts either real or imagined, *as if* they were present.[3]

Ruskin's ideas and writings on art had a profound influence on his peers and contemporaries, including Ford Madox Brown and Thomas Woolner. It is worth remembering also that several artists in this cultural milieu, notably Woolner and Rossetti, were also poets. In the case of Brown, we have a situation where the artist himself wrote an ekphrastic poem in response to his great emigration painting, a sonnet, produced a decade after *The Last of England* was completed, to accompany an exhibition of the artist's work in 1865. I quote it here with a reproduction of the famous image:

Fig. 3. Ford Madox Brown. *The Last of England.* 1855. Oil on canvas, 82.5 x 75 cm. (Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery) ©Birmingham Museums Trust.

"THE LAST of England! O'er the sea, my dear,
Our homes to seek amid Australian fields,
Us, not our million-acred island yields
The space to dwell in. Thrust out! Forced to hear
Low ribaldry from sots, and share rough cheer
With rudely-nurtur'd men. The hope youth builds
Of fair renown, barter'd for that which shields
Only the back, and half-form'd lands that rear
The dust-storm blistering up the grasses wild.
There learning skills not, nor the poet's dream,
Nor aught so lov'd as children shall we see."
She grips his listless hand and clasps her child,
Through rainbow tears she sees a sunnier gleam,
She cannot see a void, where he will be.

— Ford Madox Brown

This is not Tennyson, nor even Rossetti, but it does give voice to the inner emotional life of the male protagonist and, by extension, gives the reader an insight into Brown's views on emigration and the state of the nation, his motivation for the work. The sonnet, along with

[3] Goehr contextualises the ancient and modern readings of ekphrasis in her article *How to Do More with Words: Two Views of (Musical) Ekphrasis* in *The British Journal of Aesthetics*.

entries in the artist's diary, provided me as a composer with some possible starting points for musical ideas.

Ekphrasis and Music

The concept of musical ekphrasis has been explored at length in a number of formative articles and books by the pianist and musicologist Siglind Bruhn. In *A Concert of Paintings: Musical Ekphrasis in the Twentieth Century*, Bruhn argues that:

> Not only poets may respond to a work of visual art with a creative act in their own medium, transposing the style and structure, the message and metaphors from the visual to the verbal. Composers, more and more frequently, are also exploring this interartistic mode of transfer. (Bruhn 551)

There are many examples of contemporary art music works that are inspired by painting. Consider Mark Anthony Turnage's orchestral work *Three Screaming Popes* (1992) after Francis Bacon; Morton Feldman's contemplative *Rothko Chapel* (1971) or Louis Andriessen's Boogie-Woogie tone poem *De Stijl* (Part III of the opera *De Materie*; 1984-88) which transposes the primary colours and dimensions of a Mondrian painting into musical sounds and structures. Writing music about art is a challenge, not simply because the media are so different, but also because the way in which we experience a painting in a gallery is so unlike listening to a piece of music in the context of a live performance. As composer, writer and broadcaster Andrew Ford explains:

> In a gallery we may choose to walk up to a painting or not; we decide how long we spend with it; we may dwell on a particular detail or step back and take in the whole; we can walk away from it and return to it later; or we may simply cast a backward glance at it before we move to the next room, our final impression of the work being from a considerable distance. Practically none of these approaches is possible with music. (Ford 23)

Musical ekphrasis can be relatively straightforward in the context of musical theatre or opera, where spoken text and lyrics establish an unequivocal connection between the music and visual subject matter. Consider Stephen Sondheim's rendering of George Seurat's painting *Un dimanche après-midi à l'Île de la Grande Jatte* (1884) in the musical *Sunday in the Park with George* (1984). At the conclusion of Act One, the painter, George, arranges his composition into the final tableau of the *Grand Jatte*; the painting is literally animated before our eyes and sings itself into being in the choral song *Sunday*:

> Sunday,
> By the blue
> Purple yellow red water
> On the green
> Purple yellow red grass
> Let us pass
> Through our perfect park,
>
> Pausing on a Sunday

By the cool
Blue triangular water
On the soft
Green elliptical grass
As we pass
Through arrangements of shadows
Toward the verticals of trees
Forever…

By the blue
Purple yellow red water
On the green
Orange violet mass
Of the grass
In our perfect park,

Made of specs of light
And dark,
And parasols

People strolling through the trees
Of a small suburban park
On an island in the river
On an ordinary Sunday… (Sondheim 128-34)

This is essentially an ekphrastic poem, which, like Ruskin's description of Turner's *Slave Ship*, is written in the present tense, bringing the artwork vividly to life in the mind's eye. In terms of form, it is unique in Sondheim's output, as he explains:

> This is the only lyric I've written that consists of one long incomplete sentence. I wanted it to be like the descriptive caption you might read in a museum next to the painting. (Sondheim 32)

The music begins as a stately processional in 4/4 in G major, which eventually becomes a radiant paean of praise to the creative act itself.

A similar affect is achieved by Mussorgsky in his piano work *Pictures at an Exhibition* (1874). The composer in this case eulogises his friend (the artist, Viktor Hartman) by creating a suite of ten pieces, each representing a painting by Hartmann, and five interludes or "promenades", as the composer leads us through the sonic gallery from one painting to the next. This formal plan allows for a theme and variations to be nested within the meta-narrative of the piece. Each promenade is subtly different from the last, variously in terms of key, speed, dynamics and duration. Sometimes the whole theme is present, sometimes only a segment. And this is not simply a device or conceit to link the disparate movements of the suite: in the grand finale of the piece, *The Great Gates of Kiev*, the promenade is revealed as the motto of the work, transformed into a majestic sequence of chords which conjure up the sound of a peel of church bells and a massive pipe organ.

Mussorgsky's sonorous recreation of Hartmann's paintings transcends the paintings themselves. We have an unusual example of an ekphrastic work that surpasses the original.

This is not to say that Hartmann's work is insignificant. It inspired one of the great masterworks of nineteenth-century music, a piece that has become, particularly in the orchestration by Ravel, one of the most popular works of the repertory.

Because music is essentially non-representational, in that it eschews definitive meaning, a composition bearing the title of an extant artwork sets up certain expectations of its audience. If listeners are to *hear* Madox Brown's painting in my music, it will depend to a large extent on an appreciation of the "extra-musical" inspiration or stimulus for the work: knowledge of the painting and its themes and the degree to which the musical idiom or style seems appropriate in terms of its reference to the source work. For Siglind Bruhn, knowledge of the primary work of art is pivotal to our understanding and appreciation of what she terms "transmedialisation". She writes:

> While music is no doubt "a language," we all know that it cannot label or describe directly; it cannot simply say or show *red* or *green*, *behind* or *in front*, *apple* or *chair*. For a music listener to understand how music responds to a work of art, it is even more necessary than in the case of an ekphrastic poem that the beholder be acquainted with the stimulus. The significance of the listener's familiarity with the primary work of art increases in proportion to the degree to which a composer establishes original links between musical means and the extramusical content of that primary work. (Bruhn 557)

What are the "musical means" through which composers create an interface between works of art and the "language" of music? Because music also has a visual dimension, in that it can be written down in the form of notation, there are parallels one can draw between the compositional techniques of painting, drawing and sculpture and the structural elements of music-making: form, tempo, dynamics, melodic, harmonic and rhythmic characteristics and so on, which are, broadly speaking, relatable. Whilst musical tones are clearly very different entities to colours or pigments on a canvas, musicians speak of *timbre* or sound "colour", of musical *lines* and the blending of sounds as *texture*; (some) composers still write "sketches" in sketch books. The graphic scores of the 1960s and early 70s represented an attempt to push the boundaries of musical notation towards the visual.

Music has a sense of *perspective* in physical space. We also have a situation in music where technical, stylistic and aesthetic ideas originating from the art world have been adopted and/or assimilated in their own medium by composers. One thinks of the expressionism of Schoenberg and Berg; the impressionism of Debussy; the Dadaism of Satie; the pointillism of early Stockhausen and Boulez; the minimalism of Steve Reich and Phillip Glass. Musical composition involves the arrangement of sounds in temporal space. The ear listens for patterns in the sonic information, for signals of repetition and change in order to make sense of it as "piece" of music. In a similar way, the eye scans the delineated space of a canvas and draws together the shapes, lines, contours and colours etc into a recognisable representation of say, *a ship in a storm*. Musical "motifs" are developed and shaped to become larger ideas, which are worked-out by the composer during the course of the work.

Visual art seems to approach the condition of music the less it tries to recreate a semblance of the outside world. Writing about his work *Manhattan Epiphanies* (1994-99) composer Andrew Ford notes that:

> Paintings often suggest music. For example, it is hard to look at one of Canaletto's views of Venice and not imagine the music of Vivaldi… Similarly, Picasso's

> *Guernica* always makes me hear Schoenberg, a response that probably dates back to some old BBC arts documentary. El Greco evokes Monteverdi, Géricault conjures up Boulez, Roy Lichtenstein suggests early rock-and-roll. This is all historical and fairly obvious. But *Blue Poles* is different. Pollock's canvas always makes me want to play it; or to be precise, it makes me want to play from it, because in many ways it resembles a musical score. (Ford 174)

Ford goes on to describe the "internal momentum" of the painting and the fact that, due to the size and shape of the canvas, it appears to reveal itself gradually, "in stages", akin to a piece of music. He also makes a startling observation about the "poles" themselves:

> On the most obvious level they divide the painting into sections so that the eye passes from one to the next, adding to that sense of movement…For me they have a further function. Those blue poles remind me of bar lines, with complex and brightly coloured melodic strands cavorting across them. (Ford 175)

Musical Ekphrasis *or* Program Music?

In the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, instrumental compositions inspired by subject matter such as novels, poems, plays and visual artworks, fell under the broad umbrella of program music. Among the best-known works in this genre are symphonic "tone poems" such as Tchaikovsky's *Francesca di Rimini* (1877), Liszt's *Hamlet* (1858), Richard Strauss's *Don Quixote* (1897) Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* (1894) and Rachmaninoff's *Isle of the Dead* (1908). In each case, the music seeks to convey an extra-musical narrative or "program", sometimes made explicit by the composer, sometimes not. The question as to whether musical ekphrasis can be understood as a distinct genre to program music is a matter of continued debate.[4] Siglind Bruhn argues that it is appropriate to consider these "after-works" as a different order of composition, for "Program music narrates or paints, suggests or represents scenes or stories (and by extension events or characters) that enter the music from the composer's mind". However, she continues:

> Musical ekphrasis, by contrast, narrates or paints stories or scenes created by an artist *other* than the composer of the music and in another artistic medium. Furthermore, musical ekphrasis typically relates not only to the content of the poetically or pictorially conveyed source text but usually also to one of the aspects distinguishing the mode of primary representation—its style, its form, its mood, or a conspicuous arrangement of details… Program music represents, while musical ekphrasis re-presents.

In my re-presentation of *The Last of England* I worked initially to find a musical language that would sound authentic and truthful to the painting, without resorting to a simple pastiche of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century piano music. The music I have written is, in a way, about other music. At first hearing, the most obvious influence is the traditional music of the British Isles and whilst there are no quotations of existing instrumental tunes or songs, the spirit or trace of folk music is clear. Further, I came to realise that what I was writing was a semi-autobiographical work, wherein elements of my own personal history intersect with the painting at various points. This discovery was the key to the work I wanted to make, in which

[4] See Melo's review of Bruhn's *Musical Ekphrasis: Composers Responding to Poetry and Painting* in *Notes*.

details from the painting are like embarkation points for musical vignettes which begin as observations and become something else.[5]

This autobiographical aspect is an important feature of the primary work in this instance. Brown worked at *The Last of England* between 1852-1855 at the height of the great diaspora from the British Isles. Whilst many genre painters of the day picked up on the subject, Brown avoids the overtly sentimental tendencies of many contemporary pictorial renditions of emigration by conflating the idea of a modern history painting with a family portrait. The middle-class emigrant family in the foreground were modelled by the artist and his future wife Emma Hill; the baby in her shawl is their son Oliver and the blond-haired little girl standing behind them, munching on an apple, is their daughter Catherine. This framing of the artist's domestic inner circle within the meta-narrative of a seismic historical event is a master stroke. Brown places himself, as it were, in the emigrant's shoes. As Carol Becker points out, certain artworks – and I contend this is one – reach beyond the apparent specificity of their subject matter and attain a universal significance:

> The best art goes so far into the personal that it broadens its own particularity and touches the world. Through the strength of its execution it becomes emotionally and aesthetically available to a heterogeneous audience.

This personal identification with the subject is followed through in the technical execution of the painting. The level of resolution when in proximity to the work, down to individual droplets of water, strands of hair and threads of cloth, is breathtaking. The keen observation of the quotidian is almost forensic, anticipating photo-journalism.[6]

The Music

I recorded *The Last of England* on November 5th, 2016 at Elder Hall in Adelaide.[7] The performance was recorded for the most part in one take, with minimal editing in order to capture as much of the narrative flow of the piece as it would be experienced in a recital setting. For the purpose of this article, I will discuss a few examples of individual pieces from the suite which will give a sense of my working practice, beginning with a sketch of the overarching structure of the work.

Once I had settled on the idea of the painting being the starting point, I began to improvise at the piano, often with elements of the painting before my mind's eye. I also began to make notes in my journal: sometimes written observations, sometimes fragments of music heard whilst I was physically in the gallery with the painting. The duality of leaving and returning and the liminal space in-between "where we are" and "where we would seek to be" emerged as the overarching idea and set the coordinates for the composition. For me, this is

[5] The personal connection with the painting is also explored by Jarman in relation to his film *The Last of England* (1987). He writes: "One day I remembered the painting of the emigrants leaving the white cliffs behind for a life in the new world. My great-grandparents had done that. Left their farm in ... Devon, to go to New Zealand ... in the 1850s" (Jarman 190; 93).

[6] Brown plots the development of the painting in his diary during the three years of its making. He explains in some detail the lengths he has gone to in order to ensure the verisimilitude of the image. For further information see *Exiles and Emigrants* (NGV Catalogue) and *Ford Madox Brown: Pre-Raphaelite Pioneer*.

[7] The CD of this recording is available via my website: www.richardchewmusic.com. It can also be accessed on various digital streaming platforms such as Spotify.

symbolised by the oval shape of the picture. It is like a window or an aperture – a porthole even. Are the people in the picture looking *out*, or are we looking *in*?[8] One of the curious aspects of *The Last of England* is that there are virtually no corners, straight lines or hard edges in the painting. The composition of the image is organic and, when reduced to its basic elements, reveals itself as series of interlocking curves, ellipses, ovals and semi-circles. Angela Thirwell takes up this most striking aspect of the painting's form:

> The circularity of the whole picture is subtly reinforced by the cunning triple framing device of Emma's bonnet. Within the bonnet, the roundness of her head is emphasised by the halo of her familiar plaited coil of hair, and between her head and the bonnet, pink ribbons double-frame her head. Like half-rhyme in poetry, or variations on a musical theme, other more angular shapes reiterate the circular structure – the octagonal contours of the umbrella which the husband protectively curves around his wife are repeated in the deck ropes around the ship's stern. (Thirwell 60)

As we have seen, the more abstract things become, the easier it is to render the visual delineation of space in musical terms. I have tried to emulate this state of flow, the internal movement or rhythm of the painting, in various ways. The most obvious means of doing this is to blur or blend the transitions from one piece to another, creating the illusion of seamlessness. This happens at various points during the course of the work. I have also tended towards circular melodic shapes, which seem to repeat without literally doing so and often overrun the bar lines in terms of phrasing. Another technique, which also establishes a sense of unity (as a whole) and connection between the individual pieces is to delimit the tonal palette or harmonic ambit of the work.

The "home key" of *The Last of England*, the tonal polarity around which everything orbits, is D major and its relative B minor. Of almost equal importance is the key of G major and its relative E minor. These are the foreground primary colours, so to speak. The whole work spirals around these key centres, with only a few exceptions. No.4 "Leave-Taking", is a slow air in B♭ major, a key that emerges out of the previous music of No.3 "Cathy/The Circle of Her Love Moves with Her". We do not hear music in this key again; because this is a one-way ticket. The chalk cliffs of home are already distant in the moment that Madox Brown has fixed for posterity. "Leave Taking" is about the part of *us* that is left behind.

At the epicentre of Brown's painting is the emigrant family. The woman holds the tiny hand of the baby in her shawl; her gloved right hand grips the hand of her partner tight, draining the blood from his fingers. Beneath his right shoulder, to the left, a little girl (modelled by Catherine Madox Brown) holds an apple to her mouth for comfort and grasps the scarf of her brother. Her fist is red with cold. She is the only person on the boat who looks directly at us with piercing blue eyes.

I created a "family" of themes for *The Last of England*, which stand for the family in the painting as individuals and as a unit. The theme for Cathy is delicate melody in G major, like an old fiddle tune. Again, the element of autobiography is never far from the surface. This piece is actually about my own daughter, Martha, who was four years old when we moved to Australia. It gives way to a related but rhythmically stricter theme in E minor, representing Emma and this in turn develops into one of the two motto themes of the work:

[8] The roundel also references the Renaissance Tondo format and Woolner's circular portrait medallions.

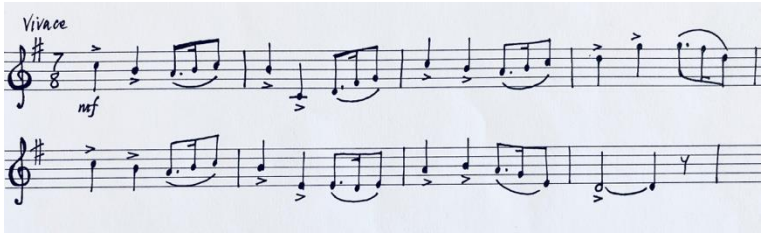

Fig. 4. *Eureka* theme, from *The Last of England*, Richard Chew. ©Richard Chew 2016.

This vigorous melody in G major is, for me, tied to Ford Madox Brown and, by association, Thomas Woolner. It appears twice in the work; here, where the rhythmic asymmetry of 7/8 suggests the influence of the choppy weather and at the end of Part One in No.8 "The Eureka Set", where it appears in D major, as a slow march in 6/8; an invocation in musical terms of the miner's "Oath" and the Eureka flag.[9]

The second motto theme is introduced in the first piece we hear in *The Last of England;* "Channel Winds". I began with the idea that the work should open with a "wide-angle shot" of the whole canvas – music about a sea voyage. The central theme is announced by the left hand in the cello register. It is an ardent melody of sixteen bars with no direct repetition. The right hand plays a repeated falling ostinato pattern, conjuring up the white horses of waves rising and breaking in the upper right quadrant of the painting. "Channel Winds" is the most recognisably classical Romantic piece in the suite in terms of style, and there is good reason for this. The piece is an homage to Mendelssohn's *Hebrides Overture* (1830) which is the first orchestral work I remember clearly from childhood; one that inspired me to become a musician.

We know that Mendelssohn heard the opening music for the overture on a boat trip from Oban to Tobermory on the Isle of Mull.[10] He sketched out the opening bars in a letter to his sister Fanny, dated 7th August, 1829:

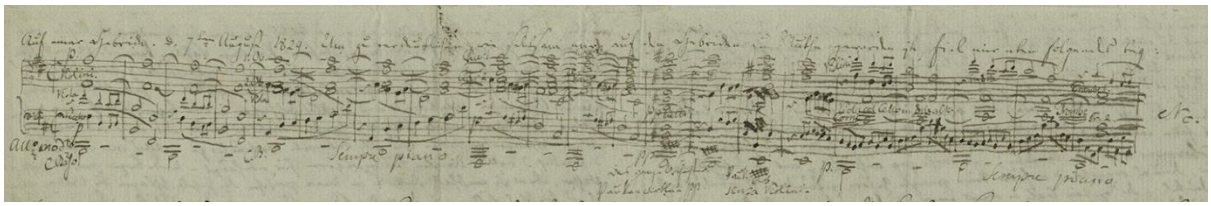

Fig. 4. Mendelsohn's sketch of the opening bars of the *Hebrides Overture*; 7th August, 1829. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

The ferry sailing from the port of Oban to Tobermory is a journey I know well. Mendelssohn has captured the feeling of this landscape perfectly in his overture. Even Wagner, ordinarily so dismissive of Jewish composers, had to admit that:

> Mendelssohn was a landscape painter of the first order, and his *Hebrides Overture* is his masterpiece. Wonderful imagination and delicate feeling are here presented with consummate art. Note the extraordinary beauty of the passage where the oboe rises

[9] Although Woolner had returned to England by December 1854 when the Eureka Stockade rebellion took place, one of his companions and fellow member of the PRB, Bernhard Smith was there. Smith migrated from England with Woolner and Edward La Trobe Bateman aboard the *Windsor Castle* in July 1852.
[10] For a detailed account of the provenance of this work, see Fiske's *Music in Scotland*.

> above the other instruments with a plaintive wail like sea winds over the sea. (Richard Wagner qtd. in Nieks 196)

I hear a reminiscence of the second subject of Mendelssohn's overture (beginning at bar 47) in the theme of "Channel Winds". The key is the same, with the suggestion of cellos in terms of registration and the gradual expansion of the melodic contour also comparable:

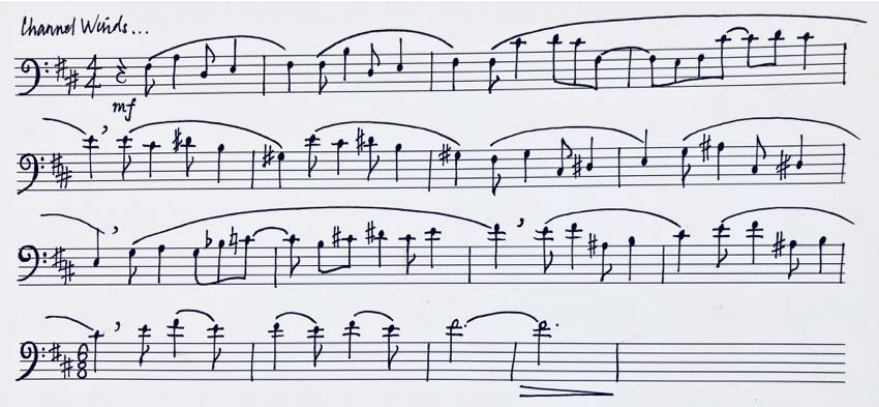

Fig. 5. "Channel Winds" theme, from *The Last of England*, Richard Chew.

There are also little hidden connections to the painting in this theme. There are 75 notes in total the melodic line, representing the width of the image (75cms). The opening ostinato pattern in the right hand is a sequence of eight demisemiquavers repeated 4 times (32 = the height of the painting in inches).

In No.11, "The Clasp", this theme returns in a B minor variant that is much more introspective and melancholic, recalling Madox Brown's sonnet: "She grips his listless hand and clasps her child / Through rainbow tears she sees a sunnier gleam / She cannot see a void, where he will be". The theme appears once more, at the end of No.13, "A Song Without Words", in E minor, where it is finally revealed as the "emigrant song", which will be sung in reminiscence of times past and absorbed into the social and cultural fabric of the new land.

The Last of England attempts the impossible. It seeks to translate a work of art into music for piano. I concur with Siglind Bruhn that knowledge of the source work will ultimately enhance the appreciation of this music, but it is not a pre-requisite. Brown's painting became the starting point for a series of piano pieces which explore my lifelong fascination with the instrument and its myriad sonorities. The descriptive titles will, I hope, guide the listener in a certain direction, to discover details in the painting that have inspired a musical response. As I have intimated earlier, *The Last of England* is, to an extent, autobiographical, an interface between the two lives I have led in the UK and Australia. The descriptive titles will, I hope, guide the listener in a certain direction, to discover details in the painting that have inspired a musical response.

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include works for the Adelaide Festival, Vienna Festival, Welsh National Opera, Festival of Arts and Ideas (USA), Lyndsay Quartet, Young Vic Theatre Company and Salisbury Cathedral. Recent projects include conducting the Victorian premiere of his choral work *Stari Most*, which tells the story of the iconic Old Bridge in Mostar, Bosnia Herzegovina, in a special *Concert for Compassion*, featuring guest artist Lior. In 2019, Richard wrote the music for two documentary films; *The Missing* and *Harbour Lights* for Wind & Sky Productions and was commissioned by Federation University to compose a new orchestral work, celebrating the 150th anniversary of the university in Ballarat. Richard's music is available on his website: www.richardchewmusic.com.

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