

# The Music of Rebecca Clarke (1886–1979)

Thesis submitted in accordance with  
the requirements of the University of  
Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in  
Philosophy by Bryony Claire Jones

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Rebecca Clarke, ca. 1918<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Photograph from: <http://www.rebeccaclarke.org/biography.html>

## Contents:

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <i>Acknowledgements</i>   | vi         |
| <i>Preface</i>  | vii        |
| <i>Abstract</i>   | xi         |
| <br>  |            |
| <b>Chapter 1: A Biographical Outline</b>  | <b>1</b>   |
| <br>  |            |
| <b>Chapter 2: Clarke's Student Sonata Form Works (1908–09)</b>  | <b>19</b>  |
| The Early Violin Sonatas  | 19         |
| (i) Sonata Movement in G Major (1908)   | 20         |
| (ii) Violin Sonata in D Major   | 27         |
| <br>  |            |
| <b>Chapter 3: The Coolidge Works:</b>   | <b>36</b>  |
| <b>Viola Sonata (1919), Piano Trio (1921) and Rhapsody (1923)</b>   |            |
| (i) Viola Sonata  | 36         |
| (ii) Piano Trio   | 56         |
| (iii) <i>Rhapsody</i>   | 75         |
| <br>  |            |
| <b>Chapter 4: Clarke's Other Chamber Works (1908–44)</b>  | <b>90</b>  |
| (i) Clarke's Prize-winning Student Chamber Works (1908–09)  | 96         |
| (ii) The Emergence and Development of Clarke's Mature Style   | 103        |
| (iii) The 'Alternative' Coolidge Years (1917–23)  | 111        |
| (iv) Movements for String Quartet (1924?–26)  | 127        |
| (v) Shorter Works   | 135        |
| (vi) Works Completed During the Second World War  | 139        |
| <br>  |            |
| <b>Chapter 5: Clarke's Mature Songs (1912–54)</b>   | <b>156</b> |
| (i) Dramatic Songs (1920–45)  | 160        |
| (ii) Songs with Religious Texts (1920–54)   | 174        |
| (iii) Love Songs 1912–c.45  | 182        |
| (iv) Songs about Death (1925–c.45)  | 186        |
| (v) The Duets (1907–26)   | 188        |
| (vi) Songs for Voice and Strings  | 196        |
| <br>  |            |
| <b>Chapter 6: Choral Music (1906–43)</b>  | <b>207</b> |
| <br>  |            |
| <b>Chapter 7: In Retrospect</b>   | <b>228</b> |
| <br>  |            |
| <b>Appendix 1: Timeline Biography</b>   | <b>238</b> |
| <br>  |            |
| <b>Appendix 2: Chronological Catalogue Of Works</b>   | <b>248</b> |
| <br>  |            |
| <b>Appendix 3: Overview of Clarke's Vocal Music (Solo Songs, Duets, Songs With Accompaniments for Other Instruments and Choral Music), Arranged in Chronological Order of Poets' Birthdates</b> | <b>280</b> |

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>Appendix 4: Clarke's Colleagues</b>   | <b>285</b> |
| <b>Appendix 5: Contemporary Critical Reaction to Clarke's Music</b>  | <b>292</b> |
| <b>Appendix 6: Extracts from Clarke's Diaries (1919–1933) Concerning Her Music</b>   | <b>301</b> |
| (i) entries concerning songs and poets   | <b>302</b> |
| (ii) entries concerning the Viola Sonata   | <b>306</b> |
| (iii) entries concerning the Trio  | <b>308</b> |
| (iv) entries concerning the <i>Rhapsody</i>  | <b>309</b> |
| (v) entries concerning other chamber works   | <b>311</b> |
| (vi) entries concerning Clarke's participation in concerts,<br>her attendance at concerts of her own works, and her<br>reaction to critical reception of her music | <b>313</b> |
| (vii) entries concerning publication difficulties  | <b>314</b> |
| (viii) entries concerning choral music   | <b>316</b> |
| (ix) selected comments on other composers and performers   | <b>317</b> |
| (x) entries concerning composing at the piano<br>miscellaneous entries.  | <b>318</b> |
| <b>Bibliography</b>  | <b>321</b> |



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## Preface

Interest in Rebecca Clarke's music has grown steadily throughout the last few years: recently she has been discussed on BBC Radio 4's 'Woman's Hour' programme (24 March 2003), a review of several new editions of her music appeared in *Notes* (March 2004), and new CD releases of her works have been reviewed in the national and music press. Indeed a significant number of new recordings (or re-releases of older ones) have been issued since 2000, and these have proved an invaluable resource throughout my research.

The majority of Clarke's manuscripts are held in the private estate of her grandnephew by marriage, Christopher Johnson, who, for reasons perhaps best kept to himself, rarely allows scholars to access them. Not surprisingly, previous researchers have been few in number and their work has invariably been hindered by the difficulty of obtaining scores for critical study. Today the situation is better: around three-quarters of her mature output has been published by OUP, about half of that since 2002. A reassessment of Clarke's music is long overdue, but during the twentieth century a wide-ranging study of her music proved unfeasible for the reasons given above.

In 1999 the first biography of Clarke was published, Daniella Kohnen's *Rebecca Clarke, Komponistin und Bratschistin*, though this contains little discussion of her music. In May 2004 a more significant book on Clarke, *A Rebecca Clarke Reader*, discussed her life and music from various angles, although it appeared in print too late to be assessed in this thesis and, besides, was almost immediately withdrawn from circulation because of legal disputes between Christopher Johnson and the publishers, Indiana University Press. There has still not, however, been a full

volume dedicated to an analysis of Clarke's music, and it is that gap that the present thesis aims to fill.

Despite the increased number of recent publications, several important works remain in manuscript, or have been published since I began my research. Without access to these works (Mr Johnson refused to allow me to see or copy the scores) my research could not have been comprehensive. Fortunately, Dr Liane Curtis of Brandeis University, Chairwoman of the Rebecca Clarke Society, generously allowed me access to unpublished works that she had obtained before Mr Johnson became so unreasonable. For the simple reason that I have seen some, but not all of Clarke's manuscripts, the information regarding the number of pages in the manuscripts in Appendix 2 is inevitably incomplete. I have not seen all of Clarke's juvenile songs, so Chapter 5 concentrates on her more important mature songs and duets.

Between 1969 and 1972 Clarke wrote her memoirs entitled *I Had a Father Too, or 'The Mustard Spoon'*. These remain unpublished though Dr Curtis has edited them and has allowed me to see several chapters. Clarke's original version is not divided into chapters so my page references largely use Dr Curtis's edited version with page numbers given by chapter (each chapter begins from page one).

In light of the extensive biographical work on Clarke being carried out by Dr Curtis, the aim of my first chapter is simply to provide a biographical outline, an introduction to Clarke's life rather than an in-depth study. In this chapter I also examine the changing fortunes of her reputation, discuss possible reasons for her disappearance from musicological literature and study the most recent developments in the revival of interest in her work. Chapter 7 is a summing up chapter in which I assess Clarke's contribution to early twentieth-century English music. I examine



further reasons for her disappearance from public view and draw parallels with other composers whose careers followed similar paths. I discuss Clarke's views of herself and her career (a source of contention among Clarke scholars and enthusiasts) and draw on evidence from interviews and Clarke's private diaries to support my conclusions.

Analytical discussion of Clarke's music appears in Chapters 2–6. Chapters 2–4 examine her chamber music; Chapter 2 deals chronologically with two early student works, and Chapter 3, which also takes a chronological approach, discusses the three works written for competitions and festivals organised by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. Chapter 4 concerns Clarke's other chamber music, written between 1908 and 1944, and divides the works written during this period into largely chronological groups, with one unavoidable overlapping section ('Shorter Works'). Chapter 5 examines Clarke's songs and duets, and in this chapter I have divided her vast output into subsections, dealing first with the solo songs with piano accompaniment, further dividing these into categories: 'Dramatic Songs', 'Religious Songs', 'Love Songs' and 'Songs about Death'. I have used these categories in order to consider Clarke's varying responses to different types of subject matter. Next, I examine the duets in chronological order, then finally the songs for voice and strings, drawing out the most important features from these songs as a whole.

My methodological approach began with a thorough analysis of Clarke's music, and a comparison with other works in the same genre. I then selected the most interesting features to concentrate on in each composition, varying the focus both to avoid repetition and to make the study more engaging for the reader. This approach brought to my attention several traits which occur throughout Clarke's output, irrespective of genre, and so I have cross-referenced information between chapters to

bring these features to the reader's attention. Throughout this thesis I have endeavoured to trace developments in Clarke's technique and style and to place her compositions in the perspective of the music of her contemporaries.

The aim of this study is to examine in detail, for the first time, all genres of Clarke's music, to trace the development of her mature style, to examine parallels across genres, to explore the influences on her style and technique, and to define the characteristics of her unique musical voice. I have also discussed Clarke's views on her own ability as a composer, and some outstanding questions have at last been answered, such as the role of the piano in Clarke's compositional process. Further, I have traced the growth of interest in her work and discussed reasons for its fall from public view, drawing extensively on contemporary reviews and observations.

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## Abstract

Rebecca Clarke completed over 100 works but her reputation rested for many years on just two, the Viola Sonata (1919) and Piano Trio (1921). This thesis is the first in-depth discussion of Clarke's oeuvre as a whole. Chapter 1 provides a biographical outline, discusses reasons for her disappearance from musicological literature and details recent developments in the revival of interest in her work. Chapter 2 examines two unpublished works dating from Clarke's studies at the RCM under Stanford. Chapter 3 discusses the three 'Coolidge' works. Chapter 4 examines Clarke's other chamber music (1908–44). Chapter 5 considers the mature songs. Chapter 6 discusses the choral music. Chapter 7 assesses Clarke's contribution to early twentieth-century English music. There are six appendices: a timeline biography; a chronological catalogue of works; an overview of Clarke's vocal music; brief biographical details of Clarke's colleagues and friends; examples of contemporary critical reaction to Clarke's music; and extracts from Clarke's diaries (1919–33).

Parallels between genres are discussed wherever relevant. The characteristics of Clarke's musical style are assessed and the argument put forward that her work can be classed as 'mature' from as early as 1909. Evidence is also provided to show that the two works for which she is best known appeared as a logical outcome of ten years' musical development and the considered honing of an already impressive technique. This thesis shows how many of the same ideas returned throughout Clarke's mature output, and demonstrates how, after receiving criticism for cultivating too 'dark' a style in her 1923 *Rhapsody*, Clarke did not radically alter it merely to please others. Her own views on her work are also examined, using unpublished diary extracts, memoirs and interviews to support the conclusions drawn.



## Chapter 1: A Biographical Outline

The brevity of the two-line entry awarded to Rebecca Clarke in the 1980 edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* summed up a then-typical attitude of indifference towards women composers, which has remained prevalent throughout the literature on Western musical history:

Clarke, Rebecca b. Harrow, 2 Aug 1886. English viola player and composer, wife of JAMES FRISKIN.<sup>1</sup>

Significantly, in the entry under the name of her husband, the pianist and composer James Friskin, a considerable proportion of the information given is actually about Clarke. Here we find out the date of her death (curiously omitted from her own entry!), that she was a pupil of Stanford, further details about her career as a performer, and, most significantly, information about the types of works she completed. All of this would seem infinitely more appropriate under the entry for her own name:

Friskin, James (*b* Glasgow, 3 March 1886; *d* New York, 16 March 1967). Scottish pianist and composer...He married the English viola player and composer Rebecca Clarke (1886–1979), who was also Stanford's composition pupil. She has performed with several internationally known chamber groups. Her compositions comprise chamber works (the Viola and Piano Sonata, 1919, and the Piano Trio, 1921, won prizes at the Berkshire Festival, USA), songs and smaller

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<sup>1</sup> Sadie, S, ed.: *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 1980, IV, 448.



pieces. She wrote the viola article in COBBETT'S CYCLOPEDIA  
SURVEY OF CHAMBER MUSIC (London, 1929, 2/1963).<sup>2</sup>

Even this, however, gives no indication of the real merit of a composer who has been described as: a 'significant British figure...who wrote with impressive technical command, individual expression, and a refreshingly international outlook';<sup>3</sup> 'one of the most interesting and independent-minded British composers – of either sex – in the first half of the twentieth century';<sup>4</sup> and 'one of the most accomplished British composers of her generation'.<sup>5</sup>

Prior to the publication of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (in January 2001), the meagre entry on Clarke in the 1980 edition became one of the most infamous examples of her neglect by the musicological literature, and her almost complete absence from histories of English Music is as mystifying as it is unjust. Banfield lists her as one of the composers he omits from his broad two-volume study *Sensibility and English Song*,<sup>6</sup> despite the fact that she composed over fifty songs of a high quality. Perhaps most surprisingly of all, Karin Pendle's comprehensive book *Women and Music – A History*<sup>7</sup> makes no mention of her. An important development was the more detailed entry on Clarke (by Stephen Banfield) in the 1994 *New Grove Dictionary of Women Composers*, and pressure from the Rebecca Clarke Society<sup>8</sup> successfully led to Clarke receiving a far

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., VI, 855. The entry includes some inaccuracies: Clarke's Viola Sonata and Trio did not win prizes at the Berkshire Festivals; both came second in their respective years. It also makes no mention of her choral works, though these were little known in 1980.

<sup>3</sup> MacDonald, C: 'Rebecca Clarke's Chamber Music'; *Tempo*, 160 (March 1986), 15.

<sup>4</sup> MacDonald, C: Introduction to the Boosey and Hawkes edition of Clarke's *Trio* (1994).

<sup>5</sup> Oliver, M E: *Gramophone*, 73 (October 1995), 81.

<sup>6</sup> London, Cambridge University Press, 1985.

<sup>7</sup> Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1991.

<sup>8</sup> The Rebecca Clarke Society was founded by Dr Liane Curtis of Brandeis University in 2000. Their mission is 'to honor the life and work of composer and violist Rebecca Clarke (1886–1979) by promoting interest in her and her music. [The society aims to] encourage and support performances

more significant entry of around one thousand words in the latest edition of *Grove*,<sup>9</sup> allowing a true recognition of her achievements and importance to British musical history. In 1999 the first biography of Clarke was published, though this is in German, is difficult to obtain, and is unlikely ever to be published in English.<sup>10</sup> Within the last few years much of her music (including numerous works which are still unpublished) has been recorded and issued on CD, and several important articles on Clarke have been published in musicological journals. Since 1998 more of her music has been published too, as Appendix 2 shows. Another significant development is the publication of a book of essays on Clarke's life and music, along with transcripts of interviews she gave in the 1970s and reproductions of articles she wrote for *Music and Letters* in the 1920s. This publication, entitled *A Rebecca Clarke Reader*, was published by Indiana University Press in May 2004.<sup>11</sup> Clarke kept detailed diaries from 1919 to 30 and completed a lengthy memoir from 1969 to 72. These give an important perspective on her life and musical career but remain unpublished and closely guarded by the trustees of Clarke's estate. Several insightful articles on or by Clarke have been included as 'extras' in recent Oxford University Press publications of her music, but unfortunately some of these appear as decoration on the back covers, with certain pages or paragraphs obscured, and with few source details that would be useful for academic study. Nevertheless the information contained in these articles is a welcome addition to the steadily growing body of literature on Clarke.

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and recordings of her music and writings, and scholarship concerning Clarke and her music.' (See <http://www.rebeccaclarke.org/Mission.html>)

<sup>9</sup> Now significantly more than the entry on James Friskin, which has been considerably reduced.

<sup>10</sup> Kohnen, Daniela: *Rebecca Clarke, Komponistin und Bratschistin* (Germany, Egelsbach, 1999).

<sup>11</sup> This book is currently withdrawn from circulation because of copyright problems.



Rebecca Thacher Clarke was born in Harrow, Middlesex, on 27 August 1886, the eldest child of her Bostonian father, Joseph Clarke (1856–1920), and Bavarian mother Agnes Helferich (1861–1935), who had married in Munich in 1885. Agnes was the daughter of Hans von Helferich, Professor of Political Economy at the University of Munich, and a great-niece of the famous German historian Leopold von Ranke. Joseph Clarke, the son of a physician, had been educated in Germany and had worked successfully as an archaeologist before his design and production of a magazine camera brought him to the attention of George Eastman of the Eastman Kodak Company. Eastman recruited Clarke as the company's European representative, and after their marriage the Clarkes settled in Harrow. Rebecca became a pupil at the South Hampstead School for Girls.

By all accounts the Clarke household was one in which Victorian values were upheld, and the four children (Rebecca had two brothers Hans<sup>12</sup> and Eric,<sup>13</sup> and one sister, Dora<sup>14</sup>) were coerced into playing string instruments<sup>15</sup> and making chamber music. Hans recorded that he was 'exposed to musical and intellectual stimuli'<sup>16</sup> from an early age, and that he took part in family string quartets from the age of eight. Agnes and Joseph were strongly interested in music (she was a capable pianist,

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<sup>12</sup> Hans Clarke (1887–1972) became a very successful biochemist and lived for most of his adult life in the US.

<sup>13</sup> Eric Clarke (1890–1968), referred to by Rebecca in her diaries as 'Monkey', was the first of the four children to move to the US. He wrote a book, *Music in Everyday Life*, which was published in New York in 1935.

<sup>14</sup> Dora Clarke (1890/95–after 1964) was a sculptor who began her studies at the Slade School of Art at the unusually young age of fifteen. She held numerous exhibitions in London between 1916 and 1938. She married Admiral G B Middleton but continued to use her maiden name professionally. (See Dunford, Penny: *A Biographical Dictionary of Women Artists in Europe and America Since 1850* (Hertfordshire, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990, 66).

<sup>15</sup> Both sons disliked playing the violin. Hans later took up the clarinet (and became a highly respected amateur performer) and Eric the French horn.

<sup>16</sup> 'Hans Thacher Clarke', biographical memoir by Hubert Bradford Vickery (1975) published by National Academy Press online in *Biographical Memoirs V.46* at [www.nap.edu](http://www.nap.edu). (Consulted October 2002.)

he an amateur cellist<sup>17</sup> and both were amateur singers) and Rebecca began to learn the violin in 1894 at the age of eight,<sup>18</sup> enrolling in the Royal Academy of Music from the Lent Term of 1903. Her teacher there was Hans Wessely,<sup>19</sup> and she had lessons in harmony and counterpoint with a friend of her father's, Percy Hilder Miles.

Joseph Clarke was a complex and domineering character, capable of moments of appalling cruelty, unafraid to beat his children if he thought they had misbehaved. Rebecca's troubled relationship with him is detailed in her memoir, *I Had a Father Too, or 'The Mustard Spoon'*<sup>20</sup> and in Liane Curtis's unpublished article 'Rebecca Clarke and Virginia Woolf: Moments of Being'.<sup>21</sup> Many of the actions Clarke describes matter-of-factly in the memoir would today be seen as abuse, both physical and mental (hitting his children with a two-foot steel architect's ruler and using them as target practice for his airgun are just two examples). However, Clarke never quite manages to condemn her father, and sometimes seems even to make excuses for his behaviour ('In thinking back to the harsh treatment we so often had to endure at Papa's hands I really believe he persuaded himself that he was doing the right thing by us'<sup>22</sup>). In 1905 Joseph Clarke allowed Rebecca to travel to Boston on her own to visit members of his family, yet during the Midsummer term of that year he had withdrawn her from the Royal Academy after Hilder Miles proposed to her. At a time when children only became adults by law at the age of

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<sup>17</sup> Clarke described her father's cello playing as 'somewhat less than mediocre' (*I Had a Father Too, or 'The Mustard Spoon'*, Chap. 2, 21).

<sup>18</sup> Her first violin teacher was a neighbour, identified in her memoir as Mr Cave.

<sup>19</sup> Hans Wessely (1862–1926) was an Austrian violinist who became professor at the RAM in 1889. A quartet named after him played in London until 1914. In her memoir Clarke recorded: 'I found the R.A.M. thrilling, even if Hans Wessely was a stern and sometimes unkind teacher.' Chap. 7, 2.

<sup>20</sup> The significance of the 'mustard spoon' is explained at the start: Joseph Clarke exchanged his wedding ring for a mustard spoon in a pawn shop not long after he married Agnes Helferich.

<sup>21</sup> 2002.

<sup>22</sup> *I Had a Father Too*, Chap. 2, 9.



twenty-one, Joseph Clarke was clearly horrified. (On his death in 1922, Hilder Miles bequeathed Clarke a Stradivarius violin, profits from the sale of which she donated for an annual cello prize at the Royal Academy of Music in honour of her close friend, the cellist May Mukle.)

Two years after removing Rebecca from the Academy, Joseph Clarke sent a few of her songs for voice and piano to an acquaintance of his, Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, then a leading British teacher of composition, whose list of former pupils included Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst. As the list of works in Appendix 2 shows, Clarke wrote numerous songs, mostly to German texts, when still in her teens (she had been taught German from an early age by her mother). In an interview given in 1976 Clarke commented on these songs in typically modest terms: ‘very bad songs, thank goodness they’re torn up’.<sup>23</sup> Whatever Clarke’s opinion of her early work, Stanford wrote back to Joseph Clarke saying he ‘thought he detected one or two traces of talent’<sup>24</sup> and agreed to take Rebecca on as one of the very few female composition students he taught during his long career.<sup>25</sup> By this time Stanford had already been knighted (1901) and was a formidable figure. He had been Professor of Composition at the RCM since 1883, and remained there until his death in 1924. As Paul Rodmell maintains in his book, many of Stanford’s pupils found him to be a particularly harsh critic, but Clarke’s experience was one she remembered fondly in later years:

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<sup>23</sup> Rebecca Clarke. Interview with Robert Sherman, 1976, broadcast on WQNR radio in the US, on the occasion of Clarke’s 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. A transcript of this interview appears in *A Rebecca Clarke Reader* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2004 [currently withdrawn because of copyright problems]).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> It has erroneously been indicated in various sources that Clarke was Stanford’s first female composition student. Clarke herself, in her memoir, *I Had a Father Too*, states, ‘That I was the only woman he had accepted was a source of great pride to me, though I knew full well that I never really deserved it.’ (Chap. 7, 34). Whether she actually believed this to be the case is unknown. Paul Rodmell’s book on *Charles Villiers Stanford* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2002) gives a list of his composition pupils from the Royal College of Music and Cambridge University which includes two women he taught *before* Clarke: Katherine Ramsey (taught 1892–95) and Marion Scott (1896–1904).

I shall always remember with gratitude and affection the lessons he gave me, feeling myself fortunate to have been his pupil. From the very beginning he was entirely charming to me. I remember so well how I waited outside the glass door of his room before my first lesson, too nervous to go in; and how an older student, chancing to pass by, advised me to speak up for myself and not give him the impression of being frightened. Sir Charles's amused quizzical glance of course took in the situation in an instant, and we were friends from that moment. I can see now the hovering of his familiar gold pencil, and hear the picturesque exaggerations of his praise or blame.<sup>26</sup>

As a female composition student Clarke was considered rather unusual, but she evidently thrived at the College. Two works written at this time – a *Theme and Variations* for solo piano, and a three-movement *Danse Bizarre* for two violins and piano – received prizes from the Royal College of Music's Council,<sup>27</sup> a very promising start to her career as a composer. It was Stanford who suggested she switch from studying the violin to the viola as a first instrument 'because then you are right in the middle of the sound, and can tell how it's all done.'<sup>28</sup> She took lessons with the illustrious violist Lionel Tertis, who would later include her Viola Sonata (1919) in his repertoire, performing it in concerts in America.

During her time at the College, Clarke made numerous friends who would figure in her performing life from then on; her musical career was to continue along the dual paths of performing and composing for many years. Her chief interest as a

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<sup>26</sup> 'Sir Charles Stanford and his Pupils', *RCM Magazine*, Vol. 58 (1962), quoted in Rodmell, *Charles Villiers Stanford*, (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2002), 352.

<sup>27</sup> Exhibitions awarded by the College's Council existed to give financial help to students without drawing on the more formal scholarship funds.

<sup>28</sup> Clarke, R: *I Had a Father Too*, Chap. 7, 38.



performer was in chamber music, and two articles she wrote for *Music and Letters*<sup>29</sup> during the 1920s show her passion for this.

While studying at the Royal College, Clarke remained at home, but tensions with her father ran high: in July 1910 she found a number of love letters written to Joseph Clarke from one of his mistresses and made a pyramid of them on the dining table for him to find. In the ensuing argument he threw Rebecca out of the family home, aged twenty-four, with only £12. The two were to have no further contact.<sup>30</sup>

On his death on 23 September 1920 Joseph Clarke left his large library of chamber music to his eldest son, Hans, a biochemist and amateur clarinettist, rather than to Rebecca. Afterwards, Rebecca returned to England to live for a time with her mother and sister, but some twenty-four years later (and nine years after the death of her mother) got married in New York on the anniversary of her father's death, 23 September 1944.

Unable to finance continued study after her eviction, Clarke left the College<sup>31</sup> and, with the help of Stanford, gained a place in the Norah Clench Quartet, London's first professional all-female string quartet.<sup>32</sup> This was the first of many chamber groups that she was to be involved with, and later her viola playing brought Clarke into contact with some of the most respected musicians of the time. She met Arthur Rubinstein, Pablo Casals and Guilhermina Suggia, among others, and even told

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<sup>29</sup> See Bibliography.

<sup>30</sup> Her diary entry on 28 May 1920 records having seen her father in the audience at a Wigmore Hall concert, but he did not see her.

<sup>31</sup> According to the RCM records she was later issued with a testamur from the college. These were certificates awarded for attendance of at least three terms.

<sup>32</sup> The original line-up, listed in Cobbett's *Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music* (Vol. I, 1929/1963: 204), was Norah Clench and Lucy Stone (violins), Cecilia Gates (viola) and May Mukle (cello). The group had formed in 1907 and Clarke replaced Gates in 1910.



Ravel's fortune with Tarot cards after she took part in a concert of his works on 28 October 1928!<sup>33</sup>

Clarke was one of the thirty-seven women at the inaugural meeting of the Society of Women Musicians, which took place in London on 15 July 1911. Founded jointly by the singer Gertrude Eaton, composer Katharine Eggar, and musicologist Marion Scott, the society aimed to 'provide a focal point for women composers and performers to meet and enjoy the benefits of mutual cooperation'.<sup>34</sup> Within its first year of operation the society had formed a choir and library, hosted lectures and a concert of its members' works, and held a composers' conference. By 1913 an orchestra had been formed and in 1918 the businessman, amateur violinist and chamber music patron Walter Willson Cobbett donated a library of chamber music. The society continued in existence until 1972.<sup>35</sup>

In 1913, after much urging from Ethel Smyth, Sir Henry Wood agreed to allow women to audition for places in his New Queen's Hall Orchestra, featured in his Promenade Concerts. Henry Wood admitted six women, including Clarke,<sup>36</sup> on the condition that they received equal pay to their male colleagues. This, however, was not from a desire for equality, but merely to ensure that other women would not try to undercut their male peers by offering to play for a smaller salary. The women did not play in as many concerts as the men; they did not take part in the Proms

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<sup>33</sup> As she recounted during her 1976 interview with Robert Sherman.

<sup>34</sup> Fuller, S: 'Society of Women Musicians' entry in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Second Edition, XXIII, 2001, 602–03.

<sup>35</sup> The archive is held at the Royal College of Music, London.

<sup>36</sup> The others were Dora Garland, Jessie Grimson, E M Dudding and Jean Stewart (violins) and S Maturin (viola). See Jacobs, Arthur: *Henry J Wood, Maker of the Proms* (London, Methuen, 1994, 142).

series because the schedule was thought to be too physically demanding. Clarke remained in the orchestra only until the following year.<sup>37</sup>

Clarke worked with many well-known musicians at various times in her career, and often dedicated works to colleagues: the cellist Guilhermina Suggia, the violinist Adila Fachiri, the tenor Gervase Elwes, and the baritone John Goss (with whom she had an extended affair) amongst others. She also dedicated works to people who supported her career and to members of her family: her sister, Dora, her niece Magdalen, her brother Hans and his wife Frieda. She knew Benjamin Britten, and the manuscripts of two of her unpublished vocal duets are in the Britten-Pears library in Aldeburgh.

Clarke was much admired by her contemporaries, especially for her skill as a violist, which is how she became better known. The English composer Walter Leigh (1905–42) dedicated his *Sonatina for Viola and Piano* (1930) to her and it was performed on 17 June 1932 at the International Society for Contemporary Music Festival in Vienna. According to Barry Marsh, Ernest Moeran<sup>38</sup> initially pencilled a dedication to Rebecca Clarke on the manuscript of his String Trio but changed it to The Pasquier Trio before its publication in 1936.<sup>39</sup> The reasons why he changed his mind are unknown, though a commercial motive is likely. A concert made up

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<sup>37</sup> However, Clarke must have stayed in contact with Wood. Her diary for 24 May 1926 records: 'Had a letter from Henry Wood asking me to write him something for the Proms, but refused as I don't want to be hurried.' (Unpublished diary entry.) In a 1978 interview with Ellen Lerner, Clarke commented: 'Henry Wood once asked me to write a piece for the orchestra and I didn't because I never got as far as studying orchestration' (14 September 1978). However, this conflicts with a passage from Clarke's memoir which describes 'rescoring Mozart symphonies from the piano arrangements and then comparing' (unpublished memoir: *I Had a Father Too*, 176). Perhaps if Clarke had been able to continue her studies at the Royal College of Music her orchestration studies could have continued and her career path might have been very different.

<sup>38</sup> Moeran must have known Clarke, but despite the combined efforts of the Rebecca Clarke Society and Moeran enthusiasts the only direct link that has been found is a diary entry Clarke wrote on 6 July 1929: '[played] at a concert at the Women Musicians. Moeran was there, half-drunk and most attentive.' Moeran dedicated several works to John Goss; interestingly one of these was a song, *A Dream of Death* in 1925. Clarke completed a setting of the same poem (by W B Yeats) the following year.

<sup>39</sup> See the list of Moeran's dedications given at [www.moeran.com](http://www.moeran.com) (accessed April 2004).



entirely of Clarke's works, given at the Wigmore Hall on 21 October 1925, was attended by some of the leading names in English music and received largely favourable reviews in the press.

In addition to her musical talents, Clarke was also a skilled writer on music, writing two articles for *Music and Letters* on 'The History of the Viola in Quartet Writing' (1923) and 'The Beethoven Quartets as a Player Sees Them' (1927).<sup>40</sup> She also wrote the entries on Ernest Bloch and on the viola for Cobbett's comprehensive *Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*<sup>41</sup> and in 1946 was involved in the production of a book on Martinů, *Bohuslav Martinů, the Man and his Music*. Originally by Miloš Šafránek, the Czech text of this book was translated into English by Božena Linhartová, then revised by Clarke. After her retirement from performing, Clarke gave lectures in the US and in 1959 finished an article on Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto for *Music and Letters* that her husband had left incomplete at the time of his death.<sup>42</sup>

It was Clarke's association with the wealthy American patroness Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge which was to have the biggest impact on her career as a composer, not least because the indisputably high quality of the works Clarke wrote for Coolidge between 1919 and 1923 kept her name alive even when the rest of her music had been forgotten. The fact that Clarke wrote over one hundred works comes as a surprise to many who know her only from the Coolidge Competition entries, the Viola Sonata (1919) and Piano Trio (1921). A "hidden" *Rhapsody* Clarke wrote to commission for Coolidge in 1923 – "hidden" in that it has never been published (and

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<sup>40</sup> See Bibliography.

<sup>41</sup> London, Oxford University Press, 1929.

<sup>42</sup> 'The text of Tchaikovsky's B Flat Minor Concerto, unfinished article completed by Mrs J Friskin and Malcolm Frager' *Music and Letters*, Vol. 50 (1969) 246–51. Malcolm Frager (1935–1991) was an American pianist and music scholar.

therefore has been recorded far fewer times) – is an equally important work to consider. The three are examined in later chapters. It is sufficient to add here that, above all, Coolidge gave Clarke a reason and vital encouragement to compose, as well as an international platform on which to exhibit her work.

Clarke spent much time travelling, touring not only England but also Europe and the United States, and from 1922–23 a world tour included visits to China, Japan, India and Hawaii (she had also visited Hawaii in 1918–19). At the outbreak of World War II she was visiting her brothers in the US and was refused a visa to return to England because she was deemed an ‘unproductive mouth to feed’! She lived for a time with her brothers in New York before moving to Connecticut in 1942 to work as a nanny. Two years later Clarke had a chance encounter with the Scottish composer, pianist and teacher James Friskin, a fellow former pupil of Stanford at the Royal College of Music who had been teaching in the US since 1914. They married later that same year, both aged 58. After their marriage Clarke’s compositional output, which had slowed during the 1930s, almost completely dried up, and she only finished three works after 1944 (see Appendix 2). During their twenty-three-year marriage (Friskin died in March 1967) Friskin did not prevent Clarke from composing, indeed he encouraged her to do so, but for various reasons she felt unable to write.

Whether Clarke’s position as a ‘woman composer’ had an effect on the trajectory of her career is an issue that cannot be avoided, though it is a matter of contention among Clarke scholars and enthusiasts. Contemporary reviews of her work show that many critics could not see beyond her being a woman. Their comments are littered with such references, which frequently contain revealing presuppositions:

In reading Miss Rebecca Clarke's 'Chinese Puzzle' and 'Midsummer Moon' (Oxford University Press), our first impression is one of relief and gratitude; for the new "woman composer" is at least free from the cloying sentimentality of the old. She seems quite impervious to the feelings of her predecessors. May nights and moonlight are no longer the source of gushing platitudes. The modern woman looks upon these things with the detachment of a scientist.<sup>43</sup>

Rebecca Clarke...is, as all women composers, largely reflective of the preceding masculine creations. She has, however, real feminine personality in such things as her 'Lullaby' for viola and piano, and a true feminine bent towards the grotesque and intricate in 'Grotesque' and 'Chinese Puzzle'.<sup>44</sup>

To these reviewers there is a clear-cut assumption that a woman composer's music is – or should be – different to that of her male counterparts. The generalities about the 'old' woman composer in the first review, and the need for the reviewer to remind us that Clarke *does* reveal 'real feminine personality' in certain works, as if afraid to be seen as questioning her femininity, demonstrate this.

Often, complimentary remarks are diminished by an unconstructive swipe. The following review is by no means negative, but the critic moderates his praise with a suggestion that Clarke's personality is in some way weak. It is a prime example of damning with faint praise:

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<sup>43</sup> B.V: 'Reviews: Violin and Pianoforte', *The Musical Times*, Vol. 67 (September 1926), 810.

<sup>44</sup> *Western Mail*, Cardiff, cited in Curtis, L. 'A Case of Identity...', *The Musical Times*, Vol. 137 (May 1996), 17.



Monotony is the common charge to bring against one-composer programmes, but we did not find Miss Clarke's monotonous. A stronger personality than hers might suffer more from that defect. Her music varies between flashes of originality and skilful handling of derived ideas.<sup>45</sup>

The assumption that as a woman composer Clarke must be weaker – both physically and mentally – than her male counterparts, along with the feeling that she should not be attempting to write the same kinds of pieces, is not uncommon among reviews:

Three songs by Rebecca Clarke excelled in fancy rather than in grip.<sup>46</sup>

Compositions for piano and viola are rare enough, and this...is entitled to some consideration amongst native works for that combination; but we could not but prefer the lesser 'Lullaby' – a work of real feminine charm – and the well-named 'Grotesque'.<sup>47</sup>

In this final example, the unnamed critic admits to preferring what he terms the 'lesser' work, surely an absurd admission.

One of the most telling of all reviews concerns the first performance by the New Queen's Hall Orchestra after six women had finally been admitted. The concert, on 18 October 1913, included Bach's *Toccatà for Orchestra* (arranged by Wood), the first performance in England of Skryabin's Symphony No.3, *Le Divin Poème*, Dvořák's Cello Concerto in B minor (performed by Pablo Casals), and Rimsky-

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<sup>45</sup> Unnamed reviewer, *The Times* (22 October 1925), 10.

<sup>46</sup> Unnamed reviewer, *The Times* (7 October 1921), 8.

<sup>47</sup> Unnamed reviewer, *The Daily Telegraph*, 22 October 1925, 8.

Korsakov's *Overture, Ivan le Terrible*. On 20 October *The Times* published the following review:

Perhaps some of the tedium of this performance was due to the fact that the conductor and orchestra had set their teeth with the grim determination to achieve a clear exposition of [Skryabin's]...highly intricate score. Certainly such a frame of mind is not the one in which the direction "avec une ivresse débordante" is likely to get the fullest realisation. One can imagine moreover, that, in view of the fact that for the first time the enlarged orchestra contains several ladies among the string players, Sir Henry Wood omitted to translate this and other directions at rehearsal.<sup>48</sup>

"Avec une ivresse débordante" roughly translates as "With a drunken exuberance", so the critic placed some of the responsibility for the lacklustre performance at the feet of the six women musicians (out of an orchestra of 110) because their presence at rehearsals prevented the conductor from behaving in his usual way!

A frequently-cited anecdote concerns Clarke's use of a male pseudonym, 'Anthony Trent', on the programme of a concert given in New York in February 1918. Christopher Johnson, owner of the rights to Clarke's estate, claims that this stemmed from nothing more than a desire not to see her name written on the concert programme three times (two of her other works were also performed).<sup>49</sup> He adds:

Although this was Clarke's only known use of a pseudonym in a career that spanned 70 years and comprised more than 90 compositions, it has excited more comment than almost any other

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<sup>48</sup> Unnamed reviewer, 20 October 1913, 12.

<sup>49</sup> The work for which Clarke used the pseudonym was *Morpheus*, the other two works on the programme were *Lullaby* and *Grotesque*, later published in one volume as *Two Pieces for Viola and Cello* (London, Oxford University Press, 1930).



topic in the literature on Clarke and has been adduced as evidence of a lifelong ambivalence in Clarke's self-image as a composer.<sup>50</sup>

But Johnson ignores three crucial points, which are not simply that Clarke used a male pseudonym, but that she did so because she was *embarrassed* to have her name on the programme so many times (as she admitted in 1976);<sup>51</sup> that contemporary critics singled out the composer 'Anthony Trent' for particular praise, and all but ignored the pieces by 'Rebecca Clarke'; and lastly that Clarke considered this to be the weakest of her three pieces on the programme<sup>52</sup> when analysis suggests that *Morpheus* was her most important achievement to that point (see Chapter 4).<sup>53</sup> These are the aspects which have interested the writers Johnson disparages. Whether or not Clarke's modesty stemmed from the fact that she was a woman is not the point, but to deny that she was self-effacing in public about her talent (she is occasionally more self-confident in her private diaries) is to ignore her own comments. Brief remarks she made to a journalist in 1922 make Clarke's position clear:

Art...has nothing to do with the sex of the artist. I would sooner be regarded as a sixteenth-rate composer than be judged as if there were one kind of musical art for men and another for women.<sup>54</sup>

The majority of Clarke's output is songs, many unpublished, which have been rather eclipsed by the successes of her Viola Sonata and Trio. However, there are also numerous chamber and choral works which have hitherto been largely ignored.

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<sup>50</sup> Johnson, C: Introduction to Oxford University Press edition of *Morpheus* (1917–18, published 2002).

<sup>51</sup> In her interview with Robert Sherman, op. cit.

<sup>52</sup> As Clarke claimed in the 1976 interview with Robert Sherman.

<sup>53</sup> It is perhaps not so surprising, therefore, that critics picked up on Trent's name.

<sup>54</sup> Haddon Squire, W H: 'Rebecca Clarke Sees Rhythm as Next Field of Development', *Christian Science Monitor* (9 December 1922), 18.

Pressure from the Rebecca Clarke Society has led to a slight change in the attitude of the owner of Clarke's manuscripts, who is now beginning to allow unpublished works to appear. From each newly published piece and from unpublished manuscripts we can see that Clarke's skill never faltered. Even her so-called 'juvenile' works (from 1903–08 when Clarke was aged between seventeen and twenty-one) show a remarkable proficiency and a natural gift for music.

Clarke's talent remained unrecognised for many years, and the reasons behind this are numerous and diverse. It is conceivable that prejudice prevented her from achieving more widespread recognition, though evidence indicates that she was well respected and her music largely well-received during her lifetime. Clarke herself noted, however, that after the Coolidge competition of 1919 one critic suggested that 'Rebecca Clarke' was a pseudonym Ernest Bloch used for works he did not consider his best,<sup>55</sup> reflecting the fact that in some circles she would always be considered first as a 'woman composer', regardless of her objections. Despite this, no strongly adverse reaction to Clarke's position as a woman composer is mentioned in any of the contemporary writings about her music; so it would seem that the reasons behind her relative lack of success lie elsewhere.

Clarke restricted the types of work that she wrote to chamber music and songs, which attracted less public attention than large orchestral works. She was also unquestionably in a 'no-win' situation: she had to work in order to live and could not make a living from composition. However, she could not compose unless she could devote all her time to this activity, as she observed in 1976:

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<sup>55</sup> Interview with Robert Sherman, 1976.

I wanted to [compose] but I couldn't. I had lots of sketches of things...But you can't do it – at least I can't – maybe that's where a woman's different – I can't do it unless it's the first thing I think of every morning when I wake up and the last thing I think of every night before I go to sleep – I've got to have it in my mind all the time and if one allows too many other things to take over one is not liable to be able to do it, that's been my experience.<sup>56</sup>

Her chief stumbling-blocks would appear to have been a lack of support from those around her in her early career, and later her intense modesty which in turn led her to eschew all self-promotion.

As a final blow, Clarke was writing at a time when the revolution of the Second Viennese School had already begun to make its mark. This made it difficult for less radical composers to leave a lasting impression on the audiences of their day; indeed there were many English contemporaries of Clarke – such as Bliss, Bax, Rubbra, Bridge, and Ireland – who were also soon marginalized after the arrival of Schoenberg and Stravinsky on the musical scene. These composers are today enjoying something of a revival of interest, undoubtedly helped by the huge growth in the recording industry, and it can only be hoped that the name of Rebecca Clarke will soon be added to the list of esteemed English composers. Before this can happen, though, the true merit of her music must be examined, justified and acknowledged.

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.



## Chapter 2: Clarke's Student Sonata Form Works (1908–09)

Clarke's 'juvenile' works date from 1903–09: from her first year of study at the Royal Academy of Music until the year before she left the Royal College of Music. The majority of these early pieces, as Appendix 2 shows, are songs for voice and piano, and most of these have German texts (see Chapter 5). Many works remain inaccessible in Clarke's estate, unlikely ever to be published. Several, though, have been made available through other sources and therefore can be included in the present survey. This chapter will examine Clarke's two early sonata form works for violin and piano, both of which were recorded and issued on CD for the first time in 2003.<sup>1</sup>

### The Early Violin Sonatas (1908–09)

Clarke's early sonatas for violin and piano, written under Stanford's supervision, consist of a single sonata-form movement in G major (*Molto moderato*) of 1908,<sup>2</sup> and a three-movement work in D major (*Allegro comodo, Andante quasi Adagio, and Scherzando*) of 1909. Stanford had accepted Clarke as a pupil after having seen some of her early songs, but it is not surprising that he then pressed her to write instrumental sonata form works. In his treatise on *Musical Composition* written in 1911, he observes:

To write a good song is one of the most difficult tasks which a composer can set himself...The wisest plan is to keep song writing for an occasional and

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<sup>1</sup> Dutton Records, CDLX 7132, recorded March 2003.

<sup>2</sup> The date of this work is erroneously given as 1907 in various sources. In almost every biographical source consulted it is wrongly stated that Clarke began her studies at the Royal College of Music in 1907, when their records show she began in September 1908.

experimental amusement, and to eschew it as a practice until the power over writing absolute music is assured.<sup>3</sup>

Although songs were to form a large part of Clarke's output, Stanford placed a strong emphasis on meticulous instrumental music. The early sonatas, Clarke's first known attempt at writing instrumental music, are substantial works, which demonstrate considerable technical skill and a firm grasp of the intricacies of sonata form. They are testament both to Clarke's natural talent, and to Stanford's supervisory skills. Like much of Clarke's music, neither has been published and the manuscripts remain locked away within the Clarke estate. Fortunately, photocopies of her meticulous manuscripts for these works and several other unpublished pieces are held at the BBC Library in London, giving performers and researchers the chance to study them.

#### **(i) Sonata Movement in G Major (1908)**

Presumably Clarke chose to write for the violin because it was then her first instrument. Perhaps she wanted to use her sonata to demonstrate her technical prowess as a performer as well as as an exercise in sonata form composition. The G major movement opens, *forte pesante*, with a bold and difficult passage for solo violin. The impassioned character of this opening phrase suggests the beginnings of her later competition pieces, the Viola Sonata (1919) and Trio (1921) (see Chapter 3), and is a voice she used only rarely. The vast majority of her other chamber pieces, published and unpublished, begin *piano*. The bold opening gestures of the Viola Sonata and Trio have been cited as evidence of Clarke employing an unusually forthright voice in her competition pieces (a style that differed from her 'natural' one), with the implication being that she wrote thus because she was a woman

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<sup>3</sup> 1911, reprinted 1949, 34.



entering a male-dominated competition and thought it the best way of progressing through the rounds.<sup>4</sup> It is particularly interesting, therefore, to note that it was a stance she had used much earlier in this 1908 movement, which suggests that Clarke simply found this an effective way to start a large-scale movement, or had been encouraged to begin thus by Stanford. (It is also likely that the *anonymous* nature of the Coolidge competitions gave the modest Clarke the extra confidence she needed to trust her musical instincts.) As in the Viola Sonata and Trio, the early sonata movement's most important motivic material appears in the first phrase; this initial thematic material being the crux of much of the movement. Notably, the later Viola Sonata also begins with a striking solo for the string instrument, although there above a sustained piano chord.

**Ex. 2.1: Sonata movement in G, bars 1–8 (A theme)**

Molto Moderato

*f* pesante

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a 'pesante' marking. The first two bars feature a two-measure phrase with a downbow on the first note and rests on the second. The third bar has a quarter rest. The fourth bar has a quarter rest. The fifth bar has a quarter rest. The sixth bar has a quarter rest. The seventh bar has a quarter rest. The eighth bar has a quarter rest. The score includes various bowing indications such as 'V' for downbow and 'V V' for upbow, and a 'ff' dynamic marking at the end.

Clarke's bowing indications, particularly the use of declamatory downbows on the last three chords of the opening two-bar phrase (see Ex.2.1, bar 2), and the use of multiple-stopping, mean that this opening sounds *marcato e rubato*, with detached quavers. The use of rests in bars 2, 4, and 6 allow the music to breathe, and enhance

<sup>4</sup> 'When approached by Coolidge to write a viola work for her chamber music competition, Clarke felt the need to impress her potential audience and the judges by turning away from her standard style of composition and instead producing an assertive work that would compositionally match up to the other works with which she would be competing. She decided to step into the unusual (for her) and typically masculine genre of the absolute sonata.' Susan Mina, *Rebecca Clarke: An Evaluation of Her Published and Unpublished Viola Works in the Context of Her Life as a Violist and Composer for the Viola*. <http://ftp.acns.nwu.edu/~srmina/rc.html> (October 2001).

its sense of grandeur and scale. There is something rather stately about the descent in bars 5–6, the multiple-stopping holding back the pace. McPherson describes the role of a first subject, indicating that it must be ‘of such a strongly-marked and definite character as to fix itself easily in the memory of the listener’<sup>5</sup> and also should ‘arrest...the attention from the outset’.<sup>6</sup> Clarke evidently had similar instructions and followed them to the letter.

Ex. 2.2 shows a plan of the movement, with different motivic material represented by the letters A, B and C. The A thematic material is, or is based on, the eight bars shown in Ex. 2.1, B those in Ex. 2.3, and C those in Ex. 2.5. The reappearances of the three themes in the exposition and recapitulation are not exact repeats of bars 1–69, but neither are they different enough to justify being labelled A<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>1</sub> and C<sub>1</sub>. Clarke often re-uses similar material, with minor changes, perhaps an altered harmony here or a change in instrumentation there. In some cases repeated material deviates in ways so slight as to make it seem that Clarke was working from memory without reference to the original (as Dvořák often did) and this continued to be the case much later in her career. The characteristics of these various themes will be discussed later; the significant features to note from the diagram below are that Clarke uses a two-theme first subject which appears twice in the exposition (before the second subject), but only once in the recapitulation, and that a second development appears *after* the recapitulation.









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<sup>5</sup> McPherson, 1930, 20. In her memoir (Chapter 7) Clarke mentions having read McPherson’s ‘dictates’, presumably an earlier publication containing the same instructions.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

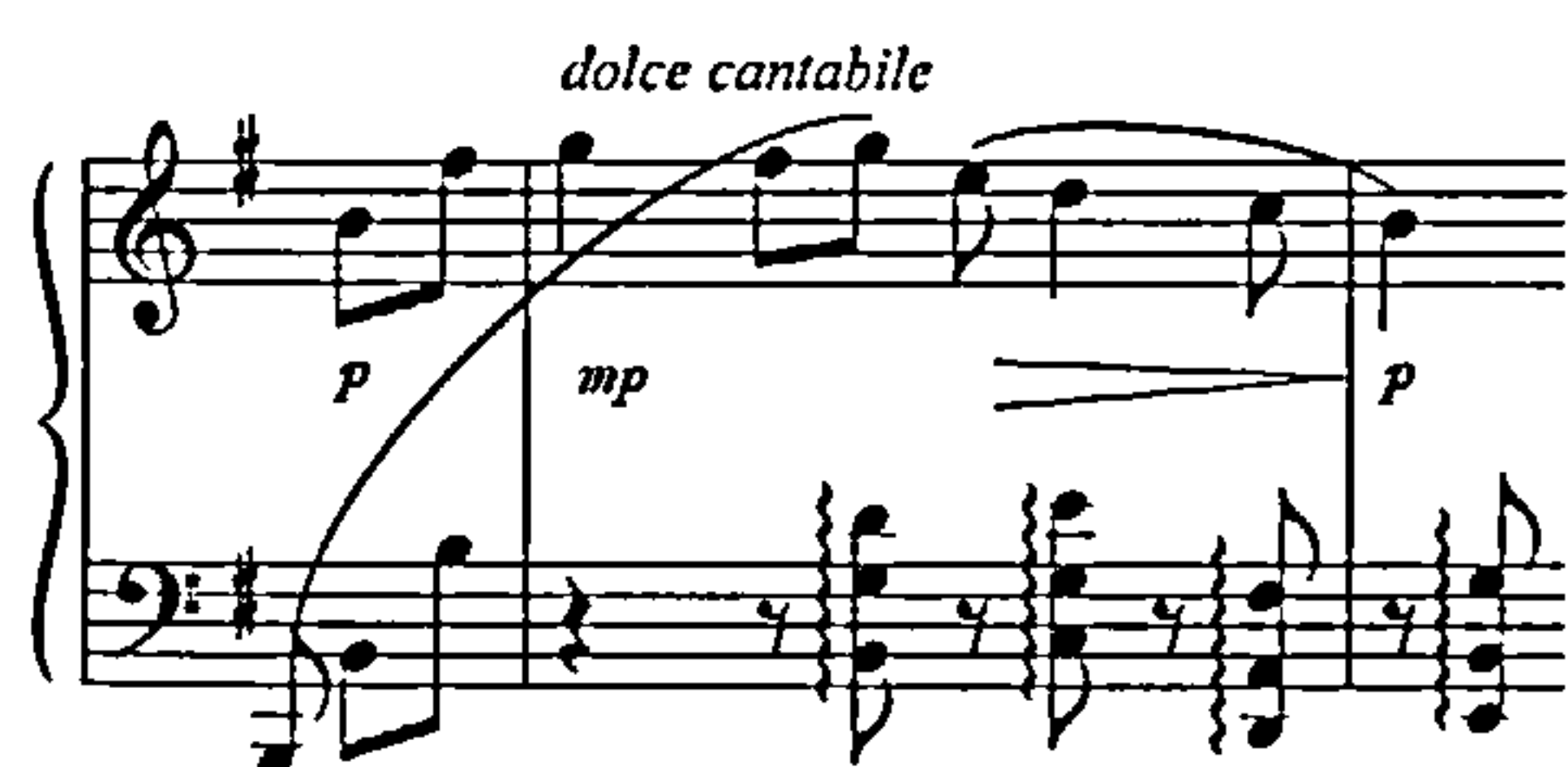


**Ex. 2.2: Sonata movement in G, structure**

| PART OF SONATA                    | BAR NUMBERS    | SECTION              | OPENING MELODY/INSTRUMENTATION   |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------------|--|
| <b>EXPOSITION</b>                 | <b>1-69</b>    | <b>A, B, A, B, C</b> |  |
| First subject                     | 1-8            | A                    |  <p><i>f pesante</i><br/>Violin solo.</p>   |
|                                   | 9-16           | B                    |  <p><i>dolce cantabile</i><br/><i>p mp p</i><br/>Initially piano solo, but violin joins in in bar 12.</p>   |
|                                   | 17-24          | A                    |  <p><i>f pesante</i><br/>Violin and piano duo, now cadences into D minor rather than D major.</p>   |
|                                   | 25-41          | B                    |  <p><i>p dolce</i><br/>Violin and piano duo.</p>  |
| Second Subject                    | 42-69          | C                    |  <p><i>dolce</i><br/><i>mf</i><br/>Initially piano solo, but violin joins in in bar 45, taking over the melody in bar 48.</p>                                   |
| <b>DEVELOPMENT</b>                | <b>70-107</b>  | <b>A, B, C</b>       | True duo: elements of all three themes appear in both instruments.   |
| <b>RECAPITULATION</b>             | <b>108-162</b> | <b>A, B, C</b>       |  |
| First Subject                     | 108-115        | A                    |  <p><i>f pesante</i><br/>Violin solo.</p>   |
|                                   | 116-145        | B                    |  <p><i>espressivo</i><br/><i>p mf p</i><br/>Initially piano solo, but violin joins in in bar 119.</p>   |
| Second Subject                    | 146-162        | C                    |  <p><i>mf</i><br/>Duo, the theme is shared between instruments. In the example above the violin has the melody in bar 146, and the piano takes over in 147.</p> |
| <b>2<sup>ND</sup> DEVELOPMENT</b> | <b>163-191</b> | <b>A, B, C</b>       | As first development above.  |

As this plan shows, Clarke follows her energetic opening with an unexpected change in character: a contrasting B theme, still part of the exposition's first subject, now takes over. This differs from A in a number of ways: it is heard on the piano rather than violin, it is *piano* rather than *forte*, *legato* rather than *marcato*, and *dolce cantabile* rather than *pesante*. Spread chords in the left hand provide a sense of momentum and the whole phrase moves forward apace, unlike the opening bars. Despite these clear differences, though, there are some similarities in design. The descending shape is similar, and there are rhythmic connections in the use of a crotchet + two quavers figure at the start of the bar. The initial notes G–F#–G are also identical after the anacrusis in B. Clarke leaves this contrasting theme based around the tonic key, G major, although her use of chromatic harmonies sometimes makes a key centre difficult to define precisely. Ex. 2.3 shows the beginning of this new section.

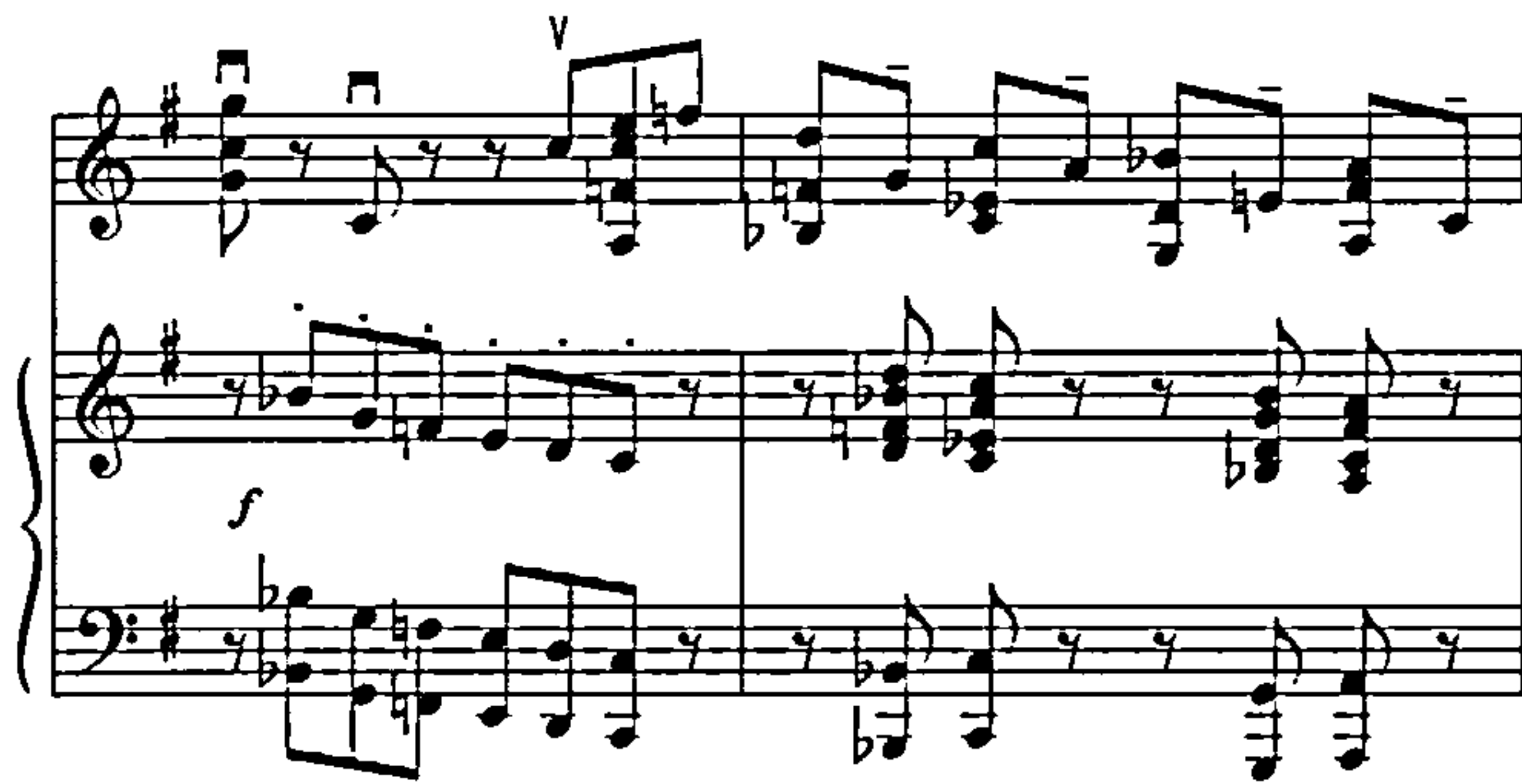
**Ex. 2.3: Sonata movement in G, bars 9–10 (B theme)**



When she repeats these themes in the exposition, Clarke explores their different harmonic possibilities, most notably by changing the A material with chromatic colourings and distorted intervals, a technique she would continue to use later in her career. The first two bars of this theme now cadence clearly into D minor rather than D major as in the initial statement (see Ex. 2.2, and cf. bars 4–5 in Ex. 2.1 with Ex. 2.4), and Clarke continues this distortion throughout the repeat. The piano now punctuates and supports the violin's statement with descending staccato quavers and

thick chords, which add further weight to the *pesante* violin in a simple yet effective way (see Ex. 2.4).

**Ex. 2.4: *Ibid.*, bars 20–21**



The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff is for the violin, and the bottom staff is for the piano. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The violin part starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, and a quarter note E4. The piano part starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, and a quarter note E4. The violin part continues with a quarter note D4, a quarter note C4, and a quarter note B3. The piano part continues with a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, and a quarter note E4. The violin part ends with a quarter note D4, a quarter note C4, and a quarter note B3. The piano part ends with a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, and a quarter note E4. There are dynamic markings 'f' and 'v' in the score.

This example also highlights another feature of Clarke’s writing: how she changes the instrumentation to create contrasting timbres, in addition to exploring the different colouring effects of altered harmonies. Also a feature of her later Viola Sonata and other chamber works, these changing instrumentations, allowing either instrument to act as soloist or accompanist, or both to take an equal role, show that Clarke aimed to create a true duo performance. Her writing for piano in this early sonata and throughout her career is particularly impressive considering that Clarke was not a first study pianist.

Another example of how Clarke changes the instrumentation is shown in Ex. 2.5. This is the beginning of the development section, in which, for the first time, the Sonata’s opening theme appears on the piano. Here the violin plays descending quavers after the piano’s statement, a direct reversal of the instruments’ roles in their second appearance of the exposition.



**Ex. 2.5: *Ibid.*, bars 70–72 (C theme)**

The musical score for Ex. 2.5 consists of three staves. The top staff is a single treble clef line for the vocal part, starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic and ending with a fermata. The bottom two staves are a grand staff for piano accompaniment, with a forte (*f*) dynamic at the beginning and a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking in the middle. The piano part features a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and moving lines in both hands.

The B theme is extended when it is heard for the second time in the exposition, to allow a gradual modulation towards the dominant, which is where we arrive, in traditional sonata form fashion, for the beginning of the second subject (see Ex. 2.6).

**Ex. 2.6: *Ibid.*, bars 42–43**

The musical score for Ex. 2.6 consists of two staves. The top staff is a single treble clef line for the vocal part, marked *dolce a tempo* and *mf*. It features a melodic line with a fermata at the end. The bottom staff is a single bass clef line for the piano accompaniment, featuring a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

This lyrical and Romantic second subject theme is similar stylistically to the B theme from the first subject and the transition from B to C is less marked than that from A to B, though now the modulation to the dominant makes clear that this *is* the second subject.

In the first subject Clarke avoids a strong cadence into the tonic key; the cadences in the first eight bars are into D major (Ex. 2.1 bars 2, 4 and 6) and B major (bar 8). The first cadence in G major comes part way through the B theme, although the end of this theme is a plagal (IV–I) cadence in F major. Nevertheless, there is the feeling that G is an important tonal centre; both A and B themes begin with the tonic-leading-note-tonic (G–F#–G) figure mentioned above. Clarke clearly had a sound understanding of sonata form, but was also very capable of retaining a modern outlook in her work. Notably in her later songs the first appearance of the tonic key is

often delayed as long as she dares, though she never abandons the use of key signatures and tonal centres.


Although this is her earliest chamber work, there are shades of Clarke's later style in this early movement. Above all, the harmonic language she uses in this sonata is already developing into a highly personal one. If we might expect such an early student sonata to be overly diatonic, Clarke surprises us. Although within the I–V–I sonata framework, this movement is full of chromatic colourings which serve to lessen the impact of the larger-scale changes of key. Although using a traditional form, this is a modern interpretation. Later Clarke would expand this idea of 'modernising' traditional devices through the gradual distortion of modal melodies.

## **(ii) Violin Sonata in D Major**

The D major sonata (1909) by contrast begins *piano*. Perhaps she was deliberately aiming to distinguish it from her earlier single-movement work, and by beginning softly with an anacrusis which blurs the start of the bar, her first theme gently floats in rather than arrests our attention. The string writing throughout is less technically demanding than that in the G major movement and surprisingly there are no bowing indications on the manuscript copy. If Clarke had written the earlier sonata with the intention of performing it herself, perhaps now that she had switched to viola as a first instrument her priorities had changed and she no longer aimed to impress with bravura. However, in her later works she tended to use fewer bowing indications in the pieces she wrote for herself to play.

Like her other sonatas and much of her other chamber music and songs, the opening theme of the first movement (Ex. 2.7) provides important thematic material, elements of which reappear throughout the movement.

**Ex. 2.7: Violin Sonata in D major, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, bars 1–5**



The musical score for Ex. 2.7 consists of two systems. The top system is the violin part, written in a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and is marked *legato semplice*. The melody is a simple, flowing line. The bottom system is the piano accompaniment, written in two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of one sharp. It also begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and is marked *sempre p*. The piano part features staggered quavers in both hands, with the right hand playing notes an octave higher than the left hand.

Here, the violin and piano lines are independent, and elements of each appear separately later: the piano has falling and rising thirds an octave apart, whilst the violin plays a *legato semplice* melody. There is not the feeling of the piano ‘supporting’ the violin here, and the construction is a linear, horizontal one. Ex. 2.8 shows Clarke using the thirds from the opening later in the A<sub>1</sub> theme (see Ex. 2.11 for a plan of the movement). Although the left and right hands of the piano part now have staggered quavers, they still play the same notes an octave apart.

**Ex. 2.8: D major Sonata, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, bars 32–34**



The musical score for Ex. 2.8 consists of two systems. The top system is the violin part, written in a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. It begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The melody is a simple, flowing line. The bottom system is the piano accompaniment, written in two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of one sharp. It also begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The piano part features staggered quavers in both hands, with the right hand playing notes an octave higher than the left hand, indicated by an *8va* marking and a dashed line.

Quavers divided between the hands as in Ex. 2.8 are used later in the development section, a passage from which is shown in Ex. 2.9. The melody in the right hand of the piano in Ex. 2.9 is derived from the violin part in bars 2–5 of Ex. 2.7, and shows how Clarke combines ideas, using elements of one motivic cell in the construction of another; a procedure that remained in her later chamber music. At the end of the





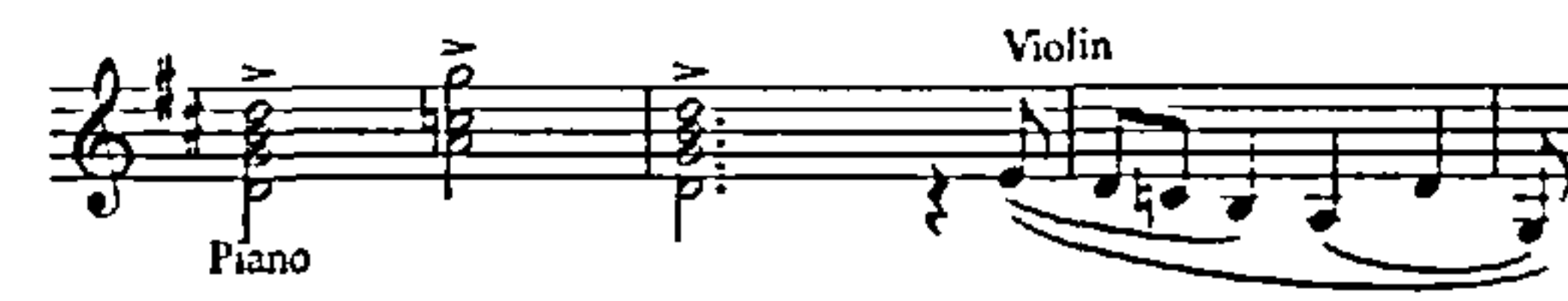


development, unison falling then rising thirds return to signal the imminent recapitulation (Ex. 2.10) which is achieved effortlessly with Mozartian skill.

**Ex. 2.9: *Ibid.*, bars 110–12**

**Ex. 2.10: *Ibid.*, bars 165–168**

**Ex. 2.11: D major Sonata, plan of 1<sup>st</sup> movement**

| SECTION       | BAR NUMBERS | THEMATIC MATERIAL | OPENING MELODY/INSTRUMENTATION  |
|---------------|-------------|-------------------|---|
| EXPOSITION    | 1–92        | A, B, A, C        |   |
| First subject | 1–18        | A                 | <p>Violin accompanied by falling and rising thirds in the piano. Clearly D major.</p>   |
|               | 19–25       | Transition (B)    | <p>New theme in piano, violin has broken chords. The keys of A major (dominant of D) and B minor (relative minor) are touched upon.</p> |
|               | 26–58       | A <sub>1</sub>    | <p>Very similar to A theme, although with a stronger beginning and accented chords.</p>   |

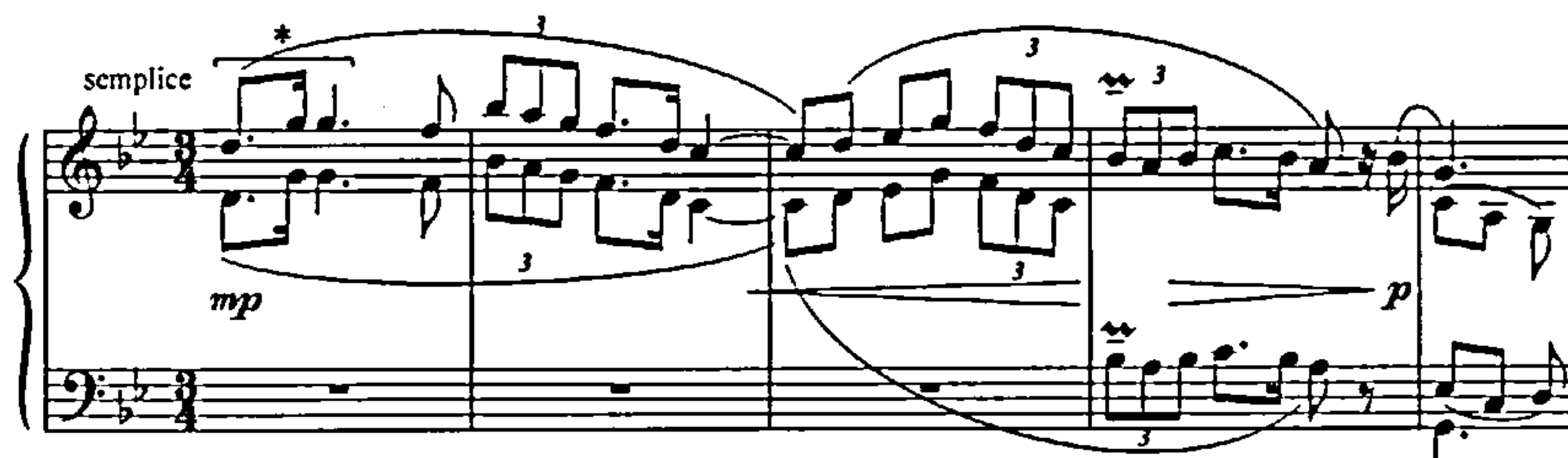
|                       |                |                                 |  |
|-----------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Second subject        | 59–92          | C                               |  <p>Initially piano solo, then violin enters in bar 63, taking over the melody in bar 69. This new theme begins in C major.</p> |
| <b>DEVELOPMENT</b>    | <b>93–167</b>  | A (with slight references to C) | Develops the A material, but the only reference to C is the rising and falling minor third motif (from the first bar) which appears briefly in the piano part.   |
| <b>RECAPITULATION</b> | <b>168–256</b> |                                 |  |
| First subject         | 168–185        | A                               | As in exposition   |
|                       | 186–189        | Transition (B)                  |  <p>As in exposition, this theme appears on the piano, beneath violin broken chords.</p>  |
|                       | 190–216        | A <sub>1</sub>                  |  <p>Now shared between instruments, this theme is now in G major, the subdominant of D major.</p>                             |
| Second subject        | 217–256        | C                               |   |
| <b>CODA</b>           | <b>257–280</b> | A, B                            |   |

As Ex. 2.11 shows, Clarke again breaks her first subject material into two sections, A and A<sub>1</sub>, which are divided by a transition figure (B) containing new motifs. In her earlier G major sonata form movement, the two themes were very different in character, whereas in this later sonata the A and A<sub>1</sub> material are similar in shape, though the latter begins with a much stronger opening, *fortissimo*, on the beat and marked with accents. The following descending phrase, shown in Ex. 2.11 is almost identical to the corresponding part of the A theme, though it now occurs as an aside after the accented minims, on a question-and-answer basis. In the recapitulation this second theme is transposed to the subdominant key of G major, whereas in the exposition both A and A<sub>1</sub> remain in the tonic. The second subject material, shown as C in Ex. 2.11, is suitably different in character to the first subject, though in the

ensuing development section there is very little reference to the new motifs introduced here, and in the short coda which brings the music to a rather unexpected close, it is the A and B motifs which recur once again.

The slow *semplice* second movement of this sonata is completely Romantic in feel. The short motivic cells she employs in the outer movements are replaced here with broad-spanning melodies in the violin supported either by thick-textured chords or triplet arpeggios in the piano. The emphasis in this movement is not on thematic contrast but on the development of a single melodic idea. Ex. 2.12 shows the opening of the movement; the two most important features are the initial motif, marked \*, and the triplet figure in bar 2. Both are used throughout, and examples are shown in Exx. 2.13a–b.

**Ex. 2.12: D major Sonata, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, bars 1–5**



**Ex. 2.13a: *Ibid.*, bars 19–23 (violin part)**



**Ex. 2.13b: *Ibid.*, bars 39–41 (violin part)**



There is an expansiveness in this movement which is not present elsewhere in the sonata, and which is achieved through the monothematic nature of the writing.



Ex. 2.14 shows the first entry of the violin, where a simple but effective extended scale of G minor (also the Aeolian mode, though without ‘folkish’ connotations here) builds up with a long crescendo, finally arriving on a top Bb before swooping down a thirteenth in bar 15 in Romantic fashion. This scale reappears at the end of the movement, only now ending on a B natural, leading to the final chord of G major as a *tierce de Picardie*. This Romantic voice appears rarely in Clarke’s mature output; *Danse Bizarre*, written in the same year, is similar in style, but after this Clarke opted for a more modern musical aesthetic, only returning to this Romantic voice much later in her 1941 *Dumka*. Stanford evidently approved:

My second year at the Royal College was even more rewarding than my first. Stanford told me to try my hand at a violin sonata, and my mind was full of it. One day when I took him the beginning of the slow movement a surprising thing happened. He suddenly disappeared without a word, leaving me sitting alone and rather puzzled in the classroom. Later I heard this was a habit of his: when a student brought a piece of work that interested him he would go off and show it to one of the other professors; in this case it was to Fernandez Arbos, the chief violin teacher. I was told I ought to be very flattered; and I was. It was the only time it ever happened to me.<sup>7</sup>


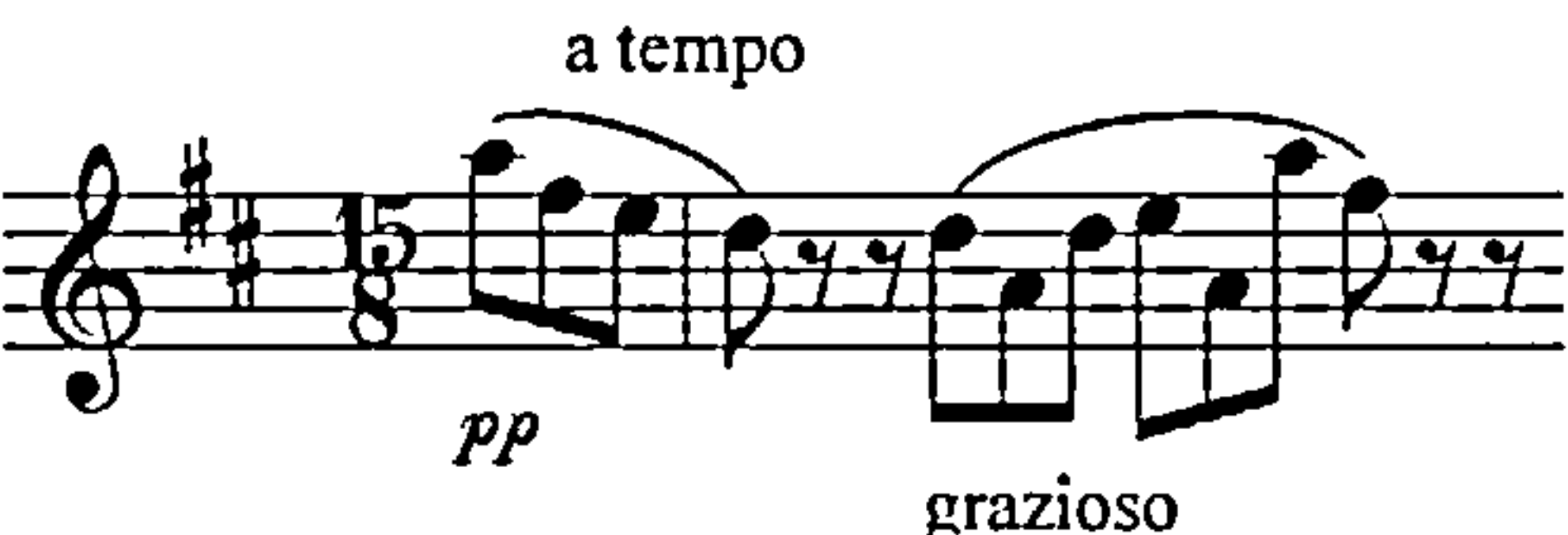


**Ex. 2.14: *Ibid.*, bars 11–16 (violin part)**



<sup>7</sup> Clarke, R: *I Had a Father Too*, unpublished memoir, Chap. 7, 50.

The third and final movement is a *Finale Scherzando* with four main musical motifs which are altered in various ways in typical Clarke style. It is unusual for a Scherzando movement to be the final movement of a sonata: typically the Scherzando would be the middle movement, as in Clarke's later Viola Sonata, or the third movement of a four-movement sonata. There is a constant and very effective interplay between the violin and piano. Ex 2.15 shows the main musical ideas.

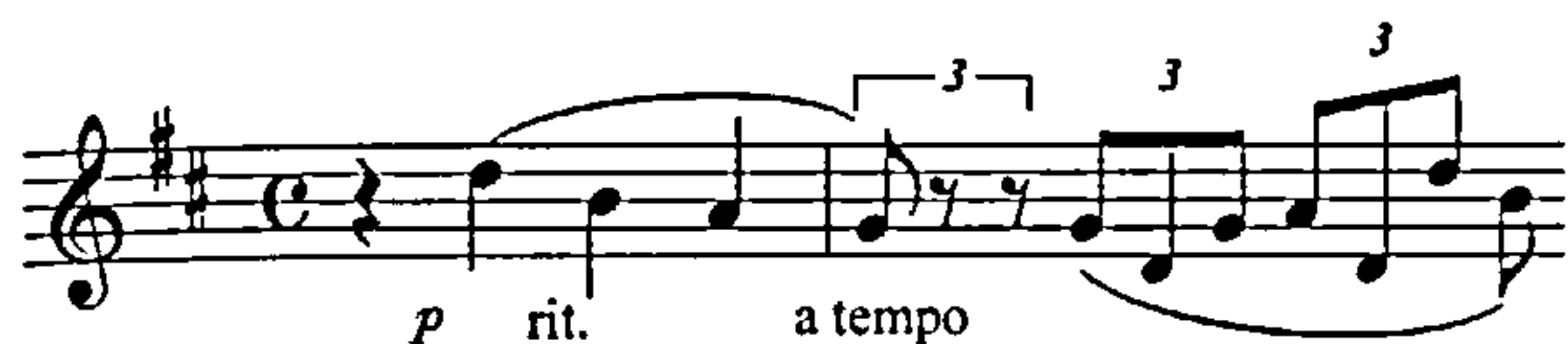
**Ex. 2.15: Violin Sonata in D, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement themes and characteristics**

| MAIN THEMES (WITH BAR NUMBERS)  | CHARACTERISTICS  |
|---|--|
| <p>Bars 1–2 (vn):</p> <p>Allegro</p>  <p><i>f pizzicato</i></p> | <p>Begins on the beat, <i>forte</i>, with accents for extra emphasis. Violin is <i>pizzicato</i> here.</p>   |
| <p>Bars 6–7 (pf):</p> <p>a tempo</p>  <p><i>pp</i> grazioso</p>  | <p>Begins with an anacrusis. Contrasts with the first theme in many ways: <i>pp</i> replaces <i>f</i>, and <i>arco grazioso</i> replaces <i>pizzicato</i>. However, the D–A–D–E, and A–F# figures from the opening of bar 1 are present here in bar 7.</p> |
| <p>Bars 37–38 (pf):</p>  <p><i>ff</i> a tempo</p>               | <p>Repeated, accented, <i>ff</i> chords give a <i>pesante</i> stomping dance feel.</p>   |
| <p>Bars 75–77 (vn):</p> <p>Andante</p>  <p><i>p</i> legato</p>   | <p>The intervals in bar 75–6 (F–D–C–Bb) are derived from bars 6–7.</p>   |

Particularly interesting is Clarke's choice of an unusual 15/8 time signature for much of the movement, with passages of 4/4 appearing about halfway through. As her career progressed Clarke explored even greater rhythmic and metrical flexibility, often changing time signatures numerous times within a single movement. The appearance of a main 15/8 theme later in 4/4 – from quintuple compound time to

quadruple simple time (Ex. 2.16) – is an indication of the kind of techniques she would employ in her later chamber music.

**Ex. 2.16: Violin Sonata in D, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bars 164–65 (violin part)**



The two early sonatas are important for what they tell us about Clarke's developing musical style, but it is as interesting to note what elements of her later style are missing as it is to see what she had already assimilated. The folk influences and inflections found in her later music are not present in these early sonatas (though as Chapter 4 will show she first began to use these in another chamber work from 1909), neither had octatonicism found its way into her harmonic language, as it had done by the time she wrote her Viola Sonata in 1919.

The choice of instrumentation, as mentioned, was a natural one for Clarke. Significantly, string writing dominated her later chamber music too: she even used violin rather than piano to accompany some of her song settings, following the example of Holst. After Clarke had switched from violin to viola in 1909 she was more often drawn to its darker tones and those of the cello, particularly in longer works such as *Morpheus* (1918), the *Viola Sonata* (1919), *Epilogue* (1921), and *Rhapsody* (1922–23). As a regular concert performer Clarke often wrote music for herself to play, and this understandably had a direct bearing on the forces for which she wrote. But when writing for an instrument other than the viola, she more often opted for the cello than the violin in her later career.

The way in which Clarke manipulates her thematic material in these early sonata form works has pre-echoes of her later music too. Although in the G major movement she does not re-use her opening themes in different moods as she does in



her later Viola Sonata, she *does* repeat her opening material with changed harmonies and instrumentation, and the two contrasting parts of the first subject are constructed along similar designs. By the time she wrote the D major Violin Sonata, though, the idea of altering the character of a theme was being put into practice (cf A and A<sub>1</sub> themes). There is a good deal of internal cohesion too in both pieces; something she mastered fully in her songs and in *Epilogue*.

Perhaps the most obvious difference between these early works and Clarke's later chamber music lies in their rhythmic characteristics. A prevalent feature of Clarke's later style is the use of cross-rhythms: twos against threes, and particularly threes against fours. In the early sonatas, however, this is rare; the repeat of the B section in the exposition of the G major movement is one example. As in her later works, performance directions are plentiful and explicit (except for the curious lack of bowing instructions in the later sonata). The short crescendos and diminuendos reminiscent of Debussy and found often in her later pieces are not yet used to the same degree.

Clarke's early sonatas were undoubtedly important achievements, and she must have drawn on her experience when she came to work on her successful Coolidge Competition entries. Above all the sonata form movement in G and the Violin Sonata in D major show that she had a great deal of both talent and craftsmanship at this early stage of her career; they certainly do nothing to tarnish her reputation, and it remains a mystery why the manuscripts remain so closely guarded by the Clarke estate.

## Chapter 3: The Coolidge Works: Viola Sonata (1919),

### Piano Trio (1921) and *Rhapsody* (1923)

#### (i) Viola Sonata (1919)

Winning second prize in the 1919 Coolidge competition in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, with her Viola Sonata is probably the most often-recounted anecdote of Clarke's long career. She first met the wealthy American patroness of the arts, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge (1864–1953), during the New York leg of an American concert tour in 1917 with the cellist May Mukle, and the two had been with Coolidge when she first formed the idea for her biennial festivals of chamber music. The deaths of Coolidge's parents and husband between 1915 and 1916 had left her in control of a substantial fortune;<sup>1</sup> as a lifelong devotee of the arts, she decided to use some of her newfound wealth to support various musical ventures. After forming the Berkshire String Quartet (1916) she decided to mount a yearly festival of chamber music at her summer estate on South Mountain near Pittsfield and even built a small auditorium and accommodation for participating artists on the site.<sup>2</sup> Clarke was present at the first festival of chamber music Coolidge organised in September 1918<sup>3</sup> and attended several more of the festivals in subsequent years, regularly taking part as a performer.

Clarke remained in close contact with Coolidge for a number of years, and their association led to the most fruitful period in Clarke's career as a composer. Coolidge evidently held Clarke's work in great esteem, and the two were also good

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<sup>1</sup> The Coolidge family fortune had been made in the wholesale grocery business in Chicago.

<sup>2</sup> Coolidge's dedication to the arts saw her provide financial support (through commissions) to numerous twentieth-century composers, most notably, amongst English composers, Frank Bridge. Coolidge was awarded the Cobbett medal 'for services to chamber music' by the Worshipful Company of Musicians in 1926.

<sup>3</sup> Mukle took part in this first Festival.



friends. In later life Coolidge looked back fondly on their friendship, writing to Clarke in a particularly touching letter:

It would give me very much pleasure to renew our old association.

The world has grown very sad for people in my generation; for, beside the terrible national conditions, I find that I am almost left alone in my generation and it will be a comfort and pleasure to see you and revive the memories of those rich years when we had...so many...dear friends who have gone on in advance.<sup>4</sup>

The idea to combine a composition competition with the festival was probably inspired by Walter Willson Cobbett<sup>5</sup> (1847–1937), an English businessman and amateur violinist whose strong interest in chamber music led him to institute annual ‘Phantasy Competitions’<sup>6</sup> in England in 1905. Prizes in these competitions were won by Stanford, Bridge, Friskin, Waldo Warner, and Dorothy Howell, among many others. Clarke never entered a Cobbett competition, and it was most likely due to Coolidge’s encouragement that she was persuaded to enter the Pittsfield one in 1919,<sup>7</sup> although Coolidge could hardly have predicted the attention which would surround the verdict. Of the seventy-three anonymous entries, the six judges – Louis Bailly, Georges Longy, Frederick Stock, Rubin Goldmark, Richard Aldrich and George Copeland – were divided equally over who should be awarded the first prize: Clarke for her Viola Sonata, or Ernest Bloch for his Suite for Viola and Piano. As

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<sup>4</sup> Letter to Rebecca Clarke dated 17 October 1941, quoted in Banfield: ‘“Too much of Albion”? Mrs. Coolidge and Her British Connections’, *American Music*, Vol. 4 (1986), 80.

<sup>5</sup> Clarke’s diary of 1925 records taking Coolidge to see Cobbett at his home.

<sup>6</sup> The Phantasy Competitions offered prizes for composition of a Phantasy for a specified instrumental ensemble.

<sup>7</sup> Clarke explained the circumstances under which Coolidge asked her to enter the competition: ‘I was taking a drive with my friends and with Mrs Coolidge, and Mrs Coolidge said ‘Now look, Rebecca, I’m offering a prize for a viola [work], now why don’t you write one?’ and I thought I’d rather like to. I had one or two little snippets of things I’d jotted down that I thought might fit in, so I wrote it.’ (Interview with Robert Sherman, 1976.)



organiser, Coolidge was asked to break the deadlock and though she chose Bloch's work to be the winning entry,<sup>8</sup> the judges were so impressed with both pieces that they demanded to know the identity of the runner-up (normally only the name of the winner would be revealed). They declared Bloch's Suite the work of a philosopher, and Clarke's Sonata that of a poet, and many were very surprised to find that the second placed entry was written by a woman.<sup>9</sup> After this event critics became so fond of comparing the two composers that one even wrote in a London newspaper that 'Rebecca Clarke' was simply a pseudonym for 'Ernest Bloch'!<sup>10</sup>

It is hardly surprising that Clarke's Viola Sonata should have been so well received. It immediately stands out as being the work of a self-confident and assured composer. Considering that no work by Clarke had been published prior to the competition, and that she was most likely known, if at all, as a viola player rather than a composer, the excitement caused by the competition's result – which saw Clarke's picture published in *The New York Times* and in *Vogue* – is unsurprising.

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<sup>8</sup> Some reports have claimed that because Clarke was a friend of Coolidge's, Coolidge most likely felt she had no choice but to name Bloch the winner. The calls of favouritism which would have resulted from a Clarke victory may well have dissuaded other composers from taking part in future competitions, causing problems for the competition before it had become properly established. In her unpublished article *Rebecca Clarke's One Little Whiff of Success*, Cyrilla Barr quotes a letter, dated 27 August 1919, from Frederick Stock, one of the jurists for the 1919 competition, to Coolidge, in which he discusses the outcome: 'What the wise-acres would have said, had a "woman-composer" and one of your personal friends in Pittsfield won the prize, I do not dare to contemplate, but I am sure that suspicions of a "frame-up" between you and the judges would have been endless, and that we might have had a great deal of other trouble besides. All things considered, we were most fortunate in our choice.' This assumes that Coolidge knew the other work was Clarke's; a fact which, though likely, cannot be verified. Although the entries were anonymous, Bloch's style was immediately recognisable and there was little doubt in the minds of the jury that the Suite was his work. One adjudicator even claimed after the competition that many of the jurists thought the other entry (Clarke's) was the work of Ravel. Indeed many were surprised to find that it was not!

<sup>9</sup> A frequently cited comment of Clarke's concerns the judges' surprise on discovering her identity. 'Mrs Coolidge broke the bolts...and she said to me, "and you should have seen their faces when they saw it was by a woman".' (Interview with Robert Sherman, 1976.)

<sup>10</sup> Given that Debussy described Bloch's high-pitched voice as 'that of a eunuch bursting into a harem' in 1916, the comparison may not have been all that ridiculous to the initiated. *Debussy Letters* ed. Lesure and Nichols (Faber, 1987, 318. Letter to Jacques Durand of 4 September 1916.)

She later referred to this episode as ‘that one little whiff of success that I’ve had in my life’.<sup>11</sup>

Under the title of this work, Clarke offers two lines from an Alfred de Musset (1810–57) poem, ‘La Nuit de Mai’, as a sub-heading:

Poète, prends ton luth; le vin de la jeunesse  
Fermente cette nuit dans les veines de Dieu.

(Poet, take up your lute; the wine of youth  
is fermenting tonight in the veins of God).

This gives some indication of the exigent intensity of the music which is to follow; however, the urgent alarm of the opening motif seems to reflect even more accurately the *carpe diem* outcry from a later line of the poem:

Console-moi ce soir, je me meurs d’espérance;  
J’ai besoin de prier pour vivre jusqu’au jour.

(Comfort me tonight, I am dying of hope;  
I must pray that I may live until daybreak)

Musset describes a poet and his muse as they discuss inspiration; the muse rails at the poet to give voice to his creative talents with much the same commanding force as Clarke uses to seize the attention of the listener at the beginning of her sonata. The use of this particular poem seems sadly ironic too, in light of the fact that Clarke herself was frequently unable to give free reign to her creative talents.

The Sonata is in three movements (*Impetuoso, Vivace, Adagio*), the first of which adheres, for the most part, to the typical formal structure of a sonata. However, Clarke also uses a twelve-bar introduction before the first subject is reached, and ends the movement with a short coda. The introduction provides the

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with Robert Sherman, 1976.



inspiration for much of the first movement, and reappears in the third. Shown in Ex.3.1, it begins in the viola with a repeated perfect fifth ‘bugle call’ figure, underpinned by a crashing *fortissimo* E  $\frac{5}{4}$  chord in the piano. This is followed by a five-note motif (marked ‘x’ in Ex. 3.1) which dissolves into a Dorian viola melody, freer in tempo and with an improvisatory quality that brings an air of calm after the driving rhythm of the frenetic opening outburst. The moment of introspection, however, does not last long and the viola snaps back into action with a repeated driving figure which winds itself in an *accelerando* back to a restatement of the opening motif.

**Ex. 3.1: Viola Sonata, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, bars 1–3**

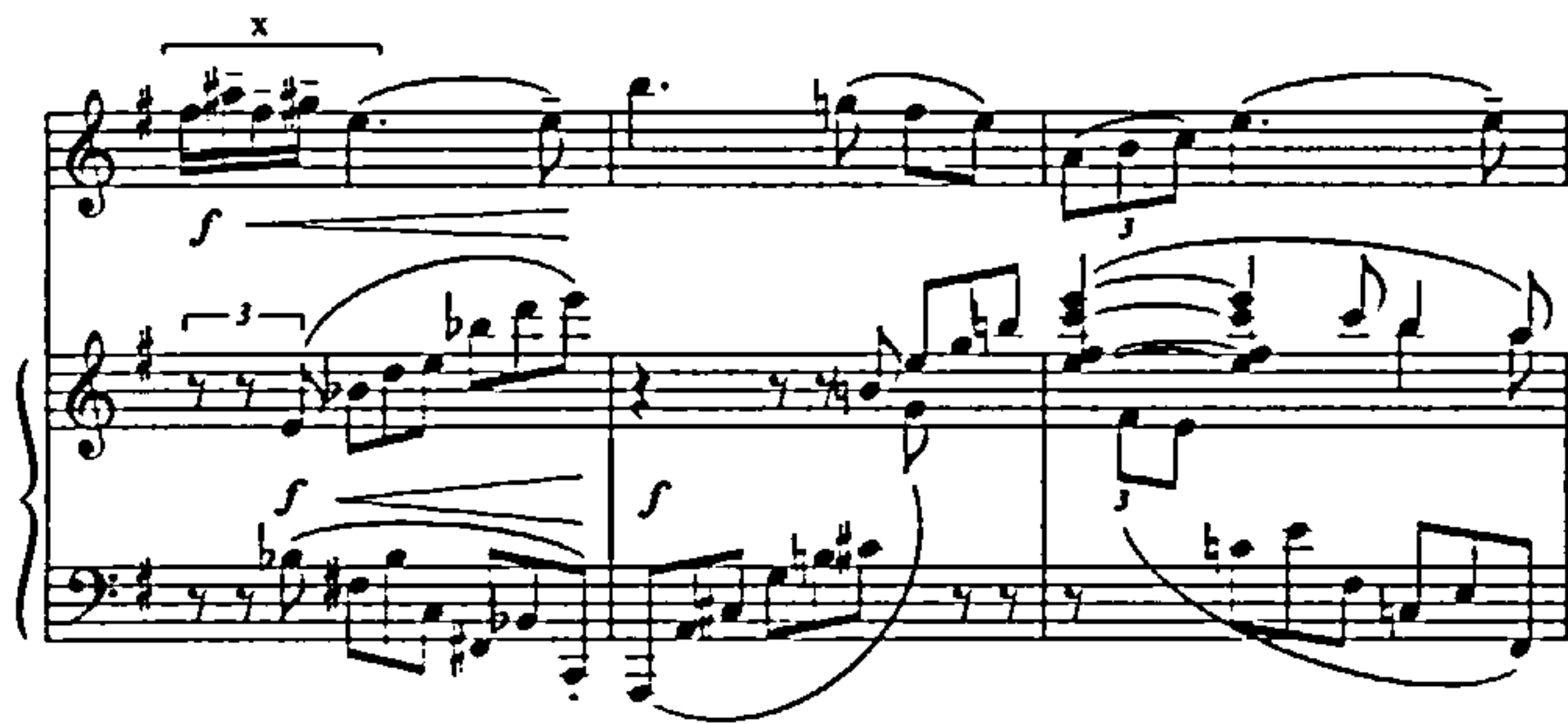
The first subject proper, *Poco agitato*, which follows the introduction, begins with the same intensity. Tension builds through the use of short *crescendos* that suddenly drop back to *piano* (see Ex. 3.2), a technique suggesting the influence of Debussy in Clarke’s music. Even when a longer, two-bar, *crescendo* leads back to a *forte* restatement of the beginning of the first subject (bar 18) there is a slight break before the first note of the restatement which takes the listener by surprise.



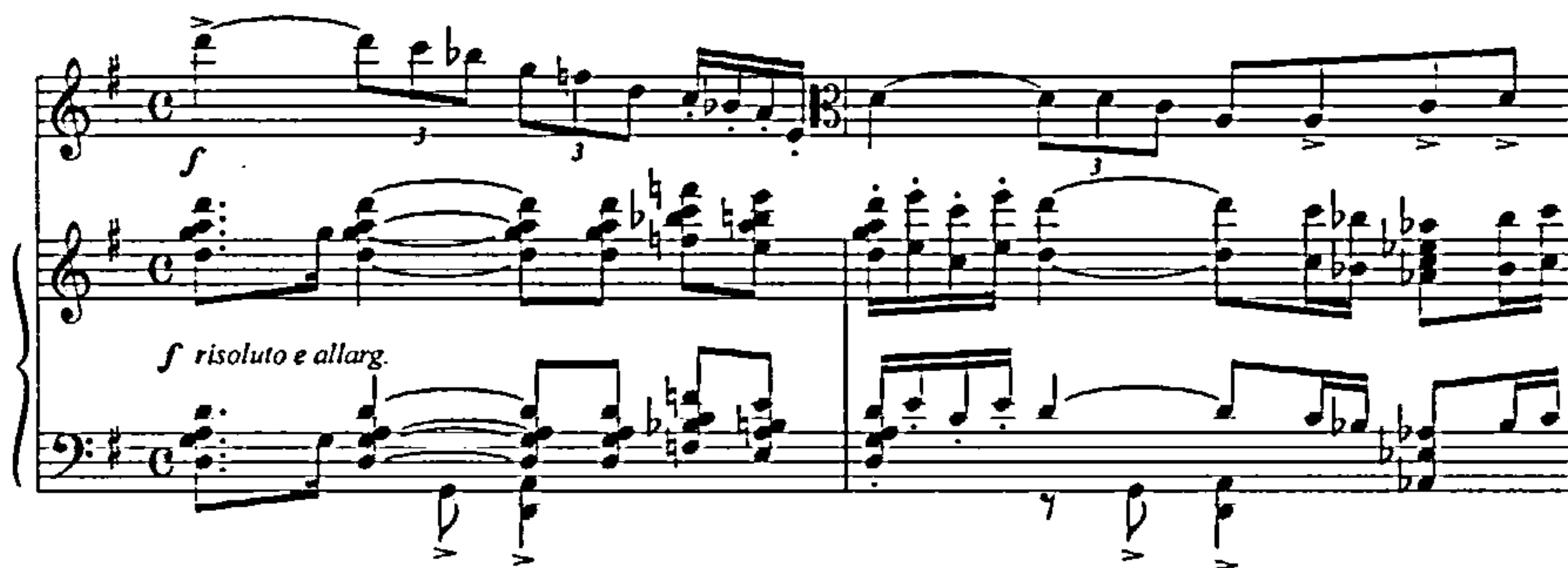
Ex. 3.2: *Ibid.*, bars 13–18

Rhythmic motifs from the viola in Ex. 3.1 are present here (cf Ex. 3.1 bar 1 with Ex. 3.2 bars 14–17, and Ex. 3.1 bar 2 with Ex. 3.3 bar 22). The five-note motif in Ex. 3.3 bar 22 (marked ‘x’) is used with increasing regularity from this point until a climax in bar 31 (Ex. 3.4) in which the piano repeats the viola’s introductory theme whilst the viola crashes through in a deliberate *forte* descent. The chord of  $D \frac{5}{4}$  without a third (bar 31) here reminds us of the opening chord (Ex. 3.1). Motifs from the introduction therefore form a crucial part of the exposition. Starting with simple rhythmic references, elements of the twelve-bar opening gradually begin to appear in the first subject until its full importance becomes clear as the opening outcry returns in the piano at the climactic *risoluto* (Ex. 3.4).

Ex. 3.3: *Ibid.*, bars 22–24



Ex. 3.4: *Ibid.*, bars 31–32



The entry of the second subject (Ex. 3.5) heralds a change in character from the attention-grabbing force of the first. Now a more reflective mood takes over, marked by a descending chromatic figure in the left hand of the piano, reminiscent of the opening of Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*,<sup>12</sup> (1892–94) (it is here marked *langoroso*: similar to the reappearance of the opening melody in the *Prélude* where it is marked *Dans le premier mouvement avec plus de langueur*). Notably, the descending shape and rhythm of this theme are suggestive of the opening of the first subject (cf bars 39–40 in Ex. 3.5 and bars 23–24 in Ex. 3.3), and by creating some connections in this way Clarke brings a sense of cohesion to the different sections of this movement.

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<sup>12</sup> In a radio interview in 1958 Clarke recounted how chamber musicians reacted when Vaughan Williams returned from France after taking lessons with Ravel: 'There was a good-natured joke, though, that went the round among London musicians, about whichever it was he wrote first when he came back from Paris: -- they called it 'L'Après-midi d'un VAUGHAN'! (From Clarke's prompt-script, reprinted on the back cover of the Oxford University Press edition of Clarke's *Songs with Piano*, 2002.)

Ex. 3.5: *Ibid.*, bars 39–42

In typical sonata form fashion, the themes from the introduction and exposition are further combined in the ensuing development section. Perhaps the most important of these themes is the opening perfect fifth figure, which now appears as a *misterioso* echo, through an Ab major 7<sup>th</sup> chord in the piano accompaniment to an improvisation-like melody in the viola (see Ex. 3.6). The widely spaced series of seventh chords with parallel octaves and fifths in bars 77–78 recall Debussy in style, but the melodic shape here originates from bars 1–2 of the introduction (Ex. 3.1). In the introduction, the arresting opening cry was followed by a rhapsodic melody in the viola; here the transmuted ‘bugle call’ is heard in the piano underneath a freer viola melody. In this way elements of the introduction are now forged together.

Ex. 3.6: *Ibid.*, bars 75–78

The recapitulation begins with the return of the first subject: the introduction, which began the movement, is not heard again here as it has been extensively metamorphosed already. The first subject is repeated exactly as it appeared in the



exposition, but the two-bar linking passage which eased the transition from the *fortissimo* climax of the first subject to the second is not necessary in the recapitulation, as the second subject is now also *forte*.

Although the modal writing and extensive use of chromaticism in this sonata make key centres often difficult to establish, it is clear that Clarke wanted to retain some links to the key structure of traditional models. In the exposition the first subject begins ambiguously with an E-flat in the viola against a chord of Fm7 in the piano, and the second subject does not shift to the dominant key, as would be expected, but retains the first subject's key signature of one sharp and places a strong emphasis on chromatic movement. Significantly, though, the second subject in the recapitulation begins with a firm E major chord and arpeggio in the piano, (with a key signature change to four sharps) and the movement remains in E major to the end. This reasserts the importance of E as a tonal centre in this sonata (the most important thematic material, the introduction, is formed from an E–E Dorian scale and the final movement of the sonata ends triumphantly in E major). Despite being changed in character, most of the second subject theme reappears in the recapitulation, though before it reaches a conclusion it slows into a *calmato espressivo* coda. In this, the opening repeated figure reappears *pianissimo* in the piano, at first in its usual perfect fifth form, but then changed to a perfect fourth (A–D) for its final appearance before the music draws softly and serenely to a close.

The second movement of Clarke's Sonata is, at first glance, a light-hearted scherzo in which interplay between the viola and piano plays a large part. It is in a loose ternary form in that there are three main sections, though the repeat of the A section material is far from exact, and a short twelve-bar reminder of the B section appears in the A section repeat just before the final flourish. In the previous

movement the second subject began with a piano solo, and here the action begins with an A–A Aeolian staccato melody in the piano which the viola accompanies with on-the-beat *pizzicato* quavers (Ex. 3.7). The jocular spirit, however, remains rooted in the outer sections while the middle has a much darker atmosphere, underlined by the importance awarded to the tritone. Rippling legato semiquavers in the right and left hands of the piano line in the B section are a Stravinskian tritone apart (see Ex. 3.8). In fact, this entire middle section is written using octatonic pitch collections, and it is these which give this music its strange, ‘otherworldly’ quality: the passage shown in Ex. 3.8 uses the octatonic pitch collection III shown in Ex. 3.9.

**Ex. 3.7: Viola Sonata 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, bars 1–4**

**Ex. 3.8: *Ibid.*, bars 59–62**

### Ex. 3.9: Octatonic pitch collections<sup>13</sup>



The differences in mood between the middle and outer sections of this movement are significant because they indicate the importance of contrast throughout this scherzo. When the A theme returns after the middle section, it is at first *fortissimo* and accented (Ex. 3.10): in total contrast from its initial *piano*, *staccato* and *leggiero* appearance (Ex. 3.7). Even within the sections there are many other abrupt textural contrasts, as demonstrated in the passage shown in Ex. 3.11: *legato* followed by *staccato* (bar 10); high register against low (bars 10–11); *fortissimo* followed by *pianissimo*; and ethereal harmonics against richer, more resonant sounds (bars 14–17 and bar 11). Clarke's skill in constructing a large-scale movement, though, ensures that these changes hold together: enough is retained in the *pianissimo* section of Ex. 3.10 from the *fortissimo* to provide coherence.

### Ex. 3.10 Viola Sonata 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, bars 103–108

<sup>13</sup> These are eight-note scales (originally termed the 'Rimsky-Korsakov scale') with alternating tone-semitone intervals. Enharmonic equivalents of the eight notes are admissible, so that, for example, a Bb could also appear as an A#. See Van Den Toorn, P: *The Music of Igor Stravinsky*, 1983, 51.



Ex. 3.11: *Ibid.*, bars 9–17

The musical score for Ex. 3.11, bars 9–17, is presented in two systems. The first system features a single staff with an *Arco* marking and a dynamic of *ff*. Below it is a grand staff with piano accompaniment, including a *gliss on black notes* instruction and dynamics of *ff* and *pp*. The second system continues the piano accompaniment with dynamics of *pp* and *p*.

Despite these contrasts, a unifying feature links the A and B sections together: repeated notes at the beginning of a phrase from the middle section (Ex. 3.12) are cleverly derived from the opening staccato figure (Ex. 3.7). Despite using similar musical material, Clarke creates disparate sound worlds for the different sections of this movement. A brief moment of retrospection (mentioned above) takes us back to the music of the B section but the opening theme swiftly returns, now in its original *pianissimo, leggiero* form to lead us to the end of the movement.

Ex. 3.12: *Ibid.*, bars 63–66

The musical score for Ex. 3.12, bars 63–66, is presented in two systems. The first system is a single staff with a melodic line. The second system is a grand staff with piano accompaniment.

The repeated use of a distinctive rhythmic motif in this movement is a technique also used in the first. Here it is a four semiquavers - quaver figure from the second bar (Ex. 3.7) which appears frequently in the outer sections. Though changed melodically it retains its previous arc shape. Exx. 3.11 and 3.13 show some of the instances in which this motif later appears.

**Ex. 3.13: *Ibid.*, bars 138–41**

Another technique used throughout this sonata is to take a short repeated phrase to lead into a new section. In the first movement, as discussed above, this took place at the end of the introduction to lead into the first appearance of the first subject; in this second movement, a similar device leads the B section into the repeat of A section material (see Ex. 3.14).

**Ex. 3.14: *Ibid.*, bars 99–103**

This example also demonstrates another common feature of Clarke's writing in this sonata: the use of groupings of three notes against four. Other brief instances of this,

and of groupings of twos against threes, appear in Exx. 3.2, 3.3 (bars 22–23), 3.4 and 3.17 (bars 11–12). This is common in her other chamber music too (see Chapter 4).

Calum MacDonald suggests that the model for this movement is clearly the second movement, ‘Pantoum’, from Ravel’s *Piano Trio* of 1914 (published 1915);<sup>14</sup> and a comparison of the opening of each movement shows this to be possible. Both begin with *staccato* quavers in the piano and *pizzicato* chords in the strings; both are fast scherzos; both begin *piano*, and use repeated notes in the opening piano melody. Ravel, like Clarke, uses contrasts of sound with *legato/staccato*, *pizzicato/arco*, and *fortelpiano* within the movement as a whole. He also uses harmonics in the strings to provide an occasional change in sound quality. Ex. 3.15 shows the opening of Ravel’s *Piano Trio*, which can be compared with Ex. 3.7.

**Ex. 3.15: Ravel Piano Trio, ‘Pantoum’, bars 1–4**

In the third movement (*Adagio*) of Clarke’s sonata motifs from the first movement are reintroduced; in this way the outer movements of the sonata are linked together giving the work a feeling of unity through a cyclic approach. It begins, though, with a previously unheard introductory theme of an expanding Aeolian melody on the piano (Ex. 3.16). Clarke’s concept of a sonata is evidently a duo in

<sup>14</sup> MacDonald, C: ‘Rebecca Clarke’s Chamber Music’, *Tempo* Vol. 160 (1987), 19.



which the 'solo' instrument and piano are of equal importance; new ideas are introduced by either instrument and motifs which first appear in one instrument re-emerge later in the other. This equality is evident in much of her chamber music. Immediately after Ex. 3.16, the viola takes over with what is essentially the same melodic idea, but with slight tonal alterations. Clarke uses octatonic pitch collections to distort the modal theme, as shown in Ex. 3.17 (see Ex. 3.9).

**Ex. 3.16: Viola Sonata, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bars 1–8**

*Adagio*  
*p semplice*

*rubato*

*pp*

**Ex. 3.17: *Ibid.*, bars 9–12**

*p molto espr.*

*p*

The use of octatonicism to modify the original melody creates a sense of unease before a *calmato* section, in which the Aeolian melody from the beginning returns, but is now heard over a sustained pedal chord of Bb major 7  $\flat$  in the piano. This opening theme – or parts of it – appears throughout the movement, and is frequently altered both in tonality and character. It disappears after the first twenty-eight bars,

for example, only to reappear completely changed in style a short while later (Ex. 3.18).

**Ex. 3.18: *Ibid.*, bars 64–65**

When part of the theme reappears, as in the example above, it often serves to link other passages together (also cf. Ex. 3.14). The phrase shown in Ex. 3.18 occurs as a brief interjection before the crashing descent in the viola from the climax of the first subject of the first movement returns to forewarn us of the more sustained recapitulation which is to come (cf. Exx. 3.19 and 3.4).

**Ex. 3.19: *Ibid.*, bars 68–70**

This fleeting glimpse back to the first movement, though, is followed by another statement of the third movement's opening theme, now returned to its *calmato* form. Significantly, when the extended recapitulation of the first movement's introduction,

mentioned above, actually occurs shortly afterwards (Ex. 3.20), it is prefaced by yet another rendition of the third movement's opening theme, this time a single line melody, *ppp lontano*, in the right hand of the piano above a ponticello tremolo harmonic in the viola. Thus, the motifs from different movements effortlessly lead into one another without there being the slightest feeling that the earlier material has been forced in.

**Ex. 3.20: *Ibid.*, bars 100–107**

The musical score for Ex. 3.20, bars 100–107, is presented in three systems. The first system shows a single line melody in the right hand of the piano above a ponticello tremolo harmonic in the viola. The second system is marked 'ordinaire' and 'Allegro', with dynamics 'mf' and 'cresc.'. The third system is marked 'Risoluto' and 'f', with dynamics 'con 8ve' and '12'.

The connections to the first movement, though, are not limited to this repeat of the introduction. From this point onward themes from the first subject and introduction that were used extensively in the first movement rapidly re-emerge. Most important of these are the perfect fifth bugle-call figure – at first in its original form, then in the final *Più mosso* without the anacrusis (Ex. 3.21) – and the five-note figure first shown in Ex. 3.1. The themes are brought together to end the movement



with triumphant fortissimo unison E naturals (by implication ending in the major key), in contrast to the end of the first movement.

**Ex. 3.21: *Ibid.*, bars 220–23**

The image displays a musical score for two systems, each containing a violin part (top staff) and a piano accompaniment (bottom two staves). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is 3/4. The first system is marked *mf* and *Più mosso*. The violin part features a melodic line with a fermata over the first measure. The piano accompaniment consists of a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system continues the melodic and accompanimental material, with a fermata over the final measure of the violin part.

Clarke's Viola Sonata demonstrates an eclecticism which reveals the many influences which shaped her mature compositional style. The extensive use of chromaticism and the inclusion of octatonic pitch collections, in addition to the regular appearance of chords of the seventh, ninth, eleventh and thirteenth in the Viola Sonata, suggest that the work of her twentieth-century contemporaries Stravinsky, Debussy and Ravel had made a lasting impression. Chromatic and octatonic passages, though, are freely combined with modal phrases – mostly Mixolydian, Dorian and Aeolian – which suggests that Clarke also found inspiration in the English folk traditions that were so important to the work of Vaughan Williams (although Debussy and Ravel also made use of such modal writing, especially the Dorian mode). But Clarke was not affected by the simplicity of folk models in the way that Butterworth had been in his Housman songs. The skill with

which she integrates these different tonal systems and manipulates musical material in a sonata full of complex thematic relations shows that Clarke was a composer worthy of respect, and make it all the more curious that her music fell into obscurity.

Before examining Clarke's other Coolidge works in more detail it is worth noting some similarities between the careers of Clarke and her near contemporary Frank Bridge (1879–1941). Both studied under Stanford at the Royal College of Music<sup>15</sup> and won financial awards for composition there (Clarke a Council Exhibition, Bridge a scholarship). After leaving the college both made their living primarily as viola players and both later enjoyed the support of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. But it is their approaches to composition that offer the most remarkable similarities and make it valuable to pause before continuing with our analyses.

Bridge's music is rarely discussed without reference to his supreme craftsmanship, in particular the way in which he places a strong emphasis on motivic connections and in transforming thematic material; these techniques appear to have emerged – or at least developed – as a result of the early works he wrote as entries for Cobbett's Phantasy Competitions. Although Cobbett's own stipulations for these entries were simply that they should be of moderate length and that a continuity of flow should run through the varying moods,<sup>16</sup> J A Fuller-Maitland's words about the form give a more detailed insight into what the 'Phantasy' actually was, although few of the Cobbett entries followed these guidelines to the letter:

A piece for concerted instruments in a continuous movement (with occasional changes of tempo and measure), occupying a shorter time than the usual classical works, and free from the structural laws of the

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<sup>15</sup> Bridge initially went to study violin at the RCM in 1896, but won a scholarship to study composition with Stanford from 1899 to 1903.

<sup>16</sup> Cobbett did not state explicitly (unlike Fuller-Maitland) that this required connections in thematic material.

“classical” form. In place of these it is...recommended that the development section of the sonata form is to be replaced by a movement in slow tempo, which may include also a Scherzando movement. In any case a logical connexion with the thematic material of the first part is maintained. A return to the characteristics of the first part of the movement is made, but not necessarily a definite repetition; and a developed coda is added as finale. Thus the fundamental outlines are retained, but there is not a hard and fast line.<sup>17</sup>

From this it is clear that the Phantasy form was suited to Clarke’s natural style of composition, and although she never entered a Cobbett Competition it is not implausible to suggest that she *was* influenced by this archaic form – derived from the 16<sup>th</sup>-century English Fancy – indirectly; that is, through the music of Frank Bridge. His early enthusiasm for the Phantasy rippled throughout his career and his penchant for cyclic treatment as a way of unifying even a multi-movement work also dates from his first experiments with the form.<sup>18</sup>

The technical devices of motivic connection and thematic metamorphosis were evident in Clarke’s early chamber works but really came to the fore in the Viola Sonata in which she now added to the list of common techniques a cyclic treatment of her material across the different movements. Like Bridge, these methods of composition in which everything is ordered in a logical way remained with Clarke throughout her career. The principle of ‘logical connexion [sic]’ in contrasting thematic material is particularly evident in the Viola Sonata, *Morpheus* and *Epilogue* (see Chapter 4).

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<sup>17</sup> Originally in an appendix to the second edition of *The Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, quoted in *Cobbett’s Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*, 1929, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1963, Vol. I, 285–86.

<sup>18</sup> These were his Phantasy String Quartet, 1901, Phantasy Piano Trio 1907 (which won first prize) and Phantasy Piano Quartet, 1910.



## (ii) Piano Trio (1921)

Rebecca Clarke's Piano Trio (1921) was written as an entry for the chamber music competition in Pittsfield, Massachusetts organised by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. Again she received second prize, the Trio being beaten by the work of another English violist-composer, and founder member of the London String Quartet, Harry Waldo Warner (1874–1945). The Trio's first public performance<sup>19</sup> was given on 3 November 1922 at the Wigmore Hall by Myra Hess (piano), Marion Hayward (violin) and May Mukle (cello), and a committee consisting of Arnold Bax, Frank Bridge and Eugene Goossens recommended it to the organisers of the Salzburg ISCM Festival of 1924, though it was not actually performed there. Surprisingly, Winthrop Rogers did not publish the Sonata until 1928. Rogers had been the first to publish any of Clarke's music when, in 1920, he published her *Two Songs* ('Shy One' and 'The Cloths of Heaven') which she had completed in 1912. Rogers' wife, Mary, was a friend of Coolidge's,<sup>20</sup> so it is perhaps not surprising that this first publication appeared when it did: 1920 was the year after Clarke's success at the Pittsfield Festival.

The works for the Coolidge Festivals are the most expansive of Clarke's career. After 1923 her output consisted mainly of songs and single-movement chamber works with descriptive titles. Although to date most analytical work on Clarke's music has concentrated on the Viola Sonata and Trio, the quality of these other pieces should not be underestimated. Her songs and chamber works are remarkable for their internal cohesion, supreme craftsmanship and integrity; the repetition and transformation of motifs forms the basis of her compositional method,

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<sup>19</sup> Its private premiere was given in New York by the Elschuco Trio on 12 February 1922. There is no evidence to suggest that the Trio was performed during the 1921 Pittsfield Festival, despite its having come second in the competition.

<sup>20</sup> See Banfield, S: 'Too Much of Albion? Mrs Coolidge and her British Connections', *American Music*, iv, (1986), 15–26.

whether within the confines of a twenty-bar song, or the expanses of a three-movement sonata. Cyclic techniques are even more apparent in the Trio than in the earlier Viola Sonata and an extension of this is that there are also instances in which motifs from one work reappear in another, as happens in *Morpheus* (1917–18) and the Viola Sonata (1919), the Trio (1921) and *Rhapsody* (1923), and in several of the songs (see Chapters 4 and 5). The similarities between the Viola Sonata and Trio are marked, though the later work is even more complex harmonically and rhythmically than the Sonata, and shows how Clarke's musical thinking had changed in the intervening two years.

The three movements of the Trio are *Moderato ma appassionato*, *Andante molto semplice* and *Allegro vigoroso*. The first opens dramatically with *fortissimo* tritone chords in the strings beneath a piano figure which highlights the intervals of a minor seventh and begins with a series of six repeated dyads (Ex. 3.22). Again, this arresting idea is organic in the construction of many subsequent themes both in this movement and in the work as a whole.

**Ex. 3.22: Trio, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, bars 1–2**

Moderato ma appassionato

ff

8va

ff

ff

con 8

There are striking similarities here with the first movement of the Viola Sonata, which begins in a similarly assertive way (see Ex. 3.1), and also with the early sonata form movement in G major for violin and piano. In fact, both the Trio and Viola Sonata's first movements use a modified sonata form in which a short introduction precedes the exposition, and after the recapitulation a coda rounds off each work to perfection. Both open with an impassioned *fortissimo* outcry which momentarily calms to *piano* before being whisked in a *crescendo* back to the opening mood. The main point of difference between the two introductions is that the Trio immediately launches into crashing discords, whereas the Viola Sonata begins with a modal cadenza for the soloist. Clarke does not abandon modality in her Trio but turns to it later than in her Sonata. Perhaps by beginning in such an overtly 'modern' way she was aiming to prove that she was aware of current trends and knew something of Bartók and Stravinsky.






The first subject material of the Trio is so similar to that of the introduction, that the precise starting point of the exposition only becomes clear with the return of the first subject in the recapitulation. In these sonata form movements Clarke rejected the technique of the contrasting two-part first subject, as used in her early student violin sonatas.<sup>21</sup> Ex. 3.23 shows a plan of the first movement.

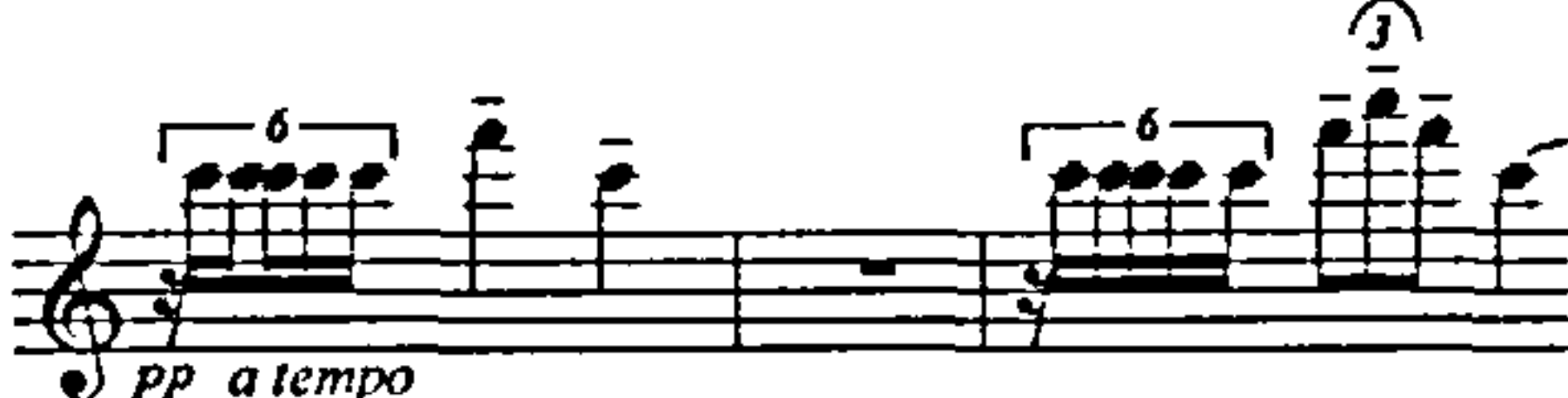
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<sup>21</sup> These are a single sonata form movement in G major (1907–8) and a three-movement sonata in D major (1909).



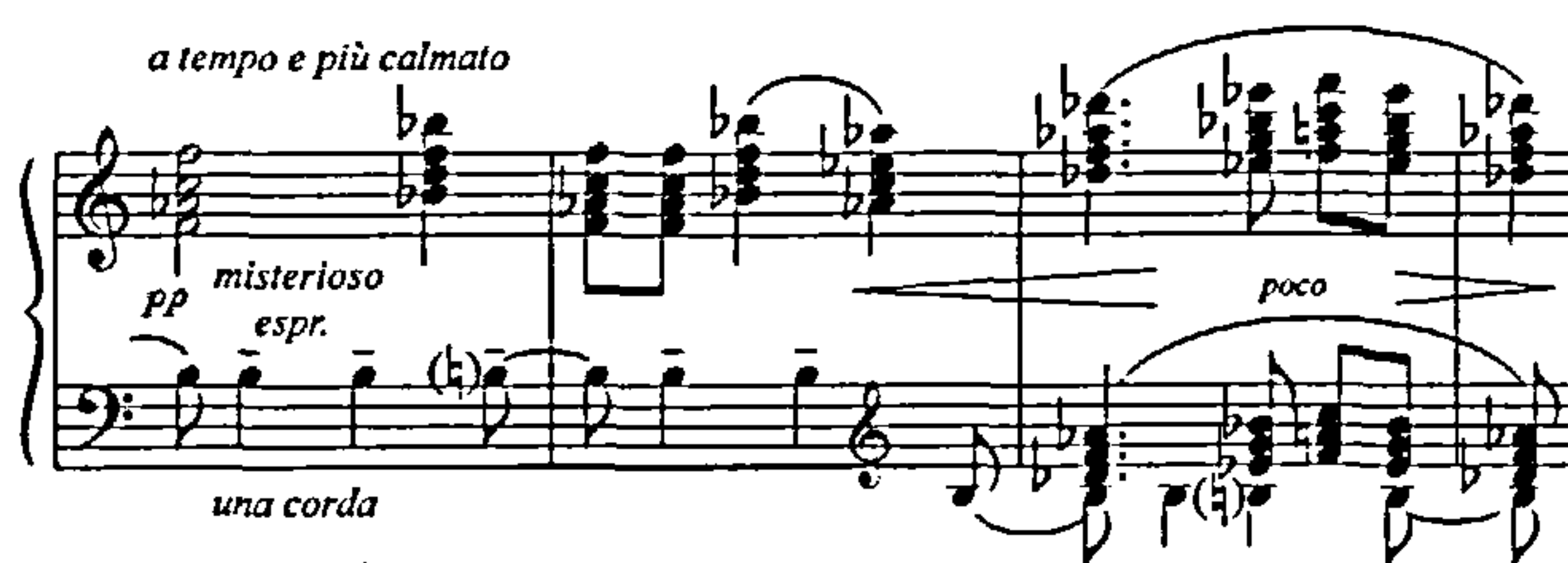
Ex. 3.23: Trio, structure of 1<sup>st</sup> movement:

| PART OF SONATA | BAR NUMBERS | SECTION          | OPENING MELODY/INSTRUMENTATION   |
|----------------|-------------|------------------|--|
| INTRODUCTION   | 1-8         | A                |  <p>All three instruments begin <i>ff</i>.</p>  |
| EXPOSITION     | 9-74        |                  |  |
| First subject  | 9-39        | A1               |  <p>This theme initially heard in the cello, then in the cello and violin together above rippling semiquaver arpeggios in the piano. The piano begins a <i>forte</i> rendition of the A theme in bar 26. At the end of the first subject the music 'winds down' with <i>piano</i> and <i>pianissimo</i> iterations of the military call shown below (see 'Coda').</p> |
| Second subject | 40-74       | B                | <p><i>a tempo e più calmato</i></p>  <p>Initially a piano solo. Strings enter in bar 49.</p>  |
| DEVELOPMENT    | 75-115      | Combines A and B | All three instruments combine elements of A and B. Begins with the rippling arpeggio figure from A1 in the strings above a <i>pianissimo</i> version of theme A in the piano.  |
| RECAPITULATION | 116-167     |                  |  |
| First subject  | 116-138     | A1               |  <p>Theme heard initially in the cello as in the exposition. This section is very similar to the exposition, though the string renditions of the above theme are now overlapping rather than in unison. There is now no 'winding down' to lead into the second subject.</p>   |
| Second subject | 139-165     | B                |  <p>Theme heard on the violin above <i>pizzicato</i> cello, and fast arpeggios on the piano.</p>  |

|      |         |    |   |
|------|---------|----|---|
| CODA | 166–197 | A1 |  <p>The theme heard at the end of the first subject in the Exposition now returns. It is initially heard on the piano, but appears in the violin before the end of the movement.</p> |
|------|---------|----|---|

As in the Viola Sonata, and as is typical of sonata form movements in general, the second subject of the Trio's first movement has a completely contrasting character to the dramatic opening declaration. Now the mood calms to *pianissimo misterioso*, and entries appear in each instrument in a short *fugato*, taking the first two bars of the piano's initial statement (Ex. 3.24, bars 40–41) as the theme. In this way Clarke continues to use short fragmentary motifs as the basis for the construction of a larger passage within the piece. The right hand of this new piano theme hovers in the key of F minor (Ex. 3.24) but beneath this is a B natural pedal in the left hand, which continues through the first eight bars of this section. Although the mood has calmed in this second subject, the syncopated pedal note – which is a tritone away from the key-note – helps maintain the feeling of tonal instability and unease which began with the use of minor sevenths and tritones in the introduction. Seventh chords also dominate the accompaniment in the latter part of the first subject, but though these now give way to root position triads, the persistent pedal note refuses to allow the music to become harmonically straightforward.

Ex. 3.24: Trio, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, bars 40–43



In the ensuing development section, the first and second subject themes reappear and are occasionally combined. One example of how this is achieved is shown below in Ex. 3.25. Here the piano plays the second subject theme (now *vigoroso* rather than *misterioso*) in low octaves, and with the second note lengthened to two beats rather than the original one (cf. Ex. 3.24). Above, the strings play a unison variation on the opening repeated note figure (cf. Ex. 3.22), now turned into an emotionally charged stomping dance. The minor sevenths from the opening are not now heard in the strings, but exist between the B-natural in the piano and the A-natural in the violin and cello at the beginning of this passage (Ex. 3.25, anacrusis). The characteristic features of the introduction are thus retained but cleverly disguised.

**Ex. 3.25: *Ibid.*, bars 87–90**

Clarke manipulates musical material by combining, altering and repeating themes, often using characteristic features of one motif as the starting point for a seemingly new one, and this occurs in each movement of the Trio. The opening *misterioso* melody in the second movement, for example, heard on a muted violin above a repeated G-natural pedal in the piano, is used as the basis for the piano figure which follows (see Exx. 3.26 and 3.27). The piano melody, however, only uses the first six notes of the opening violin theme – before the chromatic alteration of the



violin's first note from a B natural to a B flat in bar one (Ex. 3.26) – and it is now heard over lilting triplets in the left hand (Ex. 3.27).

**Ex. 3.26: Trio, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, bars 1–4**

Andante molto semplice  
*misterioso*

*pp con sordino*

*p*

**Ex. 3.27: *Ibid.*, bars 9–10**

*a tempo*

*pp sempre legato ma marcato*

This one-bar piano motif (Ex. 3.27), an augmented version of the opening theme, is repeated several times, achieving a hypnotic effect, whilst above it the strings combine snatches of previously heard themes from the first movement with newer material (Ex. 3.28 [notes marked 'X' in cello part], cf. Ex. 3.22 [piano] and Ex. 3.25 [strings]). Ex. 3.29 shows how this theme grows into an even more complex texture. The initial melody returns to end the movement, accompanied this time by low *ppp* octave G naturals in the piano, and a sustained perfect fifth chord in the cello (G–D). Ending with the same theme as she began is a common feature of Clarke's writing, not only in these larger scale works, but also in her songs.

Ex. 3.28: *Ibid.*, bars 18–20

Ex. 3.29: *Ibid.*, (piano part only), bar 22

Other themes are also transmuted in the second movement: the examples given in Exx. 3.30 and 3.31 show how a simple early melody becomes completely transformed when it reappears. The melody from Ex. 3.30 is still heard in the right hand of the piano in Ex. 3.31, but is now accompanied by tritones in an undulating figure in the left hand, with harmonics in the strings. By using these devices, Clarke creates a strange, otherworldly effect around a straightforward transposition of the original melody.

Ex. 3.30: *Ibid.*, bars 37–40

Ex. 3.31: *Ibid.*, bars 65–66

The third movement not only introduces and transforms new motifs, but also combines them with themes from the first and second movements, thereby serving to unify the entire work across a broad span. Ex. 3.32 demonstrates how this is achieved in one passage: the lines marked X are derived from the second subject of the exposition in the first movement (cf. Ex. 3.24 and Ex. 3.25 [piano]) whilst that marked Y is from an early theme in the second movement (cf. Ex. 3.27). References such as these continue to appear throughout the movement.

Ex. 3.32: Trio, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bars 77–79



One particular figure occurs in all three movements, and is another point of similarity with Clarke's earlier Viola Sonata: this is a military-inspired motif which initially appeared at the end of the first subject in the Trio's first movement. Using the repeated-note idea from the opening of the piece, Clarke creates a distant bugle-call, reminiscent of the Last Post. The rise and fall of a perfect fourth (Ex. 3.33 bar 36) anticipates the opening of the second subject, which follows in bar 40 (see Ex. 3.24). Clarke uses a similarly martial theme at the beginning of the Viola Sonata, which opens with a striking, perfect fifth bugle-call figure (Ex. 3.1). In the Trio, though, the motif is extended (Ex. 3.33 bars 37–38), making the reference to military models more explicit. It also re-emerges in the coda (see Ex. 3.23), and appearances of this theme in the second and third movements are shown by the boxes in Ex. 3.34 and in the left hand of the piano in Ex. 3.35.

**Ex. 3.33: Trio, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, bars 35–39**

**Ex. 3.34: Trio, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, bar 58**

Ex. 3.35: Trio, 3rd movement, bars 158–59

The full importance to the third movement of the themes from the first becomes clear towards the end of the piece when references to the earlier material culminate in a richly expressive piano solo (Ex. 3.35). Here the “bugle-call” theme rings out bitonally beneath undulating arpeggio figures, and the music builds up in a *crescendo* to *sfz* unison E naturals before suddenly giving way to a final *pianissimo* utterance of the military motif. Following this piano solo there is a fairly lengthy reminder of the introduction and exposition from the first movement: Clarke’s use of cyclic form in this way mirrors her earlier Viola Sonata, although in the final movement of that work a more extensive repetition of material from the first movement was used to finish the piece. The reappearance of previously heard material in the third movement of the Trio, however, is followed by a return to the movement’s opening themes for the final eleven bars, so that, despite the evident importance of motifs from the first movement’s exposition, the work ends with material singular to the third. In this way the general feeling is one of looking forward rather than back, whilst retaining a unity within the final movement. Ex. 3.36 shows the beginning of this final push to the end.

Ex. 3.36: *Ibid.*, bars 186–87

Clarke's eclectic musical style and harmonic language – with its various modal, chromatic and octatonic characteristics – reveals the numerous sources which influenced her writing: the importance in this respect of Clarke's contemporaries Debussy and Ravel should not be underestimated. It is worth noting, too, that of Clarke's other peers it is the musical techniques of the Swiss-born composer Ernest Bloch (1889–1959) which are the most stylistically similar to her own. One summary of Bloch's stylistic traits, 'frequent changes of tempo and key, modality, cyclic form, and propensity for open 5ths and 4ths',<sup>22</sup> could almost equally be applied to Clarke's music, and it is significant that she held his work in the highest esteem.<sup>23</sup>

Clarke uses octatonic pitch collections in her Viola Sonata quite extensively, most notably in the middle section of the second movement, and these also appear in the Trio. The opening bars, with their clashing discords (Ex. 3.22), are constructed from pitch collection III, shown in Ex. 3.9, and there are many other octatonic passages in this movement. In fact, octatonicism is much more extensively used here than in the Sonata. The first subject of the exposition and large sections of the

<sup>22</sup> Kennedy, M: *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 3/ 1980, 78.

<sup>23</sup> Speaking of the 1919 Coolidge competition Clarke commented: '... I admired Bloch enormously, I didn't know much of his music at that time, but later on I became quite a lot influenced by it... I know that there are traces...where I more or less 'cribbed' as Vaughan Williams used to say.' Interview with Robert Sherman, 1976.



development and recapitulation are made up of notes from collections II and III (see Ex. 3.9). Notably, the second subject of the exposition is not octatonic, and this is another way in which Clarke makes the two themes differ. However, the second and third movements of the Trio use octatonicism less, with the systematic use being limited to the first movement.

The use of octatonic pitch collections commonly results in bitonality and in the prominence of tritone intervals, and this is demonstrated in the first movement of the Trio. The example shown below (Ex. 3.37) shows a passage in which arpeggios of Ab major in the violin and D major in the cello, are fused together, whilst the piano plays a chord at the start of bar 76 consisting of notes from both these triads (Ab and D are a tritone apart). This uneasy accompanying figure is constructed from notes in octatonic pitch collection II, and is dominated by successive tritone intervals (D against Ab, A against Eb, F# against C). The passage marks the beginning of the development section; the opening repeated-note figure reappears in the piano transmuted to *pianissimo*, but now acts like the opening of a scherzo to announce the start of this new section.

**Ex. 3.37: Clarke, Trio, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, bars 75–77**

The musical score for Ex. 3.37 consists of four staves. The top two staves are for the violin and cello, both marked 'a tempo'. The violin part features a series of arpeggiated chords, with dynamics starting at 'pp ponticello'. The cello part also features arpeggiated chords, with a '8va' instruction indicating an octave shift. The bottom two staves are for the piano, marked 'PP ma molto marcato'. The piano part includes a repeated-note figure in the right hand and a more complex rhythmic pattern in the left hand, with fingerings such as '3 2 1 3 2 1' and '5 4 3 2' indicated. The score is set in 3/4 time and includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Clarke's musical language in both her most important works combines principles from different tonal systems: diatonicism, modality, chromaticism, whole-tone writing and octatonicism. Passages constructed from these various systems meld into each other without ever seeming forced or unnatural. Clarke evidently knew a great deal of music and she assimilated various elements of different musical styles into her own unique and eclectic voice, as Poulenc and Koechlin did. It is doubtful whether Clarke deliberately set out to make use of systems such as octatonicism, and it seems most likely that she subconsciously recreated in her music sounds that she had heard in other people's. Unexpected key changes and chord progressions are frequent, and often make a key centre difficult to distinguish: atonal and bitonal passages also appear more routinely in the Trio than in her Viola Sonata. In the example below, a chord of Eb major with added seventh and ninth suddenly appears at the end of bar 60 (Ex. 3.38) of the first movement. This serves to slide the music away from the predominantly Dorian mode of the preceding passage, by anticipating the juxtaposed Eb major/A major (octatonic pitch collection III) chord in the next bar (bar 61).<sup>24</sup> Leading onto this first Eb chord the piano line ascends chromatically from octave C naturals in the right hand to Dbs, and from a D natural in the left hand to an Eb (Ex. 3.38, bar 61).

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<sup>24</sup> Note that the A major chord consists only of the notes A and C sharp: it does not have an E natural as its fifth, so the level of dissonance is carefully controlled.

Ex. 3.38: Clarke, Trio, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, bars 59–61

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a single melodic line with a 'ten.' marking above it. The middle staff is a piano accompaniment featuring a dense texture of triplets. The bottom staff is another piano accompaniment with a 'cresc.' marking and a triplet of eighth notes. The music concludes with a 'f allarg.' marking.

The piano part in the above example also demonstrates another of Clarke's often-used devices: the setting of triplets in one line against groups of two or four notes in another. Throughout each movement, examples of this polyrhythmic feature abound; instances are also found in Exx. 3.27, 3.28, 3.30, 3.31, 3.32 and 3.34. Judging by the frequency with which examples appear in her chamber music, the device appears to have been one to which Clarke was particularly drawn. Notably, though, it is not as common a feature in the work of Debussy and Ravel:<sup>25</sup> two composers whose work influenced Clarke's harmonic language considerably. Ravel's Piano Trio of 1914, with which Clarke was evidently familiar, contains only a few brief examples of duplets set against triplets and no passages in which this occurs continuously. Nor is it extensively used in either of her student violin sonatas, suggesting that it was a technique she came to later. In using duplets against triplets in extended passages such as those shown in Exx. 3.27, 3.28 and 3.30, Clarke's aim is not to draw attention to the accompaniment, but rather simply to prevent it from becoming static. In these longer sections it is usually used where the overall mood is one of tranquillity. The passage from the second movement shown in Ex. 3.27 shows the first two bars of a repeated accompanying figure which extends over thirteen bars

<sup>25</sup> There are examples in Debussy and Ravel but these are rarely as extended as the passages found in Clarke's music. The first of Debussy's *Deux Arabesques* (1888) is an exception.



until a *crescendo* is marked in the score. At this point (bar 22 in Ex. 3.39) the triplet quavers are immediately replaced by four semiquavers in the left hand of the piano part. When Clarke aims to change the mood, by building up the sound in a *crescendo*, it is necessary for the accompanying figure to lose the gentle lilting feel given to it through the use of triplets.

**Ex. 3.39: Trio, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, bars 21–22**



The third movement of this Trio displays even greater rhythmic flexibility than the first two. This is reflected in frequent metre changes through which familiar phrases are extended and made irregular. The passage shown in Ex. 3.40, for example, shows how Clarke uses successive 4/8 and 5/8 bars, and later a 3/4 bar, to lengthen the phrase heard in bars 45–46, so that the top note of the phrase becomes sequentially a stage higher each time. In addition to this lengthening of the phrase Clarke uses an unexpected duplet in the piano in bars 46 and 48, which has a particularly striking effect.

Ex. 3.40: Trio, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bars 45–52

In the above example short *crescendos* and *diminuendos* are used to make the intended phrasing clear. The use of swells in dynamic such as these are most common in the third movement of the Trio. Sudden increases in dynamic level, such as in Exx. 3.40 and 3.41 suggest the influence of Debussy on Clarke's music, and this is especially true when the dynamic suddenly drops back to *piano* after a short *crescendo*.

Ex. 3.41: Trio, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, bars 4–6

Dynamic changes in the Trio usually occur simultaneously in all three instruments, so that when one is marked *pianissimo* or *forte* the others are too. However, there are a few instances in which terraced dynamics are employed. Ex. 3.42 contains a passage in which the piano is *mezzo forte* against *fortissimo appassionato* in the strings. In Ex. 3.25 the piano is marked *mezzo forte* whilst the strings are marked *sempre forte*. These differences are only slight, but show Clarke taking on board questions of balance in performance, and emphasising that some lines are of greater importance than others. In both the Trio and Viola Sonata there are also wide contrasts in dynamic – from *ppp* through to *fortissimo* in the later work.

**Ex. 3.42: Trio, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, bar 61**

Rebecca Clarke made her living primarily as a chamber violist and, as well as giving her a platform on which to perform her own compositions, this enabled her to become familiar with the way successful chamber music was constructed. Her writings for *Music and Letters*, ‘The History of the Viola in Quartet Writing’ and ‘The Beethoven Quartets as a Player sees them’<sup>26</sup> demonstrate her broad and detailed knowledge of the genre, and the combination of her own considerable talent as a violist and her strong background as a chamber music participant explain the assurance of her chamber writing. Perhaps one of the reasons why Clarke completed

<sup>26</sup> Volumes IV/i (1923), 6–17 and VIII/ii (1927), 178–90.



no large-scale orchestral works was because most of her music was simply intended for performance within the ensembles in which she played. Perhaps she lacked the required ambition, or considered the process of writing orchestral scores too protracted for someone who had to earn a living as a performer, especially if she was not guaranteed a performance when the work was completed. Maybe she was simply not attracted to the genre. If Clarke felt that she lacked the skills required to tackle orchestral writing it would have been typical of her modesty, but the craftsmanship she displays throughout her chamber writing suggests that she would have tackled large-scale forms and pacing perfectly well.

The importance of military motifs in the Viola Sonata and Trio is especially striking, and it is worth observing that both works were written not long after the end of the First World War. Clarke's reaction to the international conflict must have been a particularly complex one: she had mixed heritage parents (her mother was German, her father American), and it is conceivable that the military themes found in her works were a reaction to the war. Unfortunately, Clarke made no comment on this aspect of her writing so this can only remain speculation.

Despite the similarities, there are also differences between the two works, with the later piece showing a greater rhythmic and harmonic freedom and a more systematic use of octatonicism in the first movement. Piano lines are also even more elaborate and technically difficult in the Trio than in the Viola Sonata, and are also wholly remarkable and convincing from the pen of an amateur pianist. These factors show that although both pieces were constructed in a similar way, Clarke's musical thinking *had* changed, if not dramatically, in the intervening years.

### (iii) *Rhapsody* (1923)

After her successes in the Coolidge competitions of 1919 and 1921 there was to be a third chapter in the story of Clarke's association with the wealthy American patroness: one which received far less publicity – then and now – but which deserves equal attention. In 1923 Coolidge decided not to include a composition competition in her Festival, choosing instead to award commissions for new works. Thenceforth she would alternate between holding competitions and giving commissions each year. From as early as January 1922 she had been planning a strong British bias for the 1923 Festival, and to that end her first two commissions went to two British composers, Rebecca Clarke and Eugene Goossens.<sup>27</sup> Both received \$1,000 for a 20-minute work, the same amount that the winners of the previous competitions had been awarded.

Clarke's contribution, a large-scale (524-bar) *Rhapsody* for cello and piano, took fourteen months to complete and was finished during her stay on the sparsely populated Hawaiian island of Molokai in July 1923. She had been staying there with May Mukle and other friends, and travelled with Mukle to San Francisco during the first weeks of August in order to move on to Pittsfield for the Festival in September. According to Daniela Kohnen,<sup>28</sup> Clarke and Mukle's priority on arriving in San Francisco was to find a pianist capable of playing through the score with the cellist because Clarke, usually considered a non-pianist, had been unable to hear her work performed. Clarke's diaries, however, show that she *could* play the piano – there are numerous references to composing (and to working on the *Rhapsody*) at the piano –

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<sup>27</sup> Rebecca Clarke had already agreed by the time Coolidge wrote to Goossens (see Banfield: '“Too much of Albion”? Mrs. Coolidge and Her British Connections', *American Music*, Vol. IV (1986)).

<sup>28</sup> See Kohnen, D: *Rebecca Clarke, Komponistin und Bratschistin*, Deutsche Hochschulschriften, Germany, 1999, 62–63.



but presumably her technique was not good enough to cope with the work's considerable demands.

The first performance of the *Rhapsody* was given on 29 September 1923 by Mukle and Myra Hess at the Coolidge Festival in Berkshire; the second only in 1986 as part of a BBC Radio 3 broadcast by Moray Welsh and David Owen Norris. Although there is no dedication on the manuscript, Clarke wrote to Coolidge on 13 September 1923 asking for permission to dedicate the *Rhapsody* to her. The score has never been published,<sup>29</sup> and this must remain one of the more inexplicable oversights on the part of the managers of Clarke's estate. It is a vital part of her development; in length, scope and outlook it is easily the equal of her previous Coolidge works, and it is important too in showing how Clarke's musical thinking had moved on since the Trio.

When she was working on the *Rhapsody*, Clarke recorded its progress in her diaries, and her comments show how her opinion of the work varied dramatically at different points in its creation. She began work on 11 May 1922, and despite initial frustrations (the diary entry for 7 June 1922 reads 'Absolutely disgusted with my work, I seem to be permanently stuck and am so depressed I don't know what to do') she later became much more content with its development (13 November 1922: 'Composing with success all the morning. I'm getting quite pleased with the cello piece'). By the time she finished Clarke was evidently content, writing on 29 August 1923, 'Finished the Rhapsody! Am so glad I have taken my time over it, as I am sure it is much better than if I had hurried'. However, once she had heard it performed, she seemed dismayed by the number of alterations she felt were needed, recording on

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<sup>29</sup> Kohnen suggests that Clarke was never completely satisfied with the *Rhapsody* and therefore never attempted to get it published (op. cit., 63). However, given the difficulty Clarke had had in getting the Trio – a work that had received much positive acclaim – accepted by a publisher, it is more likely that she thought there was little point in attempting the same with the *Rhapsody*.



15 September 1923, 'Worked all day fussing over the last corrections of the Rhapsody, and also made a cut as it is too long'. Then, a few days later on 19 September, 'Lost no time in going over my piece with Myra (in fact we started last night at about midnight). Depressed over Rhapsody, which needs many alterations.' However, the suggestion that after 1923 Clarke put the *Rhapsody* to one side and, to all intents and purposes, forgot about it (or even destroyed it<sup>30</sup>) seems far-fetched; her diaries give a more logical account. Clarke's comments after the premiere of the *Rhapsody* show that the work was, intriguingly, very well received but not liked – a fact that upset her greatly – and she resigned herself to her first major failure.

Sept. 29, 1923. Sat. My Rhapsody played in the morning, between Hindemith 4tet and Goossens 6tet. Very well received, but not liked by many, who thought it too long and gloomy...Very tired at afternoon concert. ... Had long interesting talk with Bauer about my work at lunch and again in the evening. Also with Bridge and Bliss. All very nice. Very depressed all night.<sup>31</sup>

Sept. 30, 1923. Still feeling very sad, but can see it is very good for me to have a failure. Bad notice in the Times from dear old Aldrich. Suddenly very cold as if the festival had ended the summer and now the autumn is here.<sup>32</sup>

Richard Aldrich, who had been one of the six judges during the 1919 competition, now writing in *The New York Times*, was one of several adverse critics:

Miss Clarke has shown her unmistakable talent in other compositions heard at Pittsfield, and ... has shown it more unmistakably than in this Rhapsody. It

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<sup>30</sup> Susan Schoenfield, in *Ernest Bloch's Suite for Viola and Piano/Rebecca Clarke's Sonata for Viola and Piano*, M.M Thesis, Texas Tech University, 1982, claims that "Clarke later destroyed this work [the *Rhapsody*] because it did not meet her standards of quality", 60.

<sup>31</sup> Unpublished diary entry.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

was very rhapsodical and very gloomy and undeniably long. Some of her sincerest admirers may think that she is not following a promising path as indicated by this composition.<sup>33</sup>

The *Rhapsody*'s failure to impress Clarke's peers and critics seems to have had a demoralizing effect, and she never again attempted to write such a large-scale work. The fact that it remains unpublished some eighty years after it was completed is a great loss to performers and audiences alike and baffling to say the least, especially in view of the fact that so many of Clarke's other works have now been published. Thankfully a recording was issued in 2000,<sup>34</sup> and a copy of Clarke's manuscript is held at the BBC Library in London.<sup>35</sup>

At just under twenty-four minutes, the *Rhapsody* is Clarke's longest work. It is highly virtuosic for both instruments, and similarities with the Viola Sonata and Trio abound. In fact these three works form a triptych at the heart of Clarke's output. In the *Rhapsody* the mood is even darker than before, and there is little to lighten the atmosphere created in the opening bars. Although in a single broad-spanning movement, the *Rhapsody* falls into three continuous sections as the table below (Ex. 3.43) demonstrates. Like her Viola Sonata and Trio these three sections (which might be seen as movements) are closely related thematically and the cyclic treatment of motifs used in her two earlier Coolidge pieces is carried out even more fully here. The various groups of thematic material are labelled A–F below, and the opening bars of each are shown in Ex. 3.43; within each section new material is often introduced with a change of tempo. This is Clarke's most ambitious attempt yet at uniting various groups of thematic material.

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<sup>33</sup> 30 September 1923, 5.

<sup>34</sup> 'Rebecca Clarke', CDLX 7105 (Dutton). Recorded 1998, issued 2000.


<sup>35</sup> However, as this is not a public library the music remains essentially inaccessible.

### Ex. 3.43: Structure of *Rhapsody*

#### Section 1

*Molto Lento*, bars 1–31 are all derived from thematic material A:

A *Molto Lento*



*Allegro*, bars 32–47 begins using A material (now *Allegro*) but then a new theme enters at bar 34 (thematic material B):

B



*Poco meno mosso*, bars 48–56 (thematic material C)

C



*Poco più mosso*, bars 57–90

A returns in the piano beneath the continuing C melody in the cello. From bar 61 C begins in the piano.

Perfect fourth motif (shown below) appears in bar 75 and continues through to bar 90.



*Meno mosso*, bars 91–105

Left hand of piano has C theme. Cello is derived from A. Piano begins to reintroduce A material from bar 98 and builds up into a huge climax.

*Tempo I*, bars 106–129

All based on A, but reduces in volume and thins out in texture as it leads towards the second section.

#### Section 2

*Adagio e molto calmato*, bars 130–79

D *Adagio e molto calmato*



Begins by introducing thematic material D. Motifs from A reappear from bar 157.

*Molto semplice*

E



A returns during bars 202–237



D returns through bars 238–251  
 A returns in bar 252 and combines with E in bar 263.

**Section 3**

*Allegro ritmico*, bars 264–359



*Poco più mosso*, bars 360–461 C returns at bar 360, A returns in bar 369, with the perfect fourth motif reappearing in bar 370–85, F returns at bar 386–461.

*Lento* bars 462–524

A returns at bar 462, part of D material returns at bar 468. A returns at bar 482 and combines with D to the end.

The *Rhapsody* begins with an unrelenting low pedal D, which tolls ominously forty-two times over the first eleven bars. The emptiness of this single note introduces straight away the sense of bleakness and isolation that permeates the *Rhapsody*. Time signature changes between 3/4, 4/4, and 5/4 in Ex 3.44 bring metrical fluidity as the cello presents the main thematic material of this organic creation. The rhythmic characteristics and intervallic contours introduced here – particularly the leaning semitones – are crucial.

**Ex. 3.44: *Rhapsody*, bars 1–5**



This sinuous opening theme dominates the melodic material of the *Rhapsody*. It appears in various keys and in each instrument with different, and sometimes complex, accompanying figures. Even when other themes try to take over (such as

early in the second section) this initial motif refuses to disappear, returning frequently with renewed vigour. One early recurrence appears in a rhythmically modified canon, with the piano entering a quaver after the cello. Clarke's skill in altering the rhythm of the piano's iteration, especially incorporating octave triplets, is clear (see bar 22, Ex. 3.45). Appearing immediately after the quaver triplets in the cello, these draw the listener's attention as if underlining a point with increasing force and persistence. Where the cello is increasing in dynamic with its *crescendos* the piano carries on *piano*, the two instruments working contrapuntally to achieve their effect.

Ex. 3.45: *Ibid.*, bars 21–22

The musical score for Ex. 3.45 consists of three staves. The top staff is for the Cello, the middle for the Piano, and the bottom for the Bass. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The Cello part begins with a quarter note G2, followed by eighth notes A2, B2, and C3, then a quarter note D3. This is followed by a triplet of eighth notes (E3, F3, G3), a quarter note A3, and another triplet of eighth notes (B3, C4, D4). The dynamics are marked 'cresc.' twice and 'poco al' at the end. The Piano part starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a series of chords and octaves, including a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand. The Bass part provides a steady accompaniment of eighth notes.

Dark episodes in the Viola Sonata and Trio are relieved with more substantial periods of light than appear in the *Rhapsody*, whose sombre mood rarely gives way to more optimistic emotions. One example of how the writing in the *Rhapsody* is different in this respect is shown below in Ex. 3.46. Here, in an early climax, a martial figure echoes passages from the Viola Sonata and Trio:

Ex. 3.46: *Ibid.*, bars 75–78

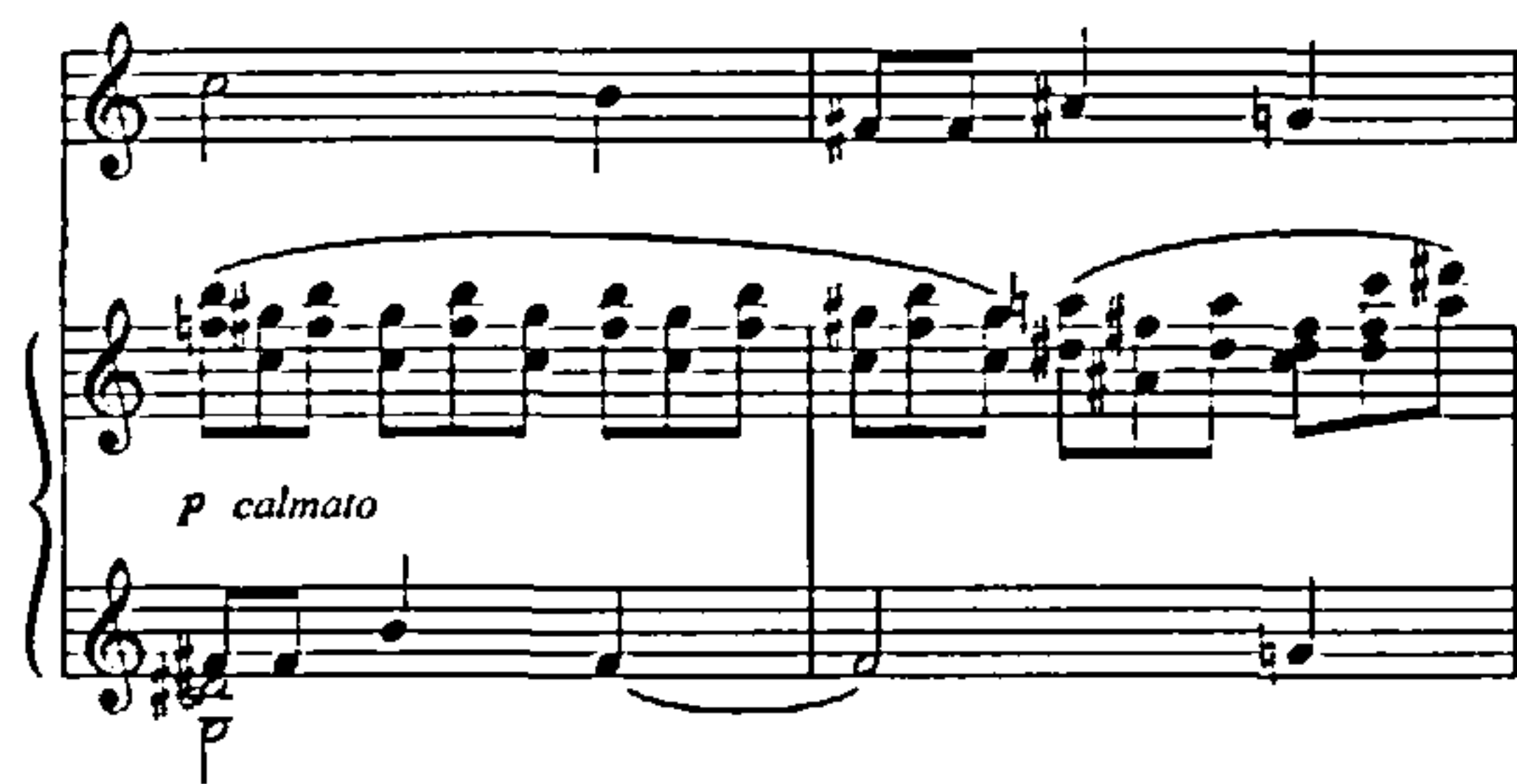
Rising and falling perfect fourths in the cello (F#–B, bars 75–76) and piano (C#–F#, bar 76) are particularly reminiscent of a *piano* phrase from the Trio (see Ex. 3.33). However, in the *Rhapsody* this motif and all subsequent repetitions appear *fortissimo*, and the triplet figures in bar 78 (Ex. 3.46) distort the intervals from bar 37 of the Trio's first movement (Ex. 3.33). In the Viola Sonata the military motif introduced *forte* in the opening bars returns later in a shadowy form *pp misterioso* (see Exx. 3.1 and 3.6), and likewise in the Trio the motif appears at different dynamic levels (as Exx. 3.33 and 3.35 show). If the Coolidge works, with their military motifs, represented a conscious or subconscious response to the devastating effects of World War I, paramount in the minds of many composers in England at that time, the *Rhapsody* paints the bleakest picture yet. Although Clarke was drawn to dark subject matter throughout her career, a fact demonstrated many times through her choice of song texts, these military motifs are absent from her other music. This is perhaps the most obvious difference between the Coolidge and non-Coolidge chamber works.

The skill with which Clarke achieves an internal coherence through evolving new themes out of previously used material in the *Rhapsody* easily matches that shown in the earlier Viola Sonata and Trio, and indeed in her other chamber works (see Chapter 4). The military theme shown in Ex. 3.46 is one example. Derived from a figure used earlier in the same piece, it initially appeared early in the left hand of



the piano, but here could easily have gone unnoticed (Ex. 3.47). By working in this way Clarke relates new material to old and creates an entirely logical and satisfying progression. Though the listener may not be aware of these techniques, it is precisely these interrelationships that make her music so persuasive and successful.


**Ex. 3.47: *Ibid.*, bars 17–18**



The musical score for Ex. 3.47 consists of three staves. The top staff is a single melodic line in treble clef. The middle and bottom staves are piano accompaniment in treble and bass clefs respectively. The piano part is marked with a piano dynamic (*p*) and the instruction *p calmato*. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some chords and rests.

Significantly, the military theme in the *Rhapsody* is supported by a quotation from the opening of Clarke's Trio (cf. bass line in Ex. 3.46 with the piano in Ex. 3.22). This theme also reappears later in the *Rhapsody*, occupying a prominent place in the cello line towards the end of the work (Ex. 3.48). There are strong similarities, too, with the *Rhapsody*'s own opening theme (Ex. 3.44).

**Ex. 3.48: *Ibid.*, bars 474–75**



The musical score for Ex. 3.48 consists of three staves. The top staff is a single melodic line in treble clef. The middle and bottom staves are piano accompaniment in treble and bass clefs respectively. The piano part is marked with the instruction *sempre dim.*. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some chords and rests.

The fact that Clarke quotes her own work in this way makes it all the more important to consider the *Rhapsody* along with the other Coolidge works, and allow it to be seen as an important achievement in her career. The continual reworking of themes in this way shows a consistency of thought, and there are similar examples elsewhere

both in the non-Coolidge chamber works and in the songs (see Chapters 4 and 5). What she achieves within the confines of a single piece in reworking particular themes is therefore mirrored on a much larger scale with certain motifs to which Clarke returned at different stages in her career.

Some of the most striking features of the *Rhapsody* lie in its rhythmic twists. There are numerous tempo changes – requisite in rhapsodic form – but Clarke’s skill in constructing a large-scale movement means that the new tempi never arrive unprepared. Aside from using *accelerandos* and *rallentandos* to lead into a new section, Clarke also proves expert at building apparent changes of tempi into the fabric of the music, sometimes without actually changing the speed. Ex. 3.49 shows Clarke combining these methods to build up to an important dramatic moment. Here, the rhythm of the right hand of the piano part is changed before the crotchet chord in each bar: from a crotchet rest in bar 28, to quavers in bar 29 and finally to triplets in bar 30. By fitting more notes into each beat the feeling of anticipation is increased as the music progresses. In connection with the indications *più animato* and *sempre animando e cresc*, and the steady rise in pitch of the crotchet chords (made all the more obvious by the use of ominous repeated low Ds from the opening before each chord), the writing shows Clarke’s expertise in controlling her forces, assisting the performers to achieve the desired effect and leaving nothing to chance.

Ex. 3.49: *Ibid.*, bars 28–30

In the second section, *Allegro ritmico*, Clarke frequently changes the time signature between 2/4 and 3/4, but also accents unexpected beats (for example the last beat of a 3/4 bar) so that we are never quite sure what to expect (see Ex. 3.50). She also uses the hemiola effect of shaping a phrase in 3/4 to feel as if it is in 2/4, as Ex. 3.51 demonstrates, and in these ways Clarke maintains new interest and suspense throughout this middle section.

Ex. 3.50: *Ibid.*, bars 288–89



Ex. 3.51: *Ibid.*, bars 295–97

One of the most unsettling passages in the work is a *Molto semplice* in the second section in which a distant Dorian melody in the piano is given a disturbing twist by *ppp pizzicato* minor seventh chords in the cello, and piano chords which do not quite ‘fit’ the harmonic scheme (particularly the haunting open fifths in the right hand in Ex. 3.52, bars 183–84). Modality had been important to Clarke’s style since 1909, and she does not abandon it even in this harmonically advanced work, but gives it a special new flavour by combining it with other elements to create an unusual and disturbing sound world. In other words she takes the familiar (a modal scale) and mixes it with the unfamiliar to create this disquieting effect.

Ex. 3.52: *Ibid.*, bars 180–84

Clarke uses similar compositional techniques and effects in the *Rhapsody* to those used in the *Viola Sonata* and *Trio*. In addition to those discussed previously these include a general rising in pitch during steadily paced progressions towards climatic moments, as if the questioning from both instruments is becoming

increasingly urgent and searching. There are also sudden *decrescendos* before a climax has been reached, often occurring through a downward arpeggio to calm the atmosphere rapidly before another build-up begins. As in the previous Coolidge works and other mature chamber music, themes are swapped between instruments and registers, are altered in rhythm or distorted in pitch whilst retaining certain characteristics of the original. Fragments of themes are also used in repetition to work up to climactic points. Some large-scale repeats are used too, though with slight alterations, for example in the spacing of chords. Passages of whole-tone writing are juxtaposed with other tonal systems without the joins seeming out of place.

In order to combine different themes effectively, Clarke often creates seemingly disparate themes which actually have underlying similarities. These similarities are then brought to the fore when the themes or motifs are combined. As an example, the A and D material of the *Rhapsody*, shown in Ex. 3.43, appear quite distinct but are connected through a descending three-note motif: the starting note, the note a semitone below, then the note a minor third below that (Db–C–A in section A; G#–G–E in section D). This motif returns in *Epilogue* (see Chapter 4) and *Lethe* (see Chapter 5). In the final *Lento* of the third section, this connection is underlined as the A and D material is combined to end the work. In this way Clarke perseveres with the cyclic approach she had used in her earlier Coolidge works. Ex. 3.53 shows the last eleven bars, in which the three-note motif is clearly heard in the cello, sometimes as crotchets, at other times rhythmically augmented, whilst beneath the final cello note the piano's opening low Ds reappear, now *pianissimo*, varying in length and deprived of their initial insistency. Notably, Clarke ends the *Rhapsody* with a chord consisting only of an open fifth (D and A): resolution of any kind, which would have been indicated with a major or minor third has not been found,

and the *Rhapsody* ends bleakly, but poetically, with a question that remains unanswered.

**Ex. 3.53: *Ibid.*, bars 514–524**

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. The first system (bars 514-516) features a bass line with a long note, a treble line with a melodic line, and a piano accompaniment with a 'pp' dynamic. The second system (bars 517-519) continues the melodic line with an '8va' marking and features a 'p.' dynamic. The third system (bars 520-524) shows a 'pp' dynamic and a 'marc.' marking, with a complex piano accompaniment and a final melodic flourish.

As the following chapter will show, the seeds of the Coolidge works had already begun to germinate in Clarke's earlier chamber music, so the *Viola Sonata* did not arrive unprepared, but was an entirely logical culmination of ten years' experience and stylistic development. Here, the various elements with which Clarke had been experimenting before 1919 came together and combined with a new penchant for striking military motifs in what should be seen as one of the most compelling British post-war commentaries of the time.

The Coolidge works were ambitious in what they set out to achieve as large-scale coherent structures. Through their impassioned tone and musical language



Clarke proved herself to be a serious talent and the reception of the Viola Sonata and Trio showed that this talent *was* recognised by her peers, however much they were surprised by it. A more positive critical reaction towards the hard thought-out *Rhapsody* may well have encouraged Clarke to continue in the same vein, though there is little to be gained from dwelling on what might have been. It is worth observing, though, that despite negative critical remarks about the darkness of the *Rhapsody*, Clarke did not completely abandon this side of her musical personality, though future outings were restricted to more intimate genres or for less public occasions. Perhaps, too, the less-than-enthusiastic critical reaction simply reflected the general mood of the time: five years after the end of the First World War the public were looking for a more optimistic mood in the music they listened to. If the *Rhapsody* had appeared at another time things might have been different.

Clarke was clearly a composer to whom encouragement was important, but the *Rhapsody's* reception was by no means as catastrophic as some writers have suggested, and certainly did not herald an abrupt end to her career. Sadly, however, as far as many music history books were concerned the 'Rebecca Clarke' entry had already been completed.

## Chapter 4: Clarke's Other Chamber Works (1908–44)

The successes of the Viola Sonata and Trio in 1919 and 1921 were critical to Clarke's reputation as a composer, and responsible for rescuing her name from obscurity. However, the high quality of these two works has tended to eclipse her other achievements, which have only recently begun to enjoy the recognition they deserve.<sup>1</sup> In reality, the 1923 *Rhapsody* (see Chapter 3) and many of her songs (see Chapter 5) deserve equal commendation, and there are numerous other chamber works not written for Coolidge festivals which are just as reflective of her extraordinary talent. The aim of this chapter is to reveal the extent of Clarke's chamber writing; to see what happened after her brief period of celebrity. It will also show that the Viola Sonata, Trio, and *Rhapsody* do not stand apart from the rest of her chamber music, but are integral to its development.

Although Clarke wrote fewer chamber works than songs on a numerical basis, the genre covers a similar period, from her days as a student at the Royal College of Music (1908–10) until 1944, the year of her marriage to James Friskin and her retirement as a professional violist. The table below lists Clarke's chamber works: of the twenty-five completed, twelve remain unpublished.<sup>2</sup> Like her songs, several of those published in the 1920s and 1930s were subsequently out of print for many years. Ex. 4.1 also shows that the overwhelming majority of Clarke's chamber music was written for string instruments, usually with a piano accompaniment.

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<sup>1</sup> An important article by Calum MacDonald, 'Rebecca Clarke's Chamber Music', was published in *Tempo* in March 1987, but other than this the current literature on Clarke largely concerns only her Coolidge competition entries. However, two valuable CD recordings (*Rebecca Clarke/ The Cloths of Heaven*, Guild, GMCD 7208, recorded and issued 1992, re-released 2000 and *Rebecca Clarke/ Midsummer Moon*, Dutton Digital CDLX 7105, recorded 1998, issued 2000) have brought her songs and chamber works to a wider audience, and several of the works have since been published for the first time.

<sup>2</sup> For details of publishers see Appendix 2.

**Ex. 4.1: Clarke's Chamber Music**

\* = unpublished

| Date of composition | Title of work  | Instrumentation                     | Date of publication |
|---------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1908                | Sonata form movement in G major                                    | Violin and piano                    | *                   |
| 1908                | <i>Theme and Variations</i>  | Solo piano                          | *                   |
| 1908-9              | Sonata in D major  | Violin and piano                    | *                   |
| 1909                | <i>Danse Bizarre</i>   | 2 Violins and piano                 | *                   |
| 1909                | <i>Lullaby</i>   | Viola and piano                     | 2002                |
| c.1913              | <i>Lullaby: an Arrangement of an Ancient Irish Tune</i>            | Viola and piano                     | 2002                |
| c.1916              | <i>Two pieces for Viola and Cello</i> 1. 'Grotesque', 2. 'Lullaby' | Viola and cello                     | 1930                |
| 1917-18             | Untitled   | Viola and piano                     | 2002                |
| 1917-18             | <i>Morpheus</i>  | Viola and piano                     | 2002                |
| 1918                | <i>Lullaby</i>   | Violin and piano                    | *                   |
| 1919                | Sonata   | Viola or cello and piano            | 1921                |
| c.1921              | <i>Epilogue</i>  | Cello and piano                     | 2003                |
| 1921                | Trio   | Violin, cello and Piano             | 1928                |
| 1921                | <i>Chinese Puzzle</i> (Adapted from a Chinese Tune)                | Violin and piano                    | 1925                |
| 1923                | <i>Rhapsody</i>  | Cello and piano                     | *                   |
| 1924                | <i>Midsummer Moon</i>  | Violin and piano                    | 1926                |
| 1924                | <i>Comodo e amabile</i>  | String quartet                      | 2004                |
| 1926                | <i>Poem</i>  | String quartet                      | 2004                |
| 1930                | <i>Cortège</i>   | Solo piano                          | *                   |
| 1940                | Untitled   | 2 Violins                           | *                   |
| 1941                | <i>Passacaglia on an Old English Tune</i>                          | Viola or violin and piano           | 1943                |
| 1941                | <i>Dumka</i>   | Violin, viola and piano             | *                   |
| 1941                | <i>Prelude, Allegro and Pastorale</i>                              | Clarinet and viola                  | 2000                |
| 1941                | <i>Combined Carols</i>   | String quartet and string orchestra | *                   |
| 1944                | <i>I'll bid my heart be still</i>                                  | Viola and piano                     | 2002                |
| c.1945              | <i>He Hath Filled the Hungry</i>                                   | Solo piano                          | *                   |

With so few compositions commercially available for such a long time, it is hardly surprising that Clarke's reputation has been slow to establish itself. Welcome additions to the canon are the Oxford University Press editions of *Prelude, Allegro and Pastorale, Morpheus, the Shorter Pieces for Viola and Piano*<sup>3</sup> and the *Shorter*

<sup>3</sup> This volume, published 2002 contains *Lullaby* (1909), *Lullaby: an Arrangement of an Ancient Irish Tune*, *Untitled*, *Chinese Puzzle*, *Passacaglia on an Old English Tune* and *I'll Bid My Heart Be Still*.



*Pieces for Cello and Piano*.<sup>4</sup> But a significant number of important chamber works remain inaccessible, including three works for solo piano which are the only examples of her writing in that genre.<sup>5</sup>

McDonald considers Clarke's first truly original works to be her W B Yeats song settings of 1911–12, and suggests her 1913 *Lullaby: an Arrangement of an Ancient Irish Tune* to be the first chamber work in which there is 'sustained evidence of a distinctive compositional outlook'.<sup>6</sup> However, this overlooks an important *Lullaby* for viola and piano written in 1909.<sup>7</sup> The first of four compositions with that name, the *Lullaby* has most likely been ignored because it has been difficult to obtain: it was first published in 2002, some ninety-three years after it was written. I suggest the *Lullaby* to be Clarke's first mature work because the distinctive mixture of English modal and French influences, which colour her later style, is fully evident here. For this reason, the *Lullaby* stands apart from the student violin sonatas completed between 1908–09, which demonstrate her natural talent for the manipulation of musical material but undeniably *sound* very different. The *Lullaby*, therefore, is a better indicator of what was to come. The three Coolidge works were examined in detail in Chapter 3 but are also referred to here to illustrate similarities with or differences from her other chamber works.

The non-Coolidge works differ from Clarke's Coolidge Festival submissions in several ways, being generally much shorter and mostly cast in a single movement.<sup>8</sup> For her festival pieces Clarke used the generic titles 'Sonata', 'Trio' and 'Rhapsody'

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<sup>4</sup> This volume, published 2003, contains the first publication of *Epilogue*, a republication of *Passacaglia on an Old English Tune* and an arrangement of *I'll Bid My Heart Be Still*.

<sup>5</sup> Despite the best efforts of the Rebecca Clarke Society to persuade the manager of Clarke's estate in the USA to allow the publication of more works, the majority of those still unpublished are likely to remain inaccessible for the foreseeable future.

<sup>6</sup> *Tempo* Vol. 160 (1987), 16.

<sup>7</sup> Macdonald had not seen this work at the time of writing his article.

<sup>8</sup> The *Rhapsody* (written to commission, *not* as a competition entry) is in a long single movement, but in three continuous sections.

and one of the major differences in most of her non-Coolidge pieces is their descriptive titles, or titles with extra-musical associations such as *Morpheus* and *Midsummer Moon*. However, as Ex. 4.1 shows, several non-Coolidge pieces also lack descriptive titles: *Prelude, Allegro and Pastorale* and *Epilogue* are examples. Moreover, to assume that a difference in title signifies a different compositional approach is to ignore the evidence of the music itself.

Thus, the similarities between the Coolidge and non-Coolidge works are manifold, and particularly concern how the music is constructed, with the repetition and transformation of motifs remaining fundamental. In this way, the *Viola Sonata, Trio* and *Rhapsody* do *not* represent Clarke's adopting a significantly different technique to that of her other chamber music. The major difference was that the Coolidge works were significantly longer than many of her earlier works and those post-1923. However, Susan Mina, another Clarke scholar, disagrees:

The *Viola Sonata* is such a profoundly different sounding work that it is almost difficult to believe that it came from the same pen as the single movement viola works. It is much more extroverted, forward, assertive, martial, fast, and loud...The opposition of the short viola works and the *Sonata* stems not only from the difference in intention (personal versus public realm), but additionally from Clarke's need to create a piece for society which would appeal to its traditional tastes in compositional form and technique. Unsurprisingly, her public piece, the *Viola Sonata*, attracted much attention, while her more personal and subtle works were practically forgotten and remain so to this day.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Susan R Mina: Rebecca Clarke: 'An Evaluation of Her Published and Unpublished Viola Works in the Context of Her Life as a Violist and Composer for the 'Viola'. From website: <http://ftp.acns.nwu.edu/~srmina/rc.html> (Accessed October 2001).



These comments, however, do little to promote Clarke's music. When discussing the Viola Sonata, Mina gives the impression that Clarke adopted a stance different to her natural one, presumably in order to give herself the best chance of winning the competition. As evidence of this she has compared the single movement viola works with the Viola Sonata and, noting differences, claims the Viola Sonata to be the 'odd one out'. This, however, has taken no account of much of Clarke's other chamber music, which has more in common with the Viola Sonata than the works with which she compares it.

The generalisation which classes the Viola Sonata as an 'extroverted, forward, assertive, martial, fast and loud' work summarizes one of Clarke's greatest achievements as traditional and overblown, a view backed up by Mina's final statement that 'the Viola Sonata attracted much attention, while her more personal and subtle works were practically forgotten.' To characterise the sonata in this way and to imply that all the other viola works belong to another sphere, is to oversimplify the situation to such an extent as to give a flawed impression of Clarke's chamber writing.

Another misleading comment is that the Viola Sonata and the single movement viola works were written for different realms: personal versus public. Mina's comment conveniently ignores *Morpheus*, which was premiered in 1918 at a concert at the Aeolian Hall, New York, and the *Prelude, Allegro and Pastorale*, premiered at the 19<sup>th</sup> Festival of the International Festival for Music in Berkeley, California, on 6 August 1942. These are hardly private venues.

To compare the attention received by the Viola Sonata to that received by Clarke's other works is also unfair. A competition, especially one in which there was a battle for first place, was certain to attract newspaper attention and give the Viola



Sonata a head start in the race for recognition. Contemporary newspaper reports, though, were often as complimentary towards her 'other' works as they were towards Clarke's Viola Sonata. The reviewer writing below in *The Daily Telegraph* even preferred some of Clarke's other works to her Viola Sonata:

Compositions for piano and viola are rare enough, and [the Viola Sonata]...is entitled to some consideration amongst native works for that combination; but we could not but prefer the lesser 'Lullaby' – a work of real feminine charm – and the well-named 'Grotesque'.<sup>10</sup>

The reason why many of these works remained unknown for so many years is simply because they are either still unpublished or have only been published very recently, rather than because of societal indifference towards particular types of chamber work.

Because of their number, the chamber works are best divided into subcategories. Those I have chosen divide Clarke's output into largely chronological groups: in 1908 and 1909 two of Clarke's compositions won her substantial monetary prizes at the Royal College of Music; the years 1909–18 saw the emergence and refining of her mature style; three significant works contemporary with her Coolidge submissions date from 1918–23 and offer valuable insights into the more illustrious competition pieces written over the same period; two string quartets date from c.1924 and 1926; then after a lengthy period in which Clarke wrote very little – and no chamber music – her final pieces date from during the Second World War, when circumstances forced her to settle in the US. I have also

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<sup>10</sup> Unnamed reviewer: *The Daily Telegraph*, 22 October 1925, 8.

included one other category, 'Shorter Works', which deals with the few remaining pieces, written at various times in Clarke's career.

**(i) Clarke's Prize-winning Student Chamber Works (1908–09)**

During her two-year period at the Royal College of Music Clarke received two prizes for composition. These were RCM Council Exhibitions: financial awards given to students of all musical disciplines studying at the college. In her memoir Clarke cites two works, *Theme and Variations* (1908) and *Danse Bizarre* (1909), as those for which she was awarded prizes. Reported in *The Times*, the awards were to the value of £20 in 1908, and £12 for the following year; in each year the amount given was one of the highest-value prizes awarded. Neither of these works has been published, and until July 2002 both were thought to be lost.<sup>11</sup> Now that they have been rediscovered it is possible to assess their value for the first time.

Clarke's *Theme and Variations* for solo piano is her first extended chamber work and was completed during her first year of study under Stanford. She refers to it in her memoir in typically modest terms:

For me the high point of each week was [the] composition lesson. Sir Charles began by making me write a few themes for variations, and after choosing the least feeble of the lot got me started on the variations themselves. It was hard work squeezing them out, and I remember little about them except that at one point I had the audacity to dispute a suggestion he made...All the same, those variations (now lost, and a good thing too) did gain me at the end of the term an Exhibition – a sum of money covering half my fees for the year.<sup>12</sup>

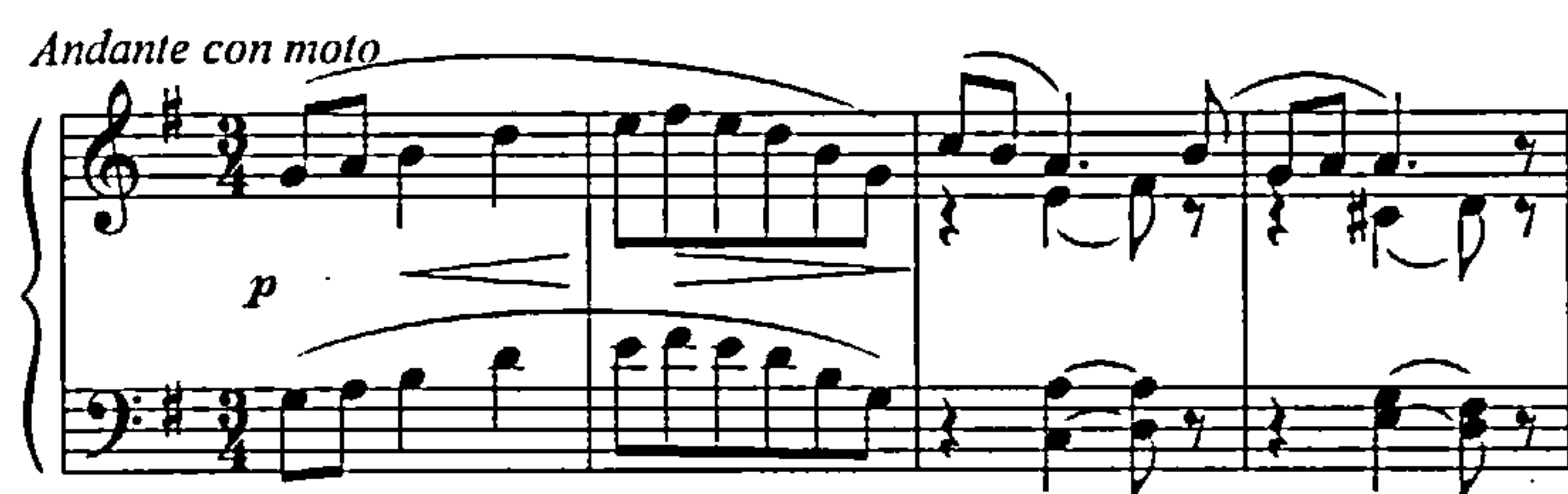
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<sup>11</sup> They were discovered at Clarke's former apartment in New York.

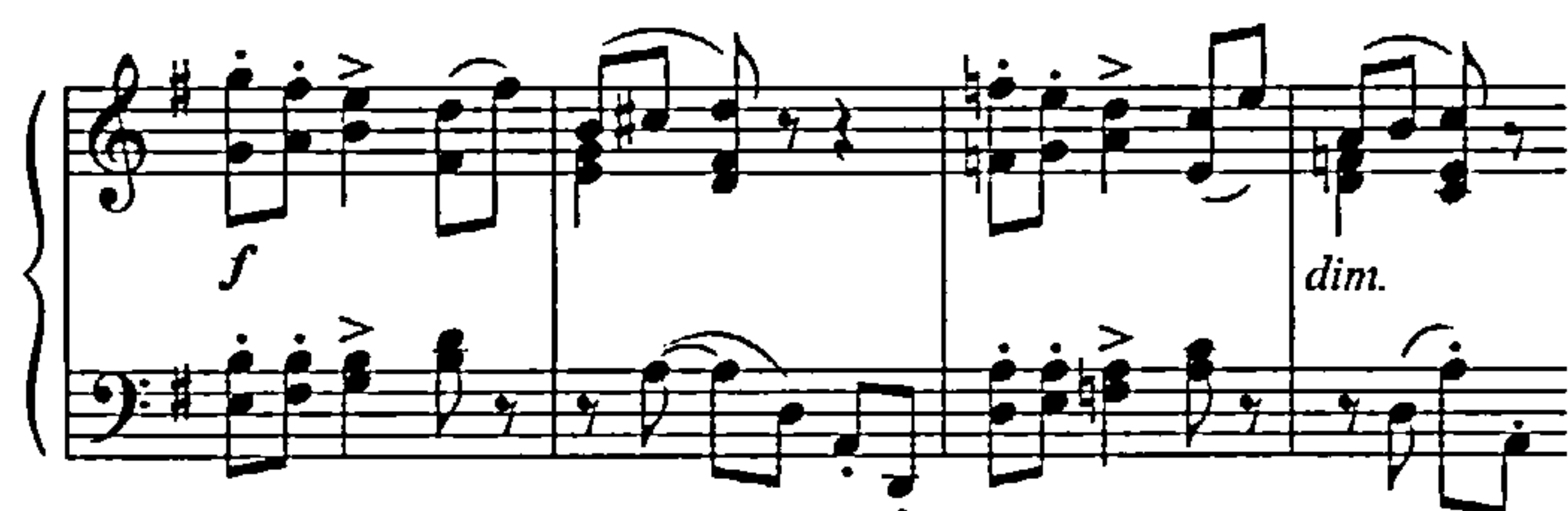
<sup>12</sup> Clarke, *I Had a Father Too*, Chap. 7, 37.

The work consists of a short theme (nineteen bars), sixteen variations and a Finale. The simple theme divides into two parts, A and B, separated by a double barline (Exx. 4.2a and b show the beginnings of these two sections). These contrast in dynamics and articulation, but the end of B is similar to the beginning of A so there is a satisfying conclusion even within a small framework.

**Ex. 4.2a: *Theme and Variations*, Theme, bars 1–4**



**Ex. 4.2b: *Ibid.*, bars 9–12**



In her later chamber music, the technique of altering themes through variation and motivic metamorphosis was as central to Clarke's style as it was to her contemporary Frank Bridge; therefore this early work shows her beginning to develop the skills she would use throughout her career. The sixteen variations differ in a number of ways, although they rarely stray from the original key of G major (see Ex. 4.3). In her memoir, Clarke describes a conversation with her fugue and counterpoint teacher, Sir Frederick Bridge:

“But the trouble with you is, Miss Clarke, you're like a goat.”

“I beg your pardon?” I said, wondering what on earth he meant.



“Yes,” he said, “you can’t get away from the keynote: it’s like a goat that’s tied to a post. Every time the poor goat tries to get to a nice fresh bit of grass it keeps getting pulled back. You should modulate more.” It was good advice, and I’ve often thought of it.<sup>13</sup>

It is not known to which work (or exercise) Bridge was referring, but this reluctance to modulate is not a feature of her post-Royal College of Music work. In the *Theme and Variations* Clarke is clearly not afraid to touch on other keys but her modulations are passing as opposed to structural.

Clarke achieves the most obvious contrast in the variations through altering their time signatures. The theme is in 3/4 but variations appear in 2/4, 3/4, 4/8, 3/8, 6/8, 4/4, and one flits between 2/4 and 3/4. Clarke also changes the tempo of each variation, ranging from *Largo* to *Presto* as Ex. 4.3 shows.

**Ex. 4.3: *Theme and Variations*, tempo markings, time signature and key of each variation**

| Variation | Tempo marking           | Time signature                    | Key      |
|-----------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Theme     | <i>Andante con moto</i> | 3/4                               | G major  |
| 1         | <i>Allegretto</i>       | 2/4                               | G major  |
| 2         | <i>Largo</i>            | 3/4                               | G minor  |
| 3         | <i>Allegro</i>          | 3/4                               | G major  |
| 4         | <i>Andante</i>          | 4/8                               | G major  |
| 5         | <i>Allegro</i>          | 3/4                               | G major  |
| 6         | <i>Andante</i>          | 3/4                               | G minor  |
| 7         | <i>Presto</i>           | 3/8                               | G major  |
| 8         | <i>Andante con moto</i> | 3/4                               | G major  |
| 9         | <i>Allegro molto</i>    | 6/8                               | G major  |
| 10        | <i>Largo</i>            | Alternates between<br>2/4 and 3/4 | G minor  |
| 11        | <i>Allegro molto</i>    | 6/8                               | G major  |
| 12        |                         | 3/4                               | D Dorian |
| 13        | <i>Andante con moto</i> | 3/4                               | G major  |

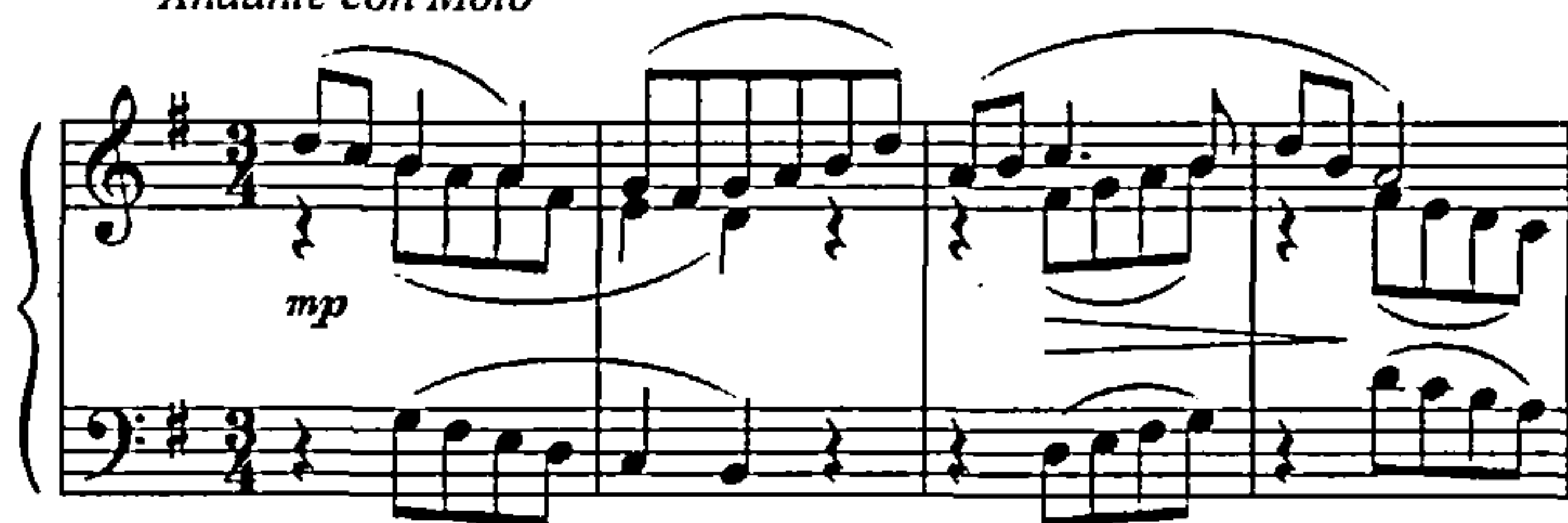
<sup>13</sup> Clarke, *I Had a Father Too*, Chap. 7, 33.

|        |                         |     |         |
|--------|-------------------------|-----|---------|
| 14     | <i>Andante con moto</i> | C   | G major |
| 15     | <i>Allegretto</i>       | 6/8 | G major |
| 16     | <i>Molto espressivo</i> | 3/4 | E minor |
| Finale | <i>Andante</i>          | 3/4 | G major |

Some variations use the entire theme, others only the first part (A), selected phrases from both A and B, or they build an entire variation from a thematic cell. Clarke also uses inversion (in Variations 8 and 12, see Ex. 4.4), changes of tempo, alterations in rhythm (as in Ex. 4.5), and embellishments of the original theme (in Variation 2). In some variations Clarke emphasises the ‘folkish’ qualities of the theme, for example in Variation 4 she uses a ‘Scottish snap’ (see Ex. 4.5), in Variation 14 a droning accompaniment beneath a jig-like melody, and Variation 12 is set in the Dorian mode.

**Ex. 4.4: *Theme and Variations*, Variation 8, bars 1–4**

*Andante con Moto*



**Ex. 4.5: *Ibid.*, Variation 4, bars 1–5**

*Andante*



The general style of each variation differs too, ranging from the simple to the broadly Romantic, and they show a number of different musical moods which Clarke would use again in later works. In all, this was an important ‘learning’ work for Clarke, in

which she began to hone her skill in manipulating material and altering musical moods.

Clarke's three movement<sup>14</sup> *Danse Bizarre* ('Prelude', 'Danse Bizarre', 'Nocturne') for two violins and piano dates from the second year of her study at the Royal College of Music, and in her memoir she explains a little about the work's background:

Stanford sent me in for another Exhibition with a piece I had just finished called *Danse Bizarre* for two violins – always referred to him as my Bazaar Dance – and I played it at the audition with one of the best violinists at college, a girl called Sidney Bostock, for whom I had a great crush at the time. We were both lucky: she and I were each awarded an Exhibition<sup>15</sup> of twice the usual amount. And walking on air up Exhibition Road on our way home, we wondered jubilantly how many Exhibitioners had commented on the suitability of its name.<sup>16</sup>

*Danse Bizarre* is stylistically closer to Clarke's early violin sonata-form works than to her later chamber pieces, or even the *Lullaby* of the same year, being clearly Romantic in style. However, the writing is impassioned and convincing and the techniques she used in this early work to organise thematic material are similar to those used throughout Clarke's career.

In the opening 'Prelude' most of the thematic material is derived from two early motifs, shown as x and x1 in Ex. 4.6. These motifs are closely related, but the rhythmic characteristics of each are distinct: x1 is a more expressive development of

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<sup>14</sup> A fourth movement was begun but remained unfinished.

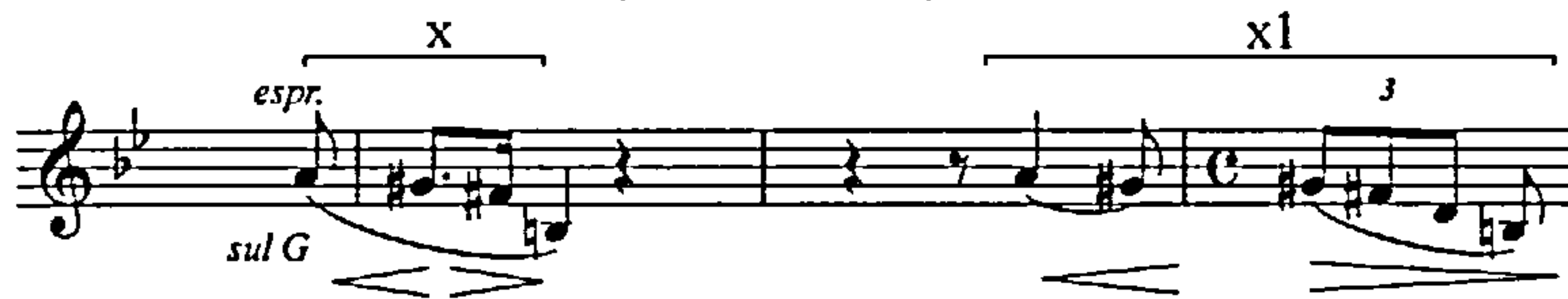
<sup>15</sup> Presumably in this case Clarke was awarded the Exhibition for composition, Bostock for performance.

<sup>16</sup> *I Had a Father Too*, Chap. 7, 54.

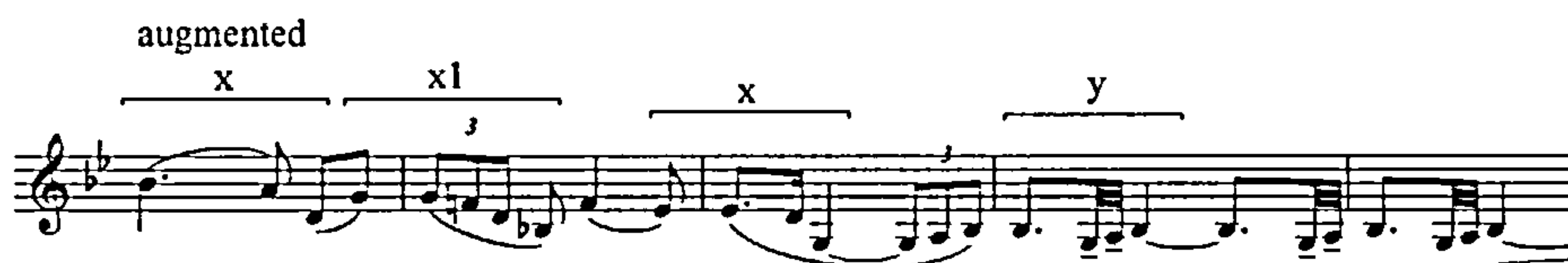


x. Both motifs reappear with slight alterations throughout the 'Prelude', often without their anacruses: an early example of a device which would be fundamental to Clarke's compositional technique from then on. Ex. 4.7 shows how she uses x and x1 to create a long, flowing, Romantic melody, initially heard (as shown) in the second violin, but which reappears in both other instruments. Another significant motif, y, is introduced here too, and this also returns frequently. Notably the dotted rhythm in x prepares for y as Clarke moves between motifs with a seamless approach.

**Ex.4.6: *Danse Bizarre*, 'Prelude', bars 3–5 (violin 1)**



**Ex. 4.7: *Ibid.*, bars 10–14 (violin 2)**



The second movement, 'Danse Bizarre', is an energetic unrelenting *Vivace*: a forerunner of the second movement (also marked *Vivace*) of Clarke's Viola Sonata. Several features of this movement make it particularly interesting. First, Clarke begins with an almost exclusively pentatonic melody (F#, G, Bb, D, E) in the piano beneath a double pedal, G and D, in the violins, an early example of her experimentation with different modes.<sup>17</sup> Secondly, Clarke uses some interesting rhythmic devices, such as that shown in Ex. 4.8, in which triplets in the violins occur simultaneously with semiquavers in the piano, divided between the hands. There are also frequent changes of time signature, and a switch from simple to compound time

<sup>17</sup> Clarke used Orientalisms such as this several times in later works.

in the *Presto* towards the end. Other techniques, which would later become typical of her style, appear here too, such as using large-scale repeats of earlier material.

**Ex. 4.8: *Ibid.*, ‘Danse Bizarre’, bars 30–33**

Taking a little under ten minutes to perform, the ‘Nocturne’ is the longest movement of the three. A mysterious *pianissimo* beginning, *Adagio*, in which triadic chords high in the piano chime like distant bells (Ex. 4.9) between snatches of a low, unison melody on the two violins, gives way to an unfolding Romantic melody (and countermelody) in the piano whilst the violins continue their themes from the opening (Ex. 4.10). The writing becomes more complex, the textures busier, in a slow build to a sustained *fortissimo* climax. Here the violins soar ever higher, each imitating and weaving around the other. This gently distils and leads to a serene *pianissimo* ending, finally coming to rest in C major.

**Ex. 4.9: *Ibid.*, ‘Nocturne’, bars 1–4**

Ex. 4.10: *Ibid.*, bars 8–14

These early works were clearly important to Clarke's development as a composer because they gave her experience in manipulating musical material in different ways. It is clear that the techniques she developed here remained important in her later works. The fact that they were completed under the watchful eye of Britain's leading teacher of composition was also an important factor.

**(ii) The Emergence and Development of Clarke's Mature Style (1909–18)**

Clarke's most significant early work dates from the second year of her study at the Royal College of Music under Stanford. This is the first of three lullabies (1909,<sup>18</sup> c.1913 and 1918) and the second of a significant number of 'nocturnally-themed' chamber pieces (the first being the third movement of *Danse Bizarre*), which include

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<sup>18</sup> The date of composition is not certain, but is that suggested by Clarke's grandnephew by marriage, Christopher Johnson, in the Oxford University Press edition (2002). Johnson catalogued Clarke's works, with her collaboration, in 1977, so the date is likely to be correct.



*Morpheus* and *Midsummer Moon*. Notably, sleep or dreams are themes in several of Clarke's songs too (see Chapter 5). The *Lullaby* was published for the first time in 2002,<sup>19</sup> and this explains why it has often been overlooked as an important work in Clarke's output.

It was Stanford's suggestion that Clarke switch from the violin to the viola as her first choice of performing instrument, and it is not surprising to find her earliest chamber works written for instruments that she played herself. The 1909 *Lullaby* is her first piece for the viola, so it is likely that this was the year in which she changed instruments. Although a short, single-movement work of only fifty-seven bars, the *Lullaby* is crucially important because it is the first in which Clarke's mature musical language – which mixes various modal, diatonic and chromatic elements – is clearly visible. In this way it stands apart from the early student sonata movements discussed in Chapter 2, and indeed the two prize-winning works examined above, which are important as her first large-scale works but less indicative of her later musical style. In the *Lullaby* Clarke uses English modal melodies for the first time and combines these with the 'French' harmonic inflections – particularly chords with an added seventh or ninth – that she assimilated from the music of Debussy and Ravel.

The structure of the *Lullaby* is fairly simple, with two main thematic ideas shown as A and B in the table below (Ex. 4.11).

**Ex. 4.11: *Lullaby* (1909), structure**

| Thematic Material | Bar numbers |
|-------------------|-------------|
| A                 | 1–16        |
| B                 | 17–28       |
| A <sub>1</sub>    | 29–47       |
| A and B combined  | 48–57       |

<sup>19</sup> Along with several of Clarke's other works for viola and piano under the title *Shorter Pieces for Viola*, Oxford University Press.

After a brief piano introduction the viola begins a folk-like Aeolian melody (A) in which steadily rising and falling phrases suggest the regular breathing of the sleeping baby or a continuous rocking motion (Ex. 4.12). The use of such modal melodies, with their particularly 'English' sound, is evident in many of Clarke's mature chamber works, including those written for Coolidge competitions. In fact, part of the melody used here is very similar to that which appears at the beginning of the third movement of Clarke's later Viola Sonata both in rhythm and melodic contour (see Ex. 3.16). Chromatic alterations to the middle note of a triadic chord, changing major to minor or visa versa, are a feature of this work, and appear initially in the first bar of piano introduction (Ex. 4.12). The rhythmic grouping of a triplet in the left hand against a duplet in the right hand (bar 1) also appears extensively in her later works, though appears only in passing here.

**Ex. 4.12: *Lullaby* (1909), bars 1–6 (start of A theme)**

The musical score for Ex. 4.12 is presented in two systems. The first system (bars 1-4) begins with a piano introduction. The viola part (top staff) is in 3/4 time and features a folk-like Aeolian melody. The piano accompaniment (middle and bottom staves) includes a triplet in the left hand against a duplet in the right hand in the first bar. Dynamics include *mp* and *p*. The second system (bars 5-6) continues the A theme, showing the viola melody and piano accompaniment with various textures and dynamics.

The piano writing in the *Lullaby* is always assured, and shows a greater diversity of textures than Clarke's early sonata movements. The experience of

writing for the piano in the *Theme and Variations* had clearly helped. Rolled chords in bars 3–5 imitate a traditional harp accompaniment beneath the viola’s ‘folk’ melody. Arpeggios divided between the hands later in A give way to high shimmering effects at the start of the secondary thematic material, B, (Ex. 4.13) and later (in A<sub>1</sub>) to thick triadic chords, as the accompaniment provides a changing background. Towards the end the piano is brought more to the fore when Clarke combines the two principal themes, A and B: the Aeolian melody from the beginning in the viola, and the B theme now in the left hand of the piano, beneath a steadily descending chromatic scale in octaves in the right. To have created two themes which fit together so well in this way was another important stage in Clarke’s development and was a technique she developed further in her Viola Sonata.

**Ex. 4.13: *Ibid.*, bars 17–18 (start of B theme)**

Clearly, a lullaby has stylistic limitations: movement away from a mood of quiet tranquillity would be inappropriate. However, the B section *does* contrast with the A material without being completely opposing in mood. The undulating melodies from the opening give way to rather more agitated phrases, often beginning with a series of repeated notes with the same rhythmic pattern as those shown in Ex. 4.13; perhaps the sleeper has become restless. The most important aspects of this work, though, are the subtle transformations of the A material which occur in its second



appearance, described as  $A_1$  in Ex. 4.11.  $A_1$  begins like A, but without the two-bar piano introduction and with an altered accompaniment. The melody begins to depart from A in the sixth bar where it slides smoothly into a whole-tone ascent (bar 35, Ex. 4.14) rather than continuing with the Aeolian theme. Seventh chords, with an occasional ninth and diminished octave, now dominate the accompaniment. (The diminished octave chord appears prominently in Clarke's 1911–12 songs *Shy One* and *The Cloths of Heaven*.) Parallel chords whose roots are a minor third apart (Ex. 4.14, bar 36) are characteristically Debussyan. This deviation away from the A material lasts only for eight bars but it marks a turning point for Clarke: her harmonic thinking has now clearly absorbed more 'advanced' or 'modern' ideas. But these do not predominate; rather they are used as a way of achieving contrast. This juxtaposition of passages and ideas from diverse sources is something Clarke had not done before, but would do many times in the future.

**Ex. 4.14: *Ibid.*, bars 33–36**

Clarke followed her 1909 *Lullaby* four years later with another, again scored for viola and piano. This second *Lullaby* has the subtitle *An Arrangement of an Ancient Irish Tune*, though Clarke does not identify this. At first glance this work does not appear particularly remarkable; it is short (fifty bars), and employs seemingly straightforward thematic material which is used in repetition.

The introductory piano figure (Ex. 4.15) consists of two short phrases, of which the second is longer than the first, giving the rocking motion a slightly uneven feel. This is the basis for much of the piano accompaniment.

**Ex. 4.15: *Lullaby: an Arrangement of an Ancient Irish Tune*, bars 1–3**



The viola melody, which enters in the fifth bar, hovers between the Lydian mode and Db major. The Lydian mode – much rarer in English folk music than the Aeolian or Dorian – has a raised fourth, and where Clarke uses this (bars 7 and 9) she quickly flattens it again. Ex. 4.16a shows this melody and 4.16b the Db Lydian mode. Beneath this the accompaniment is largely, though not exclusively, octatonic (collection I, Ex. 3.9); the Eb shown in Ex. 4.15 is not part of this collection, but much of the remaining material is. This is Clarke’s first known use of this distinctively modern-sounding device; she later used octatonicism quite extensively in her Viola Sonata and Trio, but *Lullaby: an Arrangement of an Ancient Irish Tune* predates that work by some six years, making it another important and previously overlooked stage in her development as a composer.

**Ex. 4.16a: *Ibid.*, bars 6–13 (viola part only)**



### Ex. 4.16b: Db Lydian mode



Clarke's untitled work for viola and piano of 1917–18 was, until 2002, known only in an incomplete version, as Christopher Johnson explains in the 'Editorial Notes' to the first publication:

The manuscript originally consisted of eight pages on two folded sheets, but the sheets became separated while in Clarke's possession. In 1976, she presented only the outer sheet for cataloguing, either failing to notice the slightly odd join between the present mm. 27 and 71 or finding it plausible, and in this truncated form the piece was circulated, performed and recorded. The inner sheet was recently discovered in a box of loose sketches and blank staff-paper found in a closet in Clarke's former apartment.<sup>20</sup>

The work is contemporary with *Morpheus* but does not appear to have been a forerunner to the 1919 Viola Sonata in the way that *Morpheus* seems to be, although there are a few similarities in style. The repeated chords in the opening bars for piano (Ex. 4.17), which continue beneath the viola melody from bar 3, are similar in mood to the opening of *Morpheus* (Ex. 4.21). One declamatory rhythmic motif is particularly similar to one early in the Viola Sonata, as Exx. 4.18a and b demonstrate.

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<sup>20</sup> Johnson, C: 'Editorial notes' to *Rebecca Clarke, Shorter Pieces for Viola and Piano*, 2002, 1.



Ex. 4.17: Untitled (1917–18), bars 1–5

Musical score for Ex. 4.17, bars 1–5. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a single melodic line in the treble clef and a piano accompaniment in the grand staff. The tempo markings 'rit.' and 'a tempo' are present. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' above it.

Ex. 4.18a: *Ibid.*, bars 12–13

Musical score for Ex. 4.18a, bars 12–13. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a single melodic line in the treble clef and a piano accompaniment in the grand staff. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' below it.

Ex. 4.18b: *Viola Sonata*, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, bars 12–13

Musical score for Ex. 4.18b, bars 12–13. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a single melodic line in the treble clef and a piano accompaniment in the grand staff. The tempo markings 'allarg.' and 'Poco agitato' are present. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' below it.

We can see that Clarke did not intend this piece for publication, or perhaps even for public performance, because it is untitled and because there is not a single dynamic marking for either instrument throughout (though she often used fewer performance directions on pieces that she intended to perform herself). However, its importance lies in the fact that it is an exercise in whole-tone writing, with increasingly lengthy whole-tone phrases appearing as the work progresses. This could make her allegiance closer to Debussy than to Ravel (who largely avoided

what he saw as Debussy's province). Ex. 4.19 shows the opening viola melody with these phrases clearly marked. Clarke had used this scale before, but never as extensively. After this work it was fully assimilated into her musical style and recurs (as a melodic, rather than harmonic, feature) frequently in her later chamber pieces.

**Ex. 4.19: Untitled (1917–18), bars 3–9 (viola part only)**



These pre-1918 chamber works gave Clarke experience in inventing imaginative textures and distinct musical atmospheres, some utterly tranquil, some impassioned and compelling and some energetic. In short, without these early experimental works there would have been no *Viola Sonata*, *Trio* or *Rhapsody*.

**(iii) The 'Alternative' Coolidge Years (1917–23)**

For several years after she left the Royal College of Music, Clarke concentrated almost exclusively on songs and choral works. It must be remembered, too, that at this time she was earning a living through work as a professional violist, so she did not always have the time she may have wanted to compose. *Morpheus*, for viola and piano, was in some ways her most ambitious chamber work since her early violin sonatas (1908–09), and the first to achieve any critical acclaim. As a concert violist she noted the lack of solo repertoire and wrote *Morpheus* for herself, giving the premiere with Katherine Ruth Heyman (piano) on 13 February 1918 at the Aeolian Hall, New York. On the concert programme the composer was given as 'Anthony

Trent', and it is ironic that reviews singled out Trent as the name to watch. Clarke herself spoke about this in a 1976 interview:

...although the piece by Anthony Trent was not particularly good it had much more attention paid to it than the [two other] pieces that I had written, I mean in my own name, which was rather a joke...And people would ask me about Anthony Trent, and I was rather self conscious at having invented him and I think I would blush...and I think I could see in their faces that they thought 'ah yes, there's a romance somewhere...'<sup>21</sup>

Sadly, this media interest was never followed up as *Morpheus* was published for the first time in 2002.

Morpheus is the god of dreams, one of the sons of Sleep, who appears in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:

Then Father Sleep chose from among his sons,  
His thronging thousand sons, one who in skill  
Excelled to imitate the human form;  
Morpheus his name, than whom none can present  
More cunningly the features, gait and speech  
Of men, their wonted clothes and turn of phrase.  
He mirrors only men...<sup>22</sup>

By imitating family, friends, enemies or loved ones, Morpheus stimulates dreams.

Clarke uses similar techniques in her score, where themes often reappear slightly

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<sup>21</sup> Interview with Robert Sherman, 1976.

<sup>22</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, XI, 'Ceyx and Alcyone' (AD 2). Translated by A D Melville, Oxford University Press (1986).



altered (or imitated) in some way, perhaps swapping instruments, using a different accompaniment, or appearing in a different register. She had already experimented with these means of manipulating material in her previous works, but here they seem particularly apt.

As the table in Ex. 4.20 shows, *Morpheus* employs two groups of thematic material, A and B, which are similar in mood and design (see annotations in Exx. 4.21 and 4.22) and yet different enough to be labelled A and B rather than A and A<sub>1</sub>. Within each section, certain phrases (or parts of them) are repeated.

**Ex. 4.20: Organisation of thematic material in *Morpheus***

| Thematic Material | Bar Numbers         |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| A                 | 1–20                |
| B                 | 21–46               |
| A                 | 47–75               |
| B                 | 76–87 <sup>23</sup> |

**Ex. 4.21: *Morpheus*, bars 1–4 (A material)**

Ben moderato  
con sord.

x y

pp sempre

3

<sup>23</sup> Two manuscript sources exist for *Morpheus*, though only one seems to have been circulated and used in performance. The Oxford University Press edition (2002) uses this ‘performed’ manuscript as its primary text, but includes parallel texts to show where the two versions differ. The published edition is eighty-seven bars long, with the eighty-second bar marked ‘senza misura ma in tempo’. In an alternative ending, from the other manuscript source, Clarke bars this as normal (it is no longer ‘senza misura’) and rewrites the last five bars so they now include an extra bar. The ‘other’ source, therefore, is ninety-one bars long, not eighty-seven, though the musical material in both is almost identical.

Ex. 4.22: *Ibid.*, bars 21–23 (B material)

Clarke's handling of thematic material in *Morpheus* shows a marked development from her earliest chamber works. Within each A and B section she weaves together melodic strands in increasingly complex textures with overlapping, fugato entries in the viola and piano. In *Morpheus* A and B material is only briefly combined, when the accompanimental figure in the second A section uses a rhythmic pattern derived from B. Also, they are not metamorphosed as they are in the *Viola Sonata*, although a change of mood in *Morpheus* would seem inappropriate to the programmatic suggestions of the title.

In one of the most tranquil openings of Clarke's entire repertoire, *Morpheus* begins with both instruments together; the muted viola weaving its *pianissimo* theme through a repeated figure in the piano, which continues (with slightly altered harmonies) through the first eight bars (see Ex. 4.21). Even more effectively than in the 1909 *Lullaby*, Clarke depicts the sleeper's breathing, here through the steadily rising and falling crotchet chords over a double Eb and Bb pedal in the accompaniment as well as in the undulating melody. The B material covers a wider range of notes in the viola line than A, with demisemiquavers at the start of bar 21 (Ex. 4.22) suggesting a flicker of movement, perhaps a moment of restlessness (though Clarke is careful to mark this 'Calme') before the minim-crotchet figure in bar 22 with an ascending arpeggio in the piano brings back the tranquillity of the A

material. Phrase endings throughout B often include a swooping downward gesture such as this.

Completed the year before the Viola Sonata, *Morpheus* never nears the imposing mood of the later work's opening bars: that would be to disturb its idyll. However, the feeling of absolute calm that permeates *Morpheus does* appear in the Sonata, particularly in the third movement. Several melodic ideas from the Viola Sonata clearly have their roots in *Morpheus*, too, making it in some ways a precursor to Clarke's celebrated Sonata, in the same way that the later *Epilogue* (1921) for cello and piano paved the way for the *Rhapsody* (1923). Exx. 4.22 and 4.23, 4.24a and b and 4.25a (right hand of piano part) and b show three such similar themes from *Morpheus* and the Viola Sonata.

**Ex. 4.23: Viola Sonata, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bars 32–33**

**Ex. 4.24a: *Morpheus*, bars 35–36, viola part**

**Ex. 4.24b: Viola Sonata, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, bars 13–14**



Ex. 4.25a: *Morpheus*, bars 29–30

Ex. 4.25b: *Viola Sonata*, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bars 57–58

Throughout *Morpheus* the harmonic language is largely diatonic, with chromatic inflections usually saved for passing accompanimental figures, or to colour a melodic line. Clarke uses Ravellian ascending and descending black-note glissandi (as in the second movement of the *Viola Sonata*, see Ex. 3.11) beneath part of the reappearance of the A material to create a new texture, and the brief cadenza for the viola towards the end of that section is exclusively whole-tone. These two elements add to the timeless, otherworldly atmosphere. At the end of the work Clarke inverts the descending fifths, which appeared throughout the B material, to finish with a series of rising fifths in the piano as Morpheus serenely disappears and the dream evaporates into nothing (Ex. 4.26).

Ex. 4.26: *Morpheus*, bars 85–87

Despite the fact that critical attention after the premiere of *Morpheus* focused on ‘Anthony Trent’, Clarke must have taken heart from the way that the work was received. Perhaps this gave her confidence to attempt the Viola Sonata the following year, and encouraged her to retain some links between the two viola and piano works. *Morpheus* and the Viola Sonata gave Clarke invaluable experience in developing themes and manipulating motifs, and with these skills assimilated into her compositional thinking, it is not surprising that the 1921<sup>24</sup> *Epilogue* for cello and

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<sup>24</sup> There is some confusion about the date of composition. In the Oxford University Press edition of the *Shorter Pieces for Cello and Piano* (2003) in which *Epilogue* is published for the first time, Christopher Johnson states in the Editorial Notes that in 1976 Rebecca Clarke guessed the date of its composition to be around 1921. He continues, ‘The only known documentation for the piece, however, is Clarke’s diary-entry for January 26, 1932, when she went to hear May Mukle rehearse it. It was called *L’envoi* at that point, and this title is still barely visible through heavy crosshatching on the manuscript cello part.’ He remarks that if the piece dates from 1921 it is unusual that Clarke made no mention of it in her diaries before 1932, and adds, ‘Regardless of when *L’envoi* was written, it appears certain that Clarke changed the title and wrote out the surviving score after January 26, 1932, and thus seems to have connected the piece directly to her affair with the singer John Goss, which she had just ended (as she thought) after a “beastly year” that left her “too much misery to bear.”’ Johnson, however, has missed two important diary entries from 1930 and 1931: ‘Dec. 17 1930. Went to the Izard’s in the morning to hear Toddles try my cello piece “Epilogue”. Sounds rather well’ and ‘April 24 1931. Went to the Izard’s [sic] in the morning to hear Toddles play my cello piece with Miss Stein.’ If Johnson is suggesting the change of name to mean that Clarke saw it as an *Epilogue* to a difficult period in her life he has overlooked the fact that the name change occurred *before* the end of her affair.

I believe the complexity of *Epilogue* suggests it was written at a time when Clarke was utterly absorbed in her work (during the early 1920s), rather than during a period when she was engrossed in the emotional turmoil her affair with Goss evidently caused. During a 1976 interview with Robert Sherman, Clarke commented that she could not compose if there were other things occupying her mind. Also it should be noted that Clarke dedicated the work to Guilhermina Suggia, *not* Mukle, so it would seem unlikely that the 1932 rehearsal was for the work’s premiere – surely the premiere would have been given by Suggia? It is possible, too, that *Epilogue* predates Clarke’s diaries (therefore pre-1919) and that is why there are no references to it between 1919 and 1930. Johnson claims ‘it would have been highly uncharacteristic of her to have let the piece go completely unrecorded during a period when she was writing up minute details of her work on pieces far less



piano is a masterpiece in miniature. Written for her friend and colleague Guilhermina Suggia,<sup>25</sup> though only published in 2003,<sup>26</sup> *Epilogue* is immaculately constructed with themes woven together in a broad and impassioned single movement.

Two years later Clarke completed her large-scale *Rhapsody* for cello and piano, and in many ways *Epilogue*, though a quarter of the length of the *Rhapsody*, was a forerunner of that work. There are motivic similarities (cf Ex. 3.44, bars 3–4, with Ex. 4.28a, the start of the phrase marked b) and the overall character is similarly shadowy, though *Epilogue* is less extreme in its darkness, never veers far from its *Lento* tempo, and does not have the ominous undertones present throughout the *Rhapsody*. Other features of Clarke’s mature style are evident here too: a penchant for the rhythmic groupings of twos against threes; a strong sense of interplay between instruments; and the hint of modality in the B theme (Ex. 4.28d), emphasised by open fifths in the left hand of the accompaniment, but given a special twist, in true Clarke form, by the appearance of sevenths and ninths above the tonic in the right hand.

Essentially, as in *Morpheus*, there are two thematic groups, A and B, as the table in Ex. 4.27 shows:

**Ex. 4.27: Organisation of thematic material in *Epilogue***

| Section        | Bar numbers |
|----------------|-------------|
| A              | 1–14        |
| A <sub>1</sub> | 15–24       |
| B              | 25–36       |
| A <sub>2</sub> | 37–44       |
| B              | 38–41       |
| A <sub>1</sub> | 45–70 (end) |

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substantial’ but seems to ignore that fact that Clarke made no reference to its composition – only to hearing it performed – in her diaries. In fact several of Clarke’s works receive little attention in her diaries.

<sup>25</sup> It is not known whether Suggia ever performed *Epilogue*, though as she regularly took part in concerts with Clarke it would seem likely that she did.

<sup>26</sup> By Oxford University Press.



In A there are two important motifs, shown as 'a' and 'b' in Ex. 4.28a. Exx. 4.28b–c show how this theme is developed and becomes more urgent as the A material becomes transformed (via Ex. 4.28b) into A<sub>1</sub> (Ex. 4.28c), albeit in a continuously developing thought. The increased dynamic at the start of A<sub>1</sub>, and the unexpected drop to *piano* in bar 17 intensifies the character change. Although different rhythmically and more expansive, 'b<sub>1</sub>' (Ex. 4.28c) is similar in shape to 'b' (Ex. 4.28a), so links are retained. The dotted rhythm at the start of 'b<sub>1</sub>' grows out of 'a<sub>1</sub>' and the descending third at the end also links it with the A material. The first two bars of the B material (Ex. 4.28d) are identical in rhythm, and also have some similarities in shape, with b<sub>1</sub> in A<sub>1</sub> (see circled notes on Exx 4.28c and d), but now, without the descending thirds at the beginning (as in 'a' and 'a<sub>1</sub>'), the emphasis has changed, so that we start directly with an expressively legato phrase, thus making this new section immediately attract our attention.

Exx. 4.28a–c only show the cello part, but beneath this the piano accompaniment also becomes more complex as the work progresses, with increasing use of fugato entries of the melodic ideas first presented by the cello. In general the writing for both cello and piano is less florid than many of Clarke's other contemporary chamber works, though the mood is always impassioned and persuasive.

There is a declamatory feel about the start of *Epilogue*: rests between the short phrases in the opening line lend it its atmosphere of uncertainty, and the phrases, marked 'quasi recitativo', seem like rhetorical statements. Clarke achieves a similar effect at the beginning of the 1923 *Rhapsody*.

Ex. 4.28a: *Epilogue*, cello part, bars 1–2 (A)

Ex. 4.28b: *Ibid.*, cello part, bars 7–10 (later in A)

Ex. 4.28c: *Ibid.*, cello part, bars 15–18 (A<sub>1</sub>)

Ex. 4.28d: *Ibid.*, bars 29–30 (B)

In B, Clarke briefly explores then distorts themes in the Dorian (Ex. 4.28d) and Aeolian modes. This idea of gradually distorting modal elements to remove their modal quality is something she had already done in the third movement of the Viola Sonata and would later do in the *Rhapsody* (see Chapter 3). It shows Clarke's modern adaptation of traditional musical language.

The three-note motif marked section 'a' in Ex. 4.28a is given a more disconsolate feel later when the first and last notes are raised by a semitone, as in Ex.

4.29. Clarke would later use this new three-note motif throughout her song *Lethe* (1941) to indicate despair (see Chapter 5) and also appears in the dark *Rhapsody* (see Chapter 3). MacDonald detects a similar feeling in *Epilogue*, which he describes as an ‘expressive but emotionally troubled utterance...The ending is one of quiet despair.’<sup>27</sup> At the end of the work, a long, slow chromatic ascent in the piano, with searching quavers in the cello seems to seek resolution, which it finds in the final Ab major chord (Ex. 4.30). Clarke was not afraid to end works with an unresolved dissonance; indeed, her song *The Seal Man*, which dates from the same year as *Epilogue*, ends in such a way, so her use of a major chord at the end of this chamber work suggests that rather than concluding in despair, resolution *has* been found by the end, however suddenly it appears.

**Ex. 4.29: *Ibid.*, cello part, bars 23–24**



**Ex. 4.30: *Ibid.*, bars 68–70**

After the *Epilogue*, Clarke returned to a familiar theme for her next chamber work, and with *Midsummer Moon* created the next in her series of ‘night’ pieces.

<sup>27</sup> ‘Rebecca Clarke’s Chamber Music’, *Tempo*, Vol. 160 (March 1987), 22.



Scored for violin and piano, the work is dedicated to Clarke's friend, the celebrated violinist Adila Fachiri,<sup>28</sup> who performed in a string quartet with her sister, Jelly d'Aranyi (violin), Guilhermina Suggia (cello) and Clarke (viola) during the 1920s and 1930s. Fachiri gave the first performance of *Midsummer Moon* with Bertram Harrison (piano) on 12 May 1924 at the Wigmore Hall, London.<sup>29</sup>

The precise meaning of the title is, according to *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary*, 'a season when madness was supposed to be rife',<sup>30</sup> although other commentators seem to have missed this point. MacDonald and Ponder both assume 'Midsummer Moon' to be simply a reference to the moon in midsummer.<sup>31</sup> However, an understanding of the correct meaning of the title helps to explain the mysterious and slightly intangible quality of the atmosphere emanating from the opening bars, where unresolved discordant clashes operate within a restrained dynamic. This dark twilight feel continues through much of *Midsummer Moon*, with the stillness punctuated from time to time by an unexpected trill or tremolo which reflect the 'madness' suggested by the title through sudden agitation; a musical nervous tic. Clarke actually added the title *after* she had composed the work, recording in her diary: 'April 14 1924: Worked hard again all day, & got my piece finished after tea. I'm calling it "Midsummer Moon," which is the best title I can find that describes it.'

Throughout the work motifs and gestures are hazy and suggestive rather than bold and clear: a musical reflection of objects being observed in dim light. Piano chords are frequently blurred with the sustaining pedal and shapes seem to come in

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<sup>28</sup> Clarke recorded in her diary: 'Feb. 16, 1924: Started writing a fiddle piece using some old scraps I started a couple of years ago. Adila has asked me to do it for her recital in May.'

<sup>29</sup> Clarke recorded this event in her diary, simply as: 'Adila's concert in the evening. She played most beautifully & everyone seemed to like it.'

<sup>30</sup> A M MacDonald, ed., (W+R Chambers Ltd, Edinburgh, 1972/1981), 829.

<sup>31</sup> '*Midsummer Moon* of 1924 is her most exquisite miniature. Written for Adila Fachiri, it contains various flutterbird-like figures on the violin. Perhaps the *Midsummer Moon* is being serenaded by a nightingale.' (Ponder, CD liner notes to *Rebecca Clarke/ Midsummer Moon* (Dutton Digital CDLX 7105, recorded 1998, issued 2000). Also see MacDonald op. cit.

and out of focus, illuminated briefly by the moon's light before being cast by a shadow back into darkness. Ex. 4.31 shows the opening five bars. Here chords built on tritones (E–B $\flat$ , G $\sharp$ –D) dominate the accompaniment, whilst melodic augmented and diminished (D $\sharp$ –D, G–G $\sharp$ ) octaves in bar 2 (violin) are heard together in bar 3 (B in violin, B $\flat$  in piano) as Clarke establishes her eerie and mystical sound world. Above the clouded piano sonorities, the violin weaves a rhapsodic theme – much more florid in style than the Romantic themes in *Danse Bizarre* – which flits between octaves as if unsure how to proceed. There is a sensuousness about the luscious harmonies but we never feel the steadiness a firm harmonic foundation would bring. Clarke's midsummer moon appears to shine on a supernatural, twilight world.

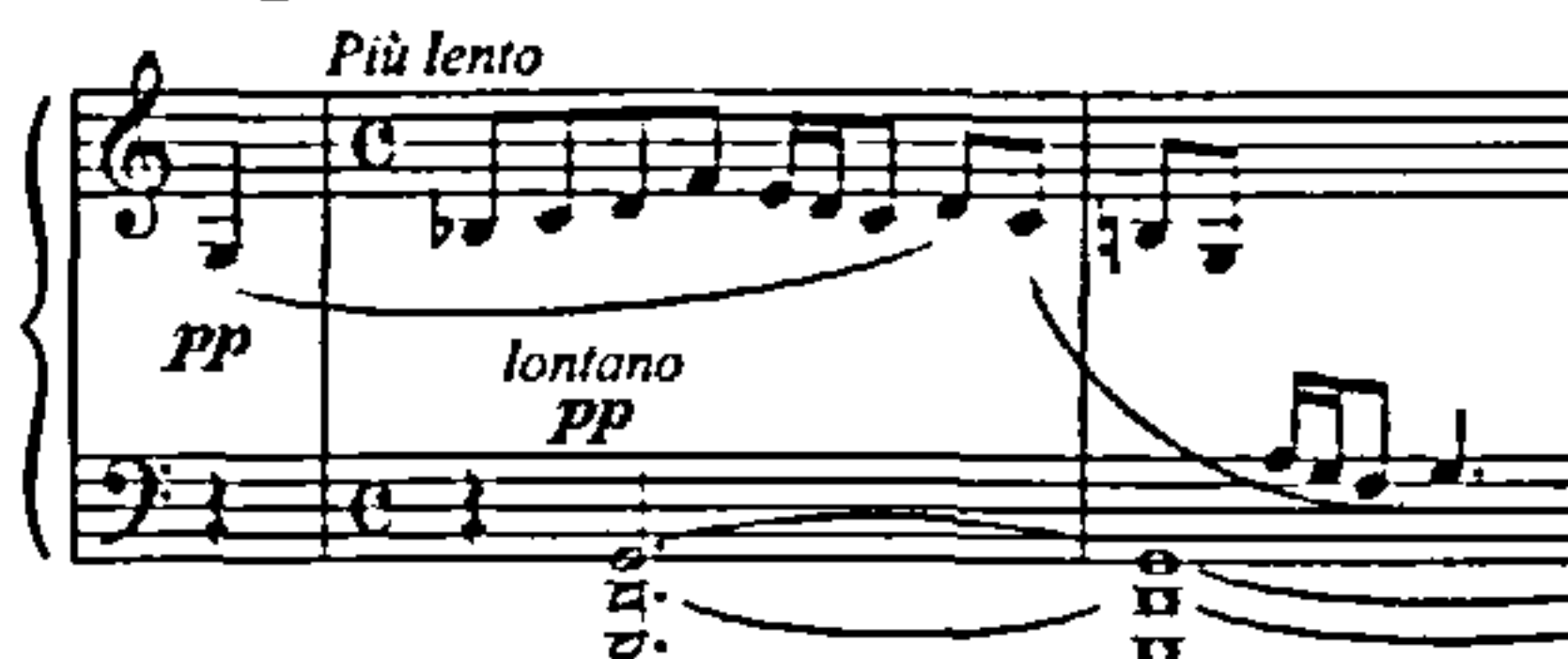
**Ex. 4.31: *Midsummer Moon*, bars 1–5 (start of section A)**

Despite the feeling of rhythmic freedom at the opening of this work, *Midsummer Moon* is as carefully constructed as any of Clarke's mature chamber works. As the table in Ex. 4.32 shows, the thematic material divides into three groups, A, B and C, of which A and C reappear slightly altered, with the changes



suggesting a further breakdown in composure. The opening bars of A<sub>1</sub>, for example, are a repeat of the A material in the violin but with a different accompaniment. The piano line is still dominated by tritones, but where they first appeared cloaked in chords held with the sustaining pedal they now attract attention as shimmering tremolos (Ex. 4.33). These tremolos were originally heard in the violin's cadenza (section C), but as perfect fourths rather than tritones. Clarke, therefore, works in her usual way of creating new themes or gestures out of old ones, but here the result is a subtle disintegration of what little stability there was at the outset. Throughout A<sub>1</sub> the piano line is largely constructed from the same chords as A, but in A<sub>1</sub> the arpeggiated figurations often include more notes per beat than they did initially (a technique used previously in the *Rhapsody*, see Ex. 3.49), giving a more agitated feel. It is as if by the time we reach A<sub>1</sub> the intervening material has somehow caused an irrevocable change.

**Ex. 4.32: *Midsummer Moon*, structure:**

| Section | Bars  | Characteristics   |
|---------|-------|---|
| A       | 1–24  | After a rather hesitant opening, both instruments move forward in an <i>a tempo</i> , with the shape and rhythm of the violin's melody in bar 4 (Ex.4.31) being particularly important to the rest of A. This section builds to a <i>forte</i> climax in bar 18, which is immediately calmed by rapid ascending and descending arpeggios in the violin over a <i>fortissimo</i> piano chord which is left to resonate via the sustaining pedal. |
| B       | 25–47 | Here the piano accompaniment largely consists of triplets rather than the semiquavers in A (Ex. 4.34a). This section is initially calm, but becomes more agitated in the lead up to a <i>fortissimo</i> climax in which the piano now has the rapid arpeggios heard in the violin in the previous section.  |
| C       | 48–61 | A <i>pianissimo</i> 'lontano' Dorian melody gives way to a violin extemporisation.<br>  |



|                |       |   |
|----------------|-------|---|
| A <sub>1</sub> | 62–82 | Largely the same as A, but with slightly different accompaniment and the violin melody appears in different octaves to A. Climax (bar 78) is now a semitone higher.   |
| C <sub>1</sub> | 83–91 | Piano melody from C returns, but violin now plays from first bar, rather than piano solo. Some of the violin's figurations from cadenza at C now return in the piano. |

**Ex. 4.33: *Midsummer Moon*, bar 62**

For the B and C sections Clarke draws inspiration from the third movement of her Viola Sonata, as Exx. 4.34 a and b show. There are two brief cadenzas for the violin, which Clarke uses to move between the main melodic passages. These passages are similar not only in mood (the sudden use of modal writing in the C section is a technique Clarke used in the third movement of the Viola Sonata, there marked ‘Comodo: quasi pastorale’) but also in melodic contour. The Viola Sonata made such an impact on Clarke’s musical thinking that its ripples were still in evidence five years later in *Midsummer Moon*.

Ex. 4.34a: *Ibid.*, bars 25–32 (start of section B)

Ex. 4.34b: *Viola Sonata*, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bars 37–44

Similarities between these three works illustrate how Clarke constructed her music and the techniques she used are much the same as in her Coolidge works. One particularly effective technique, for example, frequently used to develop melodic material, is to begin a repetition of a phrase at the same pitch but then to rise higher in the second phrase. Effectively underlining the initial phrase with more force, this creates a compelling musical argument, and is a technique found throughout the

Viola Sonata, Trio and *Rhapsody* too (see Exx. 3.26 and 3.40 from the Trio, and 3.49 from the *Rhapsody*).

A similar idea is to repeat a phrase sequentially, becoming higher in pitch with each statement, or to repeat a small motivic cell from the end of a phrase to lead into a new section (see Exx. 3.14 and 3.19 from the Viola Sonata). Both have the effect of building up tension to give a sense of increased urgency to the music. They show Clarke working in a systematic way to achieve her musical goals.

#### (iv) Movements for String Quartet (1924?–26)

Considering her extensive experience of performing in string quartets it is surprising that Clarke only completed two movements for that medium.<sup>32</sup> These are *Comodo e amabile* and *Poem*.<sup>33</sup> Christopher Johnson, in his catalogue of Clarke's works (1977), gives 1924 as the date of completion for *Comodo e amabile*, and 1926 for *Poem*. It seems probable, however, that the first of these dates is incorrect.<sup>34</sup> According to Calum MacDonald the manuscript copy of *Comodo e amabile* is titled 'String Quartet 1<sup>st</sup> Movement',<sup>35</sup> and the first violin part of *Poem*<sup>36</sup> is headed '4<sup>th</sup> movement'. That being the case, it has been suggested<sup>37</sup> that the two movements may have been intended as part of the same work, though if Clarke completed, or even began, the inner movements (presuming the fourth movement would have been the finale) they are as yet undiscovered. The only reference to the work in Clarke's diaries, though, appears to be:

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<sup>32</sup> She also completed a song, *Daybreak* (1940), for voice and string quartet.

<sup>33</sup> The Oxford University Press 2004 edition of *Poem* (the work's first publication) is titled *Adagio*.

<sup>34</sup> There is no date on the manuscript.

<sup>35</sup> 1987, 25.

<sup>36</sup> MacDonald's claims that the score appears to be lost are untrue: a copy is held at the University of California. The manuscript parts are in the private collection of the inheritors of Clarke's estate.

<sup>37</sup> MacDonald, 1987, 25.






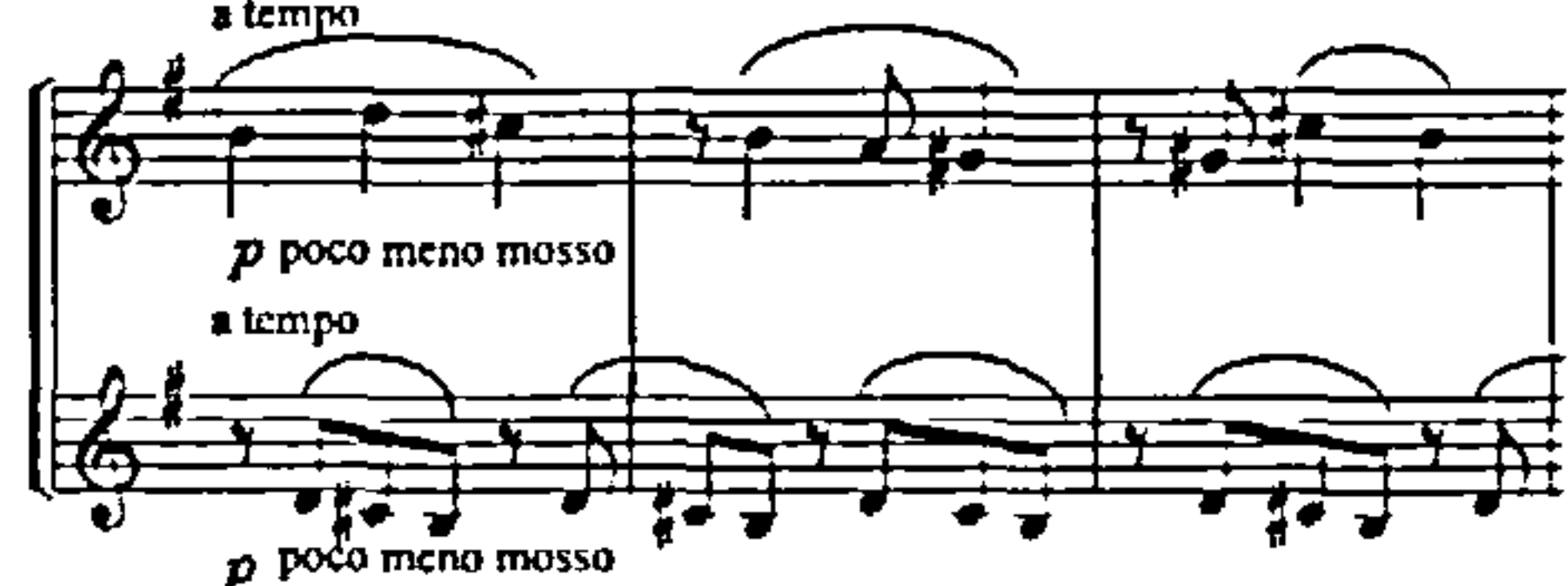
Dec. 30, 1925 I am starting very tentatively on a string quartet, beginning with the slow movement. Difficult, but simply fascinating.

The 'slow movement' she refers to is most likely *Poem*. Therefore if *Comodo e amabile* was completed in 1924 the two movements cannot be part of the same work. Also, Clarke's wording 'starting very tentatively' would seem to indicate that this was her first attempt at writing for string quartet and for that reason I would suggest that regardless of whether *Comodo e amabile* and *Poem* were intended as two movements of the same quartet, *Comodo e amabile* most probably postdates *Poem*. Moreover, the two movements are very different, and I consider it unlikely that they were intended as part of the same work because none of the themes in *Poem* originate from *Comodo e amabile*. This is especially significant when we consider Clarke's cyclic treatment of motifs from different movements in her Viola Sonata and Trio and from different sections of her *Rhapsody*. Thematic integration across movements of the same work was a feature of Clarke's writing and its absence here further suggests that the movements are *not* from the same work.

At nearly 300 bars long and taking around seven minutes to perform, *Comodo e amabile* is one of Clarke's longer single-movement chamber pieces. The work is in sonata form, but includes a codetta in the exposition, which is followed by a return to the second subject material – ending with a last-minute shift to E minor's dominant (a descending B minor Aeolian scale is followed by two B major chords, then one of B minor as Clarke tries out different tonal effects centred around B) – before the development begins. In the plan shown in Ex. 4.35 the lettered sections indicate groups of thematic material rather than one particular theme: the first subject material is marked A, the second subject B, and the codetta material C. Often the sections shown in the table are less noticeably demarcated in the music, with themes

merging into one another without a cadence. Identifying a precise point where one section 'becomes' another can therefore be problematical. The development, as shown, largely consists of the A material after which the recapitulation is followed by a coda in which C is expanded and more densely scored.

**Ex. 4.35: Structure of *Comodo e amabile***

| SECTION     |                         | THEMATIC MATERIAL | BARS  | CHARACTERISTICS   |
|-------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------|---|
| EXPOSITION  | 1 <sup>st</sup> subject | A                 | 1-24  | <p>Aeolian then Dorian melody (both with E as their tonal centre) with overlapping entries in the various instruments.</p> <p>Vn 1:</p>  <p>Descending scales are a feature of the accompaniment from bar 11.</p> |
|             | 2 <sup>nd</sup> subject | B                 | 25-52 | <p>Begins with an important three-note motif in both violins, which is immediately repeated:</p>  <p>Short, repeated descending scales are passed between the accompanying parts.</p>                             |
|             | Codetta                 | C                 | 53-60 | <p>Short unsettling passage for the two violins with frequent major 2nds.</p>   |
|             | 2 <sup>nd</sup> subject | B <sub>1</sub>    | 61-78 | <p>The second subject theme now appears in thirds. The short accompanying scales from B are elongated towards the end of this section and lead to three concluding chords: two of B major and one of B minor, making the exposition end on the dominant.</p>  |
| DEVELOPMENT |                         | A <sub>1</sub>    | 79-95 | <p>Distorted version of A. A persistent three-note figure continues beneath the melody. The three-note figure from the start of B appears in the underneath parts as a passing accompanimental figure.</p>        |



|                |                         |                                |         |  |
|----------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---------|--|
|                |                         | B <sub>2</sub>                 | 96–107  | The three-note figure from the start of B appears in first violin and cello, now accompanied by more complex figurations (including tremolos) in the inner parts. The three-note figure is used in sequence to lead to an exciting unison <i>fortissimo</i> climax.      |
|                | Bridge passage          |                                | 108–113 | Agitated repeated Bbs in the cello beneath double dotted motifs in the other instruments.  |
|                |                         | A <sub>2</sub> +B <sub>3</sub> | 114–29  | A clever combination of the A and B material in which both are distorted and more chromatic than they have been previously.  |
|                |                         | A <sub>3</sub> +B <sub>4</sub> | 130–49  | Another variation of A, but now begins pizzicato. The rhythm is altered.   |
|                |                         | C                              | 150–86  | A much longer version of C with overlapping entries. From bar 160 the first violin tries to bring the A theme back into play, with its phrases broken up whilst the C theme continues unrelentingly in the other instruments.  |
| RECAPITULATION | 1 <sup>st</sup> subject | A                              | 187–210 | Beginning on a solo second violin, the C theme merges back into A before a larger scale repetition, with slight changes, of the A material (starting in bar 187).  |
|                | 2 <sup>nd</sup> subject | B                              | 211–49  | Repetition of B material from bar 25, with slight changes. This section ends with three chords as in the exposition, but these are now chords of F major.  |
| CODA           |                         | C <sub>1</sub>                 | 250–83  | A more thickly scored version of the codetta themes from the exposition now employing all four instruments. From bar 277 parts of A reappear to end the movement. The clashes from the codetta have gone here and the two violins play the same notes two octaves apart. |

The first subject theme has E as its tonal centre, though it begins in the Aeolian mode (E F# G A B C D) where it remains for the first six bars before shifting to the Dorian (E F# G A B C# D). The modal qualities here reflect Clarke at her most 'English'.<sup>38</sup> Like the third movement of the Viola Sonata and *Epilogue, Comodo e amabile* is an exploration of the limits of modality. As the work progresses Clarke gradually distorts the modal themes, so, whilst retaining certain of their characteristics, the modal qualities are lost in increasingly dissonant variations during the development, before being resurrected in the recapitulation. Often the first subject material is altered rhythmically as well as through distortions of pitch (see A

<sup>38</sup> The two modes most favoured by Clarke, the Aeolian and Dorian, are the two most common in English folk music.



and A<sub>1</sub> in Ex. 4.35). By changing the rhythm Clarke gives a different emphasis to the themes she has already introduced. In these ways, as in *Epilogue*, Clarke takes traditional elements and twists them through her own distinctively modern approach.

The short passage labelled as a 'bridge passage' in Ex. 4.35 introduces a new motif (see figure x in Ex. 4.36) which is neither prepared by any of the thematic material which has preceded it, nor returns after this brief appearance. It is introduced by a short and also unexpected unison four-note chromatic descent. In Ex. 4.36, the chromatic movement, divergent lines and double-dotted rhythm in the violins and viola above rapidly repeated Bbs in the cello combine to make this a disquieting moment. Clarke used double-dotted rhythms such as this in some of her songs too, frequently to suggest a feeling of dread (see Chapter 5). Unprepared thematic material such as this is rare in Clarke's output, and suggests that the significance of this passage would most likely have been made clear in the other movements of the quartet, if Clarke had completed (or even begun) them.

**Ex. 4.36: *Comodo e amabile*, bars 108–111**

Clarke's skill in manipulating musical material is particularly evident when she merges the A and C themes at the end of the development section (Ex. 4.37). These two themes are very different, and yet here Clarke effortlessly interweaves the

two: the A material appearing in the first violin while the other instruments have fugato entries of the C material.

**Ex. 4.37: *Ibid.*, bars 157–65**

MacDonald describes *Comodo e amabile* as ‘rather lightweight’<sup>39</sup> but although the atmosphere – particularly in the A and B material – is lighter than that of many of her other chamber works it is still a substantial achievement. If Johnson’s dating of the work, 1924, is correct and *Comodo e amabile* was Clarke’s first attempt at writing for the medium, her experience as a quartet player had evidently given her important insights into effective ensemble writing. However, in comparison with the earlier *Viola Sonata* and *Trio*, Clarke’s use of sonata form is less progressive and her musical material feels a little overworked by the end of this fairly lengthy movement.

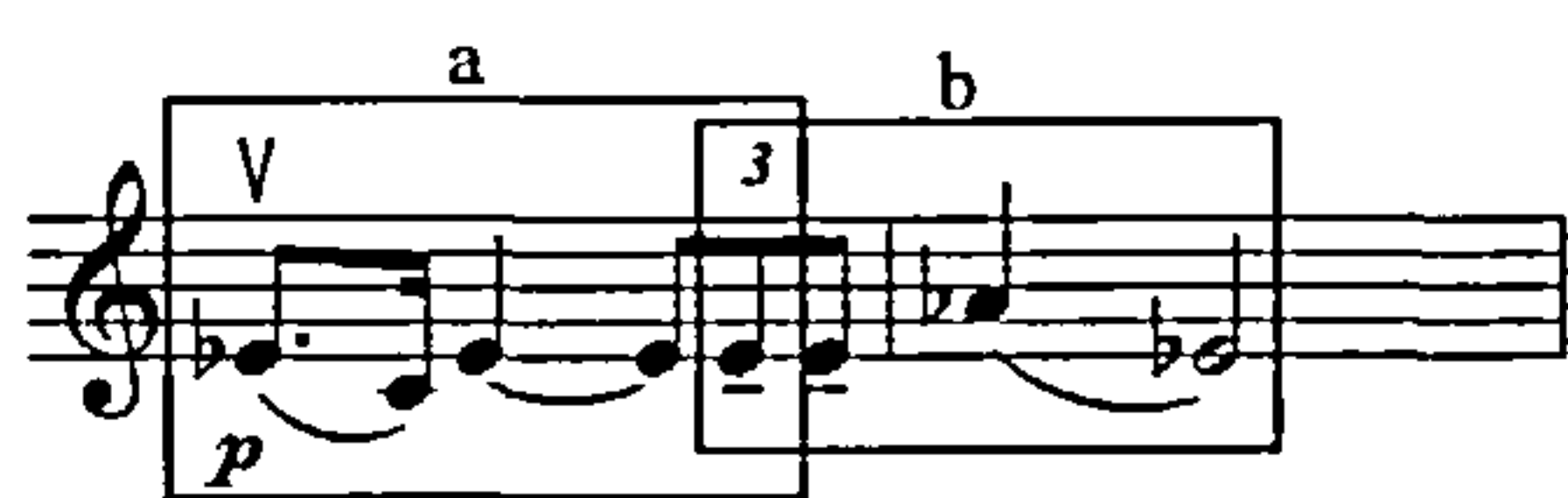
The title of Clarke’s other string quartet movement, *Poem* (1926), is not on the manuscript parts, which are just marked *Adagio*. However, it appears on a copy of the score held at the library of the University of California at Berkeley. Described as ‘one of the most intensely troubled, but also...one of the most impressive of [her] creations’<sup>40</sup> *Poem* inhabits the same shadowy and slightly oppressive sound world as *Epilogue* and the *Rhapsody*. The whole work, 138 bars in a slow 3/4, is constructed

<sup>39</sup> 1987, 25.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

from the same thematic material, with short motivic cells which seem to be derived from three of Clarke's other chamber works as the examples in Exx. 4.38a–e show. The phrases marked a–c demonstrate the motivic connections between *Poem*, the Viola Sonata, Trio, and *Epilogue*. Although in her songs and chamber music Clarke occasionally indulged in self-borrowing to supply subtle layers of meaning, here the similarities in melodic cells reflect her stylistic 'fingerprints'. When she borrowed material consciously from another work the quotation tends to be rather longer. Notably all four of these works were written in close succession. This sort of cross-fertilisation pervades Clarke's music and is evidence of a highly unified musical style.

**Ex. 4.38a: *Poem*, bars 1–2 (second violin part)**



**Ex. 4.38b: Viola Sonata, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, bars 1–2 (viola part)**



**Ex. 4.38c: Trio, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, bar 37 (piano part)**



**Ex. 4.38d: *Poem*, bars 7–8 (first violin)**



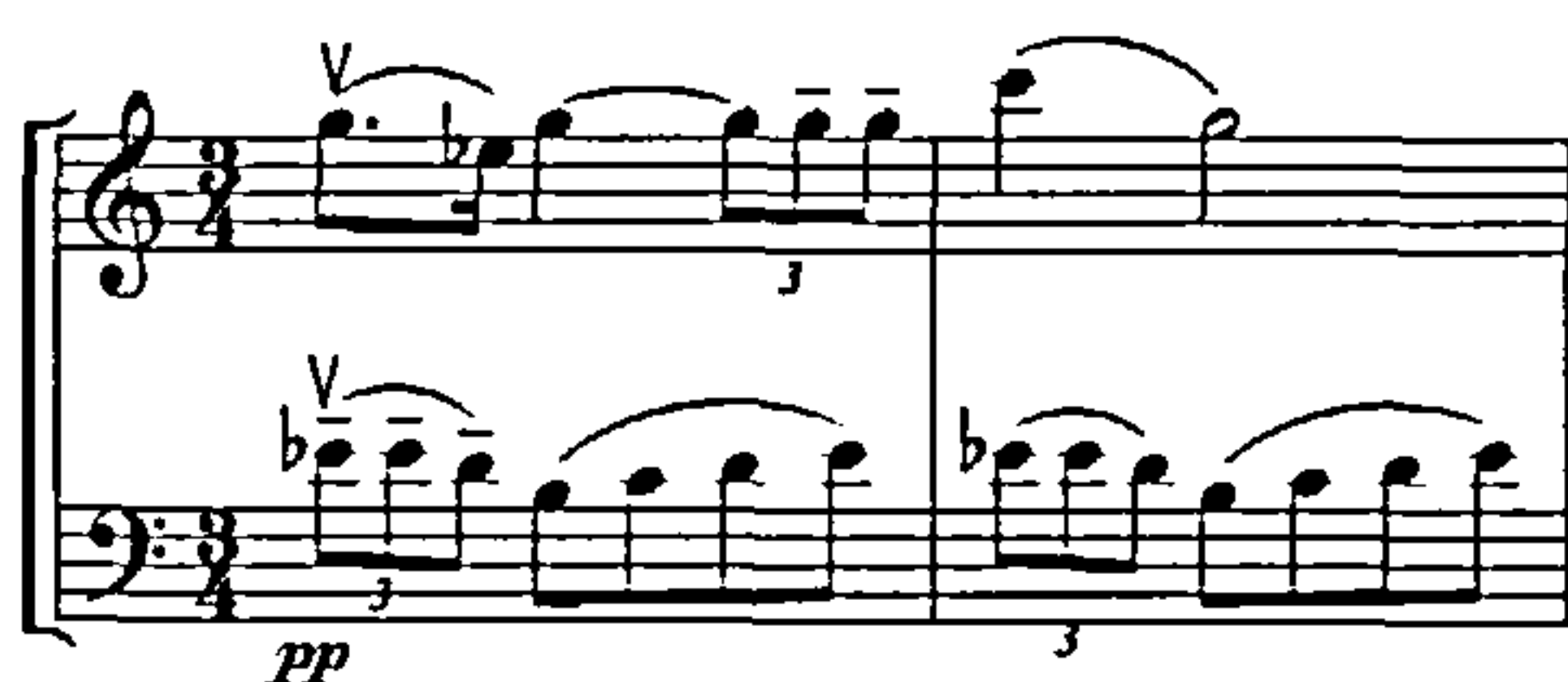


**Ex. 4.38e: *Epilogue*, bars 2–3 (cello part)**



Clarke's methods of manipulating musical material in *Poem* are much the same as those employed in her previous chamber works, with much use of overlapping thematic entries. Here, though, she does not change the character of her themes by transmuting them as she does so successfully in her *Viola Sonata*, but remains focussed on the same musical thought. The material has two main motifs, which are shown in Exx. 4.38a and d. These are combined almost immediately, as shown in Ex. 4.39.

**Ex. 4.39: *Poem*, bars 11–12 (first violin and cello parts only)**



The harmonic language of *Poem* is among her most advanced, being more intensely chromatic than her works to this point, as the sample passage in Ex. 4.40 shows.

Ex. 4.40: *Ibid.*, bars 43–46

The work draws to a conclusion on a chord of Fm7, without the sense of resolution and optimism found in the major key chords at the end of *Epilogue*; perhaps, if the movement was intended as part of a multi-movement work, Clarke intended to leave resolution to a later movement. The dark atmosphere of the *Rhapsody* which critics had found too uncomfortable was clearly still one to which Clarke was drawn, and in *Poem* she again gave it free rein. It is conceivable that the reaction to the *Rhapsody* discouraged Clarke from attempting to finish the other movements of the quartet to which *Poem* may have been intended to belong because she knew that publication would be difficult. Whatever the background, *Poem* is another important work which has until recently been unpublished and difficult to obtain. It was issued on CD for the first time in 2002<sup>41</sup> and published, seventy-eight years after completion, in May 2004.

(v) Shorter Works

Completed in the same year as her Trio, Clarke's *Chinese Puzzle* is utterly different in style: perhaps it offered some light relief after her intense work on the Trio. In her

<sup>41</sup> *Death and the Maiden*, Lafayette String Quartet, CBC Records, MVCD 1149, 2002. This recording, however, contains some significant inaccuracies, see <http://www.rebeccaclarke.org/poem.html>

memoir she describes how Yin Lee, a Chinese friend of her brother Hans, gave her the tune for this work:

On a less exalted level was a little tune he once hummed for me; I wrote it down and subsequently adapted it as a short violin solo, published as *Chinese Puzzle*. Years later when I was in Peking I checked it for accuracy with a Chinese I knew who told me that it had words so improper that he could not disclose them. I wondered if Yin Lee had known this in the old days.<sup>42</sup>

*Chinese Puzzle* is a very short, exclusively pentatonic work (except for two glissandi) for violin and piano (later arranged by Clarke for viola and piano). The theme is stated by the violin above a simple piano accompaniment, then repeated by the piano before returning to the violin. In the final statement of the theme the right hand of the piano line copies parts of it in canon with the violin, complete with 'Chinese' parallel perfect fourths and fifths, whilst the top part of the left hand line does the same in augmentation (see Ex. 4.41). This sort of contrapuntal approach (though not the sound) is typical of Clarke's mature style.

**Ex. 4.41: *Chinese Puzzle*, bars 22–25**

The musical score for *Chinese Puzzle*, bars 22–25, is presented in three systems. The first system shows the violin part (treble clef) and the piano accompaniment (treble and bass clefs). The violin part begins with a *pp* dynamic. The piano accompaniment features a right hand with *ppp* dynamics and a left hand with *mp* dynamics. The second system continues the piece, with the piano accompaniment marked *a tempo* and *ben marcato*. The third system concludes the excerpt. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

<sup>42</sup> *I Had a Father Too*, Chap. 7, 40.



A 'Chinese puzzle' is defined in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* as 'a very intricate puzzle or problem': in her score Clarke takes a straightforward melody and retains an air of simplicity whilst creating a clever canon. At only thirty-two bars long, and taking a little over a minute to play it is her shortest chamber work, and was probably intended for performance by less experienced players (Clarke writes 'Gliss. if possible' for the violin towards the end). The premiere was given by Constance Izard in London on 29 May 1924, and the work was published by Oxford University Press in 1925. The fact that Clarke managed to get *Chinese Puzzle* published easily is because it is straightforward, short, amusing and accessible.

Besides the *Theme and Variations* of 1908, Clarke's only known original piece for solo piano is her unpublished *Cortège*,<sup>43</sup> though this was written considerably later, in 1930, and revised in 1978. Writing in her diary on 10 February 1930 about *Cortège* Clarke evidently discounted her student work: 'Almost finished my little piano piece – the first I've done.' It was dedicated to the English pianist and composer William Busch (1901–45) though what prompted the dedication, and whether Busch ever performed the work is unknown. *Cortège* is a relatively short but highly effective work in which a procession – possibly funereal – steadily comes into view before continuing into the distance. As the procession nears, piano textures become thicker and louder leading to a majestic *fortissimo* climax. Clarke's model for this build-up of sound was most likely Debussy's 'Fêtes' from *Nocturnes* (published 1900).

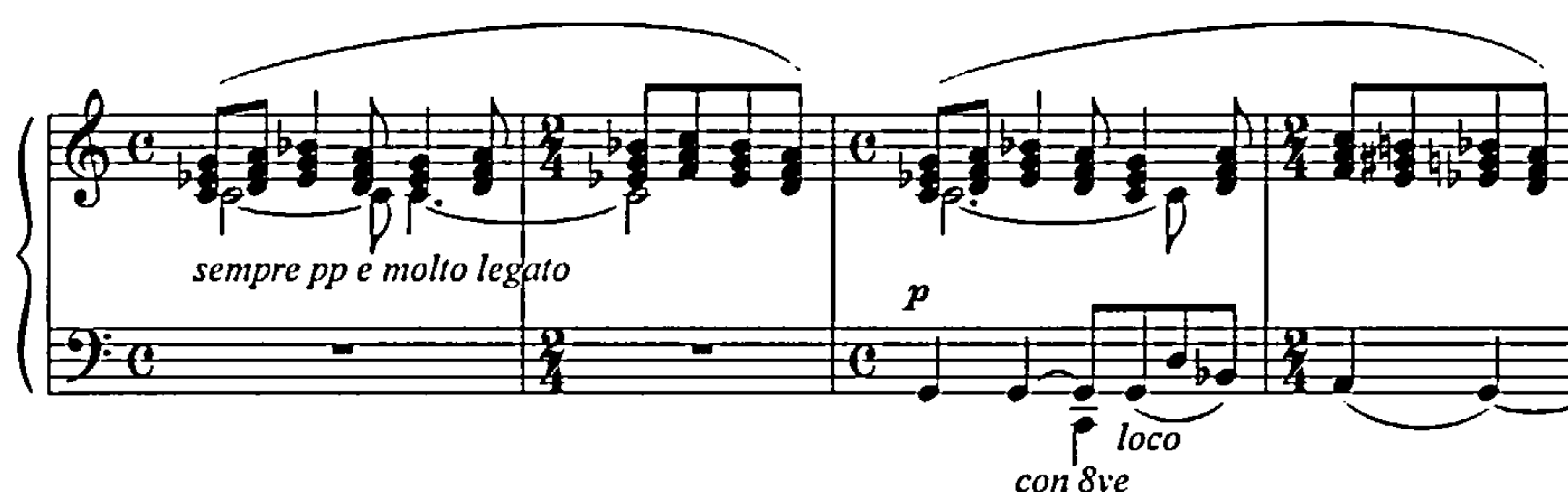
Michael Ponder's description that '*Cortège*...inhabits the world of Debussy impressionism but with a sense of desolation in which a modal tune is continually

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<sup>43</sup> Clarke also completed an (unpublished) arrangement of JS Bach's 'Esurientes' from the *Magnificat in D* for her husband, the pianist James Friskin.

surrounded by tritones'<sup>44</sup> mistakenly labels as tritones the major and minor triadic chords shown in Ex. 4.42. These *sempre pianissimo* ghostly triads move continuously, often rising and falling chromatically, throughout much of *Cortège*.

Ex. 4.42: *Cortège*, bars 1–4



The chromaticism, however, is non-functional, and serves simply to colour the strands of melody, which first emerge low in the left hand of the piano line as if through a mist (Ex. 4.42). This melody, which Ponder identifies as ‘modal’ bears a resemblance to certain phrases from the folk tune, ‘The Water is Wide’, and the theme of separation in that song (‘The water is wide, I cannot get o’er’) is especially significant if Clarke’s ‘cortège’ is indeed a funeral procession. Clarke’s melody has modal qualities but is not exclusive to any specific mode. In the first phrase there is a Mixolydian flattened seventh, but in the next phrase a Lydian raised fourth. Clarke uses modal colourings, but the melody moves through different modes and keys, lending it a feeling of aimlessness. Despite the fact that this is a procession, there is not a harmonic pull towards resolution: the importance of the tonic-dominant relationship in diatonicism being less significant in modal writing.

The melody does not develop, but sections are repeated, sometimes with fugato entries, and after a clever combination of two themes in the central section,

<sup>44</sup> CD Liner notes, op. cit., p.7.

both hands of the piano line gradually synchronise and the initial left-hand melody now emerges triumphant in a grand, extended statement (Ex. 4.43)

**Ex. 4.43: *Ibid.*, bars 32–34**



Dynamic markings throughout *Cortège* are numerous and specific, and Clarke is careful to indicate which lines are to be brought to the fore when the texture becomes more complex. As the procession passes on into the distance the triadic chords from the opening return, but now underpinned by repeated Gs in the left hand, at first *piano* then *pianissimo* then eventually *ppp*. This is reminiscent of the ending of the *Rhapsody*, but here it suggests a tolling funeral bell marking the sombre occasion.

**(vi) Works Completed During the Second World War**

After being forced to stay in the US at the outbreak of the Second World War Clarke found that she had more time to devote to composition, and in January 1941 completed a *Passacaglia on an Old English Tune* written to commemorate the death of Frank Bridge.<sup>45</sup> This brought her briefly out of her creative drought, and 1941 proved to be the most productive year in her career since the late 1920s.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Bridge died on 10 January 1941.

<sup>46</sup> In 1941 Clarke also completed *Dumka, Prelude, Allegro and Pastorale, Combined Carols* and *Lethe*. See Appendix 2.



Clarke's *Passacaglia on an Old English Tune* (the melody is attributed to Thomas Tallis) for cello and piano is straightforward in design, with a ten-bar melody being repeated seven times with varied accompaniments. Six of these repetitions are in full, with the melody, originally stated by the cello, sometimes moving between the two instruments, and sometimes between separate 'voices' in the piano (as is shown in Ex. 4.44). The first three bars of the penultimate statement of the theme, though, are replaced by an extemporization in the cello above a long pedal note in the piano. Originally, Baroque passacaglias were continuous variations above a (usually) four-bar ostinato, more often than not a ground bass, and were usually in a minor key: Clarke's ostinato is a ten-bar theme, a melody rather than a ground bass, and the whole work is in C minor. Stylistically it is a pastiche of earlier models rather than an attempt to apply a twentieth-century interpretation to a Baroque form.

**Ex. 4.44: Dynamic markings and instrumentation in *Passacaglia***

| Statement of theme | Dynamic marking   | Instrumentation of theme <sup>47</sup>  |
|--------------------|-------------------|---|
| 1                  | <i>mf</i>         | Entire theme in cello.  |
| 2                  | <i>mp</i>         | Begins in cello, then passes to upper left hand of piano, then to upper right hand.                   |
| 3                  | <i>pp &lt; f</i>  | Begins in upper right hand of piano, then to upper left hand, then to cello.                          |
| 4                  | <i>ff</i>         | Entire theme in cello   |
| 5                  | <i>p</i>          | Upper right hand of piano, then to upper left hand before going back to upper right hand.             |
| 6                  | <i>pp</i>         | Entire theme in upper right hand of piano.  |
| 7                  | <i>pp &lt; ff</i> | Entire theme in cello (though the first three bars are now an extemporization on the original theme). |
| 8                  | <i>ff</i>         | From left hand of piano (in   |

<sup>47</sup> NB: both instruments play together throughout, this table simply shows in which part the passacaglia theme appears.

octaves) to upper right hand.

Each repetition of the theme uses the same notes (in varying octaves) with the same rhythm: only the instrumentation and dynamics change. When the theme passes between instruments, particularly when it begins in the cello as a prominent melody line but then moves to the middle of the piano texture, it sometimes becomes less conspicuous (and thereby the work avoids sounding repetitive), though on occasion Clarke marks the theme *marcato il tema* when it might otherwise be lost. The theme is shown in Ex. 4.45.

**Ex. 4.45: *Passacaglia*, cello part, bars 1–10 (theme)**

As usual in Clarke's music the piano part employs a range of different textures, from widely spaced chords to more intricate writing. In places this becomes quite complex with cascading repetitions of a small phrase, as the quaver movement in the cello and piano lines in Ex. 4.46 shows.

**Ex. 4.46: *Passacaglia*, bars 8–10**

The *Passacaglia* shows Clarke creating something different from her other chamber music, and it is interesting that the final few chamber works of her career show her using non-descriptive titles.

Fifty years after Dvořák's *Dumky Trio*, op. 90 (1891), Clarke embarked on a *Dumka* of her own, but scored for violin, viola and piano rather than the traditional piano trio. The *Dumka* originated from Ukrainian folk music and poetry, in which it referred either to a narrative ballad or to a lament, usually in 2/4 time, though it sometimes combined elements of both. In folk music *Dumkas* were characterised by sudden alternations of tempi and style, from slow, melismatic, melancholy passages to faster, livelier ones. Clarke's *Dumka* is an extended single movement in several distinct sections in which these characteristic changes are clear and effective.

*Dumka*, like the *Passacaglia* of the same year is again different stylistically to much of Clarke's earlier music: there is little evidence of the 'English' modal writing which had previously been an important element of her musical language, and the 'French' chords with added ninths and elevenths which had dominated earlier works were now largely rejected in favour of simpler harmonic foundations.

Clarke's *Dumka* is more Romantic in style than much of her previous chamber music and as such harks back to a much earlier period in her career when she completed *Theme and Variations* and *Danse Bizarre*. Phrases tend to be longer, continuously unfolding and less declamatory in feel. Ex. 4.47 shows one passage in which chords on the second beat of each bar steadily ascend, building tension towards a climax. This is similar to a device used in the earlier *Rhapsody* (see Ex. 3.49), though here in *Dumka* 9–8 suspensions at the start of each bar give an added feeling of Romantic yearning.





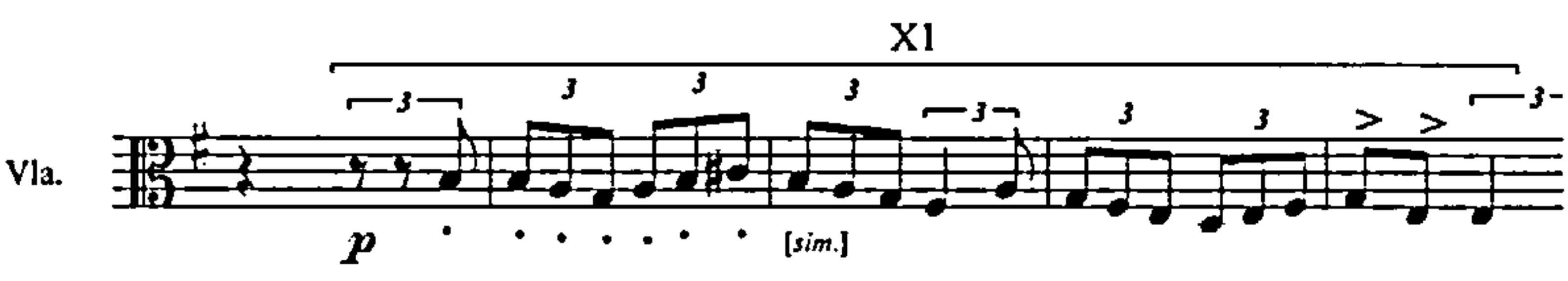
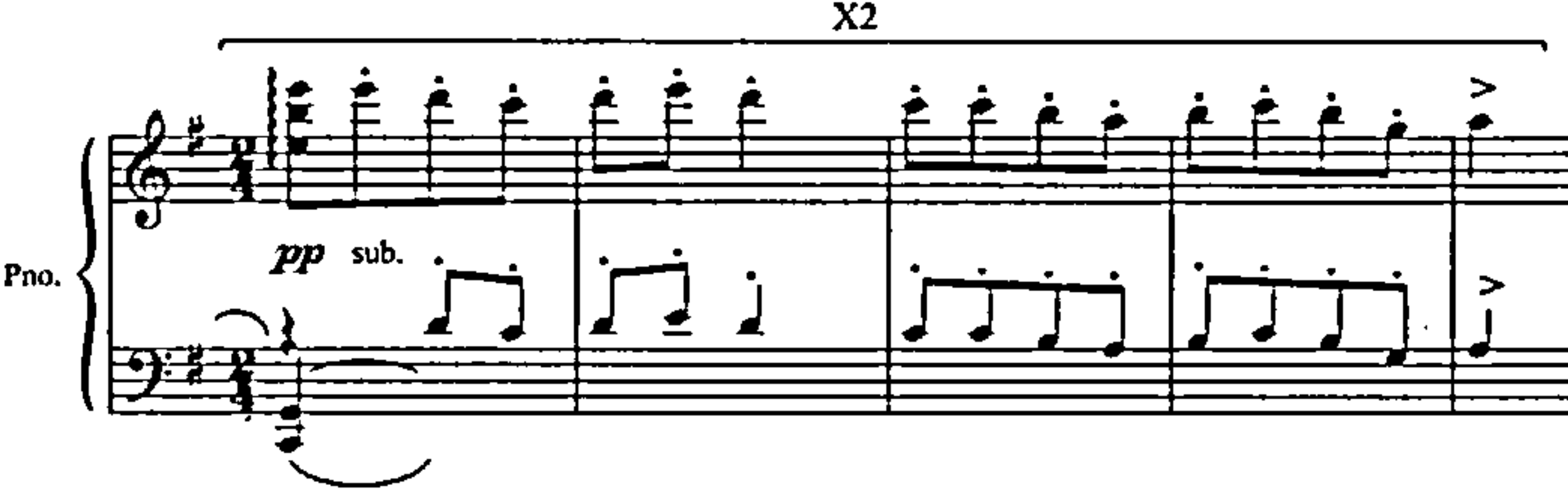

Ex. 4.47: *Dumka*, bars 9–13

The musical score for Ex. 4.47, *Dumka*, bars 9–13, is presented for Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Piano (Pno.). The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The Violin and Viola parts feature triplet patterns. The Piano part includes a 'poco cresc.' marking and features a rhythmic pattern of duplets and triplets.

There are no juxtaposed passages of whole-tone or octatonic writing in *Dumka*, and in that way it is more straightforward than some of Clarke's earlier chamber works. The length of the themes means that Clarke does not attempt to combine them, though the main thematic idea for the whole work, which appears in the first few bars, is transformed in her usual way. There are few examples of rhythmic groupings of duplets against triplets either, a common feature of her previous writing. The atmosphere is lighter than that of many of her other chamber works, though the work ends on a chord of E minor with an added seventh, a lack of resolution in this way being common to much of Clarke's music.

Despite these differences in style, Clarke's constructional technique remains unimpaired. Themes are transformed in character, passed between instruments and used in sequences to lead into new sections; tension is built up steadily before being interrupted via an unexpected relaxation; and seemingly new themes are often derived from the same basic material. Large-scale repetitions often appear to have been rewritten from memory, because differences are so slight (for example the spacing of a chord in the piano might be altered). This is also true of Dvořák, for example in his Piano Quintet (op. 81). Overlapping fugato entries of motifs are still common. The table in Ex. 4.48 shows the structure of *Dumka* and demonstrates how much of the work's thematic material is connected.

**Ex. 4.48: Dumka: structure**

| Section | Bars    | Characteristics  |
|---------|---------|--|
| A       | 1–43    | <p><i>Poco andante</i>. E minor. Melody appears in thirds in the strings. Frequent octave chords in the left hand of the piano. The 'x' theme dominates. Mostly 2/4 but some 3/4 bars extend particular phrases (as demonstrated below):</p>   |
| B       | 44–75   | <p><i>Allegro moderato</i>. More lively, with a staccato melody and pizzicato chords. Melodic interest now not in thirds as it was in much of A. Accompanimental figure in the piano:</p>  <p>Motif 'x' from section A returns, but transformed in character:</p>  <p>Rising and falling semiquaver scales appear in the strings from bar 57, becoming prominent in bar 68 where they are <i>forte</i> and build in a <i>crescendo</i> to lead to the next section.</p> |
| C       | 76–139  | <p><i>Più mosso</i>. Although this is faster, the semiquavers from B do not appear here, so the feel is less agitated. Motif 'x' returns in bar 98:</p>    |
| A1      | 140–76  | <p><i>Tempo I</i>. Much of A material transposed to F# minor. Motif 'x' returns, now <i>forte</i> in the piano. Thick chords in both hands of the piano part, 'appassionato'. The roles of the piano and strings are reversed. Starts to re-introduce themes from section B in bar 168.</p>  |
| B1      | 177–231 | <p>Returns to E minor. Much of the material is very similar – although as usual, identical repeats are rare. At the end of this section the strings have a short cadenza.</p>  |
| A2      | 232–61  | <p><i>Tempo I. Meno Mosso</i>. Begins as A but with slight differences. From bar 249 passes through various keys, different to A. This is a contracted version of the A material.</p>  |
| D       | 262     | <p>The bass line here is from section B (see above) but a new <i>semplice</i> theme now appears over the top, though this is derived from 'x':</p>   |



The significant *Prelude, Allegro and Pastorale* (1941) was dedicated to Clarke's brother, Hans, and his wife Frieda.<sup>48</sup> Hans, an eminent biochemist, was an extremely good clarinettist and Frieda an amateur violinist, though Clarke chose to score her work for clarinet and her own first instrument, viola. It was premiered at the 19<sup>th</sup> Festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music in Berkeley, California on 6 August 1942 by Rudolph Schmitt (clarinet) and Walter Herbert (viola). Curtis suggests that Clarke's 'friendship with Albert Elkus, a music professor at the University of California, and his British wife, Elizabeth, probably played a role in her involvement, since Albert Elkus was one of the festival organisers'.<sup>49</sup> In a 1978 interview<sup>50</sup> Clarke claimed that the work was written on a whim and that she only decided to send it to the ISCM committee *after* it was completed. Perhaps she showed the finished work to Elkus and on his suggestion sent it to the committee for appraisal. Whatever the circumstances of its creation, Clarke considered *Prelude, Allegro and Pastorale* to be one of her best works.<sup>51</sup>

Much of *Prelude, Allegro and Pastorale* sounds undeniably different to Clarke's earlier chamber music, and there are various reasons for this. The most obvious is the instrumentation: Clarke wrote no other original music for wind instruments of any kind,<sup>52</sup> and the majority of her previous chamber music has a piano accompaniment (*Two Pieces: Lullaby and Grotesque*, for viola and cello, are an exception). Another notable difference is in the absence of any sense of folk modality in the first two movements, something that had previously been an integral

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<sup>48</sup> The dedication reads 'for Hans and Fietzchen'. 'Fietzchen' was Frieda's nickname.

<sup>49</sup> 'Meeting of Altos', *The Strad*, Vol. 110, no. 1314 (1999), 1079. Clarke's diaries mention Elkus as early as 1921.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Ellen Lerner, 14 September 1978. This appears in transcription in *A Rebecca Clarke Reader* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2004 [currently withdrawn due to copyright problems]).

<sup>51</sup> As she indicated in the same interview.

<sup>52</sup> Though she did make an arrangement of her 1921 piece *Chinese Puzzle* for a performance by the Aeolian Players (flute, violin, viola and cello) in 1922.



part of her musical language. The third movement, 'Pastorale', however, opens with a Dorian (Bb minor) melody in the viola, and therefore immediately seems more like the Clarke of previous years. There is also more rhythmic unity (particularly in the outer movements) than in much of Clarke's music. The middle movement, 'Allegro', is the most substantial, and is framed by the outer two, though as Clarke said in a letter to the festival organisers, the three movements can be played separately. Her description of *Prelude, Allegro and Pastorale* gives a rare glimpse of Clarke being satisfied with her work:

The whole thing is very unpretentious: a short unassuming little prelude; an Allegro which I originally thought of calling a Toccata – as it gives both the players plenty of chance to show what they can do... The subject is more or less 'mirror-writing', and in the coda the instruments are, in addition, continually crossing one another. There is a long fugato section in the middle of the movement, after a second subject in pizzicato chords on the viola. The whole of the second movement should sound very spirited, and is, I think, quite effectively written for both parts.

The third movement Pastorale is rather melancholy and nostalgic, ending in a very subdued way. The pieces, by the way, though designed to be played together, can all three be played as separate numbers, if so desired. If you see the artists who will play them at the Festival will you kindly tell them that they are to be taken quite freely: I have under-marked them, and there will be several places – notably in the Allegro where it will be natural to make a slight stringendo, and so on.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Private letter (date unknown) held at the Collection of the Music Library at the University of California, Berkeley. Quoted in Curtis, Liane: 'Meeting of Altos', *The Strad*, Vol. 110, no. 1314 (1999), 1079.

The opening bars of the short, ABA<sub>1</sub>C-form 'Prelude' immediately introduce the discords which remain an important feature of the whole work. Previously such dissonances had largely been temporary, such as the opening of the Trio, or the codetta in *Comodo e amabile*, but here the discordant writing continues over an extended passage. Ex. 4.49 shows the first two bars. Here chords of G minor on the first and third beats alternate with a chord of Ab major with an added raised fourth (D, creating a prominent tritone with Ab). The notes of this second chord, Ab, D and C, are swapped between instruments, and this constant substituting is characteristic of the writing throughout all three movements. Clarke uses the fact that the clarinet and viola have a similar pitch range to merge the two lines together.

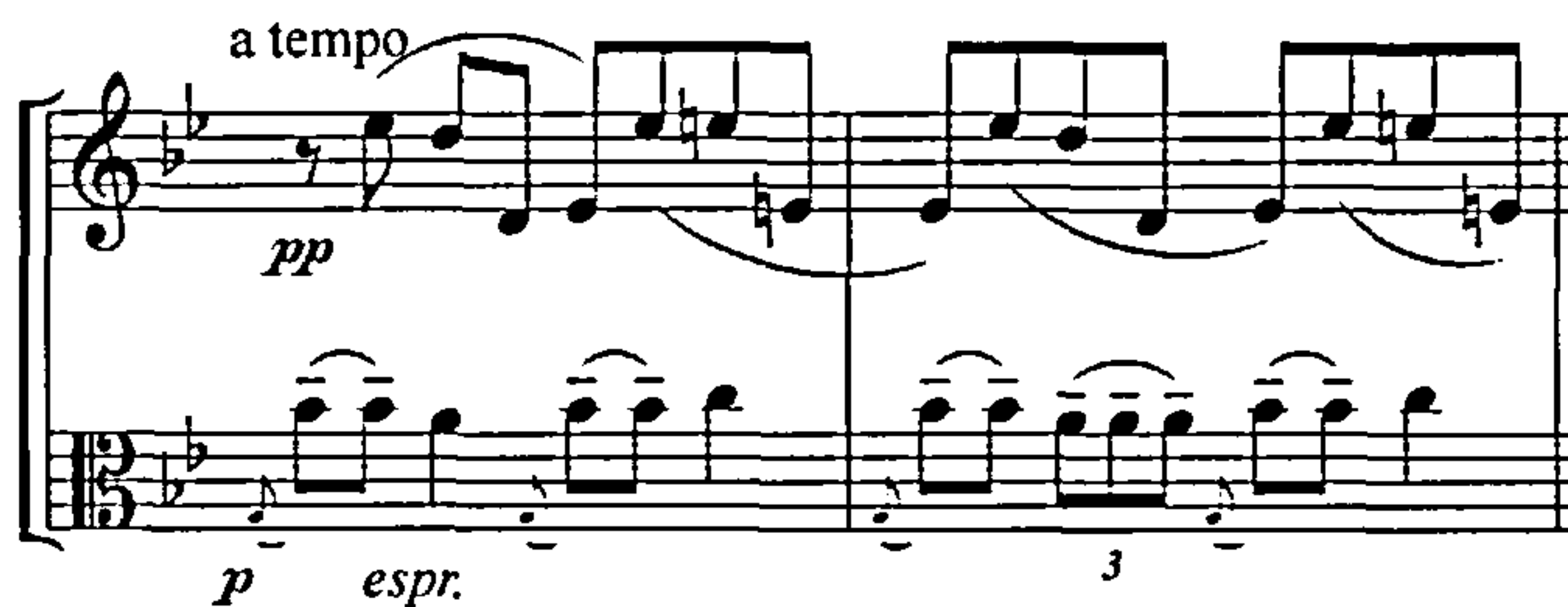
**Ex. 4.49: *Prelude, Allegro and Pastorale*, 'Prelude', bars 1–2 (concert pitch)**

The musical score for Ex. 4.49 consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The tempo/mood is 'Andante semplice' and the dynamics are 'pp'. The first bar contains two measures of music. The second bar contains two measures, with the second measure marked with a triplet '3' over a group of three eighth notes. The notes in the first bar are G4, A4, Bb4, G4, A4, Bb4. The notes in the second bar are Ab4, D5, C5, Ab4, D5, C5.

Ex. 4.50 shows the later return of the opening A material (A<sub>1</sub>) with the clarinet's original theme now appearing in the viola an octave higher. The acciaccaturas give it more emphasis and it is carefully marked *p* against the clarinet's *pp* to bring it to the foreground. The Ab from the opening (on the second beat of the clarinet's first two bars) has now been replaced by an A natural, and no longer creates a tritone with the clarinet, whose continually moving octave quavers are phrased across the beat to create more interest. There is also cross-barline phrasing in *Comodo e amabile*. These subtle alterations of a theme are typical of Clarke's earlier

chamber music, showing that even though the *sound* of the music differs from her previous work she manipulates musical material in the same ways.

**Ex. 4.50: *Ibid.*, bars 22–23 (concert pitch)**



As Clarke's letter to the festival organisers indicates, the second movement, 'Allegro', was originally to be called 'Toccata'. Like other twentieth-century composers, Clarke did not see the Toccata as being a form limited to keyboard instruments, as it was originally, but saw it simply as a work which would enable the performers to show off their skills. However, she settled on the title 'Allegro' and headed the movement *Allegro vigoroso*. The 'mirror-writing' she mentions in her description was hinted at in the 'Prelude', where towards the end of the movement the viola copies but inverts the clarinet melody from a few bars earlier (Ex. 4.51). However, in the 'Allegro' the technique is used from the beginning (Ex. 4.52) where a theme and its inversion are played simultaneously. The writing throughout the 'Allegro' – particularly the use of fugato writing and passages of mirror writing – suggests Clarke knew Bartók's *44 Duos for Two Violins* (1931) well.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Clarke completed a work for two violins (it is simply headed 'For 2 Violins') around 1940 of which I have seen only four pages of a blurred photocopy of her manuscript. From these four pages, however, it is clear that it is another work that owes much to Bartók's *Duos*.



**Ex. 4.51: *Ibid.*, clarinet part, bars 29–30, viola part, bars 32–33**

clarinet (concert pitch)

29 *poco rit.* *a tempo*

viola

32

**Ex. 4.52: *Ibid.*, 'Allegro', bars 1–5 (concert pitch), first subject**

*Allegro vigoroso*

As in the 'Prelude', Clarke continues to highlight discords throughout the 'Allegro': the viola and clarinet frequently play notes a second or a tritone apart. The writing is angular and emphasises unexpected beats (Ex. 4.52: 4<sup>th</sup> beat, bar 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> beat, bar 2 for example). Ex. 4.53 shows how the intervals Clarke employs here widen towards the middle of each of the first two bars so there is the sense of something trying to expand but being pulled back. Notably each of these intervals forms a discord: by continuously following discords with other discords Clarke was aiming to bring her style up-to-date as Poulenc and Germaine Tailleferre did on their occasional flirtations with serialism (Clarke's work is not serial). The sense of *rhythmic unity* seen in the 'Prelude' continues here too as Ex.4.52 demonstrates.

**Ex. 4.53: *Ibid.*, intervals used in bars 1–2**

viola

clarinet

The 'Allegro' has three main themes, identified by Clarke in her letter quoted above as first and second subjects (Exx. 4.52 and 4.54) and a fugato theme (Ex. 4.55). These themes are each stated then repeated with alterations: the way Clarke moves from one theme to the next by using previously heard material is always ingenious. For example, the arpeggio figure in the clarinet in bar 23, Ex. 4.54 – the start of the second subject – is introduced at the end of the first subject (bar 22), thereby easing the transition from one section to another. This technique is common in Clarke's earlier chamber music, as we have seen.

**Ex. 4.54: *Ibid.*, bars 21–24 (concert pitch). End of first subject–beginning of second.**

**Ex. 4.55: *Ibid.*, bars 33–39 (Viola part only). Fugato theme.**

The main theme of the fugato – the most extended section of the movement – is introduced at the end of the second subject, but is then heard in full on the viola from bar 33 (Ex. 4.55). After several statements of this theme in each instrument Clarke ingeniously divides it between the clarinet and viola. Ex. 5.56 shows how the

first two bars of the theme pass between instruments (first starting in bar 53, then a second statement beginning in bar 55).

**Ex. 4.56: *Ibid.*, bars 53–56**

Clarinet (shown in concert pitch in alto clef)

Viola

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Clarinet and Viola. The Clarinet part is written in alto clef (C4 on the middle line) and the Viola part is in C-clef (C4 on the first line). Both are in 2/4 time. The score shows four bars. In the first bar, both instruments play a quarter note G4. In the second bar, the Clarinet plays a quarter note A4 and the Viola plays a quarter note G4. In the third bar, the Clarinet plays a quarter note B4 and the Viola plays a quarter note A4. In the fourth bar, the Clarinet plays a quarter note C5 and the Viola plays a quarter note B4. The notes are connected by solid lines in the first two bars and dashed lines in the last two bars, indicating a melodic line that is shared between the two instruments.

After the fugato, Clarke interweaves elements of the each of the three groups of thematic material in a lengthy and unrelenting passage of mirror-writing bringing the movement to an energetic close.

That Clarke enjoyed such technical writing is shown by the fact that at the age of forty-four, some twenty years after leaving the Royal College of Music, she went for lessons in counterpoint with the author, teacher and composer R O Morris.<sup>55</sup>

Her diary entries show a genuine enthusiasm for this work:

June 24, 1931: Went to tea with the R.O. Morris's & had a talk with him about the advisability of doing counterpoint with him. Decided to.

June 27, 1931: A quiet day. Am getting absolutely mad about counterpoint, and find it fascinating. Really hope it will buck up my composition.<sup>56</sup>

July 8, 1931: Cousin Mary came to lunch ... Had to rush off after to lesson with R.O. Morris. He quite approved of most of my counterpoints.

The 'Pastorale' opens, as Ex. 4.57 shows, with a Bb Dorian melody for the solo viola. However, this soon shifts imperceptibly into D Aeolian before ending with a brief glance towards Eb minor in a phrase that is also part of an octatonic pitch

<sup>55</sup> Reginald Owen Morris (1886–1948) taught at the Royal College of Music 1920–26, and then again from 1928. He wrote several textbooks on music harmony and was also a composer.

<sup>56</sup> Despite enjoying this work, it can be seen from Appendix 2 that Clarke's hopes only came to fruition ten years later; she did not finish any other music until 1937.



collection, as shown. Clarke began the third movement of her Viola Sonata with a similarly modal solo (see Chapter 3), though there the melody remained firmly Aeolian. By moving between tonal systems within a twelve-bar phrase Clarke shows how her musical thinking had moved forward since the Sonata, and is another example of her adapting modality into her individual modern style.

**Ex. 4.57: *Ibid.*, 'Pastorale', bars 1–12**

Despite this modal beginning, Clarke returns to the discordant sound used in the previous two movements as soon as the clarinet enters. Like much of her earlier chamber music, the prevailing mood is mysterious, though her harmonic language here is more unrelentingly advanced and atonal. Much of the thematic material for the rest of the movement is derived from motifs introduced in the first twelve bars, but now with two instruments playing simultaneously Clarke weaves their lines together to create unusual sonorities.

The rhythmic unity from the first two movements is now gone, and Clarke tends to favour linear thinking. The independence of the two lines make the overall effect rather melancholic, as though they cannot quite 'meet' no matter how hard they try. Ex. 4.58 shows how discordant clashes result from this independence.

Ex. 4.58: *Ibid.*, bars 29–32

Clarinet (concert pitch)

Viola

*mf*

With few moments of respite from these clashes, 'Pastorale' rounds up the three-movement work in an appropriately enigmatic way, closing gently on an open fifth, as Ex. 4.59 shows.

Ex. 4.59: *Ibid.*, bars 91–92

Clarinet (concert pitch)

Viola

rit.

*ppp*

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A study of Rebecca Clarke's chamber music as a whole shows her progression as a composer and thereby gives a logical explanation for the distinctive musical voice which first came to public attention seemingly 'out of the blue' in her 1919 Viola Sonata. Now that works from as early as 1909 have been published it has become possible to trace the gradual development of Clarke's mature style in a way which was previously impossible for those without access to her closely-guarded manuscripts. This raises questions: why has it taken so long for important works to be published? Why does the *Rhapsody*, crucial to a broad understanding of Clarke's style, remain unpublished? Why are such works inaccessible to scholars wanting only to promote her music and assess her importance as a composer? How can withholding such works possibly benefit Clarke's reputation? Unfortunately, these

are likely to remain unanswered, though each newly published work is a cause for optimism for those wishing to give Clarke's music the attention it deserves.

In some cases, works thought to be lost, sometimes even by Clarke herself, have been found in her former New York apartment years after her death. This is the case with *Danse Bizarre*, *Theme and Variations* and some of her early songs. Whether Clarke truly believed these works to be lost is unknown, but perhaps by keeping rather than destroying them she showed a little more self-confidence in her abilities as a composer than her public remarks would suggest.

We have seen how the path to publication was rarely an easy one for Clarke, and her diaries record how frustrating she found this. During her lifetime she only had seven chamber works published after periods ranging from two to fourteen years: *Lullaby and Grotesque* (1916, 1930), *Viola Sonata* (1919, 1921), *Trio* (1921, 1928), *Chinese Puzzle* (1921, 1925), *Midsummer Moon* (1924, 1926), and *Passacaglia* (1941, 1943). Clarke gives details in her diaries of two songs being refused by publishers: *Come, Oh Come My Life's Delight* (by Winthrop Rogers in 1924), *Tiger, Tiger* (by OUP in 1929), and it is likely that she may have had similar experiences with chamber works, though it is equally possible that for some she simply chose not to attempt publication, supposing that they would be refused.

Although Clarke's style varied occasionally (especially in her works from the early 1940s) her way of composing remained largely the same. She brought newly acquired techniques into practice, and kept herself up-to-date with modern musical trends, but she was also anxious to acquire a firm grasp of older techniques, hence her interest in fugue towards the end of her career. Above all, these chamber works show Clarke's remarkably consistent and self-imposed high standards. Clarke was not prolific but her music is a prime example of the benefits of 'quality rather than



quantity'. If her name remained little known for so long because her music was not commercially available, it can only be hoped that in the future, now that that situation is being rectified, Rebecca Clarke's importance as a twentieth-century chamber music composer can be properly acknowledged.

## Chapter 5: Clarke's Mature Songs (1912–54)

It is only relatively recently that the importance of song to Rebecca Clarke has been acknowledged. For many years hers was not a name often associated with the genre, but as interest in her work increased during the 1980s and researchers began to look beyond the Viola Sonata and Trio to discover what else she had written, the extent and high quality of her song writing became apparent. The main reason for this lack of recognition as a song writer is clear: until 1995 from an output of over fifty songs, including six duets, fewer than twenty had been published, and many of these had been out of print since the later 1920s, making copies rare and difficult to obtain.<sup>1</sup> In 1995 Boosey and Hawkes issued a volume of nine Clarke songs which had been first published separately<sup>2</sup> in the 1920s, and in 2002 Oxford University Press issued a volume of eleven more songs, including seven first publications.<sup>3</sup> In addition to her songs, Clarke completed twelve choral works, of which two were published in the 1990s (*Ave Maria* in 1998 and *Chorus from Shelley's 'Hellas'* in 1999); Oxford University Press published the remainder in 2003 following the release of a CD of her choral works in January of that year.<sup>4</sup> These are discussed in Chapter 6,

It is clear from these figures that vocal music was important to Clarke, and that she did succeed in publishing some of it during her brief period of celebrity in

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<sup>1</sup> See list of works in Appendix 2.

<sup>2</sup> Except *Shy One* and *The Cloths of Heaven* which were published together in one volume in 1920. The other seven songs are: *June Twilight*, *A Dream*, *Eight o'Clock*, *Greeting*, *Infant Joy*, *Down by the Salley Gardens* and *The Seal Man*.

<sup>3</sup> The songs in this volume are: *Weep You No More*, *Sad Fountains* (first publication), *A Psalm of David*, *When He Was in the Wilderness of Judah* (first publication), *Come, Oh Come, My Life's Delight* (first publication), *The Cherry-Blossom Wand*, *Cradle Song*, *Tiger, Tiger* (first publication), *The Aspidistra*, *Lethe* (first publication), *The Donkey*, *Binnorie: A Ballad* (first publication), and *God Made a Tree* (first publication).

<sup>4</sup> The CD was recorded by the choir of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, who gave the premieres of several of the unpublished works at a concert in The Queen's Building, Emmanuel College, Cambridge on 26 April 2002. See Appendix 2.

the 1920s. Although she completed more songs than chamber works, there is, however, no story behind them, as there was in the cases of the prize-winning Viola Sonata and Trio, to secure them even a passing mention in music history books.<sup>5</sup>

As a result of this neglect, Clarke's songs have been ignored in the concert hall for many years, a remarkable reversal in fortune from the late 1910s and early 1920s when the renowned English tenor Gervase Elwes championed her first mature songs in England and America. Despite the attention of certain singers – the Danish soprano Povla Frijsch (1881–1960) made the first recording of Clarke's music with a performance of *Shy One*,<sup>6</sup> and Clarke dedicated *The Donkey* to her in 1941 – her songs have for a long time been performed only by a select few.

Clarke wrote songs throughout her career: her first juvenile compositions, some of her earliest mature works, and the last piece she completed were all songs. For that reason alone they are central to any serious appraisal of her work. It was some early songs that Joseph Clarke sent to Charles Stanford at the Royal College of Music in 1908, in which Stanford detected the 'one or two traces of talent',<sup>7</sup> which persuaded him to take Rebecca on as a student. But he was not keen for his pupils to concentrate too heavily on song writing (as we saw in Chapter 2), and it is not known whether he saw or gave her advice on any of the songs she composed during her years of study at the Royal College of Music.

In her early songs up to 1907 Clarke set numerous German texts, though she later concentrated on English poetry, setting Shakespeare, Blake and Shelley, as well as contemporary poetry by John Masefield, W B Yeats and Katherine Kendall: like

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<sup>5</sup> This is even true of Aaron I Cohen's *International Encyclopedia of Women Composers* (Books & Music (USA) Inc, New York, 1987) in which Clarke's songs are not mentioned.

<sup>6</sup> Victor Records. Frijsch cited Clarke as one of her favourite American composers in a *Musical America* interview (see Curtis, CD liner notes, *Rebecca Clarke / The Cloths of Heaven*, Guild Music Ltd, GMCD 7208, recorded 1992, issued 2000).

<sup>7</sup> Clarke. Interview with Robert Sherman, 1976.



Finzi and Parry she was clearly well read. The vast majority are scored for voice and piano, though there are several (mostly arrangements) for voice and violin.

Like her chamber music, Clarke's songs for voice and piano vary dramatically in outlook, style and length. Her longest song *Binnorie: A Ballad* (c.1945), which was only discovered in 2000, takes over fifteen minutes to perform; her shortest, *Shy One* (1912), is only eighteen bars long. What is remarkable is that even the shortest songs show the same tightness of construction and motivic skills as the largest chamber works. Many of the texts she chose to set have similar themes: common subjects are love, death and dreams or combinations of the three. It is clear that Clarke was frequently drawn to dark or mysterious – sometimes disturbing – subject matter. Two of her songs, *The Seal Man* (1922) and *Binnorie: A Ballad*, involve death by drowning.<sup>8</sup> *A Psalm of David* (1919–20) is a discomfiting religious setting ('But those that seek my soul to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth'), whereas *Eight O'Clock* (1927), with a text from A E Housman's *Last Poems* (1921, published 1922), details the final minutes of a prisoner's life as he awaits execution. Many of the songs with eerie undertones end in the same way, with a notably absent third in the final chord. Ending on open fifths in this way might suggest that Clarke knew and admired the music of Purcell: the few comments she made in her diaries about his music were favourable. However, she also sometimes omits the third but includes an unresolved seventh to end a work in an enigmatic way: a technique also used in her chamber music.

Other songs are connected through musical rather than textural means. *The Seal Man* and *Tiger, Tiger* (1929) are stylistically alike and have strong similarities,

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<sup>8</sup> Early in her memoir, *I Had a Father Too*, Clarke tells how she was born with a caul: part of the inner membrane which encloses a foetus that is occasionally found on a child's head at birth. Dried cauls were reputed to bring sailors immunity from drowning. Clarke's caul was stolen at the hospital and presumed sold to a sailor.

both in mood and thematic material, with the cello and piano *Rhapsody* (1923). *The Seal Man* was completed in January 1922, and the *Rhapsody* begun four months later in May, so to find connections here is unsurprising. However, the fact that the later *Tiger, Tiger* contains so many similarities is significant when we consider that Clarke's critics and colleagues thought the explicit darkness of her final Coolidge work a step in the wrong direction (see Chapter 3). By using this dark style again, several years later in *Tiger, Tiger*, and later still in *Binnorie: A Ballad*, Clarke revealed its inner psychological importance to her, though perhaps by opting for song form she purposefully chose a more intimate genre than she had for the unsuccessful *Rhapsody*.

In other cases connections result from the use of similar thematic or harmonic material, and in a few Clarke even indulges in self-quotation, adding another dimension to the text by suggesting something found elsewhere. In this way she shows how music can add layers of meaning to poetry, with varying degrees of subtlety, by alluding to something not made explicit in the words alone.

Clarke's songs vary greatly in style, from the simple (*Down by the Salley Gardens*, 1919) to the extrovertly dramatic (*The Seal Man*). These differences are largely reflected by the piano accompaniments, which range from the straightforward to the virtuosic, and sometimes vary dramatically within a single song. The way in which the voice is used also differs between songs. Where she sets prose rather than poetry, Clarke veers towards a *parlando* vocal line, closely following the rhythm of the words. Her familiar rhythmic device of using groups of two notes against groups of three is as regular a feature of her songs as it is of her chamber music. Melismas are relatively rare in any of her solo songs, as is word-painting; instead of highlighting individual words, Clarke usually responds to the overall mood of each



poem, thereby providing a more satisfying result. This approach is, of course, found in superior song-writers from Schubert and Schumann to Fauré and Debussy, and was a feature of much early twentieth-century English song. Whatever the style of poetry, Clarke's settings are consistently effective, and reflective both of her skill as a composer and her sympathetic understanding of different poetic styles.

Discussing Clarke's songs in groups presents a problem. While it is advantageous to compare 'dramatic songs', 'songs with religious texts' or 'love songs' as categories, there are so many links between them that the boundaries are not always distinct. *A Psalm of David*, for example, fits the terms 'dramatic' and 'religious'. But as some dramatic songs have no religious connections, to merge these two categories would not work. In addition, a religious song may also have similarities with a non-religious song, so should mention be made of a secular song within the 'songs with religious texts' category? A chronological approach presents even greater difficulties; songs written around the same time often have little in common with each other, but a great deal in common with songs written several (or many) years later, even insofar as to include self-quotation. My chosen method is to divide the songs into broad categories, because this provides the greatest insight into Clarke's approach to song setting. A degree of flexibility is necessary, but where a song appears in more than one category, repetition of information is avoided wherever possible. I examine the solo songs with piano first (sections i-iv), then the duets (v), then finally the songs with string accompaniment (vi).

### **(i) Dramatic Songs (1920–45)**

In terms of drama, scope, length and virtuosity, Clarke's setting of Psalm 63, *A Psalm of David, When He Was in the Wilderness of Judah*, forms a quartet with three



other songs written over a twenty-five year period, *The Seal Man*; *Tiger, Tiger*; and *Binnorie: A Ballad*. The psalm setting was not published until 2002, eighty-two years after it was written, and it appeared in the same volume<sup>9</sup> as *Tiger, Tiger* and *Binnorie: A Ballad* (both also being published for the first time). As is the case with so many of Clarke's works, the reasons why these three remarkable songs remained unpublished for so long are most likely founded in a lack of encouragement (*Tiger, Tiger* was rejected by Oxford University Press in 1929,<sup>10</sup> though they accepted her *Cradle Song*, another setting of Blake, at the same time), and her intense modesty (she rarely promoted her own work). *The Seal Man* fared rather better, being published in 1926. Perhaps John Masefield, whom Clarke went to see in 1925 to discuss her settings of his poetry in *The Seal Man* and *June Twilight* (1925), had persuaded her to seek a publisher, giving her the extra confidence she needed to encourage her into the spotlight. Perhaps, too, his backing encouraged publishers to look favourably on Clarke's work. (He was considered highly enough in England to be made Poet Laureate in 1930.)

The years 1919–29 were particularly productive for Clarke, and much of her darkest music dates from that time. This is not to say that everything she wrote during that period was bleak or that outside those parameters she wrote nothing with the same sinister edge, but within that ten-year span Clarke produced the majority of her most intense pieces.

Psalm 63 is particularly powerful, and Clarke's setting – which has the feeling of a *Dies Irae* – reflects the striking quality of the Old Testament text. Two years later she completed a setting of the rather more reassuring Psalm 91 (*He That*

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<sup>9</sup> Published by Oxford University Press.

<sup>10</sup> Clarke's diaries record her sending a copy of *Tiger, Tiger* to Hubert Foss at Oxford University Press on 21 July 1929. Her entry for 16 September 1929 reads: 'Went to tea w Hubert Foss at the Oxford Press to talk over the difficulty of my Blake songs. Decided to take "Lullaby" [*Cradle Song*] away from them & try and get "Tiger" published with it elsewhere.'

*Dwelleth In The Secret Place Of The Most High*) for tenor and chorus, and later still set two poems with religious themes as songs for voice and piano, *The Donkey* (1942) and *God Made a Tree* (1954). In this first outing, though, Clarke presented her least comforting picture of what the Judaeo-Christian tradition has to offer.

The opening of *A Psalm of David* is highly effective, with unison C#s in the piano before the voice enters with a dramatic ascent from C# to G on the words 'O God' (Ex. 5.1). By using this particular interval, a diminished fifth, (the 'diabolus in musica'), Clarke immediately introduces the idea of a clash between good and evil which is the theme of Psalm 63. The interval also appears in the bass of the piano in bars 1–2 and is echoed in chords in bars 2 and 3 (G–C# and B–F), reinforcing its significance. Even on the word 'my' ('O God, thou art my God') a jarring simultaneous B and Bb in the piano, along with another tritone (B–F) suggest further inner conflict: claiming a personal connection with God in this way brings the writer no sense of comfort.

**Ex. 5.1: *A Psalm of David*, bars 1–3**

The dramatically descriptive text has an insistent sense of foreboding which Clarke underlines with dissonant harmonies, unexpected *fortissimo* discords and unresolved suspensions. However, equally as effective are passages in which the texture is sparser: when the text refers to a 'dry and thirsty land where no water is',

disquieting ‘empty’ perfect fifths (Ex. 5.2 bars 8–9) and low *pianissimo* octave Fs then Es (bars 9–11) in the piano give this a musical representation, whilst linking the piano part to the vocal line in bars 9<sub>3</sub>–11<sub>2</sub> through exposed rhythmic augmentation.

**Ex. 5.2: *Ibid.*, bars 8–11**

The musical score for Ex. 5.2, bars 8–11, is presented in two systems. The top system shows the vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are "in a dry and thirst - y land where no wat - er is". The piano accompaniment is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). Dynamics include *mp*, *p*, and *pp*. The piano part features exposed rhythmic augmentation in bars 9–11, with a low octave F in bar 9 and an E in bar 10.

Clarke gives an equally dramatic setting to John Masefield’s prose poem ‘The Seal Man’. Masefield’s dark text was first published in 1905 as part of *A Mainsail Haul*, a collection of writings with a nautical theme. In her setting Clarke follows the text exactly, though she begins part way through the lengthy poem and omits the final paragraph.

The tale tells of a ‘bad man’, O’Donnell, ‘who died of the fever’. At his wake those present become uneasy and watch in horror as O’Donnell’s corpse rises and walks down to the sea, where his screams summon up seals and other sea creatures. The corpse falls back onto the sand, but its wraith, ‘all bald and black’, goes out into the water and passes into a bull seal. The seal has the ability to walk like a man and he fathers a son with a local girl. This son, ‘the seal-man’, has a hypnotic power over people: ‘Them [sic] who passed this seal-man, they felt the call in their hearts.’ A local girl, Kate O’Keefe, falls prey to his charms and follows him, in a trance-like state, down to the sea where she drowns.



To set an appropriately eerie atmosphere right from the start Clarke quotes a line from Masfield's text beneath the title: 'Them that live in the water, they have ways of calling people.' Her setting begins from the moment the seal-man begins to lure Kate O'Keefe away to her death, but by including this quote from an earlier (unset) point in the poem she goes part way to explain the title character's mystical powers.

Clarke's highly detailed score begins on solo piano with a rhapsodic *misterioso* passage. Using only three notes, C, Ab and B in various octaves, this builds with an *accelerando* then slows down before the vocal entry. The rippling arpeggio waves suggest the aquatic references of the poem, and the changing speeds indicate an underlying lack of control. Before a word has been sung the listener is unnerved. The first two bars are shown in Ex. 5.3. Ex. 5.4 shows the beginning of *Tiger, Tiger*, written seven years later, which demonstrates numerous similarities with *The Seal Man*. Both show Clarke using similar techniques to create a blurred texture and a dream-like atmosphere. Both begin low on the piano, *misterioso* and *pianissimo* with three-note arpeggio figures incorporating a semitone clash (C–Ab–B in *The Seal Man* and G–D–Ab in *Tiger, Tiger*), and both use short *crescendos* and *diminuendos* to create swells in the sound. In her eerie Yeats setting, *A Dream* (1926), Clarke uses a similar figure high on the piano, first as an introduction (Ex. 5.5), but then as a continually repeated motif beneath the vocal lines 'I dreamed that one had died in a strange place / Near no accustomed hand; and they had nailed the boards above her face, / The peasants of that land'. Here, the figure continues in 5/4 metre over the first eleven bars and reappears towards the end at the words 'And gazed upon the mournful stars above, / And heard the mournful breeze.' The result is

an otherworldly atmosphere, which is sustained throughout the song, confirming that this is all a disturbing dream.

**Ex. 5.3: *The Seal Man*, bars 1–2**

**Ex. 5.4: *Tiger, Tiger*, bars 1–2**

**Ex. 5.5: *A Dream*, bar 1**

William Blake's *The Tyger* originally dates from his notebook of c.1791–92; a revised version appears in the same notebook and in *Songs of Experience* (published 1794). Clarke set three of Blake's poems, though this is probably the best known text. At sixty-four bars, her setting is slightly shorter than *The Seal Man* (seventy-five bars) but is still lengthy when compared to most of her other songs. Clarke matches Blake's fiercely effective description of the powerful beast with some of her most commanding music.

In contrast, *Binnorie: A Ballad* is a traditional text, one variant of the 'Two Sisters' ballad:<sup>11</sup>

These ballads have in common the basic plot of the drowning of a young girl by her older sister, jealous that her lover prefers her younger sister to herself, and the subsequent denunciation of the murderer by a musical instrument crafted from the body of her victim. Not only were the ballads ornamenting this basic tale found throughout Britain, as the large number of variants amassed by recent scholarship attests...but versions can be traced all across northern Europe, through Scandinavia to Poland, and similar tales are extant even in Asia and Africa.<sup>12</sup>

The tale was used by Cyril Rootham (1875–1938) in his only opera *The Two Sisters* (first performed at the New Theatre, Cambridge, on 14 February 1922).<sup>13</sup> Although it is not known whether Clarke saw Rootham's opera, it is likely she was aware of it: performances took place in Cambridge and London and were reviewed in the national and music press. With its supernatural associations, the dark tale of love, jealousy, murder and retribution was bound to appeal to her.

Clarke's chosen version of the narrative rhyming poem divides into seventeen four-line verses, and therefore contains a great deal of text. In her setting the first three verses appear in a modified strophic form, with a straightforward Aeolian melody, heard initially without accompaniment: Clarke's 'supposed' folk melody is wholly appropriate for the folk-ballad text. To continue for the remaining fourteen verses with the same melody, however, would have been monotonous, so Clarke varies the melodies used from verse four onwards, returning to original melody for

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<sup>11</sup> The first appearances of the tale in print date from the mid-seventeenth century.

<sup>12</sup> Anne-Marie H Forbes, 'A Comparative Study of Folk Material in Opera', *The Music Review*, Vol. 51 (1990), 96.

<sup>13</sup> The libretto was written by Marjory Fausset.



verses fifteen and sixteen: a cyclic approach such as she used in much of her chamber music. In the intervening music, though, some melodic links are retained: a recurring phrase in the poem is the lament 'Binnorie, O Binnorie' (Binnorie is the Scottish town where the events unfold), and wherever this appears Clarke uses the same melody (see Ex. 5.6a and b). This cry appears in verses 1, 2, and 3 (which set the scene); 5 and 6 (in which the murder takes place); and 15, 16 and 17 (in which the dead sister, in the form of a harp, names her murderer). The melody used for this phrase originates from the first bar of piano introduction, and remains as in Ex. 5.6a until verse six, where a more elaborate version, with distorted intervals and an elongated cry of 'O', signal the terrible event which is about to take place (Ex. 5.6b):

The youngest stood upon a stone,

Binnorie, O Binnorie!

The eldest came and pushed her in.

**Ex. 5.6a: *Binnorie: A Ballad*, vocal part, bars 12–13**

Bin - no - rie, O Bin - no - rie!

**Ex. 5.6b: *Ibid.*, bars 71–72**

Bin - no - rie, O Bin - no - rie!

As in the *Rhapsody* Clarke uses a rising chromatic bass line to heighten the dramatic effect in Ex. 5.6b. The accompaniment provides diversity throughout, ranging from a single line to complex multi-layered textures at the most exciting points, expertly reflecting the events of the story and enhancing the atmospheric build-up of tension.

The texts of these four dramatic songs are very different and show how Clarke's method of setting prose (as in *A Psalm of David* and *The Seal Man*) differed from her settings of poetry (*Tiger, Tiger* and *Binnorie: A Ballad* are rhyming poems). For instance, many of the melodic lines in *A Psalm of David* and *The Seal Man* reflect the inflections and rhythms of natural speech: they are much freer in tempo than those in *Tiger, Tiger*, or *Binnorie: A Ballad*. The vocal line in the prose settings often remains static or moves mostly in seconds, as in recitative or plainchant. At several points in *The Seal Man*, where the aim is often to advance through the prose dialogue as rapidly as possible, the piano plays a single chord, or a single note, held with a caesura while the voice presses forward above (such as in Ex. 5.7a). Ex. 5.7b shows how a similar vocal line in *Tiger, Tiger* is rendered more flowing and directional via its accompaniment with its doubling of the voice in the left hand.

**Ex. 5.7a: *The Seal Man*, bars 7–9**

The musical score for Ex. 5.7a is presented in two staves. The top staff is the vocal line, written in treble clef with a common time signature. It begins with the tempo marking 'Poco animato'. The melody consists of a series of eighth notes, with the first three measures containing triplets. The lyrics 'And he came by her ca-bin to the west of the road, call - ing.' are written below the notes. The final note of the phrase is marked with a long note value and the instruction '(lunga)'. The bottom staff is the piano accompaniment, written in bass clef with a common time signature. It features a single note held with a caesura, marked with a piano dynamic 'p'. The score is divided into three measures corresponding to the vocal line.

Ex. 5.7b: *Tiger, Tiger*, bars 12–13

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff is the vocal line, starting with the tempo marking 'a tempo' and the dynamic 'p' with a 'cresc.' (crescendo) instruction. The lyrics are: 'In what dis - tant deeps or skies Burnt the fire of thine eyes?'. The bottom staff is the piano accompaniment, starting with a 'p' dynamic and a 'cresc.' instruction. It features a trill (tr) in the right hand and a triplet (3) in the left hand. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

There is an expansiveness to all four of these ‘dramatic’ songs that is achieved through their often virtuosic piano accompaniments. Sudden dynamic and textural changes are common, with thick chords switching without warning to arpeggios between the hands and then to a single melodic line. Although Clarke was not a confident pianist, she did compose at the piano and the accompaniment in *The Seal Man* is constantly idiomatic. Chords are left to resound over a number of bars via the sustaining pedal, whilst a recitative passage continues above in the vocal line. Contrasts of *staccato* writing in one hand with *legato* in the other, again with the sustaining pedal held down, also provide different timbral effects. The writing in *Tiger, Tiger* and *A Psalm of David* seems rather more orchestrally conceived, as in the high *pianissimo* tremolos and low trills in Ex. 5.10. The accompaniments cover the full range of the piano, though in *Tiger, Tiger* much of the writing is scored for both hands in the bass clef, the dark timbres an indication of the notoriously shadowy and slightly sinister title character.

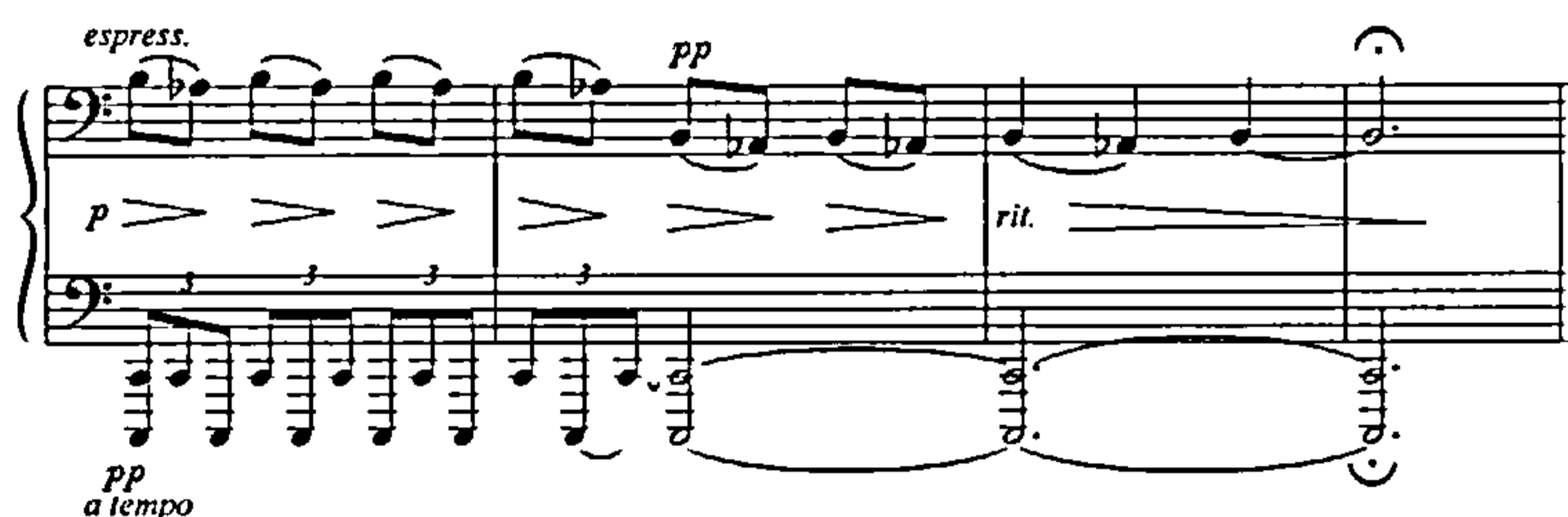
At the end of *The Seal Man*, the piano’s solo introductory arpeggios reappear, as we have seen. This did not impress the *Daily Telegraph*’s critic when John Goss (baritone) and Reginald Paul (piano) gave the premiere at the Wigmore Hall in 1925. His comment below, however, shows that he somewhat missed the point:



...the composer has not been just clever enough, and the Lisztian waves give the lady so pianistic a drowning that the imaginative atmosphere...is completely nullified a few bars before the end. How much more cunning to have allowed the voice to finish alone!’<sup>14</sup>

It is evident, though, that by ending the song in the same way as she began Clarke imitates the form of Masefield’s poem, which started with O’Donnell’s wraith going down into the sea and ended with his son causing the death of Kate O’Keefe in the same place. *The Seal Man* contains numerous different thematic strands and a highly effective ending is created by rounding it off in this way. The piano’s last four bars (Ex. 5.8) use the introduction’s three notes (C, Ab and B) in a repeated, pulsating figure suggestive of a heartbeat becoming slower and slower, until, finally, it stops altogether on an unresolved seventh.

**Ex. 5.8: *The Seal Man*, bars 72–75**



There is also a reference to heartbeats in *Tiger, Tiger*, and Clarke marks these in her score with a series of regular, accented Fbs (Ex. 5.9). Here there are strong similarities with a passage from the *Rhapsody* in both the rhythm and shape of the solo line and the repeated bass octaves in the piano (cf Ex. 3.49). However, the feel in the *Rhapsody* is of pushing forward, whereas in *Tiger, Tiger* it is as if the beast is still, perhaps waiting to pounce.

<sup>14</sup> Unnamed critic: *The Daily Telegraph*, 22 October 1925, 8.

Ex. 5.9: *Tiger, Tiger*, bars 21–22

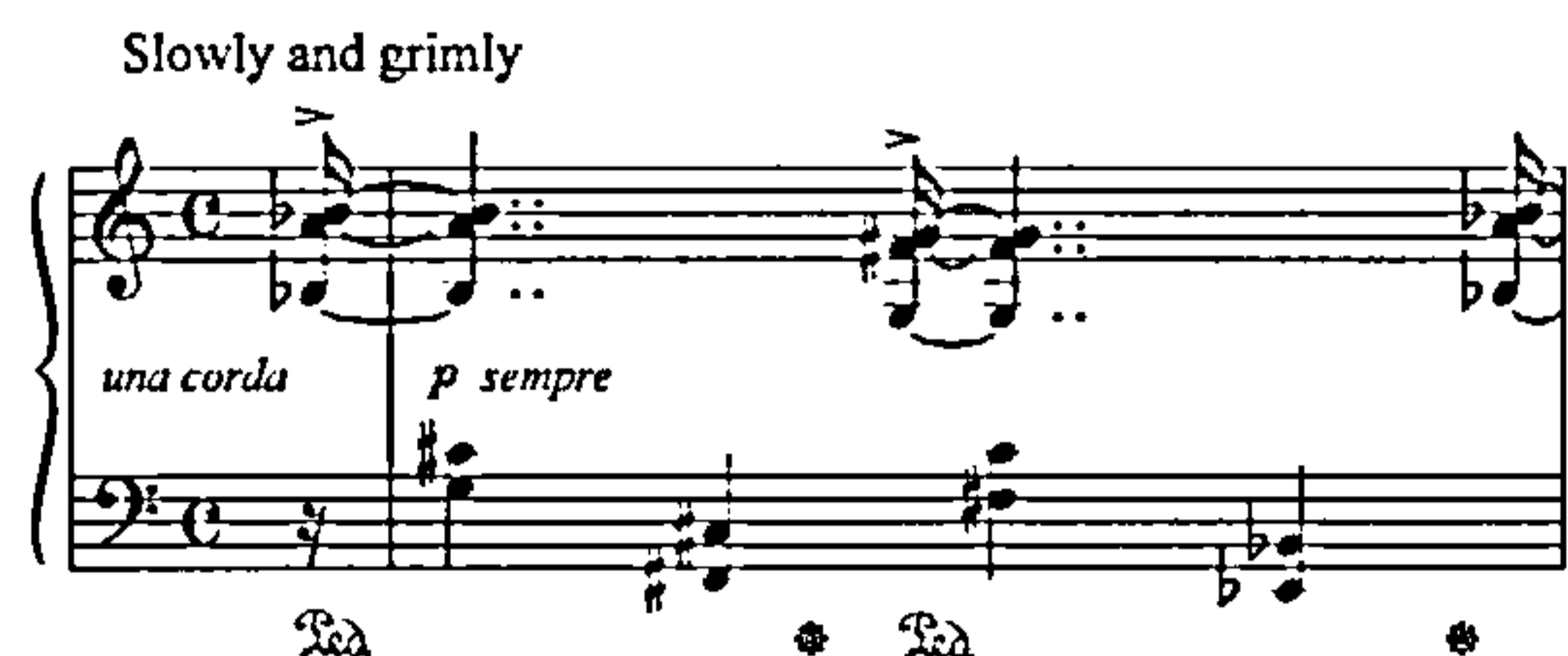
Ex. 5.10: *Ibid.*, bars 3–4

There are other similar themes too in these two works: the opening melody of *Tiger, Tiger* (Ex. 5.10) has the same brooding, repeated rising semitones as the cello at the start of the *Rhapsody* (cf Ex. 3.44). In Ex. 5.10 the unexpected *sforzando* semiquaver chords (which do not appear in the *Rhapsody*) have a startling effect after the *pianissimo* opening. They suggest compulsion, the uncontrollable: a reflection of the tiger's primitive wildness.

The use of a sudden semiquaver followed by a longer note (similar in effect to an *acciaccatura*) occurs infrequently in Clarke's songs, but each example creates a similar effect. In *Eight O'Clock* the rhythm is used throughout much of the song to suggest the constant ticking of the tower clock while a prisoner waits for the hour of his execution (Ex. 5.11). The prisoner's despair proves to be well founded. Although the ticking relents while he is prepared for the gallows ('Strapped, noosed, nighing his hour'), this simply shows that his attention is elsewhere now. The clock has

certainly not stopped: eight final *fortissimo* repetitions of the ‘ticking’ rhythm ring out in the piano before it falls silent. Eight o’clock has arrived; the prisoner is dead.

**Ex. 5.11: *Eight O’Clock*, bars 1**



A similar motif appears several times in *Binnorie: A Ballad*, initially disturbing the simple folk-like melody of the opening (Ex. 5.12) and suggesting an air of unease. The darting movement and semitone oscillations (bars 4–5) act as a warning reinforced by the chromatically rising perfect fifths in the right hand.

**Ex. 5.12: *Binnorie: A Ballad*, bars 1–6**



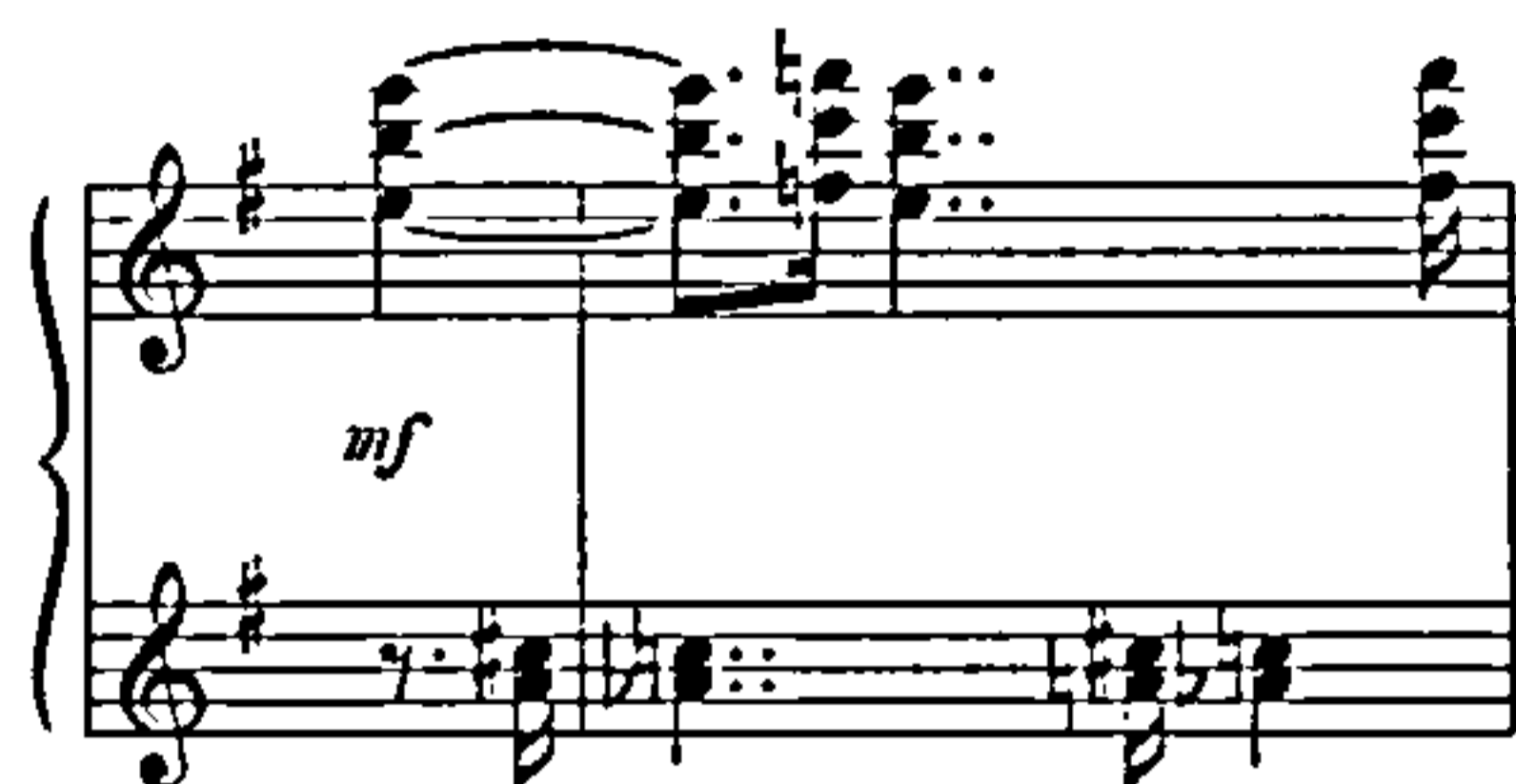
This sense of unease is temporarily forgotten while the voice sings a solo modal melody to set the scene, ‘There were twa sisters sat in a bower; Binnorie, O Binnorie! / There came a knight to be their wooer, / By the bonnie milldams o’ Binnorie.’ But the piano immediately returns with its unsettling theme, the semiquaver motif now appearing in the right hand in open fifths (Ex. 5.13). A subsequent reappearance takes this chromatic movement a stage further, incorporating a parallel movement in major thirds in the left hand (Ex. 5.14):



Ex. 5.13: *Ibid.*, bars 19–23



Ex. 5.14: *Ibid.*, bar 47



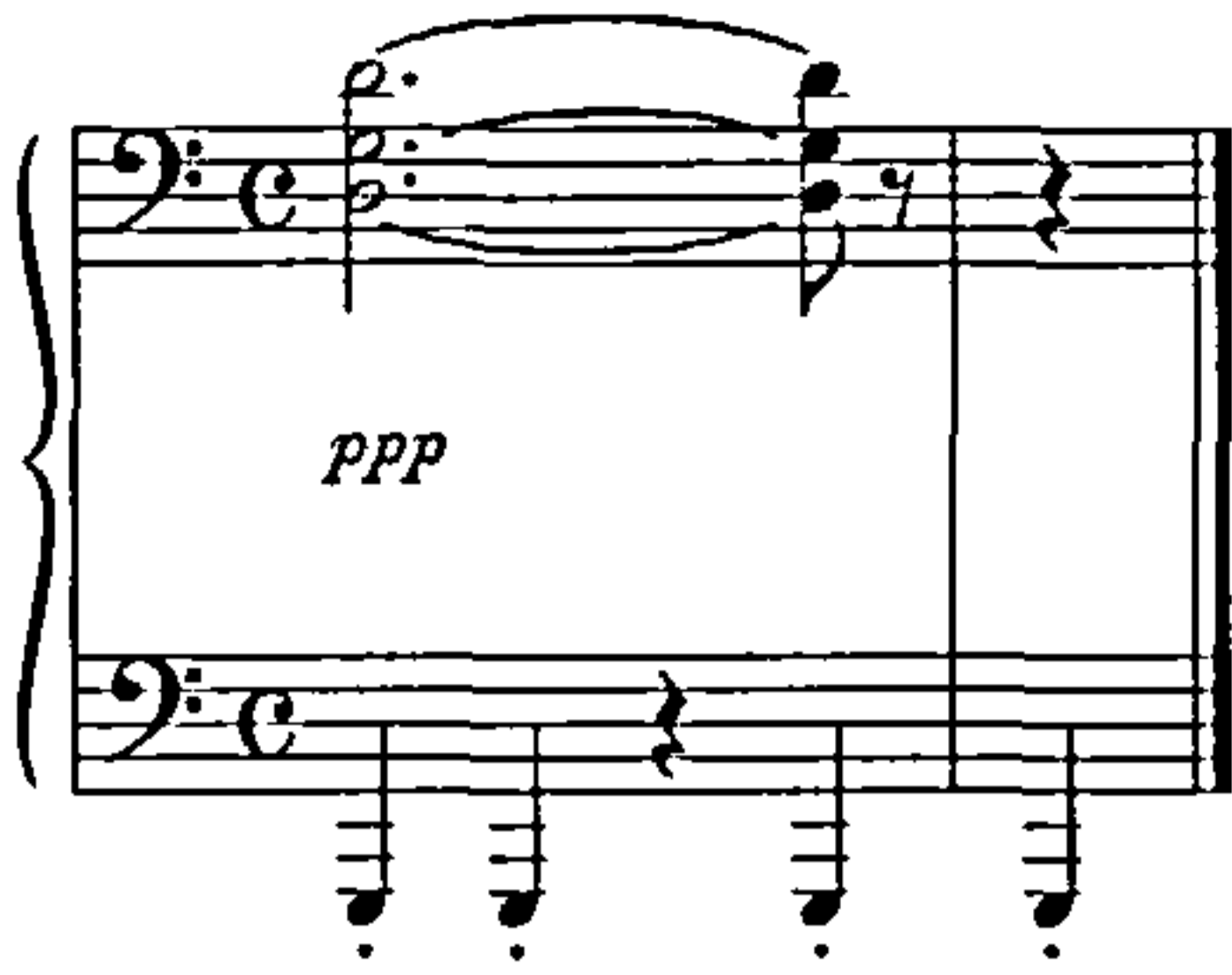
All the implicit unease contained in the motif finally comes to an unambiguous realisation of dread when the dead girl denounces her murderous sister with a dramatic cry of 'Woe!' (Ex. 5.15). Perhaps Clarke intended this rhythm to be a 'woe' motif, each example being charged with a chilling sense of foreboding.

Ex. 5.15: *Ibid.*, bars 214–15 (vocal part only)

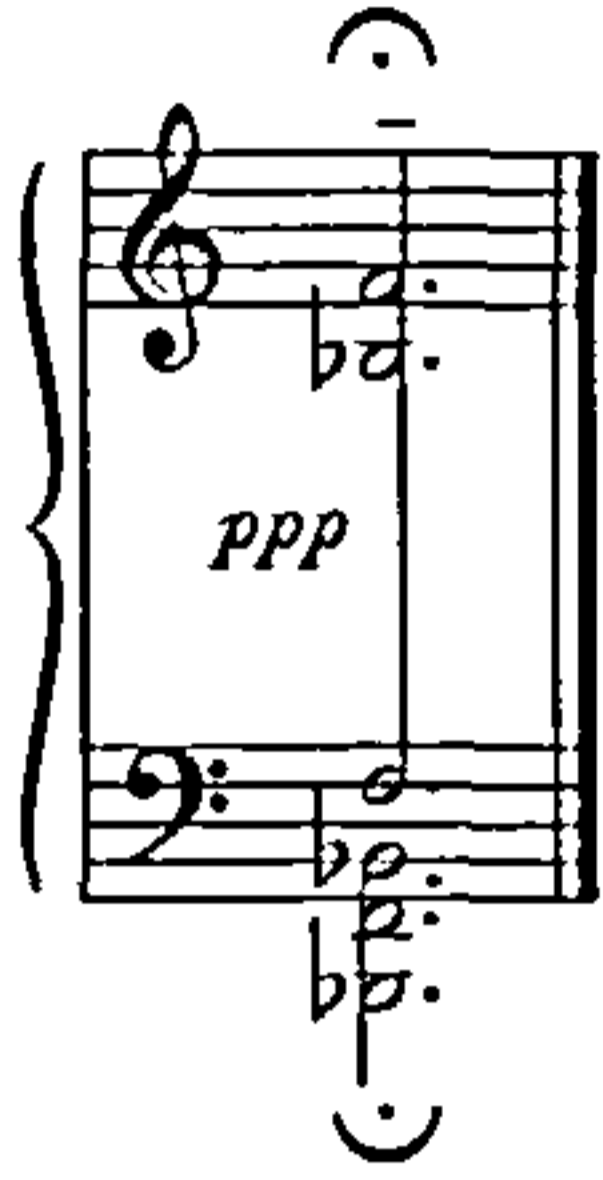


The dark undertones present in each of these dramatic songs are reinforced by their endings, all of which lack a sense of resolution. In *A Psalm of David* and *Tiger*, *Tiger* this is done through the thirdless final chord (see Exx. 5.16 and 5.17), and in *The Seal Man* through coming to rest on a major seventh without the third or fifth (Ex. 5.8). *Binnorie: A Ballad* ends bleakly with two low *staccato* and *pianissimo* Es in the bass of the piano separated by two beats of silence. In each case nothing has been settled, and the bleak picture painted in each is not given a falsely optimistic ending.

**Ex. 5.16: *Tiger, Tiger*, bars 63–64**



**Ex. 5.17: *A Psalm of David*, bar 70**



Dramatic songs clearly suited Clarke's sensibilities and musical style, and there is much drama, too, in her chamber music. Even after such significant chamber pieces as the three Coolidge works, Clarke returned to song form, venting her dramatic energies with skill and conviction.

**(ii) Songs with Religious Texts (1920–54)**

Clarke completed three songs with religious texts at different stages in her career. The texts she chose are very different, and come from disparate sources: *A Psalm of David* is Biblical (as we have seen), *The Donkey* (1942) and *God Made a Tree* (1954) are twentieth-century poems, the first rhyming, the second not. Both are by British writers.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *The Donkey* is by G K Chesterton. Katherine Kendall (1883–1966), the author of the unpublished poem *God Made a Tree*, was best known as a violinist and leader of the Kendall String Quartet. She began to write poetry in her later years. A devout Catholic, she was a friend of Clarke's and also knew the war poet Siegfried Sassoon well. Archives at the John J Burns Library in Boston, Massachusetts, include several letters from Sassoon to Kendall.

The setting of Psalm 63 has been examined earlier, but is mentioned again here because, when compared with the two later songs with religious texts, it suggests that Clarke's attitude towards organised religion became more conventional in later life. Her choice of a dramatic text in *A Psalm of David* contrasts distinctly with the later settings. Admittedly, the text of her next work, a setting for tenor and SATB chorus of Psalm 91 (1922), concentrates more on how God will protect His followers than on what will happen to disbelievers (as in Psalm 63), but there is still much to unsettle the listener in this highly dissonant choral work (see Chapter 6), and Clarke's music brings a disturbing edge to a reassuring text. This provides further evidence that she saw the Old Testament view of God as a forbidding one at that time.<sup>16</sup>

In contrast, *The Donkey* and *God Made a Tree* are more comforting: the former because its message, despite its bitterly ironic tone, is that God's love extends to all; the latter because it, too, offers a signal of hope. In both these poems, however, the sense of optimism in the words comes at the end, after ambiguous beginnings.

*The Donkey* stands apart from the other two songs because the fact that its fundamental message is a religious one is not made apparent until the end. In Chesterton's wry, yet poignant tale it is the donkey himself who narrates. So often a victim of ridicule because of his 'monstrous head and sickening cry and ears like errant wings' he muses to himself how those who deride his species are themselves fools, because they have forgotten the donkey's finest hour. With the words 'there was a shout about my ears and palms before my feet' the religious significance

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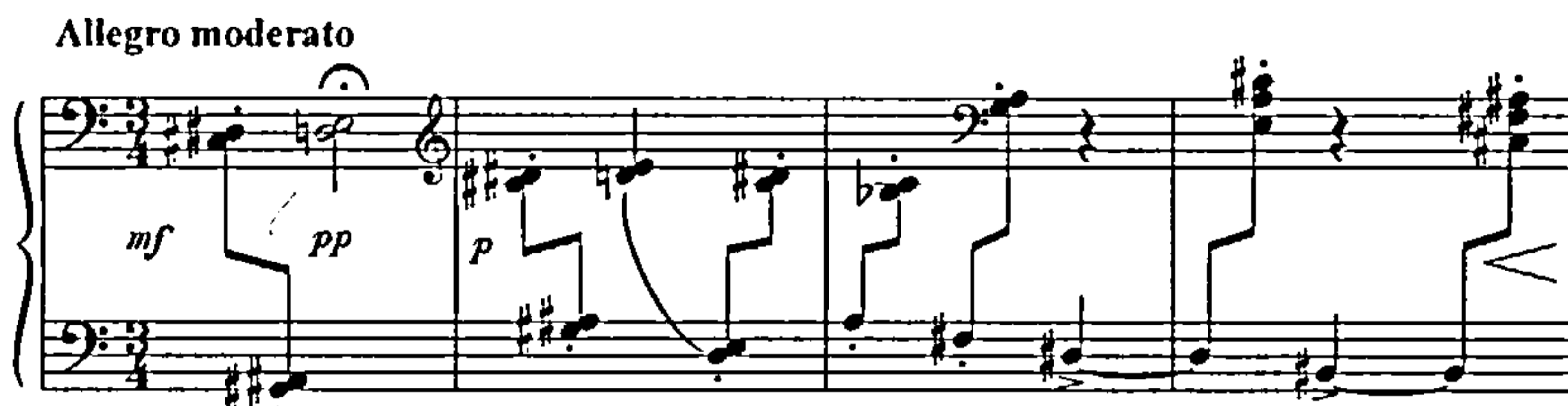
<sup>16</sup> If Clarke had ambiguous feelings towards organised religion it is unsurprising: her parents' views about Christianity were completely opposed. As she describes in her memoir her mother was a Lutheran, her father an atheist who 'could not bear to have anyone disagree with him' (Chap. 1, 6). The following anecdote sheds light on Clarke's use of Psalm 63: 'Our maid...strongly disapproved of our never going to church. She sometimes frightened me dreadfully, when getting me ready for bed, with tales about hell and the eternal torture that would be my portion if I died without repenting.' (Chap. 2, 5.)



becomes clear: the triumphant day was Palm Sunday when Christ rode into Jerusalem on a donkey.

Clarke reflects this change in the poem's direction through the piano accompaniment. Initially spiky and ungraceful, suggesting the ungainly animal and his bizarre cry, the piano line becomes far smoother as the donkey prepares to tell his sacred tale, with chorale-like chords suggesting a religious connection before this has been broached in the text (see Exx. 5.18 and 5.19). There are obvious similarities here with the second movement of Clarke's *Prelude, Allegro and Pastorale* completed the previous year: the biting seconds, and unexpectedly accented crotchets in Ex. 5.18 and mirror writing in the accompaniment in bars 35–37<sub>3</sub> of Ex. 5.19 are reminiscent of Ex. 4.52.

**Ex. 5.18: *The Donkey*, bars 1–4**



**Ex. 5.19: *Ibid.*, bars 35–37**



The accompaniment at the final words 'and palms before my feet' changes from *Allegro moderato* to *Adagio*, with a succession of majestic major triads, finally coming to rest on a strong D major chord. The change from the opening is obvious,

with stately chords now reflecting the donkey's pride. Clarke was anxious always to create a musical representation of the text, and she achieves this expertly here.

Although written in 1954, some twenty-five years before her death, *God Made a Tree* is Clarke's final work in any genre, other than revisions of *Tiger, Tiger, Lethe* and *Cortège* that she made during the 1970s.<sup>17</sup> Its message is a simple one about eternal life, and yet offers a particularly prescient observation, when viewed with hindsight, on the popularity of Clarke's music, especially considering the revival it has enjoyed since her death. In each verse Kendall's text shows how man tried to destroy God through the crucifixion of Christ: ultimately, through Christ's resurrection, man's efforts are shown to have failed.

Perhaps the most significant feature of *God Made a Tree* is the reappearance of a motif Clarke used twenty-seven years earlier in *The Cherry-Blossom Wand*. In this previous song the motif (shown in Ex. 5.20) appeared several times, initially in the piano introduction, and in the vocal line at the end of the first verse:

I will pluck from my tree a cherry-blossom wand,  
And carry it in my merciless hand,  
So I will drive you, so bewitch your eyes,  
With a beautiful thing that can never grow wise.

**Ex. 5.20: *The Cherry-Blossom Wand*, bars 1–2 (piano part):**



This theme reappears *pianissimo* in the piano at the end of the first verse of *God Made a Tree* (Ex. 5.21), now ending on an unresolved chord of Ab major 7:

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<sup>17</sup> Pencilled revisions to the duet *Away Delights* possibly date from the 1970s too.

God made a tree

Man felled it and with craft and cunning

fashioned it cross-wise.

God hung on it.

**Ex. 5.21: *God Made a Tree*, bars 8–10:**

The musical score for 'God Made a Tree' (bars 8-10) is presented in a standard format. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in G major and 4/4 time, with the lyrics 'God hung on it' under a slur. The piano accompaniment includes markings for 'pp senza espr.', 'pp', and 'pp sempre e calmato'. The instruction 'una corda' is written below the piano part.

The most obvious linking factor between the two poems is the image of a tree; particularly the felling of a tree (or part of one). By drawing our attention to the use of similar imagery in the texts Clarke invites us to look further for other connections.

Anna Wickham's<sup>18</sup> poem is open to interpretation on many levels, but on the surface it compares the ending of a brief love affair with the act of cutting away a branch of a cherry tree. In this way, and in *God Made a Tree*, something killed in its prime avoids a slow decay and in so doing lives for eternity: the cherry-blossom wand (and the love to which it is compared) as a memory; God, through Christ's resurrection. Clarke may well have seen even deeper connections; it is not inconceivable to read Wickham's text itself as a metaphor for the story of the Christian Trinity (the tree, the wand and eternal beauty). The cherry tree also features prominently in old Christian texts.<sup>19</sup> If Clarke saw the text in this way it is particularly significant, because a Christian reading of Wickham's poem gives it a sense of optimism that

<sup>18</sup> Anna Wickham (1884–1947). Both Clarke and Wickham were friends of the cellist May Mukle.

<sup>19</sup> In the nineteenth century 'The Cherry Tree Carol' was a very popular folk carol traditionally sung on Christmas Eve. It relates the tale of Mary announcing her pregnancy to Joseph in a cherry orchard. Joseph becomes enraged until the unborn baby Jesus commands the boughs of a cherry tree to lie low on the ground so Mary can pick cherries, whereupon Joseph realises his son truly is the Son of God.



might otherwise be missed. Perhaps by referring back to her earlier song Clarke aimed to bring an element of hope to the less sanguine early lines of Kendall's verse. It is only at the end of *God Made a Tree* that the message of eternal life becomes clear in what is a poignant end to Clarke's career as a composer:

God made a stone.  
Man hewed it and sealed Him in a tomb  
with it grave-wise.  
God rose from it.

The motif from Exx. 5.20–21 returns in other of Clarke songs, too. In *Greeting* (1929), with a text by the contemporary Irish poet Ella Young,<sup>20</sup> a girl sends a message to her lover, unsure of his whereabouts:

Over the wave patterned sea-floor  
Over the long sunburnt ridge of the world,  
I bid the winds seek you.  
I bid them cry to you  
Night and morning  
A name you loved once;  
I bid them bring to you  
Dreams and strange imaginings, and sleep.

At the words 'you loved once' the shape of the phrase from Exx. 5.20 and 21 is copied in the vocal line, with the semitone descent followed now by a minor rather than major third (Ex. 5.22). This is the first place where the vocal melody ventures away from the F major scale, and the motif now does not contain the rising major

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<sup>20</sup> 1867–1956.

second at the end, as it did in *The Cherry-Blossom Wand* and *God Made a Tree*. Without the ascent at the end of the phrase it is turned into a sighing gesture, and its meaning turns completely to one of hopelessness. Both the vocal and piano lines in *Lethe* (1941, revised 1979) are dominated by this new three-note motif. ‘Lethe’ in Greek mythology is a river in Hades whose water produces forgetfulness of the past in those who drink it. Clarke’s use of this theme in her setting of Edna St Vincent Millay’s eerie poem underlines that the call to ‘drink again this river that is the taker away of pain, the giver back of beauty!’ comes at a cost. This ‘despair’ motif also appears in Clarke’s 1921<sup>21</sup> work for cello and piano, *Epilogue* (see Ex. 4.29), and in the dark 1923 *Rhapsody* (see Ex. 3.44 [bars 3<sup>4</sup>–4<sup>1</sup>], 3.45 [bars 21<sup>4</sup>–22<sup>1</sup>], 3.48 [bar 475] and 3.53) where it gives similar feelings of hopelessness.

**Ex. 5.22: *Greeting*, bars 11–12:**

The musical score for Ex. 5.22 consists of two systems. The top system is the vocal line, written in a single treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat major/D minor). It contains the lyrics "A name you loved once;". The bottom system is the piano accompaniment, written in two staves (treble and bass clefs) with the same key signature. Both the vocal and piano parts are marked with the dynamic instruction "molto dim.".

**Ex. 5.23a: *Lethe*, vocal part, bars 3–4**

The musical score for Ex. 5.23a consists of two systems. The top system is the vocal line, written in a single treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F# major/C# minor). It contains the lyrics "this ri-ver that is the tak-er-a-way of pain, the". The bottom system is the piano accompaniment, written in two staves (treble and bass clefs) with the same key signature. The vocal part is marked with the tempo instruction "a tempo", and the piano part is marked with the dynamic instruction "p".

<sup>21</sup> See Chapter 4 for a discussion about the date of completion of this work.

Ex. 5.23b: *Ibid.*, bars 6–7

a tempo  
pp  
beau - ty!  
Gra-  
pp molto legato  
pp sempre e legato

In *Greeting* the motif eventually develops into an unmistakable quotation from another song, *The Cloths of Heaven*, written seventeen years earlier (1912). This appears under the song's final word (see Exx. 5.24a and b).

Ex. 5.24a: *The Cloths of Heaven*, bar 18

Tread soft - ly  
mf

Ex. 5.24b: *Greeting*, bars 17–18

pp  
sleep.  
esp.  
p poco

Clarke's interpretation of Young's text reinforces Yeats' sentiment behind the plea 'tread softly, because you tread on my dreams'. The earlier line from *The Cloths of Heaven* 'But I being poor have only my dreams' comes to mind too: the girl can do nothing but dream of her lover.



Although not numerous, Clarke's three songs with religious texts show different perspectives on religion and reflect the different views she was exposed to from a young age through her parents. Through connecting these songs to others which have no overtly religious context she reveals layers of meaning which are not identifiable if the songs with religious texts are examined in isolation. In analysis of Clarke's music it is important to retain a broad perspective even across genres, because insights such as these are often only revealed when works are viewed in relation to others.

### (iii) Love Songs (1912–c.45)

Love is the theme in many of Clarke's songs, and in very varied settings written across a broad time span she explores the different emotional states associated with it, from rapture (*Come, Oh Come, My Life's Delight*) to sorrow (*Down by the Salley Gardens*). She also considers some of the effects that love can have, examining the tragic consequences of forbidden love in *The Seal Man* and *Binnorie: A Ballad*. In addition, two settings of William Blake poems from *Songs of Innocence*, *Infant Joy* (1913) and *Cradle Song* (1929), concern love for a child.

Clarke's most significant early songs, two settings of poems by W B Yeats, *Shy One* and *The Cloths of Heaven*, were the first of her works to be published.<sup>22</sup> The first is an affirmation of love; the second expresses a lover's fears. These songs, dedicated to and performed by Gervase Elwes, immediately proved Clarke to be a young composer with a confident and special voice. In the first two bars of *Shy One* she harmonises three repetitions of the word 'shy' in different ways. The second chord, which includes a diminished octave (F#–F) (Ex. 5.25), caused raised

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<sup>22</sup> In one volume titled *Two Songs* published by Winthrop Rogers in 1920. Clarke's diary for May 1920 records: 'May 20 1920: Went to see the publishing man at Winthrop Rogers about my songs, as I have just got Yeats' permission to use the words.' Unpublished diary entry.

eyebrows from an unsympathetic, suitably anonymous reviewer of the published version:

[The discords] in which Rebecca Clarke indulges appear to be dragged in for their own sake. In the second bar of her 'Shy One' we have a grinding dissonance on the word 'shy', used later for 'dishes', 'candles' and 'rabbit'. This is only one of the features that make the song seem far-fetched. Again in 'The Cloths of Heaven' the complexity and pungency of the accompaniment seems out of keeping with the tender simplicity of the words.<sup>23</sup>

**Ex. 5.25: *Shy One*, bars 1–2**

Moderato grazioso  
Tenderly, but not too seriously

*p*

Shy one, shy one, shy one

*p*

*Shy One* is in modified strophic form. There is nothing particularly inappropriate about the appearance of the bittersweet diminished octave at the words 'dishes', 'candles' and 'rabbit' which so upset the *Musical Times* critic; if Clarke used the chord in the first instance specifically to reflect the awkwardness of shyness and perhaps the anguish of the sufferer, then the later appearances are simply a referral back to the title of the song. This 'modern' chord reappears frequently in *The Cloths of Heaven*, written in the same year, so was evidently one which appealed to Clarke at that time. Ex. 5.26 shows an example from the second song, and other examples appear in Exx. 5.1 (bar 3), 5.24a and b (bar 17).

<sup>23</sup> *The Musical Times*, Vol. 61 (1920), 557.

**Ex. 5.26: *The Cloths of Heaven*, bar 15**

Whenever Clarke sets a text with a strophic melody she maintains a flexible approach: words are never forced to fit a rhythm, but the melody is changed to accommodate the natural rhythm of the words. This approach is applied to the melodic material too. Exx. 5.27a and b show how a melody in *Shy One* is chromatically altered to give a more melancholy edge to the word ‘shy’ in the second verse:

**Ex. 5.27a: *Shy One*, bar 3**

**Ex. 5.27b: *Ibid.*, bar 11**

*Infant Joy* and *Cradle Song* contrast strongly with Clarke’s other Blake setting, *Tiger, Tiger*. At only twenty bars long, *Infant Joy* is one of Clarke’s shortest songs, and is deceptively simple. In its subtle construction much of the thematic material typically originates from the vocal line in the opening bar. A downward gesture in the vocal line here is shown in Ex. 5.28a. Ex. 5.28b shows a passage from later in the song where this motif passes through the texture of the music.



Ex. 5.28a: *Infant Joy*, bar 1 (vocal part only)

*p*  
I have no name:

Ex. 5.28b: *Ibid.*, bars 3–4

old: What shall I call thee?  
*rit.*  
*poco*

*Infant Joy* is a dialogue between a mother and her baby, and the idea of having two voices in the same song is reminiscent of Housman's 'Is My Team Ploughing', from *A Shropshire Lad*, which was set by Vaughan Williams and George Butterworth, among others. Vaughan Williams' *On Wenlock Edge* (1909), in which his setting of 'Is my team ploughing?' appears, clearly made a big impression on Clarke:

I shall never forget the impact "Wenlock Edge" had on me the first time I heard it – specially that first song about the wind blowing. It completely bowled me over. I'd never heard anything like it before; and it still seems to me absolutely original. And all done with such simple means.<sup>24</sup>

The accompaniment in *Cradle Song* is far simpler than that in *Infant Joy*. The intricate melodies and countermelodies in the earlier song are now replaced by

<sup>24</sup> Rebecca Clarke, quoted on back cover *Rebecca Clarke Songs With Piano*, Oxford University Press, 2002.

repeated chromatically descending gestures, although the chromaticism is mostly decorative (Ex. 5.29). *Cradle Song* has more in common with the instrumental lullabies than does *Infant Joy*.

**Ex. 5.29: *Cradle Song*, bars 1–4**

The musical score for 'Cradle Song' (bars 1-4) is presented in a standard format. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Andante' and the dynamics are 'p' (piano). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/8. The lyrics are: 'Sleep, sleep beau - ty bright, Dream - ing — in the joys of night;'. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves, with the right hand playing arpeggiated chords and the left hand providing a steady bass line.

Because her love songs cover such a broad range of texts and emotions their only common denominators are their fundamental subject matter – love – and Clarke’s immaculately thought-out approach to design and construction. Despite huge differences in such disparate songs as the dramatic *The Seal Man* and the utterly simple *Down by the Salley Gardens* (in which the accompaniment consists almost entirely of arpeggio figures) the settings in each case are appropriate to the text and demonstrate both Clarke’s wide-ranging literary tastes and her abilities to interpret text to produce a setting which enhances it.

**(iv) Songs About Death (1925–c.45)**

Death is the subject of several of Clarke’s songs, most of which have already been examined in detail in this chapter. *The Seal Man*, *Binnorie: A Ballad*, and *Eight o’Clock* concern rather gruesome demises (one manslaughter, one murder, and one execution), and *A Dream* is a weird tale of an unexplained death. The tone of *The Aspidistra* (1929), though, is lighter. The aspidistra was a popular houseplant in

Victorian households,<sup>25</sup> though in Clarke's song the narrator is distinctly indifferent towards his:

I had an Aspidistra  
'Twas growing in a pot  
'Twas old and green and dusty  
A living lingering blot.

Part of the popularity of the aspidistra stems from the fact that it is extremely easy to look after, and notoriously difficult to kill. However, one way to ensure for the plant an early end is through overexposure to sunlight. Almost certainly with this in mind the narrator of Claude Flight's poem, decides to take decisive action:

I took away its curtains  
Which were the creature's pride.  
I took away its curtains  
And the Aspidistra died.

Clarke sets the poem to a Lord Berners style waltz, full of 'wrong' notes (see Ex. 5.30). Dedicated to her friend the South African pianist and composer Adolph Hallis (but, one hopes, not a comment on his playing), the song was one of the few published during Clarke's lifetime.<sup>26</sup> Presumably it was considered suitable for publication because of its seemingly light-hearted subject matter. The music successfully parallels Flight's poem in two ways: first by copying the surface

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<sup>25</sup> Claude Flight's poem predates George Orwell's 1936 novel *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, in which the main character's disaffection with society is played out through his refusal to have an aspidistra in his window.

<sup>26</sup> It was published by J&W Chester Ltd in 1930. The front cover for the first edition was designed by Claude Flight.



humour of the text, and secondly by poking fun at Victorian values through an off-key waltz.

**Ex. 5.30: *The Aspidistra*, bars 5–11**

The musical score for 'The Aspidistra' (bars 5-11) is presented in a two-staff format. The top staff is for the voice, and the bottom staff is for the piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The vocal line begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a long melisma on the word 'di' in 'Aspidistra'. The lyrics are: 'I had an A - spi - di - - stra 'Twas grow - ing in a pot,'. The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and a rhythmic pattern in the left hand. The score includes a *stacc.* marking at the end of the vocal line.

This is a rare moment of humour in Clarke's output. The song was well received, but although Flight went to see Clarke a few days after the premiere to take her some more of his poems, there is no record of her having set any of these.

**(v) The duets (1907–26)**

In addition to her songs for solo voice, Clarke also completed six duets, written sporadically over a period of nineteen years. These are *Nacht für Nacht* (1907), *Spirits* (1909), *Away Delights* (1912), *Hymn to Pan* (1912), *Sleep* (c. 1926) and *Take, O take those lips away* (c. 1926); all have piano accompaniment. In many ways these duets run in parallel with the solo songs in terms of subject matter, compositional technique, scope, and how Clarke responds to text. Where they differ is in aspects of their style. The majority (2/3) of the texts Clarke chose for her duets are Elizabethan (three by John Fletcher<sup>27</sup> and one anonymous) and in response to this she imitates Renaissance musical devices, particularly in the earlier Fletcher settings. Most of

<sup>27</sup> *Sleep* is attributed to John Fletcher, though recent scholarship suggests Francis Beaumont, Fletcher's collaborator, to be the more likely author.

Clarke's solo songs set late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century poetry (see the table in Appendix 3) and in these her distinctive, modern voice is always evident.

Like the solo songs, the duets contain some fine examples of Clarke's skill in reflecting textual meanings through musical devices. In *Spirits*, for example, she mirrors the elusive nature of Robert Bridges' subjects (angels) through relentless but subtle *pianissimo* unresolved dissonances, with harmonies focussed throughout on chords of the seventh, ninth and eleventh.<sup>28</sup> The use of these chords is more extensive here than in any of Clarke's previous music and is further evidence that 1909 marked a turning point in the development of her mature musical style. Ex. 5.31 shows the first four bars of introduction in which chords of D9 (bars 1–2) and G7 (bars 3–4) establish an uneasy atmosphere. The lack of resolution and the widely-spaced chords in the right hand, and the delayed tonic in bars 1–2 (the D only appears in bar 2) give this opening an elusive quality which is retained throughout the song, a reflection of Bridges' words in which the narrator speaks to an angel, enquiring whether she is aware of man's increasing confidence in her non-existence ('Know ye how men say/ That ye haunt no more'). The hazy, nocturnal atmosphere is similar to that created in several of Clarke's later chamber works, and the lilting 6/8 rhythm is also used in the important *Lullaby* of the same year. The first pure triad in *Spirits* comes in the fifty-eighth bar (Ex. 5.32) where its sudden clarity establishes a firm harmonic foundation (D major) as the coda begins. As we have seen, many of Clarke's later songs finish without a feeling of resolution, through a purposeful omission of the major or minor third in the final chord. In *Spirits*, however, the ending answers the questions posed throughout by the unresolved dissonances,

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<sup>28</sup> George Butterworth, whom Clarke knew at the Royal College of Music, used a series of descending seventh chords to depict a ghost in his well-known 1911 song 'Is My Team Ploughing' from *A Shropshire Lad*. (In *Sensibility and English Song* (1985: 147) Stephen Banfield shows how Butterworth 'lifted' his harmonies here from Grieg's String Quartet.) Bridges' wording in *Spirits* evokes spectral images and in so doing generates comparisons between ghosts and angels.

ending the song with a sense of hope, though the use of a second inversion chord in the final bar provides an incomplete resolution.

**Ex. 5.31: *Spirits*, bars 1–4**

**Ex. 5.32: *Ibid.*, bars 58–66**

This early duet is more harmonically advanced than Clarke's next contributions to the genre, two 1912 settings of John Fletcher, *Away Delights* and *Hymn to Pan*, in which she recalls Renaissance styles. This recall relies on extensive parallel or droning fifths, abundant suspensions and a strong emphasis on modality in the melodic lines. In addition there are occasional false relations in *Away Delights* (bar 12, Ex. 5.33 for example, where they are simultaneous) and numerous lengthy melismas (never a feature of her solo songs) in *Hymn to Pan*, which contribute to the



Elizabethan flavour. Despite both having a Renaissance feel, the two songs are distinct and reflect their diverse subject matters: *Away Delights*, full of woeful suspensions, is an anguished plea from one forsaken in love ('Away, delights, go seek another dwelling for I must die'); *Hymn to Pan* is a vigorous exaltation of the god Pan<sup>29</sup> ('Sing his praises that doth keep our flocks from harm') with a lively 12/8 reel, often above a droning hurdy-gurdy bass. The irregular metre and phrasing in the example shown below from *Away Delights* (Ex. 5.33) along with the cessation of the accompaniment for expressive effect in bar 12 bring the work into the twentieth century, though Clarke was clearly suggesting the spirit of the sixteenth–seventeenth.

In both songs, the harmonic structure alternates between linear and vertical construction, with slightly more emphasis towards the former in *Hymn to Pan* and the latter in *Away Delights*. In the vocal parts these changes are demonstrated in passages that begin contrapuntally with one voice entering after the other, but gradually merge into a rhythmic unity (see Ex. 5.33). Where this happens the voices usually end up a third apart, though this is not always the case. The divergent vocal lines in Ex. 5.33, bars 11–12, reach their apex at a jarring false relation on the word 'hard', emphasising the narrator's discomfort through word-painting; another example of an Elizabethan musical device, made bolder in the manner of Purcell.

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<sup>29</sup> In Greek mythology Pan is the god of herds and flocks.

Ex. 5.33: *Away delights*, bars 9–12

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system shows the vocal lines and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "A-las for pi-ty go and fire their hearts thathavebeen hard to thee". The second system continues the vocal lines and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "A-las for pi-ty go and fire their hearts thathavebeen hard to thee". The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and a more active treble line with chords and single notes. A "poco rit" marking is placed above the second vocal line.

Many of Clarke's peers were similarly interested in Renaissance musical devices; Peter Warlock and Ivor Gurney are examples. Many twentieth-century English songwriters had a dual interest in both contemporary and Elizabethan poetry.

Neither of the two c. 1926 duets, *Sleep* and *Take, O take those lips away*, both of which have Elizabethan texts,<sup>30</sup> owe as much to Renaissance musical models as the earlier Fletcher settings. Although there are still some stylistic devices (parallel fifths, occasional melismas, modal inflections and typical melodic figurations at cadence points) that are derived from Elizabethan music, these appear less frequently than in *Away Delights* and *Hymn to Pan*. The intervening years had actually been productive for Clarke, and though her mature musical voice was already in evidence by 1912 the later duets show that she had gained in confidence and experience: now she was creating a twentieth-century slant on earlier music, rather than simply a stylistic imitation.

<sup>30</sup> The anonymous text of *Take, O take those lips away* appears in two early seventeenth-century plays: Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (c.1604) and Fletcher's *Rollo or The Bloody Brother* (c. 1624–25). In her song Clarke only uses one verse (though she employs much word repetition), suggesting her source was *Measure for Measure*, in which only one verse appears, rather than Fletcher's play, in which there are two. F W Sternfeld suggests 'the ancestor of Shakespeare's verse was probably the popular Latin poem, "Ad Lydiam", much admired in the sixteenth century.' See Appendix II, 'Take, O take those lips away' in *Measure for Measure*, Arden Edition, Routledge, London and New York, 1965, 201.

Despite these differences, certain features link the c. 1926 duets with those written earlier. The most obvious example concerns the different uses of the piano, with the accompaniment conceived mostly as a four (or more) part choral texture in *Away Delights* (see Ex. 5.33) and *Take, O take those lips away* (see Ex. 5.34), but in a much more idiomatic, pianistic way in *Hymn to Pan* and *Sleep* (see Ex. 5.35). Clarke had completed the majority of her four-part choral works by 1912 (most of which also had Elizabethan texts), so was clearly comfortable writing in this style. However, as Appendix 2 shows, most of her works to 1912 had been songs or instrumental works with piano accompaniment, so she also had experience in writing for the piano.

**Ex. 5.34: *Take, O take those lips away*, bars 1–4**

Fairly slowly

The musical score for Ex. 5.34 consists of three staves. The top two staves are vocal lines, and the bottom staff is the piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Fairly slowly' and the dynamics are 'mp'. The lyrics are: 'Take, O take those lips a-way, That so sweet - ly were for-sworn;'. The score shows the first four bars of the piece.

The texture of *Away Delights* remains the same throughout the work, with the vocal lines usually being doubled on the piano. *Take, O take those lips away* is often similarly constructed (as Ex. 5.34 shows), though there is more flexibility in the accompaniment. The middle section (marked 'Slower'), for example, offers a complete change of character and is independent from the vocal lines. Ex. 5.35 shows how Clarke uses half-diminished seventh chords here at the start of bars 16 and 17 which resolve onto diminished sevenths when the top note descends a



semitone. Progressions such as this are not found in the 1912 duets, and show how Clarke's harmonic thinking had changed. Notably, too, the dotted rhythm in the piano in bars 15 and 17 is similar to motifs used in later songs, as already described, to imply a feeling of woe, especially as it first appears as a semitone oscillation (D–Eb–D). We have already seen how accompaniments in Clarke's mature chamber music can change during the course of a piece, and similar examples have been shown in her solo songs. Her skill is in easing the transition from one section to another without the juxtapositions becoming conspicuous.

**Ex. 5.35: *Ibid.*, bars 15–18**

The musical score for Ex. 5.35, bars 15–18, is presented in three systems. The top system shows the vocal staves with the lyrics: '- gain; Seals of love, Seals of love,'. The piano accompaniment is shown in the bottom system. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'pp' and 'p', and tempo markings like 'Slower'. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The piano accompaniment features a dotted rhythm in bars 15 and 17, which is similar to motifs used in later songs.

The accompaniment in *Hymn to Pan* is mostly independent from the vocal lines, with a spirited melody in the right hand of the piano which first appears at the beginning, and reappears between vocal phrases as a way of linking them together. During the vocal phrases the piano line is often reduced to simple repeated fifths in varying octaves. Only the middle section at the words 'Pan, oh Just God Pan, to thee / thus do we sing chaste and free as the young Spring' does the piano writing change to chorale-like chords, something Clarke would do again thirty years later at the end of her solo song *The Donkey*.

Throughout her solo song output Clarke tended to avoid texts that had already been set by numerous other composers, but in her choice of Elizabethan texts for

duets and choral music her tastes were more conventional, and several of the poems she chose exist as settings by her contemporaries. Of these *Sleep* is probably the best-known in settings for voice and piano by Ivor Gurney (1912, published 1920) and Peter Warlock (1922, published 1924). Gurney's *Sleep* is one of the most celebrated twentieth-century English songs, so it was brave of Clarke to set the same text, though perhaps by opting for duet form she aimed to distance her version from previous settings and avoid direct comparisons. Her setting was written for two members of the English Singers who were also her friends, the tenor David Brynley and the baritone Norman Notley.

*Sleep* is the most effective of Clarke's Elizabethan duets. The subject matter immediately suggests a connection with her numerous other nocturnally-themed pieces<sup>31</sup> and the piano opening with its gentle lilt could belong to another instrumental lullaby (Ex. 5.36).

**Ex. 5.36: *Sleep*, bars 1–4**

Rather slowly

The musical score for 'Sleep' bars 1-4 is presented in three staves. The top staff is for Tenor, the middle for Baritone, and the bottom for Piano. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Rather slowly' and the dynamics are marked 'p' (piano). The Tenor part begins with a rest in the first bar, followed by the lyrics 'Come, sleep, and with thy sweet de-ceiv - ing'. The Baritone part also begins with a rest in the first bar, followed by the lyrics 'Come, sleep, and with thy sweet de -'. The Piano part features a repeating eighth-note figure in the right hand and a tonic Ab pedal in the left hand.

The hypnotic repetition of the opening piano figuration and tonic Ab pedal at the beginning of the first nine bars enhance the soporific effect. When the tenor and

<sup>31</sup> Approximately one-fifth of Clarke's works have associations with night, sleep or dreams.

baritone enter they appear in strict canon at the unison over a free accompaniment with the baritone two beats behind the tenor, as Ex. 5.35 shows. In her previous duet *Away Delights* phrases begun in this way often merge into a rhythmic unity as we have seen, but here Clarke is content to let one voice remain 'behind' the other. The text below shows how this continues, with the underlined words being those sung in rhythmic unison. The remainder stays in canon.

Come sleep, and with thy sweet deceiving  
Lock me in delight awhile  
Let some pleasing dreams beguile all my fancies  
But from there I may feel an influence  
All my powers of care bereaving  
Though but a shadow, but a sliding,  
Let me know some little joy  
We that suffer long annoy the contented  
With a thought by an idle fancy wrought  
O let my joys have some abiding!  
O let my joys have some abiding!

#### (vi) Songs for voice and strings

In addition to her songs for voice and piano, Clarke also made a significant contribution to the repertoire for voice and solo violin – rare among twentieth-century English songs – perhaps taking the idea from Holst, whose *Four Songs* (Op. 35) for that combination were completed 1916–17. Vaughan Williams followed suit three years after Clarke's *Three Old English Songs* (1924, 1925) in his Housman settings *Along the Field* (1927). Clarke's other contributions to the genre are *Three Irish Country Songs* (1926, 1928) and *Down by the Salley Gardens* (a 1955 arrangement of her original setting for voice and piano of 1919). Her diaries record that she found arranging folksongs fascinating, and that she was pleased with the results she obtained. Critical reaction was largely favourable and it is notable that the two sets Clarke completed in the 1920s were published relatively quickly.



Clarke's settings for voice and violin all have the feel of traditional folksongs, and the simplicity of texture seems particularly apt for songs of this nature. In general these songs are more straightforward than most of Clarke's settings for voice and piano, but there are still some clever contrapuntal touches (such as in 'I know my love' from *Three Irish Country Songs* in which the violin copies the singer's melody exactly, one beat behind<sup>32</sup>) and Clarke's usual level of textual appreciation is displayed to good effect in 'I know where I'm goin'' from the same set. The major tonality of this traditional Irish melody seems at odds with the words in which a girl expresses regret that the man she is to marry is not the man she loves. But Clarke marks her arrangement *Poco lento* and finishes with an unresolved chord of F major in the violin against a raised fourth (B-natural) in the voice, held with a caesura and allowed to die away with a *diminuendo*. We saw several such 'left-in-mid-air' endings in Clarke's songs for voice and piano.

Clarke records in her diary that her *Three Old English Songs* were well received when she and the baritone Norman Notley gave their premiere on 26 May 1924. A later newspaper review of her *Three Irish Country Songs* is typically restrained in its praise: 'her arrangements of three Irish folk-tunes...for voice and violin were not the least impressive examples of the freedom with which she moves within narrow self-appointed limits.'<sup>33</sup>

Her arrangement of her own setting for voice and piano of Yeats's *Down by the Salley Gardens* arguably works better than the original, where the piano accompaniment seems a little over-simplistic. Transcribed for the violin, it works effectively. The final bars show another of Clarke's unresolved endings: the song is

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<sup>32</sup> This technique of an 'echoing' accompaniment was later used by Benjamin Britten in his *Sweet Polly Oliver* folk-song setting for voice and piano (1945-6, published 1948).

<sup>33</sup> H E W from an unidentified 'contemporary newspaper review' quoted on the back cover of OUP's 'Rebecca Clarke, Songs with Violin' (2001).

largely in F# Aeolian, but ends (as shown in Ex. 5.37) with an unresolved minor seventh between the violin and voice.

**Ex.5.37: *Down by the Salley Gardens*, bars 34–35**

The *Three Old English Songs* and *Three Irish Country Songs* are most effective performed as sets, rather than as individual songs, because of the ranges of accompaniment styles and tempi found within them. The contrast between continually moving quavers in ‘Phyllis on the new made Hay’ and lively dancing *spiccato* quavers in ‘The Tailor and His Mouse’, together with the imitations of birdsong in ‘It was a Lover and His Lass’ work best when heard successively.

As shown, the early 1940s were a period of experimentation for Clarke, during which she created instrumental works in a range of different styles, varying from Baroque pastiche (*Passacaglia on an Old English Tune*), through Romantic (*Dumka*) to her most modern sound yet in *Prelude, Allegro and Pastorale*. Similarities between the latter work and Clarke’s song *The Donkey* have already been mentioned. Chapter 4 demonstrated how the instrumental *Dumka* of 1941 showed Clarke harking back to a style she had not used since her days as a student at the Royal College of Music; similarly in her 1940 song for voice and string quartet, *Daybreak*, Clarke revisits stylistic ideas she had used earlier in her career, by creating a play on sixteenth- and mostly seventeenth-century musical idioms. She had used this technique previously in her duets *Away Delights* and *Hymn to Pan*, and



in several of her choral works (discussed in Chapter 6), and it was a device used when Clarke wanted to match the style of her music to that of the text. The text of *Daybreak* is attributed to John Donne, though it has been suggested<sup>34</sup> that the author was most likely John Dowland, since the poem first appeared in a book of Dowland songs, *A Pilgrim's Solace* (1612) as a preface to his setting of Donne's poem *Break of Daye*.<sup>35</sup> The poem is not a dawn evocation, as the title might lead us to suppose, but a sad parting: the break of day is not welcomed by the protagonists.

Clarke's setting of this single verse of text makes full use of Renaissance melismas and consistent modality, with mostly contiguous melodic movement of a perfect fifth or less and some suspensions, but includes chromatic shifts which immediately transport it into the twentieth century. The work is carefully constructed, in Clarke's usual way; there is no extraneous material; economical rests appear throughout. The texture is littered with canonic entries, which appear in all parts; the opening vocal phrase (Ex. 5.38) reappears complete in the first violin, cello and viola. The head of the theme also appears in the second violin, shown in Ex. 5.39, and it is subtly altered in the first violin in a later reappearance where it is transformed from its original Mixolydian mode (Ex. 5.38) to the Aeolian (Ex. 5.39). Ex. 5.38 shows how Clarke overlaps phrases between the voice and strings so as to keep a feeling of motion when the melodic phrase cadences into the tonic in bars 2 (voice) and 6 (violin). Note in Ex. 5.39 how in the first violin the expected tonic (E) is avoided in bar 29 and replaced with a chromatic sidestep to F natural as the beginning of a further transmuted appearance of the opening phrase. Exx. 5.38 and

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<sup>34</sup> See *The Poems of John Donne edited from the old editions and numerous manuscripts with introductions and commentary by Herbert J C Grierson* (OUP, 1912: 432).

<sup>35</sup> Donne's original poem is in two verses and does not include the text set by Clarke. Although the additional verse *does* appear in some of the earliest editions of Donne's poetry, these publications date from *after A Pilgrim's Solace*, which suggests that this extra verse was by Dowland, but later became wrongly attributed to John Donne.



5.39 also show Clarke making clear allusions to the sixteenth century by beginning her canonic entries either at the same pitch as the initial statement or a fifth lower. The descending shape of this important phrase suggests an extended sighing gesture, befitting to the text, and there is a continual undulation in much of the part writing, though pedals notes (found in each voice) prevent this from becoming uneasy.

**Ex. 5.38: *Daybreak*, bars 2–6 (voice and first violin parts only)**

Musical score for Ex. 5.38, showing the voice and first violin parts for bars 2–6 of *Daybreak*. The voice part has lyrics: "Stay, O sweet, and do not". The dynamic marking *p* (piano) is present at the beginning and end of the voice line. The first violin part also has a dynamic marking *p* at the end.

**Ex. 5.39: *Ibid.*, bars 27–29**

Musical score for Ex. 5.39, showing the voice and string parts for bars 27–29 of *Daybreak*. The voice part has lyrics: "stay! or else my joys will die". The dynamic markings *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *f* (forte) are present. The string parts (first violin, second violin, viola, cello) also have dynamic markings *mf* and *f*. The cello part is marked *arco* (arco).

Ex. 5.39 shows the song's climax, in which, at the word 'die', the voice reaches its loudest dynamic and, for the second time in the work, its highest note. The upward semitone movement in the voice from E to F balances the downward semitone slide in the first violin, viola and cello. The dramatic impact of this moment is heightened by the added sixth chord at the start of bar 29, which creates a major second clash between F in the voice and first violin and G in the second violin. This

clash is made even more emphatic by the dramatic octave sweep, *forte espressivo*, in the second violin.

Ex. 5.40 shows another appearance of the opening theme, now in the cello from bar 15. Here it is used to end the first section in an ABA<sub>1</sub> plan in which A<sub>1</sub> is an instrumental coda (bars 33–41). As in Ex. 5.39 the expected tonic (G) does not arrive at the start of bar 17, but now it is momentarily delayed by a quaver A tied over from the previous bar as the phrase completes itself with an extension to a cadence in bar 18. This postponement of the expected cadence keeps the melody moving forward instead of being broken down into shorter phrases. Section B instantly starts with a sudden semitone shift upwards at bar 19 and the first violin in bars 19–20 reflects the shape of the phrase extension at the end of A, thereby making the bar 17 extension the impetus for the middle section and ensuring continuity between sections A and B. This example also shows how Clarke alters the positioning of the melodic interest: here it is clearly in the first violin while the voice intones a *pianissimo* G# pedal, perhaps suggesting the ‘un-breaking’ day beneath.

**Ex. 5.40: *Ibid.*, bars 15–21**

The musical score for Ex. 5.40, bars 15–21, is presented in five staves. The top staff is the vocal line, with lyrics: "eyes; The day breaks not:". The second staff is the first violin, the third is the second violin, the fourth is the cello, and the fifth is the double bass. The score includes dynamics such as *pp* (pianissimo) and *p* (piano), and articulation marks like *V* (fortissimo) and accents. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The score shows a melodic extension in the first violin and a G# pedal in the voice.

Throughout *Daybreak* there is full contrapuntal integration of all five parts, using the main idea of descent by mode (Ex. 5.38–5.40 and 5.44), and another important figure, the ‘English cadence’ motif. An example of this decorated perfect cadence, with its characteristic false relation between the flattened then raised leading note (Bb to B natural) is shown below in Ex. 5.41. Although Clarke never uses this as such in a Ia–Va 4–3 natural–Ia context such as shown in Ex. 5.41, the melodic figuration with the flattened leading note appears several times. Ex. 5.42 shows one characteristic example. Use of this figure suggests she knew the final bars of the Drunken Poet’s scene from the end of Act I of Purcell’s *The Fairy Queen* (1693 version) well. Crucially, the words at the end of this scene are ‘Let ’em sleep, let ’em sleep ’til break of day’ (Ex. 5.43); perhaps Clarke intended *Daybreak* to be a homage to Purcell, as Ex. 5.44 suggests.<sup>36</sup>

**Ex. 5.41: The ‘English’ cadence<sup>37</sup>**



**Ex. 5.42: *Daybreak*, bars 8–9**



<sup>36</sup> Liane Curtis has suggested that one possible influence for Clarke’s 1941 *Passacaglia on an Old English Tune* is ‘Dido’s Lament’ from Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas* (1690) (*A Rebecca Clarke Reader*, 2004, 42).

<sup>37</sup> Example from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/speech/cadence.shtml>



Ex. 5.43: Purcell, *The Fairy Queen* (1693 Version), 'Scene of the Drunken Poet'

(End of Act I) (Vocal score)

The musical score for Ex. 5.43 consists of five staves. The top four staves are vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and the bottom staff is the piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Lento' and the dynamics are 'p' (piano). The lyrics for all parts are: 'Let 'em sleep \_\_\_\_\_ till break of day.' The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand.

Ex. 5.44 shows the final three bars, in which Clarke cleverly ends where she began with the vocal melody from the start now appearing in the same key in the viola, like a complete final entry in a fugue. The triplets here are essentially a modern feature but they bring this short masterpiece to a perfect, serene close.

Ex. 5.44: *Daybreak*, bars 39–41

The musical score for Ex. 5.44 shows the final three bars of 'Daybreak'. It features five staves: two vocal parts (Soprano and Alto), a viola part, and two piano parts (Right and Left Hand). The tempo is 'rit.' (ritardando) and the dynamics are 'pp' (pianissimo) and 'ppp' (pianississimo). The score includes triplets and a '3 rit.' marking. The viola part features a melodic line that mirrors the vocal melody from the beginning of the piece.

It is not known for whom Clarke wrote *Daybreak*, or whether she was involved in performances of the work herself (which is not unlikely), but as the only example of her writing for voice and string quartet<sup>38</sup> – and probably the finest example of her writing for voice and strings – it is an important work. Fortunately, its future publication is planned by Oxford University Press.

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Clarke's song-writing spans her entire career and perhaps one of the most remarkable facets of her work in this genre is the sheer breadth of poetry she chose to set. Many of her contemporaries found an affiliation with the work of specific poets: Finzi with Hardy, or Butterworth with Housman, for example, and so settings of poetry by these writers tend to dominate their output. Clarke, however, drew on numerous and diverse sources, setting several poets only once and others two or three times. In all, she completed sixty-seven vocal works, with texts by twenty-seven named poets and six anonymous ones, as well as six traditional, two biblical and one prayer text. Appendix 3 shows a detailed list of her vocal music, poet by poet.

In her memoir Clarke recalls how her mother endeavoured to instil an interest in literature in her young children, 'At home...she tried exposing us to literature in the shape of Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare, the Death of Socrates, and assorted bits of Greek mythology...I loved being read to'.<sup>39</sup> Later comments show how this approach had succeeded: 'All of us...were avid readers of almost anything we could

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<sup>38</sup> Settings for voice and string quartet are relatively rare among twentieth-century English song. With her setting, Clarke was following in the illustrious footsteps of Vaughan Williams in his original setting of *On Wenlock Edge* (1908–09) (a work which Clarke greatly admired) and Ivor Gurney in his Housman settings *Ludlow and Teme* (1920, published 1923) and *The Western Playland* (published 1926).

<sup>39</sup> *I Had a Father Too*, Chap. 7, 25.

lay our hands on.’<sup>40</sup> Her father had a library of over 12,000 books and presumably this included the diverse material Clarke used in her early songs, such as the poems of the Chinese poet Ssu-K’ung T’u<sup>41</sup> and numerous German texts. Clarke wrote about her early German songs in her memoir in her typically modest way:

Composing became for me a refuge, an outlet, and finally a passion. A number of songs – now fortunately lost – resulted, mostly with German words, and all sentimental and amateurish. Dreams of becoming a professional musician began to invade me, and with that object I kept up my violin practice.<sup>42</sup>

Among English composers of the early twentieth century, the most successful songwriters were often those who were the most widely read (Finzi, Gurney and Parry for example), and it is clear that Clarke was equally discerning in her choice of poems for setting to music. As shown, her texts come from diverse sources: she chose poetry from different eras (including some Romantic poetry which her peers tended to avoid) covering a span of over one thousand years, and set different languages – English, Latin, French and German – as well as foreign poetry in English translations (as in the poems of Ssu-K’ung T’u and Omar Khayyám). She set prose as well as poetry, and also chose some traditional folk texts and passages from the Bible. The texts are by male and female poets and she often met the contemporary writers whose work she set (this is true of Masefield, Yeats, Kendall, Wickham and Flight). It was evidently important to Clarke to gain the poet’s approval for setting their poetry, and she needed their permission to use their words

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>41</sup> Clarke writes only ‘Old Chinese Words’ on her score.

<sup>42</sup> *I Had a Father Too*, unpublished memoir, Chap. 7, 5. The early German songs listed in Appendix 2 are not lost, but are held by the managers of Clarke’s estate.



in songs that were to be published or performed. Claude Flight, an illustrator as well as a poet, even designed the front cover for the first edition of Clarke's setting of his poem *The Aspidistra*.

By choosing such varied sources and yet returning frequently to similar subject matter, Clarke's songs offer us different perspectives on those subjects which most inspired her. The alliance of words and music gave her the inspiration she needed in order to work, and her choice of predominantly ontological subject matter shows an empathy which make her songs critical to an evaluation of her importance.

## Chapter 6: Choral Music (1906–43)

Clarke's choral music was for many years a hidden treasure: unpublished, unperformed and unknown. There are twelve<sup>1</sup> choral works in total, including two SATB arrangements of her own songs for voice and piano,<sup>2</sup> so her work in this genre accounts for just over one-tenth of her total output. Nevertheless, many music encyclopaedia and dictionary entries on Clarke (such as the 1980 edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* quoted in Chapter 1) make no mention of this. There is no record of Clarke's choral music having been performed publicly during her lifetime and the first publication of any of these works occurred only in 1998, some nineteen years after her death.

The choral works span a period of thirty-seven years, from before her days as a student at the Royal College of Music to 1943, the year before her marriage to James Friskin, though as Ex. 6.1 shows the majority were completed before 1914 and so represent an early stage in her career. The first publications were *Ave Maria* in 1998 and *Chorus from Shelley's 'Hellas'* in 1999. Then, after a recording of all the choral music was issued in January 2003,<sup>3</sup> Oxford University Press published the remaining ten works later that year. Ironically, choral music was for many years the only genre to remain unpublished; now it is the only genre published in its entirety.<sup>4</sup>

The works are mostly scored for SATB, though there are other combinations and in

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<sup>1</sup> In her diary for 1925 Clarke records her progress on another choral work: 'Feb. 17, 1925 Started a choral thing on the new Tagore words. Have dropped the other for the present. Rather thrilled over this new one...Feb. 21, 1925 My choral thing is coming on fast and it is very exciting to do. Feel quite thrilled over it.' This work appears to have been lost; it is not known whether it was ever finished.

<sup>2</sup> *Come, oh come, my life's delight* was completed for SATB c. 1911–12 and arranged for solo voice and piano in 1923; *Weep you no more sad fountains* was initially written as a song for voice and piano c. 1912 and was arranged for SATB in 1926.

<sup>3</sup> *Rebecca Clarke, The Complete Choral Music*, recorded 2002, issued 2003, ASV: CD DCA 1136.

<sup>4</sup> That is, all the works which are known about and are complete. It is possible that other works may as yet lie undiscovered.

two Clarke uses soloists in addition to the choir (see Ex. 6.1). All are unaccompanied.

**Ex. 6.1: Clarke's Choral Music (with her own capitalisation of titles)**

| Date of composition and publication         | Title of work   | Author of text                             | Forces used             |
|---|---|--|-------------------------|
| 1906 (2003)                                 | <i>Now fie on love</i>  | Anon                                       | TTBB                    |
| 1907 (2003)                                 | <i>Music, when soft voices die</i>                                      | Shelley                                    | SATB                    |
| 1908 (2003)                                 | <i>A Lover's Dirge</i>  | Shakespeare                                | SATB                    |
| 1909 (2003)                                 | <i>The Owl (When cats run home and light is come)</i>                   | Tennyson                                   | SATB                    |
| 1911 (2003)                                 | <i>My spirit like a charmed bark doth float</i>                         | Shelley                                    |                         |
| 1911–12 (2003)                              | <i>Come, oh come, my life's delight</i>                                 | Campion                                    | SATB                    |
| 1912 (2003)<br>arranged for chorus in 1926. | <i>Weep you no more sad fountains</i>                                   | Anon                                       | SATB                    |
| 1914 (2003)                                 | <i>Philomela</i>  | Sidney                                     | SATB                    |
| 1920–21 (2003)                              | <i>He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High (Psalm 91)</i> | Biblical                                   | Tenor and SATB chorus   |
| 1928 (2003)                                 | <i>There is No Rose</i>   | Based on a 15 <sup>th</sup> -century carol | Solo baritone, A,T,Br,B |
| 1937 (1998)                                 | <i>Ave Maria</i>  | Prayer text                                | SSA                     |
| 1943 (1999)                                 | <i>Chorus from Shelley's 'Hellas'</i>                                   | Shelley                                    | SSSAA                   |

Clarke's interest in choral music brought her into contact with two of the most important names in twentieth-century English music: Vaughan Williams (who conducted Clarke and others<sup>5</sup> in an early music singing group, 'The Palestrina Society', formed in the summer of 1912) and Gustav Holst. In her diary for 24 March 1921, Clarke records going to see Holst at St Paul's Girls' School, Hammersmith, where he was the Director of Music, to show him her two Psalm settings: Psalm 63 (*A Psalm of David*) for solo voice and piano, and Psalm 91 (*He that dwelleth*). She

<sup>5</sup> These included George Butterworth (1885–1916) (see Barlow, Michael: *Whom the Gods Love* (London, Toccata Press, 1997, 120) ) and James Friskin.



writes: 'Showed my two finished Psalms to Mr Holst. He was very nice but criticized them very severely. I felt very depressed for the rest of the day, but suppose it is good for me.' This criticism is made all the more disappointing when her diaries reveal her enthusiasm for her Psalm. She records in her diary: 'April 16, 1920 Didn't do a blessed thing all day but sit and compose. Suddenly quite thrilled over a setting for another Psalm – "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High." Wrote like mad all day, only interrupting by a short walk with Mama and Dora'. Perhaps Holst's lack of encouragement helps to explain why none of this music was published during her lifetime. (This presumes the more likely scenario that she did not approach a publisher, rather than that the works were rejected.)

We do not know for whom these works were written, and it is possible that Clarke may have sung in performances of them herself. If they were written for amateur choirs, however, she made no concessions: many are not easy to sing because they are intensely chromatic, assume a wide vocal range, and contain many problems of pitching. The only records of any performances during Clarke's lifetime come in two brief diary entries:

Oct. 5 1926 -- made another part-song out of "Come, oh, come, my life's delight", just for practice. Jane Joseph<sup>6</sup> is going to let me hear them from a small chorus.

Oct. 22 1926 Had dinner at Jane Joseph's and she put a little choir together to let me hear my part-songs which I thought were disappointing.

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<sup>6</sup> Jane Joseph, like Clarke, was a member of the Society of Women Musicians, which was established in 1911. Joseph was also a composer: Clarke's diaries refer to some of her choral works, which she considered very highly.

However, the fact that Clarke returned to the genre several times, long before 1926 and even after Holst's criticism,<sup>7</sup> suggests that she most likely *did* have the opportunity to hear amateur performances at an earlier date.

Although the choral music is of a consistently high quality, much of it has more in common with her vocal duets *Away Delights* and *Hymn to Pan* than with her chamber works or solo songs. For her texts, Clarke (as in her vocal duets) often turned to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writings, with six dating from before the mid-1600s.<sup>8</sup> The texts are from both secular and sacred sources and the subject matter runs the gamut from the unsettling, even disturbing (*He that dwelleth*) to the light-hearted (*When cats run home*), the latter a rarity in Clarke's music. The theme common to most of these works, though, is love and as in the solo songs this heading covers a range of emotional states, from rapture (*Come, oh come*) to despair (*A Lover's Dirge*), and it includes both sacred (*There is No Rose*) and profane love (*Weep you no more*).

In those works with sixteenth- or seventeenth-century texts, as in the 1912 duets, Clarke imitates Renaissance styles, adopting devices such as melisma that appear rarely in her other vocal music (see Exx. 6.2–6.4, 6.8–6.11, 6.14–6.15). Although the style of writing is undoubtedly inspired by Renaissance models with imitative melodic entries and fluid but vertically logical vocal lines, Clarke does not overwork the use of such devices. Again, it was her aim to follow the spirit rather than the letter of the Renaissance in these works: to suggest earlier styles through use of similar devices rather than to create any sort of pastiche. For example, although her melodic lines move mostly by intervals within a perfect fifth (and mainly by seconds and thirds), sixths occur with greater regularity than would be found in

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<sup>7</sup> Though after receiving Holst's comments it was another seven years before Clarke returned to the genre.

<sup>8</sup> The two anonymous texts clearly date from Renaissance times.



English Renaissance choral music and there are several prominent sevenths such as that shown in Ex. 6.4 from *Philomela*. In addition, as in her solo songs, word-painting is still relatively rare, and there are few examples of false relations. None of this is to suggest that Clarke was incapable of following Renaissance rules – in places she does so convincingly – but for the most part her concern was to adapt Renaissance ideas into a twentieth-century work: to create a modern interpretation of an earlier style of writing rather than a faithful reproduction.

It is also important to note that the techniques Clarke ‘borrowed’ from earlier music do not appear solely in those of her choral works with a Renaissance text, so, for example, staggered vocal entries and imitation are just as noticeable a feature of *Chorus from Shelley’s ‘Hellas’* as they are of *Now fie on love* or *A Lover’s Dirge*. Similarly, Clarke does not shy away from treating early texts to a dose of twentieth-century modernism. *Philomela* is a case in point, being a work in which elements of Renaissance and twentieth-century writing are successfully combined. Clarke reflects the changing moods in Sir Philip Sidney’s sixteenth-century text through marked changes in the music, using contrasting material in the A and B sections of the A-B-Refrain-A-B-Refrain-coda form. With freely alternating lines of seven or eleven syllables, Sidney’s poem fits the syllabic structure which typified the verses used by Renaissance madrigal composers, and Clarke’s use of contrasting A and B sections, in which A is more harmonically straightforward than B, is another typical madrigalian touch. By following the madrigal form in this way she retains her link with the Renaissance.

The primary aim of the mid-sixteenth-century madrigal writers had been one of expressiveness: to make their music match the qualities of the poetry they set. This often meant the need for contrasting passages of music within a single piece, in order



to express differences in the text. Clarke's A and B material in *Philomela* vary greatly: A is largely modal (Dorian and Aeolian), uses smooth vocal lines and the parts frequently move in parallel thirds and sixths (see Ex. 6.2), such parallel movement also occurs in *A Lover's Dirge* and is typical of English Renaissance choral music. B, on the other hand, uses intensely chromatic shifts (see Ex. 6.3), frequently has more angular lines, and includes a striking sudden leap of a minor seventh at the start of Ex. 6.4. The extent and intensity of the chromaticism in B goes far beyond anything imagined possible during the Renaissance even by Gesualdo: it is not the musical language Clarke aims to recreate, but the overall structure and approach of the madrigal form. A unifying feature from both sets of material is the triplet movement in parallel thirds and sixths (cf Ex. 6.2, bar 3 and Ex. 6.3, bars 18–19), which is also similar in contour; triplets were rarely used during the Renaissance, so right from the outset Clarke signifies that this is not pastiche. Here it is as if Clarke takes the A material and shows it in B distorted through the lens of chromaticism. In the first two 'verses' the change in the text clearly explains the need for contrasting music:

|   |   |                   |
|---|---|-------------------|
| The nightingale, as soon as April bringeth<br>Unto her nested sense a perfect waking,<br>While late-bare Earth, proud of new clothing springeth,<br>Sings out her woes, a making; | } | set to A material |
|---|---|-------------------|

|  |   |                   |
|--|---|-------------------|
| And mournfully bewailing,<br>Her throat in tunes expresseth,<br>What grief her breast opresseth<br>For Terens' force on her chaste will prevailing | } | set to B material |
|--|---|-------------------|

In Sidney's poem the change in syllabic structure (from three lines of eleven followed by one line of seven syllables to three lines of seven followed by one line of eleven syllables) signifies the change in mood between verses 1 and 2, and in Clarke's score a slight change of tempo (*Poco meno mosso*) along with the blatant harmonic alterations (B begins with an unprepared ninth between the basses and

sopranos) mark the sudden reflection of Philomela's anguish. By separating the soprano line from the other three parts in B (as in Ex. 6.3) Clarke also suggests Philomela's isolation. Reflecting textual meanings in this way is something Clarke does throughout her solo song repertoire.

**Ex. 6.2: *Philomela*, bars 1–4 (A)**

The night - in - gale, as soon as A-pril bring - eth

The night - in - gale, as soon as A-pril bring - eth

The night - . . . in <sup>3</sup> gale as<sup>3</sup> A-pril bring - <sup>3</sup> eth

as soon as<sup>3</sup> A-pril bring - eth

**Ex. 6.3: *Ibid.*, bars 18–19 (B)**

*Poco meno mosso*

And mourn - ful - ly be - wail - ing, her

And mourn - . . . ful - ly, be - wail - . . . ing,

And mourn - . . . ful - ly be - wail - . . . ing,

And mourn - . . . ful - ly be - wail - . . . ing,

Ex. 6.4: *Ibid.*, bars 27–29

The musical score consists of four staves. The top two staves are for vocal parts (Soprano and Alto), and the bottom two are for piano accompaniment (Right and Left Hand). The music is in 4/4 time, marked 'Tempo I' and 'f' (forte). The lyrics are 'For Te - rens' force'. The vocal lines are melodic and expressive, with the piano accompaniment providing harmonic support. The lyrics are repeated across the four staves.

After an effectively plaintive refrain ('O Philomela fair, O take some gladness that here is justice cause for plaintful sadness!/ Thine earth new springs, wine fadeth/ Thy thorn without, thy thorn my heart invadeth.') Clarke returns to the A, then the B material for the third and fourth verses. By doing so she creates a logical framework for the song as a whole, although the use of the same musical material (A) for verses one and three does not provide as satisfying an overall result as a through-composed approach might, because the text of the third verse continues in the same anguished mood as that of the second.

One of the few choral works that offers opportunity for direct comparison with a solo song is Clarke's setting of Psalm 91, *He that dwelleth* (1920–21). Chapter 5 examined Clarke's other Psalm setting, *A Psalm of David* (Psalm 63), and noted the harsher, more forbidding view of the Creator it expresses. The two were completed in consecutive years but Clarke was working on them simultaneously throughout much of 1920, so it would be fair to expect to find connections between them: unsurprisingly, analysis reveals numerous similarities. Above all, the tone of each is similarly dramatic and compelling, and the musical language is utterly modern, making much use of chromaticism and whole-tone writing. The technical devices Clarke used in *A Psalm of David* to highlight the rather ominous undertones of the text are also used in *He that dwelleth* in contrasting ways to underline its more



comforting message. One example concerns the setting of similar words: in *A Psalm of David* Clarke set the line, 'Oh God, thou art my God' with jarring diminished octaves in the piano, plus tritones in the voice and piano (Ex. 5.1) to suggest a feeling of discomfort. Early in *He that dwelleth*, she sets the similar words 'My God in whom I trust' in an utterly different way: they are in unison, and with a significant chord of E major on the word 'God' (see Ex. 6.5). The unison writing suggests a feeling of togetherness – the speaker is at one with God – and the major chord offers a triumphant sense of hope, creating an overall effect which is in stark contrast to the setting of *A Psalm of David*.

**Ex. 6.5: *He that dwelleth* (Psalm 91), bars 11–12**

The image shows a musical score for four voices: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). All four parts are written in unison, with the lyrics 'My God, in whom I trust.' written below each staff. The music is in 3/4 time and marked with a forte (f) dynamic. A fermata is placed over the word 'God' in all parts. The melody consists of a series of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The bass line is an octave lower, starting on G3.

A similar point of contrast is Clarke's choice of final chord: *A Psalm of David* ends *ppp* with an open fifth (see Ex. 5.17), indicating that no resolution has been found; *He that dwelleth* ends at the same dynamic level but with a perfect cadence onto a chord of G major, leaving an optimistic last impression that is quite different to the earlier Psalm.

Clarke uses other devices, too, to achieve the same effect in both Psalms. Ex. 6.6 shows the opening five bars, where the sopranos and basses of the chorus follow the same melodic shape as the tenor soloist but in rhythmic augmentation. Clarke

uses the same technique in her setting of *A Psalm of David* (cf Ex. 5.2 in which the piano copies the vocal line in a similar way). The result in each case is to reinforce the solo line by repeating the same statement in a slower and more deliberate way. By using a solo tenor in addition to the choir Clarke suggests the role of an ecclesiastical cantor and enhances its religious ambiance.

**Ex. 6.6: *Ibid.*, bars 1–5**

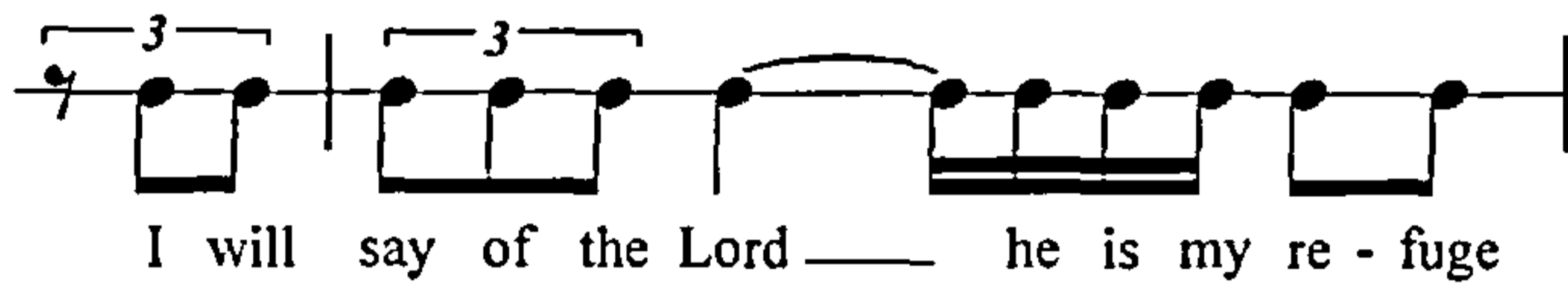
The musical score for Ex. 6.6, bars 1–5, is presented in five staves. The Solo Tenor part is marked *mf espr.* and features a melodic line with lyrics: "He that dwell-eth in the se - cret place of the Most High shall a-bide". The Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass parts are marked *ppp sempre* and provide a choral response with lyrics: "He that dwell-eth in the se - - cret place of the Most High". The lyrics are aligned with the notes on each staff, showing the staggered entry of the voices.

Here Clarke carefully reflects the capitalisation of 'Most High' through the slightly unexpected stressing of 'Most' on the third beat of bar 3 in the solo tenor part and the first beat of bar 5 in the chorus. She also avoids word-painting by not rising in pitch at this point.

As in *A Psalm of David* and Clarke's other prose setting *The Seal Man* there is a considerable amount of text involved in *He that dwelleth* and Clarke uses speech rhythms more frequently here than in her settings of poetry to progress through the text in a natural 'spoken', recitative-like way (see Ex. 6.7). The melodic intervals used throughout are mostly narrow (seconds and thirds) in each part; another

characteristic of recitative (though also a feature of much of Clarke's music for voices).

**Ex. 6.7: *Ibid.*, SATB parts (rhythm only), bar 9**



At an early stage of the work Clarke cleverly uses a single soprano, tenor and two alto soloists in addition to the SATB chorus (of which each part also divides). At this point (bars 24–30) Clarke divides the soloists and chorus into two by giving each ‘group’ a different passage from the text. Here stylistic differences between the soloists’ and chorus’s music reflect the different meanings of the texts. The chorus sing the words ‘His truth is a shield and a buckler’ in steadily-paced *pianissimo* unison to show their unity with God and their quiet determination, whilst the soloists (initially the two altos) sing ‘Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night / nor for the arrow that flieth by day / nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness / nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day’, *forte*, with shorter note-values, and to a much less predictable melodic shape, giving an anxious and agitated feel. Ex. 6.8 shows part of this passage; the motifs marked ‘X’ in the solo alto part are examples of Clarke’s ‘despair’ motif (cf Exx. 3.44, 3.45, 3.48, 3.53, 4.29, 5.22, and 5.23a and b, 5.24a and b) which are particularly fitting in this context.



Ex. 6.8: *Ibid.*, bars 24–27

*Poco più mosso*

Solo Alto  
Solo Bass  
S  
A  
T  
B

Thou shalt not be a-fraid of the ter-ror by night Nor for the ar-row that li-eth by day

buck - ler His truth is a shield

buck - ler His truth is a shield

buck - ler His truth is a shield

buck - ler His truth is a shield

Although the overall message of Psalm 91 is a positive one, concerning God's protection of His followers, certain passages (such as that shown above) highlight what He is protecting them from. Where Clarke can reflect these ominous references through her music, she never fails to do so. Conversely, the message of unity and strength is frequently underlined through the ways shown in Ex. 6.8, and she makes much use of pedal points throughout to give a feeling of there being a strong underlying foundation: God's strength.

When Clarke completed her choral setting of Psalm 91 in 1921 she was in the most important stage of her career as a composer, and it is clear from the opening bars that this work shows her at her uncompromising best. The piano accompaniment, such an important part of her other Psalm setting, is not missed; in this purely vocal texture she is able to convey her message just as appropriately thanks to her constantly sympathetic treatment of the text.

The opposing religious views of Clarke's parents were discussed in Chapter 5, and although her own beliefs are not documented<sup>9</sup> the passion and conviction seen in the religious choral works would seem to suggest that she *did* hold religious beliefs and that these pieces are deeply felt and experienced. Diary entries concerning the writing of the Psalm settings suggest musical rather than religious fulfilment, but perhaps the two went hand in hand. The heart-felt simplicity of *There is No Rose* is utterly different in style to the earlier Psalms. Her setting of this anonymous fifteenth-century carol<sup>10</sup> uses a solo baritone with a chorus of altos, tenors, baritones and basses. The religious subject matter and the switches between homophonic and contrapuntal writing mark this out as a motet. As in her other choral works, Clarke uses techniques found in Renaissance music but uses them with a freedom that brings them up-to-date.

The soloist sings each of the three short verses to the same melody (the final verse is slightly contracted) with a six-bar codetta at the end. He begins the first verse alone (the chorus enter in the tenth bar), allowing the melody to be heard clearly. When the chorus enter they sing in unison, in canon with the solo baritone, dividing just before the soloist finishes his line and ending the verse with a protracted 'Alleluia' (see Ex. 6.9). These contrasts between harmony and unison are vocally striking, and are a feature of much of Clarke's choral music.

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<sup>9</sup> Clarke never writes directly about her religious beliefs in her diaries. Those from 1919–23 contain several references to going to church but the later diaries contain very few such references and there are none at all from 1929–33.

<sup>10</sup> Medieval carols such as this had religious themes and text in English and Latin ('There is no rose of such virtue / Than the rose that bore Jesu. Alleluia.').

**Ex. 6.9: *There is No Rose*, bars 17–24**

Musical score for Ex. 6.9, bars 17–24. The score is for five vocal parts: Solo Br., A, T, Br., and B. The lyrics are "bore Je - su. A - lle - lu - ia." The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* and *mp*, and shows staggered entries for the vocal parts.

Another common way in which Clarke alters the musical fabric of her choral works is through alternating largely homophonic phrases (such as the 'Alleluia' in Ex. 6.9) with passages of freer part-writing, which often begin with staggered entries. Ex. 6.10 shows part of the second verse of *There is No Rose* as an example.

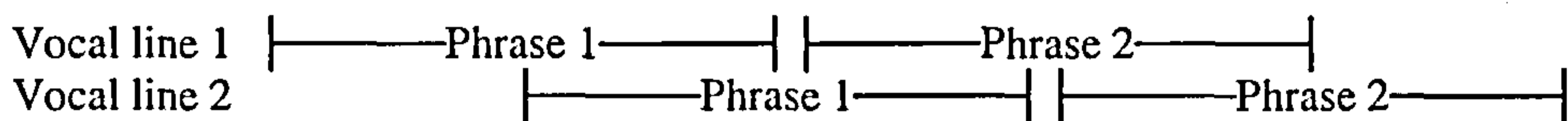
**Ex. 6.10: *Ibid.*, bars 38–42**

Musical score for Ex. 6.10, bars 38–42. The score is for five vocal parts: Solo Br., A, T, Br., and B. The lyrics are "was Hea - ven and earth in lit - tle space." The score includes a *cresc.* marking and shows staggered entries for the vocal parts.

Note in the example above how the bass line in bars 38–39 anticipates the solo baritone line in bars 39<sup>3</sup>–40, with a simplified version a third lower. This canonic passage recurs later *forte* and accented in the final push before the serene *ppp* end.



Throughout Clarke's choral music there are many instances of staggered, imitative entries, which frequently start in the same way, with the 'head' of the theme, before dissolving into free parts. Clarke's early work *My spirit like a charmed bark doth float* has a predominantly polyphonic texture, in which phrase endings are often disguised when one vocal line draws to a conclusion whilst another continues beneath:



Here, the overlapping phrases are particularly appropriate because they suggest the continuous motion of the river referred to in the text ("As a boat with swift sails / winging its way down some many winding river"); the first point of unity in this work occurs halfway through. This kind of writing features in much sixteenth-century choral music, but whereas Renaissance composers would have begun their subsequent entries either on the same note as the 'head' or at the dominant, Clarke often begins on other pitches, as Ex. 6.10 shows. This kind of writing also carried on into the Baroque era, most notably with Purcell and Handel.

There is little chromaticism throughout *There is No Rose*: by letting the sacred words speak for themselves without over-decoration in the music Clarke invoked something of the spirit of plainsong. This makes the ending, with the sudden appearance of a Neapolitan chord of the flattened second (an Eb major chord in D major) particularly effective (see bar 70<sup>2</sup> in Ex. 6.11).

Ex. 6.11: *Ibid.*, bars 70–71

The musical score for Ex. 6.11, bars 70–71, consists of five vocal parts: Solo Br., A, T, Br., and B. The music is in G major and 4/4 time. Each part has the lyrics "Gau-de - a - - - - mus!". The score includes performance markings such as "molto dim.", "rit.", and "ppp". The Solo Br. part starts with a "rit." marking and a "ppp" marking. The A, T, Br., and B parts also have "molto dim." and "ppp" markings. The Solo Br. part has a "rit." marking above the first measure and a "ppp" marking above the last measure. The A, T, Br., and B parts have "molto dim." markings above the first measure and "ppp" markings above the last measure.

Clarke's three settings of Shelley poems emerged at opposite ends of her composing career – two early on, the other much later (see Ex. 6.1). Of these, by far the most remarkable is the *Chorus from Shelley's 'Hellas'* (1943), written in a period when Clarke was experimenting with different musical styles. In her instrumental works she looked back to earlier periods with *Dumka* (Romantic) and *Passacaglia on an old English tune* (Baroque) and, in complete contrast, she used her most modern-sounding style yet in *Prelude, Allegro and Pastorale* (1941) and her song *The Donkey* (1942). The *Chorus from Shelley's 'Hellas'* is another forward-looking work, with none of Clarke's modal penchant in evidence. In outlook this work occupies similar territory to the setting of Psalm 91, written over twenty years previously, being equally compelling and (relatively) lengthy. Here, however, the luscious imagery of Shelley's verse is matched by Clarke's close, rich harmonies in which the five vocal parts (three sopranos and two altos) frequently overlap.

Although tonality is not abandoned in this work, the harmonic progressions are often intensely chromatic. We rarely feel a pull towards a key centre, but Clarke

uses major triads at the ends of phrases – instead of traditional cadences – throughout to give moments of respite. Here, it is as if the harmonies, which have hitherto been rather blurred, suddenly come into focus. The subject matter of this work shows it to be another (the last) of Clarke’s nocturnal pieces, and as in her instrumental work *Midsummer Moon* these unexpected moments of focus suggest an illumination amidst the darkness. Ex. 6.12 shows the first four bars in which these shifting harmonies are clear. Before coming to rest on a chord of D major in bar 4, Clarke anticipates the resolution with a D major chord (‘her ex-’), followed immediately by one of D half-diminished 7 (‘-haust-’), then an enharmonic D diminished triad (in which the Ab becomes G#) (‘-ed’) as she moves towards the major resolution. Ex. 6.13 shows the text of the poem and highlights Clarke’s use of major triads in this way: all but two are in root position; the second inversion chords provide less stable resolutions. Straightforward major triads such as these appear rarely in the rest of the work and Clarke’s use of them in this way shows a change in her ideas about tonality.

**Ex. 6.12: Chorus from Shelley’s ‘Hellas’, bars 1–4**

*Poco lento*  
*pp molto legato*

Soprano I  
The young moon has fed her ex - haust - ed horn

Soprano II  
The young moon has fed her ex - haust - ed horn

Soprano III  
The young moon has fed her ex - haust - ed horn

Alto I  
The young moon has fed her ex - haust - ed horn



**Ex. 6.13: Use of major triads in *Chorus from Shelley's 'Hellas'***

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| The young moon has fed                              |           |
| Her exhausted <b>horn</b> ,                         | D major   |
| With the sunset's <b>fire</b> :                     | E major   |
| The weak day is dead,                               |           |
| But the night is not <b>born</b> ;                  | B major   |
| And, like loveliness panting with wild desire       |           |
| While it trembles with fear and delight,            |           |
| Hesperus flies from awakening <b>night</b> ,        | C major   |
| And pants in its beauty and speed with <b>light</b> | E major   |
| Fast flashing, soft, and <b>bright</b> .            | G# major  |
| Thou beacon of love! thou lamp of the <b>free</b> ! | A major   |
| Guide us far, far away,                             |           |
| To climes where now veiled by the ardour of day     |           |
| Thou art hidden                                     |           |
| From waves on which weary <b>Noon</b> ,             | C major*  |
| Faints in her summer <b>swoon</b> ,                 | Eb major* |
| Between kingless continents sinless as <b>Eden</b>  | E major   |
| Around mountains and islands inviolably             |           |
| Prankt by the <b>sapphire sea</b> .                 | A major   |

\* = 2<sup>nd</sup> inversion chord

As Ex. 6.13 shows, tonics form focal points at the ends of lines, and in these chords a rising pattern of tonalities is evident. There is also some linkage of tonalities via common notes, so that one note from the new tonic triad was often found in the one before (for example E major and G# major share a G#; A major and C major share an E). This eases the transition from one tonality to the next, particularly where the keys are not closely related, and is an equivalent technique, now translated into harmonic terms, to Clarke's favoured method of thematic integration, where themes which appear quite distinct actually have a unifying feature.

At certain moments in this work Clarke uses short pedal points, in which the lower voices stop while the upper parts shift harmonies above (such as shown in Ex. 6.14, and 6.15, bars 73–75). In the same way that Hesperus moves above a still landscape, here the harmonies shift subtly above a static bass.

**Ex. 6.14: Chorus from Shelley's 'Hellas', bars 43–50**

As in her solo songs, Clarke uses musical effects to reflect the sentiments expressed in the text, or to suggest atmosphere. In Ex. 6.15 the very narrow chromatic intervals give a feeling of stasis to 'weary noon', creating a lazy, languorous feel as if it is too hot to move.

**Ex. 6.15: *Ibid.*, bars 71–75**

The advance towards the final A major chord is an interesting one. In Ex. 6.16 the harmonies move gently as one chord melts into the next. From each chord to the one

that follows there is always at least one common note. By ending in A major Clarke has taken us back to where we began, as the work started with unison A naturals (see Ex. 6.12).

**Ex. 6.16: Chord progression at the end of *Chorus from Shelley's 'Hellas'***

[Prankt] by the sapph - ire sea by the sapph - ire sea.

The discovery and subsequent performances, recording and publication of Clarke's choral music has allowed this aspect of her writing to reach public attention for the first time. Whereas her chamber music in particular and songs to a lesser extent were performed in England and the US during Clarke's heyday from the late 1910s to late 1920s, she seems to have kept her choral music very much to herself, perhaps considering it too personal an utterance for public consumption. Nevertheless it was evidently an important genre to Clarke because she returned to it sporadically throughout her career. As is true of her solo songs, the choral music shows Clarke's skill at word-setting, and her sensitive approach reveals an empathy with the poets she set when she reflects their inner meanings through her music.

Although we do not know whether Clarke's training in composition extended to writing choral music, it is clear that she must have studied Renaissance choral works closely: her music displays an awareness of techniques used in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century models. However, as we have seen, her aims went beyond those of pastiche, and she was not afraid to use established techniques as a starting point, but then to break rules in order to maintain a twentieth-century perspective. It was the auditory effects of techniques such as imitative entries that she took on board,



without feeling the need to follow the strict rules governing their usage that characterises Renaissance composers. This in itself shows confidence, and this was in evidence even in Clarke's early choral music.

While her tonal palette in the choral works does not include the mixture of French and English modal harmonies that characterise much of Clarke's chamber music, it is worth remembering that the majority of the choral music comes from early in her career, when she was still developing the unique voice seen in her later chamber works. If the choral music is not as original or groundbreaking as her chamber music, it is, nevertheless, always immaculately designed and constructed, showing Clarke's usual technical assurance. It also contains some glorious moments.

## Chapter 7: In Retrospect

In the early years of the twentieth century the list of internationally renowned English composers was by no means large, but although the international music press was not overrun with English names at that time, support for native composers was active in the contemporary English press. Despite negative comments from some quarters at the time,<sup>1</sup> it is clear today that conditions during the early decades of the twentieth century pushed English music into a position of strength it had not seen since the days when Purcell, and, later, Handel were the dominant figures on the English music scene.

The second English Musical Renaissance gathered pace from the 1880s largely thanks to the efforts and exacting standards of Hubert Parry and Charles Stanford. Parry and Stanford led by example with their own music and as a composition teacher Stanford's exemplary record is revealed through the achievements of his many illustrious pupils. The founding in London of the Trinity College of Music (1872), the Guildhall (1880) and the Royal College of Music (1882–83) provided competition with the existing Royal Academy of Music (1822), and standards of performance, teaching and composing were improved as a result. Hindsight reveals that the First World War had a less damaging effect on the English musical scene than might have been predicted at the time; indeed in some ways it inadvertently aided the continued recovery of English music. The cancellation of large-scale choral festivals and the difficulties of staging big orchestral concerts focussed much attention on the smaller-scale genres of chamber music and song.

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<sup>1</sup> The composer, conductor, translator and teacher at the Royal Academy of Music, Frederick Corder, launched a stinging attack in the pages of the 1916 *Musical Times* on the state of English music, laying the blame with the Government, the general public, the examination boards, publishers and the composers themselves. His comments sparked a wave of reaction with many writing in to contest his claims.

Meanwhile the exclusion of much German music (especially at the Proms) gave English composers an unprecedented opportunity to have their works performed.

Through publications such as *The Musical Times*, *Music and Letters* and numerous other shorter-lived journals (such as Walter Willson Cobbett's *Chamber Music* supplement to *The Music Student*<sup>2</sup>), along with various books on English music (the Chester biographies series,<sup>3</sup> as well as contributions by leading musical figures of the time such as Vaughan Williams and Stanford) many English composers' careers were documented, their music discussed, performances advocated and reviewed, and publications advertised. This information is not hard to find, and even composers whose outputs were small, or who have now faded into obscurity (Benjamin Dale, for example) enjoyed some recognition. But despite this, very little was written about Rebecca Clarke, even at the height of her success in the late 1910s to mid 1920s. She was the subject of a fairly lengthy article by Edwin Evans in *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music* (OUP, London, 1929), but she was a friend of the editor and contributed two articles for the encyclopaedia<sup>4</sup> so this is not really surprising. The fact that she is omitted from an article on 'women composers' in the same book suggests that hers was not a name on everyone's lips. It is significant that an article in *The Times* giving advance notice of a 1925 concert in which some of Clarke's songs were to be performed included the comment 'Miss Clarke is already known to listeners as the viola player in the Aeolian Players.'<sup>5</sup> By 1925 Clarke had already enjoyed her most successful period as a composer and had completed her Coolidge triptych. None of her subsequent works would receive as

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<sup>2</sup> This was issued monthly between June 1913 and November 1916.

<sup>3</sup> These anonymous short books with English and French text, dealt mostly with English composers (Lord Berners, Joseph Holbrooke, Ernest Moeran and Peter Warlock are examples). These publications were funded by Chester Ltd in order to promote composers whose music they published.

<sup>4</sup> It is notable, too, that the article on Clarke's music erroneously classifies her Viola Sonata as 'atonal' (London, 1929: 282).

<sup>5</sup> Anonymous writer, *The Times*, 3 July 1925.



much publicity, so if the public were unaware of her achievements as a composer prior to 1925 they were unlikely to read about them before her most recent renaissance, which began in the mid-1970s, but only properly gained pace around twenty years later.

A search through the pages of *The Times* (via *The Times* digital archive) uncovers Clarke's name numerous times through the years of her joint musical careers, but the vast majority of these are advertisements for concerts in which she was involved, rather than discussions of her music. Easily overlooked, these concert engagements are nevertheless fundamental to an understanding of why Clarke did not compose more: she was often simply too busy. Furthermore, these London concerts are just the tip of the iceberg; Clarke's career as a viola player took her around Britain, Europe, the USA and Asia at a time when international travel was a time-consuming activity. The timings are crucial too; a world tour from 1922–23 might well have taken her music to parts of the world that would otherwise have been unlikely to hear it (her diaries confirm that she performed her own music on these tours), but it also kept her on the move at a time when she had just produced her most impressive works and was at the height of her career as a composer. Although she did continue to compose during this time, conditions were hardly conducive to a period of intense activity. Clarke herself stated that in order to compose she must be able to devote all her time to it, and it is worth adding that access to a piano, which she used for composing, was not always available when on tour.<sup>6</sup> In this respect Clarke was in a similar position to Harry Waldo Warner, winner of the 1921 Coolidge Competition in which Clarke was awarded second place. As a member of the illustrious London String Quartet who performed a great deal of

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<sup>6</sup> Clarke's diaries reveal that when she was away from home access to a piano was rare and therefore always very gratefully appreciated.

contemporary English music, Warner had to agree to cut back on his composition despite his obvious talents in this area, the players deciding that their priority was performing, rather than teaching or composing. Frank Bridge also had to support himself through viola playing and teaching until December 1923. At the second time of asking, he agreed to accept generous financial support from Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge<sup>7</sup> which allowed him to concentrate on composition. For Clarke, a period of time to concentrate on composition and to consolidate all that she had learnt and experienced with her 1919 and 1921 masterpieces might well have been the impetus to a more sustained period of compositional activity, which could have propelled her into a higher position of renown and ensured her a lasting place in British musical historiography.

Chapter 1 explored other reasons why Clarke was never well known as a composer during her lifetime, and of these her intense modesty and lack of self-promotion was shown to have been the most important. In this way she resembles her near contemporary, the French composer and only female member of Les Six, Germaine Tailleferre (1892–1983). Although Tailleferre was more prolific than Clarke and also worked in the larger-scale genres of opera, ballet and orchestral music, she had some similar experiences: two unhappy marriages in the mid 1920s–1930s sapped her creative energies in much the same way as did Clarke's affair with the baritone, John Goss. Like Clarke, Tailleferre's dislike of self-promotion stemmed from 'her natural modesty and unjustified sense of artistic insecurity.'<sup>8</sup> Unlike Clarke, Tailleferre was not a public performer (she did quite a bit of accompanying as she could transpose anything into any key at sight and was a pretty adept pianist), and as composition was her only source of income she composed mainly to

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<sup>7</sup> Estimates suggest that Coolidge gave Bridge an annual stipend of \$2000–2500.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Orledge, 'Germaine Tailleferre', entry in *The Norton/ Grove Dictionary of Women Composers* (London, The MacMillan Press Limited, 1995), 451.



commission 'resulting in many uneven and quickly written works.'<sup>9</sup> Clarke's output could never be described as uneven in quality, so it is perhaps fortunate that she did not have to work in this way. Tailleferre, like Clarke, also settled in the USA in later life.

It is significant, too, that Clarke's 'successes' in the Coolidge competitions were hardly mentioned in the English press; the native Cobbett Phantasy competitions received far more attention, and the winners of these would have been better known to the English chamber music devotees. Although Clarke's Viola Sonata was performed in London, other works by her contemporaries were better known and heard more often. John Ireland's Second Violin Sonata, for example, was performed many times after its premiere (on 6 March 1917) received almost unanimous praise from both critics and audiences. As a response to the First World War, Ireland's Sonata seemed to capture the *zeitgeist* of a nation coming to terms with the devastations of international conflict. As Fiona Richards writes: 'it was perceived as being war-inspired and was both expressive and inspirational at a time of need.'<sup>10</sup> Ireland had to choose between offers from rival publishers and the first edition sold out through advance orders before it was actually printed, something almost unheard of at that time for an English chamber work. We can only imagine what a similar experience with her Viola Sonata would have done for Clarke's self-confidence and future career. As a reaction to the war, Clarke's work, with its variously transformed military motifs, nostalgic passages of 'English' modality and triumphant E major ending, surely stands on a par with Ireland's powerful Sonata.

Although we know how important composition was to Clarke, to establish a clear picture of her views about the quality of her own work is difficult simply

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Richards, Fiona: *The Music of John Ireland* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2000), 25.



because the evidence offers contradictory information. Suggestions that she was intensely self-critical are based on the Anthony Trent incident described in Chapter 4, plus comments made in interviews about early songs ('now fortunately lost'<sup>11</sup> and 'very bad songs, thank goodness they're torn up'<sup>12</sup>), *Theme and Variations* ('now lost and a good thing too'<sup>13</sup>), *Morpheus* ('not particularly good'<sup>14</sup>) and the Viola Sonata ('very much lesser'<sup>15</sup> than the works of Ernest Bloch). Crucially, she also made no proviso in her will as to what should happen to her manuscripts after her death. This implies that she did not consider them important, or did not expect anyone else to be interested in them. Against this is the fact that works Clarke claimed were lost or torn up were subsequently found in her apartment, suggesting that she had either misplaced and forgotten about them, or, perhaps, was actually rather proud of these early pieces and reluctant to discard them. In addition there are a significant number of diary entries in which she seems pleased with her own work; a private confidence and excitement she rarely showed in public:

Feb 1, 1919: Wrote "Down by the Salley Gardens." Pleased with it.

April 22, 1919:...Worked hard again at the [Viola] Sonata all day. It is beginning to come out extremely well.

July 3, 1919: The Sonata is finished now, and I have only a few small corrections to do, and the marking and copying before sending it off.

Feel very proud to have actually got it done.

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<sup>11</sup> *I Had a Father Too*, Chapter 7, p. 25. The early German songs listed in Appendix 2 are not lost, but are held by the managers of Clarke's former estate.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Robert Sherman, op cit.

<sup>13</sup> *I Had a Father Too*, Chapter 7, p. 37. The manuscript copy of *Theme and Variations* was found in Clarke's former apartment in July 2002 (see Chapter 4).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

July 8, 1919: Got the piano part done, though not marked as yet. Had a performance of the whole thing in the evening. Expected to hate it after all that work, but really am rather pleased with it.

Oct. 5, 1920: Am quite thrilled over an idea I had for the beginning of a Trio – if only I can carry it out.

April 13 1921: Such a good morning's work at my Trio. Felt in high spirits.

Nov. 13, 1922: Monday Composing with success all the morning. I'm getting quite pleased with the cello piece.

Sept. 12, 1924: Am yet again overhauling *The Seal Man* as I feel it is so good I want it to be better and simpler.

Rebecca Clarke lived a fairly anonymous existence in her New York apartment until 1976 when she was interviewed by Robert Sherman for a WQXR radio programme ('The Listening Room') about the pianist Myra Hess, with whom Clarke had worked as a performer. On discovering that Clarke had also been a composer, Sherman organised another interview, this time to discuss her own career.<sup>16</sup> It is appropriate that the revival of Clarke's music should have been sparked by such a chance event and had nothing to do with self-promotion. Clarke clearly enjoyed her brief period of celebrity in the late 1910s to early 1920s, just as she was clearly pleased to have been 'rediscovered' in the 1970s, but she never actively sought the limelight. Composition seems to have been the driving passion in her life, but it was also something intensely personal, something she did for herself rather than to attract the approval of others. When others disapproved of the direction she had chosen to take (such as with the dark 1923 *Rhapsody*) she was disappointed but had the strength of character – a stubbornness perhaps – which urged her to continue.

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<sup>16</sup> This interview coincided with Clarke's ninetieth birthday, and performances of some of her works were also broadcast as part of the celebrations.



Although she understood the need to have works published, early setbacks dented her confidence, and in many cases she did not even approach a publisher though she continued to write when she could. She appears to have gained a knowledge early on of what publishers would accept and kept other works to herself. During her lifetime she had just nineteen<sup>17</sup> works published. Now that that situation has improved dramatically, as Appendix 2 shows, her importance to twentieth-century English musical history can be reassessed.

Among her contemporaries Clarke was rare in having been equally at ease and skilled in the mediums of vocal and chamber music. Her musical language is not startlingly original, but the way in which she fuses aspects of different tonal systems gives her an individual voice that is particularly apparent in her chamber music and solo songs. It is curious – though not surprising in light of the publication situation – that her reputation has rested for many years on her Viola Sonata and Trio, because although these works are undoubtedly two of her best, there is plenty of other material of an equally high quality, as the previous chapters have, I hope, demonstrated.

Clarke's attention to detail is remarkable, and from an early stage her music displays a conviction that is always supported through a strong, well-honed technique. Her technical expertise encompasses not only a skilled ability to manipulate musical material and, in the first place, to create material which lends itself to manipulation via thematic transformation, but also a sound understanding of the capabilities of the instruments for which she writes. She was not ambitious to broaden her output into areas in which she felt she had not had enough training, commenting: 'I have not the slightest desire to write an opera. Although I have never

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<sup>17</sup> This counts the *Two Songs*, *Two Pieces for Viola and Cello*, *Three Old English Songs* and *Three Irish Country Songs* as single publications.



thought of writing one, I agree with those who believe that the ballet offers a much better medium for the modern composer',<sup>18</sup> and she remained dedicated to the smaller-scale genres in which she excelled.

Clarke was first and foremost an English composer with an unmistakable penchant for English modality, open parallel fifths and string textures, but she was well aware of music beyond England, too, and her style assimilates various European influences that should not be overlooked. As a performer she came into contact with many different styles of writing, and it is interesting that towards the end of her career she experimented with both old and new forms of expression in her final chamber works. Her choice of song texts show that, like Finzi, she was well read, discerning and up-to-date in her choice of poetry.

Clarke's diaries and memoir reveal her immediately appealing razor-sharp wit and serve to give us a broader perspective on her work and personality. They provide a fascinating commentary on the progress of certain of her works, and her comments on her contemporaries – she had a wide circle of illustrious musical friends and acquaintances – show her to have been a shrewd observer.<sup>19</sup> She was a down-to-earth humanitarian who grew up the hard way and never developed airs, graces or pretensions. She must have been thoroughly likeable and approachable, like her talented but unassuming contemporary Kathleen Ferrier. Clarke's articles in *Music and Letters* show an extensive knowledge of chamber music and the ability to convey her ideas to others. It is thus regrettable that she never had the opportunity to teach in a musical institution. If she had, she may well have had the advantage of

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<sup>18</sup> *The Christian Science Monitor*, 9 December 1922, 18.

<sup>19</sup> Appendix 6 gives extracts from her diary entries in which references to music are made.

distinguished pupils<sup>20</sup> to promote her music or keep it in the public eye (as was the case of Frank Bridge and his pupil Benjamin Britten).

Although her final work dates from 1954, Clarke's eye for detail was still active when she reached her ninetieth year: in the 1976 interview with Robert Sherman she comments that she could see things that might have been done better in her Viola Sonata, but that it was too late to do anything about it now. Around this time she also made revisions to some of her unpublished earlier works (*Tiger, Tiger* and *Cortège* for example) perhaps inspired by the knowledge that people were once again becoming interested in her work, and hopeful, too, that unpublished works would at last be issued and performed.

As has become clear, the future for Rebecca Clarke's reputation is bright. Some forty-three of her works are now published: approximately two-thirds of her mature work. Recordings of much of her music are available on CD, and several new and important articles have recently been published. The composer Ruth Lomon, financed by the Rebecca Clarke Society, has been commissioned to orchestrate Clarke's Viola Sonata, which will, I hope, bring her music to new audiences. With all this renewed attention we can only hope that in twenty years' time Clarke's name will be one of those listed with her better-known contemporaries as a significant figure in the twentieth-century Renaissance of English music.

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<sup>20</sup> Clarke taught a small number of students privately in both viola/violin playing (her diaries mention giving lessons to a 'Mr Swan and [his daughter] Sheila') and composition (she taught Ora Pearson, for example between 1924 and 1926).

## Appendix 1: Timeline Biography

|      |                |   |
|------|----------------|---|
| 1886 | 27 Aug         | Born in Harrow. Eldest child of Bostonian father, Joseph Clarke (1856–1920), and Bavarian mother, Agnes Helferich (1861–1935), who had married in Munich in 1885.   |
| 1894 |                | Begins to learn the violin.   |
| 1900 | Summer         | Hears Javanese gamelan at World's Fair in Paris.  |
| 1903 | Lent Term      | Enters Royal Academy of Music. Studies violin with Hans Wessely, and harmony and counterpoint with Percy Hilder Miles.  |
| 1905 | Midsummer Term | Father withdraws Clarke from the RAM after Miles proposes to her.   |
| 1905 |                | First visits the US. Travels alone to Boston. Stays with the William James family and meets a number of her father's relatives.   |
| 1908 | 9 Jan          | Enters RCM as one of only a handful of female composition students of Sir Charles Stanford. Clarke's father had sent Stanford some of Rebecca's early songs, and it is on the basis of these that he agrees to take her on as a pupil. Stanford suggests she switch from violin to viola as a first instrument. |
|      | 19 Dec         | Awarded Royal College of Music Council Exhibition of £20 for composition at the RCM. In her memoir, Clarke states that this award was for her <i>Theme and Variations</i> .   |
| 1909 | ? 18 Dec       | Awarded RCM Council Exhibition of £12 for composition   |



- at the RCM. In her memoir, Clarke states that this award was for her duet for two violins and piano, *Danse Bizarre*.
- 1910 July Leaves the RCM. Has some private viola lessons with Lionel Tertis. Joins the Nora Clench Quartet (formed 1907), replacing Cecilia Gates on viola. The full line-up is Clench, Lucy Stone, Clarke and May Mukle.
- Joseph Clarke expels Rebecca from the family home after an argument in which she confronts him about his mistresses. She leaves, aged twenty-four, with only £12.
- 1910 Nov Testamur issued by RCM, for attendance of at least three terms. Clarke did not sit the examinations which would have led to an ARCM, but the syllabuses and annual reports of the time seem to indicate that these were reserved for performing musicians.
- 1911 15 July Goes to inaugural meeting of the Society of Women Musicians, at the Women's Institute, 92 Victoria St, S.W.
- 1912 Gervase Elwes performs two of Clarke's songs, 'Shy One' and 'The Cloths of Heaven'.
- 1912 Summer Joins a choral group, 'The Palestrina Society' whose aim is to sing early music. Vaughan Williams conducts.
- 1913 18 Oct Becomes one of the first six women to join Sir Henry Wood's New Queen's Hall Orchestra (two of whom enter the viola section). Wood insists the women receive equal pay to prevent other women players from undercutting their male colleagues. She stays with the orchestra until 1914.

- 1916 Visits the US on a prolonged concert tour. It is her base until 1922.
- 1917 Summer With May Mukle meets Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge for the first time near Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Clarke becomes a close friend of Coolidge for many years.
- 1918 13 Feb, 3pm Performs in concert of chamber music at Aeolian Hall, New York with May Mukle (vc) and Katherine Ruth Heyman (pf). The programme includes Clarke's *Morpheus* (1<sup>st</sup> performance) under the pseudonym 'Anthony Trent', and *Two Pieces for Viola and Cello*, 1. 'Grotesque' 2. 'Lullaby'.
- 1918 Sept Attends the first Berkshire Festival of Chamber Music near Pittsfield, Massachusetts, organised by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge.
- 1918 ? Dec Begins work on the Viola Sonata in Honolulu where Clarke takes part in a series of chamber concerts. She finishes the work in Detroit in July 1919.
- 1919 Jan-6 April In Hawaii with May Mukle. Gives numerous private harmony lessons and several lectures on the development of chamber music and performs in several concerts (the final lecture takes place on 24 Feb).
- 1919 19 April Arrives in Detroit, where she works on her Viola Sonata until 3 July.
- 1919 11 July Sends Viola Sonata, under the pseudonym Anthony Trent, to the organisers of the Coolidge Competition. There are seventy-three entries and six prominent American musicians

- as adjudicators.
- 1919 24 Aug The results of the Coolidge competition are announced: Clarke's Viola Sonata comes second to Bloch's Suite for viola and piano.
- 1919 25 Sept Viola Sonata premiered at the Pittsfield Festival. It is performed by Louis Bailly, the viola player from the Berkshire Quartet, and Harold Bauer (pf). Clarke writes in her diary 'Bailly did not play very well, but Bauer was magnificent. Had a very warm reception and had to bow from platform. Overwhelmed with congratulations.'
- 1920 26 Jan Viola Sonata first performed in New York.
- 1920 11 April Arrives back in England.
- 1920 31 May Concert of Clarke works takes place at the Aeolian Hall, London. It includes performances by Clarke and Harold Bauer (Viola Sonata), and Gervase Elwes. Clarke records: 'practically every musician in London there' in her diary. The concert receives excellent reviews.
- 1920 Winthrop Rogers issue *Two Songs*, the first publication of any of Clarke's works.
- 1920 Aug Attends Berkshire Festival.
- 1920 23 Sept Father dies.
- 1921 24 March Goes to see Holst at St Paul's Girls' School, Hammersmith, where he is the Director of Music, to show him her two Psalm settings: Psalm 63 (*A Psalm of David*) for solo voice and piano, and Psalm 91 (*He that Dwelleth*) for soloists plus



- SATB chorus. She records in her diary that he 'criticized them very severely'.
- 1921 8 Feb Plays at a memorial concert for Gervase Elwes in Westminster. Elwes was killed in a train crash in Boston in Jan 1921, just days after Clarke heard him sing her 'Shy One' at a concert in New York.
- 1921 Spring Clarke delivers her manuscript of the Viola Sonata to J & W Chester who have agreed to publish it. She does not see the first printed copy until Jan 1922.
- 1921 July Travels to America.
- 1921 Aug Piano Trio entered in the Coolidge Competition. There are 64 entries, and Clarke's comes second to that of Harry Waldo Warner (1874–1945). The winner is announced on 27 Aug, and the Festival begins on 29 Sept.
- 1921 Oct Attends the Pittsfield Festival. (Her Trio is not performed, despite its having come second in the Coolidge Competition.)
- 1922 March Visits Italy with May Mukle where the two give concerts.
- 1922 March Receives a \$1000 commission from Coolidge for a work for cello and piano to be performed at the 1923 Berkshire Festival. Begins work on her *Rhapsody*. The 1923 Festival is to have a strong British bias. Eugene Goossens receives a commission for the same amount.
- 1922 May Percy Hilder Miles dies and leaves Clarke a Stradivarius violin in his will.

- 1922 12 Oct Asked to write an article: 'The History of the Viola in Quartet Writing' for *Music and Letters*, IV/I, 6–17. Clarke first sees the published article on 24 Jan while in India.
- 1922 3 Nov Piano Trio first performed in England at Wigmore Hall by Marjorie Hayward (violin), May Mukle (cello) and Myra Hess (piano).
- 1922 Dec–May Goes on a concert-giving world tour 1922–23 with May  
1923 Mukle. Visits Egypt, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), India, Malaysia, Singapore, Java, Hong Kong, China and Japan. Also composes during this time.
- 1923 28 Sept Performs in Benjamin Dale's Sextet for Six Violas at the Pittsburgh Festival. The other players include Tertis and Waldo Warner. Rehearsals go badly, and the piece is not a success!
- 1923 29 Sept *Rhapsody* is performed at the Coolidge Festival. Clarke records in her diary: '[The *Rhapsody* was] Very well received, but not liked by many, who thought it too long and gloomy'
- 1924 Returns to England, settles in London. This remains her base until 1939.
- 1924 3 April Goes to Stanford's funeral at Westminster Abbey. Records in her diary: 'Felt very mournful; it was the first funeral I've ever been to.' Later in April she writes a tribute to Stanford for the RCM magazine.
- 1925 7 Oct Performs with London Chamber Music Group (Marjorie

- Hayward, May Mukle and Evelyn Howard-Jones) at Wigmore Hall.
- 1925 21 Oct Recital of Clarke's compositions given at Wigmore Hall. The performers are Clarke, Myra Hess, May Mukle, Adila Fachiri, John Goss and Reginald Paul. A favourable review in *The Times* notes: 'Her music varies between flashes of originality and skilful handling of derived ideas.'
- 1925 24 Oct Goes to see John Masefield to discuss her settings of his poetry in two of her songs, *The Seal Man* and *June Twilight*. They discuss the problems of getting permission from the Author's Society to publish his words in her songs. He promises to do all he can to help.
- 1925 10 Nov Receives a letter from Oxford University Press asking her to send copies of her violin works (presumably *Chinese Puzzle* and *Midsummer Moon*) with a view to publishing them.
- 1926 21 Feb Gives her first solo performance to be broadcast by the BBC.
- 1926 Founder member of The English Ensemble. The line-up is Kathleen Long (piano), Marjorie Hayward (violin), Clarke (viola) and May Mukle (cello). Founded after Nora Clench's retirement. Clarke is also the secretary of the new ensemble. The group goes on a European tour in 1931 and remains active until 1939.
- 1926 31 May Takes part in a concert of chamber music with Joseph Slater, Constance Izard and Gordon Bryan at the New Chenal



- Galleries, Chelsea. Includes first concert performance of sonatas by W Friedrich Bach and the first performance in England of a *Rhapsody* for flute, violin, viola and piano by Honegger (1917).
- 1926 Gives a talk at the Society of Women Musicians' Conference.
- 1927 4 Feb Performs in the English Ensemble at the Aeolian Hall.
- 1927 April Writes an article: 'The Beethoven Quartets as a Player Sees Them' which is published in *Music and Letters*, III/2, 178–90.
- 1927 Begins relationship with the well-known baritone John Goss, which lasts until at least 1933.
- 1927 26 Oct Performs in a concert as part of the Aeolian players (Joseph Slater, flute, Antonio Brosa, violin, and Clarke, viola). Includes a performance of Clarke's *Chinese Puzzle*. *The Times* reviewer comments, 'The performances were admirable from every point of view'.
- 1928 The English Ensemble tour Europe.
- 1928 7 July The Society of Women Musicians hold a concert at 74 Grosvenor Street, London, in which Clarke's Irish folksong settings for voice and violin are played.
- 1928 19 Oct Takes part in a sell-out concert of Ravel's works at which the composer is present. According to a review in *The Times*, the *Introduction and Allegro* 'roused so much enthusiasm that it was repeated.' At a party after the concert

- Clarke tells Ravel's fortune.
- 1929 Writes entries on 'Bloch' and 'Viola' for *Cobbett's Cyclopaedic Survey of Chamber Music*.
- 1931 The English Ensemble tour Italy and Holland, and play at the Colonial Exhibition in Paris during the summer.
- 1931 31 May Takes part in concert of chamber music with Joseph Slater, Constance Izard and Gordon Bryan.
- 1934 Aug/Sept Attends the Pittsburgh Festival. This is the first Festival since 1928: the Depression had prevented Coolidge from funding a festival in the intervening years. Frank Bridge is also present.
- 1935 Mother dies in London.
- 1939 In New York at the start of World War II visiting her brothers. Although she only intended her visit to last for three months, she is refused a visa to return to the UK on the grounds that she is an 'unproductive mouth' to feed.
- 1941 11 March Plays in a memorial concert for Frank Bridge in Washington, organised by Coolidge. It had been Clarke's suggestion to include Bridge's Sextet in this concert. Clarke played the 2<sup>nd</sup> viola part.
- 1942 6 Aug At the Festival of the International Society of Contemporary Music held at the University of California in Berkeley, Clarke's *Prelude, Allegro and Pastorale*, for clarinet and viola, is chosen to represent English music. It is performed by Rudolph Schmitt (cl) and Walter Herbert (va). She is the

- only woman composer whose music is performed.
- 1942 Begins work as a governess in Connecticut.
- 1944 Completes her final chamber work, *I'll Bid My Heart Be Still*, which she gives to James Friskin as a wedding present.
- 1944 23 Sept Marries the Scottish pianist, composer and teacher James Friskin (a former fellow RCM student) on the anniversary of her father's death, after a chance meeting earlier in the year. Both are aged 58. They settle in Manhattan.
- 1944 Sept Retires from performing as a violist.
- 1954 Completes her final song, *God Made a Tree*.
- 1967 Husband James Friskin dies.
- 1969 Begins work on memoir: *I Had a Father Too, or 'The Mustard Spoon'*. She completes it in 1973, but it remains unpublished.
- 1976 27 Aug A radio broadcast on WQNR radio celebrates Clarke's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- 1979 13 Oct Dies in New York, aged 93.



## Appendix 2: Chronological Catalogue Of Works

This list of works gives the following information: date and place (if known) of composition in column 1 (if a single date is given it can be assumed that it is the date of completion). Then, in column 2: title, description and author of text (if applicable); description of the music, including instrumentation; dedication (if applicable); present location and details of the manuscripts (*US-pc* is a private collection in the US; the majority of Clarke's manuscripts are in the possession of her grand-nephew by marriage, Christopher Johnson. Because of Johnson's unwillingness to let researchers have access to the unpublished material I have also included details of locations where copies of the unpublished scores may be found. *GB-BBC* is the BBC library in London, *GB-BPI* is the Britten Pears library in Aldeburgh, *US-Wc* is the Library of Congress, Washington DC) and *US-BEm* is the library at the University of Berkeley, California; publication details of the music; details of the first performance (where known). Capitalisation of titles and tempi are as Clarke wrote them. The list is divided into two sections (i) completed works and (ii) undated or incomplete works.

### Abbreviations

|         |                             |        |                      |
|---------|-----------------------------|--------|----------------------|
| arr.    | arranged by,<br>arrangement | orig.  | original/ originally |
| bar     | baritone                    | pf     | piano                |
| cl      | clarinet                    | pp.    | pages                |
| ded.    | dedication, dedicated to    | prem.  | premiere             |
| fl      | flute                       | pubd   | published by         |
| MS, MSS | manuscript,<br>manuscripts  | pubn   | publication          |
| mvt(s)  | movement(s)                 | unpubd | unpublished          |
| n.d.    | no date given               | va     | viola                |
| perfd   | performed                   | vc     | cello                |
|         |                             | vn     | violin               |

All other abbreviations as in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2001.

**(i) Completed works**

c.1903

**Wanderers Nachtlied [Wanderer's Night song]**

text: Goethe (originally contained in a letter written to Mrs von Stein in Feb 1776. Goethe wrote a similar poem with the same name on 6 Sept 1780, as set here)

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

c.1904

**Chanson [Song]**

text: Maurice Maeterlinck

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

1904

**Ah, for the red spring rose**

text: anon.

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

1904

**Shiv, Who Poured the Harvest**

text: Rudyard Kipling, 'Shiv and the Grasshopper'  
from *The Jungle Book* (1894)

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

1904

**Aufblick [Daybreak]**

text: Richard Dehmel, from *Weib und Welt* (1896)

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

c.1904

**Klage [Complaint]**

text: Richard Dehmel, from *Weib und Welt* (1896)

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

c.1904

**Stimme im Dunkeln [Voice in the Dark]**

text: Richard Dehmel, from *Weib und Welt* (1896)

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd



c.1904

**O Welt [Oh World]**

text: anon.

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

1905

**Oh Dreaming World**

text: anon.

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

c.1905

**Du [You]**

text: Richard von Schaukal, source unknown

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

c.1905

**The moving finger writes**

text: Khayyám, *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, trans.

Edward Fitzgerald (1859)

music: song

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

c.1905

**Vor der Türe [Before the door]**

text: anon

music: song for voice, vn and pf

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

c.1905

**Wiegenlied [Cradle Song]**

text: Detlev von Liliencron, source unknown

music: song for voice, vn and pf

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

c.1906

**Nach einem Regen [After a Rain]**

text: Richard Dehmel, from *Weib und Welt* (1896)

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

c.1906

**Now fie on love**

text: anon.

music: partsong for TTBB

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New  
York, 2003

1906

**Durch die Nacht** [Through the Night]

text: Richard Dehmel, from *Weib und Welt* (1896)

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

April 1907

**Vergissmeinnicht** [Forget-me-not]

text: Richard Dehmel, from *Aber die Liebe* (1893)

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

June 1907

**Manche Nacht** [Some Night]

text: Richard Dehmel, from *Weib und Welt* (1896)

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

Aug 1907

**Nacht für Nacht** [Night for Night]

text: Richard Dehmel, from *Weib und Welt* (1896)

music: duet for soprano, contralto and pf

MS: *US-pc*, 5 pp.

unpubd



Sept 1907

**Magna est Veritas [Truth is Mighty]**

text: poem by Coventry Patmore, XII in Book I of  
*To the Unknown Eros, Etc* (1877–78)

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*, 3 pp.

unpubd

c.1907

**Das Ideal [The Ideal]**

text: Richard Dehmel, from *Weib und Welt* (1896)

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

c.1907

**Music, when soft voices die**

text: Percy Bysshe Shelley, from *Posthumous  
Poems*, pubd by Mrs Shelley in 1824

music: piece for SATB

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New  
York, 2003

prem.: 24 Feb 2002, by the choral group Coro Allegro  
in Boston

1908

**Sonata Form Movement for Violin and Piano**

music: one mvt work for vn and pf in G

I. *Molto moderato*

MSS: *US-pc*, 24 pp., copy at *GB-BBC*

unpubd

prem.: 23 Sept 2000, by Joanna Kurkowicz and Vivian  
Chang, The First and Second Church, Boston

c.1908

**A Lover's Dirge (Come Away Death)**

text: William Shakespeare, from *Twelfth Night*, Act  
II, scene iv (c.1600)

music: partsong for SATB

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New  
York, 2003

1908

**Theme and Variations**

music: piece for pf solo

MS: *Us-pc*, 36 pp.

unpubd

prem.: Ian Jones, 24 March 2003, Lauderdale House,  
Highgate, London

1909

**Sonata for Violin and Piano**

music: three mvt work for vn and pf in D

- I. *Allegro comodo*
- II. *Andante quasi Adagio*
- III. *Scherzando*

MSS: *US-pc*, 57 pp., copy at *GB-BBC*

unpubd

prem.: 23 Sept 2000, by Joanna Kurkowicz and Vivian Chang, The First and Second Church, Boston

1909

### **Danse Bizarre**

music: 3 mvt piece for 2 vns and pf (a fourth mvt is incomplete)

- I. *Prelude*
- II. *Danse Bizarre*
- III. *Nocturne*
- IV. *Finale* (incomplete, 8pp.)

MSS: *Us-pc*

unpubd

prem.: Contemporary RCM exhibition by Clarke and Sidney Bostock, 1909. First public performance (of mvts I-III) by Ian Jones (pf), Lorraine McAslan (vn) and David Juritz (vn) on 24 March 2003 at Lauderdale House, Highgate, London.



1909

**Spirits**

text: Untitled poem by Robert Bridges, pubd in  
*Shorter Poems*, Book IV, no. 18 (Oct 1890)

music: duet for two high voices and pf

MS: *US-pc*, 6 pp.

unpubd

1909

**Lullaby**

music: piece for va and pf

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New  
York, 2002

prem.: this work was in Clarke's performance  
repertoire in the 1910s

c.1909

**When Cats Run Home**

text: Alfred Tennyson 'Song – The Owl', pubd in  
*Poetical Works of Alfred Tennyson* (1899)

music: piece for SATB

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New  
York, 2003

c.1910

### **The Colour of Life**

text: Clarke writes "old Chinese words" on the score. The poet is Ssu-K'ung T'u (AD 834–903)

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*, copy at *GB-BBC*

unpubd

c.1910

### **Return of Spring**

text: Clarke writes "old Chinese words" on the score. The poet is Ssu-K'ung T'u (AD 834–903)

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*, 4 pp., copy at *GB-BBC*

unpubd

c.1910

### **Tears<sup>1</sup>**

text: Clarke writes 'Chinese words' on the MS

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

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<sup>1</sup> According to Ponder (1983: 86) this song 'was a result of a private contest between the composer, May Mukle and Eugene Goossens to see who could make the best settings.' The poet is possibly Ssu-K'ung T'u.

c.1911

**One that is ever kind**

text: W B Yeats, 'The Folly of Being Comforted',  
from *In The Seven Woods*, pubd 1903

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

c.1911–12

**My spirit like a charmed bark doth float**

text: a poem by Shelley, 'Fragment: To one Singing'  
(1817, pubd 1839)

music: partsong for chorus

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New  
York, 2003

c.1911–12

**Come, oh come, my life's delight**

text: Thomas Campion, *Third Book of Ayres*, XIII

music: piece for SATB, arr. for solo voice and pf 1923

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New  
York, 2002 (version for solo voice and pf).  
SATB version pubd OUP, 2003



c.1912

**Two songs**

text: two poems by W B Yeats: No 1, 'To An Isle in the Water' from *Crossways* (1889); No. 2, 'He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven' from *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899)

music: songs for voice and pf, titled:

1. *Shy One*

2. *The Cloths of Heaven*

ded.: 'Dedicated to Gervase Elwes'

MSS: *US-pc*

pubn: Winthrop Rogers, London, 1920

c.1912

**Weep you no more, sad fountains**

text: Anon. Used in Dowland's *Third Book of Ayres* (1603)

music: song for voice and pf, arr. for SATB 1926

ded.: 'for Dora' [Clarke<sup>2</sup>]

MS: *US-pc*, copy at *GB-BBC*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 2002. SATB version pubd OUP 2003.

c.1912

**Away Delights**

text: John Fletcher from *The Captain*, Act III, scene iv (1647)

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<sup>2</sup> Rebecca's sister.

music: duet for high and medium voices and pf

MS: *US-pc*, 5 pp.

unpubd

c.1912

### **Hymn to Pan**

text: John Fletcher, from *The Faithful Shepherdess*,  
Act I, scene I (c.1608–09)

music: duet for tenor, baritone and pf

MS: *GB-BPL*, 9 pp.

unpubd

1913

### **Infant Joy**

text: poem by William Blake, III from *Songs of  
Innocence* (1784–85, pubd 1789–90)

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Winthrop Rogers, London, 1924

1913

### **Lullaby: an Arrangement of an Ancient Irish Tune**

music: piece for va and pf

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New  
York, 2002

c.1914

**Philomela**

text: Sir Philip Sidney, *Certain Sonnets*, no. IV 'The nightingale as soon as April bringeth' (pubd posthumously in 1598)

music: piece for SATB

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 2003

prem.: 24 Feb 2002, by the choral group Coro Allegro in Boston

c.1916

**Two pieces for Viola and Cello**

music: string duets titled:

1. *Grotesque*

2. *Lullaby*

MSS: *US-pc*

pubn: Oxford University Press, London, 1930

prem.: Clarke (va) and May Mukle (vc) c.1918

1917–18

**Untitled**

music: mvt for va and pf

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 2002



1917–18

**Morpheus**

music: piece for va and pf

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 2002

prem.: 13 Feb 1918, Aeolian Hall, New York, by Clarke (va) and Katherine Ruth Heyman (pf).  
In the programme Clarke included *Morpheus* under the pseudonym 'Anthony Trent'

1918

**Lullaby**

music: piece for vn and pf

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

1 Feb 1919

**Down by the Salley Gardens**

text: poem by W B Yeats, from *Crossways* (1889)

music: song for voice and pf, arr. for voice and vn  
1955

ded.: version for voice and vn, 'for Helen Boatwright'

MSS: *US-pc*

pubn: Winthrop Rogers, London, 1924. Version for voice and vn pubd Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 2001.

prem.: version for voice and vn given private prem. in  
New York City by Helen Boatwright (sop) and  
Howard Boatwright (vn) in 1955

3 July 1919, Detroit

**Sonata for Viola or Violoncello and Piano**

music: three mvt work for va or vc and pf:

1. *Impetuoso*

2. *Vivace*

3. *Adagio*

ded.: to Mrs E S Coolidge

MSS: *US-Wc*, 52 pp.

pubn: J & W Chester Ltd, London, 1921

prem.: 25 Sept 1919, at the Pittsburgh Festival,  
Massachusetts, by Louis Bailly (va) and Harold  
Bauer (pf)

Aug 1919–29 Dec 1920

**A Psalm of David. When he was in the Wilderness  
of Judah**

text: Psalm 63 in the Authorized (King James)  
Version (1611)

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*, copy at *GB-BBC*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New  
York, 2002

April 1920–7 May 1921

**He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most  
High**

text: Psalm 91 from the Authorized (King James)  
Version (1611)

music: piece for SATB chorus and SATB soloists

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New  
York, 2003

prem.: 24 Feb 2002, by Coro Allegro, Boston

1921?

**Epilogue**

music: piece for vc and pf

ded.: 'to Guilhermina Suggia'

MS: *US-pc*, copy at *GB-BBC*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New  
York, 2003

1921

**Trio for Violin, Violoncello and Piano**

music: three mvt work for vn., vc, pf:

1. *Moderato ma appassionato*

2. *Andante molto semplice*

3. *Allegro vigoroso*

MSS: *US-Wc*

pubn: Winthrop Rogers, London, 1928



prem.: Private perf. by Elschuco Trio (Samuel Gardner, vn; Willem Willeke, vc, Richard Epstein, pf), 12 Feb 1922. Public prem., 3 Nov 1922, Wigmore Hall, London, by Marjorie Hayward (vn), May Mukle (vc) and Myra Hess (pf)

1921

**Chinese Puzzle (Adapted from a Chinese Tune)**

music: piece for vn and pf, arr. 21 April 1922 for va and pf, arr. 23 Feb 1926 for fl, vn, va, vc and pf by Clarke for a perf. by the Aeolian Players the following year.

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Oxford University Press, London, 1925. Arr. for va and pf pubd. OUP, 2002

prem.: Orig. version Constance Iazard (vn), London, 29 May 1924

24 Jan 1922

**The Seal Man**

text: John Masefield, from *A Mainsail Haul* (Elkin Mathews, London, 1905)

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Winthrop Rogers, London, 1926

prem.: 11 June 1925, by John Goss (bar) and Reginald  
Paul (pf) at the Wigmore Hall, London

29 Aug 1923

### **Rhapsody**

music: piece for vc and pf, written to commission  
(\$1000) for the 1923 Coolidge Festival

ded.: to Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge

MS: *US-Wc*, 62 pp., copy at *GB-BBC*

unpubd

prem.: 29 Sept 1923 at the Berkshire Festival in South  
Mountain, near Pittsfield, Massachusetts, by  
May Mukle (vc) and Myra Hess (pf)

April 1924

### **Midsummer Moon**

music: piece for vn and pf

ded.: 'Dedicated to Adila Fachiri'

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Oxford University Press, London, 1926

prem.: 12 May 1924 at the Wigmore Hall, London, by  
Adila Fachiri (vn) and Bertram Harrison (pf)

1924

### **Comodo e amabile**

music: piece for string quartet

MS: *US-pc*, copy at *GB-BBC*

pubn: Oxford University Press, New York, 2004

prem.: 25 Sept 1999, Brandeis University, Boston, by  
the Lydian Quartet

Jan 1924

### Three Old English Songs

text: No. I from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, Act  
V, scene 3 (1599)

music: three songs arr. for voice and vn

1. *It was a lover and his lass* (Thomas  
Morley, arr. Clarke)
2. *Phyllis on the new made hay*
3. *The tailor and his mouse*

MSS: *US-pc*

pubn: Winthrop Rogers, London, 1925

prem.: 26 May 1924, Aeolian Hall, London, by Norman  
Notley (bar) and Clarke (vn)

1 Jan–7 Feb 1925

### June Twilight

text: John Masefield, printed in *The Speaker*,  
London, 11 June 1904. First pubn in book form  
in *Ballads and Poems by John Masefield*, pubd  
15 Sept 1910 by Elkin and Mathews.

music: song for voice and pf

ded.: 'To John Goss'

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Winthrop Rogers, London, 1926



April 1926

**Poem**

music: piece for string quartet

MS: *US-pc*, copy at *US-BEm*

pubn: Oxford University Press, New York, 2004

prem.: Music Library Association, Berkeley,  
California, 1994

1926

**A Dream**

text: poem by W B Yeats, 'A Dream of Death' from  
*The Rose* (1893)

music: song for low voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Winthrop Rogers, London, 1928

April 1926

**Three Irish Country Songs**

text: from Herbert Hughes *Irish Country Songs*  
*Volume I* (London, 1909)

music: three songs arr. for voice and vn by R. Clarke

1. *I know my love*
2. *I know where I'm going*
3. *As I was goin' to Ballynure*

MSS: lost

pubn: Oxford University Press, London, 1928

c.1926

### **Sleep**

text: John Fletcher, from *The Woman Hater* (1607)

music: duet for tenor, baritone and pf, composed for  
David Brynley and Norman Notley, members  
of the English Singers

ded.: 'To David & Norman from their earliest and  
most enthusiastic fan Rebecca'

MS: *US-pc*, copies at GB-BBC, and *GB-BPl*, 5 pp.

unpubd

prem.: at the home of Julian Huxley, date unknown

c.1926

### **Take, O take those lips away**

text: Anon. One stanza is used by Shakespeare in  
*Measure for Measure*, Act IV, scene 1 (first  
perfd 26 Dec 1604, first printed 1623), and two  
stanzas are used by John Fletcher in *Rollo* or  
*The Bloody Brother* (c.1624–25)

music: duet for tenor, baritone and pf

MS: *GB-BPl*, 3 pp.

unpubd

10 Jan–26 June 1927

### **The Cherry-Blossom Wand**

text: a poem by Anna Wickham, subtitled 'To be  
sung'

music: song for voice and pf

ded.: 'to Anne Thursfield'

MS: *US-pc*, copy at *GB-BBC*

pubn: Oxford University Press, London, 1929

prem.: The song was sung for Wickham on 8 July 1927 according to Clarke's diaries.<sup>3</sup> This was almost certainly the work's private prem.

26 May–July 1927

**Eight o' clock**

text: A E Housman, *Last Poems*, XV (written between 1895–1910 and in April 1922, pubd Sept 1922).

music: song for voice and pf

ded.: 'To Lawrence Strauss'

MS: *US-pc*, copy at *GB-BBC*

pubn: Winthrop Rogers, London, 1928

prem.: 15 Feb 1928, Phillis Sjörsjön (sop), pianist unknown, Aeolian Hall, London

1928

**There is No Rose of Such Virtue**

text: based on a 15<sup>th</sup>-century English carol

music: piece for solo baritone, and A T Bar B chorus

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 2003

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<sup>3</sup> Johnson, Editorial Notes, *Rebecca Clarke, Songs with Piano*, OUP, 2002.



1928

**Greeting**

text: Ella Young, source unknown

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*, copy at *GB-BBC*

pubn: Winthrop Rogers, London, 1928

1929

**The Aspidistra**

text: Claude Flight, source unknown, probably  
unpubd

music: song for voice and pf

ded.: 'to Adolphe Hallis'

MS: *US-pc*, copy at *GB-BBC*

pubn: J & W Chester Ltd, London, 1930

prem.: 11 June 1929, by Anne Thursfield (sop), pianist  
unknown

6 March 1929

**Cradle Song**

text: poem by William Blake, IV from *Songs of  
Innocence* (1784–85, pubd 1789–90)

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*, copy at *GB-BBC*

pubn: Oxford University Press, London, 1929

20 May 1929 (rev. 1931)

**Tiger, Tiger**

text: poem by William Blake, originally from his notebook, c.1791–92, a revised version appears in the same notebook, and also appears in his *Songs of Experience* (pubd 1794)

music: song for voice and pf (also known as ‘The Tiger’)

MS: *US-pc*, copy at *GB-BBC*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 2002. Clarke made further revisions to *Tiger, Tiger* in the 1970s, but this version remains unpubd

1930 (rev. 1978)

**Cortège**

music: piece for solo pf

ded.: ‘to William Busch’

MS: *US-pc*, 4 pp., copy at *GB-BBC*

unpubd

1937

**Ave Maria**

text: Roman Catholic prayer

music: piece for unaccompanied SSA choir

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 1998

1940

**Daybreak**

text: poem attributed to John Donne (but probably by John Dowland). It appeared as a prefix to Donne's poem *Break of Daye* in early editions of *Songs and Sonnets*, but first appeared in Dowland's *A Pilgrim's Solace* (1612)<sup>4</sup>

music: song for voice and string quartet

MS: *US-pc*, copy at *GB-BBC*, 3 pp.

unpubd

c.1940

**Untitled**

music: single mvt work in F minor for two vns

MS: *US-pc* (more than 4pp.)

unpubd

1941

**Passacaglia on an Old English Tune**

music: piece for va or vn and pf, on a tune attributed to Thomas Tallis

ded.: 'To BB'<sup>5</sup>

MS: *US-pc*

prem.: 28 March 1941 at Temple Emanu-El in New York City, Clarke (va)

pubn: G. Schirmer, New York, 1943

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<sup>4</sup> See *The Poems of John Donne edited from the old editions and numerous manuscripts with introductions and commentary by Herbert J C Grierson* (OUP, 1912: 432).

<sup>5</sup> The composer's niece, Magdalen.



1941

**Dumka**

music: piece for vn, va and pf

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

1941

**Prelude, Allegro and Pastorale**

music: three mvt work for va and B flat cl

*I. Prelude*

*II. Allegro*

*III. Pastorale*

ded.: 'for Hans and Fietzchen'<sup>6</sup>

MSS: *US-pc*

prem.: 19<sup>th</sup> Festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music in Berkeley, California, 6 Aug 1942, by Rudolph Schmitt (cl), Walter Herbert (va)

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 2000

1941

**Combined Carols ('Get 'em all over at once')**

music: piece for string quartet or string orch, played annually on New York radio station WQXR in the early 1940s

MS: *US-pc*

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<sup>6</sup> Hans Clarke was Rebecca's brother, Fietzchen was the nickname of his wife, Frieda.

unpubd

1941 (rev.1976)

**Lethe**

text: Edna St Vincent Millay, from *The Buck in the Snow* (1928)

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 2002

Nov 1942

**The Donkey**

text: poem by Gilbert Keith Chesterton, from *The Wild Knight* (pubd 1900)

music: song for soprano and pf

ded.: 'for Povla Frijsh'

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: printed in *British Music Society Journal* (1984), then pubd by Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 2002

prem.: New York Town Hall, Povla Frijsh (soprano) and Celiws Dougherty (pf).

c.1943

**Chorus from Shelley's *Hellas***

text: excerpt from Shelley's lyrical drama *Hellas* (1822)

music: piece for female voices (SSSAA)

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New  
York, 1999

1944

**I'll bid my heart be still**

music: an old Scottish Border melody arranged for va  
and pf

ded.: written for James Friskin as a wedding present,  
but no dedication on the MS

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New  
York, 2003

c.1945

**Binnorie: A Ballad**

text: Traditional Scottish folk text

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New  
York, 2002

prem.: 27 Oct 2001, by Eileen Stempel (sop) and  
Sylvie Beaudette (pf), Boston Public Library.



c.1945

**He Hath Filled the Hungry**

music: piece for pf solo, transcription of 'Esurientes'  
from J S Bach's *Magnificat in D*, written for  
Clarke's husband, James Friskin

MS: *US-pc*, 3 pp.

unpubd

prem.: Ian Jones, 24 March 2003, Lauderdale House,  
Highgate, London

1954, New York

**God Made a Tree**

text: based on an unpubd poem by Katherine  
Kendall

music: song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

pubn: Oxford University Press, Oxford and New  
York, 2002

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**(ii) Undated or incomplete works**

n.d.

**Up-hill**

text: Christina Rossetti, pubd in *Goblin Market and  
Other Poems* (1862)

music: undated song for voice and pf

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

n.d.

**Untitled**

music: incomplete piece for ensemble, including  
strings and flute

MS: *US-pc*

unpubd

1940

**Jehovah reigneth**

music: incomplete sketch of work for SATB chorus

MS: *Us-pc*, 2 pp. sketch

unpubd

1970s

**Pomposo**

music: incomplete work for viola. A musical portrait  
of an acquaintance.

MS: *Us-pc*

unpubd



### Appendix 3: Overview of Clarke's Vocal Music (Solo Songs, Duets, Songs With Accompaniments for Other Instruments and Choral Music), Arranged in Chronological Order of Poets' Birthdates

**Key:**

|   |
|---|
| Song for voice and piano                  |
| Choral work                               |
| Duet for two voices and piano             |
| Song for voice and stringed instrument(s) |

Dates in parentheses are dates of publication.

| Poet                 | Poet's dates        | Poem set by RC                          | Date poem written and published     | Date of Clarke's setting and publication date | Instrumentation of Clarke's setting |
|----------------------|---------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Ssu-K'ung<br>T'u     | A.D.<br>834–<br>903 | <i>The Colour of Life</i>               |                                     | 1910  | Voice and pf                        |
| Ssu-K'ung<br>T'u     |                     | <i>Return of Spring</i>                 |                                     | 1910  | Voice and pf                        |
| Ssu-K'ung<br>T'u?    |                     | <i>Tears</i>                            |                                     | 1910  | Voice and pf                        |
| Khayyám              | c.1048–<br>c.1131   | <i>The moving finger writes</i>         | Published in UK<br>translation 1859 | 1905  | Voice and pf?                       |
| Sir Philip<br>Sidney | 1554–<br>86         | <i>Philomela</i>                        | 1598 (posthumous<br>publication)    | 1914 (2003)                                   | SATB                                |
| Anon,<br>quoted by   |                     | <i>Take, O take those lips<br/>away</i> | One verse in<br>Shakespeare's       | 1926  | Duet for tenor,<br>baritone and pf  |



|                          |              |   |  |   |                |                                 |
|--------------------------|--------------|---|--|---|----------------|---------------------------------|
| Fletcher and Shakespeare |              |   |  | <i>Measure for Measure</i> (1623); two verses publ in Fletcher's <i>Rollo</i> or <i>The Bloody Brother</i> (c. 1624–25) |                |                                 |
| Shakespeare              | 1564–1616    | <i>A lover's dirge</i>                                      |  | From <i>Twelfth Night</i> (c. 1600)   | 1908           | SATB                            |
| Shakespeare              |              | <i>It was a lover and his lass</i>                          |  | From <i>As You Like It</i> (1599)   | 1924 (1925)    | Voice and vn                    |
| Campion                  | 1567–1620    | <i>Come, oh come, my life's delight</i>                     |  |   | 1911–12        | SATB                            |
| Campion                  |              | <i>Come, oh come, my life's delight</i> (arr. of the above) |  |   | 1923 solo arr. | Voice and pf                    |
| Attributed to Donne      | c. 1572–1631 | <i>Daybreak</i>   |  | After 1612.   | 1940           | Voice and string quartet        |
| Fletcher                 | 1579–1625    | <i>Away delights</i>  |  | From <i>The Captain</i> (1647)  | 1912           | Duet for high and medium voice  |
| Fletcher                 |              | <i>Hymn to Pan</i>  |  | From <i>The Faithful Shepherdess</i> (c. 1608–09)   | 1912           | Duet for tenor, baritone and pf |
| Fletcher                 |              | <i>Sleep</i>  |  | From <i>The Woman Hater</i> (1607)  | 1926           | Duet for tenor, baritone and pf |
| Goethe                   | 1749–1832    | <i>Wanderers Nachtlied</i>                                  |  | 1776  | 1903           | Voice and pf                    |
| Blake                    | 1757–1827    | <i>Infant Joy</i>   |  | 1784–85, (1789–90)  | 1913 (1924)    | Voice and pf                    |
| Blake                    |              | <i>Cradle Song</i>  |  | 1784–85, (1789–90)  | 1929 (1929)    | Voice and pf                    |



| Blake                 |           | <i>Tiger, Tiger</i>                             | c. 1791–92 (1794) | 1929 (2002) | Voice and pf                   |
|-----------------------|-----------|---|-------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|
| Shelley               | 1792–1822 | <i>Music, When Soft Voices Die</i>              | 1824              | 1907        | SATB                           |
| Shelley               |           | <i>My spirit like a charmed bark doth float</i> | 1817 (1839)       | 1911 (2003) | SATB                           |
| Shelley               |           | <i>Chorus from Shelley's 'Hellas'</i>           | 1822              | 1943 (1999) | SSSAA                          |
| Tennyson              | 1809–92   | <i>The Owl</i>                                  | 1899              | 1909 (2003) | SATB                           |
| Patmore               | 1823–96   | <i>Magna est Veritas</i>                        | 1877–78           | 1907        | Voice and pf                   |
| Bridges               | 1844–1930 | <i>Spirits</i>                                  | 1890              | 1909        | Duet for 2 high voices and pf  |
| Detlev von Liliencron | 1844–1909 | <i>Wiegenlied</i>                               |                   | 1905        | voice, vn, pf                  |
| Housman               | 1859–1936 | <i>Eight o' clock</i>                           | 1895–1910 (1922)  | 1927 (1928) | Voice and pf                   |
| Maeterlinck           | 1862–1949 | <i>Chanson</i>                                  |                   | 1904        | Voice and pf                   |
| Dehmel                | 1863–1920 | <i>Aufblick</i>                                 | 1896              | 1904        | Voice and pf                   |
| Dehmel                |           | <i>Klage</i>                                    | 1896              | 1904        | Voice and pf                   |
| Dehmel                |           | <i>Stimme im Dunkeln</i>                        | 1896              | 1904        | Voice and pf                   |
| Dehmel                |           | <i>Nach einem Regen</i>                         | 1896              | 1905        | Voice and pf                   |
| Dehmel                |           | <i>Durch die Nacht</i>                          | 1896              | 1906        | Voice and pf                   |
| Dehmel                |           | <i>Vergissmeinnicht</i>                         | 1893              | 1907        | Voice and pf                   |
| Dehmel                |           | <i>Manche Nacht</i>                             | 1896              | 1907        | Voice and pf                   |
| Dehmel                |           | <i>Nacht für Nacht</i>                          | 1896              | 1907        | Duet for sop, contralto and pf |



|                 |               |  |                 |             |                                       |
|-----------------|---------------|--|-----------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| Dehmel          |               | <i>Das Ideal</i>   | 1896            | 1907        | Voice and pf                          |
| Kipling         | 1865–<br>1936 | <i>Shiv and the Grasshopper</i>  | 1894            | 1904        | Voice and pf                          |
| Yeats           | 1865–<br>1939 | <i>The folly of being<br/>comforted</i>                                    | 1902            | 1911        |                                       |
| Yeats           |               | <i>To An Isle in the Water<br/>(‘Shy One’)</i>                             | 1899            | 1912        | Voice and pf                          |
| Yeats           |               | <i>He Wishes for the Cloths of<br/>Heaven (‘The Cloths of<br/>Heaven’)</i> | 1899            | 1912        | Voice and pf                          |
| Yeats           |               | <i>Down by the Salley<br/>Gardens</i>                                      | 1889            | 1919 (1924) | Voice and pf                          |
| Yeats           |               | <i>Down by the Salley<br/>Gardens</i>                                      | 1889            |             | Arr. of the above for<br>voice and vn |
| Yeats           |               | <i>A Dream</i>   | 1893            | 1926 (1928) | Voice and pf                          |
| Young           | 1867–<br>1956 | <i>Greeting</i>  |                 | 1929 (1929) | Voice and pf                          |
| von<br>Schaikal | 1874–<br>1942 | <i>Du</i>  |                 | 1905        | Voice and pf                          |
| Chesterton      | 1874–<br>1936 | <i>The Donkey</i>  | 1900            | 1942 (2002) | Voice and pf                          |
| Masefield       | 1878–<br>1967 | <i>The Seal Man</i>  | 1905            | 1922 (1926) | Voice and pf                          |
| Masefield       |               | <i>June Twilight</i>   | 1904            | 1925 (1926) | Voice and pf                          |
| Flight          | 1881–<br>1955 | <i>The Aspidistra</i>  | Possibly unpubd | 1929 (1930) | Voice and pf                          |
| Kendall         | 1883–<br>1966 | <i>God Made a Tree</i>   | Unpubd          | 1954 (2002) | Voice and pf                          |



|             |           |   |  |          |                |                       |
|-------------|-----------|---|--|----------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Wickham     | 1884–1947 | <i>The Cherry-Blossom Wand</i>  |  |          | 1927 (1929)    | Voice and pf          |
| Millay      | 1892–1950 | <i>Lethe</i>  | 1928                                       |          | 1941 (2002)    | Voice and pf          |
| Traditional |           | <i>Binnorie: A Ballad</i>   |  |          | c. 1945 (2002) | Voice and pf          |
| Traditional |           | <i>Phillis on the new made hay</i>                                      |  |          | 1924 (1925)    | Voice and vn          |
| Traditional |           | <i>The tailor and his mouse</i>   |  |          | 1924 (1925)    | Voice and vn          |
| Traditional |           | <i>I know my love</i>   |  |          | 1926 (1928)    | Voice and vn          |
| Traditional |           | <i>I know where I'm going</i>   |  |          | 1926 (1928)    | Voice and vn          |
| Traditional |           | <i>As I was goin' to Ballynure</i>                                      |  |          | 1926 (1928)    | Voice and vn          |
| Biblical    |           | <i>A Psalm of David (Psalm 63)</i>                                      |  |          | 1920 (2002)    | Voice and pf          |
| Biblical    |           | <i>He That Dwelleth In The Secret Place Of The Most High (Psalm 91)</i> |  |          | 1921           | Tenor and SATB chorus |
| Anon        |           | <i>Ah for the red Spring rose</i>                                       |  |          | 1907           |                       |
| Anon        |           | <i>Oh Dreaming World</i>  |  |          | 1905           |                       |
| Dehmel      |           | <i>Oh Welt</i>  |  |          | 1904           | Voice and pf          |
| Anon        |           | <i>Ave Maria</i>  | Roman prayer                               | Catholic | 1937 (1998)    | SSA                   |
| Anon        |           | <i>Weep you no more sad fountains</i>                                   | Renaissance text                           |          | 1912 (2002)    | Voice and piano       |
| Anon        |           | <i>Weep you no more sad fountains</i>                                   | Renaissance text                           |          | 1912 (2003)    | SATB                  |
| Anon        |           | <i>Now fie on love</i>  | Renaissance text                           |          | 1906 (2003)    | SATB                  |
| Anon        |           | <i>There is no rose</i>   | Based on a 15 <sup>th</sup> -century Carol |          | 1928 (2003)    | Solo baritone, ATBrB  |



## Appendix 4: Clarke's Colleagues

The following is an alphabetical list of groups and individuals with whom Clarke performed or who gave the premieres of her works. The list also includes performers to whom Clarke dedicated music and composers who dedicated music to her. Clarke's career as a viola player was highly active, and she performed in numerous 'one-off' concerts with various different singers; these are not listed here.

### **Aeolian Players**

The Aeolian Players were Gordon Bryan (piano), Joseph Slater (flute), Antonio Brosa (violin; Constance Izard took over as the violin player in 1926) and Rebecca Clarke (viola). They formed in 1924 to play chamber music which included a flute as part of the ensemble. Several works were written for the Aeolian Players and they gave the first performances in England of several chamber works. Recordings made by the group were often broadcast on BBC radio during the 1930s.

### **d'Aranyi, Jelly (Yelly) (1895–1966)**

Hungarian violinist, younger sister of Adila Fachiri. d'Aranyi trained in Budapest but became a British subject. She made her American debut in 1927, and toured the US with the pianist Myra Hess, as well as giving concerts with several orchestras. She was the dedicatee of several important works, including Bartok's two Violin Sonatas (1922 and 1923), Ravel's *Tzigane* (1924; she gave the premiere of this in Paris on 30 November 1924 with the Colonne Orchestra, conducted by Gabriel Pierné) and Vaughan Williams' Violin Concerto (1925).

### **Boatwright, Helen**

Important American soprano, teacher, lecturer and writer. She married the concert violinist Howard Boatwright and the two regularly performed works for voice and violin. Clarke dedicated her arrangement of *Down by the Salley Gardens* (1919, originally for voice and piano) to Helen Boatwright in 1955.

### **Brynley, David**

English tenor, member of the English Singers. Clarke dedicated her duet *Sleep* (c.1926) to Brynley and Norman Notley. Another duet, *Take, O take those lips away* (c.1926) was written for them to perform, though there is no dedication on the manuscript.

### **Busch, William (1901–45)**

English pianist and composer. His composition teachers included John Ireland and Bernard van Dieren. Clarke dedicated her work for solo piano, *Cortège*, to Busch in 1930.

### **Elwes, Gervase (1866–1921)**

Renowned English tenor. Clarke dedicated her first published songs, *Two Songs* ('Shy One' and 'The Cloths of Heaven') to Elwes, and he performed them widely in concerts in the UK and US. He was killed in a train accident in Boston, and a fund established in his memory is now the Musicians' Benevolent Fund.



### **English Ensemble**

The players of the English Ensemble were Kathleen Long (piano), Marjorie Hayward (violin), Rebecca Clarke (viola) and May Mukle (cello). The ensemble was primarily a piano quartet but occasionally performed piano and string trios and sonatas. They performed extensively in England during the 1920s and gave the first performance in England of Bloch's Piano Quintet among other works. Like the Aeolian Players, recordings made by the English Ensemble were regularly broadcast on BBC radio during the 1920s.

### **Fachiri, Adila (1889–1962)**

Hungarian violinist, sister of Jelly d'Aranyi. Fachiri studied in Hungary and Berlin and went on to have a busy career as an orchestral soloist and chamber musician. She married the English barrister and amateur cellist Alexander Fachiri and settled in London after her English debut in 1909. Clarke dedicated *Midsummer Moon* to Fachiri in 1924.

### **Frijsh, Povla (1881–1960)**

Danish soprano, Clarke dedicated *The Donkey* to her in 1942. She was the first singer to record one of Clarke's songs – *Shy One* in 1941.

### **Friskin, James (1886–1967)**

Scottish composer, pianist and teacher. Friskin studied composition with Stanford at the Royal College of Music, but moved to the US in 1914 and earned his living primarily through teaching. A chance meeting with Rebecca Clarke in 1942 led to their marriage later that same year (when they were both aged 58). As a pianist he

was known for his interpretations of JS Bach. Clarke transcribed JS Bach's 'Esurientes' from *Magnificat in D* for Friskin, under the title *He Hath Filled the Hungry*. Her work for viola and piano *I'll Bid My Heart Be Still* was written for Friskin as a wedding present in 1944.

### **Goss, John (1894–1953)**

English baritone. As a recitalist Goss gave many concerts in London and also toured the US, Canada and the Far East. He was also a member of the London Singers and edited several song books, including the *Oxford Song Anthology*, *Ballads of Britain*, and the *Daily Express Community Song Book*. In the 1920s he gave numerous performances of works by English composers, in particular songs by Warlock and Moeran (who dedicated several works to him). He had a long affair with Clarke from the late 1920s to mid 1930s (though he was married at the time) and Clarke dedicated *June Twilight* to him in 1925.

### **Hallis, Adolphe**

South African pianist and composer. Clarke dedicated *The Aspidistra* to Hallis in 1929.

### **Hess, Myra (1890–1965)**

Leading English pianist. Hess studied at the Guildhall School of Music, then the Royal Academy of Music from 1902, where she met Rebecca Clarke. She toured extensively in Europe, the US and Canada and was made a CBE in 1936, and a DBE in 1941 (during her legendary wartime recitals). It was a radio interview Clarke gave to Robert Sherman for a programme on Hess for the WQNR station in 1976 that

sparked the revival of interest in Clarke's music. With Marjorie Hayward and May Mukle, Hess gave the first public performance of Clarke's Trio in 1922, and with May Mukle she gave the premiere of *Rhapsody* in 1923.

### **International Quartet**

This consisted of André Mangeot, Boris Pecker, Frank Howard and Herbert Withers. 'Originally known as the *Music Society String Quartet*, and founded in connexion (sic) with the Society of that name in order to perform works not normally played by other ensembles. The formation of the Quartet was then André Mangeot, Dorothy Christison, Rebecca Clarke, and May Mukle. On the departure of May Mukle for America, the 'cellist was Ambrose Gauntlett, the second violin Kenneth Skeaping and the viola Raymond Jeremy.'<sup>1</sup>

### **Leigh, Walter (1905–42)**

English composer who studied in Cambridge and Berlin. Leigh dedicated his *Sonatina for Viola and Piano* (1930) to Clarke. He died in action in Tobruk.

### **Moeran, Ernest (1894–1950)**

English composer who studied at the RCM and with John Ireland. Moeran wrote a dedication to Rebecca Clarke on the manuscript of String Trio, but changed the dedication to The Pasquier Trio before its publication in 1936. He wrote several songs for the baritone John Goss, with whom Clarke had an extended affair.

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<sup>1</sup> Cobbett (ed.), *Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*, Vol I, 1929, 210.



### **Mukle (pronounced Muklé), May (1880–1963)**

Renowned English cellist who studied alongside Clarke at the Royal Academy of Music. Mukle made her first appearance as a cellist at the age of nine, and gave a recital in London at the age of seventeen after which she toured with Clarke throughout England, Europe, the US and the Far East. She had a busy career as a soloist and chamber musician, and gave the premieres of *Two pieces for Viola and Cello*, Trio (1<sup>st</sup> public performance), and *Rhapsody*. She played with Clarke in the English Ensemble. Works were written for Mukle by Holst and Vaughan Williams and Mukle also did some composing herself. Clarke established a cello prize at the RAM in Mukle's honour.

### **Norah Clench Quartet**

London's first professional all-female string quartet. The line-up was Norah Clench and Lucy Stone (violins), Rebecca Clarke (viola) and May Mukle (cello). The group formed in 1907, but Clarke replaced the original violist, Cecilia Gates in 1910. The group had disbanded by 1919.

### **Notley, Norman**

Baritone, member of the English Singers. Clarke dedicated her duet *Sleep* (c.1926) to Notley and David Brynley and wrote *Take, O take those lips away* (c.1926) for them to perform.

### **Strauss, Lawrence**

American tenor. Clarke dedicated her 1927 song *Eight o' clock* to Strauss.

### **Suggia, Guilhermina (1888–1950)**

Portuguese cellist who studied in Portugal and Germany before having an international career as a performer. Suggia is thought to have been the wife of her teacher Pablo Casals for a time (1906–12), though he denied that they had been married (it was probably annulled: he does not mention her in his autobiography). She settled in London. Clarke dedicated her *Epilogue* (1921) for cello and piano to Suggia and regularly played string quartets with Suggia and the d'Arányi sisters. She was the subject of a famous portrait by the painter Augustus John, who afterwards was rumoured to have declared that he would never work with a cellist again!

### **Thursfield, Anne**

Mezzo soprano, gave the first performance of *The Aspidistra* in 1929; the work is dedicated to her.

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Clarke also performed on occasions with the Music Society String Quartet and the London Chamber Music Group.

## **Appendix 5: Contemporary Critical Reaction to Clarke's Music**

The following are reviews or extracts from reviews of Clarke's music written during her lifetime. Most come from the pages of *The Times*, but there are some extracts from *The Musical Times*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The New York Times*. They are listed in chronological order of publication. In Chapters 1 and 7 I have argued that Clarke's lack of self-confidence was due, at least in part, to a lack of critical support; these reviews will, I hope, clarify my opinion.

### ***The Times*, 22 February 1919, 7: Unsigned review**

Mr Elwes's Recital. Mr Elwes sang us four good songs (beside *Wenlock Edge*) at the Aeolian Hall yesterday – or three and a half. The possible half was Rebecca Clarke's "Shy One"; her other song "Had I the heaven's embroidered cloths," which was sung three times, we tried hard to think worthy of Yeats's words, but did not succeed.

### ***The New York Times*, 26 September 1919, 11: Unsigned review**

Miss Clarke's sonata was one of the seventy-two manuscripts submitted for the prize and was the second in the estimation of the judges. It is a remarkable work as coming from a young woman unknown to the musical public, and shows unusual talent. It may be said that the talent is not wholly original, that it reveals strong influences of the modern French school, that the name of Debussy comes to the listener's mind involuntarily. Yet, Miss Clarke had unquestionably something of her own to say, she is moved by a strong feeling for beauty, and much of her work is charming and really engrossing, especially the strongly motivated first movement and the brilliant scherzo.



Miss Clarke has written with uncommon skill for the viola, an instrument which she plays herself, and has made use of its ingratiating qualities, while her writing for the piano is also singularly effective. The work was played with altogether remarkable skill and appreciation by Louis Bailly, the viola player of the Berkshire Quartet, and Harold Bauer.

***The New York Times*, 27 January 1920, 18: Unsigned review**

Rebecca Clarke[,] whose sonata for viola and pianoforte won honorable mention with Bloch's \$1,000 prize work at the Pittsfield festival, where it also was played by Bauer and Bailly, had the novel experience of presenting her own music at Aeolian Hall last evening for the first time in New York. Winifred Christie, pianist, was heard with Miss Clarke in the sonata, which has before been described in *The [New York] Times* as a remarkable work, moved by a strong feeling for beauty.

Miss Clarke's score bears a quotation from Alfred de Musset's "Night in May" – Poet, take thy lute; the wine of youth ferments tonight in the veins – and she has all but vocalized the free spirit of the verses. She played last night also a sonata for viola by Graziolli, with Walter Golde, and among lesser pieces a new "Caprice Basque" by Emile Ferir.

***The Times*, 30 May 1921, 8: Unsigned review**

It was pleasant to renew acquaintance with Miss Rebecca Clarke's Sonata for viola and pianoforte; it was played by the composer and Winifred Christie at the latter's recital of British music given at the Aeolian Hall on Saturday.

Although showing strong evidence of the influence of the French school, notably César Frank, Miss Clarke's music is by no means devoid of fancy and

imagination, suggesting that she will ultimately develop a style of her own. She is apt to be a little discursive and has not learnt how to make her climaxes really conclusive, but she has managed the simpler form of her Scherzo quite skilfully, while the writing for both instruments is decidedly effective and interesting throughout.

***The Times*, 7 October 1921, 8: Unsigned review**

Three songs by Rebecca Clarke excelled in fancy rather than in grip.

***The Times*, 21 October 1921, 8: Unsigned review**

Rebecca Clarke's "Shy One", obvious and pretty.

***The Musical Times*, Vol. 63 (April 1922), 247–48: B.V.**

A Pianoforte and Viola Sonata

Miss Rebecca Clarke's Sonata for viola (or violoncello) has already been heard in public, and on the whole the comments it excited were favourable. It is now published by Messrs. Chester, and the reading of the score justifies both the praise we gave and the misgivings we felt while the Sonata was being played. Throughout the work there appears an admirable determination to do something new and striking, to avoid all that is 'crooked and awry' – to quote from the play of the hour – and to make boldly for new paths, new ventures, and new goals. Now it would hardly be fair to suggest that Miss Clarke has achieved this giant's task. Clearly her strength is not quite equal to the intention, as she will undoubtedly perceive when her own powers of criticism and observation have ripened. At the same time, it is but too easy to do less than justice to a work of

this kind. A Sonata for viola and pianoforte has its own problems, and they are problems which apparently more experienced composers than Miss Clarke have found little to the liking, for the literature of the instrument is exceedingly limited. Miss Clarke undoubtedly deserves much credit for balancing her parts well, and, more particularly, for showing the resources of her instrument in the best light. She possesses many of the qualities that qualify for composition; but she must acquire the art of skilful and drastic curtailment. Much that is good in the Sonata is less effective because it is preceded and followed by indifferent matter. This will come in time, for the Sonata is very promising in some ways. But composition, like husbandry, implies a knowledge of pruning as well as of planting, although the subject does not appear in the curricula of music schools.

***The Times*, 4 November 1922, 5: Unsigned review**

A New Trio. Miss Rebecca Clarke's Pianoforte Trio, played for the first time in England at the Wigmore Hall last night, displays a far more marked leaning towards the latter-day extremities of clashing tonalities and angularity of thematic outline than any other of hers we have heard. The change may or may not be for the better; at any rate in this Trio there is not enough consistency of style to make one feel that she is doing as yet much more than experimenting. All the same there is a direct vigour and boldness in the music, which is interesting, though not exactly charming. The writing for the three instruments does not show enough variety, Miss Clarke's technique being still rather limited in this respect.



***The Musical Times*, Vol. 63 (December 1922), 874: A.K.**

Rebecca Clarke's Trio

At the concert given by Miss Marjorie Hayward, Miss May Mukle, and Miss Myra Hess at Wigmore Hall on November 3, a new Trio for pianoforte, violin, and violoncello was played for the first time in England. It is much influenced by Debussy and Ravel, yet bears the mark of a personal style in the making. The interest is kept alive throughout by well-marked themes and strong workmanship. There is passionate feeling in every section, and even had it been the work of a man, it would be called a virile effort. The performance was excellent, as was that of Trios by Mozart and Ravel which occupied the rest of the programme.

***The New York Times*, 30 September 1923, 5: Richard Aldrich**

Miss Clarke has shown her unmistakable talent in other compositions heard at Pittsfield, and ... has shown it more unmistakably than in this Rhapsody. It was very rhapsodical and very gloomy and undeniably long. Some of her sincerest admirers may think that she is not following a promising path as indicated by this composition.

***The Times*, 20 June 1924, 12: Unsigned review**

"Midsummer Moon", for violin and piano, is melodious but diffuse, at any rate at first hearing: it has plenty of agreeable moments, but they do not seem somehow to make a complete whole. The violin part sounds well and is well written; the piano part is not so well knit, and sounds a little experimental. We hope, however, some more such experiments will be made, and look forward to something good as the technique becomes more perfect.

*The Musical Times*, Vol. 65 (December 1924), 1100: H.G.

'From the same publishers [Winthrop Rogers] come two songs by Rebecca Clarke 'Down by the Salley Gardens' and 'Infant Joy.' The former is in folk-song style, and its simplicity seems rather too studied; the second is a beautiful setting of Blake's little poem. The numerous key-changes look violent, but sound perfectly natural, and the treatment of the words from the rhythmic point of view is charming.'

*The Times*, 22 October 1925, 10: Unsigned review

Miss Rebecca Clarke's Concert

A Versatile Composer

Most if not all of the works which formed the programme of Miss Rebecca Clarke's compositions at Wigmore Hall last night have been heard before at one time or another, but it was interesting to have them grouped together. Monotony is the common charge to bring against one-composer programmes, but we did not find Miss Clarke's monotonous. A stronger personality than hers might suffer more from that defect. Her music varies between flashes of originality and skilful handling of derived ideas. Two concerted works stood at each end of this programme, the sonata for viola and piano played by the composer and Miss Myra Hess at the beginning, and the trio, of which Miss Hess, Mme Adila Fachiri (violin) and Miss May Mukle (violoncello) gave a fine performance at the end. The latter is the stronger work, more consistent in idiom and definite in aim, but we got more pleasure from the sonata, which has a certain charm in its very desultoriness. In writing for her own instrument the composer writes what she would like to play, and, so to speak, feels her way from thought to thought. The trio seems more consciously constructed.

Miss Clarke was fortunate in a strong cast of interpreters. Mr John Goss was added to their number and sang songs which ranged from "The Seal Man", an interesting and not wholly successful attempt to set the prose of John Masefield as though it were poetry, to such simple and graceful lyrics as "Infant Joy", and "Shy One!" (Yeats). He and Mme Fachiri collaborated in three old English songs arranged for voice and violin. The violin part of "It was a lover" is just too elaborate, and one often feels throughout Miss Clarke's work that touch of [the] amateur, an inability to let well alone. The stress laid on a particular rhythm in a sonata movement is apt to be forced beyond its natural usefulness. Two pieces for violin, "Midsummer Moon" and "Chinese Puzzle" (the latter a piquant *pizzicato*), and two duets for viola and violoncello are all slight, but contributed to show the composer's versatility.

***The Daily Telegraph*, 22 October, 1925, 8: Unsigned review**

Between imitative art and art that is imitative historic criticism has always drawn a clear line. Between the musical art of to-day that is inspired by traditional forms and that which is a spontaneous outburst of personal feeling and makes its own forms the line of demarcation is always there for those who can see it. Miss Rebecca Clarke may not be amongst the pioneers, but her talent is an attractive one, and, generally speaking, she makes a very good show in expressing herself in various styles more or less current in Europe to-day...she gave us a variety of songs and instrumental pieces that showed her talent in the full flower of maturity.

Compositions for piano and viola are rare enough, and this [Viola Sonata], with all its indebtedness to the French stylists of 20 years ago, is entitled to some consideration amongst native works for that combination; but we could not but prefer the lesser "Lullaby" – a work of real feminine charm – and the well-named



“Grotesque”. Formal classical architecture has its obligations, and the young composer is clearly happier with improvisations like these and the fiddle pieces “Midsummer Moon” and “Chinese Puzzle”. Miss Clarke’s setting of “The Seal Man” of John Masefield has good points, and its merging of song and speech – the piece, it will be remembered, is in prose with piano accompaniment – is adroit. Masefield himself has derived this story of the woman who “went down into the sea with her man” from sources that are older than literature; legends in the Hebrides and in Ireland tell the same tale. But the composer has not been just clever enough, and the Lisztian waves give the lady so pianistic a drowning that the imaginative atmosphere...is completely nullified a few bars before the end. How much more cunning to have allowed the voice to finish alone! The programme further contained the Piano Trio and a group of Old English songs with accompaniment for violin alone. Even if Miss Clarke has, in the latter, followed Mr Holst at a respectful distance, she has done it with much credit to herself. These went well.

***The Times, 5 March 1926, 12: Unsigned review***

Miss Clarke’s [Trio]...speaks in the current idiom based on the old harmony as modified by Debussy, Vaughan Williams and Stravinsky, but it is a strong work, of which the thought is personal, even though the phraseology is obviously derived.

***The Times, 8 March 1926, 21: Unsigned review***

Miss May Mukle and Mr Adolphe Hallis played Miss Rebecca Clarke’s sonata in E...Miss Clarke’s sonata is rather uneven, for her musical inspiration is not quite sustained enough to carry out her excellent ideas.

***The Times*, 17 June 1927, 12: Unsigned review**

...a setting of some prose by Masefield, "The Seal Man" by Rebecca Clarke was a successful and effective experiment.

***The Times*, 31 October 1927, 12: Unsigned review**

Rebecca Clarke's little *Chinoiserie* was...clever, and we think, ... successful.

***The Times*, 9 July 1928, 14: Unsigned review**

Miss Clarke has contrived some ingenious violin accompanying for the folk-songs, especially "A Ballynure Ballad" and we liked her harmonic basis in "I know where I'm going".

***The Times*, 4 February 1938, 12: Unsigned review**

Rebecca Clarke's sonata is inspired by lines from de Musset's "Nuit de Mai", and reflects much of the romantic fervour though not the richness of language of that famous poem. It impressed, in spite of weaknesses, as a work of genuine imagination.'

## Appendix 6: References from Clarke's Diaries (1919–33)

### Concerning Her Music

Between 1919 and 1933 Clarke kept detailed private diaries which document, in almost 80,000 words, her activities and thoughts during the most important years in her performing and composing careers. These not only give us a broad picture of Clarke's character and importance as a figure from the early twentieth-century English musical scene, but also offer fascinating insights on her method of composing and her views on the works she created at the height of her career. The diaries also reveal that her career as a viola player was a highly active one, reinforcing the view that her relatively small compositional output resulted partly from the fact that she was often too busy to devote long periods of time to it. Perhaps most importantly they show how vital composition was to Clarke: when her composition was flowing smoothly she seems to have been happiest with life.

Dr Liane Curtis of the Rebecca Clarke Society allowed me access to typewritten transcripts of Clarke's diaries (the originals are in the Clarke estate), and the following are edited extracts from these transcripts. I have divided the extracts into categories (each arranged chronologically) so as to make references to particular works easier to find. My categories are: (i) entries concerning songs and poets; (ii) entries concerning the Viola Sonata; (iii) entries concerning the Trio; (iv) entries concerning the *Rhapsody*; (v) entries concerning other chamber works; (vi) entries concerning Clarke's participation in concerts, her attendance at concerts of her own works, and her reaction to critical reception of her music; (vii) entries concerning publication difficulties; (viii) entries concerning choral music; (ix) selected



comments on other composers and performers; (x) entries concerning composing at the piano; and (xi) miscellaneous entries.

I have put dates into the Anglicised format and put titles of works in italics to match the rest of my text. Explanatory footnotes are added where necessary and editorial amendments are added in square brackets. Some entries are relevant to more than one category but in these cases I have not repeated the information.

**(i) Entries concerning songs and poets**

**(a) Masefield settings: *The Seal Man* and *June Twilight***

**15 January 1922:** Worked most of the day at composing. My *Seal Man* is almost done now.

**16 January 1922:** More *Seal Man*, and a lot of letters written and a lot of errands done.

**24 January 1922:** Finished my *Seal Man*...Spent the evening copying out the *Seal Man*.

**12 September 1924:** Am yet again overhauling *The Seal Man* as I feel it is so good I want it to be better and simpler. But it's slow work overhauling.

**1 December 1924:** I...found a letter from John Goss saying he likes *The Seal Man* immensely.

**31 December 1924:** John Goss came to tea to sing me *The Seal Man* which he does simply beautifully. Nan Mukle<sup>1</sup> came to play piano. Goss is very jolly and friendly. Dora and I met May Hobbs at St. Martin in the Fields and joined the carol singers, conducted by Vaughan-Williams [sic]. I saw Holst singing there, too.

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<sup>1</sup> Nan Mukle, a pianist, was May Mukle's sister.

**1 January 1925:** Started a new song for Masfield's *June Twilight*. I haven't finished the choral thing yet, but still!

**7 February 1925:** Went to tea with Kathleen Long so that she and I and John Goss (who turned up an hour late) could discuss programs. He tried *June Twilight* which I have just finished and wants to sing it.

**11 June 1925:** In the evening went to Helen Henschel and John Goss's joint recital. He gave the first performance of my *Seal Man*. A little inaccurate, but a splendid interpretation. People seemed to like it.

**(b) W B Yeats settings: *Down by the Salley Gardens* and *Shy One***

**1 February 1919:** Wrote *Down by the Salley Gardens*. Pleased with it.

**30 September 1919:** Edith Bennet sang *Shy One* and I had to get up in my seat and bow. I feel quite a celebrity here now!<sup>2</sup>

**20 May 1920:** Went to see the publishing man at Winthrop Rogers about my songs, as I have just got Yeats' permission to use the words.

**28 May 1920:** Corrected proofs of my songs – took them to Winthrop Rogers.

**8 May 1921:** Tea w[ith] Mrs Fowler. W B Yeats was there and I had a nice talk w[ith] him.

**(c) Folksong arrangements**

**27 December 1923:** Composing all the morning (more folk-songs, the arranging of which simply fascinates one.) It[']s so lovely to have time to breathe again after the rush of last year. Not a thing to have to go out for all day, either.

**5 January 1924:** Finished my arrangement of 'It was a lover and his lass'. I've now

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<sup>2</sup> Clarke was at the Coolidge Festival in Pittsfield, where her Viola Sonata had won second prize in the Composition Competition.

done six songs. Last Tues[day] I did 'A tailor had a little mouse' and both these last ones have turned out practically as well.

**19 January 1924:** Made clean copies of three of my folksong arrangements and Madeleine came round...and tried them through with me. We did 'It was a Lover and his lass', 'Phyllis on the new mown hay' & 'the tailor and his mouse'. They came off really well.

**11 February 1924:** Norman Notley came in the morning to run through my *Old English Songs* with Fiddle, and wants me to give the first performance with him at Aeolian Hall in May.

**2 April 1924:** Played the violin for Notley in my fiddle songs, but they went off badly.

**11 May 1924:** Had a reh[earsal] at Norman Notley's studio of my *Old English Songs*, which he is doing at his recital and I am to play.

**23 May 1924:** Went to Norman Notley's to run through my *Old English Songs* with him. I am going to play my Strad[ivarius], and it sounds so nice.

**26 May 1924:** Rehearsed with Notley at Aeolian Hall at 2 (violin) then – to Westminster and rehearsal with André & Co.<sup>3</sup> (viola) then had concert there at 5:15. Everything went very well. Ernest drove us home and I dressed, practised and went with May to Norman Notley's concert to play violin in my *Old English Songs*. Very well received.

#### (d) *The Aspidistra*

**11 June 1929:** Took Claude Flight to Anne Thursfield's concert to hear *Aspidistra*. It was very well received – everybody laughed so much...The end was incredible. But

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I have an idea the critics will be down on it. He [Flight] was very pleased w[ith] the song.

**15 June 1929:** Claude Flight called in the morning with more poems. Took May [Mukle] to hear Myra [Hess] and Jelly [d'Aranyi] at the Queen's Hall.

**19 November 1931:** Asked David Brynley to lunch, as he wanted to look at my *Aspidistra*.

**(e) *Tiger, Tiger***

**29 July 1931:** The Festival is over & it has been fun, but most strenuous. Spent morning making clean copy of revised *Tiger, Tiger* as the Jacobis came to tea and wanted to see it...Much encouraged at Fred's precise [sic] of my thing. He thinks I've improved.

**(f) *Eight o'Clock***

**26 May 1927:** Started a song on *Eight o'Clock* by Housman. Rather a different style from any of my others.

**15 February 1928:** Evening went to hear a singer Phillis Sjörsjön at the Aeolian. She sang first performance of my *Eight O'Clock* – not very good.

**(g) Finding words to set**

**13 July 1925:** I went round to the Graves' to look at some of their books of poetry. Didn't find many good words to songs.

## **(ii) Entries concerning the Viola Sonata**

**3 April 1919:** Spent rest of day working at my Viola Sonata, which I am beginning to get quite excited about...

**21 April 1919:** Worked awfully hard all morning at my Sonata, which Monkey<sup>4</sup> and Beryl are very thrilled about. It is so nice being here with them.

**22 April 1919:** Worked hard again at the Sonata all day. It is beginning to come out extremely well.

**26 April 1919:** Put finishing touches to final movement of my Sonata, and played it with Beryl.

**11 June 1919:** Walked to the Detroit Institute of Music, about a mile away, and got a room with a piano, to work in all the morning. Starting my scherzo, now.

**3 July 1919:** My last day of working at the Institute. Shall be sorry to stop. The sonata is finished now, and I have only a few small corrections to do, and the marking and copying before sending it off. Feel very proud to have actually got it done.

**8 July 1919:** Got the piano part done, though not marked as yet. Had a performance of the whole thing in the evening. Expected to hate it after all that work, but really am rather pleased with it.

**24 August 1919:** A red-letter day for me. Mrs Coolidge and [Hugo] Kortschak<sup>5</sup> walked in while we were having supper to tell us the result of the competition. Apparently the jury made a tie between the two, and as Mrs Coolidge would not divide the prize she gave the casting vote, which turned out to be for Bloch. The other was mine, which was given special mention. Very excited indeed.

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<sup>4</sup> Monkey was Clarke's youngest brother, Eric. Beryl was his wife.

<sup>5</sup> Kortschak was the first violin player in the Berkshire String Quartet formed by Coolidge in 1916.

**25 September 1919:** Very exciting day for me – the first day of the festival, at which my Sonata was played. Sat next to Mrs. Coolidge and felt very nervous indeed. Bailly did not play very well, but Bauer<sup>6</sup> was magnificent. Had a very warm reception and had to bow from platform. Overwhelmed with congratulations. Arricutjie gave a dinner for me, and after had a reception at Maplewood.

**27 September 1919:** A very interesting vocal and chamber music program this morning, including *Wenlock Edge*. Afternoon concert with Ernest Bloch's prize sonata, which is an extremely fine work, & was wonderfully played. Dined at Maplewood with Mrs Coolidge[,]...the jury and Bloch, & there was a large reception after. I am still being tremendously complimented, & have met so many people that I am giddy.

**30 November 1919:** Went to a tea given for Percy Grainger. Evening had a dress rehearsal of sonata and trio. Four viola players there joined arms and bowed to me!

**26 January 1920:** Saved myself up all day for the evening. Felt very nervous, but May was a darling to me all day long. Concert went off extremely well. Had tremendous success with Sonata and also solos.<sup>7</sup>

**27 January 1920:** Felt pretty tired, but soon revived after seeing my splendid notices. All good, though some short, owing to the opening of the Chicago opera last night.

**28 May 1920:** Played my Sonata with [Harold] Samuel to [Lionel] Tertis who was really thrilled and will play it on June 29<sup>th</sup>.

**12 January 1922:** Saw the first printed copy of my Sonata [by J & W Chester Ltd] today. Very thrilled

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<sup>6</sup> Louis Bailly (viola) and Harold Bauer (piano).

<sup>7</sup> This was the New York premiere of the Viola Sonata.



### **(iii) Entries concerning the Trio**

**5 October 1920:** Am quite thrilled over an idea I had for the beginning of a Trio – if only I can carry it out.

**3 April 1921:** Spent the entire day working at my Trio. Very strenuous.

**12 April 1921:** Getting on nicely w[ith] my Trio, which I work hard at every morning.

**13 April 1921:** Such a good morning's work at my Trio. Felt in high spirits.

**20 April 1921:** I seem to be doing nothing nowadays but compose and rehearse.

**3 May 1921:** Started work on my Trio slow movement, but had to have an early lunch and go up to town to see more agents for the house, before a rehearsal at Adila's.<sup>8</sup>

**17 May 1921:** Work going well, and so I feel most pleased with life.

[The diary entry for 28 August 1921, when Clarke received the news that her Trio had come second in the Coolidge Competition is missing.]

**29 August 1921:** Had gone to bed last night very sad because of my Trio's failure, but gave myself a little wholesome talking too, and woke up quite gay again. And then at 11 o'clock Kortschak rang up and told me that mine and one other were given honorable mention, and asked my permission to have it announced, so everything is much the same as two years ago.

**30 August 1921:** Drove to Sharon for our concert there. Grilling hot day. ... Have never played in such heat before. Strings wouldn't stay in tune and I was melting. Big audience, very pleased with us...Called on Mrs Coolidge. Took home the corpse of my Trio.

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<sup>8</sup> Adila Fachiri.

**29 January 1922:** In the evening...I went up to the Kneisels to hear for the first time a rehearsal of my Trio by the Elshucos[sic].<sup>9</sup> They were obviously wondering what I was going to say, and I had to be very tactful, but got my way most of the time and left them feeling very pleased with themselves! So excited with the Trio I could hardly sleep.

**12 February 1922:** Played in the afternoon at a composer's concert at Cooper Union. I was the only woman and the only non-Hebrew!...dinner party given by Mrs Reis, then home for the party here. Bad thunder-storm, so many people failed [to turn up], but Trio was a great success.<sup>10</sup>

**2 February 1926:** Paris always goes to my head -- I simply adore it. Met the Comte [Étienne] de Beaumonte [sic] who is getting up the concert. All English music. Large fashionable audience, who seemed to like [it]. My Trio had fine reception...Champagne supper at end.

**27 January 1927:** The evening['s] post brought me a very annoying surprise. They sent back only the first movement of my Trio from the B[ritish] M[usic] S[ociety]. and Miss Wedham very kindly saw Voigt about it and found he had not sent the rest. Naturally it didn't have a chance with the international jury.

#### (iv) Entries concerning the *Rhapsody*

**3 March 1922:** Started working. I must begin [the] cello rhapsody soon, as my plans for the future are so uncertain.

**5 March 1922:** I go up every morning to Madeline's flat to work at her piano, as she is away in Vienna. The 'cello thing is just beginning to materialize, though slowly.

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<sup>9</sup> The Elschuco Trio were Samuel Gardner, violin, Willem Willeke, cello, and Richard Epstein, piano.

<sup>10</sup> This private performance was the Trio's premiere.

**11 May 1922:** Went round to Mr Merston's and started work on the 'cello piece. Very quiet room, and a lovely grand piano. I am in luck.

**12 October 1922:** I'm staying at May's place now, while she is away in Scotland, and I had a good morning's work at the *Rhapsody*.

**13 November 1922:** Composing with success all the morning. I'm getting quite pleased with the cello piece.

**27 April 1923:** Thrilled about being here [in Peking]...Arranged to have a piano sent to my room, as I want to compose here.

**12 May 1923:** Finished my slow movement section. Spent the afternoon at it.

**21 July 1923:** Realized that my *Rhapsody* is getting too long, so made a big cut that brings me within sight of the end.

**29 August 1923:** Finished the *Rhapsody*! Am so glad I have taken my time over it, as I am sure it is much better than if I had hurried.

**19 September 1923:** Lost no time in going over my piece with Myra [Hess] (in fact we started last night at about midnight). Depressed over *Rhapsody*, which needs many alterations.

**20 September 1923:** Whole morning made corrections in *Rhapsody*. Very depressed about it.

**29 September 1923:** My *Rhapsody* played in the morning, between Hindemith [quar]tet and Goossens [sex]tet. Very well received, but not liked by many, who thought it too long and gloomy. The Goossens arrived in Pittsfield just too late for his piece! Very tired at afternoon concert...Had long interesting talk with Bauer about my work at lunch and again in the evening. Also with Bridge and Bliss. All very nice. Very depressed all night.



**30 September 1923:** Still feeling very sad, but can see it is very good for me to have a failure. Bad notice in the [New York] Times from dear old Aldrich.<sup>11</sup> Suddenly very cold as if the festival had ended the summer and now the autumn is here.

**(v) Entries concerning other chamber works**

**18 February 1919:** May and I played my *Lullaby and Grotesque*, and they went down very well.

**21 April 1922:** After lunch arranged my *Chinese Puzzle* for viola.

**16 February 1924:** Started writing a fiddle piece using some old scraps I started a couple of years ago. Adila [Fachiri] has asked me to do it for her recital in May.<sup>12</sup>

**26 March 1924:** Whenever I have time to compose I work at a new piece for fiddle; it's getting on slowly, & isn't bad.

**28 March 1924:** Worked at composing all the morning and had a lovely time at it.

**4 April 1924:** Worked hard all day at my fiddle piece...Very tired after dinner, but had to go to Adila's to play her my piece, which she decided to play at a recital in May.

**9 April 1924:** Got such a lot of work done, & my piece is nearly done now.

**11 April 1924:** Worked on my fiddle piece all the afternoon, and spent the evening at home, and May came to supper.

**15 April 1924:** Copied hard & got my piece ready to take to Alec Fachiri<sup>13</sup>

**8 May 1924:** Adila played my piece to me in the morning. May came to hear it.

**12 May 1924:** Adila's concert in the evening. She played most beautifully &

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<sup>11</sup> Richard Aldrich was the music critic for *The New York Times*, and was also on the jury for the 1919 Coolidge Competition. His review of Clarke's *Rhapsody* is printed in Appendix 5.

<sup>12</sup> This is *Midsummer Moon*.

<sup>13</sup> Alec Fachiri was Adila's husband. Clarke was to deliver the manuscript of *Midsummer Moon* to him so that he could give it to her (Adila) when he met her in Europe later in April 1924.

everyone seemed to like it.

**13 May 1924:** My little [composition] pupil, Ora Pearson, came for her lesson in the morning with a huge bunch of flowers...as a sign of her appreciation of my piece last night! She felt faint later & had to stop her lesson. Funny little thing.

**29 May 1924:** Connie Izard's concert in the late afternoon. She played some things awfully well, including my *Chinese Puzzle*, which had to be repeated. The concert wasn't over till 7:00.

**2 September 1924:** Started writing a 4tet as an exercise; it is to be very short & simple. Great fun.

**25 November 1925:** Spent the morning getting my *Midsummer Moon* ready for the printer. That & the *Chinese Puzzle* are to be publ[ished] by the Oxford Univ[ersity] Press.

**27 November 1925:** Had an interview w[ith] Hubert Foss of the Oxford Univ[ersity] Press. They are publ[ishing] the fiddle pieces, & I wanted to ask him about the woodcuts.

**30 December 1925:** I am starting very tentatively on a string quartet, beginning with the slow movement. Difficult, but simply fascinating.

**23 February 1926:** Arranged *Chinese Puzzle* for the Aeolian Players.

**17 December 1930:** Went to the Izard's in the morning to hear Toddles<sup>14</sup> try my cello piece *Epilogue*. Sounds rather well...Shocked to see about Heseltine<sup>15</sup> death on front of all evening papers.

**24 April 1931:** Went to the Izard's in the morning to hear Toddles play my cello piece [*Epilogue*] with Miss Stein.

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<sup>14</sup> Toddles was related to the Izards.

<sup>15</sup> Philip Heseltine, otherwise known as Peter Warlock.

(vi) **Entries concerning Clarke's participation in concerts, her attendance at concerts of her own works, and her reaction to critical reception of her music.**

**31 May 1920:** Was treated like a real Prima-Donna all day and spoilt like anything by the Howards. Went to lunch w[ith] [J B] McEwen to meet Gervase Elwes and Lady Winifred. Dora helped me dress and took me to the concert. Felt frightfully nervous, but was immensely bucked by the enthusiasm of the audience. Hall was packed, and practically every musician in London there. Samuel and Elwes did my things beautifully and were so nice. I got lots of lovely flowers and really had a heavenly time.

**1 June 1920:** Didn't get to sleep till after 4 last night. However, had to get up in the morning, as I had an engagement to play w[ith] McEwen. Found a wonderful notice of my concert in *The Morning Post*. Quite made one blush.

**2 June 1920:** Mr [Walter Willson] Cobbett rang up to ask me to go round...to see him. [He] talked about my concert and asked me to give him a write-up about the Sonata. Got ever so many letters of congratulation.

**7 June 1922:** Absolutely disgusted with my work, I seem to be permanently stuck and am so depressed I don't know what to do. Wrote letters and cleaned up and washed stockings.

**27 February 1924:** [In Cambridge for a performance of the Trio] Drove to Mr. Gordon's where André came and reh[earse]d the Trio...Nice hall and audience. Sonatas went quite well, & mine made a real hit.

**21 October 1925:** Dora ran errands and telephoned for me all morning. Rehearsal with Myra [Hess] in the afternoon of the Trio and Sonata, and had tea there. Dora took me to the concert. I was shockingly nervous but didn't play so badly. Large



audience and masses of flowers after the Sonata; rather embarrassing. Also many telegrams. Everyone enthusiastic and my artists all darlings. Party at the Howard's after. Nearly dead.<sup>16</sup>

**22 October 1925:** Can't believe my concert is really over. Have never been so nervous in my life before and feel now as though I've been through a serious illness!

**23 October 1925:** Notices of my concert beginning to creep in, most of them rather good and some a bit patronizing. All the critics seem to have been there, and also I am inundated with letters from friends. Took the 4:45 to Oxford with Kathleen Long. Met by Mrs. Stewart and dined and changed there and rehearsed so her children could hear my sonata, as they like it. Concert went all right, though I was very tired. Lovely little old hall.

#### **(vii) Entries concerning publication difficulties**

**20 May 1920:** Went to see the publishing man at Winthrop Rogers about my songs, as I have just got Yeats' permission to use the words.

**12 October 1920:** Copied my viola sonata for [J & W] Chester's and worked on my Psalm.<sup>17</sup>

**30 May 1922:** Rather depressed, as I found last night a letter from New York refusing publication of my Trio, which there had seemed good chances of. Never mind.

**11 January 1924:** Had an appointment with Mr. Curwinn [sic]<sup>18</sup> to see if he could publish my Trio. Had quite a talk with him and Mr. Goodwin. They seemed doubtful but not hopeless and I shall hear later.

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<sup>16</sup> This is the concert of Clarke's compositions at the Wigmore Hall.

<sup>17</sup> This could be either Psalm setting; she was working on them both at this time.

<sup>18</sup> John Curwen (1881–1935).

**23 January 1924:** My Trio, or rather the copy Mrs Coolidge had made arrived from America...and I immediately took it to Curwen's...who wanted to look at it.

**25 January 1924:** Fetched my music at Curwen's who has refused it and went to see Mrs Balkwell of the British Music Society who wants it for the Salzburg Committee. Mrs. Duncan Wilson came to tea...So nice to see May.

**4 February 1924:** Called on Mr. Hatzfeld at Ashdown's in Hanover Square to see what could be done about publishing my Trio. He was very oily but indefinite. Introduced me to Ashdown; I hated them both, and went home quite depressed, wishing one need never have anything published at all!

**7 April 1924:** Called on Calista Rogers...to talk over keys etc. of songs she is publishing of mine, *Salley Gardens & Infant Joy*. She refuses *Come, oh come*.

**14 November 1924:** Took some songs to Nan [Mukle] to hear them with piano. She was very nice about them...Evening went to the Howard Jones's...He and his wife very busy making plans to help me with getting my compositions published.

**9 June 1925:** Took *The Seal Man & June Twilight* to Mr Voigt at Hawkes, by his request, but to my great disappointment, there seems to be a tie-up for Masefield's words and they may not be printed after all.

**6 October 1925:** Got through lots of letters, mostly to do w[ith] our concert...Had a long talk w[ith] John Ireland on the telephone about copyright apropos of my Masefield words. He was so nice, but not encouraging. Very depressed.

**10 November 1925:** I had a thrilling letter from the Oxford [University] Press asking to see my fiddle pieces to publish them, perhaps.

**16 September 1929:** Went to tea w[ith] Hubert Foss at the Oxford [University] Press to talk over the difficulty of my Blake songs. Decided to take *Lullaby* away from them & try and get *Tiger*<sup>19</sup> published with it elsewhere.

**(viii) Entries concerning choral music**

**16 April 1920:** Didn't do a blessed thing all day but sit and compose. Suddenly quite thrilled over a setting for another Psalm – *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High*. Wrote like mad all day...

**24 November 1924:** I've thought of an entirely new beginning for the choral thing I am doing, & even though it was half finished I have discarded it to do the new one, which should be much better but is very hard to work out.

**17 February 1925:** Started a choral thing on the new [Rabindranath] Tagore words. Have dropped the other for the present. Rather thrilled over this new one.<sup>20</sup>

**21 February 1925:** My choral thing is coming on fast and it is very exciting to do. Feel quite thrilled over it.

**5 October 1926:** Made another part-song out of *Come, oh come, my life's delight*, just for practice. Jane Joseph is going to let me hear them from a small chorus.

**22 October 1926:** Had dinner at Jane Joseph's and she put a little choir together to let me hear my part-songs which I thought were disappointing.

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<sup>19</sup> *Tiger, Tiger* was not published until 2002.

<sup>20</sup> This work is presumably lost. It is not known whether Clarke finished it.



**(viii) Selected comments on other composers and performers**

**22 November 1919:** In the evening went to Prokofieff's recital. Disliked his playing and hated his compositions.

**28 December 1919:** Evening went to Bodanzky concert. Rachmaninoff played his F# minor concerto. Not mad about it.

**20 July 1920:** Stravinsky concert at Wigmore Hall. Crowded audience, mostly laughing at it. I couldn't help liking a good deal of it, and it is all interesting.

**17 November 1920:** Rushed up-town to a tea at Mrs Goldmark's given for Percy Grainger and Cyril Scott (who I can't stand!)

**28 December 1920:** Went in the afternoon to a lecture at the Otto Kahn's – Percy Grainger holding forth about Cyril Scott and his work, his character, etc.! Scott played some of his compositions and read some of his poems. I could hardly keep a straight face at the way he did it. The most screaming thing I ever heard.

**7 June 1921:** Went with May [Mukle] to Goossens' big orchestral party in the evening. Tremendously impressed by Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps*. Fine performance, beautifully conducted. Stravinsky appeared at the end, and indeed every musician in London was there. Great reception in artists room. Was so excited I went back with May instead of home.

**1 November 1921:** Went with May to hear the Philadelphia Orchestra and heard Casella's debut. Did not care awfully for his ultra-modern composition but thought he played the piano beautifully.

**19 December 1923:** Everyone getting excited over the concert tonight. Myra, Moisevitch, Clara Butt & her husband, & Squire. I have never heard anything so horrible as Clara Butt.

**8 November 1924:** [Went] to Delius concert...Hope I shall never hear another note of Delius! Chief excitement was watching Beatrice Harrison's<sup>21</sup> faces & squirmings. Fanny [Wadsworth<sup>22</sup>] & I were in fits.

**26 June 1929:** Went to a lecture given by Hubert Foss on John Ireland...Quite interesting, but, as May said, "Why all the fuss?!"

**(ix) Entries concerning composing at the piano**

**11 June 1919:** Walked to the Detroit Institute of Music, about a mile away, and got a room with a piano, to work in all the morning. Starting my scherzo, now.

**23 August 1919:** [Worked] in an empty room with a piano in Sylvio's house composing. Working at Psalm No. 93.<sup>23</sup>

**11 May 1922:** Went round to Mr Merston's and started work on the 'cello piece. Very quiet room, and a lovely grand piano. I am in luck.

**19 May 1922:** Wrote about 10,000 letters...Mr Merston came in to say that I might come in any time and work at his piano, as he is away all day.

**(x) Miscellaneous entries**

**13 May 1922:** A letter came for me from a lawyer saying that Percy Miles who hadn't seen me since I was eighteen, died and left me his Stradivarius!

**14 January 1924:** Had rather fun...going with Dora to buy some pearls! I am adding a few to the middle of my necklace with the money I have just got as royalties from

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<sup>21</sup> Beatrice Harrison (1892–1965) was a famous cellist.

<sup>22</sup> A friend of Clarke's.

<sup>23</sup> Unless this setting of Psalm 93 has been lost, we must presume Clarke meant her setting of Psalm 63 (she did not begin work on Psalm 91 until April 1920).

my songs. My pearls are to be all out of my compositions!

**13 November 1924:** Rehearsed again all morning at Queen's Hall. Went to tea with Edwin Evans. He had to interview me for Grove. Concert in the evening. Got so thrilled with the singing that I forgot to come in once. Ethel Smyth was there and was introduced to me after.

**24 May 1926:** Rather nice having time...to do some work! Had a letter from Henry Wood asking me to write him something for the Proms, but refused, as I don't want to be hurried. Took a walk with May after lunch and after supper we went to rehearse again with Ann Thursfield for Oxford.

**31 May 1926:** Played at the...BBC concert after a long test starting at 6 o'clock...Concert went fairly well; I was rather nervous, as I don't mind broadcasting, and I don't mind concerts, but the combination, and playing to two audiences at once is unsettling! Went on for drinks at Ann Thursfield's who had been singing.

**2 June 1926:** Gordon [Bryan]<sup>24</sup>...told me that the BBC were not pleased with our show on Monday.

**19 October 1928:** Back to London, lunch on the train. May and I went straight to Aeolian Hall where there was a Ravel rehearsal. Concert in the evening all sold out and Gordon is to repeat it in January. Ravel came back to May's after and [we] had a rather successful party. I told Ravel's fortune.

**30 November 1928:** I wish I could work. Can't settle down to it. Still feel very restless and depressed about John<sup>25</sup> and can't help feeling he feels the same. But what can we do. [?]

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<sup>24</sup> Gordon Bryan was the pianist in the Aeolian Players.

<sup>25</sup> Clarke was then engaged in an affair with the baritone John Goss.



**4 March 1929:** Adjudicated the Lionel Tertis Prize at the RAM in the morning. Only 3 to hear. Had a long talk & lunch w[ith] [J B] McEwen & was treated like royalty!...evening went to the BBC Bartok concert

**14 November 1930:** Went to R.O. Morris's [the music theorist and composer] concert and took Walter Leigh.

**24 June 1931:** Went to tea with the R.O. Morris's & had a talk with him about the advisability of doing counterpoint with him. Decided to.

**27 June 1931:** A quiet day. Am getting absolutely mad about counterpoint, and find it fascinating. Really hope it will buck up my composition.

**8 July 1931:** Cousin Mary came to lunch...Had to rush off after to lesson with R.O. Morris. He quite approved of most of my counterpoints.

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